

Toothless Tiger: Panchayats sans power



KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, NOV 7/--/ For Sukumar Mondal (Name changed), newly elected PRI member in N&M Andaman, the reconstitution of Panchayat Samities in Andaman & Nicobar Islands was a positive move by the central government as it was a step to give elected public representatives a chance for self-governance. But though six months have elapsed after the panchayat election, the UT administration is yet to transfer funds and staff leaving them in the lurch. Biswas has been increasingly facing the anger of his voters as he is not in a position to fulfill his election promises pertaining to taking up development works in the village as also meeting the aspirations and needs of the people of his constituency. He blamed the UT Administration's reluctance to re-transfer powers, funds and staff to the Panchayat Samities taken away during the abolition of Panchayat Samities in Sept 2020. "The Andaman & Nicobar Administration is yet to put the three-tier Panchayati Raj system

Even 8 months after election, panchayat bodies still await transfer of power and assets

in place even after more than eight months after the panchayat polls were held. Caught between the voters and the Administration, the Pramukhs and Up-Pramukhs have no way to get out of this", he rued. The Panchayat Samiti in Andaman & Nicobar Islands was abolished in Sep 2020, which was reinstated a few months ago. After abolition of Panchayat Samiti in the islands all the assets and funds have been transferred to respective Gram Panchayats and the unspent balance of funds, along with accrued interests have also been transferred to Director of RD, PRI and ULBs in 2020. But after the

Panchayat Samities were reinstated in 2022, about eight months earlier, elections for Pramukhs & Up-Pramukhs were held but till date these transferred assets and funds have not been retransferred to Panchayat Samities by the respective Gram Panchayats.

Due to the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic, developmental activities at rural villages were totally hampered for about two years but even after election was held, the development projects in rural villages have not speeded up due to shortage of funds and staff. People have elected PRIs so that the elected representatives of Panchayats can fulfill their aspirations by creating assets required in the rural villages. However, due to problems like non-transfer of powers and funds, the PRIs are still struggling to fulfill the aspiration of the people by way of creation of required assets in the villages. Another issue confronting the PRI members is lack of vehicles. Due to non-availability of vehicles, Panchayat Pramukhs are finding it hard to visit the work sites, attend vital meetings and address the grievances of the people.

Guru Nanak and his important contributions (1469–1539)

DR (MISS) SARABJEET KAUR JAGPAL

Guru Nanak was the Founder of 'The Sikh Religion'. He was followed by nine

successors. There was thus a continuous and an unbroken period of 239 years in which the teachings of Guru Nanak were assimilated and practiced. The followers of Sikh religion are known as "SINGHS". Since 1947, a large number of Sikhs have also settled in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, East Africa, Canada, UK, USA, Australia, Fiji, New Zealand and other countries. From his early childhood, Guru Nanak showed a meditative and contemplative nature. Both the Hindus and Muslims loved him. In spite of the difficult means of transportation and communications during the fifteenth and the sixteenth centuries, Guru Nanak travelled as far as Assam in the East, Sri Lanka in the South, Tibet in the North and Mecca in the West. Guru Nanak firmly believed that God is One and only One, an Absolute True Supreme Reality. Guru Nanak has been called "one of the greatest religious innovators of all time". He travelled far and wide teaching people the message of one God who dwells in every one of His creations and constitutes the eternal Truth. He set up a unique spiritual, social, and political platform based on equality, fraternal love, goodness, and virtue.

Guru Nanak's words are registered in the form of 974 poetic hymns in the holy text of Sikhism, the Guru Granth Sahib with some of the major prayers being the Japji Sahib, the Asa di Var and the Sidh-Ghost.

It is part of Sikh religious belief that the spirit of Guru Nanak's sanctity, divinity and religious authority descended upon each of the nine subsequent Gurus when the Guruship was devolved on to them. The concept of God is reflected in the prologue to the Guru Granth

Sahib which in English could be described as follows:

"Only One Immortal Supreme Entity - the Sole Creator;

The Creator is Eternal Reality - the Everlasting Truth;

The Creator of the Universe and the whole Cosmos;

The Creator, Almighty Authority is not afraid of any one;

The Creator is without any enmity - Malice towards none;

The Creator, Invisible Entity is Timeless and Formless;

The Creator is beyond birth and death, but Ever Self-Existent; and

The Creator's Grace is attainable by practicing Revealed Divine Word."

HIS REVOLT AGAINST CASTE SYSTEM

Guru Nanak considered all human beings as children of God. He further emphasised that no one can be high or low. The person who looks on all as equals is religious. When asked by the Maulvi of Mecca - "Who is superior? Hindu or Muslim?" Guru Nanak replied without any fear or favour: "God cares not for label. The Creator searches the hearts of all persons and judges them according to their action."

HIS REVOLT AGAINST SOCIAL PARASITES

Well before the advent of Guru Nanak, Indian society was surrounded by social parasites. On one end, the cruel rulers, landlords and greedy traders were exploiting the masses for their personal benefits and on the other end were the religious priests-Brahmins, Mullahs, Yogis and various fakirs. He preached that to live on the labour of others was irreligious.

PROTECTOR OF WOMEN'S CAUSE

In medieval India, women were equated with untouchables and treated as household slaves. They were sold in child marriages, condemned to a miserable widowhood, if they escaped sati immolation and were regarded unfit

for religious instructions. But Guru Nanak had the rare courage to equate women with men. Guru says, "why call them inferior when they give birth to all human beings including the Kings and Prophets?"

SALVATION THEORY

Guru Nanak rejected another popular concept that salvation could be acquired only through this 'Avatar or that Messiah.' According to Him, there are no saviours, except The Creator. Guru Nanak practiced the love of God, the love of man and loved the world as an entity resident within the Creator.

THE UNIQUE APPROACH

The unique and universal religion established by Guru Nanak can also be the religion of the modern space age. The Guru, five centuries ago, talked of millions of worlds, universes, suns and moons, as the science does reveal today and is still in the process of sighting different planets. His teachings were based on the true logic and spiritual wisdom. There is no place for blind faith, religious bigotry or fanaticism in the fundamental principles or actual day to day working of the Sikh religion. Through popular tradition, Nanak's teaching is understood to be practised in three ways:

Kirat Karo: Earning and making a living honestly, without exploitation or fraud

Va?? Chakko: Sharing with others, helping those with less who are in need

Naam Japna: Meditating on God's name to control the five weaknesses of the human personality.

Guru Nanak emphasised Nam Japna (or Naam Simran), that is repetition of God's name and attributes, as a means to feel God's presence.

SUCCESSION

Guru Nanak appointed Bhai Lehna as the successor Guru, renaming him as Guru Angad, meaning "one's very own" or "part of you". Shortly after proclaiming Bhai Lehna as his successor, on 22 September 1539, Guru Nanak Devji Ji 'Jyoti Jot Samaye' in Kartarpur, at the age of 70.

(The writer of this article is the Principal of KPSSS, Port Blair)

MV Nalanda to arrive on 9th Nov

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ MV. Nalanda is expected to arrive at Port Blair on 9th November 2022 at 0600 Hrs from Vizag. She has 378 adults on board. On arrival the vessel will be berthed at Haddo Wharf and Passengers will be disembarked immediately.

No Covid positive case today

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ No COVID positive case has been detected today in A&N Islands. Today, 16 flights with 2749 passengers arrived, out of which, 2494 passengers were vaccinated with both doses while RT-PCR test was conducted on 61 passengers and the reports are awaited.

GANG RAPE CASE

SC refuses to set aside anticipatory bail granted to ex-CS

ROOPALALL

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ In a setback to the A&N Administration, the Supreme Court on Monday refused to set aside anticipatory bail granted to former Chief Secretary, Mr. Jitendra Narain, who is facing gangrape allegation. However, the Apex Court has directed the former CS to approach the Sessions Court to apply for bail by 9th November 2022.

The Supreme Court says "Interest of justice will be served if the respondent applies for anticipatory bail before the jurisdictional Sessions Court. Let the party approach Sessions Court on November 9 and let the matter be decided by November 11 (Sessions Courts). Meanwhile, the former Chief Secretary also appeared before the SIT in connection with the gangrape investigation on Monday.

:- GREETINGS :-

On the auspicious occasion of the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji, I extend my warm greetings to all Islanders, especially the Sikh brothers and sisters and entire Sikh community.

Guru Nanak Devji taught ethical and compassionate ways to lead a life of satisfaction and fulfilment. He was an icon of truth, compassion, and righteousness. On this joyous occasion, I pray that the light of wisdom and humanity lit by Guru Nanak Devji will guide us to build a more harmonious, peaceful and compassionate world.

Let us all follow the footsteps of Guru Nanak Devji and strengthen the spirit of harmony and unity in our society.

Kuldeep Rai Sharma,
Member of Parliament,
Andaman and Nicobar Islands.

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Applications submission date extended

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ The last date for submission of application form for admission in various Postgraduate (PG) courses has been extended upto 21st November, 2022 due to non-declaration of results of various courses by the Pondicherry University. The date of counseling etc. shall be informed in due course.

MORE LOCAL ON PAGE-3

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SC upholding 10 per cent quota to EWS a slap on face of parties with vested interests: Education minister

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ The Supreme Court's decision to uphold 10 per cent reservation for economically weaker sections is a slap on the face of parties with vested interests who have tried to sow discord amongst citizens with their propaganda, Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Monday.

In a landmark verdict, the apex court by a majority view of 3:2 on Monday upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitution amendment providing 10 per cent reservation to people belonging to the economically weaker sections (EWS) in admissions and government

jobs. The apex court said the quota does not violate the basic structure of the



Dharmendra Pradhan

Constitution. "The amendment is valid and in no manner alters the basic structure of the constitution Hon.

#SupremeCourt's nod to uphold 10pc reservation for the EWS is a slap on the face of parties with vested interests who have tried to sow discord amongst citizens with their propaganda," Pradhan said in a series of tweets.

"Constitutional validity to 10% quota for EWS will open up new doors of opportunities for the economically weaker sections, especially in admission to HEIs and central govt. jobs, further strengthen social justice as well as the spirit of 'Sabka Sath and Sabka Vikas'," he added.

A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice U U Lalit pronounced four separate

verdicts on 40 petitions challenging the validity of the 103rd Constitution amendment promulgated by the Centre in 2019. While Justices Dinesh Maheshwari, Bela M Trivedi and J B Pardiwala upheld the law, Justice S Ravindra Bhat along with the CJI shot down the same in their minority view. The judges read four separate judgements for over 35 minutes in the courtroom.

"#NewIndia under the leadership of PM @narendramodi ji is not only upholding the rights of underprivileged and vulnerable sections but also making efforts to ensure everyone gets equal opportunities," the Union minister said. (PTI)



President Droupadi Murmu meeting with the recipients of the National Florence Nightingale Awards for the year 2021 to the Nursing professionals at Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Monday

Imposition of UCC in Himachal not aimed at polarisation: MoS Jitendra Singh

DHARAMSHALA, NOV 7 /--/ The BJP's poll promise of imposition of the Uniform Civil Code in Himachal Pradesh is not aimed at polarisation, Union minister Jitendra Singh said on Monday. "When they (Congress) ask why we are imposing the Uniform Civil Code (UCC) here in Himachal as 95 per cent of the population is Hindu here, it means they do not want that this law be imposed in the country," Singh told reporters here. "When there is no scope for polarisation in Himachal and still the BJP wants to impose the UCC here, it shows that we do not want to impose it for the sake of polarisation," he said. The Union minister of state for science and technology said the saffron party has announced to impose the UCC in the whole country. Talking about the BJP manifesto for the state which is going to poll on November 12, he said his party has tried to focus on areas that were ignored by the Congress.

On the issue of unemployment, Singh said: "We have talked about start-up funding to address that. Employment does not mean providing only government jobs." He said the youth in hill states think about government jobs as the only avenue for employment, but that perception needs to be changed. BJP president J P Nadda had on Sunday promised UCC and 33 per cent reservation for women in government jobs in Himachal Pradesh while releasing the party's manifesto for the assembly polls. With less than a week left for the polls in his home state, Nadda had announced various soaps, including 8 lakh jobs, scooters for girls pursuing higher education and five new medical colleges.

Releasing the BJP's 'Sankalp Patra', he promised implementation of UCC in Himachal Pradesh if the party was voted to power and said a committee would be formed for it. Focussing on women voters, Nadda released the party's separate manifesto for them announcing 33 per cent reservation in government jobs. He also announced cycles for girl students in classes 6 to 12. The BJP, which is eyeing to change the trend of alternate governments in the state, had formed a committee to take suggestions from the public to draft the manifesto. (PTI)

AAP will lose deposit in all 68 seats: Nadda

KOTKHAH, NOV 7 /--/ BJP president J P Nadda claimed on Monday that the AAP will lose the security deposit in all the 68 constituencies of Himachal Pradesh in the November 12 Assembly polls, asserting that the people of the hill state will change "riwaz, but not raaj". Addressing a public meeting in favour of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidate Chetan Bragta from the Jubbhal-Kotkhai seat, Nadda said the upcoming poll battle is about protecting the rights of the state's people and not about individuals. "This is the battle for your rights and Chetan will protect them very seriously. Protect Chetan till November 12 and he will protect your rights after that," the BJP chief said. He also lauded the role of Chetan Bragta's father Narinder Bragta, saying as a former minister, he protected the rights of the farmers and horticulturists of the region. Jubbhal-Kotkhai is a part of the state's "apple belt".

Chetan Bragta lost the 2021 by-poll from Jubbhal-Kotkhai to Rohit Thakur of

the Congress. He had contested the bypoll as an independent nominee. Bragta faces Thakur again this time, with the Aam Aadmi Party's (AAP) Srikant Chauhan also in the fray. "They say governments alternate every five years in Himachal Pradesh, but we have to change this trend as we have done in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa and other states," Nadda said. In Uttar Pradesh, he said the saffron party was elected to power twice in succession after a gap of 38 years.

"I went to Goa and saw the banners of the AAP. People said it was contesting in 39 of the 40 seats. It lost the deposit in 35 of those 39 seats in Goa. In Uttar Pradesh, it lost the deposit in 349 of the 350 seats it contested. In Uttarakhand, the AAP contested 69 seats and lost the deposit in 65. "In Himachal Pradesh too, we have to ensure that the AAP loses the deposit in all the 68 constituencies," Nadda said amid slogans of "Ek bar BJP, bar bar BJP". "Give a clear message to the Congress that

riwaz (tradition) badal raha hai, raaj (power) nahi," the BJP chief asserted amid cheers from the gathering.

This is the first time that Nadda has launched an attack on the AAP from his poll rallies in the hill state. The BJP chief enumerated several schemes launched by the saffron party's government at the Centre led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and said Himachal Pradesh has also benefitted from those. "Modiji and (Chief Minister) Jairam Thakur have empowered the common people of Himachal," he said, urging people to elect a "double-engine" government again by helping the BJP retain power in the state. Nadda said 28 lakh people from the state are getting the benefits of free foodgrains under the Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana. He also listed out other central schemes that have benefitted the people of Himachal Pradesh. (PTI)

Delhi govt to reopen primary classes from Nov 9, revokes work-from-home order

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ The Delhi government on Monday decided to reopen primary classes from November 9 and revoke the order asking 50 per cent of its staff to work from home in view of improvement in the city's air quality.

At a press conference, Delhi environment minister Gopal Rai said there has been a rapid improvement in the air pollution situation in Delhi and farm fires have also reduced. "Therefore, it has been decided to lift the curbs imposed under stage 4 of the Graded Response Action Plan in compliance with the direction from the Commission for Air Quality Management," Rai said. "Primary schools will reopen from November 9 and the order asking 50 per cent of the government staff to work from home is being revoked," the minister said.

As the air pollution in Delhi-NCR ameliorated over the last two days, the Centre's air quality panel Sunday directed authorities to lift the ban on plying of non-BS VI diesel light motor vehicles in the region and the entry of trucks into the capital imposed under the final stage of the Graded Response Action Plan. The CAQM order recommending the restrictions was issued on Thursday. High pollution levels had prompted the Delhi government to announce additional measures on Friday, including the closure of primary schools from Saturday and work from home for 50 per cent of its staff.

The 24-hour average air quality index of Delhi improved from 447 on Friday to 381 on Saturday and further to 339 on Sunday, primarily due to favourable wind speed and a drop in the contribution of stubble burning. (PTI)

Centre opposes plea before Delhi HC assailing provisions of surrogacy law

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ The Centre has opposed a petition filed before the Delhi High Court assailing certain provisions of the surrogacy law, saying the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021 and the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 were enacted following due procedure, with an intention to restrict the commercialisation of embryos and new-born children.

In an affidavit, the Centre has said the law was passed by Parliament after receiving comments from all the stakeholders and the provisions challenged by the petitioners regulate the procedure of assisted reproductive technology (ART) and surrogacy, which, if diluted, would defeat the whole purpose of the law. "Both Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021 and Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021 have been enacted after following due prescribed procedure as per law. Hence, there are no comments. The provisions challenged by the petitioners in the writ petition are to regulate the procedure of the ART and surrogacy. If these clauses are diluted, the whole purpose of both the Acts shall be defeated," read the counter-affidavit filed by the ministry of health and family welfare.

"Both the Acts are enacted so that the procedures followed in the ART and surrogacy can be regulated in an appropriate manner, as per rules and regulations, with an intention to restrict sale/purchase/commercialisation etc. of embryos/gametes/new born child etc.," it added. The petitioners -- Karan Balraj Mehta, an unmarried man, and Dr Pankhuri Chandra, a married woman and a mother of one -- have challenged several provisions of the surrogacy law, including the exclusion of a single man and a married woman having a child from the benefit of surrogacy as a reproductive choice and the requirement of the exercise being an altruistic surrogacy only.

The petitioners have contended that they stand ousted from availing the benefit of surrogacy as a reproductive choice, which is discriminatory and in violation of articles 14 and 21 of the Constitution. The Centre, in its reply, said the Acts are not ultra vires articles 14 and 21, and there is no violation of the fundamental rights of the petitioners. "The petition filed by the petitioners is devoid of any merits and is required to be dismissed in the interest of justice," the counter-affidavit filed by the Centre read. The petition, filed through lawyer Aditya Samadhar, has challenged the constitutionality of sections 2(e), 14(2), 21, 27(3) and 31(1) of the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Act, 2021 and sections 2(h), 2(s), 2(r), 2(zd), 2(zg), 4(ii)(a), 4(ii)(b), 4(iii), 4(II)(C), 8 and 38(1)(a) of the Surrogacy (Regulation) Act, 2021. The provisions pertain to the regulation of surrogacy and surrogacy procedures. In their plea, the petitioners have stated that commercial surrogacy is the only option available to them, but the "ban on commercial surrogacy robs them of the option".

"The personal decision of a single person about the birth of a baby through surrogacy, that is, the right of reproductive autonomy is a facet of the right to privacy guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution. Thus, the right to privacy of every citizen or person to be free from unwarranted governmental intrusion into matters fundamentally affecting a decision to bear or beget a child through surrogacy cannot be taken away," the petition says. It argues that the eligibility criteria to maximise the chances of finding the best surrogate mother would be any healthy woman above the age of majority and "the needless conditions of being genetically related, of a particular age, married and already having at least one child only constrict the universe of available candidates who may otherwise become healthy surrogate mothers". (PTI)

AAP declares 12 more candidates for Gujarat Assembly polls

AHMEDABAD, NOV 7 /--/ The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday announced the names of 12 more candidates, including former Patidar quota leader Alpesh Kathiriya, for the upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections. The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP, which has been trying to project itself as the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) main contender in Gujarat, released its 11th list of candidates on Monday. With this, it has so far declared 130 candidates for polls to the 182-member Gujarat Assembly which will be held in two phases on December 1 and 5. The counting of votes will be taken up on December 8. Kathiriya has been given the ticket from the Patidar-dominated Varachha Road seat in Surat city, currently held by former minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Kishor Kanani.

Kathiriya was a close aide of quota spearhead Hardik Patel, who joined the BJP earlier this year after quitting the Congress. Another Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti (PAAS) leader Dharmik Malaviya has been chosen for the Olpad seat in Surat, also held by the BJP. The other AAP candidates are - BT Maheshwari (to contest from Gandhidham seat), MK Bombadiya (Danta), Ramesh Nabhani (Palanpur), Mukesh Thakkar (Kankrej), Lalji Thakor (Radhanpur), Rajendrasinh Parmar (Modasa) and Umesh Makwana (Botad). Rahul Bhuva and Dinesh Joshi have been given the tickets for Rajkot East and Rajkot West seats respectively, while Bhimabhai Makwana has been chosen to contest from Porbandar's Kutiyana seat, currently held by the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). Delhi chief minister Kejriwal's party had won 27 seats in the Surat Municipal Corporation last year. (PTI)

SC seeks replies of UP govt, ECI on plea of SP leader Azam Khan against disqualification

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ The Supreme Court on Monday sought response from the Uttar Pradesh government and Election Commission of India on a plea of Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan against his disqualification from the state Assembly after his conviction and three-year jail sentence in a hate speech case.

A bench of Justices DY Chandrachud and Hima Kohli asked Additional Advocate General Garima Prashad, appearing for Uttar Pradesh to file her response to Khan's plea and asked his petition to be served on the standing counsel for the Election Commission. "What was the tearing hurry to disqualify him? At least

you should have given some breathing space to him", the bench told Prashad after she said that disqualification was in accordance with direction given by the top court in one of its judgements.

At the outset, senior advocate P Chidambaram, appearing for Khan said the BJP MLA Vikram Saini from Khatauli in Muzzafarnagar district was also convicted on October 11 and sentenced to two years but no decision has been taken for his disqualification.

"Urgency in the matter is that Election Commission of India is going to issue gazette notification announcing by-poll for the Rampur Sadar seat on

November 10", he said. Chidambaram said that Sessions Court judge is on leave for a couple of days and the Allahabad High Court is closed, so he can't move there against his conviction and sentence. The bench then asked Prasad that why no action has been taken in the case of Khatauli Assembly seat. It posted the matter for hearing on November 13 and asked Prashad to seek instruction and file her reply.

On October 27, Khan was convicted in a hate speech case and sent to three years in jail by a Rampur court. The MP-MLA court in Rampur has also granted bail to the MLA in the 2019 case. (PTI)

PM yet to acknowledge 'epic failure' of demonetisation move: Kharge

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge attacked Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday over his government's 2016 demonetisation move, saying the Prime Minister is yet to acknowledge this "epic failure" that led to the "fall of the economy". Kharge's remarks, a day before demonetisation's sixth anniversary, came over a media report which said that the currency with the public has jumped to a new high of Rs 30.88 lakh crore as of October 21. "Demonetisation was promised to free the country of black money. But it destroyed businesses and ruined jobs. 6 years after the 'masterstroke' the cash available in public is 72% higher than that in 2016," Kharge said in a tweet. "PM is yet to acknowledge this epic failure that led to fall of economy," the Congress president said. According to the fortnightly data on money supply released by the RBI on Friday, the currency with the public increased to Rs 30.88 lakh crore as on October 21. The apex bank data for Reserve Money had put the currency in circulation at Rs 17.7 lakh crore on November 4, 2016. Currency with the public refers to notes and coins used by people to transact, settle trades, and for buying goods and services. The figure is arrived at after deducting cash with banks from the currency in circulation. (PTI)

AHMEDABAD, NOV 7 /--/ Ahead of the Gujarat Assembly elections, Congress leader Kanhaiya Kumar has claimed the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) are the same team with one following the other.

In an interview with PTI, Kumar also said the BJP is an ideological and cadre-based party and the Congress is its only natural opponent which can provide an alternate ideology in the country. The Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP has been trying to project itself as the BJP's main contender in the Gujarat Assembly elections. The state polls will be held in

two phases on December 1 and 5 and the counting of votes will be taken up on December 8. Kumar said the perception in the country is "what Gujarat thinks today, India thinks tomorrow." "Many new things start from here (Gujarat). We hope there will be a political messaging from here. If people are happy with the BJP, let them choose it, but if people want a change then they will give a chance to the Congress, I hope so," the former JNU student leader said. Gujarat can give a "milestone" result in the 2022 Assembly elections, added Kanhaiya, who was in the BJP-ruled state last week to participate in the

Congress's 'Parivartan Sankalp Yatra'. "The BJP realised in 2017 that it would not win the next



Kanhaiya Kumar

Gujarat elections, so it has brought the AAP here. There is no question of A

and B team, the BJP and AAP are the same team. One is following the other," he claimed. "When (Prime Minister) Modi and Kejriwal have the same dreams, what is the ideological difference between them? Amidst the politics of hate, violence and polarisation, you want to do your politics by remaining mum on it, so where is the ideological difference?" said Kanhaiya, who was in the Communist Party of India (CPI) before joining the Congress last year.

The former student leader is of the firm opinion that the Congress need not budge an inch from its core

ideology as the present surge in favour of the BJP will subside soon and people will realise that to go on the path of religious division is not the right way for the nation. He also said that with the 'Bharat Jodo Yatra', in which he is also participating, the negative perception about Rahul Gandhi created by the opponents is going away. "The BJP is an ideological and cadre-based party. We have to understand that if a party is not ideological or cadre-based it cannot challenge the BJP in India, it cannot be an alternative to the BJP," Kanhaiya said. "The Congress is the natural opponent of the BJP in the

country. The Congress is the only party which has taken power back from the BJP in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh," he said to a question on the likelihood of the AAP eating into the Congress votes in a three-cornered contest in Gujarat.

What happened in the recent elections in Goa and Uttarakhand? The BJP benefitted due to the division of votes, he said. In Goa, anti-incumbency against the chief minister was very high, but they challenged the BJP in India, it cannot be an alternative to the BJP," Kanhaiya said. "The Congress is the natural opponent of the BJP in the

CPI (M) Observes 105th Anniversary of October Revolution



PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ Mr. D. Ayyappan, Secretary, CPI (M) A & N State Organising Committee hoisted the party flag at party State Headquarters Shaheed

Bhavan, Anarkali, Port Blair on Monday on the occasion of 105th Anniversary of October Socialist Revolution in Russia. Addressing the gathering on

the occasion. Mr. D. Ayyappan said that it was in 1917 that the workers of Russia established a society free from exploitation. He said that this is an occasion for the

people in India to learn and to strengthen the CPI (M) to challenge the ruling classes in order to achieve an exploitation-free society in India too.

Construction of Ice Plant/Cold storage, application invited for availing subsidy

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ Application has been invited for construction of Ice Plant/ Cold Storage in pro-rata basis with minimum capacity of 3 MT and above in the prescribed proforma from Fishers/ Fish Farmers/ Fish Workers/ Fish vendors / SHGs/ JNGs / Fisheries Development Corporations / Fisheries Federation/ Entrepreneurs / Private firms / ST / Women/ Differently abled persons for availing subsidy under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampad Yojana (PMSY).

The approved Unit Cost for 01 MT Ice Plant/ Cold Storage is Rs.4.00 lakh. The approved pattern of assistance for General

Category is 40% of the 01 MT unit cost with a ceiling of Rs.1.6 lakh and for ST/Women is 60% of the Unit Cost with a ceiling of Rs.2.4 lakhs for construction of Ice Plant/ Cold Storage. Interested applicants may obtain application forms from the Directorate of Fisheries/ Zonal Fisheries Office/ Fisheries Sub Station and submit their application along with necessary documents (Identity Proof, Address Proof, Land particular, etc) to the respective Zonal Fisheries offices or nearest Fisheries Sub Stations within 15th December, 2022. For any query, they may contact helpline number 03192-240095 from 10 am to 5 pm.

Two lakh youths recruited in CAPF in 5 years

NEW DELHI, NOV 7/--/ Nearly two lakh people were recruited in six Central Armed Police Forces like the BSF and the CRPF in the last five years as part of the Narendra Modi government's efforts to provide jobs to unemployed youths, officials said.

However, as of July-end this year, there are still over 84,000 vacancies in these forces the Border Security Force (BSF), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and the Assam Rifles (AR). Steps have been taken to fill them too.

According to Union Home Ministry data, the highest number of 1,13,208 youths were recruited in the CRPF in the last five years (2017-2021), 29,243 were recruited in the SSB and 17,482 were hired by the BSF. The CISF recruited 12,482 youths, the ITBP 5,965 and the Assam Rifles recruited 5,938 youths in the last five years. In 2022 also, till July, the six central forces recruited 10,377 youths - 6,509 in the CRPF, 1,945 in the SSB, 1,625 in the BSF, 229 in the Assam Rifles and 69 in the CISF.

On October 22, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a recruitment drive for 10 lakh personnel, a major chunk of the Central Armed Police Forces, to be appointed in the next 18 months.

Six held for saying 'Pakistan Zindabad' at BSP rally in UP

AZAMGARH, NOV 7/--/ Six men were arrested for allegedly raising Pakistan Zindabad' slogan here after a meeting of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) workers.

The arrests were made after a video surfaced on social media that showed



some people shouting Pakistan Zindabad' after a meeting of BSP workers in Jahanaganj held to discuss local bodies poll last week. Mohd Afzal, Khurshid Ahmad, Pappu Khan, Maksood Alam, Abdul Wasid, and Zubair Ahmad were arrested Saturday after their name came to fore during the probe, police said. Additional SP, City, Shailendra Lal said that an FIR has been registered against them for taking out procession with permission and making "objectionable" slogans. (PTI)

Literary figures play essential role in connecting youth with culture: Ladakh LG

LEH, NOV 7/--/ Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur on Monday said literary figures have an important role to play in charting the course of society and connecting the youth with the Ladakhi culture and literature.



R K Mathur

Literary Meet 2022 organised by Ladakh Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (LAACL) in Leh, Mathur said, "Unlike the general impression of people from outside Ladakh as it being a remote area, this trans-Himalayan region has a very old strong culture and identity." The LG said the Ladakh administration is making efforts to compile a Ladakhi dictionary of around 25,000 words, which will also include around 4,500 articles and enumerate over 1,000 folk songs of the region.

Stressing the need for the protection of the Ladakhi language, he said society has a crucial role to play in this regard. "The administration, both the Hill Councils and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) will make efforts to raise awareness about Ladakhi literature and culture among young students in schools and colleges along with putting up books in local languages in the district libraries," he said. "There is a need for the youth to have a strong base so that they are not affected by social media culture and language," he said, stressing on the need to outreach the young generation in schools and colleges.

Mathur also highlighted the need for young students to learn the local language, understand the rich folk songs, and literature and be proud of their heritage. He said the UT administration and the Hill Councils will facilitate a literary meeting with scholars and literary figures from other parts of the country so that the literary figures from Ladakh could interact with them and the others would also know about the rich history and culture of the region. (PTI)

Workshop on Bird Identification & Basic Ornithology'

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ Zoological Survey of India, Port Blair will be conducting workshop on 'Bird Identification & Basic Ornithology' under the ACCELERATE VIGYAN SCHEME (AV), sponsored by the Science and Engineering Research Board (SERB), Department of Science and Technology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India held during 14th to 27th November 2022. Interested and eligible candidates may submit Bio-Data to the following email: anrszsi@gmail.com. Selected candidates will be intimated through email.

Sr. No.	Name of the Course	Educational Qualification	Duration	Number of seats	Last date of submission of application
1	Workshop on Bird Identification & Basic Ornithology	Post Graduate/ Ph.D. Scholars (Zoology/ Life Science/ Botany/ Environmental Science/ Cratering material)	Two weeks	20	10 th November 2022

'Startup Mela' on Nov 9 & 10

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ Since the launch of the 'Andaman & Nicobar Startup and Innovation Policy' by the Prime Minister of India on 30th December, 2018, the UT of Andaman and Nicobar Islands has made significant strides in its Startup System, generating a noteworthy number of startups encompassing all sectors including IT, E-Commerce, Fisheries, Agriculture, Internet of things and Tour and Travels among others. The Directorate of Industries, A&N Administration in the capacity of the Nodal Department of Startup India scheme in the Islands is committed to the growth and nurture of the Startups and development of a strong and vibrant Startup Ecosystem in the Islands.

For the exposure of the Startups in the market and to provide them the exposure they deserve, the Directorate of Industries, Andaman and Nicobar

Administration will be organizing a 'Startup Mela' on Nov. 9 & 10. The platform will provide the Startups to showcase & market their products. The Startup Mela will be organized at a pavilion specially erected in the Parking Lot of the ANE-Sagarika of the Department at Middle Point, Port Blair, a prominent visitor destination of A&N Islands.

Painting competition was conducted on the topic "Anti-

GREETINGS



ANTCC President, Mr. Rangalal Halder extends his heartiest wishes and greetings on the auspicious occasion of "Guru Nanak Jayanti" to all of our Islanders of Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

The Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak Devji, the First Guru of Sikhism was remembered and celebrated on this day.

On this occasion, May Guru Nanak Ji inspires you and your family to achieve all your goals, and bless you with peace and bestow you with eternal joy and happiness.

Let's make this day joyous & bright and also pledge to follow his teachings.

"Happy Gurburab"

ICAR-CIARI celebrates Vigilance Awareness Week - 2022

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ ICAR-Central Island Agricultural Research Institute, Port Blair celebrated Vigilance Awareness Week - 2022 with the theme "Corruption-free india for a Developed Nation" during 31st October to 6th November, 2022. Various events were conducted by ICAR-CIARI to mark the celebration of Vigilance Awareness Week - 2022. The celebration of Vigilance Awareness Week - 2022 was started with an integrity pledge taking ceremony by the employees of ICAR-CIARI on 31-10-2022. Gram Sabha was conducted on the topic "Menace of corruption and the measures for its redressal" on 02-11-2022 at Badmaspahad village, South Andaman By ICAR-CIARI and VKV, South Andaman. Besides, an essay writing competition on "Promising anti-corruption measures for a developed nation" was conducted for the staff and their children on 02-11-2022 at ICAR-CIARI.

Painting competition was conducted on the topic "Anti-

corruption" for the School and College students on 03-11-2022.

A seminar on "Preventive vigilance measures" was delivered by Ms. Ragini Kumari, Assistant Professor (Law), Andaman Law College on 04-11-2022 for the benefit of staff of ICAR-CIARI. Awareness rally on "Vigilance" was conducted from ICAR-CIARI to BathuBasti on 04-11-2022 to spread awareness among the stakeholders. Finally, Vigilance Awareness Week - 2022 was ended with a valedictory programme and prize distribution on 07-11-2022 in which the winners of various competitions were felicitated.

The week-long programme was conducted under the Chairmanship of Dr. Eaknath B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIARI, Dr. Jai Sunder, Vigilance Officer, CIARI and the team composed of Dr. K. Saravanan, Dr. Rafeeqe Rahman Alyethodi, Dr. R. Jaya Kumaravaradan, Dr. J. Praveenraj, Dr. Sirisha Adamala and Mr. Shyam Sundar Rao.

Seekho Aur Kamao (Learn & Earn) for skill development of minorities

PORT BLAIR, NOV 7/--/ The Ministry of Minority Affairs, GoI is implementing the Central Sector Scheme- Seekho Aur Kamao (Learn & Earn) for Skill Development of Minorities.

The scheme aims at upgrading the skills of the minority youth in various modern / traditional vocations depending upon their educational qualification, present economic trends and the market potential, which can earn them suitable employment or make them suitably skilled to go for self employment. The scheme is implemented through selected expert Project Implementing Agencies (PIAs). It ensures placement of minimum 75% trainees, out of which at least 50% placement is in the organized sector.

The eligible trainees/ beneficiaries should belong to minority communities, should be between 14-35 years of age, should have minimum qualification of at least Class V. In case seat for reserved categories as prescribed under this scheme remain vacant, these vacant seats may be treated as unreserved.

Monthly stipend for local Non-residential trainees would be Rs. 2,000/- per month and for Residential trainees would be Rs. 1,000/- per month. Post Placement Support (PPS) of Rs. 2,000/- per month will be given to all placed candidates for two months.

Interested institutes/ organizations have been requested to visit the URL <http://seekhoaurkamao-moma.gov.in> or visit the website of Ministry of Minority Affairs, Government of India for guidelines and more details/ various components of the scheme.

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Consultation for Knee & Hip Joint problems and requiring opinion for Knee & Hip replacement surgery

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Time: 11.00 am to 6.00 pm

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The reason why worry kills more people than work is that more people worry than work

Robert Frost

UN climate talks amid grim scenario

The talks on tackling climate change in Sharm el-Sheikh (Egypt) is being held at a time when the planet appears to be heading toward irreversible “climate chaos” unless countries find a way to put the world back on track to cut emissions and help poor countries cope with the impacts of global warming. Envoys from around the globe have descended on the Egyptian seaside resort for talks on tackling climate change, which come as the world also grapples with multiple crises, including the war in Ukraine, high inflation, food shortages and an energy crunch. More than 40,000 participants have been registered for this year’s talks, reflecting the sense of urgency as major weather events around the world impact many people and cost billions of dollars in repairs. Over 120 world leaders will attend, many of them speaking at a high-level event. But many top figures, including China’s President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Narendra Modi of India, were not planning to come, casting doubt on whether the talks in Egypt could result in any major deals to cut emissions without these two countries. Unlike the previous climate summit in Glasgow last year, the Sharm el-Sheikh meeting is not expected to produce headline-grabbing outcomes. But there are important matters to be taken care of, nonetheless. Rights groups criticised Egypt for restricting protests and stepping up surveillance during the summit. New York-based Human Rights Watch, citing Egyptian media, said authorities had also arrested dozens of people for calling for protests.

It’s a fact that the talks are being overshadowed by Russia’s attack on Ukraine that has triggered political and economic upheaval around the world. But 2022 must not become a lost year for climate protection. For many states, it’s about the survival of their population and their culture. For them, the climate crisis remains the most important security issue, not Russia’s war in Europe. Germany has said that it was willing to show solidarity with poor countries, including on the thorny issue of compensation for losses resulting from climate change caused by rich countries’ emissions. Smaller countries have for long been arguing that they are suffering for no fault of theirs. While their contribution to global emissions are meagre, they face the worst impacts of climate change. The consequences of the war on global climate action is not the only thing on the top of the minds of climate negotiators. This year has seen unprecedented climate disasters — a historic heat wave in Europe, the worst flooding ever in Pakistan, and a wave of droughts and floods in several parts of the world. The pre-monsoon period was exceptionally hot in India and Pakistan. Pakistan had its hottest March and April on record. The heat caused a decline in crop yields. This combined with the banning of wheat exports and restrictions on rice exports in India are threatening the international food markets and posing risks to countries already affected by shortages of staple foods. Record-breaking rain in July and August led to extensive flooding in Pakistan. There were at least 1,700 deaths and 33 million people affected while 7.9 million people were displaced. India also reported significant flooding at various stages during the monsoon season, particularly in the northeast in June. Around 700 people died due to floods and landslides, and another 900 from lightning. Floods also triggered 6,63,000 displacements in Assam.

In any case, it’s an important COP, politically as Pakistan is the chair of Group of 77, Indonesia is head of the G20, and India is the next chair. It could be a big moment for South Asia.

Gujarat, Himachal poll results on Dec 8 crucial for Rahul Gandhi

Five years back in Himachal Pradesh and Gujarat, the BJP and the Congress were face to face and people were asking the question “what does Gujarat and Himachal mean for the two national parties? In 2017, Aam Aadmi Party was limited to Delhi and nobody thought much of AAP other than to mention it in the passing, like in an obituary.

This time around, AAP and Kejriwal are in the conversation, definitely more in Gujarat than in Himachal Pradesh. There is also the creeping feeling that AAP fancies its chances in Gujarat, ever more after the BJP trained its guns more on the AAP than on the Congress after the hanging bridge of Morbi capsized midair, killing 135.

Morbi happened out of the blue leaving the BJP hanging like an asterix. Whoever thought clockmaker Ajanta would get the time wrong for the BJP? The headwinds are now full-face on the BJP and the question hangs: What if the BJP gets clobbered by AAP because of Morbi, and where will that place the Congress?

Till a few days ago, the BJP and the AAP had dismissed the Congress as not much of an outfit to reckon with, not ready to even give it the time of the day, or the benefit of Rahul Gandhi’s ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ doubt. RaGa had only the other day said in Telangana that after Morbi, the BJP would sink like a rock in Machuchu.

The thing is after Morbi, the BJP is on a slippery slope. It’s suddenly upriver for the saffron party. The 135 deaths can put the BJP in 135 different kinds of trouble on top of the 27 times anti-incumbency. Rahul Gandhi was scathing in his assessment of BJP’s

REFLEX ACTION

Sushil Kutty

chances in Gujarat and Gandhi, who knows, must also be crystal-gazer in his new avatar.

And, depending on the results that will be declared in December, Arvind Kejriwal and bright AAP boy Raghav Chadha will decide on whether to undertake their own brand of ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’, such has been the popularity of BJJ! Even actor Pooja Bhatt joined Rahul Gandhi on the road and from the shape she’s in, she didn’t look like a habitual morning walker!

For the Congress, victory in Gujarat will be rejuvenation and reappraisal. The Congress believes Rahul Gandhi is no longer ‘has been’ or ‘also ran’. Every new day of ‘Bharat Jodo Yatra’ is turning Rahul Gandhi into an unknown quantity for the BJP, and ‘Colour Red’ for Modi, and for whoever crosses BJJ!

In case Rahul Gandhi has read the tea leaves right, and the Congress bests both the BJP and AAP in the aftermath of Morbi, the ramifications will stretch to 2023 and beyond, to 2024! What if before that, the BJJ caravan takes a detour to Gujarat, giving Rajasthan short shrift or a complete miss? Does Rahul Gandhi have the mojo in him to throw a surprise to stun the BJP, and startle the AAP?

Gujarat, as also Himachal, was important for the Congress in 2017, and it is important for the Congress in 2022, too. Either the BJP continues with its domination or the Congress throws a spanner in the

BJP’s works. The Congress nearly toppled the BJP in Gujarat in 2017. This time the grand old party has left it to its state unit leadership to wage battle. It’s a new and different strategy, will it work?

That said, it was AAP which made Modi mad, especially Gopal Italia with his Mama Mia diatribe against Modi’s mother, which was below the belt and could boomerang if the Gujarati took it personally. The fact is, if the Congress repeats its 2017 performance, and the AAP shears 15-20 seats on its own, the BJP will be warming seats on the opposition benches.

If the Congress forms the government after 27 years in political wilderness, it will be the beginning of the end of Narendra Modi. ‘The Wire’ and Siddharth Vardarajan can sit back and enjoy the sun. You see, nothing can be ruled out in politics, and in a marriage to the village beauty!

Another win for the BJP in Gujarat, however, will cement BJP’s hold on India. Narendra Modi’s clout will be reinforced manifold and his popularity will skyrocket. The man and the politician will become unassailable and India will be closer to becoming a Hindu Rashtra than it ever was in over 2000 years. But if the Bharatiya Janata Party is defeated in Gujarat, the tables will be turned and millions will dance in the streets of India.

There’s a sneaking chance that Gujarat will give Prime Minister Narendra Modi the slip this time around. Apparently, the stars are plotting against Modi, and the sun and the moon also will be in alignment, a rare celestial phenomenon that will spell Modi’s tryst with destiny (IPA)



A woman hawker sells her wares on a central Kolkata footpath while a cat looks on--Arijit Ganguly

Legislations unable to thwart ‘auctioning’ of daughters, wives and sisters

The disgraceful incident in Rajasthan’s Bhilwara in which a man ‘auctioned’ his daughters to repay his debt is a social evil that manifests in similar occurrences in parts of northern India from time to time. The incident attracted widespread condemnation and lowered the prestige of India as a modern nation in highly negative western media reports.

According to local media, a distraught father who had owed Rs 1.5 million to a lender was recently ordered by the area’s caste panchayat to sell his sister as well as a 12-year old daughter to settle the debt. When that was deemed not enough, he was forced to sell four more daughters. The ‘sale’ was made official by recording it on stamp paper, which is used for all formal financial transactions.

The practice is prevalent in many parts of India where debt is repaid by exchanging girls and women, who are then sent to places like UP, MP, Mumbai, Delhi and sometimes abroad in trafficking. Harrowing tales of such victims get reported in the media occasionally, leading to calls for stringent action. There will be a lot of noise for some time, but the incidents continue to occur. There are laws that ban the practice, but deep-rooted social systems in some regions ensure that the arms of law cannot reach the evil, which gets sustenance from community-based groupings.

Early this year, police had made several arrests following massive outrage over the online ‘auction’ of over

100 Muslim women through what was known as the Bulli Bai app, hosted on Git Hub, which was meant essentially to denigrate Muslim women who expressed themselves on social media and other platforms against what they perceived as anti-minority policies of the ruling parties.

Some three decades ago, Indian Express reporter Ashwini Sarin had created sensation by ‘buying’ a young woman, whom he named Kamala, for Rs 2,300 from Dholpur, the tri-junction of Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, and Madhya Pradesh, and bringing her to Delhi to expose the large-scale trafficking in women in the Agra-Morena-Mainpuri-Etah area. Rather than trying to fight the menace, the authorities slapped a case against the enterprising reporter for ‘trafficking’.

A poll by Thomson Reuters in 2018 had described India as one of the most dangerous places for women, worse than even Afghanistan, Yemen and Somalia. But India had questioned the methodology used for the survey and challenged the conclusion. In fact, in the wake of the report, the Indian ministry of tourism launched a global campaign to dispel the impression, highlighting the support systems that are in place for the safety and security of women, particularly in the

aftermath of the gangrape and murder of a girl student in Delhi in 2012. The girl, who has since been named Nirbhaya, is often projected as an icon of initiatives for women’s security.

But there are still areas where such initiatives have failed to touch the lives of women, as demonstrated by the latest instance in Rajasthan. A skewed sex ratio that is heavily tilted against women in states such as Haryana has meant trafficking of women from places like West Bengal, Assam, Bihar, Odisha, and Jharkhand to service the needs of the highly patriarchal society. There have been stories of women being sold multiple times. Haryana has only 834 girls per thousand boys in the state’s population.

Over the last three years, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have seen the highest number of human trafficking cases, followed by Assam, Jharkhand, Kerala, Odisha and Rajasthan. But according to the latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), conviction rate in human trafficking cases across the country continues to be low. While police filed chargesheets in 84.7 per cent of the 2,189 cases registered under the Anti-Human Trafficking Units (AHTUs) across the country in 2021, only 16 per cent of the cases saw convictions. In the

wake of the latest report about auction of girls in Rajasthan, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has issued a notice to the state government and sought a detailed report from the chief secretary in the matter, including the action taken so far and the measures proposed to be taken to prevent recurrence of such incidents.

Bahujan Samajwadi Party leader Mayawati, who once came to power by championing the cause of the downtrodden, has used the incident to attack at the Ashok Gehlot’s Congress government in Rajasthan, and take a dig at Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadhra whose ‘Ladkihoon lad saktihoon’ (I’m a girl, I can fight) campaign had hogged the headlines.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s BJP has also trained its guns on Congress, saying such incidents reminded one about Taliban. “Under the Congress government in Rajasthan, girls are being sold in the markets, which is a heinous crime. If we compare such incidents, they happen under the Taliban rule and in Syria-Iraq. There too, the innocent girls are made slaves. Such incidents are reported from half-a-dozen districts in Rajasthan,” BJP national spokesperson Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore said.

The skewed sex ratio of 834 girls per 1,000 boys and the patriarchal system in Haryana have led to a practice where women are easily bought from poor states like Assam, Bihar, Odisha, and Jharkhand. And sometimes, from even across the border. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword												
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ACROSS						DOWN					
1	Meditating	5	Rodent	7	Lyric poem	1	Drinking vessel	2	Sun god	3	Worship
8	In abundance	11	By way of	12	Unbound	4	Roman emperor	5	Venerate	6	Journey
14	Indonesian holiday	15	isle	16	Courage	9	Partly open	10	Vast age	13	Sundry
18	Get up	20	Disguise	21	Wait on	14	Small domestic fowl	15	Antiseptics pioneer	17	Climbing plant
23	Make lace	24	Stuffs with food	27	Tawny brown	19	Work unit	22	Ballot choice	25	Wildbeest
28	Flood					26	Prosecute				

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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1697								
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Two lakh youths recruited in CAPF in 5 years

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ Nearly two lakh people were recruited in six Central Armed Police Forces like the BSF and the CRPF in the last five years as part of the Narendra Modi government's efforts to provide jobs to unemployed youths, officials said.

However, as of July-end this year, there are still over 84,000 vacancies in these forces the Border Security Force (BSF), the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF), the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) and the Assam Rifles (AR). Steps have been taken to fill them too. According to Union Home Ministry data, the highest

number of 1,13,208 youths were recruited in the CRPF in the last five years (2017-2021), 29,243 were recruited in the SSB and 17,482 were hired by the BSF. The CISF recruited 12,482 youths, the ITBP 5,965 and the Assam Rifles recruited 5,938 youths in the last five years. In 2022 also, till July, the six central forces recruited 10,377 youths - 6,509 in the CRPF, 1,945 in the SSB, 1,625 in the BSF, 229 in the Assam Rifles and 69 in the CISF. On October 22, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched a recruitment drive for 10 lakh personnel, a major chunk of the Central Armed Police Forces, to be appointed in the next 18 months. Appointment letters have already been

handed over to 75,000 newly inducted appointees. According to home ministry data, as on July 31, 2022, there were 84,659 vacancies in the six Central Armed Police Forces. While the CRPF had 27,510 vacancies, the BSF had 23,435 vacancies, the CISF had 11,765 vacancies, the SSB had 11,143 vacancies, the Assam Rifles had 6,044 and the ITBP had 4,762 vacancies. A home ministry official said the government has decided to fill up existing vacancies in the Central Armed Police Forces by December 2023. The total strength of the Central Armed Police Forces is about 10 lakhs.

The BSF guards the country's 3,323-km-long border with Pakistan (ex-

cept the 740 km-long Line of Control) and the 4,096-km-long border with Bangladesh. The CRPF is deployed for internal security duties, maintenance of law and order and anti-militants operations in Jammu and Kashmir and the Northeast. The CISF guards vital installations like nuclear plants, key industries, metro networks and other important government buildings. The ITBP guards the 3,488-km-long Sino-Indian border. The SSB guards India's borders with Nepal (1,751 km) and Bhutan (699 km). The Assam Rifles guards the 1,643-km-long Indo-Myanmar border and carry out anti-militancy operations in the Northeast. (PTI)



President, Smt. Droupadi Murmu in a group photo with the awardees of National Florence Nightingale Awards, 2020 and 2021, in New Delhi

Literary figures play essential role in connecting youth with culture: Ladakh LG

LEH, NOV 7 /--/ Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur on Monday said literary figures have an important role to play in charting the course of society and connecting the youth with the Ladakhi culture and literature.

Some of the petroglyphs found in the Union Territory are more than 10,000 years old, Mathur said, highlighting the need for the local youth to have faith in their identity, culture and rich heritage as it would enable promoting a strong society. Virtually attending the Ladakh Literary Meet 2022 organised by Ladakh Academy of Art, Culture and Languages (LAACL) in Leh,



R K Mathur

Mathur said, "Unlike the general impression of people from outside Ladakh as it being a remote area, this trans-Himalayan region has a very old strong culture and identity." The LG said the Ladakh administration is making efforts to compile a

Ladakhi dictionary of around 25,000 words, which will also include around 4,500 articles and enumerate over 1,000 folk songs of the region.

Stressing the need for the protection of the Ladakhi language, he said society has a crucial role to play in this regard. "The administration, both the Hill Councils and Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) will make efforts to raise awareness about Ladakhi literature and culture among young students in schools and colleges along with putting up books in local languages in the district libraries," he said. "There is a need for the youth to have a strong

base so that they are not affected by social media culture and language," he said, stressing on the need to outreach the young generation in schools and colleges. Mathur also highlighted the need for young students to learn the local language, understand the rich folk songs, and literature and be proud of their heritage. He said the UT administration and the Hill Councils will facilitate a literary meeting with scholars and literary figures from other parts of the country so that the literary figures from Ladakh could interact with them and the others would also know about the rich history and culture of the region. (PTI)

SAD expels Bibi Jagir Kaur after she fails to appear before disciplinary panel

CHANDIGARH, NOV 7 /--/ The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) Monday expelled Bibi Jagir Kaur from the party after she failed to appear before its disciplinary committee to explain her decision of contesting the November 9 SGPC presidential poll.

The move was announced by the party's disciplinary committee head Sikandar Singh Maluka here. The SAD's action came after Kaur was adamant about contesting the poll for the post of president of Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), slated for November 9. The party had given chances to Kaur to reply to a show cause notice issued to her for "anti-party" activities and appear in person at party headquarters here by Monday noon. Addressing the media here on Monday, Maluka said the party had given her chances to explain her position but she failed to respond. "We are left with no option except to take action against her. The disciplinary committee today decided to expel her from the party. Her primary membership in the

party has been cancelled. Her services at the party have ended now. The party has nothing to do with Bibi Jagir Kaur," Maluka told reporters here.

Last week, Kaur was suspended from the party after she dug her heels in for contesting the election, against the party's wishes. The SAD had earlier issued a two-day ultimatum to Kaur to stop "anti-party" activities, failing which, it said, strict disciplinary action would be taken against her. But Kaur did not reply to the show cause notice despite the party giving her two opportunities. The SAD's disciplinary committee on Sunday granted an extension to Kaur for replying to the notice in person by Monday noon. She failed to appear before the disciplinary committee on Monday.

Kaur, once considered a loyalist of the Badal family, had been pressing to be the party's nominee for the SGPC presidential poll. The SAD had already announced incumbent Harjinder Singh Dhami as its candidate for the post of president of the apex gurdwara body. (PTI)

Kochi to host 18th international telemedicine conference

KOCHI, NOV 7 /--/ The 18th International Telemedicine Conference, organised by the Telemedicine Society of India (TSI) in association with TSI Kerala Chapter will be held here from November 10-12.

Organisers said the three-day event which expects to bring together more than 200 scientists and academic scholars from India and around the world, would be held at the Amrita hospital here. "S Somanath, Chairman of ISRO, will be the chief guest and will deliberate on how the latest technologies improve telemedicine facilities in our country. Mohanan

Kunnummal, Vice Chancellor of Kerala University of Health Science, and Dr. Rethan Kelkar, the IT Secretary of Kerala, will also attend the event," Amrita hospital said in a release. TELEMEDICON 2022 is an annual global conference for healthcare professionals, providers, health insurance providers, online pharmacy chains, industrialists, academic scientists, research scholars and scientists, medical and engineering stakeholders from various fields of telemedicine, telehealth, e-health, m-health, and digital health across the world meet.

The conference is held in collaboration with gov-

ernment agencies, private organisations, and national and international professional societies. "The core theme of the event 'Strengthening Health Systems Through Sustainable Telemedicine and Digital Health' puts forward a platform to pool ideas to spearhead the growth of telemedicine in the right direction, as the future of both telemedicine and the front runners of telemedicine holds immense potential," the release said.

The conference aims to build platforms involving healthcare regulators, health funding authorities, service providers, and international experts. It said the

dignitaries will explore emerging telehealth models, breakthrough technologies, examine new telehealth models, and entrepreneurship. The conference will also highlight the socioeconomic impact of telehealth on healthcare access and equity.

The event's highlights include scientific sessions on topics like Space Telemedicine programmes, telehealth tourism, AI-based telehealth systems, tele homecare, IOMT, AR, and VR. The event will also hold a session to discuss Legal practices on Telemedicine lead by Justice Devan Ramachandran. (PTI)

Maharashtra: Sugarcane farmers stage protest in Pune over various demands

PUNE, NOV 7 /--/ Sugarcane farmers from across Maharashtra took out a march in Pune on Monday to press for their various demands from the state government.

The protest march, led by Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana leader Raju Shetti, began at Alka Chowk and culminated at the Sugar Commissionerate office in the city. Sugarcane cultivators have demanded Rs 350 per tonne for their produce apart from the fair remunerative price (FRP), digital weighing scales at sugar mills and sought that the state government withdraw its policy of disbursing the FRP in two installments, it was stated. Talking to reporters, former MP Shetti said, "These are policy demands and the government does not have to give any monetary aid for the same. Only political will is needed to implement these changes." (PTI)

MGP passes resolution to name Mopa airport after Goa's 1st CM Dayanand Bandodkar

PANAJI, NOV 7 /--/ The Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party has passed a resolution to name the upcoming Mopa airport in Goa after the state's first chief minister late Dayanand Bandodkar, MGP president Deepak Dhavalikar said.

The MGP, Goa's oldest regional party, has two MLAs in the 40-member state Assembly and is currently supporting to the Pramod Sawant-led government. Even as the Mopa airport in Goa is set to be commissioned next month, political leaders are at loggerheads about whom the facility should be named after, but the state government has maintained silence on the issue. Dhavalikar said the MGP's central committee on Sunday passed the resolution to name the Mopa airport after Bandodkar and it would be sent to the state government for a follow-up. He said it would be a befitting tribute to former CM Bandodkar who had shaped the future of the state after its liberation in 1961 from Portuguese rule.

Notably, the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) Goa unit spokesperson Savio Rodrigues recently said the new airport should be named after Dr Jack Sequeira, the first leader of opposition in the state Assembly. There was no better tribute to the man who saved Goa's identity when some political leaders wanted to merge the state with Maharashtra, Rodrigues had said. Chief minister Pramod Sawant had on Friday said the airport at Mopa in North Goa would be commissioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi after December 8, depending on the availability of his dates. (PTI)

Six held for saying 'Pakistan Zindabad' at BSP rally in UP

AZAMGARH, NOV 7 /--/ Six men were arrested for allegedly raising Pakistan Zindabad slogan here after a meeting of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) workers.

The arrests were made after a video surfaced on social media that showed some people shouting Pakistan Zindabad after a meeting of BSP workers in Jahanaganj held to discuss local bodies poll last week. Mohd Afzal, Khurshid Ahmad, Pappu Khan, Maksood Alam, Abdul Wasid, and Zubair Ahamed were arrested Saturday after their name came to fore during the probe, police said. Additional SP, City, Shailendra Lal said that an FIR has been registered against them for taking out procession with permission and making "objectionable" slogans. He said that police are going through footage and more arrests are likely. (PTI)

Delhi Police arrest 3 of gang which robbed people with sleeping pills

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ Three members of 'Zeher Khurani' gang, known for robbing people after sedating them with sleeping pills, have been arrested, police said on Monday.

Kamal Singh, 34, Pawan, 32, and Gourav, 30, were based in Seelampur area of east Delhi, they said. Police said the gang would make people eat sweets mixed with powdered sleeping pills and would rob them after they would get unconscious.

One such matter came to light on October 23, when a 43-year-old resident of Chandni Chowk approached Gulabi Bagh Police Station with a complaint of robbery, they said. According to police, the victim in his complaint said that on October 21 around 7 am, he was travelling with 23

ceiling fans and some copper wires in his auto rickshaw. He had loaded the rickshaw at an electrical store in Bhagirath Palace and was on way to Najafgarh through Gulabi Bagh. The accused at some point accosted him feigning that they were distributing sweets and offered him a laddoo 'laced with the narcotic, which he ate. He started feeling dizzy and became unconscious near the Shastri Park Metro Station, a senior police officer said.

The accused all this while followed the auto rickshaw and robbed him when the victim lost his consciousness, he said. "During investigation, CCTV footage of the route followed by the complainant were checked. More than 100 CCTV cameras were checked for leads and finally, all the three ac-

cused were nabbed," Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said. "... During police custody, the accused also named the chemist who used to provide them with the drugs without any prescription. Legal action is being initiated against him as well," he said.

The accused confessed that they robbed the man, and revealed that they sold the stolen goods to one Raju, a resident of Seelampur, for Rs 45,000.

They said that they spent the money on the Diwali celebration. Later, police made raids to arrest Raju too, but he had already decamped, Kalsi said. The vehicle used in the crime and seven tablets used to sedate the targets were recovered from them, he added. (PTI)

Jhiri Mela begins after 2-year Covid gap in Jammu

JAMMU, NOV 7 /--/ The 10-day-long annual Jhiri Mela commenced here on Monday after a two-year gap due to the pandemic with thousands of devotees from across the country thronging the fair to seek blessings at Baba Jittoo temple.

The fair is being jointly organised by the directorate of tourism in collaboration with district administration from November 7 to 16. The Jhiri Mela is held every year during 'Karthik Purnima' to pay obeisance at Baba Jittoo temple in village Jhiri to seek blessings. "All necessary arrangements have been made for

the smooth conduct of the Mela, which is visited by one lakh people per day from different parts of the country," Kumar told reporters.

He said since farmers mostly visit the Mela, the government has put up special awareness stalls to inform them about the new schemes and technologies introduced for their benefit. Kumar said the key feature of the Mela is to promote the sports and cultural richness of the region to make this event accessible among the citizens.

Over 10 lakh devotees from across the Jammu re-

gion and neighbouring states including Punjab, Himachal Pradesh and Haryana are expected to take part in the fair to commemorate the sacrifice of the Baba, a farmer who gave up his life in protest against the oppressive demands of the 'zamindar' (landlords) about 500 years ago.

His daughter, as per the legend, also took her life by jumping on her father's funeral pyre. The devotees also take a customary dip in the Baba-da-Talab, a natural pond four km from the temple which is believed to have curative powers, officials said. (PTI)



Union Minister for Culture, Tourism and Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER), G. Kishan Reddy lighting the lamp at the inaugural 'Vartalap media workshop' for journalists organised by PIB Vijayawada, in Nellore

India's 1st voter Shyam Saran Negi preferred polling station over postal ballot, says grandson

SHIMLA, NOV 7 /--/ India's first voter Shyam Saran Negi, who died on Saturday at his home in Himachal Pradesh's Kalpa, had insisted he wanted to cast his vote at the polling station rather than exercising franchise through postal ballot.

Taking note of his health condition, Negi was however urged to cast vote through postal ballot, his grandson Deepak Kumar told PTI. "He was insisting that he will go and vote on November 12 at the polling station in primary school Kalpa, where he had first cast his vote but he was facing difficulty in walking and standing and was advised against going there," he said. Three days after casting his vote for the 34th time, Shyam Saran Negi died at the age of 106. Negi, who was the Election Commission's brand ambassador, had voted for the Himachal Pradesh assembly polls through postal ballot on November 2, the poll panel said earlier. "It was for the first time in his life when he cast his vote through postal ballot," Deepak said.



Shyam Saran Negi

he said. "My grandfather always used to tell everyone that one must always exercise the right to vote," said Deepak, a government contractor, who also works in the tourism sector. In 1951, a young Negi made history when he exercised his franchise in Kalpa becoming India's first voter. Negi, who had never missed voting in any state or general election, was a VIP of sorts whenever he went out to vote, with the administration also rolling out a red carpet for him. Polls were held in Chini, present-day Kalpa in Kinnaur district, which borders Tibet to the east, before other parts of the state in 1951, anticipating heavy snowfall in higher altitude areas, when Negi first cast his vote. His house

is in Kalpa's Kanang Saring, famous for its high-quality apples, situated at an altitude of nearly 10,000 feet.

During a poll rally in Sundernagar in Mandi district on Saturday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed condolences over Negi's death. "Just a few days ago, Negi had cast his vote through postal ballot for the Himachal Pradesh polls.

Even before his demise, he discharged his duty," Modi had said, adding Negi's outlook toward democracy will inspire the people of the country, especially the youth. Chief election commissioner Rajiv Kumar also visited Negi's residence last week and paid homage to him. (PTI)



Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Sikh community leaders at Sahid Minar, on the eve of Guru Nanak's birth anniversary
—Photo: Shyamal Maitra

Mamata joins social media platform Koo

KOLKATA: Chief minister Mamata Banerjee has joined social media platform Koo, a statement said on Monday. Mamata, who has 7 million followers on Twitter and 4.9 million followers on Facebook, joined Koo on November 1. "Her handle is @Mamtaofficial on Koo. In her first Koo, Mamata Banerjee announced the milestone of 50 lakh rural households having access to clean potable water through tap connections. She congratulated everyone involved in achieving this," the statement issued by Koo said. Koo co-founder Aprameya Radhakrishna said the TMC and other leaders of the party have also joined the platform. "Millions of Bengali users across the world and many Indians across the country would want to get updates from Mamata Ji directly," he said. (PTI)

Rahul promises farmers loan waiver if Cong assumes power in Telangana

KAMAREDDY, NOV 7 /--/ Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who is leading the 3,500-km 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' on Monday said farm loans would be waived in Telangana if his party comes to power in the next elections. Speaking at a public meeting in Jukkal constituency before entering Maharashtra, he said hospitals were being privatised and education system was being destroyed in Telangana. "Farmers are not getting a supporting price. No farmer feels that farming is a profitable venture. The UPA government waived agriculture loans to the tune of Rs 70,000 crore. We promise farm loans will be waived when we come to power," he said. Alleging that the ruling TRS government is not implementing the Tribal Bill that the UPA government had brought, the Congress leader said the lands of Dalits

and Adivasis that were allegedly grabbed would be returned to them. Rahul alleged that education has become expensive and one has to spend lakhs of rupees to become an engineer or doctor. The former Congress president charged BJP and TRS with working in tandem and whatever Bill that the former introduces in Parliament is supported by the latter. Rahul alleged that the NDA government is privatising public sector undertakings such as BHEL and Railways to benefit some friends of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Congress sources said Rahul Gandhi undertook a 375-KM march in Telangana. President of the Congress's Telangana unit Revanth Reddy would hand over the national flag to his Maharashtra counterpart Nana Patole on the border: (PTI)



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during 'Bharat Jodo Yatra' in Kamareddy

Gujarat HC takes suo motu cognisance of Morbi tragedy, issues notice to state govt

AHMEDABAD, NOV 7 /--/ The Gujarat High Court on Monday took suo motu cognisance of the Morbi bridge collapse tragedy and issued notices to the state government and local authorities and also sought a status report in the matter by November 14. The British-era suspension bridge on the Machchhu river in Morbi collapsed on October 30, claiming 135 lives. The bridge was thrown open for the public on October 26 after seven months of repair work by a private firm. "We have taken a suo motu (on their own) cognisance of the Morbi incident. But for the vacation, we would have sat on the same day itself," a division bench of Chief Justice Aravind Kumar and Justice Ashutosh Shastri said addressing Advocate General Kamal Trivedi who was present in the court. The bench took cognisance of the incident on the basis of a newspaper report.

It issued notices to the state government through the chief secretary, state home department, commissioner of municipalities, Morbi municipality, district collector and the State Human Rights Commission and relisted the matter on November 14. The court said it wants to see some action being taken by the government and directed the chief secretary and the home secretary to file a status report by next Monday, when the matter will come up for hearing. The State Human Rights Commission has also been directed to file a report in the matter by November 14. "We will implead the state, the home department, the chief secretary, Morbi municipality, urban development authority, commissioner of municipalities. Also, we would like to have the State Human Rights Commission," the HC said. "The State Human Rights Commission shall also file a report in this regard by the next date of hearing. The registry is directed to communicate this order through special messenger to respondent number 5-- State Human Rights Commission. Relist the matter on November 14," it said. (PTI)

SC majority verdict upholds Centre's 10 per cent reservation to EWS

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ In a landmark verdict, the Supreme Court by a majority view of 3:2 on Monday upheld the validity of the 103rd Constitution amendment providing 10 per cent reservation to people belonging to the economically weaker sections (EWS) in admissions and government jobs.

The apex court said the quota does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution. A five-judge constitution bench headed by Chief Justice U U Lalit pronounced four separate verdicts on 40 petitions challenging the validity of the 103rd Constitution amendment promulgated by the Centre in 2019. While Justices Dinesh Maheshwari, Bela M Trivedi and J B Pardiwala upheld the law, Justice S Ravindra Bhat along with the CJI shot down the same in their minority view. The judges read four separate judgements for over 35 minutes in the courtroom. Justice Maheshwari, who read the judgement for himself, said the 103rd constitutional amendment cannot said to breach the basic structure of the Constitution.

Justice Maheshwari said reservation is an instrument of affirmative action so as to ensure an all inclusive march towards goals of egalitarian society and it is a means of inclusion of any class or section so disadvantaged. Justice Trivedi said the 103rd constitutional amendment cannot be struck down on grounds of being discriminatory. She said the 103rd Constitution amendment has to be treated as an affirmative action by Parliament for the benefit of EWS class. Justice J B Pardiwala concurred with their views and upheld the validity of the amendment. Justice Pardiwala, however, said reservation is meant to secure social justice but it should not continue for indefinite time so that it becomes vested interest. Justice S Ravindra Bhat, in a minority view, dissented and struck down the constitution amendment on EWS quota. He declared the 103rd Amendment Act as unconstitutional and void on grounds that it is violative of basic structure of the Constitution. CJI Lalit concurred with the view of Justice Bhat. The apex court had on September 27 reserved the verdict on the legal question of whether the EWS quota violated the basic structure of the Constitution after hearing a battery of senior lawyers, including the then Attorney General K K Venugopal and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, in a marathon hearing that had lasted for six-and-half-days. Academician Mohan Gopal had opened the arguments in the case before the

bench on September 13 and opposed the EWS quota amendment by terming it as "deceitful and a backdoor attempt" to destroy the concept of reservation. Tamil Nadu, represented by senior advocate Shekhar Naphade, had also opposed the EWS quota, saying the economic criteria cannot be the basis for classification and the top court will have to revisit the Indra Sawhney (Mandal) judgement if it decides to uphold this reservation. The then attorney general and the solicitor general had vehemently defended the amendment, saying the reservation provided under it was different and had been given without disturbing the 50 per cent quota meant for the

by permitting the State to make special provisions, including reservation, based on economic criteria," read the first issue framed. The second legal question was whether the constitutional amendment could be said to breach the basic structure by permitting the state to make special provisions concerning admissions to private unaided institutions. "Whether the 103rd Constitution amendment can be said to breach the basic structure of the Constitution in excluding the SEBCs/OBCs, SCs/STs from the scope of EWS reservation," the third issue, to be adjudicated upon by the bench, read. The doctrine of basic structure was propounded



The bench of Supreme Court judges during pronouncing of verdict on 10 per cent quota in colleges and government jobs for the poor or EWS (Economically Weaker Sections), in New Delhi

socially and economically backward classes (SEBC). Hence, the amended provision does not violate the basic structure of the Constitution, they had said. The apex court heard as many as 40 petitions and most of the pleas, including the lead one filed by 'Janhit Abhiyan' in 2019, challenged the validity of the Constitution Amendment (103rd) Act 2019.

The Centre had filed some petitions seeking the transfer of pending cases, challenging the EWS quota law, from various high courts to the apex court for an authoritative pronouncement. The bench, on September 8, had framed three broad issues for adjudication arising from the pleas challenging the Centre's decision to grant 10 per cent reservation to EWS in admissions and jobs. It had said the three issues suggested by the then attorney general for the decision "broadly" covered all the aspects relating to the petitions on the constitutional validity of the decision to grant the reservation. "Whether the 103rd Constitution amendment Act can be said to breach the basic structure of the Constitution

by the top court in 1973 while deciding the Keshavananda Bharati case. It was held that Parliament could not amend every bit of the Constitution, and aspects such as rule of law, separation of powers, and judicial freedom formed part of the "basic structure" of the Constitution and hence, could not be amended. The Centre, through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment Act, 2019, introduced the provision for EWS reservation in admissions and public services. Earlier, the Centre, in 2019, had also told the apex court that its law, granting a 10 per cent quota for EWS, was brought in to promote "social equality" by providing "equal opportunities in higher education and employment to those who have been excluded by virtue of their economic status". The Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha cleared the bill on January 8 and 9 in 2019 respectively and it was then signed by then President Ram Nath Kovind. The EWS quota is over and above the existing 50 per cent reservation to SCs, STs, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs). (PTI)

Russia, India stand for 'more just' and 'polycentric' world, says Moscow ahead of Jaishankar-Lavrov talks

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ Russia and India stand for the formation of a "more just" and "polycentric" world order and both sides demonstrated the proximity of positions on the most pressing issues, Moscow said on Monday, a day ahead of talks between the foreign ministers of the two countries.

External affairs minister S Jaishankar begins a two-day visit to Russia this evening amid growing global concerns over increasing hostilities between Russia and Ukraine. In a statement, the Russian foreign ministry said Jaishankar and Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, in their talks, will focus on trade and investment, use of national currencies for trade, "promising projects" in the energy sector and

the formation of a security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region. "Russia and India stand for the active formation of a more just and equal polycentric world order, and proceed from the inadmissibility of promoting the imperialist diktat on the global arena," it said. "Both countries demonstrate the proximity of positions on the most pressing issues and stand for the adherence to the universally recognised norms of international law, enshrined in the UN Charter," the ministry said.

It further added: "We are aimed at promoting a unifying agenda and building a constructive dialogue in the field of interstate relations." The Russian foreign ministry said Jaishankar and Lavrov

will also discuss ways to further "advance joint work" in the key areas and compare notes on upcoming contacts. "The talks will focus on trade and investments, transport and logistics, the use of national currencies in mutual settlements, as well as promising projects in the energy sector, especially in the Arctic shelf and the Russian Far East," it said. The ministry said the two ministers will exchange assessments of the current international issues with an emphasis on interaction within the UN, Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), G20 and the Russia-India-China trilateral. "The ministers will also discuss India's presidency in the SCO, efforts to fight terrorism, as well as a number of the regional

issues, including the formation of a security architecture in the Asia-Pacific region, the situation around the Iranian nuclear problem, state of affairs in Afghanistan, Syria, and Ukraine," it said. Announcing Jaishankar's visit to Moscow last week, the ministry of external affairs (MEA) said issues pertaining to bilateral economic cooperation in various domains will be discussed. Jaishankar will also hold talks with Russian Deputy Prime Minister and minister of trade and industry Denis Manturov. In the last few months, India has increased the import of discounted crude oil from Russia notwithstanding increasing disquiet over it by several Western powers. Jaishankar and Lavrov have already met

four times after the Ukraine conflict began in February.

Since the Ukraine conflict began, Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to Russian President Vladimir Putin as well as Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy a number of times. In a phone conversation with Zelenskyy on October 4, Modi said that there can be "no military solution" and that India is ready to contribute to any peace efforts. At a bilateral meeting with Putin in the Uzbek city of Samarkand on September 16, Modi told him that "today's era is not of war". India has not yet condemned the Russian invasion of Ukraine and it has been maintaining that the crisis must be resolved through diplomacy and dialogue. (PTI)

Indian High Commission team meets visiting Sikh pilgrims in Pak to review their security

LAHORE, NOV 7 /--/ A team of officials from the Indian High Commission in Pakistan met with the leaders of the visiting Indian Sikh pilgrims here on Monday to take stock of their safety and security, and to facilitate their visits to various gurdwaras in this country.

Over 2,500 Sikhs from India arrived in Pakistan on Sunday amid tight security to take part in the festivities in connection with the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh religion, on Tuesday. Pakistan has been seeing a law-and-order situation since ousted premier Imran Khan's party launched a long march towards Islamabad over a week ago. The visit of the Indian Sikh pilgrims is taking place at a time when Pakistan is on the edge following an

assassination attempt on Khan last week in the Punjab province. The pilgrims are taking part in festivities at Gurdwara Janamasthan in Nankana Sahib, some 80 km from Lahore. On Monday, the Indian Sikhs also visited Gurdwara Sacha Sauda



Farooqabad, about 75 kilometres from Lahore. " @IndianPakistan consular team is on the ground, with the Indian jatha visiting Pakistan for Gurupurab, coordinating with jatha leaders, local authorities for their safety, security and to facilitate their visit to various Gurdwaras in Pakistan @MEAIndia," said the High Commission of India in Islamabad in a tweet. "The Indian High Commission's team met with the Sikhs jatha leaders and Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) officials at the Gurdwara Sacha Sauda Farooqabad," Amir Hashmi, spokesperson for

ETPB, which looks after the holy places of the minorities in Pakistan, told PTI on Monday. He said ETPB additional secretary (shrines) Rana Shahid Saleem held the meeting with the team of the Indian High Commission and discussed matters related to the visit of the pilgrims. Khan, who underwent a surgery for bullet injuries, was discharged from the hospital on Sunday and moved to his private residence in Lahore. The former Prime Minister, 70, suffered bullet injuries in the right leg on Thursday when two gunmen fired a volley of bullets at him in the Wazirabad area of Punjab province, where he was leading a protest march against the Shehbaz Sharif government. Khan's party announced to resume the suspended long march to Islamabad from Wednesday. Khan said he would join it in Rawalpindi when it reaches there in 10 to 14 days and until then will stay at his Lahore's Zaman Park residence. India and Pakistan signed a pact in 2019 to open a land corridor between the two countries that will allow Indian pilgrims to visit Darbar Sahib Gurdwara in Kartarpur, in the Narowal district of Pakistan. (PTI)

Halloween stampede: Chocolates, flowers and soju as Seoul mourns its dead

SEOUL, NOV 7 /--/Buzzing with fun and laughter till just the other day, Itaewon is quiet and grim, the deaths of 156 people in a Halloween stampede on October 29 casting a dark shadow on the hub of the South Korean capital's glittering nightlife. Some shops are open and many closed, there's barely any traffic and the air is heavy with the fragrance of incense sticks at the makeshift memorial near the alley where a swelling crowd of party goers got out of control. The stampede that followed killed 156 people, mostly in their 20s and 30s, and injured more than 170. "People seem to be avoiding the area," said a taxi driver who has ferried barely any passengers to the entertainment district. White chrysanthemums -- symbolic of grief in South Korea -- bottles of soju, a local liquor, chocolates and cigarettes are some of the farewell gifts mourners have left behind at the memorial near Hamilton Hotel. "My pretty friend, Yu-na... Sorry," reads a letter, mourning the death of a dearly loved one who got caught in the crush. Memories of the day are still fresh and many don't want to discuss it. "I'm sorry," said a tired shopkeeper, waiting for customers and refusing to talk about the tragedy that unfolded that night.

A fleet of around eight-10 police buses is stationed on the road leading to the narrow alley, now marked as a 'no entry zone' with orange tape and police personnel guarding the site in pairs. "We don't know till

when we will be here or when things will go back to normal," Kim, a police officer, told PTI. That fateful day, an estimated 100,000 people gathered in the popular location, known for trendy nightclubs, restaurants and bars, for South Korea's biggest outdoor Halloween festivities. It was the first relaxation in social distancing protocol and mask mandates since the Covid-19 pandemic began. For some like Kurt Jang, who was partying with his friends at a club metres away from the alley, the trauma lives on. "We saw people lying on the road. We started searching social media to find out what was going on. We were shocked. We hurried back to our homes. It was traumatic," Jang, who is in his late 20s, told PTI. That his flat is in front of Soon Chun Hyang Hospital, the nearest medical facility to the accident site, added to his distress. "I could see people constantly being lifted out of the ambulances. The sirens kept ringing all night. My family called me in the morning worried sick. They had also assumed that I was one of them," he said. "I don't have enough words to express what all went on that night. The wounds are too fresh.

The sounds you hear almost 10 days later underscore the tragedy -- the stern voices of police personnel asking people to keep moving so others can pay their last tributes, hushed tones of local reporters as they set up equipment for a live broadcast and the chanting of Buddhist monks sitting near the memorial to comfort the dead. (PTI)

Pak Chief Justice likely to deliberate on PM's request for full court commission in Khan's assassination bid allegation: Report

ISLAMABAD, NOV 7 /--/ Chief Justice of Pakistan Umar Ata Bandial is likely to deliberate Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's request for the constitution of a full court commission to probe his predecessor Imran Khan's allegations that he was among the three people who plotted the assassination bid on him, a media report said on Monday.

While Monday would be a hectic day at the Supreme Court as several high-profile cases would be heard, Chief Justice Bandial would consult fellow judges on Khan's allegation matter, The News International newspaper reported. Khan, 70, suffered a bullet injury in the right leg on Thursday last week when two gunmen fired a volley of bullets at him and others mounting on a container-mounted truck in the Wazirabad area of Punjab province, where he was leading a protest march against the Shehbaz-led government.

A day after the attack on him, Khan alleged that three people -- Prime Minister Shehbaz, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah, and Major General Faisal Naseer -- were behind the botched assassination attempt on his life. Prime Minister Sharif

addressed a press conference on Saturday and urged the Chief Justice to make a full court commission, including senior and junior judges, and also said he would send an official letter regarding the matter. Sharif had also said that if the apex court did not accept his request then such allegations would come up



Umar Ata Bandial

again. According to sources, the Supreme Court is waiting for an official request from Prime Minister Sharif over the matter seeking the constitution of the full court commission, the report said.

"Chief Justice Bandial will consult fellow judges of the Supreme Court today (Monday) on the presser of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif seeking the formation of a full court for probing the assassination attempt on Imran Khan," the report quoted sources as saying. After the Chief Justice

receives the official request from the Prime Minister's Office, pros and cons of the possibility of formation of the judicial commission would be looked into, the sources said. Meanwhile, the legal fraternity is of the view that the prime minister has no authority to ask the Chief Justice to constitute a full court for probing any matter adding that it is the prerogative of the Chief Justice to do so, the report said. Following last week's incident, there has also been a deadlock over filing an FIR. Khan's party Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has raised questions over alleged police reluctance to register their complaint. The deadlock stemmed from Khan's insistence on naming the Army general in the FIR.

Khan said that he has every right to name those responsible for the attack in the FIR, but authorities in Punjab are refusing to file the FIR unless he removes the military official's name from it.

The powerful military has already lashed out at Khan for alleging that a senior Army officer was also involved in the plot to assassinate him. In a hard-hitting statement, the Army said it would jealously protect its personnel from false allegations. (PTI)

Kyiv region still struggles 6 months after Russian retreat

MOSCHUN, NOV 7 /--/ Standing amid the wreckage of his home, Vadym Zherdetsky shows photos on his phone of how it once looked: handsome rooms, a hand-carved wooden bed and a chest of drawers he intended to leave to his grandchildren.

When Russia invaded Ukraine in February, two missiles struck the house in the tiny village of Moschun on the outskirts of the capital, ripping off the roof and nearly killing four family members. The town was recaptured from Russian forces in April, but Zherdetsky's house, like many others in the Kyiv region, remains in ruins. Everything changed. Our lives changed, the 51-year-old said, wiping away tears. Thank God it was only property, and we are

alive and healthy. ... I don't know where our kids and grandkids will live. I don't know anything. More than six months after Russian forces retreated from the towns around Kyiv, residents of those communities are still struggling to rebuild their lives. An estimated 1 million people half the number who fled the region have returned, according to local authorities. But many no longer have jobs, cannot afford to fix their houses and say they need more assistance. Nearly USD 350 billion is needed for reconstruction across the war-ravaged country, and that amount is expected to grow, according to a report issued in September by Ukraine's government, the European Commission and the World Bank. (AP)

The latest on COP27 - this year's annual UN summit on climate change

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, NOV 7 /--/ The head of the United Nations warned Monday that the world is on a highway to climate hell with our foot on the accelerator unless drastic action is taken to curb global warming. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres told world leaders gathered for this year's climate summit in Egypt said humanity must cooperate or perish, saying rich industrial nations must lead the way. But Guterres said emerging economies must also do their bit to bend the global emissions curve, calling out the world's two biggest emitters, the United States and China, have a particular responsibility. The UN urged countries to forge a climate solidarity pact that includes giving poor countries sufficient financial

support to cope with the effects of global warming, and reiterated his call for a tax on the windfall profits of fossil fuel companies. Egyptian President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi warned that the planet has become a world of suffering" in his opening remarks to leaders at the summit. Climate change will never stop without our intervention...Our time here is limited and we must use every second that we have," he said. El-Sisi also called for an end to the Russia-Ukraine war.

Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo called for wealthy nations who are more responsible for climate change to pay and compensate African nations that are among the hardest hit by the impacts of climate change. The damage is obvious, he told The Associated Press on Monday. Those

who are responsible should be very, very much aware of the need to compensate others. He said his government needs around 561 billion to implement the country's transition plan to clean energy, and at the same time avoid job losses in the oil and gas sector.

The World Trade Organisation chief is acknowledging that trade contributes to carbon emissions but says a new WTO report estimates that lifting tariffs and other barriers to trade in environmentally friendly energy products could both boost exports and reduce emissions.

WTO Director-General Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala says the Geneva-based trade body's latest World Trade Report, whose release was timed for Monday's opening of the UN climate conference, found that

Lab-grown blood given to people in world 1st clinical trial

LONDON, NOV 7 /--/Scientists in the UK have infused blood cells grown in a laboratory into people in the first such clinical trial in the world.

If proven safe and effective, manufactured blood cells could in time revolutionise treatments for people with blood disorders such as sickle cell and rare blood types, the researchers said. It can be difficult to find enough well-matched donated blood for some people with these disorders, they said. The team, including researchers from the University of Cambridge in the UK, said the blood cells were grown from stem cells from donors. The red cells were then transfused into healthy volunteers. This is the first time in the world that red blood cells that have been grown in a laboratory have been given to another person as part of a trial into blood transfusion, they said. "We hope our lab grown red blood cells will last longer than those that come from

blood donors," said chief investigator Cedric Ghevaert, a professor at the University of Cambridge and NHS Blood and Transplant. "If our trial, the first such in the world, is successful, it will mean that patients who currently require regular long-term blood transfusions will need fewer transfusions in future, helping transform their care," Ghevaert said in a statement. The trial is studying the lifespan of the lab-grown cells compared with infusions of standard red blood cells from the same donor. The researchers said the lab-grown blood cells are all fresh, so the trial team expects them to perform better than a similar transfusion of normal donated red



cells, which contains cells of varying ages. If manufactured cells last longer in the body, patients who regularly need blood may not need transfusions as often, reducing iron overload from frequent blood transfusions, which can lead to serious complications, they said. "This challenging and exciting trial is a

huge stepping stone for manufacturing blood from stem cells," said Ashley Toye, a professor at the University of Bristol. "This is the first-time lab grown blood from an allogeneic donor has been transfused and we are excited to see how well the cells perform at the end of the clinical trial," Toye said. Two people have so far been transfused with the lab grown red

cells. They were closely monitored and no untoward side effects were reported, they said. The participants are well and healthy. The identities of infused volunteers so far are not currently being unveiled, to help keep the trial 'blinded'. The amount of lab grown cells being infused varies but is around 5-10 ml - about one to two teaspoons. Donors were recruited from a blood donor base. They donated blood to the trial and stem cells were separated out from their blood. These stem cells were then grown to produce red blood cells in a laboratory. The recipients of the blood were recruited from healthy people.

A minimum of 10 participants will receive two mini transfusions at least four months apart, one of standard donated red cells and one of lab grown red cells, to find out if the young red blood cells made in the laboratory last longer than cells made in the body. (PTI)

'Act now' to stop 'abuse' of power: Imran writes to Pak Prez

ISLAMABAD, NOV 7 /--/Imran Khan, who has survived an assassination attempt, has urged Pakistan President Arif Alvi to act against the "abuse of power" at the hands of "rogue elements" in the government and also define "clear operational lines" of the Army's media wing.

In a letter to the president on Sunday, the former prime minister wrote that since the removal of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) government, the country has been confronted with an ever-increasing scale of false allegations, harassment, arrests, and custodial torture. Khan, 70, suffered bullet injuries in the right leg on Thursday when two gunmen fired a volley of bullets at him



and others mounting on a container-mounted truck in the Wazirabad area of Punjab province, where he was leading a protest march against the Shehbaz Sharif government. He has alleged that Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah has repeatedly issued death threats to him and that he was informed of an assassination plot hatched by Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, Interior Minister Rana Sanaullah and a senior military official, the Express Tribune newspaper reported. "The plot was operationalised earlier this week during our long march, but Allah saved me and the assassination attempt failed, he said.

Khan requested that as the head of the State of Pakistan and also as the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces of the Constitution, President Alvi take note of the following serious wrongdoings that undermine Pakistan's national security. In his letter, Khan raised three separate points regarding the Prime Minister Office leak, the cypher controversy and the role of the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of the powerful army. He claimed that the Official Secrets Act was breached when a confidential conversation between myself as prime minister, the Chief of Army Staff and the director general of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), on a supposedly secure line, was leaked' to the media. "This raises a very serious question as to who or what organisation was involved in doing a clearly illegal wiretap of the PM's secure phone line? This is a breach of national security at the highest level, he said.

A series of separate audio recordings surfaced in September, allegedly featuring the leadership of the PTI and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) holding informal conversations never meant to be heard by the public. Khan also mentioned about the cypher controversy, which the former premier has long touted as evidence to overturn his government through a foreign conspiracy. He noted that the National Security Committee (NSC) meeting held during his tenure had decided this was an unacceptable intrusion into our internal matters which was also later reaffirmed during the meeting held under the Shehbaz government. However, a joint press conference of the spy agency ISI chief and ISPR chief had the former contradicting the decision made by the NSC under two governments and stating that the message of the US government conveyed by our envoy in Washington DC in the cypher was not an unacceptable intrusion into our internal affairs but simply a case of misconduct'. (PTI)

Leftist Lula's election victory in Brazil's election not necessarily a setback for far-right globally: Experts

WASHINGTON, NOV 7 /--/The outcome of the landmark Brazilian elections - in which left-leaning Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva narrowly defeated incumbent Jair Bolsonaro, also known as "Trump of the Tropics" because of his right-wing credentials does not necessarily reflect a global trend among democratic countries, experts here feel.

Lula, 77, the South American country's president from 2003-2010, was immediately congratulated by US President Joe Biden, who praised the outcome, saying the win came "following free, fair and credible elections". The close election outcome marks an about-face for the country after four years of far-right politics. Brazil's electoral authorities announced a narrow win for Lula in the run-off of the presidential election in which the former president secured 50.9 per cent of the valid votes against Bolsonaro's 49.1 per cent. Bolsonaro, 67, is yet to concede publicly. But his chief of staff Ciro Nogueira last week said that the "process of transition" of power would begin. Commenting on the election outcome in Brazil, US experts feel that it may not necessarily be a setback for the far-right globally. "I would be reluctant to draw a broader trend from such a small sample size," Milan Vaishnav, director and senior fellow, South Asia Program of the prestigious Carnegie Endowment for International Peace think-tank, told PTI when asked about the results of the Brazilian elections and also the defeat of right-wingers in recent elections in the United States in 2020. The results signal "the deep divide that Lula will confront as

president, according to The New York Times. "His victory also pushes Brazil back to the left, extending a string of leftist victories across Latin America, fuelled by a wave of anti-incumbent backlash. "Six of the region's seven largest countries have now elected leftist leaders since 2018, the daily wrote. But does this have any signal for the two largest democracies of the world -- India where the elections are scheduled for 2024 and the United States, which is having its mid-term polls on Tuesday and the presidential elections in 2024 -- is the question.

American experts are reluctant to jump to a definitive conclusion right now. "A new right-wing government has come to power in Italy, the Republicans are poised to gain seats in the US midterm election," Vaishnav argued, predicting the return of Israel's right-wing in power. Former Israeli president Benjamin Netanyahu-led coalition of right-wing parties secured a comfortable majority in the parliament elections last week. "Even the Brazilian results show, at best, a deeply divided country with the Bolsonaro faction nearly eking out a victory, he said. "In India, the fact is, no party right now poses a grave threat to the BJP on a pan-Indian basis. It is much too early to sound the death knell of conservative forces around the world, Vaishnav said in response to a question. Author of several thought-provoking books on Indian politics and its internal dynamics, Vaishnav through his multiple years of research is seen as an authoritative voice on Indian democracy and its broader political trend. (PTI)



UK court approves extradition of accused middleman Sanjay Bhandari

LONDON, NOV 7 /--/A UK court on Monday ruled that Sanjay Bhandari, an accused middleman and consultant in arms deals, can be extradited to India to face charges of tax evasion and money laundering.

The 60-year-old faced two extradition requests from the Indian authorities, the first related to money laundering and the second to tax evasion. District Judge Michael Snow, who heard the case at Westminster Magistrates' Court in London earlier this year, concluded that there are no bars to him being extradited and decided to send the case to UK Home Secretary Suella Braverman, who is authorised to order the extradition based on the court order. As I am satisfied that extradition is compatible with the defendant's Convention rights, I must send this case to the Secretary of State [Braverman] for a decision as to whether the defendant is to

be extradited, Judge Snow said in his judgment. However, I only do so on the basis of the Assurances that have been provided by the Government, he said, with reference to Indian government assurances that Bhandari will be held in a separate cell at Tihar Jail in New Delhi with relevant healthcare provisions while he faces trial in India.

The Indian government's extradition request for Bhandari had been certified by then UK Home Secretary Priti Patel in June 2020 and he was arrested on an extradition warrant the following month that year.

The London-based businessman has been on bail on a security provided to the court as he fought extradition on the cases against him by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) and is expected to appeal against Monday's magistrates' court

order. According to the court documents, Bhandari is wanted in India for intended prosecution for an offence of money laundering contrary to the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) 2002 and for offences of tax evasion contrary to the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Asset), Imposition of Tax Act 2015 and Income Tax Act 1961.

Bhandari, who was resident in India for tax purposes at the time in 2015, is accused of concealing overseas assets, using backdated documents, benefiting from the assets not declared to the Indian tax authorities and then falsely informing the authorities that he did not possess any overseas assets. He denies the allegations. The UK's Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), on behalf of the Indian authorities, argued that Bhandari's conduct amounts to "fraud by false representation" in the British jurisdiction. (PTI)



Trent Boult and Jimmy Neesham wait for their turn to bowl in the nets, Men's T20 World Cup 2022, Sydney

GAME NOTES

Kohli named ICC player of month for October

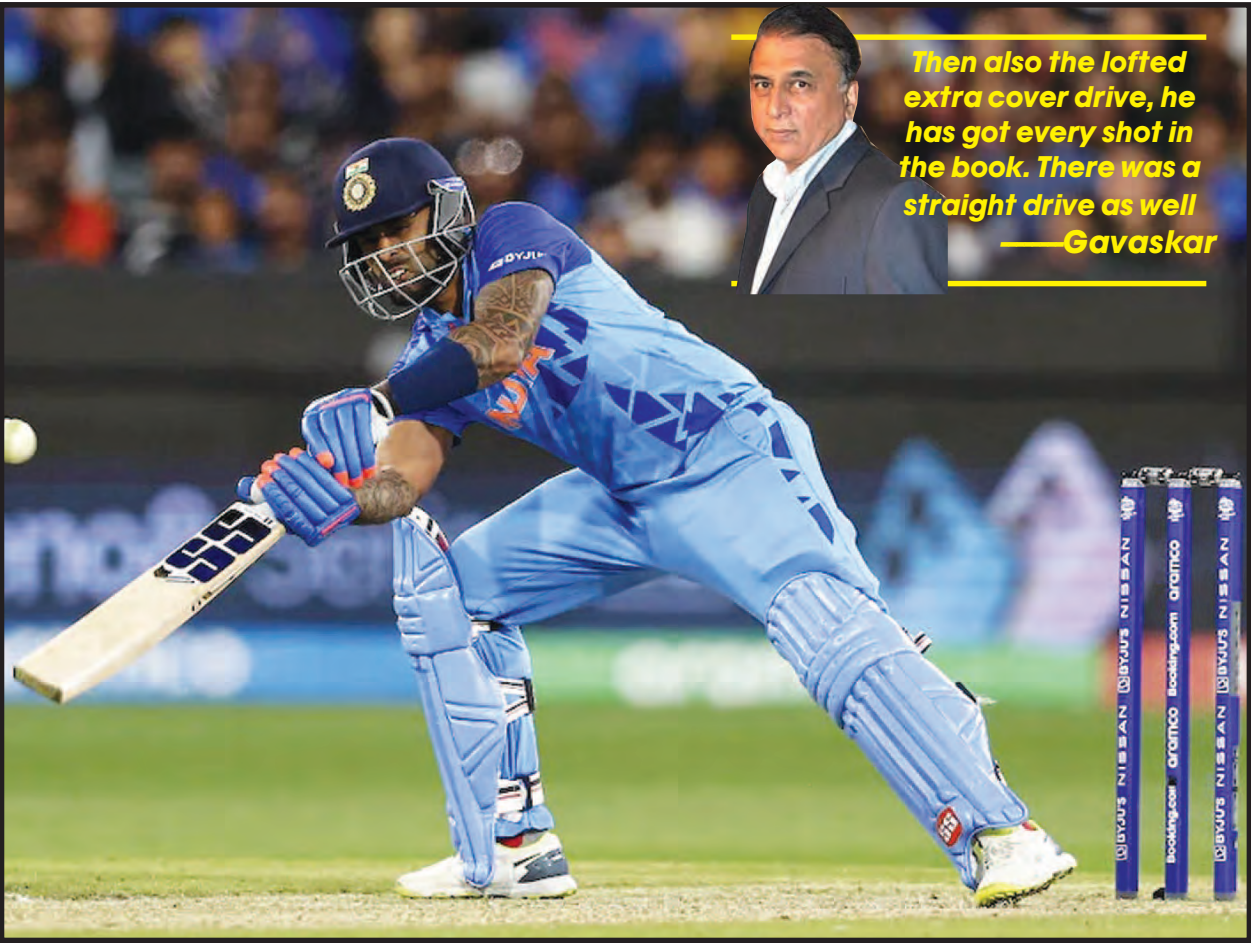
DUBAI, NOV 7 /--/ Star batter Virat Kohli was on Monday named the ICC Men's Player of the Month for October following a series of stellar performances during India's charge to the T20 World Cup semifinals in Australia. Pakistan's veteran all-rounder Nida Dar won the honour in the women's category thanks to her sensational form in their Asia Cup campaign. Dar edged out the Indian duo of Jemimah Rodrigues and Deepti Sharma, who produced impressive displays in the same tournament in which their side won. Both Kohli and Dar were declared winners following a global vote conducted among media representatives, ICC Hall of Famers, former international players and registered fans. (PTI)

Everyone would love to see India-Pakistan final: Watson

SYDNEY, NOV 7 /--/ The anticipation, drama, energy and fan-involvement is completely different in an India-Pakistan game and the possibility of a dream T20 World Cup final between the two biggest rivals in cricket has got former Australia all-rounder Shane Watson excited. The Asian rivals have already clashed once in the much talked-about Group stage match of the ongoing tournament at the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), where Virat Kohli conjured up one of the greatest T20 knocks. The close match had millions of fans glued to their TV sets while the ones who watched the heart-stopping action unfold before their eyes at the venue, considered themselves the luckiest. Now that the two teams have reached the semifinal stage, albeit by taking contrasting routes, an India-Pakistan title clash is being anticipated. (PTI)

Suryakumar is the new Mr 360, without him India will struggle to get 140-150: Gavaskar

'Let's hope Rohit is saving the runs for the next two matches'



Then also the lofted extra cover drive, he has got every shot in the book. There was a straight drive as well —Gavaskar

You're very quickly getting there dude, and even more! Well played today —AB de Villiers'

AB de Villiers' reaction in Suryakumar Yadav's 'there's only one Mr.360' remark

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ Right-handed batter Suryakumar Yadav has been in blistering form in the ongoing T20 World Cup as he has already registered three half-centuries in the Super 12 stage. In the match against Zimbabwe, Suryakumar Yadav played a knock of 61 runs off just 25 balls with the help of 6 fours and 4 sixes to take India's total past the 180-run mark. This total was enough as India sealed a comfortable 71-run win, and they will now face England in the semi-finals on Thursday at Adelaide. Suryakumar is now being referred to as 'Mr 360', a tag which has been used for a very long time for former South Africa captain AB de Villiers. While speaking



to Star Sports in Hindi after the match against Zimbabwe, Suryakumar responded to his comparisons with AB de Villiers. "There is only one 360-degree player in the world, and I will try to play like him," said Suryakumar. Now, former Proteas captain de Villiers has reacted to the comment made by Suryakumar. "You're very quickly getting there dude, and even more! Well played today," de Villiers tweeted. The fifty against Zimbabwe was Suryakumar's third half-century of the tournament and he played some mind-blowing strokes in the match yet again. Former India head coach Ravi Shastri asked Suryakumar about the ramp shot that fetched the Indian batter a six over deep fine leg. Surya explained how he has prepared himself to play the stroke. "I mean you got to understand what the bowler is going to bowl at that time. That is a little predetermined at that moment. I have practiced the stroke a lot, when I used to play a lot of rubber-ball cricket. So, you got to be thinking what the bowler is thinking at that time. "If the field is in I just back myself to go, there," Suryakumar said.

He was almost half through his swing and then the length is not there, and he was good enough to hold his shape and find the middle and hit it far enough to get it not just over the fence —Ricky Ponting



said referring to Kohli's moment of magic. Ponting, who is third in the all time run getters list behind only Sachin Tendulkar and Kumar Sangakkara, said on a lighter note that he never attempted what Kohli executed in his illustrious career. "I didn't do it,"

Ponting said with a laugh. "I mean, it wasn't on the back foot, it was just a backfoot length ball. He sort of loaded up, his footwork was quite neutral when he hit it." Ponting feels Kohli's supreme fitness also allowed him to attempt that stroke. (PTI)

NEW DELHI, NOV 7 /--/ Suryakumar Yadav has evolved into the new Mr 360 degree and India will struggle to put up enough runs on the board if he fails to fire, says batting great Sunil Gavaskar. Suryakumar, the world's number one T20 batter at the moment, has dazzled in his maiden T20 World Cup, playing scintillating innings in the Super 12 stage to help India reach the semifinals of the marquee event. Against Zimbabwe, he smashed an unbeaten 61 off 25, sending the ball to every corner of the field. "Each of those innings was pretty much 360 degrees. He is the new Mr. 360 degree. There was that one shot that he hit for a six just to the left of the wicketkeeper. Then he went a little squarer in the final overs, for example, taking advantage of the angle that the bowler was trying to aim at. "Then also the lofted extra cover drive, he has got every shot in the book. There was a straight drive as well," Gavaskar was quoted as saying on India Today. The former India captain feels Suryakumar is the reason India has

succeeded in scoring totals they could defend. "He is actually turning out to be the player who is taking India to totals which you can defend. The score India got was the highest T20I score at the MCG. Without his 61 not out, India would not have reached even 150," he stated. The under-fire Rahul returned to form with back-to-back half centuries in India's last two games against Bangladesh and Zimbabwe. Gavaskar said if Suryakumar fails Rahul will need to take charge. "I think at the moment, there are two batters who are in prime form, Kohli and Suryakumar. It was also good to see KL Rahul get yet another half-century, but he has to look to get more than that for a simple reason. "If Surya doesn't fire, then India will struggle to get 140-150. It's therefore very important for Rahul to keep going," Gavaskar added. Skipper Rohit Sharma is having an underwhelming World Cup by his standards. The opener has scored just 89 runs in five matches, with his only substantial knock being 53 against the Netherlands. "Well, let's just hope he is saving the runs for the next two matches. They are going to be the

biggest matches. In a group game, you know there's another game to follow, so you maybe sometimes try a little too much and get out. "Now, these are knockout games. In a knockout game, you can't afford to experiment too much. You need to be at your best. Let's hope that Rohit comes good," Gavaskar said. Rohit hasn't been able to provide India with solid starts and the pull, which is his trademark shot, has been his undoing in Australia. "What's been happening is, he himself, as the captain of the team, has set this template in the first 6 overs to go bang, bang, and bang. "Suddenly, he can't be seen looking to work the ball around. He is always a good puller of the ball. But on Australian boundaries, that pull shot has got him into trouble. "We saw that two years ago as well, he got out twice by playing the pull shot after having scored 40-50 runs (in Tests). That's got him into trouble again. "In a T20 format with just one fielder in the first 6 overs, he has got to be mindful of the fielder and play the pull shot. It's a productive shot for him, let's not forget that," Gavaskar added. (PTI)

Will go down as one of most remembered shots in T20 WC history: Ponting on Kohli's straight six off Rauf

MELBOURNE, NOV 7 /--/ Virat Kohli's sensational straight six off a super quick Haris Rauf delivery will go down as one of the best shots played in T20 World

Cup history, reckons Australian legend Ricky Ponting. The special six in extreme pressure was followed by a flick over fine leg, reducing the equation to 16 off the final over in one of the most memorable Indo-Pak contests ever. With Kohli staying unbeaten on a magical 83 at the other end, R Ashwin hit the winning runs off the final ball, as India pulled off a win for the ages. The two sixes from Kohli has already become part of cricketing folklore and Ponting, too, looked back fondly at those outrageous strokes, especially the first one. "I'm not sure what all the fuss is about," Ponting said in his

inimitable style before raving over the first six. "It's going to go down as one of the most remembered and talked about shots probably in - I won't say white-ball cricket history - but certainly T20 World Cup history," he told the T20 World Cup website. Babar Azam was forced to bowl left-arm spinner Mohammad Nawaz in the 20th over after Rauf, Naseem Shah and Shaheen Afridi finished their quota. Kohli himself had admitted that he had to find those two sixes off Rauf to keep his team in the game. "They would have known, having done the calculations, that it was going to have to be the

spinner that was going to bowl the last over. That just goes to show how important the last two balls of the 19th over were," said Ponting. "They had to get boundaries on those two or the game was done. What had sort of happened in the over previous as well, Virat was setting up for something that was going to be full. "You're setting up something for that full, that he could smack back down the ground off the front foot. "He was almost half through his swing and then the length is not there, and he was good enough to hold his shape and find the middle and hit it far enough to get it not just over the fence," he

Pant might be needed in games ahead, hints Dravid

MELBOURNE, NOV 7 /--/ Rishabh Pant's disappointing outing against Zimbabwe isn't a cause of concern for head coach Rahul Dravid, who hinted that the flamboyant left-hander could start in the T20 World Cup semifinal against England at Adelaide on Thursday. Pant didn't get a look in in the first four games where veteran Dinesh Karthik, who in all likelihood is playing his last global meet, was assigned the role of a finisher. With Karthik not being able to deliver on bowler friendly Australian tracks, Pant is back in equation. "I don't think we judge people on one game, and sometimes whether we play them or not is not based on one game," Dravid said after India's 71 run victory in which Pant's contribution was a mere three.

After that, Dravid gave good enough indication that decision to field Pant wasn't taken in isolation as the coach was potentially looking at a match up with leg spinner Adil Rashid in the semifinals. "Sometimes it's just matchups. We need to look at what are the skills we might need against the kind of bowlers we might come up against. So a lot of things go into these kind of decisions," said Dravid. He also firmly reiterated that team management had never lost faith in Pant. "Yeah, in a sense it's not that we ever lost confidence in Rishabh. We've got confidence in all of our 15 players who play here. It's only 11 guys who can play, and it depends on the combinations that you have. "The very fact that they are here and they're part of the

World Cup means that we have a lot of confidence in them. It means that anytime they can be called on to play in the XI. "Yes, you can only play 11 at a time and some people sometimes miss out and don't have to play, but again, Rishabh is someone that as a lot of you would have been seeing, has been travelling with us. "He's been batting a lot in the nets, he's been hitting a lot of balls, doing a lot of fielding practice and sort of keeping practice and keeping himself ready. The opportunity came for us today (Sunday) to give him an opportunity," he reasoned. In fact, Dravid was happy about Pant's intent against left arm spinner Sean Williams but the execution was wrong. "Obviously, it didn't kind of work out today, but absolutely no

-- I'm not bothered about that at all because I think he took the right option. "His role was to take on the left-arm spinner which was there, and sometimes it comes off and sometimes it doesn't." Pant being a left hander also gives the team variations among specialist batters. "Sometimes it gives us the opportunity, as well, to play Rishabh, keeping obviously this game in mind as well but just keeping the future in mind, just opening up our options. "I think everyone is available for selection; just because somebody missed out on this game doesn't mean that we can't go back to him and we can't decide on -- we might go the same way. We might go a different way, as well," said Dravid trying to put his guard up on the potential change in the playing XI. (PTI)

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