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INSIDE

J&K TERROR ATTACK: 2 DRIVERS KILLED, 1 INJURED IN SHOPIAN
PAGE 12



AMID CHILL, INDIA & PAK SIGN PACT ON KARTARPUR
PAGE 11

SC UPHOLDS GOVT'S ₹92,000-CR DUES DEMAND FROM TELCOS
PAGE 23

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RETURNS IN MAHARASHTRA, IN THE RUNNING IN HARYANA, LOSES SOME GROUND IN BOTH STATES

BJP, but...

BJP-Sena back, but shaken by Pawar play

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE & VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

THE RULING BJP-Shiv Sena alliance returned to power in Maharashtra Thursday, winning 161 of the 288 seats in the state Assembly. But the poll results did not go according to script with the BJP suffering reverses in Vidarbha and Marathwada and, in the process, managing 105 seats — way below the halfway mark of 144 which it hoped to attain on its own, and less than its strength of 122 in the previous House.

With the results in, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, only the second Chief Minister in Maharashtra in 47 years after Vasantao Naik to complete the full five-year term, conceded his

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6



Devendra Fadnavis in Mumbai; Gopal Kanda (left) on a chartered flight to Delhi. Pradip Das, Twitter



Khattar's 2nd term banks on Independents & Kanda

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 24

STRANDED AT 40 seats, six short of an absolute majority, the BJP Thursday scrambled to secure a second consecutive innings at the helm in Haryana. It sought the support of six party rebels and INLD chief Om Prakash Chautala's estranged brother

Ranjit Chautala, all of whom won as Independents — and Haryana Lokhit Party's Gopal Kanda.

BJP sources told *The Indian Express* that the oath-taking ceremony is likely to be held Friday evening. "As soon as the BJP once again forms the government in Haryana, public work will speed up through an honest and accountable government in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

Rahul stays in shadow as Congress sees a glimmer

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

HIS SILENCE Thursday is also the story of the Congress this Assembly election. While the party put up a brave face and its leaders pointed to a resurgence in Haryana and a better-than-2014 performance in Maharashtra

despite a slow-off-the-blocks campaign, Rahul Gandhi, until midnight, had not made a single comment, not even on Twitter.

While AICC general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on a visit to Rae Bareilly, said she was "really happy" with the party's performance in Haryana and "the fact that here in UP our vote percentage has increased from the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

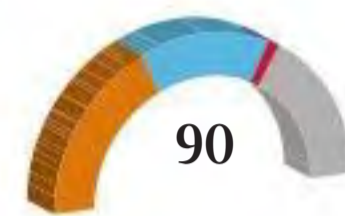
ASSEMBLY ELECTION RESULTS 2019

MAHARASHTRA



BJP	105 (-17)	25.75%*
Shiv Sena	56 (-7)	16.41%
NCP	54 (+13)	16.71%
INC	44 (+2)	15.87%
Others	29 (+9)	25.26%

HARYANA



BJP	40 (-7)	36.49%
INC	31 (+16)	28.08%
JJP	10 (NA)	NA
INLD	1 (-18)	2.44%
Others	8 (-1)	32.99%

FULL COVERAGE, PAGES 14-20

*Vote share percentage

Result till 12:30 am (Source: ECI)

How 303 plus 370 didn't quite add up this time

RAVISH TIWARI & LIZ MATHEW
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

BOTH PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and BJP national president Minister Amit Shah congratulated party workers Thursday evening and applauded the results in Maharashtra and Haryana. Although the party was below the halfway mark, Modi called the Haryana result an "unprecedented" achievement, cited the 3 per cent increase in the party's vote share over the last

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



Assembly elections and flagged the fact that BJP, a minor player before 2014, was all set to return for a second term in power.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

30 YEARS

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EXPLAINED: THE BJP'S MAHARASHTRA PLAN HAS NOT GONE BY THE SCRIPT, HERE'S WHY

From the high of the 2019 Lok Sabha election results when it managed to win 23 of the 48 seats in Maharashtra, the BJP has got a reality check in the Maharashtra Assembly polls. The party's strategy of poaching leaders from other parties also seems to have not gone down well

VIDEO OF THE DAY



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MAHARASHTRA, HARYANA ELECTIONS

Dushyant Chautala's JPP could be kingmaker in Haryana

EXPRESS AUDIO

Maharashtra and Haryana election result analysis

On this episode of 3 Things, reporters dissect what the voting patterns across the two states signal, what role the JPP will play in Haryana and how the Shiv Sena's performance will give it more bargaining power

FROM PAGE ONE

How 303 plus 370 didn't quite add up this time

However, in the party headquarters, there was no mistaking the low-key nature of the celebrations.

For, the BJP, riding on the high of its 303 Lok Sabha seats, the high-octane pitch on Article 370 and a call to expel all illegal migrants and implement the National Register of Citizens across the nation, had lost seats in both states.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, BJP general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya, who was in charge of Haryana when the BJP won the 2014 polls, said: "The PM's popularity and Shah's leadership brought the BJP back to power in both the states. The party could have done better micromanagement on the ground. Our workers could have been deployed more effectively to mobilise support and consolidate votes."

The BJP, which had led in 79 of Haryana's 90 Assembly segments in the Lok Sabha elections barely five months ago fell to 40. In a state that, ironically, provides a healthy recruiting ground to the armed forces and when apart from state leadership, both Modi and Shah repeatedly highlighted Kashmir and Article 370 in their rallies.

Modi addressed 16 rallies ahead of the October 21 polling in these two states, Shah held 25. In Maharashtra, the party fell well short of NDA's target of 220+ despite a wave of defections — most engineered by the BJP — from the Opposition Congress and NCP which had faced their worst electoral results in the Lok Sabha elections. The BJP won 105 seats of 164 as against the 122 it won from 260 seats it contested last time. In the Lok Sabha elections, BJP was leading in 125 Assembly seats and Shiv Sena led in 105 seats totalling 230 of 288. Apart from the slip in Shiv Sena, the BJP slipped in Vidarbha, the home turf of chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, and Western Maharashtra where it had lured many from the Opposition ranks.

"We were expecting to win a majority on our own in Maharashtra. Now that we need to rely on Sena to form the

government, it could be more demanding," said a senior party leader underlining that the BJP will face changed equations in a state with a more confident Opposition led by Sharad Pawar's NCP and, of course, a more aggressive Sena.

The verdict in these two states is being seen as a message to the BJP-led government as well as its leadership that voters differentiate between a national election and state polls. And that national issues may not always outweigh local issues. The results may nudge its attention towards the economic slowdown which, incidentally, has been publicly contested and downplayed. Indeed, at least three leaders in the party indicated that the setback in the two states could have been influenced by aspects of economic distress.

The results also highlight the limitations of vilifying the politically dominant communities in these states. The BJP tried to rally numerically smaller and the politically less dominant communities against Marathas (Maharashtra) and Jats (Haryana). The fact that it lost significant ground right in the backyard of its CMs, Vidarbha (Fadnavis) and North Haryana (Khattar), puts a question mark on the effectiveness of its regional satraps to hold the party's fort against dominant caste politics. Party sources said the BJP leadership "relied" on these satraps without "paying heed" to other leaders including ministers which led to a number of rebel candidates fighting against official candidates.

Some BJP leaders admitted that the results will also be factored in as the party plans for upcoming elections in Jharkhand and Delhi. The results are also a signal to BJP's unconventional choices as CMs — Raghubar Das (Jharkhand), Yogi Adityanath (UP), Triwendra Rawat (Uttarakhand), Jairam Thakur (Himachal Pradesh), Vijay Rupani (Gujarat), Sarbananda Sonowal (Assam), Biplob Thakur (Tripura) among others — that "some of them may have mistaken Modi's popularity as endorsement of his leadership," said an insider.

The struggling Opposition can seek some comfort in the fact that the results fit a pattern

that indicates the BJP finds it hard to improve its performance in states where it's already in power and is seeking re-election.

Modi's dramatic and sweeping victory in 2014 upset many a calculation and the BJP won Maharashtra (2014), Jharkhand (2014), Assam (2016), Uttar Pradesh (2017), Uttarakhand (2017) and Karnataka (2018) — but in all these states, it was in opposition. However, it has struggled to improve its position in states where it was seeking re-election: Gujarat (2017), Madhya Pradesh (2018), Rajasthan (2018) and Chhattisgarh (2018). Indeed, it took Modi's concerted personal push to stage off a setback in his native Gujarat in 2017.

This trend is also reinforced by the results of Assembly by-polls where the party is in power — Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat and Bihar. The BJP has won seven of 11 seats that went to polls in UP Assembly. The party won three of six seats in Gujarat and in Bihar, the ruling alliance won only one of the five seats. This when Assembly bypolls are generally considered an easy win for the ruling establishment.

Khattar's 2nd term banks on Independents and Kanda

state," Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar said.

The late-night developments were prompted by the setback received by the BJP when the Assembly poll results came in earlier in the day: A resurgent Congress led by Bhupinder Singh Hooda claimed 31 seats and the newly formed Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) of Dushyant Chautala won 10.

Both the Jat leaders severely dented the BJP's poll call of "Abki baar 75 paar (Over 75 seats this time)" — the ruling party had gone to polls with 48 MLAs after winning the Jind by-poll in January.

More embarrassing for the party was that barring Khattar and Health Minister Anil Vij, all their five Cabinet colleagues, their party's state unit chief and a minister of state, lost badly to either Congress or JJP candidates.

The Congress claimed more than double its tally of 15 in 2014, and the JJP opened its account by reaching double digits. The results came just five months after Haryana voted for the BJP in all the 10 Lok Sabha seats with huge margins.

As the results became clear, it was initially expected that Dushyant Chautala, the son of Ajay Chautala and grandson of Om Prakash Chautala, would play the kingmaker in deciding the next government. But the BJP decided to go with the

BJP, but...

party's failure to contain "rebels" — at least 30 rebels of the BJP and Sena upset their calculations. He said the people have given the alliance a decisive mandate to form the government for a second consecutive term.

But Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray lost no time to "re-mind" the BJP about the "equal" or "50-50 power-sharing" formula for all berths in the new government. This was also interpreted as Senaspeak for rotating the post of the Chief Minister.

"We all know that when the alliance was forged before the Lok Sabha polls, the 50:50 formula was decided. There is no need to hide it now. It was also decided that seat sharing would be 144-144. BJP state president Chandrakant Patil had then said I should understand the BJP's problems in seat sharing. I understood their problems and accepted a smaller share of the seats. But if their problems are going to increase, then I can't understand all their problems," Thackeray told reporters at the Sena headquarters in Dadar.

He said he needs to expand his party. "So, all senior leaders from both parties will sit to-

gether and we will take a decision on the formula. Then we will stake claim to government formation," he said. This, he said, was not a "warning" to the BJP but "just a reminder" of what had been discussed.

Earlier, when the results were coming in, Fadnavis spoke to Thackeray. He defended the BJP's performance: "In 2014, the party contested 260 seats and won 122. Whereas now, it contested 164 and won 102 (that figure changed to 105 later)." In the past, the "strike rate" was 47% and vote share 28%. This time, the "strike rate" jumped to 70% while the vote share was 25.75%.

For the Sena though, the score of 56 was a disappointment. Its "strike rate" was just 45% as against BJP's 70%. Describing the elections as an "eye opener", Thackeray said, "I feel proud that people of the state have kept democracy alive. When some people started walking with some assumptions, it appears people brought them to ground reality. It is a lesson for all political parties."

What came in the way of BJP plans was the pushback by Maratha strongman Sharad Pawar in the face of action by

enforcement agencies against him and his colleague Praful Patel in the last days of the election campaign. His NCP won 54 seats, a gain of 13, compared to the 2014 assembly polls. Its ally Congress, which almost seemed to have given up, also bagged 44 seats, two more than in 2014. Together, they neared the three-digit figure, lending the Opposition more voice in the House.

During the campaign, Pawar took on the central and state leadership of the BJP. This helped NCP retain sway over western Maharashtra. In fact, he salvaged the situation for the Congress which appeared leaderless throughout the campaign. "The mandate is for us to sit in Opposition," Pawar admitted. But he took a swipe at the BJP-Sena for inducting rebels of the rival camp. "The elections have shown people are not ready to accept turncoats who desert the party."

Fadnavis too acknowledged that rising aspirations of party workers had many rebels entering the fray. "We could not contain this... But almost 15 rebels who have been elected had expressed their support to the alliance post polls. We are considering their support as

they are our party workers," he said.

Although the BJP has kept its analysis on hold for now, the results show that the party didn't fare too well in Vidarbha, which is Fadnavis's backyard, and Marathwada, besides western Maharashtra.

In cotton-growing Vidarbha, where the BJP had peaked with 44 of 62 seats in 2014, it lost nine seats. Similarly, in western Maharashtra where it won 25 of 72, it lost nine seats. The party lost three seats each in north Maharashtra and Marathwada.

Former Congress Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan said: "The BJP's poor performance shows the impact of economic slowdown and rising unemployment. The people have rejected central BJP leaders' emotive campaign on cultural nationalism."

In fact, a section of the state BJP believes that the central leadership's aggressive campaign focus on Article 370 was a tactical mistake. "Especially, at a time when the entire Marathwada and western Maharashtra were badly hit by drought and floods," a state BJP leader said.

seven Independents and Gopal Kanda.

However, the inclusion of Kanda — he took a chartered flight with Ranjit Chautala to New Delhi Thursday evening to meet the BJP leadership — is bound to raise eyebrows.

In August 2012, while serving as Home Minister in the then Congress-led state government under Hooda, Kanda was arrested after a former air hostess with MDLR airlines, which he owned, committed suicide after accusing him of harassment. In February 2013, the air hostess's mother, too, committed suicide.

In March 2014, the Delhi High Court dropped charges of sexual exploitation against Kanda and released him on bail. But he continues to face trial on other charges, apart from a number of other cases including for illegally developing a property in Sirsa.

In May 2014, Kanda and his brother Govind Kanda started HLP and contested the 2014 state polls from Sirsa, but without success. This time, Kanda won the Sirsa seat by a mere 602 votes. Incidentally, Govind Kanda lost to Ranjit Chautala, who was denied a Congress ticket and contested as an Independent, by 19,431 votes in Rania.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Govind Kanda said: "The BJP sent an aircraft, and my brother and Ranjit Chautala have flown to New Delhi to meet Amit Shah. We are sup-

porting BJP, it's a homecoming for us. Our late father Murli Dhar had joined RSS in 1926 and contested on an RSS-backed poll symbol from Sirsa in 1952."

Govind Kanda claimed that they had sought a pre-poll tie-up with the BJP and asked for two seats, which was denied. "Any decision of merging HLP with the BJP will be taken later," he said.

The six BJP rebels who won as independents were Nayan Pal Rawat from Prithla, Randhir Singh Gollan from Pundri, Rakesh Daultabad from Badshahpur, Sombir Sangwan from Dadri, Balraj Kundu from Meham and Dharampal Gonder from Nilokheri.

Thursday's result, however, was a severe indictment of the BJP's poll strategy. Significantly, its "nationalism" pitch did not resonate at the ground level. While the BJP focussed on the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K and the Balakot air strikes, more than its governance, Congress and JJP highlighted core state-specific issues.

The caste factor appeared to have played a role, too, with at least 13 Jat candidates winning across the state. In two Jat-dominated districts of Rohtak and Sonapat, which cover 10 segments, the Congress won seven seats, while the BJP managed only three.

Among the BJP Jat leaders who lost was Finance Minister Capt Abhimanyu who was de-

feated by JJP's Ram Kumar Gautam. The other big losses for the party were: Education Minister Rambilas Sharma, Agriculture Minister Om Prakash Dhankar, Women and Child Development Minister Kavita Jain, Transport Minister Krishan Panwar and Minister of State Krishan Kumar Bedi.

The party's choice of candidates also backfired. Replacing 12 of its sitting MLAs and depending on deserters from other parties failed to work — 11 had switched over to INLD (seven lost, four won), and two from Congress (both won).

Besides, its move to pitch top sportspersons in Opposition strongholds flopped. Olympian wrestlers Yogeshwar Dutt and Babita Phogat lost from the Jat-dominated areas of Baroda and Dadri, respectively — Phogat ended third. The lone bright spot was the victory of former hockey captain Sandeep Singh in Pehowa, a Punjabi Sikh-dominated constituency.

Rahul stays in shadow as Congress sees a glimmer

Lok Sabha elections", it was left to other party leaders to lift morale and take on the BJP. And they made no secret of the fact that the showing could have been much better had key de-

isions been taken early in the run-up to the elections.

Senior leaders said the Haryana outcome is a message to the Congress and the Opposition that the BJP can be fought. While underlining that it "dispels the false perception that... the BJP is invincible and the Opposition has capitulated", Anand Sharma, who is also a member of the Congress Working Committee, said: "(Bhupinder Singh) Hooda has led an inspired fightback. The organisational change should have taken place much earlier. In retrospect, I can say that had it been earlier, we would have got a clear majority."

Party veteran and Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, in a television interview, made similar remarks.

The party has gone down fighting in Haryana — it has managed to more than double its tally — and credit for the resurgence is being attributed to Hooda. This is likely to strengthen the hands of the old guard in the organisation and weaken Rahul Gandhi's position considerably. A churn has already begun in the party with veterans openly saying that the party could have emerged victorious had Hooda been given charge of the state earlier.

Congress leaders said the key takeaway for the party from the Haryana numbers is that the BJP can be challenged in state elections if the party has a strong local leader who can exploit the anti-incumbency

mood. During the campaign, Hooda did not mention the Prime Minister's name or any big national issue, focusing instead on purely local issues.

With Delhi and Jharkhand going to polls in the next few months, party leaders say it is time to empower established state leaders.

According to Congress leaders, it was Rahul who delayed the leadership change in Haryana, overruling the old guard who had argued that Ashok Tanwar had neither been able to inspire confidence among the rank and file nor unify the party. The party went to Lok Sabha elections with Tanwar, a Rahul protege, at the helm. After considerable pressure, he was replaced by Kumari Selja and Hooda was made CLP leader, barely a month before elections by Sonia Gandhi who returned as party chief.

"We are ourselves to blame. For five years, we humiliated a tall leader (Hooda)," said another CWC member. Many leaders said Sonia's decision to set up a panel to craft the party's strategy on important issues itself was a reflection of the changing dynamics in the party. Sources said there had been demands, ever since the Lok Sabha election defeat, for collective thinking and decision-making in the party.

Several leaders in the Congress said the party did not fight as a national party in these elections. They pointed out that even a coordination committee consisting of top leaders was set up barely 10 days ahead of the elections. "That gives you an idea how well prepared we were. The committee met for the first time on October 11 and then once or twice after that," a leader said. Rahul himself took a back seat in these elections. Unlike in the past, he did not campaign much in Haryana.

While Sonia did not campaign at all, Rahul addressed only seven rallies — five in Maharashtra and two in Haryana. He addressed the second rally in Mahendragarh after Sonia pulled out at the last minute. Sources said there was not much demand from Congress candidates for Rahul's rallies this time in Haryana. In Maharashtra too, the party suffered in Mumbai where a tug-of-war between Rahul loyalists Sanjay Nirupam and Milind Deora went on during the campaign period.

Many Congress leaders had been critical of Rahul's style of appointing working presidents in states. "Appointment of a president and a host of working presidents has proved to be counter-productive. Sonia did not appoint working presidents either in Haryana or in Delhi. Just months ago, Rahul appointed a president and working president in Maharashtra. All of them contested elections, leaving the organisation headless," a senior leader said.

Court adjourns hearing in Ishrat Jahan case

Ahmedabad: The special CBI court in Ahmedabad adjourned the hearing in the Ishrat Jahan encounter case for a third time this month, on Thursday, after the special public prosecutor of the CBI sought the court's leave owing to his necessary appearance at the Gujarat High Court. At the last hearing on October 17, the matter had to be adjourned as certified copies of several documents were not made available to the lawyers of the four accused. The matter is now expected to be heard next on November 13. **ENS**

MP considers introducing eggs in anganwadi menu

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, OCTOBER 24

THE CONGRESS government in Madhya Pradesh is considering a proposal to include eggs in the anganwadi menu in 89 tribal blocks as supplementary nutrition under the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme.

A presentation made before Chief Minister Kamal Nath informed him that the inclusion of protein-rich eggs in the anganwadi menu could go a long way to tackle the challenge of malnutrition and under-nutrition, espe-

cially in tribal dominated areas of the state.

Right to Food campaigner Sachin Jain wrote a letter to the CM last month requesting that eggs be included in the menu at the earliest and how it was important step towards management of under-nutrition.

"The problem of high levels of child malnutrition in the state is well acknowledged. Despite some improvements over last decade, the level of under-nutrition is still very high, with 42 per cent of children under 5 being stunted. The immediate determinants of under nutrition are poor diet and ill health (infections),

Addressing malnutrition comprehensively requires a host of interventions targeting multiple determinants, it's important to ensure children eat adequately, both in terms of quality and quantity," the letter said.

Sources said the Chief Minister was convinced with the proposal, unlike his predecessor and senior BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan, a vegetarian who was against it and did not encourage any discussion on it when he was in office till 2018.

Women and Child Development Department Principal Secretary Anupam Rajan told *The Indian Express* that the

proposal is at an early stage.

"The idea is to provide protein-rich food by serving one egg three times a week. It will not be compulsory, and those who don't eat eggs will be provided milk and banana," he said.

The annual cost of serving three eggs per child in 89 tribal blocks will be between Rs 40 and Rs 50 crore. Rajan said many states have already included eggs in their menu and the proposal, as and when it gets the final nod, will be implemented from the next financial year. "Eggs are readily available and tribal children like to eat them," Rajan said. A bureaucrat said the proposal

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FLAG-BEARERS OF THE NATION

Quality of the business is most important

A leading light of the real estate industry, **Amarjit Bakshi**, CMD, Central Park, believes that consumer satisfaction and protection of their interests should be of prime importance for new-age entrepreneurs if they are to succeed in creating a sustainable and reliable business

What is different in the Indian economy that sets it apart from other countries of the world? What is it that makes it conducive for entrepreneurs and flagbearers like you?

The Indian economy has certain factors that set it apart from others. It is a big market and a big economy. The middle class is continuously growing, there is a significant aspiring class and there is ease of doing business in terms of the legislation and support provided to new market entrants. In India, 65-70% of the population is under 35 years of age—in comparison to other countries that have more of a mature and aged population—leading to the rise of promising millennials during this tech-age. A result of this is the abundance of start-ups that are coming into existence each day. With such a population comes varied demands and for entrepreneurs it becomes imperative to think of ways to bridge these gaps and in turn, meet these requirements.

You own a diversified group with interests in hospitality, real estate and automotive sectors. Do you believe that the diversification of a business helps in achieving more stability and growth?

The Bakshi Group has indeed diversified into various verticals, but what I have learnt over the years is that it is the quality of growth that outweighs everything else and provides satisfaction and stability. The size of a business does not matter if there is no quality attached to it. Quality provides a name to the business. If your customers are not happy and they lack satisfaction, they might rebuke you—and we have always followed Customer Centricity at every step. Therefore, one should not focus on size but on quality—to be the best at what you do and not necessarily the biggest.

You have been a leading light of the industry. What would your message be to all the new generation entrepreneurs and leaders?

Like I said earlier, the size of the business does not matter, what you do and what you leave for the next generation matters. When one comes out to work, one should not forget that the customer is the only stakeholder that will put in money for the product one is selling and the others will only ask for money and be an expense. The message I would therefore reiterate is that there should always be a deep-rooted faith and respect for the consumer, and it is this that will help new generation entrepreneurs and leaders to be successful in their endeavours.

If given a chance, leaders should not waste time waiting to find a team of sincere workers and start working—the starting point comes from within. The sincerity towards work should begin from the person ideating to create a business empire. If this happens, people will automatically trust you and will, themselves, like to work in a business of such nature. With these values, one can build a business and their integrity will then keep it going. Trust will act as a cementing material.

The Government has reduced the corporate tax rate. It is a welcome move by the government. How has that benefitted you as a diversified group? What are your views on its impact on businesses in general?

The recent reduction in the corporate tax is more of a move to attract foreign investors than aid the industry at large. There are various aspects to this—any policy that is brought in shows its impact after a few years. In this case, the move may positively impact the income tax.

The real estate and hospitality sectors are not doing very well. Problems like stressed assets, slump and liquidity are some of the challenges. The forecast for the two sectors is also not very good. What is your sense of the future for the two?

In the hospitality sector, I do not

think that there is a slump. But in real estate, yes, there is. The real estate sector has now seen a correction of sorts in the way the business has been done until now, but I still feel that if you care for your customers they will never leave your side, and that is what has helped Central Park.

And how long do you think will the phase last?

We expect that the situation will be normal in the next five years.

What are your plans on the real estate front in the coming years?

My real objective and meaning of growth comes from consumer satisfaction. My vision has always been to build a company of excellence that continues to serve its customers, fulfils the aspirations of its employees and caters to the real needs of the community as a whole. If these things are executed in the future successfully, then I think my job is done as a leader. In line with this, Central Park is known for designing 'Concept Living' spaces, offering not only a home but homes fused with hospitality and providing an entire lifestyle. The brand has positioned itself as a niche and innovative lifestyle real estate player, committed to exceptional quality and customer delight. When planning, it is essential to study the market in terms of understanding the changing times and changing demands and thereafter take the necessary steps. Our aim at Central Park is to always go the extra mile; an example of this is that we gifted our residents at Central Park Resorts an extraordinary tunnel experience when they enter the vicinity of their homes. Also, Central Park is the first developer to introduce anti-smog cannons at Central Park Resorts, which reduce the overall pollution in the condominium as well as lower the ambient temperature. Similarly, our products are constructed keeping in mind the ever-changing consumer needs and the broad range of the target audience – potential buyers are increasingly well-travelled and are well aware of international standards of living, and we believe in providing those here as well. Central Park is set to come up with an innovative and futuristic product that will be the perfect combination of today's technological advancements and the current demand of homebuyers, giving the term 'luxury' a new definition.

More specifically, real estate is on the cusp of change. In the past two decades, the sector has seen a lot of things that are now impacting its development – technology use is one, digital awareness and use of



Amarjit Bakshi, CMD, Central Park

“Quality service to consumers, their satisfaction and having a good value system matter more than the size of business”

social media to sell is another such development. How do you see these changes?

The transformation of the sector should reflect buyers' prosperity. This means that luxury and urban living should considerably transform with the passage of time for consumers. But this is not happening in entirety. Digitisation is a way of selling; it becomes an additional tool and the use of technology and

AI in homes should facilitate consumer convenience.

In the context of change, millennials form a large section of the youth in the country. These prefer to rent places instead of buying a property. Is this impacting the real estate sector or your plans?

The various modes of selling and transacting have changed over time. It is important to look at the social be-

haviour of this group. For instance, they might want to live together but they may not want to marry. Their freedom in day-to-day life and activities is a priority, and we have taken note of this.

For this segment we are coming up with a project where we have focused on activities that a millennial would want to participate in. Trends have revealed that in comparison to the space meant for activities, these customers do not mind compromising on the area for resting and sleeping. This goes more into the segment of co-habitation, where there will be common living areas accessible to 20 plus private rooms with amenities. These will be operated on the model of pay-as-you-use. Kitchens will be private but will be amply supplied by a convenience store right outside the hall. If the couple living together has a child, there is a place for children, too. If they do not want to own a car, an area will be created for taxi services such as Uber & Ola – hence, we have not kept any parking. The entire premises will have party halls, hang-out areas, etc.

This concept is futuristic and has the potential to serve the millennials. In the next 30 years, people will probably not work for as many hours a week as they do now. People may not even buy homes. Energy will come cheap. People will be more worried about their health, mind and body. These are all ideas that we should keep in mind beforehand, seeing the overall trends pertaining to millennials and their needs.

Talking about housing in the country, where do you see the real demand?

Housing is one of the basic needs of the people. But cities around the world have been witnessing migration, which is a worldwide trend. Indian mega cities and state capitals are no different to their counterparts around the globe. The migration rate in the country however, is high compared to other countries. Therefore, housing-needs and its supply are directly proportional to the rate of migration.

But there is a challenge to the growth of housing in the country. Our cities lack the infrastructure to build houses at the required speed. The problem is escalating because migration to cities is not stopping and continues to grow. Problems like limited parking space, availability of resources and urban poverty continue to create further issues for urban dwellers. People migrating to cities continue to earn a living in the city and send money to their homes, which spirals a vicious cycle of poverty around them. In addition to these challenges, peo-

ple have other expenses such as rent, needs of a growing family, etc. With family growth, there is need for a house; as the family grows further, they need a bigger house/flat—this reflects the market demand. Thanks to the private sector, demand continues to be high. The sector per se has been witnessing challenges. Witnessing the demand potential, several unscrupulous builders have adopted wrong means for growth. In the process of building something they have ruined themselves and have also given a bad name to the sector.

On a more practical level, as you said, housing supply remains a challenge and the preparedness of the city also is a problem. How do you see the situation improving?

Correction in the sector has already commenced. The government is more responsible than the builders. Lending banks have been bailed out. But the prime question is – where has the money gone? The Government has not been able to plug the loopholes. There have been a few learnings though: first, there is need for a more proactive stand on all the problems highlighted. Second, people must learn from past mistakes – credit is not free; it is a cost. Third, when one borrows, one must return. These areas must be corrected in the system.

In terms of projects undertaken, the people and the system put in money to build something. If one is striving hard to complete the project, the trust of the people remains in the system. That is what is required in the current scenario.

Talking about the India growth story and real estate, what is required to boost growth?

The first step has already been taken in the form of RERA (Real Estate Regulatory Authority). The government and the sector participants have realised that it is their responsibility to protect the interests of customers and corporates are working towards delivery now. Everything has to be done methodically and systematically and the onus to deliver on the consumers' money lies in the hands of these corporates. They should deliver what they have promised. RERA will help in mitigating the challenges to some extent.

Pick up RERA rules from any state and you will find there is equal provisioning of penalty for delivery and payment default on part of a developer and a consumer, respectively. That said, there are some among consumers, too, who want to exploit the situation. But overall consumers should be protected.

What are some of the initiatives that you think will be healthy for the sector?

We are following some of the best initiatives at Central Park that directly relate to corporate governance. For instance, we book apartments with a grace period of 30 days. This means we give our buyers a chance to book the apartment and cancel this booking within 30 days in case they change their minds. We consider the flat booked when we receive the cheque but do not encash this cheque for the first 30 days. This is also because sometimes buyers makes an impulsive decision. Should a booking be cancelled, the cheque is refunded with no deductions. This is a first-of-its-kind initiative in India. This really helps Central Park gain consumer trust.

What is your one message to those who are planning to begin their entrepreneurial journey?

Every day, one's conduct should be a reflection of one's character – keeping this in mind, one should bear in mind one's responsibility towards consumers and work towards fulfilling it. Success will follow these values.



At markets in capital, traders rue dip in festive sales

ANANYA TIWARI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

ON THURSDAY, the Sarojini Nagar market wore a festive look as people went about making last-minute Diwali purchases. However, the festive spirit was considerably subdued inside shops. Pointing to his empty store, a shop manager said, "We don't understand what is going on. We usually see so many customers during Diwali."

The remark found an echo at many markets, including Khan Market, Karol Bagh, Sadar Bazar and Chandni Chowk, with some

traders attributing the dip in sales to the "economic slowdown", and "failing to recover post the implementation of GST and demonetisation".

Typically decorated with lights during Diwali, Khan Market wore a deserted look.

Calling it a multi-faceted problem that has been building up for years, Brij Gopal Khosla, vice-president of the Khan Market Traders' Association, said: "Business is down 40-50% since last year. There are various reasons — sentiments are low, the economy is down. The online business is different, we do not consider it competition... Since



Shoppers at Sarojini Nagar Market ahead of Diwali. *Remuka Puri*

GST, sales are going down and prices going up."

The Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT), which has writ-

ten to the government against e-commerce websites, also said sales were sluggish this year.

Praveen Khandelwal, CAIT national general secretary, said, "Past experience shows that between Navratri and Diwali, business goes up by 30%. This year, it has declined by 30% for all businesses including mobiles, FMCG, shoes and fashion wear."

"Diwali has no meaning for traders anymore. The major culprits are e-commerce websites, which offer discounts of up to 90%," he added.

CAIT, in a statement, claimed retail trade in India generates a yearly business of Rs 45 lakh

crore, of which business of Rs 6 lakh crore alone is during the Diwali period.

S K Mittal, who runs a silver works at Chandni Chowk and is a member of the Delhi Hindustani Mercantile Association, said, "Every year, our business has been going down by 20% since demonetisation."

In Chandni Chowk, other factors such as redevelopment work have also affected business.

Rachit Gupta, who sells artificial jewellery in the area, said, "In the past 12 years, this has been the worst. Business has dropped by 40% from last year due to the slowdown."

Ex-DU teacher SAR Geelani suffers cardiac arrest, dies

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

FORMER DELHI University teacher SAR Geelani, who was arrested in the 2001 Parliament attack case before being acquitted by the Supreme Court, died Thursday following a cardiac arrest.

His son Atif confirmed to *The Indian Express* that Geelani (50), who stayed in Zakir Nagar, passed away in the evening. "He had gone to the gym when it happened," he said. Geelani is survived by his wife, his son Atif and daughter Nusrat.

Former DUTA president Nandita Narain said, "We've seen him through many difficulties... His health was affected by the whole ordeal. I think he was a patient of asthma as well, and was unwell for the past few days."

Geelani, a Kashmiri who earlier taught Arabic at Zakir Hussain College, was arrested and sentenced to death by a Delhi court in 2002 in connection with the 2001 Parliament attack. However, the Delhi HC acquitted him of all charges for "need of evidence" in October 2003. The SC upheld the HC's decision in August 2005. Through it all, Geelani maintained his innocence.

Months before his SC acquittal in February 2005, Geelani was seriously injured when he was shot at five times outside his lawyer Nandita Haksar's home in Vasant Kunj. Geelani was vocal about his views on Kashmir's self-deter-



Geelani (50) earlier taught Arabic at DU's Zakir Hussain College. *Archive*

mination and was critical of the hanging of Afzal Guru, who was convicted and hanged in connection with the Parliament attack case in 2001.

Geelani's support of Guru landed him in trouble again when in 2016, shortly after then JNU students' union president Kanhaiya Kumar was arrested for sedition for allegedly shouting anti-India slogans on campus, when he too was arrested for the same in February and kept in 14-day judicial custody. He had organised an event at the Press Club of India to mark the anniversary of the hanging of Guru.

He had been out on bail since March 2016, and was provided police security. Delhi Police is yet to file a chargesheet in the matter.

Family members wanted to take his body to Kashmir for the funeral and informed police that they did not want a post-mortem to be conducted as they didn't suspect any foul play.

Police, however, have decided to conduct a post-mortem Friday. The body was shifted to AIIMS Thursday night.



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 - Fireworks containing barium salts/ lithium/ arsenic/ antimony/ lead/ mercury
 - Firecrackers manufactured earlier but non-permissible as per above Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement.
- ▶▶ **Only those crackers permitted to be sold whose decibel (sound) level are within the permissible limits (125 dB(AI) or 145 dB(C)pk at 4 meters from the point of bursting)**
- ▶▶ **Bursting of fireworks not allowed in silence zones : Silence Zone is an area comprising not less than 100 meters around hospitals, educational institutions, courts, religious places or any other area which is declared as such by the competent authority.**
- ▶▶ **Timings of Firecracking as per directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court:**

From 08.00 PM till 10.00 PM	on Diwali Days
From 04.00 AM till 05.00 AM	on Gurgurab
From 09.00 PM till 10.00 PM	on Christmas Eve & New Year Eve.
From 11.55 PM till 12.30 AM	
- ▶▶ **Community fire cracking to be undertaken at pre-identified areas/fields as far as possible.**

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- School Vehicle shall carry a register of school children with name and other details

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BRIEFLY

Nigerian man detained

New Delhi: A Nigerian national, who has acted in Bollywood movies, was apprehended by CISF personnel at Delhi airport Thursday for allegedly overstaying his visit in the country, officials said.

Astroturf field inaugurated in govt school

New Delhi: A new astroturf hockey field was inaugurated in a government school in East Delhi Thursday.

JNU sanitation staff protest

New Delhi: Several sanitation workers of JNU have gone on strike on a host of issues, the most recent being the denial of Diwali bonus. However, the contractor said they can disburse the bonus only if money is allotted by the varsity. The V-C could not be reached for comment.

Snatcher targets woman

New Delhi: A 45-year-old woman journalist of a leading English daily was robbed of her phone while sitting in an autorickshaw by a man on foot in Darya Ganj Thursday.

'Stop guest faculty appointment'

New Delhi: The National Commission for Backward Classes has asked the principal of Satyawati College to stop appointment of guest faculty, and respond to allegations that reservation policy was violated in appointments. The principal did not comment. ENS

EXPANSION PART OF ONGOING HEALTH SCHEME

Delhi govt to offer 1,000 free surgeries at private hospitals

ASTHA SAXENA NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE DELHI government is set to widen the ambit of its health scheme, whereby people who are given a waiting time of over 30 days for a surgery or procedure at a Delhi government hospital are eligible for free treatment at empanelled private hospitals.

Under the expansion, 1,016 surgical, 123 oncology and 10 neonatal procedures, as well as six medical packages, have been made part of the 86 surgeries already covered under the Delhi Arogya Kosh (DAK) — a corpus that funds various health schemes for residents of Delhi. This includes implants as well as treatment for vector-borne diseases, sources said.



4,654 patients got cashless treatment till June 2019

With the additions, all treatment covered under the Centre-run Ayushman Bharat scheme will fall under the DAK. The Delhi government has not implemented the Centre's scheme in the city yet, calling their scheme better. Only Delhi voters will be eligible for the scheme. Children below 19 years of age will be eligible on the basis of the voter

identity card of their parents, along with Aadhaar card or birth certificate from Delhi.

The free surgery scheme was launched in March 2017 and 56 private healthcare providers have been empanelled by the government. Till June 2019, a total of 4,654 patients received cashless treatment under the scheme.

Under Ayushman Bharat, free secondary and tertiary treatment worth Rs 7,901 crore has been available in 32 states and UTs. Procedures like cardiology, orthopaedics, radiation, oncology, cardio-thoracic and vascular surgery, and urology have emerged as the top tertiary specialties.

In Delhi, the packages will include cost incurred during pre-anesthetic check-up; investigations; medicines and consumables; bed charges; diet

charges; consultation; and nursing care, among others, and will specify the duration of admission.

"We held a meeting on October 21 to discuss package rates... We are expecting that around 100 NABH-accredited hospitals will be able to offer the facilities," said the official, adding that private hospitals can't deny treatment to any patient if they have the service.

"This scheme is a win-win situation for private and government hospitals. We are paying more than the rate decided under the Ayushman Bharat scheme. A private hospital will be paid 10% to 40% over what the Ayushman Bharat scheme offers," said president of Delhi Medical Council Dr Arun Gupta, who has been elected to the newly formed governing body of DAK.

At 14 shelter homes in city, audit finds instances of abuse

SOURAVROY BARMAN NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

IN A report to the Delhi government, a Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) audit of shelter homes for women and children in the national capital has flagged grave instances of sexual and physical abuse in around 14 facilities. The instances of sexual abuse in the guise of "punishment", as detailed in the 143-page report, include insertion of "chilli powder in private parts, throwing hot water, beatings, denial of food" and other humiliations like giving group baths to inmates having serious mental illnesses.

The report, commissioned by the Delhi Commission for Women on the government's directions, was discussed in a meeting chaired by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday. The "grave concerns" pertain mostly to shelters run by individuals and NGOs. Serious cases of abuse were immediately dealt with, including filing police complaints, said a Delhi government official. At a privately-run centre in

South West Delhi, where residents include destitute women and victims of trafficking aged above 18 years, "a resident reported a shocking incident of sexual abuse where she was made to remove her salwar and chilli powder was inserted in her vagina. In another incident, a resident shared that hot water was thrown on her as punishment", the report stated.

At a girls' home in South West Delhi, an inmate received similar treatment for urinating in bed.

"The staff reportedly did this in front of everyone in the dining hall... This was often repeated, leaving the child with deep trauma and fear. The girls were constantly intimidated of consequences if they discussed issues... with anyone," said the report.

A Delhi government-run centre for children in North East Delhi threw up alarming findings, including availability of two buckets for over 60 girls, "compelling them to take bath in the open"; broken glasses of dormitories; cold rooms. "While blankets were there in the store, same were not given to children. Also, girls were

made to share beds due to severe shortage of cots and mattresses. When asked about it, a staff member tried to justify it saying the girls like it that way as it keeps them warm," the report said.

In North West Delhi, at a facility meant for women suffering from mental illnesses, residents reported beatings, being locked up and food deprivation as punishment for disobedience. Residents also received no psychiatric or counselling support, the audit found.

"The overall situation of institutions in Delhi was found to be satisfactory. Most institutions were following the rules governing them; providing residents with crucial amenities... While some homes stood out for providing exemplary services, a handful were found to be working in contravention to the rules," it added.

A government official said Kejriwal and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia were assured action soon. The audit was carried out by 'Koshish', a field action project of TISS, which had unearthed the Muzaffarpur shelter home abuse.

Out for poll duty, several govt school teachers miss class for nearly a month

SUKRITA BARUAH NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

EVEN AS Delhi government schools are under pressure to improve board exam results, some schools have been missing a sizeable portion of their teaching staff for close to a month as they have been deputed for electoral roll revision duty for the upcoming Assembly polls.

As per the original order issued by the SDM's (Election) office, poll work was supposed to have concluded on September 30. However, the date for teachers to re-join schools has been extended twice — first to October 15 and then to October 25. These duties are delegated to teachers at the level of Assembly constituencies, and the duration

of deputation might differ from one constituency to another.

A school in Trilokpuri has had 12 regular teachers deputed since September 23. Another has had 11 permanent and one guest teacher missing in action for the same duration. With Trilokpuri being a densely populated area, the period has been extended multiple times to complete work. In Gandhi Nagar constituency, it has been extended till October 31.

"The 12 teachers comprise a significant part of the teaching staff of 29 regular and 15 guest teachers; they include those who teach maths, science to classes X

and XII students. Starting October, we began urging teachers to produce 100% class X and XII results but we are left without means," said the head of the school.

In 2007, the practice of deputing government school teachers for non-educational purposes, such as poll duty, during school hours was challenged in the Supreme Court. The court had directed that "all teaching staff shall be put on duties of roll revisions and election work on holidays and non-teaching days..." However, officials said shortage of poll staff meant the order has not been put into practice.

At the Trilokpuri school, teachers who have a free period have been asked to look after classes. "Teachers are deputed every time polls come around. This needs to be revised; schools and their teaching requirements cannot be accorded such little priority," said the head of another school. Meanwhile, some schools in North West Delhi said teachers rejoined on October 1.

New Delhi: Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal inaugurated new services, including open-heart surgery, at Rajiv Gandhi Super-Specialty Hospital in East Delhi Thursday. Speaking at the event, Kejriwal said that since 2015, the foothall in Delhi government hospitals has doubled to six crore.

The increased numbers, Kejriwal said, are a "big challenge"



CM at the launch. Amit Mehra

but added that the government has plans to "scale up facilities". The Rajiv Gandhi Super-Specialty Hospital will now have an ICU; OT complex; hepatobiliary, bariatric and metabolic surgery centres; and gastroenterology, officials said. The hospital has 200 beds. ENS

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Table with columns: SI. No., Category, Cut-off marks. 1. Unreserved (01) BC (05) 73.07 69.79. 2. 73.07 69.79. 3. दिनांक 25.03.2019 को प्रकाशित आवश्यक सूचना में अनर्हित उम्मीदवारों से दिनांक 08.04.2019 तक आपत्ति अर्थात्वेदन को मांग को गई थी। प्राप्त सभी अर्थात्वेदनों को विभागीय विशेषज्ञ द्वारा निस्तारण करते हुए प्रतिवेदन समर्पित किया गया।

1,728 UNAUTHORISED COLONIES GET LEGAL TAG Regularisation push: DDA to use images from ISRO

ABHINAV RAJPUT NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

TO MAP the boundaries of 1,728 unauthorised colonies in the capital, which received the Centre's approval to be regularised, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has sourced satellite images from the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO). It will also seek help from Survey of India, Department of Science and Technology, said DDA vice-chairperson Tarun Kapoor.

The key responsibility of implementing the Centre's decision lies with the DDA, the city's land-owning agency, which has set itself an ambitious deadline of three months to execute the project.

Kapoor said the DDA held a meeting with senior officials of the revenue department, and it has been decided that a portal will be developed to facilitate the process of registration of properties.

Since 2015, the Delhi government has tried to demarcate boundaries using four different methods, including drones.

According to a senior government official, the main problem with demarcating areas was that maps provided by different agencies had different outlines: "Maps provided by RWAs were from 2007-09. Since then, the



Pandav Nagar is on the list of colonies that will be regularised. Abhinav Saha

area has expanded. Shajra maps from the 19th and 20th centuries did not have measurements in metric terms... when converted, they turned out to be confusing. The fixed points used in these maps, such as ponds, walls or pillars, have now disappeared. We got a survey done but it had several inaccuracies."

Sources said the earlier plan to demarcate boundaries using Google Earth images had not given desired results, and the DDA was forced to reach out to ISRO and Survey of India.

The agency will also build a local area plan — a layout for the 1,728 colonies, which will have details of the number of parks, schools and other amenities that have to be provided.

"At a later stage, we will also

draw up local area plans with recreation and community centres, green patches and areas that promote walkability," said a senior official.

The process, however, comes with its own set of challenges as the existing geography of several colonies do not allow for much alteration. "In several colonies, the space between two houses is just two feet. The plans need detailed deliberations," said a DDA official.

Officials said they will also have to tackle multiple claims for a single land, as several disputed areas are mired in court cases. Moreover, there is little clarity on how millions of ownership documents will be verified. "There are chances of people fudging documents to meet the cut-off date of 2015," the official said.

At RK Puram unauthorised colony tagged affluent, residents say houses just 100 sq yards

SUKRITA BARUAH NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

A MOTOR-MECHANIC spreading out car parts in front of his apartment, an elderly man resting on a charpoy — the narrow lanes of Anant Ram Dairy resemble those in other neighbourhoods of Delhi. Located in the heart of R K Puram, this neighbourhood though is one of the 69 unauthorised colonies categorised as "affluent" colonies.

On Wednesday, the central government cleared a proposal to regularise 1,728 unauthorised colonies in the city. These do not include the 69 "affluent" colonies — with Sainik Farms in South Delhi, Mahendru Enclave in North West Delhi and Anant Ram Dairy being the three that Union Minister Hardeep Puri spoke about.



Anant Ram Dairy is one of the 69 'affluent' unauthorised colonies that won't be regularised. Express

Residents of Anant Ram Dairy, meanwhile, insist that their neighbourhood is nothing like the other two.

"There is no property in the

neighbourhood which is larger than 200 square yards. Most are around 30 square yards... others are 50 and 100 square yards. How is this a wealthy or affluent

colony? We are trying to get a date to meet the Housing Minister to present our case, and to ask that a team be sent to conduct an enquiry into why this colony has been included in the list," said Ashok Phalwan, president of the residents' association.

The neighbourhood, in existence since 1952, occupies 16 acres nestled in the midst of government housing complexes in RK Puram. Unlike many unauthorised colonies, all basic amenities are in place here — permanent water and electricity connections, pucca roads, functioning sewage and drainage system and streetlights. But residents claim that the "unauthorised" tag continues to pose a problem for them.

"We're paying house tax to the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) and development charge for the facilities.

But because we're not recognised as legitimate, we cannot develop the area or even carry out repairs properly," said Anil Lal, a resident who works in household interiors.

While residents claimed they do not know why the neighbourhood has been counted amongst the affluent colonies, they weighed in on the possible reasons. The neighbourhood has housed former ministers PR Kumaramangalam and Dinesh Singh.

"Why should the 250 other families living here suffer because two prominent people lived here? Another reason might be that it is the only unauthorised colony in the posh NDMC area. But it has grown over time from the hutments which housed dairy farmers," said advocate and resident Ashok Singh.

Ahead of polls, BJP to hold outreach drive on regularisation

ABHINAV RAJPUT NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

FOLLOWING THE Centre's decision to grant ownership rights to over 1,700 unauthorised colonies in the capital, the BJP central leadership has asked the state unit to talk about the move at the grassroots level, by holding outreach programmes in each district ahead of the Assembly polls.

To this end, Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari Thursday stayed the night at Shashi Garden in Patparganj. Talking to people about the decision, he appealed to them to vote for the party.

BJP leader Neelkant Bakshi said the party has also prepared posters, with photos of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Tiwari, calling the move a "Divali gift". Around 2 lakh posters will be put up across the capital, he said. Earlier in the day, Minister of State for Home



Tiwari at Shashi Garden in Patparganj, Thursday. Express

Affairs Nityanand Rai visited Raja Vihar, an unauthorised colony, along with leader of Opposition Vijender Gupta and North West Delhi MP Hans Raj Hans.

Rai, who is one of the in charges for the Delhi Assembly polls, said that the Centre will leave no stone unturned to ensure the process of regularisation and giving ownership rights starts at the earliest. Hans said he will invest his MP fund to provide civic facilities in unauthorised

colonies. Party leaders have also been asked to send reports of the feedback they get from the colonies to senior leaders, said BJP women's wing president Poonam Parashar Jha.

Post Diwali, the BJP will launch Phase II of the outreach programme in the colonies in which senior leaders and morcha presidents will be given responsibility of a district each, said a senior leader.

AAP rallies thank Kejriwal for move

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

A DAY after the Union Cabinet cleared the proposal to transfer property rights to residents of unauthorised colonies, the AAP Thursday took out "dhanyawad yatras" across the city, crediting Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for "forcing the Centre to bend".

Through the local-level gatherings, the AAP essentially sought to push the message that the Centre could not have made its move had the Delhi government not sent its proposal in 2015, a narrative set by Kejriwal himself Wednesday. The yatras were mostly led by AAP MLAs.

"After five years of struggle by Kejriwal, finally, the Centre had to bend. Now, people living in unauthorised colonies of Delhi will also get a respectful life," AAP said in a statement.

On November 2, 2015, the Delhi Cabinet had cleared a proposal to regularise 1,797 colonies and 10 days later, on November 12, the proposal was sent to the Centre. "The Centre sat on our proposal, citing pending work of mapping the colonies. How have they done it now? After all, the DDA itself is admitting that the mapping exercise will take at least three months," a senior AAP leader said.

"The Delhi government wrote several letters to the BJP government at the Centre and requested them to take a decision on this proposal as soon as possible, but the Central government did not take any step. Not waiting for the Centre's decision, the Kejriwal government sanctioned development works worth Rs6,000 crore for these colonies. And now the Centre has approved the decision of the Delhi government," the AAP statement added.

DU students claim beaten up at bar, police file FIR

New Delhi: Four DU law students sustained injuries after they were allegedly beaten up by bouncers at a bar in North West Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar Wednesday.

DCP (North West) Vijayanta Arya said, "We have lodged an FIR against the bouncers; efforts are on to nab them," adding that a few weeks ago, an FIR had been lodged against the same bar for serving hookah.

Police said the complaint was filed by a second-year student at DU's Faculty of Law. "The student invited his friends to the bar to celebrate his birthday. As they were dancing, one of his friends requested the DJ to change the song. When the DJ refused, a heated argument ensued. A bouncer intervened and

started beating the students," said a senior police officer. The student alleged he and his friends were taken down and attacked by other bouncers. "The bouncers claimed they were misbehaving in the bar. The group received grievous injuries," said the officer.

After the incident, around 200 students turned up at Kingsway Camp to protest, causing traffic snarls. They dispersed after police assured action would be taken. Former DUSU president Shakti Singh alleged, "Police did not cooperate in the matter and were shielding the accused instead."

Police, however, said a case has also been filed against the bar's owner for not carrying out verification of his employees, including the bouncers. ENS

WEST CENTRAL RAILWAY CHIEF PROJECT DIRECTOR, RAILWAY ELECTRIFICATION, JABALPUR (ENGINEERING BRANCH) NIT. OPEN TENDER (E-TENDER) E-Tenders are invited on behalf of the President of India acting through Executive Engineer, Railway Electrification Jabalpur for the following works: (1) E-Tender Notice No.: RE/JBPENG/852201903. Date: 18.10.2019. Name of Work with location: Security, Watch and ward, housekeeping, up keeping cleaning and maintenance of lawn of office of the Chief Project Director and officer's Rest House Railway Electrification Jabalpur. Approximate cost of the work: ₹ 24,72,665.90 (Rs. Twenty four lakhs seventy two thousand six hundred sixty five and ninety paise only) Earnest Money: ₹ 49,500.00/- (Rs. Forty Nine thousand five hundred only) Closing date & time: 15.11.2019 upto 15.00 Hrs. & Date of Opening: 15.11.2019 at 15.30 Hrs. Completion period: 12 Months. (2) E-Tender Notice No.: RE/JBPENG/852201905. Date: 18.10.2019. Name of Work with location: Manufacturing/Fabricating, Supplying and fixing of In-situ Glued Joints on 52kg/60kg running track during traffic block in connection with Railway Electrification works under XENRE/JBP in Gr 173B & 174. Approximate cost of the work: ₹ 40,49,457.42 (Rs. Forty Lakh forty nine thousand four hundred fifty seven and forty two paise only) (4) Earnest Money: ₹ 81,000.00/- (Rs. Eighty one thousand only) (5) Closing date & time: 15.11.2019 upto 15.00 Hrs. & Date of Opening: 15.11.2019 at 15.30 Hrs. Completion period: 06 Months. The complete information of the above E-Tender is available on website "https://ireps.gov.in" and also placed on the notice board of the Chief Project Director, Railway Electrification, Jabalpur. Tenders other than in the form of E-bids shall not be accepted against above tenders.

CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS E-TENDER NOTICE Tender Notice No.: CLW-DKAE-SAFETY-904. E-tender is invited for and on behalf of the President of India for the following work: Sl. No. [01]; Tender No. CLW-DKAE-SAFETY-904; Name of the work: Statutory Testing / Inspection and Issuance of Certificate of E.O.T. Cranes, Chain Sling, Lifting Tackles, Fork Lift Trucks, Hydra. Air Vessel, Loco Pulling Winch Machine, Surface Traverses, Transformer Lifting and Lowering Trolley, situated at Assembly shop and Bogie shop through Open Tender for the period of Successive two turns of 02 years each of Electric Loco Assembly & Ancillary Unit of CLW/ Dankuni. Tender value (Rupees): 2,000.00 (Rupees Two thousand only); Earnest Money (Rupees): 11,900.00 (Rupees Eleven Thousand Nine Hundred only); Period of Completion: Successive two turns of 02 years each. NOTE: (i) Complete details can be seen in the Railways website www.ireps.gov.in (ii) Contact Number: 8179043015. (iii) Date of closing of tender submission is 29.11.2019 at 12:00 hrs. (iv) Similar Service Contract Means: Statutory Testing of various safety items like I- Hook of E.O.T. Crane or Chain Sling or Lifting Tackle or Chain Hook or Air Vessel or Lifting hands of Fork Lift Truck, Hydra in Indian Railways or in other Government Department or Production Unit of Public Sector Undertakings. AWM/Plg./Dankuni ABC-218 ELAAU/CLW/DANKUNI Like us on: www.facebook.com/clwrailways

REPLACEMENT OF PSC SLEEPER & REPAIRS TO COLONY ROAD AND DRAIN E-TENDER NOTICE No. TSK/Engg/44 of 2019; dated 18-10-2019. E-tenders are invited for the following works: Item No. 1. Brief Description of item: Tinsukia Division: BG TSK(P) of existing 52 Kg (M+4) density PSC sleeper by new 50 Kg (M+4) density PSC sleeper at sharp curve No 101 and 102 between Sriparaganew New Tinsukia. Total=1340 Rmt. Tender Value: ₹48,68,431/-. Earnest Money: ₹97,400/-. Item No. 2. Brief Description of item: At Tinsukia, Makum, Jn. Tinrai, Digboi, PWA, Margherita, Bargaraj & L.L.O. Repairs to colony road and drain under the jurisdiction of SSE(I)/Tinsukia. Tender Value: ₹1,34,74,899/-. Earnest Money: ₹2,17,400/-. All above E-tenders will be closed at 15.00 hrs. on 15-11-2019 and opened at 18.00 hrs. on 15-11-2019. The complete information with the tender document of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs of 15-11-2019 in website www.ireps.gov.in Divisional Railway Manager (Work)/Tinsukia NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY "Serving Customers with a smile"

e-Tender Notice e-Tenders in B-1 form are invited by the Assistant Director, Department of Archaeology, Aurangabad from contractors empanelled with Department of Archaeology, Government of Maharashtra. The name of work, estimated cost, earnest money, security deposit, time limit for completion & detailed tender notice is available on Maharashtra government website https://mahatenders.gov.in for following monuments from Aurangabad City : 1) Bhadkal Gate 2) Makai Gate 3) Delhi Gate 4) Sahaguni Masjid 5) Lal Masjid 6) Chowk Masjid 7) Kali Masjid 8) Panchakki 9) Navkhanda Palace 10) Lala Hardaul Samadhi. Assistant Director, Department of Archaeology Government of Maharashtra, Aurangabad.

COIMBATORE SMART CITY LIMITED SMART CITIES MISSION NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (NIT) Date: 17.10.2019 The Managing Director, Coimbatore Smart City Limited, Coimbatore hereby invites Bids through both on-line and off-line from eligible bidders for the following work: Sl. No. Name of work Tender Value Bid Security Period of Completion 1. Restoration and Rejuvenation of Narasampathy Lake (Third call) Rs. 9.73 Crore Rs. 9.73 Lakh 18 months

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY E-TENDER NOTICE The Divisional Railway Manager (Engg)/ E. C. Railway/Samastipur for and on behalf of the President of India invites Openly tendered from experienced and financially capable tenderers for the following works in E-tendering mode of IREPS web portal of Indian Railways: 1. Tender Notice No. TC-214-2019-SPJ. Name of work: Supply of 1,00,000 cum machine crushed stone ballast 50mm size as per Rly. Specification for Track ballast and loading the same into any type of wagon from Bakudih/Pakur for Samastipur Division (For Year 2019-20). Tender Value (In ₹): ₹8,30,00,000/-. Earnest Money (In ₹): ₹5,95,000/-. Cost of Tender document (In ₹): ₹10,000/-. Completion period of the work: 12 Months. 2. Tender Notice No. TC-215-2019-SPJ. Name of work: Augmentation of capacity for additional 20 bedded running room at Rakaul. Tender Value (In ₹): ₹1,67,445,31.08, Earnest Money (In ₹): ₹2,33,700/-. Cost of Tender document (In ₹): ₹5,000/-. Completion period of the work: 08 Months. 3. Tender Notice No. TC-216-2019-SPJ. Name of work: Augmentation of capacity for additional 12 bedded running room at Jaynagar. Tender Value (In ₹): ₹1,327,096,26. Earnest Money (In ₹): ₹2,16,400/-. Cost of Tender document (In ₹): ₹5,000/-. Completion period of the work: 08 Months. 4. Tender Notice No. TC-217-2019-SPJ. Name of work: Repairs of road surface of LCs, Painting of Gate Lodges and fencing, various boards and toilet facility to gateman under ADENSHC. Tender Value (In ₹): ₹69,89,361.86, Earnest Money (In ₹): ₹1,40,000/-. Cost of Tender document (In ₹): ₹5,000/-. Completion period of the work: 06 Months. Last Date & time for receiving of Tender in E-tender mode on IREPS web portal: 13/11/2019 upto 15.00 hours. Opening Date & time for E-Tender: 13/11/2019 after 15.00 hours. Website particulars where complete details of tender & tender document can be seen on website: www.ireps.gov.in. Amendments/modifications if any shall not be published in the newspapers but the same shall be uploaded in the website: www.ireps.gov.in Sr. Divisional Engineer/Co-ord ECR/Samastipur PR/1506/SPJ/Engg./T/19-20/68

CENTRAL POWER RESEARCH INSTITUTE Switchgear Testing & Development Station (A Government of India Society) Govindpura, Bhopal-462023 Ph/Fax No. 0755-2586283, E-mail: khairwar@cpri.in

NOTICE INVITING TENDER-(NIT): STDS-03/2019-20 date: 25.10.2019 Online e-tenders are invited from eligible suppliers/agencies/manufacturers for the following equipments/machineries, conforming to national/international standards wherever applicable: 1) Sweep Frequency Response Analyser (A-1984). 2) Switch's for 1250MVA, Short Circuit Testing Station (A-1985). 3) Multiple Chopping gap system (A-1986). 4) 25kVA, 50-900V, 100Hz, 3 Phase Motor Generator Set with AC Drive and Control (RTL-N-20). 5) Multi Channel Temperature Data Logger (RTL-N-21). 6) Portable Hardness Tester (TRC-110). Tender documents including detailed specifications and other terms & conditions can be downloaded from our website: www.tenderwizard.com/CPRI and www.cpri.in from 25.10.2019 onwards. No separate tender documents will be issued from our office. The bids are to be submitted online through www.tenderwizard.com/CPRI only. Bids submitted through any other mode will not be considered. All errata, addendum, extension etc. if any, shall be published on the CPRI website only. Sd/- UNIT HEAD

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority noida Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar (U.P.) Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com E-TENDER NOTICE E-Tender are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & http://e.tender.up.nic.in. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments and corrigendum etc. (A) 1. 14/Noida/GM(K)/SM-WC-7/ET/2019-20, Name of Work: M/o Drain (Supply and Installation of 1000mm dia M.S. Pipe by trenchless system in Irrigation drain for disposal of water for drain along DSC Road at NSEZ), Noida, Cost - Rs. 46.58 Lacs. Which can be uploaded by date 07.11.2019 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 08.11.2019 at 11.00 AM. GENERAL MANAGER NOIDA CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

P/WAY MAINTENANCE WORK AT LUMDING DIVISION E-Tender Notice No. LMG/Engg/113 of 2019 Date: 22-10-2019. Works tenders through E-Tendering system for and on behalf of the President of India are invited for the following works: SN.1. Brief Description of item: P-way maintenance work including casual renewal of rail, painting of rails, and cropping, drilling, distressing, packing, jungle cutting, side drain cleaning and other ancillary work under SSE/PWAY/Diphu. Tender Value: ₹1,35,03,086.24. Earnest Money: ₹2,17,500/-. SN.2. Brief Description of item: P-way maintenance work including casual renewal of rail, painting of rails, and cropping, drilling, distressing, packing, jungle cutting, side drain cleaning and other ancillary work under SSE/PWAY/Bargaraj. Tender Value: ₹1,24,18,385.36. Earnest Money: ₹2,12,100/-. Date of Closing of tender: 13-11-2019 and opened at 14-11-2019. The complete information with tender documents of above e-tender will be available upto 15.00 hrs of 13-11-2019 in website www.ireps.gov.in DRPMV, Lumding NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY "Serving Customers with a smile"

KARNATAKA STATE DRUG LOGISTICS AND WAREHOUSING SOCIETY (R) No.1, Dr. Siddhaiah Puranki Road, KHB Colony, Magadi Road, Bangalore - 560 079. Ph: +91-80-23283218 Fax: +91-80-23281477 e-mail: ad.kdls@gmail.com No: KDL/TND/Implants/77/2019-20 Date: 24.10.2019 TENDER NOTIFICATION Ref: (1) Tender Notification No. KDL/TND/Implants/77/2019-20, (IND-629) Dtd: 23.10.2019. (2) Tender Notification No. KDL/TND/TD/Vaccine/04/2019-20, (IND-631) Dtd: 24.10.2019 (3) Tender Notification No. KDL/Insurance/82/83/2019-20, Dtd: 24.10.2019. Under KPPP wide Tender is invited through e-Tendering system under NATION Act 1999 and Rules 2000 for the following tender: 1. Tender for Supply of Implants for the year 2018-19. 2. Tender for Supply of Tetanus Diphtheria Vaccine for the year 2019-20. 3. Tender for REP for Insurance coverage of KSDLWS. The tenderers who have registered under e-Procurement department may participate through e-tendering system. Details regarding EMD, Terms and Conditions and other information are available in the Tender Document, which can be downloaded from the website https://esproc.karnataka.gov.in from 23.10.2019 and 24.10.2019 the eligible tenderers shall submit their e-tenders under e-procurement platform for above mentioned tenders. Further information if any may be obtained from this office. DIPR/DDU/1555/2019-20 Sd/- Additional Director, KSDLWS.

DELHI JAL BOARD GOVT OF NCT OF DELHI OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (EAST) I M 16 MAYUR VIHAR PKT E PHASE II NEW DELHI 110091 PRESS NOTICE TENDER NIT NO. 37/East-I/(2019-20)

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Contract Value (ECV)/Amount put to tender	Earnest Money (EMD)	Tender Fee	Date of Release of tender in E-Procurement Solution & Tender ID No.	Last Date/Time of receipt of tender through e-Procurement Solution
01	Improvement of water supply by replacement of 150 mm dia CI water line along CR road from Lalita Park to D-Block in Laxmi Nagar constituency AC-58 in East-I	31,08,200.00	62,200.00	500.00	23.10.2019 2019_DJB_182811_3	11.11.2019 At 03:15 PM
02	Shifting of existing sewer line from Ravidass Camp JJ Cluster to main carriage way on Mother Dairy Patparganj road in East-I (Re-invited)	29,40,747.00	58,900.00	500.00	23.10.2019 2019_DJB_182811_3	11.11.2019 At 03:15 PM

Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V 475/2019-20 Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (EAST)-I

DELHI JAL BOARD: DELHI SARKAR OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (N) -II NEAR TRANSPORT AUTHORITY MAIN BURARI ROAD DELHI- 84 NIT No. 59 (Item No. 1,2,3,4) (2019-20) EE (North)-II

S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost in (Rs.)	Date of release of tender in e-procurement solution	Earnest Money	Tender fee (Non-refundable)	Last date/time of receipt of tender through e-procurement solution
1.	Improvement of sewerage system by P/L 250,300 and 400 mm dia sewer line and making Interconnection by HDD method in CW Block Sanjay Gandhi Transport Nagar in AC-05 under E.E. (North)-II I.D. (2019_DJB_182785_1)	48,24,832/-	23.10.2019 03 PM. onward	96500/-	500/-	Technical bid will be received 13.11.2019, 3.00 PM & opening of Financial bid after completion of technical bid & confirmation of EMD from Bank
2.	Improvement of sewerage system by replacing of 250 mm dia sewer line to 300 mm dia sewer pipe line from Tikona Park to Laxmi Dharam Kanta in Badli Village in AC-05 under E.E. (North)-II I.D. (2019_DJB_182785_2)	45,29,697/-	23.10.2019 03 PM. onward	90600/-	500/-	Technical bid will be received 13.11.2019, 3.00 PM & opening of Financial bid after completion of technical bid & confirmation of EMD from Bank
3.	Providing and Laying of 100/150 mm dia water line in SSI Jahangir Puri in AC-04 under E.E. (North)-II I.D. (2019_DJB_182785_3)	43,03,963/-	23.10.2019 03 PM. onward	86,100/-	500/-	Technical bid will be received 13.11.2019, 3.00 PM & opening of Financial bid after completion of technical bid & confirmation of EMD from Bank

Further details in this regard can be seen at https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in

ISSUED BY P.R.O. (WATER) Advt. No. J.S.V 477/2019-20 Sd/- EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (N)-II

GOVT & POLITICS



NEW INSIGHTS

IF, AFTER his 2014 win, there were a series of books on the political life and achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, authors are now coming out with not-so-well-known facts about his trust with foreign policy before he was elected to the top post. In his new book *Modi Diplomacy*—Through a Shakespearean Prism, former diplomat T P Sreenivasan (who was then deputy chief of mission at the Indian embassy, Washington DC) narrates an incident which show that Modi had played a key role in strengthening the draft US Congress resolution to push the Bill Clinton administration in demanding that Pakistan withdraw from Kargil. “As requested by Clinton Pakistan Prime Minister went to Washington on 4 July, America’s Independence Day, and agreed to withdraw and end the Kargil war,” the book says. According to the author, Modi, the organisation general secretary then, who was visiting the US, had sought reopening of the text of the draft private resolution to make it stronger.

PRESSING MATTERS

HOME MINISTER Amit Shah on Thursday cancelled his visits to events of central agencies as the Haryana and Maharashtra election results began filtering in. Shah, who is also the BJP president, was the chief guest at the ITBP Raising Day parade. He was also supposed to address a conference of Anti-Terrorism Squads from across the country organised by the NIA. But the minister did not attend either of them. In his absence, MoS Home G Kishan Reddy presided over the ITBP event. There was no official word on why he cancelled his visits.

BOOST BEFORE POLL

THE RELEASE of Karnataka Congress leader D K Shivakumar from jail has given a boost to the party in a state gearing up for a big electoral battle in December. Bypolls to 15 of the 17 vacant Assembly seats will be held on December 5, and the outcome is critical for the stability of the BS Yediyurappa government. There is speculation that Shivakumar, who has been virtually the go-to man for Central leaders in the state, could be given a big responsibility. Congress leaders did not rule out the possibility of him being appointed state Congress chief, but added that much will depend on his plans, too.

FIRST IMPRESSION

STANDING COMMITTEES have usually acted as critics of departments they are supposed to scrutinise. Railways is no different. However, officers attending the meeting of the new Standing Committee on Railways earlier this week got a different vibe. Headed by BJP MP Radha Mohan Singh, the meeting mostly talked about how well the transporter was functioning. While nothing can be made of the first meeting, officials are of the view that this committee may not be as “tough” as previous ones.

In refusing Justice Mishra’s recusal, SC relied on two verdicts by CJI-led benches

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24



Justice Arun Mishra

THE FIVE-JUDGE Constitution bench hearing a case on the interpretation of a provision of the Land Acquisition Act refused recusal of Justice Arun Mishra from the bench by relying on two judgments delivered by benches headed by former Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dipak Mishra.

The verdicts, delivered in 2018, had held that the CJI has the last word in assigning cases to other benches.

The petitioners — land associations — had sought Justice Mishra’s recusal on the ground that he had delivered the 2018 verdict, which has to be reconsidered, in which the court deviated from the settled law and subsequently sought a larger bench hearing on the issue.

Among the judgments cited, Justice Mishra relied upon a three-judge bench’s ruling in *Asok Pande v. Supreme Court of India*, and another ruling by a five-judge bench in *Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms v. Union of India*.

Both benches, headed by then CJI Dipak Mishra, reiterated that there cannot be any “mis-trust in functioning of the office of the CJI” (then Mishra).

While Asok Pande’s plea had challenged the CJI’s powers to assign cases to other benches, following allegations that CJI Mishra was “selecting assigning cases” to Justice Arun Mishra, the Constitution bench was set up to

overturn an order of a two-judge bench to set up a larger bench to hear a matter of alleged bribes taken in the name of judges.

Justice Arun Mishra was also part of the five-judge bench hearing the latter case.

At a press conference in January 2018, four then-most senior judges of the Supreme Court — CJI Ranjan Gogoi (then second in seniority) and Justices J Chelameswar, Madan Lokur, Kurian Joseph (now retired) — had expressed concern that significant cases were being assigned by CJI Mishra to Justice Arun Mishra.

Refusing to recuse from the case, Justice Mishra said, “There may not be even one judge in this court who has not taken a view one way or the other concerning Section 24 of the Act of 2013, either in this court or in the High Court. If the submission is accepted, no judge will have the power to decide such a matter on the judicial side. We have to deal with cases every day in which similar or somewhat different questions are involved concerning the same provision.

“For having taken a view once, if recusal is to be made, it would be very difficult to get a judge to hear and decide a question of law.”

Amid chill, India & Pak sign pact on Kartarpur Corridor

KAMALDEEP SINGH BRAR & SHUBHAJIT ROY
GURDASPUR, NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24



Indian and Pakistani officials sign the agreement at Dera Baba Nanak on Thursday. ANI

AMID STRAINED ties between India and Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir, New Delhi and Islamabad Thursday finally signed the ‘Kartarpur Sahib Corridor Agreement’ on the zero line at Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur to facilitate the visit of Indian pilgrims to Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur.

The signing comes after hectic negotiations over the last year, with Delhi and Islamabad agreeing on most major issues except a \$20 fee to be levied by Pakistan per pilgrim on which India has sought a relook.

The agreement is significant since it’s essentially a confidence-building measure that comes at a time when the two countries haven’t held bilateral talks amid a series of incidents: terrorist attacks in Pathankot, Uri and Pulwama, Balakot air strikes, downgrading of diplomatic ties, withdrawal of Most Favoured Nation status, snapping of trade ties, and cancelling of bus, train and even postal services.

The corridor will be opened on November 9 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan inaugurating the facility in their respective countries. It will be open for the public from November 10. A website — in Punjabi and English — for pilgrims to book their visit (prakashpurb550.mha.gov.in) was also made live Thursday.

The agreement has been signed for five years and can be extended or terminated with notice of one month. Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara is the resting place of Guru Nanak Dev and one of most sacred of Sikh religious sites due to its historical value.

The key points for pilgrims are:

- Indian pilgrims of all faiths and persons of Indian origin can use the corridor.
- While a Pakistani visa will not be required, pilgrims will have to carry valid passports. Persons of Indian origin will need to carry OCI cards with passports of their country.
- The corridor will be open from dawn to dusk, and pilgrims travelling in the morning will have to return the same day.
- The corridor will be operational through the year, except on notified days.
- Pilgrims can visit as individuals or in groups, travel on foot.
- India will send the list of pilgrims to Pakistan 10 days ahead of their travel dates. Confirmation will be sent to pilgrims four days earlier.

In a statement, India said the main point of discussion continues to be the insistence of Pakistan on levying US\$ 20 (about Rs 1,420) as service charge per pilgrim per visit.

It said that India has consistently urged Pakistan to not levy any fee. However, it said, India agreed to sign the agreement in the interests of the pilgrims and timely operationalisation of the

corridor before the 550th Prakash Purb.

India also said that it continues to pursue all-weather connectivity through the corridor. In this context, the government has built a bridge on the Indian side and a temporary service road as an interim arrangement.

“It is expected that Pakistan will fulfil the assurance that it would build the bridge on their side at the earliest,” the statement said. It also said that provisions are made for facilitation of pilgrims. “All the required infrastructure, including the highway and the passenger terminal building, are nearing completion. A robust security architecture has been put in place while facilitating smooth and easy passage of pilgrims,” it said.

Referring to mandatory registration on the website, the statement said pilgrims will be informed by SMS and email of the confirmation of registration 3-4 days in advance of travel.

An electronic travel authorisation will also be generated, which will have to be produced along with passports at the passenger terminal building, it said.

At the signing, the Indian delegation was headed by SCL Das,

EXPLAINED

India against conflation with talks process

NEW DELHI has maintained that the Kartarpur corridor is not to be conflated with the bilateral dialogue process with Pakistan, as it is for pilgrimage and in line with the sentiments and faith of the Sikh community.

Islamabad, on the other hand, has portrayed the move as a peace gesture towards India.

Additional Secretary in Ministry of Home Affairs while Pakistan was led by Dr Mohammad Faisal, D-G South Asia and spokesperson of Pakistan’s Foreign Office.

Strategic ties, migration, oil: key agenda of PM’s Saudi visit

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

IN A bid for strategic depth and focus to their growing relationship, India and Saudi Arabia will sign an agreement on establishing the India-Saudi Arabia Strategic Partnership Council during Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s visit to Riyadh on October 29. The council will be headed by Modi and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

Modi, who will depart for Riyadh on October 28, will meet Saudi King Salman Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and hold delegation-level talks with the crown prince. The Prime Minister will also deliver the keynote address at the third edition of Saudi Arabia’s annual investment forum, the Future Investment Initiative.

MEA secretary (economic relations) T S Tirumurti said Riyadh has shown “understanding” about the recent developments in Jammu and Kashmir and it has had a “salutary effect” on Pakistan.

During Modi’s visit, the major pacts to be signed will include an MoU to roll out the RuPay card - India’s digital payment system - and one on bringing coordination on e-migration systems between the two countries.

The leaders will also discuss enhancing defence and security cooperation. The first naval exercise between the two nations is tentatively lined up for December 2019 or January 2020.

On the issue of cross-border terrorism, Tirumurti said both India and Saudi Arabia have concerns which reflected in the joint

Saudi Arabia is a source for over 17 per cent of crude oil and 32 per cent of LPG requirements of India

statement issued after Crown Prince Salman’s visit here in February.

The two countries will also finalise and move ahead on the ambitious west coast refinery project in Raigarh, Maharashtra, which will involve investments from Saudi oil giant Aramco, UAE’s Abu Dhabi National Oil Company and Indian public sector oil firms.

They are also scheduled to sign an MoU for a joint venture between Indian Oil’s Middle east subsidiary - IOC Middle East FZE - and Saudi company Al Jeri for downstream cooperation and setting up a retail fuel business in the Gulf country.

Saudi Arabia is a key pillar of India’s energy security, being a source of over 17 per cent of crude oil and 32 per cent of LPG requirements of India.

Both sides are also hoping to finalise Saudi Arabia’s investment in India’s National Infrastructure Investment Fund. Another key agreement both sides are eyeing to finalise is in the area of migration and protecting interests of Indian work force in the country. “We hope to launch the integration of our e-migration system and the Saudi system during the prime minister’s visit,” Tirumurti said.

He said both sides are also expected to ink an MoU for co-operation in the area of renewable energy.

Ready to hear disqualified MLAs: Karnataka House Speaker to SC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE KARNATAKA Assembly Speaker told the Supreme Court on Thursday that he was ready to hear the 17 MLAs who were disqualified by his predecessor, K R Ramesh Kumar, and take a “fresh call” on the issue.

The current Assembly Speaker is V Hegde Kageri. Kumar had disqualified these 17 MLAs, leading to the fall of the Congress-JD(S) coalition government headed by the then chief minister H D Kumaraswamy in Karnataka.

Kumaraswamy had resigned after losing a trust vote, which paved the way for the BJP-led government in the state under B S Yediyurappa.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the office of the Speaker, told a bench headed by Justice N V Ramana that under the scheme of Constitution, a lawmaker has a right to resign and speaker should accept it.

“We have no difficulty in hearing them all and take a fresh call,” Mehta told the bench, also comprising justices Sanjiv Khanna and Krishna Murari.

INX MEDIA MONEY-LAUNDERING CASE

Delhi court sends Chidambaram to ED custody till October 30

ANAND MOHAN J & PRITAM PAL SINGH
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24



Former Finance Minister P Chidambaram arrives at the ED office after his custody got extended till 30th October, in New Delhi on Thursday. ANI

A DELHI court on Thursday sent former Union minister P Chidambaram to the Enforcement Directorate’s (ED) custody until October 30 in the INX Media money-laundering case.

Special Judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar allowed the ED to interrogate the senior Congress leader for another seven days, after he was produced before him on expiry of his earlier seven days of remand. The judge also said that Chidambaram be taken to AIIMS immediately in case of any medical complication, after his counsel, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, submitted that his client’s health was a matter of serious concern and he has been seriously ill due to acute stomach pain, the cause of which, doctors have not been able to diagnose.

After getting bail in the INX Media corruption case from the Supreme Court, Chidambaram had moved the Delhi High Court for bail in the money-laundering case, saying he was “innocent” and “wrongly implicated”.

The HC on Thursday issued notice to the ED and sought its stand on Chidambaram’s bail application in the money-laundering case within a week. Justice Suresh Kumar Kait fixed the matter for further hearing on November 4.

Referring to the apex court’s bail order, which said that he is not a “flight risk” and a mere averment that he allegedly ap-

proached witnesses, without any basis, cannot be a reason to deny regular bail, his bail plea before the HC said that the “instant criminal proceedings are mala fide and borne out of political vendetta, and that the investigating agency is acting at the behest of the Central government, which wants to malign his untainted and unimpeachable reputation”.

He also contended that his health condition is “fragile”.

The ED, represented by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and advocate N K Matta, asked for seven-day custody. Mehta said Chidambaram was asked a total of 65 questions during his custody from October 17 to 23 and the pace of Chidambaram’s answer “substantially and drastically decreased”.

None of us have a choice: Apex court on privacy issue

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

“NONE OF US have a choice,” the Supreme Court remarked on Thursday at a hearing on how private entities were taking unsuspecting users for a ride, and decided to examine if the state had a duty to defend citizens against violation of their fundamental rights by such entities.

The words came from Justice S Ravindra Bhat, who was part of a five-judge Constitution bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, hearing a matter related to limits of free speech by ministers and those holding high offices.

The question had arisen in the

context of controversial comments by former Uttar Pradesh minister and Samajwadi Party leader Azam Khan following the 2016 Bulandshahr gangrape case.

Senior advocate Harish Salve, who is amicus curiae in the matter, told the court that the question was important in an era of growing privatisation. Explaining why he wanted the court to look into it, the senior counsel told the bench — also comprising Justices Indira Banerjee, Vineet Saran, M R Shah and S Ravindra Bhat — that he had once appeared in a matter challenging the user agreement of a social media giant. Those who accepted the user agreement were also unknowingly allowing it to read their messages, he said,

adding this was challenged in court.

During the hearing, the social media platform’s “brazen reply” was “then don’t use our services”. Then the government gave a brazen reply, “in that case we will ask internet service providers to block you like they do in China”, Salve recalled. Following this, the rules were amended, he said, adding “when so many unsuspecting citizens use such services, the government is under obligation to ensure their dignity is protected”. Joining issue, Justice Bhat said “non-state entities exercise far greater power today”. He pointed out that there were even privately-owned cities in the US and such cities were coming to

India too. Attorney General K K Venugopal said he was in agreement with Salve’s suggestion.

Justice Bhat gave the example of author Salman Rushdie. “Rushdie wrote something that was objectionable to the entire Islamic world. There were many protests even in India. There were many death threats following which he was given 24X7 security.” He added “today it may be vigilantes... or private individuals which may chill your speech” and asked “what is the state’s duty to ensure that fundamental rights are protected?” The AG said the Rushdie instance was a “different area”. Disagreeing, Justice Bhat replied, “It’s the same area. It’s the same right.”

“This is the era of privatisation,” remarked Justice Shah as Salve pointed out that the need for settling the question was never more important. “Can you tell youngsters write off your future in return for something...?” said Salve adding “don’t they have a choice?”

“None of us have a choice,” replied Justice Bhat, adding that the question of private entities was left unanswered by Justice P N Bhagwati in one of his judgments, wondering what was the need for it then. The court also agreed to examine Salve’s suggestion on whether persons holding high office can say whatever they want and then claim right to free speech.

Naga dispute: Talks between govt, NSCN-IM inconclusive

ESHA ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE MEETING between the government and Naga group NSCN-IM, held in New Delhi on Thursday, remained inconclusive, the group confirmed. NSCN-IM leaders said that another meeting will be scheduled within this month.

The meeting was scheduled after Prime Minister Narendra Modi set a three-month deadline to find a solution to the 60-year Naga dispute, compelling both the government and the insurgent leaders to speed up the process to meet the October 31 deadline.

Over the past two days, teams of insurgent leaders, not just from the NSCN-IM but also from the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG) — an umbrella of seven insurgent groups, started arriving in New Delhi for talks.

Former NSCN-IM Ceasefire Monitoring Committee convenor K Chawang told *The Indian Express*, “The meeting was inconclusive. It was a four-hour meeting which began at 2.30 pm and was heavily guarded. Unfortunately, both parties were unable to reach a solution. Another meeting will be scheduled and will take place, we believe, within this month. But that depends on Governor R N Ravi.”

Meanwhile sources said that Chief Interlocutor and Governor Ravi was expected to meet the NNPG separately within the next few days.

While the bone of contention between the government and the NSCN-IM has been that of a separate flag and constitution for Nagaland, the NNPG has been far more flexible in their conditions, giving up this demand.

Instead, they have demanded that the seats in the state Assembly be increased from 60 to 90, that the number of members from Nagaland in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha be increased, and that an “upper house system” be put in place in Nagaland which is to have Members of Legislative Councils, apart from MLAs.

EXPRESS NETWORK

How long? Come with clear answers: SC to J&K on curbs

ANANTHAKRISHNANG
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE SUPREME Court Thursday told the J&K administration to "come with clear answers" on how long it intends to keep in place the restrictions imposed ahead of the August 5 announcement ending the special status of the state under Article 370.

While the administration maintained it was reviewing the situation daily, Justice N V Ramana, heading a three-judge bench, questioned Solicitor General Tushar Mehta who appeared for J&K: "It's already two months. How long will the restrictions be in place?". Posting the matter for further hearing on November 5, Justice Ramana told Mehta "you have to come with clear answers".

The bench, also comprising Justices R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai, is hearing *Kashmir Times* Executive Editor Anuradha Bhasin's petition challenging the communication blackout imposed in the state.

Justice Reddy too said: "You may impose restrictions from time to time, but you have to review daily".

"We are," replied Mehta, adding that 99 per cent of J&K was now without movement restrictions.

Appearing for the petitioner, advocate Vrinda Grover said the Internet shutdown was total.

Mehta protested, saying when Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani was killed by security forces, Internet was shut down for three months. He wondered why no one rushed to the court then. "This has trans-border implications," he said.

Countering him, Grover said that according to government data, there was a fall in terror activities in J&K and this showed there was no relation between terror and access to Internet.

The court also fixed November

5 as the date for hearing other petitions including a writ of habeas corpus by CPM general secretary Sitaram Yechury on the detention of party colleague Mohd Yusuf Tarigami. The lawyer who appeared in the matter requested the court to permit him to file an affidavit, saying Tarigami was still being subjected to the same restrictions as earlier in J&K.

The Solicitor General objected: "What detention? He conducted a press conference in Delhi yesterday."

The court also took up the plea of Asifa Mubeen, challenging the detention of her husband Mubeen Ahmed Shah.

Mehta told the court that a writ of habeas corpus on this had already been filed in the J&K High Court and that it had been reserved for judgment.

Senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appearing for the petitioner, said his client did not have anything to do with that petition and her consent was not taken before its filing. He said it was filed by some lawyer sitting in New York "who wanted to be in the limelight".

But Mehta pointed out that as per the court, the brother of the detenu was present in the court room during the hearing. The petitioner, he said, should wait for the High Court order. He said there was now an order of detention and the petitioner should challenge that.

When Sankaranarayanan repeated his contention, Justice Reddy asked him: "Did you make any attempt to withdraw the petition? What is this? One petition here, one there."

Intervening, Attorney General K K Venugopal said "I think they should wait for the HC order." The bench agreed and asked the HC to decide the matter expeditiously.

It also tagged writ petitions challenging Article 35A to those challenging changes to Article 370 which the court had already fixed for hearing on November 14.

J&K to SC: Situation has substantially improved

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration told the Supreme Court on Thursday that the situation in the state had "substantially improved" and that "barring 8-10 police stations, movement restrictions have been completely removed".

An affidavit filed by the "J&K government" in the top court said that the state has its own "state-specific geopolitical relevance" and the "decisions" pertaining to it "have always been taken considering its longstanding history of terrorism from across the border, helped and abetted by some of the elements within the State in aggravating the same, acting as agents for the vested interest across the border".

The affidavit was in response to a petition by Anuradha Bhasin, Executive Editor of *Kashmir Times*, who claimed that she had not been able to publish her paper from Srinagar because of the "communication blackout".

Justifying the restrictions, the administration said that the

"menace of abuse of social media in the State by the anti-Indian forces across the border by spreading fake news, doctored videos and morphed images is so rampant that based upon a situation prevailing at any given point of time such restrictions are required to be resorted to".

It added that the "situation has improved substantially and restrictions initially resorted to are fully or partially lifted".

Bhasin had demanded that the government produce the orders on the basis of which the restrictions were put in place.

Hearing the plea last time, the court had asked why the Centre was reluctant to share the orders. The state responded that they were administrative orders passed in the interest of national security and that while it had no problem sharing them with the court, the same could not be given to the petitioner, and that the petitioner could not sit in appeal over it.

Following this, the affidavit submitted on Thursday annexed "the reasons and justifications behind passing of such orders are obviously never reflected in the orders as recording such grounds in the order/s would defeat the very object of the order/s".

Two non-local truckers killed in Shopian, trucks set on fire

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

MILITANTS KILLED two non-local truckers in South Kashmir's Shopian district on Thursday evening. Police officials said that another trucker was seriously injured in the attack, and three trucks laden with fruit were set on fire.

Officials said that militants shot at three truckers, killing two and critically injuring one in Chitragram area of Shopian. While the driver was identified as Ilyas Khan, a resident of Alwar in Rajasthan, the identity of his assistant, who was also killed, is yet to be established.

With this incident, five non-locals have been killed in the Valley since October 14.

Kashmir Zone Police tweeted on Thursday, "Terrorists killed two civilians in Shopian. One injured has been shifted to the hospital. Further details shall follow."

A senior police official said that another truck driver identified as Jeevan Singh from Punjab was critically injured and shifted to a local health facility, from

Militants shot at three truckers, killing two and leaving one critically injured. A manhunt has been launched to nab the attackers

where he was referred to a Srinagar hospital. The two deceased had burn injuries as well, the official added.

A senior health officer in Shopian's Zainapora told *The Indian Express* that a truck driver was brought to the health facility in Zainapora. "He had bullet wounds in the abdomen. We referred him to Srinagar for specialised treatment," said the officer. Sources in Srinagar's SMHS hospital, where Singh was admitted, said that Singh was critical and being operated on by doctors.

Officials said that other truckers escaped from the area unhurt. An official said the truckers had gone to the interiors of Shopian: "The area where the attack took place is in the interior.

We are investigating how the truckers entered that area." Soon after the attack, security forces cordoned off the area and a manhunt was launched to nab the attackers.

Last week, a 30-year-old non-local labourer was killed by militants in Pulwama district. That same evening, a non-local fruit trader was killed while his associate was critically injured in a militant attack in nearby Shopian district. On October 14, a non-local truck driver from Rajasthan was killed while his truck was set ablaze in Shopian district.

After the attacks in South Kashmir, DGP Dilbag Singh had said that truckers have been advised not to take their trucks into the interiors of Shopian, and designated points have been identified where fruit would be loaded in trucks.

Mohammad Ashraf Wani, president of Fruit Growers and Dealers Association, Shopian, said that 300-350 fruit-laden trucks leave Shopian every day. "Only 20 per cent of the total fruit has been sent (outside) so far. We are yet to send 80 per cent of the fruit," he said.

Pak troops shell Kashmir's Tangdhar, one civilian killed

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 24

ONE WOMAN was killed and four others were injured after Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked mortar shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) in North Kashmir's Tangdhar town on Thursday evening. Another four civilians were injured in shelling in Kupwara district on Thursday evening.

Police officials said that shelling started at five places around Teetwal in Tangdhar on Thursday afternoon. A woman identified as Hamida Fatima died after shells landed in Pingla Haridal village.

Tangdhar Block Medical Officer Dr Farooq Qureshi told *The Indian Express* that the four civilians were brought to the health facility. "All of them were females, and two were referred to a Srinagar hospital for treatment," he said.

BJP wins 81 of 280 blocks in J&K's first BDC elections

BASHARAT MASOOD & ARUN SHARMA
SRINAGAR, JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

TWO MONTHS after abrogation of J&K's special status, the BJP won only 81 of 280 blocks that went to the polls in the Block Development Council (BDC) elections in J&K held under tight security on Thursday.

The BJP was the only major political party in fray, with the National Conference, PDP and Congress staying away to protest detention of their leaders and curbs imposed on the people following the Centre's August 5 decision.

The saffron party managed to get only about a third of the blocks in its stronghold of Jammu division, winning 52 of 148 blocks. Panthers Party won eight, and Independents were elected chairpersons in remaining 88 BDCs.

The BJP had won 25 of 37 Assembly seats from Jammu division in 2014 elections.

The party won 18 blocks out of 137 in Kashmir Valley.

State Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Shaileendra Kumar released the results on Thursday evening. "Of total 316 blocks, elections were to be held for 307 blocks. Since candidates on 27 seats were elected unopposed, polling was held on 280 blocks," Kumar told the media in Srinagar. "The BJP has won 81 blocks, INC (Indian National Congress) one and JKNPP eight. Independents secured 217 blocks".

In the Valley, panches and sarpanches, the electorate for the polls, were brought to polling stations in bulletproof mobile police bunker vehicles.

CEO Kumar said around 26,000 panches and sarpanches cast their votes, and more than 98 per cent polling was recorded.



A woman casts her vote during the BDC elections in Budgam district on Thursday. ANI

At Kakapora, over a hundred security personnel surrounded the single-storey "Panchayat Ghar". In the first hour-and-a-half, all nine voters had cast their votes, eight of them Kashmiri Pandit migrants belonging to two families.

Manoj Pandita (50), a Kashmiri Pandit who contested for BJP and lost to Independent candidate Umar Jan, said: "I contested for development of my village."

Pandita, originally from Lajora village in Pulwama who lives in Jammu and recently shifted to valley, said, "When I visited my village last year, nothing had changed. There was no development; the village high school founded in 1960 has not been upgraded through all these years."

In north Kashmir's Sumbal block, five candidates - one BJP and four Independents - were in fray, and by the end of scheduled poll time of 1 pm all 37 votes had been cast. "While we have filed a party candidate here, we are supporting an Independent candi-

date," BJP's sarpanch from Asham Abdul Rashid Khan said. "Some panches and sarpanches were wary of contesting on BJP tickets, so we allowed them to file nomination as Independents."

Reserved for women, BJP's Ruheena Jan was elected as chairperson of Bhagat Kanipora block of central Kashmir's Budgam, on the outskirts of Srinagar city, defeating independent candidate by two votes. Of 32 votes polled in the block, Ruheena secured 11.

In Jammu district's 20 blocks, spread over 11 Assembly constituencies (nine of them won by the BJP in 2014 Assembly polls), BJP candidates were declared elected at nine. In Kathua district's 19 blocks spread over five constituencies, all of which had elected BJP candidates in 2014 Assembly polls, BJP won only nine. The remaining 10 went to Independents.

Sources said BJP candidates for Nagri and Jugan blocks won by one vote each.

In Udhampur district, BJP won four out of 17 blocks. It failed to win any of the three blocks in Vijaypur Assembly constituency in Samba district, which was represented by BJP minister Chander Parkash Ganga in 2014. Ganga was among the J&K ministers who were made to resign from the then PDP-BJP coalition following widespread public criticism for supporting family members of the accused in Kathua rape and murder case last year.

In Reasi's 12 blocks, BJP won four; two out of nine in Ramban; five out of 12 in Doda; seven of 13 blocks in Kishtwar districts. In Kishtwar district's Palmar block, BJP candidate, after ending tied with an Independent candidate, was declared elected through a toss.

In Rajouri district's 19 blocks, BJP candidates won at eight places, and the party failed to open its account in Poonch district, with Independents winning in all 11 blocks.

US CONGRESS HEARING ON J&K India says criticism 'regrettable', should have focussed on cross-border terror

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

DAYS AFTER the first US Congressional hearing on the Union government's decision to scrap the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370, New Delhi on Thursday called criticism by several US Congress members over the situation in Kashmir as "regrettable" and stressed that the comments reflect a "very limited understanding" of the country's history and its pluralistic society.

Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said that instead of criticising New Delhi, the occasion should have been used to "ascertain facts on state-sponsored cross border terrorism in Kashmir".

"It is regrettable that a few members of the US Congress used the Congressional hearing on human rights in South Asia to question the measures taken recently to safeguard life, peace and security in Kashmir," Kumar said in response to a question at a media briefing. "These comments display a very limited understanding of India's history, her pluralistic society, constitutionally guaranteed freedom, fundamental rights, and the robust institutions operating in the world's largest democracy."

He said India feels that the hearing should have been used to ascertain facts on state-sponsored cross-border terrorism afflicting Kashmir, which endangers the most fundamental of human rights - the right to life.

Kumar said India has been regularly updating departments concerned in the US government on the situation in Kashmir and sensitising them about "real concerns" over "revival" of cross-border terrorism by Pakistan. He said India has taken note of comments of Alice Wells, US Assistant Secretary of State for South and Central Asia, that Pakistan needs to do much more in curbing terrorism on its territory in a "credible, verifiable and irreversible" manner.

In the hearing, held Tuesday night (US EST), the Donald Trump administration had walked the diplomatic tightrope, telling the US Congress that there

EXPLAINED

US Congress vs US administration

INDIA'S RESPONSE to the US Congressional hearing made a clear distinction between what US Congress members said and what the US administration officials testified on the Kashmir situation. While Delhi slammed some of the US Congress members for their views, there was a fair bit of appreciation of the US administration's comments. This reflects New Delhi's understanding of the nuance between the US Congress and the executive branch. But it also puts responsibility on the government to act on the ground to normalise the situation in Kashmir.

is a "humanitarian crisis" in J&K, and adding that its relationship with India is not one of "dictation" but that of "partnership".

US administration officials also told the panel that American diplomats wanted to travel to J&K after August 5 but New Delhi denied permission, saying it was not the right time to go there.

On the key issue of change in status, however, US officials backed New Delhi, saying that the decision to revoke provisions of Article 370 was passed by Parliament, where Opposition members "crossed the aisle" and voted in favour of the legislation, and that the matter is under review of the Supreme Court.

Alice Wells made it clear that the US government was not taking a position on the issue of Article 370 but on the manner in which the decision was executed by New Delhi.

PALM OIL IMPORT BOYCOTT India asks Malaysia leadership to do 'serious introspection'

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

CALLING MALAYSIAN Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad's comments "unacceptable", India on Thursday slammed Malaysia for raising the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and asked its leadership to do "serious introspection".

Referring to the palm oil import boycott, Delhi said that trade cannot be "impervious" to the state of the bilateral relationship. Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar said that "his statements are unacceptable and are not keeping with the facts and we hope Malaysia will do serious introspection on the position it has taken".

Asked about the impact on

trade between the two countries, the MEA spokesperson said that while the "decision to import any commodity or otherwise is the prerogative of the importing company", at the "same time they are not impervious to the state of affairs between any two countries".

Mahathir had said on Tuesday that he would not retract his criticism of New Delhi's actions on Kashmir despite Indian traders calling for an unprecedented boycott of Malaysian palm oil.

India's top vegetable oil trade body on Monday asked its members to stop buying Malaysian palm oil after Mahathir said at the UN General Assembly last month that India had "invaded and occupied" Kashmir, a region also claimed by Pakistan.

NORTH WESTERN RAILWAY
ई-निविदा सूचना
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(नियम पत्र की संख्या: 52.81.164) जमा की जाने वाली बयाना राशि: ₹. 1,42,700 /- आइआईटीएस प्रोडेंट से ऑनलाइन पंजीकरण वेबसाइट पर वेबसाइट ई-निविदा प्रस्ताव करने की वेबसाइट की ओर निर्दिष्ट वेबसाइट: www.iirps.gov.in पर तथा मंडल रेल प्रबंधक कार्यालय, उत्तर पश्चिम क्षेत्र, जयपुर के निविदा नोटिस बोर्ड पर उपलब्ध है।
1079-D/19
Please join us on

**Superintending Engineer
Meerut Circle, P.W.D Meerut**
No. 4380/11 Cashier- CD(B) Meerut-MRT Circle/19-20 Dated: 14.10.2019
(E-Tender Notice) (Very Short term)
1. The Superintending Engineer Meerut Circle, U.P.P.W.D. Meerut on behalf of Governor of Uttar Pradesh invites the percentage rate bids online from the eligible and approved Contractors registered with UP PWD, Road work in class 'A', 'B' The Bidder may submit bids for any or all of the works. Bidders are advised to note the minimum qualification criteria specified in Clause 4 of the Instructions to Bidders to qualify for the award of the contract.
2.

Sl. No.	DISTRICT	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs. In Lakhs)	Bid Security (Rs. In Lakhs)	Cost of Bid Document	Time of Completion	Address of Executive Engineer of the Executing work	Address of Superintending Engineer	Address of Chief Engineer
1.	Meerut	Widening & Strengthening of Jawalagarh to Rardhana via Kheda, Faridpur, Moment (Ch. 15.700 to 16.700+1 Km.) to Rardhana Pul (Bridge) in Distt. Meerut	140.00	9.00	2000+300 + GST 1%	03 Months	CD (Building) PWD Meerut	Meerut Circle PWD Meerut	Meerut Zone PWD Meerut

The Rate adopted in the BOQ all Other taxes but excluding GST Taxes.
Bids must be accompanied with the copy of UTR (Unique Transaction Receipt) bid security (EMD) and tender cost of the amount specified for the work in the table. Bid security and Tender Cost should be deposited online only by Net Banking in A/C No. 37455743456 (IFSC Code :- SBIN0006144)
Bids must be published/download online 10:00 AM on date 25.10.2019 and submitted online on or before 4:00 PM on date 31.10.2019 and the technical bids will be opened online date 31.10.2019 at 12:30 PM and Financial bids of the qualified bidders will be opened on date & time as notified. According to the provisions of Government Order no. 1/2018/307078-2-2018/42 (IT/2017/22) Date 03-01-2018 after opening of the technical and financial bids, the bidder has to submit original documents personally in department office. In the event of non submission of original documents by the bidder, the appropriate action will be taken in accordance with the provisions of G.O.
All terms & conditions can be seen on website <http://etender.up.nic.co.in>
Sd/- (C.P. Singh) Executive Engineer Construction Division (Building), P.W.D, Meerut Ph. 9897597240 Email - cd1pwmrmt@gmail.com
Sd/- (Sanjeev Shrivastava) Superintending Engineer Meerut Circle, P.W.D, Meerut Email - sepwmrmt1@gmail.com
UPID-144857 dt. 24.10.2019 WWW.UPGOV.NIC.IN

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, ROAD CONSTRUCTION DEPARTMENT, ROAD DIVISION, GUMLA
e-Procurement Notice (1st Call)
e-Tender Reference No. RCD/GUMLA/1132 Date :- 24.10.2019
1. Name of the work Reconstruction of Dumri (On MDR-036)-Bara Katra - Kerakona (Jharkhand - Chhatisgarh Border) Road including Ht. Bridge (Total Length -11.400 km)
2. Estimated Cost (Rs.) Rs. 47,06,81,300.00 (Rs. Forty seven crore six lacs eighty one thousand three hundred) Only.
3. Time of Completion 18 Months
4. Last date/Time for receipt of bids 18.11.2019 Up to 12:00 Noon
5. Date of Publication of Tender on website 26.10.2019 From 10:30 A.M.
6. Name & address of office inviting tender Executive Engineer, Road Construction Department, Road Division, Gumla.
7. Contact no. of e-Procurement officer 06524-222097
8. Helpline number of e-Procurement cell 0651-2401010
1. Further details can be seen on website <https://jharkhandtenders.gov.in>
Sd/- Executive Engineer, Road Construction Department, Road Division, Gumla.
PR 220836 (Road) 19-20 (D)

Kamlesh murder: Cleric held for 'helping' two suspects

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 24



Kamlesh Tiwari was killed in Lucknow last week

THE SIT formed to investigate the murder of Hindu outfit leader Kamlesh Tiwari arrested Bareilly-based cleric Kafi Ali on Thursday for allegedly providing shelter to the two suspected killers while they were on the run.

Sources said that the SIT has also picked up one Naved, from Bareilly, who allegedly helped the suspected assailants - Ashfaq Hussain Jakir Hussain Shaikh (34) and Farid alias Moinuddin Khurshid Pathan (27) - to travel to Nepal to escape. Ashfaq and Moinuddin were arrested at the Gujarat-Rajasthan border by Gujarat ATS on Tuesday. They were handed over to the UP Police on a transit remand and brought to Lucknow, where a local court on Thursday sent them to

three days of police custody. "Kafi Ali provided shelter to Ashfaq and Moinuddin for around three hours in Bareilly. He has been booked under IPC section 216 (harbouring offender). He would be booked under more charges if the ongoing investigation found him involved in the murder conspiracy," an SIT officer said. Meanwhile, Naved had allegedly arranged shelter for Ashfaq and Moinuddin in Nepal after they escaped from Lucknow after the murder. Both stayed at a house in Nepal for a day but had returned through Lakhimpur Kheri border.

AGUSTAWESTLAND CASE

CHHATTISGARH

Delhi HC seeks CBI, ED stand on Christian Michel bail petitions

Controversial cop moves SC, claims state police hounding him, his family

Mukesh Gupta headed ACB, EOW under BJP govt; accused of abusing state power, demoted

DIPANKAR GHOSE
RAIPUR, OCTOBER 24

A CONTROVERSIAL top Chhattisgarh Police officer, who faces allegations of financial impropriety and illegal phone-tapping, has filed a writ petition in Supreme Court against the state police, alleging "persistent hounding and victimisation at the behest of the present political dispensation".

The petition comes up for hearing in the top court on Friday.

Mukesh Gupta, who was Director General of Police of the state Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) and the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) under the previous BJP government and was removed in September this year, also alleges that the state police are illegally tapping phones of his two daughters,

and "tracking and stalking (my) family members", including his two daughters.

Last month, Gupta was demoted, along with two other police officers of the same rank, to ADG rank. It is mentioned in his petition. Gupta also held the post of IGP, intelligence wing, during the Raman Singh-led BJP government.

The BJP lost to the Congress in the Vidhan Sabha polls in December 2018.

Even before he became Chief Minister, Bhupesh Baghel, as then state Congress chief, had accused Gupta of corruption, and alleged that the BJP was protecting him.

Two FIRs registered against Gupta in February this year accuse him of misusing state power by ordering illegal phone-tapping, forging official documents, and fudging evidence. According to the FIRs,

these took place when he, as then chief of ACB and EOW, was investigating the Chhattisgarh PDS scam.

In the third case, registered three months later, Gupta was accused of using his influence as then SP of Durg district, and allegedly using manipulated documents to get land allotted in Bhilai Special Area Development Authority.

Gupta has fought these cases in court, and has been granted relief through a stay. The Supreme Court had also taken cognizance of his allegations of hounding by the police and issued notices to the state government, including CM Baghel.

Chhattisgarh DGP D M Awasthi said, "As the matter is sub judice, it would not be appropriate for me to say anything."

Senior Congress leader R P Singh also pointed out that the

matter is in court, and "what has to be said will be said in court."

In his writ petition, Gupta mentions that although the apex court granted him "relief" on September 2 with the stay order, the respite "was short-lived, as the respondents (state police) soon unleashed their full might".

Since then, he submitted, the police are "hounding the applicant/petitioner and his family members in a patently mala fide exercise of state power".

The petition mentions that Chhattisgarh Police officials are "permanently parked" outside his flat in Panchsheel Park, New Delhi, and have allegedly threatened the family's security guard and driver.

It says a complaint on this was made to the SHO of Malviya Nagar in Delhi on October 6.

"(But)...officers of Chhattisgarh Police on October

10 threatened the driver named Heera at his residence and attempted to abduct him in a Pajero sports car bearing number CG 13 U 0001," it states.

The petition says the officers drove away, leaving behind Heera, after a Delhi Police van arrived following a PCR call.

Delhi Police's DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said, "We received a complaint on October 6 and the matter is being investigated."

On allegations of abduction attempt, DCP (PCR) Sharat Sinha said, "A PCR call was made and police personnel did reach the spot, but there was no case of kidnapping."

The petition includes a complaint filed by Gupta's daughter, alleging that Chhattisgarh Police personnel are tracking moves of the family members, and that they were even followed on a flight to Chennai.

DEFAMATION CASE BY MJ AKBAR

Deleted my Twitter account, it can be restored: Ramani

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

JOURNALIST PRIYA Ramani Thursday told a Delhi court that she has deactivated her Twitter account, which was not deliberate "in order to destroy evidence" and that it can be reactivated.

"This case has been very hard for me the past one year. I have been in Delhi almost every month and I need to focus on my personal and family life. It is not deleted and it can be reactivated," she told the court of Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Samar Vishal during her cross-examination by MJ Akbar's counsel Geeta Luthra.

Ramani had last year levelled allegations of sexual misconduct and harassment against MJ Akbar, who subsequently resigned as Union MoS for External Affairs and filed the defamation case.

Luthra showed Ramani comments from the Twitter handles @rajivazad and @indiawassup, where the users reacted to Ramani's tweet. Ramani told the court that she had not read the comments earlier.

Asked whether she can open her Twitter account and confirm these comments, Ramani replied, "I deleted my Twitter account around a month ago, so it cannot be verified now. I do not remember the specific date."

Luthra asked Ramani, "Are you aware that your Twitter account is evidence in this case or not?" Ramani's counsel Rebecca John objected to the question and said, "The Twitter account of the accused is not evidence in this case and the tweets which are a subject matter of this case are already admitted by her and exhibited in her evidence."

ACMM Vishal said that will be decided during time of judgment.

Ramani then told the court, "It is wrong to suggest that these comments and replies...to my tweet show that Mr Akbar's repu-



Ramani: Case has been very hard for me for past one year

tation was lowered by my tweet in the estimation of others who were following my tweets."

Luthra then said, "I put it to you that the comments, replies on your Twitter handle, which account you have now deleted during the trial, have become inaccessible." Ramani replied, "I don't think it is true."

The ACMM then asked Ramani whether all these messages be seen again and recovered if she reactivates her Twitter handle with the same account. Ramani replied, "I think so."

Luthra also asked whether Ramani deactivated her Facebook account, to which Ramani replied, "No. I have 700 friends on Facebook".

Luthra asked Ramani whether she has retweeted any tweet by Akbar.

Ramani replied that she does not remember. Luthra then showed her a copy of her retweet of Akbar's post on how not to use metaphors. Ramani told the court, "I may have on 04.12.2010 retweeted a tweet of Mr Akbar's on how not to use metaphors. I do not remember that on 14.12.2010, I tweeted about Mr Akbar's Times of India column as compared to India Today writing".

Luthra suggested that Ramani has also, on other occasions, commented positively and tweeted about Akbar's work, to which Ramani replied, "It is incorrect. I don't think so." Her cross-examination will continue on Friday.

Northern Army commander, six others injured as helicopter crash-lands in Poonch

ARUN SHARMA
JAMMU, OCTOBER 24

THREE TOP commanders of the Indian Army, including Northern Army Commander Lieutenant General Ranbir Singh, were among seven Army officers injured on Thursday afternoon when an Advanced Light Helicopter crash-landed near the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district.

Sources said General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Nagrota-based 16 Co rps, Lt General Harsha Gupta, and General Officer Commanding (GOC) of the Rajouri-based 25 Div, Major General Dharam



Local residents and Army personnel rescue the injured from the crash site in Poonch on Thursday. Express

Rajan, were among seven people on board. A civilian who was nearby was also injured

An Army statement said "The Army Commander was visiting units in Poonch sector when the

ALH developed a technical snag and crash-landed. All the passengers and crew sustained injuries. The injured were evacuated to the Command Hospital, Udhampur and as per medical investigations, all have sustained blunt and superficial injuries."

"The local villagers who arrived first on the scene, wholeheartedly assisted the Army in management and evacuation... We salute them," it added.

According to sources, the incident occurred when the helicopter was on its way to the Mandi area. The helicopter was picking up altitude at Mandi when its rotor blades got entangled in overhead wires resulting in its forced landing.

Punjab and Haryana HC gets 3 judges

New Delhi: The Centre on Thursday appointed three additional judges to the Punjab and Haryana High Court.

According to a notification issued by the Union Ministry of Law & Justice, the President has appointed advocates Suvir Sehgal, Girish Agnihotri, and Alka Sarin as additional judges of the High Court for a period of two years.

The elevation pertains to recommendations forwarded by the Supreme Court collegium, headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, where five advocates were recommended to be elevated as High Court judges on July 25. ENS

SAFETY, CONVENIENCE, COMFORT 100 NEW BUSES ON DELHI ROADS

Dip/Shabbir/ID/02/2019/19-20



UNIQUE FEATURES

Hydraulic lift for differently abled

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Two way communication with control room

FLAG-OFF CEREMONY

Friday, 25 October 2019 at 03:00 pm
Dwarka, Sector 22, Cluster Bus Depot

Chief Guest
Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi

Guest of Honour
Kailash Gahlot
Transport Minister, Delhi



दिल्ली सरकार
Transport Department, Government of NCT of Delhi



ALWAYS VOTE FOR PRINCIPLE, THOUGH YOU
MAY VOTE ALONE.
— JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

Cracks in the edifice

Assembly elections give a small but important reprieve from BJP's arrogance, its consolidation of power



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

DENTED AT THE TOP

BJP returns in Maharashtra, may be back in Haryana, but will have to address new questions

FOR A PARTY for which no election is too small, and which aggressively courts an aura of invincibility, there are unmistakable messages writ on the Haryana and Maharashtra walls. The outcomes of the assembly elections in these two states are a warning that the BJP cannot take its winning streak for granted, that there is something tenuous and nothing inevitable about it — it managed to retain power in one, but not as convincingly as it had projected, and lost its majority in the other, only months after sweeping the state in the Lok Sabha elections. The Maharashtra and Haryana results are a reminder that political dominance in a democracy, beyond the whirring of the marvellous election machine, is made of the several pacts between the voter and the party at local levels that need to be constantly worked upon, and renewed.

In days to come, the BJP must ask itself if the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, his popularity, is enough. It may have helped the party win the Lok Sabha election decisively across states — as in Haryana, where it won all 10 seats — but it has now evidently failed to carry it past the halfway mark in the Haryana assembly or hold on to its numbers in Maharashtra. It can even be argued that the BJP's underwhelming performance in Haryana and Maharashtra is not despite PM Modi, but because of him — that's a question that can no longer be un-askable in the party. If these elections signal the possible limits of the personality cult that the BJP has constructed around PM Modi, and the dangers of banking on it excessively or exclusively, they also point to the diminishing returns of the emotive nationalism card, played in these two elections by the insistent and emphatic invocation of the Centre's abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir. There is no evidence to suggest that the electorate in Maharashtra and Haryana opposed the removal of J&K's special status, but there is reason to conclude that at a time when the aam voter is cramped and cornered by agricultural distress and raging joblessness closer home, it was not their primary concern. For some time now, it had seemed that the BJP had been able to accomplish two feats — to separate the economic from the political, and to subsume the political into a test of nationalism. These election results indicate that that separation, that distraction, may no longer be working as well to the BJP's advantage as it did in the past.

In both states that went to polls, the BJP had become, not without its own complicity, the most favoured destination for defectors. If it opened its doors wide to leaders from the NCP and Congress in Maharashtra, it took in large numbers from the INLD and Congress in Haryana. The final tallies in both states have also put a question mark against the anything-goes, moveable politics that it seems to be turning to, to win.

A CRACK, AN OPENING

BJP's dimming numbers may not signal an endorsement of Congress politics. But they provide it an opportunity

THE MAHARASHTRA AND Haryana assembly election results offer the Opposition, especially the Congress, some reason to cheer. After the drubbing in the general election a few months ago, it has crawled back to relevance in both states. In Haryana, the Congress stood in the way of the BJP winning a simple majority whereas in Maharashtra, the BJP's final tally is likely to be significantly less than its strength in 2014. Yet, while the results are a wake-up call for the BJP, the Congress would be mistaken if it reads them as a sign of its own resurgence.

By all accounts, the Congress has been the indirect beneficiary of anti-incumbency in these states. In Haryana, the party has made considerable gains from 2014, but it may have more to do with it being the default option for voters angry with the Manohar Lal Khattar government. A divided house, the Congress was rocked by resignations and desertions till days before polling. The party organisation is in disarray, its district units remain headless. If it has been thinning organisationally, it has been missing in action politically, staying away from street mobilisations in the past five years despite the growing stress in the agriculture sector and disquiet among youth over joblessness. In Maharashtra, the NCP has won more seats than its parent body and is poised to be the main Opposition party. Here, the Congress hitched its wagon to NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who, at 80, was the Opposition's star campaigner. In fact, the party could learn from Pawar how to turn adversity into advantage and hold the fort against odds. Maharashtra was rocked by protests over farm distress, unemployment, social discrimination and so on in the past five years. Yet here too, the Congress was missing in action even as a large section of the population turned restive. The party's failure to do its job as the Opposition and engage with the public is now reflected in its failure to make bigger gains from the clear anti-incumbency in the two states.

The Congress leadership may well conclude that electoral success is cyclical and that its turn will come when the BJP exhausts itself. Such smug optimism would be misplaced. The Congress is no more seen to be the natural party of governance, that mantle seem to have shifted to the BJP. The party will need to sort out leadership issues, revitalise its cadre, and voice public concerns by mobilising on the streets if it wishes to be in the reckoning more than it is at the moment.

CHARMINGLY CHUBBY

Bikaner police is monitoring waist sizes of policemen. But there was something comforting about corpulent cops

MAYBE IT'S BOLLYWOOD'S fault. Too often, the beat constable or the junior sub-inspector is given short shrift during a chase scene. The villain easily outruns the cops in a foot chase, if the police do manage to arrive in time to stop anything at all. The Rajasthan police has, in Bikaner, decided to address this problem. And like all bureaucracies, it has reduced a social problem to one of numbers — in this case, weights and measures. The officers in Bikaner have been instructed by the Superintendent of Police (SP) of the district to provide details of the men under their charge who have an "above average weight/waist size" and "chest size".

A fighting-fit police force is, of course, something that all civic governments now assume society requires. But there is something comforting about the archetypal image of the beat constable, whose belly would always enter a room before him. Ganpat Havaldar from Nukkad, for example, gave joy to an entire generation, much more so, perhaps, than the muscle-bound John Abraham or Ajay Devgn have on the big screen. And, given how intimidating and frustrating most interactions with the police can be for ordinary citizens, it might be better if cops looked like friendly neighbourhood uncles.

Of course, the Bikaner SP's initiative is in keeping with the way India views its police forces. The criterion, even at the time of entry, is largely physical. And despite laudable initiatives at trying to introduce community policing, investigative skills that go beyond intimidation and sensitivity to issues of caste, gender, community, etc, the police continue to retain aspects of their colonial origins. And, given their abysmal working conditions and hours, is it any wonder many don't have time to eat salads and hit the gym?

IN HINDSIGHT, all election results seem over determined, paradoxically even more so when they go against projected trends. The close result in Haryana, and the BJP's inability to put in a command performance in Maharashtra has, to borrow Leonard Cohen's phrase, "opened up a crack" through which some light can come in. Far from the hang-over effect of the Lok Sabha election, the BJP's drop in vote-share in Haryana is more than 20 per cent, quite spectacular by any means. It will be too quick to draw large conclusions, but these elections have brought back some home truths about politics.

There is nothing inevitable about the BJP juggernaut, even with all its resources, leadership, organisational acumen, and the use (and abuse) of state power behind it. There is an undercurrent of dissatisfaction that is sidelined by high-decibel nationalism issues. The intriguing question is that the scale of the upset might have been even greater had this undercurrent been tapped into with greater resources and organisational acumen by the Opposition. The dent in Haryana has occurred despite a lack of deep presence and intensity in the opposition. Even with Narendra Modi's popularity, there is a sense of unease about India's economy; rural India seems to be a little riper for revolt. By playing the nationalism and the Article 370 card in local elections, the BJP may itself have expressed contempt for local voters. Both Haryana and Maharashtra, like many Indian states, have a strong sense of their identity. The support for nationalism and abrogation of 370 is very high. But voters can also see the sense in which this achievement can be used as a shield to mask other important issues. It is an interesting question whether in this instance, the BJP's attempt to nationalise the election actually hurt it, and it might be a case of the central leadership needing to be blamed more than local strategists. As Haryana demonstrates, messaging requires responsiveness to context, not just the wielding of a mantra, which is what nationalism might have become.

Voter preferences are not too deeply congealed into ideological formations just yet. One of the interesting things in this election is that the turnover of seats is fairly high. There is a thesis that has been propounded of

late, that politics has become detached from social cleavages. We sometimes veer between placing too much emphasis on social cleavages, or we write them off prematurely. In most elections, social identities split votes across all parties, though the distribution varies. The real question is when do they matter and how. It will be simplistic to see this election as a Maratha revolt against a non-Maratha CM in Maharashtra or a non-Jat CM in Haryana. The seemingly greater salience of social identity can be as much as an effect, not a cause of politics. In contexts where there is a credible ideological identity, social cleavages can be overcome. If caste seems to reassert itself a little more in some elections, it is probably because there is no other narrative or organisational formation around which to congeal.

Contrary to popular perception, there is nothing inevitable about the hankering for stability and strong leadership at the state level. The voters have expressed their protest, or in some cases reasserted their identity, in the best available form they could. Both states have returned a fractured verdict, with voters, rightly not unduly worried about the implications for stability. Not only will there be more effective opposition in Maharashtra, but even the BJP Shiv-Sena bargaining game is not as lopsided in the BJP's favour as it might have hoped. It does seem to matter if a party can project who its own leader is. The Congress did that much better in Haryana than Maharashtra.

There is an interesting lesson here in the politics of anti-corruption/anti-dynasty at two levels. There is the simple fact that lots of candidates who have been in the swirl of corruption allegations have actually done quite well in the elections; and the anti-dynastic card seems a generic national trope rather than an effective strategy at the local level. But more importantly, the Indian voters can spot the difference between the intent to clean up the system, and a vendetta to target political opponents. We might want the system cleaned up, but we do not want leaders who represented it persecuted in political terms. Leaders, even sometimes corrupt ones, are our own alienated selves, and there are limits to persecution.

There is an interesting lesson here in the politics of anti-corruption/anti-dynasty at two levels. There is the simple fact that lots of candidates who have been in the swirl of corruption allegations have actually done quite well in the elections; and the anti-dynastic card seems a generic national trope rather than an effective strategy at the local level. But more importantly, the Indian voters can spot the difference between the intent to clean up the system, and a vendetta to target political opponents. We might want the system cleaned up, but we do not want leaders who represented it persecuted in political terms. Leaders, even sometimes corrupt ones, are our own alienated selves, and there are limits to persecution. Sharad Pawar's biggest achievement was to respond to the

government's attempts to tighten the noose around him by mounting a political response, responding with new energy. This is a cautionary tale for the BJP using state power to only appear to target opponents and protect its own, and a lesson for the Opposition in how to fight such a targeting — mobilise.

The most significant consequence of this election might be this. One of the mechanisms by which dominant party systems reinforce themselves is by their power to distribute patronage. For anyone wanting a share in power, aligning with the ruling dispensation becomes a winning strategy. At one level, this is manifest in defectors who join the ruling dispensation. Many of those defectors have been punished. The opposition also is demoralised since the possibility of gaining access to power remote. The biggest significance of this election is that it breaks that self-fulfilling cycle of single-party dominance. The fragmentation of protest through state patronage may have its limits; and it still makes sense for some political groups to hedge their bets rather than join the winning bandwagon. This election demonstrates the rationality of doing so. It is a break on the logic of state patronage creating its own power.

Where does India head after this? The election gives a small, but important reprieve against the BJP's arrogance and their consolidation of power. What the BJP will do next is an open question. Will its economics turn more leftward and politics more right? The opposition can take some heart from the fact that there is political space for them to exploit. But this political space can only grow and have a multiplier if there is more smart and credible coordination amongst all opposition groups that converts a protest vote into an alternative economic and ideological narrative. It will be a pity if this moment is squandered on the shoals of personal ambition, or short-term thinking. There is also going to be another interesting question: Does the Congress do better in the relative absence of its central leadership? Nothing is a foregone conclusion in Indian politics, provided we can give up on complacency or resignation.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express

WHOSE MAHATMA

After Patel, Bose and Bhagat Singh, RSS is trying to appropriate Gandhi



BINOY VISWAM

MOHAN BHAGWAT has rediscovered Mahatma Gandhi. In an article on October 2, he called him the brightest leader that India's freedom struggle had produced. But, he did not rebuke the BJP and the RSS leaders who unleashed their diatribes against Gandhi. The "saint" who declared Godse to be a true patriot, is a member of Parliament from the BJP. It may surprise some that Bhagwat chose to wax lyrical about Gandhi on his 150th birthday, but did not defend him on any of those occasions.

This is a textbook example of how the RSS works; they can't bury Gandhi's ideas, hence they must appropriate them to their end. One can say anything that serves its purpose as long as it is loaded with force and vigour. We have seen them paint the legacies of Sardar Patel, Subhash Chandra Bose and Bhagat Singh in saffron. Now they brandish that brush at the Mahatma, marking the political-ideological contradictions of our times all too clearly.

Bhagwat claims that K B Hedgewar was one of those who spoke at a rally in Nagpur organised in protest of Gandhi's arrest in 1922. However, he wouldn't reveal why Hedgewar left the Congress soon after. He wouldn't allude to the ideological transformation that led the speaker at a Congress rally in 1922 to become the founder of RSS in 1925. This shift reflects the chasm between the ideals of Indian national movement and Hindu fundamentalism.

The roots of Godse's hatred against Gandhi cannot be traced elsewhere. Gandhi stood for harmony and unity between Muslims and Hindus. It was the entrenched hatred for Muslims that led Hedgewar to embrace fascism in the way it was propounded by Benito Mussolini. How can anyone draw parallels between this and Gandhian vision? Can Bhagwat or anyone else prove that Gandhi harboured any sympathy towards the Sangh's hatred for Muslims?

MS Golwalkar codified the thoughts that underpinned the Sangh's ideology. His perspectives are espoused in his books *We or Our Nationhood Defined* and *Bunch of Thoughts*. He deals with India's enemies: Muslims, Christians and Communists, in that order. The similarity of this list with Hitler's list of enemies, as noted in *Mein Kampf*, is striking: Jews, Christians and Communists in that order. Bhagwat might not like to mention these now.

Instead, he writes of Gandhi's visit to Sangh Shala in Delhi during partition and the reports that appeared in this respect in *Harjan* on September 27, 1947. To portray it as Gandhi's patronage of communalism as opposed to his desperate cry to put an end to the bloodshed in those moments of despair is appalling.

Gandhi's murder was not an outcome of a madman's sudden provocation. Godse undertook preparations that spanned several

months. During the trial, he narrated the groundwork that preceded the killing. Whether Godse was a member of RSS at the time of firing his pistol is nothing but a technical detail. He had always maintained that he had nothing personal against Gandhi. Yet, he was convinced that every day Gandhi remained alive was an affront to Hindu dignity. The murder was as much political as it was heinous.

At the time of his crime, Godse was still the editor of the mouthpiece of Hindu Mahasabha. Gopal Godse, Nathuram's brother had emphasised the Sangh's influence over their lives. They spent longer hours at the RSS office. Hatred for Muslims was inculcated in them in those formative years. Gandhi led a war against such hatred. That is why in Godse's eyes Gandhi became unfit to live.

Let us not take our eyes off from the bunch of thoughts that fuel atrocities in the name of citizenship and Article 370, that allow cow vigilantes to lynch citizens or violent men to kill Dalit children for defecating in the open, that systemically degrade Dalits and Muslims. Let us not forget how it propelled the bullets that took Gandhi's life then, and the lives of Govind Pansare, Narendra Dhabolkar, M M Kalburgi and Gauri Lankesh now.

The writer is Rajya Sabha MP from the Communist Party of India

OCTOBER 25, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO



LOK DAL ALLIANCE WOES THE POLICY differences between the Lok Dal and the Congress that generated considerable strain between the alliance partners will remain the main issue that Congress president Devaraj Urs will discuss with Prime Minister Charan Singh. Urs, who is arriving in Delhi, is expected to meet the Lok Dal President in a day or two and seek clarifications on Singh's views, expressed at election meetings in Andhra Pradesh, that have caused serious concern in Congress circles. While the AICC general secretary reiterated that the Congress would not compromise on its fundamental policy of pursuing Nehru's policies, the Lok Dal general secretary,

Rajinder Puri, defended Singh's criticism of Nehru's policies. He said the Congress should not be under illusions on these issues.

BAHUGUNA'S MOVE FORMER FINANCE minister H N Bahuguna is still undecided about his future course of action. Sources close to the CDF leader say he had held discussions with a number of Congress leaders recently. The AICC general secretary, N K Tirpude, had met him yesterday. A day before, Congress president Devaraj Urs, had a telephonic discussion with him from Bangalore. Urs is scheduled to meet him in Delhi. While admitting that he had been invited to join the Congress, sources say that

Bahuguna will have to consider "many factors" before reacting either way.

CISF STRIKE THE CENTRE is nonplussed as those guarding its industrial establishments are poised for a showdown in an effort to wrest largescale concessions. The home ministry is yet to make up its mind on how to deal with the threatened strike by some sections of the CISF, scheduled to begin on November 5. According to sources, the home ministry is "willing to strike but afraid to wound." The government is unable to grant some of the demands raised by the agitators nor is it ready to take firm action to enforce discipline.

Restoring a balance

BJP's weakened showing in Maharashtra polls is a lesson for the party that ridiculed the Opposition and displayed over-confidence



GIRISH KUBER

"AAG KE liye pani ka hona zaruri hai, satta ke liye santulan zaruri hai," says Om Puri in his inimitable style in Vishal Bhardwaj's *Maqbool*, based on Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Voters in Maharashtra have displayed what that santulan, or equanimity, is all about. The hubris with which the BJP-Shiv Sena conducted its business in the past few months has led to the saffron combine's wings being clipped to a large extent — and rightfully so.

Before the electioneering began, the BJP seemed way ahead of the other parties. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis had an unblemished record and his performance was nothing short of spectacular. However, just before the elections, he started showing signs of over-confidence, and times, this bordered on recklessness. The first indication of this attitude was the Maharashtra BJP's "free-import" policy. The party inducted all and sundry from other parties, forgetting that not so long ago, its leaders had dubbed some of the new recruits as corrupt. The height of the BJP's brazenness was inducting the NCP MP from Satara, Udayan Raje Bhonsale, a descendant of the great Maratha warrior Chhatrapati Shivaji, and a controversial leader. The BJP made him resign just before the polls, forcing the Election Commission to hold by-polls in Satara along with the state assembly elections. The BJP had hoped that Shivaji's descendant will bring in the much-needed Maratha votes. But the Satara by-poll is a case study in BJP's adventurism. Satara not only handed a resounding defeat to the BJP but hurt the party in adjoining constituencies as well. Barring a few exceptions, many of the newly-imported leaders bit the dust.

The BJP's second mistake was dismissing — in some cases, even ridiculing — all those trying to raise economic and agrarian issues. The BJP's response to such matters was "all is well" and "only the media is creating a fuss out of nothing". This indifference to economic issues has cost the BJP a significant number of seats in rural and semi-urban areas. Vidarbha, a stronghold of the BJP — thanks to the RSS headquarters being located at Nagpur and chief minister Devendra Fadnavis and party stalwart and Union Minister Nitin Gadkari hailing from the region — has turned away from the BJP. CM Fadnavis' victory margin is significantly lower than in 2014. The Marathwada region too has deserted the BJP and Sena. These regions have reported the maximum farmer suicides.

The third and the most important lesson for the BJP from this election is: Never humiliate the Opposition. There may not be an opposition leader who can match the BJP's leaders in stature, but it is the voter in whose minds the seeds of opposition are sowed. And, when the voters realise that the time has come to rein in the party in office, they stand with anyone who is willing to take on the ruling dispensation. This is exactly what has happened in Maharashtra. While the BJP's leaders — including Fadnavis, party chief Amit Shah and even Prime Minister Narendra Modi — kept harping on the fact that there is no challenger on the other side of the fence, voters in Maharashtra backed even rookies against the party's stalwarts. It's not surprising that several



CR Sasikumar

cabinet ministers in the Fadnavis government were sent packing by voters.

The performance of the BJP's alliance partner, Shiv Sena, has been underwhelming. Political observers have time and again pointed out the Sena's helplessness in tagging along with the BJP. The Sena did the most laughable thing in politics — have their cake and eat it too. Though sharing power with the BJP, the Sena tried to occupy the Opposition's space. It was neither here, nor there. Voters have sent out a clear message to the Sena that it can not have the best of both worlds. The Sena has been hopped from one agenda to other; in the process, it seems to be losing its identity. To begin with, the Sena talked about the Marathi Manoos, it then jumped onto the Hindutva bandwagon and in the current election, it tried to offer a mix of both. The election outcome suggests that both issues have slipped out of the party's hands.

Not surprisingly, the only leader who can savour the election result is the old war horse, Sharad Pawar. When every other opposition leader was either giving in or joining the BJP, the Maratha strongman demonstrated how to tame the raging bull. The octogenarian leader criss-crossed the state and single handedly took on the BJP. Fadnavis will rue the humiliation he handed out to the NCP chief at various platforms. Putting behind a life-threatening ailment and his advancing years, Pawar demonstrated how to convert challenge into an opportunity. For instance,

The performance of the BJP's alliance partner, Shiv Sena, has been underwhelming. Political observers have time and again pointed out the Sena's helplessness in tagging along with the BJP. The Sena did the most laughable thing in politics — have their cake and eat it too. Though sharing power with the BJP, the Sena tried to occupy the Opposition's space. It was neither here, nor there. Voters have sent out a clear message to the Sena that it can not have the best of both worlds.

Pawar converted the ill-timed ED notice to him into a media spectacle. Under the glare of cameras, he walked into the ED office in Mumbai with hundreds of supporters to "surrender" before authorities. Caught completely off guard, the ED had to publicly give a "clean chit" to Pawar.

This was the turning point of this election campaign. By beating the ruling party with its own stick, Pawar also gave a lesson or two to the NCP's alliance partner, the Congress. Virtually rudderless, the Congress was the most invisible political force in the current elections. It was Pawar who galvanised the Congress and towards the end of the electioneering, it at least resembled a political party. The point to be noted here is that neither Sonia Gandhi nor Priyanka Gandhi had a single rally or meeting in Maharashtra. One can understand Sonia's absence because of her ill-health, but the Congress could have deployed Priyanka in the Maharashtra election campaign.

This, in fact, makes the election outcome even more interesting. The message is very clear: No political party can — and should — take the electorate for granted. A ruling party's slide begins the moment it gives a call for getting rid of the Opposition. Such hubris creates an opposition for the ruling dispensation in the voter's mind. And, it is the voter who knows, *Satta ke liye santulan ka hona zaruri hai*.

The writer is editor, Loksatta

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"While Justin Trudeau's defeat of the Conservatives is welcome, closer scrutiny of his record is overdue." — THE GUARDIAN

Medical devices are not drugs

Why government should bring a new law to regulate medical devices, not apply the 80-year-old Drugs and Cosmetic Act



DINESH THAKUR

ASTONISHING THINGS are happening in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare these days. In less than 30 days, the ministry is going to put in place a regulatory framework for medical devices that will likely give lobbyists for the medical device industry a wonderful Christmas present. Amazingly enough, the ministry aims to implement this new framework without the Parliament casting a single vote to determine the future of an industry which has already proven itself to be brazenly irresponsible towards patients in India as we are seeing in the ongoing hip-implant scandal. Rather than moving a new law in Parliament to regulate the medical device industry, the ministry is creating an entire regulatory framework out of notifications and rules, using powers delegated to it under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 — a pre-independence legislation that was enacted almost 80 years ago.

The first move towards the new framework was made in 2017 when the ministry, using powers under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, notified the Medical Device Rules, 2017. At that time, only a few medical devices were notified as "drugs". In a notification a few days ago, the government announced its intention to treat all medical devices, be it an implant or a MRI machine as "drugs" under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. This means that all medical devices would be placed within the framework of the Medical Device Rules, 2017. This attempt to deliberately retrofit medical devices into the Drugs and Cosmetics Act will lead to a toothless regulatory framework for devices, similar to what exists for drugs today. I say this for two reasons after having spoken to legal experts.

First, the ministry cannot create new offences or penalties through its rule-making authority. Only Parliament can enact a law that creates new offences and penalties for wrongdoing. As a result, the Medical Device Rules 2017 contain no penal provisions. Although the Drugs and Cosmetics Act does contain a penal provision for the manufacture of sub-standard drugs, it cannot be used to penalise manufacturers of sub-standard medical devices (although medical devices will now be legally defined as drugs) because legally binding standards recognised in the Second Schedule to the Drugs and Cosmetics Act covers only pharmacopeias for drugs. If no standards for medical devices are recognised in the Second Schedule, it follows that there can never be a prosecution of a manufacturer of sub-standard medical devices.

What will unfold, if the current proposal is adopted, will be similar to what we see with substandard drugs: Companies that make defective products will recall them from foreign markets while continuing to sell the same product in India, and comply with the law. There is one subtle

distinction here. Even though sale of sub-standard drugs can be prosecuted under the current law; because there is no political will, most manufacturers who make poor quality drugs go scot-free. Under the present proposal, even if there is public pressure, similar to what we have seen in the faulty hip-implant case, no prosecutions will take place because there will be no basis to prosecute intentional wrongdoing in the law.

More importantly, medical devices, because of their nature, will be far more difficult (if not impossible) to standardise when compared to drugs. So, what are the tools available to Indian regulators under the proposed framework to hold makers of sub-standard medical device manufacturers to account? The answer is none whatsoever. At most, the ministry can prohibit the manufacture and sale of certain medical devices under Section 26A or cancel a license to prevent future harm. But, what of penalties or prosecution to punish for the harm already inflicted on patients due to negligence or worse, intentional wrongdoing by the manufacturer?

The second reason is that it is quite clear that the ministry has not learnt any lesson from the recent hip-implant debacle. One of the main challenges faced by the government in securing justice for faulty hip-implants was to secure a list of patients who had received the implant through surgery. Since the manufacturer sold these devices to doctors and hospitals and not patients directly, it did not have a list of patients who had these devices implanted. It could therefore conveniently skirt the government's query for a list of all the patients with faulty implants. Neither the doctors nor the hospitals have an incentive to share the list of patients or even inform the patients because it would mean opening themselves up to legal liability for surgically implanting faulty devices in the patient's body. One of the solutions to solve this information deficit is to create a confidential patient register that should be maintained by the government to record all details of implants. This register could be used to notify patients in the case of malfunctioning devices. The proposed regulatory framework does not offer any such provision. As a result, the next time there is such a case, the government will once again not be able to contact the patients to inform of their rights.

While medical devices have tremendous potential to revolutionise healthcare, the hip-implant scandals in India and abroad have shown us the dark underbelly of this industry. The proposed regulatory framework lacks teeth and will do little to hold the powerful medical devices industry accountable in cases of intentional wrongdoing. The government must rethink this toothless framework and instead enact a new law through Parliament. Medical devices are not drugs, and it would be a grave mistake to apply the same regulatory framework to regulate these complex devices. The need of the hour is for new ideas to regulate this industry in the Indian context where the courts lack the capacity to tackle such complex issues.

The writer is a public health activist who blew the whistle on Ranbaxy Laboratories

THE URDU PRESS

WAITING FOR VERDICT

THE HEARINGS before a Constitution bench for title rights to the land where the Babri Masjid stood ended a week ago. Urdu dailies have extensive reports on it and *Etemad*, the Hyderabad-based AIMIM's daily, published an editorial on the subject on October 17.

Etemad reflects on what the Supreme Court had said before the trial began. The editorial says: "It (SC) had said it would hear only those sides that had appealed the Allahabad High Court order and no new side. It rejected Subramaniam Swamy's plea to be heard. It also said that only the title suit would be heard and no other claims." The editorial goes on to say that, "instead, in Court, the Hindu side focussed on the question of the birthplace of Lord Ram and puja rights. The Court had asked for a mediation panel, which has now given its report." The editorial asserts: "all eyes are now focussed on what the Court says. In this, news has emerged that one party and person, the chairman of the Sunni Waqf Board, against whom an FIR had been registered, has retreated from the case and this has created immense restlessness amongst Muslims." The editorial asserts: "Muslim ulema, intellectuals and politicians have all said that the Supreme Court ruling must be respected. But no Hindu side has said this."

Munsif, on the same day, has an extensive report on its front page. It raises question marks (literally) over the talk of a "deal" be-

tween some Hindu and Muslim parties. It quotes the Shahi Imam of Delhi's Jama Masjid, Ahmed Bukhari, asking why there is *saudebaazi* (deal-making) at the *lamhe-aakhir* (last moment).

Mumbai-based *Urdu Times* on October 16 published an editorial, 'Masjid ka Maamla' (The Masjid matter). It gives its view, wherein it holds that the Hindu side has failed to establish that there was a mandir on the ground that was destroyed to build the Babri Masjid, or that it stood where the Babri Masjid was. The editorial outlines the arguments laid down in Court by both sides. "These arguments in Court will determine which side gets the land," it says. The editorial ends on an interesting note: "If the Court decides on the logic of arguments presented before them, then it should be clear that the top Court is still not overwhelmed by Hindutva and is still unaffected or pure — untouched by Hindutva sentiments."

RESTIVE OVER NRC

INQUILAB ON October 14 ran an editorial on the NRC (National Register of Citizens), calling it a "new fancy" (*naya shosha*). It mentions a "central minister" (unnamed) who dropped a *naya shosha* in a rally in Mumbai's Bhandi Bazaar, stating that NRC is not for Indian Muslims but for foreigners. The minister did not reveal where or how he discovered that Muslims are scared, or did he think it necessary to advise Indian Muslims about

not being scared, before they are scared?" The paper argues: "Then, another question arises. Why did he deem it necessary to say this? Actually, by framing the NRC as a Hindu-Muslim question, it makes it clear that not only *daal mein kuch na kuch kaala hai*, *balki poori daal kaali hai*. Now, is it that blackness has crept in because of the compulsion to bring in black money?" The editorial mixes metaphors and goes on: "Or, is it that people are trying to keep their hands clean of their attempt to clean corruption?" It concludes that through several contradictory statements, ministers and leaders of the ruling party are deliberately trying to keep the people in the dark about the whole thing (NRC exercise).

Siasat has an editorial on October 9, on "(Bangladesh Prime Minister) Sheikh Hasina's silence over the NRC". On October 12, it poses a more direct question, asking, "Who is the intended target of the NRC?" It claims: "The government is trying to divert the focus from burning issues that need peoples' attention. And this policy of diversion is being concretely implemented as the new NRC is being spoken of for all India." It has harsh things to say about India's social atmosphere. "After Assam, West Bengal was made a centre and all issues that spread disagreement, hate and division in society are being spread there". The newspaper argues that "(Home Minister) Amit Shah is so obsessed with NRC that he can see no other issues pertaining to the common man. It ap-

pears that this is not a matter of home affairs alone but the entire central government is taking this on, on a war footing." It elaborates that all ministers holding different portfolios are also talking of NRC, which "makes it clear that before all ministers, peoples' issues have no significance".

NOBEL PURSUITS

EDITORIALS HAVE lauded the Nobel to Indian-origin and educated economist, Abhijit Banerjee. Banerjee and Esther Duflo's work on combating poverty has also been discussed at length.

The October 17 editorial in *Inquilab* says: "(Abhijit Banerjee) has used many opportunities to point out the problems with the Indian economy, but his viewpoint has been ignored and there has been no attempt to use his talent, skills or expertise. The government tried during demonetisation to paint all these experts as communist and as those with leftist views." It asks if labelling people like this is not an "insult to their knowledge and status in the world?"

Siasat on October 16 has an editorial devoted to Banerjee. It talks about the need for strong and concrete policies to battle poverty. It says: "They offer lessons which need to be learned by those in developing countries, where the problem of poverty exists."

Compiled by Seema Chishty

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

STRINGENCY TOO

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'Put away the stick' (IE, October 24). Overpopulation is a hydra-headed devil. Several factors like the mortality rate and migration come into play. History shows us that the two-child policy is effective in capping population growth. To check overpopulation, stringent measures are the need of the hour. Affordable healthcare is also imperative to contain population growth.

Varun Das, Zirakpur

FUEL PUMP POLITICS

THIS REFERS to the editorial, 'Fuel retail business rules eased: Non-oil firms can now set up petrol pumps' (IE, October 24). Lowering the investment threshold for fuel retailing is a welcome decision. Though few foreign and Indian firms like Total, Adani, Reliance and Aramco have presence in this space this decision will help them penetrate the market. It is also good that the government has inserted a clause to open at least one CNG, LNG or electric charge station for every petrol pump in the next three years. But it should have increased the cap on the private sector for setting up fuel pumps in rural areas. But given the importance of electric cars in the government agenda, diesel firms will look to tread carefully.

Bal Govind, Noida

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.

SANCTITY OF SPACES

THIS REFERS to the article "Don't sing in Pilibhit" (IE, October 22). The society seems to have normalised bringing Hindu practices into what are supposed to be secular systems. We see photos of Hindu gods in government offices just like the ones of Gandhi, Ambedkar. I work in a government office in a rural Karnataka. On Gandhi Jayanti this year, I was astonished to see puja being performed to a Gandhi photo. Kumkum, agarbattis and coconut were being used in much the same way as in a Hindu festival.

Rajiv M V, Chitradurga



SIMPLY PUT

Reading the two verdicts

In Maharashtra, BJP falls short of ambitions and finds itself dependent on Shiv Sena. In Haryana, it is short of a clear majority. A number of factors were at play in the polls, some exclusive to either state, and some common, such as state units driving the Congress campaigns. Five takeaways from each state.

Resurgence of Pawar with Cong riding piggyback, and fissures within BJP-Sena

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

Opposition is not dead, yet

Weeks before the Maharashtra Assembly election, Sharad Pawar, 79, was staring at the remains of his NCP after the BJP had systematically poached key members in areas that remained Pawar strongholds despite the Modi wave. The BJP scaled up its ambitions to winning 145 seats on its own so that it would not be at the mercy of its alliance partner, Shiv Sena. It proved a bridge too far, although the BJP-Sena did hold on to power.

There were two turning points for Pawar in the run-up to the polls. The first came when he was named by the Enforcement Directorate in a money-laundering case against the Maharashtra Cooperative Bank. He announced he would voluntarily present himself at the ED office in Mumbai. On the given day, NCP supporters swarmed Mumbai, turning it into a Maratha pride moment, while the ED frantically put out a statement that it had not summoned Pawar. He called off his visit to the ED office at the request of the Mumbai police commissioner, but had sent out a strong political message.

It was on the very last day of the campaign that the second turning point arrived. He addressed a widely televised rally for the Satara Lok Sabha bypoll, standing under pelting rain, to thundering applause. The footage went viral overnight. It was NCP's magic moment, and possibly set a template for the opposition in the state and country.

Nationalism vs local issues

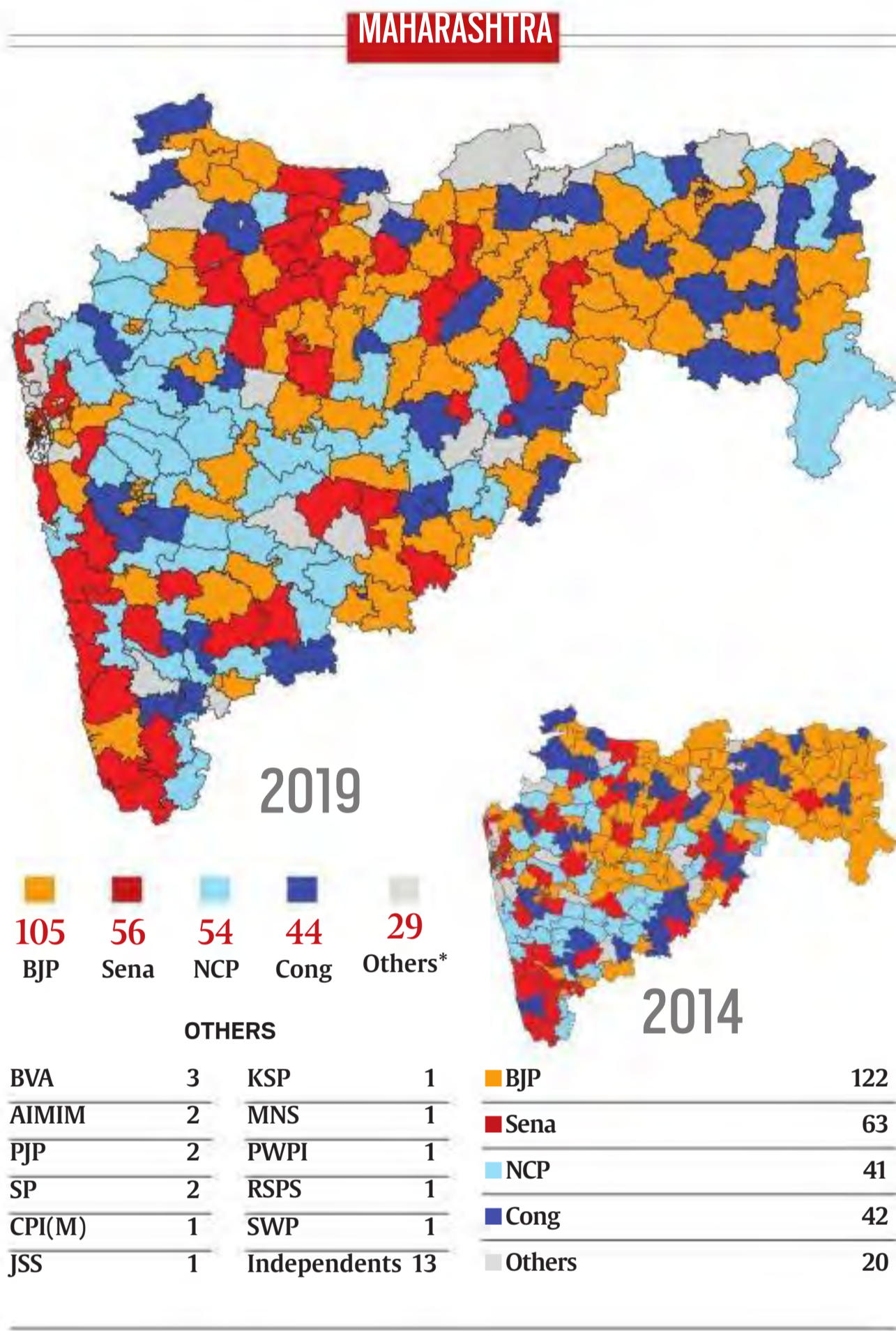
In rallies, the emphasis by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis was mainly on work by his government, but he also ended every meeting with the Centre's decision to revoke J&K's special status. In an interview to *The Indian Express*, Fadnavis said the Kashmir issue had resonance in Maharashtra. In speeches by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah, too, the Centre's action to abate Article 370 was a main pitch. The results indicate it may not have had as much resonance among Maharashtra voters as local issues such as farm distress, and rural indebtedness. In Nashik, the BJP-Sena paid heavily for the government's onion price control measures. Throughout its campaign, a confident BJP did not address the consequences of the economic slowdown in the country's most industrialised state.

SOPS DON'T ALWAYS FETCH VOTES: In the BJP's calculus, the Maratha quota, granted in 2018, was the silver bullet to winning over Maharashtra's politically most dominant community. The Marathas had been a mainstay of the Congress and NCP's voter base but the BJP's dominance in the Lok Sabha polls appeared to suggest the community had shifted loyalties. The Assembly polls made it clear that the BJP could not take this for granted. Out of 70 seats in Western Maharashtra, a Maratha stronghold, the BJP won only 16 seats, against its 25 of 2014. The promise of the Bharat Ratna to V D Savarkar did not help the BJP quest for dominance either.

Gandhis weren't missed

After the rout in the Lok Sabha elections and the leadership crisis within, the Congress appeared not to be in the fight for the Assembly elections, and was a feeble partner of the NCP. Rahul Gandhi addressed only five meetings, and Sonia Gandhi stayed away from the campaign for health reasons.

It was left to the Maharashtra Congress to make the best out of a bad situation. What may have helped it in constituencies it won was its choice of candidates who were locally well known though they may not have had a state-wide profile. A rudderless Congress,



The Congress coat-tailed on a resurgent NCP. One of the curiosities of their alliance was that the Congress and the NCP did not address a single rally from the same platform but still managed to project a united front. On the other hand, the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance was beset by tensions from the very start.

coat-tailing on the NCP, won four more seats than in 2014. In many seats, it also benefited from bad vibes within the BJP-Sena alliance. One of the curiosities of the Congress-NCP alliance was that the two parties did not address a single rally from the same platform but still managed to project a united front. However, despite its improved seat tally, the Congress finished fourth, and its vote share fell from 17.8 per cent to 15.2 per cent.

Divided saffron alliance

From the start, the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance was beset by tensions, born out of BJP's ambition of finishing the Sena, and the latter's insistent demand for "equal" power sharing, by which it meant a shared chief ministership, or the deputy chief minister's post. While Fadnavis and Uddhav Thackeray managed to paper over these issues, the Sena's acceptance of a lower seat share was a shock to cadres. It was a battlefield between Sena and BJP in many seats.

Tensions within the BJP too played a part, especially in Vidarbha, marked by the sidelining of Nitin Gadkari, and ticket aspirants seen as close to him. On the ground, unhappy RSS cadres are said to have worked for rejected candidates who contested as independents. Also, only 16 of 31 defectors from Congress-NCP to BJP-Sena won, an indicator that not all voters are receptive to party hoppers.

Fadnavis suffers a setback

Fadnavis had outsmarted rivals in 2014 to become the Chief Minister, and defied critics who saw his Brahmin identity as unworkable in a Maratha-dominated political ecosystem. He proved them wrong, along the way deftly dealing with the Marathas by granting them a quota, then breaking their stranglehold by going after cooperatives. This time, his mission was to return the BJP with a near majority of its own, so that it could shake off the Shiv Sena. Instead, the BJP has become more dependent on the Sena than it was. The loss of seats in Vidarbha, his home turf, is another setback to Fadnavis.

Local issues versus emotive ones, Hooda's continuing relevance, rise of Dushyant

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 24

For youth, absence of jobs

The election results in Haryana went against the idea that the BJP has successfully managed to disconnect economics from politics by focusing on its nationalist agenda. Haryana, which has a population over 40 lakh in the 20-29 age bracket, has witnessed a steep rise in unemployment over the last five years. A report by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy for May-August 2019 pegged unemployment in the state at 28.7 per cent, the highest in the country. A few years ago, it had been only 8 per cent. It is estimated that there are 2.02 million unemployed young people in the state and over half of them are matriculates and above.

While the BJP sought to highlight transparency in recruitment to Class IV posts, its rivals drummed home the rising joblessness. The loss of jobs in the Manesar-Gurgaon belt also appear to have hurt the BJP, which fell short of the halfway mark.

The Congress and the Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) harped on disappearing jobs during their campaign, with the latter promising to implement the right to work and a 75 per cent job quota for locals. Many Haryanvis, who had voted for the nationalist agenda in the Lok Sabha polls, seem to have decided that local issues mattered more in the Assembly polls.

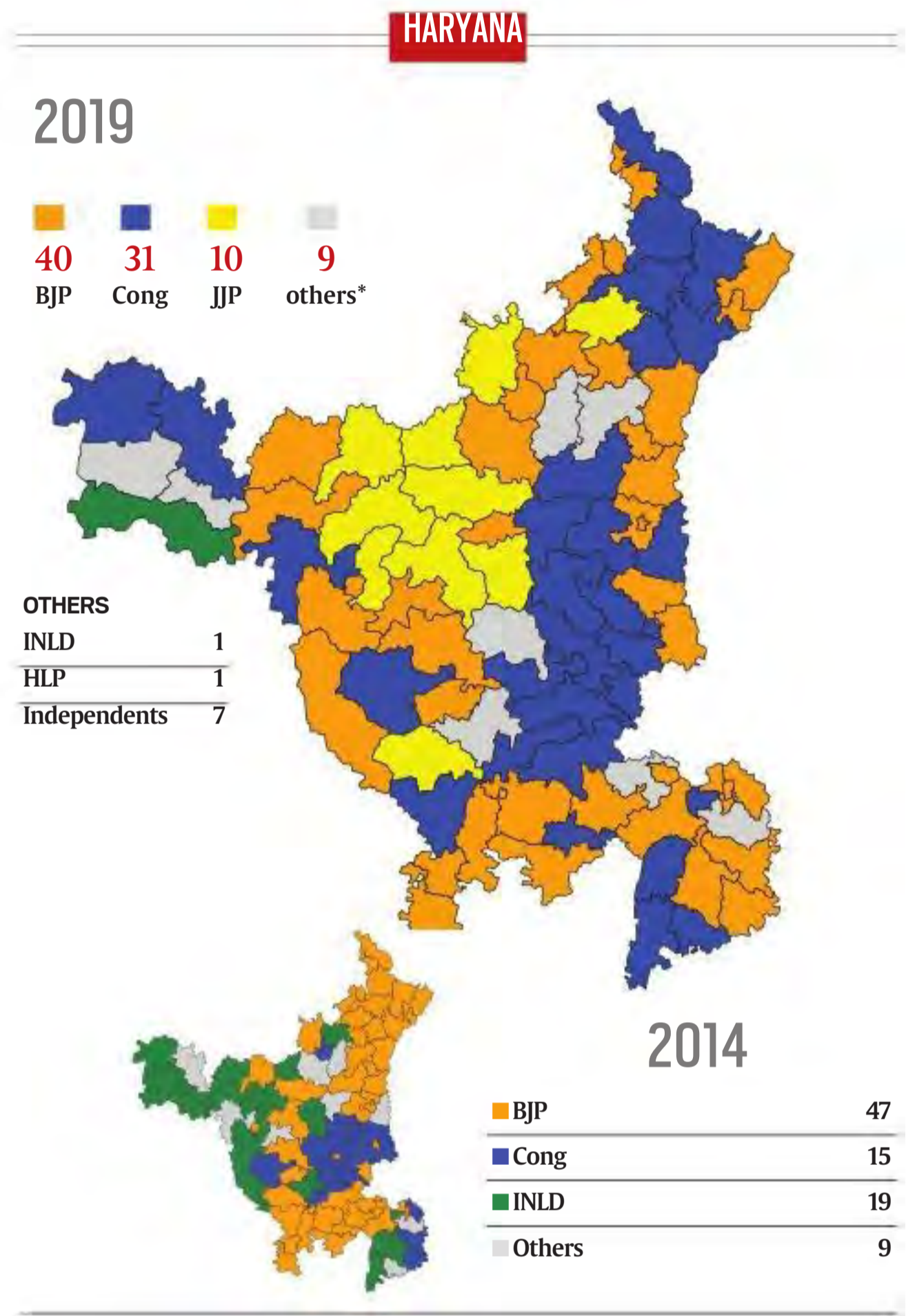
Gandhis out of limelight

This was one election where the Gandhi family of the Congress did not play a lead role in campaigning. Most of the canvassing was done by the candidates themselves, with some help from state Congress Legislature Party chief Bhupinder Singh Hooda and the new state Congress chief Kumari Selja. While Prime Minister Narendra Modi addressed seven rallies in the state, Rahul Gandhi addressed only two.

The upswing in the fortunes of Congress, from 15 seats in 2014 to 31 now, indicates that the Gandhi star appeal did not matter. Two-time former Chief Minister Hooda, who is facing investigations in the Manesar land scam, emerged the clear leader of the Congress with his focus on local issues. The fear that former state Congress chief Ashok Tanwar's resignation from the party, and his support to both the JJP and the INLD, would affect the party's performance, too, was proved wrong. Hooda got the lion's share in the distribution of tickets, and the Congress swept his strongholds of Rohtak, Sonapat and Jhajjar. The Congress won 11 of the 15 seats in the Jat belt with the BJP taking three and one going to an independent.

Emergence of Dushyant

The JJP, formed out of a split in the INLD, has emerged as a third front by bagging 10 seats in its maiden elections. A new leader in has emerged in Dushyant Chautala, 31, great-grandson of Chaudhary Devi Lal. Known for his oratorical and organisational skills, he has demonstrated that the state is ready for a youthful leadership. Many of the cadre votes



While the BJP sought to highlight transparency in recruitment to Class IV posts, its rivals drummed home the rising joblessness in the state. It is estimated that there are 2.02 million unemployed young people in Haryana, and over half of them are matriculates and above.

that used to go to the INLD have shifted to Dushyant, showing discontent with a moribund leadership. That he also has the Chaudhary Devi Lal lineage also helps.

Interestingly, candidates from political families did reasonably well in elections regardless of their party affiliation. Kiran Chaudhry (Congress) was able to retain her seat, as was Kuldeep Bishnoi. Abhay Chautala was the only INLD winner, in results that spelt doom for the party. Founded in October 1996 as Haryana Lok Dal by Chaudhary Devi Lal, who served as Deputy Prime Minister and as Chief Minister twice, the INLD used to give the national parties a tough fight in Haryana. Even in 2014, it had won 19 seats, four more than Congress, to emerge as the principal opposition.

Hurt by over-confidence

The slogan 'Mano again' for Manohar Lal Khattar did not resonate with Haryanvis on the ground. CM Khattar's statements such

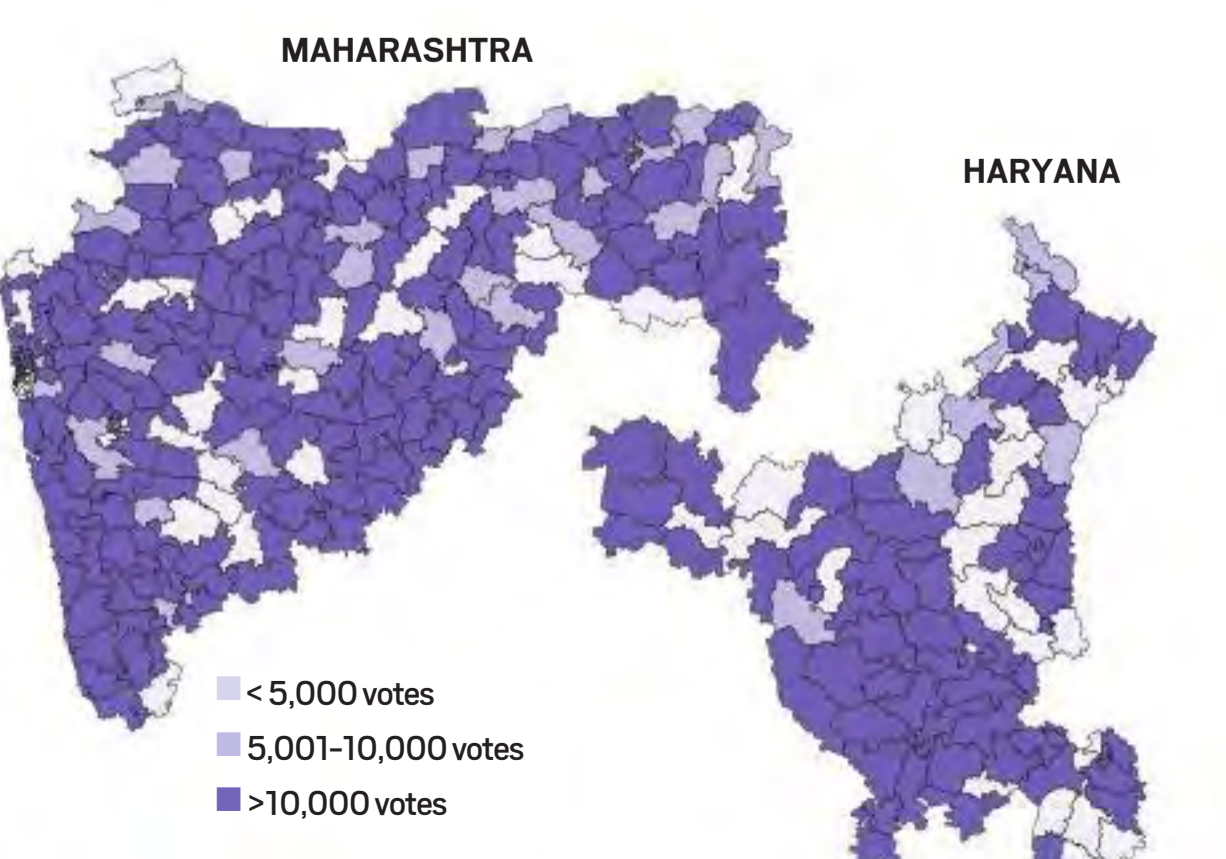
as "Main anaadi nahin siyasat ka khiladi hoon", backfired with the Opposition accusing him of being arrogant. There was an uproar on social media when, during his Jan Ashirwaad Yatra preceding the polls, Khattar threatened to head a man who had crowned him (he later clarified it was because he believed in equality).

The fall of heavyweights in his ministry — those defeated included eight ministers and the BJP state chief — showed that the top echelons of the government had failed to connect with people despite the multitude of people-friendly initiatives. Bakshish Singh Virk, the BJP candidate from Assandh, who had bragged that no matter which button you press, the vote will go to BJP, also lost the seat he had won in 2014.

Jats remain a factor

Although the BJP sought to move beyond the dominance of Jats, the community did make a difference in 36 seats across four parliamentary constituencies. In the Lok Sabha polls, the BJP had secured more than 70 per cent of both non-Jat upper caste votes and OBC votes besides 50 per cent of Jat votes as per data from Lokniti-CSDS. But many Jats who had voted for the BJP's nationalist agenda in the Lok Sabha polls, cast their vote on local issues in the Assembly polls.

IN BOTH STATES, MOST VICTORIES BY COMFORTABLE MARGINS



Maps: Piyush Aggarwal and Hemang Kumar

TIGHT FIGHTS IN 9 HARYANA SEATS, VICTORY MARGINS LESS THAN 2,000

The Congress won 5 of the 9 seats that were decided by the smallest margins in the state; the BJP won 3. Gopal Kanda of the Haryana Lokhit Party won in Sirsa by only 602 votes

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HARIKISHAN SHARMA
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 24

THE BJP has finished six seats short of a majority in the 90-member Haryana Assembly, but is confident of getting the support that it needs. Its job though, might have become a little more difficult had three seats it has won by margins lower than 1,500 votes, gone the other way.

The BJP won Thanesar by a margin of 842 votes, and Ratia (SC) and Yamunanagar by 1,216 and 1,455 votes respectively. In all, nine seats saw victory margins smaller than 2,000. Five of these were won by the Congress; one by Gopal Kanda of the Haryana Lokhit Party.

Among the Congress victories, the closest was in Punahana in the Muslim-dominated Nuh district — Mohammad Ilyas defeated an Independent candidate by just 816 votes. The next smallest margin was in Rewari, where Chiranjeev Rao of the Congress defeated the BJP's Sunil Kumar by 1,371 votes. Rao is Lalu

WHAT THE NUMBERS SHOW

SEAT	WINNER	DEFEATED	BY VOTES
Thanesar	Subhash Sudha (BJP)	Ashok Kumar Arora (INC)	842
Yamunanagar	Ghanshyam Dass (BJP)	Dilbagh Singh (INLD)	1,455
Assandh	Shamsher Singh Gogi (INC)	Narendra Singh (BSP)	1,703
Mulana (SC)	Varun Chaudhary (INC)	Rajbir Singh (BJP)	1,688
Rewari	Chiranjeev Rao (INC)	Sunil Kumar (BJP)	1,317
Punahana	Mohammad Ilyas (INC)	Rahish Khan (Ind)	816
Kharkhauda (SC)	Jaiveer Singh (INC)	Pawan Kumar (JJP)	1,544
Ratia (SC)	Lakshman Napa (BJP)	Jamail Singh (INC)	1,216
Sirsa	Gopal Kanda (HLP)	Gokul Setia (Ind)	602

Prasad's son-in-law, and RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav campaigned for the Congress candidate.

In 2014, the BJP won Rewari by a massive 45,466 votes. But sitting MLA Randhir Kapriwas was denied the ticket this time — so he fought as an Independent and won 36,778 votes, ensuring Sunil Kumar's defeat.

The other seats the Congress won by narrow margins were Mulana (SC), Assandh, and Kharkhauda (SC).

The smallest victory margin in the state was at Sirsa, where Gopal Kanda defeated Independent candidate Gokul Setia by 602 votes. Sirsa was won by the INLD in 2014; this year, the party has got just one seat — Ellenabad, where Abhay Chautala has won.

17 HARYANA

DECISION 2019

ASSEMBLY 90 SEATS

BJP 2014
40 47

CONG 2014
31 15

JJP 2014
10 NA

INLD 2014
01 19

HLP 2014
01 00

OTHERS 2014
07 09

MINISTERS: ONLY VIJ IN

HEALTH MINISTER ANIL VIJ (BJP)
DEFEATED CHITRA SARWARA (INDEPENDENT)
By a margin of 20,165 votes in Ambala Cant

EDUCATION MINISTER RAM BILAS SHARMA (BJP)
LOST TO RAODAN SINGH (CONGRESS)
By a margin of 10,220 votes in Mahendragarh

AGRICULTURE MINISTER OM PRAKASH DHANKAR (BJP)
LOST TO KULDEEP VATS (CONGRESS)
By a margin of 11,245 votes in Badli

WCD MINISTER KAVITA JAIN (BJP)
LOST TO SURENDRA PANWAR (CONGRESS)
By a margin of 32,878 votes in Sonapat

FINANCE MINISTER CAPT ABHIMANYU (BJP)
LOST TO RAM KUMAR GAUTAM (JJP)
By a margin of 12,029 votes in Narnaund

TRANSPORT MINISTER KRISHAN LAL PANWAR (BJP)
LOST TO BALBIR SINGH (CONGRESS)
By a margin of 20,015 votes in Israna



Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda watches the results at his residence in New Delhi on Thursday. Anil Sharma

Hooda admits: change came late

IN AUGUST, former Chief Minister **BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA** publicly rebelled against the Congress and declared himself the chief ministerial candidate, "with or without Congress". Giving in to pressure, the party high command, in September, made him CLP leader and replaced Ashok Tanwar with Kumari Selja as PCC chief. Hooda tells **VARINDER BHATIA** that if the change was made earlier, the results would have been different.

Of course, the results would have been different. Do you think the BJP's nationalist campaign failed? Talking about Balakot, Article 370 etc is a separate issue. At the Assembly polls, they should have listed the achievements of their state government in the last five years. They should have shown what they have done for the people of this state — be it traders, youth, farmers. Every section of society is upset with this BJP government. People of the state have shown their anger today and proved what I have been saying — that it is a non-performing government.

take any people-friendly decision. The state government did not have any achievement to showcase. Whenever they went to the people, they could not say if they have got any additional metro line, thermal power station, university, college, job avenues, industries. They absolutely failed in governance. The state which used to be No. 1 in per capita investment and per capita income in 2014, has now been reduced to being No. 1 in unemployment and crime.

The BJP is staking claim to form the government. It can do so, as it is the single largest party. But, morally, it has lost all right to do so. When your entire cabinet has been rejected, when the people have given their mandate against you, when the people have rejected you, you do not have any moral ground to stake claim. It is a moral defeat for the BJP.

Almost all the BJP's outgoing ministers have lost. This reflects the non-performance of the government. Its ministers were full of arrogance. It shows that the government did not

After winning 31 seats, what is your next step?

The mandate of the people of Haryana is against the state government. I have already appealed to the entire Opposition that the people's mandate should be respected and we should all join hands — whether it is the JJP, INLD, independents or Kanda's HLP. Let us see how they respond. I have not yet spoken with Dushyant Chautala, but a few independent candidates who have won are in touch.

If the change in the party's state leadership was made earlier, would the results have been different?

TURNCOATS: MIXED BAG

In the run-up to Assembly polls, several politicians switched sides. A look at how they fared

PARMINDER DHULL
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Defeated by JJP's Amarjeet Dhand in JULANA

ZAKIR HUSSAIN
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Defeated by Cong's Aftab Ahmed in NUH

RAJVEER BARARA
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Defeated by Cong's Varun Chaudhary in MULLANA

RAM CHANDER KAMBOJ
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Finished third in RANIA

SATISH NANDAL
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Defeated by Cong's Bhupinder Singh Hooda in GARHI SAMPLA-KILOI

NASEEM AHMED
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Defeated by Cong's Mammen Khan in FEROREPUR JHIRKA

NAGENDRA BHADANA
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Defeated by Cong's Neeraj Sharma in FARIDABAD NIT

VINOD BHAYANA
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING CONG
Wins from HANSI, defeats JJP's Rahul Makkar

ASHOK ARORA
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Defeated by BJP's Subhash Sudha in THANESAR

PRADEEP CHAUDHARY
JOINED CONG AFTER LEAVING INLD
Wins from KALKA, defeats BJP's Latika Sharma

DURA RAM
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING CONG
Wins from FATEHABAD, defeats JJP's Virender Siwach

LEELA RAM GURJAR
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Wins from KAITHAL, defeats Cong's Randeep Singh Surjewala

RAM KUMAR KASHYAP
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Wins from INDRI, defeats Rakesh Kamboj (Independent)

RANBIR GANGWA
JOINED BJP AFTER LEAVING INLD
Wins from NALWA, defeats Cong's Randhir Panihar

What dented BJP: Backlash in Jat stronghold

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 24

THE BJP on Thursday faced defeat in six Jat-dominated constituencies that were at the epicentre of the quota stir violence of 2016. It also lost the three Muslim-dominated seats in southern Haryana.

Candidates of the ruling party lost all the nine Assembly segments even though the BJP had managed to win all 10 Lok Sabha seats in Haryana during the recent Lok Sabha polls.

The Muslim-dominated seats of Nuh, Ferozepur Jhirka and Punhana are in southern Haryana. The Jat-dominated seats, which fall in Rohtak, Jhajjar and Sonapat districts, are Beri, Jhajjar, Meham, Badli, Baroda and Garhi Sampla-Kiloi.

In the Muslim-dominated constituencies, the BJP relied on INLD turncoats Zakir Husain in Nuh and Naseem Ahmed in Ferozepur Jhirka — both were seeking re-election from their respective constituencies. In Punhana, the BJP fielded debutant Nouksham Chaudhary. However, these constituencies maintained their voting pattern, which was evident in Thursday's results.

In Nuh, Congress candidate Aftab Ahmed defeated BJP's Zakir Hussain by 4,038 votes, while in Ferozepur Jhirka, Congress's Mammen Khan defeated BJP's Naseem Ahmed by 37,004 votes. In Punhana, Congress's Mohd. Ilyas defeated Independent candidate Rahish Khan, while BJP candidate Nouksham Chaudhary was nowhere in the fight.

Among the Jat seats, Beri saw Congress candidate Dr Raghuvir Singh Kadian defeat BJP's Vikram Kadian by 12,952 votes, while in Jhajjar, Congress candidate Geeta Bhukkal defeated BJP candidate Rakesh Kumar by 13,751 votes.

In Baroda, Congress candidate Sri Krishan Hooda defeated BJP's Yogeshwar Dutt by 4,840 votes and in Meham, independent

candidate Balraj Kundu defeated Congress's Anand Singh Dangi by 12,233 votes. Here, BJP's Shamsheer Singh finished third.

Badli saw Congress's Kuldeep Vats defeating BJP's Cabinet minister Om Prakash Dhankar by 11,245 votes, while in Garhi Sampla-Kiloi, Congress's Bhupinder Singh Hooda defeated BJP's Satish Nandal by 58,312 votes — the biggest victory margin in these Assembly polls.

Beri, Meham, Badli, Garhi Sampla-Kiloi and Jhajjar Assembly segments fall in Rohtak parliamentary constituency, from where BJP's Arvind Kumar Sharma defeated Congress's Deepender Singh Hooda in the Lok Sabha polls just five months ago. Baroda constituency falls in Sonapat parliamentary constituency, from where BJP's Ramesh Chander Kaushik defeated former CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda in the same parliamentary elections.

The caste factor appears to have played a vital role in deciding the BJP candidates' fate in the Jat-dominated seats. Despite the BJP fielding Jat candidates here, the party's image as a non-Jat party and failure of Jat leaders within the BJP to secure reservation for their own community seem to have gone against them. Forty lives were lost in Haryana during the Jat quota stir. Later, a large number of Jats were arrested on charges of charges of vandalism.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, too, the BJP candidates who won by huge margins failed to make inroads in these Assembly segments.

In Nuh, the BJP had got 34,258 votes while the Congress had polled 82,116 votes. Similarly, in Ferozepur Jhirka, BJP had got 26,466 votes while the Congress had led the segment with 1,08,324 votes. In Punhana, the BJP had polled 22,267 votes against Congress's 81,876.

Similarly, in all Jat-dominated Assembly segments, the BJP had trailed the Congress during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Dushyant emerges as new Chautala

MANRAJ GREWAL SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 24

THE FLEDGLING Jannayak Janata Party (JJP), born just 10 months ago out of a family feud in the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD), emerged Thursday as a third political force in Haryana by winning 10 out of the 90 seats in the Assembly polls — a significant number in a verdict that did not throw up any clear winners with BJP and Congress failing to get majority.

As the results came in, however, JJP chief Dushyant Chautala struck a measured note and dismissed talk about him being a kingmaker. "I am neither a king nor a kingmaker... I have called a meeting of senior leaders, including the winning candidates, tomorrow. We will discuss our future course of action, and will abide by whatever decision is taken by the party," he said.

Dushyant, 31, is the son of Ajay Chautala and grandson of Om Prakash Chautala, both of whom were sentenced in 2013 to 10 years in jail for their role in a teachers' recruitment scam.

On its poll debut this time, JJP's candidates defeated heavyweights such as finance minister Capt Abhimanyu from Narnaund, BJP state chief Subhash Barala from Tohana, and minister of state Krishan Kumar Bedi from Shabhad. Dushyant's mother Naina Singh upstaged Congress candidate and late CM Bansilal's son Ranbir Singh Mahendra from Badhra.

Dushyant, a business graduate from California State University and a lawyer from NLU, trounced Prem Lata Singh, wife of BJP leader Chaudhry Birender Singh, who had defeated him in the previous state polls in 2014. Just four months ago, Prem Lata's son



Dushyant Chautala thanks voters at Uchana Kalan on Friday. Jasbir Malhi

Brijender Singh, a former Haryana-cadre IAS officer, had defeated Dushyant from the Hisar Lok Sabha constituency.

But many of JJP's winning candidates this time are ambitious turncoats. Ram Karan, the winner from Shahbad (SC), was an INLD member who had lost to BJP's Krishan Kumar Bedi by a mere 562 votes in 2014. He joined JJP after Congress refused to give him a ticket.

Two of the winners are disgruntled BJP leaders who switched sides for tickets. Jogi Ram Sihag, the winner from Barwala, is former chairman of the Haryana Housing Cooperative Federation, who joined Dushyant's party on October 3.

Ram Kumar Gautam, the giant-slayer from Narnaund, is known for his role in scrap-

ping the Jat quota. He had once left BJP when it allied with INLD, saying it was a "party of demons". This time, he quit the saffron party after being denied the ticket from Narnaund.

Devinder Singh Babli, who defeated the BJP state chief at Tohana, joined JJP in October after being denied ticket by Congress.

The JJP also fielded the highest number of Jat candidates at 34 followed by Congress's 27 and BJP's 20, and found support in Jat-dominated seats. Anoop Dhanak, one of the four INLD legislators to join JJP when the party split last December, won from Uklana, while Amarjeet Dhand stopped Paramjeet Singh Dhull (INLD) from scoring a hatrick at Julana.

Both the candidates fought on the slogan, "Coron chahne waalon ka mela hai, kaun ke-

hta hai Dushyant Chautala akela hai? (It's a festival of those who seek crores, and who says Dushyant Chautala is alone?)".

One of the last to come up with their manifesto, the party targeted the youth by promising right to work and 75 per cent quota for local youths in jobs and an unemployment allowance of Rs 11,000.

When Dushyant founded JJP on December 3, 2018, after his expulsion from INLD by party supremo and grandfather Om Prakash Chautala, many had thought it would be a flash in the pan. But he positioned himself as the heir to the legacy of Choudhry Devi Lal, arguably the tallest Jat leader of Haryana, by using his name Jannayak, and started enrolling members.

His detractors first took note of the young party when Dushyant's younger brother Digvijay came second in the Jind bypolls, relegating Congress heavyweight Randeep Singh Surjewala to third and INLD, once considered formidable in the seat, to fifth. It also raked in more votes than INLD in the Lok Sabha polls in May.

The JJP draws its cadre not just from a fractured INLD Jat vote, but also from Indian National Students Organisation (INSO), a well organised outfit set up by Ajay Chautala.

Ever since he became the youngest Lok Sabha MP at 26 after defeating former CM Bhajan Lal's son Kuldeep Bishnoi from Hisar in 2014, Dushyant has been nurturing the youth constituency.

The student cadre translated into enthusiastic supporters during the Assembly elections. With a smattering of green and yellow flags, catchy slogans, and peppy numbers, JJP was very much the third most visible party in the campaign, with long cavalcades of supporters belying the party's age.

BALLOTIN

AAP candidates set to lose deposits in Haryana, Faridabad

Gurgaon: The AAP candidates in Haryana's Gurgaon and Faridabad districts are set to lose their deposits, with all of them missing the 16.67 per cent vote share mark by large margins. AAP had fielded candidates in 6 of the 10 constituencies in both districts — two in Gurgaon and four in Faridabad. The BJP also gained another constituency in Faridabad — Tigaon, where the party's Rajesh Nagar defeated sitting MLA and Congress candidate Lalit Nagar by 33,841 votes. **ENS**

Swaraj India fails to open account

Chandigarh: The Yogendra Yadav-led Swaraj India, which had contested 40 seats in Haryana, failed to open its account. The party had surprised everyone on July 23 by releasing its list of candidates.

Party founder Yadav had made it clear that he did not expect to win any seat. "I am just laying the foundation of a new electoral discourse," said Yadav. The party's candidates were selected for their affinity to public service. The party called its manifesto Imaan Patra and promised to create 20 lakh job opportunities at an outlay of Rs 20,000 crore in the state. **ENS**

MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR (BJP)
wins Karnal seat by 45,188 votes

BHUPINDER HOODA (CONG)
Wins Garhi Sampla-Kiloi seat by 58,312 votes

DUSHYANT CHAUTALA (JJP)
wins Uchana Kalan seat by 47,452 votes

RANDEEP SURJEWALA (CONG)
loses Kaithal seat by 1,246 votes

ABHAY CHAUTALA (INLD)
Wins Ellenabad seat by 11,922 votes





AND THE WINNER IS

Shiv Sena candidate Aaditya Thackeray with his family members at his residence, after winning from Worli, on Thursday. Prashant Nadkar

How Pawar scripted NCP fightback: 66 rallies in poll run-up

ZEESHAN SHAIKH
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

"IT MAY not be a clean sweep but Sharad Pawar, the warrior, has fought back. And how," NCP MP from Baramati, Supriya Sule, said on Thursday.

Addressing the media in Mumbai, the NCP chief showed just how his leadership helped the party improve its tally from 41 seats in 2014 to 54, just two behind the Shiv Sena: an unrelenting drive, even at just days shy of 79. While he was being hailed as the comeback king, Pawar said he would embark on a state-wide tour to develop a new batch of young, second-rung leaders in Maharashtra.

Not long ago, the state and his old associates seemed to have turned their back on Pawar, with many quitting the party to join either the BJP or the Sena. But rather than getting bogged down, Pawar decided to launch the comeback of his life, holding 66 rallies in the campaign phase.

In the run-up to the elections, the Enforcement Directorate had registered a case against Pawar in a money laundering case, but his strategy to run a campaign on how he was being "targeted" as part of vendetta politics by the ruling regime seems to have found a connect with the voters.

"In this election we have seen that people do not take to kindly to people who get intoxicated with power. Power comes and goes, and people have this expectation that you should be grounded. If you take a position contrary to that, the same people do not take to it kindly," he said, reacting to the election verdict.



"The mandate is that we sit in the Opposition. We will do that," said Pawar. Ganesh Shirsekar

Pawar's statement was a swipe at Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, who, during campaigning, said that his party was ready for a wrestling match but there was no "pahalwan" (wrestler) left in the ring. Fadnis had also taken swipes at Pawar at other times, comparing him to the comic jailer played by actor Asrani in the film 'Sholay'.

"This government's attitude of looking at people's problems has not been liked by the people," Pawar said. "This call of *abki baar 220 paar* (this time 220-plus) has not been accepted by the people."

Pawar also denied that the NCP is looking at being a part of the government. "The mandate is that we sit in the Opposition. We will do that," Pawar said.

WITH ANURADHA MASCARENHAS IN PUNE

BALLOTIN

MNS wins one seat, vote share drops

Mumbai: The Raj Thackeray-led MNS has been able to win only one seat — Kalyan Rural won by Pramod Ratan. The MNS's vote share in Maharashtra has been in a free fall from the heady days of 2009 when it won 13 seats polling 5.71 per cent of votes. This dropped to 3.1 per cent in 2014 when it won one seat. It has now further come down to 2.3 per cent. After its initial plan not to contest, the MNS fielded 101 candidates. Raj Thackeray's aggressive style of campaigning was hardly on show with many perceiving this change to the ED notice slapped on him in a money laundering case. ENS

AIMIM gets two, loses old seats

Mumbai: The AIMIM made inroads in North Maharashtra winning two seats in Malegaon Central and Dhule City, but failed to save its own turf of Aurangabad Central and Byculla, where the party had won in 2014. After breaking ranks with Prakash Ambedkar-led Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, the Hyderabad-based party under the leadership of state president Imtiaj Jaleel had fielded 44 candidates in Maharashtra — the highest so far since Asaduddin Owaisi-led party started contesting elections in Maharashtra. Mufti Ismail won from Malegaon Central seat and Shah Faruk Anwar from Dhule City. ENS

VBA draws a blank, vote share dips

Mumbai: Six months after its impressive debut with over 7 per cent of votes in Maharashtra at the Lok Sabha elections, the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) failed to impress in the Assembly elections, failing to win a single seat. While its candidates fared reasonably well in a few select seats, overall, its vote share fell significantly from its Lok Sabha performance. ENS

As BJP's tally dips, Uddhav reminds it of '50-50' formula

VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

AS THE BJP's seat tally in the Maharashtra Assembly polls tumbled to about 20 less than what it was in 2014, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray lost no time on Thursday to "remind" his saffron alliance partner about the "equal" or "50-50 power sharing" formula for all posts in the government.

This is Sena speak for rotating the chief minister's post between itself and the BJP for two-and-a-half years each. Thackeray appeared to be speaking with the newfound confidence that the BJP's lower than expected performance in the elections seemed to have given his party.

"We all know that when the alliance was forged before the Lok Sabha polls, 50:50 formula was decided. There is no need to hide it now. It was also decided that the seat-sharing ratio would be 144:144. BJP state president Chandrakant Patil then said that I should understand BJP's problems in seat sharing. I understood their problems and accepted a smaller share of the seats. But if their problems are going to increase, then I can't understand all their problems," Thackeray told mediapersons at the Sena headquarters in Mumbai.

Maintaining that he needs to expand his party, he added: "So, all senior leaders from both parties will sit together and we will take a decision on the formula. Then, we will stake a claim on government formation."

It was not a "warning" to the BJP, he said, but "just a reminder" of what had been discussed earlier.

The Sena chief's remarks came after the Assembly polls results showed that the BJP is set to win 105 seats, and the Sena 56. Both parties have won less number seats as compared to the last time. In the 2014 elections, the BJP had won 122 seats, while Sena won 63 after contesting the polls separately.

Thackeray indicated that he would not explore the possibility of forming a government without the BJP by seeking support from the Congress-NCP combine. "I am not in a hurry. I am not greedy for power and won't do anything out of turn for power," he

said on Congress-NCP offering support for a Sena CM.

Sena leaders are confident that the party's bargaining power has increased due to the fall in the BJP numbers, though its own tally of seats has fallen by seven seats from what it had won in 2014.

"The drop in the number of Sena seats happened either due to the rebellion by party workers or non-cooperation of BJP workers at many places. The results clearly showed that there was no alliance at the ground level despite attempts made by the top leaders of both parties," said a senior Sena leader.

Another Sena leader said that the party faced anti-incumbency at a few places and also faced strong fight from the NCP in some seats.

"Some of our candidates faced the anti-incumbency. Also, change of candidates seems not to have worked in our favour," said the leader, pointing out that people did not vote for defectors from Congress and NCP who had joined Sena ahead of the polls and were given tickets by the party.

INTERVIEW | EX-MUMBAI CONGRESS CHIEF

SANJAY NIRUPAM TELLS MANOJ CG WHY HE THINKS THE PARTY COULD NOT PUT UP A PROPER FIGHT IN MAHARASHTRA. EXCERPTS:

How do you analyse the election results? What went wrong in Maharashtra?

We did not fight the elections (properly). The BJP has a style. It creates a huge propaganda two-three months before the elections... They identified the weak links in our party and inducted such leaders from the Congress and NCP. It demoralises the rest of the leaders. On top of that, there was a lack of unity, lack of cohesiveness, and paucity of funds. So there was no campaign as such. We did not carry out a proper campaign to attack the ruling alliance. Results clearly say that voters were



looking for a good, viable alternative. But we could not become an alternative. That appeal was missing. It has to be created.

Why could you not provide that alternative? That should be asked of those who ran the campaign. What is the responsibility of the general secretary in charge? His job is to dispel confusion in the state unit — talk to the people, take everyone along. There was no such attempt. I demand that some accountability be fixed now...

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

BJP CANDIDATE EXPECTED TO CONTEST, BUT SENNA GIVEN TICKET: POLL OFFICIAL

In Latur (Rural) seat, NOTA is first runner-up with 27,500 votes

SADAF MODAK
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 24

THE CONSTITUENCY of Latur (Rural) saw 27,500 voters choosing the 'None of the Above' (NOTA) option, the highest in the Maharashtra Assembly election. NOTA polled the second highest number of votes — accounting for 13.78 per cent of the total votes counted in the seat.

In the constituency, Congress candidate Dhiraj Deshmukh, son of former chief minister Vilasrao Deshmukh, got 1,35,006 votes (67%). After Deshmukh and NOTA, Shiv Sena's Sachin Deshmukh and VBA's Baliram Done polled 13,524 and 12,966 votes, respectively.

When asked about the high NOTA votes, Sachin said he was still shocked by the verdict. An aide said they would decide whether they want to approach the EC.

District election authorities, however, said they were not surprised by the high number of NOTA votes. An official said that a BJP candidate was expected to be given a ticket for the Latur seat, but eventually a Sena candidate was chosen due to the seat-sharing arrangement between the two alliance partners. Following this, there were protests by BJP workers in the district. Pamphlets were also found urging voters to choose NOTA.

"The pamphlets also shared on social media claimed that if NOTA receives the maximum votes, there will be re-election. When a clarification was sought by the press before

the elections regarding NOTA, we had stated the rules regarding it," said Latur district election officer and collector G Srikanth.

As per rules, even if NOTA is chosen more than any other candidate, the candidate who gets the maximum votes after NOTA — even if it is a single vote — will be declared a winner, the district authorities had clarified.

Done, the candidate who stood fourth, alleged that the rumours about NOTA were politically motivated to discourage voters from electing him. So far, neither the Sena candidate nor the VBA or any other candidates have filed complaints on the alleged rumour.

Apart from Latur, Palus Kadegaon, which is part of Sangli Lok Sabha constituency, also saw a high number of NOTA votes — 20,631 or 9.9 per cent of the electorate. The winning

candidate, Patangrao Kadam of the Congress, secured 83.04 per cent of the votes, while NOTA was chosen more than any candidate apart from Kadam.

In Mumbai's Jogeshwari East constituency, 12,031 voters or over 8% chose the NOTA option, the highest in the city. The constituency comprises areas including Aarey Colony, where 2,185 trees were hacked for a Mumbai Metro car shed earlier this month. While many residents protested the tree-cutting, none of the groups, including the 7,000 activists living in the 27 tribal padas part of the constituency had, however, declared that they would be choosing NOTA as a protest vote. Shiv Sena's Ravindra Waikar, the incumbent MLA, won with a margin of 58,787 votes.

In 2014, when NOTA was used in the state for the first time in Assembly polls, the maximum NOTA votes recorded in the city were in Chandivali-4653, with Jogeshwari East recording 2,038 NOTA votes.

In 2013, the Supreme Court had directed the Election Commission to provide a button called None of the Above in EVMs, for those who come to the polling booth and decide not to vote for any of the candidates in the fray. The court had observed that the mechanism of 'negative voting' serves a fundamental and essential part of a 'vibrant democracy', and held that such an option gives the voter the right to express his disapproval with the kind of candidates being put up.

WITH ATIKH RASHID IN PUNE

PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN (CONG)
wins Karad South seat by 9,130 votes

ASHOK CHAVAN (CONG)
wins Bhokar seat by 97,445 votes

AMIT DESHMUKH (CONG)
won Latur City seat by 40,415 votes

NITESH RANE (BJP)
wins Kankavali seat by 28,116 votes

PARAG SHAH (BJP)
wins Ghatkopar East seat by 53,319 votes

ROHIT PAWAR (NCP)
wins Karjat Jamkhed seat by 43,347 votes

