

## WEST BENGAL



**FLOODS: CM SEEKS PM'S INTERVENTION**  
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## SUNDAY STORY

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## A NEW TURN

Will Kanhaiya Kumar's campus-style politics infuse fresh blood into the Congress? The man and his changing politics

## INCREASE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN LEGAL SERVICES INSTITUTIONS: PRESIDENT

# Collegium sent 106 names for judges & 9 for CJs, expect Govt to clear them: CJI

'Names of 7 for judges, 1 for CJ cleared; Law Minister has said rest coming soon'

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

UNDERLINING THE importance of filling judicial vacancies to address pendency of cases, Chief Justice of India N V Ramana said Saturday that the Supreme Court Collegium had recommended 106 names for judges and 9 for Chief Justices since May this year and the government had "so far" cleared names of 7 for judges and one for Chief Justice.

Addressing a gathering at the launch of the 'Pan India Legal Awareness and Outreach Campaign' of the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) — those present at the Vigyan Bhavan event included President Ram Nath Kovind and Union Law Minister Kiren Rijiju — CJI Ramana said: "I expect that the government will clear the rest of the names very soon."

He said Minister Rijiju has "informed the rest of the things"

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



CJI N V Ramana at the event in New Delhi, Saturday

SC collegium sends names twice, Govt still sits on them  
Memorandum of Procedure ignored

**APURVA VISHWANATH**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

IN WHAT could mark a significant departure from the Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) that governs the process of appointment of judges to the higher judiciary, a month after the Supreme Court collegium reiterated its recommendations for the

second time to appoint two advocates as judges of the Karnataka High Court, the government is yet to act on them.

On September 1, the collegium headed by Chief Justice of India N V Ramana reiterated its earlier recommendation for the second time to appoint advocates Nagendra Ramachandra Naik and Aditya Sondhi as judges

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## DRAFT E-COMMERCE RULES

# Australia raised red flags: Overly prescriptive, will up trade barriers

## YOUR RIGHT TO KNOW

AN EXPRESS RTI APPLICATION

**PRANAV MUKUL**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

BESIDES TRIGGERING a strong pushback internally, the draft e-commerce rules of the government's Department of Consumer Affairs have drawn flak from at least one sovereign government — Australia — and multiple foreign trade bodies for being intrusive and detrimental to trade.

The draft rules published on June 28 seek to tighten the regulation on online marketplaces. The Consumer Affairs Department had given time till July 21 for various stakeholders to submit their comments.

The Australian government, which is negotiating a trade pact with India — including a dedicated chapter in the agreement on e-commerce — has formally written to the Department of Consumer Affairs pointing out that the new rules would "impose extensive extraterritorial obligations on foreign e-commerce entities operating in India".

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



PM Narendra Modi with Australian PM Scott Morrison at the Quad summit. ANI file

## EXPLAINED

### Shadow on trade deals

AUSTRALIA'S VIEWS on India's proposed e-commerce rules came in alongside trade pact negotiations between the two countries, which are seeing some progress. The e-commerce sector finds a separate chapter in the pact. Detailed feedback from other foreign lobby groups also shows how India's e-commerce sector could increasingly find a place in trade discussions.

## 'INTER-FAITH RELATIONSHIP'

Youth killed, Hindu group activists, girl's father probe

**KIRAN PARASHAR**  
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 2

A 24-YEAR-OLD youth, whose body was found on the railway tracks in Belagavi on September 28, is now suspected to have been murdered over an inter-faith relationship.

Though Arbaz Aftab Mullah's

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Will return to power, I'm here for 15-20 yrs, says Gehlot amid talk of leadership change

**DEEP MUKHERJEE**  
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 2

IN AN apparent jibe at his detractors, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday asserted that his government will not only get re-elected to power in the next Assembly elections, but that he himself will be around for the next 15-20 years.

"Mujhe ab kuch hone wala nahin hai. Ab 15 saal se 20 saal mujhe kuch nahin hone wala. Ab



'Nothing will happen to me'

dukhi hona ho to ho dukhi, mere bas ki baat nahin hai. Mujhe kuch nahin hoga (Nothing will happen to me now. For 15-20 years, nothing will happen to me. Now if you want to be sad, be sad, it's not in my hands. Nothing will

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## EXPRESS NETWORK



PM Modi pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary. Amit Mehra

**INTELLECTUAL DISHONESTY: PM TARGETS OPP, SAYS NEED BIG DECISIONS**  
PAGE 4

After protests in Haryana and Punjab, Centre relents, paddy procurement to begin today

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

TWO DAYS after the Centre said it would put off paddy procurement in Punjab and Haryana to October 11, the government has decided to commence procurement for the kharif marketing season (KMS) 2021-22 from Sunday.

The Centre's move comes amid the ongoing farmer agitation and fresh protests in both the states over the decision to



Farmers protest in Karnal on Saturday. Manoj Dhaka

delay procurement. It also comes a day after Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi met

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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**KIRTI** Shares her Struggle & Success

**PREPARATION PLAN** I went through the syllabus and divided my time for all subjects which I had to read together. Ambition's Bare Act proved beneficial for Prelims & Mains, both.

**WHAT'S IMPORTANT AND WHAT'S NOT** Important - Continuance and dedication. Not important - distraction & demotivation of failure.

**MAINS STRATEGY** During preparation for Mains, I faced time problem. To overcome this I used to put alarms for specific intervals everyday and tried to complete practice paper of Ambition Law Institute in that time frame only.

**CREDIT FOR SUCCESS** Credit goes to Papa, Maa, My Brother, Teachers, Entire Team of Ambition Law Institute, My Seniors & God for the success.

**PREETI JHA** Talks to Judicial aspirants & Kirti shares Master strategy on **AMBITION LAW INSTITUTE** YouTube Channel

**PLUNGE IN JUDICIARY** When I was pursuing LL.B., one of my seniors cracked this exam. That was the time I determined myself to prepare for Judicial Services.

**FIRST STEP** I joined Ambition Law Institute, Delhi which I consider to be my first step towards my journey.

**TIME MANAGEMENT** Definitely, while I was in Ambition Law Institute, Alok Sir always told us to focus on answer writing. Answers should be specific and must also be done in a time bound manner.

In Ambition Law Institute, we used to get a topic daily for answer writing, which certainly helped me during Mains preparation because through that I did daily exercise of answer writing.

**CREDIT FOR SUCCESS** My parents, they constantly supported me throughout my journey. I believed that God has been very kind to us. I would also like to thank Ambition Law Institute for guiding me through this journey.

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

**EXPLAINED: WHY YOUTUBE HAS BLOCKED ANTI-VACCINE CONTENT**  
  
Youtube blocking anti-vaccine content comes amid criticism that social media platforms are not doing enough to tackle misinformation related to Covid-19.

SCIENCE

**STUDY FINDS OUT**  
**How human exploitation dwindled Caribbean shark communities**

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**HUAWEI BAND 6 REVIEW**  
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EXPRESS

AUDIO

**Game Time: What really caused the rift between Paes and Bhupathi?**

Hosts Gaurav Bhatt and Mihir Vasavda talk about Zee5's Break Point, a recently released docu-series that explores the controversial legacy of Leander Paes and Mahesh Bhupathi

FROM PAGE ONE

Australia red-flags draft e-commerce rules: will raise trade barriers

“We consider the proposed amendments would be overly prescriptive and would increase trade barriers, particularly for SMEs,” it wrote in an undated submission titled “Consultation on proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020 of the Government of India” made to the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

A copy of this submission, and inputs submitted by other stakeholders for the draft e-commerce rules, were obtained by The Indian Express under the Right to Information Act.

Specifically, among the seven concerns it raised, are aspects such as definition of mis-selling, mandatory registration of e-commerce companies with the Indian government and time stipulation to redress complaints. Further, on the lines of concerns flagged by Indian government departments and industry players, Australia has also sought clarification on ban of flash sales.

“We support efforts to implement rules that prohibit fraudulent business practices online. We note however that the organisation of flash sales by e-commerce entities is commonplace and a widely accepted international practice. In that regard, we would welcome clarification on how fraudulent interception could be determined in practice, and what “technological means” might encompass,” it noted.

*The Indian Express* had reported Friday that the draft rules had received scathing feedback from several government departments including the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade, the Niti Aayog, the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. These departments flagged several anomalies, questioned certain provisions, and suggested remedial tweaks with the proposed rules.

“In summary, the E-Commerce Rules, as written, are likely to have a significant adverse impact on Australian e-commerce entities which operate in India. The Rules would impose unreasonable compliance costs and be particularly onerous for SMEs, which would likely have implications on competition and consumer choice in India,” the Australian government wrote.

E-mail queries sent Friday to the Australian High Commission in New Delhi did not elicit a response.

Australian Minister for Trade, Tourism, and Investment Dan Tehan, who is on a visit to India, told a press conference on Friday he had discussed e-commerce with his Indian counterpart and that both sides had agreed there would be an e-commerce chapter in the final agreement. The two countries have already agreed to have an interim or early harvest trade agreement by Christmas and a final free trade agreement or Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA) by the end of 2022.

India and Australia plan to exchange of offers regarding the proposed CECA agreement by October. Australia has said it wants access to Indian e-commerce channels for its premium food, beverage, and consumer product companies.

In addition to the Australian government, trade bodies and

groups representing American businesses such as the US-India Business Council and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum too have flagged several concerns on the proposed e-commerce rules in separate letters written on July 21. These pertain to clauses such as country of origin, mis-selling, registration of e-commerce entities, fall-back liability, and appointment of personnel already mandated under the new IT rules.

“These appointments not only unduly add to the compliance burden on e-commerce entities, there is no distinction between the roles and responsibilities of the various appointees...further, the obligation of RGO (Resident Grievance Officer) by an e-commerce entity overlaps with the similar obligation applicable to an intermediary under the Information Technology Act, 2000,” the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum noted in its inputs.

American companies Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart command a majority share in India’s e-commerce pie. Large domestic retail players such as Reliance Industries and the Tata Group too have plans to enter the segment.

Notably, in December 2020, the US Congressional Research Service, a bipartisan public policy research institute, had flagged concerns about “investment barriers” in India despite the aim to attract foreign investment. “US concerns about investment barriers persist nevertheless, heightened by new Indian restrictions on how e-commerce platforms such as Amazon and Walmart-owned Flipkart conduct business. From the US view, India’s weak regulatory transparency and other issues, such as IPR and localisation policies, add to concerns about FDI barriers,” it had noted.

Will return to power, I am here for 15-20 years, says Gehlot

happen to me),” said Gehlot on Saturday at the inauguration of the Rajasthan government’s public outreach programme, Prashahan Gaon/Sheheron Ke Sang.

He made the remarks while speaking about a recent angioplasty procedure he underwent for a blockage in the artery.

Gehlot’s statement comes after the recent leadership change in Punjab, where Amarinder Singh was forced to resign from the Chief Minister’s post and amidst speculations that after Punjab, the high command might turn its attention to Rajasthan.

The rumours of leadership change were also fuelled by the recent meetings of former deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot with Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Over the past two years, the Congress in Rajasthan has been riddled with infighting between factions loyal to Pilot and Gehlot.

Much of Gehlot’s assertion – about the government returning to power and that nothing will happen to him for two more decades – appeared to be aimed at Pilot and his loyalists, who have been demanding a Cabinet expansion in the state for long.

Hitting out at the media, he said reports of a possible leadership change in Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh, after Punjab, were meant to “mislead the country”.

Gehlot said he was confi-

Sent 106 names for judges, 9 for CJs, I expect Govt to clear them soon, says CJI

are going to come in a short time, within one or two days”. The CJI said “these appointments will take care of pendency to some extent” and “I seek the cooperation and support of the government to enable access to justice and to strengthen democracy”.

On May 20, the Collegium, headed by CJI Ramana, recommended the elevation of Justice Sanjay Yadav as Chief Justice of Allahabad High Court. This was approved by the government following which he was administered the oath of office on June 13. Chief Justice Yadav, however, had a short tenure and retired on June 25.

On September 16, the Collegium recommended names for Chief Justices of 8 High Courts – Calcutta, Meghalaya, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Allahabad, Karnataka and Chhattisgarh – but these

are yet to be cleared. As for judges, the Collegium had recommended names of judicial officers and advocates for elevation to the High Courts of Madhya Pradesh, Gauhati, Allahabad, Calcutta, Karnataka, Punjab and Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Jammu and Kashmir, Kerala, Madras, Jharkhand, Patna, Gujarat, Orissa and Bombay.

According to the Department of Justice, a total of 420 vacancies in High Courts existed on May 1, 2021. As of October 1, there are 471 vacancies in the HCs.

Launching the awareness and outreach programme, President Kovind said the country has made substantial progress since Independence in realising its Constitutional goals, “but a lot of work remains to be done to reach the destinations identified by our founding fathers”.

Referring to Mahatma

Gandhi’s call to lawyers to provide free legal aid to people, he called upon the legal fraternity and designated senior advocates in the Supreme Court and High Courts to follow this, and earmark a certain part of their time to provide pro bono services to people from the weaker sections.

The President said that “as a country, our aim is to graduate from ‘women development’ to ‘women-led development’,” and called for increasing the number of women in National Legal Services Institutions. This, he said, “is as important as reaching out to the largest possible number of women beneficiaries”.

He pointed out that presently there are about 11,000 women lawyers among over 47,000 advocates on the panel of lawyers enrolled with legal aid institutions at the district level and about 17,000 women Para-Legal Volunteers out of a

total of nearly 44,000. Supreme Court judge Justice D Y Chandrachud said the legal profession still continues to be a feudal profession and this needs to change.

“This is something that the Supreme Court Bar Association can persuade, at least some of the seniors, to democratise access to the legal profession, because the mainstream of our profession does not democratise access. We still continue to be a purely feudal profession which I believe needs to change,” Justice Chandrachud said, touching on how lawyers beginning their careers prefer to join law firms than start legal practice when they do not have connections to gain entry to lawyers’ chambers.

Justice U U Lalit, Supreme Court judge and NALSA Executive Chairman, and Justice A M Khanwilkar also spoke on the occasion.

Collegium sends names twice, Govt sits on them

of the Karnataka High Court.

Naik, a senior advocate originally from Bhatkal in Karnataka, was a CBI counsel appointed by the Congress-led UPA government. The collegium first recommended him on October 3, 2019 along with eight other advocates. While the government appointed the remaining, Naik’s recommendation was pending. The collegium then reiterated its recommendation on March 2 and then for the second time on September 1.

Senior advocate Aditya Sondhi, a graduate of the National Law School of India University, Bangalore, was the former Additional Advocate General under the Congress-ruled Karnataka government in 2016. Sondhi was first recommended by the collegium on February 4 and his name was reiterated on August 24. The second reiteration was made again on September 1.

Conventionally, the government is bound to accept the recommendation of the collegium if the decision has been reiterated. While the MoP does not specifically talk about reiteration of the collegium recommendations, it says that “the Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs, would then put up as early as possible, preferably, within 3 weeks, the recommendation

or the Chief Justice of India to the Prime Minister who will advise the President in the matter of appointment.”

However, the 1998 landmark ruling, popularly referred to as the Third Judges case, held that the court will have the final say in judicial appointments.

“Non-appointment of anyone recommended, on the ground of unsuitability must be for good reasons, disclosed to the Chief Justice of India to enable him to reconsider and withdraw his recommendation on those considerations. If the Chief Justice of India does not find it necessary to withdraw his recommendation even thereafter, but the other Justice of the Supreme Court who have been consulted in the matter are of the view that it ought to be withdrawn, the non-appointment of that person for reasons to be recorded, may be permissible in the public interest. If the non-appointment in a rare case, on this ground, turns out to be a mistake, that mistake in the ultimate public interest is less harmful than a wrong appointment. However, if after due consideration of the reasons disclosed to the Chief Justice of India, that recommendation is reiterated by the Chief Justice of India with the unanimous agreement of the Judges of the

Supreme Court consulted in the matter, with reasons for not withdrawing the recommendation, then that appointment as a matter of healthy convention ought to be made,” the court had ruled.

The 1993 Second Judges case (The Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association Vs Union of India), a nine-judge Constitution Bench and the Third Judges case evolved the collegium system of appointing judges. The two verdicts form the basis of the MoP, a formal document that governs the process.

Legal experts said the fact that the collegium had to reiterate its recommendation indicates that the MoP stands diluted. “Unfortunately, yes,” said former Supreme Court judge Madan Lokur when asked by The Indian Express if the event is a departure from convention.

“The MoP has no sanctity left. The judiciary must be firm and that’s it,” Justice Lokur said. He added that it should not take more than a day for the SC to clear its stand on the recommendations.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, however, said that the MoP is not “set in concrete” and deviations are permissible. “The MoP governs the process but is not set in concrete. It does not mean that it should

be implemented the same way, say like the Income Tax Act,” Salve said.

There are at least three other instances in which the collegium has had to reiterate its recommendations multiple times.

In the case of Karnataka High Court judge Krishna Bhat, the government appointed Bhat after his name was reiterated thrice by the collegium between 2016 and 2019. Bhat was accused of alleged sexual harassment and had faced an internal inquiry after he was first recommended.

Allahabad High Court advocate Amit Negi was first recommended by the collegium in August 2016 and his name was reiterated twice in November 2016 and August 2018. In January 2019, the collegium, considering objections from the government, withdrew its recommendations.

Calcutta High Court advocate Sakya Sen, son of former HC judge Shyamal Sen, was first recommended by the collegium in December 2017. However, the collegium, in August 2018, sent the name back to the high court for reconsideration. In July 2019, the Supreme Court once again recommended Sen after the Calcutta HC sent his name again. Sen is yet to be appointed.

Punjab, Centre relents, paddy procurement to begin today

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and sought early procurement of paddy in the state.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Union Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said, “Paddy procurement will begin as per FAQ (Fair average quality) norms in mandis across Haryana and Punjab from tomorrow. The procurement will pick up in areas where farmers have harvested early maturing varieties of paddy and where the impact of rainfall is minimal. It will gradually pick up in other areas.”

On Sunday, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala and state Agriculture Minister J P Dalal met Minister of State for

Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ashwani Choubey in New Delhi.

After the meeting, Choubey said, “Haryana’s chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar and a delegation of ministers came and met me. They said their preparations for paddy’s procurement were already in place and thus, we decided that the procurement shall begin from tomorrow so that farmers do not face any inconvenience.”

On Thursday, the Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution had cited “heavy rainfall” to postpone paddy procurement in Punjab and Haryana to October 11.

The procurement and milling period for the kharif marketing season for Punjab was to begin from October 1, 2021, and for Haryana, from September 25, 2021.

In a statement issued on Thursday, the Ministry had said,

“It has been reported that due to recent heavy downpour in the States of Punjab & Haryana, the maturity of paddy has been delayed. Keeping in view the interest of farmers and to avoid any inconvenience to them, the Department of Food and Public Distribution under Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution has decided that the procurement of Paddy under MSP would commence from 11th October 2021 in states of Punjab & Haryana,” the Food Ministry said in a statement.

The announcement led to farmers protesting in both the states.

In Haryana on Saturday, several protesters were detained and police resorted to lathi charge near Chandimandir toll plaza on Panchkula-Kalka-Shimla national highway as farmers in tractors tried to break through police barricades.

Farmers also hoisted the Kisan-ekta flag at the Karnal residence of Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and camped outside the residence of Haryana Home Minister Anil Vij in Ambala.

In Punjab, hundreds of farmers laid siege to offices of Deputy Commissioners (DCs) across the state, and the residences of several legislators of the ruling party. In Jalandhar, they gheraoed the residence of newly appointed Punjab Cabinet Minister Pargat Singh.

Later, when the decision to begin procurement from Sunday was announced, Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) leaders said farmers had succeeded in getting the Centre to listen to them.

Reacting to the Centre’s move to begin procurement on Sunday, the Office of Chief Minister of Punjab tweeted, “On Chief Minister @CharanjitChanni’s request, Centre allows Punjab to start paddy procurement from October 3. Chief Minister thanks Prime Minister @NarendraModi for his personal indulgence to resolve this issue expeditiously.”

After the meeting with the minister, Khattar said, “Throughout the day, they [farmers] held protests at several places across Haryana. We are also concerned that the procurement of paddy should begin at the earliest. Thus, I, deputy CM Dushyant Chautala, agriculture minister JP Dalal, and various other MLAs had come to Delhi to meet Union Ministers. Now, since a decision has been made that the procurement shall begin from tomorrow [October 3], I hope they will withdraw their agitation.” Punjab and Haryana are crucial states for paddy procurement. Last kharif marketing season, 135.89 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of rice – or 202 LMT paddy – were procured from Punjab, while the figure stood at 37.89 LMT – or 56 LMT paddy – for Haryana.

— WITH INPUTS FROM ENNS, CHANDIGARH

Youth killed, Hindu group activists, girl’s father face probe

body was found in a mutilated state, the investigations, including a post-mortem procedure, have revealed it to be a case of murder, police sources said, adding that they are looking closely at a relationship that the victim had with a Hindu girl over the last couple of years.

Arbaz’s mother Najeema Shaikh, 46, has said in a police complaint that she suspects the

father of the girl, with whom her son was involved, and a few persons associated with a radical right-wing group of murdering her son.

Arbaz, a resident of Azam Nagar in Belagavi, was a civil engineering graduate who worked as a car dealer in Belagavi city. After his body was found on September 28, the railway police initially registered a case of unnatural death, but the post-mortem revealed stab injuries on the head, indicating that Arbaz was murdered.

The Superintendent of Police (Railways) Siri Gowri said, “After the victim’s mother filed a complaint, we registered a case under IPC 302 (murder). The case will be transferred to the Belagavi district police for further probe since the death was not as a result of the victim being hit by a train.”

A senior officer with the Belagavi district police said that while the case was yet to be officially handed over to them, they had already gathered information and some leads to indicate that Arbaz’s relationship with a Hindu girl had led to the murder.

“All the accused have been identified. Efforts are on to find out the exact sequence of events. The relationship was an issue and there were a lot of negotiations over it between the two sides,” a police source said, adding that they suspect the involvement of persons with links to right-wing extremist outfits.

Speaking to The Indian Express, Arbaz Mullah’s mother Najeema Shaikh, a government school teacher, said she was aware that her son was in a relationship with a Hindu girl that had gone on for over two years. “Our family and the girl’s family were aware of the relationship. We were living in Khanapur (a taluk in Belagavi)... I spoke to the girl’s mother then to stop her from meeting Arbaz and I told Arbaz the same too. However, we were being threatened by their family, so we recently relocated to Belagavi city,” she said.

Najeema lost her husband three years ago. Her daughter, an aeronautical engineer, lives in London. Two days before her son went missing, Najeema says she and Arbaz met two Hindu activists, one of whom went by the name ‘Maharaj’.

“We were threatened with dire consequences and they told us to come near Khanapur to settle the matter,” she said. “On September 26, Arbaz and I went there and, in their presence, Arbaz deleted all the photos of his girlfriend on his phone. They also took some money from us. They told me that there were at least a thousand people ready to lynch Arbaz and me. I requested them to allow us to lead a peaceful life and we left from there. Arbaz disposed of his old SIM card and took a new one too,” Najeema said.

On September 28, Najeema said she was in Goa for some work related to her passport. Arbaz, she says, was home till at least 5 pm. “He called me on my phone and asked me when I would be reaching home. I told him that I would reach by 7 pm. Since I was worried for him, I told him to stay inside the house. When I returned, he was not home. We got to know that Arbaz was no more when police called the next day,” she added.

In her complaint, Najeema has named ‘Maharaj’, another right-wing activist, who identified himself to her as ‘Birje’, and the father of the girl with whom Arbaz was in a relationship.

Arbaz Aftab Mullah

Grey Blue Yellow Black Grey Blue Yellow Black Grey Blue Yellow Black Kolkata Grey



# 3 WEST BENGAL

## DVC denies CM claim, says states have prior info on release of water

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 2

THE DAMODAR Valley Corporation (DVC) released a press statement on Saturday, denying the claim of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that the state government was not informed about the release of water from Maithon and Panchet barrages, a decision that she said was behind the prevailing flood situation in the state. Sources in the DVC said a decision on discharging water is taken by the Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee (DVRRC), which has representatives of both the West Bengal and Jharkhand governments, and the same is conveyed six hours before the actual release of water through emails and a WhatsApp group involving all the stakeholders.

Even in its release, the DVC specified that any decision to this effect is taken by the DVRRC and the DVC merely implements it.

"The water released from DVC dams for moderation of flood is as per the advice of the 'Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee (DVRRC)', which is headed by Member (R&M), Central Water Commission, New Delhi. The DVRRC comprises members in the rank of Chief Engineer from the Govt. of West Bengal, Govt. of Jharkhand and DVC. DVC authorities only follow the water release advice and instructions of the DVRRC towards discharge of water through dams and has no role in the quantum of water released," the release read.

It further stated, "The release advice are as per the capacity of the dams to hold water up to a certain level. Before the release of water, flood warning messages is communicated well in advance to

Chief Engineers of Govt. of West Bengal, District Magistrates of Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman, Purulia, Bankura and Superintending Engineer and Executive Engineer, Durgapur, Govt. of West Bengal. The Executive Engineer, Durgapur, Govt. of West Bengal further communicates the messages to the District Magistrate of Hooghly, Howrah, SDOs, ADMs, BDOs and others as per the Flood Warning Memorandum. This is as per the established system followed during flood events."

After conducting an aerial survey of the flood-affected regions of the state on Saturday, the chief minister accused the DVC of releasing water without any prior word of intimation to her government. Labelling it a 'crime', she demanded that the DVC award compensation to flood-hit people.

Responding to the CM's remark, Debashish Dev, executive director (civil), DVC, said, "We always follow our protocol in intimating the states on releasing water from our barrages and dams and this time too, we did the same.

Another senior DVC official said, "We inform the West Bengal government at least six hours before the discharge of water. Six hours upon intimation, we started releasing barrage water which reached places such as Udaynarayanpur and Khanakul at least 10 to 12 hours post the discharge. Right now, DVC is discharging 95,000 cusecs of water. In the last two days, we released just 34% of our capacity. Our barrage level is 495 feet beyond which we are bound to discharge water as otherwise, the barrage will be damaged. The water level currently is 493 feet, just two feet less than the highest level. Should there be more rainfall, we might have to release more water."

### CM SURVEYS FLOOD-HIT AREAS

## Mamata targets DVC again, says PM should intervene

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 2

CHIEF MINISTER Mamata Banerjee on Saturday blamed the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC) yet again for the prevailing flood situation in West Bengal, while urging the Centre to come up with a concrete plan to prevent such types of flooding in the state's western reaches.

After making an aerial survey of the flood-hit regions of the state, the CM said she would urge Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention in the matter, adding that she would also request the government in neighbouring Jharkhand to draw up flood mitigation plan for both the states.

Apart from making an aerial survey of the flood-affected parts of the state, the chief minister also chaired a review meeting with the top officials of the administration.

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, she hit out at the central government, saying, "Not just Bengal, excessive rainfall is being experienced elsewhere in the country as well. However, no action is being taken by the central government. I have asked the chief secretary to write to the central agricultural secretary as agriculture in the state has been severely affected."

Also coming down heavily on the DVC, the CM claimed that it had committed a 'crime' by releasing water into the state without prior consultations with her government.

"While we were busy with the polls (Bhabanipur bypoll and elections to two other Assembly segments in Murshidabad district) on



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee speaks to reporters during her visit to a flood-affected area in Arambagh, Hooghly district, on Saturday. CMO

September 30, they (DVC) had released several lakh cusecs of water by midnight. Till October 1, the DVC had released almost 10 lakh cusecs of water," the CM alleged.

She said people affected by the release of water are agitated and might ask to be compensated by the DVC, adding that she will soon write to the PM on the flood situation in the state.

"While the monsoon couldn't flood the state, this release of water by the DVC certainly has, just a day after polling, they released

water again. More than 10 lakh cusecs were released. Is this justified? Will the DVC keep releasing water this way every year?" Banerjee said.

She added, "The Union Home minister sent central agencies to malign our leaders but in the aftermath of 'Amphan', 'Yaas', 'Phani' and 'Bulbul', they did not allocate any funds for cyclone relief. They should release funds immediately as lives are at stake now."

"More than five lakh people

have been evacuated so far from Howrah's Udaynarayanpur, Bankura town, Barjora block, Ghatal, Debra, Birbhum's Nanur and Puba Bardhaman's Ausgram blocks. More than one lakh houses have been damaged in the inundated areas," she further said.

While claiming that Jharkhand is a friendly neighbour, the CM said, "They should consult with us before releasing such huge amounts of water from their dams and barrages. They should give us some time to prepare."

## 'She-made flood': BJP hits back at CM



Leader of Opposition Suwendu Adhikari (left); BJP vice-president Dilip Ghosh

were diverted for 'Lakhbir Bhandar' (state-sponsored scheme aimed at providing monthly income support to women). Rendered weak as the government did not direct funds to fortify them on time, the embankments were breached in the face of rain fury. It is not the DVC's fault," Adhikari, the BJP MLA from Nandigram, told mediapersons.

Also lashing out at the CM, BJP vice-president Dilip Ghosh said, "Beyond a certain level, the DVC has to release water. She has her people in the DVC. What were they doing? She has been in power for ten years. What has she done?"

"Her visit, in the name of surveying the flood-hit areas, was nothing but a photo opportunity. There are two members from

the state in the DVC committee. How could they not have been aware (of the release of water from the DVC)?" Sukanta Majumdar, who recently took over as the new BJP state chief from Ghosh, said.

"It isn't man-made flood but 'she made flood'. The Met office had predicted heavy rainfall. Why did she (Mamata) not take any precautionary measures to prevent breaches in embankments? The embankments weren't repaired. Her government wasn't bothered about securing lives and livelihoods. The kind of rainfall that the state has experienced this year hasn't been seen in the last 80 years. It is in her nature to blame others when she is at fault. I would like to request her to stop politicising the floods and

stand with the people. She should convene an all-party meeting at the earliest and send an all-party delegation to the affected areas," senior BJP leader Rahul Singh said.

However, senior TMC leader and Kolkata mayor Firhad Hakim shot back at the BJP, saying, "The DVC should have released water in small amounts. They released 1 lakh cusecs of water at one go, and, over the past few days, 5 lakh cusecs of water were released. There was no need for this. Is this not 'man-made flood'? Is this because people didn't vote for you (the BJP)? This sudden release of water at a time when we had managed to gain some control over the rain-related woes, is pre-planned."

## Domestic help seen 'assaulting' infant in viral clip, arrested

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 2

AFTER A video went viral on social media showing a domestic help physically assaulting a 10-month-old infant in Purba Medinipur district, the police on Thursday arrested the woman.

The purported clip, which is of CCTV footage, shows the help not only assaulting the baby girl in the absence of her parents but also throwing the infant on the bed in a bid to put her to sleep.

The parents lodged a complaint with the police.

Acting on the complaint, the police arrested the 50-year-old domestic help on Thursday.

According to police sources, the infant's mother is a health official in Purba Medinipur, while her father is a doctor. The couple resides in a rented apartment with their baby girl.

According to local sources,

the help had been with the family since 2018.

Growing suspicious of their help's conduct a few months ago, the couple had a security camera installed in her room, the police said, adding that they had direct access to the CCTV from their mobile phones so that they could keep watch on her even from afar.

In the viral clip, the help is seen grabbing the baby's tender limbs and throwing her on the bed while her parents were away. She had no clue about the fact that she was under CCTV surveillance and was caught on camera assaulting the infant.

While scanning the footage, the couple came across the purported clip of the assault and shared it with the police. The help was arrested on the evidence of the footage.

The girl is reportedly unwell and is under treatment at a state-run hospital.

## 'Fit India Freedom Run' organised

**Kolkata:** To mark the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi and former PM Lal Bahadur Shastri and as part of 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', the Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport, Kolkata organised the Fit India Freedom Run 2.0 on Saturday. Employees of AAI, CISF, BCAS and other stakeholders participated in the event. It is an initiative of Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports. C Pattabhi, Airport Director, Kolkata said, "The run is aimed at promoting fitness and creating awareness among all. For a better tomorrow, we have to move towards a more physically active lifestyle." **ENS**

## 761 new Covid deaths in a day

**Kolkata:** West Bengal recorded 761 new cases of the coronavirus infection (Covid-19) in the past 24 hours, a bulletin issued by the state health ministry said on Friday. With this latest rise, Bengal's Covid-19 infection tally has gone up to 15,70,539 cases. The bulletin added that nine new deaths were recorded in the state, taking the fatality tally to 18815.

The state recorded 743 Covid-19 recoveries in the past 24 hours. The number of people cured of the infection in the state has now gone up to 15,44,144 the health department bulletin said. The recovery rate among coronavirus patients now stands at 98.32 per cent. West Bengal now has 7580 active Covid-19 cases. **ENS**

### 7 ARMY COLUMNS DEPLOYED FOR RESCUE OPS: DEFENCE OFFICIAL

**Kolkata:** At least seven columns of Army personnel had been deployed for flood relief operations in three districts of West Bengal following unprecedented rainfall over the past few days in various parts of the state, a defence official said here. The Army had dispatched two columns each in the districts of Paschim Bardhaman and Howrah, and three in Hooghly, he added. Each Army column has around 70 personnel.

**PTI**

**EXPRESS NEW SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 2

SENIOR BJP leaders in Bengal, including Suwendu Adhikari, Dilip Ghosh, Rahul Sinha and Sukanta Majumdar, on Saturday blamed the prevailing flood situation in the state on Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. They claimed that she was busy campaigning for the Bhabanipur bypoll, ignoring embankment breaches and failing to take timely measures to check the floods.

Even as the chief minister on Saturday sought to lay the blame on the Damodar Valley Corporation (DVC), the Leader of Opposition in the Assembly, Suwendu Adhikari accused her of putting lakhs of people in distress just to save her job.

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**Registrar**

**DAMODAR VALLEY CORPORATION**  
DVC Towers, VIP Road, Kolkata 700054

**Mechanism of flood moderation by DVC dams**

The water released from DVC dams for moderation of flood is as per the advice of the "Damodar Valley Reservoir Regulation Committee" (DVRRC) which is headed by Member (R&M), Central Water Commission, New Delhi. The DVRRC comprises of Members in the rank of Chief Engineer from the Govt. of West Bengal, Govt. of Jharkhand and DVC. DVC authorities only follow the water release advices and instructions of the DVRRC towards discharge of water through dams and has no role in the quantum of water released. The release advices are as per the capacity of the dams to hold water up to a certain level.

Before the release of water, flood warning messages are communicated well in advance to Chief Engineers of Govt. of West Bengal, District Magistrates of Purba Bardhaman, Paschim Bardhaman, Purulia, Bankura and Superintending Engineer and Executive Engineer, Durgapur, Govt. of West Bengal. The Executive Engineer, Durgapur, Govt. of West Bengal further communicates the messages to the District Magistrates of Hooghly, Howrah, SDOs, ADMs, BDOs and others as per the Flood Warning Memorandum. This is as per the established system followed during flood events.

3rd October, 2021

INF/65/Misc./21-22



# 4 EXPRESS NETWORK

## VCs for JNU, BHU: Year into search, govt issues new advts, calls for applications

**SOURAV ROY BARMAN & AVANEESH MISHRA**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

A YEAR after launching the process to pick the next vice-chancellors of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and Banaras Hindu University (BHU), the Ministry of Education has issued fresh advertisements to accept more applications for the posts, citing the need to have a "wider choice for selection".

Applications for the post of JNU V-C, under the re-advertisement that was issued on Saturday, will be accepted till October 11. Fresh applications for the post of BHU V-C were accepted between September 15 and September 24.

Incumbent JNU V-C M Jagadesh Kumar's tenure ended on January 26, following which he was allowed to continue in his post by the Ministry till his successor was picked. Kumar is also among the frontrunners for the next IIT Delhi Director.

In BHU, Professor Vijay Kumar Shukla is the acting VC after former V-C Rakesh Bhatnagar's term ended on March 28 this year.

"The Advertisement for appointment of VC, JNU was initially published on 24.10.2020 in the leading newspapers. However, in order to have a wider choice for selection, the applications in the prescribed proforma are invited from eligible persons...The eligible candidates need to apply by 11th October 2021 till 05.30 P.M.," said



Rajnath Singh in Lakshadweep on Saturday. PTI

## Rajnath: None can doubt patriotism of Lakshadweep Muslims

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

ANNOUNCING THAT the government intends to make Lakshadweep another Maldives, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Saturday said patriotism of people from the Muslim community in the Union Territory should not be doubted. He said Lakshadweep's strategic location makes its security very important.

"In view of the importance of this place, some anti-India forces also try to create disturbances here. Efforts are also made to provoke people, but they have not been successful," Singh said. "No one should dare test the patriotism of the Muslim population in Lakshadweep".

Speaking in Kavaratti, where he unveiled a statue of Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary, Singh said that even though the

the new advertisement issued by the Department of Higher Education of the Ministry.

In the previous round, when a month-long window was provided, around 200 applications were received.

The JNU Teachers' Association (JNUTA) hit out the ministry over the re-advertisement, saying it "speaks volume of not just its (Centre) inefficiency but its active connivance in systematically destroying the university".

"JNUTA has consistently maintained that Prof. Kumar's tenure as Vice Chancellor has been regressive and marked by several volatile moments. The re-advertisement offers a pretext for the continuation of Prof. M. Jagadesh Kumar for an indefinite period, allowing him the opportunity to further erode the university's autonomy," the association, which has been locked in dispute with Kumar throughout his tenure, said in its statement.

Sources in the Ministry said applications received in the previous round stand valid in the case of JNU as well as BHU and will be taken into account during the selection process.

The three-member JNU search-cum-selection-committee has National Board of Accreditation chairperson Professor K K Aggarwal and Professor Ashok Gajanan Modak, who was appointed as a National Research Professor by the Centre in 2015, among its members.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Soon, no woman will have to walk long distances for water: PM Modi

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

OBSERVING THAT each household in 1.25 lakh villages across 80 districts is now getting tap water, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said that the day is not far when no woman in the country will have to walk long distances every day to fetch water.

Addressing a gathering through video conference on the occasion of the launch of the Jal Jeevan Mission App and Rashtriya Jal Jeevan Kosh, the Prime Minister said, "Since Independence to 2019, only 3 crore households in the country had access to tap water. However, Since the launch of Jal Jeevan Mission in 2019, 5 crore households have been connected to tap water connections."

"Today, every household in about 1.25 lakh villages in about 80 districts of the country is getting water from tap. The work that was done in the last 7 decades, today's India has done more work than that in just 2 years."

"Wo din door nahin jab desh ki kisi bhi behen-beti ko paani laane ke liye roz roz door door tak paidal chal kar nahin jaana hoga. Wo apne samay ka sadupyog apni behata-ree, apni padhai-likhai, ya apne rojgaar par usko shuroo karne mein kar paengi (The day is not far when no woman in the country will have to walk long distances every day to fetch water. They will be able to utilise their time for their betterment, education or employment)," Modi said.

"Empowerment of women in villages is one of the top priorities of our government," the Prime Minister said.

"We have seen many movies, read stories and poems detailing how the women and children of the village have to walk miles and



PM Narendra Modi pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi on his birth anniversary, at Rajghat in New Delhi, Saturday. Amit Mehra

**EXPLAINED**

### Focus on women as a constituency

FROM TOILETS in every home and school and affordable sanitary pads, to nutrition support during pregnancy and immunisation, the government has taken several steps to strengthen what the Prime Minister called 'Matra Shakti'. Most of the 2.5 crore houses constructed in villages are in the name of women, Ujjwala has relieved women of smoke-filled life, women are being integrated with Atmanirbharta mission through self-help groups, and these groups have increased three fold in the last seven years, PM Narendra Modi pointed out.

miles to fetch water... Why does the water not reach these people? I think those who had the responsibility of policy-making for a long time should have asked this question to themselves," the Prime Minister said.

The Prime Minister said, "A long time has passed, 75 years of Independence, now we have to move very fast. We have to ensure that the situation of transporting water by tankers or trains to any part of the country does not arise again... For this we have to continue our work on war footing," Modi said.

Stating that many areas in the country face the problem of polluted water, the Prime Minister said that at one time, the number of tap connections in the 61 districts of the country affected by encephalitis was just 8 lakh. Today, it has increased to more than 1 crore 11 lakh, he said. He said that the number of tap connections in aspirational districts has increased from 31 lakh to more than 1 crore 16 lakh.

The Prime Minister also interacted with five Pani Samiti (water committees) and gram panchayat members.

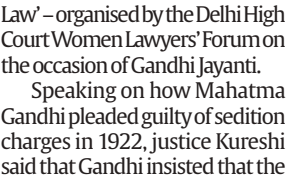
### WEBINAR ON 'GANDHIAN INFLUENCE ON LAW'

## 'Law may be made validly but has to be just'

**APURVA VISHWANATH**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

THE TEST of manifest arbitrariness to strike down a legislation is an example of Gandhian principles in contemporary law, Justice Akil Kureshi, Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court, said on Saturday. "The justness of law is now codified in our legal system. That if it is arbitrary, it is not just. The law may be made validly but it also has to be just," he said.

Justice Kureshi, whose transfer as Chief Justice of the Rajasthan High Court is pending government approval, was speaking in a webinar on 'Gandhian Influence on



Justice Akil Kureshi

Law' – organised by the Delhi High Court Women Lawyers' Forum on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.

Speaking on how Mahatma Gandhi pleaded guilty of sedition charges in 1922, Justice Kureshi said that Gandhi insisted that the law itself is not enough but it must have moral authority to rule. One of the two contemporary examples of that idea of law is the evolution of the principle of manifest arbitrariness by former Supreme Court judge Rohinton Nariman, Justice Kureshi said.

While executive actions have been struck down for being "arbitrary", the SC has extended this to legislation passed by Parliament since 2017.



Before 2017, the Supreme Court had only two qualifications for laws to pass the constitutionality test – whether Parliament has legislative competence to enact a law on the subject and whether the law violates fundamental rights or any other provision of the Constitution. A third – whether the law is not manifestly arbitrary – was added in 2017.

The principle was first used by

## Amid Chhattisgarh Cong tussle, Baghel gets UP elections role

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
RAIPUR, OCTOBER 2

AMID A tussle within the ruling Congress in Chhattisgarh, AICC chief K C Venugopal on Saturday appointed Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel as a senior party observer for the upcoming Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh.

With health minister T S Singh Deo and Baghel staking claim to the CM's post in Chhattisgarh, and more than a dozen party MLAs camping in Delhi, the new assign-



Bhupesh Baghel

ment for Baghel is being seen as a clear message by political analysts in the state.

While the MLAs have asserted that they are united and want to meet their party leaders for rea-

sons unrelated to the tussle, sources believe that the MLAs have gone in batches to showcase their support for the CM if the need arises.

"Baghel is being given more opportunities for him to explore. He was responsible for the party's performance during the Assam elections as well. Despite the party not making a mark there, he is now being given the charge of the party's performance in UP, which has bigger stakes," a source from within the Congress said.

**FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## Intellectual dishonesty, political deceit: PM slaps Opp, critics

Previous Govts led by someone from Cong gotra, people voted for complete change: PM

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

ACCUSING THE Opposition of "intellectual dishonesty" and "political deceit" in its criticism of his government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said tough and big decisions need to be taken to bring benefits to citizens who should have received them decades ago.

In an interview to Open magazine, Modi took on his political rivals over their attack on him for decisions such as new farm reform laws, rollout of the GST and Aadhaar, and construction of a new Parliament building. He accused them of doing a U-turn and launching a malicious campaign for political reasons after earlier promising or advocating similar measures.

Look at those who are opposing the pro-farmer reforms today, and people will see the real meaning of "intellectual dishonesty and rajneetik dhokhadhadi" (political deceit), he said.

The Prime Minister noted that his government has been saying right from the beginning that it is ready to sit together with the protesting farm organisations. "Many meetings have also been held in this regard but no one till now has come up with a specific point of disagreement that we want this to be changed," he said.

He also drew a distinction between his government and the previous governments saying earlier ones were fundamentally

formed under the leadership of a person from "Congress Gotra".

"And that is why, for each of them, there was no difference between their political thought process and economic thought process. Atal-ji was given an opportunity by people but he didn't have a full majority. It was a coalition government. I am fortunate that this is the first non-Congress government that was given a full majority by the people. This means that the people of this country voted for complete change," he added.

The biggest lesson from the Covid fight has been that India has an unparalleled ability to unite, find a common purpose, come together, and a tremendous capacity to deliver when a need arises, he said.

"Imagine if our country had not come up with a vaccine. What would be the situation? We know that a large population of the world doesn't have access to Covid vaccines. Today, our success in vaccination is thanks to India being Atmanirbhar (self-reliant)," he said.

"I, with an honest mind, respect critics a lot. But, unfortunately, the number of critics is very few. Mostly, people only level allegations, the people who play games about perception are more in number. And, the reason for this is that, for criticism, one has to do a lot of hardwork, research and, in today's fast-paced world, maybe people don't have time. So sometimes, I miss critics," he said.



The two leaders from rival parties shared the dais at a function at Ahmednagar in Maharashtra. Twitter/PawarSpeaks

## Gadkari has shown how power can be used: Pawar

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
PUNE, OCTOBER 2

NCP CHIEF Sharad Pawar on Saturday lauded Union Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari for using power effectively to carry out development.

The two leaders from rival parties shared the dais at a function at Ahmednagar in Maharashtra.

"I am attending this function because I was told that Gadkari was going to inaugurate many projects in Ahmednagar, which would solve long-pending issues of the city, and he wants me to be present," Pawar said.

Very often nothing happens once the stone-laying ceremony takes place for a project, the NCP leader said. "But when it comes to Gadkari's projects, within a few days of the function one sees the work starting. Gadkari is a great example of how a people's representative can work for the development of the country," Pawar added.

"I remember that before Gadkari took over this responsibility (of the road transport and highways ministry), about 5,000 km of work had been done. But after he took over, the figure has crossed 12,000 km," the NCP chief said.

The former Union Agriculture minister advised farmers in the region that the use of sugarcane will not remain limited only to sugar production and they should think of it as the raw material for ethanol too.

In his speech, Gadkari said while executing road projects in Buldhana district of Maharashtra, the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) also de-silted local rivers and streams. "I suggest (Maharashtra Rural Development Minister) Hasan Mushrif to think of focusing on water conservation in Ahmednagar district," he said.

Mushrif, an NCP leader who is also the guardian minister of this parched district, was present at the function.

Increasing the depth of streams and ponds helps increase the groundwater level, Gadkari said.

## Trivendra and Tirath in Uttarakhand BJP poll panels

**LALMANI VERMA**  
DEHRADUN, OCTOBER 2

MONTHS AFTER being replaced as Chief Ministers, Trivendra Singh Rawat and Tirath Singh Rawat have been given responsibilities in the BJP's Uttarakhand state election management committees.

Party state general secretary Kuldeep Kumar, who issued the circular detailing committees, said that 33 poll management related committees have been constituted with 122 leaders.



Replaced as CMs earlier

Trivendra, who had been replaced in March after leading the government in Uttarakhand for four years, has been appointed co-head (sah-pramukh) in the vishesh sampark (special outreach) com-

mittee. Former CM Vijay Bahuguna, who had switched to the BJP from Congress in 2016, will jointly head the committee with MoS (Defence) Ajay Bhatt.

Tirath, who served a four-month tenure as CM after replacing Trivendra, is co-convenor in the election management committee that is headed by party state president Madan Kaushik and Almora MP Ajay Tamta, who is the convenor.

Former CM Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank will head the manifesto committee. **FULL REPORT ON**  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## EC: Chirag, Paras factions can't use LJP name, symbol

New Delhi: Ahead of the Assembly bypolls in Bihar, the Election Commission on Saturday decided to freeze the symbol of Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) and the party name for the factions led by Chirag Pawan and Pashupati Kumar Paras.

The EC's ruling to freeze the party name and symbols is an interim order that will be in effect till the dispute is finally settled. It said both factions are free to use new names. **ENS**

## Actor's son among 10 held in rave party bust

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 2

THE NARCOTICS Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday busted a rave party on a cruise ship mid-sea off the Mumbai coast.

At the time of going to the press, the raid was still underway and NCB officials were in the process of registering an FIR under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act.

Sources in the department said that around 10 people, in-

cluding the son of a Bollywood actor, were detained for allegedly being part of the rave party.

The NCB officials claimed that a few days ago, they had received information about the rave party that was being organised on the passenger cruise ship, which was to leave for Goa on Saturday evening. The NCB personnel accordingly booked tickets and boarded the cruise ship disguised as passengers.

"As soon as the cruise ship left Mumbai coast and reached mid sea, a few passengers started consuming drugs, after which the

NCB officials began their operation and caught them red-handed," said a source.

Cocaine and other synthetic drugs have been found in their possession, which were subsequently seized during the raid, said officials. The captain of the ship was instructed to take the cruise to the international terminal at Ballard Pier in south Mumbai. The detainees will be sent for medical examination, said officials aware of the matter. Heavy deployment from Mumbai Police was witnessed in and around the terminal.

## Assam Cong MLA held for remarks on 8 killed in '83 stir

**TORA AGARWALA**  
GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 2

THE ASSAM Police on Saturday arrested Congress legislator Sherman Ali Ahmed for his 'controversial statements' on eight Assamese youths, who were killed in February 1983 during the Assam Agitation.

"He has been arrested. Would share case details in due course," Special DGP GP Singh told The Indian Express. However, he did not share the sections under which Ahmed

was arrested.

Ahmed was picked up Saturday evening. "Questioning is underway. We received a few FIRs against him," police said.

Ahmed is a three-time MLA from the Bagbar Assembly constituency in Barpeta district, and was earlier with the All India United Democratic Front, before he contested on Congress tickets in 2016 and 2021.

Controversy erupted after Ahmed made comments on the February 1983 killing of eight Assamese youths near the Sipajhar area – where violence

during the recent eviction drive left two, including a 12-year-old, dead. The eight killed in 1983 are among those who the Assamese believe "sacrificed their lives" during the agitation.

In a video clip, the MLA claimed that the eight people who died during the 1983 violence in Chalkhowa in Darrang district were not "martyrs" but "killers", since they were also responsible for the death of many others from the Miya (Bengali-speaking Muslim) community. He was referring to an episode of violence in Sipajhar area be-

tween the protestors of the Assam Agitation and the "immigrant" community. He claimed that the Miya community had killed the eight Assamese youths in order to "save themselves".

Following the statement, several organisations including the All Assam Students' Union (AASU) as well as the BJP and ally the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) criticised Ahmed for "disrespecting" the "martyrs." The AASU demanded that he be arrested.

On Saturday, the Assam Congress issued a show-cause notice to Ahmed.



# 5 SUNDAY STORY

THE GANGA that once flowed by Sadakat Ashram, the Congress party headquarters in Patna, has receded, much like the party's voters. Over the last three decades, the party office has been mostly deserted while the action has shifted to Bir Chand Patel Path that houses the offices of the BJP, JD(U) and RJD. But now, for the first time in years, Sadakat Ashram is in the spotlight, awaiting the arrival of its newest entrant, Kanhaiya Kumar.

Speaking to the media on September 29, the day he joined the Congress in Delhi, the former president of the JNU Students' Union — whose arrest in the sedition case of February 2016 and whose *azadi* slogans coursed through campuses across the country — said, "I have chosen the country's oldest and most democratic (party). Many young people feel that if the Congress is not there, there won't be a country," said Kanhaiya.

It's a definite shift for someone steeped in Left politics, whose politics has revolved around attacking the BJP and the Congress. During the 2015 JNU student union presidential debate, he had paraphrased a famous couplet to say, "*Barbaad Hindustan karne ko ek hi Congress kafi tha... Har rajya main BJP baitha hai, barbaad e gulistan kya hoga*" (One Congress was enough to destroy the country; if the BJP is in every state, what will be left of this country)?

For the boy from Begusarai, the Bihar town that's often called "Mini Moscow" or "Bihar's Leningrad" for the hold the Communist Party of India (CPI) once had over the region, activism started early. While he was introduced to student politics in school, it was college in Patna where he took the plunge into cultural and political activism.

Kanhaiya studied in R K C High School in Barauni, Begusarai, before joining the College of Commerce, Arts & Science in Patna in 2004 for his graduation. "I performed many plays for IPTA (India People's Theatre Association) because of which I began reading a lot and got acquainted with Marxism. Once I began taking part in socio-political activities, I met activists of the AISF (All India Students Federation, the CPI's youth wing), though I had become a member of the organisation by 2002, while still in school," Kanhaiya had told *The Indian Express* in 2015, shortly after being elected JNUSU president.

After his graduation from Nalanda Open University, Kanhaiya moved to Delhi and subsequently joined JNU for his MPhil in 2011 at the Centre for African Studies. In 2019, he completed his PhD with his thesis on 'The Process of De-colonisation and Social Transformation in South Africa, 1994-2015'.

It's probably a measure of how far politics has travelled since the rise of the BJP that Kanhaiya, a leader of the CPI, saw in the Congress a natural career progression for himself. It is particularly ironic considering Bihar, which saw protracted battles between the CPI and Congress, from the mid-1960s till the late 1990s, now sees both parties as natural allies of each other.

Many of Kanhaiya's contemporaries in JNU and those close to him at the Brahmaputra hostel, where he stayed, are, however, understanding of his choice of the Congress.

"The support that our movement received extended far beyond the campus or specific student organisations, and we became articulators of a broader progressive agenda. As long as he stands for that progressive vision, I wish him all the best," says former JNUSU vice-president Shehla Rashid Shora, who was in the JNU union with Kanhaiya.

A hostel mate and friend of Kanhaiya's says, "Kanhaiya is ambitious, and a person of his calibre should be ambitious. Over the last 4-5 years, especially after he left campus and began seeing ground realities, there was some frustration building up in him against the structure of the party (CPI) and its rigid-

## THE SUNDAY PROFILE

# A new turn

Last week, Kanhaiya Kumar joined the Congress, a party that has been steadily losing ground in Bihar and elsewhere. Will his campus-style politics infuse fresh blood into the party or is the induction another sign of the drift within?

SANTOSH SINGH & ARANYA SHANKAR on the man and his politics

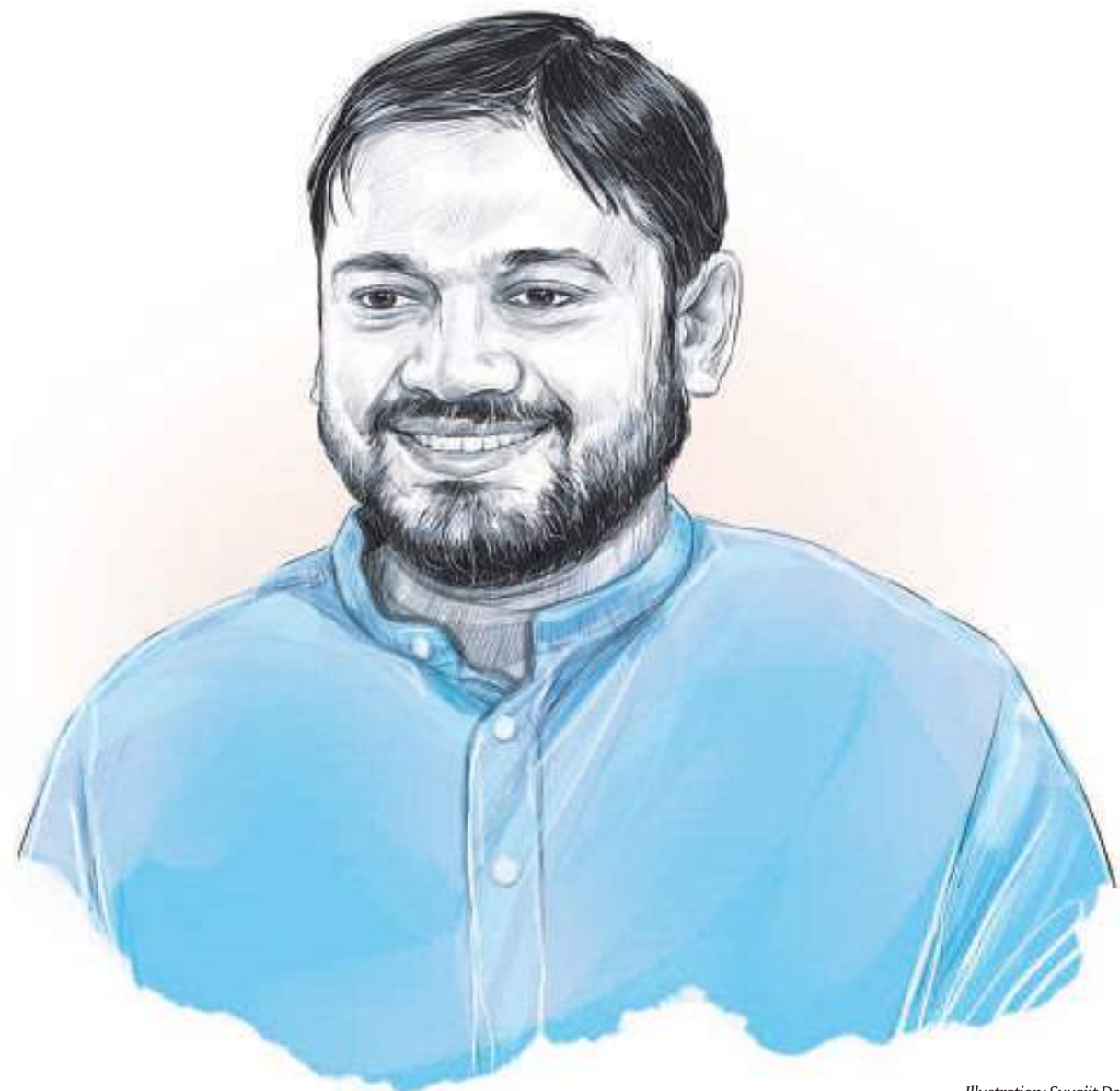


Illustration: Suvajit Dey

ity. He was unable to make changes in society like he wished."

One of Kanhaiya's closest friends and hostel mates, Anshul Trivedi, was among those who joined the Congress with him on September 28. Explaining his decision, Trivedi says, "In around 200 seats, only the Congress is in opposition to the BJP. Without strengthening the Congress, this anti-people regime can never be toppled." Trivedi has been a member of Left organisations on campus, first the Students' Federation of India (SFI) and then the Democratic Students' Federation.

Many, in fact, point out that Kanhaiya and the Congress make for a natural fit.

For Kanhaiya, the Congress was, by elimination, the only option left — the BJP is his principal opponent, and the two socialist parties, JD(U) and RJD, wouldn't project an upper-caste leader. With the CPI almost non-existent, Kanhaiya, a central committee member, couldn't have progressed

**Kanhaiya knows that a rigidly "Left" image could be a liability. A friend recalls a meeting after his poll loss. "The atmosphere was tense. Then chants of *lal salaam* erupted... He wondered if we could have a conversation without too much *lal salaam*"**

much more.

A CPI leader said: "Kanhaiya is a very ambitious leader. He felt marginalised when the Grand Alliance, of which all three Left parties, CPI (M), CPI (ML) and CPI, were constituents, did not use his services enough for the 2020 Bihar Assembly polls."

So while Kanhaiya did not have a strong party, the Bihar Congress did not have a strong leader. The party, which was last in

power in the state in 1990, has been without a leader who can lift it from three decades of political inertia.

This is where Kanhaiya comes in. He is seen as someone who can stare down an opponent. At the height of the opposition to the Centre's CAA and NRC, it was neither the Congress nor socialist parties, but Kanhaiya, who took on the BJP. He launched a series of rallies in the Seemanchal region (Araria, Purnia, Katihar and Kishanganj), drawing huge crowds — his Purnia rally attracted around one lakh people.

Even if briefly, Kanhaiya's rallies pushed the BJP on the backfoot. The rallies forced the party — which thought Kanhaiya was done and dusted after his Begusarai Lok Sabha (2019) seat loss to the BJP's Giriraj Singh — to hold pro-CAA rallies.

Despite the fact that he could work the crowds in a manner that few could, most political parties, except the CPI cadre, stayed

away. The only Congressman who shared the dais with Kanhaiya during those rallies was Shakil Ahmed Khan, a former JNU student.

A Congress leader had then asked: "Who else is Kanhaiya bringing to the table apart from some Dalits and Muslims?"

Now, as he begins a new innings, Kanhaiya realises his biggest strength — his aggressive counter to the BJP's nationalistic and Hindutva politics — could also be his biggest undoing, especially in the Congress, a party still floundering and divided in its approach on how to take on Modi.

Those close to him say Kanhaiya knows this only too well — that a rigidly "Left" image could be a liability.

His friend and poet Sudhanshu Firdous recalls a meeting of civil society after Kanhaiya's 2019 Begusarai seat loss. "The atmosphere was tense. Suddenly, chants of *lal salaam* erupted and Kanhaiya wondered if they cannot have a normal conversation without using *lal salaam* too much," he says.

Those within the Congress who are critical of his induction wonder how someone who couldn't win his own seat enthuse the party.

Lalan Kumar, former Bihar youth Congress president and AICC member, says: "Kanhaiya is welcome, but what about several young Congress leaders who have been waiting in the wings for long? Kanhaiya has not won any election either. As Congress leader, will he continue to attract crowds the way he did as a CPI leader?"

They also point to his inconsistency as a drawback. Kanhaiya is known to emerge for brief bursts of activity before withdrawing into a shell — before the 2019 polls and later, after his anti-CAA rally, he had gone all quiet. His silence over the arrest of his JNU ally Umar Khalid in the Delhi riots case had also come in for criticism.

"Where was he when the entire Opposition was taking a stand on caste census? He remained out of Bihar for most of the time after the 2019 polls," says a senior Congress leader.

Firdous dismisses the impression of Kanhaiya being stand-offish or unreliable. "There is no protocol for meeting Kanhaiya. But he does keep his distance from people at times because of security reasons. During his 2020 rallies, we spent a night at Darbhanga, where we all slept on dirty carpets and suffered mosquito bites all night. But Kanhaiya did not complain and held the next day's rally with as much enthusiasm."

It's this son-of-the-soil hardiness that is being counted as Kanhaiya's biggest draw, for the Congress that has steadily lost its grassroots connect.

Kanhaiya has often told *The Indian Express* of his hardscrabble early life in Begusarai — the son of Jaishanker Singh, a sustenance farmer and small-time CPI worker, and mother Meena Devi, an anganwadi worker — that has flashes of a child who had a way with words and oratory.

He has spoken of how he opted to read books so that he could escape the physical work the other boys his age did, how he won an Oxford Learner's Dictionary for speaking on Mother Teresa at a school competition, and how he earned some money by volunteering as a polio worker.

Now that Kanhaiya has joined the Congress, his immediate challenge would be to deal with party veterans.

Bihar Congress working president Kaukab Quadri, however, said, "Since Kanhaiya has been directly inducted into the party by the high command, he will not face much challenge from within. Kanhaiya is a great orator and a star campaigner in the true sense. After a long while, we will see people coming to Congress rallies."

## == TAKE 5 == POLICE WORKING HOURS

PRITI VISHRANT MANE, 32  
POLICE NAIK, PUNE CITY



Mane has been with police for 13 years, and has a son

## 'My son is very happy... we talk about things that we can do now'

The Maharashtra Police has reduced from 12 to 8 the daily duty hours of women police personnel below the rank of ASI, "to help them balance professional and personal lives". Police personnel are entitled to one weekly off in the state

SUSHANT KULKARNI

### 1 How has the reduction of duty hours helped you?

The biggest change is it has given a sense of stability. The stress has significantly reduced.

### 2 What are the things you can do now with more time on hand?

In the hectic schedule around job, children, home and attending to elderly, finding time for oneself is very difficult. Now, when the system is making efforts to make more time available for you... I plan to use it for fitness and my hobbies. I want to take up calligraphy and learn a new language. I have always loved sketching, and want to explore if this can be useful in my police work.

### 3 Were you told the reason behind the decision?

Working long hours, often 24 hours at a stretch, can strain one's mind and body. Some can find work and life balance, many can't. It adversely affects work too. I believe the decision was taken to ensure this balance, which will help us perform our duties efficiently.

### 4 How have your male colleagues responded?

I believe the decision was taken considering all the necessary aspects. Our male colleagues have welcomed the decision and have been supportive, like always.

### 5 How has your family responded to the change?

Everyone at home is really happy obviously, especially my son. We have started talking about what we can do together now... The orders to implement the change in Pune City came into effect just a few days ago, on September 27.

HARIKISHAN SHARMA

india 75

NUMBER PLATE

Rs 197.39 crore

The size of the first Union budget of a "free and independent" India, presented by Finance Minister R K Shanmukham Chetty, on November 26, 1947, for the financial year ending on March 31, 1948. The highest share of the Budget, Rs 104.5 crore, was for refugees, followed by Defence Services (Rs 92.74 crore), and subsidies for imported food grains (Rs 44.5 crore)

92

Overall Budget speeches made since 1947, including for 14 interim Budgets and four on the occasion of presenting additional proposals

₹34,83,236 crore

The size of the Budget in 2021-22, a rise of 17,646 times since 1947. In the first Budget, revenue receipts, expenditure were Rs 171.15 cr and Rs 197.39 cr, which are Rs 17,88,424 cr and Rs 29,29,000 cr now. Defence budget has reached Rs 3,47,088 cr

₹3.32

The value of one US dollar in terms of Indian currency in 1947-48. The rupee has since slid to Rs 74. Therefore, the size of the first Budget in terms of today's price may be many times higher than Rs 197.39 crore

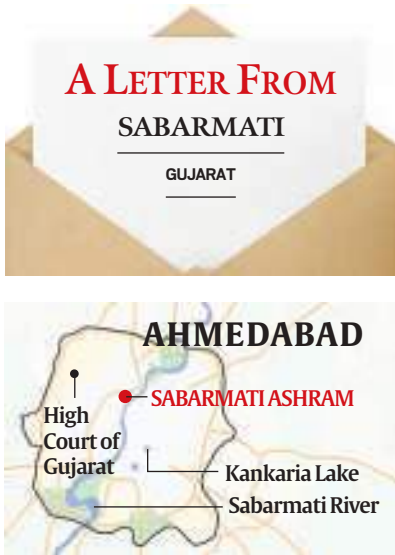
# Living with the Mahatma

PARIMAL DABHI

MAHENDRA VYAS, 73, remembers the communal riots of 1969 that forced several Muslim residents of Satyagraha Ashram to move out to minority-dominated areas. "A pregnant Muslim girl and her mother stayed back because of the girl's fragile health. Some rioters came looking for them, but I kept them in my house for 18 days without anyone knowing," says Vyas.

In July, Vyas, whose house is barely 200 metres from the place now famous as Sabarmati Ashram — once a part of the original Satyagraha Ashram — moved out, taking a compensation of Rs 60 lakh and with that, memories of a lifetime.

Now, as part of the Rs 1,200 crore Gandhi Ashram Redevelopment project — which proposes to reclaim the area that was the Satyagraha ashram of the 1950s and turn it into a "world-class" memorial — those living in tenements on the premises will move out and be owners of new properties under a settlement plan worked out by the Gujarat government. So far, 80 of the 263 families have taken the compensation amount. Nearly Rs 300 crore has been allocated for building a satellite campus to build homes for *ashramwasis* — as generations of those living in the tenements are



called — who don't want the compensation but want to live close to the ashram.

The present-day *ashramwasis* are descendants of the people who were brought to the Harijan Ashram that Mahatma Gandhi established on the banks of the Sabarmati river in 1917, to do various tasks and help run the ashram.

As descendants of the original inhabitants of Sabarmati ashram move out as part of a redevelopment plan, they carry with them a slice of history and memories of a lifetime



Vyas, born the year the Mahatma was assassinated, spent over seven decades in the ashram. His family has now bought a flat in an Ahmedabad suburb. Nirmal Harindran

The homes in the ashram, originally plastered with lime and with tiled roofs, and categorised as *chh ordi* (a cluster of six houses or rooms), *saat ordi* and *dus ordi*, turned into colonies such as Shikshak Niwas, Jamna Kutir, Laal Bungalow and Thakor Vaas,

among others.

Born the year the Mahatma was assassinated, Vyas remembers a childhood spent in the company of people who worked on one of the most audacious projects — a non-violent battle against a colonial power.

"In the ashram, we had to spin and weave our own khadi and grow vegetables in the front yard. During my younger days, there were 10 community toilets in the ashram colony where we would queue up. And there was a water tap near Hriday Kunj where we would get water for household use. To wash utensils and clothes, women used to go on the banks of Sabarmati river," says Vyas, who has now bought a flat for Rs 71 lakh in Gota, an Ahmedabad suburb where his son runs a dairy parlour.

Amrut Modi, 88, Secretary of the Sabarmati Ashram Preservation and Memorial Trust (SAPMT), one of the six trusts that manages the land here, has been living in the ashram since 1955. Originally an employee of the then State of Saurashtra, Modi was drawn to the ashram after attending a seven-day workshop by social reformer and Gandhian Dada Dharmadhikari.

Modi, who is working on a book on the ashram and its history, says, "Initially, there were no houses on the ashram premises. Close associates of Gandhi like Kakasaheb Kalelkar, Mahadev Desai, Narhari Parikh etc. used to stay in tents. One of the first buildings to come up here was Udyog Bhavan, which Gandhi got built and where activities related to khadi were carried out."

"After that, around 1919, work on the

ashram tenements began, for which Gandhi got funds from his old friend Pranjivan Mehta, a Rangoon-based jeweller. The work went on for around three years," he says, adding that the construction was done under the supervision of Gandhi's nephew Maganlal Gandhi.

During Gandhi's days at the Sabarmati Ashram, there were around 450 people from 14 different regions of the country — besides four families from Nepal — living there.

Vyas says the average height of the original houses was around 12-15 feet. With ownership of the tenements with the respective trusts, the *ashramwasis* pay a nominal rent and seek permission from the trust to carry out maintenance and other repair work. Over time, the *kuchcha* roads inside the premises were laid with concrete.

Like Vyas's family, the Parmars, originally from Gujarvadi village in Surendranagar, too, are packing up and will soon relocate to Chandkheda, another Ahmedabad suburb.

Bhikhabhai Parmar, 55, has got a cheque of Rs 40 lakh as compensation and will get the remaining Rs 20 lakh at the time of handing over the ashram house to the Ahmedabad collectorate. Bhikhabhai's wife Savitaben says, "We are sad to leave. We spent all our youth here. But the government has a project, so we have agreed to move."



Across  
THE AISLE

PCHIDAMBARAM

Website: pchidambaram.in  
Twitter: @Pchidambaram\_IN

HAS THE number of jobs in Indian firms that employ 10 or more persons increased since 1947? That is what we call a 'no brainer'. The answer is yes. Amend the reference year to 2013-14. The answer will still be yes, unless the economy had been devastated by war or famine or natural calamities. A ship on a course, even without a firm hand at the wheel, will, under normal circumstances, sail forward.

The real question is not whether the total employment has increased since 2013-14, the last year of the UPA government. The BJP promised to create 2 crore jobs a year. In seven years, their 'deft' management of the economy ought to have created 14 crore new jobs in the formal and informal sectors, but it did not.

## HOW MANY JOBS?

A few days ago, the Ministry of Labour and Employment released a report on a survey of firms employing 10 or more workers in nine sectors that account for 85 per cent of the total employment (the formal sector). The report concluded that total employment stood at **3.08 crore** as against **2.37 crore** in 2013-14 (Sixth Economic Census), that is an increase of **71 lakh** jobs in seven years. Extrapolating the number to cover other sectors, the increase would be, at most, 84 lakh jobs. The report appears not to have covered the informal sector or the farm sector. The report claims "most impressive growth" ranging from 22 per cent (manufacturing) to 68 per cent (transport) to 152 per cent (IT/BPO) — but, remember, all of this

Jobs were, and are, lost; new jobs are created; but if the net increase over 12 months is just 44,483, what does it say about the management of the economy and the pompous claims of the ministers and economic advisers?

## The case of the missing jobs

adds up to only 71 lakh jobs!

Since the government has discontinued the Periodic Labour Survey, we are compelled to look to other sources. The data is important for, to quote the government's words, "evidence-based policy making and statistics-based execution".

## OTHER CREDIBLE DATA

The most credible is the employment-unemployment data gathered and published by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE). In a short note, Mr Mahesh Vyas has summarized the essential conclusions of the data at the end of the third week of September 2021. I have tried to capture them in a Table:

Date	Total Employment	Unemployment Rate	Labour Force Participation Rate	Employment Rate
Feb 2020	405.9 mn	7.76%	42.6%	39.29%
April 2020	282.2	23.52	35.57	27.21
July 2020	392.4	7.4	40.61	37.6
Aug 2021	397.8	8.32	40.52	37.15

The CMIE is right when it says that "India's recovery from lockdowns of Covid-19 has been **swift, partial, exhausted...**". Mark the word **exhausted**. Boasting of any kind of recovery — V or any other alphabet-shaped — misses the crucial point that unless we **reach the level** of total employment that was achieved in 2019-20, and **exceed** that level, the so-called 'recovery' is illusory.

People must have jobs and the incomes that go with jobs. Any economic 'recovery' that does not restore the old level of jobs, and does not exceed that level, is meaningless to the people. Technology, new machines, new processes and Artificial Intelligence can bring growth, but if that growth does not restore old jobs or create new jobs, we have a huge problem at hand. The government has stubbornly refused to acknowledge that India has, indeed, such a problem; much less is it willing to take measures to deal with that problem.

## SHRINKING FORCE, SLIDING RATE

The shrinking of the labour force indi-

cates another serious problem. Both the labour force participation rate (LFPR) and the employment rate in August 2021 are significantly lower than the corresponding rates in February 2020 (see Table). The logical conclusion is that a significant number of people have withdrawn from the labour market (i.e., stopped looking for jobs) and the number of people working (employed) has

also fallen. Unless these two ratios are reversed, there is no way to rapidly double the size of the GDP or outclass bigger economies like Germany or Japan.

The CMIE has also calculated the net cumulative increase in total employment between September 2020 and September 2021: it is a measly **44,483**. Jobs were, and are, lost; new jobs are created; but if the net increase over 12 months is just 44,483, what does it say about the management of the economy and the pompous claims of the ministers and economic advisers? Mr Vyas observes, pertinently, that this "indicates a premature exhaustion of the recovery process. This is serious because while the creation of additional jobs has stalled, the flow of additions to the stock of working age population continues".

There are more depressing conclusions if we subject the data to an analysis based on gender; or look at the numbers through a rural vs urban lens; or examine the 'quality' of the jobs. The agriculture sector has been the saviour. It absorbed additional labour of the order of 46 lakhs between March 2020 and August 2021, but rural India lost 65 lakh non-farm jobs during the same period. People shifted from non-farm to farm jobs, but this may be only disguised unemployment.

I wish the Prime Minister will address the issues of joblessness and jobs in his next *Mann ki baat*. Let him throw away the sanitised and summarized reports of the Ministry of Finance and talk to real people who have lost their jobs and young people who are desperately looking for jobs. They may tell him some bitter truths.

Fifth  
COLUMN

TAVLEEN SINGH

Twitter: @tavleen\_singh

No more  
'high  
command',  
please

TWO WORDS that have got on my last nerve in the tawdry drama that we have seen in Punjab are: high command. They are words that we have come to so totally accept that journalists use them casually in their reportage, as if it was the most normal thing in the world for a political party in a democratic country to have such a thing as a 'high command'. It is not normal. It is a reminder that proud though we are of holding elections regularly, our political parties remain dangerously feudal in their thinking. Not only is there a 'high command' in all our political parties, but this entity is also inevitably surrounded by courtiers and sycophants. If someone has the courage to break ranks and speak the truth, they risk being expelled or getting their homes attacked, as Kapil Sibal discovered last week.

No political party is in greater danger of being destroyed by its 'high command' than the Congress, but it seems unable to save itself. The 'high command' is currently a triumvirate and the oldest member of it is rarely seen these days. She is rumoured to be in poor health. So, it is Sonia Gandhi's children who make political decisions now, and with the careless insouciance of spoil heirs. Neither of them has shown the ability to win state or general elections for their party either on their own steam or because of the charisma of the family name, but they are today more powerful than any other leaders in our oldest political party. It was they who decided, one fine morning, that the Chief Minister of Punjab was a liability and had to go.

They forgot that it was he who won them the election in Punjab last time despite not being named chief minister before the campaign. They forgot that there are courteous, honorable ways of making a political decision of this kind, and instead forced him to resign by publicly humiliating him. They appear to have done this on the advice of a political lightweight who, after he gave up playing cricket, has been famous only for laughing hysterically on a show called *Comedy Nights*. Having got rid of the Chief Minister, this laughing man threw a petulant, very public tantrum and resigned from his job as head of the Congress in Punjab.

It matters not one bit if Navjot Singh Sidhu is persuaded to take back his resignation because the damage is done. A sensitive border state that is currently awash with thousands of unhappy farmers now faces serious political instability. Last week Punjab's former Chief Minister met the Home Minister and the National Security Advisor in Delhi and warned them that our unfriendly, neighbourhood Islamic Republic is making aggressive attempts to stir up secessionist sentiments among Sikh farmers, as they did successfully not very long ago. This time around drones are being used to drop weapons, drugs and propaganda material. The last thing that Punjab needs is a revival of Khalistani ideas, and yet the Congress party's 'high command' may have paved the way.

Captain Amarinder Singh has hinted that he plans to start his own party and that it will speak out loudly for the rights and concerns of farmers, whose protest has gone on much too long. Hopefully he will succeed in persuading both the farmers and the Modi government to make a real attempt to find a solution. It seems obvious that if farmers do not believe that the new agricultural laws will benefit them, then the way forward is for the Prime Minister to either find some way to convince them of the benefits or scrap the laws. If this happens, it could be the only good thing that has come out of the sordid shenanigans that the Congress party's 'high command' has been responsible for.

Meanwhile, BJP spokesmen have found it hard to conceal their jubilation at what they perceive correctly as a total meltdown in the Congress. They need to control their glee and pay attention to the emergence in the past seven years of a 'high command' in their own party. Modi's devotees continue to use 'Lutyens' as an abusive word against his critics, without noticing that the Prime Minister has done nothing to change the political culture that made Lutyens Delhi into a detested power centre that bred entities and ideas more suited to feudalism than democracy.

Personally, I cringed at the craven sycophancy and hero worship that I saw at the reception the Prime Minister was given when he returned from the United States last Sunday. Dancers and musicians from different parts of India were brought in to perform and the BJP president spoke in high praise of Modi's 'achievements' from a stage whose backdrop had the faces of the four leaders of the Quad on it. The Prime Minister stood with his hands folded in the middle of a giant garland with an expression on his face that made clear that he accepted that he was worthy of the adulation. And, for what? For speaking at the United Nations, meeting the American President and other leaders of the Quad. Not since the 'dark days' of the Emergency have I seen a prime minister greeted with such an open display of sycophancy. As I watched I was overcome by a deep, depressing sense of deja vu.

Caste system: Hindus  
must reflect, drive change

## Dalitality

ANANTANAND  
RAMBACHAN

IN FEBRUARY 2006, I was invited as a representative of the Hindu community at the 9th Assembly of the World Council of Churches in Brazil. At the very first discussion, a Bishop from India chastised the Council for giving legitimacy to Hindus and their traditions by inviting a few of us. He described us as his oppressors and characterised Hindu traditions as "unjust" and "bereft of any redeemable features". He concluded by inviting everyone to work for dismantling of Hinduism. I learned later that the Bishop came from the Dalit community. His words pierced me. I had never before heard anyone describe me as an oppressor.

My great grandparents had migrated from Northern India to Trinidad and Tobago in the late 19th Century as indentured workers. The observation of caste strictures was very difficult in the shared living space of barracks. Caste, therefore, although not absent, was a minimal feature in my life. I was aware that most Hindu priests claimed status as Brahmins, but other traditional features of caste such as hereditary work-specialisation, and regulations governing inter-dining, intermarriage and social relations were minimal. Our friendships were not constrained by caste. Temples were open to all. My grandfathers served the community as Hindu priests. I was aware of my family's status as Brahmins.

I was challenged by the Bishop's denunciation to recognise that he encountered Hinduism in ways radically different from my own experience. His context was India and Hinduism was an oppressive tradition that negated the dignity and self-worth of his community. How do I as a Hindu respond to this powerful challenge?

I must begin by acknowledging the inhumanity, and injustice, of the caste system, and that it has indeed been widely legitimised by its appeal to Hindu teachings and texts. It is pervasively present in ritual practices. As Hindus, we must desist from apologetically explaining away the caste system as a creation of foreigners or as just a response to foreign presence in India. Its antiquity belies such explanations. We must cease speaking of caste as corruption of a social arrangement that had some noble

underlying purpose for the common good. Hindus are not free from susceptibility to the corruption of power, from the desire to affirm self-value by devaluing others, and from controlling the bodies of others for their own economic wellbeing.

There can be no genuine dismantling of the structures of caste without the willingness of Hindus to move from defensive justification to radical self-criticism. We must also interrogate the assumptions of the social system that assign different values, privileges and opportunities to human beings on the basis of dangerous notions of purity and impurity.

The repudiation of religious teachings and practices that justify caste must be complemented by Hindu support for policies that redress economic and other disadvantages. There is a direct relationship between regarding some bodies more worthy than others and unequal access to goods and opportunities. The affirmation of a Hindu theology of human equality and dignity, grounded in the teaching that the divine exists equally and identically in everyone, is fundamental for the work of social change and structural transformation.

Self-criticism, however, will not be meaningfully undertaken without attention to the voices of those who experience the tradition as denying them the opportunities and resources to flourish. We must hear their truths, however difficult for us. This is not easy since Hindu religious leaders still come primarily from males of the upper castes who have always experienced power and privilege within the tradition.

There is no critical voice as insightful about the oppressive face of the Hindu tradition than Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar. Yet, no prominent Hindu post-Independence commentator on the Bhagavad Gita, including Mahatma Gandhi, even makes mention of his formidable arguments.

The questions from the Dalit community, articulated by Dr Ambedkar in 1935, are compelling ones to begin the journey of Hindu self-examination. "Does Hinduism recognise their worth as human beings? Does it stand for their equality?... Does it at least help to forge the bond of fraternity between them and the Hindus?... Does it say to the Hindus it is a sin to treat the Untouchables as being neither man nor beast?... In fine, does Hinduism universalise the value of life without distinction?"

*The writer is a Professor of Religion at Saint Olaf College, Northfield, Minnesota, US. Suraj Yengde, the author of Caste Matters, curates the fortnightly Dalitality column*

history  
HEADLINE  
CHAKSHUROY

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THE ROYAL Academy of Arts has held a summer exhibition in London for the last 250 years. Art enthusiasts eagerly await the exhibition's opening every year to see works by established and aspiring artists. Such is its draw that the Academy displayed Lutyens' and Baker's design of the buildings of the New Capital City of Delhi at the 1914 event. The exhibition also has had its share of controversy. In 1932, despite the selection committee's acceptance, the Royal Academy rejected a portrait of Mahatma Gandhi from the summer exhibition. This painting now occupies a prominent place in the Indian Parliament.

It was the first portrait to adorn the Central Hall of Parliament, where Constituent Assembly members debated the Constitution. Every President of India has stood underneath this painting and addressed MPs of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. The artist who painted it was Captain (later Sir) Oswald Birley, an Englishman born in New Zealand. Birley had studied at Harrow and Cambridge, was a veteran of both World Wars and one of England's most sought after portrait painters. Before painting Gandhi, he had an illustrious list of personalities like King George V, the King and Queen of Siam (Thailand), and British Prime Minister Stanley Baldwin, who sat for his portraits. Birley was also no stranger to India. By then, he had visited India twice and travelled extensively in the country.

Birley had painted the who's who of British society, and the Academy had regularly exhibited his works. The rejection of his Gandhi painting led to speculation that the Academy acted under government pressure. Adding to the controversy was the acceptance of two of his other portraits, one of which was of Lord Irwin, the former Viceroy of India. The President of the Royal Academy denied any political motive behind the rejection. He said that the Gandhi picture was the least important of the three works submitted by Birley. A newspaper commented that the Gandhi portrait was not "good enough". The rejection made the portrait more famous. Sarvapalli Radhakrishnan would use its image in the volume he edited for Mahatma Gandhi's seventieth birthday in 1939.

The portrait ending up in Parliament re-

How Gandhi portrait  
ended up in Parliament

A P Pattani and Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan with the portrait. Pattani Archives

quired the intervention of Sir Prabhashankar Pattani, the Dewan of the princely state of Bhavnagar. The Dewan and the ruler of Bhavnagar are known for championing students to study engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Business historian Ross Bassett states, "During the 1930s, a small princely state in Kathiawar, Bhavnagar, was the leading source of Indian students at MIT. In fact, Bhavnagar, representing less than 2 per cent of the population of India, produced almost half the Indians who earned degrees from MIT in the 1930s."

Bassett found that some students from Bhavnagar received scholarships from the princely state to pursue their degrees. Sir Pattani engaged with these students on his visit to Boston. Material from the recently set up Pattani archives indicates that the Dewan was a hands-on administrator. He implemented a scheme to release farmers from the burden of private debt and passed a law to limit interest rates that money lenders could charge in the state. Sir Pattani was also an associate of Gandhi. He travelled with Gandhi to London in September of 1931. Both of them participated in the Second Round Table Conference — Gandhi representing Congress and Sir Pattani, the princely state of Bhavnagar.

During this London visit, Gandhi had a busy schedule. He did not pose for sculptors trying to make a bust of him, and it is unlikely that he would have sat for long hours for a portrait. What is more likely is that Birley made a sketch of him and then completed the painting in his studio.

Two weeks after India's Independence and five months before Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, the portrait arrived in Parliament House. Sir Prabhashankar Pattani had died in 1938, and his son A P Pattani presented the portrait to the Constituent Assembly. He informed his colleagues that Birley had made the portrait for himself and agreed to part with it when his father told him that the portrait was for India.

Birley would paint portraits of other famous personalities like Winston Churchill and General Dwight D. Eisenhower (later US President). He died in 1952 at the age of 72. A year before his death, he held a retrospective of his portraits and paintings in London. He was proud of his portrait of Mahatma Gandhi and considered it "good enough" to persuade the Indian government to loan it for the exhibition. It was the only time that the portrait left the country.

*The writer is head of outreach, PRS Legislative Research*

On the  
LOOSE

LEHERKALA

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CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal launched a *Deshbhakti* curriculum in Delhi government schools saying people only think of their country while raising the Tricolour or singing the National Anthem. "We need to develop an environment wherein our children feel patriotic at every step," said Kejriwal, while unveiling the course book of 100 short stories of freedom fighters. He added: "A *deshbhakt* doctor would look to help maximum people. A patriotic officer won't think about bribes but about clearing the most number of files."

The Kejriwal government's last big innovation in Delhi schools was introducing

## Deshbhakti: Can patriotism be invoked?

classes in happiness. To give them some credit, they understand that modern life is isolating and people are hungry to invest in social rituals that communicate a deeper sense of belonging. I remember in my primary school years, we used to have lessons in 'Moral Science'. The teacher would read out mythical tales with simple themes of good and evil that imparted values in the end. All storytelling developed perspective and affects the way a child views the world. Aesop's Fables have served as an ethical guide since the 6th century B C, and the Indian equivalent, *Panchatantra*, in existence for 2,500 years, remains hugely popular. If the idea of the *Deshbhakti* class is to create a space for children to think about the lived realities of Indians from another time, by all means, it's not a terrible thing —

as long as they make room for the possibility that our icons tend to obscure as much as they reveal.

An honest *Deshbhakti* curriculum would encourage students to engage with aspects of India's past that are troubling, as well as inspiring. Especially this year, can any student ignore that the statue of the founding father of modern India was topped post the Black Lives Matters movement? It's time to shed the shackles of one-sided narratives and inculcate nuance. Students deserve to know that despite his greatness, the Mahatma may have been ignorant and prejudiced about African-Americans. Unfortunately, merely the title of one the chapters, 'Deshbhakti: My Country, My Pride', suggests the coursework is hopelessly banal; students will

waste precious time pouring over the admirable qualities and splendid achievements of our heroes, forfeiting an opportunity to understand the myriad discrepancies in our turbulent history.

There is something fundamentally self-defeating about making patriotism mandatory because, like parenting, it's an emotion that occurs naturally from within. Some years back the Supreme Court passed the law that the National Anthem be played before the screening of films in cinema halls. It didn't work. Personally, I love *Jana Gana Mana*, but being compelled to stand in a dark movie theatre where people are constantly shuffling in and out was not conducive to experiencing intense love for my country. Eventually, most of the states decided to make the playing of *Jana*

*Gana Mana* optional. The exercise wasn't entirely pointless either, as it stirred debate on whether there is any value in these public displays of patriotic virtue.

The fact is, comy gestures don't prove one's patriotism or the lack of it. For some of us, it takes privation and danger for our deeply buried feelings of civic duty to surface. In the ordeal of the last year and a half, when all health institutions failed, young Indians banded together for a common cause, donating blood, platelets, oxygen and money for their fellow citizens. What is that if not love for nation? The prevailing political rhetoric demands mindless veneration from us all, but to truly build nationhood, it's infinitely more urgent to recognise our defects.

*The writer is director, Hutkary Films*



THE SUNDAY EXPRESS, OCTOBER 3, 2021

# ECONOMY

## CBDT NOTIFIES RULES FOR COMPANIES TO SETTLE TAX DISPUTES

# Retro tax: Repayment timeline for govt outlined, cos to notify for indemnity

**ENSECONOMICBUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

FOLLOWING THE decision to scrap the retrospective taxation provision, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) under the Ministry of Finance has notified rules that will help close tax disputes with companies such as Cairn Energy and Vodafone Plc.

The rules state that such companies will have to indemnify the Indian government against future claims and withdraw any pending litigation or proceeding before any forum in order to settle their retrospective tax cases, the notification dated October 1 stated.

The rules also specify other conditions, such as issuance of a public notice or press release by the company stating that claims arising out of or relating to the relevant orders or any related award, judgment or court order, no

longer subsist, and include an indemnity against "any claims against the Republic of India or any India affiliate contrary to the undertaking".

These rules when adhered to will lead to the government withdrawing tax demands raised using the 2012 retrospective tax law and any tax collected in enforcement of such demand is paid back. The repayment will take at least two months as per the timeline outlined in the rules. An Indian affiliate is any department, agency, instrumentality, public sector company or any other entity of the government owned directly or indirectly in India or abroad.

The companies will have to withdraw any pending litigation or proceeding before any forum against the levy of the retrospective tax and also give an assurance that they won't pursue any further claims in the future. Also, companies will have to file a declaration

**EXPLAINED**  
**E** Law amended in Aug

AFTER IT faced the risk of its properties in Paris getting attached and Air India assets being pursued under the arbitration award in the Cairn Energy case, the government in August amended the Income-tax Act to withdraw retro tax demands, for transactions that took place before May 28, 2012.

with the income tax authorities along with a board resolution or legal authorisation besides an indemnity bond, the rules said.

The initial submission of an undertaking to withdraw all pending legal proceedings has to

be done in 45 days. Thereafter the relevant Principal Commission of Income tax has to give a certificate accepting or pass an order rejecting the claim in 15 days from the receipt of the application.

After grant of certificate, the companies will have to fulfil the condition of indemnity by all interested parties within 60 days. After this, the order granting relief has to be made within 30 days and only after this the refund will be initiated.

"The declarant and all the interested parties shall indemnify, defend and hold harmless the Republic of India and Indian affiliates from and against any and all costs, expenses (including attorneys' fees and court's fees), interest, damages, and liabilities of any nature arising out of or in any way relating to the assertion or, bringing, filing or maintaining of any claim, at any time after the date of furnishing the undertaking," the

rules by the CBDT said.

In August, the government brought in The Taxation Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, stating that no tax demand shall be raised for any indirect transfer of Indian assets if the transaction was undertaken before May 28, 2012.

The Centre had, in 2012, retrospectively amended the Income-tax Act. This was in response to a Supreme Court verdict, which had held that Vodafone cannot be taxed for a 2007 transaction that involved its purchase of 67 per cent stake in Hutchison Whampoa for \$11 billion.

Later in 2014, the Centre again used the same section to raise tax demand against Cairn Energy Plc for restructuring done in 2006.

Following the retrospective amendment by the then UPA government in 2012, tax demands were raised in 17 cases, out of which tax amount of Rs 8,100 crore has been collected for four cases.

## CALLS FOR 'INFORMAL APPROACH TO INSOLVENCY RESOLUTION'

# Next phase of IBC implementation should be personal insolvency: Sahoo

**KARUNJIT SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

THE NEXT phase of India's insolvency regime should be the commencement of personal insolvency provisions and a greater emphasis on a more informal process for resolving insolvency, outgoing Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India (IBBI) Chairperson MS Sahoo told *The Sunday Express*.

Sahoo, who demitted office on October 30, has headed the IBBI since its inception and was the first Chairperson of the regulator which has played a key role in setting up the rules and regulations for insolvency proceedings under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) and regulating insolvency professionals and information utilities. The outgoing IBBI chief said the next phase of the implementation of the IBC should include "individual insolvency with provisions for a fresh start and an informal approach to insolvency resolution, moving away



Outgoing IBBI chairperson MS Sahoo via IBBI

slightly from court proceedings." The IBC does have provisions for a "fresh start" scheme for individuals with debts of up to Rs 35,000, gross annual income under Rs 60,000, total assets of under Rs 20,000 and do not own a home. The process would allow such persons who are unable to pay off their debts to be discharged of their liabilities.

Individual insolvency proceedings for personal guarantors to corporate debtors under the IBC have commenced, however indi-

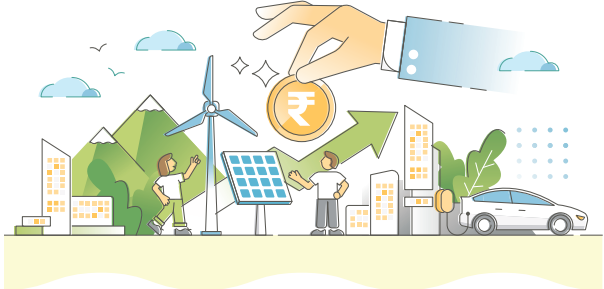
vidual insolvency of partnership and proprietorship firms as well as or other individuals has not yet been brought into force.

Sahoo noted the next phase of IBC would require improvement in "capacity, conduct and approach" of all players involved in the insolvency process, including committee of creditors (CoCs) and insolvency professionals. He added that considering an informal approach to insolvency resolution may yield better results.

The government has introduced a pre-packaged insolvency resolution process for MSMEs, aimed at faster resolution for distressed companies. Under this, financial creditors will agree to terms with promoters or a potential investor, and directly seek approval of the resolution plan from the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) avoiding a prolonged litigation process that often occurs under the Corporate Insolvency Resolution Process (CIRP). The Centre plans to eventually extend pre-packaged insolvency resolution process to larger corporations.

# '22 ethical funds in India worth \$2 billion'

India, despite being the sixth largest economy and the third largest polluter, has the fewest ethical/sustainable/green bonds at just about 22 funds, a Refinitiv report said



**TOP 5 SUSTAINABLE FINANCE DEALS IN INDIA SO FAR THIS YEAR:** JSW Steel's \$999.99 million bond issuance in

September, Greenko's Dutch arm's \$940 million in March, Adani Green Energy's \$750 million in September, JSW Hydro

**Fund distribution in India:** Of the \$7.93 billion, pure green bonds account for \$5.02 billion, while purely marked as ethical funds are about \$2.03 billion as of August 2021 Source: Refinitiv/PTI

**Energy's \$707 million in May, Axis Bank-Gujarat International Finance Tech city's \$600 million in September**

**ESG FUNDS:** Funds broadly labelled as ESG or environmental, social and governance/sustainable investments/ethical funds across mutual funds and insurance products

**DEMAND PICK-UP IN INDIA:** India is witnessing an early signs of pick-up in demand for ESG funds, as four of the past five quarters saw strong demand.

**IN INDIA,** so far in 2021, collective ESG funds are \$7.93 billion through 22 issues

**GLOBALLY, AS** of March 2020, ESG funds collectively are over \$103.4 trillion

## CRUDE WATCH

## OIL SETTLES NEAR 3-YEAR HIGH

*New York:* Oil settled above \$78 a barrel on Friday, shy of a three-year high, hoping OPEC will keep a steady pace in raising supply. Brent rose 97 cents, or 1.2 per cent, to reach \$79.28 in its fourth weekly rise. US WTI rose 85 cents to hit \$75.88 in a sixth weekly gain. **REUTERS**

# ZEEL moves Bombay HC against Invesco EGM demand

**ENSECONOMICBUREAU**  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 2

ZEE ENTERTAINMENT Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) on Saturday filed a petition in the Bombay High Court asking it to declare the requisition by a foreign investor to hold an extraordinary general meeting (EGM) as "illegal and invalid".

This follows the media firm's rejection of a notice by its top investor Invesco Developing Markets Funds to convene an EGM to elect certain directors, citing "multiple legal infirmities".

The move comes ahead of the next hearing before the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Monday. The company has filed a suit before the Bombay High Court under the ordinary original civil jurisdiction. ZEEL said in a stock exchange notice.

It added that there would be no financial implications on the company with regards to the civil suit, except legal costs.

Earlier, in its September 11 requisition letter, Invesco had sought convening an EGM to remove MD and CEO Punit Goenka, and non-

## CIVIL SUIT FILED

■ The company has filed a suit before the Bombay High Court under the ordinary original civil jurisdiction, Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd said in a stock exchange notice

■ On Friday, ZEEL's board rejected the EGM requisition by Invesco Developing Markets Fund, citing "multiple legal infirmities" and termed the notice as "invalid and illegal"

executive directors Ashok Kurien and Manish Chokhani, alleging breach of corporate governance norms. Kurien and Chokhani later resigned ahead of the AGM.

In the same letter, Invesco (formerly Invesco Oppenheimer Developing Markets Fund) — which, together with its subsidiary OFI Global China Fund, holds a 17.88 per cent stake in

ZEEL — had also sought inducting six of its nominees on the Indian firm's board.

On Friday, ZEEL's board rejected the EGM requisition, citing "multiple legal infirmities" and termed the notice as "invalid and illegal". The board, in an exchange filing, said it had arrived at this decision by referring to various non-compliances under Sebi and Ministry of Information and Broadcasting guidelines and Companies Act, among others.

Expressing its ability to convene the EGM, the company also said it was in the best interest of the firm, including all its shareholders and stakeholders.

ZEEL said it needed prior permission from the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, and added the proposal by Invesco to appoint one-half of the board would also result in the foreign investor effecting a change in control of the company without making an open offer.

Onits part, Invesco had moved NCLT's Mumbai bench Thursday, and the appeal came up for hearing on Friday. The tribunal had adjourned the case to Monday. **FE**

# Petrol, diesel at new highs across country after latest price hike

**ENSECONOMICBUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

PETROL AND diesel prices shot to new all-time highs in several parts of the country on Saturday, as rates were hiked again by 25 paise and 30 paise a litre, respectively.

In Delhi, the price of petrol rose to its highest ever level of Rs 102.14 a litre and in Mumbai, to Rs 108.19, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

Diesel rates, too, touched a record high of Rs 90.47 in Delhi and Rs 98.16 a litre in Mumbai. Prices of the two fuels differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes.

The price hike follows international oil prices soaring to near three-year high as global output disruptions forced energy companies to draw more crude oil out of their stockpiles.

The basket of crude oil India imports has averaged \$78 per barrel in last few days. The fourth in-

**With hikes of 25p and 30p, respectively, petrol reached an all-time high of ₹102.14 a litre and diesel hit a new record at ₹90.47 in Delhi**

crease in its rates this week has sent petrol prices above Rs 100 in most major cities of the country.

Similarly, the seventh increase in prices in nine days has shot up diesel rates above Rs 100 mark in several cities in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

State-owned Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) resumed daily price revisions on September 24 after international oil prices neared a three-year high. Global benchmark Brent crude is trading above \$78 per barrel. **WITH PTI**

# High demand, low supply: Power plants left with 4 days of coal stock



As per a government release, heavy rains in mine areas in September hit both output and despatch of coal. File

A SHARP uptick in power demand and low supply of coal due to the monsoon has pushed overall stock of coal at thermal power plants in India down to 8.1 million tonnes or four days worth of stock on October 1, down from 24 million tonnes or 13 days of coal stock at the beginning of August, according to a government release.

Thermal power plants with a generation capacity of 6,960 MW are currently facing outages due to a shortage in coal supply. Of the 135 power plants in the nation, 72 have coal stocks of below three days compared to a recommended inventory of 14 days.

"The unprecedented increase

September reached 124.2 billion units per month up from 106.6 billion units in the same period in 2019 which was not impacted by Covid-19.

The release noted that heavy rains in coal mine areas in September had affected both the production and despatch of coal.

Thermal power plants have supplied a disproportionate part of the increased demand and with the share of coal-based power generation having increased to 66.4 per cent from 61.9 per cent in 2019.

Indian thermal power plants have also reduced import of coal due to high international prices.

The price of coal imported from Indonesia has risen to about \$200 per tonne from \$60 per tonne in March, as per the government release.

## BRIEFLY

### LICMD charge

*New Delhi:* Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India said BC Patnaik, who was elevated to Managing Director on July 5, took charge on Friday. Prior to taking charge as MD of LIC, Patnaik was Secretary General, Council for Insurance Ombudsmen, (CIO) Mumbai. **ENS**

### Morrisons deal

*London:* Clayton, Dubilier & Rice (CD&R) won the auction for Morrisons with a 7 billion pound (\$9.5 billion) bid, paving the way for the US private equity firm to take control of Britain's fourth-biggest supermarket group. **REUTERS**

# Amazon-backed EV maker Rivian reveals nearly \$1 bn losses in filing

**REUTERS**  
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 2

RIVIAN AUTOMOTIVE, backed by Amazon.com Inc and Ford, disclosed losses of nearly \$1 billion in the first half of the year, the electric-vehicle maker's US IPO filing showed on Friday.

The company has been investing aggressively in ramping up production of its electric vehicles, including its upscale all-electric R1T pickup truck which was launched last month beating out competition from more established rivals.

Rivian had about 48,390 pre-orders for its R1T pickup trucks and R1T SUVs in the United States



Rivian's R1T all-electric truck. The EV maker said it will list its shares on Nasdaq under the symbol 'RIVN'. Reuters file

and Canada as of last month.

The company is currently pursuing a two-track strategy: building electric delivery vans for Amazon and developing an electric pickup and SUV brand aimed

at affluent individuals.

As part of its broader effort to cut carbon footprint, Amazon has ordered 100,000 of Rivian's electric delivery vans. Rivian said on Friday it will list its shares on the Nasdaq under the symbol "RIVN".

Founded in 2009 as Mainstream Motors by R. J. Scaringe, the company changed its name to Rivian in 2011. "Rivian" is derived from "Indian River" in Florida, a place Scaringe frequented in a rowboat as a youth.

Scaringe on Friday said the company would put 1 per cent of equity in its environmental program called "Forever" that is aimed at helping address climate change and preserving wildlands and waterways.

## GLOBAL FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT

# Rapid growth, increasing adoption of crypto assets pose challenges: IMF

**LALIT K JHA**  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 2

THE RAPID growth of the crypto ecosystem presents new opportunities, the IMF has said but also cautioned that the digital currency assets pose financial stability challenges.

Cryptocurrencies are digital or virtual currencies in which encryption techniques are used to regulate the generation of their units and verify the transfer of funds, operating independently

of a central bank.

"The rapid growth of the crypto ecosystem presents new opportunities. Technological innovation is ushering in a new era that makes payments and other financial services cheaper, faster, more accessible, and allows them to flow across borders swiftly," said in a chapter of its latest report Global Financial Stability Report.

Crypto asset technologies have the potential as a tool for faster and cheaper cross-border payments. Bank deposits can be transformed to stable coins that

allow instant access to a vast array of financial products from digital platforms and allow instant currency conversion, said the IMF in its chapter titled The Crypto Ecosystem and Financial Stability Challenges.

Decentralised finance could become a platform for more innovative, inclusive, and transparent financial services, it added.

"Despite potential gains, the rapid growth and increasing adoption of crypto assets also pose financial stability challenges," the IMF said. **PTI**

## Bitcoin climbs to highest in nearly 2 weeks

*New York:* Bitcoin rose Friday to its highest level since around mid-September, up 9.3 per cent at \$47,910, after hitting a high of \$48,236.08, bolstered by seasonal factors as well as supportive comments from US Fed Chair Jerome Powell. **REUTERS**



# 8 THE WORLD

## TOP OF THE WORLD



A photo of Mercury taken by BepiColombo spacecraft. AP

### SPACE EU-Japanese space mission gets 1st glimpse of Mercury

A JOINT European-Japanese spacecraft got its first glimpse of Mercury as it swung by the solar system's innermost planet while on a mission to deliver two probes into orbit in 2025. The BepiColombo mission made the first of six flybys of Mercury at 11.34 pm GMT Friday, using the planet's gravity to slow the spacecraft down. After swooping past Mercury at altitudes of under 200 km, the spacecraft took a black-and-white photo with one of its monitoring cameras before zipping off again. The European Space Agency said the captured image shows the Northern Hemisphere and Mercury's characteristic pock-marked features. AP

### ECUADOR Thousands to be pardoned after prison riot

ECUADOR IS planning to pardon up to 2,000 inmates in order to relieve overcrowding at its detention centres after 118 inmates died and a further 79 were injured in the country's worst-ever prison riot earlier this week, an official said on Friday. Bolivar Garzon, the director of the South American country's SNAI prison authority, said the government aimed to prioritize the elderly, women, and prisoners with disabilities and terminal illnesses in the wake of the clashes on Tuesday at the Penitenciaría del Litoral in the southern city of Guayaquil. REUTERS

### CHINA Graft watchdog probes former justice minister

CHINA'S TOP anti-corruption watchdog said on Saturday it is investigating a former justice minister, Fu Zhenghua, the latest high-ranking domestic security official to be brought before the authorities in a broad crackdown. The Central Commission for Discipline Inspection said it suspected Fu of "serious violations of discipline and national laws", in a statement that offered no other details about the investigation. Fu and the commission could not be reached for comment. REUTERS

## Global coronavirus deaths cross 5 million

US goes past 700,000 deaths; more than half of the world yet to get even 1 Covid-19 vaccine dose

KAVYA B & ROSHAN ABRAHAM  
OCTOBER 2

WORLDWIDE DEATHS related to Covid-19 surpassed 5 million on Friday, according to a Reuters tally, with unvaccinated people particularly exposed to the virulent Delta strain.

The variant has exposed the wide disparities in vaccination rates between rich and poor nations, and the upshot of vaccine hesitancy in some western nations.

More than half of all global deaths reported on a seven-day



A memorial for Americans who died due to Covid-19, in Washington DC on Friday. Reuters

average were in the United States, Russia, Brazil, Mexico and India. While it took just over a year

for the Covid-19 death toll to hit 2.5 million, the next 2.5 million deaths were recorded in just un-

der eight months, according to a Reuters analysis.

An average of 8,000 deaths were reported daily across the world over the last week, or around five deaths every minute. However, the global death rate has been slowing in recent weeks.

There has been increasing focus in recent days on getting vaccines to poorer nations, where many people are yet to receive a first dose, even as their richer counterparts have begun giving booster shots.

More than half of the world has yet to receive at least one dose of a Covid-19 vaccine, according to Our World in Data.

The World Health Organization this week said its COVAX distribution programme would, for the first time, distribute shots only to countries with the lowest levels of coverage.

The United States, which has been battling vaccine misinformation that has caused about one-third of the population to avoid inoculations, surpassed 700,000 deaths on Friday, the highest toll of any country.

US cases and hospitalisations have been trending lower, but health officials are bracing for a possible resurgence as cooler weather forces more activities indoors. REUTERS



Joe Biden with Nancy Pelosi on Capitol Hill on Friday. AP

## Everybody is frustrated, Biden says as agenda stalls

LISA MASCARO & ZEKE MILLER  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 2

US PRESIDENT Joe Biden on Saturday acknowledged frustrations as Democrats strain to rescue a scaled-back version of his \$3.5 trillion government-overhaul plan and salvage a related public works Bill after frantic negotiations failed to produce a deal.

"Everybody's frustrated, it's part of being in government, being frustrated," Biden told reporters before leaving the White House for a weekend stay at his home in Wilmington, Delaware. He pledged to "work like hell" to get the two pillars of his domestic agenda passed into law, but refrained from laying out a deadline.

The president had gone to Capitol Hill Friday for a private meeting with House Democrats that was partly a morale booster for the disjointed caucus of lawmakers. According to lawmakers, he discussed a \$1.9 trillion to \$2 trillion-plus price tag for the larger package that would expand the country's social safety net.

The White House and its allies in Congress are prepared for protracted negotiations. Biden said he would soon travel around the country to promote

### TRUMP ASKS JUDGE TO FORCE TWITTER TO RESTART HIS ACCOUNT

FORMER US President Donald Trump asked a federal judge in Florida on Friday to ask Twitter to restore his account, which the company removed in January citing a risk of incitement of violence. Trump filed a request for preliminary injunction against Twitter in the US District Court for the Southern District of Florida, arguing the social media company was "coerced" by members of the US Congress to suspend his account. Twitter and several other social media platforms banned Trump from their services after a mob of his supporters attacked the US Capitol in a deadly riot on Jan 6. REUTERS

the legislation and he acknowledged concerns that the talk in Washington had become too focused on the trillions in new spending and taxes in the Bill.

"I'm going to try to sell what I think the American people will buy," Biden said Saturday, adding, "I believe that when the American people are aware of what's in it we'll get it done." AP



Qataris queue up to vote in Doha on Saturday. Reuters

## Qatari voters turn out to cast ballots in country's 1st legislative elections

ANDREW MILLS & LISA BARRINGTON  
DOHA, OCTOBER 2

QATARIS BEGAN voting on Saturday in the Gulf Arab state's first legislative elections for two-thirds of the advisory Shura Council in a vote that has stirred domestic debate about electoral inclusion and citizenship.

Voters trickled into polling stations, where men and women entered separate sections to elect 30 members of the 45-seat body. The ruling emir will continue to appoint the remaining

15 members of the Council.

"With the chance to vote, I feel this is a new chapter," Munira, who writes children's books and asked to be identified by only one name, told Reuters. "I'm really happy about the number of women standing as candidates."

The Council will have legislative authority and approve general state policies and the budget, but has no control over executive bodies setting defence, security, economic and investment policy for the small but wealthy gas producer, which bans political parties.

Latest government lists showed 26 women among 234

candidates across 30 districts in the country, which has for several years held municipal polls.

Campaigning has taken place on social media, community meetings and roadside billboards.

"This is a first-time experience for me... to be here and meet people talking about these things that we need," said Khalid Almutawah, a candidate in the Markhiya district.

"At the end of this day, the people of Qatar, they're going to be part of the decision making," said another male candidate in the same district, Sabaan Al Jassim, 65. REUTERS

## Philippines leader Duterte says he is retiring, but not everyone is convinced

KAREN LEMA  
MANILA, OCTOBER 2

PHILIPPINES PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte said on Saturday he was retiring from politics, a surprise move that fuelled speculation he was clearing the way for a presidential run by his daughter.

Sara Duterte-Carpio is currently mayor of Davao, the Philippines' third-largest city, and filed on Saturday to contest the role again. She has previously said she would not run for national office next year.

"Today, I announce my retirement from politics," Duterte said as he accompanied his ally Senator Christopher "Bong" Go of the ruling PDP-Laban party to register Go's candidacy for vice president in next year's election.

But political analysts were sceptical, noting that last-minute changes were still possible, as in 2015 when Duterte entered the



Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte with Senator Christopher "Bong" Go in Manila on Saturday. AP

presidential election race at the eleventh hour and won.

Duterte, 76, had been expected to run for the No 2 job, a plan most Filipinos oppose as violating the spirit of the constitution, which sets a one-term limit for the president to stop power being abused.

"In obedience to the will of the people..., I now say to my countrymen, I will follow your wish," Duterte said as he urged the public to back his longtime aide.

Analysts say it is crucial for

Duterte to have a loyal successor to insulate him from potential legal action — at home or by the International Criminal Court — over the thousands of state killings in his war on drugs since 2016.

"I would take his announcement with a lot of salt," Carlos Conde, Philippines researcher for Human Rights Watch, said. "But assuming that he's really going to retire, that doesn't mean he won't get the protection from the ICC that he craves." REUTERS

## For first time, Dubai Expo 2020 says five workers died on site

ISABEL DEBRE  
DUBAI, OCTOBER 2

DUBAI'S EXPO 2020 on Saturday acknowledged that five workers had been killed on site during construction of the massive world's fair, revealing for the first time overall statistics for worker fatalities.

Expo previously said its 200,000 labourers who built the site worked some 240 million hours in its construction. It had not offered any overall statistics previously on worker fatalities, injuries or Covid infections despite repeated requests from AP and other journalists.

The admission comes after the European Parliament last month urged nations not to take part in Expo, citing the United Arab Emirates' "inhumane prac-



The AI Wasl Dome at Expo 2020 in Dubai. AP

tices against foreign workers" that it said worsened during the pandemic. Ahead of Expo, businesses and construction companies are "coercing workers into signing untranslated documents, confiscating their passports, exposing them to extreme working hours in unsafe weather conditions and providing them with unsanitary housing," the resolution said. AP

### QUESTIONS RAISED AFTER REPORTS THAT TOP OZY EXECUTIVE IMPERSONATED YOUTUBE EXECUTIVE ON CALL WITH BANKERS

## Ozy Media, once a darling of investors, shuts down in swift unravelling

BEN SMITH & KATIE ROBERTSON  
OCTOBER 2

OZY MEDIA, the digital media company that came under intense scrutiny for its business practices in recent days, announced Friday that it was shutting down, following a sudden flight of investors and advertisers and bringing to a close a strange chapter in the annals of online journalism.

It was a precipitous fall for a company that was once a darling of Silicon Valley investors who believed in the vision of its leader, former MSNBC anchor Carlos Watson. Watson had aimed to cre-

ate a sparkling multiplatform media company that would appeal to a diverse generation of younger readers looking for the kind of content not provided by establishment news organisations.

When the end came, it came swiftly, five days after *The New York Times* published an article that raised questions about the company and its leadership team. The report detailed an episode in which a top executive at Ozy appeared to have impersonated a YouTube executive during a conference call with Goldman Sachs bankers in February while the company was trying to raise \$40 million. The abrupt collapse riveted

media observers not because Ozy had a large number of loyal readers — that, in the end, was the problem — but because many had wondered how the company had managed to survive. The answer had to do with a charismatic and relentless founder, a great story and a slick brand that was perfectly tuned to appeal to noted Silicon Valley investors and powerful advertising executives.

Its founder, Watson, was an investment banker who dreamed of having his own talk show. When that eluded him, after a brief stint in 2009 as a host on MSNBC, he built a media company in his own image as a politically moderate, upwardly mobile son of teachers,



Ozy lost one of its biggest stars, former BBC anchor Katie Kay, who resigned on Tuesday. NYT

one who had gotten degrees at Harvard and Stanford and worked at Goldman Sachs.

Watson and his partner, another Goldman alumnus, Samir Rao, raised more than \$80 million

from some of the biggest names in finance. The company debuted in 2013, backed by investors including Emerson Collective, the organisation run by billionaire philanthropist and media entrepreneur Laurene Powell Jobs; and Marc Lasry, a hedge fund manager and a co-owner of the Milwaukee Bucks basketball franchise.

Ozy had its headquarters in Mountain View, California. It employed around 75 people to create articles, videos, podcasts and newsletters on a range of topics, from espionage to the appeal of Grandma's kitchen. Many of the videos and television shows that Ozy also sold starred Watson in conversation with politicians and

celebrities, including Joe Biden, Hillary Clinton and John Legend.

Ozy's appearance of success depended to some degree on the performance of its videos on YouTube. On the conference call in February, the person posing as a YouTube executive told the Goldman Sachs team that Ozy was a great success on the platform.

Watson apologised to Goldman soon afterward, saying the impersonator was Rao, Ozy's chief operating officer. In that apology and in an email to the *Times* last week, Watson said Rao had been going through a mental health crisis at the time and was "now thriving again". After the conference call,

YouTube's security team started an investigation of the matter. Google, the owner of YouTube, alerted the FBI.

While the *Times* article was being reported, Emerson Collective distanced itself from the company. On Tuesday, the Ozy board said it had hired a law firm to investigate the company's "business activities".

On Thursday, Lasry resigned as the chairman of the Ozy board.

Ozy also lost one of its biggest stars. Former BBC anchor Katie Kay, who had joined Ozy this year after nearly three decades at the British broadcaster, announced on Twitter that she had handed in her resignation Tuesday morning. NYT

## Canadian who narrated ISIS videos flown to US to face terror charge

ADAM GOLDMAN  
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 2

A CANADIAN man who narrated two infamous propaganda videos that the Islamic State used to recruit Westerners and to encourage terrorism attacks was secretly whisked to the US to face federal prosecution in Virginia.

The man, Mohammed Khalifa, 38, a Canadian who travelled to Syria in 2013 and later joined the Islamic State, was charged with material terrorism support that resulted in death, according to a criminal complaint made public on Saturday. He was captured in early 2019 by a Kurdish-led militia, the Syrian Democratic Forces, which is backed by the United States.

The militia handed over Khalifa to FBI agents this week, and he was flown to the US. Khalifa, who was born in Saudi Arabia, appears to be the first foreign fighter to be prosecuted in the United States during the Biden administration. He is scheduled to make an initial appearance in court early next week.

"Mohammed Khalifa not only fought for ISIS on the battlefield in Syria, but he was also the voice behind the violence," said Raj Parekh, the acting US attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia.

Parekh added that Khalifa "promoted the terrorist group, furthered its worldwide recruitment efforts and expanded the reach of videos that glorified the horrific murders and indiscriminate cruelty" of the Islamic State.

Khalifa was the voice of a 2014 ISIS video known as "Flames of War". The unit he worked for was responsible for publicising such brutal footage as the beheading of American journalist James Foley and other Western hostages. NYT



# THE SUNDAY EXPRESS MAGAZINE



## POINT OF VIEW Circle of Life

A Bengali existential horror on COVID-19 is set to premiere at the 26th Busan International Film Festival



## SPOTLIGHT Staying Power

When the run-up to the Partition had Lord Mountbatten bring Mahatma Gandhi and Jinnah together



MAPPING India's journey since independence, with 75 songs from Hindi films that capture all shades of life:

**1947** *Afsana likh rahi hoon (Dard)*: Weeks before August 15, composer Naushad and Urdu poet-lyricist Shakeel Badayuni put this gentle melody together. Sung by Uma Devi aka Tuntun, it became the song of the year.

**1948** *Watan ki raah mein (Shaheed)*: This Ghulam Haider composition carried the zest of the youth wanting to lay down their lives for the nation.

**1949** *Mere piya gaye Rangoon (Patanga)*: A trunk call from Rangoon (now Yangon, Myanmar) to Dehradun that spoke of love and longing was an inherently fabulous, funny and catchy number by Shamshad Begum.

**1949** *Aayega aane wala (Mahal)*: This song by Lata Mangeshkar sealed her supremacy in the Indian film industry.

**1949** *Suhani raat dhal chuki (Dulari)*: A favourite with Mohammed Rafi, the piece catapulted him to fame.

**1951** *Tadbeer se bigdi hui taqdeer (Baazi)*: In this rather buoyant melody, poet Sahir Ludhianvi says, overcome your ruined fate with faith. Composer SD Burman had Geeta Bali sing the *ghazal* as a club number in this Bombay noir.

**1953** *Mausam beeta jaaye (Do Bigha Zamin)*: In Manna Dey's haunting voice, the song was a commentary on the rising inequality in the country.

**1954** *De di hamein azaadi (Jagriti)*: One of Kavi Pradeep's early patriotic lyrics was dedicated to Mahatma Gandhi, his ideas of freedom and non-violence. It's almost always sung on every October 2.

**1955** *Pyaar hua ikraar hua (Shree 420)*: This iconic duet by Lata Mangeshkar and Manna Dey will always be remembered for the iconic imagery of Raj Kapoor and Nargis under the umbrella.

**1957** *Yeh duniya agar mil bhi jaye toh (Pyasa)*: Who can forget Rafi's heart-rending crescendo *Jala do isse, phoonk daalo yeh duniya* that tore into the rising materialism.

**1957** *Jinhe naaz hai Hind par woh kahan hain (Pyasa)*: This protest song by Sahir Ludhianvi established him as a peerless poet of the time.

**1957** *Maang ke saath tumhara (Naya Daur)*: This song complemented the memorable *Ude jab jab zulfain teri*. OP Nayyar turned to Punjabi folk in this composition and presented it with his trademark *ghudtaal* (the clip-clop of horse's hooves) in the rhythm.

**1958** *Yeh mera deewanapan hai (Yahudi)*: One of Mukesh's finest, the song became a refuge for every heartbroken lover.

**1958** *Suhana safar (Madhumati)*: Salil Chowdhury worked with the simplicity of Shailendra's lyrics, bringing swelling strings and chirping birds into the tune, along with a unique pause-and-play effect.

**1958** *Woh subah (Phir Subah Hogi)*: When Sahir Ludhianvi's sharp lines cut through the disparity between haves and have-nots.

**1959** *Waqt ne kiya (Kaagaz Ke Phool)*: Guru Dutt's melancholic masterpiece was an amalgam of light and shadow, Kaifi Azmi's words and Geeta Dutt's voice.

**1959** *Jalte hain jiske liye (Sujata)*: Bimal Roy's scathing comment on caste has lovelorn Brahmin boy Sunil Dutt singing for Sujata, a "lower"-caste girl.

**1960** *Jab pyar kiya toh darna kya (Mughal-e-Azam)*: The coming together of potent lyrics, Naushad's composition, Lata Mangeshkar's voice and Madhubala as Anarkali.

**1961** *Aye mere pyare watan (Kabuliwala)*: Memorable for its rabab tunes, and Manna Dey's soulful voice about home.

**1961** *Allah tero naam, ishwar tero naam (Hum Dono)*: This evocative *bhajan* by Jaidev gave India the message of unity.

**1963** *Mora gora ang laile (Bandini)*: Gulzar makes his debut using Awadhi in the lyrics to describe a woman's desire to meet the man she loves.

**1963** *Aye mere watan ke logo*: In the aftermath of the 1962 Sino-Indian War, an emotional Kavi Pradeep song, immortalised the words *Jo shaheed huye hain unki, zara yaad karo qurbani*.

**1963** *Laaga chunari mein daag (Dil Hi To Hai)*: Sahir Ludhianvi took this line from mystic-poet-saint Kabir's *nirgun bhajan* that highlighted the soul's struggle with materialistic desires.

**1964** *Mann re (Chitrakleha)*: This song in Rafi's voice was the backdrop of a difficult year with the Kashmir crisis and the death of Nehru, India's first prime minister.

**1964** *Apni azadi ko hum (Leader)*: The song became synonymous with revolution.



ILLUSTRATION: SUVAJIT DEY

# SONGS LIKE US

A celebration of India through Hindi cinema melodies

**1964** *Naina barse rimjhim (Woh Kaun Thi?)*: Madan Mohan creates this atmosphere that is both haunting and melodious. Squawking bats, gliding Sadhna in an ethereal white sari and a crematorium.

**1965** *Aaj phir jeene ki tamanna hai (Guide)*: This "freedom song" symbolised a moment of rediscovery, where Rosie reclaims her life again.

**1966** *Sajan re jhooth mat bolo (Teesri Kasam)*: This folk album came with moving lyrics from Hasrat Jaipuri, about a conversation with god.

**1967** *Mere desh ki dharti (Upkar)*: Manoj Kumar made the film on then prime minister Lal Bahadur Shastri's suggestion, to tell the story of the Indian farmer. The song soon became an anthem.

**1970** *Jeena yahan, marna yahan (Mera Naam Joker)*: Even though Raj Kapoor's masterpiece was misunderstood and the film tanked, the music was a chartbuster.

**1971** *Dum maro dum (Haré Rama Haré Krishna)*: RD Burman's most famous hour; he also got Asha Bhosle to sing this seminal piece.

**1971** *Humko mann ki shakti dena (Guddi)*: A Vani Jairam rendition, it was played often on radio as India went to war with Pakistan.

**1971** *Kahin door jab din dhal jaye*

(Anand): The song from Hrishikesh Mukherjee's film showcases the unfulfilled desires of a dying man.

**1971** *Piya tu ab toh aaja (Caravan)*: Helen's groovy moves, Asha Bhosle's throaty rendition, the tried-and-tested RD Burman-Majrooh formula by Nasir Hussain, and that phrase, *Monica, o my darling*, made this into the best cabaret number Indian cinema has ever witnessed.

**1972** *Kuchh toh log kahenge (Amar Prem)*: The conversational song combines melancholy and joy to make this Anand Bakshi creation a classic.

**1972** *Chalte chalte (Pakeezah)*: This seminal piece by composer Ghulam Mohammed and poet Kaifi Azmi describes the contemplations of a courtesan in love.

**1973** *Chaabi kho jaaye (Bobby)*: This Laxmikant-Pyarelal song made Rishi Kapoor and Dimple Kapadia stars overnight.

**1973** *Chura liya hai (Yaadon Ki Baaraat)*: The tune of clinking bottles still gets our hearts racing.

**1975** *Tere bina zindagi se (Aandhi)*:

Gulzar's film was a storm to remember! It came in the same year as the Emergency and the protagonist Suchitra Sen closely resembled then prime minister Indira Gandhi. The film was banned for two years. The song by RD Burman speaks of a deep anguish, where an estranged couple looks back at their life.

**1975** *Yeh dosti (Sholay)*: This friendship song by RD Burman is remarkable for its guitar riff and Salim-Javed's script.

**1975** *Dil dhoondhta hai (Mausam)*: One of Gulzar's most memorable love songs owes a great deal to Mirza Ghalib, whose couplet forms the first line.

**1976** *Kabhi Kabhi (Kabhi Kabhie)*: Sahir Ludhianvi's song makes apparent the pangs of separation in this number

that many felt was written for another great poet in love with him, Amrita Pritam.

**1976** *Parda hai parda (Amar Akbar Anthony)*: This Rafi song was made memorable with Rishi Kapoor's sparkling performance, in a film that amplified the message of unity.

**1978** *Hum bewafa (Shalimar)*: *Shalimar* flopped at the box office just the way the Janta Party did in national politics. But the song found its place.

**1980** *Tum itna jo (Arth)*: This haunting *ghazal*, sung and composed by Jagjit Singh and wife Chitra, featured in Mahesh Bhatt's film about adultery, love and loss.

**1980** *Aap jaisa koi (Qurbani)*: Feroz Khan discovered a young Pakistani singer Nazia Hassan in a London club and asked music director Biddu to make a song for her. It went on to become an iconic disco number.

**1981** *Yeh kahan aa gaye hum (Silsila)*: This song saw the debut of music duo Shiv-Hari and poet Javed Akhtar.

**1981** *Dil cheez kya hai (Umrao Jaan)*: The song captured a generation's heart, featuring Rekha in the role of a courtesan. It was also one of the grandest albums of the '80s.

**1987** *Mera kuchh samaan (Jjaazat)*: Only RD Burman could turn a love letter into the most eloquent break-up song.

**1988** *Papa kehate hain (Qayamat Se Qayamat Tak)*: The immensely catchy song turned Udit Narayan and Aamir Khan into overnight superstars.

**1989** *Kabootar ja (Maine Pyar Kiya)*: Lata Mangeshkar sang this cult favourite, in a

film about young love.

**1990** *Yaara seeli seeli (Lekin...)*: This Hridaynath Mangeshkar composition was one of Lata Mangeshkar's finest moments from the '90s.

**1990** *Dheere dheere se (Aashiqui)*: Kumar Sanu and Anuradha Paudwal entered our homes with this delicate composition. The soundtrack apparently increased the sale of music players.

**1992** *Chhoti si aasha (Raja)*: The fresh and dewy vocals of singer Minmini, arranged with synth and *ghatam* in the Hindi remake of Mani Ratnam's Tamil film, brought a new sound to Bollywood. It also introduced us to composer AR Rahman.

**1993** *Dil hoom hoom kare (Rudaali)*: Director Kalpana Lajmi asked her partner Bhupen Hazarika to create the tunes for this film about caste, and placed it in the world of professional mourners. Lata Mangeshkar brings the sadness of the "unlucky" Dalit woman to the fore.

**1994** *Maye ni maye (Hum Aapke Hain Koun...!)*: After the success of *Maine Pyar Kiya* Sooraj Barjatya repeated composer Ram-Laxman for this film that changed the meaning of blockbusters.

**1995** *Tujhe dekha toh (Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge)*: The mandolin riff in this romantic melody rang through the film and in our hearts.

**1995** *Tu hi re (Bombay)*: Hariharan and Kavita Krishnamurthy sang this beautiful number against the backdrop of the Mumbai riots.

**1996** *Chhod aaye hum woh galiyan (Maachis)*: Vishal Bhardwaj's film set during insurgency in Punjab, in the '80s, had Hariharan and Suresh Wadkar as the lead vocals.

**1997** *Sandese aate hain (Border)*: Newbie Sonu Nigam's soulful, "Rafi-like" voice carried the ditty with such competency. The film would resonate when the Kargil War broke out two years later.

**1998** *Aye ajnabi (Dil Se...)*: While *Chhaiya Chhaiya* found love, it was this underrated masterpiece by Udit Narayan that won everyone's affections.

**2001** *Chale chalo (Lagaan)*: Another brilliant album from AR Rahman with folk music as its mainstay.

**2001** *Dil chahta hai (Dil Chahta Hai)*: This hip and zesty number introduced musicians Shankar-Ehsaan-Loy. The song, like the movie, unabashedly celebrated aspirations for a good life.

**2003** *Kal ho naa ho (Kal Ho Naa Ho)*: Sonu Nigam sang about seizing the day and finding happiness in every situation.

**2004** *Yeh jo des hai (Swades)*: The shehnai prelude in this AR Rahman number draws you in to the story of an NRI, who is caught between staying home in a village in India or returning to his life as an engineer at NASA.

**2005** *Baawra mann (Hazaaron Khwaishein Aisi)*: Swanand Kirkire's greatest service to Bollywood is this beautiful song set in the '70s, amid the Emergency.

**2006** *Rang de basanti (Rang De Basanti)*: With Rahman's music and Daler Mehndi's vocals, this song became a modern retake of a patriotic number.

**2007** *Chak de India (Chak De! India)*: Salim-Sulaiman's anthem sung by Sukhwinder Singh was a rallying call for the female hockey team in the film. Written by Jaideep Sahni, it is played ever-so often at Indian sporting events, including this year's Tokyo Olympics.

**2008** *Jai Ho (Slumdog Millionaire)*: This Rahman song will forever be remembered as the one that brought home two Oscars (Best Original Score and Best Sound Mixing) for Rahman and Resul Pookutty, respectively, through Danny Boyle's film *Slumdog Millionaire*.

**2009** *O pardesi (Dev.D)*: The film showcased composer Amit Trivedi and lyricist-singer Amitabh Bhattacharya's masterful command over a range of musical genres. *O pardesi* lets us imagine as if a Haryana club song is being sung in Buddha-Bar, Paris, to scat singing and sitar riffs.

**2011** *Sadda haq (Rockstar)*: A power-packed performance from Mohit Chauhan alongside distorted guitars and synths, gave the composition a grungy rock feel.

**2013** *Kabira (Yeh Jawaani Hai Deewani)*: Amid accusations of plagiarism, composer Pritam played an inventive hand and gave us *Kabira*, lyricist Amitabh Bhattacharya's best work till date.

**2013** *Tum hi ho (Aashiqui 2)*: Arijit Singh broke into the big league with this Mithoon composition and never looked back. This earworm carried the airwaves for months.

**2015** *Tu kisi rail si guzarti hai (Masamand)*: Created by Indian Ocean, this couplet from Dushyant Kumar's poem is complemented by Varun Grover's lyrics and Swanand Kirkire's fantastic baritone.

**2019** *Azadi (Gully Boy)*: It's wild, it's irreverent, and extremely catchy as it turns the spotlight on Mumbai's underground rap scene. It's one of the finest political pieces of music one has heard in a long time. The chant *azadi* traces back to feminist-poet Kamla Bhasin, who passed away last month.



EYESPY

EVERY FORTNIGHT,  
WE PICK, YOU WATCH



Shubhra Gupta

Shubhra Gupta is film critic  
with The Indian Express

## One Last Shot

The film paints an affecting portrait of an ancient town in transition



RIVER SIDE STORY

A still from Gaurav Madan's film *Barah by Barah*

Shubhra Gupta

THE FIRST thing that strikes you about *Barah by Barah*, set in Varanasi, is its tremendous lived-in feel. The spaces that the film inhabits we have seen before — the narrow *gullies* that lead to the Manikarnika Ghat with the ever-burning pyres, the banks of the Ganga which is home to those who have traditionally made a living off the dead, the sellers of the wood, the *pandits* who preside over the rituals for the departed soul, the barbers who shave the heads of the men of the deceased's family. What director Gaurav Madan does, through the story he co-wrote with his long-time collaborator Sunny Lahiri, is to give us a fresh perspective on this holiest of towns, through the eyes of the "death photographer", a man who takes photographs of the dead, as a keepsake and an eternal memory.

Sooraj is the last of his dwindling tribe. Everyone these days has camera phones, and his services are no longer needed. Still, every day he gets ready with his trusty camera, waiting for customers in his "studio", inches away from the passing "*arthis*". He follows funeral processions, with his offer — (Rs 100 for a photo which is 3x4 inches, or Rs 200 for 4x7 inches) — and he returns home, mostly empty-handed, to his wife Meena, his young schoolgoing son, and to his father who is phlegmatically counting out his days on a *charpaai* (cot) in the *aangan* (courtyard).

Films set in Varanasi are fatally attracted to exoticism, regardless of where the filmmaker is from. Even the most determinedly realistic of movies set in this town — long the magnet for navel-gazers from around the world seeking *sanyas* and spiritual *gurus*, or those who make it their final destination — are overlaid by a little extra glow and grandeur of the Ganga Aarti, or lay a little more emphasis on the picturesque "*chillum-smoking sadhus*". Madan stays strictly away from these temptations. What we get is an affecting portrait of an ancient town in transition: even as the faithful try to hold on to the past, a few, which include people like Sooraj and his close friend Dubey, whose desperate hold on his crumbling ancestral home loosens reluctantly but inevitably, give in to change.

The authenticity flows not just from the locations, but also from the characters. Sooraj (Gyanendra Tripathi), his attractive, supportive wife Meena (Bhumika Dube), his father (Harish Khanna), his sister Mansi (Geetika Vidya Ohlyan) who left for Delhi several years ago, and his friend Dubey (Aakash Sinha), all feel just right. "We were very clear that we wanted to show contemporary reality, not over-romanticise anything," says Madan, who shot the film on celluloid, making it almost an ironic counterpoint to the digital overtake of his lead character.

*Barah by Barah* is currently doing the film festival rounds, and hoping for the right platform to showcase its wares widely soon. Keep an eye out for it.



LEVEL PLAYING FIELD

Rather than crying or feeling lost, let's acknowledge the pain and absorb the best from each moment

SUVIR SARAN

# All the Light We Cannot See

How pain makes us realise we are all connected in spite of our differences, it brings out our artistic and humane best

SLICE OF LIFE



Suvir Saran

Suvir Saran is a chef, author, educator and world traveller

PAIN HAS no GPS location. It doesn't belong to one joint of the body, one malady or one human being. It is universal; it is a rainbow that changes its face, its nuance, its tragedy and its infliction as it goes from home to home, from people to people, and across the regions of the world. Pain makes us citizens of a global village without borders, regardless of racial or religious divides. Pain forces us to realise that black, white, brown, beige — whatever colour we might be — we are all connected.

As far back as I can remember, pain has been a part and parcel of life. I hurt when I walked, when I ran, when I played. I didn't think it was odd. I thought it was normal and meant to be. It wasn't until many years later when the ache in my joints was so unbearable that I couldn't sleep at night that I went to the doctor and was told I had rheumatoid arthritis (RA). I'd had RA for a long, long time without knowing it.

Then one day, I wasn't able to raise my arm above my head. I didn't think much of it; I assumed it was one more affliction from RA I'd have to live with. I resisted going to the doctor until it became difficult for me to lift a glass of water. That's when my partner Charlie said, "Enough is enough."

The doctor ordered an MRI, which showed my shoulder was in a very bad shape. He was shocked that I was still cooking and lifting heavy pots when it should have been difficult for me to lift even a piece of paper. The only option I had to regain the use of my arm was surgery.

It was the most painful surgery I could have ever imagined going through — and the most painful recovery. But as long and as miserable an ordeal as it was, at the same time, Tapestry, my restaurant in Greenwich Village, New York City, was flourishing, and that was a happy distraction. I would go there, with a sling on my shoulder, to cook something with my team. Those few moments of being able to teach, inspire, and connect with others made me feel I was still human and of relevance.

Then Tapestry closed before it could even come of age. I had laboured tirelessly to bring my baby into the world, and to see its doors shuttered because of the improvident mindset of others was heart-breaking. But it was a heartache that I had to accept.

In 2017, I started to black out and wake up on the floor with a chipped tooth or a concussion, with no memory of how I had fallen. The doctors diagnosed my condition as orthostatic hypotension, where my blood pressure was so low that I would faint. After many falls and seven concussions, I was left with aphasia, poor motor skills, and the loss of sight in my right eye. I couldn't see anything beyond three feet in front of me with my left eye.

And so again, I was given another kind of pain. I was broken beyond anything I'd experienced before. I had no confidence in myself or my abilities. I felt the world had forgotten me. The doctors had given up and felt they had done what they could. So, my mother and

Pain teaches us to be accepting of grace, and in return to be graceful in life, living and loving

Charlie decided that I needed a sabbatical from life and living as I had known it in America. This meant that apartment living in New York City, life on our farm, any business I was involved in, writing cookbooks, all had to come to a close. I would go to India to heal and give my life a chance to live.

I arrived in India in 2018, barely functional, and slept in my mother's bed. For hours on end, she cared for me like she would for an infant. I was totally dependent on her.

This kind of pain was new to me. I was used to being up and about and doing things for myself and others. But I discovered something in the midst of this infirmity. I discovered that when I'm hurting the most, that's when I find myself in the most creative zone.

In a world that I couldn't see, my iPhone became a dear friend. I started taking photographs more maniacally than I ever had. The images connected me to the world I was part of — and one which I had to again learn to live in. Eventually, I published these images in a book of reflections, *Instamatic: A Chef's Deeper, More Thoughtful Look into Today's Instaworld* (2020).

A few weeks ago, I had surgery on my left shoulder. The aftermath is even more torturous than the first time around because my medical condition doesn't allow me to take pain medication. And so, here I am suffering from excruciating pain, but once again I'm in that creative zone. Ideas come to me, I have matchless energy to create, to write, to read, to recite. I want to sing 24 hours a day. The more my body torments me, the higher the notes I can capture, the more depth I can bring to them. Some may call it masochistic, but for me, the more I suffer, the more this artistic expression comes fully alive.

When I'm in agony, unable to even cry, when I'm hitting myself in parts of my body where there is no pain to take my mind off of those places where there is throbbing, searing pain — in those moments, in the dark of the night when all others are asleep, I look into the sky and visit friends and family who have passed us by. I'm able to connect with elders

and friends, these beautiful people once again. And so, in this deep, dark hour, in the darkest moments of the night sky, I find answers, I find hope, I find relief, I find a little less agony than I had just seconds before. How can I despise pain when I get such beautiful moments of growth, catharsis and connection with life, living and loving?

Pain has been a constant in my life; it has been my best friend, I might have to say. Pain has made me move forward; it has made me look ahead. Pain helps me forgive and forget because I know there are moments on the horizon that will alleviate it. The best moments of life I've enjoyed, I've enjoyed despite the pain and suffering I live with.

We all experience pain. Cancer, stroke, brain damage, heart attack, epilepsy, paralysis, birth defect, severe burns. There are those who lose a loved one, or are worried about the future; some whose children have left the nest and flown to faraway places. Others have retired from their jobs and wonder "what now?"

There will always be challenges thrown our way. We will be faced with trying uncertainties and what may seem like tediously agonising paths forward. But it is not a moment to cry or feel lost. We must acknowledge the pain, carry on, and keep living mindfully, with our senses wide awake, so that we are taking from each moment the best it can give us, capturing all the opportunities coming our way. Whether it's accepting a bowl of soup from an up-until-now-unknown neighbour or a new spark of creativity racing through our veins, we choose to believe something good can come from it.

The collegiality of suffering connects us to one another and to the planet in ways we may never think of when we are at the top of our lives, feeling unconquerable, not thinking about the other. But in moments of pain, we have the opportunity to allow ourselves to accept gifts of succour, sustenance and care from those we never thought would provide for us. Pain teaches us to be accepting of grace and, in return, to be graceful in life, living and loving. That's the exchange, a life lesson, made possible by a compendium of pain, the universality of our existence and acceptance of one another.

# The Day Time Stopped

A Bengali existential horror on COVID-19, realised by a silent-era production studio, is set to premiere at the 26th Busan International Film Festival

Tanushree Ghosh

WHEN COVID-19 restricted her at home, a fear-gripped Sarmistha Maiti, 41, one half of the director duo of *Kalkokkho* (*House of Time*), observed, for the first time, that her little daughter would talk to "*megh bhai*" (brother cloud). Loneliness was scarier. "It was the longing for belonging...my biggest lesson was 'how to deal with my own self,'" she says.

The duo's other half, Rajdeep Paul, 40, was paranoid about his three elderly housemates, his father and aunts, to whom "the concept of sanitising and wearing masks was completely alien." One of his aunts, a foodie, stepped out of their "containment zone *para* (area)" one day to return bearing *shingara* (*samosa*), her mask on her chin. Paul flipped and threw them away. A similar scene appears in the film, too. His "devious" mind thought, "what if the only way to survive the pandemic was by abducting a doctor and keeping him at home?"

*Kalkokkho* was thus born. The structure came next. He'd ponder daily, "Has the day actually passed, or is it a dream or a nightmare?" Time loop felt like the "most obvious choice".

Satyajit Ray Film and Television Institute



(SRFTI) alumni Maiti and Paul's debut Bengali feature opens with a disgruntled doctor, on a morning jog, when a woman in a PPE suit rushes forth, pleading him to go with her to check on her ailing mother and daughter. He refuses, citing protocols. The next thing, he's taken hostage — trapped spatiotemporally.

*Kalkokkho*'s world premiere will be on October 9 in New Currents segment of the 26th Busan International Film Festival. The other Indian film in the category is Natesh Hegde's Kannada debut feature *Pedro*. Another Bengali film headed to Busan is Jadavpur University professor Madhujay Mukherjee's Tillotama Shome-starrer, Shoojit Sircar-produced *Deep6*. There's Aparna Sen, too. Though her Konkona Sensharma-starrer *The Rapist* is a Hindi film that will compete with Bangladeshi New-Wave di-

rector Mostofa Sarwar Farooki's Nawazuddin Siddiqui-starrer *No Land's Man* (in English), among others, for the Kim Jiseok Award.

The house, in *Kalkokkho*, is a simulacrum, an imitation that replaces, even upends, the real world and real-world norms as we know it. It's a feminist utopia. The doctor (man/patriarchy/first world) is tied up by Mamoni (nature/feminism/marginalised) until his true self as "a healer, not tyrant" is revealed. The three ghost-like women, like matryoshka dolls in grey dresses, call each other *mamoni*, a Bengali term of endearment for both mother and daughter, hammering in life's cyclicity. They represent "past, present, future", "paranoia, amnesia, loneliness", the Freudian "id, ego, superego", and the three fates of Greek mythology: Clotho, Lachesis, Atropos, one spins, the other weaves, and the third cuts.

The subject readily lent itself to horror — not of the jump-scare variety, but existential dread and psychological horror. It's got a mix of magic realism, spiritual allegory and mythological symbolism (the Vedic story of Ekata, Dwita, Trita; chased by wolves, Trita falls into a well and to escape, has to make a sacrifice). "Spirituality, mythology, religion, one of the biggest reasons for their existence is to under-



APOCALYPSE NOW

(Clockwise from above) directors Rajdeep Paul (left) and Sarmistha Maiti; stills from *Kalkokkho* (*House of Time*)

stand how to deal with your own mortality," says Paul, who's been intrigued by recent apocalypse series/films (*Dark*, *Sacred Games*), even before COVID-19. In Sandra Bullock's *Bird Box* (2018) — which topped Netflix Original films' top viewership hours at 282 million hours in the first 28 days, according to data released this week — "except the demonic things in the end, almost 80 per cent of the film only speaks of a horror, not seeing but knowing it exists," he says.

If their film reminds one of Nicole Kidman's *The Others* (2001), one won't be too far from the truth, "the fear isn't of ghosts but of loneliness, death, losing identity," says Maiti, "with COVID, our imagination, too, was getting circumscribed by these elements."

After documentaries (on Mrinal Sen; the National Award-winning *At the Crossroads* on

Calcutta's ace drummer Nondon Bagchi) and short films (*Malai*, 2018, about a regressive Odia wedding practice, and *Kayantar*, 2019, on the Islamic community keeping the Bahurupi tradition alive), their debut feature was to be about Citizenship (Amendment) Act. On a location recce in Murshidabad, a torched Sargachi railway station, near Beldanga, made them rethink.

*Kalkokkho*, which after Busan will open Boston's 7th Caledscope Indian Film Festival and compete in the 20th Dhaka International Film Festival, marks the return — to feature films — of ostensibly India's oldest surviving and in-business studio/production house from the silent era. The Kolkata-based 115-year-old Aurora Film Corporation's legacy includes producing and distributing films like Satyajit Ray's *Aparajito* (1956) and *Jalsaghar* (1958), distributing *Pathar Panchali* (1955), Ritwik Ghatak's *Ajantrik* (1958), producing the first Bengali film shot abroad *Bhagini Nibedita* (1960), producing shows like Derek O'Brien's *Cadbury Bourmvi Quiz Contest* in the '70s. Their last feature film was Utpalendu Chakraborty's *Moyna Tadanta* (*Post Mortem*, 1980), which tanked.

"We were always into experimental, offbeat films. Even when (superstars) Uttam Kumar-Suchitra Sen films were at their peak, my father decided to distribute a certain Satyajit Ray's *Pathar Panchali*," says Anjan Bose, 75, Aurora's third-generation managing director. The two-time National Award-winning director (for documentaries) adds, most Bengali films at festivals today have some foreign talent in the crew, the DOP, editor, etc. He's instead determined to bankroll "Bengali new wave" and home-bred fresh talents (from FTII, SRFTI, etc.). "We have potential, let's give them the scope," he says.



# A Question for Posterity

Rashtrapati Bhavan archives offer new perspectives on the cataclysmic events that decided the fate of the subcontinent

Ajay Singh

IF THE past is a prologue, the Rashtrapati Bhavan sets a unique historical context for the partition of India and the nation's subsequent journey. Ironically, its inauguration in 1931 as Viceroy's House coincided with the roundtable conferences which formed the basis of the devolution of power carried out through the Government of India Act of 1935.

The magnificent building and other structures around it — North Block, South Block and the Parliament complex — had come up on the picturesque Raisina Hills as symbols of the imperial majesty. Edwin Lutyens' works impressed many, but Mahatma Gandhi was not among them. At the second roundtable conference in London, during a "federal structure committee" meeting on November 19, 1931, he termed New Delhi a white elephant, and said "those buildings... do not represent the millions of India."

As the years went by and the Muhammad Ali Jinnah-led Muslim League bared its fangs, Gandhi gradually reconciled to the centrality of New Delhi in general, and the Viceroy's House in particular, in the nation's destiny. His efforts to keep the country united drew a blank. Besides his series of meetings with successive occupants of the Viceroy's House, he held at least 18 meetings with Jinnah, only to return more dejected each time. His voice for sanity and peace got lost in the cacophony of rising communalism.

Yet Gandhi remained eminently relevant. Lord Louis Mountbatten, the last viceroy, knew it better than most of his compatriots. When, in the run-up to the Partition, communal violence engulfed Punjab, Bengal, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, Lord Mountbatten brought Gandhi and Jinnah together. The viceroy's office issued a press statement on April 16, 1947 containing their joint appeal: "We deeply deplore the recent acts of lawlessness and violence that have brought the utmost disgrace on the fair name of India and greatest misery to innocent people, irrespective of who were the aggressors and who were the victims. We denounce for all time the use of force to achieve political ends, and we call upon all the communities of India, to whatever persuasion they may belong, not only to refrain from all acts of violence and disorder; but also to avoid both in speech and writing, any incitement to such acts."

For Mountbatten, the beginning of June 1947 was quite tumultuous in every sense of the term. June 3 was scheduled to be the day when the process of transfer of power by the British to India would be laid bare in a series of



PHOTOS: RASHTRAPATI BHAVAN ARCHIVE

broadcasts, first by British prime minister Clement Attlee in London, followed by a detailed statement by Mountbatten and successive endorsements by Jawaharlal Nehru, Jinnah and Sardar Baldev Singh on All India Radio (AIR).

In these broadcasts, while Nehru and Singh stuck to their agreed scripts and expressed their distress over the Partition, Jinnah digressed and provocatively broached the issue of the North-West Frontier Province which considerably irked Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, who was the member of the cabinet, in charge of information and broadcasting. Nehru and Patel were upset at the kid-glove handling of Jinnah by Mountbatten, for whom placating Jinnah was a tactical necessity.

The prospect of the Partition was indeed dreary. In this setting, Mountbatten was keen to become the governor general of both India and Pakistan to facilitate a smooth transition. While Indian leaders had accepted this proposal, Jinnah was reluctant. A day after his June 3 announcement that explained the process of transfer of power, Mountbatten, flanked by Patel, held a marathon press conference to clarify misgivings about the British intentions. Mountbatten was particularly keen to give his answer to a critical question, and his office slipped this question to a journalist who asked: "Will governor generals be appointed on the advice of the dominion governments?"



## THE LINES ARE DRAWN

(Clockwise from above) (Left to right) Nehru, General Hastings Ismay, Lord Mountbatten and Jinnah discussing the Partition; Lord and Lady Mountbatten with Mahatma Gandhi in the spring of 1947; the room in which the decision to partition was solemnised

If so, is there any bar against there being separate governor generals for the two states?"

Mountbatten replied, "The moment any state acquires dominion status, it chooses its own governor general. The governor general is chosen by the prime minister of the government of the dominion concerned. He submits his name to the King, who being a constitutional monarch, may discuss it but finally acts on the advice of the concerned government."

Through this answer, Mountbatten intended to convey a definite message to Jinnah that the proposed arrangement of having one governor general for both countries was only temporary and meant to ensure a harmonious transition. It, however, had exactly the opposite effect on Jinnah who conveyed nearly a month later in no uncertain terms that he would hold the position of governor general, not prime minister, of Pakistan.

If you rummage through the Mountbatten Papers, compiled and preserved in the President's study, you will find invaluable nuggets of history that reveal new



perspectives altogether. In hindsight, one can assume that the question posed in the press conference had a significant bearing on the future of the subcontinent. If Mountbatten had been the governor general of both nations, Jinnah would have been reined in from launching many of his misadventures, especially in Kashmir.

History is replete with many unpredictable twists and turns that radically altered the face of the future. Perhaps a fly-on-the-wall account would have exposed the highs and lows of individuals entrusted with people's destiny. The Machiavellian statecraft that entailed actions shrouded in secrecy and well-practised equivocation of the colonial masters still need to be fully deciphered.

What is certain, however, is the fact that Gandhi, despite his initial distaste for Lutyens' creation and all that it represented, had grown fond of the last viceroy. Hours after that fateful press conference of Mountbatten, he met Gandhi, who said at the prayer meeting that evening, "And now I want to reassure you about the British." In the light of his own talks with Mountbatten, he said, "the Viceroy has had no hand in this decision." Venting frustration at the attitude of the Muslim League, he appreciated Mountbatten for going on "doing his work in the name of God."

Though circumstances forced Gandhi to accept the Partition, he continued to cling fast to his hope that the innate goodness of human beings would eventually overcome acrimony. An eternal optimist that Gandhi was, he remained committed to his belief till the end.

Ajay Singh is press secretary to the President of India

## DOWN IN JUNGLELAND



Ranjit Lal

Ranjit Lal is an author, environmentalist and bird watcher

## Dracula's Darlings

Their benefits far outweigh their cons, but bats are vilified no end

AT THE moment, they are probably the most vilified animal in the world, thanks to their connection with the coronavirus. But hey, let's remember one thing: Bats did not seek us out with the desire to infect us with the virus. We poked our noses into their business (harvested their number two, which we call guano) and slid our surgical needles into them for "research". So what can you expect? Ironically, this happened in China, one of the few places in the world where bats were traditionally regarded as harbingers of happiness, joy and good fortune. The Western world long regarded them as malevolent creatures of the night. Some of the other unpleasant viruses they harbour are rabies, the Nipah virus and even Ebola. Worse, they give sanctuary to these horrors without being affected themselves, making scientists wonder why not.

One theory suggests that bats have suppressed their immune system so that it doesn't freak out when all these lovelies seek sanctuary in their bodies. In return, the virus doesn't go berserk and only imposes low viral loads upon their host, achieving a diplomatic balance. Scientists suspect low immunity evolved because of the high metabolic demands of flight: A hyper-sensitive immune system could take to arms and cause all sorts of complications. When your USP is being the only mammal which can fly in a sustained manner, you don't want to muck with it!

Sustained flight has made bats the second most-successful family of mammals (after rodents), with over 1,400 species living across the world. Of these, at least 200 are endangered as we hunt (and, sometimes, eat) them *en masse*, destroy their habitats and conveniently forget that they save us anything from \$3.5 billion to \$53 billion (one estimate was \$23 billion in 2011) through insect predation every year (These figures probably pertain only to the US). Add to that the work they do as pollinators — everything from rainforest trees to bananas are pollinated by bats and some plant species are entirely dependent on them for this service; there's also the value of their droppings — guano — which we use as fertiliser.



RANJIT LAL

## HUNTERS OF THE NIGHT

There's a certain charm to the ugliness of bats

The small, swift "flicker-flying" bats are microbats — and most are insectivorous. Others of this clan may dine on pollen, nectar, small mammals, reptiles, fish and even blood, and can fly at 100 kmph. The big (with wingspans up to 1.7 m) "flying foxes" or megabats are vegans thriving on fruits, flowers, nectar and pollen.

Bats are technical marvels. Their limbs have flexible bones (to assist manoeuvres in flight), linked with a thin membrane which provides lift and thrust, and, at the same time, serve as temperature regulators and gas exchangers. Unlike birds, bats can fold their wings on the upstroke, saving up to 35 per cent energy during flight. This fine membrane tears easily — but mends easily, too.

While the eyesight of night-flying bats is poor (they are not blind), they navigate and hunt by sophisticated echolocation. Ultrasonic pulses stream out from the bat's mouth and nose as it flies, and its highly tuned and sensitive ears pick up the returning echoes, enabling the bat to accurately map its surroundings and the movements of its prey. The slow-flying megabats have excellent eyesight. Years ago in what was then Bombay, I'd watch them unhook themselves from the peepul tree and set off like bombers in the twilight for the nearest fruiting target. Bats prefer the dark hours because it is safer and cooler. They are good communicators, too: at least one gentleman bat (the Mexican free-tailed bat) is known to woo a partner by singing and calls have been deciphered as arguing over food, space, territory, mates and even honking!

With their frenetic lifestyles (microbat hearts may beat at 1,000 bpm), bats need to eat more than their own body weight. Microbats, in particular, save 50-99 per cent energy by going into torpor — they drop their body temperatures radically and go into a state of inactivity. Some bats migrate over enormous distances and use an in-built compass tuned to the earth's magnetic field for navigation. Others hibernate. They live in caves, wells, hollows, trees and even human-made structures. Family life may be single-parent, communal and nuclear.

With their furry screwed-up faces, tucked-up noses, fan-like ears, leathery reptilian wings, bats give most people the willies, though there is a certain charm to their ugliness. We have defamed them — they are Dracula's darlings, after all, who will take a drink or two from you and waddle off. But we have done so much worse by them. Besides, vampires are known to look after the infirm in their colony by regurgitating a blood meal to them if they are unable to hunt themselves. If Dracula's darlings can have such tender hearts, where does that leave us?

## ‘Drawings allow us to pose urgent questions’

Mumbai-based artist Jitish Kallat, 47, on taking his cue from British naturalist Charles Darwin for his curatorial exhibition and the centrality of drawing in his practice

Vandana Kalra

In the online platform South South's inaugural curatorial exhibition 'I Draw, Therefore I Think' you bring together over 60 artists from across the world. Could you share the thought behind using (British naturalist) Charles Darwin's 1837 sketch *Tree of Life* as a curatorial prompt?

There are often certain images or references that resonate with you over the years. The Darwin sketch of the phylogenetic tree was one such drawing that has been of interest to me for over a decade. When I was invited to curate the inaugural curatorial project for South South, somehow, my attention was drawn towards this drawing from one of his early 'transmutation notebooks'. This speculative drawing is presented as the inaugural 'prompt' to think about the process of drawing, as well as placing the question of 'evolution' at the centre of inquiry. I've often wondered if he wrote 'I think' and then the words began to mutate into a drawing. That is an interesting thought that the words could not contain the intuition and a drawing had to happen to manifest the idea. If you reverse that, and ask yourself, did he draw first, that is equally beautiful because then he realises that drawing is like a projection of thought... He writes the words 'I think' pointing to the ambivalence inherent in the processes of observation, rumination, discovery and doubt. It is really a coming together of these vital ingredients — where ideas produce images and images, in turn, procreate ideas.



project emerged out of my own personal obsession with 'drawing' as a practice, and as a tool to work through one's intuitions. There are several possibilities that a drawing allows. Drawings have a beautiful open-endedness that allows us to pose questions that are urgent at this moment. We are experiencing a frontier moment in our evolution with concerns about viruses, the questions around genomics, climate anxieties and the progressive alienation between peoples and estrangement from the larger web of life.

For me, drawing has been a studio ritual for many years. At 23, when I had my first solo exhibition, 'PTO', more than half the works were drawings. Across the last two decades, there are drawings that I have done as a series of studies. I can recall *Womb Studies* (2002), *Analgesic Studies* (2005-07), or, more recently, there are elemental drawings that are often mediated by forces of nature. The *Wind Study* drawings register the silent conversation between fire and wind. For the *Rain Studies*, I used paper overlaid with fast-drying pigment momentarily exposed to rain. In mid-2020, at the time of progressive lockdowns the world over, I began *Circadian Study* (*Contact Tracing*) — a series of observations of the sun's cyclical rhythms made by tracing the contours of moving light and shadows cast by fallen twigs on the studio terrace. On January 1, 2020, I began the *Integer Study* (*Drawing From Life*). In these works, the three integers are the algorithmically estimated human population of the planet at that very moment, as well as the estimated births and deaths that have occurred until that time of day. The numbers are abstractions forming a triangulation of life by mapping birth, death and time.

This show comprises really diverse works. How did you work on the selection?



PHOTOS: JITISH KALLAT

## FORM AND MATTER

(Clockwise from above) Kallat in his studio in Mumbai; the Raqs Media Collective artwork on show at South South's virtual exhibition on till November 24; Kallat's *Circadian Study* (*Contact Tracing*)

My mandate to myself was not so much to 'curate the content' but to 'curate the intent'. It was like letting a certain set of ideas circulate and allowing the resultant echoes to shape the exhibition. It is, in that sense, a diffused curatorial project, where I received responses and let them assemble into this structure as if through a process of natural selection.

The works in the exhibition are indeed diverse, ranging from abstraction to figuration. If in Raqs Media Collective's *Why Do They Call the Answer to a Question, A Solution* (2020) the very act of drawing becomes visible, in Rirkrit Tiravanija's reflective chrome work one finds references to Darwin and (French painter Marcel) Duchamp. In Taiwanese artist Yuan Goang Ming's uncanny video *Everyday Manueur*, a highrise city is seen with the camera moving through its isolated streets. This was shot in 2018, before the pandemic, during a particu-

lar day when Taiwan does a drill, and, in the last year, the entire world enacted that drill.

You and Reena (Kallat, wife) are showing **parallelly at Norrtälje Konsthall in Sweden. Was the juxtaposition planned?**

The two exhibitions are a sort of mini-surveys of both our recent work. My exhibition, 'Epicycles', includes the video *The Eternal Gradient* (2015), where rotis morph with the waxing and waning images of the moon as if aeons of time were passing through an ever-changing lunar almanac.

There are large format paintings, drawings such as *Wind Study* (*Hilbert Curve*), and sculptures such as *The Infinite Episode*. Helen Hedsenjo, the curator of the exhibitions, said she was mindful of our diverse practices and was keen to place them adjacent to each other. The two exhibitions are taking place on two different floors of the Konsthall.



COURTESY: SOUTH SOUTH

What made you turn to drawing as the foundation of creativity? It is a medium that has stayed with you, too.

At one level, I could say that the curatorial



## Rajasthan young guns chase down big target with plenty to spare to keep themselves in fray



**Yashasvi Jaiswal, 19, set the tone for Royals' chase with a quick-fire 50 off 21 balls.**

iplt20.com

**SRIRAM VEERA**  
OCTOBER 2

By the time the short ball took out the openers - Lewis was caught on the boundary and Jaiswal made the mistake of getting

### POINTS TABLE

	M	W	L	NRR	Pts
CSK	12	9	3	+0.829	18
DC	12	9	3	+0.551	18
RCB	11	7	4	-0.200	14
KKR	12	5	7	+0.302	10
PBKS	12	5	7	-0.236	10
RR	12	5	7	-0.337	10
MI	12	5	7	-0.453	10
SRH	11	2	9	-0.490	4

Ravindra Jadeja started him off with an overpitched delivery that was thrown back from the long-on stands. Moeen Ali too got the same treatment soon, the six seemed to be sucked into the night sky before it thudded into the ground behind the long-



**CSK opener Rituraj Gaikwad was on the losing side despite scoring an unbeaten 101 off 60 balls.** *iplt20.com*

iplt20.com

The most aesthetically pleasing knock-out of the evening was from Gaikwad. "It seems as if nearly all his shots are appropriate shots for that ball," Surendra Bhavare, a former player who has coached Gaikwad's Ranji team Maharashtra, would

But off the last ball of the innings, he pulled the ball into orbit, had one look at the disappearing trail and turned around to begin his celebrations. It all seemed hunky dory for Chennai at that point but boy, were they in for a brutal shock.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Rajasthan Royals 190 for 3 (Dube 64\*, Jaiswal 50) beat Chennai Super Kings 189 for 4 (Gaikwad 101\*, Tewatia 3 for 39) by 7 wickets

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
GOLD COAST, OCTOBER 2

After Tahlia McGrath (28) hit Vastrakar's wide and short delivery straight to Smriti Mandhana at point to leave the hosts at 119 for four, Goswami was brought back with two slips, a gully and a silly mid-off, but Ellyse Perry (27 batting) and Ashleigh Gardner (13

**SYNOPSIS:** Synopsis: Iyer digs in after Avesh beats Mumbai batsmen for pace

**GAURAV BHATT**  
OCTOBER 2

Iyer himself started off ramping off-spinner Jayant Yadav for two runs on the second ball he faced. Afterwards, he dug in. And in Ravichandran Ashwin, Iyer finally found a partner ready to rotate strike. They ran down the run-a-ball chase, and Ashwin sealed it with a six, exacting a small measure of revenge on



DC's Shreyas Iyer anchored the run chase with a run-a-ball 33. [iplt20.com](http://iplt20.com)

iplt20.com

Delhi Capitals skipper Rishabh Pant, for better or worse, plays like someone mashing buttons on a video game controller. On Saturday especially, each ball was an event. The left-hander came in with both his openers gone in the space of five balls, and clobbered Krunal over deep midwicket for a six. On a slow, low wicket, with Aussie seamer Nathan Coulter-Nile dominating the pace, Pant went for three straight pulls, edging two and missing the last. When Jasprit Bumrah had him struggling from around the wicket, Pant hoicked him off a length for a

Royal Challengers Bangalore vs Punjab Kings, 3:30 pm  
Kolkata Knight Riders vs SunRisers Hyderabad, 7:30 pm

## Hot heads, calm minds and everything in between at the game

favourite to play the ICC event while Ashwin wasn't even sure of his place in the Test playing XI. On a sweaty Sharjah evening, Ashwin let his bat and his mouth do the talking. Bring on the T20 World Cup, Come on!

"No ball," yelled Shivam Dube as soon as he made contact with the high full-toss from Shardul Thakur. The umpires didn't echo Dube's call and luckily for him, the ball fell in the



On 86 after 17 overs, Ruturaj Gaikwad, would have never thought he would need a 6 on the final ball of 20th to reach a hundred. After hitting

18th over, he would have even started re-hearing his first IPL century speech. The rookie, standing at the non-striker end, would learn an important T20 lesson: Never second guess how events unfold in IPL. Gaikwad, in 90s, did his best to bottle in the emotional upheaval inside him. Jadeja was hogging the strike. Gaikwad was also being the perfect team man, after one six suggesting Jadeja to do the sword dance. No anxiety, no sulk, the find of the season was on Dhoni mode – someone with supreme confidence in his skills. On 95, he needed one ball to reach the most important milestone of his young career. The big-hearted Jadeja gave him double of that – two deliveries. Gaikwad missed one, hit the last one for six. CSK better retain this guy next season. The original last-over six-hitter wouldn't be around for long.

okay but Rahman started to backtrack a touch, perhaps anticipating that the throw might be fired real hard. In the process,



though, he was right in the path of du Plessis who realised that he was going to ram into Rahman but couldn't stop himself in time. Just after they collapsed to the ground in pain, du Plessis threw a look at Rehman, which suggested 'what were you doing there, mate?'. Almost immediately, Rahman raised his left hand as sort of an apology. Civilities done, both reached for the ground to resume their tryst with pain.

**DC pacer Avesh Khan truly wreaked havoc with the change of pace. His 135kmph off-cutters would dig into the track and turn. But it was the faster balls that had Mumbai batsmen in trouble.**

Shaw, meanwhile, twice played shots not many would do on the Sharjah pitch. The first was a silken cover drive through extra cover off Trent Boult in the first over. The second, an attempted pull off Krunal. The ball expectedly stayed low, and the DRS confirmed that it

would have crashed into the stumps. Shimron Hetmyer's 8-ball 15 wrestled back some momentum for a sluggish Delhi, before Iyer and Ashwin completed the chase.

## Beaten for pace

With the seamers straight-jacketing them, Mumbai batsmen tried to attack Axar Patel, who got his three wickets in the most un-Axar-like fashion. Quinton de Kock & Saurabh Tiwary were caught going after wide, loopy deliveries. Suryakumar Yadav hadn't put a foot wrong till he chipped an Axar full toss to long-on.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Delhi Capitals 132 for 6 (Iyer 33\*, Ashwin 20\*, Coulter-Nile 1-19) beat Mumbai Indians 129 for 8 (Suryakumar 33, Avesh 3-15, Axar 3-21) by four wickets