



CII backs signing of RCEP, but farmers are against it

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Fear, cold and lack of work force migrant workers out of Kashmir

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Hong Kong protesters clash with police in upmarket mall

page 14

Mushfiqur Rahim takes Bangladesh home in the first T20I against India

page 20



NEARBY



Action initiated against farmers: Amarinder

CHANDIGARH

Action has been initiated against 2,923 farmers so far in 20,729 cases of stubble burning reported till November 1 in Punjab, which expects a 10-20% decline in the number of such cases this year compared with 2018, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said. As against a total of around 49,000 cases of stubble burning last year, this year the State government has so far received reports of 20,729 cases, with more than 70% of the paddy already harvested.

NORTH ▶ PAGE 6

Newly elected Haryana MLAs to take oath today

CHANDIGARH

The newly elected members of the Haryana Assembly will be administered oath here on Monday when the three-day session of the House begins. Senior Congress leader and Beri MLA Raghuvir Singh Kadian, will administer the oath to the newly elected members as per tentative programme of the session.

NORTH ▶ PAGE 6

EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGES 15 & 16

## Delhi chokes as air pollution levels hit a three-year high

Some weather models say plume could move to south India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Pollution levels in Delhi peaked to a three-year high on Sunday, prompting hundreds of distraught people to take to social media to say they wanted to leave the city because of poor air quality.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the national capital's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) stood at 494 at 4 p.m. on Sunday, the highest since November 6, 2016, when it was 497.

The Ministry of Earth Sciences' air quality monitor, SAFAR, said the city's overall AQI reached as high as 708 around 5 p.m., which is 14 times the safe level of 0-50.

Some weather models showed that Delhi's pollution could impact even south India. A chemical-pollutants dispersal model called SILAM (System for Integrated modeLling of Atmospheric coMposition), developed by the Finnish Meteorological Institutes, indicated that the plume of dust and smoke hanging over Delhi would travel towards east India, move into the Bay of Bengal and hike pollution levels as far away as Tamil Nadu.

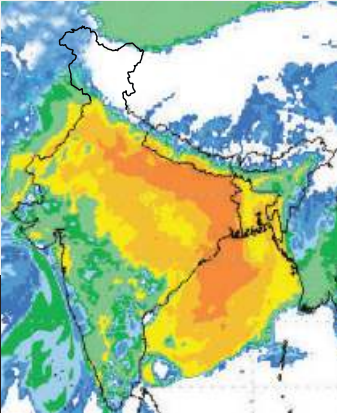
"That is quite unlikely," said V.K. Soni, scientist at the India Meteorological Department.

"The chemical-transport

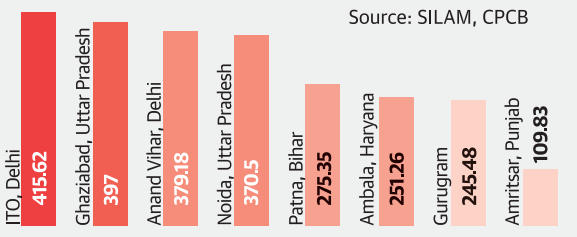
### Blanketed by smog

Cities across the northern and eastern parts of India choked due to air pollution on Sunday. A look at the degree of pollution levels across cities

Map shows the PM 2.5 particulate matter levels as of 6.30 a.m. on Sunday. Deeper the orange, higher the PM 2.5



Graph shows average PM 2.5 levels across select cities on Saturday. The permissible limit is 60 µg/m³ for 24 hours



Source: SILAM, CPCB

model we're testing shows a rapid dispersal that will make its presence felt as early as Sunday night. It's unlikely for this current pattern of wind to transport pollutants so far," he said.

With the pollution levels worsening in Delhi, Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will monitor the situation in Delhi and the NCR on a daily basis, it was decided at a high-level meeting chaired by Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P.K. Mishra.

Mr. Mishra reviewed the

situation with senior officials from the States of Punjab, Haryana and Delhi joining the meeting through video-conference, according to a statement.

Meanwhile, the thick haze in the national capital threw flight operations at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport into disarray. Poor visibility led to 490 flights being delayed, 35 getting cancelled and 32 being diverted to nearby airports.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## Odd-even scheme returns to city today

200 traffic points have been identified to ensure efficient implementation of scheme

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The odd-even scheme will return to the Capital for the third time on Monday with pollution levels and the presence of toxic pollutants in the city's ambient air being recorded at their highest so far this season on the eve of the implementation of its provisions for the better part of November.

The scheme will be enforced at 8 a.m. on Monday, allowing only vehicles with even last digit on their respective registration number plates to ply till 8 p.m. The scheme will end on November 14. Non-transport, four-wheeler vehicles with registration numbers ending with odd digit will not be allowed



The Capital was shrouded in smog on Sunday. ■ V. V. KRISHNAN

on the roads with violators liable to pay a fine of ₹4,000.

The restrictions, in accordance with the last digit of registration numbers, will also apply on vehicles registered in other States. The scheme, however, will not be in force on November 10

on account of it being a Sunday. While two-wheelers have been exempted from the restrictions of the scheme, CNG-driven ones have not been put on the list of exempted vehicles this time.

Vehicles being used for

medical emergencies and ferrying schoolchildren in uniform will be exempted in addition to women-only vehicles with children aged up to 12 in them. Vehicles occupied by physically disabled persons will also be exempted.

A senior police officer said that Delhi Police has identified 200 traffic points with the deployment of as many teams to ensure the efficient implementation of the scheme.

"This has been done in coordination with the Delhi Transport Department. Challans will be issued on the spot through e-challan system," the officer said.

particularly the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, operating in that country, the note said.

### New dimension

"The reported nexus between home-grown terror outfits and Pakistan-based extremist organisations in terms of procurement of weapons, technology and training has added a new dimension to the threat scenario," it added.

The intelligence machinery has taken cognizance of anonymous threatening letters/communications and derogatory content on social media against the Prime Minister and other high-risk dignitaries. A high level of alert would be necessary for intelligence agencies to collect inputs having a bearing on VIP security during the

Republic Day functions in Delhi.

Referring to the "success" of the IS in radicalising a few Indian youth and attracting certain sections of the local population/Indian diaspora to participate in its activities or support terrorist groups operating in India, the alert warned of a desperate individual resorting to some extreme measures.

"Significantly, the IS has urged its followers to carry out 'lone wolf' attacks in the country of their residence," it added.

The porous coastline in the southeast and southwest of India was an easy landing ground for terror outfits to push their men and material into the country, the note said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## NRC exercise only to update 1951 list: CJI

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi said on Sunday that the Assam National Register of Citizens (NRC) process, meant to identify illegal migrants residing in the border State, was "neither a new or novel idea" but only an attempt to update the 1951 list.

Chief Justice Gogoi, who is retiring on November 17, headed the Special Bench of the Supreme Court that monitored the process.

The court's intervention led to the publication of the final citizenship list on August 31.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

## Judicial probe ordered into Tis Hazari clash

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

In a special hearing on Sunday, the Delhi High Court ordered a judicial inquiry by a retired High Court judge into the clash between lawyers and police personnel at Tis Hazari courts on Saturday.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar took suo motu cognizance of media reports of the incident and directed the Delhi Police Commissioner to transfer Special Commissioner Sanjay Singh and Additional Deputy Commissioner Harinder Singh during pendency of the investigation.

The Bench appointed former judge Justice S.P. Garg to head the judicial inquiry.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 5

## Priyanka Gandhi was warned by WhatsApp, says Congress

Party spokesperson accuses govt. of using Israeli software to snoop on citizens

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday claimed that party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra had received a text message from WhatsApp alerting her to a possible privacy breach about a month ago, as did others whose phones were similarly hacked with the Pegasus spyware from the Israel-based technology and cyber intelligence firm, NSO Group.

"When WhatsApp sent out messages to all hacked phones, one such message was sent to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's mobile phone too. WhatsApp did not say that the phone was hacked in an illegal fashion by Pegasus software. Nature of the message is already in the public domain and she received the message," Congress communication in-charge Randeep Surjewala said at a press conference here.

### Ahead of LS election

In serious allegations against the Narendra Modi-led NDA government, Mr. Surjewala said citizens, journalists and Opposition leaders were spied upon in the run-up to the Lok Sabha election.

"A perusal of the website of the NSO Group shows that the Pegasus spyware and all NSO products are exclusively sold to governments. In fact,

When WhatsApp sent out messages to all hacked phones, one such message was sent to Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's phone too. WhatsApp did not say the phone was hacked in illegal fashion by Pegasus

— RANDEEP SURJEWALA, CONGRESS SPOKESMAN



Haven't we seen Congress imagining things? Remember them claiming that Rahul's life was in danger when a green light, off a video camera flashed on his face. Well, that is the level of their leaders' credibility

— AMIT MALVIYA, BJP SPOKESPERSON



the NSO Group has written to Citizen Lab (of the Munk School of Global Affairs and Public Policy at the University of Toronto) stating clearly that, "Our product is licensed to government and law enforcement agencies for the sole purpose of investigating and preventing crime and terror," he said.

Countering the government's claim that WhatsApp kept it in the dark about the Pegasus attack, Mr. Surjewala said Facebook, the owner of WhatsApp, had reported the breach in April this year.

"In fact, it was duly noted and a vulnerability report issued by 'Indian Computer Emergency Response Team' – CERT-in – of the Ministry of IT. Not only this, IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad met WhatsApp CEO Chris Daniels on August 20 this year. He again met Facebook vice-

president Nick Clegg on September 12. Yet Mr. Prasad, as also the Modi government, chose to keep mum," Mr. Surjewala said.

Quoting from the Citizen Lab Report, the Congress said telephone and internet providers for the government, including MTNL, the National Internet Backbone and the National Informatics Centre, were infected. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi needs to answer whether the BJP government was spying on its citizens and political leaders in the run-up to the 2019 general election. Who in the government of India purchased and deployed the illegal spyware Pegasus from the Israeli company NSO?" Mr. Surjewala asked.

PEGASUS MISADVENTURE

▶ EDITORIAL

## Gave an alert in Sept.: WhatsApp

WhatsApp informed the government in September that 121 Indian users were targeted by the Israeli spyware Pegasus, but the Information Technology Ministry said the information received earlier was inadequate and incomplete, according to sources. ▶ PAGE 12

## Two panels to probe case

Two parliamentary panels headed by Congress leaders have decided to examine the WhatsApp snooping case, and will seek details from top government officials, including the Home Secretary. ▶ PAGE 12

## Dhankar alleges privacy breach

West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar said on Sunday that "privacy is compromised" in the State, indicating that the Mamata Banerjee government was monitoring the devices of individuals. Many important people told him that their privacy was compromised, he said. ▶ PAGE 12

## 'Post Naga deal, extortion should end'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The political parties of Manipur have sought a guarantee from the Centre that the settlement of the Naga peace process would signal the end of "extortions and illegal taxations by Naga insurgents".

The final peace deal, expected to be announced soon, is between the Centre and the Isak-Muiivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) and seven rival outfits who formed the umbrella Naga National Political Groups.

In a joint memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 15 political parties of Manipur, including the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Opposition Congress, listed five concerns about the deal.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 12

## Home Ministry warns of 'lone wolf' attacks by IS operatives

High alert issued to all States ahead of Republic Day

S. VIJAY KUMAR  
CHENNAI

A high alert has been issued to security forces across the country by central intelligence agencies, warning of possible 'lone wolf' attacks by Islamic State (IS) operatives targeting high-risk dignitaries in the run-up to the Republic Day celebrations in January next year.

A communication issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs to all the States on November 1 stated that the overall security scenario in the country remained a cause for concern on account of the threat emanating from Pakistan and the Afghanistan-Pakistan belt.

Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) continued to provide infrastructural and other financial/logistical assistance to terror groups,

particularly the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, operating in that country, the note said.

### New dimension

"The reported nexus between home-grown terror outfits and Pakistan-based extremist organisations in terms of procurement of weapons, technology and training has added a new dimension to the threat scenario," it added.

The intelligence machinery has taken cognizance of anonymous threatening letters/communications and derogatory content on social media against the Prime Minister and other high-risk dignitaries. A high level of alert would be necessary for intelligence agencies to collect inputs having a bearing on VIP security during the

Republic Day functions in Delhi.

Referring to the "success" of the IS in radicalising a few Indian youth and attracting certain sections of the local population/Indian diaspora to participate in its activities or support terrorist groups operating in India, the alert warned of a desperate individual resorting to some extreme measures.

"Significantly, the IS has urged its followers to carry out 'lone wolf' attacks in the country of their residence," it added.

The porous coastline in the southeast and southwest of India was an easy landing ground for terror outfits to push their men and material into the country, the note said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12





# Hail the Sun

Braving hazardous pollution and rain, thousands of women devotees paid obeisance to the rising Sun on Sunday morning at ghats along the Yamuna banks and waterbodies across the city, marking the culmination of Chhath Puja



(Clockwise from top) Devotees offer prayers at a ghat near ITO; hundreds gathered at Nasirpur in Dwarka; people do some last-minute festival shopping at Azadpur Mandi; a view of a ghat near ITO; women offer prayers at India Gate pond on Saturday. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR, V.V. KRISHNAN, SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Woman fed up of taunts over divorce kills 81-yr-old mother

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

An 81-year-old woman was bludgeoned to death allegedly by her 47-year-old daughter following a quarrel over her marriage at their house in west Delhi's Hari Nagar, the police said on Sunday.

Neeru Bagga, who works as an assistant personnel officer at a power discom, killed Santosh Bagga with an iron rod, they said.

The police said they were informed on Saturday that a woman was sitting in front of her house in Mayapuri's Khazan Basti with head injury. A team rushed to the spot where they found Neeru. They tried to calm her as she could not speak.

"The woman later said she lives with her mother Santosh Bagga in Hari Nagar and during a quarrel, she hit her on the head and left the house," a senior officer said. After this, a team was sent to her residence in Hari Nagar to verify the details.

At the house, the police found her mother lying in a pool of blood, the officer added. Neeru had got divorced 13 years back and was staying with her mother since then.

Neeru said her mother used to often taunt her over her divorce and on some occasions, she even persuaded her to get married again.

"Fed up of her mother's constant taunts, she committed the crime," the officer said.

At the house, bloodstained clothes of the accused were found, the police said, adding that a case of murder was then registered.

### DELHI TODAY

**Poetry reading:** "Aaj Kavita", a poetry reading session by Tushar Dhawal Singh (Kolkata); Pankhuri Sinha (Delhi); Yashashwini Pandey (Baroda); and Abha Bodhisatva (Mumbai) at Lecture Room - II, Basement Annex, India International Centre (IIC), 6:30 p.m.

**Dance:** Kuchipudi and creative dance choreography by Prabir Datta and troupe at The Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Heaven on Earth... - A tribute to India!", a solo photography show by Sharat Sharma at Visual Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Cerre des Dieux (Land of the Gods)", a solo painting show by Sheela Karki at Experimental Arts Gallery, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** "Spirituality in the Digital World", a group digital artwork show at Digital Art Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.

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

## Kejriwal asks citizens to follow rules, make odd-even successful

CM blames stubble burning in neighbouring States for pollution woes in the Capital

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

On the eve of the implementation of the odd-even scheme, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal appealed to Delhiites to follow the provisions of the plan even as he blamed stubble burning in neighbouring States for pollution woes in the Capital.

The people of Delhi, Mr. Kejriwal argued, had "done nothing" over the last 20 days leading to the spike in pollution levels in the Capital, which, he said, witnessed "good or moderate" air quality between February and October this year.

"We are implementing the odd-even scheme from tomorrow [Monday] from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. I want to request you all to please follow the rules for the safety of yourself and your family. I will also follow the rules along with you all," Mr. Kejriwal said.



Arvind Kejriwal

"Delhi is extremely polluted today. There is smoke all around. The children and the elderly are suffering the most. But what is the fault of the people of Delhi? From February to the second week of October this year, the pollution levels in Delhi were at good or moderate levels. The air and the sky were clear," Mr. Kejriwal said while showing comparative aerial pictures of the city.

"This picture of a blue and

clear sky in Delhi was clicked 20 days back. And these pictures have been clicked today. There is smog and pollution everywhere. But the people of Delhi have done nothing in the last 20 days that may have led to such a situation. There was no sudden spike in vehicles plying on the city roads or industries. The air quality deteriorated due to the smoke from stubble burning in the neighbouring States," he alleged.

A few years ago, the Chief Minister argued, Delhi used to remain polluted "all year long" but this was prior to the people of Delhi taking several measures to battle pollution in the State. Frequent power cuts, he said, was a major issue leading to the usage of five-six lakh diesel generators during major power cuts.

The city, he said, now had 24-hour electricity and diesel gen-

erators were no longer in use which had reduced pollution considerably. The Delhi government had carried out afforestation on 600 acres of land to increase the forest cover in the State among taking other measures, he added.

"We have done whatever we could to reduce pollution in the State during rest of the year. We are not blaming anybody. We are saying that everyone should come together and find a solution. There should be no politics. It is a matter of grave concern for all of us. Our health is at stake," Mr. Kejriwal said.

**Sharing cars**

"Delhi Cabinet Ministers and officials will also follow them [the provisions of odd-even scheme]. I would request you to share a car with your friend. I will also share a car with one of my fellow Ministers," he added.

## BJP MP calls scheme an election gimmick

Vijay Goel says he will flout provisions

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

BJP Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Goel labelled the odd-even road rationing scheme, which comes into effect for the better part of the month starting Monday, an "election gimmick" here on the eve of its enforcement.

The scheme, he argued, was an "electoral stunt" and "a drama" which he would protest against by flouting its provisions for which he had "especially designed his car".

"If only stubble burning is responsible for pollution, then why is the Kejriwal government implementing the odd-even scheme? Kejriwal has never made any report public about pollution caused by vehicles and other sources. This only further makes odd-even scheme futile," he argued.

"It was the Kejriwal government's responsibility to reduce 90% pollution levels in Delhi caused by internal sources. But

he did not do anything including on [issues such as] road and construction dust, industrial emissions, diesel vehicles, road sprinkling, banning gen-sets, installing smog towers, procuring buses. The government failed to spend even a single penny from ₹1,300 crore of the environmental cess," he alleged.

Terming it a "mere gimmick" which had given Mr. Kejriwal an "excuse to waste taxpayers' money and advertise himself", the former Delhi BJP chief challenged the Chief Minister to seek experts' opinion on its utility. He also accused the Chief Minister of practising vote bank politics by exempting certain categories of drivers from following its provisions.

"I challenge Kejriwal to take the opinion of anyone like CPCB, TERI, SAFAR, DPCC...on the viability of odd-even rule. All of them will discredit it and the expenditure on the same," he argued.

## Capital grabs masks as weapon against pollution

People opt for what they say is the only solution

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

With a significant drop in the air quality index in Delhi post Diwali this year, Delhiites have started donning anti-pollution masks in large numbers. *The Hindu* spoke to some people who said they have decided to cover their faces while stepping out in the open, for the first time.

"I don't want it to happen, but the business is booming," said Akash Garg who sells masks at Palika Bazaar. He said he was wearing one for the first time, but added that the masks were not of much help. "The masks can protect you from dust as much as a handkerchief will. They can hardly protect you from pollutants. The ones which have chemical in them are a bit better but even they don't really do much," he claimed.

Akash Joshi, a political worker, who has lived in the city for over three years, decided to put on a mask for the first time this season. "My throat was itching, eyes were watering. It was a little weird initially, but we are helpless," he said. He said he believed that unless a viable alternative is given to the farmers, Delhi's air quality

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	494	Gurugram	486
Ghaziabad	491	Faridabad	496
Noida	495	Greater Noida	482
Legend: Good (0-50), Satisfactory (51-100), Moderate (101-200), Poor (201-300), Very poor (301-400), Severe (>401)			
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS)   SOURCE: CPCB			

would not improve.

Harish Chowdhary, a resident of Karol Bagh, who has been staying in the city since five years, said this year has been the worst when it comes to air pollution levels. He purchased a mask and was also trying to convince his friends to buy those. He said schemes like the odd-even were the only solution.

Some sanitation workers at Connaught Place have been given surgical masks to be worn while on duty, by the New Delhi Municipal Council. One such worker, Bhagwan Das, said he purchased a cotton mask for himself and his children who go out and play. "I am not sure if it [mask] helps, but you have to do something. Don't you?" he said.

## Students form human chain

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A group of students from various universities came together to protest the lack of action against worsening levels of air pollution in the Capital, at Central Park on Sunday.

These students from DU, JNU, AUD, JMI, and others formed a human chain and many of them held posters reading: "Don't let Delhi Die Young". The students demanded clean air from the

State and Centre. AISA president Kawalpreet Kaur attacked the government saying that every year, a blame game takes place without any seriousness to combat it. She said pollution was a "political issue" and that parties must show the will to address it.

The students demanded that the metro rides be made free for a month and 10,000 CNG buses be deployed. They said pollution control norms for industries be strictly enforced.



DELHI ☀️ Timings			
MONDAY, NOV. 04			
☀️ RISE	06:35	🌇 SET	17:35
🌙	13:09	🌇 SET	23:59
TUESDAY, NOV. 05			
☀️ RISE	06:35	🌇 SET	17:34
🌙	13:48	🌇 SET	00:00
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 06			
☀️ RISE	06:36	🌇 SET	17:33
🌙	14:23	🌇 SET	00:53
Delhi Weather	max	min	
Delhi City	27	19	
Safdarjang	27	19	
Palam	27	18	

**Delhi Palam Today**  
30°C A smoggy morning. A partly cloudy sky. Pollution will continue at very poor level.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
30°C Haze/mist in morning. A mainly clear sky. Moderate north westerly likely during day.

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IN BRIEF

**Veteran journalist passes away at 90**  
NEW DELHI  
Veteran journalist M. B. Lal passed away at 90 in New Delhi over the weekend after a brief illness. Lal had an illustrious career as a journalist for more than 30 years mostly with *The Statesman*, and, after retirement in 1988, as an author of several books. He is survived by his wife, three children, six grandchildren and one great-granddaughter.

**Students issue statement against JNU hostel manual**  
NEW DELHI  
Several student groups of the Jawaharlal Nehru University on Sunday issued a statement criticising the new draft hostel manual approved by the varsity administration. The students have been on strike against the new hostel manual, alleging it has provisions for curfew timings, dress code and hostel fee hike.

# Clash in Tis Hazari courts: six FIRs lodged; ASI suspended

Security deployed outside court premises; cases transferred to Crime Branch

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
A day after a clash broke out between police and lawyers inside Tis Hazari court premises allegedly over a parking issue, the police on Sunday said they have registered six FIRs in the case.

**Action against constable**  
A Delhi Police ASI has been suspended and departmental action has been initiated against a constable, they added. A team of officials from the Crime Branch and the forensic department visited the jail inside the court premises on Sunday. The police said they will conduct an inter-departmental inquiry into the matter to find out the role of their personnel during the violence. Special CP (Crime) Satish Golcha also inspected the court premises where the violence broke out on Saturday afternoon.

## Kejriwal meets injured lawyers; BJP, AAP trade charges

### AAP asks Amit Shah to set up judicial inquiry in addition to a ‘serious investigation’

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday met with the lawyers who were injured during a clash between them and police at the Tis Hazari courts on Saturday. Meanwhile, the Aam Aadmi Party and the BJP traded charges over the incident. BJP Delhi president Manoj Tiwari said he wants all those involved in the incident to be punished.



A police vehicle was set on fire during the incident on Saturday. • PTI

The police said that based on a lawyer’s complaint, a case has been lodged under Sections 307 (attempt to murder), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 342 (wrongful confinement) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the Indian Penal Code. “Based on the complaint of a constable, another case has been lodged under Sections 186 [obstructing public

**BCD gives compensation to injured lawyers**  
NEW DELHI  
The Bar Council of Delhi (BCD) on Sunday announced a compensation of ₹2 lakh each for two lawyers, who are currently in ICU and ₹50,000 for the injured advocates. BCD chairman K. C. Mittal said a judicial inquiry should be ordered immediately in the incident.

servant in discharging their duty], 353 [assault on public servant], 307 [attempt to murder], 147 [rioting], 392 [robbery], 148 [rioting with deadly weapon] and 149 [unlawful assembly guilty of offence] of the IPC,” a police official said. “A service pistol belonging to a policeman was robbed during the violence. We are scanning CCTV footage to identify the accused in the

case,” the officer added. Apart from the two cross-FIRs, a third case was lodged based on the complaint of a District Judge at Tis Hazari court. The fourth FIR was filed after a woman lawyer alleged that she was molested during the incident. Based on the complaints of two more lawyers, two FIRs have been registered under IPC Section 307. The cases have been transferred to a Special Investigation Team, which is headed by the Crime Branch for further investigation. Meanwhile, the police avoided the deployment of armed personnel inside the court premises. They said paramilitary security personnel has been deployed at the entry gate of the court. For the safety of prisoners and policemen, an iron mesh has been installed at the main door of the jail.

## Delhi lawyers to abstain from work today

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

Advocates in the Delhi High Court and all district courts here have decided to abstain from work on Monday to protest against the clash between lawyers and policemen at Tis Hazari court premises on Saturday. The lawyers said they would not participate in any of the judicial work and only proxy counsel would appear in the courts to take dates in various matters. Delhi High Court Bar Association president Mohit Mathur said they have requested all members to abstain from work on Monday as a mark of protest.

**Future course**  
“Proxy counsel will be there in the courts to take dates. We are not forcing anyone, we have only requested the members,” he said. Advocate Jaiveer Singh Chauhan, secretary of Tis Hazari Bar Association, said a meeting would be held on Monday to decide the future course of action. “Strike will be held in all the district courts from 10 a.m. The strike will continue till all the culprits are arrested,” Mr. Chauhan said. He added that the lawyers’ strike will also be observed in courts in Rajasthan, Punjab, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala, some parts of Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

# High Court orders probe into incident

Bench appoints ex-judge to head inquiry

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

In a special hearing on Sunday, the Delhi High Court ordered a judicial inquiry by a retired High Court judge into the clash between lawyers and police personnel at the Tis Hazari court complex on Saturday. A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar took suo motu cognisance of media reports of the incident and directed the Delhi Police Commissioner to transfer Special Commissioner Sanjay Singh and Additional Deputy Commissioner Harinder Singh during pendency of the investigation. The Bench appointed former judge Justice S.P. Garg to head the judicial inquiry which will be assisted by the Central Bureau of Investigation Director, the Director of Vigilance and the Director, Intelligence Bureau or any other superior officer appointed by them. It also noted that the inquiry should be completed within six weeks. The court also directed that no coercive action should be taken against any lawyer on the basis of the FIRs lodged at the behest of police officials.

The Bench also ordered the Delhi Police Commissioner to record statements of injured advocates and thereafter lodge an FIR and place a copy of it in the court. It directed the Delhi government and the Centre to provide best treatment to injured lawyers, preferably in AIIMS. It also directed the Delhi government to provide lump sum ex-gratia of ₹50,000, ₹25,000 and ₹10,000 respectively to advocates Vijay Verma, Ranjit Malik and Pankaj Dubey, who received gunshot injuries. The High Court said the preliminary departmental inquiry by the police should be completed within six weeks and the report submitted in the court. The lawyer’s bodies urged the court that the senior officials of the Delhi Police who ordered lathi charge and firing be arrested. Advocate Rahul Mehra, representing the Delhi Police, told the court that during Saturday’s clash, 21 police personnel and eight lawyers were injured, 14 motorcycles and one police car were burnt and eight prison vans were vandalised.

**The High Court directed the Delhi government to provide ex-gratia of ₹50,000, ₹25,000 and ₹10,000 respectively to advocates Vijay Verma, Ranjit Malik and Pankaj Dubey, who received gunshot injuries**

# Colony regularisation: gap too wide between plan and execution

People living in unauthorised colonies are sceptical of the decision actually being implemented. They say it is unlikely to have a bearing on Assembly polls

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI  
The Centre’s decision to give ownership rights to those living in 1,731 unauthorised colonies in Delhi, regulations for which were notified recently by Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry, is unlikely to be an electoral game changer. Most people *The Hindu* spoke to in some of these colonies are sceptical of the regularisation plan actually being implemented and said the decision would not have a bearing on their vote in the upcoming Assembly elections. Vimal Sharma, a property owner in the narrow lanes of New Ashok Nagar who purchased her plot in 1997, said the regularisation promise was something every party has dangled ahead of polls in Delhi. “It was promised during [former Congress Chief Minister] Sheila Dikshit’s time also and we had even paid house tax. The Centre has promised it and even [Delhi Chief Minister Arvind] Kejriwal has said that he will do it if he comes back to power,” she said. She doubts the policy will even go through. “There’s no chance of it happening. I don’t see it being implemented,” said Ms. Sharma, who has a master’s in political science from Meerut University.

**Unfulfilled dream**  
Others here echoed her views. Regularisation would be a huge relief for 55-year-old Jayant Akhuli, a lab technician. “There is this constant fear in our hearts that something could happen to our house. If the colony becomes authorised, we will not have to worry about it,” he said. But Mr. Akhuli is also sceptical if ownership rights would finally be a reality. “Every government in the past has promised this. New settlers here may get swayed by the announcement but the people who have been staying here for a long time won’t. They know that it’s just an election ploy,” he said. In south Delhi’s Vasant Kunj, a small pocket of about 120 plots makes up an unauthorised colony



A view of unauthorised colonies in north-west Delhi. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## CITY MATTERS

with its own Residents’ Welfare Association (RWA) which runs a gated society manned by private guards, a private sewer system and independently employed garbage collectors. RWA president Harbans Nagpal is opposed to the area falling in the list of 69 ‘posh colonies’ excluded from regularisation. “We don’t have a park or a club like at Sainik Farms...we will demand to know the guidelines under which we are included in the list. We put together our money and set up these systems independently; that doesn’t make our colony posh,” he said. Mr. Nagpal welcomed the regularisation decision but said the credit for it could not be taken by any one government. “Even though the Centre finally approved it, the Delhi government after all made the application,” he said. He hoped the announcement is not some election propaganda.

“The guidelines should come out at the earliest so that we can be assured,” he said. He has already started collecting details of all residents in order to be prepared for if and when the registration process starts.

**‘Neutralised’ impact**  
Yagavendra Singh, former RWA president of the area who also owns a plot in Bhawani Kunj, said that with both the Centre and the State government taking credit for the move, its electoral impact is likely to be neutralised. “Even though the [Union] Cabinet has passed it, the Delhi government is saying that it made the recommendation first,” he pointed out. In nearby Harijan Basti, also in Vasant Kunj, a different kind of problem persists. Separated from Masoodpur village about 30 years ago, up to 18 plots here were awarded to people from SC and ST categories, residents said. “Sewers here are always clogged, the roads have not been fixed ever. On paper, CCTV cameras have already been set up, but there are none here,” said Rakesh Kumar, a resi-

dent. “The other unauthorised colonies in the area have regular upkeep. Who’s going to listen to Harijans?” asked Mr. Kumar. He said through the regularisation move, the BJP had managed to do something that the Congress could not do in several years of its existence. He, however, insisted that the same issue would continue to come up: “Go to Tughlakabad, the way properties were once built here, they are now coming up there. As long as MPs and MLAs do their jugaad, this is going to continue. People pay local politicians a price to protect their illegal constructions, unauthorised colonies come up and the cycle continues,” said Mr. Kumar. Shekhar Saroloya, also a resident of Vasant Kunj Harijan Basti, thinks that his colony may fall under the posh colonies list. “Though the civic infrastructure is poor in the locality, land rates here are as high as in RK Puram’s Aman Dairy,” he claimed. Mr. Saroloya is not too concerned though. “With no clarity yet on the way forward, voting trends are a far-off question,” he said.

## 15,033 cases disposed of in Lok Adalats

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A total of 15,033 cases were disposed of at special Lok Adalats conducted across Delhi on Sunday to clear traffic challans and cases under the Negotiable Instruments Act, the Delhi Legal Services Authority said. Among the cases settled were 12,950 traffic challans and 2,083 cases under the Negotiable Instruments Acts. The cases were settled for a total of approximately ₹12.85 crore, it said.



Power to U.P. village cut over dues

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUZAFFARNAGAR

Power supply to a village in Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district has been disconnected

as villagers did not clear dues of over ₹91 lakhs, officials said on Sunday. All 300 consumers in the village failed to clear their dues.

Action initiated against farmers for stubble burning: Amarinder

'State expects decline in number of cases this year compared with 2018'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Action has been initiated against 2,923 farmers so far in 20,729 cases of stubble burning reported till November 1 in Punjab, which expects a 10-20% decline in the number of such cases this year compared with 2018, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said.

As against a total of around 49,000 cases of stubble burning last year, this year the State government has so far received reports of 20,729 cases, with more than 70% of the paddy already harvested.

**'Drive intensified'**  
Despite the High Court having stayed the recovery of fines from farmers penalised last year, the State government has intensified its drive



A policeman in mask manages traffic amid heavy smog in Patiala on Sunday. • PTI

against the dangerous practice of stubble burning, Capt. Amarinder said in a statement here on Sunday.

The enforcement teams had till November 1 visited 11, 286 fire incidents sites, and environment compensation amounting to ₹41.62 lakh had been imposed in 1,585 cases, red entry made in re-

venue documents (khasra girdawari) in 1,136 cases, and prosecution-FIR filed in 202 cases against defaulting farmers.

The process of verifying the remaining fire incidents and levying of environmental compensation was being expedited, said the Chief Minister. He said that the Pun-

jab Pollution Control Board had also imposed environmental compensation of ₹62 lakhs on 31 combine harvesters operating without Super Straw Management System.

**Central compensation**  
Compensation by the Central government was the only solution in the circumstances, said the Chief Minister, adding that the matter was not one of politics, but "a question of the future of our people, which goes beyond politics."

The ball was totally in the Centre's court since most State governments were bankrupt, with his own State reeling under massive debt, Capt. Amarinder said, adding that the fiscal situation was linked to GST, which had aggravated their economic problems.

Newly elected Haryana MLAs to take oath today

Election of Speaker also on same day

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
CHANDIGARH

The newly elected members of the Haryana Assembly will be administered oath here on Monday when the three-day session of the House begins.

Senior Congress leader and Beri MLA Raghuvir Singh Kadian, the Pro-tem Speaker of the 14th Haryana Legislative Assembly, will administer the oath to the newly elected members, as per tentative programme of the session.

After the members are administered the oath, election of Speaker and Deputy Speaker will also take place the same day.

On November 5, Haryana Governor Satyadeo Narain Arya will also address the Assembly, this being the first session of the new Assembly.

Later, discussion on the Governor's address will

take place while on concluding day on Wednesday, the House will conduct legislative business.

The Bharatiya Janata Party and the Jannayak Janta Party have formed the government in alliance in Haryana.

**Independents' support**  
They also enjoy the support of seven independents. The polls were held on October 21 and results came out on October 24.

In the 90-member House, the BJP won 40 seats falling short by six members for a simple majority. JJP won 10 seats, Congress 31, independents 7, INLD and Haryana Lokhit Party one each.

While Dushyant's JJP has 10 members, his uncle Abhay Singh Chautala will be the lone MLA from his party representing his Indian National Lok Dal outfit.



# BJP now mulls offering two key portfolios to Sena

Party hopes proposal will bring ally to discussion table; Fadnavis says wrinkles to be ironed out soon; CM to meet Amit Shah in Delhi today

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Unable to form a new government in Maharashtra 11 days after emerging as the single largest party in the Assembly polls, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) may now offer two of the four important portfolios to ally Shiv Sena in a bid to at least bring the party to the discussion table.

BJP sources had initially said that all talks with the Sena regarding the share in State Cabinet would exclude these portfolios, namely, home, revenue, finance and urban development.

However, Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, who has been reminding the BJP of its pre-poll promise of sharing power equally, showed no interest in the proposal.

According to sources in the BJP, the Sena's firm stand and the resultant deadlock in government formation has prompted the BJP to take a step backwards and come up with a new offer. "We can discuss the exchange of finance and revenue portfolios," a senior BJP minister privy to the discussions said.

While Mr. Fadnavis and Mr. Thackeray are not talking directly, the BJP leader said negotiations through other channels have been under way since the day the results were announced.

The BJP's new offer, however, does not mention anything about the chief minister's post. Sena leaders have been insisting that equal power shares also mean the CM post being shared for two-and-a-half years.

Mr. Thackeray has said he has received no word from the BJP camp on government formation.

The desperation of the BJP leaders, especially Mr. Fadnavis, was visible on Sunday during his tour to Akola in Vidarbha to inspect crop losses due to excessive rain.

"The problems in forming the government will be resolved soon. The government should be formed



**Taking stock:** Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis inspects damaged crops in Akola on Sunday. • PTI

## Crops destroyed on 30 lakh hectares in Marathwada

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
AURANGABAD

Crops on at least 30 lakh hectares in Marathwada have been destroyed due to unseasonal rain in the last month, as per a report on preliminary losses prepared by Divisional Commissioner Sunil Kendrekar.

"Due to heavy rains in the catchment areas, the doors of Jayakwadi dam were opened for the fifth

time which is unprecedented since its construction. In all, 52,65,165.96 hectares of land was under cultivation in the region. Of this, 47 lakh hectares was under kharif crop," authorities said.

More than 30 lakh of the 43,01,436 farmers incurred heavy losses due to damage caused to their crops, mainly cotton, maize and soybean.

soon, which will be good for the State as there are limitations to the financial aid that an interim government can announce for farmers," he said while speaking to reporters. This is the first time any BJP leader has admitted to problems in forming the government.

Mr. Fadnavis will meet BJP president Amit Shah in Delhi on Monday, sources in the party said.

Contrary to Haryana, where the BJP's central leadership swung into action to form a government, in Maharashtra, Mr. Fadnavis appears to be fighting a lone battle. The BJP has rejected this perception, and said the central leadership will be in the picture once the Sena joins the discussion table.

"There needs to be some basis to start discussions. The Sena leadership is not agreeing to negotiate. How can our central leaders intervene?" one leader said.

Mr. Fadnavis's visit to the Capital will coincide with Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar's meeting with Congress president Sonia Gandhi. The two are likely to discuss the Opposition's strategy in case the BJP and Sena fail to reach a consensus.

Senior Congress leaders from the State have already met Ms. Gandhi regarding the political situation. According to State Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat, she has neither given her consent nor disapproved the move to extend support to the Sena if needed.

## Relief package inadequate, says Uddhav

Sena chief tours Aurangabad district, deflects questions on power tussle

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Calling the ₹10,000-crore relief package announced by Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis for farmers hit by unseasonal rain "grossly inadequate", Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday demanded that the government provide ₹25,000 per hectare as compensation to farmers without any conditions attached.

The Sena chief, who toured parts of Aurangabad district to assess crop damage, parried questions on the tussle between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Sena over government formation, merely saying the people would come to know soon enough if his party would be in power.

"The damage to crops is so extensive that the government must immediately give recompense of at least ₹25,000- ₹50,000 per hectare for these farmers... nothing will happen in the ₹10,000 crore package announced," Mr. Thackeray said, stating that the farmers stared at an existential crisis because of this 'wet famine.'

At a time of fraught relations with ally BJP, the Sena president's criticism of the relief package chimed in with that of the Nationalist Congress Party's (NCP), which dismissed the assistance as "a joke."

When asked if his party would form the new government to ensure help to distressed farmers, Mr. Thackeray refrained from giving a direct answer and merely said it was "inappropriate" to speak of government formation at a time when farmers were suffering.

### Dig at Fadnavis

The Sena chief, however, took a swipe at Mr. Fadnavis, remarking: "Despite the



**Promising help:** Uddhav Thackeray meets farmers whose crops have been destroyed, at Kannad taluka in Aurangabad district. • YOGESH LONDHE

**When the PM had come to Ausa in Latur ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, I had told him the people will give you their blessings if you assure relief during drought**

monsoon withdrawing, it seems to be saying *mi punha yein* (I shall return)... now, this has created fear among people."

Mr. Thackeray was referring to Mr. Fadnavis's oft-repeated assertion of *mi punha yein* ('I shall return') during the Assembly election campaign that he would easily return as chief minister for a second term.

Mr. Thackeray also took jibes at the Narendra Modi-led government at the Centre, saying it was New

Delhi's "duty" to help Maharashtra's farmers in their hour of crisis. "The State has given its wholehearted blessing to the ruling party at the Centre by voting it back to power in the general election. When the Prime Minister had come to Ausa in Latur ahead of the Lok Sabha polls, I had told him the people will give you their blessings if you assure relief during drought. I now expect the Centre to extricate Maharashtra's farmers from this crisis," he said.

The Sena chief had toured drought-hit parts of the State before a particularly acrimonious run-up to his party sealing the alliance with the BJP before the general election.

### Warning to banks

He exhorted crop insurance companies do away with cumbersome documenta-

tion and not create impediments while giving insurance aid to farmers. "I also urge banks to behave in a humane manner in this grave hour facing farmers," he said, warning that Shiv Sainiks would take to task any financial institution that created obstacles in disbursing credit to farmers.

"There is a need to give succour to farmers and not conduct surveys via helicopters. The farmers' subsistence crops have been destroyed in one night at many places," Mr. Thackeray said, remarking that the despair had reached such a point that farmers were contemplating extreme steps.

Appealing to farmers not to commit suicide, the Shiv Sena chief said his party stood firmly behind them and would leave no stone unturned to provide them just assistance.

Raut texted me, will call him, says Ajit Pawar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

On the eve of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) president Sharad Pawar's meeting with Congress chief Sonia Gandhi in New Delhi amid an impasse over government formation in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena seems to have reached out to the NCP on Sunday.

The speculation that the Sena was exploring alternatives to ally BJP were strengthened on Sunday when senior NCP leader Ajit Pawar showed reporters a phone message from Sena MP Sanjay Raut, containing a formal introduction and greetings.

The message from Mr. Raut read, "*Namaskar, mi Sanjay Raut* (Hello, this is Sanjay Raut). Jai Maharashtra." Mr. Pawar said, "This means I should call him. I will call and check."

The Sena and the BJP are locked in a dispute over sharing power, prompting speculation that the Uddhav Thackeray-led party may ally with the NCP and the Congress to form a government. The NCP has maintained that it would sit in the Opposition.

While Mr. Raut has claimed the Sena would soon have its chief minister with the support of 170 MLAs, Mr. Pawar said he was "unaware" how the Sena leader had arrived at this number. "The Congress-NCP and other allies have a strength of 110 seats. And we have a mandate to be in the opposition," he said. He also scoffed at speculation that NCP chief Sharad Pawar was in the race for the CM's post.

The Baramati MLA was speaking to NCP candidates who lost the Assembly polls, giving them the example of former Congress CM Vilasrao Deshmukh who went on to occupy the top post after a shock defeat from his stronghold Latur in 1995.

'Governor will start talks if no one stakes claim by Nov. 7'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Union minister and Republican Party of India (Atha-wale) chief Ramdas Athawale on Sunday said Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari will begin consultations with political parties on government formation in the State if nobody stakes claim by November 7.

Mr. Athawale said the Governor informed a delegation led by him on Saturday evening that he was waiting for a party/parties to stake claim to form the government.

The term of the existing 13th State Assembly ends on November 9.

In the recent polls, the BJP won 105 seats and its ally Shiv Sena bagged 56 seats. However, the two parties are locked in a bitter power tussle.

## Goa gets new Governor



**Taking charge:** Bombay High Court Chief Justice Pradeep Nandrajog administers the oath of office to Satya Pal Malik, who was sworn in as the Governor of Goa, at Raj Bhavan at Dona Paula on Sunday. • ATISH POMBURFEKAR

## Nod for FIRs in irrigation scam pending with WRD official: ACB

Ajit Pawar's involvement not found yet, says officer

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NAGPUR

The Anti-Corruption Bureau's (ACB) seven proposals for filing FIRs against senior government officials in connection with the alleged multi-crore irrigation scam in Maharashtra are pending with the principal secretary of the State Water Resources Department (WRD), an officer has said.

The ACB needs approval of the principal secretary to file FIR against officials of the Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation (VIDC) under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

The scam, pegged at around ₹70,000 crore, relates to alleged corruption and irregularities in approval and execution of various irrigation projects in Maharashtra during the Congress-NCP government's rule.

"The proposals for filing FIRs are pending with the WRD's principal secretary since August last year. Hence, FIRs in seven contracts allotted by VIDC have not yet been registered," Superintendent of Police, ACB Nagpur, Rashmi Nandedkar, told reporters on Saturday. Asked whether NCP leader and former deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar was found to have a role in the cases, the officer said, "His involvement is not yet found in any case so far."

### Probe into 302 contracts

The ACB, Nagpur, is conducting inquiry into 302 contracts allotted by the VIDC for 17 irrigation projects. The anti-graft agency earlier lodged 20 FIRs against senior officials of the VIDC and contractors in connection with a scam into

the Gosikhurd project, which falls under the VIDC and is one of the major irrigation projects in Godavari basin in Bhandara district on the Wainganga river.

Mr. Pawar was among the NCP ministers who were in charge of the irrigation department at different times between 1999 and 2014 during the Congress-NCP coalition rule.

During an inquiry into the Gosikhurd scam, the ACB found major irregularities and lapses in the tender process as well as involvement of then engineers, divisional accounts officers of the department, contractors and their partners, a police official earlier said.

The cost of the tenders was illegally inflated by the government officials to favour specific contractors and their partners, he said.

## Ater reports of dead fish, Goa govt. says no leaks from stranded ship

Minister asks residents to bear with authorities; fisherfolk plan to seek Governor's intervention



**Stuck:** The naphtha-loaded shipping tanker, anchored off the Mormugao port, drifted off on October 23 before running aground near Dona Paula. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ADITYA ANAND  
MUMBAI

Amid reports of dead fish washing ashore at Dona Paula in Goa, the State government on Sunday denied any oil leak from stranded merchant ship *Nu-Shi Nalini* causing the fish deaths.

Revenue, IT, Labour and Employment Minister Jennifer Monserrate, in whose Taleigao constituency the fish have allegedly washed ashore, carried out an on-the-spot assessment. "I addressed the concerns of our locals on the situation of the grounded vessel, *Nu-Shi Nalini*, and the way forward.

The government is committed towards solving this issue at the earliest," she said.

The minister requested the residents to bear with the government a little longer and assured them everything was being done carefully to avoid further mishaps. "The hull integrity of the ship is maintained and there has been no leakage/spillage of any of the ship's contents," Ms. Monserrate claimed.

The naphtha-loaded shipping tanker, which was anchored off the Mormugao port, drifted off on October 23 before running aground on sand and rock a few

hundred metres off the coast near Cabo Raj Bhavan.

On Saturday, local fisherfolk from Marivel beach held a meeting to decide the course of action regarding the grounded vessel, which has turned into an eyesore. Angry youths accused the authorities of failing to take them into confidence. They also decided to meet the newly sworn-in Governor Satya Pal Malik seeking a hearing of their grievances.

Efforts to empty the vessel of 2,400 metric tons of naphtha, 50 tonnes of heavy oil and 19 tonnes of diesel are currently under way.





**IN BRIEF**

**Help workers or face stir, Pawan tells A.P. govt.**  
VISAKHAPATNAM  
Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan on Sunday said he would march on the streets of Amaravati if the Andhra Pradesh government failed to address the concerns of construction workers, hit hard by sand shortage and slump in the sector. At a meeting, he sought ₹50,000 per worker for the loss of livelihood and ₹5 lakh each to the families of the 36 workers who committed suicide.

**Jacobite group to build temporary church**  
KOCHI  
Work has begun on a temporary place of worship in Kerala's Piravom town by the Jacobite faction parishioners of the Piravom King of Kings St. Mary's Cathedral. The temporary church is being built on a piece of leased land near the Post Office junction. The cathedral was closed by the Ernakulam district administration on September 26 following a standoff between the Orthodox and Jacobite groups of the Malankara church over its control and administration.

**Panic in Chittoor after child dies of dengue**  
CHITTOOR  
A three-year-old boy, hailing from Chandragiri here in Andhra Pradesh, died of dengue on Saturday night, sparking panic in several mandals of the district. The boy was said to have fallen ill a week ago. He was initially taken to a local health centre and later to a private hospital in Tirupati. As his condition deteriorated, he was rushed to the Christian Medical College and Hospital in Vellore, where he died. Since January this year, over 104 cases of dengue have been recorded officially.

# Fresh plea filed against SC's order to demolish Maradu flats

In a curative petition, 40 families seek an opportunity to be heard once

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI  
Forty families, whose high-rise apartments in Kerala's Maradu face demolition for violation of the coastal regulation zone rules, have filed a curative petition in the Supreme Court, arguing that they had never been given a chance to be heard before the court passed the order on May 8. The petition, represented by Supreme Court advocate E.M.S. Anam, is likely to be listed this week for consideration. The Golden Kayaloram Residents Association, represented by secretary Thomas Kariath, said a "fraud" was played on the court by the committee of local officials that enquired into whether the high-rises violated the coastal regulation zone rules. "The committee, without making any local enquiry or study, conclude that the



**Shattered dream:** Windows of a flat in Maradu, Kerala, being removed ahead of its demolition. ■ H. VIBHU

area falls under the Coastal Regulation Zone III (CRZ-III), which is a 'no construction area' as Maradu is a panchayat," the residents said in their petition. They argued that "a fraud was played upon the court by the enquiry committee by classifying the project and the building under CRZ-III, when, in reality, the project falls under CRZ-II, under which the building where it stands is a permissible construction". The resident said the State government had shown-caused the other three project proponents/builders for violations of the coastal regulation zone rules, but the Golden Kayaloram project was never once found to have fallen foul of the rules. "The case of Golden Kayaloram is a case apart from the rest," the petition claimed. The residents stated that they did not get an oppor-

tunity to raise the errors in the findings of the enquiry committee. These findings had served as the basis for the court to declare the structures illegal and order their demolition. They sought an open court hearing to "prevent grave miscarriage of justice as the demolition process will illegally deprive the residents of 40 flats of Golden Kayaloram project of their life savings invested in the flats in occupation for the past 8-10 years". On May 8, 2019, the court ordered the demolition of four residential complexes in the Maradu municipality in Ernakulam district on the findings of the enquiry committee. The residents of Golden Kayaloram then approached the court with a review petition to set aside the order, saying they were not heard. The court dismissed this petition on July 10.

# Kerala govt. may not give nod to prosecute CPI(M) workers

Panel headed by former judge will have to first review case

N.J. NAIR  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
The Kerala government is not likely to clear the prosecution of two Communist Party of India (Marxist) activists, Alan Shuhaib and Thaha Fazal, arrested under the provisions of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, from Kozhikode on Saturday. Sources said, "The government has put in place a system for reviewing such cases and will strictly go by its recommendations. The UAPA Authority headed by a former High Court Judge was constituted for granting permission for prosecution after reviewing the merit of each case and also for ensuring justice to the victims." As per procedure in such cases, charges could be framed only after getting it cleared by the district police chief. An officer of the Dy.SP rank, after investigation, should seek permission for

# Police seek legal opinion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
The Kerala police on Sunday appeared to back-pedal on its decision to push ahead with the UAPA charges slapped on the two CPI(M) workers. In a bid to disentangle themselves from the controversial move, senior officials said the FIR filed against the students by the police was now the subject of a legal review. Senior officials deliberated on whether the police should oppose the bail of the youth or seek their custody for further interrogation, given the politically touchy nature of the case. prosecution, get legal opinion before a final decision is taken with the concurrence of the government. Earlier too, permission for prosecution was denied in nine cases for want of evidence. As many as eight of those were against 'Maoists.' The arrest of Shuhaib and Fazal has drawn flak from the CPI(M) leaders, including Left Democratic Front convener A. Vijayaraghavan. On Sunday, he said the pol-

# Ready to defer some demands if talks begin: TSRTC unions

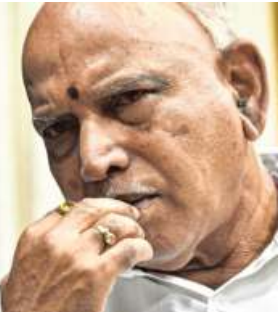
Deadline set by Chief Minister to rejoin duty ends tomorrow

STAFF REPORTER  
HYDERABAD  
A day after Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao set November 5 as the deadline for Telangana State Road Transport Corporation workers to end their stir and report for duty, the TSRTC Joint Action Committee on Sunday softened its stand and said it was willing to negotiate, even if it meant deferring some demands. TSTRCTAC leaders E. Ash-

wathama Reddy, K. Raji Reddy and others spoke to the media at the Telangana Mazdoor Union headquarters and said that before instructing employees to join, there should be clarity on issues such as provident fund and city compensatory scheme. "We are ready to defer some demands if you start talks," Mr. Reddy said. The trade union leaders sought to know that if the transport juggernaut were to be privatised, then what fate would befall its 25,000 employees — nearly half the TSRTC staff. Urging workers not to lose hope, Mr. Reddy said, "Do not give up. There is no need for you to join. If someone reports for work, it is their choice." RTC employees and unions began the strike on October 5, demanding merger of the corporation with the government, among others.

# Video clip meaningless: Yediyurappa

'Siddaramaiah is trying to create confusion in SC'  
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU  
Accusing Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly Siddaramaiah of trying to create confusion over the video in which purported references have been made to Union Home Minister Amit Shah overseeing resignations of MLAs and their stay in Mumbai, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Sunday maintained that the video neither had meaning nor legitimacy. In damage-control mode after the video from the Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP) meeting in Hubballi surfaced in public on Friday night, Mr. Yediyurappa said: "He [Mr. Siddaramaiah] is telling lies. We have nothing to do with the resignations of MLAs. People will teach him a lesson in the byelection for lying." The CM's comments come in the wake of the Congress and the Janata Dal (Secular) deciding to submit the video before the Supreme Court as evidence. In the purported video, Mr. Yediyurappa is heard saying that Mr. Shah oversaw the resignations of MLAs



B.S. Yediyurappa

There is no meaning to it and I condemn this move. Probably, Congressmen themselves may not like it," he told reporters. 'No connection' Mr. Yediyurappa further said: "Those who submitted resignations did it for their own reasons. I do not have any connection with it. The BJP will decide what to do next. I have not said we will give ticket to disqualified legislators. It is up to them to do what they want and we have not promised them anything. We have nothing to do with it and I have said this 100 times before."

# 500 passenger trains get ISRO-enabled GPS

'It will monitor precise speed, location'

V. GEETANATH  
HYDERABAD  
About 500 passenger locomotives of the South Central Railway (SCR) have been fitted with the newly developed Real-time Train Information System (RTIS) to monitor precise speeds and movement throughout the journey from first point to the destination. It has been developed by the Centre for Railway Information Systems (CIRE) with the help of Indian Space Research Organisation-Airports Authority of India's GAGAN-Global Positioning System (GPS) aided geo-augmented navigation, originally developed for air traffic management. "Within the next six months, we plan to install the devices in the freight-carrying locomotives too.

For now, the information is being used for internal purposes. Gradually, passengers too will be given access to the data through messages or social media so that they can plan their journeys better," said general manager Gajanan Malloya. The new system has facilitated automatic transmission of details on speed and movement of trains to the central control office. Senior railway officials feel that once RTIS is installed on freight trains, it would help track not only unscheduled stoppages and breakdowns but also theft of goods, which is rampant. Bharat Electronics Limited has bagged the contract for supply of 2,835 devices to be installed on locomotives and network infrastructure.

# Yellow valley



**No time to pause:** A tribal woman crosses a niger field to a shandy in Araku Valley in Visakhapatnam district, Andhra Pradesh. The picturesque valley attracts tourists and film units in November and December every year. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

# Amaravati missing in new map of India

Hyderabad is common headquarters

THARUN BODA  
VIJAYAWADA  
The redrawn political map of India, released by the Centre depicting the newly formed Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, has no mention of Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh — reinforcing the claim of the ruling YSR Congress Party that the previous TDP government had not notified 'Amaravati' as the capital of the State. The map published by the Survey of India continues to show Hyderabad as the administrative capital of Andhra Pradesh like it did in the editions of the map published post bifurcation. As per the AP Reorganisation Act, Hyderabad is the common capital for both States for 10 years from 2014. The map also men-



The redrawn map brought out by the Survey of India. tioned that the 'administrative headquarters of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana are at Hyderabad'. However, this has surprised netizens who wondered why there was no mention of the capital — for which foundation stone had been laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. TDP MLA A. Satya Prasad had earlier said that the capital was notified in the gazette in December 2014.

# Protest against plan for high-rise at Cubbon Park

Hundreds of walkers join hands against move to build High Court annexe on park premises

ASHRITHA RAGHAVENDRA  
BENGALURU  
The Cubbon Park Walkers' Association staged a protest on Sunday against the proposed high-rise building set to come up on the premises of the park. "The Cubbon Park was initially 300 acres, but over the years, it has been reduced to 160 acres. If we let these encroachments continue, we will lose a major green space of our city," said S. Umesh, president of the walkers' association. The Karnataka High Court had recently given the go-ahead to the construction of a seven-storey HC annexe on the premises of the park. Widespread concern Centenarian and freedom fighter H.S. Doreswamy, who



Members of the Cubbon Park Walkers Association protesting on Sunday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

participated in the protest, said, "If citizens do not oppose such moves by the government, the park will soon become a memory. If you want Bengaluru to survive,

you must save the park. I'm not concerned about myself. I'm more concerned about the generations to come. We must not let the constructions continue. If they want a

building, let them build it on our graves." Hundreds of walkers and joggers gathered at the park to express their love for the green space and the need to

save it. "We all know where the world is headed in terms of climate change. In times like this, cutting down trees in breathing spaces of the city is not a smart idea. Many people come here to de-stress, and destroying such spaces will affect mental health too," said Akanksha S., a strategist and a frequent visitor to the park. Mr. Umesh said the association plans to form a human chain around the old office of the Election Commission in the park on November 10. "We want to meet the Chief Secretary. We will also take the legal route against the order. They say they will not cut down trees, but how can you construct a building in a park without chopping trees?"

# Kerala govt. helped 19,901 students repay loans

₹195.57 crore spent for those with loans below ₹9 lakh

STAFF REPORTER  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
The Kerala government has helped 19,901 persons repay education loans under the Education Loan Repayment Support (ELRS) scheme since it was launched in 2017. A total of ₹195.57 crore has been spent on the purpose, as per figures presented by Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac in the Assembly. Kerala is the first State to launch such a scheme intended to help those who are struggling to repay education loan debts after the completion of their course. An amount of ₹900 crore has been set aside for the



scheme. The scheme is applicable to students who have availed education loans not exceeding ₹9 lakh, and to students whose family income does not exceed ₹6 lakh per annum. The income ceiling for differently abled students with a 40 per cent disability is ₹9 lakh. The scheme currently applies to loans whose repayment began before April 1,

2016. The government bears 90 per cent of the amount repayable during the first year, 75 per cent in the second year, 50 per cent of the repayable amount in the third year and 25 per cent in the fourth year. A total of 78,062 online applications for loan repayment support were received in the ELRS web portal elrs.kerala.gov.in. Of this, 5,512 applications were rejected as ineligible. A total of 30,041 applications were temporarily rejected due to discrepancies. Of the remaining applications, funds were cleared for 19,901 applications based on the recommendations of the State Level Bankers' Committee.



IN BRIEF



**Prasad tells BSNL, MTNL to proceed with VRS**

NEW DELHI  
Union Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has directed BSNL and MTNL to implement voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) guidelines quickly and initiate proactive measures to monetise assets. PTI

**Chhath devotees flout NGT directive again**

KOLKATA  
Several devotees barged into the Rabindra Sarobar lake in Kolkata on Sunday to perform Chhath Puja rituals, flouting the National Green Tribunal's order for the second time in the last 12 hours, a Kolkata Metropolitan Development Authority official said. Security guards at the location were outnumbered by the devotees, the official added. PTI

**Motorman saves injured commuter in Thane**

MUMBAI  
An alert motorman rescued a 21-year-old commuter Pankaj Rai on Saturday, who was lying injured by the side of a railway track after falling off a train in Thane district of Maharashtra, an official said. Pravin Katiyar, the motorman, spotted Mr. Rai and immediately applied brakes to stop the train and alerted the train guards. He then carried Mr. Rai to a train coach with the help of some commuters. PTI

**M.P minister cleans drain, 3 suspended**

GWALIOR  
Three officials of the civic health department in Gwalior were suspended after a video of Food and Civil Supplies Minister Tomar Pradyumn Singh cleaning a drain went viral on social media. Residents of Birla Nagar had repeatedly complained about the drain slush entering their homes, but no action had been taken by the officials, the Minister said, adding that he would go out to more such areas to carry out cleaning work. PTI

INTERVIEW | SANDRA MULLIN

# ‘More countries are regulating and banning e-cigarettes’

V-P of Vital Strategies, a global public health organisation, says comprehensive ban imposed in India will help prevent its use among the youth

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPADDAN

*Vital Strategies works in more than 40 countries to support the adoption of proven policies to reduce tobacco use, and participated in the recent World Lung Conference at Hyderabad. Sandra Mullin, senior vice-president, spoke about the TB-tobacco relationship, the ban on e-cigarettes and the End-TB campaign.*

**What are your thoughts on the recent ban on e-cigarettes in India and compare that with the U.S. where the authorities are now calling it a ‘teen epidemic’?**

■ In the U.S., policymakers have tragically allowed e-cigarette companies to foster a new generation of nicotine users who are now hooked to their products. The unregulated introduction of e-cigarettes into the U.S. market has led to an epidemic of youth vaping, with a jump of 73% over a single year, undermining the decades-long

trend of reduction in tobacco use, particularly among youth. We commend the Government of India for taking decisive action to protect youth from e-cigarettes. We hope the comprehensive ban on the sale, manufacture, import and advertising of e-cigarettes will help prevent its rising use among youth, as we’ve seen in the U.S. and other countries. More and more countries around the world are increasing their support for regulating and banning these products, and we hope that the momentum is continued.

**Is there a relationship between tuberculosis and tobacco use?**  
■ Smokers are twice as likely to develop active TB and die from it than non-smokers, and smoking also makes TB treatment less effective. In 2018, 900,000 TB cases were attributable to smoking, according to the latest Global Tuberculosis Report. Worldwide TB rates could drop by as much as 20% if we eliminated smoking, according to the most recent *Tobacco Atlas*.

And it’s not just smokers who suffer. We know that secondhand smoke has been linked to TB relapse and also impacts the outcome of TB treatment. The message is clear – tobacco control is tuberculosis control. Implementing strong tobacco control policies is



among the best ways that countries can prevent TB, especially in a high-burden country like India.

**There is a lot of focus on TB globally and in India with the End TB campaign. Are there synergies between tobacco control and tuberculosis treatment?**

■ Due to better evidence around the links between tobacco use and TB outcomes over the last few years,

there’s been more global attention paid to coordination between national TB and tobacco control programmes. We applaud countries who have taken steps in this direction. India’s National Strategic Plan for TB elimination provides a road map for coordination between the Tuberculosis Control and Tobacco Control Programmes. We can see opportunities for coordinating care, for instance, providing TB patients who identify as tobacco us-

## Army to have first Dhanush regiment by March 2020

Entire order for 114 guns will be completed by 2022: Army

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

The Army, which began inducting the indigenously upgraded Dhanush artillery guns, will have the first regiment in place by March 2020 and will get all 114 guns by 2022, Army sources said. Dhanush is the indigenously upgraded variant of the Swedish Bofors gun imported in the 1980s.

“The first regiment of 18 guns will be in place by March 2020. We will get another 36 guns by March 2021 and another 40 by March 2022. The entire order for 114 guns will be completed by 2022,” an Army source said. In April, the Ordnance Factory Board had handed over the first batch of six



Dhanush is an indigenously upgraded variant of the Swedish Bofors gun.

Dhanush guns. The Gun Carriage Factory, Jabalpur, received the Bulk Production Clearance from the Army on February 18, 2019. Sources said the induction process was reviewed at the recently concluded Army Commanders’ Conference and “various options for the employment were discussed”.

Dhanush is a 155 mm, 45-calibre towed artillery gun with a range of 36km and has demonstrated a range of 38 km with specialised ammunition. It is fitted with an inertial navigation system having global positioning system-based gun recording and auto-laying, an enhanced tactical computer for on-board ballistic computations, an on-board muzzle velocity recording, an automated gun sighting system equipped with camera, thermal imaging, and laser range finder. The Army recently procured 155mm Excalibur precision guided ammunition from the U.S. Sources said the ammunition can be used with all 155-mm artillery guns in the inventory.

## Iqbal Mirchi case: ED lists properties for attachment

The value of the assets is estimated at over ₹600 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has started listing the properties for the first round of attachment in the money laundering case against international drug dealer Iqbal Mirchi, an alleged associate of underworld don Dawood Ibrahim, who died in the United Kingdom in 2013. The value of the assets, several of which are in Mumbai, is estimated at over ₹600 crore.

**List of properties**  
The list includes the third and fourth floors of Ceejay House, constructed by Millennium Developers Private

Limited in 2006-07, according to the agency. In 2007, the third and fourth floors of the building were given by way of tenancy rights to Mirchi’s wife Hajra Memon and two children by Millennium Developers. **Overseas assets**  
The ED has also identified close to two dozen properties in the U.K. and one property, worth ₹180 crore, in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that are linked to the drug dealer’s family. Sixteen properties in the U.K. were allegedly owned by Hajra Memon through two companies: Country Properties Limited and Uscombe Limited. While six


more properties are in the name of four U.K.-based companies, three are held by the UAE-based Mihaj Investments Corporation Limited, according to the ED. The ED has so far arrested Haroun Aleem Yusuf, property dealer Ranjeet Singh Bindra, Humayun Merchant and Rinku Deshpande. They had allegedly helped Mirchi grab properties in Mumbai and make huge money through real-estate deals. **Patel questioned**  
The ED has also questioned former Union Minister Praful Patel as he is a co-owner of Millennium Developers.

## Manipur govt. to freeze accounts of 2 separatists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
IMPHAL

The Manipur government has directed all banks to freeze the accounts of the two separatist leaders, who recently announced the launch of the “Manipur government-in-exile” in London. In a directive issued on Friday, Special Secretary (Home) Kh. Raghumani Singh said all bank accounts of Yamben Biren and Narengbam Samarjit be frozen with immediate effect. The directive was being issued on the grounds of suspicion that the money, parked in their accounts, could be used for “wrongdoings and unlawful purposes”, Mr. Singh said.

WEATHER WATCH  
RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Monday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Gale winds with speed reaching 160-170 kmph and gusting to 185 kmph, likely over east-central and adjoining west-central and northeast Arabian Sea.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala.....	00.0	33.0	20.0	Kozhikode.....	—	33.0	25.0
Ahmedabad.....	3.7	30.0	24.0	Kurnool.....	—	33.0	23.0
Aizawl.....	25.0	14.0	—	Lucknow.....	—	30.0	20.0
Allahabad.....	32.0	21.0	—	Madurai.....	—	33.0	25.0
Bengaluru.....	29.0	21.0	—	Mangaluru.....	—	32.0	23.0
Bhopal.....	28.0	21.0	—	Mumbai.....	—	34.0	24.0
Bhubaneswar.....	31.0	21.0	—	Mysuru.....	—	29.0	18.0
Chandigarh.....	29.0	16.0	—	New Delhi.....	0.3	27.0	19.0
Chennai.....	33.0	26.0	—	Patna.....	—	31.0	23.0
Coimbatore.....	4.4	32.0	22.0	Port Blair.....	—	27.0	24.0
Dehradun.....	28.0	16.0	—	Puducherry.....	2.2	32.0	24.0
Gangtok.....	21.0	13.0	—	Pune.....	—	31.0	19.0
Goa.....	33.0	23.0	—	Raipur.....	—	31.0	23.0
Guwahati.....	32.0	20.0	—	Ranchi.....	—	28.0	18.0
Hubballi.....	27.0	19.0	—	Shillong.....	—	22.0	11.0
Hyderabad.....	31.0	21.0	—	Shimla.....	—	20.0	11.0
Imphal.....	28.0	16.0	—	Srinagar.....	—	—	—
Jaipur.....	32.0	20.0	—	Thiruvananthapuram.....	2.2	32.0	24.0
Kochi.....	18.8	31.0	25.0	Tiruchi.....	—	33.0	28.0
Kohima.....	25.0	13.0	—	Vijayawada.....	—	33.0	24.0
Kolkata.....	32.0	23.0	—	Visakhapatnam.....	—	32.0	26.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad.....	119	90	43	49	70	—
Bengaluru.....	9	15	41	95	—	—
Chennai.....	10	32	50	114	—	—
Delhi.....	5	79	112	500	472	—
Hyderabad.....	7	—	27	78	—	—
Kolkata.....	6	49	24	166	141	—
Lucknow.....	24	71	28	424	—	—
Mumbai.....	10	84	117	37	56	—
Pune.....	92	11	82	41	41	—
Visakhapatnam.....	26	53	45	304	203	—

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>2</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

## ISRO’s NavIC set to be commercialised by Antrix

The regional navigation satellite system can serve as an indigenous-GPS

MADHUMATHI D.S.  
BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) and its older commercial arm Antrix Corporation Ltd. are poised to commercialise India’s regional navigation satellite system, NavIC, with Antrix recently floating two separate tenders to identify industries that can develop dedicated NavIC-based hardware and systems. NavIC (Navigation in Indian Constellation) is the Indian system of eight satellites that is aimed at telling business and individual users where they are, or how their products and services are moving. The indigenous positioning or location based service (LBS) works just like the established and popular

U.S. Global Positioning System or GPS, but within a 1,500-km radius over the sub-continent. Antrix’s Chairman and Managing Director S. Rakesh said the company was currently identifying suitable device manufacturers on the one side and comprehensive integrators of NavIC-based systems (SIs) on the other. Eligible manufacturers from the two sets would be empanelled so that they could bid for government projects that require monitoring of moving assets and fleet. **Early users**  
The early set of commercial NavIC users, he said, would be potentially be transporters of resources such as



**Easy navigation:** A boat carrying a NavIC receiver sets out to the sea for user trials at Kerala’s Vizhinjam harbour. •FILE PHOTO

mined ore, coal and sand in various States. Several transporters currently use GPS-based systems. “Mining and transportation sectors need vehicle tracking applications that are

tied to revenue sharing systems of the government,” said Mr. Rakesh. Last year, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways mandated that all national-permit vehicles must

have such tracking devices. As a pilot, many fishing boats have been fitted with these devices that have a unique texting facility. Besides the Antrix tenders, two other recent deve-

lopments have paved the way for taking NavIC closer to end users. **Positive developments**  
In mid-October, ISRO announced that Qualcomm Technologies Inc., a leading producer of semiconductor chips, had developed and tested NavIC-friendly chipsets across its user bases and that it would add NavIC to them. Another important development for NavIC was the certification of the Indian system by the 3GPP (The 3rd Generation Partnership Project), a global body for coordinating mobile telephony standards. The specifications will be available in March 2020 and the Telecommunications Standards Development Society, India has said it would adopt them as a national standard.

## BSF tracks earth, water and air on Bangladesh border

Recently acquired Israeli tether drones & thermal imagers aid operations in challenging riverine terrain

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

The Border Security Force (BSF) has literally gone underground to keep a watch on trafficking in the Dhubri sector of the India-Bangladesh border. It has also placed eyes in the sky. The border force has procured an unspecified number of Israeli tether drones for the Dhubri sector that stretches from Meghalaya to Cooch Behar in West Bengal. Tethered to a base for continuous supply of power, these drones – worth ₹37 lakh each – are equipped with day-and-night vision cameras that can capture images within a range of 2 km.

Five States – Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Tripura and West Bengal – share a 4,096-km border with Bangladesh. Of the 263 km that Assam shares, 119.1 km is riverine. The 61-km border in western Assam’s Dhubri sector, where the expansive Brahmaputra river flows into Bangladesh, is arguably the toughest to man. Vast sandbars or river islands and innumerable water channels make surveillance a challenge, especially during the rainy season. “Smuggling is usually done at night and through blind spots that are difficult to monitor. The tether drones are an extension of



**Going high tech:** The BSF has bought Israeli drones for use in Dhubri sector that stretches from Meghalaya to Cooch Behar.

our physical and biological limitations with cameras constantly feeding images from a maximum height of 150 m,” Inspector-General of BSF’s Guwahati Frontier

Piyush Mordia told *The Hindu*. Mr. Mordia admitted that cattle smugglers or human traffickers could detect the tether drones. “But the idea

is to send them the message that they are being watched day and night,” he said. Apart from the drones, the BSF has employed thermal-imagers – non-contact temperature measurement devices – and both underground and underwater sensors to detect movement of people, animals and other objects. “The underwater sensors are crucial given the topography of the area where our men cannot patrol without boats,” Mr. Mordia said. The BSF’s use of gadgets is part of the Comprehensive Integrated Border Management System to ensure foolproof security.

## Minister’s son beaten up

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MADHUPURA (BIHAR)  
A Bihar Minister’s son was beaten up by a group of people in Madhepura district in the early hours of Sunday, police said. Bihar Sugarcane Industries Minister Bima Bharti’s son Raj Kumar and his cousin Sanjay Kumar were beaten up by a group of people near Bhatgama village of the district, Superintendent of Police Sanjay Kumar said. Both have been admitted to Chausa primary health centre for treatment, police said, adding that an FIR has been lodged. The Minister has demanded the immediate arrest of those involved in beating her son.





Pegasus misadventure

The government must clarify whether it deployed spyware to snoop on its critics

The Government’s reaction to messaging platform WhatsApp’s revelation that Indian journalists and human rights activists were among some 1,400 people globally spied upon using a surveillance technology developed by Israel-based NSO Group is inadequate and, more unfortunately, far from reassuring. Thursday’s disclosure by Facebook-owned WhatsApp, which is suing the Israeli company in a California federal court for the hack, is a chilling reminder that nothing is private in the digital world, given the right tools. In this case, a malicious code, named Pegasus, exploited a bug in the call function of WhatsApp to make its way into the phones of those select users, where it would potentially have had access to every bit of information. But the disclosure raises a more worrying question: on whose directions were the Indian journalists and human rights activists spied upon? There are a few reasons why this question is important. One, this was not done with money in mind. Two, as the NSO says on its website, “NSO products are used exclusively by government intelligence and law enforcement agencies to fight crime and terror.” The NSO, by its own admission, sells its service only to government agencies. Three, those targeted include civil rights activists, lawyers, and journalists. Notably, some of them have legally represented activists arrested in the case related to the violence in Bhima Koregaon in 2018. Lawyer Nihalsing Rathod, academic Anand Teltumbde, Dalit activist Vivek Sundara, and human rights lawyer Jagdish Meshram are some of those who have been targeted by Pegasus. Who would have wanted to snoop on them?

It is, therefore, extremely important for the Government to clear the air on this issue in no uncertain terms especially when WhatsApp had given information to CERT-IN, a government agency, in May, even if without any mention of Pegasus or the extent of breach. It is all right to ask WhatsApp, as the Government has done, as to why the breach happened and what it is doing to safeguard the privacy of its users in India, estimated to be around 400 million. In separate statements, Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and the Ministry of Home Affairs have expressed concern about privacy breaches while at the same time hinting that this issue is being politicised and an attempt is being made to malign the Government. This is hardly a trivial issue, as it concerns the digital well-being of citizens, the very thing this Government says it wants to promote. In a country where data protection and privacy laws are still in a nascent stage, incidents such as this highlight the big dangers to privacy and freedom in an increasingly digital society. It is thus imperative that the Government sends a strong message on privacy, something that the Supreme Court in 2017 declared to be intrinsic to life and liberty and therefore an inherent part of the fundamental rights. The first thing it could do is to answer categorically if any of the governmental agencies used NSO’s services.

A test and a chance

BJP’s poll machine will be tested in Jharkhand, giving the Congress a chance to return

After Haryana and Maharashtra, Jharkhand is the third State in which the BJP will be seeking a second consecutive term in government following its victory in the Lok Sabha election earlier in the year. The party will indeed draw lessons from Haryana and Maharashtra, where it underperformed, even if without disastrous results. It focused entirely on nationalistic issues such as Article 370 and the Modi government’s strident posture towards Pakistan, but the strategy’s electoral dividends were not enough for an emphatic victory in either State. Given a rap on the knuckles by the electorate, the BJP reportedly plans to repurpose its campaign strategy by including local issues and acknowledging particular social factors and candidate profiles. However, this is not easy for a party that wants to divert attention from development and livelihood issues by highlighting grand narratives. The Congress, despite its recent above-expectations electoral showing, is still not an inspiring fulcrum for allies or a magnetic alternative to the BJP in the eyes of voters. The Assembly poll offers a new opportunity for the Congress; and a fresh test for the BJP’s mega poll machine.

Jharkhand has a significant tribal population and 28 of the 81 Assembly seats are reserved for them. Along with Chhattisgarh, the State of Jharkhand was formed in 2000, fulfilling a long-standing demand of tribal groups, by the Vajpayee government. The BJP politics subsequently has been less sympathetic to tribal aspirations, starkly demonstrated in the appointment of non-tribal Chief Ministers in both States. Raghubar Das, the first non-tribal CM of the State is also the first one to complete a five-year term, but his administrative measures have also given him an anti-tribal image. The BJP’s mobilisation model hinges on aggregating voters without appealing to their tribal identity. The Sangh Parivar politics has encouraged a divide between Christian and non-Christian tribals. Lynch mobs that target Muslims, tribals and Dalits have thrived in Jharkhand, sometimes cheered on by BJP leaders. The challenge for the Congress is to attempt a big tent coalition of social groups through alliances and internal mechanisms. It cannot lose any time in firming up an electoral understanding with the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, if it is serious about confronting the BJP. There are unique development challenges that remain unresolved in Jharkhand, despite its formation as a separate State two decades ago. The Assembly election campaign is an appropriate opportunity to bring these issues to the forefront.

Intransigence as villain of the peace?

In Nagaland, aspirations of a new era can seldom be seen from an aging, fixed vision; the NSCN(IM) must recognise this



PRADIP PHANJOUBAM

It is fortunate that the peace talks between the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Mui-vah), NSCN(IM), did not break down on October 31, the government’s deadline for concluding an accord. Although there are no specific details, both sides apparently agreed to step back a little from earlier stances and to sign a deal sometime soon. This delay, however, cannot be for long as other Naga groups have already been promised a settlement with or without the NSCN(IM) if the deadlock with it holds; going against this promise can result in complications.

Potential spoilers

The deadlock was on the insistence for a separate flag and constitution by the NSCN(IM) to make way for India and Nagaland to be independent allies in a shared-sovereignty federal relationship. Conceding to this, especially after the abrogation of Article 370, would have been impossible for the Government. The uncertainty, however, was also on account of many other thorny internal contradictions – some old and some new; in the days ahead, they can show up to become spoilers.

Call it determination or obduracy, the most pronounced of these is a seeming intransigence of vision on the part of the NSCN(IM), and a refusal to accept radical shifts in aspirations all around brought by new challenges and opportunities of a new era. Ernest Renan’s “a nation is a daily plebiscite” must be heeded by the nation

and its challengers alike, for aspiration of any collective of people is a moving target which can seldom be hit from a fixed vision.

The 70 years of struggle by the Nagas is heroic; so is the identity formation among these linguistically disparate tribes at constant war with each other in pre-modern times. There is now no lack of a sense of peoplehood around the Naga identity, and considering the germination of this identity is just about 100 years old, this is phenomenal. As many scholars have pointed out, the watershed years were the First World War. Tribesmen from these hills recruited in the British Labour Corps, discovered their commonness of destiny in Europe. The formation of the Naga Club upon their return, their memorandum to the Simon Commission in 1929 asserting their distinct identity and wish for self-determination, the formation of the Naga National Council and its decision under visionary leader A.Z. Phizo to take to armed struggle not long after Indian independence, etc., are well-documented. The grit and romance of this resistance was magnetic, and affiliation to the Naga identity expanded among more tribes in these hills, crossing established political boundaries, and in the process creating their shares of ethnic frictions.

Need for moderating notions

Several decades down the line, the fight is getting weary. Obviously, no revolution can sustain on 70-year-old slogans. Moreover, this struggle has also seen violent splits, ugly divisive tribalism, fratricidal feuds and untold sufferings. These also have to be factored into this story of a unique history. If history is the record of a given state building project, and is blind to events which do not contribute this exercise and relies on memory and myths – as the Naga



story often does – to reconstruct the past can be equally problematic. Memory too is extremely selective and chooses to forget events which go against the image of the past being constructed. It also often confabulates to fill gaps in the story. Therefore, all notions of unique histories and ancestral homelands will need moderation against this scale.

Decisive shifts

Even in the last 22 years of Naga peace negotiations, radical shifts in perspective have been evident. For instance, when parleys began in 1997, it was exclusively with the NSCN(IM). In 2001, the NSCN’s other major faction led by the late S.S. Khaplang, NSCN(K), too entered into a ceasefire agreement with the Government, but they were not made part of the peace negotiations, ostensibly because of objections from the NSCN(IM), which instead offered amnesty to all other factions if they joined them. Expectedly, the NSCN(K) began showing signs of disintegrative pressures from within. By 2011, two important leaders, Kitovi Zhi-momi and Khole Konyak, had left in moves allegedly engineered by Indian intelligence to separate the Myanmar Nagas from India in anticipation of a settlement. Khaplang is from Myanmar. In 2016, Khole Konyak formally joined the NSCN (IM).

Erosion from within the NSCN (K) ranks continued and Kha-

plang, in June 2015, decided to abrogate the ceasefire agreement. Two months later, on August 3, the Government signed the Framework Agreement with the NSCN (IM). The latter continued to hold centre stage but not for long. Realising that the NSCN(IM) cannot be the sole representatives of the Nagas, in 2017 other Naga underground factions were also brought to the negotiating table, lowering the prestige of the NSCN(IM). Today there are seven of these factions under an umbrella organisation, the Naga National Political Groups (NNPG), taking part in the parleys, and they are willing to sign a peace pact under the Constitution, leaving other demands to be pursued later.

The Framework Agreement envisaged a bilateral truce between “two entities”, but today it is set to be a multilateral one. Not only this, as a Ministry of Home Affairs spokesperson clarified through the Press Information Bureau on October 31 evening, the accord will only be concluded after consultations with Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, all States which have a stake in the matter. Till date the talks were in complete secrecy, raising anxiety in these States.

The other tangible mood in Nagaland is, if the settlement is for an Indian state and not a sovereign Naga homeland, they are happy with the present Nagaland State. The willingness of the NNPG, most of whose leadership are Nagaland based, to keep in abeyance demands such as for a Greater Nagaland, is an indication. There are now more urgent indicators. On October 25, a total of 17 leaders of the NSCN(IM) ditched the organisation to join the NNPG. All defectors are Nagaland based and most are from the Sema tribe. This is significant. When the NSCN(IM)’s respected Sema leader, Isak Chishi Swu died in June 2016, there was

speculation this might erode the support base of the NSCN(IM) among Semas, thereby its foothold also in Nagaland, leaving it largely a Manipur-based organisation. Most of its other top leaders and cadres, including its supreme Thuingaleng Muivah, are from Manipur. Today this prophesy seems to be unfolding.

There has also been a growing social movement in Nagaland for consolidation of Nagaland’s own people. The demand for a Register of Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland, and now the formation of the Nagaland Indigenous People’s Forum on October 28 (at its launch, former Nagaland Chief Minister and retired Governor of several States, S.C. Jamir, unambiguously reminded the Nagaland public that the State is already burdened with difficulties and should not take on more excess baggage) are some of these.

A Nagaland-centred truce would indeed leave the NSCN(IM) in a bind. For then, from the lofty demand for a sovereign homeland, the people may be left to be content with territorial councils in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Even such a settlement will not be without resistance, as these States, most vocally Manipur, are unwilling to make compromises to their territorial integrity or administrative structures. Whatever is to be given to the Nagas in their State, they want it done via their existing State governments and institutions.

It is not too late yet, but the NSCN(IM) leadership should have read the writing on the wall earlier to make way for aspirations of the new era. Shakespeare put it so well in King Lear: “What, in ill thoughts again? Men must endure. Their going hence, even as their coming hither: Ripeness is all.”

Pradip Phanjoubam is a senior journalist and author based in Imphal

The crisis in Dalit-Bahujan politics

The right wing has appropriated caste-based politics with more representation to BCs but no robust social agenda



AJAY GUDAVARTHI

The political mobilisation of Dalit-Bahujans in India is in the midst of an epistemic crisis. Though it entered the mainstream riding on steep identitarianism, and independent and ‘autonomous’ mobilisation, Dalit-Bahujan politics has unfortunately become all about ‘merely’ demanding more representation. Given the extremely skewed social power between dominant castes on the one hand and internal divisions of sub-castes within the Dalits and the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) on the other, identity politics, demanding more representation without an accompanying social and economic development agenda, seems to have been an attempt to short-circuit the humongous gap in power. Many Dalit-Bahujan scholars and political leaders read more representation as the “social revolution” Ambedkar had spoken about.

Misreading the equation

Kancha Iliah Shepherd, who shot to fame with his book *Why I am Not a Hindu*, best symbolises this militant demand for representation with an empty social agenda. He demanded representation for Dalit-Bahujans from being appointed as priests of the Venka-

teshwara temple at Tirupati to being the general secretary of the Communist Party.

He equated right and left, and in fact went to the extent of arguing that while the right is like a white snake in the green grass that can be easily identified; the left is a green snake in the green grass that surreptitiously denies Dalit-Bahujans their due in leadership and in articulating their justified demands.

But a mode of articulation that began with a legitimate urge to find an autonomous space outside the left fold, soon led to the formation of a political group claiming exclusivity and universality at the same time. If one expressed sympathy and solidarity and articulated views in support of anti-caste politics, it was deemed to be an attempt to appropriate the Dalit-Bahujan agenda, while if one did not join the group it was because of Brahminical prejudice.

Dalit-Bahujan politics has got entangled in this vicious cycle of a prejudice-appropriation dynamic, disallowing it to either forge larger solidarities or assert exclusivity with a radical social agenda. It increasingly became indifferent to other forms of progressive political articulations. The identity that enabled it to enter the mainstream carried in its interstices the processes of its own marginalisation.

With representation as the lone marker for Dalit-Bahujan assertion, its politics lost the velocity of offering a fresh perspective as also the possibility of leading the opposition with various political and



ideological formations. Kancha Iliah Shepherd, a bitter critique of the Hindutva brand of politics, and Hinduism too for its deep seated discriminatory practices, celebrated Narendra Modi becoming the first OBC leader to take office as Prime Minister. He compared him with Abraham Lincoln and saw the possibility of the emancipation of Dalit-Bahujans under his leadership, just the way Lincoln contributed to abolishing slavery. When Mr. Iliah Shepherd did not see that happening in reality, he blamed it not on Mr. Modi’s ideological training by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) but on the fact that he was not a shudra OBC but a baniya-OBC.

Even as scholars like Mr. Iliah Shepherd saw a ray of hope in the ascendance of an OBC leader like Mr. Modi, he remained a bitter critic of non-Dalit-OBC social activists, again based on their birth, and leaving no space for social or political negotiation. In his recent autobiography, he accuses social activist K. Balagopal of being prejudiced, and refers to him as a ‘Brahmin’. K. Balagopal has

worked tirelessly for a range of social causes and also demonstrated uncanny physical courage and personal integrity but much of this goes unacknowledged. Instead of appropriating the activism of K. Balagopal, representation and identity politics practised by this group dismissed non-Dalit-Bahujans as an anthropological moral crisis of integrity.

A shallow politics

The shallow representational politics of social justice seems to have found a space in right-wing politics. The right appears to be welcoming of a brand of politics that demands representation without an accompanying social and economic agenda. This process also got further accentuated as identity politics disallowed raising questions of power internal to Dalits and the OBCs. While it pitched for Bahujanism, it never allowed taking a serious look into the skewed power relations that often found expression in physical assaults between OBCs and Dalits. In fact, such questions were often represented as a way of weakening Dalit-Bahujan unity. Unity based on power hierarchies is precisely the mode in which the right led by the RSS wishes to actualise its fantasy of a Hindu Rashtra based on Hindu unity.

Dalit-Bahujan politics is caught between extending representation by joining various political parties, including the Bharatiya Janata Party-RSS combine, on the one hand, and demanding separate and autonomous spaces like that of Prakash

Ambedkar’s Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA) which undercuts the possibilities of secular political parties, on the other. This undoubtedly reflects the stamp of a dark history of caste in India with skewed power relations, and for that very reason it is imperative that the current ‘epistemic crisis’ must be overcome.

One way out is for secular political formations to offer more leadership positions to those coming from the Dalit-Bahujan communities along with including a robust social agenda and knowledge systems internal to such communities.

The clues to such a move also lie in Dalit-Bahujans asserting a non-hegemonic universality as the post-colonial thinker, Achille Mbembe, rightly said, “It is simply not true that unless I have undergone the exact same experience as the other, I know nothing about his or her pain and should simply shut up. Insofar as to be human is to open oneself up to the possibility always already there of becoming (an)other, such a conception of self and identity is by definition antihuman. The political in our time must start from the imperative to reconstruct the world in common. For the idea of decolonisation to have any purchase at a planetary scale, it cannot start from the assumption that I am purer than my neighbour.”

Ajay Gudavarthi is Associate Professor, Centre for Political Studies, JNU. His forthcoming edited book is ‘Secular Sectarianism: Limits of Subaltern Politics’

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

Snooptage

A “Boycott WhatsApp” is trending on social media, but such a step is only a microscopic resolution towards digital security. We are barking up the wrong tree by focusing only on WhatsApp. Many of us use several such applications, downloading them using popular platforms or unknown websites. We do not pay attention to the terms and conditions of the applications, if any. Going digital is not sufficient. Digital security should be our priority.

VISHWAS SHARMA,  
Moradabad, Uttar Pradesh

that their privacy was not in jeopardy, the Information and Technology Minister’s tirade, especially against the Congress party, was totally out of context and unwarranted (Page 1, November 1). Those in the present government must shed their tendency to blame past governments for every conceivable problem. The claim by the Israeli-based group that its products are exclusively used by government and law enforcement agencies makes the case all the more curiouser.

MANOHAR ALEMBATH,  
Kannur, Kerala

nuclear plant in Tamil Nadu having been hacked. Now we have another cyber threat that many of us can relate to – the hacking of phones with WhatsApp.

These instances only raise more questions: How prepared are we to deal with cyber challenges? Do we need to modify the IT Act.

KIRTI WADHAWAN,  
Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh

Power tussle

After contesting the Maharashtra elections in alliance with the BJP, it is against all the ethical norms now for the Shiv Sena giving room for speculation that it is not averse to forming the government with the Opposition (Page 1,

“Maharashtra waits for Shah to resolve crisis”, November 3). It would be ideal for both the NCP and the Congress to keep away from the overtures of the Shiv Sena, which is using these two parties as a tool to exert pressure on BJP for plum portfolios. In the long run, the two parties might lose their identity as champions of secularism and inclusiveness.

V. SUBRAMANIAN,  
Dombivli, East Thane, Maharashtra

■ Are elections held in the interests of the public or political parties? Landslide victories result in parties exhibiting dictatorship, hung Assemblies led to weak or no governance, and coalition

governments prompt political black mailing.

KSHIRASAGARA BALAJI RAO,  
Hyderabad

Building quality

It was quite amusing to read the claim by officials that buildings of the British era are not earthquake-proof (‘FAQ’ page, November 3). If I am not mistaken, during the Asian Games, attempts were made to widen Minto Bridge in Delhi. The drilling failed and it was only recently

and given some touches. There are several British-era quarters that have withstood Delhi’s earthquakes. If the present government wants to recreate a new history using architecture, and also erase Nehruvian-era structures, it may do so. It must remember that the British structures are much more stronger than what we see today.

N. NAGARAJAN,  
Secunderabad

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:  
www.hindu.com/opinion/letters/

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the photograph that accompanied the report headlined “Jharkhand to have five-phase elections for Assembly from Nov. 30” (some editions, Nov. 2, 2019), an Election Commissioner’s name had been erroneously mentioned as *Sunil* Chandra. It should have been *Sushil* Chandra.

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# Privatisation is not the question

The discussion in Telangana should focus on ways of revitalising the State Road Transport Corporation



ANANT MARINGANTI

On November 2, a day after the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (RTC) strike entered its 28th day, neither the Telangana government nor the Joint Action Committee representing over 48,000 employees showed any sign of changing their positions. Several news commentaries noted this to be the longest-ever strike in the history of the corporation, which traces its origins to the Nizam State Rail and Road Transport Department. The previous longest strike, which lasted 27 days, took place in 2011 as part of a general strike in support of the separation of Telangana State from Andhra Pradesh. The reference to this fact was not without meaning – it was the present Chief Minister, K. Chandrasekhar Rao, who gave the call for the 2011 general strike which proved to be a watershed in the long-drawn struggle for statehood.

### Privatisation plans

The long-term consequences of this fallout between the employee unions and the State government will certainly be serious, both politically and economically. Four of the striking employees of the current strike have committed suicide. On November 2, in the press briefing after the State Cabinet meeting, Mr. Rao reiterated his stance: get back to work or face dismissals. He sought to establish that the strike was illegal and politically motivated. He reminded the Bharatiya Janata Party, one of the opposition parties rallying behind the striking employees, that his government was acting within the provisions of the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act 2019.

The key demand of the RTC employees is merger of the corporation with the government. Simply put, it is a demand for pay parity with government employees. The Telangana government summarily rejected this demand. On the contrary, it declared privatisation of routes on which 5,100 buses are currently plying. These presumably include 2,100 bus-



“The RTC is a tool for catalysing economic growth, democratising opportunities for people in seeking health, education, employment.” Women RTC employees protest in Indira Park in Hyderabad. ■ G. RAMAKRISHNA

es presently leased in and operated by the RTC and another 3,000 which are either already phased out or about to be phased out.

If there is a strategic plan behind the Cabinet’s decision to privatise routes, it is not immediately apparent. The broader plan previously laid out by the government suggested a trifurcation of the RTC where approximately half the present fleet of 10,400 buses in the State would be run by the RTC exclusively, another 30% would be taken on hire and operated by private owners, and the remaining 20% would be entirely privately operated. This plan suggests an attempt to counter perceived inefficiencies of the RTC. However, the RTC being a publicly owned corporation with permanent employees is obligated to give wages to the staff in accordance with their experience, and is obligated to run bus services even if the operational efficiency is not ideal. Private operators are not obligated to do either. Even if one were to overlook this negative outcome for the workers and the general public, the fact remains that without a negotiated plan to downsize staff, this decision will only transfer the staff from the off-loaded routes back into the corporation, pushing up the already high bus-to-staff ratio and aggravating operational inefficiencies. It is this move which the unions are reading as a sign of a conspiracy to kill the RTC completely.

Political questions apart, road transport in the region has under-

gone a sea change in the last 20 years. It has seen the RTC go from one of the best transit organisations in the country to being among the weakest. During this period, the government reduced vehicle tax and increased salaries of the employees. However, these have had no significant impact on the plummeting incomes of the corporation, as fares have simply not been increased even as fuel costs went up. Nor did it improve employee morale, as new capital infusion has not taken place leaving the corporation to not only eat into the reserves of the credit society funds and deny general employee benefits, but borrow at market rates from banks to meet the operational costs. During this period, the RTC saw a number of labour practices which forced the employees to work longer hours. At the same time, there was a gradual decline in the number of permanent staff, particularly in the maintenance wing, with the retiring workforce not being replaced with new employees. During this period, both the region and the city of Hyderabad have seen a phenomenal growth in private and for hire vehicles. Paratransit (shared autorickshaws) have become the default mode of transit across the entire region; aggregator platforms such as Ola and Uber and other cab and bike startups have been eating into the operational spaces of the buses. More recently, the Metro Rail in Hyderabad has severely constrained the manoeuvrability of the RTC.

On the whole, the Cabinet decisions of November 2 are perceived as threatening the unions rather than as a business plan to lift up a sinking bottom-heavy corporation which has served an important role in the region’s economic growth. In the short run this will mean suffering for the 48,000 families; in the medium term it will mean further aggravation of the RTC’s problems; and in the long run this could have political fallouts that are imponderable at present.

The way out of this is to acknowledge that public transportation is a key capacity of the government. It has a favourable but immeasurable impact on the general economy. To privatise or not to privatise is not the question; rather, the question is how to retain the government’s core capacities and roles in the regional and urban economy. No government can afford to abdicate that role. No government can work without taking unions into confidence; without giving corporation managements some degree of professional autonomy; and without owning up its own financial obligations. The rest is a matter of negotiation and careful calibration.

### Not a profit-making entity

The long and the short of it is that the employees understandably see a studied indifference to public transportation and a refusal by the government to own its own assets; if not an outright conspiracy to privatise the assets of the RTC. The RTC is not a profit-making entity, they rightly remind us – it is a tool for catalysing economic growth, democratising opportunities for people in seeking health, education, employment. Presence in public transit is not something that any government has ever given up. This conversation therefore cannot be confined to whether or not to privatise. It should be about how to revitalise the RTC – even if it means some mix of public and private transportation. For that to take place, the government must publish a white paper and take immediate steps to arrest the haemorrhaging of the RTC. The stop-gap solution of running a skeletal service at premium, as it has done for the last month, is just too expensive for everyone.

Anant Maringanti is Director of Hyderabad Urban Lab Foundation

# Under a cloud of suspicion

The CPI(M)’s moral posturing over extrajudicial killings in BJP-led States will now sound hollow

K.P.M. BASHEER

It was the first ‘encounter’ killing by the police in Kerala. Nearly 50 years ago, ‘Naxalite’ Varghese, whom his admirers later called the Che Guevara of Kerala, was shot dead in the jungles of Wayanad.

In the wake of the Naxalbari uprising in West Bengal at the time, the police of the Communist-led Kerala government launched an anti-Naxalite drive in the State. It was in that drive that Varghese, 31, was killed on February 18, 1970. He had been a Communist Party of India (Marxist) activist before he turned a Naxalite. Varghese was instrumental in ending the centuries-old system of bonded labour of the tribals by local landlords.

At the time, the police claimed that Varghese had opened fire on them and they had shot him in “self-defence”. Forty years after he was killed, this terrible lie, employed frequently these days by the police and security forces across the country, was exposed by Constable Ramchandran Nair (in photo). It was Nair who had pulled the trigger on an unarmed Varghese. Troubled by his conscience, the former CRPF constable revealed that he had shot Varghese point blank on the orders of the Inspector General of Police, K. Lakshmana. Based mainly on Nair’s testimony, a CBI Special Court in Kochi awarded life imprisonment to Lakshmana on October 28, 2010. He was 75 years old then.

### Recent incidents

Exactly nine years after Lakshmana was sent to jail, three suspected Maoists were shot to death on October 28 by the Thunderbolts, a special anti-Maoist unit, in the Agali forests of Attappadi in Palakkad district. Another suspected Maoist was killed the following day. As predicted, the police said that the suspected Maoists were killed during a gun battle between the armed irregulars and the Thunderbolt commandos.

These shootings were the third ‘encounter killings’ with Maoists after the Pinarayi Vijayan-led government came to power more than three years ago. Mr. Vijayan, who is also the

Home Minister, said that the four Maoists had been killed by the police in “self-defence”.

Retired High Court judge B. Kemal Pasha was among the first to call these extrajudicial killings. He said that suspected terrorists and Maoists should be produced before the law, not shot at sight. Human rights activists have called the killings “state-sponsored murders”. Neither in the Attappadi ‘encounters’, nor in the Nilambur or Vythiri ‘encounters’ previously was a single policeman reported wounded, they pointed out.

Tellingly, a five-member fact-finding team of the Communist Party of India (CPI), the second largest party of the Left Democratic Front government, alleged that the Thunderbolts had shot dead three of the victims while they were eating lunch in the jungle. The CPI also alleged that the fourth suspected Maoist, an ailing Manivakasam, said to be the leader of the group, was taken into custody and gunned down by the police.

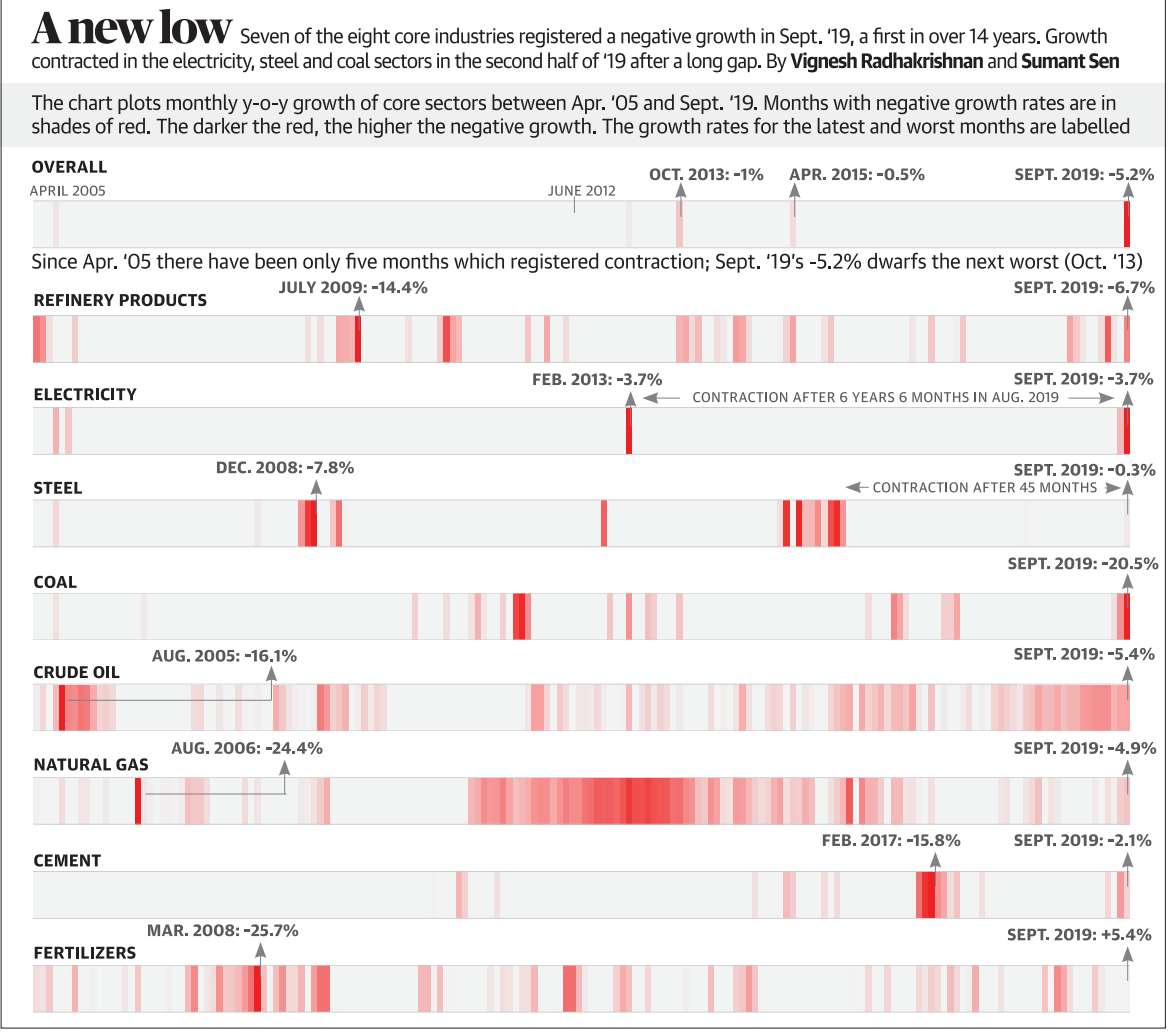
### A high moral position

Though Kerala is not alien to custodial deaths, ‘fake encounters’ – extrajudicial killings that are common in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Jharkhand, U.P., Andhra Pradesh, among other States – are a new phenomenon in the State. Barring a few minor incidents, there has been no Maoist violence in Kerala since the Emergency. Instead, hundreds of people have lost their lives in political violence, mainly in targeted killings by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh and the CPI(M). For the only Communist-led State government in the country three ‘encounters’ in three years is a political shame. The CPI(M)’s moral posturing over extrajudicial killings in BJP-led States will now sound hollow. The CPI deserves praise for its strong stand – it has taken this position risking the wrath of its governing partner, the CPI(M) – that the Attappadi killings were fake. For extrajudicial killings are among the worst kind of human rights violations.

K.P.M. Basheer is a Kerala-based independent journalist



### DATA POINT



### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

# Being a witness builds trust

The invitation to readers to participate in editorial meetings is an innovative exercise in media literacy



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

In the opening lines of his memoir, *Permanent Record*, Edward Snowden makes a crucial distinction that is getting lost in this age of hyper-nationalism: “I used to work for the government, but now I work for the public. It took me nearly three decades to recognize that there was a distinction, and when I did, it got me into a bit of trouble at the office.” One institutional element that always separates public service from the service of the regime is transparency in the application of rules and regulations. When colonialism retreated to give birth to a number of new nation states at the end of the Second World War, it was widely believed that we were entering a phase where laws would be universal and their application, open and fair.

### Duties of ombudsmen

Within this larger universe, self-regulation mechanisms were devised for the media, to keep it independent from government control. These mechanisms have taken myriad forms: codes of ethics, press and media councils, complaints commissions, and in-house ombudsmen. The Organization of News Ombudsmen and Standards Editors (ONO) has listed some of the duties of a news ombudsman: “To improve the quality of news reporting by monitoring accuracy, fairness and balance; to help his or her news provider to become more accessible and accountable to readers or audience members and, thus, to become more credible; to increase the awareness of its news professionals about the public’s concerns; to save time for publishers and senior editors, or broadcasters and news directors, by channelling complaints and other inquiries to one responsible individual; and to resolve some complaints that might otherwise be sent to attorneys and become costly lawsuits.”

But these declarations rarely explain how the public benefits from having an ombudsman. It has been repeatedly stated at various ONO conferences that an ombudsman should treat media literacy as an intrinsic part of the job. The ONO website spells out the benefits in an unequivocal manner: “An



ombudsman helps to explain the news-gathering process to the public, a process that often is mysterious and, therefore, suspect to many readers. Having a contact person can help overcome the belief that news media are aloof, arrogant or insensitive to concerns of the public and generally inaccessible to average citizens.”

### Building trust

On November 5, some readers will be part of the editorial meetings at our head office in Chennai. For years editors have explained the salient features of journalism in numerous articles, reports, analysis, memoirs and books. They have tried to explain its core feature of being an interlocking public and its core values and principles. Some of these books became bestsellers. For instance, *My Paper Chase* by Harold Evans gives an idea of how the post-war media developed its investigative skills. It also provides an insight into how the changing ownership pattern is impacting journalism.

The invitation to readers to participate in editorial meetings is an innovative exercise in media literacy. We hope that by being witness to the journalistic processes, readers will understand the idea of editorial judgment, the importance of news hierarchy, and the reasons behind selecting or rejecting story ideas. Media scholars often say that technology may change but trust, when earned and nurtured, will endure.

The social media-inspired public sphere is neither transparent nor fair. Take, for instance, the case of the Twitter account of senior Supreme Court lawyer Sanjay Hegde. His account was suspended because he used an iconic 1936 photo of Nazi Germany, which is celebrated as a brave display of dissent, and for sharing a poem titled ‘Hang Him’. While social media platforms invoke the principle of freedom of expression to justify the presence and amplification of toxic content, they become opaque when it comes to stifling voices of reason. Reports about the spread in the use of the expensive Pegasus spyware across encrypted platforms like WhatsApp to target select individuals is a grim reminder that there is scant regard for individual rights and privacy.

In this context, the participation of readers in the editorial meeting not only restores balance in favour of transparency, but also builds moral pressure on other platforms to have a responsible public discourse.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

The **Hindu**.

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 4, 1969

Chasing ideological hares  
(From an Editorial)

To the spectator of the battle now raging between two sections of the Congress leadership, the most confusing aspect... is the controversy over programmes and policies which is supposed to lie at the root of the problem. The Prime Minister’s group alleges that the Syndicate leaders have dragged their feet on the ten-point programme which was recommended as far back as 1967. That programme called for the social control of banks, the nationalisation of general insurance, the curbing of urban landholding, the abolition of privy purses and princely privileges, the removal of monopolies, state trading in foodgrains and foreign trade. Even at that time, it was pointed out that while the Working Committee and the All India Congress Committee had the right to formulate the programme it was... up to the governmental wing of the party to decide how and when the programme was to be implemented... The three originators of the programme were Mr. Kamaraj, Mr. Nanda and Mr. K.D. Malaviya... While Mr. Morarji Desai opposed the outright nationalisation of banks, other members of the Syndicate... took the more radical stand. Some of these leaders were therefore taken by surprise ...when the Prime Minister accused them of conservatism and followed it up by nationalising 14 banks by Ordinance.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 4, 1919.

### The Khaliphate Question.

Lucknow, November 3. – The following cable has been sent by the All-India Moslem League, Lucknow, to the Premier, Secretary of State for India and the Islamia Bureau, London:-- The Council of the All-India Moslem League views with alarm and indignation the attitude of the Premier towards the Turkish question as disclosed by his Sheffield speech which foreshadows anti-Turkish and anti Moslem nature of settlement he seems inclined to favour at the Peace Conference ignorant of universal Moslem protests made in this behalf and even violating the pledge given by himself on behalf of the British Government, Empire and nation to the Moslem world during the war. The Council deplores that the Prime Minister of England which has the largest number of Mussalmans amongst its subjects should show such deliberate disregard of universal Moslem opinion regarding what is to Mussalmans a religious question.



FROM PAGE ONE

## Delhi chokes as pollution levels hit three-year high

Delays of two hours to seven hours were common resulting in chaotic scenes at the local airport as passengers struggled for updates on flight status. There were similar scenes too at other airports, where flights scheduled to depart for New Delhi were held back.

The spurt in pollution levels also prompted the administrations in Ghaziabad, Noida, Greater Noida, Gurugram and Faridabad to shut all government and private schools till November 5. The Delhi government on Friday directed closure of schools till the same date.

The deterioration in air quality over Delhi was blamed on pollution and adverse weather conditions. Meteorologists said a strong wind is expected to pick up and flush pollutants within the next 12 hours.

Over the last week, authorities monitoring pollution had already said the air quality warranted declaration of a “public health emergency.”

As of Sunday evening, the AQI was in the “severe plus” levels, according to SAFAR. This was primarily due to increased moisture from a passing Western Disturbance, on November 2 and 3. The WD didn’t bring as

much rain as expected, stalled winds and retarded the disbursement of pollutants, said Madhavan Rajeevan, Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences.

### Blame game

Delhi’s State government and the Centre have been engaged in public blame-gaming over the decline in air quality. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the Centre had failed to address stubble burning from Punjab and Haryana that’s believed to have contributed to as much as 45% of Delhi’s pollution in the last two days.

Dr. Ajay Mathur, Director General, The Energy and Resources Institute (teri) said in a statement, “Along with year-round sources of pollutants, agricultural burning is a prime contributor in the severe deterioration of air quality in Delhi, in these days. Large numbers of fires in the upwind States were detected between 26 and 30th October, which are now, after the transport of the pollutants through atmospheric winds, adversely affecting the air quality in Delhi. In order to avoid exposures to the air, non-essential commute should be curtailed.”

## NRC exercise only to update 1951 list, says CJI

The NRC 2019 is an attempt to end the vicious cycles of violence and agitations in Assam over the presence of illegal foreigners, Chief Justice Gogoi said.

He was speaking at the release of journalist Mrinal Talukdar’s book, *Post Colonial Assam (1947 to 2019)*.

Over 19 lakh out of the 3.29 crore applicants in Assam were excluded from the final NRC list.

These people face uncertain days ahead trying to prove their Indian citizenship through appeals filed in foreigners’ tribunals.

“The NRC is not a document of the moment. 19 lakh or 40 lakh is not the point... It is a base document for the future. A document on which we can determine future claims,” Chief Justice Gogoi said.

Chief Justice Gogoi described Assam as an ancient land unrivalled in its beauty and endowed with diversity. “A meeting place of many races and ethnic groups. Each contributing to the rich tapestry of cultures, languages,” the CJI said. While the children of Assam made their mark on the world stage, the State itself suffered from agrarian strikes, natural calamities such as persistent floods and widespread agitations and frequent violence which had deeply impacted socio-political life in the State, he said.

The CJI said the NRC had attempted to quell the enormous amount of guesswork about illegal immigration in the State. This “guesswork” had fuelled panic. Callous reporting by few media had worsened the situation, he added.

The Assam NRC list of 2019 attempted to give some degree of certainty on illegal influx, Chief Justice Gogoi explained. He agreed that the final NRC list was “not without contestations”. But, he

said, the “idea of NRC was neither new or a novel idea and it had found expression as early as 1951”. “Current NRC is an attempt to update the 1951 NRC. Nothing more nothing less,” the CJI said.

The NRC was only a manifestation of a peaceful exercise, Chief Justice Gogoi said and praised the magnanimity of the Assamese people in accepting the cut-off date for the NRC update.

“Assamese people have displayed great magnanimity to accept cut-off date. Humanness is acceptance. Acceptance is the first step towards diversity... People who raise objections about cut-off dates are playing with fire... There is no place for fresh wounds or conundrums,” he said.

Recently, certain sections in Assam have objected to 1971 being the cut-off date of the NRC update. They want the cut-off date to be revised to 1951 to detect illegal foreigners in the State.

The CJI lashed out at the national discourse about sensitive issues being dominated by “armchair commentators”, who presented a distorted picture. Emergence of social media and tools had fuelled these “double-speaking commentators”.

Severely criticising these commentators, Mr. Gogoi said they had launched tirades against democratic institutions... “Armchair commentators with their vile intentions and rumour mills flourished. Assam and its development agenda had been victims of such commentators,” he said.

“Unrestrained mudslinging” and “personal attacks” against both institution and its members masqueraded as fair criticism in public interest. “It does not take long to bring down and institution, but takes long to build one,” the CJI pointed out.

## Govt. warns of ‘lone wolf’ attacks by IS operatives

Inputs indicated that Sri Lanka and Maldives were used by Pakistan-based terrorist elements for anti-India activities.

The recent withdrawal of special status to Jammu and Kashmir under Articles 370 and 35A and the earlier pre-emptive air strike on non-military targets inside Pakistan by Indian Air Force had considerably enhanced the

threat from these outfits, according to the note. Inputs also indicated terrorist groups’ efforts to sneak into coastal areas of Tamil Nadu and Kerala via sea route.

The communication called for deploying adequate manpower at airports, railway stations and bus stations to mount surveillance on anti-social elements and their known hideouts.

# Alerted govt. in Sept. too, says WhatsApp

The messaging platform had earlier reached out in May; IT Ministry says information was inadequate

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

WhatsApp had informed the Indian government in September that 121 Indian users were targeted by the Israeli spyware Pegasus, but the Information Technology Ministry has contended the information received from the messaging app earlier was inadequate and incomplete, according to sources.

Sources at WhatsApp said the messaging platform had now responded to the government’s query seeking an explanation on the Pegasus incident that allegedly snooped on journalists and



The messaging platform has responded to the government’s query seeking an explanation on the Pegasus incident.

human rights activists across the world.

### ‘Studying response’

The Ministry sources said they had received a reply

from WhatsApp and were studying it, and that a view on it would be taken soon.

While declining to comment on the details of the fresh response sent last

week, sources in WhatsApp said the company had reached out to the government in September as well, its second alert on the issue after its communication in May. They said the Facebook-owned company had in the September communication flagged that 121 users in India had been affected by the spyware.

The IT Ministry officials said they had received some communication from WhatsApp in the past but it was inadequate, incomplete and full of technical jargon. WhatsApp did not respond to queries over the matter.

The messaging giant, on Thursday, had said Indian journalists and human rights activists were among those globally spied upon by unnamed entities using an Israeli spyware Pegasus.

Government officials had questioned the “suspicious” timing of the disclosure of the hacking incident, particularly against the backdrop of the Supreme Court allowing the Centre three months to come up with rules to curb misuse of social media in the country, and the continued demand for bringing in traceability of originators of malicious content.

# Two House panels will take up the case

We will seek details from the Home Secretary on the Pegasus issue, says Congress leader Anand Sharma

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Two parliamentary panels headed by Congress leaders have decided to examine the WhatsApp snooping case and will seek details from top government officials, including the Home Secretary.

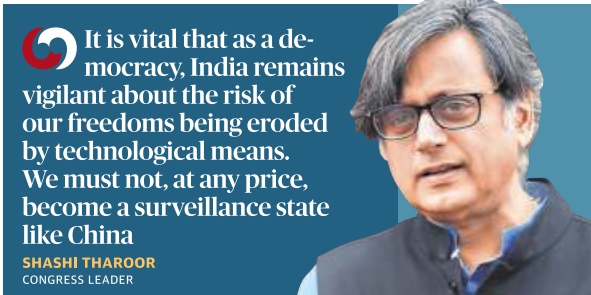
The Facebook-owned WhatsApp on Thursday said Indian journalists and human rights activists were among those globally spied upon by unnamed entities using an Israeli spyware Pegasus.

Describing the entire

snooping episode as worrisome, Congress leader Anand Sharma, who chairs the parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs, said this issue would be taken up at the panel’s next meeting on November 15.

The Home Secretary is scheduled to brief the panel on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. “In that meeting, this issue will also be discussed and we will seek details from the Secretary,” Mr. Sharma said.

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who heads the



Standing Committee on Information Technology, said the panel would share its concerns. He said he would consult other members by email on the matter.

“In any case, cybersecurity is a major issue on our agenda and we are definitely going to take this up under that rubric. And we will be seeking clarifications from

## Kartarpur glitters



**Ready for pilgrims:** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Sunday shared on Twitter some pictures of the Kartarpur complex and Gurdwara Darbar Sahib, saying the revered venue is ready to welcome Sikh pilgrims for the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev. “Kartarpur ready to welcome Sikh pilgrims,” he wrote. •TWITTER

# Sena claims support of 175 MLAs

Sanjay Raut says party will install its CM, amid rumours of a tie-up with Cong., NCP

STAFF REPORTER  
MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena once again stepped up its rhetoric on Sunday on the issue of government formation and the post of Chief Minister in Maharashtra, with party leader and Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut saying it has the support of up to 175 MLAs.

Mr. Raut said a Sena Chief Minister would soon take oath at Shivaji Park.

Ten days have passed since results of the Assembly election were declared. A new government must be installed before November 9.

Adding to the sense of crisis, former State Finance Minister and BJP leader Sudhir Mungantiwar had said on Friday that Maharashtra was headed for President’s Rule if a government was not installed by November 7.

Despite this, the Shiv Sena seems firm on having its nominee as Chief Minister – possibly Aaditya Thackeray, first-time MLA and son of party chief Uddhav Thackeray.

Asked about the BJP starting preparations for the swearing-in, possibly at the Wankhede Stadium, Mr.



Sanjay Raut. •FILE PHOTO

Raut on Sunday told *The Hindu*: “Wankhede news is just a way of building pressure on us, but it won’t have any effect. Our Chief Minister’s swearing-in will happen in Shivtirth [Shivaji Park].”

### Suspense on alliance

Asked whether the Sena would install its Chief Minister by allying with the Congress-NCP combine, Mr. Raut simply reiterated that it would be a Shiv Sena Chief Minister.

“We will reach a figure of up to 170-175 [legislators]. We will submit a list with majority MLAs [to prove a majority in the Assembly].”

On rumours that NCP chief Sharad Pawar would

become the Chief Minister of a Congress-NCP-Sena coalition, Mr. Raut said the rumour was being spread by the BJP.

Speaking to news channels on Sunday, the Sena leader said, “The single largest party has not been able to form a government... On one option, discussion is almost over and Uddhav Thackeray is close to a decision.”

Asked about rumours of Sharad Pawar becoming the CM, he said, “Mr. Sharad Pawar is a national leader. For him, this post [CM] is small. In Karnataka, Kumaraswamy has brought proof of Operation Lotus. Even though this is a Karnataka incident, this

will not work in Maharashtra. Amit Shah took the initiative for a small State like Haryana, but not a big State like Maharashtra – this is mysterious.”

### Firm on demand

Asked about media reports of the BJP willing to cede an equal number of portfolios to the Sena but not the Chief Minister’s post, Mr. Raut said, “Sena is not sitting in the market. The issue is of Chief Minister post and the discussion will only happen on that. Otherwise, we will have our own Chief Minister.”

Elaborating on Sunday’s *Saamna* editorial, Mr. Raut launched an aggressive attack on the BJP and said, “Whoever has misused ED, CBI for making government, it has boomeranged. I have also seen some criminals who have come out of jail are now on big posts, have the government’s backing; these goondas have tried a lot to put pressure in 10 days, but it did not work. We will reveal details of all this soon. Some people think they are immortal in politics, you have Home Ministry, based on which you rule.”

# ‘Post deal, extortion by Naga rebels should end’

Manipur parties list five concerns

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The political parties of Manipur have sought a guarantee from the Centre that the settlement of the Naga peace process would signal the end of “extortions and illegal taxations by Naga insurgents”.

The final peace deal, expected to be announced soon, is between the Centre and the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN-IM) and seven rival outfits who formed the umbrella Naga National Political Groups.

### Memorandum to PM

In a joint memorandum to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 15 political parties of Manipur, including the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party and the Opposition Congress, listed five concerns about the deal.

Topping the list was the guarantee that “any final peace accord should not compromise in any way the territorial, administrative and political integrity of Manipur”.

This concern is based on the NSCN-IM’s vision of Nagalim, a self-administered homeland comprising all Naga-inhabited areas of the northeast.

Arunachal Pradesh and Assam stand to lose large swathes of land if such a homeland is acceded to, but it will impact Manipur the most.

“The geopolitical conditions of Manipur – 92% hills and 8% valley – scarcely warrants any administrative dispensation which will fracture the existing composite administrative and political set-up as such a dispensation would not be

**Manipur suffered loss of thousands of crores over a period of more than 50 years. GoI needs serious consideration of compensating adequately**

MANIPUR PARTIES

viable,” the parties said in the memorandum.

The parties also elaborated on how Manipur has been “at the receiving end of illegal taxation and extortion from Naga insurgent groups, particularly NSCN-IM” since the inception of the “Indo-Naga confrontation”.

The extortion intensified after the truce (1997) and talks with the Centre in a “semi-legal way under the cover of ceasefire,” they said.

### Seeking compensation

“Manipur State has suffered the loss of thousands of crores of rupees spreading over a period of more than 50 years. GoI (Government of India) needs serious consideration of compensating adequately to the State of Manipur for the same. Further, GOI should also guarantee that such extortions and illegal taxations by the Naga insurgents on Manipur-bound vehicles shall not be allowed in the future,” the memorandum said.

Manipur relies heavily on two National Highways – one from Dimapur in Nagaland and the other from Silchar in southern Assam – for essentials. These highways pass through Naga-inhabited hill districts before reaching State capital Imphal.



### APPEAL

4 years old **Shafiq Mohamed** is diagnosed with B Cell Acute Lymphoblastic Leukemia and urgently requires **Rs. 6,00,000/-** towards Chemotherapy at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. Please help him for a lasting change and a healthy life. Donations sent by Ch / D.D. favouring Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch / D.D. / NEFT Transfer Flat No. GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.No. 13, N.No. 29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai-600006. Ph: 044-42137401 / 28235324. Email ID: [womenswelfare syndicate@gmail.com](mailto:womenswelfare syndicate@gmail.com) Website: [www.womenswelfare syndicate.org](http://www.womenswelfare syndicate.org) **WWS**