

MAHARAJGANJ

DM, SDM, suspended for 'negligence' in cow upkeep

MAULSHREE SETH
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 14

THE UTTAR Pradesh government Monday suspended the District Magistrate (DM) of Maharajganj, a sub-divisional magistrate (SDM), a former SDM, a chief veterinary officer and a veterinary officer for "negligence in cow protection", an official statement said.

The statement said UP Chief Secretary RK Tiwari said "continuous complaints" were received about negligence in the upkeep of stray cows at Madhvaliya cow shelter in Nichloul tehsil, Maharajganj district.

The statement added that it was found that on the pretext of fodder and maintenance of cattle, the number of cattle was deliberately increased on paper to misuse government funds, which also amounts to financial irregularities.

An inquiry found that a cow shelter home, which had claimed to have 2,500 cows, had only 954 cows. It also found that 328 acres of the animal hus-

bandry department meant for the cow shelter was instead leased out to private individuals illegally.

The suspended officers are (DM) Amar Nath Upadhyaya, the then SDM of Nichloul area, Devendra Kumar, present SDM, Nichloul, Satyama Mishra, chief veterinary officer, Rajiv Upadhyaya, deputy veterinary officer Dr V K Maurya. The DM was also the chairman of the working committee of the cow shelter concerned and the other officers were its members.

The government has also directed that an FIR be registered in the matter and that further audit be done into "anomalies" in the operations of the cow shelter.

"The District Magistrate is chairman of the working committee of the cow shelter, of which SDM of Nichloul area and deputy chief veterinary officer were members, while the chief veterinary officer of the district was member-secretary of the committee. Thus, it was the responsibility of these officers to stop such anomalies from hap-

pening," said UP Chief Secretary R K Tiwari. Tiwari added, "The government has top priority towards cow and its progeny and clean administration is also a top priority. Thus, these officers have been suspended with immediate effect after they were found prima-facie guilty in the inquiry."

Ujjwal Kumar, who was serving as Municipal Commissioner, Prayagraj, was appointed as new District Magistrate of Maharajganj with immediate effect.

Tiwari said that on paper, 2,500 cows and its progeny were listed at the cow shelter in Madhvaliya area of Nichloul tehsil in Maharajganj district of eastern Uttar Pradesh. However, during ongoing inspections and later in a detailed inquiry conducted by the Commissioner, administration, Maharajganj, it was found that there were just 954 cows at the cow shelter home.

"There was a huge difference in the numbers but none of the local officials were able to give a clear clarification or explanation in this regard..." said Tiwari.



A protest by Telangana State Road Transport Corporation staff in Hyderabad on Monday. PTI

TRANSPORT STRIKE

TRS leader appeals to TSRTC union to initiate dialogue with govt

SREENIVAS JANAYALA
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 14

TELANGANA RASHTRA Samiti (TRS) leader K Keshava Rao on Monday appealed to the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) employees who are on strike to not take any drastic steps, and asked them to initiate a dialogue with the state government.

This is the first time since the

strike started on October 4 that a senior TRS leader has proposed talks with the TSRTC union.

Keshava Rao, a Rajya Sabha MP who is a close confidante of Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu, is learnt to have been advised by the CM to appeal to the union leaders as the two suicides has not only dented the image of the government, but has also charged up the atmosphere in the state. His appeal is being seen as an effort

to break the ice after the CM took a very strong stand against the striking employees.

However, there has been no reaction from the government.

Keshava Rao urged the employees to not be rigid in their demands and immediately start negotiations with the government. In a letter released Monday afternoon, he urged the CM to consider some of the demands of the TSRTC, barring the merger with the government.

HC drops contempt case against Tamil magazine editor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE DELHI High Court Monday dropped a contempt case against Swaminathan Gurumurthy, the editor of Tamil magazine *Thuglak*, for having retweeted an article alleging bias by a judge of the court.

The proceedings were closed after Gurumurthy agreed before a bench of Justices Manmohan and Sangita Dhingra Sehgal to retweet the apology of the author, who had earlier written the offensive article.

The bench was informed by senior advocate Mahesh Jethmalani, representing Gurumurthy, that his client will

mention on his Twitter handle that the author has also tendered an unconditional apology to the court. He will also mention that the author has withdrawn the article against Justice S Muralidhar and will share the hyperlink of the apology tendered by the author, Jethmalani said.

Jethmalani contended that Gurumurthy had merely shared the article without making any comments and so he could not be held guilty under the Contempt of Court Act.

The court issued fresh notices to several respondents, including film maker Vivek Agnihotri and Anand Ranganathan, to respond as to why contempt action be not initiated against them in the matter.

DMK alleges illegal shifting of EVMs ahead of Nanguneri bypoll

Chennai: The DMK wrote to the Election Commission on Sunday alleging that 30 electronic voting machines (EVMs) were shifted from Nanguneri Assembly constituency to Tirunelveli collectorate on Saturday night without intimating the Congress candidate. An Assembly bypoll will be held in the constituency on October 21.

The complaint was filed by DMK's organisational secretary RS Bharathi to the Election Commission of India and the State Election Commissioner. According to Avudaiappan, chief election agent for Congress candidate R Manoharan, 30 EVMs were shifted from Nanguneri taluk office to Tirunelveli collectorate on the night of October 12. ENS

District health officer suspended under Odisha's Mo Sarkar

SAMPAD PATNAIK
BHUBANESWAR, OCTOBER 14

IN WHAT is being seen as the first action taken against any senior officer under the Odisha government's public feedback programme Mo Sarkar, Dr Pankaj Patel, Senior Consultant (Medicine), who is serving as Chief District Medical and Public Health Officer in-charge of Sundergarh district, was suspended on Sunday.

Maintaining that there has been "some misunderstanding", Dr Patel told *The Indian Express* on Monday, "I would have explained the situation to the committee. But I was not present when they collected feedback."

Manas Mangaraj, media adviser to the state government, however, disputed this. He said, "The doctor concerned was given adequate opportunity to explain, but he could not submit a satisfactory reply."

The notice from the Health and Family Welfare Department reached Dr Patel late on Sunday.

On Monday, the Odisha Medical Service Association, which represents government doctors, other than those serving in medical colleges, criticised the move, calling it "clear-cut injustice".

Both the main opposition parties, the BJP and the Congress, also opposed the government's action. While the BJP called a six-hour bandh in Sundergarh dis-

trict, state Congress president Niranjana Patnaik told the media, "What the BJP is saying (is correct). Should you not even ask for a showcause notice?"

Mo Sarkar, a project of Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik's 5T vision, is aimed at bringing a shift in government services by proactively seeking feedback from people. As part of the programme, a team led by 5T Secretary V K Pandian is visiting state government hospitals unannounced to seek prompt public feedback.

On Sunday, Pandian and Development Commissioner Suresh Mohapatra visited the district headquarters hospital (DHH) in Sundergarh.

Sources said they allegedly received two adverse reports. "Some patients said they were going to private clinics to conduct tests before dialysis even though the facilities are available at the hospital. Another patient and attendant said they were served only breakfast while the hospital provides three meals," a hospital staff member said.

Citing clause (a) of sub-rule 1 of Rule 12 of Odisha Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) Rules 1962, Patel was placed "under suspension with immediate effect".

Dr Patel said, "Some patients prefer private clinics to get test results on serum, creatine and electrolytes because the process is faster than at DHH. No one forced them to go there."

HC seeks Centre's stand on plea to extend Sec 377 provisions to third gender

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE DELHI High Court Monday sought to know the stand of the Centre on a PIL demanding that the application of Section 377 of the IPC, which prescribes punishment for unnatural sex with any man, woman and animal, should extend to those accused of sexually assaulting transgender/third gender persons.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar issued a notice to the Ministry of Law and Justice on the petition filed by assistant public prosecutor Jamshed Ansari.

The plea states that due to loopholes in Section 377, those accused of sexually assaulting transgender persons are being let off as the section has no mention of the third gender.

The court asked the Centre to file its reply by the next date of hearing - January 17, 2020.

Ansari, in his public interest litigation (PIL), filed through advocate Gaurav Kohli, said, "Such discrimination against an individual on the basis of gender identity is deeply offensive to the dignity and self-worth of the individual, which is against the mandate of...the

The plea states that due to loopholes in Section 377, those accused of sexually assaulting transgender persons are being let off

Constitution of India and the law laid down by the Supreme Court..."

The Supreme Court had recognized transgender persons as the third gender in a landmark ruling, saying it was addressing a "human rights issue".

The plea stated that, after the apex court judgment, the transgender/third gender persons are entitled to fundamental rights enshrined under the Constitution of India and are also entitled to the protection of all laws within the territory of India.

On September 6, 2018, the Supreme Court had ruled that the application of Section 377 to consensual homosexual sex between adults was unconstitutional, "irrational, indefensible and manifestly arbitrary". It remains in force in cases related to sex with minors, non-consensual sexual acts, and bestiality.





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BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

An economics for the poor

Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer introduced a paradigm shift in approach to alleviating poverty



HIMANSHU

THE NOBEL Prize in Economics for 2019 has been awarded to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer for "their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty". The approach, popularly known as Randomised Control Trial (RCT), has been the buzzword among development economists for almost two decades. Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer have used this technique (inspired by the use of RCTs in medical science) to test the effect of small interventions on individual behaviour.

Most of these interventions carried out under the aegis of Abdul Lateef Jameel Poverty Action Lab (J-PAL), co-founded by Banerjee and Duflo, in Africa and Asia, have produced evidence on the response to a particular intervention by the poor using these randomised trials. The approach basically examines the impact of these micro interventions by treating one set of individuals/households and comparing the outcome with another set of individuals/households, which are similar in all other respects but have not been treated with the intervention. India has been among the biggest laboratories of these experiments with several experiments on diverse themes such as literacy, nutrition, health, micro-finance and so on.

The RCT approach has its share of supporters as well as critics. While it has enamoured a large number of development economists for its simplicity, where inferences on what works or not are drawn from field experiments, it has also been criticised for reducing the study of poverty to small interventions unconnected to the lived experiences of the poor. The discomfort among many established scholars is that this fashionable trend has made the historical, institutional and social structures of the persistence of poverty less relevant to understanding why the poor continue to remain poor. Others have picked holes in the methodology. However, it has not deterred development economists from using this ap-

proach for designing experiments and conducting them to understand how the lives of poor people change as a result of these micro interventions. There have been questions about whether the results can be replicated in different societies, as well as on the ethics of some of the experiments, which have been conducted in collaboration with participating governments. It is also worth pointing out that the method is as good as the range of interventions that can be undertaken.

While critics may have been unfair to RCTs in some respects while correctly pointing out the pitfalls in an RCT-based approach, there is no denying that all the three scholars have contributed a great deal to putting poverty and development economics back on the agenda of economics. Newer methods and approaches are necessary for the discipline struggling to find relevance in an increasingly complex world, which is as much defined by the microeconomics of small interventions as well as the macroeconomics of development such as government policy and structures of production. As Angus Deaton (Nobel Prize winner of 2015) says: "RCTs can play a role in building scientific knowledge and useful predictions but they can only do so as part of a cumulative programme, combining with other methods, including conceptual and theoretical development, to discover not 'what works', but 'why things work'".

RCT has become almost like a movement, encouraging many young economists (sometimes called "randomists") to visit rural areas and observe the lives of the poor. It may not have had any credible and long lasting impact on the lives of researchers and the population studied, but the fact that so many young economists are immersing themselves in the lives of the poor and trying to understand poverty is itself an achievement. More so at a time when economics has often been criticised for being far removed from reality.

The other achievement, although not

necessarily for the better, has been the attempt to give scientific colour to the discipline of economics through the use of evidence generated from these experiments. It certainly has convinced many governments to use facts and evidence in policy prescriptions and induced a degree of caution while introducing new interventions. Even in India, there is evidence of RCTs contributing to improvements in financial management and flow of funds for various government programmes including in the field of education.

While it would have been good if RCTs could predict the effects of demonetisation on the lives of the poor, it is also a reality that most such decisions are not contingent on evidence based on hard facts but on the whims and fancies of the government of the day. Despite the tentative nature of much of this evidence, there is no denying that policy interventions do require better facts and evidence for efficient outcomes. This is true not only for evidence generated by RCTs, but also data generated by our statistical systems including the National Sample Survey (NSS).

Incidentally, both Kremer and Banerjee did their PhD work at Harvard University. Banerjee had completed his MA in economics from the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning (CESP), JNU, before proceeding to Harvard for doctoral studies. Banerjee supervised Duflo's doctoral work at MIT. While both Banerjee and Duflo remain engaged with research in India, Kremer was one of the first to use these experimental methods and look at micro-interventions to examine their impact on poverty. The Nobel recognition will hopefully encourage more rigorous work on some of the long-standing problems of development economics, including on poverty and social mobility. Hopefully, it will spur our own government to take data and evidence more seriously.

The writer teaches economics at JNU

EASING POVERTY

2019 Economics Nobel affirms value of evidence-based policy-making in addressing intractable problems

ON MONDAY, THE Royal Swedish Academy of Sciences awarded the 2019 Nobel Prize in Economics to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer for their "experimental approach to alleviating global poverty", which, it said, has had a clear impact on policies to fight poverty around the world. Among the things that make this moment special is the fact that Banerjee becomes the second Indian to have received the Nobel prize in Economics, and Duflo is only the second woman to have been awarded after Elinor Ostrom in 2009.

Banerjee and Duflo co-founded the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Lab, which has helped popularise Randomised Control Trials (RCT), a technique of exploration which draws from medical research to examine the impact of policy interventions on individual behaviour through controlled trials. It involves selecting two sets of individuals at random, one of the two is then exposed to a policy intervention. The experiment examines the impact of such interventions, often over long periods of time, to gauge the impact of policy, and whether it justifies the costs associated with it. Drawing on these field experiments to understand the lives of poor, they have examined government interventions to see what works and what doesn't in developing countries. For instance, they found that it was possible to dramatically increase the quality of education in urban India, at a relatively reasonable cost, through remedial education and computer assisted learning programmes. The results of another experiment suggested that multi-topic medical training of informal healthcare providers may offer an effective short-run strategy for improved health care, while another found that most businesses funded by microfinance firms tended not to grow. Banerjee, who has been in favour of shifting to cash transfers, has in the past argued for a universal basic income architecture.

Though RCTs have become widespread in recent times, some are sceptical about over-relying on them. Angus Deaton, who won the 2015 Nobel prize in economics, noted that while RCTs can play a role in building scientific knowledge, they can only do so as part of a cumulative programme. "Small scale, demonstration RCTs are not capable of telling us what would happen if these policies were implemented to scale", he noted. But, despite the conditional nature of these studies, it is difficult to deny that policy interventions require better understanding to ensure efficient outcomes, especially in countries with limited state capacity and resources. In India, where billions are poured in the name of the poor, often without proper understanding of what works and what doesn't, and where there is little faith in evidence-based policy-making, such research can be enormously valuable in informing public debate.

NO ZERO SUM

India needs to view Nepal-China intimacies with equanimity, work on repairing its own relationships in the neighbourhood

PRESIDENT XI JINPING'S visit to Nepal after the Mamallapuram meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi underlines starkly the challenges India faces in its relationship with China, with Nepal, and more generally, with China's deep-pocketed outreach in the entire neighbourhood. In fact, Xi's visit to India was sandwiched between receiving Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, and his Nepal visit. If Delhi has been disturbed at the signals from these engagements around the Mamallapuram summit, it has managed to hide it well. It cannot but know that, as far as Nepal is concerned, the problems are largely self-inflicted.

Xi was the first Chinese President to land in Kathmandu in over two decades, and the visit acknowledged the closeness between the two countries from the last decade, but more so, since 2015. That was when Nepal Communist Party leader Kharga Prasad Oli took office as prime minister. His first term, which lasted barely a year, was dominated by a crippling blockade of the Nepal border at Birgunj from the Indian side. China stepped in at the time to provide fuel and other essentials. Oli was quick to strengthen Nepal's relations with its northern neighbour. He was ousted from office within a year, but much to India's surprise, returned even stronger in an election in early 2018. Modi's three visits, and agreements for more infrastructure projects, including a rail line from Kathmandu to Raxaul at the border, have clearly not persuaded landlocked Nepal that the only friend it needs in the neighbourhood is India.

Xi's generous assistance to Nepal of USD 495 million was of a piece with the style with which China makes friends with India's neighbours. There is to be a feasibility study on a trans-Himalayan train link between the two countries, and a road link from Kathmandu to Kerung, on Nepal's border with Tibet, as part of the Belt and Road Initiative. Both connections will increase Nepal's access to the Chinese economy. To the extent that this pushes up the possibility of Chinese goods flooding India through Nepal, Delhi should be concerned. But it must also come to terms with the reality that there can be no zero sum games in foreign policy. Viewing relations with neighbouring countries only through the prism of India's security has its limits. As the region's largest economy, India needs to find better ways to make friends with its neighbours, and retain these friendships.

MARTIN'S LAMENT

Scorsese criticises superhero films, points to a trend: The story comes second to VFX

THE LATEST RE-IMAGINING of a classic superhero character, *Joker*, is heavily inspired by a Martin Scorsese classic, *The Kings of Comedy* (1983). Scorsese, one of the most successful and respected directors today, though, has scant regard for films based on comic books, especially the "summer blockbusters" that Marvel and DC churn out every year. He has remarked that these films were "not cinema", blamed them for turning the theatre into an "amusement park" and said they were "invading" the public imagination, crowding out art that explores human complexity.

While Scorsese's lament has, predictably, caused much chagrin among superhero movie producers and fans, it is worth taking his criticism seriously. The audiovisual is arguably the most widely-consumed and accessible form of public art. It shapes public conversations and opens up worlds. Unidimensional characters, and fairly formulaic plots have come to dominate the big screen in the US, as have remakes. Original writing — the story — seems to be coming in second to VFX extravaganzas for an attention-deficit audience. And while the case has been made that the plethora of choice allows all forms of cinema to find their audience, big distributors for big films crowd out other films. Scorsese's point, really, is that character-driven cinema need not be pushed to the sidelines.

In his polemic against the superhero, Scorsese did make a confession: He wasn't able to watch all the important films in the genre. If he had, perhaps he would have realised that over the last two decades, these films, too, have evolved. The generation that watched the first *Spiderman* (2002), is now looking for its characters to grow. Or, maybe Scorsese is right, it's time for new stories, and for the security blanket of childhood comforts to be relegated to nostalgia. In the end, though, Samuel Jackson, a staple in superhero movies who has also worked with Scorsese, put it best: "Everybody's got an opinion, so I mean it's okay. Ain't going to stop nobody from making movies."



KAUSHIK BASU

LAST NIGHT OUR son, Karna, his wife and grandson dropped in for dinner. While chatting, conversation drifted to the Economics Nobel Prize this year, and we did some guessing and gossiping about who might get it. Karna predicted it would go to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer. We all agreed that would be a fantastic choice. The only question was, they are so young (58 years, 46 years and 54 years, respectively), would this happen this year would we have to wait for a few more years.

It is so rare to get the Nobel prediction right that when I got woken up this morning by journalists calling to get my reaction and learned that the prize has just been announced and it has gone to exactly the three names we talked about the previous evening, I was thrilled.

This is a richly-deserved award. The prize has been given for their work on randomised control trials used in the broad area of poverty eradication and policies for better health and education. Research done by Abhijit, Esther and Michael has transformed the way development economics is practised nowadays, not just in United States, where they are based, and India and France, where Abhijit and Esther are from, but the world over. The Poverty Action Lab that they founded is active all over the world, from Asia and Africa to Latin America.

Let me give you a sample of some of their work which I have used elsewhere. It had long been suspected that there is a connection between the better provision of local

TIME FOR INDIA TO CELEBRATE

It is important to use Nobel to harness the best of science, reasoning to policymaking

public goods and the local government having women leaders. But we had no idea which way the causality runs. Is it that more progressive villages elect women, or that women leaders are more effective as policymakers and facilitate the better provision of public goods? Esther Duflo, along with Raghav Chattopadhyay, did an outstanding study of India's decision to reserve some of the leadership of local governments — village panchayats — for women. Since the choice of which seats are to be reserved for women is done by lottery in India, since 1993, following a constitutional amendment, this turned out to be a perfect setting for studying how the election of women leaders could affect economic well-being in the locality. By studying a massive data set from West Bengal and Rajasthan, they proved that the provision of local public goods, like water supply, improves in statistically significant ways in villages where women are elected to lead.

Likewise, Michael Kremer's research, done with Ted Miguel, on what de-worming in schools in Kenya could do for child health and absenteeism of school students was quite remarkable. By doing a massive randomised controlled study, they showed that benefits of deworming could be staggering, way beyond the costs of such an intervention. There are many similar and important findings recorded in the book by Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo, *Poor Economics: A Radical Rethinking of the Way to Fight Global Poverty*. It should be mentioned here that quite

apart from the field for which the three of them got the Nobel, they have made important contributions to other areas of economics. Michael Kremer's research on O-rings, which uses an analogy from the disaster that occurred when the space shuttle, Challenger, crashed in 1986, to explain poverty traps was pioneering. It is a model that I have used in my own work. Abhijit Banerjee's work on the mathematics of herd behavior, which he did as a PhD student at Harvard University, is an outstanding piece of research.

Congratulations to all three of them. All three are great economists but also wonderful people with genuine commitment to do their bit for a better world. It is worth pointing out here that since I chair the jury for the Infosys Prize in the Social Sciences, I feel very happy personally that two of the Nobel Prize winners this year won the Infosys Prize even earlier — Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo.

With Abhijit having studied at Kolkata's South Point School, Presidency College and then at JNU in Delhi, India should be proud of his achievement and remind itself of the importance of science and scientific thinking. With the slowdown in India's economic growth it is important for us to use this prize not just for celebration but to harness the best of science and careful reasoning to policymaking.

The writer is C Marks Professor at Cornell University and former chief economist and senior vice president, World Bank



OCTOBER 15, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

MILL STRIKE OFF
WORKERS OF THE Ayodhya Textile Mill decided to call off their 110-day-old strike from the morning of October 15 following an agreement with the owner of the mill, the National Textile Corporation. Out of 24,000 striking workers of five textile mills in the national capital, about 3,100 belong to the Ayodhya mill. The remaining workers are employed in three mills of the DCM group and one mill of the Birlas. The action committee of the textile unions, which has been leading the agitation, said that the indefinite strike will continue in all the four mills till the managements accept its demands.

CASTEISM CHARGES
PRIME MINISTER CHARAN Singh denied casteism charges levelled against him by Congress (I) and Janata leaders and said they themselves were perpetuating the division of society on the basis of birth. How could they accuse him of casteism when they preached a system which could not be got rid of except by change of religion, Singh asked while inaugurating the election campaign of the Lok Dal in Kaithal, Haryana. The PM offered to retire from politics if Indira Gandhi and the Janata Party leader, Atal Bihari Vajpayee, accepted his thesis that only those would be allowed to enter government service who married outside their "biradari".

STOP IMMIGRANTS
THE MINISTER OF State at the London home office, Timothy Raison, is visiting India, Bangladesh and Pakistan, this week to study how best he can control the inflow into Britain of those who claim that they have a right to come and stay here permanently as British citizens. Last week, at the Conservative Party annual convention at Blackpool, immigration became an emotive issue — the rightwingers vehemently demanded immediate stoppage of immigrants, especially South Asians, into Britain. They demanded that the "small" island of Britain be not overwhelmed by immigrants and that jobs be available to "our own people" only.

15 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Chinese society is full of goodwill to India and hopes to see India achieve peaceful development. They should expand their friendly collaboration."
— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Turning away from Mahatma

Those who denigrate his legacy today must answer: Is it possible to imagine India without Gandhi?



ADOOR GOPALAKRISHNAN

THIS YEAR, ON January 30 — the day commemorating Mahatma Gandhi's assassination — a group of people led by a woman stood before a large cut-out of Gandhiji. The woman was wielding an air pistol which she aimed at the image and shot at point-blank range — reminiscent of the original assassination by Nathuram Vinayak Godse. Then, each one in the group followed suit. This was followed by an announcement that the performance would be an annual event.

Watching the unbelievable video clip of this event, that was making the rounds all over the country, my heart broke. My naive mind started imagining that the culprits would be caught red-handed and put in jail for the extreme act of disrespect and defilement to the Father of the Nation.

Some of us in Thiruvananthapuram got together in front of the government secretariat later and held a meeting to seek pardon from Bapuji for our compatriots' vandalistic expression of ingratitude and desecration, graphically caught on camera, and, circulated for everyone's consumption.

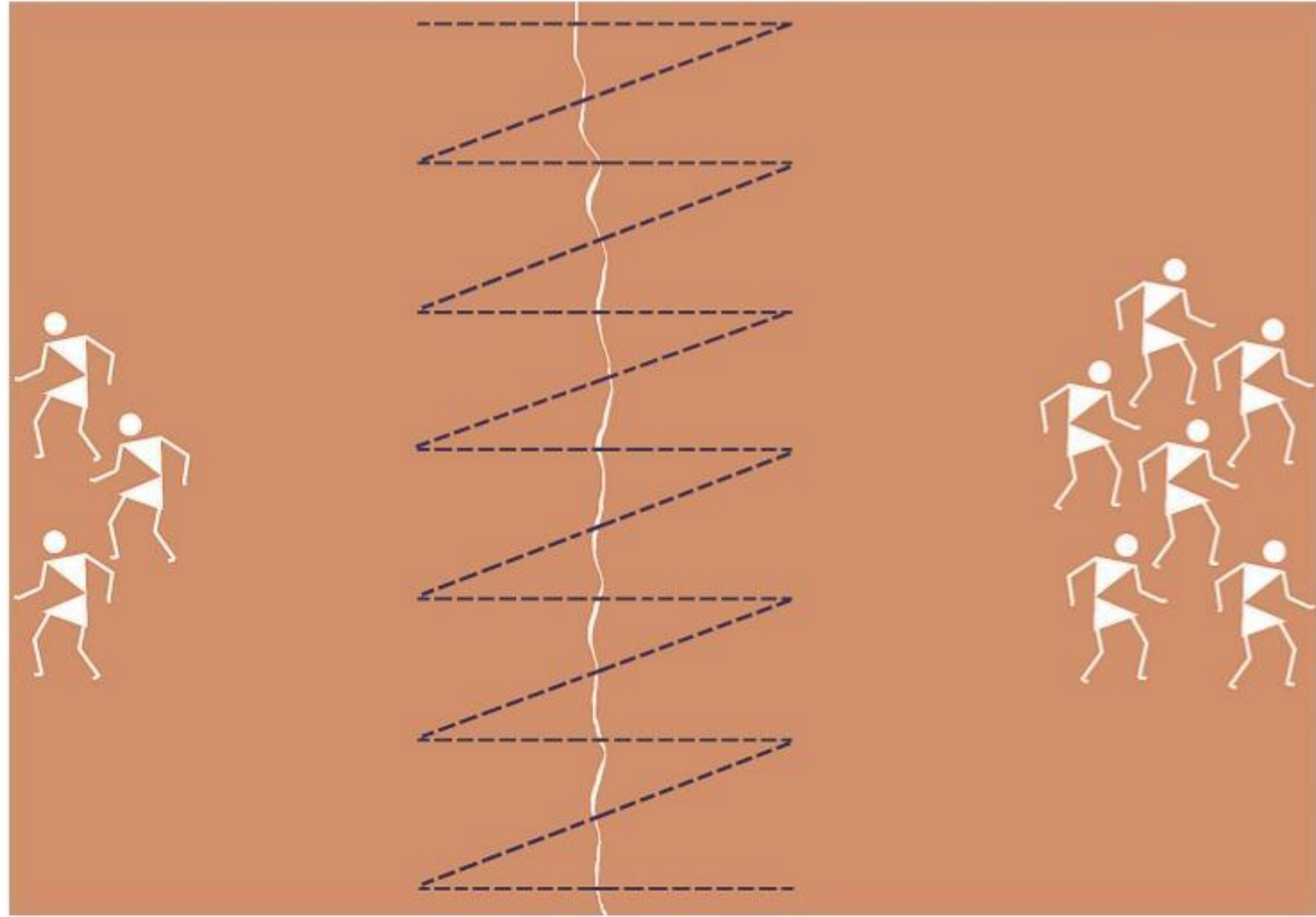
Sadly, we were very wrong to believe that people who share such radical beliefs might recognise the error of their ways: Another woman with similar radical beliefs was elected to the Lok Sabha with an astounding margin.

No one would have imagined that Gandhiji could, one day, become an object of malice and hatred in a country that he fought and died for: This has to be seen against the 150th birth anniversary of Gandhi being commemorated across the world with installation of his statues in city squares and streets being named after him.

Is our memory so short? Is it possible for us to think about an India without Gandhiji's spiritual guidance? The Indian independence movement he spearheaded and fought for had no precedent in history. It assumed especially epic proportions as it was fought with the weapons of non-violence and non-cooperation against a mighty empire like the British Raj. Gandhiji could garner the support and involvement of every proud, thinking Indian in his struggle. Freedom from colonisation was the birthright of each and every citizen of India, he had declared.

He lived a life of such absolute austerity and honesty, that anyone who watched could only learn and be inspired. Gandhiji used to say that his life is his message — and there was no duality about what he professed and practised. His autobiography, *My Experiments with Truth*, is a testament to how an introverted person overcame inhibitions and how honesty and adherence to personal values moulded him into an individual unafraid to fight for causes — whether for a community or for his country.

Animosities and hatred had no place in his mind. In every difficult confrontation with the British, and even when caught in the midst of religious fanatics with a propensity towards violence, he would resort to satyagraha to cleanse his conscience of any un-



C R Sasikumar

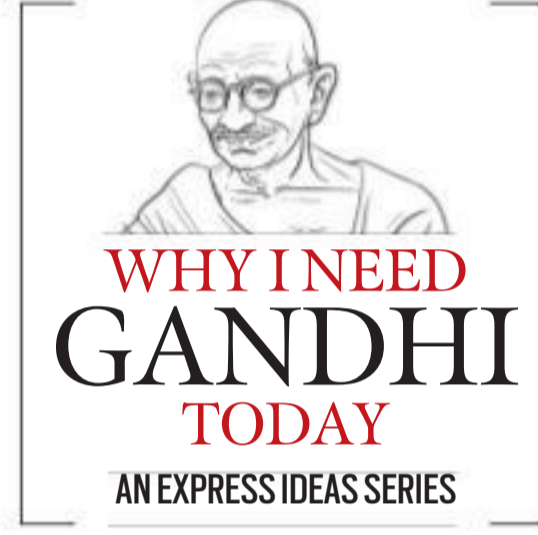
truth and anger.

A devout Hindu, he always believed in cordial co-existence with other religions. He used to assert that he was a Hindu, Muslim and Christian all at once. He took lessons from Christianity and Islam and also from faiths closer home like Sikhism, Jainism and Buddhism. He never saw these religions as inimical to his pursuit of sanatana dharma. He was the essential Indian.

Gandhiji's favourite Hindu god was Ram, but I think he was also highly influenced by Lord Krishna, who was an adept statesman and had great tact in solving complex worldly problems: Gandhiji's personality was a unique combination of both these puranic *purushas*. Otherwise, he could not have negotiated so effectively with the British for so long till we achieved freedom. One need only study the stance Gandhiji took regarding the participation of Indians in World War I. The British did not keep their promise that once the War was over, India's claim for independence would be considered. Undeterred, he went on to ensure an overwhelming Indian participation in World War II as a tactical means of bargain. This time, after the War was over, the British had to relent and active parleys started.

It should be remembered that the prefix of "Mahatma" was bestowed on him by no less a personality than Rabindranath Tagore. On his visit to Santiniketan, when Gandhiji addressed Tagore as Gurudev, Tagore in turn addressed him as Mahatma. Gandhiji became Mahatma thereafter for the whole country and the rest of the world.

The Indian National Congress and Gandhiji, along with his close associates — Jawaharlal Nehru, Vallabhbhai Patel, B R Ambedkar, Abul Kalam Azad, Subhas Chandra Bose and a host of other leaders — instilled into every Indian the thirst for freedom and the willingness to sacrifice. The strongest-willed and, occasionally, even stubborn among them, was Gandhiji. But he was also the most soft-spoken and un-



He lived a life of such absolute austerity and honesty, that anyone who watched could only learn and be inspired. Gandhiji used to say that his life is his message — and there was no duality about what he professed and practised. His autobiography, 'My Experiments with Truth', is a testament to how an introverted person overcame inhibitions and how honesty and adherence to personal values moulded him into an individual unafraid to fight for causes — whether for a community or for his country.

derstanding. He spoke in Gujarati, Hindi and English depending on the region where he was speaking. His language was simple and direct, and its appeal always deep and clear.

Gandhiji's life and teachings attracted many admirers — world leaders such as Nelson Mandela and Martin Luther King Jr, among many others. Without winning a Nobel, he became the apostle of peace and harmony among people of various faiths and pursuits.

Gandhiji firmly believed that in independent India, democracy should be practised from the grass roots. Gram panchayats were his dream. Men and women who represented the voters, he believed, should be leaders of immaculate character and should serve the people with devotion and selflessness.

Self-reliance was the great mantra he wanted every Indian to practise. For instance, he could make yarn from cotton on a charkha and the yarn could go in for weaving after that for making regular clothes. Every village should become self-sufficient in producing food, clothing and shelter using materials available in its locality, he believed. He asserted that Nature can give what we need, but it cannot feed our greed.

It seemed as if he had a simple solution to every complex problem. While he always preferred our hands to be engaged in producing things, he was never averse to mechanisation that eased and assisted human labour. When the stitching machine was introduced by Singer company, he duly termed it "the most useful machine man has invented".

The great humanistic philosophy of Mahatma Gandhi is forever. Becoming blind to his contributions does not augur well for humanity and India, in particular. The legacy of this great son of India is for us to celebrate and feel proud of, not denigrate.

The writer, a filmmaker, studied at Gandhigram Rural Institute, Tamil Nadu

Xi's security diplomacy

India needs to pay close attention to deepening of Nepal-China cooperation



RAJA-MANDALA BY C RAJA MOHAN

PRESIDENT XI Jinping's brief but significant visit to Kathmandu was defined by the determination to accelerate the development of an ambitious trans-Himalayan corridor between China's Tibet and Nepal. While Delhi will debate the issues generated by China Nepal Economic Corridor for some time to come, it also needs to pay attention to an equally important dimension of China-Nepal relationship — the deepening of bilateral security cooperation. We are not referring to military and defence exchanges but to the expanding engagement between the police forces, intelligence agencies, border management organisations and law-enforcement authorities of the two nations. China's interest in "security diplomacy" as separate from "defence diplomacy" is not limited to Nepal.

Security diplomacy has emerged as a major element of China's international relations in all geographies. The globalisation and digitalisation of the Chinese economy, the growing movement of people across Chinese borders and expanding capital and human assets beyond borders have made law enforcement cooperation with the rest of the world a major priority for China. The range of issues involved in security diplomacy include tracking down fugitives from Beijing's anti-corruption campaign, criminals seeking safe haven in other countries, countering terrorism, preventing drug trafficking, assisting Chinese citizens and tourists abroad, and reining in political dissidents active in other countries. In the case of neighbours, security diplomacy takes on an added dimension, given the dynamic interaction between internal political stability and the situation across the frontiers.

The importance China attaches to security diplomacy is reflected in the fact that four of the 20 documents signed in Kathmandu relate to law enforcement. These agreements touched on border management, supply of border security equipment, mutual legal assistance, and collaboration between Nepal's Attorney General and China's "Supreme People's Procurator" (or the prosecutor general).

Xi's emphasis on internal security was evident in his remarks to Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli: "Anyone attempting to split China in any part of the country will end in crushed bodies and shattered bones," Xi said, according to official Chinese media. He also warned other countries against interfering in the internal affairs of China. The context of the remarks is easy to see. The protests in Hong Kong that have taken a violent turn in recent days are testing Beijing's patience. The Chinese Communist Party is angry with attempts in the US to link trade negotiations with the situation in Hong Kong. But there might be a more specific reason, Tibet, for Xi to choose Kathmandu for making the harsh remarks.

Nepal's northern border with China is entirely with Tibet, and Beijing sees security cooperation with Kathmandu as critical in controlling the movement of people across

this frontier. Nepal, which was once hospitable to Tibetan refugees fleeing China, now extends full support to Beijing's law enforcement agencies in tracking and deporting them. Nepal's security cooperation has become intense ever since trouble broke out in Tibet in the early years of this century.

Growing bonhomie between China and Nepal's political leaders has provided a more permissive environment for this cooperation on Tibet. In recent years, Chinese security agencies have apparently gained effective access to border areas on the Nepali side in dealing with Tibetan exiles and have every reason to be pleased with Kathmandu's support.

As the joint statement issued after Xi's talks in Kathmandu put it, the two sides agreed to "respect and accommodate each other's concerns and core interests". Nepal "reiterated its firm commitment to One-China policy" and acknowledged that Tibetan matters "are China's internal affairs". Kathmandu also promised not to allow "any anti-China activities on its soil". China, in turn, declared, its firm support to Nepal in upholding the country's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, and its firm support and respect to Nepal's social system and development path, independently chosen in the light of Nepal's national conditions. The statement also signalled satisfaction at the signing of the "Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters and expressed hope for an early conclusion of the Treaty on Extradition." China, in turn, has promised to enhance the capacities of Nepal's law enforcement agencies.

Strengthening internal security in China's far flung provinces with significant religious and ethnic minorities has always been a major political priority for the People's Republic of China in dealing with its neighbouring countries. Trouble within or across the borders of Xinjiang, Tibet and Yunnan has meant greater cooperation with the neighbouring states. In the case of Xinjiang, the focus is on the three Central Asian states (Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan) as well as Pakistan and Afghanistan that share a border with the province. Securing the Tibetan frontier has been an integral part of China's difficult political engagement with India and an increasingly productive cooperation with Nepal. Collaboration with Myanmar is central to China's security management of the Yunnan province.

Massive modernisation of its internal administrative structures, significant investments in new technologies, and an effective integration of law enforcement into China's foreign policy have transformed China's pursuit of security diplomacy. It is by no means limited to neighbours and is now spread across all geographies — from developed countries in North America and Europe to the developing world in Asia and Africa. China is also participating in the development of new international rules on law enforcement, shaping the discourse on issues at hand, and seeking leadership positions in multilateral organisations dealing with law enforcement. Like the other great powers that preceded it, China sees security diplomacy and law enforcement cooperation as important tools of statecraft.

The writer is Director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs for The Indian Express

Babasaheb's warning

In politics, hero-worship is a path to degradation and eventual dictatorship



SOLI J SORABJEE

BHIMRAO RAMJI Ambedkar, affectionately known as Babasaheb Ambedkar, was the main architect of our Constitution. The task of framing free India's Constitution was formidable. The first meeting of the Constituent Assembly for this purpose was held on December 6, 1946. Ambedkar was elected on August 29, 1947 as the chairman of the drafting committee. He was insistent that the guarantees of fundamental rights be expressly incorporated in the Constitution and that remedies for their enforcement be easily accessible and expeditious. With that in view, draft Article 25, corresponding to the current Article 32 was incorporated. According to Ambedkar, "If I was asked to name any particular article in this Constitution as the most important — an article without which this Constitution would be a nullity — I could not refer to any other article except this one. It is the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it".

Ambedkar's prescription for the successful working of the Constitution was that there must be no glaring inequalities and that there must be neither an oppressed class nor a suppressed class. He believed that unless the moral values of a Constitution are upheld, grandiloquent words will not protect the freedom and democratic values of people. He attached great importance to constitutional morality in the working of the Constitution which meant "a paramount reverence for the forms of the Constitution, enforcing obedience to authority acting un-

der and within these forms, yet combined with the habit of open speech, of action subject only to definite legal control, and unrestrained censure of those very authorities as to all their public acts". According to Ambedkar, constitutional morality is "not a natural sentiment. It had to be cultivated. We must realise that our people have yet to learn it".

On the concluding day of the Constituent Assembly, November 26, 1949, Ambedkar expressed his misgivings about the successful functioning of democracy in our country in these memorable words: "A thought comes to my mind: What would happen to her democratic constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lose it again? When there was no way left for constitutional methods for achieving economic and social objectives, there was a great deal of justification for unconstitutional methods. But where constitutional methods are open, there can be no justification for these unconstitutional methods. These methods are nothing but the grammar of anarchy and the sooner they are abandoned, the better for us". The grammar of anarchy is still prevalent and Ambedkar's hope that it would be abandoned has not fructified.

Hero worship is endemic in our country and personality cult flourishes. There is nothing wrong in admiring our leaders as heroes, but the risk is that in the process, the tendency is to entrust such persons with vast powers and uncritically accept the ex-

ercise of these powers, without insisting on accountability, which is a sine qua non of any genuine democracy.

Ambedkar was aware of these lurking dangers. He underlined the importance of observing caution which John Stuart Mill had uttered to all who are interested in the maintenance of democracy, namely, not "to lay their liberties at the feet of even a great man, or to trust him with powers which enable him to subvert their institutions". There is nothing wrong in being grateful to great men who have rendered life-long service to the country. But there are limits to gratefulness.

Ambedkar emphasised that this caution is far more necessary in the case of India. For in India, bhakti, or what may be called the path of devotion or hero-worship, plays a part in politics, unequalled in magnitude by the part it plays in the politics of any other country. Bhakti, in religion, may be a road to the salvation of the soul. But in politics, Bhakti or hero-worship, is a sure road to degradation and to eventual dictatorship.

On the last day of the Constituent Assembly, Ambedkar pointed out the perils of a "life of contradictions" in these memorable words: "On January 26, 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. In politics we will be recognising the principle of one-man one-vote and one-vote one-value. In our social and economic life,

we shall by reason of our social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one-man one-value. How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly has so laboriously built up".

The anguished questions posed by Ambedkar continue to haunt us. Equality and banishment of discrimination, the abolition of untouchability and the inhuman practices associated with it were uppermost in Ambedkar's mind. How could it be otherwise? He knew and had suffered the hurt and humiliation of being an untouchable and was painfully conscious of the sufferings of those who were outcasts on account of their "untouchability". Social justice, which is the signature tune of our Constitution, still eludes us. Political leaders, so-called intellectuals, eminent journalists do not observe constitutional morality. But, the struggle for social justice must continue with determination. Its achievement will be the best tribute we can pay to one of the greatest sons of India, Babasaheb Bhimrao Ambedkar.

The writer is former Attorney General for India

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

IDENTITY AND PROOF

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Where do I belong?' (IE, October 14). I tried for six years to open a bank account for my domestic help, a young man of 30. Somehow the system operates like a game of snakes and ladders. When you are sure you have nearly made it, you fall down and start again. I have won the game finally and Anil, my domestic help inside of a meager Rs 14,000 in his account, feels like a crorepati. I think his journey to find a legal identity is about to end. Hopefully.

Abhimanyu K, New Delhi

NOT ON BOARD

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'In his company' (IE, October 14). It is not shocking to learn about findings of the CS Gender 3000 Report. Barring a few big names such as Kiran Mazumdar Shaw, Anu Aga, Renuka Ramnath and Kalpana Morparia there are hardly any women on boards or in the top management team in Indian companies. Indian women have broken glass ceilings. We surely can take a leaf out of Sweden, Italy, France or Norway.

Bal Govind, Noida

TIME FOR RESEARCH

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Time to TOP up' (IE, October 14). Increase in food pro-

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301. Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

cessing capacities and value addition in the tomato, onion and potato has been advanced as the most promising solution to high price fluctuations. But the food processing industry has quality requirements that require farmers to adhere to certain standards. Agricultural policy need to address such issues.

Sudip Kumar Dey, Kolkata

TELLING NUMBERS

After a clean spell, how Delhi's air is getting worse now

SHIVAM PATEL
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

AS DIWALI and winter approach, the air quality in Delhi has started to deteriorate. The average air quality index (AQI) moved into the 'Poor' zone on Thursday (October 10), and worsened progressively every day until Sunday — before improving marginally on Monday. The situation is not expected to get better this week.

The reason for the worsening of the air was the accumulation of pollutants after the burning of Ravan effigies on Dussehra on Tuesday, and a change in the wind direction, which brought in pollutants from Punjab and Haryana in the north-west, where the seasonal burning of crop residue is under way.

It ended a happy spell of three months, during which the air quality in the city oscillated between 'Satisfactory' and 'Moderate'. In September, the highest AQI recorded was 173, which is considered 'Moderate'; the lowest was 60, which is 'Satisfactory'. The average AQI for the whole month was 98, in the 'Satisfactory' range — this is the lowest AQI the capital has had in the month of September since 2015.

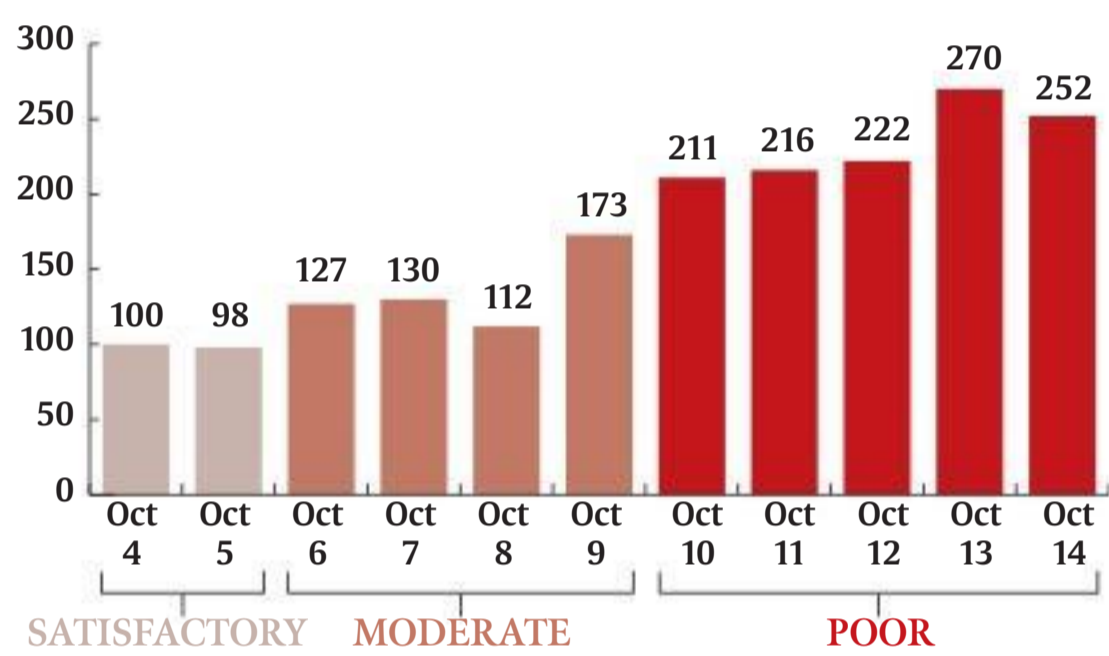


The seasonal burning of farm stubble is currently under way in Punjab and Haryana, impacting air quality in Delhi. *Express Archive*

The contribution from stubble burning to Delhi's air in the form of particulate matter of 2.5 micrometres (PM2.5) started around Friday, and has increased since. Its share in the overall pollution increased from 1% on Friday to 8% on Monday.

The capital's AQI is forecast to touch the higher end of the 'Poor' category on Tuesday at 297 — just four points less than the 'Very poor' air quality band. Further deterioration could start from the fourth week of October, with the burning of firecrackers around Diwali contributing to the bad air.

AQI IN DELHI, LAST 10 DAYS



TIP FOR READING LIST

FOR THE LOVE OF TEA

HENRIETTA LOVELL, the author of *Infused: Adventures in Tea*, is the founder of London-based Rare Tea Company, a boutique tea business that sells a small, exclusive range of teas that it sources directly from tea gardens across the world. As the title of Lovell's book and its review in *The New York Times* suggests, she hates tea bags — a dislike that she announces in her Twitter bio: "Always loose, never baggy."

In the preface of *Infused*, Lovell pitches it directly: "This is the story of my adventures in tea. I hope to seduce you, a little,



into a love of loose leaves. It's a highly personal, partisan account rather than an objective treatise on tea in general. It's my story of tea, not the story of tea. I want to tell you about the really good stuff that fuels me, and the places it takes me. There is so much I long to share, you could think of this book as an unburdening of my loves."

The many short chapters in the 256-page book are named after important places in the author's journey. There are Meghalaya and Sikkim in that list, and also Sri Lanka and Nepal — but neither Darjeeling nor Assam.

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Breaking down Laureates' work

What is the argument of Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo for moving away from the 'big questions' on poverty? What is the winners' new 'experiment-based approach' that the prize has recognised?

UDIT MISRA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE 2019 Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Sciences in Memory of Alfred Nobel has been awarded jointly to Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer "for their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty". The award carries a purse of 9 million Swedish krona (about Rs 6.5 crore) to be shared among the three winners.

When asked what she would do with the "considerable" prize money given that most of her work is on alleviating poverty, Duflo recalled Marie Curie, who had bought a gram of radium with the prize money from her first Nobel (in Physics in 1903): "We will discuss and decide what our 'gram of radium' is."

Like Curie, who won the 1903 Nobel with her husband Pierre, Duflo is married to Banerjee, with whom she shares the honour in part. They have been collaborating for long, and in 2011 wrote the book *Poor Economics: Rethinking Poverty & The Ways to End it Together*. The couple are at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Kremer is at Harvard University.

Why have Banerjee, Duflo, and Kremer won the Nobel Prize?

"The research conducted by this year's Laureates has considerably improved our ability to fight global poverty," the Nobel citation says. "Their new experiment-based approach has transformed development economics."

In *Poor Economics*, Banerjee and Duflo bemoaned how the debates on poverty "tend to be fixated on the 'big questions': What is the ultimate cause of poverty? How much faith should we place in free markets? Is democracy good for the poor? Does foreign aid have a role to play? And so on".

Banerjee, Duflo and Kremer, who have been working together since the mid 1990s, are different in that they do not get stuck with the "big questions". Instead, they break down a problem, study its different aspects, conduct various experiments and, based on such "evidence", decide what needs to be done.

Thus, instead of looking for the silver bullet to prop up the 700 million people globally who still live in extreme poverty, they look at the various dimensions of poverty — poor health, inadequate education, etc. They then drill down further on



Nobel Laureates Abhijit Banerjee and Esther Duflo at The Indian Express office in New Delhi on January 15, 2015. *Ravi Kanooja/Express Archive*

each of these components. Within poor health, for instance, they look at nutrition, provisioning of medicines, and vaccination, etc. Within vaccinations, they try to ascertain "what works" and "why".

As Duflo said immediately after the announcement: "People have reduced the poor to caricatures without understanding the roots of their problems. (We decided) let's try to unpack the problem and analyse each component scientifically and rigorously."

How does this approach work in practice?

"The lack of a grand universal answer might sound vaguely disappointing, but in fact it is exactly what a policy maker should want to know — not that there are a million ways that the poor are trapped but that there are a few key factors that create the trap, and that alleviating those particular problems could set them free and point them toward a virtuous cycle of increasing wealth and investment," Banerjee and Duflo said in *Poor Economics*.

Breaking down the poverty problem and focussing on the smaller issues such as "how best to fix diarrhea or dengue" yielded some very surprising results.

For instance, it is often believed that many poor countries (like India) do not have the resources to adequately provide education,

and that this resource crunch is the reason why school-going children do not learn more. But their field experiments showed that lack of resources is not the primary problem.

In fact, studies showed that neither providing more textbooks nor free school meals improved learning outcomes. Instead, as was brought out in schools in Mumbai and Vadodara, the biggest problem is that

teaching is not sufficiently adapted to the pupils' needs. In other words, providing teaching assistants to the weakest students was a far more effective way of improving education in the short to medium term.

Similarly, on tackling teacher absenteeism, what worked better was to employ them on short-term contracts (which could

be extended if they showed good results) instead of having fewer students per "permanent" teacher, in order to reduce the burden on teachers and incentivise them to teach.

And what is their "new experiment-based" approach?

The "new, powerful tool" employed by the Laureates is the use of Randomised Control Trials (or RCTs). So if one wanted to understand whether providing a mobile vaccination van and/or a sack of grains would incentivise villagers to vaccinate their kids, then under an RCT, village households would be divided into four groups.

Group A would be provided with a mobile vaccination van facility, Group B would be given a sack of foodgrains, Group C would get both, and Group D would get neither. Households would be chosen at random to ensure there was no bias, and that any difference in vaccination levels was essentially because of the "intervention".

Group D is called the "control" group while others are called "treatment" groups. Such an experiment would not only show whether a policy initiative works, but would also provide a measure of the difference it brings about.

It would also show what happens when more than one initiatives are combined. This would help policymakers to have the evidence before they choose a policy.

Is there a flip side to RCTs?

The use of RCTs as the provider of "hard" and incontrovertible evidence has been questioned by many leading economists — none more so than Angus Deaton, the winner of the Economics Nobel in 2015, who said "randomisation does not equalise two groups", and warned against over-reliance on RCTs to frame policies.

While randomly assigning people or households makes it likely that the groups are equivalent, randomisation "cannot guarantee" it. That's because one group may perform differently from the other, not because of the "treatment" that it has been given, but because it has more women or more educated people in it.

More fundamentally, RCTs do not guarantee if something that worked in Kerala will work in Bihar, or if something that worked for a small group will also work at scale.

This Nobel, albeit indirectly, for RCTs will likely stoke this debate again.

OTHER MARRIED LAUREATE COUPLES



Marie & Pierre Curie
Nobel Prize in Physics, 1903

IN 1895, the year Marie and Pierre married, Henri Becquerel discovered that minerals containing uranium emitted a strong radiation. In 1898, Marie and Pierre Curie discovered two new elements — polonium and radium. In 1903, Becquerel won the Nobel for his discovery of spontaneous radioactivity, along with the Curies for their supporting researches on the radiation phenomena.



Irene Joliot-Curie & Frédéric Joliot
Nobel Prize in Chemistry, 1935

IRÈNE, DAUGHTER of Marie and Pierre Curie, and Joliot married in 1926, when they were working at the Curies' Radium Institute. The couple researched both individually and together, in particular on the projection of nuclei, which was an essential step in the discovery of neutron and positron. They were awarded the Nobel for discovering artificial radioactivity.



Gerty & Carl Cori
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, 1947

GERTY AND Carl Cori went through medical school together, graduated, married, and emigrated from Vienna to Buffalo as anti-Semitism rose in Europe. In the US, they collaborated in most of their research on how hormones and enzymes cooperate. After 30 years of team work, they were awarded the Medicine Prize for research on glycogen and glucose metabolism.



Gunnar Myrdal
Prize in Economic Sciences, 1974

THE MYRDALS, social scientists, are the only wife/husband team to win two awards in different disciplines. Gunnar and Friedrich August von Hayek won for their analysis of interrelations between economic, social and political processes. Alva was recognised for her work countering nuclear proliferation.



May-Britt & Edvard Moser
Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, 2014

MAY-BRITT and her then husband Edvard were awarded the Medicine Prize for their discovery of our "inner GPS". In a podcast, Edvard Moser talked about their long collaboration and the importance of their different personalities. In 2016, the Mosers announced they were divorcing. They shared the Nobel Prize with John O'Keefe. *Source: nobelprize.org*

Bench strength, validity of law: Why land acquisition matter is back in SC

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

ON TUESDAY, a five-judge Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court will begin hearing a case to clarify the interpretation of the law on land acquisition, specifically the provision related to compensation awarded to land owners. Two three-judge Bench rulings delivered by the apex court in 2014 and 2018 on the same issue differed in their interpretations, prompting the court to refer the matter to a larger Bench.

The scheduled hearing will decide the legality of several cases of land acquisition that took place across the country before 2009. The matter also raises significant questions on judicial discipline, and how judgments of the court are applied while deciding subsequent cases on similar issues.

What is the provision of the law in question?

The issue involves Section 24(2) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and

Resettlement Act, 2013, which replaced the colonial 1894 land acquisition law.

The provision says that in cases where acquisition proceedings were initiated under the 1894 law and compensation had been determined, the proceedings would lapse if the state did not take possession of the land for five years, and also had not paid compensation to the landowner.

Once the proceedings lapse under the old law, the acquisition process would be initiated again under the new law, allowing the owner to get a higher compensation.

The term "paid" needed interpretation — and since it placed the responsibility on the government, cases were filed before courts soon after the law was implemented.

What did the two conflicting judgments say?

In 2014, in the first such case involving the interpretation of the new law, a three-judge Bench comprising Justices RM Lodha, Madan Lokur and Kurian Joseph in *Pune Municipal Authority v Harakchand Misirimal Solanki* said that the state depositing the compensation in its own treasury cannot be

equated with the landowners being "paid". In exceptional circumstances, where the landowner refuses the compensation, the sum can be deposited with the court, but a deposit in its own treasury would not suffice.

This ruling was followed as precedent by High Courts in several cases, and was affirmed by the apex court itself in 2016.

However, in February 2018, a three-judge Bench comprising Justices Arun Mishra, Adarsh Goel and Mohan Shantanagoudar while dealing with a similar issue, ruled in *Indore Development Authority v Shailendra* that in cases where the landowner had refused compensation, depositing it with the treasury was sufficient, and the state was not obligated to deposit it with the court.

The court also said that the only consequence of not depositing the compensation with the court "at the most in appropriate cases may be of a higher rate of interest on compensation", and not lapse of acquisition.

In doing so, the court also invalidated the settled law on the issue — the 2014 judgment by another three-judge Bench on the same issue — and declared it "per incuriam".

The two senior judges formed the majority in the 2018 verdict; Justice Shantanagoudar dissented.

Why was a referral to a larger Bench made?

Days after the 2018 verdict was pronounced, another three-judge Bench comprising Justices Lokur, Joseph (both of whom were part of the 2014 verdict that was invalidated), and Deepak Gupta noticed the inconsistency and stayed all cases relating to this provision of the land acquisition Act in High Courts across the country until the question of law was settled.

It also asked "other Benches of the Supreme Court" to not take up the issue until it was decided by a larger Bench.

Justice Joseph in oral observations made in the court strongly criticised the 2018 ruling, and said that the verdict had deviated from "virgin principles" of the institution in declaring a verdict of equal Bench strength as *per incuriam*.

Subsequently, separate Benches headed by Justices Goel and Mishra referred the case to then Chief Justice of India Dipak Misra re-

questing him to set up a larger Bench.

What is the problem with an ruling being invalidated?

The controversy stemmed from not only the fact that the 2014 ruling was declared *per incuriam*, but also because it was done so by a Bench of equal strength. In common law, a judgment of the court is used as the basis or precedent for determining future cases.

A ruling of the Supreme Court is binding on all High Courts, and a ruling of the Supreme Court by Benches of larger or equal strength is binding on other Benches of the court.

A three-judge Bench cannot hold a decision by another three-judge Bench to be *per incuriam*, but can only ask for consideration by a larger Bench if it disagrees with the precedent.

Similarly, a Bench cannot ask other Benches to not follow a judgment.

Since the Supreme Court sits in Benches of two or three (unlike in the US where all justices of the Supreme Court sit together for hearing every case), the prac-

tice of following precedent ensures consistency and certainty in law. Hence, larger Bench rulings are preferred to make sure that the law laid down by the court is predictable as far as possible.

And what does it mean for a case to be declared per incuriam?

"Incuria" is Latin for "carelessness", and when a judgment is declared *per incuriam*, it means that the case was wrongly decided, mostly because the judges were ill-informed about the applicable law. A judgment can also be declared *per incuriam* if it has materially deviated from earlier precedents.

A judgment that is *per incuriam* has no legal force or validity and does not have to be counted as a precedent.

Justice Shantanagoudar in his dissent agreed with the interpretation of the law with Justices Mishra and Goel who wrote the majority opinion, but declined to declare the 2014 ruling *per incuriam*. He said that the ruling had considered all aspects of the law, but since it was the first decision on the provision, had taken a different view.



K-POP STAR FOUND DEAD
Korean pop star and actor Sulli was found dead at her home in Seoul, South Korea. According to Variety, Sulli's manager found her body and informed the police. Police said that they are looking at the chances of suicide.

TOP OF THE WORLD



A day after the election, in Raszyn, Poland. Reuters

POLAND
Conservatives dominate vote

Warsaw: Poland's conservative ruling Law and Justice party capitalised on its popular social spending policies to do even better at the ballot box than when it swept to power four years ago, according to nearly complete results reported Monday. If confirmed, the results from Sunday's general election would be the strongest showing for a single Polish party in a parliamentary election in 30 years, since Poland threw off communism to establish democracy. Law and Justice won just under 44% of Sunday's vote, according to results.

PAKISTAN
PML-N lawyer 'kidnapped'

Lahore: Kashif Ali, a senior lawyer of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) party was allegedly "kidnapped" by some unidentified persons, according to a police complaint lodged by his brother, days after he led a group of advocates in chanting anti-army slogans during a court hearing of jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif in a corruption case here.

JAPAN
Typhoon toll rises to 56

Tokyo: At least 56 people have been killed in Japan by Typhoon Hagibis, national broadcaster NHK said Monday, as rescuers worked into the night searching for survivors. The broadcaster said 15 people were still missing after the deadly storm, which slammed into Tokyo and surrounding areas Saturday night as one of the most powerful typhoons to hit the area in decades.

EGYPT
Prominent activist held

Cairo: An Egyptian rights lawyer says prosecutors have ordered a prominent pro-democracy activist to remain in custody for 15 days. Khaled Ali says Esraa Abdel-Fattah was brought before prosecutors late Sunday, after she was arrested by security forces in plain clothes a day earlier. Abdel-Fattah was a co-founder of the April 6 movement which played a crucial role in the 2011 pro-democracy uprising.

US troops pulling out, Syria steps in to halt Turkish assault

AGENCIES
TALL TAMR (SYRIA), OCTOBER 14

THE SYRIAN REGIME sent troops towards the Turkish border on Monday to contain Ankara's deadly offensive against the Kurds, stepping in for US forces due to begin a controversial withdrawal.

Outgunned and without US protection, the autonomous Kurds in northeastern Syria had few other options to stop the rapid advance of Turkish troops and their Syrian proxies.

Turkey wants to create a roughly 30-kilometre (20-mile) buffer zone along its border to keep Kurdish forces at bay and also to send back some of the 3.6 million Syrian refugees it hosts.

The United States and its partners, who spent years fighting alongside the Kurds against the Islamic State group in Syria before deserting them, have condemned the Turkish invasion, but their threats of sanctions have failed to stop it.

Washington says that it is planning to pull out 1,000 troops — almost the entire ground force — from Syria's north, in a move welcomed Monday by Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan as "a positive approach". The chaos in the areas targeted in the six-day-old Turkish assault has already led to the escape of around 800 foreign women and children linked to IS from a Kurdish-run camp, Kurdish authorities said.

The Kurds had repeatedly warned of that scenario when



A Syrian army soldier in the town of Tel Tamer in northeast Syria, on Monday. SANA/handout via Reuters



TURKEY'S SYRIA OFFENSIVE

Western countries refused to repatriate their IS-linked nationals and when US President Donald Trump made it clear he wanted to end the US military presence.

Wasting no time to fill the void, Moscow — already the top broker in Syria — clinched a deal between the Kurds and

Damascus, whose ties had been icy since the minority threw its lot with Washington and unilaterally declared self-rule.

"In order to prevent and confront this aggression, an agreement has been reached with the Syrian government," the Kurdish administration said in a statement late Sunday.

In an editorial published in Foreign Policy magazine, the head of the main Kurdish force wrote: "If we have to choose between compromises and the genocide of our people, we will surely choose life for our people." By Monday morning, Syrian government forces were already moving to within several kilometres (miles) of the border, AFP correspondents on the ground said.

Residents around the town of Tall Tamr welcomed regime forces with cheers and Syrian state

'Kurdish forces emptied IS jail'

Ankara: Turkish Defence Minister Hulusi Akar said Syrian Kurdish YPG fighters had emptied a jail holding IS prisoners in a part of Syria where Ankara is mounting an offensive, and that the prisoners there had been abducted. US president Donald Trump also tweeted that Kurdish forces might be freeing IS prisoners deliberately.

Syria welcomes India statement

New Delhi: Syrian Ambassador Riad Kamel Abbas on Monday welcomed India's statement on Turkey for its "unilateral military offensive" in northeastern Syria, saying New Delhi has a "strong voice" in the international community and Damascus looks forward to joining hands with it for further cooperation.

television showed some of them waving national flags and portraits of President Bashar al-Assad.

Syrian troops also deployed in the areas of Tabqa and Ain Issa in Raqa, said the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights.

As Hong Kong erupts again, Xi says will crush any bid to split China

JOHN RUWITCH & JESSIE PANG
HONG KONG, OCTOBER 14

TENS OF thousands of mostly young pro-democracy activists rallied in Hong Kong on Monday in the first legal protest since the introduction of colonial-era emergency laws and pleaded for help from the United States.

They chanted "Fight for Freedom, Fight for Hong Kong" as they gathered peacefully near central government offices in the Admiralty district of the Chinese-ruled city only hours after police said violent protests had escalated to a "life-threatening level".

A small bomb exploded and a policeman was stabbed on Sunday night, the latest violence in four months of unrest in which police have responded to petrol bombs and rocks with tear gas, rubber bullets, water cannon and sometimes live rounds. Emergency laws introduced on Oct. 5 banning face masks at rallies and carrying a maximum penalty of one year in jail sparked some of the worst violence since the unrest started.

On Monday night, many protesters wore face masks in defiance of the ban.

Speakers urged the United States to pass a Hong Kong human rights act to ensure democ-



Protesters urged the US to pass a Hong Kong human rights act to ensure democracy for the former British colony. Reuters

racy for the former British colony, which returned to Chinese rule in 1997.

"Make Hong Kong Great Again", read one poster. Some protesters waved the U.S. flag and carried "Uncle Sam" recruitment posters reading "Fight for Freedom, Stand with HK".

"All of the Hong Kong people feel hopeless and the government hasn't listened to our voices so we need the USA to help us," said protester Edward Fong, 28.

The protesters are angry at what they see as Beijing's tight-grip on the city which was guaranteed 50 years of freedoms under the "one country, two sys-

tems" formula under which it returned to China. Beijing rejects the charge and accuses Western countries, especially the United States and Britain, of stirring up trouble.

The unrest poses the biggest popular challenge to Chinese President Xi Jinping since he came to power in 2012. He warned that any attempt to divide China would be crushed.

"Anyone attempting to split China in any part of the country will end in crushed bodies and shattered bones," Xi said in a meeting on Sunday with leaders in Nepal, where he was visiting, according to China's state broadcaster CCTV.

Pomp in London, Brexit talks in Brussels as deadline looms

JILL LAWLESS & RAF CASERT
LONDON, OCTOBER 14

BREXIT DIVORCE talks in Brussels are making slow progress, both sides said Monday as some EU ministers said they could even spill into next week. Across the Channel, Britain dragged out a horse-drawn carriage and a diamond-encrusted crown so the queen could read out the government's post-Brexit plans to Parliament.

In terms of historical importance, the painstaking paragraph-by-paragraph talks at the EU's glass-and-steel Berlaymont headquarters seriously outweighed the regal ritual in which an ermine-draped monarch delivered a speech on the priorities of a Conservative government that could be out of office within weeks.

But the spectacle, complete with a Household Cavalry equestrian escort, lords in scarlet robes and jewels galore, did provide a day's diversion from the long Brexit grind.

Britain is scheduled to leave the EU on October 31, and an EU summit on Thursday or Friday was long considered one of the last possible chances to approve a divorce agreement to accommodate that timeframe.

British PM Boris Johnson insists the country will leave at the end of the month with or without a Brexit deal, something the queen reiterated Monday.

"My government's priority has always been to secure the United Kingdom's departure from the European Union on the 31st of October," the Queen said in a speech to Parliament that was



Elizabeth delivers the Queen's Speech in London. Reuters



Why speech was seen as stunt

THE SPEECH was seen by many as a stunt, because Johnson's Conservative administration lacks a majority in Parliament and an early general election looks likely within the next few months, whether or not Britain leaves the EU as scheduled on October 31. The state opening, during which the speech is made, is usually an annual event, but amid the country's Brexit chaos there has been no Queen's Speech for more than two years.

written for her by the government. It remains to be seen whether Johnson will achieve that goal.



ECUADOR PROTESTS END AFTER DEAL

People in Ecuador celebrated a deal President Lenin Moreno and indigenous leaders struck late Sunday to cancel a disputed austerity package and end nearly two weeks of protests that have paralysed the economy and left seven dead.

TRUMP DEMANDS WHISTLEBLOWER TESTIFY
Trump ex-Russia adviser testifies in impeachment probe

AGENCIES
WASHINGTON, OCTOBER 14

DONALD TRUMP demanded Monday that a whistleblower whose warning about the US president's call with Ukraine triggered the impeachment inquiry against him be identified and testify before Congress.

As the president menaced the person who exposed his potential wrongdoing, Trump faced a new setback with his former top Russia adviser, Fiona Hill, sitting for a closed-door



Fiona Hill arrives on Capitol Hill, Washington. AP

deposition Monday before Capitol Hill lawmakers. Hill served in the National

Security Council but left the administration shortly before Trump's July 25 call with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky.

Democrats expect her to share her concerns about Trump's involvement in the Ukraine scandal, including his ouster of the US ambassador to Kiev Marie Yovanovitch, who testified to Congress last week.

Hill, under a congressional subpoena according to her lawyer, made no remarks to reporters as she entered the secure meeting room in the US Capitol for a depo-

Spain jails 9 Catalan independence leaders

EMMA PINEDO & JOAN FAUS
MADRID/BARCELONA, OCT 14

SPAIN'S SUPREME Court on Monday sentenced nine Catalan separatist leaders to between nine and 13 years in prison for sedition over their role in a failed independence bid, triggering protests across the region.

Three other defendants, who were also on trial for their involvement in the October 2017 referendum held in spite of a ban and a short-lived independence declaration, were found guilty only of disobedience and not sentenced to prison.

All defendants were acquitted of the gravest charge, rebellion, but leading separatists were quick to condemn the court's decision and the jailed men sent out messages of defiance, urging people to take to the streets.

"This sentence is an attack on democracy and the rights of all citizens," the head of the regional



Decision triggered protests in Barcelona on Monday. AP

parliament Roger Torrent said. "Today we are all convicted, not just 12 people."

Former head of Catalonia's regional government, Carles Puigdemont, said the prison sentences were an "atrocious".

In Barcelona, three main streets were blocked by protesters holding signs calling for "Freedom for political prisoners" and a crowd chanted "We'll do it again" — a slogan used by separatist supporters who want to hold another referendum.

REUTERS

Condemn violent video: US president

Meanwhile, the White House said that President Trump has yet to watch a graphically violent parody video that depicts a likeness of him shooting and stabbing his opponents and members of the news media, but says he "strongly condemns it." Journalists covering the White House have called on Trump to condemn the video, in which Trump's critics and media members are portrayed as parishioners in a church fleeing his gruesome rampage.

Hunt for 'Asia's El Chapo' at centre of meth ring

TOM ALLARD
BANGKOK, OCTOBER 14

THE LARGEST ever task force assembled to fight organised crime in Asia has identified a long-time drug trafficker, a China-born Canadian national, as the suspected kingpin of a crime syndicate that police say dominates the \$70 billion-a-year Asia-Pacific drug trade.

The suspected syndicate leader is Tse Chi Lop, 55, an ex-convict who formerly lived in Toronto and has moved between Macau, Hong Kong and Taiwan in recent years, according to counter-narcotics officers from



Tse Chi Lop's group may be earning as much as \$17.7 bn annually

four countries as well as law enforcement documents reviewed by Reuters. Authorities have not publicly identified Tse as the boss of the drug trafficking group.

The syndicate he is suspected of running is known to its members as "The Company." Law enforcers also refer to it as "Sam Gor," or Brother Number Three in Cantonese, after one of Tse's nick-

names.

The Australian Federal Police (AFP), which has taken the lead in the sprawling investigation, has compiled a list of top syndicate members that identifies Tse as "the senior leader of the Sam Gor syndicate." The group, the list says, has "been connected with or directly involved in at least 13 cases" of drug trafficking since January 2015. The list, reviewed by Reuters, does not provide specific details of the cases.

A flow-chart of the syndicate in a Taiwanese law enforcement document identifies Tse as the "Multinational CEO" of the Sam Gor syndicate. A U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

(DEA) alert circulated among regional government agencies this year says Tse is "believed to be" the leader of the syndicate.

"Brother Number Three is target number one," said one AFP officer.

Reuters was unable to contact Tse Chi Lop. In response to questions from Reuters, the AFP, the DEA and Taiwan's Ministry of Justice Investigation Bureau said they would not comment on investigations.

According to interviews with regional law enforcers from eight countries, as well as a review of law enforcement documents, the syndicate produces vast quantities of high-grade

methamphetamine in Myanmar and trafficks the drug to countries stretching from Japan to New Zealand. The group is "conservatively" raking in \$8 billion a year and could be earning as much as \$17.7 billion annually, according to an estimate by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).

"Tse Chi Lop is in the league of El Chapo or maybe Pablo Escobar," said Jeremy Douglas, Southeast Asia and Pacific representative for UNODC, referring to Latin America's most legendary narco-traffickers. "The word kingpin often gets thrown around, but there is no doubt it applies here."

Hailing 'new revolution', political outsider set to be Tunisia president

BOUAZZA BEN BOUAZZA
TUNIS, OCTOBER 14

TUNISIA'S ELECTION commission says a preliminary count shows Islamist-backed law professor Kais Saied has won the country's presidential election by a significant margin.

The commission reported Monday that Saied, who hasn't held elected office before, received 72.71% of the vote. His opponent, media mogul Nabil Karoui, got 27.29%.

Saied's victory is a stinging rebuke for a governing elite that has



People celebrate in Tunisia. Reuters

failed to improve living standards or end corruption since the 2011 revolution in the North African country that introduced democracy and ushered in the "Arab

Spring". A 61-year-old retired law professor, Saied has no political party and wants to introduce an experimental form of direct democracy. Supporters who celebrated in the streets hailed his triumph as a revival of the revolution.

Nabil Karoui, his only opponent in a run-off vote, spent much of the campaign period in detention and initially kept the door open to lodging an appeal against the results when exit polls on Sunday put Saied on more than 70% of votes.

"What I have done is a new revolution," Saied told a crowd of supporters.

CANADA'S ELECTION

Pocketbooks and the planet

Climate change dominates Canada's election

LAST TIME Canadians had a general election, in 2015, many felt it was a struggle for the soul of the country. It pitted Stephen Harper, a cantankerous Conservative from the oil-producing province of Alberta who had governed for nearly ten years, against Justin Trudeau, the handsome dynast in charge of the Liberal Party. To his fans Mr Trudeau's victory heralded a return of Canadian values—tolerant, open, progressive—that Mr Harper had abandoned.

The election to be held on October 21st is not like that. Slip-ups and scandals have dulled Mr Trudeau's sheen. He urges voters to "choose forward", which could mean "don't dwell on my mistakes" as well as "let me build on the progress I've made." His main rival, the Conservatives' Andrew Scheer, is affable but quickens no pulses. His campaign combines pocketbook promises with put-downs of Mr Trudeau (he's a "high-carbon hypocrite" because he campaigns using two aeroplanes). Pundits grumble that the campaign, like "Seinfeld", an American sit-com, is "about nothing".

In some ways that is a good thing. Unlike many other democracies, Canada is not fighting its election on the dangerous ground of identity and culture. Mr Scheer has not picked a fight over immigration and race, as some analysts feared he would. He accepts immigration at today's levels, while wanting to be tougher on asylum-seekers walking across the border from the United States. Last year Canada admitted at least 321,000 new permanent residents, equivalent to nearly 1% of the population. Mr Scheer is sceptical of gay marriage (he once said in Parliament that it was like counting a dog's tail as one of its legs), but has no plans to challenge its legality. The election's Seinfeldian quality may vindicate Mr Trudeau's central political thesis: that boosting the middle class is a good way to fend off populism. Both the main candidates are now peddling tax cuts for the middle class. If he wins, Mr Scheer would spend less freely than Mr Trudeau but is unlikely to depart radically from the course Mr Trudeau has set.

Except in one crucial respect. The candidates' biggest area of disagreement is over the environment. Mr Scheer says his first priority as prime minister will be to scrap the national carbon-price floor agreed on by the provincial and federal governments. He says Canada will hit its target for reducing emissions of greenhouse gases—down by 30% from 2005 levels by 2030—by other means. A "national energy corridor" would carry oil from Alberta and his home province of Saskatchewan to the Atlantic and Pacific coasts. Mr Trudeau, by contrast, has stepped up his ambitions for Canada in the fight against climate change, pledging to cut its emissions to "net zero" by 2050. So the election's main consequence may be to determine whether Canada remains credible as a global cheerleader in the campaign against climate change.

Mr Trudeau has other boasts. In his four years in office Canada became the first big country to legalise recreational cannabis. It passed laws to allow medically assisted suicide. His government has skilfully handled President Donald Trump. Along with Mexico it negotiated a successor to the North American Free Trade Agreement and persuaded the United States to drop tariffs on steel and aluminium.

It kept its biggest promise: to help the middle class and "those aspiring to join it" by cut-



Slip-ups and scandals have dulled Trudeau's sheen. He urges voters to "choose forward", which could mean "don't dwell on my mistakes" as well as "let me build on the progress I've made". Reuters

ting taxes and boosting benefits. This included a transfer to families of up to C\$6,600 (\$5,000) a year per child. Mr Trudeau's priorities for his next term include another middle-class tax cut and a ban on assault weapons (though Canada has much less gun crime than across the border).

With this record, Mr Trudeau should be racing to re-election while dispensing advice to other leaders on how to soothe middle-class discontents and achieve liberal goals. But his mistakes, coupled with the high expectations he raised, have made his campaign more of a slog than a sprint.

Trouble began when he failed to keep a promise from the last campaign to change Canada's British-style electoral rules. These award a seat in Parliament to the candidate who wins most votes in a riding (constituency), even if that is not a majority. This "first-past-the-post" system favours big parties. A decision in February 2017 to scrap electoral reform "was the first unveiling that Justin

Trudeau was not Jesus after all", says Richard Johnston of the University of British Columbia.

It was not the last. In August Canada's ethics commissioner scolded him for leaning on the justice minister last year to drop a prosecution for corruption of SNC-Lavalin, an engineering firm based in Quebec, a province vital to the Liberals' electoral prospects. Then pictures emerged of Mr Trudeau as a young man wearing black- and brownface, embarrassing the world's most "woke" head of government.

Mr Scheer has capitalised on this, telling voters the prime minister is "not as advertised". His other big message is that a Conservative government will help Canadians

"get ahead", mainly by cutting taxes and fees. A "universal tax cut" will lower the rate on the lowest income bracket from 15% to 13.75%. Mr Harper's boutique tax credits, for children's sport and taking public transport, which were axed by the Liberals, will be reinstated. National museums will be free. Some of the money to pay for all this will come from a 25% reduction in foreign aid. The Conservatives promise to help homebuyers by easing mortgage stress tests for banks, which were brought in to cool an overheating housing market.

Their promise to scrap the carbon tax combines this "affordability" agenda with

enthusiasm for oil. Under the Liberals, provinces that do not have their own carbon-pricing schemes must accept the federal one. This sets a price floor of C\$20 a tonne, which will rise by C\$10 a year until 2022. All the money raised is returned to the province. Four provinces—Manitoba, New Brunswick, Ontario and Saskatchewan—are subject to the federal scheme, and Alberta will be from January. Mr Scheer's plan to replace it is a hotch-potch of regulations and incentives. Few specialists think it will result in Canada meeting its Paris promise.

How green you are

On this issue, most Canadians share Mr Trudeau's alarm rather than Mr Scheer's complacency. But the Greens and the left-leaning New Democrats are also appealing to climate worriers. And the goodwill Mr Trudeau may have earned from environmentalists was reduced by his decision to buy a pipeline that carries petroleum products from Alberta to

Canada's west coast and to back its expansion. Mr Trudeau's plan, like Mr Scheer's, falls short of what is needed to achieve the Paris goal, let alone eliminate net emissions. Planting 2bn trees, Mr Trudeau's new pain-free idea, will not accomplish that. Still, he has laid a foundation on which he can build, if re-elected, in part by continuing to raise the carbon-price floor beyond 2022.

Polls say each of the two main parties has the backing of a third of the electorate. Most of the rest is split between the New Democrats and the Greens. Mr Trudeau may have the edge because many of Mr Scheer's votes are bunched in the oil-producing western provinces. Perhaps a tenth of voters will make up their minds at the last minute, says Darrell Bricker of Ipsos, a pollster. In a close fight, they may be decisive. Their choice may depend not on how they feel about Canada but how they feel about the planet.

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Andrew Scheer says his first priority as PM will be to scrap the national carbon-price floor agreed on by provincial and federal governments. Justin Trudeau, by contrast, has pledged to cut its emissions to "net zero" by 2050

AMERICA'S CAR INDUSTRY

Strike force

A strike at General Motors is hitting its suppliers hard

AMERICA'S BIGGEST carmaker is in the grip of the longest industrial action it has suffered in decades. In 1970 a crippling strike called at General Motors by the United Auto Workers (UAW), the industry's main labour union, dragged on for 67 days. On September 16th UAW workers at its plants across North America once again walked out. Their chief gripes include GM's use of temporary workers, health-care benefits and product allocation at various plants. Although the company is highly profitable, its boss, Mary Barra, intends to reduce costs dramatically in order to invest more in electric vehicles. A sudden breakthrough is possible even in such heated negotiations.

GM is already feeling the impact. It makes about 2m vehicles a year in its American factories, which were shut down immediately by the walkout. Most GM plants in Canada and Mexico, which make roughly another 1m vehicles a year, were forced to shut a few days later. By the reckoning of JPMorgan Chase, a bank, this lost output has already slashed GM's profits this year by over \$1bn. It is now costing the firm roughly \$82m in earnings each day. A healthy cash cushion of nearly \$20bn at the end of June should help GM stay afloat. The firm should be able to boost production quickly after the strike ends. The same cannot be said for most of its suppliers. As a consequence, these companies have been hit much harder.

The outlook for North American makers of car parts was darkening before the GM strike. Moody's, a credit-rating agency, now forecasts

The outlook for North American makers of car parts was darkening before the GM strike. Moody's now forecasts that their earnings before interest, taxes and amortisation will decline by 9.7% this year compared with 2018

that their earnings before interest, taxes and amortisation will decline by 9.7% this year compared with 2018—a much steeper fall than it predicted at the start of the year. The main reason is its expectation that global car sales will droop by 3.8% this year.

A prolonged strike will make things worse. Adam Jonas of Morgan Stanley, an investment bank, calculates that by day 22 the strike had already cost suppliers around \$3.7bn in total revenue. Every day it goes on they lose another \$170m.

In dollar terms, the hardest hit company is Magna, a Canadian maker of drivetrains and other complex systems with a market capitalisation of \$15bn. It is losing \$27m in earnings before interest and taxes a week. Smaller suppliers are even less able to withstand shocks. Lear and American Axle, two domestic producers of seats and drivshafts respectively, are losing \$16m-17m each a



The chief gripes of United Auto Workers (UAW) include GM's use of temporary workers, health-care benefits and product allocation at various plants. Reuters

week, according to JPMorgan Chase. Measured as a share of market capitalisation, the hit to American Axle is more than ten times that to bulkier Magna.

In defending GM's workers the UAW may be hurting others who are worse off as it is. The Centre for Automotive Research, an industry

think-tank, puts the average total labour cost (including benefits and profit-sharing) at GM at \$63 an hour, above Ford's \$61, and \$55 at Fiat-Chrysler. Suppliers, especially smaller ones, pay far less.

Dale Rogers, a supply-chain expert at Arizona State University who grew up near

Detroit, still has family working at GM. For every worker at a car plant owned by the big carmakers and affected by a strike, he recalls, the rule of thumb used to be that ten workers at suppliers in neighbouring cities like Toledo and Lansing would suffer. "When Detroit catches a cold, Toledo gets pneumonia," he

says, invoking a local adage. The rise of vehicle production in Tennessee and other parts of the American south means that Motor City no longer dominates carmaking. Even so, there is still truth in this old Michigander saying.

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19 ECONOMY

GOLD	RUPEE	OIL	SILVER
₹38,885	₹71.23	\$60.89	₹46,510

*Indian basket as on October 11, 2019

SENSEX: 38,214.47 ▲ 87.39 NIFTY: 11,341.15 ▲ 36.10 NIKKEI: 21,798.87 ▲ 246.89 HANG SENG: 26,521.85 ▲ 213.41 FTSE: 7,218.03 ▼ 29.05 DAX: 12,446.35 ▼ 65.30

*International market data till 1900 GMT

POLICY WATCH DEPOSIT INSURANCE

In 11 yrs, insured deposits' share of total value falls from 60% to 28%

SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE FAILURE of Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank has reignited the debate on the low level of insurance coverage for deposits held by public in banks. In an event of a bank going bust in India, depositors get a maximum of Rs 1 lakh per account as insurance cover, even if their deposits far exceed Rs 1 lakh. While depositors holding less than Rs 1 lakh of deposits in a bank are covered by the deposit insurance, depositors holding more than Rs 1 lakh in an account have no legal remedy in case of the collapse of a bank.

Currently, the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC) — a fully owned subsidiary of the Reserve Bank of India — provides for cover of Rs 1 lakh per depositor for deposits in commercial banks, regional rural banks, local area banks (LABs) and cooperative banks, and rest of the deposit amount is forfeited in the rare event of a bank failure.

Over the years, the level of insured deposits as a percentage of assessable deposits has declined from a high of 60.5 per cent in 2007-08 to 28.1 per cent in 2018-19, as per DICGC data. "Given this backdrop, there is a dire need to revisit the insurance coverage of bank deposits. In particular, the current upper limit of Rs 1 lakh per depositor has outlived its shelf life and there is a need to revisit it," State Bank of India's group chief economist Soumya Kanti Ghosh said in a recent note.

At the end of March 2019, the number of registered insured banks with DICGC stood at 2,098 — comprising 103 commercial banks, 1,941 co-operative banks, 51 regional rural banks and three LABs. DICGC last revised the deposit insurance cover to Rs 1 lakh on May 1, 1993, up from Rs 30,000 cover from 1980 onwards. DICGC charges 10 paise per Rs 100 of deposits held by a bank. The premium paid by the insured banks to the Corporation is required to be borne by the banks and not to

be passed on to the depositors. However, the Centre seems to be exploring the possibility of raising the deposit insurance limit in the wake of the PMC Bank scam. "Our team is going through such a proposal. There's a committee which is looking into it," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said last Thursday.

Any rise in insurance cover is protested by scheduled commercial banks, who typically cross subsidise failures of cooperative banks and other small banks.

"As of now there is no differential premium pricing in India. Premium is collected on the amount of deposits held by banks at the beginning of the fiscal year. Since schedule commercial banks have large deposits and almost no instance of bank failure in recent years, they end up paying much more on insuring deposits than the cooperative and local banks. Ultimately, they end up covering default risks of cooperative banks," a senior banker told *The Indian Express*, adding that the regulator should look at risk-based differential premium pricing.

As per DICGC data, commercial banks paid total premium of Rs 11,190 crore in 2018-19, while cooperative banks paid premium of Rs 850 crore to cover deposits against default risk.

As for cooperative banks, only 44.5 per cent of their assessable deposits were covered in 2018-19, while for commercial banks this ratio was 25.7 per cent. Cooperative banks collectively account for Rs 8,49,200 crore worth of assessable deposits — of which only Rs 3,77,500 crore worth of deposits were insured.

As of March 31, 2019, DICGC has paid a cumulative amount of Rs 295.90 crore towards claims in respect of 27 commercial banks since the inception of deposit insurance in 1962. The cumulative amount of claims paid in respect of 351 cooperative banks (which failed/amalgamated or liquidated) since the start of the deposit insurance scheme in 1962 amounted to Rs 4,822.30 crore. This includes Rs 37 crore of claims paid in FY19 for 15 failed cooperative banks.

WPI INFLATION EASES TO 0.33% FROM 1.08% IN AUGUST

Costlier food items push retail inflation to 3.99% in September

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

RETAIL INFLATION in September rose to a 14-month high of 3.99 per cent, primarily on account of an increase in food prices and base effect, government data released Monday showed.

Consumer Food Price Index (CPI) inflation rate in September overshoot the headline number, increasing to the highest level in over three years to 5.11 per cent in September primarily driven by uptick in vegetables prices, a possible fallout of the floods in various states.

Inflation rate for meat & fish, vegetables and pulses jumped to 10.3 per cent, 15.4 per cent and 8.4 per cent, respectively, in September from 8.5 per cent, 6.9 per cent and 6.9 per cent in the previous month. Vegetables and pulses itself contributed 76.4 per cent of the increase in retail inflation in September over the previous month.

Urban areas recorded higher food inflation than rural areas, with urban food inflation being recorded at 8.76 per cent in September from 7.07 per cent last month, while rural food inflation rose to 3.22 per cent in September from 0.85 per cent last month.

At 3.99 per cent, the overall retail inflation rate stayed within

EXPLAINED

Fresh crop arrivals in market may prod RBI to cut rates

THE RESERVE Bank had said it expected inflation to stay below its medium-term target of 4 per cent (with a band of +/- 2 per cent) through to the early months of the financial year 2020-21, while lowering its economic growth forecast to 6.1 per cent for the current year ending March 2020, from an earlier estimate of 6.9 per cent.

Analysts believe that arrival of the new crop in the market could ease food prices and so calm inflation, providing the central bank with the headroom to cut rates further.

the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI)'s medium-term target of 4 per cent (with a band of +/- 2 per cent). For October-March, RBI has projected CPI inflation rate at 3.5-3.7 per cent.

While some economists said the RBI will continue with its accommodative stance, others were of the view that the rise in inflation print would lead to a pause in the rate cut cycle in the next meeting in December. Food inflation though may fall below 4 per cent by the end of the December quarter as winter supplies start trickling in. "While food inflation did record a broad-based increase in September 2019, the

primary driver of the uptick was vegetables, a fallout of the flooding in various states. As vegetable prices normalise over the next two months, particularly with the seasonal arrival of winter supplies, food inflation may recede below 4 per cent by the end of this quarter. Nevertheless, today's data serves as a reminder that short lived shocks in food prices can quickly translate into a sharp rise in the headline retail inflation," Aditi Nayar, principal economist, ICRA Ltd said.

The core CPI inflation, which is the non-food, non-fuel inflation, eased to a 26-month low of 4.2 per cent in September.

Wholesale price index-based inflation eased to over three-year low of 0.33 per cent in September as against 1.08 per cent in August due to fall in prices of non-food articles, separate set of government data released on Monday showed. The rate of price rise for the food articles remained broadly flat at 7.47 per cent during September.

Manufactured product prices, which makes up for 64.23 per cent of the weight of the WPI, declined 0.42 per cent on the back of a drop in prices of basic metals, chemicals and chemical products and textiles. Fuel and power prices declined 7.05 per cent due to lower prices of LPG, petrol and high speed diesel.

Within primary articles, wholesale prices of onions saw the highest increase, growing 122.40 per cent in September over the same month in 2018.

"What we are seeing essentially is the slowdown is being caused by fuel products and manufacturing products ... When manufactured product prices are low, it is actually reflective of the loss of pricing power for the corporate sector.

"Manufactured goods prices coming down is only reflective of what the corporate results will be like. They will tend to be subdued," CARE Ratings chief economist Madan Sabnavis said.

FINANCE MINISTER ON PMC BANK CASE

FM: Have urged RBI Governor to expedite customer payments



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman during a meeting with heads of public sector banks in New Delhi, Monday. PTI

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

PUBLIC SECTOR banks have disbursed loans worth Rs 81,781 crore in loan distribution programmes organised during October 1-9, Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar said Monday. Of the Rs 81,781 crore, new term loans worth Rs 34,342 crore have been disbursed, Kumar told reporters following a review meeting with heads of public sector banks held by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The second credit outreach programme would be organised from October 21-25.

Sitharaman said there was sufficient demand for retail loans and banks have enough liquidity to service customer needs. On the issue of withdrawal restrictions at Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank, she said the Finance Ministry is closely monitoring the situation and has been in discussions with Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das, who has assured that customers' interest will be protected.

"The RBI Governor has assured me that he will keep the interest of customers in mind, and at the earliest try resolve it ... I had discussion with RBI Governor this afternoon and I am closely monitoring it," she said.

Earlier this month, the central bank slapped restrictions on PMC Bank, a leading cooperative bank headquartered in Mumbai, appointed an administrator and superseded its board of directors, sending shock waves among thousands of its depositors.

The bank was funding a clutch of companies, mainly in the troubled real estate sector, led by HDIL. Commercial banks have already declared HDIL a defaulter.

On August 20, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) admitted an insolvency plea moved by Bank of India against HDIL in connection with a Rs 522-crore loan default.

PMC Bank allegedly extended 70 per cent credit of out of its Rs 9,000 crore in total advances to HDIL through fraudulent means.

"Government has been on its toes in terms of bringing the assets of these promoters (indulged in fraud) of the bank... process will not suffer for want of enough assets which can eventually help paying back customers. In fact, my appeal to (RBI) Governor this afternoon was if there are so many assets, is there anyway RBI can expedite in terms of paying to customers who are genuinely suffering," Sitharaman said.

She also said the Centre could consider raising deposit guarantee limit from the existing Rs 1 lakh. If it happens it will be through Parliament, she added. The Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation insures each depositor in a bank up to a maximum of Rs 1 lakh for both principal and interest as on the date of liquidation/cancellation of the affected bank's licence or from the date of amalgamation/merger.

The Finance Minister said she had discussion with Das over whether the deposit guarantee of Rs 1 lakh can be released instantaneously. But the RBI Governor informed that the deposit guarantee is released only after the bank is closed and not when it is a going concern, which is the case for PMC Bank, she said.

Sitharaman further said that banks are working to ensure that retail credit is extended as per their prudential guidelines. In order to ensure liquidity for small businesses, she said that banks have been asked to provide bill discounting facility to the MSME sector against payments due from the large corporates.

According to returns filed by the large corporates to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, around Rs 40,000 crore is due to the MSME sector, and the government is working to ensure that MSMEs get their dues ahead of Diwali festival on October 27.

'Tenancy law to harmonise tenant-landlord relationship'

The proposed model tenancy law will be instrumental in institutionalising rental housing in India, the report 'Institutionalising the Rental Housing Market in India - 2019' by Knight Frank and Khaitan & Co said

Draft Model Tenancy Act, 2019: Announced by the Centre in July, the Act proposes to create a legal framework to bring harmony to the landlord-tenant relationships and balance the scale for both the parties

Creation of large purpose-built rental stock: Institutionalisation of rental housing through this legislation will help in creating large purpose-built rental stock as well as attract investments

Lack of clarity: There are several areas from the perspective of both the landlord and tenant where



the Act provides no or limited clarity, which can create challenges in its implementation

~11.09 million: Number of vacant urban

housing units across the country

78%: Contribution of 10 states and union territories to total vacancy level, i.e. 8.64 million

21.72 million: Number of rented urban households in India

76.5%: Total share for below mentioned cities in overall rented households

- Tamil Nadu: 16.5%
- Andhra Pradesh: 13.8%
- Maharashtra: 13.5%
- Karnataka: 11.3%
- Gujarat: 6.1%
- West Bengal: 5.9%
- Uttar Pradesh: 5.1%
- NCT of Delhi: 4.3%

223 million: Number of urban residents expected to be added to cities by 2031, which will necessitate development of rental housing market

Total to buy 37.4% stake in Adani Gas for ₹5.7K cr

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI/AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 14

FRENCH ENERGY major Total SA has proposed to acquire a 37.4 per cent stake in Adani Gas Ltd — the firm that retails gas to automobiles and households — for an estimated Rs 5,700 crore.

Total will first make an open offer to buy a 25.2 per cent stake in Adani Gas. Depending upon the success in the open offer, it will buy a stake from Adani to take its holding to 37.4 per cent in the company. Adani family holds 74.8 per cent stake in Adani Gas and will dilute shares to the public to bring down its holding to 37.4 per cent, the two firms said in separate statements.

Adani Family and Total shareholders will ultimately hold 37.4 per cent each and public shareholders will hold remaining 25.2 per cent. Adani family will sell some stake in the open market to meet the listing norm of keeping public holding at 25 per cent.

Adani Gas is targeting to set up 1,500 CNG stations to retail gas to automobiles and piped cooking gas to 6 million households. It will also set up 1,500 petrol pumps over 10 years. "Taking into account the divestiture of the Group's interest in Hazira terminal in early 2019, the establishment of this partnership on gas in India represents a net acquisition cost for Total of approx \$ 600 million over 2019-20," Total said.

"The partnership will derive significant synergies between

Adani Family and Total shareholders will ultimately hold 37.4 per cent each and public shareholders will hold remaining 25.2 per cent

Adani's capabilities of developing world class assets and Total's global best practices as well as leveraging business synergies across LNG, Fuel Retail and City Gas Distribution," Adani Group chairman Gautam Adani said in a statement.

Adani said both partners would make significant investments in the next 10 years across the businesses to develop India's gas infrastructure, distribution, marketing businesses with presence in over 15 states reaching out to 7.5 per cent of the country's

population and setting up global scale and world class LNG, gas distribution and fuel retail infrastructure in India.

Total, which exited a JV with Royal Dutch Shell in a 5 million tonne liquefied natural gas (LNG) import terminal at Hazira in Gujarat in August 2018, had in October last formed a 50:50 JV for two LNG import terminals of Adani on the east and west coast of India as well as for setting up of 1,500 petrol pumps in the country over 10 years.

The French firm is the latest en-

ergy major seeking to expand its presence in India, which is the world's third-largest and the fastest-growing energy consumer. In August, Reliance Industries said Saudi Arabian Oil Co will buy 20 per cent of its oil-to-chemical business at an enterprise value of \$ 75 billion. As part of this partnership, Total will bring its LNG and retail expertise and will supply LNG to Adani Gas. Total and Adani will also establish a joint venture to market LNG in India and Bangladesh.

"The natural gas market in India ... is an attractive outlet for the world's second-largest LNG player that Total has become," said Patrick Pouyanné, chairman-CEO, Total. India has set the ambitious target of increasing the share of natural gas in its energy mix to 15 per cent by 2030.

HDFC cuts home loan rate by 10 bps

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

MORTGAGE FIRM HDFC Ltd Monday cut its benchmark lending rate by 10 basis points (bps), lowering interest rate for existing as well as new borrowers. The new rate will be effective from October 15, an HDFC statement said.

HDFC has reduced the retail prime lending rate (RPLR) on housing loans, on which its adjustable rate home loans (ARHL) are benchmarked, by 10 bps, it said. The new rates for the salaried class will now range between 8.25 per cent and 8.65 per cent depending on the loan amount.

Last week, State Bank of India slashed the interest rate on savings bank deposits (with balances up to Rs 1 lakh) by 25 bps from 3.50 per cent to 3.25 per cent with effect from November 1, 2019.

The state-owned lender also slashed its retail term deposit and bulk term deposit interest rates by 10 bps and 30 bps, respectively, for '1 year to less than 2 years' tenor with effect from October 10, 2019. The bank also reduced the MCLR (marginal cost of funds based lending rate) by 10 bps, making home and personal loans cheaper for customers.

Earlier this month, the Reserve Bank of India cut the repo rate for the fifth time this year by 25 bps to 5.15 per cent — its lowest level in nine years — and signalled more easing as it looks to support the economy, which is growing at its slowest pace in six years.

HUL Q2 standalone net profit rises 21.18%

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

NOTWITHSTANDING THE slowdown in the economy, FMCG major Hindustan Unilever Ltd (HUL) Monday posted a 21.18 per cent rise in standalone net profit to Rs 1,848 crore for the quarter ended September 2019, as against a net profit of Rs 1,525 crore for the corresponding period last fiscal.

Even as HUL's total income during the quarter under review rose to Rs 10,032 crore from Rs 9,539 crore for the same period a year ago, chairman and managing director Sanjiv Mehta said "the near-term outlook for demand, especially in rural India, remains challenging."

Chairman and managing director Sanjiv Mehta said "the near-term outlook for demand, especially in rural India, remains challenging"

"Amidst a challenging market environment, HUL has delivered another quarter of resilient performance and sustained margin improvement. Our focus on consumer value, excellence in execution and market development continues to serve us well," Mehta said, adding that "margin expansion was driven by improved mix, benign commodity price movement in our large segments and our savings agenda."

The company's revenue from home care segment rose to Rs

3,371 crore in July-September 2019 from Rs 3,080 crore in the year-ago quarter, according to an exchange filing. Beauty and personal care segment revenue increased to Rs 4,543 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 4,316 crore in the year-ago period.

The revenue of foods and refreshment segment stood at Rs 1,847 crore in July-September 2019, against Rs 1,704 crore in the same quarter of last year. The board of directors has declared an interim dividend of Rs 11 per

share for the year ending March 31, 2020, the company said.

"We welcome the various measures announced by the government and the Reserve Bank of India to spur investment and improve liquidity and are confident that the government will take all necessary steps for higher income transference to rural India. HUL remains well positioned to unlock the structural FMCG India opportunity while navigating the short-term challenges.

"We continue to progress our 'purpose-led and future-fit' agenda which is underpinned by our sustainability initiatives and 'Re-imagining HUL' driven by leveraging data and technology in all aspects of our operations," Mehta said.

Moody's cuts Indiabulls Housing Finance to B2 from Ba2; outlook remains negative

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

RATING AGENCY Moody's Investors Service on Monday downgraded the corporate family rating (CFR) and the foreign-currency senior secured rating of Indiabulls Housing Finance to B2 from Ba2, citing the company's ongoing challenges in terms of accessing funds.

Moody's also downgraded Indiabulls' foreign and local currency senior secured medium-term note (MTN) programme ratings to (P)B2 from (P)Ba2. The outlook on all ratings, where applicable, remains negative, the

Firm seeks Sebi nod for buyback

New Delhi: Indiabulls Housing Finance on Monday said its board intends to go for a buyback of shares and will take final decision in this regard after receiving concurrence from Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). PTI

rating firm said in a statement. This means that Moody's does not expect the ratings to be upgraded.

PMC Bank customers can withdraw up to ₹40K: RBI

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

PROVIDING FURTHER relief to harried customers of crisis-hit Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative (PMC) Bank, the Reserve Bank of India on Monday increased the cash withdrawal limit to Rs 40,000 per account from Rs 25,000 earlier. "The Reserve Bank, after reviewing the bank's liquidity position and its ability to pay its depositors has decided to further enhance the limit for withdrawal to Rs 40,000, inclusive of Rs 25,000 allowed earlier. With the above relaxation, about 77 per cent of the depositors of the bank will be able to withdraw their entire account balance," the RBI said.

While slapping restrictions on the bank for six months on September 23, the RBI had allowed withdrawal of only Rs 1,000 for the bank's depositors, creating panic among them.

However, on September 26, following a spate of complaints from depositors, the RBI relaxed the curbs and allowed depositors to withdraw a sum not exceeding Rs 10,000 (including the Rs 1,000 already withdrawn) of the total balance held in every savings bank account or current account or any other deposit account. This was further raised to Rs 25,000 on October 3.

"The financial position of the bank has been substantially impaired due to fraud perpetrated on it by certain persons," it said. "The Reserve Bank is closely monitoring the developments and shall continue to take necessary steps in the interest of the depositors of the bank," the RBI said.

"Forensic auditors have been appointed by the Administrator of the bank to look into the related transactions. The Administrator and the 3-member Advisory Committee appointed by the RBI are working for speedier resolution of the various issues being faced by the bank in conducting its operations," it said.

On September 23, the RBI superseded the board of the bank and appointed JBBharia as administrator of PMC Bank to take appropriate measures to bring the bank back on the rails.

PMC Bank, which has a deposit base of Rs 11,617 crore, has 137 branches spread across seven states.

IRCTC zooms 128% on market debut; plans to develop budget hotels

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

IN A boost to the government's disinvestment plan, state-owned Indian Railway Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC) Monday made a blockbuster debut on the stock exchanges, zooming 128 per cent to close at Rs 728.60 as against the issue price of Rs 320. The Centre has set a target of mopping up Rs 1.05 lakh crore from divestment this fiscal and has lined up a number of PSUs for divestment. IRCTC's stellar listing is the first of a government-owned entity this fiscal.

The company, a subsidiary of the Railways, made a dream stock market listing at Rs 644, a jump of 101.25 per cent, rallied to Rs 743.80 and closed at Rs 728.60 on the BSE. The stock did not fall below Rs 625 during the trade. The market capitalisation of IRCTC on the listing day was Rs 11,657 crore.

According to analysts, this is the best IPO show and also arguably the best debut after Salasar Engineering in July 2017 which had rallied 142 per cent on opening trade and Avenue Supermarts which runs the D-Mart chain of retail stores also closed over 100

percent up on debut. The last time a government company received such a welcome from the market was when it sold 12 per cent in Coal India in October 2010. It was listed at Rs 340 as against the issue price of Rs 245.

IRCTC Chairman-Managing Director Mahendra Pratap Mall said he was overwhelmed with the response the firm received. "We have more than doubled the wealth of investors. This showcases the trust of our customers and stakeholders on the brand called IRCTC and the services it provides. The investor demand exceeded shares on offer by 112 times, making us the most sought after state-run firm," he said.

"With the company's diversification plans for future and growing services across categories, IRCTC aims to stand out as a full-service hospitality and tourism brand of India," he said. The initial public offering of IRCTC, a huge hit among investors, was subscribed 111.91 times earlier this month.

As part of its strategy to diversify its business offerings, IRCTC plans to develop budget hotels in key tourist destinations. On October 4, IRCTC flagged off its first privately run train Tejas Express on the Lucknow-Delhi route.

ASKS AGENCY TO NOT ATTACH ANY ASSETS WITHOUT NOD NCLAT to ED: Release attached assets of Bhushan Power & Steel

Appellate tribunal also puts on hold ₹19,700-crore payout by JSW Steel

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

THE NATIONAL Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) on Monday asked the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to immediately release the attached assets of Bhushan Power and Steel (BPSL) and directed the investigation agency to refrain from attaching any other asset of BPSL without the prior approval of the appellate tribunal.

The appellate tribunal also put on hold the Rs 19,700-crore payout by JSW Steel for acquiring the bankrupt firm till further orders.

The ED had on Saturday attached assets worth over Rs 4,025 crore of BPSL in connection with its money-laundering probe linked to an alleged bank loan fraud. It had said that it attached land, building, plant and machinery of the company located in Odisha under the provision of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

IN CONNECTION WITH MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

■ The ED had on Saturday attached assets worth over Rs 4,025 crore of BPSL in connection with its money-laundering probe linked to an alleged bank loan fraud

■ It had said that it attached land, building, plant and machinery of the company located in Odisha under the provision of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act

■ The appellate tribunal fixed October 25 as the next date for further hearing in the matter

■ Following the attachment of the assets, JSW said that it vindicated its stand and that's why it had moved the NCLAT after winning the bid to seek immunity from litigation related to alleged frauds at the bankrupt firm

"IBC cannot be annulled in this manner. Money laundering is by an individual," the NCLAT observed while directing ED to release the assets. The ministry of corporate affairs said that the ED has no jurisdiction to attach the property of a corporate debtor, particularly when an appeal is pending with regard to attachment.

The appellate tribunal fixed October 25 as the next date for

further hearing in the matter.

Following the attachment of the assets by the ED on Saturday, JSW said in a statement that it vindicated its stand and that's why it had moved the NCLAT after winning the bid to seek immunity from litigation related to alleged frauds at the bankrupt company.

In September, the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) had allowed JSW Steel to acquire

BPSL but the firm did not get relief from the scope of ongoing probes against BPSL.

The stand-off in the matter arises from the fact that in April a Delhi High Court ruling had held that laws on money laundering take precedence over the bankruptcy law. This had led JSW Steel to move NCLAT despite its proposal being declared as the winning bid.

During the proceedings on Monday, the ministry of corporate affairs (MCA) told the NCLAT that the ED has no jurisdiction to attach assets under the insolvency process. The MCA's stand is in consultation with the department of financial services and banks.

BPSL, Sanjay Singal, the then CMD and other accused were booked by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) for defrauding banks. The attachment order came after Punjab National Bank (PNB) and Allahabad Bank in July this year claimed that they had been defrauded by BPSL to the tune of Rs 1,774.82 crore. **FE**

BRIEFLY

Investment in InvITs: Banks told to set policy

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank Monday asked banks to put in place a board-approved policy for making investment in infrastructure investment trusts (InvITs). An InvIT is a collective investment scheme, which enables direct investment of money from individual and institutional investors in infrastructure projects and return out of their investment.

RBI imposes fine on LVB, Syndicate Bank

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank of India on Monday said has imposed a monetary penalty of Rs 1 crore on Lakshmi Vilas Bank and Rs 75 lakh on Syndicate Bank for violating asset classification and fraud detection norms.

Ratan Tata to invest in Tork Motors

New Delhi: Electric vehicle startup Tork Motors Monday said Ratan Tata has decided to invest an undisclosed amount in the firm "In the last few years, there has been a sea of changes in the attitude towards electric vehicles. This industry is changing rapidly and I place good value on the sound logic and the approach that the team at Tork Motors has taken," Ratan Tata said.

ONGC free to sell stake in HPCL: Pradhan

New Delhi: Amid reports of ONGC's inability to derive any benefit out of its HPCL acquisition, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Monday said the state-owned firm was free to sell its stake in the oil refining and marketing company.

HAL unions on indefinite strike; illegal, says firm

Bengaluru: As the HAL unions went on an indefinite strike from Monday pressing various demands, including wage revision, the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited management said the agitation was illegal. **PTI**

'Softbank could take control of WeWork'

New York: Softbank could take control of WeWork as part of a financial package to address the firm's cash crunch since its botched effort to sell the public its stock, according to *The Wall Street Journal*. Both WeWork and the Japanese investment firm declined to comment on the developments. **AP**

'Securitisation volume up 48% in first half of FY20'

Shadow banks' continuing difficulties in accessing finance have led to a massive 48 per cent jump in securitisation volume in the first half of the fiscal year to ₹1 lakh crore, a report by Crisil said

WHAT IS SECURITISATION?: A process under which a non-banking finance company (NBFC) sells its future receivables from a loan or a pile of loans to a different entity for a discount for cash payout

LIQUIDITY WOES SINCE IL&FS CRISIS: Most NBFCs have been struggling for liquidity since the second half of 2018, after a crisis triggered by infra lender IL&FS' defaults. As funds get scarce, a lot of them are selling future receivables.

RS 1 LAKH CRORE: Growth brought about by both established and new



originators opting for securitisation in first half of FY20

48%: Increase in volume as a result of NBFCs and HFCS resorting to securitisation to augment their resources

profile in a challenging environment

100: Number of originators in the market in first half of FY20, as against 70 in the year-ago period

MAINSTREAM RECEIVABLES USED FOR SECURITISATION:

- Gold loan
- Personal loan
- Two-wheeler loan
- Lease rental

BOOST FROM CREDIT GUARANTEE SCHEME: The partial credit guarantee scheme launched by the Finance Ministry is expected to further lift demand for securitisation from public sector banks

Spectrum auctions will be done this fiscal: Prasad

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

WITH THE Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) unwilling to revise the high reserve price for spectrum for the forthcoming auctions, telecom minister Ravi Shankar Prasad Monday came forward and assured the industry that the Centre will undertake reforms in pricing of the airwaves. He also said auctions will take place in the current financial year.

Speaking at the India Mobile Congress 2019, Prasad said the government was aware and alive to some problems and challenges being faced by the industry. "Spectrum auctions will be done this financial year... We are undertaking some reforms in spectrum pricing," he said.

Trai had last year recommended the auction of about

8,644 MHz of spectrum across bands, including those for 5G services, at an estimated total base price of Rs 4.9 lakh crore. But the industry, which is buckling under high debt, had argued that the proposed prices are exorbitant and unaffordable.

Though the recommended reserve price is considerably lower than what was fixed for the 2016 auctions, they are still on the higher end, considering the industry's financial position.

For instance, the 5G band in the 3300-3600 MHz where the prices have been given for the first time, at Rs 492 crore per MHz, for a pan-India minimum block of 20 MHz operators will have to shell out Rs 9,840 crore, which is seen as steep. For the premium 4G spectrum, though Trai has reduced the reserve price by 43 per cent at Rs 6,568 crore per MHz, still for a pan-India 5 MHz block operators will

have to shell out Rs 32,840 crore.

Going by global standards the price of Rs 492 crore per MHz for 5G spectrum is on the higher side as the South Korean auctions which happened last year had the price at Rs 130 crore per MHz.

At the moment, the ecosystem for 5G services is not developed so even if auctions are conducted and operators win the spectrum, they will have to wait for a considerable period before it can be effectively used.

In the last held auctions in 2016, the Centre had mopped a total amount of Rs 65,789 crore, 4 per cent over reserve price, from the country's six operators who participated in the bidding.

However, this was a lukewarm response as only 965 MHz spectrum got sold against a total of 2353 MHz put up on sale, meaning that only 40 per cent got sold. **FE**

"While we stand committed to support the growth of the industry, we seek enabling regulatory environment to ensure that necessary investments are made,"

KUMAR MANGALAM BIRLA
CHAIRMAN, VODAFONE-IDEA.

"Current reserve price is seven times higher than the global peers... This high price coupled with more capex deployment on sites and fibre is going to take a toll on telecom sector,"

RAKESH BHARTI MITTAL
BHARTI ENTERPRISES VICE CHAIRMAN

"Higher floor prices will lead to 5G networks being unviable and therefore getting delayed. An equilibrium, therefore, needs to be established between government revenue and overall growth,"

MAHENDRA NAHATA
DIRECTOR ON BOARD OF RELIANCE JIO

'₹1 lakh cr per year toll collection in next 5 years'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

WITH INITIATIVES like FASTag and others towards electronic tolling on highways, India's toll collection is likely to reach Rs 1 lakh crore per year in the next five years, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said. "Of the total 1.4 lakh km highways under NHAI, 24,996 km of highways currently is under the ambit of toll and the length will grow to 27,000 km by the year-end," Gadkari said, addressing a conference to launch One Nation One Tag- FASTag programme.

The programme assumes significance because the Centre has decided that from December 1 all national highway toll plazas will accept tolls only through FASTags.

The initiative aims to integrate collection of toll digitally via FASTag at state highways as well for seamless mobility of vehicles across India. Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Haryana signed memorandums of understanding with the Indian Highways Management Company Limited, an arm of National Highways Authority



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari at the exchange of the agreements, at the inauguration of the Conference on 'One Nation One Fastag', in New Delhi, Monday. **PTI**

of India (NHAI), to accept FASTags in their state highway tolls.

FASTags are radio frequency identification-based devices or stickers affixed to vehicles that enable digital, contactless payment of toll without having to stop at toll gates. The prepaid monetary value in the tags can be replenished using bank accounts and other payment methods, just like wallets. At present, 60 lakh vehicles in India have FASTags.

Gadkari said that in line with PM Narendra Modi's stress for transport system reforms, the GST

Council has accorded in-principle approval for integration of GST EWay Bill (EWB) system and a pact has also been inked.

"Our toll revenue is Rs 30,000 crore per annum... As we are constructing more roads, we will move forward with the target that in the next five years, the income from tolls rise to Rs 1 lakh crore every year. If we get such revenues, we can get loans from banks and raise more money from markets and invest in more projects," the Union Road Transport and Highways Minister said.

Talking to reporters on the sidelines of a conference, Gadkari said there was no dearth of resources and 75 per cent of the projects under NHAI were viable for financing by banks. The cashless system will not only save time but also result in huge savings to the GDP by reducing delays at toll plazas and cutting down on vehicle fuel, he said. He also launched a prepaid NHAI Wallet for FASTag.

Gadkari said the integration of GST EWB system will also result in massive reforms. As per NHAI, in the existing EWB System, it has been observed that some transporters are doing multiple trips by generating a single EWB. Accordingly, an MoU was signed between Indian Highways Management Committee Ltd and Goods and Services Tax Network.

The minister said that integration of EWB system with FASTag will help revenue authorities track the movement of vehicles and ensure that they are travelling to the same destination as the transporter or the trader had specified while generating the EWB. Gadkari added there are plans to build 2,000 bus ports pan-India.

Airbus subsidies: US gets WTO nod to target EU goods worth \$7.5 bn

STEPHANIE NEBEHAY
GENEVA, OCTOBER 14

THE WORLD Trade Organization (WTO) formally authorised the United States on Monday to impose tariffs on up to \$7.5 billion of imports of EU goods after an arbitrator's decision over subsidies to planemaker Airbus. The WTO's dispute settlement body, made up of representatives from its 164 members, cleared Washington to take countermeasures against the European Union and Airbus-producing countries Britain, France, Germany and Spain.

The authorisation was a formality after a WTO arbitrator awarded a record right to retali-

ate over illegal subsidies this month. It would only have been denied if all WTO members present voted against. The meeting lasted less than 20 minutes.

US trade ambassador Dennis Shea told the meeting that Washington still preferred a negotiated solution.

"But that can only happen if the EU genuinely terminates the benefits to Airbus from current subsidies and ensures that subsidies to Airbus cannot be revived under another name or another mechanism," he told the meeting.

The European Union delegation told the meeting that it had "serious concerns" and that US tariff measures were short-sighted. **REUTERS**

China September exports, imports in deeper contraction as tariffs take toll

REUTERS
BEIJING, OCTOBER 14

ASLIDE in China's exports picked up pace in September while imports contracted for a fifth straight month, pointing to further weakness in the economy and underlining the need for more stimulus as the Sino-US trade war drags on.

Analysts say it could take time for Chinese exports to recover given slowing global growth, despite tentative signs of a thaw in tense trade relations between the world's top two economies.

On Friday, US President Donald Trump outlined the first phase of a deal to end the trade war with China and suspended a threatened tariff hike set for October 15. But existing tariffs remain in place and officials on both sides said much more work needed to be done.

Tariffs being imposed by Dec 15 if no China trade deal: Mnuchin

Washington: US Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin said on Monday that an additional round of tariffs on Chinese imports will likely be imposed if a trade deal with China has not been reached by then, but added that he expected the agreement to go through.

"I have every expectation — if there's not a deal, those tariffs would go in place — but I expect we'll have a deal," he said in an interview with CNBC, when asked

pected a 3 per cent decline after August's 1 per cent drop. "The headline figures suggest that global demand softened last month, adding to the pressure from the US tariffs that went into effect in September," said analysts at Capital Economics.

about a round of tariffs scheduled for December 15. US President Donald Trump said on Friday that China and the United States had reached the first phase of a trade deal that covered agriculture, currency and some aspects of intellectual property protections, and would ease the reciprocal trade restrictions that the world's two largest economies have been imposing for 15 months. **REUTERS**

Economists also attributed the export slowdown to a fading in the so-called "front-loading" effect. Some Chinese firms had rushed to ship goods to the United States ahead of the September deadline, supporting overall July and August export readings.

21 TALK ART, MUSIC, STYLE, FOOD

NO FURRY DELIGHT

The state of California has banned the sale of fur, starting 2023. With the new law passed, it will become the first US state to ban the sale and manufacture of new fur. Residents will face a fine upwards of 500 USD.



Sweet Success

Rachel Goenka's debut book, *Adventures with Mithai*, presents traditional Indian sweets with a modern twist

EXPRESS FEATURES SERVICE

WHY REINTERPRET a classic? While the global trend in culinary art thrives on this question, the Indian sweet — the mithai — has remained largely untouched. However, a new book, *Adventures with Mithai* (HarperCollins India; Rs 899), challenges how we know our traditional mithais.

Written by Rachel Goenka, founder and CEO, The Chocolate Spoon Company, the book features 50 recipes that contemporise classic Indian sweets. It was launched on Monday evening over high tea at Mahalaxmi's Tote on the Turf, where Goenka was in conversation with Anindita Ghose, editor, *Mint Lounge*.

While the conversation ranged from how the book was born to Goenka's favourite recipes, Ghose opened the dialogue with the question, "Why reinterpret the classics?" Goenka said that the versatility of mithais remains largely unexplored. Explaining how she shortlisted the final recipes, Goenka said, "I wanted to make sure that the ingredients and flavours were universal, that they cut across regions. The second crucial factor was that the recipes should be easy. I can rustle up many things in my central kitchen but I want the recipes to be accessible to those who make them at home."

Founder of successful restaurants such as The Sassy Spoon and House of Mandarin, Goenka studied at Le Cordon Bleu in London and then trained under celebrity chef Rachel Allen. A graduate in journalism and English from Pennsylvania State University, this is Goenka's debut book. The recipes combine her experience in traditional baking and in-herent understanding of mithais; the result is some wild pairings. The kala jamun, for instance, has been presented in the form of a bread and butter pudding with salted bourbon sauce. "On some days, I would wake up with ideas and jot them down, eager to try



Rachel Goenka at the book launch; (left) cover of *Adventures with Mithai* by Nirmal Harindran

them out in my kitchen. I would begin by trying out these ingredients independently and then together. If the flavours clicked, I would work on them," said Goenka, who was declared 'Young Restaurateur of the Year' at the Restaurant India Awards in 2018.

At the launch, the audience was served a

variety of desserts that feature in the book. While Goenka's personal favourite, the Kashmiri Kahwa Macaron, had a nutty macaron infused with delicate flavours of the spicy beverage, the Milk Cake Cheesecake brought together a delicately baked cheesecake with the granular milk cake. The Bitter Chocolate Nap Naang, which combines dark chocolate mousse with black rice pudding from Nagaland, is dedicated to her father, Viveck Goenka, Chairman & Managing Director, The Express Group.

While some desserts were closer to Indian mithais, such as the Amarkhand Mousse and the Besan Laddoo Towers, others, like the Milk Cake Cheesecake, were given a western spin. "Most of us do not enjoy anything too sweet. I wanted people to be able to have more than a couple of bites of these desserts," she said.

The World in an Embrace

That theatre legend Ebrahim Alkazi was also an artist is a forgotten truth that finally comes to light in an exhibition in the Capital

VANDANA KALRA

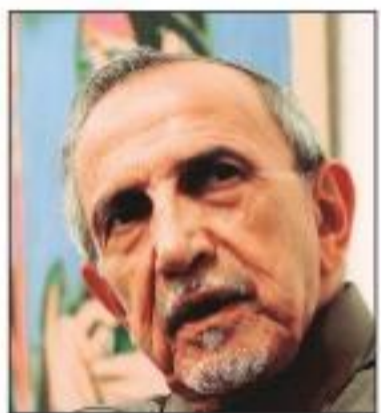
AROUND TWO years ago, when theatreperson Amal Allana found a portfolio of her father, theatre legend Ebrahim Alkazi in an old trunk, she was ecstatic. She had heard him talk about exhibiting these paintings in the late 1940s in London, and Mumbai in the '50s. "I did not even know that these works were still around," she says, sifting through the numerous mixed media compositions that include a self portrait from the 1940s, and *Soliloquy* in pen and ink, where Alkazi turns to Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

In the exhibition titled "Opening Lines" the audience will be introduced to a rather forgotten forte of the veteran, who is credited for revolutionising theatre in India. As director of National School of Drama (NSD) from 1962 to 1977, he shaped the course for modern Indian theatre, establishing links between traditional vocabulary and modern idiom. "He thought of all the arts as related, that's how he even taught theatre. If you wanted to do theatre, you had to know the arts. You had to be visually strong," says Allana. She recalls the visual grandeur of his productions and



(Clockwise from top) Alkazi's *Last Night did Christ the Sun rise from the Dark*; *Soliloquy*; Ebrahim Alkazi; *Elopement*

During this period, Alkazi straddled the worlds of art and theatre. "He was not a hobbyist but a full-fledged visual artist. He had still not made a definitive decision for theatre as against visual art. What this exhibition will reveal is that it could have gone either way... We are looking at the question of how someone can have multiple practices and how the commitments you make, institutions you work with, take your life in one direction or the other," says Hoskote.



He played a formative role in what we have now come to think of as post-colonial Indian art RANJIT HOSKOTE

Over 100 works that are on display are divided into two distinct chronologies — the late '40s and early '50s, and the '60s. Depicting his quest for modernism, talking about the first set, Hoskote says, "These were painted when Alkazi was in his early 20s. These were highly confident works that reflect his incredible engagement with questions of primitivism and myth, and his ongoing preoccupation with Shakespeare. These are anchored in the Indian context but engage with questions preoccupying poets, painters and theatre-makers of the time."

A noted art connoisseur and collector, he was close to the members of the Progressive Artists' Group such as FN Souza, Akbar Padamsee and MF Husain — some of who later painted and designed sets for his plays.

"Bobby" Padamsee's Theatre Group company. Though he headed to London in the late 1940s to pursue art, he eventually joined the Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts. "The story goes that he saw a poster of 'admissions open' outside the Academy and went for the interview and was enrolled instantly," says Allana. Those were years of inquiry and experimentation. In the exhibition are letters exchanged between Alkazi, his wife Roshen, Souza and poet Nissim Ezekiel, among others. "They show the great energetic embrace of the world that these young Indian men demonstrated when they went to London," says

Hoskote. In a letter to Ezekiel, Alkazi analyses English theatre and how there is need to move to the vernacular in India, else "it will be death of theatre".

After he returned to Mumbai in 1951, he established Theatre Unit in Mumbai with Roshen and Ezekiel. He also curated a series of exhibitions titled "This is Modern Art" at Bombay's Jehangir Art Gallery. In 1977, he and Roshen established Art Heritage gallery in Delhi to promote established as well as young talent. "He was a true nationalist, wanting the best impulses of his country to come to the fore," says Hoskote.

In the second part of the show are works exhibited when Alkazi's professional inclination towards theatre had become evident. Some of these featured in an exhibition with his sister and artist Munira Alkazi at Shridharani Gallery in 1965, when he was the director of NSD and had to his credit plays such as *Andha Yug* (1963) and *Miss Julie* (1960). Here, Alkazi paints more stark depictions in charcoal and continues his engagement with the Christ figure. "The first phase was more quirky and experimental. This was far more classical and had gravitas. It was like a survey of different genres, demonstrating his engagement with each, including landscapes, seascapes and nude torsos," says Hoskote. Alkazi's granddaughter, artist and theatre director Zuleikha Chaudhari has also used material from his production of Euripides' *Medea* and Nalini Malani's *Medea* to create an installation.

Meanwhile, Allana mentions that the memories of 93-year-old Alkazi might now be cloudy, but his voice will be heard in archival videos playing in the gallery.

The exhibition is on till November 11

Weave in Time

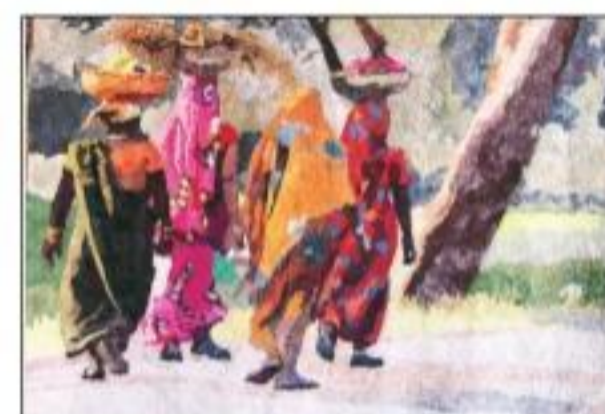
A travelling exhibition by the Quilt India Foundation highlights the textile art form

PALLAVI CHATTOPADHYAY

EVERY QUILT on display at AIFACS gallery in Delhi hides within its frame heart-rending tales. Lalitha Rajan and Prabha Mathew's *Anamika — We Too*, for instance, has a group of rural women with their heads covered, carrying produce from farms and buckets of water. The duo note that the quilt is a tribute to the village women, whose unpaid labour to ensure the smooth running of their household often goes unnoticed.

This is one of the 18 award-winning quilts travelling the country in the exhibition "Threads That Bind". Competing at the India Quilt Festival 2019 in Chennai — the first quilting festival in India founded by quilting enthusiasts Varsha Sundararajan, Deepa Vasudevan and Tina Katwal — these are testament to how the art of quilting involves the use of needles, threads, cotton, embellishments and cutting equipments. Sundararajan says, "The aim is to create awareness about the art of quilting. It's a billion dollar industry in the US. Every town in America has a quilt festival every year. Our objective is to promote allied industries that feed into the making of quilts."

While Sundararajan notes that India probably has the oldest quilting tradition, these are broadly divided into categories of traditional, modern and art. In the exhibition is Ritu Sudharshan's design that combines patch blocks and appliqué blocks. Titled *Sweet Treats*, it is a tribute to her love for baking. It features motifs of muffins and donuts. The national bird of India, peacock, is the theme for Chitra Mandanna, as she depicts its magnificent beauty. Winner of the Viewer's Choice Award, Mandanna's other piece, named *Animal Whisperer*, brings out the trait of compassion, which she witnessed in her two-year-old daughter, when she offered her bananas to a cow in Coorg. Marline Turner from South Africa renders her fascination for the classic blue and white patterns

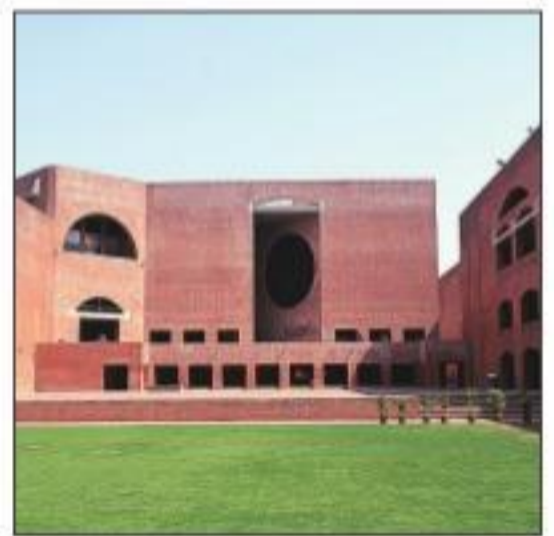


(From top) Chitra Mandanna's *Animal Whisperer*; Lalitha Rajan and Prabha Mathew's *Anamika — We Too*; Yan Liu's quilt

of China pottery and Yan Liu from Canada recreates the famous Gustav Klimt painting *The Lady in Gold*.

The exhibition is on till October 15

SNAPSHOT



Heritage Alive

THIS YEAR'S UNESCO Asia-Pacific Awards for Cultural Heritage Conservation has three winners from Mumbai. While the Vikram Sarabhai Library, Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad (pictured), won the 'Award of Distinction', the 'Award of Merit' went to two Mumbai projects — Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue and Our Lady of Glory Church. Mumbai's Flora Fountain was given 'Honourable Mention'. The awards, which were announced on Monday, acknowledged how the projects "renewed their roles to meet local needs and contributed to the sustainability of the community". Mumbai-based firm Somaya & Kalappa Consultants, who were appointed conservation architects for the Vikram Sarabhai Library, had to restore the exposed brickwork, besides the interiors, and upgrade services for the Louis Kahn-designed structure. Architects Ainsley Lewis and David Cardoz, who restored the Gothic heritage building of Our Lady of Glory Church, meanwhile, used state-of-the-art conservation practises to detail the carpentry, joinery and plasterwork. Abha Narain Lambh Associates refreshed the Keneseth Eliyahoo Synagogue in Kala Ghoda to its former glory and conservation architect Vikas Dilawari restored Flora Fountain to Mumbai.

The More the Merrier

The grand finale of the India Fashion Week was an all-inclusive affair

EKTAA MALIK

MAYBE IT'S the impending festivities in the air or the fact that an A-list star was walking the ramp — Kangana Ranaut — and another, Sonam Kapoor, was sitting in the front row, but the grand finale of the Lotus-Makeup India Fashion Week, started a whole one and a half hour later than scheduled. Featuring collections by Anamika Khanna, Manish Arora, Wendell Rodericks and Rajesh Pratap Singh, it followed the theme #myfashionmytribe. We saw models who were plus size, transgender and non-hetero normative. The showstopper, Ranaut, wore a black skirt paired with white

shirt, completing the look with black boots and heavy silver jewellery. Kapoor, who watched the show with attention, was clad in an Anamika Khanna outfit. Highlights:

Throwback from Wakanda

Goa-based designer Wendell Rodericks presented his vision of #myfashionmytribe in hues of white, blue and beige. We saw long flowing silhouettes, dramatic white jewellery and accompanying headgear, as models walked the ramp to tracks from *Black Panther*. The collection had a very African ceremonial touch, which can perhaps be attributed to the designer's recent trip to Ethiopia.



White Nights

Delhi-based Rajesh Pratap Singh, known for his signature white creations, presented an all white collection. The show began with dancers clad in white twirling on the ramp. Models had splotches of neon orange, pink and green on their faces and clothes. The headgear, made of fairy lights, was interesting.

Pop and Soda

Manish Arora, who hasn't showcased in the Capital for long, brought the choicest pop colours for a collection that had a very boho-nomadic vibe. We saw long skirts, gowns and pants, embellished with accentuated exaggerated bows. Floral prints and sequined motifs were also prominent. The takeaway was the dramatic ponytails, very much inspired by American signer Ariana Grande.

(From left) Kangana Ranaut; a model wearing Rajesh Pratap Singh; a Wendell Rodericks design

ICC TWEAKS SUPER OVER RULE
ICC tweaked the super over rule for all its major events following the uproar over the outcome of the men's World Cup final in July when England were declared winners against New Zealand on boundary count.

Former Captain

Ganguly, the man with an uncanny knack of leaving a memorable first impression, in new leadership role as BCCI president

New BCCI keen to send Srinivasan to ICC

SANDIP G
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

SOURAV GANGULY, the captain widely credited to infusing aggression in the Indian cricket team, would begin his toughest innings yet. As the president of India's cricket board — he was the only candidate to file his nomination on Monday — Ganguly is set to reclaim the BCCI reins from the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) on October 23, the day of the elections.

Speaking to reporters, he hinted at the turbulent times under CoA and his road map for the future. "I am taking over at a time when the BCCI has not been in the greatest of position for the last three years. Its image has got hampered quite a lot. It's a great opportunity for me to do something good. It's a big responsibility because it is the biggest organisation in the world of cricket. India is a powerhouse. It will be a challenge," he said.

The foremost concern, he said was regarding the conflict of interest. "Cricketers are a part of the system but the numbers were not that much in the past. Conflict of Interest is an issue and I am not sure whether we will get the best cricketers. It really needs to be looked at. NCA, CAC, appointment of coaches... there has been an issue with everything. The house needs to be set in order," he said.

Several former and current cricketers had to grapple with the conflict of interest question since the term gained currency post the 2013 spot-fixing scandal. Last April, the conflict of interest shadow was cast on Ganguly himself as he was Cricket Association of Bengal president as well as an advisor to the IPL franchise Delhi Capitals. Fellow member VVS Laxman too was asked to leave the committee as he was the mentor of IPL franchise Sunrisers Hyderabad and a commentator.

More recently, Rahul Dravid was asked to choose between the post of National Cricket Academy coach or quit his job with India Cements, prompting Ganguly to post an acerbic tweet: "New fashion in Indian cricketconflict of interest ...Best way to remain in news ...god help Indian cricket!" Even Sachin Tendulkar and Sunil Gavaskar weren't immune to getting slapped with conflict of interest issues.

To use a common cricketing refrain, Ganguly began on an aggressive note, as he reminded the International Cricket Council that the Indian cricket board hadn't received funds from the parent body during the time of administrative chaos. "We (Indian board) have not received any money from the ICC in the last 3-4 years. That is going to be one of the agendas now and we need to find a solution because this is leading us nowhere," he remarked.

Ganguly, as expected, was concerned about the well-being of domestic cricket, which he felt was neglected by the CoA.

"My biggest priority will be to look after first-class cricketers. I have been requesting that to the CoA for three years. That's the first thing I will do, look after the financial health of our first-class cricketers. We will speak to everyone first as we make a decision but my biggest priority will be to look after first-class cricketers," he said.

The board, in its AGM, had proposed a pay hike for the domestic cricketers, only to be shot down by the CoA. The shadow war has been a recurring theme in the last few years, with the interim panel and board squabbling over several issues.

Ganguly, though, is accustomed to leading his team out of the darkness. Like when he assumed captaincy on the heels of the worst match-fixing scandal, with India as the focal point, that shook the game.

He is credited with resurrecting the image of Indian cricket by steering it through the choppy waters. From losing the Test series to South Africa at home and being drubbed by Australia Down Under, India recovered quickly with a brand of fresh young players.

In the next five years, he led India to



FROM LEFT: PRESENT, PAST

Flanked by former BCCI president N Srinivasan, former secretary and Saurashtra stalwart Niranjan Shah and former IPL chairman Rajiv Shukla, Sourav Ganguly entered the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai on Monday to submit his nomination papers. AP

memorable series triumphs against Australia in 2001 and the first-ever in Pakistan. India reached the final of the 2003 World Cup from the brink of a premature exit, shared the Champions Trophy and laid the foundation of a Test side that eventually became the best-ranked team in 2008.

Micro-management of skills

His micro-management skills were often lauded. His judgement of potential and the unshakeable faith in those he considered were worth investing time into were brilliant. As a consequence, a host of match-winners blossomed under him, from Harbhajan Singh to Zaheer Khan and Virender Sehwag to Yuvraj Singh.

All these skills would be once again put to test, maybe even more vigorously, as he would be dealing with not youngsters or contemporaries but wizened and battle-hardened veteran administrators. The power dynamics and equations are fickle as some of English venues he had encountered. He's not managing 11 players but a whole country.

He admitted he had a first taste of how the equations within the board could change overnight. "I didn't know I would be the president when I came down. You [reporters] asked me and I told you it's Brijesh and when I went up, I came to know it has changed. I have never been in a BCCI election and I never knew it worked like this."

Having served his term as the CAB's president, Ganguly is not a novice administrator. Tough as his new stint could be, he wouldn't shirk away from challenges. Remember, he had an uncanny knack of leaving a memorable first impression. Like the hundreds in his first two Test innings, taking a callow bunch to Champions Trophy final. Can he imprint a memorable first impression in his new innings?

SECRETARY: Jay Shah

SON OF Union Home Minister Amit Shah, he was tipped to get the coveted post, since the time BCCI elections were announced. Shah became Gujarat Cricket Association joint secretary in 2013 and was involved in the day-to-day cricketing activities of his association.

He is also involved in monitoring the progress of the new GCA stadium, whose capacity is expected to be more than one lakh. His father was president of GCA but left the post after Lodha Committee recommendations were adopted, which barred politicians from holding positions in cricket administration. Shah has earlier attended the BCCI annual general body meeting and was also a voter in BCCI's last election in 2015 when Anurag Thakur won by one vote.

TREASURER: Arun Singh Dhumal

YOUNGER BROTHER of BJP leader and Minister of State, Anurag Thakur, Arun was elected as Himachal Pradesh Cricket Association president this year. Arun has been part of BCCI's sub-committees before too. He strategises for his brother and father (former HPCA chief minister Prem) during elections.

VICE-PRESIDENT: Mahim Verma

HE WAS responsible for conducting various tournaments at grassroot levels in Dehradun before the association finally got recognition from the Indian board this year. Verma was

Chosen ones

BCCI's Apex Council will comprise the following officials who are set to be elected unopposed in the upcoming elections. Monday was the last day of filing nominations, and since office bearers have been picked unanimously with no contending nominees, the October 23 election, becomes a mere formality.



Arun Singh Dhumal with Jay Shah.

the architect in helping his group get the BCCI nod for Uttarakhand cricket as he held records of all tournaments conducted by his group in the past many years.

JOINT SECRETARY: Jayesh George

OLD GUARD in Kerala Cricket Association,

George was elected unopposed as president. He has been an office bearer for five years at KCA and is a member of the apex council governance committee for eight years. He was appointed India A manager recently. Like Ganguly, George too will have to demit office after a year as he has completed six years combined in State/BCCI.

IPL GC MEMBER: Brijesh Patel

FORMER INDIA cricketer, Patel was the front-runner for the BCCI president's post. However, Sourav Ganguly piped him to the top post. Patel has been actively involved in Karnataka Cricket Association and has played a major role in revamping Karnataka cricket.

GOVERNING COUNCIL MEMBER: Khairul Jamil Majumdar

THE BCCI found it tough to fill up the candidate for IPL member as they had no takers. Majumdar became the first northeastern member from Mizoram to be included as IPL GC. Mizoram was given full membership after Lodha Committee recommended each state should have full membership in BCCI.

COUNCILOR: Prabhjot Singh Bhatia

SON OF outgoing Chhattisgarh Cricket Association president Baldev Singh Bhatia, Prabhjot was elected as the lone councilor in the new Apex Council. The 27-year-old is the brains behind the beer brand Simba.

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 14

THE NEWLY elected members of BCCI's state units are keen on former president N Srinivasan attending International Cricket Council meetings. Srinivasan during his reign, had proposed the concept of Big Three where India, England and Australia would earn a lion's share of the game's coffers since these three territories generated a sizeable chunk of the revenue.

Since BCCI's revised constitution doesn't permit any individual who has completed a nine-year term or is more than 70 years of age to hold office, the board members want that clause to be relooked at, so that the 74-year-old TN administrator can be accommodated.

It is learnt that the BCCI members discussed this issue at an informal meeting here on Sunday. They have decided to approach the Supreme Court with a plea to re-consider the clause, as they feel that India needs an experienced voice in dealing with the ICC and Srinivasan can drive a hard bargain.

A BCCI member said, "All the state associations are of the view that Srinivasan should be sent to ICC. BCCI should request the Supreme Court to consider this. India has lost too much money in the past three years, a lot is at stake. Srinivasan is the best person for this." Though the only two matters on the AGM agenda are clearing of accounts and holding officials' election, the BCCI will also nominate a member for ICC, post the annual general body meeting.

On the day Sourav Ganguly filed his nomination for the BCCI president's post, he too was vocal about how India was unfairly treated by the ICC, when helmed by the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA). When Shashank Manohar became ICC chairman, the big-three model which put India, England and Australia at the top of the pyramid, was diluted.

Manohar had been in favour of a more egalitarian model. Later, a new model was framed by the global body to ensure every international board received a share of the massive pie that was ICC's revenues. Ganguly when asked about the ICC, said, "That's one area we will have to take care of, because in the last 3-4 years we have not received the kind of money that we deserve. India generates 75-80 per cent of the global cricket revenue, so that is going to be one of the big points on the agenda. Talks and discussions need to happen and we need to find a solution, as (current situation) is not leading us anywhere," Ganguly told reporters.

ICC readmits Zimbabwe, Nepal

Dubai: The ICC on Monday decided to readmit Zimbabwe and Nepal as its members following the conclusion of the Board meetings here. Zimbabwe and Nepal were suspended in July this year following government interference in the running of the Board.

"I would like to thank the Zimbabwe Sports Minister for her commitment to the reinstatement of Zimbabwe Cricket. Her desire to work in support of Zimbabwe Cricket was clear and she has unconditionally complied with the conditions set down by the ICC Board," ICC chairman Shashank Manohar said.

"Funding to Zimbabwe Cricket will continue to be on a controlled basis as part of a collective effort behind getting the game in Zimbabwe back on an even keel." Zimbabwe will now be able to take up their place in the ICC Men's U-19 World Cup in January and the ICC Super League later in 2020. Nepal has also been reinstated on a conditional basis following their 2016 suspension for breach of the ICC regulations which prohibit government interference and require free and fair elections.

Election of a 17-member Central Working Committee for the Cricket Association (CAN) of Nepal were completed earlier this month and paved the way for the re-admittance of the CAN.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Opening statements: What he said and what it means

During his interaction with the media on Monday, Sourav Ganguly spoke about some of the pressing issues — from the board's reduced revenue from the ICC, issues of conflict-of-interest and the well-being of domestic cricketers, which he felt was being neglected by the Committee of Administrators. SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY explains.

We (BCCI) have not received any money from the ICC in the last three-four years. That is going to be one of the agendas now and we need to find a solution because this is leading us nowhere."

DURING HIS tenure as ICC president, N. Srinivasan was instrumental in creating the 'Big Three' financial model, drawn up by the boards of India, England and Australia. Srinivasan battled for larger revenue share since the BCCI contributed to over 70 per cent of ICC's revenues. Under this model, India stood to earn at least \$440 million over an eight-year period from 2015 to 2023. However, based on the profits, it could potentially even rise to \$570 million.

When Srinivasan left the ICC in 2015, he was replaced by Shashank Manohar, who had jumped the BCCI ship, with the Lodha reforms around the corner, to become the independent chairman of the global body. He started working towards dismantling the 'Big Three' on the pretext of having a more equitable revenue distribution system. In 2017, as the ICC Board approved a new revenue sharing model by a 9-1 vote — India's representation in ICC became lightweight. Subsequently, BCCI's projected revenue came down to \$293 million over the eight-year cycle.

Interestingly, the so-called equitable revenue distribution model failed to uplift majority of ICC's Full Members. Pakistan, Sri Lanka, West Indies and Zimbabwe are still reeling under financial crisis, while South Africa are fast slipping towards the red zone.

Cricketers are a part of the system but the numbers were not that much in the past. Conflict-of-interest is an issue and I am not sure whether we will get the best cricketers. It really needs to be looked at. NCA, CAC, appointment of coaches... there has been an issue with everything. The house needs to be set in order."

GANGULY FOUND himself at the receiving end of BCCI ombudsman-cum-ethics officer Justice (Retd) DK Jain, who decreed him conflicted of wearing many hats. He was already the Cricket Association of Bengal president, when he was appointed Delhi Capitals' advisor for the 2019 IPL season. That apart, he was also on the commentary panel.

Consequently, the former India captain was asked to pick one role. Similarly, Sachin Tendulkar and VVS Laxman, too, had conflict-of-interest complaints against them for their involvement with IPL franchises. The

trio was part of the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) that was set up in 2015 to take important cricketing decisions including appointment of coaches. Following the complaints, Tendulkar recused himself from the CAC and eventually it became defunct. An ad-hoc CAC comprising Kapil Dev, Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy was formed that picked WV Raman as the Indian women's team coach and re-appointed Shastri as the head coach of the men's team. When conflict-of-interest allegations were made against the ad-hoc CAC members, they duly resigned.

Conflict of interest complaints were levelled against Rahul Dravid as well, following his appointment as NCA director. His job with Indian Cements was cited as the reason. This prompted a not-so-subtle tweet by Ganguly: "New fashion in Indian cricketconflict of interest ...Best way to remain in news ...god help Indian cricket!" To be fair, the CoA, too, found the conflict-of-interest clause "too rigid".

In 2016, when the erstwhile CAC picked Anil Kumble as Indian team head coach, snubbing Ravi Shastri, the latter hit out at Ganguly, saying he was "disrespectful" by remaining absent for his presentation. Ganguly left the interview to attend a CAB meeting. He responded to Shastri by saying "he was living in a fool's world". Now that Ganguly is going to be the new BCCI president, social media has gone into a tizzy, with predictions about Shastri's future.

My biggest priority will be to look after first-class cricketers. I have been requesting that to the CoA for three years. That's the first thing I will do, look after the financial health of our first-class cricketers."

THE COA increased the domestic cricketers' match fee to Rs 35,000 per day for a first-class fixture, but the panel has created a discrepancy by approving a higher match fee for umpires. The CoA, at its meeting on April 12, 2018, doubled the match fee of umpires, match referees and curators that saw 20 umpires get Rs 40,000 per day to officiate in matches other than T20s. Former BCCI secretary Niranjan Shah was first to point out this discrepancy.

Four jr. hockey players die in car crash; national camper among injured

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

ON SUNDAY, Ashok Kumar had a reunion of sorts with his former trainees on the sidelines of a tournament named after his father Major Dhyan Chand.

He teased birthday boy Aadarsh Hardua, who just turned 18, for still being 'baby-faced'. Shah Nawaz Khan, Kumar said, couldn't suppress his elation at being re-admitted to the Madhya Pradesh Hockey Academy just 22 days ago. He waited for a bit to meet Aniket Varun, considered to be one of the most talented junior forwards in the state. "But he had gone to freshen up after playing a match. I thought I'll meet him the next day," Kumar said.

That day never came. Early on Monday morning, Khan, Varun and Hardua – along with their teammate Ashish Lal – were killed when their car met with an accident near Raisalpur village between Itarsi and Hoshangabad towns. Three other players,

Shaun Alfred, Akshay Awasthi and Sahil Choure were injured and rushed to a nearby hospital where their condition was reported to be out of danger. Awasthi had received his maiden call-up for the junior national team camp in March this year.

The seven players were returning to Hoshangabad, the venue of a national level hockey tournament, from Itarsi, where they had gone on Sunday to celebrate Hardua's birthday. The mishap occurred around 6.45 am when the car, in an attempt to avoid another vehicle, lost control and hit a tree, the police said. The players, aged between 18 and 22, were due to play another match on Monday. They had sought permission from the organizers before leaving the town.

"I was getting ready to go for the match in the morning when I was informed. I couldn't believe the news," Kumar, who selected the three players when he was the chief coach of the Bhopal-based MP Hockey Academy, said. "They were all 9-10 years old when I selected them for the MP Hockey



Mangled remains of the car in which the players were travelling in, near Raisalpur village in Hoshangabad district of Madhya Pradesh. PTT

The seven players were returning to Hoshangabad, the venue of a national level hockey tournament, from Itarsi, where they had gone on Sunday to celebrate Hardua's birthday.

Academy and just one ambition – to play for the national team.

MK Kaushik, who was the academy coach after Kumar's stint, said the players had the skill-set and deftness that's unique to the region. Aniket was selected for the Delhi-based National Hockey Academy in 2018 and after spending a year there, he returned to Bhopal. "They were artistic players, especially Shah Nawaz and Aniket who were both strikers. Aniket was chosen to train in Delhi because we saw a lot of potential in him," Kaushik, who is the chief coach of the acad-

emy, said. Shah Nawaz, his coaches said, was living his father's dream. "He came from a very modest background. His father, Hameed, played hockey as well but never made it big. Through Shah Nawaz, he was living his dream. The family put most of their resources in his training and he was doing very well," Kaushik said. "It's a big loss for all of us."

Former Madhya Pradesh Sport and Welfare minister Yashodhara Raje Scindia, who pioneered the academy, said this should be a lesson for next time around. "We have lost four really talented young players. If a child is going for a tournament, he is the coach's and department's responsibility. Monitoring is important. I hope we learn from this," she said.

While expressing grief over the death of young players, Chief Minister Kamal Nath said the kin of the dead will get Rs 5 lakh each from the insurance taken by the state government and another Rs 2 lakh will be given from CM's fund.

Focus on strikers in India's WC qualifier

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, OCTOBER 14

BUOYED BY their gallant goalless draw against Asian champions Qatar, India would be looking to register their first win in the FIFA World Cup qualifiers when they take on Bangladesh in a group E second round match at the Saltlake Stadium, here on Tuesday.

India put a gritty performance against an attacking Qatar, to hold the reigning Asian champions to a goalless draw and earn their first point of the qualifiers after suffering a heartbreaking loss in the opening match against Oman. With the city set to host the senior national men's team after a gap of nine years, the euphoria around the match has been immense with a mad rush for tickets as the Saltlake Stadium is set to witness a packed house, giving the Igor Stimac-coached side a perfect stage to grab three points and keep their World Cup hopes alive.

The absence of defender, Sandesh Jhingan due to an ACL tear on his left knee is a big blow to the hosts. But the return of talismanic captain Sunil Chhetri after missing the last game will lift the team's spirit.

In his last appearance, Chhetri scored his 72nd international goal, the second most among active players, as India put up a dominating first-half display only to go down 1-2 after conceding late goals in their World Cup qualifier against Oman in Guwahati.

Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu took the charge in Chhetri's absence and thwarted a barrage of attacks from Qatar, making 11 saves in a heroic display to snatch a point from the 2022 World Cup hosts.

While defence, tactical formation and discipline were the highlights of their match against Qatar, the focus against Bangladesh, who are ranked 83 places below India, would be on the strikers. Chhetri will remain the go-to man in the attacking zone, but the onus will also be on the likes of Balwant Singh and Manvir Singh to make an impact, something former India captain Bhaichung Bhutia has highlighted. "It's only Sunil who's able to score. If he's not playing or does not score it becomes very, very difficult. We need to improve our forward lineup. In this Bangladesh game, it's going to be a big test for the strikers. It's not the defence but the forward line will have to deliver," Bhutia said.

Chhetri will also have the support of his Bengaluru FC teammates Udanta Singh and Ashique Kuruniyan, while Mandar Rao Desai and Sahal Abdul Samad will be key in creating chances. As for the back line, Stimac will be forced to rejig his central-defence with Anas Edathodika likely to pair up with Adil Khan in front of Sandhu. Jhingan's injury gives Anas with a perfect opportunity to prove himself again, especially after returning from retirement. India failed to keep up the intensity in the final minutes because of fitness concerns against Oman but Stimac addressed the issue against Qatar.

LIVE: 7:30 PM; STAR SPORTS 1&2

ISL opens door for I-league

From 2022-23 season, I-league winner will get ISL berth; Two clubs can enter ISL after next season by paying Rs 15 crore franchise fee

MIHIR VASAVDA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

AT LAST, the impasse has been broken. And seemingly, everyone's on board. For five years, Indian football faced a severe identity crisis; mostly with respect to domestic competitions.

The Indian Super League (ISL), five years old and run jointly by Reliance Sports and Star Sports, staked the claim to become India's premier football tournament. The move was opposed by the clubs playing in the I-League, which has enjoyed that status for two decades (include the decade when it was called the National Football League).

The All India Football Federation (AIFF), tangled in a complex web of commercial and contractual obligations, remained indecisive. Finally, on Monday, with the Asian Football Confederation (AFC) as the mediator, the warring parties found a middle ground.

Following a meeting with the AIFF and club officials, the continental body announced that ISL will replace I-League as the premier domestic competition. For several years, the I-League clubs had been opposing this move as it would have, in one stroke, relegated the entire competition to second division. That, they in turn feared, would threaten their very existence.

But the AFC seems to have persuaded them by dangling a carrot. The I-League clubs have been assured that starting 2022-23 season, the winner of the competition will be promoted to the ISL; and from 2024-25 the ISL – a closed league so far – will have to adopt a promotion-relegation system, which wasn't possible thus far due to contractual obligations.

Here's the AFC's four-point plan for Indian football:

- The ISL, which begins on October 20, has been conferred the status of India's premier league. As a 'special compensation' to India, the AFC will allow the ISL champions to compete in the AFC Champions League play-offs, while the I-League winners get to play in the AFC Cup playoff.

- Two I-League clubs will be allowed to enter the ISL by the end of 2020-21 season on the condition that they pay Rs 15 crore franchise fee and meet the club licensing criteria.

- Starting 2022-23 season, the winner of I-League will stand a chance to be promoted to the ISL without any participation fee on the basis of 'fulfilling sporting merit and the national club licensing criteria'. The I-League side will not be entitled to share from the central revenue pool, which was Rs 13-14 crore per team on an average last season.
- From 2024-25 season onwards, the two parallel leagues system will be abolished. ISL will introduce promotion and relegation system, in sync with most leagues around the world.

Every party, including the AFC, has conceded some ground to end this logjam. And although there've been multiple roadmaps before, there is renewed optimism after Monday's outcome. "There is a lot of inclu-



Performers carry flags of teams during an opening ceremony of the Indian Super League. File

East Bengal and Mohun Bagan are the two I-League teams likely to join the ISL when the window opens at the end of next season. It is not yet clear as to how the I-League will be restructured going forward with regards to issues like number of teams, broadcasters and such. In fact, whether they can sustain is question in itself.

siveness. There is enough and more clarity on the issue. We can build on this," Bengaluru FC CEO Mandar Tamhane, who was at present at the meeting, said.

As much as ensuring 'inclusiveness', doing away with the closed league system was also a lot to do with increasing the number of teams in the top division. With 10 teams in ISL and 11 in I-League, an Indian player plays half the number of competitive matches in a year than the global average. However, if the proposed plan is exe-

cuted, then from 2024-25 season onwards – when the promotion/relegation system kicks in – the ISL will have 14 teams. "We have informed AIFF that 10-12 teams are not enough for the top league – it must be bigger," AFC secretary general Dato Windsor John said in a statement. John's views were echoed by Mumbai City CEO Indranil Das Blah. "If you are a football lover, you want a league with more than 8-10 teams and you want promotion and relegation. That seems to be the future. We are extremely happy with the developments," he said.

East Bengal and Mohun Bagan are the two I-League teams likely to join the ISL when the window opens at the end of next season. It is not yet clear as to how the I-League will be restructured going forward with regards to issues like number of teams, broadcasters and such. In fact, whether they can sustain is question in itself.

Challenge to generate revenue
In the last few years, Goan giants Dempo and Salgaocar along with other teams like Pune FC scaled down their operations after realizing that the I-League would be relegated to second division. For these clubs, it was a challenge to generate revenue even

Why execution of assurances is crucial for the sake of Indian football.

THE OUTCOME of Monday's meeting between the AIFF, AFC, IMG-Reliance, and clubs from ISL and I-League is largely seen as positive. However, the challenge for the AIFF would be to implement these proposals and ensure they just don't remain on paper. Multiple meetings have taken place in the past where several roadmaps have been presented. But none have seen the light of the day because of seemingly trivial issues.

On this occasion, AFC general secretary Dato Windsor John and competitions director Shin Mangil have taken it upon themselves to ensure all points are implemented as proposed.

Ultimately, though, it will be up to the AIFF to make sure everyone is on board and the said landmarks are met within deadline so that India's domestic football scene gets in sync with rest of the world.

when they dominated the I-League when it was the top division. To survive in the second tier would've been a bigger challenge.

That's a question that stares in the face of most I-League clubs. Ranjit Bajaj, the owner of former champions Minerva Punjab, is optimistic. "At least we now have something to

show potential sponsors and investors. We can tell them that in five years, we have a chance to qualify for the top division which will multiply the revenue." Bajaj, who has been one of the biggest critics of AIFF and IMG-Reliance, said. "If they go ahead and do this, it'll be a great thing."

'Sentimental' boxer Polipalli overcomes depression, wins gold

GAURAV BHATT
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 14

DESPITE A viral fever and subsequent chronic back pain wrecking preparations, Lalitha Prasad Polipalli successfully defended his 52kg national title last Thursday. "This entire week, I competed with my back taped. I can't bend down, can't stand for too long," says the boxer from Vizag, adding that he would readily go through these painful days again than reliving the dreadful fortnight before last year's tournament.

Prasad's gold at the nationals in Baddi came almost a year to the day his 11-year-old brother attempted to take his life.

"The Nationals were 15 days away. I had practiced so hard but then I got the news that my brother had tried to hang himself. I am so fortunate that I have such coaches and friends who put Rs 15,000 in my hand, booked my flights," says the services boxer. "Mera jaan hai mera chhota bhai (My brother is my life). After he got better, I flew back to compete at nationals and won gold."

Services coach Narendra Rana tears up recalling his ward's feat at the tournament last year.

"He came back to us, but he left his heart at home. He would have this blank look on his face, and we were worried because you don't want to send an unprepared boxer in the ring," says Rana. "He said he wanted to box because otherwise his mind wouldn't stay still. For the team, it's one gold medal among several. But we all know the significance of his performance."

"Rana sir came to me and told me, 'You're a sentimental boxer. You use this sadness in the ring,'" remembers Prasad.

"By god's grace my brother was saved. I don't know what I would've done otherwise. He saw it in some movie, and decided to try it. I was very shocked because he is very close to me. I felt disappointed that he thought he couldn't share his problems with me. Eventually we realised that he was missing our father."

Prasad's father, a taxi driver who supported his three sons and wife, passed away after prolonged illness in 2012. His brother was young, but was the closest to his father.

"We aren't well off. But having papa around meant less pressure on anyone. Most days we would have a bowl of ganji rice (porridge). If it was a good day for him, we would cook chicken. Mutton we couldn't afford,"



Lalitha Prasad Polipalli (52kg) defended his national title.

said Prasad, "But we were a close, happy family. Me and my elder brother weren't good at studies, but papa wanted our little brother to go to a private school."

After his father passed away, Prasad's elder brother took up driving. But depression and financial difficulties forced them to transfer the youngster to a government

Prasad's father, a taxi driver who supported his three sons and wife, passed away after prolonged illness in 2012. His brother was young, but was the closest to his father.

school. "He also had to take a break for a while, and because of that his life got disturbed. Last year was especially tough for us. So he decided to take that step," said Prasad. "He is doing better now. I called him after my final bout and he was very happy."

Climbing back
The 23-year-old Prasad, a national champion at sub-junior, junior and thrice at seniors, is a pedigreed boxer. But the former youth world and Asian bronze medalist lost his way due to injuries, aforementioned struggles and the fleeting sense of fulfillment (and complacency) after he got the job as a havaladar. Over the last few years, Prasad has seen contemporaries leave him behind, most notably, men's boxing top dog Amit Panghal.

"I have wins over Amit. Once at the nationals in 2015. In the youth nationals the year before. But his rise is only because of the amount of hard work he has put in since. He has gone so far ahead now that I can't even begin to think of catching up to him now," laughs Prasad.

"We have always been together since the sub-junior days. Me, Amit, Manish Kaushik. There are days when you look at what they are achieving and feel left out," Prasad adds. "But Amit's attitude, discipline is something else only. He's a complete sportsman. He's my competitor, but more than that, he is like a friend, like a brother to me."

This year has been about climbing back, and the Makran Cup silver-medallist believes he's one breakthrough away from being a top prospect again. More importantly, all's good on the personal front too.

"My brother recently told me, I also want to become a boxer. I feel so scared when I think of him getting punched," says Prasad.

"I told him 'sure, once you pass 10th. I would like for him to continue his studies and have a good future. But boxing isn't bad. More important is that he is feeling better now, and has a goal."

No talk of Brighton Miracle, says Erasmus

REUTERS
TOKYO, OCTOBER 14

PLAYING A warm-up fixture against Japan had been deliberate in order to try and dampen down any talk of the Brighton Miracle if the Springboks met the tournament hosts during the World Cup, South Africa coach Rassie Erasmus said on Monday.

South Africa comfortably accounted for the Brave Blossoms 41-7 in Kumagaya on Sept. 6 but the pre-match buildup had been dominated by Japan's shock 34-32 victory over the Springboks in Brighton at the 2015 World Cup. "In all honesty, the reason for that warm-up game was to erase the Brighton game, so that if we do play them in play-off games, that game hopefully doesn't get mentioned again," Erasmus told reporters ahead of their quarter-final on Sunday.

"It's 1-1, and now we go into a quarter-final game against a really tough team. That (Brighton) game is in the past now."

Erasmus also acknowledged that their pre-tournament clash would have absolutely no bearing on how both sides played at Tokyo Stadium on Sunday.

Japan were error prone in the humid conditions and did not stretch the defence as much as they have other sides in the World Cup, while South Africa chose to play without the ball for long stretches to work on their defence and counter-attack.

"I must say that in that warm-up game, there was no pressure," Erasmus said.

"We definitely won't be able to go with the same plan that we went into the warm-up game with (and) we will definitely have to come up with a totally new plan."

"It will probably be something where we will have to match their pace and speed, and try to keep up with the way they play the game." The former Springboks loose forward added that he had been impressed with the way Japan was developing and adapting for each game at the World Cup, while players like scrumhalf Yutaka Nagare were becoming the standouts of the tournament.

"Their number nine (Nagare) is probably the guy who gets their game going," Erasmus said. "He is probably the guy who cleans, at the World Cup, the fastest at the breakdown."

Graduation day

Gauff becomes youngest WTA singles champion in 15 years with Linz win, says Federer's pep talk helped

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
OCTOBER 14

COCO GAUFF hailed Roger Federer for his words of wisdom as the 15-year-old US prodigy on Sunday became the youngest champion on the WTA Tour since 2004.

Gauff defeated 2017 Roland Garros winner Jelena Ostapenko 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 in the Linz final for her maiden title. The teenager is managed by Federer's Team8 and even shares an Italian pasta sponsor with the 20-time major winner.

On Sunday, she revealed that a pep-talk by the Swiss superstar, after she suffered a heartbreaking defeat in the first round of the 2018 Australian Open junior event, has helped her on a path which this year saw her reach the last 16 at Wimbledon and US Open third round.

"He did give me some advice at the Australian Open in 2018 when I lost in the first round (after being amongst the favourites)," Gauff recalled.

"He told me not to focus too much on the pressure or the outside drama. He gave me some perspective."

"Now, I try to enjoy the tennis and I barely think of that first-round loss two years later." Gauff, meanwhile, confirmed she is "100 percent" ready to play at this week's Luxembourg WTA event where she will enjoy a career-high ranking inside the top 70. She started the week in Linz at 110 in the world and was originally set for an early departure from Austria after losing in the qualifying rounds before grabbing a lifeline as a lucky loser.

"For sure, I'm 100 percent playing in Luxembourg," said Gauff whose rise has been meteoric -- at the end of 2018, she was 686 in the world.

"I'm excited, it will be my last event for the year. I'm playing doubles there also (with regular partner Caty McNally).

"This is the opportunity to see how I perform at back-to-back tournaments." Gauff's career timetable has suddenly shifted into overdrive, with her breakthrough WTA trophy coming much more quickly than might have been expected.

"My goal was the top 100 and to get into the main draw of at least one Grand Slam," said the player, who has now earned a main draw spot for January's Australian Open.

"I've accomplished all of those goals this year, now I need to work on improving my game. I've gone through what was supposed



Gauff, 15, defeated 2017 Roland Garros winner Ostapenko 6-3, 1-6, 6-2. Reuters

He did give me some advice at the Australian Open in 2018 when I lost in the first round (after being amongst the favourites). Gauff recalled. He told me not to focus too much on the pressure or the outside drama. He gave me some perspective. Now, I try to enjoy the tennis and I barely think of that first-round loss two years later."

COCO GAUFF
ON HOW ROGER FEDERER'S ADVICE HELPED HER

to be my timeline for the next two years. It's been crazy." "I didn't expect to be on the Tour in general right now," the 2018 French Open junior champion said.

Gauff, coached by her father, said she ex-

pects to start gaining confidence as she gets more accustomed to the WTA circuit.

"I'm new to the Tour and I've not faced a lot of the players. I'm sure the more matches I play the more confident I'll get, along with

Coco started the week in Linz at 110 in the world and was originally set for an early departure from Austria after losing in the qualifying rounds before grabbing a lifeline as a lucky loser.

the more experience I'll have."

Federer in Tokyo

Roger Federer announced Monday he will compete at next year's Tokyo Olympics in a bid to claim the men's singles gold medal, the only major prize he has yet to win. "I've been debating with my team for a few weeks now, months actually, what I should do in the summer time (of 2020) after Wimbledon and before the US Open," he said at a promotional event.

"At the end of the day my heart decided to play the Olympic Games again."

Federer has won all four of the Grand Slam tournaments, as well as the ATP Tour Finals six times, but is still waiting to grab Olympic singles gold.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion did win a doubles gold alongside fellow Swiss Stan Wawrinka at Beijing in 2008, but when he got to the London singles final in 2012 he was hammered 6-2, 6-1, 6-4 by an inspired Andy Murray. Federer did not compete at Rio 2016, where Murray won again, but has since twice won the Australian Open and took the 2017 Wimbledon title before losing an epic final in the grass-court Grand Slam to Novak Djokovic earlier this year.

Serbia's Djokovic, and Federer's eternal rival Rafael Nadal, have both already said they will compete at Tokyo, the trio setting the scene for a highly competitive tournament. Nobody will be writing the ageing triumvirate off. The 32-year-old Djokovic is world number one and the player poised to take top spot off him in the coming weeks is Nadal, 33.

The 38-year-old Federer is third in the world rankings, while Nadal and Djokovic won all four Grand Slams between them this year. The two-time defending Olympic champion Murray, coming back from his January hip surgery, is yet to announce his intentions for Tokyo.

Bale's strike keeps Wales' hopes alive

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CARDIFF, OCTOBER 14

GARETH BALE claimed a point for Wales as they drew 1-1 with World Cup runners-up Croatia on Sunday which left their Euro 2020 qualifying hopes on a knife-edge.

Bale, who has had a difficult start to the season at Real Madrid, scored during first half injury time after Nikola Vlasic's opener for Zlatko Dalic's men.

"We need to win our next two games, and that's all we're concentrating on. It won't be easy but we're capable of it," said Wales coach Ryan Giggs whose side now face a trip to Azerbaijan before hosting Hungary in November.

He added: "When Gareth gets in those positions he never lets you down, just the composure, not many chances but when he does get them he puts them away."

Dalic, who led his country to the World Cup final in Russia last year, said their only remaining match of the campaign is crucial for their hopes of reaching the finals.

"We started well, scored a goal but didn't continue in the same way," Dalic said. "We're not very happy with the result. Our last game is now a deciding one for us," he added ahead of hosting Slovakia on November 16.

The first chance of the match fell to Josip Brekalo but the Croatia left-back's effort from outside the box went wide. Dalic's outfit took the lead on just nine minutes. Brekalo broke down the left flank, found Bruno Petkovic inside the box who laid off the ball to Vlasic, who smoothly beat goalkeeper Wayne Hennessey.

Wales' first shot on target came shortly afterwards with Bale testing Dominik Livakovic with a half-volley. Hennessey then made up for failing to stop Vlasic's effort on 13 minutes when he dived down low to stop an Ivan Perisic shot.

SUNDAY'S RESULTS

Group C: Belarus 1-2 Netherlands, Estonia 0-3 Germany
Group E: Hungary 1-0 Azerbaijan, Wales 1-1 Croatia
Group G: Poland 2-0 North Macedonia, Slovenia 0-1 Austria
Group I: Kazakhstan 0-2 Belgium, Cyprus 0-5 Russia, Scotland 6-0 San Marino

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