

Poll moves: Cong president started campaign after praying at Gurudwara

Rahul on longest roadshow in MP

Rakesh Dixit
BHOPAL: Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday evening embarked on his longest roadshow in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh.

The 46-km roadshow between Jaura to Bamnor in Morena district of the Chambal region evoked enthusiastic response. Riding a bus, Rahul greeted people lined up on the road sides all through the journey. He was accompanied by Jyotiraditya Scindia and Kamal Nath, Congress' Madhya Pradesh unit chief.

Fifth state tour
 On the second day of his fifth state tour in a month, Rahul started his campaign after pray-

ing obeisance to Guru Granth Sahib in a Gurudwara in Gwalior. On Monday, he had performed puja at Peetambaram temple and prayed at a mosque. In his speeches, the Congress president targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his silence on the Rafale issue. He also slammed the Shivraj Singh government over the issues of farmer distress, Vyapam scam, unemployment and corruption. "There is a chain of corruption from bottom to the top which is linked to Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan", he said. Rahul has already led roadshows in Gwalior, Rewa, Satna, Jabalpur and Bhopal in the last one month in the run up to the Assembly election, which is due on November 28. Earlier, the Congress president addressed three election meetings in Sheopur, Sa-balgarh and Jaura. **DH News Service**



A RIDE TO REMEMBER: Congress president Rahul Gandhi during a roadshow from Jaura to Morena in Madhya Pradesh, on Tuesday. PTI

Digvijay says Cong votes will get reduced if he campaigns

BHOPAL: A controversy erupted in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday after a video went viral in which senior Congress leader Digvijay Singh is heard saying that his party's votes get reduced if he campaigns for it.

The video was recorded on October 13 but it emerged on a day Congress president Rahul Gandhi is in the state to campaign for the upcoming Assembly elections. Significantly, Singh, the two-time former chief minister of Madhya Pradesh, has been conspicuous by his absence in the programmes and rallies which Gandhi has been addressing in the state over the last few weeks. "... mera kaam keval ek. Koi prachar nahi, koi bhashan nahi. Mere bhashan dene se to Congress ke vote kat-te hai, mai jata nahi" (I have only one job, no campaigning, no speech. When I deliver a speech, Congress votes get reduced, so I don't go)," Singh is heard saying in the video.

In the video, in which he is seen talking casually to party workers at the residence of MLA Jitu Patwari here, Singh also advises Congress workers to campaign for candidates wholeheartedly to achieve victory. "Dekho, khaab dekhte rah jaoge agar kaam nahi kiya to. Nahi banegi sarkar agar aise kaam kiya to. Jisko

ticket mile, chahe dushman ko mile, jitao (You will continue dreaming if you do not work. You can't form the government if you work like this. Even if the ticket is given to a rival in the party, you should ensure his victory)," he is seen telling the party workers. When contacted Singh said the video was not being shown in a proper manner. "It is not being shown in the right manner, especially the first part. If you hear the first part, you will understand it in a proper way," Singh said.

The ruling BJP was quick to take a dig at the opposition party over Singh's comments, with Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan saying the Congress should not treat one of its senior leaders in this manner. "We (BJP) have not given him (Singh) this pain. It was given by the Congress itself. His posters are not being put up, he is not being given prominence," Chouhan said.

"I never imagined the Congress will treat one of its leaders in this manner. Congressmen should, at least, respect their leader," the chief minister added.

State Congress chief Kamal Nath parried questions on Singh's video by saying, "I am not aware of the context in which he was stating this". **PTI**

Rahul's temple run unnerves BJP...

As Rahul followed the family tradition by offering prayers at the famous Peetambar Temple in Datia in Madhya Pradesh, the BJP fielded spokesman G V L Narasimha Rao to hit out at the Congress for trying to appease Hindus while at the same time opposing the Ram Temple. The BJP has quickly dubbed Rahul an election Hindu. The Congress outreach comes at a time when the Sangh Parivar is stepping up its campaign for building the temple at Ayodhya, an initiative which coincides handily with the election campaigns in Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Rajasthan.

Rahul's temple runs began during the Gujarat elections with a visit to the famous Dwarkadheesh Temple dedicated to Lord Krishna. He visited at least 25 more temples, including a visit to Somnath that triggered a controversy over his religion.

In the subsequent Karnataka elections, the Congress made it a point to have prominent temples and local mutts on Rahul's itinerary across the state in a bid to appeal to the spiritual masses in the state.

The BJP's response was to wheel out ministers to question his commitment to religion and even stoke controversies such as the Congress president eating chicken right before a temple visit.

While Congress leaders are relishing the BJP's discomfiture and busy projecting Rahul as a 'Shiv Bhakt' in poll-bound Madhya Pradesh after his Kailash Mansarovar pilgrimage, Rahul cannot get the whole hog to win the Hindu vote, and risks antagonising the core Congress voters among the minorities.

"Indira Gandhi was a devout Hindu, Rajiv Gandhi also visited temples. But they always showed they were secular. They were never into appeasement of this kind," Annapurna Nautiyal, professor of Political Science at the H N Bahuguna Garhwal University, told *DH*. "The temple issue is only political, common people are not bothered. They want better facilities such as roads, health-care, education," Nautiyal said.

Another political analyst who has tracked the Congress closely said it would anyway be a long haul for the party to undo the perception that it was not bothered about Hindus and only cared for the minorities.

In his assessment of the Congress' Lok Sabha debacle, senior leader A K Antony had observed that the Congress was perceived to be a pro-minority party.

"Congress policy is equal justice to everyone. But people have doubt whether that policy is being implemented or not. This doubt is created by the party's proximity towards minorities, and such a situation would open the door for the entry of communal forces into Kerala," Antony had said in 2014 immediately after the Congress' rout in the Lok Sabha elections.

Cong workers deface Modi's posters

LUCKNOW: Uttar Pradesh Congress workers defaced posters of Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Tuesday over the continued rise in the petrol and diesel prices.

Led by party leader Shailendra Tewari, the workers smeared black paint on the posters of Modi in Hazratganj area on Tuesday evening, Congress spokesperson Anshu Awasthi said.

The party workers took the step to protest the continued rise in the prices of petrol and diesel, he said. It was also done to expose the BJP which has failed to fulfil its promise made during the 2014 Lok Sabha election campaign that petroleum products will be sold at Rs 35 per litre during its tenure, he added.

Awasthi claimed that an RTI reply had recently revealed that the Modi government was selling petrol and diesel to other nations at around Rs 34 and Rs 28 per litre respectively, far cheaper than the fuel prices in India. **PTI**

'Clown Prince' out-clowning himself: FM on Rahul

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Tuesday hit out at Congress President Rahul Gandhi over his tirade against the government and countered as "falsehood" and "concoction" the latter's charge that he (Jaitley) had met fugitive jeweller Nirav Modi in person. Drawing an allegory, Jaitley said many young lawyers practising criminal law used to get an advice early in their career

from veterans in the field. They were told, "if you are strong on facts, bang the facts. If you are strong on law, bang the law. If you are weak on both, then bang the desk." Those who advise Rahul Gandhi appear to have persuaded him that he is cut out only for the third option, Jaitley said. Accusing Gandhi of "concocting" false narratives on issues like Rafale, GST, NPA, Nirav Modi, he said the Con-

gress President was living in "self-delusion" and cited five examples which he said reveal "lies" of the Congress chief. "Today I feel it is much more than hallucinations. Is it a personality issue where he lies a dozen times and then in self-delusion believes it to be true or is it a case of a 'Clown Prince' out-clowning himself," he said. Annexing purported clips of Gandhi's two speeches made

at two different functions in Madhya Pradesh, Jaitley alleged that the latter in one speech said that the finance minister admitted having met Vijay Mallya in Parliament and helped him to escape, while in another speech he said that the finance minister admitted having met Nirav Modi. **Absolute lie** Calling it Rahul Gandhi's latest concoction, Jaitley said he does

not recollect "ever having even seen Nirav Modi" in his life. "The question of him meeting me in Parliament does not arise. If he came to Parliament, as Rahul Gandhi claims, then reception records would show that. Where have I admitted all this Mr Gandhi?" Jaitley asked. He also dubbed as "absolute lie" the charge of Mallya having told him that he was leaving the country. **DH News Service**

Rise and Rise of Prashant Kishor

Anand Mishra **Analysis**

NEW DELHI: Recording a meteoric rise in party hierarchy, poll strategist Prashant Kishor, also called PK, was on Tuesday appointed national Vice President of Janata Dal (United), exactly a month after he joined the Nitish Kumar-led party on September 16.

"Our party President Nitish Kumar has appointed Prashant Kishor as National Vice President of the party. We greet him and are confident that his elevation will strengthen the party," said JDU general secretary K C Tyagi.

Kishor had shot to fame by drafting the personality centric campaign strategy of Narendra Modi-led BJP in 2014 Lok Sabha polls, which the saffron party won with a massive mandate.

In 2015, he drafted the campaign strategy of the secular grand alliance led by Nitish Kumar in Bihar for the assembly polls, in which the alliance decimated the BJP. In 2017 his campaign strategy for Congress in Uttar Pradesh bombed.

Kishor, who has no other experience of direct involvement in politics, is known for his popular coinages like 'Chai pe charcha' during 2014 Lok Sabha polls and 'Bihar mein bahaar hai, Nitishey Kumar

hai' during last assembly polls in Bihar. For quite a few months after Nitish Kumar junked the secular grand alliance last year and re-joined the NDA bandwagon, there was speculation that Kishor would be back to campaign for PDA — for Nitish Kumar in Bihar and for Narendra Modi in the national elections.

Virtual No. 2 With the latest elevation, Kishor is the virtual number 2 in JD-U. How it goes down with senior leaders in the party remains to be seen. Tyagi, however, emphasised that Kishor's appointment would help it reach out to social segments outside its traditional support. Kishor in his earlier stint with BJP had caused much heartburn among its senior leaders. Later, as he was sidelined after Modi's stupendous victory, he had parted ways with Team Modi. The JDU is counting on the persuasive skills of Kishor at a time when its relations with lead NDA partner BJP are cold and there are few takers for it even in the secular block. The first test of Kishor will be the seat sharing in Lok Sabha elections in which both BJP and JDU are vying for lion's share. **DH NEWS SERVICE**

Not Atal ashes but soil, says BJP

Karuna Shukla, niece of former prime minister the late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, and other Congress leaders were arrested after a clash with the BJP over ashes of Vajpayee kept at BJP state headquarters in Raipur on Tuesday, reports *DHNS*. The Congress was protesting in front of the BJP office and a tussle broke out between leaders of the two parties. Police arrested the Congress leaders. Trouble started after a media channel reported that the BJP had plans to use the ashes of Vajpayee during upcoming elections to seek a pledge from voters to vote for the BJP. Karuna Shukla claimed that the BJP is insulting Vajpayee by not immersing all the ashes. The BJP leaders retaliated by accusing Shukla of changing party. Denying the allegation, BJP state president Dharamlal Kaushik told the media that it was not the ashes of Vajpayee but soil in plastic bottles, collected from different parts of Chhattisgarh for the Atal Memorial at Atal Nagar. He said Karuna was always welcome at the BJP office. She could have walked in and checked for herself the real facts.

Amit Shah to kick off Mizoram campaign today

Sumir Karmakar
GUWAHATI: BJP president Amit Shah will address more than 10,000 party workers at Mizoram capital Aizawl on Wednesday, as the party gears up to cash in on the "anti-incumbency" factor in next month's Assembly elections to wrest power from the Congress. The Mizoram election is seen more significant for the BJP as it has set its target to make the Northeast "Congress-mukt." Shah, who reached Guwahati on Tuesday evening, is scheduled to inaugurate the party's new office in Aizawl at 11 am following which he is slated to address the booth-level workers in an indoor stadium, BJP Mizoram state president J V Hluna told *DH* on Wednesday from Aizawl. Shah will also hold a meeting with the party leaders and discuss the strategies for the campaign. The 40-member Mizoram Assembly goes to polls on November 28. The BJP, at present, has no seat in the Mizoram Assembly. The party has already announced that it would contest in all seats, despite the fact that the Opposition Mizoram National Front (MNF), an ally of the Northeast Democratic



Karuna Shukla and other Congress leaders being taken away by police after they were arrested following a clash with the BJP over ashes of Vajpayee, in Raipur on Tuesday.

Alliance (NEDA), a forum of regional parties floated by the BJP, too is contesting in all the seats. The BJP had formed the NEDA soon after it wrested power from the Congress in Assam in May 2016 after forging an alliance with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the Bodo People's Front (BPF), two other regional parties. Apart from the focus on the anti-incumbency factor, the BJP would make development and the alleged failure of the Lal Thanhawla-led Congress government as their major plank, Hluna said. **AGP miffed at BJP**

The party demands that citizenship issue in Assam must be solved based on March 24, 1971, cut-off date, irrespective of religious consideration, as agreed in the 1985 Assam Accord which was signed following the six-year-long anti-foreigner movement. Former Assam chief minister and senior AGP leader Prafulla Kumar Mahanta recently said the regional part would walk out of the alliance if the BJP passes the bill, which is now pending with a Joint Parliamentary Committee. The BJP has 61 MLAs in the 126-member house while the AGP has 14 and the BPF 12. **DH News Service**

'Political compulsions forced Chandrababu to take U-turn'

J B S Umanadh
HYDERABAD: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Tuesday reiterated the government's stand that the all the promises made to Andhra Pradesh in the bifurcation Act will be fulfilled. He said this after laying foundation for BJP's state headquarters in Reddypalem of Guntur in Amaravati. "While our intentions are clear, Chief Minister Nara Chandrababu Naidu took a u-turn on the issue of special category status. This decision to back down on a special package is based on political compulsions, but not on facts," he said. "What Naidu is actually doing is to provide oxygen to the Congress which is on deathbed. I don't see any logic in Naidu's choice of an alliance partner because anyone

going with the Congress are doomed," he said. He said that the Centre has so far given Rs 1,500 crore for the construction of Amravati and another Rs 1000 crore for the development of Vijayawada city, which is now a part of Amaravati. "In addition, the Centre will take care of the construction of Polavaram multipurpose national project and the home ministry will grant eight battalions of police force for the residential state. "The BJP will provide all assistance to the state of Andhra Pradesh, whenever it requires," Rajnath said. Elaborating on the need of alliances, he said that the BJP has always kept the "Alliance

Dharma" and is keen on forging new alliances with political parties. "The only stable alliance government by the Congress was provided by none other than our own Telugu stalwart P V Narasimha Rao. He really kept the 'Alliance Dharma' intact. But the Congress has ill-treated him by not providing a resting place in Delhi, the nation's capital," Rajnath said recollecting the economic reforms that P V had brought. BJP state unit president Kanna Lakshminarayana in a scathing attack claimed that Naidu has resorted to corruption by siphoning of the funds provided by the Centre to complete irrigation projects. He said that Naidu and his son Lokesh are engaged in real estate business with the lands pooled by the farmers for the construction of Amaravati. **DH News Service**

Stay away from Cong: Maya to state leaders

NEW DELHI: Hinting that the BSP is unlikely to forge an alliance with Congress in coming Lok Sabha polls, BSP chief Mayawati on Tuesday asked the party's Karnataka unit to stay away from Congress and no need to show any soft-corner to grand old party. Mayawati, who chaired a meeting with BSP Karnataka leaders here, learnt to have said since the BSP has decided to fight against the Congress at the national level by fighting independently in coming Assembly polls, the same stand would continue at the state level in coming Lok Sabha also. In an hour-long meeting, however, she said her party alliance with Janata Dal (S) will continue even for Lok Sabha polls too, sources in the party told Deccan Herald. Emerging out of the meeting, Kollegal BSP MLA, former Minister N Mahesh said Maya-

wati asked the state leaders to focus on building the organisation across the state and fight against both Congress and BJP will continue. "Partnership with JD (S) will continue and will support the government on all its decision," he said. In the meeting, which was attended by around 20 leaders, she said the leaders should build the party with new vigour, he said. Mahesh, who resigned to H D Kumaraswamy's cabinet recently on the advice of Mayawati, said he would not contest coming Lok Sabha polls. While Congress still hoping to forge an alliance with BSP in next year Lok Sabha polls as part of its plan to form a grand alliance to defeat BJP, the BSP is yet to reveal its plan whether it would part of the grand alliance or fight independently. **DH News Service**

Two Goa MLAs quit...

Goa MLA, from Page 1
 The BJP is hamstrung by demands from coalition partners who want Parrikar to continue in the saddle despite ill-health. Coalition partner Goa Forward Party rebuffed BJP's attempts at leadership change in the state by making it clear that it had agreed to support the saffron party on the sole condition that Parrikar would be the chief minister. The Congress has been snapping at the BJP's heels, flashing its claims of being the single-largest party and even appealed to the President on Monday to give it a chance to prove majority if the Parrikar government collapsed. Goa Congress president Girish Chodankar accused the BJP of engineering a split in the Congress in a bid to "manufacture" majority in the House. "The BJP is trying to break the Congress and poach MLAs either by using money power or terrorising them. Some

MLAs had said in the past that they and their family members had been threatened," he said. AICC in-charge of Goa A Chella Kumar claimed that the two MLAs were threatened by the BJP to quit the Congress. The BJP is also facing a dearth of acceptable leaders in Goa and its attempts to make ally MGP's leader Sudin Dhavlikar — the senior-most leader in the ruling combine — the chief minister were stonewalled by another coalition partner, the Goa Forward Party led by Vijai Sardesai. Sardesai also harbours chief ministerial ambitions. Before the resignations of Sotpe and Shirodkar, the Congress was the single-largest party in the 40-member Goa Assembly with 16 MLAs. The Parrikar government has the support of 24 MLAs — 14 BJP MLAs, 3 each from the Goa Forward Party and the Maharashtra Gomantak Party and 3 independents. The lone NCP MLA also backs the BJP.

Editorial

Gujarat: making 'others' of our own

Gujarat has seen a very large exodus of migrant workers belonging to Uttar Pradesh and Bihar in the last two weeks. Despite assurances of safety to the scared migrants and action against a number of people who intimidated and even attacked them, the exodus has not stopped. The trigger was the rape of a 14-month-old baby by a Bihari worker on September 28. The culprit was arrested, but the incident led to large-scale violence against migrants, especially in the northern districts of the state. The campaign against them tapped into the pent-up sentiments against "outsiders" and was led by an outfit called the Thakor Sena, led by a Congress MLA Alpesh Thakor. The victim's family belonged to the community to which Thakor belonged. He described the violence as a manifestation of the unrest among youth over lack of employment opportunities. Congress president Rahul Gandhi also seemed to endorse the view, stating that the state government had failed to create jobs.

Lack of jobs can be an explanation but no justification for violence. Gujarat, like most other parts of the country, has seen insufficient creation of jobs. Joblessness has been increasing and the latest monthly employment survey for September confirmed it. One main reason for the Patidar agitation for reservation of jobs, too, was the lack of jobs for the youth. This has created resentment against migrants who are seen as taking away the few jobs available and which should go to the people of the state. The government has been under political pressure to act on this. Last month, it announced that 80% of the state's factory and service sector jobs will be reserved for domiciles. This can hurt a state like Gujarat, where migrant workers are the backbone of the economy.

BJP's outsider vs other tactic is showing its result

About 30% of the state's population is made up of migrants and that shows how dependent it is on migrant labour. States which are industrially more developed have a higher rate of influx of migrants.

The issue is not just about the economy, which will suffer a setback if migrant labour is discouraged and thrown out. Every Indian has the right to live and work in any part of the country and governments have the responsibility to protect this right. Diversity and free interaction between various groups make states and the country economically, socially and culturally stronger. It is wrong to consider some groups as outsiders, to create resentment against them and to claim that they are the source and cause of all problems. The BJP is adept in creating the "outsider" and the "other", and the situation in Gujarat has its roots in this policy.

Ganga activist's death exposes Modi

The long campaign for a clean Ganga has claimed another life, with the death of GD Agarwal who was on a fast to save the river. The river is almost dead for most of its course with silt, sewage, chemicals and other effluents making its water unfit for any use and a health hazard. Agarwal had been fighting for the river for many years. He was a US-trained hydrologist and a professor at IIT-Kanpur and was the first member secretary of the Central Pollution Control Board. He was also on the board of the National Ganga Basin Authority but resigned from that position as he was disillusioned with its functioning. He became an environmental activist and a campaigner, then a monk in 2011 and finally a martyr for the Ganga. He died on the 112th day of his fast, after the police removed him to a hospital. Another swami, Nigamanand, had died in 2010 while he was on a fast to end sand-mining on the river bed.

Agarwal had deep knowledge of the Ganga, acquired through study and observation. He wanted the government to take steps to ensure the smooth flow of water in the river. He argued that the cleaning of the water by stopping the discharge of effluents into the river was not enough and wanted an uninterrupted flow of water to be always maintained. He was therefore against the construction of dams, barrages and other structures in the river that would block or alter its course. The UPA government had accepted his position, but he thought that the NDA government needed to be convinced and persuaded on that. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the fast, he said that "it was my expectation that you would make special efforts for the sake of Gangaji" but that "in the past four years, all actions taken by your government have not been gainful".



Agarwal died for a cause the Modi govt is 'committed' to

The government issued a notification a day before his death which said that it would ensure a minimum flow of water even after it is diverted for irrigation and other purposes, but that did not satisfy the man on a mission. He felt that the environmental flow rates promised by the government were not scientifically correct. It is ironic that an activist died fasting for a cause to which the Modi government is supposedly giving top attention and priority. Thousands of crores of rupees have been spent on plans, from the Ganga Action Plan of 1986 to the latest Namami Gange programme, but the Ganga still flows filthy and dirty. The challenge calls for a better response from the government and society.

MODI-PUTIN SUMMIT

A game changer for India

The deal for the S-400 missile system will not only give India potent capability, but has also boosted ties with Russia.

PK Vasudeva

India and Russia recently signed a \$5-billion deal for New Delhi to buy the Russian S-400 Triumf missile defence system to bolster its shield against possible air attacks by Pakistan and China. They also signed eight other pacts, including cooperation on India's ambitious human space mission, Gaganyaan. The signing of the S-400 deal came amidst the US warning India against it.

The Russian-built S-400 Triumf is the world's most advanced operationally-deployed long-range surface-to-air missile system, considered much more effective than the US Terminal High Altitude Area Defence (THAAD) system.

India's move to ink the \$5.43 billion (Rs 40,000 crore) deal for five S-400 missile squadrons from Russia, despite the looming threat of US sanctions, underlines Delhi's resolve to bolster India's air defence coverage.

The resolve became stronger after China inducted six S-400 batteries in January under a \$3 billion deal with Russia in 2014. The US last month imposed financial sanctions on China for its S-400 deal, but India is hopeful of getting a waiver from the Trump administration, being its close strategic partner. The US also depends on India to counter China in its strategic manoeuvres in South China Sea and other areas.

The S-400 system is critical for India's national security. In terms of configuration, India's S-400 are better than what China is getting. The highly automated and mobile S-400 systems, with four different kinds of missiles with interception ranges of 150-380 km, will change the dynamics of air defence in the region. China is getting the older version of S-400.

India will pay 15% (Rs 6,000 crore) to Russia as the first instalment, with the rest being linked to deliveries. The air force is slated to get the first S-400 missile squadron in 24 months, with its associated battle management system of command post and launchers, long-range acquisition and engagement radars, and all terrain transport-erector-launcher vehicles. All five squadrons, with two firing units each, will arrive in

54 months.

The S-400, with their huge 'area denial capabilities' are a game changer. The combination of the 36 Rafale fighters that India is buying from France for Rs 59,000 crore and the S-400 missile systems is a force to reckon with, even in case of a two-pronged offensive by China and Pakistan.

When deployed near the border with Pakistan, the S-400 missile system can shoot down a hostile F-16 fighter or cruise missile much before they come anywhere near Indian air space during hostilities. It can even take out intermediate range ballistic missiles. It will be crucial in providing multilayer defence to cities like Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata.



The issue of India disregarding the US threat of sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act (CAATSA) had dominated during the Narendra Modi-Vladimir Putin summit. Though the US had earlier cautioned countries against helping the Russian economy by buying weapon systems from it, India went ahead with the S-400 deal in view of its urgent national security needs.

American lawmakers, however, have allowed the possibility of a presidential waiver. Hopefully, the Trump administration will give a waiver to India. India has mounted a major diplomatic-military campaign to convince the US to do so and has assured the US that it will not "compromise the operational secrecy" of the weapon systems it has purchased or will buy from the US. It has conveyed that India maintains robust technical firewalls and does not pass on sensitive information to a third party. India re-

spects IPR and meticulously adheres to contracts linked with other countries.

National security requirement

America's worry is that the S-400 systems are capable of "mapping or recording" data of other platforms like aircraft or radars. The stealth characteristics, electronic warfare and other capabilities of US F-35 fighters can be recorded by S-400 missile systems. Moscow would then be able to access data recorded by S-400 systems if leaked by India or any other country.

Hopefully, Trump will understand India's urgent national security requirement, especially when it is surrounded by two colluding, nuclear powers. If sanctions are imposed on India, the US will suffer more than India. Moreover, Russia is the major country that has been supporting India at the UN on the Kashmir issue, even using its veto during adverse verdicts against India. Indo-Russian joint military exercises are being carried out regularly for planning joint strategies.

Speaking on India-Russia bilateral trade ties, Prime Minister Modi said that Russia could become our partner in the new and renewable energy sector. He said that the world had changed but the relationship between India and Russia had remained the same and that trade between the two countries had risen 20% in 2017-18.

Pacts were also inked in the fields of space, nuclear energy, railways and space. A crucial MoU was signed between Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and the Federal Space Agency of Russia "ROSCOSMOS" on joint activities in India's human spaceflight programme, Gaganyaan. India is planning to send astronauts into space by 2022, for which Russia is going to be a great help.

President Putin said the two countries have agreed to step up cooperation in combating terrorism and drug trafficking—the two most important worries for India. Russia has pitched for Indian energy companies to invest in its ventures. Putin said he and Modi had discussed in detail the Kudankulam nuclear power plant in Tamil Nadu — where Russia is building the third and fourth reactors and will next build the fifth and sixth units.

The Modi-Putin summit is likely to prove to be a game changer when it comes to settling the international disputes of the region. (The writer is a defence analyst and commentator)

RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE

Gutsy 'Galz'

The concerned ladies are in their agile eighties, spry seventies, sweet sixties...

Sudha Devi Nayak

They make up a feisty gutsy gang in a WhatsApp group that calls itself — audaciously — "Galz". It is a motley crowd of women cutting across all levels of hierarchy from an organisation that bred and gave them their spunk and a never-say-die attitude.

The concerned ladies span a wide spectrum of agile eighties, spry seventies, sweet sixties, and the rearing-to-go fifties and forties. Some have long hung up their boots, some have done so lately, some are on the verge and others still in the saddle admirably juggling homes and careers with acrobatic finesse, achieving a perfect work life balance. They grace the promotion lists and land plum postings at home and abroad. What gives them unity in their rich diversity is their level of enthusiasm and the

willingness to put their best foot forward. Judging by the posts streaming in everyday, we really have a rich fare. There is much bonhomie as they wish one another happy birthdays as to make the birthday gal elated just to be born on this great "good earth". Then there is the erudite exchange of opinion and views and tongue-in-cheek comments on politics, economics, art, literature et al.

There is much enlightened discussion, debate, dissent, some heat, some light and finally a happy consensus on burning topics. In fact, no subject eludes their analytical abilities — demonisation, bail out, elections, governance, frauds, taxes, literary festivals, the FIFA and what have you. It is also about general gossip, light-hearted banter, letting your hair down and the fine feeling of being among good friends. Then there are interesting video clips that smack of humour, tenderness and hard-hitting critique of social and political ills.

There are artists among the Galz — musicians, writers, philosophers and intrepid travellers bitten by the wanderbug whose accounts keep the rest

of them enthralled and itching to start off with a backpack at the earliest. Although they are always ready with their quirky humour, there is plenty of empathy, appreciation and kindness when a sudden misfortune hits anybody.

As one of the Galz appreciatively said, everybody is ready to help with compassion, sound advice, timely information and more than that if necessary. Not everybody knows everybody in the group but the sheer joy of connectedness across distances makes for great camaraderie. Of course, small groups of Galz meet, time and opportunity permitting, and then they have a royal blast in their colourful best seeing old friends once again and seeing others for the first time and feeling like they have known them forever.

There are active and passive members in the group, the active ones pitching in with their posts that trigger a chain of interesting responses and the passive ones absorbing everything and chipping in when they feel like it but enjoying the overall experience. So here's to the spirit of the Galz!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

M J Akbar's statement has politicised #MeToo

Sir, Apropos "Akbar rejects charges, threatens legal action" (DH, Oct 15), the Minister of State for External Affairs M J Akbar's denial of accusation of sexual misconduct by at least 14 women, and calling them false and fabricated, seems irrational as all these women cannot be lying. Further, he has been accused of sexual harassment earlier too. He has also lent the #MeToo movement a political colour by questioning why the accusations have emerged before the general elections, attributing an agenda to it.

Had there really been such an agenda, surely most other BJP leaders would have been accused too. This only means that it is the senior journalist who is trying to politicise the movement. On its part, the BJP has maintained an objectionable silence because if Akbar were to resign, it would give much ammunition to the Opposition ahead of the elections. But the ruling party, including PM Modi, should come clean to the public on his wrongdoing. Q QASMI, Hyderabad

Lies do have legs

Sir, It was gratifying to note that as M J Akbar arrived at the airport yesterday, he was ringed by a posse of policemen. One assumed this was essentially to keep the gentleman away from his innate curiosity over the opposite gender. But now that he is out to file defamation suits against many of his now vocal objet d' desir, his posse may be detailed to keep all women away from harassing this gentleman who, by all indications, may stay on as a minister. R NARAYANAN, Pune

Stop censorship

Sir, The incidents at Jagriti, a performance venue in Bengaluru, are reprehensible and ought to be condemned. The play, Shiva, which is about

discrimination against the LGBTQ community should be performed especially in the backdrop of the recent SC ruling. Such protests by those who have no interest in art and have no idea what they are protesting against is ridiculous! The citizens should express their protest strongly and not yield to any kind of censorship. K M SRINIVASA GOWDA, Bengaluru

Striking a balance

Sir, Apropos "Conflicting rights: equality or religion?" (DH, Oct 15), that the deity in a Hindu temple is a juristic person is well accepted in law. The deity's worship is laid down in the shastras, however archaic it may sound today. Religion is a matter of faith evolved over time and not based on logic. It is unlikely that women will go to the temple as the present agita-

tions demonstrate. We need to strike balance between law and tradition. H N RAMAKRISHNA, Bengaluru

Thumping triumph

Sir, Riding on Umesh Yadav's 10-wicket haul, India defeated the Windies 2-0 in a two-match Test series in Hyderabad, registering a 10th successive series win at home. Prithvi Shaw also jumped onto the stats bandwagon, finishing the series with 234 runs. Bravo, Team India and its young talent. Q NADAF, Mysuru

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SPEAK OUT



"Ram is the ethos of the nation. People want and have fought for (it)... Ram temple will be built only at Ram's birthplace. It is so natural."

PRAKASH JAVADEKAR, Union Minister

The problem is that religion tends to give people bad reasons to be good. Sam Harris

IN PERSPECTIVE

H-K: lagging, seething in anger

The region is under-developed due to lack of political will, trickle-down economics and historical factors

Mohan Das K

The rise of regionalism poses a major challenge for Indian federalism. This has happened due to the growing inequality among and within the regions.

In Karnataka, for instance, the Hyderabad-Karnataka region shows acute development gaps among the districts of the state. It is well evidenced from the Nanjundappa Committee report and the Human Development Index (HDI) report of Karnataka that the H-K region scores very low in all socio-economic and political indicators.

That's the reason the people of these regions have started demanding for special attention from the Centre and the state government to the regional dimensions of development. And the objective is to get special status in terms of economic assistance, which would be needed to overcome the long spell of stagnation and deprivation.

In this regard, efforts were made by the state government after 1991 to provide financial assistance to Hyderabad-Karnataka region. In 1992, the Hyderabad-Karnataka Area Development Board (HKADB) was established to carry out the development plans for the region.

The objective was to promote holistic development in the region by focusing on irrigation, health, education, agriculture, industries, women's empowerment, transport and tourism. The High-Power Committee for Redressal of Regional Imbalances (HPCFRR) also identified H-K region as the extremely backward region of the state.

Even 70 years after being freed from the despotic rule of the Nizam (of Hyderabad) in September 1948, the Hyderabad-Karnataka region has not been developed in terms of socio-economic and political factors. However, Article 371(J) alone will not transform the region. The backwardness of the region was the natural outcome of policies of both the British and the Nizams. The special status might provide reservation to the people of Hyderabad-Karnataka region in recruitment and education. However, the important question is, how will it help the marginalised sections of the region.

Initially, the people of H-K region did not ask for a division of Karnataka, rather it was for special status within Karnataka in terms of financial assistance for the development of the region. The ground realities show that due to lack of access to education, health and employment opportunities, the people of this region are marginalised.

Both the Fact Finding report of 1956 and the Nanjundappa

Committee report 46 years later in 2002 pointed out that the H-K region is the most backward region of the state. Unfortunately, the committee's recommendations have not been implemented at any level.

The role of the HKADB is limited in the process of development due to clashes among the political and economic lobbies. After the implementation of 371-J, there has been a growing conflict between the economic and political institutions. This region is an example of under-development due to the lack of political will, trickle-down economics and historical factors.

Throughout the rule of successive governments, the political support to achieve special status for this region was low. This indicates that there is a lack of political will. In 2013, the Centre passed the Gazette notification to pass the Ordinance of Article 371-J for Hyderabad-Karnataka region.

However, the aspirations of the people of H-K region were not fulfilled fully by the provisions of Article 371-J. There has not been any positive impact on the regional inequalities of the region. There is a growing feeling that the state government maintains a 'step-motherly attitude' towards the region. The transfer of resources to the state government for the development of H-K region is not being realised.

The people of H-K region have realised that the assignment of special status by the Indian union was nothing more than a 'piecemeal approach' to keeping the people from rising up in protest. This caters only to the political interest of the party at the Centre. It was done in order to silence the movement that was gathering momentum. But practically, there has been no benefit from this provision, there are no signs of development in the region. It is due to this reason that the people of Hyderabad-Karnataka began to demand separate statehood for the region.

At present, there is a slight improvement in the education sector, with some facilities given to the students of the region, but still a major part of the development agenda remains unaddressed. The leaders of H-K region hardly raise these issues and are merely followers of leaders from other regions of the state. Even now, the region lags behind the rest of the state in all aspects of development due to the inactive political leadership.

There has hardly been any change in the situation post 371-J. Backwardness still persists due to lack of strong leadership and proper utilisation of funds. Only the proper implementation of policy measures and proper planned development with sufficient funds can bring development to this region, and calm the demand for separate statehood. (The writer is Assistant Professor, Vijayanagara Sri Krishnadevaraya University, Ballari)

OUR PAGES OF HISTORY

50 years ago: October 16, 1968

Controversy over beard

New Delhi, Oct 16. Akali Sikhs are trying to import communism to overshadow the martyrdom of revolutionary Bhagat Singh in commemoration of which a postal stamp is being released at Hussainiwala on Oct 21. Nirlep Kaur, leader of

the Akali group in the Lok Sabha, met Communication Minister Ram Subhag Singh pleading that the proposed postal stamp should not bear Bhagat's popular picture — a dashing shaven youth with a devil-may-care moustache and a felt hat. Instead, he be shown as a Sikh youth with a beard and turban.

25 years ago: October 16, 1993

Nobel peace prize for Mandela, De Klerk

Oslo, Oct 15 (AP). National Congress President Nelson Mandela and South African President F W De Klerk won the Nobel Peace Prize for overcoming centu-

ries of distrust bred by racial separation and for pushing South Africa towards democracy. They were honoured for their efforts "to peacefully end apartheid," said the Norwegian Nobel Committee which awarded the 6.7 million Swedish kronor prize.

ICICI's Chanda Kochhar: How the mighty fall

Jagdish Rattanani

"We have placed strong emphasis on a framework of ethics and good governance that balances the interests of different stakeholders. We have sought to be adaptable and flexible, anticipating and responding to the changing needs of the economy, the dynamic business environment and the expectations of our stakeholders. These values and beliefs will continue to be the foundation of our strategy." Thus wrote Chanda Kochhar in ICICI Bank's 15th Annual Report and Accounts in 2009, the year she took over from KV Kamath as CEO and Managing Director of the bank.

There are many ways that statement could be interpreted but in those days of laudatory mentions, front page pictures and the social paraphernalia around the ascendancy, the words were likely seen as the right kind of noises from an incoming CEO. A woman career banker, poised, calm and considered in her approach, was chosen to head an important bank, and that was achievement in itself.

Kochhar was an old-timer who had risen with the bank, from trainee to the top echelons, and knew the landscape, the culture,

the ethos and the subtle and not-so-subtle ways in which the bank plotted its growth journey to become the largest Indian private sector bank. She took over at a time the bank was steering through the impact of the global financial crisis of 2008. Profit After Tax (PAT) year-on-year had dipped 10% to Rs 3,758 crore.

Under Kochhar, the bank consolidated, but its DNA of aggressive growth took over and problems were back soon. In 2018, PAT was down 30% to Rs 6,777 crore. By July, the bank reported a net loss of Rs 120 crore for the April-June 2018 quarter, its first quarterly loss in 16 years.

When Kochhar finally quit the bank on October 4, 2018, exiting under a cloud, it was not because of a business loss in one quarter. It was not because the bad loans of the bank had risen dramatically. That slide didn't hurt her, just as the growth she delivered as CEO didn't help her. Kochhar could no longer hold on. Her continued association (even on leave of absence) became untenable in the face of mounting allegations of quid pro quos, conflict of interest and conduct, in general, that would test the long-forgotten words used in her inaugural letter to shareholders.

In the end, delivering the numbers and



negotiating the vicissitudes of business proved easier than living the theme of the message that she had sent out nine years ago. The case has hit the reputation of the bank, raised questions on its governance standards at the highest level and once again highlighted the ineptitude, inefficiency and worse of the board of directors — the more marquee the names, probably the poorer the outcome.

Loan to Videocon

At the heart of the case is a syndicated loan of 2012 to the Videocon Group of Rs 40,000 crore, spread across 20 banks, in

which ICICI participated and loaned out Rs 3,250 crore. The loan account is now a Non-Performing Asset (NPA), a case like many others in the burning national problem of NPAs that are bleeding the system and are of the order of Rs 10 lakh crore and rising. But the issue of conflict comes from the fact that Kochhar sat on the loan committee while her husband had dealings with the Videocon Group, notably through a company called NuPower Renewables.

This was a 50:50 shareholding between Kochhar family members and the Videocon Group that eventually came to be controlled by Kochhar's husband Deepak Kochhar — allegedly funded by Videocon as ICICI gave the loans to Videocon. There have subsequently been allegations and some linkages reported to Chanda Kochhar's brother-in-law in Singapore who runs a business in restructuring loans, and more recent reports of Videocon linkages to the house that the Kochhars have in South Mumbai.

The complaint in the case is not new. It came up first in 2016 and did not get much traction though the complainant wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Arun Jaitley and published his allegations. Then, something turned

this year, and the allegations took flight. The board, which said it had already investigated the case when it first came to light, did nothing further in the matter.

In a statement that must continue to haunt the board, raise red flags on corporate governance standards and ideally invite strong sanction, if not prosecution, of the board members, ICICI said in a formal statement on March 28: "... there is no question of any quid pro quo/nepotism/conflict of interest as is being alleged in various rumours.

The board has full confidence and reposes full faith in the bank's MD & CEO, Ms Chanda Kochhar. The board also commends the entire management team under the leadership of the MD & CEO for their hard work and dedication. We would urge you not to be misled by these rumours which are being spread to malign the bank and its top management."

The chairman of the board then was MK Sharma, a former vice chairman of Hindustan Unilever Limited, who has served as a member of the Corporate Law Committee of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs to study the Companies Act and was a member of the Committee on Corporate Governance formed by the union govern-

ment. He once wrote about the significance of upholding values like "honesty, integrity, truth, courage, concern and care, and all of this converging and culminating in just one — character." According to one report, when the statement clearing Kochhar was issued, Sharma left the conference without taking a single question.

All this changed quickly. Kochhar went on leave and then quit. The statement accepting her resignation this time noted: "The enquiry instituted by the board will remain unaffected by this and certain benefits will be subject to the outcome of the enquiry." It marked the end of a career but not the end of the inquiry, now being aggressively pursued by multiple agencies.

While the reports are awaited, ICICI and its new CEO should know that such clear cases of a conflict at the level of the CEO are probably the result of a large and deeper malaise in the ICICI system. That malaise will not go away in a hurry. It will have to be hunted out at great pain to the organisation. That is the greatest opportunity and also the challenge that the new CEO must face.

(The author is a journalist and a faculty member at SPIJMR) (The Billion Press)

DNA tests, Net led me to my kids and their mother

A former sperm donor, searching online, finds both offspring and love.

Aaron Long

I didn't meet my girlfriend, Jessica, until 12 years after our daughter, Alice, was born.

Let me explain. Nearly 25 years ago, I returned from a year of teaching English abroad, moved in with my mother and, lacking prospects, began driving a cab. One day I saw a newspaper ad seeking healthy men, 18 to 35, to participate in a semen donation programme.

"Donors" is the standard industry word, yet virtually all of us are paid. Forty dollars a pop was what I received in 1994.

Applied to sell my sperm and sold twice weekly for a year. At the time I was in a long-distance relationship, so this seemed like a good outlet. When I told my mother, she presciently wondered aloud if this was the only way she was going to have grandchildren.

Today, sperm buyers view detailed profiles for potential vendors, whereas I wasn't asked to provide much beyond college major, hobbies and family health history. Jessica and her partner at the time chose me primarily because I was a writer and musician.

After a year of selling my sperm, I went back to giving it away and largely forgot about the whole thing. Occasionally the subject of whether I had children would come up, and I'd make a joke about probably having a bunch. I had signed a nondisclosure waiver and assumed there would never be a way for my progeny and me to find one another. Then the internet happened.

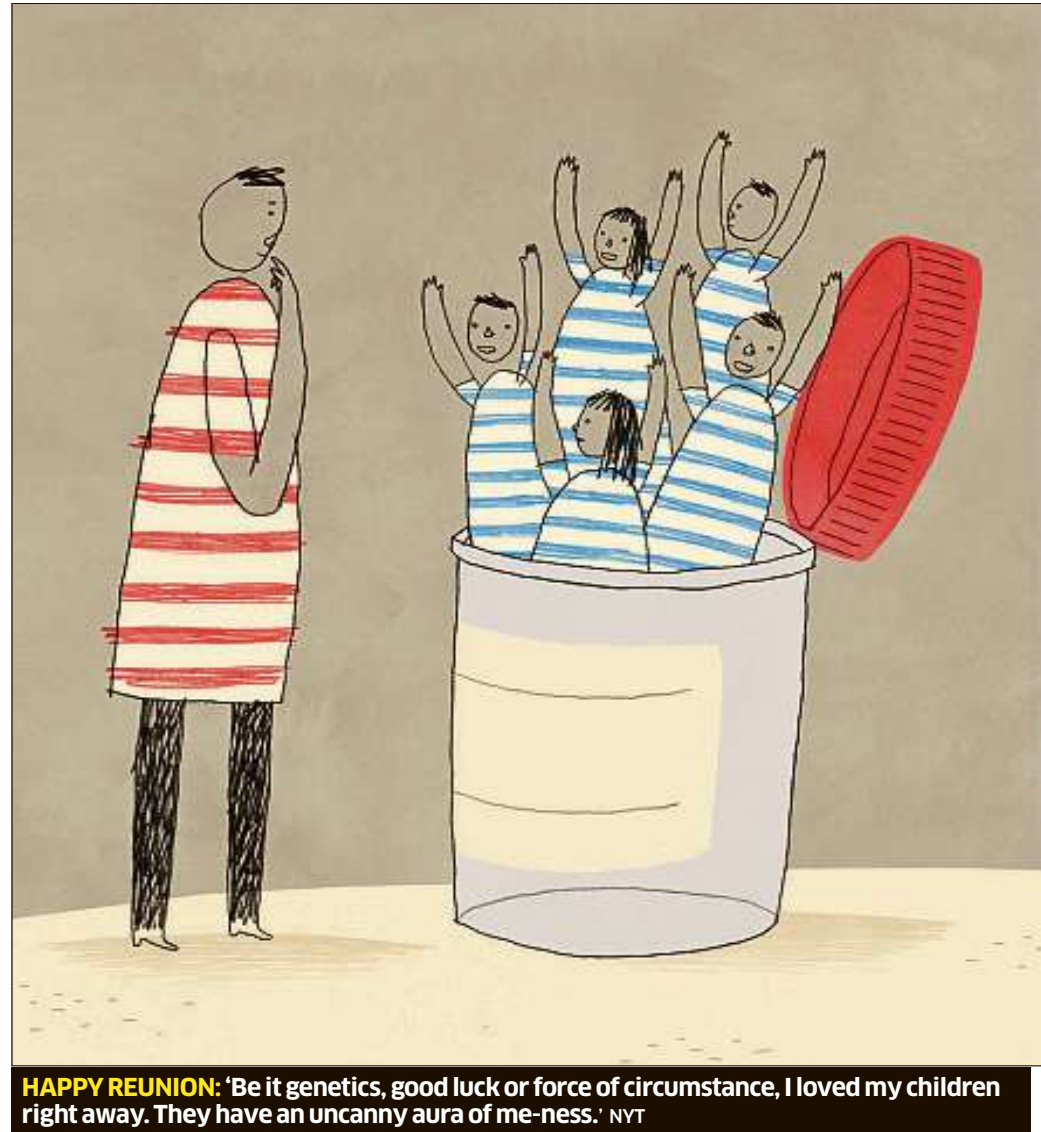
In the early 2000s, I searched online for a way to find my offspring and discovered the Donor Sibling Registry but didn't see any leads there and never got around to checking back. (I had looked way too early: my progeny began to use the site to find each other when they became teenagers in the 2010s.)

A couple of years ago, I began seeing ads for 23andMe, a service that analyses your saliva — you spit in a test tube and mail it off for analysis — and provides you with information about ancestry, health and DNA relatives. The opportunity was obvious, but I assumed the odds of finding my children were low. I procrastinated for months before curiosity and an urge to know them made me order a kit.

I got my results back, and boom: I had a son, Bryce. His full name was unusual enough that I easily Googled him, and the picture resembled me enough that I felt confident this senior geography major was mine (mine?). Guessing he had been notified of my existence by 23andMe, I mulled in agitation for a week before finally putting fingers to keyboard.

"Dear Bryce," I wrote. "I recently joined 23andMe and found you listed as my 'son,' so I believe myself to be your biological father. I hope my existence isn't a shock and wonder whether you joined in hopes of connecting with me." My letter continued awkwardly from there, giving him a brief sketch of my life.

Bryce replied almost instantly: "Dad, I cannot express how excited I am to be hearing from you. I did join 23andMe hoping that you would have already done so and was upset to see you hadn't. This is amazing though and I'm so happy. I'm



HAPPY REUNION: 'Be it genetics, good luck or force of circumstance, I loved my children right away. They have an uncanny aura of me-ness.' NYT

one of six of your children that I'm aware of and in contact with. I'm 20 years old and live on Long Island but I'm studying in upstate New York."

"Dad?" I was briefly concerned that Bryce might have some fatherly expectations of me and show up on my doorstep, but my worries were unfounded. It's a brave new world, and we're all struggling with the terminology.

More important, six children? Yikes! I did some napkin math based on the number of samples I provided and the odds of conception and estimated that I may have as many as 67 children.

Bryce connected me with Madalyn, 19. Upon viewing her Facebook page, I had my first parental thought ever: my daughter should put some more clothes on. I may be biased, but I found my children to be ridiculously attractive. I felt a sudden need to share their photos with all the ex-girlfriends who chose not to marry and procreate with me.

A few months later a new DNA relative appeared on 23andMe: Alice, age 11. Her mother, Jessica, wrote me a note. She and her former partner had each given birth to one daughter conceived with my sperm. They broke up years ago but had been raising both girls together until

recently, when the other mother moved away with the daughter she had given birth to.

Jess and I began to chat online. She knew a lot about buying sperm and self-impregnating, which was fascinating for me to learn, and, it turns out, more difficult than my role: masturbate into a cup. She also no longer identified as lesbian and was dating a man who, incredibly, had my same first and middle names (Aaron David), with a similar, monosyllabic last name. Had there been a mix-up at the Bureau of Boyfriends? Was I the one who was supposed to be dating her?

My children and I exchanged written biographies. Bryce's showed me how little I know of young adult culture and reminded me that one's 20s are a difficult decade. Madi's revealed a keen understanding of her upbringing and the parts of it she would like to break from. But it was Alice's, entitled "A series of awkward events separated by snacks," that floored me.

Hers was a hodgepodge of lists and memories written under duress ("Mom: Write or death!"). Favourite colour: "Black. Like my soul." Favourite holiday: "Halloween (because candy and murder)." She liked Alfred Hitchcock films. "Basically," she wrote, "I'm an angst teen in a

child's body." This kid's 11?

A plan developed for Bryce and Madi to come to Seattle for a couple of weeks in the summer. Jess and Alice lived a few hours south and would drive up. I figured meeting my children was going to be the closest thing I'd ever have to a wedding, so I decided to host a party.

I had told my news to a few people, but most learned of it from the "Meet My Kids Party" Facebook invitation, featuring photos of Bryce, Madi and Alice. The shock value was high.

Be it genetics, good luck or force of circumstance, I loved my children right away. They have an uncanny aura of me-ness. Bryce is shy but sharp and obsessed with memes in a way I might have had I grown up Gen Z. Alice has little use for adults, as I still don't. Madi, especially, has my sense of humour and eyes: locking gazes with her makes my brain explode, but then we laugh.

At the party, we played a nature-versus-nature question-and-answer game and discovered we were all quite liberal and that none of us believed in God. None of them, however, sleeps with a pillow between their knees, as I have long done.

The first time Jess and I found ourselves alone we hugged at length in a way entirely inappropriate for people who had just met. Jess says I have mannerisms that remind her of both of her daughters and thus felt instantly comfortable with me.

Whether we were pawns of fate or unwitting participants in a chromosomally arranged marriage, Jess and I quickly bonded. I deployed my Bureau of Boyfriends mix-up line to a grudging but sweet reception. During the vacation, she and I fell easily into the mom-and-dad role for Bryce, Madi and Alice. We soon had in-jokes and teased each other about our foibles, just like any family. I even gave Bryce and Madi a lecture about smoking.

At the end of the visit, Bryce somehow managed to get Jess and Alice kicked out of the house they were renting by climbing onto the roof to retrieve a toy, so I invited them to stay with me while they figured things out. What Jess soon figured out was that she wanted to keep staying with me. Alice rolled her eyes as if she had been tricked into a traditional family arrangement.

While 23andMe is not generally considered a dating site, Jess and I are grateful to the technology that has made our backward-formed relationship possible. We have a lot of questions about love and genetics and whether we would have felt this connection had we met in a more conventional way.

Our bond has survived the "How cool is this?" phase, though we still enjoy cybermonitoring my other progeny and speculating about how many more may emerge. (I'm up to 10 now; I have had some contact with the new ones' mothers but haven't made plans to meet yet.) Madi liked the West Coast and us and recently moved into our place. We're hoping to lure Bryce back, too.

In the end, the sci-fi trappings of our love story are irrelevant: Jess and I work as a couple because we like spending time together. I suppose it doesn't hurt that I happen to be the father of her child.

International New York Times

Exercising your arthritis away

Vikas Jain

Arthritis affects millions of people in the world and disturbs the muscles, joints and bones. Once you are diagnosed with arthritis, there is no way you can get away from exercise. Physical workouts and arthritis pain are inversely proportional to each other — the more the exercise, the less the pain.

The mere idea of walking on a treadmill or doing yoga asanas or other kinds of exercises scares arthritis patients when stiff and painful joints are already bogging them down. People go to orthopaedics for pain relief and medication eases your pain for some time but doesn't give a permanent solution to pain and stiffness.

On the other hand, exercising helps to:

- Aid joint lubrication and nourishment
- Ease your joint pain and stiffness
- Improve flexibility
- Build muscular strength
- Improve or maintain the density of your bones
- Help you maintain a healthy body weight.

Making exercise a daily habit can cure arthritis pain. Here are few exercises that an arthritis patients should follow:

Pilates

Pilates is good for stabilising your joints and strengthening the muscles that support them. Lay on your back, bend your knees and place your arms along each side of your body. Exhale through pursed lips as you contract the abdominals and lift your pelvis. Inhale through the nose and hold the position. Exhale to lower your pelvis back to the ground and repeat the exercise.

Yoga

Yoga packs two great benefits for arthritis patients. Using deep relaxation techniques, like yoga nidra, promotes a healthy immune system and helps reduce joint inflammation.

Walking

Walking is a great bone strengthening and aerobic activity. Walking builds endurance if you walk longer, but it's okay to do 10 minutes at a time.

Cycling

Whether you're riding outdoors or sitting on an upright or recumbent exercise bike, cycling avoids the pounding of high-impact aerobic activities, but still packs great cardiovascular benefits. It also strengthens the quads.

Water workout

In a lap pool (usually four-feet deep), walk from one side of the pool to the other at a brisk pace. If you workout in a health centre with an underwater treadmill, your trainer can adjust the speed of the exercise. The buoyancy of the water relieves pressure on your joints. Consider exercising using a water jogging belt. It suspends you above the pool floor so you can move without putting any pressure on your hips, knees or ankles.

Weight-lifting

Start by doing bicep curls with light hand weights, no more than 2 to 5 lbs, and build your endurance over time by adding weight and sets. Stronger muscles help you perform daily activities.

Stretching

You can stretch sitting in a chair, that helps. And you can use a Stretch-Out Strap, a nylon strap with built-in loops for your hands and feet.

Hand stretch

Spread your fingers as wide as they can go, then make a fist, and repeat that stretching and squeezing motion. If you're in the water, open and close your hands underwater, or try squeezing a foam ball. Let it absorb the water before squeezing it out again.

Zumba

It burns calories without jarring your joints. Taking twice-weekly classes will help you learn the choreography.

Elliptical training

Riding an elliptical machine is not for the exercise novice. It's ideal for people in good cardiovascular condition who want a higher-intensity, no-impact challenge. Start at a constant ramp height and constant resistance and make adjustments as you get stronger. Or choose a pre-set cross-training programme. Adding arm movements will amp up the cardiovascular benefit.

Suspension training

With suspension training, you leverage your own body weight from straps hanging from an anchor point. Place your feet in the stirrups and hold your body up with your hands or resting flat on your forearms. Holding a plank position works muscles in the abdomen, back and shoulders. Work up to a 30-second hold with a 20-second rest between reps.

(The writer is MD, Anytime Fitness)

Same-sex penguin 'couple' tickled pink by foster egg

Two male penguins who have paired up as a "same-sex couple" have become so good at nesting that zookeepers in Sydney have given them a real egg to look after.



Sea Life Sydney said they had been watching "inseparable" gentoo penguins Sphen and Magic become a "great team" during this breeding season. Initially, the pair were "constantly seen waddling around and going for swims together" and then they began to build a collective nest of pebbles.

They gathered more than any other couple, prompting the aquarium to provide a dummy egg for them to look after.

"They were absolute naturals and displayed great care for their egg, so much so, the team at Sea Life Sydney fostered a real egg to them from another couple who had two," the aquarium said.

The pair are incubating their charge well enough that "there are often days where the egg cannot be seen," it added. But there is some room for parental improvement, with staff saying younger penguin Magic is still mastering the skill.

This is not the first time same-sex penguin couples have adopted eggs in captivity, with a handful of zoos worldwide reporting similar cases. In 2009, two male penguins — Z and Vielpunkt — successfully hatched and reared a chick that was rejected by its heterosexual parents at a zoo in Berlin.

Before them came Roy and Silo, two male chinstrap penguins at a zoo in New York who were spotted frequently trying to mate with each other. After they tried to incubate a rock, zookeepers gave them a foster egg which they successfully hatched. Their foster chick, a female called Tango, eventually paired up with another female. - AFP

In Norway, rare discovery of Viking ship traces

Archaeologists say they have found what they believe are traces of a Viking ship buried in southeast Norway, a rare discovery that could shed light on the skilled navigators' expeditions in the Middle Ages.

The boatlike shape was detected about 50 cm underground in a tumulus, a burial mound, with the use of a ground-penetrating radar in Halden, a municipality located southeast of Oslo.

"In the middle of the mound, we discovered what is called an anomaly, something that is different from the rest and clearly has the shapes and dimensions of a Viking ship," Knut



Paasche, an archaeologist at the Norwegian Institute for Cultural Heritage Research (NIKU), said. "What we cannot say for sure is the condition of the conservation. Yes there was a boat there, but it's hard to say how much wood is left," he said.

The Vikings, Northern European warriors and merchants who sailed the seas between the 8th and 11th century, would bury their kings and chiefs aboard a boat hoisted onshore and left under a mound of earth.

Only three ships in good condition have been discovered in Norway, including the well-preserved Oseberg ship discovered in 1903. All three of them are exhibited in a museum near Oslo. "We need more discoveries to explain what these boats looked like and how the Vikings would sail," Paasche said.

Left without a bow and a stern, which is the back part of a ship, the traces were discovered in Halden prior to agricultural drainage operations. They are about 20 metres long, potentially making it one of the largest Viking ships discovered in Norway, according to NIKU. The institute says it now considering what to do with the discovery, but ruled out an excavation at this time of the year. - AFP

Kohinoor surrendered, not forcibly taken: RTI

CHANDIGARH: One of the largest cut diamonds in the world, the Kohinoor weighing 21.21 grams, was not forcibly taken by the British, but was instead surrendered by the erstwhile Maharaja of Lahore to the Queen of England, states a recent RTI reply.

The information has been provided by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) in response to an RTI application filed by a resident of Punjab's Ludhiana. That the Kohinoor, now housed inside the Tower of London in UK, was stolen or forcibly taken by the British, has formed part of a sizable public perception, which may not be the case.

The RTI reply received by activist Rohit Sabharwal said that 'as per the Lahore Treaty held between Lord Dalhousie and Maharaja Duleep Singh in 1849, the Kohinoor diamond was surrendered by the Maharaja of Lahore to the Queen of England'. The Lahore Treaty, according to the RTI reply by the ASI, also indicates that the Kohinoor was not handed over to the Queen on the wishes of Maharaja Duleep Singh, who was a minor at the time the treaty was signed.

Jaitley defends Ayushman Bharat plan

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Under attack over falling short of expenditure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's signature health care scheme 'Ayushman Bharat', Finance Minister Arun Jaitley on Tuesday defended the move saying the Centre's estimated savings of Rs 90,000 crore on Aadhar-based direct benefit transfer was more than enough to fund the world's largest health care programme.

The scheme was launched late last month with an estimated Rs 2,000 crore funding plan in the first year as announced in the Union Budget 2018-19.

However, critics have raised questions on whether the budgeted sum is enough to fund the scheme that intends to serve 50 crore people.

Last week senior Congress leader and former finance minister had sought to know where was the money to finance such a large healthcare project. He pointed Rs 2,000 crore would not even suffice for two lakh patients.

Jaitley, however, said that the Aadhar-based direct benefit transfer programme helped the government save over Rs 90,000 crore every year and that would be more than enough to support Ayushman Bharat.

NGT slaps Rs 50 cr fine on Delhi govt

NEW DELHI, DHNS: The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Tuesday fined the Delhi government with Rs 50 crore for failing to act against steel pickling units.

The unit are being run in residential areas despite falling under the prohibited list of industrial activity as per the Delhi Master Plan (DMP), 2021.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel rapped the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government for not closing the industrial units despite its specific directions.

The NGT also directed the Delhi government to shut these units with immediate effect.

The order came on a plea filed by an NGO, the All India Lokadhikar Sangthan, seeking the execution of an order by which the green panel had directed the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) to take action against the stainless steel pickling industries.

The plea claimed that such units functioning at Wazirpur discharged effluent in open drains, which ultimately met Yamuna river.

Pickling is the process of removing impurities such as stains and inorganic contaminants from metals.

Only 7IITs, IISc figure on top 500 world varisities' list

Despite being world's largest network of higher education

Prakash Kumar

NEW DELHI, DHNS: At a time when the government is hoping to make India a hub of education for foreign students, just a handful of Indian higher education institutions have made it to the list of world's top 500 universities.

The rankings were released by two reputed international rating agencies for the year, 2018. India has the world's largest network of higher education institutions with a total of 903 universities; 39,050 colleges and 10,011 standalone institutions.

In the latest international ranking of the world univer-

sities by the Quacquarelli Symonds (QS), merely nine higher education institutions from India have figured in the list of top 500 universities.

The nine institutions include Indian Institute of Science (IISc), Bengaluru; seven Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) and Delhi University.

Releasing its latest report, the QS has declared IIT-Bombay number one in India compared to other Indian institutions.

While IIT-Bombay was given the 162 rank among the top 500 universities in the world, IISc, placed second in India, got 170 rank and IIT-Delhi received 172 rank.

IIT-Madras grabbed 264th

position the QS' list, IIT-Kanpur 283, IIT-Kharagpur 295, IIT-Roorkee 381, IIT-Guwahati 472 and Delhi University 487.

The QS declared that IIT Madras as third best higher education institution in India, IIT-Delhi fourth, IIT Kharagpur fifth, IIT Roorkee ninth and IIT Guwahati tenth.

University of Hyderabad and University of Delhi were placed at seventh and eighth position in India as compared to other Indian higher education institutions assessed by the QS for their quality and standards on various parameters. The number of Indian higher education institutions figuring in the Times Higher Education world university rankings-2019, released recently, was also very low with just five of the Indian institutions making it to the list of top

500 in the world. The international rating agency placed IISc in the 251-300 band, IIT-Indore 351-400 band, IIT-Bombay 401-500 band, IIT Roorkee in 401-500 band and JSS Academy of Higher Education and Research, Mysuru, in the band of 401-500.

The Union government in April rolled out a 'Study in India' programme to increase the number of foreign students, offering them as many as 50,000 seats for admission in various disciplines in the country's 160 higher education institutions which included the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) and the IITs.

A total of 46,144 students were enrolled to higher education institutions in India in 2017-18 with the highest number of students taking admission from Nepal (25%) followed by Afghanistan (9.5%).

QUALITY MATTERS

Quacquarelli Symonds's rating of top 500 universities in the world

9

Only higher education institutions from India figure in the list.

IIT-Bombay - 162*
IISc, Bengaluru - 170
IIT-Delhi - 172*
IIT-Madras - 264*
IIT-Kanpur - 283*
IIT-Kharagpur - 295*
IIT-Roorkee - 381*
IIT-Guwahati - 472*
Delhi University - 487*



*Rank

MP's son waves pistol at couple outside hotel

Accused was booked under Arms Act

NEW DELHI, DHNS: Son of a former Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) MP landed in trouble on Tuesday after a video of him brandishing a pistol went viral on social media. The incident took place at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in the national capital late on Saturday.

As the video footage kicked up a row, Delhi police swung into action and lodged an FIR against the gun-toting man, identified as Ashish Pandey, son of former BSP Member of Parliament Rakesh Pandey, under the Arms Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC). It also launched a hunt to nab the accused.

In the video footage, Pandey is seen waving a pistol and threatening a couple in the foyer of a five-star hotel. A woman, who was with Pandey, also joined him in threatening



Ex BSP MP's son threatens couple with pistol outside five-star hotel at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in the national capital late on Saturday.

the couple as the hotel staff rushed in to calm them down.

Pandey hails from Lucknow. His brother Ritesh Pandey is a sitting BSP MLA (Member of Legislative Assembly) in Uttar Pradesh, according to police.

"Delhi Police has initiated action on this incident. FIR has been registered under Arms Act and IPC. Strong and appropriate action will be taken. Also verifying the identity of others," Union Minister for Home Affairs Kiren Rijiju tweeted. Joint Commissioner of Police (New Delhi) Ajay Chaudhary said the police team are on the lookout for Pandey in coordination with the Uttar Pradesh police.

"No complaint was lodged by the victim and the hotel staff on the same day. There is negligence on the part of three parties—the victim, hotel authorities and the accused," he said.

Amid boycott, threats, civic polls in J&K end peacefully

SRINAGAR, DHNS: Amid boycott call by separatists, threats by militants and regional parties staying away from the poll process, municipal elections in Jammu and Kashmir ended peacefully on Tuesday with 4.2% polling recorded in fourth and the last phase of the exercise.

Poll officials said 4.2% voting was recorded in the last phase of the election with Srinagar recording 4% and neighbouring Ganderbal 11.3%. The overall voting percentage for all four phases in the Kashmir valley was just 5% while in Jammu region, the polling was brisk at about 68%.

In the previous three phases, the voter turnout in Kashmir remained 8.2%, 3.4% and 3.5% respectively. The average polling in all four phases of the elections in the state was 35.1%, they said. The counting of votes will take place on October 20.

Barring few incidents of stone-pelting in some areas, the polling in all the four phases ended peacefully. Authorities had made adequate security arrangements for all the four phases of the elections. The election in the fourth phase was held for 24 wards of Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) and 12 wards of Ganderbal municipal committee. Candidates had been declared elected unopposed in one ward of SMC and five wards of Ganderbal municipal committee. 156 candidates were in the fray for the fourth phase for which 308 polling stations had been established for 2,50,794 electorate.

There was no election for municipal committees of Patan, Pampore, Khrew, Pulwama, Shopian and Doorn-Verinag as candidates were either elected unopposed or there were no contestants at all.



ACTING AGAINST LAW: People protesting against the fourth phase of Municipal elections throw stones at security personnel during a clash, near a polling station in Srinagar on Tuesday.

Arunachal MP writes to Modi over Chinese intrusion

Sumir Karmakar

GUWAHATI, DHNS: The reported "intrusion" by Chinese troops recently in Arunachal Pradesh left many in the eastern frontier state worried with Congress MP Ninong Ering urging Prime Minister Narendra Modi to raise the issue during his meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in November.

"At many instances in recent times, Chinese troops have tried to enter into Arunachal Pradesh and build roads. You must intervene in such incidents and ask China to respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of India, for a peaceful co-existence, as envisaged in the historic Panchasheel agreement," Ering's

letter to the PMO, submitted on Monday said. Ering cited media reports and inputs by local residents in Dibang Valley district in July, who informed Indian army men that People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops had intruded towards Anini town in Arunachal Pradesh. Indian army troops had raised the issue with the PLA prompting them to go back.

The matter came to light on Monday, a day before MoS defence Subhash Bhamre visited Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh bordering China to inaugurate a clinic for ex-servicemen and meet the army commanders guarding the disputed McMahon Line with China. The issue is likely to come up in his meeting at Tawang, situated atop 10,000 feet, bordering China,

army sources on Tuesday said. Citing similar reports of intrusion by PLA, many in Arunachal Pradesh wants Modi to take up the issue of intrusion and stapled visas offered to residents of the frontier state by China, when he is scheduled to meet Xi Jinping on the sidelines of G20 Summit.

China gives stapled visa to residents of Arunachal Pradesh, a practice normally adopted by the counties hostile to each other. "The issue of stapled visa provided by China to the residents of state must be brought to their attention tactfully. The government must assert the territorial integrity of India, and convey the feelings of Arunachal Pradesh people in firm manner," Ering's letter said.

Court admits PIL to capture, not kill, man eater tigress

MUMBAI, DHNS: Even as India's biggest manhunt is underway to track down tigress Avni or T1 over the last 45 days, the Bombay High Court on Tuesday admitted a petition that prayed that the animal be tranquilised and captured and not eliminated.

Camera traps, drones, sniffer dogs and a hang-glider have been deployed to search for T1 - considered a "man eater" - in areas surrounding the Pandharkawada forest in Yavatmal district in Vidarbha region of

Maharashtra. According to reports, the tigress has claimed over a dozen lives in the area - prompting the Maharashtra government to track her for elimination.

The PIL filed by Mumbai-based Earth Brigade Foundation and Dr Jerryl Avinash Banait, a medical practitioner from Nagpur, was admitted by a division bench of the Bombay High Court.

"The petition would come up for hearing on 19 October," Dr Banait told *DH* over phone.

The respondents in the petition include Maharashtra Government, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, National Tiger Conservation Authority, among others.

A petition in Change.org said: ".....the state Forest department has issued forest 'shoot to kill' order in the name of Avni. The order itself is ambiguous, as it orders to "tranquillise and capture Avni" in one place, and "shoot to kill Avni if she can't be captured" in another place.

Maoists blast railway tracks

PATNA, DHNS: Passengers travelling by Ludhiana-Dhanbad Express had a miraculous escape on Monday late night when Maoists blew up the railway tracks barely few minutes after the train crossed the route.

Maoists, owing allegiance to the banned outfit CPI (Maoist), had given a two-day bandh call on October 16-17 to protest death sentence awarded to their two colleagues who were found guilty in the killing of Pakur SP, Amarjit Balihar.

The young IPS officer was blown up in his official vehicle in 2013 while he was return-

ing to Pakur after attending an official meet at Dumka (in Jharkhand).

"The original plan of the Maoists was to blow up Ludhiana-Dhanbad Express. The underground rebels blew up the tracks on Up line at 10.45 pm near Choudhary Baandh station (on Dhanbad-New Delhi route) on Monday. Within two minutes, they blew up the railway tracks on Down line as well at 10.47 pm," a senior police official in Jharkhand told *DH* here on Tuesday.

"Such was the intensity of the blast that around two metres of the railway tracks were

uprooted," the source added. Several important trains, including Bhubaneswar-New Delhi Rajdhani Express, Kalka Mail and Utkal Express pass through the main route which also connects Howrah with the national capital.

Soon after the twin blasts, movement of most of the trains was stopped on this section. "Some of the trains were diverted in the late night. However, the damaged tracks have now been repaired and the railway traffic restored," a senior official in the East Central Railway (ECR) told Deccan Herald.

Treasure trove



Panchaloha idols recovered after a bulgury from a temple in Madurai on Tuesday.

Godman gets life term for murder

Gautam Dheer

CHANDIGARH, DHNS: A powerful self-styled Haryana 'godman', 63-year-old Rampal Dass, was on Tuesday sentenced to life imprisonment by a court in Hisar in Haryana in a case of murder.

In another case of murder in which he was found guilty last week, the court will pronounce the verdict on Wednesday.

Founder of Satlok Ashram in Hisar, Rampal was a junior engineer with the Ir-

rigation department before he self-proclaimed himself as a 'Jagat Guru'. The area has been put on high alert in wake of the sentencing of the sect head.

Heavy police force has been deployed to prevent a repeat of the violent protest that took place in the state after the conviction of jailed Dera Sacha Sauda chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh in two rape cases last year. As many as 40 people had died in police firing that took place after Gurmeet Ram

Rahim was convicted.

Murder

The two cases against Rampal pertain to the murder of five women and a toddler inside the sect. Bloody violent clashes had broken out between the police and thousands of sect followers, who were resisting the arrest of the self-styled godman in another case. Along with Rampal, the other co-accused have also been sentenced to life imprisonment. Rampal had evaded appearance before the Punjab and

Haryana High Court in Chandigarh in another case after which the court ordered the police to arrest him. Rampal was finally arrested in November 2014 after a two-week long stand-off between his followers and police at his Ashram.

The stand-off led to the death of women and a child. Rampal's army of followers clashed as security personnel tried to move into the ashram. While Rampal claimed the deaths were because of the police action, the court held all accused guilty of murder.

Woman jumps into well with 5 kids, booked

AHMEDABAD, PTI: Battling poverty, a woman allegedly threw her five children into a well, leading to the death of four of them, before she herself jumped into it in Gujarat's Bhavnagar district, police said on Tuesday.

The woman and one of her children survived in the incident which took place Monday night at Panchpipla village in Bhavnagar, an official at Alang police station said.

The woman appeared mentally disturbed and claimed "she saw ghosts whenever she closed her eyes," he said.

Gitaben Bhalia (40) left her home at Royal village in Bhavnagar on Monday evening after telling her husband Dharamsinh Bhalia that she was taking her five children to visit a temple at the nearby Panchpipla village, he said.

After reaching Panchpipla, located around 170 km from here, she threw her five children into the well and then herself jumped into it, he said.

Four of the children - a daughter and three sons aged between 1.5 and 7 years - drowned, while the woman and her eldest daughter, aged 8, survived, the official said.

Some villagers raised an alarm and called the police on Monday night after which the bodies were fished out from the well, he said.

The woman was arrested and booked under IPC sections 302 (murder) and 307 (attempt to murder), the official said.

He said during interrogation, the woman, whose husband is a farm labourer, mentioned that she was fed up with life as she was unable to look after her children due to poverty.

She also suffered from weak eyesight which compounded her problems, he said.

'Mob lynching ignored in Raj assembly'

JAIPUR, DHNS: In the 14th Legislative Assembly of Rajasthan, Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje and her three cabinet ministers' attendance in the last five years is 'zero', claimed an Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) report.

The report compiled by ADR on the basis of RTI evaluates the performance of MLAs in the Legislative Assembly. The report claims that the attendance of CM along with home minister Gulabchand Kataria, PHED minister Yunus Khan and tribal area development minister Nandlal Meena during Assembly sittings was zero. Elaborating, Anil Verma, national coordinator of ADR, said that it appears that these leaders may not have registered their attendance in the Assembly.

Lynching ignored

The report also suggests that issues like violence against women, atrocities against Dalits and minorities and mob lynching were ignored in the Assembly. The ADR has prepared the report in association with S R Abhiyan and Rajasthan Election Watch and was released at Pink City Press Club.

Interestingly, out of the 42,452 questions asked in 11 sittings of the Assembly, 3,325 and 2,970 were related to education and healthcare respectively. Renuka Pamecha, coordinator of Rajasthan Election Watch said, "Questions related to crime and mob lynching were blatantly ignored in the Assembly".

Ex-CM Gehlot mum

Former chief minister Ashok Gehlot has not asked a single question during the 11 sittings of the Assembly. Nikhil Dey of S R Abhiyan slammed Gehlot and said, "Gehlot as an elected MLA from Sardarpura, Jodhpur should have asked questions. Instead, he never misses any opportunity to question Raje government through his social media accounts".

The report reveals his dismal appearance in the assembly as he attended just 25 days out of 139 days of proceedings in 11 sittings.