

RAM JANMABHOOMI-BABRI MASJID DISPUTE

Mosque side set to file review plea  
against SC order, rejects 5-acre plot

Sunni Waqf Board opposes decision by AIMPLB, Jamiat;  
AIMPLB says will accept what the court finally decides

**ABANTIKA GHOSH & MAULSHREE SETH**  
NEW DELHI, LUCKNOW,  
NOVEMBER 17

THE All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) and Jamiat ulama i Hind announced on Sunday that they would file review petitions on the Supreme

Court judgment in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute, and would not accept the 5-acre plot awarded by a five-judge Bench in lieu of the disputed site.

After a meeting held in Lucknow, AIMPLB working committee member Kamal Farooqui said, "The board has decided that a review petition

should be filed against the Supreme Court verdict."

While Jamiat is a party in the dispute, the AIMPLB has played an organising role in the case. The AIMPLB working committee members said the petition would be filed within the 30-day deadline and reiterated that whatever "the final verdict" of

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Zafaryab Jilani (right) at the AIMPLB press meet Lucknow. PTI

Key sales numbers  
show rural demand  
may dip further

Warning signs across FMCG, tractors & 2-wheelers, gold, real rural wages

**PVAIDYANATHAN IYER**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

THE GOVERNMENT Friday claimed that a significant divergence in levels of consumption and direction of change prompted it to withhold the findings of the survey on household consumption expenditure for July 2017-June 2018. But all major indicators of rural demand suggest the situation has only worsened since the beginning of financial year 2019-20, and the economy is yet to see the end of the current slowdown cycle.

The Indian Express spoke to business leaders across key industries to find that all indicators of rural demand — sales of FMCG, and of tractors and two-wheelers, in non-cities — show they are still riding the trough. Other indicators, such as a sharp fall in gold imports in the last four months (half of gold demand is rural-driven) also point to slackening demand.

The most critical factor behind rural stress is not just the fall in nominal wage rates of labour. With CPI rising for rural labour-

EXPLAINED  
E.

Revival still  
some time away

FMCG, TRACTOR and motorcycle sales, as well as a decline in real wages, show that rural consumers are postponing the purchase of non-discretionary items. The possibility of a revival is at least three-six months away.

ers, real wages since March have also seen a decline. The real wage growth, adjusted for CPI-RL (Consumer Price Index-Rural Labourers), has seen the sharpest erosion in August. With CPI-RL at 6.23%, even if nominal wages increased 3.4% in August, real wages eroded by 2.83%.

While some economists say excess and late monsoon in a few

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Let Farooq attend, Oppn tells PM at  
all-party meet before House session

**PRADEEP KAUSHAL**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

AS PRIME Minister Narendra Modi said the government was ready to discuss every issue, at the all-party meeting held a day before the Winter Session of Parliament begins Monday, the Opposition raised the question of continued detention of leaders in Kashmir. Congress Rajya Sabha leader Ghulam Nabi Azad demanded that senior National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, who is held under the Public Safety Act, "be allowed to attend Parliament".

Buoyant after the recent Assembly election results which didn't give the BJP the results it expected, the Opposition is gearing up to take on the government over the economic slowdown, unemployment and farm distress, apart from Kashmir.

Returning to power with an increased majority, the Modi government in the past two sessions pushed through the triple talaq Bill and the scrapping of special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Now, bolstered by the Supreme Court verdict in the Ayodhya case, it has lined up exhaustive legislative business



Modi, Shah, Azad at the all-party meeting, Sunday. Renuka Puri

such as the contentious citizenship (amendment) Bill.

The session is scheduled to conclude on December 13, and will hold a special joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha on November 26 to commemorate 'Constitution Day'.

Modi and BJP chief Amit Shah, apart from leaders of 27 parties, were present at Sunday's meeting, called by Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi.

In his customary remarks, the PM said the government was willing to discuss every issue in

the House. "We look forward to a productive Parliament session, where people-centric and development-oriented issues would be discussed," he said, adding that constructive discussions in Parliament also kept the bureaucracy alert.

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad (Congress) and National Conference Lok Sabha MP Hasnain Masoodi raised the continuing detention of mainstream leaders in Jammu and Kashmir.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Chirag seeks  
convenor, cites  
missing Sena,  
shrinking NDA

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

THE TREMORS of the Shiv Sena's parting of ways with the BJP in Maharashtra were felt at the NDA meeting in Delhi on Sunday, ahead of the Parliament session, with allies pitching for a mechanism to improve coordination and Prime Minister Narendra Modi describing the ruling alliance as "one big family".



TDP, RLSP  
left earlier:  
LJP chief

Janshakti Party (LJP) demanded appointment of a convenor for better coordination, and said the government should take up unemployment in the coming session. With the government

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

30 political detainees in  
Srinagar moved amid  
claims of manhandling

**ADIL AKHZER**  
SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17

NUMBERING OVER 30, all the mainstream political leaders kept under detention at the Sher-e-Kashmir International Conference Centre (SKICC) in Srinagar since August 5 were on Sunday afternoon moved to the MLA hostel within the city, amid allegations of manhandling by police.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) claimed that the hostel wasn't equipped with heating facilities, the reason unofficially given for shifting the detainees. This led to protests, after which



The detainees being moved  
in Srinagar on Sunday. PTI

some leaders were allegedly roughed up. People's Conference

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TRAIN SERVICES  
RESUME, PAGE 7

WORLD



INDIA MAPS: NEPAL  
PM SAYS KALAPANI  
ITS AREA, PAGE 13

**PRITAM PAL SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

PORTIONS OF the November 15 order of the Delhi High Court dismissing the bail plea of Congress leader P Chidambaram in the INX Media money laundering case, it has emerged, bear striking resemblance to both a previous High Court order as well as a Supreme Court decision on the bail plea of lawyer Rohit Tandon, arrested in several money laundering cases (he is currently out on bail).

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait's 41-page judgment denying bail



Similarities  
with HC, SC  
orders, ED  
affidavit

to the 74-year-old Congress leader also, in parts, resembles the counter-affidavit filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) during the course of the proceedings.

This emerged after Justice Kait's order was uploaded late on Saturday evening. Senior

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Gotabaya wins, his  
camp reaches out:  
'India closest friend'



EXPRESS IN COLOMBO

**ARUN JANARDHANAN**  
NOVEMBER 17

BY THE time friends and family members started thronging his two-storey house, away from the heart of Colombo, the verdict was clear. Around noon Sunday, visitors were told that he was taking a nap after staying up the entire night to track the results. Finally, in the afternoon, Gotabaya Rajapaksa stepped out to reach the election commission.



Gotabaya Rajapaksa after  
the results, in Colombo. AP

By then, the former wartime defence secretary, and younger brother of ex-president Mahinda Rajapaksa, had been officially elected as the new President of Sri Lanka with about 52 per cent of votes. "All Sri Lankans are part

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

HERO OR 'WAR  
CRIMINAL'? , PAGE 13

Exiled in UK, Pak MQM  
leader seeks asylum from  
Modi for himself, aides

**ADITI KHANNA**  
LONDON, NOVEMBER 17

MUTTAHIDA QUAMI Movement (MQM) founder Altaf Hussain, living in exile in the UK, has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to grant him and his colleagues asylum or at least some financial assistance to take his case to the International Court of Justice.

Promising that he would not interfere in politics, Hussain took to social media last week to relay a new speech, in which he also welcomed the Supreme Court

verdict in the Ayodhya case.

The 67-year-old is due to stand trial in the UK on an offence of encouraging terrorism through a speech relayed to his followers in Pakistan a few years ago.

"If India today, and Prime Minister Modi, allow me to come to India and provide me asylum with my colleagues, I am ready to come to India along with my colleagues, because my grandfather is buried there, my grandmother is buried there, my thousands of relatives are buried there. I want to go there, to their graves," said Hussain, in a speech

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WEB EXCLUSIVE



**AT DELHI'S FIRST OXYGEN BAR, BREATHE IN 'PURE AIR' FOR RS 300**

In between all the measures to battle the severe air pollution levels in Delhi-NCR, there's one more option for you — a bar that has "pure air". Founded by Aryavir Kumar and Margarita Kuritsyana, Delhi's first-ever oxygen bar — named 'Oxy Pure' — offers 15 minutes of 80-90 per cent pure oxygen starting from Rs 299.

VIDEO OF THE DAY



**'APNI PATHSHALA'**

**This Rajasthan cop started a free school for underprivileged kids**

FULL COVERAGE



**SRI LANKA ELECTIONS**

**Gotabaya Rajapaksa to be the new President of island nation**

**EXPRESS AUDIO**

**Our plastic addiction and what we can do**

THE SANDIP ROY SHOW

Sandip talks to Bharati Chaturvedi, founder-director of the environmental research and action group, Chintan, about the myriad ways in which plastic affects our lives and how we can realistically fight it.

# FROM PAGE ONE

## Detainees

(PC) claimed its chairman Sajad Lone had been “manhandled and misbehaved with” under the pretext of security checking.

SSP, Security, Kashmir Imtiyaz Hussain denied the claims. “There are some mandatory drills... We followed those. Nothing of this sort happened,” he told *The Indian Express*. He later reiterated the same on Twitter.

PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti’s daughter Iltija Mufti tweeted that Lone, senior PDP leader Waheed Para and chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir People’s Movement Shah Faesal were manhandled.

Claiming that “new jail windows are blocked with wood, (it) lacks heaters & has surveillance jammers”, Iltija, who uses Mehbooba’s handle, issued a series of tweets, saying “manhandling started when Sajad Lone was repeatedly frisked & asked to undress”. “If a man who PM Modi

called his younger brother is being humiliated like this, imagine plight of others... Lone sahab’s aged mother refuses to leave srinagar despite the cold because her son is jailed. Is this humane?”

The PC said the way Lone had been treated led to an exchange of words, “in which some members also exchanged blows”. “This attitude of the local police towards former democratically elected representatives is brazen arrogance and contempt for the rule of law,” the party said.

A senior PDP leader told *The Indian Express* the detained leaders were told they were being shifted “because of the cold”, with Kashmir seeing snow earlier than expected. However, the government has not given a specific reason, and sources said one of the considerations was the bill of Rs 3.28 crore run up at the SKICC.

On Friday, Mehbooba Mufti became the first political detainee in Kashmir to be moved to a new

place after August 5 when she was shifted from a Chashme Shahi hut to near Lal Chowk. Iltija had earlier said the hut didn’t have enough heating.

### House session

“How can a parliamentarian be detained illegally?” Azad said, in an apparent reference to Abdullah.

Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said the Opposition demanded that the issues of economic slowdown, job loss, farm distress and pollution be discussed. He said the Congress will also raise the issue of withdrawal of the SPG cover to the Gandhi family.

Trinamool Congress leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay said they would raise the role being played by West Bengal Governor Jagdish Prasad.

The government plans to seek Parliament’s nod on two ordinances — one by which it cut the

corporate tax rate to arrest the economic slow-down; and the other introduced to ban e-cigarettes and similar products.

According to both the Rajya Sabha and Lok Sabha business list, about 35 legislations will be taken up during the session.

The 18 MPs of the Shiv Sena in the Lok Sabha and three in the Rajya Sabha have been allotted seats on the Opposition side.

The BSP, JD(U), RPI, DMK, AIADMK, LJP, SP, TDP, Apna Dal, AAP and RJD also attended the meeting.

### Gotabaya

of this journey,” he said.

His camp, meanwhile, was quick to reach out to India — and convey that while China will be a “trade partner”, India remains “our relative”. As a symbolic first step, the President-elect chose Anuradhapura, the World Heritage City known for its traditional links to India, for his swearing-in ceremony Monday.

In Delhi, the PMO tweeted that Prime Minister Modi had spoken to Gotabaya and invited him to visit India. “The invitation was accepted,” it said.

Sources close to Gotabaya told *The Indian Express* that he will be a “healthy partner” for India. “With the current government, India imagined that its interests will be protected. But it failed to protect Sri Lanka’s interests and did nothing for India. A strong president in Sri Lanka will make sure that India is the closest friend while protecting autonomy of his own country,” sources said.

In 2015, Mahinda had alleged India’s role behind his electoral defeat at a time when Sri Lanka was perceived to have grown close to China. This time, however, sources said, India “changed a lot” over the last year. “Earlier, Indian officials in Colombo were reluctant to meet us. Now there is a warm relationship between Gotabaya and Delhi. He will follow the same policy that we followed earlier — China is a trade partner, while India is a relative,” sources said.

Palitha Kohona, former foreign secretary, said, “We are in a hurry to develop (the country). If our first priority is to maintain a special relationship with India, we are also prioritising our trade and investment relationships with every potential partner, China, the US or Europe.”

“Gotabaya was appointed by then President Mahinda to communicate with India during the war. He has a strong network in Delhi among bureaucrats and politicians. It helped us finish the war,” said Kohona, who is a key consultant for the Rajapaksa family.

Bernard Goonetilleke, former diplomat, too said Lanka’s proximity to China is only about development. “It cannot be compared with our ties to India, which are historically rooted,” he said.

Gotabaya’s victory came on the back of overwhelming support from the majority Sinhalese Buddhist community. With elections coming seven months after the Easter Sunday terror blasts, Gotabaya’s stress on national security worked in his favour.

Initial data shows Gotabaya secured over 60 per cent support from

# Mosque side set to file review plea

the apex court, they would abide by it.

On Sunday evening, the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board told PTI it was not in favour of a review petition. The Waqf Board was one of the main litigants in the case. Chairman Zulfar Farooqui told PTI, “Before the judgment, the AIMPLB was repeatedly saying it will abide by any judgment of the Supreme Court. Then why is an appeal being made now?”

On the question of taking another plot of land in lieu of the disputed area, Farooqui said they would decide at a meeting on November 26. Original petitioner Iqbal Ansari too has indicated he is reluctant to continue the legal battle.

In its November 9 judgment in the dispute, the Supreme Court ordered handing over of the entire disputed 2.77 acres to the Hindu side. The Muslim side was awarded a 5-acre plot within Ayodhya for the construction of a mosque.

AIMPLB secretary Zafaryab Jilani, who was the counsel for the Muslim side, said, “We have decided petitions will be filed by

Maulana Mahfooz Rahmani and Muhammad Umar, also some defendants. Jamiat too has decided to file a review plea... It seems likely at this point that these will be different petitions.”

The Jamiat said a panel under the chairmanship of president Maulana Arshad Madani had “gone deeply into the prospects of a review petition”. “The expert panel observed that the judgment was against the Babri Masjid and it was not a final judgment as the option of reviewing is available under the Constitution. The panel found that in its more than 1,000-page judgment, (the court) accepted that most of the evidence and arguments given were in favour of the Babri Masjid,” the Jamiat said, adding, “While the legal option is available, there is also Sharia obligation to defend the masjid till the last breath.”

The AIMPLB said it had taken into account the evidence presented by the Muslim side and come to the conclusion that a review petition should be filed “because of the various apparent errors in (the Supreme Court order)”. “The petition will also

deal with the fact that Muslims cannot accept any other land in lieu of the masjid land, and it is only justice that they be given the land that Babri Masjid stood on... The restitution by granting 5 acres where fundamental values have been damaged to the extent of causing national shame will not in any manner heal the wounds... the effect of this direction would amount to shifting the mosque by judicial order without any provocation by the community, which tried to protect this mosque.”

Saying Sharia law did not allow building the same mosque at any other site, it added, “Mosques are essential for the religious practice of Muslims.”

The AIMPLB added, “...Supreme Court has observed that the protection granted therein (Places of Worship Act, 1991) is to protect fundamental values of the Constitution... and acceptance of equality of all religious faiths. The Muslim community contested this litigation to ensure the said fundamental values.” Noting that “the State has no religion”, the board said the failure to protect the Babri

Masjid “amounted to betrayal of the Muslim community”.

On the 5-acre land, Jilani said it was not about building a mosque, and that Ayodhya had at least 27 already. “The 5 acres will neither balance equity nor repair the damage caused in the country,” the AIMPLB said.

The Jamiat statement underlined that some Supreme Court observations cleared several allegations regarding the Babri Masjid. “For example, the mosque was not built after demolishing a Ram temple... Furthermore, both the courts — the Supreme Court and Allahabad High Court (in 2010) — accept this bitter fact that idols were put inside the Babri Mosque illegally...”

“It is also perplexing that the bench did not accept deity Ram Lalla as the owner of the land but handed over the mosque to the Hindu parties,” the Jamiat statement said.

The AIMPLB meeting was attended by MP Asaduddin Owaisi, an AIMPLB member, who was among the first to call for rejection of the 5 acres.

# Key numbers show rural demand may dip further

large states — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat — has suppressed farm incomes, others argue it is a simplistic deduction. “Lack of jobs due to poor or no investment over the years has meant poor incomes. Rural to urban migration for work has hardly matched addition to work force (estimated at 5-8 million a year). More people have stayed back in villages, and non-farm opportunities there have shrunk since demonetisation,” said an economist with a public finance think-tank.

A senior executive with a major FMCG company says rural consumers were holding up as late as March 2019. “After two big disruptions — demonetisation in 2016 and GST in 2017 — it was expected that we will see an uptick in 2018. The big companies passed on the benefits of lower GST to consumers. So, there were good parts to 2018, when companies like HUL were growing at 14-15 per cent,” the executive said.

But in calendar year 2019, the FMCG rural demand started slowing. “Rural markets were always growing at 1.4-1.5 times the urban market... By June-end, the rural market started slowing and was growing at the same pace as urban. By September, rural was growing at half the rate of urban,” the executive said.

Rural India accounts for roughly about 38-40 per cent of the total FMCG market. “If the ur-

HOW WAGES TURNED NEGATIVE IN RURAL INDIA			
Year 2019	*Nominal rural wage growth %	**CPI (RL)	Real rural wage growth %
January	4.01	2.44	1.57
February	3.98	3.24	0.74
March	3.99	4.25	-0.26
April	3.87	4.80	-0.93
May	4.17	5.45	-1.28
June	4.02	6.10	-2.08
July	4.30	6.04	-1.74
August	3.40	6.23	-2.83

Source: Labour Bureau  
\*The nominal average wage growth for males in rural India across 25 agricultural and non-agricultural occupations \*\* Consumer Price Index for rural labourers

ban segment is growing 10 per cent, rural is growing 5 per cent... and this may drop further to 3-4 per cent. People are postponing even small ticket purchases. We see things getting worse over the next three-six months. Rural FMCG sales have not yet hit the bottom,” said another executive with a top FMCG company.

The auto companies, meanwhile, are hoping for greater government intervention for crops that will boost rural incomes. For, the performance of top companies in sales of tractors and two-wheelers during the current year, including the recent festive month of October, gives little reason for cheer.

Domestic tractor sales declined in the first eight months of financial year 2019-20. For

Mahindra, the largest player in the segment, sales in each of the five months beginning April 2019 were lower than the corresponding months in the previous year. It was down 8 per cent in April, 17 per cent in May, 19 per cent in June, 11 per cent in July and 15 per cent in August.

In September, domestic sales were marginally up — 97 units more. But that turned out to be an aberration, as expectations from the good monsoons and crop prices were belied. In October, domestic sales were lower again, by almost 2,000 units or 4 per cent. In contrast, sales had jumped 17 per cent in October 2018 from the previous year.

When Hero MotoCorp recorded its highest single-

month sales of 12.84 lakh two-wheelers in October, many saw the green shoots of a turnaround. But more than half of this was inventory pushed aggressively by dealers during the festive month. The company despatched only 5.99 lakh two-wheelers during the month, 18.43 per cent lower than sales in October 2018.

Hero MotoCorp, which has the largest share of almost 46 per cent in the two-wheeler market, saw a continuous dip in sales in the first six months of 2019-20. Except for May, when it dropped 7.7 per cent, the dip was in double digits. Bajaj Auto and TVS, two other big players, recorded a decline in sales even in October.

A continuous decline in gold imports over the last four months also indicates the stress. In October, India imported 38 tonnes gold, 33 per cent less than in October 2018. In July, August and September, gold imports had plunged 55 per cent, 73 per cent and 68 per cent, respectively. In contrast, during the April-June quarter, gold imports had surged 35.5 per cent.

Analysts say any income usually gets saved in the form of gold in rural areas, especially among those that lack access to banking. The government did hike customs duty on gold in the Budget, but the sharp fall in imports cannot be attributed to the increase from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent alone, they say.

Sinhalese strongholds, especially in southern areas such as Hambantota and Matara. Opponent Premadasa won 70-80 per cent votes in the Tamil and Muslim-populated areas to the north and east, including Jaffna.

### Chirag Paswan

announcing that the contentious citizenship (amendment) Bill would be introduced in this session, allies from the Northeast expressed their disquiet.

In his introductory remarks at the meeting, which was not attended by the Sena, Modi said NDA allies may have different ideologies but were like one family and should not get unsettled by small differences. Later he tweeted, “Our alliance represents India’s diversity and the aspirations of 130 crore Indians.”

Speaking to reporters after the NDA meeting, LJP chief Chirag Paswan said the appointment of a convenor or constitution of a co-

ordination committee would ensure the exchange of ideas and views across alliance partners. “There should be better coordination,” he said, adding that this would also help check rumours regarding NDA unity. The LJP and BJP are contesting elections separately in Jharkhand after failing to reach an agreement.

Appointed the LJP chief earlier this month, Paswan said the Sena’s absence had been felt as it was one of the oldest NDA members, and expressed concern over the “declining” alliance strength. The Telugu Desam Party had left the NDA earlier, and then the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party, he pointed out, adding that what happened between the BJP and Sena in Maharashtra could have been avoided if there had been better coordination.

Sources said the Apna Dal, JD(U) and a few allies from the Northeast also made similar suggestions.

Unlike Atal Bihari Vajpayee’s time, there is hardly any consultation among allies in the NDA now. The usual practice is to just have floor coordination in both Houses of Parliament.

While the LJP asked the government to take up the issue of job demand, sources said Home Minister Amit Shah sought to reassure Northeast partners regarding the government’s plans on the citizenship Bill and the National Register of Citizens. The JD(U) talked about air and water pollution.

**WITH PTI INPUTS**

### Pak MQM leader

dated November 9.

A controversial but powerful figure in Pakistan’s politics, Hussain has been accused of inciting violence in Karachi from exile in the UK. He has managed to remain on the right side of the military establishment through his troubles. With the MQM a party of the Mohajirs, Urdu-

speaking Muslims who migrated to Pakistan from India, and given his pro-India remarks, Hussain has often invited charges of being propped up by Delhi.

In his speech, Hussain said, “I am a peace-loving person. I will not interfere in any politics, I promise. But just give me, along with my colleagues, a place to live in India. I request you to grant some Baloch, Sindhis whose names I give asylum as well.”

During the broadcast, he welcomed the Supreme Court order offering land for a new mosque in lieu of the demolished Babri Masjid, and said those who did not accept the ruling should leave India. He also said the current Indian government has a right to establish “Hindu raj”.

Hussain is currently on strict bail conditions, imposed after he was charged on terror last month.

**PTI, WITH ENI INPUTS**  
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## AAP to hold booth-level meetings

*New Delhi:* AAP legislators have been directed by the party to hold booth-level meetings over the next month to propagate the party's narrative of "good governance", as against the "mismanagement" during the BJP and Congress years, in the run-up to next year's Assembly polls.

Senior leader and Delhi unit convenor Gopal Rai said the action will shift to the booth level in the fourth phase of the party's poll campaign. The first three phases saw AAP leaders, including CM Arvind Kejriwal, address gatherings of party workers at the district and constituency levels.

Rai said the campaign will cover around 14,000 booths in the city. The MLAs will hold '*jan samvads*' or public dialogues at every booth in their respective constituencies. "The *jan samvad* events will be led by the MLAs. In constituencies not represented by us or those which have fallen vacant, leaders who've been made in-charges of those seats will lead the charge. Every MLA or in-charge will hold at least four-five events on a daily basis," Rai said.

Rai said the dialogues will include comparative discussions on the AAP's record of governing Delhi since 2015, as against the performance of the Congress and the BJP. The campaign, set to begin on November 17, will continue till December 24. **ENS**

## 'SWERVED TO AVOID TREE' 19-yr-old student dies as car topples

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

A 19-YEAR-OLD physiotherapy student died after his car toppled and rammed a water tanker in South East Delhi's Okhla Estate Road in the early hours of Sunday.

Police said the student, Ansh Girdhar, swerved to avoid a tree lying in the middle of the road and hit the pavement. The impact was such that the car toppled and rammed a water tanker parked on the side.

DCP (South East) Chinmoy Biswal said, "The student was rushed to AIIMS and died during treatment. His Baleno car was found in a damaged condition at the spot. We suspect he was speeding over 100 kmph at the time of the incident. A post-mortem was conducted and the body was handed over to the family."

Police said a case has been registered against the tanker driver under IPC section 279 (rash driving or riding on a public way) and 304(a) (death by negligence) for leaving the vehicle parked by the side of the road.

Police said the incident took place when Girdhar, who had gone to have tea with his friends at Crown Plaza around 2 am, was on his way home around 3.30 am. "During preliminary investigation, we found that Girdhar lost control of the car when he swerved to avoid the tree.



Ansh Girdhar, a physiotherapy student, was on his way home when the incident took place

We suspect a truck or a big vehicle might have rammed the tree earlier in the day, causing it to fall on the road," said a senior police officer.

Shweta, an eyewitness, said, "I live near the street where the accident took place. I heard a loud noise from outside. When I went out to check, I found a man stuck inside an overturned Baleno. I tried to pull him out... I made a PCR call and police arrived within minutes."

Police said the car belongs to Girdhar's elder brother, Ishan. The victim was pursuing his bachelors in physiotherapy from ISIC Institute of Rehabilitation Sciences and lived with his family in Kalkaji Extension. While his father, Anil Girdhar, runs a pharmaceutical business, his mother is a homemaker, said police.

## Strong wind, sunlight improves air quality

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

STRONG, GUSTY winds coupled with a clear sky and ample sunlight further improved the city's air quality to the 'poor' category Sunday from 'very poor' a day earlier. IMD officials said winds as strong as 36 km/hr were recorded in the city Sunday, which dispersed pollutants.

Sunlight also helped increase the atmospheric mixing layer height which further helped release pollutants trapped closer to the surface, IMD officials said.

The 24-hour AQI of Delhi Sunday was 215 (poor). Gurgaon had the lowest AQI of 136 (moderate), Ghaziabad recorded 218 and Noida 203.

A report from the central government's air quality monitoring system SAFAR said, "High



Visitors at India Gate Sunday. Prem Nath Pandey

surface winds are forecast to continue for the next 24 hours after which they are likely to decrease slowly."

Share of stubble burning in Delhi's air Sunday, as per the SAFAR report, was 2% and is expected to go up to 9% Monday. Air quality is expected to remain 'poor' or improve to 'moderate' Monday, but may deteriorate from Tuesday and reach the higher end of 'very poor' by Wednesday, as per the report.

## Gangster killed over land dispute: Police

*Gurgaon:* A day after gangster Ashok Rathi (44) was allegedly shot dead by three aides at his home in Sohna's Alipur, police said the accused fired 11 bullets at him. The post-mortem showed he received injuries to his abdomen, limbs, ear and chest, they added.

Police suspect the accused, Narendra, Rohit Dagar and Salim, killed Rathi over a land dispute. Rathi's brother Mahesh claimed, "A week ago, Rohit bought property and wanted money from my brother but Ashok wasn't interested in investing in it. The three would often meet him about the property."

Mahesh also alleged that a gangster named Leelu Dagar was behind the murder. Police said they are yet to find evidence to verify the allegations. **ENS**

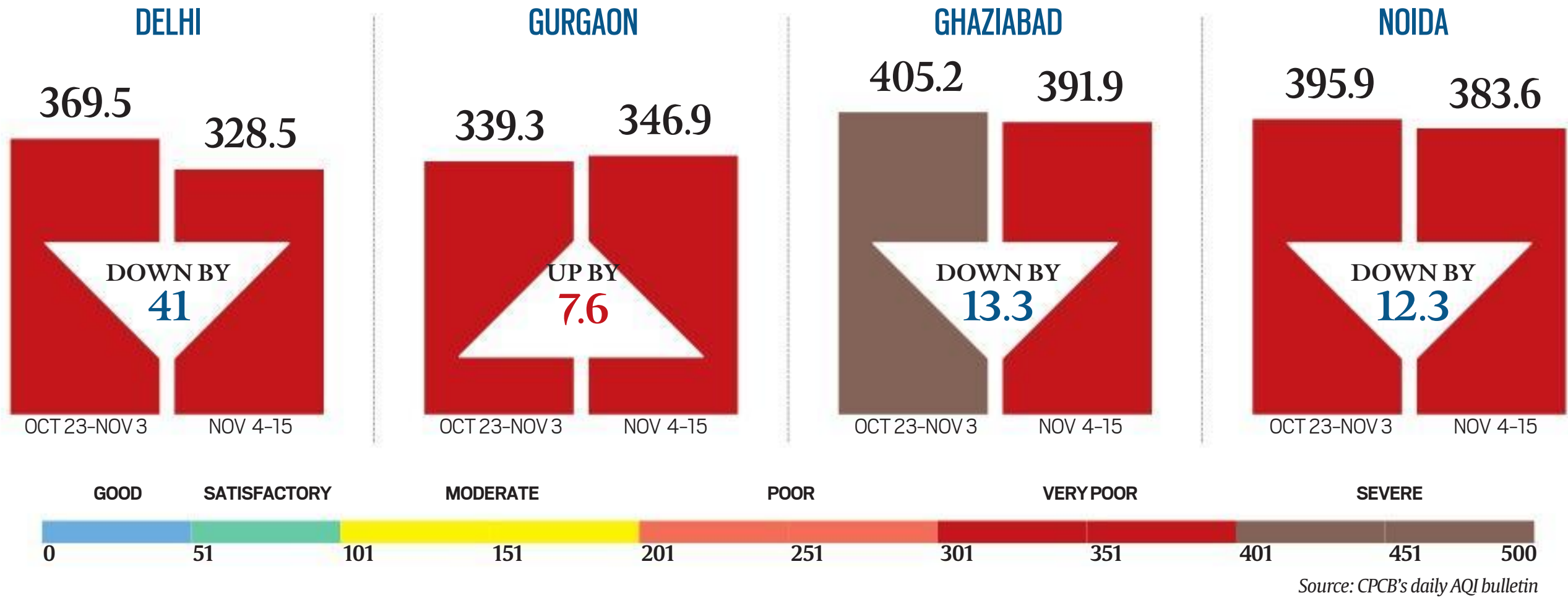


# 4 HARDLOOK

## ODD-EVEN SCHEME

### AVERAGE AQI

Comparing 12 days before odd-even to 12 days during odd-even. Delhi saw a higher dip in AQI than NCR cities



# ROAD TEST

The third edition of the Delhi government's odd-even scheme ended on Friday – the same day the Supreme Court sought to know how effective it really is. MALLICA JOSHI looks at data from Delhi and NCR cities to understand whether the initiative managed to help bring down air pollution

ON WEDNESDAY, November 13, as evening sets in and levels of particulate matter (PM) 2.5 climbed steadily, an official monitoring the situation could not help but get frustrated. All construction activity in the city had been suspended a few weeks ago, the second week of the odd-even road-rationing scheme was in place, and schools had been ordered to shut for the next two days.

"This is the highest the GRAP (graded response action plan) goes. We are doing everything we can, but who can control the weather?" said the official.

Under GRAP, an action plan to combat pollution in Delhi-NCR, actions are recommended based on the concentration of pollutants. At lower levels of PM 2.5 and 10, the plan suggests making sure waste is not set on fire in the open, illegal industrial activity is curtailed and roads are vacuum-cleaned. At the highest end of the spectrum are actions such as halting construction, shutting schools and odd-even.

Anticipating an increase in pollution post-Diwali and during crop burning season, the Delhi government had announced in September that the third phase of the odd-even scheme, whereby cars can ply on alternate days based on the last digit of their registration number, will be implemented between November 4 and 15. The scheme, which has been implemented in several countries such as China, Mexico and France in different forms, aims to remove half of the cars from the roads.

This is the third time the scheme has been implemented – the first two times were in 2016 – and all three times, its effectiveness has been hotly debated. The two phases in 2016 had witnessed studies by various agencies that produced conflicting results and leading many to wonder: Does odd-even really work? On Friday, the Supreme Court asked the same question.

The *Indian Express* analysed the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) air quality index (AQI) in Delhi, where the scheme was implemented, and compared it with Gurgaon, Ghaziabad and Noida. CPCB releases a 24-hour average AQI for 105 cities in the country every day.

The average AQI in Delhi and the three NCR cities was calculated for the 12 days before odd-even was implemented, and the 12-day period it was in place (including Sundays and two days during Guru Purab, when all cars were allowed to ply).

These four places were chosen as air quality depends on several factors, including a city's emissions, external emission sources, wind speed, humidity, temperature and wind direction. Since the four cities share borders, similar factors were in play during the comparison period.

#### The highest drop

The average AQI in Delhi between October 23 and November 3 – before the implementation of odd-even – was 369.5. The highest was 494, recorded on November 3. During odd-even, from November 4-15, the average AQI was 328.5. The highest was 463, on November 14.

The average AQI had decreased during the odd-even phase by 41 points.

A similar comparison in Gurgaon, where odd-even was not in place, showed that the November 4-15 average AQI was higher than the October 23-November 3 figure by 7.6 points. In Ghaziabad, there was a reduction of 13.3 points, and in Noida, by 12.3 points (see box above).

Simply put, the average AQI decreased most significantly in the national capital, where odd-even was in place.

But despite available data – Delhi is the most closely monitored city in the country with the AQI value calculated based on 28-36 stations daily, as compared to 10 in Mumbai, which is the second highest – experts said determining the exact impact of an individual measure on air pollution is very tough.

"As air quality depends on so many different factors, it is not easy to say what the effect



The scheme was in place from November 4-15. Abhinav Saha

## PM 2.5 share from stubble burning less than 150: SAFAR

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

THE "ABSOLUTE SHARE" of farm fires' contribution to PM 2.5 levels in Delhi has been less than around 150 micrograms per cubic metre air ( $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ ) since nearly a month, even on 'severely' polluted days, an assessment by SAFAR, the Centre's air quality monitoring agency, claims.

As per the analysis, on November 3, when PM 2.5 in the air had reached a record high of around  $600 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  – double the emergency threshold (300) – the share of farm fires in it was nearly  $150 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The acceptable 24-hour standard for PM 2.5 is  $60 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ . The assessment is done based on 24-hour average levels of the pollutant.

On November 12, when the pollutant rose to nearly  $400 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ , stubble burning contributed around 100 to it, after which its share fell. It was around  $50 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$  on November 15, when PM 2.5 again touched  $400 \mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ .

A combination of factors, including unfavourable meteorological conditions, local emissions and stubble burning, has pushed Delhi's air quality to dangerous

levels several times this month.

The Delhi government has blamed crop residue burning while experts have pointed out that Delhi's high basal pollution level is also part of the problem.

On Sunday, as the city's air quality improved, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal retweeted photographs of the clear blue sky above Delhi, and air quality index recorded in different parts of it, and said, "Stubble burning has stopped. And with it Delhi's air has become clean too..."

In a statement later in the day, he said, "Some people were saying that only 5% of Delhi's air pollution is due to crop (residue) burning. If this were true, how did the air quality index reduce from 500 to less than 200 today?"

Kejriwal claimed images from US space agency NASA showed that with an increase in crop residue burning instances in the first week of October, North India's air quality deteriorated.

Blaming its recent pollution crisis entirely on crop stubble burning, Kejriwal said Delhi had taken steps to reduce local emissions. "But the current crisis of air pollution in Delhi was due to stubble (burning) in nearby states," he added.

### WHAT EXPERTS SAY

"We saw a very small decrease in pollution levels in three locations in the city in January 2016. A dip of 8%-10% in pollutants was seen in only these places. The two reasons for this were unfavourable meteorological conditions and too many exemptions. We are also in the process of studying the impact of this phase."

SAGNIK DEY, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, CENTRE FOR ATMOSPHERIC SCIENCES, INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY DELHI

"The Indo-Gangetic Plains are suffering effects of poor air. We need to control our local sources. Trees and shrubs need to be planted on every surface possible to absorb and ground pollutants and control dust pollution. The impact of meteorology on the Plains is such that dust can travel from as far away as Iran and Iraq. We can't do anything about that. We can only control our sources."

DIPANKAR SAHA, RETIRED AIR LAB CHIEF, CPCB

wheelers under the scheme.

"A half-baked odd-even scheme... either you have a full odd-even and give no exceptions... instead you allow two- and three-wheelers which cause more pollution," Justice Deepak Gupta Friday told senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who appeared for the Delhi government.

Rohatgi told the court that studies suggest odd-even can help reduce pollution by 5-12%, and explained that two-wheelers were exempt because the city will "collapse" if they are also brought under the scheme. This is because the public transport system is simply not equipped to handle the load – while there are 35 lakh private cars in the city, the number of two-wheelers stands at 65 lakh.

The bench then asked CPCB member secretary Prashant Gargava, "Are we getting benefited by it?", to which he replied: "Not

more than 3-4%". He also told the court that of pollution caused by vehicles, cars contribute only 3%.

The Delhi government, in an affidavit, told the apex court that it relied on three external studies "to conclude that the policy works as an effective emergency measure".

The government cited a study conducted by researchers from IIT-Delhi, IIT-Kanpur, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, National Physical Laboratory and TERI, which used satellite-based estimates of PM 2.5 to examine the potential decrease due to fewer traffic emissions during odd-even.

"The estimated PM 2.5 represents the level between 10.30 am to 1.30 pm, when the satellites cross this region. The study concluded that the traffic restriction between January 1-15 in 2016 reduced PM 2.5 by 4-6% with a maximum of up to 10%, primarily at three local hotspots in Delhi," the government told the court.

The second study the government cited was conducted by researchers at Energy Policy Institute, University of Chicago, Centre for Policy Research and Harvard Kennedy School, which studied the first two phases of the scheme.

"The analysis compares Delhi's monitors with monitors from neighbouring cities in the National Capital Region using PM 2.5 data before, during, and after the two pilot rounds," the government told the court.

"This second analysis finds that PM 2.5 levels were lower by 14-16% on average during 8 am-8 pm during the odd-even scheme in January 2016. No impact was detected at night. No impact was detected when the programme was repeated in April, most likely because the warmer month of April is marked by greater dispersion of particulates. The researchers conclude that 'taken together, this suggests that the main value of an odd-even program is as an emergency measure during winter months when car emissions play a more prominent role in affecting air quality,'" it said in the affidavit.

The third study cited by the government was done by researchers from Delhi Technological University and Madan Mohan Malaviya University of Technology, Gorakhpur, during the first phase in January 2016.

"The study reports an average reduction of PM 2.5 by 5.73% and that of PM 10 by 4.70% in the ambient air... which depicts a small but positive impact..." the affidavit states.

An analysis published in the journal *Current Science* by researchers at the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Mohali, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and India Meteorological Department, however, said pollution during the period did not come down as people chose to drive during non-restriction hours (before 8 am and after 8 pm) or used taxis and three-wheelers instead of buses and the Metro.

The CPCB, meanwhile, said the scheme may have reduced pollution by a small amount but a "single factor or action cannot substantially" reduce air pollution levels in Delhi.

Researchers also pointed out that Delhi's location is as much to blame as its internal sources of pollution.

A landlocked state, Delhi's pollution-related woes start primarily in October, and last till February. The practice of crop stubble burning, which adds a significant amount of pollutants to Delhi's air in October and November, is at least three decades old but the 2009 water conservation Act implemented by Punjab pushed paddy sowing season forward by almost a month from April to May. This meant that the harvest was also pushed a month forward. When farmers set paddy stubble on fire now, it coincides with the end of monsoon and change in wind direction from south easterly to north westerly, bringing a large pollution load to the capital and the whole of the Indo-Gangetic Plains.

Winters also see a dip in temperature and low wind speed – important factors that aid the accumulation of particulate matter and aerosols.

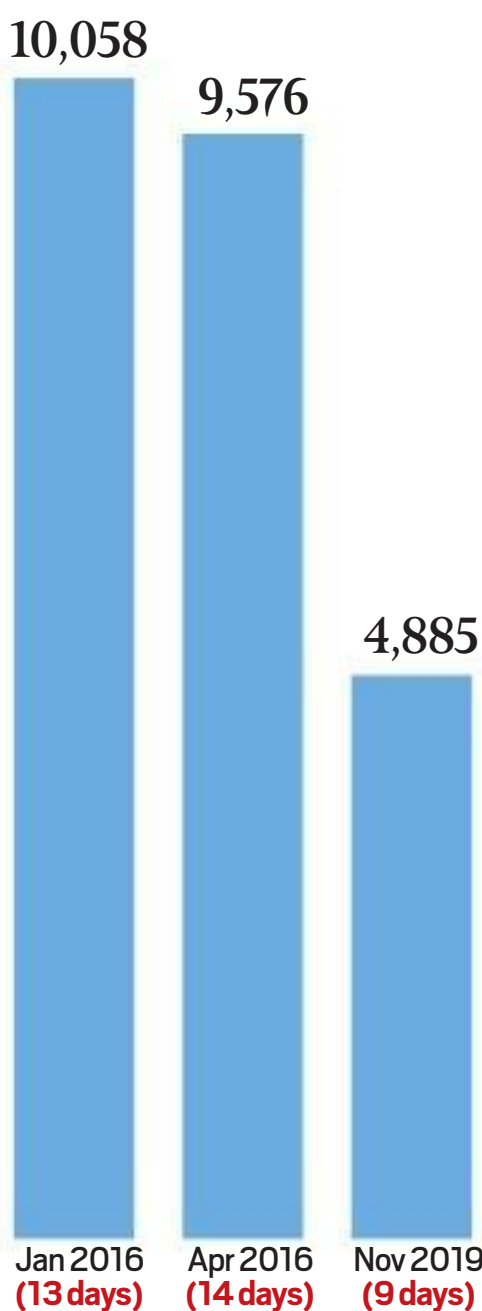
## METRO USAGE DURING SCHEME

DATE	JOURNEYS
November 4	58.94 lakh
November 5	59.98 lakh
November 6	57.17 lakh
November 7	56.45 lakh
November 8	58.07 lakh
November 13	59.83 lakh
November 14	57.04 lakh
November 15	58.02 lakh

IN SEPTEMBER, average daily line utilisation was 54.26 lakh/day

IN OCTOBER, line utilisation crossed 60 lakh on certain days owing to festive rush

## CHALLANS DURING ODD-EVEN



## WHAT DIFFERENT STUDIES SAY

### STUDY PERIOD JAN 1-15, 2016

Researchers from IIT-Delhi, IIT-Kanpur, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, National Physical Laboratory and TERI

### FINDING: PM 2.5 REDUCTION BY 4-6%

### STUDY PERIOD JAN 1-15, 2016 AND APRIL 15-30, 2016

Researchers from Energy Policy Institute, University of Chicago, Centre for Policy Research and Harvard Kennedy School

### FINDING: PM 2.5 REDUCTION OF 14-16% ONLY BETWEEN 8 AM AND 8 PM IN PHASE 1

### STUDY PERIOD JAN 1-15, 2016

Researchers from Delhi Technological University and Madan Mohan Malaviya University of Technology, Gorakhpur

### FINDING: PM2.5 REDUCTION OF 5.73% AND PM 10 REDUCTION OF 4.70%

### STUDY PERIOD JAN 1-15, 2016 AND APRIL 15-30, 2016

Researchers from Central Pollution Control Board

### FINDING: SMALL REDUCTION BUT POLLUTION NOT DEPENDENT ON SINGLE FACTOR

### STUDY PERIOD JAN 1-15, 2016

Researchers from Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Mohali, Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology, Pune, and India Meteorological Department

### FINDING: POLLUTION INCREASED AS PEOPLE DROVE DURING NON-RESTRICTION HOURS



BRIEFLY

Call centre racket busted in West Delhi

New Delhi: Police busted a call centre in West Delhi's Moti Nagar and arrested 32 men who allegedly posed as Canadian police officers and duped over 50 foreigners. Police said the racket involved asking foreigners to pay fines for social insurance number violations.

Common mobility card bags award

New Delhi: The Delhi government's common mobility card has won the Centre's 'Best Intelligent Transport System Project' award. The award, presented at an event in Lucknow Sunday, has been constituted by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs.

3 held for loan fraud

New Delhi: A marketing agent of a finance company and two other men were arrested for allegedly duping the company of Rs 20 lakh. Police said they received a complaint from the firm that the accused fabricated documents of customers and used them to get loans. **ENS**

VARSITY WON'T EXTEND EXAM, DISSERTATION DEADLINES

JNU V-C, profs ask students to end 'undemocratic' protest

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

REACHING OUT via a video message to students protesting over the hostel fee hike, Jawaharlal Nehru University Vice-Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar Sunday appealed to them to return to their classrooms and research activities from Monday as not doing so will jeopardise their academic goals.

Registrar Pramod Kumar also published a circular Sunday, stating that there will be no relaxation of exam and dissertation submission deadlines. It stated that students who do not clear the requisite number of courses and examinations, and do not maintain the requisite CGPA, "will be dropped from the JNU roll list".

"In the last two weeks, academic activities in the university have suffered greatly because some students are on strike... As you know, the IHA committee and dean of students, provosts and senior wardens are in the process of discussing with the hostel presidents to listen to their concerns about the hostels. Recently, in the Executive Council meeting, the draft manual was also discussed and many students' concerns were taken into consideration. The charges to be paid are only 50% for BPL (below poverty line) students and many other concessions have also been given. In spite of this, if we continue with the strike, it will lead



Prem Nath Pandey

Dean Students Welfare Umesh Kadam addresses the media Sunday; (right) students have been protesting against the fee hike for the past few weeks



to academic loss which will affect futures of thousands of students," said Kumar in his message.

"From tomorrow, the new week is going to start. I would like to appeal to all of you to return to your classes and resume research activities. From December 12, your end-semester exams will start; if you don't attend classes and participate in the exams, it will affect your future academic goals," he added.

This was echoed in a press address by five JNU teachers — Majhar Asif, Aswini Mohapatra, Pawan Dhar, Nagendra Srinivas and Girish Nath Jha — who said it is "difficult for the university to extend further concessions".

"We would like to appeal to students to attend classes. They have to complete their exams before December 23. Dedicated teachers are trying to complete the syllabus but are struggling to

take classes. It will be very difficult for the university to adjust the semester, and students will be the biggest losers," said Mohapatra.

Neither teachers nor Dean (Students Welfare) Umesh Kadam were able to shed light on who comprise "BPL students".

"... I've been told that different states have different income levels for it. Perhaps it will be different for students from different states and they will have to produce certificates accordingly... It is very difficult to define," said Mohapatra.

Kadam, who was also at the press conference, said he supports protests but not an "undemocratic protest" and that the administration was not going to enter into a dialogue with an "un-notified union".

"We have not notified the union because the election com-

mittee announced the poll results arbitrarily. The committee had submitted the result to the dean of students' office in a sealed envelope, when the High Court had put a stay on its announcement. The envelope is still lying with me. Why should we talk to them when they are not notified?" he said.

Associate Dean of students welfare Vandana Mishra — who claimed she was held captive inside a classroom for 28 hours by students during the protest — alleged the entire protest was "political prejudice turning to political animosity".

"At the time, I was only presented with a list of demands, with names of the four so-called students' union office-bearers, because me signing it would mean they were notified. There was no interest in reducing fee," she alleged.

CM targets Oppn over free rides scheme

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

THE MONEY spent by Opposition parties in buying aircraft for "personal use" of their leaders is more than adequate to fund the free rides scheme for women in buses in Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said Sunday.

"The Opposition raised a hue and cry when we implemented the scheme. They ask for the money source... A few days ago, the CM of a state bought an aircraft worth Rs 190 crore for his personal use. Instead of a plane for myself, I'm spending the money to make travel free for my sisters," said Kejriwal, at an event in Rohini.

Earlier this month, the Gujarat government bought a business jet worth Rs 191 crore for use by CM Rupani and other VIPs. A senior state government official had told *The Indian Express*, "The government currently owns a Beechcraft Super King aircraft, which is about 20 years old... It had several breakdowns and was unsafe to fly; so it was decided to buy a new one."

Implementing the free rides scheme between October 29 and March 31 next year, will cost the Delhi government Rs 140 crore.

Kejriwal also announced that resurfacing roads will be done after breaking up the existing layer of asphalt, to ensure cost cutting of up to 30%. In a tweet, he also slammed a BIS report — which termed Delhi's water the worst among all metros and state capitals — as "politically motivated".



THROWBACK TO SCHOOL

CM Arvind Kejriwal talks to a former teacher via video call during a school reunion held at his residence Sunday

One dead in fire at Narela shoe factory

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

A 32-YEAR-OLD security guard was charred to death after a fire broke out inside a shoe factory in Narela early Sunday morning. An eyewitness told Delhi Fire Services that another worker was in the building, but rescuers are yet to find him.

"We received the call around 12.45 am. The factory is a four-storeyed building. The fire started from the ground floor and spread to the other floors. We deployed 24 fire tenders and started dousing the fire on the ground floor and broke windows to let out the smoke. We were able to control the fire within an hour and began cooling operations. Around 4.45 am, a man's body was found on the top floor," said Atul Garg, DFS chief.

The cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

The victim, Mangal Mandal, worked in the night shift and would guard the factory from inside. Police said the factory was closed for the weekend.

"Mandal was found near the stairs on the top floor. We suspect he was trying to escape but got stuck due to smoke from the raw material in the factory," Garg said.

Kanti Ram (55), an eyewitness who works at a cable shop nearby, claimed he saw Mandal and another man going inside the factory at 10 pm. Firefighters and police are looking for the other man.

"Factory owner Parveen Kumar said only the guard was supposed to be inside the building. We are checking if there was another man inside," said Gaurav Sharma, DCP (Outer North).

Avoid student meeting on campus: JNU registrar writes to MPs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

FORMER AND present MPs, who were invited by students to address a public meeting at JNU Sunday, received letters from the varsity's registrar asking them not to attend the meeting.

The guests included MPs K K Ragesh (CPI-M), Manoj Jha (RJD), Binoy Viswam (CPI), K Somaprasad (CPI), Elamaram Kareem (CPI-M) and former MP Mohammad Salim (CPI-M).

The subject of the meeting was 'The JNU fee hike and the crisis of public-funded education'. In his letter to the MPs, JNU

Registrar Pramod Kumar wrote: "You are requested not to address the said protest meeting, as its venue falls in the close vicinity of JNU's administrative block, which is a prohibited area... for holding such activity."

The registrar invoked academic rules and a Delhi HC directive to say that "hunger strikes,

dharmas and other peaceful and democratic forms of protest" can only be held 100 metres away from the administrative block.

Mohd Salim and K K Ragesh attended the event.

Addressing the gathering, Mohd Salim said: "Your anger is absolutely legitimate. All of us would never have been able to

enter higher education if the public-funded university system did not exist in our country."

K K Ragesh said he was "cautioned" by the Registrar not to attend the meeting. "Even when I entered campus, some security personnel told me the meeting has been cancelled..."

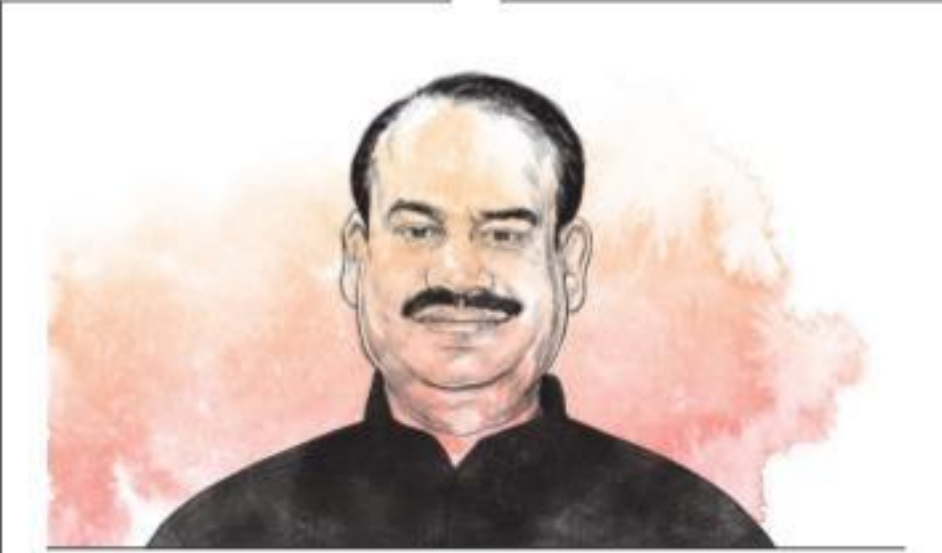
MP Kareem did not attend

the meeting citing "health issues", and wrote to the registrar.

"... it is a very unfortunate act from the JNU administration to request an MP not to attend an event. The whole country... has come out in solidarity with the protest... I will be happy to attend such programmes in the future," he wrote.



# 6 GOVT & POLITICS


**DELHI CONFIDENTIAL**


## VISIT TO VETERANS

HAVING GOT cooperation from members of the Lok Sabha to sit long hours in the previous session, Speaker Om Birla appears to have decided to walk that extra mile to signal that he cares for the members. A day ahead of the winter session of Parliament, Birla decided to meet veteran Parliamentarians who have not been keeping well. Keeping aside the protocol of Speaker, Birla on Sunday drove down to the residence of veteran MP Mulayam Singh Yadav to enquire about his health. He also drove to the residence of Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan, who has been recuperating from a fractured leg, to enquire about his health. Incidentally, both Yadav and Paswan started their legislative careers — from respective state assemblies — five decades ago, and it was an opportunity for the Speaker to exchange views with the veterans.

## ART ON DISPLAY

PRESIDENT RAM Nath Kovind on Sunday witnessed an exhibition of paintings set up by the Artists-in-Residence at Rashtrapati Bhavan. The President also felicitated the artists after visiting the exhibition. The paintings, on display at the exhibition, were made by the Artists-in-Residence during their week-long stay at Rashtrapati Bhavan. Under the In-Residence programme, the artists stayed within the Rashtrapati Bhavan premises from November 10 to 17 this year. The distinguished artists included Krishen Khanna, Ganesh Haloi, Anjolie Ela Menon, Lalu Prasad Shaw, Sanat Kar, Arpita Singh, Paramjit Singh, Suhās Bahulkar, Chandra Bhattacharjee, Anwar Khan, Sanjay Bhattacharya, and Chinmay Roy — and young artists Siddharth Shingade, Parnita Parveen Bora and Vimmi Indra.

## THOROUGH CHECK

IT HAS been over two weeks since the search-cum-selection committee interviewed shortlisted candidates for the post of director at IIT-Kharagpur. Earlier, the norm was to send the name of the one candidate selected by the committee to the President for formal appointment the same day itself. However, after HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal took charge, the search-cum-selection committee doesn't select one candidate but sends a panel of three to five names. After this, the minister selects one and forwards it to the ministry. The buzz is that the minister's office does its own background check of the shortlisted candidates before selecting one. This is why the ministry hasn't sent the name of the selected candidate to the President's office yet although the interview took place more than two weeks ago.

## 'People will vote for BJP as development has reached villages'

AHEAD OF Jharkhand Assembly elections, Rajya Sabha MP and state BJP election in-charge **OM PRAKASH MATHUR** spoke to **ABHISHEK ANGAD** on the poll planning, problems in the party's alliance and if national issues will be an agenda during the campaign. Excerpts:



**How confident are you in the upcoming election?**

The welfare schemes brought out by the central and state governments have impacted the population of Jharkhand. I think that only 1-2 per cent would have been left out. Jharkhand was Maoist-affected and people could not travel at night. It is under control. Better roads, power and gas connections have reached people. People will vote for us because development has reached the villages. We will win 65-plus seats.

**There is some dissatisfaction among the BJP's ground workers that the leadership is not listening to them.**

We asked for opinions of workers at the Mandal level on their choice of candidates. Sometimes we also have to look into social equations and there are chances that someone forced them to write their names. So the dissatisfaction will remain, but it is momentary.

**On political challenges for the state BJP, there is a perception that the party is anti-tribal. CM Raghubar Das's 'rude, reckless' image and the BJP giving tickets to turncoats who face criminal cases, people are now talking about the party's "chaal,**



**THE EXPRESS**  
**INTERVIEW**

WITH  
**O P MATHUR**  
JHARKHAND BJP  
ELECTION IN-CHARGE

**charitra, chehra aur chintan".**

Opposition parties have created that perception, but when I go to the ground I don't see anti-BJP sentiments among tribals. An environment has been created, but it is for the people to decide. I am aware of what is being talked about the CM and I think people should have control on their language... one needs to understand that there are also a lot of political cases... Let the court decide first.

**Is the alliance between BJP and All Jharkhand Students Union intact? AJSU says that the BJP never responded to the demand of 17 seats and declared seats without a decision on the table.**

I think he (AJSU chief Sudesh Mahto) did not understand the time and political situation... Seats which they had asked for were left vacant... at times it is stubbornness which does not allow things to move forward.

**Will national issues be brought to the Jharkhand election campaign?**

We will be campaigning on the issues of state and development. But why would national issues not be important?

**FULL INTERVIEW ON**  
**www.indianexpress.com**

## BAL THACKERAY'S DEATH ANNIVERSARY

# NCP, Congress pay Thackeray respects, Fadnavis heckled by Shiv Sena workers

**VISHWAS WAGHMODE**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 17

AS THE Shiv Sena gathered at Shivaji Park to remember founder Bal Thackeray on his seventh death anniversary on Sunday, among those present were leaders from the NCP and Congress, underlining the changing political equations in Maharashtra.

BJP leaders Vinod Tawde and Pankaja Munde also turned up, and waited to receive former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis. From the Sena side, party secretary Milind Narvekar was the only leader around to greet Fadnavis, whose hopes of returning to power have been thwarted by the Sena.

As Fadnavis was leaving, the Shiv Sainiks present heckled him with the slogan: "There will be a Shiv Sena CM."

Through the day, the Sena and BJP took digs at each other. Fadnavis released a video in the morning saying "Balasaheb taught us the importance of self-respect". Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut hit back saying nobody should teach the Sena anything. "We are Balasaheb's Shiv Sainiks. No one should try and teach us anything. We have to fulfill Balasaheb's dreams and the promise that Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray has made to him of installing a Sena CM. The promise will be fulfilled... The next CM will be from the Shiv Sena and

**E.**

## Show of strength

BAL THACKERAY'S death anniversary provided the Sena a chance to put up a show of strength. While it claimed more party members turned up sensing a Sena CM soon, it would have also been delighted that all three Maharashtra players marked their presence — the NCP, Congress and BJP — as well as the forlorn Devendra Fadnavis.

he will come to Shivaji Park," Raut told mediapersons.

While last year, senior BJP leaders Piyush Goyal and Suresh Prabhu had come to pay respects to Thackeray, this time there were only state leaders. Even among the Congress, senior leaders stayed away. Among those who paid tributes on social media were NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Union minister Nitin Gadkari.

The Sena claimed the event had drawn larger numbers than last year, "because of the possibility that there might soon be a



Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray and BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis at Bal Thackeray's memorial in Mumbai. Nirmla Harindran

Sena CM".

At Shivaji Park, near where Thackeray was cremated, a rangoli had been made with images of him and Lord Ram, with a message of 'Jai Shri Ram'.

Senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal and NCP state president Jayant Patil were the first to reach Shivaji Park. Patil said, "This is not for the first time we went to pay respects. We have attended in the past as well."

The Thackeray family was present in strength, including Uddhav, wife Rashmi and sons Aaditya and Tejas.

## RS has come a long way, but still has miles to go: Venkaiah

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

VICE PRESIDENT and Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said the Upper House has come a long way since its inception in contributing to the socio-economic transformation of the country, but still has "miles to go" with regard to proper functioning.

He was addressing leaders of various parties at his official residence. He released a publication, titled *Rajya Sabha: The Journey since 1952*, which provides glimpses of various aspects of the functioning of the House.

He urged the leaders to ensure proper attendance of MPs so that Parliamentary Committees can effectively examine and report on various subjects and Bills in a bipartisan and detailed manner.

"Rajya Sabha has been an integral part of the socio-economic transformation of our country since it came into being in 1952. From passing the Hindu Marriage and Divorce Bill in 1952 to the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill in 2019, (the Bill against instant Triple Talaq), from imposition of additional excise duty on dhotis in



Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu, along with other leaders, releases a booklet to commemorate the 250th session of the Upper House, in New Delhi on Sunday. PTI

1953 to introduction of GST in 2017, from passing the Industrial Disputes (Amendment) Bill in 1954 to the New Delhi International Arbitration Centre Bill in 2019, from the passage of the Andhra State Bill in 1953 to the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Bill in 2019..., Rajya Sabha has come a long way in addressing the challenges faced and meeting the requirements of the nation from time to time," Naidu said.

"But we still have miles to go in letting our country realise its full potential by making up for the

missed time and opportunities and in respect of the functioning of the House itself," he added.

Various events have been planned for celebrating the 250th session of Rajya Sabha beginning Monday. While *Rajya Sabha: The Journey since 1952* was released on Sunday, a discussion in the House on the Role of Rajya Sabha in Indian Polity: Need for Reform is planned for the first working day. A commemorative volume on the evolution of Rajya Sabha and its functioning and a silver coin worth Rs 250 and a postage stamp worth Rs 5 will also be released.

## Karkare's life & 26/11: His daughter's book is ready



Jui Karkare Navare

settled in the US with her husband and their two daughters. Karkare's wife died in 2014 after suffering a brain haemorrhage.

The book, says Navare, is a dream her mother Kavita had nurtured till her death.

"I was asked by many to get a ghost writer for the book. I didn't. Emotions cannot be outsourced... Writing came as a catharsis to ease my grief, my anguish and my pain," she says.

Navare says she has "written a memoir on my father". The book, *Hemant Karkare — A Daughter's Memoir*, is being published by Crossword, The Write Place and will be launched on the eve of her father's death anniversary.

Having spent a decade watching her father's last living image — him donning a bullet proof vest, "played every year, every single year" on TV — she says the book is her "sincere effort" to "focus on the positives, on the man he was and the life he lived".

It was in April that Navare broke her silence on her father's death, telling *The Indian Express* in an interview that she wants everyone to remember that he placed his uniform before his own life and family.

She was speaking after Pragya Thakur, the BJP's Lok Sabha candidate from Bhopal, claimed that Karkare had died after she cursed him. Thakur was among 11 people arrested by the ATS under Karkare in October 2008.

Navare, 38, is the eldest of Karkare's three children and is

## Pawar to meet Sonia today

**MANOJ MORE**  
PUNE, NOVEMBER 17

AMID TALKS of government formation in Maharashtra, the NCP on Sunday held its core committee meeting in Pune, which was presided over by party chief Sharad Pawar. Other leaders like state party chief Jayant Patil, Ajit Pawar, Dhnanjay Munde, and MPs Supriya Sule and Sunil Tatkare were also present.



Pawar and Congress president Sonia Gandhi are expected to meet in New Delhi on Monday to take a final call on joining hands with the Shiv Sena to form the state government, according to sources.

## Vice President releases book on House that never dissolves

After the core committee meeting, party leader Nawab Malik said, "The NCP and Congress chiefs will meet in Delhi on Monday and decide on the future plan, which will be about providing an alternative

government".

Malik said the common minimum programme, which was drafted by the two parties in consultation with the Shiv Sena, would certainly be part of the discussion, but "we believe government formation and future roadmap will be the crux of their discussion".

He added that the NCP was confident that a Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government will soon take charge in the state.

## UPPER HOUSE CHRONICLE

**First Session on:**  
**MAY 13, 1952**  
**No of sessions so far:**  
**249**  
**No of sittings so far:**  
**5,466**  
**No of Bills introduced:**  
**944**  
**No of Bills withdrawn :**  
**104**  
**No of Bills pending:**  
**38**  
**No of Bills passed:**  
**3,817**

Rajya Sabha is a continuous House and a third of its members retire by rotation every two years. Never since its first sitting on May 13, 1952, has the country been without a Rajya Sabha.

On two occasions, Rajya Sabha alone approved imposition of President's Rule in a state when the Lok Sabha was dissolved.

The first time, the Upper House met on February 28 and March 1, 1997 to approve President's Rule in Tamil Nadu and Nagaland. The second time was in 1991 when Rajya Sabha met on June 3 and 4 to approve the proclamation imposing President's Rule in Haryana. The Upper House has special powers under Article 356 (3) of the Constitution to approve the proclamation issued by the President in relation to a state when Lok Sabha is dissolved.

There have been 2,282 Rajya Sabha members till date, including those who have sat in the House of States for more than one term. Mahendra Prasad of the JD(U) with seven terms tops the list of MPs with more than one term, followed closely by Najma Heptulla with six terms.

Among the longest debates in the Upper House is the one that took place on June 4, 1991 when it discussed for 12 hours and 4 minutes the failure to provide adequate security to former PM Rajiv Gandhi, who was assassinated on May 21 that year. The demolition of Babri Masjid on December 6, 1992 was discussed for 11 hours and 37 minutes on December 18 and 21, 1992 and the Indo-US Nuclear Deal was debated for 10 hours and 6 minutes on December 4 and 12, 2007.

Today, Navare's daughters have helped her handle the trauma, but writing about it hasn't been easy. "I initially started writing about the events on and around 26/11 and wondering if the masterminds of the attacks would ever be given the punishment they deserved. I wrote of the day I lost my father and I realised I couldn't write anymore... I felt my senses deadened."

She then used the silence of the nights to write. "I remember the early chapters, when I started to write about the night of November 26, even the smallest creak or sound from outside would startle me. Mornings, I would wake up horrified, the thought of my bleeding father having been unattended for 45 minutes shaking me. I would step out to drive my children to nursery and halt as the tears never stopped. How could he remain bleeding on the road for almost an hour? How much it must have pained him? How did he die in the end... thoughts like that... It's something you have to live with. These thoughts will never leave me, at

least not in my lifetime." Soon after the funeral, Navare found a "trunk of correspondence and diaries" at home. And, a father she didn't know started taking shape.

The book starts on the night of November 26, but has interviews and correspondences from those associated with Karkare. In India, Karkare's sibling, Shirish and his wife Amruta, also helped by conducting interviews. "This was a story of a man who was focussed, right from his childhood. And he was my father. He came from a vernacular medium and wanted to learn English. The diaries, written as early as when he was 21, speak of how he identified English words by looking for real life examples in friends."

For instance, a friend who spoke less was named "taciturn" in the diary. "He writes of another friend who got selected in NASA and dreams of striving that level of excellence... There was this one specific page which I recall where he writes, 'My friends call me chief. I shouldn't let them

down,'" says Navare.

Every page, she says, brought her closer to him. "Growing up, one of his constant lessons to us was of his constant lessons to us was we are too privileged and need to learn to respect the less fortunate, and do something for them. His idea of India always was that to become a stronger nation, we need to work from grassroots, reach the marginalised, the less privileged."

Back in the US, she says there are days when the fear of the gun can get too close. "The other day, my daughter came from school saying she was taught how to hide under the desk if a stranger walks in the school boundaries with a gun, and how to hide in the classroom till the teacher shuts the door. I went numb thinking how terrorism is now part of everyday life, everywhere. She is only eight. Someday, I plan to tell her about 26/11 when she is mature. But that day, I just told her, listen to the teacher's instructions. My father always taught us, stick to the plan."

**FULL REPORT ON**  
**www.indianexpress.com**



# 7 EXPRESS NETWORK

## J&K admin ends tenure of Assembly Speaker

**ARUN SHARMA**  
JAMMU, NOVEMBER 17

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration under Lt Governor G C Murmu has issued a notification ending the tenure of senior BJP leader and Assembly Speaker Dr Nirmal Singh.

“Dr Nirmal Singh shall be deemed to have ceased to hold the office of Speaker of the erstwhile State of Jammu and Kashmir with effect from October 31, 2019,” read a notification issued by the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs on Saturday.

The notification came after Singh continued to function as Speaker even after Jammu and Kashmir’s Assembly ceased to exist on October 31.

On November 13, he met Lt Governor Murmu at Raj Bhawan in his capacity as Speaker and discussed with him various issues relating to public welfare and development of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Sources said Singh was categorically told that the office he was holding will cease to exist in the new dispensation days before the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir came into existence, but he paid no heed. Singh refused to comment, saying he does not want to be dragged into a controversy.

Asked how Singh was allowed to function as Speaker for over a fortnight after the new dispensation took over, sources said the Law Department had to seek legal opinion from the Advocate General and after it came, the file was moved to the office of Lt Governor for approval. The notification was issued after Law Department received the approval.

## Lucknow police lodge FIR against Ansals, two others

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
LUCKNOW, OCTOBER 17

TWO DAYS after a controversy erupted over the recording of a purported phone call in which minister Swati Singh allegedly threatened a police officer for registering an FIR against real estate giant Ansal, Lucknow police on Sunday registered an FIR against Ansal API chairman Sushil Ansal, his son and vice-chairman Pranav Ansal and two others.

This comes a day after Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath summoned the minister.

Station House Officer (Lucknow PGI) Ashok Kumar Saroj said the FIR against Sushil Ansal, Pranav and two others — Arun Mishra and Sushil Singh — has been filed under IPC sections 420 (cheating), 406 (criminal breach of trust), 504 (intentional insult with intent to provoke breach of the peace) and 506 (criminal intimidation).

### CHHATTISGARH

## Worry for CRPF, Maoists get drones

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

IN A worrying sign for security forces deployed in areas affected by Left-wing extremism (LWE), Maoists appear to have acquired aerial surveillance technology to keep track of the movement of forces. Until now, this technology was used by forces to keep track of Maoists’ movements in the jungles of Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha.

According to sources in the CRPF, drones appeared to be flying over CRPF camps in Kistaram and Palodi areas of south Bastar in Chhattisgarh during the night about a month ago. The two camps are deep in the jungles of the Bastar region and saw Maoists target a CRPF vehicle with an IED blast leading to the death of nine security personnel last year.

“At least on three occasions, personnel have reported an unidentified object flying over the camps in the past one month. Because of its whirring sound and



A Baramulla-Srinagar-Banihal train arrives at a station in Srinagar on Sunday. PTI

## Train services fully restored in Valley

**ADIL AKHZER**  
SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17

TRAIN SERVICES have been fully restored in the Valley with a train plying on the Srinagar-Banihal stretch on Sunday, three days after the Srinagar-Baramulla service was reactivated.

Train services were suspended in the Valley on August 5 when the Centre decided to revoke Jammu and Kashmir’s special status under Article 370.

Nearly 1,200 passengers used the train service in the Valley on Sunday, according to officials.

“We plied two trains to Banihal in which one was a trial run. The response from the public was good and we expect the number of passengers to increase further,” said a senior railway official. He

said there will be two trips on the Banihal-Baramulla stretch and the frequency would increase with improvement in the situation. “Railways will make efforts to run the trains smoothly on the Baramulla-Banihal stretch and the number of trains will be increased over time,” said Ravi Vanshi, Senior Security Commissioner of the Railway Protection Force in Srinagar.

The Srinagar-Banihal railway line is considered very sensitive as the train has to pass through areas in South Kashmir.

Railway authorities had approached security agencies seeking clearance to resume train services in the Valley. But security officials earlier said the situation was not conducive for restoration of services. As the situation has improved, Railways got an approval.

## Soldier killed in blast near LoC

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
JAMMU, NOVEMBER 17

AN ARMY soldier was killed and two other Army personnel injured in a suspected IED blast that took place near the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir’s Palanwala sector on Sunday.

Defence Ministry spokesperson Lt Colonel Devender Anand identified the soldier who was killed as Havaladar Santosh Kumar of Pura Bhadauria village in Agra district of Uttar Pradesh.

Sources said the explosion took place around 11 am when an Army patrol was moving near the LoC. The IED was apparently planted by militants, sources said.

Meanwhile, Pakistani troops resorted to unprovoked shelling and small arms fire along the LoC in Shahpur area of Poonch district. The Indian Army retaliated.

## Winter-grade fuel suited for Ladakh launched

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

LAUNCHING A specially manufactured efficient fuel suited for Ladakh, Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said the government was committed to bring the Leh-Ladakh region on a par with the rest of the country. He also said abrogation of Article 370 was the right step in this direction.

He said hydro electric and solar power projects planned for Ladakh at a cost of Rs 50,000 crore will produce 7,500 MW power and will be ready in four years.

Shah made the comments as he launched, through video conference, a special winter-grade diesel for the high-altitude region which faces sub-zero temperatures during the winter months.

“The NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to bring Leh-Ladakh region, which was neglected for the last 70 years, on a par with the rest of the country,” he said. He said that when the abrogation of Article 370 was announced, the Prime Minister said it was a right step to accelerate development in Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh.

The winter-grade diesel launched by Shah has been produced by the Panipat Refinery of the Indian Oil Corporation Limited. It has a pour point of minus 33 degree celsius and does not lose its fluidity even in the region’s extreme winter weather unlike normal grade diesel, which is difficult to use in sub-zero temperatures.

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas Dharmendra Pradhan, Ladakh MP Jamyang Tsering Namgyal and officials of Home Ministry and Petroleum Ministry were present on the occasion.

### ROW OVER LAND COMPENSATION

## Farmers protest in Unnao, 5 held for arson

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 17

THE PROTEST by farmers seeking better compensation for their land in Kanwapur village in UP’s Unnao district continued Sunday, with the protesters allegedly setting fire to a hot mixer plant and a stockpile of plastic pipes of Uttar Pradesh State Industrial Development Authority (UPSIDA). A total of 1,141 acres has been acquired in the area and a residential Trans Ganga City Project is planned there.

“We are holding a meeting with farmers and trying to convince them. We suspect some miscreants are trying to mislead them for vested interests. They resorted to arson,” Additional DM Rakesh Kumar said.

The work on the residential project began in 2015 and was stopped in 2017 due to protests by farmers who demanded better compensation for their land. Sources said that after UPSIDA stopped work, villagers had resumed farming in their acquired land.

On Saturday, UPSIDA officials, accompanied by police force, reached Kanwapur to resume work. Soon, the farmers started protesting in demand of more compensation. They gheraoed the officials and an altercation followed. It has been alleged that when officials of district administration and police reached the spot to convince the farmers, a policeman hit a youth and the protest turned violent.

“They (farmers) started throwing stones at UPSIDA officials and policemen. They damaged government vehicles. The situa-



Firefighters try to douse the fire in Unnao on Sunday. Express

tion came under control when additional personnel arrived and used force to disperse the crowd. Four policemen, including Addl SP Vinod Kumar Pandey and Circle Officer (City) Anjani Kumar Rai, and 12 farmers were injured in the clash,” a senior police officer said.

Police have lodged separate FIRs against 40 named and 400 unidentified persons on various charges, including rioting, deterring public servant from discharge of his duty and damaging public property at Gangaghat police station. “Five persons have been arrested so far,” said SHO, Gangaghat, Sateesh Kumar Gautam.

Force has been deployed in the area to avoid any untoward incident. “The situation is under control,” Addl SP Pandey said.

A UPSIDA official said the state government decided to acquire land in Unnao for a Special Economic Zone in 2002-03. “A total area of 1,141 acres spread across seven villages was identified. Initially, the matter was settled for Rs 1.5 lakh per bigha. In 2005, farmers protested after they came to

know a leather industry was coming up on their land and demanded a hike in compensation. It was decided to raise the compensation to Rs 5.5 lakh per bigha and the government started acquiring land. In 2014, when the government announced Trans Gang City Project after cancelling the SEZ project, farmers again staged protests and the government gave Rs 7 lakh per bigha as ex-gratia,” said the UPSIDA official.

Reacting to the incident, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra tweeted, “UP chief minister is making big speeches in Gorakhpur, but see the condition of his police... A person who grows grains for you is subjected to such cruelty.” BJP spokesperson Manish Shukla hit back. “Priyanka Vadra jee, you are not aware of the ground reality of Uttar Pradesh. Before doing politics on Twitter, find out about Unnao’s reality.”

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav tweeted, “Instead of getting adequate compensation, farmers are getting beaten up... Is this the definition of development in BJP’s ‘raaj’.”

### TATA LITERATURE LIVE! AWARDS

## Raj Kamal Jha’s The City and the Sea gets Book of the Year award in fiction

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 17

“WHY I write in Marathi has nothing to do with either the hierarchy of languages or the politics of language. I write in Marathi simply because I love the language. Each language has its own rhythms and cadences. So if I have the chance to play with these things in two languages, Marathi and English, why not take it?,” said Shanta Gokhale in her acceptance speech at the Tata Literature Live! Awards on Sunday evening.

The 80-year-old Marathi and English-language writer, translator, theatre critic and playwright was awarded the Lifetime Achievement Award at the 10th edition of the literary festival, which also recognised the works of several other writers from varying genres in a number of categories.

Raj Kamal Jha, Chief Editor,



The Indian Express Chief Editor Raj Kamal Jha (centre) with authors and jury members Jerry Pinto and Arshia Sattar at the award ceremony in Mumbai on Sunday. Express

The Indian Express, won the Book of the Year Award in the fiction category for his fifth novel, *The City and the Sea* (Penguin Random House).

The story that Jha’s book tells will resonate beyond this year,

said jury member and writer Arshia Sattar, as she announced the prize.

“The minute Raj sent us this story, we knew we had to publish it. We believe it is an important book for our times and as

the jury said, a book for all time,” said Meru Gokhale, publisher, Penguin Press Group, Penguin Random House India.

The Big Little Book Award for Hindi and English children’s literature went to Prabhat and Priya Kuriyan, respectively. The best Business Book of the Year was awarded to Raghunath Mashelkar and Ravi Pandit’s *Leapfrogging to Pole-vaulting: Creating the Magic of Radical and Sustainable Transformation*. This was followed by the award for the best First Book in fiction and non-fiction — Madhuri Vijay won for her debut novel, *The Far Field*, and Ashok Alexander won for *A Stranger Truth: Lessons in Love, Leadership and Courage from India’s Sex Workers*.

Tony Joseph won the Book of the Year award in the non-fiction category for *Early Indians: The Story of Our Ancestors and Where We Come From*. The final prize, the Publisher of the Year, was awarded to Penguin Random House.

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

JUSTICE SHARAD Arvind Bobde will be sworn in as the 47th Chief Justice of India on Monday. He will succeed Justice Ranjan Gogoi, who stepped down as the CJI on Sunday after remaining in office for over 13 months.

Hailing from a family of eminent lawyers, Bobde was appointed as a Supreme Court Judge in April 2013. He will remain as the CJI till April 23, 2021. His father Arvind Shrinivas Bobde was the former Advocate General of Maharashtra and his brother a veteran lawyer. Justice Bobde was part of the five-judge Constitution Bench which delivered a unanimous decision on the Ayodhya issue.

Justice Gogoi’s tenure was eventful and saw the Supreme Court consider and decide several

critical cases. Besides the Ayodhya case, the bench headed by Gogoi also decided to refer important questions arising out of the Sabarimala issue to a larger bench.

In a first, the office of the Chief Justice of India was covered under the Right to Information Act with riders. A bench led by Justice Gogoi found nothing wrong with the Centre’s decision to purchase Rafale jets from France under a government-to-government deal.

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# Despite HC order in favour, interfaith couple still apart

Citing condition in court order, authorities say couldn't contact woman's father

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
BHOPAL, NOVEMBER 17

THE CHHATTISGARH High Court has allowed a Jain woman, whose interfaith marriage has entailed a long legal battle, "to live with the person of her choice and at any place of her choice". The authorities, however, did not release her from Sakhi One Stop Centre, Raipur, citing a condition in the court order.

Anjali Jain secretly married Ibrahim Siddique in February 2018 at an Arya Samaj Temple. Ibrahim claims that he converted to Hinduism before marriage and took the name Aryan Arya. When the matter came to light after a few months, the couple drew the ire of not just the woman's family, but also the Jain community and Hindu right-wing organisations.

The 23-year-old had been staying at Sakhi for the past few months because she did not want to live with her parents. On

**"The order is very clear that she has to be set free but the authorities are deliberately delaying the release because an appeal is likely to come up in the apex court..."**

PRIYANKA SHUKLA  
IBRAHIM'S LAWYER

Friday, a division bench comprising Chief Justice P R Ramchandra Menon and Justice Parth Prateem Sahu said she should be set free but directed that she be released in the presence of Raipur SP and high-ranking officials of Sakhi. It said the woman's father Ashok Kumar Jain and Ibrahim alias Aryan Aryan be informed of the date and timing of her release 24 hours in advance over phone or any other admissible mode.

The authorities decided to release her at 1 pm on Sunday. Ahead of the release, the district administration imposed prohibitory orders within 200 m of

the Sakhi centre anticipating trouble from groups opposed to the marriage.

The woman's father, mother and sister were not available at their residence in Dhamtari and their phones were off. The police pasted a notice at the woman's home that they tried to contact her father on Saturday as per the court order and that Anjali would be released on Sunday.

On Sunday, Ibrahim and his lawyer Priyanka Shukla waited at the Sakhi centre, but Anjali was not released.

SP Arif Shaikh said the matter is pending in Supreme Court. He said the police are yet to get a certified copy of the order, but they tried to contact the father, and he was neither available at his residence nor could be he informed over the phone. "What if he tells the court tomorrow that the decision (to release Anjali) was taken without his knowledge? We have to make multiple attempts to reach him," said the SP.

Ibrahim's lawyer alleged that

the authorities were interpreting the order as per their convenience. "The order is very clear that she has to be set free but the authorities are deliberately delaying the release because an appeal is likely to come up in the apex court on Monday," she said.

Ibrahim (33), who claims to be an event manager, said the Sakhi centre authorities have now told him that Anjali will be released on Monday. "I spoke to her and she was eager to come with me. She also wanted to talk to the media but they took her inside. We are not together because authorities found excuses. Just because someone switched off phones, you can't stop your work," he said.

Following a police complaint by Anjali's family, Ibrahim had been arrested. He was recently released on bail.

"On interaction with the detainee (Anjali), we find that she appears to be of stable mind and during interaction, she clearly expressed her wish to live with her husband," the bench said.

## Dalit man's death spurs protest in Sangrur, kin deny nod to autopsy

Chandigarh/Ludhiana: A day after a Dalit labourer from Sangrur died due to injuries sustained after being beaten up and forced to drink his urine, his family started a sit-in protest at the PGI in Chandigarh Sunday, while refusing permission for a post-mortem till a written assurance on their demands was received from the government.

In Sangrur, Dalit outfits also started an indefinite blockade of the Sangrur-Jakkhal state highway in the family's support. While the family has demanded Rs 50 lakh as compensation, the state government has offered financial assistance, job to the next of kin, and pension as per the SC/ST Act.

Jagmale Singh (37), from Changali Wala village in Sangrur, had succumbed to his injuries on Saturday. All the four accused, who are residents of the same village, have been arrested. They had reportedly targeted Jagmale following an altercation on October 21. All of them belong to the Jat Sikh community.

Punjab CM Amarinder Singh has directed the state Chief Secretary and DGP to ensure speedy probe and trial. **ENS**

# Captured and translocated, rogue elephant dies of cardiac arrest

ABHISHEK SAHA  
GUWAHATI, NOVEMBER 17

A ROGUE elephant that killed five people in Goalpara district on October 29, and was subsequently captured and translocated to Orang National Park on November 12 following a 10-day operation, died in captivity on Sunday morning, forest officials said.

Dr K K Sarma, a top veterinarian who was among the four doctors who conducted the autopsy, said the primary cause was "cardiac arrest". "The primary reason was a heart disease that the animal had and the process of capture and translocation could have been a precipitating cause," said Sarma, professor and head of surgery and radiology at the College of Veterinary Science in Guwahati.

Sarma said viscera and blood samples have been collected for further analysis to shed light on "what triggered the cardiac arrest". However, he clarified that most of the animal's "heart muscles" had already died and this was not caused by recent events.

The elephant, nicknamed Krishna after its capture, died at about 5.45 am at the Elephant Training Camp, according to a statement issued by B V Sandeep,



**Assam's Chief Wildlife Warden M K Yadav performs the last rites at Orang National Park on Sunday.** *Assam forest dept*

Divisional Forest Officer (Mangaldai). "The elephant was in constant observation and good care and had started responding well to the mahouts," Sandeep said.

Krishna, who was over 30 years old, was initially planned to be released at a forest in Lumding in Hojai district but was brought to Orang following massive public protests over safety of villagers.

The forest department planned to train the elephant though experts had hinted at the difficulty in domesticating a grown up elephant. Forest department officials had earlier said that the elephant was left out of its herd and was not able to mate.

The process of tracking, capturing and translocating the elephant was one of the first of its kind in the state. BJP MLA Padma Hazarika,

**EXPLAINED** **Habitat loss and conflict in Assam**

ACCORDING TO data provided by the Assam government this year, 761 people were killed by elephants in the state since 2010, while 249 elephants lost their lives due to non-natural reasons in the same period. Activists believe that habitat loss due to encroachment has forced elephants to leave forest areas and move to other places in search of food and water, leading to loss of life and property.

whose family is associated with catching elephants, had also joined the operation to track and capture Krishna. "It is very unfortunate... I have been tracking the elephant's prognosis after it was translocated and everything seemed fine," Hazarika said, adding that he had suggested immediate treatment for the elephant's injuries.

Sandeep's statement also stated that the animal was "found to have several injuries and festering wounds on the body and the underbelly prior to the capture".

# FROM PAGE ONE Chidambaram

Advocate Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who represents Chidambaram, said they would raise this when the matter comes up in the Supreme Court on Monday.

Incidentally, on Friday, while opposing the ED plea challenging bail granted by the Delhi High Court to his client, Kamataka Congress leader D K Shivakumar, in the Supreme Court, Singhvi had submitted that some parts of the agency's petition were copy-pasted from its affidavit in the Chidambaram case.

In his order rejecting bail for Chidambaram, Justice Kait wrote, "It is alleged that during the period from 15.11.2016 to 19.11.2016 huge cash to the tune of Rs 31.75 crore was deposited in eight bank accounts in Kotak Mahindra Bank." The same line figures in an order by another judge of the high court while denying bail to Tandon, in May 2017.

There are other common portions — "It (the ED) gives details of demand draft issued from 15.11.2016 to 19.11.2016 from eight bank accounts in the name of Sunil Kumar, Dinesh Kumar, Abhilasha Dubey, Madan Kumar, Madan Saini, Satya Narain Dagdi and Seema Bai on various dates. Most of the Demand Drafts issued have since been recovered."

And, "The statements recorded during investigation have evidentiary value under Section 50 PMLA. Prima facie, the version given by them is in consonance with the prosecution case. The prosecution has further relied upon call data records, CCTV footage."

The portions in Justice Kait's order common to the Supreme Court decision on Tandon's bail last year are: "...The stated activity allegedly indulged into by the accused named in the commission of predicate offence is replete with mens rea. In that, the concealment, possession, acquisition or use of the property by projecting or claiming it as untainted property and converting the same by bank drafts, would certainly come within the sweep of criminal activity relating to a scheduled offence."

The HC order denying bail to Chidambaram says: "The Economic offences in itself are considered to be the gravest offence against the society at large and hence are required to be treated differently in the matter of bail... An economic offence is committed with cool calculation and deliberate design with an eye on personal profits... A disregard for the interest of the community can be manifested only at the cost of forfeiting the trust and faith of the community in the system to administer justice in an even handed manner without fear of criticism from the quarters which view white collar crimes with a permissive eye..."

Para 9 in the ED's counter-affidavit submitted in the Chidambaram case states: "... economic offences in itself are considered to be the gravest offence against the society at large and hence are required to be treated differently in the matter of bail... A disregard for the interest of the Community can be manifested only at the cost of forfeiting the trust and faith of the Community in the system to administer justice in an even handed manner without fear of criticism from the quarters which view white collar crimes with a permissive eye..."





FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

COMING UP THIS SESSION: CITIZENSHIP, DATA PROTECTION AND OTHER BILLS

THE LIST of business for the Winter Session of Parliament, being held between November 18 and December 13, include 27 new Bills for introduction, consideration, and passing; 12 pending Bills for consideration and passing; and 7 for withdrawal, according to PRS Legislative Research.

New Bills include the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, whose earlier version lapsed at the end of the previous Lok Sabha, and the Personal Data Protection Bill. Two Bills replace Ordinances, one of these banning e-cigarettes and the other amending the Income Tax Act to benefit domestic

companies. Other new Bills seek to amend the Industrial Relations Code to amalgamate three Acts including the Trade Unions Act, the Companies Act to decriminalise certain offences, and the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code to include a chapter on cross-boundary insolvency.

Bills that are already in Parliament include one (Dam Safety Bill) that provides for surveillance of certain dams, another that bans commercial surgery, one that provides for transgender rights, and two that modify the lists of Scheduled Tribes in Assam and Karnataka.

# What is driving onion prices

Government has called for import of 1 lakh tonnes of onion to help control rising prices. What has been causing the increase in prices since May, and how far can the new move be expected to reverse the trend?

PARTHA SARATHI BISWAS  
PUNE, NOVEMBER 17

LAST WEEK, Ram Vilas Paswan, Union Minister for Food and Civil Supplies, directed the state-owned trading corporation MMTC to import 1 lakh tonnes of onions to help ease the spike in retail prices. The decision marks India's transition from being an onion exporter to an importer.

## What has led to the rise in prices?

Prices have risen sharply since May this year, caused by delayed arrival of the new crop and damage to the harvested crop in the main onion-growing states of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

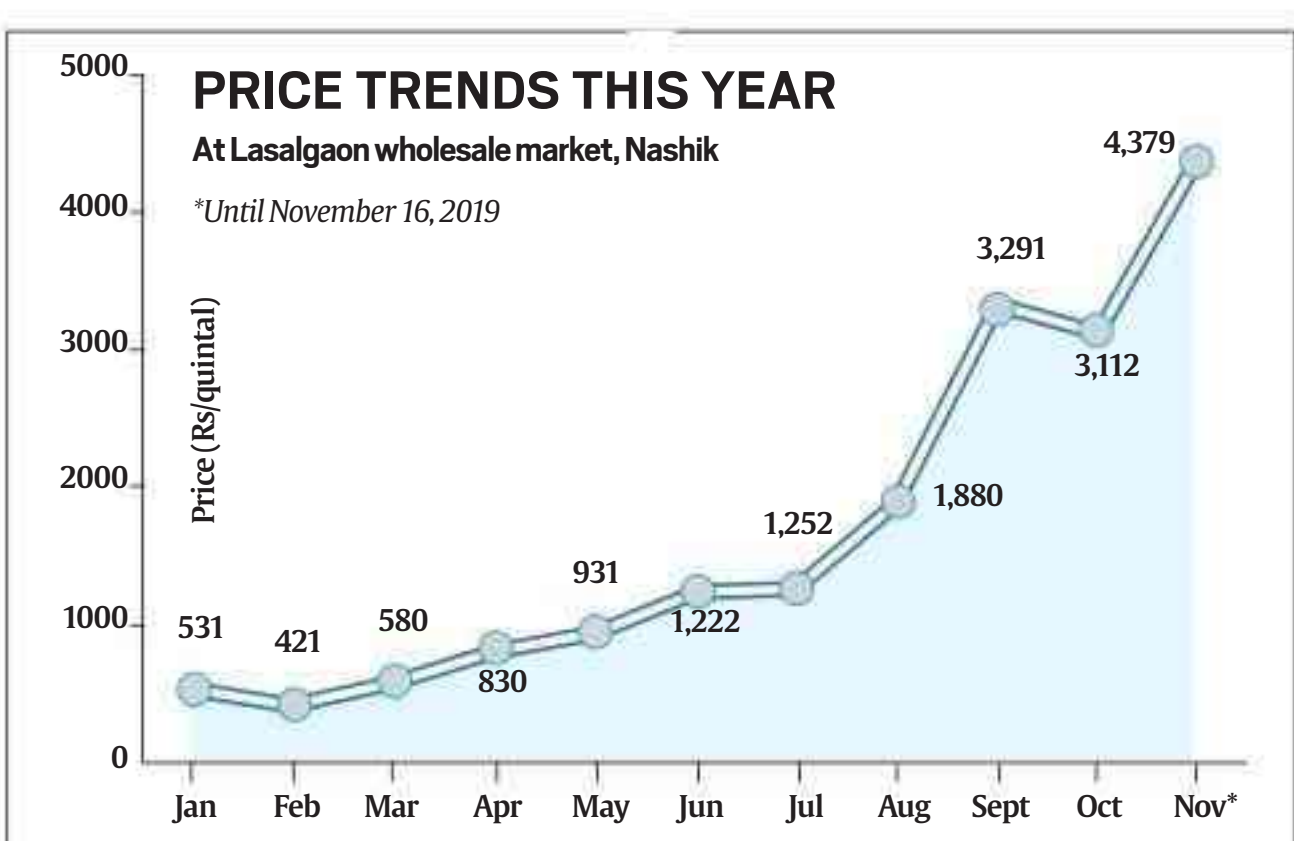
Due to a decrease in onion acreage in the main onion-growing districts of Maharashtra, arrivals dipped across wholesale markets. Prices at the wholesale market at Lasalgaon, Maharashtra, which were in the range of Rs 500-600 per quintal since the start of January, crossed the Rs 1,000 mark after May. Located in Nashik district, Lasalgaon is the largest onion market in the country and sets the price trends for the crop across the country. Retail prices in most cities have been hovering around Rs 70-80 per kg.

Back then, the low supply was due to a decrease in the rabi or summer crop. Farmers in the onion-growing belt of Nashik, Ahmednagar and other parts of Maharashtra harvest this crop after April. This crop is suitable for storage given its lower moisture content, and farmers store them in kanda chawls (raised platforms designed to prevent moisture ingress and sprouting) and continue liquidating the stock until the new crop arrives after October.

Rabi and two other harvests, kharif (harvested after October) and late kharif (harvested in January-March) feed the market round the year. While the rabi crop was affected by a drought in 2018, both the kharif and late kharif crops were delayed, first by a late arrival of the monsoon and later by heavy rainfall in October when the crop was ready for harvest. At the start of the April season, farmers had stored 22 lakh tonnes of onions, of which just around 5-6 per cent remain. Kharif acreage, as per the Ministry of Agriculture, has dipped from 2.97 lakh



Fresh onion arrivals in a wholesale market in Pune. Pavan Khengre



hectares in 2018-19 to 2.58 lakh hectares this year. The dip has been mostly in Maharashtra, where the onion belt had not seen much sowing due to the delayed monsoon.

What contributed to the rise in prices was the almost simultaneous damage to the ready crop in Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Gujarat due to the heavy unseasonal rainfall that hit these states from September.

Maharashtra, which is the leading producer of onion at 35 per cent of the country's production, has seen a dip in both its rabi and kharif output.

## What measures has the government taken to control the prices?

Since June, the Centre has been keeping a close watch on onion prices, given their

possible political fallout. First came a decision, in June, to scrap a 10% subsidy that was being given to exporters to ship onions out of the country. This was followed by more stringent measures. On September 13, the minimum export price - the lowest at which exports are allowed - was raised to \$850 per tonne, which was followed within weeks by a complete ban on exports as well as putting limits on how much onions traders could hold (500 quintals for wholesale traders and 100 quintals for retailers).

On November 11, income tax officers started verification of stocks and books of accounts of traders for possible violation of stock limit restrictions. They visited offices and premises of 15 traders in various markets of Nashik. While the team's report is yet to be made public, trade sources have said the raids were aimed at controlling prices. Within days after the searches, onion prices across the district had corrected themselves, with major traders staying away from the wholesale market for fear of government action.

The decision allowing import of 1 lakh tonnes is the latest move aimed at controlling onion prices.

## What changes with the latest move?

Even at the time it stopped exports, the government had opened up the doors for imports with MMTC floating tenders for 2,000 tonnes in the first week of September itself. While the tenders failed to fructify, private traders started importing the bulb. It is estimated that around 2,000-4,000 tonnes have docked in the Mumbai ports and are expected to reach the markets in the next few days.

Paswan's latest announcement marks a change in India's status from that of an exporter to that of an importer of onions. In the last fiscal, India had exported 21.82 lakh tonnes of onions worth \$497.97 million while importing only 7,080 tonnes worth \$1.12 million. Afghanistan, the United Arab Emirates and Egypt are the main markets from where India imports onions, although domestic traders say such onions are not welcomed in the markets. The traders also point out how the imported onion would have a negative effect on the prices of the new crop that is to due hit the market at almost the same time when the former is expected to reach India.

## NEW BILLS (27)

### FINANCE /CORPORATE AFFAIRS

- Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (replaces Ordinance)
- Multi State Cooperative Societies (Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Companies (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Competition (Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019
- International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019



### LABOUR & INDUSTRY

- Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2019
- Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Development (Amendment) Bill, 2019



### HOME AFFAIRS, SECURITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, LAW, STRATEGIC AFFAIRS

- Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (Modifies list of STs in UP)
- Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children) Amendment Bill, 2019
- Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2019



- National Police University Bill, 2019
- Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Anti Maritime Piracy Bill, 2019
- Disaster Management (Amendment) Bill, 2019

### HEALTH & EDUCATION

- Prohibition of Electronic Cigarettes (Production, Manufacture, Import, Export, Sale, Distribution, Storage and Advertisement) Bill, 2019 (replaces Ordinance)
- Medical Termination of Pregnancy (Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Healthcare Service Personnel and Clinical Establishments (Prohibition of violence and damage to property) Bill, 2019
- Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2019
- Central Sanskrit University Bill, 2019



### OTHER SECTORS

- Personal Data Protection Bill, 2019
- Pesticides Management Bill, 2019
- Aircraft (Amendment) Bill, 2019
- Recycling of Ships Bill, 2019
- Mines and Minerals (Development and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2019
- National River Ganga (Rejuvenation, Protection and Management) Bill, 2019



## FROM THE LAST SESSION (12)

### FINANCE

- Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019. (Introduced in Lok Sabha on August 5)

### HEALTH & EDUCATION

- National Institutes of Design (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (Passed by Rajya Sabha on August 6)
- National Commission for Indian System of Medicine Bill, 2019 (Introduced in Rajya Sabha on January 7; Standing Committee report pending)
- National Commission for Homoeopathy Bill, 2019 (Introduced in Rajya Sabha on January 7; Standing Committee report pending)
- National Institutes of Food Technology, Entrepreneurship and Management Bill, 2019 (Introduced in Rajya Sabha on February 13; Standing Committee report pending)
- Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019 (Passed by Lok Sabha on August 5)

### HOME AFFAIRS, SECURITY, SOCIAL JUSTICE, LAW, STRATEGIC AFFAIRS

- Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (Modifies list of Scheduled Tribes in Assam; introduced in Rajya Sabha on January 9)
- Constitution (Scheduled Tribes) Order (Second Amendment) Bill, 2019 (Modifies list of STs in Karnataka; introduced in Rajya Sabha on January 9)
- Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019 (Passed by Lok Sabha on August 5)

### OTHER SECTORS

- Jallianwala Bagh National Memorial (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (Passed by Lok Sabha on August 2)
- Dam Safety Bill, 2019 (Passed by Lok Sabha on August 2)
- Inter-State River Water Disputes (Amendment) Bill, 2019 (Passed by Lok Sabha on July 31)

Source: PRS Legislative Research

## Disney+ and the future of video streaming

SHRUTI DHAPOLA  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

DISNEY+, the new streaming service with exclusive content from Walt Disney Company's vast bank, is off to a big start. Disney+ launched in the US, Canada and the Netherlands on November 12, and according to the company, has already got 10 million subscribers signed up in just under two days. It also launches at time when on-demand video streaming services continue to grow in popularity across the world. Among other big players, Apple launched Apple TV+ on November 1.

## What is Disney+?

It is the premium streaming service starting at \$6.99 per month in the US with on-demand video. It will feature exclusive content from Disney. Like Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Hulu, and others, Disney+ will also introduce its own original content. One of the most talked about of these is The Mandalorian, the first-ever live-action Star Wars series.

Disney+ subscribers get access to four concurrent streams, and unlimited downloads on up to 10 devices. It will support setting up of seven different profiles. Parents will also be able to set up Kids Profiles to ensure age-appropriate content.

## When will Disney+ launch in India?

Disney+ is launching in US, Canada and the Netherlands for now. It will launch in Australia, New Zealand and Puerto Rico on November 19, followed by countries in Western Europe - including the UK, France, Germany, Italy and Spain - on March 31, 2020.

Regarding India, there's no word, except from Hotstar, the streaming service owned by Star Networks that in turn is owned by Walt Disney Company. Hotstar has been tweeting that it will bring Disney+ to India. It is not clear if Disney+ will be bundled in the existing price of Hotstar (Rs 299 per month or Rs 999 per year) or whether the prices will be increased for Hotstar.

Already some of the Disney exclusive content such as the Avengers movies are

showing on Hotstar.

## How will one stream Disney+?

The Disney+ service won't just be limited to apps on Android and iOS and the official website. Like Netflix and Amazon Prime Video, it will work on Google Chromecast, Android TV devices, LG Smart TVs with webOS, Microsoft (Xbox One), Samsung Smart TVs. All Android-based Sony TVs and PlayStation 4 and Roku streaming devices will get the service. Amazon's Fire TV devices, including the Fire TV Stick also get support eventually.

## What does this mean to the video streaming market?

Disney's vast content includes the Marvel franchise with all the Avengers films, and the Star Wars franchise, all with a fan base running into millions. They will flock to the platform as shows or films are developed around these, besides streaming the older films. In 2019, Disney acquired 21st Century Fox, which gave it control over the entire Fox net-

work, cable TV channels, Star Networks in India, and even a 30 per cent stake in Hulu.

No one but Disney will be distributing this content. Earlier Netflix had content from Marvel, but that has all been pulled given the new Disney+ service. Disney also has titles planned such as an Obi-Wan Kenobi series (Star Wars franchise), live-action series from Marvel Studios with characters like The Winter Soldier, WandaVision, Loki, Hawkeye, She-Hulk, etc.

Disney+ will also have content from Pixar, National Geographic, and shows like The Simpsons. Some of the most popular children's movies like The Lion King, The Toy Story series, The Incredibles, Mickey Mouse, old classics like The Little Mermaid, Peter Pan, Cinderella, etc are all going to be exclusively available on Disney+.

Plus Disney+ has a bundled option for US subscribers to get access to ESPN and Hulu at \$12.99, which means it will also provide sports content and content from Hulu. However, Disney+ will be family-oriented with no adult or R-rated content.

# Another election, another churn: Why the Mhadei's waters are muddy again

SMITA NAIR  
PANAJI, NOVEMBER 17

ON OCTOBER 23, Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Prakash Javadekar announced on Twitter that the "Kalasa-Banduri drinking water project in Karnataka has been granted Environment Approval". Javadekar deleted the tweet subsequently, but Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant led an 11-member all-party delegation to New Delhi to demand that the clearance to the project be withdrawn.

On Twitter, the CM, who belongs to the BJP, posted: "[River] Mhadei [the water of whose tributaries, Kalasa and Banduri, Karnataka wants to divert to the Malaprabha basin in Karnataka] is more than mother to us. We shall protect it at any cost. Officially Govt. of Goa is not aware of any EC [environmental clearance] having been granted to Karnataka affecting Mhadei river." Sawant vowed to "defend the interest of the people of Goa and the state at any cost", and announced that "In case such EC is issued without hearing State of Goa, we shall challenge the same before appropriate forum including NGT".

## The river and dispute

The Mhadei (or Mahadayi/Mahadeyi)

risers in the Western Ghats in Khanapur taluk of Karnataka's Belagavi district, and enters Goa in the Sattari taluk of North Goa. Several streams join it along its course, and the river grows in volume to become the Mandovi, one of Goa's two major rivers, before flowing into the Arabian Sea at Panaji.

Two-thirds (76 km) of the 111-km Mhadei flows in Goa (where it is called Mandovi). Since Goa's other 11 rivers hold salt water, the sweet-water Mandovi is crucial to water security and ecology, and an important source of fish. The Mhadei/Mandovi basin, along with its tributaries and distributaries, nourishes Goa and contiguous areas of Maharashtra and Karnataka.

Tensions over sharing the Mhadei's water started in the 1980s and escalated through the early 1990s as Karnataka designed several dams and canals to channel water to the Malaprabha basin to address endemic water shortages in its northern districts of Belagavi, Dharwad, Gadag, and Bagalkot.

Goa asked for a Tribunal in 2002 and, four years later, moved the Supreme Court. The central government set up the Mhadei Water Disputes Tribunal in November 2010.

In August 2018, the Tribunal awarded 13.42 thousand million cubic (TMC) feet from the Mhadei basin - including 3.9 TMC feet for diversion into the depleted Malaprabha



basin through the Kalasa-Banduri project - to Karnataka. Goa and Karnataka have both challenged the award, and the matter is pending in the Supreme Court.

## The latest escalation

In April this year, the Karnataka Neeravari Nigam Limited (KNNL), the state government company in charge of all irrigation projects, submitted to the Union Environment Ministry documents related to the Rs 840-

crore "Khalasa Bhandura Drinking Water supply Scheme" that proposes to divert 3.90 TMC feet of "water flowing [in] streams/nalas in Mahadayi basin to water deficit Malaprabha basin by construction of three diversion dams across Haltara Nala, Kalasa Nala, and Bhandura Nala". The project, the KNNL said, "is exclusively proposed for drinking water facilities to Hubli-Dharwad towns, Kundgol town, and en route villages as part of commitment to National Water Policy 2012".

On October 17, the Ministry confirmed Karnataka's request for waiver of provisions of the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Notification, 2006, provided some steps were followed. This upset Goa, and the delegation that met Javadekar on November 3 expressed "shock and surprise" at the Ministry's response, and accused Karnataka of misrepresenting facts before the Centre. Environmentalist Rajendra P Kerkar of the Mhadei Bachao Andolan, part of the Goa delegation, argued that the proposed project falls "within the ecologically sensitive area identified earlier by Karnataka Forests Department and the Western Ghats Ecology Expert Panel headed by Dr Madhav Gadgil in their report in 2011 and subsequently the high level working group appointed under the chairmanship of Dr Kasturirangan in their report of 2013".

The delegation said part of the project falls within the eco-sensitive zone of Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, and the dam site was just 231.27 m and its canal systems just 3.17 km from Mhadei Wildlife Sanctuary - all of which required it to go through the EIA process.

Kerkar later told The Indian Express that most of Goa's paddy farming is by the Kazaan way, which requires the water to be of a certain level of salinity. "Of the 12 rivers in Goa, only Mhadei fulfils the needs and if seawater ingress happens in a weak Mhadei, we stand

to lose our entire paddy cultivation," he said.

## Politics mixed in water

Politicians on both sides in Goa have sought to link the Ministry's approval to the project to December 5 Assembly byelections in Karnataka. Several of the 15 seats up for grabs are in the Malaprabha basin.

"Everyone should understand that bypolls are scheduled in that state (Karnataka). There could also be fresh elections in that state. Political situation is not very good over there. But we should not get distracted by any letters issued to them," Goa Ports Minister Michael Lobo told a press conference.

Lobo claimed such letters have been issued by the Centre "time and again", sometimes for "political reasons". Ahead of the Karnataka elections of 2018, former Goa CM Manohar Parrikar had, in a letter to then Karnataka Opposition leader BS Yediyurappa, shown willingness to consider Karnataka's request for water for its northern districts.

Parrikar's letter had followed a meeting with BJP president Amit Shah in New Delhi, where Parrikar and the BJP's state heads in Maharashtra and Karnataka were also present. And Javadekar in his tweet last month acknowledged the "follow-up" of Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, BJP MP from Dharwad, of which three of the bypoll seats are part.





DEFUND, MAKE SURE THINGS DON'T WORK, PEOPLE GET ANGRY, HAND IT OVER TO PRIVATE CAPITAL.

— NOAM CHOMSKY

The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

# Over to the states

With the economic centre of gravity shifting to states, India's growth hinges on cooperative federalism



DUVVURI SUBBARAO

## BRICS MATTERS

India's persistence with it speaks about Delhi's strategy to hedge against the great global uncertainties of the moment

THE ONLY THING remarkable about this year's summit of the BRICS forum in Brasilia is that it took place at all. During his campaign for the presidency in 2018, Jair Bolsonaro made no secret of his distrust of China and the strategic enthusiasm for President Donald Trump. If his recent predecessors promoted the BRICS as part of their left-wing agenda for Brazil, conservative Bolsonaro seemed ready to dissociate Brazil from that tradition. That he has chosen, instead, to stay with the BRICS, underlines the power of inertia in the conduct of foreign policy. Each member of the very diverse and geographically dispersed group finds some value — even if it is merely diplomatic — in staying with the BRICS. But the internal contradictions among the five member states — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa — are real and not easily overcome. None of them are sharper than the contradictions between India and China.

It was Russia that helped develop the forum and sustain it. The Russian objective was to mount international opposition to the United States in the unipolar moment that followed the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991. As China rose in the 21st century and found new tensions rocking its ties with the US, Beijing found much in common with Russia in limiting US dominance of the world. Beyond geopolitics, Beijing also found the BRICS a useful forum to promote a global economic agenda that is in sync with its emergence as the world's biggest exporter and the second largest economy all set to replace the US as number one. For both Russia and China, having three large developing nations — India, Brazil and South Africa — as partners in their enterprise makes eminent political sense.

But India's gains from the BRICS are not obvious. Nor is it evident if India's interests are in alignment with the declared policies of the BRICS. Consider, for example, the thundering BRICS declaration on defending multilateralism. Many of India's problems in the multilateral domain are rooted in Beijing's opposition — it stalled efforts to join the UNSC as a permanent member and the Nuclear Suppliers Group. On trade, while it is easy to demonise President Trump's protectionist policies, Delhi's biggest trade deficit is with China. India has cited China's economic threat for not joining the Asian trading bloc — RCEP. On countering terrorism, which is a major foreign policy priority for India, China views the problem through Pakistani eyes. Delhi is also acutely conscious of two other factors. One is the eagerness of Beijing and Moscow to do bilateral deals with Washington. It is also aware of the profound imbalance of power within the BRICS. For, the Chinese economy is twice as large as the other four put together. India's persistence with the BRICS says less about its ideological convictions. It is more about Delhi's strategy to hedge against the many great global uncertainties of the moment.

## STEPS TO REVIVAL

Mess in banking and telecom sectors needs to be addressed urgently to pierce economic gloom

LAST WEEKEND, THE Supreme Court approved the resolution plan of ArcelorMittal to pay Rs 42,000 crore to local financial creditors and take over Essar Steel after setting aside a ruling of the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal, marking a closure to an important case under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. That's a big positive as the Court has made it clear that the decision of the Committee of Creditors or lenders will be final and binding, which should help faster resolution of more such cases. It will also mean the entry of the world's largest steelmaker into one of the biggest markets having agreed to infuse Rs 8,000 crore into the bankrupt company which it is acquiring. But the bigger challenge lies ahead. It concerns one of the most competitive sectors in India — telecom — with a Supreme Court ruling on dues in adjusted gross revenue hitting two major players, Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel, leading to the foreign telecom company reporting the highest ever quarterly loss by an Indian corporate of Rs 50,921 crore a week ago, and Bharti Rs 23,045 crore.

The problem is not restricted to just the telecom sector. The latest development is bound to trigger fresh concerns for Indian banks, which had an exposure of Rs 1.15 lakh crore to the telecom sector at the end of September this year. These lenders will be further weighed down because of extra provisions and the need for capital if the issue is not swiftly sorted out by the government. Vodafone, which had indicated its inability to invest more, is no ordinary firm. It is one of India's largest FDI investors and a global telecom player. It has taken a lot of effort, including by the NDA government, to undo the damage caused by the decision of the UPA government to tax the company retrospectively over seven years ago.

What is worrying is the reluctance or failure of the government and policymakers to recognise the inter-connection — the knock-on impact of such decisions on other sectors such as banking. In such a scenario, a good decision, like the reduction of corporate tax, which makes India one of the most competitive tax regimes, will be neutralised at a time when the country is hoping to attract global supply chains shifting from China. The mood among investors is more sombre, compared to the start of this fiscal, especially with indications that growth could well be sub 5 per cent and with little clarity on a global economic recovery next year too. Retaining the trust of investors — be it local wealth creators or foreign entities — is an ongoing process, which is why the government should move quickly on the strategic sell-off of BPCL and Air India, address sectoral issues and further strengthen India's dominant state-owned banks to revive lending.

## FREEZE FRAME



## E P UNNY



IN GOOD FAITH

RAJESH KOCHHAR

IT IS A measure of the hatefulness and narrow-mindedness that has come to permeate the national atmosphere that the appointment of a young Muslim Sanskrit scholar, Firoz Khan, as an assistant professor in the literature department of the Sanskrit Vidya Dharma Vijnan at Banaras Hindu University has brought forth protests from his to-be colleagues as well as the department's PhD students, demanding a cancellation of the appointment. The vice-chancellor has clarified that the appointment was made by a duly-appointed selection committee in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

Rajasthan-born Khan has been educated at the Jaipur campus of the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan, which is a deemed university under the Ministry of Human Resource Development. After completing his studies, Feroze served here as guest faculty for three years. This year, he has been awarded the Sanskrit Yuva Pratibha Samman by Rajasthan government.

The protesters know that the selection committee could not possibly have said that even though Khan was the best candidate for the position, he should not be offered the job due to communal considerations. If the selected candidate was, say, European, nobody would probably have raised any objection.

Admittedly, in an earlier era, access to Sanskrit was severely restricted. Sacred texts were the preserve of select Brahmin groups, while classical Sanskrit could be taught to upper-caste Hindus. That is how Raja Bhoja and Raja Bharthari emerged as Sanskrit scholars

# SCHOLARSHIP HAS NO RELIGION

Protests in BHU against hiring of a Muslim Sanskrit professor speak of dismal times

In their own right. It was, however, forbidden to teach Shudras Sanskrit. The Skanda Purana explicitly states that any Brahmin who teaches Sanskrit to a Shudra would lose his caste.

British and European interest in ancient India punctured Brahmin orthodoxy. Brahminical learning became an internationally-marketable commodity. For considerations of money, employment and patronage, Brahmins sold their old manuscripts to Europeans, went to their residence to teach them Sanskrit, admitted them into their homes, discussed sacred texts with them, and collaborated with them to prepare bilingual dictionaries. The very definition of *mlechchha* was modified to accommodate Europeans. The *mlechchha* was now not a despised foreigner as before but one who could not pronounce Sanskrit words correctly.

Brahmins appreciated Europeans' respect for their learning and Hindu society in turn considered European scholarship to be authoritative. When a dispute arose between the Sanskrit professors at Oxford and Cambridge on the correct pronunciation of a particular Vedic *rchha*, two experts from Benares Sanskrit College were sent to Calcutta to record their recitation, which was forwarded to England.

Once Brahmins agreed to admit *mlechchhas* into the Sanskrit fold, they could not have kept the Shudras out. Raja Radhakanta Deb emerged as the most celebrated Sanskrit scholar in 19th century Bengal. In the pre-Plassey days, Brahmins would not even have accepted drinking water from his ancestors.

The British opened three Sanskrit Colleges: Benares (1791), Poona (1821), and Calcutta (1824). In 1832, a brilliant former student of Sanskrit College Calcutta was appointed a pro-

## NOVEMBER 18, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

US HOSTAGES FREED

AYATOLLAH RUHOLLAH KHOMEINI ordered the release of all women and black hostages at the US embassy in Tehran if they are proved innocent of spying, and said he was acting out of Islamic mercy, Tehran Radio reportedly said. Khomeini's statement said the remaining "professional spies" will be held until the Shah and "all that he has plundered" are returned to Iran. The broadcast said the captors would comply with Khomeini's order to free six or seven American women and several black marines from among the estimated 62 Americans and eight non-Americans held in the embassy since November 4.

CFD MINISTERS RESIGN

EIGHT CFD MINISTERS resigned from the Banarasi Das ministry, creating a post-dated political crisis in the state which would make the survival of the Lok Dal government in Uttar Pradesh difficult. One CFD minister of state, Govind Singh Mehra, however, did not resign. According to Chief Minister Banarasi Das, he would forward the resignations of all the eight cabinet ministers to the governor for acceptance.

AMU'S STATUS

CHARAN SINGH'S CARETAKER government has dropped its plans to come out with an ordinance to declare Aligarh Muslim

University a minority institution: This decision has already been discussed at various levels in the government, and has been taken mainly because of fears that President N Sanjeeva Reddy, might not agree to sign it. Instead of issuing the ordinance, Singh is now thinking of making a promise in the election manifesto that if his party comes to power it will make a law granting AMU minority character. Even on this issue, there appears to have developed a difference between the two partners of the ruling alliance — Lok Dal and Congress. Lok Dal wants to amend the AMU 1920 Act, while the Congress fears that in this form it would be struck down by the Supreme Court.

Kochhar is author of The Vedic People: Their History and Geography





# THE IDEAS PAGE

## A jan aandolan for nutrition

Poshan Abhiyaan promises to revive traditional food systems across the country while addressing malnutrition



SMRITI Z IRANI

THE PAST CENTURY has seen impressive growth in agricultural productivity in India and across the world, fuelled by systemic and scientific improvements in farming practices — the Green Revolution, and globalisation and industrialisation of the food sector. Ironically, this growth has not eliminated malnutrition, which continues to remain a challenge with serious social and economic costs.

Malnutrition among children, in particular, has long-lasting and critical effects on our nation's progress and future. For example, in the 1990s, it was found that 46 per cent of the children in India were stunted due to malnutrition and today, they form the country's workforce, designing and directing the nation's economy and health. The World Bank reports that the annual cost of malnutrition in India is at least \$10 billion and is driven by loss of productivity, illness and death. Analyses have shown that in order to achieve zero hunger in India by 2030, India will have to liberate nearly 50,000 people from hunger, every day.

The awareness of the extent of malnutrition despite agricultural growth has led to a need to converge agriculture and nutrition. While the two areas share a common foundation, "food", which reinforces the intimate relationship between them, there has in reality been a significant disconnect in recent times, due to the demands on quantity rather than quality, driven by exponential population growth and needs.

Missions to tackle nutrition from farm to table involve multiple stakeholders, with the government at one end and individuals who can influence consumption patterns at the other end of the agri-nutrition chain. Such missions must necessarily consider the looping relationships along the food supply chain, to strengthen the linkages between agriculture and nutrition.

Building on existing strengths and capitalising on unexplored possibilities, the Government of India has embarked on an unprecedented initiative, the POSHAN Abhiyaan (the Prime Minister's Overarching Scheme for Holistic Nutrition) since 2018 to tackle malnutrition, through a multi-sectoral results-based framework. The mission, set up under the aegis of the Ministry of Women and Child Development (WCD), aims at targeted reduction of stunting, undernutrition, anaemia and low-birth-weight babies in India.

The novelty of the Poshan Abhiyaan is twofold — at the agricultural level, it aims to amalgamate knowledge of regional food systems and at the consumer level, to foster social and behavioural changes among individuals, especially parents. The mission also seeks to improve linkages between communities and health systems, thus paving the way for a mass movement to promote a transformative change, referred to as the jan aandolan.

However, food and crop diversity need to be linked with agro-ecological patterns like soil, groundwater, etc. We need to know what was traditionally grown across the country, what were the nutrition and micro-nutrient content, how can we move away from monocropping and increase crop diversity to increase diet diversity.

Without understanding social, behavioural and cultural practices, we cannot promote healthy dietary practices and reinforce healthy dietary behaviours both at individual and community levels keeping in mind wide regional variations.



C R Sasikumar

As part of the Poshan Abhiyaan, the WCD, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, is developing India's first Poshan Atlas, to create a repository of diverse crops across 127 agro-climatic zones of the country that would be accessible to policy-makers, administrators, experts and communities to help meet nutritional outcomes.

Named Bharatiya Poshan Krishi Kosh, the initiative is particularly relevant in this age of globalisation because the advent of modern food systems has resulted in a loss of knowledge on and consumption of traditional and local nutrient-rich foods in favour of less nutritious industrialised and processed food products. For example, the replacement of nutrient-dense millets, suited for cultivation under the water-strapped conditions of the country, by other grains has been a result of globalisation; increased awareness about the suitability of millets from both the nutrient standpoint and agricultural logistics is catalysing the slow restoration of these super grains in recent times.

The information gained through the Atlas will be disseminated at the district level for implementation through cooperative tasks among all the stakeholders — farmers, food supply intermediaries and consumers. The Poshan Culture Atlas will create a repository of traditional foods/crops and cultural practices associated with them, such as seasonal folk songs, theatre and art forms. These tools will be employed to disseminate food and nutrition-related information among the people, thus forging closer ties between the agricultural and nutrition sectors.

The novelty of the Poshan Abhiyaan mission is twofold — at the agricultural level, it aims to amalgamate knowledge of regional food systems, and at the consumer level, to foster social and behavioural changes among individuals, especially parents. The mission also seeks to improve linkages between communities and health systems, thus paving the way for a mass movement to promote a transformative change, referred to as the jan aandolan.

This ambitious project would see government, academia, the scientific community, private sector and cultural groups join hands and take a major step towards finding local, workable solutions to be implemented at community levels. In partnership with the Gates Foundation, Harvard University's TH Chan Centre of Public Health, ministries of agriculture, rural development, skill development, department of civil supplies, state governments, ICAR, Niti Aayog, National Institute of Nutrition, Deendayal Research Institute and many others will join hands to undertake this project, the first in any country, to ensure coming generations have access to traditional knowledge that can be used for workable solutions to address problems of nutrition.

The Poshan Atlas project will go a long way to address this gap and propel parents and communities to rethink on what to feed and what to consume. Awareness and knowledge about our crop diversity and regional variations in nutritious food will provide a nudge for behaviour change across the country propelling demand which, in turn, will provide opportunities to farmers and agro-processing units to address consumer needs.

Let us all join hands to build a New India where our food and crop diversity can be revived and our traditional knowledge leveraged for tackling undernutrition and malnutrition.

The writer is Union Minister for Textiles and Women & Child Development

### WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Washington indulges in the mobs' vandalism to destroy Hong Kong and views efforts by the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) government as suppression on democracy and freedom. How ruthless and hypocritical it is."

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

## A Lincoln moment

What PM Modi has in common with the former US President



RAM MADHAV

ABRAHAM LINCOLN PUT an end to slavery in the American South through the historic Emancipation Proclamation in 1863. He had always believed that slavery was against the basic tenets of the American Constitution. His resolve to end it was fortified by an open letter published by eminent thinker Alexis de Tocqueville in 1856 in the pro-abolition paper Liberty Bell. "I am pained by the fact that the freest people in the world maintain slavery", Tocqueville had written.

It was not an easy journey for Lincoln. He was severely criticised not only by the pro-slavery leaders of the South, but also by a number of others including prominent liberals in the US and Britain. Even the Papal establishment was against his decision. Civil war had erupted, forcing Lincoln to resort to strong measures like the declaration of emergency, deployment of army and the censorship of media. Liberals had a good opportunity to accuse him of degenerating American democracy into a military despotism. He was called an aspiring tyrant, a hypocrite who used slavery as an excuse to exert the North's authority over the South. Lincoln was also accused of provoking civil war, violating civil liberties and even destroying the Republic.

Laboulaye, who was credited with the conception of the famous Statue of Liberty, was one scholar who had analysed Lincoln's actions very well. Historian Helena Rosenblatt, in *The Lost History of Liberalism*, writes about Laboulaye's analysis of Lincoln: "Lincoln's use of emergency authority, he [Laboulaye] concluded, was the very model of crisis government. Lincoln had responded to the emergency without undermining the Constitution or the rule of law. He had suspended habeas corpus, but only to save the Constitution. Most importantly, Lincoln had engaged in moral uplift. In all these ways, then, Lincoln was a great leader of liberal democracy. In making such a man president, the United States had vindicated not only the Constitution, but liberty, democracy, and humanity itself."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's actions in Kashmir will be seen in similar light in the future. In ending a constitutional provision that was coming in the way of civil rights, political rights and dignified living of the ordinary people of Kashmir — and one that was promoting terrorism and secessionism — Modi, like Lincoln, had to demonstrate some toughness.

The slave system was being exploited by the aristocrats of the South. They used everything, including the Jesuit religion, to whip up sentiments of the commoners against the more modernised and liberal North, and waged a civil war. Article 370

was benefitting a few hundred political, aristocratic families in Kashmir. They were using the ordinary Kashmiris as cannon fodder to uphold their family feudalism.

The liberal attacks on Modi for his Kashmir decision are particularly ferocious. Liberals, whose great-grandfathers had attacked Lincoln as a despot, paint a dark picture of Kashmir today. While the Papal establishment had joined hands with the liberals in Lincoln's times, it is the Islamists who are the partners with the frustrated liberals now. The European liberals had stood by Lincoln on the principle of liberal equality then. Today, when a number of MEPs, after visiting the Valley, have reiterated the same principle in extending their support to the Modi government's action, Indian liberals fulminate and brand them as right-wingers.

Unlike in Lincoln's America, no civil war has erupted after Modi's decision. Three months down the line, the Valley has been absolutely peaceful. There are no restrictions on people's movements. One encounters traffic jams on a daily basis in Srinagar and other cities. Business and educational establishments have reopened. Offices are running normally. The newly born Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir is reinventing itself as a full and integral part of India.

"Human rights" is a bogey that the liberals flaunt easily. Placing a couple of hundred politicians under preventive detention on a temporary basis can't be called human rights violation. Hundreds of other political activists are free and engaged in political and electoral activity in the state. The Block Development Council elections, held after the historic decision, saw the participation of 98 per cent of the electorate. Those under detention, too, would be able to resume political activity at an early opportunity.

Raising the bogey of internet disconnection as another human rights violation is superfluous. An increasing number of people are getting their broadband connections restored. Internet cafes have been reopened. The state administration has promised that full internet services will be restored based on the security assessment. But, the internet cannot be categorised as a fundamental right. It is a civic right no doubt, the denial of which for the larger social good will always be in the domain of the state. Vint Cerf, often called the "father of internet", also categorically rejects the rights argument. "Technology is an enabler of rights, not a right itself", he had written in 2012. Kashmir had witnessed internet blackouts many times in the past. While the whole country got the internet in the 1990s, Kashmir got it after a decade or so after that.

Like Lincoln, Modi too needed an iron-will. Lincoln had to be ruthless with racial fascism in his time. For Modi, it was, to quote Bashir Assad in his book *K File*, masla-e-Kashmir is no longer political; it is about Nizam-e-Mustafa; it is a pan-Islamic movement now. Lincoln didn't have any choice. Neither did Modi.

The writer is national general secretary, BJP, and director, India Foundation

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

#### INFLATION MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'RBI's choice' (IE, November 15). The reason for the spike in inflation needs to be examined carefully. It could be due to the much awaited rise in aggregate demand in the economy as a result of successive interest rate cuts by the Monetary Policy Committee. Hence, tweaks to the monetary policy by RBI will not suffice. Alternatively, it may well be an outcome of supply side disruption due to the decline in investments and production. In this case, the government, not the RBI, needs to act through appropriate fiscal policies.

S B Bhalerao, Mumbai

#### LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to [editpage@expressindia.com](mailto:editpage@expressindia.com) or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

#### RESPECT HISTORY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'A verdict, a test' (IE, November 15). Why must we view the Babri structure as a symbol of "invasion by an intruder"? Why cannot we, as citizens of a modern democracy, view it as a historical event in an ancient country, and accept the historical significance of the structure. The article suggests a grotesque othering of Muslims. There are several narratives of the Indian nation, and they often intersect with one another. It is wrong, both morally and politically, to assert one's political beliefs by attempting to erase the events of history.

Shuchi Shah, Ahmedabad

#### WITHOUT A VISION

THIS REFERS TO the news, 'Real obstacle to India's rise not barriers of World but dogmas of Delhi: Jaishankar' (IE, November 15). The Minister for External Affairs's observations are correct. India has not been able to seize the crucial moments in history be-

cause the policymakers have displayed both a lack of vision and self belief. To claim its rightful place on the international high table, the country has a lot of catching up to do.

Vijai Pant Hempur

#### PROTECT ECONOMY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Who's afraid of RCEP?' (IE, November 14). India's recent decision to opt out of the RCEP has been criticised by a large section of economists, many of whom has said that the country has missed a great opportunity. We, however, need to understand the current state of our economy and the trajectory of our development path. The country's GDP growth rate has fallen, many sectors are facing an economic crunch and the rupee has fallen against the US dollar. The decision to not join the RCEP was, therefore, backed by the desire to protect the economy from further shocks.

Gracy Singh, Delhi

### VIEW FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

#### SRI LANKA POLLS

ON SUNDAY AFTERNOON, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Sri Lanka's president-elect Gotabaya Rajapakse on his victory. Rajapakse, brother of former president Mahinda, is known for his hardline outlook during the civil war in the country.

The Sri Lankan Press, of course, has been following the election closely, and almost exclusively. And, as is the case in India, it is likely that the drama and euphoria of the change of guard in Colombo will be the subject of editorials and opinion articles for some time to come.

On November 15, however, as the campaign was winding down, the press in Sri Lanka was critical of the principal political players. In its editorial, *The Island* remarked on the tall promises that political parties make while campaigning: "Perhaps, the only thing the presidential candidates did not promise us, during the last few weeks, was rice from the moon or handen haal. They pledged to give us virtually everything else free of charge so much so that one may have wondered whether they had found Aladdin's magic lamp. Fulfilling all these promises is a task that only Sakka or the King of Gods may be equal to, given the huge amount of funds

and the superhuman effort it requires."

But the one thing political parties did not pay attention to was the question of intimidation, and the fairness of the election process. "During the last several decades, there have been many instances of goons chasing voters away, storming polling booths and stuffing ballot boxes, under successive governments. The situation seems to have improved somewhat, but precautions have to be taken," the editorial remarks.

The editorial in *The Daily Mirror* on the same day addresses a different issue — the presidency of Maithripala Sirisena.

The newspaper calls Sirisena a lucky man, since "there was no talk of a Maithripala Sirisena presidency even a few days before presidential aspirations were announced in late 2014. He did not express such intention and no one considered him to be a possible contender. And yet he became the president."

The thrust of the assessment of Sirisena, who has not contested for a second term, as president is this: He was, at times, a convenient scapegoat for the UNP leaders (earlier opposed to his party, the SLFP, but part of the erstwhile ruling coalition) who had never fully forgone their loyalty to Mahinda Rajapakse. For his part, the compulsions of keeping a coalition together meant the pres-

ident had to swallow his pride.

#### MYANMAR IN FOCUS

The November 17 editorial in *The Daily Star* is on a familiar subject — Myanmar and the international community's reaction on the Rohingya issue. However, unlike its usual lament that not enough is being done to hold the country's government to account for the genocide of the Rohingya, the newspaper expresses hope.

Four recent developments, it says, may indicate that officials responsible for atrocities in Rakhine State may be punished: "First, The Gambia filed a case with the UN's International Court of Justice (ICJ) accusing Myanmar of committing genocide against the Rohingya. Two days later, several rights bodies filed a lawsuit with an Argentine court against Myanmar State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi and several other top officials. On Thursday, the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague approved a full investigation into Myanmar's crimes. The same day, in New York, a resolution was adopted at the third committee of the 74th UN General Assembly, which is expected to exert significant pressure on the Security Council to take action."

According to the editorial, the ideal situation would be if international pressure also creates a situation conducive to the repatriation of Rohingya refugees back to Myanmar.

#### 100 DAYS

On November 14, *Dawn* had an editorial marking 100 days of the clampdown on communications and the arrest of political figures in Kashmir. Much of the editorial is either rhetorical or attempts to pull on heartstrings by talking of the suffering of the Kashmiri people.

The editorial asserts that Pakistan "will continue to support" Kashmiris in their struggle, while pointing out the ill-effects of media censorship and prolonged detention without trial.

The editorial does make a point that merits consideration in terms of how state might may not be effective while dealing with a political issue: "India can continue its brutal approach in the region for another 100 days but the result is unlikely to be different, as Kashmiris will not start treating their oppressors as their benefactors. Instead of this failed approach, India must immediately lift the siege of Kashmir and listen to what its people have to say."





# 12 THE GOVERNANCE PAGE

## WEST BENGAL/SAVING THE CHILDREN

# Why this WB village won 2019's Child-friendly Panchayat Award

Sarberia Agarhati eliminated child trafficking, child marriages, reduced school dropouts

RAVIK BHATTACHARYA AND  
SANTANU CHOWDHURY  
SANDESHKHALI, NOVEMBER 17

IN 2015, when the family of 17-year old Tajmira Khatun decided to marry her off, their decision was considered par for the course. Tajmira had five other siblings, the parents were poor and her marriage would reduce the burden on the family's meagre resources. But, Tajmira's reaction was anything but par.

She flatly refused to get married. All too often, child marriages led to child trafficking. Even child labour cases often resulted in abuse and trafficking.

But when her family continued to put pressure on her, she reached out to a children's group called "Ajker Surjya" (Today's Sun) that worked towards putting an end to child marriages, child labour and child trafficking in Sarberia Agarhati Gram Panchayat area of North 24 Parganas district's Sandeshkhali. Together, they approached the Gram Panchayat to seek justice. The Panchayat members eventually convinced her parents to give up the idea.

Four years later, Tajmira is now a part of Ajker Surjya and, last month, Sarberia Agarhati became one of the 22 Gram Panchayats (out of a total of 2.5 lakh in the country) to win the Union Ministry of Panchayati Raj's coveted "Child-friendly Panchayat Award" for 2019. It is also the first one to receive this honour in West Bengal.

Tajmira often sits with the other members of the group in the dining space of Sarberia High School, going over the list of homes they intend to visit. They discuss the ways to prevent child marriage, trafficking and to create awareness on immunisation and child rights.

"With the help of the group, I successfully thwarted my early marriage. Now, I am part of the group. We keep vigil in the village for traffickers or unknown faces. We have a network of children who inform us about school dropouts or if a family is secretly planning to marry off their daughters before the age of 18. We also visit households, campaigning for immunisation, institutional deliveries," says Tajmira.

Tajmira and the group's effort are bearing fruit. What was once a hub of child trafficking, child labour and child marriages in West Bengal, has seen a dramatic change. Seventeen villages under the Sarberia Agarhati Gram



Children of Ajker Surjya raise awareness as well as keep a strict vigil. Partha Paul

Panchayat are now free of trafficking, early marriage, child labour. What's more, there is 100 per cent immunisation and institutional delivery (*see box*). What brought about this change were the children of this area who relentlessly battle these ills on a daily basis.

The children's group started in 2004. Earlier this area was infamous for traffickers, and child marriages were rampant. Children were taken to different parts of India including Delhi, Haryana, Maharashtra — often as part of domestic helps," says Sheikh Sahajahan, the Panchayat Pradhan.

There are several groups now. Children aged between 14 and 18 are part of these groups and each group consists of around 15 to 20 members. Their primary task is to identify children who ap-

## SARBERIA AGARHATI GRAM PANCHAYAT: A STORY OF HEROIC CHANGE

SINCE 2015

- Child marriage cases came down from 22 to zero
- Child labourers came down from 68 to zero
- School dropout fell from 29 to just nine
- Child trafficking completely eliminated
- Hundred per cent child immunisation
- Hundred per cent institutional facility-based childbirths

pear to have gone missing — say, either they have stopped attending school, or if a girl child has simply gone missing. In addition, they visit each household and inquire about children. If they find someone missing or engaged in child labour, they directly report to the Panchayat Office or the Dhagasia Social Welfare Society (DSWS), a partner NGO of Save The Children.

The children have given proper training on how to deal with such issues. They have been told about child rights and how to protect them. They have been trained in such a way that they do not bat an eyelid before calling the Superintendent of Police or the Officer-in-charge of a police station.

According to government sources, the initiative to form children's groups in

## EXPLAINED E.

### How children showed the way

CHILD TRAFFICKING, especially among girls, is one of the most intractable problems in areas afflicted with severe poverty. Often, it all starts with child marriages. But, in Sarberia Agarhati, children aged between 14 and 18 years have been able to eliminate this malaise. Trained by the government, they keep a constant watch over all the children in the area and raise the alarm when something is amiss.

Sandeshkhali and Canning areas began in 2014 with the help of NGOs. After its success, the initiative to form similar groups was replicated in different districts of the state and even in slum areas of Kolkata.

Children rescued from various parts of India and school dropouts were given special training by NGOs and integrated with local schools and children groups. The children have their own network and work closely with local police and Panchayat. Children are also part of the village level child protection groups, which have local teachers, Panchayat members and police officials as members. Representatives of children participate in monthly meetings of Child Protection Committees (CPC), apart from holding frequent meetings among themselves.

"We have issued guidelines to form CPCs in 2014. It is an ongoing process and we routinely evaluate the works of CPCs. The award comes as a recognition of our effort," says Shashi Panja, state Women and Child Development and Social Welfare minister. "Save the Children has been piloting various interventions with DSWS. We acknowledge the support of the Directorate of Child Rights and Trafficking, Government of West Bengal in this process," says Chittapriyo Sadhu, Deputy Director, Save the Children.

# 'e-NAM is better than APMC, but it needs a framework that all states find compatible'

THE UNION Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman recently urged states to move away from the Agricultural Produce Market Committee (APMC) framework and push for greater adoption of the electronic National Agriculture Market (or e-NAM). SUDHA NARAYANAN of the Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research tell UDIT MISRA the issues plaguing APMC Act.



## THE POLICY INTERVIEW

SUDHA NARAYANAN  
Associate Professor, Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research.

### What ails with the APMC framework? Why have the reforms not worked?

To understand why the APMC framework is viewed as problematic, we need to understand that both "agriculture" and "markets" are state subjects as per the Constitution. Each state has therefore historically had its own APMC Act, with provisions that can vary quite a bit. This lack of uniformity, or rather compatibility, has led to the fragmentation of agricultural markets, where each state functions as a separate market.

The original purpose of these Acts was to prevent the exploitation of farmers by traders, by bringing all trade into regulated markets. We know now, that creating fragmented markets also enabled restrictive practices and collusion among traders. It also led, inadvertently, to excessive dependence of farmers on middlemen, who are financiers, information brokers, providers of storage facilities, all rolled into one.

The architecture of state-specific APMC laws also introduces a lot of friction in interstate trade. As commodities move across market areas, they typically attract multiple fees. These transaction costs lead to large price dispersions between the producer and consumer.

Reforms of APMC across many states have allowed for more space for private players — allowing private market yards etc. I would not say that reforms have not worked — rather, different states have reformed their APMC Acts (or not) in different ways — in ways that serve local interests. In 2006, Bihar, for example, chose to repeal it. Different states also choose to enforce some aspects of the Acts more than others. In short, states don't necessarily consider the consequences of state-level reform beyond their narrow, local interests.

### How does e-NAM correct for the weaknesses of APMC Act?

The e-NAM is an online trading platform, constructed with the goal of creating a seamless national market where buyers and sellers can transact without being in the same location. When this happens, more buyers

can bid for a specific lot. Given that they are dispersed and bid anonymously online, it reduces the opportunities traders have for colluding. This is the main advantage of e-NAM.

For this to materialise, e-NAM needs a legal framework across states that is mutually compatible. Therein lies the challenge. So, rather than the e-NAM correcting for the weakness of the APMC Act, the e-NAM requires the weaknesses of the APMC Act to be corrected first, as a precondition, for its thriving.

The Model APLM Act of 2017 sought to provide a reference point for states so that they can align state-level laws to enable e-NAM. But as I mentioned before, it is politically difficult for state governments to do so. So the e-NAM is only a shade of what it can be.

### Are there any downsides with eNAM?

The eNAM is reportedly functional in several states — it is not clear though how it is doing and whether it has the potential to reach a threshold where it can begin to make a difference. Apart from the issue with legal frameworks, there are several practical issues. For a trader to bid from another location, there needs to be a reliable way to assess the quality of the produce. Also, traders often prefer and trust visual inspection by their own agents. Settlement of trade with immediate online payments is also an intrinsic part of e-NAM — here too traders are reluctant to pay until they receive the goods.

Full interview on indianexpress.com

## FROM STATES REFORMS TRACKER

### ASSAM

### New policy to boost tea exports

THE STATE government has announced a new export and logistics policy aimed at boosting exports from Assam. The policy will be in force for the next five years. Assam's main export has been tea and the new policy will leverage the state's locational advantage — it being the bridge between the vibrant economies of South East Asia and the rest of India. Apart from tea, the policy will also focus on other items such as petroleum products, textiles, agro and horticulture produce, as well as cosmetics and pharmaceutical products.

### HIMACHAL PRADESH

### Attracting IT and ITes investments

THE STATE government has unveiled a new policy aimed at exploiting the massive potential of the Information Technology and Information Technology Enabled Services sectors. The new policy will provide firms in this sector land lease for setting up shop. It will also provide rental subsidies — 75% for the first year, 50% for the second year, and 25% from there on till the fifth year from the date of commencement of commercial operations. The state government will also provide a capital subsidy on fixed investments. The move is expected to help start-ups in the small and medium enterprises sector.

### CHHATTISGARH

### Growth without hurting environment

THE STATE government has rolled out a new plan that aims to achieve fast industrial growth but without compromising on the state's green cover. So while the state would promote industries that produce bio-ethanol and electric vehicles, it would also mandate that all industrial plants have efficient waste management systems in place.

# Underprivileged women in Ahmedabad are questioning job stereotypes, and succeeding

PARIMAL DABHI  
GANDHINAGAR, NOVEMBER 17

IN A unique initiative aimed at empowerment, underprivileged women from the Sakhi Mandals of Ahmedabad have been operating the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation's (AMC) Pay & Park facility at several locations in the city. Women are in charge of seven such facilities as of now and every facility earns the concerned Mandal roughly Rs 10,000 per month.

Sakhi Mandals are Self Help Groups (SHGs) consisting of women from underprivileged sections of the society in different wards of the AMC.

Collecting parking fees might be an unusual territory for these women but it is being done under an initiative of AMC's Urban Community Development (UCD) department and it is part of the National Urban Livelihood Mission (NUHM) — a scheme of



Prabhabeen Makwana collecting parking fees. Javed Raja

the Union government.

The initiative, floated around three years ago, is now proving to be a catalyst for economic empowerment of these women of Sakhi Mandals. Director of UCD department Yogesh Maitrak says the concept is based on a model presented by Bangladesh-based economist and social entrepreneur

Muhammad Yunus.

In the last three years, Sakhi Mandals have collected nearly Rs 1 crore in parking fees. Dinesh Dabhi, who works for the UCD department says the nature of women as painstaking workers who generally do not indulge in addition (like smoking, chewing tobacco etc.) make them more suitable for the job than men. "Men would loiter around on one pretext or the other...which means they are less vigilant in collecting parking fees".

Prabhabeen Makwana is one of the women who is managing the Pay & Park facility. "One of the major challenges is an altercation with someone who is not ready to pay the parking fee," says Makwana. But she has a solution. "When rowdies misbehave we have been instructed to either lock their vehicles or to get it towed away by cranes. Also, we have to be alert throughout the working hours (8 am to 2 pm and 2 pm to 8 pm) to ensure that maximum collection takes place," she says.

## TELANGANA/INCENTIVISING PLASTIC WASTE COLLECTION

# In Mulugu — collect 1 kg plastic waste, get 1 kg rice in return

SREENIVAS JANYALA  
HYDERABAD, NOVEMBER 17

C NARAYANA Reddy, the District Collector of Mulugu in Telangana who has initiated a campaign to make the district free of single-use plastic, says it all started as a challenge to some village school kids who wanted a cricket kit.

"I told the kids at the Jakaram village school to collect as many empty plastic bottles lying in and around the village. In one hour they collected 996 bottles. I realised what a huge problem it was and we started this drive," he says.

Since that school challenge in early October, the district has collected nearly 50,000 kg of plastic and seized over 600 kg of single-use plastic (SUP) through a network of collection points in 174 Gram Panchayats. The plastic is then sent for recycling.

Reddy believes that if citizens are incentivised, they would participate enthusiastically. "Since rice is a staple food, we came up with the idea of giving 1 kg of rice to anyone who collects and deposits 1 kg of plastic at the Gram



Mulugu D C Narayana Reddy inspecting plastic waste brought by people. Express

Panchayat collection centres. The idea has clicked. The rice is of premium quality which we purchased at Rs 30 per kg," he says. The rice

that is being given in place of plastic has been procured using money donated by local traders and NRIs; 57 people have donated over

200 quintals of rice in 10 days. "Some people donated bags of fine rice while others donated cash. Some people donated cloth bundles to stitch bags," said another district official.

There were penalties as well. The district collected almost Rs 1 Lakh in just one month by penalising people using SUP.

R Sudarshan, a teacher at the Zilla Panchayat school in Kothur, says his students have got in the habit of picking up discarded plastic bottles on their way to the school and depositing it there.

Reddy says that instead of banning SUP suddenly and then trying to enforce it, it is better to do it gradually. "Involving people is very important and I am thankful for the immense support I am receiving from the people. In some villages, people who were doing odd jobs have started dedicating their entire day to collecting plastic. In return they get good quality rice, which encourages them," he said.

Reddy wants to make Mulugu the first district in the country to eliminate the use of SUPs.

On November 16, the district administration conducted an exhibition on innovative ideas to stop the use of plastic. Hundreds en-

rolled for the exhibition with themes such as exploring alternatives to plastic bags etc. Winners were given cash prizes.

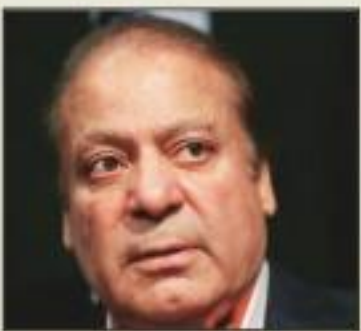
Last weekend the district also introduced its first ATM that dispenses coupons in place of plastic water bottles. The administration has tied up with some hotels and restaurants and these coupons can buy a cup of tea or a snack.

The idea of curbing plastic use has caught on so much that a couple has sent out their marriage invitations printed on cloth bags, which people can use in place of plastic bags when buying groceries. Reddy has also appointed a tailor in every village who gets a monthly honorarium for stitching cloth bags if people bring clothes.

Mulugu is also preparing to make the biggest tribal festival in the country, which takes place in Medaram village in February, free of plastics. More than 5 lakh people attend it. "Even if people bring plastic, we are making arrangements so that the plastic is collected and taken away. We are training 1,000 volunteers who will take away any plastic bags that the pilgrims and devotees are carrying and give them cloth bags," Reddy said.



TOPOF THE WORLD



PAKISTAN  
Ailing Sharif to travel to London on Tuesday for treatment

*Lahore:* Pakistan's ailing former prime minister Nawaz Sharif will leave for London on Tuesday by an air ambulance for treatment after the Lahore High Court allowed him to travel abroad for four weeks for medical care on his plea and rejected the Imran Khan government's condition of furnishing an indemnity bond. A two-member bench of the Lahore High Court headed by Justice Baqar Najfi on Saturday announced the verdict on Sharif's plea challenging the Imran Khan government's condition of furnishing an indemnity bond for the removal of his name from the no-fly list so that he could travel to the UK for his medical treatment.

BRITAIN  
Govt, military covered up war crimes: report

*London:* The UK government and military covered up credible evidence of war crimes by British soldiers against civilians in Afghanistan and Iraq, according to an investigation by the BBC and the *Sunday Times*. Leaks from two government-ordered inquiries into the conduct of troops in the conflicts implicated troops in the killing of children and torture of civilians, the investigation found. The allegations include murders by a soldier from the elite SAS unit, as well as deaths in custody, beatings, torture and sexual abuse of detainees by members of the Black Watch infantry unit.

PHILIPPINES  
Life taking toll on my health, says Duterte

*Manila:* Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has admitted that life is taking its "toll on my health", as speculation swirls over the 74-year-old's prolonged absences from the public eye. Duterte cut short a trip to Japan last month because he was suffering from "unbearable pain" in his spine after a recent motorcycle accident, and has not spoken publicly for two weeks. The accident came 10 days after he revealed he has *myasthenia gravis*, an autoimmune disease that causes muscle weakness.



A protester throws a Molotov cocktail during a clash with police at Hong Kong Polytechnic University on Sunday. AP

## HK cops try to flush out campus protesters

Police fire barrage of teargas, water cannons, officer hit by arrow in day of clashes

KEN MORITSUGU  
HONG KONG, NOVEMBER 17

POLICE LAUNCHED a late-night operation Sunday to try to flush about 200 protesters out of a university campus on a day of clashes in which an officer was hit in the leg with an arrow and massive barrages of teargas and water cannons were fired.

Riot police began moving in on one group of protesters outside the campus after issuing an

ultimatum for people to leave area. They used teargas and water cannons on a resistant crowd wearing raincoats and carrying umbrellas.

Protesters used bows and arrows earlier in the day, and one arrow struck a media liaison officer in the calf. Photos on the department's Facebook page show the arrow sticking out of the back of the officer's leg through his pants.

As riot police moved in from all sides, some protesters retreated inside Hong Kong Polytechnic

University while others set fires on bridges leading to it.

A huge blaze burned along much of a long footbridge that connects a train station to the campus over the approach to the Cross-Harbour Tunnel, a major road under Hong Kong's harbor that has been blocked by the protesters for days.

The use of bows and arrows, along with a gasoline bombs launched with catapults, threatened to escalate the violence in the more than five-month-long

anti-government movement. Protesters are trying to keep the pressure on Hong Kong leaders, who have rejected most of their demands.

The protests were sparked by proposed legislation that would have allowed the extradition of criminal suspects to the mainland. Activists saw it as an erosion of Hong Kong's autonomy under the "one country, two systems" formula implemented in 1997, when Britain returned the territory to China. AP

## Map row: Nepal's PM claims Kalapani area, tells India to 'withdraw'

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, NOVEMBER 17

WITH PROTESTS mounting, Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli said on Sunday that the Kalapani area at the tri-junction of Nepal, India and Tibet belonged to Nepal, and "India should immediately withdraw its army from there".

It was Oli's first public response to a controversy triggered by official India maps released recently that included Kalapani, an area located on the western edge of Nepal. While there was no official response from Delhi, sources reiterated that the maps depicted India's "sovereign territory accurately" and there had been no revision in the boundary with Nepal.

Addressing a meeting organised by the Nepal Yuva Sangam, the youth wing of the ruling Nepal Communist Party, Oli said, "We will not allow even an inch of our territory to be occupied by any country. India must vacate it." However, he overruled suggestions that Nepal come out with an amended map including the contested areas. Dialogue will follow after India "withdraws its army from our land", Oli said.

Nepal has seen protests by both ruling and opposition parties over the India maps. Participants at an all-party meet-



Protests against the maps in Kathmandu, Sunday. Reuters

ing called by Oli three days ago, including former prime ministers and ex-foreign ministers, asked him to take up the issue with India immediately.

The new maps were released by India to factor in the newly-created Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir (J-K) and Ladakh. These maps include Pakistan Occupied Kashmir as part of J&K, and Gilgit-Baltistan, also controlled by Pakistan, in Ladakh.

In a statement on November 6, the Nepal Foreign Ministry said, "The government is clear that the Kalapani area lies within Nepalese territory."

In a reaction a day later, the

Indian Ministry of External Affairs said, "Our map accurately depicts the sovereign territory of India. The new map has in no manner revised our boundary with Nepal... The boundary delineation exercise with Nepal is ongoing under the existing mechanism. We reiterate our commitment to find a solution through dialogue in the spirit of our close and friendly bilateral relations."

The statement added that India and Nepal should guard against "vested interests trying to create differences between the two".

WITH INPUTS FROM MNS, DELHI

## In blow to Trump, only Dem governor in US's deep south wins re-election

Louisiana is 2nd poll setback in a month for President after campaigning heavily

RICK ROJAS &  
JEREMY ALFORD  
BATON ROUGE, NOVEMBER 17

GOVERNOR JOHN Bel Edwards of Louisiana, the only Democratic governor in the Deep South, narrowly won re-election Saturday, overcoming the intervention of President Donald Trump, who visited the state multiple times in an effort to help Edwards' Republican challenger and demonstrate his own clout.

It was the second blow at the ballot box for Trump this month in a Republican-leaning state, following the Democratic victory in the Kentucky governor's race, where the President also campaigned for the GOP candidate.

In Louisiana, Trump had waged significant political capital to try to lift Eddie Rispone, a businessman who ran against Edwards in large part by embracing the President and his agenda. Trump campaigned for



Louisiana Governor John Bel Edwards with supporters at his election night watch party. AP

Risponed twice in the final two weeks of the race, warning Louisiana voters that a loss would reflect poorly on his presidency — the same appeal he made in Kentucky earlier this month to try to help Gov. Matt Bevin, who ultimately lost.

Of the three governor's races this year, all in deep red states, Republicans won only one, in Mississippi. Republicans also lost

control of both chambers of the state legislature in Virginia, where many Democratic candidates were sharply critical of Trump.

In a rally in Louisiana last week in support of Rispone, Trump acknowledged the stakes, saying, "You've got to give me a big win, OK?" He also told the crowd that everyone wrongly blamed him for the Republican loss in Kentucky. NYT

### EXPLAINED Why state setbacks matter

TRUMP TRAVELLED to Louisiana thrice to campaign for the Republican candidate, telling the crowd at a rally to "give me a big win, OK?" This comes at a time when the President is facing impeachment proceedings that could end his time in office if the GOP-controlled Senate doesn't take his side. He has repeatedly said any Republican who does not show 'loyalty' will be defeated in their next electoral race by his energised support base. But mounting GOP losses could be seen in some quarters of the party as Trump losing his political clout, and this could have implications for his potential impeachment.

## Woman in Boris favouritism row says he left her humiliated

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, NOVEMBER 17

A US businesswoman at the centre of controversy over whether Boris Johnson showed her inappropriate favouritism amid an alleged affair said Sunday she had been left "heartbroken" and "humiliated" by the British Prime Minister.

Jennifer Arcuri, who is accused of getting privileged access to foreign trade jaunts and grants



UK PM Boris Johnson

when Johnson was previously London mayor, told Britain's ITV

he was treating her like "some fleeting one-night stand".

The technology entrepreneur said the British premier, now campaigning for re-election, had rebuffed her requests "for advice" after the scandal erupted in September.

"I'm terribly heartbroken by the way that you have cast me aside like I am some gremlin," Arcuri, addressing Johnson directly, told ITV's *Exposure* programme, according to excerpts re-

leased ahead of its Sunday broadcast. "I don't understand why you've blocked me and ignored me as if I was some fleeting one-night stand or some girl that you picked up at a bar because I wasn't — and you know that," she said. "I felt so disgusted and humiliated that I was told bigger things are at stake, never mind you."

Johnson, who was London mayor from 2008 to 2016, is battling for a five-year term in Downing Street in next

month's general election.

The show alleges the pair had an affair for over four years, though Arcuri refused to confirm this.

Johnson has previously said he did not have the kind of relationship with Arcuri that required him to notify watchdogs of a potential conflict of interest, as required. Arcuri was reportedly given £126,000 in public money and privileged access to three foreign trade missions led by then-mayor Johnson.

discussed for weeks in the national and international news media. But the case thrust her reluctantly into the headlines and onto a list of the top 10 cases of injustice against journalists, and she is determined to use her newfound celebrity to push for a political system with independent institutions and a free press.

"I was not just the victim of unjust laws but the victim of unjust authorities," she said in an interview conducted in her apartment in Rabat. "My case wasn't really about a nonexistent abortion, but it was the result of the arbitrary politics of the state."

As terrible as this experience may have been, it seems fair to say that Raissouni seemed almost bound to fall afoul of Moroccan authorities at some point.

She was born into a prominent family of landowners, warriors, intellectuals and political dissidents in northern Morocco and was urged from an early age to hold those in power accountable in a country where injustice largely prevails. She is also a niece of two prominent voices of dissent in Morocco: Soulaïmane Raissouni, editor of *Akhbar Al Yaoum*, one of the few independent news outlets in Morocco,

where she had been working; and Ahmed Raissouni, an Islamist and vocal critic of the state.

The urge to write and express herself came to Raissouni at an early age. When she was just 9, she wrote an article titled "Peace," and when she was 12, another one titled "Freedom." She excelled in school and eventually moved to the capital for college.

Raissouni said she is not sure she is ready to resume her career, preferring to take time to recuperate from the ordeal. But she said she is still determined to denounce human rights abuses — perhaps even more so. NYT

### DAYS BEFORE WEDDING, SHE WAS HELD FOR AN ABORTION SHE SAYS SHE DIDN'T HAVE. NOW HAJAR RAISSOUNI IS PUSHING FOR MORE FREEDOMS

## Moroccan journalist a 'victim not only of unjust laws, but of unjust authorities'

AIDA ALAMI  
RABAT, NOVEMBER 17

WHEN HAJAR Raissouni, an investigative journalist with one of Morocco's only independent news outlets, went to her doctor's office last August seeking treatment for a vaginal hemorrhage, she was not planning on becoming the centre of a national discussion on press freedom, abortion rights and what critics said is the nation's antiquated penal code.

But Aug 31, minutes after she received the treatment, Raissouni

and her fiancé, Rifaat al-Amin, were arrested — just two weeks before their wedding date. At first, she thought they were being robbed. But she quickly realised that the six men in plainclothes holding video cameras were police officers and that she was being arrested because of her critical reporting on Moroccan authorities.

The couple would eventually be charged with sex outside of marriage and having an abortion, both crimes in the North African kingdom, though abortion laws are rarely enforced. Raissouni, who strongly denies having had an abortion, said she was forced

by Moroccan authorities to undergo a pelvic examination that aggravated the hemorrhage, provoking renewed bleeding.

Her physician, Dr Jamal Belkeziz; a second doctor; and an office assistant also were arrested, charged with violating abortion laws. Their trial in September caused a sensation in Morocco, drawing crowds of supporters and protesters and unleashing a torrent of criticism from press freedom and abortion rights advocates, among others. The court's decision to convict all five and sentence Raissouni and al-Amin, who is now her husband, to a year in



Sentenced to one year in prison, Hajar Raissouni was later pardoned. Reuters

prison provoked another uproar that was quieted only after the issuance of a royal pardon for all of

the defendants Oct 16.

"We're relieved that Hajar and her co-defendants are free, but they should have never been arrested in the first place," said Ahmed Benchemsi, Middle East and North Africa communications director at Human Rights Watch, after the pardon. "A silver lining for this deplorable incident is that a debate was opened about archaic laws in Morocco, and now there's a growing demand to impel criminalisation of nonmarital sex from legal bodies."

Naturally reserved, Raissouni is still dealing with the consequences of having her private life



# 14ECONOMY

## HOUSEHOLD SECTOR'S SHARE IN TOTAL DEPOSITS REMAINS DOMINANT

# Bank deposits: Govt share falls by nearly ₹4 lakh cr, but corporates post sharp rise

**GEORGE MATHEW**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 17

THE GOVERNMENT'S share in total deposits with commercial banks declined sharply from Rs 15.79 lakh crore as of March 2019 to Rs 11.86 lakh crore in March 2018, according to the latest data released by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). However, significantly, the share of corporates (non-financial) rose sharply by around Rs 6.5 lakh crore, even as the government deposits declined by Rs 3.93 lakh crore.

While the government sector accounted for as much as 13.5 per cent of the total deposits in March 2018, the share declined to 9.2 per cent in March 2019.

On the other hand, the share of non-financial companies jumped from Rs 11.82 lakh crore (10.1 per cent share in the total deposits) in March 2018 to Rs 18.36 lakh crore (14.24 per cent of the total deposits) in 2019, indicating a shift of over Rs 650,000 crore to non-financial companies in a year, as per the RBI data.

## BRIEFLY

### Gates notes India's potential for growth

*New Delhi:* India has the potential for "very rapid" economic growth over the next decade which will lift people out of poverty and allow the government to invest in health and education priorities in an "exciting way", billionaire philanthropist and Microsoft co-founder Bill Gates has said. In an exclusive interview to *PTI*, Gates, the world's richest person, specifically complimented India's Aadhaar identity system and the country's performance in the financial services and pharma sectors.

### GoAir's network planning head resigns

*New Delhi:* GoAir Sunday said its network planning head Samir Patel has resigned as he wants to go back to his family in the US. Patel is a US citizen and has completed a year at GoAir. "His family could not join him in India and hence Samir has decided to go back to his family," a GoAir spokesperson said.

### 'Golden age' for Indian aviation: IndiGo CEO

*New Delhi:* With strong fundamentals, India's civil aviation sector is in its "golden age" and there is also healthy competition among domestic carriers, IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta has said. "We are in the golden age of Indian aviation and there are huge opportunities going forward... There are always problems, there are always issues and economic cycles. (But) The fundamentals are strong," he said. When asked if there is healthy competition among local carriers, Dutta said there is. **PTI**

### Ghoshn seeks to throw out case against him

*Tokyo:* After 130 days languishing in a detention centre, former Nissan boss Carlos Ghosn is now out on bail and seeking to have his case declared null and void, even as his own defence call his chances unlikely. The 65-year-old Brazil-born executive faces charges of deferring part of his salary until after his retirement and concealing this from shareholders, as well as syphoning off millions in Nissan cash for his own purposes. **AFP**

### MOST DEPOSITS IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

■ **Metropolitan areas held 51.8 per cent of bank deposits. Since March 2010, however, the shares of other population groups have gradually risen, with 10.5 per cent share for rural areas, 16.2 per cent for semi-urban areas and 21.5 per cent for urban areas by March 2019, according to data from the RBI**

■ **Among states, Maharashtra held the highest share of deposits**

Among institutional categories, the household sector's share in total deposits remained dominant at 63.2 per cent, followed by non-financial corporations, general government, rest of the world and financial corporations. Individuals — including Hindu Undivided Families (HUFs) — who are the major constituent of the household sector, ac-

(21.0 per cent), followed by National Capital Territory of Delhi (9.5 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (8.2 per cent)

■ **With the RBI lowering interest rates, the structure of term deposits has gradually shifted to lower interest rate buckets in recent years, with the share of term deposits with interest rates above 8 per cent declining from 82.8 per cent in March 2015 to 10.9 per cent in March 2019**

counted for 55.0 per cent of aggregate deposits, the RBI said.

The household sector's deposits rose from Rs 74.11 lakh crore in 2018 to Rs 81.51 lakh crore. However, as percentage of total deposits, it remained flat at 63.21 per cent in 2019 as against 63.3 per cent last year.

The share of corporates in deposits is expected to rise further in

the wake of the corporate tax cut and lack of new investments amid the ongoing slowdown in the economy, analysts said.

According to the RBI, the share of current, savings and term deposits stood at 9.6 per cent, 31.9 per cent and 58.5 per cent, respectively, in March 2019.

Metropolitan areas held 51.8 per cent of bank deposits. Since March 2010, however, the shares of other population groups have gradually risen, with 10.5 per cent share for rural areas, 16.2 per cent for semi-urban areas and 21.5 per cent for urban areas by March 2019, the RBI said.

With the RBI lowering interest rates, the structure of term deposits has gradually shifted to lower interest rate buckets in recent years, with the share of term deposits with interest rates above 8 per cent declining from 82.8 per cent in March 2015 to 10.9 per cent in March 2019. The central bank has cut the repo rate by 125 basis points between March 2015 and March 2019.

"The share would have gone down further as the RBI has cut

repo rate by another 110 points to 5.15 per cent between March 2019 and October 2019. Banks have also shifted to repo-linked deposit rates since October this year," said an official of a nationalised bank. Banks also slashed deposit rates faster than the lending rates.

The RBI has nearly three-fourths of term deposits which were due for maturity within one year on residual maturity basis. On original maturity basis, however, 58.3 per cent of term deposits were in the one to three years maturity bucket at the end of March 2019. About half of the deposits of financial and non-financial corporations were held with private sector banks.

Among states, Maharashtra held the highest share of deposits (21.0 per cent), followed by National Capital Territory (NCT) of Delhi (9.5 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (8.2 per cent). However, bankers said this is because of the large number of corporate houses based in Mumbai. The commercial capital also accounts for the largest number of bank branches and headquarters of banks.

## 'Oct green certificate sales down 2.25% to 6.87 lakh'

Sales of renewable energy certificates (RECs) dipped 2.25 per cent to 6.87 lakh units in October as compared to 7.03 lakh in the same month a year ago due to lower supply, according to official data



## 4.48 lakh

Sale of RECs recorded by Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) in October, as against 4.25 lakh in the year-ago month

## 2.38 lakh

Sale of RECs recorded by Power Exchange of India (PXIL) last month as compared to 2.77 lakh in October 2018

**LOW SUPPLY OF NON-SOLAR, SOLAR RECS:** IEX data showed that both non-solar and solar RECs continued to see low supply situation, with buy bids exceeding sell bids due to low inventory

**AT IEX:** Buy bids for 13.88

lakh RECs, sell bids for 5.75 lakh RECs

**AT PXIL:** Buy bids for 5.37 lakh RECs, sell bids for 2.6 lakh RECs

**IEX AND PXIL** are the two power bourses in the country which are engaged in trading of RECs and electricity. The trading of RECs is conducted on the last Wednesday of every month

**WHAT IS AN REC?:** The REC mechanism is a market-based instrument to promote renewable sources of energy and development of market in electricity. It provides an alternative voluntary route to a generator to sell its electricity from renewable sources just like conventional electricity

## Lack of investor interest a challenge for Odisha's plastic park project

**SAMPAD PATNAIK**  
BHUBANESWAR, NOVEMBER 17

THE ODISHA government claims it will have the first fully operational plastic park in the country, but concedes that it is struggling to find investors to set up units inside the facility.

According to people familiar with the details of the project, the problem is "lack of entrepreneur awareness" that is threatening to derail the state government's assumption that non-financial incentives to boost manufacturing are probably more advantageous for potential investors than financial incentives like tax exemptions.

Odisha has held road shows in Kolkata, Mumbai, Raipur and Bhubaneswar.

However, the park has so far

only allotted plots to nine units against a potential of 80 units that can manufacture woven sacks, plastic pipes, and injection moulded components, films, pouches and consumer plastic products, among others. The eight units account for only 30 per cent of leaseable land.

The thrust in this park model, say state government officials, was to develop common facilities that are otherwise not available in multi-product parks.

"Operating inside such an ecosystem would take them 10 years ahead of a unit operating outside — time and resources do not need to be spent to set up water, power, road infrastructure, along with required clearances", said Sanjay Singh, Chief Managing Director, Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (IIDCO) and Skill

## EXPLAINED Big potential for plastics manufacturing

A NOTE accessed from Odisha government states that India's domestic production meets only 50 per cent of its demand for plastic, which is increasing with the construction and infrastructure industry. "Today, India consumes plastic to the tune of 12 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) of which about 6 million tonnes is produced domestically and about four MTPA are imported", the document states.

To reduce imports, the Department of Chemicals and Petrochemicals (DCPC), Ministry of Chemicals & Fertilizers (MoCF), had formulated a scheme for setting up of four Plastic Parks in Assam (Tinsukia), Madhya Pradesh (Raisen), Odisha (Jagatsinghpur) and Tamil Nadu (Thiruvallur).

Development Authority. "We have developed an ad-

ministrative block, testing lab, skill development centre, place

### MARKET WATCH

## FPI INFUSE OVER ₹19K CR IN NOV

*New Delhi:* Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pumped in a net sum of Rs 19,202.7 crore into the domestic capital markets in the first half of November, with Rs 14,435.6 crore infused into equities and Rs 4,767.18 crore into the debt segment during November 1-15. **PTI**

### INTERVIEW WITH CEO, BAJAJ ALLIANZ LIFE INSURANCE

# 'For debt investments, we will do holistic management check like we do for equities'

EVEN AS the life insurance industry has witnessed growth in premium collection, the broader economic growth may impact the growth. TARUN CHUGH, CEO, Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance told SANDEEP SINGH that life insurance sector can't remain in its own microcosm for too long because ultimately consumers will stop spending. He, however, said that things should improve over the next six-eight months. He also said that with companies failing despite AAA rating, his company is now going for a holistic management check of companies before debt investment. Excerpts:

**Despite economic slowdown, the premium collection for the industry has increased in the September quarter. How do you explain this?**

While people are saving for the long term, the real reason I think is the low rates on fixed deposits (FD). When FD rates come down and yield curve has settled somewhat, portfolio returns can go up with the help of some bond investments. So, in the saving part of life insurance, we are taking benefit of the yield curve and we are able to diversify with more AAA corporates where we are able to get better yields; so, as a result, we are able to give better net of tax return for a long term to the customers. While the last quarter was good, even the current quarter is also looking strong as of now.

While traditional insurance products have been giving between 5-6.5 per cent, now 6.5 is not possible but it is comfortably possible to give 5-6 per cent return, net of tax. So, tax arbitrage with FDs is playing out well for us.

When you lock-in with a bank for three-five years at 7 per cent, the post-tax return is 5.5 per cent. But if I can give you a 10-year product which gives you similar return, then suddenly we get competitive and you can play the yield curve.

**You mentioned about AAA rated companies, but there are so many corporate and financial entities that once were AAA rated but now are in a bad shape and people have**



Tarun Chugh

**lost a lot of money. What is the sanctity of AAA rating then?**

What we were doing is that we were relying on the AAA rating by credit rating agencies, but now we are very clear that we will do it the way we do for equities, where we do a management check which is a holistic check. Also, now we are only going for big companies.

**How do you see the economic slowdown and revival?**

While our industry has witnessed growth, I can't say that life insurance can remain in its own microcosm for too long because ultimately consumers will stop spending. It is a concern, but I have a feeling that next year the base impact will kick-in.

I think that it is a six-eight month phenomenon but this year will be tough. The consumption may have been down but Diwali was not as bad as people expected. I also feel that the government will step in to provide income tax benefits.

There has been a shift in how consumers and markets are reacting to global, behavioural and GST changes. We normally say that if transportation does well, it is the first indicator of economic revival. But suddenly, you see that the truck that used to take six days to reach down south, now reaches in four days and the wear and tear has reduced.

So, that is the recalibration that is happening. That will impact the demand. These factors are also playing a role.

**Government may hike FDI in insurance sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent. Are you in**

**favour of this and will you reduce your stake?**

It's government's outlook. But as far as we are concerned, it is company-by-company issue and in our case Allianz wants to buy more, but Bajaj may not want to sell more and we don't need the money either. We are one of the highest capitalised life insurer, so, whichever way it goes, Bajaj Allianz is not impacted. Some companies where the Indian promoter is not able to fund any more, ... they will gain out of it.

**What is your view on life insurance companies getting into health insurance business?**

Historically, in India, life and health have been separate, whereas globally, life, health and pension go as one package. I am looking forward to it and it needs to be looked from the customers' perspective. Every company brings its own competence. I think from a customer perspective, possibly it is lot more under penetrated and so should new players be there? Of course there should be.

**How do you see the Vodafone issue playing out?**

Any sector which is touching the life of individuals on a daily basis — and telecom is one of those — a major player going down in that will of course impact sentiments. We will have to see how it plays out. A lot of finance entities have exposure to it as total liabilities stand at over Rs 1 lakh crore.

**Do you see the government playing a role and helping the sector which is under stress?**

It is a tricky situation and we can't get socialist about it. Businesses will have to find their own viability. I, however, feel that the government may have to come in from a consumer perspective and see whether the consumer will gain or lose from all this.

The way I see it, over the last four-five years, whether it is credit side or other businesses, it is a kind of clean-up happening. Of course the jury is out on whether it should have happened in such a big bang manner or should have happened gradually.

## Bank of India, IOB report NPA divergences

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

BANK OF India and Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) have reported divergences in their bad loans for the fiscal ended March 2019, resulting into widening of net losses for the year.

IOB has reported a net non-performing asset (NPA) divergence of Rs 358 crore for 2018-19, as per a filing by the bank.

Bank of India, on the other hand, had a fall in its net NPA divergence by Rs 329 crore for 2018-19, because the NPAs reported by the bank were higher than that assessed by the RBI.

## YET TO NAME ANY CORNERSTONE INVESTORS OR FORMALLY DISCLOSE LISTING DATE

# Aramco eyes IPO record with \$1.7 trillion top value

**HADEEL AL SAYEGH, SAEED AZHAR & RANIA EL GAMAL**  
DUBAI, NOVEMBER 17

SAUDI ARAMCO is worth up to \$1.7 trillion at the price range set by the oil giant on Sunday, below the \$2 trillion sought by Saudi's crown prince but putting it in the running to become the world's biggest IPO. Aramco cannot sell its shares directly to investors in the United States and other markets, as the initial public offering (IPO) will be restricted to Saudis and those foreign institutions permitted to invest in the kingdom's stock market.

The oil giant said it plans to sell 1.5 per cent of the company, or about 3 billion shares, at an indicative price range of 30 riyals to 32

riyals, valuing the IPO at as much as 96 billion riyals (\$25.6 billion) and giving the company a potential market value of between \$1.6 trillion and \$1.7 trillion.

This could just beat Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba's record \$25 billion New York stock market debut in 2014.

Aramco's IPO size could be bigger if there is enough demand for it to use a 15 per cent "green-shoe" over-allotment option.

"We are planning to subscribe to the IPO in two funds that we manage," said Zachary Cefaratti, chief executive officer of Dubai-based Dalma Capital Management Ltd, adding that the preliminary valuation was "in line with our expectations".

Aramco kicked off its IPO on November 3 after a series of false starts. Crown Prince Mohammed

**The oil giant said it plans to sell 1.5 per cent of the company, or about 3 billion shares, at an indicative price range of 30 riyals to 32 riyals, valuing the IPO at as much as 96 billion riyals (\$25.6 billion)**

bin Salman, who floated the idea nearly four years ago, is seeking to raise billions of dollars to invest in non-oil industries, create employment and diversify the world's top crude exporter away from oil.

In its original prospectus, published on November 9, Aramco said the domestic IPO would be made to institutional investors outside the US according to Regulation S of the United States Securities Act of 1933, and inside the United States under the Rule 144A of the US Securities Act. But on Sunday in an adden-

dum to the IPO prospectus Aramco said that it had removed any reference to such regulations, which three people familiar with the matter said suggested there would not be any international roadshows to market the shares.

"I expect this is a reflection of poor international demand," said Rory Fyfe, managing director at MENA Advisors. "It was not worth it from their view. If there's no substantial value or demand why do it and take additional legal risk?," a banker familiar with the matter told *Reuters*.

Aramco is yet to name any cornerstone investors in the deal or formally disclose the listing date.

Analysts from banks working on the Riyadh bourse had given a valuation range of \$1.2 trillion to \$2.3 trillion for Aramco's IPO and the fall from Crown Prince Mohammed's original target underscores the challenges facing the company.

The Crown Prince's reputation was tarnished by the murder of Saudi journalist Jamal Khashoggi last year, while Aramco's oil plants were targeted in September by attacks which initially halved its output. It has said the strikes will not have a material impact on its business.

Aramco is the world's most profitable company with a planned dividend of \$75 billion next year. **REUTERS**



## AIRCRAFT-CARRIERS

## Sink or swim

If carriers and the planes that fly off them do not adapt, American allies in Asia will be in trouble

America has by far the world's largest fleet of carriers—11 of the full-sized sort, plus half a dozen smaller ones. *Reuters*

“NO PIECE of hardware better exemplifies America's military might than an aircraft-carrier,” declare the memoirs of Ashton Carter, America's defence secretary in 2015-17. Nor does any other piece of hardware so plainly exemplify what is wrong with America's military thinking. Aircraft-carriers are the largest and most expensive machines in the history of warfare. A new American Ford-class ship costs \$13bn—more than the annual defence budget of Poland or Pakistan. However, as precision missiles become faster, more accurate and more numerous, these beasts look increasingly like giant floating targets.

Although America has by far the world's largest fleet of carriers—11 of the full-sized sort, plus half a dozen smaller ones—their appeal is global, and growing. China's first

domestically built carrier will be commissioned within months. Britain's second modern carrier began its sea trials in September. Even pacifist Japan is converting two destroyers to carry jets, for the first time since the second world war.

Aircraft-carriers have proved their worth in recent years. Many armed forces watched admiringly as American naval jets did the lion's share of bombing in the early months of war in Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003 (and again in 2014). Land bases were often unavailable because of awkward geography or recalcitrant allies.

But the seas off enemy shores look ever less safe. Russia and China are both developing long-range missiles that are manoeuvrable and accurate enough to hit large ships at sea. China's DF-21D, an anti-ship ballistic

missile that can travel over 1,500km (950 miles), is already a threat. Several countries are building cheaper anti-ship cruise missiles, which fly shorter distances but can be launched from planes. Anti-ship missiles are growing in range, precision and number. By one estimate, an American naval force within 2,000km of China might have to parry 640 incoming weapons in a single salvo.

Though guiding such missiles onto a distant moving target is tricky, no navy will be

keen on putting several billion dollars and thousands of sailors in peril. Carriers have become too big to fail. As a result, they will probably have to remain at least 1,000km away from shore, a distance that their warplanes cannot cross without refuelling. That could have grave implications for America's ability to project power across the Pacific—and so for all its allies. Carriers will also have to be cocooned with destroyers and frigates, which will absorb most of the resources of

smaller navies, like those of Britain and France.

Carriers are not entirely obsolete. Most wars will not be great-power clashes. They will remain useful against foes which lack modern missile systems. Even in intense conflicts, warships will require air power to protect them from the predations of enemy ships and aircraft. As long as navies have surface ships, they will want to be able to fly planes above them.

But what sort of planes? Even as missiles force carriers farther offshore, the average combat range of their air wings has shrunk, from 2,240km in 1956 to around 1,000km today. (Modern munitions travel farther, but do not make up the difference.) The obvious remedy is to use drones that can fly longer, riskier missions than human pilots, allowing

their host carriers to keep a safe distance away. But the Pentagon unwisely scrapped its programme for such a drone in 2016, replacing it with one that would merely refuel inhabited planes.

Aircraft-carriers, like the warplanes on them, belong to a class of large, vastly expensive weapons that military types call “exquisite”. A more homely approach to military technology is warranted. Smaller, cheaper and, where possible, unmanned systems could be procured in larger numbers, dispersed more widely and used more daringly. Such forces may lack the prestige of massive warships. But they are better adapted to a world in which the projection of military power is growing ever harder.

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## FOOLED YOU

## How to forge rhinoceros horn

A realistic knock-off may wreck the rhino-horn market

RHINOCEROS HORNS are big business. Traditional Chinese medicine uses them to treat rheumatism and gout, even though they have no actual pharmaceutical properties beyond placebo. And Yemeni craftsmen carve them into dagger handles. A kilogram can thus command as much as \$60,000, so there is tremendous incentive for poachers to hunt the animals. Since almost all rhinoceros populations are endangered, several critically, this is a serious problem. Some conservationists therefore suggest that a way to reduce pressure on the animals might be to flood the market with fakes. This, they hope, would reduce the value of real horns and consequently the incentive to hunt rhinos.

That would require the fakes to be good. But Fritz Vollrath, a zoologist at Oxford University, reckons his skills as a forger are up to the challenge. As he writes in Scientific

Reports, he and his colleagues from Fudan University, in Shanghai, have come up with a cheap and easy-to-make knock-off that is strikingly similar to the real thing.

The main ingredient of Dr Vollrath's forged horns is horsehair. Despite their differing appearances, horses and rhinos are reasonably closely related. Horses do not have horns, of course. But, technically, neither do

**A kilogram of rhinoceros horn can command \$60,000, so there is tremendous incentive for poachers to hunt the animals. Since almost all rhinoceros populations are endangered, this is a serious problem**

The 'horns' of rhinoceros are composed of hairs bound tightly together by a mixture of dead cells. *Reuters*

rhinos. Unlike the structures that adorn cattle and bison, which have cores made of bone, the “horns” of rhinoceros are composed of hairs bound tightly together by a mixture of dead cells.

Examination under a microscope

showed that hairs collected from horses' tails had similar dimensions and symmetry to those found in the horns of rhinos. They also shared a spongy core structure. Horse hairs had a scaly layer that was absent from those of the rhino, but the researchers were able to

strip this away with a solution of lithium bromide.

The next task they tackled was making a suitable binding matrix. This, Dr Vollrath and his coauthor Mi Ruixin made from a fibrous protein-rich glue of the sort pro-

duced naturally by spiders and silkworms. They bundled the treated horse hairs as tightly as they could in a matrix of this glue, and then left the bundles in an oven to dry.

The result was a material that, with some polishing, looked like rhino horn. Specimens on the black market are, however, inspected carefully before sale, so for the false horns to be effective they would need to stand up to closer scrutiny than the naked eye. To this end, Dr Vollrath and Dr Mi decided to test their product in detail.

DNA analysis would certainly reveal fakes, but such analysis is complicated and therefore hard to do in the sorts of back rooms in which rhino-horn sales tend to take place. The forgeries passed other tests with flying colours, though.

First, fake and real horn looked the same when examined under a scanning electron microscope. Next, they behaved similarly when tested by a technique that compared their capacity to absorb heat. Finally, when stressed or strained and then relaxed regularly for long periods, to probe their underlying mechanical properties, the results for real and false horn were indistinguishable.

Whether using clandestine means to launch impeccable fakes onto the rhinoceros-horn market would truly reduce prices and sabotage demand remains to be tested. But it might. It is an old trick in warfare to flood the enemy with forged, worthless money. Something similar may yet help save the rhino.

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# To the Great Unknown

Theatre director Neel Chaudhuri's *Rihla* gives voice to the disillusionment of the young



They argue and fight, they mock and educate each other and they reveal their dreams, fears and secrets

NEEL CHAUDHURI  
THEATRE DIRECTOR



Scenes from *Rihla*; (below) Neel Chaudhuri

**The play has been enacted by performers from Nizamuddin basti, who are with the Aagaaz Theatre Trust. Was it a conscious decision to cast youngsters in the play?**

I felt a compulsion that the play had to be done in Hindi and that it had to be made with young actors. The text does not specify that the characters are young people but there is something about the tenacity with which they speak that makes me think that they have a long future ahead of them. People in mature stages of adulthood, I feel, are much more bitter and cynical. We modified the text a bit so that the voice of the text is young and, at the same time, they have to think maturely about larger conceptual thought.

**What is the significance of the title?**

The reason the play is called *Rihla* is that it feeds off the ancient travel narratives of Ibn Battuta (Moroccan scholar and traveller) and others. That genre of travel writing was a mix of fact, fiction, hearsay and gossip.

**What is the profile of the characters who drive the story?**

We worked with the idea of arche-

types. One actor's archetype was the shepherd. He is continuously trying to keep the group together because they keep arguing and threatening to collapse. He is the person who understands that empathy with people is a very important thing even if you don't agree with one another. The Rogue is another archetype. She is mischievous and can be a bit of a nuisance. We also have the Cynic who, at any given point, is imagining the worst that can happen.

***Rihla* has been created within the space where it is being performed, Black Box Okhla, although you showed at Rang Shankara in Bengaluru recently. How does the experiencing of creating a play on site impact it?**

We prepare plays in a little basement or in living rooms. Black Box Okhla is five times the size of a living room. *Rihla* being created in Black Box Okhla means we rehearsed there for three weeks before we started performing for an audience. We spent a week rehearsing with lights as opposed to one morning or afternoon.

The whole idea was to work in the space and work with whatever was there in the space. There is a kind of cavernous character about Black Box Okhla. The set that Oron Das has built is in response to this, where it seems these people are inside some kind of a vessel. When people look at the play from outside, they see all kinds of different things, from a boat to waves. The acoustics have played a role in how the actors deliver their lines and the space gave us certain possibilities with light, which we could embrace to some degree. Deepa Dharmadhikari has designed the lighting as a play of light, shadow and darkness. I think that's a huge element of the play.

*The play will be performed at Black Box Okhla from November 22 to 24, 8 pm. On November 24, 4 pm, a discounted matinee show will be staged for students*

## ON THE LOOSE

# Wishful Thinking

Thirty day challenges while gasping for air



LEHER KALA

THERE ARE barely 40 days left to the end of the year. The resolute resolution-makers gearing up for 2020 to begin, are looking back on their achievements (or lack of) in 2019. Maybe that's why there is a fresh spurt of 30-day challenges online, a last ditch effort to make up for promised goals, unmet. Morale boosting self talk, rather WhatsApp group talk, while cringeworthy, has its positives — research suggests creating routines with digital support systems do, indeed, help people establish healthier lifestyles.

I've never much liked the idea of a challenge — or the other worthy attempt at maximising the time in one's life — a bucket list. Of course, it's good to have a plan, if only for the reason it's something to think about and occupy your mind with. The top #30daychallenge trending on Twitter right now, unsurprisingly, is something called '30 days 30 minutes' that urges a half-hour daily workout with the tag line, be stronger than your excuses. Goal setting is motivating and accomplishments feel good, sure. But this fools people into believing that 30 days of exercise will magically transform a lifetime's habit of non-exercising. It's a good attempt to kick-start something positive but the reality is that exercising regularly is a struggle even for people who've been doing it all their lives.

We tend to benchmark ourselves against all the amazing people we read about and see, and God knows there are enough of them out there. This newspaper carried an incredible story about 17-year-old Yashasvi Jaiswal, who sold paani puri while trying to make it to the Indian cricket team. However, the vast majority of us are, at best, above average performers who simply wouldn't be able to handle that kind of hardship, which is exactly the problem with these fitness

challenges; they end up making you feel bad about yourself when you can't keep up. Human beings spend a large part of their lives beating themselves up for wasted time and missed opportunities. Cooped up in this pollution induced haze that, in any case, induces feelings of deep discontentment, then to have to live up to some goal—it sounds extremely stressful. While one could always do more (work), be more (fit), right now it seems enough to just be, and dream of a brilliant blue sky.

Or, partake in the other far more entertaining challenge (if you can call it that) of posting one useless fact for 30 days. Who knew 'dreamt' is the only word in the English language to end with 'mt'? A vastly popular one, followed by many of my acquaintances, is the posting of favourite book covers for 30 days. I was recently added to a chat called '21 Days of Abundance' where the tasks involved were keeping financial accounts and listing five people who improve your life. I am highly sceptical of any exercise that promises a discovery of inner strength or resolve. But having to think about this and write it down led me to the surprising conclusion that the person who improves my life the most is my driver, without whom I would be caught in an endless loop of painful chores.

The notion that we can ever be better, is in theory, a great idea. It also feels ridiculously optimistic right now. The smoky grey sky transports one back to Pink Floyd's most depressing albums predicting an apocalyptic doom. An environmental anthem, *Sorrow* is an ominous recollection of a lost paradise and of rivers that 'flow dark and troubled to an oily sea'. However, the fatalistic band does — like people participating enthusiastically in challenges — provide a glimmer of hope in the same track: *One world, one soul, time pass and the river roll*.

hutkayfilms@gmail.com

**I've never much liked the idea of a challenge — or the other worthy attempt at maximising the time in one's life — a bucket list. Of course, it's good to have a plan, if only for the reason it's something to think about and occupy your mind with**

## SNAP SHOTS



Bose Krishnamachari, Shubigi Rao and Sunil V

## Turning Heads

ARTIST BOSE Krishnamachari, co-founder of the Kochi-Muziris Biennale (KMB), and Singapore-based visual artist Shubigi Rao

— the curator of the fifth edition of KMB — have been named in Art Review's list of 100 most influential people in the field of contemporary art in 2019. The 'Power 100' list, selected by 30 international jurors, also features members of the Raqs Media Collective — Jeebesh Bagchi, Monica Narula and Shuddhabrata Sengupta — scholar and literary theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, legendary photographer Nan Goldin and director of Museum of Modern Art, Glenn D Lowry. Speaking about his selection, Mumbai-based Krishnamachari said, "The Kochi-Muziris Biennale represents a coming together of the artists community in India. ArtReview has and continues to acknowledge the impact of the Biennale globally, since 2015. I also believe this to be a recognition of the collective work and support that has gone into the making of the Biennale."

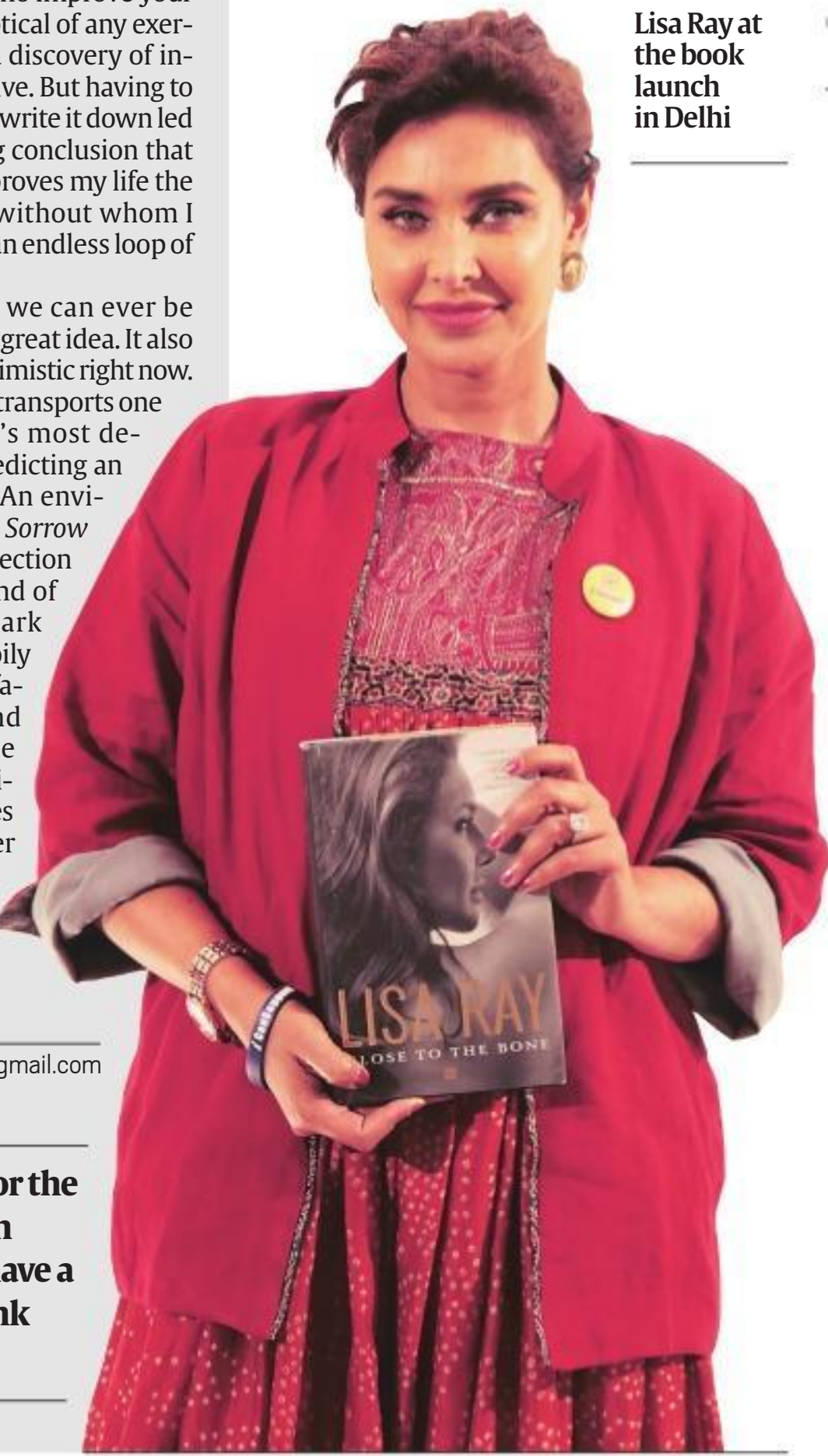


## Spanning a Lifetime

IN MARCH 2020, Tate Britain will hold an exhibition that covers the wide oeuvre of the late British illustrator Aubrey Beardsley, popular for his black and white ink drawings that were inspired by Japanese woodcuts. His illustrations for Alexander Pope's poem *The Rape of the Lock*, created in 1897, will be showcased for the first time among the 200 works.

# A Lesson on Life

Actor Lisa Ray on her debut book *Close to the Bone*, battling cancer, and being an accidental actor



Lisa Ray at the book launch in Delhi

## PALLAVI CHATTOPADHYAY

ACTOR LISA RAY vividly recalls that night in 1991, when her mother was battling for her life in a Canadian hospital — after the family met with a serious car accident — when she got a phone call from India, enquiring if she would be interested in acting in Hindi films, including one opposite Sunny Deol. Already a recognised face in the modelling industry by then, Ray took some time to decide. After attending to her mother who was paralysed and wheelchair ridden after the accident, Ray headed to Mumbai to pursue a career in Bollywood.

The actor shared the memory at the launch of her debut book *Close to the Bone* (Rs 599; HarperCollins India) at Canada House in Delhi last week. The cancer survivor who battled the illness twice, called herself an "accidental actor". "That's because I experienced overnight, all of these things that we as a society define as success — money, fame, opportunity, reputation and so on — literally in a snap. At the same time, I was experiencing the deepest depths that you can experience in terms of trauma and emotion. I was broken. So it made me question: look, on one hand, I have got everything that is supposed to make me happy, yet why am I feeling like this? In a strange way, life had set me up to start questioning those notions of what does it take to make you happy and complete. What does it take to make you feel purposeful and alive in life, because all of this stuff, which I had gotten out from being at the right place at the right time, was not working for me and was not making me happy," says she.

Born in Toronto to a Polish mother and an Indian Bengali father, 47-year-old Ray recalls being born with a rebellious streak. "I didn't have the necessary vision of par-

ticularly achieving goals in my professional life, but to simply gather experiences," says the actor who has been seen in films such as *Bollywood/Hollywood* and *Water*.

In the book, Ray she shares numerous moments from her life — from being diagnosed with the rare blood cancer multiple myeloma to fighting anorexia, and her journey in Bollywood.

At the event, the actor revealed how she decided to go public with her cancer diagnosis at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2009, when she was 40 pounds overweight due to the life-saving steroids she had to take to save her life. Around the same time, she also began sharing her experiences on the blog *The Yellow Diaries*. "I never wanted to be in front of the camera. But I have a career today because of the camera. I always felt that as a woman I was objectified and women are more scrutinised than men are in front of the camera. I always hated the red carpet. I had a breakthrough moment at the festival. I decided to bring my two worlds together — my private and secret life, and my public life, and use that as an opportunity to speak about something that was meaningful to me. That broke the spell of worrying about my appearance and what other people thought."

Months later, she posed with a bald head on the cover of an Indian magazine. She says, "I believe in myself. What I have to offer is much more than my looks. I do not identify myself as an actress. When I am sitting at home and reading, I don't think of myself that way. That is other people's perceptions. As far as I am concerned, I am Lisa. When I am not working, I don't wear make-up. I don't comb my hair. I am interested in art and in backpacking across India."

She ended the discussion by pointing at a lotus tattoo on her leg, inspired by a *shlok* that she learnt on the sets of Deepa Mehta's Oscar-nominated film *Water*, where she played a widow, Kalyani — *Padma patram ivam bhasa*. Ray says, "Live your life like the lotus flower. We have this magical ability to rise above the murky waters and inhabit this world and all of its myriad kind of experiences — good or bad, dark or light — and still blossom above all of them."

## WEEK AHEAD



## Step Wise

THE INTERNATIONAL Centre for Kathakali (ICK) is hosting the diamond jubilee celebrations of the Kathakali School at ICK Auditorium, C-20, Qutab Institutional Area. Several Kathakali performances will be staged by the students of ICK, till November 23, 6 pm onwards. Contact: 9871883604.



## In for a Treat

THE LIL Flea festival is back with over 250 homegrown pop-up shops, artisanal bakers and food brands. It will also feature indie bands, open-mics, stand-up acts, book exchanges and movies. From November 22 to 24 at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium.

## Into the Wild

AWARD-WINNING wildlife photographer and author Shivang Mehta's book *Leopards and Shepherds of Jawai* explores the co-existence of man and the predator in Bera, Rajasthan. Join them for the book launch at WWF-India, on November 21 at 7 pm.

## Looking East

EXPERIENCE LIFE in Japan at the Konnichhiwa Japan 2019 festival. The event will feature cultural performances, food stalls and a cosplay competition. On November 23, 12 am to 7 pm, at AICTE Auditorium, Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj.

## Get Crafty

DASTKAR NATURE 2019 brings together craftsmen from around the country to display an array of Gond and Kalighat paintings and textile crafts like applique work, ajrakh and tribal weaves. At Nature Bazaar, Kisan Haat, till November 24, 11 am to 7.30 pm.



BRIEFLY

Kohli, Rohit, pacers skip pink-ball practice

Indore: Skipper Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and the much-vaunted pace trio skipped training while some of the remaining team members practised under lights on the centre wicket of Holkar Stadium here on Sunday, gearing up for India's first Day/Night Test. Besides Kohli and Rohit, the trio of Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav were also given a break after accounting for 14 of the 19 Bangladesh wickets in the opening Test here, which India won by an innings and 130 runs. The Pink Ball Test is slated to be held from November 22 to 26 at Eden Gardens in Kolkata. Also giving the training a miss were first Test double centurion Mayank Agarwal and wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha. Cheteshwar Pujara, Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja were the prominent figures to have trained from the main team. Rishabh Pant, Hanuma Vihari, Shubman Gill and Kuldeep Yadav also participated in the session.

Test cricket needed rejuvenation: Ganguly

Kolkata: BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Sunday said five-day cricket "needed rejuvenation" to revive interest in the game's traditional format. India's last series against South Africa witnessed a poor turnout but the tickets for the first three days of the pink-ball Test, beginning here on Friday, have already been sold out. "That's the way forward. Test cricket needed a rejuvenation," said Ganguly. "It happens all around the world. Somewhere it had to start. India is the biggest country in terms of cricket. I think that rejuvenation was important." Ganguly said India captain Virat Kohli will be happy to see a full house when he walks out to bat against Bangladesh. "He is a great player and he should be playing in front of packed house. He will be happy to see it full house when he walks out to bat on day one. You will love the atmosphere at the Eden so come and watch. You can't have greats of the Indian cricket play in front of empty stands. And here you will have full house for the first three days," he said.

Afghanistan beat WI in T20I series decider

Lucknow: Opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz slammed a strokeful 52-ball 79 as Afghanistan claimed the three-match T20I series 2-1 with a comprehensive 29-run win over the West Indies in the third game here on Sunday. Batting first after winning the toss, Afghanistan posted a competitive 156 for 8, courtesy Gurbaz's superb innings. Asghar Afghan (24 off 20), Najibullah Zadran (14 off 14) and Mohammad Nabi (15 off 7) were the other contributors. Shai Hope, who was called in as cover for the injured Dinesh Ramdin, then made a 46 ball off 52 but he didn't get enough support from the other end as Afghanistan restricted West Indies to 127 for 7 to complete the win. Chasing 157 to win, West Indies lost Lendl Simmons (7) and Brandon King (1) early to be reduced to 16 for two. Evin Lewis (24) was then dismissed LBW by Karim Janat (24). Hope and Shimron Hetmyer (11) tried to steady the innings, adding 38 but the latter was removed by Rashid Khan in the 13th over. Skipper Kieron Pollard then joined Hope as the duo brought up the team hundred in the 16th over but they failed to push the score. **BRIEF SCORES:** Afghanistan 156/8 in 20 overs (R Gurbaz 79, A Afghan 24; S Cottrell 2/29, K Paul 2/26) bt West Indies (S Hope 52, E Lewis 24; N ul-Haq 3/24) by 29 runs. **AGENCIES**



PRACTICE TEST

Bangladesh and Indian players practised under lights with the pink ball at the Holkar Stadium in Indore on Sunday. The two teams will play a day-night Test in Kolkata from November 22 to 26. Express photo

‘Stayed positive during my rehab, never thought what would happen’

SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY  
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 16

IN FOUR days' time, India will play their first-ever day-night Test at Eden Gardens. Wriddhiman Saha, arguably the world's best wicketkeeper, is one of the early birds in the team, with regards to playing pink-ball cricket. Back in June 2016, Saha played in the CAB Super League final, which was a pink-ball, day-night, multi-day game. Before the start of the Test series against Bangladesh, Saha, who returned to the playing XI during the home series against South Africa after an elongated injury layoff, spoke with *The Indian Express* and touched upon various issues, including the pink-ball Test. Excerpts:

**How difficult was the phase when you were away from the Indian team?**

For a player, every phase is difficult, whether you are playing or not playing. When you are playing, there's always the pressure to perform. In my case, Rishabh (Pant) was playing (after I got injured). Maybe, after the two Tests in the West Indies, the team management thought about giving me a chance (against South Africa). Probably the team has the belief, which is a reason why I returned to the playing XI. And I tried to contribute. As far as batting was concerned, I basically didn't get the opportunity to play long innings. Because most of the time, when I went to bat, declaration was on. As for 'keeping, I tried to give my best.

**For a 35-year-old, how tough is it to handle an elongated injury layoff?**

Of course when you are out of the side, it's always difficult to return to limelight. But I always stayed positive during my rehab. I never thought about what would happen next. I just concentrated on my rehab and training.

**Did you require any psychological help during the layoff period?**

No. In fact, I never felt like I was left out. When I returned to domestic cricket and played the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy for Bengal earlier this year, it felt like I straight-away got into the groove.

**You returned to the Test squad for the WI**



Wriddhiman Saha is arguably the best wicketkeeper in world cricket at the moment.

**tour but didn't get a game, as Pant played. Did you have any conversation with the team management in that regard?**

It wasn't required. Rishabh was playing. He performed well in Australia. So it was quite natural that he would play. The West Indies was India's first Test assignment after the Australia tour. And Rishabh was an automatic choice.

**You took that in a positive way?**

Of course. I played a few matches for India A during that period, which helped.

**Superman Saha became a Twitter hashtag after you pulled off the Theunis de Bruyn stunner in the second innings at Pune. But your leg-side gathering has always been top-drawer. Even at times when you are unsighted by the batsman, you go and grab the ball. What's the secret of your leg-side gathering?**

A lot of things come into play. It starts with judging the line and the pace of the ball. Following the ball till the last minute. Soft hands. But behind everything, there's hard work. It basically comes down to practice. It doesn't happen directly in the match. There's a mental aspect to this as well; the desire that

every ball will come to me.

**Practice is a key reason for sure. But apparently, your 'keeping, especially the way you boss the leg side', feels natural.**

If it were natural, then I would have collected every ball that came to me. But I couldn't do that.

**Does a brilliant catch or an excellent stumping create a feel-good, carry-over effect?**

The focus instantly shifts to the next ball. When a ball is bowled and the whole process is over, then it's dead and buried. It's about the next ball then, doesn't matter whether you have taken a good catch or dropped one.

**Coming to the pink-ball Test, how challenging it could be for a 'keeper?**

Under lights the ball will move and all our fast bowlers clock 140kph or more. When I played the CAB Super League final, picking the pink ball under lights was a tad difficult after it got old. You can't eliminate the problem in two days' practice (an early finish of the first Test against Bangladesh at Indore has allowed the team a couple of extra days of training). You have to adapt during the game.

**For a 'keeper, is it advisable to use glasses in pink-ball cricket, something similar to what Ian Healy used to wear for white-ball, day-night matches? Back then, a single white ball was used in the ODIs.**

Yes, those glasses helped a brighter vision. But it's about the habit. If you don't have a habit of wearing that, you would feel uncomfortable. The challenge will be to adapt (to the situation). I trust my eyes. You won't see me wearing sunglasses very often in day games also.

**Do you see any role for the spinners in the day-night Test, given that the pink-ball has an extra coat of lacquer, and also an extra coat of grass on the pitch?**

So far, the majority of the day-night Tests have been played with the Kookaburra ball. SG pink will be used for this game. So we will have an idea during our first training session; how are the bowlers feeling. The pitch, too, will play a part.

**Sourav Ganguly says day-night Test cricket is the way forward, given the dwindling stadium attendance in the long-form. What's your take on this?**

This is the idea behind the day-night Test. It will create a different feel and Kolkata being a cricket crazy city, I expect very good turnout. The effort is praiseworthy. Let's see how it pans out.

**India boast of one of the finest pace attacks in the world. From a 'keeper's point of view, who creates the stiffest challenge?**

(Jasprit) Bumrah and (Mohammed) Shami, for apart from pace, their deliveries wobble more, compared to Ishant (Sharma) or Umesh (Yadav). And this happens in all conditions.

**Umesh wasn't part of the original Test squad against South Africa. Came in as Bumrah's replacement and hit the ground running. Did you expect that?**

Yes, because he was training hard. He is not someone who shies away from training if he is not in the team. Also, he is very consistent these days, which again is down to training and hard work. There's a reason why our reserve bench is so strong; every player is always match ready.

Ombudsman orders Sharma to continue as DDCA prez

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 17

THE DELHI & Districts Cricket Association (DDCA) ombudsman Justice (Retd) Badar Durrez Ahmed on Sunday ordered senior journalist Rajat Sharma to continue in his role as president while stopping suspended general secretary Vinod Tihara's reinstatement. Sharma had resigned yesterday from his post, citing his inability to continue amidst "various pulls and pressures", though without making any name.

The Ombudsman has also in his directive stated that due procedure was not followed while passing a resolution to withdraw powers of president and Tihara's suspension can't be revoked till his case remains pending with the Ombudsman.

"Three purported resolutions are said to have been passed by circulation by the Apex Council on 13.11.2019. These purported resolutions are said to be illegal," the ombudsman stated in his order, a copy of which is in possession of PTI.

Tihara reinstatement blocked

"One purported resolution seeks to reinstate Mr. Vinod Tihara, as the Secretary, DDCA, who was suspended on 2.11.2019 by the Apex Council and in respect of which a reference was made to the Ombudsman.

"It is pertinent to note that the reference is pending with me and Mr. Vinod Tihara had been given two weeks time to respond. No reply has been received from Mr. Vinod Tihara."

The Ombudsman added: "Prima facie no purported resolution reinstating Mr. Vinod Tihara ought to have been passed when the very issue was under consideration of the Ombudsman."

The Ombudsman in his order stated that Apex Council can't pass any order as the resignations of Sharma and other office bearers "will be kept in abeyance".

"All these persons who had tendered their resignations shall continue to discharge their duties in the interest of the game of cricket. No further resolution in this regard be sought to be passed by members of the Apex Council without the permission of the Ombudsman and without following proper procedure."

The hearing of the complaints will take place on November 27.

Bangladesh league hopes to attract out-of-contract India players

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DHAKA, NOVEMBER 17

IN AN EFFORT to raise the profile and rebuild the image of its revamped domestic T20 league, Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) is planning to rope in out-of-contract Indian players to play in the cash-rich tournament in future.

Match-fixing scandals and payment delay of some foreign players have shattered the image of the Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) which was launched in 2011, forcing the country's cricket board to take control of the event and rename it the 'Bangabandhu BPL'.

**'I am not sure if we will get them in this BPL, but hopefully we will get them in future.'**



It was the fast bowler's third breach in the past 18 months.

Thursday. The two were seen to be competing for one bowling slot to partner Josh Hazlewood, Pat Cummins, and Nathan Lyon.

Paine said he was disappointed, with the Australian team working hard to win back pub-

lic support since the ball-tampering scandal last year. He told broadcaster ABC that Pattinson had "let himself down, he's let the group down". "We actually had a chat last night about the fact that we hold ourselves to a really high standard

**We're disappointed ... but James has owned up and knows he's made a mistake and has apologised for it and will come back bigger and better."**

TIM PAINE  
AUSTRALIA CAPTAIN

now with our behaviour," Paine said. "That's not just while we're playing (Test) cricket, we've got to go back to domestic cricket and lead the way on that front as well. "We're disappointed ... but James has owned up and knows he's made a mistake and has apologised for it and will come back bigger and better." Pattinson admitted he "made a mistake in the heat of the moment". "Straight away I realised I was in the wrong, and I apologised immediately, both to the opponent and to the umpires," he said. "I have done the wrong thing and accept the penalty. I'm gutted to miss a Test match, but the standards are there for a reason and the fault is mine."





## SYED MUSHTAQ ROUND-UP



Comeback aspirant Karthik smashed 58 off 32 balls.

### GROUP B

## Karthik steers TN to super leagues

**Thiruvananthapuram:** Skipper Dinesh Karthik came up with another superb knock (58, 32 balls, 5 fours, 3 sixes) to spur Tamil Nadu as they beat Vidarbha by 113 runs on Sunday. His knock helped his team to 168 for 8 in 20 overs before the bowlers stepped in to rout Vidarbha for 55 in 14.5 to seal a big win. Tamil Nadu advanced to the super league to be played in Surat, topping Group 'B' with 20 points from 6 games (5 won, 1 lost).

**BRIEF SCORES:** Tamil Nadu 168/8 in 20 overs (Dinesh Karthik 58, B Aparajith 33, Yash Thakur 3/23) beat Vidarbha 55 in 14.5 overs (R Sai Kishore 3/9, Vijay Shankar 3/12); TN: 4 points, Vidarbha: 0.

Tripura 69/7 in 16 overs (Miliind Kumar 22 not out, Aniket Choudhary 3/15, Rahul Chahar 2/18) lost to Rajasthan 74 for 1 in 5 overs (Mahipal Lomror 50 not out); Rajasthan: 4 points, Tripura: 0.

Kerala 119/8 in 20 overs (Sanju Samson 38) beat Uttar Pradesh 42/4 in 7 overs (Akshdeep Nath 30 not out) by 1 run via VJD method; Kerala: 4 points, UP: 0.

### GROUP D

## Pondicherry stun Bengal by 4 wkts

**Mumbai:** Newbies Pondicherry spun an upset over Bengal, chasing down a modest target of 132 with four wickets in hand.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Bengal 132 for 7 (Vivek Singh 43, Abhimanyu Easwaran 28, Suresh Kumar 4/17) lost to Pondicherry 135 for 6 (Rohit Damodaran 55, Suresh Kumar 16) by four wickets. Pondicherry 4 points, Bengal: 0.

Madhya Pradesh: 159/6 (Rajat Patidar 69; Harshal Patel 3-34) lost to Haryana 162/6 (Sumit Kumar 44 not out, Shivam Chauhan 4) by four wickets. Haryana 4 points, Madhya Pradesh 0.

Meghalaya: 207/4 (Ravi Bhamidipati 53 not out, Abhay Negi 50 not out) beat Mizoram 182/2 (Taruwar Kohli 90, Pawan Prasad 72 not out) by 25 runs. Meghalaya 4 points, Mizoram 0 points.

### GROUPE

## Dagar, Dalal star in Delhi's canter

**Surat:** Leg-spinner Karan Dagar started with the ball before opener Hiten Dalal scored a blistering half-century as Delhi registered an emphatic nine-wicket win over Sikkim.

**BRIEF SCORES:** Sikkim 88/7 in 20 overs (Iqbal Abdulla 37; Karan Dagar 4/12) lost to Delhi (Hiten Dalal 54 not out) by 9 wickets.

# Back from the ban, with a bang

Prithvi Shaw celebrates his return to competitive cricket with a thrilling 63 off 39 balls against Assam

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 17

PRITHVISHAW didn't overdo his celebrations after cracking a breezy half-century against Assam in a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy league game, upon his return to competitive cricket from an eight-month doping ban. He calmly nodded his head, reluctantly turned towards the camera and waved his bat, followed by a let-the-bat-do-all-the-talking gesturing. Not animatedly, but shyly.

But inwardly, he might have felt unburdened after passing through what he once referred to as the darkest days of his life, after samples of a banned drug, Terbutaline, was detected in his urine sample, which the 20-year-old claimed came from a cough syrup. He dusted up bitter memories of that angsty phase: "I never thought that something like this would happen. I was obviously upset. For the first 20-25 days after I was banned, I was not able to make sense of things. After that, I stabilized myself and kept myself mentally stronger. But each day was hard. I kept harder with each passing day."

Worse, he had no place to train, as the ban meant he couldn't avail the training facilities back home or even play a local game. Negativity piled on and to escape the public glare, he packed his bags to London, where he could blend into anonymity. "I could chill in London," he said. Soon, he realised that he could do nothing about the ban, but could work harder to regain the lost ground during the time. "Obviously I committed a mistake. I had no idea what I was consuming. In that period I was alone and was trying to stay away from people and their advice. I was telling myself that I can get out of this mess and be mentally strong," he explained.

He returned to India refreshed and was planning to join the gym ace shuttler PV Sindhu frequents in Hyderabad, before he got a call from Rahul Dravid, ever his supportive mentor, to report at the National Cricket Academy, where he could train and could be in the groove once his ban ended. A lot of emphasis was on his fitness. "Under Rahul sir a lot of focus was on training. I had to clear all my fitness Tests. Rahul sir was always there for guidance," he said.

It also helped that Kuldeep Yadav, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Varun Aaron were also training at the NCA, which meant he was facing quality bowlers and managing quality practice at the nets.

So by the time his ban period ended, on November 16, he was not only in the right frame of mind but also in reasonable touch. His comeback though wasn't guaranteed, as Mumbai had nailed a settled opening pair in Aditya Tare and Jay Bista in this format. Obviously, skipper Suryakumar Yadav and the



Shaw started sedately, before he demolished the Assam bowlers in a Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy league encounter. *File*

team management were in a dilemma, before, on the morning of the match, Yadav decided to ring in Shaw's comeback.

### Restrained start

Shaw, who likes to attack straight away, began sedately, smuggling singles and farming the strike to Tare, who tore into Assam's bowlers. Off their 138-run first-wicket alliance, the foundation of Mumbai's 83-run win, Tare's contribution was 82 (off just 48 balls). But gradually, Shaw began to deal in boundaries and returned to his violent best, eventually smacking seven boundaries and a brace of sixes, completing his half-century in 32 deliveries. He perished in his attempt for the third six, miscuing a swipe to midwicket. He was aghast, but he knew his comeback was on the right track.

The early restraint was perhaps a sign of maturity, which young players develop after traversing through adversities. Or maybe, it was the Shaw 2.0 he had mentioned in his

birthday post last week. For Shaw, who celebrated his 20th birthday just a week ago, there wouldn't be any shortage of motivation. Life was flowing smoothly after his hundred on Test debut against the West Indies in Rajkot, before an ankle injury that he picked during a warm-up game, ruled him out of the Australia series. Months after his return, when enjoying a rich vein of form in the IPL, winked in another setback in the form of the doping ban.

In the interim, Mayank Agarwal and Rohit Sharma emerged as India's primary openers in the longest format. Agarwal's stocks continue to soak after he logged in his second double hundred in four Tests, while Sharma has acquainted well with the new role by cracking a pair of big hundreds against South Africa. Talented as he is, the selectors and the team management will certainly keep an eye on his progress. Said Team India batting coach Vikram Rathour: "Getting back into the team will be the selectors' decision. As far as team manage-

**For the first 20-25 days after I was banned, I was not able to make sense of things. After that, I stabilized myself and kept myself mentally stronger."**

### PRITHVI SHAW

ment is concerned, I think he's a phenomenal player. So let's see how it goes, how he shapes up after the suspension. I'm sure he's working hard and getting ready to come back."

To trace his route back to the national team, Shaw has to file constant reminders to the selectors, remain patient for another break and latch on to. He would require truckloads of runs this domestic season, which he has set off in promising fashion. He promises to let runs flow of his bat, and in jest promises to keep off cough syrups. "Zindagi mein ab kabhi koi syrup nahi peeonga!"

# Journeyman tales: No sponsors, camping in tents & pay pangs

SHAHID JUDGE  
PUNE, NOVEMBER 17

AS HE sank to the floor, James Duckworth punched the air a few times. He greeted his vanquished opponent Jay Clarke, walked to the other side of the court and fell to the deck again, pressing his forehead against the blue centre court at the Balewadi Tennis Stadium in Pune. Later he buried his face in his towel, sobbing uncontrollably.

This was to celebrate the singles title of the USD 54,160 KPIT Pune Challenger, an 80 ranking point event which is the lowest rung on the ATP tour. Duckworth's celebration may have been akin to those of tennis' top stars when they conquer another big title. But for the Australian, a journeyman on the tour, any and all wins make a big difference. And this one in Pune will now take him to the top 100—considered the break-even point in the sport.

"I knew that if I won this, I'd break into the top 100 and get direct entry into the Australian Open," says Duckworth after beating Clarke 4-



The Pune win took James to top 100.

6, 6-4, 6-4. "I knew there was a lot on the line. And I've struggled a lot to get this far."

The 27-year-old was once a top 100 player, reaching as high as 82, but then came a series of injuries that required five surgeries. But once he got back, his ranking had dropped and he lost all sponsors. "I met some people who gave

me a few shirts and shorts for the US Open, that's about it," he says. "I don't have a racquet sponsor either. Today I won USD 7200, which is nice. But there have been times where I lose the first round and get just USD 500."

Travelling is the essence of the tour, as players require to move around the world and compete in tournaments for ATP points. The Grand Slams are the pinnacle of glory but the lower you step on the tennis rung, the more obscure and uncertain your world gets—that's where about 80 percent of the players dwell.

Japanese veteran Toshihide Matsui remembers starting out in the sport by driving around Japan in a car and staying in a tent he'd carry along with him. It was a time when the 41-year-old had returned home after finishing college in the United States. By the time he did start to earn a living, the main goal for all tennis players—getting good results in the Grand Slams—became a distant dream.

"I'd travel around in Japan for prize money tournaments (national events that do not offer ATP ranking points), and set up my tent outside the courts," says Matsui, who paired up

with India's Vishnu Vardhan and reached the semi-final of the Pune Challenger. "That phase ended when I was 25, but by then I had to think about making a living which is why I had to play those money events. I could have tried to travel for the ATP tour, but I didn't have the money for it."

Travelling on the circuit has been a problem faced by players from all countries. And the players, particularly those who do not have the resources to move at will, have the extra pressure of winning matches. At some point there's just no scope left for them to get far.

"I see millions of these stories (of players living in a car or tent). I feel bad but I have almost become immune to them now," says Purav Raja. "We have at least 100 players in India who will fizzle out in the next two years just because they don't have the finances."

But for those who do manage to get on tour, live through the grind, somehow, and continue to stay on the circuit, the measure of success always varies. O'For some players it is winning Grand Slams. But for me it's trying to make a living," Matsui says. "Yes I want to say that I will

# Kim wins Panasonic Open; Shiv tied second

**Nuh (Haryana):** A double-bogey on the last hole proved costly as Indian golfer Shiv Kapur signed off tied second along with compatriot S Chikkarangappa at the Panasonic Open India here on Sunday. Kapur (70), who lost out in a playoff at the Thailand Open last week, was again denied victory this week as he conceded a one-shot lead to 17-year-old Korean sensation Joohyung Kim, who fired a seven-under 65 to bag the top honours with a total of 13-under-203.

Kapur and Chikkarangappa (67) ended with a total of 12-under 204 at the Classic Golf and Country Club here. Indians Vikrant Chopra (10-under-206) and Veer Ahlawat (eight-under-208) claimed career-best finishes of tied fifth and tied eighth respectively.

Kim, who earned his Asian Tour card for the remainder of the 2019 season after claiming three wins on the Asian Development Tour (ADT) this year, continued his hot streak in India with rounds of 70, 68 and 65 at the USD 400,000 event which was contested over 54 holes. "I'm really speechless. It has been a dream of mine to play on the Asian Tour ever since I was young. It's really wonderful to come here, be in contention and win," said the Korean, who became the second youngest Asian Tour winner.

"I cannot describe the feeling now. The season has been great especially coming back from my injuries and winning three times on the ADT and now this victory."

Kapur (67-67-70), who was in a three-way lead after the penultimate round, mixed five birdies with a bogey and a double-bogey on Sunday. Kapur, the 2017 Panasonic Open India champion, was leading by one shot till he hit his tee shot out of bounds on the 18th. The Dubai-based golfer finally missed a 20-foot bogey putt that would've taken him into a playoff with Kim.

Chikkarangappa (69-68-67) produced his best round of the week on Sunday to secure the joint runner-up position, his best for the season. Chikka got his confidence going with the early birdie on the third where he made an 11-feet conversion.

The Bengalurean then added two more birdies and a bogey till the 10th. Chikka managed to finish well with three birdies over the last five holes where he made two quality chip-putts and a 30-footer after a poor second shot on the 15th.

The other Indians in the top-20 were Arjun Prasad and M Dharma (both tied 11th at seven-under-209) as well as Om Prakash Chouhan, Karandeep Kochhar, Khalin Joshi and Rashid Khan (all in tied 14th at six-under-210. **PTI**

## [SPORTS BAR]

## Ruthvika, Siddharth win badminton titles

South Asian Games gold medallist Ruthvika Gadde roared back to form by claiming the women's singles title while Siddharth Pratap Singh triumphed in men's event at the All India Senior Ranking Badminton Tournament in Pune on Sunday. The unseeded Ruthvika, who started her campaign as a qualifier, defeated 13th seed Shruti Mundada 21-10, 21-17 in the final that lasted just 35 minutes. In the men's singles, a day after knocking out the top seed Ansal Yadav, the 10th seed Siddharth pipped K Jagadeesh 23-21, 21-15 in a hard fought final.

## Shagun grabs pole on day 1 of trap qualifiers

Shagun Chowdhary shot two rounds of 25 to grab the pole position on day one of the women's trap qualifiers at the 63rd National Shotgun Shooting Championship in New Delhi. Shagun, representing ONGC, shot the same score of 71 as Punjab's Rajeshwari Kumari, but two perfect rounds of 25 including the third and final round of the day, saw her claim the top honours at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range. Intense competition is building up as the finals beckon after two more qualifying rounds on Monday, with Bihar's Shreyasi Singh closely following on 70 and the likes of India's only World Cup medallist Seema Tomar also in the top six with a score of 67.



Indian players arrive in Muscat on Sunday. *AIFF*

## Stimac cautious ahead of Oman tie

Winless India will start as underdogs in the World Cup qualifying round match against Oman in Muscat on Tuesday, said head coach Igor Stimac, while ruling that his players were creating chances but not converting them. Stimac's side had lost 1-2 in the first leg in Guwahati in September. "Qatar and Oman are two favourites in our group. The difference between the other three (Afghanistan, Bangladesh and India) is very less. Against Afghanistan my team performed in the second half," Stimac said. India had needed an injury time goal to eke out a 1-1 draw against Afghanistan in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, on November 14 to play out their third draw of the campaign in four matches. "This is a team for the future and we are in the process of becoming a tough team to play against. We had created chances to win every match until now. We even created chances against Qatar in the last minutes. We're improving gradually and that's what makes me proud," the Croatian said.

## Marquez wins season ending MotoGP race

World champion Marc Marquez won the Valencia GP on Sunday with a superb performance for his 12th victory of the season to ensure that the Repsol Honda team won the teams' world title. The 26-year-old, who began the day behind Petronas Yamaha's pole-sitter Fabio Quartararo, overtook the French rookie with a superb move in the eighth lap and never looked back to finish the race in 41 minutes, 21.469 seconds. Quartararo finished second, 1.026 seconds behind Spaniard Marquez, while Australia's Jack Miller was third for the non-works Pramac Ducati team.

## Mixed form for Eng ahead of NZ Test

England completed preparations for the first Test against the Black Caps with mixed fortunes in a drawn warm-up match against New Zealand A in Whangarei on Sunday. After New Zealand batted first and declared at 302 for six, England slumped to five for 105 before a middle-order revival by Joe Denly (68) Ollie Pope (88) and Jos Buttler (116) lifted the total to 405. At stumps on the third and final day, New Zealand were 169 for eight in their second innings with Jofra Archer taking three for 34 and Sam Curran three for 42. The first Test starts in Tauranga on Thursday.



## 12 medals for India at Asian Youth Boxing

It rained gold for India at the Asian Youth Boxing Championship as all five of the country's women finalists emerged victorious while two men signed off with silver medals in Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia, on Sunday. Naorem Chanu (51kg), Vinka (64kg) Sanamacha Chanu (75kg), Poonam (54kg) and Sushma (81kg) fetched the yellow metal for the country in a phenomenal sweep. Naorem and Sanamacha train at Mary Kom's academy in Manipur. Among the men, Selay Soy (49kg) and Ankit Narwal (60kg) settled for the second place after going down in their respective summit clashes. India signed off with 12 medals in the event with bronze coming from Arundhati Choudhury (69kg), Komalpreet Kaur (+81kg), Jaismine (57kg), Satender Singh (91kg) and Aman (+91kg).



# Now showing: Clockwork Oranje

Netherlands qualify for Euro 2020 after missing out on previous edition; Germany, Croatia through



A hard-fought draw against Northern Ireland in Belfast helped the Dutch seal a berth for the 2020 Euros. Reuters

## AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE PARIS, NOVEMBER 17

THE NETHERLANDS, Germany and World Cup finalists Croatia expanded a list of big hitters to qualify for Euro 2020 on Saturday as the trio booked their places at next summer's finals. Austria also made it through to the multi-host tournament, which kicks off in Rome on June 12, with 16 sides now ensured of a spot at the 24-team event and only four places remaining from the main qualifying route.

They join other big names such like world champions France, Spain, Italy and England, with European champions Portugal one win away from qualification. Ronald Koeman's resurgent Dutch needed a point to qualify for their first major tournament since coming third at the 2014 World Cup and got what they needed in a scrappy goalless draw with Northern Ireland in Belfast. "It means a lot for us as players. Hopefully it means so much to the Dutch people," Liverpool defender Van Dijk said. However they were far from the flamboyant outfit that has so often thrilled in Group C, and survived a huge scare when Steven Davis smashed a first-half penalty high over the bar. The Dutch dominated possession and stopped the hosts from having a single shot on target but failed to create much themselves. Davis' spot-kick blunder left Michael O'Neill's side third and hoping for a way into the tournament via the playoffs.

### Germany join the Dutch

The draw allowed fierce rivals Germany to move top in the group as Toni Kroos hit a brace in a simple 4-0 win over Belarus in Moenchengladbach which saw them qualify for the Euros for the 13th time in a row. A deft back-heeled goal from defender Matthias Ginter just before the break and impressive finishing by Leon Goretzka and Kroos gave the Germans a comfortable three-goal lead early in the second half.

Captain Manuel Neuer produced a superb save to keep out Belarus striker Igor Stasevich's penalty before Kroos dribbled through the defence to claim his second goal seven minutes from time and make sure of a routine win. "Overall we did well, but at the moment I don't include us among the favourites for the European title," said Kroos, echoing coach Joachim Loew's comments from earlier in the week. A win over Northern Ireland in Frankfurt on Tuesday will guarantee Loew's new-look side first place. Croatia survived a scare to secure their place in the Euros after coming from behind beat Slovakia 3-1 in Rijeka. The World Cup runners up needed just a point to ensure qualification from Group E but Robert Bozenik stunned the home crowd when he tapped the away side ahead in the 32nd minute.

However it was one-way traffic in the second half and Croatia's qualification was never in doubt once Nikola Vlasic drilled home the leveller. Bruno Petkovic headed the hosts in front and Ivan Perisic sealed the three points with a thumping finish with 16 minutes left.

"We were trying to stay calm in the dressing room at half-time, we were sure that our quality would prevail. We kept attacking, creating

## Have a great time: Pique urges Davis Cup players

*Madrid:* Gerard Pique hopes players and fans have "the week of their lives" when a radically changed Davis Cup takes place in Madrid's La Caja Majica next week. The Barcelona defender's investment company Kosmos has teamed up with the International Tennis Federation (ITF), providing the financial muscle to revamp the 119-year-old tennis team competition.

Instead of two nations playing off on home soil, 18 nations will gather in Madrid for a week-long competition battling to reach next Sunday's final. While traditionalists have questioned the wisdom of largely ditching the old format and Australian captain Lleyton Hewitt even questioned Pique's involvement, the Spaniard believes the event will win over the sceptics. "I want them to have the best

week of their lives," the 32-year-old said in the build-up to the event which will start on Monday with a glitzy opening ceremony expected to feature his wife, Colombian singer Shakira. "During that week fans will enjoy more than just tennis, and of course we want them to have a great time in Madrid."

While Pique accepts criticism of the revamp, he says this year's Davis Cup will break new ground. "In terms of the event we needed to convince different people who were maybe sceptical and were against the idea of changing the format," he said. "We've had to face it since the beginning. This is something I believe we did an amazing job at because we feel people in the game are now more convinced," he added. **REUTERS**

## Lewis says he's not expecting knighthood

### REUTERS SAO PAULO, NOVEMBER 17

LEWIS HAMILTON says he is not expecting his sixth Formula One world championship to be recognised with a knighthood at the end of the year. The Mercedes driver's supporters are pushing for him to join other British sporting sirs like Tour de France winner Bradley Wiggins, runner Mo Farah, tennis player Andy Murray and cricketer Alastair Cook.

Hamilton, by far his country's most successful racing driver with twice as many titles as the knighted great Jackie Stewart, doubted that would happen. "I don't really like to think too much about it," he told reporters at the Brazilian Grand Prix. "Just the fact that people have mentioned it, it's already an honour, but it's not been something that I've been chasing in my life. "If, at any point, that was to happen, I don't particularly know how I would handle it. "I have stood in front of Her Majesty The Queen before and it was pretty incredible and I think she's just awesome. Again, I don't think it's going to happen, and again, it doesn't bother me if it doesn't."

"It doesn't mean I'm not British. It doesn't mean I'm not continuing to try and raise the flag as well as I can," he added.

Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff has said frequently that he feels Hamilton's achievements are not recognised enough in his home country and may not be appreciated fully until he has left the stage. When Hamilton won his fifth title last year he was runner-up in the BBC's Sports Personality of the Year to Tour de France winner Geraint Thomas.

Britain, which has produced more champions than any nation in Formula One history, has certainly never known anyone like him and only German great Michael Schumacher, with seven, has won more



Hamilton is his country's most successful racing driver with twice as many titles as the knighted great Jackie Stewart.

championships.

Hamilton has won 10 races a year on average for the last six seasons, a success rate that would leave him on course to overhaul Schumacher's record of 91 victories some time next year. Even if he played it down, the prospect of him getting a knighthood tickled the fancy of Ferrari rival Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull's Max Verstappen.

"Do you get a sword? That would be cool if you get to keep the sword," said Vettel, a four times world champion. Informed that he would have to call Hamilton 'Sir Lewis' if the Briton were to be knighted, 22-year-old Verstappen sounded doubtful.

"You don't have to, do you?" asked the Dutchman, who starts Sunday's penultimate race of the season on pole position.

Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel gave Max Verstappen a taste of his own language at the Brazilian Grand Prix on Saturday when he smilingly suggested the Red Bull's qualifying speed was suspicious.

### Vettel takes a dig at Verstappen

Verstappen, who qualified on pole position for Sunday's race at Interlagos, angered Ferrari at the previous round in Texas when he appeared to accuse the Italian team of cheating to gain engine performance.

Vettel, who joins the 22-year-old Dutch driver on the front row, said on Friday that Verstappen's comments were unprofessional and immature.

The German added some sly extra needle at the post-qualifying news conference on Saturday. "I think we have to admit that we got beaten fair and square today," said the four-times world champion, who will be making his 100th start for Ferrari. "It was a bit of a surprise to see — not to see them that quick but to see them that on the straights. So, a little bit suspicious." Verstappen, sitting alongside, was not letting that go unanswered: "For once it's you, then," he replied.

Vettel said the Honda engine's performance was genuinely a bit of a surprise. "Usually, we've seen a lot of qualifying sessions and we were always a bit faster than everyone on the straights, losing a bit in the corners but today...Max and Alex (Albon) were as fast on the straights as us. "That's about it. I don't know why. I don't think, I mean I know we didn't do anything different, so..." Mercedes' Lewis Hamilton, who clinched his sixth world title in Texas two weeks ago, said he had no idea where Red Bull's extra power came from.

The pole was the second of Verstappen's Formula One career, after Hungary last August, but the Red Bull driver insisted he was counting it as a third.

## Lee wins title as protests rage in Hong Kong

### AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE HONG KONG, NOVEMBER 17

HOME FAVOURITE Lee Cheuk-yiu battled to victory over Indonesia's Anthony Ginting to secure a shock Hong Kong Open win as the city's pro-democracy protests raged nearby on Sunday. Lee, 23, came from a game behind and then saw off championship point in a thrilling decider before winning 16-21, 21-10, 22-20 to lift his first major trophy. The final took place at the Hong Kong Coliseum, a short distance from the Polytechnic University where a police officer was wounded by a protester's arrow in the latest fierce clashes.

The city has been wracked by months of protests including this week's chaos when major routes and rail services were blocked by masked protesters, bringing parts of the city to a standstill. Lee's title run, which includes surprise wins over Denmark's Viktor Axelsen and Kidambi Srikanth of India in the quarter- and semi-finals, comes after he appeared to show support for the protesters.

After winning his opening match, the world number 27 held up an outstretched right hand and his left index finger, a gesture interpreted as supporting 'Five demands, not one less' — a slogan chanted by the demonstrators. "Those who understand will understand, those who don't, just forget it," Lee said this week when asked to explain his celebration, according to the *South China Morning Post*.

China's Chen Yufei fought to a hard-won 21-18, 13-21, 21-13 win over Ratchanok Intanon, the former world champion from Thailand, to be crowned the women's singles champion.