The Future

is Flexible With the pandemic transforming the way we work, returning to office will never be the same again

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PANDORA PAPERS - PART 6

AN INVESTIGATION BY THE INDIAN EXPRESS WITH INTERNATIONAL CONSORTIUM OF INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISTS

Arrested this week, Unitech promoter's wife got offshore trust, Dominica passport

JAY MAZOOMDAAR NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

SIX YEARS ago, around the time desperate homebuyers approached courts against Unitech Group promoter Sanjay Chandra, his wife Preeti Chandra set up an offshore family trust structure and changed her nationality, records in the Pandora Papers investigated by *The Indian* Express show.

Records of corporate service provider Trident Trust show that Unitech Group defaulted

as early as 2009 on servicing a \$210-million loan from Credit Suisse for investing in realty projects in

Last Monday, Preeti Chandra and Sanjay Chandra's father Ramesh Chandra were arrested by the Enforcement Directorate probing the Unitech money launder-

Pandora Papers ing case. In March, the ED had stopped her from boarding a flight at Delhi. The agency

Preeti Chandra's

two passports, one

other Dominican.

Indian and the

are part of the

CRARDRA

PARETE

INDIAN

company: Niharika's husband

SHYAMLALYADAV

NIHARIKA RAJE, wife of BJP MP Dushyant Singh and daughterin-law of BJP leader and former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje, is named in the Pandora Papers as a "beneficial owner" of an entity in Belize, a cial owner" of Octavia Limited, incorporated in Belize.

A declaration by Panamabased trust Rendor Overseas SA on November 12, 2010, stated: "We have no beneficial interest in the holding of 1 ordinary share

HELD AFTER DAY-LONG QUESTIONING

Mishra son arrested, cops say he's evasive; SKM wants MoS detained

Tikait says farmers accused of lynching were just reacting

ASAD REHMAN& **AMIL BHATNAGAR** LAKHIMPUR KHERI, NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

DAILY FROM: AHMEDABAD, CHANDIGARH, DELHI, JAIPUR, KOLKATA, LUCKNOW, MUMBAI, NAGPUR, PUNE, VADODARA

FACING MURDER charges over the Lakhimpur incident, Ashish Mishra, the son of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra, was arrested late

Saturday night, after question-

ing that lasted the entire day. Having skipped the first summons issued to him, Ashish, 40, appeared before the SIT investigating the Lakhimpur Kheri incident, that had left eight dead, at 10.30 am on Saturday - just in time for the second notice. He arrived with his lawyers and BIP MLA from Lakhimpur (Sadar) seat Yogesh Verma (the latter left soon after), at the Crime Branch office in the district, amid heavy police deployment.



Ashish Mishra, son of Union MoS Ajay Mishra, arrives for questioning in Lakhimpur Kheri on Saturday. Vishal Srivastav

Around 11 pm at night, DIG Upendra Kumar Agrawal, heading the SIT, told reporters: "We found that he was not cooperating. He was not telling certain things. On ground of non-cooperation and evasive replies, we

are taking Ashish into custody. He will be produced in court tomorrow. We will do sustained custodial interrogation."

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM), which is spearheading CONTINUED ON PAGE 2 SUNDAY STORY

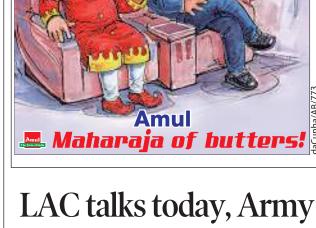
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Meet the **Mishras**

Tracing Ajay Kumar 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

Uttar Pradesh



Tata Good Buy!

chief says China infra means 'there to stay'

KRISHN KAUSHIK NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

INDIA AND China will hold the 13th round of Corps Commander-level talks Sunday to try and resolve the military standoff on the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

On the eve of the talks, Army chief General MM Naravane said the Chinese have been building infrastructure on their side of the region which means "they are there to stay". He had made a similar remark while on a tour of eastern Ladakh last week.

Troops have disengaged on the north and south banks of Pangong Tso and Gogra Post, but not at Hot Springs where they continue to face each other ever since the Chinese crossed the LAC in May 2020. The Chinese have also been

preventing Indian troops from accessing traditional patrolling points on the Depsang Plains, not far from the strategic Indian outpost at Daulat Beg Oldie near the Karakoram Pass in the north

The Indian team to the talks on the Chinese side of the Chushul-Moldo border personnel meeting point will be led by Lt General PGK Menon, com-

Rhea to Aryan, common link: NCB's

Wankhede & his ring of informants



General Naravane



China has been investing heavily, and very rapidly, in infrastructure in its regions facing Ladakh and Arunachal Pradesh, the western and eastern sectors of the boundary. Taking time to withdraw troops to locations before the start of the Ladakh standoff, it is testing Indian preparedness with transgressions in the middle and eastern

Corps. Major General Liu Lin, commander of the South Xinjiang Military District, will lead the Chinese side.

Vasundhara Raje's daughter-in-law had firm in tax haven No relationship with any offshore According to records from Panamanian law firm Alcogal NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9 (Aleman, Cordero, Galindo & . Lee), Niharika Raje is a "benefi-

NAMASTE, INDIA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Denmark's Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen in New Delhi on Saturday, Prayeen Khanna

Many Pandit & Sikh govt staff leave Valley: 'who will guarantee security'

ARUN SHARMA, **AANCHAL MAGAZINE, BASHAARAT MASOOD**

JAMMU, NEW DELHI SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 9

A SENSE of anxiety and fear has gripped the minorities in the Kashmir Valley, with several government employees and teachers belonging to Kashimiri Pandit and Sikh communities returning to Jammu, some seeking transfer, and many staying away from work, due to rising worries about safety.

Susheel, a junior assistant with the Education Department in Srinagar, returned to Jammu in the wee hours last Friday. "Hum Kashmir se bike par bhagey hain (We fled Kashmir on a bike)," he said.

The "targeted killing" of a Sikh woman principal and a



Kashmiri Pandit families return to a migrant camp in Jammu on Saturday. PTI

Kashmiri Hindu teacher in Srinagar has left them edgy and suspicious of all. "Kashmir mein sadak par chaltey huey humey ek hi khayal aata raha ke jo koi bhi CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MANY SARPANCHES RESIGN IN J&K OVER 'INTERFERENCE'

PAGE 4

Won't stop Ayodhya and Mathura projects of Yogi govt: Maya

Wants EC to ban pre-poll surveys

MAULSHREE SETH LUCKNOW OCTOBER 9

BAHUJAN SAMAJ Party (BSP) chief Mayawati on Saturday promised that the BSP. if it forms the government in Uttar Pradesh after next year's Assembly polls will not work with a "vengeance" and will not stop projects and schemes started by the present BJP government in the state, including religious ones in Ayodhya, Varanasi and Mathura.

"Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura wah anya dharmik sthalon par logon ki suvidhan ke liye BSP ki



A BSP rally in Lucknow on Saturday. PTI

sarkar ke padchinnon par chalkar vartman sarkar ne jo bhi karya kiye hai unhe badle ki bhaavna se roka nahi jayega balki pura karaya jayega (In Ayodhya, Varanasi, Mathura and other religious places, public amenity started by this government in the footsteps of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 9 TO THOSE who know him, it is

MOHAMED THAVER

no surprise that Sameer Wankhede is at the centre of both the high-profile Rhea Chakraborty allegations of last vear and the still-unfolding drug bust case against Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan. The 2008batch IRS officer, with stints in the NIA and Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI), before being loaned to the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) as Director, Mumbai Zone, is no stranger to controversy -- or celebrities.

During his stint as a Customs officer at Mumbai international airport, among those he had taken action against was Shah Rukh, who in 2016 was stopped for carrying excess baggage and



NCB Director, Mumbai Zone, Sameer Wankhede. File

fined Rs 1.5 lakh duty. At the Customs and later the Service Tax Department, he would cross paths with Anurag Kashyap, Vivek Oberoi, Mika Singh and Ram Gopal Verma.

So even before he moved to the NCB from the DRI last year, Wankhede, the son of a police officer, was a well-known name in Mumbai. Sources say he was specifically brought in in the

Raiput's death and the cascading allegations against his girlfriend Chakraborty, due to his work on drug seizures at the DRI.

'He he has an excellent network of informants when it comes to narcotics," explains a senior NCB official.

After Wankhede took over. the inconspicuous NCB office in south Mumbai became the buzzing heart of the city, with one celebrity after another called for questioning in the Chakraborty case, including Deepika Padukone, Shraddha Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan and Rakul Preet Singh. Many wondered how media would know precisely when a celebrity would ar-

Questions were also raised about the NCB's apparent focus now on cases involving small **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

THE WORLD



U.S., TALIBAN TO HOLD FIRST TALKS SINCE AFGHANISTAN WITHDRAWAL

CHINA-TAIWAN TENSION: XI VOWS 'PEACEFUL **REUNIFICATION'**

'A message to my assailant: I want you to pledge that you will educate your children to behave better' sickened, saddened and shocked

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

CAROLINE ROWETT

I ENJOY my early morning walks in the 'City Beautiful'. It's a time to reflect on what happened and look forward.

A time to plan my meals for the day (dal makhni or paneer lababdar). Sometimes I start planning my next trip to explore India. But my peaceful reflections were shattered recently when, as I was walking, I was hit forcefully and deliberately on the back by a motorcyclist who sped away into the darkness. I was left bruised and angry. What gives a man the right to hit an elderly, grey-haired woman as she quietly walks along the street early one morning? What sort of threat did she pose to him? Like many women in the UK,

India and around the world, I'm

when I read reports of abduction, violence, and rape. More often than not, women are the victims vet we are often told that it was our fault, we wore the wrong clothes, walked in the wrong place at the wrong time. The onus should not be on women to keep themselves safe. Instead the focus should be on tackling violence against women and together finding solutions to this shared challenge.

SPECIAL TO THE **EXPRESS**

Chandigarh is a beautiful city and a Smart City. It also aspires to be an equal, just and fair city. It has always been a positive role model for others in so many ways, it is fitting that it should also aspire to be a city free of violence against women and girls.

In 2019 the British Deputy High Commission in Chandigarh supported the work of the Centre for Women's Studies and Development, Panjab University, to produce an action plan to make Chandigarh a Safe and Violence Free City for Women and Girls.

The UK along with support from the Government of India is also working with over 100 partners on Pledge for Progress, a joint initiative which aims to take practical steps to tackle gen-

der challenges and promote gender equality. In the coming weeks I am

looking forward to meeting the newly appointed Governor Banwarilal Purohit, Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi and DGP Chandigarh Praveen Ranjan and seeing how we can work together to support implementation of the Action Plan.

And finally, a message to my assailant. I want you to pledge that you will educate your children to

violence against women is never acceptable. Tell your daughters that their lives have value: that they are equal to men. (Caroline Rowett is the British

behave better. Tell your sons that

Deputy High Commissioner in Chandigarh. On October 8, Chandigarh Police arrested a 21vear-old man in connection with the assault on the writer. Police said he had molested another woman in the city on June 10 and a case had been registered then as well.)

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HOW ARTIFICIAL LIGHT, OTHER 'BY-PRODUCTS' OF RAPID URBANISATION THREATEN

A 2017 study observed that changes in the behaviour of nocturnally migrating birds in response to light stimuli disappeared immediately after lights were switched off

BOLLYWOOD REWIND

SUJATA



When Bimal Roy took on caste discrimination and disguised it with a love story

SONOS BEAM REVIEW At Rs 37,399, it is on the

TECH

steeper side. But the audio quality is so good that you will not regret

EXPRESS AUDIO

Game Time: The problem with the 'Spirit of the Game' in cricket

Cricketer Ravichandran Ashwin has often been called 'disgraceful' for not following the 'Spirit of the Game'. But what exactly is the spirit of the game? Is it really necessary? And does it create more problems than it solves?

FROM PAGE ONE

LAC talks today

Last week, there was a near clash in Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh after Indian soldiers confronted over 150 Chinese troops. The troops jostled each other before local commanders stepped in to control the situation. Late August, nearly 100 Chinese soldiers had intruded into Indian territory in Barahoti in Uttarakhand.

On Saturday, General Naravane, speaking at the India Today Conclave, said both countries have been developing infrastructure in the region - the Ladakh frontier is in the western sector of the LAC -- for the additional troops and military equipment brought in last year.

He was of the view that the LAC in eastern Ladakh would become like the Line of Control with Pakistan, but will not be active like the LoC.

"It is a matter of concern that the large-scale build-up, which had occurred, continues to be in place. And to sustain that kind of build-up, there has been an equal amount of infrastructure development on the Chinese side.'

"It means that they are there to stay," Naravane said. "But if they are there to stay, we are there to stay too. And the build-up on our side, and the developments on our side, are as good as what PLA has

He said India is "keeping a close watch on all those developments". If Chinese troops continue to stay there for a second winter. he said, it will "definitely mean that we will be in a kind of LC situation" though "not an active LC as is there on the western front".

He said "definitely we will have to keep a close eve on their troop build-up and deployments to see that they don't get into any

misadventure once again". India and China deploy ditional troops and military equipment in the region last year. Each side has around 50,000 troops in the depth areas -- a large number of them remained deployed through the harsh Ladakh winter last year.

The Army chief said he is not aware why China did what it did last vear in eastern Ladakh, but "whatever it might have been, I don't think they have been able to achieve any of those aims because of the rapid response by the Indian

Repeating a statement by the Ministry of External Affairs, he said the massive Chinese build-up "and non-adherence to various protocols that have been laid down in the past" was "the trigger for all that happened"

The standoff, he said, has led to realisation in the Army that it needs to "do more as far as ISR is required" -- intelligence, surveillance, reconnaissance -- and that has been the "thrust of our modernisation over the last one year".

Mayawatı

previous BSP governments will not be stopped, and will instead be completed)."

Citing the example of West Bengal Assembly elections to point out that Mamta Banerjee's Trinamool Congress performed contrary to all pre-election surveys, and that such surveys do nothing but misguide people before the polls, Mayawati also said her party will urge the Election Commission to impose a ban on pre-poll surveys six months before all state elections.

Addressing a huge rally in Lucknow on the occasion of the $death\,anniver sary\,of\,BSP\,founder$ Kanshi Ram, Mayawati said her party does not announce announce an election manifesto, but gave what appears to be a sneak peek into the road map ahead of state elections next in Uttar

Pradesh, Punjab and Uttrakhand. While she took on both BJP and opposition parties such as Samajwadi Party, Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which is trying to carve out a space in UP,

Mayawati asked people to not waste their votes on other smaller outfits, and warned that it will lead

Warning BSP workers that there will be attempts to damage the party from the time election dates are announced until the last vote is cast, she asked them not to be misguided. The BSP chief said, "We will soon write to the EC and urge them to ban surveys by all agencies whenever there is Assembly election in any state from six months before the polls until the voting process is completed — so that elections are not affected."

Slamming pre-poll surveys, Mayawati said, "Bengal mein jab Vidhan Sabha ka chunao chal raha thha toh wahan par result aanev se pehle survey-wale Mamata Banerjee ko bahut peechhe dikha rahey thhey. Lekin jab result aaya to ulta aaya...jo satta ke sapne dekh rahey thhey unka sapna chakna-chur ho gaya aur Mamata Banerjee bhaari bahumat se punah waapas aa gayi. Isliye survey...inke behkave mein nahi aana hai (Before Bengal elections, all survevs forecast Mamata Baneriee trailing. But the results turned the tables on those who were dreaming of coming to power, as TMC won with a big majority. So you should not come under the spell of such surveys)."

With a few senior BSP leaders having joined the SP recently, Mayawati, without naming any party, asked her supporters not to be misguided by "such parties who bring people from other parties to increase their clan".

Accusing ruling BIP of trying to give a "communal colour" to most issues, she said, "Yeh party aakhir mein iss chunao ko Hindu-Muslim sampradayik rang dekar uski aar mein rajnaitik fayeda utthane ka karya kar sakti hai (they can turn the elections, too, into a Hindu-Muslim issue and take political advantage)."

September 2020 "large" seizures.

Many asked why the NCB, a Central anti-narcotic agency, was going after even cases of consumption, such as the one involving comedian Bharti Singh, Said an officer of the Mumbai Police: consumption cases." In fact, prior to Wankhede joining, a majority of the NCB's operations were related to raiding factories producing mephedrone on the outskirts

In an interview to The Indian Express in February, Wankhede had said their strategy was to nip drugs at all levels. "You see our record, we have seized drugs from cocaine to ganja... dismantled suppliers and manufacturers. Regarding consumers, is consuming legal in the country?... There is Section 27 of the NDPS Act... Anybody violating the Act, we are taking action... When the law prohibits it, how can we allow its

In the Chakraborty case, there

Wankhede denied these alle-Eventually two gations. chargesheets were filed against Prasad, who is currently out on

Chakraborty case was behind him, the NCB conducted several operations, neutralising 12 local gangs as well as networks run by

BIP back into power.

Wankhede

drug quantities but high-profile accused. As per data provided by the NCB to The Sunday Express, of the 30 cases it registered from -- when Wankhede took over -- to February 2021, in at least 12, the amount seized was "small" -- as compared to "intermediate" or

"Even our constables hardly do

were other question marks too, like over Wankhede's intentions. One of those arrested, Kshitij Prasad, associated with Dharmatic Productions, told the court that Wankhede had told him to implicate his boss Karan Johar, if he wanted to be let off.

bail. As is Chakraborty.

To be fair to the officer, once the

Arrested this week, Unitech promoter's wife got offshore trust, Dominica passport

claimed she was "involved in laundering and layering of funds deposited by home buy-

Earlier this week, the Supreme Court cleared a "fullfledged criminal investigation" into allegations of collusion of certain officials of Tihar jail with Sanjay Chandra and brother Ajay Chandra while they were lodged in the jail. In August, both were ordered to be separated and moved to jails in Mumbai.

Between her husband's arrests in 2011 in the 2G spectrum scam, and in 2017 for allegedly cheating homebuyers. fashion designer Preeti Chandra, still an Indian citizen, incorporated two companies and a family trust in the British Virgin Islands.

Formed in March 2015, Trikar International Inc (BVI), was to hold assets for the family trust, which was being set up with Preeti as protector. Bellmora Ltd (BVI) was incorporated as the "named beneficiary in the Chandra Family Trust" in May 2015 to hold investments in UAE and India, and a bank account in Emirates NBD. Dubai.

The Chandra Family Trust held all 50,000 shares of Trikar International, which was funded by Trikar Advisors DMCC (Dubai); Trikar General Trading FZE (Sharjah); and

"fashion designing businesses."

In September 2015, Preeti signed a declaration of solvency vowing that "no event has occurred which I have reason to believe will result in a claim being made against me by any third party" and that none of her assets "have been derived from" money laundering.

In April 2016, Preeti got her passport from Commonwealth of Dominica, which does not have an extradition treaty with India.

And a month later, she transferred all shares of Trikar General Trading FZE (Sharjah) from Trikar International to herself for 150,000 dirhams. By the end of 2016, she de-

cided to dissolve the family trust and Trikar International. In a self-certification in April 2017. Preeti declared herself to be a tax resident of UAE and Preeti Chandra and a Dubai-based Indian chartered

accountant, who served as director in Trikar International (BVI), did not respond to queries from The Indian Records in the Pandora Papers also show how Credit Suisse raised the alarm over

two "related entities of Unitech

Group" in Cyprus even as

Unitech Group hit market tur-

Rs 850 crore) to the two Cyprus companies for investing in land and real estate projects such as hotels and SEZs in India. The loans were collater-

Between January and July

2008, Credit Suisse (Singapore)

lent \$210 million (then around

alised with Unitech Group stock at 325 per cent of the value. In addition, the shares of the Cyprus entities -- Dareno Holdings Ltd and Rockslide Investments Ltd -- were pledged, along with shares in underlying Indian firms.

As of June 2008, Dareno Holdings, which borrowed \$165 million from Credit Suisse, had made investments worth \$116 million through 49 per cent JVs with Vectex Holdings Ltd (Cyprus, \$25m) and Crowbel Holdings Ltd (Cyprus, \$40m); and in 100 per cent subsidiaries Ranchero Services Ltd (Cyprus, \$12m), Hedisa Holdings Ltd (Cyprus, \$18m), Albium Holdings Ltd (Cyprus, \$15m) and Legal Value Technology Services Pvt

Ltd (India, \$6m). The same year, amid a severe credit crunch in the market, Unitech stock crashed from Rs 500 to below Rs 80. And the company sought time and restructuring, pledging extra stock and promising to "slowly

pay off" the outstanding. During this period, a UK executive of Trident Trust eral offshore entities for the Chandras, suggested in an internal email that the financials of the Cyprus firms worried Credit Suisse, auditors noting their inability to "opine on value of projects underneath beyond cost' The lending was anyway

Company, which handled sev-

"based on expected long-term value when hotel was developed and sold, not today's value" and "when it came to the 'crunch', Credit Suisse are only thinking today CYA (cover your a**)," the Trident executive wrote.

By May 2009, Dareno Holdings and Rockslide Investments defaulted on their debt and Credit Suisse held their shares until October

The records also show that in October 2007, Credit Suisse offered a \$40 million facility to Sanjay Chandra for buying a pre-owned Bombardier Global Express aircraft. But they do not show if the loan materialised.

In an email, a Credit Suisse spokesperson said: "Credit Suisse does not comment on potential or existing client relationships, Credit Suisse conducts its banking business in compliance with all the applicable laws, rules and regulations in the markets in which

Raje's daughter-in-law had firm in tax haven

of USD 1 each standing in our name in the capital of Octavia Limited of 60 Market Square, Belize City, Belize...the whole of the said share being held for Niharika Raje of Lekha Vihar, Scindia Potteries, Near Bikaji Cama Place Flyover, 110066 New Delhi, India absolutely (hereinafter called the Beneficial Owner)."

The address, according to the Lok Sabha website, is that of the late Vijaya Raje Scindia,

The Rendor Overseas declaration stated it would "execute the powers vested in us as the holders of the aforesaid

how busy Wankhede has been is

just the numbers -- the FIR against

Aryan and others in the alleged

drug bust on a cruise liner was the

94th registered by the NCB in

Mumbai and Goa (which also

comes under the Mumbai Zone)

in 2021; against 35 in 2019; 25 in

2018, 30 in 2017; and 23 in 2016.

and his team at the NCB got the

Home Minister's medal for "excel-

that Wankhede today has one of

the most enviable networks of in-

formants and has dealt a major

blow to the narcotics network in

he has handled over 90 cases.

These include arresting major

drug suppliers like Chinku Pathan,

Farooq Batata and the network

aided by Dawood's brother Igbal

Kaskar. Unfortunately these cases

get overshadowed by the ones in-

names involved that find

Wankhede in the cross-hairs. Like

in the Chakraborty case, his meas-

ures have come under a cloud in

 $the Aryan \, arrest \, too, especially \, his$

involvement of a person with BJP

links and a private investigator fac-

ing cheating charges in the raid.

Over the weekend, NCP leader

However, it's not just the

olving Bollywood stars.'

 $An \, NCB \, of ficial \, says, ``This \, year,$

lence in investigation".

Mumbai as well as Goa.

In August this year, Wankhede

Even his bitter critics concede

mother of Vasundhara Raje.

share in such manner" as Niharika "may direct (including the appointment of proxies) and will account" to her for all sums by way of dividend, bonus or otherwise as shall be received by us or to which we shall become entitled by reason of the aforesaid

"In the event of our incapacity, our successors shall be bound by these covenants," it

Dushyant Singh's declaration of his and Niharika's assets and liabilities, made with his nomination papers for the Lok Sabha elections of 2009, 2014

allegations, saying several people,

including one with BJP links, had

been let off by the NCB after the al-

leged drug bust on the cruise ship.

Khan was incidentally arrested by

the NCB in connection with a nar-

cotics case earlier this year, and got

bail last month, after around six

Sawant, who has also questioned

Wankhede's measures, says the

NCB under him is "doing the work

of the BJP government". "Several

questions have been raised by us

but the NCB has not answered

them." About Wankhede's suc-

cess against drug gangs, Sawant

adds, "That is the job of the NCB..

Even Mumbai Anti-Narcotics Cell

giving talks to youngsters on the

ill-effects of drugs at religious

places, along with religious lead-

ers. At a mosque in Mahim, where

drug-peddling is said to be ram-

pant, he spoke about verses from

the Quran that prohibit narcotics.

sense, hardworking Wankhede

working on operations from his

third-floor office. Married to well-

known Marathi actress Kranti

Redkar, he has in the past spoken

about missing out on time with his

twin daughters.

Officers talk of the no-non-

Lately, Wankhede has been

carries out seizures.

Congress spokesperson Sachin

Malik's son-in-law Sameer

The NCB denied the allegations.

and 2019, made no mention of Octavia Limited. Rendor Overseas S.A. was also listed in the Panama

Papers as one of the entities which was a shareholder of some other companies. A search of the company registry of Belize now shows

Octavia Limited as an "inactive" company. Responding to queries from The Indian Express, Dushyant Singh, on behalf of his ailing wife, said: "This is in reply to

your email...Mrs Niharika Raje has no relationship with any offshore company." Alcogal, responding to

queries from the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists, with which The Indian Express has collaborated on this investigation, said: "... Answering your questions, or rectifying or clarifying your statements, to the best of our ability, could result in a violation of laws, and our ethical duties to our clients. The law expressly prohibits us from publicly disclosing beneficial ownership or shareholder information, or confirming whether or not a SAR (suspicious activity report) has been filed, other than to the compe-

tent authorities."

At the same time, this is where Wankhede perhaps most wants to be. The 42-year-old once said, "Before joining the NCB, whenever I had free time, I loved watching shows like Viking, Narcos. I was highly impressed by the under-

cover police of the Drug Enforcement Agency in Narcos." Mishra son held

the farmers' agitation, Saturday demanded MoS Mishra's arrest as well on charges of spreading disharmony, and murder and conspiracy, and his resignation from the Union Council of Ministers, warning protests across the country if the demands were not met.

At the press conference held in Delhi by the Morcha, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait said the farmers who are alleged to have beaten four people to death -- after four farmers had been crushed by a convoy, including at least one car owned by MoS Mishra -- could not be equated with Ashish.

"Theirs was a reaction to an action. We do not consider them accused. And we cannot call it murder. When someone causes an accident, even well-meaning people block traffic and argue in the middle of the road." Tikait said.

The BKU leader also pointed out that the family of a journalist

who was among the dead had said they were being pressured to say the farmers killed him, and that his body had tyre marks. "The truth is... they (the accused) wanted to kill people with three cars," Tikait

The SKIM gave a call for farmers to reach Lakhimpur on October 12 for an 'ardas' (prayer) being held for the deceased farmers, and said the day would be marked as Shaheed Kisan Diwas across the

Seeking Mishra's resignation as MoS and his arrest, the SKM said: "If the demand is not met, a Shaheed Kisan Yatra will be taken out from Lakhimpur Kheri with the asthi (ashes) of the martyr farmers, across UP and each state. The yatra will conclude at a holy or historical place in every district. On October 15, the effigies of the anti-farmer BJP will be burnt. A rail roko movement will be organised across the country on October 18, and eight days later, there will be a mahapanchayatin Lucknow."The mahapanchayat would be "apolitical", it said.

Two separate FIRs have been registered at the Tikunia Police Station over the Lakhimpur Kheri incident -- one against Ashish and 15-20 others on charges including murder and rioting, and another against unidentified persons for rioting, causing death by negli-

ADG (Lucknow zone) Satya Narain Sabat told The Indian Express on Friday that they had come to know names of 10 accused. "Two have been arrested. Five have been identified and we are checking their role. Three others are dead.'

gence, and murder.

Mishra has denied that his son was driving one of the vehicles that ploughed into the protesting farmers, leaving four of them dead. "The way rioters posing as farmers have beaten people... If Ashish was there, he would have been killed.'

On Saturday, BJP workers gathered at Mishra's office in Lakhimpur Kheri district in protest against the action against Ashish. Addressing them, the minister said, "There is a rule of law in the country. Our government believes in an unbiased probe. I want to say to all workers that you must keep your faith in the law. The investigating agencies will do the right probe. Those who are guilty will face action, and those innocent

Sikh govt staff

humari taraf dekh raha hai, woh humey goli mar dega (Along the roads in Kashmir, we suspected anyone looking at us, worried he would shoot us)," Susheel told The Indian Express.

Safety seems to be the paramount concern for those returning to Jammu. Siddharth Raina (name changed) was just two years old when his family fled Kashmir in 1990 along with a lakh plus Pandits following threats and killings in 1990. Two-and-a-half decades later, he returned to Srinagar in 2015 with a job in the I&K Education Department under the Prime Minister package.

On Friday, Siddharth left Anantnag with his wife for Jammu after what he describes as a "sleepless and fearful night". "I couldn't sleep the whole night and left the very next morning for Jammu. There are loose utterances of harmony and peace, but no security has been assured. If they could walk up to the teachers and kill them after seeing their identity cards, who will guarantee security for Kashmiri Pandit employees like me," he told The Indian Express over phone from Jammu.

Susheel, who returned in the wee hours Friday, said his Muslim colleagues were helpful, but its for the government to think if minority community employees can feel secure in such circumstances. "The minority community teachers are posted in far off hilly areas in the Valley. What can they do except return to Jammu?"

The J&K government denied any 'reverse migration' of minority community employees posted in the Valley under the PM package. "We have taken up the matter with Kashmir Divisional Commissioner seeking directions to all the Deputy Commissioners in the Valley to ensure increased security for employees living in secured government accommodations in their respective districts," J&K Relief and Rehabilitation Commissioner Ashok Pandita

But evidence on the ground suggests many are returning. Ramesh Kumar, a provision shop owner at Jagti township, a settlement near Nagrota in Jammu inhabited by migrant Kashmiri Pandits, said many employees posted in Kashmir under the PM package have returned. "I have met at least 30 today since they came to shop after 2-3 months. They said they fled the Valley... some said they left around 12 mid-

"Jo healthy ladke thhey na, woh bhi aaj becharey haar gay... mata kasam (Even men with good physique lost their courage)," shop owner Ramesh Kumar said. Even as was speaking with The Indian Express, two families arrived in separate vehicles from the Valley. They were reluctant to speak and rushed to their quarters. A neighbour explained that they feared pressure from the government to return to their duties in the Valley.

An employee in the Finance Department in Pulwama returned along with his wife and two children Saturday afternoon. "I did not want to come back, but my parents in Jammu insisted we come for some days until the situation normalises," he said not willing to

Another migrant Kashmiri Pandit said his son along with his wife and two minor children had left Kupwara. "They are reaching here by evening. There is little one can do under the present circumstances especially when living in a rented place outside the secured accommodation." he said requesting anonymity.

Kashmiri Pandits who didn't leave even in 1990 are adopting a wait-and-watch mode. A heightened sense of fear since last week has made them move around with a lot of caution. "Unlike 1990, there is a greater fear and I suspect almost everyone around me. The acts of killing with pistols seems to show that they are not even undertaking arms training like earlier times. The resentment against outsiders started to build up after the abrogation of Article 370 and the recent worsening of situation in Afghanistan has made it worse," Rohit Pandita (name changed), a 54-year-old shop owner at one of Srinagar's upmarket locations

Pandita is, however, not planning to leave. "I had 4-5 shops earlier and now run one shop. I have stayed all these years and will stay on. The killings are happening on both sides of the divide, but the government is silent," he said.

KL Singh (name changed), a Sikh businessman in Srinagar, who stayed on in the 1990s, said Sikhs are feeling scared for the first time in so many years. "The fear has been put in our minds. For the first time, a lady from our community has been killed at point blank range. She was doing a humanitarian act of helping a Muslim girl's education yet was killed. This is an extreme act and won't be tolerated by us," Singh, who is also a member of the Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee, Srinagar

"My nieces, who work as teachers in far-flung areas of Kashmir, have stopped going to work. They are asking for safer postings. The recent directive for hoisting flags on August 15 was for everyone including Muslims and not only for the Sikh or teachers from other minority communities. But the minorities have been singled out. I have not seen this level of fear and silence in so many years here. The killings of minorities need to be openly condemned by the majority community," he said.

At a press conference Saturday, Sikh leaders said the Sikh community would not be deterred by the killing of its members. "They (killers) may be thinking that by killing four Sikhs or ten Sikhs, the Sikhs would leave Kashmir." said Joginder Singh Shan, Minority Affairs Secretary of the Peoples Democratic Party and a prominent Sikh leader. "We are not going to leave Kashmir because of these murders. This is our Kashmir. In 1947, 33,000 Sikhs gave blood for it (sic).'

The Sikh leaders said identifying and killing members of the minority community has shocked them. "Our grievance (with the Muslim community) is that when we took the procession for cremation and protested outside the (civil) secretariat, they didn't join us. Our grievance with the government is that two or three members of the community had already been killed but they didn't take any solid steps for the safety and security of the minority employees," said another Sikh leader Navtej Singh.

Lucknow

Nigerian nationals. One clue of Nawab Malik came out with fresh

Manish Gupta was allegedly

assaulted by policemen

during a hotel raid in

The Gorakhpur

was taken.

ernment one.

Police is, meanwhile,

examining footage of

CCTV cameras at the

hotel and the hospital

where Manish Gupta

lot of time in transferring Gupta

from a private hospital to a gov-

tographs of the accused.

The SIT has released the pho-

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.

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

The police have recorded the

Gorakhpur on Sept 28.

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 Rs1 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 ques-

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

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

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

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 dealy in an FIR following her rape complaint, a 55year-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

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 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 scooty 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.

visited the police station, alleging that two men, with their faces covered, barged into her house a day before and dragged her to a secluded place.

As she tried to fight them off, the accused thrashed her, she said, adding that during the scuffle the scarf came off the face of one of the accused and she recognised him as her neigh-

She further claimed that the accused then raped her and left the place after threatening her with dire consequences.

The woman narrated the incident to her husband and the couple later visited the police station to get an FIR lodged.

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 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 car-

Almost Ready

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

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.

MINISTRY ASKS POWER PLANTS TO WORK TO FULL CAPACITY

also been questioned.

Kejriwal rings alarm bells on power availability, writes to PM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

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 blackout after two days. The Power Ministry, mean-

while, said that NTPC had been directed to increase coal stocks equal to the national average for Dadri II and Jajjhar stations (which provide a bulk of Delhi's On October 6, the Dadri

plant had one day of coal stock



693 MW 300 MW 150 MW Singrauli 100 MW Mejia (*through thermal power plants) 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

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,"

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 teman 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 min-

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 com-Valmiki temples on Saturday.

ister's remark, Gandhi had de-

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

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

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

His mentality is plagued by arrogance and feudal narrowmindedness, it alleged. Despite taking the oath of the

Constitution and occupying a constitutional post, he is making frivolous remarks against the Dalits, karamcharis are hurt by it. **UP Congress spokesperson**

Pankaj Tiwari said in Varanasi, where the party is holding a public meeting on Sunday, state unit president Ajay Kumar Lallu and former MP Rajesh Mishra cleaned Maharishi Valmiki's statue and a park.

They also honoured a member of the Dalit Swachhakar Samai and said cleanliness is the mantra given by Mahatma

Gurmukhi script **PRESSTRUST OF INDIA**

Bahraich admin

writes to Sikhs in

REACHING OUT

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 commu-

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

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 begin-

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

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.



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EXPRESS NETWORK

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 mem $bers\,who\,were\,in\,Afghanistan, and$ 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

Last Date-29.10.2021

Tender No.

PT/OT/03/AZ

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 Authorityhad written to DGCA eeking resumption of flights operated by Kam Air and Ariana Afghan Airline to and from Delhi.

GM (Comm.), CWC, New Delhi

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Rs. 26 Lakhs

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ivery of <u>Bank's dues from B</u>orrowers and Guarantors to the Secured Creditor. The details are described as below

Name of Guarantors Name of Property Bank's Dues

Wo Sri Avdheah

Late Sri Ram

Gupta

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Zonal Office: 19237, Civit Lines, MG Read, Bada Chauraha, Kanpur as Secured Creditor, will be add on "As is whereigt". "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 29.10.2021. It

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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

First batch of stranded Afghans return to Kabul on Iran flight The Taliban-ruled Afghanista Chhattisgarh violence: FIR registered against Raman Singh's son, BJP MP, other leaders

GARGIVERMA 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

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 historysheeter 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 Abishek, Pandey and the others, took out the rally on Tuesday. The FIR says that the mob went on a

panches have resigned en

masse in three blocks of

Ramban district of Jammu &

Kashmir, upset over allegedly

being sidelined by the adminis-

tration. They submitted their

resignation to their respective

Block Development Council

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

Official sources said over half

BDC) chairpersons Friday.



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-

Development Council chairper-

been resenting the alleged inter-

ference of the administration in

their functioning for a while.

Minister of State for Rural

Development Niranjan Jyoti's vsit

to Ramsu block's Krawa pan-

chayat as a part of the Centre's

public outreach programme was

the last straw as the district ad-

ministration invited neither the

local sarpanch nor those of nearly

half a dozen neighbouring pan-

Sources said the panches had

son Shafiq Ahmed Katoch.

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 BIP has accused the

tion close to the venue.

their posts.

On Friday, they were joined by

Alleging undue interference

by the administration, they also

demanded that development

more sarpanches and panches

and they all resigned from

ing 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.

MUNDRA DRUG HAUL

NIA conducts

searches at

multiple

locations

70 sarpanches, panches resign in J&K district

ARUN SHARMA JAMMU. OCTOBER 9

AT LEAST 70 sarpanches and

TENDER NOTICE No. AME(Comp.)/VTPIS(1)/2020-IT, dt. 07.10.2021

TSRTC

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 ful details can be downloaded from https://tsrtc.telangana.gov.in

DIPR. R.O. No.: 2215-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL S.M.S. MEDICAL COLLEGE & CONTROLLER OF THE ATTACHED HOSPITALS, JAIPUR

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 porta (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

PRINCIPAL & CONTROLLER

KARNATAKA URBAN WATER SUPPLY AND DRAINAGE BOARD

Saraswathipuram, Mysuru - 570 009. Ph no: 0821-2545894, Email: kwbcemys2014@gmail.com

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION

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.

Details of Property/ID No.

Karrahi Kanpur Area: 36.75 Sq. Mr.

Boundaries: East: House No. 169

West: 4.50 Meter Road North

House No. 155 South: House No.

Vikas Scheme 2, Hanspuram

Naubasta, Kanpur Area; 40.06 Sq Mtr. (Covered Area 25:00 Sq. mtr.) Boundaries: East: House No. 40 335 West: House No. 4C-352 North:

House No. 4C-338 and 4.00 mt. Road

South: House No. 4C-355, 356, 357

For downloading further details and Terms & Conditions, Please Visit:

358-ID No.-IDIB 318-01

3. https://www.metcecommerce.com/auctionhome/ibapi

las of 64 16 2021) No. E-154 Block-5/S. Gurtjan Whar.

1591D No. -IDIB4489-01

Sri Ravi Gupta Sto Re. 25.25.066.50 Land & Building consisting of property Rs. 20.18 Lats Rs. 2.01 Lacs Late Sri Rami (see 94.10.2021) at House No. 4C/337, EWS, Awas

Tenders are invited from interested bidders for implementation of Vehicle Tracking & Passenger Information System for 4,170 special type buses of

Notice Inviting Bid

DIPR/C/10336/2021

#927, 1st floor, 6th main road, New Kantharaj urs road,

(Through E-Procurement Portal only)

Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER, K.U.W.S. & D BOARD, Mysuru.

Earnest Money

Rs. 2.13 Lacs

Rs. 21.29 Ltm

nows to the Bank

Indian Bank

Notice Inviting e-Tender

Capacity 130 TPH), for the production of (-) 12 mm Rock Phosphate Chips ont-11/2021-22 ted 07.10.2021 with Manpower, all Type of Spares /Consumables Including Feeding of Ore into Hopper by Combination of Loaders & Dumpers and other Miscellan

ont-12/2021-22 ted 07.10.2021 ML2122WSOB00111

value Rs. 1538.00 Lakh, EMD 30.76 Lac., Tender Fees Rs. 4720/-Crushing Plant (by using front end loaders) into the truck/ trippers; transportation of loaded truck/ tippers to an average lead (to & fro) of approximately 0.50 Km and unloading into the hopper of LGO 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.,

have been given in detailed tender for which please visit us at o website www.rsmm.com or www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in or eproc.rajasthan.gov.in or conta

Moradabad Municipal Corporation Pdi Korbi, Jalkal Compound, Moradahad- 244001 (U.P.)

Name of WorldDescription of Item		Consultancy services for Transactive Advisory and Third Party inspection for Proposed — for provenent and strangthening of sentration and useanability projects at Monadabad.
RFP	1.1	(NR 10000 00(Tim Theasand Only)
Earnest Money Deposit (E.M.II)		1.DLass (Dre Lac) is from of DtD in the form of EDR/TDR of a Nationalised Scheduled bank of inclusin favour of the "Commissioner, Municipal Corporation Mandalos/Payable at Mondalos/

Procurement Portal https://etender.up.nic.in/from 11-10-2021 at 11:00 Hours (IST) wards. Online buts are invaled for the following works up to 19/10/2021 at 17:00 hours For more details on the sender and hidding process you may please visit the above incr

MMC: Moradahad Manicipal Corporation Address: Pfl Kothi, Moradahad-244901 (UP) Mohile: 9105900529 Email-moradabadnagarnigam@gnail.com,cennm222@gnail.com

te: 1 - All eligible interested consultans are mandated to get enrolled on e-Procurence

2. Contractor can contact Help Desk for any clarification of their doubts regarding the ocess of Electronic Procurement System.

(Rajeer Kumar Rathi Dr. Eng/Environment Engineer Napar Napars Metadabad

mportant Notice for the Rail Passengers It is notified for information of general



05-11-2021 = 5 Trips • Train No. 08188 Ex. Gorakhpur Every Saturday, Dt. 09-10-2021 to 09-10-2021 = 5 Trips

Gorakpur		Station	Hatia		
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	Garhawa 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 he guidelines issued for prevention and safety from Covid-19. Chief Pass. Trans. Managar, Gorakhpur

About any passenger amenity complaint SMS on Mob. No.: 09794845955 Never travel on roof and foot boards.

tender process, they added. Sarpanch Ghulam Rasool Mattoo alleged that they are not allowed

PUBLIC NOTICE

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-

Gadipeer 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

Classifieds

NAME CHANGE

I, Meenu Kumari Shrivastava

Shrivastava R/o 5/314, Viram

Lucknow, have changed my

name to Meenu Srivastava W/o

LOST & FOUND

certificate (Unique ID : 6640478

S/O Mr. Syed Mohammad Ali, a student of SKD Academy, Rajajipuram, Lucknow. Passing

BUSINESS OFFERS

IT Projects Propos

With Low Investmen

Min. Monthly Billing 1500 USD

Projects Available

Hardbook Scanning

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8100177548, 6289641022

NOTICE

Be it known to all that, as per information provided by the

wner, sale deed dated

16/01/1964, registered or 16/11/1964 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 los comewhere. The said house is

owned by Syed Mohamm Arif Rizvi S/o Mohd. Askari. Persons having information objection, inform within

Jagesh Bajpai, Advocate E4052-4054

Rajajipuram, Lucknov Mobile - 835400569

HTML Tagging

kode Core

) of Syed Mohd. Abbas Rizvi,

year: 2021 has been lost, if found please contact 0522- 2414722 0060084620-1

0040587523-1

D/o Sri Nirmal Kumar

Rakesh Srivastava

Khand 5, Gomti Nagar,

The marksheet and pass

considered void.

works up to Rs three lakh be done through panchayats only. For nearly a year now, the administration has been involved in the to take part in the tendering process for projects.

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9 THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday conducted searches at multiple locations in the country in connection with its probe into the drug

haul at Mundra Adani Port in Gujarat last month. "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 trans-

ferred 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. where besides sections of IPC and NDPS Act, Section 17 and Section 18 of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act were also invoked.







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



CHRISTIAN

For Catholic 30 Years Old Slim Girl. Masters In Psychology, Bed.Teacher At Chandigarh.30 #8146739501 0050184912-1

MANGLIK

Suitable Match for slim, fair, attractive Hindu Brahmin girl, 35/5'3", BE (IT), Working in Bangalore IT MNC. Call:7470467723, Email: cmsharma@rediffmail.com 0040587432-1

Lucknow

Date: 08.10.2021 Place: Kanpur

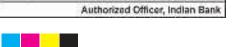
Corporate Office: Avvai Shanmugam Salai Royalpettah, Chennai-600014

Bidders are advised to visit the website <u>involvement comments</u>, comit of our elaution service provider MSTC Ltd. to participate in online bid. For Technical Assistance Please call MSTC HELPDESK No. 033-2201004 and other help tine numbers available in service providers help desk. For Registration status with MSTC Ltd. please contact bapting mistocomments com.

For property details and photograph of the property and auction terms and condition please visit <u>Miss Waspi</u> in and for derification related to this portal please contact help line number 1800/1025029 and 1011-41103131 Bidders are advised to use Property ID Number mentioned above while searching for the property in the website with hits office his property and property in the website with

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.

1. www.indianbank.co.in 2. https://www.ibapi.in











and panches have resigned in chayats. Many panchayat heads Ukhral block, said Ramsu Block and members held a demonstra-4, Meera Marg, Udaipur – 313001 Phone: (0294)2427177 / 2428763&67, Fax (0294)2428768, 2428739

Tender Fees Rs. 4720/-

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Uttar Produch

portal (https://etendecuparis.in)

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY Notification No.: 233/2021

 Train No. 08187 Ex. Hatia, Every Friday, Dt.08-10-2021 to 08188 Gorakpur-

EXPRESS NETWORK

TRACKING THE SECOND SURGE



NEW CASES: 17,414 ACTIVE CASES: 2,31,568

TOTAL VACCINATION: 93,99,15,323

DAILY DEATHS | TOTAL DEATHS | WEEKLY CFR 4,50,586 | 0.86%

OVERALL CFR



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	TOTAL	WEEKLY	OVERALL
	DEATHS	DEATHS	CFR	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%

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 CI. Justice Indraiit Mahanty, who was the CI of Raiasthan HC has been appointed Cl of Tripura High Court.

Justice Mohammad Rafiq will be the new Chief Justice of Himachal Pradesh HC. He is cur-

rently 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 has Meghalava 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

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 Raiender 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 an autopsy. A report is

statement, Akanksha had come to Delhi in June to prepare for the USPC 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.

spot for inspection.

Police said they have initiated inquest proceedings in the mat-

According to the family's

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

ter under CrPC section 174.

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

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 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

'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

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

'Not active in BJP': Kamboj warns of Rs 100-cr case

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI, OCTOBER 9

ARGUING THAT HE was no longer an active BIP member, Mohit Kamboj on Saturday said he would file a Rs 100-crore defamation case against NCP minister Nawab Malik for making false charges against him and his family members in connection with the cruise drug bust case. He alleged that Malik was trying to settle an old score with him.

Addressing the media in Mumbai, Kamboj said, "Rishabh Sachdev is my brother-in-law. He is my wife's younger brother. He was standing in the queue to board the cruise ship along with other passengers when there was

a NCB crackdown. Several people were detained and taken to the agency's office. But after thorough verification, the NCB allowed Sachdev and others to go."

"There is neither any question of possessing drugs nor any connection with drug peddlers. My brother-in-law is neither a friend nor has any connection with Arvan Khan or his friends."

Kamboi said: "I am no longer active in BJP. I am BJP sympathiser... minister is settling an old score by making irresponsible and serious allegations... In 2012, Malik's family was trying to seek Rs 50 lakh for a Juhu property. Since I had intervened and thwarted the deal, he never misses an opportunity to attack

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 Rajasthan's in 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 rounded up, accused Hanumangarh police tweeted on Saturday night, According to police, preliminary investigation suggests the accused had videographed the assault on the victim, Jagdish Meghwal, 29, which is being circulated widely on social

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

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

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

PRIME MINISTER Narendra

Modi and his visiting Danish

counterpart Mette Frederiksen

on Saturday held "fruitful" talks

with a focus on expanding coop-

eration in a range of key areas

such as health, agriculture, wa-

ter management, climate change

the talks, Modi said both sides

reviewed the progress made un-

der the India-Denmark Green

Strategic Partnership and delib-

erated on further expansion of

overall cooperation in multiple

agreements that will provide for

The two sides also inked four

In his media statement after

and renewable energy.

NEW DELHI. OCTOBER 9

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 videographed 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 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

India, Denmark to expand ties

in health, agri, climate sectors

deepening of cooperation in sci-

ence and technology, climate

the historic decision to establish

a Green Strategic Partnership be-

tween India and Denmark in our

virtual summit. This is a sign of

far-reaching thinking and re-

spect for the environment by

In her remarks, the Danish

PM complimented Modi for his

focus on green technologies and

described him as an "inspiration

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 mil-

lion households and for renew-

"I am also proud that Danish

for the rest of the world"

both our countries," he said.

"A year ago today, we took

change and skill development.

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 BJF 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. of being protectors of Dalits in other states. Priyanka Gandhi ji, Rahul Gandhi ji, do come here sometimes as well to wipe the

able energy including off-shore

to cooperate in areas like effi-

cient supply chain, smart water

resources management and

technologies relating to the farm

sector to increase agricultural

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 coopera-

tion, particularly in the health

the two prime ministers.

External Affairs Minister S

Ahead of the talks between

called

and agriculture sectors.

Iaishankar

productivity in India.

Modi said both sides decided

wind," she said.

Gujarat elections: Rajasthan minister gets Congress charge play an important role from

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

'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

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

LIZMATHEW & MANOJCG NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

DESPITE PRESSURE from some BJP members to replace him, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor will Parliamentary 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 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

Ministers visit disputed areas

Pilingkata (Assam): Assam Water Resources Minister Pijush Hazarika and Meghalaya Deputy CM Prestone Tynsong on Saturday inspected the interstate border areas to solve the boundary dispute between the two states. PTI

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

Newly elected Rajya Sabha MPs have been nominated to the reconstituted committees. 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 PP Choudhary.

The IT committee was caught in controversy several times in its last tenure, with BIP MPs objecting to the panel's decisions to summon Facebook for allegations against the social media giant on ignoring hate speeches by some BIP 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 is-

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 cuss alleged "misconduct" of

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 BIP leader Jual Oram, Ramesh Bidhuri, BIPMP from South Delhi, will head the panel on Petroleum and Natural Gas, Jagadambika Pal continues to be chairman of Urban Development panel, BIP Raiva Sabha member Vinav Sahasrabuddhe retains chairmanship of the panel on Education; Radha Mohan Singh of Railways committee, and Saniay Jaiswal of the panel on Water Resources.

FULL REPORT ON

Uddhav, Rane face-off at airport inauguration — both

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE MUMBAI. OCTOBER 9

claim credit for project

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 Chipi 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 Konkan stronghold, and was for-

mer Sainik Rane's bastion. The inauguration of Chipi 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. Twitten

Jyotiraditya Scindia, from New Delhi, virtually flagged off the

At the airport, Thackeray and Rane, who were on the dais to-

gether 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. Lucknow

Rancour in Kerala BJP after organisational shuffle dia, "I haven't gone after any posiregain the forgotten moral confice-bearers. Sobha was

Rise after defeat

RECONSTITUTION OF various committees in party's state

unit is seen as a sign that Kerala BJP chief K Surendran has

emerged stronger in the party despite the setback in the

recent Assembly polls, and allegations related to election

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 of Minister State Muraleedharan in party organisational affairs.

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

Padmanabhan, have been side-

such as C K

face in the state, was suspended from the party after he said that elections are only a means of raislined. Workers are resentful over ing funds for BJP in Kerala. "The party is collapsing under the presmittee." Nazir said. ent leadership. Several senior

reconstitution of the state com-

funding, including a case of loot.

Two weeks ago, state unit general secretary MT Ramesh had made a veiled attack on the of Deendayal Upadhyaya's birth anniversary, he had said, "He (Upadhyaya) acted without greed for personal gains.... Memories of Deendayal-ji will enable (us) to

rival leadership. On the occasion

sciousness for those basking in the comfort of power. Sources in state BJP said district presidents, without alle-

giance to any group, were removed Surendran-Muraleedharan duo filled the slots with their loyalists. Several senior state BIP 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-

dropped from the national executive and PK Krishnadas was demoted from executive member to special invitee. These changes go against the principle of collective leadership and cements the impression that only group loyalty matters in the party.' In Wayanad, a few district-

level leaders on Friday quit BJP over removal of the district president, Saii Sankar, who is seen to have invited the wrath of the state leadership in the scandal related to bribing tribal leader CK Janu to contest as an NDA candidate in the Assembly polls.

ON MARCH 15, BJP Lashmipur Kheri MP Ajay

Kumar Mishra shared an unstarred question

with the Congress's Tiruchirappali MP, Su.

Thirunavukkarasar. The question, marked to

then Minister of Culture Prahlad Singh Patel, read: "Whether it is a fact that heavy dam-

age has been caused by [farmer] protesters

and many priceless antiquities and precious items... have been damaged and missing dur-

ing the attack on the Red Fort on 26th

other unstarred question, this time of the

Electronics & Information Technology

Minister: "Whether the Government is con-

templating to make any stringent law against

the persons who were spreading propa-

ganda on social media against the country

and inciting violence in the name of farmers

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, in-

cluding one owned by Mishra, ploughed into

a group of farmer protesters, killing four of

them. In the violence that followed, the min-

ister's driver and two BJP workers were

killed. A journalist was also among those

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 cog-

nizance - have put the spotlight on Lakhimpur Kheri and its two-time MP, Ajay

The two Parliament questions, along with

Days later, on March 24, Mishra asked an-

January, 2021."

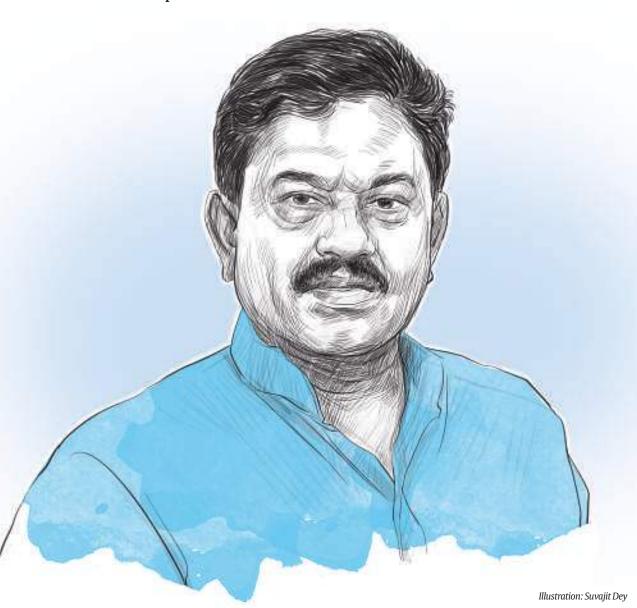
who died.

SUNDAY STORY

THE SUNDAY PROFILE

MEET THE MISHRAS

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



'Teni Maharaj' to two-time MP Mishra, 61, who started his political ca-

reer 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

"Because he was the only BIP 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

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 until his surprise selection to the Union Cabinet in July. BJP leaders in the state admit ther, 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 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 slo-gans 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

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 twostorey 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 foodgrain 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

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

=TAKE5= 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

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.

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-mulagat. These physical meetings, where they can see their famhelp them feel better, mentally and emotionally, and will also help their overall health.

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 AB 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) HR 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

GARGIVERMA

EDESMETTA (BIJAPUR)

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

SILCA TATI, 31, contracts malaria every year,

sparse, only started reaching the village after the start of the 'Malaria Mukt 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

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

for malaria, now a possibility after the WHO



A LETTER FROM



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 Mukt 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

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

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 savs.

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 farflung 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

Whose law, whose order?

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 griev-

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.

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,
- she was not allowed to meet her legal counsel who was at the gate for 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 Aditvanath'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 highranking 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?

inside **COOMIKAPOOR**

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 BIP-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 Naviot 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 ministerof state layant 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 years.

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

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 unsubtle 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-inmaking, 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 af-

ter 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 was not the angry young man like Bachchan, or pointedly earnest like Aamir, nor the lover boy who grew muscles like Salman, or the whatever-works star Akshay Kumar. He was the flawed, reachable hero, almost always fighting to get a woman

— a woman who was her own person

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 Badshaah of the country, then its snootv 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

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

of the Northeast (if only

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 vou, 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 DILIPTIRKEY**

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

But to say that Jaipal sir was the flagbearer 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 sirvery 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

Fifth 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 iihadi 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 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.

THE WORLD



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.



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.

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 Changiin. 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

TOPOFTHE 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

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 restrictionshave 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 re-

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 vet eligible for



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

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

Bangladesh signs UN deal to help refugees on island

US appeals court lets Texas resume ban on abortions

Terrorism will also feature in the talks, said a second official who spoke on condition of anonymity because he was not authorised to speak to the media. Since the Taliban took power,

Islamic State extremists have ramped up attacks on the militant group, as well as ethnic and religious minorities. On Friday, an IS suicide bomber killed at least 46 minority Shia Muslims and wounded dozens in the deadliest attack since the US departure. However, the Taliban on

Saturday ruled out cooperation with the US to contain extremist groups in Afghanistan. Taliban political spokesman

Suhail Shaheen told AP there would be no cooperation with Washington on going after the Islamic State group.

The US-Taliban agreement of 2020 demanded the Taliban break ties with terrorist groups and guarantee Afghanistan would not again harbor terrorists who could attack the US and

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

CARLOS GARCIA & YEW LUNTIAN

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 eople 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

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

LALITK JHA WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 9

US PRESIDENT loe Biden wants 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 offi-

cially 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 employmentbased 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 peo-

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



ple waiting in line for a Green Card.



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

A FEDERAL appeals court Friday

night quickly allowed Texas to re-

sume banning most abortions, just

one day after clinics began racing

to serve patients again for the first

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

back into a state of chaos and fear,"

"Patients are being thrown

in cases of rape or incest.

 $A one-page\, order\, by\, the\, 5th\, US$

time since early September.

PAUL J. WEBER

AUSTIN, OCTOBER 9



Rohingya refugees being Char island last Dec. Reuters

populated South Asian country eventually want the island to accommodate about 10% of the 1 million Rohingya refugees who

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 re-

sumed normal abortion services.

der camps after fleeing violence in neighbouring Myanmar. UNHCR, the UN refugee

agency, said the agreement signed on Saturday allowed for close cooperation with the government on providing services for the island's growing refugee population. "These cover key areas of

protection, education, skillslihoods 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

She called on the US

Clinics had braced for the New

Supreme Court to "step in and

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 be-

yond six weeks, and booked new

appointments for this weekend.

before the appeals court ac-

But barely 48 hours passed

stop this madness.'

within three 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.

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 healthcare and education. **REUTERS**

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,

Republican Texas Attorney

General Ken Paxton tweeted. "I

will fight federal overreach at

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

"Great news tonight,"

until Tuesday to respond.

every turn."

UK Home Secretary Priti Patel UK eyes 'walk ll get enough of the me home' phone-tracker to

protect women **DANICA KIRKA** LONDON, OCTOBER 9

A TOP British government official is backing a phone company's proposal for a new tracking service to help protect women walking alone, an idea pitched amid ongoing outrage over the slavings of two young women who were targeted near their homes in London.

The chief executive of Britain's biggest phone company, BT, proposed the "walk me home" service in a letter to Home Secretary Priti Patel. Once a woman activated an app on her phone, the service would track her journey and send an alert to her emergency contacts if she didn't reach her destination on time, Philip Iansen said in the letter.

The UK Home Office confirmed Patel had received the letter and would respond in "due course." Patel was more supportive in comments to the Daily Mail. "This new phone line is ex-

actly the kind of innovative scheme which would be good to get going as soon as we can," the newspaper quoted her as saying. "I'm now looking at it with my team and liaising with BT."

The "walk me home" service could be up and running by Christmas, the Mail reported.

ment Britain's existing nationwide emergency number. Jansen said. BT has run Britain's 999 emergency number for 84 years and is currently upgrading the system.

In March, Sarah Everard, a 33-year-old marketing executive, was abducted, raped and killed by a serving police officer who was convicted of murder and other charges this month and sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

Primary school teacher

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 expression." 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 activists and other journalists as retaliation for Rappler's coverage of Duterte's brutal drug war. During a staff meeting

shortly after, Ressa and her cofounders, Lilibeth Frondoso, Glenda Gloria and Chay Hofilena, 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-

of the Nation address, saying it was "fully owned by Americans". In February 2019, the author-

gling out Rappler in his 2017 State

ities 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.'



Sabina Nessa, 28, was killed six months later as she walked through a park in London. AP

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**

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR TATA GROUP POST TAKEOVER

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

PRANAV MUKUL& **SANDEEPSINGH**

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, burdenfar 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 employeeper-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 riod 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

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.

nature of Air India's workforce.

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 imleakages will also reduce," said Rashesh 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.'

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

'IN PUBLIC INTEREST'. WHERE THERE IS REQUIREMENT: GUIDELINES

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

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU

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

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 insol-

vency resolution process (CIRP)

cials to provide all the documents

against the two companies.

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

Srei group cos enter

moratorium as NCLT

admits insolvency pleas

■The country's thermal power plants are currently facing a severe coal

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

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

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 4 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.

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

A government release said

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

Diesel crosses

₹100 per litre

in Mumbai as

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

Gold reserves were up by \$128 million to \$37558 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**

'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



2,753 job postings, the Naukri JobSpeak monthly index hit an all-time high in September surpassing in September 2019 by 21%

RECENT WAVE OF DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION among ANNUAL GROWTH year-onorganisations continues to professionals

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%**

HOSPITALITY (82%) AND

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

mitted the two insolvency pleas moved by the banking regulator

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

FB faces second outage in a week

REUTERS BENGALURU, OCTOBER 9

technology (138%)

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

Free trade

pacts to

be in focus

WITH EXPORTS for the

achieved nearly half its

target, the focus for the

negotiating free trade

government now may be

agreements (FTAs) with

several nations as well as

ongoing fiscal having

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.

against the two companies. The insolvency tribunal imposed a moratorium on both the companies and directed its offi-

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

the National Company Law Tribunal appointed Rajneesh Sharma as administrator to run Srei Infra and Srei **Equipment Finance**

A two-member bench of

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.

auto fuel prices rise again **PRESSTRUST OF INDIA** NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

MUMBAI ON Saturday became the first metro city in the country to see diesel prices cross the Rs 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.

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 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 Festive fireworks unlikely for \$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 Pivush Goval 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,

Goyal said engineering goods

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

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

auto sector amid chip shortage

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**

Georgieva's future unclear post marathon IMF meeting



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

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



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



Benita Fernando

ORKING 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 highpressure 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.

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





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-fromhome 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 The workplace will 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 muchneeded 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 at-

tended. Tea is had on the roof terrace — a

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

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

privilege, John says. Yet, a coffee at the cafe-

teria, 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 wash-

ing dishes, fixing a coffee and a variety of hot

beverages for the rest of the family. With re-

turn to office being pushed to the next quar-

ter 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

Much like policies on

disabilities and inclusion,

it will be imperative for

employers to note that

model is rolled out.

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 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 places. 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

A Day for the Unsung Heroes

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

TE 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



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

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 "highprotein 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

T 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 haraam (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 "shoitaner 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 $important\,film makers\,such\,as\,Aparna\,Sen(\textit{The}$ 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 idea is; 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.



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 under-

garment 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* vet (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, $mostly\,I\,prescribe\,for\,my self\,or\,in\,rare\,cases,$ call a doctor friend.

The visit to the physician was a few years ago. I had returned from a five-day-threecity 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-



DOC ON CALL

If we don't pay

attention to

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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 kahiye, 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

Leafing Through History

An archival account of the work of Indian artists who enriched the tradition of botanical paintings

Ganesh Saili

ANDERING THROUGH the thousand-acre Forest Research Institute in Dehradun, I take a break from its immaculate brick-lined corridors to step into a room. Around me are the paintings of flowering branches of beautiful trees of India, faithfully depicting the shape and colour of flowers, leaves and branches. It takes my breath away with its accuracy and freshness, where every single petal comes alive. Some of these include the work of the artist Ganga Singh.

But more on him later.

Almost two centuries after the first botanical paintings made their long journey from colonial India to the Kew Gardens in London, along comes a book that perhaps represents the first return journey of an archive. Seventy years after wresting independence from the British Crown, for the first time, the tradition of Indian botanical artists has been showcased between two covers.

Fortunately, in recent times, artists such as Hemlata Pradhan in Kalimpong, Nirupa Rao in Bengaluru and Jaggu Prasad in Rajasthan have exhibited their work the world over, while gently passing on the baton of botanical painting to the younger generation of artists.

This tradition of flower painting dates back at least The local artists as far as 1620, when Emperor Jahangir commissioned a detailed study of the botany which so deinfluenced by lighted him on a visit to Kashmir in springtime. The European herbals local artists were greatly influenced by European herbals and woodcut illustrations of the time and illustrations of these led to a certain formality and accuracy in represen $tation\, along side\, the\, already$ established naturalistic ob-

servation of plants. Down the ages, flower ornament went on to become a central feature of Indian decoration: in architecture, carpets, other textiles and also in Indian miniatures and book design



What really must have gone through the mind of a 16-year-old still-wet-behind-the-

gates of the Chandbagh in 1911, the gravel crunching underfoot? The incredibly talented painter from the tiny village of Kakhola, with a population of 19, became a trainee botanical artist there. For the next 20 years, there was looking back. Retirement in 1942 saw him join the staff of Maharaja Yadavindra Singh of Patiala, painting the collected flora in over 400 watercolours over the next two decades, until he passed away in 1971.

Elsewhere, others like him who did not come from a family of traditional artists, were usually hired and trained by the British to paint in the Western illustrative "East India

Company" tradition, though Singh was so

ears Ganga Singh as he walked through the



unlike the artists that worked for Scottish botanist and physician William Roxburgh, or those that did the Dapuri Drawings, commissioned by another East India Company official Alexander Gibson. Many early paintings by Singh carry the signatures of late 18th century artists like Sheikh Zain al-Din, Bhawani Das and Ram Das. The trio also created portraits of birds, fish and some of the animals kept in Lady Impey's Calcutta menagerie around 1780.

Initially, all artists were influenced by the paintings of the gifted 19th-century botanist Sir Joseph Dalton Hooker, who visited India around 1850 and met many skilled artists, whose paintings he greatly admired. This made him start his own collection that included his own works as well. All these were sent to his father, who was a curator at the Kew Gardens.

Of course, there were many artists who chose to root their work in the Western tradition of British botanical artists like Hooker, and the Dutch artists that were brought over to draw Hendrik Adriaan van Rheede tot Drakenstein's Hortus Indicus Malabaricus, in-



(From left) Chrysanthamum by unknown artist c 1795; chir pine by a Calcutta artist c1828; knotweeds by unknown artist c 1828

stead of following the tradition of Mughal botanical painting started by Jahangir. They were interested in all commercial aspects of plants that grew on the coast of Kerala, and particularly in spices and medicinal plants. They evolved a style which was distinctly their own and are a powerful demonstration of their complete mastery over the medium - you will find in the pages of this well-produced book, images that seem to float off the surface, so exquisitely the ink and paint come together on paper.

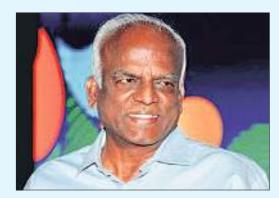
It is heartening to note that the work of Indian artists has been recognised for the first time. More often than not, publications overlook giving credit where it is due. Resurrecting the names of these forgotten artists, thus, is a way of giving credit where it is due and a noble way of correcting a profound archival erasure.

This book is a valuable contribution that does a course correction of history's collective amnesia.

Ganesh Saili is a writer and photographer

Sundae Inspiration

An inspiring story of enterprise and frugality that led to the birth of a multi-crore dairy company



DREAMING UP A FUTURE RG Chandramogan

T Nanda Kumar

EARD OF Ibaco? In the small town of Kollam in south Kerala, it is the preferred destination for young ice-cream lovers. The town, like many others in south India, boasts of international brands like Baskin Robbins, London Dairy, etc. Ibaco is a brand owned by Hatsun Agro Product (HAP), a Rs 5,500-crore company known for Arokya milk and Arun Ice Creams.

Harish Damodaran (national rural affairs and agriculture editor, The Indian Express, and currently on sabbatical as senior fellow at the Centre for Policy Research) brings to us the fascinating story of RG Chandramogan, the man behind Hatsun, and his journey from an investment of Rs 13,000 and three ice cream carts to becoming the largest private dairy company in India — a journey that took him five decades, countless mistakes and a fierce determination to succeed.

Chandramogan, whom I've met, is from Virudhunagar, a district in southern Tamil Nadu, a place known for enterprising people. He has a Kamaraj-esque countenance (the late K Kamaraj, veteran Congress leader, hailed from Virudhunagar) - simple, almost frugal, clear-headed, focussed and not afraid of failures. The book describes the journey of Hatsun Agro, mostly told by the promoter himself, but substantiated by facts and figures where required. There are interesting bits which throw light on the character of the person and, in the process, provide valuable lessons to the reader. Sample a few: His first lesson from his grandmother was that "water is like gold, not a drop should be wasted." In water-scarce Virudhunagar, this was a valuable lesson for a boy of six. Thrift is part of his DNA. This explains the fact that the first refrigerator for his house came 12 years into the ice-cream business and his own house came after almost 30 years in the company. But he did not hesitate to invest Rs 105 crore in Active Bulk Coolers, a technology developed by two techies from MIT, the US, or Rs 115 crore in "Ekomilk" analysers and rooftop solar systems in his purchase centres. Nor did he hesitate

to engage the services of Al Ries, an international brand consultant for

\$60,000 for three days! The real strength of the company seems to be its ability to learn from mistakes. As Harish puts it, learning from mistakes has been hard-wired into the company's DNA – something large companies looking for "haircuts" before National Company Law Tribunal would be loath to admit!

There are more lessons to be **BROKE TO** learnt from the story, mostly from BREAKTHROUGH: the mistakes it made. Read the THE RISE OF portion on how adding rural retail INDIA'S LARGEST outlets to milk collection centres PRIVATE DAIRY failed! There are more such in-**COMPANY** stances which could become ex-**BY HARISH** cellent case studies in top man-DAMODARAN agement institutions. Penguin Viking

224 pages

A few lessons, in my view, carry the Dr Verghese Kurien (man behind India's White Revolution) stamp. Creating value for con-

sumers and adherence to quality are two of them. The decision to buy all milk directly from producers (most private dairies depend on intermediaries), investing in fodder development in association with Tamil Nadu Agricultural University to reduce cost for farmers (read the interesting part on crude protein requirements for milch animals), investing in the integrity of the cold chain right from the collection point (farmers should be able to pour the milk into a cold chain, preferably within the hour), are leaves out of Kurien's book. For a private company, this required great courage and conviction. Chandramogan has an interesting name for such decisions: "economic moats against competition". His commitment to quality and consumer delight comes through, when he asserts that the company pays rent and electricity charges of all their retail outlets to ensure that the franchisee has no incentive to switch off power at night (probably a lesson from Mother Dairy's practices). There are valuable lessons for those wanting to enter a competitive market. Conventional marketing theory will suggest a price point entry: not Hatsun. Arokya (meaning health in Tamil) was positioned as Nalarappal (4.5 per cent fat milk) at a higher price to take on the established 3 per cent (fat) milk of Aavin (Tamil Nadu Dairy Coop). The story of Arun ice cream taking on brands like Kwality is another study in strategic marketing!

The book also reveals how policies under the Milk and Milk Product Order (MMPO) almost thwarted private sector efforts at getting a registration in the 2000s. But for an intelligent secretary in the department of animal husbandry (late Nishikant Sinha) who overruled the objections of the lower bureaucracy, there would have been no Hatsun and no story! Had there been no MMPO, more Hatsuns would have come up in many parts of India!

A fascinating story, full of facts and anecdotes (my advice, skip the place names and some of the numbers), this is a book in true Harish Damodaran style and a must read for budding entrepreneurs, agri-professionals, business schools and those who want to stay long-term in business!

and former secretary, agriculture and food, Government of India

Lucknow

SHELF LIFE

BOTANICAL ART:

BY MARTYN RIX

GARDENS/ROLI

224 pages; ₹1,495

BOTANICAL

ANILLUSTRATED

Ready and In Service

were greatly

and woodcut

the time

DEPENDING ON where one looks from, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) has a different shape, size, goal and impact. From the company's point of view, very often, it is giving back to the community and contributing to the all-round development of its employees. From the bystander's lens, however, most CSR work is seen only as a task that companies and conglomerates undertake because the government mandates it. That any and all CSR work is just to offset the bad karma that corporate greed brings.

Snigdha Parupudi's book, A Silent Revolution, challenges these notions from the word go. The book, which details the journey of Srinivasan Services Trust, talks about how CSR must not be a yoke forced upon the shoulders of the company but a collective responsibility of the corporate and the community.

Founded in 1996 by Venu Srinivasan, the Chairman of TVS Motor Company, the Srinivasan Services Trust (SST) has, over time demonstrated with success why it is important to follow in social service the same strict management principles applied to factory floor and office suites, Parupudi writes.

The book teems with anecdotes and stories of communities coming together to work with SST, while also explaining why the functioning of this companyrun trust is very different from other nongovernment organisations that also function alongside them.

For example, in the very beginning, Parupudi writes about how a leaky tap had



A SILENT REVOLUTION: THE SRINIVASAN SERVICES TRUST **BY SNIGDHA** PARUPUDI HarperCollins 376 pages; ₹499

the villagers petitioning that SST fix the tap instead of themselves. The incident forced the Trust as well as its then chairman and former Indian Administrative Services officer Ashoke Joshi to change tack by asking them to contribute to the development of their communities as well.

The idea, writes Parupudi, though revolutionary, faced its share of challenges as people would question if TVS Motors, the company backing the trust, did not have enough money to complete the tasks they undertook. With time, however, the communities where SST worked, understood the concept behind them being asked to pay and would regularly contribute, starting initially with 10-15 per cent of the project, which then gradually went up to as much as 40 per cent.

The book can also function as a ready reckoner on why, despite the presence of so many NGOs on ground in rural India, there is very little sustainable development that has been achieved over all these years, Most NGOs, Parupudi says in her book, choose to work only till they need to provide some sort of relief, or provide food following a natural calamity. The book also talks in detail about why SST, unlike many other company-run trusts and NGOs, choose to partner with the government and ensure last-mile delivery instead of targeting and downplaying their schemes.

For all its easy narration, the book could have done with more statistics and data, explaining how SST has, in just over two decades, managed to run and operate an NGO that does not helicopter in only when there are tragedies. The absence of images, bars and graphs to break the monotony of uninterrupted narrative is, sadly, a missed opportunity.

AASHISH ARYAN

News from Faraway Places

A travelogue recounting her adventures in China in the late 1950s offers insight into the early years of historian Romila Thapar's career and life

Tansen Sen

THE BUDDHIST grottoes in Dunhuang and Maijishan in present-day Gansu Province, People's Republic of China (PRC), are remnants of centuries-long religious and commercial interactions along the so-called "Silk Routes". The Indian sinologist PC Bagchi and KM Panikkar, the first Indian ambassador to the PRC, visited these sites in 1948 and 1951 respectively and emphasised the need for Indian scholars to study them, Romila Thapar's remarkable travelogue Gazing Eastwards on her visit to these two sites in 1957 owes much to these two earlier visits, and especially to Panikkar's intervention.

Thapar is one of the most renowned scholars of Indian history and an influential intellectual in India. However, her trip to China as a doctoral student at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London is less well-known. Gazing Eastwards offers insights into Thapar's early academic career and her experiences beyond the study of Indian history. Based on the diary she kept during the four-month trip, the book recounts her experiences and encounters at sites very few foreigners (or even Chinese citizens) visited during the 1950s. It also includes a particularly useful Introduction that outlines the "Silk Routes" exchanges and the role of Dunhuang and Maijishan in these long-distance interactions.

Together with the Paris-based art historian Anil de Silva and the photographer Dominique Darbois, Thapar travelled as a research assistant in China between July and October 1957. The trip resulted in the publication of two important studies: The Art of Chinese Landscape in the Caves of Tun-huang (1964) by de Silva, and The Cave Temples of Maichishan (1969) by Michael Sullivan. Both volumes contain stunning images by Darbois. In the latter work, de Silva provides a short account of the visit (erroneously mentioning that it took place in 1958), in which Thapar credits the trip to Panikkar and his "personal contact" with Premier Chou En-lai "made while he was Indian Ambassador in Peking."

The result of this "personal contact" is evident through the book. The Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries hosted the trip; several renowned Chinese scholars, including the leading archaeologist Xia Nai and the Indologist Ji Xianlin, met with them; provincial and local officials arranged for travel and stay; the team was invited to official events, including at a state reception for the visiting Indian president, S Radhakrishnan. Despite such official support, their travels deviated significantly from the scripted tours of foreign delegations common during the '50s.

The researchers first travelled to Beijing from Paris via Prague and Moscow. After a few days in Beijing and dining at the obligatory Peking Duck Restaurant, they began their jour-



Maijishan hill caves, grottoes and stairways

GAZING EASTWARDS: OF **BUDDHIST MONKS** REVOLUTIONARIES IN CHINA, 1957 BY ROMILA THAPAR Aleph Book Company 340 pages

₹710

ney, accompanied by an interpreter, by train to Xi'an, the ancient Chinese capital, and to Lanzhou, the gateway to Central Asia. From Lanzhou they went by a bumpy road to Maijishan, their first research site. After a productive stay, they journeyed further west to the historical frontier towns of Tianshui and Jiuquan before arriving in Dunhuang, the "high point" of their trip. Visits to Zhengzhou, Nanjing, Shanghai and Hangzhou later, they returned to Beijing. Their final stop was in Guangzhou/Canton, where their hosts organised a "spectacular" farewell and toasted "the enduring friendship" between India and China with glasses of Moutai, a potent Chinese liquor.

The book contains valuable insights into the lives of people in urban and rural China, the state of museums and educational institutions in major cities, interactions with Chinese academics, and the feeling of being an Indian. especially a sari-clad woman, in a foreign land. Perhaps, the most remarkable part of the travelogue is the description of Thapar's stay at a Buddhist monastery in Maijishan. Here she lost a table tennis game to a monk, learned to play the two-stringed Chinese instrument erhu, and listened to locals sing, including a Chinese rendition of Awaara hoon from the Hindi film Awara (1951).

The homeland always lurks in travel narratives in foreign regions. India appears in various contexts (but unfortunately, not in the book's index) in Gazing Eastwards, including in discussions about the Buddhist influences on China, the comparisons of cultural practices and states of development. Here Thapar's lamentations about the fundamental difference between Chinese and Indian traditions of record-keeping is most noteworthy. Several times, she bemoans that, while Chinese Buddhist pilgrims and historians have left behind accounts of foreign lands, including India, "pre-modern Indians... remained uninterested in commenting on the world beyond their immediate own.... It is such a stunning contrast to the Chinese avidly wanting to know about the wider world and writing about it," she writes.

It is in this context of a dearth of Indian writings on China that the value of Thapar's travelogue must be considered. The first Indian travel writings on China appeared only in the late-19th century and increased in numbers during the first half of the 20th century. However, accounts by Indian women visiting China are rare. Activist Gita Bandyopadhyay's From Moscow to China (1952), which describes her visit in 1949-50 to attend the Asian Women's Conference, may have been the first such work. Thapar's book belongs to this rare category. In both cases, insights into the role and status of women in China, often with reflections about gender issues in India, and the experiences of female travellers in a foreign land appear in great detail.

Yet, while Bandyopadhyay's narrative is overwhelmingly sympathetic towards the new Communist government in the PRC, Thapar is more introspective about its contemporary conditions and the country's future prospects. The combination of academic explorations and adventures of foreign travel makes the book immensely enlightening and enjoyable and a worthwhile relief from the focus on nation-state relations that dominates Indian publications on China.

Sen is director of the Center for Global Asia and professor of History, New York University, Shanghai The writer is former chairman, National Dairy Development Board,

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 Qatariowned 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

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

On Thursday, Amnesty International urged the Premier League to change its owners' and directors' test to address hu-

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 exter-

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

♣J1093

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 strikerate, 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 underutilised. 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

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

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 Prasidh Krishna with a 22-

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 bene-

fited 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.

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 confi-

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

Australia win T20 to seal multi-format series vs India

PRESSTRUSTOFINDIA GOLD COAST, OCTOBER 9

INDIAN BOWLERS put up a valiant effort with very few runs to defend before rookie Tahlia McGrath won the battle of nerves at the death, guiding Australia to a four-wicket victory in the second women's T20 International and also clinch the multi-format series 9-5.

Batting first, India put up an inept performance, scoring only 118 for nine, largely due to a 37 off 26 balls by Pooja Vastrakar.

Australia scored the runs in 19.1 overs, courtesy rookie McGrath (42 not out off 33 balls), who launched into Shikha Pandey's 18th over, getting 14 runs which proved to be a gamechanger. Renuka Singh's inexperience also cost India dearly as the 19th over yielded 13 runs with McGrath, playing only in her second T20 International, winning it for the hosts. "We were 20 runs short on this track," India

Alyssa Healy's (4) defence and after that it was

captain Harmanpreet Kaur said after the game.

Pandey (1/27 in 4 overs) bowled one that jagged back a long way to breach through Rajeshwari Gayakwad, who controlled the middle-overs by getting rid of Meg Lanning (15). Ashleigh Gardener (1) belted a halftracker from Harmanpreet straight to point.

Deepti Sharma then got Ellyse Perry (1), leaving Australia tottering at 46 for four.

Beth Mooney (34 off 36 balls) was cautious for the better part of her innings as McGrath started smashing the bowlers. The Indian outfielding was very poor on the day.

Once Mooney was stumped off Gayakwad and Nicola Carey was also stumped off a rebound off Richa Ghosh's body, India looked to be making a comeback at 94 for six but Pandey and Renuka couldn't bowl tight lines.

Vastrakar's power-hitting

Earlier, Vastrakar power-hitting 36 not out off 27 balls took India to 118 after they were reeling at 81 for nine being put into bat.

Vasktrakar, fondly called 'Chota Hardik' by her Test skipper Mithali Raj, has come of age as an all-rounder on this tour. She hit three fours and two sixes at the back end to ensure that India don't embarrass themselves.

Interestingly, India were 81 for nine after the 17th over and in the last three overs, the tourists scored 37 with Vastrakar making all the runs in the company of Gayakwad, who could not open her account.

BRIEF SCORES: India: 118/9 in 20 overs (Vastrakar 37 n.o., Harmanpreet 28; Molineux 2/11) lost to Australia: 119/6 in 19.1 overs (Mooney 34, McGrath 42 not out; Gayakwad 3/21) by 4 wickets

LIBRA (Sep 24 - Oct 23)

Please be aware that

romance, has moved

Venus, the star of

from a supportive

position to a sympathetic one. In

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

Loved ones and

colleagues have, in

their own way, come

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 23)

the facts.

other words, it moves from a

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2342

◆ 75432 **754** WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH ♦ KQJ **♣**A8 SOUTH (you) Pass Pass ♠ A98 **983** ♦ 7653

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 hearts. 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-KO.IIO6H-O6D-IOC-KO742

The East Hand: S-H-AK J1092D-A8 42C-65
A rule I have touched on a few times lately is that if you can overruff with a worthless trump, it is OK to do so in general. If you have to overruff with a winning trump, it is often best not to do so. If you do not overruff 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?

does he have let 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 ood enough to withstand one round of hearts from East.South wa

you see a small set, there is no reason not to look for a bigger set as long as vou know vou are safe to do so. NOTE the importance of not overruffing the king. If West took his ace early,

SOUTH



NORTH

Pass

South played in 4H after an opening 1S bid by West and a pass by East, West

Pass

- 5. Texas city on the Rio Grande (6) 10. Small flute (7)
- 11. Ruin, rout, complete failure (7)
 12. River in Europe "Heron" anagram?(5)
- 13. Shone, sparkled or twinkled (9)
- 14. Limiting rules?(12) 18. Foreword (12)
- 21. Thousands of years (9) 23. Planetary path (5)
- 24. Unavailing(7) 25. Thrust oneself in (7)
- 26. A small piece of gossip?
- 27. Partial or unfair? (3-5) DOWN
- Business magnate? (6)
- A value greater than nothing or nil? (5.4)Consideration (14)
- Book of photographs (5) Edible snail (8)
- Use drugs to excess (8)
- Government, management (14) 15. Approximately 60 days?
- 16. Get off (8) 17. Most motionless (8)
- 19. Nonsense or paradoxical

20. Be present, listen (6) 22. Tropical resin(5)

CRYPTIC CLUES

- 1. Are such babies sycophants?
- 5. One has the feeling that that's the
- way to make less of it (6) 10. In Karachi, BA chiefly involved a $type \, of \, brazier \, (7)$
- 11. How rare to injure battle legend (3,4)12. German approval given to port
- wine from Spain (5) 13. Can't decide if, when you move out, I'll occupy it (9)
- 14. Really determined not to overdo the drinking?
- 18. Depressed, having organ removed? 21. Slim party arranged for fortune
- 23. NZ district circles both sides of the

S

- 24. European ignoring Asian or African leader(7) 25. Lakes 'e'd transformed in the Lake
- District (7)
- 26. Earliest word for throwing money around table-top (6)
- 27. Yes, large waves revealing an aquatic mammal (4,4)
- DOWN 1. Military band making a mess of endless hot rock 2(6)
- 2. A wildcat protects B-Britain 3. Cook cut a liver in shreds. It's so
- $beneficial \, (9)$ 4. Bucking up to check spanish port
- Flynn seen in character role (5) workers!(3.5)
- Literary props (4,4) 9. Wary, yet receive treatment at sixmonthly intervals (5,5,4)
- this pastime
- 15. Puck takes some hard knocks in 16. Diva and poet arranging some sort

17. Book of songs to be accompanied

by unknown old instrument (8)

- 19. The trouble is that Mother is so old
- 20. "As a model," we put in, "will be successful" (2.4)
- 22. Fashionable one taking turn as
- architect, familiarly

Solutions to 2341

QUICK CLUES Across: 1 Talons, 4 Szechwan, 9 Powers, 10 Skinhead, 12 Seed, 13 Tear-jerker, 15 Reconstructs, 18 Representing, 21 Concentric, 22 Bump, 24 Involved, 25 Stigma, 26 Tinsmith, 27 Bandit. Down: 1Tapestry, 2Lawrence, 3 Nero, 5 Zakir hussain, 6 Concertina, 7 Wreaks, 8 Nadira, 11 Beat a retreat, 14 Antebellum, 16 Divulged, 17 Eggplant, 19 Script, 20 Uneven, 23 Atta. CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 1 Satins, 4 Isabella, 9 Rueing, 10 Columnar, 12 Warp, 13 Sculptural, 15 Aking's ransom, 18 Cockeyed view, 21 Profiteers, 22 Pall, 24 Consider, 25 Chichi, 26 Cronyism, 27 Sea dog. **Down**: 1 Straw hat, 2 The trail, 3 Non-U, 5 Scotland Yard, 6 Blunt words, 7 Loners, 8 Airily, 11 Score-keepers, 14 Ignobility, 16 Financed, 17 Swilling, 19 Ipecac, 20 Borneo, 23 Thee.

2

6

If it's your

Sunday October 10

such a perfect moment to travel that it's difficult to see what's keeping you at home. A family member from will arrive

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.

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

harmony with your practical, business sense. Give a partner the benefit of the doubt, though, it's the least they deserve.

Your emotional desires are operating in

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 benefit, there should be plenty to distract you from more

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 longrange 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

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.

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

CAPRICORN (Dec. 23 - Jan. 20) In spite of all that other people say or

concerns rather than inward-

looking emotional

complications.



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

is only useful for what it can do. It is therefore essential that you pay the utmost attention to getting the details right.

helpful planetary influences.

Most Aquarians see in money a

deeper meaning, realising that it

make the most of



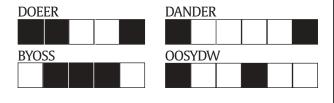
partners, but then you yourself will be in a highly-sensitive frame of mind, liable to take offence even when none is intended. While professional matters seem relatively straightforward, your work routine will intrude more and more into your life.

Lucknow

JUMBLED WORDS

Pass

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to $\frac{1}{2}$ the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given quip.



Answer: **Words** have a longer life than **deeds**. - Pindar SOLUTION: ERODE, BOSSY, DARNED, WOODSY

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9

Difficulty Level 4s

must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the

1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s =

3 9 5 6 2 4 7 5 6 2 9

9 3 4

SOLUTION SUDOKU 461 9 8 7 1 2 3 6 4 5 4 2 3 5 6 9 1 7 8 1 4 9 8 5 2 7 3 6 6 5 2 3 7 1 9 8 4

Birthday

on your doorstep.

Tuesday October 12 You are making steady progress. Today is

Thursday October 14 You'll be free to press ahead with personal

5 1 6 7 4 8 2 9 3 7 9 4 2 8 6 3 5 1 8 6 1 9 3 5 4 2 7 2 3 5 4 1 7 8 6 9 3 7 8 6 9 4 5 1 2

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 Bhanwala, 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 Fridav. anvi Soni (105) hagged 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

Golden girl from Pink City

SPORTSLINE

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

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 nitpicking 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 Al 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



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.

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 preaiming and follow-through.

Follow-through is how shooters continue to look at the target after taking the shot. (They also hold their weapon steady after pulling the trigger). This gives the pellet time to go and hit on the target. Pre-aiming is when the shooter prepares the body for a shot before putting their cheek on the rifle.

Every muscle, every aspect of the mind needed to be in cohesion before the shot and once that trigger was pulled, Lekhara needed to make sure that the pellet went where she wanted it to. When nothing in qualification was going her way, this was the only means to bring herself back on track.

"Everything that could have gone wrong, went wrong in qualification. But I also felt that the worst was behind me. I was seventh and at worst would come eighth."

The ability to stay calm when things are not going one's way is something that Lekhara has been well versed with.

When the 2020 para-sports season was canned because of the global pandemic, Indian shooters were provided with shooting range simulators (digital target setups). Even then, staying at home and practising was not ideal. "Initially, it was tough. You don't get the feel of training at a range. I was practically shooting from my kitchen hallway to the master bedroom. Somebody is cooking, sometimes the TV is on... it wasn't a proper way to train," said Lekhara, pointing to the kitchen and the bedroom of her house in Jaipur.

Soon a schedule was finalised. One of her first shooting coaches in Jagatpura, Chandra Shekhar was regularly with her during this period, helping in fine-tuning her shooting skills. His concern was more to do with the 50m three-position event, and particularly the prone position.

In the SH1 category of shooting at the Paralympics, athletes with paraplegia or nonfunctioning limbs participate and a competition like three-position has to be especially tailored for them.

Since standing, kneeling or prone positions are all not possible, adjustments are made. For the standing position, athletes like Lekhara shoot from their wheelchairs. For kneeling, a flat board is provided along with a circular object on which the elbow is rested. It is an attempt to mimic an elbow resting on

But it was the prone position that would cause the most physical discomfort to Lekhara. "The type of injury she has, sensitivity below her waist isn't there. So sometimes the position of her elbow wasn't where it was supposed to be," Chandra Shekhar told

The prone position would also require Lekhara to lean forward and the extra pressure on her back was something that was causing her discomfort.

Conquering pain

So much so that in the months of May and June, she decided to stop shooting completely and focus purely on physiotherapy.

"In March during the World Cup, I felt some pain and thought I couldn't go to the Paralympics with this issue."

She added, "It was a risk. You can't stop shooting a few months before such a big event. I have the confidence to shoot but to shoot while being in pain is another matter altogether. I was happier with my bronze medal because 3P is a longer match. 120 shots, almost three-and-a-half hours of qualification followed by 45 shots in the final, which is almost double the time of a normal final. There were back exercises, icing sessions, and sprays for two-three hours a day."

During this period of not shooting, ekhara focused on mental exercises. She constantly visualised various scenarios in her mind. It is a strength of hers that Shekhar acknowledges has led her to such heights.

"Her grasp and intelligence regarding shooting is very good. She studies the sport, takes notes, and tries to understand the best way to succeed. For her, shooting was something that she wanted to practise at the highest level. Nothing else mattered," said Shekhar. In fact, he was so sure of a medal that he texted her father on July 21 at 1 am to assure him that the gold was hers.

Even after the qualification, Shekhar thought the gold was his ward's, but Lekhara

All she had going for her at that point was the knowledge that she was in the finals and it was now a clean slate. But the pre-aiming and the follow-through worked. All her preparations allowed one of her worst qualfication performances to be forgotten. With one shot remaining in the finals, she was assured of the gold.

That gold medal now is the first thing she sees on waking up and the last thing she gazes at before sleeping, but the mind continues to think about that last shot.

"I'm very bad at remembering the good things. I even remember everything that happened 10 years ago. In a sense, it's a good thing because every match that I've played in, I come back and think about the mistakes I made. Sometimes I feel ki maine sabh sahi kara lekin fir bhi theek nahi gaya (I did everything right but it didn't work out). I really don't like when that happens.'

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 erves 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 Anatasia 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



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

WBC CHAMPIONSHIP

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

GAURAV BHATT

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 9

Anna Janssen. PTI

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-Moble Arena in Las Vegas. The hotlyanticipated 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-yearhold. 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

"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, VBO, 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

Lucknov

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