



Commercial vehicle owners seethe over hefty fines

Vehicle fitness, delayed permit renewal points of discontent

KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, OCT 16/-/- Owners of commercial vehicles (With yellow number plates) are getting a run for their money. They are being forced to pay hefty penalties for their failure to renew permit and fitness certificates within the stipulated time. And this has not gone well with them as they claim that most of the commercial vehicles were non-operational at the time of Covid-19 induced lockdown. Now, when these vehicle owners approach the RTO, they are asked to pay fines, which are even more than the cost of the vehicle itself. "Business during the Covid-19 time and subsequent period were almost nil and most of the commercial vehicle owners had suffered heavy loss during this period. Even after the ease of lockdown, business has not yet picked up to the pre-Covid-19 level. During this hard time, levying hefty penalties by the Regional Transport Office (RTO) for renewal of permit and fitness of commercial vehicles is taking a toll on the owners of the commercial vehicles",



said Ranjit, a Jeep owner. Due to varied reasons, some commercial vehicle owners were unable to get their vehicle permit renewed on schedule, but now they are asked to pay hefty fines. It didn't make sense to impose heavy penalties on them as they are coming out from Covid-19 aftermath. While appreciating the Government for extending relaxation by non levying fines during the peak of

Covid-19, i.e. from February 2020 to October 2020, these commercial vehicle owners have now urged the RTO to extend more relaxation by scrapping the daily penalty it has been levying for delay in renewing expired fitness certificates and renewal of permit. According to the Motors Vehicle Act, updated fitness certificates and permit renewal on schedule is mandatory for operation of commercial vehicles on

roads. Earlier, in the islands commercial vehicles off the roads and under repair in garages were considered for relaxation while levying fines. They just have to show evidence that their vehicle was off the road and under repair in the garages. But in recent years, due to the hard policy of the former Director of Transport, relaxation is not given to them and hefty fines are imposed on failure to get

permits renewed on schedule. Speaking to EOI, Palni, a cargo auto driver said "I have a commercial vehicle used for transportation of goods. For the past two years, I have been camping in Chennai for the treatment of my ailing mother. I have parked my vehicle in one of my relatives' houses and it has been off the road for the past two years. But when I visited the RTO office for renewal of permit, I was told to pay over Rs 2 lakh as fines. Just imagine, from where I can manage such a huge amount. It is already difficult for the family to arrange money for the treatment of my ailing mother, at this time depositing such a huge amount as fines for renewal of permit is beyond my capacity. Finally, we decided to sell the auto so that I can at least ensure treatment of my mother. I have to look for some job thereafter", rued a depressed Palni.

No-LPG refills for villagers of Pinakinagar, Kamalapur, Harinagar & Jaipur past 3-months



KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, OCT 16/-/- It's over three months now, villagers of Pinakinagar, Kamalapur, Harinagar and Jaipur under GP Haringar have not received LPG refills yet. The Prahan, GP Haringar, Mr. Manojit Halder has taken up the issue with the IOC seeking timely supply of LPG refills to villagers in rural areas. Getting a cooking gas refill is still a daunting task in the rural areas in the Islands. Every time a LPG truck visits any place in these areas, people run behind the truck to get the LPG refills. Villagers argue that after July-2022, the villagers of this Panchayat are facing hardship due to non-distribution of LPG refills on time. Villagers demand CCS Ltd to chalk out a distribution chart and adhere to a distribution schedule so that LPG trucks can visit the fixed areas as per the chart. This will help resolve the distribution hurdle faced by the CSS Ltd and help consumers to get LPG refills on time.

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MP condoles demise

PORT BLAIR, OCT 16/-/- Mr. Kuldeep Rai Sharma, Member of Parliament has mourned the sad and untimely demise of Mehmood, Assistant Divisional Officer, Delhi Fire Service, R/o Dollygunj, Port Blair who passed away at Delhi on 15th October 2022. He prayed to the Almighty to give eternal peace to the departed soul and courage to the bereaved family to bear the irreparable loss.

Secretary (Education) visits Schools at GP Shivapuram



KARTIK

MAYABUNDER, OCT 16/-/- The Pradhan, GP Shivapuram, Mr. Venkateswar Rao, along with PRI members, Mr M Perriah, Smti Rajitha and the SMC Chairperson, Mr Abdul Majeed met the Secretary of Education on 14th October 2022, at Hawks Bill Nest Guest House RRO

to discuss various issues and placed problems faced by the Schools under GP Shivapuram. The PRI members raised the issue of posting of sufficient teachers in Middle School Panchwati, Middle School Padmanabhapuram, Sec School Shivapuram, Sr Sec School CFO Nallah and Primary School Kalady. The Secretary of Education

assured us to look into the issue. The Pradhan also raised the issue of lack of infrastructure facilities in these Schools. He also underscored the need to give more attention on conducting sports activities under the 'Khelo India Khelo' scheme of the government. The Secretary of Education on Saturday visited Padmanabhapuram

School, Shivapuram School and Panchawati School, along with the Pradhan and inspected infrastructure facilities provided in the schools.

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India will give befitting reply to anyone who tries to cast evil eye on it: Rajnath

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 --/ India has never tried to hurt any country, but a befitting reply will be given if anyone tries to cast an evil eye on it, defence minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday, amid a lingering border row with China in eastern Ladakh.

In his address at a virtual event, the defence minister emphasised that strict vigil is being maintained at the borders and that the country is ready to deal with all challenges. "India is a peace-loving nation which has never tried to hurt any country, but if any attempt is made to disrupt peace and harmony in the country, a befitting reply will be given," he said. The defence minister noted that

bolstering the security apparatus by equipping the armed forces with indigenous state-of-the-art weapons is the top priority of the government. He also urged the citizens to contribute to nation-building by transcending sectarian barriers and imbibing the qualities of national pride and patriotism, found in abundance in every Indian soldier and freedom fighter, according to the defence ministry. The event, "Shaheedon ko Salaam", was organised by an NGO named "Maruti Veer Jawan Trust".

Singh said the armed forces personnel, rising above the barriers of region, religion, caste and language, serve the nation

selflessly and protect people from various kinds of threats, the same way the "revolutionary" freedom

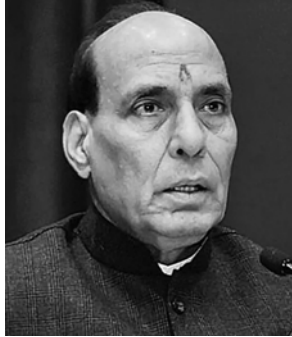
fighters laid down their lives for the country's independence. "It is the duty of every citizen to carry forward the ideals and resolutions of our freedom

fighters and soldiers, protect the unity, integrity and sovereignty of our nation and play their part in building a strong, prosperous and self-reliant 'New India'," he said. Singh further said India has never tried to hurt any country, but a befitting reply will be given if anyone tries to cast an evil eye on it. Terming the support to the family members of the fallen heroes a national responsibility, the defence minister asserted that the government is committed to ensuring the welfare of the next of kin of the serving as well as the retired security forces personnel.

He described the family as the biggest strength and support system of a soldier and said the government is

leaving no stone unturned to strengthen that support system. "During my stint as the home minister, the 'Bharat Ke Veer' fund was one of the major decisions taken to support the families of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) jawans and officers," Singh said.

"Recently, the Ministry of Defence launched the 'Maa Bharati Ke Sapoot' website to enable people to contribute more to the armed forces Battle Casualties Fund," he said. The defence minister said the induction of "Made-in-India" ships and other equipment reflects the resolve to achieve complete 'aatmanirbharta' (self-reliance) in the defence sector soon. (PTI)



Rajnath Singh

Modi to launch PMJAY-MA Yojana Ayushman cards distribution in Gujarat today

AHMEDABAD, OCT 16 --/ Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Monday attend an event to distribute Ayushman cards to beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana-MA Amrutam (PMJAY-MA) scheme in Gujarat, an official said on Sunday. Modi will join the programme organised in Gujarat capital Gandhinagar at 4 pm in the presence of Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel via video conference, and will also interact with three beneficiaries, an official release said. The Ayushman PVC cards (made of polyvinyl chloride material which can be carried easily) are to be distributed to more than 50 lakh beneficiaries under the



PMJAY-MA scheme in Gujarat, there release said. The Centre's PMJAY scheme of providing healthcare facilities to the economically weaker sections was integrated with Gujarat's Mukhyamantri Amrutam (MA) and Mukhyamantri Amrutam Vatsalya (MAV) healthcare schemes in 2019. As a result, all beneficiaries of the state schemes were eligible to get PMJAY-MA cards, the release said. Since the integration of the two schemes, PMJAY-MA cards were issued to 1.58 crore beneficiaries in Gujarat, the state government said. "From September 2021 till date, more than 50 lakh cards have been issued under the chief minister's leadership. Newly printed Ayushman PVC cards will be given to these beneficiaries," the release said.

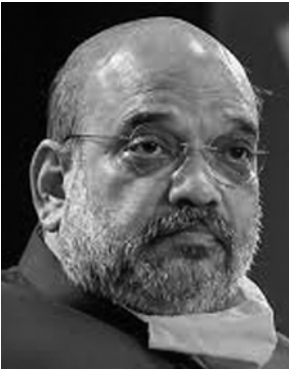
Gujarat's Minister of Health and Family Welfare Rushikesh Patel will attend the state-level programme. Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya will join the event virtually. The Ayushman PVC cards are being given to beneficiaries as per the National Health Authority (NHA) guidelines. At least 50 lakh PVC cards have been printed in Gujarat and delivered to the respective chief district health officers/medical officers. The Ayushman PVC cards will be distributed at the village level, it was stated. Under the Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY, the world's largest health insurance scheme, health cover of up to Rs 5 lakh is provided per family, as per the government website. After the announcement of the Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY in 2019, the Gujarat government integrated the Mukhyamantri Amrutam and Mukhyamantri Amrutam Vatsalya schemes with it, and beneficiaries of these three schemes were issued co-branded cards under the PMJAY-MA. (PTI)

Shah lays foundation stone for terminal building and expansion of Gwalior airport Says Cong stalled public schemes

GWALIOR, OCT 16 --/ Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday laid the foundation for the new terminal building and expansion of the Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Airport in Gwalior city and accused the erstwhile Congress government of stalling welfare schemes in Madhya Pradesh.

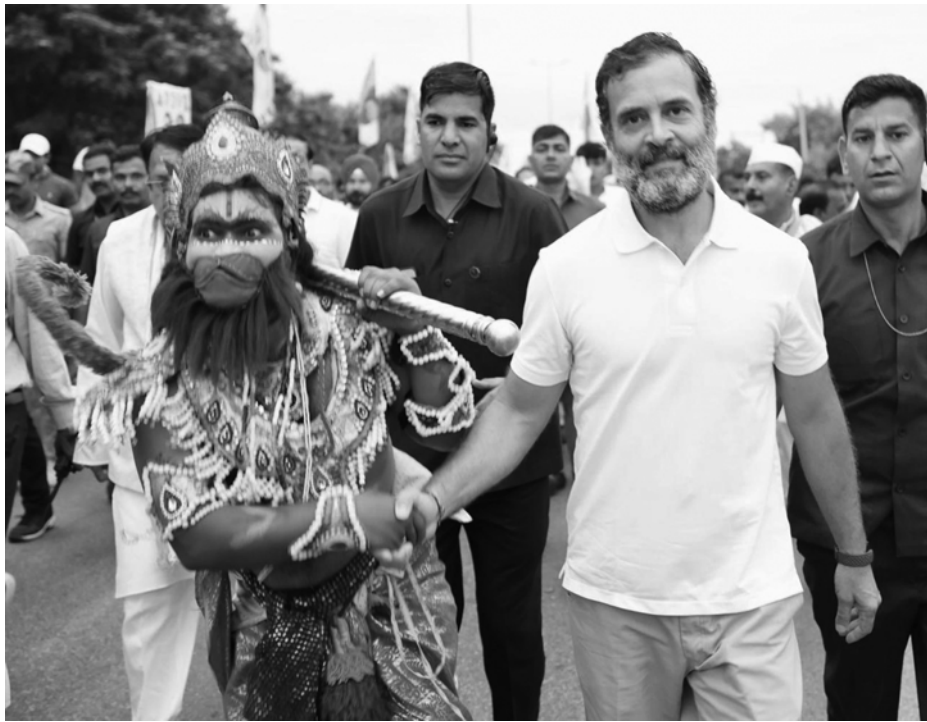
He appealed to people to re-elect Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Madhya Pradesh, going to polls in November of next year. Madhya Pradesh had experienced Congress rule once. Now the elections are on the anvil again. Don't repeat the mistake. Believe in Modi ji (Prime Minister Narendra Modi) and vote for BJP, Shah said after laying the foundation for the Rs 446-crore expansion of the airport and launching a Rs 4,300-crore project under the Jal Jeevan Mission. Shah alleged the previous Kamal Nath-led Congress government, which remained in power for 15 months till March 2020, stalled welfare projects

including the PM Awas Yojana and Jal Jeevan Mission, which were meant for the poor. After becoming chief minister, Shivraj Singh Chouhan expedited these projects to compensate for the loss that



occurred during the Congress regime, he said. Union Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and CM Chouhan were present on the occasion. The new terminal building will have an area of 20,000 sq metres as compared to the existing

3,500 sqm, an official said. After the expansion, the airport will have the capacity to park 13 planes as against the existing capacity for three aircraft, the official said. Scindia said the area of the Rajmata Vijayaraje Scindia Airport will go up to 180 acres from the existing 25 acres after expansion. A cargo terminal and four aerobridges will be constructed in the airport, which will also showcase the heritage of the Gwalior-Chambal region, said Scindia, the grandson of the late Rajmata Vijayaraje, a key BJP leader and one of the highest royal figures of Gwalior. The new terminal building will have an area of 20,000 sq metres as compared to the existing 3,500 sq m, the official said. After the expansion, the airport will have the capacity to park 13 planes as against the existing capacity for three aircraft, the official said. Shah later inaugurated "Gatha Swaraj ki-Maratha Gallery" gallery at Scindias' Jai Vilas Palace in the city. (PTI)



Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with an artist dressed as Lord Hanuman during the party's Bharat Jodo Yatra in Ballari district of Karnataka on Sunday

Bharat Jodo Yatra: 4 persons suffer "minor electric shock" while tying flags to a pole

BALLARI, OCT 16 --/ The Congress on Sunday said four persons suffered a "minor electric shock" near Moka here, while tying flags to a pole, for the Bharat Jodo Yatra led by Rahul Gandhi.

Rahul Gandhi and AICC General Secretary in-charge of Karnataka Randeep Singh Surjewala visited the injured at hospital, where they are recovering, and the party has announced Rs one lakh financial help to all four. "An unfortunate incident occurred during the Yatra today. A few of our friends suffered an electric shock while tying flags to a pole. They have been tended to in the Civil Hospital, New Moka, Ballari. I am happy to see that they have not suffered any major injuries, and their morale continues to remain high," Rahul Gandhi said in a Facebook post. Noting that those injured were immediately helped and taken care of, and their safety and health prioritised, he said, "I would like to take this opportunity to tell all those involved in the Yatra to take safety precautions and utmost care while they go about fulfilling their duties as we forge ahead in our mission to unite India."

The 17th day of Bharat Jodo Yatra in Karnataka began at Sanganakallu here this morning and will end at Bennikallu. Earlier, Surjewala in a tweet said, "Today, an unfortunate incident happened in yatra when 4 persons got minor electric shock near Moka town in Ballary. Sh. Rahul Gandhi deputed me and Nagendra, MLA to visit the Civil Hospital. God is kind as everyone is fine. INC will give ?1 Lakh financial help to all four." (PTI)

Chhattisgarh Assembly Deputy Speaker Manoj Singh Mandavi dies of heart attack CM, other leaders express grief

KANKER, OCT 16 --/ Chhattisgarh Assembly's Deputy Speaker and ruling Congress MLA Manoj Singh Mandavi died on Sunday following a heart attack, party leaders said.

Mandavi, 58, was taken to a hospital in neighbouring Dhamtari town after he suffered a heart attack where he died in the morning, state Congress communication wing head Sushil Anand Shukla said. As a mark of respect to the departed leader, the Chhattisgarh government has announced one-day state mourning on Sunday in his home district Kanker and capital city Raipur, a public relations department officer said. The national flag will be flown at half-mast at these two places during the period. Besides, there will be no government entertainment and cultural programmes during this period there, he added. The legislator, who represented B h a n u p r a t a p p u r constituency in Kanker district, was at his native village Nathia Nawagaon in Charama area of the

district on Saturday night. After he complained of uneasiness, he was taken to a hospital in Charama where doctors attended to him, Shukla said. Mandavi was then shifted to a hospital in neighbouring Dhamtari town where he died, the Congress leader said.



Manoj Singh Mandavi

The mortal remains have been taken to his village where the final rites will be performed later in the day with state honours, a district administration official said. The three-time MLA and a prominent tribal face of the party in Bastar region, Mandavi had served as the minister of state for home and prisons during the Ajit Jogi-led Congress government in the state between 2000 and

2003. Condolences poured in from various quarters with leaders from both the ruling Congress and opposition BJP recalling Mandavi's contribution for the development of tribal community and Bastar region. Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel said Mandavi was a prominent tribal leader and his sudden demise has left everyone in a state of shock. He used to effectively raise the issues pertaining to adivasis. He always strived for the progress of the tribal community and development of his region. His death is an irreparable loss to all of us, Baghel said. State Assembly Speaker Charan Das Mahant described Mandavi as a simple and soft spoken person. His contribution towards the development of the state will also be always remembered, he added.

Chhattisgarh health minister TS Singh Deo, former chief minister and BJP national vice president Raman Singh and senior BJP MLA Dharamlal Kaushik also condoled Mandavi's demise. (PTI)

Sisodia, Jain are today's Bhagat Singh: Kejriwal on CBI summons in excise case

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 --/ With the CBI summoning Manish Sisodia for questioning in the excise policy case, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday compared his deputy and jailed minister Satyendar Jain to Bhagat Singh and termed his government's fight with the Centre the "second freedom struggle".

The AAP claimed that Sisodia would be arrested on Monday and alleged the move was initiated in view of the forthcoming assembly elections in Gujarat where it is in a direct contest with the BJP. The reactions from Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) came after the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) summoned Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Sisodia for questioning on Monday in connection with alleged corruption in the formulation and implementation of the now-scrapped excise policy.

The federal probe agency

has asked the AAP leader to appear before it at its headquarters here at 11 am on Monday. "Jail bars and hanging noose could not deter Bhagat Singh's resolute intentions. This is the second fight for freedom. Manish and Satyendar are today's Bhagat Singh."

After 75 years, the country got an education minister who gave good education to the poor and gave hope for a bright future. Prayers of crores of poor are with you," Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi. Satyendar Jain was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate on May 30 in connection with a money laundering case. Reacting to the CBI summons, Sisodia said he will fully cooperate. "CBI raid was conducted at my house for 14 hours, nothing came out."

Searched my bank locker, nothing came out init. They did not find anything in my village. Now they have called me to CBI

Headquarters at 11 am tomorrow. I will go and give my full cooperation. Satyameva Jayate," Sisodia tweeted. Addressing a press conference at the party headquarters, the AAP's chief spokesperson, Saurabh Bharadwaj, said the central probe agency has summoned Sisodia to arrest him. "We all understand that Manish ji is going to be arrested by the CBI tomorrow. Orders have already been issued in this regard, he said.

"But the move to arrest Sisodia has nothing to do with the alleged excise policy scam. It's about elections in Gujarat where the AAP is in direct contest with the BJP and the people are talking about change and want change, he claimed. Sisodia's arrest will further strengthen the AAP in Gujarat as people are watching why such repressive actions are being taken against the party leaders, he claimed. "We are ready. (PTI)

Four-day national executive board meeting of RSS begins in UP

PRAYAGRAJ, OCT 16 --/ A four-day national executive board meeting of the RSS, which will discuss the expansion work of the Sangh as well as the prevalent current issues, began in Gauhania here on Sunday. Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Dattatreya Hosabale attended the meeting and paid floral tributes to a portrait of Bharat Mata'. In the meeting,

discussion will be held to review the expansion work ('kaaryavistaar') in view of the centenary of the RSS as well as on current issues. Discussion will also be held on various issues raised by Bhagwat in his speech on the occasion of Vijaya Dashami in Nagpur. The RSS chief had spoken about education in mother tongue, population imbalance and social harmony. On the first day, tributes were paid to some of the prominent persons who

passed away recently. They included Shankaracharya of Dwarka Peeth Swami S w a r o p a n a n d , Panchpeethadheeshwar Acharya Dharmendra, former Chief Justice of India R C Lahoti, comedian-actor Raju Rivastava, industrialist Cyrus PMistry, archaeologist BB Lal and Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav. RSS publicity in-charge Sunil Ambekar said the event will continue till October 19. (PTI)

Health Ministry not to procure fresh Covid vaccines Surrenders Rs 4,237 crore from vaccination budget

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 --/ The government's Covid vaccination programme is in its final leg with the Health Ministry deciding against procuring more vaccines as of now and surrendering Rs 4,237 crore, or nearly 85 per cent of the 2022-23 budget allocation for inoculation purposes, to the Finance Ministry.

Official sources told PTI that more than 1.8 crore doses are still available with the governments at the Centre and in states and the stock is sufficient to continue the vaccination drive for around six months, given the low uptake of vaccines among people due to declining Covid case burden. Even if the government's stock gets exhausted, Covid vaccines

will be available in the market. "Any decision on whether to procure Covid vaccine doses through the government channel or get (fresh) budget allocations for the purpose after six months will depend on the coronavirus situation prevailing in the country at that time," an official source told PTI.

As part of the nationwide vaccination drive which began on January 16 last year, the Government of India has been supporting states and Union territories by providing them Covid-19 vaccines free of cost. Since the Covid cases have been low, a sense of complacency has grown among people and there has not been much demand of vaccines even

though the government conducted a 75-day drive -- 'Covid Vaccination Amrit Mahotsava' -- to administer booster doses to all adults free of cost. "Considering this and the vaccines in the stockpile nearing their expiry date, the decision has been taken not



to procure any more vaccines for now. Also, the Union Health Ministry has surrendered to the Finance

Ministry the balance of Rs 4,237.14 crore from its 2022-23 budget allocation of Rs 5,000 crore for inoculation purposes," the source said. The cumulative Covid vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 219.32 crore, according to

provisional reports till 7 am on Sunday. Official sources said 98 per cent of India's adult

population has received at least one dose of the Covid-19 vaccine while 92 per cent have been fully vaccinated. Besides, 83.7 per cent of adolescents aged 15 to 18 years have been vaccinated with the first dose since the vaccination for this age group began on January 3, while 72 per cent have got both the first and second doses.

In the age-group of 12-14 years, 87.3 per cent have been administered the first dose while 68.1 per cent are fully vaccinated. Of the total eligible target population of 18 years and above, a little over 27 per cent have been administered precaution doses so far. The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16 last year with healthcare workers

getting inoculated in the first phase. Vaccination of frontline workers started from February 2 last year. The next phase of Covid-19 vaccination commenced on March 1 last year for people over 60 years of age and those aged 45 and above with specified comorbid conditions. Vaccination for all people aged more than 45 years began on April 1 last year. The government then decided to expand the ambit of the vaccination drive by allowing everyone above 18 years to be inoculated against Covid from May 1 last year. Inoculation of adolescents in the age group of 15-18 years commenced on January 3.

India began administering precaution doses of vaccines to

healthcare and frontline workers and those aged 60 and above with comorbidities from January 10. The country began inoculating children aged 12-14 from March 16 and also removed the comorbidity clause making all people aged above 60 eligible for the precaution dose of Covid vaccine.

India on April 10 began administering precaution doses of Covid-19 vaccines to all aged above 18 years. The cumulative vaccine doses administered in the country crossed the 100-crore mark on October 21 last year and 150 crore on January 7 this year. The total doses administered in the country surpassed the 200-crore mark on July 17. (PTI)

When the lawmaker and the law enforcer fail

BHOPINDER SINGH

The historic town of Kheda in Gujarat was instrumental in the journey of Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi to 'Mahatma'. It was here that Gandhi had launched a Satyagraha against oppressive taxes by the British rulers. Satyagraha was a spectacularly non-violent protest, and locals cutting across ethnicities and religions did their bit assert their rights and sow the seeds of India's independence. Gandhi had described the epic movement as "the beginning of an awakening". Kheda was also the hometown of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. Today, the same town that was so pivotal in shaping the inclusive 'Idea of India' is in the news for shameful visuals of its law enforcers, i.e., the local police, publicly flogging members of a minority community who had been chained to an electric pole. The optics were reminiscent of the pre-Independence highhandedness of the British rulers.

The victims of the flogging had been accused of pelting stones at garba celebrations that had been organised in

the proximity of a mosque. For the police to retaliate with means that are blatantly unconstitutional and brutal, especially in these polarised times, augurs poorly for the trust that ought to be the bedrock of all law enforcement.

In recent times, the normalisation of police excesses such as extrajudicial actions, staged encounters and bulldozer terror have sullied the credentials of our constitutional democracy and its ability to deliver effective criminal justice. Vigilante justice cannot be the wont of law enforcers. Surely, they would have known the inherent communal angle in the tinderbox of Gujarat, yet the police chose to act in complete defiance of all norms of duties, restraints, and implied impartiality.

The previous Chief Justice of India N V Ramana had recently warned that the "threat to human rights and bodily integrity are the highest in police stations". Yet, the police in Kheda felt emboldened enough to conduct itself with such a devil-may-care attitude, perhaps confident of their impunity. Expectedly, many even justified the same and felt that such

tactics of the police are necessary, never mind that it increasingly makes India look like an illiberal police state like a Saudi Arabia or North Korea.

Completing the picture of societal morass is the recent video of a BJP lawmaker in the national capital itself who suggested a "total boycott" of a minority community and is seen exhorting supporters to "fix their heads and set them straight". These shockers didn't come from a wet-behind-the-ear newbie but a young dynastic politician (whose father was once the Chief Minister of Delhi). This, after taking the solemn oath of a Member of the Lok Sabha, "I will bear true faith and allegiance to the Constitution of India as by law established".

At the same function, another lawmaker, an MLA from Uttar Pradesh, equated the targeted community to 'pigs' in his unrestrained vitriol. From

the symbolism of historic Kheda to the national capital, both lawmakers and law enforcers diminished the dignity of their respective callings and, above all, the dignity of India. India has perhaps never looked more like Pakistan, a bogey that the ruling party and its Parivar constantly raise, than today.

Institutionalised violence signifies the decline in the health of a constitutional democracy and the rule of law, expected to be implemented impartially by its law enforcers. It was Sardar Patel who said: "A civil servant cannot afford to, and must not, take part in politics. Nor must he involve himself in communal wrangles. To depart from the path of rectitude in either of these respects is to debase public service and to lower its dignity". That path of rectitude in public service has been enthusiastically forsaken, recklessly abandoned, by tactical acquiescence



and inaction. It is a wound that will inevitably turn into the septicemia of Indian nationhood. Honouring the word and principles of Sardar Patel in their true spirit, rather than merely casting him in a grand statue (paradoxical, in the current backdrop, to call it the 'Statue of Unity') for purposes of political appropriation, would be more befitting.

Even if one were to grudgingly admit that politicians in a multi-identity land will invariably feast on societal fault lines and tensions, yet the police can surely repair and strengthen societal bonds by enforcing the law without fear or favour. Their ability to demonstrate procedural justice, unbiased conduct and contribute towards societal reconciliation can be decisive - which of these three tenets were upheld by the police by their action in Kheda or inaction in Delhi, is worth pondering. The much-publicised line 'With You, For You, Always', emblazoned on Delhi Police PCR's must evoke a sense of earned trust and genuine respect in the eyes of the citizenry, irrespective of their ethnicity, race, religion or any other

'identity'. But does it?

Unfortunately, the policing institution has remained a 'caged parrot' that has historically been politically subservient (across all governments since Independence), though the levels of submission, interference and misuse of the various governmental institutions has perhaps never been so brazen as now.

In today's desperate times, silence is tantamount to complicity - it isn't even about targeting one partisan party, one state police, one community or 'one' another, it is about the overall failure of the governance model and narrative. When both lawmakers and the law enforcers 'normalise' such majoritarianism, then the lofty 'Idea of India' as envisaged by the likes of Sardar Patel is in danger. Blaming the 'past' has outlived its utility and it is time for those in power to heed to at least their own Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas slogan, if not Sardar Patel. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands and Puducherry. The views expressed are personal.)

3-days National Training of Trainers Workshop conducted in Chennai

PORT BLAIR, OCT 16/--/ A 3-days National Training of Trainers Workshop was conducted by International Collective in Support Fishworkers (ICSF) Trust on the Small-Scale Fishworker (SSF) Guidelines in Chennai, Tamil Nadu from 13th to 15th October 2022.

The aim of the workshop was to enhance the capacity of fishworkers' organizations, CSOs, and community-based organizations to engage with the SSF Guidelines to negotiate issues of concern in regard to policy, legislation, lives and livelihoods of the SSF communities. The workshop was attended by fisher representatives from all the coastal states and coastal union territories, including Andaman & Nicobar Islands (ANI).



Mr. S. U Maheshwar Rao, Member of Governing Body, National Fisheries Development Board (NFDB) & Representative of National Platform for Small-Scale Fishworkers (NPSSF) and Ms. Madhuri Mondal, Senior Programme Officer, Dakshin Foundation and an islander working with fishing communities, attended the workshop from ANI.

The 3-days workshop was divided into multiple sessions. On the first day, there were sessions on Customary rights of fishing communities and challenges faced by the marine fishing communities in India.

There were also talks on Marine Fisheries Management in India and Status of Marine Fish Stocks in India by scientists

governance reforms needed in the states and at union level. The representatives from ANI expressed the need to have a mechanism for participatory fisheries management in the islands by formation of state and district level committees with fisher representatives, fisheries department officials, civil society organizations working with fishers and scientific institutions like FSI, CMFRI, Pondicherry University. Discussions were held on existing schemes for marine fishing communities in India and reforms needed on these. The representatives from ANI mentioned the need to provide pension to fishworkers above the age of 50 years and also to

provide diesel subsidy for the fishers.

They informed that there is also a need to build capacity of fishers in the islands periodically on various aspects of health, safety and use of technology. They discussed the need to improve the post harvest fish storage and handling by enhancing hygiene and quality of facilities in local fish markets. The need to recognize and prioritize the customary rights of local fishers were also

Firing practice on Oct 27 & 28

PORT BLAIR, OCT 16/--/ Firing practice by CG Dornier will be carried out from 1400-1600 hrs on Oct.27 & 28, 2022. The safe flying height is above 6000 feet AMSL. All concerned have been warned to keep themselves and their vessels/fishing boat away from the firing range during the above mentioned date and time.

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The most important thing is to be whatever you are without shame

Rod Steiger

India to boost visa capacity in UK

Difficulty in getting an Indian visa by travellers from Britain may soon become a thing of the past as steps are being taken to boost capacity and address the problems that have led to a mounting backlog of applications for visas in recent months. Earlier, Britishers could apply for a paper visa to India through the post. But the UK has now been banned from this, a fate similar to Lebanon and Pakistan. This will come as a boon for applicants who often complain of shortage of appointments available and lengthy processing times. Applying for visas in person for British citizens at this stage is rather difficult if not impossible, given that appointments at India's nine visa processing centres from Birmingham to Manchester and from central London to Edinburgh are fully booked for more than a month. Newly appointed Indian High Commissioner to the UK VikramDoraiswami has revealed plans for a new visa centre in Scotland by next week and one in central London by the end of the month and said the goal was to double the capacity of visas handled by the outsourced VFS centres per month. "The essence of this effort is to ensure that we go up to about 40,000 visa applications per month, which is a doubling of our capacity," he said in a video message from India House in London.

This assumes significance amid reports of cancelled Indian holidays in the wake of visa appointments crunch as a result of soaring demand as many travellers are renewing their travel plans that were delayed by the COVID lockdowns. The long wait time for Indian visas threatens to derail holiday plans for hundreds of Britons, long used to quick visa approvals, booked to fly to India in the coming weeks. Several UK citizens looking to visit India have been forced to postpone or cancel their trips after visa agents in the country received notices that they could no longer apply for tourist visas on behalf of the applicant. This means that the applicant now needs to appear in person at the UK visa centres. But, unfortunately, there are no appointments available before their flights depart. Tourism is the second biggest revenue earner for Rajasthan, an important tourist destination in India, and the biggest market for the state, known for palaces and forts, besides desert, is the United Kingdom. A travel agent rued that the removal of e-visas has also meant that booked holidays are being cancelled, causing a significant drop in the number of visitors. The tourism industry could lose close to fifty million dollars with the cut in e-visas, he said. Last week, the High Commission had issued a statement to say that it is investigating reports pertaining to unauthorised agents charging money illegally from travelers to India for getting their visas processed. It clarified that there had been no change in the visa application process for individual visa applicants.

The UK is currently not included in the over 150 countries that can access the online tourist e-visa option when travelling to India, which has also caused considerable strain for tourists who are facing long waits at the outsourced VFS centres for their applications to be processed.

AAP supremo trying to compete with BJP in Hindutva race

REFLEX ACTION

Sushil Kutty

the BJP most—at the BJP’s Hindu vote-bank. That does not mean dividing Hindu from Hindutva, which is no different from separating secular from the communal, a defeated strategy.

Painting Hindus with the communal colour has boomeranged. Today’s aspiring generation of Hindus don’t like to be labelled perpetually and entirely “communal”. Larger and larger chunks of voting-age generation X (Gen Y?) have been gravitating to the BJP for want of another “Hindu-party”, which the Congress wouldn’t want to be, and which the Samajwadi Party, the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Trinamool Congress did not want to be at the cost of alienating each their own chunk of the Muslim vote-bank collective. In Delhi, and even in Punjab, AAP did not deviate from this largely followed secular playbook though Kejriwal did stray from the chosen path by embracing Hanuman! But in Gujarat, there is a marked change in AAP strategy, and tactics—the AAP wants to make inroads into the BJP’s captive ‘Hindu vote-bank’, to get hold of which Kejriwal will go to any extent, even become ‘Krishna’ come to slay the Gujarati ‘Kans’.

In the 75 years since Independence, there hasn’t been a more brazen and politically shameless party than the AamAadmi Party. The AAP has proved time and again in its short life that principles are for the birds and bees. And for the first time in 27 years of the ‘Gujarat Model’, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is facing an adversary who is not only slippery as an eel but also with mastery over shaping/ shifting imagery. For example, there may not be many Buddhists in Gujarat but there are the Scheduled castes and after the AAP conversion stunt in Delhi, Gujarat’s Dalit have



A Goddess Kali idol being prepared to receive a first coat of paint at Patuapara--Arijit Ganguly

Betting on the wrong horse: Battle to define moderate Islam

Proponents of a moderate Islam that embraces tolerance, diversity, and pluralism may be betting on the wrong horse by supporting Muslim scholars on autocrats' payroll. Polling in the Middle East seems to confirm that state-sponsored clerics lack credibility.

Recent research suggesting that non-violent protest has increasingly become less effective magnifies problems posed by the clerics' legitimacy deficit. The combination of lagging credibility and reduced effectiveness enhances the risk of politically inspired violence. Add to that that young Muslims gravitate towards militancy in a world of perceived persecution of the faithful. Tam Hussein, an award-winning investigative journalist and novelist, who has spent time with jihadists in various settings, noted in a recent blog and an interview that a segment of Muslim youth, who see Western militaries operating across the Muslim world, often embrace the jihadist argument that Muslims would not be victims if they had a genuinely Muslim state with an armed force and religious laws that would garner God's favour.

Hussein cautioned that "this sentiment of young Muslims... cannot be combated with platitudes, ill thought out deradicalisation programmes, and naff websites set up to combat social media." His insight goes to the crux of a rivalry for religious soft power in the Muslim world that, at its core, involves a struggle to define concepts of moderate Islam. In essence, Hussein argues that a credible response to religiously inspired militancy will have to come from independent Islamic scholars rather than clerics who do Muslim autocrats' bidding. The journalist's

assertion is undergirded by some three-quarters of Arab youth polled annually by Dubai-based public relations firm ASDA'A BCW, who have consistently asserted in recent years that religious institutions need to be reformed. When the erudite Azhari sheikhs such as Ali Gomaa seemingly support Sisi's killing of innocents followed up by Habib Ali Jifri's support for his teacher, one cannot help but understand their predicament and anger," Hussein said, referring to scholars of Al Azhar, a citadel of Islamic learning in Cairo.

Hussein was pointing to Ali Gomaa, who, as the grand mufti of Egypt, defended the killing of some 800 non-violent protesters on a Cairo square in the wake of the 2013 military coup led by general-turned president Abdul Fatah al-Sisi. The coup toppled Mohamed Morsi, a Muslim Brother and Egypt's only democratically elected president. A Yemeni-born UAE-backed cleric, Al-Jifri, a disciple of Goma, is part of a group of Islamic scholars who help project the Emirates as a beacon of an autocratic form of moderate Islam that embraces social reforms and religious diversity, rejects political pluralism, and demands absolute obedience of the ruler. The group includes the former Egyptian mufti, Abdullah Bin Bayyah, a respected Mauritanian theologian, and his disciple, Hamza Yusuf, one of America's foremost

Muslim figures. Hussein could have included Mohammed al-Issa, the secretary general of the Muslim World League, the primary vehicle employed by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to garner religious soft power and propagate his autocratic version of Islam.

Autocratic reformers such as UAE President Mohammed bin Zayed and Bin Salman offer an upgraded 21st-century version of a social contract that kept undemocratic Arab regimes in office for much of the post-World War Two era. The contract entailed the population's surrender of political rights in exchange for a cradle-to-grave welfare state in the oil-rich Gulf or adequate delivery of public services and goods in less wealthy Arab states. That bargain broke down with the 2011 and 2019/2020 popular Arab revolts that did not spare Gulf countries like Bahrain and Oman. The breakdown was sparked not only by governments' failure to deliver but also by governments, at times, opening political space to Islamists so that they could counter left-wing forces.

To revive the core of the social contract, Bin Zayed and Bin Salman have thrown into the mix degrees of social liberalization and greater women's rights needed to diversify their economies and increase jobs as well as professional, entertainment, and leisure opportunities. At the same time,

they have cracked down on dissent at home and sought to impede, if not at times brutally, reverse political change elsewhere in the region. Nevertheless, the notion of an autocratic moderate Islam appears to work for the UAE and holds out promise for Saudi Arabia but is on shaky ground elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa.

The diverging pictures may be two sides of the same coin rather than mutually exclusive. The survey and other polls and Mr. Hussein likely tap into different segments of Muslim youth. Some of those responding to polls may be empathetic but probably wouldn't pull up their stakes because they are at a point where they have too much to lose. Even so, recent surveys by the Washington Institute for Near East Policy showed that 59 per cent of those polled in the UAE, 58 percent in Saudi Arabia, and 74 per cent in Egypt, disagreed with the notion that "we should listen to those among us who are trying to interpret Islam in a more moderate, tolerant, and modern way."

Recent academic research suggesting that non-violent dissent is seeing its lowest success rate in more than a century even though the number of protests has not diminished magnifies the resulting threat of militancy. One study concluded that the number of protest movements worldwide had tripled between 2006 and 2020, including the dramatic 2011 popular Arab uprisings. Yet, compared to the early 2000s when two out of three protest movements demanding systemic change succeeded, today it is one in six, meaning that protests are more likely to fail than at any time since the 1930s, according to Harvard political scientist Erica Chenoweth. (IPA)

something to chew on, while the Bharatiya Janata Party has something to worry about. Next, Kejriwal got atop the Krishna rath and proclaimed himself 'Krishna avatar' "born on Janmashtami" to slay 'Kans', beaming Hindu-love straight into the lovelorn eyes of Hindus including Gujarat's garba-dancing Hindu mahila-voters who will not miss the imagery. Add to that Modi's inability to bridge the age with Krishna and Arvind Kejriwal's aggressive posturing takes on meaning.

For the first time in eight years of fighting elections and winning them, too, Modi is at a loss for the right words. Besides, he is missing Rahul Gandhi, with whom he was comfortable with as an adversary. Rahul Gandhi is on a mission and has no time for Modi, which appears to be troubling Gujarat's mahapurush and adipurush, both rolled into one!

Modi sees a "silent" conspiracy in the Congress party's absence from the 'yudh'.

And he's telling the Gujarat electorate to beware of the Congress game-plan. Modi's obsession with Rahul Gandhi cannot be replaced with a fetish for Arvind Kejriwal, who talks the same language that Modi does, and that in idiom that is giving Modi a run for his dictionary. AAP is pounding the pavement for the BJP's Hindu vote-bank by invoking Lord Ram and Lord Krishna even as the BJP peppers Gujarat with posters labelingKejriwal "anti-Hindu".

The AAP convener is not the goody-goody Rahul Gandhi-type. Arvind Kejriwal grew up in the rough and tumble of the NCR neighbourhood. Manish Sisodia's government schools are his domain, not Doon School and St. Stephens. "If elected I will send whoever wants to, on an all-paid pilgrimage to Ayodhya," says Kejriwal, and it was Prime Minister NarendraModi who laid the foundation stone for the 'Bhavya Ram Mandir' in Ayodhya. Kejriwal doesn't care who hears him shouting "Jai Shri Ram" and "Jai Shri Krishna" as long as Prime Minister NarendraModi is up the Sabarmati without a paddle to bail him out. (IPA)

Conventional Crossword													
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ACROSS							DOWN						
1	Looks slyly	5	Yield	8	Shooting star	9	Sky coloured	10	Without legal force	11	English river	12	Little devil
15	Nidus	18	Distributed cards	21	Female deer	22	Uprising	24	Satellite	25	Plant secretion	28	Papal ambassador
29	Drink	30	Agreements	1	Calm	2	Flightless bird	3	Saucy	4	Meat dish	6	Gathering of witches
				7	Worn away	13	Myself	14	Conditional release	16	To that extent	17	Sport
				19	Passenger vessel	20	In the direction of	23	Snare	24	Unruly crowd	26	Greek letter
				27	Dry, of champagne								

SUDOKU : 3668													
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Yesterday's Solution 3667													
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7	9	3	6	5	4	2	1	8					
8	2	1	7	9	6	3	4	5					
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Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 1676													
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BSNLEU scores victory in membership verification



PORT BLAIR, OCT 16/--/ The 9th membership verification in the BSNL to recognize the majority union through secret ballot was held in the country on 12th October 2022. The votes were counted and results were declared on 14th October, 2022. BSNL Employees Union has emerged as the single largest Union with 15311 votes (48.62%) of the total votes polled while the nearest rival NFTE polled 11201 votes (35.57%) all over India. In Andaman and Nicobar Islands,

BSNL Employees Union polled nearly 61% of the polled votes. The membership verification takes place once in three years. The BSNL Employees Union has been elected as the largest union successively for the last 8 times in the country. Mr. SP Kalairajan, Secretary, Andaman & Nicobar Telecom Circle of BSNL Employees Union congratulated all the BSNL employees for the great victory of the Union in the Membership verification.

Blood donation camp at JNRM



PORT BLAIR, OCT 16/--/ The Department of Home Science, JNRM in association with the Lions Club of Port Blair and Directorate of Health Services, A & N Administration organized a Blood Donation Camp to commemorate the 91st Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, former President of India on Saturday at JNRM New Block. During the inauguration, the chief guest, Mr. Kalaivanan R, Superintendent of Police, South Andaman District shared his experience and interaction he had with Dr APJ Abdul Kalam while he was a student. He explained the importance of students'

life in campus and also encouraged them to utilize the available resources and to participate in various social activities like blood donation, tree plantation, drug abuse prevention and traffic management & regulation etc. Dr. H. K. Sharma, Principal, JNRM, informed the gathering that in collaboration with the Lions Club of Port Blair, every year JNRM organises various activities. Dr. Kalam was a visionary and his ideas were always for the development of our country. MJFLN. G. Somasundaram, Past President, Lions Club of Port Blair presented the activities under the banner

of Lions Club. Dr. K. Venkatesan, HoD, Home Science and Coordinator of this programme spoke about Dr. Kalam's innovation in Science & Technology and his contribution in Missile & Nano Technology. On the occasion, a poster competition was also conducted on 'Kalam's Vision and India's Development'. Ms. Shailey, Ms. Rameetha, Ms. Shubha Lakshmi of IInd B.Sc., Home Science secured the 1st, 2nd and 3rd prizes respectively in poster competition. Prizes and donor certificates for Blood Donation were distributed. Altogether 34 units of blood were donated.



Union Minister for Information & Broadcasting, Anurag Singh Thakur interacting with artists at the 14th Tribal Youth Exchange Program at Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan, in Ahmedabad, Gujarat

Elderly man killed by vagabond after being refused money to consume liquor: Delhi Police

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 /--/ A 70-year-old tea stall owner was allegedly killed by a vagabond after the elderly man refused to give him money to consume liquor, police said on Sunday. The accused, Johan Kevat (44), has been arrested, they added. The victim, identified as "Chillar Baba", used to run a tea stall at Nigambodh Ghat and the accused kept his money with the elderly man, they said. The incident took place in the intervening night of October 13 and 14, police said, adding that the accused asked "Chillar Baba" to give him his money for consuming liquor, but the elderly man refused to oblige and abused him instead. This infuriated the accused, who hit him with a stick while he was asleep

and fled the spot after the victim died. Deputy commissioner of police (North) Sagar Singh Kalsi said a call was received at the Kashmir Gate police station on October 14 regarding a body lying on the bank of the Yamuna, near Pahadi Ghat. The deceased had injury marks on the head, the officer said. Crime and forensic experts from Rohini were called to the spot and the crime scene was inspected. A preliminary enquiry revealed the identity of the victim, who was living in the area for the last eight to 10 years, the DCP said. A case under section 302 (punishment for murder) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) was lodged. Police went through the footage obtained from more than 30 CCTV cameras

installed near Nigambodh Ghat and zeroed in on Kevat after interrogating around 30 vagabonds. Kevat told police that he knew the victim for eight years and was very close to him. He used to keep his money with the victim, the DCP said. "In the intervening night of October 13-14, he demanded his money from the deceased for drinking but the latter refused to oblige and abused him. Kevat hit him on the head with a stick when he was asleep. When he realised that the victim had died, he threw his shawl into the Yamuna river to destroy evidence," the senior officer said. Police said the blood-stained clothes and the Aadhaar card of the accused and the stick used in the crime have been seized. (PTI)

Chess selection championship held by ANCA

PORT BLAIR, OCT 16/--/ Maxwell A & N State Sub Junior (U-15) Chess Selection Championship 2022, was organised by Andaman Nicobar Chess Association (ANCA) on Sunday at Govt. Tagore College of Education Auditorium, Middle Point, Port Blair

The tournament was graced by Mr. Sara Chandran, Deputy Director of Education (Plg/Perl) as chief guest while Mr. V Selvam, Nodal Officer, Sports & Youth Affair, Port Blair was the guest of honour for the inaugural ceremony. They inaugurated the championship by making the ceremonial move on the top boards against R KashthuriBhai for Girls event and A Chirag Kumar for Boys event to kickstart the championship.

The chief guest for the closing ceremony was Dr. E. B. Chakurkar, Director, ICAR-CIAR while Smti P Sushilla owner Maxwell and Shri. Soumitra Roy, Insurance advisor graced occasion as the guest of honours. They gave away the prizes to the winners of the tournament.

A full day event was held separately for boys and girls in rapid format over six rounds. Around 90 players participated in the event, in which Shrestha Vijay, Carmel School secured first position, MA Dinakar, Kamaraj English Medium School secured second and J.S Viraj, VKV Lamba Line stood third and V Yashwant, Model School stood fourth in boys category.

Similarly, in the girls category, R KashthuriBhai, GDM School secured first position, Tanisha Raj, VKV Lamba Line school secured second, Kavya Raj, VKV, Lamba Line stood third and S Vidhya, Kamaraj English Medium School secured fourth position respectively. The winners were awarded with Trophies, Cash prize and certificates.

These top best four players from boys and girls have been selected to participate in the upcoming National Sub Junior (U-15) Chess Championship 2022 to be held in New Delhi during November 2022

Apart from U-15 category, three best players each in boys and girls from Under 09, Under 11, Under 13 and best youngest boy and girl were also awarded with trophies and certificates.

Former Punjab minister Sunder Sham Arora arrested on charge of offering bribe to vigilance official

CHANDIGARH, OCT 16 /--/ Former Punjab minister Sunder Sham Arora was arrested by the state vigilance bureau for allegedly offering a bribe of Rs 50 lakh to one of its officers to "settle" the ongoing inquiries against him, a senior official said on Sunday.

Arora, who joined the BJP after quitting the Congress in June, was arrested on Saturday night in Zirakpur in Mohali when he tried to allegedly hand over the cash to the Assistant Inspector General of the vigilance bureau. A Mohali court on Sunday sent Arora to police remand for three days. Arora is the third former minister of the previous Congress government to be arrested after the AAP government came to power in March this year.

Earlier, the vigilance bureau had arrested former ministers Sadhu Singh Dharamsot and Bharat Bhushan Ashu in different cases. Arora has been facing inquiries in a



Sunder Sham Arora

disproportionate assets case and alleged irregularities during his tenure as industries minister in the previous Congress government. He refused to comment on allegations of offering a bribe to the vigilance officer.

Have complete faith in the court. Everything will be fine; he told reporters when he was being taken to the court in Mohali. Earlier in the day, Varinder Kumar, chief director of the Punjab Vigilance Bureau, told reporters that Arora was arrested for allegedly offering Rs 50 lakh in bribe to the vigilance officer to

"help" him in these cases. Kumar said Arora allegedly contacted AIG Mannohan Kumar Sharma, who is supervising the inquiries, on October 14 and told him to help him clear his name in the inquiries. The former minister allegedly offered to pay Rs one crore for it, said Kumar. He said he will pay Rs 50 lakh as the first installment and the remaining amount later, the chief director alleged. After Sharma brought it to the notice of his seniors, a case was registered and a trap was laid to arrest Arora.

He was arrested when he tried to hand over a bag containing Rs 50 lakh cash, Kumar alleged. A case under the relevant section of the Prevention of Corruption Act has been registered against him, said Kumar.

The medical examination of Arora was conducted before producing him before the Mohali court. A vigilance bureau official later said the court granted a three-day police remand and he will

be produced before the court on October 19. Arora has been under vigilance scanner for the alleged irregularities in the allotment of industrial plots of the Punjab Small Industries and Export Corporation and the sale of a 32-acre of commercial plot of JCT Electronics Limited in Mohali to a realty firm when he was the industries minister in the previous government.

Soon after the AAP formed the government in Punjab, it said there would be zero tolerance towards corruption. Former minister Dharamsot, the forest minister in the Amarinder Singh-led government, was arrested in June in a corruption case. Ex-minister Sangat Singh Gilzian, who was the forest minister in the Charanjit Singh Channi-led government, was booked in the same corruption case. Former Food and Civil Supplies minister Ashu was arrested in August in an alleged food grain transportation scam. (PTI)

DU's 'centenary chance examination' for college dropouts begins

NEW DELHI, OCT 16 /--/ The Delhi University's (DU) "centenary chance examination" for college dropouts to complete their courses commenced on Sunday.

Speaking to PTI, D S Rawat, Dean of Examination, DU, said the exams are being conducted in two shifts and the attendance has been "good" so far. The dropouts have been given this one chance in view of the DU's year-long centenary celebrations that started on May 1. "The centenary chance examination has begun. All the arrangements were made carefully and the exams are being conducted smoothly," Rawat said. More than 1,850 students are slated to appear on the first day of the examination. More than 8,560 students applied to appear in the exams. The exams would be conducted in two shifts on Sunday. The exams are being held at two centres -- the Faculty of Arts and the Faculty of Sciences.

In each shift, the examination for 18 papers will be conducted, Rawat said. The eligible candidates can appear for a maximum of four papers in the annual mode and up to eight papers for semester-wise tests. It will be held for theory and practical examination and not for internal assessment. The exams will be conducted from October 16 to November 9. The DU had announced in May that those who dropped out of college in the final year can register for this one chance to appear in the examination and complete their courses. The university will hold another round of exams in March next year. (PTI)

Letter threatening to blow up railway stations and temples in Uttarakhand triggers alert

HARIDWAR, OCT 16 /--/ Police and intelligence agencies have gone on an alert after a letter threatening to blow up several railway stations and religious places in Uttarakhand, including the Himalayan temples of Kedarnath and Badrinath, was received at the Haridwar railway station.

The letter, sent by ordinary post, was received by the Haridwar railway station superintendent on October 10. Additional Superintendent of Police, Government Railway Police (GRP), Aruna Bharti said on Sunday. The writer claimed to be Jameer

Ahmad, the so-called "area commander" of the terror outfit Jaish-E-Mohammad, and vowed to avenge the killing of "Jihadis" in Jammu and Kashmir. The letter claimed the attacks would be carried out on October 25 and 27. Authorities in Uttarakhand have received similar threat letters in the past but for the first time a case has been registered in this connection, the official said, adding it is being ascertained whether the threat is real or just a hoax. She said that one such letter was received by authorities in Roorkee during the Kanwar Yatra this year. "We

are also coordinating with our counterparts in states where letters with similar content have been received," she said.

The police and intelligence agencies are on the alert, she said. The letter threatened attacks on railway stations in Uttarakhand on October 25, including Haridwar, Dehradun, Roorkee, Najibabad, Kashipur and Kathgodam. It also threatened to blow up Har ki Pauri, Bharat Mata Mandir, Chandi Devi Mandir, Mansa Devi Mandir temple, Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri on October 27. (PTI)

Movement focussing on all-round development of students on in J&K: Union Minister

SRINAGAR, OCT 16 /--/ There is a movement going on in Jammu and Kashmir focussing not only on education but the all-round development of the students, which has resulted in the Union Territory improving its rank from 17 to 8 in school education in the last five years, Union Minister Subhas Sarkar said on Sunday.

Sarkar was talking to the media after concluding his three-day visit to Kashmir as part of the third phase of the Central government's public outreach programme in the Union Territory. He expressed satisfaction at the overall development in the education sector in J and K. "There is a movement going on in J&K which focuses not only on education but all-round development of the students, which is very heartening to see," The Union minister of state for education said.

Sarkar said funds received by J&K for education have gone up from Rs 8,000 crore to Rs 9,600 crore in the last two



Subhas Sarkar

years, which is a matter of pride.

According to the National Achievements Survey, the rank of Jammu and Kashmir has improved from 17 to 8 in the last five years, which is very heartening to know, the minister said. Sarkar said the Class 10 pass percentage in the UT has gone up by three percentage points. An increase of 3.4 percent in the pass percentage is nothing less than record-

breaking, he added. The enrolment has gone up considerably in the last two years, he said and expressed satisfaction at the setting up of smart classrooms in the schools of UT.

Referring to the National Education Policy (NEP), the Union minister expressed happiness at the speed of progress being made to develop the infrastructure. He said 70,000 new enrolments have been recorded in Kashmir at the primary level in the recent past.

Sarkar said the national curriculum framework with reference to the NEP is very democratic in the country and suggestions are taken from all stakeholders including students and their parents for the improvement of the system.

In the context of higher education, the minister said, an interdisciplinary approach has been introduced at UT which will help students to compete with their counterparts from other parts of the country. (PTI)



Union Minister for Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal at the inauguration of the contemporary art exhibition "Rang Sutra" at Crafts Museum, Pragati Maidan, in New Delhi

Passenger pushed out of moving train in West Bengal, 1 arrested

RAMPURHAT, OCT 16/--/ A man suffered injuries after he was pushed out of a moving train in Birbhum district by a fellow passenger following an altercation, a railway official said on Sunday. One person was arrested in this connection and the Government Railway Police (GRP) suspect that a few others were also involved in the crime.

The incident happened between Tarapith Road and Rampurhat stations on Saturday night. The official said the Sajal Sheikh, who was pushed out of the Howrah-Malda Town Intercity Express, was rescued from the tracks in an injured condition.

He was admitted to Rampurhat Medical College and Hospital where his condition was stated to be stable, the official said. Sheikh, a resident of Sundipur village, told the police from his hospital bed that he had boarded the train from Sainthia. The man claimed that he was thrown out of the train when he protested the alleged misbehaviour of fellow passengers. (PTI)

West Bengal govt asks Kolkata Metro to compensate Bowbazar victims

KOLKATA, OCT 16/--/The West Bengal government on Saturday asked Kolkata Metro to compensate families whose houses in the Bowbazar area have developed cracks due to construction work of the East-West Corridor with Rs 5 lakh each within a month, mayor Firhad Hakim said. The affected shop owners of the area will also be compensated for the loss of livelihood based on a formula derived by the Kolkata Municipal Corporation (KMC) -- Rs 1.5 lakh for up to 100 sq ft, and Rs 5 lakh if more than 100 sq ft, he said. The decision was taken in a meeting at state secretariat Nabanna, chaired virtually by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee. Besides Hakim, Chief Secretary HK Dwivedi, Home Secretary GP Gopalika, Kolkata Police commissioner Vineet Goyal, KMC commissioner Binod Kumar and senior officers of Kolkata Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (KMRL) and experts from Jadavpur University were present in the meeting. At least 12 houses in Madan Dutta Lane developed cracks since Friday morning, following water seepage during work for a metro tunnel, the third such incident in the area in three years. Camps would be organised in the area from Sunday for the purpose of providing compensation to the affected families, Hakim said after visiting the spot along with Dwivedi and other senior officials. "These cracks are the result of soil settlement," he said, adding that experts were asked for tests so that the KMRL can repair or rebuild the affected buildings. "Immediate arrangements should be made for shifting the affected families to safer locations. In case of students, patients and vulnerable persons, special care will be taken," he said. KMRL was asked to give prior intimation to the police and civic authorities before restarting the works, the mayor said. Total 180 people of 28 families have been affected by the disaster, an official of the state government said. (PTI)

KOLKATA, OCT 16/--/ Around Rs 2 crore in cash was recovered from a businessman's car parked outside his apartment in West Bengal's Howrah district, police said. The amount was seized on Saturday midnight. Two businessmen brothers-Sailesh Pandey and Aurovind Pandey had flats in the upscale housing complex in Shibpur area and the amount was seized from the latter's car during a raid, a police officer said.

The search operation took place following

PM Modi dedicates 75 Digital Banking Units to nation



Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressing the gathering at the dedication of the 75 Digital Banking Units across 75 districts to the Nation, via video conferencing, in New Delhi on Sunday

SRINAGAR, OCT 16/--/Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dedicated to the nation 75 Digital Banking Units, including two of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, via video-conferencing. Of the two Digital Banking Units (DBUs) of Jammu and Kashmir Bank, one is the SSI branch at Lal Chowk in Srinagar and the other is the Channi Rama branch in Jammu. The function at Lal Chowk here was attended by Union Minister of State for Education Subhas Sarkar, who was in the Valley as part of the

third phase of the central government's public outreach programme, officials said. Member of Parliament from Srinagar and National Conference (NC) President Farooq Abdullah was also present on the occasion, they added. As part of the Union Budget 2022-23, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced the setting up of the 75 DBUs in as many districts of the country to commemorate 75 years of India's independence. The DBUs are being set up to ensure that the benefits of digital banking reach

every nook and corner of the country. Eleven banks in the public sector, 12 in the private sector and one Small Finance Bank are participating in the endeavour. DBUs will provide a variety of digital banking facilities to people such as opening a savings account, account balance check, printing passbook, funds transfer, fixed deposit investments, loan applications, application for credit or debit cards, and bill and tax payments, among others. Out of 12 public sector lenders, 11 opened

nearly two-thirds of the total 75 DBUs, while 12 private sector lenders and one small finance bank together opened only one-third. While public sector lenders opened 48 DBUs, the private sector managed to open 27 across various states, as per the data provided by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). Only the Central Bank of India, which is still under the Prompt Corrective Action framework of RBI could not participate in the endeavor. The country's biggest lender State Bank of India opened a maximum of 12 DBUs followed by the third biggest Bank of Baroda with 8. However, the second biggest state-owned lender Punjab National Bank opened only 4 DBUs. In the private sector space, leading lenders HDFC Bank and ICICI Bank opened four each, followed by Axis Bank with 3 and Kotak Mahindra Bank 2 in two districts. Jana Small Finance Bank opened two DBUs--one each in Bihar and Jharkhand, as per the RBI Data. DBUs are brick-and-mortar outlets which will provide a variety of digital banking facilities to people such as opening a savings account, account balance check, printing passbook, funds transfer, fixed deposit investments, loan applications, application for credit or debit cards, and bill and tax payments, among others. Out of 12 public sector lenders, 11 opened



Who is the next president of Congress, Shashi Tharoor (L) or Mallikarjun Kharge!

Congress Prez polls today: History beckons as party gears up for 6th contest for AICC chief in its history

NEW DELHI, OCT 16/--/Senior Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Shashi Tharoor will face off in an electoral contest on Monday for the post of AICC chief, as the party gets set to have a non-Gandhi president in over 24 years. Over 9,000 Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) delegates form the electoral college to pick the party chief in a secret ballot. Voting would also take place at the AICC headquarters here and at over 65 polling booths across the country in an electoral contest which is taking place for the sixth time in the party's 137-year history. While party chief Sonia Gandhi and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra are expected to vote at the AICC headquarters here, Rahul Gandhi will be voting at the Bharat Jodo Yatra campsite in Karnataka's Sanganakallu in Ballari along with around 40 other Bharat Yatri who are PCC delegates. Kharge is considered the firm favourite for his perceived proximity to the Gandhis and backing by senior leaders, even as Tharoor has pitched himself as the candidate of change. During the campaign, even though Tharoor has raised issues of uneven playing field, both candidates and the party have maintained that the Gandhis are neutral and that there is no "official candidate". Asked about the significance of the polls, Congress general secretary in-charge communications Jairam Ramesh told PTI that he has always believed in the Congress model of evolving a consensus for such positions. The most famous practitioner of this approach in the post-Nehruvian era was K Kamaraj, he noted. "As we approach E-Day tomorrow this belief has become even more stronger. The reasons for this are pretty obvious," Ramesh said without elaborating. "I am not at all convinced that organisational elections actually strengthen the organisation in any way. They may serve individual purposes but their value in building a collective spirit is doubtful," he said. Even so, the very fact that elections are taking place are of some significance, he added.

"But I consider them of less institutional importance than the historic Bharat Jodo Yatra which is a transformational initiative for the Congress and for Indian politics as well," Ramesh said. Though the campaign has been largely about a roadmap for the party which the two candidates have elaborated upon during their meetings with PCC delegates at various headquarters of the party in states, it has also seen complaints and claims of an uneven playing field by the Tharoor camp. The contrast in the campaigns has been stark, while Kharge's campaign has seen several senior leaders, PCC chiefs and top leaders receiving him at the state headquarters visited by him, Tharoor has mostly been welcomed by young PCC delegates with PCC chiefs mostly absent from his events. Tharoor has underlined during his campaign that he is the candidate of change while Kharge of status quo. He has also claimed that youngsters and people in lower levels of the party are supporting him, while seniors are backing his rival. Kharge, on his part, has highlighted his experience, coming up the organizational ranks over decades and his ability to take everyone along. Both the leaders have emphasised that the Gandhis hold a special place in the party with Kharge saying that he would seek their "guidance" and "suggestions", and Tharoor asserting that no Congress president can function keeping a distance from the Gandhi family as their DNA runs in the party's blood. The last electoral contest for the top post of the party took place in 2000 when Jitendra Prasad had suffered a crushing defeat at the hands of Sonia Gandhi. Also, with Sonia Gandhi, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra deciding not to be in the running for the party president's post, a non-Gandhi would be at the helm after over 24 years. Congress' central election authority chairman Madhusudan Mistry said on Wednesday that the Congress presidential polls will be held by a secret ballot and no one will get to know who voted for whom. He had asserted that a level-playing field had been ensured for both candidates. Mistry had also demonstrated to reporters the ballot boxes, ballot paper and how the votes would be cast. He had said the sealed boxes would be transported to Delhi, kept in a strong room at the AICC headquarters and opened in Delhi. The ballot papers would be mixed before counting starts. (PTI)

Hindi MBBS textbooks launch: Medical education in Hindi will help students overcome inferiority complex of not knowing English, says Amit Shah

BHOPAL, OCT 16/--/Union Home Minister and BJP leader Amit Shah on Sunday termed the beginning of imparting medical education in Hindi in Madhya Pradesh as "historic", which will enhance the abilities of students and also allow them to overcome the "inferiority complex" of not knowing English. Shah released textbooks in Hindi of three subjects for the first year students of MBBS course as part of the ambitious project of the Madhya Pradesh government to impart medical education in the Hindi language, a first in the country. Shah also said the work is underway to start technical and medical education in eight other languages in the country. Studying in one's own language will enhance the abilities of students. Students across the country should come out of their linguistic inferiority complex as today there is a government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and they can showcase their abilities in their language, Shah said on the occasion. He released Hindi textbooks on Medical Biochemistry, Anatomy, and Medical Physiology. Shah hailed PM Modi for speaking in Hindi on international platforms to send across a message to the world, which he said boosts the confidence of the young people in India. He said in the 21st century, some forces adopted the "brain drain" theory (migration of skilled professionals), but PM Modi has changed it to the "brain gain" theory. Shah predicted an "educational revolution" due to the restoration of pride in our languages through the New Education Policy of the Modi government which is planning to impart technical, medical, and legal studies in the country

(in regional languages). He said some people associate the usage of the English language with intellectual ability, but there is no relation between them. Language is only a medium of expression whereas intellectual ability is a natural gift which can be improved through education, and if



Union Home Minister Amit Shah speaks during the release of the Hindi books for the first year of medical courses as part of a project of the Madhya Pradesh government to impart medical education in the Hindi language, at Lal Parade Ground in Bhopal

education is given in the mother tongue, it proves very beneficial in improving the intellectual ability, Shah said. He said after today's launch, India will go a long way in global research and the world will come to know about the intellectual potential of Indian students. Appealing to students, Shah said they should overcome the "linguistic inferiority complex. Terminating an important day in history, Shah said Madhya Pradesh has become the first state in the country to start the MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery) course in Hindi. "This

day will be written in history in golden letters," Shah said. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who is behind the Hindi initiative, and Medical Education Minister Vishvas Sarang were also present. Shah said he feels proud that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government in Madhya Pradesh has fulfilled the dream of PM Modi by launching medical studies in Hindi. "This moment marks the revival of the education sector in the country and I thank the prime minister for it," he added. Shah said the work is underway to start technical and medical education in eight other languages in the country. The MBBS course in Hindi was launched as part of the NEP and soon it will be started in other languages also, he said. Now, students of the country will not have any inferiority complex about not knowing the English language and they can study with pride in their language, the union home minister said. "Modiji has called for imparting medical and engineering education in Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Gujarati, Bengali and other languages. I feel proud that Madhya Pradesh, led by Chouhan, has become the first state to start medical education in Hindi," he said. Shah said earlier there were 387 medical colleges in the country having a total of 51,000 seats. Now, the nation under the leadership of the prime minister has 596 medical colleges with an additional 89,000 seats. Chouhan said these textbooks have technical terms written in Hindi the way they are pronounced in English. For example, 'kidney' is written as kidney only. The chief minister said students from rural areas who were unable to get medical education because of the lack of knowledge of English will not lag and will be able to pursue the MBBS course in Hindi. (PTI)

Rs 2cr seized from businessman's car at Howrah

complaints by two banks with the Kolkata Police on October 14 about the transaction of a huge amount by the two persons who had accounts in the banks, the officer said. A case was registered at Hare Street Police Station and the Anti-Bank Fraud Section of the detective department of the Kolkata Police started the investigation. The flats were sealed after the raid. The family members were not present in the two dwelling units during the search operation, the

officer said. The amount was seized by a team of Kolkata Police, assisted by law enforcers of Shibpur Police Station. The brothers could not be contacted by the police team or the media so far. Since July this year, there has been a series of seizures of large amounts of cash either by central or state investigative agencies in West Bengal. BJP spokesperson Samik Bhattacharya claimed while the common man of the state does not have enough money, a small section of

people has amassed huge wealth, ill-gotten money with the support of the ruling Trinamool Congress. "Is this the reason behind the TMC opposing demonetisation by the Narendra Modi government in 2016 so that black money amassed by a section of people in West Bengal is not unearthed?" he asked. Countering him, TMC Rajya Sabha MP Santanu Sen said "such recoveries prove that demonetisation did not help in stopping the circulation of black money. What about the recovery of currency in

Gujarat recently?" Sen also said the seizure was an indicator that the Kolkata Police and the state police were on the trail of illegally stashed money. "We are proud of our police forces," the TMC MP said. He alleged that the BJP is using the black money stashed by people close to the party to fund political programmes and engineer horse trading of people's representatives to topple democratically elected governments of opposition parties in different states (PTI).



Korean student who stabbed Indian-origin roommate in US University, charged with murder

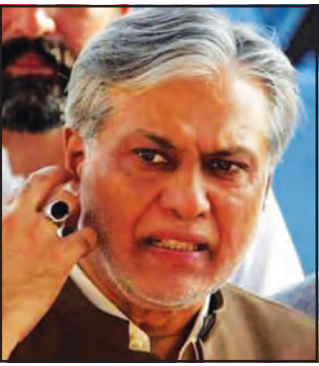
WASHINGTON, OCT 14 /--/ A Korean student, who allegedly stabbed his Indian-origin roommate to death in their dormitory at the prestigious Purdue University has been charged with murder, according to US media reports.

Ji Min Sha, a 22-year-old cybersecurity major from Seoul ruthlessly attacked Varun Manish Chheda on October 5 by stabbing him multiple times in the head and neck before he called authorities to report his 20-year-old roommate was dead, prosecutors argued, according to the Journal & Courier on Thursday. She was formally charged with murder on Thursday in the killing of Chheda, in what police called an unprovoked attack. Prosecutors allege that Sha "did knowingly or intentionally kill" Chheda, ABC News reported. Chheda from Indianapolis was found dead in McCutcheon Hall on the western edge of the campus last Wednesday. Purdue Police chief Lesley Wiete said last week that Sha called police early on October 5 and told them his roommate was dead in their first-floor dorm room on the campus in West Lafayette, which is about 104 kilometers northwest of Indianapolis. Officers who arrested Sha found him wearing clothes with blood on them, prosecutors said, and an autopsy found that Chheda had died of multiple sharp-force traumatic injuries. If convicted of the one count of murder, Sha could face anywhere between 45 to 60 years in prison.

The cybersecurity major is being held without bail, the Post reported. On Thursday, Sha claimed he was blackmailed by Chheda, when he was asked about the motive of his crime, adding that he was very sorry for having killed his friend. He also apologised to Chheda's family, the Journal & Courier reported. Last week, Sha appeared to mutter I love my family as he was hauled to jail. Police found Chheda in a chair and Sha covered in what appeared to be blood, according to WLFI, a television station in Indiana. They also observed what they believed to be blood spattered on the wall, along with a pool of blood and a folding knife on the floor. Sha allegedly admitted that the knife was his and that he had used it to kill his roommate. Chheda's friends have said they had been gaming with the victim when they suddenly heard him screaming. Indiana police described the crime as an unprovoked and senseless murder. (PTI)

Pak finance minister heckled at airport in Washington

ISLAMABAD, OCT 14 /--/ Pakistan finance minister Ishaq Dar was heckled by unidentified persons at the Dulles International Airport when he arrived in Washington to attend meetings with the global lending institutions and seek much-needed aid for the cash-strapped and flood-hit country. In a video that went viral on Twitter on Thursday, Dar, accompanied by Pakistan's Ambassador to US Masood Khan and other officials jeered at the airport. In the clips,



Ishaq Dar

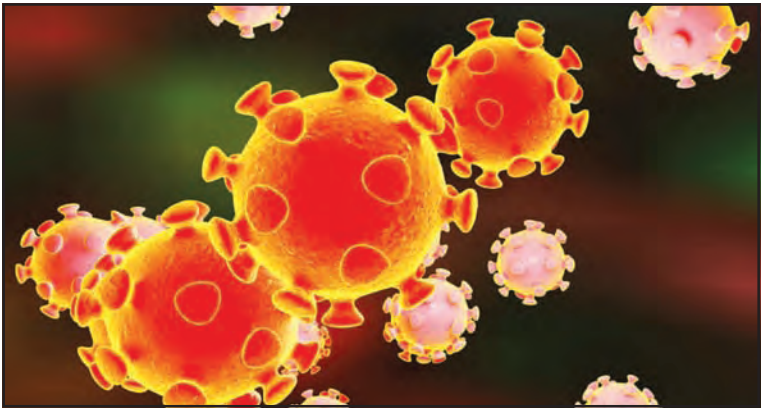
the hecklers can be heard chanting slogans of chor chor directed toward Dar. In one of the videos, a man can be heard shouting: You're a liar. You're a chor. In his retort, Dar says: You're a liar. Mani Butt, the president of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz party's Virginia chapter who accompanied Dar can be seen exchanging profanities with the hecklers, the Dawn newspaper. Dar, 72, recently took over as the finance minister of Pakistan from his predecessor Miftah Ismail. He is in the US to attend the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Pakistan will seek new terms from international lenders after devastating floods hit the country. The death toll from the cataclysmic floods in Pakistan was close to 1,700. It has also displaced over 33 million people and caused economic damages to the tune of USD 40 billion, fanning fears that the country may not be able to meet its debt obligations.

This is not the first time Pakistani ministers have been jeered at public places on their trips abroad and even within the country. Last month, Information Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb was heckled at a coffee shop in London. Earlier, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal was harassed by supporters of former prime minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) party at a restaurant. In April, a group of Pakistani pilgrims accosted, heckled and chanted slogans against Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his entourage at the Masjid-i-Nabwi in Madina during their three-day visit to Saudi Arabia. Pakistani politicians and other religious figures had condemned the incident and some had even blamed the supporters of Khan's PTI party. (PTI)

Symptomatic Covid infection linked with poor mental health: Lancet study

LONDON, OCT 14 /--/ Having symptoms of Covid-19 infection is associated with poorer mental health and lower life satisfaction, according to a study published in The Lancet Psychiatry journal.

The team, led by researchers at King's College London and University College London (UCL) in the UK, looked at the impact of Covid-19 infection on subsequent mental health and wellbeing. Data was taken from 11 longitudinal studies between April 2020 and April 2021, in which there were 54,442 participants with and without self-reported Covid-19. Researchers found that rises in psychological distress, depression, anxiety, and lower life satisfaction were associated with prior self-reported Covid-19. The associations with poorer mental health did not lessen over time after infection, highlighting the potential enduring impacts of the disease and the need for a longer follow-up process from healthcare providers. Self-reported Covid-19 was consistently



associated with psychological distress, regardless of whether people tested positive for antibodies to the virus. These effects of infection were felt similarly in different groups of gender, ethnicity and socio-economic circumstances.

The study suggests that the infection of Covid-19 might impact mental health most in older people as people with self-reported infection aged 50 years and older

showed a stronger association with poorer mental health. This might reflect that older people are more likely to experience more severe Covid-19 symptoms, greater worry around infection, and increased risk of blood vessel (microvascular) or brain (neurological) changes after infection, the researchers said. This contrasts to the effect of the pandemic overall on mental health, where previous studies have shown that women and adults aged 25-44

Rebels plot to replace Liz Truss with Rishi Sunak amid UK crisis

LONDON, OCT 14 /--/ Rebels on the backbenches of the UK's governing Conservative Party are on Friday said to be plotting to replace Liz Truss as party leader and prime minister with a so-called unity joint ticket team involving former leadership rival Rishi Sunak.

It comes as a YouGov poll for the The Times' found that almost half of Tory party supporters believe the party chose the wrong candidate in the leadership election. The YouGov poll found that among those who voted for the Conservatives at the last election, 62 per cent said that party members had made the wrong choice when the race was shortlisted between Truss and Sunak, compared with 15 per cent who said they had got it right. It has led panicked Tory members of Parliament to start considering alternatives in the candidates who secured the most votes within the parliamentary party

the British Indian former Chancellor, who was the frontrunner with his colleagues, and Leader of the Commons Penny Mordaunt, who came in third.

The government, meanwhile, is reeling from the impact of the controversial mini-budget at the end of last month, with UK Chancellor Kwasi Kwarteng flying back from an International Monetary Fund (IMF) meeting in Washington a day earlier than planned. While further U-turns on the tax-cutting plans are expected following crunch meetings at 10 Downing Street, the Tory backbenchers are said to be weighing up the prospect of changing the party leader yet again. Given that Truss

technically cannot face a leadership challenge unless until 12 months unless the powerful 1922 Committee of backbench MPs vote to change their rules,



MPs are said to be considering the possibility of rallying behind a joint team of Sunak and Mordaunt where the former is the Prime Minister and the latter his Deputy.

Another option is for Mordaunt to take over as party leader and Prime Minister and

Sunak as Chancellor, given his track record in office at the Treasury and that he had warned of much of the turmoil that has since unleashed under Truss. A

coronation won't be that hard to arrange, a senior Tory was quoted as saying in The Times'. The party believes a pact is possible between Sunak, who lost to Truss in the party membership vote 57 to 43 per cent, and Mordaunt who came in third in the early stage of the voting among MPs and then threw her support behind Truss. However, former prime minister Boris Johnson loyalists have condemned such plotting as anti-democratic by disgruntled Sunak backers. No offence to Sunak or Mordaunt but government is not a game of spin

the bottle, where if you don't like the result you can just keep spinning again, tweeted Tory MP Nadine Dorries, a fierce Johnson loyalist. Those absurdly called grandee MPs (men) agitating to remove Liz Truss are all Sunak supporters.

They agitated to remove Boris Johnson and now they will continue plotting until they get their way. It's a plot not to remove a PM but to overturn democracy, she said. It comes a day after UK Foreign Secretary James Cleverly fired a warning shot for rebels that it would be a disastrously bad idea to think about replacing Truss as the Tory leader, just over a month after she was elected by the party membership. I think that changing the leadership would be a disastrously bad idea, not just politically but also economically, and we are absolutely going to stay focused on growing the economy, he said. (PTI)

Russia to evacuate Kherson residents as Ukraine advances

KYIV, OCT 14 /--/ Russia has promised free accommodation to residents of Ukraine's partially occupied Kherson region who want to evacuate to Russia, a sign that Ukrainian military gains along the war's southern front are worrying the Kremlin.

The Moscow-installed leader of Kherson, one of four regions illegally annexed by Russian President Vladimir Putin last month, asked the Kremlin to organise an evacuation from four cities, citing incessant shelling by Ukrainian forces. Vladimir Saldo, the head of the Moscow-appointed regional administration, said a decision was made to evacuate Kherson residents to the Russian regions of Rostov, Krasnodar and Stavropol, as well as to the Crimean Peninsula, which Moscow annexed from Ukraine in 2014. "We, residents of the Kherson region, of course know that Russia doesn't abandon their own, and Russia always offers a hand, Saldo said on Thursday. Russia has characterised the movement of Ukrainians to Russia or Russian-controlled territory as voluntary, but in many cases those are the only evacuation routes residents of the occupied areas can or are allowed to take.

Reports have surfaced that some Ukrainians were forcibly deported to filtration camps with harsh conditions. In addition, an Associated Press investigation found that Russian officials deported thousands of Ukrainian children - some orphaned, others living with foster families or in institutions - to be raised as Russian. As

Ukrainian forces sustain counteroffensives in the country's east and south to recapture occupied areas, Russian troops have retreated from some areas they overran soon after invading the country in late February. The Ukrainian gains and an October 8 truck bomb explosion on a prized bridge linking Russia to Crimea have led to domestic criticism of the Kremlin's handling of the war and increased pressure on Putin to do more to turn the tide in Russia's favour.

The evacuation announcement came as Ukrainian forces pushed deeper into the Kherson region, albeit at a slower pace than a few weeks ago. Ukrainian forces reported retaking 75 settlements in the region in the last month, Ukraine's Ministry for Reintegration of Temporarily Occupied Territories said late on Thursday night. A similar campaign in eastern Ukraine resulted in 502 settlements in the Kharkiv region, 43 in the Donetsk region and seven in Luhansk region returning to Ukrainian control, the ministry said.

Putin illegally annexed Kherson, as well as the neighbouring Zaporizhzhia region and the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of eastern Ukraine last month following referendums in the four regions that Kyiv and the West denounced as a sham. Gen Valeriy Zaluzhny, the commander of Ukraine's armed forces, vowed on Friday that his forces would succeed in getting ours back. "No one and nothing will stop us, Zaluzhny said in a video message. We have buried the myth of the invincibility of the Russian

army. While reiterating calls for local residents to evacuate to Russia, Saldo's deputy, Kirill Stremousov, also insisted the evacuation preparations did not mean the Russian-installed officials anticipated Ukrainian forces taking all of the Kherson region. No one's retreating. ... No one is planning to leave the territory of the Kherson region, he said.

Early on Friday, Russia continued missile strikes on critical infrastructure that started Monday in retaliation for the explosion on the Moscow-funded bridge that links Crimea to the Russian mainland. In the last 24 hours, at least nine civilians were killed and 15 were wounded, the Ukrainian president's office reported Friday morning. The victims included seven people who died after a missile strike in the city of Mykolaiv, where a residential building was destroyed, the regional governor, Vitaliy Kim, said. Multiple Russian missile strikes shook the city of Zaporizhzhia overnight. The capital of the annexed region remains in Ukrainian hands and has come under repeated bombardment as Ukraine pushes its southern counteroffensive. Several explosions were reported overnight at infrastructure facilities, causing fires, regional Gov, Oleksandr Starukh said.

There were no victims in preliminary reports, and further details about specific damage were unavailable. Starukh told Ukrainian state television that Russian soldiers remained unable to enter the city but their missiles remind us of the evil and grief that the army of the occupiers carries. (AP)

IMF mission expected to visit flood-hit Pak next month: Official

ISLAMABAD, OCT 14 /--/ An IMF team is expected to visit Pakistan early in November to start the next review of the country's current economic programme, a senior official of the global lending body has said. In its last review in August, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) approved the 7th and 8th tranches of USD 1.17 billion, of its USD 7 billion Pakistan programme which was signed in 2019. The global lender said that it would send a mission in November to Pakistan after the annual meetings as part of preparations for the next review, IMF's Director of the Middle East and Central Asia, Jihad Azour was quoted by Dawn newspaper on Thursday. At a media briefing in Washington, Azour extended support to the flood-hit country. We accelerated some of our disbursements to help Pakistan deal with recent shocks, such as the increase in prices of foods and commodities, he said. Hopefully, we will be fielding a mission in November, after the annual meetings, to Pakistan to start the process for the next review," Azour said.

The Fund has been very supportive of Pakistan. We have a programme with Pakistan that has been extended and increased in size. This is to help Pakistan deal with a confluence of shocks, starting with the Covid crisis where we provided additional flexibility, the IMF official said.

In a reply to questions regarding the Fund's plan for Pakistan given the economic devastation caused by the recent floods, Azour said the IMF is waiting for the World Bank and the UN Development Programme's ongoing evaluations of the flood damage to assess the situation and provide help accordingly. Based on this assessment, we will update our data and we will also (engage) with the authorities to see what their priorities are and how the Fund can help, the IMF official said, the Dawn newspaper reported. The IMF regional director spoke against 'untargeted subsidies' as regressive incentives that have proved to be counterproductive and urged Pakistan, and other countries, to relocate limited resources to those who need them. "This is something that it's not, I would say, part of the IMF conditionalities, this is part of what is needed in order to provide the right protection for those who need it at the time where inflation is very high," he said, according to the report. Pakistan's teetering economy is facing a balance of payments crisis, a ballooning current account deficit, and inflation hitting an all-time high of 27 per cent. The devastating floods, which left more than 1,600 dead and displaced more than 30 million people, added to Pakistan's forex woes, with an estimated loss of over USD 28 billion to the economy. In August, New York-based rating agency S&P Global revised Pakistan's long-term ratings from 'stable' to 'negative' given the spiralling inflation and tighter global financial conditions. (PTI)

Poor nations to demand climate justice, finance at UN summit

NAIROBI, OCT 14 /--/ The chair of an influential negotiating bloc in the upcoming United Nations climate summit in Egypt has called for compensation for poorer countries suffering from climate change to be high up on the agenda.

Madeleine Diouf Sarr, who chairs the Least Developed Countries group, told The Associated Press that the November conference known as COP27 should capture the voice and needs of the most climate-vulnerable nations and deliver climate justice. Sarr said the group would like to see an agreement to establish a dedicated financial facility that pays nations that are already facing the effects of climate change at the summit. The LDC group, comprised of 46 nations that make up just a small fraction of global emissions, negotiates as a bloc at the UN summit to champion the interests of developing countries. Issues such as who pays for poorer nations to transition to cleaner energy, making sure no communities get left behind in an energy transition and boosting how well vulnerable people can adapt to climate change have long been on the bloc's agenda. Developing nations still face serious challenges accessing clean energy finance, with Africa attracting just 2 per cent of the total clean energy investment in the last 20 years, according to the International Renewable Energy Agency. The UN weather agency recently estimated that global clean energy supplies must double by 2030 for the world to limit global warming within the set targets.

Sarr added that the bloc will push for funds to help developing countries adapt to droughts, floods and other climate-related events as well as urging developed nations to speed up their plans to reduce emissions. The group is particularly vulnerable to climate change because of their lack of ability to adapt to extremes, the UN weather agency said. We have delayed climate action for too long, Sarr said, pointing to the promised 100 billion a year in climate aid for poorer countries that was pledged over a decade ago. We can no longer afford to have a COP that is all talk. The climate crisis has pushed our adaptation limits, resulted in inevitable loss and damage, and delayed our much-needed development, added Sarr. (AP)

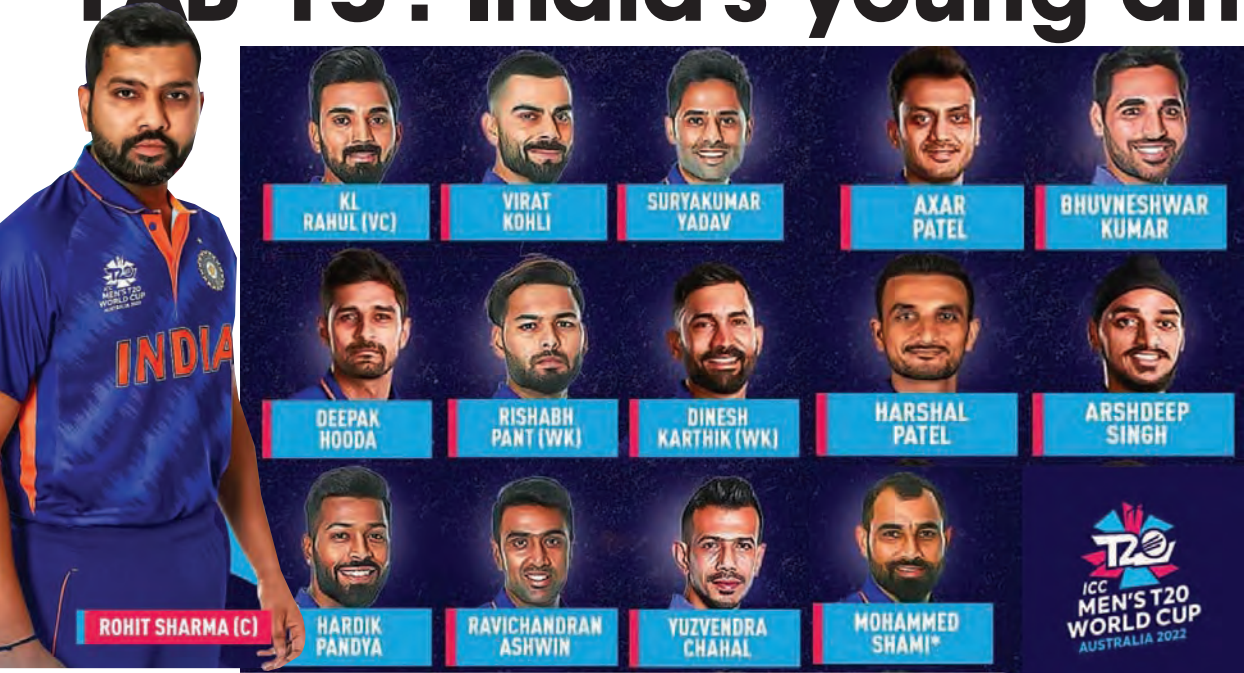
EU regulator recommends clearing Takeda's dengue vaccine

LONDON, OCT 14 /--/ The European Medicines Agency on Friday recommended the authorisation of a dengue vaccine made by the Japanese pharmaceutical Takeda that could provide a new tool for millions worldwide against the potentially fatal disease. The EU regulator said in a statement the vaccine should be cleared for anyone aged four and over, to prevent the four types of dengue. The viral disease causes more than 390 million infections globally every year, including up to 25,000 deaths, mostly in children. The benefits and safety of the current vaccine have been evaluated in 19 clinical trials that enrolled more than 27,000 people aged between 15 months and 60 years, the EMA said. Studies showed Takeda's vaccine was about 84 per cent effective in preventing people from being hospitalized with dengue and about 61 per cent effective in stopping symptoms four years after getting immunized. The most commonly reported side effects included headaches and muscle pain. There is no specific treatment for dengue, which is a leading cause of serious illness and death in roughly 120 Latin American and Asian countries. While about 80 per cent of infections are mild, severe cases of the mosquito-spread disease can lead to internal bleeding, organ damage and death.

The green light for the Takeda vaccine comes after Sanofi Pasteur's dengue vaccine triggered a public health crisis in the Philippines in 2017. The Dengvaxia shot was found to increase the risk of severe disease in people who had not previously been infected with dengue and was linked to the deaths of more than 100 children. Critics charged that the Sanofi vaccine was rolled out prematurely to about 800,000 children across the Philippines. Numerous scientists and officials were indicted for introducing the vaccine with undue haste, that prosecutors said resulted in homicide. The World Health Organisation had previously concluded the Sanofi Pasteur vaccine was safe, but later said children should only be immunised if they were tested first to ensure they had already had dengue.

The EMA said its endorsement of the Takeda vaccine means that a global unmet public health need is being addressed, explaining that countries beyond the EU should have confidence that the shot is safe and effective. (AP)

'FAB 15': India's young and old ready to turn tables



NEW DELHI, OCT 16 /--/ In 2007, when 20-year-old Rohit Sharma hit his first international half-century against South Africa on a bouncy Kingsmead track, everyone knew that there was a talent in town. Even as one was appreciative of Rohit's phenomenal talent, little did one know that a team with an average age of around 26 would conquer the world in a format that was very reluctantly accepted by its own board. Fifteen years down the line, another Indian team is hitting the Australian shores to regain the trophy, which once completely changed the demographics of Indian cricket. That was a team led by a new captain and no one knew what to expect of them, but as the 35-year-old Rohit gets ready to step onto the MCG, his team with an average of 30 and half would have to believe in the old adage: Winning is not everything but the only thing. So how is this squad of 15 shaping up? The PTI takes a look at the 'Men in Blue'.

■ **Rohit Sharma (captain):** He has the God's elusive gift -- sinewy wrists that help him play the flick and pull with equal finesse and elan. Rohit has been a fantastic IPL captain with five titles and more than a decent leader in most of the bilateral series that the national team played under him. The national captaincy came to him when he was pushing 35 and he will have perhaps only two ICC tourneys (this and the 23 ODI World Cup) as a leader to leave a lasting legacy. He has changed his batting style from the last World Cup and is taking the lead in powerplay overs. But marshalling the limited fast bowling resources will test his leadership in adverse conditions.

■ **K L Rahul (vice-captain):** One of the most stylish players in contemporary times but perhaps the weakest link in India's top-order. Rahul, a favourite of head coach Rahul Dravid, has often struggled with his strike-rate. He does have all the shots in the book and is a prolific scorer in the IPL, but if one looks at his record across formats, Rahul hasn't really stood up during the crucial games where the team's fate was on the line. He has had problems against fast incoming deliveries, and how he tackles Pakistan lead pacer Shaheen Shah Afridi will set the tone for the tournament.

■ **Virat Kohli:** He was, is and till he plays will remain the greatest threat for any opposition. The best part about Kohli is his return to form in the nick of time. The glimpses of 'Vintage Virat' during the Asia Cup is a warning for the opposition. However, with Kohli, one has to give him that cushion of 8-10 balls before he starts to dominate the bowlers. For that a good powerplay start will be a must.

■ **Suryakumar Yadav:** To term a strike-rate of 176 plus, with nine fifties and one hundred in 34 games, staggering, would be an understatement. These are

simply eye-popping numbers. His hundred in Nottingham against England, or his recent exploits against Australia and South Africa, give hope. No one plays the ramp shot against rising deliveries better than Surya or the whiplash 'pick-up pull' behind square to the deliveries on rib-cage. In the back-10, the Mumbai star is India's X factor: The Indian fans won't mind doing the 'Surya Namaskar' if everything comes off perfectly.

■ **Hardik Pandya:** Perhaps the most important link in the team with his all-round abilities. Everyone is aware of the destruction Hardik the batter can cause, but it is Hardik the bowler, who will need to up the ante. With his ability to hit the hard lengths consistently and a very deceptive short ball in his armoury, the flamboyant Baroda man can be the surprise bowling weapon on the big Australian grounds. In batting, he will any day be a better finisher than Dinesh Karthik, with his ability to hit sixes at will.

■ **Rishabh Pant:** A strike-rate of 127 across 62 games doesn't do complete justice to this once-in-a-generation talent. Pant hasn't been able to unchain himself in the T20s where he seems confused between attacking and anchoring. He has played his natural game whenever he has opened the innings with Rohit. But it doesn't seem Dravid will be too keen on replacing Rahul at the top as the Karnataka man can't be slotted in the middle-order in the shorter format. In terms of talent and ability, he is way ahead of Karthik but if he isn't opening, then the Tamil Nadu man looks a better bet on current form. But on a big day, Pant can outshine everyone.

■ **Dinesh Karthik:** One of those eternal comeback men of Indian cricket. Save Rohit, Karthik is the only active playing member from the 2007 World T20 winning squad. He has a very specific role for him -- to play 10-15 balls towards the back-end and create the maximum impact. It's a high risk-high reward approach and there will be days when it won't come off. An innovative shot would look like a 'hara-kiri'. But the team trusts Karthik. He has never been great at big events but a course correction could be round the corner. Expected to start ahead of Pant in the playing XI if Rahul opens the innings.

■ **Ravichandran Ashwin:** In this Indian team, if someone has always been a brave innovator, it is Ravichandran Ashwin. At times it has worked, and at times, it didn't, but the 'Cricket Scientist', as his fans call him, has never been shy of trying something new. With Pakistan and South Africa having multiple left-handers in the set-up, Ashwin will remain in the mix being an off-spinner, but he will certainly not be a first-choice slow bowler.

■ **Axar Patel:** In recent years, purely as a T20 left-arm spinner, Axar Patel has

shown better control than Ravindra Jadeja, the man he replaced in the set-up. As a package though, he is no match for Jadeja, who is a far superior batter, and perhaps, the world's No. 1 fielder in all positions -- infield and outfield. Yet Axar, with an economy rate

of less than 7.5 and handy batting skills, will be preferred against certain opponents. Coach Dravid is big on 'match-ups' (one-on-one duels) and the Gujarat man might not be preferred against teams with more left-handers.

■ **Yuzvendra Chahal:** His main problem in the last one year has been the lack of consistency. He was dropped from the T20 World Cup squad for the last edition due to a slump in form. He has blown hot and cold since his comeback. In fact, against Pakistan in the Asia Cup Super 4s, Ravi Bishnoi with his googlies looked far more in control. Ideally, he should still be the first-choice spinners, as wrist spinners normally do well Down Under.

■ **Bhuvneshwar Kumar:** There is no denying that Bhuvneshwar

Kumar is past his prime. While he is still a force to reckon with in the powerplay, Deepak Chahar, with the same skill-sets, has looked far more potent in recent times.

The bigger problem is his failure at the back-end during the Asia Cup where he consistently bowled length balls in the 19th over. His pace has also dropped a bit and his form is a cause for concern going into the tournament.

■ **Mohammed Shami:** He hasn't played a single T20I since the last World Cup in the UAE. It is believed that he was told by the team management that he would only play Tests and 50 over cricket because of a near-10 economy rate in T20Is. But Jasprit Bumrah's injury changed it all. Also his performance for Gujarat Titans in the IPL, where he

was superb at powerplay, gives the team hope. But the lack of game time post COVID-19 could be a major issue.

■ **Arshdeep Singh:** One for the future and a bowler with a big heart. But he does need a lot of experience, and certainly, T20 World Cup isn't a place for that. With the tournament starting in the last part of the Australian winter, if the Punjab man can swing it up-front, like he did in Trivandrum during the South Africa T20Is, he would be a handful. At the death, he would need back-up from his seniors, which he didn't get in the Asia Cup. His area of concern is fielding as he is a bit sloppy on that front.

■ **Harshal Patel:** A bowler with plenty of skills but who would always need a bit of assistance from the tracks to use his variations

of slower deliveries to good effect. He has come back from a rib-cage injury, and since then, has been off the boil. On the hard and true Australian tracks, it will be difficult to predict how effective his dipping slower ones would be. May be like Mohit Sharma of 2015, Rohit could urge Harshal to use the slower ones well.

■ **Deepak Hooda:** If one talks about strength, Deepak Hooda might face competition from only Pant in this set-up. In the limited chances that he has got, he has shown a big heart and fine temperament. But Hooda is also not a finisher but more of a top-order batter who can explode after getting set. He bowls wicket-to-wicket and his off-breaks don't turn much. Certainly not a first XI starter and will only be called upon if a player gets injured. (PTI)



Government of India
Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare





Progressive and Prosperous Farmers – A symbol of Self-reliant India

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to inaugurate PM Kisan Samman Sammelan and



Rupees 16 thousand crore to be transferred to beneficiary farmers as the 12th instalment of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi

- Till now, more than Rs. 2 lakh crore has been transferred directly to the Bank accounts of more than 11 crore farmers.
- Rs. 6,000 transferred to beneficiary farmers every year in three equal instalments.
- 100% expenses of the Scheme borne by the Government of India.

Inauguration of 600 PM Kisan Samruddhi Kendras

- PM Kisan Samruddhi Kendras to fulfil all agricultural related needs of the farmers.
- More than 3.3 lakh Fertilizer Retail Shops to be converted into PM Kisan Samruddhi Kendras in a phased manner.

Inauguration of Exhibition of 300 Agri Start-up Stalls

- Approx. 1500 Agri Start-ups to participate in the Sammelan.
- Start-up entrepreneurs, Senior Scientists, Agricultural experts and policy makers to provide guidance.

Launch of PM Bhartiya Jan Urvarak Scheme – 'One Nation, One Fertilizer'

- Availability of 'Bharat' Brand Urea for all farmers of the country.
- Launch of 'Bharat' Urea Bag.

Launch of 'Indian Edge' - Fertilizer e-Magazine

- Information on Fertilizers' availability and consumption with domestic and international perspective.
- Success Stories of Farmers.

17 October, 2022 at 11:00 A.M.
Venue : Mela Ground, IARI, Pusa, New Delhi

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