



## Historic Inauguration of India's First Aircraft Final Assembly Line in the Private Sector by

**Narendra Modi**  
Prime Minister of India

**Pedro Sánchez Pérez-Castejón**  
President of the Government of Spain



### A landmark moment for India's Aerospace & Defence industry

- India's 1<sup>st</sup> Aerospace Project under the 'Make in India' initiative, for the Indian Air Force
- India's 1<sup>st</sup> Aircraft Final Assembly Line in the private sector
- Strategic partnership between Tata Advanced Systems and Airbus Defence & Space

**State-of-the-art facility for C295 Final Assembly Line,  
built at Tata Advanced Systems' Aircraft Complex**

**Date:** Monday, 28<sup>th</sup> October, 2024 **Time:** 10:00am onwards  
**Venue:** Tata Advanced Systems Limited, Tata Aircraft Complex Harni, Vadodara - 390022

## TATAS-AIRBUS PLANT IN VADODARA FOR C295 TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT

# Spain PM reaches today for inaugural of India's first pvt facility for military aircraft

Sanchez, Modi to hold bilateral talks

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

SPAIN'S PRIME Minister Pedro Sanchez is reaching Vadodra Monday where he and Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold bilateral talks and inaugurate the Final Assembly Line (FAL) plant of the C295 medium-lift tactical transport aircraft for the Indian Air Force.

The Vadodra facility is India's first private military transport aircraft production

plant, a partnership between Tata Advanced System Limited (TASL) and Airbus Defence and Space (Airbus DS).

Under the first 'Make in India' aerospace programme in the private sector, India is to acquire 56 C295 aircraft to replace the IAF's legacy Avro fleet.

Airbus is to deliver the first 16 aircraft in fly-away condition from its FAL in Seville, Spain. The remaining 40 aircraft will be manufactured and assembled by TASL at the Vadodra facility.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Of the 56 C295 aircraft being acquired for the IAF, 16 will be delivered from Spain. Of these, six have already arrived. Reuters

**EXPLAINED**  
Entering the IAF

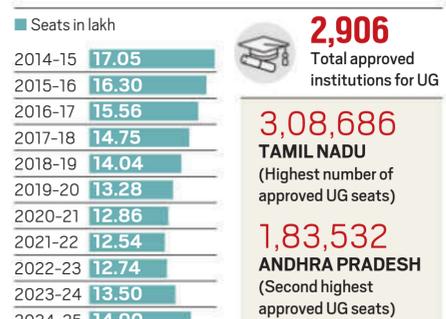
THE MEDIUM-LIFT C295 aircraft is replacing IAF's Avro fleet. The first 16 aircraft are being delivered in fly-away condition from the Airbus facility in Seville, Spain. The first of the remaining 40 aircraft to be made in Vadodra will roll out by 2026 and deliveries will be completed by 2031.

## 50% OF INCREASE FROM 3 SOUTH STATES

# After slump, AICTE data shows uptick in BTech seats: 2024-25 records 8-year high

Top official points to new courses for working professionals, lifting seat cap

### APPROVED UNDERGRADUATE INTAKE



**2,906**  
Total approved institutions for UG

**3,08,686**  
TAMIL NADU  
(Highest number of approved UG seats)

**1,83,532**  
ANDHRA PRADESH  
(Second highest approved UG seats)

ABHINAYA HARIGOVIND  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

FOLLOWING YEARS of declining intake and consolidation, mainly due to a slump in demand and government-mandated limits, the number of BTech seats available across the country has hit an eight-year high, according to data from All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE).

The approved intake for undergraduate engineering and technology programmes for the academic year 2024-25 is 14.90 lakh — an increase of about 18.84% from 12.54 lakh in 2021-22 when the total number of seats reached the lowest in a decade.

The new high comes after the intake saw a year-on-year decline for most of the past decade, from around 17.05 lakh seats in 2014-15. The 2022-23 academic year marked the first increase in a decade, with a modest rise of a little under 2%, followed by a 5% hike the following year (see chart).

For 2024-25, intake has surged by 10%, adding over 1.4 lakh seats from 13.5 lakh the previous year. The latest number, however, is still less than the intake across the first three years of the decline: 17.05 lakh (2014-15), 16.30 lakh (2015-16) and 15.56 lakh (2016-17).

According to AICTE data, of the increase in seats this year, the largest chunk or more than 50% comes from three southern states: Tamil Nadu (32,856), Andhra Pradesh (23,518) and Telangana (20,213).

The approved intake in CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# After Paris dip, Govt eyes 'flab' cut in elite Olympics scheme

India's Paris haul was one silver, 5 bronze medals

MIHIR VASAVDA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

INDIAN OLYMPIC hopefuls may no longer get unfettered access to public funds for their preparation as the Government is considering "cutting the flab" from its flagship Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS).

The move is being debated within the Mission Olympic Cell (MOC) — the high-powered committee comprising former athletes, coaches, government officials and administrators — and the fresh selection parameters could be decided in the coming weeks, two members of the

panel told *The Indian Express*. At present, there are close to 300 athletes across core and developmental groups who receive financial support under TOPS. One MOC official projected that the number could be halved if the selection rules get strict.

While there is no move yet to reduce funding, it was proposed during a review of the country's disappointing performance at the Paris Olympics — six medals (one silver, five bronze) — that only those athletes who genuinely meet the criteria should receive funding under TOPS.

The key benchmark, it was suggested, should be the ability CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

### BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



### GOVT & POLITICS



LEBANON CALLS ON INDIA TO URGE ISRAEL TO RESPECT GLOBAL LAW: ENVOY PAGE 12

### MANN KI BAAT

# PM cautions against 'digital arrest' frauds, says no govt agency makes such calls

DIVYAA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi Sunday cautioned against "digital arrest" frauds, in which scamsters posing as law enforcement officers call up people and threaten them of arrest to extract money. He said no government agency ever makes such calls.

The Prime Minister said probe agencies are working with states to deal with the problem but added that awareness is essential in protecting oneself from such scams.

In the 115th edition of his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi said, "Beware of digital arrest frauds. There is no system like digital arrest under law. No government agency will ever contact you via phone or video call for such an investigation."

Sharing an audio, he said: "The conversation you just heard pertains to the fraud of digital arrest. This conversation is between a victim and a fraudster."

"The fraudsters impersonate as police, CBI, narcotics, at times RBI... using such labels, they converse as fake officers with a lot of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Vijay's Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam or TVK held its first rally in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram district on Sunday. PTI

# Vijay unveils roadmap: Yes to Periyar but no to his 'anti-God' stand, slams corrupt family politics

ARUN JANARDHANAN  
VIKRAVANDI, OCTOBER 27

AT THE first state conference of his party Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam Sunday, Tamil actor-turned-politician Vijay took aim at both the BJP government at the Centre and the DMK government in Tamil Nadu, without naming either party. He declared that his party would embrace

the ideologies of Tamil icons like Periyar, but without "the anti-God position".

The event at Vikravandi town of Villupuram district marked the superstar actor's first political rally, where over 3 lakh people turned up.

Vijay began the speech with a metaphor, comparing himself to a child facing a snake to loud applause.

"I am a child in politics, I ad-



TVK founder and Tamil superstar Vijay at the rally. PTI

mit. But this child is ready to hold the snake (politics) in his hand," Vijay said. He then quickly moved on from the metaphorical, announcing, "Our political

plan is 'pucca practical'." Presenting himself as not just a film star, but a leader charting a new course for the state, he sought to position himself as an alternative to the state's established political order.

Without naming any party, he hit out against "corrupt family politics" and "divisive, casteist and communal agendas". He sought to draw a distinction CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

## AUGUST 2014 INCIDENT IN KARNATAKA'S KOPPAL DISTRICT

# In this village, sense of justice, anxiety as 98 get life for attack on Dalit homes

KIRAN PARASHAR  
MARUKUMBI (KOPPAL), OCTOBER 27

IN MARUKUMBI village of Karnataka's Koppal district, people from the Dalit community live on the right side of the main road, and those from upper caste communities live on the other side.

This divide has become starker since a recent judgment in connection with a 2014 caste-related incident in the small village. The verdict has brought a sense of justice to the Dalits in the village, but for residents from both sides, there is also an anxiety about the future.



Pampathi's house was among those burnt. Kiran Parashar

On October 24, a Koppal district and sessions court sen-

tenced 98 of the 101 accused to life imprisonment in connection CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

**IDEA EXCHANGE**

'The economy can grow by eight per cent despite negative narratives'

PROF KRISHNAMURTHY V SUBRAMANIAN  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, IMF  
PAGE 14

# Indians lost ₹120 crore in digital arrest frauds in January-April 2024

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

INDIANS LOST Rs 120.30 crore in "digital arrest" frauds, which was highlighted by Prime Minister Narendra Modi Sunday, in the first quarter of this year alone, government cybercrime data shows.

According to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), which monitors cybercrime at the central level through the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C), digital arrests have of late become a prevalent method of digital fraud. Many of those carrying out these frauds are based

in three contiguous southeast Asian countries: Myanmar, Laos and Cambodia.

In its analysis of trends from January to April, the Indian Cybercrime Coordination Centre (I4C) found that 46% of cyber frauds reported in this period — in which the victims cumulatively lost an estimated Rs 1,776 crore — originated in these three countries.

National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) data show 74 lakh complaints were made between January 1 and April 30 this year, while 15.56 lakh complaints were received CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

# Amid bid to get UNESCO tag, Gujarat's dinosaur park a picture of neglect

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

ADITIRAJA  
VADODARA, OCTOBER 27

THE FIRST thing that catches the eye at the Dinosaur Fossil Park and Museum in the village Raiyoli in Gujarat's Balasinor taluka are the overgrown bushes. Standing up to two feet tall, they frame every winding path that leads visitors to fossil exhibits, their wild growth and prickly thorns getting caught in

delicate pieces of clothing and sparking concerns about snake bites.

Earlier this month, teams from the Geological Survey of India visited the protected fossil site to help pitch it as a contender for the coveted UNESCO "geoheritage" tag. The survey came 40 years after two geologists, GN Dwivedi and DM Mohabey, stumbled upon large dinosaur bones and fossilised eggs in the area — a discovery that put Raiyoli on the map.

But for a site that aims to become one of the major tourist destinations of the country, the



A signboard welcoming visitors to the Dinosaur Fossil Park and Museum; (right) inside the complex at Raiyoli village in Gujarat's Balasinor taluka. Aditi Raja



park paints a picture of neglect. From overgrown vegetation in the park and seepages and broken exhibits in the Rs 25-crore state-of-the-art museum to a lift irrigation project nearby that experts claim poses a threat to the protected site, the Dinosaur Fossil Park and Museum appears to be plagued with problems.

When *The Indian Express* visited the place, the overrun pathway leading in the 72 hectare park meant many exhibits further in were almost inaccessible. Meanwhile, at the museum that lay across the road, some other visitors who had travelled

here from outside Gujarat were in for a disappointment: the museum was facing a power outage, shutting down the major digital displays.

According to a senior GSI official, "earnest efforts" are being made to have the site included in the UNESCO list. "It's an extremely important site for research on dinosaurs and there's a possibility that more rare fossils are located around it," this official says.

Meanwhile, a staff member at the park promises that "the vegetation will be removed soon". According to GSI's 'Dinosaurs

of Gujarat', a February 2017 publication of the different research projects on the dinosaur fossils in the state, Dwivedi and Mohabey were conducting a systematic geological mapping when they stumbled upon the bones about 1 km west of Raiyoli.

"Subsequently, the Paleontology Division of Western Region of GSI confirmed them to be of the dinosaurs. After the formal processes, the excavation work commenced in January 1983 on the western slopes of the hill overlooking Raiyoli village, using crowbars, spades, shovels, chisels, CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

FROM PAGE ONE

FULL REPORTS ON WWW.INDIANEXPRESS.COM

Spain PM reaches today for inaugural of India's first pvt facility for military aircraft

With a proven capability of operating from short or unprepared airstrips, the C295, sources said, is used for tactical transport of up to 71 troops or 50 paratroopers, and for logistic operations to locations that are not accessible to current heavier aircraft. It can airdrop paratroopers and loads, and can be used for casualty or medical evacuation (medevac), as demonstrated during the Covid-19 crisis, using either basic litters or mobile intensive care units (ICU) with life support equipment. The aircraft can perform special missions as well as disaster response and maritime patrol duties. Sources said the Ministry of Defence and Airbus DS signed a USD 2.5 billion contract for the supply of 56 C295. The first of 16 aircraft was delivered to the IAF from Spain in September 2023 - so far 6 aircraft have been delivered.

The FAL plant in Vadodra, sources said, will roll out the first Made-in-India C295 aircraft in 2026. The 56th aircraft is expected to be delivered to the IAF by 2031. The first Make-in-India project in aerospace in the private sector involves the full development of a complete industrial ecosystem: from manufacture to assembly, test and qualification, to delivery and maintenance of the complete lifecycle of the aircraft. Apart from the Tatas, leading defence public sector units such as Bharat Electronics Ltd and Bharat Dynamics Ltd as well as private MSMEs will contribute to this programme, sources said. At present, the only final assembly line for the C295 aircraft is located in Seville - it also produces the Airbus A400 aircraft. This is the first time Airbus will have a full production system in another country.

Spain's Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez, accompanied by his spouse Begona Gomez, will be on an official visit to India from October 28 to 30. He will be welcomed with a Shobha Yatra, a roadshow, and will hold bilateral talks with Modi at the Laxmi Vilas Palace. This will be his first visit to India - the first by a Spanish PM after 18 years. Modi and Sanchez have met several times on the sidelines of multilateral meetings. Sanchez will also visit Mumbai where, apart from official engagements, he will interact with trade and industry leaders, think tanks and the film industry. He will address the 4th Spain India Forum, organised by the Spain India Council Foundation and the Observer Research Foundation. He will visit prominent film studios where he will interact with leading celebrities of

Indian movie industries with the aim of fostering greater collaboration between the Indian and Spanish media and entertainment industry. "A number of MoUs/agreements are expected to be signed during the visit which shall give a fillip to bilateral cooperation," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement. Underlining that India and Spain enjoy close and friendly relations and the bilateral ties got a fresh impetus after Prime Minister Modi visited Spain in 2017, the MEA said that Sanchez's visit will be an "opportunity to review the entire gamut of our bilateral relations and further deepen the partnership across various sectors including trade and investment, IT, innovation, infrastructure, renewable energy, defence and security, pharma, agro-tech and bio-tech, culture and tourism".

After slump, AICTE data shows uptick in BTech seats

Tamil Nadu, which was 2,75,830 seats last year, now stands at 3,08,686 - the maximum for a state overall. Andhra Pradesh had an approved intake of 1,60,014 seats last year, which has increased to 1,83,532 this year, coming next after TN overall. And Telangana's number last year of 1,25,344 seats rose to 1,45,557. AICTE Member Secretary Rajive Kumar attributed the overall increase in numbers to two factors: approvals granted for engineering and technology courses for working professionals, and the removal in 2023-24 of an embargo on adding new seats in BTech programmes. "The programme for working professionals was introduced for the first time (in 2023-24). These are supernumerary seats. With this, the number of seats has gone up by around 40,000 to 50,000, and around 400 to 500 institutions have been given approval for this programme. These institutions have started taking admissions," Kumar said. The total number of approved institutions for under-

graduate engineering courses this year is 2,906. Kumar said that 1,256 institutions have been approved for an increase in intake this year, including the approvals for working professionals' courses, adding that the increase in intake was mostly for courses in the computer domain. The programme is meant for those working in organisations, industries or MSMEs located within a 50-km radius of the institute, and have a minimum of a year's full-time work experience. These are meant for UG, PG and diploma courses, and can help those who may want to complete their courses after they have begun working, Kumar said. Starting in 2023-24, AICTE also lifted the upper limit previously imposed on seat numbers in existing engineering colleges. This decision followed a review by an AICTE-appointed committee, which recommended lifting the cap after noting an encouraging increase in admissions for core engineering branches in 2022-23. The occupancy of BTech seats in that academic year was 81% compared to 71%

in 2021-22. "This (the lifting of the seat cap) is subject to the fulfillment of infrastructure availability, its readiness and filled faculty position. Before grant of approval to the increase in intake sought by the institution, the council shall ascertain the infrastructure and faculty availability," AICTE's approval process handbook for 2024-25 to 2026-27 said. Kumar said, "Up to 420 seats, we have granted approval on self-declaration basis (an institute can apply for an increase in intake by providing a self-declaration on facilities available). If the requested intake is to be more than 420 seats, we have visited the institutes virtually, and then accepted or denied the request, based on availability of infrastructure, faculty, laboratories. Earlier, this figure used to be 360 seats." The seven years of consolidation in engineering intake and closures of institutes from 2014-15 to 2021-22 was seen as a market response to reduced demand forcing colleges to shut down. In December 2017, an investigation by The Indian Express

showed there were no takers for 51 per cent of 15.5 lakh undergraduate seats in 3,291 engineering colleges in 2016-17. The investigation found glaring gaps in regulation, including alleged corruption; a vicious circle of poor infrastructure, labs and faculty; non-existent linkages with industry; and the absence of a technical ecosystem to nurture the classroom. All this, it found, accounted for low employability of graduates. A few weeks later, AICTE announced its decision to reduce intake in courses with poor admissions by half, starting academic year 2018-19. In 2019, it announced a two-year moratorium on new institutes and new seats. However, there were a few exceptions to the ban. Existing engineering institutes were allowed to start new programmes in new technologies or convert current capacity in traditional engineering branches to emerging new technology areas such as artificial intelligence, blockchain, robotics, quantum computing, data sciences, cyber security and 3D printing.

In Karnataka village, sense of justice, anxiety as 98 get life for attack

with the 2014 case. The case stems from an August 29, 2014 incident in which three houses belonging to Dalit families in the village were set on fire after a person belonging to the Bhoivi community (an upper caste among the Scheduled Castes) was allegedly assaulted outside a movie theatre. During the ensuing riot, Dalits were dragged out of their houses and assaulted. Over 30 people were injured in the incident, according to the police. In July 2015, just days before he was scheduled to give a statement before the court, the key witness in the case, Veeresh, was found dead. Police declared it a suicide. While delivering the judgment, judge C Chandra Sekar had observed, "This matter appears to be a case of caste violence rather than an ordinary mob violence." The village, which has a population of 1,774, comprises Madigas (Dalits), Muslims, Scheduled Tribes and Lingayats. A local resident told The Indian Express that in nearly all upper caste households in the village, there is at least one man who was convicted in the 2014 case. Despite the police stationed along the main road dividing the

village, the Madigas quietly expressed their fear of a reprisal over the judgment. Pampathi, 48, from the Madiga community, says he is happy to be "finally getting justice". Pampathi was working in a field owned by an upper caste family when his house was set on fire in 2014. "Thankfully, my wife and children were unharmed," he says. For two-three months after the incident, Pampathi and his family lived at the Ganji Kendra set up by the administration at a local government school for all the victims. He admits that his happiness over the verdict is overshadowed by worries for his future. "I work in fields owned by the upper castes. It is my only source of livelihood. I don't know for how long I will have this work. Since the verdict, the village seems divided once again. But what can we do? The law has taken its course," he says. Pampathi says untouchability is still prevalent in the area. "Madigas traditionally stitched slippers. Their (upper caste residents') argument is that we don't take slippers inside our house, so you too should stay away." Panduranga, the only post-

CRIMES AGAINST SCs\* 1,923 cases, including 53 for murder, 213 rape Accused acquitted in 1,077 cases Convictions in 24 cases 2,574 more cases are pending investigation \*in 2023; Source: KSCRB

graduate from the village who also holds a PhD, is a sociology lecturer. A member of the Madiga community, he says, "When I was studying, we (Madiga students) were made to sit separately. Things have changed, but not much. I still cannot enter the temples located on the other side (where the upper caste residents live) or get drinking water from their houses. Until a few years ago, I could not even visit hotels, tea stalls and barber shops run by other communities," he says. Stating that the village has a "history of atrocities", Basavaraj, also from the Madiga community, alleges, "In 2003, Dalits were tied to poles and assaulted on the

charges of stealing crops. Nothing happened to the accused in the case. After the 2014 incident, an FIR was filed. For three-four years, we were boycotted - not just here, but also by nearby villages. We had to travel 12 km to Gangavathi to get groceries." Talking about "compromise attempts", Basavaraj says, "A few years after our boycott, they (upper caste residents) realised that it was not working. The Madigas were then allowed to buy groceries in the village. On February 12-13 this year, the upper caste residents organised and celebrated a temple fair in a Madiga area with us. Then, they asked us to withdraw the case. However, we insisted on the law taking its own course." Accusing a section of the media of portraying the recent verdict as a "harsh" punishment, Dalit Sangarsha Samiti (DSS) Koppal district president Manjunath Dhoddamani says, "We welcome the judgment. Though the verdict did not make national headlines, we hope it will serve as a warning to the upper caste residents to treat us as their equals." Meanwhile, on the other side of the road in the village, shock and despair over the "unantici-

dated verdict" are writ large on the faces of the convicts' families. Pointing to the crops ready for harvest, they said the men who were supposed to be working in the fields are now in prison. On October 24, Ramanna Bhoivi, 38, who was among those sentenced to life term, died of a heart attack hours after the verdict. Locals believe that Ramanna, who suffered from other ailments, could not bear the shock of the verdict since the accused had already spent 48 days in jail after the 2014 incident. Of the five men convicted from 70-year-old Sanna Mudiappa's family, one died three months ago. Sanna says, "We did not follow the court proceedings closely. The lawyer too kept us in the dark. Many of us thought that the 48 days we spent in prison (in 2014) was all the punishment we would serve in the case." Lawyer Umesh Malekoppa, who represented the convicts, denied Sanna's claims. "I am in touch with all the accused. We will challenge the verdict in the Karnataka High Court," he adds. Amaramma, the wife of convict Sangamesh, says, "On Monday (October 21), he left the house saying the case was closed and that he was going to sign

PM on 'digital arrest' frauds

confidence... What is this dangerous game? It is very important for you to understand this," he said. Explaining the modus operandi of the fraudsters, Modi said, "The first move... they collect all of your personal information... 'You went to Goa last month, didn't you? Your daughter studies in Delhi, right?' They collect so much information about you that you will be surprised." "The second move - create an atmosphere of fear... Uniform, government office set-up, legal sections... they will scare you so much on the phone," he said. "And then their third move begins, the third move - the time pressure. 'You have to decide now or else you will be arrested' - these people create so much psychological pressure on the victim that one gets scared. People from every class and age group fall victim to digital arrest." "People have lost lakhs of rupees earned through their hard work, out of sheer fear," he said. To stay safe, Modi said, people should follow three steps - stop, think and take action. "As soon as you get a call, stop... don't panic, stay calm, don't take any hasty steps, don't give away your personal information to anyone; if possible take a screenshot and record it for sure," he said. The second step, he said, is to think. "No government agency threatens you on the phone like this, neither inquires nor demands money on a video call like this. If you feel scared, then know that something is wrong," he said. The third step, he said, is to take action. "Dial the national cyber helpline 1930, report on cybercrime.gov.in, inform family and police, preserve evidence," Modi said. "I'll reiterate that there is no system like digital arrest in the law, this is just a fraud, deceit, it is a lie, a gang of criminals and those who are doing this are enemies of society. To deal with the fraud that is going on in the name of digital arrest, all the investigative agencies are working together with the state governments," the Prime Minister said, adding that a National Cyber Coordination Centre has been set up for synchronisation among these agencies. "Thousands of such fraudulent video calling IDs have been blocked by the agencies. Lakhs of SIM cards, mobile phones and bank accounts have also been blocked. Agencies are doing their

job, but for protection from scams in the name of digital arrest, it is very important that everyone is aware, every citizen is aware. Those who are victims of this kind of cyber fraud should let as many people as possible know about it," he said. "I would also like to urge schools and colleges to involve students in the campaign against cyber scams. We can fight this challenge only with the collective efforts of society." During the address, the Prime Minister also urged people to strengthen the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign this festive season. "Self-reliance has not only become our policy, it has become our passion. It was not very long ago, just 10 years ago, when someone said that some complex technology was being developed in India, many people would not believe it and many would ridicule it," he said. "But today, the same people are amazed to see the success of the country, India, which is becoming self-reliant, is doing wonders in every field," Modi said. He also announced the government's plans to celebrate the 150th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and freedom fighter Birsu Munda, and urged the people to become a part of the campaign. He said both were great men who had different challenges but their vision was the same. While Patel's 150th birth anniversary year will begin on October 31, Birsu Munda's 150th birth anniversary year will begin on November 15. Modi also recalled his visit to Ulihatu village in Jharkhand, the birthplace of Birsu Munda, on his birth anniversary last year. Ahead of World Animation Day on October 28, the Prime Minister spoke about turning India into a global animation powerhouse. He said Indian animation studios are now working with famous production companies such as Disney and Warner Brothers. "Today, our youth is creating original Indian content which has a reflection of our culture. They are being watched worldwide. The animation sector has today taken the form of an industry that is giving strength to other industries. Virtual Reality tourism today is getting famous. On October 28, World Animation Day will be celebrated. We must resolve to make India a global animation powerhouse," he said.

Vijay unveils roadmap

between TVK's goals and the "regressive practices" of others. "Divisive forces that divide us based on religion, caste, and identities are not our only enemies. Corrupt forces must be opposed too. While divisive forces are easy to identify, corrupt ones are harder to spot. They are elusive - eloquent in ideology, dramatic in their performance, and self-proclaimed guardians of Tamil culture. They wear masks. Their faces themselves are masks. Such fake forces are ruling over us today. Yes, divisive and corrupt forces are our enemies," he said. He struck a delicate balance, revealing enough to make clear his stance, yet keeping the criticism indirect and wrapped in punchlines. At one point, Vijay took aim at the state government, terming it an "anti-people government" that "falsely parades its social justice credentials". "They run an anti-people government and fool people by calling it a Dravida model government," he said. In the speech, he grounded TVK's ideological leanings in the legacy of key Tamil leaders. He invoked the names of Dravidian icon E V Ramasamy Periyar, former chief minister K Kamaraj, and the architect of the Constitution, B R Ambedkar. He declared that TVK's ideological focus would be on social justice, women's empowerment, and secularism. However, Vijay also asserted TVK's independence from the Dravidian movement's rejection of religion. He said the party would take everything from Periyar except his "anti-God position". "We won't be taking only one thing that Periyar said - the anti-God position. We have no stake in a politics that denies God," Vijay said. Targeting the style and substance of existing political communication, he suggested that the familiar, heavily-structured format of political addresses no longer resonate. "I am not here to quote world literature and deliver a speech like an MP3 audio playlist," he said, adding, "Do only science and technology need to change? No, politics should also change." Vijay also brought up the

term, "koothadi", a colloquial label often used to dismiss film actors venturing into politics. "Even if you call me Thalopathy (the lieutenant, as he is fondly called by fans), I am also a mere koothadi for some," he said, adding, "Koothadis tell the truth." He also spoke of actor-politicians like M G Ramachandran and Andhra Pradesh's N T Rama Rao. Laying out an agenda that prioritised education, women's safety, and social justice, Vijay proposed establishing a special department dedicated to the protection of women, children, and the elderly, along with reforms to ensure access to education, healthcare, and basic resources like clean drinking water. He called for a caste census, citing proportional representation as a key priority to secure equal opportunities for all. Vijay also sought to not distance his party from 'Dravidian ideology'. "Dravidism and nationalism are the two eyes of our ideology," Vijay said, and said the TVK would be a bridge between traditional Dravidian values and broader national issues, unifying them rather than choosing between them. As the speech drew to a close, Vijay's eyes were firmly set on the 2026 state elections. "Each vote should drop here like an atom bomb," he said, urging people to ensure a majority for TVK. He also sought to keep the door open for allies. "Whoever comes along with us will have a share of power in our government," he said. This was seen as a strategic overture to AIADMK, which risks losing further ground if TVK emerges as the primary, secular, anti-DMK force. With a career spanning three decades and 68 films, several of them crossing the Rs 100-crore mark, Vijay has established himself as one of the most commercially successful actors. He enjoys an extensive fan base spanning the southern states and beyond and has often drawn comparison to icons like MGR and Rajinikanth. His latest film, GOAT (Greatest of All Time), has already grossed over Rs 450 crore worldwide, further cementing his dominance in Tamil and Indian cinema.

Amid bid to get UNESCO tag, Gujarat's dinosaur park a picture of neglect

hammers, plaster of Paris, cloth bandages, and chemicals," it says. The bones were eventually discovered to belong to Rajasaurus narmadensis and Rahiolisaurus gujaratensis, large bipedal carnivorous theropod dinosaurs believed to have walked the earth in the Late Cretaceous period some 67 million years ago. Although similar discoveries were subsequently made in different parts of Gujarat, what made the Balasinor one special was that it was one of the largest hatcheries of dinosaur eggs in the world, third only to Aix-en-Provence in France and the Mongolian Gobi Desert. The possibility of the discovery of a new species of dinosaurs in Gujarat had sparked international interest in the 90s - in December 1997, a team of 50 paleontologists, including an American paleontologist Kirk Johnson, currently the director of Natural Museum of National History Museum in Washington DC, visited Balasinor to study the dinosaur eggs. It was also around this time that Aaliya Sultana Babi, the nawabzadi of the erstwhile princely state of Balasinor and an amateur paleontologist and conservationist, began to take keen interest in the site. Popularly known as 'Dinosaur Princess', Aaliya has been involved with the site's preservation ever since. Before the area was discovered to be a fossil site, locals would use the eggs to grind masalas, she tells The Indian Express. "After they were proven to be

fossils, I came across a woman in a local village grinding masala with what looked like a dinosaur egg. On closer examination, it was indeed a fossilised egg covered with chilli paste. Since then, it's my prized possession, humorously named the 'masala anda'," she laughs. According to officials and locals, the site has been a source of employment for residents and sees about 2,500 visitors a month. This number goes up during weekends, even going to as many as 2000/day around Diwali. Paleontologist Ashok Sahni, professor emeritus at Panjab University, Chandigarh, who set up the Dinosaur of India Gallery in that city, says there's much around the area that hasn't been explored even though "much money has been poured into the museum". "The problem is that the government moves slowly and by the time, most of the things are lost," he says. On their part, officials of the Gujarat tourism department say that while there had been plans to expand the scope of the park, it was on reserved forest land, which limits the amount of work that could be undertaken there. "There was a plan to create two pits where the fossils were found and erect a glass wall to allow tourists to go inside to see how the fossils were discovered but it hasn't taken off," says one official. However, Deputy Conservator of Forests (DCF) Mahisagar District NV Chaudhary says that while the state forest department can clear

the site of vegetation, more ambitious plans at the site require the central government's permission. Experts also see the nearby Lift Irrigation Pipeline Project as a major threat. Aimed at providing irrigation facilities to water deficient villages of about six talukas of Kheda and Mahisagar district, the 40-lakh litre tank and pipeline project stands just 100 metres away from the boundary wall of the fossil park. According to Sahni, the project poses a threat not only to the protected site and also many potentially undiscovered fossils in the area. But Balasinor Sub-Divisional Magistrate Hiren Chauhan, also co-chairman of the Fossil Park Society that's formed to ensure inter-departmental coordination for the park, believes the water pipeline project is imperative to the area's development. "The project is coming up after following due process and will cover the five adjoining districts facing water scarcity. We have to look at development while also balancing heritage," he says. What ails the museum Problems also plague the museum complex located 500 metres from the fossil park. Inaugurated in two phases in 2019 and 2022, the sprawling 25,000 sq. ft facility has 16 galleries and allows tourists to experience its displays through 3D projection mapping and holograms, sensor-based interactive consoles, 360-degree interactive Virtual Reality Tour, Animated Diorama Dynamic sculpture in-

stallation, a 5D theatre and a digital forest. For its maintenance and upkeep, the Gujarat government has contracted the Ahmedabad-based VAMA Communications. However, issues such poor manpower and security, power outages and water leakage and non-functioning displays frequently plague the museum. Vandana Raj, founder and Chief Executive Officer of VAMA Communications, which is also behind the Jallianwala Bagh memorial complex in Amritsar, says that the company maintains over 40 museums across India. She also attributes the problems plaguing the Rajoli museum to "structural issues" and "irregular payments" from the state government. "Repair work is undertaken regularly but waterlogging in the older section of the museum is a structural problem since it was handed over to us. We also face a strain with funds as despite the clause for monthly payments, the authorities release funds only once in four months," she says, adding that repairs have now been undertaken. But SDM Chauhan denies that funds are an issue, instead emphasising on the need for better supervision. "I have written multiple letters to the agency urging them to overcome the problems. Government payments may be delayed but they are usually cleared within a few weeks," he says. "The issue is that of supervision. The technical faults are anyway not related to payments, and the agency is supposed to maintain them on its own."

Indians lost Rs 120 crore

in all of 2023. A total 9.66 lakh complaints were reported in 2022, up from 4.52 lakh the previous year. According to I4C, there are four types of scams - digital arrest, trading scam, investment scam (task based) and romance/dating scam. "We found that Indians lost Rs 120.30 crore in digital arrest, Rs 1,420.48 crore in trading scam, Rs 222.58 crore in investment scam, and Rs 13.23 crore in romance/dating scam," Chief Executive Officer (I4C) Rajesh Kumar had said while releasing the January-April data in May. In digital arrest, potential victims would get a call in which the caller would tell them that they had sent or were the intended recipients of a parcel containing illegal goods, drugs, fake passports, or other contraband. In some cases, relatives or friends of the target would be told that the target had been found to be involved in a crime. Once they had the target -

After Paris dip, Govt eyes 'flab' cut in elite Olympics scheme

to challenge for a medal, as the name of the scheme implies. Another clause that is likely to be added to fresh contracts for the 2028 Olympics cycle relates to accountability. Sources said many athletes are yet to submit their bills and expenses up to roughly "Rs 10 crore are yet to be settled". "Many athletes who have retired are also yet to submit their expense sheets. We have no doubts over their intent, the money was sanctioned only after the propos-



Cleaning staff sprinkle chemicals to dissolve the froth in the Yamuna river in Kalindi Kunj Sunday. *Gajendra Yadav*

## GK, Vasant Kunj among areas hit by water shortage; no relief until Nov 1

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

SEVERAL PARTS of south and central Delhi will continue to reel under water shortage till November 1, with maintenance in two treatment plants and high pollution levels in the Yamuna hitting the supply.

The affected areas include prime locations such as Lajpat Nagar, Mayur Vihar, Laxmi Nagar, Preet Vihar, Greater Kailash, Vasant Kunj, Kalkaji, Amar Colony, Panchsheel Park, Sarita Vihar, Malviya Nagar, Geetanjali Enclave and several areas under the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC).

According to Delhi Jal Board (DJB), the Bhagirathi and Sonia Vihar water treatment plants are functioning only at 30% ca-

capacity, and are having to rely temporarily on the Yamuna.

The Yamuna, however, saw the ammonia levels rise — at more than 1.5 parts per million (ppm) — affecting treatment capacity.

With a capacity of 110 million gallons per day (MGD) and 140 MGD respectively, Bhagirathi WTP and Sonia Vihar WTP process water from both Ganga and Yamuna rivers. According to DJB, until October 21, the Ganga water was to be received through ponding at various locations across the Upper Ganga Canal.

However, the supply from Ganga was disrupted due to a scheduled annual maintenance work by the Uttar Pradesh Irrigation Department. The WTPs were then supposed to be dependent on the Yamuna

river for an alternate source of raw water until midnight of October 31.

However, high ammonia content in Yamuna meant that the WTPs could not process raw water from the river.

"Hence, the production at Bhagirathi and Sonia Vihar has been curtailed up to 30% of the capacity. Further, the production would depend entirely upon the quality of raw water in Yamuna. The production from these plants shall vary accordingly," the water authority stated.

Meanwhile, DJB vice-chairperson Vinay Mishra, who inspected Sonia Vihar WTP, blamed the Haryana government for the alleged discharge of industrial waste.

"The Delhi government will soon talk to the Haryana government and resolve this issue so

that Delhiites can get clean water. Also, appropriate instructions were given to the officers to ensure that when the quality of water improves, the water treatment plant works at 100% capacity," he posted on X.

The Delhi government blamed the industrial waste discharge from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh for the rise in ammonia levels in Yamuna, which has now led to a 30% decrease in water production.

"Ammonia spikes have been repeatedly detected, most notably in January and February this year, impacting production, especially at the Wazirabad WTP. Recently, ammonia content reached 0.9 ppm, rendering the water unsuitable for treatment and further limiting WTP operations," it stated.

## Phoolwalon ki sair, a testament to Delhi's syncretic culture

DEEPIKA SINGH  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

IN THE early 19th century, around the time the Mughal empire began to fade, a rebellious prince began to turn into a thorn in the side for the British. All of 19, Mirza Jahangir fired at the then British resident and was exiled to Allahabad. His mother, Mumtaz Mahal Begum, made a vow: Once her son returned, she would walk barefoot from the Red Fort to Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki dargah in Mehrauli to offer her gratitude.

Her prayers answered, the queen decided to keep her promise. To ease her journey, it is said, the local people scattered flowers throughout her route. The flower seller also made floral *pankhas* (fans) offered to the Kaki dargah and the nearby Yogmaya temple. So popular was the event that it was decided to be held yearly. The result was a week-long annual celebration called the *Phoolwalon ki sair* or *Sair-e-Gulfaroshan*.

Over 200 years on, the tradition continues and serves as a testament to Delhi's syncretic culture.

This year, the event kicked off on October 21 and saw the organisers, Anjuman Sair-e-Gul Faroshan, presenting the ceremonial *pankha*, with a picture of Goddess Durga juxtaposed with an image of the Madina mosque, to Chief Minister Atishi.

*Phoolwalon ki sair* was instituted in 1811, writes author and historian Swapna Liddle in her book *14 Heritage Walks of Delhi*. "...it became an annual fair sponsored by the palace..."

In 1942, during the Quit India Movement, the British stopped the festival. "Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru restarted it in 1962...The president of India and the Lt Governor of Delhi are ceremoniously invited with the shehnai being played at their residence," writes author and historian Rana Safvi in her book *Where Stones Speak - Historical Trails in Mehrauli, the First City of Delhi*.

Pakistani journalist Raza Rumi wrote in his book *Delhi by Heart: (Phoolwalon ki sair is) a multicultural event that involved Hindus, Muslims, mullahs and pandits all in one go.*

On Saturday night, Jahaz Mahal, a Lodhi-era structure in Mehrauli, was all decked up with lights and marigold flowers to



The decked up dargah; (below) CM Atishi at *Phoolwalon ki sair* this year. *Express*



host a cultural event to mark the celebrations. Cultural performances and a splendid *Qawwali* were part of the event, a press note by the Delhi government stated.

Speaking at the event, CM Atishi said, "Phool Waalon Ki Sair" is not just a festival; it has upheld the tradition of Delhi's centuries-old Ganga-Jamuni Tehzeeb."

Asif Khan Dehvi, founder of Delhi Karavan, said: "Given instances of strife around the world, the festival is more relevant than ever before. An occasion where people of all faiths and walks of life come together and celebrate, what can be more beautiful than that?"

As the last Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar said: "Waqai sair hai ye dekhte ke qabil, Chasm e anjum ho na iss sair par kyun maai". "To look at this ceremony is such a delight; Why wouldn't the stars gaze at this very ceremony," translates Safvi in her book.

## Delhi GST kitty up by 6.5% from April to September

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

DELHI'S GST collection has risen by 6.54% in the first six months of this fiscal year compared to last year, government data states.

Data shows that from April 1 to September 30, Delhi collected a revenue of Rs 21,439.76 crore. During the same period last year, it collected Rs 20,179.96 crore.

Data also shows that collection

was good in April, June and August. In April, the collection even crossed the Rs 4,000-crore mark. September, meanwhile, saw a slight dip.

As compared to last year, revenue from luxury, entertainment, and betting tax has seen a slight increase. As per data, from April 1 to September 30, 2023, revenue from luxury entertainment and betting tax was Rs 0.27 crore. It rose to Rs 1.07 crore during the same period this year.

## 60-yr-old held for molesting minor

New Delhi: A 60-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly molesting a minor girl in Shahdara Saturday, police said. The accused and the victim's family live nearby. "The accused was unemployed

and living with his nephews," the officer said. A case under relevant sections of BNS and POCSO Act has been registered against the accused, police said.

ENS

## 2 men on motorcycle open fire at house in Rani Bagh; police suspect links to Chaudhary-Bambiha gang

HIMANSHU HARSH  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 26

TWO UNIDENTIFIED individuals on a motorcycle opened fire at a house in Rani Bagh near Pitampura on Saturday evening, police said, adding that they suspect the men were from the Kaushal Chaudhary and Davinder Bambiha gang.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer Delhi) Sachin Sharma, the incident was reported to the police at 8.40 pm on Saturday. On

reaching the spot, police said they found that multiple rounds had been fired at the house

reaching the spot, police said they found that multiple rounds had been fired at the house.

"During initial investigation, it was found that two men on a motorcycle drove by and one of them fired multiple rounds before they fled from the spot," the

officer said. "The crime team inspected the spot and a case has been registered under relevant sections... Efforts are underway to identify and apprehend the culprits," the DCP said.

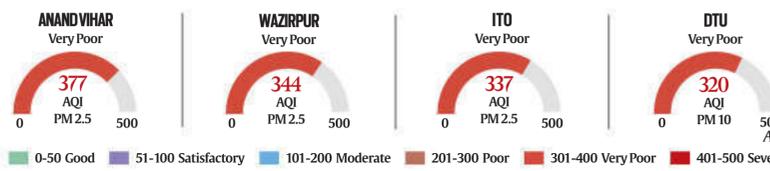
"A threat note has been found bearing the name of Kaushal Chaudhary and Bambiha gang," a police source said. The DCP said the motive behind the shooting is unclear as of now and further investigation is underway.

The Bambiha gang is an arch-rival of the Lawrence Bishnoi

gang, said police. Bambiha, who allegedly ran an extortion racket in Chandigarh, Mohali, and Panchkula, was killed in a police encounter in 2016.

The inter-gang rivalry often led to shootouts in Chandigarh, Delhi, and Punjab. The gangs not only fought over protection money but for supremacy over the Punjab music industry and kabaddi players.

Police said Kaushal Chaudhary, the leader of the gang, is currently imprisoned in Bhondsi jail in Gurgaon and is facing over 40 criminal charges.



**S K Y W A T C H**

October 28  
Mist in the morning  
Mainly clear sky

**MAX: 34** | **MIN: 20**  
2.2°C above normal | 2.8°C above normal

**HARDLOOK**

# Delhi's annual crisis

Like every year, several measures are in place to tackle the city's air pollution problem. How effective are they on the ground? *The Indian Express* finds out

**SOPHIYA MATHEW**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

WINTER IS just around the corner in Delhi. The days grow shorter, there is a slight chill in the air — and there is a yellow haze, a cocktail of pollutants, hanging over the city like a shroud.

This year, the city saw its first bad air day on October 13 when the Air Quality Index (AQI) dipped to the 'poor' category (an AQI between 201 and 300). Compared to 2015, except for the 2021 pandemic year, this was very delayed. The days that followed oscillated between 'poor' and 'very poor'.

On Sunday, Delhi's average air quality was in the 'very poor' category at 356 — the worst in the country, as per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The Delhi Environment Minister has warned that the next 15 days are crucial with Diwali festivities (on October 31) and stubble-burning season in the neighbouring states (Punjab, UP and Haryana) coinciding this year.

Year after year, interventions have been planned — pushing for public transport, curbing dust pollution, a firecracker ban — to curb pollution. *The Indian Express* looks at what's been promised and what's been done on the ground.

According to a 2015 IIT-Kanpur study on sources of pollution in Delhi, among the top contributors to PM 10 (particulate matter of diameter of 10 micrometers or less) emissions annually were road dust at 56%, industrial point sources at 10% and vehicles at 9%. The top four contributors to PM 2.5 (particulate matter of diameter of 2.5 micrometers or less) emissions were road dust (38%), vehicles (20%), domestic fuel burning (12%), and industrial point sources (11%).

The Centre for Science and Environment's (CSE) analysis of data from the Decision Support System (DSS) for Air Quality Management shows that among local emission sources, around half of Delhi's particulate pollution during winter months is from the transport sector.

The most polluted months in the year are generally November, December and January, according to the data on monthly AQI averages. So far this year, only three 'severe' days have been reported in January while there have been no 'good' AQI days, as per data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) (see box).

The daily average AQI till Saturday stood at 198. But when compared to the daily average AQI in the same period since 2016 (when the average AQI was 236) it shows that air quality levels are the worst since 2019, when it stood at 152 for the same period.

The 2021 air quality guidelines of the World Health Organisation suggest that daily average PM 2.5 levels should not exceed 15 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and for PM 10 levels, the limit is set at 45 µg/m<sup>3</sup>. On Sunday, as per data from the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC), the PM 2.5 and PM 10 levels reached up to 445 µg/m<sup>3</sup> and 1,566 µg/m<sup>3</sup>.

**Action taken**



On Sunday, Delhi's average air quality was in the 'very poor' category at 356. *Gajendra Yadav*

One of the key actions to combating air pollution is invoking the Centre's emergency Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) when air quality in Delhi-NCR is expected to decline in the winter months. At present, GRAP Stage 2 (when AQI is between 301-400) has been activated by the Commission for Air Quality and Management (CAQM) since October 21. Under this, there is a ban on the use of coal and firewood, including tandoors at hotels, restaurants, and open eateries as well as diesel generator sets (except for emergency and essential services). It also includes a hike in parking charges to discourage use of private vehicles.

**PARKING HIKE**

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) hiked parking fees last week. Earlier, a parking fee of Rs 20 was charged per hour for four-wheelers (with the maximum being Rs 100 for 24 hours), but now Rs 40 will be charged per hour (maximum Rs 200 for 24 hours). For two-wheelers, the fee is Rs 10 per hour (maximum Rs 50 for up to 24 hours) but now Rs 20 will be charged per hour (maximum Rs 100 for up to 24 hours). In November 2023 too, it had increased parking rates.

The Municipal Corporation of Delhi, however, is yet to do so. To date, since GRAP came into existence, parking charges in MCD areas have not been hiked even once. According to an MCD official, "Parking rates have not been increased as there are several locations, like in Northeast and Outer Delhi, where bus and Metro connectivity is not as good. A proposal was placed in the MCD House to automatically increase parking charges by four times, every time GRAP II guidelines are enforced. However, it was postponed; it is expected the agenda will be presented in the House again." Metro congestion is already high so a surge in parking fees will cause a public crisis, added the official.

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**VEHICULAR EMISSIONS**

The Delhi government has restarted action against End-Of-Life vehicles (petrol and diesel vehicles that have completed 15 years and 10 years of age) in the city. According to officials in the Delhi Transport Department, there are around 1.5 lakh old vehicles and nearly 2,000 of these have been impounded so far.

The Centre, meanwhile, said a total of 3,567 intercity buses ply to Delhi daily from various cities in Haryana, UP and Rajasthan, and all of these have shifted completely to much cleaner BS-VI diesel/CNG/EV mode.

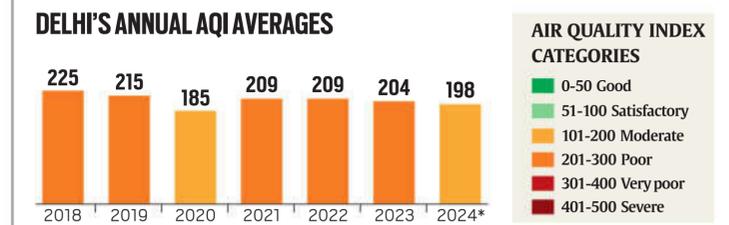
In the CAQM's latest revision, stringent action was also introduced in Stage 2 of its emergency response measures for better con-

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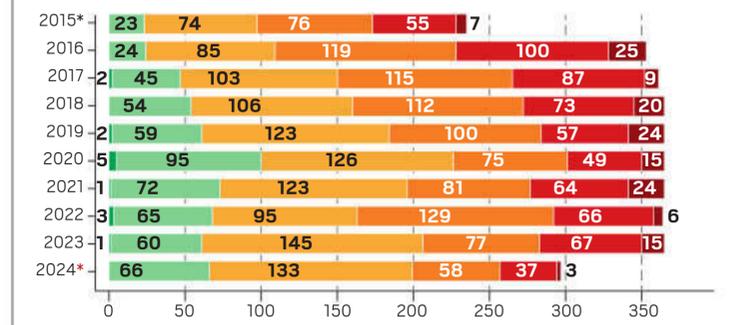
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## How previous years have fared



Data provided by the Commission for Air Quality Management in NCR and Adjoining Areas  
\*As of October 25, 2024

## AIR QUALITY OVER THE PAST 10 YEARS (no. of days)



\*CPCB started maintaining data from May 2015 till October 25

## AQI MONTHLY AVERAGES

	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024*
Jan		370	304	328	328	286	324	279	311	355
Feb		293	267	243	242	245	288	225	237	218
Mar		238	211	203	184	128	223	217	170	176
Apr		271	227	222	211	110	202	255	180	182
May		244	252	249	217	221	144	144	171	223
Jun		192	208	174	202	190	123	148	130	179
Jul		138	146	98	104	134	84	110	87	96
Aug		147	105	103	111	86	64	107	93	116
Sept		194	163	139	112	98	119	78	104	108
Oct		264	271	285	268	234	265	173	210	219
Nov		358	368	361	335	312	328	377	321	373
Dec		301	365	313	361	337	332	336	319	348

CPCB started maintaining data from May 2015 till October 25

rol of vehicular pollution. There is no permit for inter-state buses from NCR states other than EVs/CNG/BS-VI diesel, to enter Delhi (excluding buses/tempo travellers operated with an All-India Tourist Permit).

The transport sector remains the major source of air pollution despite elaborate measures to combat it. When asked about this, the AAP-led Delhi government responded, "... It is well established that the situation at Anand Vihar is worsening because of the pollution of diesel buses at UP's Kaushambi Depot. Cases of stubble burning are rising each day in BJP-ruled UP and Haryana."

**DUST POLLUTION**

The government has initiated action against vehicles without valid pollution under control certificates and transportation of construction and demolition (C&D) material in open vehicles, said the ministry. In terms of stringent measures to control dust pollution from C&D activities, officials said 580 construction sites are registered in Delhi and CAQM has

One of the key actions to combating air pollution is invoking the Centre's emergency Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) when air quality in Delhi-NCR is expected to decline in the winter months. At present, GRAP Stage 2 (when AQI is between 301-400) has been activated by the Commission for Air Quality and Management (CAQM) since October 21. Under this, there is a ban on the use of coal and firewood, including tandoors at hotels, restaurants, and open eateries as well as diesel generator sets (except for emergency and essential services). It also includes a hike in parking charges to discourage use of private vehicles.

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mandated deployment of anti-smog guns in proportion to the area of construction. There is remote monitoring of bigger construction projects on plot areas greater than 500 sqm.

**STUBBLE BURNING**

Prevention of stubble burning has been a "high-priority sector". As of October 26, a total of 3,434 crop-residue burning events have been reported in Punjab (1,857), Haryana (700), UP (865) and Delhi (12), as per data from the Indian Agricultural Research Institute. The number is significantly low for Punjab against the 18,347 cases reported in 2020 from September 15 to October 26. Haryana also recorded the least fires in this period; the highest reported was 2,010 in 2021. UP, on the other hand, has seen the highest number this year when compared to previous years. In 2023, it had reported 706 stubble-burning events for the period.

IITM in its air quality forecast has warned that stubble burning cases will pick up and lead to severe air quality in the coming days.

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To curb this, in-situ and ex-situ management is recommended by the CAQM. Crop diversification, promoting basmati variety, low straw and early maturing paddy varieties, and direct seeding of rice methods are some of the plans or schemes to reduce paddy straw generation. The Environment Ministry stated, "Owing to concerted action by all stakeholders, a gradual but significant reduction has been witnessed in paddy residue burning incidences."

**ARTIFICIAL RAIN**

This is being considered as a potential emergency measure by the Delhi government. Environment Minister Gopal Rai has repeatedly called for considering cloud seeding as an emergency measure to induce rain and reduce pollution, while urging the Centre to convene a meeting with stakeholders to approve it.

According to the Union Environment Ministry, "A detailed proposal on artificial rain was sought from DPCC on September 23, which has not been received. However, experts have opined

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that source mitigation is to be done by Delhi and artificial rain may not be of much use."

**'More needs to be done'**

Several experts *The Indian Express* spoke to said what's worked through GRAP is a better coordination system to bring stakeholders — pollution control board agencies, industrial area authorities, and MeT department — on board, but it is reactive.

"We need a system wherein the rise in pollution levels is predicted several days in advance. This can help policymakers plan interventions. Delhi has seen the maximum number of interventions every year during this time," said Swagata Dey, a policy specialist with the Air Quality Team, Centre for Study of Science, Technology and Policy.

The emergency action plan approved by the Supreme Court in 2016 does not include long-term measures for pollution-source mitigation.

Anumita Roychowdhury, Executive Director of Research and Advocacy at CSE, said, "We need to get granular in approach to see a change in the long-term... It is not enough for the government to say the number of electric buses fleet has increased; even with augmenting the Metro, there is a shortfall. There needs to be an action-taken report that is made public instead of just the Winter Action Plan. The report should have the action taken in key pollution sectors and an assessment needs to be done, gaps need to be addressed whether it is systemic or infrastructural."

There is a need for more dynamic models for forecasting severe air quality events in advance, she said. "Work is in the pipeline by experts from IIT-Kanpur, among others, to build more efficient models to forecast AQI."

Dey said, "Reducing waste burning in pockets by better collection and segregation of waste; replacing biomass for cooking in urban slums by providing easier access to LPG; implementing stricter norms for DG sets in the wedding season; and providing cleaner, affordable, safe, and reliable mass public transport — all of these must continue. We need to phase out CNG buses in favour of electric ones as CNG emits nitrogen oxides which contribute to smog and particulate matter. The construction ban that comes into effect for GRAP must be followed for all sites without exemptions... However, all these need to continue throughout the year..."

The CSE, in its latest report 'Air Quality and Vulnerable Groups: An Agenda for Inclusive and Just Action', pointed out that hotspot plans in Delhi don't include the nature of exposure of local communities, their vulnerability, and coping capacity to the crisis. A singular focus on ambient air quality, while excluding an assessment of exposure to different groups, is a limitation of the air quality management approach, it stated.

Despite several interventions unlike any other state in the country, there is still a lot to be done, including mitigation of hyperlocal sources of pollution, experts said.

# 'I like Delhi because it's not an easy place. It needs... time and indulging'

**My Delhi**  
Ambassadors on this city - their home  
SECOND OF A SERIES  
PHILIPP ACKERMANN  
GERMAN AMBASSADOR

**NIRBHAY THAKUR**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

NEW DELHI was never a city that grew around one centre and it doesn't jump in your face. It is not an easy place, "it needs some time and some indulging". This is how German Ambassador Philipp Ackermann describes the Capital of India. The 59-year-old has spent five years in the city, two years in this stint. His favourite Indian food is *gobhi aloo* and a good *kebab*.

He studied Art History and Economics in Bonn, Heidelberg

and Utrecht, and received his doctorate in Art History in 1993. That same year, he joined the German Foreign Service. His overseas postings include Rabat (Morocco) and New York (German mission to the UN). From 2006-2007, he headed the German Provincial Reconstruction Team in Kunduz, Afghanistan. Between 2007 and 2010, he served as political counsellor in New Delhi (India). He was Deputy Head of Mission in Washington DC from 2014 to 2016.

In Berlin, he worked between 2002 and 2006 in offices of Federal Foreign Ministers Joschka Fischer and Frank-Walter Steinmeier. From 2010 to 2014 he held the position of Head of Task Force Afghanistan-Pakistan in the Federal Foreign Office and as Deputy Special Representative for Afghanistan and Pakistan. Before being assigned his current job, he was Director General for Africa, Latin America, Near and Middle East at the Federal Foreign Office for five years.

Ackermann spoke to *The Indian Express* for the second in a series of interviews with Ambassadors about Delhi — their home. Edited excerpts:

**What is your favourite spot in Delhi?**

"...It's incredibly difficult to say... so, let me give you a diplomatic answer. Historically and aesthetically, Humayun's Tomb — it's one of the most beautiful buildings I know... When you want to feel the spirit of Delhi, I would say Chandni Chowk... It's bustling, you have the merchants and traders and there's food everywhere. When it comes to Delhi as a *Rajdhani*, I would say what used to be the Rajpath between India Gate and Rashtrapati Bhawan is maybe the most impressive expression of the Republic of India. I think they've done a great job in restoring it. You see lots of people having picnics on the grass. It's a park but it shows the history and grandeur, and you realise what a big nation this is.



German Ambassador Philipp Ackermann. *Express*

**Can you list three things that have stood out in your stay?**

The visit to the Nizamuddin Auliya shrine is something I'll never forget. It's a moment where people were praying during *Ramadan* and they started breaking their fast. Being fed by the community in such a peaceful and beautiful place... was a very touching moment for me. Kite flying on the roofs of Old

Delhi is also something I really like. You stand on the roof of houses and you see all these boys and girls, an army of kites in the air, and pigeons in between... And you see the sun setting and the *Jama Masjid*... it's... unforgettable... I'm a bird watcher. South Delhi is incredibly green... I have the enormous privilege of living in a residence with a garden. What I find remarkable is the variety of

birds that come... I think I found 41 species... in my garden alone... You see the occasional Ibis... Myna, parakeets... who would have thought in this civilisation, you would find so much nature?

**Your go-to places to eat?**

"... You get fabulous food at Karim's in Old Delhi... When you go to Paranthé Wali Gali in Chandni Chowk, you have a lot of little vegetarian stores where you get excellent meals... I'm not afraid of getting sick as everything is cooked well... You can also have fabulous star-like food in Delhi... (at) Indian Accent restaurant..."

**Are there any encounters that will stay with you?**

"I have a very good story that I found very touching... I was with friends at Red Fort. I'd seen it many times so I told them to go in and I will read a book outside... A young Indian guy... came up to me and said 'Sir can I talk to you?'. My first reaction is 'What does he

want...'. But he looked nice enough so I said why not... He said to me, 'I have to talk to you because I haven't talked to anyone in 24 hours'. He came to Delhi to get a scholarship but couldn't get it, which made him sad. But what made him very sad was he was completely alone in Delhi... He started telling me about his life. I was surprised at how well-informed he was about Germany. We had a nice conversation. When he was about to leave, he said, 'I think life is all about making other people happy'. I found that very sweet... I hope he's made a good life.

**How would you describe Delhi to someone who's never been here?**

"If you want to find your way through Delhi, you have to invest time. Unlike Mumbai or other cities in India, it's not a city that jumps in your face. You must know where to go. New Delhi was never a city that grew

around one centre. You had seven Delhi. Even today, there is no clear 'centre' of Delhi.

"... When



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# 6 DECISION 2024

MAHARASHTRA • JHARKHAND



I HEREBY DECLARE



**GEETAKORA, 41**, former MP, BJP Jagannathpur candidate

**TOTAL ASSETS**  
₹3.85CR (2024)  
₹2.52CR (2019)

Movable assets ₹3.29 cr  
Immovable assets ₹56 lakh  
Liabilities ₹47 lakh  
Criminal cases 2\*  
Education B.S.W  
\* Not convicted



**PURNIMASAHU, 30**, Odisha Governor Raghubar Das' daughter-in-law, BJP's Jamshepur East candidate

**TOTAL ASSETS**  
₹1CR (2024)

Movable assets ₹1 cr  
Immovable assets None  
Liabilities None  
Criminal cases None  
Education PGDC

## NO PARTY HAS WON MAJORITY IN STATE'S HISTORY

# Little room for error, Jharkhand polls may hinge on nine low-margin seats

The number of such constituencies declined from 19 in 2014 to 9 five years ago. In the recent Lok Sabha polls, there were 4 Assembly segments where the margins were below 5,000 votes

**LALMANI VERMA & ANJISHNU DAS**  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

WITH THE Jharkhand Assembly elections next month expected to be a close contest, nine seats where the victory margin was less than 5,000 votes in 2019 may play a key role for both the NDA and INDIA alliances. Given that the halfway mark in the 81-member Jharkhand Assembly is only 41 seats and no party has ever got an outright majority in the state's history, these nine seats become crucial.

The nine are Deoghar, Godda, Kodarma, Mandhu, Baghmara, Jarmundi, Simdega, Nala, and Jama. Of these, the BJP won five and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and Congress won two each five years ago. However, in the recent Lok Sabha elections, the BJP and its ally All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) led in eight of these Assembly segments and the Congress in one.

In 2019, the average victory margin in these nine constituencies was 2,349 votes, with the lowest margin of 285 in Simdega, where the Congress defeated the BJP. In Baghmara, the BJP defeated the Congress by a narrow 824 votes. The BJP also stood second in the four of the constituencies it did not win, while the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), an ally of the JMM and the



The 2019 Assembly polls saw a flip in 14 of 19 seats where the margin was less than 5,000 in the 2014 elections. The JMM won five of these, while its ally Congress won three. Facebook

### THE MATH OF THE LOW-MARGIN SEATS

Seats	Winner	Runner-Up	Margin-2019	2024 Ls
Deoghar	BJP	RJD	2,624	BJP
Godda	BJP	RJD	4,512	BJP
Kodarma	BJP	RJD	1,797	BJP
Mandhu	BJP	AJSUP	2,062	BJP
Baghmara	BJP	INC	824	AJSU
Jarmundi	INC	BJP	3,099	BJP
Simdega	INC	BJP	285	CONG
Nala	Jmm	BJP	3,520	BJP
Jama	Jmm	BJP	2,426	BJP

Congress, was runner-up in three constituencies. The Congress and the AJSU stood second in a seat each.

The 2019 Assembly elections saw a flip in 14 of the 19 Assembly seats where the winning margin was less than 5,000 votes in 2014. The average winning margin in these 19 seats in 2014 was 2,100 votes. The BJP had won seven of these 14 seats in 2014, while the All Jharkhand Students Party (AJSUP) won two. The JMM, the Congress, the Marxist Co-ordination (MCO),

the Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM), and the Navjawan Sangharash Morcha (NSAM) all won a seat each in 2014.

Of the 14 seats that flipped in 2019, the JMM won five and the Congress three. The two parties subsequently went on to form the government. The BJP won five of these 14 flipped seats.

In another trend, the runners-up in the low-margin seats of 2014 ended up largely winning the seats, again with low margins. The JMM was a runner-up in 2014 in the five low-margin seats that it managed to clinch in 2019.

Among the low-margin flipped seats that the BJP won in 2019, it was a runner-up in three seats five years earlier. This also included Torpa where the party lost the seat to JMM by a mere 43 votes. The CPI (ML) Liberation that lost Bagodar to the BJP by 4,339 votes in 2014 won the seat in 2019.

After 2014, low-margin seats declined from 19 to nine in 2019, and further to just four Assembly segments in the recent Lok Sabha elections. These four Assembly segments are Mahagama in the Godda parliamentary constituency, where the Congress led by 121 votes; Ghatsila in Jamshepur, where the BJP led by 795 votes; and Tundi in Giridih and Rajmahal in the Lok Sabha seat of the same name where the JMM led by 933 and 3,597 votes, respectively.



Mumbai Congress chief and Lok Sabha MP Varsha Gaikwad (left) has been getting flak over ticket distribution. PTI

### TICKET TUSSELE

# Nominations to close tomorrow, Mumbai Cong troubles continue

Party likely to end up with 10 after demanding 18 of 36 seats in Mumbai

**ALOK DESHPANDE**  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

AS THE seat-sharing deadlock continues in the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) with nominations for the Maharashtra Assembly elections set to close on Tuesday, a section of the Congress's Mumbai unit is unhappy about losing out to ally Shiv Sena (UBT) of Uddhav Thackeray on the negotiation table and the seats the party allotted to the party.

Of the 36 Assembly seats in Mumbai, the Congress asked for 18 seats, Mumbai Congress president Varsha Gaikwad told The Indian Express in a recent interview, adding that it was based on the Lok Sabha poll results in which the party contested two of Mumbai's six parliamentary seats and won one.

While the party has declared candidates in nine constituencies, it is likely to get only one more. A section of Congress leaders in the city alleged favouritism in the choice of candidates but Gaikwad dismissed these reports of discord alleging that "people with vested interests" were spreading rumours.

Those unhappy claimed the leadership had failed to secure "respectable seats" and ensured tickets for only a handful of leaders or their kin.

Sitting MLAs Aslam Sheikh and Amin Patel have been given their constituencies of Malad West and Mumbadevi. Gaikwad's sister Jyoti has got the constituency of Dharavi despite opposition within the party whereas former minister and ex-MLA Naseem Khan has been fielded from Chandivli.

There was a push within the Congress for Versova, Bandra East, and Byculla but the party failed to get any of these from the Shiv Sena

(UBT). Sources said a party MLA was interested in getting the Versova ticket for his son-in-law and when it became clear he would not get the ticket he convinced the party to give up its claim on the seat, they alleged.

Congress leader Sachin Sawant got the ticket from Andheri West but subsequently issued a statement requesting the high command to change its decision. Gaikwad said Sawant's request had been conveyed to the high command. On Sunday night, the Congress replaced Sawant with Ashok Jadhav in Andheri West. Jadhav is said to be interested in Bandra East that has gone to the Shiv Sena (UBT) in the seat-sharing deal.

Another seat where the Congress candidate initially appeared reluctant is Bandra West. The party fielded former corporator Asif Zakaria against Mumbai BJP chief Ashish Shelar. According to sources, Zakaria was not interested in contesting the election and was convinced at the last moment after former Lok Sabha MP Priya Dutt remained firm on not contesting the Assembly polls.

The party's Charkop candidate Yashwant Singh was also not initially interested in fighting from the constituency, according to sources. "He is with the party's north Indian cell. He had asked for the ticket from Kandivali East as it has a sizable north Indian population. Instead, a Gujarati candidate has been given in Kandivali (Kalu Badheliya)," said a leader.

Gaikwad, however, claimed that the party had given tickets based on merit. "Those who are miffed or haven't got a ticket might say anything. But ultimately we give tickets to those who can fight to win," she said.

# BJP hits out at Cong leader over remarks on Sita Soren

**ABHISHEK ANGAD**  
RANCHI, OCTOBER 27

DAYS AFTER he allegedly made offensive remarks about his BJP rival Sita Soren, Chief Minister Hemant Soren's estranged sister-in-law, Jharkhand Minister and the Congress's Jamtara candidate Irfan Ansari continued to face a backlash from the BJP on Sunday even as he denied the allegations saying an "edited video" had been used to defame him.

After filing her nomination papers from Jamtara on Sunday, Sita Soren told reporters that Ansari had been targeting her since her candidature was announced. "But, the derogatory remarks he made after filing his nomination are not acceptable. It is an insult to women of the tribal community. The tribal community will never forgive him," she said. "Since my husband is not alive, he (Ansari)..." Sita Soren said, breaking down.

Sita is the wife of JMM chief Shibu Soren's eldest son Durga Soren who died in 2009. She joined the BJP earlier this year following a fallout with the family over the CM's chair after Hemant Soren resigned from the post and



Sita is the wife of Durga Soren, the eldest son of JMM chief Shibu Soren. Facebook

went to jail in a money laundering case.

Stepping up its criticism of Ansari, the state BJP on Sunday submitted a complaint to Governor Santosh Kumar Gangwar, condemning the usage of the words against a tribal woman and demanding that he be barred from the polls.

"This comment is not only an insult to Smt. Soren but also disrespects the entire tribal society, especially tribal women. The use of such indecent words against a tribal public representative of Jharkhand state, which was created for the upliftment and respect of tribals, is highly con-

demnable. We would also like to bring to your notice that apart from this insulting statement by Mr Irfan Ansari, he has also registered a fake case in Jamtara police station to harass Smt Sita Soren. This step shows that the minister's behaviour and words towards women lack humanity and decency," read the letter.

Union Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, BJP's election in-charge for Jharkhand, said in a statement, "If Hemant Soren has any shame or self-respect, he should immediately resign.

However, Soren remains silent. If he cannot honour his sister-in-law, who holds the status of a mother, how will he protect the mothers, sisters, and daughters of Jharkhand? Such a person has no right to hold office."

Dismissing the allegations against him, Ansari said: "The entire video has been edited. I consider Sita Soren my sister-in-law and never took anyone's name. The BJP's IT Cell is using this for election. The fight should be healthy and should not be degraded." Asked who he was referring to, he said: "That was not made against anyone specific. Bolchaal ke bhasha mein use kiye the (said in a colloquial sense)."

### IMAGE OF THE DAY



ALL HANDS ON THE LINE: Union Minister Piyush Goyal inaugurates the election office of BJP Kandivali East MLA Atul Bhatkalkar in Pune on Saturday. ANI

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KEY GROUPS  
**IN MAHARASHTRA, SC-RESERVED SEATS, BJP, ALLIES HAVE BEEN SLIDING SINCE 2014**

### NUMBERS GAME

# Routed in 2019, how BJP is trying to regain ground in Jharkhand's Kolhan

**ABHISHEK ANGAD**  
RANCHI, OCTOBER 27

FOR THE past three years, the BJP has visibly been placing special emphasis on Jharkhand's Kolhan belt where it faced a complete rout in the 2019 Assembly elections, losing all 14 seats.

The senior BJP leadership has chosen Kolhan — it consists of the districts of East Singhbhum, West Singhbhum, Saraikela Kharsawan — to address rallies and unveil Central government schemes, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi having already visited the Kolhan belt twice this year. In a visit to Jamshepur in East Singhbhum in September, the PM flagged off six Vande Bharat trains and laid the foundation stone of various railway

projects worth Rs 660 crore.

A BJP leader said the party has been going all out to mobilise its cadre in the region. "Since Kolhan did not give any seat to the BJP, the party has been working to mobilise its workers in the region. Union Home Minister Amit Shah addressed the Vijay Sankalp Rally in Chaibasa in 2023 ... The Chaibasa Lok Sabha constituency, which is a seat reserved for Scheduled Tribes (STs), ended up going to the JMM ... Since then, the BJP has been strategising on how to make inroads here. Inducting former Chief Minister Champai Soren is part of the strategy to win some seats in this belt."

Another BJP leader said the party was "initially not in favour of inducting Champai Soren and



Former Union Minister Arjun Munda's wife Meera.

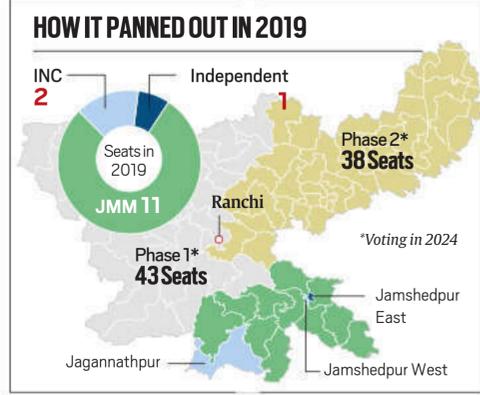
wanted him to fight independently," adding, "However, there is desperation to win a minimum of two to three seats in this division. That is why he was inducted."

In the 2019 Assembly polls, the JMM won 11 seats in Kolhan,

the Congress two, while one went to an Independent. This time, the JMM has again given tickets to nine of its sitting MLAs from the region. In Majhgaon, it has fielded debutante Jagat Manjhi who is MP Jobha Manjhi's son, BJP rebel Ganesh Mahli who joined the JMM before the coming Assembly polls will contest from Saraikela, taking on Champai Soren.

The Jamshepur East seat has been given to ally Congress, which has fielded its former state president Ajoy Kumar. The Congress has repeated the tickets of its two sitting MLAs: Banna Gupta from Jamshepur West, and Sonaram Sinku from Jagannathpur.

Sensing the need to recalibrate its strategy in the region, the BJP has changed all its candi-



dates in the 10 seats that it is contesting and fielded some new faces, turncoats, and the kin of

prominent politicians. Its allies All Jharkhand Students Union Party and Janata Dal (United)

have fielded candidates in three seats and one seat respectively. Former Union Minister for Tribal Affairs Arjun Munda's wife Meera Munda has been fielded from Potka. In Jamshepur East, Purnima Das Sahu who is the daughter-in-law of Odisha Governor and former Jharkhand CM Raghubar Das will face off against Ajoy Kumar. As incumbent CM, Das had lost the seat in 2019, making this a prestige battle for his daughter-in-law. In Ghatshila, Champai Soren's son Babul who is contesting on a BJP ticket will take on incumbent JMM MLA Ramdas Soren.

Another high-profile seat is Jagannathpur where JMM rebel Geeta Kora who joined the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha polls is contesting. Kora won the lone Congress seat in the 2019 Lok

Sabha polls. In the recent Lok Sabha polls, even after her much-publicised move to the BJP, she lost Singhbhum to the JMM's Joba Majhi.

Along with its developmental pitch, the BJP has been talking of alleged corruption in the Hemant Soren government, lack of jobs, and the "disrespect" meted out to Champai Soren when he was asked to step down as CM as part of its campaign.

The JMM has been relying on its key youth leader Kunal Sarangi who joined the BJP before the 2019 elections but returned to its fold last week. Sarangi is monitoring the campaign in some of the seats. The JMM-led alliance is also campaigning on its trusted welfare schemes such as the Maityya Samman Yojna to fight the BJP.

### Woman kills husband, travels 840 km to burn body; arrested with 2 others

**KIRAN PARASHAR**  
BENGALURU, OCTOBER 27

THE KARNATAKA police have solved the murder of a Telangana businessman whose body was found burnt in an estate in the Kodagu district. The police arrested his second wife and two others and investigations revealed that the wife killed him to take over ₹8 crore worth assets.

The deceased was identified as Ramesh, 54. The investigation started on October 8 when an unidentified body was discovered in a coffee estate in Kodagu. The police arrested Niharika P. 29, the second wife of Ramesh; her associates Dr Nihil, a veterinarian, and Ankur Rana, a resident of Bengaluru.

After the body was discovered, four special teams of 16 officers pursued leads. Located only one kilometre from the highway, the crime scene prompted the police to sift through data from thousands of vehicles in Madikeri, Suntikoppa, Kushalnagar, and Madhapur to narrow down possible suspects.

Eventually, investigators identified a red Benz registered in the name of Ramesh, who had recently gone missing. The Kodagu police then liaised with their Telangana counterparts to gather background information on Ramesh. As inquiries progressed, suspicion focused on Niharika, her associate Dr Nihil, a veterinarian, and a friend, Ankur Rana. When Niharika was taken into custody, she confessed to the crime, the police said.

Niharika is from Mongeer Nagar in Telangana. She married at a young age and became a mother, but she later divorced due to marital issues, the police said. While she was in Haryana, she became involved in a financial scam that led to her arrest. Upon release, she returned to Bangalore and married Ramesh in 2018. Ramesh financed her lavish lifestyle, but disputes arose, especially after he refused her demand for ₹8 crore.

Driven by resentment, she, with Ankur's help, devised a plan to murder Ramesh, the police said. She allegedly lured him to Uppal, Hyderabad, on October 1, where he was strangled to death.

Niharika and her accomplices then allegedly transported the body to Kodagu, 840 km away, police said.

They covered the body with a blanket and burn it in a coffee plantation, they said.

Niharika even filed a missing person report for Ramesh, said the police.

### Kanpur gym trainer killed woman, buried her body near DM's residence, say police

**MANISH SAHU**  
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 27

A 35-YEAR-OLD gym trainer allegedly killed a woman and buried her body near the residence of the Kanpur District Magistrate to avoid suspicion, police said on Sunday.

The victim, Ekta Gupta (32), wife of Rahul Gupta, a businessman, had been missing since June 24. The gym trainer, Vimal Kumar, alias Vimal Soni, who was absconding since, has been arrested.

The woman's decomposed body buried in the compound of Officers' Colony adjacent to the DM's residence was recovered on Saturday, police said. The body was located based on information provided by Soni and was sent for autopsy Sunday. The autopsy report is awaited.

"Vimal Soni has been arrested. Charges of murder have been invoked against him," said ACP (Law and Order) Harish Chander. Soni was a trainer at a gym in

Green Park Stadium, where Ekta Gupta exercised regularly.

According to police, Rahul Gupta filed an FIR on June 24, alleging that Soni kidnapped his wife after she went to the gym that morning. He alleged that Soni had given Ekta a sedative-laced drink in the guise of a protein shake, rendering her unconscious before abducting her.

Police said they conducted searches across various states but were unable to trace Soni since he was not using a cellphone. He contacted his family recently, allowing the police to locate and arrest him in Kanpur, the ACP said. During questioning, Soni initially tried to mislead the investigators, claiming he had disposed of the body in a river, Chander said. He, however, revealed the details after extended questioning.

The body was exhumed in the presence of Ekta Gupta's family members. "The decomposed body was found in the pit. The victim's family identified the body from her clothes and hair."

### Draft amendment Bill proposes concept of 'emergency arbitration'

New Delhi: Seeking to provide "further boost" to institutional arbitration and reduce court intervention in such cases, the government has come out with a draft bill seeking views on the proposed amendments. The Department of Legal Affairs in the

law ministry has invited comments on the draft Arbitration and Conciliation (Amendment) Bill, 2024, saying "...purpose is to provide further boost to institutional arbitration, reduce court intervention in arbitrations and ensuring timely conclusion of

arbitration proceedings". The draft bill comes months after an expert committee, headed by former law secretary and former LS secretary general TK Vishwanath, submitted its report on proposed reforms in the arbitration sector to the

ministry. The draft bill proposes the concept of 'emergency arbitration'.

The proposed amendment says arbitral institutions may, for the purpose of grant of interim measures, provide for appointment of "emergency arbitrator"

prior to the constitution of an arbitral tribunal. The emergency arbitrator appointed will conduct proceedings in the manner as may be specified by the (arbitral) council. At the same time, the draft bill also omits some of the clauses of the present law. PTI

**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  
**CENTRAL INSTITUTE OF PSYCHIATRY**  
KANKE, RANCHI-834006, JHARKHAND

**NOTICE**

Director, Central Institute of Psychiatry, Ranchi invites the applications for the following posts on tenure basis upto three years. Selection will be made through written examination and department assessment scheduled to be held on **26.11.2024 at 11.00 A.M.** at CIP campus. Details of vacant posts are as under. The number of vacancy may vary.

**Clinical Psychology Tutor - 02 posts (SC - 01, ST - 01)**

Desirous candidates may send their application by post by hand or by E-mail ID: [director@cipranchi.nic.in](mailto:director@cipranchi.nic.in) on or before 23.11.2024 in the prescribed format giving full details of academic records and experience along with photocopy of the relevant documents with recent photograph so that reach this office by 23.11.2024 for written examination and department assessment scheduled to be held on **26.11.2024 at 11.00 A.M.** Application received after due date will not be entertained. Further details can be seen on the Institute's website [www.cipranchi.nic.in](http://www.cipranchi.nic.in).

**Sd/-Director**

**संस्कृत मंत्रालय**  
भारत सरकार

**समसामयिक अध्ययन केंद्र**  
प्रधानमंत्री संग्रहालय एवं पुस्तकालय  
द्वारा आयोजित

**सरदार वल्लभभाई पटेल व्याख्यान श्रृंखला के उद्घाटन भाषण**  
लाइफ एंड टाइम्स ऑफ सरदार वल्लभभाई पटेल  
में

आप सादर आमंत्रित हैं।

वक्ता : डॉ. कर्ण सिंह  
दार्शनिक, वरिष्ठ सांसद एवं विचारक

दिनांक: 29 अक्टूबर 2024, समय: अपराह्न 5:00 बजे

स्थल : सभागार, पुस्तकालय भवन प्रधानमंत्री संग्रहालय एवं पुस्तकालय तीन मूर्ति भवन, नई दिल्ली-110011

सभी का स्वागत है।

अपना नाम जोड़ने के लिए कृपया हमें ईमेल करें:  
[ccs2nmml@gmail.com](mailto:ccs2nmml@gmail.com)

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**POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable property)**

Whereas Punjab National Bank the Authorised Officers of the Punjab National Bank under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets & Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002, and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13 read with the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued demand notices on the dates mentioned against each account calling upon the respective borrowers to repay the amount as mentioned against each account within 60 days from the date of notice(s) date of receipt of the said notice(s).

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under Sub-section (4) of Section 13 of Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on the dates mentioned against each.

The borrower's (guarantor's) attention is invited to provisions of subsection (8) of section 13 of the Act in respect of time available to redeem the secured assets. The borrower's in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealing with the properties will be subject to the charge of Punjab National Bank for the amounts and interest thereon.

Sl. No.	(A) Name of Branch (B) Name of the account (C) Name of the Borrower (owner of the property)	(A) Demand notice date (B) Date of possession Notice Affixed	Amount outstanding as on the date of demand notice
1.	(A) Baheri (072820) (B) Smt. Rani Devi (C) Smt. Mali Devi Guarantor- Smt. Mali Devi	(A) 12.07.2024 (B) 22.10.2024	Rs. 26,76,275.00 (Rupees Twenty Lakh Seventy Six Thousand Two Hundred Seventy Five Only) with further interest w.e.f.01.07.2024 and other charges.
<b>Description of the Property:-</b> Land & Building situated at Mauza- Dhanauli, Pargana- Havi, PS and Anchal- Baheri, District- Darbhanga in the name of Smt. Mali Devi, Thana No - 34, Taou No - 6065, Khata No - 1375, Khesra No - 1754 (N), 826 (O), Area- 2 Katha 10 Dhur, Sale Deed No - 5411, Dt. 20.04.2016. <b>Boundaries:-</b> North- Bandhi, South- Surendra Choudhary, East- Nij Kharidar, West- Surendra Choudhary			
2.	(A) Rosarghat (640600) (B) Smt. Usha Devi (C) Smt. Usha Devi	(A) 13.08.2024 (B) 22.10.2024	Rs. 6,84,327.50 (Rupees Six Lakh Eighty Four Thousand Three Hundred Twenty Seven and Fifty Paise Only) with further interest w.e.f.01.08.2024 and other charges.
<b>Description of the Property:-</b> Land & Building constructed thereon situated at Lakshmiapur, Rosera, Samastipur-848210 bearing Thana No - 89, Taou No - 6424, Khesra 1120(O), 232(N), Khata 505(O), 97(N), Area- 7 Dhur, Deed No. 2804 Dated 03.03.2003 in the name of Smt. Usha Devi. <b>Boundary:-</b> North- Tami Singh & Others, South- Nij Vendor, East- Rachina Prasad W/o Dr. Jaynandan Prasad, West- Deepak Kumar Sinha			
3.	(A) Sakuri (789900) (B) Ms. Maa Luxmi Vishnu Enterprises, Prop - Shri Hemant Kumar Singh (C) Shri Hemant Kumar Singh	(A) 12.07.2024 (B) 23.10.2024	Rs. 9,20,438.19 (Rupees Nine Lakh Twenty Thousand Four Hundred Thirty Eight and Nineteen paise Only) with further interest w.e.f.01.07.2024 and other charges.
<b>Description of the Property:-</b> Land situated at Mauza- Mohan Badhyam, Thana No. 101, Anchal- Pandaul, Madhubani, Khata No. 204, Khesra No. 2018, Area- 15 Decimal, Mortgage Deed No. 4339, dated 07.07.2017, property owner name- Hemant Kumar Singh, <b>Boundaries:-</b> North- Bhagwati Sthan, South- Murga Farm of Sadanand Singh, East- Road, West- Ram Binay Singh			
4.	(A) Gangaur (175200) (B) Mrs. Kajal Kumari, Mrs. Phoolan Devi.	(A) 12.07.2024 (B) 08.08.2024 (B) 23.10.2024	Rs. 8,62,209.00 (Rupees Eight Lakh Sixty Two Thousand Two Hundred Nine Only) with further interest w.e.f.01.07.2024 and other charges.
Baby Anshika Kumari through guardian Kajal Kumari (Legal heirs of Late Shatrudhan Kumar Das), Mrs. Rinkoo Kumari, Mrs. Pooja Kumari, Mrs. Aarti Kumari and Mr. Govind Kumar (Legal Heir of Late Ram Chandra Das) (C) Shatrudhan Kumar Das (since deceased now represented by legal heirs) & Ram Chandra Das (since deceased now represented by legal heirs).			
<b>Description of the Property:-</b> Regd. Mortgage of Land and construction thereon situated at Mauza- Uchhachait, Pargana- Lautan, Thana No - 89, Taou No - 6286, Anchal + PS- Benipatti, Madhubani, Khata No - 138 (O), 150 (N) & Khesra No. 770(O), 1731 (N), Area- 19.50 Dhur, regd. Deed No. 9623 dated 30.12.2022 in the name of Shatrudhan Kumar Das (since deceased now represented by legal heirs) & Ram Chandra Das (since deceased now represented by legal heirs)			
<b>Boundaries:-</b> North- Road, South- Narendra Jha, East- Sakhindra Mahito, West- Chandra Bhushan Jha			
<b>Name of the Authorized officer:- Vishnu Kumar Verma</b>			
Date: 26.10.2024	Authorized officer Punjab National Bank		
Place: Darbhanga			

**EAST BOUND FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS-2024**

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during Deepawali and Chhath Puja Festivals, Northern Railway has planned to run the following East Bound Festival Special Trains from 28.10.2024 to 30.10.2024 in addition to normal regular trains as per schedule given below:-

**EAST BOUND TRAINS FROM DELHI AREA TERMINALS ON 28.10.2024 (MONDAY)**

Spl. Train No.	Station From	Dept. Time	Station to	Arr. Time	Accommodation	Stoppages
04032	Anand Vihar(T)	05:15	Saharsa Jn.	10:30	3 Tier AC	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Sitapur, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur, Kaptanganj Jn., Bagaha, Narkatiaganj Jn., Raxaul Jn., Bairagnia, Sitamarhi, Janakpur Road, Darbhanga Jn., Sakri Jn., Jhanjharpur, Nirmali, Saraygarh, Supaul & Garh Baruari
04096	Anand Vihar(T)	09:00	Ayodhya Cantt.	22:00	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC & Sleeper	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly & Lucknow
04078	Anand Vihar(T)	23:55	Patna Jn.	16:25	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara & Danapur
04058	Anand Vihar(T)	23:15	Muzaffarpur	21:15	3 Tier AC	Moradabad, Chandausi Jn., Hardoi, Lucknow, Gorakhpur Jn., Chhapra & Hajipur Jn.
03256	Anand Vihar(T)	23:20	Patna Jn.	17:20	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy & Sleeper	Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara & Danapur
03258	Anand Vihar(T)	05:00	Danapur	20:45	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper, General	Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar & Ara
05220	Anand Vihar(T)	08:00	Muzaffarpur	00:45	Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur, Patliputra Sonpur Jn. & Hajipur Jn.
05024	Anand Vihar(T)	15:15	Gorakhpur	04:45	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper, General	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Sitapur Jn., Burhwal Jn., Gonda Jn., Basti & Khalilabad
02398	Anand Vihar(T)	08:20	Gaya	00:30	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone & Anugraha Narayan Road
05284	Anand Vihar(T)	07:00	Muzaffarpur	04:50	2 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Moradabad, Shahjehanpur, Hardoi, Lucknow, Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Bagaha, Harinagar, Narkatiaganj Jn., Bettiah, Sagauli Jn., Bapudham Mothari, Pipra, Chakia, Mehsi & Motipur
03414	New Delhi	10:30	Malda Town	07:55	3 Tier AC, Sleeper, General	Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Patna Jn., Patna Saheb, Fatuha, Khusropur, Bakhtiyarpur Jn., Barh, Mokama, Hatidih Jn., Barhiya, Luckeesarai Jn., Kiul Jn., Kajra, Abhaipur, Dharhara, Jamalpur Jn., Bariarpur, Sultanganj, Bhagalpur, Kahalgaon, Sahibganj Jn., Barharwa Jn. & New Farakka Jn.
02570	New Delhi	12:15	Darbhanga	10:00	3 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy & Sleeper	Kanpur Central, Aishbagh, Chhapra, Muzaffarpur Jn. & Samastipur Jn.
02564	New Delhi	17:55	Barauni Jn.	15:10	3 Tier AC Economy, 3 Tier AC, & Sleeper	Kanpur Central, Aishbagh, Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Deoria Sadar, Siwan Jn., Chhapra & Muzaffarpur Jn.
02394	New Delhi	13:20	Patna Jn.	07:00	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy, Sleeper & Gen.	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Buxar, Ara & Danapur
04080	Delhi Jn.	19:30	Varanasi Jn	09:45	3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Lucknow & Maabelha Devi Dham Pratappgarh
02422	Delhi Jn.	09:30	Subedarganj	19:40	3 Tier AC, Sleeper, General	Aligarh Jn., Tundia Jn., Etawah Jn., Kanpur Central & Fatehpur
05002	Delhi Jn.	15:15	Gorakhpur Jn.	09:55	3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Sitapur Jn., Burhwal Jn., Gonda Jn., Bahrampur, Tulsipur, Barhni, Sidharth Nagar & Anand Nagar
02246	Hazrat Nizamuddin	23:55	Patna Jn.	16:40	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara & Danapur
04124	Hazrat Nizamuddin	15:50	Prayagraj Jn.	09:00	3 Tier AC, Sleeper, General	Mathura Jn., Agra Cantt., Dhaulpur, Gwalior, Virangana Lakshmbai Jhansi, Mau Ranipur, Harpalpur, Kulpahar, Mahoba, Banda Jn., Atarra, Chitrakot, Manikpur Jn., Dabhaura & Shankargarh

**EAST BOUND TRAINS FROM DELHI AREA TERMINALS ON 29.10.2024 (TUESDAY)**

04032	Anand Vihar(T)	05:15	Saharsa Jn.	10:30	3 Tier AC	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Sitapur, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur, Kaptanganj Jn., Bagaha, Narkatiaganj Jn., Raxaul Jn., Bairagnia, Sitamarhi, Janakpur Road, Darbhanga Jn., Sakri Jn., Jhanjharpur, Nirmali, Saraygarh, Supaul & Garh Baruari
04060	Anand Vihar(T)	10:30	Jaynagar	15:15	3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Lucknow, Rae Bareilly Jn., Amethi, Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh, Varanasi, Aunihar Jn., Ghazipur City, Ballia, Suraimanpur, Chhapra, Sonpur Jn., Hajipur Jn., Muzaffarpur Jn., Samastipur Jn., Darbhanga Jn. & Madhubani
04044	Anand Vihar(T)	23:15	Gorakhpur Jn.	14:00	3 Tier AC	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Chandausi, Bareilly Cantt., Sitapur, Gonda & Basti
04010	Anand Vihar(T)	23:45	Jogbani	05:20	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Chandausi Jn., Bareilly Cantt., Shahjehanpur, Sitapur Jn., Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Deoria Sadar, Siwan Jn., Chhapra, Sonpur Jn., Hajipur Jn., Shahpur Patoree, Barauni Jn., Begusarai, Khagaria Jn., Nalgachia, Katihar Jn., Purnia Jn., Arariya Court, Arariya & Forbesganj Jn.
04048	Anand Vihar(T)	15:20	Katihar Jn.	15:00	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Patliputra, Hajipur Jn., Barauni Jn., Begusarai, Khagaria Jn. & Mansi Jn.
03436	Anand Vihar(T)	15:45	Malda Town	23:30	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC & Sleeper	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Patna Jn., Bakhtiyarpur Jn., Mokama, Kiul Jn., Abhaipur, Jamalpur Jn., Sultanganj, Bhagalpur, Kahalgaon, Pirpaiti, Sahibganj Jn., Barharwa Jn. & New Farakka Jn.
05220	Anand Vihar(T)	08:00	Muzaffarpur	00:45	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur, Patliputra Sonpur Jn. & Hajipur Jn.
02398	Anand Vihar(T)	08:20	Gaya	00:30	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone & Anugraha Narayan Road
05284	Anand Vihar(T)	07:00	Muzaffarpur	04:50	2 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Moradabad, Shahjehanpur, Hardoi, Lucknow, Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Bagaha, Harinagar, Narkatiaganj Jn., Bettiah, Sagauli Jn., Bapudham Mothari, Pipra, Chakia, Mehsi & Motipur
04070	New Delhi	00:20	Rajgir	21:00	1st AC-Cum-2nd AC, 2nd AC-Cum-3rd AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Buxar, Ara, Patna, Bakhtiyarpur & Bihar Sharif
04052	New Delhi	14:20	Jaynagar	15:40	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 2nd AC-Cum-3rd AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & Gen.	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Buxar, Ara, Patna, Mokama, Barauni, Samastipur & Darbhanga
02248	New Delhi	08:25	Patna Jn.	20:30	Chair Car, Executive Chair Car	Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar & Ara
02564	New Delhi	17:55	Barauni Jn.	15:10	3 Tier AC Economy, 3 Tier AC, & Sleeper	Kanpur Central, Aishbagh, Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Deoria Sadar, Siwan Jn., Chhapra & Muzaffarpur Jn.
02570	New Delhi	12:15	Darbhanga	10:00	3 Tier AC Economy, 3 Tier AC, & Sleeper	Kanpur Central, Aishbagh, Chhapra, Muzaffarpur Jn. & Samastipur Jn.
02394	New Delhi	13:20	Patna Jn.	07:00	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC Economy, Sleeper & Gen.	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Buxar, Ara & Danapur
05112	New Delhi	12:50	Chhapra	11:30	3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Moradabad, Bareilly Jn., Sitapur Jn., Burhwal, Gonda, Basti, Khalilabad, Gorakhpur, Pipraich, Kaptanganj, Padrauna, Tamkuhi Road, Thawe Jn., Dighwa Dubauli & Masrakh
04068	Delhi Jn.	19:30	Darbhanga	16:30	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Moradabad, Bareilly, Lucknow, Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Narkatiaganj Jn., Raxaul Jn., Bairagnia, Sitamarhi & Janakpur Road
04006	Delhi Jn.	23:05	Jaynagar	23:45	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Lucknow, Gonda Jn., Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Chhapra, Hajipur Jn., Muzaffarpur Jn., Samastipur Jn., Darbhanga Jn. & Madhubani

**EAST BOUND TRAINS FROM DELHI AREA TERMINALS ON 30.10.2024 (WEDNESDAY)**

04022	Anand Vihar(T)	11:40	Sitamarhi	15:45	3 Tier AC	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly, Shahjehanpur, Lucknow, Rae Bareilly Jn., Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh, Varanasi, Aunihar Jn., Ghazipur City, Ballia, Suraimanpur, Chhapra, Sonpur Jn., Hajipur Jn. & Muzaffarpur Jn.,
04096	Anand Vihar(T)	09:00	Ayodhya Cantt.	22:00	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC & Sleeper	Ghaziabad, Moradabad, Bareilly & Lucknow
05220	Anand Vihar(T)	08:00	Muzaffarpur	00:45	Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Buxar, Ara, Danapur, Patliputra, Sonpur & Hajipur
04056	Anand Vihar(T)	18:05	Ballia	10:00	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper	Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Jaunpur City & Ghazipur City
02398	Anand Vihar(T)	08:20	Gaya	00:30	2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj, Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya, Bhabua Road, Sasaram, Dehri On Sone & Anugraha Narayan Road
05284	Anand Vihar(T)	07:00	Muzaffarpur	04:50	2 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Moradabad, Shahjehanpur, Hardoi, Lucknow, Gonda, Basti, Gorakhpur, Bagaha, Harinagar, Narkatiaganj Jn., Bettiah, Sagauli, Bapudham Mothari, Pipra, Chakia, Mehsi & Motipur
05038	Anand Vihar(T)	11:10	Banaras	01:10	3 Tier AC Economy	Moradabad, Bareilly, Lucknow, Rae Bareilly Jn., Amethi, Maa Belha Devi Dham Pratappgarh & Bhadohi
02282	New Delhi	00:20	Darbhanga	21:15	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, 3 Tier AC & Sleeper	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Danapur, Patliputra, Hajipur Jn., Muzaffarpur Jn. & Samastipur Jn.
04054	New Delhi	14:20	Barauni Jn.	11:00	1st AC, 2 Tier AC, Sleeper & General	Govindpuri, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Patna Jn. & Mokama
02252	New Delhi	08:25	Patna Jn.	20:00	Chair Car, Executive Chaircar	Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar & Ara
03484	New Delhi	10:30	Bhagalpur	04:10	Sleeper & General	Kanpur Central, Prayagraj Jn., Pt. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Jn., Buxar, Ara, Patna Jn., Patna Saheb, Fatuha, Khusropur, Bakhtiyarpur Jn., Barh, Mokama, Hatidih Jn., Barhiya, Luckeesarai Jn., Kiul Jn., Kajra, Abhaipur, Dharhara, Jamalpur Jn., Bariarpur & Sultanganj
02564	New Delhi	17:55	Barauni Jn.	15:10	3 Tier AC Economy, 3 Tier AC, & Sleeper	Kanpur Central, Aishbagh, Basti, Gorakhpur Jn., Deoria Sadar, Siwan Jn., Chhapra & Muzaffarpur Jn.
02570	New					

Police raid farmhouse of BRS leader KTR's kin, party says CM Revanth's trap

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 27

POLICE RAIDED a farmhouse allegedly owned by BRS working president K Rama Rao's brother-in-law and booked one person, who tested positive for cocaine at the party organised there.

A police official said Rama Rao's brother-in-law, Raj Pakala, was absconding following the raid at his farmhouse. The incident triggered a political row in Telangana, with leaders of the ruling Congress demanding a thorough probe over the matter. The BRS alleged that Chief Minister A Revanth Reddy was trying to trap Rama Rao in a false case. The party claimed showcasing the residence as a farmhouse reeks of malicious intent. Rama Rao's brother-in-law, Raj Pakala, organised the party in his new house, the BRS said and accused the police and Excise officials of carrying out searches at the house without any warrant.

Classifieds

PERSONAL

It is for general information that I, Akella N V Sri Vaishnavi, daughter of, A B V RAMA RAO, presently residing at, Quarter, No-39, Fifth-Floor, Type-4, Kali Bari Apartments, Near-TTD Mandir, New Delhi-110001. My mother's name has been mentioned in the 10th and 12th marksheet and certificate as A V S GAYATRI but my mother's actual and correct name is Akella V S Gayatri, which may be amended accordingly.

I, RAKESH SINGH, S/O-RAJENDRA PRASAD SINGH, R/O FLAT, NO-1605, TOWER NO-G9, NIRALA GREEN SHIRE, SECTOR-2, GREATER-NOIDA WEST, GAUTAM BUDDHA-NAGAR U.P.-201301, have changed my name to RAKESH KUMAR SINGH.

I, PREETI KUMARI, W/O-RAKESH KUMAR SINGH, R/O FLAT, NO-1605, TOWER NO-G9, NIRALA GREEN SHIRE, SECTOR-2, GREATER NOIDA WEST, GAUTAM BUDDHA-NAGAR U.P.-201301, have changed my name to PREETI SINGH.

I, CHARAN SINGH, S/O MR. DINDAYAL, R/O E-27B, OLD JASOLA VILLAGE, NEW DELHI-110025, inform that my daughter's (RASHI), school record my name CHANDAN SINGH wrongly-written instead of correct name CHARAN SINGH. My correct name CHARAN SINGH, for all future purpose.

It is for general information that I, Akella N V Sri Vaishnavi, daughter of, A B V RAMA RAO, presently residing at, Quarter, No-39, Fifth-Floor, Type-4, Kali Bari Apartments, Near-TTD Mandir, New Delhi-110001. My mother's name has been mentioned in the 10th and 12th marksheet and certificate as A V S GAYATRI, but my mother's actual and correct name is Akella V S Gayatri, which may be amended accordingly.

I, Rhea Manish Sah, w/o PRABHMEHER SINGH NANDA R/O, D-33, SOUTH-EXT PART-II, SOUTH DELHI, HAVE CHANGE HER NAME TO AFTER-MARRIAGE RHEA S NANDA, FOR ALL PURPOSES.

I, Bablu Mistri, W/o Lal Kishun Mistri R/c-585, Subhash Park, Khora Gaon, Ghaziabad, U.P have changed my name to Babalu Sharma for all purposes. For all future purposes.

RECRUITMENT

SITUATION VACANT

ACADEMIC

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Under 'digital arrest': 73-yr-old man loses ₹45 lakh in cyber fraud

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE PUNE, OCTOBER 27

A 73-YEAR-OLD man from Pune was forced to remain confined to his home and not talk to anyone as part of "digital arrest" for four days by cyber criminals posing as Mumbai police officers who threatened his arrest in drug trafficking and money laundering cases and made him pay Rs 45 lakh, police said.

An FIR in the case was registered at Chaturshringi police station. In September, the victim received a call from a person who identified himself as a Telecom Regulatory Authority of India official. He was told that his phone number and Aadhaar number were flagged over drug trafficking and money laundering cases and would be blocked from further use. He was told that he will have to travel to Mumbai or talk to an officer of the Mumbai Crime

Branch of the phone. Later he was made to connect on video call with a profile with the Maharashtra police logo. The person who identified himself as an officer of the Mumbai Crime Branch asked for his personal and financial information. He was asked to remain in "house arrest" till the "inquiry was over".

Later, another person posing as an officer asked him to deposit all his savings and deposits to "RBI accounts" for inquiry, police said. He was told that he would get the money back after the probe was over. He transferred Rs 45 lakh to the accounts and subsequently, there was no response from any of the numbers.

An advisory issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in May warned citizens regarding intimidation, blackmail, extortion and "digital Arrests" by cyber criminals posing as police authorities or other law enforcement agencies.

SALUTE THE SOLDIER CENTRAL RESERVE POLICE FORCE

Advertisement for Shaheed Constable Pravin Bora, 81-BN, 21-05-1966 To 28-10-1989. Text: In 1989, amid the ongoing militancy in Punjab, 81 Battalion of CRPF was deployed in Tarn Taran district. On 28 October, a team was assigned to a naka on the Bhihiwind-Khemkaran Road in Amritsar for vehicle screening. As Constable Pravin Bora signalled a vehicle to stop, militants inside opened fire. Being gravely injured, Ct Praveen Bora made the ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty.

Advertisement for Shaheed Ct/Dvr Jai Prakash, 140-BN, 05-05-1968 To 28-10-2003. Text: On 28 October 2003, troops of 140 Battalion, under the command of Shaheed Sh. VT. Mathew (2IC), were returning to their detachment HQ in Antagarh. Near Baronda village, PS Narayanpur, Kanker, around 150 Maoists ambushed the convoy, unleashing heavy gunfire and IED blasts. Despite being outnumbered and caught by surprise, the troops retaliated fiercely. In a bold counterattack, Shaheed Sh. VT. Mathew led his men against the ambush, breaking the enemy line. In the ensuing battle, he and three others—Shaheed HC Bijon Pal, Shaheed Ct/Dvr Jai Prakash, and Shaheed Ct/Dvr Dharmendra Kumar—sustained critical injuries. Despite their valorous resistance, they later succumbed to their wounds, making the ultimate sacrifice. For his heroism, Shaheed Sh. VT. Mathew, Second in Command, who succumbed to his injuries on 31st October, was posthumously awarded the President's Police Medal for Gallantry.

Advertisement for Shaheed Ct/Dvr Dharmendra Kumar, 136-BN, 10-09-1976 To 28-10-2003. Text: On 28 October 2003, troops of 140 Battalion, under the command of Shaheed Sh. VT. Mathew (2IC), were returning to their detachment HQ in Antagarh. Near Baronda village, PS Narayanpur, Kanker, around 150 Maoists ambushed the convoy, unleashing heavy gunfire and IED blasts. Despite being outnumbered and caught by surprise, the troops retaliated fiercely. In a bold counterattack, Shaheed Sh. VT. Mathew led his men against the ambush, breaking the enemy line. In the ensuing battle, he and three others—Shaheed HC Bijon Pal, Shaheed Ct/Dvr Jai Prakash, and Shaheed Ct/Dvr Dharmendra Kumar—sustained critical injuries. Despite their valorous resistance, they later succumbed to their wounds, making the ultimate sacrifice. For his heroism, Shaheed Sh. VT. Mathew, Second in Command, who succumbed to his injuries on 31st October, was posthumously awarded the President's Police Medal for Gallantry.

Advertisement for CT DINESH KUMAR P V, 13.10.1969 - 28.10.2002. Text: Bordermen Salute and proudly remember today their brave comrade, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting militants in Rajouri Kadal (J&K).

Advertisement for INSP RAM KANWAR YADAV, 02.02.1948 - 28.10.2002. Text: Bordermen Salute and proudly remember today their brave comrade, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting militants in Ramban area (Jammu).

Advertisement for CT GOPAL DASS, 19.06.1969 - 28.10.2005. Text: Bordermen Salute and proudly remember today their brave comrade, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting militants in Mustafabad (J&K).

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Advertisement for HC M H LASKAR, PMG, 31.10.1965 - 28.10.2002. Text: Bordermen Salute and proudly remember today their brave comrade, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting militants in Sunderbani area (Jammu).

Advertisement for HC SACHINDRA DAS, PMG, 14.11.1960 - 28.10.2002. Text: Bordermen Salute and proudly remember today their brave comrade, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting militants in Sunderbani area (Jammu), comrade, who made supreme sacrifice while fighting militants in Handwara (J&K).



Workers clear footwear and other belongings of passengers strewn on a platform following a stampede at Bandra Terminus in Mumbai on Sunday. Ganesh Shirsekar

Amid festival rush, 10 injured in stampede at Bandra station

SWEETY ADIMULAM MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

TEN PEOPLE were injured in a stampede at the Bandra Terminus railway station early Sunday amid a rush of passengers to board a train to Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh. Officials said two of the injured are in a critical condition.

According to officials, the incident occurred as Mumbai-Gorakhpur Antyodaya Express (Train No. 22921), an unreserved train, was reaching Platform No. 1 at around 2.55 am. The train was scheduled to leave only at 5.10 am, however, in order to get a seat, passengers jostled in to the slow-moving train and several of them fell down.

According to a senior official of the Western Railway, the Bandra-Gorakhpur Express has a seating capacity of 2,036, while 2,530 tickets were sold. As the train was fully unreserved, there was no restriction on ticket sales exceeding the train's seating capacity, WR said.

The rush took place despite two earlier trains departing on the same route — one to Gorakhpur and another Avadh Express, officials said, emphasising the need for increased passenger awareness about the availability of multiple trains to avoid overcrowding. Two among the 10 injured — Noor Mohammad Shaikh (18) and Indrajit Sahani (19) — are in critical condition and are admitted to KEM Hospital, according to the BMC. The remaining injured are being treated at Bhabha Hospital and KEM. Five persons remain hospitalised, while three others were discharged.

Kin of the injured raised the urgent need for enhanced safety measures, highlighting the vulnerabilities within public transportation systems in a city like Mumbai with an estimated floating population of two crore.

Officials said that to handle increased passenger rush during Diwali and Chhath festivals, the Indian Railways has deployed over 130 special trains, primarily on routes to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Following the stampede incident, Western Railway immediately suspended platform ticket sales at Bandra Terminus and other major stations, with Central Railway implementing similar restrictions to manage crowd control during the festival season.

Advertisement for OFFICE OF THE CERTIFICATE OFFICER -CUM-SPECIAL OFFICER RATIONING, PATNA (PATNA COLLECTORATE, PATNA). Ref No: E-auction Advertisement No. 01/2024. Important Notice for Bidders regarding E-Auction of land situated in Patna. (Through e-Procurement mode over http://www.eproc2.bihar.gov.in)

Table with 3 columns: SI No., Information, Details. Row 1: Name of the Assignment, Disposal of residential cum commercial plot situated at Mauza- Dhawalpura (South from NH) Survey Thana- Patna City, P.S. - Chowk, Dist. Patna through online auction mode.

Table with 3 columns: SI No., Information, Details. Row 4: E-auction Processing Fee/Cost (Non- Refundable), Payable online through e-payment mode i.e. NEFT/RTGS/Credit Card on following website: https://eproc2.bihar.gov.in

Table with 3 columns: SI No., Information, Details. Row 8: Tender & Bidding Currency, INR. Row 9: Date of Issue of Notice Inviting E-auction, From date of Publication of e-auction notice.

Advertisement for Certificate Officer-Cum-Special Officer Rationing, Patna. PR. No. 011426 (District) 2024-25. This information is available on website www.state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar also. नरो से बचने का है एक ही उपचार, दृढ़ संकल्प और परिवार से प्यार।

Yogi: UP to revive gurukul-style schools for Sanskrit education

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE VARANASI, OCTOBER 27

UTTAR PRADESH Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday said the state government will "revive residential gurukul-style Sanskrit schools across the state. Addressing a gathering at Sampurnanand Sanskrit University in Varanasi where he launched a scholarship scheme for Sanskrit students, the CM asked the students to pursue the language, claiming that it was the language of science and technical education. Under the scheme, Scholarships worth Rs 586 lakh will be distributed to 69,195 Sanskrit students across the state. Learning Sanskrit was akin to advocating for humanity, he added.

Alleging that previous governments neglected Sanskrit education in the state, he said, "Previously, only 300 Sanskrit students were eligible for scholarships, and then there were age restrictions. But under the new initiative, benefits are being extended to all eligible students."

"Sanskrit is not just deva vaani (language of gods), but also a scientific language that can be applied to modern fields like computer science and artificial intelligence," he said. The scholarship benefits for Sanskrit students would be transferred directly into their bank accounts, he said. These gurukul-like institutions will receive additional support with special assistance to those offering free accommodations and meals for students, the CM added.

These institutions will also have the autonomy to recruit qualified acharyas, he said.

Mann signals intent to step down as AAP Punjab chief

Jalandhar: Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann on Sunday announced his intention to step down from the post of state president of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), pointing to the need of a full-time leader who can focus solely on party matters.

Having served as AAP's state president for over seven years, including the last two-and-a-half years as CM, Mann emphasised the importance of opening up opportunities for others.

He was talking to mediapersons in Chhabeval constituency where he had gone to campaign for the Assembly bypolls.

He said, "As Chief Minister, I manage over a dozen departments which is a significant responsibility, while also dedicating myself fully to my duties as state president...With a full-time appointment, we can strengthen our organisational structure and allow each leader to focus on their role effectively." ENS

Ambedkar, Kamaraj and Periyar among reformers behind Vijay's ideology

NIKHILA HENRY NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

EVEN BEFORE his speech at the first state conference of his Tamilaga Vettri Kazhagam (TVK) party, actor-turned-politician Vijay, popularly referred to as "Thalapathy (commander)" by his fans, made his ideology clear by aptly using imagery. At Vikravandi in Tamil Nadu's Villupuram district, Vijay's rally on Sunday was dotted with the cutouts of five reformers: K Kamaraj, Periyar, Velu Nachiyar, Anjalai Ammal, and B R Ambedkar.

This illustrates the anti-caste, secular political ideology of the new party. Talking about ideology, Vijay said the party was not going to "separate Dravidian nationalism and Tamil nationalism". "They are the two eyes of this soil. We shouldn't shrink ourselves to any specific identity," he added.

The TVK's launch anthem, "Tamizhian Kodi Parakuthu ... Thalaivan Yugam Parakuthu (The Tamil flag flies high... A leader's time has arrived)", borrows lyrics from songs sung by AIADMK founder M G Ramachandran in the 1950s, with the anthem signalling a revival of Tamil aspirations. Vijay's move into politics is a calculated attempt to forge a new political identity in a state historically dominated by the Dravidian parties, DMK and AIADMK. These are the five reformers:

K Kamaraj: K Kamaraj was born in 1903 and was a freedom fighter, credited to have participated in the Salt Satyagraha and Quit India movement. He became the first chief minister of Madras province — which consisted of the current state of Tamil Nadu and parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala — in India in 1954. He later became the president of the Indian National Congress and is known for re-



Vijay in Villupuram, TN, Sunday. PTI

building the party after the Indo-China War of 1962.

Periyar: Popularly known in Tamil Nadu as Thanthai Periyar, Periyar E V Ramasamy is largely known as the father of the Dravidian Movement. He rallied for a Dravidian state and protested against the imposition of Hindi on Tamils. A social reformer who supported female literacy, Vijay said Periyar inspired him to work on empowering women.

Velu Nachiyar: The queen of Sivagangai who waged a war against the East India Company in 1790, Velu Nachiyar is known as "Veeramanchai (brave woman)". She was known to have been great at archery and scholarship alike. According to Vijay's party, she inspired his "grit to fight a formidable enemy".

Anjalai Ammal: A social reformer and freedom fighter from Cuddalore in Tamil Nadu, Anjalai Ammal is known for her work on female literacy. She participated in the Salt Satyagraha and presided over the Congress' women's wing. She inspired Vijay because she "championed the cause of women in pre-Independence India".

B R Ambedkar: The father of the Indian Constitution was the inspiration behind the anti-caste and secular politics of Vijay's party.

4 from Gujarat killed in Canada car accident

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE VADODARA, OCTOBER 27

FOUR INDIANS, including siblings from Godhra in Panchmahal and two residents of Anand district, were killed while returning from a dinner in a Tesla crash in Toronto, Canada, on Thursday.

The group, as per reports, was travelling in a Tesla electric car when they hit the guardrail at Lake Shore Boulevard and the vehicle went up in flames.

The deceased have been identified as Ketaba Gohil (29) and her brother Neelraj (25) — residents of Godhra where their family resides. They were accompanied by Jayrajshih Sisodia (30), a resident of Borsad in Anand district and an unidentified man and a woman. The unidentified 25-year-old woman was rescued with burn injuries and is currently under treatment at a hospital in Toronto.

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# 9 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## IN THE NAME OF...

**SAMAJWADI PARTY (SP)** national general secretary Azam Khan is currently lodged in the Sitapur district jail but his name features in the list of 40 star campaigners that the party has sent to the Election Commission for the UP bypolls. Khan's supporters in his home town Rampur are upset over the party's move, accusing the SP leadership of using his name for Muslim votes but not taking any step to get him out of jail. A senior SP spokesperson, however, said the list showed the party's respect for Khan, whose "name was popular enough to appeal to the voters". Khan's is the third name on the list after SP president Akhilesh Yadav and the party's principal general secretary Ramgopal Yadav.

## FILM APPEAL

A **FIRST-of-its-kind** public service announcement film on disability inclusion will be aired in PVR's chain of cinemas across the country. The PSA film, which seeks to challenge biases against persons with disabilities and creates awareness on the issue, was launched through social media on Wednesday by National Centre for Promotion of Employment for Disabled People, a cross-disability advocacy organisation and the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment.

## ON A MISSION

GIVING A literal meaning to Swahili word "karibu (welcome)", the Indian High Commission in Dar es Salaam hosted a group of 30 school students over the weekend as part of an initiative called 'Karibu Tanzania Youth'. The event presented an opportunity for the students to get familiarised with the work of the High Commission and also relish Indian cuisine served at the venue. Tanzanian officials working at the High Commission gave presentations in Swahili on various issues pertaining to India-Tanzania relations. The students also visited High Commissioner Bishwadip Dey's office and got to see how visas were processed and stamped. Dey said the idea was to "inspire Tanzanian students to become friends of India". The initiative will now be held on a monthly basis.

## Amid farm protests in Punjab, Joshi says will procure every grain

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

AMID PROTESTS in Punjab by farmers over "tardy" paddy procurement and lifting, Union Minister of Food and Public Distribution Pralhad Joshi Sunday assured Punjab farmers that the Centre will procure each and every grain from them.

Joshi said, "We strongly stand with farmers of Punjab... Whatever commitments we have made, we will fulfil the same by November-end. *Main fir se ek baar aashwast karta hum ki ham ek ek dana, ham apse khareedenge.* (I want to assure you again, we will procure each and every grain from you)."

Paddy procurement in Punjab began on October 1 this year due to heavy rainfall in September, Joshi said, adding that despite the late start, it is on track to achieve the target to pro-

ure 185 lakh metric tonnes by November 2024.

However, on lower Out Turn Ratio (OTR) from paddy to rice, he said, "There has also been a demand from the millers to reduce existing 67% OTR, citing that the paddy variety PR-126 has been giving 4% to 5% lesser OTR than usual. The PR-126 variety has been in Punjab since 2016, no such issue has been reported previously."

As on October 26, 2024, around 50 lakh metric tonnes of paddy have been procured against the arrival of 54.5 lakh metric tonnes, Joshi said, adding that until the same day last year, 61.5 lakh metric tonnes of paddy were procured against the arrival of 65.8 lakh metric tonnes.

Dismissing reports of delay in procurement due to non-availability of storage space, he said storage capacity of 16 lakh metric tonnes will be available as on November 1, 2024.

## OPENS PASSENGER TERMINAL BUILDING IN BORDER TOWN

# End state-sponsored infiltration in Bengal by electing BJP: Shah

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 27

ACCUSING THE Mamata Banerjee-led government of "state-sponsored infiltration" and claiming that women in the state were not safe, Union Home Minister Amit Shah Sunday exhorted party workers to begin preparations for the 2026 Assembly elections to "oust the TMC from power".

Shah addressed two events in North 24 Parganas' Bongaon and BJP membership drive in Kolkata. Shah hit out at the TMC over alleged corruption in the state, cow smuggling racket and incidents of assault on women in Sandeshkhali, and R G Kar rape and murder.

Shah, in his first visit to West Bengal after the Lok Sabha polls, said: "In Bengal, where Rabindra Sangeet used to be heard in the morning, sounds of bombs going off is heard everywhere now. In Bengal, state-sponsored infiltration is going on... (there is) corruption in the hiring process, health sector and rations along with cut money and syndicates. To get rid of it and build a Sonar Bangla (golden Bengal) as envisioned by



Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Dadasaheb Phalke award recipient Mithun Chakraborty and Union Minister Sukanta Majumdar in Kolkata, Sunday. Partha Paul

Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore and Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, the people of Bengal need to elect a BJP government in 2026."

Urging party leaders and cadres to enroll one crore people into the BJP, Shah said: "Bengal has to be saved from the terror of communists and (CM) Mamata (Banerjee). The only way out is to form a BJP government in 2026... Save Bengal from coal thieves, job corruption, health sector corruption, cut money syndicate corruption. One crore people must be made members of the BJP." "The

only way to kick corruption, infiltration out of Bengal is by bringing BJP to power."

Questioning safety of women in Bengal, he said "don't let Sandeshkhali, R G Kar happen again in Bengal".

Reminding BJP workers about the party's performance in the Lok Sabha polls – the party's tally dropped to 12 from 2019's 18 – Shah exhorted them to prepare for the 2026 Assembly polls. "... Our target is a BJP government in Bengal in 2026. Don't be afraid, don't fear anyone... Don't

forget, we are a party that has gone from two seats to 370 seats and has taken steps like the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K. Of the state elections held in 2024, we have won more than 50%. We have won in Haryana and we will win in Jharkhand and Maharashtra."

Earlier in the day, inaugurating a new passenger terminal building and a cargo gate Maitri Dwar at Petrapole land port bordering Bangladesh, Shah said that PM Narendra Modi was committed to the development of Bengal. "Bring in change in West Bengal in 2026. (We) will put an end to infiltration and ensure peace in the state."

He also said, "In establishing peace in the region, land ports play an important role. When there is no scope for the legal movement of people across the border, illegal modes of movement arise, which impacts the peace of the country... There can be peace in Bengal only when infiltration stops."

Responding to Shah's allegations, TMC leader Kunal Ghosh said, "Infiltration is a problem at the international border, which is being guarded by the BSF under his ministry. Therefore, it is a failure of the MHA and the central agencies." **WPTIINPUTS**

## Jaishankar: Want govt in Maharashtra that will be on same page with Centre

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

EXTERNAL AFFAIRS Minister S Jaishankar said Sunday it is important to have a government in the state that is on the same page with the Centre.

Ahead of Assembly polls in Maharashtra, Jaishankar batted for a "double-engine" government that can "drive growth and success" with the BJP in power at the Centre and the state.

"Maharashtra is a leading state in industry, technology, infrastructure, ports, logistics... To achieve our goal of Viksit Bharat, we need Viksit Maharashtra. We need a government whom the country and the world trust."

He said a government with a track record and strong performance can be trusted for major education and logistics projects.

About Maharashtra's socio-economic importance, he referred to a meeting with German Chancellor Olaf Scholz and said several German companies were keen and already in Maharashtra.

"Whenever investors choose a destination, they draw their own assessment based on ground realities. What matters to them is good governance, a conducive political atmosphere, infrastructure and ease of doing business. Here, state leadership and government's role in implementing the projects is important. The success depends on a positive, effective and secure partnership between the state and Centre... When the Centre and state align, it will boost the confidence of domestic and foreign investors," he said.

Jaishankar also spoke about the recent patrolling agreement with China. "The October 21 agreement related to patrolling along the LAC does not mean all issues between two countries have been resolved... Our approach with China is the first disengagement followed by the next step, de-escalation."

"The latest step of disengagement as part of the understanding is that patrolling will take place in Depsang and Demchok.



External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar in Mumbai, Sunday. Ganesh Shirsekar

## 'AFTER 26/11, GOVT DIDN'T RESPOND, WON'T HAPPEN NOW'

Mumbai: Reiterating the Modi government's zero tolerance policy on terrorism, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar said Sunday that "there was a terror attack (in Mumbai) and there was no response" but this would not be the case if such an incident happened again. "We held a national security council meeting in the same hotel in Mumbai that was attacked by terrorists in 2008," he said, referring to the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks. Without naming the erstwhile UPA government, he said, "When terrorists attacked Mumbai, the government then was passive... When this city (Mumbai) was attacked, nothing was done... under Modi's leadership... India is seen as a leader in fighting terrorism." **ENS**

Gradually, attempts to diffuse the conflict will follow. It will take some time. And then it also entails border management," he said. About developments along the Bangladesh border, he stated, "There has been some political instability in Bangladesh that has led to disturbances. However, we have strengthened our borders. We no longer pursue open border policies. Since 2014, we have been clear about tightening our borders for security reasons, not just with one specific nation."

## BJP alone can't win, but will be single-largest party: Fadnavis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM Devendra Fadnavis Sunday said though the BJP will not be able to form a government on its own in Maharashtra, it will emerge as the single-largest party in the Assembly polls. However, the Mahayuti will get the edge to form the government in the state, he said.

Fadnavis was speaking at the NDTV Marathi Conclave in Mumbai.

While pointing to the ground reality with three-party alliances on each side, Fadnavis said, "The BJP alone cannot win the state but will become the single largest party with highest votes and seats. With Shiv Sena led by CM Eknath Shinde and NCP led by Deputy CM Ajit Pawar, we will jointly form the Mahayuti government."



Mahayuti will form government, says Deputy CM Devendra Fadnavis

"Generally, I don't like to predict the number of seats. But I must state that Mahayuti will have an edge in state. We will be able to get comfortable majority to form the government, he said.

"I feel sad to see many aspirants denied tickets. But then in pre-poll alliance, we have to make adjustments. One cannot say we want other parties' votes, but cannot accommodate their candidates..." he said.

## Won't campaign for NCP-SP in 3 seats: UBT Sena leader

MANOJ MORE  
PUNE, OCTOBER 27

BOTH THE MVA and Mahayuti are facing threats of rebellion in three seats in Pimpri Chinchwad city ahead of Assembly elections.

On Sunday, as the Sharad Pawar-led NCP announced the candidatures of Rahul Kalate for the Chinchwad seat and Ajit Ga-

vhane for Bhosari seat, the Pimpri Chinchwad president of Sena (UBT), the party's MVA ally, has decided not to campaign for them.

Similarly, two leaders from Ajit Pawar-led NCP have also decided to file their nominations against the BJP's Chinchwad candidate.

"We will not campaign for all three candidates fielded by Sharad Pawar-led NCP in Pimpri-Chinchwad. We are stunned that

not a single seat was given to the Sena," Sachin Bhosale, president of Sena (UBT) in Pimpri-Chinchwad, told *The Indian Express*.

The third candidate is Sulakshana Shilwant, whom NCP (SP) on October 25 announced as its candidate for Pimpri, a reserved seat that the Uddhav Sena wanted to contest. Bhosale said he would contest from the Pimpri seat. "I will file my nomination. Entire

## Shinde Sena 2nd list: In Worli, Milind Deora to take on Aaditya

VALLABH OZARKAR  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

CM EKNATH Shinde-led Shiv Sena Sunday released its second list of 20 candidates and fielded party's Rajya Sabha MP Milind Deora from the high-profile Worli seat against Sena UBT's sitting MLA Aaditya Thackeray.

With this, Shinde Sena has announced candidates in 65 seats. With Deora now in the contest, Worli will see a triangular fight between the three Senas, with the MNS fielding Sandeep Deshpande from the seat.

One sitting Sena RS MP and two sitting MLCs – Amshya Padvi and Bhavana Gawali – were given tickets by the party.

The list features at least seven former BJP leaders and functionaries who joined Shinde Sena ahead of polls. The party has also nominated former MP Sanjay Nirupam from Dindoshi.

Sena rank and file will campaign for me. They will not campaign for MVA candidates," he said.

Meanwhile, NCP leader Bhausaheb Bhori said he will also file nomination Monday from Chinchwad seat adding that his supporters want him to contest the polls. Another NCP leader Nana Kate, close to Ajit Pawar, has also announced to contest from the seat.

## Botched Thrissur Pooram fest: Police register FIR

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
THRISSUR, OCTOBER 27

THE KERALA Police Sunday lodged a case in connection with the alleged disruption of the iconic Thrissur Pooram festival in April this year.

According to officials, the Thrissur East police registered the case based on a report submitted by an SIT headed by ADGP (crime branch) H Venkatesh.

"The FIR was lodged under charges of 120 (B) (conspiracy), 295(A) (deliberate and malicious acts intended to outrage religious

feelings of any class by insulting its religion or religious beliefs) and 153 (A) (promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, place of birth, residence, language, etc.). The investigation will be carried out by the SIT," said a top official.

The state government earlier this month announced a three-tier investigation into the disruption of the Thrissur Pooram festivities following a report submitted by then ADGP (law and order) M R Ajith Kumar to State Police Chief in September.

The row regarding the disruption had sparked a political storm.

# As North-South faultlines appear, what Priyanka's Kerala poll debut will mean

If she wins Wayanad, as is likely, how does she navigate this tricky terrain? With all three Gandhis in Parliament, what message does it send to the party?



THE NEERJA CHOWDHURY COLUMN

Weekly insight into what's changing in national politics – and why

AFTER TWO decades of speculation over when she will take the leap, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra is all set to enter the electoral arena and Parliament, that is if she wins the Wayanad bypoll on November 13.

Given the constituency's political profile – it has almost 43% Muslims, 13% Christians, around 10% tribals, and 7% Dalits – that is very likely. For long, Wayanad has been one of the Congress's safest seats and Priyanka got an enthusiastic response when she went to file her nomination papers last week.

Both the Gandhi siblings made an emotional pitch to the people of Wayanad, with Rahul saying that the constituency would now

have two MPs all the time, one elected and the other him. The decision for Priyanka to enter parliamentary politics is unlike 2004 when the Gandhi family decided that it would be Rahul, not Priyanka, who would contest the Lok Sabha elections. It was then said that Priyanka's children were young and needed her around. Had she come into politics in the years that followed, she could have very well become a rival pole in the party. Sonia Gandhi, from all accounts, was clear about who the party leader should be.

Today, Rahul has come into his own and is accepted as the top boss in the party, more confident than he was five years ago when his sister entered active politics. Her role now is likely to be secondary.

During the recent Lok Sabha elections, at one stage it seemed Priyanka might contest from Rae Bareilly. It would have been a natural next step for her after years of nursing the seat for her mother. Rahul was anyway contesting from Wayanad and he de-

clared his intention to fight from Rae Bareilly only after voting was over in the Kerala constituency.

As things turned out, Rahul now represents a seat in the North and Priyanka may represent one in the South. Their grandmother Indira Gandhi, who Priyanka resembles, had chosen the South over the North several times. In 1980, she gave up Rae Bareilly and retained Medak (now in Telangana), when she bounced back to power. In 1977, the South had stood with her when the Congress was wiped out all over the North in the election held after the Emergency. A year later, she began her comeback journey from the lush green, coffee plantation-dotted constituency of Chikmagalur in Karnataka, where she won a bypoll.

I remember the interest Priyanka sparked when she accompanied her mother to Bellary to fight against the BJP's star performer Sushma Swaraj in 1999. Stopping in Hyderabad on the way back, I was struck by the



Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra during a roadshow before the latter filed her nomination.

number of party workers who pitched for Priyanka to join active politics for she "reminds us of Indira amma". It took the party (or the family) a quarter century to make that decision. As a result, Priyanka is contesting her first election at 52 and Rahul is already a five-time MP. India too has moved on, with 65% of India under 35, and a fading memory

of Indira Gandhi's rule.

## Priyanka and North-South tensions

If elected, Priyanka will represent the South at a time when North-South tensions are growing, something reflected in Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu's call to people in the South to have more children. There is growing angst in the southern states that the impending delimitation exercise, due in 2026, will work against the South just because it has controlled its population. The northern states, on the other hand, have not done so well. But they stand to gain because their larger populations will increase the number of MPs they send to the Lok Sabha, the exercise contingent on the decadal Census that has been delayed. Delimitation, in short, is a political time bomb ticking away.

How will Priyanka, whose family is accepted by the North and the South alike, navigate this tricky terrain? Becoming an MP

from Wayanad, and being who she is, will give her a rare opening to engage with both the North and the South. Will she seize it as an opportunity, which can enable the South to view itself not as a victim but as a powerhouse of new ideas and successful endeavours?

Additionally, how will she ensure that the Congress gets strengthened south of the Vindhya? It is possible that Priyanka is handed charge of a campaign. She was sought as a campaigner by party managers during the Lok Sabha elections. The CMs of Karnataka and Telangana, and the other state units asked for her, given her appeal among women voters who are emerging as an important constituency for every party.

## The flip side

There is also a flip side to the Priyanka story. Having three members of the Gandhi family in Parliament at the same time sends its own signal, that the dynastic principle and not democratic

functioning that Rahul Gandhi speaks of is strengthening.

It also seals the leadership question in the Congress. With both the siblings in their fifties, they are likely to call the shots at least for another two decades. That being the case, staying on the right side of the family may become even more pronounced in the party as the way to get ahead. Priyanka is known for thinking on her feet politically and giving it back as good as she gets. In 1999, she asked the people of Rae Bareilly if they would vote for Arun Nehru, her father Rajiv's third cousin and the man who had "betrayed" him. That one-liner was enough to sink Arun Nehru's attempts to get elected.

Priyanka has also dealt with Narendra Modi's charge of "parivarवाद (dynasty politics)" head-on, speaking about the "shahadat (martyrdom)" of Indira and Rajiv. It is after all people, she has pointed out, who elect the members of the "family". It is also equally true that an ordinary Congress worker such

as Kishori Lal Sharma and not a member of the Gandhi family can also defeat Smriti Irani in Amethi when given a chance, a chance Sharma did not get for years despite looking after the constituency for the family.

How will Priyanka's entry into Parliament affect Rahul's politics? The siblings will together up the ante against the BJP. The family is also known to take decisions together and not publicly air their differences. But what happens if Priyanka outshines Rahul and this leads to a sharpening of the divide between the two groups loyal to them?

Priyanka's electoral debut will, therefore, turn a page in the ongoing story of the Indian National Congress, coming as it does when the party has shown signs of revival.

(Neerja Chowdhury, Contributing Editor, *The Indian Express*, has covered the last 11 Lok Sabha elections. She is the author of *How Prime Ministers Decide*)



**WORDLY WISE**  
NEITHER PRIVACY NOR PUBLICITY IS DEAD, BUT TECHNOLOGY WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE A MESS OF BOTH. — DANAH BOYD

## The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY  
**RAMNATH GOENKA**

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# Notes from an endgame

World's most powerful nation gnaws on its fingernails, there is some comic relief, few reasons for hope



**BHASKAR CHAKRAVORTI**

## COME NOVEMBER

As US presidential election approaches, Israel and Iran circle each other, after inaugurating a new phase in their conflict

ISRAEL'S MISSILE BARRAGE against Iran marks a new phase in the simmering conflict between the two nations, signaling a potential escalation in their long-standing rivalry. This latest exchange is part of a series of tit-for-tat attacks, with Tel Aviv and Tehran now engaging in direct military strikes for the first time, raising fears of a broader and more intense confrontation. There is concern that the conflict may deepen — both in the scale of violence and in its geographic scope, potentially drawing in other nations in the region. Reports suggest that Israel's Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu, opted for a restrained response, under pressure from the United States. Israel's attack was deliberately limited: It did not target Iran's critical oil infrastructure or its sensitive nuclear facilities. Instead, the operation focused on military targets, avoiding civilian areas, and minimising casualties. The missile strikes resulted in the deaths of four Iranian soldiers but caused few civilian casualties.

This restrained response contrasts sharply with the aggressive retaliation Netanyahu had initially threatened following Iran's missile attack on Israeli military bases in October. Although Israel has signaled it is prepared to escalate further if provoked, the Biden Administration's influence has moderated Tel Aviv's actions. Meanwhile, Washington is urging Tehran to refrain from retaliating and has been rallying international partners to push for de-escalation. Iran's reaction has been cautious. While downplaying the impact of Israel's strikes, it maintains its right to respond. Like Israel, Iran is weighing the risks of an uncontrolled escalation, which could spiral into a more destructive conflict. However, Iran cannot afford to appear as if it is capitulating to Israeli and American pressure, creating a delicate balancing act for Tehran's leadership.

In both capitals, internal debates rage on how to handle the other. In Israel, hawks advocate for a more aggressive stance, arguing that confronting Iran's regional proxies in Gaza and Lebanon is not enough — the source of the problem, they say, lies in Tehran itself. This has put more moderate voices in Israel on the defensive. In Iran, the hardliners — who have long dominated policy discussions, with calls for Israel's destruction — face opposition from moderates urging a more cautious approach. Optimists see a glimmer of restraint in Iran's recent statements, which prioritise ceasefire agreements in Gaza and Lebanon over direct retaliation against Israel. This stance allows Tehran to occupy the moral high ground, emphasising the need to end violence in Gaza and Lebanon while subtly pressuring Israel. For now, the restraint exhibited by both sides, even if tactical, underscores the ongoing role of diplomacy in preventing a wider war in the Middle East. The Biden Administration's efforts have, for the moment, forestalled a major escalation. However, as the US presidential election approaches, its influence may wane, particularly in its ability to curb Netanyahu's military ambitions in Gaza and Lebanon. As November nears, both Israel and Iran are likely to adopt a wait-and-watch approach, assessing the election's outcome before making any definitive moves.

AMERICA IS ON a knife-edge and the knives are out. Elections are just days away, and the outcome is anybody's guess. After the initial surge that wiped out the Joe Biden enthusiasm deficit, a disciplined campaign, free of major gaffes or scandals, and a billion dollars in the bank, the Kamala Harris "vibe" seems to be running out of battery power. As Harris and Donald Trump make the final push for the undecided votes that will decide the next President of the United States, we are down to middle-school-level name-calling. Harris says Trump is unhinged and unstable, while Trump calls Harris "retarded", "stupid" and is not above reaching for an epithet to describe her.

For a nation that ought to know better about how easily violent rhetoric turns into lethal violence (look up rioters storming the US Capitol on January 6, 2021), the threats are getting increasingly ominous. Election officials get messages threatening violence. Trump has said he will send in the military after his opponents if he's elected. State troopers had to be deployed to guard students going to school in Springfield, Ohio, after Trump and his sidekick JD Vance spread the canard that Haitian immigrants in the city were eating their neighbours' pets. Of course, we should not forget that Trump himself was the target of two assassination attempts during a single campaign season.

The nuttiness is not just in the streets. The hallowed halls of justice are teeming with it as well. The 2024 election is shaping up to be the most litigated election in US history; lawsuits are being filed almost every day to pre-emptively cast doubt on any unfavourable results. The government has also jumped into the fray: The US Department of Justice has sued the state of Alabama's top election official for illegally removing voters from its election rolls. From the Supreme Court providing Trump a cover of immunity protecting him from the many cases against him to the world's richest man, Elon Musk, giving away a million dollars a day to a randomly selected registered voter willing to sign a petition, the law is being bent in increasingly creative ways.

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Serious policy issues don't seem to be much of a factor. How will America ever pay for its massive debt, for example? A \$3.5 trillion hole is expected by 2035 under Harris' plan and \$7.5 trillion is expected under Trump's — these numbers are somewhere between all or twice all of India's current GDP. The enormous burdens being dropped on future generations don't appear to be a worry on anyone's mind — be it candidate or voter. The media may be getting muzzled already: Even the august *Washington Post* that ran the banner "Democracy Dies in Darkness" after Trump's 2016 election has gone dark and decided not to publish its previously planned endorsement of Harris.

Therefore, let's sum it all up. Harris' closing argument is, effectively: Trump's a fascist; I'm not Trump. Trump's closing argument: He has one, but neither he nor anyone else can remember what it is since he moves from mendacity to other meanderings.

Meanwhile, the campaigns are engaged in a frenzied endgame to the very finish. Three notable groups could tilt the balance.

**Muslim and Arab voters, in critical swing states:** These voters — traditionally Democrats — are deeply upset over the yearlong flattening of Gaza, the opening of a new front in Lebanon and the Biden administration's unwavering support of Israel. Harris is pledging an end to the war if she is elected but is not signaling how and whether she would make a break from Biden's position. Trump's past record suggests that he is no friend of Muslims, unless they are connected to the Saudi royal family. But an August poll from the Council on American-Islamic Relations had data that ought to give Harris the heebie-jeebies — 18 per cent of Muslims in key swing states supported Trump while the corresponding support for Harris was 12 per cent, with 40 per cent going to a protest vote.

**Men:** This key demographic seems less than enchanted by Harris and Trump persists in enchanting them with a mix of machismo and profanity. In particular, the enchantment gap among Black men is a problem for Harris. Is this because they "just

aren't feeling the idea of having a woman as president" as Barack Obama said in a recent scolding aimed at Black men? Is this because Harris has been walking a tightrope of being a tough-on-crime prosecutor in the past to please White men (and women) while battling rumours that she put large numbers of Black men in prison? With both candidates eyeing them, Black men have never felt so wanted and with this much attention paid to their hopes and dreams.

**Republicans who must hold their noses to vote for Trump:** These are the Nikki Haley supporters who might be feeling a little marooned. The Pew Research Center found that Haley's support base grew from 11 per cent late last year to 18 per cent this year. While Harris does not have Haley battling for her, she has recruited prominent Republicans, Liz Cheney, daughter of former Republican Vice President Dick Cheney and Jimmy McCain, son of the former Republican presidential candidate, the late John McCain, and a bunch of former Trump staffers and others doing their darndest to get the nose-holding Republicans to defect.

So, here we are. The world's most powerful nation, collectively gnawing on its fingernails. Comic relief comes from the fake Kamala Harris played by the brilliant actor, Maya Rudolph, on the weekly font of satirical relief, *Saturday Night Live*; or from the sight of Trump swaying to his music playlist at a political rally for a full 39 minutes while those around him wonder what the heck is going on. Maybe there is hope for America after all if that most American of institutions, McDonald's, will give a convict like Trump a chance to serve fries even before he's served his own sentence.

Other than these few notes of hope, America stares at the abyss as it prepares for two possibilities: A convict is elected president or he's not, but close to half the country would wish that he were.

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## KEEPING UP WITH AI

Concerns about copyright, privacy must be addressed without stifling its transformative potential and problem-solving abilities

EVER SINCE IT first made headlines in late 2022, the capabilities of generative artificial intelligence — in swiftly and expertly producing text, art and music — have often felt closer to science fiction than to reality. Yet, even as they have inspired awe, they've also caused anxiety, centred on two questions: Could AI ever fully replace humans? And what is owed to those on whose original creations — including articles, novels, paintings, songs and films — AI has been trained to "generate" its own content? These questions are also at the heart of the legal action taken on October 21 by Dow Jones, parent company of *The Wall Street Journal*, and *The New York Post*, against startup Perplexity AI, accusing it of "massive amount of illegal copying" from the publications' copyrighted work. Along with other lawsuits filed over the last year, including against OpenAI and Microsoft, it trains the spotlight on what has come to be one of the most fraught aspects of the AI story, where the new technology is cast not only as a threat to jobs, but to human creativity itself.

This latest chapter in the history of technology is, in a sense, no different from previous ones: Whether it was the printing press, photography or even the internet, anxiety about how a new technology might alter society has long cast a shadow over human ingenuity. Legal action connected to AI could show the way towards addressing such concerns, but they must not be allowed to stifle the growth of a technology that has a huge transformative potential. AI represents a paradigm shift in how long-standing and complex questions in fields such as physics, mathematics and medicine are addressed, a fact acknowledged by the Nobel committee this year — while the Physics Prize recognised the foundational work that enables machine learning with artificial neural networks (powering AI's generative capabilities), the Chemistry Prize recognised the use of AI in decoding and creating proteins, work that has huge implications for the discovery of new drugs and curing ailments arising from protein disorders, like Parkinson's disease and Alzheimer's.

The challenge of AI right now is not that it is developing too much, but that it is developing very quickly. The task before stakeholders, including industry and government, is to find a way to keep up and address issues such as copyright and trademark infringement, privacy and data security, and the generation of false information or "hallucinations". The ongoing lawsuits, and civil society actions, like the recent release of a public statement by writers, actors and other creative professionals and artists — including Nobel Laureate Kazuo Ishiguro — highlight these very concerns. They must lead to more dialogue and understanding, not paranoia and doomsday pronouncements.



**ARUSH KHANNA**

## INDIA-UAE, BIT BY BIT

Bilateral investment treaty broadens scope of trade, suggests a more flexible stance

THE BILATERAL INVESTMENT Treaty (BIT) between India and the United Arab Emirates came into force from August 31, 2024. Replacing the earlier Bilateral Investment Promotion and Protection Agreement (BIPPA) which lapsed on September 12, 2024, the BIT marks a significant move to bolster economic cooperation with the UAE, a country which accounts for 3 per cent of the total FDI receipts in India and cumulative investments of \$19 billion between 2000-24.

This announcement comes at a time when India's bilateral treaties have dried up, more so, since the adoption of the model BIT in 2016. Despite having contested several BIT claims and suffering adverse awards in multi-billion dollar disputes from international tribunals, the model BIT was seen more as a knee-jerk reaction, a one-size-fits-all measure rather than a nuanced and calibrated approach towards cross-border trade. This resulted in the termination of 68 of the 74 BITs which were in force as of 2015. The difficulty in renegotiating terms with other countries under the 2016 model led to a decline in FDI. According to government data, between April 2023 and September 2024, FDI equity inflows declined 24 per cent whereas the total FDI, which also includes reinvested earnings and capital inflows, contracted by 15.5 per cent.

Harbouring aspirations of a \$5 trillion economy, the Indian government, in its 2024 Interim Budget promised a renewed push to re-energise economic ties with its trade partners. The India-UAE BIT is an important step towards fulfilling that promise. It is interest-

ing to note from the text of the treaty, India's softened and flexible stance in amending or dispensing with certain covenants from the model BIT. For instance, under the model BIT, an investor was mandated to first resort to local remedies under the Indian legal system for five years before taking recourse to international arbitration. This has been watered down to three years under the India-UAE BIT (Article 17.1). The issue relating to exhaustion of local remedies has been an Achilles heel for India in its negotiations with the UK for the free trade agreement which long awaits a breakthrough. One will have to wait and watch whether the amendment to this clause will provide a template for other countries which are also seeking similar concessions.

Another noteworthy addition is the inclusion of a negative covenant prohibiting investors from availing third-party funding for contesting disputes. Historically, third-party funding in common law jurisdictions such as India was viewed in contravention of public policy under the colonial doctrines of champerty and maintenance. However, these have been significantly diluted to embrace modern economic realities. Even the Supreme Court, in *Bar Council of India v AK Balaji* (2018), held that financial assistance from an unrelated party to a dispute would not ipso facto be deemed in contravention of public policy. A recently constituted expert committee by the Ministry of Law and Justice in its report (February, 2024) has even recommended the inclusion of third party funding in our arbitration regime. In that light, a blanket prohibition

of third-party funding for investor-state disputes runs against the domestic tide which has started to embrace the concept.

The India-UAE BIT broadens the scope of trade by including portfolio investments (Article 1.4) which were specifically excluded in the model BIT. This would allow investors with financial holdings to take recourse under the BIT and make any disputes arising therefrom amenable to the investor-state dispute settlement mechanism (ISDS) under the BIT. The Global Trade Research Initiative has rightly flagged this issue by stating that it may increase India's exposure to disputes over financial instruments, even those that don't significantly contribute to economic development, moving away from the model BIT's focus on long-term investments.

Time will judge whether the treaty has managed to strike a fine balance between promoting foreign investment and the state's right to regulate. The discussions on the proposed FTAs with the UK and the EU are at an advanced stage. Negotiations with other countries such as Hong Kong, Australia, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Russia are also active. Notwithstanding what ensues, for the time being, given India's disappointing ratings in contract enforcement and current geopolitical conundrums, these steps should be viewed in the right spirit which hopefully pave the way for a robust cross-border economic ecosystem, BIT by BIT.

*The writer, a lawyer, is partner at Numen Law Offices*

## FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



## OCTOBER 28, 1984, FORTY YEARS AGO

### NTR'S POLL STRATEGY

ANDHRA PRADESH CHIEF Minister NT Rama Rao said that he would continue to "play my role" in the endeavour to unite all opposition parties to fight the Congress (I) in the forthcoming parliamentary polls. Rama Rao is also contemplating convening "immediately" a meeting of leaders of all non-Congress (I) parties to work out a strategy to defeat the Congress (I) at the hustings.

### PAK CONDEMNS INDIA

THE PAKISTAN GOVERNMENT has strongly condemned as "motivated attempts being

made by Indian authorities to falsely implicate Pakistan in incidents of violence in East Punjab." The allegation reportedly made by the Amritsar district police chief that two Sikh terrorists had "confessed" they had been trained in Pakistan and provided arms to assassinate some Indian leaders "is a complete fabrication", the Pakistan government said.

### DEPLETING RESERVES

ALONG WITH CENTRAL and state governments, it is now the commercial banks' turn to run a huge negative cash balance with the Reserve Bank of India leading to an unprecedented increase in the commercial bank credit

in the first six months of the financial year. The disturbing feature is that while the accretion of bank deposits in this period remained stable, the increase in commercial bank credit went up three times in the same period last year.

### MARCOS IN TROUBLE

THE NOOSE APPEARS to be tightening around the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos. About 10,000 Filipinos marched into central Manila demanding his resignation as the United States Congress has decided to allot the Philippines half the military aid that the US government had sought. Washington's growing concern is a problem for Marcos.

# THE IDEAS PAGE

11

## TOP crops, price volatility & RBI

Recent surge in vegetable prices is not an anomaly. It is symptomatic of deeper inefficiencies and vulnerabilities in their value chains that demand urgent policy attention



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH  
BY ASHOK GULATI, BIDISHA CHANDA AND RANJANA ROY

RBI GOVERNOR SHAKTIKANTA Das categorically stated in the minutes of the last Monetary Policy Committee meeting that it is risky to reduce the repo rate as inflation is still not at a comfortable level of 4 per cent. September inflation, measured by the Consumer Price Index, surged to 5.5 per cent, while food inflation, affecting the largest population segment, crossed 9.2 per cent. Hence, RBI's uneasiness in committing to reduce the repo rate is understandable.

A bigger question is how far can the RBI really tame inflation, especially when it is driven by food, and within that, largely by vegetables. Vegetable inflation is 36 per cent and their overall contribution to CPI inflation is 42.8 per cent. The top 10 commodities that contributed most to CPI inflation in September are all vegetables. No wonder, vegetables have put RBI in a bind.

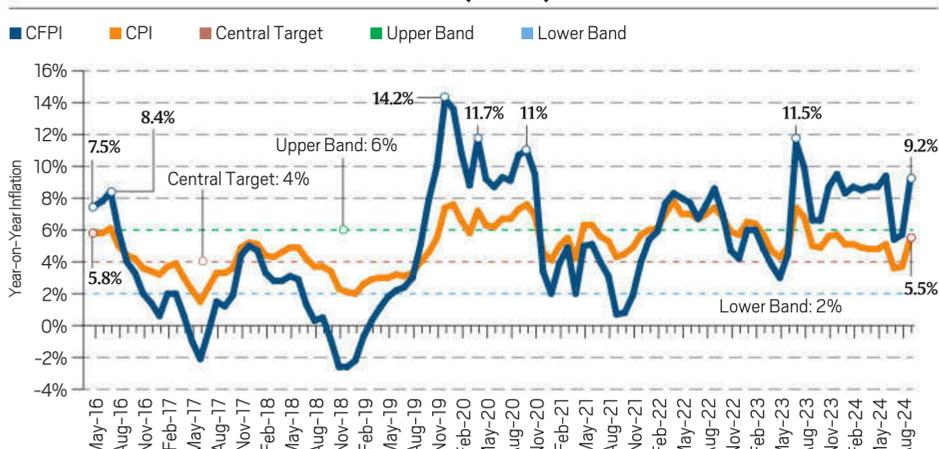
To be fair to the RBI, let us see its record in taming inflation since it adopted the flexible inflation targeting (FIT) framework, with a target of 4 per cent +/- 2 per cent. Our analysis of 101 months shows that CPI inflation exceeded the 4 per cent target 72 per cent of the time, and in 28 per cent of the cases, it surpassed the upper threshold of 6 per cent (Figure 1).

Various factors have impacted CPI inflation during this period. These have ranged from plunging international prices, especially of crude and food, to reducing the fiscal deficit in the early years of this period (2016 to 2019) when inflation was tamed below 4 per cent. After that, disruptions in supply chains during Covid-19, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict in 2022, pushed up global as well as domestic inflation.

The outsized influence of CFPI on overall CPI inflation boils down to the outdated weights assigned to food and beverages in the CPI basket. Currently, they account for 45.9 per cent of the CPI, with food alone making up 39 per cent, based on a 2011-12 consumption survey. It is high time these weights are updated, based on the 2022-23 consumption survey. The RBI still deserves credit for maintaining inflation at levels lower than in many emerging markets and developing economies (EMDEs). According to IMF data, in 2024, India's inflation stood at 4.4 per cent, well below the EMDE's average of 7.9 per cent. But the greater the proportion of food in overall CPI, the harder it becomes for monetary policy alone to control inflation. So, replacing old food weights in CPI with new ones, which are likely to be about 5-6 percentage points less, should be a priority to reflect the reality better.

Let us dive deeper into current food inflation. The recent surge in vegetable inflation, particularly driven by tomatoes, onions, and potatoes (TOP), is a direct manifestation of structural weaknesses in India's agricultural supply chains, compounded by adverse climatic conditions. In September 2024, vegetable inflation contributed a staggering 63 per cent to the food inflation (CFPI), with year-on-year price increases of 42.4 per cent for tomatoes, 66.2 per cent for onions, and 65.3 per cent for potatoes. These figures are not merely anomalies, they are symptomatic

FIGURE 1: RETAIL AND FOOD INFLATION (Y-O-Y): 2016 TO 2024



Source: MOSPI



CR Sasikumar

of deeper inefficiencies and vulnerabilities in their value chains that demand urgent policy attention.

Tomatoes follow the classic "cobweb model" of price cycles, where short supply quickly pushes up prices due to their perishable nature. Current prices of Rs 60-80/kg stem from delayed kharif arrivals due to heavy rains in Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh. Karnataka's key production belts — Chikkaballapur and Kolar — suffered a 20-30 per cent yield loss from white fly infestations, worsening the supply shortage and fuelling food inflation.

Onion retail prices, currently between Rs 50-60/kg, highlight severe supply disruptions. Among the three growing seasons, only the rabi crop can be stored from March to October, serving as a buffer during lean months. This year, onion storage is slightly lower than last year, with Maharashtra reporting 1.3 LMT storage loss. Incessant rainfall in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana, and Andhra Pradesh has damaged the kharif crop, delaying arrivals and tightening supply.

Stored stocks of potatoes get released from May to November in which October sees the largest release as the rabi potato starts to perish by that month. The lower arrival of mandis has resulted in a spike in prices. Part of this surge can be attributed to the low base effect from the previous year.

India's recurring price volatility in TOP crops demands a more resilient agricultural policy. While Operation Greens launched in

2018 aimed to stabilise prices by streamlining value chains, its expansion to cover all fruits and vegetables diluted its original focus. As a result, supply disruptions and significant post-harvest losses — 18-26 per cent for potatoes, 25 per cent for onions, and 11.6 per cent for tomatoes — continue to drive up retail prices. Such losses should not be taken lightly, after all, a spike in onion prices in the 1998 elections caused the Vajpayee government to collapse. Short-term measures like the recent 40 per cent export duty on onions reveal the government's consumer bias and knee-jerk reactions. The solution lies in processing a portion of TOP crops during surplus periods: Converting at least 10 to 15 per cent of tomato production into paste and puree and dehydrating onion into products like flakes and powder. Successful models like Jain Irrigation's onion dehydration partnership with farmers, demonstrate how such initiatives can reduce wastage and boost farmers' income.

What's truly needed is a dedicated agency, staffed with experts focused exclusively on tomatoes, onions, and potatoes. Without such specialised oversight and long-term strategies, RBI will remain in a bind on the repo rate. It needs to press for these long-term strategies with the government as this goes beyond its jurisdiction. Only then can it heave a sigh of relief from veggie inflation.

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Gulati is distinguished professor, Chanda is research assistant and Roy is a senior fellow at ICRIR. Views are personal

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"If the global community is serious about de-escalation in the region, it must call for an immediate, unconditional ceasefire in Gaza, and an end to Israel's aggression in Lebanon. Without this, the regional war underway will only intensify."  
— DAWN, PAKISTAN

## Patent injustice

As seen in the ongoing controversy surrounding pertuzumab, evergreening remains a challenge in launching affordable biosimilars



DHANENDRA KUMAR

THE INDIAN BIOPHARMACEUTICAL industry is one of the fastest growing globally and is valued at \$60 billion. Contributing to this is an increase in innovation — the country is now ranked 39th in the Global Innovation Index, up from 81 in 2015.

Biopharmaceuticals are medicines made from living cells, such as yeast and bacteria, as against conventional drugs that are made from chemicals. They have revolutionised the treatment of chronic diseases like cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and serious inflammatory autoimmune diseases. Biopharmaceuticals include biologics and biosimilars. Biosimilars refer to a biologic that is very similar to the one that has been cleared by the authorities for prescription by doctors. That is why they are also called follow-on biologics. They have the same efficacy, are as safe as the reference biologic and are used to treat the same disorders as the first biologic drug.

India is a pioneer in the global biosimilars market. It was the first country to approve a biosimilars product for Hepatitis B. Today, there are 98 approved biosimilars in India, with at least 50 in the market, the most in any country. Many India-made biosimilars have been approved in markets like the US.

The Indian biosimilars market was valued at \$349 million in 2022 and is estimated to expand at a growth rate of 25.2 per cent per annum from 2022 to 2030 to reach \$2,108 million by 2030. Between now and 2030, biologic products worth some \$170 billion will lose patent protection. This will open a window of opportunity for Indian biopharma to launch more biosimilar products.

Under the Make in India Initiative, the Centre has launched the National Biopharma Mission (NBM) — an industry-academia collaborative mission managed by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council. This \$250 million mission, co-funded by the World Bank, aims to accelerate biopharmaceutical development. It supports nearly 150 organisations and 300 MSMEs, with 21 shared infrastructure facilities established for research and biomanufacturing. These facilities were pivotal in the Covid-19 vaccine trials. They contribute to India's long-term healthcare goals. NBM has supported over 200 grantees, resulting in 18 successful products. Despite these efforts, India has a mere 3 per cent share of the global biosimilar market. One of the biggest barriers faced by Indian biosimilar manufacturers is patent evergreening.

Patents encourage investment in drug development by offering 20 years of exclusive market access to its holder to recover their R&D investment. After the patent expires, biosimilars, lower-cost versions of the first drug, enter the market, driving down prices due to their reduced R&D and manufacturing costs. In some European countries, biosimilars have a nearly 100 per cent market share.

However, to extend exclusivity, patent holders indulge in patent evergreening, extending the period of a drug's market monopoly. They do this when a patent's life is coming to an end by making minor modifications, which allow them to block and delay entry of biosimilars, thus keeping prices high. For example, the multinational Roche extended the exclusivity of trastuzumab (Herceptin), a biologic used to treat breast cancer, by introducing a subcutaneous version just as the original patent was expiring. It is estimated that this strategy of "patent evergreening" costs the US healthcare system \$700 million annually.

India's patent legislation, particularly Section 3(d) of the Patents Act, 1970, aims to prevent "evergreening" by rejecting patents for small innovations that lack substantive improvement. Under this, Novartis' patent application for the cancer drug Glivec (imatinib), used to treat leukaemia, was rejected as it did not show significant technical advancement. The decision, upheld by both the Madras High Court in 2005 and the Supreme Court in 2013, set a strong precedent against evergreening practices. Section 3(e) of the Act restricts patenting mixtures of known compounds unless a synergistic effect is proven, and Section 3(i) prevents patents on treatment methods.

Despite these legal safeguards, evergreening remains a challenge in launching affordable biosimilars as seen in the ongoing controversy surrounding pertuzumab, used to treat certain types of breast cancer. In India, due to its heavy disease burden, population density and lack of access to affordable medical care for a majority of the citizens, patent evergreening is a challenge.

Patent evergreening poses a significant threat to public health by impacting the accessibility and affordability of essential medicines. While India's legal framework aims to curb such practices, recent studies reveal that around 72 per cent of granted pharmaceutical patents are minor or secondary. The need for stronger scrutiny and opposition is obvious.

In the US, 74 per cent of new patents are associated with existing drugs and nearly 80 per cent of the top 100 best-selling drugs have received patents, extending their monopoly beyond the initial patent's duration. However, in the EU, the European Medicines Agency established biosimilar guidelines in 2005, with a more straightforward approval process compared to the US. Europe has seen significant biosimilar adoption, especially in Germany, the UK, and Nordic countries, leading to cost savings and better access.

To safeguard public health and promote genuine innovation, India needs to strengthen its patent opposition mechanisms, ensuring that the patent system serves its intended purpose rather than extending monopolies through minor modifications. Only then can all patients suffering from serious diseases like cancer, who require biopharma drugs, be assured of access to affordable biosimilars.

The writer is former chairman, Competition Commission of India, and former executive director, World Bank for India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan. He is currently chairman of Competition Advisory Services India LLP. With inputs from Varun Singh.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### MAHARASHTRA POLLS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Not about ideology' (IE, October 26). Mahayuti and MVA are fighting a close and bitter electoral battle in Maharashtra. Winning assembly elections is crucial for both. MVA successfully clinched 30 of 48 seats in the Lok Sabha polls. Mahayuti has rejigged its strategy by keeping the broader OBC voter base and simultaneously playing the Hindutva card. This is the first assembly election after BJP engineered splits in the Shiv Sena and the NCP. It will decide the future of Eknath Shinde and Ajit Pawar, and will have an impact on BJP's national political strategy.

Atul Thakre Nagpur

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Not about ideology' (IE, October 26). In India, elections are not fought on ideological issues; the main issue is the performance of the incumbent government. The MVA has almost succeeded in working out a mutually acceptable formula. In the Mahayuti alliance, the BJP had to sacrifice chief ministership in favour of the Eknath-Shinde-led Shiv Sena faction to keep its flock together. This election is crucial for both and will have national ramifications. The ruling alliance faces anti-incumbency coupled with unemployment and corruption. It is to be seen if the MVA can capitalise on those factors to translate into a change of guard.

SS Paul, Nadia

### FOR BETTER AIR

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A nudge towards clean air' (IE, October 26). Agricultural universities should have researched uses for stubble so as to avoid burning by farmers. Diversification of crops will also help save groundwater. Other factors like fuel guzzling SUVs, industrial plants releasing untreated water, waste burning and construction need to be checked. On Diwali, people should be encouraged to not use firecrackers to keep the AQI in check. Such efforts may bring down pollution levels substantially.

Subhash Vaid, New Delhi

### INDIA AT BRICS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'All the BRICS is a stage' (IE, October 26). The recent summit underscores the diplomatic gravitas of BRICS as a platform for symbolic and substantive engagement. President Vladimir Putin's recent clarification that BRICS is "non-West" rather than "anti-West" aligns with India's stance, framing BRICS as a means for multipolar engagement. The expansion of BRICS could amplify its role as a global stabiliser, offering smaller states room for manoeuvre in an increasingly polarised world. For India, however, the challenge lies in sustaining its independent foreign policy, thus requiring it to continue walking a diplomatic tightrope.

Ritwik Basak, Kolkata

## The villain origin stories

From 'The Apprentice' to 'Joker: Folie à Deux', the dark beckons



POOJA PILLAI

ORIGIN STORIES MATTER. Just ask Donald Trump, running for President of the United States for the third time in a row and hoping to be successful for the second time. For weeks now, he has been obsessed with a particular autobiographical nugget shared by his rival, Kamala Harris. The Democratic nominee claims that in her youth, she once briefly worked a minimum-wage job at a McDonald's. For Trump, the billionaire son of a wealthy real estate developer, her backstory makes for a very unflattering contrast with his own, especially as he tries to woo voters whose top concern is about making ends meet in a difficult economy. So what is Trump's strategy? Strenuously push the unfounded claim that Harris is lying, while manning the fries station at a McDonald's franchise and dodging questions about whether or not he would raise the minimum wage as President.

Clues to why Trump has chosen to respond in this fashion may be found in a controversial new biopic, *The Apprentice*, directed by Iranian-American filmmaker Ali Abbas. Set in New York of the 1980s, it depicts the relationship that the ambitious young businessman formed with lawyer and political power broker Roy Cohn, and how it shaped him and his world view. "Rule no. 1: Attack, attack, at-

tack," Cohn tells Trump at one point. At another: "You create your own reality". After the film premiered at the Cannes Film Festival earlier this year, it was described by film critic Tim Grierson as Trump's "supervillain origin story" — a phrase that has since been echoed in almost all coverage about the film.

*The Apprentice* is not the only "villain origin" story of the year, though. Hitting theatres in November is the film adaptation of the Broadway show *Wicked* (based on the novel of the same name by Gregory Maguire, which, in turn, is a revisionist take on Frank L. Baum's *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*). It tells the backstory of the so-called "Wicked Witch of the West", the primary antagonist of the 1900 novel, of when she was a green-skinned and idealistic young girl named Elphaba whose great power is taken advantage of by the Wizard and Madame Morrible, the power broker of Oz. Then there's *Joker: Folie à Deux*, the second, and final, instalment of another "origin story", 2019's *Joker*, about one of the chief villains of the Batman universe, which released earlier this month. Before that, in September, came *Monsters: The Lyle and Erik Menendez Story* about the real-life case of two brothers who brutally killed their parents in their Beverly Hills mansion in 1989 (the Netflix

show, in fact, does double duty as an example of another entertainment trend: The "prestige" true crime drama with a stellar cast and top-of-the-line production values — nothing, at least in terms of treatment, like the grimy TV retellings of the late 1990s and early 2000s). What does it say about us as creators and consumers that we are so invested in figuring out exactly what made the bad guys, well, bad? It hardly matters that under this broad umbrella of the "villain origin story" are both fiction and non-fiction. Some, arguably, are not even about villains, as much as they are about anti-heroes, like *Wicked*, or victims in their own way, like the Menendez brothers.

Are these supposed to be cautionary tales? Certainly, it can be wildly entertaining, when one has lived a straight-and-narrow kind of life, to be allowed the licence to be bad, even if only through the experience of a story. This holds true both for the storyteller and their audience. But perhaps there are lessons to learn too. One might say of *The Apprentice*, for example, that it teaches us to beware the student who learns too well from his teacher the dark arts of manipulation.

Yet, the morality handbook argument is the least compelling one in favour of such stories, which do so much more than teach us

how to live. They are reminders that our world can, in fact, be an awful place — full of corruption, decay and betrayal — and that we are all, in the right (or wrong?) circumstances, capable of terrible actions (only the degree of susceptibility varies).

A popular criticism of *The Apprentice* is that it casts Trump in a sympathetic light. Could it be, however, that it casts the viewers in an unsympathetic light, forcing them to ask how they would themselves behave in exactly that time, place and position and on precisely the same quest that Trump was on in '80s New York? To interrogate oneself in this way, especially if the truth that emerges is something that one would rather not confront, can be a deeply uncomfortable thing. Another discomfiting question: Is it possible to understand Trump and his story, without necessarily excusing his past and present behaviour, especially if a film has managed to place you, the viewer, inside his head? It's disturbing territory to be in, but exploring it might yield some unexpected rewards, including a deeper understanding of one's own psyche — that's the promise of a good story about a bad man.

pooja.pillai@expressindia.com

# 12 EXPRESS NETWORK

**BRIEFLY**

**GUJARAT**  
**Farmer dies by suicide, crop failure blamed**

**Ahmedabad:** Facing financial distress, a farmer died by suicide in Rajkot district Saturday, police said. The deceased has been identified as Jeshingbhai Makwana, 45, a resident of Sardhar village, about 30 km from Rajkot city. The Aji Dam police station has registered a case of accidental death in the matter. The family of the deceased claimed that Makwana was upset for the past few days due to crop failure, adding his condition started deteriorating after he consumed a poisonous substance. He was taken to a private hospital from where he was referred to the Rajkot Civil Hospital where he was declared 'brought dead'. **ENS**

**BIHAR**  
**Man, son held for opening fire on police**

**Nalanda:** A man and his son fired at police personnel in Bihar's Nalanda district on Sunday, an official said. However, none were injured in the firing and the father and son were arrested by police, the official said. The accused have been identified as Birbal Shaw and his son Shiv Shankar Kumar. According to police, "The incident took place at around 11 am in the Rahui area when Birbal Shaw and Shiv Shankar Kumar had a fight with their neighbours - Santosh Kumar and his mother Sushila Devi - over some trivial issue. Police got a call that the father-son duo were beating Santosh Kumar and his mother." **PTI**

**JAMMU & KASHMIR**  
**Militant's associate held in Kupwara**

**Srinagar:** Security forces Sunday arrested a militant associate from Kupwara district of Jammu and Kashmir and recovered arms and ammunition from his possession. Acting on a specific information, police along with the Army and CRPF, apprehended a militant associate at Unisoo during mobile checking of the vehicles, a police said. He said the arrested person was identified as Ishfaq Majeed Dar, a resident of Latti Shart in the Sopore area. During search, incriminating materials, arms and ammunition, the spokesperson said. **PTI**

## 'We call on India to leverage its influence to urge Israel to respect international law'

AS ISRAELI army continues its operations against Hezbollah targets in Lebanon, also conducting strikes in Iran on Saturday, in an exclusive interview, Lebanese Ambassador to India **RABIE NARSH** spoke to **DIVYA A** about how peace remains out of reach in the region, Israel's opposition to the two-state solution propagated by the world, including by India, and how India, as a global leader, can play a decisive role in advocating for an end to the conflict. Edited excerpts:

**It's been over a year since the Israel-Hamas conflict started, and now it is expanding. What is your evaluation of the situation?**

The current situation reflects a prolonged tragedy for the region, stemming from Israel's decades-long occupation and relentless aggression. Israel's disregard for international law, its continued expansionism and its savage oppression of Palestinians have created a cycle of violence that destabilises the region. Lebanon, which now suffers directly from Israeli attacks, understands the price of this unchecked aggression. The refusal to address the root causes — the occupation, the violation of Palestinian rights and the endless expansion — ensures that genuine peace re-

mains out of reach. Lebanon stands resolute in calling out Israel's transgressions and emphasises that peace cannot co-exist with occupation and oppression.

**Do you think there is a solution? What is Beirut's stand on the two-state solution that New Delhi is also advocating?**

Lebanon has long supported the two-state solution as a viable and just path to peace, despite Israel's constant rejection of this vision. Israel remains the only nation globally to categorically deny the two-state solution, defying the international consensus and challenging UN resolutions. Lebanon affirms that without addressing the rights of Palestinians to self-determination and statehood, Israel's ongoing policies of land theft and displacement will continue to breed unrest and injustice. Beirut appreciates India's steadfast commitment to this solution and urges the international community to hold Israel accountable for rejecting the legitimate path to peace.

**What do you think of the role India has played so far, or can play going forward?**

India's rich legacy of anti-colonial struggle and its commit-



**THE EXPRESS INTERVIEW**  
WITH **RABIE NARSH**  
LEBANESE AMBASSADOR TO INDIA

**How are the ties between India and Lebanon progressing in other fields? What are the areas of mutual cooperation?**

India and Lebanon share a longstanding relationship rooted in mutual respect and shared interests. Despite the challenges Lebanon faces due to Israel's aggression, our bilateral ties with India continue to flourish in areas several key areas including trade, technology and education. Cultural exchanges between our nations further strengthen our partnership.

**Have the leaders in New Delhi and Beirut discussed the West Asian conflict in the last one year?**

Lebanon and India remain in close dialogue, particularly given Israel's aggressive actions that threaten regional peace. Our leadership values India's understanding of the complexities at play and appreciates India's balanced approach to addressing the root causes of conflict, notably Israel's occupation. Lebanon remains committed to deepening this dialogue with India to work towards a shared goal: a peaceful and stable West Asia free from aggression and expansionism.

**What about the hostages? Has Lebanon discussed it with anyone in Gaza/Hamas?**

Thousands of Palestinians have been held hostage in Israeli horrific prisons, detention camps and torture centres. We urge international actors to negotiate responsibly for the release of the prisoners, and call for the world's recognition of the Israeli hypocrisy in calling for hostage release while disregarding basic human rights in its occupation and aggression.

**advocating for a ceasefire. Blinken is visiting Tel Aviv for talks. Do you think it will achieve anything?**

A ceasefire, while urgently needed, is only a temporary measure unless Israel's occupation and violations are directly addressed. Ceasefires are not solutions but pauses that Israel historically exploits to regroup and continue its expansionist policies. Lebanon urges the United States and other influential countries to not only support an immediate ceasefire but also to pressure Israel to comply with international law and respect the rights of all people in the region. We hope these talks signal a shift toward holding Israel accountable for its actions and not merely enabling further aggression under the guise of peace.

**The West, even the US, is now**

## Accused of raping help, ex-MD of several Kerala PSUs on the run, applies for anticipatory bail

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCTOBER 27

A 75-YEAR-OLD Kerala man accused of raping his domestic help, a 23-year-old tribal woman from Odisha, remained absconding even as he has moved an anticipatory bail petition which will come up for hearing on Tuesday.

Police have booked K Sivaprasad, who had served as the managing director of the State Farming Corporation of Kerala, Horticultural Products Development Corporation, Kerala State Film Development Corporation and Plantation Corporation of Kerala Ltd, for allegedly raping his house help after serving her spiked juice.

The alleged incident happened in his house in Kochi on October 15 when other members of Sivaprasad's family were away. The FIR was registered on October 17.

According to police, the 23-year-old woman joined as a domestic help at Sivaprasad's villa under the Maradu police limits early this month. According to the complaint of the woman, Sivaprasad allegedly spiked her

juice and outraged her modesty. She said in the complaint that she fell unconscious after taking the juice. The police registered a case on charges of outraging the modesty of woman, but after medical examination of the survivor, charges of rape were included in the FIR.

Police sources said a day after the alleged incident, Sivaprasad had left for Guruvayur temple along with family. On October 16, the woman, who was alone at the house, narrated the trauma to her relative, who is working as a housemaid at another house in the city.

Benoy Peter, who runs an NGO, Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development, was alerted by the owner of the house, where the survivor's relative worked.

"The survivor had reached the house early this month. She was not familiar with the location of the house. She sent the outdoor images of the house to her relative. After going through the images, we could identify the location and then we took up the matter with the Maradu police," Peter said.

Police reached the house and sent her to medical examination.



**RJD chief Lalu Prasad with Leader of Opposition in Bihar Assembly Tejashwi Yadav, former MP Mohammad Shahabuddin's wife Hina Shahab and son Osama Shahab in Patna, Sunday. PTI**

## After 3 yrs, Shahabuddin's wife returns to RJD with son Osama

**SANTOSH SINGH**  
PATNA, OCTOBER 27

HENA SHAHAB, widow of former Siwan MP and strongman Mohammed Shahabuddin, on Sunday returned to the RJD after three years.

Her son Osama Shahab also joined the party. Welcoming the mother and son to the party, RJD national president Lalu Prasad said late Shahabuddin was a "founder member of the RJD and his family had always been a part of it". Hena walked out of the RJD after the death of her husband in 2021. She contested the 2024 Lok Sabha elections as an Independent candidate from Siwan and finished as the first runner-up ahead of RJD candidate Awadh Bihari Choudhary.

Her candidature divided votes, making it easier for JD(U)'s Vijay Lakshmi Kushwaha to win the seat by a margin of over 90,000 votes.

Hena has lost from Siwan four times since the 2009 Lok Sabha polls. Before her, Shahabuddin had represented the seat four times till 2004 Lok Sabha polls.

"They (Hena and Osama) would help us fight strongly against communal forces... BJP and RSS... Late Shahabuddin was a founder member of RJD formed in 1997. Now that his family is back with us, it would further strengthen the party," Lalu told mediapersons at his 10, Circular Road residence in Patna.

Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Prasad Yadav also welcomed Hena and Osama to the

RJD and said their presence would immensely benefit the party.

Hena, sources said, is now looking forward to the 2025 Assembly polls in which her son is most likely to contest. An RJD leader said, "With BJP leader Giriraj Singh raising pitch of Hindu consolidation with his recent Hindu Swabhiman yatra, and new political entrant Jan Surajj of Prashant Kishor looking to split Muslim votes, the RJD has to look for consolidation of Muslim votes. Hena Shahab may not be able to regain her husband's political turf, but she is still a force to reckon with." The leader said Hena would influence Muslim votes in neighbouring districts of Gopalganj and Siwan in the 2025 Assembly polls.

## SHO, others booked for murder after trader's custodial death in Lucknow

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 27

AN FIR was registered on Sunday against a station house officer (SHO), unidentified police personnel and two residents on charges of murder and criminal conspiracy after a 32-year-old trader arrested over alleged breach of peace died in police custody in Lucknow on Saturday, officials said.

Mohit Pandey, the trader, was taken to the Chinhat police station on Friday evening after a dispute with his neighbour Adesh Kumar over a minor issue, the officials said. SHO Ashwani Kumar Chaturvedi, the incharge of Chinhat police station, was removed from his post, the Lucknow police said in a press statement.

Pandey's family has alleged that the police brutally beat him up at the police of Adesh, a driver, and his uncle, a local political leader. Pandey, who manufactured and supplied school uniforms, is survived by his mother, wife and three children.

The FIR was registered against Ashwani Kumar Chaturvedi, Adesh Kumar, his uncle (not named) besides unidentified police personnel on the complaint of Pandey's mother Tageshwari Devi. No arrests have been made yet and the investigation was going on, the police said.

After Pandey's death, locals staged a protest, demanding action against the police and others allegedly involved.

According to the police, the complainant alleged that on Friday evening the police took her son to the Chinhat police station after he had a minor dispute with Adesh. Later, when Pandey's elder brother Shobha Ram went to the

station to enquire about him, he was also detained allegedly on charges of being intoxicated.

Devi claimed that no action was then taken against Adesh due to the influence of his uncle. The two brothers were kept in separate rooms, it was alleged.

The police brutally assaulted Pandey, resulting in his death, she alleged, adding that they took him to hospital to cover up torture in custody.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (ADCP Lucknow) Pankaj Kumar Singh said after Pandey's condition worsened at the Chinhat police station he was taken to a community health centre, which referred him to the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital, where he was declared dead. The family was subsequently informed of his death, he said.

Following the incident, a large crowd gathered in Gomti Nagar, with Pandey's family demanding action against the police personnel responsible for his death. The protesters also demanded compensation and a government job for one of his family members.

They briefly blocked the road, causing traffic disruption, before senior police officials assured them that their demands would be raised with the authorities concerned. They also alleged that police officials did not allow them to see the body before sending it for post-mortem examination, and that the victim was denied water in the lock-up despite his requests.

Meanwhile, a video also surfaced on social media showing Shobha Ram trying to 'revive' his brother in the lock-up.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Radha Raman Singh said the investigation is on and that action will be taken on the basis of their probe findings.

## At least 50 flights receive hoax bomb threats, 2 diverted

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
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 after thorough inspections, 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.

Union Civil Aviation Minister K Rammoohan Naidu on Sunday said the Centre is mulling steps to ban perpetrators, who resort to hoax bomb threats, from flying.

The minister also said besides taking support from interna-

### HOTELS IN LUCKNOW GET BOMB THREATS

**Lucknow:** At least 10 major hotels in Lucknow received bomb threats via email on Sunday. The Bomb Detection and Disposal Squad (BDDS) did not find anything suspicious, officials said. "The issue has been taken up with the cyber crime unit. BDDS unit checking was done in three hotels, nothing suspicious was found." A senior official of the UP government said. **PTI**

tional agencies, law enforcement wings and the Intelligence Bureau to prevent these fake threats, the union government is also mulling to amend two Civil Aviation Laws.

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.

## Haryana vs Rajasthan: Officials on challan spree after ₹50 ticket row

**HAMZA KHAN**  
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 27

DAYS AFTER a video of a Haryana female cop refusing to buy a ticket in a Rajasthan Roadways bus went viral, the situation has escalated into an usual ego clash between officials of the two states, with traffic police of both the states issuing challans to dozens of roadways buses from the other state.

The issue began with the purported video of a female Haryana cop inside a Rajasthan roadways bus. In the viral video, the female cop, with her face covered with a dupatta, is headed to Dharuhera in Haryana which is on the Rajasthan-Haryana border, but refuses to buy the ₹50 ticket. The bus conductor asks her to get down but she responds with a firm no. She says she is "staff", insisting the ₹50 ticket is not applicable to her. With the bus stopped and other annoyed passengers asking her to pay, she says "it works in Haryana (roadways)", before someone points out "it is a Rajasthan roadways bus". As the video went viral,



**Haryana traffic police challans a Rajasthan Transport bus. Express**

Haryana traffic police personnel started stopping and issuing challan to several Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC) buses over two days, also clicking photos with the buses they had challaned.

"They are mostly issuing challans to non-AC buses," an RSRTC conductor told *The Indian Express*. Manoj Kumar Bansal, general manager (traffic), with the RSRTC said that about 40 RSRTC buses have been issued challans by Haryana traffic police for lane

change, driver not wearing uniform, not wearing a seatbelt, etc. Another senior RSRTC official said, "They issued challans to 39 RSRTC buses over two days and Rajasthan did it only for two hours today (Sunday)."

The official also claimed that Rajasthan traffic police have seized eight Haryana Roadways buses on Sunday and issued challans to over 100 of them. However, other sources put the number of Rajasthan buses which were issued a challan at 90 and that of Haryana buses which were issued a challan at 26.

"Their action (of issuing challans to RSRTC buses) was reciprocal after the video went viral. We kept requesting them to not file challans but it seems that the Haryana police associated the video with their pride. And issuing challans to 39 of our buses cannot be done without the instructions of higher ups," the official alleged.

RSRTC chairperson Shubhra Singh called it "a little unfortunate and unkindly for". "We have kept our restraint and we are seeking an amicable resolution," she said.

## To improve gene pool, Odisha's Similipal reserve brings tigress from Maharashtra

**SUJIT BISOIY**  
BHUBANESWAR, OCTOBER 27

AFTER A nearly 36-hour journey covering over 1,000 km, a tigress from the Tadoba-Andhari Tiger Reserve in Maharashtra on Sunday reached its new home — the Similipal Tiger Reserve (STR) in Odisha.

The translocation project is part of Odisha government's efforts to improve the gene pool of tigers inside the reserve, which is spread across 2,750 square km in Mayurbhanj district and is the country's only wild habitat for melanistic royal Bengal tigers. Genetic analyses of other tiger

populations in India and computer simulations suggest that the black tigers of Similipal may have come from a very small founding population and are inbred.

The Odisha Tiger Estimation conducted this year found that out of the total 24 adult tigers in Similipal, 13 are pseudo-melanistic. Also, 10 of the 24 are males and 14 are females.

In March, the state government had sought the approval of the National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) to introduce Similipal's black tigers to female tigers from locations in central India that match the landscape and climate of Similipal. NTCA officials then visited Similipal, after

which the body gave its nod to the translocation project, sources said.

Hence, the state government decided to introduce tigers from geographically proximate, but high-heterozygosity (more genetic diversity) population areas.

"The 2.5-year-old tigress was captured at around 9 am on Saturday and brought in a special vehicle from Maharashtra. It will be released to a soft-enclosure of around two hectares in the core areas of Similipal tonight and will be kept on observation for around seven days," Odisha Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife), Susanta Nanda, told *The Indian Express* on Sunday.

One more tigress from a tiger

reserve in Maharashtra will be brought to STR soon as part of the project, officials said.

In 2018, the Odisha government had made a tiger translocation attempt with the aim of bringing the big cats back to the Satkosia Tiger Reserve, which no longer has tigers. Accordingly, one male tiger, Mahavir, from Kanha and one female, Sundari, from Bandhavgarh in Madhya Pradesh had been translocated to Satkosia. While the male tiger died after falling into a trap laid by poachers, the female was sent back to its original habitat after it allegedly killed two persons during its 30-month stay in Odisha.

## Indian man dies trying to cross English Channel

**Paris:** An Indian man about 40 years old died on Sunday morning in northern France after the inflated boat he and other migrants had boarded to cross the English Channel deflated, French authorities said in a statement. The man's death Sunday pushed this year's tally so far to 56.

The boat, which "appeared to be in very poor condition," deflated immediately after departure, the statement said. "Migrants... returned to the beach swimming but not everyone was equipped with a life jacket." The man had a cardiac arrest. Police gave him a cardiac massage, but could not resuscitate him. An inquiry has been opened. **PTI**

# 13 ECONOMY

THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2024

MARKET WATCH

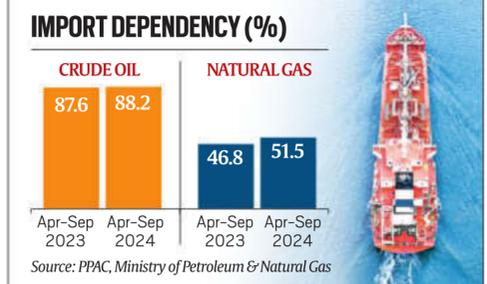
## MCAP OF 9 OF TOP-10 VALUED COS DROPS

Nine of the top-10 most valued firms together lost a whopping Rs 2,09,952.26 crore from market valuation last week, in line with weak trends in equities, with Hindustan Unilever and Reliance Industries Limited taking the biggest hit.

## OIL IMPORT DEPENDENCY IN H1 WAS 88.2%, UP FROM 87.6% IN YEAR-AGO PERIOD

# India's reliance on imported oil, natural gas grows on stagnant domestic production

SUKALP SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27



**EXPLAINED**  
**E**nergy demand rising rapidly

INDIA'S ENERGY demand has been rising rapidly, leading to higher oil and gas imports. Reliance on imported oil has been growing continuously over the past few years, except in FY21, when demand was suppressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The country's oil import dependency stood at 87.8 per cent in FY24 and 87.4 per cent in FY23.

INDIA'S RELIANCE on imported crude oil and natural gas grew further in the first half of the current financial year as the delta between consumption growth and the more or less stagnant domestic production continued to widen.

The country's oil import dependency in April-September (H1) was 88.2 per cent, up from 87.6 per cent in the year-ago period and 87.8 per cent for the full financial year 2023-24 (FY24), per latest data from the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning & Analysis Cell (PPAC). Import dependency in the case of natural gas was 51.5 per cent in the first six months of FY25, up from 46.8 per cent a year ago and 47.1 per cent for the full FY24.

India's energy demand has been rising rapidly, leading to higher oil and gas imports. Reliance on imported oil has been growing continuously over the past few years, except in FY21, when demand was suppressed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The country's oil import dependency stood at

87.8 per cent in FY24, 87.4 per cent in FY23, 85.5 per cent in FY22, 84.4 per cent in FY21, 85 per cent in FY20, and 83.8 per cent in FY19.

Heavy dependence on imported crude oil makes the Indian economy vulnerable to global oil price volatility, apart from having a bearing on the country's trade deficit, foreign exchange reserves, rupee's exchange rate, and inflation. The government wants to reduce India's reliance on imported crude oil but sluggish domestic oil output in the face of incessantly growing demand for petroleum products has been the biggest roadblock.

In the case of natural gas,

the government wants to increase its consumption and share in the country's primary energy mix to 15 per cent by 2030 from over 6 per cent currently.

The rationale behind the push for natural gas, even though it would lead to higher gas imports, is rather simple. Natural gas is far less polluting than conventional hydrocarbons like crude oil and coal, and is usually cheaper than oil. It is also seen as a key transition fuel. To be sure though, the government has also been pushing India's oil and gas companies to increase domestic production of natural gas in a bid to keep import dependency levels un-

der check.

India's crude oil imports rose to 120.5 million tonnes in H1 from 115.9 million in the year-ago period, while domestic production declined slightly to 14.4 million tonnes, per PPAC data. The country's gross oil import bill in the first six months of FY25 rose nearly 12 per cent year-on-year to \$71.3 billion. Natural gas imports rose 23 per cent year-on-year to 18.98 billion cubic metres in H1, and

cost \$7.7 billion against \$6.5 billion a year ago.

In early 2015, the government had set a target to reduce reliance on oil imports to 67 per cent by 2022 from 77 per cent in 2013-14, but the dependency has only grown since.

Cutting costly oil imports continues to be a key focus area for the government, which has taken a number of policy measures to incentivise investments in India's oil and gas exploration and production sector.

Reducing oil imports is also one of the fundamental objectives of the government's push for electric mobility, biofuels, and other alternative fuels for transportation as well as industries. While there has been a pick-up in electric mobility adoption and blending of bio-fuels with conventional fuels, it is not enough to offset petroleum demand growth.

Total domestic consumption of petroleum products in April-September was 117.7 million tonnes, of which just 13.8 million tonnes came from domestically produced crude oil, resulting in a self-sufficiency level of 11.8 per cent, per PPAC data.

## G20 INDEPENDENT EXPERT GROUP REPORT CARD ON STRENGTHENING MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS

# 'MDBs push for lending expansion but fall short of tripling targets'

RAVI DUTTA MISHRA & ANANCHAL MAGAZINE  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27



MULTILATERAL DEVELOPMENT BANKS (MDBs) have put in place measures to expand lending by making better use of their balance sheet and attracting additional capital through innovative channels, but the volumes involved — about 30 per cent of current lending volume — fall short of the tripling they need, given their enlarged mandate, the report card of the G20 Expert Group on Strengthening MDBs said.

The 'G20 Independent Expert Group Report Card on Strengthening MDBs: An Incomplete Grade' has come after a year of the setting up of the expert group on MDBs under the G20 Indian Presidency that had Fifteenth Finance Commission Chairman NK Singh and former US Treasury secretary Lawrence Summers as co-convenors. The report card said that though every MDB has embarked on reforms, the pace and ambition of implementation falls well short of what was required to deliver on the vision set out by the group.

"Progress has been positive, with a 33 per cent increase in lending capacity and better utilisation of guarantees, the unification of the guarantee platform, and improved use of the balance sheet as per the recommendations of the capital adequacy framework report, optimising the balance sheet. This progress must be seen in the context of our goal to triple capacity. In absolute terms, there has been positive movement. However, relative to the expectations set out in what we refer to as the 'triple agenda'—aiming for 'better, bigger, bolder' goals—there remains significant work to be done," NK Singh told *The Indian Express*.

The expert group had outlined a triple mandate for the MDBs for eliminating extreme poverty, inclusive growth and the financing of global public goods involving tripling of the level of financing commitments, and establishing a 'Global Challenges Funding' mechanism for 'Global Public Goods'. The expert group had stressed on the need for MDBs to mobilise more private capital, greater engagement with private sector, stating that private financing worth \$740 billion per year would be required to reach overall goals for additional cli-

mate and sustainable development goals (SDGs)-related finance, an increase of \$500 billion over the 2019 level of sovereign borrowing and private participation in infrastructure.

Each MDB has moved ahead on private sector mobilisation but the numbers and prospects remain a fraction of the \$500 billion per year of private finance that was set out in the 'Triple Agenda', the report card said. "More priority is being given to reforms to improve the enabling environment for private investment, especially in the context of country platforms. Guarantees, equity and first-loss instruments to de-risk private capital are being expanded in non-sovereign MDB operations. Local currency lending, however, remains underdeveloped, with only a few examples," it said.

On the group's recommendation of a tripling of concessional finance channeled through MDBs to the poorest countries, the report card said

there are few signs of any meaningful rise. Expanding mandates with insufficient financial resources will not work effectively, the report card said.

"Progress has been far less than expected, particularly in two areas: harnessing private sector capital and increasing private sector involvement. Regarding credible conversations with rating agencies, bringing them together with the private sector, and shifting the multilateral development banks (MDBs) towards a culture that attracts private sector involvement by reducing the perceived risks for private capital through changes to processes and procedures—progress has been slow. This is what we refer to as an 'incomplete grade,'" Singh said.

Changing MDB relationships with the private sector has proven to be "hard and difficult", the report card said. While noting the improvements on the expanded use of guarantees, the report card pointed out that the aggregate volume of private capital mobilisation—about \$70 billion in the last year—demonstrates an incremental approach, not a radical transformation of business models of the MDBs.

The expert group had recommended that the MDBs operate more in sync with developmental priorities of individual nations and co-create multi-year programmes along with pointing out the need for bringing private sector engagement to the centre of MDB operations, and significantly raising MDB financing.

MDBs have introduced innovations to attract hybrid (non-voting) capital, and some member states have expressed a willingness to participate but uptake has been slow, the report card said. MDBs have also increased their climate-related financing. In a joint statement by 10 MDBs in September, they reported \$75 billion in climate-related financing commitments in 2023, up from \$42 billion in 2019. Of the \$75 billion, \$50 billion was for mitigation and \$25 billion was for adaptation activities.

However, there is limited joint financing among MDBs and differences remain between institutions on how to address sustainability and value-for-money approaches. The MDB heads are looking to harmonise procurement and tendering practices through mutual reliance agreements and a digital co-financing portal for large projects has been set up to facilitate coordination, it said.

## BRIEFLY

### Turkey's polyester steps: India seeks compensation

New Delhi: India has sought compensation from Turkey as Ankara's decision to extend safeguard measures on polyester staple fibres has impacted the product's exports, an official said. India flagged concerns and impact from these measures during a recent bilateral consultations with Turkey under the WTO's safeguard agreement. On October 14, India sought consultations with Turkey under the agreement following Ankara's decision to extend safeguard measures on polyester staple fibres. "We have sought compensation as we have a loss of trade. India has the option to propose retaliatory customs duties equivalent to the value of export loss if the issue will not be resolved through consultations," the official said. India has exported these fibres worth \$22.18 million during 2023-24. It was \$23.55 million in 2022-23. PTI

### Hindustan Zinc to invest up to \$2 bn: CEO

New Delhi: Vedanta Group firm Hindustan Zinc plans to pump in up to \$2 billion (around Rs 17,000 crore) to double its production capacity to 2 million tonnes in the next few years, its CEO Arun Misra said. The company which had already engaged consultants to ramp up its capacity is looking for mining partners for the same, Misra said. "We have a plan of doubling the production to 2 million tonnes... So, I am sure by the end of this quarter, we should be able to make project announcements, which projects, how much and where it is happening," he explained. PTI

### Appliance makers expect 30% festive sales growth

New Delhi: The appliance & consumer electronics industry expects around 30 per cent growth in the festive season sales this year after a double-digit booster from online sale events of Flipkart and Amazon and an expected final thrust from offline channels during Dhanteras week. Companies such as LG Electronics, Panasonic, Sony, Godrej Appliances and Haier started festive sales with a good kick start from the Onam festival and expect to continue the momentum till the remaining week of the nearly 45-day festive period, which concludes after Diwali. PTI

## MARKETS IN SAMVAT 2081

# Expect modest returns: Experts

VIVEK KUMARM & JOYDEEP GHOSH  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

CONCERNS RANGING from the risks to earnings growth, weak consumption, global conflicts and foreign funds moving money to China, have left money managers and market mavens cautious. Returns in Samvat 2081, they believe, will be modest.

Andrew Holland, CEO of Aventus Capital Alternate Strategy for instance, has tempered his expectations. Returns from the benchmark indices, Holland estimates, will be about 10 per cent in Samvat 2081, less than half of that in Samvat 2080. "Earnings have to start catching up with valuations now. You've seen that in this results season. If you miss, the fall in prices is very hard," Holland said.

Shankar Sharma, founder, GQuant Investech, believes the rally, which is in its fifth year, is likely to take a reasonable breather. "While we are going to see some degree of an upward trend, it is unlikely to be a repeat of the preceding four years," he said. Sharma pointed out that typically bull markets usually end in the



fifth or sixth year, or at least, take a reasonable breather. "We are in the fifth year of a bull market, so simply statistically, a cooling off period is due, and we may well be starting that now," he said.

Investor sentiment during Samvat 2080, which ends this week, was bullish for the most part. However, the markets have lost momentum over the past month. Since September 27, the Sensex has lost 7.5 per cent with more than Rs 40 lakh crore of investor wealth wiped out.

Nilesh Shah, managing director at Kotak Mahindra AMC opined that while India's long-term growth story is intact, green shoots on consumption as well as private investment don't seem to be sustaining. "We expect returns

across debt, equity, and gold to converge to a narrow range. Investors will have to moderate return expectations significantly," Shah said. Shankaran Naren, ED and CIO, ICICI Prudential, advocates a cautious approach: "Although India's macros look robust, current market valuations are elevated, driven by overly optimistic domestic sentiment, which calls for a cautious investment approach." Shah's mantra for 2081 will be "quality over momentum, reasonable valuations over expensive valuations, and moderate return expectations with a focus on asset allocation."

Experts believe that the free-for-all market approach has to be substituted with moderation and quality control. ICICI Pru's Naren recommends investors stay disciplined and follow asset allocation strategies, particularly through hybrid and multi-asset allocation schemes. "These vehicles offer dynamic exposure across asset classes such as equities, debt, commodities, and cash, helping investors mitigate risks associated with overvalued markets and seize opportunities during market corrections," he added.

Ever since the March 2020 sell-off, equities have been on a steady bull run. Despite the recent fall, the Nifty and Sensex are currently up over 22 per cent and 24 per cent, respectively, for Samvat 2080. The broader markets did even better giving investors returns of more than 40 per cent.

Sharma draws an analogy from cricket. "When Lala Amarnath was asked to predict the outcome of an India-Pakistan cricket test game, he said, "Either India wins, or Pakistan wins, or it's a draw. Stock market predictions should be made in exactly the same way." But he signs off on an optimistic note: "But fear not: India is the OG for finding pieces of carbon that turn to diamonds in a few years, and a drawn game is the best time to unearth those stars." FE

## FPIs withdraw ₹85,790 cr from Indian equities in October so far on better Chinese valuations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

FOREIGN INVESTORS have continued selling in the Indian market, pulling out a massive Rs 85,790 crore (around \$10.2 billion) from equities this month due to Chinese stimulus measures, attractive stock valuations, and the elevated pricing of domestic equities. October is turning into the worst-ever month in terms of foreign fund outflows. In March 2020, FPIs withdrew Rs 61,973 crore from equities.

## FPIs INVESTED ₹57,724 CR IN SEPTEMBER

**OCTOBER IS** turning into the worst-ever month in terms of foreign fund outflows. In March 2020, FPIs withdrew Rs 61,973 crore from equities. **THE LATEST** outflow came after a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore in September 2024. **SINCE JUNE**, FPIs have consistently bought equities after withdrawing Rs 34,252 cr in April-May.

The latest outflow came after a nine-month high investment of Rs 57,724 crore in September 2024. Since June, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have consistently bought equities after withdrawing Rs 34,252 crore in April-May. Overall, FPIs have been net buyers in 2024, except for January, April, and May, data with the depositories showed.

## IN SECOND QUARTER

# Urban demand woes disrupt FMCG growth runway

VIVEAT SUSAN PINTO  
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 27

AFTER MONTHS of holding the fort within the fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) market, urban demand is slowing. CEOs of top consumer goods companies have said in their Q2 commentary. But while the urban slowdown is a concern, this is limited mainly to the lower half of the urban market, that is, popular and mass segments versus the premium end, which is growing, CEOs of top consumer goods companies have said in their Q2 commentary

## CEOs OF CONSUMER GOODS COMPANIES:

■ While the urban slowdown is a concern, this is limited mainly to the lower half of the urban market, that is, popular and mass segments versus the premium end, which is growing, CEOs of top consumer goods companies have said in their Q2 commentary

misation remains intact as premium products are doing better than popular and mass-market categories in urban areas. We have no plans to move away from our premiumisation strategy due to the broader urban slowdown," Rohit Jawa, CEO & MD, Hindustan Unilever (HUL) said in response to urban slowdown and the company's way forward.

Almost two-third of FMCG sales come from urban areas, with a third coming from rural markets, according to companies and market experts. Tata Consumer's MD & CEO Sunil D'Souza said that food in-

flationary concerns had limited the propensity of the urban middle class to make discretionary purchases.

"There is stress on urban demand, though rural demand is recovering. This has to do with food inflation, which, in turn, is putting pressure on out-of-home consumption in urban areas," D'Souza said. Nestle India's CMD Suresh Narayanan had pointed to a "shrinking middle class", which was curtailing expenditure versus premium consumers in urban areas, who continue to remain confident buyers. FE

## Muted revenue, rising costs dent India Inc profit

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

FROM HIGHER prices of commodities to rising expenses on employees, the increase in costs of a host of items has pressured operating margins of companies at a time when revenue growth has been muted.

For a group of 424 companies (excluding banks, financials and oil marketing companies) that have announced results for Q2FY25, revenues grew at a modest 6 per cent year-on-year (y-o-y). At the same time, the total expenditure went up by 7 per cent leading to a fall in operating margins of about 80 basis points (bps) y-o-y. Further, thanks to an 11 per cent rise in interest costs, net profits were up only 4 per cent y-o-y.

At Havells, employee costs increased by 26 per cent y-o-y due to an increase in manpower and salary hikes while spends on advertising shot up by 53 per cent y-o-y ahead of the festive season. The company also invested in new distribution and sales channels.

At Hindustan Unilever, the adjusted gross margins contracted 125 bps y-o-y due to volatility in prices of commodities — the prices of palm oil and tea rose 10 per cent and 25 per cent y-o-y.

## 424 select firms see revenues grow at just 6% in Q2FY25

At Indigo, the total expenses — aircraft fuel, rentals, repair and maintenance and airport charges — in the September quarter increased by 22 per cent y-o-y while the revenue from operations went up by 13.6 per cent. The airline posted a surprise consolidated loss of Rs 987 crore in Q2FY25, the first quarterly loss in two years.

At Colgate, the gross margins contracted 23 bps y-o-y and the operating margin by 206 bps y-o-y largely due to higher advertising and promotions, even as raw material prices were benign. The rise in advertising and promotions was close to 100 bps y-o-y. This dampened margins which contracted by 120 bps y-o-y.

A sharp escalation in prices of leaf tobacco hurt ITC's profitability which was partly offset by calibrated pricing action and an improved product mix. TVS Motor incurred higher-than-expected other expenses and staff costs which were partly responsible for the lower-than-expected operating profit growth of 20 per cent y-o-y. FE

## 'Swiggy cuts IPO valuation to \$11.3 bn'

New Delhi: Swiggy has slashed its IPO valuation again, to \$11.3 billion, 25 per cent below the initial goal of \$15 billion as market volatility and the lacklustre debut of Hyundai India weigh on sentiment, two sources said on Sunday.

BlackRock and Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB) will invest in the \$1.4 billion IPO, which will be the country's second-biggest stock offering this year, the sources told Reuters. Swiggy, BlackRock and CPPIB did not immediately respond to requests for comment outside business hours.

Hyundai India shares fell 7.2 per cent on their debut last week after retail investors gave a lukewarm reception amid concerns about a lofty valuation.

Swiggy, backed by SoftBank and Prosus, was concerned to avoid a tepid response to its relatively large IPO, coming amid global uncertainty from the November 5 US presidential election, and decided to cut the valuation in consultation with investors, said one source, with direct knowledge of the company's plans. Swiggy does not want a "bad IPO", this person said. Its last funding round, led by Invesco, valued it at \$10.7 billion in 2022. REUTERS

# 14 IDEA EXCHANGE NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

## ON EIGHT PER CENT GROWTH

Formalisation of the economy will drive productivity, our formal sector firms are catching up with their global peers and there is credit creation in the economy. Ours is a catch-up growth



## WHY K SUBRAMANIAN

Prof Krishnamurthy V Subramanian is Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Before this, he was the Chief Economic Advisor with the Government of India from 2018 to 2021. His ideas have been felt in policy, be it in economic surveys, which included ethical wealth

creation, post-COVID restructuring and recovery using public capital expenditure in infrastructure and healthcare. An alumnus of IIT Kanpur, IIM Calcutta and the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, his book, *India @100*, talks about how the nation can become a \$55 trillion economy by 2047.



## ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The plumbing we've done in 10 years will make a big difference, an example of which is our digital infrastructure. Even in the US, I can't just pay through Google Pay. The seller can show data and get credit from the bank

**Aanchal Magazine: You are projecting a \$55 trillion economy in less than 25 years. How realistic is that estimate, which is way ahead of projections made by EY and Goldman Sachs?**

Let me start with a couple of examples, just to anchor the idea. In 1970, the Japanese economy was \$220 billion. By 1995, in a 25-year period, it had grown 25.6 times, to be precise, to become a \$5.5 trillion economy. If you take China, its GDP grew 22 times between 1996 and 2021. So over a 25-year period, countries have actually grown so much. And that is because of the power of compounding.

The assessment that I'm making for the Indian economy is a multiplication of GDP (gross domestic product) about 15-odd times, which is certainly not as high as the 26 times that Japan grew, or the 22 times that China grew by.

A key macro-economic development happened in India in 2016, which was us implementing the inflation targeting regime. Before 2016, India's inflation was about 7.5 per cent. Since then, despite Covid, the war in Ukraine, supply chain problems and at a time when advanced economies have faced 2.5 to four times the historical average inflation, India has had an inflation of five per cent. That's the kind of difference which will translate into a lower rate of depreciation, one for one. This is the most important difference. The other estimates haven't taken this important development into account.

Now, five per cent inflation means that the Indian rupee's purchasing power is eroding faster than that of the US at two per cent, which is what led to the significantly higher depreciation. With a seven per cent plus inflation, the Indian rupee was losing value much more. The currency had to depreciate more in order to keep the purchasing power intact. So conceptually, it should be now very clear that higher the rate of inflation, higher will be the rate of depreciation. Conversely, lower the rate of inflation, lower will be the rate of depreciation. Without taking this very important macro-economic development into account, they have extrapolated that whatever rate of depreciation has been in the past will prevail. I've tested this across various 25-year periods. Fundamentals, eventually, do show up over long runs.

As I have said in the book, with an eight per cent rate of growth, the rate of depreciation is likely to be about half a per cent. I will round it off to one per cent because depreciation will reduce the value in dollar terms compared to the rupee. So eight per cent in real growth, five per cent inflation, that's 13 per cent in nominal terms. There is one per cent rate of depreciation, so 13 minus 1 is 12 per cent, right? Now, there is this 'Rule of 72', which is used to know how many years it takes to double your money. If you divide 72 by the rate of interest (12 per cent), you actually get the number of years (six) it takes to double the money.

From 2023 to 2047 is a 24-year period, 24 divided by six is four, so there will be four doublings, right? In 2023, India's GDP was \$3.28 trillion, I'm going to round it off to 3.25 so that we can do the math. The first doubling is 3.25 to 6.5, second doubling is 6.5 to 13, third 13 to 26, fourth 26 to 52 or close to \$55 trillion. This is the power of compounding. I'll end by saying that my main ask for the Indian economy is basically eight per cent growth in real terms. There's no stretch goal involved because five per cent inflation is conservative.

**Harish Damodaran: An eight per cent growth per year for 25 years is a huge ask. And along with it, your incomes will grow. We will need more food. Where will the land come from and who will grow India's food?**

This is the question upon which I reflected the most. First, when you look at growth at any level — individual, company or country — it is always a function of your investment rate and what you're making out of that investment or your return on investment (RoI), which in macro-economic terms we call productivity. Second, it's really important for us to understand the differences between the Indian economy vis-a-vis some of the advanced economies. This will help us understand why eight per cent growth is sustainable for 20-25 years and why we won't encounter the law of diminishing returns for the next 20-25 years. Formalisation of the economy will drive productivity growth, our formal sector firms are catching up with their global peers and there is credit creation in the economy. Ours is a catch-up growth.

If you take the extent of credit creation in the economy, the advanced economy average is that for every hundred units of GDP, the credit created is about 180 per cent. For India, the same number is 58 per cent. For every 100 units of GDP, we have only 58 units of credit being created. So there is a

# 'The economy can grow by eight per cent despite negative narratives'

Prof Krishnamurthy V Subramanian, Executive Director, IMF, on the economy's rate of growth, the middle-income trap, the challenges from headwinds and skilling for industry. The session was moderated by Aanchal Magazine, Senior Assistant Editor



Prof Krishnamurthy V Subramanian (right) in conversation with Aanchal Magazine during the Idea Exchange at the Indian Express office, Noida. Renuka Puri

huge runway for credit to expand and credit actually leads to investment. It also leads to productivity improvements. I've seen this in Bandhan Bank, for instance. A glass bangle seller on a *thela* was given credit by us. Six months later, he had set up a shop that sold bangles as well as cosmetic items. Ten months later, his wares had saris and dress material. He expanded because we gave him credit. When credit is given for asset creation, it enhances investment, productivity and growth in the economy.

The plumbing that we've done over the last 10 years will make a big difference, an example of which is our digital public infrastructure. Even in the US, I can't just pull out my phone and pay somebody wherever and whenever through Google Pay. The seller can show data and get credit from the bank. World Bank data from 2014 to 2024 shows that the rate of new firm creation has been more than 200 per cent annually compared to 3.2 per cent a decade ago. As a result, we are the third largest entrepreneurial ecosystem in the world now, with more than 120 unicorns. They generate productivity, push the incumbent firms to become more productive and drive innovation. On the Global Innovation Index, we are ranked 39 from 85 in 2015.

For credit creation, we cannot look at collateral only as the way to give credit, we need cash-flow based lending. None of this growth involves more food, so land is not a concern. Therefore, the premise that this growth will necessarily challenge our resources is not true.

**Aanchal Magazine: Given that the net financial savings of households have nearly halved in FY23, do you see that impacting investment growth rate?**

It's important to understand the direction of causality when we talk about savings, deposits, loans, investment loans and deposits. What's the counterpart of savings at the micro level? It is deposits. It could even be mutual funds. What is the counterpart of investment at the micro level? It is loans that you pay. According to the current theory of financial intermediation, banks are considered financial intermediaries, passing the money parcel. So in the theory of financial intermediation, there is no difference between a bank and a non-banking financial institution (NBFC).

But in reality, a bank creates money. If I go to an ICICI bank branch for a Rs 10 lakh loan, it is not going to look at deposits as a necessary precondition for giving me a loan. It will check my credit worthiness and lend. I get a loan, then it gets credited as a deposit in my bank account. So the loan leads to the deposit, it's not the deposit that leads to the loan. That's how the loan be-

comes the asset. The loan creates deposits. This causality has not been understood very well in academic literature but people in the industry understand this very well. The accumulation of all deposits is the savings rate in the economy. The accumulation of all loans is the investment rate in the economy. From here, savings are not a precondition for investment. In fact, research shows that savings respond to growth. During the global financial crisis period and even later, the investment rate fell even though there was no change in the savings rate of the economy.

In 2018, when I joined as the Chief Economic Advisor, the investment rate had gone down though the savings rate was absolutely fine. The investment rate just responds to the anticipated demand and is not a function of savings.

**Anil Sasi: You've referred to the middle-income trap in the book. The average income in Argentina is about \$12,000, we're under \$3,000. We've got a long way to reach where Argentina is. Their problem is that they were not able to pull out the next five million up the class divide. The rich grew richer, so the per capita income has gone up, but the average income is not spread all through. Do you think that we might be headed that way?**

Let me draw a parallel. If I have a mouse trap that is the size of this cup, the likelihood of a mouse getting trapped in it is not very high. But if I have a trap that is the size of this room, then not just one mouse, there will actually be 100 mice in it. The probability of a mouse getting trapped would be actually very high. If you look at the definition of middle-income itself, it is so expansive. Even if you grow a GDP per capita up to six times — let's say from about \$3,000, we go up to \$18,000 or \$19,000 —

we will still be middle-income.

South Africa and Latin American countries are examples of countries that have been caught in the middle-income trap. Why? They did not refine their growth models as they grew. There is an important lesson in there for India as well on the extent of hand-holding and exposure to competition. If the domestic industry is not strong enough to compete, you will give some protection. But that can't be forever. Take the Production-Linked Incentive (PLI) for instance. If it continues to be for the next 30 years, then the industry will never become capable on its own.

So, it is important to always think about economic policy in a dynamic sense. What is good in 2020 will not be good in 2030 or 2035, because by that time, the industries that need protection will have changed. Argentina or any Latin American country did not do this. Policy supporting industry today does not mean support ad infinitum.

**Liz Mathew: After the Lok Sabha election results, the ruling party relies on allies, which will definitely affect the reform process and legislation. Regional parties are forcing the ruling party to go into welfare economics. How will this affect our growth?**

Was the 1991 liberalisation done by a majority government? No, it was done by a minority government. The major reforms in telecom, privatisation were done by a minority Atal Bihari Vajpayee government. First, there is ample evidence that politics is not necessarily a binding constraint for reforms. Second, we seem to put the onus of reforms only on the Central government when our Constitution has designed India to be a federal structure with Central, State and Concurrent lists. Let's say a manufacturer needs land to build a factory, labour, capital to buy the equipment, power to run

the factory and logistics to transport its merchandise, both within the country and outside. Of these major inputs, capital is the only one that is the domain of the Central government. Everything else is a domain of state governments, particularly land. Whenever I talk to entrepreneurs about their projects, they talk about land as the most important requirement, which is the state government's responsibility.

Because you asked me about politics, I want to say that in the last 30 years, irrespective of the political dispensation, the Central government has been far more reformist. It is actually time that we start focussing on states for reforms.

**Amitabh Sinha: How resilient is any growth projection to shocks from climate change?**

Japan grew 26 times between 1970 and 1995. There were actually big shocks to the world economy — Vietnam war and the oil crisis that resulted in unprecedented double-digit inflation. Even during Covid they didn't face that kind of inflation. Yet the economy grew. Similarly, when China grew its GDP 22 times from 1996 to 2021, there were Black Swan events like the global financial crisis and Covid. In a 25-year period, there will inevitably be headwinds, but equally there will be tailwinds as well.

Climate change, de-globalisation, the focus on industrial policy that many advanced economies are working on are all potential headwinds. But the potential of using AI can be a really good tailwind for India. One needs to look at not just challenges but also opportunities.

**Sukalp Sharma: You introduced the concept of 'thalinomics' in the Economic Survey. There's a suggestion to dissociate food inflation from inflation targeting. Is this a valid idea?**

Food inflation is far more supply-side driven. The two items that actually contribute the most to food inflation are pulses and oil seeds. Even among vegetables, in a year when the produce is low, onion prices go up. Then in a year when production is high, onion prices go down. The Central bank can't work on the supply side of the economy, the government has to.

So when one talks about policy, the Central bank should be tasked with those policy items that it can directly influence. Conceptually, core inflation does not include food or oil price inflation.

**Ravi Dutta Mishra: India is trying to boost domestic manufacturing. But there is protectionism abroad in new sectors like clean energy and electric vehicles. We are facing a globalised**

**market, unlike China, which had a free market at the time of its expansion. How will we tackle this challenge?**

Emerging economies like India get tutored on tariff barriers. What was right for them cannot be wrong for us. GDP is basically consumption, investment, government spending and net exports. If you take the relative shares, you'll see consumption accounts for about 60 per cent of GDP. That is completely domestic. Investment accounts for about 30 per cent of our GDP, of which FDI (foreign direct investment) would be 1.5 per cent. Even if it increases, say three per cent, it is only one-tenth of the domestic part. Government spending is another 10 per cent. Cumulatively, that accounts for 100 per cent.

When you start to think quantitatively, the argument that the global economy will have a significant impact on the Indian economy does not hold up. A country as large as India has the advantage of having a very large home market. We need to realise that strength and not blow up the impact of the global economy.

**P Vaidyanathan Iyer: In this massive growth that we hope to achieve by 2047, how do you factor in skill development and jobs?**

Employment and jobs are where the negative narratives have run far ahead of the actual evidence. A lot of the negative narratives have used the CMIE (Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy) data. But better quality data, for instance, KLEMS (Capital, Labour, Energy, Materials and Services) has found that apart from the 3.5 crore jobs that have been created in agriculture, nine crore jobs have been created over the last 10 years, which means everywhere, 90 lakh jobs have been created. This is consistent with the data on poverty reduction. If you look at the Gini index, consumption inequality has reduced in both rural and urban areas.

You can ask if the employment situation is so good, why has the government, in its recent budget, focussed on unemployment? The real world is not about binary narratives. We need to focus on employment because we have a young population and we need to skill people. The focus on skilling through internship opportunities is a good beginning. We need to focus on ITIs (Industrial Training Institutes) as well because they are adapting their curriculum to the demands of the industry. That is why these key pillars are important — macro-economic growth, social and economic inclusion (of which jobs are a critical determinant), agricultural renaissance, ethical wealth creation and a virtuous cycle driven by private investment.



## ON INDUSTRY-READINESS

These pillars are key — macro-economic growth, social and economic inclusion, agricultural renaissance, ethical wealth creation and a virtuous cycle driven by private investment

# Significance of the livestock census, species it will cover

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
 NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

RAJIV RANJAN Singh, the Union Minister of Fisheries, Animal Husbandry and Dairying, on Thursday launched the 21st Livestock Census in New Delhi.

**What is the livestock census all about?**  
 Conducted every five years, the census carries out a headcount of the number of domesticated animals, poultry, and stray animals in the country. The census takes into account information about the species, breed, age, sex, and ownership status of the animals in question.  
 Since 1919, a total of 20 livestock censuses have been carried out so far, with the last one in 2019. The enumeration process for the 21st census will take place between October

2024 and February 2025.  
 Over the next few months, some 87,000 enumerators will visit independent houses, apartments, enterprises, as well as institutions such as *gaushalas* (cattle sheds), dairy farms, poultry farms, veterinary colleges, and defence establishments, to gather information about livestock in India. The census is expected to cover 30 crore households.

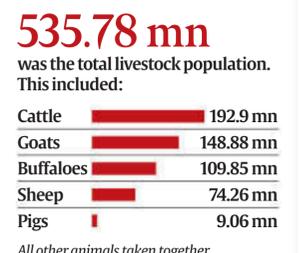
**What animals will be counted in the 21st census?**  
 According to the Department of Animal Husbandry and Dairying, information on a range of animal species will be collected. These include: cattle, buffalo, *mithun*, yak, sheep, goat, pig, camel, horse, ponies, mule, donkey, dog, rabbit, and elephant. In all, the census will capture information on 219 indigenous breeds of these species, recognised

by ICAR-National Bureau of Animal Genetic Resources (NBAGR).  
 Besides these, the census will also carry out a headcount of poultry birds such as fowl, chicken, duck, turkey, geese, quail, ostrich, and emu.

**What is the objective of the livestock census?**  
 The livestock sector plays an important role in providing employment to people in rural areas.

In terms of productivity in the agriculture sector, poultry and animal husbandry contribute to roughly 30% of the Gross Value Added (GVA). In the economy overall, the livestock sector's GVA stands at roughly 4.7%. For comparison, the whole agriculture sector contributes to a GVA of roughly 15%. GVA refers to the total output of a sector minus

## WHAT THE 2019 LIVESTOCK CENSUS FOUND



All other animals taken together contributed just 0.23% of the total livestock population in India

the cost of intermediate consumption.  
 Among other things, the data of the census will be used to estimate GVA from the livestock sector. It will also help formulate and implement policies relating to the census. "Livestock Census shapes policies, ensures sustainable growth of India's Livestock Sector," Union Minister Singh said while launching the census exercise.

The data from the census will also be crucial to track progress of achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the United Nations. The Livestock Census will provide data pertaining to Goal 2 (Zero Hunger), and Target 2.5 (to maintain genetic diversity in food and nutrition), specifically Indicator 2.5.2 (the percentage of local livestock breeds that are at risk of extinction) of the SDGs.

**What will remain the same and what**

**will change in the exercise?**  
 The census this time will be fully digitised, just as the last one was in 2019. This will include "online data collection through a mobile application, monitoring at various levels through a digital dashboard, capturing the latitude and longitude of data collection location, and generation of livestock census report through software."

Additionally, the 21st census will capture several new data points. These include:  
**■ Data on pastoral animals, pastoralists:** For the first time, the census will collect data on the contribution of pastoralists to the livestock sector, their socio-economic status, and livestock holding.  
**■ More details, granular information:** The census will find out the proportion of households whose major income comes from the livestock sector. It will also contain data on the gender of stray cattle.

## EVERYDAY SCIENCE

### HOW TARDIGRADES ARE ABLE TO RESIST HIGH LEVELS OF RADIATION

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
 NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

A TEAM of researchers has identified the genetic mechanisms that help a newly discovered species of tardigrades (*Hypsibius henanensis*) withstand high levels of radiation. The species comprises thousands of genes, which become more active when exposed to radiation. They protect the microscopic animals' DNA from damage and repair breaks, according to the scientists.

Their study, 'Multi-omics landscape and molecular basis of radiation tolerance in a tardigrade', was published in the journal *Science* last week. The scientists involved in the research are affiliated with several institutions in China.

The findings could one day be harnessed to help protect astronauts from radiation during space missions, clean up nuclear pollution or improve cancer treatment, according to a report in *Nature*.

Lingqiang Zhang, a biologist at the Beijing Institute of Lifeomics and co-author of the study, told *Nature*, "This discovery may help improve the stress tolerance of human cells, benefiting patients undergoing radiation therapy."

**How was the study carried out?**  
 Zhang and his colleagues discovered a new species of tardigrade six years ago after they brought back moss samples from Funiu Mountain in China's Henan province to their laboratory.

They named it *Hypsibius henanensis* and began to analyse its characteristics. Also known as water bears or moss piglets, tardigrades have long fascinated scientists as they can withstand extreme conditions.

The team of scientists sequenced the genome of this new species and revealed that it had 14,701 genes, 30% of which were unique to tardigrades. They then exposed *Hypsibius henanensis* to radiation doses of gamma rays that were far beyond what would be survivable for hu-



**Tardigrades have long fascinated scientists as they can withstand extreme conditions.**  
 Wikimedia Commons

mans, the *Nature* report said.

**What did the study find?**  
 The scientists discovered 2,801 of the genes in *Hypsibius henanensis* that were involved in DNA repair. More specifically, they found three factors that help this species survive radiation.

The first was its ability to quickly repair double-strand breaks in DNA due to radiation exposure, by using a protein called TRID1.

"The second factor involved a gene that was switched on during exposure to radiation, resulting in the generation of two proteins that are known to be important for mitochondrial synthesis... in tardigrades, it appears they also help with DNA repair," according to a report by *phys.org*.

The third one was *Hypsibius henanensis*'s ability to produce different types of antioxidant pigments called betalains. These pigments can mop up some of the harmful reactive chemicals that radiation causes to form inside cells, the *Nature* report said.

Notably, the researchers tested one of the tardigrade's betalains on human cells and found it significantly improved their survival rate after radiation exposure.

## EXPLAINED AGRICULTURE

### Election & farm sector health

There is no drought in Maharashtra this time, unlike in the last two polls. But low soyabean, cotton and milk prices could still cause farmer disquiet. Govt schemes for landless labourers will also play a role

**HARISH DAMODARAN AND PARTHASARATHI BISWAS**  
 NEW DELHI, PUNE, OCTOBER 27

THE OCTOBER 2019 Maharashtra state elections were held under the shadow of a prolonged drought from July 2018 to July 2019. In the worst-hit Marathwada region and neighbouring Ahmednagar and Solapur districts, government-funded fodder camps, sheltering over 11 lakh cattle at their peak, were operational till late-September. The animals were even fed whole sugarcane, which fetched a higher price as fodder than what mills were paying.

It wasn't that different in the April-May 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Maharashtra had a poor southwest (June-September) and also northeast monsoon (October-December) season in 2023, which was followed by deficient winter rain in January-February 2024 and the mercury crossing 40 degree Celsius as early as March.

The run-up to the Assembly polls scheduled on November 20 has, in contrast, been marked by all the four meteorological subdivisions of the state — Vidarbha, Marathwada, Madhya Maharashtra and Konkan — receiving surplus (above long period average) monsoon rain. These have helped fill up the state's major reservoirs — such as Jayakwadi, Bhima, Mula and Pench — and recharge groundwater aquifers, holding out hope for the upcoming *rabi* (winter-spring) crop season as well.

**Less distress**  
 Simply put, the 2024 Maharashtra state elections are being fought amid not as much farm distress as was clearly obvious during the previous two polls.

Agriculture had just 11.2% share of Maharashtra's GDP (at current prices, net of product taxes and subsidies) in 2023-24, below the corresponding all-India average of 17.7%. But it employed 43.2% of the state's workforce, marginally lower than the national average of 46.1%, as per the official periodic labour force survey for 2023-24.

Also, the latest NABARD All India Rural Financial Inclusion Survey report for 2021-22 identified 59% of rural households in Maharashtra as "agricultural", i.e. deriving a significant share of their income from farm-related activities. Agriculture, hence, matters when it comes to voting in Maharashtra. And whether elections are taking place against the backdrop of drought or relative plenty can in-

## STATE-WISE PRODUCTION OF SUGAR (lakh tonnes)

	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25*
Maharashtra	137.35	105.30	110.20	90.00
Uttar Pradesh	102.50	104.80	103.65	100.00
Karnataka	61.25	59.80	53.00	50.00
Tamil Nadu	12.65	14.75	10.75	9.00
Gujarat	12.35	10.10	9.20	9.00
All-India**	359.25	330.90	319.00	290.50

Source: National Federation of Cooperative Sugar Factories. \*Industry projections; \*\*Includes other states



fluence the political narrative and sentiment. Maharashtra's most "political" crop is sugarcane. The state is India's largest sugar producer. The 2024-25 sugar year (October-September) could, however, see Uttar Pradesh taking the top slot (see table). The reason for it is last year's drought.

Sugarcane is a 12-18 months' duration crop. The cane that mills will start crushing from next month, till about April, was the dry weather-affected crop planted last year. Maharashtra farmers plant either a 12-month 'suru' (in January), a 15-month 'pre-seasonal' (July-December) or an 18-month 'ad-sali' (April-June) cane. The benefits of this time's good rains would show up only in the cane crushed in the 2025-26 sugar year.

**Not sugar alone**  
 Sugarcane is grown largely in western Maharashtra (Ahmednagar, Pune, Satara, Solapur, Sangli and Kolhapur) and the adjoining Marathwada region districts of Osmanabad, Latur and Beed.

But Maharashtra isn't just a leading sugar producer (along with UP). It also ranks No. 1 in the production of *jowar* (sorghum), onion, grapes and pomegranate, and No. 2 in cotton (after Gujarat), soyabean (after Madhya

Pradesh), *chana* or chickpea (after Madhya Pradesh), *arhar/tur* or pigeon-pea (after Karnataka) and organised milk procurement (after Gujarat). That makes for a quite diversified cropping profile.

While *jowar* is cultivated as a staple cereal across Maharashtra — barring the Konkan and Nagpur (eastern Vidarbha) divisions that mostly take rice — the production of other crops is concentrated in particular regions.

The western Maharashtra sugar belt is also the state's milk production hub, housing major cooperative (Gokul, Warana and Rajarambapu) as well as private (Sonai, Chitale, Schreiber Dynamix, Parag and Prabhat) sector dairies.

Cotton is primarily grown in Khandesh (Jalgaon-Dhule), Marathwada and western Vidarbha (Amravati division plus Wardhan-Nagpur), Marathwada and western Vidarbha are also the main cultivation tracts for soyabean, *arhar/tur* and *chana*.

Horticultural crops are even more regionally concentrated: Northern Maharashtra (especially Nashik) for onion, tomato and grapes; Jalgaon for banana; Solapur for pomegranates; and Konkan (Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg and Raigad) for mangoes. Horticulture farming entails heavy in-

vestments, whether in drip irrigation systems, tissue-cultured planting material, specially water-soluble and liquid fertilisers (as opposed to normal urea or di-ammonium phosphate) or fungicides.

While production cost per acre is only Rs 15,000-20,000 in soyabean, it is Rs 45,000-50,000 for onions, Rs 1-1.25 lakh for grapes and Rs 1.75-2 lakh for pomegranate. But average per-acre yields are lower, at 0.5-0.6 tonnes, for soyabean, compared with 6-7 tonnes in onion and 9-10 tonnes in grapes.

## The other side of bumper harvests

Farm incomes are a function of not only production, but also prices. Take soyabean, which is selling at an average of Rs 4,350-4,400 per quintal in the Latur market. That's below the government's minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 4,892 and also last year's market rate of Rs 4,650-4,700/quintal at this time. *Kapas* (raw un-ginned cotton) is, likewise, fetching Rs 6,500-6,600 per quintal at Yavatmal, as against Rs 6,800-6,900 a year ago and the officially declared MSP of Rs 7,121.

It isn't prices alone. Balasaheb Dake, a farmer from Kajla village in Jalna district's Badnapur tehsil, says that harvesting/picking costs for *kapas* have increased from Rs 7 to Rs 12 per kg over the last one year. He attributes it to the ruling BJP-Shiv Sena-NCP Mahayuti's Ladki Bahin Yojana, which provides a cash transfer of Rs 1,500 per month to women from families with an annual income of up to Rs 2.5 lakh. This scheme, Dake claims, has led farm labourers to reduce their days or hours of work. The resultant scarcity has pushed up wages.

Maharashtra farmers have sown a record 51.6 lakh hectares (lh) area under soyabean in the current kharif season, even while cutting down cotton acreage to 40.9 lh from last year's 42.2 lh.

The area planted under these crops is much more than the 10.5 lh under sugarcane. Their prices ruling below MSP — and dairies, too, paying only Rs 27-28/litre for cow milk containing 3.5% and 8.5% solids-not-fat (from Rs 37-38 in February-March 2023) — can well be poll issues this time.

To sum up, bumper production from a bountiful monsoon may make agrarian distress less visible, but low crop prices and rising cultivation costs could still be talking points as the electoral campaign picks up. Also, it remains to be seen how much of farmer disquiet, if any, will be neutralised by Ladki Bahin and other schemes targeting rural landless labourers.

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# Justice Sanjiv Khanna to be next CJ: how is the top judge of the SC appointed?

**AJOY SINHA KARPURAM**  
 NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

THE CENTRE on October 24 appointed Justice Sanjiv Khanna as the next Chief Justice of India (CJI), formally approving the recommendation made by CJI D Y Chandrachud a week ago.

Justice Khanna, the seniormost judge in the apex court, will succeed CJI Chandrachud a day after the latter's retirement on November 10. He will hold the post for a little over six months until his retirement on May 13, 2025. CJI Chandrachud's two-year term is among the longest in recent years.

**What is the process for appointing the CJI?**  
 By convention, the seniormost judge of the SC (based on years of experience as a judge in the apex court) becomes the CJI. This process has now been put down in the 'Memorandum of Procedure for the appointment of Supreme Court Judges' (henceforth referred to as the MoP).

**Basis of appointment:** The MoP says that the "appointment to the office of the Chief Justice of India should be of the seniormost Judge of the Supreme Court considered fit to hold the office". Even before the MoP was agreed upon in 1999, the seniormost judge of the Supreme Court after the CJI was by convention elevated to the top post.

**How the process begins:** According to the MoP, the appointment process begins when "The Union Minister of Law, Justice and Company Affairs would, at the appropriate time, seek the recommendation of the outgoing Chief Justice of India for the appointment of the next Chief Justice of India". By convention, the "appropriate time" for the process to begin is a month before the date of retirement of the incumbent Chief Justice. CJI Chandrachud sent his letter of recommendation to the Centre on October 17.

**Central Government approval:** As per the process laid down in the MoP, "after receipt of the recommendation of the Chief Justice of India, the Union Minister of Law, Justice... will put up the recommendation to the Prime Minister who will advise the President in the matter of appointment".

## THE NEXT IN LINE TO BE CHIEF JUSTICE OF INDIA

Since all Supreme Court judges have to retire at the age of 65, the length of a CJI's tenure depends on how old they are at the time of their predecessor's retirement.

Judge	Date of Assuming Office	Retirement Date	Length of Tenure
Justice Sanjiv Khanna	Nov 11, 2024	May 13, 2025	184 days
Justice B R Gavai	May 14, 2025	Nov 23, 2025	194 days
Justice Surya Kant	Nov 24, 2025	Feb 09, 2027	443 days
Justice Vikram Nath	Feb 10, 2027	Sept 23, 2027	226 days
Justice B V Nagarathna	Sept 24, 2027	Oct 29, 2027	36 days
Justice P S Narasimha	Oct 30, 2027	May 02, 2028	186 days
Justice J B Pardiwala	May 03, 2028	Aug 11, 2030	831 days
Justice K V Viswanathan	Aug 12, 2030	May 25, 2031	287 days

Note: The dates in the table work on the assumption that each of these judges will be the seniormost judge when they assume the office of CJI. The above information may change based on any changes in convention, early resignation, or loss of life.

Though the final word on appointing the next CJI technically lies with the Centre, by convention the Centre tends to appoint whoever the presiding CJI recommends as

her successor.  
**Has there ever been a departure from the convention of appointing the**

## seniormost SC judge as CJI?

Yes. This convention was famously discarded by former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, whose government recommended the appointment of Justice A N Ray as CJI in 1973, superseding three more senior judges, Justices JM Shelat, KS Hegde, and A N Grover.

Justice Ray was considered to be more favourably disposed towards the Indira government than his more senior colleagues. His appointment was announced the day after the Supreme Court pronounced a landmark order in the *Kesavananda Bharati* case, which laid down the "basic structure" doctrine. Justice Ray was part of the minority in the 7-6 verdict of the 13-judge Bench.

India's government, in January 1977, once again ignored the convention by superseding Justice H R Khanna to appoint Justice M H Beg as the CJI. Justice Khanna had been the lone dissenter in the *ADM Jabalpur vs Shiv Kant Shukla* order, in which the majority comprising Justices A N Ray, P N Bhagwati, YV Chandrachud, and M H Beg agreed with the government that fundamental rights including the right to life and liberty stood abrogated during a period of national Emergency.

## How did the MoP come into existence?

Following the apex court's decisions in the *First Judges Case* (1981), *Second Judges Case* (1993), and the *Third Judges Case* (1998), a peer selection process for the appointment of High Court and SC Judges was put in place by establishing what we now know as the Supreme Court Collegium. This Collegium comprises the seniormost judges of the SC, and the Centre is technically bound to accept its recommendations.

The MoP — first drawn up in 1999 — provides the procedure for appointment and obligations of the Centre, the SC, and the High Courts when it comes to the appointment process. This document is crucial as the Collegium system of appointing judges is a judicial innovation that is not mandated through legislation, or text of the Constitution.

In 2015, the SC struck down the constitutional amendment that brought in the National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC). This would have allowed the Centre to have greater influences in the process of recommending judges. Following this decision, the MoP was renegotiated in 2016, although the government maintained until last year that it was still being finalised.

# THE WORLD

## TOP OF THE WORLD



Protest in Lisbon on Saturday. AP

### PORTUGAL

#### Thousands protest against police violence

Lisbon: Thousands of people took to the main avenue of downtown Lisbon on Saturday to protest police violence, several days after a policeman shot a Cape Verde-born Portuguese resident, triggering a wave of unrest. Rights group Vida Justa, which called the protest, changed the route to avoid clashes with supporters of the far-right anti-immigration party Chega, which held a separate smaller rally also in central Lisbon in support of the police. Violence had broken out on the multi-ethnic outskirts of the capital after Monday's shooting of Odair Moniz, a 43-year-old chef, in the Amadora suburb. Demonstrators shouting "justice for Odair" carried posters bearing slogans such as "Stop killing us".

REUTERS

### TAIWAN

#### Taiwan reports Chinese 'combat patrol' near it

Taipei: Taiwan's defence ministry said on Sunday that Chinese warplanes and warships had carried out another "combat patrol" near the island, after Beijing threatened to take countermeasures in response to a \$2 billion arms sale package by the United States. The United States is bound by law to provide Chinese-claimed Taiwan with the means to defend itself despite the lack of formal diplomatic ties, to the constant anger of Beijing. The Pentagon said on Friday the United States had approved a potential \$2 billion arms sale package to Taiwan.

REUTERS

### SRI LANKA

#### 'Illegal fishing': 12 Indian fishermen held

Colombo: 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 Jaffna, the Sri Lanka Navy said.

PTI

## DAY AFTER AIRSTRIKE ON MILITARY SITES

# Shouldn't downplay or exaggerate Israel's attack: Khamenei as Iran weighs response

Strikes on Iran achieved Israel's goals: Netanyahu

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
DEIR AL-BALAH, OCTOBER 27

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. Already, Iran's military has said a cease-fire in the Gaza Strip or Lebanon trumps any retaliatory attack on Israel, though officials also have said they reserve the right to respond.

"The evil actions of the Israeli regime two nights ago should neither be exaggerated nor downplayed," Khamenei said. "The miscalculations of the Israeli regime must be disrupted. It is essential to make them understand the strength, will, and initiative of the Iranian nation and its youth." He added: "It is up to the authorities to determine how to convey the power and will of the Iranian people to the Israeli regime and to take actions that serve the interests of this nation and country."

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Sunday that the strikes "severely harmed" Iran and achieved all of Israel's goals. "The air force struck throughout Iran. We severely harmed Iran's defense capabilities and its ability to produce missiles that are aimed toward us," Netanyahu said in his first public comments on the strikes.



The site of an apparent truck attack near the Mossad Headquarters in Tel Aviv on Sunday. AP

## Israeli strikes on Gaza kill 22, 'truck attack' near Mossad HQ injures 35

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
OCTOBER 27

ISRAELI STRIKES on northern Gaza have killed at least 22 people, mostly women and children, Palestinian officials said Sunday, as the Israeli offensive in the hard-hit and isolated north entered a third week and aid groups described a humanitarian catastrophe. Israel said it targeted militants at the site.

In a separate development, a truck rammed into a bus stop near the Israeli city of Tel Aviv, wounding 35 people, according to first responders. Israeli police described it as an attack and said



After an Israeli strike on a school in Gaza City on Sunday. Reuters

the assailant was an Arab citizen of Israel. The ramming occurred near the headquarters of Israel's Mossad spy agency.

## EGYPT PROPOSES 2-DAY TRUCE DEAL, RELEASE OF 4 HOSTAGES: PRESIDENT

Ramat Hasharon: Egypt's president says his country has proposed a two-day cease-fire between Israel and Hamas during which four hostages held in Gaza would be freed.

President Abdel-Fattah el-Sisi, speaking in Cairo, said the proposal also includes the release of some Palestinian prisoners and the delivery of humanitarian aid to the besieged Gaza Strip. El-Sisi said the proposal aims to "move the situation forward." He said that once the two-day cease-fire goes into effect, negotiations will continue to make it permanent. Egypt has been a key mediator along with Qatar and the United States. This is the first time Egypt's president has publicly proposed such a plan.

## PROTESTERS DISRUPT NETANYAHU SPEECH AT OCT 7 MEMORIAL EVENT

Ramat Hasharon: Protesters disrupted a speech by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu at a ceremony Sunday remembering the victims of Hamas attack last year.

People shouted "Shame on you", 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' Oct 7, 2023, attack and hold him responsible for not yet bringing home the remaining hostages.



Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of Georgian Dream party, speaks after exit poll results in Tbilisi on Saturday. Reuters

## Opp disputes poll results in Georgia as pro-Russia party retains power

Election was viewed as make-or-break referendum on country's EU joining

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TBILISI, OCTOBER 27

GEORGIA'S OPPOSITION disputed the results of its election Saturday after officials said the ruling party led the crucial vote which could decide whether the country pivots to embrace the West or falls back into Russia's orbit.

Many Georgians viewed the vote as a make-or-break referendum on the opportunity to join the European Union.

Initial figures suggest turnout is the highest since the ruling Georgian Dream party was first elected in 2012.

Georgia's Central Election Commission said Georgian Dream won 52.99% with the majority of votes counted.

Georgian Dream stood against four main opposition groups, which indicated they did not accept the results.

The opposition initially declared victory shortly after polls closed at 1600 GMT.

If Georgian Dream's win is confirmed, the party will have a parliamentary majority which will stoke fears about the country's bid for EU membership. The party has become increasingly

authoritarian, adopting laws which are similar to those used by Russia to crack down on freedom of speech. After one such law was passed earlier this year, Brussels suspended Georgia's EU membership process.

Bidzina Ivanishvili, the founder of Georgian Dream, claimed victory almost immediately after polls closed and said, "It is rare in the world for the same party to achieve such success in such a difficult situation."

Tina Bokuchava, the chair of the United National Movement opposition party accused the CEO of carrying out Ivanishvili's "dirty order" and said he "stole the victory from the Georgian people and thereby stole the European future."

There were also reports of multiple voting irregularities. Ahead of the parliamentary election Ivanishvili vowed again to ban opposition parties should his party win.

Georgian Dream will hold opposition parties "fully accountable under the full force of the law" for "war crimes" committed against the people of Georgia, Ivanishvili said at a pro-government rally in Tbilisi, Wednesday.

## Bangla tribunal summons 20 people including Army ex-chief over 'genocide'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DHAKA, OCTOBER 27

BANGLADESH'S INTERNATIONAL Crimes Tribunal 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 alleged crimes against humanity and genocide during the July-August uprising in the country.

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 authorities concerned to produce 20 people, including 10 former ministers and two advisers to former prime minister Hasina, before it on November 18, *The Daily Star* 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.

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.



## ON A WING AND A PRAYER

Members of South Korea's Christian community hold a worship service to protest a court ruling that upheld the rights of same-sex couples to receive state insurance, in Seoul on Sunday. Reuters

## As Japan votes, ruling alliance braces for setback

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TOKYO, OCTOBER 27

JAPANESE PRIME Minister Shigeru Ishiba's ruling coalition is certain to lose a majority in the 465-seat lower house in a key parliamentary election Sunday, Japan's NHK public television said. The results reflect voters' outrage over the governing party's extensive financial scandals.

Ishiba's Liberal Democratic Party and its ruling coalition with junior partner Komeito were cer-



Japan PM Shigeru Ishiba speaks to reporters in Tokyo on Sunday. AP

tain to lose a majority 233 seats in the lower house, NHK said.

Falling short of a majority does not mean a change of government, but the results would make it difficult for Ishiba to get his party's policies through parliament, and he may need to find a third coalition partner.

Ishiba, immediately after taking office on Oct 1, ordered the poll in hopes of shoring up support after his predecessor, Fumio Kishida, failed to address public outrage over the LDP's actions.

"The results so far have been

extremely severe, and we take them very seriously," Ishiba told NHK. If the majority is lost, Ishiba said, the LDP will still lead a ruling coalition and tackle key policies, compile a supplementary budget and pursue political reform. He indicated that the LDP is open to cooperating with opposition groups if that suits people's wish.

As of early Monday, LDP won 173 seats and Komei 22 for a total of 195 seats, while the opposition Constitutional Democratic Party of Japan secured 137 seats, NHK said.

## Elon Musk worked illegally in US in '90s, Washington Post reports

Washington: The Washington Post reported on Saturday that South African-born billionaire businessman Elon Musk worked illegally in the United States during a brief period in the 1990s while building a startup company.

The news outlet reported that Musk arrived in California, in 1995 to attend Stanford but never enrolled in his program there. Instead, he developed software company Zip2, which sold in 1999 for around \$300 million. Two immigration law experts quoted by the Post said Musk would have needed to be enrolled in a full course of study in order to maintain a valid work authorization as a student.

## Will respond if West helps Ukraine to strike deep into Russia: Putin

REUTERS  
MOSCOW, OCTOBER 27

PRESIDENT VLADIMIR Putin said on Sunday that Russia's defence ministry was working on different ways to respond if the United States and its NATO allies help Ukraine to strike deep into Russia with long-range Western missiles.

The 2-1/2-year-old Ukraine war has triggered the biggest confrontation between Russia and the West since the depths of the Cold War, and Russian officials say the war is now entering its most dangerous phase.

Russia has been signalling to the US and its allies that if they give permission to Ukraine to strike deep into Russian territory with Western-supplied missiles, then Moscow will consider it a major escalation, Putin said on Sept. 12 that Western approval for such a



President Vladimir Putin. File

step would mean "the direct involvement of NATO countries, the United States and European countries in the war in Ukraine" because NATO military infrastructure and personnel would have to be involved in the targeting and firing of the missiles.

"(The Russian defence ministry) is thinking about how to respond to the possible long-range strikes on Russian territory, it will offer a range of responses," Putin said in a Russian state TV interview.

## CHINA FACES THE TWIN CHALLENGES OF FALLING BIRTHRATES AND A SHARP RISE IN AGEING POPULATION

# Thousands of kindergartens shut down across China amid sharp decline in birthrates

K J M VARMA  
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



In 2023, the number of kindergartens fell by 14,808 for a second consecutive year. Reuters File

million by the end of 2023. Projections suggest it will exceed 400 million by 2035 and reach 500 million by 2050, the state-run Xinhua news agency reported early this month. An increasing number of kindergartens have been converted into care centres for senior citizens and many of their staff members have switched jobs to care for the elderly, according to the Post report.

The rising numbers of the Chinese elderly are mostly dependent on state social security support putting pressure on the state finances amid the flagging economy. Officials attribute China's serious demographic cri-

sis to decades-old one-child policy which was scrapped in 2016 after which China permitted all couples to have two children.

As it failed to make an impact, China revised the population policy in 2021, allowing people to have three children in an attempt to address the reluctance of couples to have more kids due to mounting costs.

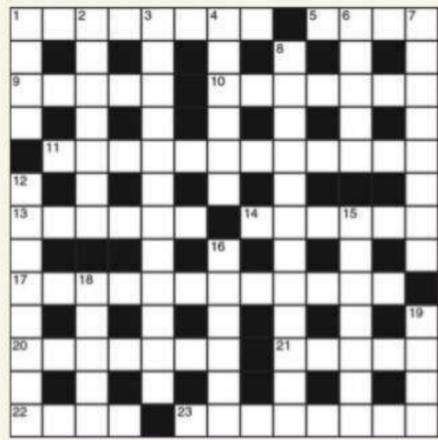
As the costs of pensions and geriatric care mounted, China last month raised the retirement age of men from 60 to 63 and for female office workers from 55 to 58 years. "The burden of elder care is intensifying, all amid economic stagnation," said He Yafu, an inde-

pendent demographer based in Guangdong province.

"Kindergarten operators need to adjust strategically to meet new challenges, such as expanding early childhood education to include children under three and establishing an integrated care-education system," He told the Post.

National Health Commission data from 2021 showed that more than 30% of Chinese families with infants and toddlers in China need child care, but only 5.5 per cent have enrolled their children in nurseries. China wants to make it easier to marry, harder to divorce amid shrinking and ageing population.

## CROSSWORD 5506



- ACROSS**
- Drop a hint to a close acquaintance (8)
  - Essential equipment for invaders from Mars (4)
  - It may be held either way (5)
  - Skittled due to full pay settlement (7)
  - Forfeit a dividend perhaps and become bored (4,8)
  - In operation's the way to be displayed (2,4)
  - Awfully sacred? (6)
  - Pedestrian in control of the factory (3-2-3-4)
  - A cider's mixed in a cocktail (7)
  - It's jelly like the photo shows (5)
  - Appeal for help gets nothing or nothing special (2-2)
  - Unnecessary to goad Hitler's bodyguard (8)
- DOWN**
- Just a little letter from abroad (4)
  - Hazy sun out perhaps around the end of June (7)
  - It's strictly true but unimaginative (6-2-4)
  - Drinking a lot of best gin cocktail (6)
  - Rummage for right sort of file (5)
  - Lied to us about being lonely (8)
  - Receives an order and assumes control (5,7)
  - They go around looking to stir us (8)
  - Go from bad to worse? (7)
  - Prime object of care (6)
  - Artist's models who barely earn a living? (5)
  - Book some theatrical turns (4)

Solutions Crossword 5505 Across: 1 Crack shot, 8 Irate, 9 Uniform, 10 Zither, 11 Aegean, 12 Gardener, 15 Integral, 18 Let out, 20 Tailor, 21 Admiral, 22 Clean, 23 Displayed Down: 2 Range, 3 Coffer, 4 Stranger, 5 Titled, 6 Washing, 7 Bear fruit, 11 Armistice, 13 Rolled up, 14 Striker, 16 Ground, 17 Attila, 19 Usage

## OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



## CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



## MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



## JUMBLED WORDS

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

The man of knowledge must be able not only to love his enemies but also to hate his friends. - Friedrich Nietzsche (4...4)

**GRVEE**      **INOSLT**

**RVYAO**      **AIRSHV**

Solution: VERGE, OVAEY, TONSIL, RAHVIS

**SUDOKU 5757**

Difficulty Level 1s  
Instructions  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

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

**SOLUTION SUDOKU 5756**

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

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

**Regional Office, Samastipur:** Panchwati Complex, Mohanpur Road, Samastipur (Bihar) Pin-848101

**यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India**

**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**

**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES**

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) / 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rule, 2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower(s) and Guarantor(s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Union Bank of India (Secured Creditor), will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on the date mentioned below, for recovery of dues as mentioned hereunder to Union Bank of India from the below mentioned Borrower(s) & Guarantor(s). The Reserve Price and the Earnest Money Deposit are also mentioned hereunder:

Name & Address of Branch	Name & Address of Borrower/ Mortgagee/ Guarantor	Amount Due	Property Details	Reserve Price/ EMD/Bid Multiplier
Union Bank of India, Samastipur Main Branch, at LEAD DIST.OFFICE, GOAL ROAD, SAMASTIPUR, BIHAR - 848101 BM Sri ABHIJEET GAURAV Mob.8840261679	1. Borrower: Suresh Sah, S/o - Fudan Sah, 2. Co-Borrower / Mortgagee: Urmila Devi W/o - Suresh Sah, both (1 & 2) at Vill+Post-Bishanpur, Daryanpur, Hakimabad, Anchal-Samastipur, Bihar-848101	Rs. 9,84,483.00 as on 31-07-2024 plus interest and other Expenses	Land & building in the name of Urmila Devi W/o-Suresh Sah situated at Bisanpur Hakimabad, Samastipur, Bihar bearing land detail as under:-Thana No. -207, Khata No. 293 (O), 1092(N), Khesra No.-451 (O), 611(N), Area 1 katha 8 Dhur. Boundary: N- Rakesh Prasad, S- Ganaur Sah, E- Ganaur Sah, W- Sadak	Rs. 6,88,500.00/- Rs. 68,850.00/- Rs. 15,900.00/-

Date and Time of e-auction 13.11.2024 at 12:00 PM to 05:00 PM (with 10 minutes unlimited auto extension) For detailed term and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Union Bank of India's website i.e. <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/auction-property/view-auction-property.aspx> and <https://ebkray.in>

Date : 27.10.2024  
Place : Samastipur

Authorised Officer  
Union Bank of India

**Regional Office, Samastipur:** Panchwati Complex, Mohanpur Road, Samastipur (Bihar) Pin-848101

**यूनियन बैंक Union Bank of India**

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Name & Address of Branch	Name & Address of Borrower/ Mortgagee/ Guarantor	Amount Due	Property Details	Reserve Price/ EMD/Bid Multiplier
Union Bank of India, Muzaffarpur Main Branch at Motijheel, Daudi Market, Muzaffarpur, Bihar-842001 BM Sri Rajeev kr. Ranjan Mob.9628371194	1. Borrower: Niraj Kumar, S/o-Satyannarayan Prasad, 2. Co-Borrower / Mortgagee: Smt Sita Devi W/o- Satyanarayan Prasad, both (1 & 2) at Chuna Bhatti Road, Malighat, Muzaffarpur, Bihar-842001	Rs. 18,03,483.92 as on 30-09-2024 plus interest and other Expenses	Land & building in the name of Sita Devi W/o-Satyannarayan Prasad situated at Mauza Kothiya Dakhili, P.S-Mushari, Distt- Muzaffarpur bearing land detail as under:- Thana No. -413, Khata No. 97, Khesra No.- 19, Area 1.5 Decimal (653 sq ft). Boundary: N- Man, S- 12 feet Rasta, E- Present Purchaser, W- Pinki Devi	Rs. 9,34,000.00/- Rs. 93,400.00/- Rs. 10,000.00/-

Date and Time of e-auction 13.11.2024 at 12:00 PM to 05:00 PM (with 10 minutes unlimited auto extension) For detailed term and condition of the sale, please refer to the link provided in Union Bank of India's website i.e. <https://www.unionbankofindia.co.in/auction-property/view-auction-property.aspx> and <https://ebkray.in>

Date : 27.10.2024  
Place : Muzaffarpur

Authorised Officer  
Union Bank of India

**FLUID CONTROL RESEARCH INSTITUTE**

Kanjikode West, Palakkad - 678 623, Kerala, India  
(Under Ministry of Heavy Industries, Govt. of India)  
Phone: 0491-2566120/2566206 Fax: 0491-2566326  
Email: [purchase@fcriindia.com](mailto:purchase@fcriindia.com), Web: <http://www.fcriindia.com>

**NO. PUR/FCRI/24075/GFS/2024-25**  
Dated 18th October 2024

**TENDER NOTICE**

Competitive tenders are invited from reputed manufacturers / suppliers through GeM Portal for "Supply, installation, integration, testing & commissioning of Gravimetric Primary Gas Flow Calibration Standard (GFS) & Secondary Gas Flow Standards with establishment of overall measurement uncertainty as stated for flow from 15cm up to 1200 slm". **Cost of Tender Form:** Rs.1180/- (by NEFT in favour of Fluid Control Research Institute, payable at Palakkad). **EMD:** Rs.1,00,000/-

The Tender Form can be obtained from GeM Portal/FCRI Website [www.fcriindia.com/tenders](http://www.fcriindia.com/tenders). Participation on Tender through GeM Portal only. Last date for receipt of Tender : 18th November 2024

Sd/-  
Director

**पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank**

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)  
Circle SASTRA Office, Bhalgalpur (Ground Floor-Naulakha Appt.)  
Opp DIG Kothi, Badi Khanjarpur, Bihar-812001  
Mob.No.8918536149 (Email: cs8197@pnb.co.in)

**BO: Bhalgalpur Bazar (196600) E mail: bo196600@pnb.co.in**

**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES**

E-auction Sale Notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/ symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

**SCHEDULE OF THE SECURED ASSETS**

Lot No.	Name of the Branch	Description of the Immovable Properties	A) Dt. Of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFESI ACT 2002			Date/ Time of E- Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
			B) Outstanding Amount as on	C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFESI ACT 2002	D) Nature of Possession Symbolic /Physical/Constructive		
1.	PNB- Bhalgalpur Bazar (1966000)	Primary Security-Hypothecation of stock of Auto Spare Parts And Lubricant Items. <b>COLLATERAL:-</b> 1.EM of Residential Land And Building In The Name Of Mrs. Jay Shree Devi W/o Sri Dinesh Kumar Singh Situated At Mauza -Sabour, District : Bhalgalpur +PO+PS - Sabour, District : Bhalgalpur Having Jamabandi No. _4795 , Thana No. -27, Halka No - 02, Khata No. :817 And Khesra No. : 815, Sale Deed No :5490 dated 15.04.2010 measuring Total Area Of Land 10.33 Decimal. <b>Boundary:-</b> N- Swami sri Vedanand Ji Maharaj S- Road, E- Nij Farikan,Pankaj Kumar, W-Road	A) 02.11.2023 B) As on 01.11.2023 Rs. 1,01,43,523.97 + Interest Accrued From The Date of 01.11.2023 C) 17.01.2024 D) Symbolic	A. 1,08,00,000 B. 10,80,000 C. 1,08,000	13.11.2024 From 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Nothing within the knowledge of the Bank.	

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E-AUCTION SALE**

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions.

- The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS". 2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorized Officer, but the Authorized Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation 3. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the website <https://ebkray.in> on 13.11.2024 @ 10.00 AM to 05.00 PM. For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer <https://ebkray.in> & [www.pnbindia.in](http://www.pnbindia.in).

Date: 25.10.2024  
Place: Bhalgalpur

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFESI ACT, 2002. Punjab National Bank, Secured Creditor

Authorised Officer  
(Ramesh Kumar)

**पंजाब नैशनल बैंक Punjab National Bank**

(A Govt. of India Undertaking)  
Circle SASTRA Office, Bhalgalpur (Ground Floor-Naulakha Appt.)  
Opp DIG Kothi, Badi Khanjarpur, Bihar-812001  
Mob.No.8918536149 (Email: cs8197@pnb.co.in)

**BO: Bhalgalpur Bazar ( 196600) Email -bo196600@pnb.co.in**

**SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES - M/S Abhishek Dal Mill**

E-auction Sale Notice for sale of immovable assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the security interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical/ symbolic possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of the Bank/ Secured Creditor, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on the date as mentioned in the table herein below, for recovery of its dues due to the Bank/ Secured Creditor from the respective borrower (s) and guarantor (s). The reserve price and the earnest money deposit will be as mentioned in the table below against the respective properties.

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Lot No.	Name of the Branch	Description of the Immovable Properties	A) Dt. Of Demand Notice u/s 13(2) of SARFESI ACT 2002			Date/ Time of E- Auction	Details of the encumbrances known to the secured creditors
			B) Outstanding Amount as on	C) Possession Date u/s 13(4) of SARFESI ACT 2002	D) Nature of Possession Symbolic /Physical/Constructive		
1.	PNB- Bhalgalpur Bazar (196600)	Primary Security: Mortgage Property Registered Mortgage Deed No12715 Dated 11.10.2019 Standing in the name of Sh. Dilip Kumar Sah S/o Ramakhan Sah Bearing Jamabandi No.1152, Bhag No- 7, Page No.-136 At Anchal Nath nagar, PS:- Nathnagar Office , Situated At Mohalla Bhimkitta, KB Lal Road, Nathnagar Ward No. 20, Under Municipal Corporation Bhalgalpur, Anchal Nathnagar, PS: Nathnagar and Distt. And sub Registry Bhalgalpur, Khata No.-128,Khesra no. 8 & 9 (part), Having Area of 0.0185 1/2 Hec. Equal To 2022 Sq. Ft. Distt. :- Bhalgalpur 812006. <b>Boundary:</b> North-Yogendra Yadav and Suresh Yadav, South-Gali, East-Subodh Kumar Sah, West-Thakurani Road	A) 03.06.2021 B) As on 31.05.2021 is Rs. 37,81,726.44 (Rupees Thirty Seven Lac Eighty One Thousand Seven Hundred Twenty Six And Paise Forty Four Only ) With Further interest until Payment In Full ( herein Referred to as ( Secured Debt) + Interest accrued from the date of 01.06.2021 C) 27.09.2021 D) Symbolic	A. Rs. 93,48,000 B. Rs. 934800 C. Rs. 93480	13.11.2024 From 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM	Nothing within the knowledge of the Bank.	

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF E-AUCTION SALE**

The sale shall be subject to the Terms & Conditions prescribed in the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002 and to the following further conditions.

- The properties are being sold on "AS IS WHERE IS BASIS" and "AS IS WHAT IS BASIS" and "WHATEVER THERE IS BASIS". 2. The particulars of Secured Assets specified in the Schedule hereinabove have been stated to the best of the information of the Authorized Officer, but the Authorized Officer shall not be answerable for any error, misstatement or omission in this proclamation 3. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through e-auction platform provided at the website <https://ebkray.in> on 13.11.2024 @ 10.00 AM to 05.00 PM. For detailed term and conditions of the sale, please refer <https://ebkray.in> & [www.pnbindia.in](http://www.pnbindia.in).

Date: 25.10.2024  
Place: Bhalgalpur

STATUTORY SALE NOTICE UNDER RULE 8(6) OF THE SARFESI ACT, 2002. Punjab National Bank, Secured Creditor

Authorised Officer  
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## INDIA LOSE TO THAILAND

*Chonburi:* 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 on Sunday. 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. **PTI**

## BRIEFLY

## WTT Champions: Manika's campaign ends in quarterfinals

*Montpellier:* Manika Batra crashed out of the WTT Champions after a quarter-final straight game defeat against China's Qian Tianyi in Montpellier, France. The Indian, a world No. 30, went down to Tianyi 8-11, 8-11, 10-12 in just 25 minutes on Saturday night. Batra, a multiple Commonwealth Games medallist, fought well in all three games, but her Chinese opponent played the crunch points better to emerge the winner. The first Indian to enter the WTT quarterfinals, Batra had shocked world number 14 Bernadette Szocs of Romania 11-9, 6-11, 13-11, 11-9 on Friday to enter the last eight. Tianyi too had caused an upset in the pre-quarterfinals, stunning world No. 4 compatriot and the top seed here Yidi Wang 11-7, 11-9, 13-11. **PTI**

## Para badminton: India wins 24 medals

*Tokyo:* Sivarajan Solaimalai and Sukant Kadam delivered standout performances, helping India win 24 medals at the Japan Para Badminton International. India won six gold, nine silver and as many bronze medals in the tournament. Sivarajan enjoyed a double victory, clinching gold in the men's singles SH6 class and partnering with Sudarsan Saravanakumar Muthusamy to win the top prize in men's doubles. Sukant also excelled, taking gold in men's singles (SL4) and silver in men's doubles (SL3-SL4) with partner Dinesh Rajaiah. **PTI**

## Despite disallowed Nepal goal, India lose

*Kathmandu:* India crashed out of the SAFF Women's Championship as they lost to Nepal 2-4 in penalty shootout in the semifinal match marred by utter confusion after the home side held up play for more than one hour in protest against a decision of the referee, here on Sunday. When the shoot-out ended, the total duration of the match was nearly three hours since the start. India took the lead in the 62nd minute through Sangita Basfore's shot. Nepal then scored but the goal was denied by the referee. After that, the match was held up for more than 70 minutes as Nepal refused to continue, protesting the referee's decision. **PTI**

## Thalaivas fight back to pull off draw

*Hyderabad:* Tamil Thalaivas made a stunning comeback as they pulled off a tie in the dying seconds of the match against the Jaipur Pink Panthers in the Pro Kabaddi League here on Sunday. The two sides ended the game locked on 30-30 with Sachin top-scoring for the Tamil Thalaivas with 11 points in his name. For the Jaipur Pink Panthers, Arjun Deshwal scored seven points and Vikash Kandola added six more. The result was also the second time a game has ended in a tie in PKL Season 11 so far. **PTI**

## Latham, the quiet achiever

How the eternal stand-in, multi-utility cricketer, who could bat from one to eight, pulled off the greatest heist beating India in India

## SANDIPG

PUNE, OCTOBER 27

STEADY THE Ship, the Kane Williamson cheer group that downs pints of beer in their ubiquitous sailor hats and revels in the stands, calls Tom Latham Dave Franco, because the cricketer uncannily resembles the Hollywood actor and director best known for his support roles. The nickname has soared to cult realm in New Zealand, so much so that someone walking along the street would call him Dave Franco, and he would turn back. Or so the myth travels.

For a decade, he has been the dutiful apprentice and sidekick to Kane Williamson. The man performing his multiple functions in the shadows of arguably his country's greatest cricketer, Latham has been the eternal stand-in, multi-utility cricketer. A stop gap opener in Tests before he became a regular; a makeshift wicket-keeper; a stand-in captain before he became the real one. In white-ball cricket, he has batted from one to eight; he was once thrust T20I captaincy from wilderness. He has donned the roles of blunting the new ball to shredding the old ball; he has been their middle-over bulwark as well as their lower-order finisher. Once, he has humbly told Otago Daily: "I was the youngest one in most of the teams I had played and so I was often asked to do everything. And I would do those."

Maybe, it's the resourcefulness you naturally ingrain when you are one of the smallest countries in the world, with one of the slightest budgets and the sparsest player pool. There was another reason why his childhood coach Neil Fletcher says he was dispensed with many chores. "It's because he was gifted and he gave his 100 percent to whatever he did. He took the game very seriously, and that's why he has built such a successful career. He's always had a really good understanding of his own game. At an early age, that was quite visible ahead of players his own age. And he hits more balls than anyone. There's no secret to his success," he says.

He was only 14 when he began opening for his club Burnside West University. Just when the team reached the ground, the coach realised that Shane Bond, on his recovery road to the national team after an injury, was in the rival team. Fletcher was frightened and decided to push him down the order. But Latham told

Tom Latham became the first New Zealand captain to win a Test series in India. **PTI**

him: "Don't worry coach, one day or the other I have to face bowlers as fast as him," he told him. The coach was still reluctant, before Tom's father Rod, a former international opener himself, assured him: "Let's see if he's got the stuff.. If he's not good enough, maybe, he needs to rethink his future."

## Latham's bravery

Rod, a buccaneering opener and dabbly-dobbyly artist, was never a pushy father. He didn't introduce him to cricket either. "So after retiring from international cricket, I began working at a sports shop in Christchurch and when he was around 4-5, my employer presented Tom with a cut-

down cricket bat. I was surprised he picked it up left-handed," Rod had told stuff.co.nz.

Soon, his son showed he was good enough. When he took guard, one of the fielders sledged him. "Something like, have you carried enough nappies or do you have a feeding bottle, some silly stuff. But Tom hardly listened to all this rubbish. He was just waiting for the biggest moment of his life. He even snatched the strike from his senior partner," says Fletcher. Unfazed, Latham stroked an unbeaten 92. Marvelled, Bond gave him an autographed ball. He told his father: "Brave lad, I'm sure he will be a Black Cap like you."

Not just another Black Cap, but the first cap-

tain of his country to win a Test series in India. He inhabits a rarified space alongside Ricky Ponting and Alastair Cook, the other two captains who have conquered India at home. Go back further, bigger names descend, Imran Khan, Clive Lloyd. Latham doesn't strut with the aura of them, each a legend of the game. Two of the greatest batsmen of their time, two of the all-time great captains. Latham might not scale the heights they have; he is just one among his teammates. That is the brand of his captaincy too.

He is nearly invisible on the field. He lets the bowlers be themselves, he helps them set the field. But doesn't impose himself on the field. He lets the batsmen play their nat-

**He took the game very seriously, and that's why he has built such a successful career. He's always had a really good understanding of his own game. At an early age, that was quite visible ahead of players his own age. And he hits more balls than anyone. There's no secret to his success"**

## NEIL FLETCHER

LATHAM'S CHILDHOOD COACH

ural game. He rarely yells or shouts, or even picks an argument with the umpire. At times, he looks like Williamson without the mendicant's beard, similarly composed. His blueprint is simple: "What I want to do is to encourage the guys to be themselves, be leaders amongst themselves as well. If we can do that we can play the brand of cricket we want to play."

The turnaround he has inspired was swift. From losing 2-0 to an eternally in flux Sri Lanka to leading a powerful India 2-0. In Sri Lanka, they had looked like a rusty bunch of ragtag individuals rather than a robust team. Now, they seem like a world-beating team in progress. Everyone wants to perform to their optimal potential. Mitchell Santner braved his side soreness in the second innings. But Latham shies away from limelight.

In that sense, he has forged a team in his image, a group willing to stretch the limits of their talent, a bunch with clear plans and steel to execute those. There were no frills about them, they were spectacularly unspectacular, but there is an inner streak of aggression and resoluteness. "We've wanted to fire a shot. We've wanted to be the one that puts India under pressure, what that may look like from a batting point of view or a bowling point of view," Latham said in his press conference. It was one of the rare instances when he sounded emphatic.

The Lathams would now be referred in as reverential tones as the New Zealanders would the Hadlees and Crowes and Bracewells, the elite sporting families of the country. Perhaps, even better, because Tom Latham has achieved what no other New Zealand captain ever had. Dave Franco, though, would have the halo of Russell Crowe, New Zealand's finest export to Hollywood.

## Woeful Indian batting helps New Zealand level women's ODI series 1-1

## VINAYAKK MOHANARANGAN

OCTOBER 27

AMELIA KERR – player of the final and player of the tournament at the T20 World Cup recently – was ruled out of the remainder of the ODI series against India in Ahmedabad. An absence like that is not easy to fill because New Zealand effectively needs two players to do the job that an elite allrounder like Kerr does.

Thankfully for them, they had a certain Sophie Devine leading their charge. The White Ferns captain put in an all-round show (79 off 86 balls and 3/27) that more than made up for Kerr's absence as the visitors beat Harmanpreet Kaur's India by 76 runs to register an emphatic win in the second ODI and level the three-match series 1-1.

## Top order disorder

Chasing 260 was going to be tricky but

Radha Yadav scored 48 runs in India's failed run chase on Sunday. **Sportzpics**

India's batting performance was woeful from the word go. Smriti Mandhana was once again out caught at backward point off a lazy lofted shot, Shafali Verma soon fol-

lowed suit by getting trapped plumb in front and wasting a review to boot. The only hint of resistance from a top-order batter came from captain Harmanpreet, who returned to the XI and played a decent hand of 24 but Devine accounted for her counterpart. At one point India were 108/8 and looked to be in danger of folding well before the 30-over mark.

But then came a valiant partnership of 70 for the 9th wicket between Radha Yadav and Saima Thakor that kept NZ on the field much longer than they'd have wanted. That the team's highest stand came that far down said a story but the two lower-order batters produced what is now India's record for the 9th wicket partnership in women's ODIs. Radha eventually fell for a defiant 48.

## Mixed day on the field

On the personal front, it was actually a memorable day for Radha. She is one of the

few Indian players who could stake a place in the squad, and even the playing XI regularly, just purely based on her fielding skills. That she is a solid spinner and a handy lower-order batter makes her a proper 3-dimensional asset.

And on Sunday she showed off her stunning catching skills – not once, but twice. In the 32nd over, debutant Priya Mishra was in the middle of a solid spell but was still searching for her first senior international wicket. She had been unlucky until that point but Radha came up with a blinder. As Brooke Halliday mis-hit a wrong'un from Priya, the ball skied over to Radha who started running back from cover. It still seemed a tough ask, but as the ball was on its way down, Radha put in a full-length dive and didn't let it slip as she landed heavily.

And before that, she had taken another fabulous catch to dismiss Georgia Plimmer. Deepthi Sharma's ball stopped on the opener and her attempted push through mid-

wicket looped up. It still looked to be falling safely until Radha put in a late dive to pluck the ball inches away from the ground. India's catching was still suspect overall on the day, but Radha's two efforts were a reminder why she is one of the best in the business. She also picked up four wickets but went for 69 runs.

Deepthi, however, had the exact opposite kind of day. She had a nightmare on the field, dropping a few easy catches but was the best Indian bowler on display, with figures of 2/30 in her 10 overs. The decisive performance of the day, however, came from Devine who rode her luck early on before playing a well-constructed innings with the bat. Fellow veteran Suzie Bates too chipped in with a half-century at the top of the order to ensure NZ posted a total that was well out of India's reach.

**BRIEF SCORES: New Zealand** 259/9 (Devine 79; Radha 4/69) beat **India** 183 (Radha 48; Devine 3/27) by 76 runs.

## WASTED TALENT

## Mumbai's despondency after investing in Prithvi isn't surprising

## SANDEEP DWIVEDI

"PRITHVI SHAW is born to play cricket... He's a spectator's delight. There's a bit of Sachin there, a bit of Viru in him and when he walks – there's a bit of Lara as well."

That was Indian cricket's eternal optimist Ravi Shastri on Prithvi Shaw after his sparkling 2018 Test debut that had a sumptuous stroke-filled hundred. Shastri is a shrewd man. He is prone to exaggeration but at most times it seems he willingly allows his excitement to overpower his very sound cricketing acumen. When Shastri flashes, he flashes hard.

Shastri is conscious of the impact of high-praise on young minds. With Prithvi it didn't work. His short international career shows he didn't quite have 'a bit' of what Sachin, Viru or Lara had. All he was, was 'a bit' of disappointment.

When Shastri was the head coach, he is said to have tried the 'good as well as the bad cop' approach with Prithvi. It was futile. Runs dried, he started to gain weight and stories of his indiscipline would spread on the circuit. Prithvi would lose his place in Tests, ODIs and T20I.

This week, Mumbai selectors also failed to see either Sachin, Viru or Lara in Prithvi. What they finally couldn't overlook was the 35 percent body fat of their acclaimed opener. At 24, Prithvi resembled an overweight cricketer, the kinds who play corporate tournaments on weekends.

That maiden boy with an unruly mop of

hair and the charming Dennis-the-menace naughty smile had gone missing. Once he was said to rule the world, but now he wasn't among the top cricketers in his city. A promise had been broken and the collective investment of a city had gone bad.

There were many who walked the extra mile, put their money where the mouth was so the teen prodigy from Virar would walk the Tendulkar path. Despite the best of efforts, Project Prithvi didn't go as planned. There was support for him, he got the break at the right time, he was given chances, he was even indulged. But Prithvi didn't keep his part of the bargain, he didn't give his all to the game. He always faced questions about his fitness and work ethics. He can't escape the blame.

## Rooting for young Prithvi

Prithvi was three when his mother passed away. She had asthma. There's this old documentary called "Beyond all boundaries" that was shot when Prithvi was 8. It has candid footage of a tiny Prithvi dressing up after a bath in his modest Virar home. He was towel wrapped around his waist and is being helped by his father to get into his trousers. It's an endearing clip, you can't but root for the youngster, if nothing just for the young father's dedication.

This was a story of a spectacular punt that was bordering on foolishness. Prithvi's father gave up his ready-made clothes business as he had to travel often outside Mumbai. When he is asked what he did, the reply is puzzling:

Prithvi Shaw was recently dropped from the Mumbai Ranji team. **PTI**

"Nothing". He cooks for the two, packs a tiffin for his son and takes the harrowing ride on the local train – the two and half hours of hell from Virar to Churchgate.

The most endearing character from that Prithvi documentary is his early benefactor – local politician Sanjay Potnis. To eliminate their travel travails, he gave the father and son a flat

in Santa Cruz – an extraordinary favour in the sea-side city where land is insanely expensive and severely scarce.

The big-hearted politician is seen sitting on a chair speaking to the camera with Prithvi training in the background. Potnis asks Prithvi to play a reverse scoop over the keeper. Prithvi obliges. Potnis swells with pride, starts gig-

## This week, Mumbai selectors also failed to see either Sachin, Viru or Lara in Prithvi. What they finally couldn't overlook was the 35 percent body fat of their acclaimed opener.

gling like a child. He looks at the kid in pads like a proud craftsman displaying his work of art. He says he is privileged to be part of a famous cricketing journey. Just like Sachin's friends from Sahitya Sahawas. "See, he will do what I say. He is everyone's pet, every eye is on him" he says.

The erstwhile darling of the country's cricket fans is now seen as a wasted talent. Prithvi would also hit headlines for wrong reasons. There were whispers when he failed a dope test. He blamed it on an off-the-counter cough syrup. More eyebrows were raised.

The last straw probably was the grainy visuals on social media of him allegedly in a late night brawl outside a luxury hotel. This murky tale also featured a startle, a car chase, a base-ball bat and a broken windshield.

This happened around 4 am, roughly the time Prithvi's father would get up in Virar back in the day. How times change.

This was the time of the day a Wellington man, a couple of us reporters met during India's tour of New Zealand in 2009, had

# Lewandowski, Yamal spoil Mbappe's first Classico



Robert Lewandowski and Lamine Yamal scored three of Barcelona's four goals against Real Madrid. AP

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MADRID, OCTOBER 27

ROBERT LEWANDOWSKI scored twice and Lamine Yamal piled on to ruin Kylian Mbappé's first classico as Barcelona routed Real Madrid 4-0. The lopsided victory in Spain's capital ended the host's unbeaten run in La Liga at 42 games, one shy of Barcelona's record streak in 2017-18. Carlo Ancelotti's side suffered its first loss since Sept. 23 last year.

And what a loss it was. Lewandowski got the visitors going from a superb pass by Barcelona's latest youth talent Marc Casadó in the 54th minute and rose up to head in a fine header three minutes later to silence Santiago Bernabeu Stadium.

Yamal made it a rout in the 77th when the teenage phenom rifled a shot from an angle over goalkeeper Andriy Lunin. That goal made him the youngest scorer in a classico at 17 years, 105 days, surpassing teammate Ansu Fati, who was about 250 days older in October 2020.

Raphinha then broke free with Madrid completely unhinged and chipped Lunin in the 84th. The win came three days after Barcelona thumped Bayern Munich 4-1 in the Champions League. It has outscored its last five opponents 21-2. "We came here to do just this," Yamal said. "We had lots of confidence and when we scored the second goal, we wanted to score a third, and then a fourth, as many goals as possible. To win 4-0 at this ground and beat Bayern 4-1, we showed that we are ready for anything." It is an understatement that Mbappé had a frustrating first game against Barcelona in a white shirt.

The France star was caught eight times off-side by Barcelona's synchronized back four and failed to beat second-choice goalkeeper Iñaki Peña one-on-one with his team down two goals. "We knew that they played with a high line, and we just couldn't take advantage of it," Ancelotti said. "Sometimes (Mbappé) fell off-side, but he had three or four chances to score and needed a better finishing touch." Hansi Flick, meanwhile, had a night to remember in the first classico for the German coach.

Barcelona still has financial troubles that cast doubt over its future but its youthful team has made huge steps forward since Flick replaced Barcelona great Xavi Hernández in the summer.

**Action after racist insults**  
*Reuters adds:* La Liga and Real Madrid reacted strongly after racist insults were allegedly directed at Barcelona players during the El Clasico. Spanish media reported Barcelona forward Lamine Yamal, who is of Equatorial Guinean and Moroccan heritage, was targeted with xenophobic and racist abuse. Real Madrid said they had opened an investigation to identify the perpetrators. "Real Madrid strongly condemns any kind of behaviour involving racism, xenophobia or violence in football and sport, and deeply regrets the insults that a few fans uttered last night in one of the corners of the stadium," the club said.

## INTERVIEW: HARSHIT RANA

# 'I am a three-format bowler'

Pacer has taken rapid strides—from stress fracture issues to being picked for the Test series in Australia

PRATYUSH RAJ  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

BEING WOKEN up by his father at 4 am to watch India playing in Australia on television is a Delhi winter-morning memory of fast bowler Harshit Rana. Harshit was six years old the first time this happened. He even threw tantrums because he wanted to continue sleeping.

"Wo toh dekhna hi padta tha (I used to watch it as I had no other option)," Harshit tells *The Indian Express* after completing a five-wicket haul in the Ranji Trophy match against Assam in New Delhi.

The 22-year-old's career is on the fast track after he was selected for the five-match Test tour of Australia. Wickets this season for IPL champions Kolkata Knight Riders put him in the limelight. A quick rise for a fast bowler who had struggled with injuries even before he turned 20.

There is another India-in-Australia link. Watching the Indian team perform though their backs were against the wall in the 2020-21 series; Cheteshwar Pujara taking body blows, the Ravichandran Ashwin-Hanuma Vihari partnership, made Harshit determined to play for the country.

"The last BGT series was really inspirational, and the way we won it motivated me," Harshit said.

The series coincided with the time he was struggling with one stress fracture after another. His father Pradeep Rana, who represented the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) in hammer throw and weightlifting, recalls the tough days.

"First it was the back, then it was groin, then calf and a niggle in the shoulder. Every part of his body was injured. During that time I had taken him to many hospitals just to understand why he is breaking down. I even took him to an Ayurveda facility in Najafgarh. Whatever knowledge I gained from watching videos, and reading news items, I tried everything," Pradeep said.

Finally, when there was no permanent solution, they decided to leave it to destiny.

"We enjoyed the Test series. The win was amazing and I could literally see him getting motivated. Navdeep Saini was bowling with an injured groin. Pujara took so many hits on his body. The Ashwin and Vihari partnership in Sydney. After watching these heroics Harshit expressed his desire to play for India," Pradeep said.

Harshit dedicates his maiden Test call-up



Harshit Rana took five wickets against Assam at the Kotla ground. File/PTI

to his father. "During my teenage years I was getting injured too often but my father stood like a rock behind me. He told me that it was okay even if I don't become a professional cricketer. Whatever I am today, it is because of my father," Harshit said. He has been close to getting picked for

the Indian team before but hasn't played a game in any format till date. He was part of the T20 team for the tour of Zimbabwe and the home series against Bangladesh. He was also a reserve for the first Test against New Zealand in Bengaluru. "I was hopeful (of going to Australia). I

"During my teenage years I was getting injured too often but my father stood like a rock behind me. He told me that it was okay even if I don't become a professional cricketer. Whatever I am today, it is because of my father."

HARSHIT RANA

was with the team and the management was kind of preparing me for this tour," Harshit said. He has wanted to have a crack at the Australians.

"My father's dream is to watch me play in England. But I always wanted to play against Australia because I am competitive in nature and Australia also plays the same brand of cricket. I am really looking forward to this tour," he added.

### Losing weight

A hamstring injury that resulted in him missing the entire 2023-24 Ranji Trophy season was a wake up call of sorts to get as fit as possible. From November 2023 to the start of the IPL 2024 in March, he shed 17 kgs. Now he has been injury-free for seven months.

"The team management is looking after my workload. I just want to play for India whether it is T20s, ODIs or Test matches. I see myself as a three-format bowler," Harshit added. The experience of travelling and training with the Indian team has been a learning curve for Harshit.

When he was a reserve for the Test team recently, he got the chance to pick the brains of legends. "Both Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma asked me to focus on my length. Bowling to them is completely different to what I have experienced before. They train with the same intensity in the nets like they bat in the match. Once you bowl at them it feels like you were playing a match. I also spoke to Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Siraj about the length that one should bowl in Australia. They have shared their inputs as well," he added.

Harshit caught the attention of Team India's head coach Gautam Gambhir when he was with KKR as mentor.

With Gambhir now the India coach, the speedster hopes he can be successful in India colours also. "Gautam bhैया has backed me from the start. He has always given me the right guidance. He has taken me under his wings in the IPL and since then I have improved as a cricketer."

## RANJI ROUNDUP

### Delhi's spot of bother

New Delhi: Delhi's woes with the willow continued as the team struggled to 214 for six after the likes of Yash Dhull and Himmat Singh failed to convert their starts into substantial knocks in their Ranji Trophy match against Assam here on Sunday. Resuming at their overnight score of 264 for six, Assam's first innings innings ended at 330 with wicketkeeper Sumit Ghadigaonkar making 162 off 237 balls. PTI

**Brief Scores:** Assam 330 (Sibsankar Roy 59, Sumit Ghadigaonkar 162; Harshit Rana 5/80) vs Delhi 214-6 (Himmat Singh 55; Swarupam Purkayastha 3/46).

### Kaushik century boosts UP

Mullanpur: Opening batter Madhav Kaushik's unbeaten 128 handed Uttar Pradesh an upper hand against Punjab as they reached 293 for 3 on Day 2 of their Ranji Trophy Group C match here on Sunday. UP resumed the day at 8/0 after the hosts made 210 in their first innings, and they are ahead by 83 runs at stumps with seven wickets in hand. The Kaushik and Priyam Garg (27) pair added 43 more to the UP total before the latter became Brar's second victim. PTI

**Brief Scores:** Punjab 210 (Pukhraj Mann 61; Shivam Mavi 4/29) vs UP 293/3 (Madhav Kaushik 128 batting, Nitish Rana 66, Mulani Singh 46 batting; Gurnoor Brar 2/66).

### Mumbai in driver's seat

Agartala: Defending champions Mumbai took control, amassing a solid 450 in their first innings against Tripura, bolstered by impressive fifties from late-order batsmen—Shams Mulani (71), Himanshu Singh (59), and Shardul Thakur (62). Tripura were 60 for 1 in response, with Jivanjot Singh (39) and Parvez Sultan (1) at the crease. Resuming at 248 for 6, Mulani and Himanshu added 61 runs before Mulani was trapped LBW by Manisankar Murasingh (3/117). PTI

**Brief Scores:** Mumbai: 450 all-out in 122.4 overs (Suryansh Shedge 99, Shams Mulani 71; M Murasingh 3/117) vs Tripura 60 for 1 in 19 overs (Jivanjot Singh 39, Himanshu Singh 1/5).

# Chhattisgarh make TN toil, using TNCA league experience

VENKATA KRISHNA B  
OCTOBER 27, COIMBATORE

THEY PUSHED Delhi at home. They came close to surprising Saurashtra at Rajkot. And now in their Ranji Trophy fixture against Tamil Nadu, Chhattisgarh are dreaming of causing a huge upset at Coimbatore. Thanks to a grinding effort from their middle-order batsmen, who gave absolutely nothing away, resuming at an overnight score of 293/2, Chhattisgarh ended up with 500 in their first innings. The SNR College pitch which has mostly been on sleep mode threatened to get active towards the end of Day 2 on Sunday.

Despite 177.1 overs being sent over two days, the shoe marks haven't managed to create rough patches beyond the crease.

In the final hour, an odd ball kept low, but still Tamil Nadu having already lost opener S Lokeshwar to off-spinner Jivesh Butte have a task at hand to overhaul Chhattisgarh's mammoth total and take home three points.



Tamil Nadu's left-arm spinner S Ajith Ram celebrates the wicket of Chhattisgarh's Amandeep Khare. TNCA

An outright win for the hosts looks far-fetched even if they wish to take the game forward with their aggressive intent.

This pitch played into Chhattisgarh's hands who had already batted long and frustrated Delhi and Saurashtra in the earlier two rounds. With most of their players featuring in the TNCA First Division League, they were familiar with the hosts' attack and having featured in the Buchi Babu Tournament a couple of months, they knew what to expect. "Psychologically, if you score 500 it will put some impact on the other team so as a batting unit we did it really well. We want to win this game outright because last two matches didn't go our way," Chhattisgarh captain Amandeep Khare said.

And full credit to Chhattisgarh for sticking to their plan. Having conceded nearly 300 runs on Day 1, TN ensured Chhattisgarh were not going to find easy runs. But where Chhattisgarh had the hosts short was with their guessing game. In the morning session, instead of asserting their full authority, they

chose to be tentative as TN sniffed an opening and attacked.

It brought them the wickets of two well-settled batsmen Anuj Tiwary (84) and Sanjeet Desai (82) and that of Chhattisgarh captain and their in-form batsman Amandeep Khare.

But in that first session where TN sent down 34 overs, Chhattisgarh scored only 66 runs. "We wanted to be cautious because TN were getting something off the surface. Our lower order can also score vital runs, so it was all about playing to our strengths," Khare added.

And it was their No 5 and 6, who sucked all the juice out of TN's attack. In the post-lunch session, as TN attacked, Eknath Kerkar and Ajay Mandal frustrated them with their defensive approach in a 91-run stand that came in 184 deliveries and was ended only off the last ball before tea. They withheld aggressive shots and quietly built a partnership before shifting gears towards the end of the second session as Madal and Kerkar went in

search of boundaries. It signalled a declaration was around the cards.

But once Kerkar was dismissed, Chhattisgarh would again go back to patiently grinding their way towards a total that would challenge TN.

In the last session, with Chhattisgarh showing no real intent, TN would once again go back to working hard in search of wickets and it was their two left-arm spinners—S Ajith Ram and M Siddharth—who would do all the hardwork.

"It was definitely challenging," Ajith who picked 4/132 in 47 overs said. "There was not much help, so you had to be patient and build pressure by altering the pace. Of course, you had to be incredibly consistent with your lengths here. But the key thing is the pace," Ajith said.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Chhattisgarh 500 (Aayush Pandey 124, Anuj Tiwary 84, Sanjeet Desai 82, Eknath Kerkar 52, Ajay Mandal 64; Ajith Ram 4/132) vs Tamil Nadu 23-1 (Ajith Ram 10 batting; Jivesh Butte 1/5) by 477 runs.

# Late Bowen penalty gives West Ham dramatic win over Manchester United

SCORELINE	
Man Utd	West Ham
1	2
Casemiro 81'	Summerville 74'
	Bowen 90+2' (P)

REUTERS  
LONDON, OCTOBER 27

JARROD BOWEN converted a controversial last-gasp penalty to lift West Ham United to a 2-1 Premier League victory over Manchester United in a fluctuating clash between two struggling sides on Sunday. Crysencio Summerville scored his first goal in a West Ham shirt as they climbed past their visitors to 13th in the table on 11 points after nine games, level with 14th-placed Manchester United.

Although Man United's loss was only their second in 10 matches across all competitions, it will put manager Erik ten Hag under pressure again. "Three times this season we feel injustice," Ten Hag told the BBC. "We have to score, we created so many chances. We should've been two or three up. "Second half we were forcing it but we allowed them into the game. When you are



West Ham United's Jarrod Bowen (L) celebrates scoring their second goal with Danny Ings. Reuters

losing 1-0 you need big personality and character of the team and showed resilience to get back into it. Unfair and unjust the way we conceded the penalty."

Bowen netted in the 92nd minute, stepping up to the penalty spot after a lengthy VAR review showed Matthijs de Ligt had clipped the leg of Danny Ings, a decision that left Ten Hag shaking his head.

"I spoke with (the officials)," Ten Hag said. "But the decision is made. There's no way back and that's football."

Bowen launched a low penalty just inside the post, beyond the hands of Andre Onana who dived the right way.

West Ham were fortunate not to concede in a first half dominated by their northern rivals and were much brighter in the second after manager Julen Lopetegui brought on Summerville and Tomas Soucek. "Happy for the three points. We are happy for the fans and players, they deserve this victory after suffering a lot in the first half," Lopetegui said. "Second half we changed different things and the first half was for them but the second was for us. We were able to compete better and win the match."

Summerville got them on the scoreboard in the 74th minute when he slid in at full stretch to poke home Danny Ings' scuffed shot. Seven minutes later, Casemiro silenced the home fans when Diogo Dalot headed across goal from a cross, Joshua Zirkzee helped it on, and the Brazilian midfielder nodded home at the back post.

The travelling supporters' celebrations were short-lived, however, and after 12 minutes of added time they were left to rue another loss. Ten Hag's team will regret their opportunities squandered, particularly in the first half starting with a long shot inside two minutes that Alejandro Garnacho rattled off the crossbar. "We have to look in the mirror, we don't score in a good game from our side," Ten Hag said.

# Armaan wins three pickleball titles

NAMIT KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 27

ARMAAN BHATIA won all three of his finals to emerge with three titles at the first flag-ship pickleball event held in New Delhi. On Sunday, he won the men's singles, mixed doubles, and men's doubles crowns of the PWR DUPR India Masters at the Delhi Lawn Tennis Association (DLTA) stadium.

The 25-year-old Mumbai-based player, who turned an aspirational career in tennis into a high-standing one in pickleball, is currently Asia's top-ranked pickleball player and showcased his abilities with a remarkable turnaround 8-11, 11-9, 11-8 victory over Dusty Boyer in the men's singles final, then winning the mixed doubles title with Roos van Reek and the men's doubles title alongside compatriot Harsh Mehta.

Among Bhatia's successful results, the one against top seed Boyer, an American star, in the singles final will remain the highlight. Despite starting well, he slumped to a one-set deficit and faced a mountain to climb while trailing in the second, before winning a few points in a row to force a decider. Boyer was decidedly ahead at the start of the third, fashioning an 8-0 lead before Bhatia roared his way back to clinch the title.

"I was leading almost the whole time, and felt in control but he just kept making big shots. I think I played at the same level throughout but he kept getting better and better and maybe I didn't respond to it well



Armaan Bhatia, 25, was a tennis player before switching to pickleball. Express

enough," Boyer would say after the match.

With pickleball—a singles and doubles racquet sport with rules and play similar to that of tennis or badminton—gaining pace as a popular recreational sport in urban cities of India, New Delhi has hosted the international professional event of repute, a Pickleball World Rankings (PWR) 700, for the first time hoping to draw in enthusiasts and build an audience for the sport.

"It's a new sport, so some crowds are coming in. Those that play pickleball and it's

enthusiasts are coming in. Right now it's the first event of its kind at this level so it's gaining popularity. This is just the start, so for a start, this has been great event," Aditya Khanna, tournament director and co-founder of PWR, said.

Boyer, a former professional tennis player, was glad that this tournament happened to be his first professional international event. "Tough result for me but this week and the reception has been fantastic," he said. "The hospitality is great, the people are super friendly and they are showing a real excitement for the game. It's awesome to see pickle growing, this is my first international tournament and it has been my most electric."

He was bullish about the prospects of better players emerging from India. "I think the level here is only going to get better. India can produce great athletes. I remember when I came up against them when I was playing tennis, I hated it because they used to have such great hands and be so crafty—great in doubles. Those skills transfer onto pickleball," Boyer added. **RESULTS (FINALS) Men's singles:** Armaan Bhatia bt Dusty Boyer 8-11, 11-8, 11-9; **Women's singles:** Sofia Sewing bt Kao Pei Chuan 11-3, 11-2; **Men's doubles:** Armaan Bhatia/Harsh Mehta bt Roman Estereja/Mitch Hargreaves 11-3, 11-2; **Women's doubles:** Roos van Reek/ Kaitlynn Heart bt Yuchieh Hsieh/ Xiao Yi Wang-Beckvall 11-5, 8-11, 11-7; **Mixed doubles:** Armaan Bhatia/Roos van Reek bt George Wall/ Danni Elle Townsend 11-5, 10-11, 11-1.

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