



SC discusses 'voluntary code of conduct' for Cabinet Ministers

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Lack of confidence in govt. behind prolonged slowdown: Manmohan

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Leaked Chinese govt. documents show details of Xinjiang clampdown

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Hyung wins Panasonic Open title after Kapur loses the plot

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J&K detainees slam police action

At least 32 high-profile political detainees staged a protest on Sunday against the police's alleged bid to "strip and humiliate" Peoples Conference chief Sajjad Lone while they were being shifted to a new detention centre in Srinagar. The incident took place around 2 p.m. when the authorities began shifting the detainees in batches from the Centaur Hotel to the MLA Hostel in Srinagar.

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Fake international call centre busted; 32 held

A fake international call centre being operated from Kirti Nagar was busted and 32 people were arrested for being allegedly involved in duping foreign nationals by posing as Canadian police officers, the police said on Sunday. The police seized 55 computers, 35 mobile phones, and illegal softwares along with other equipment from the call centre.

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## Muslim law board to file review plea against Ayodhya verdict

Declines five acres allotted to Muslims, says it will 'not heal the wounds caused'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

The All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) on Sunday declined the five acres of land allotted to Muslims in Ayodhya and decided to file a review petition against the Supreme Court verdict in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi case.

The "restitution by granting five acres of land, where fundamental values have been damaged to the extent of causing national shame, will not in any manner heal the wounds caused," the Board said here, after a meeting of its working committee, chaired by president Maulana Sayyad Mohammad Rabe Hassani Nadwi.

The two decisions were taken through a "unanimous resolution," Board secretary Zafaryab Jilani told the media. Jamiat Ulema-e-Hindu president Arshad Madni also issued a statement in favour of filing a review petition and argued that there was no question of taking up any alternative land for a mosque.

'Not permissible'

The Board argued that mosques "are essential for the religious practice of Muslims" and that "building the same mosque at some other site in situations like this is also not



To go on appeal: AIMPLB secretary Zafaryab Jilani, right, and member Qasim Rasool Ilyas in Lucknow on Sunday. ■PTI

permissible as per Islamic Law."

"We, on behalf of the community at large, make it clear that the five-acre land, as directed in the present judgment, will neither balance equity nor repair the damage caused in the country," the AIMPLB said in a separate statement. Stating that there was "no dearth" of mosques in Ayodhya, 27 of them functional, Mr. Jilani said the matter was not about a mosque but "rights to a land" and justice.

The AIMPLB argued that it decided in favour of filing a review petition, claiming there were "apparent errors in the verdict."

Board member Qasim Rasool Ilyas said, "It was felt at the meeting that not only were there several self-contradictory points in the ver-

dict of the Supreme Court, on several points it was also beyond comprehension, and *prima facie* appears to be inappropriate."

'Installed by force'

Mr. Ilyas also asked if the placing of idols of Lord Ram under the dome of the Babri Masjid "by force" on the intervening night of December 22-23, 1949, was "illegal," how were such illegally placed idols considered a deity? Even under "Hindu dharma shastra," they could not be a deity, he argued.

Further, the AIMPLB asked if "it was proven that Muslims had possession of the Babri Masjid from 1857 to 1949 and also offered namaz there," on what basis was the land of the mosque given to Ram Lalla?

A third point raised by the

Board was related to the use of Article 142 by the court. Mr. Ilyas said that while using Article 142, the judges did not consider that the exchange or transfer of masjid land was barred under Sections 104-A and 51(I) of the Waqf Act.

How could another piece of land be given in exchange for the masjid land, going against the statute and legal restrictions, he asked.

The AIMPLB's decision stands in contrast to the stance of the Sunni Central Waqf Board, whose chairman Zufar Faruqi, on the day of the verdict, stated that it would not go in for any review of the Supreme Court ruling or file any curative petition. Whether the Sunni Waqf Board would accept the five-acre land to be allotted to it by the Central government on the directions of the court would be decided at a meeting on November 26.

Asked to explain the AIMPLB's *locus standi*, as the court directed that the land be given to the Sunni Waqf Board, Mr. Jilani said the AIMPLB "represents the Muslims" and the case was filed on behalf of the community and not the Sunni Waqf Board alone.

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## Gotabaya wins in presidential poll

Ruling party candidate in Sri Lanka loses despite leading in northeast



The victor: President-elect Gotabaya Rajapaksa waving to supporters in Colombo on Sunday. ■AP

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, Opposition candidate in Sri Lanka's presidential election, on Sunday emerged winner, securing 52.25 % of the mandate and marking the return of the Rajapaksa family to power.

Mr. Rajapaksa beat the government's candidate Sajith Premadasa – who got nearly 42% of the vote share. Mr. Rajapaksa will be sworn in as Sri Lanka's seventh executive president on Monday in the historic city of Anuradhapura, his Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP or People's Party) said.

The Tamil and Muslim minorities in the northern and eastern districts, averse to a Rajapaksa return, voted decisively for Mr. Premada-

sa. However, this did not make up for the ground he lost to Mr. Rajapaksa in much of the Sinhala-majority areas. "I am the President of not only those who voted for me but also those who voted against me and irrespective of which race or religion they belong to," Mr. Rajapaksa said, following his victory.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe has said he will discuss the possibility of a parliamentary election with the Speaker and party leaders soon.

On Sunday, three Cabinet members, including Finance Minister Mangala Samaraweera, resigned.

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BACK TO THE RAJAPAKSAS

► EDITORIAL

## Allow Farooq to attend House: Oppn.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Opposition parties in unison questioned the Narendra Modi government on the detention of Lok Sabha member and former Jammu & Kashmir Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah, but once again got no definite response from the government.

Speaking to the media-persons after the all-party meeting convened by the government ahead of the winter session of Parliament, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad said, "How can a parliamentarian be detained illegally? He should be allowed to attend Parliament."

While Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others heard the Opposition's demand, they did not respond, Mr. Azad said. "We anyway do not get any replies from the government on any issues," he added.

The question was raised by other lawmakers, including T.R. Baalu of the DMK and Sudip Bandhopadhyay of the Trinamool Congress.

CONTINUED

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## After Sena's exit, NDA allies seek coordination panel

PM chairs coalition meet, responds positively to demand

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The National Democratic Alliance, diminished after the exit of one of its oldest constituents, the Shiv Sena, met on Sunday, with the remaining allies of the BJP asking for a coordination committee and a convener for the grouping to avoid further alienation within the alliance. Prime Minister Narendra Modi responded positively to the demand.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Lok Janshakti Party president Chirag Paswan said he personally felt the absence of the Shiv Sena at the meeting, and suggested that the grouping needed more cohesiveness.

"The differences between the NDA allies, which we witnessed in Maharashtra, should not happen. That's why a convener or a coordination committee should be



Chirag Paswan

appointed," he said.

He added that he was backed in this demand by the JD(U) and the Apna Dal.

Significantly, Mr. Paswan's party is going it alone in the Jharkhand Assembly election after seat-sharing talks with the BJP did not come to fruition. "It is a matter of concern that first the Telugu Desam Party and the Rashtriya Lok Samata Party left the alliance," he said.

Sources also confirmed that some allies of the NDA

from the Northeast expressed concern about the National Register of Citizenship (NRC) that Union home minister Amit Shah has said would be conducted across the country.

Mr. Modi, who chaired the meeting, also seemed to be not unaffected by the exit of the Shiv Sena. According to sources at the meeting, he stressed that the NDA was like a "huge family".

"Prime Minister Modi said the NDA was like a huge family and that we needed to work together for the people. He also said while our ideologies were different we were still like minded parties who had been given a huge mandate. Small differences should not be allowed to unsettle the alliance and that a coordination committee could be considered," said a senior NDA leader present at the meeting.

## Marriage not 'good enough' to quash rape FIR: Delhi HC

Verdict will have implications on rape cases

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Is marriage a "good enough" reason to quash an FIR for rape if both the offender and the victim decide to settle the case? The Delhi High Court says no.

In a significant verdict that will have implications on a large number of rape cases in India, the High Court has ruled that the offence of rape falls under the category of "heinous and serious crime" which cannot be quashed even if the parties have settled their dispute or got married.

A large chunk of the rape cases in India are reported against those who were known to the victim.

The latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) shows that of a total of 32,559 cases of rape reported across the country in 2017, in one-third or 10,553 cases the victim and offender were either

friends, online friends, live-in partners or separated husbands.

The High Court verdict delivered last week by Justice Brijesh Sethi came on a petition by a man seeking to quash an FIR for rape registered against him in September 2013 at the Safdarjung Enclave police station here by his live-in partner.

The woman in her complaint had stated that she and the man had been living together at a rented accommodation in Gautam Nagar for about five months.

During this period, she stated that "on his false allurements of marriage and after repeated insistence, cohabited with him".

She had complained that despite her repeated insistence on marriage, he had refused and in August 2013, he left her following an altercation.

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## Musicians want airlines to secure their instruments

After receiving broken sitar at the end of flight, maestro launches petition for accountability

JAGRITI CHANDRA  
NEW DELHI

As a crowd of over 200 lovers of Indian classical music gathered in a temple in New York, preparing to spend the evening in the shimmering melody of a sitar, musician Shubhendra Rao greeted them and announced that he had not brought his sitar along.

There was a collective gasp from the crowd in the auditorium.

The sitarist, who is among the leading soloists in India and a protégé of sitar maestro Pandit Ravi Shankar, discovered after a



Shattered notes Shubhendra Rao's sitar broke into multiple pieces when it was transported by air. ■

15-hour Air India flight from New Delhi on November 1 that his sitar had been irretrievably damaged. Its stem

had cracked, and the 'tabli', or the soundboard atop the pear-shaped base, had broken into three. But perform

he did, on a sitar borrowed from a disciple though it was "like walking on an artificial limb".

He says he has had too many strokes of bad luck lately – three incidents of "vandalism" during air travel in the past three consecutive years, which even forced him to cancel a concert in France in 2017.

'Fix responsibility'

Mr. Rao has restarted a petition he launched in 2017 on a website.

In it, he urged that airlines be made accountable for damage to a musical in-

strument. He also demanded that making passengers waive the liability of airlines for fragile items by signing a "limited release" document be done away with.

He described the special relationship every artiste has with his or her musical instrument, which is also their voice. "To every artiste, his or her instrument is like a child he or she loves and nurtures every day."

Mr. Rao said his sitar was always by his side, whether he had a broken arm or was on honeymoon.

IMPORTED RULES HIT MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS ► PAGE 12



Dalai Lama to deliver talk on overcoming anger, anxiety

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Dalai Lama will deliver a talk on ‘Overcoming Anger and Anxiety’ at St. Columba’s School on November 20. The event is being hosted by the Tushita Mahayana Meditation Centre as part of its 22nd Dharma Celebration.

“There is great significance to such an event. Not only does it reinforce awareness of the strong spiritual bonds between India and Tibet, going back to the 8th Century when Buddhism was transmitted to Tibet through the painstaking efforts of a host of great Masters and translators from both nations, but it also awakens us to the enduring legacy of the Nalanda Buddhist tradition and its relevance to the thinking public of today at a time when people are searching for deep answers to life’s issues in a period of major changes and challenges,” the organisers said.

The event will begin from 10 a.m.

Delhi water is 100% safe: DJB

Agency criticises study done by Centre

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The study by the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), which stated that Delhi’s water was the most unsafe among 21 State capitals, is not reflective of the ground reality, the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) said on Sunday.

The study had noted that water samples from Delhi failed in 19 of 28 parameters. DJB CEO Nikhil Kumar said, “We have tested 1.55 lakh samples since January and they were found to be satisfactory as per both BIS and World Health Organization (WHO) norms.” He said that the WHO considers 5% unsatisfactory results as acceptable, but “the DJB results were much better”.

“We have not received the [BIS] report and we do not know when and from where the samples have been taken. We assure Delhiites that DJB water is absolutely potable and 100% safe as per BIS and international standards,” said Mr. Kumar.

“The DJB was not part of this study by the Centre.

**We have tested 1.55 lakh samples since January and they were found to be satisfactory as per BIS and WHO norms**

**NIKHIL KUMAR**  
CEO, Delhi Jal Board

Compared to the 1.55 lakh samples we have tested since January, the 10 samples is not reflective of the ground reality,” he added.

A senior DJB official said that sometimes tap water has problems due to issues in connections from the main supply line to the households. “Many times we notice that complaints are due to problems in the connections from the main pipeline. It is the responsibility of the housing society or individual household to rectify it. The DJB is not responsible for problems in connections from the main supply line,” the official added.

The official further said that people often mix DJB water with supply from borewell, which can also result in lower quality of water.

19-year-old killed in road accident

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old student died after he allegedly lost control of his SUV and rammed a stationary water tanker in southeast Delhi on Sunday.

Ansh Girdhar, a resident of Kalkaji Extension, was returning home when the incident took place on Okhla Estate Road near Hanuman Mandir, said the police.

The police received a call about the accident around 3.30 a.m. Ansh was rushed to AIIMS where he succumbed to injuries, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal.

Ansh was speeding when he swerved to avoid a tree trunk and lost control. The car hit a water tanker parked on the roadside before overturning, he said. Ansh was pursuing a course in physiotherapy at an institute in Vasant Kunj, the police said.

A case has been registered at Govindpuri police station, said the police, adding that the body has been handed over to the family after postmortem.

Fake call centre that duped foreigners busted, 32 arrested

Illegal software, 55 computers, and 35 phones seized

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have busted a fake international call centre, being operated from west Delhi’s Kirti Nagar, allegedly involved in duping foreign nationals by posing as Canadian police officials, the police said on Sunday.

“We have arrested 32 people, including telecallers, in connection with the scam and have seized 55 computers, 35 phones, and illegal software along with other equipment from the call centre,” said a police officer.

The police said that on November 15, they received inputs about fraudsters posing as Canadian police officials over the phone and duping foreign nationals on the pretext of saving them from Social Insurance Number (SIN) violations.

“SIN is a nine-digit number that is required to work in Canada and to have access to government programmes and benefits,” said the officer.

A complaint was received from Canadian national Elvis Henry, who was alleged-



The accused in custody.  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ly duped of \$13,500, the police added.

Additional DCP (West) Sameer Sharma said that the police, along with a team from the Department of Telecommunications, raided the call centre in Moti Nagar. Jasjot Singh, Sarabjot Singh and Sagar Jain were found supervising the activities of the telecallers.

**VOIP calls**

Upon interrogation, the supervisors disclosed that they impersonated Canadian police officials and targeted Canadian nationals through Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) calls, said Mr. Sharma.

Explaining the modus operandi, the officer said:

“The call centre was operational during night hours. The accused began with a robocall claiming to be from Service Canada and informed the recipient that there are several allegations linked with the victim’s SIN. The victims were threatened with arrests if they failed to call back.”

“Those who called back were subjected to further threats, but then offered a one-time chance to pay and settle the matter,” said the officer. The victims were asked to transfer money either through Bitcoin or gift cards.

The accused used call-spoofing technology to mislead victims and one of the phones found at the spot had ‘Bitcoin Blockchain Wallet App’, which was used to receive money from victims in the form of Bitcoins, he added.

Raids are being conducted to nab others, including call centre owners – Raja, Sushil, Naveen, Bunny Aroora and Pankaj, the police said, adding DoT officials are also probing the case.

AAP to launch ‘mass contact campaign’

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

In the run up to the Delhi Assembly polls, likely to be held early next year, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) city convener Gopal Rai on Sunday announced the launch of a booth-level ‘mass contact’ campaign, which will be led by party MLA’s in each of 70 Assembly constituencies.

The MLAs will organise ‘Jan Samwads’ at 4-5 booths in their constituencies every day, Mr. Rai said. At these meetings, work carried out by previous city governments, as well as AAP’s own track record over the last five years, will be discussed.

In constituencies without an MLA, the campaign will be carried out by the Vidhan Sabha incharge along with the ‘Sangathan Mantri’. The party will also begin forming booth-level poll committees through this campaign, Mr. Rai said.

Around 2,700 ‘mandal incharges’, already appointed by the party, will be present at these meetings and lead the process to form the panels, he said. The campaign will be monitored by up to 70 “observers”.

DELHI TODAY

**Talk:** Lecture on “Weighty Problem of Liver Fat – Eat and Live for Grand Children” by Dr. Shiv Kumar Sarin, Senior Professor, Hepatology and Director, Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences at Seminar Rooms II & III, India International Centre, 6:30 p.m.

**Exhibition:** “Moments of Happiness: A Painters Eye”, a painting show in oil and acrylics by Anurita Kochhar and Dr. Sonali Kochhar at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Dance:** “Anandadhara” (worship of Nature through Unity), a dance ballet in Rabinranatyam style by Delhi Ballet Group at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre, 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** “Soliloquy”, an exhibition of drawings and paintings by Bijoy Kumar Basak at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

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

3 held for duping finance firm of ₹20 lakh

One of the accused is an employee of the company

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Three men have been arrested for allegedly duping a finance company of ₹20 lakh. One of the accused is an employee of the firm, the police said on Sunday.

Sunil Kumar (25) was working as a marketing agent at Leyland Finance Limited. Harish Dhingra (40) worked as a share broker, and Mohammad Sualeheen (28) is a dealer of old tyres in Jama Masjid, they said.

According to the police, a complaint was received stating that Sunil and his associates had fabricated documents of customers and obtained loans from the company for himself.

After getting the loans, the accused procured 28 scooters on ‘hire-purchase’ basis, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) Chinmoy Biswal.

A case was registered in this regard at Okhla Industrial Area police station.

During interrogation, Sunil disclosed the names of his associates, who were later nabbed by the police.

It was revealed that Harish was the mastermind behind the fraud and lured marketing agents of finance companies, who worked in automobile showrooms, and facilitated loans for prospective buyers, said the DCP.

Six vehicles have been recovered from their possession, he said.

Man killed in Narela factory fire

Smoke trapped victim inside the building, says fire official

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old man was burnt to death after a fire broke out at a shoe factory in outer Delhi’s Narela, the police said on Sunday.

The body was beyond recognition and it is suspected to be of security guard Mangal Mandal, a resident of Bihar, they said.

Chief Fire Officer Atul Garg said they received a call regarding the fire around

12.45 a.m. “The fire started from the ground floor of the factory and spread to the other floors. A total of 24 fire tenders were rushed to the spot. Firefighters brought the blaze under control within an hour,” he said.

Mandal’s body was near the stairs on the top floor of the factory, the official said, adding that the floor’s gate was locked from the inside.

“We suspect that he was trying to escape but got

stuck in the building as raw material inside the factory created a lot of smoke,” the fire official said, adding that the victim worked on the night shift. All three stories were engulfed in the blaze.

Factory owner Praveen Kumar told the police that it was a holiday on Saturday and only Mandal was inside. We are probing if there was any other person trapped inside,” said Gaurav Sharma, DCP (Outer North).

IN BRIEF

**Congress holds rallies against BJP policies**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Sunday held rallies in south Delhi’s Mehrauli and Badarpur against “price rise, unemployment and economic slump”. The party blamed the Centre for the problems. The protest was part of the party’s ‘Halla Bol’ agitation, which it launched on Saturday. “The Modi government’s dream of taking the country to a \$5 trillion economy was yet another *jumla* to fool the people,” Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra said at the rallies.



JNU students to march to Parliament today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

JNU students on Sunday announced that as part of their protest against the hike in hostel fee, they will organise a “long march” from the university to Parliament on the first day of its winter session on Monday.

The JNU Students’ Union (JNUSU) said that the march was to “save public education” and they would like to ask Parliamentarians to ensure that “education remains a right and not a privilege”.

The JNUSU appealed to students from other universities to lend their support to the protest and join them on their march.

“JNU is on the brink of destruction and if the university administration has its way, fees will rise by over 1,100%.... As per JNU’s own data, over 40% of students will have to dropout and possibly leave their education,” said the students’ union.

‘If JNU doesn’t roll back hike, I may have to abandon studies’

Many students say they will not be able to sustain themselves without subsidised education; ‘partial roll back of hostel fee hike is of no help’

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ  
NEW DELHI

When Devika, a second-year BA student, left her home in Kerala to study at Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), she entered the gates of the university with an assurance that she would get quality education at a cost she would be able to afford on her own.

However, two years into her course, she feels cheated as the hike in hostel fee has left her wondering whether she will be able to continue to fund her studies.

“When we took admission here, we were assured that we could study and live here by paying a small amount. Now, out of the blue, the JNU administration has increased the fee and we feel cheated,” says Devika.

There are hundreds of students who are worried as they do not rely on their parents for money and were given permission to come to Delhi to study only because it was not a financial burden on their family, she adds.

Henna, a first-year MA stu-

dent who also hails from Kerala, echoes Devika’s views.

“I am only in my first year and I am considering going back home to complete my education if the hike in hostel fee is not rolled back. We came here keeping a certain budget in mind. We could have gone elsewhere also. It is like buying a ticket for a particular event and then being told that the show has changed. The administration could at least have brought in the changes in a phased manner so that students coming here would be able to take an informed decision with respect to their financial planning,” says Henna.

Protests on

Since October 28, hundreds of students have taken to the streets against the hike in hostel fee, some of them have never taken part in any activism or missed a single class but are now on the roads demanding a roll back to secure their future.

The JNU Executive Council’s decision on a “partial



Since October 28, hundreds of JNU students have taken to the streets against the hike in hostel fee.

• FILE PHOTO: SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

roll back” has not managed to pacify the students as they feel that the exemption to Below Poverty Line (BPL) students is vague.

Nandini Sharma, a second-year student, says she had to fight with her father, a farmer, to study at JNU.

“My mother and uncles supported me but my father did not want to send me to Delhi from Bihar to pursue my studies because we could not afford it,” she says.

“When I came here I stayed in a dormitory with a friend the first night. It was only after learning that the cost of living was affordable did my father let me stay on and continue my education. I give tuition in the evenings to sustain myself but if the fee is increased, I will have to consider quitting as I cannot ask for money from home as our financial situation is not good,” says Nandini.

The students feel that the

partial “roll back” of the fees announced by the JNU administration after the intervention of the Ministry of Human Resource Development did nothing to solve the financial burden that they are going to face.

Yash, an MA student, says those who are saying that the fee hike is only marginal do not understand the background of students studying here. Most of them are first-generation learners, without subsidised education they will not be able to sustain themselves here, he says.

“I have read comments on social media questioning the protests saying ₹600 per month is not a huge amount. If these people come to JNU and speak to the students from rural and deprived backgrounds, then they will understand the background many students come from and what they had to sacrifice to continue their studies, says Yash.

Former JNUSU president Geeta Kumari says she will have to discontinue her stu-

dies if the fee hike is not rolled back.

“My father retired from the Army and now receives a pension of ₹30,000 per month out of which ₹15,000 goes for loan repayment. We do not have any land or other assets. We are surviving only because we live in a village. I have two other siblings who are dependent on my father. If I am able to complete my PhD, I will be the first to do so from my family. But the administration is making things very tough. I cannot ask my father to support me as I know he does not have the money. I will have to reconsider the future of my education,” she says.

Pending fine

For Geeta, there is an added cost to her education.

The cost of raising her voice has come in the form of a fine and it has risen to almost ₹50,000 during the fee hike protests. She still has pending fines from protests she participated in during her tenure as president of

the JNUSU. “The administration wants to ruin the life of students by increasing hostel fee and then imposes fines when we protest. But this is a fight not just for JNU students but for the future of affordable higher education in the country. Why should only the rich have access to higher education,” says Geeta.

Depanjan, a final year PhD student participating in the protests, says he has completed his stay at the university but is attending the protests so that future students will not have to think twice before taking admission.

“After finishing my M.Phil at Hyderabad Central University, I got a job that paid me ₹20,000 but it was because of the affordable fee at JNU that I could let go of the job and think about pursuing a Ph.D here. With the current hike in hostel fee, students will not be able to do research as they will have to think about how to earn money to support themselves instead of concentrating on doing research.”

‘Return to classes or names will be deleted from rolls’

University issues a circular; V-C appeals to students to resume academic work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Vice-Chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University M. Jagadeesh Kumar on Sunday appealed to students to return to classes and resume their academic and research work so that “losses incurred may be compensated” and they will be able to complete their academic programmes without any further obstacles.

In a circular signed by the Registrar, students were told that if these academic requirements are not met on time, thousands of students may be affected, damaging their future prospects. Students have not been attending classes since October 28 and their end semester ex-

**Students pursuing their BA (Hons.) programme need to clear all the sessional examinations and maintain a minimum CGPA as specified in ordinance**

JNU ADMINISTRATION

aminations will start on December 12.

Reminder to students

Those with deadlines for submission of M.Phil. dissertation/Ph.D. thesis in the schools/centres were reminded that there would be no relaxation in deadlines and students may not be able to re-register themselves.



“Students pursuing their BA (Hons.) programme need to clear all the sessional examinations and maintain a minimum CGPA as specified in ordinance relating to the award of BA (Hons), BA (Pass) degrees failing which their names will be removed from the JNU roll list. The same applies for MA, MSc, degrees as well,” the JNU ad-

ministration said.

For award of the Master of Philosophy degree, students need to clear at least 50% of the total courses. In case they fail to clear any of these courses and if they fail to secure a CGPA of 5.00 on completion of course work at the end of second semester, their names will be automatically removed from the roll list of the university, the administration added.

The administration said that only a few are protesting and destroying the lives of thousands of students. The students have blocked the administration block of the university and have demanded a complete rollback of the hostel fee hike.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Umesh Kadam, Dean of Students at Jawaharlal Nehru University, on Sunday said that the JNU Students’ Union representatives were not invited for the inter-hall administration meeting held on October 28 as the university had not notified the students’ union for the year.

He added that the JNU administration was open to dialogue with elected hostel representatives but not with the “non-notified” students’ union, to end the stand-off by students over the hike in hostel fee.

“The JNUSU election results are still lying with me in my office in a sealed enve-

lope. The election committee announced the results without taking that sealed envelope from me. How can we notify the students’ union when the results are still with me,” he said.

Mr. Kadam was speaking at a press conference organised by “concerned” faculty members of the university who said that they were working to end the strike by students on the campus so that academic life could resume.

‘Politically motivated’

Also present at the conference was Vandana Mishra, Associate Dean, who alleged that she had been confined to her classroom for 29

hours by protesting students last week.

Sharing her experience, Ms. Mishra said that the entire protest was politically motivated as during the time she was confined by students to her classroom, none of them wanted to discuss matters relating to changes in the hostel manual.

“The students were only interested in calling me names and were alleging that I was affiliated to certain political outfits. They never engaged me in a discussion about the hostel rules or hostel fee hike. This shows that it is only a protest with political animosity.”

She added that students

have every right to protest democratically but the protests that were going on were not democratic.

“You cannot reason with a mob of students. If they want to discuss or debate any point in the manual, they must do so through proper channels. The JNUSU has not been notified by the university. It is the elected hostel presidents that need to come forward and discuss matters and they were the ones who were invited to the IHA meet.”

Mr. Kadam said that the university was only following guidelines from the UGC that directed universities to generate internal receipts for hostels.

DU teachers write to President Kovind over ‘looming crisis’ in SOL

They call for revoking of semester system

SIDHARTH RAVI  
NEW DELHI

Expressing concern over a “looming crisis” in Delhi University’s School of Open Learning (SOL), where for the first time semester examinations are to take place later this month, several teachers have written to the university visitor, President Ram Nath Kovind, calling for postponement of the exams and rolling back of the semester system for this year.

Delhi University had introduced the Choice Based Curriculum System (CBCS) to the distance learning programmes it runs, including the SOL and NCWEB, in the current session. As a result, instead of annual mode of examinations, students will have to sit for the semester examinations. Since the start of the academic session, several students, under the banner of Krantikari Yuva Sangharsh (KYS) have been highlighting the lack of preparation to implement the new system and have been carrying out regular protests against it.

“There has been chaos at all study centres of SOL since the introduction of the system,” the group reiterated in a statement on Sunday. The group also alleged that study material had not been made available to most. “All this while the exams are due this very month,” it added.

“We have been observing the growing agitation of SOL students and the high handedness with which the university is circumventing to their objections regarding the manner in which the system has been intro-

duced,” the letter to the President said. It was said to be signed by about 100 teachers.

The teachers said they were shocked that without adequate classes being organised and updated study material being provided “nearly 1.5 lakh first year students would be forced to compete in the upcoming examinations along with regular mode students.”

A review of the study materials provided upon which distance education students mostly rely on showed that they were “full of errors” and not a product of academic protocols, they wrote in the letter. The teachers also raised issues about the way the new system was introduced, arguing that it was “bulldozed” through the university’s statutory bodies.

While a parity in the mode of education between regular courses and distance learning has been welcomed by both the teachers and KYS, “the imposition of a sham parity” with the university rushing through a major restructuring could not be justified, the teachers said. Adding to the warning issued by KYS that there would be “mass failures” in the upcoming examinations, the teachers said that given their experience as evaluators, “the SOL students are going to fair very badly.”

The teachers and KYS have demanded that the CBCS and semester system in SOL be rolled back for the current batch and introduce it from the next academic session with adequate preparation.

Krishna Nagar Market likely to charge for on-street parking soon

SIDHARTH RAVI  
NEW DELHI

East Delhi’s congested Krishna Nagar Market may soon witness on-street parking charges with the civic body planning to tender out the parking here to a private concessionaire, a senior official said.

The market is one of three sites in the city where the Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority (EPCA) has instructed the civic body to carry out pilot parking projects that may be replicated in other areas.

The EDMC had in the second week of October carried out a temporary pedestrianisation of the market, with multiple roads blocked for vehicles. The pilot project involved the deployment of several traffic policemen and municipal staff to keep a check on traffic movement and illegal parking.

Nodal officer in-charge, Assistant Commissioner Aman Rajput, said that the private contractor would be in-charge of various aspects such as barricading and security apart from which it would also turn parking here into a source of revenue.

The EDMC will soon issue a short-period tender for the same and hopes to have the system along with pedestrianised stretches in place by the first week of December, the official said.

Parking in the area is currently free, but as per the new parking policy by the Delhi government, Mr. Rajput pointed out, on-street parking is not permitted.

All clear



Rare sight: Blue skies above the Ashoka Pillar at Feroz Shah Kotla on Sunday. • V.V. KRISHNAN

Gurugram protests for right to clean air

Hundreds of people from different walks of life gather at Leisure Valley Park

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

Several hundred people from different walks of life, including students, activists, doctors, corporate employees, autorickshaw drivers and security guards, assembled at Leisure Valley Park in Sector 29 here on Sunday morning to hold a massive demonstration seeking their right to clean air. They were mostly dressed in black and wearing masks.

The two-hour-long protest – seemingly one of the biggest in the Millennium City so far against air pollution – was jointly organised by several private and government schools, corporate houses,



The protesters were mostly in black and wearing masks. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Moms, I Am Gurgaon, Why Waste Your Waste, Garbage Free India, Nagarro, Make My Trip, Genpact, IBM and Bata.

Nagarro CEO Manas Fuloria said: “Nagarro employs 5,000 people in Gurugram and the National Association of Software and Services Companies [NASSCOM] employs may be 100 times this number here and form the main engine of the economy. On behalf of NASSCOM, Haryana, I can state that we are suffering greatly on account of air pollution. Our people are unwell; they are frustrated. They are leaving for other cities and countries. And our international clients are nervous. They are cancelling

their trips to India.”

Mr. Fuloria, along with several other protesters, also held a token hunger-strike at the venue. The protesters carried placards pleading with the government to grow forests and sought the right to live and breathe clean air.

Pawan Tayla of Art of Living said that it was heart-warming to see the people of Gurugram from all walks of life voicing their concerns for clean air.

A few among the protesters, including activists and doctors, addressed the gathering on the causes, implications and the possible solutions for the rising level of air pollution.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	215	Gurugram	136
Ghaziabad	218	Faridabad	197
Noida	208	Greater Noida	202
0-50 Good 51-100 Satisfactory 101-200 Moderate 201-300 Poor 301-400 Very poor >401 Severe			
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS)   SOURCE: CPCB			

Wind helps air quality reach ‘poor’ category

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Air quality in the Capital on Sunday settled in the ‘poor’ category primarily due to an increase in wind speed. Delhi’s AQI on Sunday was 215 (poor); it was 357 (very poor) on Saturday, as per CPCB data.

The air quality is likely to improve marginally on Monday but may deteriorate on Tuesday, said forecasting agency SAFAR.

Pointing out that there is a “strong correlation” between stubble burning and pollution in north India, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said: “The stubble burning has stopped and with it, the air quality in Delhi has improved.”

Meanwhile, BJP MP Vijay Goel and members from the party’s Delhi unit held a protest at Jantar Mantar on Sunday accusing the AAP government of failing to curb pollution in the Capital.



THIRD TIME'S THE CHARM  
Prosecution figures of the three editions of odd-even:

	FIRST EDITION	SECOND EDITION	THIRD EDITION
ENFORCED FROM	January 1 to January 15, 2016	April 15 to April 30, 2016	November 4 to November 15 (suspended on November 11 and 12 due to Guru Parv)
TOTAL NUMBER OF DAYS OF ENFORCEMENT	13	14	9
TOTAL NUMBER OF PROSECUTIONS	10,058	9,576	4,885
AVERAGE NO. OF FINES ISSUED DAILY	774	684	543

#NO RESTRICTIONS ON SUNDAYS

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
JATIN ANAND  
NEW DELHI

Motorists have increasingly become more willing to comply with the odd-even restrictions, as per analysis of prosecution data of the three editions of the scheme that the city has seen since 2016. The third and latest edition concluded on November 15.

The scheme was initiated by the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government as a measure to tackle rising air pollution in Delhi. Odd-even is a road-rationing system in which vehicles with registration numbers ending with even digits are allowed to run on even dates, and those ending with odd numbers are permitted to ply on odd dates. The restrictions do not apply on Sundays.

During its 13-day debut from January 1 to January 15, 2016, a total of 10,058 motorists were penalised for not following the regulations.

The rule was enforced again from April 15 to April 30, 2016. In the 14-day period, 9,576 drivers were issued the ₹2,000 fine for violating the rules.

The third and latest edition of the scheme has been the shortest. It was implemented from November 4 to November 15, but the scheme was suspended on November 11 and 12 so that the Sikh community could observe Guru Parv without any restric-

tions.

In effect, the third iteration of the scheme lasted only nine days. During that period 4,885 fines were issued to violators. This time the penalty was ₹4,000.

The Delhi government has said that the dip in prosecution figures was evidence of the scheme's increased acceptability among the Capital's citizens.

"The decrease in fines issued this time indicates an increase in voluntary compliance with the regulations of the scheme. It also shows that the people of Delhi are ready to do their bit for better environmental conditions if governments in power make an effort to address the issue," said Jasmine Shah, vice-chairman of the Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi, a government think-tank.

**Scheme extension**

"As far as environmental impact [of the scheme] is concerned, there are many studies which have proved its effectiveness in bettering the air quality of the Capital," Mr. Shah said, adding that the Delhi government is monitoring the Air Quality Index (AQI) of the city on an hourly basis and a decision on whether or not to extend the enforcement of the scheme will be taken on Monday.

On November 15, as the third edition neared its conclusion,

# Delhiites warming up to odd-even

The Capital has witnessed three editions of the scheme since 2016. Each time, fewer motorists have been caught violating the rule



the Supreme Court observed that the scheme seemed to have had little impact on air pollution. The Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Deepak Gupta stated that improving public transport so that more people use it, may work out to be a better solution than the odd-even scheme. The judges added that cities that have successfully used the scheme had given no exemptions. Women drivers and two-wheelers were exempted from the rule this time.

During the hearing, senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, who represented the Delhi government, told the court that data show a 5%-12% reduction in pollution due to the scheme. Justice

Mishra, however, observed that the AQI figure of last year and this year for the period seemed to be the same.

**'Commuters being harassed'**

According to the Opposition, the scheme has led to nothing but harassment for commuters.

"Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal is trying to mislead the people. Even the Supreme Court has pulled up the Delhi government for not being able to submit any credible evidence positing that odd-even had any impact on the air quality of the city. The

scheme just ends up becoming a source of harassment for drivers belonging to the middle-class," said BJP MP Vijay Goel, citing personal accounts from motorists. "If Mr. Kejriwal is serious about the issue of pollution, why did he not allow the scheme to be in place around Chhath Puja? And why was it allowed to be suspended for two consecutive days around Prakash Parv?" Mr. Goel asked.

Meanwhile, the Delhi Traffic Police has been slowing honing its skills to catch violators of the scheme. The

department issued 2,870 fines in the first edition of the scheme; in the latest iteration, it caught and fined 2,500 motorists.

A senior traffic police officer said they identified 200 traffic points in more than 50 traffic circles across the city to enforce the scheme – in coordination with the Delhi Transport and Revenue departments.

"This time, it was easier for the traffic police to identify violators as there was no exemption for CNG vehicles. In 2016, traffic policemen first had to look for a CNG sticker before noticing the registration number," a police officer said, adding that the Delhi Traffic Police issued on-the-spot e-challans to violators.

**Schools shut; fine doubled**

After the implementation of the new Motor Vehicle Act this year, motorists were "very cautious" and sought to avoid violating any traffic rules, the officer said, adding that this may have had an impact on the downward trend of the fines.

"This time, the fine amount

was ₹4,000... double the fine amount issued when the rule was first introduced," a traffic policeman pointed out.

"Fewer cars were seen on the roads as people voluntarily car-pooled. Schools remained shut for four days due to extreme pollution levels during the scheme," said another traffic policeman.

Despite a clash between police and lawyers at the Tis Hazari Courts on the day the odd-even scheme came into effect, the force managed to fine 233 violators. A day after the clash, policemen staged a massive protest at the Delhi PHQ at ITO; but they still managed to catch and fine 213 motorists violating the odd-even rule.

After the conclusion of the second edition, the Delhi government formed a six-member committee to study the impact of the opening of schools and hot weather on the scheme. The committee had concluded that the second iteration was "largely successful" as car owners voluntarily complied with the initiative. It also pointed out that opening of schools had led to congestion in the vicinity of the institutions.



• SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



<b>DELHI</b> 🌤️ <b>Timings</b>		
<b>MONDAY, NOV. 18</b>		
☀️ RISE	06:46	🌇 SET 17:27
🌙 RISE	22:43	🌇 SET 11:52
<b>TUESDAY, NOV. 19</b>		
☀️ RISE	06:46	🌇 SET 17:26
🌙 RISE	23:47	🌇 SET 12:40
<b>WEDNESDAY, NOV. 20</b>		
☀️ RISE	06:47	🌇 SET 17:26
🌙 RISE	00:00	🌇 SET 13:24

<b>Delhi Weather</b>	max	min
Delhi City	29	16
Safdarjang	29	16
Palam	28	14

**Delhi Palam Today**  
**28°C** Haze and mist will prevail in the morning. A windy and comfortable day lies ahead. The sky will be sunny.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
**27°C** Shallow fog will prevail during cool morning. Day will be comfortable with a clear sky.

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## AMUSU hails AIMPLB’s Ayodhya move

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GHAZIABAD

The Aligarh Muslim University Students’ Union has welcomed the decision of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) to file a review petition challenging the Supreme Court’s Ayodhya verdict. A statement issued by AMUSU president Salman Imtiaz said the verdict “appeared one-sided in the conclusion.”

“We consider the building of the temple over the land of the mosque as a humiliation, injustice, and subjugation of Muslim minorities. It appears a step towards the creation of Hindu domination in India wherein Muslims will be rendered to second-grade citizens,” Mr Imtiaz said.

He further said the AMUSU was committed to the cause of Babri Masjid, and it would never allow India to lose its constitutional core. “We are happy with many details in the judgment that have strengthened the constitutional framework of the nation, and outrightly rejected Hindu chauvinism,” the statement said.

# It’s BJP vs. the rest in Jharkhand

JMM, Congress and RJD have stitched a seat-sharing arrangement for the polls

**AMARNATH TEWARY**  
PATNA



Senior BJP leader and CM Raghubar Das

With just two weeks to go for the first phase of Assembly elections in Jharkhand, it appears it’s going to be the ruling BJP versus the rest. The opposition Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), the Congress and the Rashtriya Janata Dal have stitched a seat-sharing arrangement, while the BJP and its alliance partner All Jharkhand Students’ Union (AJSU) are not admitting publicly that the alliance between them has fallen apart.

The BJP’s other alliance partners in neighbouring Bihar, the JD(U) and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), are contesting alone in Jharkhand.

Senior BJP leader and Minister for Civil Supplies, Food and Consumer Affairs in the Raghubar Das Ministry, Saryu Roy, 68, on Sunday declared he was contesting the poll independently.

Mr. Roy, who has regularly been exposing corruption in the State and raising his voice against his government’s “wrong policies”, appeared hurt over his name missing from the BJP’s list of 72 candidates for the 81-member Assembly.

### Minister upset

On Saturday, he wished the JMM chief ministerial candidate Hemant Soren a “bright future”. Mr. Roy is also said to be upset with his own party for giving ticket to Bhanu

Pratap Shahi, who is an accused in a ₹130-crore medicine procurement scam which had rocked the then Chief Minister Madhu Koda’s government between 2006 and 2008.

While speaking to a national news channel, Mr. Roy disclosed that BJP president Amit Shah didn’t like his “friendship” with Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar. “Now, I’m not going to beg for a ticket from my party”, he told journalists in Jamshedpur.

Mr. Roy, originally from Bihar’s Buxar district, represented Jamshedpur (West) seat in the Jharkhand Assembly and this time he is likely to contest both from Jamshedpur (East) against Chief Minister Raghubar Das and Jamshedpur (West). Polling for Jamshedpur East and West seats will be held on December 7 and the last date for filing nomination is November 18.

Earlier, the JMM, the Congress and the RJD had announced that their alliance was contesting 43, 31 and seven seats respectively.

The BJP’s alliance partner AJSU had demanded 17 seats but the BJP was unwilling to give them not more than 13 seats. Meanwhile, the BJP announced its candidates for some of the seats the AJSU wanted to contest and, later, AJSU too fielded its own candidates against BJP nominees. “They want to play the victim card telling voters that the alliance fell apart because of the other”, said JMM leader Soren.

Besides, the JD(U) and LJP too have declared they are contesting in 81 and 50 seats respectively and this is likely to make a dent in the BJP vote bank. Former chief minister Babulal Marandi-led Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) too is contesting the election independently.

# ‘Give ₹2,500 per acre to Haryana farmers for not burning stubble’

State govt.’s ₹1,000 per acre not enough: Hooda

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
CHANDIGARH



Former Haryana CM Bhopinder Singh Hooda

Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda on Sunday demanded that the Haryana government give compensation of at least ₹2,500 per acre for crop residue management to small and marginal farmers who did not burn stubble.

If Punjab can give ₹2,500 per acre as compensation to small and marginal farmers who refrained from burning crop residue, why can’t Haryana do the same, the senior Congress leader asked. Speaking in his home town, Rohtak, Mr. Hooda said the State government’s announcement of giving ₹1,000 per acre as operational charge for managing crop residue would not be enough.

The Leader of Opposition in the Haryana Assembly al-

increasing due to stubble burning, the 72-year-old opined that blaming farmers who set fire to crop residue was not going to solve the problem as various stakeholders need to find a solution to the issue.

### ‘Various factors’

“There are various factors that cause pollution. Burning stubble is only one of them. There is pollution caused by vehicle fumes, industries, construction activities and several other factors that are responsible for it. Just putting the blame on farmers is not the right thing to do,” Mr. Hooda said.

Notably, burning of crop residue by farmers in Haryana and Punjab is being stated to be one of the major reasons behind the severe pollution levels in Delhi-NCR.

# Protect forest rights, avert possibility of eviction: tribals

Hear them out before taking a final decision, says Union Minister Faggan Singh Kulaste

**SIDHARTH YADAV**  
BHOPAL

Leaders of 80 tribal groups from across Madhya Pradesh called upon governments to work towards safeguarding their traditional rights over forests in a bid to avert the possibility of eviction.

As the Supreme Court on November 26 will hear States on the status of pending rights claims, the groups, under the banner of ‘Protect Jal-Jungle-Zameen and Lives’, visited Chambal, Bundelkhand, Vindhya, Mahakoshal and Malwa-Nimar regions of the State over a month.

### Spreading awareness

They highlighted non-implementation of laws to authorities, spread awareness on them among tribals, and mobilised them.

“This movement is a call



Tribals at the ‘Hunkar’ rally in Bhopal on Sunday. • A.M. FARUQUI

to governments that they should consider it their duty to ensure the rights for tribals, facing the threat of eviction owing to the Court’s order,” said Gulzar Singh Markam, organiser of the ‘Hunkar’ rally, which began on October 2 and culminated at an event here on Sunday.

The Court on February 28

had stayed its February 13 order that lakhs of those whose claims, under the Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006, were rejected be evicted. In Madhya Pradesh, which boasts the largest forest cover and 24 tribal districts, the most in the country, 3,60,181 out of 6,26,511 claims were rejected.

“The Centre believes tribals should be heard before any decision is taken. Issues should be resolved locally and States should do their bit. So far nine States have submitted status reports,” Union Minister of State for Steel Faggan Singh Kulaste told *The Hindu*.

According to a report of the Standing Committee on Forests, 25,000 hectares of forests were diverted for industrial use every year across the country, said Madhuri Krishnaswamy, of Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathan.

### ‘Eye on polls’

As for the Centre’s withdrawal of the proposed changes to the FRA, she said, “This was done keeping an eye on the Assembly elections in Jharkhand. We fear they will revive the plan after the results.”

“The main challenge during our field visits was to bring distinct tribes on the same platform. They may have their own peculiarities, but the struggle is towards a common goal,” said Yogesh Diwan, member of Janpahal.

Former State in-charge of the Bhim Army, Sunil Astay, said it was important for Dalits and tribals to become part of a common struggle as both were suppressed at the hands of the same forces. “At present, Dalits are aware of their rights, but many tribes still aren’t. Being part of the same movement will help them demand rights more forcefully.”

State Forest Minister Umang Singhar, Home Minister Bala Bachchan, Tribal Affairs Minister Omkar Singh Markam and more than 15 MLAs across party lines were present at the event.

# Woman dacoit arrested in M.P.’s Satna

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
SATNA

A 21-year-old woman dacoit, who was carrying cash rewards on her head, was arrested on Sunday from a forest area near here, police said.

The dacoit, Sadhana Patel, was wanted by the police in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Both the States had announced ₹10,000 each cash reward on her, police said.

“Patel was the leader of a gang of male dacoits. They had committed robberies and kidnapping for ransom,” Satna Superintendent of Police Riyaz Iqbal said.

“Based on a tip-off, we arrested her from Kadian jungle, around 50 kms from the district headquarters,” he added.

# 14 criminal gangs busted in Haryana, says DGP

Special drive conducted in the State

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
CHANDIGARH

The Haryana police busted 14 active criminal gangs operating in different parts of the State in October, Director General of Police Manoj Yadava said in a statement here on Sunday.

Besides, the police has also arrested 285 proclaimed offenders and 330 bail jumpers, many of whom were evading arrest for a very long time, Mr. Yadava said.

The gangs were involved in robbery, other criminal activities, the police chief said, adding that 55 cases were worked out and stolen property worth more than ₹59 lakh was seized following the crackdown.

Of the 14 gangs, two were of robbers, three of burglars, five of thieves and the remaining four were engaged in other crimes, he said.

The crackdown began on October 1 as part of a special drive conducted in the entire State, he added.

During this period, police also seized 3.9 kg opium, 4.3

**Police also arrested 483 people under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act**

**MANOJ YADAVA**  
Director General of Police

kg charas, over 252 kg poppy husk, 107 illegal pistols, 2 revolvers and 169 cartridges from those arrested.

Mr. Yadava said that police had also arrested 483 people under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act during a special anti-narcotic drive conducted between August 20 and September 20 in the State.

A total of 1,204 kg of drugs were also seized during this period.

He said that the State police was constantly making efforts to check the crime rate as well as to trace and nab notorious criminals.

“We will continue to speed up our operations against the criminals in the State,” he said.

## Brick by brick



Labourers stacking bricks for drying at a brick kiln in Rohtak district of Haryana. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



# Protests lined up against Citizenship Bill in Assam

Bharatiya Janata Party is likely to reintroduce the Bill during the winter session of Parliament

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI**

More than 100 civil society and students’ organisations and political parties have lined up protests against the BJP’s move to reintroduce the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill during the winter session of Parliament.

The Bill seeks to fast-track the process of granting citizenship to non-Muslims who have allegedly fled religious persecution from Afghanistan, Ban-

gladesh and Pakistan till December 31, 2014.

The Left Democratic Front, Assam, a coalition of nine political parties including the Communist Party of India (Marxist), Janata Dal (Secular) and Nationalist Congress Party, has called for a State-wide protest on Monday.

**‘Anti-Assam’**

“The Bill is communal and anti-Assam, as it would render the expensive exercise of up-

dating the National Register of Citizens meaningless,” a spokesperson of the Front said on Sunday.

About 30 organisations aligned with the All Assam Students’ Union have chalked out a series of programmes for drumming up support against the push for the “jatidhwangshi” (race-destroying) Bill.

According to the Union, the six-year Assam Agitation for ejecting illegal migrants would go waste if the Bill is passed by

Parliament.

The Assam Accord of August 1985 that put an end to the agitation had prescribed March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date for detecting and deporting illegal migrants from the State.

**1966 base year**

The NRC is being updated on the basis of this cut-off date, although officials have allegedly considered 1966 as the base year for ascertaining the citi-

zenship of people belonging to the non-indigenous communities.

Another 70 organisations, led by the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, have also announced a “door-to-door” campaign against the Bill from Monday.

A Samiti spokesperson criticised Assam Health and Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma for insisting that the Bill would be in the State’s interest.

## Police launch probe into hacking of ATM booths in Agartala

**SYED SAJJAD ALI  
AGARTALA**

The Tripura police on Sunday identified ATM booths in Agartala which were targeted by hackers to loot lakhs of rupees over the past three days. The Cyber Crime Cell of the State police launched a probe after several people complained of losing money from their bank accounts.

The Cell marked three ATM booths of the State Bank of India and one of the Tripura State Cooperative Bank in the bank heist. “ATM card skimmers were installed in the booths to commit

the fraud,” an officer connected with the probe told *The Hindu*.

He said CCTV footage of the booths was being checked to identify the accused. Those who lost money are customers of the SBI. The Cyber Cell, which is taking support of the bank’s technical wing, has made some progress in the investigation. Sources said the hackers worked out of Kolkata.

Meanwhile, the Tripura police have appealed to those who have used any of the four ATM booths in the past couple of days to change their PIN immediately.



# BJP leaders pay homage to Sena founder

Fadnavis taunted with slogans by Sena workers, posts video with Bal Thackeray’s comments on self-respect



In memoriam: Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray and (right) Devendra Fadnavis offer prayers at the Bal Thackeray memorial at Shivaji Park on Sunday. •VIJAY BATE



**ALOK DESHPANDE**  
MUMBAI  
Leaders of the BJP leaders, including former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, offered tributes to Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray at his memorial at Shivaji Park on Sunday, his seventh death anniversary, even as the Sena is on the verge of exiting the NDA and may even form a government in Maharashtra with the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

**Cold welcome**  
No Sena leader, except party chief Uddhav Thackeray’s personal secretary Milind Narvekar, was present to receive Mr. Fadnavis, who has been engaged in a war of words with Mr. Thackeray. The former CM, accompanied by former education minister Vinod Tawde, also encountered Sena workers shouting party slogans at him.  
The BJP leader, meanwhile, posted a 1.46-minute-long video on his Twitter page, comprising lines about self-respect from Bal Thackeray’s speeches. The video

seemed to be aimed at Uddhav Thackeray for aligning with the Congress and NCP, which are opposed to the idea of Hindutva.  
The video – captioned “Honourable Balasaheb gave us the mantra of having self-respect” – included the Sena founder’s remark saying: “Till the time this self-respect is alive, the country will have golden days. Otherwise nothing will happen. Everything will vanish.”  
Another line said, “Name and money. Once your name is defamed it will never return. Money will come and go. Preserve your name.” The video ends with a remark on the Hindu religion. “The saffron flag of the Hindu religion should fly higher and higher.”  
Ever since the Sena decided to dump the BJP and sought help from the other two parties, questions have been raised whether the party’s ideology of Hindutva allies with that of the Congress and NCP.  
All three parties have repeatedly said the issue will be addressed only when an alliance is sealed.

## Cong.-NCP leaders join Sena rank and file to offer tributes

**TANVI DESHPANDE**  
MUMBAI  
Several leaders of the Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) paid their respects to Shiv Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray at Shivaji Park on his death anniversary on Sunday, apart from the entire rank and file of the Sena.  
Party MP Sanjay Raut once again said the State will soon have a chief minister from the Shiv Sena. The Sena is in talks with the Congress and NCP to possibly come together to form a government.  
Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, along with wife, Rashmi, and sons Aaditya and Tejas, paid his respects to his father.  
From senior leaders Manohar Joshi, Subhash Desai, Neelam Gorhe and Mr. Raut, to Yuva Sena mem-

bers and party workers, Shiv Sainiks flocked to the memorial. The Sena’s leader in the Assembly, Eknath Shinde, and party workers reached on foot from Dadar station.  
Senior NCP leaders Jayant Patil, Chhagan Bhujbal, Jitendra Awhad visited the memorial early in the day. Senior Congress leader Bhaji Jagtap also paid his respects, saying he does so every year and there is nothing political about it.  
**Social media tributes**  
Throughout the day, thousands of people visited the memorial. Others, including celebrities, paid their respects on social media. NCP chief Sharad Pawar tweeted his respects to “the man who created a Marathi Manos who celebrated regional pride, the man known for his oratory and eternally loved by his followers.”  
**Raj remembers**  
Though MNS chief Raj Thackeray, the Sena founder’s nephew, did not visit Shivaji Park, the MNS Twitter handle tweeted a video with a montage of Bal Thackeray’s pictures. The MNS chief is heard narrating an anecdote of when the uncle and nephew had to reach Sena Bhavan. Since the Sena founder did not use a car with a red beacon, he refused to sit in the then mayor’s car and travelled by taxi, with the mayor’s car following it.  
Mr. Raut, when asked about talks with the Congress-NCP, told mediapersons, “Balasaheb’s dream of having a Sena CM will be fulfilled soon.”

# Many turncoats in touch to return to NCP: Jayant Patil

Party to decide their fate based on merit, local discussions

**SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE**  
PUNE

A number of MLAs, who defected to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) prior to the Assembly elections, are in contact with the Sharad Pawar-led party, NCP State president Jayant Patil claimed on Sunday.  
“As many as 15-20 MLAs, including NCP leaders who switched alliances to the BJP before the polls and a number of Independents, are in touch with us. However, we are not interested in conducting a mega *bharti* (recruitment) and these MLAs will only be taken into our party on merit,” Mr. Patil said, ahead of the NCP’s core committee meeting in Pune.  
Refusing to reveal any names, he further said the decision to take such MLAs back into the party would only be reached after taking into confidence local leaders of their constituencies and the youth leadership within the party.  
**Differing ideologies**  
He emphasised that the NCP would never form a government with the BJP, given their adversarial ideologies. When asked how the party could then explain its moves to form a government with



NCP chief Sharad Pawar meets the party’s core committee at his home in Pune on Sunday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the rightwing Shiv Sena, Mr. Patil said the reigning spirit among party workers was that “a brick [Shiv Sena] is softer than a stone [the BJP].”  
“From mulling over giving support to the Sena from the outside, we are now actively discussing on how to form a government together. However, a common minimum programme of all three parties [Sena, NCP and Congress] would be decided in Delhi only after a meeting by the heads of all parties,” he said, remarking that while efforts were on to form a government as per the wishes of the people, the result had to be a stable government.  
A clandestine understanding between the BJP and the NCP before the 2014 general elections had resulted in the crumbling of the till then unbroken Sena-BJP (since 1989) and Congress-NCP (since 1999) alliances.  
In the aftermath of the 2014 Assembly poll result, the NCP had offered unsolicited outside support to the then minority BJP government while the Sena dithered.  
**Core committee meets**  
On Sunday, the NCP’s core committee meeting, chaired by Mr. Pawar at his Pune residence, saw the participation of the party top brass, including Mr. Patil, Ajit Pawar, Dhananjay Munde, Supriya Sule, Chhagan Bhujbal and Sunil Tatkar.  
The meeting went on for three hours.

## Uncertainty looms large as Pawar set to meet Sonia today

Meeting may decide if Cong., NCP, Sena stitch together alliance

**ALOK DESHPANDE**  
MUMBAI

The uncertainty over who will form the government in Maharashtra looms large with all eyes now set on the meeting between Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar in Delhi on Monday.  
Other senior leaders of both parties are likely to reach Delhi on Monday and Tuesday as the talks between the party chiefs are likely to stretch for more than a day. The meeting in Delhi is likely to finalise the fate of the State’s political situation, and whether a Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP government will take shape for the first time.  
“Our president Sharad Pawarji will meet Congress president Soniiaji Gandhi in Delhi on Monday. We held a core committee meeting and decided to plan our next move only after discussions with the Congress, as we fought the election together. Other party leaders will meet on Tuesday, and a decision on forming a government will be announced soon,” the NCP’s chief spokesperson Nawab Malik said.  
The Congress is reported-



After the meeting between Sharad Pawar and Sonia Gandhi, Congress and NCP leaders will meet on Tuesday. •FILE PHOTO

## ₹4 cr. facelift for 9 gates in Aurangabad

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
AURANGABAD  
Nine historical entrances that give Aurangabad the identity of “city of gates” will be repaired at a cost of ₹4 crore, a senior official said on Sunday.  
Tenders for the work have been floated by the Aurangabad Smart City Development Corporation Limited (ASCDCL), and the entire project is expected to be completed in nine months after the bids are finalised, the official said.  
“A total of ₹4 crore will be spent on the repairs and maintenance of these nine gates that have historical value and are the identity of Aurangabad. The contractor appointed will have to maintain the gates for a period of five years,” Pushkal Shivam, senior consultant with ASCDCL, said.

## Ram temple a symbol of self-respect: VHP

Secretary general targets Kerala government over Sabarimala controversy

**DHAIRYA GAJARA**  
MUMBAI  
The Ram Janmabhoomi temple in Ayodhya is a symbol of Hindu religious sentiments and self-respect, Vishwa Hindu Parishad secretary general Milind Parande has said.  
Speaking to the media in the city on Sunday, Mr. Parande termed the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya title suit as “the victory of truth” and a result of the struggle and sacrifices made by lakhs of Hindus.  
“As the Supreme Court has asked the Central government to organise a trust for the construction of the temple, we hope that the government soon takes steps for it,” he said.  
The VHP secretary general also took on the Kerala government on the Sabarimala temple controversy, saying it is the intent of the ruling par-



Milind Parande  
•EMMANUEL YOGINI

ty to hurt the religious sentiments of Hindu devotees.  
“The VHP does not worry about being a part of the trust committee, but we believe that the construction [of the Ram temple] should be done according to the wishes of Hindu society... The temple should be constructed with the money of Hindu society as it’s the Hindu society’s temple, and it should not become a government temple,” Mr. Parande said.  
Given that the All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB) has decided to file a review petition against the Ayodhya verdict, Mr. Parande said it was their right to file a review petition, although the decision of Supreme Court was very balanced.  
“They had the time in the 40-day hearings to prove that the disputed land had a Muslim graveyard or it was an empty land, but they failed to prove it.”  
He said if the AIMPLB thought the demolition of the Babri mosque was illegal, it should also think of the temple at that site, which he claimed was demolished before the mosque.  
Mr. Parande said neither the VHP nor the Ram Janmabhoomi Nyas had asked for any donations for the temple construction in the recent times, and warned people not to believe in rumours.  
He also accused the Communist Party of Kerala of hurting religious feelings of Hindu devotees by trying to portray the Sabarimala temple issue as one of discrimination towards women. The VHP secretary general also accused the Kerala government and Christian missionaries of wanting to hurt the religious sentiments of Hindus, for which, they are using the Sabarimala issue.  
Mr. Parande was in Mumbai to attend an annual function of a home for cancer patients managed by the VHP.

## 11 leopards trapped in three weeks in Gujarat

Suspected to have caused 8 deaths

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
AHMEDABAD  
Eleven leopards have been captured over three weeks in Gujarat’s Junagadh and Amreli districts on suspicion that they are responsible for the deaths of eight people since April this year, a senior forest department official said on Sunday.  
The latest among the 11 was a female leopard, which was trapped on Saturday night from the farm of one Kurjibhai Kyada in Manekvada village in Amreli, chief conservator of forests, Junagadh Wildlife Circle, Dushyant Vasavada said.  
A leopard was trapped from Lunghiya village in Amreli on November 13 and another in Shivthali in Junagadh the next day, over 300 km from here. “These leopards have been captured in the region around Visavadar

taluka of Junagadh, and Dhari and Bagasara talukas of adjoining Amreli, from where eight deaths have been reported due to leopard attacks since April this year,” Mr. Vasavada said.  
He said scat and pug marks were being analysed to zero in on the leopards responsible for attacks on humans, adding that the big cats were being kept at the Sasan rescue centre. “We suspect these leopards are behind the attacks. They have been held as a preventive measure, and they are not going to be released any time soon,” the official said.  
The decision to catch the leopards was taken last month after a 60-year-old man, Valabhai Maru, was killed in Visavadar. Prior to this, a 5-year-old boy was killed in Champathal village, and two others in Molvel.

## Seismometer, other key devices at Jayakwadi dam go ‘out of order’

Retired MERI staff to be enlisted to repair equipment

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
AURANGABAD

The seismometer, which helps measure the magnitude of an earthquake, and several other key instruments installed at the Jayakwadi dam in Aurangabad district have stopped functioning properly, an official said on Sunday.  
Retired staff of the Maharashtra Engineering Research Institute (MERI), who have expertise in repairing these devices, are being roped in to get them fixed.  
“The seismometer was installed at the Jayakwadi dam after the devastating earthquake in Killari in Latur district in 1993. This instrument is powerful as it has a range of 10,000 km. In the past, it has recorded the epicentres of earthquakes in Pakistan, Afghanistan, Russia and Nepal,” executive engineer Rajendra Kale said.  
“But this and other instruments, like the piezometer, earth pressure cell and slope meter, have been out of order for the last two years. Every instrument is important and we are trying to get them re-



The seismometer was installed at the Jayakwadi dam after the earthquake in Killari in Latur district in 1993. •FILE PHOTO

paired soon or get new ones as early as possible,” he said. “We hope to get [the seismometer] repaired within a week. If the repair work does not yield positive results then we will seek permission to purchase a new one,” Mr. Kale said.

## CM rejected proposal for subsidised fish: GFP

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
PANAJI

Goa Forward Party MLA Vinod Paleykar on Sunday said Chief Minister Pramod Sawant had rejected a proposal to create a corporation to supply subsidised fish in the coastal State.  
Addressing a press conference here, Mr. Paleykar said the file to set up the State Fisheries Corporation was at the final stage of approval when he was fisheries minister. Mr. Paleykar and two other GFP ministers were dropped from the Cabinet on July 13. “We were shocked that Mr. Sawant on July 25 rejected the file without specifying any reason,” he said.  
Mr. Sawant and Goa Fisheries Minister Philip Neri Rodrigues could not be contacted.





**Speaker's remarks unfortunate: Yanamala**  
VIJAYAWADA  
In a sharp reaction to Andhra Pradesh Speaker Tammineni Sitaram's allegations against Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders, former Minister Yanamala Ramakrishnudu said that none who held the august post in the past had made such comments. In a letter to the Speaker on Sunday, Mr. Ramakrishnudu said that it was the Speaker's duty to ensure that parliamentary decorum was maintained under all circumstances.

**VRO bites colleague's ear in Andhra Pradesh**  
KURNOOL  
The Mandal Revenue Office here in Andhra Pradesh was witness to fistcuffs between two village revenue officers (VRO) on Sunday. The altercation between Joharapuram VRO Krishnadevaraya and his Venugula counterpart Suresh Reddy began over a money transaction. In a fit of rage, Mr. Krishnadevaraya allegedly bit Mr. Reddy's ear. MRO Tirupati Sai had to then intervene and broker peace between the two in his chambers.

**Police inspector, villagers injured in stone-throwing**  
GUNTUR  
A sub-inspector of police and some villagers were injured in stone-throwing on Saturday night when a religious event at Dharnavaram village in Durgi mandal here in Andhra Pradesh turned violent. The incident occurred during Harihara Balanagendra Swamy 'tirunallu' (carnival). While a drama was being staged, a section of crowd displayed flags of a political party, while others objected to it. The war of words turned violent and soon, the crowd began throwing stones.

# There is *de facto* stay on Sabarimala verdict: Minister

Kerala government can act only according to court orders, says Balan

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Kerala Law Minister A.K. Balan said on Sunday that there was a *de facto* stay on the Supreme Court's September 2018 order granting unrestricted entry for women to the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple, adding that the State could act only on the basis of the verdict.  
In a 3:2 verdict on November 14, the five-judge Constitution Bench decided to refer the matter to a larger Bench to re-examine religious issues, including those arising out of its 2018 verdict lifting the centuries-old ban on women of menstruating age visiting the temple.  
"In this case, a constitutional government can act only according to the orders of the court. Now, we have a new problem. The question is whether the November 14 verdict has stayed the earlier order. *De jure*, there is no stay..., but *de facto*, there is a stay. The 2018 order has been stayed in effect, though it was not officially mentioned," Mr. Balan told reporters.  
*De jure* means existing or holding a specified position by legal right, while *de facto* means existing or holding a specified position in fact, but not necessarily by legal right.  
Though the court did not stay its 2018 order allowing the entry of women into the temple, the LDF government in Kerala has said the shrine is not a ground for activism and has made it clear it will not help women who want to visit the temple for publicity. On Saturday, the police said some women were sent back from the Pamba base camp as they were in the "barred" age group.



**Rain no hurdle:** Devotees queuing up in heavy rain at the Ayyappa temple in Sabarimala on the first day of the Malayalam month of Vrischikom on Sunday. • PTI

## Mandalam season gets off to a smooth start unlike last year

**RADHAKRISHNAN KUTTOOR**  
SABARIMALA  
The 41-day annual Mandalam pilgrim season began at the Sabarimala Ayyappa temple on the first day of the Malayalam month of Vrischikom on Sunday.  
The sacred grove (*poon-kavanam*) witnessed heavy rush as hundreds of devotees thronged the hillock to offer prayers in the early hours of the first day of the pilgrim season.  
New head priest (Melsanthi) A.K. Sudheer Namboodiri opened the sanctum sanctorum at 3 a.m. and the Sannidhanam resonated with high-pitched 'Swamiyei, Saranam Ayyappa' chants.  
The pilgrims waited for

hours together in long queues to get a glimpse of the deity. They had to wait inside the iron barricades at the Valiyanadappanthal and on the Saramkuthy path for a long time to reach the temple sopanam.  
**Tight security**  
All pilgrims were diverted through door-framed metal detectors kept at the Valiyanadappanthal and at the entry point on the northern side of the temple as part of the tight security arrangements.  
The calm ambience at Sabarimala and its base camps this time was in sharp contrast to the tumultuous situation during the previous season in the wake of the Supreme Court verdict, permitting entry for women of all age groups into the temple.  
The rituals began with chief priest (Tantri) Kandararu Maheshwararu Mohanararu, performing the Ash-tadravya Maha Ganapati homom in the morning. Both the Tantri and the Melsanthi distributed *prasadam* (sandal paste with flowers offered to the deity) to the devotees.  
*Neyyabhishekam*, the ritualistic pouring of ghee over the Ayyappa idol, which the devotees consider an important offering to the deity, began at 3.30 a.m.  
The 41-day Mandalam pilgrim season will come to close on December 27.

# Telangana police foil fast of top RTC union leader

Ashwathama Reddy shifted to hospital as stir continues

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
HYDERABAD  
The indefinite strike by transport employees in Telangana entered the 44th day on Sunday even as police foiled the fast of a top union leader.  
The 'hunger strike' by TSRTC (Telangana State Road Transport Corporation) employees unions joint action committee convener E. Ashwathama Reddy was foiled as he was picked up from his house, taken in a police vehicle and admitted to a State-run hospital, police said.  
Mr. Reddy, who had begun the hunger strike on Saturday, said he would continue his fast.  
Similarly, another TSRTC JAC leader Raji Reddy was taken into custody from his house. The striking workers raised slogans against the government over the police action.  
The police also thwarted the proposed Maha Deeksha at the Indira Park by the Madiga Reservation Porata Samithi (MRPS) in support of the TSRTC workers and took several activists, including



**Cut short:** JAC convener E. Ashwathama Reddy on the second day of his fast in Hyderabad on Sunday. • G. RAMAKRISHNA

the organisation's chief Manda Krishna Madiga and leaders of different organisations and striking workers, into preventive custody from different places.  
Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar on Saturday said permission was denied to the MRPS to hold any dharna at the Chowk.  
Nearly 48,000 employees had boycotted work and begun the strike from October 5 on a call by the JAC employees' unions demanding merger of the RTC with the government, pay revision and recruitment to various posts, among others, resulting in buses staying off road, causing inconvenience to commuters. The employees continued the protests on Sunday across the State.  
Chief Minister K. Chandrababhi Naidu had earlier said that under no circumstances would the RTC be merged with the government and said the stir was illegal as they caused inconvenience to the public.  
The State government has engaged temporary drivers and conductors to operate buses.

## 'No proposal before Centre to make Hyderabad second capital'

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
HYDERABAD  
Union Minister G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday clarified that there was no proposal with the Centre on making Hyderabad the second capital of the country.  
There was also no discussion on bringing a Uniform Civil Code, he told reporters here in response to questions.  
"There has been no such proposal before the Central government nor was there any discussion [before it] on Hyderabad."  
"The State [Telangana] government too did not come up with any such proposal. No discussion has taken place in any forum of the Centre over the matter. Also, there is no discussion on bringing a Uniform Civil

Code," the Minister said here.  
The Centre was ready to discuss any matter or issue the Opposition would raise in the winter session of the Parliament beginning on Monday, the Union Minister of State for Home said. On Jammu and Kashmir, he said the situation there was peaceful after the withdrawal of special status.

# Infighting continues to plague BJP in Karnataka

Rebellion seems to be festering in four constituencies

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BENGALURU  
Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa has been busy fighting dissidence within the BJP over ticket for the bypolls. Despite all efforts, rebellion seems to be festering in at least four constituencies — Hoskote, Ranebennur, Athani, and Kagwad.  
In an attempt to send a strong message to rebels, the Chief Minister on Sunday defended the disqualified MLAs joining the BJP and reiterated his commitment to make them Ministers.  
He will accompany N. Nagaraju (MTB) as he files his nomination as BJP candidate for the bypolls from Hoskote on Monday.  
BJP MP B.N. Bache Gowda's son Sharath Bache Gowda, the defeated BJP candidate from the constituency in the 2018 Assembly polls, has filed his nomination as



an Independent candidate for the bypolls. "We will expel Mr. Sharath," the Chief Minister said. He also said that the order appointing Mr. Sharath as chairman of the Karnataka Housing Board will be withdrawn.  
Ranebennur has turned a headache for the party. Shortly after the Chief Minister placated rebel MLA R. Shankar from the constituency with the promise of being made an MLC and Minister, other ticket aspirants

continue to remain unhappy.  
A delegation of supporters of Basavaraj Kelagar, defeated BJP candidate in the 2018 Assembly polls and a ticket aspirant, held a protest outside the Chief Minister's residence demanding ticket. The party recently announced ticket for Arun Kumar Pujar, defeated BJP candidate in the 2013 polls.  
High drama ensued in Athani, as supporters of Deputy Chief Minister Laxman Savadi gheraoed him at his residence in an attempt to dissuade him from attending a workers meeting called by Mahesh Kumathalli, the BJP candidate. Mr. Savadi was a ticket aspirant but failed to make the cut.  
Meanwhile, Raju Kage, defeated BJP candidate in the 2018 Assembly polls from Kagwad, who switched sides, has been announced as Congress candidate from the constituency.

## To the finish



A child racing to the finish line in the 5-km category of the 'Kochi Navy Marathon', at the Willingdon Island in Ernakulam district, Kerala, on Sunday. • THULASI KAKKAT

## Concern over moral policing at tourist spots

**STAFF REPORTER**  
SHIVAMOGGA  
Incidents of moral policing reported at tourist spots in Tirthahalli taluk here in Karnataka in recent times have become a cause for concern.  
The Malur police recently arrested four persons on the charge of assaulting a boy and a girl at the Mandagadde Bird Sanctuary. Both were studying at a private college in Shivamogga city and had been to Mandagadde as part of an academic assignment. The arrested objected to the duo taking a selfie together on the banks of the Tunga river and assaulted them.  
A similar incident of moral policing was reported near Kundadri hill in Tirthahalli taluk in August.  
Ajay Kumar Sharma, an activist and travel enthusiast, told *The Hindu* that to avoid such incidents, cameras need to be installed at tourist spots and guards deployed.

# As officials don't act, residents rebuild bridge

Fighting many odds, including fund crunch and sand mafia, the locals are continuing their work

**ANIL KUMAR SASTRY**  
MANGALURU  
With the administrative machinery going into mute mode, the residents of Pavoor-Uliya Kudru (river island) in the middle of the Nethravathi, about 10 km off Mangaluru, have again started to rebuild the 750-ft foot-overbridge over the river — a yearly affair.  
About 40 families have been building the makeshift bridge made of steel scaffolding with the help of the local parish for the last couple of years to reach the mainland soon after the monsoon season. During monsoon, they have no option but to dismantle the bridge and cross



Priest Capt. Gerald Lobo oversees work on the foot overbridge on the Nethravathi, 10 km off Mangaluru. • H.S. MANJUNATH

the river in spate using boats.  
With a majority of the residents depending upon employment opportunities out-

side the island and having meagre resources, they are forced to source funds from well-wishers. They spent about ₹18 lakh initially last year to procure steel fabrication and are spending nearly ₹3 lakh on wooden planks and labour, said the parish priest of Infant Jesus Chapel, Capt. Gerald Lobo, who is guiding the construction. He added that there has been no financial support from the local administration.  
A major part of the expenditure is towards labour even though the residents themselves are helping out extensively. The river bed is 20 ft deep at some places because of excessive mining, and this poses a challenge for bridge construction.  
Vandals from the sand mafia damaged a portion of the

bridge in January this year after the residents protested the indiscriminate sand extraction. However, the residents rebuilt the bridge soon after with help coming from the area MLA, U.T. Khader.  
For every daily need, the residents have to come to the mainland at Adyar on NH 75.  
Capt. Lobo told *The Hindu* that the residents have been demanding a permanent solution in the form of a concrete bridge. His plea to the Prime Minister reached the State government, and the PWD sent a proposal on a ₹5-crore project to the government.  
However, things have not moved since, he said.

## Kerala is 'Best Honeymoon Destination'

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
Kerala bagged the 2019 'Best Honeymoon Destination' award under domestic category by the Travel and Leisure India and South Asia Magazine.  
The awards were given to international and domestic tourism departments, hoteliers and destinations at a function in New Delhi on November 15. Deputy Director, Kerala Tourism at New Delhi, Manoj T.C., received the award. Tourism Minister Kadakampally Surendran said the award was a "rousing endorsement" for Kerala tourism's conscious initiatives.

## 'Tipsy' woman creates ruckus at police station

Assaults woman SI, clip goes viral

**STAFF REPORTER**  
HYDERABAD  
The Banjara Hills police station here in Telangana witnessed some commotion in the early hours of Sunday after an allegedly drunk woman was detained for creating nuisance in the area.  
The woman identified as Lisa, 24, a native of Nagaland, also attacked a female sub-inspector, bit her on her hand and hurled abuses at the staff when she was not allowed to leave the station. She was later taken to a Women Safe Home.  
Inspector N. Kalinga Rao said Ms. Lisa was detained based on a complaint re-

ceived on Dial 100. "Locals complained that she was moving around semi-naked, screaming and shouting abuses. A team of women officers brought her to the station," he said.  
In a video clip of the incident, which has gone viral on social media, Ms. Lisa is seen threatening to kill the police officers if they don't let her leave. "She was drunk," the officer said, adding that her blood samples were sent for tests.  
Ms. Lisa is a resident of Begumpet. Based on the complaint lodged by the woman SI who was assaulted, a case was registered.



# Cracking the online ad game – the BJP outperforms the Congress

In the States where it swept all seats, the party was the biggest spender

PRAGATI K.B.  
NARESH SINGARAVELU  
CHENNAI

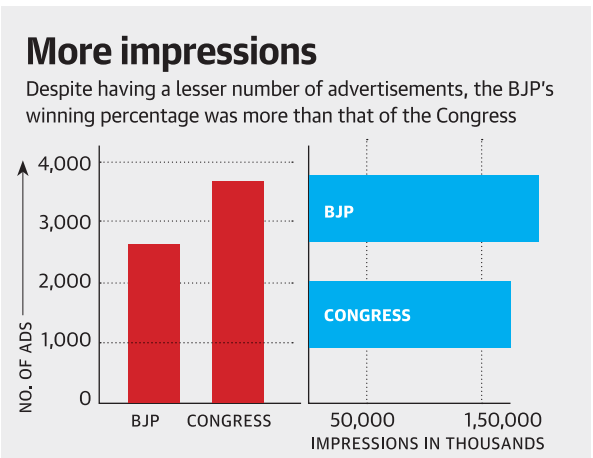
Data on online political advertisements on Facebook show that there is a direct correlation between electoral success and online ad spend. Facebook recently released an Ad Library and Ad Library API to make political advertising “more transparent”, which allows users to see who exactly posted a political ad and how much was spent on the campaign.

Data culled from the API by two researchers, Nayantara Ranganathan and Manuel

Beltran, on their website ad.watch offers good insights into the ad spending strategies of political parties and the efficacy of the ads.

Unsurprisingly, official pages of India's two largest parties, the BJP and the Congress, are its two biggest spenders.

Despite the BJP's 40% more expenditure than the Congress, the Congress has an additional 1,040 ads. Even so, the BJP's ad outreach, measured in “impressions”, is higher by 10%. In the States where the BJP won by sweeping all seats, the party was



the biggest spender on online ads.

In New Delhi, for instance, the BJP won all seven seats and spent ₹35,058,591 on Fa-

cebook ads. In contrast, the Congress spent just ₹6,483,277 – one-fifth that of BJP.

There were just three ex-

ceptions to this correlation of ad expenditure and electoral success – Kerala, Punjab and Odisha. The BJP, which drew a blank in Kerala, had spent ₹28,166,172.

The Congress that won 15 out of the 20 seats, on the other hand, had spent just ₹3,818,667, which is one-seventh of what the BJP spent.

## Campaign strategies

The BJP ran 3 main campaigns: #MeinBhiChowkidar, #PhirEkBaarModiSarkar and #MyFirstVoteForModi. At least 1,500 of the 2,600 plus ads in 2019 from the BJP official page used the Chowkidar hashtag. 'Here's how a doctor is also a chowkidar', 'Here's how the youth are

fighting corruption', 'Let's together build a clean India' and 'Giving up subsidy is an important contribution' are some ways that this campaign generated traction.

Over 1,000 Phir Ek Baar ads and 30 My First Vote ads, in different formats were pushed. Most of the 3,700 plus ads by the Congress spoke of the party “delivering” on their 2019 manifesto promises. 'We promise to reserve 33% of Central government jobs for women', 'We will provide 24 lakh private and public sector jobs' and 'A minimum yearly income of ₹72,000 to 5 crore poorest families' formed the content of their creatives.

#AbHogaNyay, which was

the Congress' war cry on other media, was used sparingly, in about 20 ads.

While the BJP pushed ads in English and Hindi, the Congress had at least 100 ads each in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Bengali.

The Congress thus spent lots of little money on lots of different ads and the BJP pumped in a lot of big money to make a few good ads.

The BJP having high impressions despite lesser number of ads, could imply one of three things, says Cyril Sam, co-author of The Real Face of Facebook in India. “The BJP has more followers than the Congress, so post receives high organic impressions and additional money

spent brings additional impressions; that the BJP's content is organically more engaging than the Congress'; that the Congress is optimising for impressions and the BJP for engagement.”

Number of impressions is the number of times an ad was displayed to users. While they were a measure of success of advertisements used in traditional media, impressions aren't telling on digital media. Someone browsing through their newsfeed without paying attention to the screen would still count as an impression. Actual engagements in the form of clicks, shares, comments, and reactions are better measures than plain impressions.

## IN BRIEF



### Bill Gates gives lifetime achievement awards

NEW DELHI  
Bill Gates on Sunday presented Lifetime Achievement Awards to Cyrus S. Poonawalla, chairman and MD, Serum Institute of India; Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, chairman and director, Biocon India and Prakash Baba Amte, director, Lok Biradari Prakalp. He also addressed the 108th Foundation day of the Indian Council of Medical Research.

### Nirbhaya case: court admits parents' plea

NEW DELHI  
A Delhi Court has admitted a plea filed by the parents of the 2012 gangrape victim seeking transfer of the case to another judge. They have sought a direction to Tihar Jail officials to expedite the execution of the convicts. PTI

### Doctors demand revised CGHS consultation rates

NEW DELHI  
Doctors across India, after a general body meeting held earlier this week, have argued that consultation charges under the Central Government Health Scheme (CGHS) are extremely low and demanded their urgent revision.

## Up in flames



**Violent blaze:** A huge fire destroyed a century-old church and an adjoining house in Shillong on Sunday morning. An elderly couple was killed in the incident. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Drones scan CRPF camp in Naxal hub

Centre issues shoot-at-sight orders across States

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI  
Shoot-at-sight orders have been issued to security forces across States affected by left-wing extremism after drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) were seen hovering over a strategically important Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) camp in the worst Naxal-violence af-

fected district of Sukma in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar region.

The directive was issued by security and intelligence agencies at the Centre.

As per communication shared by ground forces, “small red and white light-emitting drones” were seen flying near the CRPF camp in Kistaram and Pallodi last

month at least four times in three days.

The drones emitted a “low whizzing sound” that drew attention of the guards, after which an alert was sounded across nearby camps, said sources. However, the mini-UAVs soon disappeared from the sky even before they could be aimed at and shot down.

# Dam-hit families say they were caught unawares

Narmada flood victims struggle without amenities

STAFF REPORTER  
BHOPAL

Families hit by the Sardar Sarovar dam project after the swelled up Narmada backwaters submerged 178 villages in August, took part in a public hearing in Bhopal on Sunday as the protests demanding rehabilitation entered the second day.

The hearing was conducted by journalist L.S. Harde-niya, Madhya Pradesh Kisan Sabha president Jasvinder Singh, Gandhian Dayaram Namedev and former Chief Secretary S. C. Behar outside the Narmada Bhavan and was led by the Narmada Bachao Andolan (NBA).

“Instead of following the Supreme Court orders in 2000, 2005, 2017 and the rehabilitation policy, the Narmada Valley Development Authority had let 178 villages submerge. This shows the government's callous attitude towards us,” said Kamla Yadav, a farmer



**Seeking relief:** Social activist Medha Patkar, right, at a sit-in with the displaced villagers in Bhopal on Sunday. ■ PTI

from Chhota Barda in Barwani district.

“While the affected in Maharashtra and Gujarat had got a fair share, those in Madhya Pradesh had to do with bread crumbs,” said Pema Bhilala, a farmer from Avalda village in the district.

## No warning

The government had told the families that they would be alerted six months in advance.

“But we were caught unawares ... At sites of rehabilitation, drinking water and

electricity hasn't reached yet.”

Referring to several riverine islands that had come up after the waters rose, Dadu, of Ekalbara, said: “The way to our fields is blocked now. What was just a kilometre away is now at a distant 18-20 km.”

NBA leader Medha Patkar told *The Hindu* that members of the Prajapati community, who owned brick kilns in Dhar district, had returned to the relief camps as they were assured of a resolu-tion at the district-level.

## Protests erupt after killing of Dalit man

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Villagers and activists staged a protest in Sangrur district on Sunday against the brutal killing of a 37-year-old Dalit man at Changuwala village. Jagmail Singh, who was allegedly beaten and forced to drink urine, succumbed to his injuries on November 16, nine days after the incident. The police have arrested four people.

The Opposition parties hit out at the ruling Congress government for its failure to maintain law and order.

Several Dalit rights organisations and political outfits, along with family members of the victim blocked the main road at the village. They demanded a compensation of ₹50 lakh, a government job to a family member, and punishment for the accused.

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has directed the State Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police to ensure time-bound investigation into the case and trial against the accused.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY













TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Monday:** Heavy Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...	30.0	18.0	Kozhikode	22.4	33.0	24.0
Ahmedabad	...	33.0	20.0	Kurnool	...	32.0	22.0
Aizawl	...	26.0	14.0	Lucknow	...	30.0	16.0
Allahabad	...	31.0	16.0	Madurai	...	33.0	25.0
Bengaluru	...	29.0	18.0	Mangaluru	...	35.0	23.0
Bhopal	...	29.0	15.0	Mumbai	...	34.0	23.0
Bhubaneswar	...	32.0	20.0	Mysuru	...	30.0	21.0
Chandigarh	...	26.0	13.0	New Delhi	...	29.0	16.0
Chennai	2.9	32.0	25.0	Patna	...	30.0	16.0
Coimbatore	...	32.0	23.0	Port Blair	0.5	32.0	24.0
Dehradun	...	29.0	12.0	Puducherry	1.2	32.0	23.0
Gangtok	...	18.0	13.0	Pune	...	30.0	18.0
Goa	...	34.0	24.0	Raipur	...	31.0	19.0
Guwahati	...	28.0	19.0	Ranchi	...	29.0	13.0
Hubballi	...	29.0	21.0	Shillong	...	22.0	11.0
Hyderabad	...	32.0	19.0	Shimla	...	18.0	9.0
Imphal	...	26.0	11.0	Srinagar	...	...	...
Jaipur	...	29.0	18.0	Thiruvananthapuram	1.1	34.0	24.0
Kochi	2.6	31.0	25.0	Tiruchi	...	33.0	25.0
Kohima	...	24.0	13.0	Vijayawada	...	32.0	23.0
Kolkata	...	31.0	20.0	Visakhapatnam	...	32.0	25.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing						Yesterday
CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad.....	154	37	118	85	.....	
Bengaluru.....	4	40	68	86	.....	
Chennai.....	12	16	117	.....	.....	
Delhi.....	12	52	255	170	.....	
Hyderabad.....	3	54	154	124	.....	
Kolkata.....	10	81	241	154	.....	
Lucknow.....	11	48	297	.....	.....	
Mumbai.....	72	37	173	119	.....	
Pune.....	75	13	159	119	.....	
Visakhapatnam.....	10	48	79	.....	.....	

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Muzaffarpur, Bihar, recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 315 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Eloor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 27.

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.  
**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.  
**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.  
**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

### KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI  
A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court is hearing arguments on whether Cabinet Ministers at both the Central and State levels should have a “voluntary model code of conduct” which addresses their private and public activities.

The submissions about such a code were made before the five-judge Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra, which is examining if “grea-

ter restrictions” should be imposed on the right of free speech and expression of high public functionaries to protect the citizen's fundamental right to lead a dignified life.

## Two petitions

The question was framed after family members of the Bulandshahr rape case victim complained about former Uttar Pradesh Minister Azam Khan's public statements that the rape case was



The code will address the Ministers' private and public activities.

part of a political conspiracy against the then Akhilesh Yadav government. The Bench

is also hearing a separate petition filed by a Kerala-based man, Joseph Shine, represented by senior lawyer Ka-leeswaram Raj, about the public comments made by State Minister M.M. Mani.

Both Attorney General K.K. Venugopal and Mr. Raj, who are assisting the Constitution Bench, were against introducing additional restrictions.

Mr. Venugopal argued that the SC has taken a consistent stand in the past against in-

terventions on free speech of citizens, and public men are no exception.

Mr. Raj asked the court to direct the government to frame the code of conduct for Cabinet Ministers, with the Cabinet head ensuring a collective responsibility for the activities of the individual Ministers.

“The code of conduct should reflect constitutional morality and values of good governance. The acts of the

persons holding public offices can be thus subjected to better and meaningful public scrutiny,” Mr. Raj argued before the Constitution Bench.

He said the Union Ministry of Home Affairs already has a code of conduct for Ministers, which is essentially concerned with financial discipline. “Nothing is emanating from the code which addresses the private and public activities of the Ministers in general. This is too narrow and inadequate,” he said.





## Back to the Rajapaksas

With a decisive mandate, Gotabaya Rajapaksa should work to prove detractors wrong

The convincing victory of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Sri Lanka's presidential election was not entirely unexpected. His main rival Sajith Premadasa's spirited campaign was not enough to overcome the anti-incumbency mood in much of southern Sri Lanka. An overwhelming majority of Tamils and Muslims voted for Mr. Premadasa, largely over fears that Gotabaya Rajapaksa evokes from his days as Defence Secretary under his brother, former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. If Tamils blamed the Rajapaksas for the death of thousands of civilians at the end of the civil war in 2009, and the subsequent reluctance to probe war crimes and disappearances, Muslims were worried about being targeted by majoritarian elements backed by Gotabaya Rajapaksa. But in a country where over 70% of the population is Sinhalese, Mr. Premadasa required a significant chunk of the majority vote too. Besides, there were other factors behind Gotabaya Rajapaksa's impressive performance in the south: anxieties arising from the state of the economy, revulsion towards unabated corruption and fears set off by the Easter Sunday bombings. Events since President Maithripala Sirisena dismissed Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe in October 2018, leading to a constitutional crisis, made this election a referendum on the failures of the power-sharing arrangement between the two leaders.

Mr. Sirisena and Mr. Wickremesinghe had come together in an alliance of rival parties to defeat Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2015. There was much euphoria in the early days, as people sensed a return to the rule of law and a departure from the authoritarian tendencies of the Rajapaksa era. They felt the days of the subversion of independent institutions were over. However, with the bitter parting of ways, especially in the backdrop of corruption allegations and poor economic performance, the arrangement collapsed. The worst fallout was perhaps the April 21 bombings, which happened despite advance intelligence, indicating a staggering breakdown of communication within the government. This is a sobering moment for all Sri Lankans. A mandate for reform and progress has been frittered away. Those blamed for the past democratic deficit are back in power. The country is nowhere near the promised constitutional reforms, either to address minority concerns or to abolish the executive presidency. Fears that the two-term limit on running for President, as well as constitutional curbs on the chief executive's powers, will be removed in future are not misplaced. The new President should strive to allay such fears and work on strengthening the economy and ethnic harmony. He should refrain from antagonising the international community. In relations with India, he should assuage concerns that he would promote the interests of China to the detriment of India's. To truly make a mark, Gotabaya Rajapaksa should aim to disappoint his detractors.

## Quality on tap

Empowering consumers with rights is essential in improving quality of water supply

The report of the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution red-flagging tap water quality in major Indian cities comes as no surprise, given that many official water distribution agencies routinely advise consumers to consume only boiled water. Going by the matrix of tests carried out by the Bureau of Indian Standards for the Ministry, Delhi has abysmal water quality, Chennai and Kolkata rank very low, and Mumbai is the only city with acceptable results. City water systems are normatively required to comply with the national standard for drinking water, IS 10500:2012, but most obviously feel no compulsion to do so. Their lack of initiative could be attributed partly to the expanding footprint of packaged drinking water, especially in populous cities, coupled with the high dependence on groundwater in fast-growing urban clusters where State provision of piped water systems does not exist. On paper, the Indian standard has a plethora of quality requirements, including absence of viruses, parasites and microscopic organisms, and control over levels of toxic substances. But in practice, municipal water fails these tests due to the lack of accountability of the official agencies, and the absence of robust data in the public domain on quality testing.

The Centre's approach to the issue relies on naming and shaming through a system of ranking, but this is unlikely to yield results, going by similar attempts to benchmark other urban services. Making it legally binding on agencies to achieve standards and empowering consumers with rights is essential, because State governments would then take an integrated view of housing, water supply, sanitation and waste management. A scientific approach to water management is vital, considering that 21 cities – including many of those found to have unclean tap water – could run out of groundwater as early as 2020, as per a NITI Aayog report. Moreover, the Central Ground Water Board estimates that nearly a fifth of the urban local bodies are already facing a water crisis due to excessive extraction, failed monsoons, and unplanned development. On the issue of regular testing, there is a case to entrust a separate agency with the task in each State, rather than relying on the same agency that provides water to also perform this function. If data on water are made public on the same lines as air quality, it would ratchet up pressure on governments to act. For too long, the response of water departments to the challenge has been to chlorinate the supply, as this removes pathogens, ignoring such aspects as appearance, smell and taste. It is time to move beyond this and make tap water genuinely desirable.

# The fountainhead of India's economic malaise

The citizenry's distrust in institutions and lack of confidence in the government have caused a prolonged slowdown



MANMOHAN SINGH

The state of India's economy is deeply worrying. I say this, not as a member of the Opposition political party, but as a citizen of this country and as a student of economics. By now, the facts are evident to all – nominal GDP growth is at a 15-year low; unemployment is at a 45-year high; household consumption is at a four-decade low; bad loans in banks are at an all-time high; growth in electricity generation is at a 15-year low – the list of highs and lows is long and distressing. But the state of the economy is worrying not because of these disturbing statistics. These are mere manifestations of a deeper underlying malaise that plagues the nation's economy today.

A nation's state of the economy is also a function and reflection of the state of its society. The functioning of any economy is the result of the combined set of exchanges and social interactions among its people and institutions. Mutual trust and self-confidence are the bedrock of such social transactions among people that foster economic growth. Our social fabric of trust and confidence is now torn and ruptured.

### Industrialists live in fear

There is a palpable climate of fear in our society today. Many industrialists tell me that they live in fear of harassment by government authorities. Bankers are reluctant to make new loans, for fear of retribution. Entrepreneurs are hesitant to put up fresh projects, for fear of failure attributed to ulterior

motives. Technology start-ups, an important new engine of economic growth and jobs, seem to live under a shadow of constant surveillance and deep suspicion. Policymakers in government and other institutions are scared to speak the truth or engage in intellectually honest policy discussions. There is profound fear and distrust among people who act as agents of economic growth. When there is such distrust, it adversely impacts economic transactions in a society. When transactions among people and institutions are negatively impacted, it leads to a slowdown of economic activity, and eventually, stagnation. This perilous state of fear, distrust and lack of confidence among citizens is a fundamental reason for our sharp economic slowdown.

There is an air of helplessness too. Aggrieved citizens find nowhere to go to air their grievances. Public trust in independent institutions, such as the media, judiciary, regulatory authorities and investigative agencies, has been severely eroded. With the erosion of trust, there is a lack of a support system for people to seek refuge against unlawful tax harassment or unfair regulations. This makes entrepreneurs lose their risk appetite even further for undertaking new projects and creating jobs. This toxic combination of deep distrust, pervasive fear and a sense of hopelessness in our society is stifling economic activity, and hence, economic growth.

The root cause of this rupturing of our social fabric is the Modi government's 'mala fide unless proven otherwise' doctrine of governance. The premise of the government's policy framework seems to be that economic participants have mala-fide intent unless they can prove otherwise. This suspicion that every industrialist, banker, policymaker, regulator,



entrepreneur and citizen is out to defraud the government has led to a complete breakdown of trust in our society. This has halted economic development, with bankers unable to lend, industrialists unable to invest and policymakers unable to act.

The Modi government seems to view everything and everyone through a tainted prism of suspicion and distrust due to which every policy of previous governments are presumed to be of bad intent, every loan sanctioned considered undeserving and every new industrial project deemed to be crony in nature. And the government has positioned itself as some saviour, resorting to foolhardy moral-policing policies such as demonetisation, which have proved to be ill-thought-out and catastrophic. Wrongful evil characterisation of everyone and a 'good-vs.-evil governance' doctrine cannot be a recipe for healthy economic growth.

The role of social trust in economic development has been well-documented, right from the times of Adam Smith to the modern-day discipline of behavioural economics. The tearing of our so-

cial fabric of trust is the fountainhead of our current economic malaise. For economic growth to revive, it is very important that our torn social fabric of fear and distrust be stitched and knitted together to enthuse trust and confidence. It is very important for businessmen, capital providers and workers to feel confident and exuberant rather than being fearful and nervous. This is possible only if the government sheds its 'mala fide-unless-proven-otherwise' doctrine and begin to trust India's entrepreneurs.

India's economy is perched in a precarious state currently. Incomes are not growing. Household consumption is slowing. People are dipping into their savings to maintain similar levels of consumption. Headline GDP growth is accruing almost entirely to the creamy layer at the top.

### Risk of stagflation

The real worrying trend is that the most recent retail inflation numbers have shown a sharp increase, especially the food inflation figure. Retail inflation is expected to rise even further in the coming months. Continued increase in inflation combined with stagnant demand and high unemployment will lead to what economists term as 'stagflation', a dangerous territory from which it becomes very hard for large economies to recover. While we are currently not in stagflation territory yet, it is prudent to act quickly to restore consumption demand through fiscal policy measures since the impact of monetary policy seems muted.

It is my belief that India's fragile economic situation calls for the twin policy actions of boosting demand through fiscal policy and reviving private investment through 'social policy' by inspiring trust and confidence in the economic

participants in our society.

India is now a \$3-trillion global economic powerhouse driven largely by private enterprise. It is not a tiny command and control economy that can be bullied and directed at will. Nor can it be managed through colourful headlines and noisy media commentary. Shooting down messengers of bad news or shutting off economic reports and data is juvenile and does not behave a rising global economic powerhouse. No amount of subterfuge can hide the performance and analysis of a \$3-trillion market economy of 1.2 billion people. Economic participants respond to social and economic incentives, not diktats or coercions or public relations.

Sadly, this self-inflicted economic wound comes at a time when there is a unique and opportune moment in the global economy for India to capitalise. The slowing down of China's economy and exports has opened up a large export opportunity for India to fill. India should aim to garner an elephant's share of this export opportunity by fostering a climate of confidence and economic dynamism away from the current climate of fear, distrust and pessimism. With the government having an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha and the global oil prices being low, this is a once-in-a-generation economic opportunity to catapult India to the next phase of economic development and create new jobs for hundreds of millions of our youth. I urge the Prime Minister to set aside his deep-rooted suspicion of industrialists and entrepreneurs and nurse us back to a confident and mutually trustworthy society that can revive the animal spirits and help our economy soar.

*Dr. Manmohan Singh was the Prime Minister of India from 2004 to 2014*

# The false allure of English-medium schooling

Andhra Pradesh's push to make English the medium of instruction in state-run schools will prove counterproductive



ANJALI MODY

The Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy government in Andhra Pradesh is set to make all government elementary schools 'English-medium' from the next academic year. There has been the expected party-political denouncement of the decision, despite the fact that it is really just the scaling up of a policy proposal made during N. Chandrababu Naidu's tenure, when English was introduced as the medium of instruction in a select number of schools as a pilot project.

The push for English as the medium of instruction in government schools in Andhra Pradesh, as in other States including Karnataka and Tamil Nadu, is due to two related factors. First, there is a belief that English-medium schooling can guarantee good jobs. Second, economically constrained families are shifting their children from free government schools to private English-medium schools. It is to try and reverse this trend (which also poses a threat to government teaching jobs) that many State governments have made at least

some of their schools English-medium or started English-medium sections.

Research, from India and across the world, shows that children who get educated in their mother tongue learn better than those who start school in a new language. A new language in the early school years, especially one that is not used outside school, can become a barrier to learning. This is also plain common sense: if a child speaks or understands the classroom language, engaging with new concepts, ideas and information is easier, as is learning to read and write. Even researchers who advocate privatisation of schools as a quality improvement measure accept that English-medium schools are not the solution. A study of learning outcomes in government and private elementary schools in Andhra Pradesh has found that children perform best in Telugu-medium schools.

### Ignoring the evidence

Governments, while making policy changes favouring English-medium schools, have ignored the evidence. For politicians, it is a win-win situation – they are able to give a mass of voters what they appear to want, at no significant additional cost. For the influential middle class, it is comforting to believe that poor children are getting a leg-up through English-medium



government schools. Even some Dalit intellectuals who claim to speak for the most vulnerable hold that it is English-medium schools that will emancipate them, and that those who disagree are hell-bent on retaining the status quo.

Even ignoring all the evidence about language and learning, what sort of English-medium schools does the government promise? At the very minimum, such schools will need teachers who, apart from being knowledgeable in the subjects they teach, are also fluent in the medium of instruction. No State government can claim that a majority of teachers, especially in elementary schools, are English-fluent, not even the ones who teach English. The vast majority of them have had their entire education in their mother tongue or the State language, and have spent their working lives teaching in that language. With rare exceptions,

any English they have is bookish. 'Retraining' them, through short-term language courses, would not transform them into teachers for English-medium schools. On the contrary, it will handicap them, making the best of them resentful, and the disinterested even more so.

### In-egalitarian system

The problem lies not in the medium of instruction, but in an in-egalitarian education system that is completely skewed in favour of the intergenerationally privileged. This is a system whose design – from the annual school calendar to the syllabus and textbooks to teacher engagement to the high-stakes board exams – ignores the vastly different socioeconomic realities of a majority of children. The focus on English medium pulls a veil over these knottier problems.

Politicians and the middle class (whose powerful voices make or influence policy) have for too long promoted the canard that if you give everyone the "same thing" – in this case English-medium schools – it makes everything equitable. Making Telugu-educated school teachers instruct children, with no English, in English will not transform Andhra Pradesh government schools into institutions of the kind Mr. Jaganmohan Reddy's children go to. On the

contrary, such schools will be a parody of the elite schools, like the 'affordable' private English-medium schools that children most often move to from government schools. In these schools, teachers with barely any or no English read from English textbooks and use the mother tongue or State language to communicate; students have to cram the English textbooks or prepared answers for their tests. The result is that they develop a hold over neither their mother tongue/State language nor English.

This is what the government English-medium schools will offer, with the only difference that they will be free. This sort of 'English-medium education', far from making education more equitable and closing the social gap, will accentuate inequity.

A government really concerned about education and making English accessible to poor children in government schools should focus on the children's natural receptiveness to new languages by teaching English as a language. Investing in modern language-teaching education (not short-term training) for English-language school teachers is essential. Anything else is just an eyewash that people will soon be wise to.

*Anjali Mody is a journalist with a special interest in education*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### Unsafe water

Close on the heels of reports about high levels of air pollution in Delhi, the revelations of the Bureau of Indian Standards about the quality of piped drinking water supplied in 13 State capitals has created panic in the city residents and the public. When people are deprived of pure air and water, how can they lead a healthy life? When the water supplied from rivers are highly polluted, how will people get pure drinking water? It is the responsibility of State governments to ensure that water supplied is suitable for drinking. First, they must take measures to clean the water sources. They must also take proactive steps to control pollution and make

compliance of quality standards for piped water mandatory across the country. Prosperity of a country depends on the health of its citizens (Front page, "Delhi has the most unsafe tap water," Nov. 17).

VENU G.S.,  
Kollam, Kerala

■ It is a shame that even after seven decades of independence, our governments are failing to provide basic necessities such as drinking water to the people, not to talk about giving employment, world-class infrastructure, double-digit GDP growth and making India a superpower. Instead of wasting huge amounts of taxpayers' money on providing subsidies, freebies and loan waivers, governments should invest in

health care, education and skill development.  
KSHIRASAGARA BALAJI RAO,  
Hyderabad

### Morales's fall

The ignominious fall of Bolivian President Evo Morales was more or less of his own making (Despatches, "Fight for the future of Bolivia," Nov. 17). His decision to contest the presidential election for a fourth term, in defiance of the 2016 referendum and the presidential term limits, alienated him from a large number of Bolivians. He was trying to make himself indispensable for the country. It is unfortunate that Mr. Morales, the first indigenous President of his country, was forced to seek political asylum in Mexico. He could have instead

gracefully and honourably called it a day following the competition of his third term as President.

C.G. KURIAKOSE,  
Kothamangalam, Kerala

### Climate study

The latest report released by *The Lancet* journal that climate change is potentially damaging the health of the children across the world is cause for serious concern. There may be no greater threat to world's children than climate change. (Life, "Climate change is harming health of children, says *Lancet* report," Nov. 14). This mounting global crisis has the potential to undermine many of the gains we have made in child survival and development. In every crisis, children, due to their physical and cognitive

immaturity, are the most vulnerable, and climate change is no exception. When compared with adults, children breathe more air and drink more fluid for their body weight. Also, since children are shorter and spend more time on the ground, they are closer to ground-level pollutants. These factors cause children to have higher exposure levels than adults. As temperatures increase, together with water scarcity and air pollution, children

feel the deadliest impact of water-borne diseases and respiratory disorders. As the world experiences a steady rise in climate-driven migration, children's lives and their future will be the most disrupted. Unless the world acts forcefully to stem the climate crisis now, the danger is bound to escalate.

R. SIVAKUMAR,  
Chennai

**CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:** >> In the Editorial page article titled "Groping in the dark on the economy" (Nov. 16, 2019), the following sentence that said: "The Budget's provisions for collecting more in taxes from the incomes of the super-rich, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman then explained, ..." should be recast to say: "The Budget's provisions for collecting more in taxes from the capital gains accruing to the super rich, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman then explained, ..."

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# Return of the Rajapaksa regime

Sri Lanka's great liberal democratic experiment has now been overcome by authoritarian populism



AHILAN KADIRGAMAR

The 2019 presidential election will be a watershed in Sri Lankan history. The Rajapaksa regime was decisively defeated in both the 2015 presidential and parliamentary elections. Since then, remnants of the regime have persevered to rebuild. Rejected nationally and isolated internationally, their crafty politics, ideological consolidation, and political mobilisation ensured a powerful political base among the Sinhala constituencies. While the minorities, worried about their future, voted overwhelmingly against presidential candidate and former Defence Secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa, the Sinhala political base, built by the Rajapaksas, has brought them back to power.

### Road to power

The Rajapaksa camp took the risk of forming their own party, the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna, which has now engulfed the Sri Lanka Freedom Party. They built a base in their Sinhala constituencies by engaging the rural population and lower middle classes. They spoke to the discontent with a long-neglected drought and deteriorating economic situation. They turned the corruption discourse that had damaged them in power back onto the incumbent government, as the Central Bank bond scandal exposed the newly appointed Central Bank Governor and provided an irredeemable blow to the promise of “good governance”.

They tested their strength and gained confidence with the local government elections of 2018, where their newly constructed party machine made a landslide victory in the Southern constituencies. They kept Parliament at boiling point with no-confidence motions, and even attempted a parliamentary coup, with President Maithripala Sirisena appointing Mahinda Rajapaksa as Prime Minister. They capitalised on the Easter attacks, and claimed to be the only actors who can address national security, even as the President and Prime Minister pointed fingers about the security lapses that could



“The coalition government did little to confront the chauvinist forces that ideologically mobilised the Sinhala constituencies by constructing the Muslims as the new enemies.” Posters of Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Colombo. ■ AP

have averted the disaster. Not only did they miss no opportunity to attack the government over the last four years, but also worked incessantly on the ground to build up their base, whether with the disgruntled Sinhala rural masses, the bureaucrats comfortable with their politics of patronage, the business classes that sought to gain from their economic policies, or the chauvinist social movements that thrived on their backing for majoritarian and xenophobic politics. With the presidential election victory, the Rajapaksa juggernaut now looks well poised to consolidate power for the long haul.

Each of the gains of the Rajapaksas was in fact a failure of the Sirisena-Wickremesinghe government. The coalition government was rocked by infighting, and its aloof leadership with grand projects of trade liberalisation and foreign investment neglected people's everyday concerns. With the global Islamophobic discourse on the rise, the government did little to confront the chauvinist forces that ideologically mobilised the Sinhala constituencies by constructing the Muslims as the new enemies. Amid acute joblessness, soaring living costs, mounting household debt and people's still rural livelihoods, coupled with fear since the Easter terror attacks, the people turned to a “strong leader” for relief from gripping insecurity. These are the grounds on which Sri Lanka's great liberal democratic experiment of 2015 has now been overcome by

authoritarian populism.

If the neoliberals under Ranil Wickremesinghe lost the plot on the economy, there was nevertheless liberal progress with state and social institutions. Militarisation and surveillance in the country, in the North and East in particular, was considerably reversed with democratic space providing room for freedom of expression and protests. Military-held lands in the North were released to their private owners. The judiciary regained independence. The media and social movements gained the confidence to critique the state. The excessive powers of the executive presidency were clipped, and independent commissions for human rights and right to information were strengthened.

In this context, the normalisation away from an excessive security mindset hung over from the war years were undone by the Easter attacks, and the room for scrutiny of the security apparatuses are now shutting down. Independence of institutions are also now at risk: either through legislative moves with consolidation of power in Parliament or through crass politicisation. These are blows to the democratic space gained over the last five years.

It is those concerns that brought the loose set of actors opposing the return of a Rajapaksa regime. What was necessary, however, was a strong coalition that also addressed fundamental political-economic concerns, but that was not to be with the

Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) seeking to build a third force and United National Party (UNP) leader, Mr. Wickremesinghe, seeking to undermine his party's candidacy to ensure his own leadership of the party.

### Electoral outcomes

In this context, the electoral map reveals certain divisions. The Tamil- and Muslim-heavy regions of the North and East, the UNP and up-country Tamil strongholds of the Central Highlands, and the minority-heavy and UNP strongholds around Colombo voted for Sajith Premadasa, while the vast majority of the other electorates voted for Mr. Rajapaksa.

The electoral map may immediately hint at a polarised country along ethno-nationalist lines, but a deeper look into the politics of each region may reveal different dynamics. The voter turnouts in the Northern constituencies were much higher than in the past, despite neither candidate addressing their aspirations and a crass call from the Tamil nationalist fringe for boycott of the elections. In voting overwhelmingly for Mr. Premadasa, the Northern constituencies have entered the realm of national politics seeking to shape it as opposed to the decades-long approach of exclusionary politics that refused to even consider national changes. Similarly, while the simplistic narrative of the Sinhala voter supporting a majoritarian regime may be tempting, in reality it is perhaps lower and middle class economic disenchantment and youth disillusionment that ensured a mass vote for Mr. Rajapaksa.

While the responsibility for the defeat of the liberal democratic experiment of 2015 falls squarely on Mr. Wickremesinghe and Mr. Sirisena, salvaging what is left of that democratic space now becomes the task of the dispersed actors and forces that have to regroup ahead of the imminent parliamentary elections. The Muslim and Tamil minority parties that sought to keep the Rajapaksas at bay, the failed third force experiment of the JVP with allied left forces, and various social movements now have the unenviable task of defending the democratic space from an authoritarian populist regime about to consolidate power.

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### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

## The integrity of numbers

Journalism can be an effective warning system only when society decides to act on its findings



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

Argentine author Jorge Luis Borges made an important observation during World War 2, which also rings true in the second decade of the 21st century: “Exclamations have taken over the function of reasoning; it is true that the scatterbrains who carelessly utter them give their slogans a discursive air, and that this tenuous syntactical simulacrum satisfies and persuades whoever happens to be listening”.

Readers must remember that the critical distance between a news organisation and the ruling government is not only an ethical obligation but a democratic requisite. The society pays a huge price if truth is sacrificed for the sake of claims. Take the case of the East German newspaper, *Neues Deutschland*, the official mouthpiece of the Socialist Unity Party of Germany. In its edition dated November 10, 1989, the day after the fall of the Berlin Wall, it did not have a report on this historic event. Propaganda may serve a limited purpose for a limited time, but it cannot prevent the course of history. Whatever their ideological positions, leaders crave for some version of *Neues Deutschland*. Citizens want credible information for them to make critical choices.

### Suppressing data

One of the effective journalistic tools to confront propagandist drivel has been data journalism. But what happens if the government suppresses data? How do we understand the current state of data poverty? While we may not have a direct correlation between data manipulation and the democratic deficit, the economic slowdown and the resultant hardship are starkly staring at us.

On November 15, the government decided not to release the household consumer expenditure survey results of 2017-18 due to “data quality issues”. The unreleased survey showed that consumer demand had declined in 2017-18 for the first time in more than 40 years, validating the anecdotal evidence of the sad state of the Indian economy. The official statement said that the government is “planning the next consumer expenditure survey in 2021-22 after data quality refinement in the survey process”. We have to remember the government did the same

with the NSSO data on employment, using the weak defence that the study leaked to the media was a draft and should not be considered final.

We have not done a systematic survey of citizens to understand their reaction to data manipulation and data suppression. Most policymakers are disturbed by the lack of credible numbers from the Indian government. Economist A. Vaidyanathan wrote a timely reminder in this newspaper, “Why the integrity of data matters” (May 30, 2019). In two of my columns, “Discussing an editorial” (December 3, 2018) and “We need a validation of good reporting” (February 4, 2019), I looked at the issue of data manipulation and its impact. I quoted the Nobel Prize-winning economist, Ronald Coase: “If you torture the data long enough, it will confess to anything.”

### The importance of follow-ups

In the '80s and '90s, the general practice in Indian journalism was to do a systematic follow-up of major scoops. It did not matter who broke the story. But despite the proliferation of media outlets, we hardly find the idea of follow-up being taken seriously by journalists today. This newspaper carried an important article in August 2019 about an International Monetary Fund report (“IMF report flags several delays in India's data reporting”). The IMF report showed that inconsistencies have crept into the dissemination of fiscal datasets as well. The news report records how India failed to comply with multiple requirements prescribed in the Special Data Dissemination Standard, a practice mandatory for all IMF members, whereas comparable economies comprising the BRICS nations maintained a near impeccable record in the same period. The decline really began from 2016.

Journalism can be an effective early warning system only when society decides to act on its findings and not exhibit ostrich-like behaviour whenever uncomfortable truths emerge. In March, 108 major economists and social scientists from across the world issued an appeal to convince the Indian government to stop suppressing uncomfortable data, restore access to public statistics and re-establish the independence and integrity of institutions. If the government had not turned a deaf ear to the observations of economists in March and to *The Hindu's* August story, we may have had some real policy measures to stem the economic slowdown.

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## Secularism in the time of security

It is to be seen whether the bogey of security will allow the BJP to circumvent constitutional strictures

MANURAJ SHUNMUGASUNDARAM

After the verdicts on Ayodhya and Sabarimala, the focus will now shift from the Supreme Court to Parliament. There is a compelling case to suggest that the BJP has begun executing its ideological agenda through the arms of the Union government. With Amit Shah straddling two key positions as Union Minister for Home Affairs and national president of the BJP, the co-ordination and coherence in policymaking and political manoeuvring are palpable.

The party's 2019 election manifesto spoke about providing citizenship to minorities escaping persecution from neighbouring countries. The execution of this promise has come in the form of renewed vigour to enact the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the winter session of Parliament. If Parliament legislates the changes proposed to the Citizenship Act, this would mark an irrevocable shift away from India's secular credentials.

Speaking at a seminar in Kolkata last month, Mr. Shah emphasised that “all Hindu, Buddhist, Sikh, Jain refugees” will not be “driven out”. He further announced that by bringing the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in force, the Union government would ensure that “all the rights of an Indian national” would be extended to this cohort. It is trite observation that the definition of refugee, under the present government, contains conspicuous omissions.

### A Trojan Horse

Though the discourse is structured around persecution and refugees, there is little doubt that these actions, if carried through, would effectively mutate India into a “Hindu Rashtra” or a Hindu nation. Therefore, concern for refugees is nothing more than a Trojan to build a mono-religious country which will serve as a promised land for people belonging to the Hindu and other “Indic faiths”. Naturally, this will alter the secular fundamentals underpinning the country and its Constitution.

Not long ago, a Minister of the Union government waded into trouble by talking about removing the word ‘secular’ from the Preamble to the

Constitution. There is no doubt that this demand is in line with the long-held Hindutva agenda. However, it is equally obvious that the constitutional courts may view any such amendment to the Constitution as a direct threat to its basic structure, as laid down under various judgments. Most notably, in *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973), the Supreme Court held that secularism was part of the basic structure of the Constitution and further, that the basic structure could not be abrogated. As such, it follows that the state must be secular and actions by the state shall not impinge on the secular fabric of the country.

A further legal impediment would arise on the basis of international law and humanitarian principles which prohibit the discrimination of refugees on the basis of religion. Recently, Indian courts have read international obligations under the Universal Declaration of Human Rights relating to stateless persons in consonance with Article 51(C) of the Constitution to endow them with force of law. In *P. Ulaganathan v. Government of India* (2019), the Madras High Court utilised the expansive powers under Article 21 of the Constitution to provide partial relief to refugees and stateless persons.

### Security and state

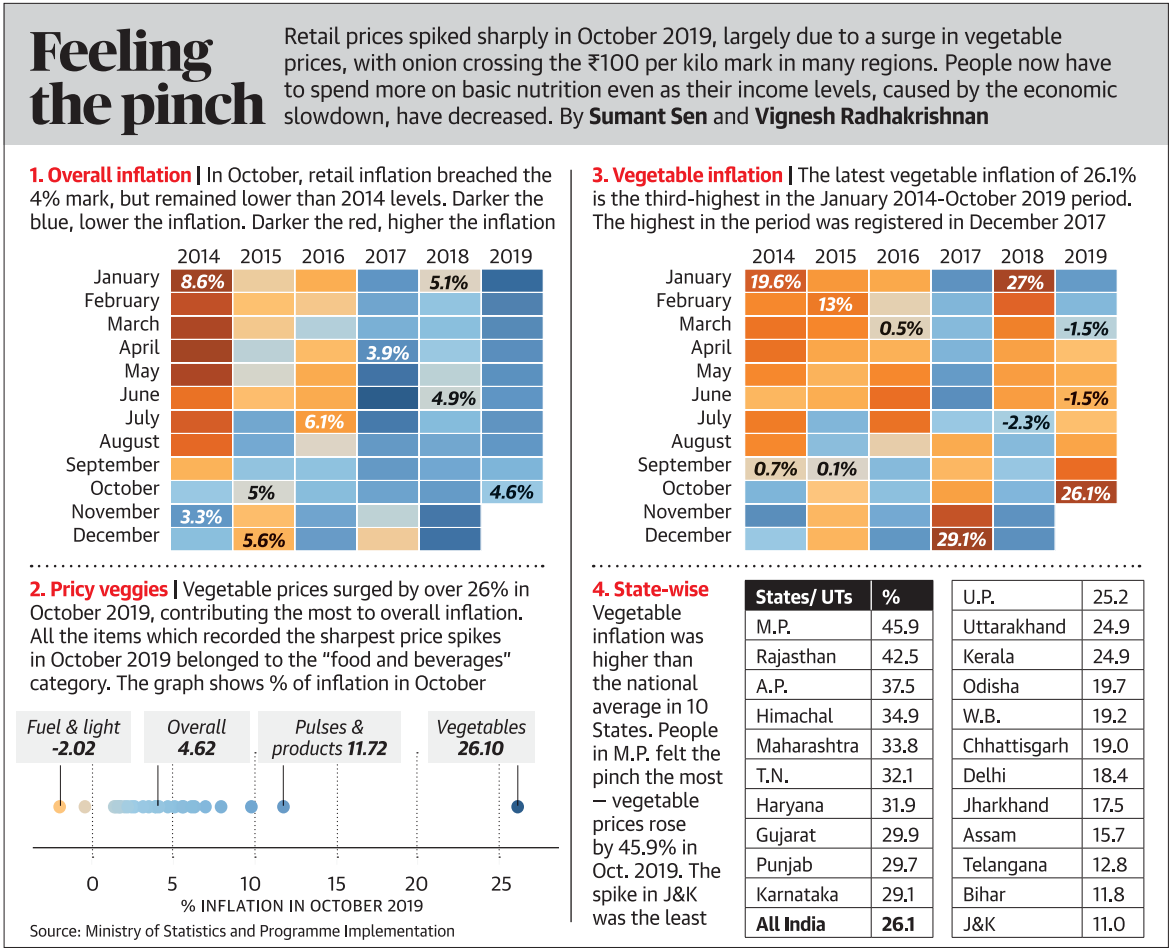
In recent times, Turkey has seen its secular foundations being reshaped under President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, as has been pointed out by Amitav Ghosh and Shashi Tharoor. However, whether this model can be executed in India would depend on how the judiciary perceives this challenge to secularism.

Perhaps anticipating such judicial resistance, recently Mr. Shah spoke extensively on “national security”. He emphasised that no country “can run smoothly with the weight of so many intruders”. It is to be seen whether the bogey of security will allow the BJP to circumvent constitutional strictures and convert India to a Hindu nation.

Manuraj Shunmugasundaram is an advocate at the Madras High Court and Spokesperson, DMK



### DATA POINT



### The Hindu.

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 18, 1969

### Demand for inclusion of Chandigarh

A massive demonstration by several hundred thousand Haryanis demanding Chandigarh's merger with their State, was the highlight of a day of marches in the Capital, coinciding with the opening of Parliament's winter session. The organisers of the Haryana demonstration put the number of participants at more than a million, but independent observers estimated they numbered about 500,000. The lower figure still left it one of the largest demonstrations witnessed in recent times. The seven-mile long procession started at about 11 in the morning and the head reached the Boat Club, about two furlongs from Parliament House, at 12-30 p.m. Carrying their respective party flags, the processionists marched through the streets of Old Delhi and New Delhi shouting slogans like “Chandigarh for Haryana” and “Chandigarh hamara hai” (Chandigarh belongs to us). At 2 p.m. the Prime Minister Mrs. Indira Gandhi came to the Boat Club to receive a memorandum from the demonstrators. The demonstrators shouted “Indira Gandhi Zindabad”. The Prime Minister spent about five minutes with the representatives of the demonstrators.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 18, 1919

### A steamer's experiences

Bombay, November 16: The steamer ‘Zayani’ from Persian Gulf to Bombay with 1,200 pilgrims aboard, which arrived in Bombay this week after taking fourteen days on voyage which in ordinary circumstances would have occupied only six days, ran into wholly unexpected cyclone en route on the 5th November. The Captain was forced to run with the wind and, when he tried to bring the ship to the right course, the vessel refused to answer. The helm engines broke down and stopped in the middle of the night. At the same time, a deputation of pilgrims waited on the ship officers enquiring whether there was danger of the ship's foundering. They were told that the ship would have to fight the cyclone and if she succeeded they might reach Bombay all right. The chief officer personally saw that the pilgrims were supplied with biscuits and water. Eventually, the engines got going in full speed ahead again and, with the wind and sea moderating, a course was set for Bombay, the Zayani having already been blown 150 miles out of her course. Twelve deaths occurred among the pilgrims on the voyage.