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**GOVERNANCE**  
**BY ARVIND KEJRIWAL**  
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## A NATION'S TRIBUTE

On Gandhi Jayanti, at the Mahatma's statue in Parliament House on Wednesday. Neeraj Priyadarshi

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## Andhra govt takes over liquor shops, prohibition from next year

SREENIVAS JANYALA  
HYDERABAD, OCTOBER 2

IN THE first step towards total prohibition, the Andhra Pradesh government has taken over 3,500 liquor shops across the state, which will be run by the AP State Beverages Corporation. The new excise policy took effect on Gandhi Jayanti Wednesday even as the government said it wants total prohibition within a year.

To gradually cut availability and consumption, liquor shops will stay open from 10 am to 9 pm and later reduced to just 3-4 hours a day. In the last four months, the government has started shutting down liquor shops and the number is currently down to 3,500 shops from 4,380. Liquor sales and consumption has decreased by 18 per cent in the last four months since the YSR Congress Party came to power under Chief Minister Y S

**Sales down since Jagan came to power**

Jagan Mohan Reddy. Deputy Chief Minister (Excise) K Narayana Swamy said that within a year, total prohibition would be implemented in the state. "We took over 475 liquor shops last month on a trial basis. Now, we have taken over all the liquor shops as the licences expired on October 1. Since Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy took over as CM on May 30, our government has closed down all 43,000 illegal and illicit liquor shops functioning mostly in rural areas," he said. "This was Jagan's promise to people during his padyatra. Gradually, we will make liquor unavailable and put a total ban

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## THE EDITORIAL PAGE

## DANGERS OF NRC, CITIZENSHIP BILL

BY HARSH MANDER  
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## Rural India has declared itself open defecation free: Modi

'Will eliminate single-use plastic in the next three years'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, OCTOBER 2

ANNOUNCING THAT rural India and its villages have declared themselves open-defecation free, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Wednesday that the effort to provide toilet facilities to more than 60 crore people in 60 months had amazed the whole world.

Addressing a Swachh Bharat Diwas programme in Ahmedabad to mark the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi, Modi said that the Mahatma was not an icon of just the Indian Independence movement but also cleanliness. The event was attended by around 20,000 village heads, including 10,000 from Gujarat.

Congratulating every citizen, especially those living in villages, and sarpanchs, who have all worked for 'Swachata', the Prime Minister also announced a second campaign aimed at eliminating single-use plastic by 2022.

"Just as millions of people joined the Satyagrah movement



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Gujarat Governor Acharya Dev Vrat and Chief Minister Vijay Rupani in Ahmedabad on Wednesday. Javed Raja

to oust the Britishers on Gandhi's call, crores of citizens joined this movement of Swachhagrah," he said. "Five years ago, from Red Fort, I gave a call for Swachh Bharat. Then, we only had the public's trust and Bapu's eternal message — the change you want to see in the world must begin with yourself."

With this mantra, he said, people across the country, from all walks of life "picked up brooms and started working".

"The world is amazed and

giving awards for this...in 60 months, more than 60 crore people were provided with 11 crore toilets. But for me...these numbers and accolades mean little. I derive more satisfaction from the fact that Swachh Bharat is giving dignity to women and saving lives of lakhs of children," he said.

During the event, Modi also released a Rs 150 coin and postal stamps to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary of the Mahatma.

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## Minister says single-use plastic ban in monuments

DIVYAA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

TOURISM MINISTER Prahlaad Patel has announced a ban on single-use plastic items in and around historical monuments.

"Single-use plastic will not be allowed inside monuments and within 100 metres of them," Patel said at the launch of tourism fair 'Paryatan Parv' at Rajpath Wednesday evening.

The Minister, however, did not specify when the ban would come into force. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had first called for a ban on single-use plastic during his Independence Day speech this year.

Tourism Ministry officials said the ban will come into effect in all ASI-protected monuments — they are currently working on alternatives to single-use plastic items like water bottles and cutlery. "We might install water dispensers and paper cup vending machines inside monument premises. But the challenging part would be to enforce the ban outside, where hawkers sell snacks and beverages," said an official.

## EYE ON BLOCK POLLS

## Curbs eased on movement of Jammu leaders, Valley waits

MoS's brother Rana, former minister Kitchloo, Cong leader Bhalla among those told by police they can step out

ARUN SHARMA  
JAMMU, OCTOBER 2

ALMOST TWO months after they were ordered indoors as part of the lockdown in J&K following the removal of Article 370, around a dozen top Opposition leaders of the Jammu region were allowed to move out of their homes Wednesday to resume their political activities.

The lifting of restrictions on movements of Jammu Opposition leaders comes ahead of the first Block Development Council elections in the state, scheduled for October 24.

National Conference provincial president and former J&K minister Devender Rana, younger brother of Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State in the PMO, told *The Indian Express*: "A senior police officer called me late Tuesday night, saying restrictions imposed on us have been lifted and now we are free to go anywhere and meet party workers."

Sajjad Kitchloo, another former state minister and ex-NC



lawmaker, and Javed Rana, a former MLC, too said restrictions imposed on their movements outside homes have been lifted. "Police personnel outside our residences have been withdrawn," they said.

Jammu leaders told to stay indoors following the Centre's August 5 decision included Choudhary Lal Singh (Dogra Swabhimani Sangathan), Raman Bhalla (Congress), Firdous Tak (PDP), Surjit Singh Slathia (NC),

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## EXPLAINED

HASINA IN INDIA: AMID CHALLENGES, CELEBRATING TIES  
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## Surge in external debt adds to worry over oil price hike

Forex reserves record high but growth in debt in last year highest in last 5 yrs

SANDEEP SINGH & SUNNY VERMA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

EVEN AS the country's foreign exchange reserves are close to their highest ever levels at around \$430 billion, the sharp rise in India's external debt over the last couple of years from \$485 billion in June 2017 to \$557 billion in June 2019 has opened a big gap over the forex cover — and potentially renders the economy vulnerable to any external shocks such as a global oil price spike.

As liquidity in the domestic financial market tightened over the last year and companies found it tough to raise funds from banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), India Inc incrementally turned towards foreign markets to raise funds, both for their long-term funding needs and even for short term capital requirement. This resulted in a 8.6 per cent jump in the country's external debt from \$513 billion in June 2018 to \$557 billion in 2019.

The growth in external debt over the last one year is the high-

**EXPLAINED**  
**No alarm yet but...**

WHILE THIS may not be reason to set alarm bells ringing, given that between 2013-2016, the ratio of forex to external debt was lower, the concern this time stems from uncertainties over crude prices. Policy makers may need to factor this in while assessing external risk and the adequacy of the RBI's risk buffer.

est seen in the last five years since the 11.8 per cent growth recorded in June 2014.

Against the 8.6 per cent growth in last year, the compounded annual growth rate of India's external debt between June 2014 and June 2018 stood at just 3.16 per cent.

While the long term debt outstanding increased 8 per cent from \$414 billion to \$447.7 billion over the last one year, the

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## Rejecting Pak claim to Nizam funds, UK court rules in favour of India

SHUBHAJIT ROY  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

THE UK High Court Wednesday ruled in favour of India and the grandsons of the last Nizam of Hyderabad in a decades-old legal dispute with Pakistan over funds belonging to the Nizam at the time of Partition and deposited in a London bank account.

The Nizam's descendants, Prince Mukarram Jah, the titular eighth Nizam of Hyderabad, and his younger brother Muffakham Jah, had joined hands with the Indian government in the legal battle against the Pakistan government over some 35 million pounds lying with the National Westminster Bank in London.

In his judgment handed



India had backed Mukarram Jah's claim. File

down at the Royal Courts of Justice in London, Justice Marcus Smith ruled that the "Nizam VII was beneficially entitled to the Fund and those claiming in right of Nizam VII — the Princes and India — are entitled to have the sum paid out to their order".

"Pakistan's contentions of

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## Rs 50,000 fine for idol immersion in Ganga &amp; its tributaries: Centre

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 2

THE CENTRAL government has issued a 15-point directive, including cordoning off ghats and imposing a fine of Rs 50,000, to prevent the immersion of idols in the Ganga or its tributaries during festivals, including Dussehra, Diwali, Chhath and Saraswati Puja.

The directive has been issued by the National Mission for Clean Ganga (NMCG) to chief secretaries in 11 Ganga basin states. "No idol immersion into river Ganga and its tributaries and on their banks," says the directive, which was issued after a meeting between representatives of states and NMCG officials last month.

Officials from Uttarakhand, UP, Bihar, Jharkhand and West Bengal were present during the



15-point directive to 11 Ganga basin states. File

meeting, said sources. Apart from these states, the directive has been sent to Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Haryana and Rajasthan.

Sources told *The Indian Express* that the officials were told to strictly implement norms against the immersion of idols

and disposal of puja material in the Ganga and its tributaries, and to make suitable alternative arrangements in an environmental-friendly manner.

Issued under Section 5 of The Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, the directive states: "River Bank and Ghats should be

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PAGE 1  
ANCHORSUKHBIR SIWACH  
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 2

SHE HOLDS Master's degrees in Sanskrit and English and hopes to complete her PhD soon on the work of Pulitzer winner and Booker finalist Jhumpa Lahiri. And yet, whenever Asha Khedar visits her husband's village in Haryana's Hisar, she sticks to an age-old practice — she covers her face with a purdah.

On Tuesday, however, Asha was in for a surprise when she visited Khedar village after being named as a BJP candidate for the Haryana Assembly polls

this month. Remove the purdah, go to voters with confidence, she was told.

A Dalit married to a Jat businessman from Khedar village, Asha (36) is the BJP candidate from Uklana, a reserved constituency in Hisar. "In the last 13 years since my marriage, I have never gone to my *sasural* (home of her in-laws) without a purdah as I was a *bahu* (daughter-in-law)... the villagers mind these things," she says.

"So, after the announcement of the ticket, I went to my *sasural* where more than 2,000 people had gathered. But to my surprise, everyone insisted that

**DECISION**  
**2019**  
**HARYANA**

I remove the purdah. They asked me to go to voters with full confidence, and called me their daughter. They said such initiatives should begin from the home (village) itself. Now, I will be touring all the villages here to seek votes without a purdah," she says.

Says Zila Parishad member



BJP's Asha Khedar seeks votes in Hisar. Express

Rajbir Khedar, who was among the gathering: "It doesn't look nice that a politician covers her face with purdah. If she is elected to the Assembly, she may become a minister, too. Then it would be odd if she attends big functions in a purdah."

Says former village sarpanch, Shamsher Singh: "Being the *bahu* of the village, she was in purdah. But how could she have met the voters in a purdah? We want her to succeed and asked her to focus on the elections by removing the purdah."

Asha says she completed her post-graduation in Sanskrit from Panjab University and in English

from Kurukshetra University. "I have also completed B.Ed and M.Phil in English from Kurukshetra University. I am about to complete my PhD on 'Identities in Jhumpa Lahiri's novels' from BMU in Rohtak. Only the viva process is left," she says.

Asha grew up in Chandigarh, where her father worked for Haryana Roadways. She is now based in Uklana town, about 200 km from Chandigarh and 20 km from Khedar village, with her husband Vinay and 11-year-old daughter. "Vinay runs a petrol pump in Barwala town nearby. The other members of my

husband's family live in the village. I go there almost daily but always in purdah," she says. Asha joined the BJP in 2007 and is now a general secretary in its Hisar unit. Party workers say she is known for her compering skills and is usually in charge on stage when Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar holds public meetings in the district.

"Development of this area will be on top of my agenda in the election (on October 21). A college has already come up in Uklana, fulfilling a 50-year-old demand of residents. An Industrial Training Institute (ITI) will soon be set up," she says.