

THE EDITORIAL PAGE

MAHARASHTRA: A FAILURE OF INSTITUTIONS

BY SUHAS PALSHIKAR
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BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNY



EXPLAINED



SIMPLY PUT WHAT NOW IN MAHARASHTRA?

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CONSTITUTION DAY: OPP MAY SKIP JOINT SITTING OF PARLIAMENT TODAY

PROTESTS IN LOK SABHA AND RAJYA SABHA

BJP LEADERS SAY CONFIDENT OF NUMBERS

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SENA, NCP & CONG PARADE MLAs, BJP SAYS ONLY HOUSE TEST MATTERS

We are 162: Show of strength by Opp alliance — on floor of a Mumbai hotel

His MLAs fearful of Ajit whip, Pawar says not one of them will be disqualified

VISHWAS WAGHMODE & ZEESHAN SHAIKH
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

HOURS AFTER the Supreme Court said it would rule Tuesday on their pleas for an immediate floor test in the Maharashtra Assembly, the combine of Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress held a show of strength Monday evening at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Mumbai, parading MLAs and claiming they had 162 on their side in a House of 288.

With their petitions in the Supreme Court challenging Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari's Saturday decision to swear in Devendra Fadnis as BJP as Chief Minister and Ajit Pawar of NCP as the Deputy Chief Minister, the three parties went to Raj Bhavan Monday morning and submitted a letter with signatures of 162 MLAs, claiming they had the required numbers to form a government in Maharashtra.

The letter was signed by legislature party leaders Eknath Shinde (Shiv Sena), Jayant Patil (newly-elected by NCP on Saturday) and Balasaheb Thorat (Congress).

The three parties claimed that 162 MLAs were present at the hotel gathering with NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Shiv Sena Chief Uddhav Thackeray and Congress leaders Mallikarjun Kharge and Ashok Chavan.

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Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress leaders with their MLAs at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Mumbai on Monday. Prashant Nadkar

Combine seeks immediate floor test, SC to rule today

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

ASTHE Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress combine dared the BJP to prove its strength and urged the Supreme Court to order an immediate floor test in Maharashtra, and the Chief Minister and Raj Bhavan sought more time, the top court reserved its order Monday, saying it will announce its decision Tuesday morning.

Hearing pleas by the Sena-NCP-Congress combine, Justice N V Ramana, heading the bench

also comprising Justices Ashok Bhushan and Sanjiv Khanna, said: "The question today is whether the Chief Minister enjoys the majority of the House." He made this remark when senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and some BJP MLAs, said the situation in Maharashtra was "quite different from Karnataka" where the Supreme Court had asked the BS Yediyurappa government to prove its majority on the floor of the House in 48 hours.

Rohatgi maintained that "the

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ACB closes 9 probes, draws fire, says not linked to Ajit

SAGAR RAJPUT & MOHAMED THAYER
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

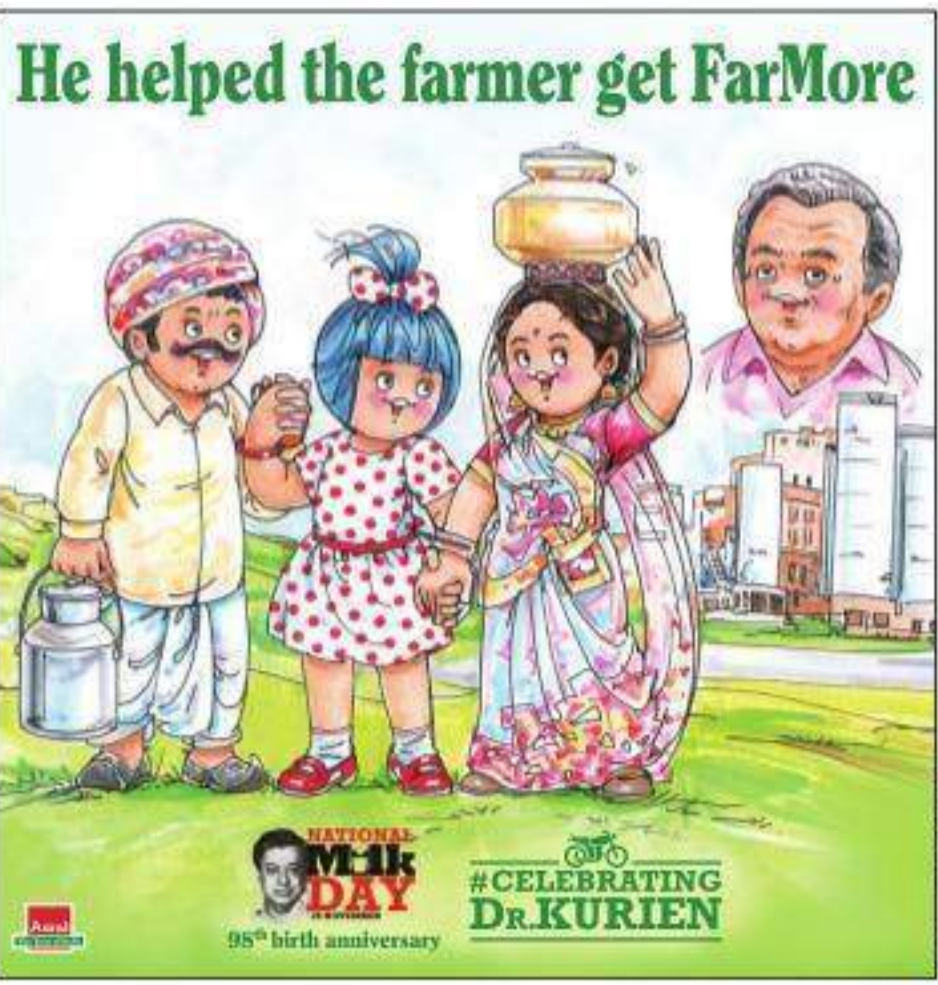
THE ANTI Corruption Bureau (ACB) Monday closed nine "open enquiries" in connection with the alleged multi-crore irrigation scam, but denied this was done to give a "clean chit" to Deputy Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar with whose support a BJP-led government was sworn in last Saturday.

The recommendation to close the nine enquiries was

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EXPLAINED Adding fuel to firestorm

THE ACB never named Ajit Pawar in any of its FIRs in the irrigation scandal, but its former chief did tell the HC that the NCP leader intervened in the award of contracts. The ACB move to shut 9 enquiries has added fuel to the political firestorm in Maharashtra.



Mamata's counter to NRC: All refugee colonies in Bengal to get land rights

SANTANU CHOWDHURY
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 25

DAYS AFTER Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in Parliament that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) would be implemented across the country, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee announced on Monday that attempts would be made to regularise all refugee colonies of up to three acres — on state government, central government as well as private land — and those living in these colonies would be given land rights.

Her move comes amid the Centre's attempt to pass the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in the ongoing Winter Session of Parliament.

"We have decided to regularise all the refugee settlements, solely because it has been a long time now — nearly 50 years. Since (March) 1971, they have been left hanging without a home or land. I believe refugees have the right," Banerjee told reporters after a Cabinet meeting.

In January, the TMC government had given freehold land rights to residents of 94 refugee colonies which were on state



'Since 1971, they have been without a home or land'

CHANGES IN NEW CITIZENSHIP BILL

New Delhi: The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, slated to be introduced in Parliament, will not be a replica of the last Bill that lapsed with the term of the 16th Lok Sabha, but will have "additional clarifications". A senior MHA official said it will provide some definitions with regard to illegal immigrants and refugees. PAGE 8

government land and had promised the same for another 237 colonies on private and central government land.

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Baghel goes back on paddy MSP promise, blames Centre

DIPANKAR GHOSE
RAIPUR, NOVEMBER 25

THE CONGRESS government in Chhattisgarh has said that it will acquire paddy at the Centre-mandated MSP of just over Rs 1,800 per quintal this season, instead of Rs 2,500 per quintal as promised in its poll manifesto.

However, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel sought to assure farmers that they would get Rs 2,500 per quintal "in their pockets", saying a ministerial sub-committee had been set up to come up with a scheme that is designed to do this. Blaming the Centre, Baghel said it did not respond to repeated petitions to acquire paddy into the central pool despite the proposed higher MSP.

Over the last few months, the

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Rajnath, Gadkari and Bachchan at Express 26/11 event today



EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

UNION MINISTER for Defence Rajnath Singh and Union Minister for Road Transport and Highways Nitin Gadkari will be chief guests at the 26/11 Stories of Strength event hosted by The Indian Express at the Gateway of India on Tuesday to mark the 11th anniversary of the Mumbai terror attacks.

In its fourth edition that coincides with the 150th birth anniversary year of Mahatma Gandhi, the event will showcase inspiring stories of courage, for-



Rajnath, Gadkari to be chief guests; Amitabh Bachchan rehearses for the event in Mumbai on Monday. Pradip Das



givenness and resilience of more than 100 survivors who have been interviewed by The Indian Express over the past decade, personal accounts that resonate uncannily with the message of the Mahatma. Anant Goenka, Executive Director, The Indian Express Group, said: "The voices

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JNU panel for partial rollback after UGC okays more funds

RITIKA CHOPRA & ARANYA SHANKAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

THE UNIVERSITY Grants Commission (UGC) Monday agreed to release Rs 6.41 crore to Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) to help the institution tide over the funds crunch that led to a substantial hike in the hostel fee.

With the regulator agreeing to release more money, the High-Level Committee (HLC) set up by the JNU administration recommended 50% reduction in service and utility charges for all students, from what it had earlier decided. As of now, these elements are not part of the hostel fee.

The HLC also recommended 75% reduction in these charges for Below Poverty Line (BPL) students, the Registrar said in a circular Monday. The revised rates are to be implemented from January 2020.

This makes it clear that the JNU Students' Union's demand for complete rollback of fee hike

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WORLD

HONG KONG: WIN FOR PRO-DEMOCRACY CAMP

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From Santiniketan to Peking University: Artist's decades-old paintings trace India-China links

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SOWMIYA ASHOK
BEIJING, NOVEMBER 25

INDIA WAS still under British rule when Chang Xiufeng went to Santiniketan in 1947 to study painting under famous Indian artist Nandalal Bose. He remained in India for 14 years, till he was deported in 1961 after being suspected of being a Communist agent and impris-

oned in Darjeeling.

"It was very difficult to go to India at the time," said his daughter-in-law, Wang Yizhu, who is the curator of an exhibition of his work that is currently on display at Peking University (PKU). "There were many Chinese people who had emigrated and were living in India at the time. Chang Xiufeng pretended he wanted to work as a teacher in a Chinese Middle School in Kolkata, so that his visa would get approved."

With 2020 marking the 70th year of diplomatic ties between



Chang Xiufeng, his work at Peking University. Wang Yizhu



India and China, 20 of Chang's 60 paintings from his time in India are on display at PKU's library. While some are inspired by the works of his Indian colleagues, his paintings capture Bengali everyday life and pictures of birds and wildlife. The exhibition, titled 'Land of Peace', traces cultural and artistic exchanges between the two countries, highlighting Chang's paintings and his uncle and scholar Chang Renxia's writings from his visit to India.

Guided by the famous painter, Xu Beihong, Chang went

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

VIDEO OF THEYYAM ARTISTE 'BEATING' PEOPLE GOES VIRAL

Raghavan Payyanad, former HOD at Calicut University, who has researched extensively on different forms of theyyam, wondered why the rights panel would file a case when no one had any complaints about the incident

VIDEO OF THE DAY

REALME 5S FIRST LOOK: IS IT A SMART UPGRADE

5s is the upgrade to the Realme 5, but has a 48MP camera

FULL COVERAGE

MAHARASHTRA POLITICAL CRISIS

Wrong to say I am behind Ajit's revolt, says Sharad Pawar

EXPRESS

AUDIO

Decoding the electoral bonds controversy

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Unpacking what electoral bonds are, why concerns were raised about their transparency when they were introduced, how they were used and what issues an RTI has exposed.

Vyapam case: 10 years in jail for kingpin, 7 years for 30 others

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, NOVEMBER 25

HANDING SENTENCES in a Vyapam scandal case of irregularities in recruitment for the posts of police constables, a special CBI court Monday sent 30 people, including candidates and those who wrote the exams on behalf of others, to seven years rigorous imprisonment, and the alleged kingpin to 10 years RI.

Special CBI prosecutor Satish Dinkar told *The Indian Express* it was among the most significant cases unearthed as part of the scandal, and had a large number of accused, including candidates, middlemen and racketeers. He said Pradeep Tyagi, also an accused in other cases, was declared the kingpin.

Among the convicted, most hailed from Gwalior, Morena, Bhind and parts of Uttar Pradesh. The police recruitment test was conducted in 2013 by the Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board, known by its Hindi acronym Vyapam (Vyavsayik Pariksha Mandal).

All 31 people were convicted last Thursday and CBI Special Judge S B Sahu announced the quantum of sentences Monday.

After taking over the investigation from the Madhya Pradesh police in December 2015, the CBI filed a chargesheet in 2017 after booking the accused for offences under sections related to conspiracy, forgery and tampering with electronic and other documentary evidence.

Pradeep Tyagi was sentenced to 10 years rigorous imprisonment, along with a fine, after he was found guilty of rigging the 2013 exams. Thirty others were sentenced to seven years in jail with a fine. They include 12 who wrote the exams on behalf of other candidates.

Video shows Tripura CM taking on NRC, CMO says clip out of context

Agartala: A video clip of Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb has gone viral on social media where he is seen saying that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in his state may cost him his post. Deb says in the video that his father and relatives came from Bangladesh and if the NRC is implemented in Tripura, he would be among those affected by it.

"If I implement it in my state... My relatives, my father came from Bangladesh. He got his citizenship card... After that, I was born in Tripura. So if anyone suffers loss through NRC, I shall lose my Chief Minister post first of all. Am I a fool that I shall implement NRC to lose CM post?" Deb is seen as saying in the video clip, which was made during the Chief Minister's press conference in North Dinajpur district, where the BJP leader visited as part of a bypoll campaign two days ago.

However, the CM's Media Advisor, Sanjay Mishra, said the video clip was out of context and was made by some people for dirty politics in order to confuse people. In the full video clip of the press conference, Deb says that the NRC and Citizenship Amendment Bill are meant to protect Indians. "Am I a fool that I shall implement NRC to lose CM post? This propaganda is being done to confuse people. NRC and CAB will benefit Indians," he says in the video.

ENS

FROM PAGE ONE

ACB inquiries

made by ACB Additional DG Bipin Kumar Singh in a letter to SP (ACB Amravati).

Ajit Pawar, who as minister in Congress-NCP governments in the past had handled Irrigation and Water Resources departments, had not been named as an accused in any of the FIRs. But in November 2018, Sanjay Barve, the then ACB DG, in an affidavit before the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court, had said that Pawar had intervened in the process of award of contracts for irrigation projects.

Barve's affidavit claimed that rules were tweaked to grant mobilisation advance to contractors, and that approval had been granted to irregular escalation of project costs.

Under Opposition fire for shutting down the enquiries, the ACB put out a statement that the nine enquiries were not related to Pawar. ACB chief Param Bir Singh said: "The enquiries that have been closed today are not related to the main irrigation scam in which FIRs have been registered."

In a statement, the ACB said: "None of these nine enquiries is in respect of Shri Ajit Pawar (a former chairman of Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation)."

It said it had initiated open enquiries into 2,654 tenders for 45 projects of the VIDC following two PILs in 2012 before the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court. The ACB said it had completed open enquiries into 212 tenders, registered 24 FIRs and filed chargesheets in five cases. Departmental enquiries, it said, had been recommended in 28 enquiries on administrative lapses, and these were sent to the VIDC over the past year-and-half.

The statement said: "45 open enquiries had been closed as no offence was disclosed during the enquiry. This order of closure of nine enquiries on November 25 is part of the 45 enquiries that were closed. The enquiry reports were received from ACB units for closure in the head office between 2-5 months ago. These nine enquiries were closed as no criminal offence was made out after enquiry against anyone."

The next date of hearing in the court is November 28. At an earlier hearing, the court had pulled up the police for the slow pace of investigation into alleged irregularities.

The first offence in the case was registered on February 23, 2016, and a chargesheet was filed on September 3 that year in a sessions court. On the directions of the High Court, two Special Investigation Teams were formed on April 4, 2018. On August 23, 2018, the High Court directed that all cases should be disposed in three months.

Mamata

"There are several refugee colonies on land owned by the central government and private parties. For a long time now, we have been asking them to regularise these refugee colonies and provide them with land possession. However, they have been sending eviction notices instead," she said.

"Those who are living in refugee colonies for a long time do not have any rights. So we thought they should get the rights as citizens of this country. They may be voting in elections, may be working here, but don't have proper land rights," she said.

"Land rights will be given to refugees who have been living on such land for a long time. They have been living in Bengal for the last 48 years. The state

Combine seeks immediate floor test

Governor has ordered reasonably" and "the Governor in the first instance acted correctly" by swearing in Fadnavis as Chief Minister and NCP leader Ajit Pawar as Deputy Chief Minister. On behalf of Fadnavis, Rohatgi said the timing and modalities for the floor test should be left to the House.

The bench said that ultimately the test has to be on the floor of the House.

Agreeing, Rohatgi said even if the post-poll coalition has not taken shape, there has to be a floor test. "But the question was whether the petition should be allowed at all, given that it had no substance... Their attack on the Governor was completely unfounded," he said, adding that allowing the petition would mean people rushing to the court every 10 days when something or the other happens in the House. The decision, he said, has to be left to the Speaker.

Appearing for the Secretary to the Governor and the Centre, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the court should allow more time to file replies. On why the Governor had not ordered an immediate floor test, he said the Governor "probably wanted to test whether the welding (between the Sena, NCP and Congress) would last". He said "giving directions to the Governor would have serious consequences for the future".

Intervening, Justice Khanna pointed out that in all similar cases before the court in the past "floor test was agreed upon by all parties and

We are 162: Show of strength by Opp alliance

The Sena said all its 56 MLAs, along with seven (of eight) independents supporting it, were present. Of its 44 MLAs, Congress said 42 were present (Prithviraj Chavan was in Delhi and Sunil Kedar in Nagpur). The NCP, which won 54 seats, said 51 MLAs were at the hotel. One more had arrived late from Delhi, the party claimed. Besides them, two Samajwadi Party MLAs and one from Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana were also present.

Sharad Pawar sought to allay the fears of his party legislators that they would lose membership of the House if they acted against the whip his nephew Ajit Pawar would likely issue. The Fadnavis government is expected to face a vote of confidence on the floor of the Assembly sooner than later. A whip is a directive issued to lawmakers, binding them to vote in accordance with their party line. Any flouting of the whip could result in disqualification of the legislator.

Addressing his MLAs, Sharad Pawar said: "The MLAs are under fear their memberships will be cancelled if they violate Ajit Pawar's whip. However, a person who has been removed from the post by the party has no such legal right. Those who are in fear that they will lose their membership should not worry. I take personal responsibility. Those who have gone against the party have no right to dictate orders pertaining to the party."

government does not want to deprive them of their rights. Refugees who have been living in this country for 12 years are now citizens of this country," she said.

Banerjee said over 13,000 and 12,000 families living on land owned by the state and central governments respectively would benefit from the decision.

However, BJP national secretary Rahul Sinha accused Banerjee of "misleading" people. "First of all, the state government has no power or jurisdiction to transfer central government land to anyone. Second, it is trying to win over the refugees by making such announcements as it knows that once the central government brings in the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, the refugees will eventually get land rights. Third, our definition of refugees does not match with the TMC's. They are including infiltrators, but we don't include infiltrators

Submitting the letters to the bench, Mehta said it mentioned the letters of support dated October 31 from 11 independent MLAs and the letter of support from Ajit Pawar dated November 22 with signatures of all 54 NCP MLAs.

Ajit Pawar's letter said the MLAs had authorised him to take a decision, and for the purposes of a stable government, "we" have decided to support Fadnavis and join the government under him, Mehta said. "It was on the basis of this letter... that the Governor decided to invite Fadnavis... Governor does not have to go on a fishing and roving enquiry... He has no reason to disbelieve this letter".

Justice Bhushan, after perusing the letter, observed that "the letter containing the MLAs' signatures don't say they are extending support to anyone".

At this, Singhvi said "your Lordships have asked a very pertinent question to which they have no answer". "Has a single MLA said we are with Ajit Pawar to form government?... Like Nelson, Governor says we will not look at the other.... will look only at undressed letter... It is a fraud on democracy," Singhvi said, and alleged that the signatures of NCP MLAs electing Ajit Pawar as leader of their legislature party was used to show support to Fadnavis.

"You are too clever by half by using signatures electing Ajit Pawar as leader of NCP legislature party to show support," he said.

Paintings

to India as a 32-year-old to attend the art school in Santiniketan. "At the time, the university had Chinese students and teachers, but most were studying literature and Buddhism. No one studied art," said Wang. "He learnt by imitating all kinds of ancient Indian paintings, including miniatures. He also served as president of the Chinese high school and began teaching courses on Chinese art history and culture."

NYU Shanghai's professor of history, Tansen Sen, who has researched Chang's life, said it was important to also focus on people who have been forgotten in telling the India-China story. "We always talk about well-known people on both sides of the border, like Rabindranath Tagore or Xu Beihong, but many unknown people are equally important," he said.

"Xu did not really engage in Indian style of paintings or Indian painters, but Chang Xiufeng was more involved in replicating the Indian school of art. He was learning from Indian style of paintings and incorporated them in his own work. He was part of the 1930-40s Chinese artists who were inspired by Indian art, which led to interesting artistic collaborations that are less studied aspects of India-China relations."

Sen said Chang Xiufeng re-

France, nobody knows much about the students studying in India at the time," she said. "We hope to take Chang Xiufeng's paintings back to Santiniketan for an exhibition next year."

26/11

of these survivors force us to remind ourselves that even in these polarised times, the majority of India is fiercely moderate."

Directed by filmmaker Anand Tiwari, the event will feature a performance by actor Amitabh Bachchan who has been an ambassador for the Stories of Strength initiative since 2016. Actors Vicky Kaushal and Radhika Apte will also be seen interviewing survivors of the attack.

There will also be performances by Dr L Subramaniam, Kavita Krishnamurthy, Zane Dalal, Rekha Bharadwaj, Mahesh Kale, Harshdeep Kaur, Divya Kumar, Shilpa Rao, Shiamak Davar Dance Company, Symphony Orchestra of India, The Indian Navy Band and the Maharashtra Police Pipe Band.

Presented by the Bajaj Group, the event is powered by Hindustan Unilever, Facebook and Adani Group with Star as broadcast partner. The Indian Express 26/11 Stories of Strength will be live streamed from 5.30 pm on Tuesday across all digital platforms of The Indian Express Group as well as ABP News, Republic TV and big92.7fm. The memorial event will also be broadcast exclusively on Star Plus and Hotstar on Saturday, November 30, at 9.30 pm.

Baghel govt

state government has written repeatedly to the Centre, asking for leeway in the rules for procurement of paddy above the Centre's MSP, which say that if a state acquires paddy at a rate above the Centre's MSP, the excess paddy would not be acquired into the central pool.

Earlier this month, Baghel met Union ministers, arguing that this leeway was given to the previous BJP government led by Raman Singh in 2016-17 and 2017-18. The Centre, however, has said that keeping the fiscal balance in mind, this is not possible.

With the Opposition BJP raising the farmers' issue on the first day of the Winter Session on Monday, Baghel later told reporters: "We want to buy paddy, but the Centre does not want us to buy paddy. I told Opposition members that they should speak to the Prime Minister, that in the last two years, the Centre gave leeway in buying paddy into the central pool. I have declared that farmers will get Rs 2,500 in their pockets. But because of the arrogance of the BJP and the Government of India, we will buy paddy at Rs 1,815 and Rs 1,835 per quintal (Centre's MSP). But how should the farmer get justice? I have announced a ministerial sub-committee, which will study how the farmer should get Rs 2,500, and it will submit a report. We will not let any injustice happen to farmers in Chhattisgarh."

Asked when the report would be submitted, he said: "It will be submitted very quickly. The Centre has put an obstacle on giving bonus, so we will give it some other way. Other states have KALIA or Rythu Bandhu, farmers will get justice in our state as well. If we are studying, it could take one or two months. Even earlier, governments used to give bonus over and above the MSP in the months after the acquisition of

paddy on MSP. We will bring a scheme in the Budget Session so that farmers don't lose out. If the Government of India decides to give us leeway, then we won't have to go for another scheme."

In the Assembly, the BJP said the decision to delay paddy procurement from November 15 to December 1 had resulted in losses to farmers. "Farmers are being forced to dump their paddy," Leader of Opposition Dharamlal Kaushik said.

When the Congress was in Opposition, it had repeatedly argued for preponing paddy acquisition from November 15 to November 1.

Meanwhile, activists blamed both the central and state governments. "It is correct that the Centre is not accepting the state's demands. But it is also true that in this tussle, it is the farmer who is losing out, and the state government is also responsible. In the Budget, no finances were set aside for the MSP. What were they waiting for? The state government is saying it will give Rs 2,500 eventually, but the farmer in this state has a long history of being cheated," said Alok Shukla, convenor of the Chhattisgarh Bachao Andolan.

JNU panel

has not been paid heed to. The Registrar also noted that the recommendations of the HLC had been "approved by the Executive Council through circulation".

JNU is learned to have approached the higher education regulator Monday for more funds and the UGC approved the request the same day.

Sources said the funds have been sanctioned under the recurring head out of the existing budget made available to the UGC by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD).

The move comes even as the high-powered committee constituted by the HRD Ministry is still to submit its report in the matter.

"The HLC has strongly recommended that concessions in utility and service charges be given to all the students of the University," the circular said with regard to the recommendations made by the seven-member committee.

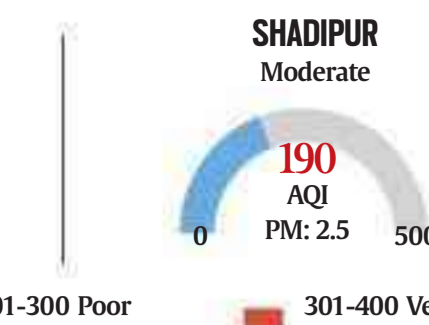
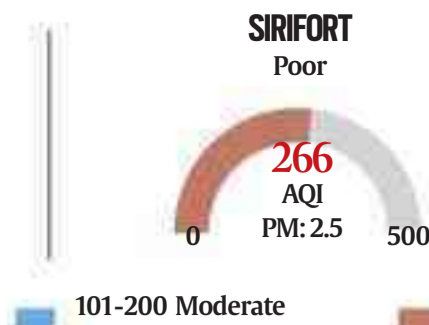
"The committee scrutinized the estimated utility and service charges in the hostels, which are Rs 2000 per month (including electricity and water charges of Rs 300) and has recommended that Rs 1000 per month may be charged, in place of Rs 2000 per month, towards utility and service charges for all the students. The Committee has also recommended 75 per cent reduction in utility and service charges for all the eligible BPL students who would be charged Rs 500 in place of Rs 2000 per month," it said.

Registrar Pramod Kumar said he "hoped" the "concessions" will "go down well with the student community and stakeholders at large".

"The student strike has caused enormous academic loss to a vast number of students in the university. The administrative shutdown due to occupation of the Administration Building has compounded the woes of the JNU community. Further continuation of lockdown of Schools would be unacceptable national loss. Therefore, the Administration appeals to the agitating students to end their strike with immediate effect in the academic interest of their fellow students. The university's image has already taken a beating and normalcy in the university must return at the earliest," he said.



0-50 Good



ANGUISHED SC PULLS UP STATES OVER POLLUTION IN DELHI-NCR

‘Why are people in this gas chamber... better to finish them with explosives’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

STATING THAT there was no let up in the air pollution situation year after year despite its orders, the Supreme Court Monday directed states to show cause within six weeks “why they should not be required to pay compensation” to the affected people.

“Year to year, position is worsening despite orders of court... Life span of people is being shortened... Time has come to require various states... as right to life of people is involved,” ordered a bench of Justice Arun Mishra and Justice Deepak Gupta.

Citing Constitutional provisions on the right to life, the bench said the compensation should be borne by the entire official machinery. It also asked all states to apprise it of steps being taken to tackle air and water pollution, and disposal of garbage.

The bench was hearing a plea on air pollution in Delhi-NCR due to stubble burning in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The court also asked the



The bench asked the states to show cause why they should not be required to pay compensation to the affected people. *Praveen Khanna*

Delhi government and CPCB to submit to it a comprehensive plan to set up smog towers in the national capital. It took exception to the submission that one such tower had been installed and was being tested on a pilot basis.

Justice Arun Mishra said such towers had already been proven in other countries and the au-

thorities concerned should go ahead and install them in Delhi too.

On November 6, the court had directed that a compensation of Rs 100 per quintal be given as an incentive to paddy farmers who had not indulged in stubble burning.

On Monday, the bench, after

perusing a status report, noted that the fires had gone up on some days and asked why this had happened despite its order.

“If you are not able to control your state, your official machinery, why should you not pay compensation to the people in tort,” the bench asked Punjab Chief Secretary Karan Avtar

Singh, and added “this is failure of the state machinery, whoever may be there.”

Singh tried to explain and said “we are monitoring daily”, but the court was not impressed.

The bench also pulled up Haryana Chief Secretary K A Arora and UP Chief Secretary Rajendra Kumar Tiwari over the increase in stubble burning incidents in their states. “This has been going on since long. Is this not worst than internal war? Why are people in this gas chamber? It's better to finish them with explosives in one go instead of suffering for long...,” remarked Justice Mishra.

He added “nobody wants to do that (which) is not populist”, and told Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CPCB, and the counsel for the states that “you people are not sitting with each other”.

The court also took exception to the role of farmers in stubble burning. “We have sympathy for them but let it not be misplaced... They cannot flout our orders,” Justice Gupta told a lawyer who appeared on behalf of the farmers.

To tackle pollution, smog tower to come up in city

SHIVAM PATEL
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

A ‘SMOG tower’ being planned for Delhi as an experiment would create a “clean air zone” around it with an estimated 50% reduction in particulate matter, experts involved in the project told *The Indian Express* Monday.

On Monday, the Supreme Court directed the Centre and the Delhi government to draw up a comprehensive plan in 10 days to install ‘smog towers’ across the capital to deal with air pollution.

The project is being headed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) Bombay in collaboration with IIT-Delhi and the University of Minnesota. The latter helped design a similar tower of over 100 metres in China’s Xi’an city. The Central Pollution Control Board is also involved with the project.

In Delhi, the 20-metre high tower would trap particulate matter of all sizes suspended in the air: “Large-scale air filters will be used in the towers, which will draw in the air through fans installed at the top before passing it through the filters and releasing it near the ground,” said an IIT-B expert in-charge of the project.

An estimate made by project experts of the tower’s impact on

EXPLAINED

E.

What is a smog tower

air quality shows it would reduce 50% of the particulate matter load in an area 1 km in the direction of the wind, as well as 200 metres each along the sides of

the tower and against the direction of the wind.

The filters being installed in it would use carbon nanofibres as a major component and would be fitted along its peripheries, project experts said, adding that the project is only focused on reducing particulate matter load at present. The tower is expected to start running before next winter.

Finding a suitable location is one of the main aspects of the project, said IIT-D Professor Mukesh Khare, who is on the project advisory board. He added, “If, for instance, the tower is installed near AIIMS, the air in that area would be cleaner.” A location is yet to be decided for the tower.

Professor Khare also said the tower design would consider Indian meteorological and air pollution conditions: “In China, the meteorology is different, their sources are mainly industrial. In Delhi, we have road dust, vehicular emissions and biomass burning among the sources.”

The project is estimated to cost around Rs 12-13 crore. A project member said it would be a “demand-based instrument” to reduce severity of air pollution.

He added that an assessment of the impact made by this tower on local air quality would be done to estimate how many such units would be required across Delhi.

Drain death: Toll rises to two

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

TWO DAYS after a 35-year-old sanitation worker died after allegedly inhaling toxic fumes while cleaning a drain in North West Delhi’s Shakurpur, his co-worker died Monday afternoon.

Rohit (30) was among three workers who had fallen sick

Saturday afternoon while cleaning the drain that comes under the Public Works Department.

Police said he was transferred to Safdarjung hospital after his condition became critical. “Rohit died at the hospital Monday afternoon. The other two labourers who fell sick are fine,” said DCP (North West) Vijayanta Arya.

Police said they have been unable to establish contact with

the family members of the victims. A senior officer said the men, who hailed from Madhya Pradesh, lived in a rented accommodation in Pooth Kalan.

A case was registered based on a complaint by a worker, Gorelal, who alleged the men were forced into the drain and were not given safety gear.

Police arrested the contractor and private supervisor Saturday.

Dec 2012 gangrape: Court transfers case

New Delhi: The 2012 gangrape and murder case was Monday transferred from a vacant court to another judge to decide whether to direct Tihar Jail authorities to expedite the execution of the convicts. District Judge Yashwant Kumar sent the case to Additional Sessions Judge Satish Arora, who will hear the matter on November 28, on an application by the victim’s mother.

In her application, the victim’s mother, through counsel

Jitender Kumar Jha and Seema Kushwaha, said the “fast track court of Additional Sessions Judge P K Jain has been vacant and she has waited for some successor judge to occupy the Chair...”

“Convicts have not preferred any remedy available in law... Sessions court is authorised to issue appropriate warrants so that the sentence awarded to the convicts may be carried out as early as possible...,” said the plea.

Tihar Jail authorities had said the convicts — Mukesh (31), Pawan Gupta (24), Vinay Sharma (25) and Akshay Kumar Singh (33) — on death row have “exhausted” all legal remedies “except provision of filing mercy petition” before the President.

While the counsel for Pawan, Vinay and Akshay said they have sent their replies to jail authorities, Mukesh’s counsel said a plea will be filed before the Supreme Court soon. **ENS**

BRIEFLY

Skill, sports
varsity bills to
be discussed

New Delhi: The Delhi Assembly will have a two-day sitting in the first week of December, where bills relating to a skill and entrepreneurship university and a sports university will be introduced for discussion and passage, the government said in a statement.

Fire at call
centre

New Delhi: A fire broke out at a call centre in South West Delhi's Vasant Kunj Monday. Six people were rescued, said police.

DUTA calls for
evaluation
boycott

New Delhi: The Delhi University Teachers' Association has called for a boycott of evaluation of the upcoming semester-end examination papers to press for various demands regarding appointment and promotion.

Constable run
over by train

New Delhi: A 45-year-old police head constable died after he was allegedly run over by a train near Lodhi Colony Railway Station.

42 CCTVs
stolen

New Delhi: A total of 42 CCTV cameras along with DVRs, LCD screens, a bike and Rs 20,000 in cash, were found missing from a storeroom belonging to an AAP worker Monday, police said. **ENS**

Court pulls up CBI for
delays in '84 riots case

Seeking report, CMM says 'expect agency to act in a sensitive manner, submit reply within 15 days'

ANAND MOHAN J

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

A DELHI court came down heavily on the CBI during proceedings in a 1984 anti-Sikh riots case, in which Congress leader Jagdish Tytler is accused, for delay in recording a key witness's statement.

Seeking a report from the CBI, Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Harijot Singh said considering it was a 35-year-old case, it expects the agency to act in a sensitive manner and not take more than 15 days to file a reply.

The CMM noted that "35 years after the incident in which citizens were burnt alive, investigation agencies have tried to show that they will show justice to the victims... conduct of the agencies, in my view speaks otherwise". He said his predecessor had ordered CBI to look into allegations of a witness being influenced and to

**Congress leader Jagdish Tytler is accused in the case**

conduct a polygraph test on another witness, Abhishek Verma.

As per court records, it took the CBI three years to conduct Verma's polygraph test, and, before his test, Verma claimed he received threats and sought enhancement of police protection. Verma had approached the court to record his statement under CrPC Section 164.

After perusing previous orders, the CMM pulled up the IO in the case, Vinod Kumar, and said: "I am surprised that the investigating agency does not seem to be concerned that the key witness received a threat right before

the polygraph test... I would like to know from the investigating officer that considering the witness, Abhishek Verma, was threatened by the alleged letter in August 2018, while he was already receiving some police protection, is it not possible that other witnesses also feel insecure?"

The CMM then asked the IO why the agency was satisfied with recording statements under CrPC Section 161, which is neither signed by the witness and is of little evidentiary value, and why he does not want the witnesses to record their statements under CrPC Section 164.

He then observed that: "In this case, persons were burnt alive in a public place and witnesses have been not been forthcoming... the decision of the investigating agency must reflect fairness to victims and witnesses who are braving to depose against influential persons."

Audit to break down liabilities
of Rapid Metro in Gurgaon**VARINDER BHATIA**

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 25

THE PRINCIPAL Auditor General, Haryana, has begun an audit of Gurgaon's Rapid Metro Rail.

The auditor shall primarily be looking into the project's financial aspects to ascertain who shall bear liabilities amounting to Rs 3,771 crore, arising out of the terminated concessionaire agreements between the Haryana Shahari Vikas Pradhikaran (HSVP) and the concessionaires, including Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited's (IL&FS) Special Purpose Vehicles — Rapid Metro Rail Gurgaon Ltd (RMGL) and Rapid MetroRail Gurgaon South Ltd (RMGSL).

**DMRC has taken over operations.** *Archive*

Built by IL&FS, the Gurgaon Metro is the country's first privately developed Metro project. From the night of October 22, Delhi Metro Rail Corporation took over operations of the Rapid Metro link after RMGL expressed its inability to run the Metro due to low footfall and high expenditure involved.

"The audit was ordered based on the directions issued by the Punjab and Haryana High Court. For the audit, six teams have been constituted. Primarily, the entire financial aspect from beginning till the end — the amount of liabilities and who should bear it are a few aspects the auditors shall be looking into in the audit, which will likely take about five-six months," a senior PAC officer told *The Indian Express*.

The matter of operation of the Rapid Metro reached the court on September 6, with the HSVP and the companies handling the Metro issuing termination notices to each other, alleging "material breaches" in contract.

At youth parliament opening, LS
Speaker stresses on need for dissent**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

ONE HAS the "right to disagree" in a democracy, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla said Monday, stressing on the need to not just respect Opposition voices but also make them a part of the decision-making process.

Birla made the remarks at the inaugural event of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association's (CPA) Youth Parliament in the Delhi Assembly. Earlier in the day, the Lok Sabha witnessed protests over Birla's decision to marshal out Congress MPs protesting in the well of the House over the Maharashtra government issue.

Birla, who was the chief guest at the Assembly event, said dialogue, debate and discussions were the pillars on which democracy stands: "Every party and stakeholder in a democratic system has the right to voice their views in this temple of

**Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel, CM Kejriwal, Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and Deputy Speaker of the Cameroon national assembly Emilia Monjow Lifaka at the inaugural event of the youth parliament, Monday.** *Amit Mehra*

democracy... More importantly, one has the right to disagree in a democracy. So, Opposition voices should be given a patient hearing and their disagreements treated with respect. The success of democracy hinges on this spirit."

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal, Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel and CPA Chairperson Emilia Monjow Lifaka, who is the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly of Cameroon, also addressed the 49 delegates representing 24 countries.

Kejriwal urged delegates to explore the need for democratic

systems to evolve and become more direct in nature, moving away from indirect forms of democracy: "People elect their representatives once every five years... they have little direct say in governance... I would like to put this question before you, that when you attend this program in the next two-three days, do keep this in mind that can democracy evolve to a stage where we have some kind of direct form of democracy... where in the next five years of electing a representative, people can have some kind of direct control over the representatives."

A Delhi government source said the event saw no participants from around 15 countries, including Pakistan, which are members of the Commonwealth. "Candidates are selected by CPA headquarters at London. We are not sure why there has been no participation from these countries. We had extended invites to all Commonwealth countries," said the official.

‘Chemical’ spill on
road: Injured man dies**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

FOLLOWING THE deaths of two men, who fell off their bike on a "chemical" that had spilt on the road, police said their friend, who was with them on the two-wheeler, died of injuries Monday.

The incident took place near Mori Gate at 5.45 am Saturday.

The victims, Mahesh Chand (23), Shivam Lal (21), and Monu Sharma (22), were heading home from a wedding when their bike skidded and they fell on the substance.

Police later found that the substance had leaked from a truck.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Monika Bhardwaj said on Monday, a team was sent to Rajasthan's

Barmer, where the truck had been traced.

"We recovered footage from CCTVs near Mori Gate; it showed the vehicle crossing the area where the incident took place... Using that, we tracked down the truck's registration number to Rajasthan," said an officer.

Chand and Lal died during treatment on Sunday at Lok Nayak Hospital. While police suspect the men died due to the substance, doctors have not yet confirmed the cause of death.

Meanwhile, Sharma's brother Rahul alleged (20): "His limbs and back had turned black. We thought he would survive as he had sustained fewer injuries than his friends... but doctors told us his lungs stopped functioning due to which he died. Police told us the chemical killed him."

Cash van loot: Driver
helped assailants, held

New Delhi: After a cash van was looted in Dwarka last week, the driver, Dheeraj Puri, told police he was beaten up by two men carrying a knife before they fled with the cash. Four days on, police arrested him for his role in the incident.

Police said the incident took place in Dwarka last Thursday. Narendra and Vikas, custodians of the cash, told police, "We went to Manipal Hospital in Dwarka to deposit cash in an ATM inside. The driver and the guard waited in the vehicle, which was parked on the road across the hospital. When we returned, we found the van was missing."

Police later received information that the men were found injured, lying inside the damaged van in Dwarka's Sector 11. The company later reported that they lost Rs 1.5 crore.

Police said the gang was be-

hind another attempt to loot a cash van some time ago and was helped by Dheeraj then as well. His involvement came to light during questioning of one of the assailants, Madan Lal.

Police found CCTV footage from the spot and saw the assailants following the van. "We noticed a Hyundai car near the spot around the time of the offence. The car was traced to Lal. The company told us that a few months ago, another van was targeted by robbers who failed in their attempt. We found that Lal had been the accused in that case as well but had fled," said JCP (Western Range) Shalini Singh.

Lal told police he and his associates — Umesh, Jatin and Mintu, who are yet to be arrested — tried to loot the van in Patel Nagar the first time but failed. Umesh had taken Puri's help to rob the van. **ENS**

Delhi govt not implementing schemes: Puri

New Delhi: Taking a dig at the Delhi government before the Assembly polls, Union minister Hardeep Puri Monday claimed it was “non-performing” on the implementation of central schemes in the capital.

At an event, the Urban Affairs Minister said, “Delhi is on all (central government) schemes I am aware of. It is under-performing, and in many cases, it is a non-performing government.” However, Puri said the BJP-led Centre will ensure people get all facilities delivered through its various schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana-Urban.

Puri claimed the Centre has not received any proposal under PMAY-U from the Delhi government.

As per the ministry, only 16,000 cases of the Credit Link Subsidy Scheme under PMAY-U were received from individuals and not the Delhi government. Puri added the Centre stepped in to complete formalities to confer ownership rights to residents of unauthorised colonies, after “seeing the attitude” of the Delhi government when they sought more time to do so. **PTI**

Thrown off scooter, man crushed under vehicle near ITO

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

A 25-YEAR-OLD man was crushed under an unidentified vehicle after he lost control of his scooter and fell on the road near ITO Monday evening. Police said the victim was accompanied by his colleague who sustained minor injuries and was later discharged from the hospital.

According to police, the victim, identified as Shahdara resident Vikas Pawar, lost control of the vehicle while taking a turn and was mowed down by a vehicle coming from behind. While the accused driver fled after the accident, police said Pawar died on the spot.

Pawar, who worked as a data entry operator in a private firm

BY DECEMBER-END

100 residents of unauthorised colonies to get ownership deeds

ABHINAV RAJPUT
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

AROUND 100 people living in unauthorised colonies will get ownership rights in the form of conveyance deeds by the end of the year, said Delhi Development Authority (DDA) vice-chairperson Tarun Kapoor Monday. With this, he said the DDA will kickstart the scheme — PM-UDAY (Unauthorised Colonies in Delhi Awas Adhikar Yojana) — to regularise over 1,700 colonies and confer ownership rights on residents.

A conveyance deed is an essential document required for purchase of property, which is signed by all parties, and is a binding contract in a court of law. According to Kapoor, once they get the deed, people can approach the Delhi government to register their properties.

According to a DDA official, while a conveyance deed grants ownership rights to people and



will be recorded with the body, registration of the property will mean they can take loan on it or sell it.

On Saturday, Union Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the process of regularising unauthorised colonies will

be completed within three months, with the DDA set to launch a portal enabling people to file applications for ownership rights on December 16. Through the portal, Kapoor said, people can apply for the conveyance deed.

Either work or leave: SC pulls up officials over poor air, water

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

“EITHER WORK or leave,” the Supreme Court told officials Monday as it pulled up the Delhi government and the corporations falling under the Centre over the city’s air, water and garbage woes.

A bench of Justice Arun Mishra and Justice Deepak Gupta also took suo motu cognisance of the drinking water pollution controversy in Delhi and said “Delhiites have right to get pure water”.

The bench, which quizzed Delhi Chief Secretary Vijay Kumar Dev about steps taken to deal with pollution in the national capital, noted that there were reports that “impure water is being supplied” and also “contrary reports that the samples were manipulated”.



DJB report on water quality will be released in 10 days

According to Delhi Jal Board vice-chairman and AAP MLA Dinesh Mohaniya, a report on water quality in the capital will be released in 10 days.

The Delhi government is carrying out the tests to challenge an earlier report released by Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), which found Delhi’s water quality to be the worst among 21

Sources said the BJP could showcase this as their achievement before next year’s Assembly polls, and that the deeds may be handed over to the 100 people by a top BJP leader. Sources, however, said the DDA is yet to figure out how the 100 residents will be selected.

Meanwhile, the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies) Bill, 2019 will be introduced in the Lok Sabha Tuesday. The bill seeks to provide special provisions for the National Capital Territory of Delhi for recognising property rights of residents of unauthorised colonies, by securing the rights of ownership or transfer or mortgage in favour of residents of such colonies.

However, the list of business in Lok Sabha only mentions the introduction of the bill and does not clarify when it will be taken for consideration for passage.

3 men held from Assam for ‘planning attack in capital’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

THREE MEN, who Delhi Police claimed are inspired by the “Bangladesh module of terror outfit ISIS,” were arrested from Assam Sunday by the Special Cell for allegedly hatching a plan to blast bombs in Assam and Delhi.

DCP (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said the men — Ranjeet Islam (24), Mukadir Islam (22) and Luit Zameel Zaman (24) — were arrested a day before they were allegedly going to plant an IED at the Raasmela festival in Dudhnoi, in Assam’s Goalpara district.

“At least one full IED, 1 kg explosives, two baton swords, pipes and nails, and four mobile phones have been recovered from the men,” he said. They were allegedly going to target the Raasmela festival on Monday evening — the last day of the annual 14-day festival — as the footfall is high, added the DCP.

The men were arrested in a joint operation by Delhi and Assam police. Kushwah said during interrogation, the men told them the “recovered IED is complete and they had planned to connect the battery just before planting it at Raasmela”. The men also said that Assam would have been the trial run; if the blast would have been



The accused were allegedly going to plant a bomb at Raasmela festival in Assam

nual 14-day festival — as the footfall is high, added the DCP. The men were arrested in a joint operation by Delhi and Assam police. Kushwah said during interrogation, the men told them the “recovered IED is complete and they had planned to connect the battery just before planting it at Raasmela”. The men also said that Assam would have been the trial run; if the blast would have been

successful, then Delhi would have been next... they were in touch with some radicalised groups in Delhi. We are investigating if they had visited Delhi, done any recces or decided upon a place. For now, we know that they would have attacked a high footfall place. The men said the IED to conduct blasts in Delhi had been arranged,” said Kushwah.

Police said that Ranjeet worked at a fish trading centre, Mukadir was a driver and Zameel worked as a supervisor at an Aadhaar Enrollment Centre. All three accused are residents of Goalpara district.

“The men watched do-it-yourself videos on how to make explosives and were self-radicalised in all likelihood. In such cases, mostly the accused get radicalised by watching online content. We are investigating this,” said Kushwah.

Police have got a 10-day remand of the three men.

Man dies after car rams tree in Dwarka

New Delhi: A 36-year-old man died after he allegedly rammed the sedan car he was driving into a tree in South West Delhi Monday morning. The incident took place around 1.10 am outside Devam farmhouse on Dwarka Link Road.

The victim, Dwarka resident Apurv Pandey, was returning home in his Honda City after attending a function from NH8, said police. “Prima facie it appears that Pandey was speeding,”

said a police officer. DCP (South West) Devender Arya said, “A PCR call was received at 1.29 am about fire in a car and when a police team reached there, it was found that a car had collided into a tree and had caught fire.”

Irshad Khan (55), a guard on duty outside the farmhouse, told *The Indian Express*, “From a distance, I saw a speeding car hit the tree. A few of us rushed there and took the driver out... Suddenly the car caught fire.” Pandey was

rushed to Venkateshwar hospital, where he declared dead on arrival.

“His body was handed over to the family after post-mortem at DDU,” said Arya.

Pandey held a private job and is survived by his parents and an elder brother who lives in Mumbai.

A case under IPC sections 279 and 304 has been filed. Police said the cause of the accident is yet to be ascertained. **ENS**

Uzbek man who tried to smuggle parrots gets bail

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

A DELHI court Monday granted bail to a 24-year-old Uzbekistan national who was arrested at IGI Airport for allegedly trying to smuggle 13 parrots to Tashkent.

Anvarjon Rakhmat Jonov was arrested on October 15 by the customs department after they spotted the birds during scanning.

The court was told one of the parrots flew away. Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Purshotam Pathak observed that the accused has been in judicial custody since October 16 and his interrogation was not required.

The CMM granted bail to Jonov on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 1 lakh, subject to the condition that he join the probe and not tamper with evidence or influence witnesses.

Jonov’s counsel Karan Tarkar, who moved the bail plea, said he received the parrots from an Ukrainian man under the pretext of a gift.

Decide Manu Sharma’s parole plea in a week: HC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

THE DELHI High Court Monday directed jail authorities to decide within a week the plea of Jessica Lal murder convict Manu Sharma, who has spent about 17 years in jail, seeking eight weeks parole to look after family needs.

Justice Rajnish Bhatnagar was informed by the counsel for Sharma that his plea seeking parole is pending with the authorities for nearly nine months even though they are required to decide it within four weeks.

“Jail authorities are directed to dispose of the parole plea of the petitioner (Sharma) within a week,” the court said.

SOL students to give combined first & second semester exams

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

STUDENTS OF Delhi University’s School of Open Learning will appear for their first and second semester exams, totalling eight papers, in May-June, officials said Monday. The decision, affecting 1.15 lakh students who were admitted to the university this year, was announced by the school Monday, following a High Court order on November 21.

A set of students had approached the court stating that the students had not been prepared by the faculty for the first semester exams, which were supposed to begin on November 24, due to hurried implementation of semester-based choice-based credit system (CBCS) in the school.

SOL was operating in the annual mode of examination till the last academic year. It decided



SOL students have been protesting against the switch to CBCS

to switch to CBCS, which is followed in regular colleges, on August 17, after the commencement of the academic session.

The counsel for the petitioners had stated that the contact classes arranged for students during the weekends had “commenced as late as” September 22 and had been cancelled “at least three times”. It also pointed out that the course material provided

was “incomplete or illegible”.

A report submitted by the V-C after the students moved court provided two alternatives — postpone the first semester exam to December or club it with the second semester exam. The petitioners chose the latter.

Meanwhile, officials from the School of Open Learning said that students preferred the former option.

“We had spoken to thousands of students, and they had said that they preferred the first option... However, we followed the court’s direction,” said Ramesh Bhardwaj, Officer on Special Duty, SOL.

But members of KYS, which had led the opposition against hasty implementation of CBCS, said students preferred exams in May-June. “The study material provided is so bad that postponing the exams by just a month is not sufficient,” said Bhim, a Delhi State Committee member of KYS.

Docs remove ‘largest kidney’ in India from 56-yr-old man

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

DOCTORS AT Sir Ganga Ram Hospital have removed a kidney weighing 7.4 kg, and measuring 32 cm x 21.8 cm, from a 56-year-old man suffering from a genetic disorder. While a normal kidney weighs 120-150 grams, doctors said the kidney they removed — weighing more than two newborns — is the heaviest in India and the third largest in the world.

The patient was suffering from Autosomal Dominant Polycystic Kidney Disease (ADPKD), which causes renal failure and requires renal replacement therapy in the form of dialysis and renal transplant.

The current Guinness World Record for the heaviest kidney removed is held by doctors from a Dubai hospital, who had removed

a 4.25 kg kidney in 2017 from a patient suffering from the disease. However, doctors found two other cases where the kidney that was removed weighed much more.

“After checking medical literature, we found two earlier reports of heavier kidneys being removed — a 9 kg (USA) and another 8.7 kg (Netherlands). We believe this is the third heaviest kidney ever to be removed. We found that no one in India has reported removing such a heavy kidney,” said Dr Sachin Kathuria, Consultant, Department of Urology, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. Doctors are planning to apply for a Guinness World Record.

According to doctors, the patient visited the hospital last month with pain and serious infection. The patient was on antibiotics but stopped responding to them, after which doctors conducted a CT scan to find the cause.

“This is a genetic condition in which, after a certain age, the kidney becomes defunct and keeps forming a cyst. As a result, functional tissues get replaced by the cyst. A cyst is like a balloon with water but it’s not urine, so the weight is because of the fluid in the cyst. Generally, we don’t remove such kidneys in patients who are undergoing transplant or are on dialysis, but in this case, due to the pain and infection, we had to operate. The patient’s other kidney is heavier than this but we had to remove this one because it was symptomatic,” added Dr Kathuria.

The patient has been discharged and will be on dialysis.

For those with the disease, kidneys are removed if there is infection, bleeding or a renal tumour. The disease is found in 1 among 700-1,000 individuals, and there are 12.5 million cases worldwide.



8

IN PARLIAMENT

WINTER SESSION

FROM THE GALLERY

FROM THE CHAIR

RAJYA SABHA

“What Mr Naqvi says should go on record.”

M VENKAIAH NAIDU, Chairman permitting Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi to make a point of order about the Opposition's notices on revocation of President's Rule in Maharashtra, even as he did not permit any comments from the Opposition on the same issue to go on record.

LOK SABHA

“Honourable member, this is the last time I am telling you, please keep the dignity of the House.”

OM BIRLA, Speaker, to protesting Congress MPs

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“I came to ask a question. But now it makes no sense because the democracy is murdered in Maharashtra.”

RAHUL GANDHI, Congress MP, when the Speaker called his name during Question Hour.

5 QUESTIONS



SPEAKER OM BIRLA NAMED CONGRESS ERNAKULAM MP **HIBI EDEN** AND THRISSUR MP **T N PRATHAPAN** FOR THEIR BEHAVIOUR, CITING RULE 373. EDEN TOLD **LIZ MATHEW** WHY HE HAS NO REGRETS.

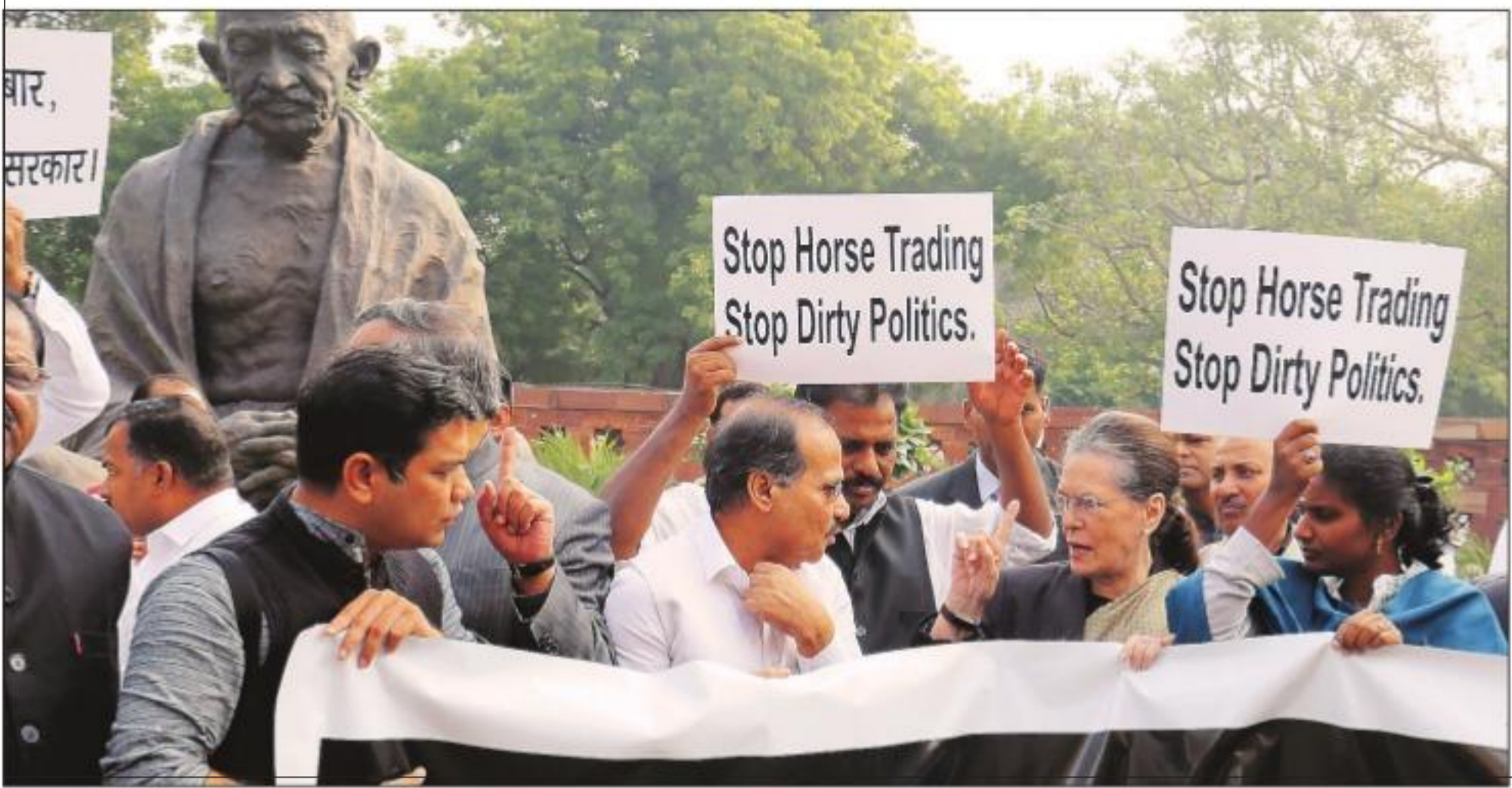
Why did you hold a banner inside the House?
We raised the Maharashtra issue, the horse-trading happening there and the money politics played out. It was quite unfortunate that security personnel were sent to grab our banners. We protested in a peaceful and democratic manner...The security personnel not only tried to snatch our banners but also misbehaved with the women MPs.

But the Speaker has given you warnings. He has also cited the rules.
Our protest is genuine. Of course the Speaker has the right to take action. He is the custodian of the Lok Sabha

Do you think the Opposition was forced to take drastic steps as the notices for adjournment motion to discuss the issue were not allowed?
There are certain conventions in Parliament and in democratic system. But unfortunately, such conventions are not followed. The Opposition has not been given enough space to discuss and put their views. Bills are introduced without giving us the opportunity to discuss in detail... We want our voices to be heard in Parliament.

So what action would be taken against you?
Whatever it is, we have no regret over what happened in Lok Sabha. We tried to get attention for the slogans raised by the Congress.

What did your colleagues S Jothimani and Ramya Haridas complain about?
They raised complaints against the people who have misbehaved with them.



Congress president Sonia Gandhi and other party leaders protest at Parliament House on Monday. Anil Sharma

70TH CONSTITUTION DAY

Oppn may skip joint session to protest ‘murder of democracy’

ABANTIKA GHOSH

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

OPPOSITION PARTIES may boycott Tuesday's special joint sitting in Parliament, organised on the occasion of Constitution Day, in protest against what they are calling the “murder of democracy” in Maharashtra and the “manhandling” of women MPs by security staff in the Lok Sabha.

The parties — 12 so far — along with some Independent members will assemble below the statue of B R Ambedkar to protest against the situation in Maharashtra. It will be led by Congress president Sonia Gandhi, who personally reached out to many opposition parties on Monday to join the agitation and to discuss the joint sitting. The parties expected to be at the protest are the Congress, TMC,

DMK, RJD, Shiv Sena, CPI, CPI(M), SP, BSP, AAP, JD(S), RSP and IUML.

The special sitting in the Central Hall to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution in 1949 will be addressed by President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla.

Sources say while there is an “overall consensus” among the parties that a boycott of the high profile event would send the message of a Constitution under attack, there are also concerns about whether the boycott could backfire and give addition ammunition to the government to pin the opposition down on a charge of disrespecting the Constitution. There is, however, unanimity about the first part of the programme - the protest at the Ambedkar statue.

TMC Rajya Sabha leader Derek O'Brien said, “All the opposition parties have decided to meet at 10 am tomorrow morning because the Constitution is being murdered. We will meet below the statue of B R Ambedkar in Parliament. Subsequently we will take a call on the joint session, whether to boycott it or not.”

An opposition source said, “We are all more or less on the same page - that we will protest below the Ambedkar statue and then boycott the special sitting. However, the DMK is keen to attend the session. We are working so that the opposition puts up a united front on this issue at least and cracks do not show. That is why we have refrained from any official statements on the boycott, but at this point of time it seems very unlikely that the opposition will go to Central Hall tomorrow.”

Oppn stalls RS proceedings over Maharashtra issue, House adjourned

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

RAJYA SABHA failed to transact any meaningful business on Monday as the Opposition protested Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu's decision to not permit a discussion on the revocation of President's Rule in Maharashtra over the weekend.

Within 10 minutes of resuming its session on Monday, the House was first adjourned till 2pm. Post lunch, as protests continued, Rajya Sabha was adjourned for the day.

In the morning, Naidu informed members that he had received notices from Congress's Anand Sharma, DMK's Tiruchi Siva and CPI's Binoy Visvam, K K Ragesh and Elamaram Kareem to discuss the “revocation of the President's Rule in Maharashtra”.

The Chairman cited two reasons for rejecting their request: first, that the matter is before the Supreme Court and that Rule 238 does not allow a member to refer to any matter of fact on which a judicial decision is pending; and second, as per a ruling on April 24, 1989, the role of a Governor in imposing or revoking of President's Rule “can be discussed only when such a Proclamation is laid before the House and becomes its property”.

As Congress, the Left parties and DMK protested Naidu's decision, the Chairman disallowed any of their comments to go on record. However, Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi was allowed to speak.

When the session resumed at 2pm, opposition members were up on their feet again, demanding a discussion on the events in Maharashtra. Deputy Chairman Harivansh reiterated Naidu's ruling, but the Opposition questioned the Chairman's decision to let Naqvi comment on the issue. As protests continued, Harivansh adjourned the House for the day.



Congress MPs S Jothimani and Ramya Haridas at Parliament House. Anil Sharma

“Stop murder of democracy” rushed to the Well, and resumed their slogan-shouting.

Birla continued with the Question Hour but told Hibi Eden and T N Prathapan, both MPs from Kerala, who had raised a banner with “Stop Murder of Democracy” written, “I am warning you. You must remove it.”

As the two failed to pay heed, the Speaker declared he was citing Rule 373 — on withdrawal of members — and asked marshals to take them out of the House. When the marshals came, Remya Haridas, Jothimani, Manickam Tagore, Dean Kuriakose and Benny Behanan, engaged in a heated argument and tried to stop them. As the scene became tense, the Speaker adjourned proceedings at 11.10 am until noon.

With the House adjourned, Jothimani and Haridas told Sonia Gandhi and other senior Opposition leaders that they were pushed and pulled by the staff. A fuming Sonia asked them to write a complaint and took the duo to the Speaker's chamber to submit it.

The House met again at noon but was adjourned immediately.

Bill proposes SPG cover to PM’s family only if they live with him

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

DAYS AFTER the Gandhi family was stripped of SPG cover, the government on Monday introduced a Bill that will not only deprive immediate families of Prime Ministers of security — unless they stay in the official residence — but also restrict the cover to former PMs and their families to five years.

The Special Protection Group (SPG) (Amendment) Bill proposes to also rescind protection provided to family members of former PMs soon as they lose the SPG cover.

The Bill says SPG will provide security to “the Prime Minister and members of his immediate family residing with him at his official residence; and any former Prime

Minister and such members of his immediate family as are residing with him at the residence allotted to him, for a period of five years from the date he ceases to hold office of Prime Minister.”

In the existing law, the provision concerned limits itself to protection for “immediate family members” and does not speak about where they should reside. It also guarantees protection for only one year after demitting office, and then continuation of the SPG cover beyond that period based on threat perception reports given by central intelligence agencies.

The Bill, in that sense, guarantees SPG protection to former PMs for five years.

The other amendment proposed relates to withdrawal of SPG security from a former PM and his/her family. The Bill says, “Where

the proximate security is withdrawn from a former Prime Minister, such proximate security shall also stand withdrawn from members of immediate family of such Prime Minister.”

The existing Act has the same provision but adds that the family members may continue to enjoy SPG security in case there is threat to their life. In that sense, the proposed legislation does away with SPG cover to family members irrespective of the threat perception.

The state of objective attached to the Bill states: “In the Act, there is no cut off period for providing SPG protection to former Prime Ministers or members of their immediate families. Thus, the number of individuals to be provided SPG cover can potentially become quite large. In such a scenario, there

New citizenship Bill set to provide definitions on illegal immigrants, refugees

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

THE CITIZENSHIP Amendment Bill slated to be introduced in the current session of Parliament would not be a replica of the last Bill that lapsed with the term of the 16th Lok Sabha but would have some “additional clarifications”, providing some definitions regarding illegal immigrants and refugees to bring clarity on provisions of the Bill, according to a Home Ministry official.

A contentious legislation, the Bill seeks to amend a 1955 law to allow Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan apply for Indian citizenship, while keeping out Muslims.

“The Bill had lapsed after the 16th Lok Sabha's term got over. It has been studied further and some clarifications added. These will help bring more clarity on application of the provisions,” the official said, not elaborating on the new definition of illegal immigrants or refugees.

The Bill comes in the backdrop of Home Minister Amit Shah's reiteration in Parliament that the exercise of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) would not only be implemented across the country but also repeated in Assam. The exercise has left more than 19 lakh people out of the list of citizens in the north-east Indian state.

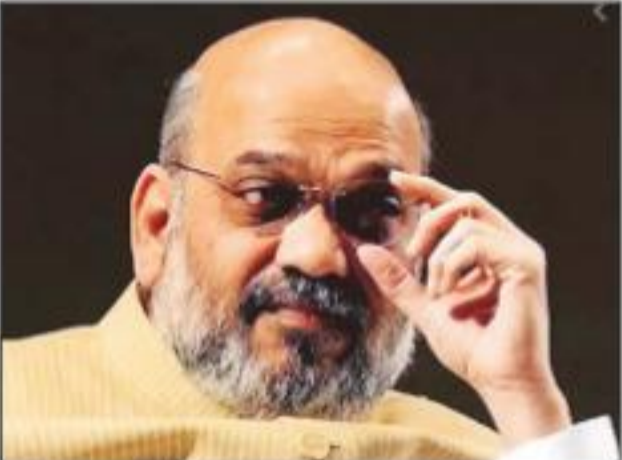
The Citizenship Amendment Bill has been mired in controversy for leaving out only Muslims.

The government maintains that the Bill aims to grant citizenship to such minorities who have faced religious persecution in other countries. Coming in the backdrop of NRC, the Bill, in its last avatar, also faced opposition in Assam, where there were concerns about dilution of ethnic culture and change in demography. Many said it was in violation of Assam Accord.

On Monday, the Centre reviewed security situation in the Northeast in light of expected fallout of the Citizenship Amendment Bill in these states. Chiefs of various intelligence agencies from the states, Assam Rifles and paramilitary forces attended the meeting, chaired by National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval.

The meeting, convened by the National Security Council Secretariat, headed by Doval, analysed the intelligence inputs coming from the ground on opposition to the Bill, a Home Ministry official said.

In the meeting, top officials gave detailed presentations on the findings of their respec-



Bill comes after Home Minister Amit Shah's reiteration on NRC.

tive agencies about the protests and people's attitude towards the proposed legislation.

In the list of business for the ongoing session, the Bill is listed as, “To amend the definition of illegal migrant, reduction in the number of years of residency period to obtain Indian Citizenship through naturalization and to empower Central Govt. to cancel the registration of Overseas Citizen of India card in case of any violations.”

The Bill was first introduced in 2016 and sought to amend the Citizenship Act, 1955, to allow Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Bangladesh, Afghanistan and Pakistan apply for Indian citizenship. It kept out Muslims.

The existing Act allows an immigrant to apply for citizenship if s/he has lived in India for 12 months immediately before the application, and for 11 of the last 14 years.

On July 19, 2016, the government introduced the Amendment Bill in Lok Sabha, relaxing the 11-year cutoff to six years for people of six religions from the three countries. Also, in 2015 and 2016, the government put out two notifications exempting such immigrants from the Foreigners Act, 1946 and the Passport (Entry into India) Act, 1920 - which provide for deportation - to let them continue living in India if they arrived before December 31, 2014.

The Bill's introduction also assumes significance as it is likely to be the first step in implementing NRC across the country - a promise that Shah made last month.

The Home Minister had said in Kolkata last month, “Before NRC, the BJP government is going to bring the Citizen Amendment Bill. All Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Christian refugees who have come to India under this Bill will be given citizenship of India forever. I want to assure all Hindu, Sikh, Jain, Buddhist and Christian refugees that you will not be forced to leave India...”

UP accounts for most complaints over midday meal graft: HRD Ministry

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

OVER THE last three years, the Union government has received 52 complaints regarding corruption under the Midday Meal Scheme (MDMS), of which the largest is regarding the state of Uttar Pradesh, the HRD Ministry told Parliament on Monday.

This revelation comes soon after the UP government had filed a case against a journalist after he reported how students in a government primary school in Mirzapur were served only roti and salt for the midday meal.

The second largest number of corruption complaints came from Bihar (11), followed by West Bengal (6). Out of the total 52 complaints, 47 are under inquiry, three were proved to be baseless and two resulted in action.

The overall responsibility for providing cooked and nutritious midday meal to eligible children lies with state governments and administration of Union territories, HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal said in a written

reply to a question by MP Bharati Pravin Pawar.

In response to another question on MDMS, the ministry informed the House that 931 children had fallen ill after eating their midday meal in the last three years and the current year. Of these, the largest number of such case were reported from Jharkhand (259), Maharashtra (201) and Uttar Pradesh (154).

As many as 709 posts for Sanskrit teachers are vacant across Sanskrit Mahavidyalayas in the country, the HRD Ministry also told Parliament.

This information assumes significance in the backdrop of a section of students at Banaras Hindu University (BHU) protesting the appointment of a Muslim professor to the Sanskrit Vidhya Dharma faculty. The protesting students have maintained that they are not opposing the appointment of a Muslim professor, but the recruitment of a non-Hindu for teaching a subject associated with the religion. However, the university administration has backed post-doctoral scholar Feroze Khan, saying that his appointment was on merit

India spent more than Rs 2 lakh cr on defence equipment in 3 years

New Delhi: India has spent Rs 1.39 lakh crore on importing defence equipment since 2016. Responding to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik said that in the same period, Rs 77,000 crore was spent for procurement of defence equipment produced by Indian vendors.

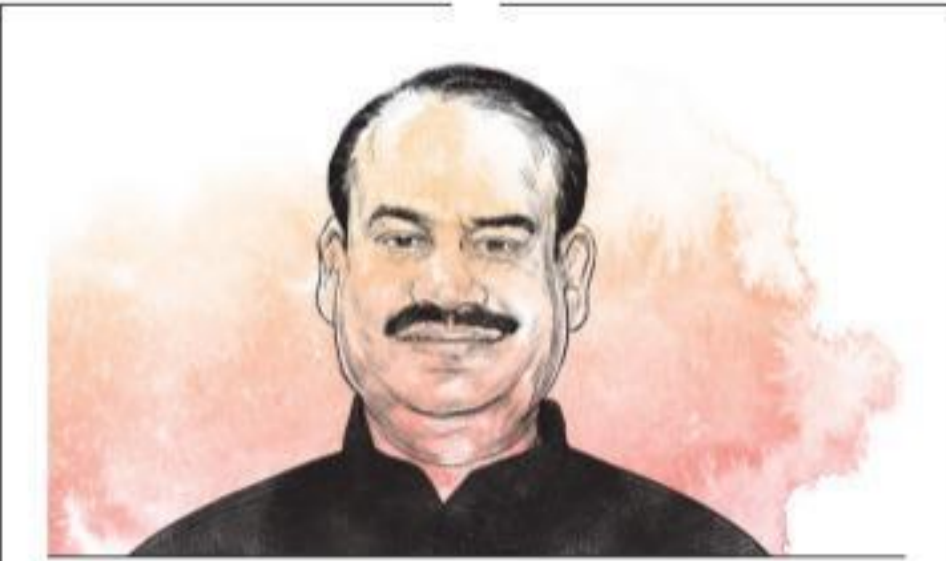
The total cost of capital procurement of defence equipment between 2016 and 2019 was Rs 2,15,628.89 crore.

Regarding the equipment made within India, Naik said that there are 41 ordnance factories and nine Defence Public Undertakings (DPSUs) in the public sector manufacturing defence equipment. **ENS**

9 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

AS TEMPELS ran high in Parliament and two women Lok Sabha MPs from the Congress complained of having been “manhandled” by security people in the House, some women MPs wondered whether it is time Parliament moved with the times and appointed women as marshals and chamber attendants. “This (Monday’s incident) could have been easily avoided had there been women security staff. That’s the established practice among policing everywhere — women deal with women,” one MP said.

WEDDING BELLS RINGING

SEVERAL MPs will have a busy time in the upcoming wedding season in Delhi. Coming up are the weddings of Union minister Hardeep Puri’s daughter, TMC Lok Sabha MP Kalyan Banerjee’s daughter, former Samajwadi Party and now BJP MP Sanjay Seth’s son, and BJD Lok Sabha leader Pinaki Misra’s daughter. Over the last weekend, many MPs had travelled to Dubai for the engagement of former Union minister C M Ramesh’s daughter. The former TDP minister is now in BJP.

ON TO PARENT OUTFIT

SUNIL AMBEKAR, organisational secretary of ABVP, has been transferred to the RSS, where his responsibilities will be decided in the coming months. RSS’s Mukund CR announced the decision at ABVP’s all-India conference in Agra on Monday. Ambekar is replaced by Ashish Chauhan, presently ABVP general secretary under Ambekar. Ambekar was appointed to this post in ABVP back in 2003. Earlier, senior Sangh leaders such as Madandas Devi and Datta Hosabale were sent back to RSS after spending many years as organisational secretary of ABVP.

OLD IS NEW

AFTER MUCH criticism of the new, military-style uniform, Rajya Sabha marshals appeared in their old uniform on Monday, minus the cumbersome turban that had been one of the reasons for the demand for a change.



PM Narendra Modi with Jharkhand CM Raghubar Das during a rally in Palamu district, on Monday. PTI

Instability, corruption, Naxalism were at peak 5 yrs ago in Jharkhand: PM

ABHISHEK ANGAD
RANCHI, NOVEMBER 25

IN HIS first election rally in Jharkhand since the announcement of polls, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday appealed to the people to vote a stable government to power, and sought to remind the gathering that the situation in the state has improved over the last five years from the time when “instability, corruption and Naxalism were at their peak” in the state.

Hailing the Raghubar Das-led government, which is the first to

complete a five-year term in the state, Modi said the BJP has worked on five key points of social justice — “*sthirta, sushaasan, samridhhi, sammaan, suraksha*” (stability, good governance, prosperity, respect and security).

Targeting the Congress and other opposition parties such as JMM at the rally in Daltonganj Assembly segment in Palamu district, Modi said, “Governments used to be formed through the backdoor because they (parties) were selfish and corrupt.”

Elections will be held in Daltonganj in the first phase on November 30.

“BJP gave Jharkhand a stable government... toiled day and

night to end corruption, created transparent mechanisms. BJP saved Jharkhand from loot and opened up the road to prosperity... BJP provided each person in society their right with respect,” the Prime Minister said.

Modi said that five years ago people could not even go from Ranchi to Palamu due to fear of Maoist violence, which was made worse due to political instability, but the condition has improved now in the state. “Instability, corruption and Naxalism were at their peak,” he said.

Trying to shed the perception of the BJP government being anti-tribal in

the state, Modi said, “BJP stands like a wall to protect your interests and your water, forests and land.” He said his government gave constitutional status to OBC commission and FRA claims have been settled in the state.

The Prime Minister brought up national issues in the last eight minutes of his speech, including Article 370 and Ram temple in Ayodhya. He said Jharkhand has sacrificed its people in Kashmir. “Congress worried for its vote bank and never looked for a solution... BJP had promised a solution... we are doing this for ‘ek Bharat, shreshtha Bharat’ and a solution has been reached,” he said on the Ayodhya issue.



JHARKHAND



Deputy CM Ajit Pawar outside Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai on Monday. Nirmal Harindran

NCP emissaries meet Ajit, urge him to return

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

THE NCP on Monday deployed a battery of senior leaders to keep up the pressure on Ajit Pawar and goad him to return to the party fold.

However, Ajit remained adamant that he would not return. He also decided to stay away from his new office and from an official government meeting called by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis.

NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal, Dilip Walse Patil and Sunil Tatkare were the emissaries who held detailed discussions with Ajit at his Churchgate residence as well as on the state Assembly premises. This is the second day that NCP leaders have reached out to Ajit asking him to return to the party fold.

Early on Monday morning, Tatkare, a close confidante of Ajit, held an hour-long meeting with him at his residence. He was then followed by Bhujbal who reached Ajit’s Churchgate residence where another round of discussions were held. A group of NCP leaders, including Bhujbal and Walse Patil, then held another round of meetings with Ajit on the Legislative Assembly premises.

“Power comes and goes but relationships should never end,” Bhujbal said after meeting Ajit at his Churchgate residence.

“The talks were positive.

Nothing has been finalised as yet. If needed we will meet him again and convince him,” Bhujbal said.

The NCP leadership on Sunday had sent Walse Patil and Jayant Patil to goad Ajit to return. The two leaders had held discussions with Ajit at his residence, where he was held up through the day meeting supporters.

In the party’s core committee meeting held in Pune on November 17, sources said Ajit had first backed the idea of going with the BJP. Incidentally it was immediately after this meeting, which had taken place under Sharad Pawar’s leadership, where the NCP had first announced its intention to join hands with the Shiv Sena and the Congress to form a government in the state much to the discomfort of Ajit.

During their meeting with Ajit, NCP leaders have dropped hints that the party could review the power sharing formula that it has arrived with the Shiv Sena and Congress if Ajit relents and comes back. The NCP leadership believes that the groundswell of support for Sharad Pawar post Ajit’s defection could make him rethink his position.

While Ajit has been adamant, the NCP believes that the optics of holding out the hand of friendship to him could help the party in further gaining support among the public as well as fence sitters in the party who could defect during the vote of confidence.

4 of 5 NCP MLAs return to Sharad fold

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

FOUR OF the five NCP MLAs, who had accompanied Ajit Pawar to his swearing-in as Deputy Chief Minister on Saturday, returned to the Sharad Pawar fold on Monday. They were taken out of a Gurgaon hotel, where the legislators had been lodged since Saturday. However, the NCP was unable to contact the fifth MLA.

The four who returned include Dindori MLA Narhari Zirwal, Shahpur MLA Daulat Daroda, Amalner MLA Anil Patil and Kalwan MLA Nitin Pawar. Ahmedpur MLA Babasaheb Patil

is the only one who has not returned to the party fold yet.

On Sunday, these MLAs had reached out to the NCP leadership, requesting to be extricated from the hotel. Three of the MLAs, including Nitin Pawar, Anil Patil and Daroda, were brought back to Mumbai on Monday on two different flights. Zirwal was kept with NCP’s office-bearers in Delhi.

Zirwal, who is still in Delhi, said they had no inkling of the swearing-in ceremony. “We were asked to gather and were taken to Raj Bhavan and had no inkling of what was to come. After the swearing-in, we were taken to Ajit Pawar’s relatives’ house where we ate. We thought

Dhananjay distances self from Ajit

Mumbai: NCP leader and Gopinath Munde’s nephew, Dhananjay Munde, on Monday distanced himself from the dramatic events of November 23.

Munde, formerly the Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council, was believed to have played a key role in aiding Ajit Pawar in the move to support the BJP and Devendra Fadnavis. It must be noted that all the MLAs who had accompanied Ajit to the Raj Bhavan for the oath-taking ceremony have claimed that they had been asked to assemble at Munde’s official bungalow in the early hours.

“My bungalow is an open house. At times it is like a bus stand,” said Munde.

Contending that the bungalow was widely used for party work, he further said that “he hadn’t taken calls till 1 pm that day as he was fast asleep.”

Munde claimed that he has “not been in touch with Ajit since the latter took a decision to join hands with the BJP”.

ENS



‘My bungalow is an open house. At times, it’s like a bus stand’

we could go home but I was surprised when we were told that we would have to go to Delhi,” Zirwal said.

Zirwal said they had rooms on the fifth floor of a five-star hotel in Gurgaon and were constantly under scrutiny. “There were senior police officers at the premises as well as a number of young party workers. We did feel intimidated by the presence of these people in the hotel,” he said.

He said he reached out to the NCP leadership after he realised the political turmoil in the state, following Ajit Pawar’s actions. “We were told that other MLAs would also be joining us. However, no one came,” Zirwal said, adding that he did not want

MAHA DRAMA

Karnataka ‘lessons learnt’, BJP confident of numbers in trust vote

LIZ MATHEW

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

EVEN AS the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress paraded their MLAs in a Mumbai hotel, claiming to have the support of 162 in the 288-member Maharashtra Assembly, ruling BJP maintained that it would prove the majority on the floor of the House whenever the Supreme Court asks for it.

BJP leaders have continuously said that the party is confident that it would be able to prove the majority in a trust vote ever since it staked claim along with the NCP’s Ajit Pawar late Friday night.

“We have learnt our lessons from Karnataka and we will not stake claim unless we are sure of the numbers,” a senior BJP leader, who did not want to be identified, said.

In a similar situation in Karnataka, BS Yediyurappa was sworn in as the Chief Minister in May 2018 after the BJP emerged as the single-largest party but fell short of a majority. Governor Vajubhai Vala had given

Yediyurappa 15 days to prove his majority, but the decision was challenged by the Congress-JD(S) combine in Supreme Court.

In a late-night hearing, the court asked the BJP government to take a trust vote in the Karnataka Assembly immediately. Yediyurappa resigned before the trust vote, as the party could not manage the number.

“Let the political drama unravel in Mumbai,” the leader said, referring to developments in the NCP camp. “When it comes to the floor test, BJP will prove its majority.”

While opposition parties led by the Congress on Monday disrupted proceedings in both Houses of Parliament over the political developments in Maharashtra, top BJP leaders took strong exception to the Congress-NCP’s charges of horse-trading and murder of democracy in the state. “Murder of democracy actually took place when they proposed to make (Shiv Sena chief) Uddhav Thackeray, who contested the election in a pre-poll alliance with BJP, the chief minister...

What horse-trading are they talking about? They took the whole stable away,” a top BJP leader said, referring to the NCP-Congress alliance’s attempts to form the government with the Sena.

BJP leaders also pointed out that in their letter to Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari staking claim to form the government, the three-party coalition could not mention their chief minister candidate.

Sources in the opposition parties said the letter staking claim was sent just to ensure that the Governor does not recommend President’s Rule by citing that no party had staked claim.

In the October 21 election to the 288-member Assembly, the BJP won 105 seats and the Sena got 56. Opposition NCP and the Congress won 54 and 44 seats, respectively.

But the Sena refused to support BJP’s Devendra Fadnavis as chief minister, saying that the post of CM should be split for two-and-a-half years each.

Fadnavis takes charge as CM, sanctions funds for farmer relief

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

AMID POLITICAL uncertainty ahead of a floor test in Maharashtra, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis took charge at the Mantralaya on Monday and sanctioned Rs 5,380 crore from the state’s contingency fund to provide financial relief to farmers who suffered crop losses due to unseasonal rain.

Unseasonal spells of heavy rain in October and November led to crop losses across 325 of 355 talukas.

“Since Fadnavis has been administered the oath of office of chief minister by the Governor at Raj Bhavan, he can function as the government. He can also call a Cabinet meeting with his Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar,” said a source.

However, Ajit Pawar, who has also taken the oath, did not take charge of his office. He was not present at any of the meetings convened by Fadnavis either.

Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar went



Fadnavis at his office in Mumbai on Monday. Twitter

to the Vidhan Bhavan to offer tribute to the first chief minister of Maharashtra, the late Yashwantrao Chavan, on his death anniversary.

Later in the evening, the chief minister chaired a meeting to discuss the proposed Climate Resilience Improvement and

Flood and Drought Management Programme with representatives from the World Bank.

An official statement from the CMO stated, “Fadnavis directed the officials to put up the proposal for Cabinet approval after discussing all technical modalities...”

Plea in HC seeking action against BJP, Sena for ‘fraud’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

A THANE resident on Monday filed a writ petition before the Bombay High Court seeking action against the BJP and Shiv Sena for allegedly committing fraud on voters by breaking their pre-poll alliance in the Assembly elections and sought an injunction against them from forming government with other political parties.

Referring to the events that have unfolded in the state since the results were declared on September 24, petitioner Priya Chauhan, who claims to be a so-

cial activist, has said she was “aggrieved by the betrayal at the hands of Shiv Sena and BJP” as a voter.

The plea states that if a re-election is ordered, the expenses should be recovered from the two parties.

The plea also seeks court’s directions asking the parties to refrain from appointing a chief minister from the post-poll alliance emerging between Sena, Congress and NCP. “Both (Sena and BJP) have broken their alliance and cheated all voters and citizens, therefore, they are liable to compensate all the expenses incurred,” the plea states.

In Karnataka, BJP aims to win over more Oppn MLAs

EXPLAINED

Wooing them over, 11 years ago

IN 2008, when the BJP won 110 seats in the Karnataka Assembly polls, three short of a simple majority, the party wooed seven Opposition MLAs in a strategy called ‘Operation Kamala’. The party got these Congress and JD(S) legislators to resign and made them contest the bypolls on BJP tickets. Five of them won, taking BJP past the halfway mark of 112. This strategy ensured that the anti-defection law did not kick in, as a legislator cannot be disqualified if s/he voluntarily resigns from a party.

seats in the truncated 207-member Assembly and has to win at the least eight of the 15 seats to

get a simple majority of 113 in a full 224-member House.

As a twin strategy to win the

by-elections in Belagavi region, where three seats are up for grabs, and two seats in Mysore region, the BJP has reportedly enlisted the support of local Congress and JD(S) legislators with the promise of inducting them into the BJP, as was done with the 17 Congress and JD(S) rebel MLAs, sources said.

BJP’s state general secretary Arvind Limbavali on Monday, in fact, hinted that the exodus of Opposition MLAs into the BJP will continue and claimed that several JD(S) legislators are in touch with the ruling party and have expressed “desire” to join it. Limbavali, also the party’s convener for the December 5 by-

polls, told the media, according to PTI, that “several JD(S) legislators were in touch with BJP; let the bypolls be over, we will tell how many of them.”

The BJP came to power in Karnataka in July this year after getting the 17 Congress-JD(S) MLAs to resign and refrain from voting in a trust vote, triggering the collapse of the then coalition government.

Although the Supreme Court earlier this month upheld disqualification of the 17 MLAs under the anti-defection law by the then Karnataka Speaker, the BJP, it is learnt, is looking to win over more MLAs from the Opposition ranks, given the court’s decision

to quash disqualification of the rebel legislators from contesting elections. Besides, sources pointed out, the Assembly Speaker this time is its own candidate.

Soon after the Supreme Court removed the bar imposed by the previous Speaker on the 17 rebel MLAs from contesting bypolls, the BJP fielded 13 of them for the December 5 bypolls.

JD(S) leaders, who have indicated that they don’t want mid-term polls, have already stated that a call will be taken on the party’s role in case the ruling BJP loses majority after the results are declared on December 9.

‘CONCEPT BRILLIANT, IMPLEMENTATION HORRENDOUS’

Residents satisfied with Aadhaar, but unaware of legal riders, says study

KARISHMA MEHROTRA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

A YEAR after the Supreme Court ruled that private entities cannot make Aadhaar mandatory for their services, 65 per cent of Indian residents still believe the card is legally required for a bank account, SIM card or school enrolment. More than half of them said a SIM card or bank account provider required them to produce their Aadhaar, while three in four children needed it for school enrolment. Only 6 per cent of Aadhaar holders refused to provide the ID when asked.

These are among findings of ‘The State of Aadhaar 2019’ study conducted by Dalberg and Omidyar — the largest primary database on Aadhaar usage with surveys of 1.67 lakh residents across 28 states and UTs between May and September.

“What really worries me is the potential problem that can be created by linking Aadhaar with various other services which can profile you, which can put you under the snooping eye of the deep web. That is something to be guarded against,” Justice (retired) B N Srikrishna said at the release of the report. “Basically, the idea of Aadhaar is good, but the implementation is horrendous,” said the former Supreme Court judge who led a committee to draft a data protection law in 2018. He said that the government should have made a privacy law that Aadhaar could “ride on”.

Despite a lack of legal understanding, residents are majorly appreciative of Aadhaar’s convenience (72 per cent) even if they faced exclusions, the study found.

As per the report, biometric authentication failed on the first attempt for 27 per cent, while 16 per cent were unable to authenticate their fingerprint at all. Two-thirds of those with failed authentications couldn’t find any other means to receive a ration or pension. PDS rations experienced the most blips, with 5 per cent of users experiencing biometric authentications and one-third of them not receiving ration.

Those with little to no education are 20 per cent more likely to have an error on their card. Overall, 2.5 per cent of respondents ultimately experienced service exclusion because of issues with their Aadhaar, which is far less than those who experienced exclusion for not having an Aadhaar at all or than those who faced non-Aadhaar issues.

Thirteen per cent experienced a delay in school enrolment due to Aadhaar, and one million children (.5 per cent) could not get school admission because of Aadhaar.

Speaking at the event, TRAI chairman R S Sharma, who was the first UIDAI chief, said that technology cannot be disregarded for the glitches. “Obviously, we need methods to tackle exceptions.”

Srikrishna responded, “There must be an immediate solution. This is not a technology issue. This is a government issue.” The judge

accounted his own experiences with biometric failures and said this is not an issue with a law.

Of the people who have been excluded from a service due to Aadhaar issues, two-thirds are still satisfied with Aadhaar. In fact, the study shows that the majority of recipients feel service delivery (from PDS ration and MGNREGS to pension) has improved with the system.

However, a third of those who expressed these benefits also gave complementary concerns, such as half of the group that worried about linking it to too many services. A quarter did not know whether their data was protected, and 10 per cent worry about data security, according to the report.

One in three respondents found updating their information difficult, and one in five did not succeed in the process. Most people deal with errors in their mobile numbers (15 per cent). Less than 40 per cent have their correct mobile number linked to their card. A very small share of respondents (13 per cent) knew about Aadhaar helplines and rarely used formal complaint mechanisms (4 per cent).

Sharma said updation has become difficult after a security issue with one Common Service Centre (CSC) led to a “knee-jerk reaction” by the government to shut down all Aadhaar updations at centres. For eight per cent of the card holders, Aadhaar is their first identity card. That number is twice as much for the homeless and third gender people.

While 95 per cent of Indian adults have Aadhaar, only 10 per cent of those in Assam and and 39 per cent of those in Meghalaya have it. One third of homeless and one-quarter of third gender people do not have the identification. Of those that do not have the ID, 95 per cent want it.



COMMANDERS’ CONFERENCE

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated the biannual commanders’ conference of the Indian Air Force in New Delhi, on Monday. He said the IAF is “growing steadily towards becoming a truly strategic aerospace power”. Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal R K S Bhaduria spoke about the “need for enhanced joint training with the Indian Army as well as the Indian Navy for fostering jointmanship and ensuring national security”. *Praveen Khanna*

WEST BENGAL BYPOLLS

BJP candidate assaulted, party complains to EC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 25

EVEN AS polling remained by and large peaceful with 75.34 per cent average voting till 5 pm in Kharagpur Sadar, Karimpur and Kaliaganj Assembly seats that went to bypolls on Monday, the BJP candidate for Karimpur, Jay Prakash Majumdar, was punched and kicked into a ditch by a group of people in full view of mediapersons and police in Phipulkhola area of Nadia district.

According to sources, the EC has sought reports about the Karimpur incident.

“You have seen how I was punched, pushed and kicked. The physical wound will heal, but will the wounds inflicted on the state’s democracy be healed? This is a real sign that there is no democracy in West Bengal and how Trinamool goons are creating a reign of fear on the poll day. These attacks will not demoralise me and I will continue to

visit all the booths. I have complained to the EC,” Majumdar told reporters.

Senior BJP leader Mukul Roy shot off a letter to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora, seeking his intervention into the matter and accused the TMC of “turning the election into farce in connivance with police and administration”.

Uttarakhand: 47% turnout in Pithoragarh

Dehradun: Around 47.48 per cent voters exercised their franchise in Pithoragarh Assembly bypoll on Monday.

The turnout was much lower than in the 2017 Assembly elections, when 62 per cent voting was recorded.

At one polling centre in Deodar, locals boycotted the poll on the issue of development. Election officials said that two people voted in that polling centre. The bypoll was necessitated by the death of three-time MLA Prakash Pant. **ENS**

Scindia’s Twitter bio sparks talk of exit; changed it month ago, he says

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, NOVEMBER 25

SENIOR CONGRESS leader and former Union minister Jyotiraditya Scindia’s decision to remove references to his political affiliation from his Twitter bio and truncate it to “public servant, cricket enthusiast” has caused a flutter in political circles. However, Scindia said he revised the bio one month ago and “people are looking at it now”.

The revised bio trended on Twitter on Monday as many people speculated that Scindia has severed ties with the Congress and is reaching out to the BJP.

“I did that a month ago, people are looking at it now. I got feedback that my biodata was boring and I should shorten it,” he told *The Indian Express*. “I shortened it because the information about the previous posts (ministerial) I held is all available on Google.”

“Let people put two and two or four and four together,” Scindia said when asked if the speculation stemmed from the perception that he was unhappy at not being made MPCC chief.

Before Scindia clarified his position, rumours did the rounds that MLAs, including ministers, who owe allegiance to the Congress leader, were not traceable and had gone incommunicado, giving the ruling party a tough time to scotch such speculation.

Amaravati: Jagan directs completion of ongoing projects

SREENIVAS JANYALA
HYDERABAD, NOVEMBER 25

ANDHRA PRADESH Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy appeared to have softened his stand on Amaravati on Monday as he directed officials to complete projects that were already under construction under the Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA) as quickly as possible and on priority basis.

Jagan had earlier taken a strong stand against completing projects initiated by former CMN Chandrababu Naidu, and faced criticism for cancelling the Amaravati start-up area in the capital.

“The CM said the government is ready to give funds to complete projects that are already under construction,” said Municipal and Urban Development Minister Botsa Satyanarayana.

At a review meeting on Monday, the CM instructed officials to consider the economic conditions of the state and not to go for unnecessary expenses but complete ongoing projects. The government decided to develop plots allotted to farmers who have given their land for the capital city,



Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy

said Satyanarayana.

Sources said that Jagan told officials to concentrate on completing projects that are in advanced stage of construction, and that the government was ready to grant funds. He said that reverse tendering in the construction work would reduce the amount.

The CM also sought full details about the works and expenditure on projects that have been completed so far in CRDA. “He sought information on the designs of roads and instructed officials that there should be no mistakes in planning infrastructure. He told officials to take advice and suggestions from IITs...” an official said.

Jagan also discussed the floods in the capital region. “The CM directed officials to improve infrastructure in the capital region without adding unnecessary expenditure.” AP CRDA Commissioner Dr P Lakshmi Narasimhan said.

KILLING OF DALIT YOUTH IN PUNJAB

BJP panel demands probe, warns of rise in extremism

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

A BJP delegation that probed the killing of Jagmale Singh in Sangrur, Punjab has warned that lack of justice for weaker sections in the state could have serious repercussions, including a rise in Left-Wing Extremism (LWE).

Singh was allegedly beaten up and forced to drink urine by four men on November 7 because of an altercation they had in October. He succumbed to his injuries on November 16. Claiming that the death was a “lynching” of the Dalit youth, the BJP panel sought a commission of inquiry to investigate it.

Sharing the findings of the three-member party delegation, BJP vice-president Vinay Sahasrabuddhe said the state police and medical officials denied any negligence on their part

despite a lack of action after Singh was reportedly thrashed and forced to drink urine.

Constituted by BJP president Amit Shah, the delegation includes MPs Satyapal Singh and V D Ram — both former IPS officers.

Addressing the media, Sahasrabuddhe said that a local dharmshala used by Dalits had pictures of LWE figures and its library was stocked with proscribed literature as he highlighted his party’s apprehensions about a rise in radical violence due to a sense of injustice among weaker sections.

“Incidents of atrocities against Dalits in Punjab have increased over the last few years. A scenario where justice is not ensured for weaker sections of society can be exploited by anti-national forces to foment trouble. The social fabric is becoming weak under the Congress rule in the state,” the BJP leader said.

9 killed as bus, truck collide in Banda

Banda/Lucknow: Nine people were killed while 15 more were injured in a collision between a UP Roadways bus and a truck in the Tindwari police station area here on Monday, police said.

In Lucknow, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath expressed grief over the deaths in the accident and the UPSRTC announced an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh for the next of kin of each of the deceased and Rs 2.5 lakh for those who sustained serious injuries.

The accident took place near the Saimiri turn this afternoon, SP (Banda) Ganesh Prasad Saha said.

There were 50 passengers on the bus which was on its way to Fatehpur from Banda, the SP said, adding that the identity of the victims was being established. Senior officials, including the district magistrate, have rushed to the scene of the accident.

UPSRTC announced it would bear the expenditure of treatment of the injured. **PTI**



NORTH

Bystander killed in celebratory firing during wedding

Hapur: A 20-year-old woman was killed in celebratory firing in Hapur on Monday. The victim, Muskaan, was standing on the roof of her house and watching the wedding procession pass by when she was hit by a stray bullet in the head. She died while being taken to a hospital in Meerut, police said. “We received in-

formation in the afternoon that a woman was shot during a wedding in Buxar village. Upon investigation it was found that there was celebratory firing during a wedding procession... The accused has absconded and we are confident of arresting him,” said a senior official, speaking to reporters. **ENS**



Two people were killed in a bus accident at old Katraj ghat near Pune on Monday. *Ashish Kale*

EAST

5 held in Odisha for posing as Maoists to extort money

Malkangiri: Five people were arrested for allegedly posing as Maoists and trying to extort money from a mine owner in Motu area of Odisha’s naxal-hit Malkangiri district, police said. The arrests were made on Sunday on the basis of a complaint filed by C Venugopal, who owns a granite mine in Peta area of

the district, Sub-Divisional Police Officer P S Meena said. “In his complaint, Venugopal alleged that he received several messages on his mobile phone between November 5 and 21, asking him to cough up Rs 50 lakh. He also said that the sender threatened to blow up his office if the payment was not made,” Meena explained. **PTI**

WEST

25-year-old lawyer raped, one arrested in Mumbai

Mumbai: The Mumbai Police has arrested a 27-year-old man for allegedly raping a 25-year-old lawyer. Police said that both, the victim and the accused met at a common friend’s party where they consumed alcohol. The lawyer has alleged that the accused took advantage of her being in an inebriated state and took her to his

Kanjurmarg house following which he forced himself on her. According to police, the incident took place in the wee hours on Friday. The accused, identified as Sanket Deshmukh, who hails from Pune, had come to Mumbai looking for a job. He has been booked under Section 376 (rape) of the Indian Penal Code. **ENS**

SOUTH

Four killed as speeding bus hits autorickshaw in Kerala

Kochi: Four people including three women were killed when the autorickshaw in which they were travelling was hit by a speeding private bus in nearby Angamaly on Monday, police said. The auto driver also died on the spot, police added. The accident occurred at the Bank Junction when the autorickshaw carrying the women heading to

Angamaly town was reportedly hit from behind. Police, Fire and Rescue Services personnel and local people had a tough time in carrying out the rescue operation as the mangled remains of the autorickshaw was lying almost beneath the bus. The bodies could be taken out only after the bus was removed using a crane. **PTI**

Muslim Sanskrit prof applies for job in other BHU faculties

AVANEESH MISHRA
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 25

DR FIROZE Khan, whose appointment as assistant professor in the Sanskrit Vidya Dharam Vigyan (SVDV) faculty of Banaras Hindu University (BHU) triggered protests by students, has now applied for teaching posts in the Sanskrit Department of the varsity’s Faculty of Arts in the hope of ending the ongoing impasse.

Khan, a PhD holder in Sanskrit, has also applied for the post of assistant professor in the university’s Faculty of Ayurveda. Sources close to the Jaipur-based professor said that if selected, he would quit from the SVDV faculty. He is keen to teach in the Faculty of Arts as the students of SVDV have said that they have no problem with Khan, a Muslim, teaching there, they said. The students of SVDV who opposed the appointment of Khan had said on multiple occa-



Firoze Khan

sions that they did not find a Muslim fit to teach them about Sanatan Dharma and Karmaand, as he was not connected with their culture.

Khan had joined the SVDV faculty on November 7, but could not conduct a single class as the students staged a dharna.

Last week, he went on leave and returned to his home in Rajasthan.

The protesting students called off their sit-in protest on Friday following a written assurance from the university administration that it would answer their questions. The students, however, said that they would

continue to boycott classes and may even resume their agitation if the BHU administration fails to answer their questions in 10 days.

“Firoze Khan is not much interested in teaching in Ayurveda faculty because it will be like deviating from his field of interest and his area of expertise. Also, the books he would have to teach there are not enough as Sanskrit literature in Ayurveda is not that rich when compared to the other department. However, if he is selected in the Faculty of Arts, he will then resign from the SVDV,” said a source close to Khan.

The department of Samhita and Sanskrit of the Faculty of Ayurveda deals with study of classical texts (Samhitas) of Ayurveda, their scientific exploration and validation.

The Sanskrit Department of the Faculty of Arts, on the other hand, deals with oriental learning, culture, philosophy and

thought of both Vedic and classical Sanskrit literature.

“It includes teaching and research of traditional Sanskrit texts, covering various domains like the Vedas, the Indian philosophy, Sanskrit grammar and linguistics, classical Sanskrit and poetics,” said a professor.

According to SVDV faculty website, the syllabus of Sahitya Department of SVDV — where Firoze is currently appointed as an assistant professor — include the study of Kavya Pradhan, Alankar Pradhan and Natya Pradhan.

The recommendation sheet for the post in Ayurveda faculty showed that Firoze has topped among the shortlisted candidates with 86.75 score.

A group of former professors of SVDV faculty and Sanskrit scholars had recently written to President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking their intervention to cancel Khan’s appointment.

NIA court finds 6 guilty in IS terror plot case

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOVEMBER 25

AN NIA court in Kochi on Monday found six people guilty of planning terror attacks in different parts of South India.

The court acquitted another alleged accused giving him benefit of doubt. The quantum of punishment will be declared on Wednesday. The accused were arrested in connection with a 2016 Islamic State (IS) terror plot case.

According to the NIA, the case, known as Omar Al Hindi module, was named after the first accused: Omar Al Hindi, alias Manseed Muhamed, a native of Chokli in Kannur, Kerala. He was an Islamic propagator at Qatar Guest Centre in Qatar. Thirteen people are accused in this case, most of them absconding, according to the NIA.

This group had men who had moved or tried to move to Afghanistan and Syria, according to the agency.

Others found guilty by the court are Swalih Mohammed, Rashid Ali, Ramshad Nangeelan, Safvan and Moinudeen Parakkadavathu. Another accused, Subahani Haja, was charge-sheeted later and is facing trial.

Prominent among the group was engineering graduate Shajeer Mangalassery, a native of Kozhikode, who had allegedly moved from the Gulf to Afghanistan in 2016 to join the IS — the NIA found that he was killed in an encounter in Afghanistan.

This module, which was allegedly planning terror attacks across South India, was busted on October 2, 2016, when the NIA raided a secret meeting of five IS operatives at Kanakamala in Kannur. According to investigators, this group had conspired to attack foreigners, especially Jews visiting Vattakkanal near Kodaikanal in TN, and prominent political leaders.

According to NIA, their targets included high court judges, senior police officers, rationalists and Muslims of the Ahmediya sect.

Militant killed in Pulwama encounter

Srinagar: One militant was killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir’s Pulwama district on Monday, police said.

The encounter broke out after militants fired on security personnel posted at a vehicle checkpoint on Shadimarg in the south Kashmir district, a police officer said.

Operations are on as it is suspected that more militants are present in the area, police said. “In an #encounter at #Pulwama so far one #terrorist has been #killed. #Arms and ammunition recovered.

#Identity and #affiliation being ascertained. #Search in the area continues,” Kashmir Zone Police tweeted.

Meanwhile, police said one person was arrested with a grenade and he was threatening candidates filling applications for the post of special police officers in Baramulla.

“One person with a grenade caught threatening Candidates while they were filled applications for SPOs. On his disclosure his 3 associates also taken into custody. Questioning is on,” the J&K Police tweeted later in the day. **ENS**

2 J&K leaders released from house arrest

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 25

THE JAMMU and Kashmir administration on Monday announced the release of two political leaders, who have been under detention since August 5, besides shifting of two others to their houses from the MLA hostel.

Dilawar Mir, who is from the PDP, and Ghulam Hassan Mir, were under detention for over 110 days and were released by the new Union Territory administration, officials said.

They are former MLAs and are both residents of Baramulla district. They had been under detention at their respective residences from August 5, the day when Centre announced abrogation of provisions of Article 370.

Ghulam Hassan was a former minister in Mufti Mohammad Sayeed’s cabinet when he became chief minister for the first time in 2002. He later parted ways and formed his own outfit called Democratic Party Nationalist (DPN). Dilawar Mir is also a former minister.

Meanwhile, Ashraf Mir and Hakeen Yaseen — both MLAs in the last state assembly of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir — would be shifted to their residences but remain under detention, officials said.

Read out Preamble in govt offices to mark Constitution Day, says J&K admin

ADIL AKHZER
SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 25

THE JAMMU and Kashmir government has asked all the Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, heads of departments and police formations to observe Constitution Day in their respective offices, and to ensure that the Preamble is read out in all government offices and institutions along with the civil secretariat to mark the day on Tuesday.

According to the government circular, dated November 22, “This year, the celebrations will be marked by reading of the Preamble to the Constitution in all the institutions, government offices and other establishments,” it said.

The circular states that the

Preamble shall be read out at the Civil Secretariat at 11am followed by a pledge to the Fundamental Duties.

“The Divisional Commissioners, Deputy Commissioners, Heads of the Departments and the Heads of all the police formations shall undertake similar activity in their respective offices and ensure that all subordinate offices also read out the Preamble on Constitution Day at 11am and pledge to the Fundamental Duties,” states the circular by Additional Secretary Subash C Chhibber.

It also directed the senior officials to ensure various activities as part of a “national campaign” between November 26 and April 14, 2020 and advised officials, heads of departments and police formations to chalk out a “month-wise calendar of activities.

DECADE OF SUCCESSFUL RE-INTRODUCTION OF BIG CATS

Panna’s challenge: From zero tigers to too many now

MILIND GHATWAI
BHOPAL, NOVEMBER 25

THE RECENT litter of new cubs at the Panna Tiger Reserve (PTR) in Madhya Pradesh caps the remarkable turnaround in a place that was left with no big cats a decade ago forcing authorities to undertake a reintroduction programme, considered perhaps the best model of conservation in the last decade in the world.

From a place devoid of any big cat, the PTR, located in the backward Bundelkhand region, is now tackling a problem of plenty. Tigers are not only venturing out of the core area into buffer zone but in some cases travelling much farther.

A tiger spotted in Hamirpur in Uttar Pradesh on November 22 is believed to have been from the PTR but forest authorities are waiting for confirmation before making any official claim unlike their UP counterparts, who insist it could have only been from PTR.

Spread over 576 sq kms in Panna and Chhatarpur districts, the current population of big cats in PTR has reached 55 with the arrival of the latest litter. Before it, the reintroduced tigers and their progeny have littered 35 times. In all seven big cats, including two males, were reintroduced from other reserves.

Forest officials had taken a long time to admit that Panna had lost all its tigers before making a public admission in early 2009. In

EXPLAINED

MP tops tiger count, but loses habitat

THE TIGER estimation report released in July pegged the total number in the country at 2,967, with the highest in Madhya Pradesh (526). However, another report released on the same day showed that at least half of 50 reserves in the country face threats from infrastructure. MP is the second largest state in India in terms of forest area which is constantly shrinking. The state lost 17,781.588 acres of Very Dense Forest and Moderately Dense Forest in last four years, according to the report.

March 2009, two tigresses were relocated from Bandhavgarh and Kanha but there was no male.

A decision to reintroduce big cats from other reserves was then taken and a formal reintroduction

programme was formulated with technical inputs from the Wildlife Institute of India in August 2009. T3, a male tiger shifted from Pench on December 6, had ventured out of the PTR towards the

south and was tranquilised and brought back on December 25.

Then park director RS Murthy recalled that successful monitoring, increased security and timely managerial interventions resulted in the first ever litter of four cubs from T1 on April 16, 2010.

“It’s a success story of tigers and people. It won’t be proper to call it problem of plenty because tigers are venturing into landscape, they are not going into villages. The same landscape had many poachers but they have given up illegal activity. People who were against tigers and the park now want to save the reserve,” said Murthy, now additional PCCF and Member-Secretary of MP Biodiversity Board.

If a senior park official, who has been there since before the reintroduction programme was launched, is to be believed, many more tigers have dispersed from PTR over the last few years. There have been 10 mortalities so far but all due to natural causes.

Confirming the arrival of the latest cubs, Field Director K S Bhadoriya admitted that tigers from the park are going outside protected areas and it is a challenge. Panna-based activist Rajesh Dixit said the reintroduction programme has overall been a success not only because of the increased tiger count but also the tourist footfall.

The successful reintroduction in PTR prompted forest authorities to try it in other reserves.



The IndianEXPRESS

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RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

THE MISSING PIECE

New labour code was long overdue. Failure to push labour reform could further hurt India's economic growth

LAST WEEK, THE Union cabinet approved the Labour Code on Industrial Relations, 2019, which will allow companies to hire workers on fixed-term contracts across all sectors, to provide more flexibility to industry while ensuring equitable treatment to workers on social security benefits. This Code, which will have to be approved by Parliament, marks the merging of provisions of the Industrial Relations Act, the Trade Union Act and the Industrial Employment Act, the third of a set of four codes the government has proposed as part of a broader labour reforms push early on in its second term. Underway is the amalgamation of 44 national labour laws into four codes on wages, industrial relations, social security and welfare and occupational safety besides health and working conditions, to ease the burden on industry, and to protect the rights of workers.

The latest changes to labour laws follow a half-way house approach, with the threshold for government approval for sacking workers kept unchanged at 100, though there is flexibility for changing it through a notification. Getting these labour codes approved in the near term and persuading states, too, to come on board on a subject which is on the concurrent list, will be the next challenge. If there is scepticism on this count, it is because of the fact that, apart from Rajasthan, few, including large BJP-ruled states with a major industrial base such as Maharashtra, have warmed up to these labour reforms. Political economy considerations have meant that more than a quarter century after India's opening up, the missing piece has been labour reforms. That has had an impact on India's manufacturing sector — in terms of discouraging firms from making the next leap on productivity and in creating more jobs. This year's Economic Survey made the point that units in states that have made the transition towards more flexible labour markets were 25.4 per cent more productive than their counterparts in states which had rigid labour laws.

There is indeed a strong case for greater flexibility on these laws to generate more jobs in an economy where 10 million young people enter the labour market annually and for easing the compliance burden for Indian industry. Even more so considering that Vietnam, Indonesia and Bangladesh are far more competitive in labour intensive sectors, positioning their economies to take better advantage of the scenario unfolding in China because of a tariff war and with foreign companies moving out. The Indonesian President, Joko Widodo, has already promised that major changes to labour laws will be on top of his agenda as he seeks to improve the quality of the country's labour force. Given this competitive drive in the region to attract investment, any delay or failure to push through the proposed changes by a government which has the comfort of far more numbers this time could further hurt economic growth.

NO CHEERS FOR JAGAN

Prohibition is a tried, tested and failed idea. But the Andhra Pradesh government is rushing in

THE JAGAN MOHAN Reddy government wants to impose total prohibition in Andhra Pradesh by next year. The new bar licence policy announced by the government last week, which includes a major hike in bar licence fee and reduces the number of bars in the state by 40 per cent, is a notable step in that direction. The government has claimed that it intends to impose prohibition by making liquor scarce and raising the costs of consumption as a response to a demand at the grass-roots in the face of rising alcoholism in rural areas. Experience in other states, however, suggests that the policy of prohibition will fail while causing immense social and economic hardship to people, including and especially the poor.

Making liquor scarce is no cure for addiction — it only drives liquor production and sales underground. The immediate impact of the move will be felt on the state's finances. Addicts need clinical counselling and medical care. Prohibition is an intervention that will only upset the budgets of families and the state, while adding to the burden of the police and judiciary. Production of cheap, spurious liquor is bound to grow and meet the supply-demand deficit. The consequences of shifting from a regulated liquor economy to an unregulated, underground alcohol market are manifold and dangerous. Take the case of Bihar, where prohibition was enforced in 2016. Among other problems, it has generated a legal logjam with the state courts reportedly saddled with over 2 lakh prohibition-related cases. Police have seized over 52 lakh litres of alcohol and arrested 1.67 lakh people under the Bihar Prohibition and Excise Act. Over 40,000 bail pleas are pending in the Bihar High Court. States like Tamil Nadu and even Andhra Pradesh have experimented with total prohibition in the past only to withdraw the policy later. N T Rama Rao is said to have won an assembly election in the 1990s by championing prohibition but his son-in-law, Chandrababu Naidu, lifted it, citing revenue losses.

The Jagan government has been on a populist path ever since it won assembly elections in May. It began by cancelling tenders and projects citing corruption. Now, it has picked up the temperance argument to impose prohibition. Andhra Pradesh's Chief Minister should stop contriving and chasing spectres, get down to governing.

PARTITION'S ORPHAN

The royals of Malcha Mahal, it has been revealed, weren't royal at all. But their tragedy is starker than their lie

ORPHANS, AT LEAST in literature, write themselves great biographies. The absence of a personal history allows them, like the protagonist in Salman Rushdie's *Enchantress of Florence*, to fill up their past with the fantasy of a great lineage, of being chosen and special. Then there are the orphans of historical ruptures, of tragedies so vast in scale that each individual's alchemy of suffering is subsumed in a great sweep of generalities, their personal story mirrored so often that it becomes a cliché. The lost royals of Awadh, the ghosts of Malcha Mahal, the beautiful, fading eccentrics with the great dane — "queen" Wilayat and her children, Cyrus and Sakina — have been part of the folklore of North India for over four decades. And last week, when a report in *The New York Times* revealed that they were not royal at all, it did not so much uncover a fraud, or even a lie as it shone the light on an epic delusion, a tragic story.

For years, since Begum Wilayat appeared in New Delhi Railway station in the 1970s, demanding justice for the cruelties perpetrated on her "ancestors" by the East India Company, the family has been of great interest, particularly to the Western media. A matriarch, eccentric children, a lost royal house, colonialism — it is a tale full of the exotica that has long helped sell the India story. Wilayat was, in fact, the wife of a civil servant who left for Pakistan during Partition, and leaving Lucknow, the only home she loved, seems to have driven her to mental illness. Eventually, she returned to India with her younger children and made up a story of her descent from Wajid Ali Shah. Her children, to whom she bequeathed her fantasy, led tragic, lonely lives — Cyrus was the last one to die, alone, in 2017.

Bishan Singh, from Saadat Hasan Manto's *Toba Tek Singh*, lies on the border, a lunatic without a home after Partition. Wilayat, too, was a victim of history. But without a Manto to tell it, she had to be both the character in, and author of, her story.



SUHAS PALSHIKAR

AS A STUDENT of political science, writing on political whodunits is not easy for this writer. But when the mystery intersects with political institutions and democratic norms, it becomes necessary to separate the comically mysterious from the serious political questions. In the age of new Chanakyas, after all, students of political science need to learn the skills to decipher improbable whodunits than talk of outdated ideas of democracy.

To win the tag of neutrality, an observer may as well duck under the routine anguish that "all" parties have failed democracy. But a clearer apportionment of criminal responsibility for undermining both the letter and spirit of the Constitution is demanded by the developments in Maharashtra. With all qualifiers and nuances, such apportionment must not run away from the fact that the ruling party at the Centre chose to make its ugly contribution to further degeneration of democracy.

Of course, when such disrespect is inflicted on democratic practice, it is often a more collective crime. In this case, all parties contributed their bit, but institutional mechanisms too succumbed like a house of cards. This failure has the crowning story of the Supreme Court postponing the most essential task of forcing a floor test on the not-too-enthusiastic claimant of a majority.

Having failed to fare as well as (it) expected in the assembly election, the BJP fell out with its three decade-old partner and was hence unable to form the government when the governor first asked it to. The proposed coalition of the Sena-NCP-Congress may not be an ideal solution. But one does not have to be scandalised by the fact that, post-election, some parties tried openly to negotiate and arrive at a formula to run the government. This is not unheard of in parliamentary democracy.

It is also not a big issue that in each of these three parties there would be differences of views about such a post-election coalition. Even if any of these three parties were to split on this issue, there would be no reason to brood over it. After all, splits have occurred in India's parties often. This script suddenly changed sometime during Friday night-Saturday morning (November 22-23). It is not clear if there indeed was a politically sustainable split in the NCP. But it is clear that the gov-

In Maharashtra, the failure of politics is coupled with institutional abdication and rigging

The first institution to fall was the governor's office — as in many other states. Next came the president. In the early hours of the 23rd morning, he revoked Article 356. One does not have to go into the merits of the BJP's claim to have a majority. But the question is: Why within the early hours of the morning was that claim accepted and acted upon? To complete the circle of institutional abdication, the court, instead of following the precedent of imposing a stiff deadline for a floor test, chose to defer the hearing from Sunday to Monday to Tuesday.

ernor got suddenly convinced that the BJP now enjoyed a working majority. Having convinced himself of this, the governor was also in a "tearing hurry" to shoot a letter to the president to revoke President's Rule. He then administered oath to the CM and deputy CM rather early in the day. Thus unfolded the all-too familiar story of institutional failure.

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This serial miscarriage of institutional norms took place in the backdrop of an unsavoury political drama. This has, so far, had three acts. The first was marked by the Sena-BJP break-up. The fear that the BJP would marginalise it combined with a surge of political ambition and dictated the Shiv Sena move to sever ties. This is something the JDU will be keenly watching. The BJP's unwillingness to accept coalition dynamics, along with its insatiable search for power, pushed the party into exploring the advantages of factionalism within rival parties.

The second act of the drama belongs to the Congress. Despite its inaction both before and after the election, the party came close to sharing power. But it refused to take any decision quickly. Apart from its prevarication and inanity in appointing all kinds of observers, this episode exposed the absence of formal state-level mechanisms for taking decisions. A party that blames Modi for centralisation unabashedly centralised this state-level decision. The two key bodies — state legislature party and state executive committee — should have been the legitimate decision-makers. The delay caused by the Congress allowed crucial space to the BJP to plan its intrigue.

The final act of the drama belonged to the NCP. Reportedly, Ajit Pawar used a letter signed in advance by the party legislators. But

has anyone asked him — the governor should have asked this but was perhaps too sleepy to ask — when was it that the party legislators met and decided to support the BJP? Are there minutes of that meeting?

It is also a sad comment on the long career of Sharad Pawar, for two reasons. One, speculation continues about whether he knew about this. The fact that observers should associate him with almost anything, is a rather damning footnote that casts a long shadow over his political biography. His meeting with Modi last week only added to this suspicion. Secondly, Sharad Pawar cannot escape the criticism that he has developed a political clan. As it happens with large and multi-generational family enterprises, intra-family factionalism spills out. Beyond personal failure, the entire episode brings back the larger question: What does the NCP stand for and has it lived beyond its natural life? Having stagnated at the level it was at in 1999, Ajit Pawar's action may just have brought that existential question to the forefront.

But in the developments of last week, more is involved than mere reputations of leaders and futures of parties. While a floor test alone should determine the fate of the new Fadnavis government, the Saturday stroke has done durable damage to the idea of competitive politics — when all-round failure of politics takes place and is coupled with institutional abdication and chicanery, small-time violations of principles and practices of parliamentary democracy begin to masquerade as chanakya niti. Rigging of institutions is celebrated as democracy.

Current developments in Maharashtra symbolise this failure of politics. One is not sure if Marathi pride will bloat or sink in shame that the state has joined its neighbours, Goa and Karnataka, in undermining democracy in such a manner that public cynicism replaces popular trust in electoral party politics. When the fig leaf of decency is gone, the minimal requirements of rule of law can be thrown out of the window as useless appendages to the elixir of power. This is what Maharashtra is witnessing.

The writer, based in Pune, taught political science

COMRADES IN VERSE

Shaukat Azmi epitomised the finest qualities of progressive writers and artists



RAKHASHANDA JALIL

THE ALL-INDIAN Urdu Progressive Writers Conference, held in Hyderabad in February 1947, was the highpoint of this powerful literary grouping that had, by now, seized the imagination of creative writers all across the Subcontinent. We get a delightful account of this gathering from Shaukat Azmi, a Hyderabad lass, who met her future husband, Kaifi Azmi, during the conference and was swept up in a life very different from the one she had known. Struck by the lack of affectation in the group of young writers from Bombay, she was to write in her engrossing memoir, *Yaad ki Rahguzar* (translated into English as *Kaifi & I*): "The young progressive writers were a refreshing change; they wore their fame so lightly that I was overwhelmed." No progressives' conference was ever complete without a *mushaira*; this one had a virtual galaxy of greats. Shaukat heard Kaifi recite his rousing poem, *Taj*, a powerful attack on monarchy and injustice (which required some fearlessness in the city of nizams) and was moved beyond words. Throwing caution to the winds, she travelled to Bombay with her father, saw Kaifi's room in the commune in Andheri, met his friends, and decided to plunge headlong in this life of poetry, politics and progressivism.

Shaukat's memoir provides a luminous account of her new life in a Bombay bursting with new ideas in the company of gregarious comrades: Sajjad Zaheer and his wife Razia,

Shaukat heard Kaifi recite his rousing poem 'Taj', a powerful attack on monarchy and injustice and was moved beyond words. Throwing caution to the winds, she travelled to Bombay with her father, saw Kaifi's room in the commune in Andheri, met his friends and fellow writers, and decided to plunge headlong in this life of poetry, politics and progressivism.

the affable duo of Munish Saxena and S M Mehdi, Sardar Jafri and his wife Sultana who took Shaukat under her wing, the parsimonious Party Treasurer Comrade S V Ghate (who nevertheless grudgingly parted with Rs 100 to the newly-weds), and P C Joshi, the General Secretary of the CPI (from 1935-1947) who comes across in her narrative as a benevolent despot. Shaukat's *nikah* with Kaifi was witnessed by nearly all the progressive writers from Bombay; it was followed, naturally enough, by a *mushaira* with Majaz reciting *Aaj ki Raat* and the bride being presented a copy of the groom's first collection of poetry, *Aakhr-e-Shab*, dedicated to her. Shaukat describes Kaifi and his friends, who would become her fellow-travellers, thus:

"They were enlightened and humane individuals who were struggling to create a new world for the poor, the destitute and the hungry. Although they were from different parts of India, these people were like one family where everyone was addressed as 'Comrade', which at the time meant an evolved human being."

Kaifi earned Rs 40 as monthly salary from the Party, of which Rs 30 went towards his wife's boarding expense. Partly to lighten the burden on Kaifi and partly in response to Joshi's command that "the wife of a communist should never sit idle", Shaukat got drawn into the Indian Peoples Theatre Association, launched in May 1943 in Bombay with the aim of using the stage and other traditional arts to

portray the problems facing the country.

Shaukat's first role was in Ismat Chughtai's *Dhani Bankein*, a play on the Hindu-Muslim riots that were tearing the fabric of a newly-independent India. Soon, she got drawn into the country's most vigorous cultural movement that had the likes of Zohra Sehgal, Usha Butt, Bhisham Sahni and Prithviraj Kapoor among its stalwarts. While the catalyst for IPTA was the Bengal famine, it continued to be active long after the progressives waned, and Shaukat toured the country with a band of committed young actors intent upon creating a new theatrical vocabulary and aesthetics. The most visible and immediate effect of their efforts was the introduction of a non-sectarian ethos in stage and cinema, one that rose above the narrow confines of caste, creed and religion and worked as a balm on a national psyche traumatised by the communal outrages before, after and during the partition.

Later years would see Shaukat in many memorable roles in *Garam Hawa*, *Umrao Jaan*, *Salaaam Bombay*, among others. Muse to her poet husband, working mother, talented actor, house-proud hostess, a woman of the world, she "showed the way" to a generation of women. And proved how it was possible to be all of the above when accompanied by large dollops of humour and humanity.

Jalil is an author, translator and literary historian

NOVEMBER 26, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

PAKISTAN'S H-BOMB PAKISTAN PLANS TO test a Hydrogen bomb device by next April in spite of the American leaders' appeal to General Ziaul Haq not to do so, according to the *Sunday Times*. The *Times* said that the claim that Pakistan may be just a few months away from the test was made to it by a high-level military source from Islamabad. The paper said evidence about a secret operation by Pakistan in three countries to acquire the necessary nuclear material and know-how has been uncovered. The Americans had estimated that Pakistan was two to three years away from possessing a bomb. Now they say Pakistanis may explode it in the next three or four months.

MECCA MOSQUE ABLAZE TROOPS OF THE Saudi National Guard stormed the Grand Mosque in Mecca during the night, and the remaining gunmen who had been holding out inside the building gave themselves up, Riyadh radio reported. Other reports from Saudi Arabia said there had been heavy fighting with many dead on both sides. There was no information on the fate of hostages still believed to have been held by the gunmen since they took over the mosque early Tuesday. Part of the huge mosque was set to be in flames after the storming. The Saudi troops used heavy weapons in their final assault, diplomatic sources said.

DEFECTION RUMOURS CONGRESS PRESIDENT DEVRAJ Urs wrote to Union Industries Minister Brahmananda Reddy, requesting him to clarify if the reports about him joining the Congress-I had any basis. According to a Congress source, Urs said in his letter that he would not like to "give credence" to the rumours and would be grateful if Reddy let him know his position. Reports have appeared in the past two days about Swaran Singh, Reddy and Congress leaders like Shafi Qureshi and KC Pant planning to join the Congress-I. Both Pant and Qureshi have said they will issue statements contradicting the reports, the source said.



Importance of citizens’ duties

We need to complement our assertion of our fundamental rights with a recognition of our fundamental duties



Ravi Shankar Prasad

THE IDEA OF citizenship has acquired a new meaning, content and purpose in the democratic world. While emphasising on rights, it very important that one is also sincere about his or her duties towards the society at large and the country, especially its safety and security imperatives.

Universally, great emphasis has been laid on citizens’ duties. Article 29(1) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states: “Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible.”

Many nations across the world have transformed into developed economies by embodying the principles of “responsible citizenship” — all the responsibilities and duties that citizens of a nation should exercise and respect. The United States of America is a classic example in this respect. The Citizens’ Almanac, issued by the US Citizenship and Immigration Services, details the responsibilities of its citizens — a copy of this document is given to every person on becoming a citizen of the country. Every year, during September 17-23, Americans celebrate the “Constitution Week”, using the time to reflect on the rights and responsibilities of citizenship and what it means to be a US citizen.

Another example is Singapore, whose growth story has been fuelled by its emphasis on the relentless pursuit of duties by its citizens. As a result, Singapore has transformed from a less developed nation to a highly developed one in a short span of time.

India is one of the few countries in the world with a glorious tradition of democracy since ancient times. Eminent historian K P Jayaswal remarks that the concept of republic in ancient India is older than of the Roman or Greek republican system. The ancient republics or janpadas such as Vaishali, Kapilavastu and Mithila — and their constitutions — date back to 600 BC. These form the foundation for the constitutional democracy that India is today — as well as for the role of Indian citizens in making democracy a success in India.

Since ancient times, people in India have had a tradition of performing their duties — even in partial disregard of their rights and privileges. Since time immemorial, an individual’s “kartavya” — the performance of one’s duties towards society, his/her country and his/her parents — was emphasised. Describing the role of a king, Chanakya stated, “It is a king’s utmost duty to look after the progress and welfare of the people of his country”. Modern civilisations, sadly, do not offer many inducements for the performance of duties — they certainly don’t teach people that the real reward for responsible citizenship is the preservation of a free society.

Traditionally, the fundamental impulse to accept responsibilities and perform duties, in every society, has been religious. Performing one’s duties with sincerity, is in



CR Sasikumar

fact, a worship mechanism. As a line from the Rig Veda notes, “O, citizens of Bharat! As our ancient saints and seers, leaders and preceptors have performed their duties righteously, similarly, you shall not falter to execute your duties”. (Rig.10.191.2)

The Bhagwad Gita and Ramayana also ask people to perform their duties. In the Gita, Lord Krishna ordains, “One should do one’s duties without expectation of any fruits”. Mahatma Gandhi once said, “I learnt my duties on my mother’s lap. She was an unlettered village woman... She knew my dharma. Thus, if from my childhood we learn what our dharma is and try to follow it our rights look after themselves... The beauty of it is that the very performance of a duty secures us our right. Rights cannot be divorced from duties. This is how satyagraha was born, for I was always striving to decide what my duty was.” Gandhiji further said that the true source of right is duty. He said, “If we all discharge our duties, rights will not be far to seek”. Swami Vivekananda rightly observed, “it is the duty of every person to contribute in the development and progress of India”.

The authors of the Constitution, under the able leadership of Babasaheb Ambedkar, put their hearts and minds into drafting an inclusive Constitution for a diverse India. As chairman of the Drafting Committee, Ambedkar displayed utmost clarity on one point — the purpose of the Constitution. He stated, “the Constitution is not a mere lawyer’s document; it is a vehicle of life and its spirit is always the spirit of age”.

A very significant feature of our Constitution is that it balances citizens’ rights and duties. These are social concepts that have grown through time, tradition and usage. The citizens’ duties as enshrined in the Constitution are essentially a codification of tasks integral to the Indian way of life — they focus on tolerance, peace and communal harmony. A close scrutiny of the clauses of Article 51A of the Constitution, indicate that a number of them refer to values, which have been part of Indian tradition, mythology, religion and practices.

The chapter on Fundamental Rights in the Constitution itself recognises the essence of duties. One pertains to freedom of speech but Clause 2 to 6 of Article 19 permits reasonable restrictions on the exercise of such rights in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, and the security of the state, public order, decency and morality. This implies that while exercising one’s rights must remember one’s duties towards these Constitutional concepts.

The chapter on Fundamental Rights in the Constitution itself recognises the essence of duties. One pertains to freedom of speech but Clause 2 to 6 of Article 19 permits reasonable restrictions on the exercise of such rights in the interest of the sovereignty and integrity of India, and the security of the state, public order, decency and morality. This implies that while exercising one’s rights must remember one’s duties towards these constitutional concepts.

Today, it is important to emphasise the need to remember our constitutional duties for the progress our country. Democracy cannot establish deep roots in society until the citizens don’t complement fundamental rights with their fundamental duties. Let us remember the sacrifices of our brave jawans and officers of our security forces who laid down their lives while performing their duties to keep the country safe and secure.

Fundamental Duties must serve as a constant reminder of our national goals as well as inculcate, in all of us, a profound sense of social responsibility. It is only through the fulfillment of our duties in the most earnest way, that we can live life to our truest potential and help lead our nation towards prosperity and development.

The rationale for citizens’ duties can be summarised in the words of Mahatma Gandhi: “The best way to find yourself is to lose yourself in the service of others.” Every citizen plays a key role in building a New India — a clean, healthy and prosperous nation. Everyone performing their duties, even mechanically, would pave the way for a better neighbourhood, better society, and ultimately, a better country. Let us together build a responsible India, let us together imbibe the spirit of responsible citizenship to achieve the full potential of our country. Let us all remember our fundamental duties in the same way as we remember our fundamental rights.

The writer is the Union Law & Justice, Communications and Electronics & IT Minister

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“[China] will never abandon Hong Kong, and will never ignore the people and forces who love the motherland and the city. Hong Kong’s problems need objective analysis and practical solutions. The country will always provide guarantees for Hong Kong.”

— GLOBAL TIMES, CHINA

Russia returns to Indian Ocean

Delhi needs to engage with Moscow on the unfolding Sino-Russian naval partnership



Raja Mandala

BY C RAJA MOHAN

RUSSIA, LONG seen as marginal to the geopolitics of the Indian Ocean, is rejoining the major power scrum in the contested littoral. Three recent events highlight Russia’s growing strategic interest in the Indian Ocean and should compel Delhi to think of its consequences for India’s own regional strategy.

Last week, *Perekop*, a training vessel of the Russian Navy, arrived at the Hambantota port in Sri Lanka. Late last month two, Russian long-distance “Black Jack” nuclear bombers flew to South Africa. This is the first time these aircraft have been deployed to Africa.

This week, the Russian and the Chinese are conducting a trilateral naval exercise with South Africa in the strategic waters off the Cape of Good Hope. Called, Moris, this is the first time that the three countries (India’s partners in the BRICS forum along with Brazil) are doing such a joint exercise. The exercise reflects the growing weight of China and Russia in South Africa’s security calculus and Pretoria’s growing political distance from the West. Meanwhile, Iran has said that it plans to hold joint naval drills with Russia and China in the turbulent waters of the Persian Gulf.

Until now, Delhi’s discourse on the Indian Ocean has been focused on the growing competition with China, whose maritime profile has been growing in the littoral. This, in turn, has led to the rapid expansion of India’s naval cooperation with the United States and Japan, as well as with its regional partners like Indonesia, Singapore and other ASEAN countries in the east, many nations in the Gulf as well as the east coast of Africa.

More recently, India has also been developing a partnership with France, a resident power in the littoral and a traditional security provider in the Western Indian Ocean and Africa. India would also want to develop similar intensive engagement with Britain and the European Union.

Russia’s return to the Indian Ocean is relatively recent. It must also be seen as a part of its new strategic activism in the Middle East and Africa. Five decades ago, as a rising Soviet Russia sought to enter the Indian Ocean littoral amidst the British withdrawal from the east of Suez, it set off concerns in the region about being sucked into the superpower rivalry.

The region’s calls for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean went nowhere as the US quickly replaced Britain as the main security provider in the littoral. The Soviet Union too expanded its strategic footprint the Indian Ocean during the 1970s and 1980s. But the collapse of the Soviet Union disrupted Moscow’s Indian Ocean trajectory.

As it returns to the Indian Ocean, many fundamental constraints remain on Russia’s ambitions. Russia is a vast continental state and its limited access to the sea

remains vulnerable to exploitation by its adversaries. The unfreezing Arctic will present new opportunities for Russia, but most of them are for the long-term. Russia is also constrained by its limited economic resources. China, Japan, Europe and the US bring far greater economic weight to bear upon the region. The Indian Ocean is certainly not at the top of Moscow’s maritime priorities.

Yet, Russian President Vladimir Putin, has demonstrated the political will and strategic acumen to make the best of a weak hand. While Russian might never dominate the Indian Ocean, it certainly has the capacity to shape the strategic outcomes in the region.

For one, Moscow is one of the world’s major arms exporters and has turned that into an effective leverage in the Indian Ocean region. Second, the success of Russia’s military intervention in Syria in saving the Bashar al Assad regime has got the attention of many countries in the littoral struggling to cope with civil wars. The recent reports on Russia’s growing security role — including the use of hybrid forces — in the Central African Republic, Libya and Mozambique are a testimony to this.

Third, Russia is using its new security role in the region to gain privileged military access. Although it does not have a naval base in the Indian Ocean, acquiring one is probably a high priority. Meanwhile, Russia has stepped up its naval diplomacy in the region, making regular visits to ports in the region and deepening special relationships that it already has with countries like India.

Fourth, as a permanent member, Russia also offers diplomatic protection for many regimes in the UNSC against Western pressures on such issues as human rights. Moscow’s strong support to the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs is of great value to many African nations. Finally, Russian energy and mineral companies do offer important options for resource development in many parts of the littoral.

On the face of it, Russian activism in the Indian Ocean should be a welcome addition to the emerging multipolarity in the region. But, there are challenges that are not adequately debated in Delhi. Moscow’s deepening tensions with the West and growing strategic embrace of Beijing do pose problems for India’s own strategy.

The impact of Russia’s conflict with the US has come into public view in the case of Delhi’s purchase of S-400 missiles from Moscow and the consequent threat of Washington’s sanctions. But there is far less focus on the implications of the emerging Sino-Russian naval and maritime partnership.

Over the last few years, China and Russia have conducted impressive naval manoeuvres in the Western Pacific, the Baltic Sea and the Mediterranean. The joint exercise with South Africa this week brings the unfolding Sino-Russian naval partnership closer home to India. Delhi needs an early and intensive dialogue with Moscow on its Indian Ocean collaboration with China.

The writer is director, Institute of South Asian Studies, National University of Singapore and contributing editor on international affairs, The Indian Express



D Raja

For Constitution’s sake

We owe it to freedom movement to protect ideals of democracy, secularism

THE CONSTITUTION of India, whose chief architect was Babasaheb Ambedkar, was adopted on November 26, 1949. It was not conceived merely as a document of codified laws and regulations but was an embodiment of the values inherited from our freedom struggle. The leaders of many streams of our struggle for national liberation deliberated for nearly three years to draw a roadmap for the objectives and governance structure of India. This gave our Constitution an inclusive orientation, which could cater to the country’s cultural, spatial and social diversity. The ideas of republicanism, rule of law, democracy and secularism formed the bedrock of the independent nation state.

Unfortunately, this dynamic and lively document, the supreme law of our land and its principles, is under attack from majoritarian, patriarchal and fascist tendencies of the BJP-RSS combine.

Article 1 of the Constitution describes India as a “Union of States”. This is much more than an expression of mere political unity between different geographical units. The Union of States was envisioned to become a Union of People from different geographical and cultural regions. It united them under a secular, democratic republic while protecting diversities — cultural, linguistic, religious and regional. However, the recent assault on the autonomy of Kashmir, the abrogation of Article 370 and the bifurcation of the territory into two separate Union Territories — with the total disregard of the Kashmiri opinion — was an act of aggression against this unity of the people of India, and

the principles of federalism as envisioned by the Constituent Assembly.

The Constitution came into effect completely on January 26, 1950. But some important provisions relating to citizenship and elections came into force on November 26, 1949. These provisions, considered most important by the Constitution makers, are under attack from the ruling regime. The NRC exercise in Assam and threats to Muslims issued by some BJP leaders in the state has tainted the Indian state’s secular credentials.

Article 5 of the Constitution, which deals with citizenship, came into effect to deal with the refugee crisis in Punjab and Bengal. The Constitution makers did not allow religion to be a basis of citizenship. The proposed amendments to the Citizenship Act will invert the secular character of citizenship as envisioned by the constitution makers and replace it with the majoritarian designs of the BJP-RSS. The recently-announced plans to impose the NRC nationwide will only stoke animosity between communities.

The rule of law is the cornerstone of any constitutional scheme. The Oxford Dictionary defines Rule of Law as “the principle whereby all members of a society (including those in government) are considered equally subject to publicly disclosed legal codes and processes”. This basic political equality, constraints on individual and institutional behaviour and respect for individual rights are being threatened by majoritarian forces.

Numerous instances of lynching and vi-

olent attacks on minorities and Dalits are taking place with seeming impunity for the perpetrators. The principles of rule of law and equality before law seem burdened with majoritarianism.

The Constitution makers wanted to create a non-hierarchical society but the current regime has undone much of their labour. The idea of Hindu Rashtra is based on strict hierarchies of caste, varna, gender and religion, and has no place for Dalits or minorities. This hierarchical division questions political democracy and equality, much emphasised by Ambedkar.

By repeatedly bypassing the legislative bodies, including Parliament, the current government is also undermining the principle of separation of powers between different organs of the state. The recent Ayodhya verdict has raised questions about justice delivery. The invocation and then revocation of President’s Rule in Maharashtra have raised several constitutional questions.

The use of the ordinance route to pass laws, lack of debate and accountability of the executive to the legislature are putting India on the path to become a totalitarian state. At the same time, the right to freedom of speech and expression and the right to question and criticise the government are being challenged in the name of nationalism.

The progressively lowering of levels of state spending on education is making the right to education ineffective. The right to information was regarded as a fundamental right as part of the right to freedom of speech and expression under Article 19 (a) by the

Supreme Court for over two decades. To give effect to this, the Right to Information Act, 2005 was enacted but it has been weakened recently by taking away the accountability mechanism.

The Constitution’s Preamble provided a simple but effective design for the functioning of the Indian state. The promises made in the Preamble are under threat today. We have not achieved a non-hierarchical and egalitarian society and multiple hierarchies are challenging the spirit of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity in India.

On November 4, 1948, B R Ambedkar spoke of constitutional morality. He cautioned that “it is perfectly possible to pervert the Constitution without changing its form by merely changing the form of the administration and to make it inconsistent with and opposed to the spirit of the Constitution”. He went on to explain that “constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated. We must realise that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is only a top-dressing on an Indian soil, which is essentially undemocratic”.

The BJP- RSS combine does not believe in constitutional morality. It wants to impose an undemocratic, monolithic, illiberal socio-political order. In this challenging period it is the responsibility of all citizens of the country to come together to protect the values we have inherited from the freedom struggle, and the Constitution.

The writer is General Secretary, CPI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

UNFAIR TO VOTER

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘In darkness’ (IE, November 25). The happenings in Maharashtra are making many things clear to a common man. The political parties in the state have no qualms about resorting to unethical means to get power. This, of course, is nothing new. In 1959, President’s Rule was imposed in Kerala cutting short the tenure of the elected government. In the 1947-1959 period, President’s Rule was imposed only five times, in the 1975-1979 period it was imposed 21 times and in 1980-1987, 18 times.

Krishan Chugh, Delhi

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘In darkness’ (IE, November 25). The mandate in Maharashtra was for the saffron alliance. The Shiv Sena, the junior partner, broke ranks. The party betrayed the trust of the people who voted for the alliance. Time has come to empower voters to punishing parties which disregard the peoples choice. The apex court should call for a fresh mandate.

Partha Guha Roy via e-mail

DIVISIVE NRC

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘The absence of compassion’ (IE, November 25). Measures like the NRC open up faultlines in society. Instead of wasting Rs 16,00 crore on NRC, the government should have generated employment.

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

The government should make it clear if it is against illegal immigrants or is the drive against such migrants a subterfuge for marginalising Muslims.

Zainab Gausiya, Chandigarh

AGAINST SECULARISM

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘No more NRC’ (IE, November 22). The NRC has created divisions in society in the name of ethnicity and religion. What is the use of undertaking a nationwide NRC when the government is bringing in a citizenship amendment bill which ensures citizenship to minorities from its neighbouring countries.

Minu Sharma via e-mail

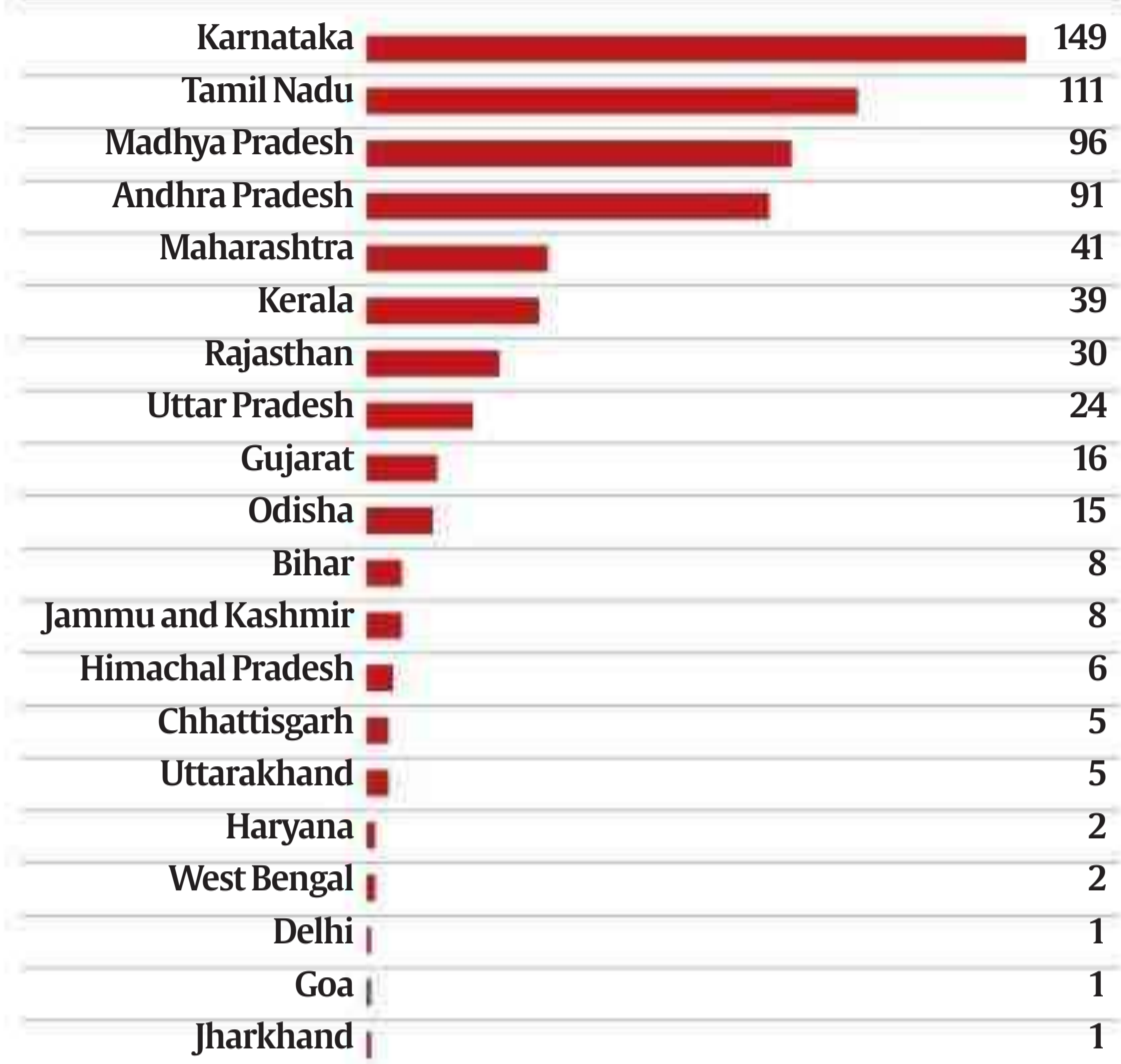
TELLING NUMBERS

Most ASI-protected temples in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu

A TOTAL 651 Hindu temples in India are designated as Centrally Protected Monuments under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI). There is no record with the central government of the number of Hindu temples under the control of state governments, Lok Sabha was told on Monday. The largest number of Hindu temples under the ASI's protection is in Karnataka, followed by Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, and Andhra Pradesh. These figures were provided by

Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture and Tourism Prahlad Singh Patel. On March 12, 2018, then Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Culture Dr Mahesh Sharma had told Lok Sabha that in all, there are 3,686 centrally protected monuments/sites under the ASI. According to a state-wise break-up provided by the government then, the largest number of these monuments/sites are in Uttar Pradesh (743).

651 ASI-PROTECTED HINDU TEMPLES



Source: Lok Sabha question

TIP FOR READING LIST

UNKNOWN NON-FICTION FROM TWO SIMILAR YET DIFFERENT NOVELISTS

VLADIMIR NABOKOV and D H Lawrence each wrote a major novel (*Lolita*, *Lady Chatterley's Lover*) that was banned and unbanned and banned again before being cut free. Each was a great traveller, as if in perpetual self-exile, and drawn to America. Each disliked heavy, didactic fiction. Each was a sensualist on the page. Each recoiled from Freud. Each had a well-tended ego. Each has stern and persuasive feminist critics. The similarities stop there. Nabokov's prose style was cool; it induced little shivers; he delivered cut and polished gemstones. Lawrence's sentences were colicky; they burned hot and frequently overheated. Impurities clung to his diamonds. Nabokov came from aristocracy and liked to live in well-appointed hotels. Lawrence, whose father was a coal miner, was fundamentally a bohemian; when he got too comfortable he felt like smashing something. They were nearly contemporaries — Nabokov was born in 1899, Lawrence in



1885 — but Lawrence died at 45 from tuberculosis and they seem to belong to vastly different eras. Two new books offer looks at these writers' nonfiction prose — essays, travel writing, book reviews, etc. The Nabokov book, *Think, Write, Speak: Uncollected Essays, Reviews, Interviews, and Letters to the Editor*, is mostly for completists. The Lawrence collection, *The Bad Side of Books: Selected Essays*, is the stronger volume. Its editor, Geoff Dyer, has chosen his favourite of Lawrence's nonfiction, not merely previously unpublished work. THE NEW YORK TIMES

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

What now in Maharashtra?

Supreme Court will pronounce its judgment on the Sena-NCP-Congress petition at 10.30 am today. What happens after the date of the floor test is fixed? What will be the roles of the Governor, *pro tem* Speaker?



Sharad Pawar and Uddhav Thackeray with leaders of the Congress at a meeting of MLAs of the 'Maha Vikas Aghadi' in a hotel in Mumbai on Monday. The alliance claimed it has the support of 162 lawmakers. Prashant Nadkar

the Legislative Assembly?

The proceedings of a legislature are presided over by the Speaker. The election of the Speaker is usually the first order of business that newly elected MLAs undertake after taking their oath of office. Often, in cases where an immediate floor test is ordered, the election of the Speaker is taken up after the conclusion of the floor test. In the absence of a Speaker, the Governor appoints one of the MLAs to perform the duties of the Speaker. This MLA is referred to as the *pro tem* Speaker. He administers the oath of office to the other MLAs, and thereafter oversees the floor test in the legislature.

On what basis does the Governor make his choice of *pro tem* Speaker?

The Constitution gives the Governor discretion in the selection of *pro tem* speaker. On many occasions, Governors have appointed the most tenured MLA in the Assembly as the *pro tem* Speaker. However, this is only a convention, with which Governors have broken in the past. For the 2018 Karnataka floor test, the Governor appointed BJP MLA K G Bopaiah as *pro tem* Speaker. While Bopaiah had been Speaker for two terms, he was not the most senior MLA. A challenge to his appointment failed in the Supreme Court, and he went on to preside over the proceedings of the Vidhan Sabha when the floor test was to take place.

Does the *pro tem* Speaker have complete

discretion in conducting the floor test?

Not really. In the past when courts have ordered a floor test, they have also prescribed safeguards. In the 2018 Karnataka case, the apex court ordered live telecast of proceedings. During the Jharkhand floor test in 2005, the court had directed the Chief Secretary and the DG of Police to ensure that all MLAs were able to attend the proceedings of the Assembly safely. In both these cases, the court had also stopped the Governor from nominating an Anglo Indian MLA to the Vidhan Sabha (who might conceivably vote for the government). In the 2016 Uttarakhand floor test, the court had prescribed that supporting and opposing MLAs should line up on two sides of the House, so that their numbers could be counted individually by a show of hands. The outcome of this floor test was then sent in a sealed cover to the apex court.

What is the apprehension about the role that Ajit Pawar might play?

The anti-defection provisions in the Constitution define the legislature party as a group consisting of all elected MLAs of a political party in the House. However, the Constitution does not define the leader of a legislature party. Very often, the governing document of a political party provides for a leader of the party in the legislature. This leader is usually elected by the MLAs of the party from among themselves.

On occasion, the party authorises this leader to issue a whip to its MLAs to vote in a particular manner. MLAs who violate a whip issued by the leader of the legislature party on behalf of the political party, can be disqualified from the membership of the House. On Saturday evening, the NCP, at a meeting attended by 42 of its 54 MLAs, used its discretion to sack Ajit Pawar as legislature party leader. On Monday, Sharad Pawar told the MLAs of the "Maha Vikas Aghadi" alliance: "A misinformation is being spread that Ajit Pawar is the NCP's legislature party leader who would issue a whip to all (NCP) MLAs to vote for the BJP (in the floor test). It is being said that whoever defies the whip would lose his membership of the House..." "Ajit Pawar, who has been removed from his position (as NCP legislature party leader), has no legal right to issue a whip to MLAs."

So in the absence of a legislature party leader, can the NCP issue a whip to its MLAs for the vote?

The anti-defection provisions specify that a party can either itself issue a whip to its MLAs or authorise any person or authority for this purpose. The NCP meeting on Saturday delegated the powers of the leader of the legislature party to state party president Jayant Patil.

(Chakshu Roy is head of outreach at PRS Legislative Research)

Speaker and unruly MPs: What House rules say

PRADEEP KAUSHAL
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

THE SUSPENSION of two Congress members by Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla after unruly scenes in the House, has brought back focus on the conduct of MPs, and related issues. Rule 378 of the Rules for the Conduct of Business states: "The Speaker shall preserve order and shall have all powers necessary for the purpose of enforcing own decisions." Rule 373 says: "The Speaker, if is of the opinion that the conduct of any member is grossly disorderly, may direct such member to withdraw immediately from the House, and any member so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith and shall remain absent during the remainder of the day's sitting." For recalcitrant members, Rule 374 says: "(1) The Speaker may, if deems it necessary, name a member who disregards the author-

ity of the Chair or abuses the rules of the House by persistently and wilfully obstructing the business thereof. "(2) If a member is so named by the Speaker, the Speaker shall, on a motion being made forthwith put the question that the member (naming such member) be suspended from the service of the House for a period not exceeding the remainder of the session: Provided that the House may, at any time, on a motion being made, resolve that such suspension be terminated. "(3) A member suspended under this rule shall forthwith withdraw from the precincts of the House." According to Rule 374A: "(1) Notwithstanding anything contained in rules 373 and 374, in the event of grave disorder occasioned by a member coming into the well of the House or abusing the Rules of the House persistently and wilfully obstructing its business by shouting slogans or otherwise, such mem-

ber shall, on being named by the Speaker, stand automatically suspended from the service of the House for five consecutive sittings or the remainder of the session, whichever is less: Provided that the House may, at any time, on a motion being made, resolve that such suspension be terminated. "(2) On the Speaker announcing the suspension under this rule, the member shall forthwith withdraw from the precincts of the House." In January, Speaker Sumitra Mahajan suspended 45 members of Lok Sabha belonging to the TDP and AIADMK after they continuously disrupted proceedings for days. Twenty-four AIADMK members were suspended for five consecutive sittings. A day later, she suspended 21 members of AIADMK and TDP, and an unattached YSR Congress member. The AIADMK members had repeatedly flung papers towards the Chair. After warning that she would be forced to name them,

the Speaker had ultimately invoked Rule 374A, barring the members from attending the House for the remainder of the session. In February 2014, then Speaker Meira Kumar had suspended 18 MPs from (undivided) Andhra Pradesh following pandemonium in the House. The suspended MPs were either supporting or opposing the creation of the separate state of Telangana. In December 2018, Lok Sabha's Rules Committee recommended automatic suspension of members who entered the well of the House or wilfully obstructed business by shouting slogans despite being repeatedly warned by the Chair. However, rules aside, it is often expediency rather than principles, which shapes the stand of a party on the issue. The ruling party of the day invariably insists on the maintenance of discipline, and the opposition on its right to protest. And their positions change when their roles flip.

How Karvy Stock Broking bypassed Sebi regulations, diverted investors' money

GEORGE MATHEW & SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

ON NOVEMBER 22, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) banned Karvy Stock Broking Ltd (KSBL) from taking fresh business for allegedly misappropriating money and securities belonging to its investors in order to fund its real estate arm, Karvy Realty. While Sebi says Karvy transferred Rs 1,096 crore to its real estate business, market estimates say the sum involved could be around Rs 2,000 crore. The regulator is learnt to be also looking into similar manipulation involving thousands of crore by several other broking houses, which could potentially create a crisis of confidence in the stock market.

What has Karvy done?

Sebi has moved against Karvy for violating norms, including transferring client shares to itself, and pledging client shares to raise money, which it diverted to its real estate arm. Many of Karvy's over 2.40 lakh

clients have complained to the regulator about money and securities not coming to their trading accounts. Karvy allegedly misused client accounts without informing them, or reporting to the depository or the stock exchange. Securities lying in Depository Participant (DP) accounts belong to clients, who are their legitimate owners. KSBL had no legal right to create any pledge on those securities. If at all client securities are pledged, it should be done only in order to meet the obligations of the respective clients. In a report submitted to Sebi, the National Stock Exchange of India (NSE) said that KSBL misused the power of attorney given by its clients to clandestinely sell client securities through entities controlled by it, and used the funds for its own purposes. To hide its misdeed, KSBL did not report the DP account (No. 11458979) in its submissions to the NSE from January to August 2019. This was detected only during inspection, the NSE said. How much money was involved? The Sebi order said a net amount of Rs 1,096 crore was transferred by Karvy Stock

Broking to Karvy Realty. However, the scam is likely to be worth about double that amount, or even more — the NSE's preliminary probe of August 19, was carried out with a limited purpose, and covered only the period from January 1, 2019 onward. While customers are looking to the stock exchanges for the money and securities allegedly siphoned off by Karvy from their accounts, Sebi is reportedly investigating similar diversions of funds from clients accounts by other broking houses. The Sebi (Stock-Brokers and Sub-Brokers) Regulations, 1992 specify that the stock broker must "segregate his own funds or securities from the client's funds or securities", and must not use "the securities or funds of the client for his own purpose or for purpose of any other client". So, how does this system work? Big stock brokers such as Karvy, finance companies, and banks offer online trading on both the NSE and the Bombay Stock Exchange. These brokers have trading platforms that allow their customers to trade online in equities, buy debt papers, mutual funds, commodities, and currencies, and participate in public issues. The client opens a

demat account with a depository and a bank, and in some cases gives power of attorney to the broking firm to act on their behalf. The securities received in pay-out, against which payment has been made by the client, should be transferred to the demat account of the client within one working day of the pay-out. Securities kept in the 'client unpaid securities account' should either be transferred to the demat account of the client upon fulfilment of the client's funds obligation, or should be disposed of in the market within five trading days after the pay-out. Were there any regulatory gaps? Sebi tightened the relevant portions of its 1992 Regulations further through a circular on June 20, 2019. It said: "With effect from September 1, 2019, clients' securities lying with trading members/clearing members... cannot be pledged to banks/NBFCs for raising funds even with authorization by client." Also, clients' securities already pledged shall be unpledged by August 31, 2019, and returned to the clients after fulfilment of pay-in obligation. The circular said that in case of default

on payment by a client, brokers will have to hold the securities for up to five days, after which they can liquidate the securities. Both the stock exchanges and Sebi had, in fact, begun to tightening norms for brokers several months ahead of the June 20 circular. In December 2018, Sebi standardised books of accounts and records in order to make it easy to carry out inspections and compare. The following month, brokers were asked for weekly reports of day-wise securities and balances of clients, International Securities Identification Number (ISIN), and DP accounts. In March 2019, a reconciliation exercise of matching depository records and exchange records was started. Between April and June, Sebi directed the depositories — National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Services Limited (CDSL) — and depository participants to provide pledged details of all brokers. A leading market expert said Karvy had carried out a "robbery" by breaking laws and norms. This expert likened Karvy's action to a promoter of a bank withdrawing depositors' money for personal use. Industry sources said it is no longer possible for brokers to pledge clients' securities except with the Clearing Corporation of India (CCIL) and clearing members — that is, within the exchange system. Cases of pledging outside the system date from the period prior to Sebi's June circular, they said. Will investors lose money? While Karvy allegedly misused securities of thousands of its investors, industry sources say as of now, there is no default — and the value of securities pledged is more than the money taken out by the broker. Government sources confirmed that investors' money will not be lost. Market sources said in case the funds available with Karvy are insufficient, investors may get their money through NSDL insurance, or from the Investor Protection Fund (IPF) set up to guard against default by members of exchanges (brokers). However, some exchange officials told *The Indian Express* that the IPF cannot be used to make good investors' losses, if any, in this case because, even though securities were taken out and pledged, there was no trade — and "IPF money can only be used in case a trade has happened".

TOPOF THE WORLD



The WikiLeaks founder is fighting extradition to the US

BRITAIN
Doctors fear
Assange could
die in UK jail

London: More than 60 doctors wrote an open letter published Monday saying they feared Julian Assange's health was so bad that the WikiLeaks founder could die inside a top-security British jail. The 48-year-old Australian is still fighting a US bid to extradite him from Britain on charges filed under the Espionage Act. In the letter to Home Secretary Priti Patel, Britain's interior minister, the doctors call for Assange to be moved from Belmarsh prison in London to a university teaching hospital. They based their assessment on "harrowing eyewitness accounts" of his October 21 court appearance.

UK TRUCK DEATHS
Man pleads guilty
to immigration,
property offences

London: A Northern Irish man, who is charged with the manslaughter of 39 Vietnamese nationals found dead in a truck near London last month, pleaded guilty on Monday to assisting unlawful immigration and to acquiring criminal property. Appearing by video link from Belmarsh Prison in east London, Maurice Robinson, 25, was not asked to enter a plea to 41 other charges, including 39 counts of manslaughter. The victims, 31 men and boys and eight women, were found on an industrial estate in Essex on October 23.

PHILIPPINES
UK man, wife
held by IS-linked
group rescued

Manila: Philippine soldiers on Monday rescued a British man and his wife from Islamic State-linked jihadists nearly two months after the couple was kidnapped from their beach resort in the nation's south, authorities said. Troops recovered the pair after a fire-fight with gunmen from the Abu Sayyaf group on the restive southern island of Jolo, which is a stronghold of the kidnaper-ransom gang that has been behind some of the worst attacks in the Philippines. Regional army spokesman Arvin Encinas said no ransom was paid.

Landslide win for pro-democracy camp in Hong Kong local elections

Captures 389 of 452 district council seats in sharp rebuke of Beijing amid months-long mass protests

KEITH BRADSHER,
AUSTIN RAMZY
& TIFFANY MAY
HONG KONG, NOVEMBER 25

PRO-DEMOCRACY CANDIDATES buoyed by months of street protests in Hong Kong won a stunning victory in local elections Sunday, as record numbers voted in a vivid expression of the city's aspirations and its anger with the Chinese government.

It was a pointed rebuke of Beijing and its allies in Hong Kong, and the turnout — seven in 10 eligible voters — suggested that the public continues to back the democracy movement, even as the protests grow increasingly violent. Young Hong Kongers, a major force behind the demonstrations of the past six months, played a leading role in the voting surge.

With 3 million voters casting ballots, pro-democracy candidates captured 389 of 452 elected seats, up from only 124 and far more than they had ever won. With two races undecided, the government's allies held just 56 seats, a remarkable collapse from 300.

To many democracy advocates, Sunday was a turning point. "There has been a very deep awakening of the Hong Kong people," said Alan Leong, chairman of



People celebrate in Hong Kong on Monday. A winning candidate (right) from the pro-democracy camp argues with police as he walks towards the campus of the Polytechnic University. AP, Reuters



the Civic Party, one of the largest pro-democracy parties.

The elections were for district councils, one of the lowest elected offices in Hong Kong, and they are typically a subdued affair focused on community issues. The job mostly entails pushing for neighbourhood needs like bus stops and traffic lights.

But this election was viewed as a referendum on the unrest that has created the city's worst political crisis in decades. In a semiautonomous part of China where democracy is one of the protesters' biggest demands, it gave res-



idents a rare chance to vote.

The gains at the ballot box are likely to embolden a democracy movement that has struggled with how to balance peaceful and violent protests to achieve its goals.

They are also likely to deepen

The government will certainly listen humbly to citizens' opinions and reflect on them seriously."

— CARRIE LAM
HONG KONG CHIEF EXECUTIVE

the challenges for China's central government, which wants to curb the unrest in Hong Kong. And they might exacerbate Beijing's fears about giving the city's residents even greater say in choosing their government. **NYT**

EXPLAINED Lam's 'silent majority' claim shattered

HONG KONG Chief Executive Carrie Lam said during the months of protests that there was a "silent majority" in the city that did not support the pro-democracy demonstrators. However, Sunday's elections saw a record turnout of over 70% and an overwhelming victory for pro-democracy candidates, undermining Lam's claim. On Monday, in a conciliatory message, she conceded that the result showed "people's dissatisfaction". But protesters, rejuvenated by the result, are set to continue the agitation. How China intends to deal with the situation, with public opinion seemingly against Beijing, will be crucial to what happens next in Hong Kong.

RAJAPAKSAS RETURN TO POWER

Lanka top investigator flees to Geneva after new govt takes charge

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
COLOMBO, NOVEMBER 25

A SRI Lankan police officer, who handled the top-level investigations against the members of the previous Rajapaksa government between 2005 and 2015, has fled to Geneva following the change of government in the country.

A statement from the police headquarters said that investigations about how Inspector Nishantha Silva left the country on Sunday without obtaining formal approval are underway.

Silva was the top sleuth in many corruption and other investigations against members of the Rajapaksa family and top officials since 2015.

Gotabaya Rajapaksa, who was elected the country's new President after the November 16 polls, told a gathering Sunday that the chief investigator in all politically-motivated investigations against them had fled the country.

Sri Lanka's controversial Rajapaksa clan tightened its grip on political power after Gotabaya swore in his elder brother Mahinda as the Prime Minister.

Silva is thought have to fled the country fearing reprisals from the new government.

"All police officers when leaving the country must obtain approval from the ministry secretary. This officer has not done so," the police statement said.

It said that Silva's "biased conduct" in carrying out investigations has been highlighted and many parties have asked for an investigation against him.



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

Gotabaya says will do nothing that harms India's interests

Colombo: Sri Lanka will work with India and it won't do anything that will harm its interests, newly elected President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said ahead of his visit to New Delhi later this week.

Rajapaksa, who is considered pro-China, said he wanted Sri Lanka to be a "neutral country" and work with all the countries.

"We will work with India as a friendly country and won't do anything that will harm India's interests," said Rajapaksa, who will travel to New Delhi on November 29 on his first official trip abroad as Sri Lankan President.

"We want to be a neutral country," Rajapaksa, who was sworn in as Sri Lanka's president last week, told Nitin Gokhale of BharatShakti.in in an interview. "We don't want to get in between the power struggles of superpowers... We are so small and we can't survive by getting into this balancing acts," he said. **PTI**



KIM ORDERS ARTILLERY DRILL, ANGERS SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un inspects a female company belonging to Unit 5492 of the army, in this picture released by state media on Monday. The North performed artillery drills near the disputed sea boundary with South Korea at the Kim's order, state media reported, drawing an immediate rebuke from the South amid stalled nuclear talks. *Reuters*

Israel to expel Human Rights Watch's country director

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
TEL AVIV, NOVEMBER 25

ISRAEL WAS set to expel the country director of Human Rights Watch on Monday after a lengthy court battle over claims he supports a boycott of the Jewish state.

American citizen Omar Shakir, the New York-based rights group's director for Israel and the Palestinian territories, arrived at Ben Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv on Monday afternoon, where he was greeted by around 20 supporters.

He denies the allegations and accuses the Israeli government of seeking to suppress dissent.

"Today culminates a two-and-a-half year effort to deport me over my human rights ad-

vocacy, an effort to muzzle Human Rights Watch," Shakir said at the airport.

"One day you will welcome me here, I hope, when it is a better day — a day in which all people, Israeli and Palestinian, have their human rights respected." He was due to fly out early on Monday evening.

Authorities say Shakir's expulsion was to be the first from inside Israel under its controversial 2017 law allowing the deportation of foreigners who support a boycott.

The European Union, United Nations and others had called on Israel to reverse course, with the UN warning of a "shrinking space for human rights defenders to operate" in Israel and the Palestinian territories.

Libya officials say US drone shot down by mistake

Cairo: Libyan forces trying to seize Tripoli shot down a US military drone over the capital by mistake last week, officials said Monday.

The US military said it lost the drone Thursday while it was assessing the security situation and monitoring extremist activity.

US Africa Command declined to elaborate, saying the incident was under investigation.

The self-styled Libyan National Army, led by General Khalifa Hifter, launched an offensive to capture Tripoli in April after seizing much of eastern Libya from militants in recent years.

The country was plunged into chaos when a NATO-backed uprising toppled longtime dictator Moammar Gadhafi in 2011. **AP**



"The truth is: the public aren't convinced either main party deserves to win this election outright."

— TONY BLAIR, former PM of Britain, on the choice between his own Labour Party and the ruling Conservative Party in the Dec 12 election.

SECRET DOCUMENTS LEAKED

Preventing escapes, pushing Mandarin: How China runs mass detention camps

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NOVEMBER 25

THE WATCH towers, double-locked doors and video surveillance in the Chinese camps are there "to prevent escapes." Uighurs and other minorities held inside are scored on how well they speak the dominant Mandarin language and follow strict rules on everything down to bathing and using the toilet, scores that determine if they can leave.

"Manner education" is mandatory, but "vocational skills improvement" is offered only after a year in the camps.

Voluntary job training is the reason the Chinese government has given for detaining more than a million ethnic minorities, most of them Muslims. But a classified blueprint leaked to a consortium of news organisations shows the camps are instead precisely what former detainees have described: Forced ideological and behavioural re-education centres run in secret.

The classified documents lay out the Chinese government's deliberate strategy to lock up ethnic minorities even before they commit a crime, to rewire their thoughts and the language they speak.

The papers also show how Beijing is pioneering a new form of social control using data and artificial intelligence. Drawing on data collected by mass surveillance technology, computers issued the names of tens of thousands of people for interrogation or detention in just one week.

Taken as a whole, the documents give the most significant description yet of high-tech



China says the facilities give voluntary job training. Reuters

mass detention in the 21st century in the words of the Chinese government itself. Experts say they spell out a vast system that targets, surveils and grades entire ethnicities to forcibly assimilate and subdue them — especially Uighurs, a predominantly Muslim Turkic minority of more than 10 million people with their own language and culture.

"They confirm that this is a form of cultural genocide," said Adrian Zenz, a leading security expert on the far western region of Xinjiang, the Uighur homeland.

Zenz said the documents echo the aim of the camps as outlined in a 2017 report from a local branch of the Xinjiang Ministry of Justice: To "wash brains, cleanse hearts, support the right, remove the wrong."

The documents were given to the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists by an anonymous source.

They consist of a notice with guidelines for the camps, four bulletins on how to use technology to target people, and a court case sentencing an Uighur Communist Party member to 10 years in prison for telling colleagues not to say dirty words, watch porn or eat without praying.

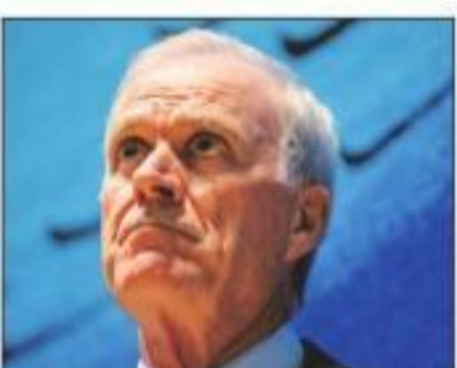
Pentagon chief fires Navy secretary over SEAL controversy

ROBERT BURNS
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 25

US DEFENCE Secretary Mark Esper has fired the Navy's top official, ending a stunning clash between President Donald Trump and top military leadership over the fate of a SEAL accused of war crimes in Iraq.

Esper said on Sunday that he had lost confidence in Navy Secretary Richard Spencer and alleged that Spencer proposed a deal with the White House behind his back to resolve the SEAL's case. Trump has championed the matter of Navy Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher, who was acquitted of murder in the stabbing death of an Islamic State militant captive but convicted of posing with the corpse while in Iraq in 2017. Gallagher was demoted after his conviction by a military jury. Trump, however, restored Gallagher's rank this month.

On Wednesday, the Navy notified Gallagher that he would face a Navy SEAL review board to determine if he should be allowed to remain in the elite force. While Trump then tweeted he would not allow the Navy to remove



RICHARD SPENCER
US Navy Secretary

Gallagher from the SEALs, the White House told the Navy it could proceed as planned, according to a Navy officer who spoke on condition of anonymity.

The Navy SEAL review board was due to hear Gallagher's case on Dec 2. Spencer, speaking Saturday at an international security forum in Halifax, Nova Scotia, said that he did not consider a tweet by Trump a formal order to stop the Navy review board.

But on Sunday, Esper said he had learned that Spencer had "privately" proposed to the White House that Gallagher be allowed to retire in his current rank and without losing his status as a SEAL. On Monday, Esper said Trump ordered him to allow Gallagher to remain part of the SEALs. **AP**

RESPONSE TO US REIMPOSING SANCTIONS AFTER EXITING 2015 NUCLEAR DEAL

'Time to take out our swords': Inside Iran's plot to attack Saudi oil sites

REUTERS
NOVEMBER 25

FOUR MONTHS before a swarm of drones and missiles crippled the world's biggest oil processing facility in Saudi Arabia, Iranian security officials gathered at a heavily fortified compound in Tehran.

The group included the top echelons of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite branch of the Iranian military whose portfolio includes missile development and covert operations.

The main topic that day in May: How to punish the United States for pulling out of a landmark nuclear treaty and re-imposing economic sanctions on Iran, moves that have hit the Islamic Republic hard.

With Major General Hossein Salami, leader of the Revolutionary Guards, looking on, a senior commander took the floor.

"It is time to take out our swords and teach them a lesson," the commander said, according to four people familiar with the meeting.

Hardliners in the meeting talked of attacking high-value tar-

gets, including American military bases. Yet, what ultimately emerged was a plan that stopped short of direct confrontation that could trigger a devastating US response. Iran opted instead to target oil installations of America's ally, Saudi Arabia, a proposal discussed by top Iranian military officials in that May meeting and at least four that followed.

This account, described to Reuters by three officials familiar with the meetings and a fourth close to Iran's decision making, is the first to describe the role of Iran's leaders in plotting the Sept 14 attack on Saudi Aramco, the



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei approved the operation, people familiar with the move told Reuters.

state-controlled oil company. These people said Iran's

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei approved the opera-

tion, but with strict conditions: Iranian forces must avoid hitting any civilians or Americans.

Reuters was unable to confirm their version of events with Iran's leadership. Tehran has steadfastly denied involvement.

Alireza Miryousefi, spokesman for the Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York, rejected the version of events the four people described to Reuters. He said Iran played no part in the strikes, that no meetings of senior security officials took place to discuss such an operation, and that Khamenei did not authorise any attack. "No, no, no,

no, no, and no," Miryousefi said to detailed questions from Reuters on the alleged gatherings and Khamenei's purported role.

Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthis rebels, at the centre of a civil war against Saudi-backed forces, claimed responsibility for the assault on Saudi oil facilities. That declaration was rebuffed by US and Saudi officials, who said the sophistication of the offensive pointed to Iran.

The plan by Iranian military leaders to strike Saudi oil installations developed over several months, according to the official close to Iran's decision making.

"Details were discussed thoroughly in at least five meetings and the final go ahead was given" by early September, the official said. All of those meetings took place at a secure location in Tehran, three of the officials told Reuters. They said Khamenei attended one of the gatherings at his residence.

The official close to Iran's decision making said the group settled on the plan to attack Saudi Arabia's oil installations because it could grab big headlines, inflict economic pain on an adversary and still deliver a strong message to Washington. **REUTERS**

SECTOR WATCH

FINANCIAL

₹15K cr of retail investor money stuck in DHFL

Secured debt, mainly banks with over ₹38K cr exposure, have the first charge on recovery

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

THE FATE of close to Rs 15,000 crore of retail investors' money stuck in non-convertible debentures (NCDs) and fixed deposits (FDs) of Dewan Housing Finance Corporation (DHFL) remains uncertain, even as the housing finance firm is being taken to bankruptcy proceedings by the Reserve Bank of India.

DHFL owes Rs 6,188 crore towards FD holders, who are mostly retail investors. Chances of nearly one lakh FD holders getting back their money are slim as FDs are unsecured instruments and the firm has been defaulting on secured loans and debt. On the other hand, recovery of Rs 9,000 crore stuck in secured NCDs of around 85,000 retail investors hinges on the IBC proceedings, sources said.

According to Indian banking laws, secured debt — mainly banks which have given over Rs 38,000 crore loans and NCDs — have the first charge on recovery. Repayment of unsecured debt comes after that. The total unsecured debt works out to Rs 9,818 crore. This includes commercial paper (CP) of Rs 100 crore, perpetual debt of Rs 1,263 crore, subordinate debt of Rs 2,267 crore and public deposits of Rs 6,188 crore. Bankers are skeptical about full recovery of debt through the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) process. "We don't expect full recovery in DHFL. There will be a haircut. Look at what happened in Jet Airways, nothing has come so far. In the IL&FS case, they talk of only 50 per cent recovery by March 2020," said an official of a nationalised bank.

Total liabilities of DHFL are Rs 83,873 crore, according to DHFL's draft resolution plan released in September. Of this, it owes banks Rs 27,527 crore, NCD holders (including retail investors, mutual funds and others) Rs 41,431 crore, National Housing Bank (NHB) Rs 2,350 crore and external commercial borrowings (ECB) Rs 2,747 crore. The big question being asked by bankers is: how and from where will DHFL get funds to repay lenders and investors?

Retail investors are now running from pillar to post to recover their money in NCDs and FDs. "Retail investors in NCDs are very small people, including senior citizens, who have very limited resources of income. They should be paid in full before FD holders or any other retailers," tweeted an investor. "My dad who is 64 now and about to have a bypass surgery has kept almost all his life savings in DHFL. Now we are stuck with no money. God

DHFL BORROWINGS (IN ₹ CRORE)

NHB	2,350
ECB	2,747
Banks	27,527
CP	100
NCDs (incl Masala Bonds)	41,431
Perpetual debt	1,263
Sub-debt	2,267
FDs	6,188
Total Borrowings	83,873
Unsecured loans	
CP	100
Perpetual Debt	1,263
Subordinate Debt	2,267
Public Deposits	6,188
TOTAL	9,818

Source: DHFL Resolution Plan

knows when we will get our own money. FD holders' priority should be higher, specially senior citizens," said another worried investor who complained to the authorities.

In their complaint to the government, NCD holders said, "In the draft resolution plan, it is proposed to pay NCD and FD holders at par. This is against the law as presently drafted, and against principles of natural justice. Investors have put their hard earned money assuming that they will be repaid on par with banks but now they are junior to banks and MFs, and on par with FD holders."

Investors also blamed the debenture trustees — Catalyst Trusteeship — for slow proceedings in the recovery process. "The debenture trustee will protect the interest of the NCD holders in the event of default by us in regard to timely payment of interest and repayment of principal and they will take necessary action at our cost," DHFL's prospectus had said.

It also said the company will maintain a special corpus called the debenture redemption reserve (DRR). This would be 25 per cent of the NCDs' values outstanding which will be parked in a bank fixed deposit. This money will not be utilised for any other purpose other than repayment of debentures maturing during the year, the prospectus had said.

However, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman proposed to scrap the obligation of DRR, a provision that requires NBFCs to build a reserve over the term of the debt to repay investors, in the Union Budget tabled in July. It was often termed as "a stumbling block for NBFCs to raise money via public bonds". Now, investors are ruing the Centre's decision to scrap DRR which would have ensured at least 25 per cent of NCD repayment.

PLEDGING OF CLIENTS' SECURITIES FOR OTHER PURPOSES A CONCERN

Post Karvy ban, broader issue for Sebi is to bring structural changes: Experts

SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

CAPITAL MARKETS regulator Sebi may undertake structural reforms, such as modifying the mechanism of posting collateral and securities for settlement by brokers with a clearing corporation, to prevent misuse as had happened in the case of Karvy Stock Broking Ltd (KSBL).

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) had last week banned KSBL from acquiring new clients for stock broking activities.

The regulator's investigation found that the company allegedly pledged securities of its clients with private banks and NBFCs, and used money to the tune of Rs 1,000 crore for purposes including funding its own real estate subsidiary Karvy Realty.

It was observed by Sebi that Karvy was allegedly using one client's securities to meet the

EXPLAINED

Violations call for stringent surveillance mechanism

WHILE FORENSIC audit has been ordered into the misuse of clients' securities by Karvy, the development points to blatant violations of securities market laws by a broker.

Further tightening of norms to prevent such misuse may be called for. The malpractice not only breaks the trust of retail investors in market, but points to the frailty of the surveillance mechanism.

obligation of another. Further, clients' securities were also allegedly used to meet the obligations of the broker on proprietary account. These are not permitted under Sebi regulations.

While the market regulator has already ordered a forensic audit into the misuse of clients' securities by Karvy, there is

a need to further tighten norms to prevent such misuse, sources said.

Normally, securities move from client account to trading member pool to clearing market pool and then to the clearing corporation.

"There needs to be a change in the current structure so that brokers don't have the scope of

misuse," said a source, who did not wish to be named.

The market regulator may also expand the scope of its investigation beyond Karvy, since it has been learnt that pledging of clients' securities for other purposes is practiced rampantly in the industry.

Earlier this year, Sebi had directed brokers that securities bought in the market through the stock exchange on behalf of a client should be credited to the demat account of the respective client within one working day of the payout.

It had directed that a client's securities lying with the trading member/clearing member cannot be pledged to banks or non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) for raising funds, even with authorisation by client since this was akin to a fund-based activity by the trading member or clearing member, which is not permitted under the regulations.

‘APAC 20 city list: Bengaluru’s MG Road tops office rental growth’

Bengaluru's central business district (CBD) has registered highest office rental growth in Asia Pacific region at 17.6 per cent during July-September quarter of 2019 compared with year-ago period on buoyant demand, according to global property consultant Knight Frank



COMPETITIVE PRICING

Bengaluru has seen continued growth in leasing activities, due to the competitive pricing offered by its CBD, as against its counterparts in New Delhi and Mumbai
MUMBAI CBD continues to be one of the most favourable office destination commanding high rental values



CONNAUGHT PLACE in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Bandra Kurla Complex (BKC) in Mumbai are ranked 7th and 11th in the 20 fastest growing prime office markets in the Asia-Pacific region, respectively

17.6% The highest year-on-year (y-o-y) rental growth in the Asia-Pacific region in July to September quarter this year (Q3 2019) registered by Bengaluru's CBD, comprising areas such as MG Road, Infantry Road and Residency Road

CBD in New Delhi continues to remain attractive, however, low vacancies and lack of Grade-A supply have restricted leasing volumes in this location.

CBDs of MELBOURNE AND BANGKOK are on the 2nd and 3rd positions, with a y-o-y office rental growth of 15.5 per cent and 9.4 per cent, respectively

RENTALS have risen 4.4 per cent in Connaught Place and 2 per cent in BKC, Mumbai

530-POINT JUMP TO CLOSE AT 40,889.23

Sensex hits new peak on US-China deal hopes, PSU divestment plan

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

THE SENSEX on Monday zoomed nearly 530 points to scale a new closing peak of 40,889.23, aided by renewed optimism over the US-China trade deal and the government's divestment programme to raise resources. The revamp of Sensex and other indices and hopes of rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India in the upcoming monetary policy meet also boosted the investor sentiment.

Led by telecom and metal shares, the 30-share index touched its record intra-day high of 40,931.71, before finally settling 529.82 points, or 1.31 per cent, higher at 40,889.23 — its all-time closing peak. Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty closed with a gain of 159.35 points, or 1.34 per cent, at 12,073.75 — just shy of its life-time

Market capitalisation of listed firms rose ₹1.81 lakh crore to ₹1,54,55,740.67 crore

closing high. "Cues that US and China will conclude a deal by next month lifted the sentiment across the globe. Reconstruction of Sensex indices and new developments over divestment to curb fiscal deficit provided confidence. Expectations of further cut in interest rate by the RBI, gave advantage to rate sensitive stocks," said Vinod Nair, head of research at Geojit Financial Services.

Sandeep Nayak, ED and CEO of Centrum Broking, said, "The prolonged trade war between US and China was weighing heavily on Indian indices. Positive statements made by both officials last

week indicating that a trade pact is likely by the end of December 2019 are being welcomed."

Investor wealth, or market capitalisation of listed firms, rose Rs 1.81 lakh crore to Rs 1,54,55,740.67 crore. The Union Cabinet last week approved the sale of the government's stake in blue-chip oil firm BPCL, shipping firm SCL and onland cargo mover Concor as well as decided to cut shareholding in select public sector firms below 51 per cent to boost revenue collections that have been hit by slowing economy. A trade pact between the US and China is likely by the end of December 2019 after positive statements made by both sides last week, analysts said.

Sectorally, BSE telecom index zoomed nearly 7 per cent, lifted by a positive sentiment in the sector in the wake of government's relief measures and plans to raise tariffs by telcos.

Apple making iPhone XR in India; supplier to buy closed Nokia unit

Salcomp to invest ₹2K cr in 5 years in the facility near Chennai

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

TECH MAJOR Apple has started production of iPhone XR in India for the domestic market and exports, underlining the government's efforts to bolster mobile manufacturing in the country, Union IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Monday.

Prasad added that Salcomp, the world's largest manufacturer and a major supplier of chargers to Apple for iPhone, has reached an agreement to take over a closed facility of Nokia in an SEZ near Chennai.

Salcomp will revive the unit, which was closed for nearly 10 years, and it will become operational from March 2020. The unit will produce charger and other

PRATT AND WHITNEY ENGINE ISSUES

DGCA to IndiGo: For every new A320neo plane, ground one with unmodified engines

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

AVIATION SAFETY regulator Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Monday instructed IndiGo to ground its old A320neo family aircraft with an unmodified Pratt and Whitney (P&W) engine, for every new A320neo plane with the modified engine that is added to its fleet. Earlier, on November 1, DGCA had instructed IndiGo to replace both engines with modified engines on its entire A320neo fleet — of an estimated 98 aircraft — by January 31, 2020 or else face grounding.

The regulator's order had come in the backdrop of repetitive events of "3rd stage LPT" (low pressure turbine) blade failure of planes causing engine malfunctions on four occasions, potentially compromising passengers' safety. The budget carrier operates a total of 91 new generation A320neos and seven A321neos.

In a fresh directive Monday, the regulator said: "Though DGCA does not wish to interfere with the import of aircraft, however, it is the considered view of DGCA that from now onwards, every aircraft that is added to the existing fleet, should lead to one of those with unmodified engines to be grounded and the new aircraft may be operated on the same schedule as was being operated by the aircraft, which will be grounded. Simply put, the new aircraft will slip into the role of one existing aircraft with unmodified engines."

IndiGo shares closed higher 4.39 per cent at Rs 1,452 at the NSE on Monday. Further, DGCA said efforts undertaken by IndiGo to replace all unmodified P&W engines on its A320neo family aircraft by January 31 next year, as instructed earlier, do not "instill enough confidence with regard to the timely completion of the said task."

The regulator also ordered that IndiGo should now lease only A320J21neos that have modified engines under both their wings.

It said if it grounds all IndiGo planes with unmodified engines

Regulator said efforts undertaken by IndiGo do not "instill enough confidence with regard to the timely completion of the said task"

after January 31, as earlier instructed, it may cause large-scale disruptions. Therefore, DGCA has suggested induction of a new plane with modified engine leading to grounding of an existing plane for engine replacement.

The DGCA also asked IndiGo to present its complete action plan, by January 31, relating to placement of both modified engines on all aircraft.

"The grounded aircraft can be allowed a fresh schedule once its engines are replaced. This process may remain in force till all engines in the fleet, have been replaced. However, in case, the operator manages to procure sufficient engines from OEM (original equipment manufacturer) for replacement, this process can be suitably altered," the DGCA said.

Most airlines operating A320neo or A321neo aircraft powered by P&W engines have faced several engine-related issues, including gearbox failures, combustion chamber distress apart LPT blade failure. These issues have been addressed in the modified engines. The US Federal Aviation Administration (FAA), last week, also issued an alert for certain variants of P&W engines for the neo aircraft. "These conditions, if not addressed, could result in uncontained release of LPT 3rd stage blades, failure of one or more engines, loss of thrust control, and loss of airplane," the DGCA said about the FAA notice.

"The current schedule remains intact. IndiGo is working with P&W and Airbus to adjust inflow of LPT 3 modified engines to meet the DGCA guidelines," IndiGo said in a statement. The DGCA order, however, may impact expansion plans of the airline.

expand your operations in India. That's our expectation," Prasad said, showcasing a 'Made in India' Apple XR device.

Apple, which also works with Taiwanese contract manufacturer Wistron in India, already makes iPhone 6S and 7 here.

In September, Prasad, after a CEOs roundtable with over 50 electronics and phone companies, had exhorted Apple to expand manufacturing base in India and to use the country as export hub, promising to line up fresh incentives and sops to galvanise electronics as well as phone industry.

"We have an ambition to make India a preferred destination for manufacturing. I have also instructed officers to accelerate this," the union minister said. **FE WITH PTI**

"It's a very proud moment for India. Earlier, it (iPhone boxes) used to say designed in California and assembled in China. Now, it says assembled, manufactured and marketed, all in India"

RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD
UNION IT MINISTER

equipment, and will boast of a diversified portfolio. This will entail an investment of Rs 2,000 crore in five years.

"It's a very proud moment for India. Earlier, it (iPhone boxes) used to say designed in California and assembled in China. Now, it says assembled, manufactured and marketed, all in India. We welcome Apple ...

Subhash Chandra resigns as Zee Entertainment Chairman

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

ZEE GROUP founder Subhash Chandra Monday resigned as the chairman of Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL), after the promoters offloaded around 16 per cent stake in the company last week to pay off debtors. However, he will continue as a director on the board of the company.

Chandra, who started the Zee TV network in 1992, expressed his intent to step aside as the Chairman of the company, which he founded way back in 1992, at the board meeting on Monday. "The board accepted his resignation with regret and applauded his vision for the company and the industry at large," the company

"However, the entire board requested him to not only continue as a board member but also to be the 'mentor' to the executive management and its MD & CEO ..."

ZEE ENTERTAINMENT ENTERPRISES LTD

IN A STOCK EXCHANGE FILING

said in a stock exchange filing. While Chandra stepped aside from the chair, he also expressed the desire to step aside as a board member. "However, the entire board requested him to not only continue as a board member but also to be the 'mentor' to the executive management and its MD & CEO," it said.

ZEEL shares fell by 3.98 per cent to Rs 343.65 on the BSE on Monday. Last week, Essel Group said it was planning to sell around 16.5 per cent stake in ZEEL to financial investors in order to repay loan obligations to certain lenders of the group for whose benefit such shares are currently encumbered.

Promoter ESSEL Media Ventures sold 69.4 million shares while Cyquator Media Services sold 61.6 million shares and ESSEL Corporate LLP sold 11.8 million shares via bulk deals at an average price of Rs 304 per share, according to the NSE data. Government of Singapore bought 28.5 million shares, representing 3 per cent stake, while Societe Generale bought 16.7 million shares or 1.73 per cent stake in ZEEL.

\$135-PER SHARE CASH DEAL TO BOOST LVMH's SMALLEST BUSINESS — JEWELLERY & WATCH

LVMH aims to restore Tiffany's sparkle with \$16.2 bn takeover

REUTERS
PARIS, NOVEMBER 25

LOUIS VUITTON owner LVMH has agreed to buy Tiffany for \$16.2 billion in its biggest acquisition yet, as the French luxury goods maker bets it can restore the US jeweller's lustre by investing in stores and new collections.

The \$135-per share cash deal will boost LVMH's smallest business, the jewellery and watch division that is already home to Bulgari and Tag Heuer, help it expand in one of the fastest-growing industry sections and grow its US presence. It will have challenges to overcome too, as spending patterns shift and Chinese shoppers retreat from the United

States to buy more at home, one of the side effects of a Beijing-Washington trade war that has weighed on Tiffany.

And in the US the jeweller is still in turnaround mode as it tries to rejuvenate its image and lure shoppers online. But the New York-based brand, founded in 1837 and known for its signature robin's egg blue boxes, still has a resonance as the go-to purveyor of engagement rings only a handful of rivals can match, such as Richemont-owned Cartier.

"It's an American icon, which is now going to become a little French too," LVMH's chairman and chief executive Arnault said in an interview. "There are some extraordinary things about Tiffany, like the colour. We're now



The Tiffany jeweller shop at the Champs Elysees avenue in Paris, on Monday. AP

the owners of a colour — that's a very rare thing."

The purchase crowns a string of acquisitions through which Arnault, France's richest man, has built up his conglomerate, including fashion brands like Christian Dior, wineries, and beauty retailers like Sephora. Not all are profitable to the same degree — the group is still trying to revive its Marc Jacobs label — but Arnault cited the firm's 2011 acquisition of Bulgari as a model for Tiffany.

The group invested in store revamps, new product ranges and communication at the Italian jeweller, and lifted operating profits fivefold, Arnault said. "I'm not saying we can do that (with Tiffany), but I think the potential is there," he added.

Restrain Shivinder from moving other courts: RHC Holding asks HC

AASHISH ARYAN
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

RHC HOLDING Pvt Ltd on Monday moved the Delhi High Court seeking to restrain its director Shivinder Mohan Singh from approaching any other court and forums, and getting orders that could in anyway hamper execution proceedings of Daiichi Sankyo's arbitration award.

Alleging that Shivinder was indulging in "forum shopping", RHC said in its plea that the younger brother of Malvinder Singh had, "despite the matter being sub-judice" in high court, moved the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) seeking similar relief.

The company, which is held equally by the Singh brothers, has also sought to restrain the younger sibling from "intimidating the employees and authorised signatories of RHC Holding in complying with the orders" of the court.

Earlier RHC Holding had, in an affidavit filed with the high court, alleged that Shivinder had been blocking efforts being made by it to recover money from garnishees, including Radha Saomi Satsang Beas chief Gurinder Singh Dhillon and his family members. "Shivinder" is blocking the re-

Alleging that Shivinder Singh was indulging in "forum shopping", RHC Holding said in its plea that he had, "despite the matter being sub-judice" in high court, moved NCLT seeking similar relief

coveries of money from them (garnishees). Recently, the judgment debtor No 6 forced and pressurised the company secretary of Prius Real Estate Private to withdraw all recovery notices issue to Mr (Gurinder Singh) Dhillon and his family member and associates and the entities under their control," RHC had said in an affidavit, a copy of which has been seen by *The Indian Express*.

Garnishees are companies that owe money to RHC, which is currently locked in litigation with Japanese drugmaker Daiichi Sankyo. Daiichi has alleged the Singh brothers concealed information regarding wrongdoing at Ranbaxy when selling the firm to it in 2008 and is seeking over Rs 3,600 crore in damages from them.

Earlier, Malvinder had, in an affidavit to the high court and the Supreme Court, alleged that Dhillon and persons associated with him had diverted close to Rs 6,000 crore from RHC. The monies were loans and advances given by

RHC and the Singh brothers to companies such as Prius Real Estate, as well as to Sunil Godhwani, and Dhillon, Malvinder had claimed in his affidavit.

In October, based on the submissions made by Malvinder, the Delhi HC had asked all the 55 garnishees to deposit the money they owed to the Singh brothers and RHC within 30 days. The court had also asked Dhillon and his family members to be personally present in the court on November 14, but later exempted them.

In a separate but related case, the high court on Monday also sought Malvinder's and former Religare Enterprises promoter Sunil Godhwani's response to an application moved by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) challenging a Central Bureau of Investigation court order.

In its plea, the ED has challenged the CBI court order which sent the Singh brothers Godhwani and others to judicial custody till December 7.

FINANCE MINISTER INTRODUCES BOTH BILLS IN LOK SABHA

Govt tables Bills to cut corporate tax, set up regulator for IFSCs

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

THE CENTRE Monday introduced the International Financial Authority Bill, 2019 in the Lok Sabha, which is aimed at establishing an international financial services centres (IFSCs) authority for regulating financial services in all such centres in the country.

The Bill was introduced by the Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the lower house.

According to provisions of the Bill, once the proposed authority is established, it will exercise the power and functions of financial sector regulators such as Reserve Bank of India, Securities and Exchange Board of India and Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India to regulate financial products and services in the IFSCs.

The first international financial services centre has been set up at GIFT City in Gandhinagar, Gujarat.

Further, amid din in the house,

TAXATION LAWS (AMENDMENT) BILL TO REPLACE ORDINANCE

■ **Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 replaces the Ordinance in September to cut corporate tax rates for domestic firms to 22% and new domestic manufacturing firms to 15%**

■ **According to International Financial Authority Bill, 2019, once the authority is established, it will exercise powers and functions of financial sector regulators to regulate IFSCs**

Sitharaman also introduced the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which is aimed at amending the Income-tax act, 1961, and Finance (No.2) Act, 2019 to give relief in corporate tax.

Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 replaces the Ordinance that was brought in September to cut corporate tax rates for domestic companies to 22 per cent and for new domestic manufacturing companies to 15 per cent.

"It was also noticed that many countries, the world over, had reduced corporate income-tax to attract investment and create employment opportunities, thus, necessitating the need of similar

measures in the form of reduction of corporate income-tax payable by domestic companies in order to make Indian industry more competitive. Therefore, it was felt that a fiscal stimulus through reduction of corporate income-tax rate of domestic companies may be provided so as to attract the investment, generate employment and boost the economy of the country," the Bill stated.

The new effective tax rate, inclusive of surcharge and cess, for domestic companies is now 25.17 per cent and for new domestic manufacturing companies is 17.01 per cent, applicable to companies that forgo the earlier exemptions

Thakur in Lok Sabha: Central GST mop-up at ₹3.26 lakh cr in FY20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

THE CENTRAL GST collection so far this fiscal stood at Rs 3.26 lakh crore, which is around half the government's target for 2019-20, Parliament was informed on Monday.

"The Budget Estimates for Central Goods and Services Tax (GST) for 2019-20 has been fixed at Rs 6,63,343 crore. The actual net GST collection for the Centre till October 2019 in current fiscal year is Rs 3,26,490 crore," Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

He said the shortfall or excess in collection of GST with respect to budget estimate, if any, is calculated after completion of financial year.

PSBs collect ₹1.9K cr in minimum balance penalty in FY19

New Delhi: Public sector banks (PSBs) collected Rs 1,996.46 crore in penalty from customers for not keeping minimum monthly balance in savings account in 2018-19, Parliament was informed on Monday.

"The reduction in the

The minister was responding to a question on details of the shortfall in GST collections of indirect taxes until October this fiscal against the budgetary projections.

On direct taxes, the minister said that for 2019-20, the Budget estimate is Rs 13,35,000 crore. Between April-October, 2019

amount through levy of charges by PSBs during 2018-19 include reduction in charges for non-maintenance of balance by State Bank of India, with effect from October 1, 2017," Anurag Singh Thakur said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. **PTI**

the net collection of direct taxes is Rs 5,18,084 crore.

When asked about the details of the revenue loss to the government on account of corporate tax rate reduction, Thakur said: "The likely revenue forgone due to the reduction in corporate tax rates has been estimated to be Rs 1,45,000 crore."

12.23 lakh new jobs created in Sept: ESIC payroll data

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

AROUND 12.23 lakh jobs were created in September as compared to 13.38 lakh in August 2019, according to the payroll data of Employees' State Insurance Corporation (ESIC).

Gross enrolments of new subscribers with the ESIC were 1.49 crore during the entire 2018-19 fiscal, the National Statistical Office (NSO) said in a report.

It also showed that during September 2017 to September 2019, around 3.10 crore new subscribers joined the ESIC scheme.

The NSO report is based on the payroll data of new subscribers of various social security schemes run by the ESIC, retirement fund body EPFO and the Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA).

It has been releasing the payroll data or new subscribers data

of these three bodies since April 2018, covering a period starting from September 2017.

The report showed that gross new enrolments with the ESIC during September 2017 to March 2018 were 83.35 lakh.

A net of 9.98 lakh new enrolments with the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) were recorded in September, as compared to 9.41 lakh in August this year.

During 2018-19, 61.12 lakh new subscribers on a net basis joined the social security schemes run by the EPFO. Similarly, the net new enrolments were 15.52 lakh during September 2017 to March 2018.

It showed that during September 2017 to September 2019, around 2.85 crore new subscribers joined the EPF scheme.

The report said that since the number of subscribers are from various sources, there are elements of overlap and the estimates are not additive.

Paytm raises \$1 bn in funding round led by T Rowe Price

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

DIGITAL PAYMENTS company Paytm on Monday said it has raised \$1 billion (over Rs 7,000 crore) in funding from US-based asset management firm T Rowe Price and existing investors including SoftBank and Alibaba to fund expansion plans.

This comes at a time when the country's biggest digital payments

The digital payments firm said it plans to invest around ₹10,000 crore (\$1.4 billion) over the next three years to expand financial services

firm is facing an intense competition from Google Pay, Flipkart-owned PhonePe and others.

Paytm said it plans to invest around Rs 10,000 crore (\$1 billion) over the next three years to expand financial services.

"One97 Communications Ltd (OCL), the parent company of Paytm, has announced an equity fundraising from a group of investors, including existing shareholders such as Ant Financial, Softbank Vision Fund, and new in-

Vehicle depreciation: Regulator proposes changes in calculation

New Delhi: Irdaai on Monday proposed vehicle new age-based depreciation formula for computing sum insured for motor vehicles, including private cars and two-wheelers.

A working group on 'Product Structure for Motor Own Damage cover' set up by the regulator has recommended two options for calculating sum insured for private cars.

For brand new private cars up

to 3 years, the sum insured "shall represent the current day on-road price of the vehicle insured including invoice value, road tax & registration charges and value of all accessories fitted thereon by the manufacturer", the exposure draft based on the recommendations of the working group said.

For vehicles older than three years, depreciation would gradually increase from 40 per cent to 60 per cent up to 7 years. **PTI**

IL&FS: NCLT asks Axis Bank, Standard Chartered CEOs to appear on Dec 16

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

THE MUMBAI Bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Monday issued an ultimatum to the chief executive officers of Axis Bank and Standard Chartered Bank to be personally present at the next hearing, failing which it will direct the authorities to issue nonbailable warrants against them in a case relating to the IL&FS case.

An NCLT bench headed by Bhaskara Pantula Mohan issued the ultimatum while hearing a contempt petition against Amitabh Chaudhry and Zarin Daruwalla of Axis Bank and StanChart India, respectively, for not being personally attending the hearings so far.

The tribunal has fixed the next date of hearing on December 16 and asked Chaudhry and Daruwalla to be present. The bench noted that both these bankers never presented themselves before the

bench since the issue surfaced last December.

The case relates to these banks allowing ex-head of IL&FS Financial Services Ramesh Chandra Bawa and his family withdraw money from their accounts with these banks and also accessing the lockers even after these accounts were frozen by the tribunal.

But the banks had submitted that the particular transactions took place before they got the copy of the tribunal order freezing these accounts.

BRIEFLY

Day 2: CSB IPO subscribed 4.35 times

New Delhi: The initial public offering (IPO) of CSB Bank was subscribed 4.35 times on the second day of bidding on Monday. The IPO of the Kerala-based lender received bids for 5 crore shares against the total issue size of 1.15 crore shares, as per data available with the National Stock Exchange. The company, which aims to raise up to Rs 410 crore, has fixed a price of Rs 193-195 per share for the IPO.

'Inclusion of NBFCs in IBC credit positive'

Mumbai: To allow bankruptcy proceedings against non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) is positive for banks as it paves the way for orderly resolution of stressed shadow banks, rating agency Moody's said in a report. "Inclusion of NBFCs into the bankruptcy code is credit positive for banks (NBFCs' biggest source of funds) because IBC provides for the orderly resolution of a stressed NBFC company," it said Monday.

Govt working on credit ratings for MSMEs

Nagpur: The government is in the process of launching 'Digital data based credit ratings' of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), to help entrepreneurs to get bank loans on the basis of these credit ratings, Union MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Monday while speaking at a conference on 'Opportunities for MSME in Agriculture & Food processing' at Agrovision 2019 event.

'India's growth to slow down further in 2019'

Singapore: India's economic growth is expected to slow further in the second half of the year, Singapore's DBS Bank said on Monday. "Real GDP (gross domestic product) is likely to print 4.3 per cent YoY in 3Q vs 2Q's 5 per cent, nearing the trough for this cycle," DBS said in its daily economic report. Weakness in the crucial consumption sector is likely to be extended into the quarter along with tepid private sector activity, the bank pointed out. **PTI**

Mitsubishi to acquire Eneco for \$4.52 bn

Amsterdam: A group led by Japan's Mitsubishi Corp will buy Eneco in a deal valuing the Dutch energy firm at 4.1 billion euros (\$4.52 billion), Eneco said on Monday, beating off rival bidders including Shell and private equity firm KKR. Eneco, a company owned by 44 Dutch municipalities and with a strong focus on renewable energy, said it had been swayed by Mitsubishi's plans to allow the company to continue its strategy and retain its corporate identity. **REUTERS**

'Unfit' Uber loses London licence over safety failures

COSTAS PITAS
LONDON, NOVEMBER 25

UBER WAS stripped of its licence to carry paying passengers in London on Monday for the second time in just over two years, pending an appeal, over a "pattern of failures" on safety and security.

Unauthorised drivers were able to upload their photos to others' accounts so that, on over 14,000 trips, a driver other than the advertised one picked up passengers, the regulator Transport for London (TfL) said. The ride-hailing firm immediately said it would appeal. The process is likely to include court action and could drag on for months, allowing



A photo illustration shows the Uber app and a bus in London. Reuters file photo

Uber's roughly 45,000 drivers in London, one of its most important markets, to keep taking rides despite its licence expiring Monday.

TfL said it had "identified a pattern of failures by the company including several breaches that placed passengers and their safety

at risk", and that some journeys had been uninsured. "TfL does not have confidence that similar issues will not reoccur in the future, which has led it to conclude that the company is not fit and proper at this time."

Uber, whose app-based ordering and demand-sensitive pricing have disrupted operators in many cities worldwide including drivers of London's "black cabs", said its systems were robust and that it would also introduce a new facial matching process. "Over the last two years we have fundamentally changed how we operate in London," tweeted CEO Dara Khosrowshahi, who took over weeks before Uber first lost its London licence in 2017. **REUTERS**

Novartis to acquire The Medicines Co for \$9.7 billion

REUTERS
ZURICH, NOVEMBER 25

SWISS DRUGMAKER Novartis is betting on heart drug prospect inclisiran in a \$9.7 billion takeover of The Medicines Co as it challenges cardiovascular medicines from Amgen Inc, Sanofi and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals.

Novartis is paying \$85 per share in cash, a 24 per cent premium over The Medicines Co's closing price of \$68.55 on Friday, to acquire the US biotechnology company's lone drug, the cholesterol-lowering injection inclisiran.

Charles Schwab to buy TD Ameritrade in \$26-bn deal

REUTERS
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 25

CHARLES SCHWAB Corp agreed on Monday to buy TD Ameritrade Holding Corp in an all-stock deal valued at \$26 billion, creating a brokerage giant in a market that has been ravaged by price wars.

The acquisition will shake up the retail brokerage industry, creating a company with \$5 trillion in assets under management and putting smaller rivals under pressure to scout for tie-ups.

The discount brokerage business is under pressure from new, nimble startups that are gaining market share by eliminating commissions on stock trades.

Last month, Schwab became the first major brokerage to elim-

inate commissions, a move followed by others including Fidelity Investments, E*Trade Financial Corp and TD Ameritrade.

"In a low, or no fees world ... the pressure will be on other financial services rivals to try to keep up, or to gain further scale themselves," Bankrate.com senior economic analyst Mark Hamrick said.

While the deal could give Schwab an edge in the price war, analysts and anti-trust experts said the merger would face tough regulatory scrutiny, although it could still be approved.

"The industry will continue to have large players and we won't think it will derail a deal," said Stephen Biggar, director of financial institutions research at Argus Research.

A FUEL AND THEIR MONEY

Putting out fire with gasoline

Rises in the price of petrol are fuelling unrest in Iran

AFTER A big rise in the state-controlled price of fuel on November 15th, anger erupted across Iran. Protesters in more than 100 cities blocked traffic, torched banks and burned down petrol stations. They targeted anything that smacked of the state, even mosques and ambulances. It was the most dramatic expression of hostility to the ruling ayatollahs since a disputed election in 2009 sparked a “green revolution” that shook the regime for a year. The most violent unrest occurred in Khuzestan, an oil-rich province on the Persian Gulf, and in a belt of commuter suburbs and small towns ringing Tehran, the capital. Amnesty International, a human-rights watchdog in London, said over 100 protesters nationwide had been killed.

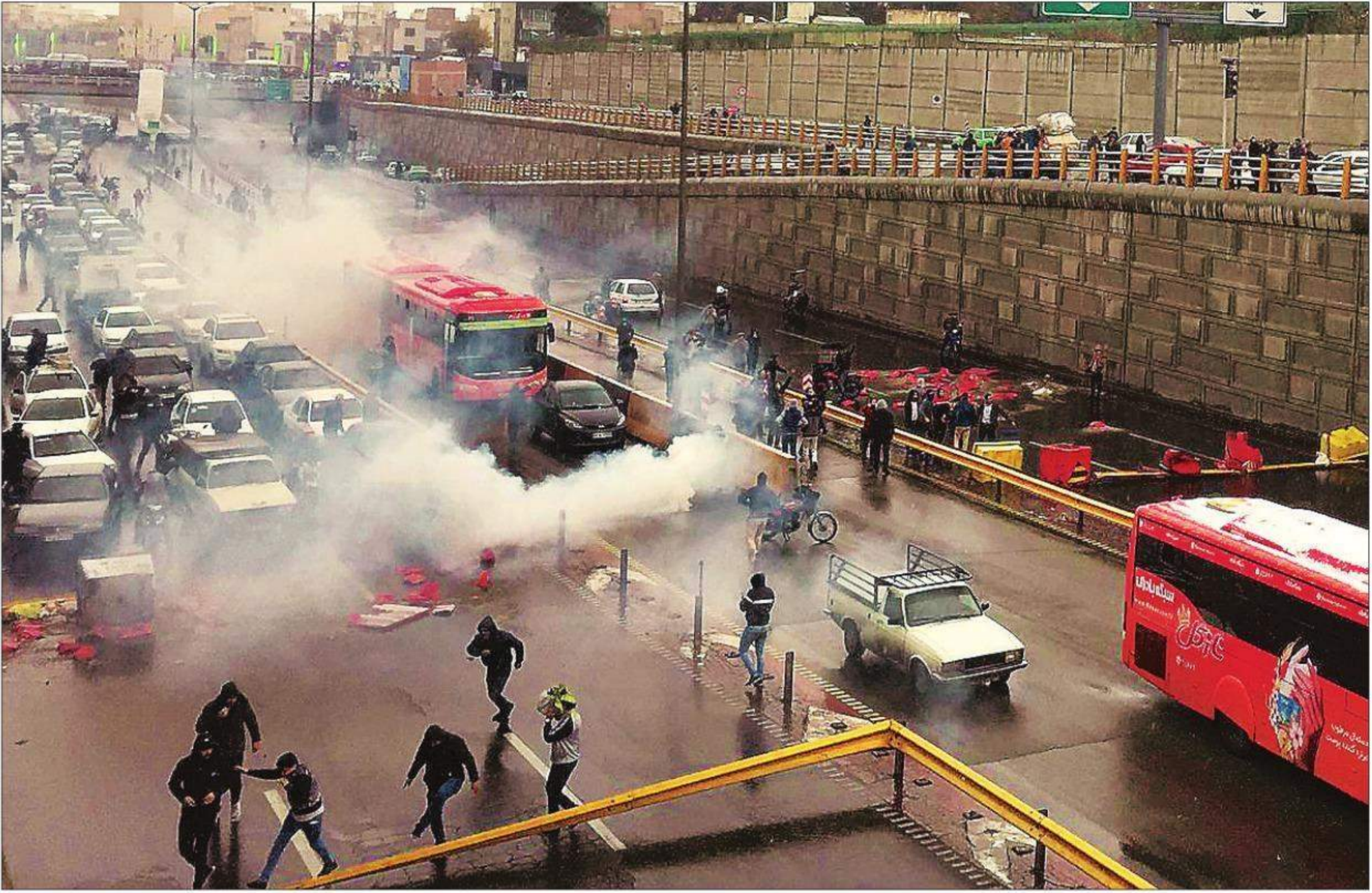
Complaints about petrol prices have turned into denunciations of the regime. Protesters burned portraits of the supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, and shouted “Mullahs get lost!” Two years ago working-class Iranians demonstrated angrily when the government raised the price of eggs. This time middle-class car-owners also joined the protests. The gulf between the ruling clergy and Iran’s 83m people appears to be widening.

The government knew its decision to raise the fuel price would bring trouble. It had repeatedly suggested it would do so, only to back down. This time the government waited until midnight on November 15th, just as the Iranian weekend began. It then announced a 50% increase in the price of the first 60 litres of petrol that may be bought every month (enough for a car’s tank of fuel) and a threefold increase for any more purchases. As the first snow of the year fell, the government hoped that people would stay indoors. No such luck.

So far, the regime shows no sign of backing down. In some places security forces opened fire to protect public buildings. The government turned off the internet and jammed satellite television. Videos shared online showed gunmen shooting into crowds of protesters. Citizens near the sites of protests received anonymous messages saying: “We know you are here.”

The various branches of Iran’s government, often at odds, have closed ranks behind a newly formed Supreme Council of Economic Co-ordination, which signed the decision to raise prices. Mr Khamenei publicly backed the president, Hassan Rouhani, whom he has often criticised. The supreme leader denounced the protesters as “thugs” and blamed “the centres of villainy around the world that oppose us” for stirring up the unrest.

It is unclear why the clerics took this gamble. Petrol arouses passions in Iran like no other commodity. Ever since its British-run oilfields were nationalised in 1951, Iranians have considered ridiculously cheap fuel a birthright. Many believe that Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the Islamic Republic’s founder, promised the people free energy in 1979. Iran has some of the world’s most heavily subsidised petrol. The refined stuff costs less than crude—and less



During a protest on a highway against increased gas price in Tehran on November 16. Since then, protesters in more than 100 cities have blocked traffic, torched banks and burned down petrol stations. Reuters

even than bottled water. Cheap fuel prompts many Iranians to commute to cities from distant satellite towns with low rents, or even to drive in from the provinces each day. Others make a living by smuggling petrol abroad. Air pollution in Tehran is, unsurprisingly, terrible.

Recent economic data may have given the government a false sense of confidence. Mr Rouhani has boasted that it has fended off America’s campaign to exert “maximum pressure” on Iran, after President Donald Trump’s ditching of the deal to curb Iran’s nuclear programme. Iran’s currency, the rial, has recovered a bit, after plummeting by 60% when Mr Trump imposed sanctions

on countries that buy Iranian oil. Tax rises, land sales and petrochemical exports have partly compensated for the loss of oil revenues. Last month the World Bank predicted that inflation would fall by almost a quarter in the year ahead and that an 8.7% fall in GDP this year would be followed by a return to modest growth. Iran is still the Middle East’s second-biggest economy after Saudi Arabia.

All the same, Mr Trump’s sanctions are hurting. Mr Rouhani had budgeted to export oil this year at a rate of 1.5m barrels per day, but Iran is struggling to find buyers for a third of that. Revenues should have covered the subsidy bill, estimated at \$25bn

(5% of GDP), but are 70% below budget, says an Iranian finance official. So the people are paying the price. The fall in the rial’s value and soaring inflation have sharply cut the purchasing power of public-sector workers. A senior civil servant on the equivalent of \$2,000 a month at the start of this year may now be earning \$400. Food prices are rising faster than inflation, hitting the poorest hardest. Middle-class families, too, are slipping into penury as they exhaust their savings. Poverty has soared.

The clerics know they must somehow dampen the anger. Parliamentary elections are due early next year. Mr Rouhani says that the savings from the reduction

in petrol subsidies will be distributed as welfare. Some 18m households (three-quarters of Iran’s population) will qualify, say officials, acknowledging the extent of deprivation. But few Iranians trust the government to keep its promise. Mr Rouhani previously cut the welfare payments his predecessor, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, made after raising fuel prices a decade ago. Moreover, many fear that rising transport costs will push up the price of groceries, wiping out the benefits of additional welfare.

Mr Trump is sure to proclaim Iran’s troubles as an American foreign-policy success. “The United States is with you,” tweeted

Mike Pompeo, America’s secretary of state, to the protesters. But it is unclear whether the latest bout of unrest will spur the regime to reform, let alone topple it. Previous protests have faded. Repression may curb the latest ones. The authorities have kept city centres under control. Oil workers have not gone on strike to back the protesters. The opposition is incoherent.

Meanwhile, the regime is toughening up. It has become more belligerent abroad, crueiler at home and less democratic. So far, the protests have failed to make it change course.

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CHAGUAN

Totalitarian and proud

Few Chinese officials are blushing at a damning leak about Xinjiang

CHINA WAS this week confronted with documentary evidence that it has built a vast and cruel police state in its far-western region of Xinjiang. In what appears to be an extraordinary leak of official Chinese papers, the *New York Times* published secret speeches by President Xi Jinping urging that Muslims infected with the “virus” of extremism undergo “a period of painful, interventionary treatment”. The leak lays bare the cold-blooded bureaucracy required as China, starting in 2017, seized hundreds of thousands of Muslims, most of them from the Uighur minority, and locked them without trial in re-education camps for even modest acts of piety, from growing long beards to praying outside state-controlled mosques. The paperwork of repression includes a script to be used on youngsters whose parents are behind bars: “Treasure this chance for free education that the party and government has provided to eradicate erroneous thinking.”

Chinese officials have offered three contradictory responses. The government of Xinjiang called the report a “complete fabrication” cooked up by anti-China forces in the West who cannot bear to see their region succeed. A spokesman for China’s foreign ministry took a more cautious line. Rather than deny the report outright, he called it a “clumsy patchwork” that distorted “so-called internal documents” in order to smear China’s successful counter-terrorism and de-radicalisation policies. The third response offered by state media and some officials is strikingly different. It skates close to an admission that Xinjiang is indeed under iron-fisted rule, and that the world should be glad of it.

Zhao Lijian is a Chinese diplomat and li-

Chinese public opinion is not monolithic, and the leaked papers reveal how some Han Chinese officials in Xinjiang resisted the new get-tough regime, even quietly releasing Uighur detainees. But ordinary Chinese live amid a pounding drumbeat of nationalism and constant reminders of an unspecified terrorist threat

censed provocateur with his own account on Twitter, a social-media platform banned inside China. Mr Zhao, who was recently brought back to a senior post in Beijing, took to Twitter on November 18th to denounce Western “preaching”. Taunting the West for being wrong about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, he declared, “China deserves a big like for showing how to deal effectively with terrorism and extremism in Xinjiang. Toughness and prosperity are a great combination!” That tone was echoed by the *Global Times*, a tabloid owned by the People’s Daily, the Communist Party’s flagship newspaper. In an editorial paired with a photograph of dancing Uighurs, the tabloid credited “decisive measures” with preventing Xinjiang from becoming another Afghanistan or Chechnya. The *Global Times* nodded to a strain of thought among nationalist intellectuals and party ideologues, who chafe at the idea that China’s 100m ethnic-minority citizens, and notably restive groups such as Uighurs or Tibetans,

should enjoy special privileges as the price of peaceful co-existence with the 1.3bn-strong Han Chinese majority. They favour promoting a collective national identity.

The *Global Times* took a bluntly majoritarian line in its editorial, suggesting that when Western elites grumble about Uighurs, they underplay the rights of all Chinese. “The dispute over Xinjiang is a clash between not only two value systems, but also two interest systems. All Chinese people, including people of all ethnic groups in Xinjiang, hope for peace and prosperity in the region. Measures that help reach this goal are in line with morality and justice,” opined the Communist Party tabloid, which has been at the forefront of the more candid, defiant line on Xinjiang.

It may sound counter-intuitive, given the risks that Uighur activists, exiles and Western researchers run to bring information about Xinjiang to the outside world, but honesty may turn out to be harder for the West to handle than outrageous lies. That is because, judging by the Mr Xi seen in the leaked papers, that unapologetic worldview—China is ruthless, and needs to be—is close to his own. The leaked papers include a secret speech from 2014 in which Mr Xi tells senior officials to shrug off international criticism: “Don’t be afraid if hostile forces whine, or if hostile forces malign the image of Xinjiang.” That was in a time of murderous terrorist attacks by Uighur militants, and in the leaked cache Mr Xi distances himself from predecessors who hoped that economic growth would cure militancy. “In recent years Xinjiang has grown very quickly and the standard of living has consistently risen, but even so ethnic separatism and terrorist violence have still been on the rise,” he noted. In the



Workers walk along the perimeter fence at Dabancheng. China was this week confronted with documentary evidence that it has built a vast and cruel police state in its far-western region of Xinjiang. Reuters

leaked papers Mr Xi puts his faith in all-pervasive surveillance, strict ideological training and increased flows of Han Chinese settlers into heavily Uighur regions.

Tyranny of the majority, with Chinese characteristics

Mr Xi’s lodestar is the absolute authority of the Communist Party. But he may also be understood as a populist, centralising nationalist. And whether Mr Xi is promoting his “China Dream” of national greatness or demanding tighter controls to “Sinicise” Islam, Christianity and other religions, his ideas resonate with many citizens. Chinese public

opinion is not monolithic, and the leaked papers reveal how some Han Chinese officials in Xinjiang resisted the new get-tough regime, even quietly releasing Uighur detainees. But ordinary Chinese live amid a pounding drumbeat of nationalism and constant reminders of an unspecified terrorist threat. There are security checkpoints at every airport, railway station and metro stop in China, complete with giant armoured pots like witches’ cauldrons, into which bombs may be popped. There is little evidence that such security theatre is resented. Domestic tourism to Xinjiang has flourished even as police checkpoints and surveillance cameras

turned the region into a techno-authoritarian dystopia, with famous Chinese travel bloggers marvelling at how safe the region is. Anti-Muslim paranoia is rampant on the Chinese internet.

Secret brutality by Chinese authorities was hard enough for the world to deal with. Open, unblushing repression is a still greater headache. Challenging horrors in Xinjiang may involve confronting Chinese public opinion, as well as China’s rulers. It is unclear whether the world has the stomach for that fight.

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SNAP SHOTS



Travel Tales

AT THE recently held Sair Conclave in Bikaner House, New Delhi, with the ambition of “exploring India’s stories”, four travelers shared their experiences of the country. While Anirudh Kanisetty, the host of *Echoes of India: A History Podcast*, spoke about exploring historical places, National Tourism award-winning blogger, Mariellen Ward, spoke about immersing herself in the country’s culture, staying at ashrams and speaking to people, which saved her from bouts of depression. Singer Kavish Seth (*pictured*) shared stories of his travels across the country, meeting artistes from small villages and towns who now form Zubaan, a music collective that encourages local artistes.

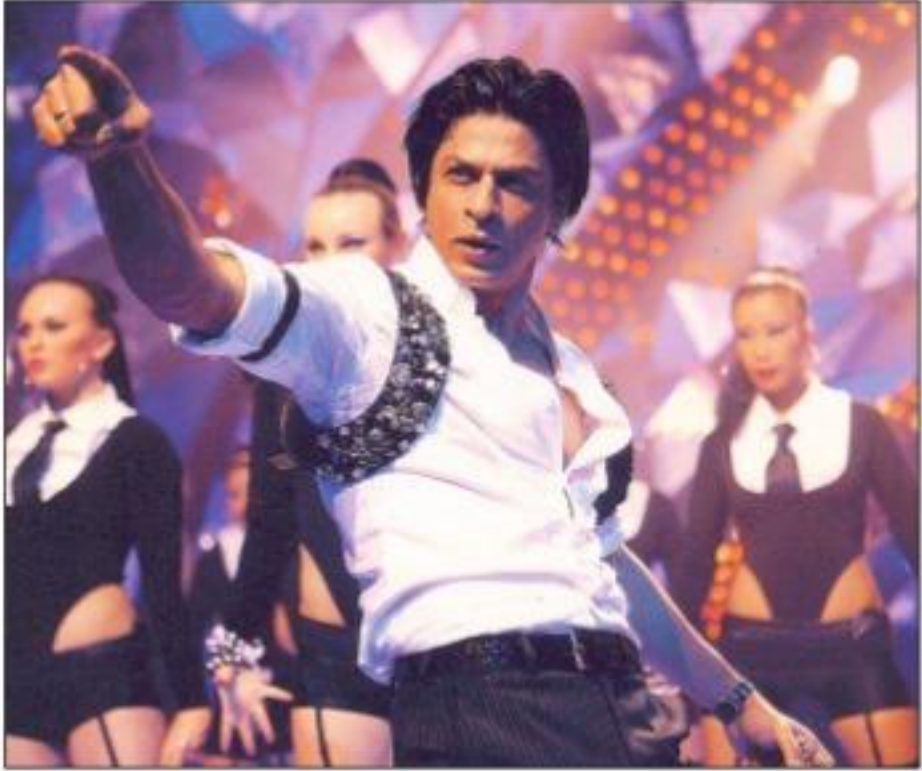


Make Your Way

SITARIST PURBAYAN Chatterjee (*pictured*) recently introduced a new initiative by HCL Digital Concerts that provides a platform for new artists in six genres, including classical, semi-classical, fusion, Sufi, Indi-pop and fusion-classical. This one-year mentorship will be with established artistes like Chatterjee and Amaan and Ayaan Ali Bangash. “Any artiste can apply on our website, entries will be screened and the selected will perform at a venue every month. The videos will be uploaded on our website after that the jury will screen them and nine acts will get to headline concerts,” says Rohit Kaul, Head, HCL Concerts.

Laws of Motion

AT AN international conclave of performers in Dhaka, Bangladesh, titled “Ocean’s Dance Festival”, an Indian contingent will explore diverse facets of the art form. Kathak dancer Shivani Varma is a part of a twin project with Kristina Dolnina from Lithuania, while Urmimala Sarkar from Jawaharlal Nehru University is one of the keynote speakers alongside Akram Khan, celebrity dancer from the UK. Artistes Meghna Bhardwaj and Aastha Gandhi will also present dance pieces.



And Pop Goes America

Fatima Bhutto on her new book, Asia’s cultural influence on the world scene and why Shah Rukh Khan tops the charts

SURBHI GUPTA

WHEN AUTHOR Fatima Bhutto visited Washington DC’s popular Politics and Prose bookstore last month, the South Asian visitors there could not stop talking about how good it feels to see someone from their land in the city. Some spoke about her Afghan lineage, while others shared memories of her grandfather Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, former Pakistan prime minister; they even enquired if she would join politics.

As the chatter subsided, she took the podium to talk about her latest book, *New Kings of the World*, published by Columbia Global Reports in the US and Aleph Book Company in India. “Essentially, the last century has been a very uniquely American century when it comes to pop culture. Barring a few blips such as The Beatles and French films, we’ve been inundated with American films, TV and music, and that continues, but what is changing in the world today is that there is movement rising out of Asia,” says Bhutto.

She primarily charts the journey of Bollywood in the book, and goes to Peru to understand what makes Indian films so popular in the country. She travels to and explores the cultural industries of two other countries too: Turkey and South Korea. Bhutto gives us a behind-the-scenes account of *Magnificent Century*, Turkey’s biggest TV show, watched by over 200 million across 43 countries, and understands how K-Pop has transformed the world of popular music through a trip to Seoul.

In a detailed email interview from the US, she talks more about the premise of the book. “We have long lived in a multi-polar world when it comes to culture. Even when I was growing up in Syria in the 1980s at an ostensibly closed time, we were able to listen to Motown music, watch Bollywood films, and get Russian cartoons on television. I started this book because I wanted to look at the rise of Asia,” says Bhutto, who has previously written *The Runaways*, *Songs of Blood and Sword* and *The Shadow of the Crescent Moon*.

American pop culture is losing its relevance because of the betrayal of globalisation, says Bhutto. “The world was not lifted on a wave of opportunity, wealth and access as promised. That has alienated millions struggling to survive the modern world, and has rendered American cultural



(From top left) A scene from *Magnificent Century*; Shah Rukh Khan; Fatima Bhutto *Jessie Craig/Contour by Getty Images*; her latest book

products offensive if not tone-deaf to their struggles. It’s not to say it’s not popular still, but it’s facing serious competition,” she says.

Can it reinvent itself? “I’m afraid it’s a bit late for that,” says Bhutto. “It has come very late to the issue of diversity; it can’t even tell the story of an Ethiopian refugee drama without a White protagonist and it no longer speaks to the struggles of the majority of the world’s populations,” she says, referring to the Dakota Fanning-starrer *Sweetness in the Belly*.

She shares with us the video of a dance performance, which shows a Peruvian girl — wearing ghaghra-choli, bindi, mehendi, and jasmine flowers — dancing to the iconic Madhuri Dixit song *Maar dala* at an Indian restaurant in Lima. “You name any Bollywood actor and there will be fan club dedicated to them in Peru,” says Bhutto. She writes about this love affair that started in the ‘50s even when countries did not share any diplomatic relations. It is 2019 and the love has only grown. Bhutto writes about her experiences at various dance classes, fan club meetings, Facebook live sessions and film screenings through

which people experience Bollywood now. It is not an interest of the elite, she points out, it belongs to the middle class who see their struggles reflected in the Indian cinema and find it fascinating to see a brown man making it big.

Shah Rukh Khan tops the charts here and young men with their dark brown skin, mestizo features and black hair cut in flat-brush style seem like they have modelled themselves on the actor. To understand his superstardom, Bhutto flew to Dubai to meet the actor in person and observe a day in his life, where he was shooting an episode for the Egyptian reality TV show *Ramez Underground*. To her, Khan spoke about his earlier films, “the goodness he brought to badness”, and why a group of German grannies follows him everywhere.

Bhutto began working on the book in 2016, “but if I was starting it today, I wouldn’t have included Bollywood”. She says, “With regards to the rest of the world, I am not sure it will survive its most recent incarnation as a cottage propaganda industry.”

The author also looks at the rise of Turkish TV shows or *dizis* that are sweeping through Middle East, Asia and Latin America. She travels to Istanbul to speak to the people behind popular shows such as *Forbidden Love*, *What’s Fatmagul’s Fault*, and *Magnificent Century*, and explains their global success. “They appeal to both modern and traditional sensibilities. The settings and production are modern, and yet the stories are based on traditional morality. The dramas are centred not around materialism or bloodlust but about the struggle of living honourable lives of dignity,” says Bhutto, who also travelled to refugee camps in Beirut to understand why people spend hours watching them.

In the book’s epilogue, she talks about the high-rises of Seoul to understand the working of Korean film industry, the making of K-Pop idols, and explains how K-culture is American culture repurposed. She speaks to K-pop trainees who tell her how contracts include seven to 10 cosmetic surgeries, and extremely hectic schedules. “Korea is facing competition from China. Already the head of Warner Music has said that artistes will want to break into China the way they once wanted to break into the US,” says Bhutto, warning us well in advance that further upending of status quo can be expected in the future.



RECORD TIME

Actor Maggie Smith’s return to the stage, after 12 years, has won her the best actress for the fifth time at the UK’s Evening Standard Theatre Awards. This comes 57 years after her first, for her portrayal of Joseph Goebbels’ secretary in *A German Life*.

Writers’ Block

A panel deconstructs the process of writing for a movie, and the cycle of attachment and detachment with characters



The panel discussion at IFFI; a still from *Raazi* (below)

ALAKA SAHANI

EVERY WRITER goes through a cycle of attachment and detachment alternately as an idea takes the form of a script, the filming begins, the rushes are edited, and the final mixing done before it reaches the theatres. This intense process of writing and production was pieced together as writer-director Meghna Gulzar, writer Juhi Chaturvedi, writer-editor Pooja Ladha Surti, cinematographer Modhura Palit and author Sumedha Verma Ojha discussed the nuances of filmmaking at the International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa.

To start the process, every writer needs to find a reason that’s compelling. For Gulzar, the “duplicitous” in the way the Arushi murder case was handled was the reason to make *Talvar* (2015). Similarly, while making *Raazi* (2018), she was moved by the story of a young girl who overnight agreed to put her life at stake for the country’s security. “It’s the core of the story that grabs me, and it has to have that backstory that will keep me engrossed,” she says. Chaturvedi, who has written films like *Vicky Donor* (2012), *Piku* (2015) and *October* (2018), agreed with Gulzar. “For example, in *October*, it’s Dan’s unconditional love that moved me. At its heart, *Piku* is about a father-daughter relationship, but it’s also about the times that we live in,” says Chaturvedi.

While for some people the process of writing is a solitary exercise, others love to collaborate. “For me, the first draft of the film has to be written by me alone. I work with Shoojit Sircar. Even though we discuss the crux of an idea, he doesn’t know what I’m going to write. My first draft is the purest version of an idea and then a lot of things goes into it — scenes are removed or added. But for me, as a writer, I need to know that subject completely by myself,” says Chaturvedi, who

often tries to think like her characters while writing. However, once she is done with the draft, she takes a step back and looks at it with a fresh mind.

Unlike Chaturvedi and Verma Ojha, who write alone, Gulzar and Ladha Surti love to collaborate with other writers. “I love collaborative writing since I am a very lazy writer. The verbal jamming with my co-writers is fun. More than a conflict, it would be a different point of view if ever I have creative differences at the script level,” says Gulzar. For her, there is a process of detachment that happens when the film is edited. She can very easily let go of the scenes that don’t work. “Once we begin our other post-production process of adding sound and music, the emotional attachment comes back. I say the final goodbye when the film goes from me to the audiences in the theatre.” Surti, who worked with co-writers in *Andhadhun* (2018), says collaborators can come up with surprises that adds value to the script.

“I love to put my characters up against a wall and make them take decisions that you know would change their lives or spoil them or make them better or whatever the case may be,” she says and adds, that a film first gets written on paper, then during the shoot and once again on the editing table. Being a cinematographer, Palit’s relationship with the characters is different even as she loves the way the personalities on screen are built gradually. However, she has to move fast with the next project. “We are fast movers, I can’t afford to grow attached to the characters in my previous projects as the pre-production of the next is already waiting for me to start it from scratch. I can’t bring that hangover of the previous shoot as I work back to back. It is better to get out of that zone ASAP and look at the new script and characters set in a different world,” says Patil.



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Much Ado About Naan

A much-reviled food opinion presents an opportunity to understand what makes Indian food so delicious

POOJA PILLAI

ON SOCIAL MEDIA, it’s hard to tell at what point righteous anger becomes a form of self-parody, but one suspects that the distinction has ceased to matter. Take, for example, the long Twitter thread posted by Shailaja Patel on the links between racism, prejudice against South Asians and the long history of, as she put it, “colonial slaughter, plunder and mass starvation”. And what target was the Indian-origin Kenyan writer and activist taking aim at with this politically-loaded cannon? A tweet by a prominent American — and importantly, White male — writer, Tom Nichols, saying, “Indian food is terrible and we pretend it isn’t.”

Patel wasn’t the only one outraged by Nichols’ “take” (opinion), which was a response to a tweet by another user inviting “controversial food takes”. Other prominent Indian-origin users who responded with disbelief or outrage, included Padma Lakshmi, Tharoor and hundreds of others were provoked. There is a long history of discrimination in the West against South Asians, particularly when it comes to food. It’s well-documented that many, as racial justice



A research paper reveals that Indians bring together clashing flavours to make food unbeatable in taste

activist Saira Rao pointed out in one of her tweets, were taunted as children about how their food “smells” and, as adults, were told by potential landlords that they were undesirable tenants because they would make the property stink of “curry”. It’s not too outrageous, therefore, to link Nichols’ tweet — especially given his use of the word “we” — to an ingrained belief amongst many non-Indian and mostly White people that Indian food

is unpalatable and, therefore, in some way, unacceptable in polite society.

And yet, the furore over Nichols’ tweet seems overblown, probably because South Asians — especially NRIs (who were the most vociferous critics of Nichols’ opinion) have never had a greater global cachet, in modern times, than they do at present. Also, what did Nichols really do except respond to a solicitation for controversial food takes with something that

was, in that sense, designed to generate the kind of outrage that it did, in fact, provoke?

However, beyond the good and the bad takes on Nichols’ original take on Indian food, lies the opportunity to understand what is it that makes Indian food so delicious. And could it be that what makes it so delicious is also what makes it so polarising in terms of acceptance by a wider audience? The answer, as discovered in 2015 by a group of researchers from IIT Jodhpur, is that this may indeed be the case. In a paper titled “Spices form the basis of food pairing in Indian cuisine”, researchers Anupam Jain, Rakhi NK and Ganesh Bagler concluded that while Western cuisines rely on positive food pairing, Indian cuisine is marked by negative food pairing. In other words, ingredients which share a larger flavour profile are less likely to be used together in Indian food, unlike food in Western cuisines which rely on overlapping flavours in individual ingredients to make their food delicious. To put it even more simply: Indians bring together clashing flavours to make food that is, for many, unbeatable in taste.

Does this mean that Nichols was racist or just plain unlucky in never having tasted the right kind or variety of Indian food? The answer maybe neither. In a separate tweet on the same subject, he also mentioned disliking Korean food, another cuisine which makes good use of negative food pairing. So perhaps Nichols just doesn’t like his flavours to clash. It doesn’t matter. There are enough of us who do.

Another pink Test: Hmmm...

Though India's introduction to pink-ball Tests went smoothly, there could be second thoughts next time around, as some of the players are still unconvinced

DEVENDRA PANDEY
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

SOURAV GANGULY might have convinced the Indian captain Virat Kohli in “three seconds” to play pink-ball Test under lights against Bangladesh in Kolkata but the new Indian board president is likely to have a hard time to convince the Indian team management again in the future. Sources in the Indian team informed that the 'sighting' of the pink ball under lights was one of the main challenges they faced in the Kolkata Test. It's learnt that the Indian team is likely to oppose moves to have pink-ball Tests in overseas tours in the near future, and when the BCCI takes feedback from the team, it's likely that players will tell them to stick to red ball in Test cricket.

The Indian team had some concerns ahead of the Test but they went in with an open mind to experience it. However, after the experience, they are in no mood to take any chances against tougher opponents in the future. “We felt sighting the ball was an issue. Apart from visibility, the ball was also too hard. Look at how Bangladesh batsman got hit; it was a challenge to sight the ball even during fielding. Any bowler who can bowl 140 kph plus will be tough to handle. Look at what Indian pacers did. The ball travelled faster than the regular red ball and under lights, the sighting was an issue to be honest,” a member of the Indian team management told this newspaper. There was no problem in gripping the ball but the sighting and the hardness was a problem, it was felt.

The 'hardness' seems to have been an issue even in the Bangladesh camp. A couple of members had spoken about it when they were training in Indore with the pink ball. A Indian player agreed with that assessment after the Kolkata Test. “Yes, its too hard. Like a hockey ball, if you know what I mean. Something is not right with the way it feels in your hand,” a player said. “It would be silly if we go ahead with pink ball Tests in future,” he said.

Considering all that, the team management feel that playing abroad with the pink ball isn't feasible as yet. Especially as the Kookaburra ball —the manufacturer of pink balls in Australia—doesn't swing once the ball gets a touch old and especially if there is dew.

They had also feared the second session when lights take effect in a pink-ball Test. “If you see a Test in Australia, a majority of the day's play during pink-ball Tests tend to be played in sunlight. Only the last session really is where the dew comes in, if at all. Indian Tests are usually played in winter and which means half-hour into second session, say around 4 or 4.30 pm, it will start to get darker. Dew comes in early. We have to factor in all that for the future,” a team-member had said before the Test.

Early next year, India are set to play two Tests in New Zealand and the word is that New Zealand are likely to push for a pink-ball Test. End of next year, India will play a full Test series in Australia, who are definitely going to press India for a pink ball Test.

Australia's captain Tim Paine had taken a cheeky dig at Kohli on the issue on Sunday. Asked whether he will push for a pink-ball Test against India, Paine said: “We'll certainly try and we'll have to run that by Virat (Kohli). We'll get an answer from him at some stage I'm sure. That's where we like to start our summer and it has been for a long long time except for last summer. We'll ask Virat and see if we can get his permission to play here and maybe even get a Pink ball Test if he's in a good mood.”

A day before the Kolkata Test, Kohli had said that pink ball shouldn't become the staple of Test cricket. “This shouldn't become the only way Test cricket is played. You can bring excitement to Test cricket, but you can't purely make Test cricket based on entertaining people. The entertainment of Test cricket lies in the fact that the batsman is trying to survive the first session, the bowlers trying to set up a batsman; if people don't respond to that, too bad,” Kohli had said.

Now that the team have experienced first-hand a Test with pink ball, it's likely that Indian camp will object to more pink ball Tests.



Virat Kohli emphasised that the pink ball shouldn't become a staple in Test cricket, while some of his colleagues complained of visibility issues. PTI

EXPLAINED
E
Why colour of the sightscreen matters

IN CRICKET, it matters if the colour of the sightscreen is black or white. Pink is lighter than red in appearance, and although pink-ball, day-night Tests are played with white sightscreens, there could be a debate if it's the right colour to provide the backdrop against the pink ball.

Even the players of highest repute have different opinions. Former India captain Dilip Vengsarkar says the sightscreen has to be white. “Pink-ball Tests have to have white sightscreens, because the colour of the seam is black,” Vengsarkar told *The Indian Express*.

Off-spin great Harbhajan Singh begs to differ. “There's no harm in experimenting with black sightscreens. Because in the red ball, the colour of the seam is white and we have white sightscreens. The majority of the ball you see is the colour of the ball, not the seam,” he said.

Pink-ball tips: Focus, technique & adaptability

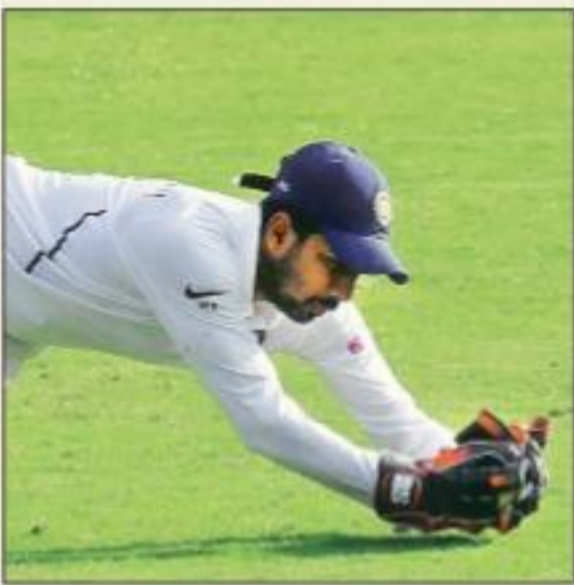
From the players' comments during the match, SHAMIK CHAKRABARTY stitches together the nuances of mastering the pink ball

It would require more concentration solid technique. The decision-making has to be very precise like the idea of off-stump. The ball was coming on faster from the pitch. It seemed a lot more under lights, swung in the first hour of the second session but seamed throughout the evening till the end of day's play.

VIRAT KOHLI
KOHLI'S GENIUS mastered the conditions and the pink ball. During his masterful hundred, he stood a couple of feet outside the crease to cover the swing, met the ball right under his eyes and played late. He also played straight. Ninety per cent of his shots were played in front of the wicket. Also, adhering to Sachin Tendulkar's advice, Kohli batted with more circumspection under lights. On the first day, when he had batted in the evening, Kohli made 59 runs off 93 deliveries. During the first session (afternoon) on the second day, he added 71 more runs to his score off 94 balls.

Cheteshwar Pujara and Rahane scored half-centuries for India. Both waited for the ball to come to the bat rather than trying to reach for the ball. Because of the extra coat of lacquer, the pink-ball's travel-speed off the pitch and off the bat was faster. Pujara actually came on the back-end of the 'twilight zone' on the first day. He bided his time and waited for dew to arrive before opening up. The three Indian batsmen, particularly Kohli, set the batting template for pink-ball cricket under lights.

The Bangladesh batsmen, on the contrary, served up the examples of what not to do against the pink ball. Their captain, Mominul, who bagged a pair, was a case in point. In the



Wriddhiman Saha's 'keeping in the pink ball was a work of art. As he had predicted pre-match, the ball wobbled a lot at high speed, especially when it travelled behind the stumps. Also, the Eden pitch was a bit two-paced, which made the job more difficult for the 'keeper and slip fielders.

Saha made light of the stiff challenge. His catch to dismiss Mahmudullah attested his brilliance. Ishant Sharma had bowled an away-goer from wide of the crease and the ball came in with the angle before leaving the batsman. Mahmudullah poked at it and Saha took a blinder, diving full-length in front of the first slip. The ball was also dying on him. It was a sensational grab.

first innings against an Umesh Yadav delivery that angled in, he played half-cock and pushed hard at the ball, getting a thick outside edge in the process. In the second, he just hung his bat to an Ishant outswinger to be out caught be-

“The difference is the ball. Kookaburra, now SG ball. Conditions-wise, twilight time will be challenging especially picking the ball. We have to adjust. It's challenging (for the ‘keepers). If it's challenging for slips, it's for me as well. The ball wobbles when our pacers bowl. But I have to accept the challenges.”

WRIDDHIMAN SAHA

A lesser 'keeper might have shifted the weight to his left leg, as the ball came in with the angle. Saha's balance was perfect. He was watching the ball till the last minute. The 35-year-old had just two practice sessions with the pink ball before the Eden Test. He had recused himself from the net sessions at Indore and returned to Kolkata after the first Test due to personal reasons.

But his gifted technique allowed him to gauge the behaviour of the pink ball almost to perfection. His 'keeping showed that with the pink ball, it was important not to commit early. Also that a 'keeper needs to keep his eye on the ball till the last moment.

The pink ball was very different to the red ball. When we started bowling at normal lengths, the ball wasn't swinging that much. We then figured out the length.”

ISHANT SHARMA

For the first 20 minutes of the match, swing was conspicuous by its absence. Then suddenly, the Indian pace trio started to make the ball talk. Ishant, Umesh and Mohammed Shami adjusted their length and started to bowl fuller, and the pink ball began to move prodigiously. That the Bangladesh batsmen stay rooted at the crease, uncertain against 140kph-plus pace, made the job easier for the Indian quicks. Shami bowled some excellent bouncers to keep the batsmen guessing. Bangladesh bowlers, on the other hand, didn't get any leeway from the Indian batters. They aimed good length. But adjustments made by Kohli and company upset their plans. As the India captain stood two feet outside the popping crease, he managed to convert some good length stuff to over-pitched deliveries. They also didn't have the pace.

I thought light and pink-ball had a role to play (batsmen getting hit). As a batsman, it's not easy to pick the short ball especially. The pace our fast bowlers have, it's not easy.”

CHETESHWAR PUJARA

Liton Das and Nayeem retired hurt of the game on the first day. Both were hit on the helmet by bouncers from Shami and subsequently failed the concussion test.

On the second day, as Bangladesh came out for their second innings, they nearly had another concussion victim. Ishant Sharma's bouncer had thudded into Mohammad Mithun's helmet grille. Mithun looked shaken. But after on-field treatment he carried on. During the final session of the day's play, Mushfiquir Rahim, the most assured of the Bangladesh batsman, was hit by an Umesh bouncer. All of them took their eye off the ball. But with the pink ball rearing off a length, it wasn't easy, especially under lights against darker background. India, too, could have faced the problem against a stronger bowling attack.

You have a twilight period when the light changes, as it goes from very bright sunshine to artificial light. That period is more challenging for the batsmen to pick the ball. I would expect a similar type of challenge for the umpires as well.”

SIMON TAUFEL

Bangladesh's collapse in the first session on the first day meant they didn't have much batting left in the twilight period. Still, they lost four wickets for 33 runs in the second session. India, too, didn't have it easy, as they lost their openers for 43 runs. As dusk melted into evening and floodlights completely took over, Pujara and Kohli put on 94 runs for the third wicket.

In the first session on the second day, with the sun out, India scored 115 runs for the loss of Rahane's wicket. Post-lunch, they lost five wickets for 58 runs in 13.4 overs. And after the hosts declared, Bangladesh were 7/2 in five overs before tea.

NEW ZEALAND VS ENGLAND

Wagner hits peak note, as England plunge to new depths in Mount Maunganui



Left-arm seamer Neil Wagner ran through England's middle and lower order. AP

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE & ASSOCIATED PRESS

MOUNT MAUNGANUI, NOVEMBER 25

NEW ZEALAND christened its Newest test venue with an innings and 65-run win over England in the first cricket test to take a 1-0 lead in the two-match series. England's battle for survival on Monday proved futile as Bay Oval, New Zealand's ninth test venue _ provided hostile conditions on the final day, and the tourists were bowled out for 197 after trailing by 262 runs on the first innings.

With the ball either scuttling through low or spitting off a length, the England batsmen were unable to see out the fifth day as they had done in similar circumstances in New Zealand six years ago. Neil Wagner took 5-44, the last five wickets to fall, as England's final wicket went down an hour after tea.

England produced only patchy resistance in its second innings. Joe Denly made 35, Rory Burns 31 and Sam Curran and Jofra Archer shared a 59 run partnership for the ninth wicket which meant New Zealand had to sweat on its win until the 97th over. Wagner

broke the partnership when he dismissed Archer for 30, then removed last man Stuart Broad with his next delivery, leaving Curran 29 not out.

The win was only New Zealand's 11th in 104 tests against England but most of those successes have been crowded into the last few years. It hasn't lost to England in the last seven tests between the teams. At the same time England has won only once in New Zealand since 2000, while New Zealand has won 11 of its last 16 Tests. England struggled throughout the match to overcome its moderate total of 353 after it batted first on winning the toss. New Zealand replied with a monstrous 615-9, built around BJ Watling's 205 _ his first double century and the highest total by a New Zealand wicketkeeper _ and Mitchell Santner's 126, his maiden test century.

Santner then took three wickets to send England to stumps at 55-3 on the fourth day, leaving New Zealand to claim seven wickets for victory on Monday. Most players will have had at the back of their minds a similar circumstance in 2013, when England came into the last day of the third test with only four wickets standing and batted all day, ending nine down.

On that occasion Stuart Broad produced the longest scoreless innings in test history. But on Monday he, and his team-mates, were unable to replicate the effort shown that day. “I think we missed an opportunity if we're being brutally honest with ourselves and if we look at the two first innings in comparison,” England captain Joe Root said. “Their guys went on to make really big contributions. We had a couple of guys play really well but we could have done with a couple of guys making those big scores and getting a score over 450, using that scoreboard pressure as another fielder almost.”

Archer claims racial abuse by a spectator

England pacer Jofra Archer on Monday said he was subjected to “racial insults” by a spectator on the final day of the opening Test against New Zealand, prompting the home board to apologise to him for the “unacceptable experience”.

The incident allegedly took place when Archer was leaving the field after the end of the first Test at Bay Oval, Mount Maunganui. “A bit disturbing hearing racial insults today whilst

battling to help save my team. the crowd was been amazing this week except for that one guy, @TheBarmyArmy was good as usual also,” the 24-year-old Archer wrote on his twitter handle.

The Barbados-born English cricketer accounted for double centurion BJ Watling (205) and scored 30 from 50 balls but could not save his team from going down by an innings and 65 runs in Mount Maunganui. New Zealand Cricket (NZC) issued a statement apologising to Archer for the incident. “We are shocked and disappointed to hear of the verbal abuse @JofraArcher received after the Test today. @englandcricket might be our rivals but they're also our friends and racist abuse is never okay!” NZC tweeted.

The NZC said it doesn't tolerate any kind of abuse and promised to identify the man and bring him to book. “New Zealand Cricket will be contacting, and apologising to English fast bowler Jofra Archer, who was racially abused by a spectator as he left the field.”

BRIEF SCORES: England 353 & 197 in 96.2 overs (Denly 35; Wagner 5/44, Santner 3/53) lost to New Zealand 615/9 declared by an innings and 65 runs.

SYED MUSHTAQ

ROUND-UP



Suryakumar Yadav was unbeaten on 94.

Suryakumar leads

Mumbai's charge

Surat: Mumbai captain Suryakumar Yadav blazed his way to an unbeaten 94 as Mumbai defeated Karnataka by seven wickets in a Group B Super League match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Monday to end the rival's winning spree. Mumbai were chasing a stiff 172-run target and Surya, who has been in great form, single-handedly guided the domestic giants to victory with an over to spare. Surya (94 not out off 53 balls, 11 fours, 4 sixes) walked in to bat after Mumbai were in a spot of bother at 44/2, losing openers Aditya Tare (12) and Prithvi Shaw (30) and still needing over 100 runs to win. The aggressive right-hander steadied the ship by stitching together a 46-run stand with Shreyas Iyer (14) for the third wicket. However, Karnataka pegged Mumbai back by removing Iyer in the 11th over. After Iyer departed, it was 'Surya show' at the C B Patel Ground as he toyed with the Karnataka bowlers, who wilted under his blistering attack. Surya 2.0 was on display as he had all shots in the book and smashed the ball around to guide his side home. This was perhaps one of the finest knocks in the national T20 championship. This was Karnataka's first defeat in the Super League stage, and Mumbai's win has opened up things in the group.

BRIEF SCORES: Karnataka 171/6 in 20 overs (Rohan Kadam 71, Devdutt Padikkal 57, Shardul Thakur 2/29) lost to **Mumbai** 174/3 in 19 overs (Suryakumar Yadav 94 not out, Prithvi Shaw 30, Shreyas Gopal 1/19) by seven wickets.

Haryana overhaul

inspid Baroda

Surat: In the second game, Haryana thrashed Baroda by six wickets and rode on fifties by Chaitanya Bishnoi (56) and Shivam Chauhan (50 not out) as they overhauled 139-run target with 15 balls to spare. Put into bat, barring veteran Yusuf Pathan (45 not out), no other Baroda batsman showed spine as Haryana restricted them to sub-par 138/5. In another game, Tamil Nadu beat Punjab by four wickets with spinners M Sai Kishore (3-10) and M Siddharth (3-9) spinning their web around the opposition batsmen. Punjab crawled to a below-par 94/8, courtesy Mayank Markande's unbeaten 33, but Tamil Nadu manage to chase the target despite losing six wickets in the process. In the final game of the day, Rajasthan beat Maharashtra by six wickets as they chased the 100-run target in 16.2 overs. Mahipal Lomror top scored with an unbeaten 35.

BRIEF SCORES: Baroda 138/5 (Yusuf Pathan 45 not out, Kedar Devdhar 25; Sumit Kumar 1-17; Yuzvendra Chahal 1-23) lost to **Haryana** 139/4 (Chaitanya Bishnoi 56, Shivam Chauhan 50 not out) by six wickets. **PTI**

Players come to blows in Nehru hockey final

Punjab Police and Punjab National Bank get involved in a brawl, prompting organisers to suspend them; HI action awaited

TUSHAR BHADURI
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 25

AN UNSEEMLY brawl between players spoiled the final of the 56th Nehru Senior Hockey Tournament between Punjab Police and Punjab National Bank on Monday. Trouble erupted towards the end of the third period with the teams locked 3-3. The trigger was a tackle against a PNB forward. This incident resulted in tempers getting frayed and players chasing each other around the turf wielding their sticks as lathis.

"It all started with a tackle that PNB players took exception to and there was a scuffle which lasted 5-7 minutes," an eyewitness said.

Eventually, the match restarted after three Punjab Police players – Hardeep Singh, Jagmeet Singh and Kanwarjeet Singh – and two from PNB – Sukhjeet Singh and Sumit Toppo – were shown red cards.

Punjab Police manager Balwant Singh was also given marching orders. Toppo was himself badly injured in the head after being hit with a hockey stick.

PNB capitalised on their numerical advantage in the final quarter, scoring three goals in eight minutes to secure a 6-3 victory and a cash prize of Rs two lakh.

The losing finalists got half that amount. Abhishek scored a hat-trick for the winners.

One of the umpires for the game, Raghu Prasad, is one of the top match officials of the International Hockey Federation (FIH).

He took charge of matches at last year's Hockey World Cup in Bhubaneswar and will do so at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics as well.

Punjab Police had in their ranks former India internationals Gurbaj Singh and Sarvanjit Singh.

According to the eyewitness, they were pacifying the players and trying to help the umpires bring the situation under control.

"The players got hyper in the match and



Players fought with sticks on the turf for a while before officials could bring the situation under control. *Stick2hockey.com*

there was a fight between the players of the two teams. Players from both teams were at fault as they lost their temper. Such incidents bring disrepute to the sport. We should make sure that this issue does not become big now," Gurbaj told *The Indian Express*.

A PNB player, speaking on condition of anonymity, gave further details.

"It was when a PNB player was approaching the Punjab Police penalty area that the umpire declared a foul. Punjab Police players objected and the PNB player pushed Punjab Police defenders after which the latter started the fight. One of the Punjab

Police players hit a PNB counterpart on the head with a hockey stick and the player sat down holding his head. Later also, Punjab Police players on the bench and officials entered the field, running after PNB players and thrashing them," he said.

A few players were also taken to hospital. Repeated attempts to contact Tournament Director Mahesh Kumar were futile.

Both teams have been suspended from the tournament – Punjab Police for four years and PNB for two.

The Jawaharlal Nehru Hockey Tournament Society (JNHTS) will also write

to the concerned authorities in the two organisations, informing them of the actions of their teams, the suspension from participation, and requesting suitable action at their end against the errant players.

Hockey India is also expected to take a hard stand on the matter. "We had a meeting of captains and coaches after the final and they will submit their report to Hockey India," Gurbaj said.

Indian Olympic Association president Narinder Batra, who is also the FIH chief and a former head of Hockey India, called for strict action against the offenders.

"Such irresponsible teams and their careless and uncensored managements, such players and weak and spineless organising committees spoil the name of the game and bring bad reputation to the sport. I urge Hockey India to take maximum strict action," he said.

Now a lot will depend on the report the JNHTS sends to the governing body of the sports in the country. "We are waiting for the official report from the tournament officials and on its basis Hockey India will take necessary action," HI CEO Elena Norman said.

Ghosal loses titanic battle against ‘Beast’

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 25

SAURAV GHOSAL woke up Monday with ringing applause and lingering regret still swirling in his head. Playing the last match of his 2019 season – his 15th year after winning the British Juniors crown in 2004 which promised dizzy days ahead – Ghosal was sobering from the highs of having played a spell-binding 85-minute classic against World No. 2 Mohamed ElShorbagy which was the talk of the squash town. And then, losing the titanic battle, 11-5, 9-11, 9-11, 12-10, 10-12, on the softest of backhand volley drops played at 10-9 match-ball in the fifth – which the 33-year-old says will cause him a lot of remorse in the coming days.

ElShorbagy's return – a backhand flick struck an agonising centimeter or two above the tin. "Had I not played that shot, or not hit it softer and struck it harder instead, he'd have hit into the tin, and maybe we would be talking about the biggest win of my career today!" Ghosal said. An upset over the Egyptian dubbed 'the Beast' would've validated Ghosal's hardwork put in over this summer. "It would've been huge," he says, pipping up though at all the praise his fighting game has received over the weekend, including his opponent chiming in, "It's the best match I've played against him in our 12 years. I'm really happy I was part of something special."

Those present at the Weybridge and watching it on the live-stream were on the edge of the seat as the Indian World No 11, mixed the delectable with the dazzling, and matched his celebrated Egyptian opponent known for his unflinching fierce game, shot for shot. In the midst of the brutal rallies, Ghosal in fact impressed with a backhand improvisation where he slid the racket



Ghosal lost to World No.2 Mohamed ElShorbagy 11-5, 9-11, 9-11, 12-10, 10-12.

face dramatically under the dipping ball for the lowest of popping nicks, and left ElShorbagy stranded, finishing with a glorious straight back in the right corner.

Now the former No 1, ElShorbagy can show-off on court. He has a short trickle boast from the back that never stops being cute and an assured crowd-pleaser: between the legs whizzer. But it was Ghosal who in between the 'his backhand to my backhand' never-ending slugfests, played the subtle angles that quickly made it to youtube's gape gallery.

Ghosal had been livid about a couple of 'No Lets' at the end of the titanic battle where he won an "unappetizing" first game strewn with the Egyptian's errors, braved through the next two when rallies got brutal and he was pipped 11-9, found second wind in the fourth, playing his improvisations, and then in the fifth, let fame that comes with beating

the Top 5, pass him by. He didn't say much in the immediate aftermath.

"But when I saw him later, I told him, you better freaking win this tournament after beating me," he laughs. To add to his Monday wretchedness, Ghosal mock-cribs, ElShorbagy went onto lose the final in 90 minutes, and not even hand him closure.

He did blame "earlier tough rounds" that finished him, for the loss though.

The two go back a long way – including training stints at David Palmer's. Ghosal remembers a long time back in a Chennai PSA when he beat a young, upcoming ElShorbagy four years his junior. And then the Egyptian's career took off and he never lost to the Indian again (it's 0-8 last 8 times) including a 3-0 win at the World Championships in Qatar last week, where the Indian had sensed he was moving and hitting well. But still, it was

the sort of calm before a storm, where Saurav Ghosal doesn't quite remember what his nondescript breakfast was that morning.

The Beast from Alexandria is a relentless fighter ("The thought of winning never crossed my mind, because Mo is the last person you entertain such thoughts against"). Ghosal has learnt to tiptoe around him – i.e. not letting any ball sit up, for Mo to destroy, for ElShorbagy smother, not for him the touch-play. His achievements are underrated but Ghosal knows how unforgiving he can get on court.

"What you see is what you get. Some players ply it very dirty on court, but act like saints, not him. He'll be honest about being selfish in training though he'll use all the tricks on court. But if he's playing most people, I'd be in his corner. He's a really good guy deep down," Ghosal says. The respect is mutually shared, and ElShorbagy tends to struggle when playing Ghosal, like he does against friends.

Ghosal would match him though on Friday – in not letting go. "Some rallies were so fierce and long in second and third, we were both dead on the glass walls," Ghosal recalls. Like fish sticking their snouts on an aquarium, the two would return for the 4th game after trading punishing rallies, literally lifting the ball to catch breath.

Ghosal was happy he simply could raise his game level to what the Egyptian was operating at. "At one point of tiredness, you just start enjoying the pain of brutal rallies. You can't play a match like that whining about how you're struggling and blah blah. I thought, let me push little and then hard and see how much I can trouble him," Ghosal said. The crowd would get behind him too. "Most were sad for me when I lost," he said gleefully. He had modest takeaways on the Monday after: "If I could go toe to toe with ElShorbagy, I surely can push the others next season."

Bailey to become Aussie selector while still playing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE, NOVEMBER 25

FORMER LIMITED-OVERS captain George Bailey is set to be Australia's new selector after he was picked to be a part of the national selection panel along side coach Justin Langer and chairman Trevor Hohns.

Bailey, 37, is still an active cricketer and plies his trade in the Big Bash League for Hobart Hurricanes and in the Sheffield Shield for Tasmania. According to a report in *The Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*, Bailey will not be the first active cricketer to be a national selector. In the past Don Bradman and Michael Clarke have enjoyed the post while still being the captain of the national team. Bailey, who has represented Australia in five Tests, 90 ODIs and 30 T20s, is yet to call it quits from the game.

Asked about the necessity of a new selector, Cricket Australia head of national teams Ben Oliver said he was "really pleased with the people who put their hat in the ring for that role". "There will be some people who are really disappointed no doubt but they should all take great encouragement and they all have a lot to offer," he said.

Although it is believed that CA is showing keen interest in Bailey because of his vast knowledge of the white-ball formats as a player, especially with next year's Twenty20 World Cup at home round the corner, Oliver said the new selector would also be involved in selecting squads for Test matches.

"The panel, and all three, will be responsible for all Australian men's teams," Oliver said. "What we've tried to achieve in this recruitment process is adding in some complementary skills to support Trevor and Justin and one of those is a consideration around short-format cricket."

[SPORTS BAR]

Anand fifth, Carlsen set to win chess tourney

Viswanathan Anand suffered two defeats but as many wins kept him in the joint fifth place at the Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour. Reigning world champion Magnus Carlsen continued his run as he took his lead to an almost unsailable five points. The Norwegian is virtually assured of the title despite a whole day and many games to come. Anand now has 4.5 points out of a possible nine and remains in contention for a berth in the Grand Finale of this tournament, to be held in London in December. With nine games on Tuesday still to come, Carlsen has a five-point lead with 21.5 points to his credit out of a possible 27 points.

Sangram, Varman win double trap nationals

Haryana's Sangram Dahiya and Madhya Pradesh's Varsha Varman won the men's and women's double trap titles respectively at the 63rd National Shotgun Shooting Championship here on Monday. Sangram shot 142 out of 150 targets to leave behind former world champion Ankur Mittal of ONGC, who managed 137 hits over the five rounds of 30 targets each. Varsha, in the women's category of 120 targets each, had 97 to her name to clinch the gold ahead of state-mate Manisha Keer, who had 93 hits.



Brescia president Massimo Cellino and striker Mario Balotelli.

‘He’s black, what can I say’: Club prez on Balotelli

Mario Balotelli was the subject of a racist remark by the president of his club on Monday in the latest discriminatory incident of a Serie A season marred by derogatory chants and other offensive behavior. Balotelli has struggled since returning to the Italian league with Brescia, his hometown club, and was dropped from the weekend's match following a dispute with coach Fabio Grosso. Asked about Balotelli on Monday, Brescia president Massimo Cellino said: "He's black, what can I say, he's working on clearing himself but he's having a lot of difficulty." Brescia later attempted to downplay Cellino's comment, saying in a statement that it was merely "a quip" that was "clearly misunderstood." The club added that Cellino was "attempting to downplay the excessive media coverage by protecting (Balotelli)." Balotelli experienced racism at the beginning of his career in Italy, where he rose to prominence with Inter Milan, and he was also the target of racist chants this month during a match at Hellas Verona.

Austrian Oly champ denies sexual assault

Two-time Olympic judo champion Peter Seisenbacher of Austria has denied the alleged sexual assault of two young girls he was coaching in the early 2000s. At the start of his trial on Monday, Seisenbacher said: "I am not guilty." According to state prosecutors, the alleged abuse took place in Vienna between 1999 and 2004. The women filed charges against their former coach in 2013. "Nothing has happened. Nobody has been attacked," Seisenbacher's attorney, Bernhard Lehofer, said.

28 medals for India at U-15 Asian wrestling

Sagar Jaglan erased a 1-6 deficit to grab a gold in the freestyle 68kg category as India concluded its campaign at the Under-15 Asian Wrestling Championships with 28 medals, including 13 gold, on Sunday. Led by 2019 Cadet World Championships bronze medalist Deepak Chahal, the freestyle grapplers won four gold medals on the final day. Chahal won the gold in 75kg, while Haryana's Vishal (62kg), Sagar Jaglan (68kg), and Madhya Pradesh's Jatin (85kg) were the others who finished on the top podium. India finished on top of the team rankings in freestyle for the first time with 225 points as all 10 wrestlers finished on the podium. Kazakhstan finished second while Japan was third.



Saina pulls out of Syed Modi International

Saina Nehwal pulled out at the last moment to take some sheen off the Syed Modi International, beginning here on Tuesday, when the in-form Lakshya Sen will seek a third BWF World Tour title. Three-time former champion Saina, who has been battling illness and injuries, is going through a bad patch, having lost six times in the first round this season. The 29-year-old from Hyderabad has already pulled out of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) to prepare for the next season. World champion PV Sindhu has chosen to give the tournament a miss. The 18-year-old Lakshya, on the other hand, will look to grab his maiden Super 300 crown this week following his title triumphs at two Super 100 events – Dutch and SaarLorLux Open – this year.



Rafa carries Spain on his shoulders

World no 1 beats Shapovalov to help country win the Davis Cup finals 2-0 in front of home crowd

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
MADRID, NOVEMBER 25

RAFAEL NADAL put the finishing touches to his extraordinary year by clinching a sixth Davis Cup title for Spain on Sunday as he beat Denis Shapovalov in Madrid to seal victory over Canada.

Nadal's 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) win over Shapovalov in front of an adoring home crowd at the Caja Magica gave Spain an unsailable 2-0 lead after Roberto Bautista Agut earlier battled past Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6 (7/3), 6-3.

"I'm incredibly happy to end the year like this," said Nadal afterwards.

The 33-year-old had been an unstoppable force in Spain's pulsating semi-final against Britain on Saturday and never looked like letting this chance slip, with King Felipe VI and Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos watching on, along with Barcelona defender Gerard Pique.

Pique's marketing company Kosmos have been at the heart of the raft of changes to this 119-year-old competition but Nadal's brilliance has been familiar, even if this will surely go down as one of the finest seasons of the 19-time Grand Slam champion's sparkling career.

He added a fourth Davis Cup final success — three more than Roger Federer — to the ones he claimed in 2004, 2009 and 2011, while capping a remarkable 12 months that has included winning the French and US Opens, and ending the year as world number one. The Spanish team will also pocket a cheque worth \$2.1 million.

Nadal won eight out of eight rubbers played this week and at times on Saturday, as when he stormed to singles and doubles victories against Britain, it was tempting to view Spain's progress as something of a solo effort.

Spain boost revamped event

But, unlike Canada, Spain have used all five of their squad, with Bautista Agut, Pablo Carreno Busta and Feliciano Lopez all playing at least one singles match, and Lopez and Marcel Granollers joining forces in the doubles. There has also been the undeniable advantage of the home crowd and although Spain's success has delivered a huge boost to the event in its inaugural year, some will argue it might have been fairer to find a new venue in 2020, let alone consider keeping it in Madrid until 2021.

Hosting and mixed attendances are



An exhausted Rafael Nadal celebrates his win over Denis Shapovalov which sealed the Davis Cup for Spain. *Reuters*

RAMPANT NADAL

- 4

Number of Davis Cup titles Nadal has won — three more than World no 2 Novak Djokovic and Swiss great Roger Federer.
- 8

Number of wins registered by Nadal in as many matches at the Davis Cup in Madrid. He did not drop a single set in his five singles and three doubles matches.
- 29

Nadal has increased his singles winning run at the Davis Cup to 29. The 31-year-old's overall win-loss singles record at the tournament stands at 29-1.

among several issues for Pique and the International Tennis Federation to solve in the coming months but on the court, some gripping ties have ensured the new Davis Cup has got off to an encouraging start.

Bautista Agut's win over Auger-Aliassime was particularly poignant, given the world number nine was returning after withdrawing from the team on Thursday, following the death of his father Joaquin.

"I could not have played today without all the work of my team-mates this week," said Bautista Agut on court afterwards.

"After such a complicated week, I had to get out there and face it. Everything was difficult today but I managed to overcome it and get the first point for Spain."

Shapovalov, meanwhile, had ousted Nadal at the Canada Masters when they first met in 2017 but he was no match here for the veteran's power and sheer force of will.

A blistering forehand on the run set up

the decisive break in the first set, which Nadal served out when Shapovalov hit long.

The youngster had a break point early in the second but slapped his return into the net and Nadal held on, surviving a nine-minute game when a Shapovalov retrieval plopped out. Shapovalov opted for more variety with a brilliant touch volley and then a deft drop-shot making things increasingly uncomfortable for Nadal, who came under pressure when serving to stay in the set both at 5-4 and 6-5.

In the tie-break, Shapovalov led early but missed a short forehand for 4-2. Instead, Nadal won four of the next five to tee up two points for the title. He looked sure to convert the first, on serve, but Shapovalov ripped a forehand pass. Two big serves saw Shapovalov save the second and then create a set point of his own. But Nadal saved it for 7-7 and a return into the net gave him a third championship point.

Mourinho back in European extravaganza

ASSOCIATED PRESS
NOVEMBER 25

JOSE MOURINHO'S charm offensive has been in overdrive during his whirlwind first few days at Tottenham. He has lauded Tottenham's training complex as being "second to none" and without comparison across Europe "at any level." He says he has slept in the club's pajamas at its on-site hotel which he rates as "six star," with its "soft pillows, amazing duvet."

Now it's time for a first taste of Tottenham Hotspur Stadium, "the best stadium in the world," he has purred, as Mourinho continues his quest to win over fans who might still be skeptical about his appointment.

Getting the team through to the knockout stage of the Champions League wouldn't do him any harm in the ingratiation process. Three days after guiding Spurs to a Premier League victory at West Ham in his first match since replacing Mauricio Pochettino, Mourinho will take charge of them in a home match for the first time when Olympiakos visits Tuesday in the Champions League.

A victory guarantees progress out of Group B alongside Bayern Munich with a game to spare. It would complete a decent week's work for Mourinho as he attempts to rebuild his coaching reputation after a fractious, and ultimately disappointing, 2½ year spell at Manchester United that ended almost 12 months ago.

The Portuguese coach hugged his players and kept a respectful distance from the traveling Spurs fans while he celebrated the 3-2 win against West Ham on Saturday. It might take some time for them to accept Mourinho and take him to their hearts, especially considering the work Pochettino did in raising standards at Tottenham — even getting the team to a Champions League final last season when it lost to Liverpool.

Mourinho has done that with Porto and Inter Milan, winning the title match on both occasions, so is seeking to become the first manager to win European club soccer's biggest prize with three different clubs — all from different countries. None of them could be classed as modern-day continental heavyweights, either, making that achievement all the more impressive.

"The gaffer's won at every club he's gone to, there's no hiding away from that," Tottenham striker Harry Kane said. "He wants to win. He's a proven winner. I've made it clear that I'm at the stage of my ca-



Jose Mourinho at Tottenham's London training centre on Monday. *Reuters*

KEY FIXTURES

Tottenham	vs	Olympiacos
Real Madrid	vs	PSG
Man City	vs	Shakhtar
Juventus	vs	Atletico
Zvezda	vs	Bayern

reer where I want to win trophies.

"Realistically we look at the Champions League and the FA Cup this season to try and do that ... You could say that (Mourinho could make the difference) because of his reputation. It's been three days so, until we build that relationship and see how things get on over the next two or three months, we won't really know." The closest Mourinho has come to winning the Champions League since that 2010 triumph with Inter was a trio of semifinal appearances — all with Real Madrid — in 2011, '12 and '13. He got Manchester United out of its group last season, only to get fired before the knockout stages even began.

If he was happy to be back in the Premier League — his "natural habitat," he called it — at the weekend, imagine how he will feel making a return to the Champions League arena. Three teams have already qualified after four of the six rounds of games: Bayern, Paris Saint-Germain and Juventus.