

Shah takes stock of J&K

protection for minorities

FIRST VISIT SINCE AUGUST 5, 2019

security, seeks more

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE 'My morality teaches me to speak out'

Aparna Sen on being outspoken, why women don't have to bear burden of being virtuous **PAGES 10, 11, 12**

Avoid jail for drug users, seizure of small amounts: Social justice ministry

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

In note sent a few days ago on review of NDPS Act, ministry says users should be treated as 'victims', sent for rehab

RITIKA CHOPRA

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

IN ITS suggestion to review the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment has recommended a more humane approach, avoiding prison, for drug users and addicts.

In a recommendation sent a few days ago, the ministry has sought decriminalising possession of small quantities of drugs for personal consumption. It has suggested amendments to the NDPS Act to treat those who use drugs or are dependent on them as victims, to be referred for deaddiction and rehabilitation, and not sentenced to jail

Last month, the Department of Revenue - the NDPS Act's nodal administrative authority had asked several ministries and departments, including the

In line with norms

THE MINISTRY'S stand is in line with recommendations of the International Narcotics Control Board, which state that criminalisation of drug use only perpetuates stigma and can compound the problem. The Board is an independent, quasi-judicial body for implementation of the UN's drug control conventions.

Home Ministry, Health Ministry, Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry, the Narcotics Control Bureau and CBI, to suggest changes to the law, if any, along with their rationale.

The Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment sent its suggestions to the Department of Revenue in this regard.

In India, drug consumption or possession is a criminal offence. Currently, the NDPS Act only adopts a reformative approach towards addicts. It gives addicts (or dependents) immunity from prosecution and imprisonment (if found guilty) if they volunteer for treatment and rehabilitation. However, there's

no provision for relief or exemption for, say, first-time users or recreational users.

For instance, Section 27 of the NDPS Act prescribes imprisonment of up to a year or a fine of up to Rs 20,000, or both, for consumption of any narcotic drug or psychotropic substance. It makes no distinction between addicts, first-time users and recreational users. This is one of the provisions for which the ministry has proposed that the prison term and fine be replaced with compulsory treatment in government-run rehabilitation and counselling centres, for at least 30 days.

> Section 27 has been used in CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BASHAARAT MASOOD SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23

> IN HIS first visit to Jammu and Kashmir since the abrogation of special status on August 5, 2019, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Saturday reviewed the security situation at a Unified Command meeting attended by Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, top brass of J-K Police, Army, paramilitary forces, and the intelligence

Visits, interacts

with families of

civilians, security

personnel killed

by militants

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Expressing concern over the "targeted killing" of civilians in the Valley, Shah sought "strategically planned protection of minorities" and "flexible patrolling of guards", according to sources who did not want to be named. He also called for better coordination between the security agencies to address the recruitment of local youth to the militant ranks.

The sources said the Union Home Minister was briefed about the current security situation that has unfolded in the Valley with 11 civilians being killed in the last one month. Shah also sought to understand the delay in tracing militants involved in the Poonch encounter which claimed the lives of nine soldiers. The encounter entered its 13th day on Saturday with the joint team of forces mounting a massive combing operation in the forests of Mendhar.

The security review meeting chaired by the Union Home Minister lasted almost two-anda-half hours, the sources said. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah at the residence of J&K Police officer Parvez Ahmed who was killed last month, in Nowgam on Saturday. PTI

Shah to youth: Here's hand of friendship, help strengthen democracy

Home Minister promises delimitation, polls, statehood

BASHAARAT MASOOD SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23

SAYING HE was extending a "hand of friendship", Union Home Minister Amit Shah sought the cooperation of the Valley's youth for peace and development and exhorted them to strengthen democracy in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing members of the youth clubs set up by the government at panchayat level, he said, "I have come here to extend friendship. Come and connect with Modi ji, connect with the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2** SUNDAY **STORY**



Recent civilian killings have led thousands of migrant labourers to leave the Valley. But, it's a relationship likely to survive

Judicial infrastructure an afterthought, ad hoc and unplanned: CJI

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

JUDICIAL INFRASTRUCTURE is "important for improving access to justice", but "it is baffling to note that the improvement and maintenance of judicial infrastructure is still being carried out in an ad hoc and unplanned manner," Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said on Saturday. The CJI was speaking at the

inauguration of two wings of the annexe building at the Aurangabad bench of the High Court Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Union Minister for Law and Justice

Kiren Rijiju were among those

"People's faith in the judiciary is the biggest strength of democracy," the CJI said, adding that courts in India have "stood up whenever individuals or society are at the receiving end of the executive excesses".

"Good judicial infrastructure for courts in India has always been an afterthought" and "it is because of this mindset that courts in India still operate from dilapidated structures, making it difficult to effectively perform their function," he said.

"The total sanctioned strength of judicial officers in the country is 24,280 and the number of court CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju, CJI NV Ramana and Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday. ANI

A month on, transfers of 2 judges, both linked to Calcutta HC, still on hold

APURVA VISHWANATH NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

THE GOVERNMENT is yet to notify two of the 24 transfers of High Court judges that were recommended by the Supreme Court collegium more than a month ago.

The judges whose transfers remain on hold are Justice Soumen Sen of the Calcutta High Court and Justice Joymalya Bagchi of the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

Justice Sen is part of the fivejudge bench of the Calcutta High

Court that is hearing a clutch of cases relating to the post-election violence in West Bengal. Justice Bagchi has been recommended for a transfer to the Calcutta High Court.

In decisions taken on September 16, the Supreme Court collegium headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) NV Ramana had also recommended the appointment of 68 judges of High Courts across the country.

On October 2, two weeks after the recommendations were made, CJI Ramana had said that he had been assured by the **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

AVANEESH MISHRA, **ATRIMITRA& AMIL BHATNAGAR** DEHRADUN, KOLKATA, NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

SEVEN MORE bodies of members of two separate trekking teams hit by bad weather in Uttarakhand were recovered on Saturdav. While 12 of the 21 trekkers are now confirmed dead, three remain missing.

Two of the dead whose bodies were found Saturday, from near the Lamkhaga Pass bordering Himachal Pradesh, were part of an 11-member team from West Bengal that had gone missing while on way to Chitkul from Harsil in Uttarkashi. The bodies

THE WORLD



of five of them had been found earlier. Two of the 11 remain missing, with rescue operations halted due to bad weather. Two

ITBP personnel retrieve bodies of trekkers, near Lamkhaga Pass in Kinnaur. UNI via ITBP

Uttarakhand: Bodies of 7 trekkers

found; 12 dead, three still missing

are injured and in hospital. The five others found dead Saturday were part of another

trekking team, which was hit by an avalanche at Sunderdhunga glacier in Bageshwar district. The four porters-cum-guides who were part of this 10-member team had managed to make

EXPRESS NETWORK

PM MEETS VACCINE MANUFACTURERS: 'WORK TOGETHER'

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

DEATH OF FARMER IN UTTAR PRADESH

'He didn't come home... next day, before his turn at the fertiliser shop, he died'

MANISH SAHU LUCKNOW. OCTOBER 23

THE AUTOPSY report says Bhogilal Pal died of cardiac arrest. However, his family says, what really killed the 53-year-old farmer was the worry over arranging fertilisers for his land in Nayagaon village of Lalitpur dis-

trict. He had been standing in a

queue outside a shop to try and

arrange the same for the second

day on Friday, when he collapsed.

COVID CASES ON THE RISE, CHINA RAMPS UP TESTING, CURBS PAGE 9

PAK SAYS NO PACT

WITH U.S. ON USE OF

AIRSPACE FOR OPS

IN AFGHANISTAN

The administration says there is no shortage of fertilisers in the district, but that the demand had suddenly shot up due to the recent rain. Soon after Pal's death, District Magistrate Annavi Dinesh Kumar recommended to the state government that the family be provided financial help of Rs 10 lakh. The government is

yet to take a call on the matter. A father of six, Pal owned two acres of land. His nephew Raghvendra said Pal had visited several shops in the past few days

trying to arrange fertilisers. On Thursday, he went to a shop at Jugpura, but the queue was long and his turn never came. "He did not return home. The next morning, he again queued up outside the shop. Before his turn came, he fell unconscious," said Raghvendra, adding that Pal was rushed to hospital by the locals.

Superintendent of Police, Lalitpur, Nikhil Pathak said a post-mortem had shown the cause of death as cardiac arrest. CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

TORA AGARWALA GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 23

Talks with Centre didn't

live up to hype, deadlock

unfortunate: NSCN-IM

THE NSCN-IM said on Saturday that talks with the Centre's new interlocutor "failed to live up to all the hype".

The statement comes barely a month after the Centre resumed talks with the rebel group, after former Intelligence Bureau Special Director A K Mishra replaced R N Rayi as the main interlocutor in mid-September.

The NSCN-IM said that with Mishra's appointment and the resumption of talks after nearly two years, "much hype was generated that the final Naga solution is just round the corner."

"However, the talks failed to live up to all the hype as the Government of India continues

to indulge in political escapism on the very issues that are holding up the road to the Naga solu-

tion," it said. The bone of contention remains the NSCN-IM's demand for a separate Naga flag and Constitution. "Ironically, the Government of India is still pretentiously acting stubborn as the crucial rounds of talks that focused on the Naga flag and the Constitution is driven to hang in balance. The stalemate created is unfortunate," it said.

It said the flag was "not just a piece of cloth" to the Nagas, but a symbol "of the Naga nation's pride and values." It also rejected the government's "post solution" offer, seemingly alluding to speculation that the differences would be ironed out after an agreement is signed.

After 3 years and memories of a lifetime, India play Pakistan today



SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY DUBAI, OCTOBER 23

FORMER PAKISTAN captain Asif Iqbal's mind goes back to the early 1980s. Shyam Bhatia, an Indian expat in Dubai and a cricket patron, recollects laved Miandad's six against Chetan Sharma. For the old-timers, an India-Pakistan match in the United Arab Emirates will always be about nostalgia, irrespective of its venue-switch from Sharjah to Dubai.

As India and Pakistan play their T20 World Cup group league fixture here Sunday — the first time the two teams are playing in three years — the Sharjah throwback becomes relevant, for it was the starting point of the game's most-followed cricket rivalry at a neutral venue.

It were Iqbal, a former Pakistan captain, and local business magnate Abdul Rahman Bukhatir who dared to dream.

"When we started India versus Pakistan matches in Sharjah, the atmosphere was totally different. India and Pakistan supporters used to come to the ground, expats not only from the UAE but working around the Persian Gulf. And whichever team won, they would share mithai after the game. No untoward incident was ever reported," Igbal told The Sunday

Bhatia talks about banging his new Mercedes, so unmindful was he after Miandad's lastball six in 1986. "For a long while, I struggled to get it out of my head, but we never begrudged our rival fans. The Pakistanis and Indians would be in the same



India and Pakistan fans outside the cricket stadium in Dubai on the eve of the match on Saturday. Shamik Chakrabarty

could talk to them. It was in the open and had no air-conditioning. It was like a community festival." he recalls.

"In Dubai, all Indians and Pakistanis are friends, but when they go to the ground, they forget the friendship for those three hours. They support their respective teams. When the match is over, everybody goes back together," Bhatia says, adding that the scenes are pretty similar to Shariah, except that the crowd there was more passionate. "The disappointment we had after the six was akin to what the Pakistanis had felt when their

team had failed to chase down 125 a couple of years earlier."

However, unlike those times.

players from the two sides aren't very familiar with each other now, considering they have not played a bilateral series in some time. Sharjah was also known for its lavish parties where players from the two teams rubbed shoulders with Bollywood, quite like Henry Blofeld mixed cricket commentary with earring details. Now, politics apart, biobubbles keep players apart. Without the pandemic, India would have hosted this edition of the T20 World Cup.

While the Dubai International

paved the way to here. Three years ago, Dubai also hosted three India versus Pakistan fixtures inside a week during the 2018 Asia Cup. And Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ramiz Raja has already said that they would have to shift the 2023 Asia Cup to the UAE if India refuse to travel to Pakistan. Cricket 'Chacha' Mohammed Zaman is the 'captain' of a group

Stadium oozes opulence, it's the

more stolid Sharjah grounds that

of six Pakistani fans who have come from Tarar village in Gujranwala, hoping against hope to get tickets for the match. He is very angry with the organisers CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Kolkata

area, no segregation. The com-

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Apple CEO Tim Cook defends billion dollar deal with Google



KERALA: THREE YEARS AND THE RAVAGES OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Owing to years of rampant mining, lack of scientific land-use policy, and a railway project in the offing, Kerala is no longer the safe haven it was, say experts. The alarm bells on climate emergency are yet to ring in Thiruvananthapuram, though.

RESEARCH



SAUDI TAKEOVER OF NEWCASTLE UNITED

The many ways to understand this latest move

SCIENCE



DOMESTICATED GOATS FROM WESTERN IRAN The closest wild

The closest wild relative of the goats was the bezoar ibex

EXPRESS AUDIO

Game Time: Why it's okay to support the Pakistan cricket team

Everything you need to know before you watch the India-Pakistan T20 World Cup match today

meri jaan, sath hai tumhara chacha aur poora Pakistan (Give

it your best dears, with you are uncle and whole of Pakistan)."

shutting out the outside noise,

one of the reasons for their World Cup dominance when it

comes to Pakistan. Virat Kohli

puts things in perspective. "We

are in a situation where we are

in charge of what we need to do

on the field. For that to happen,

we need to be in the most bal-

anced space possible. In games like these, such unnecessary

stuff, from a professional point

of view... it's fine as long as that

stays outside our controlled en-

vironment and we focus on

what we need to do as crick-

eters. Hence, I have always

maintained that it (an India-

Pakistan match) has never been

different to any other game of

Babar Azam, speaks about the

team's rendezvous with Prime

Minister Imran Khan before

coming to the UAE. He says

Khan advised them to draw in-

spiration from the mentality

and resolve of the 1992 World

Iqbal agrees that Dubai has

Purely from a cricketing

now taken the baton from

Sharjah to carry forward the

legacy of India-Pakistan cricket.

point of view, the ex-Pakistan

captain also considers India the

bigger favourites to win the T20

World Cup. "As far as Sunday's

game is concerned, there is no

reason why Pakistan can't beat

India. But being realistic, if

Pakistan win, I don't see them

going on to win the World Cup.

However, if India lose to

Pakistan, they can go on to win

the World Cup because of the

strong team they have. Pakistan

doesn't have the strength to

win X number of matches to

win the World Cup. At the same

time, I sincerely hope the

Pakistani cricketers prove me

His Pakistani counterpart,

cricket that we play.'

Cup-winning squad.

India have been good at

FIRs against them, two Meerut cops on the run

AMIT SHARMA MEERUT, OCTOBER 23

TWO CONSTABLES of Meerut Police absconded Friday night soon after FIRs were registered against them amid the force's drive to weed out corrupt personnel. This takes the total number of absconding cops to four, including President's

Gallantry Award recipient

Bijendra Pal Rana and Sub in-

spector Dinesh Kumar.

The two police constables who went missing Friday night, Rahul and Sandeep Nagar, were part of an alleged cow vigilante group which was extorting money from vehicles carrying cattle for the past four years. The racket is said to be running successfully in Meerut, Ghaziabad, Muzzafarnagar and

the adjoining districts.

It flourished when UP Chief
Minister Yogi Adityanath put a
blanket ban on cow smuggling
in the state and launched a
drive against illegal abattoirs

soon after taking over in 2017.

Meanwhile, the FIR was lodged against nine persons, including the two cops, at Meerut's TP Nagar police station. Five people have been arrested while four, including a right wing leader, are on the

run. Raids are on to nab them.

Meerut SSP Prabhaar
Chaudhary's special cell got inputs about an extortion racket
on Dehli-Dehradun Highway
following which he formed a
team headed by SP(Rural)
Keshav Prasad which caught
five members on Friday itself.

"The gang was netting extortion money to the tune of Rs two lakh daily from vehicles carrying cattle from the animal market for their milk dairies or for personal use. Each truck had to cough up a minimum of Rs 2,000 to ensure a safe passage," said an officer of the special

The drive has seen 75 constables being sent to police lines as punishment since July and 53, including inspectors, moved out of their police stations.

Two fishermen rescued after cargo ship collides with boat off Tamil Nadu coast

Chennai: Two Indian fishermen were rescued by the Coast Guard after a cargo ship from Panama collided with a fishing boat off Tamil Nadu's coast on Saturday.

The collision — in which two fishermen were thrown off board and the crew of 17 members was injured — was due to negligence, general secretary of the South Asian Fishermen Fraternity Father Churchill said, demanding compensation.

"The Panama-flagged cargo ship Navious Venus bound for Mumbai from Singapore, did not stop after ramming the fishing boat. It was due to sheer negligence," he told PTI and urged authorities to seize the ship and arrest its captain.

"We are in the process of getting an FIR filed with the marine police," the SAFF chief said.

The Coast Guard confirmed the incident and said in a press release that the two men who were thrown off board from the boat — named "Shijumon" — were rescued from the waters on Saturday morning and taken to a Thiruvananthapuram medical college for treatment.

FROM PAGE ONE

Uttarakhand: Bodies of 7 trekkers found; 12 dead, three still missing

their way out. One of the team members remains missing.

Counting the trekkers found dead Saturday, the number of casualties in rain-related incidents since October 17 in the higher reaches of Uttarakhand, triggering landslides and avalanches, has now crossed 75. Twenty-six people are injured.

SDRF Commandant Navneet Bhullar told *The Sunday Express* that they had deployed high-altitude teams, climbers and Army helicopters for the search and rescue operations, but were hamstrung due to bad weather and snowfall.

Bhullar said the trekkers who died in Uttarkashi had started their trek on October 14-15 from Harsil. "On October 19 we were informed by their tour organiser that the weather was worsening and the team was stuck at over 15,000 feet. We immediately responded, using two Advanced light Helicopters (ALH). Continuous operations have been on since."

The SDRF Commandant added that in Bageshwar, two rescues had been made successfully, with the third ongoing. "At Pindari glacier, 34 people were stranded, including six foreign nationals, and all were rescued. Fortunately they had just started their trek when hit by bad weather. They were just 11 km from the last habitation and found shelter. At Kafni glacier we rescued 19 locals who had climbed up to take their goats for grazing and had got stuck."

At Sunderdhunga, Bhullar said, the 10-member team included five trekkers, a staff member and four porters-cumguides from Khati village, where the trek started. "The four porter guides came back after bad weather hit and said there was an avalanche that had left four people dead while two were missing," Bhullar said.

Officials said they had received information regarding some locals also being stuck in Joling Kong in Pithoragarh, and SDRF teams would reach them by Saturday night.

West Bengal officials said Uttarakhand had identified five from the state who had died in the Uttarkashi incident as Tanmay Tiwari (30), Vikash Makal (33), Sourav Ghosh (34), Shuvayan Das (28) and Richard Mandol (31). Out of the six, four were from South 24 Parganas.

Of the two injured, one is Mithun Dari, from South 24 Parganas district. His elder brother Manoj Dari said Mithun was admitted at an Uttarkashi hospital. "On October 14 morning, the day he started the trek, he called me and said he would not be available on his phone for four-five days. On Friday morning I saw on the TV that his entire team was missing. Today

morning, he called me."
Among those still missing is
Sukhen Majhi, and the family
said they had not got any word
on Majhi's whereabouts.

Anthony Gayen, the brotherin-law of the deceased Vikash Makal, said: "We are in the dark on what exactly happened and if they are indeed dead because we have not get any information from the government. Everything we know is from the media. We request the West Bengal government to arrange

to get their bodies home."

The family of Anita Rawat,
38, based in Hari Nagar in Delhi
said she had left for the trek 10
days ago and was supposed to
join a group of travellers from
across the country. Anita's family originally hails from a village

in Tehri, Uttarakhand, and she had always been a keen trekker, when not helping run the family sweet shop.

"She loved travelling and had wanted to go on this trek for some time. Anita had told us she would be back before Karwa Chauth... Family members have gone for identification (of the body)," Rawat's uncle Dharmendra Singh Bhandari

The family's Jyoti Sweet Shop started as a small set-up, but business grew over the years and it is now run from a bigger store. The family said Rawat was a medical professional, and worked in Medanta Hospital before quitting her job to help run the business following her brother's death. Unmarried, she lived in a joint family.

Judicial infrastructure an afterthought, ad hoc, unplanned: CJI

halls available is 20,143 (including 620 rented halls)... Twenty-six per cent of court complexes do not have separate ladies toilets and 16% do not have gents toilets... Only 54% of court complexes have purified drinking water facility... only 5% have basic medical facilities." he said.

"Only 32% of courtrooms have separate record rooms... only 27% have computers placed on the Judge's dais with video-conferencing facility... These are the hard facts," he said

Judicial infrastructure, the CJI said, "is important for improving access to justice and to meet the growing demands of a public that is more aware of its rights and is developing economically, socially, and culturally."

He said the building that was inaugurated in Aurangabad on Saturday was envisioned in 2011. "This is not the fault of any institution or organ of the state but is emblematic of a deeper structural problem that has plagued judicial infrastructure development in our country since independence," he said.

Stating that an effective judiciary can aid in the effective growth of the economy, the CJI said that "if we want a different outcome from the judicial system, we cannot continue to work in these circumstances".

He said he had sent a proposal for establishment of a National Judicial Infrastructure Authority to the Ministry of Law and Justice, and was hoping for a positive response soon. He urged the Law Minister to expedite the process and ensure that the proposal is taken up in the winter session of Parliament.

The CJI also said that there is a common notion that only criminals or victims of crime approach the courts and people take pride in stating that they have never seen a court building in their lifetime. "But, it is high time that we make efforts to remove the taboo associated with approaching courts for the

affirmation of rights," he said. "Courts are extremely essential for any society that is governed by the rule of law. Court buildings are not merely structures made of mortar and bricks. Rather, they actively assure the constitutional guarantee of right to justice. The courts in India have repeatedly upheld the rights and freedoms of individuals. They stood up whenever the individuals or society were at the receiving end of the executive excesses. It is an assurance that the seeker of justice, howsoever weak, need not worry about the might of the State," he said.

Shah takes stock of J&K security, seeks more protection for minorities

The Srinagar city witnessed unprecedented security as Shah arrived in Srinagar on Saturday morning and was received by J-K's Lt Governor Manoj Sinha. The establishment has put in place a three-tier security setup in place, detained hundreds, arrested several under Public Safety Act over the last ten days and seized two-wheelers in the last two days.

No sooner than he arrived in Srinagar, the Union Home

Minister drove to the residence of slain police officer Parvez Ahmad at Nowgam in the outskirts of Srinagar city. Ahmad, an Inspector with J-K Police's intelligence wing, was shot dead by militants in June this year. Shah offered a government job to his wife.

In the evening, Shah interacted at Raj Bhawan with the families of civilians, politicians and policemen killed by militants. Those included the family of prominent Kashmiri Pandit chemist M L Bindroo, who was shot dead by militants in Srinagar on October 5 and the family of Sikh principal Supinder Kour, who was shot dead by militants on October 7 in Srinagar. He also met families of policemen Qazi Sagheer – killed in a gunfight with militants last year – and Arshid Ahmad. The Union Home Minister also met the family of Mohammad Shafi, a

civilian killed by militants on October 2 at Batamaloo Srinagar, family of BJP councilor Reyaz Ahmad Peer who was killed in militant attack earlier this. Shah also flagged off the

Shah also flagged off the Srinagar-Sharjah direct flight. While the first direct international flight from Srinagar airport was inaugurated in February 2009 to Dubai, the weekly flight operation was later suspended.

Amit Shah to youth: Here's hand of friendship, help strengthen democracy

Government of India... I have come here to seek your cooperation. The administration has extended its hand of friendship towards you."

Officials in J&K administration said over 40,000 youth were connected through video conferencing and attended the event. Shah said no one would be

allowed to disrupt peace in Kashmir. "Come forward and strengthen the democracy here. From the perspective of peace, development, and infrastructure, this is the ideal situation, and no one would be allowed to stop it," he said.

The Union Home Minister said elections in Jammu and Kashmir would be held after the delimitation exercise is over. "Some people say they will not allow delimitation. Why should it not happen? Delimitation will happen, elections would follow, and then statehood would also be restored."

Referring to panchayats and District Development Council elections, Shah said his government had opened these opportunities for the youth. Taking a dig at the political families in the Valley, he said, "What did 70 years of jamhooriyat (democracy) give: 87 MLAs, six MPs and three families... but Shri Narendra Modi has given $30,\!000\,elected\,representatives$ in such a short time. Those who are making a noise are doing so because jamhooriyat has come out of the custody of three families, and it now belongs to the poor. Shri Narendra Modi brought democracy to the grassroots level.

The Union Home Minister said curfew in the Valley and a ban on internet in the aftermath of abrogation of Jammu Kashmir's special status and its bifurcation into two Union territories was done to safeguard Kashmiri lives. "For some time you suffered, but it only saved your children... when the situation normalised, we opened everything," he said.

Asking the youth to set bigger targets, Home Minister Shah wanted them to use all opportunities that came their way. "One thing you should always remember. Everyone's life is full of opportunities. Now it depends whether you want to move forward with a negative mindset or an optimistic mindset... Don't set small targets, don't think, whether you could complete it or not. Just set the target and move in that direction with speed. God will definitely support you," he said. He said the situation in

Jammu and Kashmir had improved after the abrogation of the special status. "From 2014 to 2021, every year only 30 people died. Terrorism has decreased and stone pelting has ended. Nobody would be allowed to disrupt the peace in Jammu and Kashmir. We will deal with them strictly. No one would be allowed to interrupt development. It is our commitment," he said.

"Till now more than 4,0000 people have lost their lives. Should we end it or not? Can development coexist with terrorism?" he asked. While the government can make efforts to end terrorism, it is the youth

who can end it. "It is the youth who have to end terrorism, you have to do it. You have to become the ambassadors of peace and development," he said.

Without naming them, Shah said he also wanted to seek an account from the three families. "Earlier, students used to go to Pakistan. We have built seven new medical colleges and 11 nursing colleges. There is no need to move out of the valley. This should have happened many years ago. In 2014, there were only 500 medical seats here. Today, there are 1.150 MBBS seats... We have NIT, IIM and polytechnic colleges now. Tell us why they didn't come in 70 years.'

He said Jammu and Kashmir is the first place that has administered the first dose of coronavirus vaccine to 100 percent people and the second dose to 50 per cent of its population. "As per the population, ammu and Kashmir was given the highest oxygen plants. It is because J&K has a special place in Modiji's heart," he said.

Avoid jail for drug users, seizure of small amounts: Social justice ministry

several high-profile cases, the latest being the arrest of actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan in an alleged drug bust on a cruise ship.

In the case of sections dealing with punishment for possession of different drugs and psychotropic substances, the ministry has suggested that the law exclude those caught with "small quantities" (meant only for personal consumption) from a prison term. Compulsory treatment in government centres has also been recommended for them.

Small quantities under the NDPS Act mean amounts less than those specified by the Union government by a notification in the Official Gazette. For instance, the government has set 100 grams as the limit for a small quantity of cannabis, and 2 grams in case of cocaine.

The NDPS was framed in

1985, taking into account India's obligations to the UN conventions. The Act prohibits trade, production, use and possession of drugs and psychotropic substances, irrespective of purpose, except for medical and scientific reasons. However, cases of possession for personal consumption or cases of drug use make up a majority of the NDPS cases. According to a study released by Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy last year, 97.7% of NDPS cases in Maharashtra in 2017 and 97.3% cases in 2018 involved were that of "possession for personal consumption".

Kolkata

A month on, transfers of 2 judges, both linked to Calcutta HC, still on hold

Union law minister that the recommendations would be "cleared in a day or two".

"I seek cooperation and support from the government to enable access to justice and strengthen the democracy," the CJI had said at an event organised by the National Legal Services Authority.

The delay in notifying the two transfers has raised concerns in judicial circles over whether this might lead to a fresh standoff between the government and the Supreme Court. The collegium did not cite any reasons for its recommendations.

Justice Bagchi was recommended for a "re-transfer" to his parent High Court, which is the Calcutta High Court, just nine months after he had been transferred to the Andhra Pradesh High Court. The collegium had recommended his transfer from the Calcutta High Court on December 16, 2020, amidst an ongoing controversy at the time over allegations by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy that a senior judge of the Supreme Court was interfering in the functioning of

the Andhra Pradesh High Court. While Justice Bagchi was transferred to the Andhra Pradesh High Court, the Supreme Court collegium, which was at the time headed by former CJI S A Bobde, recommended the transfer of then Andhra Pradesh High Court Chief Justice J K Maheshwari as Chief Justice of the Sikkim High Court.

Justice Maheshwari is now a judge of the Supreme Court, having taken oath on August 31 this year. Justice Bagchi assumed charge as a judge of the Andhra Pradesh High Court on January 4 this year.

January 4 this year.

In its resolutions of
September 16, the Supreme
Court collegium recommended
the transfer of Justice Soumen
Sen to the Orissa High Court.
Another senior judge of the
Calcutta High Court, Justice
Arindam Sinha, too was transferred to the Orison High Court

ferred to the Orissa High Court.
On May 24 this year, Justice
Sinha had taken the unprecedented step of writing to all
judges of the Calcutta High
Court, raising questions over the
intervention of the Acting Chief
Justice of the court at the time,
Justice Rajesh Bindal, to transfer
the Narada sting case to the
High Court, and to subsequently
constitute a five-judge bench to

hear it.

Justice Sinha had said that the manner in which the High Court had dealt with the CBI's plea opposing the bail given to four Trinamool Congress leaders by the lower court was "unbecoming of the majesty" of the High Court, which had been "reduced to a mockery".

Justice Sinha was sworn in at the Orissa High Court on October 8. Justice Bindal as-

sumed charge as Chief Justice of the Allahabad High Court on October 11.

'He didn't come home... next day, before his turn at the fertiliser shop, he died'

The district has around 3 lakh hectares of cultivable land. Last year, in the month of October and November, around 32,000 metric tonnes of fertilisers were consumed in Lalitpur. Sources said the district had stocks of 19,000 metric tonnes, but was struggling to meet demand following the rain last week. DM Kumar said the demand had suddenly increased.

Late monsoon rains have

spurred demand for sowing of mustard, chana, wheat and other rabi crops, but farmers across the country have been struggling to access di-ammonium phosphate necessary to be applied at the time. Stocks are low due to a surge in international prices in the past sixseven months. The Indian Express had reported earlier that all-India stocks of DAP and muriate of potash on September 30 were less than half of a year-ago levels. The Department of Fertilisers is operating a 24X7 war room to run rakes as per demand, with the allocation to Uttar Pradesh

mainly as of now to Aligarh,

Mathura, Agra, Mainpuri, Etawah, Farrukhabad, Kanpur, and other rake points near the state's potato- and mustardgrowing tracts.

Sources said the other reason for the rush at shops in Lalitpur is that out of the total 270 shops in the district, just around 150 are functional. Others are closed because of various reasons, including their licences not being renewed. District officials are now looking at ways to reopen the shops as soon as possible.

Samajwadi Party chief

Akhilesh Yadav demanded that the government compensate Pal's family, adding in a tweet that never in the history of Independent India has the farmer been so harassed and humiliated as now. Lalitpur's wait though may

be ending. Kumar told *The* Sunday Express that arrangements have been made for supply of fertilisers to the district and stocks were likely to reach soon.

After 3 yrs and memories of a lifetime, India play Pak today

for making ticket purchases "high-tech". "They only accept credit card payments (online). We aren't upmarket people, we don't have credit cards. And now, those who have extra tickets are demanding a very high price. Still we have come and we will get our tickets. We have come with a slogan -- Khelo

West Bengal

Govt target: 1st dose of Covid vaccine to all adults by year-end

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA, OCTOBER 23

WITH Durga Puja and Lakshmi Puja over, the state government is now concentrating on stepping up vaccination against Covid-19, wary that cases may increase. The government is aiming at expediting the vaccination process and ensure that all individuals in the state above 18 years of age are given their first dose by year-end.

State Chief Secretary Harikrishna Dwivedi on Thursday issued instructions in this regard to every district administration and district health officers.

During Durga Puja, the daily vaccination number dropped to around 7.000 from more than 10 lakh a dav. After Dussehra, the number increased to 10 lakh for a day on October 18 but dipped again since.

Director of Health Services Ajay Chakraborty said, "Puja ended and we have to get back to our work now. This time it may be more challenging to control the Covid situation since people didn't behave responsibly enough... which was expected amid this pandemic situation. Maybe we need to fight harder this time as the rural and urban mixing is an additional threat after this festival. However, we are ready to accommodate the emerging situation and our doctors and nurses are ready to sacrifice their own comfort and serve humanity.'

A day after the Chief Secretary's instructions to step up vaccination, the daily vaccination number increased significantly on Friday, when it crossed the 12 lakh mark. A total of 12,29,565 persons were vaccinated, of whom 8,37,379 people got the first dose of the vaccine. The state also crossed the milestone of seven-crore doses. As of Saturday, 7,05,62,259 have been vaccinated, of whom 5,12,44,425 have received both their shots.

The target of the state administration is to achieve the first dose of vaccine takers numbers would be more than seven crore within this year.

A senior health department official said, "Vaccination picked up pace from September. Even in the flood situation, our 'ASHA' workers continued the door-to-door vaccination process. Now, after the rainy season is over, we are expecting the pace of vaccination to increase further and we will easily achieve the number that the state government expects to reach within this

'MAMATA UNDISPUTED LEADER'

Voting for Cong & Left same as pressing NOTA: Abhishek

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE KOLKATA OCTOBER 23

AHEAD OF next week's four Assembly by-polls in the state, Trinamool Congress (TMC) nageneral secretary tional Abhishek Banerjee on Saturday said his aunt and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee was emerging as the "undisputed leader" from Kashmir to Kanvakumari in the fight against the BIP, and added that voting for the Left or the Congress would be akin to opting for the NOTA (None of the Above) option on

the voting machine. The Diamond Harbour MP made the remarks in back-to-back rallies in Gosaba (South 24 Parganas district) and Khardaha (North 24 Parganas).

"In the 2024 Lok Sabha election, not the Congress, the TMC will fight against the BJP and oust their government from Delhi. Over the past seven years, the Congress has only conceded defeat to the BIP all over the country, while Mamata Banerjee thwarted all challenges posed by communal and undemocratic BIP. The Left and the Congress even tied up with the ISF but the electorate of Bengal chose TMC MP Abhishek

Mamata Banerjee over any other party. Voting for them is the same as pressing the NOTA button. If anything, it will strengthen BJP's hands."

Banerjee

The MP said TMC was making its presence felt all over India and would form governments in Goa and Tripura. "It [TMC] is established that we are now national party among top five parties and Mamata Banerjee made it possible from her humble abode. The country is eagerly waiting for the results of by-polls in these four constituencies. People want a leader like Mamata. That is why they raised slogans such as 'Desh ki netri kaisi ho, Mamata didi jaisi ho'."

The TMC leader said that while the polls in Gosaba and Khardaha were necessitated following the deaths of the TMC candidates, the elections in Santipur (Nadia district) and Dinhata (Cooch Behar) were being held because the victorious BIP candidates did not want to

give up their Lok Sabha seats.

"They dishonoured the verdict of people and that is why Jagannath Sarkar and Nisith Pramanik resigned even after they were elected from Santipur and Dinhata. Even after that, they are seeking votes and people will reject them. Predicting a "4-0 clean

sweep" in the by-elections, Abhishek alleged that the BJP was trying to win the Santipur by-poll and gain political mileage using the recent communal violence in Bangladesh. He added, "The BIP state president [Sukanta Majumdar] has said that his party will win byelections in Santipur because of the violence in Bangladesh. Isn't he ashamed? You [Majumdar] are trying to gain political mileage out of communal violence in Bangladesh where Hindus were tortured."

Lashing out at Union Home Minister Amit Shah, the MP asked him about the promises he had made in the run-up to the Assembly elections, "Home Minister Amit Shah promised Rs 2 lakh crore for the development of the Sunderbans before the Assembly polls, what happened to that promise? After the election, they have not been seen in

In contrast, he added, Mamata Banerjee "kept her promises". He added, "Here lies the difference between the BJP and the TMC. No one got Rs 15 lakh in their bank account, as promised by Narendra Modi in 2014. But all our social welfare projects - Krishakbandhu, Swastha Sathi, Kanyashree and Lakshmir Bhandar – are benefitting crores of people already.'

The MP held the Biplab Deb government in Tripura responsible for the assault on his party members, and noted that Rajya Sabha MP Sushmita Dev was "attacked in the state" by the BIP on Friday. "Should that happen in a democracy? We will not cower down before them. We will drive out the BJP from Tripura, carrying a picture of Mamata Banerjee," he said.

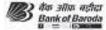
Abhishek alleged that the BJP "harasses" anyone against them with help from central agencies. He added, "They summoned me several, times, interrogated me for nine hours. You can interrogate me for hours...that will not stop me from speaking against you [BJP leaders]. If you slit my throat, I will still shout 'Jai Hind', 'Jai Bangla'. Truth is on my side." (WITH PTI INPUTS)

Bengal govt adopted 3-tier model to boost technical education: Minister

Kolkata: With a focus on experience-based education and handson training, the West Bengal government has adopted a three-tier model of skilling with vocational training centres at panchayats, ITI institutes at blocks and a polytechnic college at every sub-division of the state, a minister said on Saturday.

Technical Education and Skill

Development Minister Humayun Kabir said his department is in the process of setting up at least one polytechnic institute in every subdivision of the state. The government has identified 495 vocational training centres for upgrading and trying to converge technical education with the labour department to identify district-wise skill gap, he said. PTI



Arihant Tower, 12/1, K. N. Mukherjee Road Howrah - 711 101, W. B. (For Immovable Property

(As per Appendix IV read with rule 8(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 200

Kadamtala Branch POSSESSION NOTICE

Whereas The undersigned being the authorised officer of the BANK OF BARODA unde the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Securit nterest Act, 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12 read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated 04.05.2021 calling upon the borrower Shri Asit Kumar Mukherjee (borrower Prop. M/s Bijay Enterprise and Mr. Partha Pratim Mitra (Guarantor) to repay th mount mentioned in the notice being Rs.9829365.37 (Rupees Ninety Eight Lakhs Twent Nine Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Five and Thirty Seven paisa only) as on 26.04.202 together with further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus costs, charges an expenses till date of payment within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The Borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower

and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the propert described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub-section (4) of section 13 of the Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement, Rules, 2002 on this the 22nd day of October of the year 2021.

The borrower / Guarantors / Mortgagors in particular and the public in general is hereb cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property/ies will be subject to the charge of the Bank of Baroda for an amount of Rs.9829365.37 (Rupees Ninety Eight Lakhs Twenty Nine Thousand Three Hundred Sixty Five and Thirty Seve paisa only) and further interest thereon at the contractual rate plus Costs, Charges and expenses till date of payment.

The Borrower's attention is invited to provision of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Ac in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets

Description of the Immovable Property:

Equitable Mortgage of all the piece and parcel of House measuring area 1 cottah 2 chittack 16.75 Sq.ft. comprising Holding No.-53/22/A, R.S. Dag No. 171, Khatian No. 63, L.R Dag No. 486, at J. N. Lahiri Road, Mouza-Ballabhpur, P.S.- Serampore, Dist.-Hoogly 712201. The property belongs to Partha Pratim Mitra. Bounded: On the North by: 10 ft Wide Road, On

the South by: 10 ft. Wide Road, On the East by: Building of Dipankar Chatterjee and On the

Date: 22.10.2021. Place: Kadamtala

"Reference is made to earlier possession notice under Sec13(4) of the SARFESAI act ,2002 dated 23-09-2021 published on 25-09-2021 which is hereby withdrawn on 22 -10-2021.Fresh notice under Sec 13 (4) of the SARFESAI act, 2002 is hereby issued on 22-10-2021."

974 new Covid cases, 12 more die

Kolkata: The number of new Covid-19 cases in West Bengal further increased on Saturday as it recorded 974 cases. In the past seven days, the number of new cases have steadily increased in the state. On October 16, West Bengal recorded 443 new cases of the coronavirus infection (Covid-19) in 24 hours. The next day, it increased to 624.

On Saturday, Chief Secretary Harikrishna Dwibedi ordered district administrations to announce micro-containment zones to curb the spread of infection. The Howrah district administration announced 14 places as micro-

'Centre trying

drive on Covid

iab numbers'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SENIOR CONGRESS leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Saturday alleged that the BJP government

led by Prime Minister Narendra

Modi is trying to "confuse"

the people of the country with

its campaign on Covid-19

Lok Sabha claimed that Modi's

campaign on administration of

100 crore vaccine doses was pro-

jected in a way that made it look

like 100 crore people have

vaccine doses, 100 places were lit up. And the prime minister is trying to send across the message that 100 crore people have been fully vaccinated. This is not the fact," he said in a video

"On completion of 100 crore

Chowdhury, who is also the West Bengal Congress chief, noted that India's population stands at 139 crore, of which 106

He further pointed out that the government has said that 29 crore people have received double doses, which is just 21 per cent of the entire

"Only this 21 per cent is in the safe zone. Also, booster doses are not being given in the country as yet," the Congress MP from Berhampore stated. India had started immunisation programmes way back in

The leader of the Congress in

vaccination figures.

been inoculated.

posted on Facebook.

crore are adults.

population.

KOLKATA, OCTOBER 23

to confuse

people with

Bengal

Ranjan

Congress chief Adhir

Chowdhury

day. Bengal's Covid-19 infection tally has gone up to 15,85,466 cases. The bulletin added that twelve new deaths were recorded in the state, taking the fatality tally to 19,045. The state recorded 808 Covid-19

containment zones later in the

recoveries in the past 24 hours. The number of people cured of the infection in the state has now gone up to 15,58,690, the health department bulletin said. The recovery rate among coronavirus patients in West Bengal now stands at 98.31 percent. West Bengal now has 7731 active Covid-19 cases. ENS



GOVT. OF BIHAR

BIHAR COMBINED ENTRANCE COMPETITIVE EXAMINATION BOARD I.A.S. Association Building, Near Patna Airport, Patna-14.

for MDS in Private Dental Colleges of Bihar Website: bceceboard.bihar.gov.in

Adv. No.- BCECEB(PGDAC)-2021/05 Dated: 23.10.2021

Important Notice for MOP UP Counselling (Dental)

In continuation to earlier all published concerned Advertisement of PGDAC-2021, this is to inform all NEET(MDS)-2021 / PGDAC-2021 (MDS) candidates and all concerned that MOP UP Counselling for seat allotment / admission will be going to held offline. Detailed programme and process for MOP UP Counselling of PGDAC-2021 (Dental Course) has been published through Adv. no. BCECEB(PGDAC)-2021/04 dt. 23.10.2021 which is uploaded on Board's website: bceceboard.bihar.gov.in. All concerned kindly go through the advertisement uploaded on Board's website and do accordingly.

2. The online Registration and submission of Application Form will start from 26.10.2021 and close on 31.10.2021 (10.00 P.M.).

Controller of Examination

र्वेक ऑफ़ बड़ीदा Bank of Baroda

Date: 22.10.2021, Place: Rajbari

RAJBARI BRANCH Rajbari, Basanti Malancha Highway

Whereas, the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of the Bank of Baroda under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financi

Appendix-IV, [Rule 8(1)] **POSSESSION NOTICE** Mathbari Abad, West Bengal - 743 442 (For Immovable Property

Authorised Officer, Bank of Baroda

Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act. 2002 (54 of 2002) and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued Demand Notice calling upon the Borrowers to repay the amoun nentioned in the notice together with further interest, cost etc. thereon within 60 days from the date of the said notice. The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below to exercise of powers conferred on him/her under Section 13(4) of the said Act, read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the date mentioned below.

The Borrowers/ Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealing with the property will be subject to the charge of Bank of Baroda, Rajbari Branch for the amount and interest thereon The Borrowers' attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets.

	SI. No.	Name of the Borrower & Guarantor with address	Date of Demand Notice Date of Possession Outstanding Amount	Description of Immovable Properties
2.	1.	Borrower: Mr. Aynal Abedin Molla, S/o Esmail Molla of Charpara 2nd Part (3 No. Charadhabjikat) Nazat, 1 No. Sandeshkhali, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal - 743 442. Guarantor: Sariful Molla, S/o Aynal Abedin Molla of Kanmari, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal - 743 442. A/c No. 20080500000770 A/c No. 20080600000839 A/c No. 20080600000881 A/c No. 20080600000984	1) 15.06.2021 2) 22.10.2021 3) Rs.44,65,652.85 (Rupees Forty Four Lakh Sixty Five Thousand Six Hundred Fifty Two and Paise Eighty Five only) as on 31.03.2021 and further interest, incidental expenses, costs and charges etc. thereon.	Equitable Mortgage of Deed No. 151103177 for the year 2017 in respect of immovable property being all that piece and parcel of bastu land standing in the name of Mr. Sariful Molla, Guarantor, measuring an area of 25 Satak more or less together with one storied building measuring an area of 1200 sq. ft. more or less standing thereon and situated at Mouza-Bounian Abad, comprised in R.S. & L.R. Dag No. 2297 under R.S. Khatian No. 2587, J.L. No. 20, P.S. Sandeshkhali, District- North 24 Parganas, within the limits of Nazat No. 1 Gram Panchayat. The property is butted and bounded by North: Property of Achmat Ali Molla, South: Property of Moktar Molla, East: Road, West: Property of Fakir Molla.
	2.	Borrower: Mr. Sariful Molla, S/o Aynal Abedin Molla of Kanmari, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal - 743 442. Guarantor: 1. Alil Molla, S/o Esmail Molla of Charpara Nazat 1 No. Sandeshkhali, North 24 Parganas, West Bengal - 743 442, 2. Mr. Saiful Molla, S/o Aynal Abedin Molla of Baunia, P.S. Sandeshkhali, Dist. North 24 Parganas, West Bengal - 743 442. A/c No. 20080500000757 A/c No. 20080500000757	1) 15.06.2021 2) 22.10.2021 3) Rs.11,17,881.83 (Rupees Eleven Lakh Seventeen Thousand Eight Hundred Eighty One and Paise Eighty Three only) as on 31.03.2021 and further interest, incidental expenses, costs and charges etc. thereon.	Equitable Mortgage of Deed No. 151103801 for the year 2017 in respect of immovable property being all that piece and parcel of land measuring 3 decimal together with 152 sq. ft. shop room lying situated in R.S. and L.R. Dag 907, Khatian No. 525, J.L. No. 18, at Mouza- Kanmari, Mahakuma- Basirhat, P.S. Sandeshkhali, North 24 Parganas, within the limits of Hatgachi Gram Panchayat. The property is butted and bounded by North: 8 ft. wide road, South: 8 ft. wide road, East: Property of Sri Manoranjan Nayak, West: Property of Sri Sudarsan Jana & Sri Sanjay Baj.

Declaration about criminal cases

(As per the judgment dated 25th September, 2018, of Hon 'ble Supreme Court in WP (Civil) No. 536 of 2011 (Public Interest Foundation & Ors. Vs. Union of India & Anr.)

Format C-1

Name and address of candidate: DHAIJYA KONWAR, Resident Of Rupahibam, Post Office- Udaipur, Police Station- Demow, District- Sibsagar, Assam

Name of political party: Independent

Name of Election: Bye Election Assam, 2021

Name of Constituency: 107 Thowra Legislative Assembly Constituency

I, DHAIJYA KONWAR, a candidate for the abovementioned election, declare for public information the following details about my criminal antecedents:

(A) Pending Criminal Cases

SI. No.	Name of Court	Case No. and dated	Status Case(s)	Section (s) of Acts concerned and brief description of Offence(s)
1.	Not Applicable	Dispur P.S Case No- 3234/2017	Pending Investigation	Section 120B/ 147/ 148/ 353/ 333/ 338/ 325/ 188 of Indian Penal Code
2.	Not Applicable	Dispur P.S Case No- 3750/2017	Pending Investigation	Section 143/144/145/147/ 149/152/427/336/353 of the Indian Penal Code read with Section 3 of PDPP Act
3.	Not Applicable	Crime Branch Case No- 01/2019	Pending Investigation	Section 120B/ 122/ 123/ 143/ 147/ 148/ 149/ 150/ 152/ 153/ 326/ 333/ 353 of the Indian Penal Code
4.	Not Applicable	Basistha P.S Case No- 2130/2019	Pending Investigation	147/148/353/333/ 342/325 of Indian Penal Code R/w Section – 3 of PDPP Act
5.	Not Applicable	Basistha P.S Case No- 2126/2019	Pending Investigation	147/148/342/353/333/325/ 435 of the Indian Pena Code read with Section 3 of PDPP Act
6.	Not Applicable	Basistha P.S Case No- 2129/2019	Pending Investigation	147/148/342/353/333/325 435 of the Indian Pena Code read with Section 3 of PDPP Act
7.	Court of Munsiff No- 4, Kamrup (M)	G.R-10778/2016	Evidence Stage	Section 120B/188 of Indian Penal Code
8.	Court of CJM, Kamrup (M)	G.R-6866/2011	Appearance Stage	Section 447 of the Indian Penal Code
9.	Hon'ble Gauhati High Court	a. Criminal Appeal- 121/2021	Stage of Orders	Section 120B r/w 124A 153A/153B of the Indian
		b. Criminal Appeal- 130/2020	Pending in the Stage of Orders	Section 18 and 39 of the
		c. Criminal Appeal- 173/2020	Pending in the Stage of Orders	U(A)PA
		All above appeals are arising out of NIA Special Case No RC-13/2019		

SI No.	Name of Court & date(s) of order(s)	Description of Offence(s) & punishment imposed	Maximum Punishment Imposed
1.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
2.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable
3.	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Not Applicable

1975 and country is called the "vaccine hub of the world", he maintained.

After bribe charge, Bangladesh protests: Jamiat claims attacks, cops say keeping watch Malik says all know who was in charge of RSS in J&K

VARINDER BHATIA CHANDIGARH. OCTOBER 23

DAYS AFTER he alleged that he was told he would get a Rs 300crore bribe if he cleared two files belonging to "Ambani" and a "senior RSS functionary" during his tenure as Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Governor, Satya Pal Malik said on Saturday that it would "not be correct" to name the person, but "everybody knows who was

the RSS in-charge in J&K".

Speaking to The Sunday Express, Malik, who is currently serving as the Governor of Meghalaya, said: "It would not be correct to name the person, but you can figure out who was the RSS in-charge in I&K. But I feel sorry, I should not have taken the RSS's name. If anybody is functioning in his individual capacity or doing any business, only he should have been referred to. Irrespective of which organisation he is affiliated to, the organisation should not have been brought into

Meanwhile, asked about Malik's allegations, RSS leader Ram Madhav said in Surat, "ask him who or what it was". When told that he was in J&K at that time, he said: "Nobody from the RSS would do something like that; but I really don't know in what context he said it, or whether he said it or not. You should ask him... He may have said 'somebody said this'... I have no knowledge about this, nobody from the RSS ever does this... He said in 2014 that we are losing the elections, and that we have done injustice to farmers. Do we believe all this? This could be his opinion, what is the truth, we don't know.'

Malik made these remarks at a "public meeting" in Rajasthan on October 17. In a video of his

No. KRDCL/IFB/2021-22/17

SI.



speech, Malik says: "Two files came before me in J&K. One of them pertained Ambani, the other to a senior RSS functionary. One of the secretaries

told me these

shady deals, but you can get Rs 150 crore each from these. I rejected the offer saying I had come (to Kashmir) with five kurta-pyjamas, and will leave with just these. But, as a cautionary measure, I took time from the Prime Minister and went to meet him. I told him that this is the file, this is the ghapla (scam) in it, these are the people involved, and they take your name, you tell me what is to be done. If these projects are not to be cancelled, then I can leave and you can appoint anybody else in my place; but if I stay, I will not clear these project files. I praise the Prime Minister for his reply – he told me there is no need for any compromise on

corruption". "People cannot imagine how corrupt I&K is. Across the country. the rate of commission for clearing such files is 4-5 per cent, but in J&K, they ask for 15 per cent commission. During my tenure, there was panic and no big corruption took place," he says.

Asked if he took action against those who were trying to bribe him or government officials for getting their projects cleared. Malik said: "They were not trying to bribe me. But there was a bribe in those projects. There were a few people who were taking it... There was no requirement for any further action since I cancelled both the projects. That punishment was sufficient.'

Date: 22-10-2021

Approximate

Estimated Cost

(Rs. In Lakhs)

222.75

102.168

201.420

19.385

78.588

Sd/- Chief Engineer,

KRDCL, Bengaluru

Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited

(A Government of Karnataka Enterprise) "Samparka Soudha", No.8, Dr. Rajkumar Road,

Rajajinagar 1st Block, Bengaluru-560 010. Tele Fax: 080-22024000

E-mail: mdkrdcl@gmail.com & cekrdcl@gmail.com

TENDER NOTIFICATION

(On e-procurement basis)

following work as per the requirement of Bangalore City Traffic

Police on item rate tender basis in two cover system as detailed

Name of the work

Providing Comprehensive Maintenance

services to the Existing 825 Nos of Solar

Blinkers in Bengaluru under Road Safety

Authority and Traffic Management Project to

Providing Comprehensive Maintenance

services to the Existing 55 Nos of Pelican

Signal Light in Bengaluru under Road Safety

Authority and Traffic Management Project to

Providing Comprehensive Maintenance

services to the Existing 250 Nos of Tablets

(Digital FTVR) in Bengaluru under Road Safety

Authority and Traffic Management Project to

Providing Comprehensive Maintenance

services to the Existing Alcometers in

Bengaluru under Road Safety Authority and

Traffic Management Project to Bengaluru City

Providing Comprehensive Maintenance

services to the Existing Equipment of

Interceptor in Bengaluru under Road Safety

Authority and Traffic Management Project to

3. The calendar of events for various activities is as follows:

Earnest Money Deposit: As per e-portal & also submit the form of

2. Interested applicants may download bidding documents from the

e-procurement portal www.eproc.karnataka.gov.in and submit

the bids and EMD (Electronically) through e-procurement portal

a. The last date and time for submission of gueries is 08-11-2021

up to 17:30 Hrs. The applicants may submit their queries through

b. Pre-bid meeting will be held on 10-11-2021 at 11.30 Hrs in the

KRDCL Board Room, Bengaluru at the above address only for the

c. The Last date and time for submission of Bids is 23-11-2021

d. Date and time of opening of Technical Bids is 25-11-2021 at

* Please note henceforth, any changes in the schedule will not be

published through News papers and further changes will be

Bengaluru City Traffic Police.

Bengaluru City Traffic Police.

Bengaluru City Traffic Police.

Bengaluru City Traffic Police.

EMD Declaration. Period of Services: 3 Years.

electronic mail: cekrdcl@gmail.com

tenders referring to SI. No. (1) to (3).

updated only on e-procurement portal website.

up to 17.30 Hrs.

DIPR/Bengaluru/R.O.No.1951/2021-22

11.00 Hrs.

DEBRAJ DEB

AMID A series of rallies by Hindu organisations here against vandalisation of Durga Puja pandals in Bangladesh, the Tripura State Jamiat Ulama (Hind) submitted a memorandum to the office of Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb on Friday, alleging attacks on mosques and minority habitations in the past three days.

A senior Tripura Police officer said while there had been "a

Protest March

Kolkata on Saturday. Partha Paul

BASHAARAT MASOOD

SHARPSHOOTERS ATOP build-

ings, bullet-proof mobile

bunkers across the city, police-

men in civvies on sensitive loca-

tions, an unofficial ban on two-

wheelers, and hundreds of

detentions, including under the

Public Safety Act (PSA) --

SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 23

few stray disturbances", there was no major incident of law and order. "We are providing security to nearly 150 mosques." the officer said, confirming vandalism at a mosque near Agartala. He said they were investigating the incidents and analysing CCTV footage.

Unakoti SP Rati Ranjan Debnath said they were probing an incident regarding an idol in the district of North Tripura. Pointing out that the idol was located in an abandoned place atop a hillock in Unakoti,

ISKCON members at a protest against the recent attacks on minorities in Bangladesh, in

Amit Shah in Srinagar: Snipers,

detentions, 'ban' on 2-wheelers

Srinagar was put under a heavy

security umbrella as Union

Home Minister Amit Shah ar-

rived on Saturday for his first

visit to Jammu and Kashmir

following the abrogation of

11 civilian deaths in targeted

killings in the Valley -- most of

them migrant workers -- a jit-

tery security establishment has

With October alone seeing

Article 370 in August 2019.

Debnath said: "There was heavy rainfall the past few days... It's hard to imagine anyone would walk over 45 minutes through thick vegetation to (carry out something like this) in an abandoned place. There is no communal tension here."

In its memorandum to the CM, along with the office of Director General of Police V S Yadav, Tripura Jamiat president Mufti Tayebur Rahman said a section of people were trying to disrupt communal harmony in the state. Speaking to reporters

on Friday evening, Rahman said: 'No one from Hindu or Muslim communities of Tripura supported the heinous incidents (in Bangladesh). We also protested against it at the Bangladesh visa

BJP spokesperson Nabendu Bhattacharya said the party was against any such incident, and leaders of its minority morcha had reached out to "everyone across the state" to ensure peace.

On October 21, over 15 people, including three police personnel, had been injured when activists of the VHP and Hindu Jagran Manch had clashed with police during a rally at Udaipur in Gomati district against the Bangladesh violence, ignoring Section 144 restrictions. The organisers claimed they had the required permission for the rally, but police had stopped them when they tried to make their

ity-dominated parts. Local RSS leader Abhijit Chakraborty, who was part of the rally, said, "We suspect some people might have tried to con-

way to areas near some minor-

fuse the administration that we would disrupt law and order."

The same day, massive rallies were held at Agartala and Dharmanagar in North Tripura district over the attacks on minorities in Bangladesh.

A three-day Bangladesh International Film Festival scheduled to start in Agartala on October 21 has been cancelled. Assistant Bangladesh High Commissioner at Agartala Md Jobayed Hosen told the media, "We considered the feedback we received and decided.

PM meets vaccine makers, asks them to work together

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

LAUDING THE efforts of domestic vaccine makers in crossing the 100-crore Covid-19 vaccinations mark, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday asked them to continuously work together to be ready to face any challenges.

Speaking at an interaction with domestic vaccine manufacturers, Modi also said that the country needs to institutionalise the best practices honed during the last one-and-a-half years.

According to a statement from the Prime Minister's Office (PMO): "He said that the entire world is looking up to India, in the backdrop of the success of the vaccination drive. He also said that the vaccine manufacturers should continuously work together to be ready to face future challenges."

During the interaction, vaccine manufacturers "appreciated the vision and dynamic leadership" of the PM in providing "continuous guidance and support" towards the development of vaccines, the statement said.

"They noted that had the country been following old norms, there would have been considerable delay and we would not have been able to reach the vaccination level that we have attained till now," it

TRACKING THE SECOND SURGE

NEW CASES: 15,457 ACTIVE CASES: 1,73,521

TOTAL VACCINATION: 1,013,028,411



TESTS TODAY: 13.02.381 | TOTAL TESTS: 59.97.33.543 WEEKLY POSITIVITY: 1.22% | OVERALL POSITIVITY: 5.70%

STATES REPORTING MOST CASES

STATE	NEW Cases	ACTIVE CASES	WEEKLY POSITIVITY	TOTAL VACCINATION		
■ Kerala	8,909	81,155	10.51%	37,885,171		
■ Maharashtra	1,701	24,022	1.36%	94,581,669		
■ Tamil Nadu	1,140	13,280	0.92%	54,505,797		
■ West Bengal	974	7,731	2.36%	70,561,973		
Mizoram	745	8,883	11.67%	1,207,679		
STATES REPORTING MOST DEATHS						

PIAIF	DEATHS	DEATHS	CFR	CFR			
■ Kerala	464	28,229	1.78%	0.59%			
■ Maharashtra	36	1,43,610	1.34%	2.18%			
■ Tamil Nadu	17	36,004	1.20%	1.34%			
■ West Bengal	12	19,045	1.63%	1.21%			
■ Karnataka	7	38,002	1.91%	1.27%			
Note: Data as on Oct 23: yaco	Note: Data as on Oct 23: vaccination numbers as of Oct 22. Deaths include those from provious days. Kerala						

added more than 400 deaths in a data cleaning exercise

education for each Dalit child': **Arvind Kejriwal**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

put in place a three-tier secu-

rity set-up for the visit that will

end on Monday. A senior offi-

cer said the security protocol, to

thwart an attack during Shah's

visit, was the strictest in recent

years. The roads leading to the

Raj Bhawan and Sher-i-Kashmir

International Conference Centre

where Shah is expected to chair

an event on Monday have been

closed for civilian movement.

'Quality

FELICITATING 22 Dalit students who scored above 90% in their class XII exams, on the occasion of Valmiki Jayanti, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Keiriwal said he has "vowed to fulfil Babasaheb's dream" of quality education for all Dalit children.

A celebration of Valmiki Jayanti was held at Thyagaraj Stadium on Saturday, in which a "Pratibha Samman Sammaroh" was organised during which Keiriwal presented 22 Dalit students, who passed class XII from Delhi government schools with scores above 90%, with certificates and shields.

"Both B R Ambedkar and Lord Valmiki teach us that the only way to be successful, to flourish, is through education. Babasaheb dreamt for each and every Dalit child to get the highest quality of education. I promise to you all that it is my solemn resolve to realise his dream. I will make sure that what this country's leaders could not do in 70 years, I will make that happen and ensure that every Dalit child gets the best possible education on offer," said Kejriwal. On social welfare schemes available for the education of underprivileged children, he said, "This year, 2.5 lakh students have made the shift from private schools to government schools."

Govt advisory to TV channels: Air Covid cautions

New Delhi: A day after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address to the nation, in which he recommended caution during the upcoming festive period, the Union Ministry for Information and Broadcasting issued an advisory to all TV channels to carry messages informing people about the im-

portance of respecting and adhering to Covid-19 appropriate behaviour. "It remains crucial to not let

our guards down, especially in view of the upcoming festive

In the context of the upcoming festive season, the advisory said. "it is advised that

private satellite TV channels may broadcast messages and other content to inform people about the crucial need to adhere to COVID appropriate behavior, exercise due precautions, avoid crowded places, adhere to limits on public gathering, etc. and not let our guards down." ENS

Forced adoption: SFI leader sits on protest; Kerala govt offers help

SHAJU PHILIP

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 23

THE CPI(M)-led government in Kerala got into damage control mode Saturday as the alleged forcible separation of a boy from his mother, an SFI leader, snowballed into a controversy even as the aggrieved woman sat on a protest in front of the

state secretariat.

State Women and Family Welfare Minister Veena George said the government will take Anupama S Chandran's demand for her child to the family court. She said before adoption formalities are completed, the court will be informed. It will also be told about the government investigation into the baby's

adoption. The state women's commis-

sion has also offered legal assistance to Anupama, 23, who held a protest in front of the state secretariat Saturday, demanding that her son be given back. She ended her stir after the government promised to look into her demand.

Anupama has alleged that her parents, local CPI(M) leaders, forcibly took away her son last October, three days after her delivery.

Jammu sub-judge sentenced to 10 years in jail for raping woman

Abrol was suspended follow-

ARUNSHARMA JAMMU. OCTOBER 23

A FAST-TRACK court in Jammu on Saturday awarded ten years of rigorous imprisonment to a suspended sub-judge for raping a domestic help. The court also imposed a fine of Rs 50,000

Presiding Officer Khalil Choudhary further sentenced Rajesh Kumar Abrol to simple imprisonment of seven years and imposed a fine of Rs 20,000 for cheating the woman.

ing the FIR and was subsequently arrested. The court said. "It is not only the duty of the court, but social and legal obligations are clearly enjoined upon it to impose adequate punishment according to law while taking into consideration not only the crime, but also the criminal... Furthermore, deterrence and reformation are primarily social goals.'

Choudhary added: "It is the duty of the court to impose adequate sentence, for one of the purposes of the requisite sentence is

protection of the society and legitimate response to its collectively concise. The paramount principle that should be a guiding laser beam is that the punishment should be proportionate."

Abrol was convicted on Thursday for raping and cheating the domestic help on the pretext of providing her legal support. The court held that "all the evidence on record unerringly points towards the guilt of the accused.

FULLREPORTON www.indianexpress.com

Man stabbed to death in robbery bid

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

> A 42-YEAR-OLD electrician was stabbed to death, allegedly by two unidentified armed assailants, in Central Delhi's Patel Nagar in what police suspect is a robbery bid. The man, Manoj alias Chhotu Ram, was on his way home and

meant to take his wife for 'karwa chauth' shopping soon after.

Police said the assailants took his phone, ring, chain and around Rs 1.100 in cash after stabbing him. Police have found CCTV footage from the spot and are conducting raids to nab them.

DCP (Central) Shweta Chauhan said the victim was a resident of Faridpuri in West Patel Nagar, and originally hailed from Rajasthan. He is survived by his wife, a 13-year-old son and a five-year-old daughter, and was the sole breadwinner.

"Manoj was stabbed on the left side of his abdomen and declared dead by doctors at RML Hospital. We have got some vital leads and raids are being conducted," Chauhan said.

Kolkata

Jaipur, Rajasthan Raj. Samwad/C/2021-22/7593

Open tendens are invited through a proparament for the work of "Supply of SPhase Energy Meters, Albed Materials and fixing of Meters with Albed Materials to agriculture cervices under YSR Cichila Vyavassaya Vidyut Padhakars in Visionagasm, Visakhapatham. East Bodavari and West Godavari Detects of APEPCOL: BidNe.CGM 05CS/APEPOL/VISP/128/1001-22 Further details can be viewed in www.apeprocurement.gov.in. Sale of Tenders starts on 25:10.2021 @ 4PM.

Contact. Phone No: 0891-2582200, 9440812587 1. Karnataka Road Development Corporation Limited (KRDCL) invites offer from agencies having experience in respect of

Chief General Manager/O&CS APEPBGL: Visakhapatnam

कार्यालय नगरपालिका, महवा (दौसा) राज. Email : nagarpalikamahwa@gmail.com क्रमांक : -नपाम/2021-22/782

पालिका महवा द्वारा CONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT OF STADIUM IN NAGAR PALIKA MAHWA RAJASTHAN कार्य की निविदा आमंत्रित की गई है जिसकी निविदा खबीएन न DLB2122WSRC16459 है। निविदा सूचना एवं शर्ते राजस्थान उपापन पोर्टल की वैबसाई ww.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in एवं eproc.rajasthan.gov.in पर देखी जा सकती है

Raj./Samwad/C/7517/2021-22



NATIONAL LAW INSTITUTE UNIVERSITY

Kerwa Dam Road, Bhopal-462044 Sealed Tenders are invited for providing printing service for

customised degree, Degree Folders, Transcript sheets, Transcripts, provisional Degree, Certificates, Various Registers, Marksheet etc. in the NLIU, Bhopal.

The tender Forms may be downloaded from 21.10.2021 from the NLIU Website www.nliu.ac.in. Last date of submission of Tender Forms is 02.11.2021 till 12.00

M.P. Madhyam/102395/2021 **REGISTRAR**

TENDER NOTICE

Sealed quotations affixing Rs. 25/- Court Fee Stamp are invited for supply of Drilling Accessories, Survey Equipments, Tents & Tarpaulin, PA System, PC Computer and Plotter cum Scanner so as to reach the office of the undersigned on or before 22nd November, 2021 during office hours.

The cost of tender paper is Rs. 100/- for each item on payment by crossed D/D or cash in favour of Director of Mineral Resources, Shillong- 793003. Self addressed stamp envelope is to be enclosed along with the request.

MIPR No. 1265 dt. 22/10/2021

Sd/- (David D. Sangma, MCS) **Director of Mineral Resources,** Meghalaya, Shillong.

JAIPUR DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY Indira Circle, Jawahar Lal Nehru Marg, Jaipur-302004

No.: JDA/EE&TA to Dir.Engg.-II/2021-22/D-110

NOTICE INVITING BID

NIB No.: EE & TA to Dir. Engg.-II/24/2021-22 Bids are invited for works given below in various zones as per details given below :-

1	S. lo.	Zone	UBN No.	Cost of Work (Lacs)	A&F	Nature of Work	Last Date
	1.	EE-PRN- North	ID A 24 22 A COSE 20C E A		Construction and Repair of Road Cut Done by PHED	15.11.2021	
:	2.	IDA24220MI OD00272 1105 50		Electrification of JDA Scheme West Way Heights (Part-I)	11.11.2021		
;	3.	EE-Traffic Works-I	JDA2122WLOB00373	15000.00	145/ 2021-22	Traffic Improvement and Beautification Works at B2 Bye Pass Juction, JDA,	22.11.2021

Details are available at Procurement Portal website www.sppp.rajasthan.gov.in, www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in and www.jda.urban.rajasthan.gov.in Executive Engineer & TA to Dir. Engg.-II

COVID-19. DO NOT PANIC, BE AWARE Maintain Hand Hygiene

GOVT & POLITICS

BJP leader asks women not to go to police stations

LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 23

OPPOSITION PARTIES in Uttar Pradesh hit out at BIP national vice-president Baby Rani Maurya on Saturday for allegedly asking women not to visit police stations after 5 pm, prompting a denial from her.

Maurya, a former Governor, said the video being circulated online is a "clipped" version, with her comments taken out of

On Friday, a video had emerged on social media of an event in Varanasi, where Maurya purportedly said, "...ek mahila adhikari, ek sub-inspector wahaan baithti hai. Lekin ek baat main zaroor kahungi. Paanch baie ke baad, andhera hone ke baad. kabhi thane mat jaana. Phir agle din subah jaana. Jao toh apne ghar se kisi ko bhai ko, apne pati, apne pita ko saath le kar jaana, agar zaroori ho. Lekin mahilaon ke live *yeh kaam hua hai...* (One woman officer or a woman sub-inspector sits there. But I will say that after 5 pm, when it gets dark, don't go to police station. Go there the next morning. If you go, go with a male member of family — your brother, husband or father...but for women, this work has happened)."

The BIP has been projecting Maurya as its Dalit face in UP ahead of the Assembly polls.

Maurya told The Sunday Express, "I don't have a lot to do with this statement. I was in Varanasi yesterday (Friday) on the occasion of Valmiki Jayanti at a Dalit hamlet where Dalit and Muslim women were in attendance. I was telling them about the Yogi government and Modi government's achievements..."

"The SP is in panic... they are scared and I don't know which statement they clipped and put on social media..." she added.

SP spokesperson Raiendra Choudhary said, "Whatever she said can be heard in the video. We have nothing to do with it at all. Her allegation is false."

KANCHAN VASDEV

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 23

AMID A controversy over

Pakistani journalist Aroosa Alam.

and Punjab Deputy Chief Minister

Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa's

flip-flop on Saturday by saying

that state police cannot inquire

against her, former chief minister

Amarinder Singh is preparing to

announce his own political outfit

Friday to say that a probe will be

conducted on Alam's alleged ISI

links, Saturday said, "She is a for-

hold an inquiry against her? It

should be done by RAW and NSA."

words ensued over Alam with

Punjab Pradesh Congress

Amid his U-turn, a war of

eign national. How can a state

Randhawa, who had tweeted

before Diwali, it is learnt.

Marking SP as rival no. 1, Yogi after dark; she says video clipped calls it Kalyug avatar, Ram-drohi

LALMANI VERMA

LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 23

INDICATING THAT Samajwadi Party (SP) is the main opposition to BJP in next year's Assembly polls, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath tore into the party on Saturday, calling it a "kalyug avatar" of the Mahabharat. He said riots took place in every district of the state under the previous Akhilesh Yadav government, and that Hindus were harassed under

Adityanath's attack on the SP comes days after the Prime Minister, during an address in Kushinagar, also took on the

Accusing opposition parties in UP of being against Lord Ram, Adityanath said such "Ram-drohis" not only harmed the faith but also "disturbed the social fabric, harmed development and threw the state in the fire of riots" under their government. Those who are not the wellwisher of Lord Ram can never be your well-wisher," he said.

Addressing a Samajik Patinidhi Sammalean for Vishwakarma Samaj, organised by BJP, Adityanath said, "Maintaining distance from Ram-drohis who shield terrorists, embrace rioters, tear the social fabric, would be better for your present, and also for the future of your coming genera-

 $Without \, naming \, the \, SP\!, or \, its$ leaders, he alleged that during 2012-17, an "entire family" was involved in plundering. "They had all the relations of Mahabharat — chacha, maama, naana, bhatija (uncles, grandfather, nephews, etc). They all reminded of the relations of Mahabharat."

He said, "Mahabharat ka drishya agar dekhna thha toh 12 se 17 (2012 to 2017) ke beech me jo sarkar pradesh me thhi uska who jeevant kalyugi avatar thhi (the

Amid row over Pak friend, Capt

may announce new party soon

Capt

Singh

Committee chief Navjot Singh

Sidhu's wife Navjot Kaur Sidhu

and his chief strategic advisor

Amarinder camp said he was

ready to announce his party any-

the Election Commission. The

party is to be registered and a

choice of symbols is to be given,"

Meanwhile, the slugfest over

Alam continued on Saturday with

Navjot Kaur Sidhu accusing her of

"receiving kickbacks" for postings

said a source.

in Punjab.

Meanwhile, sources in the

"He is taking approval from

Mohd Mustafa also joining in.

Amarinder



UP CMYogi Adityanath in Varanasi, Saturday. PTI

government between 2012 and 2017 was a live demonstration of kalyug avatar Mahabharat).

Adityanath maintained that riots occurred in every district of UP in that period, and that Hindus were harassed. "If Hindus went to lodge a complaint, they themselves were booked m(in some case)," he said, adding that no one can dare get involved in riots under the present government.

"At that time (2012-17), riots occurred before your festivals before Holi, Rakshbandhan, Vijaya Dashami, Deepawali, Janmashtmi, Shivratri, Ramnavmi. No one could celebrate festivals because curfew was imposed by that time," he

"Everyone lived in fear, under the shadow of curfew; they could not celebrate festivals."

"Aur doosri taraf yeh log jaate thhey badi besharmi ke saath gol topi pehan karke; pradesh ki janata ko apmanit karne ka karya bhi karte thhey (on the other hand, those people went around shamelessly, wearing skull caps to insult people of the state)," Adityanath said.

Adityanath also said that BJP protected the setu-bandh (Ram Setu) — built by sons of Lord Vishwakarma (Nal and Neel) while the Congress, the SP and the BSP made efforts in 2005 to harm setu-bandh.

Adityanath was referring to the Sethusamudram shipping

Amarinder for tweeting Aroosa's

picture with AICC chief Sonia

Gandhi. "Still grappling to grasp

the "designs" behind tweeting CP-

Aroosa pic @CAPT_AMARINDER

Please do understand, grant of visa

by UPA or NDA doesn't include li-

cense 2 domesticate and out-

source "governance apparatus to

"videshi mehman" with unfet-

tered liberty to loot and launder,

dia advisor Raveen Thukral posted

pictures of Mustafa's Cabinet min-

ister wife Razia Sultana and his

daughter-in-law with Alam, writ-

ing: "And how about you explain-

ing this @MohdMustafaips. Isn't

that your wife & daughter-in-law

with the same lady? How low can

you get? Mixing politics with

In response, Amarinder's me-

he tweeted"

friendship!...'

Polls near, SP starts a new wing for SCs — led by ex-BSP veteran

LALMANI VERMA

LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 23

THE BJP has started wooing OBCs and SCs with targeted sammelans across UP. The BSP has been holding meetings of the Brahmin community and appealing for "bhaichara" (brotherhood) with SCs. Not to be left behind, with state elections just months away, the SP too has joined the queue.

For the first time since the party was set up in 1992, it has formed a dedicated wing for Scheduled Castes (SCs): Samajwadi Baba Saheb Ambedkar Vahini, And in what its own leaders claim is a masterstroke, the party has appointed a Dalit leader who was with the BSP for 29 years to head this new wing.

"We have to take the ideologies of Bhimrao Ambedkar and Ram Manohar Lohia along. We have to make deprived and oppressed sections aware of the ideologies of both leaders and their contribution to society," savs Mithai Lal Bharti, the man at the helm of the wing who switched sides two years ago.

"In view of the 2022 polls, our office bearers will reach out to Dalits and other deprived sections, and appeal to them to support SP and remove BJP from power. BJP is anti-reservation and anti-Constitution," he says.

Before joining SP in September 2019, Bharti had worked with BSP for 29 years and served as its Ballia district president, Purvanchal region coordinator and Bihar and Chhattisgarh in-charge.

Bharti, 48, says he is a postgraduate in Hindi from Purvanchal University. But what he really treasures from those days is an opportunity to serve a

POSTING A video of a man in UP

purportedly setting fire to his

harvest after he failed to sell it,

BIP MP Varun Gandhi on

Saturday called for a "rethink" of

the agricultural policy saying

that "it's a failure of the nation" if

we "cannot protect those who

Varun wrote: "Samodh Singh, a

farmer in Uttar Pradesh, had

been running around Mandis for

the last 15 days to sell his paddy

crop. When he could not sell the

paddy, in frustration, he himself

set fire on it. Where has our sys-

tem brought the farmers to? The

need of the hour is to rethink our

ken out in support of the farm-

Varun, who has already spo-

agriculture policy.

In his tweet with the video,

LIZ MATHEW

feed" it.

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav with Mithai Lal Bharti, president of Samajwadi Baba Saheb Ambedkar Vahini, File

meal to Kanshi Ram when the BSP founder had visited his hometown Ballia in 1997-1998.

The SP, meanwhile, has high expectations from the new wing -- until now, the party had dedicated wings for OBCs, Scheduled Tribes (STs), minorities, women and other sections.

"There was no separate wing for Scheduled Castes. There were demands from within the party and some student leaders to create such a wing to work exclusively among Dalits... Party national president Akhilesh Yadav ii had made an announcement about it much earlier but a separate vahini has been formed now," said Juhi Singh, SP state spokesperson.

Bharti says his first task is to set up organisational units from the national to state, district, sector and polling booth levels.

So far, SP did not have a dedicated programme for Dalit voters. The party's strength has always been support of the Yadav community among OBCs and Muslims. But with around 23 per cent vote share, SCs have played a significant role in UP politics.

In the 2012 Assembly polls, when the SP won a majority of 224 seats, it had bagged 58 reserved seats for SCs followed by

BJP MP

Gandhi

ers agitating against the 3 new

agricultural laws, told The

Sunday Express later on

Saturday: "There is no greater

punishment that a farmer can

inflict upon himself than setting

fire to his own crops. We must all

introspect as to why the system

has pushed them to the edge for

no fault of their own. It is a fail-

ure of the nation if we cannot

dropped from the BJP national

executive after he spoke out in

support of the farmers protest-

ing the farm laws. He has also

written to UP Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath seeking relief meas-

ures for the agitating farmers.

The MP was recently

protect those who feed us."

Varun Gandhi: Failure of nation if

we can't protect those who feed

BSP (15), Congress (four), and RLD and BJP (three).

In 2017, SP could get only five SC-reserved seats as BJP recorded a victory that included 67 reserved seats, apart from three such seats each for BSP, and NDA allies Apna Dal and Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party.

According to SP's Scheduled Tribes cell chief Vyasji Gour, his wing was working for both STs and SCs until now. "But the tribal population is confined to limited areas. So the party has created a separate wing for SCs..." he said.

According to political observers, the new frontal organisation appears to be an attempt by SP to build inroads among BSP's Dalit vote base given how their 2019 alliance airbrushed the bitter memories of 1995.

After the Babri demolition in 1992, the newly formed SP under Mulayam Singh Yadav and the fledgling BSP had allied to bring their OBC and Dalit core vote bases together to prevent the BJP from returning to power in the Assembly elections.

However, both parties and eventually their core voters --Yadavs and Jatavs -- became bitter rivals after the infamous Lucknow guesthouse incident

KARNATAKA BYPOLL

Cong banks on

minority votes:

Hanagal: With the Hanagal and

Sindgi Assembly seat bypolls less

than a week away, Karnataka

Chief Minister Basavarai Bommai

said on Saturday the Congress is

at the mercy of minority votes to

win elections. He said the

Congress remembers minorities

"They have pushed them (mi-

only when elections are around.

norities) into a well...whenever

there is an election, they throw

them a rope... but pull it back once

the elections are over," Bommai

said at an election meeting in the

Chikkanshi Hosur village in

chief minister Siddaramaiah to

visit the villages in Hanagal to see

the development there before

inviting him for a debate on a pub-

He also challenged former

Hanagal

lic platform.

CM Bommai

WITH CHIEF Minister Pinarayi Vijayan leading the charge, the CPI(M)'s Kerala leadership has argued in the party's Central

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

Committee, a meeting of which is underway in Delhi, that the Congress cannot be the "fulcrum" of anti-BJP Opposition unity and it cannot be considered as an alternative to the BIP. Sources said the central com-

mittee members from Kerala argued that this understanding should reflect in the draft political resolution, which the party is preparing for its national conclave, Party Congress, to be held in Kannur in Kerala next year.

The last Party Congress held in Hyderabad in 2018 had concluded that the BJP was the "main threat" and that the BIP and the Congress cannot be treated as "equal dangers". The party had then decided that the main task is to defeat BIP and its allies by rallying all "secular and democratic forces" but this has to be done without a "political alliance" with the Congress. Sources said the outline of

the draft political resolution approved by the CPM politburo and presented before the Central Committee advocates continuation of this stand. But since then, the CPM had entered into electoral understandings with the Congress. While the Left parties fought

the Assembly elections in alliance with the Congress, the CPM was part of the Congress-



Pinarayi Vijayan

Congress can't be

alternative to BJP:

led alliance in Assam. In Tamil Nadu, the two parties were a part of the DMK-led alliance. CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury argues for continuation of this tactical approach.

But Kerala leaders, sources said, believe that the Congress's approach to fight communalism was insincere, and on many issues, opportunistic. They argue the Congress often takes a soft Hindutva approach.

Sources said Central Committee members from Delhi, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh supported this approach. But they believe that the Congress, which is still the main Opposition party with a presence in most states, cannot be ignored at the national level.

Sources in the Central leadership believe that there was no need to change the line taken during the last Party Congress or reopen the debate. They argue that instead of discussing the party's approach to the Congress, the party should be focusing on forging a wider unity in the wake of people's movements like the farmers' agitation and increasing trade union unity gaining



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Barabanki, UP. Express

Priyanka flags off 'Pratigya Yatras'with 7 promises

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 23

CONGRESS GENERAL secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra Saturday launched her party's 'Pratigya Yatras' in UP's Barabanki district with seven promises, including sops for farmers and jobs for 20 lakh people, ahead of next year's Assembly elections.

Also among the resolutions was one on reservation of 40 per cent tickets for women candi-

Priyanka flagged off the three

Sawant: Work during Covid, state

10-day yatras for western UP, eastern UP and Bundelkhand. The fourth one, for the Awadh zone, will be announced soon.' said Congress spokesperson Anshu Awasthi.

Besides the job and reservation promises, Priyanka announced that the party would provide scooters and smartphones to girl students, give full loan waiver for farmers, buy wheat and paddy at Rs 2,500 and sugarcane at Rs 400 from farmers, halve electricity bills of all people, and distribute Rs 25,000 to each family as aid.

MONTHS TO GO FOR ELECTIONS, POLITICS HEATS UP IN COASTAL STATE

Goa CM to be replaced, says AAP; BJP denies

MAYURA JANWALKAR PANAJI, OCTOBER 23

SENIOR AAM Aadmi Party leader Manish Sisodia Saturday claimed, citing "reliable sources", that the BIP was planning to replace Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant ahead of the state Assembly elections. The BJP dismissed the assertion.

The Deputy Chief Minister of Delhi, speaking to reporters in the national capital, claimed to possess an internal BJP document that made note of the Sawant government's "failures" in the coastal state, where elec-

tions will be held early next year. Sisodia's statement comes a day after Sawant, state BJP chief Sadanand Tanavde and General Secretary (Organisation) Satish Dhond met Home Minister Amit Shah and BIP national president IP Nadda in New Delhi after they were called to the national cap-

BIP's Goa election in-charge

Devendra Fadnavis said: "That's absolutely false and baseless. It's like saying AAP will be replacing Arvind Kejriwal in Delhi.' Sisodia said: "We have learnt

from very reliable sources that the BJP is going to change its CM in Goa. Just two months before the Assembly election, it is going to replace Pramod Sawant and appoint a new chief minister. They have done this in Uttarakhand, in Karnataka."

Sisodia claimed that the BIP had drawn up a '10-point failure list' which included issues such as "mismanagement" of Covid-19 and Cyclone Tauktae, "deteriorating" law-and-order, and

Goa BJP chief Tanavade said: "Who are AAP leaders in Delhi to decide our party's decision? Just months before the election, can there be a leadership issue? This is common sense. Will any political party do such a thing? These are all rumours. There was no such discussion in the meeting in Delhi. It was about the election



Manish Sisodia

strategy of the party. Today the PM has appreciated him (Sawant).

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi Saturday virtually addressed the people of Goa and spoke with beneficiaries of the flagship state programmes, including the Swayampurna Goa (self-reliant Goa) scheme.

Sawant had started the programme, modeled on the central Atmanirbhar Bharat programme, in October last year.

The Prime Minister interacted with seven people, including a sarpanch and a chairman of the municipal corporation. He

lauded Goa's "new model of development" and praised the Sawant government for playing a leading role in implementing the central schemes.

Modi also lauded Sawant's efforts for taking Goa to "new heights"

After the virtual programme, Sawant said: "The Prime Minister has appreciated the efforts of team Goa, of the officials. If we continue to work like this, Goa will become a model for the Swayampurna Goa and Atmanirbhar Bharat pro-

On his meeting in Delhi with Shah, Nadda and BJP's Goa election in-charge Devendra Fadnavis, the Chief Minister said: "The meeting was about preparing for the forthcoming Assembly election. We had a discussion regarding that."

Meanwhile, Sawant's office announced on Saturday: "CM is travelling out of state for a personal program and will not be available in the state for Public



Praise from top leadership

BESIDES THE Prime Minister lauding his government, CM Sawant received a pat on the back from Home Minister Amit Shah for the state's handling of Covid-19, during his visit to Goa on October 14, and from party chief | P Nadda during the latter's visit in July. Nadda had praised Sawant for his 'very good work".

Meetings till Monday October 25,

Sources said he is traveling to Gujarat and is set to return Sunday

schemes will help BJP win polls **LIZ MATHEW Pramod**

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

WITH ASSEMBLY elections scheduled early next year, and ruling BJP in the state working on finalising its poll strategies, Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant the success Swayampurna Goa, his government's flagship programme and the management of Covid-19 situation and the economy will be

the highlights of the campaign. While BJP's moves to get smaller parties in the NDA fold are "yielding results", parties such as Trinamool Congress and Aam Aadmi Party, which are trying to find their feet in Goa politics, will come a cropper, he said.

"Around 60 departmental schemes are being implemented in Goa," he said. Stating that firstdose vaccination figure in Goa is 100 per cent, and 75 per cent eligible people have received the



Sawant

second jab as well, Sawant told The Sunday Express, "Our Covid-19 management and financial management have been really successful." Sawant, who is in Delhi for

discussions with BIP leaders for the party's election preparations in the state, said the tourism sector, a big revenue generator for Goa, has been revived after the success of vaccinationin the country, "We have also allowed. with the Centre's support, chartered flights and some international flights," he said.

On the political situation in the state, where new entrants TMC and AAP are getting many Congress leaders and workers, apart from civil society leaders, to join them, Sawant said: "BJP's position on ground is strong. We

have the support of 27 MLAs and an Independent (legislator). Other parties such as MGP (Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party) and Goa Forward Party (are also with BJP), but there will be some developments — I think there could be some mergers. At present, Congress is the opposition party; despite its MLAs leaving the party, it still has a vote

On TMC and AAP, Sawant said that "nothing is going to happen" despite the "hype" they have created — "because they do not have base voters...'

Stating that BJP will get a majority on its own in the 40 member Assembly, Sawant said, "Bayees mein bayees paar (22plus seats in 2022) will be BJP's target. We are firming up various ideas... The main focus will be that the BIP government will make Goa self-reliant in its next tenure, for which we have already initiated programmes."



WINTER IS HERE

Recent civilian killings have led thousands of migrant labourers to leave the Valley. But, it's a relationship likely to survive. DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & NAVEED IQBAL on an economy that rests on workers from the heartland, and on migrants who have found here a home

THA forlorn look on his face, Sajjad Wani is puffing cigarette after cigarette. The owner of a furniture-making unit in Pulwama's Litter in South Kashmir has a series of orders pending with him, but no workers to complete them. With logs of raw wood lying beside a row of intricately carved pieces and his machines covered in sawdust, the unit bears the look of a place that was busy till a few days ago.

On October 17 evening, one of his carpenters, Sageer Ahmed (55), was shot dead by suspected militants near his rented accommodation about 50 metres away from the unit. A resident of Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh, Ahmed had arrived in Kashmir two years ago in search of work. Following his death, the seven other carpenters working at Wani's unit – all from Uttar Pradesh – left the Valley, fearing for their lives.

'Under normal circumstances they would have left in December before the snowfall. Now I don't know how to deliver my orders. There aren't many local carpengood enough or absolutely lazy. Ahmed was not only very skilled at carving wood but also very hardworking. He was my chief carpenter and pretty much handled the operations of the unit," says Wani.

A few kilometres away, Farooq Mir, a farmer, is thrashing bundles of harvested paddy with his family members to separate grains from the chaff. "Usually this work is done by labourers from Bihar and UP. But after the Litter killing, all have run away... If they do not return next year, harvesting will be a problem," says Mir.

Over the past two decades, migrant labourers from India's heartland have become an integral part of Kashmir's economy. While they come from various states, including Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh, those from UP, Bihar and West Bengal form the bulk. The Union Territory administration has no compiled data, and industry and trade bodies put their figure between two and four lakh. However, research scholars studying migrant patterns, and the 2011 Census data, say their actual numbers could be over 11 lakh in Kashmir Valley alone.

They are spread across sectors such as agriculture, manufacturing, construction and brick kilns, or work as barbers and hawkers. In fact, it is difficult to find a barber shop in Kashmir run by a Kashmiri.

"While most labourers leave by the end of November or December, only to come back by March next year, barbers stay on. They have their families here too. But this time even they have run away," says Shamim Wani, who runs a bakery in Pulwama.

It is the second such exodus of migrant labourers from the Valley, the first seen soon after similar killings in the aftermath of the August 5, 2019, decision of the Centre, stripping Jammu and Kashmir of its special status and bifurcating the state into two Union territories. In the past two weeks, 11 civilians, including migrant labour and non-Muslim Kashmiris, have been killed. Those shot include Srinagar's famous pharmacist Makhan Lal Bindroo, a Kashmiri Pandit, and a teacher and a principal shot at their school, sending shockwaves up to Delhi. Most of the killings are confined to Srinagar and South Kashmir.

Sajjad Wani says he didn't have the heart to stop anyone from leaving. "I can't guarantee my own life in this place. How can I guarantee anyone else's? So I let everyone go."

The Sopore Industrial Estate in North Kashmir has 56 units of different kinds, ranging from garments and furniture to PVC pipes





At a Sopore tailoring unit, migrants say work has declined back home in Uttar Pradesh; barber shops like the one above, in Choora, Baramulla, are run almost exclusively by non-Kashmiris in the Valley. Shuaib Masoodi/Deeptiman Tiwary

and plastic garbage recycling. The estate's aged to retain most of their labour as they stay on the estate itself, and police provide perimeter security.

However, the same is not true of other sectors, Bhatt says, and local labour is hard to come by. "Kashmir's economy is heavily dependent on migrants, with their maximum presence in the construction business as masons, painters and carpenters. There are also household help from Iharkhand... Lieutenant Governor Manoi Sinha has sold us a dream that Rs 60,000 crore investment is coming from Dubai. Who will invest if this kind of an environment continues and there is no workforce?"

What Bhatt draws confidence from is that workers who had left in the aftermath of the $2019\,change\,returned\,next\,year\,as\,well\,as\,in$ 2021, despite Covid and security fears.

Fayyaz Malik, the general secretary of the Sopore Fruit Mandi, the largest wholesale market of apples in Kashmir, clocking an annual business of Rs 7,000 crore, says most of the buyers of their stocks are "outsiders". Non-locals are generally not involved in the plucking, segregation and packing of apples.

"Traders and agents of arhatiyas, along with their labour from various states, camp here for six months to buy fruits and transport them. If the number of buyers goes down because of the fear, prices of fruits will fall. Already we have not had a good harvest the past couple of years because of weather changes," says Malik.

Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry president Sheikh Ashiq says last week business leaders held a meeting with the divisional commissioner. "We all expressed our concern at what was happening with migrants in the Valley. We told the government that this is going to hamper your development goals. All infrastructure projects are going to be delayed," Ashiq says.

A senior government official said they are seized of the matter. "Security forces are doing their job and the situation will be back to normal. Ensuring security for a robust economic environment is a government's commitment," the official said.

Home Minister Amit Shah, who arrived in Kashmir on Saturday for his first visit post-August 5, 2019, and held a security review, recently announced that more than Rs 25,000 crore worth of investments have been locked in for J&K. The UT administration has claimed that JSW Steel is among four corporates which have decided to invest in the Valley.

Though Kashmir does not have much of

THE UNREST IN NUMBERS

Incidents	2020 (Till July 15)	2020 (Total)	2021 (July 15)	
Terrorism-related incide	ents 120	-	84	
Civilians killed	19	37	15	
			(11 in Oct alone)	
Security personnel killed	1 25	46	7	
Policemen killed	6	15	10	
Militants recruited	85	172	69	
Militants killed	(NA)	225	84	

THE DISTRICT-WISE KILLING OF CIVILIANS IN 2021, TILL OCT 21

Sopore	4	Bandipora	1	Pulwama	1
Srinagar	10	Kulgam	5	Awantipora	5
Anantnag	4	Budgam	1	TOTAL	31

migrant labour. Locals say people have been coming from Bihar and UP to Kashmir for work for at least four decades.

Around the mid-2000s, when the UPA government announced a Rs 24,000 crore 'reconstruction package" for Kashmir and the Valley saw relative peace, these numbers surged. This also coincided with the saturation of labour markets in popular destinations such as Delhi, Punjab and Mumbai.

With Kashmir free of the debilitating poverty of many parts of the country and enjoying a high literacy rate, locals are hard to find for menial jobs. Among the only places to fully implement land reforms, the Valley has few who do not own a piece of land or assets, helped by its low population density. One of the largest employers in the UT is the government.

"Given that locals may not be interested in menial work, migrants are not as such a threat," points out Prof Manish K Jha of the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. As part of his research on migration in India, Jha says he has found that, in the past decade migrants have started exploring newer areas like Kerala, Manipur and Kashmir, far away from the heartland states to which most of them belong.

"To begin with, it were people who had some level of skills who went to these places — a carpenter, a mason. Once they went, they realised that while their skills had a premium, there was also a shortage of labour. Then through their networks, they informed others back home and they started coming. Then some of them became brokers or mediators," Iha says.

Aijaz Ahmed Turrey, Academic Associate at IIM-Ahmedabad, says the locals who once engaged in such work have either been ab-

transport or hotel, or are happy to sit idle. "Some have even gone to the Gulf. There is always some piece of land they can live off,"

Turrey, who hails from Pulwama, published a research paper on migrants in Kashmir in 2019. Estimating their numbers at 11 lakh, he says most of them are employed in the rural areas.

Ashiq says the "outsiders" are also seen as more hardworking. "Hire a local and he will take three breaks during the day to smoke hookah. Then he will leave early and demand higher wages. He will also have frequent family issues and take leave.'

Jha says labour in Kashmir also enjoys better living conditions. "Another thing migrant workers have told us during our research over the last two years, is that living in Kashmir is not that expensive. Either through hospitality or other means, they do not have to spend much on housing. In Delhi and Mumbai, even with poor living conditions, they spend a lot more on housing."

According to Jha, migrant workers are able to send remittances up to "50 per cent higher" in places such as Kashmir and Kerala.

Mohammed Nadeem, who works in an $embroidery\,unit\,at\,the\,Sopore\,estate, came\,to$ the Valley two months ago from Bijnor in UP. The father of three says he is afraid because of the killings but has little choice but to stay on. 'I worked as a tailor in Bijnor, However, work has really dwindled over the past couple of years. Because of Covid, earnings are low and inflation is high. People are not buying new

clothes. But there is work here.' Kamlesh Chauhan, 27, who has been coming to Kashmir since 2017 as a daily wager, left for home in Bihar's Siwan district on "These things keep happening, there is nothing to fear. I have gone and come back several times. Yes there is fear, but I am sure things will settle down. There is no work back

home," he says. Mohd Lukman, 46, and Priyanshu Kumar, 23, who belong to the same village in Bettiah district of Bihar, share a rented room with four others, paying Rs 600 a month each, in Baramulla. They first came three years ago,

after having worked in Punjab and Delhi. "People there are very exploitative. They make you work for long hours and pay less than here. In Delhi I would get paid Rs 500 and work for two to three hours more. Here I get paid Rs 600 and can go home at 5 pm," says Lukman, who has four children.

According to the two, employers in Kashmir also arrange food for the labourers, which doesn't happen in Punjab. "Plus, here they treat you with dignity. You rarely have anyone using abusive language. Another great thing here is honesty. If they make you work extra, they pay you extra,'

Suraj Sahni, a fruit hawker in Srinagar hailing from Badaun in UP, says locals are generally nice to migrants and there is a level of trust. "I can leave my stuff or payment pending here and know that if I come back two years later, I will get it. I can run credits even as a newcomer. This would not happen in Delhi," he says.

Priyanshu says for him the biggest attraction is the weather and better accommodation. "Until the winter sets in, it is pleasant here. You don't feel very tired. Rooms are bigger so even with more people it doesn't get claustrophobic," he says, adding that the months that he is not in Kashmir, he works in Uttarakhand.

While most people believe the migrants leaving is a temporary blip, and that they will return, what has taken a beating is the Centre's claim of restoring "normalcy" in J&K post abrogation of Article 370. "What can be more abnormal than the killing of migrant workers? It didn't happen even during the peak of militancy. And killing of Kashmiri Hindus and Sikhs is a throwback to those terrible times (of the early '90s)," says a Srinagar businessman who does not want to be identified.

The administration is alarmed. After the October 17 episode in which two migrant labourers were killed at their accommodation in Srinagar, it moved them into secured shelters that came up overnight in govern-

ment and school buildings. Sources said the migrants were also "encouraged" to leave, and their employers were told not to stop them if they couldn't ensure their security.

Top officials, including members of intelligence agencies and Central Armed Police Forces, have been stationed in the Valley since October 17. During his visit, Shah was briefed on the steps taken to prevent attacks on civilians among other issues.

L-G Sinha has said that "every drop of innocent blood will be avenged", and there have been a series of encounters since the killings, leaving 17 militants dead. Police claim many of them were behind the migrant killings. Scores of people have been picked up on suspicions of being "overground workers (OGWs)", while police have resumed pat-down frisking - a much-maligned routine stopped in the Valley a few

IG (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar blames the civilian killings on "hybrid terrorists" or "part time militants", using small arms such as pistols to target defenceless individuals in the dark, before speeding away on bikes. Police calised individuals who might even hold regular jobs while carrying out "contract kills" It is thus harder for security forces to track them, tapping into their usual network. "In some cases, OGWs have been found directly

involved," Kumar has said. However, the 17 militants security forces have killed recently, and claimed them to be behind the attacks on civilians, were all Kalashnikov-wielding full-time operatives, and not armed with small guns. Sources say these men might have been involved in planning and not necessarily executing the killings.

The attacks on the civilians have coincided with an influx of small firearms dropped by drones from across the border, and increased infiltration since July. That the deployment of forces in the Valley is now down to pre-August 5, 2019, levels, has not helped matters.

Sources in the security establishment say things have been building up since July, when intelligence inputs first suggested non-Muslims could be targeted in the Valley. But there have also been some immediate triggers.

A senior officer says the very public Independence Day celebrations, with multiple Tricolours put up around the Dal Lake, and ingoistic slogans blared over loudspeakers, did not go down well at a time when the Valley is still bristling over the August 5, 2019, change, with no sign or restoration of statehood or elections around the corner. The officer says there are resumed whispers of plans for a "demographic change" in the Muslimmajority Valley, especially after the launch of a portal for Kashmiri Pandits to complain about the property they sold in distress sales, and a change in rules for buying of land in the Valley. "There is suspicion that a section of the local population supports these militants tar-

geting outsiders," the officer says. In September, security agencies say, they came across a social media post by The Resistance Force (TRF) — believed to be an offshoot of the Lashkar-e-Toiba — that discussed a "strategy" to target "non locals", and criticised the government's policies letting "outsiders" take up land and jobs in Kashmir. Sources said a TRF sleeper cell may be behind the recent attacks, and they were on the trail

of some militants who had been identified. But, Pulwama's Sajjad Wani, who has been in the furniture business for eight years, says any action has to come fast. "If police can't find and neutralise these militants by winter, I will frankly have to shut shop."

sorbed by an expanding economy of fruits,

an industry, it has always been a market for



PCHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in Twitter@Pchidambaram IN

If some Indians — not all can find excuses to taunt, abuse, harm, hurt, terrorise or kill fellow Indians who are Muslims, will not Hindus and Sikhs living in other countries become the objects of taunts, abuse, harm, hurt, terror or homicide? In a combustible sub-continent, 'action' and 'reaction' can never be neatly separated

Will South Asia go blind?

BOUNDARIES DEFINE countries. Boundaries cannot contain people. The history of the world has many examples of large numbers of people migrating from one country to another. The 20th century was – and now the 21st century is – noteworthy for migration.

There is a body called the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) as part of the United Nations system. Founded in 1951, the IOM recognised the link between migration and economic, social and cultural development as well as the right to freedom of movement, Migration - both internal and external – cannot be stopped. (There are 65 million inter-state migrants in India.) We can only work, as the IOM does, to "help ensure the orderly and humane management of migration".

MIGRATION OF MILLIONS

Partition is a cause of migration. War is another. India has witnessed both. The Partition of India in 1947 is believed to have caused one of the largest 'forced' migrations in human history — estimated at nearly 18 million. Before and after the Liberation war that gave birth to Bangladesh, 8-9 million refugees came to India. Most settled in West Bengal, a significant number settled in Assam. They included Hindus and Muslims. At the same time, millions of Muslims stayed back in India, thousands of Hindus and Sikhs stayed back in Pakistan and a large number of Hindus stayed back in Bangladesh. Of the three, India and Bangladesh, self-declared secular republics, are under severe test.

Over the years, millions of Indians, including Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, migrated to the United States. We proudly call them the Indian diaspora, but they are a minority in a secular, but largely Christian, country. So are the Indian migrants settled in many European countries, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, The Indian government is legitimately concerned when any of them becomes a victim of racial or religious prejudice.

Majoritarian AGENDA

213 million Muslims have their home in India where their forebears lived. Similarly, 15 million Hindus (out of a population of 160 million) in Bangladesh are descendants of families that did not migrate to India either during Partition or the Liberation war.

Both groups of Muslims - descendants of Indian citizens and migrants - reside in India. They are, from time to time victims of religious prejudice. Yet, the Modi government refuses to protect them or condemn the violence against them. If any country raises questions, the Modi government warns them against 'interference in the internal affairs of India'. Contrast the concerns expressed by India when Hindus and Hindu places of worship were attacked in Bangladesh. Consider also the forthright statements of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and her firm instructions to her home minister.

Let me recall what M S Golwalkar, one of the founding fathers of the RSS, wrote in his book We or Our Nationhood Defined: "Muslims must entertain no idea(s) but those of the glorification of the Hindu race and culture... may stay in the country wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation, claiming nothing... not even citizen's rights." Have the current leaders of the RSS/BIP distanced themselves from that philosophy?

Assuming they have, their actions and words belie that assumption. In fact, their silence in the face of excesses upon

Muslims tells us more. ■Will a secular nation justify a patently discriminatory law such as the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) that embraces people of all faiths but excludes Muslims? Can one say that the CAA and the threat of detaining thousands of alleged 'foreigners' will not have an impact in Bangladesh and elsewhere?

■Will a multi-cultural nation condone the lynching of Pehlu Khan who was transporting cows to his small dairy farm in Rajasthan, or of Aklaq on the suspicion that he had kept beef in his house in UP?

■Will a multi-religious country tolerate the pernicious theory of love jihad when two young persons belonging to different faiths fall in love or wish to be

■Will a modern nation pressure

Tanishq, a popular brand, to pull out an advertisement which suggested that an inter-faith couple are living happily with the husband's family?

■Will a multi-lingual country take offence to an Urdu name given to the launch of a line of clothes by Fabindia, an international brand, on the allegation that it gave an Islamic colour to a Hindu festival that was two weeks away?

■ Will an unbiased State obliged to uphold the law tolerate the kind of outcomes in the investigation and prosecution of the accused in the Muzaffarnagar and Northeast Delhi communal violence?

PLURALISM IS HERE

If some Indians – not all – can find excuses to taunt, abuse, harm, hurt, terrorise or kill fellow Indians who are Muslims, will not Hindus and Sikhs living in other countries become the objects of taunts, abuse. harm, hurt, terror or homicide? In a combustible sub-continent, 'action' and 'reaction' can never be neatly separated.

Pluralism is a reality. Every country must learn to live with people who belong to different cultures, practise different faiths, speak different languages and follow different mores. What bind a nation are acceptance and mutual respect. In recent years, India has failed in this regard.

Violence seems to have taken the place of tolerance. That is abhorrent anywhere, any time. Violence will breed violence. An eye for an eye will render the world blind. Ask yourself, who said that?



LOOK WHO'S TALKING

AT ITS meeting last fortnight, the Congress Working Committee accused the BJP of "electoral autocracy". The CWC was unmindful that the party itself exemplified autocracy of sorts, having skipped even a pretence of internal democracy, with elections not held since 1998. In fact, the Election Commission has threatened to freeze the party's symbol for failure to adhere to its own constitution. Sonia Gandhi says she is a hands-on interim chief, but the party's real power centre, known as the "high command", is a euphemism for Rahul Gandhi and his close confidants. Rahul's complete sway over the party was apparent when he declared that he would don the formal crown as president only when he chose to and not simply because some begged him to.

TELLING REMARK

Rahul Gandhi's comment at the CWC that when he informed Charanjit Singh Channi that he was being appointed the Chief Minister of Punjab, he broke down, was the subject of much private discussion in the party. The surmise was that Rahul implied that Channi, a Dalit, fitted into his vision of steering the party's ideological position in a more Leftist direction, aimed at marginalised groups. The comment was also seen as directed at Raiasthan CM Ashok Gehlot and Chhattisgarh CM Bhupesh Baghel, who have refused to budge in respective power tussles with their rivals. Where does that place Navjot Singh Sidhu in the new scheme of things?

NOT IN OR OUT

When Subramanian Swamy's name was not announced as a member of the BJP National Executive this month, it was yet another indicator that the outspoken, unconventional politician and the BIP leadership were not on the same page. The first signs of the cold vibes between Swamy and the Modi regime surfaced shortly after he was nominated to the Rajva Sabha in April 2016. At the request of then party president Amit Shah, Swamy filled out the official form declaring himself to be a member of the BJP and not an Independent, a status some nominated members opt for. Swamy attended the first two meetings of the BJP parliamentary

party but subsequently he was not invited. In his second session in the Rajya Sabha, he was asked to be the lead speaker on the Augusta Westland deal but subsequently, the party bosses completely marginalised the articulate parliamentarian though he still sat prominently in the treasury benches. Unsurprisingly, Swamy's tweets have become increasingly irreverent towards the party leadership, even questioning why a cricket stadium in Ahmedabad should be renamed after a living leader (Narendra Modi).

KISHOR'S CHALLENGE

Huge billboards of Mamata Banerjee dominate the Goan landscape. Banerjee's political campaigner Prashant Kishor and his organisation I-PAC are handling the TMC campaign for the Assembly elections in the state next year. TMC Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien has set up an office in Goa and plans to spend considerable time there. Veteran Congressman Luizinho Faleiro is so far the most high-profile TMC recruit, but Banerjee is hopeful of enlisting Vijay Sardesai, leader of the Goan Forward Party. Goa's oldest newspaper, O Heraldo, actively supports the TMC. Kishor has deliberately selected Goa for his latest campaign as he believes that its relatively small population is easier to work on electorally. MLAs here are kingpins in their respective constituencies, and not beholden to political parties. He reckons that even if the TMC were to win less than half-adozen seats in the House of 40, it could emerge kingmaker. The Congress and AAP are at a disadvantage with the TMC's arrival. The ruling BJP, handicapped by antiincumbency and Chief Minister Pramod Sawant's inability to improve Goa's potholed roads, could well be the biggest beneficiary of the multi-party contests.

SAVARKAR'S STORY

Uday Mahurkar's recent biography of Savarkar makes the case that far from trying to divide the country, he wanted to unify India. The author contends that Savarkar was dismissed in history books with a single line during the Congress years. Then, in 2003. Mani Shankar Aiyar sought to "demonise" Savarkar, holding him responsible for the division of the country. In fact, Syama Prasad Mookerjee, the Jana Sangh founder, wrote a letter to Savarkar in 1947, after the riots in Bengal and Punjab, noting that if Hindus had heeded Savarkar's warning, they would not have ended up as "slaves" in the land of their birth, the author writes. He adds that the late General K M Cariappa while commenting on the debacle in the 1962 war against China had lamented that the nation did not listen to

Savarkar and prepare militarily.

Life & **WORK** SANDEEP DWIVEDI

INDIA'S HEART-breaking loss to Australia in the 2003 World Cup final had at least one perk – no calls from office the next day and time to explore Johannesburg. Shahid Hashmi, a seasoned reporter from Pakistan, had been a fellow traveller on the monthand-a-half-long journey across South Africa sharing media-box space, late night cabs, takeaways and press conference quotes. He too was finally faarigh. Free.

With him wanting to shop for his sons, we ended up at a crowded merchandise outlet where heavily discounted official World Cup team shirts were flying off the shelves. I cut through the crowd first, and almost instinctively, turned to Shahid bhai and pointed to the Pakistan section with green jerseys. He moved towards the hangers with India blues, and said, "Kyon bhai. hamare bachche Tendulkar ki T-shirt nahin pehen sakte (Why? Can't our kids wear Tendulkar T-shirts?)."

No amount of essential reading on Pakistan, and certainly not the narrative back home, would have prepared me for the reaction. On the last day of my very first foreign assignment, I got to know our neighbours better and saw through the farce played out in the lead-up to the games between the two great cricketing nations.

On big India-Pakistan match days, like today, when most news channels in both the countries turn into war rooms, and some walk the extra mile to hold dog-fight debates at Wagah border, the Shahid bhais of the sub-continent go unrepresented. Even former players, rivals but friends, indulge in juvenile one-upmanship.

It's also when foreign correspondents in Islamabad and New Delhi file mood copies with lines such as: "The fierce nuclear rivals who have fought several wars are a melting pot of noise and colours of all hue." In distant non-cricketing lands, these dispatches - invariably headlined 'War minus guns' — further underline the cliche called the subcontinent. Peacocks, carnets. rugs, Taj, butter chicken, pashmina and neighbours who can't stand each other.

Having been at several of these muchhyped games for close to two decades, I can say that the bitterness and toxicity that the millions are fed don't emblematise the behaviour of the thousands in the stands and the 22 on the field. The scenes at the stadium are very different from the ones scripted, second-guessed and transmitted from the television studios.

Those pre- and post-match stadium vox

let cricket come first

Today, like on the field,



On match days, the toxicity fed to millions doesn't find any reflection in the stands filled with fans

populi, the staple for all channels and the alleged mood-meter, are a scam. A day before the 2015 India-Pakistan World Cup game at Adelaide, a fellow-reporter and I had hung around the venue. A biggish group of fans asked if the cricketers were still training. Few wore India colours, others had Pakistan written on them. They seemed like family friends on an outing.

The eager bunch couldn't believe their luck, when they got spotted by cameras. Soon they were neatly divided into two groups based on the shirts. To our amusement, in a matter of minutes, the happy bunch turned into blood-thirsty fans letting out battle cries. Once the cameras were off, they all got into one big van and were busy calling home, in India and Pakistan, to inform their relatives about the telecast timing of their act.

Even during the game, without the spotlight, the stands stay mostly civil. There is rigorous flag-waving, sometimes finger wagging, rarely any further transgression.

There are no brawls, there is no one vaguely resembling a neo-Nazi football hooligan. The young among the desis, mostly overseas students and fresh-off-theboat immigrants, are too busy living their dream – watching cricket with a beer glass in their hand, exactly the way they had seen the bare-bodied Aussies glug the bitter on the hill during those Channel Nine days.

Much as TV channels want the stadium to be a tinderbox, on the ground, the India-Pak matches have the same intensity of any Sunday tennis ball cricket game – few tiffs, few abuses and lots of laughs.

The one picture that dispelled many myths was from the 2017 Champions Trophy final. It was the game where

Pakistan thrashed India. At the trophy ceremony, Virat Kohli, Yuvraj Singh, Shoaib Malik and coach Azhar Mahammod seemed to be having a collective bout of laughter. Here were old friends with common culture, language and humour cracking up on a Malik joke. In contrast, angstridden fans of the two nations were drawing red circles — labelled "mujrims (culprits)" - on the cricketers who were treating a game of cricket the way it needed to be. The bonds between the nations that were undivided are too old and strong.

During the 2015 World Cup, after interviewing Pakistan wicket-keeper Sarfaraz Ahmed, I asked him to pose for a picture. "Achha kheenchna, India mein mere maamu rehte hein, dekh kar bahut khush honge (Click a sharp picture, my uncle stays in India, he will be very happy to see it)," he had said. He would share the maamu's number in Etawah. Over the years, the maamu has stayed in touch, but on India-Pakistan days, he remains confused about what to say.

When cricketers from across the border are made to look like enemies at the gate, even their relatives on this side, or genuine cricketing fans of world cricket's unpredictable but entertaining team, can't even afford to stay neutral.

At the stadium, it's different. It's a bubble where a cricket nut can be non-partisan without being judged. Unlike political sparring, the cricket games are evolved engagements. If only our politicians were statesmen, they would have worked towards preserving this clear line of com-

When the AAP's Atishi Marlena and AIMIM's Asaduddin Owaisi joined a few second-rung BJP politicians urging India to boycott the Pakistan game, you feared mixing sports and politics was finding a dan-

You thought these sharp young politicians - one academically rich and other a one-time university pacer — would know better. India-Pakistan are no Serbia-Croatia football games of the past where ultras burn flags on terraces and the violence would spill onto streets. Fans from the sub-continent don't turn up for cricket games wearing leather gloves lined with pointed pellets or baseball clubs wrapped under flags. Trust me, it's mainly tasty theplas and paranthas rolled in a silver foil.

P.S: 18 years later, Shahid bhai's son still treasures the Tendulkar jersey, and like always, he will be supporting Pakistan today.

Fifth TAVLEEN SINGH

New problems in Kashmir

THIS HAS been a week of drama and distractions. No sooner did our intrepid TV reporters take a break from the story of Shah Rukh Khan's son than we began cheering and beating our drums to celebrate the billionth Covid vaccination dose. This still means that just 30 per cent of our adult population is fully vaccinated, but the Prime Minister ordered the country to celebrate this 'historic' moment, and so we did. In all the din and drama, what everyone seems to have forgotten about is the ominous new phase of killings in Kashmir. As someone who has covered the Kashmir story since that summer in 1981 when Sheikh Abdullah anointed Farooq his heir by handing over his 'crown of thorns', it worries me that we are not talking more about Kashmir.

In this column I have said before and will say again that one of the bravest things that Narendra Modi did was to push through the abrogation of Article 370 in Parliament. The special status that this Article provided served mostly to fool Kashmiris into believing that 'freedom' was a possibility. It never was and never will be. But this is something that our political leaders hesitated to say plainly in that era when there were endless rounds of 'dialogues' with Pakistan. Having been present at some of these dialogues, I can report that they were exercises in duplicity.

The Pakistani side usually banged on about how much we had in common and how important peace was, and the Indian side responded in similar vein. One of the most embarrassing things, from my viewpoint, was to see high officials from southern India trying to soften their interlocutors by reciting bad Urdu poetry badly. Often, they did this to Punjabis from the other side, whose own Urdu was bad. Modi tried to take the dialogue route and stopped only when, every time he held out the hand of friendship, the response was a terrorist attack. After Pulwama, he realised it was hopeless.

The only thing that has made Pakistan's leaders understand that India has no intention of discussing the surrender of the Kashmir Valley is the abrogation of Article 370. The initial Pakistani response was for Imran Khan to throw a tantrum and appoint himself 'ambassador of Kashmir', but the expected rebellion against 'Indian brutality' never happened in the Valley. And the world was not interested. So, an uneasy sort of calm descended on the new Union territory, and tourists quietly started to return. In the past few months so many tourists poured into the Valley that it became hard to find a hotel room or a houseboat in Srinagar.

The abrogation of Article 370 seemed to have ushered in a new era of tentative peace and prosperity. In recent weeks this has changed. Hindu and Sikh teachers, shopkeepers and daily wage labourers have been targeted by jihadists who remain faceless. The day after the killings the police usually announce that the terrorists who did such and such killing have been 'eliminated' in an encounter. And, then the killings begin again, and we go through the same routine. This is not good enough. Jihadist killers do not deserve anonymity. They need to be named, shamed, and publicly punished. Or we will soon find that the gains made by the abrogation of Article 370 have gone to waste.

The Home Minister is now directly in charge of security and it is intelligence agencies of the Government of India who have full charge of ensuring that there are no failures on the intelligence front. If they are not able to identify exactly who the new jihadist killers are, they are not doing their job. It is necessary to see their faces so that we can learn if we are dealing with Kashmiri terrorists or those exported by Pakistan. With the Taliban back in Afghanistan and with their leaders publicly honouring the families of suicide bombers, we need to urgently stem Kashmir's slide into violence. The 'jihad' will soon be fought with renewed energy because, as a smirking Pakistani minister said after the Taliban took Kabul, 'They will help us win Kashmir.'

What should we do to prevent this? The most obvious and urgent need is for intelligence and security to be strengthened visibly, but it is also time that a political process began. The former state of Jammu & Kashmir must become a state once more and elections must be held as soon as possible. No Governor installed in the splendid heights of Srinagar's Raj Bhawan can find the political solutions that are needed, because it is not just his magnificent, fortified residence that is too far from what is happening on the ground. He himself is.

In the four decades that have gone by since I first went to Srinagar as a reporter to attend Farooq Abdullah's coronation in Igbal Park. I have never met a Governor. and I met many, who has been able to understand the nuances and the complexity of the Kashmir problem. If we want it to remain a domestic issue, which is why Article 370 was abrogated, then statehood must be restored, and a political process must begin immediately. In the past two years, the Prime Minister's men have tried to create a new breed of 'nationalistic' Kashmiri politicians. This exercise has failed abysmally. Modi must come up with a better strategy.

Kolkata

"WATCH THE footwork, don't worry about the hands," the dancer in front would say when you barged in, and that's how we grew up learning the garba as teenagers. Most times, you either did not know who the dancer on either side was. But you went with the flow, till you mastered the teen tali, dodhiyu, hinch and raas, readying you for any Navratri garba. Now, of course, there are dandiya "trainers" an-

nouncing sessions, months in advance. In the '80s, two weeks to go for Navratri, mothers in a group would go looking for chania-cholis or hand-block-printed fabric, with oxidized jewellery to match. We danced with friends, their parents, the milk-

Best choli forward, and anybody can dance

man, the "kaka (uncle)" who dropped us to school. Most nights as the cymbals, tambourine and drums hit a high during *aarti*, the milkman would go into a "trance". "He is possessed by the goddess," people would whisper, and hopefully ask him about some missing jewellery, or their children's exams and so on. The musicians were homegrown - none of the new-fangled DJs with Punjabi pop songs or Gangnam Style, or salons offering Navratri "grooming" packages.

The nine nights of dancing around the pandal of "Ma Amba", as Goddess Durga is known in Gujarat, meant bonding into the night, and for some, a chance to go dating. The joke was not to go by what one looked like at garba, but "love" happened. Buying a different chania-choli for the nine nights was expensive, so most would share, mix and match. (Covid has put paid to that.)

Vadodara, where I grew up, had among Gujarat's best-known garbas with up to 10,000 men and women dancing in a group, in 15-20 circles, so large that those in the outermost circle completed one round in nearly 20 minutes. Well past midnight, when the dance ended, we would zip away on Scooties, our biggest worry not any stalker but the waiting hostel warden or parents. On the night before Dussehra, we would dance till dawn.

In Ahmedabad, my first garba was at a club where people piled their belongings, including footwear, at the centre of the dance to "guard" them — a shocker for one used to strangers dancing together.

While curfew times for loudspeakers later curtailed dandiya hours, things actually began to change at the beginning of the millennium when a minister remarked

that abortion rates in the state "soared" post-Navratri – putting a new colour on what was an open secret as boys and girls hung out together with social sanction. Soon, condom and pregnancy terminating pills were advertising at garba venues.

In 2003, Narendra Modi as Chief Minister launched 'Vibrant Navratri', promoting the garba as "the world's longest dance festival". While it was to highlight the state as safe for women, soon there was talk of "terror attacks", followed by "love jihad", prompting garba organisers to seek I-cards. Around then, many organisers stopped allowing non-Hindus entry, while police deployed "anti-Romeo squads".

A friend from Gujarat was not allowed entry at a garba all the way in North America as she was a Muslim.

Can the garba survive all this? I have

hope as I look at my 15-year-old. If Ek Lal Darvaje, celebrating Ahmedabad's founder Ahmed Shah, remains my favourite garba song, my daughter prefers the raas. In 2020, Covid curbs left such a void that apartments saw people dance

on their lawns to music on mobile phones. When the Gujarat government allowed the garba this time, with restrictions, the dance returned with a vengeance. The news from Madhya Pradesh of controversies around the entry of minorities was just that - a distant news.

Meanwhile, a friend based in Zurich, Switzerland, sent news about a dandiya there. She had rushed back from Gujarat for it — a dance open to all.

> National Editor Shalini Langer curates the She Said column

OIL ENDS WEEK UP, BELOW RECENT HIGHS New York: Oil traded just below multi-year highs with bullish sentiment about low supplies. On Friday, Brent crude futures hit \$85.53 a barrel, up 1% in the week. US WTI crude futures gained 1.7

per cent on the week to reach \$83.76 a barrel. **REUTERS**

STANDALONE NET PROFIT AT ₹5,511 CRORE FOR QUARTER ENDED SEPTEMBER

Strong credit growth, easing NPAs propel ICICI Bank Q2 profit by 30%

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU MUMBAI. OCTOBER 23

AIDED BY strong loan growth and Saturday posted a 30 per cent rise in standalone net profit at Rs 5.511 crore in the second quarter ended September of FY22 as against a profit of Rs 4,251 crore in the same

Net interest income (NII) increased by 25 per cent year-onyear to Rs 11,690 crore in the second quarter from Rs 9.366 crore in the year-ago period. The bank's net interest margin rose to 4.00 per cent from 3.89 per cent in the

SECTOR WATCH

CONSUMER INTERNET COS

As Paytm heads for

largest domestic IPO,

more tech startups

likely to follow suit

quarter ended June and 3.57 per cent in second quarter of FY21.

The net addition to gross nonperforming assets (NPAs) declined by Rs 96 crore to Rs 41,437 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 38,989 crore. Gross NPA additions fell to Rs 5.578 crore from Rs 7,231 crore.

Recoveries and upgrades of NPAs, excluding write-offs and sale, increased to Rs 5,482 crore in the latest quarter from 3,627 crore in Q1-2022. The gross NPAs written off were Rs 1,717 crore. "With the increase in economic activity. disbursements across all retail products increased sequentially in Q2-2022," ICICI Bank said.

■ Net interest income (NII) rose 25% year-on-year to ₹11.690 crore in second quarter from ₹9,366 crore a year ago. Net interest margin rose to 4% from 3.89% in the quarter ended June

Mortgage disbursements were close to the level seen in the quarter ended March 2021 (Q4-2021), reflecting the increase in seamless customer onboarding experience through pre-approved offers and digitisation, it added.

Disbursements of personal loans and auto loans were close to March 2021 levels. The value of credit card spends grew 47.0 per cent sequentially in September 2022. Spends across most categories other than travel crossed March 2021 levels in September. The bank continued to focus on providing the full suite of banking products to corporate clients and their ecosystems and lending to well-rated corporates," it said.

The retail loan portfolio grew by 20 per cent year-on-year and 5 prised 62.1 per cent of the total loan portfolio at September 2021. Including non-fund outstanding, the retail loan portfolio was 51.6 per cent of the total portfolio at September 2021. The bank continues to hold Covid-19 provisions of Rs 6,425 crore as of September

2021, the same level as June 2021. As of September quarter, total assets under various resolution schemes were Rs 9,684 crore, or 1.3 per cent of total advances, as against Rs 4,864 crore at the end of June guarter. The bank has restructured loans worth Rs 4,158 crore under the second Covid-19 restructuring programme.

which would hit other

VALUE OF NATIONWIDE LAND SALES slumped 17.5% in August from a year earlier, according to Reuters calculations using finance ministry data — the biggest

slide since February 2020 **CHINESE DEVELOPERS** owed 33.5 trillion yuan (\$5 trillion), or a third of China's GDP, as of the end of second quarter, up more than two-fold

from 2015, as per Nomura LONG-TERM IMPACT:

Many Beijing officials have tried to reassure investors the crisis will not spiral out of control and impact on China's property sector

Petrol, diesel prices hiked 35p New Delhi: Petrol and diesel prices were hiked for the fourth consecutive day on Saturday, this time by 35 paise per litre, pushing the rate of petrol in Delhi to Rs 107.24 a litre and that of diesel to Rs 95.97 per

state-owned fuel retailers. The latest hike, which follows the continued climb in global crude prices, has pushed pump rates nationwide to their highestever levels. While petrol is above Rs 100-a-litre-mark in all major cities, diesel has crossed that level

litre, as per a price notification of

in more than a dozen states. The government had raised



While petrol is above ₹100-alitre-mark in all major cities, in over a dozen states. File

As part of the deal between

Amazon and Future Coupons,

Future Retail would be able to

place its products on Amazon's

excise duty on petrol and diesel to mop up gains that would have otherwise accrued to consumers from international oil prices crashing to as low as \$19 per barrel. While global prices have since recovered to \$85, excise duty has remained at Rs 32.9 per litre on petrol and Rs 31.8 on diesel.

Puri on Friday equated demand for cutting excise duty to 'axing one's own feet', saying such levies funded government schemes to provide free Covid vaccines, meals and cooking gas to millions amid

Antitrust: Epic Games opposes

Apple effort to

'FORTNITE' CREATOR Epic Games has opposed Apple Inc's efforts to put on hold orders handed down in an antitrust trial as a potentially lengthy appeals process plays out.

US district Judge Yvonne Gonzalez Rogers in September struck down some of Apple's App Store rules, including a prohibition on developers directing users to other payment options beside Apple's in-app payment system. Apple has until December 9 to comply with the injunction, but earlier this month the company said it will appeal the ruling and asked Gonzalez Rogers to put her

timely recovery of gencos' costs

POWER MINISTRY NOTIFIES RULES

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

IN A move aimed at boosting the use of renewable energy, the Power Ministry on Saturday notified rules requiring that power supply from renewable energy (RE) plants not be curtailed over commercial concerns, after a number of states have sought to cut procurement from renewables or renegotiate power purchase agreements (PPAs).

Punjab, Gujarat and Andhra Pradesh have sought to renegotiate PPAs with renewable power generating companies (gencos).

The Power Ministry also notified rules allowing timely pass through of increase in costs for gencos due to changes in law, such as changes in state or central taxes and in government regulations.

"The investors and other stakeholders in the power sector had been concerned about the timely recovery of the cost due to change in law, curtailment of renewable power and other related matters," the ministry said in a release on Saturdav.

THE NEW RULES

'Must run' status for renewable

energy plants; formula set for

■The notification of the Electricity (Promotion of generation from energy by addressing Must Run and other matters) Rules, 2021 classify solar, wind and hydro plants (in case of excess water leading to spillage) as "must-run" plants

■The Electricity (Timely recovery of costs due to Change in Law) Rules, 2021 aim to ensure timely recovery of the costs for generators

The notification of the Electricity (Promotion of generation from renewable sources of energy by addressing Must Run and other matters) Rules, 2021 classify solar, wind and hydro plants (in case of excess water leading to spillage) as "must-run" plants. The rules provide that electricity supply

constraints in the electricity grid or for reasons of security of the grid. Procurers will be required to pay must run plants as per PPAs in case supply is curtailed. 'These rules will help in

from must-run plants can only be

curtailed in the event of technical

achieving the targets of RE generation. This will ensure that the consumers get green and clean power and secure a healthy environment for the future generation," the ministry said. The Electricity (Timely recov-

ery of costs due to Change in Law) Rules, 2021 are aimed at ensuring timely recovery of the costs for generators due to change in law to promote investment in the power sector. "Timely recovery of the costs due to change in law is very important as the investment in the power sector largely depends upon timely payments," said a government release, noting that currently, the pass through of cost due to change in laws takes time and this can lead to developers becoming financially stressed.

The rules provide a formula for the adjustment in the monthly tariff due to changes in law.

China's indebted property market and Evergrande crisis

China Evergrande Group is wrestling with debts of over \$300 billion and the fate of China's second-biggest property developer is keeping global markets on tenterhooks



LAND SALES in China account for a third of their revenues, which stood at 27.3 trillion yuan (\$4.3 trillion) in 2020, according to Japanese **PROPERTY** accounts for 40% of assets owned by Chinese households, as per Macquarie, raising concerns that if the bubble bursts. consumers may turn thrifty

Buildings at the

construction site

Cultural Tourism

of Evergrande

project whose

construction has

Taicang, Jiangsu

rovince, China.

City, an

that creditors' interests will be protected, but its long-term and economy is highly uncertain

Source: Reuters

Oil Minister Hardeep Singh

the pandemic. PTI

Approval from Sebi A nod from the Securities

largest public debut.

PRANAV MUKUL

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

FINTECH MAJOR and pay-

ments bank Paytm's parent

Communications Ltd has re-

ceived an approval from mar-

kets regulator Sebi to go ahead

with its initial public offering

(IPO), which the company

claims will be the country's

and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) means that the company can now go ahead and launch its IPO. Paytm, in July, had filed its draft prospectus, proposing to sell new shares worth Rs 8,300 crore, and existing shares worth as much. While the company has not finalised a timeline yet, it is expected to launch the public ofaround Diwali

Planned use of funds

Paytm has said that it plans to use Rs 4.300 crore of the fresh issue to expand its existing business lines and acquire new merchants and customers. The company is expecting a valuation between \$20 billion and \$22 billion, and at last fundraise, it was valued at \$16 billion. The company has been in discussions with some foreign investors including Singapore's GIC and ADIA to participate in the IPO.

Next on the cards

Several Indian companies operating in the consumer internet space have gone public. including food-tech firm Zomato, its early investor Info Edge, in addition to online travel agencies MakeMyTrip.com and

yatra.com, which listed in the

EXPAND EXISTING

BUSINESS LINES

■ Paytm, which got

Sebi's nod for the

IPO, plans to use

₹4,300 crore of the

including cosmetics firm Nykaa, logistics firm Delhivery, and online insurance aggregator Policybazaar are looking at an IPO to raise funds.

Research analysts say that

each startup should be seen as a separate business and investors should not see them as belonging to one basket.

Tech companies or startnology upgrades.

"For companies that have not been able to clearly define their business model and keep changing their focus, investors need to practice caution," said a senior official with a financial services firm.

fresh issue to expand existing business lines and acquire new merchants and customers

US. and e-commerce firms Infibeam and Indiamart. Online travel agency Easy Trip Planners also went public recently in India. Up next, other than Paytm, companies

Road ahead for startups

ups have to be seen from the larger perspective of how wide their business opportunity is and what they can do in future." said the research head of a leading brokerage firm. Investment experts also say that in case of fintech companies investors should carefully evaluate as banks have also enhanced their digital presence and have done the tech-

China has about 65 million empty homes, equivalent to the total number of households in France and the UK combined, due to a massive building boom and rampant speculation

from US DFC Development

Biological E to get \$50 mn

Hyderabad: The US International Finance Corporation (DFC) will finance to increase its COVID-19 vaccine

A media invitation from the

Stay on Future-Reliance deal to continue:

manufacturing capacity.

How SIAC order gives Amazon a leg up

US Consulate here said chief operating officer of the DFC David Marchick and Biological E Ltd managing director Mahima Datla will formalise the financing agreement on October 25. "On October 25. US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) Chief Operating Officer David Marchick and Biological E. Limited Managing Director Mahima Datla will formalize a USD 50 million financing agreement to expand the company's capacity to produce COVID-19 vaccines," it said.

The agreement will help bolster near-term Covid-19 response efforts and will also benefit longterm global health in India and throughout the Indo-Pacific region, the US Consulate's invitation said. DFC is America's development bank and provides finance solutions to the most critical challenges in developing nations. **PTI**

AASHISH ARYAN Experts say the Singapore International Arbitration NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23 Centre's (SIAC) latest ruling will prove to be another

Arbitration Centre (SIAC) has ruled against lifting the interim stay that an emergency arbitrator had placed on the Future Retail-Reliance Retail deal in October last year. The ruling is a leg up to Amazon's claims that the deal between Kishore Biyani's Future Retail and Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Retail was a violation of its "contractual rights".

What does the latest ruling by SIAC mean for the Future Retail-Reliance Retail deal?

Amazon and Future Retail, so far Amazon.com Inc has had the upper hand when it comes to orders in its favour, be it from the SIAC or the Supreme Court.

that the emergency arbitrator

was right in putting an interim

hold on the Future Retail-

Reliance Retail deal and that they

have not been "vitiated by any

In the legal tussle between In its ruling, the SIAC has held stumbling block in the Future Retail-Reliance Retail deal, thereby delaying the possible merger as the Supreme Court ruling is also in Amazon's favour subsequent events or proceedings".

the latest ruling will prove to be another stumbling block in the Future Retail-Reliance Retail deal. thereby delaying the possible merger as the Supreme Court

Experts say that

ruling is also in Amazon's favour. Future Retail will, in all likelihood, wait for the final decision on the issue before going ahead either way with the plan, an ex-

Earlier this year, the Supreme Court had upheld the enforcement of an order by the SIAC emergency arbitrator which had put on hold the Future Group's deal with Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd, a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited.

EXPLAINE

In its judgment, the apex court had held that such as award can be within the Arbitration Act as these orders were an 'important step in

aid of decongesting the civil courts" and providing quick interim relief to parties in the arbitration.

Why is Amazon opposed to a deal between Future Retail and Reliance Retail?

The whole tussle dates back to 2019 when Amazon had signed a deal with Future Coupons, the parent company of Future Retail. According to the agreement, which was then worth Rs 2,000 crore, Amazon had acquired 49 per cent in Future Coupons.

According to Amazon, the deal had then also given it a 'call' option, which enabled it to exercise the option of acquiring all or part of Future Retail's shareholding in the firm within 3-10 years

of the agreement. In August last year, when Future Retail signed a Rs 24,713crore deal to sell its retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing units to Reliance Retail, Amazon claimed that the deal violated the "contractual rights" it had with Future Coupons.

On its part, the Future Group had said that it had not sold any stake in the company, and was merely selling its assets and, therefore, not violated any terms of the contract.

Although Indian laws do not recognise the concept of international arbitration and emergency orders issued by such tribunals, the orders are usually "respected" by business houses.

pause orders **REUTERS**

order on hold as the appeals process unfolds.

Epic on Friday argued in a court filing that Apple has not met the legal standard for that pause. which requires Apple show that it will be irreparably harmed by even temporarily complying with the order if the injunction is later reversed on appeal.

BRIEFLY —

Myntra CEO New Delhi: Amar Nagaram, the CEO of Myntra, has put in his papers after three years of leading the fashion

e-commerce platform, and

will pursue his own venture,

as per an email by Flipkart

CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy.

PhonePe suit New Delhi: PhonePe has withdrawn its petition against BharatPe's Buy Now Pay Later (BNPL) Postpe platform which had alleged violation of PhonePe's trade-

mark. PhonePe said it will

New Icra MD

file a fresh suit.

New Delhi: Icra named Ramnath Krishnan as its managing director and group chief executive officer. PTI

Demand high, supply low: Hit by chip shortage, automakers slow on deliveries

Cars launched in the past two-three months have

been getting huge bookings, even though there is

not enough clarity by when carmakers will be

VIKRAM CHAUDHARY NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

THE AUTOMOBILE industry is going through a phase where demand is high but supply-side constraints due to chip shortage are playing spoilsport as manufacturers have to curtail production.

This is leading to high book-

ings for newly launched models as well as the popular selling ones. The end result is that the waiting period for buyers could go on increasing over next few months. Hot-selling models like Hyundai Creta, Kia Seltos and Maruti Suzuki Swift, continue to

see high demand. Apart from

them, cars launched in the past

two-three months have been get-

ting huge bookings, even though

there is not enough clarity by

deliver them. For instance, Mahindra's XUV700 SUV, whose bookings commenced on October 7, has clocked over 65,000 bookings in just two weeks, the carmaker said on October 20. Available in both

able to deliver them

ing Rs 12.49 lakh (ex-showroom). Similarly, the Thar, launched last year in October and priced starting Rs 12.49 lakh, has clocked over 75,000 bookings.

five and seven-seat configura-

tions, the XUV700 is priced start-

Associations (Fada) said the waiting period of the Thar diesel is 9-11 months, and that of the Thar petrol is 3-4 months. MG's Astor, whose bookings started October 21 and which clocked 5,000 bookings within minutes, has been completely sold out for calendar year 2021, the company said.

MG Motor India added that it aims to deliver these first 5,000 units within this year. Bookings are still open but deliveries (of cars booked beyond

Volkswagen's Taigun are also getting strong bookings. Skoda announced in September that the Kushaq has crossed the 10,000booking milestone. Similarly, the Taigun, which was launched on September 23, had clocked 12,221 pre-bookings (before even the announcement of its price). Both these SUVs are priced Rs 10.49 lakh onwards. The newest car to be launched

is Tata's Punch, priced Rs 5.49 lakh onwards. Shailesh Chandra, president, passenger vehicles business unit, Tata Motors, recently told FE that Tata Motors had opened bookings for the Punch on October 4, and while the carmaker doesn't share booking numbers, the Punch has got "the highest pre-launch bookings amongst the portfolio of cars we have today". **FE**

GREEN INITIATIVE

Saudi to ensure oil mkt stability, but stresses on hydrocarbons

REUTERS

RIYADH, OCTOBER 23

SAUDI ARABIA'S crown prince Saturday said the world's top oil exporter aims to reach 'net zero' emissions of greenhouse gases, mostly produced by burning fossil fuels, by 2060 - 10 years later than the United States. He added it would double the emissions cuts it plans to achieve by 2030.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and his energy minister said Saudi Arabia would tackle climate change, but also stressed the continued importance of hydrocarbons and said it would continue to ensure oil market stability. They were speaking at the

ARAMCO AIMING TO EXPAND OUTPUT CAPACITY **THE CHIEF** executive

officer of Saudi Aramco, Amin Nasser, said it was counterproductive to "demonise" hydrocarbons, adding that the state-owned oil giant aimed to expand oil and gas production capacity

drocarbons. He said Aramco

aimed to expand oil and gas pro-

duction capacity while also

Saudi Green Initiative (SGI) ahead of COP26, the UN climate conference in Glasgow this month. Amin Nasser, chief executive officer of state-owned oil giant

Saudi Aramco, said it was coun-

terproductive to "demonise" hy-

achieving net zero emissions from its own operations by 2050, calling for more global investment to ensure adequate crude supplies.

Kolkata

when carmakers will be able to

The Thar, in fact, has one of the longest waiting periods; the Federation of Automobile Dealers

the first 5,000) will happen only in 2022. The Astor is priced Rs 9.78 lakh onwards.

SAJJAD HUSSAIN

ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 23

airspace for intelligence opera-

tions in Taliban-ruled Afghanistan.

(FO) issued a statement in re-

sponse to media queries regard-

ing the news report alluding to

formalisation of an agreement

between the two countries to

conduct military and intelli-

gence operations against

Afghanistan. The FO statement

read: "No such understanding

and the US have long-standing

cooperation on regional security

and counter-terrorism and the

two sides remain engaged in

three sources familiar with the

details of a classified briefing

with members of the US

Congress, that the US was near-

ing an agreement with Pakistan

for use of its airspace to conduct

ties had also demanded the

government to give an explana-

tion on the reports that Pakistan

had allowed the US military to

Khan in an interview had cate-

gorically said that Pakistan

would "absolutely not" allow

any bases and use of its territory

for any sort of action inside

said during a rally in the western

city of Eskisehir. He added: "They

will recognise, understand and

know Turkey. The day they don't

The diplomats, who also in-

Canada,

clude the ambassadors of the

Denmark, Sweden, Finland,

Norway and New Zealand,

were summoned to the foreign

A declaration of persona

ministry on Tuesday.

"Absolutely not. There is no

Earlier, Prime Minister Imran

use its airspace.

Afghanistan.

will leave.'

Netherlands.

Pakistan's Opposition par-

operations in Afghanistan.

CNN had reported, quoting

regular consultations.

However, it added: "Pakistan

was in place.'

The Pakistani Foreign Office

TOPOFTHE _ WORLD



Energy exports form the backbone of the Saudi economy

SAUDI ARABIA Saudis pledge 2060 target of

net-zero emissions ONE OF the world's largest oil producers, Saudi Arabia, announced Saturday it aims to reach "net zero" greenhouse gas emissions by 2060, joining more than 100 countries in a global effort to try and curb man-made climate change. Although the kingdom will aim to reduce emissions within its own borders, there is no indication Saudi Arabia will slow down investments in oil and gas or relinquish sway over energy markets by moving away from the production of fossil fuels. Energy exports form the backbone of Saudi Arabia's economy, despite efforts to diversify revenue as the world increasingly looks to transition away from reliance on fossil fuels.

The country is forecast to

make \$150 billion in revenue

this year alone from oil. AP

New law aims to

stress on students

CHINA HAS passed an edu-

cation law that seeks to cut

the "twin pressures" of

homework and off-site tu-

toring in core subjects, the

official Xinhua news

agency said on Saturday.

The new law, which has

not been published in full,

makes local governments

responsible for ensuring that the twin pressures are

reduced and asks parents

to arrange their children's'

time to account for reason-

able rest and exercise.

Beijing has exercised a

more assertive paternal

hand this year, from tack-

ling the addiction of youngsters to online

games to clamping down

on "blind" worship of in-

ternet celebrities.

575 inmates

escape in latest

Nigeria jailbreak

GUNMEN HAVE attacked

a prison in southwest

Nigeria, freeing around

575 inmates, officials said

Saturday. The third jail-

break in Africa's most

populous country this

year raises more concerns

about how safe detention

facilities are in the West

African nation where au-

thorities have struggled to

stem rising violence. A

handful of security facili-

ties, especially police sta-

tions, have been attacked

in a similar manner in the

past year.

NIGERIA

cuthomework

CHINA

Police: Second key suspect in Bangladesh violence arrested

ANISUR RAHMAN DHAKA, OCTOBER 23

BANGLADESH'S SECURITY agencies Saturday arrested a man in his 30s, who is believed to be the second key suspect behind the recent slew of violence against minorities and mob attacks on temples in Bangladesh during the Durga Puja

Shaikat Mandal, one of the masterminds behind the October 17 mayhem in Pirganj sub-district of northwestern Rangpur, and his accomplice was arrested from Gazipur, on the outskirts of Dhaka on Saturday. elite anti-crime Rapid Action Battalion (RAB) officials said.

festivities, police officials said.

Mandal had gone live on Facebook, which incited people and triggered a wave of violence, an RAB official said.

At least 70 houses and shops belonging to Hindus were torched in attacks at Pirganj following Mandal's Facebook post on October 17.

His arrest comes a day after police arrested Iqbal Hossain, 35, the key suspect from Cox Bazar area, and the man who had allegedly placed the Quran at a Durga Puja venue in Cumilla.

Hossain is under a seven-day police remand as other security and intelligence agencies would join to interrogate him.



RUSSIA, CHINA HOLD JOINT PATROLS IN PACIFIC

Russian and Chinese warships held their first joint patrols in the Western part of the Pacific ocean on October 17-23, Russia's defence ministry said in a statement on Saturday. Reuters

Pak: 10 killed in 2 days as supporters of radical group clash with police

MZULQERNAIN

LAHORE, OCTOBER 23

SIX PEOPLE died on Saturday raising the death toll to 10 in ongoing fierce clashes between the police and radical Islamists in Lahore, as over 8,000 activists of the banned Tehreek-i-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) began a procession to Islamabad from here to stage a sit-in for the release of their party chief Saad Hussain Rizvi, who was arrested

THE WORLD



TLP supporters protest in Lahore on Saturday. Reuters

last year amid demonstrations

Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan and

Sri Lanka will be allowed to en-

ter or transit through Singapore

from Wednesday, the health

ministry said. However, trav-

ellers from these countries will

be subjected to tight border

tion of "blasphemous" caricatures. Among the dead were three policemen and seven TLP workers.

The office of the chief minister of Pakistan's Punjab province confirmed the death of a policeman on Saturday, while the TLP claimed that five workers were killed by police during the protest in Lahore on Saturday.

On Friday, two policemen and as many TLP workers lost their lives in violent clashes in

AFGHAN ROADSIDE **BOMBING TARGETS** TALIBAN, KILLS PAKISTAN ON Saturday rejected reports about an agreement with **TWO CIVILIANS** the United States on the use of its

Kabul: A roadside bombing

airspace for ops

in Afghanistan

targeting a Taliban vehicle in eastern Afghanistan killed at least two civilians Saturday, including a child, Taliban and health officials said. Four others were wounded. Two bombs detonated as a Taliban vehicle was passing by, killing one child, district police chief Ismatullah Mubariz said, adding that no Taliban fighters were harmed. No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attack but the Islamic State group is active in eastern Nangarhar province, where it has launched frequent attacks targeting the Taliban. A local hospital official said two bodies and four wounded civilians were transferred to the hospital after the attack. The official spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to brief the media. Recently, IS has shown signs of expansion in Afghanistan, with attacks in the north, the south and the capital of Kabul. The group's ability to launch frequent at-

embattled country.

an interview in June. The Taliban seized power in Afghanistan on August 15, two weeks before the US' complete troop withdrawal on August 31 af-

tacks has cast doubt over the

Taliban's ability to maintain

security and stability in the



Indian-American Neera Tanden named White House staff secy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 23

INDIAN-AMERICAN POLICY expert Neera Tanden, a close confidant of US President Joe Biden, has been named White House staff secretary, eight months after Republican lawmakers scuttled her nomination to another key post.

Tanden, 51, a senior adviser to Biden, was named White House staff secretary on a morning staff call on Friday, CNN reported.

The White House staff secretary is a behind-the-scenes but critical role in the West Wing, responsible for managing paper flow to the President from other areas of the administration and federal government. The person filling the job has been viewed as one of the most powerful in the building, it said.

In addition to her new duties, Tanden will keep her senior adviser title "and will continue to provide leadership on particular projects and initiatives", Politico reported, quoting a White House official. She will report to White House chief of staff Ron Klain.

The appointment does not require Senate confirmation.

'The Staff Secretary role is the central nervous system of the White House and moves the decision-making process and manages a wide variety of issues for the President," the White House official said. Tanden has "over two decades of experience in policy and management which are critical elements of the role. Her experience... will be a key asset in this new role." the official said

Beijing ramps up testing, curbs as Covid cases rise

KJM VARMA

BEIJING, OCTOBER 23

AUTHORITIES IN the Chinese capital are ramping up measures like testing and restricting hotel bookings as the total number of coronavirus cases climbed to nine on Saturday, while other parts of the country reported 38 locally transmitted Covid-19 cases, according to the National Health Commission. This is in addition to the 32

cases reported on Friday.

The spike has prompted

Lanka top official rejects allegations of graft in fertiliser import from India

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA COLOMBO, OCTOBER 23

THE SECRETARY to Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Saturday rejected allegations of corruption in the deal to import the first consignment of Nano Nitrogen liquid fertiliser from India.

Dr PB Jayasundera, who heads the civil service, has outrightly rejected a newspaper report, which claimed that he exerted pressure for Rs 290 million to be transferred to a personal account for the Indian fertiliser.

Terming the report as "completely false, untrue and malicious," Jayasundera has asked police to probe these allegations.

On Wednesday, Sri Lanka received the first consignment of 3.1 million litres high quality non-harmful Nano Nitrogen liquid fertiliser from India to help the island nation's Eastern province in the cultivation of maize and paddy, country's Agriculture Secretary Prof Udith Jayasinghe said.

SINGAPORE TO ALLOW TOURISTS FROM INDIA

Singapore: Singapore on Saturday announced the removal of India and five other South Asian countries from its travel restriction list as the island-state continues to adjust border measures in response to the global Covid-19 situation. All travellers with a 14-day travel history to Bangladesh, India,

health officials in Beijing and other provinces to step up with

ASSOCIATED PRESS

ISTANBUL, OCTOBER 23

Tayyip Erdogan said Saturday

that he had ordered 10 foreign

ambassadors who called for the

release of a jailed philanthropist

to be declared persona non grata.

French and German representa-

tives in Ankara, issued a state-

ment earlier this week calling for

The envoys, including the US,

measures, which involve a 10day, stay-home notice period at a dedicated facility, it said. PTI

OSMAN KAVALA has

coup attempt in the

convicted of a crime.

over charges linked to a

same year, as well as to

mass anti-government

protests in 2013. Human rights

groups and international ob-

measures like testing, isolation of communities, cancelling ho-

tel bookings, and the use of sanitisers and masks.

The current spike in cases has been attributed to an elderly couple from Shanghai who flew to several cities including the tourist city of Xian, and tested positive for Covid-19, sending officials on a leather hunt to trace scores of people who came in contact with them.

Within three days of an announcement that the couple had tested positive in Xian on Saturday, hundreds of close contacts of the couple had been identified. PTI

servers have repeatedly

saying that his impris-

onment was based on

The European Court of Human

Rights has also called for

Kavala to be freed.

political considerations.

"I gave the instruction to our

way we are going to allow any

bases, any sort of action from Pakistani territory Afghanistan. Absolutely not," Khan had told 'Axios on HBO' in ter a costly two-decade war. PTI

Indian-origin travel blogger killed in Mexico shootout

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LOS ANGELES, OCTOBER 23

A 29-YEAR-OLD California-based Indian-origin woman techie, who travelled to Mexico to celebrate her birthday, was one of the two foreign tourists killed in a shootout between two drug gangs in the Caribbean coast resort of Tulum, according to media reports.

Anjali Ryot was killed along with another German tourist on Wednesday night in the crossfire. Californianewstimes.com news portal reported.

Ryot and her husband Utkarsh Shrivastava had gone to Mexico to celebrate her 30th birthday on October 22 from their current home at San Jose city in California, her father, K D Ryot, told PTI from his home in Himachal Pradesh.

Shrivastava informed her younger brother Ashish, who cur-



rently lives in Chicago, that she was shot dead in the Caribbean coast resort of Tulum soon after they had

was a

Anjali Ryot

California

resident

takenice cream from a stall following their dinner, he added. Ashish informed the family in

India about the tragedy on Oct 21. Ryot's Instagram account

listed her as a travel blogger from Himachal Pradesh, living in San Jose, California.

The incident happened when Rvot and four other tourists were dining on the terrace of La Malquerida restaurant when four men armed with assault rifles fired at an adjoining table in the premises around 10.30 pm, Spanish newspaper *El Pais* reported.

Aromatherapy spray from India, linked to US deaths, faces recall

MIKE STOBBE NEW YORK, OCTOBER 23

US HEALTH officials may have solved the mystery of how four people in different states came down with a serious tropical disease even though none had traveled internationally: an aromatherapy spray imported

from India. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said Friday that investigators found the same type of bacteria that causes the disease, melioidosis. in a spray bottle found in one of the patients' homes.

The four people were from Georgia, Kansas, Minnesota and



bottle of the spray. Walmart/CDC via AP

An image

of the

in Georgia, died.

The spray found in the Georgia patient's home was made in India. The genetic profile of the bacteria in the bottle is similar to that of strains usually found in South Asia, the agency said.

The contaminated product is labelled "Better Homes & Essential Oil

Gardens Lavender & Chamomile Infused Aromatherapy Room Spray with Gemstones," the CDC said. AP Kolkata

Describing the statement as foreign minister and said 'You non grata against a diplomat a resolution to the case of Osman an "impudence," Erdogan said Kavala, a businessman and philwill immediately handle the usually means that individual anthropist held in prison since he had ordered the ambassadors persona non grata declaration of is banned from remaining in be declared undesirable. their host country. 2017 despite not having been these 10 ambassadors," Erdogan

Baldwin was told gun was 'cold': court records

Erdogan orders removal of 10 ambassadors

Kavala imprisonment raised global concern

ASSOCIATED PRESS

SANTA FE, OCTOBER 23

AS A film crew and actors in Western garb prepared to rehearse a scene inside a wooden, chapel-like building on a desert movie ranch outside Santa Fe, assistant director Dave Halls stepped outside and grabbed a prop gun off a cart.

He walked back in and handed



Alec Baldwin

it to the film's star, Alec Baldwin, assuring him it was safe to use because it didn't have live ammo. "Cold gun," Halls yelled.

It wasn't, according to court records made public Friday. Instead, when Baldwin pulled the trigger Thursday, he killed cinematographer Halyna Hutchins and wounded director Joel Souza, who was standing behind her.

Details of the shooting at the ranch on Bonanza Creek Road were included in a search war-

rant application filed by the Santa

the film's armourer. Hannah

Fe County Sheriff's Office. The gun was one of three that

Gutierrez, had set on a cart outside the building where a scene was being acted, according to the records. Halls grabbed the gun from the cart and brought it inside to Baldwin, unaware that it was loaded with live rounds, a detective wrote in the search

FRUSTRATION INSIDE FACEBOOK ERUPTED OVER WHAT SOME SAW AS ITS HALTING RESPONSE TO EXTREMISM

Amid the Capitol riot, FB faced its own insurrection

ALAN SUDERMAN & JOSHUA GOODMAN

WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 23

AS SUPPORTERS of Donald Trump stormed the US Capitol on Jan. 6th, battling police and forcing lawmakers into hiding, an insurrection of a different kind was taking place inside the world's largest social media company.

Thousands of miles away, in California, Facebook engineers were racing to tweak internal controls to slow the spread of misinformation and inciteful content. Emergency actions — some of which were rolled back after the 2020 election — included banning groups with a record for hate speech, filtering out the "Stop the Steal" rallying cry and empowering content moderators to act more assertively by labelling the US a "Temporary High Risk Location" for political violence.

At the same time, frustration inside Facebook erupted over what some saw as the company's halting and often reversed response to rising extremism in the US.

"Haven't we had enough time to figure out how to manage discourse without enabling violence?" one employee wrote on an internal message board at the height of the Jan 6 turmoil.



Congress is investigating Facebook's part in the Jan 6 riots. AP

"We've been fuelling this fire for a long time and we shouldn't be surprised it's now out of control." It's a question that still hangs

over the company today, as Congress and regulators probe Facebook's part in the Jan 6 riots. New internal documents pro-

ployee-turned-whistleblower Frances Haugen provide a rare glimpse into how the company appears to have simply stumbled into the Jan 6 riot. It quickly became clear that even after years under the microscope for insufficiently policing its platform, the social network had missed how riot participants spent weeks vowing – on Facebook itself – to stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's election victory.

vided by former Facebook em-

What Facebook called "Break the Glass" emergency measures put in place on Jan 6 were essentially a toolkit of options designed to stem the spread of dangerous or violent content that the social up to the bitter 2020 election. "As soon as the election was over, they turned them back off or they changed the settings back to

network had first used in the run-

tise growth over safety," Haugen said in interview with 60 Minutes. An internal Facebook report following Ian 6 faulted the company for having a "piecemeal" approach to the rapid growth of "Stop the Steal" pages, related misinformation sources, and violent

Facebook says the situation is more nuanced and that it carefully calibrates controls to react quickly to spikes in hateful and violent content, as it did on Jan 6.

and inciteful comments.

what they were before, to priori-

Texas. Two of them, one a child

THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



POINT OF VIEW Too Late for Truth

Writer Amitava Kumar on how a painting became a canvas for reflection on inequality and lack of social justice

BOOKS

• Interview with Manu S Pillai on his book False Allies: India's Maharajahs

Review of Dhrubajyoti Borah's Elegy for the East
 Review of Arundhati Subramaniam's Women
 Who Wear Only Themselves





PARTHA PAUL

'MY MORALITY TEACHES ME TO SPEAK OUT'

Alaka Sahani

You called winning the Kim Jiseok Award for *The Rapist*, at the recent Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), special.

Many years ago, when Donald Ritchie was the chairman, I was one of the jurors for this festival. At that time, I had met Kim Jiseok (the late South Korean co-founder of BIFF), who worked very hard to promote Asian movies. That's why this award has a special significance for me. I am very happy for my team whose hard work has been recognised. In India, the movie will most likely release on an OTT platform after doing the festival rounds.

You thought of the story of *The Rapist* some years ago. What prompted you to finally make the film?

The idea came to me about a decade ago. When you read about rape cases, they leave an impact. The 2012 Delhi gang-rape case was brutal. We don't know what the trigger is why do men rape? What is it about a society that creates rapists? Is it just about inequality or the caste system? I have these questions in mind. Even though women are coming forward to speak about it, the frightening fact is that it continues to take place with impunity. In the case of the Hathras incident (2020), the victim's family was demonised. In the 2018 Kathua case of the Kashmiri girl Asifa Bano look at the way the perpetrators went about bragging about it. There are cases where people have videotaped the assault and shared it. It's because they think they won't be punished.

The film raises questions regarding the death penalty for rapists.

After some gruesome incidents, I have felt that these criminals have no right to live. But, that's not the right way to think. Are you putting someone to death so that you can set an example or instil fear in potential perpetrators? It has been proved by research that capital penalty does not deter people from committing crimes. They do it in a state of blind rage or passion or for a sense of power.

Has the intellectual and cultural environment in West Bengal, where you've grown up and worked, encouraged you to speak your mind?

you to speak your mind?
Definitely, it has contributed. Also, there is



a certain kind of morality that was instilled in me. By that, I don't mean conventional morality, I mean intellectual honesty. My grandfather was a Brahmo Samaj preacher. Personally, I am an agnostic on the verge of being an atheist. The ethics and morality of my father and grandfather have been passed on to me. That has translated into humanism and a strong sense of morality. It teaches me to speak out.

How much of your political views are reflected in your movies?

Sometimes, practical considerations come in. I may not have dialogues or scenes expressing my views but I may suggest it. I don't want scenes from my movie to be censored; it is important that people watch the film. In *Ghawre Bairey Aaj* (2019), I could have named political parties but I didn't do that. I brought up issues that I wanted to talk about — the plurality of India that I love and how that has diminished.

You have handled different responsibilities as actor, director, writer, and editor of a magazine.

When I was an editor (of the Bengali fortnightly Sananda, a women's magazine), it helped me understand what was happening around us. That's when my idea of politics also grew stronger. As (writer-director) Rituparno Ghosh once remarked, most of my editorials were about communal harmony. The world

changed after the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition. People ask me why am I not making movies like 36 Chowringhee Lane (1981) or Parama (1985) anymore. That's because the world around me has changed. Since I am occupied by what's happening around me, naturally I tend to tell those stories.

What has been exciting — to be in front of the camera or behind it?

Always behind the camera. My daughter (Konkona Sensharma) is an actor-director, so am I. During my time as an actor, we had to act coy and flutter our eyelashes all the time. After a while, I didn't care about that. A woman is portrayed either as helpless or virtuous. I didn't think it was incumbent upon a woman to bear the burden of being virtuous all the time. They can be corrupt too.

In a movie like *Parama*, you moved away from the conservative depiction of women. How did the audience react?

For people, Parama was an adulterous woman, I saw her as one making a sexual choice. Before that, being a progressive woman meant going for higher studies or marrying against the family's wishes. But being a mother of three, having an affair and not feeling guilty, created so much controversy. I know women who sneaked out to watch *Parama*, without telling their families. After its premiere, three

old ladies came up to me and said "Bless you, dear". The movie changed a lot of mindsets.

Your casting choices have been remarkable. Tell us about them.

Well, there are different ways of doing it. For the role of Violet Stoneham (in 36 Chowringhee Lane), I wanted a real Anglo-Indian lady. Utpal da (Utpal Dutt) said, 'Areyou mad? You want to cast a non-actor for your main character?' He then suggested Jennifer Kapoor's name. She was so graceful and I had my doubts if she could be dumpy, but she assured me that she could. I had met Nutan for Parama but didn't cast her. To me, Rakhee epitomised the bahu of a conservative north Kolkata household.

For *Mr. and Mrs. Iyer* (2002), I hadn't thought of Konkona. The desktop computer used to be in her bedroom. She has the habit of

reading late into the night and I have the habit of working late. Sometimes, I would read out the scenes to her. One day, I looked up as I was reading and saw the expressions fleeting across her face. I thought my actor was right there.

It is 40 years since you debuted as a director. Have we reached a stage when we no longer need to use expressions like 'women director' and instead just say 'director'?

We have. However, it is the gaze that's important. (Filmmaker Satyajit) Ray and Rituparno portrayed strong women characters. Showing explicit violence, I would say, is the male gaze. Nandita Das showed a riot in Firaaq (2008) but there was nothing explicit. It's the same in Mr. and Mrs. Iyer. This, I think, is the female gaze. I amproved that

DEFYING

STEREOTYPES

(Clockwise from

above) A still from

The Rapist; Aparna

Sen; stills from

36 Chowringhee

Lane; Ghawre Bairey

Aaj; Parama

male gaze. I am proud that many female actors have turned producers

Sixty years ago, you entered the world of movies when you acted in Ray's *Teen Kanya*. How do you look back at it?

and are making non-mainstream movies.

My nature is not to look back at it?

My nature is not to look back. For some time, when the film was playing, I thought I should have done certain things differently. In Mr. and Mrs. Iyer, for instance, there is the girl who protested when Muslim guys are taken away, and she is slapped. Later, we see her eating phuchka with her friends and laughing. People are not in a continuous state of protest and they have lives. But I should have given her a black eye. This, I thought two years after the film was released. As for the awards that I have received, I don't think about them unless I have to write in my bio. My films have won several National Awards, but I don't dwell on them.

You have worked with some great directors such as Dutt in theatre, and Ray in films. How have they influenced you as an actor and director? Utpal da was a leftist. I often argued with him about ideas of a revolution. He used to dismiss them and would call me a 'reactionary'. He had a great sense of discipline and working in theatre instils that in a person. He was very particular about being punctual and learning

Ray, of course, was a mentor, the way my father (critic and filmmaker Chidananda Dasgupta) was. But the idea was never to imitate Ray but to imbibe the essence of his work and ethics. He was very particular about every little detail on his sets. He was economical in the way he designed a shot or wrote a film. In one scene, he could impart a lot of information. This helped keep the length of the scene in control. These things stayed with me.

When he asked me how 36 Chowringhee Lane has turned out, I told him: 'There are mistakes'. He said that was given, but was I

able to create some moments? A film is not something you just watch, it's the human qualities and interactions that create a moment in the film and that stays with you. That's why one can watch Ray's movies again and again. It's like visiting your favourite holiday haunt or country house.

You were close to Ghosh

and together you made

a wonderful movie

Unishe April (1994).

People have often

spoken about the void

since he left. What do

you think of contemporary Bengali directors? Ritu was a very talented filmmaker. He understood the middle-class Bengali psyche extremely well. His passing away def-

initely left a void. There are

filmmakers like Kaushik

Ganguly, who have filled that to some extent. I like some of Anjan Dutta's movies, as well. But, Ritu was popular and people enjoyed his brand of cinema.

Making an allusion to Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, I am curious to know what does a female director require — support system, budget or people who believe in her?

We need all of that. Women filmmakers, particularly those married with children, have to have some space when they are left alone. In our country, men are not hands-on homemakers. At times, it's also about conditioning, especially in the case of women of my generation. We think we will manage everything. Then, one gets irritable and exhausted.

Konkona manages her time well, with her son (Haroon), acting, yoga classes and physical training. It's commendable when a woman is able to manage everything but she doesn't have to. Also, any director, irrespective of gender, needs a producer who believes in his/her vision and the product.

DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and hird watcher

Unpacking the Bounty

Ever watched a chrysalis turn into a butterfly or moms unbox babies?

LOGGERS NOWADAYS, all over the world, seem to be consumed by YouTube videos on "unboxing". They order some gadget online and spend a loving 90 minutes opening the box, taking out the parts one by one — and recording it on smartphones. At the end, they are surrounded by a pile of bulletproof-moulded plastic, enough bubblewrap and Thermocol to fill a dumpster, and smug smiles on their faces.

In India, it's different. Here, it means declaring a fullscale war on the item: No imported weapons-grade can opener is up to opening our specially-armoured tin cans without causing considerable blood loss to the home side. Have you tried opening a bottle of Indian-made foreign liquor without wanting to smash it to smithereens? This is all a part of our National Killjoy Policy.

Now look at Mother Nature. Every time I peel a banana, I'm wonderstruck. The packaging is perfect, tough (raw banana), waterproof, recyclable and opening/"unboxing" it gives you a certain tactile pleasure. In fleshy fruits like mangoes and chikoo, the sweet flesh separates from the skin and seed easily. You are usually warned not to consume the seed because it is hard, bitter and often poisonous. Even if you are a messy eater — like parakeets - you'll spit the seed out, letting it fall to earth - and germinate. Here, we have an unboxing-cum-courier-service rolled into one! Seed-eating birds (munias and finches) go iust for the seeds, but Mother Nature ensures there's more than enough for future generations to prosper.

Take insects and other creepy-crawlies. Have you ever watched a butterfly hatch (unbox) itself from its chrysalis? I've waited for hours to do so, and it's been worth it every time. First, the chrysalis will give you intimation, probably unbox by early next morning: you can often see the rolled-up butterfly inside the now-transparent husk of the chrysalis. Sure, you might have to wait a while, but after a series of convulsive heaves, the chrysalis breaks open and this freshly-minted gorgeous creature climbs out and crawls to the nearest convenient perch so that it can hang down its wings to dry and stiffen. Most insects that metamorphose from larvae to adult perform this miracle – a



RANJITLAL

COME INTO MY WORLD

result of mind-boggling hormonal technology. The hideous yellow grub of the spider-wasp will embrace the anesthetised little spider it was laid on as an egg and carefully suck out all the nutrients (vital parts last) before moving to the next and, eventually, morph into a pupa, inside which a shiny new midnight-blue-and-emerald wasp forms and "unboxes" at the right time.

The petals of flowers unfurl with slow beauty

The hatching of every bird's egg is an unboxing miracle. In many cases, what's "unboxed" is a scrawny pink little horror, all gape, gut and pimply skin and hair — but each nestling has a special temporary "egg-tooth" at the tip of its beak, with which it unboxes itself.

The ultimate in "unboxing" is, of course, the "unboxing" of babies from their moms! Again, messy and noisy (only in our species) but usually the end result — even if scrawny and screaming - is well worth it! Animal moms have their babies quietly and without fuss (bellowing, bleating or roaring during "unboxing" would draw predators hotfoot) and clean them up pronto so that the little thing is springing around on all fours at the earliest. Some need considerable amounts of TLC and are very wobbly on their pins initially.

A tree "unboxes" its leaves when the weather changes, with gentleness: it senses what's coming and stops the supply of nutrients. The leaf, too, cooperates by sending its nutrients down to the roots to be stored for the winter and no longer makes its own food. It starves, even if it's at its most beautiful now. This sounds cruel, but shriveling up with frostbite could be worse. The mothership lets go, and the brilliant gold/scarlet leaf wafts gently to earth. The petals of flowers unbox themselves with slow beauty.

Seeds "unbox" themselves in myriad ways: some explode from their pods like little bombs, scattering far and wide; some actually need fire to set them off! Others use lacy parachutes or drone-like propellers; many are simply swallowed and dropped in more nutrient-rich surroundings or hooked on furry bodies. Every child must have at some time, placed black-eyed beans (rongi) on a plate of wet cotton-wool and watched with wondrous eyes the first

pale leaves unbox from a seed as hard as an air-gun pellet. Nature has perfected unboxing. As we struggle to open a tuna can without lacerating ourselves, or stabbing ourselves with box-cutters, we need to take a hard look at how she goes about it. Those bhakts of our National Killjoy Policy, responsible for this armour-plated, sadistic packaging, say, it's to make the items vandal- and child-proof. Both vandals and kids, however, get through the hermetically-sealed defences easily. It's you and I, who are left cursing, sucking our bleeding thumbs and spliced hand-webbing.

On how a painting became a canvas for reflection on inequality and lack of social justice

Amitava Kumar

MAN IS being beaten. He is on the ground and, in an effort to survive, he has covered his head with his hands. One of the men attacking him has raised his foot — it is aimed at the head of the man, who is being beaten by sticks and rods. We do not know whether the man will live. Will we learn his name from the newspapers the next day? More likely, we'll learn it from a viral video.

This is a painting by visual artist and graphic designer Sameer Kulavoor, who gives it a simple title, Mob. One can see the illuminated smartphone screens in it. The assault is being recorded. That has been the truth of the lynchings over the past few years: there are always a few men among the participants who take a peculiar satisfaction in preserving evidence of their brutality. They do this, perhaps, because they see nothing wrong in what they are doing, or perhaps, they want to use the video to recruit more followers.

There are other questions that the painting forces me to ask: Will we learn the names of the attackers too? Will anything happen to them, will they be punished? I do not know the answer to such questions.

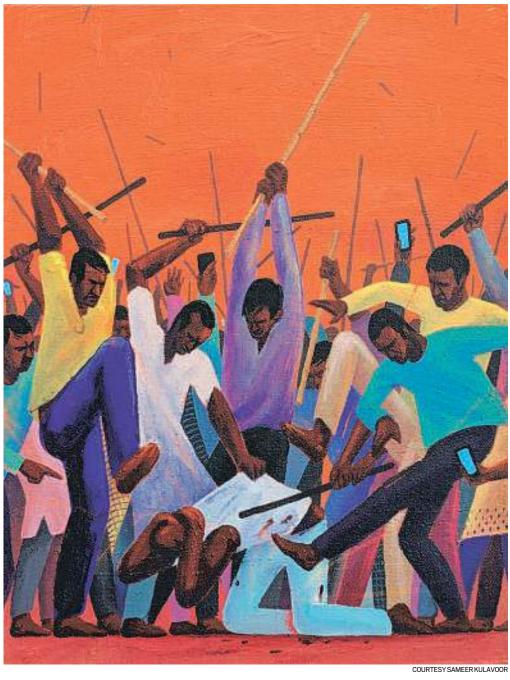
Take a careful look at the faces of the members of the mob painted by Kulavoor, you will see they are indistinguishable from each other. This seems just right because the mob is single-minded in its claim to truth. The only individual here, in any real sense, is the man being beaten. He is distinguished by his wounds. Kulavoor's art records this brutal fact.

Kulavoor was trained at Sir II School of Art in Mumbai. As a boy growing up in that city, he witnessed the riots that took place in 1992-93. He was around 10 years old. Riots had followed in the wake of the Babri Masjid demolition in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992. Official figures put the number of those killed in Mumbai during the riots at 900: 275 Hindus, 575 Muslims, and 50 others. As the product of a mixed marriage, Kulavoor told me, he had till then moved easily among different religious communities and traditions but the riots were a traumatic experience. The Gujarat riots of 2002further deepened the trauma and he began to follow the news closely.

With Narendra Modi's ascent to power in 2014, Kulavoor says, "Things went downwards" for minorities, Dalits, and rationalists. He mentioned the lynching of Mohammed Akhlaq, in Dadri in 2015, and the murder of Gauri Lankesh, in Bengaluru in 2017, as milestones on the national descent to a hell that made The New York Times declare 2018 as "the year of the lynch mob" in India. In February 2019, Kulavoor painted Mob. The national elections were a few months away. He was trying, Kulavoor tells me, to create "an image that was direct but also symbolic" of Modi's first term as Prime Minister.

In painting Mob, Kulavoor was reporting

THE LIES WE TELL **OURSELVES**



Sameer Kulavoor's painting Mob, 2019

on the recent past. But he was also in a way predicting the future. In one of the iconic images of 2020, by the late Reuters photojournalist Danish Siddiqui, we see a man being beaten by a mob. It was taken by Siddiqui in northeast Delhi during the riots in early 2020, even as then US president Donald Trump was being feted in another part of the city. The riots were the culmination of what had so far been a peaceful protest against the new citizenship laws, seen as discriminatory against Muslims.

Siddiqui had described the scene he'd captured: "Shadowing lines of heavily outnumbered police, I noticed more than a dozen people ranging from teenagers to old men assaulting a Muslim man in white clothes. Using sticks, cricket stumps, plastic pipes and metal rods, they brutally beat the man. Blood flowed from his head as he went down on his knees." The man who was being beaten was Mohammad Zubair. He survived. He had told Siddiqui, the mob attacked him when they saw his cap and beard and knew he was a Muslim. They knew nothing else about him. He asked Siddiqui, "What kind of humanity is this?"

I have recently published a novel, A Time Outside This Time, in which my narrator grapples with the realities of the current moment. The world comes to him in the form of bad news. One day, he makes a small painting from a photograph he had seen in a Delhi newspaper in May 2017. The photograph showed a man kneeling in the dirt, begging for his life. Half of his white vest — and his face - was soaked in blood. He was surrounded by onlookers - you saw their legs, their feet, but not their faces. The man on the ground, who had not been lynched yet but would be very soon, was named Mohammed Naeem. He was suspected of being a kidnapper. He was asserting his innocence, because that was the truth, but it was already too late for the truth.

In making a painting from a photograph in the newspaper, my narrator was trying to look at the scene more closely. And attempting to make his readers do the same. He was slow-jamming the news to make himself and his readers more critical consumers of reports about the horror around us.

I want to borrow my narrator's impulse and take it further.

On every vaccination card in India, on every rice bag distributed by the government, or every advertisement and government notice, we see Prime Minister Narendra Modi's face. My modest proposal is that instead of the photograph of the Prime Minister, let's put Kulavoor's painting on every rice bag. Let Mob be a kind of reality check. Let it enter our consciousness as the truth of our times. The truth that we, as a nation, have entered an era where our foundational truth is a lie. A lie that we are all equal before the law, irrespective of our religion.

> Amitava Kumar is the author most recently of A Time Outside This Time (Aleph)

Trauma and the Untold Stories of Resistance

Let's visibilise what's invisibilised, politicise what's medicalised, invite agency and restore dignity

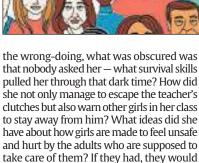


BY SHELJA SEN

TRAUMA HAS become a buzzword in the area of mental health. Podcasts are being churned out, books are being published, international conferences have erudite panellists educating the world on how trauma is at the root of all problems. Now, why would I have a problem with it? Surely, a more trauma-informed world would be a better world, won't it? Maybe not, and let me explain why

Discourse of victimhood: Suppose India's colonisation and the atrocities inflicted by the British was the only history available to us, and the sustained resistance by the people was completely erased. Where the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, crushing famines and brutal subjugation of people spanning three centuries was the single story we carried, and there was no mention of the Uprising of 1857, the Non-Cooperation Movement, and magnitude of the freedom struggle? What would it do to our identity and sense of pride as Indians? Similarly, what does it do to a person when their life is reduced to stories of oppression without any acknowledgement of resistance? People are always responding to hardships no matter how gruesome, painful and life-threatening. I work with children who have been raped, abused, neglected to the level of being on the streets. To reduce them to just victimhood will be a dishonour to years of survival in the face of extreme conditions.

Pathologisation obscures resistance: Mental health and medical industry have indoctrinated us into objectifying people as disorders and diagnoses, which leads to concealing the issues of social injustice by locating the problem in the person. Sameera (name changed), 24, who had been sexually assaulted in childhood by a male teacher in school, recently started getting severe headaches. The "trauma specialist" her parents consulted labelled it as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) with "suppressed rage" and started her on medication and counselling for "releasing rage". In this medicalisation of



have heard very different stories — of agency, of courage, of solidarity. And most of all, of how Sameera preferred to be seen – not as a passive victim but as a person who stood up for herself, her friends and who held on to her dignity in the darkest moments.

Mother-blaming: Psychiatry and psychol-

ogy have a murky history in terms of mother-bashing. Every problem a person has, be it depression, anxiety, addiction and even neurodivergence like ADHD, autism, is traced back to some problem in mothering – mothers who neglected, cared too much/too little, could not protectthe list is endless. Trauma is the new frontier in mother-blaming. Sameera was really bewildered when she was told that actually her "suppressed rage" was for her mother as she could not protect her. For centuries, feminists have stood up against patriarchy, but even now, we find such easy targets in women. Of course, children thrive when their parents can keep them safe, but rather than locating the problem in them and being complicit in this politics of mother blaming, it is crucial to highlight the structural inequality, crush-



There's a Mexican proverb,

'They tried to bury me, but didn't

know that I'm a seed.' It captures

the dignity of the human spirit

ing burden of care mothers have to carry single-handedly that drives so many to such black pits of despair and heart-breaking guilt. Our trauma practice has to be about visibilising what has been invisibilised, politicising what has been medicalised so that we can invite agency, restore dignity and hon-

our their resistance. Invite agency rather than assign dam**age**: So much of discourse around trauma is

about the effects of trauma and not the responses. Therefore, the treatment plans, highly influenced by Western ideas, diminish, overlook the local know-how and skills of survival and living. People rendered vulnerable due to traumatic incidents in their life internalise these problems

and end up dismissing their own unique responses to the situation. There is enough research on how the Western ideas of trauma and healing caused further damage in Sri Lanka after the 2004 tsunami (Ethan Watters' 2010 Crazy Like Us, Globalisation of the American Psyche is a fascinating read). Armies of well-intentioned trauma experts landed from all across the Western world with their fancy paraphernalia, and nobody bothered to ask, "What skills and resources do the local community have?"; "What steps do we take to respect the local, ethnic, cultural traditions and religious beliefs?"; "What has helped them to survive in the face of similar catastrophes in the past?". Damage is assigned through a Western lens, internalised through a colonial sense of inferiority and dispensed as the only truth.

People are real experts in their lives: In my organisation, we have worked with children from a range of socio-cultural-political contexts — Kashmir, Tibetans in exile, street children - we strive to understand the cultural narratives, the local idioms of distress and healing. In our conversation, Sameera shared with me how she continued going to school after the incident even though, despite the complaints, the teacher was not fired. She explained to me that, "I had decided that I would not let it mess my future. In fact, it made me even more determined than ever before." Her dream was to become a computer scientist and support her family, who had been through severe financial difficulties. Recently, she had got into a relationship when the headaches had started. When I asked her, "If this pain had a voice, what do you think it is trying to tell you?", after some thinking, she shared, "I think it wants me to be safe, but it wants me to find love too." The pain was not "suppressed rage" but a testimony to what she valued – safety and love.

Change happens on the margins: Any significant change that happens in this world, which works at helping people who face discrimination, happens at the margins. People who enjoy privilege and power (I count myself in that lot) are too complacent to do much. In the past few decades, resistance to oppression has come from communities who have faced trauma across generations - feminists, LGBTQIA+, people with disabilities, indigenous folks, people of colour, Dalits, neurodiverse youth and most of all, the ones who are placed at the intersection of these marginalisations. They have reclaimed it as a human-rights issue that requires a lens of social justice and not pathology and dehumanising practices.

There is a Mexican proverb, "They tried to bury me, but didn't know that I'm a seed." It captures the dignity of the human spirit. People are not passive recipients of extreme hardships, pain, violations or even trauma treatments. They cannot be crushed, they resist, and they grow back again. Even stronger.

Acknowledgement to narrative practitioners across the world whose ideas have supported my practice.

Shelja Sen is a narrative therapist, writer, cofounder. Children First. In this column, she curates the know-how of the children and the youth she works with. She can be reached at shelja.sen@childrenfirstindia.com

Views from the Other Side

Historian Manu S Pillai on examining the colonial stereotypes of Indian royalty in his new book and finding them to be inadequate

Adrija Roychowdhury

HEWORLD of the Indian maharajahs has long been laden with colonial stereotypes of silken robes, frivolity and decadence. Set up by the British Rai, this image of the Indian princes was an important element required to cement colonial rule in India. After Independence, the makers of modern India, too, largely followed the British perception of the princes. Historian Manu S Pillai's new book, False Allies, seeks to counter this image and examine the erstwhile age of Indian royalty as one of political sophistication.

Pillai, 31, begins his book with the moment in 1887 when Prince Asvathi Tirunal of Travancore attired in "English trousers and shiny shoes, with a dreary dark coat and pocket watch" climbed on a tricycle to pose for the painter Raja Ravi Varma. "Besides ear studs and an embroidered cap, there was no concession at all to the Western stereotype of Eastern opulence here," writes Pillai, who also looks at four other major princely states besides Travancore – Pudukkottai, Baroda, $My sore \, and \, Udaipur - in \, the \, book. \, In \, this \, in$ terview, Pillai speaks about why he chose to trace the age of the maharajahs through the works of Raja Ravi Varma, the princes behind the caricatures and the relationship the states shared with the British. Edited excerpts:

Why did you choose to write about the princely states in connection with the artist Raja Ravi Varma?

Ravi Varma was the perfect insider and link between multiple states. His sisters-inlaw and granddaughters were royal, while his portrait enterprise took him to several states for work. Tracking his peregrinations was a method by which I was able to select five out of 100 major states, and study them and their rulers in detail. Otherwise, the book would have become too generic.

You write that bestowing titles and insisting on public fealty was necessary for the British to acquire legitimacy. What were the princes expecting to gain out of the treaties with the British?

Each state had different incentives. Travancore went in relatively early, to secure itself from Mysore's aggressions under Tipu Sultan. Pudukkottai's rulers were transitioning from chieftains to kings, and allying themselves to a superior force was a method to gain recognition. In Rajputana, many rulers under Maratha dominance had become weak, and their own vassals encroached on their power: British support helped them restore the vitality of their thrones — that is, by accepting British suzerainty, the rajahs regained their authority over subordinate chieftains. They gave up power in one sense to win some in another. Recently, the scholar Priya Atwal has shown how several Punjab states, too, faced with confirmed extinction at the hands of Ranjit Singh's empire or survival in a truncated form with the British, chose the latter. It is all fascinatingly complex.

Were the princes aware of the caricatures they were being turned into by the British? If so, were there attempts on their part to alter that image?

Yes, many maharajahs took to wearing sim-



PAINT ME TRUE

(Clockwise from above) Pillai; Ramachandra, the Pudukkottai prince holding a copy of the Iliad in a Raja Ravi Varma portrait; Maharajah Chamarajendra Wadiyar of Mysore; artist Raja Ravi Varma

pler clothes, to fight the stereotype of royal excess. One of the charges against Sayajirao III (Gaekwad) of Baroda was that he presented himself to the British king in a simple dress he was expected to show up wearing colourful robes and diamonds. But he was allergic to being viewed as exotica. In Mysore, it was with pride that a publication announced that the ruler handled 900 files in his first year, disproving the idea that all the princes did were to sit idly on thrones. Even in the ways in which princes were depicted in art, one sees this: Ravi Varma's portrait of the Pudukkottai rajah (1879) has him rest a hand on Homer's *Iliad*, as if signalling ease with Western culture, while also in the distance showing the gopuram of his temple, hinting at a rootedness in tradition. The British had a political and imperial incentive in casting them as fools – historians must be apprehensive about such claims, especially when so much evidence exists of a princely pushback, subtle as well as obvious.

You mention that in states like Baroda and Travancore, the locals were happy with their rulers. How did they react to the news of their states acceding to the Indian union? Were there attempts made by the government to pacify them?

There was, of course, political agitation in these states as well, but standards of living



INDIA'S MAHARAJAHSIN THE AGE OF RAVI BY MANU S PILLAI Juggernaut



were high - there was a sophisticated government infrastructure, investments in health and education that surpassed British-Indian standards, and even ambitious industrial proiects. Politics did not revolve around nationalism but around local issues; often, around caste and communalism. Balances of power had to be managed within, but, even so, the very fact that the independent Indian government promised to preserve princely dignity through privy purses and privileges is important — it was not done to merely 'purchase' accession; it was also a signal that the rajahs would not be disrespected. This is not to say there were no bad eggs among the princes: only that many commanded genuine loyalty.

How did the Congress party perceive the royalty?

The Congress, by the second half of the 1930s, was hostile to the princes, but for a long stretch before that, there was regard. Various rulers not only made donations to it, but also spoke from the party's platforms. GK Gokhale, MG Ranade, Dadabhai Naoroji and their generation saw the preservation of princely autonomy vis-à-vis the Raj as an important national issue. Nationalist newspapers often celebrated maharajahs and their dewans (ministers) who, through good governance, disproved the trope that 'natives' could not the princes well into the 1930s, and hesitant for the Congress to meddle in states' politics. But into that decade, things changed. Several stereotypes peddled by the Raj were embraced by the Congress, too. Some royal families around the world,

rule. Even Mahatma Gandhi was respectful of

such as the British royal family, have managed to remain relevant. Do the erstwhile princely states have any kind of relevance today in India?

There is, depending on where you look, often a religious and social relevance to the ex-royal families, and this appeal is also why so many princely descendants are politicians today. Some have used the cultural resources they possess — art, buildings, antiques — to reinvent themselves, but many have sunk into oblivion. That the age of the princes is over is not in doubt. What matters is to study their history and their states' histories, because they, too, are part of India's story and contributed to shaping our modernity. Mysore's determined industrialisation was a legitimate form of fighting colonialism even if its ruler did not lead street agitation; Baroda's support to anti-British elements was not an accident. Even if we wish to understand how Indian nationalism itself evolved, we would benefit by studying the princes.

The Edge of the Storm

A translation of an Assamese classic brings to life the strife-torn Northeast of the Nineties

Rini Barman

HRUBAJYOTI BORAH'S Kalantarar trilogy is an unforgettable book for readers in Assam. And so, the translation of its first book can offer some new insights and critical possibilities, which otherwise might not be known to those who haven't read the Assamese original. First published in 1997, Borah's trilogy (of which the second is *Tejor Andhar* [Darkness of Blood] and the third *Arth* [Meaning]) is a realisation of the many perils and paradoxes of freedom. His characters seek freedom, both deeper and internal, and their shattered hopes of rebellion add to the overall melancholic tone of the book. A prolific Assamese writer for over three decades, Borah was awarded the Sahitya Akademi Award in 2009 for his novel, Katha Ratnakar.

Set in the Nineties, when militancy in Assam was at its peak, in Elegy for the East, we have Prabhat, a college student caught in a police interrogation about insurgents; journalist Partha is constantly trying to assess his feelings for the ideologies of the rebel outfits in the region and rebel movements across the world. We also have Ron, the camp commander of a militant outfit, who blindly follows the ideals of Che Guevara and thinks alienation from the public at large is, at times, necessary to bring about the desired revolution. His sister Bokul comes as a contrast — though not elaborated in detail, she believes in liberal humanism, something which the men are amused by.

An important book in this conversation is Uddipan Dutta's Creating Robin Hoods: The Insurgency of ULFA in Its Early Period, Its Parallel Administration and the Role of Assamese Vernacular Press (1985-1990) (2009), which traces how the image, metaphor and the actual "Robin Hoods" of the state led the region into perilous territory. Radical youth leaders — such as Ron and his mentor Bharat Hazarika in Borah's books — were identified metaphorically with the legendary outlaw Robin Hood,

whose tales dominate British folklore. Amit Baishya in his book Contemporary literature from



ELEGY FOR THE EAST: A STORY OF BLOOD AND **BROKEN DREAMS** BY DHRUBAJYOTI **BORAH** Niyogi Books 380 pages

Northeast India: Deathworlds, terror and survival (2018) calls Kalantarar Gadya a polyphonic novel where the ordinary citizen is gripped by the fear of state terror and "banal bureaucratic rituals". These narratives of precarity often lead us to the haunted, which is represented by the character Babula in the novel — a spectre who wears a "tattered army shirt and carries a bunch of fishing rods." Tortured and killed by the army after being picked up for interrogation, Babula or Babula benga (mute) now roams around "the hollongs wrapped by wild creepers, thorny thickets of cane and the stinging nettle bushes," Borah writes. The novel's depiction of natural imagery coalesces with the psyche of those suffering. It gives an accurate glimpse of the

sheer terror that gripped commoners as rebel outfits justified "necessary deaths".

While armed torture, military surveillance and the question of loyalty to those in power come alive in the story, it also brings to light the sexual abuse and marginalisation suffered by widows like Sombori, who is raped by a marauding soldier. The villagers urge her to atone in order to be accepted again into the fold — this does little justice to her mental state.

This aptly critiques the inertia of the Assamese middle class to overthrow oppressive structures and to comply with authorities in their bid to lead a hassle-free life. It is essential to narrate these stories not just because of the way militancy has subdued them, but how social and political forces lead the youth down a path that is beyond redemption. The universal appeal of the novel lies in the ways in which it is able to discuss the gaps between ideologies and their practice in real-life scenarios, in completely diverse contexts. Why else would a hero from the Bolivian forests inspire local boys in Assam and the northeastern region to revolutions?

While the translation, done by Borah himself, gets the message across, perhaps, it would have benefitted if the flow had been uninterrupted by explanations in brackets for phrases such as "my heart is like the leaves of *jetuka* (henna leaves)" or words like *saunf* (anise), dada (elder brother), borkahi (large brass plate), dheki (husking treadle), and so on, Maybe, in the upcoming translations of the sequels, there will be better cohesion in this regard.

> Rini Barman is an independent writer and researcher based in Assam

SHELF LIFE

Words in Deep Blue

IN EARLY 2010, a social worker in Odisha told filmmaker Devashish Makhija about taking her Adivasi friends to a theatre to watch an Odia dub of James Cameron's film Avatar, released the previous year. They clapped and hooted — until the end; disappointed because their stories almost never have happy endings. This story stayed with filmmaker Makhija, who went to Odisha to experience first-hand the lives of the Adivasis. "They live in a 24x7 state of dread. They don't know where they're going, what they're going to wake up to tomorrow, what belongs to them, what belongs to the State, whether they belong to the State. There were villages that were not sure that India had achieved independence, that they now belong to a country called India," he says.

The story of *Oonga* came out of that time. Makhija, 42, writes it like an Iranian film, the big bad world seen through a child's eyes. The eponymous Dongria Kondh boy wants to become like Rama and save his village from the enemy. Makhija turns to the Ramayana, the source material for Avatar, and subverts it. Oonga's teacher Hemla — the voice of wisdom, standing at the crossroads between the Adivasi villagers, the CRPF and the insurgents — teaches the Kuvi-speaking children to speak in Hindi, the tongue



BY DEVASHISH MAKHIJA Tulika 295 pages

of the oppressors, so that a dialogue can happen. The novel despairs with a grim, graphic show of the pitfalls of violence, but transcends in its portrayal of unsullied innocence, empathy and nature human and environmental.

The visual elements try to create a sense of a different world for the city reader. If a sprinting Oonga is signalled by the onomatopoeic "thupthupthupthup"; the sound of feet on earth, the linguistic shifts between Kuvi, Hindi and Telugu, spoken by the characters, are suggested by different fonts. Little tribal motifs act as section separators.

Written like an adventure story, Oonga first appeared in 2013, at film festivals, but never released in India. When Tulika Books was toying with the idea of a film-

to-book story, they approached Makhija. The result was a Young Adult (16-24 years) novel that has just won this year's Neev Book Award in the YA category. Before this, he's written a book of short stories and picture books. His publisher had told him that Oonga won't fetch an award because it's "too adult for the young adult, and it's too young for the adult adult" but the novel succeeds in pushing the boundaries of what's expected of the category.

Is he appropriating the Adivasi story? Makhija, the observer-narrator, doesn't speak for his characters, but is carrying their stories to the privileged mainstream in a tongue they understand. He also hopes to get the book translated in more languages

TANUSHREE GHOSH

Pilgrim's Progress

In her latest work, Arundhathi Subramaniam seeks out women who represent the minority in India's spiritual lineage and the result is a deeply philosophical and urgent book

Aditi Sriram

ARUNDHATHI SUBRAMANIAM'S words linger. As a poet, an author, a seeker and a disciple, one of her greatest talents is language, through which she is in constant dialogue with herself, her guru, and the rest of us. Reading about her progress, her questions and her epiphanies, the words feel effortless and resonant. So, it is not surprising that a sentence she wrote 10 years ago has become the title of her latest book. In her introduction to Pilgrim's India, a 2011 anthology about different people's experiences with pilgrimage, she posits that "...sacred journeys - those disruptive excursions -

are for those who want to cross thresholds."

A decade later, Subramaniam has published her latest work, Women Who Wear Only Themselves, about some of those threshold crossers and their "sacred journeys." Using a mix of biography and memoir, interview and revelation, poetry and prose, she describes her interactions with four women who can be described as pilgrims, mystics, gurus, mothers. Her chosen word for them "travellers", which is another Subramaniam-ism; her 2014 poetry collection is titled When God is a Traveller.

Thresholds, journeys, travellers: Subramaniam seems to be on a lifelong quest, and her prolific writing reflects this restlessness. Women Who Wear Only Themselves makes sense as her next study of the sacred journey. Like her previous books, it examines both tradition and transcendence. It wanders deep into the self, while also entering celestial territory. It spotlights incredible personalities while simultaneously revealing more of the author. What is new in this book is evident in the title, the preface, and every subsequent page: "Contemporary women. Women who improvise their way through their lives even as we speak. Women walking the spiritual path right now..." In her latest work. Subramaniam has cho-

sen to speak with four women — a minority in India's spiritual lineage, but not a diminutive

one. There are the more prominent women, like Akka Mahadevi, Andal, Lal Ded, Meerabai. And there are the more recent ones, such as Anandamayi Ma and The Mother of Pondicherry (now Puducherry). In contrast, Subramaniam goes in search of "the quiet women", and discovers in them "a contraband of radiance that I wanted in some way to smuggle into the printed page."

Subramaniam's four characters are mysterious, unpredictable, and assured. Up first, Sri Annapurani Amma is candid and brazen, "her hair a rainforest of matted wilderness." She is also completely naked; Subramaniam words, she is clad in "nothing but herself." Her guru is a saint who lived 300 years before her, and her other confidante is Shiva, as in, from the Trinity. She speaks to both regularly.

Vishwashirasini, who follows the "mystic sci-



WEAR ONLY THEMSELVES CONVERSATIONS WITH FOUR **TRAVELLERS ON** SACRED **JOURNEYS** BY ARUNDHATHI SUBRAMANIAM Speaking Tiger 176 pages; ₹499

into a clear spiritual channel, Balarishi gains disciples — as a mere teenager - and a nickname, "KitKat Swami" because they would bring her chocolates. Third is Lata Mani, a wideranging academic who transforms both externally and internally after surviving a major accident. She writes a book

ence of sound," known as Nada

yoga. When she was just 10 years

old, she began to hear things she

could not explain; "like I was

eavesdropping on sages talking to each other." As this deepens

about "spiritual teachings received from five disembodied sources: Devi, Shiva, Jesus, Mary and Moon" and dialogues with Subramaniam on social movements, trauma, and mysticism. Fourth and finally, readers meet Maa Karpoori, a monk named thus by her guru. Directed by

After her, readers hear from Balarishi him to endure three years in silence at one point in her journey, she remembers feeling

abandoned. She questions her convictions, and her guru's vision. But time changes that. "So, I waited. As a woman I knew something about waiting. I knew about simply hanging on, not letting go. It was a trial by fire... Today my fire is very much alive, but it is no longer destructive.

The book is not structured as formal interviews, but rather, a composite of conversations and reflections, arranged in four chapters. Sometimes, she recorded these discussions and other times she did not. But her deft prose and poetry convey her attentiveness, curiosity and admiration. Reflecting on this in the Afterword, she says, "Rather than paraphrase or decode them, it is enough, I believe, to look where they point."

Subramaniam's writing is a response to her self-described "thirst" for conversations which prod, provoke and pry. And these four women are her latest attempts at a quench. A must-read, whether or not you are parched; you will find yourself asking for a refill.

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Record 100 cars to take part in **Nazir Hoosein Memorial Drive**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

OCTOBER 23

FROM DELHI to Lansdowne, up to Mussoorie after passing through the snow capped peaks near Tilwara or Chopta before proceeding further north to Kufri via Shimla bypass and finally to Manali: the five-day Nazir Hoosein Memorial Drive by Team Firefox was launched on Saturday.

Organisers said there will be record participation for the non-competitive event and the 100-car field will begin their sojourn on November 8 from Greater Noida and conclude in Manali on November 12. The event will be held along the 'iconic' Himalayan Rally route to commemorate the birth anniversary of Hoosein, who is credited to be one of the persons to put India on the map of international motorsports.

Hoosein was a founder member of his club, the Indian Automotive Racing Club (IARC), and was the president of the Federation of Motor Sport Clubs of India (FM-SCI) in 1984/85. However, in the racing circuit, Hoosein is perhaps most fondly remembered for starting an event that is believed to have reshaped Indian motorsport - the Himalayan Rally,

"I heard about it as a young child and it really drove my passion for rallying," said Gaurav Gill, a multiple time FIA Asia Pacific Rally champion. "I am very happy to see this tribute to the iconic rally route in the Himalayas seeing such good participation and look forward to its great success.'

The first edition of the event was held in 1980, based on a safari rally format. Since then the concept stuck and the Himalayan Rally became an important fixture of the Indian calendar. This year, the NHMD will follow the route from the 1981 edition, the or-

On November 11, the drivers will tackle the iconic route of the original rally — the Jalori Pass before halting in Manali. The final day will see participants cross over the Rohtang pass before concluding the drive in Manali. "The idea was to recreate the original route, for various reasons. In 40 years, a lot of the landscape has changed, and it will be interesting for former participants as well as fans to experience it," Rajan Syal, the chief executive of FMSCI, said.

Syal added that after a two-year pause owing to the pandemic, the event is an attempt to 'hark back the good times.' "Once we saw things slowly opening up, some of us involved with the motorsport community decided that we should do a drive, something to hark back the good times," Syal said. "That idea snowballed into doing something to commemorate Nazir Hoosein."

EMOTIONAL ROLLERCOASTER

Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

Next change: An action-thriller?



If Pakistan and India contest doesn't hold up to its hype, a shiver would go up the spine of ICC. The opening day games were a low-quality affair. Australia vs South Africa might have thrown up a last-over finish but it was artificial respiration at best to an otherwise life-less game. Worse was to follow in the West Indies vs England game. Luckily, the fielding in both games was top notch. The first game saw an Aiden Markram stunner. In

the second, Moeen Ali ran back from mid-off to almost near the boundary, and Dawid Malan back-pedalled from midwicket to well outside the in-ring to to claim their catches. The bowling has been good but made to look better by some poor batting, ICC would hope that West Indies rediscover their touch and Australia improve their batting. And of course, India and Pakistan brighten up the tournament with a thriller.

Markram on the mark



Aiden Markram's remarkable catch had shades of Dean Jones and Roshan Mahanama. We have the first great catch of the world cup which might prove pretty difficult to overshadow in the rest of the tournament as far as boundary catches go. Steve Smith had smashed a pull off Anrich Nortje and might well have been thinking of a six when he was given the shock of his life by Markram. From his position at long-on, Markram charged to his right and dived full length and to his right even as he twisted his body to pouch it. It's one thing to dive forward or to the side in the slips, but to do a side-ward plunge near the boundary and cover the angle is quite something else. No doubt, Smith was seen shaking his head and puffing out deep breaths in the dugout



The Aussies welcomed the T20 World Cup with new hairstyles. Glenn Maxwell, who dismissed South Africa skipper Temba Bavuma in the second over of the innings, sported a novel hairdo: fade on the sides and a top knot. When Maxwell removed Bayuma, his teammates came rushing to pat his head, bringing all the focus onto the hair. The look proved to be decisive on social media, with compliments mixed with comments on 'Maxwell's mid-life crisis'. Asked by Mark Nicholas during the break if it was his lucky hair-do, he replied: "It's because it's going in my eyes and there's no hairdresser on tour." Leggie Zampa, too, turned up having grown his hair out. Who knows, if Australia win their first T20 World Cup, perhaps an Aussie cricketer would draw inspiration from MS Dhoni, who went bald after India's 2011 World Cup win.



Absence of free agent Faf proves costly

And to think they couldn't find a place for Faf du Plessis. It was a shambles of a batting performance after two sweetly times fours by the skipper Temba Bavuma. From then on it was an inexorable slide to mediocrity. "When you are working with free agents, you have to come together. You have to find a balance that works for both the team and the free agents. With Faf in particular, we struggled to find that balance," said former captain Graeme Smith, who is the director of Cricket South Africa. Without that free agent Faf, the imbalance and lack of quality in the team was hard to hide. Watching in the stands was Smith himself, with a grim stare at the proceedings.

Up, down and up again

One didn't really have to look at the action in middle to understand which way the match was swinging. As Australia dug a hole for themselves, a glimpse at the Australian dugout told the match story. Captain Aaron Finch and coach Justin Langer sat looking calm, with wide grins as Steve Smith and Glenn Maxwell pulled Australia closer to South Africa's modest total. After a wobbly start, the duo steadied the Australian ship and Australia's captaincoach had little to worry about. But the smiles disappeared from their faces immediately after Smith walked back thanks to Markram. And once Maxwell got out, they looked worried, and Finch was already wiggling around. Within minutes, the cheerful mood in the dugout turned gloomy. It stayed that way until the last over and the smiles and fist pumps were back only after Marcus Stoinis helped Australia cross the finish line.

DDCA polls: Kotla turns into political battleground

NIHAL KOSHIE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 23

ELECTIONS FOR the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) to be held next week are turning out to be a microcosm of the politics of the day with the BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) throwing their weight behind leading candidates.

Last week, leaders of the BJP's Delhi unit were asked to support the group helmed by Rohan Jaitley, son of the late Arun Jaitley. Jaitley senior was one of the most prominent BJP leaders, a union minister and a former president of the DDCA.

Rohan, who has followed in his father's footsteps into cricket administration and is the current state association president, has thrown his hat in the ring again.

The president's election is a battle between two lawyers, Rohan and former additional solicitor general Vikas Singh, who claims to have the backing of AAP leaders.

Siddharth Sahib Singh, the brother of BJP MP Parvesh Verma (West Delhi), is spearheading a third group. His father, the late Sahib Singh Verma, was a senior vicepresident of the BJP and a Delhi chief minister. Siddharth is contesting for the secretary's post which sees a three-way battle.

Contesting for the treasurer's post is another advocate Pawan Gulati, who is a maternal uncle of BJP MP from East Delhi Gautam Gambhir, a former India Test opener. Rohan said that he did not want to comment on the BJP state unit drumming up support for his group.

"This is an apolitical organisation, there are people with various political thoughts who work together for the betterment of the game. Whether someone is supporting someone, I don't want to comment on that. It is all hearsay," Rohan said on Saturday. Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta had told this paper last week that the party is "seeking support for Rohan Jaitley's panel".

Vikas Singh, a senior Supreme Court lawyer, has made personal calls to members of the DDCA to talk about his 'anticorruption campaign'.

He has also been in touch with AAP leaders in the run-up to the state cricket unit elections

Singh calls the BJP state unit's call to lend support to Rohan's group a "desperate attempt" which is turning the DDCA election into a political battle.

"The Aam Aadmi Party is helping me. Raghav Chadha (MLA), Manish Sisodia (deputy chief minister) and Satyendra Jain (power minister), all three have advised MLAs to go door to door and tell voters they need to weed out corruption. That said, I am not an AAP candidate. Their campaign is an anti-corruption campaign,' Vikas Singh says. "Look at the people they





The BJP state unit has backed Rohan Jaitley (left), Vikas Singh claims to have the support of AAP leaders.

(Rohan Jaitley group) are fielding. It includes Vinod Tihara (secretary's post) who has just come out of jail," Singh, who says he has support from friends across party lines, adds.

AAP has not officially supported any candidate.

Tihara was arrested last year for alleged violation of Goods and Services Tax (GST) norms and lodged in Meerut jail before getting bail. Rohan said that attempts were being made to run a smear campaign against his group. "Whether he has committed a fraud, let the courts decide. He has the opportunity for a fair trial. Let the law take its own course. If he is guilty, he will get convicted," Rohan said.

Both groups have highlighted their vision with focus on members and cricketers in their respective manifestos.

Building an indoor cricket facility, restructuring cricket activities and expanding the cricket window are some of the plans Rohan has put forward to members.

Vikas Singh talks about putting the DDCA's house in order and improving facilities for members, cricket academies in each district of the capital and starting the Delhi Premier League He says it is not the first time he has

been up against the BJP. "In the Supreme Court elections also, the BJP issued a whip against me but I got the highest-ever margin," Singh, who was elected president of the executive committee of the SC Bar Association in February, said Former India player Kirti Azad, a

Congress politician now, said he was supporting Vikas Singh because the need of the hour was to clean up the system in the DDCA. "The other candidates are like old wine in new bottle. Cricket needs to be the priority of those who run DDCA. Vikas Singh has promised change for the betterment of the sport and for members of the DDCA," the 1983 World Cup winner said.

The elections will be held over three days, October 25 to 27, and the results will be declared on October 28.

LIBRA (Sept 24 - Oct 23)

Some astrologers

would say that this

week's stars bode

extremely

well for relationships with

children. A psychological

to have the courage to be

heart yourself.

child-like or just young-at-

SCORPIO (Oct 24 - Nov 22)

away you should therefore

resentments can be left until

later in the year, or even next

SAGITTARIUS (Nov 23 - Dec 22)

another you should keep on

as it happens, an excellent

moment for making deep,

commitments, but only if you

CAPRICORN (Dec 23 - Jan 20)

goodies. The point is that every

penny is likely to be well-spent,

and nothing should be wasted.

For once, you seem to have your

finger on the pulse, and those

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 - Feb 19)

This week's

alignments call on

you to treasure all

splendid

polite and gracious company,

mature relationships. It's time

to gird your loins and make a

'manners maketh man', and

not to mention wise and

long-term commitment.

Remember the old saving

you can set out to charm

others with your

winning ways.

who criticise you do so at

their peril.

on family and domestic

There never was a

spending large

moment like this for

amounts of money

the move. This is also,

long-term emotional

doubts, hold back.

Your nomadic

receiving a mild

boost, so one way or

make yourself happy by

creating as cosy a nest as

possible. Simmering

year, with a little luck.

It's an ideal

moment for being

family. If you are far

at home with the

reading of your chart, on the

other hand, might advise you

BRIDGE

♠ Q842 **432** WEST NORTH EAST SOUTH **4**2 **♣**KJ65

SOUTH **♠** 65 **♥**QJ109 ♦ K1063

♣872

West led the queen of diamonds. East noted to himself that dummy wa

Pass

The West Hand: S-93H-A76D-QJ87C-A1094 The South Hand: S-AKJ1097H-K85D-A95 C-Q3

I will show you how to defend in a moment. Here is what hannened at many tables when this hand was played in a tournament. South let the queen of di-amonds win. He won the continuation and drew trump. Then he led the queen of clubs. West took it and led back a club. South got rid of a heart and later he led a heart to the king, losing to the ace.

"Good thing I did not bid game." said North, "You did well to make three. In fact," he added, "you should not even make three."

What did North mean? Could 3S have been set? The answer is yes. When

He knew that West had the jack. He knew that he would like to lead the queen of hearts.

East has to put the king of diamonds on the queen. His ten will be an entry later in the event that South takes his ace. Whether the defenders will know to do the right things is a different issue. What is important is that by playing the king on this layout. East insures that South can not keep East from ng in. Give East credit for trying. We will not know if West would have the right things because he did not get the chance.

Dealer: South Vulnerable: North/South



SOUTH (YOU) ♠ AJJ93 **₩**A83 • 0109

WEST NORTH **EAST** SOUTH Pass Pass Pass Pass Pass

nth opens 1S in third seat and North responds with 2C.Drury. South has a full opening bid but facing a passed hand he estimates that game is not a good idea and he signs off in 2S. Dummy comes down with a maximum hand. Have you missed a game? Let's pretend that you are in a game. Blame part-ner if you wish, but try to take ten tricks. west leads two of clubs. Estimate

SUNDAY CROSSWORD 2344

Tremble because of cold, fear, etc.

Former Pakistan paceman Akhtar

Eat, devour or digest (7) 11. Meets (10) 12. Adeep cut (4)

13. Tropical resin(5) 14. White ants (8)

16. Capital of Uzbekistan (8) 18. Pertaining to the Pope

20. Ex-India paceman Yohannan

21. Relative importance (10)

24. Military pageants? (7) 25. University honour (6)

26. Grown-ups (6)

DOWN Produce (5)

Beg(7) Costly, not cheap (9) Loose coverings for the head

An African spear (7)

A shocking surprise 10. Period of pregnancy (9)

13. Wasted away, very thin (9)

15. Officially rebuke (9)

Accommodation (7) 19. Prove superior (7)

22. Musical symbols (5) CRYPTIC CLUES

Old Bob gives friendly direction to the crowds (6)

4. So soundly beaten that there is nothing in it (6)

Strongly confirm, with most weight (7)

9. Ties up bow on tanks (7)

11. The stories one tells (10) $12. \ \ Fight over pound owed (4)$

 $13. \ \ Publican covering up a pretty plant$

14. See a quarter in the game and some monstrous goings-on here (4,4)

16. Upsets the officers and withdraws 18. Southwest ring-road in Toledo, for

example(5)20. Maybe he's a German with an

Italian eight (4)

21. Profound colour group

23. Slights, but the bad singer takes nothing to heart. (7)

24. From which the owner also hopes to get some brass! (3,4) 25. A dangerous choice for

mythological sailors (6) 26. Acts like a miser for stretches of time(6)

1. Military cover has become

disorganised by a blow

public attention (7)
3. In Russia, at one time, endlessly

having trouble finding sugar Minor risk revealed a bloomer

subsisted from them

(5,2)

Proved to be evergreens and one

Saw and reported in the court? 10. Passed exam, with reservations (9) 13. It will take time, following her, for them to be passed on (9)

15. I can't shop if this is out of order (9)

17. Environmental science Geo Coly

19. Rower with mother in a case of arson results in ... (7)

21. Drive carefully and live (5) 22. They are of joint use to the golfers

Solutions to 2343

QUICK CLUES Across: 6 Arjun, 7 Inferred 10 Peckish, 11 Saddens, 12 Croatia, 13 Chatter, 14 Speedometer, 19 Reached, 21 Impulse, 23 Flemish, 25 Leotard, 26 Staggers, 27 Enemy, Down; 1 Ejectors, 2 Enlist, 3 High handed, 4 Efts, 5 Desert, 6 Aspect, 8 Radiant, 9 Astro, 13 Carne in last, 15 Echoing, 16 Released, 17 Gruff, 18 Heyday, 20 Alerts, 22 Proper, 24 Heed. CRYPTIC CLUES Across: 6 Mealy, 7 Invaders, 10 Dampish, 11 Despoil, 12 Claudia, 13 Furious, 14 Dreadnought, 19 Slapped, 21 Bradman, 23 Eardrum, 25 Immerse, 26 Hatching, 27 Extol, Down; Farmland, 2 Myriad, 3 Highhanded, 4 Ovid, 5 Arroyo, 6 Medick, 8 Dishrag, 9

Bless, 13 Footbridge, 15 Empiric, 16

3

8

Airman, 22 Armies, 24 Maid.

If it's your Birthday

Sunday October 24

Emotional security is high on your agenda, You'll feel happier if you are surrounded by people who really matter to you.

Monday October 25

You're on the up. Discipline and hard work, that's what today's about. You could also work hard at enjoying yourself. That's all taken care of, then.

Tuesday October 26

results. It looks as if you're heading towards greater personal freedom, experimenting with new lifestyles and options. Wednesday October 27

Overall, your trends are positive. And that

should give you the leeway to break out of a

Short-term choices could have long-term

tight spot and begin to consider your future options. Thursday October 28 You're tempted to put choices off until tomorrow, yet decisions would best be taken

sooner rather than later. You tend to take your

time, but it will help if you work out what you

want, and then ask people how they can

Friday October 29

You should have a great start to your new astrological cycle. You may be able to get loved ones do things your way, by pressing the right emotional buttons. Make sure there's something in it for them.

Saturday October 30

You know that a positive attitude breeds a better life. So you may take responsibility for the good feeling which seems to infect people. You must now set out to help others.

YOUR WEEK AHEAD

ARIES (Mar 21 - Apr 20) that gets your

lending you a helping hand, which has to be really good news. If all goes according to n you should therefore soor be hitting the social heights. If you can put certain professional qualms to one side, you'll be able to enjoy taking a personal ambition to fabulous

TAURUS (Apr 21 - May 21)
We could see a rare flash of Taurean

are now shifting, as one ends, another begins.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21) Indulge yourself a little. Amongst the pursuits for which

chosen companions

statements and actions, and nobody could blame you if you feel slightly perplexed. This week gives you the chance to lift your morale by going out and blowing some

LEO (July 24 - Aug 23)



only if you put their interests first. The fact is that you have so much to learn by following their lead. At work, it's time to pick up a new skill. You never know when it will come in handy.

VIRGO (Aug 24 - Sept 23) The best

relationships are

to justify your reputation for

being a recluse. One way or

IOPRR ADENWT

JUMBLED WORDS

the answer for the given quip

BOSEE

Answer: Don't simply **retire** from something; have something to **retire** to - Harry SOLUTION: OBESE, PRIOR, TIBIAL, WANTED

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to

the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get

Don't simply __from something; have something to __to-Harry Emerson Fosdick (6,.,6)

Difficulty Level 3s Instructions

To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the

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

4 4 5 8 6 8 5

9

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4633

Venus, the planet

emotional juices flowing, is now

new lengths.



impatience, and the chances are that you'll emerge from the last few weeks eager and anxious to get on with your life. It could even feel as if certain responsibilities

the classic Geminian type is famous, are walking and talking. If you can manage to do both at the same time, there is no better moment than the present for a long expedition with some carefully

CANCER (June 22 - July 23) You may have been taken aback by partners' recent

money. A bout of extravagance could make you feel better.



based around joint activities. It may be boring to take part in a hobby which doesn't interest you. It may even be downright tedious. However, just think of the emotional credit you'll gain. At home,

partners expect you to agree

PISCES (Feb 20 - Mar 20) The Moon and Venus inspire new dreams and, by all accounts, you are about

another, do be sure to set some time aside for doing only what you want to do, even if it means being alone.









Live on Star Sports Network

Sunday Night Raw

Bragging rights at stake as Kohli's side look to maintain India's all-win record in World Cups against arch rivals Pakistan



SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY DUBAI. OCTOBER 23

HOW MANY matches must Pakistan play before they beat India in a World Cup? In the 1990s, they had a great team but lost in 1992, 1996 and 1999. Since the turn of the century, as India became the game's biggest power, Pakistan gradually re-

How many cricketers from the Pakistan T20 World Cup squad will get into a combined XI? Babar Azam walks in. Shaheen Shah Afridi deserves a shout out, while Mohammad Rizwan deserves an honourable mention. If it were a Test match, the result might have been a foregone conclusion due to the gulf between the two teams. T20 cricket, though, is like a penalty shootout in football. As Virat Kohli said in the post-match press conference, sometimes just three-four balls can change the momentum

Fixing their opening conundrum before the showpiece event should hold India in good stead. A brilliant IPL did the trick for KL Rahul in terms making himself the first-choice as Rohit Sharma's opening partner. Kohli will be at No.3. Ishan Kishan is in fabulous form of late, boasting three half-centuries in his last three T20 matches, including the warm-up fixture against England. Suryakumar Yadav, meanwhile, showed improvement during his 38 not out in the warm-up game against Australia. The team management rates Surya's versatile batting highly and he is likely to play.

Hardik Pandya is unlikely to bowl early into the tournament but he will be the team's No. 6 batsman. Kohli is clear in his thought process that at the death, Pandya's impact batting is what his team wants. "These things (uncertainty over Pandya's selection) from a talking or discussion point of view, feel very interesting that if he doesn't bowl, will he be left out? But we understand the value he brings to the team as a No. 6 batter and in world cricket, if you look around, there are specialists who do that job," the India captain said.

Kohli rewound to Pandya's batting in Australia last year, his 22-ball 42 not out in Sydney to be precise, that helped India see off a tense 195 run-chase. But there's a catch. If Pandya doesn't bowl, who would be the team's sixth bowler? Kohli bowled a couple of overs in the warm-up game against Australia. Is he confident enough to

do the job against Pakistan?
Playing only five specialist bowlers is high-risk, for if someone leaks runs, the void could be exposed. "We have considered a couple of other options to chip in for an over or two. So we are not bothered at all." Kohli said.

Against the team culture of India, Pakistan will turn to individual brilliance, like Akram's dream deliveries to dismiss Lamb and Lewis in 1992 or Zaman against India at the Champions Trophy. On Saturday, Pandya didn't turn up at the nets, raising a few eyebrows.

Having an embarrassment of riches gives the Indian team management a happy problem. Ravichandran Ashwin is one of them. Using Washington Sundar's fastish off-spin in the Powerplay had been Kohli's favourite template in T20Is. Washington's injury paved the way for Ashwin's inclusion in the World Cup squad. At the nets on the match eve, the senior off-spinner had a good outing. He had wickets in consecutive deliveries against Australia. Ashwin, however, can't replicate Washington's power-hitting down the order and playing him at the expense of leggie Rahul Chahar would be a complete Uturn

Over the past four years since the Champions Trophy final in 2017, India have made wrist-spin an integral part of their white-ball process. Given that Ravindra Jadeja is undroppable for his all-round ability, two conventional finger-spinners in a T20 game on a good Dubai pitch could be a luxury. As Kohli said, he expected good surfaces for the ICC event.

The BCCI has brought in MS Dhoni to the team set-up for the T20 World Cup, assuming that the former captain's title-winning experience would help the side that hasn't won an ICC event for eight years now. And so far, Dhoni has proved to be a hands-on mentor. He is giving throwdowns, talking to the players and offering advices to the batsmen.

Against the team culture of India, Pakistan will turn to individual brilliance, like Wasim Akram's dream deliveries to dismiss Allan Lamb and Chris Lewis at the 1992 World Cup final or Fakhar Zaman's match-winning hundred against India at the 2017 Champions Trophy final.

One big change for Pakistan, a team that revels in its unpredictability, is to announce the 12 for Sunday's game against India. Even a senior Pakistani cricket correspondent was surprised, calling it "very rare". Sarfaraz Ahmed's omission from the pack brought about a few questions at the presser, but Azam defended his selection. Young Haider Ali scored his runs at a strike-rate of around 180 at the National T20 Cup - Pakistan's lead-up to the world event - and for a side bereft of a power-hitter, he could be a fantastic choice if his captain shows boldness and drops one of the two veterans, Mohammad Hafeez or Shoaib Malik.

Azam put up a brave front when reminded about Pakistan's no-win record against India at the World Cups.

"Records are made to be broken and you never know what happens on any given day," said the Pakistan skipper. To make that happen, he will have to lead from the front. Pakistan's chances largely depend on their only world-class batsman, ranked second in the ICC T20I batting list. In the past, an India-Pakistan game used to be about India's batting versus Pakistan's bowling. That has changed with India's rise as a pace bowling superpower. Pakistan, on the other hand, would be concerned about Hasan Ali's profligacy in the death overs in the warm-up game against South Africa.

The one advantage, the Pakistan players is they are mentally fresher than their Indian counterparts. From the England tour to the T20 world Cup via the IPL, the Indian players have moved from one bubble to another. Kohli is aware of it. It's not easy. "... going forward, I understand we have lost some time without cricket (due to the pandemic), but in trying to cover that up, if you lose players, then world

cricket is not going to be better off," he said.



Indian cricket team players train a day ahead of their match against Pakistan.

Team India: T20's philharmonic orchestra

SANDIPG OCTOBER 23

THE MOMENT Virat Kohli announced that this would be his last assignment as his country's T20 captain, the overarching narrative of India's World Cup pieced itself together. A linear storyline of whether he would bow out on a blazing high, with an elusive ICC trophy in his honours list, or the one unscaled peak of his career would remain unscaled.

It's harsh that his leadership mettle in white-ball cricket is weighed solely on the number of titles he has not won, or he has lost narrowly than on the identity he has forged for himself and the team. Two semifinal appearances and two lost finals in as many ICC tournaments are not, by any stretch of the imagination, outright failures.

Except in trophy-obsessed, world-domination-fixated India. The country is intolerant to failures (that of sportsmen) than ever before. Their dreams are bigger and ambitions broader than ever before. An away series win here, or reaching the last four there, would no longer sate the aspirational, ambitious (and at times greedy too) India. Empowered, enlightened, moneyed, they want the country to dominate cricket like Australia for a chunk of this century or the West Indies in the last cen-

At various points of Kohli's reign, India indeed have dominated all formats of the game, but without a glittering piece of silverware as proof of their success. A destiny-fulfilling opportunity awaits India over the next three weeks. In each of the last four ICC tournaments, from the Champions Trophy in 2017 to the World Test Champions, India had worn the favourites tag despite faults and flaws.

Almost flawless

In ODIs, they fretted over middle order, in Test, they fidgeted over their balance. But here, they have descended with the most flawless, or the least flawed, of their squads in an ICC event. This time, they are the more favourites than all other favourites.

ier ravountes. It could not have been said about the team when the UAE journey of the IPL began. The form of Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan was a concern, but now that both revived their touch towards the backend of the tournament, India boast an explosive as well as versatile batting line-up. That four of the top five are crossformat regulars illustrate the multi-dimensionality of their batting. The fifth, Yadav, could join the group in a not-so-distant future too.

Destructive lower order

Hardik Pandya demonstrated that prolonged absence from regular international cricket has not diminished his prowess to kill games. He, though, will have to share some of his heavy artillery batting shifts with Rishabh Pant and Ravindra Jadeja, making India's middle-lower order the most destructive in recent times. Should Pandya start bowling, as is expected in the latter stages, India would become even more a ferocious proposition.

The strongest suit is, undisputedly, their three-man Beatles at the top, the deadliest triumvirate in T20 cricket. Should they hit the straps, which is regular, a batting treat of the highest class awaits. Two most non-violent hitters in cricket, Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul, followed by arguably the finest batsman of his time, Kohli. Sharma had a patchy IPL, Kohli was erratic, but it would be foolish to not wager on them piling runs. The magnitude of the tournament would just be the fuel that would power the Ferraris of modern cricket into race mode.

If their batsmen are race-cars waiting to vroom, their fast bowlers are thoroughbreds keen to gallop.

Bumrah the spearhead

If the IPL is a precursor, Jasprit Bumrah's verve should worry batsmen, even before they tune their eyes to his stilted, eight-step run-up. He can pull off at least half a dozen avatars—spearhead, calm-head, intimidator, enforcer, new-ball virtuoso, yorker-spitting machine. Under the giant shadow he casts, it's convenient to forgo those in the shades. But Mohammed Shami, with his ability to straddle lengths and the mastery of short-balls, is a dangerously understated bowler in this for-

mat. After years of struggling to crack the T20 code, he has strummed high-notes in the last three years. Combine them with one of Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Shardul Thakur—in most other teams both would be unquestioned

starters-there is a dazzling blend of muscle

Wealth of spin talent

and music, depth and deception.

Their depth is only paled by the riches in India's spin department. That India could afford to overlook Yuzvendra Chahal and Axar Patel, leave alone the likes of Ravi Bishnoi, would be difficult for most teams to fathom. The cunning of Jadeja, the mystery of Varun Chakravarthy, the mastery of Ravi Ashwin and the devilry of Rahul Chahar could pose confusion for not only batsmen but also the team selectors. If the pitches tend to be low and lethargic as they had been in the IPL, Kohli could unleash all three. All four could harness even a smidgeon of assistance from the pitch, but what makes them even more dangerous is that all four take the pitch out of the equation too.

So multifaceted the squad is that it could blossom anywhere in the world. Besides skills, the team has other requisites to triumph too, like their unbreakable spirit and imperishable

The only flip-side to this concoction of skills and spirit is that if they fall short of winning the World Cup, it would be counted as a bona fide failure. Or another blot in Kohli's captaincy book. A peak that remains unscaled. The overarching narrative of Kohli's last assignment as T20 captain.

Champs self destruct in opening game

SANDIPG OCTOBER 23

THERE COUDNT be worse ways to launch a title defence. The West Indies, world champions, T20 ninjas, crash-landed to 55 all out in 14.2 overs, against the team they had toppled to the title, five years ago at the Eden Gardens. If ever England went into the game with revenge on their mind, it might have ended in trading empathetic glances at their devastated opponents.

Memories of that electric night in Kolkata seemed distant, perhaps as distant as the virtue of logic and West Indies batsmen. It's fathomable if high-class bowling precipitates a meltdown, the torture of body and soul West Indies fast bowlers of the yore repeatedly subjected English batsmen to. But this was merely a case of what can, at best, be called a mockery of a batting show, a case of contagious and collective brainfreeze. A manual on how not to bat, in any format, at any level.

Evin Lewis mistimed his chip of Chris Woakes and was pouched adeptly by a springing Moeen Ali; Lendl Simmons struck the ball sweetly but straight into Liam Linvingston at deep midwicket. West Indies stumbled to 2/9 in 2.2 overs.

The situation called for knuckling and seeing through the storm. For a few overs, Chris Gayle and Shimron Hetmyer did exercise caution. But not for long. After thumping Ali for two gorgeous boundaries and dead-batting the third, conveying false notions that the most dazzling of West Indies fresh crop batsmen, Hetmyer dragged a flat, fast short of length ball straight to mid-wicket. So aghast was he that he showered himself with a volley of abuse.

Eight balls later, Tymal Mills rushed Gayle into a pull, the only instance wherein a genuinely good ball, though not a non-negotiable delivery, winked out a wicket. More often than not, Gayle would have deposited the ball in the stands, but here, he underestimated Mill's steep bounce and pace. He would have escaped undamaged but for the athleticism and awareness of a back-pedalling Dawid Malan at midwicket.

Thereafter, it was just a matter of keeping the West Indies batsmen quiet. Ali was exemplary at that, rattling in 18 dot balls. Dwayne Bravo, unusually pushed up the order, cut a Chris Jordan ball straight to the fielder at backward point. Nicholas Pooran had a wishywashy swipe outside the off-stump, his feet static, and edged to the keeper.

BRIEF SCORES: West Indies 55 all out in 14.2 ovs (Chris Gayle 13; Adil Rashid 4/2) lost to England 56/4 in 8.2 ovs (Jos Buttler 24 not out, Akeal Hosein 2/24)

Australia edge out SA by 5 wickets

Abu Dhabi: Australia endured some anxious moments before edging out South Africa by five wickets after their bowlers set it up with a clinical display in an ICC T20 WC match on Saturday. Needing eight runs in the final over, Marcus Stoinis (24 not out) hit Dwaine Pretorius for two fours and completed the job with two balls to spare. PTI

BRIEF SCORES: South Africa 118 for 9 in 20 overs (A Markram 40, K Rabada 19 not out; J Hazlewood 2/19, A Zampa 2/21) lost to **Australia** 121 for 5 in 19.4 overs (Steve Smith 35, Anrich Nortje 2/21) by 5 wkts.

WONDER AT WANDERERS

Tension lene ka nahi, tension dene ka, was our mantra in 2007



ROBIN UTHAPPA

I REMEMBER running in from long-on with my heart in my mouth as the ball seemed to hang for an eternity before it dropped into Sreesanth's palms. I knew that Sreesanth had astigmatism (an imperfection in the eye's curvature), and had issues with his eyesight. I was screaming internally, "oh god, please let him catch it, let him catch it" and I think I had almost reached mid-on when the ball settled safely into his hands.

safely into his hands. We were the world champions!

It's a feeling that no language can describe. Not English, not my mother tongue, nothing. At the moment it was like, 'what have we done here!' Even MS Dhoni was quite expressive as you would recall. He would soon settle down but I didn't sleep for



Misbah-ul-Haq on the ground as India celebrate winning the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007. Reuters

the next three nights. I was 21, living a dream, and knew I was part of something special but what it exactly was, I couldn't tell. But oh the memories.

The Indian cricketing world would remember me for that bowl-out, I guess. For all practical purposes, it was my T20 debut. The real debut against Scotland had been

a washout and so this big game was my first T20 game. And it was against Pakistan.

I had observed the hype as a kid and this was the time to experience it. The seniors all kept it simple. Only on the field, when I saw the intensity in the body language of Viru pa (Virender Sehwag), Yuvi pa (Yuvraj Singh), and Bhaji pa (Harbhajan Singh), did

I sense that this was a big game. They had all played Pakistan many times and perhaps knew better than us what it meant.

During that last over of regular game, it was running in my head that we didn't want to be the first Indian team to lose to Pakistan in a World Cup game.

The bowl-out wasn't foreign to us. We were ready. It was Venkatesh Prasad, our bowling coach and a smart cricketing brain, who first said that we should practice the bowl-outs. They had us split into batsmen vs bowlers. More often than not, it was the batsmen who won it. Viru pa, me, and Rohit (Sharma) were the three batters who hit the stumps the most.

That night, once the bowl-out was going to be on, I ran to MS Dhoni and said, 'I have to bowl, dude. You have to give me the ball'. Looking at my confidence and strong emotion. he said. 'okay'.

And I had Sachin paaji with me. Let me explain! In my mind, I was copying his seam-up action. He would have that slight pause as he gathered himself at the popping crease before the release. I had been aping it since I was a kid. During the training sessions, I saw that paaji's action gave me more hits. So, I decided, why not stick with it. It never hurts to have that ever-lasting hand of god, eh? I just went with it and boom,

bull's eye

"Tension lene ka nahi, tension dene ka' was our mantra. It had started as a joke between players and it grew into a lovely culture. Lalu ji, our coach, would tell it to the players.

I fondly remember the non-match evenings we spent together. They had told us not to wander to the beaches after 6 pm and we didn't have to as we had great fun being together at the hotel. It was the presocial media time. Heck, pre-WhatsApp time. The times of BBM messenger and the old Nokia 6110. No PlayStations either. Chatting with other human beings was still in vogue! We did plenty of that.

It was always about taking just one game at a time until we reached the semifinals. It was then, at least to me, that it sank in us that we could win this. I was happy that I could contribute properly in many matches.

There was a fifty against Pakistan in that bowl-out game, the 80+ partnership [84] with Yuvi *pa* in the semifinal against Australia, and an important run out of Imran Nazir, who was threatening to run away with the game, in the final.

I can't even say I was worried about the final or playing Pakistan as I was really worried whether I would be fit to play that game. I had sprained my left leg in the semifinal and if it were not for the hard work of our physio John Gloster, I wouldn't have made

Chasing 158, Pakistan had rushed past fifty in just over five overs when Younis Khan drove the ball to me at mid-off. I knew I couldn't put my weight on the left foot as well as I would have done with a fit leg and that I had to drive the power from my upper body. I did that and fired a direct hit at the striker's end to catch Nazir just short of the crease.

One final memory, and this would stay with me forever. The celebrations on the open-top bus ride in Mumbai. I was singing, dancing, and blowing kisses to the crowd. There were 150,000 people inside and outside the stadium that night. It took us five-and-half hours to reach the stadium. We got wet in the rain, we sweated as the sun came out. People kept throwing food at us — apples, sandwiches, soft drinks. "Khao khao, kitna time ho gaya, you guys must be hungry!"

I will never forget the night. Only a handful in the world get to experience that indescribable feeling of being loved by millions. It was a beautiful moment that I would always remember. Tension lene ka nahi, tension dena ka and love paane ka!

(As told to Sriram Veera)

R.N.I. No. WBENG/2005/20789 VOL. XVII No.31 Printed by V.Srinivasan and Published by V.Srinivasan on behalf of The Indian Express (P) Limited and Printed at Saraswati Print Factory Pvt.Ltd, 789, Chowbhaga (West), Kolkata-700105 and Published at The Indian Express (P) Ltd JL No.29 & 30, N.H.-6, Mouza - Prasastha & Ankurhati, P.O. - Salap, P.S.-Domjur, Howrah - 711 409. Ph: (033)66043800 Fax: (033)66043805 & 66043847. Chairman of the Board: Viveck Goenka, Chief Editor: Raj Kamal Jha, Editor: Unni Rajen Shanker, Editor (Kolkata): Rakesh Sinha* (*Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act)Copyright: The Indian Express (P) Limited. All rights reserved. Reproduction in any manner, electronic or otherwise, in whole or in part, without prior written permission is prohibited. The Indian Express (R)