



International bookie
Sayyam arrested in
KPL match fixing case
page 8



Rajkumar Meghen,
leader of Manipur-based
extremist group, freed
page 9



U.S. court refuses to
ban work permits for
spouses of H-1B workers
page 14

Chahar's incredible
spell helps India
win the third T20I
page 20



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NEARBY
Talks fail, lawyers to
continue strike

NEW DELHI
Protesting lawyers will
continue to abstain from
work on Monday as a meeting
between members of all
district courts' associations,
representatives of the Delhi
Police and L-G Anil Baijal on
Sunday failed to come up
with any resolution.

CITY ► PAGE 3

**No odd-even in city
today, tomorrow**

NEW DELHI
The odd-even scheme
introduced to combat air
pollution levels in the city will
be suspended for two days on
Monday and Tuesday on
account of the 550th Prakash
Parv of Guru Nanak Dev.

CITY ► PAGE 4

After BJP opts out, Governor invites Sena

BJP accuses Uddhav of disrespecting mandate for pre-poll alliance, Sena leaders go into huddle

ALOK DESHPANDE
TANVI DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Governor Bha-
gat Singh Koshyari on Sun-
day asked the Shiv Sena to in-
dicate its willingness and
ability to form a government
in the State, after the Bharati-
ya Janata Party (BJP), the sin-
gle largest party, announced
that it does not have the
numbers.

The invitation to the Shiv
Sena comes against the back-
drop of the BJP accusing it of
disrespecting the mandate
given by the people to the
pre-poll alliance of the two
parties. Mr. Koshyari, who
was informed by the BJP
about its inability to form a
government, then invited
the leader of the Shiv Sena,
Eknath Shinde. Following
this, Shiv Sena leaders got in-
to a huddle at the Thackeray
residence, Matoshree.

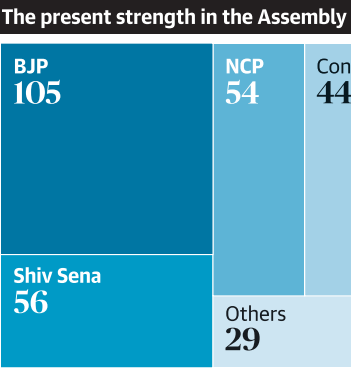
“Yesterday, Devendra Fad-
navis was called upon to ex-
press his willingness and
ability to form [a] govern-
ment. However, today, he
has shown unwillingness.

Crisis deepens

A look at the Assembly
strength and the
possible scenarios for
government formation following
the BJP's refusal

**The mandate
of the people
was for the BJP-Shiv
Sena alliance. The
Shiv Sena has disre-
spected that, hence
we have decided to
not stake claim**

CHANDRAKANT PATIL
Maharashtra BJP president



Four possible scenarios:

- 1 Shiv Sena + NCP +
Congress +
Independents/others
- 2 Shiv Sena + NCP +
Independents/others
(with the Congress
supporting from outside)
- 3 Shiv Sena + NCP +
Independents/others
(with the Congress boy-
cotting the trust vote)
- 4 President's rule

BJP State president
Chandrakant Patil,
along with party leaders
Sudhir Mungtivar,
Pankaja Munde, Ashish
Shelar and Girish
Mahajan, addressing the
media on Sunday. • PTI

The Governor has, therefore,
asked the leader of the elect-
ed members of the second
largest party, Shiv Sena, Shri
Eknath Shinde, to convey its
willingness and ability to
form the government to
him,” a release from Raj Bha-
van said.

Earlier, the BJP blamed

the Shiv Sena for not being
able to form the government
in spite of the mandate given
by the electorate.

Last-minute attempts

Announcing the decision af-
ter meeting Mr. Koshyari at
Raj Bhavan, Maharashtra BJP
president Chandrakant Patil

accused the Shiv Sena of dis-
respecting the people's man-
date. The decision came af-
ter daylong deliberations of
the State BJP's core commit-
tee at Mr. Fadnavis's official
residence, and last-minute
attempts to contact the Shiv
Sena, which is firm that the
Chief Minister's post should

be shared by the two parties
for 2.5 years each.

Wishes Sena good luck

“The mandate of the people
of Maharashtra was for the
BJP-Shiv Sena alliance. The
Shiv Sena has disrespected
that, hence we have decided
to not stake claim to form go-
vernment. We have con-
veyed our decision to Gover-
nor Koshyari,” Mr. Patil
announced.

The BJP wished the Shiv
Sena good luck, if it went on
to form the government with
the help of the Nationalist
Congress Party (NCP) and
the Congress, ignoring the
mandate, he said.
In the 288-member As-
sembly, the BJP won 105
seats, emerging as the single
largest party, but falling
short of the majority mark of
145. The Shiv Sena with 56
seats came second, while the
NCP and the Congress won
54 and 44 respectively.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12
CONGRESS TO SIT OUT IN
MAHARASHTRA ► PAGE 13



The way forward: NSA Ajit Doval interacting with religious
leaders at a meeting in New Delhi on Sunday. • PTI

Ayodhya ruling: Doval meets religious leaders

Invites sent out three days earlier

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

National Security Adviser
Ajit Doval met a group of
Hindu and Muslim “reli-
gious leaders and intellec-
tuals” at his residence here
on Sunday, a day after the
Supreme Court allowed the
construction of a Ram tem-
ple at the site where the Ba-
bri Masjid stood in Ayodhya.

A joint statement issued
by Mr. Doval and those who
attended the meeting,
including members
of the Vishwa

Hindu Parishad and the All
India Muslim Majlis-e-Mush-
awrat, said: “Those attend-
ing the meeting were alive to
the fact that certain anti-na-
tional and hostile elements
...may attempt to exploit the
situation to harm our na-
tional interest.”

The invites were sent out
three days ago, one of the
participants told *The Hindu*.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 12
PEACE AND JUSTICE
► EDITORIAL

n Sunday disallowed gath-
erings of the faithful at the
Hazratbal Mosque in Srina-
gar on the occasion of Milad-
un-Nabi, the birth anniver-
sary of Prophet
Muhammad.

All entry points to the
mosque were closed for traf-
fic. This move stopped the

my living memory that such
a thin attendance of wor-
shippers was observed on
the auspicious occasion in
Kashmir. Only locals living
in nearby areas turned up
for the night-long prayers
and the daytime customary
display of holy relics, which

evotees,” said Yaqoob Qu-
reshi, a retired teacher who
has been attending the con-
gregational prayers at the
shrine since 1990.

Noon prayers

Around 2,000 worshippers,
including women from
nearby places, managed to

r, the Hazratbal shrine wit-
nesses a gathering of more
than 50,000 devotees on
the occasion.

“We were appraised by
the security agencies befo-
rehand and cautioned
against any major gather-
ings,” a caretaker said.

The police said there

centuries-old congregation
was not allowed.

Earlier, on the occasion of
Khawaja Diger, where men
and women hold joint
prayers at the Naqshband
Sahib shrine, security forces
sealed the shrine and disal-
lowed any prayers.

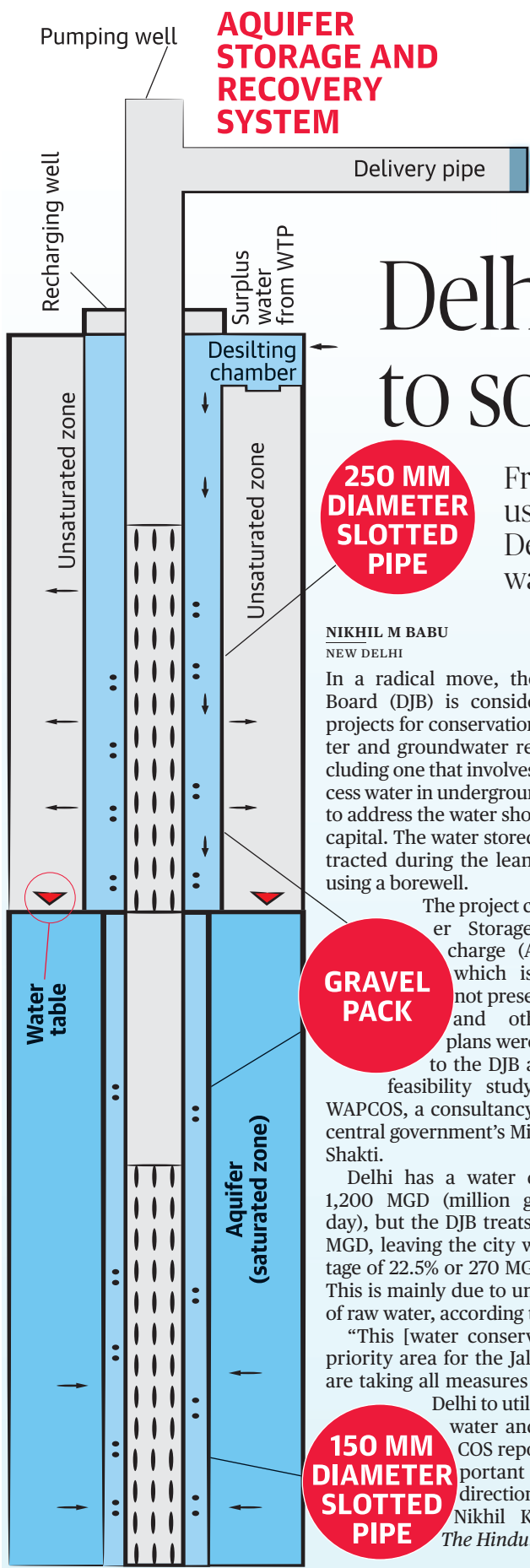
aiyer Seshan, who cracked
the whip on money and
muscle power in elections
and proved a nemesis for
political parties, died here
around 9.15 p.m. on Sunday.
He was 87. His wife, Jaya-
lakshmi, predeceased him
early last year.

A family member told

n Alwarpet. His final rites
are expected to be per-
formed on Monday evening.
Mr. Seshan was the only
one to hold the post of CEC
for six years from 1990 to
1996 in the last 50 years.

THE MAN WHO CLEANED UP
THE ELECTORAL SYSTEM
► PAGE 13

he ‘very severe’ cyclone
‘Bulbul’, which barrelled
through the coastal dis-
tricts of West Bengal before
hurtling towards Bangla-
desh, claimed 10 lives in
the State. In Odisha, heavy
rain and high-velocity
winds claimed two lives.
DETAILS ON ► PAGE 9



How it works			
● Excess water from Yamuna, urban storm water run-off, or treated water will be collected and treated through sand filter	● It will be then stored in underground aquifers through ASR wells, instead of tanks	● A portion of the water will recharge the underground water and the rest can be pumped out during lean period	● The Delhi Jal Board is planning to use existing borewells for the pilot project

Delhi looks underground to solve water shortage

From storing excess water underground in aquifers to using runoff water from city roads to recharge groundwater, Delhi Jal Board is looking at different projects to solve 22.5% water shortage the city faces

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

In a radical move, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) is considering eight projects for conservation of rainwater and groundwater recharge, including one that involves storing excess water in underground aquifers, to address the water shortage in the capital. The water stored can be extracted during the lean season by using a borewell.

The project called Aquifer Storage and Recharge (ASR) wells, which is currently not present in Delhi, and other seven plans were submitted to the DJB as part of a feasibility study done by WAPCOS, a consultancy under the central government's Ministry of Jal Shakti.

Delhi has a water demand of 1,200 MGD (million gallons per day), but the DJB treats about 930 MGD, leaving the city with a shortage of 22.5% or 270 MGD of water. This is mainly due to unavailability of raw water, according to the DJB.

"This [water conservation] is a priority area for the Jal board. We are taking all measures possible in Delhi to utilise the rainwater and the WAPCOS report is an important step in that direction," DJB CEO Nikhil Kumar told *The Hindu*.

CITY MATTERS

On October 30, officials of the DJB had a meeting with WAPCOS about the projects. "We asked them to submit a phase-wise plan to implement the project," a DJB official, who is privy to the development, said.

ASR wells

An aquifer is a water-bearing zone and under the project, excess water will be stored in aquifers, instead of tanks, through a well. The water can be extracted using the same well or a different one during lean period.

"Water is to be injected during wet periods [monsoon] and it would displace the naturally present water in the aquifer occupying a volume around the well," a document about the project read.

WAPCOS had told the DJB that pilot ASR demonstration projects need to be carried out by harvesting excess water from the Yamuna, urban storm water runoff or treated water. "The raw water is to be collected in tanks and then treated by slow and rapid sand filter," the document said about the process to be followed before injecting the water into the aquifer.

"There was a meeting on November 1 with different wings of the DJB

where it was discussed that we look into the use of existing borewells in our Okhla water treatment plant for the project. We are still working on the finer details," the official said.

WAPCOS had submitted a draft feasibility study in May and will complete the study by November 30. According to the document, WAPCOS has proposed 80 such ASR wells in different parts of the city.

Rainwater harvesting

Another project submitted by WAPCOS is recharging groundwater using modular rainwater harvesting tanks, which will be installed underground along 1,209 city road stretches and selected flyovers.

The tanks would collect runoff water, which otherwise flows into the drains. The tanks would purify the water before it recharges the groundwater table. "The on-the-site installation of detention system is both cost-effective and a durable solution for preventing urban flood risks," the document said.

The other projects include rainwater harvesting in parks, schools, and sports complexes, and creation of check dams among others.

According to WAPCOS, the pilot projects could be started by January 2020 and they can become operational by June 2021. The total cost of the eight projects would be ₹700.4 crore.

"We are looking to implement some of the projects before the next monsoon," the CEO added.

No HC relief for MBBS aspirant with disability

High Court says standards of MCI set by experts

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Refusing to meddle with rules framed by the Medical Council of India, the Delhi High Court has declined the plea of an MBBS aspirant, with 85% disability, challenging regulations that bar persons suffering from locomotor disability in excess of 80% to be eligible for admission in medicine course.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar said they are unable to come to the aid of Rakshit Yadav, who had successfully cleared the NEET-UG 2019 examination.

Mr. Yadav, who belongs to the Other Backward Classes (OBC), had sought admission in the MBBS course in University College of Medical Sciences (UCMS), under the Persons with Disability (PWD) quota.

As per MCI's rules, a candidate needs to obtain two Disability Certificates before being allowed to join the MBBS course under the PWD category.

In the first instance, all candidates, who consider themselves eligible for admission under the PWD category, are required to get themselves examined at any government medical college, district hospital or government hospital.

Thereafter, in case of their selection under the PWD category, the candidates are required to produce a disability certificate from a Disability Assessment Board.

In view of the requirements, Mr. Yadav ap-



proached the Vardhman Mahavir Medical College and Safdarjung (VMMC) Hospital, which certified that he was suffering from 'Post Encephalitis Sequelae with weakness of left upper limb', to the extent of 85%.

As the extent of disability was certified as more than 80%, he was made ineligible for admission to medical/dental courses, as per the MCI guidelines.

In his plea, Mr. Yadav had sought that the Disability Certificate issued by VMMC Hospital be quashed.

Medical authority

The HC, however, said that no court of law can quash a Disability Certificate issued by a competent medical authority. Mr. Yadav had also sought for a medical board to be constituted to examine the extent of his disability. The HC then constituted a medical board at the AIIMS, which also opined against Mr. Yadav's entitlement to undertake the MBBS course.

The High Court further declined to strike down

MCI's First Amendment Regulations, and the Second Amendment Regulations which mandate that only persons suffering from disability, between 40% and 80% were eligible for the benefit of PWD category.

'Best interest in mind'

"While we do not intend, in any manner, to doubt the capability of the petitioner (Mr. Yadav), and appreciate his achievements, despite his unfortunate physical limitations, the standards set by the regulations framed by the MCI, are set by experts, keeping the best interests of the man who treats, as well as the man who is treated, in mind," the Bench remarked.

"In matters involving medical education, courts are required to exercise a considerably greater degree of circumspection. The element of public interest, which is pre-eminent in such cases, can never be ignored... We cannot profess to greater wisdom than the framers of the said regulations," it said.

'Releasing photos, details of Asha Kiran inmates breach of privacy'

Plea in HC challenges Delhi govt.'s decision to publish data

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked the city government to respond to a petition challenging its decision to disclose photographs and IQ scores of 59 mentally-challenged women lodged in Asha Kiran homes in the Capital.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar issued the notice on a plea by NGO Prahari Sahyog Association, which has contended that releasing the photographs and IQ scores of the women amounts to "discrimination".

The HC also questioned the purpose behind the display of Intelligence Quotient (IQ) scores of the women in the advertisement published in newspapers.

The Delhi government's counsel told the High Court that the purpose behind the advertisement was to reunite the women with their families.

The High Court queried how the families were to



The petition has also sought a direction to the Delhi government to compensate the 59 women whose identities were revealed as a result of the advertisement

identify the women on the basis of IQ scores.

The petition has also contended that the advertisement violates provisions of the Right of Persons With Disabilities (RPWD) Act and the United Nations Convention on Rights of Persons

with Disabilities (UNCPRD), which prohibit the release of the identity of such individuals.

The petition has contended that the government's decision violates the right to privacy and dignity of the 59 women. It said that one of the women was admitted to an Asha Kiran home in 1971.

The NGO, which claims to fight for the upliftment of fundamental and civil rights of Persons With Disabilities (PWD), has sought directions to the Centre to frame guidelines to trace families of the women living in Asha Kiran homes and to protect the privacy of such individuals.

It has also sought a direction to the Delhi government to compensate the 59 women whose identities were revealed as a result of the advertisement.

The petition has also urged the court to direct the Delhi government to take action against officials who issued the advertisement in violation of the RPWD Act.

DSGMC to set up 550-bed hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) on Sunday announced its plan to set up a 550-bed charitable hospital adjacent to Gurdwara Bala Sahib near Sarai Kale Khan. The construction will start on November 17 to commemorate the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev.

DSGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa said that the hospital will cost ₹550 crore and will provide free or low-cost medical care to those in need.

"It will have a complete range of medical specialties, super-specialities and Centres of Excellence with multi-disciplinary health professionals and other facilities," Mr. Sirsa said.

He added that the hospital will run a 100-seat medical college and a 60-seat nursing college to meet the growing demand of the healthcare sector.

Mr. Sirsa said that the construction of different structures/blocks of the hospital will be ready in the next two years and the medical college will admit its first batch by 2022.

DELHI TODAY

Talk: Illustrated lecture on "Jainism in Early Bengal: Archaeological Perspective" by Shri Shubha Majumdar, Deputy Superintending Archaeologist, Archaeological Survey of India, Kolkata Circle at Conference Room - I, India International Centre, 6:30 p.m.

Dance: "Appa Deepo Bhava / Be the Light unto yourself" a dance production highlights the role of the four women whose presence proved to be significant at different moments in Gautam Buddha's journey to enlightenment - Yashodhara, Nartaki, Sujata and Amrapali will be performed by Dr. Sonal Mansingh & CID Repertory Group at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

Exhibition: "Ethereal Harmony", an exhibition of recent paintings by Tanu Yadav, curated by Mohan Singh at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. (Mail your listings for this column at cityed@delhi@thehindu.co.in)

Birthday celebrations



A procession celebrating Id-e-Milad-ul-Nabi, birthday of Prophet Muhammad, makes its way through Old Delhi on Sunday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

■ ASHOK KUMAR

Honda plant in Manesar shut indefinitely as strike enters sixth day

Contractual workers have been protesting since Nov. 5 after 200 employees were retrenched; company had cited slowdown for downsizing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

The Honda Motorcycles and Scooters India (HMSI) Private Limited's plant at Manesar Sector 3 here has been shut indefinitely in view of the ongoing strike by contractual workers, which entered its sixth day on Sunday. Meanwhile, talks are on between the management and the union leaders to find a solution.

The company's management, through a notice on Sunday, informed that the plant would remain closed till further intimation. Production of the plant has been hit ever since around 2,000 contractual workers sat on *dhar-na* inside the company's premises on November 5, a day after 200 contractual work-



Protesting workers at the Honda Motorcycles and Scooters India Private Limited's plant in Manesar; around 100 police personnel have been deployed inside the plant premises.

■ ASHOK KUMAR

ers were retrenched.

While one of the three shifts remained shut on November 6, the company decided to shut 'B' and 'C' shifts the next day. The management had declared November 8 and 9 as holidays.

HMSI Employees' Union president Suresh Gaur said talks are being held with the management and labour department officials to break the stalemate, but a solution could not be found. He said that another round of talks



will be held on Monday. Mr. Gaur said the permanent workers were also helping the protesting staff by way of supplying them food and other essential commodities.

More than 600 contractual workers, mostly retrenched

over the past few months, are holding a simultaneous *dhar-na* outside the company premises.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Mansarovar) Rajesh Kumar told *The Hindu* that around 100 police personnel

were deployed inside the company premises and the police had been keeping a close eye on the situation. Initially, 300 personnel were deployed, but the force was partially withdrawn for deployment in the city in view of the Supreme Court verdict on Ayodhya land title case.

Support pours in

Meanwhile, several political leaders, including Congress' Rewari MLA Chiranjeev Yadav, have visited the protesting workers over the past few days to express solidarity.

Mr. Yadav, who visited the workers on November 8, offered full support and said that he and his party were with them.

He said that it was wrong

to dismiss the workers citing economic slowdown. His father and senior Congress leader Ajay Yadav also visited the workers on Saturday.

Former Jannayak Janta Party leader and sacked BSF jawan Tej Bahadur also addressed the agitating workers on Sunday outside the company and advised them not to give up their fight till their demands were met. He said the hardships faced by them were temporary, but if they gave up their protest they would suffer lifelong. He advised the workers to video record any police action against them saying that it was admissible as evidence in the court.

Many workers' unions have also pledged support to the workers.

Electoral roll for State polls to be out on January 6

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The final electoral roll for the Delhi Assembly elections will be published on January 6, 2020, said Election Commission of India officials at a recent meeting with State officials to discuss and review preparedness for the polls.

With the term of the current legislative Assembly expiring on February 22, 2020, the elections are likely to be held in the second half of January, said sources.

In the meeting on November 4, various aspects of election preparedness were reviewed with officials from local bodies, law enforcement agencies and Delhi election officials.

The District Election Officials have been told to get eligible citizens enrolled by January 1 during the special summary revision exercise 2020. The draft electoral roll will be published on November 15 and a meeting of all political parties in the city has been called on the same day.

Meanwhile, among steps to be taken ahead of the polls, the officials have been asked to carry out vulnerability mapping to identify anti-social elements, develop a plan to mitigate undue influence upon vulnerable voters, identify expenditure-sensitive pockets and prepare to monitor expenditure by political parties and candidates, inspect polling stations to ensure accessibility and availability of various basic facilities.

Two held for smuggling gold at IGIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Two persons were arrested at Delhi airport in separate incidents for allegedly trying to smuggle in gold worth about ₹50 lakh, said officials on Sunday.

The man (56) was intercepted after his arrival from Auckland to Delhi via Bangkok on Saturday, they said.

A detailed personal and baggage search of the passenger resulted in the recovery of different gold items, two diamond-studded gold rings, all were worn by him, and 12 gold bars concealed in a black handbag, a statement read. All these gold items weighing 627g and having a market value of ₹26.76 lakh were seized from him.

On Friday, a 44-year-old Tajikistan national who arrived from Istanbul to Delhi was intercepted by the Customs officials and gold worth ₹24.49 lakh was seized from her, said officials.

Lawyers’ strike to continue as meet fails to resolve issue

Representatives of police, court associations met at L-G’s house on Sunday

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Protesting lawyers will continue to abstain from work on Monday as a meeting between the members of all district courts’ associations, representatives of the Delhi Police and L-G Anil Bajjal on Sunday failed to come up with any resolution.

The meeting was held on the orders of the High Court.

“Despite our cooperation, no concrete step has been taken to arrest the police personnel who fired at advocates. So, there will be complete abstinence from work at all district courts. Our demand was that the policemen who fired at the advocates be arrested. The police opposed it. So we will continue boycotting work,” said Dhir Singh Kasana, general secretary of the coordination committee of All District Courts Bar Associations.



A clash broke out between policemen and lawyers on November 3 allegedly over a parking issue. ■ FILE PHOTO

However, the police said that during the discussion, it was explained by them that since a judicial enquiry was under way, further action should be taken only on the basis of the outcome of the enquiry.

Mr. Bajjal also appealed to the police and the lawyers to continue holding talks to resolve the issues amicably. “A team of senior officers of the Delhi Police has been constituted for opening dialogues

with the lawyers’ bodies in compliance with the Delhi High Court’s direction. A meeting was held by both the parties on Sunday evening in the presence of the L-G,” the police said.

An hour-long meeting

The meeting, which went on for an hour at the L-G’s residence, was attended by Special Commissioners of Police Satish Golcha and Praver Ranjan; Joint Commissioner

Devesh Srivastava; Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Monika Bhardwaj, Bar Council of India Chairman Manan Kumar Mishra; and all the members of the coordination committee the of All District Courts Bar Associations.

Earlier, a meeting was scheduled to be held on November 7, but was ultimately cancelled.

Lawyers at all the six district courts in the Capital have been abstaining from work since November 4, in protest against the clash, which broke out between The policemen and lawyers on November 3 allegedly over a parking issue.

Thousands of police personnel had protested outside the Police Headquarters at ITO on November 5 to demand action against those involved in the attack on their colleague outside Saket Court Complex.

Tis Hazari clash: CBI team visits court premises, collects samples

SIT to reach out to injured police personnel today

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A team of officials from the CBI’s Central Forensic Science Laboratory (CFSL) visited the Tis Hazari Courts on Sunday and took samples and photos of the premises where a policeman allegedly opened fire on November 2.

“There was no clear CCTV footage of the firing. The CFSL team visited the lockup area and examined how the bullet ricocheted off an iron grill and hit one of the lawyers,” said an officer.

Judicial inquiry

Meanwhile, former High Court Justice (Retired) S.P. Garg, who is heading the judicial inquiry into the Tis Hazari Courts incident, met the injured lawyers and recorded their statements on Saturday.

A lawyer, who did not wish to be named, said: “Many of the injured lawyers have recorded their state-

We have not allowed policemen to take undertrials to courts till the lawyers withdraw their strike and peaceful environment prevail in the courts

SENIOR POLICE OFFICER

ments and produced other evidence pertaining to the incident.”

Another lawyer said the judicial inquiry also recorded the statements of the policemen who were injured in the clash. “In the FIR registered on the complaint of DCP North’s operator, the judicial inquiry has added more sections after his statement was recorded on Saturday,” an officer said.

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) headed by Deputy Commissioner of Police Joy Tirkey has recorded the statements of lawyers and

will reach out to injured police personnel on Monday, said another officer.

“We are in the last stage of recording statements of both sides. After this, we will switch to the identification of people involved in the violence, through technical intelligence,” said an officer.

Following an advisory that undertrials should not be taken to the courts till the situation normalises, arrangements have been made for videoconferencing, and judges are visiting jails to hold hearings, he added.

“We have not allowed policemen to take undertrials to courts till the lawyers withdraw their strike and peaceful environment prevail in the courts. Our seniors are meeting with lawyers to normalise the situation,” said a senior officer.

The police will review the security of lockups and if needed it will be further tightened.

JNUSU to protest outside convocation venue today

University has invited Vice-President to be the chief guest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students’ Union (JNUSU) has called for a strike on November 11 with the slogan – ‘no convocation without affordable education’. The university will be conducting its convocation at the AICTE auditorium, which is close to the campus.

The students said they would assemble at “freedom square”, which is outside the administration block, and march to the convocation venue to protest “anti-student policies of the administration”. For the convocation, Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu has been invited as the chief guest and Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal as the guest of honour.

Entry with invite

The university has ensured that entry to the convocation would strictly be by invitation only.

The students have been protesting since October 28 after an Inter-Hall Administration (IHA) meeting passed the draft hostel manual



JNU students protesting against the draft hostel manual on October 29. ■ FILE PHOTO: R.V. MOORTHY

which has increased the hostel fee. The students said provisions in the new manual would cut down on their movement inside the campus and also restrict their freedom of expression as participating in dharnas may now cost them their hostel seats.

The administration has appealed to the students to call off their agitation and restart academic work but the protesters have refused to do so until a new IHA meeting is held.

They also demanded the participation of students’ representatives such as presidents of the hostels and

members of the JNUSU in the meeting.

The JNUSU has also reached out to the alumni of the university to support their agitation.

The first convocation of the university was held in 1972 but was discontinued after that. Last year, the university restarted its tradition of having a convocation after 46 years.

The candidates who have been awarded their degrees from July 1, 2018, to June 30, 2019, will be eligible to be conferred their PhD degree at the convocation, the Vice-Chancellor had announced earlier.

DU student goes on hunger strike to protest high-rise near North Campus

Protesters demand Lieutenant-Governor’s intervention

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A student went on an indefinite hunger strike on Sunday to protest the proposed construction of a 39-storey building near Delhi University’s North Campus.

Raja Chaudhry went on the hunger strike due to the “lack of response from authorities involved, including the Delhi University Teachers’ Association, Delhi University Students’ Union, various other students’ groups as well as the DU administration.

construction over the past few weeks.

Earlier, the demonstrations were held at the Vishwavidyalaya metro station followed by a “solidarity through food” campaign and a rally in the university area. The construction has been opposed by multiple stakeholders in the university, including the Delhi University Teachers’ Association, Delhi University Students’ Union, various other students’ groups as well as the DU administration.

They said the construction would alter the cultural landscape of the area and pose a risk to privacy of women’s hostels nearby. They are demanding that the property be repossessed by the Defence Ministry which reportedly handed it over to the DMRC, which in turn is said to have sold it to the private builder. The students are also seeking the L-G’s intervention in the matter and want a panel to be set up to probe the allegations of corruption in the project.

Man stabbed in robbery bid

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old man was stabbed allegedly by two unidentified men during a robbery bid in south-west Delhi’s Najafgarh, the police said on Sunday.

Yogesh from Dharampura village is undergoing treatment, they said. The incident took place on Friday night when Yogesh was waiting for his car to reach home. He alleged that the accused also fled with his mobile phone. A case has been registered and investigation is under way, the police added.

4 men loot jewellery shop of ₹26L

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Four men allegedly looted a jewellery shop of ₹26 lakh after holding a salesman hostage at gunpoint in Rohini’s Begumpur, the police said on Sunday.

The incident took place on Saturday afternoon, they said, adding that the accused were identified after scanning CCTV footage. According to the police, four men barged into a jewellery shop, threatened the salesman present at the shop and fled with jewellery worth ₹25 lakh and ₹1 lakh cash. “A case was registered in the matter,” said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) S.D. Mishra.

“The accused will soon be held,” said an officer.

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THE HINDU



Sahitya Kala Parishad
Govt. of NCT of Delhi

18-A, Satsang Vihar Marg, Spl. Institutional Area, New Delhi-110067



**Invites nominations for
PARISHAD SAMMAN 2019-20**

Sahitya Kala Parishad, an Academy of Music, Dance, Drama and Fine Arts of the Govt. of NCT of Delhi, proposes to bestow one award each to Delhi based artists, who have made sustained and significant contribution in the fields of music, dance, theatre, fine arts and folk arts. Each Award will carry on award money of Rs 1.00 lakh, a memento and a shawl. In addition, one Life Time Achievement Award (at national level) will be given to most eminent personality in the field of culture who has made life time contribution in any of the above fields. This include a cash award of Rs 5.00 lakhs, a shawl and a memento.

Nominations are invited from members of the General Council, Eminent Artists, Former Awardees of the Parishad, Language Academies of Govt. of Delhi, prominent cultural Institutions of Delhi, faculties of music/dance/drama/fine arts of Universities / Colleges in Delhi etc.

Maximum two nominations will be accepted from one individual/institution in the prescribed form available from the Office of the Sahitya Kala Parishad or can be downloaded from the website:http://tte.delhigovt.nic.in/wps/wcm/connect/doit_art/Art+Culture+and+Language/Home/Sahitya+Kala+Parishad/

Tel.011-26867636

(Harleen Kaur, IAS)
Secretary, Sahitya Kala Parishad

Dip/Shabdarth/D/0240/19-20

CM
YK



Living with rising pollution

Snapshots from across the Capital show how denizens go about their normal lives in an increasingly toxic environment



• PHOTOS BY R.V. MOORTHY, SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA, V.V. KRISHNAN



Campaign against dengue a success: Kejriwal

‘No deaths and fewer than 1,100 cases reported till last week; as against 15,000 cases, 60 deaths in 2015’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

At the end of the ‘10 Hafte, 10 Baje, 10 Minute’ campaign against dengue, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that it had been a success as fewer than 1,100 cases and no deaths were reported until last week.

He said that in 2015, more than 15,000 cases and 60 deaths were reported.

The Delhi government was running the campaign, which requested the cooperation of Delhiites to keep the city free from vector-borne diseases.



Addressing Delhiites through a video message, Mr. Kejriwal said: “I want to congratulate the people of Delhi. Ten weeks back, we started a fight against dengue together. I feel proud to say that we have successfully defeated dengue. This is

I want to congratulate the people of Delhi... I feel proud to say that we have successfully defeated dengue

ARVIND KEJRIWAL
Chief Minister

all because of the people of Delhi.” The Chief Minister added that people participated in the campaign in huge numbers, and that “we could not have done this without their support”.

Mr. Kejriwal said that doctors had warned of a spike in

dengue cases this year, “but the campaign managed to control the spread of the disease”.

‘Delhi sets example’

“People from outside Delhi, severely suffering from dengue, said they wished their State could also initiate such a campaign. I hope the entire world can initiate such campaigns. More than 100 countries are suffering from dengue but they do not know how to combat this disease. But Delhi has shown them the way,” the Chief Minister said.

The campaign required people to look for stagnant water in and around their homes for ten minutes at 10 a.m. every Sunday for ten weeks and dispose of it to prevent breeding of mosquito larvae.

The government roped in celebrities to popularise the campaign and promoted the scheme in schools as well.

Delhiites were encouraged to share videos of themselves cleaning their homes and removing stagnant water to spread the message and encourage others to do their bit.

Two men rob west Delhi ATM of ₹30 lakh in cash

A security guard was held hostage

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two unidentified men allegedly fled with around ₹30 lakh in cash after breaking open an ATM in west Delhi’s Subhash Nagar, the police said on Sunday.

The accused had held a security guard of the ATM kiosk hostage while committing the crime, they said.

The incident took place on the intervening night of November 7 and 8. It is sus-

pected that they looted around ₹30 lakh cash.

However, bank officials are yet to ascertain the amount, the police said.

The accused used gas cutters to break the ATM and also sprayed paint on the CCTV camera which was installed inside the vestibule, a senior officer said.

A case was registered based on the statement of the security guard and a probe is under way.

No odd-even today, tomorrow

Police issue traffic advisory for Nagar Kirtan procession

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The odd-even scheme introduced to combat high air pollution level in the city will be suspended for two days on Monday and Tuesday on account of the 550th Prakash Parv of Guru Nanak Dev.

The step has been taken so that members of the Sikh community are not inconvenienced during the celebrations.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had announced on Friday that the scheme would

be suspended for two days.

With Sunday exempted from the scheme, Delhiites will have a three-day exemption from the rule that began on November 4 and continues till November 15.

Meanwhile, the Delhi police have issued a traffic advisory asking commuters to avoid certain roads on Monday which fall on the route of ‘Nagar Kirtan’ procession, which will be taken out as part of the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak.

The procession will start at 10 a.m. from Sishganj Gurdwara and conclude at Gurdwara Nanak Piao, around 9 p.m., they said.

The procession will pass through Kodiaapal, SPM Marg, Church Mission Road, Khari Baoli, Lahori Gate Chowk, Qutub Road, Azad Market, Roshanara Road, and Shakti Nagar Chowk. Traffic will be affected on these routes and surrounding areas due to the procession, the police added.

Air quality may turn ‘severe’ by tomorrow, says SAFAR

‘There is a spike in stubble burning, change in wind direction’

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Capital’s air quality was in the ‘very poor’ category on Sunday with the day being windy.

The air quality may turn ‘severe’ again by Tuesday as there has been an increase in stubble burning and a change in wind direction, said the government’s air quality monitoring and forecasting service, SAFAR.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board data, Delhi’s air quality Index (AQI) on Sunday was 321 (very poor) at 4.30 p.m.; on Saturday, it was 283 (poor).

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	321	Gurgaon	282
Ghaziabad	368	Faridabad	290
Noida	344	Greater Noida	338
Legend: Good 0-50, Satisfactory 51-100, Moderate 101-200, Poor 201-300, Very poor 301-400, Severe >401			
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) [SOURCE: CPCB]			

The air quality in Greater Noida, Ghaziabad and Noida was also in the ‘very poor’ category as per the CPCB.

The AQI in of Gurugram and Faridabad were in the ‘poor’ category.

“The air quality is likely to deteriorate on Monday and

may remain in the ‘very poor’ category with higher values. The air quality is likely to marginally deteriorate further on Tuesday and may remain in the upper end of ‘very poor’ category and may reach ‘severe’ in case of pollution from fire crackers,” said SAFAR. It added that an increase in stubble burning had been observed in Haryana and Punjab.

Meanwhile, agencies in Delhi have taken “major action” at 13 pollution hot spots in the city, including closing 23 polluting industrial units, over the last three day, said officials on Sunday.

South civic body lodges 16 FIRs for violation of pollution norms

SDMC issues 360 challans imposing fines worth over ₹15 lakh

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) on Sunday lodged 16 FIRs for the violation of pollution control norms laid out by the National Green Tribunal, the civic body said.

SDMC Commissioner Gyanesh Bharti had recent-

ly authorised zonal officials to file FIRs against those failing to deposit the amount they have been fined for violations such as dust emissions during construction, burning of garbage and leaves and others. On Sunday, the SDMC said that it had issued up to 360 challans, imposing fines

worth over ₹15 lakh. As part of its efforts to check pollution, the SDMC also said that it carried out 1,788 inspections over dust pollution, had deployed up to 83 water tankers, 24 mechanical road sweepers and had lifted up to 388.90 metric tonnes of construction and demolition waste.

Not quitting Grand Alliance: Manjhi

‘For formation of coordination panel’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) national president Jitan Ram Manjhi on Sunday asserted that he never said his party would pull out of the five-party Grand Alliance in Bihar.

The former Bihar Chief Minister, however, said that a coordination committee should be formed for taking decisions regarding the Grand Alliance and for better coordination among its partners: the RJD, the Congress, the RLSP, the HAM(S) and the Vikassheel Insan Party (VIP).

Speaking to reporters after the HAM(S) youth wing meeting convened at his residence here, Mr. Manjhi said, “I never said my party will come out of the Grand Alliance... I will remain in it... though I firmly spoke about the formation of a coordination committee for taking decisions of the alliance.”

Mr. Manjhi had on November 7 announced at the national executive meeting of HAM(S) that his party would go it alone in the upcoming Jharkhand Assembly elections, where it has not contested any polls so far.



Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) chief Jitan Manjhi

He also announced that his party will field candidates in all the 243 Assembly segments of Bihar during the Vidhan Sabha elections next year, giving rise to speculations that the Dalit leader may quit the Grand Alliance.

‘Panel to take decisions’
“I had joined the Grand Alliance on the condition that there will be a coordination committee and every decision of the Alliance will be taken through the committee alone,” he told reporters on Sunday.

When pointed out that RJD heir apparent Tejashwi Prasad Yadav had said that Mr. Manjhi had made up his mind to quit the alliance, the HAM(S) supremo refused to comment on it.

Convener of disaster victims’ body faces ‘threat’

Moves High Court for protection

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

The Convener of Patna Drainage Disaster Victims’ Association (PDDVA), Diljeet Khanna, has filed an application before the Chief Justice of Patna High Court seeking security for himself and his family as he was being constantly “pressurised to stop the protest” against the government.

Earlier, Mr. Khanna had, on behalf of the PDDVA, filed a public interest litigation in the Patna High Court “bringing to light the severe

inability of the respondent authorities to discharge their legitimate duty”.

Mr. Khanna, a resident of the Rajendra Nagar area of Patna, was one among lakhs of victims of the unprecedented waterlogging in certain areas of the State capital from September 28 to October 5 this year.

He along with a few residents of the area formed the PDDVA to protest against the government, its agencies and officials for their failure to prevent such “man-made disasters”.

Row over installation of Arjun Singh statue

Replaced bust of Chandra Shekhar Azad

PRERSS TRUST OF INDIA
BHOPAL

A controversy has erupted over installation of a life-sized statue of Congress veteran late Arjun Singh at a busy trisection in Bhopal where the bust of freedom fighter Chandra Shekhar Azad had existed earlier.

Interestingly, it is the BJP-ruled Bhopal Municipal Corporation (BMC) which installed the statue of Singh, a former Chief Minister and Gandhi family loyalist who died in 2011.

However, BMC Mayor distanced himself from setting up of Singh’s statue, which is yet to be unveiled.

BMC officials claimed Azad’s bust was removed about three years from the spot on Link Road No. 1 in New Market locality and was relocated at a spot along a nearby road.

The bust was relocated with twin objectives to “improve traffic condition” at the busy trisection and for widening a road.



Late leader Arjun Singh

Taking strong objection, BJP national vice-president and former Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday demanded re-installation of Azad’s bust at its original location.

‘MP is ashamed’
“Madhya Pradesh is ashamed because of the treatment meted out to the bust of great revolutionary Azad. Those responsible for this should be punished. We demand the statue of the great son of mother India (Azad) be re-installed with due respect. Otherwise, the country will never be able to forgive itself,” Mr. Chouhan said.

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	29	15
Safdarjang	29	15
Palam	28	15

Delhi Palam Today
29°C Shallow fog is likely to prevail during the morning. Day will be slightly warm.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
29°C Dry weather will prevail. Day remains slightly warm with bright sunshine.

DELHI ☀️ Timings
MONDAY, NOV. 11
☀️ RISE 06:40 SET 17:30
🌙 RISE 17:02 SET 05:16
TUESDAY, NOV. 12
☀️ RISE 06:41 SET 17:30
🌙 RISE 17:37 SET 06:11
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 13
☀️ RISE 06:42 SET 17:29
🌙 RISE 18:15 SET 07:08

‘Writing judgments part of judge’s business’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A day after the verdict on the Ayodhya dispute, Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Sunday said writing judgments was part of the business of a judge and that the justice delivery system was not about liking judgments.

He was speaking at a function in Guwahati to release the Assamese version of the book “Courts of India:

Past to Present” published by the SC. Three other judges of the apex court attended the function.

“This perhaps is my last public function. I don’t think I will miss it. I never liked talking in public. On the third of this month, there was a book release at the Indian International Centre where I spoke to my heart’s content,” Mr. Gogoi said.

At the book launch event,

however, Mr. Gogoi said he would not be commenting on any contentious issues.

“You don’t contribute to justice delivery system by liking judgments. Writing judgments is part of the business of a judge,” he said.

An Assam government spokesperson said the CJI, set to retire on November 17, had gone to his newly constructed house in the city before attending the event to launch the book.

Odisha Assembly winter session likely to be stormy

BJP plans to play role of strong opposition, raise people’s issues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

The winter session of the Odisha Assembly scheduled to commence on November 13 is likely to be stormy with the Bharatiya Janata Party trying hard to play the role of a strong opposition by raising various people’s issues.

Although it will be the second session of the 16th Odisha Legislative Assembly, the BJP legislators are planning to play the role of a strong opposition in the wake of their party’s defeat in the recently held bypoll in the Bijepur Assembly seat.

BJP second in bypoll

Although the BJP candidate was able to finish second in the race with the Congress remaining in the third position, the ruling Biju Janata Dal had won the seat by a record margin of 97,990 votes.

The BJP also saw a decline in its support base at Bijepur in western Odisha that is considered to be its stronghold.

The party nominee who had secured 53,482 votes in the elections held earlier this year bagged 37,967 votes in the recent bypoll.



Naveen Patnaik. ■ FILE PHOTO

It was believed that the BJP, which was successful in increasing its vote share in the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly polls earlier, put up a poor show in Bijepur in view of the BJD’s support to BJP’s nominee in the Rajya Sabha bypoll held in the first week of July this year. The BJD had extended support to the BJP nominee following telephone calls from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah to Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik.

The BJP was also defeated by the BJD in the election that was held for the Patkura Assembly seat in coastal Odisha a few weeks after the Rajya Sabha bypoll.

This is for the first time that the BJP has become the

main opposition in the State Assembly by replacing the Congress.

Polling in Patkura, which was initially scheduled for April 29 as part of the simultaneous Lok Sabha and Assembly elections, was held on July 20 after it was adjourned twice - first due to the death of the BJD nominee who had filed candidature for the April 29 poll and again due to Cyclone Fani that hit the State’s coast on May 3.

Urban body polls

Since the urban body polls are likely to be held in the coming months, the BJP leaders in the State are in no mood to go soft on the ruling party from the coming session which will continue till December 19, having 30 working days.

Leader of the Opposition in Odisha Assembly Pradipta Naik has already announced that the BJP will stall the winter session if the State government fails to hand over to CBI the probe of alleged murder of a lady village level worker in Jajpur district. The party is also planning to raise other issues, including farm distress.

In Meghalaya, Christians care for Shivalingams

The park is drawing Garo, Rabha tribes together

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

An hour after Amal Chandra Rabha had finished praying before a 5-foot Shivalingam - the most rectangular among the many phallus-shaped monoliths jutting out of a 3-acre enclosure in Nokat village of Meghalaya’s North Garo Hills district - church elder Jemthinath B. Marak recited his prayers.

Mr. Rabha, a Rabha tribal from Assam’s Rabhabelpara village, had little knowledge of Garo - Mr. Marak’s tongue. But he sensed the church elder had thanked the Lord for guiding him through a tricky jungle track to the Hindu site on a hillock and wished for his safe return home 3 km away.

The Garos and Rabhas coexisted across the interstate boundary until the ethnic clashes of December 2010 drove a wedge between them. The newly developed park maintained by some 300 Christian residents of Nokat, including the village’s Baptist Church pastor Sempolar B. Marak, is drawing the two communities together.

But local MLA and Meghalaya Assembly’s Deputy Speaker Timothy D. Shira has further plans. He wants the Nokat Shivalingams to be a prime Hindu pilgrimage site, seeking archaeological studies besides a “safe corridor” for devotees.

The Shivalingams are near Resubelpara, the North Garo Hills district headquarters 135 km of Guwahati.

“Work on a 6 km road under PMGSY should begin by next year and I have proposed security for visitors,” Mr. Shira told *The Hindu*.

There’s no clear historical account of the granite Shivalingams that, local authority says, could be naturally shaped or carved by some ancient civilisation. The latter is more likely, said Manash Marak of Bakrapara village, the nokma (chieftain) of 58 villages, including Nokat.

The place was hidden in wild bushes until over a decade ago when the villagers, in search of more farmland, cleared the area but found the area too rocky to cultivate. A local legend about the Hindu god Shiva meditating at the site began attracting devotees from Assam.

Meghalaya Tourism Development Forum has sought a study of Shivalingams by the ASI.

Bhima-Koregaon: 2-member panel gets fourth extension

Commission receives 500 affidavits; Ambedkarite parties question tardy progress

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The two-member commission set up by the State government to probe the causes of the Bhima-Koregaon clash that occurred on January 1, 2018, and identify those responsible for it has received another extension for a period of three months.

According to advocate Ashish Satpute, a lawyer for the commission, the State Home department issued a letter on November 8 granting it an extension till February 8, 2020.

This is the fourth extension granted by the government, which had formed the commission, comprising retired Kolkata High Court chief justice J.N. Patel and former Maharashtra chief secretary Sumit Mullick, in February 2018 to inquire into the sequence of events leading to the New Year's Day violence in Bhima-Koregaon and the adjoining villages, which left one person dead besides heightening tension across the State.

The commission has so far received nearly 500 affidavits – from victims, Dalit outfits, NGOs, right wing groups, government, and police officials – across Pune, Mumbai and Thane.

Since its constitution, the commission has been granted two extensions of four months each and another extension of six months before being given this three-



Police personnel at the site of the clash in Bhima-Koregaon on January 2, 2018. *FILE PHOTO

month extension.

Ambedkarite parties have repeatedly expressed concern over the allegedly tardy progress of the two-member commission. Outfits like the Republican Yuva Morcha have accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government of trying to shelter the true perpetrators.

“The commission was supposed to submit its finding within four months. However, proceedings have dragged on for 18 months now. We hope that this fourth extension is the last such required by the panel to wrap up the probe,” said Republican Yuva Morcha's State president Rahul Dambale.

He said leaders of fringe right wing outfits like Sambhaji Bhide which had an af-

finity with the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh had not yet been investigated.

In its status report submitted to the government, the commission secretary said so far examination of 17 witnesses has been completed and that eight have been partially heard. Also, it said more than 50 witnesses are needed to be called.

For several Dalit activists, the narrative of the Bhima-Koregaon battle, where Maharashtra community members fought under the Union Jack to allegedly defeat Peshwa Bajirao II's numerically superior forces in 1818, signified a major step in the ongoing struggle against caste oppression and Brahminical domination.

While lakhs of Dalits converge near the victory pillar

(Ranstambh or Jayastambh) each year to pay their respects, the celebrations in 2018 were marred by the clash.

Since then, there have been two investigations. The Pune Rural police have lodged an FIR against Hindutva leaders Mr. Bhide and Milind Ekbote, naming them as the orchestrators of the violence. The Pune City police have conducted multi-city crackdowns and have arrested nine lawyers, writers, intellectuals and activists, including advocate Surendra Gadling, professor Shoma Sen, poet P. Varavara Rao, and Sudha Bharadwaj for their alleged links with Maoist outfits and for their roles in the ‘Elgaar Parishad’ and the subsequent Bhima-Koregaon clash.

Maternal deaths on the decline: report

Survey from 2015 to 2017 also reveals highest casualties in the age group of 20-29

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

A special bulletin on maternal mortality has revealed that Indian women in their 20s make up for the biggest chunk of maternal deaths. The report by the Sample Registration Survey (SRS) from 2015 to 2017 shows 68% of deaths were among women in the age group of 20-29. The three-year data also reveals a positive development of reduction in the maternal mortality ratio (MMR) as compared to 2014-2016.

“It is heartening that the MMR of India has declined from 130 in 2014-2016 to 122 in 2015-17. The drop has been most significant in empowered action group (EAG) States from 188 to 175,” the report said.

The SRS had categorised the States into three groups – the EAG States comprise Bihar, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, and Assam; southern States consist of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, and Tamil Nadu; and Other States cover the remaining States and Union Territories. “Among the southern States, the decline has been from 77 to 72 and in the Other States from 93 to 90,” the report said.

As per the World Health Organization (WHO), maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy. The WHO says the MMR dropped by 38% worldwide between 2000 and 2017. However, an estimated 810 women died every day in 2017 from preventable causes related to pregnancy and childbirth.

According to gynaecologist Dr. Ashok Anand, who is attached to State-run JJ Hospital in Mumbai, wo-



Startling figures

Age-wise distribution of maternal deaths (2015-2017)

15-19	4%
20-24	34%
25-29	34%
30-34	16%
35-39	7%
40-44	4%
45-49	1%

WHY DO WOMEN DIE?

Women die as a result of complications during and following pregnancy and childbirth. Most of these complications develop during pregnancy and most are preventable or treatable.

Other complications may exist before pregnancy but are worsened during pregnancy, especially if not managed as part of the woman's care.

The major complications that account for nearly 75% of all maternal deaths are:

Severe bleeding (mostly bleeding after childbirth), infections (usually after childbirth), high blood pressure during pregnancy (pre-eclampsia and eclampsia), complications from delivery, and unsafe abortion.

WHAT IS MATERNAL DEATH?

Maternal death is the death of a woman while pregnant or within 42 days of termination of pregnancy, irrespective of the duration and site of the pregnancy, from any cause related to or aggravated by the pregnancy or its management but not from accidental or incidental causes.

WHERE DO MATERNAL DEATHS OCCUR?

The high number of maternal deaths in some areas of the world reflects inequalities in access to quality health services and highlights the gap between rich and poor. The MMR in low income countries in 2017 is 462 per one lakh live births versus 11 per one lakh live births in high income countries.

Factors that prevent women from receiving or seeking care during pregnancy and childbirth

- Poverty
- Distance to facilities
- Lack of information
- Inadequate and poor quality services
- Cultural beliefs and practices

(SOURCE: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION)

men have to prepare their bodies and be fit for pregnancy. “Unfortunately, the aspect of fitness is simply ignored.”

JJ Hospital carries out 8,500 deliveries annually. Dr. Anand said bleeding, hypertension, and infections are among the leading causes of maternal deaths. He said the highest number of deaths are seen in the age

Women have to prepare their bodies and be fit for pregnancy. Unfortunately, the aspect of fitness is simply ignored

DR. ASHOK ANAND
JJ Hospital

group of 20-29 because most women get married and get pregnant in this age

Gujarat govt. grants approval for CNG port terminal at Bhavnagar

The facility will handle 1.5 million metric tonne per annum

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat government on Sunday gave its approval for a compressed natural gas (CNG) terminal at Bhavnagar with a proposed investment of ₹1,900 crore, an official said.

A State government release said the facility, approval for which was given by the Gujarat Infrastructure Development Board headed by Chief Minister Vijay Rupani, would be the world's first CNG port terminal.

It will be developed jointly by UK-headquartered Foresight Group and Mumbai-based Padmanabh Mafatlal

Group.

The Gujarat Maritime Board (GMB) had signed an MoU with Foresight Group to set up this port terminal at Bhavnagar in the Vibrant Gujarat Summit held in January, the release said.

Apart from the CNG terminal, the investors would develop a Ro-Ro terminal, liquid cargo terminal, and container terminal at Bhavnagar port with a cumulative investment of ₹1,900 crore. The proposed CNG port terminal will have a capacity to handle 1.5 million metric tonne per annum (MMTPA).

The GMB manages the existing port at Bhavnagar,

having a capacity to handle three MMTPA cargo, and the new terminals would take the overall capacity to nine MMTPA.

While the consortium would invest ₹1,300 crore in the first phase, ₹600 crore will be invested in the second phase.

To develop CNG and other terminals on the north side of the existing port would require major modifications in the existing infrastructure, including dredging in water channel of port basin, construction of two lock gates, and off-shore infrastructure for CNG transportation, the release said.

Stroll on sand



On foreign shore: Visitors at Baga Beach ahead of the tourist season in Goa. *ATISH POMBURFEKAR

Sanjay Raut refers to Hitler, accuses Fadnavis of playing politics of fear

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday hit out at caretaker Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and accused him of playing politics of fear, while making a reference to German dictator Adolf Hitler in the backdrop of logjam over government formation in the State.

Without naming Mr. Fadnavis, Mr. Raut, in a fresh attack on the BJP leader amid the ongoing war of words between the saffron allies, said, “When ways of threatening and seeking political support don't work, it is time to accept that Hitler is dead and the looming clouds of slavery have disappeared.”

In his column *Rokhthok* in Sena mouthpiece *Saamana*, he said Mr. Fadnavis, despite being blessed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi to become Chief Minister for the second time, has not been able to assume the top post. “He could not take oath because BJP chief Amit



Sanjay Raut

Shah has remained aloof from developments in the State,” Mr. Raut said.

In the October 21 polls, the BJP won 105 seats while ally Sena won 56 seats. The majority mark in the 288-member Assembly is 145.

However, since the poll results were announced on October 24, both the parties have been bickering over the CM's post, resulting in a stalemate over government formation.

Mr. Raut said even 15 days after the results were announced, Mr. Fadnavis could not take oath as the CM. “The BJP's biggest ally Sena not ready to speak to the out-



Devendra Fadnavis

going CM is the biggest defeat (of the BJP). This time, Sena president Uddhav Thackeray will decide the next CM of Maharashtra.”

NCP president Sharad Pawar and many Congress leaders have communicated to their party chief Sonia Gandhi that their priority is to have a “non-BJP” CM, the Rajya Sabha member said in the Marathi publication.

“Everyone wants to end the politics of revenge, subservience, and playing dirty tricks,” Mr. Raut said.

“Those who used to threaten others with their power are now scared,” he said.

Policeman on duty for T20I game dies of cardiac arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NAGPUR

An assistant sub-inspector (ASI) of the Nagpur police deployed on security duty for the third T20 International to be played here died on Sunday after a cardiac arrest, an official said.

India and Bangladesh will play the third T20I at Vidarbha Cricket Stadium located at Jamtha on the southern outskirts of Nagpur. ASI Madar Sheikh (50), working at police headquarters, was on bandobast duty when he suffered a cardiac arrest around 12.15 p.m., said Deputy Commissioner of Police, Zone I, Vivek Masal.

“He was sitting on a chair and fell on the ground unconscious, after which others on duty rushed him to a nearby hospital. However, doctors there could not revive him and he was declared dead,” Mr. Masal said.

Bachchan posts picture from bed, says ‘cracks, breaks’ need healing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan posted a picture of him resting on a bed and said “cracks and breaks” he is facing need to heal before he starts shooting.

The 77-year-old actor posted on his blog a picture of him watching a soccer match, writing he was “lying around” in his spare time, “skipping time to go by in rapid form”. “And reminiscing the work front by the day after when there shall be the chair and the computer ji and the audience (referring his show ‘KBC’),” he said.

“But first the left overs of incidents from the times of ‘Don’ and the cracks and breaks now playing up and placing themselves in important avenues which restrict movement....At times of this it may be of interest too...to the body , but not the mind. So one listens to the body...and many shall there be who will applaud and commit to say...‘did we not tell you this to slow



down...’ Slow down? Thats what you tell the vehicle or the train on road and trackso...what (sic),” he said.

On Saturday, Mr. Bachchan regretted having missed the inaugural ceremony of 25th Kolkata International Film Festival which he had been attending for the last six years.

The actor wrote that while he is sad he won't be physically present, he is trying to send across a video to

the festival.

“Sad and in regret to not be able to travel for KIFF to Kolkata....an event that has invited me for years...I think now 7 years....and the speech...glorifying cinema and the research by educated assists from dear friends...gone...but there is communication established whether I could read it on video and send to them to be played at the closing,” he said.

RSS chief hails BMS founder Thengadi

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NAGPUR

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on Sunday remembered Bhartiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) founder late Dattopant Thengadi as a humble person who always cared for others without compromising on his principles.

Mr. Bhagwat was speaking as the chief guest at a function to kick off the birth centenary year celebrations of the founder of the BMS, an RSS affiliate. “Dattopant was a humble person who connected with people without compromising on his values. He practised what he preached and commanded trust from people,” he told a gathering of workers of the RSS and the BMS.

Speaking on Lord Ram, Mr. Bhagwat said some people question his existence even after 8,000 years.



IN BRIEF
Former IAS officer P.S. Krishnan dead
NEW DELHI
Former Secretary to Government of India P.S. Krishnan known for his work in empowering Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Socially and Educationally Backward Classes, passed away in a hospital here on Sunday. He was 86.

Govt. gives nod for 4 medical device parks
NEW DELHI
The government has approved setting up four medical device parks with a view to support Make in India initiative and provide world-class treatment at affordable prices. The parks will be set up in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamil Nadu and Kerala, sources said, adding that Uttarakhand and Gujarat have also approached the Centre for such parks. PTI

Maruti Suzuki cuts production by 21%
NEW DELHI
Maruti Suzuki India, the country's largest carmaker, reduced its production by nearly 21% in October — the ninth consecutive month it has lowered its output. As per a regulatory filing, the company produced 1,19,337 vehicles in October 2019 as against 1,50,497 units in the same month last year. Production of passenger vehicles, at 1,17,383 units, was down 20.8% from the year-ago period.

MMTC told to import one lakh tonnes of onions
NEW DELHI
In a bid to tame soaring onion prices, the Centre on Friday asked public sector trading agency MMTC to import one lakh tonnes of onions for distribution between November 15 and December 15. The MMTC has already issued a tender to import 2,000 tonnes of onions from Dubai and is exploring options in Egypt, Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan, officials said.

'Bulbul' leaves a trail of destruction

Modi, Shah promise Centre's help

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA
West Bengal Disaster Management Minister Javed Khan said 2.73 lakh families were affected in Cyclone 'Bulbul' and 1.78 lakh people moved to relief camps in nine places. At least 2,473 houses were destroyed and 26,000 partially damaged.

Mr. Khan said 46,000 tarpaulin sheets were distributed to people whose houses were damaged in the cyclone. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah spoke to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Sunday and assured her of help in relief operations. Mr. Shah said 10 teams of the National Disaster Response Force had been deployed in West Bengal and six in Odisha. Additional 18 teams were kept on standby.

Ms. Banerjee cancelled her trip to North Bengal and said she would conduct an aerial survey of the affected areas around Namkhana and Bakkhali when the weather cleared. "Later, I would take a meeting at Kakdwip with administration to review relief and rehabilitation measures of the cyclone-affected people. I am also planning to visit the cyclone-affected areas of Basirhat of North 24-Parganas on 13 November, 2019," she tweeted on Sunday.

The storm is likely to weaken into a deep depression and then into a depression as it moves east-northeastwards over coastal Bangladesh, the Indian Meteorological Department said on Sunday.

(With PTI inputs)



Heavily hit: Scenes of destruction in the Bakkhali area in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district. At least 2,473 houses were destroyed in several coastal districts. ■ANI



10 dead, 21 lakh shifted in Bangladesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA DHAKA

At least 10 people were killed and 25 injured as Cyclone Bulbul smashed into the low-lying areas of Bangladesh on Sunday, bringing in its wake torrential rains coupled with gales.

The cyclone packed winds of up to 120 kilometres per hour (kmph) when it made a predawn landfall before weakening into a deep depression, forcing the authorities to evacuate over 21 lakh people from the low-lying areas of

the country.

Disaster Ministry secretary Shah Kamal said they initially planned to evacuate 14 lakh people to 5,000 cyclone shelters. However by Saturday midnight, the figure rose to over 21 lakh.

Airports shut down

The authorities have ordered a temporary ban on boat and ferry movements on internal riverine routes and coastal waters, besides closing air traffic operations near coastal airports for nearly 24 hours.

At least eight people in seven coastal districts have been reported dead from a combination of falling trees, collapsed houses and illness after the cyclone ripped through southern Bangladesh, [bdnews24.com](#) reported.

The Health Directorate's Health Emergency Operation Centre and Control Room confirmed the death toll on Sunday, the report said, adding that 25 people have been injured in the cyclonic storm.

The Met office on Saturday

issued its highest "great signal numbers" 10 and 9 for the southwestern and south-eastern coastlines, prompting authorities to launch a massive evacuation campaign. However, on Sunday the office lowered the number to 3.

Army called in

The government suspended weekend leave for government officials in 13 coastal districts on Saturday. Troops of the army were also called in to supplement preparedness for the cyclone.

Study moots lowering the age of consent

'It will protect teens from social stigma'

JAGRITI CHANDRA NEW DELHI

A new study calls for a need to distinguish between self-arranged marriages among older adolescents and forced child marriages to protect teens from social stigma, parental backlash and punitive action.

The report titled "Why Girls Run Away To Marry – Adolescent Realities and Socio-Legal Responses in India" is based on a qualitative study of 15 girls, aged 15-20, from Jaipur, Delhi and Mumbai, who had been in a consensual romantic relationship. Some of these resulted in self-arranged marriages. The participants included those who entered into a romantic relationship when they were aged 12-19 years. These case studies involved intra- and inter-caste and interfaith relationships with boyfriends who were older and younger than 18. These cases were from between 2010 and 2016 to assess the impact of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act 2012.

The study – authored by Madhu Mehra and Amrita Nandy and published by Partners For Law in Development – makes a case for an age of consent that is lower than the age of marriage to decriminalise sex among consenting older adolescents. This will protect them from the misuse of law for enforcing parental and caste controls over daughters.

In most of the studied cases, a couple elopes fearing opposition from parents, resulting in a situation where families approach the police, who then book the boy for rape under POC-SO and abduction with the intent to marry under the IPC or the Prohibition of

Young & vulnerable

A look at the number of different case scenarios cited in the study

7 cases saw boys facing rape/kidnap charges and girls being sent to shelter homes

4 cases saw boys disappearing for different reasons, including fear of police action. Two later rejoined their girlfriends

11 girls had to face hostility from parents; some of them even cut off ties



Child Marriages Act (PCMA).

In one case a couple was terrorised by the spectre of caste violence. In at least three cases, the girl gets married but her parents refuse to accept it. There were also three cases where the boy abandons the girl fearing punitive action following a police complaint by the girl's parents.

The study also records that while girls face restrictions on their mobility, premarital relations and sexuality, the same was not true for boys of the same social milieu, who enjoyed greater freedom.

The study also assumes significance when the government has been discussing amending the PCMA to declare all child marriages null and void ab initio. In its current form the law only permits one of the consenting parties to seek annulment of their marriage as children until two years after they turn adults (in case of minors, their parents can seek annulment).

WEATHER WATCH










RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



Forecast for Monday: No warning issued by IMD till November 14, 2019. From November 15 to 17, isolated to scattered rain/thundershowers likely to occur over some parts of south peninsular India and the islands; isolated to scattered rain/snow likely to occur over Western Himalayan Region; weather likely to be dry over the remaining parts of the country.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala.....	8.9	24.0	22.0	Kozhikode.....	34.0	25.0	
Ahmedabad.....	33.0	21.0		Kurnool.....	34.0	23.0	
Aizawl.....	2.0	26.0	15.0	Lucknow.....	31.0	17.0	
Allahabad.....	32.0	17.0		Madurai.....	33.0	24.0	
Bengaluru.....	30.0	20.0		Mangaluru.....	32.0	24.0	
Bhopal.....	29.0	15.0		Mumbai.....	31.0	23.0	
Bhubaneswar.....	30.0	20.0		Mysuru.....	56.4	29.0	20.0
Chandigarh.....	1.0	28.0	13.0	New Delhi.....	28.0	15.0	
Chennai.....	34.0	26.0		Patna.....	32.0	21.0	
Coimbatore.....	33.0	23.0		Port Blair.....	0.1	31.0	24.0
Dehradun.....	29.0	13.0		Puducherry.....	33.0	24.0	
Gangtok.....	3.0	20.0	13.0	Pune.....	31.0	16.0	
Goa.....	32.0	23.0		Raipur.....	30.0	20.0	
Guwahati.....	1.6	27.0	21.0	Ranchi.....	25.0	17.0	
Hubballi.....	29.0	19.0		Shillong.....	13.0	19.0	13.0
Hyderabad.....	32.0	19.0		Shimla.....	20.0	9.0	
Imphal.....	4.3	22.0	17.0	Srinagar.....	5.0	0.0	1.0
Jaipur.....	29.0	18.0		Thiruvananthapuram.....	0.1	34.0	24.0
Kochi.....	31.0	25.0		Tiruchi.....	34.0	25.0	
Kohima.....	9.2	22.0	12.0	Vijayawada.....	33.0	22.0	
Kolkata.....	91.7	28.0	22.0	Visakhapatnam.....	32.0	24.0	

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing							Yesterday
CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE	
Ahmedabad.....	178	43	114	117	104		In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Panipat, Haryana recorded an overall air quality (AQI) score of 358 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 32.
Bengaluru.....	9	24	113	114	104		
Chennai.....	1	20	30	263	277		
Delhi.....	8	29	57	369	277		
Hyderabad.....	15	56	30	257	277		
Kolkata.....	13	9	13	28	36		
Lucknow.....	3	37	36	312	312		
Mumbai.....	16	68	21	135	151		
Pune.....	79	11	64	58	57		
Visakhapatnam.....	78	78	78	78	78		

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.
CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Centre gets responses to draft Social Security code

Govt. had asked for public suggestions

DAMINI NATH NEW DELHI

The draft code on social security, which subsumes eight existing laws covering provident fund, maternity benefits and pension, is being further worked upon after a recent round of public consultations, officials of the Labour and Employment Ministry have said.

A draft of the social security code, one of the four codes that are part of the Centre's labour reforms agenda, was published on September 17 for public comments and suggestions till October 25.

Officials said over 400 comments or suggestions have been received. The draft might be finalised in time for the session of Parliament beginning on November 18, an official said.

However, many trade unions are against the proposal for provident fund, pension and insurance funds to be administered by a central board, and a national pension scheme that employees can opt for.

Recently, the Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS), an affiliate of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, said it had rejected the draft code in its comments submitted to the Ministry. The BMS said in a statement that the first draft had provisions for the right to social security for all and establishment of a central apex council, headed by the Prime Minister, but these were missing from the latest draft.

Indian economy facing challenges, says Sitharaman

She was speaking at the launch of a book on global finance

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Sunday unveiled a book on global finance and said it suggests solutions for challenges that the world and Indian economy is currently facing.

Launching the book titled *The Rise of Finance: Causes, Consequences and Cure*, Ms. Sitharaman said it will help "understand the current economic situation facing both the world and Indian economy".

The book is co-authored by the Dean of IFMR Graduate School of Business V. Anantha Nageswaran and senior managing director at



Nirmala Sitharaman

Global Innovation Fund Gulzar Natarajan.

'Challenging time'

"... this will be a book that is very relevant to those of us sitting on the policy-making

table. Secondly, its relevance and the timing of the launch of the book in India. We are currently facing a challenging time," Ms. Sitharaman said.

The Finance Minister said the book has come at a time when questions are being asked about the nature of the slowdown, which is affecting the global economy and bogging it down.

"I really commend the prescriptive and descriptive narrative that supports the topic of financialisation and the solutions that have been prescribed for situations that the world and Indian economy is currently facing," Ms. Sitharaman said.

Guwahati residents rally to save 300 trees

Proposed bridge poses a threat to the habitat of some rare birds, they say

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Residents of Guwahati along Brahmaputra's southern bank formed a human chain on Sunday to demand redesigning of a proposed bridge across the river, that entails the axing of some 300 trees that are home to some rare birds.

Many children of the area took part in the demonstration that was inspired by the protests against the proposed axing of 2,500 trees in Mumbai's Aarey Colony.

Sunday's human-chain protest was a follow-up of the Coordination Committee of Citizens' October 30 memorandum to the State Finance and PWD Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for redesigning the proposed bridge to save the trees and the riverfront.



The demonstrations were inspired by protests in Mumbai against the axing of trees in Aarey Colony. ■SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"We have come to know that the PWD (Road) has started work on the bridge for connecting Bharalumukh (central Guwahati) with North Guwahati (on the opposite bank of the Brahmaputra). We appreciate the developmental activities

carried out by the State government, but at the same time we desire that our ecosystem should not be disturbed," the citizens' body said.

Green lungs at risk

The committee said that ac-

cording to the detailed project report on the bridge, the Bharalumukh end of the bridge would lead to the "destruction" of two adjacent "green lungs" of the city – the Sankardeva Park and the Azan Pir Park – situated on the riverfront at a critical bend of the Brahmaputra.

"These trees are home to many rare species of birds and help maintain the ecological balance of the area. We are not against the bridge, but it should be constructed in such a way that the parks and the valuable trees are saved," a committee member said.

The proposed bridge is to come up at the east of the Saraghat rail-road bridge across the Brahmaputra and west of a newly-constructed ropeway near the Gauhati High Court.

UNLF chief freed ahead of scheduled date

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Rajkumar Meghen, chairman of the Manipur-based extremist group United National Liberation Front (UNLF), was freed from the Guwahati Central Jail on Saturday, a day ahead of his scheduled release.

A special trial court of the NIA in June 2016 had sentenced him to 10 years rigorous imprisonment under the IPC and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

"The UNLF chairman got remission of some months for his contribution in setting up a library, a music school for the inmates and construction of a rock garden inside the Guwahati Central Jail premises," a jail official said.



Peace and justice

In paving the way for a Ram temple in Ayodhya, the Supreme Court prioritised communal harmony over all else

There comes a time when the need for peace and closure is greater than the need for undoing an injustice. In allowing a temple to come up through a government-appointed trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya, the Supreme Court has apparently chosen a path most conducive to social harmony. To compensate the Muslim litigants, who were deprived of the centuries-old Babri Masjid through an illegal act of demolition, the court has asked for the allotment of a five-acre plot of land elsewhere in Ayodhya that may be used for building a new mosque. That this is more of moral consolation by way of a political compromise and less of adjudication in recognition of their religious rights is obvious. The final award will always be a source of discomfiture for those to whom closure goes beyond ensuring peace in a communally polarised environment. But what is most welcome about the 1,045-page verdict of a Bench of five judges is its unanimity. For, it sends out a message that the judiciary has, with a single mind, ventured to give legal burial to a prolonged dispute that began as a minor litigation, expanded into a divisive political cause, and became a festering wound on the body-politic for years. The fact that the case is over at last must come as great relief to all peace-loving people.

This sense of relief masks the bitter truth that the fear of a Hindu backlash if there was an adverse verdict was genuine. After nearly three decades of unrelenting pursuit of communal polarisation, the majoritarian, revanchist forces in the country have fatigued their secular adversaries into passive acquiescence. The Bench indeed has done well to record its revulsion at two incidents that represented an onslaught on the psyche of secular India: the desecration of the masjid in 1949 when Hindu idols were planted surreptitiously under its central dome, and the planned destruction of the whole structure by the foot soldiers of Hindutva on December 6, 1992. But what is most disappointing about it is that the relief spelt out by the Bench may amount to legitimising the very demolition it unequivocally condemns. Having declared that the suits are representative of the two communities, organised violence by one party ought not to have been ignored. It is common knowledge that the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which spearheaded the temple movement with the active backing of the Bharatiya Janata Party and organised the demolition of the mosque, got a foothold in the litigation through an individual who represented the deity, Ram Lalla, as “a next friend” in a fresh suit filed in 1989.

A reading of the judgment reveals that the outcome is not wholly in line with the evidentiary conclusions the court itself reaches. It notes that archaeological evidence – procured only because excavation was made possible by the demolition and as such not available to the parties at the time of institution of the suits – only shows the existence of a 12th century Hindu religious structure underneath, but does not prove any demolition or explain what happened in the intervening centuries. It acknowledges that namaz was offered at the mosque between 1857 and 1949, and declares that Muslims did not abandon it, but offers no relief even though their religious rights stand proved. The entire disputed area covering both the inner and outer courtyards are awarded to one side contrary to its own conclusion that Muslims had a right, albeit a contested one, in the inner courtyard. While it holds that Hindus had possessory right over the entire outer courtyard to the exclusion of Muslims, it does not decide whether they had exclusive title; on the other hand, it rejects the Muslim claim solely on the ground that they failed to prove “exclusive title”. Also, the court says evidence of Hindu worship was available for a period prior to 1857, while there was proof of namaz only after 1857, without accounting for the fact that it was in that year that a massive riot took place that led to the British administration putting up a railing to divide the mosque from the Hindu shrines in the outer courtyard. The case has been decided on the balance of probabilities that Hindus have proved a better title than Muslims. While it is true that “preponderance of probabilities” is the standard of proof in civil law, it is doubtful whether this can be invoked to the exclusion of an acknowledged right belonging to the other side.

It will be disappointing to the country as a whole if the judgment in favour of Hindu litigants does not end the belligerence of Hindu organisations that ran the movement to build a temple at the very spot on which the Babri Masjid stood until that fateful day in 1992. For none can deny that the politicisation and communalisation of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title dispute left in its wake a trail of violence and led to terrible loss of lives and property across the country. To the toxic effect of the sectarian strife set off by the temple movement through processions and the infamous ‘rath yatra’ of BJP leader L.K. Advani, one can attribute many deadly riots and a wave of retaliatory bombings by Islamists since the late 1980s. There would be a real sense of justice only if those who plotted and executed the demolition are convicted in the ongoing trial in Lucknow. The rulers of the day owe this much to the nation. And in the spirit of the ‘new India’ put forward by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it would be in the fitness of things if the VHP and other organisations which participated in the demolition are expressly excluded from the proposed trust to build the temple. In paving the way for the building of a temple for Ram on the spot believed to be his janmasthan, the Supreme Court held up the faith of millions of Hindus. But it cannot allow the judgment to be perceived as an endorsement of any challenge to the rule of law in the name of faith.

A reward for ‘egregious’ violations

A balance sheet would show that more has been lost than retrieved in the Ayodhya judgment



SUKUMAR MURALIDHARAN

The Supreme Court of India has to be given wide latitude in its effort to address an unwelcome task: to resolve a dispute that has stirred up ancient resentments beyond the powers of a modern republican order to placate. It was a matter involving criminal trespass, that should have been reversed by local administrative action. Once criminality was deterred, the underlying dispute should have been settled at the local civil court.

That the matter finally reached a Constitution Bench is a sign of democratic dysfunction. That five Supreme Court judges achieved unanimity on an issue that has convulsed Indian politics through seven decades, points to a quite heroic effort at salving deep wounds.

Several pages into its long, reflective and often digressive judgment on the Ayodhya title dispute, and after many an excursus into the discipline of archaeology, the top court admits that it has been embarked on an exercise in irrelevance. “A finding of title”, it pronounces, “cannot be based.. on... archaeological findings”. Rather, the matter “must be decided on settled legal principles... applying evidentiary standards which govern a civil trial”.

Likewise, after long expeditions to uncover textual records from history, the Bench pleads its inability to “entertain claims that stem from the actions of the Mughal rulers against Hindu places of

worship”. The genesis of the dispute spanned “four distinct legal regimes – that of Vikramaditya, the Mughals, the British and now, Independent India”.

Constitution as watershed

India’s history, the court writes, is “replete with actions that have been judged to be morally incorrect and even today are liable to trigger vociferous ideological debate”. A moment of liberation from the torments of the past occurred at that “watershed moment” when India adopted its republican Constitution. That was when “we, the people of India” – as the resonant phrase in the preamble put it – “departed from the determination of rights and liabilities on the basis of our ideology, our religion, the colour of our skin, or the century when our ancestors arrived at these lands”. It was when all Indian citizens “submitted to the rule of law”.

Certain continuities between republican India and the British Raj were retained. Article 372 of the Constitution allowed the adjudication of title bequeathed from before. And yet, with no clear pathway towards resolving a dispute that originated with the British conquest of Awadh in 1856, the top court invokes an extraordinary power uniquely granted under Article 142 of the Constitution, to ensure that justice is delivered to all.

Heroic so far in squaring impossible circles, the court wanders then into a deep moral quandary. It seeks to bridge “significant gaps in the positive law” by applying principles of “justice, equity and good conscience”. Yet it arrives at findings that negate these values.

December 22, 1949, roughly halfway between the adoption of the Indian Constitution and its formal entry into force, with a delin-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

quent district magistrate looking the other way, a number of idols were smuggled into a place of worship at Ayodhya. Cutting through the mythology that has since surrounded that act, the court has declared that this was a “desecration of the mosque and the ouster of the Muslims otherwise than by the due process of law”. And then came the final act of destruction on December 6, 1992, when a monument with hoary references to India’s history was effaced, in what the court recognises as “an egregious violation of the rule of law”.

Offender and victim

The abiding mystery with the Supreme Court ruling on Ayodhya, as the Indian republic marches ahead, would be to negotiate the complicated routine through which it seeks to reward the worst violations of the rule of law. After acknowledging all these historical wrongs, the court recognises a body that has been the most serious offender against rule of law, and awards it virtually undiluted title to the land. It seeks to placate the victims of this cycle of physical and rhetorical violence, through the award of five acres in the near vicinity of Ayodhya, for the 2.77 acres lost. Evidently, the court has decreed that the injuries to an entire religious community’s sense of identity and belonging, can be easily redressed through seeming generosity in the quantitative sense.

After RCEP reticence, need for reform recalibration

India needs to prepare for the next round of structural reforms to join global value chains and unleash manufacturing



AMAN THAKKER

Last Monday, on November 4, 2019, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced that India would not sign on to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement. The agreement, which is dubbed as the world’s biggest trade agreement, is expected to proceed with the 15 other members of the agreement, including Australia, China, Japan, New Zealand, South Korea, and the 10 member states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN).

India’s decision to withdraw at this stage, particularly in light of India’s own articulation of its national interest and its ambitions internally and on the world stage, reflects an inability to translate ambitions into action.

Defining ‘national interest’

A long-standing goal for India, articulated by multiple governments from across India’s political spectrum, is to generate a high level of sustained economic growth. Such growth matters for two reasons: within India, it will create millions of jobs and secure a stable future for India’s young population, and externally, to facilitate India’s rise

as one of the poles in a multipolar 21st century. The Prime Minister articulated this same vision, in 2014, in his first Independence Day speech as Prime Minister, arguing “India cannot decide its future by remaining isolated and sitting alone in a corner. The economics of the world have changed and, therefore, we will have to act accordingly.” His path to “acting differently” was focused on “promot[ing] the manufacturing sector.”

Soon after his speech, he launched the “Make in India” programme, encouraging global companies to manufacture products in India. He articulated the goal of the initiative as “We launched the Make in India campaign to create employment and self-employment opportunities for our youth. We are working aggressively towards making India a Global Manufacturing Hub.” This articulation of India’s economic interests is particularly relevant in the context of India’s decision on RCEP.

Concerns and imperatives

In defending India’s withdrawal from the RCEP, the government has articulated three key concerns. The first is the negative impact of joining the agreement in key constituencies in India, particularly farmers and small business owners. The second is the lack of concessions within the final agreement on key demands for India such as work visas and liberalisation in services. The final is regard-



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

ing India’s trade deficit, and how those deficits would expand under the RCEP, given that India currently runs deficits with 11 of the 15 other member states. This concern is particularly acute when it relates to China, with India fearing an influx of cheap Chinese imports into India.

These concerns, particularly on the fears of Chinese imports and its impact on Indian domestic manufacturers, are legitimate and well-founded. Indeed, the Minister for External Affairs, S. Jaishankar, has argued that India has faced “unfair restricted market access” from China when it exports to the country, and Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale has pointed to “millions of non-tariff barriers” in China while accusing China of dumping.

However, the answer to these concerns is not India’s withdrawal from the agreement.

As academician James Crabtree has noted: “India had already won concessions, including implementation delays stretching into decades and safeguards to protect sensitive sectors like agriculture.”

Moreover, as Arvind Panagariya, former Vice Chairman of NITI Aayog, stated in a TV interview, existing WTO rules “allow us to impose safeguard duties and anti-dumping,” which India has used and can continue to use against China when it comes to unfair trade practices.

Value chain integration

Beyond these concerns, India has enormous strategic and long-term economic imperatives to join the RCEP. India’s ambitions to become a global hub for manufacturing means that it is the country’s long-term national interest to be integrated into global value chains. However, in Asia today, there are effectively now two economic structures – the RCEP and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP) – which will effectively determine global value chains for manufacturing in Asia for years to come. India, now a part of neither architecture, will continue to remain unintegrated in such supply chains, and will see its ambitions of becoming a global manufacturing hub further delayed.

Returning to India’s articulation of its national interest, this delay in integrating with global value chains will impact India’s internal and external ambitions. The World Bank found that when coupled with domestic reforms, joining such global value chains can “boost growth, create better jobs,

the “morbid tendency”, to disregard the “individual citizen who is really the backbone of the State, the pivot, the cardinal centre of all social activity, and whose happiness and satisfaction should be the goal of every social mechanism”. The citizen, he regretted, had been lost in the “body known as the community”, because of the “degrading habit of thinking always in terms of communities and never in terms of citizens”.

When the intrusion into the Ayodhya mosque took place under his watch as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh, G.B. Pant proved a little less mindful of the principle of equal citizenship. He responded vaguely to urgent demands from Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, that the idols smuggled into the mosque be removed. To Nehru’s worries that the commandeering of a Muslim place of worship might seriously impair India’s claim to sovereignty over Kashmir, Pant with Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel as his ally responded with references to law and order compulsions.

This entire saga may have vanished into the rabbit-hole of history had not the course of Indian democracy exposed its assurances of republican equality as a thin cover for upper caste privilege. From being an unstated premise, sectarianism was officially reintroduced into India’s electoral politics in the 1980s, as the foundations of upper caste hegemony began to falter. The Ayodhya dispute was one among many manifestations of this moment of crisis. The Supreme Court’s heroic and yet logic-defying effort to set right the problem may well be too little and too late.

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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.

Ayodhya verdict

Even going by the logic that the apex court is ‘supreme but not infallible’, the unanimous judgment of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court, in a case as important and long-standing as the Ayodhya dispute, is a welcome one. Obviously, the court arrived at its conclusion after going through thousands of pages of documents. Importantly, the verdict did not vindicate the Ram Janmabhoomi movement (Front page, “Temple at disputed site, mosque within Ayodhya, rules SC,” Nov. 10). The allotment of five acres land to Muslims should not be considered as charity but a recognition of their right to worship. The Centre and all State governments deserve appreciation for ensuring that not a single untoward

incident took place. All political parties and religious outfits would now do well to accept the verdict in letter and spirit, not to issue any provocative statements and concentrate on more serious issues plaguing the nation.

B. HARISH,
Alappuzha, Kerala

■ Coming as it does from the apex court, the verdict should be seen as upholding Indian Constitution. However, the issue dragged on for far too much time. Even ignoring the pre-British and the British eras, it took more than 70 years. While it is repeatedly said that ‘justice delayed is justice denied,’ the truth remains that the wheels of our system, including judiciary, run very slow.

That there is acceptance of the judgment from most

sections of society, including Muslims, should be seen as a positive outcome. However, we cannot overlook the other circumstances surrounding the Ayodhya episode. The apex court held that the destruction of Babri Masjid in 1992 was an “egregious” violation of the rule of law. Probably the 1934 communal riots that damaged the structure and the 1949 incident when idols were installed inside the mosque were also violations of law. One wonders how the court, even after considering these factors, ruled the way it did.

P.R.V. RAJA,
Pandalam, Kerala

■ This is the first time in the history of free India that the apex court has given its verdict based purely on faith and religious belief rather than facts and evidence. The

order to allocate five acres of land to the Sunni Muslim Board, after handing over the entire disputed land measuring 2.77 acres to the Hindus, adds insult to injury for the Muslims. Further, the court’s unwarranted insistence that construction of a temple should commence immediately with government funds drives one to doubt whether the learned judges had only interests of the majority community in mind.

THARCIOUS S. FERNANDO,
Chennai

■ The ruling was along expected lines. However, it cannot be accepted as just unless a few assurances are given. One, no more Islamic structures should be destroyed. Two, the culprits involved in the demolition of Babri Masjid and the subsequent riots should be

punished. The victims of those acts of communal violence should be compensated. Three, hate propaganda should be avoided by all sections.

THAHIRA IQBAL,
Chennai

■ The court used the word ‘secular’ multiple times in a verdict whose essence, far from being secular, was inclined more towards faith than facts. Using archaeological remnants and accounts of foreign travellers as evidence in a polarised land dispute case is rather specious. Archaeologists Supriya Varma and Jaya Menon, who were involved in the excavation exercise,

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

The book, “Sitayan”, was written by Mallika Sengupta and not by Nabanita Deb Sen as mentioned in a report, “Eminent Bengali writer Nabanita Deb Sen is dead” (Life, November 8, 2019)

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have clearly enunciated how irregular and outdated methods were used to alter the remains retrieved at the site to justify the proposed theory of the existence of a Ram Mandir. There is a danger of this judicial pronouncement being misconstrued as a tacit approval of demolition and excavations in other religious places. The state must allay the fears of minorities and provide protection to their places of worship to avoid any clashes of beliefs.

Y. MEENA,
Hyderabad

No more pro-India voices in the Valley

Those in Kashmir who once took on the separatists in their midst now stand betrayed and silenced



In one stroke, the BJP government decimated the pro-India constituency in Kashmir in early August when it ended, through the parliamentary route, Jammu and Kashmir's special status. This was not just about downing the shutters of pro-India parties like the National Conference of the Abdullahs and the People's Democratic Party of the Muftis, but about the many lakh Kashmiri Indians who had hitherto taken on the separatists and Islamists in their midst.

In my conversations earlier this month with ordinary people on the streets, officials, university researchers, policemen on duty and journalists in Srinagar and other parts of the Valley, the consensus was clear – India and being Indian have suffered a massive setback.

Since the boycott of the Lok Sabha elections in 1989, the Kashmir Valley's troubles – firings and killings, stone pelting and hartals – had appeared to be a regular feature of life. But every phase had been different, allowing the continuing tragedy to take on new and more macabre faces each time. However, since Parliament voted to end the rights of Kashmiris over land and to allow migrants to buy land and settle there, a new and more dangerous phase of the tragedy began unfolding in the Valley.

Nothing normal in the Valley

For a reporter in the 1990s, the sound of firing in Srinagar or the massive deployment of security forces were part and parcel of one's assignment. But nothing could have prepared me for the extent of deployment of paramilitary personnel across the length and breadth of the Valley today. Apart from the Army, the Central Reserve Police Force and the J&K police were deployed in numbers on the highways and streets of the Valley.

During a trip beyond Handwara to some villages in north Kashmir, I found that the deployment ended some 20 km outside Handwara town. Shops usually opened between 7



"The absence of large-scale protests should not be seen as a sign of acceptance of the Centre's actions in diluting Article 370." A Kashmiri girl rides her bike past security personnel in Srinagar. • REUTERS

a.m. and 10 a.m. and were shut for the rest of the day. Private vehicles could be seen plying, but most commercial vehicles were off the roads. But this limited opening at a time when Internet services were suspended for more than 90 days could hardly be seen as a sign of normalcy.

"There is nothing called normal in Kashmir anymore," said one researcher at Kashmir University.

There had been fears of continuing (and violent) confrontation between the people and security forces; that has, mercifully, not happened. But the absence of continued large-scale protests should not be seen as a sign of acceptance or acquiescence to the Centre's actions in diluting Article 370 and annulling Article 35-A.

Most Kashmiris were aware that successive governments had eroded Article 370 and only a shell had remained before the current decisions taken by the BJP government. What was of concern to the people now was that "outsiders" may be brought in and settled in enclaves by the government or be given jobs that were once reserved for the erstwhile State's subjects. Such concerns were not restricted to the Valley; they extended to the Jammu region as well as Ladakh.

Kashmiris felt anger and contempt at pro-India politicians, including the Abdullahs and Muftis, who are currently under incarceration in hotels and houses in the Valley. The more conspiratorial of the Kashmiri people even believed that the main-

stream politicians were aware of what the Modi-Shah combine had plotted for Kashmir, but others felt that this corrupt category of people had rightly been placed behind bars for their practices over the years. "I want these people behind bars [a reference to mainstream politicians] but on corruption charges, not under the Public Safety [preventive detention] Act," said a serving government official in Handwara town.

Feeling let down

The feeling of having been let down, the feeling that constitutional guarantees could be easily diluted, make for an angry and sullen people. The slow approach of the Supreme Court to the habeas corpus cases filed post-August 5 made people question what democracy meant for them. "Our children can't study without the Internet, GST returns can't be filed since this is an online process. There is a problem even booking air tickets. But does anyone care?" a retired official wanted to know.

It is the separatists who have won the current propaganda war in Kashmir. Right from denigrating Sheikh Abdullah for going with India and, later, settling with Indira Gandhi in 1975, the separatists have always warned that New Delhi is not to be trusted. The erosion of autonomy has hugely boosted their agenda. It also holds out enormous potential for jihadi outfits to use in their pernicious plans to obtain new recruits.

"Article 370 was only skin with no

flesh. Now, even the skin has been taken away from us," rued a veteran journalist. "We have always spoken for India in Kashmir. Now, the very basis of our conversation has been snatched away." Nearly everyone I spoke to was clear on one point: the people were in command. No one had given the call for a hartal on the days members of the European Parliament were flown in by the government to Srinagar – these things happened spontaneously.

Command over territory

There is no doubt now that India is in command of territory in Kashmir. Thirty years since the first bullet was fired by militant elements in the Valley, the counterinsurgency grid has been perfected by the state. True, the BJP government's decision to end Kashmir's special status was an ideological one, something that the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh had promised to the people of India. But this ideology and a pre-determined approach didn't seem to have factored in the response of the Kashmiri people – other than denying them the tools to communicate and protest.

There is little doubt that most among the current crop of international leaders have little to say on the question of democratic rights, which is something that the BJP government has used to its advantage. Hence, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's comments during a visit to Delhi should make the government sit up. "The situation now for the people [in Kashmir] is not good and not sustainable. This has to be improved for sure," she said.

It's quite possible that in the weeks and months ahead, some of the restrictions imposed on the Kashmiris may be relaxed. But the government is in no rush. Time is on its side, something that the Kashmiris too have figured out.

The core issue, really, is what kind of democracy India has become. Kashmir for India was always special, once a beacon for pluralism and accommodation in a diverse country. That plural approach now lies in tatters. The territory is 'ours', but the people are bitter, angry and alienated. Even words that can heal are missing from our lexicon. And the Kashmiris are smart; they know this.

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FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

A transformative engagement

Readers' participation in editorial meetings showed that a discussion among people with different views is possible



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

We are witnessing more opacity and less accountability in various walks of public life. Amendments to the Right to Information Act have virtually compromised the autonomy of Information Commissioners. Legal scholar Gautam Bhatia has termed the Supreme Court's evolving jurisprudence of the sealed cover as "a petty autocracy". On November 9, in its judgment in the Ramjanmabhoombabri Masjid land dispute, the apex court did not reveal the name of the judge who authored it, though the established practice is to specify the name of the judge who wrote the judgment on behalf of the Bench. A couple of readers felt that it is in this context that this newspaper's decision to invite readers to take part in its editorial meetings is seen as setting new standards of transparency and accountability.

Differing views

We managed to accommodate 15 readers in the two sessions on November 5: nine for the noon session and six for the evening session. The group was not only diverse in terms of demography but also in terms of interests and viewpoints. A retired banker, Tharcus S. Fernando, felt that the session gave him a clear understanding of the process undertaken by senior editors in selecting stories to be published in print and in choosing stories that required editorials. A journalism student, Simran Kathuria, referred to a photograph celebrating interfaith harmony and questioned the choice of words in the caption. She felt the newspaper should take a clear stand on identifying communities.

The participants interacted with the editorial team after the conference. The team, led by the Editor, answered their queries. No question was taboo. For instance, S.V. Venugopalan took exception to the editorial, "Big bank theory" (August 31), on public sector bank mergers, which asserted that nationalised banks are overstaffed. Paras Chaudhary felt that the newspaper should have carried the story on the Global Hunger Index on the front page rather than carrying it in the inside pages. According to the Global Hunger



Index 2019, India has slipped from 83 in 2000 to 102 now, faring worse than Nepal, Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Radesh Rangarajan was generous in his appreciation of the initiative. He wrote: "The process was professional and illuminating. We observed that while choosing stories for the front page, nearly 10 bureaus offered two or three stories each. About six stories made it past the Editor's benchmark. The process followed by the Editor, Suresh Nambath, was transparent, merit-based, aligned with the newspaper's policy of newsworthiness, and with due regard to popular interest."

An uninhibited interaction

But Mr. Rangarajan was critical of the editorial pages of the paper. He said: "While news presentation remains pristine and conservative, there is an attempt to thrust Left, secular views on readers through editorials and opinion pieces. There is a need to have a balancing mechanism where readers are given an opportunity for the opposite side to be heard." Ravikanth Devarajan made a similar observation. He said, "I request *The Hindu* to consider publishing about 30 to 40% of opinion pieces that reflect alternative views while retaining about 60% of opinion pieces for views that are aligned with *The Hindu's*. This will enable the readers to read alternative views regularly. This would attract readers with varied shades of opinion." Sharada Lakshmanan felt that the newsroom should use technology to filter toxic content as well as identify instances of plagiarism.

When the readers interacted with the editorial team after the meeting, the discussion moved to problems posed by social media posts. Mr. Rangarajan felt that the space for the anarchy of social media exists because mainstream media is ideologically driven and tends to become preachy. The Editor pointed out that views from the establishment are given due space. Even on the question of the dilution of Article 370, *The Hindu* published an opinion piece by the Vice-President, so it would not be fair to say that there is no space for differing views in the newspaper, he said.

Both readers and the editorial team realised that an uninhibited interaction is possible because of shared values and commitment to a democratic public sphere that is not vitiated by vitriol and venom.

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Renovate, not rebuild

The features of Parliament House demonstrate the secular nature of the republic

RAJMOHAN UNNITHAN

The Central government is considering either redeveloping Parliament House or building a new structure. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has said that the government is considering suggestions to build a new Parliament House or renovate the existing one with improved facilities by 2022, just in time to celebrate 75 years of Independence. Against this backdrop, a serious deliberation on the details of the proposed renovation or reconstruction plan is required.

History and architecture

Parliament House was designed by the British architects Sir Edwin Lutyens and Sir Herbert Baker in 1912-1913. Construction of the building began in 1921 and was completed in 1927. It is popularly believed that the circular structure of the 11th-century Chausath Yogini Temple in Morena district of Madhya Pradesh may have inspired the design of Parliament House. The Chausath Yogini Temple, also known as the Ekattarso Mahadeva Temple, is one of the few such Yogini temples in the country which is in good condition. This fact defies the popular misconception that Parliament House is colonial in nature.

There are 30 statues and busts in the Parliament House precincts including the sculptures of Chandragupta Maurya, Motilal Nehru, and Indira Gandhi. There are more than 20 portraits. Thus, the building represents the composite culture and social pluralism of India.

Inscriptions from the Upanishadas, Mahabharata, Manu Smriti and other texts are indicative of the spirit with which parliamentarians should conduct business. A dome over the passage to the Central Hall also has a Quranic inscription which says, "God will not change the condition of the people unless they bring about a change themselves." These features demonstrate the secular nature of the Republic of which the Parliament House is the nucleus.

The Parliament House has a hybrid architectural style. It has Hindu, Saracenic and Roman features. It drew stylistic and decorative elements from native Indo-Islamic architecture, especially Mughal architec-

ture, which the British regarded as the classic Indian style, and less often, Hindu temple architecture. This nature of architectural pluralism should be maintained while constructing a new Parliament House or renovating the existing structure.

Demands of space and security

The buildings constructed over 100 years ago such as the North and South blocks are not earthquake-resistant. There is a shortage of working and parking space, amenities and services. The building no longer supports added demands of space and security. There are no chambers for MPs. The situation will further worsen if there is an increase in the number of seats. Therefore, there should be enough space for MPs, their staff and media in the new or renovated building. Separate chambers should

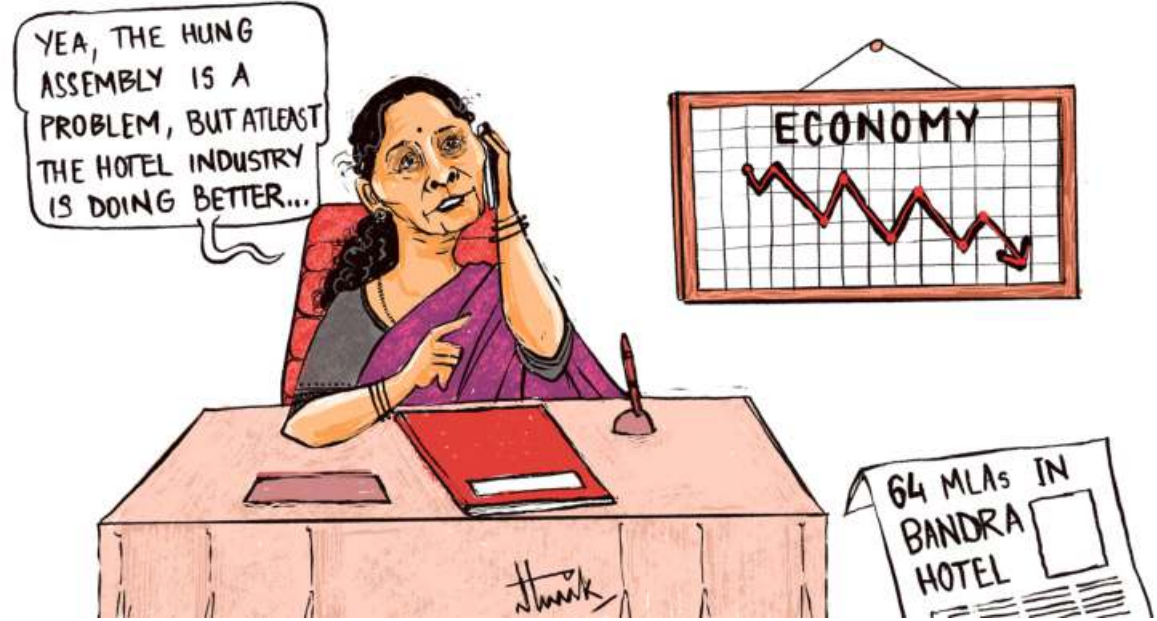


be conceived for individual MPs.

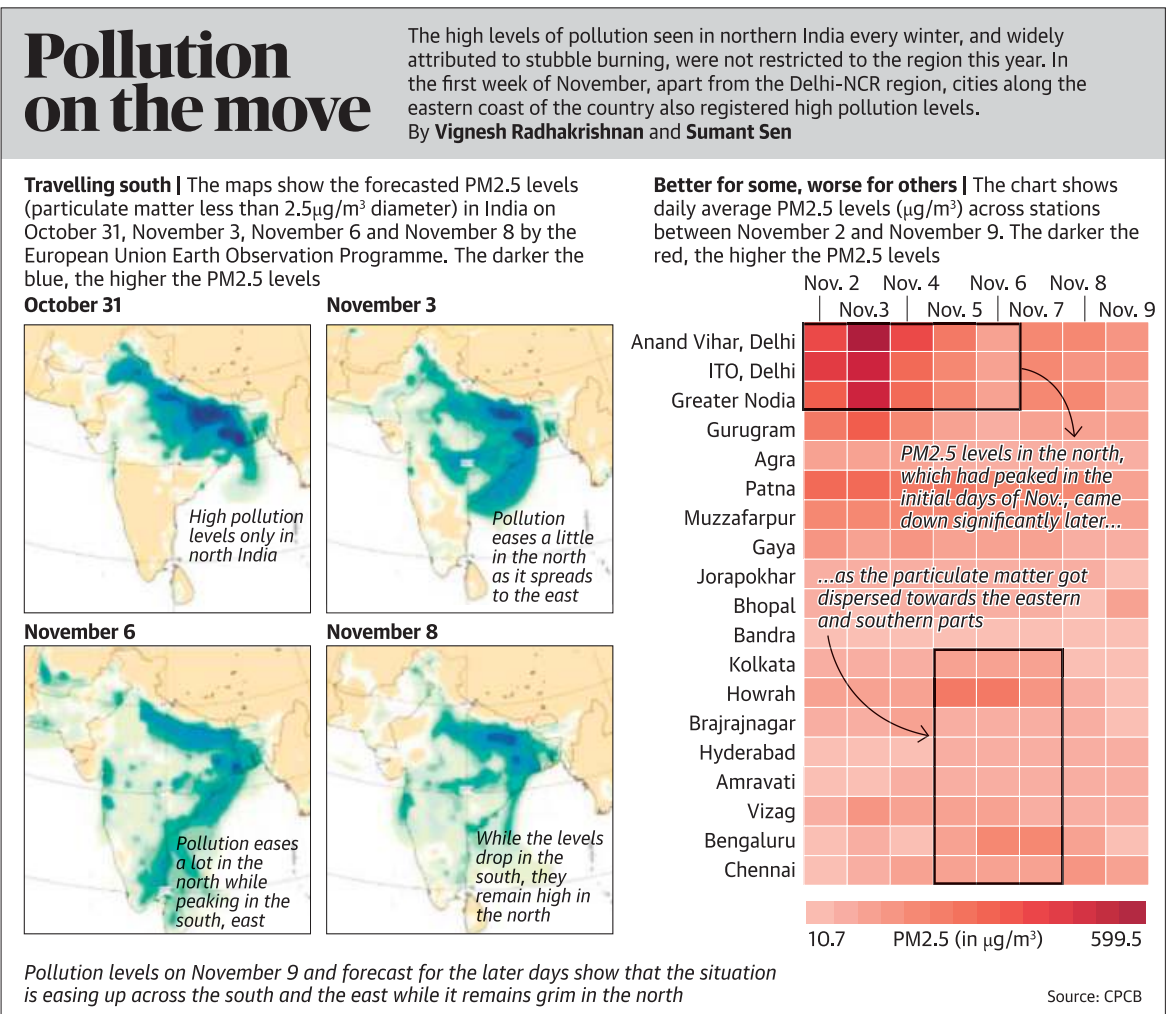
The Parliament House building has remarkable symbolic value. It embodies the spirit of Indian democracy. Hence, it would be advisable to maintain and renovate the present building rather than build a new one. The Capitol Building of the U.S., built in 1800, was subsequently expanded. A massive dome and more chambers for the House of Representatives and the Senate were added. But during expansion, the original plan was maintained despite the tumultuous passing of two centuries. This approach of maintaining and renovating the existing Parliament House building would be a wiser option.

Let us reshape the Parliament building by imbibing the composite culture and rich architectural legacy of India. Such a majestic edifice may inspire us to reshape India as an effectively secular, pluralistic and inclusive republic.

Rajmohan Unnithan is a Member of Parliament



DATA POINT



The Hindu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 11, 1969

Cyclonic havoc in Andhra

(From an Editorial)

It is indeed a gruelling ordeal for the people of coastal Andhra Pradesh to be struck twice in the same year by devastating cyclonic storms. Last Friday's [Nov. 7] visitation has left a vast trail of destruction and heavy loss of lives. While first reports spoke of 23 dead and many more injured in house collapses, drowning and other accidents in the Krishna district, later information suggests a much higher toll, with an entire village in the Kolleru area suddenly submerged by the flood. The damage to crops in three coastal districts is also said to be extensive and irreparable, since in the view of the State Agriculture Minister, the season is past for resowing and even ample Government aid may not be of any use to the ryots. One can only hope that the restoration of communications with the affected area will show that some at least of the submerged crops can be salvaged. The authorities will no doubt move quickly to repair the roads and clear the hundreds of fallen trees and to help those rendered homeless. But the question will also have to be asked whether all of the suffering and tragic loss of lives was unavoidable.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 11, 1919.

Industrial Disputes Bill.

London, November 6. – In the Commons Sir R. Horne moved the second reading of the Industrial Dispute Bill, the features of which are provision for a permanent industrial court of inquiry and the dropping of the compulsory arbitration existing under the present Act. The Bill also provides for the continuation of wartime rates of wages till September 1920. The reason that compulsion had been dropped was that employers objected to the clause empowering workmen to compel employers to accept arbitration in wages disputes, and to abide by the decision, whereas there was no corresponding compulsion on workers to abide by the decision. Labour objects to being made the subject of compulsory arbitration, hence it had been dropped. Sir R. Horne, however, defended labour against the suggestion, that the objection was because they desired to evade awards. He pointed out that in the last eleven months the interim courts arbitration had decided 863 cases, and only in three had there been a strike against the award. Moreover he declared that compulsion had largely failed in Australia and Canada, because in his opinion the people were not ready for it.