



Former Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif fighting for life: doctor



U.K.'s Opposition Labour Party agrees to December election



Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan suspended for 2 years

Ganguly succeeds in scheduling a Day-Night Test at Eden Gardens

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JNU students protest draft hostel manual

NEW DELH The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union held a strike against the institute's draft hostel manual on Tuesday, calling the changes "arbitrary, undemocratic and irrational" and demanding its immediate withdrawal

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

U.P. villagers attack police team, 3 injured

Three policemen, including a station house officer, were injured in an attack by some villagers in Varanasi's Rohaniya area, the police said on Tuesday. The police team had gone to Harsons village after a crime branch team arrived to apprehend two suspects in a loot case.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

#### **Abhay Chautala rules** out merger with JJP

CHANDIGARH Indian National Lok Dal leader Abhay Chautala on Tuesday set aside speculation about coming together of his party and its offshoot outfit the Jannayak Janta Party - in Harvana, "The chapter is closed... they have gone away and we are separate now," he said.

**NEWS** ▶ PAGE 12

**OPPORTUNITIES** PAGE 5

# European lawmakers begin J&K visit

Invite to MEP from United Kingdom rescinded after he asked to meet people without escort

PEERZADA ASHIQ

As many as 23 Members of the European Parliament (MEPs) arrived in Kashmir on a two-day visit on Tuesday to assess the ground situation after scrapping of J&K's special status and recorded the feedback from the Army, local officials and 15 delegations, as the Valley observed a complete shutdown and saw a spurt in street protests.

"We are looking for the facts. It is a good occasion to get some views. I do not have enough facts to reach a conclusion. We are conscious of the context. We are also conscious that we were being kept away from some people," Spanish MEP Herman Tertsch said.

Earlier in the day, United Kingdom MEP Chris Davies, whose invite was rescinded after he made a request to meet people without any escort, said, "I am not prepared to be part of a PR stunt for the Modi government and pretend that all is well. It's very clear democratic principles are being subverted in Kashmir and the world needs to start taking notice."

Around four MEPs have reportedly backed out from travelling to Kashmir.

On arrival, the European Union (EU) delegates drove through Srinagar city from the airport to their hotel located near the Dal lake, under a heavy security blanket.



**Ground survey:** Members of the European Union delegation at the Dal Lake in Srinagar on Tuesday. • NISSAR AHMAD

### 5 migrant workers shot dead

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Coinciding with the visit of 23 Members of the European Parliament to Kashmir, suspected militants abducted and shot dead five migrant workers and injured another in south Kashmir's Kulgam on Tuesday. The

victims, who hailed from West Bengal, were abducted from their rented accommodation in Katrussu area around 7.30 p.m.

"One injured has been shifted to a Srinagar hospital," Kulgam deputy commissioner Showkat Ajaz told The Hindu.

The cavalcade also drove past four detention centres, where three former Chief Ministers and several mainstream politicians were being held since August 5.

The EU delegates held across-the-table interactions with 15 delegations, including of traders, grassroots leaders, students, a threemember women's group and civil society members, at the Lalit Grand Palace hotel, just

next to Hari Niwas where National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah is being detained. The members also took boat rides on the Dal lake in the evening.

Global Youth Foundation head Touseef Raina, who met the MEPs, said he highlighted that youth of J&K witnessed "enough bloodshed and wanted an end to it."

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12

# Questions grow over NGO's invite to MEPs

SUHASINI HAIDAR

The Members of European Parliament (MEPs) visiting India were promised a "prestigious VIP meeting" with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and the NGO that organised the visit claimed that he wanted to meet them as "influential decision-makers from the European Union", invitations accessed by *The Hindu* show.

The invitation that went out to more than 30 MEPs from Brussels-based British PIO Madi Sharma, who accompanied the MEPs delegation, said that she ran a non-governmental organisation called WESTT (Women's Economic and Social Think Tank), although her link to the government and to the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) are unclear. The Hindu attempted to email Ms. Sharma, whose Twitter account describes her as an "international business broker", but the message bounced back and said the page was invalid.

"I am organising a prestigious VIP meeting with the Prime Minister of India, His Excellency Narendra Modi and it is my privilege to offer this invitation to you," Ms.



Madi Sharma

Sharma said. "As you will be aware Prime Minister Modi had a landslide victory in the recent elections in India and is planning to continue on his path of growth and development for India the country and its people. In that respect, he would like to meet influential decision makers from the European Union."

It also explained that the three-day visit would include meetings with Mr. Modi and senior officials, a visit to Kashmir, and a press conference on Wednesday. Ms. Sharma claimed that

all expenses for the visit (flight and accommodations) would be sponsored by the Delhi-based International Institute for Non-Aligned Studies (IINS).

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12

# Sena not promised top post: Fadnavis

'It will be a BJP-led govt. for 5 years'

A day before the meeting of newly elected MLAs of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the Shiv Sena was not promised the top post for two-and-ahalf years when the alliance was formalised before the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

Highlighting the party's stand amid the ongoing tussle with its alliance partner over power sharing, Mr. Fadnavis on Tuesday said he will be the Chief Minister for the next five years and that the BJP Legislature Party would elect its new leader on Wednesday. "There should be no doubt in anybody's mind that it will be a BJP-led government for the next five years," he told reporters at his official residence 'Varsha'.

After the election results on October 24, the Shiv Sena has been pushing for a rotational CM, with Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray last week reminding the BJP of the 50:50 formula "agreed upon" between himself, BJP president Amit Shah and Mr. Fadnavis ahead of the Lok Sabha polls.

Commenting on this, Mr. Fadnavis said, "I have confirmed with Amit Shah and he told me that the BJP has not given any assurance for



the Chief Minister's post for two-and-a-half years [each for the BJP and Sena]."

**Deputy CM's post** 

Asked about the 50:50 formula and the talk of giving the post of Deputy Chief Minister to the Sena, he said an "appropriate decision' would soon be taken.

Mr. Shah will not take part in Wednesday's meeting of the legislature party for undisclosed reasons. He is likely to visit Mumbai on November 1 or 2.

The meeting will be attended by Union Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and BJP vice-president Avinash Rai Khanna. It is likely to pass a resolution giving all rights to Mr. Shah to elect the leader of the legislature

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12 **BROTHERHOOD UNBOUND** 

# <sup>+</sup> India, Saudi Arabia constitute Strategic Partnership Council

PM Modi addresses Future Investment Initiative Summit

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday announced the formation of the India-Saudi Strategic Partnership Council that will be led by the leaderships of both countries. The announcement was made in Saudi capital Riyadh where Prime Minister Modi paid a visit during October 28-29.

Indian thanked the hosts for farsighted economic planning for Saudi Arabia and praised Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman for his leadership role in giving a new vision to one of the largest energy suppliers in the world. "In talks with the Crown Prince today, we agreed on setting up the Strategic Partnership Council that will help India ad-



Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, in Riyadh on Tuesday. • ANI

dress its expectations and aspirations," said Prime Minister Modi in Hindi, delivering the keynote address at the Future Investment Initiative Summit in Riyadh.

A joint statement at the end of the visit stated that the founding document setting up the bilateral Strategic Partnership Council was signed by Prime Minister Modi and the Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman.

**CONDEMNS TERRORISM** ▶ PAGE 13

### Justice Bobde appointed next CJI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde was appointed the next Chief Justice of India (CJI) on Tuesday after President Ram Nath Kovind signed the warrant of his appointment.

The 63-year-old judge will take oath as the country's 47th CJI on November 18 and will have a tenure of 17 months until April 23, 2021. As per convention, CJI Ranjan Gogoi, who will demit offfice on November 17, had recommended the name of Justice Bobde the most senior judge of the Supreme Court - to succeed him.

Justice Bobde is part of the five-judge Constitution Bench that will soon deliver the judgment in the Ram Ianmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute case.

'PRACTICAL JUDGE' ▶ PAGE 12

# The AQI on Tuesday was recorded at 400, up from 368 a day before

STAFF REPORTER

Delhi's air quality deteriorated further on Tuesday and remained one notch short of the 'severe' category (AQI 401), the worst for this season so far. The Air Quality Index on

Tuesday was recorded at 400, 'very poor' category, at 4 p.m., which is the average of the past 24 hours, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). The air quality has wor-

sened since Monday, when it was at 368, mainly due to stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana. The stubble fire counts in the two States have increased from 1,654 to 2,577 during the past 24 hours after a noticeable dip on Sunday, said the government-run SAFAR (System of Air Ouality and Weather Forecasting and Research).

The contribution of crop residue burning in neighbouring States to the air pol-



City's air quality dips with spike in stubble burning +

on Tuesday. • v.v. KRISHNAN

lution in Delhi was 25% on Tuesday and is expected to increase to 29% on Wednesday, which will be the season's highest, said SAFAR.

An increase in the boundary layer wind speed is expected to improve the air quality by November 1.

CM's appeal

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal requested the Punjab and Haryana governments to take action against stubble burning. "On behalf of Delhi's residents, I appeal to the

governments of Punjab and Haryana with folded hands to take some concrete steps immediately and save Delhi from becoming a gas chamber," he said in a tweet. At 8.30 p.m. on Tuesday,

Delhi's AQI was 417, in the 'severe' category, according to CPCB. Anand Vihar and Wazirpur remained the most polluted areas with AQI at 469 and 454 respectively. The visibility levels also

dropped with smog shrouding the city.

"Since Deepavali, smog

creased. Emergency action to control pollution, and not to contribute to it, should be taken," said Anumita Roychowdhury, head of 'clean air' programme at the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi. "The peak pollution on

has started to build up due

to which visibility has de-

Deepavali night was chiefly due to firecrackers, and now local pollutants are getting trapped and the mixing height [height at which pollutants are spread out in the atmosphere] has also reduced," she said.

The Delhi government on Tuesday attacked Harvana and Punjab for the air pollution in the city. "Latest NASA images show a drastic spurt in crop residue burnings in the neighbouring States, which has severely affected Delhi's air quality," an official statement said.

**SEE ALSO ▶** PAGE 3

# 80-hour battle to rescue boy from borewell fails

Hundreds of residents of T.N. village line up on roads to bid tearful farewell to two-year-old Sujith

R. KRISHNAMOORTHY KATHELENE ANTONY

The more than 80-hour long battle to save two-year-old Sujith Wilson, who had fallen into an abandoned borewell at Nadukattupatti, near Manapparai, in Tamil Nadu on Friday, failed on Tuesday with rescue workers managing to retrieve only his "highly decomposed and dismembered" body.

The boy was formally declared dead at 2.30 a.m. and his body was retrieved by teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) a couple of hours later.

The body, covered by a polythene sheet, was shifted for post-mortem to the Ma-



napparai Government Hos-Fathima Pudur shortly after pital and then to the burial 8 a.m. as relatives and wellground for the final rites as wishers grieved in silence.

people lined up on the roads Commissioner of Revenue to bid a tearful farewell. Administration J. Radhak-The mortal remains were rishnan said rescue workers laid to rest at a graveyard at had noticed foul smell emanating from the abandoned borewell around 10 p.m on Special equipment used

As per the NDRF's guidelines, the decision to remove his remains from the borewell was made. "Soon, special equipment was used to retrieve him from the well. A team of doctors took around 45 minutes to confirm his death and give a detailed report," he said.

A pall of gloom pervaded Fathima Pudur in Malaiyadipatti panchayat, the native village of the child's family, and in neighbouring Vilankurichi and surroundings as wailing relatives had a last glimpse of the coffin. The parents of the child were inconsolable as hundreds of relatives and well-wishers from surrounding villages paid homage at the graveyard.

Sixty-year-old Subramani, a family friend, said nobody was allowed to witness the retrieval operation or the body. Relatives of the family admitted that retrieving the body was difficult since the diameter of the borewell into which the boy had fallen was just four inches.

Although efforts were on to dig an adjacent passage to reach the two-year-old for over 36 hours, NDRF and SDRF officials began attempts to lift the boy through the opening of the abandoned borewell around 1:20 a.m. on Tuesday.

**CONTINUED ON ▶** PAGE 12 **DEEP TRAPS ▶** EDITORIAL

# 'No cyberattack on Kudankulam plant'

Officials deny that the site was hacked

P. SUDHAKAR TIRUNELVELI

Hours after a cybersecurity expert claimed on Twitter that the Kudankulam Nu-Power (KKNPP) domain controller-level access could have been compromised, officials categorically denied it on Tuesday.

KKNPP Site Director Sanjay Kumar said the totally isolated network of KKNPP could not be accessed by any outside network from any part of the globe. Hence, there was no question of it being hacked. Asked if power genera-

tion was stopped last week in the second reactor due to a possible compromise, Mr. Kumar said it was pureing of a mechanical device in the turbine section, and not due to any electronic complication. "While the first reactor

ly due to the malfunction-

of KKNPP is generating 1,000 Mwe power, the capacity of the Russian supplied VVER reactor, the second unit is producing 670 Mwe electricity [as on Tuesday morning]," Mr. Kumar said.

A press release from the plant information officer also said a cyberattack was not possible as the control systems are not linked to outside network Internet.

**'CONTROL SYSTEMS ARE HACK-PROOF'** ▶ PAGE 13

### Most welcome free bus rides. but some men are critical

HEMANI BHANDARI SHINJINI GHOSH

"Mahilayein apni free ticket le lein [women, please take your free tickets]," announced the conductor of a DTC bus as women passengers hopped on the vehicle on Tuesday morning. Their face lit up when he handed them a pink ticket.

The Delhi government rolled out the free bus ride scheme for women in DTC buses from Tuesday. Though the initiative

was lauded by women, many male passengers, whom The Hindu spoke to, took it with a pinch of salt.

**DETAILS ON ▶** PAGE 3

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 30

RISE 06:31 SET 17:38 RISE 08:35 SET 19:35

THURSDAY, OCT. 31

RISE 06:32 SET 17:38 RISE 09:40 SET 20:23

FRIDAY, NOV. 1 RISE 06:33 SET 17:37 RISE 10:39 SET 21:16

**Delhi Weather** Delhi City Safdarjang 30 18

#### Delhi Palam Today

31°C Haze/smoke haze likely in the morning. A partly cloudy afternoon likely

#### **Delhi Palam Tomorrow** 32°C A pleasant morning with haze. A bit warm afternoon will

persist with partly cloudy sky.

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NOTICE BY STUDENTS

# JNU students protest against draft hostel manual, lock Dean's office

JNUSU terms changes in rules 'undemocratic', demands withdrawal of document

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union on Tuesday held a strike against the institute's draft hostel manual that seeks to introduce changes like imposing a curfew on students, increasing hostel fees, enforcing dress code and barring students from

participating in protests. The students called the changes "arbitrary, undemocratic and irrational" and demanded immediate withdrawal of the document.

The students doublelocked the Dean of Student's office and put up a notice that

This office has

been double

locked because the

Dean of Students is

can collect the keys

your actions at the

behaviour of the

unbecoming of a

JNU official. You

after giving the

explanation for

JNUSU office



'Attempt to mock'

JNUSU office."

The notice was an attempt to mock the language of the notices that were sent to the stu-

dents by the Dean of Students.

The students on Monday had protested at a meeting of the Inter Hostel Administration (IHA), which was conducted to discuss the draft hostel manual. The university had said the Dean of Students had fallen ill because of the protests and also alleged that the students had "blocked" an ambulance that was called

to take the professor to a hospital.

The university said such behaviour was highly condemnable and it would take severe action against the protesters. "The university shall not be allowed to be held hostage to the whims of a small section of these agitating students and brook no indiscipline in the campus," the university had said.

# Vice-President stresses need for parliamentary reforms

Naidu lays out a 16-point agenda for the way forward

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu stressed the need for parliamentary reforms while addressing The First Arun Jaitley Memorial Lecture organised by Delhi University on Tuesday.

"There is a need for reorientation on the part of MPs and more so a pressing need for parliamentary reforms to restore the trust of the people in parliamentary institutions," he said.

#### **Points out problems**

Mr. Naidu, also the Rajya Sabha Chairman, said the problems in the parliamentary system include the declining number of sittings of legislatures, persistent disruptions, declining quality of debates, growing number of legislatures with criminal records. high degree of absenteeism, inadequate representation of women, increase in money and muscle power in elections, lack of inner democracy in functioning of the political parties among others.

He said with a higher number of literate people and those with advanced qualifications it was ironical that Tuesday. • PTI such concerns had become even more pronounced compared to earlier leading to an erosion of trust of the people in these law-making bodies. the Lok Sabha Speaker.

Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu speaks at The First Arun

Jaitley Memorial Lecture organised by Delhi University on

Agenda includes Mr. Naidu also laid out a 16point agenda for the way forward for parliamentary reforms, which includes the need to review anti-defection law to address "grey areas" that led to the expulsion of legislators and a review of the 'Whip System which was stifling reasonable dissent within parties even over non-con-

He also mentioned that there is a need to fix longer te-

sequential matters".

nures for Standing Committees to ensure their effective functioning and said he would take up the issue with

He said there is a need to improve the representation of women, stronger rules with regard to attendance, regular reports on the performance of legislators, the need to make effective interventions with regard to criminality and unethical conduct among legislators, the need for simultaneous elections and more. He added that the government needs to be responsive to the views and concerns of Opposition while among other interventions.

### Six-day Urdu Heritage Festival opens today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI The Delhi government on Tuesday announced that it will be organising a six-day Urdu Heritage Festival from October 30 at Central in Connaught Park Place.

The festival will have Manish Sisodia said Sufi music, dance, poetry, plays and other performances that will include artistes like Anwar brothers, Sithara, Fareed Sabri, Talat Aziz and Rekha Bhardwaj.

Deputy Chief Minister cially," he added.

Urdu is an integral part of Delhi's cultural and literary history. "We want to en-Hussain, Sufi Nizami sure that Urdu is not only well preserved but it also advances linguistically and so-

### **NSUI launches initiative** to fight hate speech

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The National Students' Union of India (NSUI) on Tuesday launched a Twitter handle and created an email address for people to report instances of hate

The NSUI said it would take up the onus of filing FIRs against those who propagate hate and ensure that these people are forced to fight legal battles. All India Congress Committee Joint

Secretary and national in-charge (NSUI) Ruchi Gupta said: "NSUI will take up the fight against hate speech in our polity and public discourse. We will in collaboration with others online identify propagators of hate speech and file FIRs against them across the country." She added that at present, there is zero cost of propagating hate speech even as it renders target groups vulnerable, coarsens our discourse and almost irretrievably undermines our Constitutional values of equality, fraternity, and inclusive diversity.

The twitter handle to tag instances of hate speech is @FightAgainstHate, the NSUI said, adding that they are looking for volunteers to help them monitor social media and news re-

## Jamia's 99th Foundation Day celebrations begin

4 new departments to open soon: V-C

STAFF REPORTER

Festivities to celebrate Jamia Millia Islamia's (JMI) 99th Foundation Day began on Tuesday with its Vice-Chancellor Najma Akhtar appealing to students and staff to work towards taking the university to reach a new height in the centenary

She said the university would soon be opening four new departments - Design & Innovation, Environmental Science, Hospital Management & Elder Care (hospice) and Foreign Languages. She added that the university is planning to start a medical college-cumhospital for which "Prime Minister Narendra Modi has assured me of all

Starting off the three-day festivities, Ms. Akhtar dwelt

upon the history of JMI and the role played by it during the freedom struggle. She said Jamia is a nationalistic institution in the true sense where teachers are working hard to motivate students to

towards

nation-building. Emphasizing the role of

work

the alumni in the development of the university, the Vice-Chancellor said the university will hold a grand meet with them to seek their cooperation in this regard.

The highlights of the three-day festivities include nukkad natak, stage plays, business idea competition, Urdu poetry game of 'Baitbaazi' and Tamseeli Mushaira where the students will impersonate other poets and represent a traditional mushaira, the university said.

### Former judge to manage affairs of Sai Baba temple

Plea alleges irregularities in administration

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has appointed a former judge as an administrator to manage the affairs of Sai Baba temple at Lodhi Road here, whose administration is facallegations irregularities.

Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani said it has become imperative to take away the reins of management of the Shri Sai Bhakta Samaj, the society which manages the temple, from the incumbent office-bearers so that they may also feel the urgency of conducting fresh elections to the ma-

naging committee. The court-appointed retired justice Pratibha Rani pro-tem as an administrator to take over, manage and administer the affairs of the Samaj, including in relation to

taking policy decisions as well as supervising and managing the routine day-today matters.

### **Restrictions applied**

However, it made it clear that the administrator shall neither take any policy decisions nor make any financial commitments for or on behalf of the Samaj that involves a financial outflow of over ₹10 lakh without prior

approval of this court. The court was hearing a petition by several life-members of the Samaj and members of the managing committee alleging irregularities and mismanagement in the administration and its failure to hold elections, which were last conducted in

The court listed the matter for further consideration on November 22.

### Caught tweeting



Vantage point: Red-naped ibis or Indian black ibis perched on top of a dome at South Block in New Delhi. • SANDEEP SAXENA

### Traders' body opposes minimum wage hike, demands rollback

2006.

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Opposing the government's move to raise minimum wages, traders' union -Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) - on Monday wrote to Chief Minister Kejriwal demanding a rollback of the decision.

"Delhi trade is reeling under an unprecedented slowdown...The steep hike in minimum wages will result in unnecessary financial load," the union wrote. The government, in a recent notification, had increased the minimum wage of unskilled labour to ₹14,842. The union termed it "unjustified, arbitrary and uncalled for".

The move would also give rise to "inspector raj" in the city, said secretarygeneral Praveen Khandelwal. The traders also asked Mr. Kejriwal for an appointment to discuss the issue at the earliest.

# Court acquits man in brother's murder case

Victim's mother and younger sibling, both eyewitnesses, turned hostile

NIRNIMESH KUMAR NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has acquitted a man of a murder charge after his mother and youngest sibling, both eyewitnesses in the case, turned hostile during the

The man was accused of killing his brother in west Delhi's Nangloi over a share in ancestral property, said the prosecution. The victim was married and had a daughter. The deceased's father had disowned him when the man refused to mend his aberrant behaviour.

Mother lodged complaint The police had lodged the case

based on the victim's mother's complaint. During the trials, the victim's mother said she did not know how he received the injuries and who killed him.

**DNA** test matched

Though the prosecution through the DNA test matched the bloodstains on the accused's

clothes with the blood group of the deceased but the court dismissed it saying that the blood could have spread onto his clothes when he was helping his younger brother, as argued by counsel for the accused.

Additional Sessions Judge Pooran Chand also rejected the prosecution argument that the disclosure statement of the accused was admissible as the weapon of offence was recovered on the basis of this statement.

### **DELHI TODAY**

Talk: "Why has the Harappan Script not been Deciphered?", an ilustrated lecture by Dr. V.N. Prabhakar, Director, Institute of Archaeology, Archaeological Survey of India at Conference Room - I, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

Talk: Seminar on "Land, People and Faith in Wang Meng's Zhe Bian Fengjing" by Prof. Manoranjan Mo-hanty, Honorary Fellow and Former Chairperson, ICS at Seminar Room, Institute of Chinese Studies (ICS), Civil

**Music:** Hindustani violin recital by Ragini Shankar from Mumbai, a disciple of Padmabhushan Dr. N. Raja, accompanied by Abhishek Mishra on the tabla at C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30

(Mail your listings for this column at cityeditordelhi@thehindu.co.in)

A ND-NDE

Published by N. Ravi at Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860, Anna Salai, Chennai-600002 and Printed by S. Ramanujam at HT Media Ltd. Plot No. 8, Udyog Vihar, Greater Noida Distt. Gautam Budh Nagar, U.P. 201306, on behalf of THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD., Chennai-600002. Editor: Suresh Nambath (Responsible for selection of news under the PRB Act)

THE HINDU DELHI WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 30, 2019

# Most welcome free bus rides, but some men are critical

Others want to know whether the scheme can be sustained over a period of time





Smiling faces: A woman passenger showing the pink ticket issued to her in a DTC bus in the Capital on Tuesday; (right) a marshall delpoyed in a bus travels with passengers. • Sushil Kumar Verma, R.V. Moorthy

#### HEMANI BHANDARI SHINJINI GHOSH

"Mahilayein apni free ticket le lein [women, please take your free tickets]," announced the conductor of a DTC bus as women passengers hopped on the vehicle on Tuesday morning. Their face lit up when he handed over a pink ticket to them.

The Delhi government has rolled out the free bus ride scheme for women in Delhi **Transport Corporation buses** from Tuesday. Though the initiative was lauded by women, many male passengers, whom The Hindu spoke to, took it with a pinch of salt. The DTC staff, too, raised issues over their working conditions and complained about being neglected while such initiatives were being implemented.

Santosh (32), was travelling from Loni to Anand Vihar. She deboarded to take another bus to Trilokpuri where she works in a factory. "This is a very good move. Women who work in factories and private companies will benefit from it," she said.

Maina, who works at a salon, took the bus from Shakarpur to her workplace in Laxmi Nagar. She said she usually travels in buses as she doesn't want to spend ₹40 on an autorickshaw ride. Now, with the free ride scheme, she can save ₹10 on the bust ticket too.

"It is not a big amount but anything free is welcome," she laughed

Seated next to her was Rajpal (50), who was travelling from Kalyanpuri to Mori Gate. She said she was very happy with the government's decision as she doesn't have to spend any money on her bus travel now.

"Metro travel is very expensive, so I take the DTC bus whenever I go out. Now, this is also free," she said with a smile and added that the government had already made "water free and reduced power tariff".

#### Some concerns

"One should not forget that the Delhi elections are not far away. While the Chief Minister has tried to bring in a scheme to help women, it is important to wait and see for how long this lasts. Even earlier, there were specific days when bus rides were free for women. So this is nothing special. The government should be applauded only if the scheme lasts for long [beyond the election phase]," said Parvati Jadgish Kumar, a 56-year-old house-

The Madipur resident added: "My husband is differently abled and so is my son. More often than not I take the bus to the hospital. If the scheme lasts, it would mean quite some saving for me and I can concentrate on their treatment better.'

While a few men on the buses praised the scheme, many complained about poor maintenance and fewer

number of buses on the road. Neeraj Arya (26), who travels from Kondli to Safdarjung Enclave to work in an IT company said, "Giving freebies is not a solution. They could have subsidised it. Imagine the loss DTC will suffer because of this move. They should rather spend on getting more buses on the road and on their maintenance. During rain, the roof of the buses start leaking," he said.

"Kacchi mitti ka aaina dikha rahe hain Kejriwal ji [Kejriwal is showing people an unrealistic dream]," said Pankaj Bhardwaj, an electrician who travels from Harsh Vihar to Trilokpuri.

As the conversation proceeded, the bus driver butted

in and criticised the move saying, "What will happen if the Kejriwal government goes? Women will have a problem shelling out money."

The marshals said that it was a "good move", but they too should be equipped to do their job. Sonu Kumar, an official on duty, said, "We are here to protect women but we don't even have a stick in case it is required."

On the buses, as people spoke of the move and their opinion, the staffers and passengers fondly remembered late former Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit, who, during her regime, had introduced the free ride for women on Raksha Bandhan and Bhai

*"Ye* [Arvind Kejriwal] *bhi* achchhe hain, lekin unka [Sheila Dikshit] daur alag tha [Kejriwal is also good, but Sheila's time was different]," recalled Babu Ram, a conductor for the last 34 years.

# Kejriwal calls it historic move

Riding high

Over 2.2 lakh pink tickets issued in the first shift till 5 p.m.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

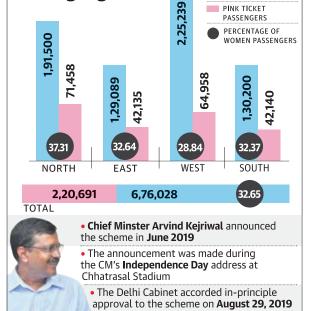
The Aam Aadmi Party government rolled out its free ride scheme for women passengers aboard public buses on the festival of Bhai Dooj here on Tuesday with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal terming it a "historic move" towards ensuring women's safety and empowerment besides increasing their participation in the Capital's workforce.

The scheme came into effect following the notification of an amendment to the Delhi Transport Corporation (Free and Concessional Passes) Regulations 1985 to enable the issuance of "single journey free travel passes" - pink tickets - to female passengers under the cluster scheme.

According to government records, over 2.20 lakh female commuters were issued pink tickets to avail free rides aboard DTC buses in the first shift till 5 p.m. The ridership numbers, according to a senior Delhi government official, were likely to go up following the compilation of data for the whole day and was expected released be Wednesday.

In his address through the recently launched AK app on Tuesday morning, the Chief Minister said the move will help in women empowerment by bridging the gender inequality that exists in society.

Similar facilities may be offered to senior citizens and students in the near future, the Chief Minister said, after the Delhi government



analyses the outcome of the current scheme.

"Now women who had to drop out of schools and colleges because of high transportation costs don't need to sacrifice their education. They can now take buses to good schools and colleges away from home. Similarly, women whose offices were far need not worry about the transportation cost," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"All these steps cannot be taken at once. We will certainly do this too [free rides for senior citizens and students] but let us start with women and see the results and based on the result we will deliberate on making these rides free for senior citizens and students too in future," he said further.

#### BJP terms free bus ride AAP's 'election stunt'

The BJP on Tuesday attacked the AAP government for what it termed was the "election stunt" of providing free rides to female passengers on Staterun buses. In addition to demanding that similar facilities be extended to senior citizens and students, the party also sought a white paper on the Capital's existing transport infrastructure alleging that over a hundred bus routes had become inoperable since AAP came to power.

Each pink ticket has a face value of ₹10, carried an image of the CM and also bore a message wishing for the progress of female commuters and their families.

# Spread word on work done by Cong., Chopra tells workers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra told cadres to draw energy from the work done by the Congress workers in Maharashtra and Haryana and work towards a comeback in the upcoming party workers on Tuesday.

He said that several people had written-off the Congress party in both the States but the party workers fought

"You need to go meet people in your area at parks in the morning or at events in the evening and spread the vision of the Congress. II solopment that the party had brought to Delhi during the 15-year rule of Sheila Dikshit government and how, the AAP government is taking credit for many initiatives brought in by the Congress government," Mr. Chopra

Mr. Chopra said that the Chopra was addressing a meone is not convinced, you fielding a number of young, Puja festival, the most imporare being charged fares mameeting of the district-level need to show them the devergence fresh faces in the upcoming tant festival of the Poorvan ny times more than the normal convinced, you fielding a number of young, Puja festival, the most imporare being charged fares mameeting of the district-level need to show them the devergence fresh faces in the upcoming tant festival of the Poorvan ny times more than the normal convinced, you election and promised that it chalis. Mr. Azad said that

would surprise its oppo-

### Chhath Puja

Mr. Chopra and Kirti Azad, chairman of the campaign committee, also hit out at both the Central and State governments for their "lax

Poorvanchalis, who want to go home to celebrate the festival, are being virtually looted by the BJP government by charging exorbitant fares. He said that special trains are deployed to ease the rush for the festival from New Delhi and Anand Vihar Railway

# Stray incidents of stubble burning on Delhi's outskirts

Though not as rampant as in Punjab or Harvana, some fields with burnt patches were found in 5 villages

NIKHIL M BABU NEW DELHI

Around 11 a.m. on Thursday last week, Sunil Ram (36) toiled on his rice field, heaping more stubble into burning mounds of crop residue, in the Capital's Tigipur village. The smoke rising from the field could be seen from the village road, about 50 metre away.

On the right side of the muddy path, which led from the village road to the field, several burnt patches were seen in another field, suggesting similar fires in the recent past.

"Around 10 a.m., I had set small fires at different points. Then water was let into the field from the channel, so that there would not be much smoke," said Mr. Ram from Bihar, who has been working in the field for the past four months.

The Hindu found workers setting stubble on fire in two more rice fields – in Tigipur and Daryapur - during a visit last week. More than 10 rice fields were found with burnt patches in Tigipur, Jhangola, Jatikra and Shikarpur on the outskirts of Delhi. The burnt patches ranged from one or two in some fields to several in at least four of the 10 fields.

### **Pollution concerns**

The top 14 most-polluted cities in the world are located in India, according to the World Health Organization, and Delhi ranks sixth among them. On Tuesday, two days after Deepavali celebrations, Delhi's air quality index was recorded at 400, one notch short of 'severe'

category. "The smoke from stubble burning can lead to respiratory diseases, worsening of heart diseases, and bronchial asthma," said Ashwani Mehta, a senior consultant at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, Delhi. He added that people who already have respiratory diseases are affected more by the smoke.

Sanjeev Khirwar, secretary, Environment Department, said, "In Delhi, stubble burning doesn't happen, according to reports from the Development Department. But if you have specific details, we will inform the district officials and take action against it."

### The stubble middleman

Farmers said that stubble burning was "very less" in Delhi as middlemen were collecting stubble from the fields at a rate between ₹2,000 and ₹3,500 from a 'killa' (measurement similar to an acre) of rice field. The stubble was then sold either to dairies or as packing materials in markets.

"We sold the stubble for ₹2,000 a killa, but some of it was still left. So we set it on fire," said Suman Yadav, 52, as she pushed more stubble into the fire in her rice field close to Daryapur village.

Ms. Yadav, whose mouth and nose were covered with a piece of cloth, said: "We



A farmer burning stubble in a field in Bakhtawarpur village on the outskirts of Delhi. SANDEEP SAXENA

will sow wheat by November 5 and if we don't remove the leftover stubble, it will get stuck in the machine."

Other farmers too said that they burn the stubble left on the field after selling the heap of it to middlemen. The farmers also said that the government is not helping them in selling the stubble and they are dependent on middlemen for the

### Ban on burning

Open burning of waste is banned in Delhi by an order of the National Green Tribunal with a fine ranging from ₹5,000 to ₹25,000. Most of the farmers said they were

aware of the ban but did not how else to dispose of the leftover stubble.

"The Delhi government should help farmers in disposing of the stubble and also provide Super Straw Management System [Super-SMS] machines, which cut the stubble and spread it while harvesting. If farmers are setting the leftover stubble on fire, then the district administration officials should make sure than there is no stubble left for burning," said Vivek Chattopadhyaya, a senior programme manager of 'Clean Air Programme' at the Centre for Science and Environment, Delhi.

### AAP blames Haryana, Punjab and Centre

STAFF REPORTER

The Aam Aadmi Party on Tuesday criticised the Centre as well as the governments of Punjab, Haryana for not controlling stubble burning in agricultural fields, which has been on the rise.

The party also urged the governments to take steps to prevent burning of crop residue.

Addressing a press conference, senior AAP leader Dilip Pandey said: "According to data from the Punjab Pollution Control Board, the State recorded 9,600 incidents of stubble burning till October 27 last. This year, the figure has shot up to 12,027. Punjab and Haryana recorded an increase of at least 2,400 farm fires, a major contributor to the air pollution in the Capital, till October 27."

He said the increasing number of stubble burning cases caused spike in pollution in Delhi, but neither the Centre nor the governments of the neighbouring States have done anything.

"Air quality monitor SA-FAR had predicted that the share of smoke from stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 concentration is likely to jump to 25% on Tuesday," said Mr. Pandey.

### IN BRIEF

Woman duped of her jewellery in south Delhi

A 35-year-old woman was allegedly duped of her jewellery by a man, who lured her by claiming that he can let her have 'darshan' of goddess Lakshmi in south Delhi, the police said. The woman told the police that the accused was known to her and she trusted him.

### Woman's purse snatched metres away from police station

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A 52-year-old woman, wife of a journalist, became a victim of snatching in Outer Delhi's Paschim Vihar when the family was on its way to celebrate Bhai Dooj on Tuesday afternoon.

The journalist, Kamal Narang, who works with a national daily, said that he, his wife Suman Narang and their daughter were in an e-rickshaw, a few metres away from Paschim Vihar police station, when two bike-borne men came and snatched his wife's purse. "The purse contained two mobile phones, cash and docu-Mr. Narang ments," added.

The couple then approached the police but were allegedly not provided "due diligence". "We gave the statement and they registered the case under Sections of theft though we told them that it is a snatching case," he said.

Deputy Additional Commissioner of Police (Outer) Rajender Singh Sagar said, "The victim's statement has been recorded again and relevant Sections have been added. The case is being moni-

# amendments to MPD-2021

Public can send suggestions and objections within 45 days

STAFF REPORTER

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has issued a public notice seeking suggestions and objections from stakeholders pertaining to the amendments to the Master Plan for Delhi -2021 with regard to the operation of gyms and fitness centres in the city.

Interested stakeholders have a period of 45 days to approach the DDA with their respective objections and suggestions to the proposed amendments.

"Nursing homes, wellness centres, including day spas, weight loss centres, ayurvedic centres and salons offering fitness and aesthetic medical services. operating in plots abutting the Master Plan roads and Zonal Plan roads shall be permissible up to 100% of built-up area and the limit on the size of the plot would not apply," read the Delhi is continuously growing...The 'mixed use' policy aims to balance the socio-economic need and the impact of the said

residential area DELHI DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

activity in the

However, according to the notice, new wellness and fitness centres established from the date of notification will be permitted on ground floors and basements only.

The notice added that pre-primary schools (other than those on plots abutting commercial streets), will be restricted to the ground floor.

'Fitness centre (including gymnasium, yoga or meditation centre) is permitted on all floors. It is also permitted in the basement subject to relevant provisions of the building bye-laws, structural safety norms and fire safety clearance," the notice added.

The urban body had approved the proposed modifications to the MPD-2021, in an authority meeting held on October 9.

"Delhi is continuously growing. The development of basic public-semi public facilities along with general commercial facilities could not keep pace with growing population resulting in the increase of mixed use. The "mixed use" policy aims to balance the socio-economic need and the impact of the said activity in the residential area," the land-owning agency had said.

The DDA had further added that the move followed "various representations" received from interested stakeholders seeking modi-

# Software engineer, his friend injured in road accident

Men on motorcycle kicked the techie off his two-wheeler

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

A software engineer and his friend were injured after two men on a motorcycle allegedly chased them on Golf Course Road and kicked them off their two-wheeler on Monday morning.

The police said the incident took place when Mohammad Ansari and his friend Amitesh Kumar, a guard at a hospital in Delhi, were emerging out of the Genpact Underpass on Golf Course Road at 4.30 a.m.

Ansari from Sector 56 was his way to Sikanderpur metro station to drop Amitesh when two men with their faces covered chased the duo and tried to stop them. When Ansari did not stop, one of the accused kicked his motorcycle down.

"I lost control and we both fell down. I hit my head against the central verge and passed out. When I regained consciousness, I found myself in the hospital," said Ansari. He claimed that the man riding the motorcycle also carried a gun and had pointed it towards him.

Mr. Ansari has suffered a fracture in the collar bone while his friend also sustained injuries. Amitesh had come to visit Ansari on the occasion of Diwali.

The police have registered a case of rash driving and causing hurt.

# DDA issues public notice on Father-son duo killed by speeding SUV

Accused fled the spot leaving the two in a pool of blood; vehicle identified

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old man and his son, who were on their way back after attending the Deepavali celebrations at Connaught Place, were killed when their bicycle was hit by a speeding car near Ranjit Singh flyover on Monday

The police said that the victims have been identified as Heera and his 10-year-old son Kishore, who had come from Nepal to celebrate Dee-

A senior police officer said that the father-son duo had gone to attend the laser show in Connaught Place's Central Park along with a few friends when the incident happened. "The two were on a bicycle and were at the end of Ranjit Singh flyover when a speeding car hit the cycle

fled the spot leaving the two in a pool of blood," he said.

A PCR call was received after which the police rushed to the spot and took the injured to a nearby hospital. However, the two were declared brought dead, the police said.

The officer said that a case under Section 304A (causing death by negligence) and 279 (rash driving) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered. CCTV footage of the spot and nearby areas have been scanned. "The vehicle has been identified. Teams are trying to identify the accused. Further investigation is under way," he said.

The police said that the victim used to stay with his family in the Railway Colony near Tilak Bridge area. While he used to wash cars for a living, his wife works as a house

## Man intervenes in fight, gets stabbed by juvenile

Victim's condition is said to be stable

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

A 17-year-old boy was apprehended for allegedly stabbing a man, who tried to intervene in a fight between him and his grandparents, in Uttam Nagar, the police said on Tuesday.

A senior police officer said that the victim has been identified as Sadhu (22), a helper at a gym in Hari Nagar. He was allegedly stabbed by the juvenile in the early hours of Monday in Shiv Vihar.

The police said that a PCR call was received around 12.30 a.m. regarding a stabbing incident. When the police reached the spot, they were told that the man had been rushed to Deen Daval Upadhyay Hospital. He underwent a surgery and his condition is said to be

During investigation, the police said, it was revealed that the minor is a school drop out and is staying with his maternal grandparents in Shiv Vihar.

"On Sunday night, the accused came back home

The 10th edition of

Grace Hopper Celebra-

tion in India (GHCI),

one of the largest technical

conferences for women

technologists, will be held in

Bengaluru from November 6

The flagship event of Ani-

taB.org India, a non-profit

organisation focused on the

advancement of women in

technology, is being present-

Sadhu and his brother Anil were passing through the area when he

from behind. The accused

noticed the boy quarrelling and intervened. Sadhu asked the boy to stop fighting...

POLICE OFFICER

and had a heated argument with his grandparents. Sadhu and his brother Anil were passing through the area when he noticed the boy quarrelling and intervened. Sadhu asked the boy to stop fighting. But the accused started arguing with the victim. The grandparents also sided with the minor," the officer said.

The police said that the boy then brought a knife from the house and stabbed Sadhu in the stomach.

The officer said that a case of attempt to murder has been registered and the juvenile was apprehended from Safeda Park in Shiv Vihar on Monday. The weapon used in the crime has also been recovered.

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Tech for Social Impact.

Hardware and

This year's sessions will

### Four held, one apprehended for 17-year-old's murder

3 pistols recovered from accused: police

STAFF REPORTER

Four persons were arrested and a juvenile apprehended on Tuesday for allegedly killing a 17-year-old boy in north-west Delhi's Adarsh Nagar, the police said on Tuesday.

DCP (North West) Vijayan-

ta Arya said the accused have been identified as Ranjeet (19), Lalit Kumar (19), Naresh (20) and Vishal Giri (19). The police said they received a PCR call at 1.03 a.m. regarding gunshot injury in Azadpur's Lal Bagh. On reaching the spot, they found that the injured person had already been taken to a hospital where he was

declared brought dead. During probe, it was revealed that the boy was going on his motorcycle when the accused intercepted him and opened fire at him before fleeing the spot. The victim from Mukundpur was known to the accused. "A murder case was registered," Ms. Arya said.

'To settle score'

The accused allegedly told police that the boy had beaten up one of them some time ago and they decided to kill him to settle the score. Three pistols and four live cartridges were recovered from the accused persons, the police added.



# **OPPORTUNITIES**

# & ARTICLES thehindu.com/jobs

# Indian company makes it to top 10 best employers in biotech category

Biocon, which has its headquarters in Bengaluru, is placed sixth on the list

engaluru-headquartered biopharmaceuticals company Biocon Ltd has moved up to the sixth spot in the Top 10 Global Biotech Employers ranking for 2019.

It continues to be the only company from Asia to have figured on the 'Science Careers Top 20 Employers' list by US-based magazine Science. The magazine runs this list every year.

Ranked number six among global pharma and biotech companies in 2019, Biocon has moved up from number seven in 2018 and number nine in 2017.

In a statement, Biocon says it has been consistently recognised for three key three attributes: being an innovative leader in the industry; being socially responsible; being change-driven (as the leadership makes the necessary changes).



An employee of Biocon at its research and development

Assocham's elevator pitch for emerging entrepreneurs

The ranking is a result of the 2019 Science Careers Top Employers global survey conducted by Science to determine which companies in the biotech and pharmaceutical industry have the best reputation as em-

ployers globally. Biocon was ahead of leading global pharma companies like Novozymes, Roche, Eli Lilly, Abbott, Novartis and Pfizer in the 2019 rankings.

The Top 5 global players in this year's list are: Alnylam, Regeneron, Incyte, Merck KGaA and Spark Therapeutics.

Respondents to the webbased survey were asked to rate companies based on 23 characteristics, including 'innovative leader in the industry,' 'treating employees with respect,' 'is socially responsible,' 'work culture values aligned' and 'leadership makes changes needed,' it has been stated.



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CV may be emailed to ntpcie@gmail.com or mahendrathakur30@ntpc.co.in or sandeepkumargupta49@ntpc.co.in

\*MCI registration is must. Leading the Power Sector

### Mega meet for women technologists lease, speakers at the meet include Padmasree Warrior, CEO, Fable; Debjani Ghosh,

president, NASSCOM; Beena Ammanath, founder, Humans for AI; Suparna Bhattacharya, technologist, HPE; Debra Danielson, CTO, Digital Guardian; and MS Deepika Lohia, director, NITI

GHCI 19 is also collaborating with the Institute of Elec-

trical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) to publish original research in computing, says the release.

Other highlights include a

career fair, speed mentoring

and expert meetups. For more information, vihttps://GHCIndia.Ani-

taB.org/ To register, please go to: https://GHCIndia.AnitaB.org/2019-attend/

### **GENERAL**



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merce and Industry of India (Assocham) is travelling to various places. The Startup Elevator Pitch

o encourage ideas com-

"Launchpad", an initiative by

Associated Chambers of Com-

ing from start-ups in

Tier 2 and Tier 3 cities,

series is being conducted in 12 cities with the objective of creating an environment where high potential start-ups can share, discover, network, develop new skills and get inspired to reach the next level, says a release.

According to a spokesperson, the series is similar to the television series Indian Idols

where participants compete against each other during a singing competition. "This is a preliminary round where start-ups pitch their ideas to jury members,"

says the spokesperson. The se-

ries started last month and is

set to conclude in January 2020. The Jammu Launchpad will be held on October 30. Goa, Ahmedabad, Kochi

Visakhapatnam are among cities where the series will be held. Early-stage startups with less than two years of operations and established start-ups with two to five years of operations can participate. Startup Elevator pitch se-

ries has been designed to give

start-ups a platform to con-

to network with high net worth individuals and generate business or funding oppor**funities** Shortlisted participants from the cities will participate in the finals scheduled to be held in Delhi, the spokesper-

son adds.

nect with industry's best busi-

ness leaders, says the release.

Start-ups can use the platform

For registration, visit www.assocham.org/startups.

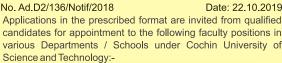
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REGISTRAR

A ND-NDE

# Amarinder seeks WB support for alternative crops

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday sought the World Bank's technological and financial support to help the State's farmers shift from the con-

ventional wheat-paddy cycle to a diversified cropping pattern, aimed at income enhancement and water conservation.

At a meeting with a World Bank delegation, led by Dr. Juergen Voegele, Global Di-

rector, Agriculture and Water, the Chief Minister said encouraged by the State government's programmes, many farmers were adopting alternative crops by shunning wheat and paddy cultivation. "They need technolog-

ical and financial support, which the World Bank could provide," he said.

Capt. Amarinder directed the State agriculture department to come out with a blueprint of crop diversification and groundwater saving projects for submission to the World Bank, for their technological and financial support. He also urged the WB to provide support for promotion of fruit and livestock exports in Punjab, as it had done in Uzbekistan.

# Man succumbs to stab injuries

 $\frac{\textbf{SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT}}{\textbf{GHAZIABAD}}$ 

A man, who was allegedly stabbed for protesting against the harassment of his sister, succumbed to injuries on Sunday night at Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital. The incident happened in front of a college at Kairana in Shamli district on October 23.

According to sources, after repeated complaints of his sister, Vicky decided to confront the accused. However, the 22-year-old was stabbed and beaten by a group of young men. The incident got captured on a CCTV camera and was shared on social media.

The main accused was identified as Anuj Kumar. SHO Kairana Police Station said Section 302 has been added to the FIR following Vicky's death.

### Cash, vehicles worth ₹5.5 cr. seized from gangster's house

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The police have seized cash, a high-end car and other valuables worth ₹5.5 crore from the residence of a gangster in Nagpur, officials said on Tuesday.

Searches were carried out at the residence of Santosh Ambekar,who has a string of criminal cases against him, on Monday. He was charged with the Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act along with eight others last week for allegedly cheating a Gujarat-based businessman of ₹5 crore in a property deal, a senior police officer said.

Mr. Ambekar had allegedly demanded ₹1 crore from the businessman when the latter demanded his money back. The gangster was in news recently when Nagpur Police made him walk barefoot to a court on October 13.

Additional Commissioner of Police Nilesh Bharne said as many as 30 criminal cases, including murder, been registered against Mr. Ambekar in the last 20 years.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (crime) Gajanan Rajmane said they seized a BMW and other vehicles, motorcycles and cash collectively valued at ₹5.50 crore from Mr. Ambekar and his accomplices.

Police suspect he had amassed the seized immovable property through illegal means. Further investigation is underway.

### Repairs to slow down rail traffic to Hyderabad

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The repair work on a minor damage detected on the railway track between Potul and Lasur here will slow down trains on the Mumbai-Nanded-Hyderabad route, an official said.

A local farmer detected a damage in the welding of the railway track and informed railway officials at Potul and Lasur stations in Maharahtra's Aurangabad district on Tuesday.

"We will complete the repairs in the next two days. Trains on the Mumbai-Nanded-Hyderabad route will be slowed down to avoid accidents. We have set the speed limit to 30 km per hour," PRO, South Central Railway Rajesh Shinde said.

# 45 Sena MLAs keen to form government with BJP, says MP

Sena MLA hits back, says Sanjay Kakade's remarks aimed at 'defaming' party legislators

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

Amid the tension between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiv Sena over power-sharing, the BJP's Rajya Sabha Member of Parliament Sanjay Kakade has claimed that nearly 45 of the 56 newly-elected Shiv Sena Members of the Legislative As-(MLAs) Maharashtra were keen on joining hands with the BJP in a bid to expedite the process of government formation.

"Just like within the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), there is a group which holds leaders like Chhagan Bhujbal, Jayant Patil or Ajit Pawar in high regard, there are sections within the Sena who have high regard for many of their leaders, who I will not name... These leaders are in touch with Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and are extremely keen on forming a government with the BJP as quickly as possible," said Mr. Kakade, a Pune-based real-

He also said the MLAs, anxious to form the new government soon, had allegedly urged the chief minister to settle (power-sharing) issues with Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray soon and form the



Sanjay Kakade, a Pune-based realtor, has stirred the hornet's nest with his recent claims. • FILE

government. "At least 45 of the 56 newly-elected Sena MLAs are directly and clearly stating that they want to go along with the BJP. They do not wish to go anywhere else," Mr. Kakade said.

Ratnagiri MLA incensed Mr. Kakade's statement has incensed the senior Sena

leader and MLA from Ratnagiri, Uday Samant, who alleged that the BJP MP was deliberately attempting to 'defame' his party's legislators with such remarks. Mr. Samant said Mr. Kakade's remarks on the Sena MLAs were "unfortunate", and brought out Mr. Kakade's political ineptness. "The allegiance of the Shiv Sena's MLAs is aligned with [late Sena founder] Bal Thackeray's thinking and Uddhav Thackerav's leadership. So, instead of alleging that Sena MLAs are in touch with the Chief

navis becomes chief minister A known party-hopper and wheeler-dealer, Mr. Kakade was earlier with Sharad Pawar's NCP before being

Minister, he ought to stick to

one party and prove his alle-

giance there," Mr. Samant

said. "He is doing it for his

own political ends in the

hope that he will gain so-

mething in the event Mr. Fad-

elected as an Independent to the Upper House and switching allegiances with the BIP. He is believed to have played a vital role in engineering the saffron party's victory in the Pune civic polls in February

In March this year, prior to the Lok Sabha polls, Mr. Kakade had announced that he would soon be entering the Congress after being denied a ticket for the Pune Lok Sabha seat. However, the BJP MP's announcement was not taken too kindly by Congress loyalists in Pune, most of whom were opposed to Mr. Kakade's induction in the party. Mr. Kakade chose to remain in the BJP after learning that there was no guarantee that he would be get a Congress ticket to contest from Pune Lok Sabha constituency.

His disenchantment with the BJP ahead of the Lok Sabha election stemmed from the allegedly 'shoddy' treatment meted out to him by the then Pune Guardian Minister Girish Bapat and the erstwhile BJP State president Raosaheb Danve.

In December 2017, Mr. Kakade had created a flutter after he predicted a dismal showing by the BJP in the Guiarat elections.

# How can BJP-Sena form govt. amid mutual distrust: Chavan

'If Sena approaches Cong., party high command will take a call'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

It was the responsibility of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiv Sena to provide a stable government for the people of Maharashtra, senior Congressman and former Chief Minister Prithvirai Chavan said on Tuesday. In the event that the BJP-Sena power-sharing talks fail and the Sena approaches the Congress with a proposal on government formation, it would place the matter before the Congress high command and discuss it with its allies, said Mr. Chavan.

"These are ifs and buts... in case we do receive such a proposal from the Shiv Sena... To the best of my knowledge, no such proposal has come to us," said the senior Congressman, speaking to reporters in Karad in Satara.

Mr. Chavan said he wondered how the saffron allies could form a government given the mutual distrust between them at the moment. "It appears that there is a major hitch in their government-formation talks. On the one hand, the Sena leadership is talking of a 50:50 power-sharing deal having been settled with [Union Home Minister] Amit Shah. Now, it seems that there is a



Senior Congress leader Ashok Chavan is willing to wait and watch the political developments. •FILE

wide gap between the Sena's have an LoP from its own understanding and Chief Minister Fadnavis' statements that no such secret deal was cut," he said. "Both parties [Sena and BJP] should hold a press conference to tell the voters of the State what was decided between them in order to end this confusion."

Mr. Chavan had won a stiff three-way fight in the Karad South Assembly segment and defeated his rival, the BJP's Atul Bhosale, despite high-decibel campaigns by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Karad and Prime Minister Narendra Modi in

Satara. The Leader of Opposition (LoP) would be elected from the NCP in the event the BJP and the Sena succeeded in forming the government, he said. For the first time in the State's political history, he said, the Congress will not ranks.

Chavan acknowledged that the Congress had fallen short in formulating a clear poll strategy and that it was dogged by leadership crises. Still, he said, people had responded to their campaigns highlighting the BJP's government's hollow assurances and severe shortcomings. He also said the Congress-NCP coalition had suffered in at least 25 Assembly segments owing to Prakash Ambedkar's Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), which queered the pitch for both the opposition parties

" Had we fought together, then not only Mr. Ambedkar, but perhaps six to seven VBA leaders would have been returned as MPs," Mr. Chavan

and again benefited the BJP-

Sena alliance.

# Justice Bobde's hometown delighted over his appointment

'Proud moment for legal fraternity in Nagpur'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The legal fraternity in Nagpur is delighted over the appointment of Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde, who hails from the orange city in Maharashtra, as the 47th Chief Justice of India (CJI). Justice Bobde, 63, will

take oath as CII on November 18, a day after incumbent Ranjan Gogoi demits office, the Law Ministry said on Tuesday. Born on April 24, 1956 at

Nagpur in a family of lawyers, Justice Bobde completed Bachelor of Arts and LLB degrees from Nagpur

Nagpur High Court Bar Association (HCBA) secretary Praful Khubalkar, who once worked as a junior lawyer in Justice Bobde's chamber here, was all praise for the CJI- designate over knowledge professionalism.

It's a proud moment for the legal fraternity in Nagpur that Justice Bobde, once a member of the bar here,



oath as Chiej justice of India on November 18. • PTI

Justice Bobde will take

has been appointed to the top post in Indian judiciary, Mr. Khubalkar said.

"He has worked in the Nagpur bench for several years and he was designated as a senior advocate from Nagpur," Mr. Khubalkar said.

Justice Bobde's arguments in the court as a lawver used to be so impressive that people would flock to listen to him, the HCBA secretary said.

"I had the opportunity to be in his chamber. I was his junior and closely watched

the way he used to work and argue cases," Mr. Khubalkar

"We have seen Justice Bobde work as a lawyer, senior advocate and then as a Judge of the Bombay High Court here.

"He used to encourage junior lawyers. Senior members and lawyers here are very happy and delighted over his appointment. In his honour, we are planning a grand felicitation gramme," Khubalkar.

Nagpur District Bar association (DBA) president Kamal Satuja said it was a matter of great pride that a legal luminary from Nagpur has been appointed as the CJI.

"He is a role model for all members of the legal fraternity. He will always be a source of inspiration for young lawyers who will be encouraged to strive for excellence.

"It is not only a dream come true for Justice Bobde, but for the entire legal fraternity," said Mr. Satuja.

### Celebrating life



Members of the Chhattisgarhi community celebrating Goura, Gouri puja with much pomp and gaiety in Nagpur on Tuesday. The festival celebrates the pastoral life of the people of Chhattisgarh, and the gathering sees the rituals of 'gedi', 'rout nacha', 'panthi nritya' and 'Goura Gouri' being performed in the traditional attire. •s Sudarshan

and the Congress alternatives to that," he said, observing

that in Sangli, Kolhapur and

the Vidarbha region, the Con-

gress gained more seats by

stressing the lack of compen-

sation to farmers as promised

by the BIP-Sena government

Commenting on the nar-

row losses for the Congress in

the Shivajinagar and Pune

Cantonment seats in Pune ci-

ty, yet another Congress lead-

er said that a hard-driving

campaign by party workers

coupled with covert support

from a disgruntled Sena led

the Congress candidates to

put up formidable contests

against their BJP opponents.

"After 2014, the BJP has en-

sured that the Sena doesn't

gain an upper hand in Pune.

The Sena's leadership is wor-

ried about the party's future

and the lack of morale within

its workers. This prevailing

discontent indirectly benefit-

ed the Congress-NCP in some

parts," said a city-based ana-

the

unemployment.

# Congress hopes to implement lessons learnt from Kolhapur

Hard-hitting campaign coupled with support from a disgruntled Sena resulted in formidable contests against BJP

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

As allies Bharativa Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiv Sena continue to jockey for power, the BIP's losses in western Maharashtra, especially Kolhapur, is emblematic of the fissures within their fragile ideological alliance.

With Sena MP Sanjay Mandlik supporting the Congress in Kolhapur, the latter, in coalition with the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) has performed surprisingly well in the 'sugar-belt' district while the BJP's presence has been wiped out, with two of its sitting MLAs suffering defeats.

The Congress-NCP alliance won six of the 10 Assembly segments in Kolhapur, with the Congress winning four crucial seats. The Sena could win only one (Shahuwadi segment) while the rest were won by ex-Congressmen like Prakash Awade (Ichalkaranji seat) and other candidates contested

Independents. Earlier this week, BJP State chief Chandrakant Patil had openly blamed Mr. Mandlik for being responsible for the



from the Kolhapur Assembly seat. • PTI

BJP's defeat in the district.

While stressing that the BIP and the Sena would eventually form a government despite some confusion, Mr. Patil reprimanded the Sena MP and other rebels within the party for their 'opportunist politics'.

In order to settle scores with the Mahadik clan, the

Sena's Mr. Mandlik had campaigned wholeheartedly for the Congress's Ruturaj Patil – nephew of senior Kolhapur Congress leader Satej 'Bunty' Patil – in the Kolhapur South Assembly. This had directly contributed to the defeat of

the BJP candidate – erstwhile sitting MLA Amal Mahadik. "From the first day, Sanjay

Mandlik has been openly saying that Congressman Satej 'Bunty' Patil has helped me and I have to pay back his debt," he said, questioning Sena's MP conduct against the BJP.

He further alleged that Mr. Mandlik had actively campaigned and backed his relative, Rajesh Patil, the Congress candidate in the Chandgad seat and veteran NCP leader Hasan Mushrif in the Kagal Assembly segment.

Against this backdrop of the fraught Sena-BJP relations, the Congress leadership in western Maharashtra and Pune is hoping to take a leaf from their strategy in Kolhapur and exploit divisions within the Sena and the BJP in the future.

'We had laid the ground in Kolhapur before the Lok Sabha polls. Satej Patil conducted a shrewd campaign which not only took maximum advantage of the fractiousness between the saffron allies but also successfully propagated the Congress' alternatives to the BIP-Sena government's failures in the region," said Pune City Congress secretary and spokesman Ramesh Iyer.

Stating that the party was in the second place on at least 14-15 Assembly seats in western Maharashtra, he conceded that the leadership crises prevailing within the Congress at the Central and State levels had hamstrung its advantages despite the electorate being disposed against the BJP and the Sena.

"There was no support or moral boost for the party in the form of 'star campaigners'. If we are to take lessons from our success in Kolhapur, we need a senior leader in every district like Satej Patil with good resources with the ability to campaign aggressively," Mr. Iyer said.

He said that the party would be mulling over this strategy in the crucial civic polls in Pune, Satara and Solapur that would be taking place in 2022.

A senior Congress leader, requesting anonymity, said that in the Assembly election, the grassroots-level worker, without any support from the top, had gone out of the way to revive the party's sagging fortunes.

"In every Assembly segment, the workers did not

#### damage crops in Akola Several hectares of soyabean, wait for any leader and took their own initiative to highlight local issues and problems in that constituency

sorghum and cotton destroyed

Post-monsoon showers

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Heavy post-monsoon showers in Akola district have destroyed various crops, raising the demand for declaring wet drought in the Vidarbha region and compensation for farmers under the Centre's crop insurance

scheme. Farmers in Balapur, Patur, Barshitakali, Telhara and Akot talukas of Akola district were hit hard due to the showers recently. As per official data, more than 1.7 lakh hectares of soyabean, 9,512 hectares of sorghum and over 1.5 lakh hectares of cotton have been damaged

Speaking about the agrarian crisis, Union Minister of State Sanjay Dhotre on Monday said he had written to his agriculture counterpart Narendra Singh Tomar, asking him to declare a wet drought in Vidarbha and seeking compensation for farmers under the Centre's crop insurance scheme.

because of the rains.

@Dev Fadnavis instructed Chief Secretary to provide immediate relief to farmers affected by the heavy rains

DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis on Monday asked the chief secretary to carry out an assessment of damaged crops at the earliest."CM @Dev\_Fadnavis instructed Chief Secretary to provide immediate relief to farmers who were affected by the heavy rains in some parts of Maharashtra by completing survey at the earliest (sic)," the Chief Minister's Office tweeted.

Shiv Sena MLA from Balapur constituency, Nitin Tale, on Tuesday promised to take up the issue of crop damage in the first Assembly session and seek relief from the government.

H.D. Deve Gowda

Karnataka election.

Congress after the May 2018

which came to me after the

election and persuaded us

for formation of the Con-

gress-JD(S) government. In-

itially I did not agree but af-

ter prolonged persuasion by

the Congress I accepted [the

alliance]," Mr. Gowda said.

"It was the Congress

No alliance with Cong.,

BJP for bypolls: Gowda

'Both the parties are not trustworthy'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Janata Dal (Secular) presi-

dent H.D. Deve Gowda has

dismissed any possibility of

having an electoral tie-up

with either the Congress or

the BJP for the December 5

bypolls in Karnataka, de-

scribing both the national

parties as "not trustworthy"

and having the "same cha-

In an interview to PTI on

Tuesday, the former Prime

Minister said the JD(S)

would contest alone the by-

polls to fill 15 vacancies in

the Karnataka Assembly

and "certainly maintain

equidistance" from the Con-

The veteran politician al-

so said he was in fact reluc-

tant to have a tie-up with the

gress and the BIP.

NEW DELHI

racter."



#### TTD to curb use of plastic at Tirumala

TIRUMALA The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams is determined to curb the use of plastic atop the sacred shrine of Lord Venkateswara. Speaking to the media, TTD EO A.V. Dharma Reddy on Tuesday said the board of trustees had resolved to free the town from plastic within a span of three months.

#### **IIT-Hyderabad student** jumps to death

Pichikala Siddharth, 20, a third year B. Tech student of the IIT-Hyderabad allegedly jumped to death from the hostel building on Tuesday. Before taking the extreme step, Siddartha sent mail to one of his friends, saying he did not find life interesting, the police said. Assistance to overcome suicidal thoughts is available on helpline 040-66202000

# Maoist encounter toll mounts to four

Kerala police commandos continue hunt for group members

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The number of alleged Maoists shot dead by Kerala police commandos in the Agali forests in Palakkad mounted to four on Tuesday.

Top police officers told The Hindu that they were bracing themselves for more casualties as the Thunderbolt commandos were scouring the area for the remnants of the group of "armed Maoist irregulars" they had battled in the Manjakandi forests on Monday. They said the Thunderbolts had engaged stragglers from the armed group at least twice on Tuesday.

The combatants had discovered the latest body of a 'Left-wing extremist' in the dense undergrowth in the Manjankandi area as they moved to cut off the remaining members of the armed



After the action: The bodies of Maoists killed in an encounter inside the Attappady forests being brought out on Tuesday.

group from fleeing the Agali forests.

police tentatively identified the body as that of Manivasakam, possibly the nom de guerre of the activist who headed the Kabani Dalam of the Western Ghats Zonal Committee of the proscribed Communist Party of India (Maoist) in Kerala.

They provisionally identified the others killed in the operations as Rema, Suresh and Karthi. The police believe that the dead were natives of Tamil Nadu.

Investigators said they were unsure about the timing of Manivasakam's death

## 'Those killed in Kerala are not from Karnataka'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHIKKAMAGALURU

Wrong information from the police has resulted in the media reporting that two suspected Maoists from Chikkamagaluru district were among those killed in an encounter in Palakkad on

This had left friends and family members of Suresh, a suspected Maoist, at Angadi village of Chikkamagaluru in shock and sorrow.

where Manivasakam lay

dead. They also recovered

Suresh Angadi, a graduate, had been absconding and had not visited his family in the last 20 years. His 75-year-old mother Siddamma, elder brother Manjunath were in shock as they learnt about his death through news channels.

The earlier information was shared based on inputs received from the Kerala police. "Now they (Kerala police) have confirmed that all four persons killed in the encounter were from Tamil Nadu, not Chikkamagaluru," the Karnataka police said.

and whether he had suctwo .303 lee Enfield type bolt action rifles of 1940s decumbed to the injuries sustained in the gunfight on signer, three country-made Monday. The police also rebut potent rifled muskets covered several arms from and a 12 gauge shotgun. the crime scene. They included one AK 47 assault rifle retrieved from the spot

The police also recovered 7.62 mm ammunition used in Self-Loading Rifles from the area where the gunfight occurred.

the government and its arms

were grievous. "In this cir-

cumstance, we are summon-

ing the Chief Secretary and

the DGP to our Delhi office."

Further action would be in-

itiated after taking a closer

look into the case. Those responsible for the rape and

death of the minor girls

would not be allowed to go

scot-free, Mr. Murugan said.

# JD(S) leader praising BJP to keep his flock together'

Siddaramaiah flays Kumaraswamy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BELAGAVI

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Siddaramaiah upped his attack on Janata Dal (Secular) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy on Tuesday by accusing him of putting up a show of support of the BJP government to prevent defections from his party to the BJP.

The Congress leader told presspersons in Sambra Airport that some JD(S) MLAs were planning to join the BJP. "To retain them in his party, Mr. Kumaraswamy is trying to praise the B.S. Yediyurappa government. He hopes that if he says good things about the BJP, his own legislators will stay put," Mr. Siddaramaiah said.



Siddaramaiah

He brushed aside allegations that he was trying to dislodge the Yediyurappa government. "It's only the family members of former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda who get ideas of dislodging governments. People like us don't harbour such thoughts," he said.

### Children made to write in blood; Jacobites in a spot

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Jacobite faction found itself in a bind with the Kerala State Commission for Protection of Child's rights taking up a case against it for allegedly forcing children to write "sathyam" (truth) in blood as part of its protest against the Orthodox church, which is trying to gain control of churches armed with a Supreme Court order.

Authorities on October 28 were unable to implement a court order directing them to facilitate entry of Orthodox faction priests and followers into a church at Kothamangalam in Ernakulam to offer prayers following strong resistance from the Jacobite priests and the faithful.

The Orthodox faction recently tried to take possession of the church.

To counter it, the Jacobite faction had organised a protest using students from Sunday school and some were made to write "sathyam" on white paper allegedly using blood drawn from their fingers.

The panel took up the case after taking note of media reports showing children writing on white paper as part of the protest.

# Top officials summoned in Walayar case

STAFF REPORTER

The National Commission for Scheduled Castes (NCSC) has summoned Chief Secretary Tom Jose and Kerala police chief Loknath Behera in connection with the rape and death of two minor sisters at Attappallam, near Walayar, in which all the accused had walked away scot-free.

The acquittals by a POCSO court here on Friday last had caused a furore. There were widespread protests against the failure of the prosecution and the alleged role of the government and some ruling party members in weakening the case.

Commission vice-chair-



The police using water cannon to disperse protesters in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. • s. манімяна

man L. Murugan visited the house of the victims and met their parents on Tuesday. He said the case was scut-

tled by the investigation officers and the prosecution right from the beginning. The mistakes committed by

The case relates to the sexual exploitation and mysterious death of two minor Dalit siblings at Walayar in Palakad in 2017.

The elder girl, aged 13, allegedly committed suicide on January 13, 2017, and her nine-year-old sibling took the extreme step 52 days la-

# <sup>+</sup> Telangana RTC strike enters 25th day

Trade union leaders claim no employee has reported for work so far

STAFF REPORTER

The Telangana State Road Corporation (TSRTC) strike entered its 25th day, the longest after 2011's Sakala Janula Samme in the united Andhra Pradesh.

TSRTC trade union leaders portended that this year's strike - which began on October 5 - could soon be the longest with the High Court hearing being scheduled for November 1. They said the corporation, before the bifurcation of erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, saw two important strikes. First was Sakala Janula Samme and another was in 2001, a time when the then A.P. Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naihad ruled out

privatisation. The 2011 strike was 27 days long. Similarly, in 2001, during N. Chandrababu Naidu's term as Chief Minister, the strike lasted for 24 days. In 2005 too, there was a strike that lasted for a total of five days. In Telangana, in 2015, there was an eight-day strike. Now, we have the



Long battle: Telangana transport corporation members coming out of the court in Hyderabad. • NAGARA GOPAL

High Court hearings and given the schedule, including the public meeting, I think we can say that this strike will cross 27 days," said E. Ashok from the National Mazdoor Union, a trade union supporting the TSRTC Joint Action Committee.

Soon after the High Court hearing on Tuesday, TSRTC JAC convener E. Ashwathama Reddy, flanked by coconveners K. Raji Reddy and Thomas Reddy, said the strike has been proceeding as planned. He claimed that despite the government pressure, no TSRTC employees, including supervisors, have reported for work.

Mr. Reddy reiterated that the TSRTC is to receive as much as ₹1.099 crore for the 2009-2014 and another ₹1,375 crore from 2014 onwards. He claimed that crores of rupees have been accumulated as reimbursements, which the transport juggernaut has not yet received.

Earlier in the day, the Andhra Pradesh Road Transport Corporation JAC expressed its solidarity with the demands of the TSRTC

JAC. It said the State government should resolve the demands of the latter, including that of the merger with

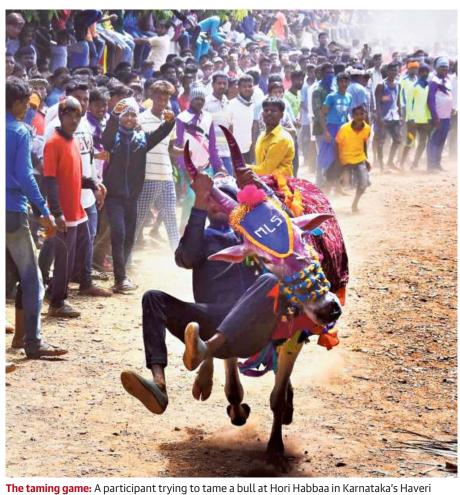
File affidavit: HC

Meanwhile, observing that parts of the affidavit filed by State government's Principal Finance Secretary were 'misplaced and vague', the Telangana High Court on Tuesday instructed the TSRTC managing director in-charge to file an affidavit over the government's claims that it overpaid the corporation.

Posting the hearing on the ongoing strike by RTC workers for Friday, the HC set Thursday as the deadline for presenting the affidavit and directed the MD to be present in the court during next hearing. The RTC officers knowing the nitty-gritty of its finances should also be present for eliciting information, the HC said.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghvendra Singh Chauhan and Justice A. Abhishek Reddy declined to give more time as sought by the TSRTC counsel.

### Tough challenge



district. The event is organised every year as part of Deepavali celebrations. • SANJAY RITTI

### Low key 100th + day celebration of BJP govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The 100th day celebration of the Bharatiya Janata Par ty government led by Karntaka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa is most likely to be a low-key affair following the floods that have affected more than half the

districts The BJP-led Karnataka government will complete its 100th day on November 2. Party sources feel that holding programmes in a grand manner would send a wrong signal as people of the State have been hit by the floods for the second

Also, they feel that completing 100 days is not a major milestone to celebrate.

Meanwhile, the government is expected to use the occasion to create public about its awareness achievements in various sectors, especially handling of flood relief.

"It will mainly be a media campaign," the party

# Renovation of 13th century temple to begin soon

The temple in Shivamogga district, built during the Hoysala rule, has developed cracks and seepage

STAFF REPORTER

SHIVAMOGGA Work on renovation of the historical 13th century Lakshmi Narasimha temple in Bhadravati of Shivamogga district that developed leaks after the recent rains will commence soon.

The temple, built during the Hoysala rule in the early 13th century, is a 'trikuta' – a temple with three shrines dedicated to deities Lakshmi Narasimha, Venugopalaswamy, and Purushothama. Rainwater seeped through the terrace and into the chinks of the pillars of the portico and the main hall, or the navaranga.



Bhadravati in Karnataka's Shivamogga district. • VAIDYA

Shejeshwara R., Assistant Director of the Department of Archaeology, Museums

and Heritage, told The Hindu that the roots of the plants and weeds that had grown

on the roof of the building had weakened the concrete plastering at many places.

Wiring to be replaced

The weeds would be removed and re-plastering would be done to stop the leakage. The concrete flooring on the platform, also called jagati, used by the devotees as pradakshinapatha, has also developed cracks at several spots. The floor will be relaid. As part of the the renovation plan, the electricity wiring in the entire building would be replaced and upgraded, he said.

A team of engineers from the department will visit the temple shortly to prepare an estimate of the costs for renovation. Work is expected to commence by the first week of December, he said.

Landscaping too

Meanwhile, devotees have demanded landscaping and a garden at the entrance to the temple. Nagaraj, a devotee and resident of Haladammanakeri in Bhadravati, said the temple attracted a large number of devotees on Vaikuntha Ekadashi and during the month of Karthika. By taking up landscaping works and illuminating the temple, it could be developed into a tourist destination, he said.

# Crack in neck after head massage can prove costly

AFSHAN YASMEEN BENGALURU

A haircut with a complimentary head and neck massage at an introductory price in a new salon opened near his house in HSR Layout in Karnataka was an offer that 38vear-old Ram Mohan Das (name changed) could not resist. But the 30-minute session proved too costly for the private company emplovee.

The therapist gave him a neck massage and turned his head suddenly on both sides till a crack was heard. As he walked back home, he felt uneasy with blurring of his

home, he realised he had difficulty in speaking too. Fortunately for him, his family members rushed him to a private hospital in Bommasandra, where doctors diagnosed it to be a stroke.

vision. Managing to reach

Vikram Huded, Head of Neurology at Narayana Health, said the sudden turning of the head and the crack had resulted in dissection of the major artery supplying blood to the brain. Dissection occurs when a tear in the artery wall allows blood to leak between the layers and separate them.

"This is an important

cause of cerebral stroke in young men, who have no lifestyle disorders such as diabetes and hypertension. I have seen at least three such cases in the last one year," said Dr. Huded, who is part of the Bangalore Stroke Support Group. Several neurologists said there was a need for further studies.

"Such head massages ending with a sudden crack in the neck by untrained therapists should be avoided. Timely diagnosis and the fact that the patient did not have any other co-morbidities helped in recovery," said the doctor.

#### IN BRIEF



**Chidambaram suffers from** Crohn's disease: sources

NEW DELHI Senior Congress leader and former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram. who is currently in **Enforcement Directorate** custody in the INX Media money laundering case, has been suffering from the chronic Crohn's disease and needs immediate specialised treatment at a super speciality hospital, sources close to him said. PT

#### Nod for grant for AgriGold victims

Andhra Pradesh Home Minister M. Sucharita has said the State government gave its nod for release of ₹2,263 crore to help the AgriGold victims who had deposits below ₹20.000 each. At a meeting held at the YSRCP central office at Tadepalli, the Minister said that by the decision, 65% of the depositors would be benefited.

### M.P. Cong. MLA offers

job to Kafeel Khan

A Congress MLA on Tuesday said he and his senior colleague Digvijaya Singh have offered a job on behalf of the Madhya Pradesh unit of the party to Dr. Kafeel Khan who was arrested after the death of over 60 children in a hospital in Uttar Pradesh's Gorakhpur in 2017. Speaking to reporters here, Congress MLA Arif Masood said, "When I met him (Dr. Khan) I felt sorry for him. I had a talk with Digvijayaji on the issue. I and Digvijaya Singhji have offered him a job." "If the U.P. government is not giving him justice, then the MP government is ready to take in such a good child

# 36 million Indians face flood risk: study

### 'Number of those affected may be underestimated'

JACOB KOSHY NEW DELHI

The number of Indians who stand to be affected by rising sea levels may have been underestimated by as much as 88%, according to a study that uses a new modelling approach.

In India, 36 million people would face annual flooding by 2050 and 44 million by 2100 if emissions continue to rise unabated. Nearly 21 million – and not 2.8 million – are expected to be living below the High Tide Line, the boundary that marks the farthest to which the sea reaches into the land at high tide.

The study, which appears on Thursday in the peer reviewed scientific journal Nature Communications, employs a new software called CoastalDEM. Estimates on the risks posed by flooding

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

Rape is presumed if occur-

rence of sexual intercourse is

proved and the woman

claims the act was commit-

ted without her consent, the

dian Evidence Act, 1872

deals with the presumption

as to absence of consent in

certain prosecution for rape.

A reading of the Section

makes it clear that where

sexual intercourse by the ac-

cused is proved and the

question is whether it was

without the consent of the

woman alleged to have been

raped, and such woman

"Section 114-A of the In-

Supreme Court has held.

#### The tidal threat

A new study suggests that in India, as of today, nearly 17 mn people live on land below the high tide lines and 31 mn on land below annual flood levels. The numbers are a sharp increase from previous \_T estimates. Table lists new estimates and change from old estimations of population

Country	New estimates	Change	Country	New estimates	Change
China	81	56	China	23	17.5
India	31	27	Vietnam	19	14.5
Vietnam	28	20.5	India	17	14.9
Bangladesh	28	25	Bangladesh	9.3	8.2
Indonesia	20	15.7	Indonesia	8.9	7.4
Thailand	8	7.54	Philippines	4.3	3.7
Philippines	5.4	4.52	Netherlands	4.1	0.1
Netherlands	4.9	-1.2	Egypt	3.9	3.9
Japan	4.1	0.1	Japan	3.2	-0.2
World	250	185	World	110	82

now rely on detailed maps of the globe taken by the Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM), which was a radar mapping system that travelled aboard the space shuttle Endeavour in 2000.

The maps so prepared form the basis for determining the elevation of the earth's topography.

However, say the authors of the study, this approach overestimates the elevation

The SC said the Gujarat High

Court had committed an error.

states in her evidence before

the court that she did not

consent, the court shall pres-

ume that she did not con-

sent," a three-judge Bench of

Iustices U.U. Lalit, Indu Mal-

hotra and R. Subhash Reddy

observed in a recent

The case involved a wo-

judgment.

'Court will take victim's word in rape cases'

'If the woman says she didn't consent to intercourse, court will presume she did not

of land surfaces and frequently miss. CoastalDEM, they claim, is more accurate and "reduces linear vertical bias from 4.71 m to less than 0.06 m".

It does so because it uses more variables – vegetation cover, population indices to estimate the actual land surface and more sophisticated modelling techniques, claim the authors Scott Kulp & Benjamin Strauss, of Cli-

man who accused her em-

ployer of repeatedly raping

her and taking inappropriate

pictures for the purpose of

blackmail. He had allegedly

even gone to the extent of

calling her betrothed and

sending him some of the pic-

tures. She finally lodged a

complaint and a case of rape

However, the Gujarat High

Court quashed the case on

the ground that the parties

had reached a "settlement"

over a large sum of money.

The woman subsequently

appealed to the Supreme

Court saying the "settle-

drawn under threat and

was a document

was filed against him.

mate Centre, an independent organisation of scientists and journalists working on climate change.

#### **Below tide lines**

Population in areas below

high tide line (mn)

Their analysis suggests that globally nearly 110 million people live on land below the current high tide lines and 250 million on land below annual flood levels, in contrast with SRTM-based estimates of 28 million and

coercion. The apex court

said the HC seemed to have

gotten "carried away" by the

settlement, which itself

of the appellant [woman],

that such document itself is

obtained under threat and

coercion, it is a matter to be

investigated," the court said.

man's betrothed should also

be probed. It said the High

Court had committed an er-

ror in quashing the trial

court proceedings. The

court, without commenting

on the merits of the case, or-

dered the accused to co-op-

erate with the investigation.

The phone call to the wo-

"When it is the allegation

needed to be investigated.

65 million respectively.

Current climate studies say that climate change has caused global mean sea level to rise by 11-16 cm in the 20th century and is expected to by as much as 2 m by the end of this century. Other than India, the flood risk has also been underestimated for China at 93 million, as opposed to the current estimates of 29 million; Bangladesh at 42 million vs 5 million: Vietnam 31 million vs 9 million; Indonesia 23 million vs 5 million; Thailand 12 million vs 1 million.

"These assessments show the potential of climate change to reshape cities, economies, coastlines, and entire global regions within our lifetimes," said Dr. Kulp in a statement.

"As the tideline rises higher than the ground people call home, nations will increasingly confront questions about whether, how much, and how long coastal defences can protect them."

### **OTP-based** refund system for train tickets

To make the refund pro-

The one-time password will be sent to the passenger's mobile number provided to the agent at the time of ticket booking. The traveller will have to share the OTP with the agent for getting the refund

### Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Lakshadweep, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry & Karaikal, Kerala & Mahe, Coastal Andhra Pradesh & Yanam, Telangana and Coastal & South Interior Karnataka

gartala32.022.2	Kozhikode
hmedabad 0.333.224.5	Kurnool33.223.6
izawl – 24.2 –	Lucknow
llahabad32.220.4	Madurai 0.831.223.6
engaluru 0.525.3 19.4	Mangaluru 33.4 23.5
hopal29.320.4	Mumbai – 34.5 24.8
hubaneswar31.722.0	Mysuru26.9 19.8
nandigarh – 30.3 16.8	New Delhi
nennai 21.833.025.0	Patna 29.4 20.2
oimbatore – 29.3 22.5	Port Blair
ehradun 26.9 16.7	Puducherry 1630.623.4
angtok19.911.5	Pune
oa23.5	Raipur31.823.6
uwahati30.222.8	Ranchi 28.2 16.6
ubballi – 29.0 21.0	Shillong
yderabad30.222.8	Shimla
nphal – 28.6 18.1	Srinagar
nipur32.419.0	Thiruvananthapuram 3.431.423.8
ochi – 32.0 25.0	Tiruchi
ohima – 24.2 –	Vijayawada 233.625.4
olkata – 31.1 21.3	Visakhapatnam 2.332.826.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

### Pollutants in the air you are breathing

#### ...99 .107 Bengaluru ..... .458 .449 .256 .215 .52 .14 .07 .21 .26 .24 .15 .17 .105 . 161

Air Quality Code: Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AOI) 502: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system

NO2: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by

nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced

# Shamed for her <sup>+</sup> looks, woman

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ends life

A 21-year-old woman, who was married just six months ago, allegedly committed suicide in Kajas than's Ihalawar district afbeing repeatedly taunted by her husband over her "dark complexion", the police said on Tuesday.

Mangibai jumped into a well outside her house in Banskhoyara village on Monday, station house officer Balveer Singh said.

Mangibai's husband, Dinesh Lodha, has been booked under Section 306 (abetment of suicide) of the

Her father, Devlal, told the police that she got married in April but her husband used to humiliate her over her "dark complexion", the officer said citing the FIR registered.

(Assistance to overcome suicidal thoughts is available at Sanjivini: Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002)

### Three policemen injured in attack by Varanasi villagers

29 persons have been detained: police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Three policemen, including a station house officer (SHO), were injured in an attack by some villagers in Varanasi's Rohaniya area, the police said on Tuesday.

SHO Rohaniya, with a team, went to Harsons village in Jansa after a crime branch team of the Jaunpur police that arrived to apprehend two suspects in a loot case were held hostage by the villagers and reportedly thrashed. The mob attacked the SHO and his team too. A video of the attack, showing a mob thrashing and slapping the police officer, was widely shared on social media.

The villagers also attacked the policemen with stones and bricks, the police

SSP Varanasi Sureshrao A. Kulkarni said the two injured constables were admitted to hospital. "Those involved in the incident will

### Man dies in police custody

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

A man detained in connection with a case of loot died in police custody after allegedly consuming poison, officials said on Tuesday. However, family members alleged that he was tortured by the police and killed in custody.

Satya Prakash Shukla, 50, and his sons were detained by the police on Monday in connection with a loot of ₹26 lakh from a bank employee.

be identified and action will be taken against them." The police are investigating if the mob snatched any police weapons during the assault. Twenty-nine persons have so far been detained in connection with the attack.

### Goodwin fraud: lookout notice

day issued lookout circulars against the owners and the manager of Goodwin Group, who were booked for alleged fraud last week.

On Saturday, the Dombivali police booked the three people after 35 customers of the jewellery store chain approached them alleging that the accused had fled with the money they had invested in fixed deposit or savings schemes. Senior police inspector S.P. Aaher said by Tuesday, the number of complainants had gone up to 69. The amount allegedly swindled by the accused

transferred to the EOW."

# against owners

ment"

STAFF REPORTER

The Thane police on Tues-

is estimated at ₹3.87 crore.

"We have issued lookout circulars against A.M Sudheer Kumar, the full-time director in Goodwin Group, A.M Sunil Kumar, managing director, and store manager Manish Kundi. The case has been

# Make My Trip, Oyo face antitrust probe

Regulator finds prima facie violations of competition law, including by Goibibo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has ordered a detailed investigation into online travel booking companies Make My Trip and Goibibo and hospitality provider OYO based on complaints by members of the Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) alleging deepdiscounting, payment issues and cheating by these firms.

In an order dated October 28, the CCI said following a complaint from the FHRAI, it had examined various aspects of the three companies' businesses and concluded that prima facie there were violations of competi-

CCI assessed the allega-



The FHRAI has alleged cheating by OYO and the

tions on the basis of the relevant markets. While in the case of Make My Trip and Goibibo (referred to as MMT-Go), it looked at the 'market for online intermediation services for booking of hotels in India', for OYO it reviewed the 'market for franchising services for budget hotels in India'.

The competition watchdog observed that MMT-Go prima facie appeared to be a dominant player in the relevant market. However, in the case of OYO it noted, "Prima facie OYO is not found to hold a dominant position, despite being a significant player in the 'market for franchising services for budget hotels in India".

'Abuse of dominance' In a 26-page order, the CCI said there was a prima-facie case to investigate MMT-Go and OYO for alleged violation of the provisions of Section 3(4) of the Competition Act – pertaining to anti-competitive pacts – as also grounds to probe MMT-Go under Section 4 of the Act (relating to abuse of dominant position).

"Thus, whether the commercial agreement between OYO and MMT entails preferential treatment to OYO and consequent exclusion of Treebo, Fab hotel and any other hotel chain and if so, the effect of the same on competition merits investigation," the CCI said.

"Further, the charging of service fee by MMT is alleged to be discriminatory as such fee is levied on certain hotels and allegedly not levied on high-end of chain hotels. Since MMT is prima facie found to be dominant, this conduct of MMT merits investigation," the watchdog said, setting a 150-day time frame for its director general to submit a report.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

cess for tickets booked through agents transparent, IRCTC on Tuesday announced a new system wherein passengers will receive refund for cancelled tickets via a one-time password that will be sent to their mobile numbers.

making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air

reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters. critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature

### Brotherhood unbound

Sena's brinkmanship in talks with BJP is unlikely to fetch it dividends in Maharashtra

The protracted bargaining for power sharing between two pre-poll allies, the BJP and the Shiv Sena, is holding up government formation in Maharashtra, despite their victory in the Assembly election. The irony is starker when compared to Haryana where a new government has been in place, though the State elected a hung Assembly. The BJP could easily cobble up a post-poll alliance in Haryana with regional outfit the JJP, but is unable to reach an agreement with the Sena, its oldest ally. The BJP and the Sena are closely aligned ideologically too, as the latter champions Hindutva more stridently than the former. However, transactional politics often trumps ideological affinity as a Sena leader appeared to suggest in his caustic comparison of the situations in the two States. In Haryana, the new Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala got a reprieve for his jailed father in exchange for joining hands with the BJP, the Sena leader suggested. The BJP could not pressure the Sena that way, he declared, upping the ante. Mr. Chautala retorted sharply, leading to an inter-State sparring between the two BJP allies. Devendra Fadnavis has meanwhile declared that he would remain Maharashtra Chief Minister for the entire five-year-tenure of the legislature, shutting the door on the Sena's demand for the top post after two and a half years. Both parties met the Governor separately.

The Sena is possibly upping the ante in an attempt to drive the best bargain with the BJP, and the brinkmanship is unlikely to lead to a separation between the two. After all, the BJP has many allies, but the BJP is the only partner that the Sena could possibly get. The Maharashtra theatrics of both parties, however, signifies a weakening of the BJP and a ceiling for the style of the party's current leadership. In 2014, the BJP dislodged the Sena as the leader of the alliance in the State, after contesting the Assembly election alone and cornering the latter into a post-poll partnership. Bolstered by its rising popularity, the BJP leadership had taken a dismissive attitude towards alliance politics in general and even humiliated several long-standing partners, including the Sena. It has even advertised its refusal to consult other parties – allies and the Opposition alike – on policy matters as a sign of strong leadership. That principle is on test in Maharashtra. The BJP could win only 105 Assembly seats, compared to 122 in 2014, increasing its dependence on the Sena. The Sena too won fewer than its tally five years ago, but has ended up with higher leverage vis-à-vis the big brother. As the haggling goes on, what is abundantly clear is that none of the issues at stake has anything to do with public interest.

### Deep traps

The onus on closure of abandoned wells should be on the local body, and not the owner

s with several such incidents in the past, the intensive operation in Tamil Nadu to rescue a child ho slipped into an abandoned borewell in Manapparai, Tiruchi district, ended in spectacular failure. Hopes for two-year-old Sujith Wilson were brightest in the initial phase, but they faded when the victim sank further into the borehole, partly buried under earth. The valiant measures of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) personnel along with their State counterparts and the slim hope for a happy ending of the kind witnessed in Kurukshetra 13 years ago kept spirits up for some time, but the end was a tragedy. Unfortunately, the truth is that no breakthrough method has emerged, whether in terms of technology or protocols, when it comes to rescuing small children who have fallen into deep holes that are less than a foot wide. The disaster that befell the Tamil Nadu farmer's family last week is no different from the one that took the life of another two-year-old in Punjab's Sangrur district earlier this year. Worryingly, more such disasters are bound to occur, since there are many disused and uncovered well holes scattered in farms in several States. No time can be lost in implementing the safety rules relating to wells issued in the past, to save children at risk.

Tamil Nadu issued, under its Panchayats Act, the Regulation of Sinking of Wells and Safety Measures Rules 2015, incorporating measures ordered by the Supreme Court in 2010. Among the many steps prescribed for orderly well-digging, there is a provision requiring the holder of a permit or well to fill up an abandoned hole up to the ground level using clay, sand or boulders (the court also mentions pebbles and drill cuttings). For meaningful implementation of this provision, the onus should rest with the local body, and not the owner of the borewell who is often a farmer of poor means. Under a normative system, closing an abandoned well would no longer be seen as a wasteful expenditure by farmers, since they would not be charged for it, and panchayat personnel would execute the closure rather than merely certify that action has been taken. Besides avoiding the ghastly human toll, timebound capping of open wells will eliminate the intensive, high-cost rescues that the NDRF has to attempt; the agency deployed its teams no less than 37 times until 2018, mostly in Maharashtra, but also in Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Gujarat and Karnataka. Deep borewell accidents have also occurred in cities that rely heavily on groundwater, and as the Supreme Court pointed out, it should be the task of the municipal and public health authorities to eliminate the lurking danger. In the court's view, the District Collector bears responsibility for enforcement. Now that another life has been lost to neglect, it is time the State governments took safety seriously, came up with a census of well structures in need of attention, and capped the problem forever.

# Piecing together the Maharashtra mandate

Missteps by the ruling alliance rejuvenated a moribund Opposition; a maze of social identities are now resurgent



ABHAY DATAR

The Legislative Assembly elections in Maharashtra this year took place in the shadow of the Lok Sabha election held less than six months ago. The alliance of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BIP) and the Shiv Sena swept the Lok Sabha election, with the Indian National Congress being practically decimated and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) barely managing to save its skin. As late as last month, it appeared as if the results of the Lok Sabha election would be repeated in the Assembly elections.

This perception was further strengthened by continuing waves of political defections from the Congress and NCP to the ruling alliance – of course engineered by the BJP, and aided by the disarray that the Congress found itself in. In the meantime, the deft handling of the Maratha reservation agitation, the discontent generated by the agrarian crisis as well as other issues had created an aura of invincible astuteness around the State BJP leadership, particularly the Chief Minister, Devendra Fadnavis. The ruling alliance began to speak confidently of winning more than 200 of the 289 seats in the Maharashtra Assembly.

#### Gains for the NCP

However, a series of missteps not only rejuvenated the moribund Opposition but also exposed the dissidence within the BJP. Initially the Congress and the NCP were

running a lacklustre campaign despite having forged an alliance. The Enforcement Directorate's notice to NCP's party chief, Sharad Pawar, was an act that actually helped the party gain a second wind rather than putting the Opposition on the backfoot. The sight of Mr. Pawar, a septuagenarian leader energetically campaigning across the State might not have attracted many voters but certainly bolstered the morale of party workers. Mr. Pawar also ensured that the alliance with the Congress worked smoothly. The NCP also gained from the departure of many a powerful dynast from within its ranks. At some places, the party utilised this space to promote a new crop of leaders. Moreover, the NCP also introduced newer and younger faces in its electoral campaigning which also contributed to the party fortunes - it surpassed the Congress to secure the third position in terms of seats

The Congress too marginally improved its performance, something that must have astonished even its party leaders. There was no State-wide vigorous campaign, and only Rahul Gandhi addressed public meetings at a few places. But a closer look suggests the district-level leaders got their act together to win their own seats. These cumulative factors ensured that the Congress survived. But numerous challenges still remain. The defection of numerous dynasts from the party has not led it to look for and cultivate a newer generation of leaders. It is still dependent on old war-horses for its politics.

The Vanchit factor The Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA), knit together by the veteran

leader, Prakash Ambedkar, and which inflicted serious damage on the Congress-NCP combine in the Lok Sabha election, contested a large number of seats in this election. This renewed accusations that the VBA was merely the "Bteam" of the BJP. Though it drew a blank, statistics suggest that it ensured the defeat of candidates of the Congress-NCP in at least a dozen seats. Conversely, the fact that the VBA came second in many constituencies implies that it has developed a strong social base of its own. It can be convincingly argued that in these constituencies the presence of the Congress-NCP candidates actually benefited the ruling alliance, and harmed the

But more significantly, Mr. Ambedkar's long-standing argument that a handful among the elite castes have monopolised material resources and political power in the State to the detriment of Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Dalits has been receiving increasing response. How the four principal parties deal with it and the manner in which the VBA itself capitalises on it in the future will deter-

mine the direction of politics in the State.

It is the Shiv Sena which has emerged the real beneficiary of these elections. Despite being a partner, albeit a junior one, in the State government, the party found itself outmanoeuvred by the BJP on all counts. In their political alliance, it lost the senior position to the BJP. The Sena had to perforce contest a much lesser number of seats this time than what had been customary. Yet, it managed to marginally improve its tally, thus giving it much needed breathing space and bargaining power vis-àvis the BJP.

#### Dents for the BJP

The BJP was confident of increasing its seat tally on the basis of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity and its message of muscular nationalism. State-specific issues were talked about sporadically. Welfare schemes which had a focus on individual beneficiaries were also not highlighted. The party could have positioned itself as the best placed to tackle the agrarian crisis which deepened in the wake of unseasonal rains during the election campaign. Instead it choose not to do so.

A multitude of micro-factors also had an impact on the BJP's fortunes. If a poor selection of candidates cost it some seats, backroom manoeuvring also had a negative impact. Reduced victory margins in a few urban seats, particularly in Pune, was an indication that the party's traditional voters are not willing to let themselves be taken for granted. In many constituencies, BIP activists rebelled against the Shiv Sena's candidates, and as a result, the Opposition won. Indeed, there was talk of these BJP rebels being actively supported

feat the Sena.

Furthermore, there were also barely perceptible ominous signs for the BJP. The party had long cultivated leaders from OBC backgrounds in order to rise against a Maratha-dominated Congress and NCP. Indeed, it seemed that the BJP was building a social alliance of non-Maratha communities, albeit with a sprinkling of leaders from the Maratha community. The decision to make Mr. Fadnavis. who is a Brahmin, one which has never really been central to recent electoral politics in the State, was regarded as part of this strategy. The near-resolution of the Maratha reservation issue was presumed to have neutralised the Maratha opposition to the BJP.

But the rhetoric of the Opposition campaign seems to have concentrated on these very points, turning them into weaknesses for the BJP. There appears to have been a reassertion of the political sentiments of the Maratha com-

The Opposition also pointed out that the BJP-Sena, with its predominantly urban leadership, does not comprehend issues related to the agricultural sector. There was also a latent focus on the Chief Minister's social background, implying that he did not have the right social credentials to lead the State. These factors could have led to a setback for the BJP.

What the results portend for the near future in Maharashtra will depend on how the political parties tackle the agrarian crisis and the maze of resurgent and assertive social identities.

Abhay Datar is Assistant Professor, Department of Political Science, People's

# The new gold standard in development economics?

With RCT becoming a dominant factor, 'randomistas' could be changing the social sciences paradigm



ATANU BISWAS

evelopment economics has changed a lot during the last two decades or so, mostly due to the extensive use of 'randomised control trials' (RCT). 'Randomistas' are proponents of RCTs to assess long-run economic productivity and living standards in poor countries. Three randomistas, Abhijit Banerjee, Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer, were awarded the 2019 Nobel prize in Economics for their RCT-based studies on poverty worldwide.

### An evolution

The concept of RCT is quite old; instances of RCTs can be traced back in the 16th century. However, the statistical foundation of RCT was developed by British statistician Sir Ronald Fisher, about 100 years ago, mostly in the context of design of experiments.

In my experience I have seen the proportion of events by the same treatment varying between 10% to 35% in different clinical trials. Is it due to unknown distribution of treatment effects, and/or other external effects such as hospital care, hospital location, etc? Thus, for an unbiased evaluation of the treatment, its performance needs to be compared with some 'control', which maybe 'no treatment' at all or an 'existing treatment' other than the treatment under study.

The next task is to allocate the patients among two treatments/interventions at hand. Patients might prefer some treatment to the other. Prior knowledge of the treatments to be applied to them might induce a 'selection bias' due to unequal proportions of patients opting out from the study. 'Randomisation' is a procedure used to prevent this by allocating patients using a random mechanism neither the patient nor the doctor would know the allocation

'Control' and 'randomisation' together constitute an RCT. In 1995, statisticians Marvin Zelen and Lee-Jen Wei illustrated a clinical trial to evaluate the hypothesis that the antiretroviral therapy AZT reduces the risk of maternal-to-infant HIV transmission. A standard randomisation scheme was used resulting in 238 pregnant women receiving AZT and 238 receiving standard therapy (placebo). It is observed that 60 newborns were HIV-positive in the placebo-group and 20 newborns were HIV-positive in the AZT-group. Thus, the failure rate of the placebo was 60/ 238, whereas that of AZT was only 20/238, indicating that AZT was much more effective than the placebo. Drawing such an inference, despite heterogeneity among the patients, was possible only due to randomisation. Randomisation makes different treatment groups comparable and also helps to estimate the error associated in the inference.



The early applications of RCTs were mostly within the agricultural field Sir Ronald Fisher himself was very reluctant to apply statistics to social sciences, due to their 'non-experimental' nature. RCT got its importance in clinical trials since the 1960s, so much so that any clinical trials now-a-days without RCT were being considered almost useless.

Marking a change Social scientists slowly found RCT to be interesting, doable, and effective. But, in the process, the nature of social science slowly converted from 'non-experimental' to 'experimental'. Numerous interesting applications of RCTs took place in social policy-making during the 1960-90s, and the 'randomistas' took control of development economics mid-1990s. About 1,000 RCTs were conducted by Prof. Kremer, Prof. Banerjee and Prof. Duflo and their colleagues in 83 countries such as India, Kenya and Indonesia. These were to study various dimensions of poverty, including microfinance, access to credit, behaviour, health care, immunisation programmes, and gender inequality. While Prof. Banerjee thinks RCTs "are the simplest and best way of assessing the impact of a program", Prof. Duflo refers to RCTs as the "tool of choice".

There has been tremendous international attention on Finland's Basic Income experiment (2017-18), where 2,000 unemployed Finns between ages 25-58 were randomly selected across the country, and were paid €560 a month instead of basic unemployment benefits Results from the first year data didn't have any significant effect on the subjects' employment, in comparison with the control group comprising individuals who were not selected for the experimental group. Essentially this was also an RCT.

Critics of RCTs in economic experiments think that in order to conduct RCTs, the broader problem is being sliced into smaller ones, and any dilution of the scientific method leaves the conclusions questionable. Economists such as Martin Ravallion, Dani Rodrik, William Easterly, and Angus Deaton are very critical of using

RCTs in economic experiments. Randomisation in clinical trials has an additional impetus - it ensures that allocation to any particular treatment remains unknown to both patient and doctor. Such kind of 'blinding' is central to the philosophy of clinical trials and it helps to reduce certain kinds of bias in the trial. It is believed that the 'outcome' or the 'treatment-

response' might be influenced if the patient and/or the physician are aware of the treatment given to the patient. However, such kind of 'blinding' is almost impossible to implement in economic experiments as participants would definitely know if they get any financial aid or training. Thus, randomisation must have a much less impact there. Often, economists miss such an important

However, unless randomisation is done, most of the standard statistical analyses and inference prolier social experiments lacked randomisation and that might be one reason that statisticians such as Sir Ronald Fisher were unwilling to employ statistics in social experiments. Thus, "RCT or no RCT" may not be just a policy decision to economics; it is the question of shifting the paradigm. The "tool" comes with lot of implicit baggage. With randomisation dominating development economics, implicitly, economic experiments are becoming more and more statistical. This is one philosophical aspect which economists need to settle.

Apparently, for the time being, many would concur with Harvard economist Lant Pritchett who criticises RCTs on a number of counts but still agrees that it "is superior to other evaluation methods". The debate would continue, while the randomistas continue to gain momentum at the moment.

Atanu Biswas is Professor of Statistics, Indian Statistical Institute, Kolkata

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

# EU team for Kashmir

The Union government's decision to allow a delegation of EU MPs to visit Srinagar is an unwarranted move and one that belittles our own Members of Parliament, Parliament and our democratic values (Page 1, "Govt. signals shift in stand, allows EU MPs to visit Srinagar", October 29). Other Indians are still deprived of information about their fellow citizens in Kashmir as communication channels are still not free. Is this the same Central government that promised transparency to the people of the country? How long will the people of Jammu and Kashmir suffer without freedom? A. JAINULABDEEN,

■ The decision is not in the best interests of the country. The government should have allowed Indian political leaders to visit Kashmir or have come to an understanding with other parties. The unilateral decision will only have negative impact. KAMIL S.V., Androth, Lakshadweep

■ It is a good decision and one hopes that the foreign MPs do not have the "version of Modi or Doval". They should be able to speak to the people of Kashmir and have the freedom to make T. ANWAR.

### Eliminated

Bengaluru

U.S. President Donald Trump's contemptuous remark that al-Baghdadi

"died like a dog" will only give a new push to the Islamic State to refurbish its puritanical ideology. According to the survey by the Pew Research Center after 9/11, the number of Americans who believe that military force can reduce the risk of terrorism dropped sharply from 42% to 32%. The IS is a hydra-headed monster. It is unlikely that the death of a single leader will diminish the basic ideology of the terror organisation which is not dependent on any particular leader for survival. The U.S. should not commit the strategic blunder of withdrawing its forces from northern Syria as it will only weaken the anti-IS fight (Editorial, "Death of a terrorist", October 29). KANGAYAM R. NARASIMHAN, Chennai

■ The U.S. and other global powers must not be lulled into a false sense of complacency. The IS may go all out to carry out a spectacular attack, somehow and somewhere in retaliation. All it takes to achieve that objective is a lone terrorist. Terrorism has to be eliminated in all its forms and manifestations if the world is to be made a safer place. However, one may take exception to the simile President Trump has used to describe al-Baghdadi's end. І. Акѕновнуа.

■ Ideally, the IS chief should have been captured alive and tried for heinous crimes against humanity. The successful U.S.-led raid points to the need for the big powers to join forces to

eliminate the scourge of mindless terrorism. MEGHANA A., Shell Cove, NSW, Australia

■ The U.S. may be taking complete pride in its operation, but the circumstances that may lead to the genesis of such monsters have not been obliterated yet. By sidelining the Syrian Kurds and withdrawing U.S. troops from the conflict zones, the situation on the ground could deteriorate. It has the potential to trigger another global security threat. The U.S. and the other global powers cannot abjure from their moral duty to end what they started. You cannot create a problem and then claim adulation for executing piecemeal solutions. Y. MEENA, Hyderabad

#### **Borewells as traps** Irresponsible and careless

handling of abandoned or under-construction tubewell pits is snatching the lives of young children across the length and breadth of the country. Men and machinery are being used to rescue the victim, with lakhs of rupees being spent; in most cases the efforts fail to bear results. It is disheartening that people are not learning any lessons from the past incidents. The authorities need to crack the whip and ensure that tubewell operations are safe. Those who endanger human lives must be penalised heavily. There have to be awareness campaigns too at regular intervals.

DR. MOHAN MANGATTUSSERY

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:



# Legal pluralism in personal law

Uniformity in civil law can only be achieved in a piecemeal manner



In Jose Paulo Coutinho v. Maria Luiza Valentina Pereira (2019), the Supreme Court has vet again revived the debate on a uniform civil code (UCC) and referred to Goa as "a shining example of an Indian State which has a uniform civil code applicable to all...". There are rumours that the government may surprise everyone in the winter session of Parliament by introducing a UCC Bill, just as it did by diluting Article 370 on August 5. But in fact it has been the judiciary, rather than the Bharatiya Janata Party or the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, that has been relentlessly pushing for the enactment of a UCC.

### Some earlier cases

In some cases that dealt with the issue of a UCC, the apex court's observations have been unnecessary obiter dicta (such as in Mohd. Ahmed Khan v. Shah Bano Begum, 1985). In some others (such as in Sarla Mudgal v. Union of India, 1995, in which four Hindu men converted to Islam to take second wives), the court's observations have been reflective of flawed and problematic judicial reasoning. Instead of condemning the men in Sarla Mudgal, the court demonised Muslims by saying, "Those who preferred to remain in India after the partition, fully knew that the Indian leaders did not believe in twonation theory or three-nation theory and that in the Indian Republic there was to be only one Nation – Indian nation – and no community could claim to remain a separate entity on the basis of religion" (sic). It also stated there "there is an open inducement to a Hindu husband, who wants to enter into second marriage while the first marriage is subsisting, to become a Muslim". In this judgment, the court completely negated the idea of legal pluralism; overlooked the fact that while all Congress leaders including Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel and Mahatma Gandhi voted for Pakistan, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad stood his ground



the control over property remains

with the husband. Even the Goa Suc-

cession, Special Notaries and Inven-

tory Proceeding Act, 2012, enacted

by the BJP government in 2016, men-

tions the surviving spouse only as the

fourth preference in Section 52 (or-

der of legal succession), after descen-

dants, ascendants, and brothers of

As far as Muslims are concerned,

the Muslim Personal Law (Shariat)

Application Act of 1937 has not been

extended to Goa. Muslims of Goa are

governed by Portuguese law as well

The majority in Shayara Bano v.

Union of India (2017) did hold free-

dom of religion subject to restric-

tions under Articles 25 and 26 of the

Constitution as absolute. Even the

right to follow personal law had been

elevated to the highest status of fun-

damental right. UCC is only one of

the directive principles. The Su-

preme Court rightly held in *Minerva* 

Mills Ltd. v. Union Of India (1980)

that "to destroy the guarantees given

by Part III [fundamental rights] in or-

der purportedly to achieve the goals

of Part IV [directive principles] is

plainly to subvert the Constitution by

Futility of one nation, one law

Since personal laws are in the Con-

current List, they may differ from

State to State. The framers of the

Constitution did not intend total un-

iformity or one law for the whole

country. States have made more than

a hundred amendments to the Code

of Criminal Procedure and the Indian

Penal Code. The law of anticipatory

bail differs from one State to another.

destroying its basic structure."

the deceased.

as Shastric Hindu law.

Savarkar's two-nation theory; and also overlooked the history of the Hindu Right's resistance to the Hindu Code Bill.

With reference to the court's judgment in Jose Paulo Coutinho, it is important to understand that the reality of Goa is a little complex. The Goa Civil Code of 1867, which was given by the Portuguese, begins in the name of God and the King of Portugal. Uniformity is not necessarily a promise for gender justice. On the opposition of Hindus, the Code permitted limited polygamy for Hindus on certain conditions, including "absolute absence of male issue, the previous wife having completed 30 years of age, and being of lower age, ten years having elapsed from the

last pregnancy". The Code gives certain concessions to Catholics as well. Catholics need not register their marriages and Catholic priests can dissolve marriages performed in church. Church tribunals are similar to the so-called Sharia courts and dissolution by them is mechanically approved by the High Court. Why the court did not, as a first step towards a UCC in Goa, recommend the adoption of a reformed Hindu Code Bill in preference to the Portuguese Civil Code is

The provision of matrimonial properties being jointly held and equally divided between spouses on divorce exists under the 1867 Code. However, through pre-nuptial contracts, parties may opt out of this joint ownership of properties. In many marriages, would-be wives are forced to sign on dotted lines. Thus, even where such joint ownership of assets exists, States, including Gujarat, have reduced fines under the amended Motor Vehicles Act despite the Centre justifying the hefty fines. This proves the futility of one nation, one law. Not all Hindus in the country are

Even BJP governments in different

governed by one law. Marriages amongst close relatives is prohibited by the Hindu Marriage Act of 1955, but is considered auspicious in the south. The Hindu Code Bill recognises customs of different Hindu communities. Even the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 made several compromises and could not make daughter a coparcener till 2005. Wives are still not coparceners. Even today, property devolves first to Class I heirs and if there are no Class I heirs, then to Class II heirs. While heirs of sons are Class I heirs, those of daughters are not. Even among Class II heirs, preference is given to the male line. If a couple does not have a child, the property of not only the husband but also of the wife goes to the husband's

Similarly, there is no uniform applicability of personal laws among Muslims and Christians. The Constitution protects the local customs of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram.

In fact, let's leave aside discriminatory personal laws; even land laws enacted after 1950 in a number of States are gender unjust. These laws have been exempted from judicial scrutiny and have been included in the Ninth Schedule.

No blueprint of a UCC has been prepared yet. No expert committees, like the Hindu Law Committee of 1941, has been constituted so far. Several provisions of codified Hindu law such as solemnisation of marriage, satpati, kanyadaan, the sacramental nature of marriage, income tax benefits for the Hindu joint family, and absolute testamentary powers may not find a place in the UCC. Provisions like dower (payment by husband) or nikahnama (prenuptial contract) are to be incorporated in the UCC. Will Hindus accept these changes?

Last year, the Law Commission had concluded that a UCC is neither desirable nor feasible. Indeed, it is best to enact a UCC in a piecemeal manner.

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# Science versus myths

Today historians have no power before politicians, who are not so much invested in truth as in legend



Rajputs appear in history roughly 1,200 years ago in regions now known as Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana, the Western Gangetic plains and Bundelkhand. For generations they have skilfully used bards, ballads and epic poetry to turn defeats at the northern frontiers of India into moral victories. Raputs lost to Ghazni about 1,000 years ago, to Ghori about 800 years ago, to Khilji about 700 years ago, to Babur and Akbar about 600 years ago. Yet we remember not their defeat, but their courage; pride; and the images of warriors voluntarily offering their heads to the goddess of war, of their brides burning themselves in pyre rather than surrendering to the enemy, of their loyal horses.

Legends about courage composed by poets, centuries after the events took place, must be textbook material, we are told, not facts about defeat collated by historians. Shouldn't textbooks be instruments to raise the next generation of patriots, like hagiographies of saints are used to bind sampradayas? Historians disagree, but they have no power before politicians, who need to bind people with a single narrative, and so are not so much invested in truth as in legend (inspiring memories, indifferent to facts) and myth (cultural truth that gives meaning to the world and life, indifferent to facts).

Controlling the discourse of a people

History as a subject based on scientific principles of measurement and evidence is barely 150 years old. In a short span it has become a serious force among people who wish to control the discourse of a people. At first, this was the priest with his access to transcendental, mystical and occult realms; then it was the king with his access to military, and later democratic, power; then the merchant, the entrepreneur, and the technocrat with control over economic power; and then the peasant and the worker, who had the numbers to replace regimes. Now it is the scientist – the historian, the economist, the sociologist, the anthropologist who uses measurement to present truths that are objective and ontological (independent of the human mind) rather than epistemic (shaped by the human mind). Naturally, priests, politicians and technocrats hate scientists; they yearn for the poets of yore.

A history of language reveals how meanings shift over time. The word 'myth' in the

19th century referred to falsehood of polytheism, paganism, and idolatry, as opposed to the 'truth' of monotheism. But today it refers to the cultural truth of a people. The Sanskrit word 'nyaya', which 2,000 years ago meant epistemology, refers today to justice in Hindi. And 'itihasa', which in Hindi today refers to history, meant narratives like the Ramayana and Mahabharata where the authors -Valmiki and Vyasa – are part of the story and hence can confidently say, 'thus indeed it happened' or 'itihasa', as opposed to 'purana' which are old chronicled narratives of gods, kings and sages that authors did not witness but heard from others.

#### When myths become history

But this meaning is lost to those who prefer myths, legend and sacred lore to scientific historiography. For them, Ramayana is history as is Prithviraj Raso that tells the story of Prithviraj Chauhan, who, while defeated by Mahmood Ghori in battlefield and blinded in prison, still managed to kill his captor using his extraordinary archery skills. It does not matter that Prithviraj Raso was composed 400 years after the event. Or that we know this story because James Tod, a captain in the East India Company, collated the stories that Rajput kings wanted to tell about themselves, and presented it as a book, Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan, highly criticised even in the 19th century, that practically 'invented' the Rajput we know today.

Today anything that does not correlate to Prithviraj Raso is seen as falsehood. Any argument might get the Karni Sena, which became infamous during the Padmavat controversy, at your doorstep. No textbook informs us how there are many conflicting stories about Prithviraj Chauhan not just in the Islamic-Persian narratives, which is understandable, but also in other Rajput and Jain legends. For example, how many of us know about Bela, his daughter, who wanted to marry Brahma, prince of Mahoba, who Prithviraj Chauhan did not approve of? The story comes from the great epic Alha, popular even today in Bundelkhand, where Jayachand is the king of Kannauj, and hardly the 'traitor' that Hindutva history insists he is. Alha speaks of how Rajputs fought amongst each other, how caste played a major role, overshadowing merit. It does not paint a flattering picture of Prithviraj Chauhan, as father or leader, and perhaps explains how Rajput infighting made India vulnerable to foreign invasion. But historians and poets who say such things will be silenced. For a king now decides what our past should be.

 $Devdutt\ Pattanaik\ writes\ and\ lectures\ on\ mythology\ in$ 

The Man Prindu.

Dangerous sweetness

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 30, 1969

In long and verse sweetness has through the

ages been equated with goodness but some

hard-hearted research scientists have now

found that one of the sweetest substances in

existence, the cyclamate, spells danger for

the consumer. Cyclamates are hydrocarbon

compounds 30 times sweeter than sugar

and since they are also non-fattening are be-

ing widely used as artificial sweeteners in

the preparation of low-calorie beverages,

confectionery, canned fruits and fruit juices.

In fact, in to-day's world of increasing calo-

rie-consciousness, the manufacture of dietary foods has become a billion-dollar (Rs.

750 crores) a year industry. Saccharine is

said to be 400 times sweeter than sugar but since it leaves a bitter aftertaste, makers of

dietary foods and beverages have gone in for

## India's Afghanistan conundrum

The U.S.'s current policy in Afghanistan puts India in a tough spot and Pakistan in a good place

MICHAEL KUGELMAN

Less than two months after U.S. President Donald Trump abruptly called off talks with the Taliban, Washington is laying the ground to resume them. That this is happening before Afghanistan has a new government – the results of its September 28 election are yet to be announced - underscores the administration's haste.

and voted against it; overlooked V.D.

U.S. officials are escalating battlefield pressure on the Taliban. This is part of a likely effort to soften up the insurgents and get them to return to the negotiating table and make concessions (read: ceasefire) that they refused to make the last time around.

Meanwhile, the U.S. special representative for Afghanistan reconciliation, Zalmay Khalilzad, has resumed his shuttle diplomacy. In recent days, he's held meetings on reconciliation with EU and NATO leaders. He also made a trip to Islamabad, which reportedly included a meeting with a Taliban delegation.

At the same time, Mr. Trump continues to telegraph his desire to pull troops from Afghanistan. Witness his recent decision to remove U.S. forces from Syria and his grumbling about "endless wars". With the 2020 U.S. presidential election fast approaching, a politically embattled Trump wants to be able to tell his base that he's bringing troops home.

The U.S.'s policy in Afghanistan is to resume talks with the Taliban and reach a troop withdrawal deal before Mr. Trump decides to initiate a unilateral withdrawal – that is, a removal of troops with no deal or ceasefire.

This won't be easy. The Taliban, unlike the U.S., has the luxury of being in no rush to reach a deal. It has little incentive to accede to Washington's likely demand of agreeing to a ceasefire before a troop withdrawal accord is signed, especially because doing so would deprive the Taliban of violence which serves as a powerful tool of leverage.

### In a tough spot

For India, the implications of the U.S.'s current policy in Afghanistan are stark: It puts India in a tough spot and Pakistan in a good place. If U.S. talks with the Taliban resume, this puts Afghanistan back on a reconciliation path that, if successively seen through, would produce a political settlement that features a powersharing arrangement with the Taliban. That's not a preferred endgame for India. If talks fail, an intensifying war means that Afghanistan would suffer rapid destabilisation, thereby constraining India's ability to operate in Afghanistan, a key strategic partner. Meanwhile, for Pakistan, a resumption of talks that produces a settlement, resulting in its Taliban ally occupying a political role, would work just fine. If Afghanistan falls into chaos, this would serve Islamabad's interests as well because the Taliban would grow even stronger and possibly seize power by force.

Even before Mr. Trump called off talks, Islamabad had an upper hand over New Delhi in Afghanistan. Pakistan was an instrumental facilitator of a U.S.-Taliban negotiation meant to lead to an eventual outcome – a Taliban power-sharing deal - that would have served Islamabad's interests. India, meanwhile, was left on the outside looking in, while Kabul, its key partner, was excluded from the talks. In fact, New Delhi's dilution of Article 370 may have been, at least in part, an effort to push back against Islamabad's upper hand in Afghanistan.

### **Difficult decisions**

In the coming months, New Delhi could have some difficult decisions to make. If the situation continues to deteriorate, with no end to the war in sight, India will need to figure out how to secure its interests in a country where it has a significant footprint. If talks resume, it will need to decide how or if it should try to play a role in them. Finally, if there is a reconciliation process and the trend lines point towards a settlement resulting in a Taliban power-sharing role, New Delhi will need to weigh whether it's worth trying to engage with its bitter rival's powerful asset. These are tough questions. But then again, when it comes to policy in Afghanistan, nothing is easy.

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### **DATA POINT**

### **Cramped jails** As of 2017, the occupancy rate in Indian jails crossed 115% indicating overcrowding of

prisons. This was an improvement from 2007, when the rate was more than 140%. With several States improving the capacity of prisons to match the increase in inmates, the rate decreased, but it still remained high as some States are still to catch up. By Vignesh R

State of affairs | In 16 out of the 28 States considered\*,

the prison occupancy rate was >100% as of 2017. However, it improved in 20 States and worsened in the rest **↑** -80 Occupancy rate = 100% POINTS) CHANGE IN RATE SINCE 0 0 20 200 OCCUPANCY RATE IN 2017 (%)

\*Undivided Andhra Pradesh was considered

Decadal CAPACITY (IN '000) INMATE POPULATION (IN '000) difference OCCUPANCY RATE (%) (RIGHT-AXIS) Between 2007 and 2017, inmate population increased by 20% 100 while jail capacity rose by 41% 20 across prisons, thereby reducing the occupancy rate of prisoners 2017

Demand and supply | Graph shows % growth of jail capacity against % growth of inmate population between 2007 and 2017 In these States, the increase In these States, there was a demand-supply mismatch similar growth in capacity Chhattisgarh  $\leftarrow$ . (2007 TO 2017) . 9 8 60 INMATE POP. IN % 40 Maharashtra 20 Average Gujarat GROWTH -20 20 -20 40 60 80 100 GROWTH IN PRISON CAPACITY IN % (2007 TO 2017)

cvclamates. The United States is the biggest user of cyclamates, 10,000 tons a year.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 30, 1919

### Corporal Punishment.

The following is the full text of the order passed by the Police Magistrate, Colombo, in the cases in which Mr. H.D. Jayasuriya charged Miss. M.A.S. Choate Principal of the Methodist girls School, Colpetty, with voluntarily causing hurt to his daughter by giving her twenty cuts with a cane on the 30th ultimo: - In this case it is admitted that the accused, Miss Choate, Principal of the Colpetty Methodist Girls' College, gave Irene Jayasuriya a public caning on the 30th ultimo, giving her 20 cuts with a cane on her thighs... Irene Jayasuriya is eleven years old and appears to me to be rather a frail child. Miss Choate says she was justified in giving Irene the caning she did, as the offence she committed was, in her opinion, a very serious one indeed viz., corrupting the other young girls in the school by telling them ugly things about her form teacher, Miss. Herft. In support of her contention she has produced the documents B,C, D and E which purport to contain statements made to her by other girls in the school of what Irene had been telling them. These documents are inadmissible in evidence for the purpose of proving such statements as the girls who wrote them have not been called as witness. Had they been called the cross-examination might have elicited the fact that they were obtained under compulsion or pressure by a School Principal from her pupils.

Source: NCRB 2017