



45 KILLED IN ISRAELI STRIKES ON GAZA STRIP WORLD



DELHI COURT TO PASS ORDER ON RASHID'S BAIL PLEA TODAY J&K



SHAH SLAMS TMC FOR 'STATE-SPONSORED INFILTRATION' NATION

PM ANNOUNCES 150TH BIRTH ANNIV CELEBRATIONS OF BIRSA BACK PAGE



## Amid farm stir, Centre says will procure every grain, have enough storage space

### Food Minister claims there's no crisis; cautions Punjab farmers against 'misinformation'

ADITI TANDON  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27**  
The Centre on Sunday stepped in to defuse ongoing tensions around paddy procurement challenges in Punjab. It assured farmers of procurement of "every single grain" and cautioned them against "misinformation about lack of space to store paddy".

"There is no crisis at all. Please try and understand. We have already shared the plan for creation of storage space with the Punjab Government. Movement of foodgrain outside the state is also underway. There is no problem on the ground. Either wrong information or misinformation is being spread on the ground," said Food Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday. He was responding to a query by *The Tribune* on why the crisis came about in the first place when standard protocols on paddy procurement and foodgrain movement were in place.

Joshi said as on date, the FCI had 14 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of storage space



Food and Public Distribution Minister Pralhad Joshi addresses a press conference in New Delhi on Sunday. PHOTO: MANAS RANJAN BHUI

#### HIGH-LEVEL PANEL TO MONITOR MOVEMENT

- High-level panel set up under the FCI CMD to monitor movement of foodgrain (13-15 LMT/month) out of Punjab
- New app created where rice millers can post grievances, which will be resolved within three working days

available and this would rise to 16 LMT by November 1. Explaining there was no crisis, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra told *The Tribune* that over the last five years, average paddy procurement until December had been 15.5 LMT. "We will already have 16 LMT space by November 1

and would have created more by moving out more foodgrain by December. So there is no crisis," he said.

The Centre has also formed a high-level committee under Food Corporation of India (FCI) CMD Vineeta Sharma to monitor the movement of foodgrain out-

- #### CENTRE'S PLAN FOR PUNJAB
- Total paddy to be procured from Punjab is 185 lakh metric tonnes (LMT); will yield 124 LMT rice (which millers will provide)
  - Average rice procurement from Punjab till March in last five years has been 84 LMT
  - Space available with the FCI as of Sunday is 14 LMT; it will rise to 16 LMT by November 1
  - Average rice procurement from Punjab (in the last 5 years) till December has been 15.5 LMT
  - There's a plan to move 13-15 LMT grains from Punjab per month
  - The Centre has approved 31 LMT storage space for Punjab under the private entrepreneurship guarantee scheme
  - The storage space will be ready by June by when entire 124 LMT rice will be procured

side Punjab for the kharif marketing season. To further resolve grievances of Punjab's millers, the FCI has also created an application on which their grievances will be resolved within three working days.

The app is yet to be launched but has been host-

ed on the FCI website. Joshi said he had also spoken to Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann and asked him to speed up the procurement process through state agencies and cooperate with the Centre for foodgrain lifting. Asked why the procurement was delayed, Joshi said, "Due to heavy rains this year, the Punjab Government had specifically requested us to start procurement from October 1, which we did."

The minister said creation of space was the responsibility of the Food Ministry and the FCI, and would be taken care of. "We strongly stand by the farmers of Punjab and will fulfil our commitment to procure 185 LMT paddy. Not a single grain will be left behind. Everything will be procured by the FCI at the MSP of Rs 2,300 per quintal, which was around Rs 1,310 in 2013-14," Joshi said.

The minister said as on date, 54.36 LMT of paddy had arrived in the mandis of Punjab as against 65 LMT on this date last year. "So we are lagging behind last year by only

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



An anti-smog gun being used at Kartavya Path to curb air pollution in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

## Before Diwali, air 'very poor' in Delhi, 'poor' in 11 Hry cities

### Thick smog engulfs Capital | Relief unlikely in coming days

SAMAD HOQUE & NITISH SHARMA  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**NEW DELHI/KURUKSHETRA, OCT 27**  
Delhi's air quality deteriorated sharply on Sunday. The Capital recorded an alarming 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) of 356, placing it in the "very poor" category. This marks a stark decline from the recent days when strong winds had briefly improved the pollution levels. Several areas experienced

"severe" pollution levels (AQI over 400), signifying extremely hazardous air, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Data from 36 out of 40 monitoring stations was shared by the department. Among these, eight stations—Anand Vihar, Alipur, Bawana, Jahangirpuri, Mundka, Wazirpur, Vivek Vihar and Sonia Vihar—had AQI readings in the "severe" category, while the remaining 28 were in the

"very poor" category. An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

With rising pollution, residents, especially children and elderly, and those with respiratory issues, have been advised to take precautions. A layer of smog engulfed the city in the early hours on Sunday. CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

## 105 kg heroin seized as major drug racket busted in Amritsar

**AMRITSAR:** The Punjab Police on Sunday claimed to have busted a major drug racket after the seizure of 105 kg heroin and the arrest of two associates of Turkey-based drug smuggler Navpreet Singh, alias Nav Bhullar. The seizure, one of the biggest in the state, was made following a massive operation in Amritsar's Baba Bakala on Saturday night. A huge quantity of scheduled drugs and five foreign-made pistols were also seized. **INSIDE**

## NC MLA detained at Srinagar airport with 2 live rounds

**SRINAGAR:** An MLA of the ruling National Conference was detained on Sunday at the Srinagar International Airport after two live rounds were detected in his baggage, officials said. Bashir Ahmad Veeri, the MLA from Srigufwara-Bijbehara Assembly seat, was stopped for questioning at the airport when the X-ray scan led to the recovery of two live rounds from his baggage, they said. Veeri was travelling to Jammu on an IndiGo flight. —PTI

## Want to focus on one job: Mann likely to quit as AAP Punjab chief

**RUCHIKA M KHANNA & RAVI DHALIWAL**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE  
**CHANDIGARH/DERA BABANANAK, OCTOBER 27**  
The Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab is likely to get a new state chief. Though the talk of a change in the state unit's organisational structure has been doing the rounds for quite some time, the same was confirmed by CM Bhagwant Mann while campaigning at Chabbewal and Dera Baba Nanak on Sunday.

"Holding two posts adds to the pressure of working as CM. It will be appropriate if I put in my papers as state president so that I can completely focus on my role as Punjab CM," he said. Mann was appointed AAP's state chief in January 2019. He has been holding the dual charge after he became CM in March 2022.

The top brass is considering bringing in a young, preferably Hindu, leader. Party sources told *The Tribune* that the name of New and Renewable Energy Minister Aman Arora was being considered. Since AAP has already



MINISTER AMAN ARORA IN THE RECKONING?

Sources in the Aam Aadmi Party said the top brass is considering bringing in a young, preferably Hindu, leader. The name of state minister Aman Arora is being considered, the sources said.

appointed six Dalit ministers, the party, as part of its social engineering, is keen on wooing the Hindu voters by appointing a member from the community as state chief.

There was a talk of appointing a new party president last year as well, but Mann apparently had his way and Budhla-da MLA Budh Ram was then appointed as state working president alongside Mann.

Mann's statement came on a day he returned from Delhi, where he met top party leaders. Not only does it signal that the AAP leadership led by

Arvind Kejriwal is looking at keeping party's organisation separate from governance, it is also being perceived as a leap towards setting the ball rolling for its 2027 Punjab elections by starting to infuse a new lease of life in the party's organisational structure.

In a recent interview with *The Tribune*, party's general secretary Harchand Singh Barsat had also hinted at change in the party's state unit. He had said, "Change is always better, although it is the prerogative of national convener Arvind Kejriwal."

## 50 flights receive hoax bomb threat; 350 hit in 2 weeks

**NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27**  
At least 50 flights operated by Indian airlines received bomb threats and two of them were diverted on Sunday, according to sources. In 14 days, more than 350 flights operated by the Indian carriers have received hoax bomb threats. Most of the threats were issued through social media.

Akasa Air on Sunday said 15 of its flights got security alerts and all aircraft were released for operations. The sources in the know said IndiGo received threats for 18 flights and Vistara for 17 flights.

At least two IndiGo flights were diverted following threats. Its flight 6E 133 (Pune to Jodhpur) was diverted to Ahmedabad and 6E 87 (Kozhikode to Dammam) was diverted to Mumbai, an official said. According to an IndiGo statement, the flights

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## India may get 26/11 plotter's custody soon

**NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27**  
Probe agencies are hopeful that Canadian-Pakistani citizen Tahawwur Rana, who was involved in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, might be extradited to India from the US before the year-end. Rana is learnt to have lost two appeals against the extradition process in American courts.

Sources said Rana (63) now had a 45-day window to appeal in the US supreme court. An appeal filed by Rana, seeking re-hearing of his extradition case, was rejected by US court of appeals last month.

The court ruled that sufficient evidence had been received from India to support the magistrate judge's finding of probable cause that Rana had committed the crimes for which he had been charged with. Rana is a Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman. After a brief stint as a doctor in the Pakistan army, he had shifted to Canada.

Later, he had set up a consultancy firm in Chicago. The



RANA'S FIRM PROVIDED COVER TO HEADLEY

- Tahawwur Rana is a Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman
- Accused Rana had set up a consultancy firm in Chicago
- Its Mumbai branch 'provided' accused David Headley cover to survey 26/11 targets

company's Mumbai branch had reportedly provided another 26/11 accused David Coleman Headley, who is currently in custody in the US, with the cover to scout and survey targets for Pakistani terror group Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT).

During the attacks, which began on November 26, 2008, 10 LeT terrorists stormed Mumbai and for four days targeted several areas. As many as 166 persons, including six Americans, were killed.

## HC admits CBI's appeal against Sajjan's acquittal in 1984 riots case

**NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27**  
The Delhi High Court has admitted an appeal by the CBI against the acquittal of former Congress MP Sajjan Kumar and others in a murder and rioting case related to the 1984 anti-Sikh riots.

In an order passed on October 21, a Bench of Justices Prathiba M Singh and Amit Sharma granted 'leave to appeal' to the probe agency against the trial court's decision.

#### TRIAL COURT ACQUITTED HIM GIVING 'BENEFIT OF DOUBT'

On September 20, 2023, and listed the matter for further consideration in December. 'Leave to appeal' is a formal permission granted by a court to a party to challenge a decision in a higher court.

"In the opinion of this court, the CBI's leave to appeal deserves to be granted...The leave petition is allowed... Admit," the court said in the order. The court also admitted the appeal by the victim, Sheela Kaur, in a case against the order of acquittal and asked the registry to put up a report on the existence of any other appeals relating to the 1984 riots against the present accused persons.

On September 20, 2023, Special Judge Geetanji Goel had acquitted Kumar in the case by giving him the "benefit of doubt" and said the prosecution "failed to prove the charge against the accused persons beyond reasonable doubt".

The trial court had also acquitted two other accused, Ved Prakash Pial and Brahmanand Gupta, holding that the prosecution failed to prove the case of murder and

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## 58% Canadians feel country taking in excess immigrants, say economy suffering

JUPINDERJIT SINGH  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 27**  
A majority of Canadians feel there is too much immigration to the country, according to a study by the Environics Institute. It further said public support for immigration to Canada was decreasing.

The Asian Pacific Post reported today that according to the country's longest-running survey on immigration by the Environics Institute, almost six in 10 (58%) Canadians now believe the country was accepting too many immigrants.

"This reflects a 14-point increase since 2023. This builds on a 17-point increase over the previous year (2022 to 2023)," said the study, uploaded on the institute's website this week.

The Environics Institute for Survey Research was established by Michael Adams in 2006 to survey public opinion on the issues shaping Canada's future. "It is through such research that Canadians can better understand themselves and their changing society," the institute said on its website.

The study pointed out,

#### MANY REFUGEES FAKE

Over the past year, an increasing number of Canadians feel many claiming to be refugees are not real refugees and that too many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values. Environics Institute for Survey Research

"Over the past year, an increasing proportion of Canadians agree that many people claiming to be refugees are not real refugees and that too



#### THEIR CONCERNS

- Shortage of housing for immigrants in Canada
- State of the economy and overpopulation; potential strain on the public finances

many immigrants are not adopting Canadian values. In both the cases, the opinion reflects a notable uptick in concerns following several

years of notable stability."

The study said this was a notable change "over a two-year period since Focus Canada began asking this question in 1977 and reflects the largest proportion of Canadians who say there has been too much immigration since 1998".

The study mentioned, "For the first time in a quarter-century, a clear majority of Canadians say there is too much immigration, with this view strengthening considerably for the second consecutive year. This trend is evident across the population but is most significant in the

Prairie provinces, while least so in Quebec." It said Conservative Party supporters were mostly in agreement about too much immigration (now up to 80 per cent) while 45 per cent of the Liberal Party and 36 per cent of the NDP backers felt the same.

Though almost seven in 10 agree that immigration has had a positive impact on the Canadian economy, but this number has declined for the second consecutive year. Since 2023, this view has weakened most significantly in the Prairie provinces and among young Canadian

(18-29 age group). Regarding the reasons to discourage immigration, Canadians had concerns about how newcomers could be accommodated given the lack and affordability of housing, as well as concerns about the state of the economy, about overpopulation, and the potential strain on public finances.

According to Canada's latest Immigration Levels Plan for 2024-2026, the country intends to welcome 4.85 million new immigrants in 2024 and another 5.00 million in both 2025 and 2026, said the Asia Pacific Post.



Rajasthan Roadways buses being challaned in Haryana.

## Free bus ride by cop triggers challan war with Rajasthan

DEEPAK DESWAL  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, OCTOBER 27

An attempt of a free ride by a Haryana policeman in a Rajasthan Roadways bus has triggered a tussle between the transport authorities of the two states. Transport and police authorities at both sides have been issuing challans to the public transport buses from opposite states.

The issue reportedly flared up three days ago when a Haryana policeman took a Rajasthan Roadways (RR) bus to reach her destination. When the conductor of the bus asked for a ticket, she refused to pay the fare stating that she belonged to the Haryana Police, which provided cops travel facilities in Haryana Roadways. The woman cop refused to get off the bus and also did not pay the fare. Sources said after the incident, the Haryana Police authorities issued challans to some Rajasthan buses in the last three days.

In retaliation, the Rajasthan police and transport authorities today issued challans of 26 Haryana Roadways buses in the Jaipur area only. The challans were issued for not wearing the

### 26 state buses issued challan in Jaipur

dress by the driver and even wrong-lane driving.

Haryana Roadways sources said the action by Rajasthan authorities seemed improper and biased. The roadways staff were not at any fault if the police or the transport authorities in Haryana had issued challans to their (Rajasthan) buses in Haryana. "But the string of challans have adversely impacted the Haryana Roadways services and the drivers are upset over this," said an official.

Amit Mahrana, the Haryana Roadways Union president said it was a serious matter and a committee took up the matter with senior officials of the Haryana Transport Department today itself. He said the committee would meet the Director General in Chandigarh tomorrow to intervene in the matter. Sujay Singh, DG, state Transport, when contacted by The Tribune said the matter had been brought to his notice. "We will take up the matter at the appropriate platform and resolve it," he said.

## Lobbying begins for posts of board, corporation chairman

In race are MLAs who missed ministerial bus, leaders who lost elections

PRADDEEP SHARMA  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 27

With the BJP forming the government for the third time in a row in Haryana, intense lobbying has started for the posts of chairmen of various boards and corporations.

MLAs of the ruling party, who missed the ministerial bus, and other senior leaders, including the BJP candidates losing the Assembly poll, are lobbying for the prized positions of chairmen of various boards and corporations.

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini inducted 13 MLAs into his ministry leaving no slot vacant, while two MLAs were elected as the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Vidhan Sabha.

As many as 32 MLAs of the saffron party and three Independent MLAs extending support to the ruling party are yet to be 'adjusted' by the ruling party. These are besides the senior BJP leaders who lost the recent poll, and other office-bearers of the

### SUITABLE REWARD SOON

The MLAs missing the ministerial bus and other senior leaders would be suitably rewarded for their hard work and commitment to the party ideology in due course of time. A senior BJP functionary

### UNDERMINING VICTIMS' TRUST

The chairmen of boards and corporations enjoy privileges such as pay, perks, official vehicle and accommodation. They also wield considerable influence in policy matters, especially during meetings, including those of the board of directors.

party eyeing the plum posts.

There are at least two dozen boards and corporations in Haryana whose chairmen are 'political appointees'. In the past, a number of MLAs and senior leader owing allegiance to the ruling party have been appointed as chairmen of these statutory bodies. In fact, the Independent MLAs supporting the government are usually appointed as chairmen of prominent boards.

Sources said these leaders were approaching the party high command and senior state leaders, including Saini

and BJP chief Mohan Lal Badoli, in this regard. "All connections, including their RSS links, are being used to get the plum posts," the sources said.

Prominent among the boards and corporations are — Haryana Bureau of Public Enterprises, Haryana Land Reclamation and Development Corporation, Haryana Agro Industries Corporation Limited, Haryana Housing Board, Sugarfed, Haryana Khadi and Village Industries Board, Haryana Women Development Corporation, HAFED, Haryana Backward Classes Welfare Corporation,

Haryana Vyapari Kalyan Board, Harco Bank, Haryana Youth Commission, Haryana Scheduled Castes Finance and Development Corporation and Haryana Dairy Development Co-Operative Federation Limited.

A majority of these boards and corporations have huge budgets and discretion at the disposal of their chairmen. The boards and corporations work in coordination with various ministries, but they enjoy a degree of autonomy. Besides pay and perks, the chairmen enjoy privileges like official vehicle, accommodation and allowances.

A senior functionary of the BJP government said since they were a 'worker-centric' party, the party rewarded its dedicated workers with positions at various levels of government. "The MLAs missing the ministerial bus and other senior leaders would be suitably rewarded for their hard work and commitment to the party ideology in due course of time," he asserted.

### SEXUAL HARASSMENT OF COPS

## Women panel summons DGP, Fatehabad SP

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

HISAR, OCTOBER 27

Haryana State Commission for Women has asked the Director General of Police (DGP) and the Superintendent of Police (SP) of Fatehabad district with detailed action taken report (ATR) into the allegations of sexual harassment by women cops against an IPS officer.

The commission has written an e-mail to the Haryana DGP, the Fatehabad SP and others asking for the details of the allegations which are reportedly being probed by the Fatehabad SP, a woman IPS officer. The inquiry was initiated following a four-page complaint letter containing serious allegations of sexual exploitation of women cops that went viral on social media.

The commission has asked the officers concerned to appear before its

chairperson Renu Bhatia along with the ATR and report to the inquiry committee on October 29 in Faridabad. The commission has summoned the officers under Rule 10 (1) of the Haryana State Commission for Women Act 2012.

Notably, the male IPS officer in a district in Haryana has faced allegations of sexual exploitation by some policemen deployed in the same district. The complaint has gone viral on the social media after which the state government has reportedly taken cognisance of it.

The four-page printed complaint which has signatures by seven women who claimed to be police women and victims of the officer was addressed to Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini. BJP state president Mohan Lal Badoli had also stated that the matter would be inquired into.

## New Vidhan Sabha building among top priorities: Speaker

NITISH SHARMA  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KURUKSHETRA, OCTOBER 27

Vidhan Sabha Speaker Harvinder Kalyan today said getting a new Haryana Assembly building constructed will be among his top priorities.

Kalyan was accorded a rousing welcome by BJP leaders and workers at Pipili Parakeet in Kurukshetra, when he was on his way from Chandigarh to Karnal. Former Thanesar MLA Subhash Sudha was also present to welcome him.

Speaking to mediapersons, Kalyan said: "I am grateful to all the members of the Haryana Assembly for unan-

imously electing me as the Speaker. The Assembly is a place where all the elected representatives express their thoughts and raise the demands of their respective areas and public issues. As the Speaker of the Assembly, it is my duty to give adequate time to all members so that the issues could be discussed and resolved. A positive atmosphere will be created and it will be ensured that the Assembly works in a smooth manner."

About the demand of a new Assembly building, he said: "In the coming days, a new Assembly building will be the requirement of the state



Speaker Harvinder Kalyan being welcomed in Kurukshetra on Sunday.

because when the delimitation is carried out, the number of MLAs and MPs will

increase in the state. While the Central government has already got a new Parliament,

Haryana also needs a new Assembly building for which the process has been already initiated. Getting a new Assembly building will be among my top priorities besides the other projects and reforms."

"More youth and women representatives being elected in the Assembly is a good beginning for society. The country and the state will move forward in a meaningful direction. Our country is a young nation and the representation of youngsters will benefit everyone. Similarly, an increase in the representation of women in the Assembly will definitely

strengthen society," he said. Kalyan also said orientation camps and workshops would be organised for the MLAs so that they are fully informed about all the rules and legislative work related to the Assembly.

"Kurukshetra has seen unprecedented development over the past 10 years, Subhash Sudha played an important role in this development. After the BJP came to power, the status of Kurukshetra has increased at the world level. Under the leadership of Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini, all 90 segments of Haryana will witness equal development," he said.

## Farmers satisfied with procurement process: Minister

YAMUNANAGAR, OCTOBER 27

Agriculture Minister Shyam Singh Rana said farmers were satisfied with the arrangements made by the Haryana Government to procure paddy and millet.

He said keeping in mind the interests of the farmers, the state government was sending the money of crops purchased by the government directly to the bank account of the farmers. He further said more than Rs 6,833 crore had been paid to paddy and millet farmers in the state so far. Of the total amount, Rs 6,191 crore had been paid to paddy farmers and Rs 642 crore to millet farmers, he added. — TNS

## NHRC notice to F'bad admn over labour laws' violation

BIJENDRA AHLAWAT  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

FARIDABAD, OCTOBER 27

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the district authorities seeking a factual report of the matter regarding the rescue of 53 bonded labourers from a brick kiln in April this year. The commission has directed the office of the DC and the Labour Commissioner to submit the reply within four weeks.

"Complainant Nirmal Gorana, convener, National Campaign Committee For Eradication of Bonded Labour (NCCBL), an NGO based in New Delhi, has lodged a complaint that the 53 labourers that were kept in

bondage were rescued from the Bhumiya Bhatta Company located in Ballabgarh subdivision on April 27 this year," says the notice issued by the NHRC on October 25.

It further says officials that visited the spot allegedly threatened and forced the labourers to sign a false statement prepared by the rescue team rather than recording their accurate statements. As members of a marginalised community belonging to the Scheduled Caste, labourers were trafficked and forcibly held in bondage. As the complainant has requested the release of the labourers, payment of wages, recording of the statements, and a fair investigation, it is found that

### RESCUE OF 53 BONDED LABOURERS

Rescue team officials have been accused of forcing labourers to sign a false statement. The NHRC has directed the Labour Commissioner and the DC, Faridabad, to conduct an inquiry and ensure whether labour laws had been complied with

the inspecting committee as well as the owner has not given its any opinion about any bonded labour, child labour or violation of the applicable labour laws; it has rather simply forwarded the statements of both the sides to the Commission, adds the letter written to the district authorities. The NHRC has directed the

Labour Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner, Faridabad, to contact the complainant, conduct an inquiry and ensure whether applicable labour laws had been complied with. A copy of the inquiry report and the action taken report (ATR) be submitted to the commission for further necessary action within four weeks. The Deputy Commissioner is also hereby directed to call for explanation from the SDM, Ballabgarh, in respect of the vague report submitted adopting a casual approach and submission of response along with the reply of the SDM to the Commission within four weeks, says the notice.

Gorana alleged that while the administration had vio-

lated the Bonded Labour System Abolition Act by not recording the statements of the workers from the very first day, the investigation team, in collusion with the owners, deliberately did adopt anti-labour approach, resulting in gross injustice to workers. Seeking action against officials responsible, he said it was a blatant example of the atrocities against poor migrant labourers, indifference of the administration and non-implementation of the labor law.

Mayank Bhardwaj, SDM, Ballabgarh, said he had joined the office after the said incident and he would look into the matter as soon as the notice was received by his office.



CM Nayab Singh Saini with yoga guru Ramdev in Haridwar. PTI

## Gyms opened in 6,500 panchayats, yoga being made popular, says CM

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 27

Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini today sought blessings from saints for Haryana's development while addressing the 12th annual festival of Acharyakulam at Patanjali Yogpeeth in Haridwar.

Saini asked the saints to bless him in his efforts to drive new dimensions of development in Haryana. He shared that visiting the holy banks of the Ganga had filled him with enthusiasm and that he was taking renewed energy and purpose back to his state.

The Chief Minister praised yoga guru Baba Ramdev for his role in reviving ayurveda and yoga, noting that the Haryana Government was actively working to promote these fields. "Gyms have been

established in about 6,500 panchayats, wellness centres in villages and yoga teachers appointed to inspire the youth toward yoga. Yoga has been made a compulsory subject from grades one to ten, and initiatives like Sri Krishna Ayush University in Kurukshetra and a research centre in Jhajjar demonstrate the government's dedication. Additionally, 506 ayurvedic dispensaries and ayushman centres have been established, he added.

During the event, Swami Ramdev announced plans to establish an 'Acharyakulam' in Haryana that would be larger than the one in Haridwar. In response, the Chief Minister pledged his full support for this project, expressing that it would be a source of pride for the people of Haryana.

## Young farmers have profitable solution — turn straw into pellet fuel

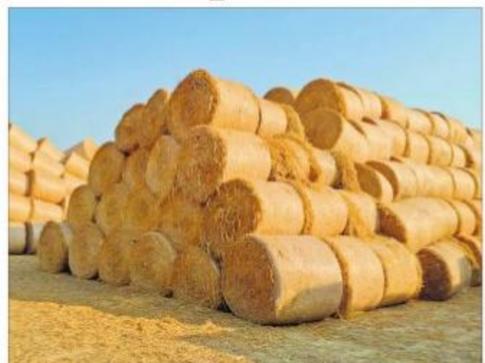
PARVEEN ARORA  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

KARNAL, OCTOBER 27

As farmers grapple with the costs of machines for managing stubble, despite government subsidies and fewer number of machines, some farmers are finding a profitable solution to the challenge.

Two brothers from Ramba village in Kamal — Gurpreet Singh (45) and Gurjeet Singh (39) — are working on a project to transform paddy straw into pellet fuel, a renewable energy source that can supplement coal in breweries, sugar mills, and power plants. They are setting up a factory for it, and three of five machines have been installed. The farmers claimed that they would start producing pellet fuel after collecting stubble from fields.

"It is our first year collecting stubble. We have already gathered over 1 lakh quintal of pad-



Stacks of stubble lie at Ramba village; and (right) farmer Gurjeet Singh shows the machine that turns stubble into pellet fuel. VARUN GULATI



Stacks of stubble lie at Ramba village; and (right) farmer Gurjeet Singh shows the machine that turns stubble into pellet fuel. VARUN GULATI

dy straw, and we are hopeful of collecting nearly 2 lakh quintal by the end of the season. We have two bailer machines, hay rake, tractor and trailer for collecting stubble and making bales. The process involves machines to compact the stubble into bundles, which are

then transported to a facility for pellet production," said Gurjeet Singh. "We offer farmers to clear their fields free of cost," he added.

"Initially, we focused on Ramba, Padhana, Kurali, Kherimaansingh and Chumi, and soon, will go to other vil-

lages," said Gurpreet Singh. He claimed that it not only contributed to stubble management, but also provided employment to local workers."

The brothers have covered about 95 per cent of fields in their village and plan to expand to other villages in

Karnal, and even into Jind and Panipat districts. They aim to produce around 100 tonne of pellets daily. "We neither take money from farmers nor pay them for the straw. Our goal is to clear their fields so that they do not resort to burning," said Gurjeet, adding that "We edu-

cate farmers about the environmental benefits of stubble management."

Another entrepreneur, Vansh Arora from Gheer village, has started producing pellet fuel from straw. Arora, now in his second season, pays farmers and custom hiring centres between Rs 1,700 and 1,900 per tonne for stubble, depending on quality. The Union government has set pellet prices according to the gross calorific value, with rates ranging from Rs 6,000 to Rs 9,000 per tonne. "The pellet size is between 6mm and 25mm, commonly used in industries," he said.

Deputy Director of Agriculture (DDA) Wazir Singh commended these entrepreneurs, saying that they were setting an example. "Other farmers should learn from their efforts and consider profiting from stubble rather than burning it," he said.

# 'Officials should know tenets of admn law'

**SAURABH MALIK**  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 27  
The Punjab and Haryana High Court has asserted that senior state officers "are not only supposed to know but are also legally bound to know the basic principles of administrative law".

The assertion came as Justice Jasgurpreet Singh Puri called for an explanation from Haryana State Agricultural Marketing Board's then Chief Administrator for bypassing procedural norms in an appeal involving an employee.

The assertion by Justice Puri came in a case where an order in an appeal was apparently passed by the punish-

**AGAINST PRINCIPLE OF NATURAL JUSTICE**  
It appears that the appellate order has been passed by the punishing authority which is totally contrary to the established principle of natural justice, i.e. doctrine of bias, apart from being without authority of law. Justice Jasgurpreet Singh Puri, PUNJAB & HARYANA HC

ing authority in contravention of the established principle of natural justice. The matter was placed before the Bench after employee Ishpal Singh Chauhan moved court for the second time against the board and another respondent through counsel Raman B Garg and Mayank Garg. He had, among other things, challenged the order of punishment and another

order passed in an appeal. Justice Puri's Bench, during the course of hearing, was told that the no order passed by the appellate authority or the board of directors was on the record. An order has rather been passed by the Chief Administrator, who was the punishing authority. Responding to a court query on the absence of order

passed by the Board of Directors, the counsel for the respondents submitted that a reference has been made to the order in the appellate order. "The order has been passed by the Chief Administrator, who is the punishing authority. It appears that the appellate order has been passed by the punishing authority which is totally contrary to the established principle of natural justice i.e. doctrine of bias apart from being without authority of law," the court observed.

Justice Puri asserted the petitioner was compelled to file the present writ petition and go in for a second round of litigation. As such, it was extremely necessary to call

for an explanation from the Chief Administrator who passed the order.

Justice Puri also impleaded IAS officer TL Satyaparkash as a respondent. "An opportunity is granted to the newly added respondent to explain to the court as to how the punishing authority has passed an order in an appeal. Not only this, he would also explain to the court as to whether the board of directors had actually deliberated and considered the petitioner's appeal.

Before parting with the order, Justice Puri made it clear that the entire record pertaining to the case would be sealed and brought to the court on the next date of hearing in October-end.

## CM Saini condoles death of Khattar's nephew

ROHTAK, OCTOBER 27  
Chief Minister Nayab Singh Saini today reached local Preet Vihar Colony and expressed grief over the death of Vaibhav Khattar (30),

nephew of Union Minister and former CM Manohar Lal Khattar. Vaibhav passed away due to illness on October 23. He was undergoing treatment at a private hospital in

Gurugram. Saini consoled Vaibhav's family members. Several BJP leaders and many other dignitaries were also present on the occasion. — TNS

## Punjab Nurses Registration Council

Medical Education Bhawan, Sector 69, Mohali - 160062 (Punjab)

### PUBLIC NOTICE

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Description	Date
Submission of online application form, uploading of documents, online payment of counselling fee & Online Choice filling through Counselling Portal for New and Old Candidates	28-10-2024 to 29-10-2024 3pm
Display of Provisional Allotment on Website	29-10-2024 9pm
Reporting by candidate to the respective Allotted Institute for joining and verification of documents	30-10-2024

Registrar,  
Punjab Nurses Registration Council, Mohali

## Haryana Diary

### 'Only our files will move'

Jhajjar: BJP national secretary and former minister Om Prakash Dhankar, who lost the Assembly poll from Badli for the second time recently, took a dig at "double-faced" individuals of his constituency, saying "things do not remain hidden". "Many of them are now getting their photos clicked with new ministers, but they do not know that no minister is out of Dhankar's reach. There is no bypass here, and they (doublefaced individuals) would have to go through our path. Only those files signed by us will move," he warned.

### In election mode, still

Ambala: The Assembly elections are long over — but not for BJP leaders Pawan Saini and Jai Bhagwan Sharma, who lost from the Naraingarh and Pehowa Assembly segments, respectively. They are still active in constituencies they don't belong to, but were fielded at the last moment. From gratitude programmes to meetings with officials regarding development works and grievances, they are making their presence felt in the segments won by the Congress. Pawan Saini, who belongs to Ladwa, was shifted to Naraingarh after Nayab Singh Saini decided to contest from Ladwa; while Sharma from Thanesar was fielded from Pehowa after the party candidate surrendered his ticket.

### DC calls in sick ahead of meet

Rohtak: Ten of 14 members of the Rohtak Zila Parishad, who had

sought a no-trust move against the chairperson, reached the venue well in time for a meeting scheduled for October 23 to discuss the motion. To their chagrin, the meeting was put off after the Deputy Commissioner called in sick at the last minute. The parishad members alleged that the district administration — under political pressure — was trying to shield the chairperson. The meeting will now be held on October 30.

### Suspension revoked within 38 hours

Hisar: The personal assistant (PA) to the Deputy Commissioner in Fatehabad district was suspended and the orders revoked — all within 38 hours. The PA was placed under suspension by Hisar Divisional Commissioner PC Meena on October 23 on the charges of alleged irregularities. The orders were, however, withdrawn soon after by the Divisional Commissioner. The PA's headquarters have been shifted from Fatehabad to Jind district. It was a short 'breather' for the official as the inquiry marked against him would continue.

### Work hits pause in govt offices

Gurugram: Inertia seems to have set in, in government offices at Gurugram. With the new government taking over, a majority of officials are expecting their transfer orders. The officials are taking it easy, thereby slowing down the pace of work. Interestingly, while the footfall in public offices has reduced considerably, people have begun to crowd the offices of newly elected MLAs and ministers.

## Bhukkal flags poor party structure

JHAJJAR, OCTOBER 27  
Former Education Minister and Congress MLA Geeta Bhukkal has blamed the lack of organisational structure and overconfidence for the party's defeat in the recently held Assembly poll in the state.

She also accused the BJP of adopting tactics like 'saam, daam, dand, bhed' and misusing the 'tantra' (government machinery) to firm the government. "We were quite confident about getting a mandate in the Assembly poll as all media surveys, exit polls and public opinion came in favour of the Congress, while all sections of society, including farmers, employees, traders and players, were against the BJP government due to its erroneous policies. Despite all this, the BJP won by adopting unfair means," said Bhukkal while interacting with the media here on Sunday. — TNS



CENTRAL VIGILANCE COMMISSION  
केन्द्रीय सतर्कता आयोग



# सतर्कता जागरूकता सप्ताह VIGILANCE AWARENESS WEEK 2024

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# 105 kg heroin, six weapons confiscated in Baba Bakala

Cross-border drug cartel operated by Turkey-based smuggler busted

PK JAISWAR  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

AMRITSAR, OCTOBER 27

With the arrest of two associates of Turkey-based drug smuggler Navpreet Singh aka Nav Bhullar, the Counter Intelligence (CI) wing of Punjab Police has made one of the biggest seizures of heroin during a massive operation in Baba Bakala area here on Saturday night.

It confiscated 105 kg of heroin in addition to a huge quantity of scheduled drugs, including 31.93 kg Caffeine Anhydrous and 17 kg dextromethorphan (DMR) which is used for multiplying the quantity of contraband four times.

Apart from these, the police also seized five foreign-made pistols and a country made pistol (desi katta) from the spot.

Those arrested have been identified as Navjot Singh, a resident of Guru Tegh Bahadur Colony in Baba Bakala, Amritsar, and Lovepreet Kumar, a resident of Kala Sanghian in Kapurthala. The police have got three-day police custody of two drug peddlers. Lovepreet Singh was doing



The accused in custody of the Amritsar police on Sunday.

IELTS while Navjot works as a photographer. According to the police, they had been in illegal drug trade for past three months. It is being suspected that the contraband was smuggled through the riverine belt along the Indo-Pak border.

Punjab Police Director General Gaurav Yadav said that CI got a tip-off that Nav Bhullar has been operating a Pakistan-backed cross-border smuggling racket using his associates living in a rented accommodation at a colony on Lady Road in Baba Bakala.

"An intelligence-led operation launched under the supervision of DSP CI Balbir Singh in the area of Baba Bakala led to the arrest of Navjot Singh and Lovepreet Kumar. It recovered 7 kg heroin from the car in which they were travelling," he said.

Following their disclosure statement, 50 policemen raided their rented accommodation and recovered the remaining 98 kg heroin along with weapons, Caffeine Anhydrous and DMR. The route of smuggling the narcotic consignment is being investigat-

ed, Gaurav Yadav said.

"Apparently, the accused were also using a water route for smuggling of narcotics and weapons from Pakistan as the police teams also seized big rubber tubes from the spot," he said.

Balbir Singh, DSP Counter Intelligence, said that the duo arrested in the case did not have any previous record. The Pakistan-based smugglers used to deliver the contraband to them and they used to stash it in the house.

Further investigations are on to establish backward and forward linkages in this case and police teams are on the hunt to arrest more criminals involved in the drug cartel.

An FIR under Section 21, 25 and 29 of the NDPS Act and Section 25 of the Arms Act was registered at Station State Special Operations Cell. Meanwhile, cops who were part of the raiding team had a narrow escape Saturday night when a man in an inebriated condition drove his SUV into the police vehicles stationed on the roadside during the raid. The miscreant turned out to be a policeman.



Sacks of paddy lying in the open at a grain market in Jalandhar on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

## 95 LMT grain moved out of state on 2,684 rakes: Bittu

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 27

Union Minister of State for Railways and Food Processing Industries Ravneet Singh Bittu on Sunday said as part of substantial efforts to transport foodgrains of Punjab, 95 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of foodgrain had already lifted as of October 24.

From April to October, 95.16 LMT of paddy and wheat were transported from Punjab through 2,684 dedicated rake movements, freeing up additional storage capacity in the state.

After chairing a high-level meeting with officials of Food

Corporation of India (FCI) in the backdrop of growing concerns over paddy procurement, management and storage in Punjab, the minister said Punjab's paddy production was estimated to reach 212 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) this season, with approximately 49.88 LMT having been procured already.

Punjab currently has a total storage capacity of 133.57 LMT, which includes FCI-owned storage capacity of 34.34 LMT and an additional 99.23 LMT of hired capacity. At present, 116.2 LMT of rice and 58.07 LMT of wheat, i.e., a total of 174.27 LMT, was stored in Punjab.

The meeting was attended by Punjab FCI General Manager B Srinivasan and other senior FCI officials who briefed the minister on the current state of paddy procurement and storage.

The Union Minister said that earlier, the allotment of storage for paddy and wheat was done separately, but that this time, permission has been given to store paddy instead of wheat wherever required. Moreover, he emphasised that Rs 44,000 crore has been allocated for MSP payments to ensure that farmers receive fair and timely remuneration for their produce.

## Ensure lifting of paddy crop before Diwali, BJP urges Guv

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 27

A delegation of Punjab BJP leaders today met Punjab Governor Gulab Chand Kataria seeking his intervention to ensure timely lifting of paddy from across the state's grain markets before Diwali.

A law-and-order situation has emerged due to the procurement crisis as farmers are on the roads protesting, it was pointed out.

National executive members Avinash Rai Khanna, Harjit Singh Grewal, Rana Gurmeet Singh Sodhi, Amanjot Kaur Ramowalia, MLA Jangi Lal Mahajan, former Union Minister Perneet Kaur, state vice-president Fateh Jang Singh Bajwa comprised the delegation.

The delegation apprised the Governor of the law and order crisis in the state that has arisen due to the inability of the AAP government to lift paddy from mandis in Punjab.

Before the commencement of the season in the last week of September, the Punjab Government got Rs 44,000 crore for the purchase of paddy on MSP from the Centre. Due to inefficiency on the part of the Punjab Government, even after 26 days of official commencement of the paddy procurement, the state government has failed to lift most of the paddy from the mandis across the state, it was alleged. It was further pointed out that paucity of gunny bags, tarpaulin, delayed notification of custom milling policy, delayed notification of FRK milling policy, delay in awarding of labour contracts or transportation contracts were among the issues related to delayed procurement. The state government even failed to enter into agreement with 5,500 rice millers.

Top state leadership of the party, including state president Sunil Jakhar and Manoranjan Kalia, were not present on the occasion. While Jakhar was away to New Delhi, Kalia was not even invited, reliable sources said. Talking to *The Tribune*, Kalia refused to comment on the issue.

## Farm unions lift blockade

PHAGWARA, OCTOBER 27

Farmers agreed to lift blockade from five spots during a three-hour meeting of the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) with Food and Civil Supplies Minister Lal Singh Kataruchak and Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian.

Sarwan Singh Pandher, coordinator, Kisan Mazdoor Morcha, among others had a meeting with senior officials. — TNS

## Farmers forced to purchase add-on chemicals with DAP

RUCHIKA M KHANNA  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 27

As farmers run helter-skelter in search of the "elusive" di-ammonium phosphate (DAP), which has to be applied to wheat fields for a good crop, they are now being forced to buy the fertiliser at rates that are 10-48 per cent higher than the market rate.

Farmers in different parts of the state are complaining that, on the one hand, there is a severe shortage of DAP, which had to be applied in fields before November 15, and on the other hand, those dealers who have the fertiliser are forcing them to buy it as a bundled package with

"irrelevant chemicals".

As a result, they are forced to pay anything between Rs 1,500-Rs 2,100 per bag of DAP even though its cost is Rs 1,350 for a bag.

Kulwinder Singh, a farmer from Nadampur village in Bhawanigarh, alleged that farmers in and around Samana and Bhawanigarh are being forcibly sold "growth promoter chemicals" worth Rs 700 with each bag of DAP. "The government is doing nothing about it. No raids are being conducted on unscrupulous dealers even when we have brought the issue to the notice of the district agriculture officers," he said.

### TAKE TOUGH ACTION: MINISTER TO DEPT

Agriculture Minister Gurmeet Singh Khuddian, when asked about the farmers' allegations of being forced to buy other chemicals with DAP, said that he has asked his department to take strictest possible action if such allegations are found to be true

Another farmer, Gurbaksh Singh from Bimbar village near Nabha, too, alleged the same. "There is panic among farmers and the coming days are very crucial. If the government fails to supply as per the requirement, the wheat crop will be adversely hit," he rued.

Gokal Prakash Gupta, general secretary of Agri Inputs Dealers Association, Punjab, when asked about this forcible sale of chemicals to farmers along with DAP, said that this was how

the private companies were supplying DAP to them — as bundled packs with other chemicals and that they had no option.

"Till 2019, there was no system of selling DAP in a fixed ratio between government (through cooperative societies) and private traders. As a result, private traders get the supply from private companies, while government-owned cooperatives supply to agriculture cooperative societies. If the sale is open, then chances of

such practices are greatly reduced," he said.

Interestingly, the cooperative societies too are getting very limited supply of DAP. Members of these societies say that only 30-50 per cent of their demand is being met. "There are 3,520 societies, but some societies have still not received supplies, while most others have a supply lower than the demand," said Bahadur Singh, president of Cooperative Societies Employees Union.

According to information gathered by *The Tribune*, the total DAP requirement for the upcoming rabi marketing season is 5.5 Lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT). From

July to October 26, only 2.35 LMT has been supplied to Punjab by the Centre. Other than this, 60,000 MT of a substitute of DAP had been supplied. No wonder Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann rushed to Delhi last evening to meet Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilisers JP Nadda to seek immediate release of DAP.

Official sources in the government said that they expect only around 70,000 to 1 LMT of DAP to be supplied till November 15, which still leaves a shortfall in supply. This has the potential to further agitate the farmers, who have already been protesting against the tardy paddy procurement.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

### NOTICE TO GENERAL PUBLIC

General public is hereby informed that Our Client M/s Slotco Buildwell LLP, having its registered office at B-66, Naraina Industrial Area, Phase II, New Delhi — 110028, has updated its Bank Accounts in records of Haryana Real Estate Regulatory Authority, Panchkula, in respect of 'Slotco Imperia' an affordable residential plotted colony under DDJAY-2016, located on a land parcel measuring 15 acres in the villages of Dodwa and Sharnagar, Sector-1, Taraori, Kamal, which are as under:-

1. A/c Number - 409002277289, IFSC Code- RATN0000218 with RBL Bank - Collection Account in which payments will be received from Allottees;

2. A/c Number - 409002277265, IFSC Code- RATN0000218 with RBL Bank — for operational funds of the developer promoter; and

3. Account Number - 409002277296, IFSC Code- RATN0000218 with RBL Bank — RERA Account

The project is duly registered with HARERA, Panchkula vide Registration Number HREERA-PKL-KRL-603-2024 dated 08-07-2024. Any person affected with the aforesaid change is hereby required to give notice of the same to the undersigned within 15 days from the date of publication hereof together with the copies of all documents basis on the basis of which an objection is raised.

Suresh Malhotra (Advocate)  
Unit # 205, EMAAR THE PALM SQUARE,  
Golf Course Extn. Road, Sector — 66,  
Gurgaon — 122102 (Haryana)

## Farm fires keep cops on toes

PATIALA, OCTOBER 27

Police personnel are working for almost 18 hours per day to check stubble burning across the state.

In Sanaur, an Assistant Sub-Inspector along with three Head Constables successfully doused farm fires in Bapror village, despite stiff opposition by farmers. "Our duty hours are sometimes over 18 hours as we personally visit fields. We have been asked to monitor stubble burning and register cases. We use tree branches and take help of farmers to douse flames," said an ASI.

With farm fire cases already touching 2,000 and the

Supreme Court monitoring the situation, the district administrations have turned heat on field officers.

"Hardly 20 days are left for sowing wheat," said Harjit Singh of Sanaur.

A cop posted in Rajpura said, "Yesterday, I reported for duty at 8 am. We were asked to reach Rajpura and manage traffic. After the dhama was over at 3:30 pm, we were asked to visit grain market. At 7 pm, our team was sent to two villages to check farm fire incidents."

A senior IPS officer said police personnel were hard pressed these days. — TNS



A policeman tries to douse flames in Patiala on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO: RAJESH SACHAR

## Spike in farm fires: 138 fresh cases, Amritsar air turns poor

MOHIT KHANNA  
TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

PATIALA, OCTOBER 27

There has been a rise in the stubble burning incidents as 138 farm fire cases were reported on Sunday. As many as 108 incidents of paddy residue burning were reported on Saturday.

As a result, Punjab's air quality index (AQI) has deteriorated further, with Amritsar's pollution index falling in the poor category with 317 points. The AQI of Mandi Gobindgarh was 216, Patiala 203, Jalandhar 161, Ludhiana 153, Rupnagar 151 and Khanna 135. The residents of Bathinda breathed easy with an AQI of 89. The pollution control board has issued as many as 397 show-cause notices to nodal and supervisory officers across the state.

In the meantime, pulmonologists said the present conditions were ideal for triggering nasal and bronchial allergies. Dr Vishal Chopra, head of the department of pulmonary medicine at TB Hospital in Patiala, said there had been a rise in the number of patients visiting the outpatient department (OPD) pertaining to the complaint of cough, allergy, asthma, runny nose and eyes allergies. People are advised to avoid direct exposure and wear masks and glasses while travelling on two-wheelers.

Ferozepur topped the district with 32 incidents, followed by Sangrur (18), Fatehgarh Sahib (17), while Patiala and Tarn Taran witnessed 14 and 13 incidents, respectively. Amritsar continues to top the state with a total of 476 incidents of paddy

residue burning reported so far, followed by Tarn Taran (375) and Patiala (250). Sangrur and Ferozepur have reported 182 and 208 residue burning incidents so far.

As many as 1,342 FIRs, 553 red entries and Rs 15.25 lakh penalty have been imposed on farmers, of which Rs 13.47 lakh have been recovered. Out of the 1,995 stubble burning incidents reported since September 15, the state has witnessed 1,734 of them — 86 per cent incidents in the past 18 days.

The state had witnessed a spike in farm fire in the second week of October with 123 residue burning incidents reported on October 10. October 11 saw 143 incidents of residue burning, while October 12 witnessed peak fire of the season with 177 incidents reported in the single day.

## Finance Minister Cheema visits Dirba grain market

OUR CORRESPONDENT

SANGRUR, OCTOBER 27

AAP MLA from Dirba-cum-Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema today visited the local grain market.

According to information, Cheema took stock of the ongoing paddy procurement process at Dirba grain market. He also reviewed lifting of paddy procured by government agencies since October 1.

Yesterday, some farmers stated that they had spent several nights at grain markets but no minister or MLA had visited them so far.

The Finance Minister gave instructions to the officers concerned to ensure timely procurement and lifting of the paddy.

Besides, he also asked the officers to make payment to the farmers within the stipulated period.

Cheema reiterated the commitment of the Mann-led Government that it was with the farmers, arhtiyas and rice millers.

The Finance Minister said Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann was constantly in touch with the Centre to resolve the problems related to farmers.

Cheema said the state government had given instructions to the Department of GST to not harass traders on one pretext or the other. He said the state government would not spare any employee or officer who would violate the instructions.



Finance Minister Harpal Singh Cheema at Dirba mandi on Sunday.

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**NOTICE U/S 13(2) OF SECURITISATION & RECONSTRUCTION OF FINANCIAL ASSETS AND ENFORCEMENT OF SECURITY INTEREST ACT 2002 (HEREINAFTER CALLED 'ACT')**

It is to bring to your notice that your loan account has been declared as NPA by secured creditor Shubham Housing Development Finance Company Limited having its registered office at 608 - 609 , 6th Floor, Block - C Ansal Imperial Tower, Community Center, Naraina Vihar, New Delhi - 110028. (herein after called 'SHDFCL') and you are liable to pay total outstanding against your loan to SHDFCL. You are also liable to pay future interest at the contractual rate on the aforesaid amount together with incidental expenses, cost, charges etc. Therefore, we hereby call upon you to discharge in full your liabilities to SHDFCL within 60 days from the date of this notice failing which SHDFCL will be empowered to exercise the power under Section 13(4) of the ACT. The details of borrowers and secured assets are as under:

S. No.	Loan Account No. Borrower(s) Name	Applicant Address	Demand Notice Amount & Date	Secured Asset
1.	0GGN2201000005042916, RAM KANWAR, PINKI	C-44, Rajiv Nagar West Near Gula Wala Mandir Sector 12, Gurgaon, Haryana-122001	Rs. 9,93,867/- & 22/10/2024	Property Situated at Dhani Mahtab Des, Barmki Basti, Tehsil & District Bhiwani, Haryana-127021
2.	GREY1703000005004564, Sunil Sharma, Niraj Kumar, Sanjay Kumar	Deongli Kaigaon Alwar Rajasthan - 301702	Rs. 6,94,039/- & 22/10/2024	A- Class Building, Khewat No. 162, Khatoni No. 185, Musili No. 67, Killa No. 28 2 (13-3) - Khat 1 Tadadi 13 Kanal 13 Marla 723 Part Bakdar 7 Marla (200 Sq.Yds), Waka Bawal Tehsil Bawal, Distt.- Rewari, Haryana - 123501.
3.	OSNP1710000005008654, RAM PARKASH, INDRA VATI	H No.1238, Gali No. 7, Kundli 55, Near Gupta Market, Sonapat, Haryana - 131028	Rs. 4,84,490/- & 22/10/2024	Khewat No. 340, Khata No. 469, Killa No. 31/1/1/0-3 Waka Rakha Mouja Kundli, Tehsil Distt.-Sonapat, Haryana-131028
4.	OSNP1810000005015455, Subhash Kumar, Suresh Kumar, Chandrawati, Anita Kumari, Pappu	Laxman Colony Near Manoj Karyana Store Sonapat Haryana-131001	Rs. 8,52,642/- & 22/10/2024	Plot measuring 125 Sq.Yds Khewat No.689 min.Khata No. 869 min Rectangle 3 Kila No.6/21/1-12 Situated in the Revenue estate of Baiyawan Tehsil Distt Sonapat Haryana-131001

PLACE: GURGAON, DATE: 26-10-2024

AUTHORIZED OFFICER,  
SHUBHAM HOUSING DEVELOPMENT FINANCE COMPANY LTD.

# CM Sukhu spends night at retired teacher's home, relishes local dishes

# 2-day regimental reunion of Gorkha Rifles concludes

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**SHIMLA, OCTOBER 27**  
Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu launched his government's outreach programme 'Sarkar Aapke Dwar' in the remote Dodra-Kwar area of district Shimla on Saturday and spent the night at the home of a local retired teacher, Hardayal Khepan. The Chief Minister reached Khepan's home at quarter to eight in the evening, where he was accorded a warm welcome by the family.

"I could not have even imagined that a Chief Minister would not only visit my house but also spend a night. I consider myself extremely fortunate to have hosted the CM," said Khepan. The government has launched the 'Sarkar Aapke Dwar' programme to reach the doorsteps of the people in far-flung areas, listen to their grievances and take steps to address their concerns.

Sitting by the bonfire, the Chief Minister indulged in a warm conversation with the

Launches govt's outreach programme at remote Dodra-Kwar village



Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu having breakfast with the members of a Mahila Mandal at Dodra-Kwar in Shimla district on Sunday. TRIBUNE PHOTO

family and other residents of the village about various aspects of their daily lives. Local women sang traditional

songs, beginning with the 'Laaman,' a song dedicated to the local deity Kwar Jakha, to welcome him. For dinner, the CM enjoyed a tra-

ditional meal that included Betu, Koda and Rafra roti, Siddu, Oglu, Chiyaun (local mushroom) and curry of locally grown Rajmah. A

local delicacy called Limdi was prepared for dessert.

Pallavi, Khepan's daughter and a trained JBT teacher, was excited over the Chief Minister choosing their home to stay overnight. "It's proud moment for the family. We took several pictures with him. It's a memory we will cherish for life," she said. Her father said the Chief Minister came across as a very simple and humble person. "He kept asking us about our area, the problems we face in our everyday lives," he said.

On Sunday morning, the Chief Minister joined the women of the local Mahila Mandal for breakfast. "We served the Chief Minister homemade 'Siddus' with honey, and he enjoyed them immensely. We also offered him other local dishes," the women said. Khepan further said the CM made several announcements for the development of the area. "Dodra-Kwar will remain grateful to him for coming here and giving a major push to the development of the area," he said.

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**SOLAN, OCTOBER 27**

The two-day regimental reunion of 4th Gorkha Rifles (4 GR), one of the Indian Army's most revered regiments, concluded at Subathu today.

This momentous occasion brought together generations of soldiers, veterans and their families, celebrating 167 years of legacy marked by bravery, sacrifice and brotherhood. Veterans from across India and Nepal joined the reunion with their families, rekindling old friendships and memories. Over 500 serving officers, veterans and families attended the reunion, reaffirming the deep bonds that unite the regiment.

The reunion was also attended by Lt Gen Mohit Wadhwa, Chief of Army Staff, Headquarter, Western Command, who exhorted all ranks to keep up with the glorious history of the 4th Gorkha Rifles. On the occasion,

Major General Balbir Singh, Colonel of the 4th



Generations of soldiers, veterans and their families, celebrated 167 years of legacy marked by bravery, sacrifice and brotherhood.

Gorkha Rifles, greeted the participants and stated that the 4th Gorkha Rifles has a history, having played a key role in several significant battles and operations, both in pre-independence and post-independence India.

The reunion served as a platform for members of the regiment to reflect on their glorious past and look forward to the future with shared pride and purpose. It's a time to honor

the sacrifices of our comrades and celebrate the shared legacy of courage and brotherhood that defines the 4th Gorkha Rifles, he added.

The event featured a wreath-laying ceremony at the war memorial, a bara khana, cultural programmes showcasing the rich traditions of the Gorkha Rifles, Special Sainik Sammelan and the unveiling of statues, a yearbook, and a memorial.

# Train service not restored in lower Kangra, protest staged

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NURPUR, OCTOBER 27**

The residents and commuters held a protest demonstration on Sunday against the failure of the Railways to restore passenger train service on the Pathankot-Jogindernagar narrow gauge railway track in lower Kangra region from Nurpur road to Kangra railway stations. The service had been suspended on July 9 in the wake of torrential rain that triggered landslide on the railway track at different locations.

Holding placards in support of their demand, the agitators held a protest demonstration under the banner of Nandpur Vikas

Sangharsh Samiti (NVSS) near Nandpur railway station (near Nagrota Surian) in Kangra district.

The agitators raised slogans against the Railway Department. Sukhlal Godara, president of samiti, said the railway authorities had conducted successful trial with seven coaches from Nurpur road to Guler railway station last month and people were hopeful that trains would start plying on this track during Navratri but the Railways restored the train service partially in two phases between Kangra and Baijnath (Paprola) railway stations on September 26 and between Kangra and Jogindernagar railway stations from October 18.

He alleged that the slow pace of repair of railway track by removing debris on it at Ranital near Kangra was delaying restoration of train service between Nurpur road and Kangra railway stations.

The agitators submitted an ultimatum to the Railways demanding restoration of train service from Nurpur road to Kangra railway stations within one week otherwise they would block traffic and intensify their protest against the Railways. As per the notifications by Northern Railways, Ferozpur division, two pairs of trains have started operating between Kangra and Jogindernagar railway stations.

# 81 Mandigram panchayats declared TB free

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**MANDI, OCTOBER 27**

In a significant achievement for public health, 81 gram panchayats in Mandi district have been declared tuberculosis (TB) free.

Mandi Deputy Commissioner Apoorv Devgan credited the success to the concerted efforts of the district administration and the Health Department, highlighting the introduction of a modern portable X-ray machine to identify TB patients in remote areas. This initiative aims to enhance the effectiveness of the TB eradication programme, he said.

The Deputy Commissioner expressed his gratitude to the representatives of the Panchayati Raj Institutions and Health Department employees for their contributions. The Deputy Commissioner said the government will reward tobacco-free gram panchayats with a grant of Rs 5 lakh for development projects.

Mandi Chief Medical Officer Dr Narendra Kumar Bhardwaj said out of the 92 gram panchayats that claimed to be TB free, 81 met the government's criteria. He urged other panchayats to follow this example.

Similarly, 19 gram panchayats in Kullu district have been declared TB free, which is a major success for the district health authorities.

# Car plunges into gorge in Mandi, five killed

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**MANDI, OCTOBER 27**

As many as five persons were killed when the car they were travelling in rolled into a gorge near Dhamchyan village in Mandi district last night.

Mandi SP Sakshi Verma said this morning, the police received information about a vehicle that had fallen approximately 80m into a gorge, close to the Dhamchyan forest area.

"Upon receiving the report, the local police rushed to the scene to conduct an investigation. Preliminary findings indicate that the vehicle was heading for Dhamchyan from Barot when the driver



Mangled remains of the car which fell into a gorge in Mandi.

lost control over it, leading to the tragic plunge into the fields below," the SP said. The victims were returning from a wedding ceremony in the area, she added.

The SP said, "All five occupants of the vehicle, includ-

ing the driver, were found dead. The deceased have been identified as Gulab Singh (33), Sagar (15), Karam Singh (33) of Dhamchyan; Ganga Singh (27) of Bajot; and Rajesh Kumar (23) of Mathi Bajgaan village in

Mandi district."

"In response to the incident, an FIR has been registered under Sections 106 and 281 of the BNS at Padhar police," the SP added.

Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu has also expressed grief over the tragic road mishap. He extended his heartfelt condolences to the families of the deceased, stating that his thoughts and prayers are with the bereaved families, assuring them of all possible support.

The Chief Minister has assured all possible assistance to the bereaved families. The district authorities have provided immediate relief of Rs 25,000 each to the kin of the deceased.



Residents protest against the Railways near Nandpur railway station in Kangra district on Sunday.

# 30% power meters registered in names of deceased, reveals KYC verification

LALIT MOHAN

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

**DHARAMSALA, OCTOBER 27**

The decision of Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board Ltd (HPSEBL) to do the Know Your Customer (KYC) verification of its customers is causing trouble to many people in Kangra district. The HPSEBL is doing the KYC verification on the direction of the state government.

Sources said that HPSEBL officials on the KYC verification duty in Kangra district had found that about 30 per cent of the electricity meters were in the names of dead people. An HPSEBL official said in many cases, people had not got the electricity meters transferred in their names even when the family

Govt action aims to check misuse of subsidy being paid on power to domestic consumers

member in whose name it was installed had passed away. Such cases had been found in both urban and rural areas. "We have directed people to get the electricity meters transferred in their names to get the KYC verification done," he adds.

SK Mahajan, a resident of Shahpur, said at his ancestral house, the electricity meter was in the name of his father. "After the death of my father, we continued to use the same electricity meter issued in his name. The house where the electricity meter was installed was a joint family property. The HPSEBL

authorities, who had done the KYC verification, told me that I would have to get the meter transferred in my name. Now, I would have to do the paper work after taking other members of the family into confidence and get the electricity meter transferred in my name," he added.

Vikas Thakur, Executive Engineer, HPSEBL, Dharamsala, said in about 30 per cent of the cases where the KYC verification had been done, it was found that the meters were registered in the names of deceased people. "We are not taking any penal action against the occupants of the

houses in such cases. However, they have been told to get the electricity metres transferred in their names," he added.

Thakur said that the occupants of a house had to submit the death certificate of the person in whose name the electricity meter was installed and move a simple application to get it transferred in the name of one of them. "In case of a joint property, the occupants of a house will also have to submit a no objection certificate (NOC) from other co-owners to get the electricity meter transferred," he added.

The sources said that in

case of a property dispute among the shareholders, they may find it difficult to get a new electricity meter.

The Himachal Government had ordered the KYC verification of all electricity consumers in the state to check the misuse of subsidy being paid on power to domestic consumers. "In many cases, people had installed several meters in one house to avail of subsidy.

In such cases, people may be directed to get one meter installed in one house. Besides, if the government decides to transfer subsidy on power directly to the bank accounts of the consumers, all people having electricity connections in the names of dead persons may also lose subsidy," he added.

# Police nabs burglar from Uttarakhand

KULLU, OCTOBER 27

The Kullu police has nabbed a burglar from Vikasnagar in Uttarakhand on Friday and recovered the booty he had managed to decamp from the house of the descendant of erstwhile royal family, Aditya Vikram Singh, during the commencement of Dasehra festival here on October 13.

Kullu SP said Chain Singh (45) of Uttarakhand was arrested and the stolen silver utensils, along with items worth Rs 10 lakh, have also been recovered from him. — OC

# Panel evaluates Renuka Ji Dam project in Sirmour

OUR CORRESPONDENT

**NAHAN, OCTOBER 27**

The Local Funds Accounts Committee of Himachal Pradesh, led by chairman, Sanjay Ratna and joined by members Satpal Satti, Keval Singh Pathania and Vivek Sharma conducted an in-depth inspection of the Renuka Ji Dam Project on the Giri river in Sirmour district. The two-day tour included Nahan MLA Ajay Solanki and was part of efforts to evaluate the progress and address issues tied to this key project, designated as a National Project due to its potential to serve Himachal Pradesh and the NCR.

The inspection included visits to prominent religious sites, including Renuka Ji and Parshuram temples. The committee then focused on the Renuka Ji Dam, a significant storage project with a planned height of 148 metres and a 24-kilometre-long reservoir capacity of around 498 million cubic metres.

The dam is expected to create substantial socio-economic opportunities, generate over 13 million labour days and generate local employment during and after construction.

# National body supports power board employees

SHIMLA, OCTOBER 27

The All-India Power Engineers Federation (AIPFEF) has extended support to the employees of the Himachal Pradesh State Electricity Board (HPSEB) in their standoff with the state government over their demands and recent abolition of 51 engineers post from the board. The federation has urged Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu to resolve their issues before Diwali, failing which power engineers from across the country will come in support of the HPSEBL employees.

The federation, in a letter written to the Chief Minister, said that the Joint Front of HPSEBL Employees and Engineers had given a notice

to HPSEB chairman to resolve the outstanding issues but the management did nothing and went on to abolish 51 posts of engineer and end the services of 81 drivers employed on outsource basis. "The AIPFEF supports all demands raised by Joint Front in the notice," said Shaileendra Dubey, chairman, AIPFEF, in the letter.

The federation further said that the Chief Minister had restored the old pension for all departments, which was a welcome step, except in the power sector. "Therefore, on behalf of the AIPFEF, I request you for effective intervention and instructions so that all issues are amicably resolved before beginning of Diwali," wrote Dubey. — TNS

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NOTICE								
Details of Observers for Assembly Constituency 10-Dera Baba Nanak regarding Bye Election-2024.								
Sl. No.	Observer Name	Service & Batch	Detail	Code	Contact No.	Place	Meeting Venue	Meeting Timings
1	Ajay Singh Tomar	IAS 2015	General Observer	G-27517	01874-295324, 8427203794	Room-1, PWD Rest House, Gurdaspur	Meeting Hall, PWD Rest House, Gurdaspur	9:00 AM to 10:00 AM Daily
2	P. Padiyappan	IRS (IT)-2016	Expenditure Observer	R-35443	01874-295324, 7652803794	Room-2, PWD Rest House, Gurdaspur	NA	NA
3	Siddharth Kaushal	IPS 2012	Police Observer	P-26030	8968792334	Room-3, PWD Rest House, Gurdaspur	NA	NA

DPR/Pb/38632 Sd/- District Election Officer, Gurdaspur.

## The Tribune

ESTABLISHED IN 1881

## Tit-for-tat strike

Israel keeps West Asia on the boil

**I**TCHING to retaliate against the October 1 Iranian attack, Israel struck missile manufacturing facilities and other military targets in Iran on Saturday. Though Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu claimed that the barrage "achieved all its goals", it would be naive of him to assume that Tehran will not respond militarily sooner or later. The fact that the strike took place more than three weeks after the ballistic missile attack by Tehran indicates that Tel Aviv preferred to wait and watch before taking action. Nevertheless, this is a grave provocation that can push West Asia deeper into the mire.

Israel has dismissed reports that it avoided hitting Iranian gas and oil facilities because of US pressure, but it is apparent that Tel Aviv is reluctant to start a full-blown war against Iran. Already grappling with Hamas and Hezbollah, Israel has intended to send out a strong message to Iran's Supreme Leader and military commanders. However, even the presumably limited scope of the Israeli operations is enough to infuriate Iran. If Israel has the right to self-defence, so does Iran. If this vicious cycle of retaliation and counter-retaliation continues, regional tensions are bound to escalate.

American President Joe Biden is hopeful that the Israeli strike would mark the end of the confrontation. His optimism is clearly misplaced as Iran is keen to keep Israel on tenterhooks, either directly or through its military proxies. Exercising restraint is alien to both nations, but they do need to carefully consider the ramifications of this destructive course not only for West Asia but also the world at large. Warmongers such as Israeli Minister of National Security Itamar Ben-Gvir, who called the October 26 strike "a good beginning in order to target Iran's strategic assets, which needs to be the next phase", must not be given free rein by the Netanyahu government.

## Art or obscenity?

Bombay HC ruling a victory for artistic freedom

**T**HE Bombay High Court's decision defending artistic expression and ruling that not all nude art is obscene reopens critical conversations on creative freedom. The court's release of artworks by FN Souza and Akbar Padamsee, seized under obscenity claims, emphasises that nudity in art must not automatically be equated with obscenity. Instead, the court argued, the prurient interest test should guide such judgments, advocating for the importance of understanding an artwork's intent and context.

Artists across countries have often encountered censorship and opposition over nudity in art. MF Husain faced intense backlash, protests and even legal action for his portrayals of Hindu goddesses, reflecting the thin line between artistic freedom and religious sensitivity. Souza also faced societal resistance for his nudes, challenging social boundaries. Austria's Egon Schiele endured legal consequences for works labelled pornographic by the authorities, underlining a global history of opposition to nude art rooted in conservative societal norms. Adding to these historical challenges, today's digital landscape brings new obstacles for artists who share nude art online. Many social media platforms uphold strict content guidelines, often censoring or banning nude art despite its historical and cultural significance. These policies complicate the sharing and accessibility of nude art, limiting artists' reach and freedom in a digital-first era.

Nude art holds profound cultural significance and is celebrated in classical forms as a tribute to human beauty and expression. Yet, its acceptance remains complex, influenced by religious and moral standards. The HC decision underscores the potential of art to provoke, inspire and push societal boundaries. Embracing a more informed, open-minded approach to evaluating art is essential to fostering a culture in which creativity can flourish free from restrictive censorship.

ON THIS DAY...50 YEARS AGO

## The Tribune.

CHANDIGARH, MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 1974

## The wooing game

As part of its political strategy for the Indian subcontinent, the Soviet Union has been shrewdly striving for a permanent foothold in Pakistan. It has already secured India's lasting goodwill through generous economic assistance and the military commitments in the Indo-Soviet Treaty of August 1971. It is now devoting much time and attention to Pakistan, mainly to counter the growing Chinese and American influence. Mr Bhutto, on his part, has been trying to exploit the Soviet susceptibilities and using his reinforced political leverage to extort maximum gains. He has reiterated that the Soviet friendship "does not affect, in any way whatsoever, Pakistan's friendship with China." In fact, another Chinese friendship delegation is reaching Pakistan this week. Mr Bhutto is a past master in the art of playing one power against another whenever feasible. With the rapport he has now established with the Soviet Union, he commands the unique distinction of having the best of three worlds, instead of the proverbial two. The summit-level talks he had with Soviet leaders in Moscow last week were the first since he assumed office after the Bangladesh debacle. The mutual differences on some vital issues have not been allowed to hinder overt and covert understandings in many fields. The search for the greatest common factor is evident from the joint communique issued after the Moscow summit. The stress throughout is on peace, security and stability. Any ambiguous reference to India, Afghanistan and Bangladesh (with all of whom the Soviet Union has cordial relations) has been scrupulously avoided.

## India, China must overcome trust deficit

Return to pre-Galwan patrolling protocols is a prerequisite for satisfactory disengagement



**CUDAY BHASKAR**  
DIRECTOR, SOCIETY FOR  
POLICY STUDIES

**T**HE most significant takeaway from the 16th BRICS Summit hosted by Russian President Vladimir Putin in Kazan was the brief meeting between the leaders of India and China. It may be interpreted as the beginning of a nascent thaw in the troubled bilateral relationship that had been vitiated by the 2020 Galwan incident. Chinese troops violated the peace and tranquillity agreement of 1993 when they transgressed the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Soldiers were killed on both sides in the ensuing dash.

Chinese troops occupied five sectors beyond the LAC — Galwan, Gogra Hot Springs, Pangong Lake, Depsang and Demchok — and prevented Indian soldiers from patrolling these points as per the earlier protocols. Since then, there has been no high-level contact between the two Asian giants.

In the run-up to the BRICS Summit, India stated on October 21 that an 'agreement' had been reached between the two nations, "leading to disengagement and a resolution of the issues that had arisen in these areas in 2020". This tentative rapprochement enabled the leaders to engage in a meeting. Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Chinese President Xi Jinping on October 23 on the sidelines of the Kazan event.

This was the first proper meeting between the two leaders since 2019. It should be welcomed cautiously. Suggestions about a breakthrough would be invalid, for there was no joint communiqué regarding the meeting, let alone about any 'agreement' as regards the border issue. While Xi noted that China and India should



**CAUTION:** For India, proceeding slowly would be a desirable policy option. REUTERS

manage their differences properly, Modi asserted that mutual trust, respect and sensitivity would guide bilateral relations.

It is instructive that while the statement by India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) was forthcoming about an 'agreement', the Chinese Foreign Ministry was reticent and opaque about the Kazan meeting. The Indian statement noted: "Welcoming the recent agreement for complete disengagement and resolution of issues that arose in 2020 in the India-China border areas, Prime Minister Modi underscored the importance of properly handling differences and disputes and not allowing them to disturb peace and tranquillity." It added that the two leaders agreed that the SRs (Special Representatives) on the India-China boundary question would meet at an early date and explore a fair, reasonable and mutually acceptable solution to the boundary question.

On the Chinese side, official news agency Xinhua reported: "The two leaders commended the important progress the two sides had recently made through intensive communication on resolving the relevant issues in the border areas. Modi made suggestions on improving and developing the relationship, which Xi agreed to in principle." India has sought a return to the pre-Galwan status quo and at

The MEA statement was forthcoming about an 'agreement', but the Chinese Foreign Ministry was reticent and opaque about the Kazan meeting.

At this stage, it is not evident if China has agreed to this formulation. Furthermore, what has dismayed India is the manner in which Beijing chose to violate previous agreements. They include the 1993 peace and tranquillity agreement and the 1996 military confidence-building agreement. These agreements are now in tatters and the challenge for India is to restore the sanctity of these pacts, the first of which was shepherded by then PM Narasimha Rao and President Jiang Zemin.

The fine print of how the disengagement along the LAC will proceed and the patrolling by India as per the pre-Galwan pattern in all sectors will be restored will have to be verified on the ground. The latest reports indicate that the process of disengagement of troops has begun in the Depsang plains and Demchok. While they have a legacy (they predate Galwan), disengagement there would be important in reaching a final settlement. Depsang remains a contentious area, and a consensual patrolling arrangement there could pave the way for moving towards de-escalation.

The Army Chief, Gen Uday Kumar, has dwelt on the need to 'build trust' in the first instance; this prudence is not misplaced. Whether China has disengaged, as sought by India, will be more evident next summer, when more robust patrolling would be possible. Divedi has added that the two sides "need to reassure each other that we are not creeping into buffer zones that are created and built trust before tackling disengagement, de-escalation, and de-induction phases".

The buffer-zone concept along the LAC came into existence after the Galwan clash; it referred to a demilitarised area at the five friction points where India and China agreed to a limited disengagement. These zones were stabilised

by September 2022, and the implication was that Indian troops were not allowed to access areas they had patrolled in the pre-Galwan period.

Thus, the erasure of the buffer zone in all contested sectors and a verified return to the pre-Galwan patrolling protocols along the LAC would be a prerequisite for a satisfactory disengagement, which could lead to de-escalation and de-induction. These complex tactical issues call for strategic patience and prudence on both sides.

Speaking about the Kazan summit, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi noted on October 25 that the BRICS nations had a shared pursuit. He added that China had called for joint efforts "to build BRICS into a primary channel for strengthening solidarity and cooperation among Global South nations" and emerge as a vanguard for advancing global governance reform. The current US-led global system has been less than effective in dealing with the challenges that threaten peace and security across the world. The wars in Ukraine and West Asia, climate change and nuclear sabre-rattling are bleak examples of such ineptitude.

However, the aspiration for BRICS to become a more credible grouping cannot be realised unless there is a major review and rearrangement of the India-China relationship. The received wisdom based on China's actions in relation to India is that it seeks multipolarity at the global level (to reduce US primacy), but wants to impose Chinese unipolarity in Asia. This is a conundrum that the guardians of the Middle Kingdom will have to grapple with. Whether the Kazan meeting will lead to such objective introspection in Beijing is a moot point.

For India, in the context of the LAC, the desirable policy option would be to trust and verify, while proceeding slowly. Finally, a comprehensive white paper on the Galwan setback would help illuminate many strands of the bilateral relationship that remain shrouded in unwarranted secrecy.

## THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Make fair agreements and stick to them. — Confucius

## The great Indian mosaic on display

MAJ GEN JS KATARIA (RETD)

**I** was commissioned into a battalion comprising Jats and Rajputs in equal proportion. The salutation among the troops and officers is preceded by 'Ram-Ram' by Jats and 'Jai Mata ji ki' by Rajputs. During Navratri, many soldiers observe a fast. Consuming non-vegetarian food during this period is taboo. The celebrations largely conclude on the eighth day, while some Rajput soldiers end their fast on the ninth day, Navami.

As a young officer, I got an invite from Rajput soldiers for a Navami function. After the initial prayers and obeisance to Maa Kali, a goat was sacrificed and meat cooked for prasad. After meat and rum were offered to the goddess, these were distributed among the devotees. This was the first time I had witnessed such a religious ceremony — it was a revelation to me.

Born and brought up in the holy city of Amritsar in a progressive Sikh family, I had imbibed the virtues of respecting all religions and their different ways of worship. On joining the National Defence Academy, I encountered a conglomeration of cadets from all religions and castes, which had no bearing on our developing camaraderie. Adapting to other religions and cultures came naturally to me. This was, and is, the norm in the Army.

My maiden obeisance to Maa Kali had raised my inquisitiveness about various gods and goddesses and the nature of worship. During my career, I got many opportunities to visit religious places and learn about our religio-cultural diversity. 'Raas Leela Dandiya' in Gujarat during the Navratras was a fascinating experience. Having married a woman who was born and brought up in Kolkata, I attended Durga Puja festivities and enjoyed the cultural extravaganza. To top it all was a trip to the famous temple of Maa Kali during the grand culmination of Durga Puja.

A few years ago, a friend sent me a piece of 'Angvas-tra' of Goddess Kamakhya from the revered Kamakhya Temple, located in Kamrup district of Assam. It rekindled my memories of a visit to the temple when I was posted in that state. Representing fertility, Goddess Kamakhya is an important Hindu Tantric goddess and a reincarnation of Maa Kaali. Interestingly, Navratri celebrations at Kamakhya last 15 days.

The defence forces have a rich tradition of religious harmony. It is an important cornerstone of their enviable performance on the battlefield. Let's celebrate our diversity and defeat the forces that are attempting to tear apart our vibrant religious and cultural fabric.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Captain's strategic move

Refer to 'Amarinder stirs the Punjab pot' (*The Great Game*); Capt Amarinder Singh is a well-read politician who is deeply conversant with the socio-economic problems of Punjab. He is the only surviving stalwart in state politics who knows the pulse of the people and is disillusioned with the political set-up. The signs of fatigue in the AAP camp are visible; the ruling party is failing to meet voters' expectations. The steady erosion of the SAD's social and political base in Punjab has demoralised its workers. In this complex political scenario, Amarinder's visit to the Khanna granary, with farmers waiting for their paddy crop's timely procurement, assumes special significance. He knows well that the people in villages and cities of the state will not forget his visit in a hurry.

RAJ BAHADUR YADAV, FATEHABAD

## No hope for farmers

Apropos of 'Amarinder stirs the Punjab pot'; the former Punjab CM's visit is going to change the terrible situation being faced by farmers. They have to sit for days on end just to get their grain lifted and are also being paid way below the MSP. Amarinder Singh lifting a few grains from a heap of paddy won't wipe the tears off a farmer's face. If indeed he wants to do something, he should ask the state government why those arhtiyas who are imposing huge cuts on the MSP are not losing their licences. The day he secures for the farmers legal guarantee of the MSP for their crop from the powers that be, he would indeed have stirred the political pot.

GURNOOR GREWAL, CHANDIGARH

## Trudeau's election gimmick

With reference to 'Trudeau's gambit'; Canada has long shone as a beacon for immigrants, thanks to its famously lenient policies. However, the surge of newcomers has precipitated an undeniable strain on essentials like healthcare, housing and employment. Even some members within Trudeau's Liberal Party have begun to question this policy. With elections a year away, Trudeau's worries are understandable. Yet, his blatantly unabashed support for separatist forces poses a serious threat to India.

Historically, India-Canada relations have thrived, but Ottawa's unreserved support for anti-India elements may jeopardise hopes of harmonious bilateral ties.

HARBINDER S DHILLON, UNA

## A series of missteps

Apropos of 'Trudeau's gambit'; given the current situation in the Maple Country, it is evident that the popularity of Justin Trudeau is waning. To cling to power, he is adopting tactics like patronising extremists and radicals to garner the support of a particular community. He has undermined Canada's reputation at the international level. Nobody should have been allowed to sour the traditional cordial relations with long-standing friend India. Parents wishing to send their children to Canada should wait, weigh the pros and cons as employment and accommodation problems are acute there.

SUBHASH VAID, NEW DELHI

## Face-saving ploy

With reference to 'SAD's bypoll retreat'; the Shiromani Akali Dal refraining from contesting the bypolls is no doubt a calculated decision aimed at averting an imminent debacle. Citing that Sukhbir Badal has been declared 'tankhaiya' is only a face-saving strategy. The SAD, once a political force to reckon with, has become a pale shadow of its former self since its rout in the 2017 and 2022 Assembly elections. It appears that the party solely may not be able to face the next Assembly elections, so it may have to take the BJP's support.

RAJ KUMAR KAPOOR, ROPAR

## Strengthen Akali leadership

Refer to 'SAD's bypoll retreat'; the party's decision to refrain from contesting the bypolls appears to be both a calculated retreat and a move to preserve its religious integrity amidst turbulent political times. While citing religious obligations to avoid the bypolls reflects panthic loyalty, the timing suggests a strategic move. SAD's withdrawal raises concerns about the party's political strength and dedication to its supporters. Strengthening its leadership structure and transparency could help regain public trust and stability before the next Assembly elections.

PAWAN JOSHI, MOGA

# Israel-Iran face-off adds fuel to West Asia fire



YOGESH GUPTA  
FORMER AMBASSADOR

**A**FTER reaching an understanding with the Joe Biden administration, Israel despatched about 100 aircraft to bomb 20 select targets in Tehran, Khuzestan and Ilam provinces of Iran on October 26, reportedly including its air defence systems such as S-400, S-300, missile and drone manufacturing units and other military targets. The Israeli strike was in response to more than 180 missiles which Iran had fired at Israel on October 1 to damage its military bases. Since the US and its allies had insisted that Iran's nuclear installations and oil production facilities must not be attacked to prevent a wider war, the Israelis focused on making Iran 'defenceless', destroying its radar facilities for future strikes. Israel also decided not to attack the top Iranian leadership to avoid provoking the Iranian military to retaliate with a second strike on Israel.

The Iranian Foreign Minister had told Arab governments earlier that Iran did not want a wider war and it

could absorb an Israeli retaliatory strike if military sites were targeted rather than sensitive oil or nuclear facilities. The extent of the damage to Iranian military facilities is not clear as the Islamic regime has prohibited its people from revealing details in order to prevent a national uproar. The Ayatollah Khomeini international airport in Tehran was reopened for normal flights after the Israeli military announced that its overnight attacks on Iran had concluded. The US had warned Iran that if it decided to retaliate, it (US) would join the war on behalf of Israel and cause massive damage. Israel also bombed military targets in Syria and Iraq; there were reports of fire at several places.

Iran's reaction so far has been restrained. It has stated that the Israeli strike had resulted in only 'limited' damage and it would humiliate Israel again. But Iran is not talking about taking any punitive action against Israel immediately. Iran needs time to rebuild its proxies like Hezbollah, Hamas and others which have been dealt a devastating blow by Israel.

President Biden monitored the progress of the Israeli strikes from his office. The 'controlled and limited' conflict allowed both Israel and Iran to save face domestically without triggering a wider conflict



RESENTMENT: People walk past an anti-US mural on a building in Tehran. REUTERS

which could damage their economies and those of other countries. A full-blown regional war would have carried significant repercussions for US domestic politics as Democratic Party candidate Kamala Harris is in a close race against Republican nominee Donald Trump in the upcoming presidential elections. Harris has called for de-escalation of this conflict to attract the support of Black, Arab, Muslim and Hispanic voters.

What are the lessons from the Iran-Israel conflict? First, Iran has buttressed its comprehensive national power by mastering the nuclear fuel cycle and man-

ufacturing advanced weapons. After this round, it is likely that Iran would augment its security by taking remaining steps to build a nuclear weapon. Iran has reportedly reached an agreement with Russia to begin manufacturing the advanced Sukhoi-35 fighter aircraft in exchange for setting up similar facilities in Russia to manufacture various missiles. It is already building drones, autonomous vehicles, submarines and other advanced weapons. Iran is also likely to seek more advanced air defence systems such as S-400 from Russia to protect its sensitive installations.

Iran would continue to play the role of a disruptor in any reorientation of the political or economic framework of the region.

With its revolutionary Islamic ideology strongly guiding its foreign policy, Iran would continue to play the role of a disruptor in any reorientation of the political or economic framework of the region.

Second, though the US continues to wield predominant influence in West Asia, it can't impose a solution of its choice anymore in the region. The Great Powers' rivalry has intensified, with Russia and China actively supporting Iran, Syria and others. It will become more difficult for the US to impose sanctions against the sale of oil by Iran in future as many BRICS countries are now keen to transact oil purchases in local currencies, bypassing Western mechanisms.

Third, the current war has further diminished the prospects of finding a solution to the Palestinian issue or other problems festering in West Asia. While most countries are now in favour of a two-state solution to the Palestinian problem, Israeli PM Netanyahu does not want to even consider such a suggestion. His priority is to continue attacking Iranian proxies in the region and decimate their infrastructure and power. The humanitarian crisis in Gaza and southern Lebanon has worsened and there is no consensus yet on ending the conflict, the return of Israeli and other hostages and future governance of

the Gaza Strip.

After the beginning of Israel's war in Gaza, the Biden administration had four important objectives: supporting Israel's war to eliminate the threat posed by Hamas; helping to secure the release of hostages; protection of civilians; and preventing an all-out war in the region. While the threat from Hamas has been considerably neutralised and a regional war has been prevented, the Biden administration has failed to prevent the killing of more than 42,000 Palestinians, including a large number of civilians and children. Two million Palestinians are facing a major humanitarian disaster, and about 3,000 people have died in Lebanon.

While Iran, Israel, Hamas and Hezbollah bear the main responsibility for the ongoing violence, the Biden administration must also accept blame as the most important foreign policy actor in the region and chief enabler of the war. The breaking out of a direct war between the two regional powers, Israel and Iran has put West Asia in a dangerous bind. India has rightly reminded all parties that the "ongoing hostilities are to nobody's benefit as innocent hostages and civilian populations continue to suffer. They should exercise restraint and return to the path of dialogue and diplomacy".

# Hoax bomb threats reveal gaps in aviation security



SHARAD S CHAUHAN  
DGP AND MD, PUNJAB POLICE HOUSING CORPORATION

**A** SURGE in bomb threats has targeted hospitals, malls, colleges and other institutions across the country, but with over 100 hoax calls in a few days and their multi-dimensional effects, the aviation sector is the most vulnerable to disruption.

These hoaxes impose enormous indirect costs on society, disrupting operations, inciting fear and diverting crucial resources. They have created mayhem in the aviation sector, with estimates indicating that the economic cost of a single hoax ranges from lakhs of rupees in the domestic sector to as much as Rs 15-20 crore on international routes.

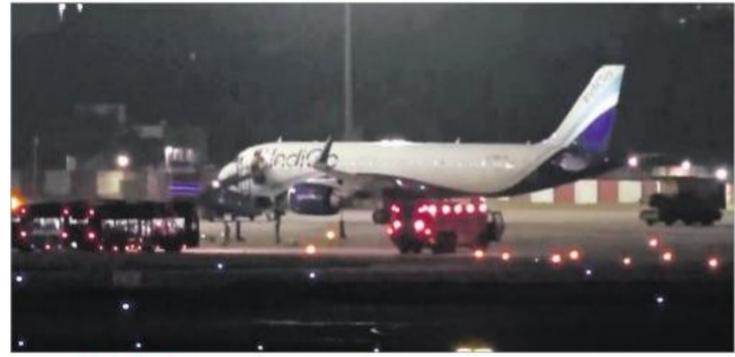
These threats create a ripple effect of consequences, including stress and anxiety for passengers, unexpected delays and disruptions in tourism and business activities. Additionally, Indian carriers face a competitive disadvantage. Security and intelligence resources are strained and diverted from genuine terrorist threats, which can have disastrous con-

sequences. The consistency of the hoaxes and the sophistication and planning involved suggest the involvement of a non-state actor or a deep state influence in the attacks.

Hoaxers and terrorist groups employ anonymising tools and networks to evade detection, such as the Tor network and VPNs, which mask their IP addresses and encrypt communications. They use end-to-end encrypted services and operate on the dark web to ensure that their messages are unreadable to outsiders. Caller ID and email spoofing complicates traceability. They route communications through multiple proxy servers and relay chains, use public wi-fi and compromised devices to avoid detection and rely on burner phones and disposable email accounts, botnets for distributed and automated attacks, making it challenging to pinpoint the source of threats.

Investigations into recent hoaxes conducted by security agencies reveal a pattern in which threats are communicated via social media or phone calls, often followed by a surge of similar threats occurring in a short time frame. The investigations have traced the originating IP addresses to locations in London and Germany, where users are employing VPNs to conceal their online identities and send tweets from remote servers.

Dealing with such acts is a challenging proposition. Along with strict adherence to the



DISRUPTIVE: The aviation sector is reeling under a spate of hoax bomb threats. PTI

standard operating procedures, comprehensive response plans and modernisation of rapid response teams through regular simulation drills are essential. Public awareness campaigns should be encouraged to educate citizens about the seriousness of threats and the legal consequences of such acts. Technological advancements should be fine-tuned, including the development of AI and machine-learning algorithms that analyse threat communications to identify patterns indicating hoaxes versus credible threats. These algorithms can analyse communication patterns, detect anomalies and identify potential bomb threats in real time, enabling prioritisation for immediate response. Additionally, integrating data from various sources, such as social media, past incidents and intelligence reports, allows for a rapid assessment of threat

credibility. Communication interception and analysis tools are also crucial as they trace the origins of emails and phone calls — even those using anonymisation techniques — and help identify perpetrators swiftly. Furthermore, sentiment analysis can detect the tone and urgency of threats, assisting in distinguishing serious threats from likely hoaxes.

FIRs have been registered under various sections of the Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS) and Section 3(1)(d) of the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against Safety of Civil Aviation Act, 1982, in connection with the recent hoax bomb threats. The BNS enforces strict penalties to discourage hoax calls. Section 353 addresses public mischief, penalising those who intentionally spread false information that incites fear or disorder, with false bomb threats punishable with up to

three years of imprisonment. Section 351 pertains to criminal intimidation through anonymous communication. Additionally, Section 113 of the BNS covers terrorism, targeting anyone who threatens economic security with the intent to instil terror. This section should be revised to encompass hoaxes that qualify as terror acts in a broader context. The authorities should not hesitate from applying stringent provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, whenever necessary.

Besides putting hoaxers on the no-fly list, the Centre should collaborate with the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, Ministry of Law and the ministries responsible for civil aviation, information and broadcasting, and information technology to enact deterrent legal amendments. It should also examine the anti-hoax provisions of other countries to establish stricter regulations that specifically address hoaxes, thereby creating a robust deterrent against such acts.

International cooperation is essential in addressing bomb hoaxes and it should focus on creating joint global task forces that unite law enforcement, military, intelligence agencies and cybersecurity experts. This collaboration enables effective identification, tracking and neutralisation of hoaxes through shared resources and expertise. Addi-

tionally, fostering public-private partnerships with entities like telecommunications companies can enhance efforts to trace the origins of bomb threats. Legal measures must include harmonised legislation across countries for consistent prosecution of hoaxers and stronger extradition treaties to ensure that offenders are held accountable, regardless of their location.

Meanwhile, no information should be taken lightly. In 1988, Pan Am Flight 103 was destroyed by a bomb over Lockerbie, resulting in over 250 deaths. The US government received a specific threat regarding a planned attack on the flight. Despite heightened security measures, including a passenger surcharge and public warnings, the bombing occurred. The warning, along with a pile of papers, was found in the airport after the attack.

The risk of a genuine attack, however minuscule, remains too significant for any government or security agency to politically ignore. With stringent SOPs in place, the only viable solution and decisive action is the rapid arrest, prosecution and punishment of those indulging in hoaxes.

If malicious, these hoaxes lend credence to the age-old claim that terrorists simply want "a lot of people watching, not a lot of people dead". In this context, the stakes are too high and the cost of inaction is unthinkable. And, India is watching impatiently.

With stringent SOPs in place, the only viable solution and decisive action is the rapid arrest, prosecution and punishment of those indulging in hoaxes.

### QUICK CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9			10				
11			12				
13			14				
15			16				
17			18				19
20			21				
22			23				
24			25				
26			27				
28			29				
30			31				

- ACROSS**
- Affection (6)
  - Island part of Tanzania (8)
  - Overthrow (6)
  - Receptiveness to ideas (4,4)
  - Sway from side to side (4)
  - Under way (5)
  - Depressed (4)
  - Genuineness (12)
  - Of proven worth (5,3,4)
  - Sympathetic sorrow (4)
  - Afraid (5)
  - Succeeding (4)
  - Conventional (8)
  - Sphere of control (6)
  - Meddlesome person (8)
  - A card game (6)
- DOWN**
- Navigable channel (8)
  - Greed for gain (8)
  - Lofly (4)
  - Friendly (12)
  - Region (4)
  - Show resentment (6)
  - Make up for (6)
  - Not for publication (3,3,6)
  - Belittle (5)
  - Consider attentively (5)
  - Liberty to act at one's discretion (4,4)
  - Penalty imposed by court (8)
  - Self-confidence (6)
  - Standing (6)
  - Search thoroughly (4)
  - Rise high (4)
- Saturday's solution**
- Across:** 1 Wager, 4 Hogarth, 8 Rob, 9 Dungaees, 10 Harbour, 11 Decay, 13 Plight, 15 Permit, 18 Guess, 19 Involve, 21 Astrakhan, 23 Ace, 24 Progeny, 25 Surly.
- Down:** 1 Worship, 2 Gabardine, 3 Rodeo, 4 Hungry, 5 Grandee, 6 Rue, 7 Husky, 12 Camel hair, 14 Hostage, 16 Thereby, 17 Mighty, 18 Grasp, 20 Venus, 22 Too.

### SU DO KU

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MEDIUM

### FORECAST

SUNRISE:	MONDAY	17:39 HRS
SUNRISE:	TUESDAY	06:34 HRS
CITY	MAX	MIN
Chandigarh	33	20
New Delhi	33	20
Amritsar	33	18
Bathinda	34	16
Jalandhar	33	17
Ludhiana	33	18
Bhivani	33	20
Hisar	34	17
Sirsa	36	21
Dharamsala	27	14
Manali	22	07
Shimla	23	12
Srinagar	25	06
Jammu	32	18
Kargil	20	03
Leh	13	01
Dehradun	31	17
Mussoorie	21	13

**CALENDAR**  
OCTOBER 28, 2024, MONDAY

- Shaka Samvat 1946
- Kartik Shaka 6
- Kartik Navishte 12
- Hijari 1446
- Krishna Paksha Tithi 11, up to 7.51 am
- Brahma Yoga up to 7.48 am
- Purvaphalguni Nakshatra up to 3.24 pm
- Moon enters Virgo sign 8.11 pm

# Ganderbal terror attack probe hints at intel gaps, undetected infiltration

**SRINAGAR/NEWDELHI, OCTOBER 27**  
An investigation into the October 20 terrorist attack in Gagangir in Ganderbal district has indicated significant gaps in intelligence and undetected infiltration since last one year along the Line of Control (LoC), officials said on Sunday.

The attack, which claimed the lives of seven individuals, including a local doctor and two labourers from Bihar, has raised concerns about the unreported trend of local youths joining militant groups in Kashmir during this period.

The attack on the Z-Morh tunnel construction site involved two terrorists, one identified as a local youth from Kulgam in South Kashmir who joined a terrorist group in 2023, while the other is believed to have come from Pakistan.

Security officials expressed alarm at the rapid radicalisation of local youths, underscoring the need for improved human intelligence (HUMINT) capabilities to identify them.

In light of recent changes in leadership of the Jammu and Kashmir police and the XV Corps of the Army, there



## LOCAL SUPPORT

- Recent terrorist attacks indicate significant gaps in intelligence and undetected infiltration since last one year along LoC
- The Ganderbal attack has raised concerns about the unreported trend of local youths joining militant groups in Kashmir during this period
- Security officials express alarm at the rapid radicalisation of local youths, underscoring the need for improved human intelligence capabilities to identify them

Security personnel keep vigil on the Gulmarg Botapathri road. FILE

is a renewed focus on enhancing HUMINT to prevent local youths from slipping into terrorism.

The terrorists on October 20 entered the construction site and opened fire for about ten minutes before fleeing into nearby jungles. The local assailant was armed with an AK rifle, while his accomplice carried an American M-4 rifle.

Officials indicated that the local terrorist may have been involved in facilitating the infiltration of the other

attacker along with his group, who likely crossed the LoC from the Tulail sector in March this year.

There have been intelligence reports of infiltration attempts from various regions, including Tulail, Gurez, Machil and Gulmarg in North Kashmir, since December last year, but the Army has been denying them due to lack of corroboration.

Similarly, the terrorists involved in the incident at Bota Pathri in the Gulmarg

region on Thursday that left two soldiers and two Army porters dead are believed to have been holed up in the higher reaches of Afrawat since early August, the officials said.

Previously, security agencies have struggled against what they refer to as the "hidden threat" posed by terrorists employing "conservation and consolidation" tactics.

This strategy involves infiltrators remaining dormant within the local population

until they receive orders from their handlers in Pakistan.

Officials believe that the recent month-long Assembly elections in the Union Territory may have prompted these groups to remain low-profile due to heightened security measures and increased international scrutiny.

The shift in terrorist operations has highlighted the urgent need for enhanced surveillance to thwart foreign mercenaries from executing their plans. Security forces have noted that the infiltration and recruitment of local youths have increasingly taken place through online platforms.

Terrorists are now relying on encrypted messaging services such as Telegram and Mastodon, which are already banned in certain districts like Rajouri and Poonch, for covert communication and operational coordination.

As authorities remain on high alert, the challenge of gathering actionable ground-level intelligence persists, underscoring the critical need for a comprehensive approach to counter-terrorism in the region, they said. — PTI

# Rana, Sharma lead race for LoP; BJP may get Dy Speaker's post

ARJUN SHARMA

JAMMU, OCTOBER 27

Two senior BJP leaders and recently elected MLAs are the frontrunners for the position of Leader of Opposition (LoP) in the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

Devender Singh Rana, who has been elected MLA from Nagrota constituency and Sunil Sharma elected from Padder-Nagseni seat are vying for the post of LoP. The BJP had won 29 seats in the recently concluded Assembly polls and dominated in Jammu region.

The BJP is also making preparations to select the Deputy Speaker as the National Conference is likely to offer the post to the saffron party. Lt Governor Manoj Sinha has already summoned a session of the legislative assembly in Srinagar on November 4. Name of BJP MLA Narinder Singh Raina, who defeated Congress working president Raman Bhalla from RS Pura-Jammu South seat, is doing the rounds for the post of Deputy Speaker.

The BJP Parliamentary Board has appointed Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and BJP's national general secretary Tarun Chugh as central observers for the elec-



Senior BJP leaders Devender Singh Rana (L) and Sunil Sharma are vying for the post of Leader of Opposition in the J&K Assembly.

tion of the legislative party leader for J&K. A meeting in this regard was expected last week. However, sources said the meeting will probably take place in the coming days.

Devender Singh Rana is a senior leader who got overwhelming support from different communities in his constituency. He won with the highest margin of over 30,000 votes from Nagrota seat, from where he was elected even in 2014. Rana had left the National Conference in 2021 and joined BJP after which the NC struggled to fill the vacuum left with his exit.

On the other hand, Sunil Sharma is a former minister who won from Kishtwar in 2014. After the change in his

constituency this time to Padder-Nagseni in Kishtwar district, many feared that he may not be able to register a win from the area, which has a substantial Muslim population. However, negating the forecast, Sharma was able to emerge victorious.

With Rana coming from Rajput community and Sharma from Brahmin community, caste is also likely to play an important role in the selection of the Leader of Opposition.

The BJP was able to win highest number of seats in Jammu and Kashmir this time. The party won even in some areas with substantial Muslim population. But it was not able to open its account in the Kashmir region.

# DIG asks police officers to remain on high alert

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, OCTOBER 27

In view of intelligence inputs that terrorists might launch attacks in Jammu division after multiple attacks in Kashmir, the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Shiv Kumar conducted a security review in Samba and Kathua districts.

"In view of present security scenario in the Union Territory, DIG, Jammu-Kathua-Samba Range, Shiv Kumar conducted security review of Samba and Kathua districts," an official said.

During the visit, the DIG met with Special Operations Group (SOG) members and checked their preparedness for anti-terrorist operations. In Samba district, the DIG visited AIIMS, Vijaypur, along with SSP Vinay Kumar and other senior police officials.

He also visited BSF posts in border areas, including Paharpur in Kathua along with SSP Shobit Saxena, ASP Rahul Charak and other officials. The DIG also conducted a meeting with security forces officials in areas close to Punjab border in Kathua. Checking at various interstate police posts was also reviewed.

"The DIG conveyed the instructions of DGP Nalin Parbhat to the officials that all security arrangements should be on high alert and all police personnel should be ready to conduct operation against terrorists. Regular searches should be conducted in forests where presence of terrorists has been sighted, along with Army and CRPF," the official said.

The DIG also instructed all SSPs, ASPs, SDPOs, and SHOs to conduct checking of busy markets in view of forthcoming festivals.

# Court to pass order on Rashid's regular bail plea today

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

A Delhi court is likely to pronounce on Monday its order on a regular bail plea of Engineer Rashid, the Lok Sabha MP from Baramulla, in a terror funding case.

Additional Sessions Judge Chander Jit Singh, who on September 10 granted interim bail to Sheikh Abdul Rashid, popular as Engineer Rashid, to enable him to campaign for the Assembly elections in Jammu and Kashmir, had earlier deferred the order on his regular bail application.

The judge had extended Rashid's interim bail till October 28 on the grounds of his father's health.

The NIA had said it had verified the documents and it was not opposing the bail application of the accused due to the health condition of his father.

Rashid had been lodged in Tihar jail since 2019 after he was arrested by the National



Sheikh Abdul Rashid, Baramulla MP

Investigation Agency (NIA) under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in a 2017 terror funding case.

Elections to the 90-member J&K Assembly were held in three phases from September 18 to October 1. The results were declared on October 8 in which the National Conference-Congress alliance attained a clear majority with 48 seats. — PTI

# AIP discusses future course of action

OUR CORRESPONDENT

JAMMU, OCTOBER 27

Awami Itihaad Party convened a meeting of constituency heads and district presidents in Baramulla today. Party leaders discussed recent political developments and the challenges on account of fallout of outcome of party chief Sheikh Abdul Rashid's bail judgment scheduled for Monday at the Patiala House Court in New Delhi.

The meeting served as a strategic assessment of AIP's outreach and impact across Jammu and Kashmir.

Following the meeting, Rashid addressed a press conference, emphasising that regardless of the court's decision, his commitment to the people of Jammu and Kashmir remains steadfast. "Whether in Tihar Jail or out-

side, I will never be deterred from representing the sentiments and legitimate aspirations of the people," he asserted. Er Rashid highlighted his outreach efforts during his time out on interim bail, covering not only the Baramulla parliamentary constituency but also parts of central and south Kashmir.

Rashid also expressed conditional support for Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, stating that he would back any initiatives beneficial to the people of J&K. He urged Omar Abdullah to fulfil his poll promises, including 1 lakh jobs, 200 free units of electricity and 12 free gas cylinders and questioned what Omar discussed with key national leaders, including the Prime Minister, Defence Minister and Home Minister. He called on Omar Abdullah to clarify whether

issues like the restoration of Article 370 and the release of political prisoners were part of those discussions and what responses were received.

Additionally, Rashid extended his gratitude to civil secretariat officers and district-level officials, praising their cooperation in review meetings and addressing public issues. He confirmed that the financial commitments he made during his visits and review sessions had been recommended to be released from the MPLADS fund and urged the administration to ensure swift implementation of these works.

Rashid reassured the public that he, his team, and newly established AIP offices across Baramulla Parliamentary Constituency are dedicated to serving the people.

# Army unveils statue of Sikh warrior in Rajouri dist

JAMMU, OCTOBER 27

Army on Sunday unveiled the statue of great warrior Baba Banda Singh Bahadur to commemorate his 355th birth anniversary at Narian along the Jammu-Poonch national highway in Rajouri district, a defence spokesman said.

The unveiling of the statue by the General Officer Commanding, the 25 Infantry Division, Major General Gaurav Rishi, coincided with Infantry Day which was celebrated by the Army across the region.

After the inauguration, the defence spokesman said the place would be known as 'Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Mod'. Being a great warrior, Bahadur continues to inspire the people of Rajouri and will instil a sense of pride amongst the civilians and locals moving along the highway, he said. — PTI

# Amid farm stir, Centre says will procure every grain...

10 LMT. The total procurement as on date is 49.88 LMT. Already 3,800 rice millers have registered with the FCI to lift paddy and 3,250 have been allotted it. We expect 4,500 rice millers to register," he said.

There are around 5,500 rice millers in Punjab and they have been reluctant to lift paddy fearing lower out-turn ratio (paddy to rice ratio) than the normal 67 per cent due to use of some hybrid varieties of rice this year.

The Centre gives arhtiyas commissions on 67 per cent out-turn ratio (OTR). On this issue, the minister said the PR-126 paddy variety had

## WILL TALK TO HIM: JOSHI ON CAPT'S BJP REMARK

Food Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday said he would speak to Capt Amarinder about Punjab's farm issues

"I don't know what he has said. I will talk to him," Joshi said when asked by *The Tribune* for comments on the

former Punjab CM's remarks that the "BJP does not seek his advice"

Singh had in an exclusive interview to *The Tribune* said his advice on farmers' issues was not being sought by the BJP

been in existence in Punjab since 2016 but there were reports this year that some hybrids were sold in the name of PR-126 which is why a Kharagpur IIT team is already in Punjab to study the varieties and recommend a review of the OTR as Mann

had suggested. "Should such a review happen it will be pan-India," said Joshi, adding that Rs 9,820-crore payment had been made to the procurement agencies concerned in Punjab and they had already released Rs 7,640 crore to farmers.

**No cause for worry: Food Secy**  
Asked about the plan on the basis of which the government was sure of procuring and storing paddy smoothly, Food Secretary Sanjeev Chopra said the commitment was to procure 185 LMT paddy or about 124 LMT rice.

"If we take the average procurement of rice we have done in the past five years, it is 84 LMT. By December on an average, we have procured 15.5 LMT over the past five years. So even if we take that average we already have 14 LMT space available today and will have 16 LMT by November 1, more

capacity than we need. Some vested interests are peddling rumours on the issue. Even in the pre-Covid season of 2019, we had only space for 13 LMT rice in Punjab. Today we have more," said Chopra.

He also explained that the Centre has plans to move out 13 to 15 LMT paddy from Punjab every month. "Even if you take the lower figure of 13 LMT per month for lifting paddy, we would have moved 67 LMT out of Punjab by March. The state government has offered us 40 LMT space which we will take without tendering. So there is no issue of space," Chopra said.

# Cong team visits Reasi, Udhampur for feedback

JAMMU, OCTOBER 27

A fact-finding team of the Congress visited Reasi and Udhampur districts on Sunday to ascertain the reasons for the party's poor performance in the recently-held Assembly polls in the UT, a party spokesperson said.

The team headed by J&K Congress vice-president Ravinder Sharma interacted with party candidates and other leaders, including district and block functionaries, besides leaders of the party's frontal wings,

the spokesperson said.

Accompanied by the team members, including Ved Mahajan, Jahangir Mir, Naresh Gupta and Dina Nath Bhagat, Sharma held detailed deliberations with the leaders over the party's poor poll show, despite alleged resentment against the BJP on various issues, including unemployment, inflation and anti-people decisions of the Centre and the Lieutenant Governor's administration in the UT. — PTI

# Three killed in Jammu road mishap

JAMMU, OCTOBER 27

Three youths were killed when their motorcycle collided head-on with a truck here on Sunday evening.

The accident took place near Panjgarian in the Nagrota area along the Jammu-Srinagar national highway, police officials said. The three youths died on the spot after their motorcycle collided with the truck. Their bodies were shifted to Government Medical College for post-mortem and identification. — PTI

# Before Diwali, air 'very poor' in...

making visibility difficult.

The minimum temperature was recorded at 20.1 degrees Celsius, one notch above the season's average. In neighbouring Haryana, the air quality in 11 cities, including Kurukshetra, Kamal, Kaithal, Rohtak, Jind, Sonapat, Bhiwani and Gurugram, continued to be in the poor category.

The AQI was recorded at 283 in Bhiwani, 272 in Sonapat, 254 in Rohtak, 239 in Gurugram, 233 in Kaithal, 225 in Hisar, 215 in Karnal, 214 in Kurukshetra, 209 in Sirsa, 208

in Faridabad, and 207 in Jind. Meanwhile, 13 fresh cases of farm fires were reported in the state on Sunday, taking the total number of such cases to 713. Kaithal has reported the maximum 135 farm fires, followed by Kurukshetra (106), Ambala (75), Kamal (74), Jind (53), Fatehabad (42), Sonapat (41), Faridabad (34), Yamunanagar (30), Panipat (29), Palwal (27), Hisar (20), Sirsa (19), Panchkula (14), Rohtak (11), and Jhajjar (3). At least, 1,005 cases of farm fires were reported during the corre-

sponding period last year. Nirmal Kashyap, Senior Environmental Engineer, State Pollution Control Board, said, "The weather conditions are changing drastically with a dip in temperature and reduced airflow. The dispersion of dust has stopped because of poor airflow. This has an adverse impact on the air quality. Besides, there is pollution by vehicles. The current situation is likely to stay. People will burst crackers on Diwali, which will further take a toll on air quality."

# HC admits CBI's appeal against Sajjan's acquittal in 1984 Sikh riots case

rioting against them. A Sikh man, identified as Surjit Singh, was killed during the incident in Sultanpuri.

Kumar was accused of various offences punishable under the Indian Penal Code (IPC), including promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race etc. (Section 153A), abetment of any offence (Sec-

tion 109), murder (Section 302) and rioting (147).

The anti-Sikh riots had broken out after the assassination of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi by her Sikh bodyguards on October 31, 1984. Kumar is currently lodged in Tihar Jail serving life term after conviction in another case related to the riots. — PTI

# 50 flights receive hoax bomb...

FROM PAGE 1

that received security-related alerts include 6E 11 (Delhi-Istanbul), 6E 92 (Jeddah-Mumbai), 6E 112 (Goa-Ahmedabad), 6E 125 (Bengaluru-Jharsuguda), 6E 127 (Amritsar-Ahmedabad) and 6E 135 (Kolkata-Pune).

Among others are 6E 149 (Hyderabad to Bagdogra), 6E 173 (Delhi to Bengaluru), 6E 175 (Bengaluru to Delhi), 6E 197 (Raipur to Hyderabad), 6E 248 (Mumbai to Kolkata), 6E 277 (Ahmedabad-Lucknow), 6E 312 (Bengaluru to

Kolkata), 6E 235 (Kolkata-Bengaluru) and 6E 74 (Riyadh-Mumbai).

Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoan Naidu on Sunday said the Centre was mulling steps to ban perpetrators, who resort to hoax bomb threats, from flying. The minister also said besides taking support from international agencies, law enforcement wings and the Intelligence Bureau to prevent these fake threats, the Centre was mulling to amend two Civil Aviation Laws.

Meanwhile, at least 10 major hotels in Lucknow received bomb threats via email on Sunday. The Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad did not find anything suspicious, officials said. — PTI

Against the backdrop of a spate of hoax bomb threats to airlines, the IT Ministry has asked social media platforms to observe due diligence obligations and promptly remove or disable access to misinformation within the strict timelines prescribed under IT rules.

Meanwhile, at least 10 major hotels in Lucknow received bomb threats via email on Sunday. The Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad did not find anything suspicious, officials said. — PTI

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**PUBLIC NOTICES**

**I. Army No. JC 471531P Sub Major & Hon. Lt. Bhupinder Singh** declare that in the Army documents my wife's name has been registered as Seema Devi, her real name is Seema that's as per the Aadhar card also. (CL24069176)

**TENDER NOTICE**

**MD Dayanand Model School,** (affiliated to CBSE) managed by DAV CMC New Delhi) Nakodar, Distt. Jalandhar. Quotation invite from reputed transporters for School bus/ tempo traveller on contract basis in different w.e.f. December 2024 for two year. Form available in the School Office on payment of Rs. 50/-, Contact: 01821-500748, Principal/ Manager. (CL24069170)

**COURT NOTICES**

**(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)**  
 In the Court of Sh. Sachin Yadav Addl. Civil Judge (Sr. Division), Chandigarh Canara Bank Vs. M/s Raghav Gift and Greetings Suit for Recovery CNR No. CHCH02-004122-2023 Next Date: 09.12.2024 Publication issued to: I. M/s Raghav Gift and Greetings through its Proprietor Ms. Leena Jain Registered Office at SCO 1024-25, FF, Sector 22B, Chandigarh 160022. 2nd Address SCO 1110-1111, Basement Sector 22B, Chandigarh, 3rd Address SCF 7, Top Floor, Veer Shopping Complex, VIP Road, Lohgarh Zirakpur Mohali Punjab 160603. 2. Ms. Leena Jain Proprietor M/s Raghav Gift and Greetings r/o Flat 102, HI Tower, Maya Garden, Zirakpur City, Mohali, Pb.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 09.12.2024 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to <https://highcourthd.gov.in/> trs=distric\_notice&district=chandigarh Dated, this day of 25.09.2024. Sd/- Sachin Yadav Addl. Civil Judge (Senior Division), Chandigarh CL24068997

**(U/O 5 Rule 20 CPC)**  
 In the Court of Mandeep Kaur Principal Judge, Family Court, Amritsar Rajwinder Kaur Vs. Jatinder Singh Dhillon CNR No. PBAS01-004299-2024 Previous Date: 10.10.2024 Next Date: 28.11.2024 Publication issued to: Jatinder Singh Dhillon s/o Raghbir Singh r/o 3015, Monache Meadows Dr. Bakersfield, California, 93313, United States of America.

In above titled case, the defendant(s)/respondent(s) could not be served. It is ordered that defendant(s)/respondent(s) should appear in person or through counsel on 28.11.2024 at 10:00 a.m.

For details logon to <https://highcourthd.gov.in/> trs=distric\_notice&district=amritsar Dated, this day of 22.10.2024 Sd/- Mandeep Kaur Principal Judge, Family Court, Amritsar. CL24069123

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# Amid festive rush, 9 injured in stampede at Bandra railway station

Central Railway imposes platform ticket sale restrictions to curb crowding

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

Nine persons were injured, including two in a critical condition, in a stampede incident as passengers rush to board a Gorakhpur-bound train at the Bandra railway station in Maharashtra on Sunday morning.

The two seriously injured persons were identified as Indrajit Sahani (19) and Noor Mohammed Shaikh (18). They have been admitted at the Bhabha Hospital.

In view of the upcoming Diwali and Chhath festivals, a large number of people planning to go to their native places had reached the Bandra Terminus where several passengers rushed to board the unreserved train when it was being brought on a platform.

The empty Antyodaya Express, having all 22 general class coaches was being backed on platform no.1 at around 2.45 am. Things got out of hand when passengers, who had queued up while waiting for the train, tried to board it when it was taken on the platform from the yard with doors of the coaches locked from inside.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said the "stampede" was the latest example of India's crumbling infrastructure. Shiv Sena (UBT) leader Aditya Thackeray said the



People gather at the Bandra railway station after the stampede incident in Mumbai on Sunday. PTI

**EXAMPLE OF CRUMBLING INFRA: CONG**

“Inaugurations and publicity are acceptable only when the foundation behind them is about public good. When people lose their lives; and bridges or statues start crumbling after the ribbon-cutting, it is a matter of serious concern. The Bandra station stampede is the latest example of India's crumbling infrastructure. Rahul Gandhi, LEADER OF OPPOSITION, LOK SABHA

incident at Bandra reflected how "incapable" the current Railways Minister was.

"Wish the reel minister was a rail minister for once. The incident at Bandra only reflects how incapable the current Railways Minister is. The BJP has made Ashwini Vaishnav a Prabhari for the BJP Maharashtra for elec-

tions, but every week there are some incidents and accidents that occur with the railways. Such a shame that our country has been forced under such incapable ministers," Aditya added.

His party colleague Sanjay Raut said Vaishnav was too busy with the bullet train project, while passengers in Mum-

bai were being ignored.

Following the stampede incident, the Central Railway on Sunday imposed a temporary restriction on sale of platform tickets at major stations to reduce festival crowding.

Central railway said the platform ticket sale restrictions will be in force at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus, Dadar, Kurla LTT, Thane, Kalyan, Pune and Nagpur stations with immediate effect. Western Railway said platform ticket sale restrictions have been imposed till November 8 at Mumbai Central, Dadar, Bandra Terminus, Borivali, Vasai Road, Vapi, Valsad, Udhna and Surat stations.

# Sena fields Deora against Aaditya

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

The Shiv Sena led by CM Eknath Shinde today nominated Rajya Sabha MP Milind Deora against ex-CM Uddhav Thackeray's son and Shiv Sena (UBT) nominee Aaditya Thackeray from Mumbai's Worli in the Assembly poll.

Deora, a former Congress leader, joined the Sena before the Lok Sabha elections and was subsequently elected to the Rajya Sabha. Shinde's decision to pit Deora against incumbent MLA Aaditya will make Worli a high-voltage contest. The Shiv Sena today announced 20 candidates.

It also fielded BJP MP Narayan Rane's son Nilesh Rane from Kudal. His younger brother Nitesh Rane has been renominated by the BJP from Kankavali.

The party has picked MLC and former MP Bhawana Gawali from Risod in Washim district, while another MLC, Amshya Padvi, will contest on Sena ticket from Akkalkuva constituency.

**CONG NAMES 14 MORE CANDIDATES**

■ The Congress on Sunday issued a list of 14 candidates for the Maharashtra Assembly elections.

■ Lalu H Shewale has replaced Madhukar Krishnarao Deshmukh from Aurangabad East, while Adhok Jadhav has replaced Sachin Sawant in the Andheri West segment.

Former Lok Sabha member Sanjay Nirupam will contest from the Dindoshi seat in Mumbai. The Sena has also nominated former BJP leader Muji Patel for the Andheri East seat in the state capital.

BJP ex-MP Rajendra Gav-it, who joined the Sena in 2019 and won the Palghar Lok Sabha seat then, has been fielded from Palghar.

Elections to the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly will be held on November 20 and votes will be counted on November 23. — PTI

# Environment Ministry team in Kenya to source cheetahs

AKSHEEV THAKUR

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

A four-member delegation of the Environment Ministry is away to Kenya to source cheetahs as well as finalise a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the African nation on enhancing cooperation in wildlife conservation.

Officials from the ministry said the new batch of cheetahs — 14 are likely to be sourced — from Kenya is in the northern hemisphere and its cheetahs will adjust better in India's tropical climate. The wild cats sourced earlier were from the southern hemisphere in Africa, a reason why they developed thick fur on their neck in the winter. Also, there is heat and humidity at Kuno, which led to infections," an official from the ministry said.

The official said as part of efforts towards wildlife conservation, Kenya wanted its forest staff to be trained at

14 likely to be brought to India



the Wildlife Institute of India in Dehradun. "They have sought long-term support," he said. The new batch of cheetahs will be introduced in Gandhi Sagar Wildlife Sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh and Shahgarh Wildlife Sanctuary and Desert National Park in Rajasthan as potential landscapes for cheetahs. At present, there are 24 cheetahs at Kuno, which include 12 adults and two India-born cubs.

# TMC aided state-sponsored infiltration in Bengal: Shah

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

Home Minister Armit Shah on Sunday accused the TMC government in West Bengal of aiding "state-sponsored infiltration" and corruption.

He further said that incidents of assault on women in Sandeshkhali and the rape and murder of a doctor at the RG Kar Hospital were evidence that women are "not safe" in the state.

Criticising the West Bengal Government, Shah further said all funds sent by the Centre to the state, "were being sacrificed at the altar of corruption".

He made these remarks during his address after inaugurating the new passenger terminal building and a Maitri Dwar at Petrapole in West Bengal, built at a cost of Rs 487 crore by the Land Port Authority of India (LPAI).

Shah pointed out that under the previous UPA government, Rs 5,000 crore was allocated to Bengal through the MGNREGA scheme, which the NDA government hiked to Rs 54,000 crore over the last 10 years. He emphasised on the need to investigate why this money did not reach the beneficiaries of the schemes.

Lauding LPAI's initiative, Shah said it would play a big role in curbing illegal infiltration from Bangladesh. "If you vote for change in the 2026 Assembly elections, then the BJP will only rest after com-



Home Minister Armit Shah with party leader Mithun Chakraborty during the BJP's membership drive in Kolkata on Sunday. PTI

pletely stopping illegal movement from across the border," he said.

"Mamata Banerjee was part of your government for 10 years, but what have you done for Bengal?" Shah asked leaders of the INDI alliance.

"All the funds sent by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for Bengal are eaten up by the Trinamool Congress workers and don't reach the real beneficiaries. She should get this probed," Shah said.

Meanwhile, referring to the Maitri Dwar, the Minister said that it would help in establishing peace in the eastern frontier, as the lack of a legal framework for movement had led to illegal crossings. Shah said peace in West Bengal could only be established when the support for illegal infiltration was stopped. This would usher in a new era of partnership with neighbour-

ing countries, he said.

The Home Minister also highlighted the Centre's role in transforming the concept of the LPAI. He noted that it was previously seen as a mere means of trade, but now it has become a gateway to prosperity and peace, playing a significant role in connecting with the neighbouring nations, promoting legal trade and contributing to the creation of a prosperous nation.

Shah mentioned that the terminal building, built at a cost of approximately Rs 500 crore, had the capacity to handle 25,000 passengers daily. He added that this would greatly boost medical and educational tourism.

The Maitri Dwar, constructed at a cost of Rs 6 crore, will allow smooth passage of transport with a handling capacity of over 600 to 700 trucks per day.

# Modi, Spain PM to inaugurate C-295 plant in Vadodara

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Spanish PM Pedro Sanchez will inaugurate the "final assembly line" to manufacture the C-295 military aircraft at Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL), Vadodara, on Monday. The facility will be the first private sector assembly line for military aircraft in India.

A total of 56 aircraft are to be manufactured at the cost of Rs 21,935 crore, under a joint venture between European major Airbus and Tata. Sixteen of the planes are being delivered by Airbus from Spain, and 40 will be manufactured in India.

Airbus, which delivered the first plane in September 2023, will complete the supply by August 2025. So far, six planes have been delivered to India. The first plane from the Vado-

First plane to roll out from facility in 2026

dara facility will roll out in September 2026 and the remaining by August 2031.

The C-295 is a versatile, new generation tactical airlift, which specialises in air transport missions under all types of weather conditions.

For the 40 aircraft to be made in India by the TASL, a substantial proportion of C-295 components, sub-assemblies and major component assemblies of aero structure are planned to be manufactured in India. Other than the aero engine and avionics, which are sourced by Airbus, 13,000 small and big parts needed in the C-295 will be produced in India.

Of the 37 companies identified by Airbus for manufacturing parts, 33 are MSMEs.

# India ranked 176 on nature conservation index

AKSHEEV THAKUR

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

With a score of 45.5 out of 100, India ranked 176 out of 180 countries in the Global Nature Conservation Index. It was placed just above Kiribati which ranked 180, Turkey (ranked 179), Iraq (178) and Micronesia (177).

The Index, launched this month, evaluates conservation efforts on four parameters — management of land, threats faced by biodiversity, governance and capacity, and future trends. India's low ranking is being primarily attributed to rising threats to biodiversity and the inefficient management of land.

"Unique habitats like India's deserts, with 628 plant species, and cold deserts (Himalayas) protect rare species like the Snow Leopard and require attention to conservation. Though 7.5 percent of India's terrestrial area is protected, improvements are

**RANKING QUESTIONED**

“The report says that our land management is poor. Imagine several African countries faced with unprecedented extension of deserts, US and Canada are leading in terms of forest fire, and yet all are above us. BK Singh, EX-INDIAN FOREST SERVICE OFFICER

needed in marine protected areas," stated the Nature Conservation Index.

However, experts are divided about the claims made in the index. Former Indian Forest Service officer, BK Singh, commented, "The report says that our land management is poor. Imagine several African countries faced with unprecedented extension of deserts, and all are above us."

"In regards deforestation, there are several reports indicating that boreal forests,

**SHOWS LACK OF WILL**

“When reserve forests and protected areas are merely for the sake of numbers and optics, and when there is no real will to conserve forests and wildlife, the net result is usually like this. Rohit Choudhary, ENVIRONMENT ACTIVIST

Amazon forests, and forests of Congo basin are subjected to severe losses as compared to us. The US and Canada are leading in terms of forest fire. In 2023, forest fires in Canada caused a surge in greenhouse gas emission. How can they be rated above us?" Singh asked.

He said that the report is a data-driven analysis and not a study report based on any satellite images. "It is quite difficult to compare countries based on the records of

land management and biodiversity conservation. Countries keep their land/soil fertility data in different formats, which indeed makes it difficult to analyse and compare," Singh said.

The report said that over 10.47 percent of India's GDP was allocated to environmental and conservation management in 2023-2024.

It noted that due to India's role as both a source and transit point for trafficked wildlife, many species were illegally moved in and out of the country.

Common wildlife seizures in India include ivory, Indian star tortoises, red sandalwood, and rhino horns. Particularly, pangolin poaching and tiger part trafficking are on the rise. "India ranks fourth globally in illegal wildlife trading, worth over £15 billion annually. Thus, there is need for stricter enforcement and international cooperation," the report said.

Environment activist Rohit Choudhary commented, "When reserve forests and protected areas are merely for the sake of numbers and optics, and when there is no real will to conserve forests and wildlife, the net result is usually like this."

Congress general secretary in-charge (communications) Jairam Ramesh commented, "Whenever India gets a very low rank on some global index or the other, the immediate response of the non-biological PM's drumbeaters and cheerleaders is to attack the index itself as a plot to defame India by agenda-driven NGOs."

"But, what will be the just response to the just-released Nature Conservation Index, in which India ranks a miserable 176th out of 180 countries? This Index has been co-developed by Israel's Ben Gurion University. Will the bona fides of this university too be questioned?" he said.

# Salman Khan should apologise to Bishnoi community: Tikait

PRAYAGRAJ, OCTOBER 27

Amid reports of a threat to Bollywood star Salman Khan's life from the Lawrence Bishnoi gang, Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait on Sunday said the actor should apologise to the Bishnoi community because if a dispute is resolved by apologising, then there is nothing wrong in it.

Tikait, who was here to take part in a farmers' "Mahapanchayat", said this while replying to a reporter's question on jailed gangster Lawrence Bishnoi. "If any dispute ends by apologising to the Bishnoi community, then what is wrong in it? If a mistake has been made knowingly or unknowingly, then what does Salman Khan lose in apologising," the farmer leader asked. He also alleged that the Uttar Pradesh Govern-

ment, which had promised free electricity to farmers, had started installing meters in their fields.

"We do not know how free electricity will come from the meters," he said while talking to reporters after the "Kisan Mahapanchayat" held at Mundera here. "If meters are to be installed, then they (BJP) will have to bring it in their manifesto before the 2027 (UP) Assembly polls. Otherwise, a meter will not be installed in a farmer's field," Tikait said.

He alleged that the crop was being procured from farmers in Jaunpur, Mirzapur and Ballia at Rs 1,200 per quintal. "The same is the case with maize. In Bihar alone, farmers have suffered a loss of Rs 1 lakh crore by selling crops at low prices," Tikait said. — PTI

# 45 killed as Israel targets Gaza refugee camp, school; 800 dead in three weeks

Victims include 3 journos; 180 scribes dead in Tel Aviv's offensive since Oct 7, 2023

CAIRO, OCTOBER 27

Israeli military strikes killed at least 45 Palestinians across the Gaza Strip on Sunday, most of them in the north of the enclave, Palestinian health officials said, as efforts to secure a ceasefire in the more than year-long war resumed in Qatar. The directors of the CIA and Israel's Mossad intelligence agency will meet with Qatar's Prime Minister on Sunday in Doha, an official briefed on the talks said.

The negotiations will seek a short-term ceasefire and the release of some hostages being held by Hamas in exchange for Israel's release of Palestinian prisoners, the official said. The talks aim to get Israel and Hamas to agree to a halt in fighting for less than a month in the hope it would lead to a more permanent ceasefire.

There was no immediate comment from Hamas but a Palestinian official close to the mediation effort said: "I expect Hamas would listen to the new offers, but it remains determined that any agreement must end the war and get Israeli forces out of Gaza."

The United States, Qatar and Egypt have been leading negotiations to bring an end to the war, which broke out after Hamas fighters stormed into southern Israel on October 7 last year, killing 1,200 people and taking more than 250 hostages, by Israeli tallies.

The death toll from Israel's retaliatory campaign in Gaza is approaching 43,000, Gaza health officials say, with the densely populated enclave in ruins. It was not clear if Egyptian officials were also joining the talks on Sunday.

At least 43 of those killed on



Palestinians react to the loss of their loved ones at the site of an Israeli strike on a school that left at least nine dead in Gaza. REUTERS

Sunday were in northern Gaza, where Israeli troops have returned to root out Hamas fighters who it says have regrouped there. Twenty people were killed following an airstrike on houses in Jabalia, the largest of the Gaza Strip's eight historic refugee camps, which has been the focus of an Israeli military offensive for more than three weeks, medics and the Palestinian official news agency Wafa said. An Israeli airstrike on a school sheltering displaced Palestinian families in Shati camp in Gaza City, killed nine people and wounded 20 others, with many in critical condition, medics said.

Three local journalists were among those killed at the school in Shati — Saeed Radwan, head of digital media at Hamas Al-Aqsa television,

Hanin Baroud, and Hamza Abu Selmeia, according to Hamas media. This raised the number of Palestinian journalists killed by Israeli fire since October 7, 2023 to 180.

On Sunday, Israel's military said it had killed more than 40 militants in the Jabalia area in the past 24 hours, as well as dismantling infrastructure and locating large quantities of military equipment. In addition, Israel said its forces had eliminated a militant cell in a clash in central Gaza. Meanwhile, the death toll from an Israeli airstrike late on Saturday on a residential district in the nearby town of Beit Lahiya rose to 40, the Wafa said.

Israeli military strikes on the towns of Jabalia, Beit Hanoun and Beit Lahiya in Gaza have so far killed around 800 people in three weeks. — Agencies

## Can't exaggerate or downplay Israel's attack, says Khamenei

RAMAT HASHARON, OCTOBER 27

Protesters disrupted a speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a ceremony Sunday remembering the victims of Hamas' attack on southern Israel last year.

People shouted "Shame on you" and made a commotion, forcing Netanyahu to stop his speech shortly after it began. The major commemorative event is being broadcast live around the country. Many Israelis blame Netanyahu for the failures that led to Hamas' October 7, 2023 attack and hold him responsible for not yet bringing home the remaining hostages held by the militant group in Gaza.

'Shame on you' chants greet Netanyahu at ceremony

Meanwhile, Iran's supreme leader said Sunday that Israel's attack on Iran this weekend "should not be exaggerated nor downplayed," though he stopped short of calling for retaliation. Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's remarks are the latest suggesting Iran is carefully weighing its response to the attack. Already, Iran's military has said a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip or Lebanon trumps any retaliatory attack on Israel. — Agencies



At least 753 people were killed during the uprising to oust Sheikh Hasina. FILE

## B'desh ex-army chief among 20 summoned in 'genocide' cases

DHAKA, OCTOBER 27

Bangladesh's International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) on Sunday summoned 20 individuals, including ex-army chief Ziaul Ahsan, 10 former ministers and two advisers to deposed prime minister Sheikh Hasina, to appear before it next month in connection with the alleged crimes against humanity and genocide during the July-August uprising in the country.

According to the Bangladesh interim government, at least 753 people were killed and thousands injured during the uprising, which ICT prosecution team and the interim government termed crimes against humanity and genocide. Over 60 complaints of crimes against humanity and genocide have been filed against Hasina and her party leaders with the ICT investigation agency and the prosecution team so far.

The ICT directed the authorities concerned to produce 20 people before it on November 18, The Daily Star newspaper reported. The order was issued by a three-member ICT Bench, led by its Chairman Justice Md Golam Mortuza Majumder, following an application from Chief Prosecutor Md Tajul Islam.

The accused list includes former ministers Faruq Khan, Rashed Khan Menon, Hasanul Haq Inu, Zunaid Ahmed Palak, Abdur Razzaque, Shahjahan Khan, Kamal Ahmed Majumder, and Golam Dastagir Gazi. Also named are former advisers to prime minister Sheikh Hasina, Tawfiq-e-Elahi and Salman F Rahman, former army chief Ahsan, former justice Shamsuddin Chowdhury Manik, and former home secretary Jahangir Alam, the Dhaka Tribune newspaper reported.

On October 17, the tribunal issued arrest warrants against

Hasina and 45 others, including her son Sajeeb Wazed Joy and several of her former cabinet members.

The ICT was formed by the Hasina-led Awami League government in March 2010 to try the perpetrators of the crimes against humanity committed during the 1971 Liberation War. It later formed ICT-2, and at least six Jamaat-e-Islami and leaders of Hasina's arch rival Khaleeda Zia's BNP party were executed following the judgments of the two tribunals. The tribunal remained dormant since mid-June after its chairman retired. The interim government led by Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus reconstituted the tribunal on October 12. Nobel laureate Yunus, 84, became Bangladesh's interim government's Chief Adviser on August 8 after Prime Minister Hasina fled to India on August 5 amidst student-led mass protests. — PTI

## Japan coalition set to lose parl majority

TOKYO, OCTOBER 27

Japan's ruling coalition is set to lose its parliamentary majority, exit polls for Sunday's general election suggested, raising uncertainty over the make-up of the government of the world's fourth-largest economy.

A poll by Nippon TV showed Prime Minister Shigeru Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), which has ruled Japan for almost all of its post-war history, and junior coalition partner Komeito would get 198 of the 465 seats in the lower house of Japan's parliament.

That would be well short of the 233 needed to maintain its majority and would be its worst election result since the coalition briefly lost power in 2009.

The biggest winner of the night, the main opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan (CDPJ), was predicted to win 157, as voters punished Ishiba's par-

ty over a funding scandal and inflation.

The outcome may force parties into fractious power-sharing deals to rule, potentially ushering in political instability as the country faces economic headwinds and an increasingly tense security environment in East Asia.

The election comes nine days before voters in the United States — Japan's closest ally — head to the polls in another unpredictable ballot.

"This election has been very tough for us," a sombre-looking Ishiba told TV Tokyo with about 40 per cent of seats still to be declared.

He said he would wait until the final results, likely due in the early hours of Monday, before considering potential coalitions or other power-sharing deals.

A poll by public broadcaster NHK predicted his coalition would win between 174 and 254 seats, and the CDPJ 128 to 191 seats. — Reuters

## 12 Indians nabbed by Lankan Navy for 'illegal fishing'

COLOMBO, OCTOBER 27

The Sri Lankan Navy on Sunday arrested 12 Indian fishermen and seized their trawler for allegedly poaching in its territorial waters, according to an official statement.

With the latest arrest, the number of Indian nationals apprehended this year by the island nation in such incidents has risen to 462. The fishermen were arrested and their trawler was seized off the coast of Point Pedro, Jaffna, in the northern province, the Sri Lanka Navy said in a press release. The 12 apprehended fishermen were escorted to the Kankesanthurai Harbour and will be handed over to the Mailadi Fisheries Inspector for further action, it said.

"The Sri Lankan Navy has held 62 Indian fishing boats and 462 Indian fishermen in island waters thus far in 2024 and handed them over to authorities for legal action," the statement said. — PTI

## China closes thousands of prep schools amid sharp dip in birth rate

BEIJING, OCTOBER 27

Hit hard by China's deepening demographic crisis, thousands of famed kindergartens have been closed as enrolment of children dropped sharply across the country due to a significant decline in birth rates, according to an official report.

In 2023, the number of kindergartens fell by 14,808 to 274,400, the annual report by the Chinese education ministry stated. It is the second consecutive annual decline in the latest indicator of China's falling birth rates.

The number of children enrolled in kindergarten declined for a third consecutive year — dropping by 11.55 per cent, or 5.35 million, last year to 40.9 million, the Hong Kong based South China Morning Post reported on Sunday, quoting the ministry's report.

The number of primary schools also dropped by 5,645 to 143,500 in 2023, a 3.8 per cent

fall. The decline reflects a broader demographic shift in China — where both birth rates and total population continue to dwindle — posing a serious threat to future economic growth, which is already slowing, the Post report said.

Last year, China's population dropped for the second year in a row, to 1.4 billion, a decline of over two million. Only nine million births were reported in China in 2023, the lowest figure since records started in 1949.

As a result of declining birth rates, China last year conceded its long-held status as the most populous country to India, whose population has overtaken that of China's. China faced a twin crisis. While on one hand the birth-rates and fertility rates dropped, there is also a sharp rise in the old age population.

China's population aged 60 years and above approached 300 million by the end of 2023. — PTI

## Cash-strapped Pak seeks additional 10bn yuan loan from China: Report

ISLAMABAD, OCTOBER 27

Pakistan has requested an additional 10 billion yuan (\$1.4 billion) loan from China as the cash-strapped country has already used the existing 30 billion yuan (\$4.3 billion), a media report said on Sunday.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, who met with China's Vice Minister of Finance Liao Min on the sidelines of annual meetings of IMF and World Bank in Washington, requested the Chinese side to raise the limits under the currency swap agreement to 40 billion yuan, a statement issued by the Finance Ministry late on Saturday said.

If Beijing accepts, the total facility will reach approximately \$5.7 billion, The Express Tribune newspaper reported. This is not the first time Pakistan has requested an increased debt limit, however, Beijing has declined all such past requests. — PTI

## GLOBE TROT



ROYAL SHOW: Oarsmen take part in Thailand's King Maha Vajiralongkorn's 72nd birthday barge procession.

## Indonesia's Marapi volcano erupts

PADANG: One of Indonesia's most active volcanoes erupted Sunday, spewing thick columns of ash at least three times and blanketing villages with debris, but no casualties were reported. Mount Marapi, in Agam district of the province of West Sumatra, is known for sudden eruptions that are difficult to predict because they are not caused by a deep movement of magma, which sets off tremors that register on seismic monitors. It unleashed hot ash clouds that spread for several miles, covering nearby villages and towns with thick volcanic residue. Ahmad Rifandi, an official with Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Centre, said. AP

## King Charles III to resume duties

LONDON: King Charles III, who had cut back on some of his royal duties after revealing a cancer diagnosis earlier this year, is to resume a full schedule from 2025 as his treatment continues. Buckingham Palace has said this weekend. A senior palace official told reporters at the conclusion of the 75-year-old monarch's tour of Australia and Samoa that he is keen to get back into a regular programme and overseas travel after a successful visit. "We're now working on a pretty normal-looking full overseas tour programme for next year, which is a high for us to end on, to know that we can be thinking in those terms, subject to sign-off by doctors," a Buckingham Palace official was quoted as saying in The Sunday Times. PTI

## Hundreds join pride march

JOHANNESBURG: Hundreds of people marched Saturday in South Africa to mark 35 years of Pride Johannesburg, an annual event that has been critical in advocating equal rights for the LGBTQ+ community. The march in the Sandton district of Johannesburg, was a colourful spectacle but also an opportunity for the LGBTQ+ community to highlight critical issues such as the discrimination most members of the community still face despite South Africa's progressive stance on equality issues. AP

## Immigration remains key issue in US election campaign

ATLANTA, OCTOBER 27

With just nine days left for the US elections, immigration remained one of the contentious issues in the US presidential campaign, with many immigrants, including from India and other South Asian nations, fearing a backlash if Republican hopeful Donald Trump wins the poll.

In his campaign speeches, Trump promised a radical shift to tighten Washington's immigration policy and vowed to carry out the "largest" domestic deportation operation in American history of undocumented immigrants and review the existing refugee programmes if he is re-elected.



Kamala Harris greets a child during a campaign event in Michigan.

The Republican leader has even resolved to end birthright citizenship for the

children of immigrants living in the US illegally, triggering concerns among various

### ON CAMPAIGN TRAIL

■ Kamala Harris and Tim Walz will crisscross the country to visit all seven battleground states in the coming days as part of a final blitz before the end of the presidential campaign.

■ Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump will headline a rally at New York's Madison Square Garden on Sunday, a high-profile event in a state that last backed a Republican president in 1984.

Various pro-immigration advocacy groups have criticised Trump over his rhetoric on immigration, saying the discontinuation of birthright citizenship is legally questionable as it is enshrined in the 14th Amendment of the US Constitution.

On her part, Vice-President Kamala Harris has underlined the need for curtailing illegal immigration and that the US immigration system is broken and requires legislative measures to fix it.

At a recent campaign rally, Trump accused Harris of bringing in "migrant gangs and illegal alien criminals" into the US, adding that "her policy of importing migrant

gangs is a crime against our country." "This is a very sensitive issue and we are worried about the possible fallout of Trump's victory," said Mohammad Iqbal, a Bangladesh-origin green card holder living in Atlanta for over a decade.

"Trump's policy is creating panic among various migrant societies and that is why they are supporting Vice President Kamala Harris," he noted.

Vasudev Patel, general secretary of the Federation of Indian-Americans in Georgia, said the Republican leader is looking at welcoming "educated" and "peaceful" people to the US. — PTI

BRIEFLY

**CHONBURI (THAILAND)**  
**India lose against Thailand in AFC U17 Asian Cup qualifiers**  
 India gave a spirited fight but lost to Thailand 2-3 in a high-octane clash of the AFC U-17 Asian Cup 2025 Qualifiers. The loss means India will have to wait for the results of the other group stage games before they know their fate regarding progression to the next round. India had needed just a draw to finish in the top-five and get through to the next round.

**GURUGRAM**  
**Indian Open: Mannat signs off as top amateur**  
 Mannat Brar finished as the top amateur and the best-placed Indian at tied-11th even as England's Liz Young celebrated her belated birthday by winning the Women's Indian Open by one stroke. Brar carded an impressive 2-under 70 in the final round. Professionals Pranavi Urs and Hitaashee Bakshi followed closely, tied for 15th. Tvesa Malik finished T26, while Ridhima Dilawari and Vani Kapoor shared 31st place.

**MUMBAI**  
**Mumbai FC and Odisha FC share spoils in ISL**  
 Odisha FC and Mumbai City FC settled for a point each in a fast-paced and gritty 1-1 draw in their Indian Super League match. Goals by talismanic strikers Roy Krishna (14th minute) for Odisha FC and Nikolaos Karelis (23rd) for Mumbai resulted in both teams sharing the honours.

**BOCHUM**  
**Five-star Bayern crush strugglers Bochum**  
 Bayern Munich swept aside hosts VfL Bochum 5-0 to remain top of the Bundesliga while also putting their heavy midweek loss to Barcelona in the Champions League behind them. The Bavarians lost 1-4 to Barca in Spain on Wednesday. AGENCIES

Former players blame seniors for series loss, defend new coach Gambhir

# Stars fail to align

**INDIA-NEW ZEALAND TEST SERIES**

**PUNE, OCTOBER 27**  
 Former wicketkeeper Dinesh Karthik said the onus for the Test series loss to New Zealand was on the senior Indian players, while former batter Sanjay Manjrekar felt that it would be unfair to place the blame on coach Gautam Gambhir.

India lost the second Test to New Zealand by 113 runs in Pune on Saturday as the Black Caps took an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three match series. With this, India's proud run of 18 consecutive series wins at home since losing to England in 2012-13 ended.

Throughout the two matches, the senior players underperformed. Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli struggled with the bat, while the formidable spin duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja also failed to make a significant impact.

"Why shouldn't it (the onus of the series loss) be on the senior players? They will look at themselves and ask what they could have done better," Karthik said.

"If you can celebrate the highs and the fans enjoy how important they are when the team wins, then when the losses happen and the brickbats are thrown at you I think they will have the courage to face it," he added.

New head coach Gambhir has also come in the line of fire after India erred tactically and experienced repeated batting collapses in the two Tests but Manjrekar backed the former opener.

"I will still maintain that the coach has minimal influence on a team, lesser than your 11th weakest player. He does not set foot on the



Virat Kohli made 88 runs in the first two Tests, with one half-century. ANI

ground, the captain is in charge out there. But you have to applaud him for Washington Sundar's selection, which was an immediate hit," Manjrekar said.

Manjrekar questioned Rohit's "bizarre" decision to send all-rounder Washington Sundar to bat ahead of the in-form Sarfaraz Khan. "The move to have Sar-

faraz bat down the order and sending Sundar above him because he is a left-hander, those kind of things shouldn't happen. It's just bizarre. That's one thing that Rohit needs to be careful of... the T20 thinking of match-ups with left hand and right hand combinations. I think he should just go by the overall quality and ability of

players," Manjrekar said. When India needed its experienced batters to lead, Rohit could manage a total of 60 runs across four innings (2, 52; 0, 8) while Kohli was a touch better collecting 88 runs (0, 70; 1, 17). Highlighting Kohli's absence in the domestic circuit, former India captain Anil Kumble felt the talis-

manic batter could have prepared well for the long Test calendar by making himself available for the domestic matches.

"Perhaps just one or two innings in a match situation could have helped. Being in an actual game is definitely more beneficial than just practice," Kumble said.

Former off-spinner Harbhajan Singh said India's batters have lost a lot of confidence over the years by playing on turning pitches. "Credit to New Zealand for playing the way they did and these were alien conditions and also not a pitch where wear and tear was natural. It was tailor-made for spinners where the ball was supposed to turn from the first hour," Harbhajan said.

Harbhajan questioned the thought process of the Indian team. "Look at the trend over the last decade. We are playing mostly on turners with the hope that we will win the toss, score 300 and control the game. But we don't know if we are at the receiving end, if we have the batting to wriggle out on turners. Our batters have lost a lot of confidence playing on these tracks. The biggest example is Ajinkya Rahane. His career suffered because of these kind of surfaces," Harbhajan said.

"If you prepare turners, you don't play spinners who can turn the ball on flattest of decks. All you need is bowlers who are accurate. Washington Sundar and Axar Patel can do the job, and you won't need Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja's quality. You had Joe Root getting five wickets here some years back. Bring Varun Chakravarthy, who is a white-ball specialist. He will run through sides," he added. — PTI

# Rohit says can't just rely on Ashwin, Jadeja



Coach Gautam Gambhir and captain Rohit Sharma after the loss. PTI

**PUNE, OCTOBER 27**  
 India's skipper Rohit Sharma said undue expectation was being put on frontline spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, as he called for more collective bowling efforts to win Test matches.

Ashwin and Jadeja had played key roles in helping India win 18 successive home series since 2012 but could not prevent New Zealand from snapping that record, claiming only eight wickets together in the second game where the pitch assisted spin.

"There's too much expectation on those two guys. Every game they play, they are expected to take wickets, they are expected to run through the team and they are expected to win Tests," Rohit said.

"I don't think that's fair, it's the responsibility of all of us to make sure we get Test wins, not just the two guys. Of course, by their standards, they know where they stand and what they haven't been able to do or what they haven't done really well," he added. — Reuters

## Indian batters had no answer for Santner

Former New Zealand pacer Simon Doull attributed India's shocking series defeat to their batsmen's inadequacies against spin bowling. Left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner grabbed 13 wickets in the second Test. "There's a misconception that Indian players are better players of spin. I think they've had better spinners and they've been able to expose the opposition batters. But in this Test, their batters were exposed a little bit by a very good performance from Mitchell Santner," Doull said. "I think you get used to playing on such good wickets. And when it does turn, techniques get exposed a little bit. For a long time, when India played on turning surfaces, they still had the best spinners in the world in Jadeja and Ashwin. So, they've been able to undo othersides. In this Test match, they were undone by a New Zealand side that, with all due respect, is not a world-class spin bowling attack. So, that will be a concern of some sort," he said. — PTI

# Despite Shami's absence, Australia will not 'underestimate' India's attack

**BORDER-GAVASKAR TROPHY**

**SYDNEY, OCTOBER 27**  
 Australia head coach Andrew McDonald feels the absence of Mohammed Shami during the Border Gavaskar Trophy next month is a huge loss for India, but stressed that the hosts won't underestimate the quicks stepping in for the seasoned pacer.

Shami, who had played a significant role in India's successful 2018 tour of Australia, has not played since the ODI World Cup final last November due to an ankle injury.

He underwent surgery and was subsequently rehabilitating at the National Cricket Academy but developed swelling in his knees which affected his rehabilitation.

"Mohammed Shami is a big loss," McDonald said. "The way our batters speak about his relentless nature, his line and lengths, the way he goes about his business, a real good complimenting skill set to (Jasprit) Bumrah so I think that one-two combo they'll lack a little bit."

India have handed maiden call ups to Delhi speedster Harshit Rana and Andhra seam bowling all-rounder Nitish Kumar Reddy while quicks Akash Deep and Prasad Krishna have also been selected for the marquee series. Bumrah will lead the fast bowling department.

"But needless to say we saw what happened last time, they had reserves that came in and did the job as well so they cannot be under-

estimated at all," he said. Australian teenager Sam Konstas, who announced himself with twin Sheffield Shield centuries for New South Wales earlier this month, is in the reckoning to partner Usman Khawaja at the top in the five-match series. "I think we're picking the best team for here and now, and if that does encompass a younger player, then we'll head down that direction," he said.

McDonald stated that if the selectors believe the 19-year-old is the best option, he will receive a Test debut, regardless of his lack of First-Class experience. "If Sam's capable to fill that spot I don't think that the opponent should come into the equation," he said. — PTI

# Skipper Devine guides NZ to big win over India

**AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 27**  
 India's batters flattered to deceive as skipper Sophie Devine's all-round heroics propelled New Zealand to a series-levelling 76-run win in the second women's ODI here on Sunday.

Opting to bat, Devine struck 79 off 86, striking seven fours and a six while stitching a vital partnership of 82 runs for the fifth wicket with Maddy Green (42 off 41 balls) to lift New Zealand to a 259/9. Devine also excelled with the ball, finishing with figures of 3/27 as New Zealand's bowlers combined to dismiss India for 183, which was built around No. 9 Radha Yadav's fighting 48.

For the White Ferns, Lea Tahuu (3/42) also claimed three wickets, while Jess Kerr (2/49) and Eden Carson

(2/32) also chipped in with key dismissals. Chasing the target, India found themselves at 26/3 within the first five overs. They further slipped to 102/7 in 26 overs when Radha and Saima Thakor (29) forged a spirited 70-run stand for the ninth wicket.

However, Kerr broke the partnership removing Thakor as the hosts were eventually dismissed in 47.1 overs, allowing New Zealand to level the series at 1-1.

Earlier, New Zealand were off to an excellent start with openers Suzie Bates (58 off 70 balls) and Georgia Plimmer (41 off 50) adding 87 runs in just under 16 overs.

"Pretty happy with the way the game went. We spoke about playing good cricket for long periods and we did that. We spoke



Sophie Devine struck 79 off 86 and took 3/27. BCCI

about making sure to build partnerships," Devine, who was named the Player of the Match, said.

**Need to work on batting, says Harmanpreet**  
 India captain Harmanpreet Kaur acknowledged the urgent need to address her team's batting woes.

"We weren't up to the mark. Batting is something that we really need to work on and if we do that we can win the series," she said. "I think we gave away too many runs and dropped too many catches but I think it was still an achievable target but we didn't bat well. We kept losing wickets in the chase. We will look to build partnerships next game," she added.

**Brief scores: New Zealand:** 259/9 in 50 overs (Devine 79, Bates 58; Radha 4/69); **India:** 183 all out in 47.1 overs (Radha 48, Thakor 29, Harmanpreet 24; Devine 3/27, Tahuu 3/42). — PTI

# Zheng claims Tokyo title

**TOKYO, OCTOBER 27**  
 China's Zheng Qinwen produced near-flawless serves to defeat American Sofia Kenin 7-6(5) 6-3 and capture the Pan Pacific Open title on Sunday for her third trophy this season.

Zheng hit 33 winners and fired off 16 aces as she took the victory in an hour and 52 minutes under a closed roof after heavy rain interrupted the first set.

The 22-year-old adds the Tokyo title to her wins in Palermo and the Paris Olympics this year.

The first set was a tightly fought encounter without a single break of serve, with Zheng failing to convert five breakpoints, but she was much more clinical in the tiebreak and clinched it with a vicious forehand winner.

The second set played out much differently as Zheng held to start and broke for 2-0 when Kenin netted a backhand, before consolidating that break to go 3-0 up.

Kenin, playing with her



China's Zheng Qinwen beat American Sofia Kenin 7-6(5) 6-3. AP/PTI

right thigh strapped, refused to go quietly and forced Zheng to defend her first breakpoint of the match, but the power and precision of the Chinese world number seven's serve proved too much for the American.

Zheng's win improved her record at the Pan Pacific Open to 8-1, with the 22-year-

old having lost in the 2022 final to Liudmila Samsonova in her only previous appearance in the tournament.

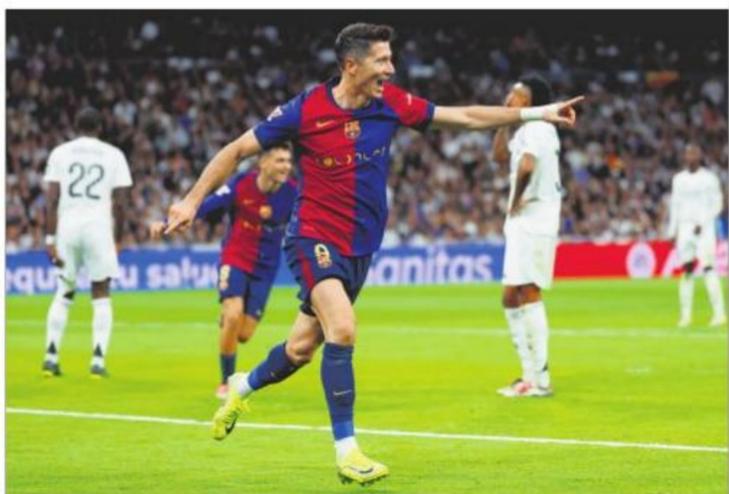
It also ensured her a first hard-court title since her Zhengzhou Open win last year and will give her a boost in confidence ahead of next month's season-ending WTA Finals in Saudi Arabia. — Reuters

# Lewa double helps Barca thrash Real

**MADRID, OCTOBER 27**  
 Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski scored a quick-fire second-half double to set the leaders on course for a 4-0 thrashing of Real Madrid that handed the hosts their first defeat in 42 LaLiga games in a sensational Clasico encounter on Saturday.

The Polish striker pounced with two goals in three minutes early in the second half before Lamine Yamal at 17 years and 106 days old became the youngest Clasico scorer and captain Raphinha wrapped up a comfortable win late on at a stunned Bernabeu. Barca stretched their lead at the top with 30 points, six above Real who saw their unbeaten LaLiga run come to a bitter end after 13 months, leaving them one tantalising positive result away from equalling the Catalans' league record of 43.

After four consecutive Clasico defeats, Barcelona claimed their first triumph over Real since March 2023 in style with a clinical perform-



Barcelona's Robert Lewandowski celebrates scoring their second goal against Real Madrid. REUTERS

ance in which they were true to coach Hansi Flick's ideas of gambling with an aggressively high defence.

The visitors were more than comfortable playing on the counter-attack, exploiting the lightning speed of

Raphinha and Yamal to help feed LaLiga top scorer Lewandowski. Real were on top at the start but became frustrated as they wasted several chances, mainly through off form Kylian Mbappe who missed four clear opening

from close-range and was caught offside nine times, including having two goals ruled out. Despite Real dominating proceedings, Barca kept playing their risk-taking tactics and the gamble paid off. — Reuters

# Jackson, Palmer score as Chelsea beat Newcastle

**LONDON, OCTOBER 27**  
 Goals by Nicolas Jackson and Cole Palmer earned Chelsea a 2-1 home win over Newcastle United in the Premier League on Sunday in the latest sign of progress for the Blues under coach Enzo Maresca.

Jackson rounded off a sweeping counter-attack to give Chelsea the lead with his sixth goal of the season in the 18th minute, converting a perfect cross by Pedro Neto who had been set free down the left wing by a pinpoint pass from Palmer.

The home fans at Stamford Bridge roared their approval as the Londoners dominated Newcastle with their fast passing game, a contrast to the frustrations of much of the past two years when Chelsea's expensively assembled squads struggled for form. Newcastle equalised against the run of play, however, when Alexander Isak converted a cross. — Reuters

## BJP, Cong brace for direct fight in Kedarnath bypoll

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

The stage is set for a direct fight between the BJP and Congress in the Kedarnath Assembly segment which holds special significance for Hindus, being home one of the twelve jyotirlingas of Lord Shiva. Both parties announced candidates for the high profile assembly bypoll on November 20. While the BJP has fielded Asha Nautiyal, Uttarakhand women's wing chief, the Congress has nominated former MLA Manoj Rawat.

The bypoll has been necessi-

### Crucial battle for saffron party after Badrinath upset

tated due to the demise of BJP lawmaker Shaila Rani Rawat, whose daughter had staked claim to the seat.

Since the 2022 Assembly elections, four bypolls have been held in Uttarakhand, with the BJP and Congress winning two each. On July 10, the Congress had upset the BJP by bagging Badrinath and Manglaur seats. This was soon after the BJP bagged all five LS seats in Uttarakhand.

# Ahead of J'khand poll, PM announces 150th birth anniversary celebrations of Birsa

Memorial to honour Santhal icon to come up in neighbouring Odisha, stone laying on Nov 15

TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said the government would celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of the country's first Home Minister Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and freedom fighter Birsa Munda.

Modi, who was speaking during his monthly radio programme 'Mann Ki Baat', urged people to become part of the government campaign. The announcement regarding Birsa Munda will resonate with the people of Jharkhand, where Assembly elections will be held next month in two phases — on November 13 and 20.

The BJP had earlier revealed plans to establish a grand memorial in Sundargarh district of Odisha to honour Munda — a Santhal icon and freedom fighter — on his birth anniversary.

The memorial will include a 150-foot statue of Munda, along with an interpretation centre, convention hall, souvenir shop and landscaped



Odisha CM Mohan Majhi listens to the 115th edition of 'Mann Ki Baat' programme in Bhubaneswar. ANI

gardens. The choice of Sundargarh district for the memorial is noteworthy as it borders Jharkhand and is near Ulihatu, Birsa Munda's birthplace in the Khunti district of Jharkhand. The foundation stone for the memorial will be laid on November 15 — a date that falls between the two phases of the Assembly

poll in Jharkhand. As many as 38 of 81 Assembly constituencies of Jharkhand will go to polls on November 20 and 43 will go to polls in the first phase on November 13.

"The government has decided to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of these great personalities (Birsa Munda and Sardar Patel) at the national

level. I would urge all of you to become a part of this campaign", Modi today said.

"Today in Mann Ki Baat, I will discuss two great heroes who had courage and foresight. The country has decided to celebrate their 150th birth anniversary. Patel's 150th birth anniversary year will begin on October 31.

After this, Bhagwan Birsa Munda's 150th birth anniversary year will begin on November 15. Both these great men had different challenges but their vision was the same — to unify the country," Modi said.

The PM also recalled his visit to Ulihatu village on Munda's birth anniversary last year. "If you ask me what the most memorable moments of my life have been, I remember many incidents, but there is one moment that is very special. That moment was when, on the 15th of November last year, I had gone to Ulihatu village in Jharkhand, the birthplace of Bhagwan Birsa Munda, on his birth anniversary," he said.

The PM also spoke about the cybercrime of "digital arrests" and urged people to adopt the mantra of "stop, think and take action" when faced with such a scam. Modi said probe agencies were working with states to deal with the issue but added that awareness was essential to protect oneself from this crime.

## OBITUARY

H Kishie Singh (Aug 28, 1937-Oct 27, 2024)

### He had a passion for 'Good Motoring'

ROOPINDER SINGH



A name familiar to The Tribune readers since the 1990s, H Kishie Singh passed away today in Chandigarh at the age of 87. An expert in driving and rallying, his Good Motoring column ran in The Tribune for 27 years.

Kishie, as we all knew him, was the happiest on the road, whether riding a motorcycle or driving a vehicle. He drove in India and abroad, including Europe, Canada, USA, South-East Asia and West Asia. He once even drove from London to Delhi. His experiences, observations and the ability to tell a story about virtually each of his pit stop made for an interesting and informative copy.

Kishie had a larger-than-life presence and the ability to instantly connect with those he came across. Born on August 28, 1937, in Shimla and son of the Oxford-educated Santokh Singh and Malvinder Kaur, he studied at Bishop Cotton School, Shimla, and St Stephen's College, Delhi. After graduation, he joined Air India, which took him to Lebanon. He also lived in Thailand and sold insurance to American GIs. He worked in senior positions with Investors Overseas Limited in Geneva and Montreal, where he imported a rickshaw, and was splashed riding it in local papers! A Formula 3 driver, he was the proud owner of a Ford Mustang.

Kishie studied visual art at McGill University and also worked as a photographer for a while before coming back to India because of family commitments. He got busy motoring, rallying, farming, besides doing photography and other activities. Kishie's column, like Khushwant Singh's, was never late, and the count crossed 650. Good Motoring had a wide readership and he was always willing to engage with his readers with a wry sense of humour — his trademark style. He had written for the Statesman earlier and was on the editorial board of some automotive magazines.

Kishie had been associated with Khushwant Singh Literary Festival since its inception as an organiser and speaker. In 2017, he released his book "Good Motoring", a curated selection of his write-ups that figured in his column. He also co-authored "Whispering Deodars", a book on HP Motoring events, including the Himalayan Rally and Raid de Himalaya, allowed him to combine his love for the mountains and driving.

The fragrance of the incense sticks he lit in his study every day was still fresh when we went to his house in the morning, as is the memory of a remarkable raconteur and a great friend. He is survived by his wife, Neena Singh, and daughter Malvika Singh.

## BCI removed 107 fake advocates in 5 yrs

NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

The Bar Council of India (BCI) has removed 107 fake advocates from its roll during 2019 to October 2024 as part of its effort to maintain profession-

alism of the legal community. "This action is aimed at eliminating advocates who no longer meet the standards of legal practice," BCI Secretary Srimanto Sen said. — TNS

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## There was no response to 26/11: EAM's swipe at Cong

MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

In a veiled attack on the erstwhile UPA government, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S Jaishankar on Sunday said there was no response from India to the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks, asserting that it would not be the case if such an incident happened again.

Reflecting on the terror attack, Jaishankar said double standards on terrorism were unacceptable and India would



S Jaishankar

"act where it has to act" to expose terrorism. Jaishankar fielded questions on issues ranging from terrorism to the

India-China stand-off and from investment to politics at a press conference in Mumbai.

Without naming China, the EAM said the disengagement of troops at Depsang and Demchok in Ladakh was the first step and it was expected that India would return to the 2020 patrolling status.

He, however, stressed the next step of de-escalation won't be taken until India is assured of reciprocity from the other side as well, obviously

referring to China. Speaking on what changed after 2014, the EAM said was the leader in fighting terrorism.

"We should not have a repeat of what happened in Mumbai. That there was a terror attack and there was no response," Jaishankar said. Mumbai is a symbol of counter-terrorism for India, he said. "There are different views from political parties. When this city (Mumbai) was attacked, nothing was done," he added. — PTI

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