



THE EDITORIAL PAGE

ECONOMY: A CRISIS OF CREDIBILITY
BY PRATAP BHANU MEHTA
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Rajasthan HC quashes case against Pehlu Khan, sons

HAMZA KHAN
JAIPUR, OCTOBER 30

THE RAJASTHAN High Court on Wednesday quashed a case of illegal transportation of cattle for slaughter against Pehlu Khan, a dairy farmer who was beaten to death by a mob of gau rakshaks in April 2017, his two sons, and the owner of the pick-up truck in which they were travelling.

"A bench of Justice Pankaj Bhandari quashed the FIR and the chargesheet against Pehlu Khan, his two sons (Arif and Irshad), as well as the owner of the pick-up (Khan Mohammad)," said advocate Kapil Gupta, who was representing the three.

"The FIR was registered against them under The Rajasthan Bovine Animal (Prohibition of Slaughter and Regulation of Temporary Migration or Export) Act,

1995. After investigation, police submitted the chargesheet against Arif, Irshad and Khan Mohammad. Police said they had found evidence against Pehlu Khan too but since he had died, the chargesheet did not name him," Gupta said.

"We prayed to the court to quash the FIR and the chargesheet on the ground that there is no evidence that the

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CZECH REPUBLIC

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Everyone should accept Ayodhya verdict with an open mind, says RSS

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 30

DAYS AFTER Prime Minister Narendra Modi reminded the country how the "government, political parties, social organisations, civil society, representatives of all sects" prevented attempts to create fissures in 2010 following the Allahabad High Court ruling on the Ayodhya title suits, the RSS Wednesday said "everyone should accept" the Supreme Court verdict in the matter with an "open mind".

A Constitution Bench, after hearing appeals against the

WhatsApp confirms: Israeli spyware was used to snoop on Indian journalists, activists

SEEMA CHISHTI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 30

FACEBOOK-OWNED platform WhatsApp, in a startling revelation, has said journalists and human rights activists in India have been targets of surveillance by operators using Israeli spyware Pegasus.

The disclosure follows a lawsuit filed Tuesday in a US federal court in San Francisco in which WhatsApp alleged that the Israeli

NSO Group targeted some 1,400 WhatsApp users with Pegasus.

While WhatsApp declined to reveal the identities and "exact number" of those targeted for surveillance in India, its US-based Director (Communications) Carl Woog told *The Indian Express* that WhatsApp was aware of those targeted and had contacted each one of them.

"Indian journalists and human rights activists have been the target of surveillance and while I cannot reveal their



Carl Woog, WhatsApp Director. US Army photo

identities and the exact number, I can say that it is not an insignificant number," Woog said.

It is learnt that at least two dozen academics, lawyers, Dalit activists and journalists in India were contacted and alerted by WhatsApp that their phones had been under state-of-the-art surveillance for a two-week period until May 2019.

In the lawsuit against the NSO Group and QCyber Technologies, WhatsApp alleged that the companies violated US and California

laws as well as WhatsApp's terms of service which prohibit this type of abuse. It claimed that smartphones were penetrated through missed calls alone.

"We believe this attack targeted at least 100 members of civil society which is an unmistakable pattern of abuse. This number may grow higher as more victims come forward," it said.

The NSO Group, in a statement, said: "In the strongest

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Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman in Riyadh on Tuesday. PTI

SILENT ON INDO-PAK TALKS

Delhi and Riyadh underline: Reject all interference in internal affairs

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 30

IN A marked departure from the one they issued in February this year, the joint statement by New Delhi and Riyadh Tuesday made no mention on the resumption of dialogue between India and Pakistan.

In the joint statement issued Tuesday after the bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Saudi King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, the two sides reiterated their "categorical rejection of all forms of interference in the internal affairs of countries", and the need for the international community to fulfil its responsibilities towards "preventing any attacks on the sovereignty of States".

While New Delhi views this as an oblique reference to Pakistan meddling in Kashmir, Saudis interpret this as Iran's

interference in their affairs.

The February joint statement, issued after Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's visit to India, had a full paragraph on India-Pakistan relations: "The two sides stressed the importance of regional stability and good neighbouring relations. His Royal Highness appreciated consistent efforts made by Prime Minister Modi since May 2014 including Prime Minister's personal initiatives to have friendly relations with Pakistan. In this context, both sides agreed on the need for creation of conditions necessary for resumption of the comprehensive dialogue between India and Pakistan."

Tuesday's joint statement was silent on India-Pakistan ties or a dialogue. And unlike February, when the joint statement said that the Prime Minister and His Royal Highness "condemned in the strongest

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PDP'S BEIG WHO MET NSA: AGREEMENT ON AN AGENDA CAN LEAD TO NEW PLATFORM OR REVIVE OLD ONE

J&K becomes UT today amid attempts to create space for political alternative in Valley

BASHAARAT MASOOD
SRINAGAR, OCTOBER 30

A NEW political alternative being catalyzed by the Centre is starting to take shape in Kashmir with some senior leaders such as PDP patron and former Deputy Chief Minister Muzaffar Hussain Beig and several young aspiring politicians ready to look beyond the abrogation of Article 370, and willing to start afresh a dialogue with the people and engage with New Delhi.

The first signs were visible when a group comprising three prominent politicians, some businessmen and activists met an unofficial delegation of Members of European Parliament (MEPs) at a lunch hosted by National Security Advisor (NSA) Ajit Doval in New Delhi Monday.

It is early days, but the Centre hopes this will restart conversations and slowly fill the political void created following the arrest of almost all notable politicians and prominent workers of mainstream parties in the Valley including the BJP's closest ally People's Conference. The Centre said these arrests were necessary in the wake of the August 5 decision to do away with the special status accorded to Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcate the state into two Union Territories on October 31.

Besides Beig, those who made it to the NSA's lunch

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A soldier consoles migrant labourers in Kulgam. Shuaib Masoodi

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‘One after another, the bodies fell... I don’t know how I am alive’

ATRI MITRA & ADIL AKHZER
MURSHIDABAD, KULGAM, OCTOBER 30

WHEN THE burst of gunfire ended in Kulgam on Tuesday, Jahiruddin (25) was left for dead. But he lived to tell the story of his survival to his wife back home in Sagardighi, in Murshidabad.

Jahiruddin, who married Paramita Bibi about two months ago, had left for Kashmir to work in the apple orchards and paddy

fields during the ongoing harvest season (October-December). But he, along with his fellow villagers, came in the crosshairs of militants on Tuesday — the sixth attack in a string of incidents targeting non-residents in South Kashmir after the Centre's decision to scrap J&K's special status under Article 370.

Jahiruddin was among the six labourers from West Bengal who were led out of their rented accommodation by militants in Kulgam district, and

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WORLD



BREXIT: JOHNSON WINS HOUSE NOD FOR POLLS

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MAY DROP TIPU SULTAN CHAPTER FROM SCHOOL BOOKS: BSY PAGE 9

As Delhi gasped for air, Punjab saw 3,105 farm fires in one day

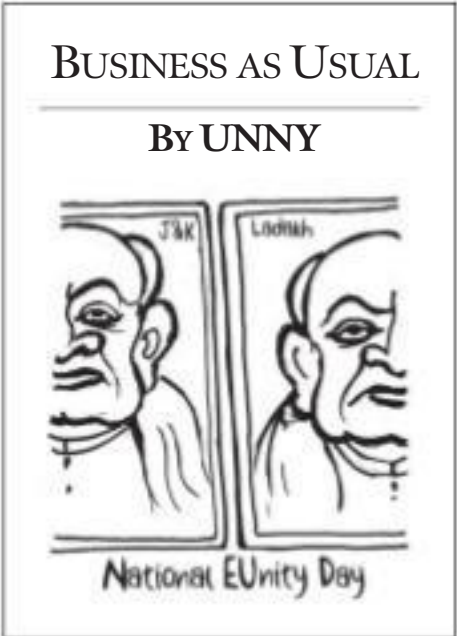
MAN AMAN SINGH CHHINA
CHANDIGARH, OCTOBER 30

FARM FIRES in Punjab peaked a day after Diwali, October 28, with 3,105 instances of paddy crop residue burning being reported from across the state in a single day. That and the fallout of firecrackers in Delhi has taken the air quality index (AQI) in the national capital to 'severe' levels — on Wednesday, it stood at 419.

The worsening air quality sparked a war of words between Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Punjab counterpart Captain Amarinder Singh.

At a press conference

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NASA's Fire Information for Resource Management System highlights farm fires in Punjab, Haryana

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EXPLAINED
Pointing to the neighbours

THE EFFECT of farm fires on pollution in the National Capital Region has taken a political colour, with the Delhi Chief Minister saying the governments in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh aren't doing enough to address the problem. Whether his appeals to neighbours have an impact remains to be seen.

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE
MUMBAI, OCTOBER 30

ENGAGED IN a tussle over power sharing in Maharashtra for about a week now, both the BJP and Shiv Sena signalled a softening of stand on Wednesday. While the BJP is learnt to have offered the Deputy Chief Minister's post along with 13 to 15 ministerial berths, the Shiv Sena, which has been aggressively pushing for rotational chief ministership, signalled a climbdown.

Responding to a question on government formation, Sena president Uddhav Thackeray said, "We will try to get whatever is best possible".

Sena MP Sanjay Raut, who had earlier voiced his party's demand for equal share in power, said it was necessary for the party to stay in the BJP-led alliance in the larger interest of Maharashtra, but without compromising on "respect".



Fadnavis in Mumbai on Wednesday. Ganesh Shirsekar

"Individuals are not important but the state's interest is important. Decisions need to be taken in a calm manner and keeping in mind the state's interest," he said.

Highly placed sources in the BJP said that besides the Deputy Chief Minister's post, the Shiv Sena has been offered important portfolios like the public works department (PWD), rural development, industries and health.

The BJP, however, has made it clear that it will not part with the Chief Minister's post. It is also

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PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SEEMA CHISHTI
NEW DELHI, OCTOBER 30

A DAY after he was appointed the next Chief Justice of India, Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde, the most senior judge in the Supreme Court after CJI Ranjan Gogoi who retires on November 17, spoke to *The Indian Express* on his priorities, ideas and the road ahead.

What is your Idea of Justice?

The common notion is that justice must be in accordance with law. But there is an element in justice called equity. Equity is

different. Equity is something you consider where does truth lie, what is the hardship that will be caused to litigants, what is the larger goal that will be achieved. So for instance, the law is that if by setting aside the impugned order, you will restore an order which is illegal, then you don't set it aside. Balance. So people normally mix up equity and justice.

There have been many different phases in the life of the Supreme Court since 1950... the dark phase of the Emergency, then the activism-phase of the 1990s. How do you see the role of

Supreme Court in a democracy?

The most important role is upholding the rule of law. And this is something which I even heard as the most important thing at a conference in Istanbul where many nations, which did not have a system like ours, but suffered a lot because of political upheaval. They said the most important thing a Constitutional court should do is uphold the rule of law. I think this is a universally recognised goal.

In 2019, what is the role of the Supreme Court in India?

Well, it can't be different

‘Stop short of making rapid changes in areas where (court) does not have adequate knowledge... Justice Venkatchaliah told me... the slope of a drain should not be made steep suddenly because then the water will flow away and leave the rubbish behind’



Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde tries out his new camera at his residence in New Delhi on Wednesday. Tashi Tobgyal

from what I said about the rule of law. So the Court has to uphold the rule of law. Stop short of making rapid changes in areas where it does not have adequate knowledge, where it cannot foresee the consequences. Justice (M N) Venkatchaliah told me something very interesting in a conversation. He said the slope of a drain should not be made steep suddenly because then the water will flow away and leave the rubbish behind.

Other than clearing pendency, what will be your topmost priority when you assume office on November 18?

It might sound very blasé or very pedantic, but I think the only *raison d'être* for the judicial system is justice. All other steps are intended to achieve that. And priorities change. But I do want to use technology judiciously, to make life in the court rooms easier for all concerned.

Liberty, Equality and Fraternity: which is the one India needs more of today?

There is a lot of mix-up in terminology. For example, liberty is mixed up with licence/license. Equality is mixed up with pulling down people, fraternity is used

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