

FADNAVIS RESIGNS AS CM AFTER SC ORDERS FLOOR TEST

# After dark night, Constitution Day

Ajit Pawar left citing personal reasons, we don't have majority, says Fadnavis

**VISHWAS WAGHMODE, SANDEEP ASHER, ZEESHAN SHAIKH & ANANTHAKRISHNAN G**  
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

HOURS AFTER the Supreme Court asked the Maharashtra Governor to ensure a floor test in the state Assembly Wednesday, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis resigned from the post Tuesday, drawing the curtain on his three-day-old government and clearing the decks for a Shiv Sena-led government with NCP and Congress as partners.

Running out of options and facing defeat in the trust vote after NCP leader Ajit Pawar resigned as Deputy Chief Minister following the Supreme Court order, Fadnavis too threw in the towel, saying he no longer had majority — the shortest tenure of a government in Maharashtra.

Before heading to Raj Bhavan to hand his resignation to Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Fadnavis told a press conference at the Sahyadri Guest House: "Ajit Pawar held discussions with us and decided to extend support to form a government which is the reason why we formed the government. After the Supreme Court order calling for a trust motion tomorrow, Pawar met me and said he cannot continue due to some reasons. He cited personal reasons for resigning. Since he has resigned, we don't have majority. Since the beginning, we have said we will not indulge in horse trading. I will go and tender my resignation to the Governor."

Late at night, Ajit Pawar reached the Silver Oaks residence of his uncle and NCP chief Sharad Pawar. Earlier in the day, **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



Fadnavis hands his resignation to Governor Koshyari, in Mumbai on Tuesday. PTI

## Uddhav Thackeray to become CM, swearing-in at Shivaji Park tomorrow



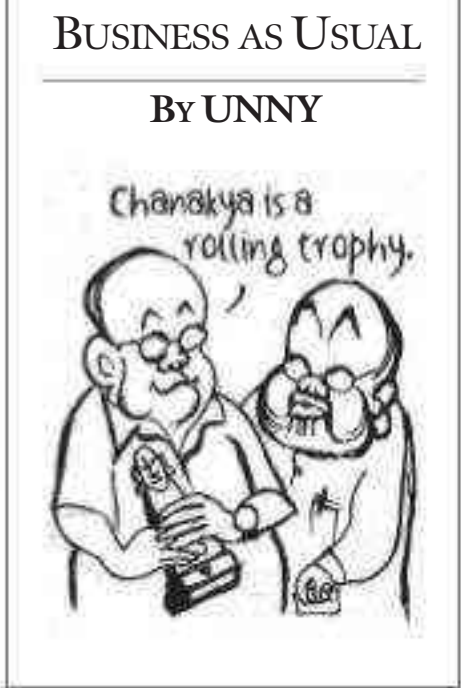
Uddhav pays tribute to father Balasaheb Thackeray. PTI

**VISHWAS WAGHMODE, SHUBHANGI KHAPRE & ZEESHAN SHAIKH**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

SHIV SENA chief Uddhav Thackeray will be the new Chief Minister of Maharashtra, heading a party-led government that will include allies NCP and Congress.

Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari Tuesday night invited Uddhav Thackeray to take the oath of office and secrecy at 6.40 pm on Thursday at the Shivaji Park in Dadar after he received a letter from the Maha Vikas Aghadi which stated it had the support of 166 MLAs.

"You may send me the list **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



### THE EDITORIAL PAGE

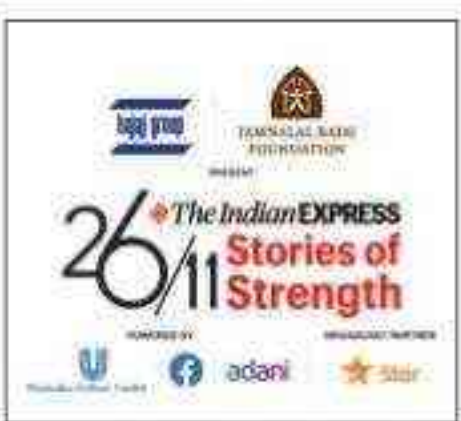
#### A SAVING GRACE

Hopefully, SC on law and a united Opposition in politics have taught BJP a lesson or two in hubris

**PAGE 14**



Amitabh Bachchan at the fourth edition of *The Indian Express* 26/11 Stories of Strength, at the Gateway of India in Mumbai on Tuesday. Nirmal Harindran



## India no more a soft target, FATF listing will be final nail in coffin for Pak: Rajnath

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

WITH ITS current maritime and coastal security structure, "India is no more a soft target" for terror attacks, Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday, adding that Pakistan-based terrorists will have to think "100 times" before making such a move.

Singh was the chief guest at the fourth edition of 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.

"We have dismantled terror infrastructure and are now trying to target its financial network. If Pakistan does not stop sponsoring terrorism, it will be



Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari at the event. Amit Chakravarty

blacklisted. In the face of recession, blacklisting of Pakistan by **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## At the Gateway of India, a tribute to bravery — with message of tolerance, love

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

ON THE evening of November 26, 2008, Devika Rotawan was at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus, when she was shot in the leg by Ajmal Kasab; the barely 10-year-old girl became the youngest and one of the first witnesses to testify against the Pakistani terrorist. On Tuesday, Rotawan took the stage at the fourth edition of the 26/11 Stories of Strength event, hosted by *The Indian Express* to mark the

11th anniversary of the Mumbai terror attacks.

"Eleven years have passed, but I can never forget that terrible night," she said, before observing a minute's silence for the victims of the attacks. The audience rose to their feet, many bowing their heads in remembrance.

Earlier, playback singer Divya Kumar joined the Indian Navy Band for a performance of A R Rahman's "Bharat humko jaan se pyaara hai" from *Raja*; they paused for a dazzling two-helicopter flypast by the Navy. **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## From a Pawargrab to Pawar pushback: How BJP lost vote of over-confidence

**LIZ MATHEW & SHUBHANGI KHAPRE**  
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

WHEN DEVENDRA Fadnavis, deserted by Ajit Pawar and outplayed by Sharad Pawar, declared Tuesday that he would hand his resignation letter to the Governor, the BJP brass in Delhi was watching it live on television. A few hours earlier, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and BJP working president J P Nadda had held a meeting at the Prime Minister's Office in Parliament House.

Sources said the "situation was such" that the leaders, who met after the Supreme Court direction for a floor test, had to



Union Home Minister Amit Shah with BJP working president JP Nadda in Parliament on Tuesday. PTI

take a decision asking Fadnavis to resign. Senior BJP leaders admitted they were not expecting this, but "anything is possible".

For the top brass, it is not just the loss of power in a big state and the country's financial **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



**FOR THE BJP**, the loss of Maharashtra is its second misadventure in 18 months. But this will hurt the party brass more than the fall of the earlier Karnataka government because this time the offices of the President and PM were dragged in to impose President's Rule and to revoke it later.

### WORLD

**PAK SC SUSPENDS IMRAN MOVE TO EXTEND ARMY CHIEF'S TENURE**  
**PAGE 17**

## From rally in rain to Grand Hyatt lobby, Sharad Pawar fought his way back

**PAGE 1 ANCHOR**

**MANOJ CG & SANDEEP ASHAR**  
NEW DELHI, MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

SHIV SENA chief Uddhav Thackeray may become the next Chief Minister, but it is NCP leader Sharad Pawar, the grand old man of Maharashtra politics, who has emerged as the undisputed anchor and face of the three-party alliance. Less than three months ago,



Sharad Pawar addressing a rally amid heavy rain in Satara became the defining image of the Assembly polls. File

Pawar — and his NCP — was staring at an uncertain political future. The perception was that

the BJP-Sena would return to power in Maharastra. But Pawar led from the front, waging a spir-

ited campaign even as ally Congress seemed to give up before the poll battle began.

A photograph of the 79-year-old addressing a rally amid a heavy downpour in Satara became the defining image of the Assembly elections. The NCP finished third, but improved its tally from 41 seats in 2014 to 54 this time. Many Maharashtra Congress leaders accept, rather grudgingly, that Pawar's enthusiastic campaign helped them in many seats.

But the real test for Pawar came after the results were declared. As the BJP and Sena fell **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**









0-50 Good

ASHOK VIHAR

Very Poor



51-100 Satisfactory

SIRIFORT

Poor



101-200 Moderate

SHADIPUR

Poor



201-300 Poor

DWARKA-SECTOR 8

Poor



301-400 Very poor

401-500 Severe

## Unauthorised colonies Bill introduced in Parliament



The Bill grants ownership to those who have properties in these colonies. Archive

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

A BILL that will help grant ownership rights to those who have properties in unauthorised colonies in Delhi was introduced in the Lok Sabha Tuesday.

Union Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Singh Puri introduced the National Capital Territory of Delhi (Recognition of Property Rights of Residents in Unauthorised Colonies) Bill, 2019, months before Assembly polls in the state.

The Bill will recognise ownership rights on the basis of power of attorney, agreement of sale, will, possession letter or any other document, conveyance deed or authorisation slip. Rights will be granted after payment of registration charges.

The DDA will distribute 100 conveyance deeds by the year-end. The deed, an essential document required for purchase of property and is a binding contract in a court of law, will pave the way for people to register their properties with the Delhi government.

Work can begin on regularising 1,797 unauthorised colonies after the Bill is passed. The move does not apply to 69 “affluent colonies” identified by DDA, including Sainik Farms, Mahendru Enclave and Anantram Dairy.

The Aam Aadmi Party, meanwhile, said the Bill was a “huge fraud” and demanded that residents of these colonies be able to register their properties before the Assembly elections.

Questioning the move to give conveyance deeds to 100 people, a statement by AAP asked: “...who will be these 100 people?” “The BJP is going to hoodwink people with a symbolic handover of registry to 100 people. It is clear they have no intention to provide registry and it is just an election gimmick,” it added.

Last week, Puri said people in unauthorised colonies can apply for ownership rights starting December 16, via a special portal.

# HC seeks copies of 100 FIRs to check use of Urdu, Persian words

Court stresses on need for simpler language in FIRs so public can understand them

**SOMYA LAKHANI**

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

*RAAZINAMA, tehreer’ adam taameel, Mujrim, guftagoo, sangeen apraadh and zer-e-tafteesh* — these are seven of the 383 Urdu and Persian words that the Delhi High Court doesn’t want to read in FIR copies being filed in the capital in a bid to simplify the FIR for the common man.

On Monday, the court asked Delhi Police to submit 100 FIR copies to ascertain if the words are being used, after a circular was issued by police to all stations to use simpler language.

The court directed police to submit “at least 10 FIR copies registered

with 10 different police stations so that we can verify whether the circular issued by DCP is being followed by subordinate police officers/officials in letter and spirit. Thus, minimum 100 copies of FIRs should be presented before the court on the next date of hearing (December 11)...”

In August, a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice C Hari Shankar observed that “too much flowery language is not needed... the FIR is for the public at large. It should not be something for which one has to do a doctorate in Sanskrit, Urdu or Persian.” This came after a PIL was filed by advocate Vishalakshi Goel.

On November 20, DCP (Legal Cell) Rajesh Deo sent a memo to all DCPs

about “instructions regarding use of simple words while recording FIRs.”

It said, “The HQ has compiled a list of Urdu, Persian words which are presently being used in day-to-day functioning of Delhi Police along with their English/Hindi words. IOs/duty officers working under your control be suitably sensitised to evade using archaic Urdu, Persian words. As far as possible, simple words which are easily understood by the common public at large should be used...”

Words such as *bayaan tehreeri* which means “written settlement”; *rubaru* which means “in the presence of”; *ishtahaar* as in “poster”; and *zaahir* as in “express” have been added

to the list.

A senior officer said, “Persian was a court language used in administrative matters. The continuity in administration meant that a lot of those words remained in our vocabulary. The police training college is now unofficially training staff to not use tough words.”

On Monday, the bench said that such FIRs are read out in court time and again and, therefore, “it should be in a simple language or in the language of the person who approached police for lodging of FIR”.

During the hearing, Delhi Police submitted the list of 383 Urdu/Persian words which are not to be used any longer.

## Used as a cricket ground, lake gets new lease of life

**SHIVAM PATEL**

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

A DRIED-UP lake in North West Delhi, which was used for cricket matches and bicycle riding until a few months ago, has been revived through the efforts of the Irrigation and Flood Control (I&FC) department.

The lake, located near Bawana’s Sannoth village, stretches over three acres. The water in the lake is recycled waste water treated through a constructed wetland method, said Ankit Srivastava, technical advisor to the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) who is also involved with the I&FC project.

“It was a dry patch of land. Around 90 days ago, we started diverting water to it. The water is clear and you can see the bottom of the lake,” Srivastava said.

Constructed wetland is a method of purifying water naturally through gravel, plants and microbes.

Waste water and sewage from villages near Sannoth flows into a drain, which reaches a regulator from where water is diverted to the STP with a treatment capacity of 1 million litres per day (MLD). Water then reaches a sedimentation tank, in which solid particles are degraded and settled through bio-cultures.



Recycled waste water treated through a constructed wetland (left) is channeled into the lake in Bawana’s Sannoth village

and further beautification is underway.

Funds of around Rs 3.5 crore have been sanctioned, officials said, for landscaping and public utilities such as developing a Chhath Ghat or an amphitheatre and installing benches and lights, among others.

The DJB and I&FC are jointly rejuvenating 259 water bodies across the capital. However, the lake in Sannoth was a compensatory revival, officials said.

Of the 259 water bodies, work is underway on 25 and a further 50 would be taken up by December 31, officials said, adding that all would use treated water from STPs.

## ‘Chemical’ spilt on road acidic in nature, forensic tests reveal

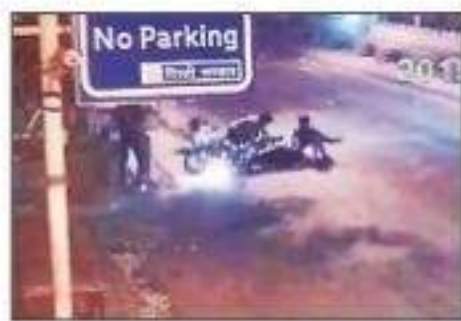
**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

DAYS AFTER three men died when they fell off their bike on a “chemical” spilt on the road in North Delhi’s Kashmere Gate, initial tests showed that the substance is acidic in nature. This comes after police and a forensics team inspected the spot and the two-wheeler.

The substance had leaked from a truck which is being traced by two teams in Rajasthan’s Barmer, said police.

An FSL official said, “The chemical is a mildly acidic substance. When it fell on the road, it got diluted with water and dust. This sample had a pH level between 5 and 6. Samples from the bike showed the pH level of the chemical was approximately



CCTV grab of the spot where 3 men fell on the substance. They died later in hospital

4... Other factors revealed it was an organic solvent.”

The official said further tests will be done to identify the substance, which is suspected to be used in textile or dye-based industries. pH is an index used to determine the acidity or alkalinity of a substance.

On November 23, Mahesh Chand (23), Shivam Lal (22) and

Monu Sharma (22), were heading home from a wedding when their bike skidded and they fell on the substance. DCP (North) Monika Bhardwaj said Chand and Lal died Sunday, while Sharma died on Monday.

According to police, post-mortem reports of Chand and Lal state, “The men suffered 30-40% major burn injuries on their limbs, back and face. Whether the chemical burns were hazardous will be determined once the chemical is identified. Subsequent examination of the bodies will be conducted to ascertain what led to organ failure...”

Meanwhile, CCTV footage shows two trucks crossing the area just before the men drive by. It shows their bike skidding and the men falling on the road. They try to get up and suddenly start taking off their clothes.

## 3 men held for theft, fraud at Trade Fair

*New Delhi:* Police arrested three men who allegedly robbed people and sold entry tickets illegally at the Trade Fair at Pragati Maidan in separate incidents over the last weekend.

Police said the accused have been identified as Shahid Khan, Ratan Singh Chauhan and Sanjay Singh.

Police said Khan was caught by a constable when he stole a man’s mobile phone around 4.30 pm Saturday. After a man complained that Chauhan had robbed items from his stall, police caught him around 7.30 pm Saturday. Five steel flasks and 11 bowls were recovered from him.

On Sunday, police arrested Singh outside Pragati Maidan Metro station, after being informed that he was selling entry tickets illegally to some people at cheaper rates. **ENS**



‘15 govt hospitals to get 63 ventilators’

ANAND MOHAN J  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

THE DELHI government informed the Delhi High Court Tuesday that 15 government hospitals in the capital have initiated the process of procuring 63 ventilators, which they would get within six months.

As per the status report filed by Advocate Satyakam, Additional Standing Counsel (Civil), before Delhi HC Chief Justice D N Patel, “procurement of 63 new ventilators is under process. Timeline of procurement is reported to be completed within six months... Repair work of 10 ventilators is reported to be completed within 2-3 weeks in the 15 hospitals.”

The Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences, in its reply, said it has initiated procurement of 38 new ventilators, the maximum among all hospitals, and that the process was currently at the technical assessment committee stage.

As per the action-taken report submitted by several hospitals on the status of beds, Guru Gobind Singh Hospital said it will incorporate additional ICUs for its new 472-bed project, work for which is underway. However, 12 government hospitals have not sent their replies.

Non-functioning ventilator beds in Delhi government hospitals was highlighted during the hearing of an issue raised by lawyer Ashok Agarwal. In January, a three-year-old suffering from a critical neurological condition, and in dire need of a breathing apparatus, was admitted in a government hospital and put on a manual resuscitator. As per the government’s report, the child died on February 10.

ACCUSED A PLATOON COMMANDER, ARRESTED

# Complainant in Home Guard scam set fire to evidence: Cops

AMIL BHATNAGAR  
NOIDA, NOVEMBER 26

A HOME Guard platoon commander has been arrested for allegedly setting fire to crucial evidence linked to the attendance scam being investigated by Noida Police — after bringing the fraud worth lakhs to the notice of senior officers.

The incident took place after police in Gautam Budh Nagar filed an FIR over allegations of Home Guards faking attendance records to withdraw more salary than they are due. The blaze, which broke out at the District Commandant Home Guard office, prompted UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath to order a probe.

According to police, Platoon Commander Rajeev Kumar had approached the SSP with a formal complaint into the scam.



Accused, Rajeev Kumar

“A week ago, Home Guard HQ in Surajpur was broken into and muster rolls being investigated with regard to the attendance scam were set on fire. We scanned CCTV footage and additional surveillance to find one person entering the office during the suspected time frame. On further investigation, the accused was identified as Rajeev Kumar — the complainant in the case. It appears that he was not satisfied with the probe and

wished to derail it,” said SSP (Gautam Budh Nagar) Vaibhav Krishna.

According to police, footage showed a man wearing a shawl and carrying an iron rod breaking into the Home Guard office. When police questioned Rajeev, after matching the physical description from the footage, he admitted to the arson and destruction of evidence.

During questioning, Rajeev told police that he had also allegedly fudged attendance figures in muster rolls to withdraw an inflated salary. Since muster rolls from 2014-2017 were being checked, he was afraid the discrepancies would have given away his involvement, police said. So, the accused decided to burn the evidence in order to clear his name, police said.

Rajeev was also “irked by the fact that the Home Guard de-

partment did not file an FIR against senior officials despite clear indications of wrong-doing”, police said.

After approaching police in July, Rajeev alleged he was threatened by officials that a conspiracy was being planned to frame him in the scam as well.

“Rajeev believed senior officials in the scam would go scot-free and the blame would fall on junior Home Guards. He felt that if the muster rolls were destroyed, no action will be taken against lower-rung personnel,” said SSP Krishna.

Home Guard muster rolls of all districts statewide are currently being scanned to ascertain the extent of the scam. An FIR of alleged cheating and fraud was filed after Rajeev’s complaint. A similar scam came to light in Lucknow and several officials have been arrested.

## In 7 yrs, AAP has changed narrative of politics: CM

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

ENCOURAGING PARTY workers ahead of the upcoming Assembly elections, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the Aam Aadmi Party has changed the narrative of politics over the last seven years.

The AAP chief, who was speaking on the occasion of the party’s 7th Foundation Day celebrations at the party office Tuesday, said the BJP is no longer able to do “Hindu-Muslim” politics in the national capital and is forced to talk on issues of development.

“*Dilli me nahi chalta inka Hindu-Musلمان*. When they come to Delhi, people ask them about the number of schools they have built and the number of CCTV cameras they have installed. To which they talk about unauthorised colonies. They ask for votes on the basis of Jatt and non-Jatt in Haryana, Maratha and non-Maratha in Maharashtra and Patel and non-Patel in Gujarat, but when these people come to Delhi they can’t differentiate. The face of politics has changed,” he said.

He also launched a number — 9509997997 — on which people can give missed calls to associate themselves with the party. “Voting again for Kejriwal will mean more free uninterrupted



Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia and AAP leaders Gopal Rai and Sanjay Singh at the party’s 7th Foundation Day celebrations, Tuesday. Praveen Khanna

power supply, free travel for women, more schools and hospitals,” said the CM, adding that the party has won the hearts of even those who believed and followed the BJP.

Holding party flags, workers shouted slogans in support of Kejriwal as he continued to talk about health and education reforms. “In the last 70 years, no party in any state has improved the condition of government schools and hospitals. In five years, your party has... done it. We have provided uninterrupted free power and water supply and free travel for women — all of this looks impossible to other parties,” he said.

Top leaders including AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh,

Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, Health Minister Satyendar Jain, Delhi unit convenor Gopal Rai, Atishi and Raghav Chaddha were among those at the event.

“We have proved that a government can be run with honesty. Till date, the governments in the country were managed by power and money. For the first time, a party is being criticised for working for the poor. No one says Kejriwal is in the pockets of Ambani and Adani... I feel that the people of Delhi will vote with double the excitement in the coming elections,” Kejriwal added.

Talking about the plan ahead, Sisodia cautioned workers to not become “overconfident” and said the next one month is extremely crucial for the party.

## AAP govt policies gave people fundamental rights: Kejriwal at ‘Constitution at 70’ event

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

ADDRESSING OVER 10,000 students from Delhi government schools, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal Tuesday said the AAP government has been trying to govern the capital as per the Constitution for the last five years and has given citizens the ‘right to equality’ and ‘right to life’ through its policies and initiatives.

The CM was speaking at the closing ceremony of the ‘Constitution at 70’ campaign, carried out across all govern-



At the closing ceremony of the event. Gajendra Yadav

ment schools over the last three months, at the Indira Gandhi Indoor Stadium. During the campaign, students participated in a number of exercises to understand and engage with the

three values laid down in the Preamble — ‘Equality’, ‘Liberty’ and ‘Fraternity’.

The CM claimed that his government has worked to grant people of Delhi certain fundamental rights, which he said were not formerly available to them. “... There is a right to equality. But would a child born in an affluent family and another born in a poor family get the same quality of education? That is why, one of our first priorities was to give quality education to poor children as well,” he said.

Kejriwal said his government has given its people the ‘Right to

Equality’ through “power subsidy and water”, and the ‘Right to Life’ by “upgrading quality of services at government hospitals”.

He claimed the government was not able to implement the Constitution “in its entirety as it faced many obstacles”: “If it is implemented properly for a day, we’ll be the number one country in the world.”

Education Minister Manish Sisodia said: “... There was a time when education could be accessed by upper castes only... but in this hall today, we have thousands of children of different castes who go to school...”

## ‘Direct police to produce Pushkar tweets’

**New Delhi:** Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, through his counsel, Tuesday urged a Delhi court to direct the Delhi Police to bring on record various tweets made by his wife Sunanda Pushkar, who was found dead inside a hotel room in January 2014.

Tharoor’s counsel, Vikas Pahwa, told court that Pushkar’s Twitter account was important to

understand her state of mind before her death. He said that her tweets were important to the case as “they paint a different picture to what the police have been alleging”.

Special Judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar reserved the order for December 12. Pahwa said: “They (police) seized three Blackberry phones of the deceased... sent it

to CFSL and asked for data from WhatsApp, Twitter, call logs... They have picked and chosen the data they want to use”.

Police, however, opposed the application. “It is vague application. This is a serious effort to not allow the trial in this case,” said senior public prosecutor Atul Srivastava, appearing for Delhi Police. **ENS**



## BRIEFLY

## Govt approves NSA against Shahberi builder

**Greater Noida:** The UP government Monday approved imposition of the National Security Act (NSA) against the builder who sold the maximum number of flats in Shahberi. The builder, Jasbir Mann, was arrested in October and a proposal for NSA approval was sent to the state government. Mann had allegedly not sought approval for blueprints, and had allegedly illegally built flats on land notified by Greater Noida Authority. In 2018, two buildings had collapsed in Shahberi which killed nine people. The area has been declared unsafe by the Greater Noida Authority and a safety audit is due to be conducted.

## ASI booked for assault

**New Delhi:** A case has been registered against an Assistant Sub-Inspector posted with the Railway Police, days after he allegedly thrashed a restaurant manager over an issued with an order. **ENS**

## Tis Hazari clash: L-G nod for ex-gratia to injured cops

**New Delhi:** L-G Anil Baijal approved an ex-gratia of around Rs 8 lakh to 21 policemen injured in a clash with lawyers at the Tis Hazari court complex. As per a November 25 order, eight policemen who sustained serious injuries will get Rs 50,000 each, while 13 policemen who received “simple injuries” will get financial assistance of Rs 30,000 each. **PTI**

## BIS doesn't have to accept DJB water report: Paswan

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

UNION CONSUMER Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan has told Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal that the Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS) was not bound to take cognisance of a report being prepared by the Delhi Jal Board (DJB) on the city's water quality.

“The BIS is not bound by the report of the team you have made as it is a Delhi government team... I demand that if Delhi's drinking water (quality) is to be tested again, a joint BIS-DJB team should be made,” Paswan said in a letter to the CM on Monday.

DJB officials have been testing five water samples from homes in all municipal wards of the capital after the BIS report, released by Paswan, ranked Delhi as the worst among 21 cities for drinking water quality.

The minister also said that the BIS had sent names of 32 officials it has appointed for the joint re-test to the Delhi government, but is yet to receive a response on the 32 officials appointed by the latter. He also said water samples collected in the joint re-test should be tested in an NABL-accredited lab, as DJB labs were not internationally recognised.

Responding to the letter, DJB vice-chairman and AAP MLA Dinesh Mohaniya said the BIS was free to not take cognisance



**Union Minister Ram Vilas Paswan wrote to CM Arvind Kejriwal to set up a joint BIS-DJB team. Archive**

of the DJB report: “We are not liable to the BIS. We are liable to the people of Delhi; that we provide clean water to them. The BIS has prepared a fake report... we do not need their certification.”

Mohaniya also said the DJB is ready to get water samples tested from any lab recommended by the BIS.

Kejriwal had called the BIS report “false and politically motivated” and challenged the Centre for a re-test. Paswan had appointed two BIS officials for a joint re-assessment and Kejriwal too had appointed two DJB officials, including Mohaniya.

However, DJB teams started collecting water samples from the city Saturday in the absence of BIS officials, with Mohaniya saying that the BIS was free to join them at any stage. The DJB is planning to test 3,000 water samples against 29 parameters, on standards set by the BIS.

## BJP launches helpline for water-related complaints

**New Delhi:** The Delhi BJP Tuesday launched a helpline for people to lodge complaints related to supply of dirty water in their areas. Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said people can call the number, 8980189801, or send WhatsApp videos to register their complaint. “The party will put pressure on the Delhi government to get these complaints resolved,” he said.

He said people can also send

complaints to dellika-paanizehrila@gmail.com. “We went to places where Kejriwal said his government laid new water and sewer pipelines in the last four years to address complaints related to water quality. We have shot videos in areas where people complained about dirty, undrinkable water,” said Tiwari.

BJP leaders claimed the videos were from areas like Karawal Nagar, Sant Nagar and Burari. **ENS**

## JNU PANEL RECOMMENDS CHANGES

## Not consulted on new hostel fee, claim elected EC members

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

A DAY after the High-Level Committee (HLC) set up by the Jawaharlal Nehru University administration recommended 50% reduction in service and utility charges for all students and said it was approved by Executive Council (EC) members through “circulation”, elected EC representatives Tuesday claimed they were not approached for approval.

On Monday, *The Indian Express* reported that the High-Level Committee had decided to give 50% concession to all students and 75% concession to Below Poverty Line (BPL) students. The announcement came after the University Grants Commission Monday agreed to release Rs 6.41 crore, to help the institution tide over the funds crunch that led to a substantial hike in the hostel fee. As of now, service and utility charges are



**The JNUSU has called for a complete rollback. Gajendra Yadav**

not part of the hostel fee.

In a statement, EC representatives Sachidanand Sinha, Moushumi Basu and Baviskar Sharad Pralhad said, “We would like to put on record that none of us were ever approached either through mail or phone for approval of the HLC recommendations, as claimed in the press release issued by the Registrar yesterday... We too learnt about

the decision only when the Registrar sent a formal press release to the university community at 11.28 pm.”

“The claim made that HLC recommendations were approved by members of the Executive Council through circulation is, therefore, untrue...,” they said.

The circular, signed by the Registrar, said, “The recommen-

## Delhi govt starts campaign to encourage family planning

cision (cut) and has the advantage of relatively less bleeding, haematoma, infection, pain as well as a shorter procedural time followed by a comfortable recovery period.

In 2018, around 500 men were sterilised while around 17,000 women opted for a tubectomy in the capital. According to sources, cases of male sterilisation are decreasing every year due to which the government has insisted on an aggressive campaign.

“Cases of male sterilisation are going down. In 2017, around 400 men opted for sterilisation but before that, the number was around 1,300. So, there is an urgent need for such an awareness campaign,” said Dr Jyoti Sachdeva, State Program Officer (Family Planning), Delhi govern-

ment.

The government has also decided to provide an incentive of Rs 1,100 for those who undergo the procedure and a five-day leave for those employed in the government sector.

“This method has no side-effects and we want to request male participation to improve family planning. They can avail the services in Delhi government hospitals during the campaign or visit hospitals any time during the year. One just needs to carry Aadhaar card details for smooth transfer of funds,” said Dr Nutan Mundeja, Director, Family Welfare, Delhi government.

India was the first country in the world to launch a National Programme for Family Planning in 1952.

## Man accused of kidnapping daughter gets 6 months in jail

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

A MAN, accused of kidnapping his daughter and taking her to Dubai illegally, has been sentenced to six months in jail by the Delhi High Court for contempt. The HC took a strong exception to the man's “contumacious conduct”.

“The man has not only clandestinely and illegally removed the baby from the jurisdiction of this court, but also tried to acquire diplomatic immunity subsequent to being held guilty of criminal contempt of court, changed his citizenship as well as religion and passport to change the applicable law and to defeat binding consensual court orders,” a bench of Justice Manmohan and Justice Sangita Dhingra Sehgal said.

The court sentenced him to six months in jail, along with a fine of Rs 2,000, and directed the registry to prepare the necessary warrants forthwith. It also asked the Centre and the CBI to file a status report a day prior to the next date of hearing, December 3.

## Man kills DU student for harassing his niece: Police

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

A 25-YEAR-OLD Delhi University student from the School of Open Learning (SOL) was found dead near IMT Industrial Area in Faridabad Monday, said police, adding that the accused — the victim's friend — has been arrested.

According to police, accused Dharendra Charan suspected Sandeep Vaishnav of harassing his niece and allegedly killed him with a baton when they were drinking inside Charan's car.

Sube Singh, PRO of Faridabad Police, said, “Vaishnav's parents said he went to meet Charan Sunday night. Charan was arrested from Sahupura village in Faridabad. He allegedly killed Vaishnav after he found that he was harassing his niece.”



**Charan hit the victim with a baton, ran over him**

Anil Kumar, ACP, Crime Branch, said Charan was found in an inebriated state in his Santro.

“Charan told us that he took Vaishnav out for a drive and offered him alcohol. After some time, Charan stopped the vehicle near IMT Industrial Area, took out a baton and hit Vaishnav on his head. He dumped his body near an old factory,” said Kumar.

Police added that after hitting him, Charan ran over Vaishnav with his car. He fled to Sahurpura and decided to sleep inside the vehicle. Vaishnav lived with his parents in Faridabad, said police.



FROM THE GALLERY

FROM THE CHAIR

RAJYA SABHA

“I have been very liberal with you.”

**HARI VANS**H, Deputy Chairman, to DMK MP T Siva on taking more time during the transgender Bill debate .

LOK SABHA

“I have not sat down on my seat. Honourable members started speaking before that. Please allow me to speak first.”

**OM BIRLA**, Speaker, when the House met in the second-half.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

“It is our right to ask for information from the government. Why are you objecting to it?”

**KODIKUNNIL SURESH**, Congress MP from Mavelikkara, to Rajiv Pratap Rudy of the BJP during an argument over sending a Bill to a standing committee.

5 QUESTIONS



BJP GORAKHPUR MP **RAVI KISHAN** SPOKE TO **PRADEEP KAUSHAL** ABOUT WHY HE RAISED THE DEMAND FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL SCHOOL OF DRAMA IN HIS CONSTITUENCY DURING ZERO HOUR.

**Most members of Parliament seek facilities for imparting technical and medical education to people in their constituents. How did the idea of getting a national School of Drama for Gorakhpur occur to you?**

If you promote music, performing arts and cinema in an area, it would generate employment for future generations. The first step in this direction will be the creation of a facility for training people.

**You said 50 lakh people spread over Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand are inclined towards literature and performing arts. How did you reach this figure?**

These three states are home to crores of people. I have shot movies in the countryside and I know much interest people have in these genres.

**You argued that the youth of Gorakhpur want to make a mark in the field of arts. Is it because of the fact that their MP is a prominent singer?**

I am an add-on. However, the Bollywood lures everyone. Who is not inspired by Dilip Kumar or Amitabh Bachchan?

**Are the young talented people from UP and Bihar facing any particular difficulty at Delhi (NSD) or Pune (FTII)?**

They cannot afford big cities because of poverty. Besides, the competition is very tough. NSD has just 20 seats. Most aspirants have to go back disappointed.

**Bhojpuri folk music, as in the case of other languages, has to contend with an onslaught of vulgarity. What is the solution to this issue?**

A ban. I have discussed the matter with the Chief Minister (Yogi Adityanath). He is aware of the problem. I also plan bringing a Bill to pave the way for it.

CONSTITUTION DAY ADDRESS

PM reminds people of Constitutional duties

‘Obey traffic rules, pay taxes, cast vote’

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

OBEYING TRAFFIC rules, paying taxes on time, vaccinating children and casting one’s vote are all part of a citizen’s duties to the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday while making a pitch for obeying Constitutional duties.

Modi was addressing a joint session of Parliament commemorating the 70th Constitution Day, an event the opposition parties boycotted in protest against political developments in Maharashtra that they allege were an attack on the country’s Constitutional values.

“Let us think about how we can fulfil the duties enshrined in our Constitution,” the Prime Minister said.

Laying stress on duties of a citizen also found emphasis in speeches of both President Ramnath Kovind, who presided over the function, and Vice President Venkaiah Naidu.

The demand of the time is that society should deliberate on duties and responsibilities as well, the Prime Minister said. “We cannot preserve our rights without fulfilling our responsibilities,” he added.

Making a distinction between *seva* (service) and duty, Modi said helping someone on the road is voluntary, and is a service. “But if I follow traffic rules to see that no one is inconvenienced...that’s (my) duty,” he said.

Modi said parents teaching their children their mother tongue is also part of their duty. Over the last 70 years the stress of policymakers had rightly been on making people aware of their rights, he said. “This was rightly so, because for ages, a very large section of the people were deprived of equality and justice.” He said, “Are we as serious about our duties as we are about our rights?”

Invoking Mahatma Gandhi, he said the Father of the Nation had understood the fine balance between rights and duties, and “as proud citizens of India, let us think how our actions will make our nation even stronger”.

Talking about the virtues of the Constitution, he made an apparent reference to the Emergency imposed by then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. But the people, he said, failed the attempts at targeting the Constitution.

The Constitution, Modi said, can be simplified in two mantras: “dignity for Indian” and “unity for India”.

In his address, the Prime Minister also paid tributes to the victims of 26/11 Mumbai



President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu and Prime Minister Narendra Modi at Parliament House on Tuesday. Anil Sharma

terror attack.

Opposition MPs from the Congress, Trinamool Congress, DMK, the Left parties and others protested near the statue of B R Ambedkar in Parliament complex.

As per protocol, Leader of the Opposition in both Houses were to be present on the dais but both Rajya Sabha leader Ghulam Nabi Azad and Congress Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury were absent when Venkaiah Naidu mentioned their names while opening his address.

Naidu said that fundamental duties should be included in school curriculum and the list of duties should be displayed at educational institutions and other public places. “Unless each one of us performs one’s duties, the rights of others cannot be realised,” he said.

President Kovind said rights and duties are two sides of the same coin. “...if someone misconstrues the meaning of freedom of speech and expression and is about to damage some public property, then another (person) who prevents him from indulging in such an act of violence and anarchy will be seen as a dutiful citizen,” he said.



Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi with other Opposition leaders near the Ambedkar statue at Parliament House. Anil Sharma

Proof of pudding is in eating: Manmohan takes dig at PM as Oppn boycotts session

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

OPPOSITION PARTIES, joined by the Shiv Sena, on Tuesday boycotted a joint sitting of Parliament on the occasion of the 70th Constitution Day to protest against the political developments in Maharashtra. Hitting out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who hailed the Constitution, his predecessor Manmohan Singh said “the proof of the pudding is in the eating”.

Opposition members led by Congress president Sonia Gandhi and Singh gathered at the B R Ambedkar statue at Parliament House and read in various languages parts of the Constitution for over 90 minutes.

Sonia read out the Preamble of the Constitution, while Singh read Article 14 of the Constitution — right to equality. When

asked about the Prime Minister’s hailing the Constitution, Singh told reporters, “Well, I think the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The way the Central government has behaved in Maharashtra, it is not certain that constitutional norms are safe in the hands of present establishment.”

Hitting out at the government, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said: “It is ironic that on the day India is celebrating its Constitution, the BJP government is busy working to destroy it. The Constitution belongs to every Indian. Let us pledge to uphold its values & defend it at all costs.”

Among the parties that boycotted the joint session and participated in the protest were Congress, Trinamool Congress, DMK, Shiv Sena, RJD, CPI, CPI(M), SP, BSP, JD(S), RSP and IUML. There were minor aberrations — Trinamool member Nusrat Jahan attended the Central Hall event, apparently because the

party’s instructions were not clear to her, while BJP’s Khagen Murmu spent several minutes at the Ambedkar statue, mistaking the opposition demonstration for a gathering to pay homage to Ambedkar on Constitution Day.

Some parties such as AAP stayed away from the demonstration at the Ambedkar statue, but joined the boycott of the Central Hall event.

Sources said the opposition plan to boycott the Central Hall function and instead assemble at the Ambedkar statue had been formed by Monday afternoon. Opposition members came armed with copies of the Constitution, while some downloaded regional language versions on their phones after having failed to procure them from bookshops in Central Delhi. “It was a collective coordinated effort. Parts of the Constitution, various Articles, the Preamble were read out in different languages — English, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Malayalam etc,” said TMC Rajya Sabha leader Derek O’Brien.



I&B Minister Prakash Javadekar with his Cabinet colleagues Nirmala Sitharaman and Ram Vilas Paswan at Parliament House on Tuesday. PTI

Govt firms up new Bill to register news outlets

KRISHN KAUSHIK  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

THE GOVERNMENT intends to bring in a new Bill to replace the nearly 150 years old Press and Registration of Books (PRB) Act, 1867, which governs registration of newspapers, periodicals and books.

The new Bill, titled Registration of Press and Periodicals (RPP) Bill, 2019, proposes to remove books under its provisions and includes online news platforms, which are not registered with any authority in the country at the moment.

A significant change that the new Bill to regulate the print and online news platform seeks to bring is that unlike PRB Act, the proposed legislation does not give powers to local authorities, such as the magistrate, to arrest a person, or seize equipment for being in contravention of provisions of the law. It, however, does provide the Press Registrar to cancel a publication’s registration if found to be going against the law.

An appellate board, named the Press and Registration Appellate Board, for “any person aggrieved” by an order of the Press Registrar will consist of the chairman of Press Council of India and another member who will be nominated by the Press Council.

The RPP Bill, the Information and Broadcasting (I&B) Ministry has mentioned, proposes to “do away with the earlier provision under PRB Act, 1867, of prosecution of publishers”. It seeks to “remove the existing provisions relating to registration of books and matters

connected thereto”, and to “do away with the existing procedure of furnishing of declaration by publishers/printers before the District Magistrate and its subsequent authentication”.

It states that the “process of title and registration of periodicals, including newspapers, is proposed to be effected centrally by the Press Registrar General as a simultaneous process” and have “a simple system of registration of e-papers”.

The RPP Bill proposes to enable the Central and state governments “to frame appropriate rules/ regulations to regulate the criteria/conditions for issuing government advertisements in newspapers, accreditation of newspapers and such other facilities for newspapers”.

The Bill retains the provision that editor of a publication must be a citizen of India.

This is the first time that the government intends to bring online news platforms under its ambit and at par with print publications. The Bill defines news on digital media as “news in digitised format that can be transmitted over the internet, computer or mobile networks and includes text, audio, video and graphics”. The Bill says all publications, whether online or print, will have to register with the Press Registrar General of India, which will have the powers to not only maintain a register of publications and their titles and issue certificates, but also ask for annual statements from the publications and printers, verify circulation figures and “revise, revoke or suspend registration of a periodical”.

The I&B Ministry released a draft of the Bill on Monday and sought comments from stakeholders over the next 30 days.

RS nod to transgender persons Bill after Oppn loses vote to refer it to select panel

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

THE RAJYA Sabha on Tuesday passed The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019 by voice vote after the Opposition lost the vote to refer the legislation to a Parliamentary select committee.

The Bill, which was cleared by the Lok Sabha on August 5, seeks to provide a mechanism for social, economic and educational empowerment of transgenders.

As the Opposition was not satisfied with the provisions of the Bill, it had urged the government to send it to the select committee for further examination. At the insistence of DMK MP Tiruchi Siva, the motion to refer the legislation to a select committee was put to vote. But the Opposition was defeated as 74 members voted against the motion while only 55 voted in favour.

Piloted by Social Justice Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot, who is also Leader of the House in Rajya Sabha, the Bill will now go to the President for approval.

The legislation is facing opposition from the transgender community as it still upholds the process of submitting an application to the District Magistrate for legal recognition of one’s transgender identity in the form of a certificate.

A person may also obtain a revised certificate if he/she undergoes surgery to change the gender, as per the Bill.

While most members expressed satisfaction that a legislation recognising the rights of transgenders had finally made it to Parliament, some pointed out the “technical



Social Justice Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot praised DMK MP Tiruchi Siva for his private member’s Bill laying out legal protections for the transgender community.

shortcomings” of the Bill.

Gehlot said that empowering a medical officer to grant certificate of identity will invite the humiliating complexities of medical examination of the applicants. Seeking to assuage the concerns, the minister said the government will make efforts to take into account the issues raised by the transgender community and MPs.

The Bill defines a transgender person as one whose gender does not match the one assigned at birth. It includes trans-men and trans-women, persons with intersex variations, gender-queers, and persons with socio-cultural identities.

The legislation prohibits discrimination against a transgender person, including denial of service or unfair treatment in relation to eight matters, including education, employment, healthcare; access to, or enjoyment of goods, facilities, opportunities available to the public; right to movement; right

to reside, rent, or otherwise occupy property; opportunity to hold public or private office, and access to a government or private establishment in whose care or custody a transgender person is.

It criminalises denial of use of public places to transgenders, removal of transgenders from households and villages, etc.

The legislation also proposes the establishment of a National Council for Transgender Persons consisting of various members from Union ministries, NHRC, Niti Aayog and state governments to monitor the impact of policies, legislation and projects with respect to transgender persons and to also redress their grievances.

During the debate, many members, including minister Gehlot, praised DMK’s Siva for highlighting issues concerning the transgender community through a private member’s Bill, which prompted the government to bring out the law.



MoS (Home) G Kishen Reddy

Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu.

Both UTs are former Portuguese colonies, which were liberated after Independence. Thereafter, Daman and Diu was part of the UT of Goa, Daman and Diu till 1987. When Goa got statehood in 1987, Daman and Diu

Government, Maximum Governance’, considering small population and limited geographical area of both the Union Territories and to use the services of officers efficiently, it has been decided to merge the UTs of Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman Diu into a single UT.”

The two UTs in question are located along the western coast near Gujarat. The decision has been attributed to a need for a more efficient administration. Both the Union Territories, for instance, have separate budgets and different secretariats even though they are just 35 km apart. Dadra and Nagar Haveli has only one district and Daman and Diu has two.

The merged UT will be called Dadra and

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

UNION MINISTER of State for Home G Kishan Reddy on Tuesday introduced a Bill in Lok Sabha which seeks to merge the Union Territories of Daman and Diu and Dadra and Nagar Haveli into one.

The proposed legislation — The Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill 2019 — comes three months after Jammu and Kashmir was bifurcated into two UTs — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

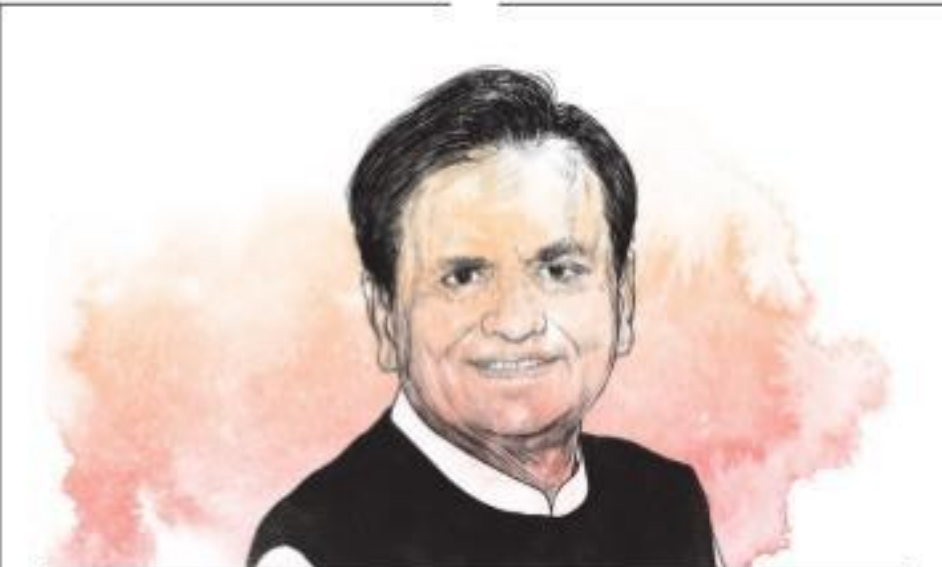
Reddy said, “In view of the policy of the Government to have ‘Minimum



# GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI **CONFIDENTIAL**



## EYEING VANTAGE SPOT

THE OPPOSITION'S show of strength in front of the Ambedkar statue in Parliament on Tuesday had its own share of giggles. Trinamool Congress MPs were among the first to reach there and occupied vantage positions at the base of the statue. When Congress members reached a little later, the situation irked Ahmed Patel, who made his displeasure known. Even while Patel was talking, Trinamool MP Aparupa Poddar asked her party colleagues who he was. Her senior colleague, Kakoli Ghosh Dastidar, wondered at a politician not knowing Patel.

## RIDDLE IN REPLY

OFFICIALS OF different ministries are at present busy with ministers' replies to questions from MPs in Parliament. One of the tricks while giving replies to Parliament questions is to word them in a way that they do not become an "assurance" to the House. Recently, one such question caused a little ripple within the bureaucracy of a ministry when an official had given a draft reply using the phrase "the department plans to" while describing a government scheme. Three levels of senior bureaucrats subsequently edited the draft to avoid an assurance. Finally, with no suitable omnibus phrase available in their army of bureaucrats, the whole sentence was thrown out of the reply.

## KIN IN COURT

As the unlikely alliance of Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress took its winnings from Supreme Court on Tuesday, those in legal circles of the parties whispered about another unlikely alliance. Although former Attorney General of India and senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi appeared for Devendra Fadnavis and unnamed MLAs in the case, the vakalatnama - or the document drawn to give a lawyer permission to represent the client in court - was taken up by Ranjeeta Rohatgi, an advocate on record in Supreme Court and also Rohatgi's niece. Incidentally, Ranjeeta is the standing counsel representing the Congress government in Punjab before the apex court.

## MAHA DRAMA

# Ajit may be staring at long, arduous rehabilitation process

ZEESHAN SHAIKH  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

IN AN open rebellion in the NCP, MLAs in 2012 had passed a resolution in its legislature party meeting urging Ajit Pawar to withdraw his resignation as the Maharashtra deputy chief minister after he decided to resign in a huff. Hardly a month later, following his uncle Sharad Pawar's intervention, Ajit had come back as the deputy CM.

Cut to Wednesday. Senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal made an emotional plea to Sharad Pawar in front of the MLAs of the newly-formed Maha Vikas Aghadi, requesting him to allow Ajit return to the party fold. The wily Maratha strongman, however, directed Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's PA Milind Narvekar to pass on a personal message to Bhujbal, asking him to cut short his speech.

Known to script almost every party meeting right down to the tee, the subtle indication by Pawar meant that though Ajit may be back in the NCP, things are unlikely to be the same and Ajit may be staring at a long arduous rehabilitation process.

Ajit had last week seemingly brought down the curtains on his association with NCP, by dramatically breaking away from family,



Supporters of Ajit Pawar shout slogans as NCP leaders hold a meeting in Mumbai on Tuesday. AP

dynasty and the political legacy of his uncle to chart an independent course as an ally of the BJP.

While Ajit embraced a strategy remarkably similar to the one used by Pawar, who had rebelled against his mentor Vasantdada Patil to form his own government in the 70s, the similarity between the two ends there. The nephew, who has the gumption of his uncle, however did not have the same clout to wean away NCP MLAs to his side.

In spite of an open rebellion by Ajit, the NCP, however, did not completely disown him with none of the senior party leaders, apart from Pawar, attacking him for what he had done.

The party deployed a battery of senior leaders to keep up the pressure on Ajit and goad him to return. While Ajit remained adamant he would not return, he decided to not take charge of his office and also kept away from an official government meeting called on Monday by then chief minister Devendra Fadnavis.

On Tuesday, too, dogged attempts were made to woo Ajit with senior NCP leaders like Bhujbal, Dilip Walse Patil and Sunil Tatkare, holding detailed deliberations with him at his residence. Members of the extended Pawar clan, including Sadanand Sule — the husband of Supriya Sule — also met Ajit.

"Calls were made by all family members, including Pratibha tai (Sharad Pawar's wife), asking him to reconsider," a close associate of Ajit said.

Apart from the emotional plea of family members, it was hardcore realpolitik that was instrumental in Ajit's rather tame withdrawal. The decision of most of the NCP MLAs who had accompanied him, to return to the NCP fold, rattled Ajit. Moreover, the Supreme Court's extensive orders on how the floor test should be conducted and the BJP's near abandonment made Ajit reconsider his decision.

The NCP, however, still seems to have kept the door slightly ajar for his reentry into the party. During the meeting of the Maha Vikas Aghadi, Bhujbal said, "We will need strong leaders. I request NCP leaders Jayant Patil and Praful Patel to go and get Ajit dada back to the NCP. I request Sharad Pawar sahab to give us the permission to do so."

Pawar chose to make no reference to Ajit in his speech. However, later in the night, the two are said to have had their first face-to-face meeting when Ajit dropped in to his uncle's residence. But party insiders say that unlike in the past, it may not be easy for Ajit to get into Pawar's good books that soon.

## Desperate for power, Sena leaders took oath in Sonia's name, says Fadnavis

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

NEARLY THREE days after he was sworn in as the chief minister, Devendra Fadnavis on Tuesday announced his resignation, saying the BJP no longer has majority after his deputy, NCP's Ajit Pawar, quit.

Speaking to mediapersons, Fadnavis accused BJP's estranged ally Shiv Sena of being desperate for the chief minister's post and surrendering its "Hindutva" ideology at the feet of Congress president Sonia Gandhi only to keep the BJP out of power.

"I want to congratulate those who will be forming the new government. I am confident that they will try to govern responsibly. But I have a fear that this new government will get buried under its own weight as there are so many internal contradictions. When I saw yesterday that Sena leaders were taking oath in the name of Sonia Gandhi, I realised how desperate Sena people had become to get power," Fadnavis said moments before resigning as the chief minister.

Maintaining even after the imposition of President's Rule in the state, Sena, Congress and NCP failed to form the government, Fadnavis said: "The reason behind this was that these three parties, which have disparate ideologies, were trying to come together for a common minimum programme (CMP). This CMP was limited to keeping the BJP out of power. Beyond this they could not take any decision."

# Oppn parties slam BJP, question Governor's role

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

ON A day the Supreme Court asked the BJP government in Maharashtra led by Devendra Fadnavis to prove its majority by 5 pm Wednesday, and Fadnavis resigned later in the day, the Congress asked Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari to shed his "RSS-BJP cloak" and invite the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress coalition to form the government, while the CPI(M) said Koshyari should resign now.

The Congress and the Left parties also said the turn of events in the state is a big blow to the BJP for its "manipulative politics" and "subversion of the Constitution".

In Kolkata, West Bengal Chief Minister and Trinamool Congress chief Mamata Banerjee said Fadnavis did the right thing by resigning as CM since the BJP did not have the numbers, but questioned Koshyari's decision to accept the letter of support from NCP's Ajit Pawar "without crosschecking it".

"People have only one question. What was the need to do it (invite Fadnavis without his party's majority)? We have heard about freedom at midnight but have never heard about government at midnight... The Governor (Koshyari) should have crosschecked whether that letter (from Ajit Pawar) came from the mother party," she said.

AICC general secretary K C Venugopal said, "After the Supreme Court verdict, it was clear that the cheap game of BJP would be over. It was only a matter of time when they (Fadnavis



BJP MLA Kalidas Kolambkar takes oath as Pro-Tem Speaker, administered by Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari. ANI

and Deputy CM Ajit Pawar) would resign. I would like to say clearly that it is not a failure of Devendra Fadnavis; it is a huge setback for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah. They had shown deplorable political immorality to grab power at any cost."

He accused the Prime Minister and BJP leaders of being directly involved in "murder of democracy". Venugopal said, "It is shameful that the Prime Minister and BJP leaders used the office of the President and the Governor to carry out their cheap political tactics."

Congress spokesperson Manish Tewari said, "We hope the Governor would draw the right lesson from this entire episode, shed his RSS-BJP cloak and appoint and invite 'Maha Vikas Aghadi' to form a government." He said the manner in which the Constitution was "mutilated and totally thrown out of the window" on Saturday morning will be "recorded in black letters in history".

Tewari also said the Congress hopes the Supreme Court will go into the manner in which the Constitution, rules, regulations, precedents and traditions were thrown to the winds when Koshyari acted in the "most partisan manner possible". Asked whether the Governor should resign, Tewari said even though morally he should, he will not, as the BJP and its leaders are not used to acting morally.

CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said, "Today is our 70th Constitution Day. It is expected from all Indians, especially those holding Constitutional positions, to adhere to Constitutional values and morality. The least that the Governor of Maharashtra must do now is to display moral conscience and quit."

His CPI counterpart D Raja said, "It is a blow to the BJP for its manipulative politics, subversion of Constitution and misuse of the offices of the Governor as well that of the President."

— WITH ENS, KOLKATA

# JMM releases poll manifesto, announces slew of sops

## Tough contest between Cong, BJP; Modi deciding factor

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
DALTONGANJ, NOVEMBER 26

WITH THE Assembly elections in Jharkhand set to start on November 30, the JMM released its poll manifesto, laying emphasis on reservation, education, land rights and MSP for agricultural produce.

The party promised free education to girls irrespective of caste, creed or religion.

The party also promised Rs 5,000 and Rs 7,000 to unemployed graduates and post-graduates.

The party pledged to provide 67 per cent reservation to STs, OBCs and SCs in government jobs, and said 75 per cent jobs in the private sector would be re-



JHARKHAND

served for locals.

The party also promised the introduction of "Bhoomi Adhikar Kanoon" (Right to Land Act), and said if it were to form the government, it would not acquire agricultural land for private firms.

For farmers, a kisan bank would be set up, and MSP for agriculture produce and fruits would be earmarked, the manifesto said, adding that the MSP for paddy would be between Rs 2,300 and Rs 2,700.

ABHISHEK ANGAD  
DALTONGANJ, NOVEMBER 26

IN JHARKHAND'S Daltonganj, residents say the contest between the Congress and the BJP will be tough. However, the decisive factor will be Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"Koi kisi ka chehra aur party nahi dekh raha hai, sirf Modi ko dekh raha hai (Nobody is seeing anybody's face or party, but only Modi)," said a priest at a temple in Subhash market.

Daltonganj, along with 12 other constituencies, is set to go to polls on November 30 as part of Phase 1 of the state Assembly

## SEAT WATCH DALTONGANJ

polls. Residents say Congress nominee K M Tripathi is more popular in these parts than BJP's Alok Chaurasia.

The priest says, "This temple was in a dilapidated condition, and Tripathi funded it and now we have solid structure. Chaurasia is not popular here. Despite what Tripathi has done, we will not vote for any candidate this time, but for our PM who has implemented a lot of schemes where people have been benefited."

Sanjay Vishwakarma, a businessman, says, "Because of Modi we have double benefits.



Members of the Sunni Central Waqf Board. Vishal Srivastav

## AYODHYA VERDICT

# Sunni Board to not file review plea, will take call on 5-acre land

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 26

THE SUNNI Central Waqf Board, a main litigant in the Ayodhya title suit case, on Tuesday reiterated that it would not file a review petition in the Supreme Court against the November 9 verdict that paved the way for the construction of a Ram Temple at the disputed site. However, the meeting of the Waqf Board here remained inconclusive over accepting the 5-acre land offered by the apex court in lieu of the disputed land given to Hindus for the temple.

Six of the seven members present at Tuesday's meeting, including chairman Zulfar Faruqui, agreed with the Board's decision to not align with All India Muslim Personal Law Board (AIMPLB), which has decided to file a review petition.

One of the members, High Court lawyer Abdul Razzaque, however, put in his dissent as he was in favour of filing the review petition.

Earlier, Razzaque and another Board member, Imran Mabood Khan, had alleged that Faruqui was not in favour of filing the review petition as he was facing criminal cases.

Mabood Khan skipped the meeting on Tuesday. "The Board has considered

the judgement of the Supreme Court passed in the Babri Masjid case. The Board has reiterated its stand that it will not file any review petition in the Supreme Court... We had taken a public stand that we will accept the apex court's decision, even if it is not in our favour. It was not just our stand, but was the stand of all petitioners in the Ayodhya case," Faruqui said after the meeting.

On the issue of five acres of land, Faruqui said the Board will take a decision on it soon.

"All further actions in compliance of the orders of Honourable Supreme Court of India, including the issue of five acres of land in Ayodhya, are still under consideration of the Board and no decision in this regard has been taken yet. The members of the Board have asked for more time to formulate their views," said Faruqui.

"We honour the Supreme Court's decision. And we had not raised this five-acre land issue. It was not our demand... The conversation about accepting or not accepting it has also started from somewhere else. We will follow the order," Faruqui added.

On asked if "following the order" would mean accepting the land as well, the chairman said, "The Supreme Court has asked the government to give us the land. We will discuss it among the Board members."

## BAGHEL'S PADDY MSP PROMISE

# Chhattisgarh CM says remaining amount to be given in new scheme

DIPANKAR GHOSH  
RAIPUR, NOVEMBER 26

WITH THE opposition BJP in Chhattisgarh raising the pitch against the ruling Congress for going back on its poll promise of minimum support price (MSP) of Rs 2,500 per quintal of paddy, Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Tuesday sought to reiterate that his government was committed to giving farmers that amount, and that the remaining Rs 600 would be given in a "Nyay Scheme" in the budget session.

On Monday, Baghel had announced his government would only be able to procure paddy at Rs 1,815 and 1,835 per quintal, as per the Centre's MSP, blaming Delhi for not allowing leeway in rules that allow for the Centre to procure excess paddy into the central pool, even if the state MSP is higher than that mandated by the Government of India.

In response, the BJP announced a protest on December

## Soon, Constitution classes in schools

**Raipur:** On Constitution Day, Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel announced that school children in the state would be given specialised training on the Constitution. He said that it was the Constitution that had given the country the gift of equality, and that it was important that students at the school level inculcate this. **ENS**

2, with its leaders alleging that this is a "betrayal of farmers".

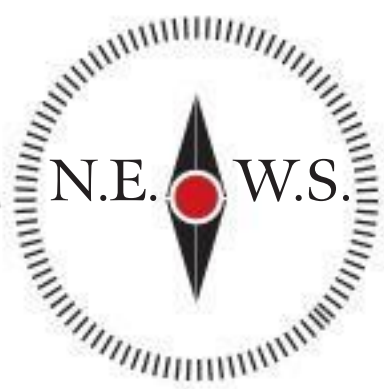
In the Assembly on Tuesday, Baghel said that "nothing could stop farmers from getting their Rs 2500 per quintal". He said, "The ministerial sub-committee will submit its report quickly. And we will announce a scheme to give the remaining money to farmers in the budget session. We are committed to our promise."

like PM Modi, Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh have campaigned in the area for first phase. Who are the big names from Congress?"

However, not all buy into the argument. A vegetable vendor and his customer both disagree that BJP has a clear mandate. The customer says, "Many upper-class voters are against the BJP this time, partly because of Raghuram Das's image... People are not happy. The local MLA is not seen with the people. It will be a tough contest and any party can win." He said that the decisive factor would be rural voters who have been benefitted by Central schemes.



## 10 EXPRESS NETWORK



## NORTH

## Man stabs woman to death after her marriage is fixed

**Noida:** A 19-year-old woman was stabbed to death, allegedly by a man who wanted to have ties with her, after the woman's marriage was fixed with another person. Bulbul, the victim, was in her house in Jarauth when Rahul, the accused, entered and stabbed her multiple times. Bulbul was rushed to the hospital,

where she was declared brought dead. The family told the police that the accused would bother Bulbul in the past as well. "Prima facie it appears... (Rahul) was aggrieved with her getting married to another person. The accused is absconding and will be arrested soon," said a senior police official. **ENS**



DRDO chairman G Satheesh Reddy presents a student with her degree during the annual convocation of Mumbai University on Tuesday. **PTI**

## WEST

## Teacher arrested for thrashing students with stick

**Vadodara:** A teacher with a private school was on Tuesday arrested for beating six students of Class VIII with sticks. According to the complainant, his son returned home from school on Monday afternoon with a severe back ache and bruises on his hands. On being asked about the injuries, he informed his parents that he,

along with his friends, was thrashed by their teacher Pradeepsinh Parmar in class. The parents of all six students confronted the principal the next day, after after CCTV footage confirmed the beating, filed a police complaint. The police then arrested Parmar from the school. The school has also suspended Parmar. **ENS**

## EAST

## Super-30 founder fined over non-appearance in HC

**Guwahati:** The Gauhati High Court on Tuesday fined Anand Kumar, the founder of Patna-based coaching institute Super-30, for failing to appear in court in connection with a PIL accusing him of cheating IIT aspirants. The court has also asked Kumar to be present before the court on November 28, the next date of hearing. "Because he did not

appear in the court today, the court asked him (Kumar) to pay Rs 10,000 each as compensation to the five persons — student and guardians — who had turned up for the hearing," said Amit Goyal, advocate for the petitioners in the case. The copy of the order was not available on the website of the court till the time of filling this report. **ENS**

## SOUTH

## Man sentenced to life for setting colleague ablaze

**Hyderabad:** A Hyderabad court on Tuesday convicted a 30-year-old teacher of a private school for killing a woman colleague by setting her ablaze in March 2015. The city court found Challa Shiva Prasad guilty and sentenced him to life imprisonment. It also slapped a fine of Rs2000 on him, a release from the Rachakonda Police

Commissionerate said. Police said Prasad and his colleague used to frequently quarrel over the running of the school. On March 24, 2015, Prasad went to her house, pushed her down, doused her with kerosene and set her ablaze. Based on a complaint filed by the woman's husband, a case was registered and Prasad was arrested, police said. **PTI**

## On J&amp;K restrictions, UT admn tells top court: Can't wait while people die

Solicitor General says Internet ban meant to deter J&K leaders from instigating people

**ANANTHAKRISHNAN**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

REFERRING TO allegedly inflammatory statements of some mainstream politicians in J&K to back the Centre's move to impose restrictions in the wake of the August 5 amendments to Article 370, Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir on Tuesday told the Supreme Court that the administration "cannot wait for people to die".

Appearing for J&K, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta told a bench of Justices N V Ramana, R Subhash Reddy and BR Gavai that the government was aware that "any reformative measure for the good of people will have some reactions from separatist elements". He said "these factors weighed with our officers" while putting in place the "preventive measures".

The court is hearing petitions filed by *Kashmir Times* executive

editor Anuradha Bhasin and Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad challenging the restrictions in J&K.

Mehta said that in the run-up to August 5, there was speculation that the Centre would do something about Article 35A or Article 370 and many leaders in the Valley made threatening public statements. On July 28, he pointed out, "a former Chief Minister" stated that "tinkering with Article 35A will be akin to setting a powder keg on fire. If any hand tries to touch Article 35A, not only that hand but the whole body will be burnt to ashes."

Although Mehta did not name the leader concerned, he appeared to be referring to PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

Mehta referred to another statement by Mehbooba where she had said there will be no one left to carry the Tricolour if something happens to Article 35A. She said that "local militants are sons

of the soil and our assets", and urged the ulema "who are assisting terror from across the border" to respond to the Centre's moves, he submitted.

Mehta then referred to statements by former CM and current Lok Sabha MP Farooq Abdullah of the NC and Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq and said these were not part of right to protest but "instigating people for uprising".

He said many of these statements were on public platforms such as Twitter, and "these are some of the facts by which I will be able to justify the internet restriction". Mehta said it is "absolutely wrong to say Internet was banned in the whole state". He said there were no restrictions in Jammu and Ladakh regions of the erstwhile state.

He said anti-India propaganda was being pushed through the Internet in a large way, and hashtags used to mul-

tiply the message by thousands of times and incite people. "It's a cyber-war, (a) psychological war emanating from across the border," he said, adding that many tweets originated from Twitter handles of Pakistani Army.

"These are exceptional (situations) which require exceptional remedies," Mehta added.

On allegations that people were not allowed to move out, the S-G said individual movement was not restricted but only congregations.

Mehta said that daily reports of the CID were submitted to SPs, who in turn submitted them to magistrates before "need-based restrictions" were put in place. He said he had with him some of these reports, including on cross-border threats, and could show it to the bench, but to no one else.

Senior advocates H Ahmadi and Advocate Vrinda Grover opposed this and said if the government wanted to claim privilege,

it must put the same on affidavit and they will also file their objections. Grover said if the court relies on arguments based on these reports, then she would be handicapped since she cannot respond without knowing the contents.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, also appearing for the petitioners, said there was no need to look into the reports as it can be assumed that such reports about cross-border threats do exist. The court agreed to this and said it will proceed on that assumption.

Sibal also countered the government's claims that the situation was normal in J&K. Referring to figures submitted by Mehta stating that over 99 per cent students attended exams for Class XI, Sibal said, "What else could they do? They will lose a year if they don't.... But that doesn't mean children were attending schools."



Policemen stand guard near the spot where the grenade exploded in Srinagar. **Shuaib Masoodi**

## For Internet in Valley, give 6-point undertaking to police

**BASHAARAT MASOOD**  
SRINAGAR, NOVEMBER 26

IN THE Valley, if one wants to access the Internet, they have to give an undertaking to the police in which the user "allows complete access to all content and infrastructure", promises not to surf social media or upload "any encrypted file", and pledges that "all USB ports on the network will be disabled".

Over the last two weeks, Internet service providers in the Valley have restored broadband Internet to over a 100 business companies — these include hotels in Srinagar, Gulmarg and Pahalgam, tour and travel agents in Srinagar, IT companies and some business organisations. The Internet to these businesses has been restored after clearance from the J&K Police, which has sought the undertaking.

Internet has also been restored to police offices and some government offices.

This undertaking is mandatory for those seeking Internet

access, and has six conditions. It reads, "In order to make sure that our Internet is restricted to business purposes only, below are the measures that are in place on our network."

The conditions include: ■ that from the allowed IP, there will be no social networking, proxies, VPNs and WiFi ■ that no encrypted file containing any sort of video/photo will be uploaded ■ that we also have MAC binding in place to restrict Internet access to registered devices through single PC ■ that all USB ports will be disabled on the network ■ that the company will be responsible for any kind of breach and misuse of internet ■ that the company will provide complete access to all its content and infrastructure as and when requested by the security agencies.

A senior police official told *The Indian Express* that while the undertaking is mandatory for the restoration of Internet, it depends on police whether to clear

the business house or office for restoration of broadband services. "There are several factors taken into consideration before restoring Internet to any office or business house," said the officer. "The police clearance is mandatory. It is not necessary that whosoever signs the bond will get his Internet connection restored."

While the internet has been restored to Doordarshan and All India Radio, it is yet to be restored to media offices and journalists in the Valley.

On Tuesday, a list of journalists working in the Valley was sought by the Centre from J&K Police.

Police officials say the list has been sought to find out the possibility of restoring Internet to journalists and media offices.

All forms of the Internet — from broadband to mobile Internet — has been barred in the Valley since August 5, when the Centre abrogated the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated the state into two Union Territories.

## Terror funding: ED takes possession of Watali's assets worth Rs 6.20 cr

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE (ED) has taken physical possession of immovable properties worth Rs 6.20 crore belonging to Kashmiri businessman Zahoore Ahmad Shah Watali and his family members in connection with a case of alleged terror funding.

These properties, the ED has said, are in the form of parcels of land and are situated at Sozeith Goripora village in Budgam district of J&K.

"The attachment of these immovable properties have been confirmed by the Hon'ble Adjudicating Authority (PMLA). These attachments were made in the ongoing investigations under PMLA in the case against Hafiz Muhammad Saeed and others," an ED statement said.

The ED case is based on a chargesheet filed by the NIA against Saeed and 11 others for allegedly fuelling unrest in Kashmir with funds sourced from Pakistan and through Saeed.

"Zahoore Ahmad Shah Watali has been found to be involved in raising of funds and acting as a financial conduit for Hurriyat leaders. He was remitting funds to the Hurriyat leaders and separatists. All Party Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and other secessionists instigated the general public, especially the youth, to observe strikes and resort to violence especially stone-pelting on the security forces at encounter sites," the ED said in a statement.

According to the ED, one Naval Kishore Kapoor was instrumental in mobilising funds from unknown sources in Dubai and remitted the same to Watali and his company M/s Trison Farms and Construction Pvt. Ltd.

"The said transactions were carried out in the guise of a lease agreement between M/s Trison Farms and Construction Pvt. Ltd. and Naval Kishore Kapoor which was found to be only a legal façade to bring funds from unknown sources in Dubai to India. The funds involved in such transactions have been considered as proceeds of crime in terms of the Provisions of PMLA," the ED said.

## Fire at shrine in Kashmir's Tral triggers protests, shutdown

**Srinagar:** A fire at a shrine in Kashmir's Tral on Monday night triggered protests through the night, and with the town and adjoining villages observing a complete shutdown on Tuesday. The Mir Syed Mohammad Hamdani shrine was partially damaged while a mosque, specific for women, was completely gutted in the fire.

Police said in a statement, "The police has taken cognizance of the act under the relevant sections of law and investigation is on to nab the culprits behind the miscreant act."

J&K's Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu condemned the incident and asked people to "maintain peace and calm and not get swayed any rumour-mongering by any inimical element". **ENS**

## Dhankhar, Mamata spar over constitutional role of Governor

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 26

THE WAR of words between West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee inflamed on Tuesday as the two addressed the special session of the Assembly to mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of Constitution.

Dhankhar, who was invited to address the House on the invitation of Speaker Biman Banerjee, hit out at the TMC government, saying that the post of the state's constitutional head has been "seriously compromised". Mamata also hit back, saying that the post of Governor in her state was being "badly misused".

There was, however, no direct exchange of words on the floor of

the House. Both also did not exchange words with each other.

"It is a worrisome situation in our country in some areas where people holding constitutional positions take to the public domain in mission mode and campaign and project defiance of the law of the land or constitutionally-sanctioned steps of the government. This cannot be countenanced as it runs counter to Constitutional essence. I call upon them to desist from such misguided intrepid approach as the same is pregnant with unpalatable consequences," the Governor said.

"The post of the constitutional head of the state has been seriously compromised. This is an unprecedented and challenging situation. I would call upon the lawmakers to ask their conscience," Dhankhar said in his address.

Meanwhile, Banerjee said, "The apex court has upheld the Constitution and it is the best gift as we mark 70 years of adoption of the Indian Constitution."

"Efforts are on to destroy the Constitution. We have heard about freedom at midnight but have never heard about government at midnight," Banerjee said, alluding to the acclaimed book *Freedom at Midnight* that chronicled India's journey to Independence.

"In my state, the post of the Governor is being badly misused. No one should forget that the Governor is a nominated post but the state government is elected. We are not at anyone's mercy," she later told mediapersons.

"We never had any problems with previous Governors. So, it needs to be seen who is responsible for this situation."

## 70TH CONSTITUTION DAY

## Interpretation of Constitution work in progress: Kovind

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

INTERPRETATION OF the Constitution is a work in progress, and it will be up to the youth of India to carry forward the task of realising its ideals, President Ram Nath Kovind said at an event to mark the Constitution Day on Tuesday.

Kovind said authors of the Constitution took extra care in providing the Supreme Court necessary powers and freedom to function without any undue influence, and "over these eventful seven decades, the judiciary has remained alive to the high responsibility placed on it".

Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said right to faith is also a fundamental right. Indicating the Ayodhya



CJI Sharad Arvind Bobde and Ravi Shankar Prasad



judgment, he said it has noted the assimilating traditions of India.

Without making any mention of Ayodhya, Prasad said, "In the light of a recent judgment, I see a lot of enlightened opinion coming on the issue of faith. Let us all that recognise right to faith is also a fundamental right under Article 25 and other Articles. I think if there is a com-

peting claim over a particular piece of land depending on the importance of a particular religion, the Supreme Court as the highest court...based upon elaborate evidence to come to a conclusion. But one particular aspect of that judgment is required to be highlighted where the court has particularly noted the assimilating traditions of India, which has im-

pacted all religions over the years."

He said no religion is an exception to that. "That assimilating, integrating tradition of India is what is truly the heritage of India, and the Constitution-makers have always recognised that."

Prasad said that in the original version of the Constitution, which was animated with India's heritage, "there is Akbar, but not Babar, (and) we need to recall that".

Speaking at the event, Chief Justice of India S A Bobde said, "The Constituent Assembly members knew they were shaping lives, livelihoods and the culture of every single citizen of India. It is therefore important for us to remember that this document is not a legal framework to conduct the affairs of our nation but indeed a 'framework of

life' for all citizens.... The Constitution does not belong to individuals in black robes - that is, lawyers or judges, or individuals who have been duly elected, or even the government - but belongs to each and every individual of this country."

Delivering the welcome address, Justice N V Ramana said, "People must recognise that the Constitution not just provides rights but also sets out Constitutional duties. Strengthening the Constitution requires improving the functioning and maintenance of the constitutional institutions. It also needs us to leave behind the colonial mindset with respect to how institutions are run in the country."

FULL REPORT ON  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



## Rajasthan urban local body polls: Congress wins 35 of 49 posts

**HAMZA KHAN**  
JAIPUR, NOVEMBER 26

RIDING ON the back of a strong show in municipal elections, the Congress party on Tuesday won the post of chairperson or mayor in as many as 35 of the 49 urban local bodies, while the BJP had to contend with 13.

A total of 3 Nagar Nigam, 17 Nagar Parishad, and 29 Nagar Palika had gone to polls, for a total of 49 urban local bodies. Of these, Jaisalmer Nagar Parishad was won by an Independent, while the rest were shared between Congress and BJP.

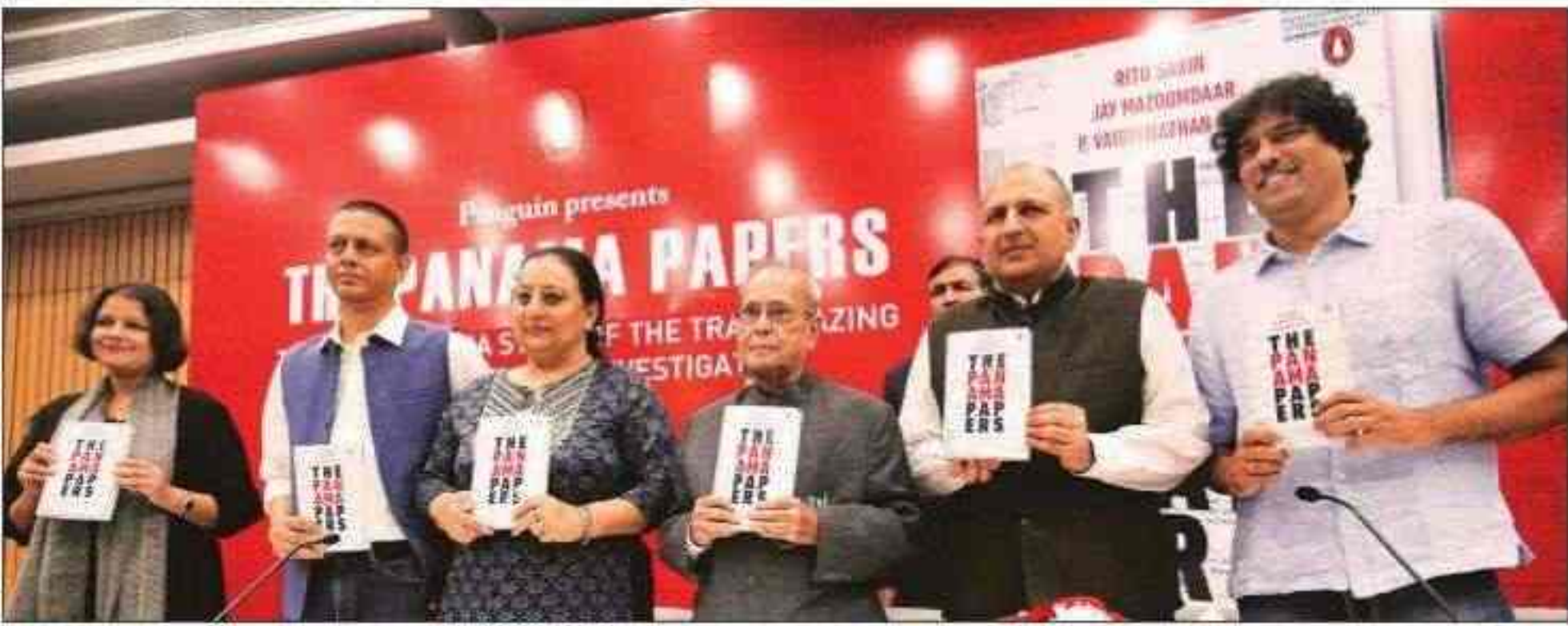
Congress won the top post in 21 Nagar Palikas, 13 Nagar Parishads, and the Bharatpur Nagar Nigam, while BJP won it in 7 Nagar Palikas, 4 Nagar Parishads and 2 Nagar Nigams.

Candidates won unopposed in three seats. BJP's Babita was elected unopposed from Bharatpur's Roopwas Nagar Palika. However, hours after her victory, she joined the Congress. The State Election Commission, however, has still officially listed it as a BJP win. Congress won unopposed in two other places, including Chittorgarh's Nimbaheda Nagar Palika, which was won by Subhash Chandra Sharda and Nagaur's Makrana Nagar Parishad, where Samreen won.

At 26, Samreen is among the youngest to be elected. Kavita Suman, 24, who was elected from Kota's Sangod Nagar Palika, is the youngest. Women won a total of 21 urban local bodies while men won the other 28.

The winner was decided via lottery in three places where Congress and BJP were tied. Ajmer's Nasirabad Nagar Palika and Udaipur's Kanod Nagar Palika were won by Congress, while BJP won Chhabra Nagar Palika in Baran.

CM Ashok Gehlot said, "People have so graciously given their support and we will do our best to fulfill their aspirations."



Former President Pranab Mukherjee with Indian Express Executive Editor (National Affairs) P Vaidyanathan Iyer, Contributing Editor Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Executive Editor (Investigations) Ritu Sarin, Associate Editor Jay Mazoomdaar and Penguin India Senior Commissioning Officer Swati Chopra at the launch of 'The Panama Papers' in New Delhi. *Praveen Khanna*

## A large section of media appears reticent to ask questions: Pranab

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

APPRECIATING THE role of the media in a democracy, former President Pranab Mukherjee on Tuesday said the media, in the classical sense, is a watchdog of democracy, freedom and independence, but lamented that a large section of Indian media has become reticent to question those in power.

Being the fourth pillar of democracy, the media is "bestowed with extreme power, since it has the power to hold the other three pillars — the executive, legislature and the judiciary — accountable", Mukherjee said.

Speaking at the launch of the book *The Panama Papers*, written by *The Indian Express* Executive Editor (Investigations) Ritu Sarin, Associate Editor Jay Mazoomdaar and Executive Editor (National Affairs) P Vaidyanathan Iyer, Mukherjee said that "at a time when a large section of the media in India appears to be reticent to ask questions to the powers that be, this book is a perfect re-

minder to shed that restraint".

He said the media is "mediation between people and public servants" and "has the power to shape public opinion and to shape the power itself".

Mukherjee said the cornerstone of any democracy is respect for law and order in that country, and "it is essential for economic activity to be in legal framework and national priority".

Recounting his time as Union Finance Minister, before he was elected the President in 2012, he said he had initiated a series of studies to find out the exact quantum of unaccounted money in the system. Mukherjee said he has been told that the three reports he had ordered have been completed and submitted to the government, but the government is yet to release them.

"I had doubts about the exact quantum of unaccounted money" in the system, and "very fictitious figures were rolled out — sometimes not so high, sometimes astronomically high", Mukherjee said. He said he then designated three agencies to study the problem and "exactly

indicate the quantum of unaccounted money operating here and operating abroad".

The agencies he named are the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, National Council of Applied Economic Research, and the National Institute of Financial Management.

"I have been told that these reports (have been) submitted but they have not yet been made public. Why it has not yet been made public... that the government should explain," he said.

He said there was also a white paper with "substantial information" about how the black money operates in the system, but it did not include its quantum.

Stating that tax evasion and tax avoidance are as old as the civilisation, Mukherjee said measures to curb them can never be stopped and will be a continued exercise.

Mukherjee said he appreciates the "elaborate exercise made in this book, even in the process of the investigation, how it should be undertaken and from where to start, and in that process revealing the extreme complex nature

of the operation".

He said in doing the reports, published as a series in *The Indian Express* in collaboration with the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists in 2016, Sarin, Mazoomdaar and Iyer had lived up to the motto of *The Indian Express* of pursuing "journalism of courage". The book and the investigation, he said, is "just not an experimental account of this global investigation (but) also forms a ready reckoner of how an investigation in such a massive story should be carried out".

*The Indian Express's* contributing editor Pratap Bhanu Mehta, who was the guest of honour at the event, called the book a "remarkable story of endurance and commitment to truth". He said the book is about offshore tax finance and is "not a sideshow", including only a "few prominent corrupt individuals, or people who want to avoid taxes". Mehta said it has become a "global lubricant" and is "close to be the main show" as nearly 40 per cent of global companies are phantom companies used to move money around.

## 3 from Kerala among those who surrendered in Afghanistan: Agencies

Surrender of IS operatives fuels hope among some families

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
NEW DELHI,  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
NOVEMBER 26

THREE YOUTHS from Kerala, including two women, who were among more than 20 from the state who left for Afghanistan in 2016 to join the Islamic State, are suspected to be among hundreds of IS operatives who surrendered before Afghan authorities in the last one week. Sources said the possibility of more Indians among the surrendered terrorists can not be denied.

Based on photographs of the surrendered IS affiliates obtained from national agencies, intelligence officials in Kerala have prima facie identified three persons. "We have unofficially come to the conclusion that the surrendered include Thasleem of Pappinassery in Kannur, Aysha alias Sonia Sebastian, and Rahaila. There is no official confirmation but we have come to the assumption matching their photographs," sources said.

Some families in Kerala are now keeping their fingers crossed, anticipating the return of missing family members, in the wake of the surrender.

A software engineer from Ernakulam, Sonia Sebastian alias Aysha had converted to Islam after marrying Abdul Rashid Abdullah, said to be the kingpin of the module that engineered the exodus of over 20 youths from

Kasaragod and Palakkad areas of Kerala in May and June of 2016.

Thasleem was an activist of the Popular Front of India before moving to Afghanistan, sources said.

Rahaila is the wife of Dr Ejaz — of Padanna in Kasaragod — who is believed to be killed in US drone attacks.

"We have actually received three photographs of a group of surrendered operatives from Afghan authorities informally. In one of the photographs, a woman sitting with a child looks very similar to Aysha. We have asked our Afghan contacts to send more and better pictures of the woman to confirm our suspicion. Once that is done, we will request the authorities to hand her over to our embassy there which will bring her to India," an officer in the security establishment said.

"Largely those who have surrendered are Pakistanis. A large number of women and children as well have surrendered. Almost half the Indians who had gone there have already been killed," the officer said.

Bindu Sampath, a resident of Thiruvananthapuram, who has been eagerly waiting to hear about her daughter Nimisha, said, "The reports about the surrender of IS men and women have given some hope to us. We are awaiting to hear some positive news after my daughter went missing. We hope our prayers would be finally heard by God."

Nimisha had married a

Muslim convert from Palakkad and gave birth to a baby in Afghanistan. Her husband Bexen alias Eesa was reportedly killed.

After a prolonged battle between Afghan forces and IS operatives in the Nangarhar province, more than 600 IS affiliates surrendered in the last one week. Shah Mahmood Miakhel, Governor of the eastern Nangarhar province, was quoted on November 17 by local media as having said, "The surrendered people include 225 [male] fighters and 190 women and 200 children. Most of them are Pakistanis but they include citizens of other countries."

Miakhel told the media that the Afghan government might hand over some of the surrendered women and children to the embassies of their respective countries in Kabul.

The group from Kerala was led by Abdul Rashid Abdullah, who had returned from Oman a few years ago to study communication engineering in Pala. He later worked for a private firm where he also met his future wife Sonia. Rashid soon left his job and began working for an Islamic foundation in Kerala for a much lower salary. Agencies believe that it was during this time that he got attracted to the Islamic State and began recruiting through online groups in the state. "Abdullah is still alive and he is not among the surrendered is what we have learnt as of now," an officer said.

**DHAKA REFUSES TO TAKE ALL 58 IMMIGRANTS AT ONE GO**

## Bengaluru DCP in Kolkata to sort out deportation snags

**EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE**  
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 26

A SENIOR Bengaluru police officer who is the nodal officer for deportation of 58 alleged illegal Bangladeshi immigrants detained in the city on October 25 is in Kolkata at present to iron out procedural concerns raised by local authorities in West Bengal and Bangladesh in pushing back all the people at one go.

Bengaluru DCP (East) S D Sharanappa has been in Kolkata for the last two days to address the concerns, police officials here said.

The 58 people arrived at Howrah railway station, near Kolkata, on Saturday afternoon along with a 30-member Karnataka police escort team.

Bangladeshi authorities have opposed the efforts to push back 58 people across the border at one shot and have agreed to take them back in batches of five to 10 members, a senior police officer said.

The 58 people, including 40 women and children, worked in Bengaluru as informal waste management workers for the city corporation or as domestic helps. They had told police at the time of detention last month that they are from Bangladesh's Bagerhat district.

Meanwhile, the state government on Tuesday told Karnataka High Court that 35 detention

centres are being set up across the state to house identified illegal foreigners before deportation.

On the issue of deporting the illegal immigrants, a senior Bengaluru police officer said, "There have been some problems at the local level in accepting the responsibility for handing them over to Bangladesh. The DCP has been in Kolkata over the last two days to sort things out and ensure that deportation takes place."

Bengaluru police had arrested 60 alleged illegal immigrants on October 25, and 58 of them were moved to Kolkata for deportation after obtaining clearances from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA).

"The deportation is taking place through an informal agreement between the two countries, so there have been questions raised at the local level in Bengal, and by Bangladesh.

These have been addressed since the deportation has occurred with FRRO (Foreigner Regional Registration Office) and MHA clearances," a senior officer said. With Bangladeshi authorities not allowing deportation of all 58 people at one go, the police team will remain in West Bengal until all of them are sent to Bangladesh, the police said.

Meanwhile, in an affidavit filed before the bench of Justice K N Phaneendra, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Rajneesh Goel stated that 35 detention centres will be set up with all basic necessities, as outlined by a January 2019 manual of the MHA. The bench is monitoring creation of detention centres for illegal immigrants.

The first detention centre of standards prescribed by the Union Home Ministry is expected to be opened in rural Bengaluru early next year.

## Kerala cops deny protection to six women to visit Sabarimala; activist attacked

**SHAJU PHILIP**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
NOVEMBER 26

DAYS AFTER the Supreme Court clarified that there was no stay on its 2018 verdict allowing women of all ages entry to Sabarimala temple, Kerala Police on Tuesday refused to give protection to six women, including Bindu Ammini, who was among the two to have successfully made it to the hill shrine last year under police protection.

Trupti Desai, a gender rights activist from Maharashtra, was also among those refused protection.

Amid violence by pro-Hindutva activists, one person attacked Bindu, 41, with chilli powder spray to deter the women from proceeding to the temple. The assailant was arrested. He was identified as Sreenath Padmanabhan, state coordinator of Hindu Helpline, a VHP venture to help Hindus in distress.

The incident took place outside Kochi police commissionerate, where Bindu and the others had gone seeking police protection for their planned visit to the hill shrine.



Activist Bindu Ammini was attacked by Hindu Helpline state coordinator Sreenath Padmanabhan outside the office of the Police Commissioner, in Kochi, Tuesday. *PTI*

While Desai and four others reached Kochi in an early-morning flight, Bindu, a guest faculty member at Government Law College, Kozhikode, joined them. As news channels began report-

ing that they had approached the police for protection, hundreds of devotees, including women activists of Sabarimala Protection Samithi and pro-Hindutva activists, converged

outside the police commissionerate. The protesters dispersed later, only after the police denied protection to the women to proceed for the trek.

Later in the evening, Desai and

**EXPLAINED**  
**A political reaction**

LAST YEAR, the CPI(M)-led government had helped Bindu Ammini and Kanakadurga reach Sabarimala temple under police protection as part of its policy to ensure gender justice and in an effort to "implement the apex court's order". But a drubbing in the recent Lok Sabha elections, with many seeing it as a reaction to the party's stand on women's entry at Sabarimala, appears to have forced the government to jettison its plan this year.

## Delhi court summons former Orissa HC judge in corruption case

**ANAND MOHAN J**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

A DELHI court on Tuesday summoned former Orissa High Court judge Justice I M Quddusi and others accused of trying to influence court proceedings over an application to grant admission rights to a UP-based private medical college barred by the Medical Council of India.

After taking cognizance of the chargesheet filed against them, Special Judge Anil Kumar Sisodia directed Quddusi and six others to appear before the court on January 9, 2020.

The court also summoned BP Yadav and Palash Yadav of Prasad Educational Trust which runs the medical college in Lucknow, alleged middleman Biswanath Agrawala, alleged hawala operator Ramdev Saraswat, Bhavna Pandey and Sudhir Giri as accused in the case. The CBI has ac-

cused all seven of criminal conspiracy and corruption.

"From the perusal of the chargesheet, statements of the witnesses and the documents filed along with chargesheet, I am of the considered opinion that there is sufficient material to take cognizance... Summons be issued to Accused-1 to Accused-7 for the next date of hearing," the court said.

The CBI FIR alleged that promoters of the Prasad Institute of Medical Sciences, among the institutes barred from admitting students for two years, moved the Supreme Court and also allegedly got in touch with Quddusi and Bhawana Pandey who allegedly promised to get the matter settled. According to CBI, Quddusi advised the promoters to withdraw the petition in SC and file another one in Allahabad High Court. Quddusi allegedly promised relief from court in exchange for bribes to influential people.



# Mother, lover kill 6-yr-old to keep relationship under wraps, mutilate body: UP Police

AMIL BHATNAGAR  
NOIDA, NOVEMBER 26

A WOMAN, along with her lover, allegedly murdered her own daughter after the minor allegedly saw the two in a compromising position at her house in a village in Hathras district. The six-year-old's body was found in a field close to the village on November 12. The duo initially

told the police that the girl was raped and murdered, allegedly to derail the police probe.

The two accused were Tuesday arrested and sent to judicial custody, police said.

"The police received information in the evening of November 12 that a minor's body had been found in a particular village. Prima facie it appeared that the minor had been inflicted with sexual violence and that she was murdered. For the next few days, we questioned the villagers including the woman and her neighbour with whom she was having an affair. We found inconsistencies in the testimonies and called the two for further questioning. They admitted to causing injuries on her private

## The two accused were Tuesday arrested and sent to judicial custody

parts and killing her. The duo has been sent to judicial custody," said Hathras SP Siddharth Shankar Meena.

According to police, the woman was having an extra-marital affair with her neighbour for the past six months. On November 12, the minor walked into her own house and allegedly saw the two in a compromising position, after which she ran away. The two accused became apprehensive and feared that the girl might tell other family members about their relationship, police said.

The duo then decided to kill the minor to ensure that nobody gets to know of their relation-

ship. They allegedly mutilated the girl's private parts and dumped her body in a field, 500 metres away from the house. The duo allegedly wanted to make it appear that the minor was raped and murdered.

After the police began investigations, the couple pretended that a third person was responsible for the murder of the minor and provided versions accordingly. Once more people were questioned, the police were informed that several other villagers were aware of the illicit relationship. One of the woman's family members also told the police that the woman was capable of carrying out such an act. After several leads, the police met the couple and found that their versions of whereabouts at the time of incident were conflicting with other testimonies. The duo eventually confessed to the crime, police said.

## 3 TERROR SUSPECTS HELD IN ASSAM

# Families deny police accusations, say their sons are being framed

ABHISHEK SAHA  
KRISHNAI (GOALPARA),  
NOVEMBER 26

ON OCTOBER 30, Mukaddir Islam, a 21-year-old electric-rickshaw driver in Assam's Goalpara district, filled up an online application form for job in the Indian Army in the JCO/OR category. Since then, his father Zabiul Islam says, Mukaddir was jogging and running regularly to pass the fitness requirement in the selection process.

Almost a month later, on November 24, Mukaddir, his cousin Luit Zaman (24), and Ranjeet Ali (24) were arrested in a joint operation by the Special Cell of the Delhi and Assam Police from a lodge in Goalpara town.

In a statement, Delhi Police's Special Cell described the three as terrorists and accused them of running an "ISIS-inspired module" in Assam. They are accused of planning to carry a "complete IED" to a local Hindu religious congregation with heavy footfall, the Raas Mela, and to explode the IED.

According to Delhi Police, "a trap was laid" near the lodge to nab the three, and that the accused have confessed during "initial interrogation" that they had similar plans to carry out attacks in Delhi and had planned the Assam blasts as a "test run".



Luit Zaman's parents, Mehboob and Lutfa. Abhishek Saha

However, their parents and relatives have denied the accusations and alleged that their sons were "being framed".

Zabiul told *The Indian Express*, "How can someone who wanted to join the Army and serve his country be connected to ISIS? My son has never been even remotely associated with any extremist organisation and this allegation against him is fabricated."

Luit worked at an Aadhaar enrolment centre at a bank in Goalpara town. His mother Lutfa Begum said the cousins left their house on Saturday afternoon and never returned. She said, "On Sunday evening, police came to raid our house. They asked me if there were knives or machetes in the house. They said there were photos on Luit's mobile. I handed

them two knives and household machetes which we use to cut vegetables or the bushes which grow surrounding our house. How can they claim those knives as evidence that Luit is related to terrorist organisations?"

The Delhi Police, however, has said that in the recovery items, there were "two baton swords". Describing Luit in a tweet, Delhi Police said he "had gained local notoriety for a failed love affair" and then "turned extremist inspired by online content".

Begum told *The Indian Express* she has no idea as to what online content Luit was browsing, but says he was in a consensual relationship with a Hindu woman, but in September a police complaint of kidnapping was filed against her son. "The only charge

against him is this woman — related case — there has been no complaints or allegations against him ever," she said.

Meanwhile, Ranjeet Ali's brother Rafiqul Islam said, "Ranjeet sells fish at the local market. He also occasionally works as an electrician. In his room, there are often parts of meter-boards, wires and batteries. During the police raid, I think they took a meter-board and now, they are using parts from it as evidence against my brother. We have never before received any complaint against my brother."

When asked for a comment on the family's allegations of the three being framed, Goalpara SP Sushanta Biswa Sarma said, "We will investigate the case and only then the truth will be found. They are in remand for 12 days."

Delhi Police has said they recovered a "complete IED", "1 kg of explosive powder" and IED components such as pipes, nails, ball bearings from the three accused. Police has not specified the explosive material.

DCP (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said that "the explosives have been sent to the forensic science laboratory and the exact content will be known then".

A police officer said, "Our source-based information said that it's the same contents used to make crackers."

## SP leader held for attempt to molest doctor, assaulting her husband

AMIT SHARMA  
MEERUT, NOVEMBER 26

A SAMAJWADI Party (SP) leader in Meerut has been arrested after he and his accomplices tried to molest a woman, and after facing resistance, beat up her husband with iron rods and lathis while attempting to drag her out of her car. The incident occurred on late on Friday, when the doctor couple, who work at a state-run medical college in Meerut, were returning home.

In an FIR lodged at the police station, the woman said that SP leader Pinkle Gurjar had been stalking her for a few days. On Friday, Gurjar and four unidentified people with him tried to molest her when she was returning home. "They tried to pull me out of the car and also brutally beat my husband when both of us put up resistance," she said in the FIR.

"The main accused has been arrested, while raids are being conducted to nab his accomplices. He is associated with a mainstream political party and has threatened the victim many times earlier. A case under IPC Sections 307 (murderous assault), 294 (obscene act or words in public place) has been registered against him while we are hopeful of arresting others very soon," Singh said.

MILIND GHATWAI  
BHOPAL, NOVEMBER 26

A WHISTLEBLOWER in the Vyapam scam has written to the CBI demanding that a video, which purportedly shows former technical education minister and one of the main accused Laxmikant Sharma in the company of one of the five women accused in the honey trap case, be treated as evidence for further investigation. The video, which went viral last week, purportedly shows the former BJP leader admitting that he concealed information regarding the alleged complicity of a former chief minister, a former Union minister and a senior RSS leader in the scam.

The demand by whistleblower Anand Rai comes in the wake of a Special CBI Court convicting and sending 31 persons, including candidates, impersonators and racketeers, to jail for seven to 10 years in one of the Vyapam cases related to irregularities in the examination conducted for police constable posts.

The Vyapam scam had come to light in July 2013 when senior BJP leader Shivraj Singh Chouhan was the chief minister and Sharma a senior minister. Sharma was released on bail in December 2015 after spending 19 months in jail since his arrest in 2014.

The video shows Sharma engaged in conversation with

Shweta Swapnil Jain, one of the main accused in the honey trap case, and a male accomplice. It appears that the video was filmed about two years after Sharma's release when he was in relative political oblivion. He had lost the 2013 Assembly elections and was expelled by the BJP after his arrest.

The whistleblower alleged that Sharma has claimed in the video that he chose to become a fall guy to save BJP and RSS leaders in the Vyapam case. "Had I wanted, I would have brought down the government," Sharma claims at one point.

Sharma did not respond to repeated attempts by *The Indian Express* for his comment. After the video went viral, he went incommunicado for some days before uploading a video pointing to a conspiracy to malign his image. He did not mention the video but the inference was obvious.

While the BJP did not react to the video, Chief Minister Kamal Nath's media coordinator Narendra Saluja alleged that the Opposition party's silence was proof that Sharma's claims were true. He alleged that the BJP during its 15-year rule engaged in corrupt and immoral practices and the honey trap case exposed its duplicity.

Referring to the latest verdict in a Vyapam case, Rai said that only candidates and middlemen were made accused in a scam that was perpetrated by senior gov-

ernment officials, ministers and their close aides. "It's unfortunate that the real culprits of Vyapam scam who were involved at the highest level have evaded the process of law, are at large and yet to be brought to justice," he said in the letter to the CBI, stating that he would be forced to approach a judicial forum if the agency failed to secure the custody of the video and other evidence by legal process.

The honey trap case came to light in September after an engineer with the Indore Municipal Corporation filed a complaint alleging that he was being blackmailed by two women who were demanding Rs 3 crore for not circulating video clips showing him in a compromising position with one of them. The investigators have so far arrested five women and a car driver in connection with the scam that allegedly involved trapping senior government officials, including IAS officers and politicians.

Aspecial investigation team is probing the honey trap case and the HC is monitoring its progress.

A video of Sharma and a purported audio of a former bureaucrat engaged in sexually explicit conversation with a honey trap accused had gone viral last week. The government had denied the allegations of the SIT leaking the audio and video clips, suggesting they were already in someone's possession.

## Uttarakhand govt planning Sanskrit TV channel

LALMANI VERMA  
DEHRADUN, NOVEMBER 26

THE UTTARAKHAND government is planning to launch a satellite Sanskrit TV channel to promote the language, officials have said. The name of the channel, so far discussed, is "SS- Sanskrit evam Sanskriti".

Officials said the channel is proposed to be run by the Uttarakhand Sanskrit Academy in Haridwar and will run on a Public-Private-partnership (PPP) model.

The Uttarakhand Sanskrit Academy was established by the department of Sanskrit Education in 2002 to organise programmes to promote the language. The CM is the chairperson of the normal committee of the academy.

Academy secretary GS Bhakuni, told *The Indian Express*, "The channel will air a host of programmes based on Sanskrit literature, besides news in Sanskrit. We have already invited proposals for appointment of a consultant who will provide a comprehensive report on a roadmap for its development, along with procedural and regulatory assistance for down-linking as well as cost-ef-

fective solutions for development."

According to officials, the channel will also telecast mythological plays. Also, prayer ceremonies at prominent Hindu shrines in the state will be live-streamed on the channel. "Subtitles of the content in Hindi and English will also be provided on the screen so that viewers can understand the programme and learn Sanskrit words," said an official. Seminars and debates organised in different Sanskrit institutes across the country will also be aired, they said.

According to sources, the department has held a meeting with a TV channel for initial technical suggestions. It has also sought the opinion of seers from different Akharas. "We have seen astrologers speaking about daily horoscope every morning on different news channels. We are unaware about the qualification of these astrologers as they make different predictions and suggestions. On our channel, astrologers holding a degree or certificate from government universities and institutes will speak about horoscopes. They will be more reliable," said an official.





The IndianEXPRESS

A line runs through it

A SAVING GRACE

Hopefully, SC on law and a united Opposition in politics have taught BJP a lesson or two in hubris

ALL OF DEVENDRA Fadnavis’s postures and pieties while resigning as four-day chief minister could not mask the bare facts that must deeply embarrass him and his party, in the state and at the Centre: The BJP had to exit the arena in Maharashtra because it was left with little choice after Ajit Pawar decided to switch sides again on Tuesday afternoon, and with the Supreme Court having stepped in to call for an immediate floor test on Wednesday. That is, in Maharashtra, the BJP was both outplayed by its rivals in the bareknuckled political game it so enjoys, and snubbed for its apparent constitutional transgressions by the umpire, the apex court. With Fadnavis’s resignation, the field has now been cleared for the Shiv-Sena-NCP-Congress to prove their majority and form a government. But the sorry saga that played out in public view over the last few days will not easily fade away. It demands a greater reckoning, and more accountability, by all the institutions and authorities that colluded in undermining the constitutional rules of the game, in letter and spirit. On Constitution Day, the cloak-and-dagger pre-dawn lifting of president’s rule and swearing-in of a new government in a crucial state by a governor after a prime minister invoked an extraordinary provision to circumvent the need for a cabinet meeting was a tawdry image and a taint.

The taint is, most of all, on the BJP. For a party that came to power in 2014 and then again in 2019 with overwhelming mandates riding, largely, on the accumulated fatigue and cynicism of the people vis a vis Congress-dominated regimes, for a party that promised to change the old and bring in the new, it has been strikingly reckless in its own treatment of political norms and institutions. In Maharashtra, there is political blame to be pinned on all major players, with unlikely and opportunistic alliance-making on all sides. But the responsibility for playing fast and loose with the Constitution rests with the BJP. That the doors of the Supreme Court had to be knocked on after the travesty of government formation enacted on Friday-Saturday morning, and that the court had to call for an urgent floor test now, followed by a possible review of the constitutionality of the actions taken by various authorities a few weeks later, must bring a sobering moment of pause for the party that has tripped on its high command’s oversized will-to-win seemingly unconstrained by law or the Constitution.

The next government in Maharashtra starts with an unclean slate. The Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress will have to battle and rein in their several inner contradictions, ensure that they do not overwhelm governance. It will also be their responsibility to ensure that the dark manoeuvres of the last few days do not leave a lasting impression in a state famed for getting on with it.

SEIZE THE SCAM

Karvy case offers an opportunity to debate new challenges to regulation, new balance to be struck in oversight

TO AN OUTSIDER, it may well appear that India’s financial sector is under siege. After the collapse of Non Banking Finance Companies such as IL&FS last year, the unravelling of Dewan Housing and Finance Ltd (DHFL) and PMC Bank and the troubled state of many banks, securities market regulator, Sebi, has banned Karvy Stock Broking Ltd which has over 2 lakh clients, from undertaking fresh business, for allegedly misappropriating money and securities belonging to its clients to fund its real estate arm, Karvy Realty. The regulatory action follows the inspection report of the National Stock Exchange, which found that the stock broking firm had transferred Rs 1,096 crore to its real estate business by misusing the power of attorney given to its clients to sell securities apparently through entities controlled by it.

It is but natural that there is concern about possible similar violations by other large broking firms too — something the regulator is now probing. The Karvy Stock Broking scam isn’t like the routine cases that Sebi disposes of often, involving minor stock brokers. It features diversion of funds of a much bigger scale and blatant violation of regulatory rules which stipulate segregation of accounts of clients and proprietary trades. The fact that a financial services group, now the top registrar and transfer agent in the country, which claims to service every third citizen in the securities market and 60 per cent of the Sensx/NSE 500 companies, was at the heart of this is bound to further erode investor faith.

On the face of it, Sebi appears to have tightened its rules relating to stock brokers — the last being in June this year. Even if there is no systemic issue, a full inspection of the books of other large stock broking firms should help, on the lines of the Accelerated Quality Review of banks by RBI which contributed to exposing a lot of divergences, notwithstanding the near-term fallout in the markets. The latest development offers an opportunity to debate the new challenges to regulation, the balance to be struck in oversight and whether there should be fetters or not on unrelated diversification for firms in the financial sector. A look at the model and experience of other jurisdictions would also help.

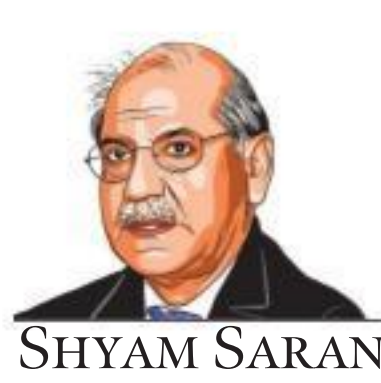
A POLL, AN OPENING

Local election results provide space to negotiate greater freedoms as well as a return to normalcy in Hong Kong

WHEN HONG KONG Chief Executive Carrie Lam described the local body elections in the city as unusually political, she was not far off the mark. Pro-democracy forces have swept the polls in Hong Kong, winning 90 per cent of the seats and with an over 70 per cent turnout — up from 47 per cent in 2015. While the local body has limited municipal powers and selection to it usually passes without comment, Sunday’s verdict was different. For one, it is a clear signal that the people of Hong Kong have not viewed favourably the manner in which the Chinese government has handled the protests. Second, it threatens to deepen the wedge between the Chinese mainland and Hong Kong.

The protests were sparked six months ago in response to a proposed law that would allow the extradition of people from Hong Kong to the Chinese mainland. The law was seen as a violation of the “one country, two systems” principle that is the bedrock of the political-constitutional relationship between China and Hong Kong. While the law was eventually withdrawn, the protests have gone on and have turned into a demand for wider reforms and full democracy. Sunday’s result also punctures Lam’s claim that the protesters were just a disruptive and vocal minority, and that a “silent majority” did not support the pro-democracy movement.

The local body elections were in a sense a referendum for what has gone in the last six months. But, unlike in a fully-functioning democracy, an election result need not signal a shift in power in China — or Hong Kong. Both the Chinese government and the protesters have thus far taken maximalist positions. In the best case scenario, these elections could provide an opening, as well as local leaders, with legitimacy, to negotiate greater freedoms as well as a return to normalcy in Hong Kong.



SHYAM SARAN

THE NOTION OF boundaries as lines drawn on a map is a recent concept — as is the nation state. This is particularly true in the Subcontinent, where empires and kingdoms shaded into one another across ambiguous frontiers rather than be separated by boundaries marking sovereign jurisdictions. The India-Nepal border is unique in that neither country has allowed a political boundary to interrupt the age-old traffic of people who share ties of kinship, religion and culture. This is now being threatened by territorial nationalism on the Nepali side and an emerging security state on the Indian side.

It is easy to trigger anti-Indian sentiment in the Kathmandu Valley, which remains the crucible of Nepali politics and the arbiter of its domestic and foreign policies. As we witness in our own country, nationalist sentiment can be a potent instrument for political mobilisation, but its orientation could be positive or negative. This depends on the political leadership but equally on how aware and enlightened a citizenry is. In Nepal, political groupings of every persuasion have been unable to resist the temptation to conjure up a bullying and overbearing India to present themselves as the fierce custodians of national interest. This is what we saw at play in the demonstrations held recently on the streets of Kathmandu. Residual revolutionaries of the Left competed with the supposedly pro-India Nepali Congress to castigate India for releasing maps which showed Kalapani at the India-Nepal-China trijunction to the north and Susta to the south as Indian territory.

These latest maps have nothing to do with Nepal. They were published to reflect the recent bifurcation of the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) into the two new Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh. There was no change in the depiction of India-Nepal boundary. Yet, the perception was created that the publication of the new map was a departure from the past and constituted pernicious cartographic aggression. It is true that Nepal has, in the past, claimed territory in the Kalapani area and Susta as its own. The two sides agreed that these differences should be resolved through friendly negotia-

India, Nepal must seek mutually acceptable diplomatic solutions to controversy triggered by a new map



It is easy to trigger anti-Indian sentiment in the Kathmandu Valley, which remains the crucible of Nepali politics and the arbiter of its domestic and foreign policies. As we witness in our own country, nationalist sentiment can be a potent instrument for political mobilisation but its orientation could be positive or negative. This depends on the political leadership but equally on how aware and enlightened a citizenry is. In Nepal, political groupings of every persuasion have been unable to resist the temptation to conjure up a bullying and overbearing India to present themselves as the fierce custodians of national interest. This is what we saw at play in the demonstrations held recently on the streets of Kathmandu.

tions and their foreign secretaries were mandated to undertake this exercise. As far as one is aware, these talks are yet to take place. If this is an issue with the potential to arouse such strong public sentiment on the Nepali side, then such inaction is inexplicable. My own experience has been that the Nepali side raises such issues for rhetorical purposes but is uninterested in following up through serious negotiations. This is what happened with Nepali demands for the revision of the India-Nepal Friendship Treaty. The Indian side agreed in 2001 to hold talks at the foreign secretary level to come up with a revised treaty — one that, in the Nepali eyes, would be more “equal” with reciprocal obligations and entitlements. Only one such round of talks has taken place.

While I was in Nepal as ambassador, a request was made to put the issue on the agenda of the foreign secretary level talks held in 2003 but without any expectation of actual discussion. When we conveyed our readiness to have a substantive discussion on the treaty revision, the agenda item was dropped by the Nepali side. The purpose was to merely show that the Nepali side was taking up the issue seriously with India. I believe it would be a good policy on the part of India to regularly offer to take up such outstanding issues bilaterally even though the Nepali side may wish to side-step. If efforts are made to rake up such issues for political gain, then India would be able to list publicly the occasions when it has offered to resolve them through friendly negotiations. At the moment, raising these issues as means of hoisting their nationalistic colours is of little risk to the Nepali political parties.

It is not widely known that the two countries have managed to settle about 98 per cent of their common border and these are reflected in the 182 strip maps initiated by them. More than 8,500 boundary pillars have been installed reflecting the agreed alignment.

The Kalapani controversy has arisen due to a difference of perception as to the real and primary source of the Mahakali river. The Treaty of Sugauli concluded in 1816 locates

the river as the western boundary with India but different British maps showed the source tributary at different places. This is not unusual given the then state of cartographic science and less-refined surveying techniques. We have similar problems regarding the alignment of the McMahon Line on the eastern sector of the India-China border. With regard to Susta, the problem has arisen as a result of the shifting of the course of the river, again a frequent occurrence in rivers shared by neighbouring countries. There are only two ways to deal with this challenge — either to accept a shifting border as the river itself shifts or to agree on a boundary which remains fixed despite changes in the course of the river. The latter is usually the more rational choice. But such matters require friendly consultations aimed at mutually acceptable outcomes not emotionally charged grandstanding.

Just a few days before this controversy erupted, the prime ministers of India and Nepal inaugurated, through a video conference, the much awaited Motihari-Amlekhgang pipeline, which will enable safe, secure and assured supply of petroleum products to Nepal. These supplies were trucked across the border in the past with frequent incidents of pilferage and contamination in transit and interruptions due to natural disasters or road blocks set up during political protests. This is a demonstration of what cross-border cooperation can achieve to benefit both countries. The ugly anti-Indian protests in Kathmandu provide the self-defeating counterpoint.

There are six to eight million Nepali citizens living and working in India. They enjoy immense goodwill and a congenial and friendly environment wherever they are. Political leaders in Nepal should reflect on this extraordinary asset their country enjoys built over centuries of benign togetherness. Its thoughtless erosion may prove to be costly for both our countries.

*The writer is a former foreign secretary and senior fellow CPR. He was India’s ambassador to Nepal 2002-4*



E P UNNY

IN 1998 WHEN BJP was elected to power, L K Advani wanted to meet the capital’s cartoonists before he began his tenure as home minister. He seemed to have a special interest in the tribe. Natural for Delhi’s early politicians who saw from close quarters free India’s cartoon emerge with a certain zest. Besides, as long time practitioner of opposition politics he must have found common ground with the adversarial art. Add to these his acquaintance with cartoonist Abu Abraham in the Rajya Sabha, where *The Indian Express* cartoonist was a nominated member.

Whatever the intention, the home minister was ready to receive us at his Pandara Park bungalow for evening tea. The informal delegation was naturally led by the city’s most visible cartoonist, Sudhir Dar. It wasn’t long after the Rath Yatra and the demolition of Babri Masjid and some of us were inclined to play truant. Veteran cartoonist Ranga was at his persuasive best and virtually herded us in. Through the evening, it was Dar Saab who did the talking for us. After the pleasantries, he asked the host, “Now, can we go beyond polite conversation?” and went on to make no secret of our apprehensions, staying perfectly polite.

It was a surprise to see the incisive political mind at work. Something one rarely saw in his cartoon. He kept his weekday pocket cartoon, “This is it”, wispy. It stayed true to form as it travelled from *Hindustan Times* to *The Pioneer* and finally to the now defunct,

THIS WAS IT

The Sudhir Dar cartoon neither screamed nor lost poise

Dar Saab chose the pocket cartoon to depict comic characters at one remove from the neta and the babu. He reduced the day’s news to an everyday situation and located it firmly in the capital’s backdrop, giving the reader multiple prompts to relate to the content.

*The Independent.* He was content to catch the fallible leader off guard and seldom rubbed it in. Unlike unsparing peers like the combative Rajinder Puri and the cerebral O V Vijayan, he had no killer instinct. He lived through the decades of disillusionment, first with the iconic Nehru and then with the heroic Indira Gandhi, retaining an incredible lightness of touch. Indian cartooning was turning pretty acidic and he like Mario Miranda managed to stay exceptionally aloof from the hardening trend. Mario had his picturesque Goa; Dar Saab was in a Delhi that then provided neither visual nor social excitement. Lutyen’s quarter seemed designed to circulate nothing but politics. Big money caught up with the capital later.

The easier thing in those politics-only times would have been to do the display cartoon featuring recognisable characters. Instead, Dar Saab chose the pocket cartoon to depict comic characters at one remove from the neta and the babu. He reduced the day’s news to an everyday situation and located it firmly in the capital’s backdrop, giving the reader multiple prompts to relate to the content. On his day, his cartoon drew upon every aspect of the capital — from the news it made to the physical setting itself. There was a typical one that showed a couple walking beside a water body (could well be the Boat Club) commenting on a wading bird that stands on one leg. “What’s so fantastic?”, asks the wife, “Chandrasekhar is doing it”. Through a short-lived premiership,

Chandrasekhar was then running a shaky stump of a government backed from outside by Rajiv Gandhi’s Congress.

Ever since he migrated to *Hindustan Times* in 1967, the Dar cartoon was a combo. You got to see Delhi as both city and capital in varying measures. Earlier on from 1961, he had run a politics-*mult* page one pocket cartoon, “Out of My Mind” in *The Statesman*. Through those years of freewheeling, he honed his cartooning skills and used them in the capital to cut down the big wigs to human scale. He was that rare practitioner who could work across a range. He gave a stirring talk on AIR on a master cartoonist who can’t be more different from him, that intensely political and personal Jules Feiffer of *Village Voice*. Dar Saab sketched and interviewed Satyajit Ray in the filmmaker’s much photographed study in Kolkata. He cartooned with equal ease for his father Krishna Prasad Dar’s Kashmiri cookbook as well as the astro-physicist Jayant Narlikar’s *Journey through the Universe*.

There was no guile in the cartoon. He never screamed or lost poise. For some of us who had watched his work for years, he was surprisingly political that evening at Pandara Park. “I grew up in a conflict-averse Kashmir,” he told the home minister then. The last few weeks have had much to make him concerned. The voice, therefore, would be doubly missed.

*ep.unny@expressindia.com*



NOVEMBER 27, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

KISSA KURSI KA  
THE HEARING OF the appeals of Sanjay Gandhi and V C Shukla in the *Kissa Kursi Ka* case opened at the Supreme Court amidst what may well be the tightest security measures ever. Madan Bhatia, counsel for Sanjay Gandhi, told a three-member bench of the Court that Sanjay did not come under the “ambit” of the Special Courts Act and that the Act in itself was unconstitutional. He said that as Sanjay had never held high public or political office, he did not come under the ambit of the Act. The Act, Bhatia contended, empowered the executive to choose certain class of people for “hostile” treatment, which was violative of Article 14 (relating to funda-

mental rights) of the Constitution.

ASSAM VIOLENCE  
THE ARMY HAS been alerted all over Assam to come to the aid of civil power at short notice following a fresh bout of violence and arson in the Brahmaputra valley which claimed five lives and reduced practically an entire village to ashes. Two persons were killed in police firing at Ahotgiri village under Kamalpur police station of Kamrup district last evening. Three persons were killed, four seriously injured and practically the entire village of Joyshreegaon under Marigaon police station in Nowgong district was reduced to ashes following violent clashes be-

tween two communities in the morning.

CONG SYMBOL FREEZE  
THE ELECTION COMMISSION froze the “cow and calf” symbol of the Congress, even as the party leadership was trying to stall the possible defection of Brahmananda Reddy and Swaran Singh to Indira Gandhi’s fold. The party high command is likely to decide on a new symbol for the party in a day or two. In his order, the chief election commissioner, S L Shakhder, said that in the interest of justice and prima facie evidence, the symbol stood frozen and the parties could lead their evidence, to establish their case for claim of the symbol later on.





# Rebuilding credibility

Sometimes a nation has to recognise that its statistical institution is failing the most basic of ‘smell’ tests and is in need of reform



NO PROOF REQUIRED

BY SURJIT S BHALLA

SOME RESULTS OF the National Statistical Office’s consumer expenditure survey (CES) for 2017-18 have been leaked. It is hoped that the official release (not endorsement for the reasons enunciated below) of the unit-level data will follow soon, so that researchers, analysts, politicians and even former prime ministers can evaluate for themselves how bad the NSO data really are.

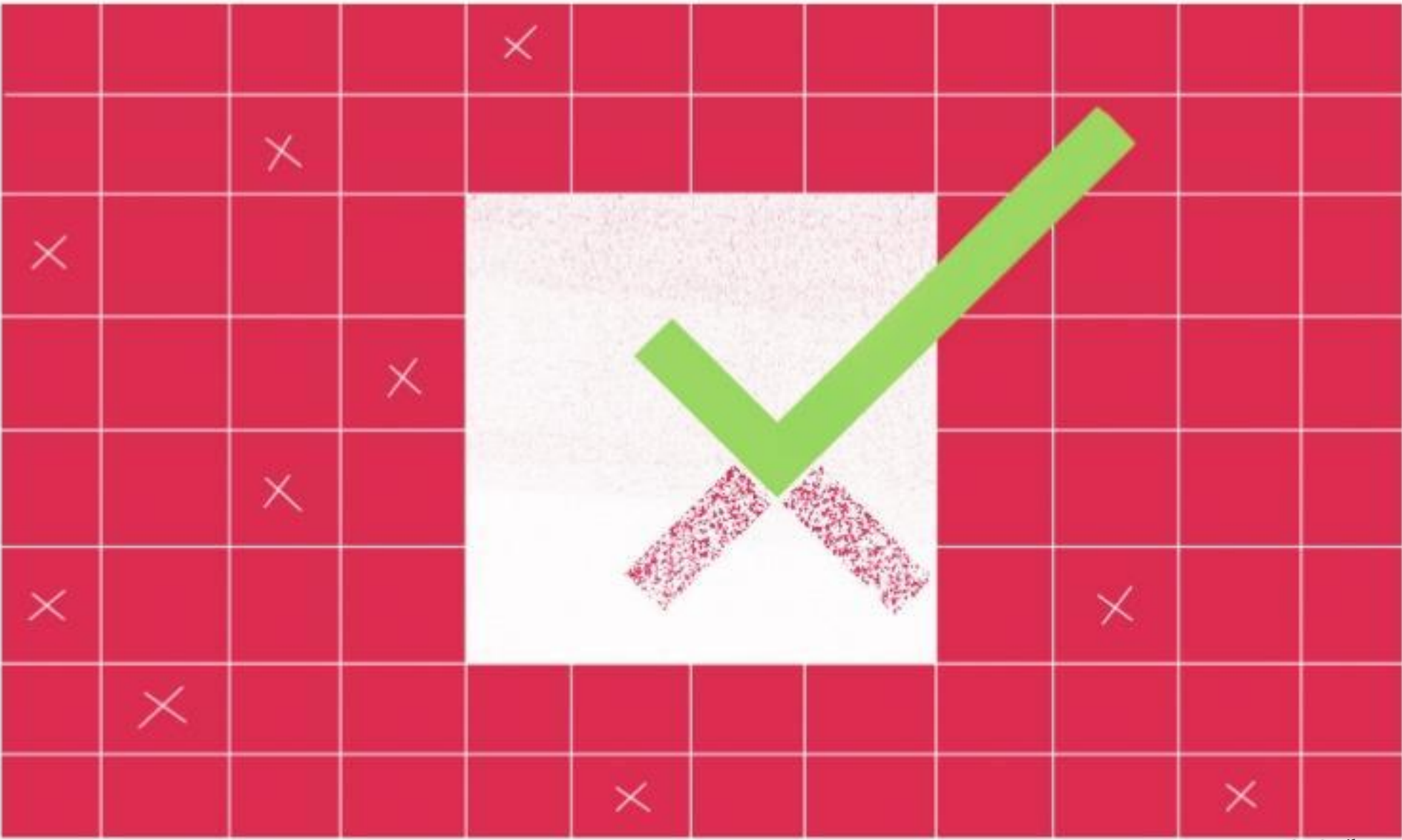
The previous NSO survey on employment (PLFS) estimated the population in 2017-18 to be 1,074 million, when even mathematically challenged individuals estimated it to be upwards of 1,300 million (actually 1,339 million). That error of a 265 million under-estimation is a national record for the highest under-estimation of such a basic number — most NSO surveys have under-estimated population by around 5-10 per cent. The underestimation in 2017-18 at 20 per cent is a record.

This under-estimation has consequences for a major policy variable of interest — jobs and job growth. The unemployment rate is not affected by the estimate of aggregate population; but the number of jobs is affected. Most scholars have estimated employment generated by the PLFS data to decline by around 18 million in the number of jobs in 2017-18 relative to 2011-12. This is according to the usual status of employment, a measure which counts both half-time work (employed for 30-182 days) and full-time work (employed for more than 182 days) as full-time employment. In a detailed (forthcoming) paper on employment, Tirtha Das and I find that the desired full-time jobs (defined as principal status) increased by eight million between 2011-12 and 2017-18 — an increase not that different from what was obtained in the high growth years of 2004-5 to 2011-12 (a 14 million increase, but over seven years).

It is much easier to count people as employed or not employed, than to ask about their monthly per capita expenditure. This is where the world record is on the way to being established. The CES survey for 2017-18 shows that the per person real monthly expenditure (mpce in NSO parlance and not income as mistakenly assumed by some) declined from Rs 1,573 in 2011-12 to Rs 1,514 in 2017-18 (data converted from 2009-10 prices to 2011-12 prices to make it consistent with other data)

In my book, *Imagine There’s No Country*, I had documented how there was a declining trend in the amount captured by the surveys over time. Household surveys (S) were capturing less and less of consumption as revealed by an alternative calculation — the national accounts (NA). While the two definitions (survey and national accounts) are not identical, they are broadly comparable.

The average S/NA ratio, around the world, was in the mid 80s in the 1980s, that is, if the NA estimate of per-capita consumption was 100, then the household survey would estimate it to be 85. It is worth remembering that the S/NA ratio in India in the 1950’s and 1960’s was upwards of 95 per cent. Too high



CR Sasikumar

to be true? In a manner of speaking, yes. For then, the household survey provided the estimate of consumption for national accounts.

But, with time, economies became complicated, and the national accounts data moved with the times, became more sophisticated and captured the trends in the economy much better than the surveys. Survey organisations like the NSO refused to move. In 1983, the S/NA ratio in India collapsed to 63 per cent from the high 70s level just a decade earlier. It was to be 30 years later (in 2012) when the world reached the low 60’s average.

That year (2011-12), India recorded a 55 per cent ratio for S/NA. Just six years later (2017-18), the S/NA ratio in India has collapsed to just 33 per cent — the second lowest ever recorded around the world for economies without hyper-inflation (when S/NA ratio really gets distorted) and with populations above 10 million. The worst ever was Nigeria in 2009 with a S/NA ratio of 27.2 per cent.

There is yet another comparison one can make. The two most recent consumption surveys in India, just six years apart, yield a decline of 22 percentage points. This is the second worst sequential decline in the world. The worst was Pakistan in 2001 when the S/NA ratio was 46.9 per cent, down 26.9 percentage points from the 73.8 per cent estimate recorded in 1998.

The secular decline in NSO has now persisted for some 50 years and marks a sad occasion for an institution that was a trend setting statistical institution in not only the emerging economies, but in the world as well. In the early 1950s, the world famous statistician P C Mahalanobis was its head.

I was privileged to be a member of the first National Statistical Commission of India headed by an internationally renowned economist Suresh Tendulkar. I was sent to Calcutta by Tendulkar to interact with the NSSO and to find out why the Indian S/NA ratio had sharply declined and what could be done to improve survey response. I met with little success and came back frustrated with the ancient techniques being followed by them.

The most recent statistical commission chairman, P C Mohanan, was a colleague. He has been quoted as not being surprised with the decision of the government to not accept the findings of the latest record-low NSO sur-

I have been surprised by how many respected analysts have pointed to the ‘findings’ of the NSO 2017-18 and are relating it to the slowdown in the economy in 2019-20. Some of these very same ‘analysts’ were cheering the RBI/MPC a year ago when it raised the repo rate to 6.5 per cent in June 2018, the very last month of the 2017-18 survey. Their reason for cheering the MPC — growth was too high, so high that it was leading to high and accelerating inflation. Both views cannot be right, and it is worse than disingenuous to hold both views simultaneously.

vey. His view is that the government is suppressing reports that are not “favourable”.

If I thought that the NSO consumption surveys were misleading and not acceptable in 2002 and 2006, I can be forgiven for thinking that the surveys are even less acceptable today. The results of the NSO survey 2017-18 are truly bizarre — a decline in average real consumption of 0.6 percentage point per year between 2011-12 and 2017-18, when the NA consumption estimate is of a positive 5.8 per cent annual growth. As discussed above, the NSO estimate for 2017-18 is so out of the box that it is actually out of any (reasonable) ballpark. If the government does not accept the findings of the survey (as has been suggested by a recent press release) then a genuine reform of the NSO can actually begin. Even if it does not return to its previous glory, a reformed NSO can become a respectable institution. That will not be easy, but it is a path worth embarking upon.

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Not every government report should be accepted. Just like individuals fail exams, and editors reject papers (and columns), sometimes, institutions fail to produce a credible report. But, I do believe that the unit-level data should be released. Let the world, and experts, find out for themselves how truly informative and credible the NSO CES data really are.

*The writer is executive director IMF, representing India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Bhutan. Views are personal*

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The Conservative programme unveiled by Boris Johnson rests upon a central untruth: The promise to ‘Get Brexit Done’.” —**THE GUARDIAN**

# Checkmated by the Constitution

Even after late-night coups, the sun rises — as it has in Maharashtra



RANDEEP SINGH SURJEWALA AND MUHAMMAD KHAN

IT IS perhaps fitting that the Supreme Court’s decision ordering a floor test in Maharashtra was delivered on Samvidhan Divas, our national Constitution day. It is a celebration of this hallowed occasion that the BJP again stands exposed for its reckless ambition that prioritises its own political gains above the Constitution.

However, the fact that the apex court was required to intervene, once again, is itself a sad commentary on where the Narendra Modi-Amit Shah regime has taken Indian politics. Over the last five years, these tactics to secure power by way of constitutional subterfuge has become textbook for the BJP, which seeks to position this low-level cunning as illustrative of a political wisdom never seen before. In fact, this “Chanakya niti” as hailed by its cheerleaders, appears to be little more than horse trading. Evidence has even surfaced of the current Karnataka chief minister allegedly admitting to the BJP’s interference in Karnataka .

This latest episode had all the hallmarks of the BJP fly-by-night operation; unquestioning institutions in the form of the Governor and the President, who without recording any protest, allowed President’s rule to be vacated in the early hours of the morning, the fabled purification — which exonerates former rivals whom the BJP had promised to prosecute to the fullest extent of the law — and a desperation to secure power at any cost without any concern as to how it looked to the public.

But few were shocked. Because this is exactly the sort of behaviour that the public has come to expect from the Modi-Shah duo. We saw it in Arunachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Goa, Meghalaya, Karnataka where despite not having the requisite numbers, the BJP clawed its way into office. In the first two cases, the Supreme Court struck down their preliminary attempts as illegal (in 2015-2016).

In fact, we owe a debt of gratitude to the previous benches of the Supreme Court .which laid down rock solid precedent interpreting the Constitution in a manner which limits the scope for horse trading. It is the one thing the BJP could not find a way around.

But Modi in 2014 had promised India two things above all else — a corruption free government and unparalleled economic reform. No amount of spin can detract from

the fact that on the latter he failed spectacularly, breaching even the lowest of expectations. On the former, he has demonstrated scant regard for the ethics and morals which he claimed made BJP a “party with a difference”. Even his attempts to appropriate Gandhian principles through propaganda are scorned for their apparent hypocrisy.

This episode was also a reminder of the BJP’s unsettling fondness to execute its moves under the cover of darkness (as in the late-night movements against a former CBI chief) or in the confines of a sealed envelope. Are these the actions of a government that swears by transparency? Considering the BJP government has recently amended the RTI Act in a manner that effectively neutralises its independence, this too is in doubt.

On the contrary, the BJP’s reckless and selfish ambition has come at a great cost to our institutions and to our laws. Some of these highlights of the BJP’s tenure include governors whose fax machines suddenly stop working, who violate convention by allotting arbitrary amounts of time to different parties to prove their numbers, governors who invite the second-largest party before they invite the first. They should bear in mind that ultimately it is the Constitution to which they have sworn their allegiance. This judgment is the latest reminder of that promise.

We have also witnessed an Election Commission, which despite repeated and brazen violations of electoral laws, took no action against the leaders of the parties in power, requiring us to approach the Supreme Court yet again for its intervention. What we saw instead was action being initiated against an Election Commissioner who dissented against this approach.

We have seen vast sections of the fourth estate become parodies of their former selves in their embarrassing loyalty to the king. Some of whom steadfastly celebrated these actions as being indicative of political “hunger” and worth our respect. These are just some illustrations in the current context which remind us the direction in which the Modi-Shah BJP has taken the country. All in an ironic inversion of their own slogan, “minimum government, maximum governance”. Whatever this form of “governance” is, it has certainly advanced the political fortunes of one party above all others.

If Modi-Shah had spent more time studying the Constitution they would have been made familiar with Justice Brandeis’s maxim that sunlight is the best disinfectant. And regardless of how many late-night operations or coups are executed, the sun always rises.

No amount of “Chanakya niti” can change that.

*Surjewala is the AICC national communications in-charge and an advocate, Khan is a lawyer*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### WISDOM MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the report, ‘Muslim Sanskrit professor applies for job in other BHU faculties’ (IE, November 26). It is disturbing that a teacher, who is well qualified, has to face protest by students for teaching Sanskrit. A teacher’s religion should not come in the way of him imparting knowledge.

**Chandravir Singh, Agra**

### WRONG SPIRIT

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘No cheers for Jagan’ (IE, November 26). Prohibition does nothing more than drive the legal sale of alcohol underground. It is ironic that despite being well aware of this fact, several state governments have resorted to prohibition. A dangerous bootlegging industry could thrive in Andhra Pradesh, creating a situation where the government will end up losing revenue while people’s lives will be imperiled. Counselling and medical care is a more potent way to wean people off alcohol.

**Vijai Pant, Hampur**

### STATE’S TASK

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘The missing piece’ (IE, November 26). Labourers are nation-builders. The country’s industrial and organised sectors have social security laws for workers. But they are rarely implemented. After globalisation, stringent labour laws are seen as constraints for investors. So, the government wants to relax them. The question is: On whose behalf should the state act? The working class is always weaker. Shouldn’t the state take their interests into account?

**Tapamoy Ghosh, Bardhaman**

### LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

### MESSY BONDS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Money and power’ (IE November 23). It’s true that the figures on electoral bonds raise alarming questions. The Election Commission should have knowledge about party funding. If transactions amounting to crores are taking place, what about issues like tax compliance?

**Vihaan Gupta, Ujjain**

### ENGLISH IN STEPS

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Let them have English’ (IE, November 21). In times where English is seen as the language of aspirations, the Andhra government’s move to teach in English medium in its schools is justified. However, given that educational sector reforms are evolutionary, the state government should have implemented the project in a graded manner, taking into account the availability of teachers.

**Satish Reddy, Nalgonda**



ARJUN RAM MEGHWAL

THE NATION celebrated Constitution Day on November 26 to mark the anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution in 1949. Since 1979, this day was observed as National Law Day, and from 2015, it has been observed as Constitution Day.

The traditions and temperament of Indian thought through the ages laid greater emphasis on duties. Swami Vivekananda even termed “devotion to duty” as the highest form of worship of God. The Constitution of India, originally, did not contain the aspect of fundamental duties for citizens. However, during discussions on the draft Constitution and fundamental rights therein, in the constituent assembly, few members had raised their voices in favour of citizens’ duties towards the nation. Prabhu Dayal Himatsingka, a member of the Constituent Assembly representing West Bengal during the discussion on the draft constitution on November 18, 1949, had said: “I wish along with fundamental rights there were certain fundamental duties also. If we think more of our duties than of our rights, a lot of our difficulties will be over and the rights will take care of themselves and there will be no occasion to feel any difficulty for want of those rights”.

Along similar lines, the Constituent Assembly members — Krishan Chandar Sharma (United Province), Thakur Das

Bhargava (East Punjab), Arun Chandra Guha (West Bengal), Nand Kishore Das (Orissa), Durgabai Deshmukh (Madras), Har Govind Pant (United Provinces), B Pattabhi Sitaramayya (Madras), K T Shah (Bihar), Shibban Lal Saksena (United Provinces), Hriday Nath Kunzru (United Provinces), and Kaka Bhagwant Roy (Patiala and East Punjab State Union), emphasised that rights must co-relate to some duties.

Seventy years after the adoption of the Constitution, this idea offers a new paradigm that can help rethink individual duties towards the nation. And, at a time when New India has set high targets for leading the 21st century, combating climate change is crucial in the country’s journey towards becoming a \$5 trillion-strong economy in a time-bound manner. Invariably, it also brings responsibility on ourselves to act dutifully towards adopting a lifestyle that helps the nation to move ahead for achieving these targets.

Earth has limited natural resources. The 20th century witnessed large-scale developmental activities and progressive changes such as industrialisation and infrastructure building. It saw the use of other improved methods for production through the massive use of natural resources — reflecting the self-centered approach of mankind. The fact is that with such exploitation of nature, con-

cerns related to duties towards future generations were largely ignored.

While governments, institutions and civil societies work for citizen’s rights, inherent duties remain crucial for individuals in order to ensure the efficacy of the system at large. However, in practice, everywhere — schools, homes, workplaces, or at the courts — “rights” have taken up more space than “duties”, when actually they are the two sides of the same coin. It is the moral duty of citizens to introduce and enhance a positive “work consciousness” and reject the tendency to find loopholes in rules and laws in order to suit convenience.

Citizens need to fulfil their duties and obey laws too. For instance, citizens have the right to get better roads, infrastructure and clean tap water are citizens’ rights. However, it is their duty to end practices that lead to the wastage of electricity and water. It is the citizen’s right to get clean streets, but it is the individual’s duty to stop throwing garbage on roads, and put trash into the right bins or dispose it in a proper manner. Citizens are entitled to get better health and healthcare facilities, but it is the duty of individuals to act towards swachhta and vaccination. It is indeed the right of

the people to get a pollution-free atmosphere and natural calamity-free ecosystem. But for that to happen, voluntary citizen service is required for planting trees, reforesting wasteland, cleaning rivers, protecting forest cover, and population control measures, along with requisite governmental efforts.

India is the largest democracy of the world. Citizens have the right to vote, but casting that vote is their duty. Citizens are certainly entitled to get better civic facilities for easier daily living, but their responsibility also includes timely payment of taxes for the welfare of the nation.

It is imperative for citizens to strive for a perfect balance between their rights and duties in order to achieve local and national development goals. Unless we promote the culture of duty and responsibility, the aims and objectives enshrined in the Preamble, and under Article 51A of the Constitution, cannot be truly achieved in letter and spirit. Any step towards a “duty-bound lifestyle” in our daily lives — be it at home, the workplace or public spaces will be a humble tribute to the founding fathers of the Indian Constitution.

*The writer is Union Minister of State for Parliamentary Affairs and Heavy Industries & Public Enterprises*



## TELLING NUMBERS

## Pollution on Diwali: PM2.5 rose 5x in Delhi, Bengaluru air clean

IN DELHI, the Diwali readings for PM2.5 and PM10 rose respectively by roughly five and three times from the previous week's readings, statistics tabled in Parliament by the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change show. While the PM2.5 reading rose from 116 micrograms per cubic metre to 512 µg/cu.m on Diwali (October 27), PM10 rose from 190 to 600. Air quality on Diwali deteriorated significantly in Delhi, Lucknow, Agra, and Kolkata. While it deteriorated in Bengaluru too, the latter remained the least polluted among these cities as both PM2.5 and PM10 levels remained within prescribed limits.

The Central Pollution Control Board conducted air quality monitoring for seven cities — Delhi, Agra, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Kolkata, Lucknow, and Vadodara. It measured air quality for pre-Diwali, Diwali and post-Diwali periods. The Board prescribes the National Ambient Air Quality Standard (NAAQS) for PM2.5 (Particulate Matter 2.5) at 60 µg/cubic metre (24-hourly average), and PM10 (Particulate Matter 10) at 100 µg/cu.m.

On pre-Diwali days, PM10 and PM2.5 were already significantly above NAAQS levels in Agra, Delhi, Lucknow and Kolkata, while the levels in the other three cities were below or slightly above these standards. On Diwali, all cities except Bengaluru crossed PM2.5 NAAQS values. On post-Diwali days (seven days after

PM10			
City	Pre-Diwali	Diwali	Post-Diwali
Delhi	190	600	439
Lucknow	182	377	324
Agra	214	284	303
Kolkata	124	263	166
Bhopal	94	150	92
Vadodara	100	91	52
Bengaluru	29	53	40

PM2.5			
City	Pre-Diwali	Diwali	Post-Diwali
Delhi	116	512	435
Lucknow	140	298	266
Agra	134	225	231
Kolkata	91	216	123
Bhopal	67	105	60
Vadodara	39	64	24
Bengaluru	11	35	22

Figures in micrograms per cubic metre

Source: Central Pollution Control Board via MoEFCC

October 27), the levels of both pollutants fell in all these cities except Agra.

The question was raised by Trinamool Congress MP Shanta Chhetri in Rajya Sabha. In his reply, Minister of State Babul Supriyo said it was evident that north Indian cities displayed similar dispersion patterns.

## THIS WORD MEANS

### POLYDACTYLY

Birth defect that leads to extra digits on hands and feet

SEVERAL NEWS organisations in India and overseas on Monday reported the story of a 63-year-old woman in a village in Odisha who, according to the reports, had been ostracised by the community as a “witch” because she was born with 12 fingers and 20 toes. The woman's condition is known as polydactyly/polydactylism or hyperdactyly, a birth defect in which humans and animals have supernumerary fingers or toes. In other words, a person suffering from the congenital anomaly of polydactyly will have more than five digits in a particular hand or foot — a condition opposite to oligodactyly, in which the sufferer has fewer than five digits in a hand or foot.

Polydactylism is reported in perhaps one or two children per 1,000 live births, and could be the most common abnormality of development seen in newborns worldwide. The defect develops during the sixth or seventh week of gestation, when an irregularity occurs in the splitting of the fingers from the hand or foot, creating an extra digit. Causes are believed to be genetic, in some cases hereditary. The defect is also seen in cats, dogs, cattle, sheep, pigs, chickens, geese, and sometimes horses.

The extra digit is only rarely fully functional; most often it is a small piece of soft



Illustration of a 12-fingered man in Hartmann Schedel's Nuremberg Chronicle, 1493. Wikipedia

tissue that sometimes also has a bone and, in a small number of cases, a bone with a joint. In most cases, the extra digits can be surgically removed; the procedure gets more challenging if there is bone with the skin and tissue, and most difficult when the bone has a joint.

Stories of stigma associated with the condition are often reported; the stigma is most commonly seen among poor and less literate communities. In December 2018, a newborn baby girl died in a tribal hamlet in Khandwa, Madhya Pradesh, after her mother allegedly cut off the extra fingers and toes with which the child had been born, apparently for fear that no one would marry her when she grew up.

Ajit Pawar, a BJP ally for three and a half days, was the target of repeated attacks by the saffron party during the time he was Water Resources Minister in the Congress-NCP government. What were the allegations?

**KAVITHA IYER**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

ON MONDAY, the day before NCP leader Ajit Pawar resigned as Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister, the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) said it had closed nine “open enquiries” in connection with the alleged multi-crore irrigation scam. The ACB denied this was done to give a “clean chit” to Ajit Pawar whose support had enabled the swearing-in of a BJP-led government (which has now resigned).

#### Where does Ajit Pawar figure in this?

Ajit Pawar was Water Resources Minister in previous Congress-NCP governments during the time allegations of irregularities surfaced in irrigation projects, including in Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation (VIDC) of which he was chairman. Maharashtra has five region-specific Irrigation Development Corporations.

While Ajit Pawar has not been named in any of the FIRs, then ACB Director-General Sanjay Barve had told the Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court in November 2018 that Ajit Pawar had intervened in the process of award of contracts for irrigation projects. The nine enquiries closed were out of open enquiries into 2,654 tenders for 45 VIDC projects. The ACB said it had completed open enquiries into 212 tenders, registered 24 FIRs and filed chargesheets in five cases.

#### What was the nature of the allegations?

As of June 2011, irrigation potential of 48.26 lakh hectares had been created by the Maharashtra Water Resources Department through 3,712 completed and ongoing projects, while the irrigation potential utilised as of June 2012 was only 32.51 lakh hectares, or 67.36%.

Between 2001-02 and 2011-12, various reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India on Water Resources Department projects highlighted the absence of long-term plans, non-prioritisation of projects, delays in completion, commencement of work without forest/ environmental clearances, etc.

**CHAKSHU ROY**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

UNTIL THE resignation of Maharashtra's newly sworn in Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Tuesday, followed by that of Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, the focus of attention had been on a floor test the government would have faced on Wednesday. The Supreme Court had ordered the floor test on Monday. In its order, it referred to cases in the past where it had directed the holding of a floor test to establish whether the political party/alliance that staked a claim for government formation had the requisite majority. Here is a recap of these cases from various states and the circumstances that led to the Supreme Court court's intervention.

**S R Bommai v Union of India (1994)**

The concept of floor test was first established by the Supreme Court in 1994 in the landmark case of S R Bommai. In this case, it was alleged that the Janata Party government led by Bommai did not enjoy a majority in the Karnataka legislature. The court held that, wherever a doubt arises whether the



Ajit Pawar outside the Maharashtra Assembly on Monday. Nirmal Harindran

#### How did the allegations first surface?

In 2012, then chief engineer of the Maharashtra Engineering Training Academy and former Irrigation Department engineer Vijay Pandhare wrote to Chief Minister Prithviraj Chavan and Governor K Sankaranarayanan recommending CBI investigations into inflated cost estimates and other alleged irregularities in dam-building contracts handed out by different Irrigation Development Corporations. The first whistle-blower in the case, Pandhare had to be given police protection after then Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar resigned as details emerged of irregularities in multiple contracts. Pandhare later unsuccessfully contested the 2014 Lok Sabha elections on an AAP ticket. Other activists who flagged irregularities included Anjali Damania (she too contested unsuccessfully as an AAP candidate) and Pravin Wategaonkar.

#### How did the then government respond?

Early details of the alleged scam came in Pandhare's first letter in February 2012. In March 2012, the annual Economic Survey report tabled in the Assembly said the department had spent about Rs 70,000 crore over a decade on dam projects that had added a mere 0.1% to area under irrigation.

Council of Ministers has lost the confidence of the House, the only way of testing it is on the floor of the House.

**Jagdambika Pal v Union of India (1999)**

The events that led to this case coming before the Supreme Court were less than pleasant. In 1996, the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections resulted in none of the contesting parties winning a clear majority. President's Rule was imposed for some time and thereafter, the BJP and the BSP formed a coalition government. The understanding between the two parties was that each party would have its Chief Minister for six months. Consequently, Mayawati of BSP became the Chief Minister for six months. When Kalyan Singh of the BJP occupied the CMs chair, BSP withdrew support to the government. A trust vote was called on the floor of the House, which witnessed some of the most violent scenes in any Legislative Assembly. MLAs threw mikes, chairs and sound boxes not only at each other but also at the Speaker. While Kalyan Singh won the trust vote, his government was later dismissed by Governor Romesh Bhandari. The Governor swore in Jagdambika Pal, whose appointment was

challenged by Kalyan Singh. The Supreme Court then ordered a composite floor test to determine who enjoyed a majority in the UP Assembly. The court also gave specific instructions about how the test should be conducted.

**Anil Kumar Jha v Union of India (2005)**

The next instance of a composite floor test being ordered by the Supreme Court happened in Jharkhand. This time the contest was between Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's Shibu Soren and the NDA's Arjun Munda. The Governor had invited Soren to form the government while Munda claimed that he commanded a majority in the House. The Supreme Court advanced the date of the floor test and again issued detailed instructions with regard to recording of the proceedings of the floor test and regarding the orderly conduct of the test.

**Union of India v Harish Chandra Singh Rawat (2016)**

The case in Uttarakhand was a little different. Here the controversy regarding a majority did not occur after the elections to the state legislature. The Congress government led by Harish Rawat had been in power since 2012. It was towards the end of its tenure in 2016, that

firmed some of the allegations made by activists since 2012. Among its findings: The Maharashtra Water Resources Regulatory Authority cleared 189 projects during 2007-13 even though there was no State Water Resource Plan based on which the projects were required to be cleared. Absence of prioritisation meant new projects were taken up in non-backlog districts, resulting in thin spreading of resources. It said the Water Resources Department was “saddled with 601 projects which were under execution as on June 2013 with an estimated balance cost of Rs 82,609.64 crore”. The balance cost was nine times the capital grant to the department for 2012-13. In many cases, land acquisition was not completed before work began, leading to stalled works and delays. In other cases, improper surveys before works resulted in cost escalations. The Irrigation Development Corporations also violated provisions of the Maharashtra Public Works Manual, allowing expenditure more than 10% in excess of administrative approvals and even over and above the revised administrative approvals, all without approval of the competent authority.

#### How did the last government follow up on these allegations?

While in Opposition, BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis had been at the forefront in demanding a probe. In December 2014, just a month since he assumed charge as Chief Minister, Fadnavis gave his nod to opening inquiries by the anti-corruption bureau into the role of Ajit Pawar and Tatkar in the irrigation scam. The probe would also extend to the roles of contractors and officials, the government said. The government also suspended four engineers with an alleged role in the financial irregularities of the Kondane dam project in Raigad district of Konkan, executed during Tatkar's tenure as minister. The charges against the officials were related to cost escalation of the project from Rs 80.35 crore to Rs 327.62 crore, and a decision to raise the dam height to 32.30 metres taken without seeking approval from the competent authorities. Nearly 45 more officials were facing departmental inquiries.

# In SC's order on floor test, mention of several sordid episodes elsewhere

controversy erupted on the floor of the House. A few rebel MLAs from the Congress party alleged that an appropriation Bill was passed without the government enjoying a majority in the legislature. Thereafter, President's Rule was imposed in the State. In response, Rawat approached the Supreme Court, which ordered an immediate floor test, after suspending President's Rule for two hours. Again the Supreme Court ordered video recordings of the floor test proceedings and also asked that the result of the floor test be brought before it.

**Chandrakant Kavlekar v Union of India (2017)**

This case from Goa was a result of the Governor inviting Manohar Parrikar of the BJP to form the government in the State. The BJP had won 13 of the 40 seats in the Goa legislature and had claimed the support of smaller parties for forming the government. The Supreme Court, while ordering a floor test in this case, held, “The holding of the floor test would remove all possible ambiguities, and would result in giving the democratic process the required credibility.”

*The author is Head of Outreach at PRS Legislative Research*

# Coming: A rulebook, bill of rights and ‘Contract’ for the World Wide Web

**SHRUTI DHAPOLA**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

SIR TIM Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web, has announced a “Contract for the Web” — aimed at saving the future of his invention, which is now almost an essential condition for human existence. The Web is at a tipping point, Berners-Lee wrote in an op-ed for *The New York Times*, and needs radical intervention from all stakeholders — governments, companies, civil society groups, as well as individual users.

#### What is the Contract for the Web?

Berners-Lee announced plans for this “Contract” nearly a year ago, and the World Wide Web Foundation, a non-profit he has founded, worked on it. The idea is to create a global plan of action for all stakeholders to together commit to building a “better” Web. The Contract consists of nine principles — three each for governments, private

companies, and individuals and civil society to endorse — with 76 clauses each.

Emily Sharpe, Director of Policy at the World Wide Web Foundation, said the Contract was not meant to be “simply aspirational”, or just a “declaration”. “It’s actually meant to be implemented, and it’s meant to be a plan of action. We’re hoping, for example, that governments who are looking to regulate in the digital era, can use the contract as a roadmap to lay out their policies and laws going forward. And companies to do the same when they’re developing their products and services for the world,” she told *The Indian Express* over the phone from London.

#### And who has created this Contract?

Representatives from over 80 organisations, including governments, companies, civil society activists, and academics. The goal was to create a standard policy for a Web that benefits all. The nine principles emerged after a series of discussions over almost a year.

Participants included the governments

of France, Germany, Switzerland, Italy, and Ghana; tech majors Google, Facebook, Twitter, Microsoft, NordVPN, Reddit, Github, and DuckDuckGo. The Contract allows individuals to endorse it on the official website.

#### What are the principles in the Contract?

■ Governments will “Ensure everyone can connect to the Internet”, “Keep all of the Internet available, all of the time”, and “Respect and protect people's fundamental online privacy and data rights”. ■ Companies will “Make the Internet affordable and accessible to everyone”, “Respect and protect people's privacy and personal data to build online trust”, and “Develop technologies that support the best in humanity and challenge the worst”.

■ Citizens will “Be creators and collaborators on the Web”, “Build strong communities that respect civil discourse and human dignity”, and “Fight for the Web” so that it “remains open and a global public resource for people everywhere, now and in the future”.



www at tipping point: Berners-Lee AP

#### How will the Contract be implemented?

The principles are lofty, and implementation will not be easy. Sharpe said companies that do not implement the Contract would be delisted from it — which may not be the strongest deterrent. However, she pointed out that companies had themselves reached out to be active participants in the Contract.

“This was an opportunity for them to have conversations with governments and

civil society instead of shouting at each other. It was an opportunity for dialogue. So they're going back to their engineers and saying, 'We've committed to all these other stakeholders that we're going to fight hate speech, that we're going to respect privacy.' We hope they will actually do that now,” Sharpe said.

Even so, the “Contract for the Web” is not a legal document, or a United Nations document — though the organisation is in talks with the UN. It cannot currently bend governments or companies — even those that are on board — to its will.

“We have to agree as a global community, what are the right standards. And now that we have that agreement, hopefully, we will see governments who are more willing to act in line with human rights standards, that they will abide by the contract clauses,” Sharpe said.

Citizen action is an important part of the Contract, and the organisation hopes citizens would hold governments and companies accountable for violations of its terms.

#### Contract is ready, what happens now?

The idea, Sharpe said, is to build “concrete solutions that support the goals that were set out in the Contract”. A clause for companies, for example, calls on them to invest in research to ensure they're not designing services that manipulate people.

“Currently there's no real accepted standard of best practices for even designing user interfaces, to make sure that people actually understand what they're consenting to, what information is being collected. That's still work that needs to be done,” she said.

The World Wide Web Foundation says it will work with all stakeholders to build some of these standards, which could help the Web stick to the principles of the Contract. It will measure the progress of the Contract's endorers, and work with regulators around the world to ensure that companies comply with national laws that support the Contract's goals. The organisation also hopes to persuade more governments across the world to come on board the Contract.



TOPOF THE WORLD



Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis

BRITAIN  
UK chief rabbi suggests Corbyn unfit for office

*London:* Britain's most senior rabbi on Tuesday suggested Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn's handling of anti-Semitism allegations made him "unfit for high office", in an unprecedented intervention ahead of next month's election. Chief Rabbi Ephraim Mirvis said "a new poison" had taken hold of the party, and left British Jews justifiably "gripped by anxiety" before the December 12 poll. In a comment piece in *The Times*, Mirvis described Corbyn's claim to have dealt forcefully with all accusations of anti-Semitism as "mendacious fiction" and that he was responsible for "a failure of leadership".

MALI  
13 French soldiers killed in copter collision

*Paris:* A midair collision between two helicopters has killed 13 French soldiers fighting against extremists in Mali, French President Emmanuel Macron said Tuesday. Macron expressed "deep sadness" at the news of the Monday evening crash, which took place during a combat operation. French defence minister Florence Parly said an investigation has been opened to determine the exact circumstances of the accident. The operation in West and Central Africa involves 4,500 personnel and is France's largest overseas military mission.

MALAYSIA  
Australian grandmother wins drugs death sentence appeal

*Putrajaya:* An Australian grandmother won her final appeal against a death sentence for trafficking in Malaysia and walked free, after claiming she fell for an online love scam and was tricked into transporting drugs. The ruling brings down the curtain on a saga that began in 2014 when Maria Elvira Pinto Exposto was arrested with crystal meth in her backpack while transiting in Kuala Lumpur. The 55-year-old, who was detained while heading home to Australia, had said she was tricked into carrying the bag after travelling to China to see someone she met online called "Captain Daniel Smith", who claimed to be a US serviceman.

# Pak SC suspends Imran's move to extend Army Chief's tenure by 3 yrs

Entire process was upside down, says Chief Justice; govt revokes notification to extend Bajwa's services

SAJJAD HUSSAIN  
ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 26

Pakistan's Supreme Court on Tuesday suspended the three-year extension given to the powerful Army Chief, General Qamar Javed Bajwa, till Wednesday and said the entire process was "upside down", in an embarrassment to Prime Minister Imran Khan who cited "regional security environment" for his decision to grant the top general another term in office.

The unprecedented move by the apex court to suspend Khan's decision on August 19 could raise the tension between the judiciary and the Pakistani Army. It also came just three days ahead of 59-year-old Bajwa's retirement on November 29 as the Chief of the Army Staff in his first stint.

"The entire process was upside down. First, the Cabinet should have given the approval, then the Prime Minister and President should have been advised," Geo News quoted Chief Justice Asif Saeed Khosa as saying.

Reacting to the development, Khan chaired an emergency Cabinet meeting and took back the notification to extend services of Bajwa.



When General Qamar Javed Bajwa was appointed Pakistan's Army Chief by former PM Nawaz Sharif, he superseded three other generals. *Reuters*

Minister for Education Shafqat Mahmood told journalists that the Cabinet took back the earlier notification and also took measures to address the concerns of the apex court.

He said the Cabinet also changed the Pakistan Defence Services Rules and added word "extension" as pointed out by the Supreme Court.

"A summary was sent to the

President to issue a fresh notification after approval by the Cabinet," the minister said.

Pakistan's Law Minister Farogh Naseem also resigned on Tuesday to represent the government in the case regarding Bajwa's extension in the Supreme Court.

The petition against Bajwa's extension was filed by a person named Raiz Rahi, who later filed an application to withdraw it.

However, the Chief Justice rejected his withdrawal bid and took up the petition as a public interest litigation under Article 184, Pakistani media reported.

During the hearing, the Chief Justice said the government notification on August 19 mentioned an "extension" while the notification issued by the Prime Minister's Office says the Army Chief has been "reappointed".

"As per rules, there is no authority of extending Army Chief's tenure or his reappointment. The government can only suspend his retirement and the Army Chief has not retired yet," Justice Khosa said.

The Chief Justice adjourned the hearing until Wednesday.

Pakistan's powerful Army, which has ruled the country for more than half of its existence, has wielded considerable power in deciding matters concerning security and foreign policies.

On August 19, Khan approved a three-year extension to the Bajwa's tenure, citing "regional security environment".

Ties between India and Pakistan worsened following India's decision on August 5 to revoke Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370. **PTI**



MEANWHILE

## TRUMP HONOURS DOG IN BAGHDADI RAID

US President Donald Trump lavished praise on Conan, the military service dog who helped in the raid that led to the death of ISIS chief Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi. The Belgian Malinois dog was injured in the mission. It made an appearance Monday at the White House along with Trump, who said he had given Conan a plaque and called the dog "so brilliant, so smart".

## Tamil signboards in Sri Lanka defaced to stall Gotabaya's India visit: Mahinda

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
COLOMBO, NOVEMBER 26

SRI LANKAN Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa has ordered a probe into the defacing of Tamil-language street signboards, asserting that the "heinous move" was aimed at disrupting the November 29 India visit of his brother and the country's President, Gotabaya Rajapaksa, according to a report.

The Prime Minister instructed the officials on Monday to put up the Tamil signboards again and called for the immediate arrest of those involved in the acts of vandalism.

Mahinda Rajapaksa told some of his confidantes that he believed the recent complaints of defacement of Tamil-language street signboards was done by a group of people who wanted to disrupt Gotabaya Rajapaksa's upcoming visit to India, *The Daily Mirror* reported.

The Prime Minister instructed senior police officials that the matter be probed immediately and those responsible for these acts be arrested, it said.

The "heinous move" was aimed at creating a rift between the Tamil community and the in-



The Rajapaksa brothers returned to power with the recent elections in Sri Lanka, as Gotabaya was elected President and Mahinda became Prime Minister

terim government and to strain the Sri Lanka-India ties, the Prime Minister reportedly said.

Officials from the Police Media Division said that following the Prime Minister's orders, all senior police officers had been informed to remain vigilant in areas where the defacement took place.

Officers have been instructed to scrutinise CCTV footage and identify all those responsible. No arrests have been made, so far.

On the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Gotabaya Rajapaksa will visit India on November 29. This will be his first official visit after being elected to the office of the President this month.

## Malta PM's chief of staff quits over journalist murder case

*Valletta:* Maltese Prime Minister Joseph Muscat said Tuesday his chief of staff had resigned amid an ongoing probe into the murder of investigative reporter Daphne Caruana Galizia.

Sources said the chief of staff, Keith Schembri, "was called in for questioning by police" on Tuesday after his name was mentioned by the main suspect in the case, Yorgen Fenech, who was arrested last week.

Galizia, a popular journalist, was killed in a car bomb in October 2017 after exposing corruption. Galizia's family has accused Muscat of protecting those involved.

Leaked emails related to the Panama Papers data leak appeared to show that companies owned by Schembri and former energy minister Konrad Mizzi — currently the tourism minister — stood to receive payments from a Dubai company owned by mogul Fenech, 17 Black.

Galizia had written in her blog about 17 Black some eight months before her death. **PTI**

## POWERFUL QUAKE KILLS AT LEAST 16 IN ALBANIA



Emergency personnel work near a damaged building in Thumane, Albania, on Tuesday. *Reuters*

■ At least 16 people were killed when the most powerful earthquake to strike Albania in decades shook the capital Tirana and the country's west and north on Tuesday, tearing down buildings and burying residents under rubble.

■ After the 6.4 magnitude tremor struck shortly before 4 am (local time), the Balkan country was jolted by 100 aftershocks after the big tremor, two of them of magnitude 5, testing already strained nerves.

■ The quake was centred 30 km west of Tirana, the US Geological Survey said, and was also felt across the Balkans and in the southern Italian region of Puglia.

■ Albania is the poorest country in Europe, with an average income of less than a third of the EU average, according to Eurostat data.

IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

## Court orders former Trump official to testify

CHARLIE SAVAGE  
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 26

FORMER WHITE House counsel Donald McGahn must testify before House impeachment investigators about President Donald Trump's efforts to obstruct the Mueller inquiry, a judge ruled Monday, saying that senior presidential aides must comply with congressional subpoenas and calling the administration's arguments to the contrary "fiction".

The 120-page decision by Judge Ketanji Brown Jackson of the US District Court for the District of Columbia handed an-

EXPLAINED

Ruling has big implications for impeachment probe

THE COURT ruling that former White House lawyer Donald McGahn must comply with the congressional subpoena could offer the Democrats a big boost in their impeachment inquiry. The ruling states that no former or current administration official can claim immunity from complying with a summons from Congress. The Trump administration has claimed that its officials did not have to testify even if subpoenaed. The ruling will be appealed, but if it is upheld, it could lead to testimony by key witnesses such as former NSA John Bolton and other high-ranking officials.

other lower-court victory to House Democrats in their fight to overcome Trump's stonewalling.

"Presidents are not kings," wrote Jackson, adding that current and former White House of-

ficials owe their allegiance to the Constitution. "They do not have subjects, bound by loyalty or blood, whose destiny they are entitled to control."

The Justice Department, which is representing McGahn in the lawsuit, will appeal, a spokeswoman said.

John Bolton, Trump's former national security adviser, has let it be known that he has significant information about the Ukraine affair at the heart of the impeachment inquiry but is uncertain whether any congressional subpoena for his testimony would be constitutionally valid. He wants a judge to decide. **NYT**

## Nepal PM Oli hospitalised, put on ventilator; condition 'stable'

YUBARAJ GHIMIRE  
KATHMANDU, NOVEMBER 26

Nepal Prime Minister K P Oli, who has been on regular dialysis for the past five weeks, has been admitted to a hospital and put on ventilator after his appendix was removed.

A bulletin issued by the hospital said he had a stomach pain on Monday night, and his appendix was removed the next morning. His condition was said to be stable.

Hospital sources, however, said the 68-year old Prime



Minister was not in good health, and has had to regularly use steroids. They said he had been consulting doctors for a kidney retransplant.

"He has been given 'lonotropes' — a medicine to bring heart beat to normal pace

— after the operation," hospital sources said.

After spending about two weeks in Singapore National Hospital last month for treatment, Oli was believed to be contemplating the kidney retransplant for the second time either in the US or in Nepal, and had been undergoing regular dialysis pending a final decision.

Doctors said Oli was in the intensive care unit of the Manmohan Cardiothoracic Vascular and Transplant Centre, and no visitors were allowed to see him.

LARGESCALE REDUCTION OF GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REQUIRED, UN ENVIRONMENT PROGRAMME REPORT SAYS

# On current course, global temperatures to increase 3.2 degrees by 2030: UN

ESHA ROY  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

A NEW report released by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) on Monday said that even if the present Paris Agreement commitments were met, global temperatures were expected to rise by 3.2 degrees Celsius by 2030. The UNEP's annual Emissions Gap Report stated that unless global greenhouse gas emissions fall by 7.6 per cent annually between 2020

and 2030, "the world will miss the opportunity to get on track towards the 1.5°C temperature goal of the Paris Agreement".

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned that global warming of more than 1.5°C from pre-industrial levels meant the "bringing of even wider-ranging and more destructive climate impacts", including storms and heatwaves. A UN climate change conference is scheduled to be held in 2020 in Glasgow and will look at the Paris Agreement commitments.

"Our collective failure to act early and hard on climate change means we now must deliver deep cuts to emissions — over seven per cent each year, if we break it down evenly over the next decade. This shows that countries simply cannot wait until the end of 2020, when new climate commitments are due, to step up action. They — and every city, region, business and individual — need to act now.

We need quick wins to reduce emissions as much as possible in 2020, then stronger Nationally Determined Contributions to



The report says global greenhouse emissions must fall by 7.6% annually between 2020 and 2030 to keep the goals of the Paris agreement on track. *Reuters*

kick-start the major transformations of economies and societies. If we don't do this, the 1.5°C goal will be out of reach before 2030," said Inger Andersen, UNEP's executive director.

G20 nations collectively account for 78 per cent of all emissions, but only five G20 members have committed to a long-term zero emissions target. In the short-term, developed countries will have to reduce their emissions quicker than developing countries, for reasons of fairness and equity, the report stated. Crucially,

the report said all nations must substantially increase ambition in their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), as the Paris commitments are known, in 2020 and follow up with policies and strategies to implement them.

Each year, the Emissions Gap Report assesses the gap between anticipated emissions in 2030 and levels consistent with the 1.5°C and 2°C targets of the Paris Agreement. The report finds that greenhouse gas emissions have risen 1.5 per cent per year over the last decade. Emissions in 2018, includ-

ing from land-use changes such as deforestation, hit a new high of 55.3 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent.

To limit temperatures, annual emissions in 2030 need to be 15 gigatonnes of CO2 equivalent lower than current unconditional NDCs require for the 2°C goal; they need to be 32 gigatonnes lower for the 1.5°C goal. On an annual basis, this means cuts in emissions of 7.6 per cent per year from 2020 to 2030 to meet the 1.5°C goal and 2.7 per cent per year for the 2°C goal.



## SECTOR SCAN PHARMACEUTICAL

# CDSCO flags drugs made by 3 PSUs for failing quality tests

PRABHARAGHAVAN  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

THE CENTRAL Drugs Standard Control Organization (CDSCO) has flagged five batches of medicines manufactured by three government-controlled drug manufacturers — Bengal Chemicals and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (BCPL), Orissa Drugs and Chemicals Ltd (ODCL) and Hindustan Antibiotics Ltd (HAL) — for failing quality tests.

At the same time, BCPL and HAL have disputed the claim that the samples were sub-standard, with BCPL also planning to challenge CDSCO's findings. The top drug regulatory authority has labelled these batches of drugs as "not of standard quality".

BCPL and HAL are Central Public Sector Enterprises, while ODCL is a joint venture between Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals, and Industrial Promotion and Investment Corporation of Odisha. As per the regulator's findings, samples belonging to two batches of paracetamol manufactured by BCPL failed "dissolution" tests, which measures the rate at which the product would release the active ingredients needed to treat the body. A batch of albendazole (for worm infection), produced by ODCL, was also flagged for failing the dissolution test. A batch of ciprofloxacin (antibiotic) and a batch of sodium lactate solution (electrolyte replenisher), manufactured by HAL, have been marked as sub-standard.

BCPL has said that re-tests of the samples showed that they passed the quality tests. However, the PSE has withdrawn a batch of around 1.94 lakh tablets of paracetamol.

"After receiving the failed report (from CDSCO), we have again tested from representative 'control sample' and 'sample sent by drug inspector', and also got control sample tested from an external NABL-certified laboratory (ITL Labs). All

**Five batches of medicines made by BCPL, ODCL and HAL flagged. BCPL and HAL have disputed the claim that the samples were sub-standard**

the samples passed all the required tests, including the dissolution test....," said Manotosh Bandyopadhyay, assistant general manager (quality assurance), BCPL. "We are going to challenge the report of the government analyst as per provision of the drug rules. But we have already recalled the batch as the government analyst declared it 'not of standard quality'," he told *The Indian Express*.

HAL also denied that its products are sub-standard, and said the regulator did not inform it that batches of its products had failed quality tests. "CDSCO have never informed HAL about the failure of Compound Sodium Lactate Injection IP 500 ml," said HAL company secretary Ashok B Gawari. He said HAL received the information from ESI Hospital in Chennai instead.

HAL tested reference sample of the product from that batch and found it to conform to the Indian Pharmacopoeia, said Gawari, adding that this information was relayed to the regulator on November 23.

"We have not received any NSQ (not standard quality) finding about Ciprofloxacin IP 500 mg tablets from CDSCO," he said. There is "no failure of quality of HAL product.... It appears that the product was not properly stored at the customers' place, which may have resulted in failure during testing," said Gawari. HAL has "stringent" quality control measures and a standard operating procedure, he said. ODCL did not respond to questions sent by email on the failed tests.

## RBI DY GUV: FOCUS ON REPAYMENT CAPACITY AT APPRAISAL STAGE

# Some concerns at growing level of NPAs among Mudra borrowers: RBI

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

RESERVE BANK of India Deputy Governor MK Jain on Tuesday warned bankers about the growing stress in Mudra (Micro Units Development and Refinance Agency Ltd) loans and asked them to monitor such loans closely as unsustainable credit growth in the sector can risk the system.

"Mudra loans are a case in point. While such a massive push would have lifted many beneficiaries out of poverty, there has been some concerns at the growing level of non-performing assets among these borrowers," Jain said at a Sidbi conference on microfinance. Banks need to focus on the repayment capacity at the appraisal stage itself and monitor loans through the life cycle of the account much more closely, Jain said.

Gross NPAs under Mudra rose by 68.7 per cent to Rs 16,480.87 crore for the financial year ended March 2019 from Rs 9,769 crore a year ago.

Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana (PMMY) was launched in April 2015 for providing loans up to Rs 10 lakh to small and micro enterprises. These advances which are given by commercial banks, regional rural banks

## Explained Concern: Systemic risk from unsustainable credit growth

AN OVER 68 per cent rise in non-performing assets (NPAs) in MUDRA loans has prompted the Reserve Bank of India to warn bankers about growing stress in such loans.

While the government push for these collateral-free loans led to banks pursuing sharp growth in their exposure to MUDRA loans, the RBI is concerned that systemic risk may arise from unsustainable credit growth.

(RRBs), small finance banks, co-operative banks, micro finance institutions (MFIs) and NBFCs are refinanced by the government. Total disbursements were Rs 311,811 crore as of March 2019.

"Systemic risk may arise from unsustainable credit growth, increased interconnect-edness, pro-cyclical and financial risks manifested by lower profitability," Jain said. It is interesting to see leading e-commerce companies tying up with banks and NBFCs to offer working capital loans to their suppliers, that are mostly micro and small enterprises, at competitive terms, he said.

## Red tape, judicial delays hurting bad loan resolution: Nobel laureate Robert Engle

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

AMERICAN ECONOMIST and Nobel laureate Robert Engle on Tuesday said red tape and endless judicial processes make it difficult for banks to deal with the bad loans problem.

However, he lauded the Reserve Bank for pushing bankruptcy reforms to increase the speed and fairness of the resolution processes and also forced lenders to send defaulting borrowers to bankruptcy courts.

"But excessive red-tape and interminable judicial schedules make it difficult for banks to deal with non-performing loans," Engle said delivering the RH Patil memorial lecture organised by the NSE.

Referring to the Essar Steel case, he said the courts blocked restructuring of the company, striking a body blow against the bankruptcy reforms.

However, in recent Supreme Court judgement rejecting the NCLAT ruling is a welcome change. "Much remains to be done to reduce the backlog of non-performing loans," he said.

The Economics Noble was awarded to him along with Clive Granger in 2003 for their research on the concept of autoregressive conditional heteroskedasticity and for inventing methods to analyse economic time series with time-varying volatility.

He, currently, is the director of the NYU Stern Volatility Institute and is the co-founding president of the Society for Financial Econometrics.

## A 'named driver policy' as an automobile insurance policy provides coverage only for drivers specifically named on the policy and not for other individuals driving the vehicle

the product will give better and transparent coverage and remove the subjectivity."

In its exposure draft 'Revisiting the product structure for Motor Own Damage', the working group has also recommended that all the occupants traveling in motor vehicles should have Rs 25,000 medical expenses coverage arising out of an accident to the insured vehi-

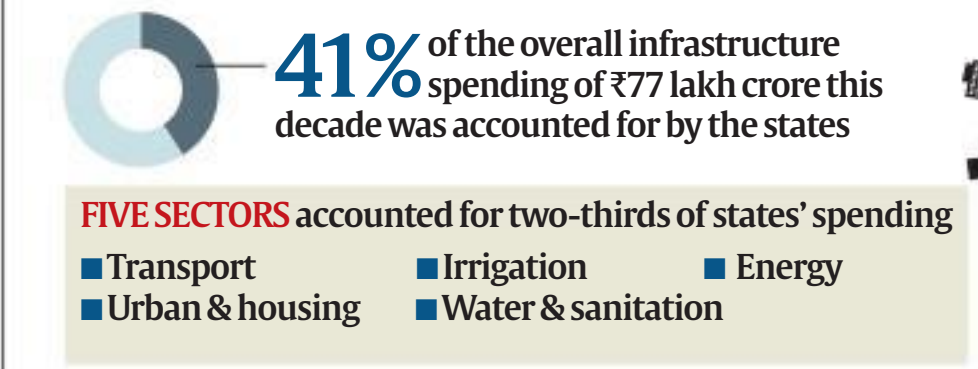
cle covered under the basic policy and appropriate premium for this should be charged by the insurers.

The panel was of the opinion that cover for damage by rodents or insects is part of the basic policy under accidental and external means. Further, it said losses arising out of damage to the engine parts due to water ingress are part of the basic policy. For private cars and two wheelers (other than brand new), the sum insured should represent the current day manufacturer's listed price of the vehicle insured including value of all accessories fitted thereon by the manufacturer, and adjusted by age wise depreciation to arrive at the sum insured as per new depreciation table suggested, it said.

For a brand new private car up to 3 years, the sum insured should represent the current day on-road

## ‘States need to raise infra spending to ₹110 lakh cr over next decade’

States need to scale up investments to ₹110 lakh crore over the next decade to achieve India's massive infrastructure targets, rating agency Crisil said



**INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENTS** by states need to rise to ₹110 lakh crore over the next decade (fiscal 2021-2030) if India is to achieve its infrastructure buildout targets, Crisil said

**FRONT RUNNER** states such as Gujarat, Maharashtra and Karnataka, which saw a moderation in capex growth on

a higher base, need to crowd in private investments, and find new triggers to grow capex sharply from current levels, it said

**MIDDLE-OF-THE-PACK** states such as Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana can be growth leaders by sustaining their current spending

**CLIMBERS** such as Rajasthan and UP,



### COORDINATED APPROACH

While states will have to do the heavy lifting, they need to work with the Centre on sectoral reforms, the report said

### CATEGORISATION

Bucketing these states into three categories – front-runners, middle of the pack, and climbers – Crisil recommended customised strategies and action sequences to maximise investments

which have been high spenders in recent years, could be constrained by surging debt burden, it added

**FISCAL DETERIORATION**, institutional weaknesses and inability to scale up commercial financing and public-private partnerships as key structural constraints to address for a sustained increase in spending, said Crisil

## Constraint to doing biz is of enforcing contracts ... in many cases the govt is violating: Sanyal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

BIGGEST CONSTRAINT to doing business in the country is poor contract enforcement, and the blame for the same rests mostly with the government, a top finance ministry official said on Tuesday. The government delays payments or does not deliver on promises made earlier, posing challenges to businesses, Principal Economic Advisor to the Finance Ministry Sanjeev Sanyal said.

Even as we have leaptfrogged on the overall ease of doing business ranking, we are still ranked 163rd among 190 countries when it comes to enforcing contract, and only "dysfunctional and war-affected" countries follow us, he said. "The biggest constraint to doing business in our country is simply the business of enforcing contracts. Unfortunately, many people have whined about it for long, but very little actual thinking has gone into it," Sanyal told an event organised by impact investing firm Avishkar.

The economist-turned-policy-maker sought to take the blame for the same onto the government. "In many cases, the poverty of contract enforcement relates not to two private parties, but the government which is violating these contracts," he said, adding this happens as both the Centre and the states "violate" honouring payments or other commitments.

**"In many cases, the poverty of contract enforcement relates not to two private parties, but the government which is violating these contracts ... If the role of the state is to be the real sovereign, then the word of the sovereign has to be printed in gold"**

**SANJEEV SANYAL**, PRINCIPAL ECONOMIC ADVISOR TO THE FINANCE MINISTRY

He assured that the present government is working on these issues through interventions like ensuring the timely payments to vendors. "If the role of the state is to be the real sovereign, then the word of the sovereign has to be printed in gold," Sanyal quipped.

Other factors that plague proper and timely contract enforcement is the justice system, which is saddled with 35 million cases and it takes over a decade to get a case solved that too "if one is lucky", he said. Stating that our regulations are "very complicated", Sanyal said, "what can be a simple regulation in other country becomes very complicated and bureaucratic here because what we are trying to do is to anticipate every possible thing that can possibly go wrong and then write some rules for preventing that to happen."



# HMSI resumes work at Manesar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

HONDA MOTORCYCLE & Scooter India (HMSI) on Tuesday said it has commenced operations at its Manesar plant with permanent employees joining the work though the sacked contractual employees continued with their protest at the site.

The two-wheeler major had suspended operations at the plant from the first week of November as workers protested for over a week against the retrenchment of

## Contractual workers continue with protest

their 200 contractual colleagues.

The stand-off at the facility, which employs around 1,900 permanent workers and 2,500 contract workers, began on November 5 morning when the company management did not allow some of the contractual workers to go inside the plant.

"The decision to resume production at Manesar plant was initiated on November 22. All perma-

nent staff associates were informed to join duties from 25-28 November in four batches," HMSI said. Process of joining back to work has started as per the schedule and the firm looks forward to normalcy of operation after this process is completed, it added.

"With the intention of maintaining industrial peace, Manesar plant management reaffirmed that all permanent workers are expected to resume work as per schedule and carry out their assigned duties with discipline, good faith, cooperation and positivity," the two-wheeler major said.

# CBDT retires 21 tax officers on charges of graft, bribery

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

IN ANOTHER round of compulsory retirement of tax officers, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) Tuesday retired 21 Group B officials on charges of corruption and bribery under Fundamental Rule 56(J), taking the total number of tax officers compulsorily retired to 85 this year.

More than half of the officers have been charged by CBI in cases of "illegal gratification", sources said. One of them was caught accepting a bribe of Rs 65,00,000, while another official is accused of having been a part of criminal conspiracy.

Officials who have been compulsorily retired were posted in places such as Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Thane, Nagpur, Hazaribagh, Rajkot, Jodhpur,

## 85 RETIRED THIS YEAR

■ The total number of tax officers compulsorily retired is 85 this year

■ More than half of the officers have been charged by CBI in cases of "illegal gratification", sources said

■ Officials who have been compulsorily retired were posted in places such as

Rajahmundry, Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Thane, Nagpur, Hazaribagh, Rajkot, Jodhpur, Bikaner, Sawai Madhopur, Ujjain and Bhopal

■ This is the fifth round of compulsory retirement of tax officials

Bikaner, Sawai Madhopur, Ujjain and Bhopal.

This is the fifth round of compulsory retirement of tax officials. In the previous four rounds, 64 high ranking tax officers were compulsorily retired under Fundamental Rule 56(J) this year.

Earlier in June, the government had compulsorily retired

A similar action under Rule 56(J) was taken by the government in May 2016 when 33 officials of the Revenue Services, including seven Group C officers, were prematurely retired for non-performance under Rule 56(j) of CCS (Pension) Rules.

The Rule 56(J) of Central Civil Services (Pension) Rules, 1972 provides for periodical review of the performance of government servants with a view to ascertain whether they should be retained in service or retired from service in public interest.

As per these instructions, the cases of Government servants covered by FR 56(J), 56(1) or Rule 48(1) (b) of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972 should be reviewed six months before they attain the age of 50-55 years, in cases covered by FR 56(J) and on completion of 30 years of qualifying service under FR 56(1) or Rule 48 of CCS (Pension) Rules, 1972.

# VW Group cuts output at Chakan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

EUROPEAN CAR major Skoda Auto Volkswagen, which is on a revival bid after the reorganisation of its multiple business units here under one umbrella brand, has been cutting output in a phased manner at its Chakan plant to align demand with supply.

In a statement on Tuesday, the company said it is preparing for

new offerings under the India 2.0 project, which seeks to strengthen its presence at an investment of around Rs 8,000 crore and with an India specific product platform, the MQB-AO-IN.

"We are preparing for the next generation products within the India 2.0 project. Several upgrades are in progress at our facilities to accommodate changes in production lines for the new platform," Skoda Auto Volkswagen said. The statement came in response to

queries from PTI whether it is shutting down production for a month at its Chakan plant as the industry is fighting a slump and falling exports.

"We are systematically planning our non-production days to sustainably meet our customer deliveries without any delays," it said without giving specifics. As per media reports, the company will halt production at Chakan from mid-December to mid-January.

# Cabinet may okay plan to raise FCI's authorised capital

HARIKISHAN SHARMA  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

THE UNION Cabinet on Wednesday may approve a proposal to raise the authorised capital of Food Corporation of India (FCI), which will allow it to borrow more money from the market.

According to the sources, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution had circulated a note for raising the authorised capital of FCI from Rs 3,500 crore to Rs 10,000 crore. Once approved, FCI will be able to raise more money from the market.

The move comes in the backdrop of FCI's request for infusion of capital. Last week, Minister of State of Consumer Affairs, Food & Public Distribution Danve Raosaheb Dadarao informed Parliament that FCI had requested equity capital infusion, against which the government has de-

## The move comes in the backdrop of FCI's request for infusion of capital

cided to increase the equity capital of FCI by Rs 5,000 crore.

"As against equity infusion plan of Rs 5,000 crore, the government has already released Rs 500 crore during the Financial Year 2018-19. Release of balance Rs 4,500 crore would be considered once the Authorised Capital of FCI is enhanced from present level of Rs 3,500 crore to Rs 10,000 crore", he said in the written reply to a question in Lok Sabha on November 19.

The FCI was setup under the Food Corporations Act 1964. It procures food grains at MSP announced by the government and supplies for the public distribution system at heavily subsidised rate.

# GST authorities unearth racket involving ₹140 cr tax fraud

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

GST AUTHORITIES have unearthed a tax racket and arrested one person for allegedly defrauding the government to the tune of about Rs 140 crore through fraudulent means.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) in a release said that the Central GST Delhi North Commissionerate has unearthed a racket "involving supply of goods-less invoices and invoice-less goods". One person has been arrested in the connection and sent to judicial custody for 14 days. The accused was found to be operating 10 fake firms which were created for rotation of money and fraudulent Input Tax Credit (ITC), thus defrauding the exchequer. "Prima facie fraudulent ITC of about Rs 140 crore has been passed on using invoices involving an amount of Rs 1,040 crore," it said.

# ICICI Prudential MF, HDFC MF receive payments from Essel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

TWO ASSET management companies — ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund and HDFC Mutual Fund — on Tuesday said they have received payments to the tune of Rs 437 crore from Subhash Chandra's Essel Group.

Individually, ICICI Prudential MF has got Rs 270 crore as repayment and interest from the Essel Group, while the same for HDFC MF has been pegged at Rs 167 crore. With this repayment, ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund's exposure to Essel Group has come down to nil.

"Pursuant to the sale of shareholding by the promoters of ZEEL, ICICI Prudential Mutual Fund has received repayment of the total principal amount invested along with the accrued interest thereon. Subsequently, as on date, none of the schemes of ICICI Prudential

MF have any investments in debt instruments issued by the promoter group companies of ZEEL," the fund house spokesperson said.

HDFC MF said that the company holds certain non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of the Essel Group that are secured by a pledge of listed equity shares. The carrying value of these NCDs as at September 30, 2019 was Rs 275.63 crore.

"The company has received a total of Rs 166.86 crore towards part repayment of the said NCDs and interest thereon, from the issuer through sale of certain listed equity shares comprising part of the collateral. The value of the residual pledged listed equity shares as at November 25, 2019 is Rs 143.95 crore," the fund house informed the stock exchanges.

On Monday, Subhash Chandra resigned as chairman of his flagship company Zee Entertainment Enterprises Ltd (ZEEL) with immediate effect.

## ‘Q2 growth likely to be at 4.7%; FY20 forecast lowered’

Indian economy may have slowed for the sixth consecutive quarter in July-September to 4.7 per cent, Fitch group firm India Ratings and Research said, as it lowered GDP growth forecast for current fiscal for the fourth time



**5.6%** The percentage to which India Ratings and Research has revised its GDP growth forecast for FY20  
**DECLINING GROWTH** Despite favourable base effect, declining growth momentum suggests that even the H2FY20 will now be weaker than previously forecasted and is likely to come in at 6.2 per cent  
**INDIA'S GROWTH**

**OUTLOOK** has weakened sharply this year, with a crunch that started with the non-banking financial companies spreading to retail businesses, car-makers, home sales and heavy industries  
**COMBINED CAPITAL AND CONSUMPTION EXPENDITURE** of central and 20 states government in Q2FY20 grew 37.8 per cent and 20.1 per cent, respectively

# CCD, bad loans weigh on RBL Bank, net slumps 73%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

SMALL-SIZED PRIVATE sector lender RBL Bank on Tuesday said its September quarter net plummeted 73 percent to Rs 54.3 crore on lumpy loans turning sour, and guided towards more pains in the next three months as well.

Its stressed book involving large borrowers stands at Rs 1,800 crore, up from Rs 1,000 crore estimated earlier due to the troubles in Cafe Coffee Day during the second quarter, managing director and chief executive Vishwavir Ahuja said here.

He said Rs 800 crore of this slipped during the quarter, taking its gross non-performing assets ratio to 2.60, almost double from 1.40, and resulting in loan provisions shooting up to Rs 539 crore from Rs 109 crore.

# Trade deal close: White House, after negotiators speak over telephone

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON/BEIJING, NOVEMBER 26

THE UNITED States and China are close to agreement on the first phase of a trade deal, White House adviser Kellyanne Conway said on Tuesday, after top negotiators from the two countries spoke by telephone and agreed to keep working on remaining issues.

US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer and Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin spoke with Chinese Vice Premier Liu on Tuesday morning, China's Commerce Ministry said, as the world's two largest economies try to hammer out a "phase one" deal in a 16-month trade war that is slowing global growth.

They discussed core issues related to the phase one deal, the ministry said.

## ‘We’re getting really close and that first phase is significant’

KELLYANNE CONWAY  
WHITE HOUSE ADVISER

Completion of a phase one deal had been expected in November, but trade experts and people close to the White House said last week it could slide into the new year, as Beijing presses for more extensive tariff rollbacks and Washington counters with its own demands.

Tuesday's news lifted markets, with Wall Street's three major indexes adding slightly to the previous days' records. Reaching a trade agreement with China is one of US President Donald Trump's top priorities. Conway told Fox News the United States and China were nearing agreement on the preliminary deal.

# RBI revises framework on currency swap pact for SAARC countries

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank on Tuesday said it has put in place a revised framework on currency swap arrangement for SAARC countries for 2019-2022.

The SAARC currency swap facility came into operation on November 15, 2012 with an intention to provide a backstop line of funding for short-term foreign exchange liquidity requirements or balance of payment crises till longer-term arrangements are made.

"Based on the terms and conditions of the framework, the RBI would enter into bilateral swap agreements with SAARC central banks, who want to avail swap facility," the central bank said in a circular. **PTI**

# Google fires 4 employees, staff calls it ‘retaliation’

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SAN FRANCISCO, NOVEMBER 26

GOOGLE HAS fired four employees on the grounds they violated data security policies, prompting ire among colleagues concerned it was retaliation for worker organising.

One of the workers fired on Monday was connected to a petition against Google working with the US immigration and border patrol agency. She confirmed her firing in a message posted on Twitter.

A memo to employees titled "Securing our data" sought to correct what it contended was misinformation about the purported wrongdoing, saying it involved "systematic searches for other employees' materials and work," according to reports by US media. However, a Medium account

## BRIEFLY

### RCap defaults on payment obligations

New Delhi: Reliance Capital on Tuesday said it has defaulted on payments towards its obligations on bonds and interest generated towards the same. Making disclosure to exchanges, it said the rating downgrade by CARE in September had initiated acceleration of various facilities by certain lenders.

### Ola to launch operations in London soon

New Delhi: Cab hailing platform Ola on Tuesday said it will soon begin its operations in London and has started onboarding licensed drivers in the region. Ola had received an operating licence from Transport for London (TfL) earlier this year.

### Provide Thapar documents: Sebi to CG Power

New Delhi: Capital market regulator the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has asked fraud-hit CG Power & Industrial Solutions to provide its ousted chairman Gautam Thapar and others information they had sought on audit findings of financial irregularities in the company during their tenure.

### CCI nod to Toyota-Suzuki stake deal

New Delhi: The Competition Commission of India on Tuesday said it has approved the minority stake purchase deal of Toyota Motor Corporation and Suzuki Motor Corporation.

### Sebi bars four firms from advisory services

New Delhi: Markets regulator Sebi on Tuesday barred as many as four entities — 3M Team Research, Samrat Trades, Core Investment and Core Group — from carrying out investment advisory services till further orders. The entities have been prohibited for several reasons, including providing investment advisory services without obtaining necessary registration, promising unrealistic assured return to investors and providing misleading information to Sebi.

### CSB Bank IPO subscribed 87 times

New Delhi: The initial public offering of CSB Bank was subscribed a whopping 86.89 times on the final day of bidding on Tuesday. The initial public offering (IPO) of the Kerala-based company received bids for over 100 crore shares against the total issue size of 1.15 crore shares, as per NSE data till 18:45 hrs. **PTI**





CHANGING GEAR

# The global drugs trade shifts to west Africa

Weak, corrupt states are ideal for cocaine barons

ONE OF AFRICA'S biggest-ever drug seizures took place on September 1st at a modest bungalow outside the town of Canchungo in Guinea-Bissau. Hidden behind a fake wall, Bissau-Guinean judicial police found 1,660kg of cocaine — enough to cut 100m lines. At two other houses nearby, they found a further 250kg of drugs. They arrested a dozen people, including three Colombians and a Mexican, and nabbed 18 cars and a speedboat. The drugs were destined for Mali and ultimately, Europe.

The seizure was the second big one this year in Guinea-Bissau. In March police got their hands on almost 800kg. Before that, they had reported no drugs hauls to the UN Office on Drugs and Crime for over a decade. For most observers the surprise was not that a big shipment of drugs was passing through the country, but that the police stopped it. In Guinea-Bissau, a small, poor west African state of just 1.9m people, where over 90% of formal exports are cashew nuts, cocaine-smuggling has been a huge business since at least 2005. UN officials warned more than a decade ago that the country risked becoming a “narco-state”. The drugs trade has only become more embedded since then. International officials in Bissau, the capital, guess that at least ten tonnes of cocaine pass through each year, probably more. At European street prices, that would be worth about the same as Guinea-Bissau's GDP. Across west Africa, coke is propping up kleptocratic political systems and fuelling violence.

Having fallen during the global financial crisis, production of hard drugs is now as high as it has ever been (*see chart*). In Colombia, since a peace deal with the FARC, a Marxist insurgency, was signed in 2016, the coca crop has increased dramatically. When the FARC disbanded, new traffickers rushed to take control of their territory. Competition between buyers has pushed up coca prices so farmers have planted more. Opium in Afghanistan has flourished since most NATO forces pulled out of the country in 2014. The Afghan state, battling the Taliban, has all but given up on trying to stop the drugs trade. Poppies bloom outside Kandahar, the second-biggest city. And the production of synthetic drugs such as ecstasy is up everywhere. In the rich world, too, drug use is climbing again. In Britain the share of 16- to 24-year-olds who say they have taken a class a drug (such as ecstasy or cocaine) in the past year almost doubled between 2012 and 2018, to 9%. In America cocaine use is rising and drug overdoses, mostly of opiates, continue to kill around 70,000 people a year. And in countries from eastern Europe to Asia, demand for recreational drugs is growing with incomes. Most of these drugs have to be smuggled from places such as Afghanistan and Colombia to users, mostly in America and Europe. Traffickers are finding ever more sophisticated ways to hide their product, says Lawrence Gibbons of Britain's National Crime Agency (NCA). Some hide cocaine within the walls of shipping containers, or inside fruit. They are also exploiting new routes. Police from Britain and the Netherlands have cracked down on shipments through the Caribbean, so traffickers are moving their product through west Africa instead. That means that the violence and corruption that has long afflicted Latin America is spreading.



Cape Verde's judicial police arrange drugs seized during their raid on targets in the Flying Boat case before burning them in Praia, Cape Verde, in 2011. Reuters

The increase in production of drugs “probably affects Africa more than anywhere else”, says Mark Shaw of the Global Initiative against Transnational Organised Crime, a think-tank, because many African states are fragile. Smugglers easily bypass or co-opt their institutions and officials. Drug markets, like other forms of organised crime, thrive best in places where the governments cannot or will not resist them. Trafficking then makes weak, dirty institutions even weaker and dirtier.

Guinea-Bissau's appeal is partly geographic. The country is a mere 3,000km from Brazil — about as close as Africa and South America get — and reachable by small aircraft fitted with fuel bladders. With over 80 islands, most uninhabited, it is easy to drop off drugs undetected, or to smuggle them in from boats. In the early days of the trade, when cocaine washed up on beaches, locals did not know what it was and used it as detergent or make-up. Now they know.

Guinea-Bissau's politics are ideal for drug barons. Politicians need money and violence to gain and hold high office. Cocaine can pay for both. Campaigns involve hundreds of cars, huge wodes of cash and even helicopters, none of which is readily available in a poor country. “The relationship between state weakness and the

emergence of the drugs trade is seen very clearly” in Guinea-Bissau, writes Hassoum Ceesay, a historian.

Colombian traffickers probably arrived in the country some time before the 2005 election, on the invitation of João Bernardo “Nino” Vieira, Guinea-Bissau's longest-serving president, who needed to raise money to fund his electioneering. Traffickers were brazen—in the military airport in Bissau sits an abandoned Lear jet flown from Venezuela full of cocaine—and the drug money quickly exacerbated Guinea-

Bissau's long-standing instability.

Soldiers killed Vieira in 2009, hours after his army chief of staff died in a bomb blast. Many locals suspect that Latin American cartels set up both murders. In 2012 the then head of the army, Antonio Indjai, launched a coup d'état, possibly to try to protect his alleged cocaine-trafficking business. He is still wanted by America's Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), which in 2013 arrested an accomplice, the former head of the shipless navy, José Américo Bubo Na Tchuto, who served four years in an American prison.

Latin American cartels probably controlled the cocaine seized in September. Elements of the National Guard and the customs authorities are said to have waved through the drugs. Powerful Bissau-Guineans protect it for a cut of the profits and less powerful ones do the grunt work. “Everybody knows what the deal is,” says a former DEA agent who worked in west Africa. “Drugs are protected by big people, the top people,” says one Bissau-Guinean justice-department official.

The judicial police force, which grabbed the drugs, is among the cleanest parts of the state. It gets international support. But the government starves it of the resources it needs to investigate the drugs trade. Officers lack boats or cars; sometimes they cannot even pay

for mobile-phone credit, says Fernando Jorge Barreto Costa, the force's deputy director. Judges refuse to issue arrest warrants, or order the release of suspects. According to the *Journal of Modern African Studies*, in 2007 the public prosecutor released several Colombians on bail using cash that had been seized during their arrest. When the judicial police refused to release them, Aristides Gomes, the prime minister at the time, intervened, arguing that the men should be released and the “bail money” forfeited to the state.

Guinea-Bissau is not the only place in west Africa to be afflicted by cocaine. In February nine tonnes were found in a ship in Cape Verde. In June police in Senegal seized 800kg hidden in cars on a boat from Brazil. And traffickers have political allies throughout the region. The eldest son of Lansana Conté, the late president of Guinea-Conakry, was jailed for 16 months there for his involvement in the drugs trade.

East Africa is plagued by heroin. Better enforcement in Turkey has pushed traffickers south. Their product is smuggled out of Afghanistan via Pakistan or Iran, and moved on fishing dhows around the Gulf of Arabia and down to Kenya and Mozambique. From there, it can travel to Europe and America hidden on container ships or inside passengers on commercial flights.

What are the consequences of the shift in smuggling routes? Drugs need not cause wars — if they did, the Netherlands, which produces much of the world's ecstasy, would be a hellhole. But they do give peo-

ple something to fight over, and bankroll armed groups that were already fighting for other reasons. The police say the drugs seized in Guinea-Bissau this year were on their way to Mali. Tuareg and Arab rebels wrestle for control of drug routes across the Sahara desert. In July the UN imposed sanctions on a Malian, Mohamed Ben Ahmed Mahri, for funnelling gains from drug-trafficking to Al-Mourabitoun, a militant group from northern Mali. Gangs that have built up political connections and stashes of weapons can move easily into new rackets such as kidnapping or extortion.

In more peaceful countries, drugs still strain weak political systems. Suspicions have been voiced in Kenya's parliament about the alleged past involvement of Mike Sonko and Hassan Joho, the governors of Nairobi and Mombasa, the two biggest cities, in drug-trafficking. Both men deny involvement. Kenya's government generally co-operates with international efforts to stop trafficking, say local diplomats — probably because the trade helps to finance the opposition. In Mozambique the dominant political party, Frelimo, mostly controls heroin-smuggling itself, says Joseph Hanlon of the London School of Economics. The revenues pay for local power-brokers to get out the vote.

Being a transit country has other downsides. Smugglers often pay their contacts in drugs to sell locally. (This is easier and cheaper than laundering money.) The world's second-biggest market for cocaine is Brazil, a major transit country. Heroin is a scourge in east Africa; crack cocaine bedevils west Africa (though it is dwarfed by the abuse of prescription opiates). At a treatment centre run by Catholic priests in Bissau, young men, most of them crack-cocaine addicts, say the drug can be bought for 2,000 west African francs (\$3.50) a gram, a tenth of the price in Europe.

## Diverted traffic

Mexico offers a glimpse of how drug-trafficking may further evolve. As demand in the United States has changed, due to the partial legalisation of cannabis and a surge in opioid use, traffickers have diversified. Tighter security on the border also favours heroin and fentanyl, which are less bulky. A truckload of marijuana is worth about \$10m, says Everard Meade of the University of San Diego. \$10m of cocaine would fill the boots of several cars. But \$10m of heroin can be smuggled inside two briefcases.

So long as drugs are illegal, criminals will profit from them. Whatever the police do, cartels will adapt. Mr Gibbons of the NCA says that in Britain some Colombians now run vertically integrated businesses — controlling supply at every level from production in the Amazon down to distribution in British cities. In Brazil the First Command of the Capital, a São Paulo-based drug cartel, has taken control of nearly all of the value chain by building plants to process cocaine paste in Bolivia and forging links with crime bosses in Europe. Italian traffickers have hired divers in Brazil to attach magnetic boxes filled with drugs to the bottom of ships, to be removed by a second set of divers when the ships arrive in Europe. As Allan de Abreu, a Brazilian journalist, points out: “The police are always one step behind the traffickers.”

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## CYBER-SICKNESS

# Virtual reality continues to make people sick

And women more so than men

The whole history of fiction shows that alternative realities are an attractive and profitable idea. So back in the 1990s, when electronics had arrived at a point where people could build headsets that blocked off actual reality and replaced it with a virtual version created inside a computer, it looked as if something world-changing might have arrived. Games companies were particularly excited, and Nintendo, Sega and Virtuality duly piled in.

The world, however, stubbornly refused to be changed. It might have put up with the low-resolution images, the choppy scene transitions and the poor controls, for these would surely have got better. It might also have put up with the price (the headsets in question could cost up to \$70,000), for that would surely have come down. It could not, though, accommodate the dizziness, nausea, eye strain, vomiting, headaches, sweating and disorientation that many of the technology's users (more than 60%, according to one study) complained of — a set of symptoms that, collectively, have come to be called “cyber-sickness”. Though not fatal to people, cyber-sickness certainly helped damage the industry, which more or less vanished.

Two decades later, however, virtual real-

ity (VR) returned from the dead, with better images, smoother transitions and more precise controls. There were also applications beyond games. The upgraded technology has found use in social media, interior design, job training and even pain management. Moreover, a new set of companies, Oculus (now part of Facebook), HTC and Sony, have come up with products that do not require a second mortgage to afford.

Despite these improvements, though, VR has not lived up to expectations. It has done respectably, with sales in 2018 of \$3.6bn, according to SuperData Research, a market research firm. But that is only 2.4% of the global market for games. Many people — and not just the usual hypeseters — thought that this time around VR would become a blockbuster technology. It has not happened. Part of the reason is that cyber-sickness has not gone away. One study suggests between 25% and 40% of users still experience it.

Dealing with this is difficult, not least because there is an argument about what triggers it in the first place. Two theories dominate. One is that users experience sensory conflict — a mismatch between what they see and what their other senses and their real-world knowledge tell them they should

be experiencing. The other is that the underlying cause is individuals' inability to control their bodies and maintain proper posture when moving around in virtual environments. To complicate matters, both hypotheses could be true.

## Feeling woozy

Sensory conflict there certainly is. For example, when users move their heads they expect what they see to change immediately in response. But time-lags and poor graphics mean their visual input often fails to meet the brain's expectations. Dealing with this means increasing the “frame rate” at which the virtual world is presented to a user, improving the resolution of the images and reducing the latency of response to a user's movements. All of these require clever processing by the computer responsible for creating the illusion.

Improvements in tracking what a user is doing also help. “Room scale” VR systems let people move around in the real world while perceiving similar movement in the virtual one. Following a user's movement can be done in one of two ways. Outside-in tracking relies on external cameras observing beacons of various sorts scattered around a



A gamer plays on a Playstation VR during Europe's leading digital games fair Gamescom, which showcases the latest trends of the computer gaming scene in Cologne, Germany, in August. Reuters

user's body. Inside-out tracking is the opposite: the beacons are scattered around the room and detectors on a user's body employ them as reference points.

On top of all this, there is the design of the lenses that sit inside a headset in front of a user's eyes to adjust optically for the fact that what is actually a nearby image is supposed to be some distance away. Since the shape of these lenses is fixed and the amount of adjustment required varies with what is being looked at, distortion is inevitable. But distortions are particularly noticeable when users move their eyes, says Paul MacNeillage of the University of Nevada, Reno. Some headsets

therefore now track a user's gaze and move the lenses within the headset in response.

Make the input too credible, though, and you run into a different problem — the contrast between what a user's eyes are seeing and what the motion-sensors in his inner ear are detecting. To deal with that, some designers program in a “virtual nose”, just visible to the user, to serve as a point of reference.

These tactics help. But they do not get rid of cyber-sickness entirely. That is where the second hypothesis, unstable posture, comes in. And it is one that has the virtue of offering an explanation of a mystery about the condition — why women are more likely to be af-

fected than men.

Thomas Stoffregen of the University of Minnesota, who has studied the matter and found women four times as susceptible as men, cites the example of driving a car to explain the unstable-posture hypothesis. When turning the steering wheel, he observes, drivers need to keep their heads oriented to the road. They need to stabilise their bodies, particularly when the car is changing direction and pushing the body in different ways. “When you spend a lot of time in cars, you get used to doing that,” he says. “It's a skill.” But in virtual environments, where there are no forces to act as signals, people have not learned to adjust their bodies properly. They lean when the virtual car turns, but in fact they are leaning away from stability. He finds this particularly affects women, who have lower centres of gravity than men. That may cause them to sway more. And increased swaying, he has found, correlates with higher rates of cyber-sickness.

It is a neat idea. But Bas Rokers of the University of Wisconsin-Madison believes there is a simpler explanation for women's experience of cyber-sickness, which is that headsets are not designed for them. For VR to work properly, sets need to be adjusted to the distance between the pupils of a user's eyes. In one popular brand, however, Dr Rokers found that 90% of women have an interpupillary distance less than the default headset setting, and 27% of women's eyes do not fit the headset at all.

If Dr Rokers is correct, a big part of the problem of cyber-sickness might be dealt with by a small change to helmet design. If women's rates of the complaint could be reduced to the level experienced by men, then a lot more people could enjoy VR rather than enduring it. And then, perhaps, it really might achieve its potential.

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Works from the exhibition Courtesy: Fraser/Nature Morte; (below) Olivia Fraser Courtesy: Fraser/Grosvenor Gallery, Vicky Luthra

# Forever Frames

Artist Olivia Fraser’s meditative works borrow from Indian iconographies and traditions

VANDANA KALRA

WE MEET artist Olivia Fraser a couple of days after she has returned from a sojourn to the hills, where she had travelled to escape Delhi’s pollution. “All my artistic life has been about India, I don’t know where one escapes to,” she says. She compares the situation in Delhi to the Great Smog in London in 1952, and almost immediately turns her attention to the cosmos painted in her works on display at Nature Morte gallery, as if to find an answer to our predicament. The intricate and layered paintings that comprise the exhibition titled “Amrit” borrow from traditional iconographies and bring together Indian philosophies and Western ideas of minimalism and abstraction. “These are visual road maps for meditation,” she says, describing the 18 works. “Here ‘Amrit’ is a word for immortality, just as the 1,000-petaled lotus probably denotes infinity. Yoga also has the same goal. It is about connecting the mind, body and soul,” adds Fraser, as she goes on to quote from the 18th-century Sanskrit yogic manual called *Gheranda Samhita* that she extensively studied during the making of this exhibition. Her studio in Mira Singh Farm in Delhi is filled with books on ancient Sanskrit texts that have acted as reference in her works for more than a decade now.

The Scottish artist was in her 20s in 1989 when she left her art studies at Wimbledon Art College in London to join her now husband, historian William Dalrymple, in Delhi. The flu she caught immediately on landing and the delayed arrival of her luggage might not have been a pleasant start, but awaiting her in the country were experiences and encounters that were to change her perceptions. “Till then, I had thought that good art was to do with the latest trends and the ‘isms’ but in India I began to look at the numerous traditions,” she says. The introduction to the country came through trips to its narrow alleys with Dalrymple who was then researching for his book *City of Djinn*s. Working in thick oils in the UK, the translucent watercolours, she felt, were more appropriate for the Indian climate and light. Now, says Fraser, it’s as if she is following in the footsteps of her kinsman, James Fraser, a 19th landscape artist who painted the Himalayas and Calcutta, and with his brother William commissioned Indian artists for portraits and to depict the life of ordinary folk, producing one of the most acclaimed collections of Company School paintings, known as the Fraser Album. Referencing Archer Mildred and Toby Falk’s *The Passionate Quest – The Fraser Brothers in India*, Olivia too began to paint the streets, scenes and people of India. She also drew illustrations for *City of Djinn*s.

Simultaneously introducing herself to India’s present and past, she began to draw from her surrounding in her art — the water-



“Here ‘Amrit’ is a word for immortality, just as the 1,000-petaled lotus probably denotes infinity. Yoga also has the same goal. It is about connecting the mind, body and soul”  
OLIVIA FRASER  
ARTIST

colours reflected the rigour and tranquility of yoga and the Bharatanatyam lessons that she learnt. An abiding influence were the miniature paintings she first saw at the National Museum in Delhi. In 2005, she apprenticed with miniaturist Ajay Sharma, where she picked up the finer nuances of the tradition, from wielding the fine squirrel-hair brush on handmade wasli paper, to grinding pigments from natural materials such as malachite and lapis lazuli, and using gum arabic and water to reach the desired consistency. “The painting process is so precision-driven, every stroke is deliberate. It’s a systematic approach with many layers and regulations... For instance, I discovered there was only one way to draw a banana leaf, so there was no need to even look at the real thing anymore,” says Fraser, who also now co-teaches at a week-long miniature

painting workshop in Jaipur once a year.

Over the years, she has developed a language that is a rather unique to her, one that introduces the viewers at once to her affinity to the spirituality of tantric and yogic forms and her admiration for the Nathdwara pichwai paintings and artists such as Henri Rousseau, Henri Matisse and Gustav Klimt. If the “Darshan” series in the current exhibition focuses on light entering through the pupil of the eye, the delicate lotus has become her recurring leitmotif. In works such as *I Am the Moon* (2015) she “portrays the cosmic bodies of the moon as multiplying 1,000-petaled lotuses to reflect a sensation of the pulse, rhythm and movement associated with yogic meditation” and the work *Red Himalaya* (2015) has a floating lotus in a mountainous field. In the ongoing exhibition, she unites the lotus with the bee to bring together the active and the passive. “I am creating a union of opposites — the bee in search of the nectar within the lotus, or the red and white, considered opposite in tantric art, with red representing the female, and white the male; questioning if in a way are they all the same,” says Olivia, adding, “I wanted to explore the Indian artistic concept of rasa, emotion, flavour and essence... I want to explore the connections in the natural world.”

The exhibition is at Nature Morte, A-1, Neeti Bagh, till November 30



## WHERE HE BELONGS

British-Indian artist Hetai Patel's video work that explores his family's roots and the issue of identity has won him the 2019 Film London Jarman award. In one video, he's leaping from his grandmother's sofa dressed as Spider-Man, and in another, he is mimicking his car-mechanic dad.

# ‘I wish to create politically relevant content’

Wagner Moura on essaying the role of Pablo Escobar in *Narcos*, and his politically controversial directorial debut *Marighella*

### EXPRESS FEATURES SERVICE

AFTER ACHIEVING international fame for playing the drug kingpin Pablo Escobar in the web series *Narcos*, Wagner Moura debuted as a director with the movie *Marighella* that premiered at the Berlin International Film Festival earlier this year. The film was screened at the 50th International Film Festival of India (IFFI), Goa, on Tuesday.

Speaking during a masterclass, whose timing overlapped with the screening of *Marighella*, Moura said, even though he received “many invitations”, he was not interested “in having the Hollywood sort of career”. Instead, he chose to direct and co-write this movie, which is based on the life of politician and guerilla fighter Carlos Marighella.

The film has sparked a controversy in Brazil. “*Marighella* is a political film and it is currently being censored in Brazil. My goal is to produce and make movies about Latin people. I want to make movies that don’t really force a stereotype. I have those political and ambitious agendas in that sense. I just produced and acted in a film for Netflix about this Brazilian called Sérgio Vieira de Mello, who was a diplomat and supposed to be the secretary general of the UN, and was killed in Iraq in 2003. It will release soon on the streaming platform,” said Moura, who has also acted in Olivier Assayas-directed *Wasp Network*, that is also being screened at the ongoing IFFI.

While the actor, who is also a musician, is open to working with directors and actors whom he admires, he said, he debuted as a director to create his own content. “I wish to create politically-relevant content and to make films about empathy. These films should see people as people and not as statistics,” said Moura, who



Wagner Moura in Goa

finds direction “easy” and acting more “complicated”.

Acclaimed for his roles in the film series *Elite Squad* and *Elysium*, Moura said: “*Marighella*’s release in Brazil was cancelled. So, it is nice to travel to many film festivals. The movie is about this revolutionary, Marighella, who was a Congressman, a left-winger. With the (then prevailing political) situation, the only way they had was to take up guns and to take up struggle. In

2013, when we started working on it, the idea was just to bring back the name of Marighella. But then the film became about people who are resisting even now,” said the 43-year-old.

Pointing out that the “culture of Brazil is under censorship”, he said: “It’s really sad that *Marighella* was sold to many international territories but can’t release in

Brazil.” But there lies the beauty of film-making, he believes. “Last week, I was on the jury at the Lisbon Film Festival. I saw a Tibetan film called *Balloon*. It was so beautiful. I was completely connected to those characters. Regardless of cultural backgrounds, we all are human,” he added.

Talking about playing the character of Escobar, he said that he always sees characters as people. “Of course, Pablo was a bad guy. But if an actor chooses, he can show someone as a monster or a saint. People are way more complex than that. We all have dark places in our souls and we all have beautiful things. Pablo was a very charismatic guy. It’s not just that he was the richest narco dealer. He was very interesting. He was the guy who built all those houses and tried to go into politics. He wanted to be loved and to break that huge social gap that still exists in South America. I never saw him or any character as one thing or the other. There are ranges.”

## SNAP SHOTS

### Right and Wrong



### Big Win

BRITISH CRIME drama television series *McMafia* won the Best Drama award at the 47th International Emmy Awards ceremony in New York. Starring Nawazuddin Siddiqui in the role of Indian businessman Dilly Mahmood, the series follows the story of an English-raised son of Russian mafia exiles. Having premiered on BBC in the UK and on AMC in USA in January 2018, the show aired in India on Zee Cafe. It is based on the 2008 book *McMafia: A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld* by journalist Misha Glenny. The teams of *Sacred Games* and *Lust Stories* were also in attendance at the award ceremony, including Radhika Apte and Karan Johar, as the shows were nominated.



### Breaking Records

AMERICAN SINGER Billie Eilish, 17, will be honoured as Billboard’s 2019 Woman of the Year on December 12, making her the youngest artiste to receive the honour. “Billie has disrupted the entertainment industry through her music and social media platforms, leaving an indelible impact on the global cultural zeitgeist. Her ability

a wrong thing in a massive mob-like manner, you are inciting violence,” said Parvathy. Deverakonda argued that a good film alone cannot right all the wrong in the world. He said, “Just a film won’t decide your behaviour. It is your family, schooling, parenting. Multiple things lead a person to behave in a particular way.”

to speak to the Gen-Z population, making teens and young adults feel accepted in today’s society has quickly allowed Eilish to grow to the top of the charts, breaking the mold for this generation with her electric hair-colour and sharp attitude,” said Hannah Karp, Billboard’s editorial director, in a statement.

# Message in the Medium

National Bhand Theatre fights against odds to preserve *bhand pathar*, Kashmir’s indigenous folk theatre form

TANUSHREE GHOSH

THE DAY his phone rang, announcing to him his troupe’s selection for the 11th Bal Sangam festival, at Delhi’s National School of Drama earlier this month, Shah-e-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat was in Kupwara. His prepaid phone worked because he was in the border area; had he been home in Budgam, he would have never received the call. The play, *Gosain Pathar*, that Bhagat brought to NSD, was the same that the director had acted in as a child artiste in Bal Sangam in 1998. As he and artistes of his National Bhand Theatre group were preparing to leave for the festival in Delhi, it snowed in Kashmir, blocking the roads.



The over-100-days lockdown had ensured that they couldn’t practise or perform. Blasts, in the past, have destroyed their costumes and instruments. This time, they could rehearse only for 10 minutes in the evenings, behind closed doors, keeping their voices low.

Kashmir is exemplary of its *mehmaan-nawazi*, says Bhagat, a spitting image of the comic and writer Varun Grover. That hospitality reflects in the play *Gosain Pathar*, which is also a story of unrequited love. The play — classical music from the musicians sitting at the back heightening the action playing out in the front — harks back to a time when Brahmins held sway, and saints and scholars would visit Kashmir (Sharada Peeth) to study. In one

such instance, a *gupali/gaupali* (girl who tends to cows) would bring milk to a *wali* (saint), and, eventually, fall in love with him, but he remains unmoved and leaves the girl, who cries in her *firaaq* (separation/longing).

Bhagat’s ancestors have been performing the folk theatre form, *bhand pathar*, for seven generations, and National Bhand Theatre — comprising 50 family members and relatives in Wathora village in Budgam’s Chadoora tehsil — was formed in 1972, and registered as an NGO in 1980. Their Wathora *gharana* follows the *guru-shishya* parampara and the group has trained under Padma Shri playwright Moti Lal Kemmu (grandfather of film actor Kunal Khemu), among others.

*Bhand pathar*, much like *jatra*, moved from village to village, and began being performed at *dargahs*, weddings and *mehfils* when Sufi saints came, some 650 years ago,



A scene from *Gosain Pathar*; (left) Shah-e-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat

and people began accepting Islam, including Bhagat’s ancestors, who converted but retained their Hindu caste. Hence, the peculiar concoction of his name, Shah-e-Jahan Ahmad Bhagat.

*Bhand* (clown) *pathar* (meaning character) was born when there was no mode of

communication. The clown-like messenger would carry messages to and from the king and his subjects.

Plays like *Gosain Pathar*, *Raja Pathar*, *Darzi Pathar*, *Angrez Pathar* are reflective of a certain historical age, and *Chakdar Pathar* had helped in doing away with the taxa-



BRIEFLY

Williamson  
apologises to Archer  
on behalf of team

*Wellington:* New Zealand captain Kane Williamson has apologised to England pacer Jofra Archer for the alleged racist abuse he faced during a Test match in Mount Maunganui, saying the incident was “against everything that Kiwis are about”. Archer has alleged that one spectator hurled racial insults at him at the end of the first Test, which England lost by an innings and 65 runs on Monday. His assertion prompted New Zealand Cricket (NZC) to offer an apology and start an investigation. “It’s certainly against everything that we as Kiwis are about, and I certainly hope that nothing like that ever happens again,” Williamson told ‘Stuff.co.nz’. “I can only apologise on behalf of Kiwis to Jofra, not only from our team and how we look to conduct ourselves, but what we expect of Kiwis in general,” he added. Williamson asserted that New Zealand is a respectful multi-cultural society in which racial abuse has no place. “It’s a horrific thing. In a country, and a setting where it is very much multi-cultural, it’s something we need to put to bed quickly and hope nothing like that ever happens again.” PTI

Gayle to skip ODIs  
during India series

*Johannesburg:* West Indies great Chris Gayle has said no to playing the three ODIs in India next month and rather wants to focus on his plans for 2020. West Indies are scheduled to play three T20s and as many ODIs in India starting December 6. He is also unlikely to feature in the T20 games. “West Indies called me to play ODIs, but I am not going to play,” Gayle was quoted as saying by *ESPNcricinfo* following his team Jozi Stars’ defeat in the MSL in South Africa. “They (selectors) want me to play with the youngsters but for this year I am going to take a break.” Gayle will also not play in the upcoming edition of Big Bash League in Australia. “I am not going to the Big Bash. I’m not sure what cricket will come up, I don’t even know how my name reached the BPL (Bangladesh league), but I have been drafted in a team and I don’t even know how that happened.” PTI

Sachin wants Duleep  
Trophy revamp

*New Delhi:* Indian cricket icon Sachin Tendulkar feels BCCI President Sourav Ganguly should initiate a revamp of the Duleep Trophy as players competing in the event seem more focussed on individual performances than their teams. The batting maestro feels that team bonding is missing from the four-day tournament, which can be reinvented by bringing in four Ranji Trophy semifinalists along with two teams of promising U-19 and U-23 players.

“I want him (Ganguly) to consider looking at the Duleep Trophy...I feel Duleep Trophy is one tournament where one is getting to hear that players are possibly more focused on their own performances and what the next tournament is and they play accordingly,” Tendulkar said. “For instance if there’s an IPL auction, or an upcoming T20 tournament or one-day, players end up playing in that mode and not for their team or looking at the need of the hour,” he said. The Duleep trophy was a five-team zonal tournament but now features India Blue, India Green and India Red in a round-robin format. Ganguly took charge as the BCCI president on October 23 and within a week, he convinced the Bangladesh Cricket Board to play their first ever Day/Night Test at Eden Gardens. PTI

INTERVIEW: CHETESHWAR PUJARA

‘During second or third session, visibility can be a bit of a problem’

India’s batting mainstay speaks to SRIRAM VEERA about the change of approach needed to counter the pink ball

**Was visibility an issue with the pink ball, especially under lights say the second session?**

Yes. You have to concentrate a little extra and spend little bit more time at the crease to get used to it. When it comes to red ball, visibility isn’t an issue at all during the day. But with pink ball under lights, when you walk in to bat during the second or the third session, visibility can be a bit of a problem as you are sitting in the dressing room and suddenly you are walking in under lights. It swings a bit more. So you have to spend little more time at the crease, try to get used to that light and then may be you can start playing your shots.

**Under lights with pink ball, do you see it a bit late from the bowler’s hand? What exactly happens?**

I wouldn’t say late but it’s slightly different for sure. May be since I have played just one innings in that situation, I felt it that way. May be if I play more, then I can comment on the exact thing, but it was different. I was there under lights for 30-45 minutes before dew started to come in and the ball stopped moving as much; it got a little easier. Also, it gets dark a bit earlier in Kolkata. The weather is different at this point of time — there was a bit of hazy atmosphere and that can also add some visibility issues. These are all guesses — I am not entirely sure as it’s all early days as of now. How it would play in different venues needs to be seen.

**What’s your take on its future? Would pink ball become a staple?**

One-off Test match in a year is fine. If you want crowd to come in and create an atmosphere. But not on a regular basis I would say. I am sure Test cricket will be mainly played with the red ball. Once in a while, you might play with pink ball but majority of the game will be played with the red ball.

**There is also a concern that the conditions (grass cover and lush outfield to ensure pink colour doesn’t fade quickly), and the dew factor in lights could negate reverse swing and spin. The thought was is it wise to negate our own strengths in India?**

I am no one to have a say on this, BCCI will take a call. What I am saying is, going forward, if we play one-off game with pink it will be fine. I certainly don’t see a situation in a five-match series, we are playing three with pink ball! I don’t think it will as far as I know but time will tell. One-off game in a year is fine.

**There was a talk that the pink ball was harder. What’s your take on its hardness?**

Any pink ball you play with is the same, be it the SG manufactured ball as the Kolkata Test was or the Kookaburra. But yes, the pink ball is certainly harder than the red ball. And it does travel a bit faster than the red or even the white ball. I am guessing it’s because of the extra coating of lacquer on it (more than white) and may be because of its hardness too I am not sure but it does travel faster. Also, it sort of moves/wobbles a bit, swings more than the white ball and that also makes it challenging in slips. But yes it does come through a lot quicker than the red.

**Was playing in lights one of the reasons Bangladesh batsmen got hit by bouncers?**

They didn’t have any first-class experience with the pink ball and our fast bowlers are a lot quicker. Plus, the nature of pink ball being that much quicker as I said. All this would have played a part.

**Now, Australia and other overseas teams are pushing for pink-ball Tests in their conditions against India. How do you see the pink ball going there?**



Cheteshwar Pujara scored a half century and added 94 runs with Virat Kohli for the third wicket after India suffered early blows in the D/N Test at Eden Gardens. *File*

**“One-off Test match in a year is fine. If you want crowd to come in and create an atmosphere. But not on a regular basis I would say. I am sure Test cricket will be mainly played with the red ball. Once in a while, you might play with pink ball but majority of the game will be played with the red ball.”**

I am sure the fast bowlers will get a lot of assistance overseas with the pink ball. In case if we play in Australia - I am not sure what’s going to happen. Let’s see what BCCI decides... Once the ball gets old, we can still manage to score some runs, pink-ball games haven’t been high-scoring so far.

**Beyond the debate on whether as a team should India play more pink ball Tests or not, as a batsman how was the challenge? Did you enjoy it?**

I enjoyed the challenge, yeah. It’s a different experience altogether. I wouldn’t say one needs different technique but a different approach. When you are batting in the first session, the ball will come on nicely and you can play your shots. Even if its new ball, it doesn’t swing as much as say a new red ball would in early morning. This starts in the afternoon only and it’s easier that time. With red ball, the first session becomes very important, with the ball seaming around and stuff. It’s other way around with the pink ball. The second session when lights come on becomes crucial. You might have to leave a few more balls in the second session than what you might have to do in the first session.

**You didn’t have too much practice with the pink ball. How did you manage?**

**“I am sure the fast bowlers will get a lot of assistance overseas with the pink ball. In case if we play in Australia - I am not sure what’s going to happen. Let’s see what BCCI decides... Once the ball gets old, we can still manage to score some runs, pink-ball games haven’t been high-scoring so far.”**

To bat in twilight period with pink ball, it’s little difficult. Most important thing was to have as many net session as possible under lights and we tried doing it. Couple of sessions at NCA before first Test and then one net session in Kolkata. Going forward, if we are going to play anymore pink-ball Tests, there should be lot more net sessions as possible.

**You got fifties in both innings you played in this series but didn’t go on. How disappointed were you?**

This Test match (Kolkata) I wasn’t disappointed. As I got a good ball. I was in control with the way I was batting but that ball had bit more bounce and pace in it. I couldn’t have done much differently; I was set, I was playing so well and you get one ball that behaves slightly differently. It had more pace from the pitch - it wasn’t as if the bowler was trying little more in it, I thought the pitch made that ball come quickly and extra bounce.

Indore I was a bit disappointed with the shot; I thought I could drive but it wasn’t that full enough to drive. Overall, I am happy with the way I am batting. I am happy with the way I was timing the ball, the fluency in the shots, my footwork in these two innings. I was really happy with that.

**Do you sometimes get so angry that you find yourself getting in the night and cursing or something? Like with that Indore shot, it was a very breezy shots-filled knock from you.**

(Laughs). No no, I don’t do that. That is something I have learnt over a period of time that you got to deal with it. Look, a Test 50 isn’t a failure! Sometimes people think that 50 in a Test match for Pujara is a failure - it’s good to have those expectations but you have to be happy with what you have done. 50 isn’t easy! If I am to score 50 in every innings from here on, I will take it! There is always a room for improvement even if you score hundred.

**At Indore, you started to play your shots from the word go. What was happening there? Did you come out thinking that you were going to play your shots?**

It just happened. I don’t come out with a mindset like that. I found that I was moving fluently, the timing was great and I started to play like that. I was trying to convert the loose balls into fours. You don’t predetermine stuff like that in Test cricket; it was happening naturally. Unless you are looking to declare or something, you don’t pre determine. In first innings, you go out there, assess the conditions and react.

**A question on the fast bowlers. How does it feel to stand in the slips to this pace pack?**

The best part is you are never sleeping in the slips!

Sometimes, you tend to relax but with the current fast bowlers you are always on your toes. You feel a catch can come any ball. It’s a proud feeling. You are always alert. You know that one ball can come anytime. It actually makes slip fielding easier - because you are alert, anticipating that the ball would

come any time, and you are so much in the game, in the moment. It’s a great feeling. It’s a proud moment.

To know your bowling unit (just not fast bowlers) can do something special. I remember the Adelaide Test, we got for 250 or something and we still bowled Australia out under it and got a lead. That was a special feeling. To see the bowlers bowl teams less than 250 out on a decent pitch was a great feeling. We are now confident that our bowlers can bowl them out like that.

And it’s just not the bowlers who are playing in the team, the ones waiting outside are also good.

**Your slip cordon seems to stand close to each other. The gap between the slip fielders - first and second or second and third seems narrower than other teams like Australia or South Africa. What’s the rationale, is it that you don’t want to dive too much?**

When the ball is new, the edges come finer. If you look at our slip cordon with the old ball, we are a bit spread out. It’s important to have right distance between slips; you don’t want the ball to go between the fielders. When the ball is new, it travels faster and you don’t want to let it go through. You can dive when the ball is a bit old as you have more time.

But when its new, it makes sense to stand the way we do. Also, since its in India, the second slip would stand a lot closer than the first slip. To catch the ball that drops shorter or flies low. The third slip is even further ahead of the second slip. Then you know that if it’s a low catch, the other fielder will go for it. If the ball is higher and coming towards the first slip, the second slip knows that he doesn’t have to go for it. There is no confusion.

BONANZA

After long wait for one, ‘two’ Gambhir stands come up at Feroz Shah Kotla

NIHAL KOSHIE

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

ON A tall shaky bamboo ladder, lodged between two rows of stadiums seats, stood a painter whitewashing the parapet wall that had ‘Gautam Gambhir’ written on it with giant black metal letters. With the light over the Feroz Shah Kotla fading, the painter climbed down the ladder. The job was too risky, he complained. As he called it a day, panic gripped the Delhi and District Cricket Association (DDCA) officials who were over-seeing the 11th hour preparation for the unveiling of the much-delayed Gambhir stand at Kotla.

There was another problem. Someone pointed out that putting up just ‘Gautam Gambhir’ on the stadium wall wouldn’t suffice, it needed a ‘Stand’ suffix. It was too late to order fresh metal letters.

One of the officials had a brain wave, a giant vinyl hoarding with ‘Gautam Gambhir Stand’ printed across it was ordered.

Thankfully, for DDCA, it reached Kotla before Gambhir.

With the original slot already occupied, the new hoarding was placed at the other end of the stadium. Now Kotla had two Gambhir stands — one on the left of the stadium end and the other on the right. It was decided that Gambhir would inaugurate the end that had the just-arrived hoarding. A suggestion to decorate the stand was floated. As luck would have it the electricians couldn’t find enough wire to light-up the wall.

Things somewhat improved with Gambhir’s arrival. The cricketer-turned-MP cut the ribbon and posed for photographs with DDCA secretary Vinod Tihara and members of the Apex Council, who have revolted against DDCA president Rajat Sharma. There were whispers about how Sharma didn’t want Kotla to have a Gambhir stand.

That’s when someone from the crowd shouted ‘*Vinod Tihara ki jai*’ as the evening turned into a show of strength for the secretary who was suspended but now has the support of nine of the 16 members of the



**There were not enough letters to write ‘stand’ at the original location, hence a vinyl hoarding was put up at the other side of the Stadium End at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground.** *Express*

Apex Council.

“Today we have dedicated a stand to Gautam Gambhir. The stand should have been unveiled much earlier. Unfortunately there was a difference of opinion between members of the Apex Council. But today we have honoured a player whose contribution to Indian cricket and Delhi cricket is invaluable,” Rajan Manchanda, the DDCA joint secretary said.

When asked which of the two stands would eventually have Gambhir’s name, Manchanda was non-committal: “Whether the left side or the right side or the entire stand will be named after Gambhir will be decided shortly. What is important is that Gambhir’s contribution has been acknowledged this evening.”

The plan of the Apex Council was to inaugurate the stand in July. However, in September at a function attended by home minister Amit Shah, sports minister Kiren Rijiju and DDCA president Sharma, a Virat Kohli Pavilion was unveiled in the presence of the Indian captain. The ‘Gambhir stand’

was put on the back-burner till the Apex Council members, who are at loggerheads with Sharma, last Tuesday unanimously decided to honour the cricketer who has played 58 Tests and 147 ODIs for India.

Scathing criticism

When Gambhir took the stage, he spoke about the delay in naming a stand after him. “The president can answer this question better because earlier I was told that the stand will be unveiled during the India versus Australia game, then they said it will be the first game of IPL, then they said the hot weather (local tournament). This was what was told to me in the last six-seven months,” he said.

Fighting has come to the fore in the DDCA since president Sharma resigned earlier this month and a majority of the Apex Council members accepted his resignation and also reinstated suspended secretary Tihara. The DDCA ombudsman Justice Badar Durrez Ahmed will conduct a hearing of all warring parties on Wednesday before coming to a decision.

Gambhir, who resigned as a government nominee of the DDCA last month, was scathing in his attack of the manner in which cricket was being run in the state unit. “One thing which is absolutely not acceptable is having a selector who has not played for Delhi. Delhi is like Mumbai and Karnataka, we are multiple time Ranji Trophy champions, so you don’t expect to have a selector who has never played for Delhi. In fact, you have got a junior selector also who has never played for Delhi. I had raised that point when I was DDCA director but it did not change anything and hurt me a lot,” Gambhir said.

Scholarship for 100 cricketers who don’t have jobs, increase in daily allowance for players and indoor nets at the Kotla are few of the suggestions Gambhir said he had put forward but his pleas fell on deaf ears.

At the end of the day, the man with the biggest smile was the official who had placed an order for the vinyl hoarding. “It was a back up plan,” he said smugly before adding, “chaos is always part of DDCA. Nothing new about that.”





# In chilly Nur Sultan, India warm-up for Pakistan showdown

**SHAHID JUDGE**  
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 26

SUMIT NAGAL and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan stand outside their hotel in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, along with India Davis Cup team physio Yash Pandey. The trio are engaged in a mock interview as Saketh Myneni records Pandey, holding a broom for a mike, asking if the players have thought about walking on the frozen Ishim River across the road. Jeevan claims it'll be a good exercise for balancing and Nagal says it is good practice for a moon-walk just before he breaks into his own rendition of a Hritik Roshan dance move.

The upbeat mood is certainly keeping the team warm in the sub-zero conditions, as the Indians prepare for their Group 1 Asia/Oceania Davis Cup tie against Pakistan this week. It's taken nine months since the draw was made to get to this point, as political tensions between the two countries prompted the Indian federation to haggle with the International Tennis Federation (ITF) to move this tie to a neutral venue. The



Indian Davis Cup squad in Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan.

Indians got their wish, and are soaking in the snow and sun (whatever little they can get of it) before they enter the indoor court of the National Tennis Centre to compete for a World Group Playoff spot.

Zeeshan Ali, the team coach, remembers

seeing rows of houses, roads, buildings, covered in snow along with an aerial view of the frozen river just before the team landed in the Kazakh capital on Sunday. And when he walked out of the plane, the first feeling he got was the cold blast of air stinging his face. "That

was expected," he says. "It's really quite cold out here, the river is frozen and there is snow everywhere. But nobody is cribbing about it. They're just enjoying the entire experience."

Tennis in these conditions would always be a tricky proposition. And coming up against a Pakistan team of four Davis Cup debutants – the only player in the squad who has an ATP rank is 20-year-old Yousaf Khaili, ranked a tied 1680 in singles – it is the weather that would be the toughest opposition. So far though, Ali has been satisfied with how the Indians have been coping.

"They've been hitting the ball very well. We've had some good sessions. Adjusting from outdoors to indoors is not very difficult, it's harder doing it the other way around. But these guys are professionals and have played on all kinds of surfaces and in different conditions," Ali says. "The biggest issue is the weather being so cold. Being able to acclimatise to these conditions is not easy, especially keeping in mind injuries and the warm ups and cool downs. So we've been focusing a lot on the boys staying healthy. I'm not worried about the (tennis) part of it, the main thing is

for them to stay healthy."

It certainly helps that the venue has been fitted with a sound heating system. So much so that the players have been happily stripping off the heavy jackets and scarves once inside the arena.

"The place is well insulated. It's remarkable technology because there's a big window here, and we can see the snow and -20 odd degree temperature outside, but inside the boys are walking and training in T-shirts and shorts," Ali explains. "As a result, the court itself is medium to fast, which suits us. The ball is moving well, and it's almost like playing in normal weather here."

Acclimatising in time is the biggest challenge for the higher ranked Indian team that is led by Nagal (singles world rank 131) and Ramkumar Ramanathan (176) in singles and 18-time Grand Slam champion Leander Paes (105) and Jeevan (111) in doubles. The gulf in class is vast between the favourites India and the four Davis Cup debutants of Pakistan.

But a win in cold Nur-Sultan will earn the team a Playoffs clash in warmer climes, where hosts Croatia will be waiting.

# I'm becoming my worst enemy, says Vishy Anand

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 26

STRUGGLING FOR consistency, five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand on Tuesday said he is becoming "my own worst enemy".

Anand missed the Grand Chess Tour Finals by just 1.5 points, getting eliminated after managing just one point in the last five games of the Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz tournament that concluded here on Tuesday. "I've no words to describe. I would give myself a chance and then I would become my own worst enemy. That probably bugs me. If I had no chance then it would have been nice actually," Anand said after the tournament.

The biggest heartbreak came in the round 15 when the former Blitz king lost to Dutch number one, Anish Giri, from a winning position and saw his flag fall in front of the crest-fallen spectators at the National Library Auditorium. Such was the despair that Anand remembered veteran John Cleese's dialogue from the 1986 movie Clockwise where the British actor says: "It's not the despair, Laura. I can take the despair. It's the hope I can't stand."

"I'm okay with failure but it's the hope that's killing me. This is what I was doing today. I kept giving myself a chance and then I destroyed myself. It (the game against Anish) was probably the final straw. I was just winning. I forgot about the clock. If I won the game, I was back in contention. I was my worst enemy," he rued.

In such troubled times, the Indian wizard found solace from his son Akhil's dance performances at school. "Almost the whole year, I've been struggling to put up any kind of stability and consistency. The good news is my son got second prize in school dance competition so that's the most important thing right now. The joy of being a father. I was at home when he was practising for his competition. He took it very seriously, putting the soundtrack and would the steps. It paid off."

Anand, who had finished third in the penultimate leg in Bucharest, concluded with a seventh-place finish. Anand had earlier missed the ticket for the next year's Candidates. "This year has been tough. The nice thing when you come to the end of the year you tend to forget everything and kind of wipe the slate. Hopefully, I can look forward to next year," Anand, who turns 50 next month, said. "Right now I've to think about why things are going so wrong. Try to be better next year," he said.

## Carlsen finishes on top

Reigning world champions Magnus Carlsen finished the tournament with a whopping 27 points and broke his own record in the Grand chess tour, bettering his 26.5 points scored at Abidjan, Ivory Coast earlier this year.

"I knew before today that I needed to score points to regain the world number one spot in Blitz. I think I'm second now -- that's a bit less disastrous than being fifth. But in the long run, being number one is what it counts where I feel like I belong," the Norwegian said.

The Norwegian was not at his best on the final day, but still came up with some exemplary victories to win by a huge four-point margin over Hikaru Nakamura of the United States, who finished second with 23 points in all. Such was Carlsen's dominance that the tied players on third place – Anish Giri of Holland and Wesley So of the United States – scored only 18.5 points – a good 8.5 points less than the champion.

Ding Liren of China finished fifth on 18 points and the sixth place was taken by a resurgent Ian Nepomniachtchi of Russia. A full point behind was Anand, on seventh with 16 points, while the Indian duo of Gujrathi and Harikrishna ended in tied eighth spot on 14.5 points each.

Levon Aronian of Armenia ended at the last spot and even this was enough to seal a berth to London.

**FINAL STANDINGS:** 1. Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 27) 2. Hikaru Nakamura (Usa, 23) 3-4. Wesley So (Usa), Anish Giri (Ned) 18.5 each; 5. Ding Liren (Chn, 18); 6. Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus, 17); 7. V Anand (Ind, 16); 8-9. P Harikrishna, Vidit Gujrathi (Ind, 14.5) 10. Levon Aronian (Arm, 13).

# Satwik gets another pay hike

After pocketing Rs 52 lakhs in the last auction, doubles star goes for Rs 62 lakh at this season's PBL auction

**ANDREW AMSAN**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

WHEN DOUBLES specialist Satwiksairaj Rankireddy, 19, told his mother that he had been picked up by Chennai Superstarz for Rs 62 lakh at the Premier Badminton League auction on Tuesday, he got a rather unusual reply. Instead of congratulating his son on being the costliest unretained Indian at the auction, Rangamani, a high school teacher in Amalapuram, Andhra Pradesh, posed Satwik a question.

"Why are they paying you so much? You're so young, you don't need that kind of money. That's exactly what she said," Satwik told The Indian Express.

Satwik says that this 'simple' attitude of his parents helps him to stay grounded. Despite the several highs on the international circuit, a trip to home gives him a much-needed reality check.

The World No 13 doubles player has had a very eventful year on the circuit with partner Chirag Shetty. He along with Chirag Shetty went on to become the first Indian pairing from the country to win a Super 500 title by bagging the Thailand Open. Then followed a Super 750 final appearance at the French Open, and most recently, a semifinal outing at the China Open where they went down fighting to the World No 1 Indonesian pairing of Marcus Fernaldi Gideon and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo.

"We also had a new coach coming in this year (Flandy Limpele) and then I had a shoulder injury to deal with. But everything fell in place and we did well in Paris and Thailand. The off-court training was tweaked by the new coach and it helped in the recovery and overall fitness," he explained.

At last season's auction, Satwik was roped in by Ahmedabad Smash Masters (pulled out this year), for 52 lakhs – two lakhs more than Olympic silver medallist Mathias Boe and a good 10 lakh more than former Olympic champion Hendra Setiawan. And after realising he's got a good increment this year he sent a cheeky message to one of his promoters saying, "Each year more money."

But for Satwik and his parents' money has never been the driving force. After last season's auction, the youngster expressed a deep desire to own a superbike or a fancy car but ended up purchasing a gearless scooter. "I don't keep a single rupee with me. I will transfer all the money to my father's account and he will take care of it. We got our house renovated and also cleared my brother's education loan. With the money I've got now, we are planning to buy a house in Hyderabad. As far as the bike is concerned, I think I will have to wait for another three to four years," Satwik said.

## 'Aggressive and stylish'

Chennai owner, Sivakumar, said they are looking for a long-term association with the youngster and feels an "aggressive and stylish" player like Satwik was a perfect fit.

Satwik, by his own admission, was surprised by his top billing but was equally shocked that his 'didi' (elder sister) and one of India's most accomplished doubles players,



There was intense bidding for men's doubles poster boy Satwiksairaj Rankireddy. The 19-year-old eventually went to the Chennai Superstarz for Rs 62 lakhs.

## Tanvi, Rituparna enter main draw

**Lucknow:** Tanvi Lad and Rituparna Das qualified for the women's singles main draw of the Syed Modi International Badminton tournament. While Tanvi defeated compatriot Prashi Joshi 19-21 21-18 21-8 in the qualifiers, Rituparna got the better of Shikha Gautam 21-10 21-12. Tanvi will face Russia's Natalia Perminova in the opening round, while Rituparna will be up against Yip Pui Yin of Hong Kong. **PTI**

Ashwini Ponnappa, went unsold despite a relatively low base price of Rs 15lakh. Awadhe Warriors too didn't retain the services of the World Championship bronze-medallist.

"We were already on a budget and were

## PBL AUCTION: TOP PICKS

**PV Sindhu (Hyderabad)** ₹77 lakh  
**Tai Tzu Ying (Bangalore)** ₹77 lakh  
**Satwiksairaj (Chennai)** ₹62 lakh  
**Ko Sung Hyn (Awadhe)** ₹55 lakh  
**Lee Cheuk Yiu (North East)** ₹50 lakh

**154** Number of players who were a part of the auction. A total of 74 Indian shuttlers will be a part of the next edition of the PBL, which will be held from January 20 to February 9.

going for Christinna Pedersen an Olympic silver medalist. We were expecting Ashwini to go for a bigger price and hence we refrained. We already spent Rs 29 lakh on Zhang Beiwen and the auction dynamics did not leave us with many options. But it's sad no

one else went for such a brilliant team player," a member of the Warriors team management said.

Satwik said he would be extremely upset to not see his Commonwealth Games mixed doubles partner Ashwini at the event slated to start off on January 20th. "Even my mother was really upset. She's such a simple person that she asked me if there was any way to share my money with didi and take her in the team. I am really disappointed," Satwik said.

Meanwhile, the most expensive non-retained player overall, not surprisingly, turned out to be World No 1 Tai Tzu Ying who was signed up by Bengaluru Raptors for Rs 77 lakh. Star shuttler PV Sindhu was retained for Rs 77 by Hyderabad Hunters side who chose to go after Sikki Reddy instead of Ashwini. Seasoned singles player Parupalli Kashyap (Mumbai Rockets for Rs 43 lakh) and prodigious teenager Lakshay Sen (Chennai Superstarz for Rs 36 lakh) too ended with lucrative deals. Top Indian stars like Saina Nehwal and Kidambi have pulled out of this season's league to focus on international tournaments.

# Reel to real: After tryst with Bollywood, Tanwar returns to boxing ring

**GAURAV BHATT**  
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 26

PROFESSIONAL BOXER Deepak Tanwar has landed many a knockout punch, but none does he remember with more relish than the right hook he landed on actor Vineet Kumar Singh in Anurag Kashyap's *Mukkabaaz*. It was a bit part – Tanwar played a boxer called Dharmpal who floors protagonist Shravan in the film's climax – but was enough to send estranged acquaintances scouring Facebook profiles.

"Childhood friends, classmates from 6th standard were adding me on Facebook. 'Tu actor ban gaya hai? (Have you become an actor?)' laughs Tanwar. "It didn't surprise my family and cousins though. When I was a child, they always told me 'You will become a hero'. Only because I spent hours styling my hair in front of the mirror."

Two years since the tryst with Bollywood, Tanwar returns to the ring this Saturday, when he travels to South Korea to face hometown favourite Sung Jae Jo (10-0, 8KOs) in a 10-round

contest. The 25-year-old, who turned professional in 2015 and has a 4-0 record, knows his has been a bit role in the bigger picture of Indian boxing as well. Discounting his exploits in the semi-professional Super Boxing League (he led his franchise to victory in 2017), Tanwar last fought in 2016 on a Vijender Singh undercard.

"There was a lot of confusion on professional boxing and the federation. But after BFI decided to allow pros to compete at amateur level this year, I started preparing for a fight," says Tanwar. "All I tell the promoters is that the fight has to be real, fair and the opponent should be tough."

Born and brought up in Bhiwani, aka 'Little Cuba', Tanwar decided to take up boxing after watching cousin Mahesh Kumar win an international medal, but the single child ran into fierce opposition from his parents. His father, a driver, only relented after his boss intervened. "Vijender Singh, Jitender had already come out of Bhiwani, and their fathers were also drivers. Papa's boss said, 'Why are you stopping him? Others are also boxing.'"

Tanwar started strongly, winning junior and



Deepak Tanwar (right) landed the climactic punch in Anurag Kashyap's *Mukkabaaz*.

youth national titles but he believes failures at crucial points and the suspension of previous governing body meant he couldn't fulfill his potential in amateur boxing. "No matter how much money you earn, how popular you become. That feeling, of standing on top of the

podium with your national anthem playing is irreplaceable. It definitely hurts to think that I missed out on such moments," says Tanwar. "I haven't given up yet. I tried for a comeback at this nationals but it couldn't happen. I will keep trying to compete in the nationals."

Tanwar is also buddies with fellow professional boxers Vikas Krishan and Neeraj Goyat, and is often called upon by the former for sparring. "Vikas is like a big brother. He is also a southpaw, so there are many things that I try to copy looking at his videos," says Tanwar. "I believe he is the most important boxer in India. He's got Asian and CWG gold, and is also 2-0 in pro fights. Now he's again in the camp and is looking good. It's a good feeling that so many of our amateurs can now consider becoming pro on the side to keep boxing."

It was Goyat who informed Tanwar of the *Mukkabaaz* opportunity, and both were eventually personally casted by Kashyap. "I have seen boxing movies where the actors are fat, the punches look fake. I liked how real *Mukkabaaz* was. There was no action director, who would make us stop and do things a certain way. There was no choreography. Kashyap sir wanted genuine boxing," says Tanwar. "So, I didn't really have to act."

Vineet, for whom it was a make-or-break project, conceived the script, sold all his belongings and moved to NIS Patiala to train for

a month. "Vineet bhai was legit. All he did was watch (Mike) Tyson videos, so by the end he had this killer left hook he used to finish all combos. I told him, 'you hit me as hard as you want. Don't worry.' But he once punched me in the face so bad, cartoon *ki tarah mere sar ke upar taare ghumne lag gaye* (I was seeing stars)," Tanwar guffaws. "I am a boxer, from Haryana, so I had to curtail my instinct to hit back hard."

Tanwar remembers the climactic showdown. "For other scenes, Vineet called me and said: 'Deepak, the movie has to be real. But *thoda sambhal ke* (be a little careful). I've already had a fracture, one more and the production will be postponed,'" says Tanwar. "But he wanted me to go for it in that final punch. You can see, there was no air. I dodged a left, and bam! Right hook, *seedha kaan ke upar*."

Fun while it lasted, but Tanwar has no plans of becoming a full-time actor. "Yeah, if somebody wants me to play a boxer and punch them real hard, sure. But I saw him during the emotional scenes, and it was unbelievable. Boxing is much easier. It's not easy being a hero."



# Russia faces sporting exile

World Anti Doping Panel recommends that the Eastern European nation be banned from global sports for four years

TARIQ PANJA  
NOVEMBER 26

RUSSIA'S FLOUTING of antidoping rules is so severe that the country should be barred from global sporting events, including the Olympics, for four years, according to a recommendation sent to the world's top anti-doping regulator. The proposed punishment, made public on Monday, comes after Russia received serious penalties, and widespread scorn, for flagrantly circumventing rules designed to ensure fairness in sports.

If the recommendation, which was sent to the regulator, the World Anti-Doping Agency, by one of its key committees, is approved by the organization's board next month, Russian athletes and teams would be barred from next year's Tokyo Olympics and from major events like soccer's World Cup and the world championships for archery, wrestling and other sports.

Next month's board vote also will serve as a crucial test of the antidoping agency's ability to enforce its rules. The brazen nature of Russia's latest rules violations — which include allegations of manipulating a database to delete some test results and fabricate other data — contravened the spirit as well as the letter of global antidoping law.

The new allegations and proposed punishments were included in a report from a committee led by the British lawyer Jonathan Taylor and sent to members of the organization's board last week. A final ruling is expected on Dec. 9, when the World Anti-Doping Agency's board meets in Paris. While the agency is expected to support the recommendation, any decision would be subject to appeal at the Court of Arbitration for Sport.

Among the proposed penalties: Forcing Russian athletes to compete at a second straight Olympic Games in neutral uniforms and collect any medals they win without the raising of the nation's flag or the playing of its anthem; barring Russian government officials and representatives from attending major events or from serving on the board of any organization that has signed the global antidoping code; and preventing Russia from bidding on new championships, and moving any the country was set to host during the four-year period.

The committee has spent several years investigating Russian compliance with global antidoping rules after the earlier scandal,



The proposed four-year ban would prevent Russia from taking part in Tokyo Olympics and the 2022 Beijing Winter Games. *AP*

## THE RUSSIAN SAGA: THE RECOMMENDATIONS AND THE ROAD AHEAD

### DATABASE MANIPULATION

■ Three years ago, Russia were accused of running a sophisticated, state-sponsored doping programme, in which antidoping experts and members of the country's intelligence service surreptitiously replaced urine samples tainted by performance-enhancing drugs with clean urine at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia.

■ As part of the resolution of that case, Russia agreed to provide a set of testing results to doping regulators from its Moscow laboratory. Now, Russia has been accused of manipulating that database to cover up continued violations, that has the country facing a years-long sporting exile.

### PROPOSED PENALTIES

■ Forcing Russian athletes to compete at a second straight Olympic Games in neutral uniforms. If they win medals, the country's flag won't be raised and national anthem won't be played.

■ Russian athletes be allowed to compete in major events only if they demonstrate that they are clean and meet a number of other strict conditions.

■ Preventing Russia from bidding for new

championships, and moving the tournaments the country was set to host during this period to other nations.

■ Russia's flag may not be flown at any major event staged in the four-year period.

■ Barring Russian government officials and representatives from attending major events or from serving on the board of any organization that has signed the global antidoping code.

### WHAT NEXT

■ On December 9, WADA's executive committee will meet to discuss these recommendations.

■ If the ExCo accepts the recommendation, formal notice will be sent to Russian Anti-

Doping Agency (RUSADA), who will have 21 days to accept the notice.

■ If they do not, the matter will be referred to Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS). If CAS upholds the recommendations, they will be binding and must be enforced.

that it had fabricated evidence in an attempt to shift blame for those changes to former Russian antidoping officials.

The proposed penalties would affect Russia most prominently at next summer's Tokyo Olympics, but the consequences would go well beyond the Games. The recommendation calls for Russian athletes tainted by doping questions to be barred from all international competitions for four years by governing bodies that are signatories to the WADA code. That group includes FIFA, soccer's governing body and the organizer of the World Cup, and organizations that oversee track and field, swimming, gymnastics, basketball and boxing.

Travis Tygart, the chief executive of the United States Antidoping Agency, praised the compliance committee for recognizing the "egregious conduct of Russia toward clean athletes." "Now," he added, "let's all hope the WADA executive committee uses the same resolve to ensure clean athletes are not again sold down the river and actually supports this unfortunate but necessary outcome."

Still, the prospect of hundreds of Russian athletes participating in Tokyo — even if they have been cleared to compete — is likely to be criticized by other athletes and national antidoping agencies. Some of them remain angry over what they see as insufficient punishment for Russia's running a huge doping program that called into question results at several Olympics and dozens of other competitions.

Case-by-case judgments on athletes would, however, conform with the views of the International Olympic Committee's president, Thomas Bach, who opposes anything resembling a blanket ban. "Our principle is that the guilty ones must be punished as hard as possible and the innocent ones must be protected," Bach said last week.

Under regulations adopted in 2018, WADA has complete authority to punish Russia, which was not the case when the scandal first emerged after the Sochi Olympics. At the time, individual sports federations were allowed to deal with Russia's cheating on their own. The results were mixed, though, with several federations failing to act decisively and the Olympic Committee welcoming Russia back into the fold almost immediately after the 2018 Winter Games in South Korea, even though it had yet to be cleared by antidoping regulators.

WADA finally reinstated Russia's antidoping agency last year but reserved the right to revoke that clearance and issue stronger punishments if Russia did not provide athletes' testing data from the Moscow laboratory at the heart of the earlier cheating scandal. **NYT**

## Ancelotti's future in doubt as troubled Napoli take on Liverpool

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE  
MADRID, NOVEMBER 26

NAPOLI HEAD for Liverpool on Wednesday for a Champions League which could prove crucial to coach Carlo Ancelotti's future at the troubled Italian club. The three-time Champions League winning coach's second season at the Stadio San Paolo has proved to be a complicated one, after leading them to second in Serie A in his first year.

His team's fortunes have waned after the high of opening their Champions League campaign with a 2-0 win over reigning European champions Liverpool, with dressing room unrest amid friction between the players and club management. Napoli president Aurelio De Laurentiis ordered the team to be confined to a week-long training camp earlier this month after a 2-1 league defeat to rivals Roma saw them slip to seventh in Serie A.

But as Ancelotti voiced his disagreement with the lockdown, the players all returned home after a 1-1 draw against Salzburg three days later, which stalled their bid to reach the Champions League last 16.

Film mogul De Laurentiis threatened to sell the entire squad and take legal action against the players after the dressing room revolt. And the sanctions began to fall this week amid reports Monday the players would receive hefty fines for breaking the lockdown. *Gazzetta Dello Sport* reported that players' salaries for the month of November — apart from those out injured at the time — will be cut by a quarter. Brazilian Allan, who had an argument with Edoardo De Laurentiis, son of the Napoli president, will see his salary slashed by half, or 200,000 euros (\$220,000).

## PLAYING TONIGHT

Zenit vs Lyon

Valencia vs Chelsea

RB Leipzig vs Benfica

Barcelona vs Borussia Dortmund

Slavia Praha vs Inter Milan

Lille vs Ajax

Liverpool vs Napoli

Genk vs Salzburg

Live on Sony Network, 11.30pm onwards