



**4 incidents of violence by lawyers reported**

NEW DELHI  
At least four incidents of assault on commuters, journalists and police personnel allegedly by lawyers staging protest were reported from district courts in the city on Monday. Lawyers broke mobile phones of people who were recording violence.

CITY ► PAGE 3

**U.P. man killed in Srinagar blast**

SRINAGAR  
A man from Saharanpur in Uttar Pradesh was killed and 41 were injured in a grenade attack by suspected militants at a busy market in Srinagar's commercial hub, Hari Singh High Street, on Monday afternoon.

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**Saying RCEP will hurt farmers, India walks out**

PM says his conscience does not permit him to sign the FTA

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
T.C.A. SHARAD RAGHAVAN  
NEW DELHI

Seven years after India joined negotiations for the 16-nation ASEAN (Association for South East Asian Nations)-led RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) or Free Trade Agreement, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced on Monday that India was dropping out of the agreement, citing its negative effects on “farmers, MSMEs and the dairy sector.”

“The present form of the RCEP agreement does not fully reflect the basic spirit and the agreed guiding principles of RCEP. It also does not address satisfactorily India's outstanding issues and concerns,” Mr. Modi told leaders of the other 15 nations at the RCEP summit in Bangkok. “In such a situation, it is not possible for India to join the RCEP agreement,” he said.

The summit included China, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Korea, and the 10-nation ASEAN group-

**Last minute withdrawal**

India pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) at the last minute on the ground that it would hurt farmers, businesses, workers and consumers

**Who signed the pact?**

The RCEP brings together the 10-member Association of Southeast Asian Nations (including India), China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. Except India, everyone else is ready to sign it

**Can India join later?**

Yes, if the issues it has with the deal are resolved



A protester burns placards during a protest against the RCEP in Delhi. ■ AFP

**Why is India worried?**

The deal requires the gradual elimination of tariffs which may flood Indian markets with Chinese goods and agricultural produce from Oceania, harming local producers

**Will India's decision hurt the RCEP?**

Without India, the RCEP accounts for nearly 1/3 of the global GDP. But they have less than a third of the world's population

SOURCE: REUTERS

ing. “When I measure the RCEP agreement with respect to the interests of all Indians, I do not get a positive answer. Therefore, neither the talisman of Gandhiji nor my own conscience permit me to join RCEP,” he added, referring to the stakes of in-

dian farmers, traders, professionals and industrialists, all of whom have protested against the government's decision to go ahead with the negotiations.

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CONG. BJP TRADE BARBS ► PAGE 13

**BJP to wait and watch in Maharashtra**

Caretaker Chief Minister Fadnavis meets party chief Amit Shah in Delhi

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

The BJP has adopted a wait and watch attitude over the Shiv Sena's assertions that it would prefer to form a government in Maharashtra with the help of the Congress and the NCP than give up its demand of a 50-50 split of the chief ministerial tenure with its long term ally.

Caretaker CM Devendra Fadnavis on Monday arrived in New Delhi to meet with Union Home Minister and BJP chief Amit Shah, ostensibly to ask for more relief for the flood-hit districts, but issues related to government formation were also on the agenda.

Mr. Fadnavis also met the BJP's election in charge for the State, Bhupendra Yadav, after meeting Mr. Shah. According to top sources in the party, it has decided to adopt a wait and watch policy with regard to government formation, and ruled out a swear-



**Pressing for relief:** Devendra Fadnavis with Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Monday. ■ ANI

ing-in ceremony either on November 5 or 6. “The party leadership is firm there will be no rotational chief ministership as demanded by the Shiv Sena,” said the sources.

“There can be some talk on ministerial portfolios but even in that the Home Ministry is something that the BJP is keen to retain,” added the sources. The Assembly poll results were announced on October 24, with the BJP get-

ting 105 seats and the Sena 56, both less than in 2014. While they had a pre-poll alliance, trouble began with the Sena asking the BJP to enforce a rotational chief ministership, failing which, it said, it would not be averse to forming a government with the support of the NCP and the Congress.

WE ARE NOT HINDERING GOVT. FORMATION: RAUT ► PAGE 12

**Pawar meets Sonia in Delhi**

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

The onus of forming a government lies with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-Shiv Sena alliance but “I can't say what will happen in future,” said Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Monday after meeting Congress leader Sonia Gandhi.

Mr. Pawar kept the suspense on, saying he would meet her again.

Sources said Ms. Gandhi had reservations about the Sena's secular credentials. The NCP chief also maintained that so far Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray has not reached out to them with any proposal.

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**End stubble burning immediately, orders SC**

Will hold State administration responsible, the court warned

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

In a bid to save Delhi from air pollution, the Supreme Court on Monday said it would hold the entire State administrative and police mechanisms of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh – from the Chief Secretary to the local policeman – responsible if even one instance of stubble burning occurred in the future.

“Who is responsible for stubble burning? State governments are responsible! They are only interested in electioneering. They have to be made liable in tort. We are making a mockery of everything,” a visibly anguished Justice Arun Mishra said.

**Penal action**

“We will haul up the State administration from bottom to top. People are dying, this just cannot happen in a civilised country. The sad thing in this country is that people in power are only interested in gimmicks...,” he stated.

The court said any instance of stubble burning



Volunteers holding a placard on the first day of the odd-even scheme in New Delhi on Monday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

from now on would be penalised.

“There cannot be a mass exodus from Delhi... People have to live in Delhi, which is the national capital. People cannot be just evacuated from here... No room inside a house is safe in Delhi. How long can we survive on air purifiers? We are losing precious years of our lives... It is writ large that various State governments, civic bodies have failed to discharge their liabilities. It is time to fix liability...,” an exasperated Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Deepak Gupta said.

The Supreme Court made the local and civic bodies as

“personally responsible” as the errant farmer who puts fire to his crop residue.

The court ordered the Chief Secretaries of the three neighbouring States of Delhi to be present in court on Wednesday to explain why the governments and civic bodies should not be punished under tort law and be made to pay a hefty penalty for stubble fires seen so far this season. The court said the ‘Polluter Pays Principle’ does apply to the State and the local bodies.

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SCHEME QUESTIONED ► PAGE 9

CLEARING THE AIR ► EDITORIAL

**‘Compensate us, don't treat us as criminals’**

Farmers in parts of Haryana deny burning stubble, suggest monetising field clearing

ASHOK KUMAR  
SONIPAT

On a hazy Monday morning, Jitender, 42, is doing the rounds of his five-acre field at Sonipat's Barona village off the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway, bordering the national capital. He hopes his crop, the ‘Pusa 1121’ variety of basmati rice, would be ready for harvest in the next couple of days.

Farmers in and around his village mostly grew basmati rice and harvested the crop manually, he said. “The grain of basmati is damaged during mechanised harvesting and fetches a lower price. We therefore harvest using labour, though it costs a little extra,” said Mr. Jitender. Farmers, he said, make up for it by selling *parali* (the upper part of paddy cut during harvest). He claimed that incidents of paddy stubble burning in and around his



A farmer arranging *parali* in his field in Firozpur Bangar village. ■ ASHOK KUMAR

village have virtually stopped over the past two years because of the growing demand for *parali* as fodder. The *parali* usually fetches a farmer ₹2,000-₹3,000 per acre. “The stubble is mixed in the field while preparing the land for the next crop,” said Mr. Jitender.

The region comprising Jhajjar, Sonipat, Panipat,

and Jind districts, mostly growing basmati varieties, account for only 20-30% of stubble burning incidents; the majority of fires are reported from Kaithal, Kurukshetra, Karnal and Yamuna Nagar districts – better known as the “rice bowl” of Haryana. The farmers in this region prefer high-yielding ‘PR’ variety because of easy availability of water and the harvesting is done through combine harvesters. The removal of stalk and straw left in the field is a labour-intensive process.

**Combine harvesting**

Malkeet Singh of Landi village in Kurukshetra said small farmers could not afford to incur three-four times the usual cost to prepare the field for the next crop after combine harvesting and preferred to set the stalk and the straw on fire.

“Instead of treating the farmers as criminals and registering a case for burning crop residue, the government should compensate us. The inputs cost of farming has increased several fold over the years, but the price for paddy has reduced to half. The farmer is well aware of the consequences, but it is cost-effective for him to burn [the stubble],” said Mr. Malkeet.

Rajinder Singh, president, Haryana Gyan Vigyan Samiti, Karnal, who is working with farmers of around a dozen villages in his area to combat stubble burning, said the government must link cutting of paddy stalk and clearing of fields after combine harvesting with the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS).

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**Bengal's cities yield new species of tree frog**

Specimens of the Brown Blotched Bengal Tree Frog were found in residential areas

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

It took six herpetologists working across States and countries to determine that a tree frog found commonly in urban habitats of West Bengal was a brand new species.

“Specimens were not discovered from deep jungles but from residential areas in two districts of West Bengal,” Guwahati-based herpetologist Jayaditya Purkayastha, who runs Help Earth, an NGO, told *The Hindu*.

Mr. Purkayastha is one of the six authors of the study published in the latest edition of *Zootaxa*, a peer-reviewed scientific journal for animal taxonomists. The other researchers are Madhurima Das from



The Brown Blotched Bengal Tree Frog. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Assam, Kingshuk Mondal, Shibajee Mitra, and Anirban Chaudhuri from West Bengal and professor at Universiti Malaysia Sarawak Indraneil Das.

**Photo on social media**

Appropriately, it was a photograph shared on social media that triggered the study. Mr. Mitra sent Mr. Purkayastha a photograph of a tree frog from a

residential area in Badu, North 24 Parganas district, West Bengal, in the winter of 2016 and asked if he could identify it.

“Through an initial literature review, it became evident that this interesting find may be new to science,” Mr. Purkayastha said. However, the frog was forgotten until Mr. Mondal found more specimens, this time from Khordanahala in South 24 Parganas district in mid-2018.

Mr. Chaudhuri coordinated the initiative to study the new species in Kolkata. After the required measurements and other data collection was done, the herpetologists concluded that the frog belonged to the genus *Polypedates*.

A genetic identity investigation by Ms. Das established the frog as a new species in this genus, while the Malaysia-based Prof. Das, an authority on herpetofauna in Asia, took care of the team's data limitations. Their study finally established the mid-sized tree frog as the 26<sup>th</sup> species under the genus *Polypedates*, found throughout south and southeast Asia.

The new species has been named Brown Blotched Bengal Tree Frog (*Polypedates bengalensis*) from the series of six to nine dark brown blotches that extend laterally from behind the frog's eye to the vent. The frog's body colour is yellowish-brown to greenish-brown.

**Tahsildar burnt alive in Telangana**

K. SHIV SHANKER  
HYDERABAD

In a shocking incident, a 37-year-old woman tahsildar Ch. Vijaya Reddy was burnt alive in her office at Abdullapurmet in Rangareddy district of Telangana on Monday. K. Suresh, a resident of Gouravelli village situated a few kilometres from the tahsil office, allegedly poured an inflammable fluid on her and set her ablaze.

While she died on the spot, the accused sustained over 60% burns. Ms. Vijaya's driver and a colleague, who came to her rescue, too suffered burns.

Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Mahesh Bhagwat said Suresh was caught in a land dispute

FAMILY CLUELESS ► PAGE 8



Odd one out: A Delhi Traffic policeman challans an odd-numbered vehicle on the first day of the car-rationing scheme in New Delhi; heavy smog over the Capital on Monday. ■R.V. MOORTHY, AP



# Odd-even Day 1: ‘many violators let off with just a warning’

Civil defence officials say several motorists claimed to be unaware of the scheme

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Nearly 2,500 civil defence officials were deployed across the Capital to sensitise motorists about the odd-even car rationing scheme implemented from Monday.

The officials, holding a placard reading “Odd-even ka palan karein. Pollution dur karein (abide by odd-even rule. Get rid of pollution)”, said many violators were let off with a warning because it was the first day of the scheme. “When people came driving odd-numbered cars, we stopped them and told them that they had violated the rule. We requested them to cooperate and comply with the rule because their own health was at stake,” said a 28-year-old official on duty at National Highway-24.

## ‘Rowdy’ violators

The officials said they often come face-to-face with “rowdy” violators who argue with them and make excuses. “They, at times, become extremely aggressive. If they become violent, we seek the help of traffic policemen who are always around,” said another official.

The officials shared that it’s tough to stop violators at many points, especially highways and roads with no barricades. It’s risky to run to the middle of the road to



Traffic during evening peak hour at ITO on Monday. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

stop the cars, they said.

Those posted near Minto Road said most motorists who were stopped for violation were cordial and admitted to their mistake.

“Violations are high. At least 30-40 motorists were stopped in the last two hours. Most of them claimed to be unaware of the rule. What do you say to that,” asked an official.

The officials said they work in two shifts - 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 2p.m. to 8 p.m. - after which the rule is not applicable. They were trained and briefed about the duties on Sunday and given a kit, including a yellow jacket, a cap, an anti-pollution mask and a water bottle.

## Long wait for app cabs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

People struggled to book cabs to reach their destinations on Monday as the waiting time to find a vehicle increased due to the implementation of the odd-even road rationing scheme in the Capital.

Some commuters also complained that despite booking rides, the cabs did not turn up.

A spokesperson of Uber said it is doing everything possible to ensure that movement around the city

is easy during this time.

“We have initiated a proactive driver partner campaign in Delhi-NCR urging them to offer pledges of support and come out on the roads to ensure maximum rider convenience. Uber has already received more than 14,000 pledges from our driver partners”.

Earlier in the day, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that Ola and Uber have assured the government of not resorting to surge-pricing.

# Pollution levels register dip due to wind

Approaching western disturbance to have positive influence on AQI, says SAFAR

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

High wind speed on Monday helped bring down pollution levels in the city even as the Air Quality Index (AQI) clocked in at 407, which falls in the ‘severe’ category. The AQI on Sunday was 494, as per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

The air quality is expected to be in the ‘very poor’ category on Tuesday and may further improve from November 8, according to government-run monitoring agency SAFAR (System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research). The AQI of Delhi was 370, ‘very poor’, at 8.30 p.m. on Monday, as per CPCB.

On Monday, the share of pollution in the city due to stubble burning in neighbouring States was 14%, down from 25% on Sunday, stated SAFAR.

“High surface and boundary-layer wind is expected on Tuesday, which will improve air quality to ‘very poor’ level by the morning. A fresh western disturbance is approaching north India, scattered rainfall and change in wind direction is expected by November 8 in Delhi region, which is likely to positively influence AQI,” said the monitoring agency.

The level of deadly respirable particles PM2.5 was almost six times (368.6 ug/m3) the safe limit (60 ug/m3) in Delhi-NCR at 6.30 p.m. on Monday, as per

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	407	Gurgaon	370
Ghaziabad	440	Faridabad	403
Noida	430	Greater Noida	428
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]			

CPCB data. On Sunday, PM2.5 was over 10 times (625.1 ug/m3) the safe limit – the highest recorded so far this season.

‘Severe’ air quality can cause respiratory problems in healthy people and has serious impact on those with lung or heart diseases, according to a Supreme Court-appointed pollution control body EPCA.

The EPCA on Monday extended a ban on coal-based industries, hot mix plants, and stone crushers in NCR till November 8.

## Cricketers move out

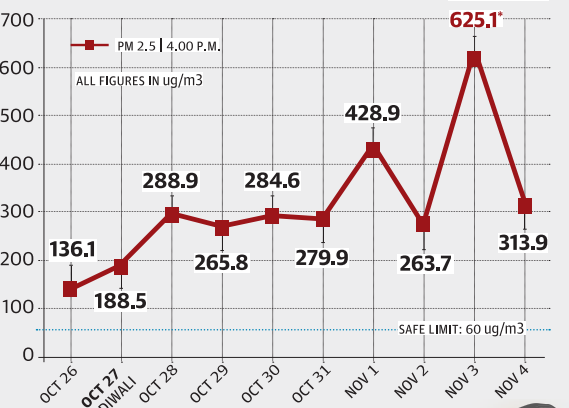
Reacting to air pollution in north India, cricketer Harbhajan Singh said in a video shared on Twitter: “North Indian air has become polluted and we all are responsible for it. I have been hearing it for the past many years that due to stubble burning air and water becomes polluted... And the life span will be reduced by 7-10 years if we live like this. So we have to act.”

Cricketers Yuvraj Singh and Ashish Nehra have allegedly already moved out of Delhi due to air pollution.



A worker sprinkles water to combat dust pollution at Civil Lines in New Delhi on Monday. ■SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Toxic air



## TAKE PRECAUTIONS:

- Avoid all outdoor physical activities
- Give morning walks a miss
- Keep all windows closed
- Stop any activity if you experience unusual coughing, chest discomfort, wheezing, or fatigue and consult a doctor
- Use N-95 masks or P-100 respirator. Do not rely on dust masks for protection



SOURCE: CPCB

## Leading by example



Deputy CM Manish Sisodia rides a bicycle to office on the first day of the odd-even scheme in Delhi on Monday. ■R.V. MOORTHY

# Paying farmers of other States not our duty: AAP

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Monday said it is Punjab and Haryana’s responsibility to help their farmers acquire technology to avoid burning stubble, hours after Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar jibed the Del-

hi government that it was more interested in promoting itself than improving the air quality.

Mr. Javadekar had said that the Delhi government should give ₹1,500 crore, which he said, the AAP government spent on advertisements, to farmers in a bid to address

the issue of air pollution.

His remark was against Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia’s recent comment that 40,000 machines provided by the Centre to curb stubble burning cannot help 22 lakh farmers.

On Monday, senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh said it is

the responsibility of the respective State governments to help their farmers and provide technology to discourage them from burning crop residue. “I challenge the Environment Minister to prove that we have taken a single penny out of Delhi’s budget, for advertisement,” he said.

# Current situation result of negligence and statutory apathy: NGT

Green panel summons senior officials

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) on Monday took suo motu cognisance of the high pollution levels in Delhi and has summoned the Delhi Chief Secretary to the Tribunal, among other officials.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel, in a chamber meeting, asked officials of the Central Pollution Control Board, Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change and Delhi Pollution Control Committee to be present before the Bench on Tuesday.

## ‘Continuous negligence’

Taking note of several media reports on the high levels of pollution in the Capital, published on Monday, the Bench said, “The air pollution is a source of diseases and threat to life. As per studies, statistics of death and health hazards have been given. Today’s situation is not creation of one day. It is continuous negligence and apathy of statutory authorities in enforcing the law.”

“There is need to ascertain why there is failure and



what should be the preventive strategies and remedial measures to ensure that present situation does not recur in future,” the Bench added.

## ‘Planning needed’

While observing that the “problem is well acknowledged,” it said, “While remedial action may continue to be taken in the best possible manner, there is urgent need to have proper planning to address the gaps in existing enforcement strategies and undesirable situation. After interaction with the Chairman and Member Secretary of CPCB, we find it necessary to further examine the matter after looking into the status of implementation of GRAP and other measures, including preventive strategies currently adopted.”

Lawyers at all district courts boycott work

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Lawyers in the Delhi High Court and all district courts in the Capital boycotted judicial work in protest against the clash between lawyers and the police in the Tis Hazari court complex on November 2.

The lawyers at six district courts here – Tis Hazari, Karkardooma, Saket, Dwarka, Rohini and Patiala House – did not participate in court proceedings, but took dates for their cases through proxy counsels.

Meanwhile, the Bar Council of India (BCI) on Monday appealed to the members of the legal fraternity to maintain peace and harmony in the courts and resume their work from Tuesday.

As per the demand of all the Bar Associations, a judicial enquiry has already been ordered by the High Court and the enquiry has to be positively concluded within a period of six weeks.

“We should not forget that six weeks time is not very long, rather for a judicial enquiry, it is quite short,” the BCI said.

The council further asked lawyers to be cautious of leaked CCTVs footage and clips that are doing the rounds on TV channels and on the socials media.

“We know that all these are being made in order to malign the image of the Bar. Overwhelming majority of members of the Bar are peace loving and law abiding citizens,” the BCI said.

It also urged lawyers “not to resort to any action that would tarnish our image and which could ultimately lead to losing the sympathy of the courts and the common people”.

Four incidents of violence by lawyers reported in Capital

Protesting advocates break mobile phones of people recording violence

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

At least four incidents of assault on commuters, journalists and police personnel allegedly by lawyers staging protest were reported from district courts in the city on Monday.

Lawyers broke mobile phones of people who were recording violence.

We have received four complaints in separate cases of assault with two policemen and two with other persons outside Saket and Karkardooma court premises,” said a police officer.

Advocates in the Delhi High Court and all district courts abstained from judicial work protesting against the clash between lawyers and police in the Tis Hazari court complex.

The incidents of violence took place in Tis Hazari, Karkardooma and Saket while no such incident took place in Dwarka, Rohini and Patiala House courts.

A video of a policeman on



Lawyers beating a policeman at Saket District Courts in New Delhi on Monday. •ANI

an official visit to Saket Court was being thrashed by a man appeared to be a lawyer has gone viral on social media.

“We have procured the video footage of the incident that was shot by someone. We are going through it to identify the person in the video. An FIR will be registered,” said a senior police officer.

An auto driver recording vandalism by lawyers outside the Saket court on his

mobile phone was thrashed by a group of advocates. A video of the incident has gone viral where an auto driver was seen being thrashed by lawyers. They tore off his clothes.

In another incident of violence reported from Tis Hazari court, a woman journalist working with a TV news channel was roughed up by lawyers when she was on the court premises for the coverage of lawyers’ protest. A vis-

**We will approach the victims. If no one comes forward, then we will take suo motu cognisance of the cases of violence**

SENIOR POLICE OFFICER

itor recording the act was held and his mobile phone was smashed on the ground. The journalist was rescued by senior advocates and policemen.

Lawyers protesting outside Karkardooma court in East Delhi thrashed a motorist and abused a woman on two-wheeler when they were passing through the area during the protest.

A senior police officer said they were procuring videos of violence that took place during the protest called by lawyers. “We will approach victims and if no one comes forward, then we will take suo motu cognisance of the cases of violence,” said the officer.

Tis Hazari incident: IPS officers vent ire on Twitter

VIJAITA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Senior IPS officers took to Twitter to express their dismay and anger following the incident outside Saket District Courts on Monday when a policeman riding a motorcycle was beaten up by men who appeared to be lawyers. The immediate reason of the attack was not known.

On November 2, violence erupted at the Tis Hazari Courts in north Delhi between the police and lawyers following a parking row in which 21 police personnel and eight lawyers were injured. As many as 14 motorcycles and a police car were burnt and eight prison vans were damaged.

In a special hearing on Sunday, the Delhi High Court ordered a judicial inquiry by a retired High Court judge into the clash and directed that “no coercive action should be taken against any lawyer on the basis of the FIRs lodged at the behest of police officers”.

Sharing a video of the Tis Hazari incident where a policeman is seen being dragged and beaten by over 50 lawyers on the court premises, senior IPS officer Aslam Khan posted on Twitter, “Any opinion? This was starting point of tussle what I could guess. For how long police will be at receiving end just because they have no support and leadership.”

Abhinav Kumar who is posted in Jammu & Kashmir, wrote on Twitter, “As a proud policeman serving in Kashmir, recent HC order in the clash of lawyers & police is demoralizing for police all over India...”

Man held for opening fire outside BJP MP’s office

Accused is a wrestling coach in a college

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 51-year-old man was arrested for allegedly opening fire outside the office of BJP MP Hans Raj Hans in Delhi’s Rohini on Monday evening, the police said.

The man has been identified as Rameshwar Pehalwan, a resident of Bawana. He has been working as a wrestling coach in a Delhi University college since 23 years, they said. The police said they were informed about the incident around 5.40 p.m.

The police said that the man had fired two shots outside the office of Mr. Hans.

In the CCTV footage of the incident, the man, who was wearing a saffron kurta and white pyjamas, can be seen firing in the air outside the lawmaker’s office, a senior police officer said.

The office was locked and nobody was inside. He created a ruckus and hurled abuses before opening fire. The man was under the influence of alcohol at the time of incident, the officer added.

He had come in a “blackish grey or black car” and left the spot in the vehicle after the incident.

A case was registered and the man was arrested, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) S.D. Mishra.

A personal grouse appears to be the motive behind the incident, the officer said, adding that further investigation into the matter is under way.

The vehicle and the weapon have been seized, the police said, adding that the weapon is .32 bore and is licenced.

Mr. Hans, meanwhile, called the act a cowardly one and demanded a thorough probe by the State police.

“I have no personal enmity with anyone. But I have been consistently exposing anti-people policies of the ruling party in Delhi. So someone may have been annoyed with this,” a Delhi BJP statement quoted Mr. Hans.

No immediate reaction was available from the ruling party in Delhi over the issue.

Architect molested in Sainik Farms, case filed

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

An architect was allegedly molested and manhandled by a few men on the street in Sainik Farms on Sunday evening, the police said. They said that a case was registered and a probe has begun.

A senior police officer said that the woman was in her car when she saw a few men walking on the street.

She honked asking them to move to the side, but the men started arguing. They then surrounded her and started abusing her.

The victim managed to call the security guard of her office, but the accused managed to flee.

The police said that a case under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code has been registered and further investigation is under way.

## EC to debut ‘booth app’ for Delhi polls

**SIDHARTH RAVI**  
NEW DELHI

The upcoming Delhi Assembly elections will debut the Election Commission’s ‘Booth app’, which will automate real-time collection and display of booth-wise voter data, Chief Election Officer Ranbir Singh said on Monday.

Using the mobile application, once a voter enters a particular booth, their identification will be scanned by officials and their details will be automatically verified, Mr. Singh said. Following this, the voter will be “logged out” once they have cast their ballot, he added.

**Full usage**

While pilot versions of the app had been deployed at by-elections in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana, the Delhi Assembly elections will see the full implementation of the app, Mr. Singh said. Details of the app were shared at a meeting of the officials of the Election Commission of India with the State election officials and others to review poll preparedness and gear up for the polls.

According to officials, the app will allow for different types of information, such as demographic data and voter turnout, to be collected and updated in real time. Through the app, voters can also check queues at their polling booths and time their visit accordingly.

### DELHI TODAY

**Exhibition:** “Ethereal Harmony”, an exhibition of recent paintings by Tanu Yadav, curated by Mohan Singh at Triveni Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 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:** “Old Delhi”, an exhibition of charcoal works by Yuvraj Patil at Delhi ‘o’ Delhi, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** A group painting exhibition by Soumen Dutta, Kaisha Ashish Dhingra and Veish Mehra at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

**Exhibition:** A solo show of paintings by Trishna Singh at Academy of Fine Arts & Literature (AFAL), 4/6, Sirifort Institutional Area, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.

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

## JNU students ‘file’ missing person report against V-C

They have been protesting the draft hostel manual that proposes fee hike

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Jawaharlal Nehru University Students’ Union (JNUSU) on Monday organised a protest march from the campus to the Vasant Kunj police station where they symbolically filed a ‘missing person report’ as they alleged that the JNU Vice-Chancellor had been “missing” in action and was not addressing their concerns.

The students have been protesting the draft hostel manual that proposes a hike in the hostel fee.

The students alleged that the university had deployed Central Reserve Police Force personnel on campus on learning about the protest march. They condemned the administration for sensationalising their protest, “which was against an issue that was important for every student



JNU students marched from the campus to the Vasant Kunj police station on Monday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that stayed on campus”.

Despite repeated attempts, the university administration did not respond to allegations that paramilitary personnel had entered the campus.

The university, however, called for a meeting of provosts and hostel presidents to discuss issues that the students have been facing.

“It is due to the student community’s continuing efforts that a meeting of provosts has been called with all the hostel presidents, ostensibly to discuss the fee hike. The administration is clearly running scared of students.

We invite the administration not to fear but address the issues at hand and revoke the unacceptable Hostel Manual Draft and fee hike,” the JNU-SU stated.

The students’ union said that the hiked fee would force several students currently studying at the university to drop out as they would not be in a position to pay the fee.

Responding to the protests, JNU V-C released a statement to the press, which read: “The provosts have invited the hostel presidents for a meeting on November 6. We request the hostel presidents to meet their provosts along with the wardens and discuss their issues. We appeal to the students to resume their academic activities. Issues can be resolved through dialogue with the officials of Inter Hall Administration.”

## Feeding frenzy



A flock of pigeons feast on grain in New Delhi. •R.V. MOORTHY

## Massive fire at godown, three firemen injured

Rear portion of building collapsed

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A massive fire broke out at a four-storey rexine godown in west Delhi’s Peera Garhi in the early hours of Monday. Three firemen sustained injuries, the fire department said.

A fire official said that a call was received at 12.25 a.m. regarding a fire at a godown opposite to Ram Leela ground in Peera Garhi, adding that 25 fire tenders were pressed into service.

“The fire was brought under control in a few

hours but the cooling-off operation took time,” he said.

The official said that the rear portion of the building collapsed following the blaze at 2.30 a.m. in which three fire officials – fireman Samarthlal Meena and fire operators Parvesh and Dharamveer – sustained minor injuries. They were sent to Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital for treatment, he said.

The department said that the cause of the fire is yet to be ascertained.

## Malaria cases highest in five years, says SDMC

Over 140 cases of chikungunya reported

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A total of 617 malaria cases have been reported in the city so far this year, the highest in the past five years, as per data released by the South Delhi Municipal corporation (SDMC) on Monday. In the whole of 2018, 473 malaria cases were reported; in 2017, there were 577 cases, as per the data.

Meanwhile, a total of 833 dengue cases have been reported so far this year with 236 cases being registered in just the last week – the highest in a single week this year. However, the total



A total of 833 dengue cases have been reported so far this year. •FILE PHOTO

number of dengue cases are lower than reported in the last four years. The number of chikungunya cases reported this year so far stands at 143, higher than the 133 cases reported during the same period in 2018.

## Student’s assault at police station: SHO challenges constitution of PCA

‘PCA not in consonance with Supreme Court’s 2006 order’

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A police officer has approached the Delhi High Court challenging the constitution of the Police Complaint Authority (PCA) and the proceedings initiated by it against him for allegedly torturing and beating up a Scheduled Caste student inside the premises of a police station.

Mahaveer Prasad Saini, who is the Station House Officer at Adarsh Nagar police station, has contended that the PCA set up by the Delhi government in 2017 was not in consonance with the Supreme Court’s 2006 direction to set up such a body each at the State and district levels.

The petition said that



the apex court had directed that the state-level PCA would deal with complaints against officers of the rank of superintendent of police and above, while the district-level body would address complaints

against officers up to the rank of deputy superintendent of police.

He has also sought quashing of the proceedings initiated against him by the PCA which had on September 2 taken suo motu cognisance of news reports regarding the alleged assault of a law student by policemen inside the police station premises.

He has said that an FIR was registered on October 1 on the student’s complaint and is being investigated by the police while the National Commission for Scheduled Caste is also looking into the matter, and therefore, there was no need for the PCA to suo motu initiate proceedings against him.

## Realty firm’s chief held over pending dues of ₹100 cr.

Surpreet Suri was absconding ever since three recovery certificates were issued

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NOIDA

A director of real estate group 3C was on Monday arrested from his Delhi office by the Gautam Buddh Nagar administration for allegedly defaulting on payments of more than ₹100 crore.

Surpreet Suri was absconding ever since three recovery certificates (RCs) were issued against the realty group in 2018 and had stopped coming to the firm’s Noida office, leaving several

buyers, who were awaiting possession of their flats, in the lurch, said officials.

“Surpreet was held from his Lado Sarai office in south Delhi on Monday by a team of Gautam Buddh Nagar administration officials. Three RCs were issued against the 3C group, including one related to the National Consumer Forum for ₹35 crore, another for ₹65 crore and one around ₹4 crore,” said Sub-Divisional Magistrate (Dadri) Rajeev Rai.

“Surpreet had become inaccessible to the people and administration officials here despite such huge payment defaults by his group. He had stopped coming to the Noida office and was on the run for over a year now,” he said.

“The district administration was tracking his movements in Delhi and finally nabbed him on Monday,” he added. Mr. Rai said the administration is also on the lookout for two other directors of the 3C group – Vidur Bha-

## Record 3 lakh students awarded degrees at DU’s 96th convocation

Event held for graduates of two academic years

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

At Delhi University’s 96<sup>th</sup> convocation held on Monday, a record three lakh students were awarded degrees, Vice-Chancellor Yogesh Tyagi said. Degrees were awarded for two academic years.

With only 700 of those graduating being present at the event, the rest will be awarded their degree in absentia, the university said. Among those present, 300 students were awarded various medals and other prizes for their academic performance in front of an audience of parents, university officials and illustrious alumni.

### Eminence status

Taking the moment to review the university’s achievements, the Vice-Chancellor highlighted the recent award of Institute of Eminence (IOE) bagged by the university.

He said that while he was aware that there were some apprehensions about the scheme, he was confident that consensus would be built. The IOE tag would help bring financial support as well human resource which would benefit the university, he added.

Mr. Tyagi also touched upon other developments, such as the formation of a



Delhi University graduates celebrate during the convocation on Monday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

new syllabus, bringing “equality” among streams such as school of open learning and regular courses, the setting up of new college campuses and new centres of learning.

### In the future

Looking ahead, Mr. Tyagi spoke about plans to turn the university into an “integrated campus” with no thoroughfare. Quoting from the Master Plan Delhi 2021, he said that the document codified this vision and called for the development of an urban design plan for the same. In a reference to ongoing protests against a high-rise con-

struction by a private builder at the university’s North Campus area, Mr Tyagi cited a section of the master plan which said that tall buildings would be restricted from the area.

“We want to have our centenary celebrations in our integrated campus,” he said.

Chief guest at the event, Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal, lauded the university stressing his belief that it would reach the top of world rankings.

The future of the country and its vision would be realised through the students, Mr. Pokhriyal said.

## Students’ groups protest against construction of 39-storey building

Construction opposed by teachers, varsity administration

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Multiple students’ organisations came together on Monday to protest the planned construction of a 39-storey building by a private organisation, at Delhi University’s North Campus.

The proposed construction has been opposed by multiple stakeholders at the university, including the teachers and the students’ unions, independent students groups and



Students’ wings during the protest on Monday. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

the university administration.

During the university’s 96th convocation ceremony

held on Monday, the Vice-Chancellor made a reference to the illegality of the construction, citing the Master Plan of Delhi 2021, which restricts high-rise buildings in the university’s vicinity.

The construction of the building poses a risk to the privacy of the four girls hostels in its vicinity, the students’ groups said in a statement. It would also effect the cultural resources and the environment of the area, they added.

## High Court allows Akali leader to visit Pakistan

He wanted to go to Nankana Sahib

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday permitted Shiromani Akali Dal (Delhi) president Paramjit Singh Sarna, who was stopped at the Attari border, to go to Pakistan to visit Nankana Sahib.

The HC suspended the Look Out Circular (LOC) issued against Mr. Sarna but ordered him to return on or before November 16. It also sought responses from the ministries of home and external affairs, as well as the Economic Offence Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police, on Mr. Sarna’s plea seeking quashing of the LOC.

On October 31, Mr. Sarna, who was leading a religious procession, was not allowed by immigration authorities to enter Pakistan on the



Paramjit Singh Sarna

ground that he was facing a cheating case registered in Delhi in 2012.

Mr. Sarna was going to Pakistan via the Attari border to visit Nankana Sahib on the 550th anniversary of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev. In his petition, Mr Sarna has sought to quash the authorities action in restraining him from travelling abroad. The HC has listed the case for further hearing on January 22, 2020.

## NGT notice over STP in Gurugram

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging non-functioning of a sewage treatment plant in Gurugram, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Gurugram civic body and the State Pollution Control Board to look into the plea and take appropriate action.

A Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel gave the authorities one month to file an action taken report.

The green panel was hearing a plea by petitioner Aditya Jakhar who alleged that a non-functional STP in Hayatpur village was discharging untreated effluents onto open land “causing damage to the environment and public health”.

## Foreign national held for supplying drugs

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

A 33-year-old Nigerian national was arrested for allegedly supplying drugs in the national capital, police said on Monday. The police have recovered around 150 grams of cocaine, valued at ₹1.5 crore in the international market, from his possession.

The accused has been identified as Orji Eugene Jideofor, a resident of Aninri in Nigeria.

He was presently residing

at Chhatarpur and was arrested from Sewak Park near Dwarka Mor on Saturday, where he had come to supply cocaine to another foreign national.

He has been remanded to two days police custody

“The accused came to India from Nigeria on a three-month visa in January, 2015 and was staying illegally since his expiry of his visa,” said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Dwarka) An-to Alphonse.

DELHI  Timings				
TUESDAY, NOV. 05				
	RISE	06:35	SET	17:34
	RISE	13:48	SET	00:00
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 06				
	RISE	06:36	SET	17:33
	RISE	14:23	SET	00:53
THURSDAY, NOV. 07				
	RISE	06:37	SET	17:33
	RISE	14:57	SET	01:46

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	30	19
Safdarjang	30	19
Palam	29	18

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

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
**29°C** A smoggy morning. A clear sky. Pollution will continue at very poor level.

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## Gian Chand Gupta new Haryana Speaker

Name proposed by CM Khattar

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHANDIGARH**  
BJP MLA Gian Chand Gupta was unanimously elected Speaker of the Haryana Assembly on Monday.

The Panchkula MLA's name was proposed by Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar and seconded by Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala.

In the Assembly election, Mr. Gupta defeated Congress's Chander Mohan Bishnoi, the son of former Chief Minister Bhajan Lal.

Earlier, Prottem Speaker Raghubir Singh Kadian administered oath to Mr. Khattar, Mr. Chautala and other



Gian Chand Gupta

legislators.

In the 90-member Assembly, the strength of BJP is 40, its ally Jannayak Janta Party 10, Independents seven, Congress 31, and Indian National Lok Dal and Haryana Lokhit Party one each.

## Parties get ready for Rajasthan civic polls

BJP nominates candidates in Kota and Sikar, Congress appoints panels for selection of candidates

**MOHAMMED IQBAL JAIPUR**

Preparations have started across the political spectrum in Rajasthan for the upcoming municipal elections, which are likely to reflect people's perception about the performance of the Congress government. While the Congress has appointed committees for selection of candidates in the 49 local bodies going to the polls, the Opposition BJP nominated its candidates in Kota and Sikar districts on Monday.

Polling for the first round of elections, covering over 2,100 municipal seats, will take place on November 16. AICC general secretary Avi-



Rajasthan BJP chief Satish Poonia addressing party workers in Sikar on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

nash Pande, who attended a meeting of the Pradesh Congress Committee here on Sunday, said the party would make every effort to touch the maximum number of people and win the polls.

Mr. Pande said the municipi-

pal elections were important for ground workers of the ruling Congress. PCC president and Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot said since the people had shown faith in developmental works of the State government, the

Congress would “sweep the polls” in the urban local bodies.

BJP State president Satish Poonia, who laid the foundation stone of the party's new office building in Sikar, told reporters that the party workers had assumed charge at the booth level and the local units would release vision documents for development of the respective areas.

BJP's ally Rashtriya Loktantrik Party, which has won three seats in the State Assembly, has decided to stay away from the municipal elections, after the BJP announced that it had a “strong base” in the urban areas and would contest the polls

alone. RLP founder-president Hanuman Beniwal said his party would extend support to individual candidates if the local workers favoured it. “We may also allow a candidate to fight on RLP's symbol if the majority of party workers in a local body support the move.”

**‘BSP to contest all seats’**

The Bahujan Samaj Party has decided to contest all the seats in the local bodies in an attempt to rebuild its organisation after all of its six MLAs switched sides and joined the ruling Congress. The party is finalising candidates in consultation with the district units.

## Pollution: U.P. farmers seek govt. support

‘Government could buy stubble... it could be a source of biomass energy’

**ANUJ KUMAR GHAZIABAD**

With pollution rising in cities of western Uttar Pradesh, farmers are seeking government support to get over the environmental crisis. It is not just Ghaziabad or Noida anymore, the Air Quality Index has crossed ‘severe’ category in Baghpat, Meerut, Hapur, and Bulandshar.

“Farmers are being made to feel responsible for the rising pollution levels, when the main cause is the increase in the number of vehicles in Delhi-NCR,” said Nishant Chaudhary, a post-graduate who does farming for a living in Achheja village of Bulandshahr.

“Stubble burning is just one of the many causes of pollution. It is being ‘marketed’ by governments of different States to pass the buck on the ordinary farmer who is grappling with an increase

in input costs. It gets highlighted because its impact could be ‘seen’ because of the change in season,” he said.

Admitting pollution was affecting their children, Mr. Chaudhary said farmers were not in a financial condition to invest in machines, even though subsidised, to prevent stubble burning. “At

this time, every day is important for the farmer, as he is preparing for the wheat crop. He can't wait for the subsidised mulcher to reach him. The government could buy stubble. It could be a source of biomass energy.”

Gopal Singh, who has a farm in Hastinapur and agricultural land in Jewar, said farmers used the stubble to

feed the cattle after mixing it with sugarcane leaves.

Mr. Singh cautioned that the presence of combine harvester could be felt in the region as well and “perhaps that's why the number of cases of stubble burning has increased in the last couple of years”.

“We have so much unemployment, and agriculture could provide jobs to so many people. The government should think,” said Mr. Chaudhary.

**‘Government's job’**

Mojpal Singh, retired professor of agriculture, Janta Vedic College, Baraut, said it was the government's job to think long term, not farmers. “Farmers indulge in stubble burning because they are left with no choice. This is not the case with those who burn crackers or drive cars,” he said.

### ‘6 cases of stubble burning’

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GHAZIABAD**

Utsav Sharma, regional officer, U.P. Pollution Control Board, said they have detected only six cases of stubble burning so far. “Kilns have been shut and we are checking the *kol-hus*,” he said.

Mr. Sharma said the sit-

uation reached the ‘severe’ level because of increase in moisture in the last couple of days. “It added to the existing pollution and led to a spike in secondary pollutants such as ozone and nitrogen dioxide. As the wind speed picked up, the conditions improved on Monday,” he said.

## Girl dies after falling into borewell

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA CHANDIGARH**

The body of a five-year-old girl was pulled out by rescuers nearly 18 hours after she fell into a 50-foot-deep borewell at Harsinghpura village in Haryana's Karnal district, police said on Monday.

She fell into the borewell belonging to her family while playing in the fields on Sunday in Gharaunda area, SHO of Gharaunda police station, Inspector Sachin, said over phone.

“After being pulled out from the borewell by rescuers, she was rushed to the civil hospital in Karnal where doctors declared her brought dead,” the SHO said.

He said the child's family found her missing after she had gone out of her home to play.

# Cyclone may hit Odisha, Andhra

IMD predicts intensification of atmospheric system over Bay of Bengal

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

Amid fears that another cyclone could approach the Odisha coast by the weekend, the Bhubaneswar Meteorological Centre of IMD on Monday said a low pressure area has formed over north Andaman Sea and is likely to become a well marked low pressure area over the next 12 hours.

“Under the influence of yesterday’s cyclonic circulation over north Andaman Sea, a low pressure area has formed over north Andaman Sea and associated cyclonic circulation extending up to 5.8 km above the mean sea level,” said H.R. Biswas, director of Centre, in a special bulletin.

“It is very likely to become a



Sea condition is likely to be rough. Fishermen are advised not to venture into deep sea

WEATHER BULLETIN

well marked low pressure area over the next 12 hours and move west-northwestwards. It is very likely to concentrate into a depression over east central Bay of Bengal during the subsequent 48 hours and intensify further with north-westwards movements,” he said.

Mr. Biswas, however, said dry weather would prevail over the districts of Odisha over the next four days (till November 7). The bulletin said light to moderate rain or thundershower are very likely to occur at one or two places over

coastal Odisha.

“Squally weather with gusty surface wind speed reaching 40-50 kmph is likely to prevail over east central Bay of Bengal from November 5 and over west central Bay of Bengal from November 7. Sea condition is likely to be rough to very rough. Fishermen are advised not to venture into deep sea areas of east central Bay of Bengal from November 5,” the bulletin warns.

Experts, however, said weather model has indicated about the formation of a cyclone, which would become clearer by November 10.

The atmospheric system would move in north-west direction which means Odisha and north Andhra Pradesh could be hit, they said.

## Security guard shoots thief

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HAILAKANDI (ASSAM)

A thief was killed in firing by a security guard of the Hindustan Paper Corporation’s mill at Panchgram when he and his four accomplices attacked the security personnel posted there, sources said on Monday. Three private security guards on duty spotted the thieves who attacked the guards, one of whom fired in self-defence. A bullet hit one of the thieves who died later.

‘Cyclone Maha may weaken before landfall’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
AHMEDABAD

Cyclone Maha is expected to weaken as a cyclonic storm before its landfall on the Gujarat coast between Devbhumi-Dwarka district and Union Territory of Diu in the early hours of Thursday, India Meteorological Department (IMD) officials said on Monday.

The State government has requisitioned 15 additional teams of the National Disaster Response Force while Naval units have been put on standby. Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Monday held a review meeting of preparations, while the Union Cabinet Secretary took stock of administrative preparedness through a video conferencing, the IMD officials said.

Earlier, it was predicted that Cyclone Maha would hit the coast as a severe cyclonic storm. Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue, Pankaj Kumar said, “Out of the 12,600 fishing boats which had ventured into the sea, only 600 are left to return. We are making efforts to bring them back as the sea would be rough in the coming days.” There will be widespread rains in most parts of Gujarat over the next two days.

Farmers suffering due to delay in forming govt.: Supriya Sule

NCP’s Baramati MP presents ‘bouquet’ of rotting crops, fruits to BJP State chief

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) MP from Baramati, Supriya Sule, on Monday said the absence of a government was delaying much-needed relief to farmers hit hard by unseasonal rain. She said there was widespread anger among farmers and accused the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Shiv Sena of being irresponsible in not forming the government in the State.

**‘Unfulfilled promises’**  
Ms. Sule, after surveying ravaged fields in Purandar in her Lok Sabha constituency, said the outgoing BJP-Sena government has not yet fulfilled its promise to waive farm loans. She said it is doubtful that the Chief Minister’s announcement of a ₹10,000-crore relief package will reach the distressed farmers. Ms. Sule said, “There is tremendous anger among farmers here [in Purandar]. No political machinery is in place even nearly 12 days after the declaration of results. Authorities and ruling party leaders are rarely to be seen on the field.” On



Supriya Sule is meeting distressed farmers in the State. ■FILE PHOTO

the relief package, she said the BJP and Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis have promised astronomical sums in the past, but none of the promised aid has reached farmers on the ground.

Ms. Sule also criticised Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah. She said both leaders had collectively held more than 20 election rallies in Maharashtra before the Assembly polls, but are nowhere to be seen when the State’s famers are in desperate need of support.

After interacting with

farmers in her constituency, Ms. Sule said, “How can the government expect harried farmers, who are facing an existential crisis, to fill online petitions for compensation? The damage assessment procedure is extremely slow and hardly any *panchnamas* have been done. There is no machinery in place as there is no government formed owing to the power struggle between these two parties.”

Ms. Sule’s visit coincided with that of BJP State chief Chandrakant Patil, who is visiting affected regions in

Baramati and Maval taluks. The two leaders came face-to-face during their visits and Ms. Sule presented a ‘bouquet’ of rotting crops and fruits to Mr. Patil.

Mr. Patil assured that all afflicted farmers would receive aid and directed officials to complete *panchnamas* by Wednesday. He said the relief package was based on a “primary estimate” and the figure would be increased. Mr. Patil said, “This figure is bound to increase as and when the *panchnamas* get done. We are trying to collect information on how many farmers have insurance. We will also provide a substantial amount if the farmers’ insurance claim money falls short.” The BJP State chief said the crisis was unprecedented and unseasonal showers had destroyed rice, maize, soybean crops and several fruit fields.

Earlier, Pune Divisional Commissioner Dr. Deepak Mhaisekar said unseasonal rain had ruined over 1.36 lakh hectares of cropland in Pune, Satara, Sangli and Solapur districts, affecting farmers across 51 taluks in the Pune division.

Sena says save farmers at all costs, demands more aid

Party terms inadequate govt.’s ₹10,000-crore relief package

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena on Monday said the intricacies of government formation in Maharashtra should not push rain-hit farmers towards existential crisis and demanded that they be provided a relief package of around ₹30,000 crore.

“Farmers in the State need to be saved at all costs,” an editorial in party mouthpiece *Saamana* said on Monday. It termed inadequate the ₹10,000-crore aid announced by the State government for crop damage due to unseasonal rain. The country is also facing an economic slowdown, resulting in lakhs of people being deprived of employment, the editorial pointed out.

**‘Bitter tussle for power’**  
The party’s comments have come at a time when it is locked in a bitter tussle with the BJP over government formation in the State. The editorial said, “Farmers should not be pushed to face the existential crisis due to the untimely showers in Maharashtra, which is also going through political intricacy.” It added that the govern-



Uddhav Thackeray

ment’s priority should be to extend assistance to cultivators and “farmers should be saved, whatever may be the cost for it”. The editorial said, “The announced amount of ₹10,000 crore is inadequate. Farmers should have been provided an assistance of of ₹25,000 crore to ₹30,000 crore.”

As per an initial evaluation, crops on 54.22 lakh hectares across 325 talukas in the State have been damaged. “The woes of cultivators should be addressed. Whatever may be the form of the current government in the State, it should offer ₹25,000 per hectare to the affected farmers,” the *Saamana* editorial said.

Farmers have nowhere to go as their major crops like

soybean, grapes, cotton and sugarcane have been severely affected, the editorial noted, adding that horticulture and floriculture have suffered a setback due to untimely showers last month. The Sena cited the case of 50-year-old farmer Dharma Jadhav, who recently committed suicide after being depressed as unseasonal rain flooded his paddy field in Palghar district.

**Warning to insurers**  
The editorial said, “He was not debt-ridden, but his crop was damaged due to heavy rain following which he ended his life. The government’s priority should be to extend assistance to farmers. It should not waste time in technicalities of damage assessment, but ensure that farmers are the direct beneficiaries of aid.” The Sena said around 50 lakh farmers have taken crop insurance, and it requested the insurers not to create any hurdles in clearance of the claims. “If the crop insurance companies create trouble for farmers, they should understand that they will have to face the Sena,” the editorial warned.

Shrouded in mist



Causing a ripple: A washerman at work early on Monday morning after a bout of unseasonal rain in Kolhapur. ■DEEPAK KUMBHAR

All-party delegation led by Goa CM meets Javadekar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
PANAJI

An all-party delegation led by the Goa Chief Minister met Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar on Monday to discuss the reported issuance of environment clearance to Karnataka for the Kalasa Banduri project on the Mahadayi. Goa and Karnataka are locked in a dispute over the

sharing of Mahadayi waters, and the project aims to provide drinking water to three north Karnataka districts by diverting water from the river. Leader of Opposition Digambar Kamat said Mr. Javadekar claimed ignorance about the issuance of any letter on environment clearance and assured the delegation of clarity on the issue in 10 days.

Marathi publication likens Raut to Betaal

‘His comments are hurting the alliance’

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Amid the stalemate over government formation in Maharashtra, a Marathi daily on Monday likened senior Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut to Betaal, the mythological ghost known for challenging King Vikramaditya with his witty riddles.

Coming down heavily on Mr. Raut, *Tarun Bharat*, the Nagpur-based publication, believed to be close to the RSS and its political extension the BJP, said he was hurting the chances of the BJP-Sena alliance to come to power in Maharashtra.

Without naming Mr. Raut, it called him a “joker”. The daily said, “His attempts to portray a picture that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is isolated in the BJP is nothing but pure entertainment.”

Mr. Raut, the Sena’s Rajya Sabha member and executive editor of its mouthpiece *Saamana*, has been at the forefront of voicing his party’s demands over equal distribution of power and sharing the chief minister’s post with the BJP in the new Maharashtra government.

He mocked the BJP on multiple occasions by asking questions on the economic slowdown like “*itna sannata kyon hai bhai...*” (why is there so much silence), using the popular dialogue from Bollywood blockbuster *Sholay*.

His attempts to portray a picture that Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis is isolated in the BJP is nothing but pure entertainment

EDITORIAL IN TARUN BHARAT

On Monday, *Tarun Bharat* published an editorial titled ‘Uddhav and Betaal’ The term Betaal is also used in Marathi to refer to a person indulging in loose talk.

“Late Balasaheb Thackeray spent his entire life wresting power from the Congress and the NCP. But this Betaal is trying hard to shatter his dreams and there will be no disappointment like seeing the Sena dragging behind one loudmouth,” the daily said.

Referring to the *Mahabharat*, it said the Sena leader’s first name, Sanjay, was also that of a character from the epic who gave a “live relay” of the war between the Pandavas and Kauravas to blind king Dritharashtra. “Sanjay’s job is to provide valuable inputs. But he himself is turning a blind eye, then there is need to worry about the Sena’s future,” the editorial said.

The Shiv Sena must be aware of the fact that one who cuts a branch while sitting on it is not a wood-cutter but “sheikh chilli” (a comic character known for his vain boasts), it said.



**IN BRIEF**  
**Andhra Pradesh Chief Secretary shunted out**  
VIJAYAWADA  
Barely seven months after his appointment by the Election Commission of India as Chief Secretary of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, L.V. Subrahmanyam was transferred and posted as Director General of the A.P. Human Resources Development Institute at Bapatla on Monday.

**Kerala Chief Secretary, DGP summoned**  
NEW DELHI  
The National Commission for Scheduled Castes summoned the Kerala Chief Secretary and the DGP on Monday, asking them to appear before it on November 11 for a personal hearing in connection with the acquittal of four accused in a case of rape and death of two Dalit girls in Palakkad district's Walayar for "lack of evidence", an official said. **PTI**

## Court nod for cremation of bodies of Maoists

Kin seek autopsy again, to approach HC

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**THRISSUR**  
The Palakkad District Court on Monday gave permission to the police to go ahead with cremation procedures of the four suspected Maoists, who were killed in Agali forest a few days ago. The police have followed Supreme Court guidelines in dealing the bodies of the suspected Maoists, the court observed. Earlier, the court had stayed the cremation till Monday on a petition filed by wife of Manivasakam, one of the slain Maoists. Karthy's family had also

# SC to hear today petition on purported clip of Yediyurappa

It proves that defection of MLAs was at the behest of the BJP, says Congress

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**  
The Supreme Court will on Tuesday hear an application filed by the Karnataka unit of the Congress to take on record a compact disc and transcripts of a speech allegedly made by Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa about the BJP backing the disqualified Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) legislators to topple the Kumaraswamy government. The application was orally mentioned before a Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana by senior advocate Kapil Sibal and advocate Sunil Fernandes on Monday for urgent listing. This development comes shortly after the Bench extensively heard the petitions filed by the disqualified legislators challenging their ouster from the Assembly under



B.S. Yediyurappa



H.D. Kumaraswamy

the anti-defection law. On October 25, the Bench reserved the case for judgment. In the four-page application, the Congress said the "annexed transcript which contains the speech of Shri Yeddyurappa unequivocally establishes the fact that the entire defection of the petitioners was at the behest, supervision and directions of the leaders of the BJP". It said: "A perusal of the transcript would clearly re-

veal that the motive of the petitioners was to defect and bring down the Kumaraswamy government, thereby attracting provisions of the Tenth Schedule of Constitution of India, 1950." The application said the Congress had sent a letter on November 2 through the Karnataka Governor to the President of India seeking the dismissal of Yediyurappa government and Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

## Video far from truth, says CM

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**BENGALURU**  
Caught in a bind over the leaked video in which he purportedly talks about Union Home Minister Amit Shah's role in the fall of the JD (S)-Congress government in Karnataka, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Monday said it was "far from truth". "The discussion in the meeting was different. There is no truth in the video. It is being twisted and things that are not there have been added," he said. The Chief Minister has not denied that the voice was his.



**Dark day:** Revenue Department employees taking part in a candlelight vigil to pay homage to tahsildar Vijaya Reddy in Karimnagar on Monday. **•SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT**

# Revenue staff to boycott work over tahsildar's murder

CM, politicians undermining officials, say associations

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**HYDERABAD**  
Stunned by the brutal murder of Abdullapurmet tahsildar Ch. Vijaya Reddy, who was set ablaze in her chambers here on Monday, all the revenue employees decided to boycott work in response to a call given by the Telangana Revenue Employees Services Association (TRESA).

TRESA president Vanga Ravinder Reddy and general secretary K. Goutham Kumar strongly condemned the incident and demanded that the government take action against the accused. The TRESA State Committee said the employees should boycott work for three days in protest.

**Panel seeks protection**  
The State Committee would finalise the future action plan with suggestions of all employees and demanded that the real conspirators behind the accused be identified and punished. The government should take

## Family of accused clueless

**K. SHIV SHANKER**  
**HYDERABAD**  
Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Mahesh Bhagwat said on Monday they will complete the investigation into the gruesome attack on woman tahsildar Ch. Vijaya Reddy at the earliest. The police want to go for trial of accused K. Suresh in a fast-track court and push for capital punishment.

However, Suresh's family members said he had never been to the tahsildar's office in connection with the land issue. They were clueless about why he took this extreme step. While the accused was reportedly shifted to the Osmania General Hospital, the attendant and the driver were shifted to nearby private hospitals.

immediate steps for protection of revenue employees, particularly women, it said. G. Upender Rao of the Telangana Village Revenue Officers Association said the Revenue Department employees had worked hard to implement the Telangana government's schemes. Though new *pattadar* passbooks were given to 60 lakh people, remaining 10 lakhs were pending because of various disputes. Instead of amending the revenue Acts

to resolve the disputes, remarks by the Chief Minister had made people restive and led to attacks on revenue employees, Mr. Rao said. Telangana Secretariat Employees Association president Padmachari said the government should own responsibility for the incident, adding that repeated statements by some political leaders and prominent persons targeting the staff undermined the confidence of the public in employees.

# Fishermen from Kerala, T.N. stranded in Lakshadweep

50 of them were fleeing from Cyclone Maha last week

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM**  
Around 50 fishermen from Kerala and Tamil Nadu are stranded at Kalpeni in the Lakshadweep Islands where they, fleeing from Cyclone Maha, sought refuge in the last week of October. Seeking help from the government to return home, the men said they were running low on food and fuel. The authorities in Kalpeni were not being cooperative, they alleged. "All of us are forced to remain on the boat. There is no other place to stay. We are low on food and the catch has begun to rot in the boats," said Selvaraj, whose boat with 10 men entered Kalpeni on the morning of October 26, the last of the five boats to do so. Four of the boats, all from

**All of us are forced to remain on the boat. There is no other place to stay. We're low on food**

**SELVARAJ**

Tamil Nadu, reached the inhabited atoll on October 23. The fishermen in the boats hail from Kanyakumari district of Tamil Nadu and from three villages in Thiruvananthapuram district, Kerala. **Alert on wireless** Selavaraj's boat was in the middle of the sea on October 24 when a wireless message warned them about the impending cyclone. They were asked to make for the nearest land. The deep depression in the Maldives-Lakshadweep region, which later

intensified into Cyclone Maha, had the Lakshadweep Islands directly in its path. But Kalpeni being the nearest, Selvaraj and his companions had decided to make for the island. "We approached Kalpeni by 8.30 p.m. on October 25, but were warned not to close in as rough seas and strong winds were reported near the shore. We spent the night in the boat and made for the land on October 26 morning," he said. Speaking on the issue, Fisheries Minister J. Mercykutty Amma's office said. "We understand that 12-14 boats are stranded in the islands. The Lakshadweep administration has been contacted. Arrangements have been made to provide them with food and accommodation," an official said.

## At your service



The New Mangaluru Port Trust launched chopper services for cruise passengers on Monday. It will fly tourists arriving at the port to places such as Sringeri Sharada Peetam in Chikkamagaluru and Bekal Fort near Kasaragod in Kerala. **•H.S. MANJUNATH**

## Plea in SC cites rise in boat accidents

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**NEW DELHI**  
The Supreme Court on Monday sought a response from the Centre on the increasing number of boat accidents occurring in the inland water routes across the country. A Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana issued notice to the Centre on a petition filed by G.V. Harsha Kumar, represented by advocates Sravan Kumar and Hiten-dranath Rath, that many unauthorised boats are plying in the rivers, especially in Andhra Pradesh, with little regard for the safety of people. The petition said neither the Centre nor the States had done anything to strictly implement the laws on boat services. The immediate trigger for the petition was the boat accident in the Godavari river in Andhra Pradesh on September 15.

# When the neighbour's mixie is too loud

Inane complaints leave staff at police control rooms and civic helplines stumped

**TANU KULKARNI**  
**BENGALURU**  
Last month, a staff member of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) helpline received a call late at night from an elderly woman complaining about dogs in her neighbourhood. "I was worried thinking the lady wanted to complain about a dog bite. After 15 minutes of narration, she said the dogs were barking too loudly and contributing to the noise pollution in her neighbourhood. It took me a few moments to explain to her that we could not intervene in any way." Personnel manning some helplines in the city, including those of the police and civic agencies, have

been stumped by such calls, which range from prank calls to complaints about the neighbour's mixie or pressure cooker being too loud. For example, the police control room received a call three months ago from a teenager who wanted to complain about his girlfriend befriending another boy. When the helpline officials said they could not help him, he told them that it was a kidnap case. Police personnel swung into action, only to realise that the girl was out on her own will. Some prank calls too have caused anxious moments. Last month, a person called the BBMP helpline and



claimed that the Nayandahalli flyover had collapsed. The helpline staff alerted the jurisdictional officials and asked them to rush to the spot, but later realised that it had been a prank call. The police helpline also often gets bomb hoax calls. To tackle this, the BBMP, which receives an average of 200 calls a day, now asks the complainant to first give

their mobile number. It has also begun recording all calls. K. Ajay Kumar, in-charge Deputy Commissioner of Police (city control room), said such calls increase late at night. "People make drunk calls to the helpline and also say they are lonely and ask our staff to come and meet them. Some try to settle scores with people they are having a dispute with and say that they are peddling drugs or are involved in a kidnap case," he said. However, the staff at the police helpline, which receives 8,000 calls daily, say they cannot ignore any call and have to get all of them verified.

# TSRTC employees to continue strike

Telangana CM's Tuesday deadline to rejoin duty fails to weaken their resolve

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
**HYDERABAD**  
Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao's deadline to the striking TSRTC employees to rejoin duty unconditionally before Tuesday midnight (November 5) has so far failed to weaken their resolve as the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of the employees' unions has reiterated its stand asking the government to resume talks to end the strike. The TSRTC employees' unions, which form part of the JAC, held talks on Monday to chalk out their strategy in the wake of the deadline set by the Chief Minister on November 5 and the next hearing of the case in the High Court on November 7. After the union-wise



Representatives of RTC unions in Telangana at an emergency meeting in Hyderabad on Monday. **•G. RAMAKRISHNA**

meetings, the JAC had a joint meeting of the union leaders wherein it was decided to hold talks with the political parties and other organisations supporting the strike on Tuesday. According to the JAC lead-

ers, the union-wise representatives from all the 95 bus depots in the State attended the meetings on Monday and resolved to continue with their strike. The strike would continue irrespective of the efforts being made to sabot-

age it by employing all sorts of tactics, the union leaders said. **'Fight for justice'** Speaking after the day-long meetings, JAC convener E. Ashwathama Reddy and co-convener K. Raji Reddy stated that except a handful of employees nobody had joined duty in spite of the deadline fixed by the CM. "It shows the commitment of the employees to fight for justice against all odds. Of the 11 employees who 'voluntarily' joined the duties on Sunday, five of them backtracked on Monday and participated in the strike," they noted. The JAC leaders said the government should view the strike with a humane approach.

IN BRIEF



**Court summons Zee News Editor-in-Chief**  
NEW DELHI  
A Delhi court on Monday summoned Sudhir Chaudhary, Editor-in-Chief of Zee News, as an accused in a criminal defamation case filed by Trinamool MP Mahua Moitra for allegedly saying in his show that her speech in the Lok Sabha on the signs of fascism was plagiarised.

**CBI questions IPS officer in Rose Valley scam case**  
KOLKATA  
The CBI interrogated Deputy Commissioner (Port) Waqar Raza in connection with the multicrore Rose Valley scam. Mr. Raza was the Special Superintendent of the Criminal Investigation Department of West Bengal Police when complaints against chit fund companies, including Rose Valley, emerged.

**Medical education not available to the poor: HC**  
CHENNAI  
The Madras HC on Monday found that the data from the State government proved that only a minuscule percentage of students cleared the NEET without attending private coaching centres. Thus, the judges concluded that medical education was not available to the poor.

SC questions Delhi’s odd-even scheme

‘What is the point of banning cars with certain numbers when third-rate autos, taxis ply the roads?’

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Monday questioned the “logic” behind the Delhi government’s odd-even scheme, saying what is the point of banning cars with certain registered numbers to reduce pollution when “third-rate” auto rickshaws and taxis ply the roads.  
A Bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Deepak Gupta ordered the Delhi government to produce data and records of the previous years, by Friday, to show the effectiveness of the scheme launched by the Arvind Kejriwal-led AAP government in Delhi.

**First day**  
The questions from the apex court came on the first day of the implementation of the odd-even scheme.  
“If people are hiring third-rate vehicles and go the same distance, what is the object you want to achieve? What is the logic behind odd-even? Banning diesel vehicles we can understand, but what is the point of odd-even scheme. Issue is you are stopping one vehicle and others are plying...” Justice Mishra addressed the Delhi government side.  
Justice Mishra then went



**Gasping for air:** A girl walking with her face covered in New Delhi because of the smoggy conditions prevalent in the city. ■ R.V.MOORTHY

on to question the Delhi government about the “more than 5000 factories you permitted which are adding to the pollution.”

**‘Master Plan’**  
“They are permitted under the Master Plan,” senior lawyer D.N. Goburdhun, for the Delhi government, responded to the court.  
“We are not bound by the Master Plan,” Justice Mishra retorted.  
“But these factories are non-polluting ones, they are permissible,” senior lawyer D.N. Goburdhun, ap-

pearing for the Delhi government.  
At this point, Justice Gupta intervened to say that energy consumers also have a role to play in the rise in air pollution.  
Air-conditioners often work at full blast in offices and homes. Conservation of energy starts at home.  
Justice Gupta, however, said increasing the efficiency of mass transport is often a better solution.  
However, he also noted that the Indian psyche finds it belittling to use the public transport.

BJP MP fined for violating traffic rule

BJP MP Vijay Goel violated the odd-even rule on Monday and was issued a challan for ₹4,000. Mr. Goel left his Ashoka Road residence and was stopped near a luxury hotel in central Delhi where he was issued a challan. “If the Kejriwal-led government is claiming that stubble burning is leading to a spike in pollution levels, then why is it bringing odd-even,” he asked.

IndiGo flights delayed after system crashes

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI  
An hour-long server problem with IndiGo’s booking system led to flight delays and over-crowding at airport terminals on Monday, adding to the chaos already caused by the cascading effect from Sunday, when pollution levels affected visibility in Delhi and threw airport operations into disarray.

The computerised reservation system failed for almost an hour, according to the airline. The glitch occurred at about 9 a.m., forcing the airline’s airport staff to resort to manual check-in of passengers. Though the technical glitch was subsequently rectified, the impact on IndiGo’s flight operations extended through the day.

CJI to get post-retirement facilities in Guwahati

Gauhati HC approves proposal for Ranjan Gogoi, his wife

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

The Gauhati High Court has approved a proposal to provide some facilities for Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and his wife, Rupanjali Gogoi, after his retirement on November 17.  
The facilities include a private secretary for the couple to look after their day-to-day requirements and coordinate with the “registry for any protocol-related requirements” and a chauffeur-driven vehicle belonging to the High Court for use on fuel basis.  
The full court, comprising 17 judges headed by Chief Justice N. Kotishwar Singh, met on October 30 to “consider the resolution”



Ranjan Gogoi

adopted by the Protocol Committee regarding the services to be rendered to Mr. Gogoi.

**‘Institutional courtesy’**  
The full court approved the Protocol Committee’s pro-

posals, “considering the unique accomplishment” of Mr. Gogoi, to provide the services after his retirement as an “institutional courtesy”.  
The three-member committee, comprising Justices Suman Shyam, H.K. Sarma and S.K. Medhi, also noted that Mr. Gogoi, who had served the Gauhati High Court, had chosen to settle down in Guwahati after his retirement.  
**Other facilities**  
The other facilities to be provided are a grade IV peon, a bungalow peon and a nodal officer to be identified from the Registry to coordinate with the private secretary.

Cyclone Fani victims petition Lokayukta

**STAFF REPORTER**  
BHUBANESWAR

People affected by Cyclone Fani thronged offices of the Odisha Lokayukta here and the Puri District Collector on Monday alleging that they were yet to receive house building assistance even after six months. More than 100 people submitted separate applications to the Lokayukta seeking its intervention to include needy villagers in the government’s beneficiary list.  
Several villagers also reached the office of the Puri Collector to air their grievances.  
They alleged that they were being deprived of assistance on grounds of political affiliation.

SC dismisses Vikas Yadav’s plea for parole

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed the parole plea of Vikas Yadav, who, along with his cousin Vishal Yadav, is serving a 25-year jail term for killing business executive Nitish Katara in 2002.  
A Bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justice Surya Kant did not allow the plea of Vikas who had sought parole for four weeks on the grounds that it was his constitutional right and he had spent around seventeen-and-half years of total 25 years jail term awarded to him in the case.  
“You have been sentenced for 25 years of imprisonment, complete it,” the Bench said, dismissing his parole plea. The Bench also dismissed another plea of



Vikas Yadav

Vikas in which he had challenged the constitutional validity of the Delhi High court order awarding him the jail term without any remission.  
The plea had said that courts are not permitted under the statute to specify the time limit of the imprisonment and put a condition that the jail term will operate without any grant of remission. “The petitions are dismissed,” the court 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 Tuesday:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Andaman & Nicobar Islands, Kerala & Mahe. Sea condition likely to be phenomenal over eastcentral & adjoining westcentral and northwest Arabian Sea and very high to high over northeast Arabian Sea

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	.....	33.1	21.0	Kozhikode	.....	1.8	33.9
Ahmedabad	.....	32.8	23.3	Kurnool	.....	34.1	24.2
Aizawl	.....	.....	.....	Lucknow	.....	29.5	19.0
Allahabad	.....	31.3	20.6	Madurai	.....	1.7	32.6
Bengaluru	.....	30.8	19.2	Mangaluru	.....	32.1	22.8
Bhopal	.....	30.7	22.2	Mumbai	.....	32.9	23.6
Bhubaneswar	.....	31.9	21.0	Mysuru	.....	29.9	19.8
Chandigarh	.....	28.3	16.0	New Delhi	.....	29.6	18.9
Chennai	.....	32.7	24.8	Patna	.....	31.4	20.9
Coimbatore	52.4	32.0	20.8	Port Blair	.....	82.4	25.2
Dehradun	.....	29.2	14.5	Puducherry	.....	32.6	23.0
Gangtok	.....	17.2	13.5	Pune	52.3	31.5	19.9
Goa	.....	33.0	23.9	Raipur	.....	32.2	21.4
Guwahati	.....	31.3	20.5	Ranchi	.....	28.4	17.6
Hubballi	.....	29.0	21.0	Shillong	.....	22.8	12.1
Hyderabad	.....	32.2	22.2	Shimla	.....	19.4	8.9
Imphal	.....	29.3	17.1	Srinagar	.....	.....	.....
Jaipur	.....	31.0	20.1	Thiruvananthapuram	.....	0.4	32.9
Kochi	17.4	30.4	24.0	Tiruchi	.....	10	32.4
Kohima	.....	24.2	.....	Vijayawada	.....	33.0	23.5
Kolkata	.....	32.1	22.7	Visakhapatnam	.....	32.0	23.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing						Yesterday	
CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>2</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE	
Ahmedabad	116	197	31	126	100	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	
Bengaluru	.....	4	62	76	113	101	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Chennai	.....	16	31	39	294	.....	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Delhi	.....	12	87	60	420	358	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Hyderabad	.....	7	33	17	119	.....	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Kolkata	.....	5	50	28	186	139	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Lucknow	.....	2	31	101	477	.....	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Mumbai	.....	9	81	115	43	59	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Pune	.....	92	11	82	48	178	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>
Visakhapatnam	.....	23	73	45	264	177	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Jind, Haryana, recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 448, indicating a severe level of pollution.

In contrast, Eloor, Kerala, recorded a healthy AQI score of 25

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

Court questions tapping of IPS officer’s phone

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed serious concern over the Chhattisgarh government tapping the phone of a senior IPS officer – and allegedly also of his two daughters – and wondered if “somebody’s privacy can be violated like this.”  
“No privacy is left for any-

body. What is happening in this country?” the top court observed.  
It asked the State government who ordered the tapping of the phones of officer Mukesh Gupta and his family and directed it to file an affidavit explaining the reason for the action. Mr. Gupta has been allegedly evading arrest in two cases.

Four debut films make the cut for this year’s NFDC Film Bazaar in Goa

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
MUMBAI

Natesh Hegde’s Kannada film *Pedro* and Pushpendra Singh’s *Laila Aur Satt Geet* (The Shepherdess And The Seven Songs) in Gojari – the language of the nomadic Gujjar tribes across India, Pakistan and Afghanistan – are among the five films chosen for the prestigious Work In Progress (WIP) Lab at the NFDC Film Bazaar to be held this year from November 20-24 in Panjim.  
The other three films



A still from the Kannada movie Pedro.

are in Hindi – *Switzerland* directed by Ajitpal Singh, *Shankar’s Fairies* by Irfana Majumdar and *Uljhan*

(The Knot) directed by Ashish Pant.  
Four of these – *Pedro*, *Shankar’s Fairies*, *Switzerland* and *Uljhan* – are debut features.  
Since its inception in 2008, WIP has been the nurturing ground for some of the finest independent films by young Indian talent. Among the acclaimed past projects are *Eeb Allay Ooo!* (2018), *Aise Hee* (2018), *Nimtoh* (2018), *Soni* (2017), *Moothon* (2017), *Lipstick Under My Burkha* (2015), *Thithi* (2014), *Titli* (2013),

*Killa* (2013), *Miss Lovely* (2011) and *Ship of Theseus* (2011).  
In the lab the filmmakers are mentored by internationally renowned film producers, writers, editors, film festival heads etc. to fine tune their ongoing projects.  
The mentors this year are veteran film critic Derek Malcolm, film historian Marco Muller, film producers Philippa Campbell and Olivia Stewart and film editors Jacques Comets and Lizi Gelber.

Karwariya brothers get life term for murder

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
LUCKNOW

A court in Prayagraj on Monday sentenced former Bahujan Sawajwadi Party (BSP) MP Kapil Muni Karwariya, his brothers Uday Bhan Karwariya and Suraj Bhan Karwariya and their uncle Ram Chandra to life imprisonment for the murder of Samajwadi Party (SP) MLA Jawahar Yadav 23 years ago.

A fifth accused died due to natural causes during the trial.  
Jawahar Yadav was sprayed with bullets on August 13, 1996 in the civil lines area of Allahabad while he was travelling in a car. His driver and a passerby also died in the shooting, in which AK-47s were reportedly used by the assailants. Yadav’s wife Vijma Yadav is a former Samajwadi Party MLA.



## String of deaths

There are laws preventing the use of synthetic kite strings, but enforcement is lacking

The perilous use of *manja*, a synthetic kite string coated with powdered glass, remains pervasive, endangering human lives and making a mockery of the multiple bans on its manufacture and sale. Three-year-old Abhinayu of Chennai, who died on Sunday after a dangling *manja* slit his neck while he was seated on a motorcycle his father rode, is the latest victim. Only in August, a man in Delhi bled to death after being entangled by a *manja*. Actually, the earliest recorded instance of a death caused by a kite string in Chennai was in October 1975 in the wake of which 197 people were arrested. Kite flying is not just a pastime but also an organised festival in States such as Gujarat and Rajasthan. During this year's Makar Sankranti, three persons were killed in Gujarat and over a 100 injured in different States. Birds, including the White Rumped Vulture, get frequently entangled in *manja* strings as well. An estimate cited by the Animal Welfare Board of India said that at least 2,000 birds are injured at the annual kite flying event in Ahmedabad of which 500 eventually die.

What has turned the once-harmless activity of kite flying into a bloody societal menace is the substitution of the traditional cotton thread with the nylon or single plastic fiber string made of monofilament fishing line coated with powdered glass. Dubbed Chinese *manja* (though locally manufactured), the transparent and light-coloured string is not easily visible. While the cotton thread too is coated with finely powdered glass, its sharpness is blunted when mixed with boiled rice, flour, egg white and tree gum. The factory-scale manufacture of Chinese *manja* and its pricing at just one-third of the rate of a cotton spool, coupled with the thrill of cutting off another kite, has led to its widespread use. The nylon string is also non-biodegradable, making it an environmental hazard. When dangling from high-tension overhead electricity cables, it has also led to electrical accidents. Taking these into account, in July 2017, the National Green Tribunal banned synthetic *manja* across India. It directed the authorities to book violators not only under the provisions of the Indian Penal Code but also invoke the Environment (Protection) Act, Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, and Wildlife (Protection) Act as the case would warrant. Multiple State governments have banned the *manja*. But what is lacking is enforcement. The police seize spools of *manja* and arrest a few persons each time a human life is lost. There is no sustained endeavour to end the menace. Also, cases of people being convicted for manufacturing, selling or using *manja* are rare. Unless the authorities get their act together, the list of casualties could only get bigger with another Makar Sankranti around in two months' time.

## Clearing the air

Tackling Delhi's pollution needs tough, unpopular measures well ahead of winter

Delhi is once again in the grip of its annual, winter pollution crisis. The city's tryst with air pollution crises isn't new. The rising prominence of particulate matter (PM) from various sources has long been a public health scourge. What differentiates the prevalent PM crisis from earlier ones is the public's ability to monitor pollution levels for themselves. The measurement of pollution, which used to be the domain of weather agencies or pollution control boards, can now be done with consumer appliances. However, increased public awareness and social media angst haven't translated into meaningful public action. The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) in Delhi, which provides for a ratcheting slew of measures – from stopping construction work to halting private vehicles – isn't effective when air quality reaches its nadir. It recommends action only after pollutants soar. A Task Force – which comprises top officials of Delhi and the Centre – advises the Environmental Pollution Control Authority, which is in charge of enforcing the GRAP. Rarely does it recommend tough pre-emptive action and when it does, there's no real pressure on municipal bodies and police to ensure that polluters are punished.

There is a sense of resignation among both the Centre and the Delhi government about tackling the crisis. Meteorology and Delhi's geography render the city vulnerable to a certain amount of winter pollution, particularly when wind speeds drop to less than 10 kmph. But, preventing local sources of pollution from worsening air quality will require both the State and the Centre to implement unpopular decisions. This would include an outright ban on two wheelers, three wheelers and cars when air quality starts to deteriorate, a halt on construction, shutting down power plants in the vicinity of Delhi and a substantial spike in parking rates. And, of course, getting the farmers of Punjab and Haryana to not burn stubble at all. Even if this confluence of miracles were to occur, it wouldn't guarantee blue skies on a windless day and, therefore, political brownie points. This makes it convenient for governments to engage in theatre such as having Ministers bicycle to work and blaming farmers for burning rice chaff. The Delhi government and the Centre routinely cite pollution figures averaged for the entire year to claim success of some piecemeal measure or the other but hide the lows of October and November. Tackling Delhi's winter air requires tough steps that need to be in place at least a couple of months before the plummet. At the very least, it requires an empowered, independent agency that can implement measures while negotiating the tricky relationship between the Centre and Delhi. Else, beyond the momentary outrage, the battle against pollution will remain reliant on a prayer, and the wind.

# A rights-based framework to theorise poverty

Debates on deprivation need to be grounded in the language of equality, opportunity and justice



NEERA CHANDHOKE

A rather interesting debate has followed the awarding of the Nobel Prize in Economics to Esther Duflo, Abhijit Banerjee and Michael Kerner. Critics have argued that the method followed by the three avoids big questions about income inequality and redistribution. The question from the perspective of political theory is, perhaps, bigger – what is the moral status of the global poor in poverty reduction schemes? Do the poor have names, faces, aspirations, dreams, projects and sensibilities? Or are they destined to be anonymous and faceless?

About thirty years ago, prominent philosophers based in Western universities sparked off what came to be known as the 'global justice debate'. The argument caught imaginations across the world. Seldom had people seen such missionary zeal ignited in young minds studying in philosophy departments. Everyone wanted to do something about global poverty and the global poor.

### An exclusionary debate

Ironically, the global justice debate was extremely exclusionary – it divided the world into the 'distant needy' in the global south; and the affluent people living in the West who owed the global poor for various reasons, ranging from compassion, guilt, charity and philanthropy to injustice wreaked by global institutions, like the World Trade Organization, dominated by Western powers.

Nowhere did we find a mention

of colonialism as a factor that was responsible for poverty. Unlike the 1970s dependency debate, scholars of the 'third world' were excluded by definitional fiat from a debate pitched as 'universal' and 'global'. The West owed 'our poor', but we had no obligation to the poor of the first world. In these philosophically complex theories, the global poor continued to be 'anonymous'; they were inert, mere recipients of concern and, sometimes, charity doled out by the West. Poverty was cause for some anxiety, the moral status of the global poor was not of interest.

Recollect the 2005 campaign organised by global civil society: 'Make Poverty History'. The campaign harnessed celebrities like Bob Geldof, Bono, and Brad Pitt to add glamour to the agenda. The media was deployed to tell a tale of how 'we' could change 'their' lives through symbolic gestures, such as wearing white bands, signifying solidarity. Sceptics remarked that the campaign showcased less of poverty and more of those who wanted to make a difference. The poor remained on the margins. 'Third world' activists were outraged; the campaign had staged the pornography of poverty.

In other circles, these campaigns caught on because they did not offend anyone. There was no demand for economic redistribution, creative use of political power or progressive taxation. They conformed to 'sufficientarian' philosophy: give the poor enough to eat. How does it matter whether they are given an opportunity to be equal to the rest or not?

But poverty cannot be abstracted from society; it is a product of and a signifier of a deeply unjust and unequal society. P is poor because she does not have the resources to go to school, read, in-



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dulge in hobbies, watch a movie, go out with her friends and plan a career like other girls. P, note, is not only *poor*, she is *unequal* to others because she is unable to do the things they do.

The poor are not only deprived of access to material benefits, they are socially marginalised, reduced to vote banks by political parties, humiliated and subjected to intense disrespect. To be poor is to be robbed of the opportunity to participate in social, economic and cultural transactions from a plane of equality. Poverty is not only about *poverty*; it is also about *inequality*. Researchers and policymakers have to take this aspect of poverty head on. Can we do something about poverty without taking on an oppressive society? If we cannot do so, poverty will continue to be produced and reproduced by an exploitative society, as an integral part of this society.

### Rising up in revolt

More significantly, how can we ignore that on momentous occasions, the poor have acted not as passive, inert subjects but as agents? We would do well to remember that the debate on global poverty accelerated in the 1990s. By then, the first phase of the globalisation project propelled by

# Fusing traditional medicine with the modern

Taking cues from the Chinese experience, India can integrate the education, research and practice of both systems



SOHAM D. BHADURI

Revival of the Indian systems of medicine, which comprises Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homeopathy (AYUSH), served as one of the sub-themes of the cultural nationalistic reassertion in the early 20th century against the imperialistic British reign. Little wonder then that there are high hopes that the Narendra Modi government and its seeming nationalistic ardour will spell good times for the perennially neglected alternative medicine sector, especially Ayurveda. Much in line with the expectations, a number of initiatives to promote AYUSH have been recently announced. This includes: creating AYUSH wings in defence and railway hospitals; giving soft loans and subsidies for the establishment of private AYUSH hospitals and clinics; and building institutes of excellence in teaching and research in AYUSH. Also, 12,500 dedicated AYUSH health and wellness centres are planned to be set up under the Ayushman Bharat mission. Here, two important areas presenting significant policy

concerns and implications can be identified.

One persistent tendency in our key strategies to mainstream AYUSH medicine has been to regard that the problem lies simply in there being 'less' of AYUSH. Hence, integration of AYUSH into the health-care system has been largely conflated with having more number of AYUSH facilities or having them in place where there aren't any.

### A fraught relationship

It is common knowledge that AYUSH's relationship with modern medicine has been fraught with multiple issues – including quackery by AYUSH practitioners; ridicule of AYUSH treatments and procedures by many; and mindless cosmeticisation and export promotion of AYUSH products. However, has little by way of a concrete harmonising strategy has been devised to address these concerns. These issues are reflective of a sharp status gap between modern medicine and AYUSH that is highly detrimental for the optimal deployment of AYUSH resources. Merely expanding AYUSH's framework will only expand the present list of problems.

True integration would require a concerted strategy for facilitating meaningful cross-learning and collaboration between the modern



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and traditional systems on equal terms. This is the only way to address the subservient status of AYUSH and to foster its legitimate inclusion into mainstream health care. The Chinese experience of integrating Traditional Chinese Medicine with Western medicine makes for a good example. An Indian parallel could envision the integration of education, research, and practice of both systems at all levels. This can include training of AYUSH practitioners in modern medicine through curriculum changes and vice versa. However, this would entail substantial groundwork with respect to the prerequisites of such integration: namely, building a strong traditional medicine evidence corpus; delineating the relative strengths, weaknesses, and role of each system; negotiating the philosophical

doctrines of free trade and unregulated markets had run into trouble in countries like Mexico, Thailand, Japan, Russia and Brazil; impoverished thousands; and generated rage and discontent. Since the 1980s, countries in South America and in Sub-Saharan Africa had been rocked by what came to be known as 'anti-IMF riots'. Now, activists proceeded to target multilateral institutions identified as responsible for the generalised misery of the global south.

A major shift in the rhetoric and strategy of global institutions was in response to aggressive and sustained campaigns like the '50 years [of the World Bank] is enough' in the concrete and virtual spaces of global civil society. In many cases, the global poor fought alongside activists against terrible outcomes of globalisation.

Across the global south, grassroots organisations have struggled to implement 'social protection' schemes, and give the poor rights to the land upon which they have constructed rude shanty towns. The poor have standing as political agents because they have struggled for some social provisioning, bargained with political parties, and shown solidarity with other groups.

"The heart of the capital", wrote Graham Greene in *The Comedians*, "is a shanty town". Note how the shanty town defines the modern city; how, for instance, in Mumbai, multi-storied shacks interrogate planning and architecture, how they subvert the notion of the planned city, and how they transform urban landscapes. We do not have to romanticise the shanty town like Raj Kapoor did in *Shree 420*. The shanty town has a dark culture best exemplified by Amitabh Bachchan's character in *Deewaar*. But we should be able to

appreciate the grit of the inhabitants. They construct the city but the heartless city has no place for them. They make their own place through struggle. They know that justice has to be wrested from imperfectly just states.

### People with rights

How can we, then, theorise the moral status of the poor? One way this can be done is by imagining human beings as bearers of the right to a fair share in the collective resources of society. If these resources have been disproportionately monopolised by upper-class groups, and if others have been historically subjected to injustice, disadvantaged persons have the right to demand that they be granted their rightful share. There is a difference between people approaching the system as victims and people fighting for their rights. A fair share in the resources of the society can be conceptualised as ownership of enough resources to allow human beings a reasonable chance of living decent lives. The wider objective of redistributive justice is that persons should participate in society, politics, and the market as equals.

Finally, at some point, we have to ask whether our task as democrats ends with the proposition that people should not be poor. Should we disclaim any further responsibility for the historically disadvantaged after providing them with minimum material needs? Should we not move constantly towards a shared vision of an egalitarian democracy where people can live fulfilling lives, instead of remaining mired in notions of minimal reparation or remedies?

Neera Chandhoke is a former Professor of Political Science at Delhi University

tial of AYUSH to contribute to universal health-care in India.

Historically, attempts at integration have been foiled by parties from both within and outside the AYUSH sector. In keeping with the recommendations of the Chopra Committee (1948), baby steps were taken to integrate the teaching of traditional and modern systems of medicines, proposals that were later scrapped. While the AYUSH lobby feared a loss of identity following such integration, the allopathic lobby alleged that standards of medical care would be diluted.

This kind of isolationist approach goes against the cherished ideal of modern medicine to embrace concepts that are backed by evidence. In the case of traditional medicine, an isolationist attitude could deter scientific scrutiny and block some potential value addition. An integrated framework should create a middle path – fusing the two systems, while still permitting some autonomy for each. Accordingly, a medium- and long-term plan for seamless integration should be developed expeditiously in view of the massive drive for achieving universal health care already under way in the country.

Dr. Soham D. Bhaduri is a Mumbai-based doctor and Editor of the journal 'The Indian Practitioner'

## 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.

### Probing Pegasus

Israel-based cyber-intelligence organisation NSO Group's statement that its products are used "exclusively by government intelligence and law enforcement agencies to fight crime and terror" raises serious doubts about the credibility of the Indian government's views on this topic (Editorial, "Pegasus misadventure," Nov. 4). Now, WhatsApp says it had informed Indian and international governments about this breach of privacy in June and September. Going into the details, we get to know that this spyware targeted some journalists, political dissidents, diplomats and senior government officials in the run-up to the 2019 general elections. Not all of these can be coincidental. The government is

repeatedly denying its role in this spy scam, but there's no smoke without fire. There are a bazillion instances from the past that show how eager the ruling party is to gag its adversaries. The decision of two parliamentary panels to examine this case is a welcome step. Impartial and proper investigations should be conducted to ensure no such spying and data stealing incident happens in the future.

CARSANI BARAL,  
Cuttack, Odisha

### Poisoned air

The ongoing saga of people in all northern States suffering from "severe or beyond" category of air pollution (Front page, "Delhi chokes as air pollution levels hit a three-year high," Nov. 4) only exposes the lack of

seriousness within the Central government to find a solution for the issue. Despite the measures taken in recent years to improve the capital's air quality, a few factors beyond the control of the local government cause a sudden spike in pollution levels during winters. Large-scale stubble burning practised by farmers in neighbouring Punjab and Haryana is a known culprit. In such a scenario, the Union Environment Ministry should have pro-actively worked to bring all stakeholders on board to devise an action plan. Ironically, it postponed many of the scheduled meetings. The PMO's belated intervention now is like digging a well after the house has caught fire.

KAMAL LADDHA,  
Bengaluru

### Jharkhand polls

After its improved showing in the Maharashtra and Haryana Assembly elections, the Congress needs to adopt a fruitful strategy for its campaign in Jharkhand (Editorial, "A test and a chance," Nov. 4). The recently concluded Assembly elections illustrate that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s campaigns on national security and on the abrogation of Article 370 had no impact on the electorates of the two States. The Congress should devote its campaign to tribal issues and try to have an electoral understanding with the local Jharkhand Mukti Morcha.

D. SETHURAMAN,  
Chennai

■ It is interesting to note that for a small State like

Jharkhand, which has only 81 Assembly seats, election will be held in five phases. This is just two phases less than the Lok Sabha elections, which were spread nationwide. Such a long election schedule likely to be welcomed by parties that

have substantial resources, as they stand to benefit from multiple phases.

H.N. RAMAKRISHNA,  
Bengaluru

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:  
www.hindu.co.in/opinion/letters/

**CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:** >>In the story headlined "How poet-saint [Thiruvalluvar]'s portrait evolved over time" (some editions, Nov. 4, 2019), the reference to Sakkiya Nayanar converting to Saivism from Jainism should be corrected to read from Buddhism.

>>Errors in the Sunday Magazine article titled "There's design in everything" (Nov. 3, 2019): The name of *Juhi Vishnnani* – along with whom Nallaperumal had headed the Mumbai-based November, a studio for graphic design and typography – had been misspelt as *Juhi Vaishnnani*. The font Calcula designed by Nallaperumal was inspired by *Kufic* lettering – not *Kurdish* lettering. The penultimate sentence needs to be recast to say: "As I flip through the company's font book, Nallaperumal, who created – *The Design Identity* for *Kyoorius Designyatra*, a design conference held in Goa this September – speaks of his upcoming projects..."

>>In a Sports page report about Novak Djokovic claiming the fifth Paris Masters title (Nov. 4, 2019), the photo caption and the last paragraph erroneously referred to his previous triumph at the *U.S. Open*. Actually he had won the *Australian Open*. The U.S. Open was won by Nadal.

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# Kerala's modernity and its discontents

The State has lost its quest for freedom, equity and rationality



On November 1, Kerala completed 63 years as an economic-political entity. Kerala's transformative experience in education, health, social security, land reforms and decentralised governance has been widely acknowledged as a 'model' for other States. This article is an effort to evaluate Kerala's modernity in the context of the transformation that took place in Kerala society in the early part of the 20th century and the events that unfolded over the last six decades or so.

**Process of renaissance**  
From a freedom perspective, Kerala's modernity may be said to epitomise the social actions of a community to fight successfully the caste, class iniquities and capability deprivations of the lower castes. It was a great process of renaissance that tried to discover human progress, exemplified in the teachings of Sree Narayana Guru and in the social demands of several community leaders of those times. The abolition of agrestic slavery and untouchability, the successful fighting for the right to worship in temples meant for the upper castes, the right to wear clothes of one's choice, the right to walk on roads exclusively meant for the upper castes, and so on were great achievements towards enhancing people's capabilities and freedom. Importantly these happened in a unique geographic environment of rich biodiversity, water bodies, mountain ranges, wetlands, and so on, which are rare natural endowments. Indeed, it is for the Kerala people and its governance system to carry forward the process of expanding freedoms, and development without damage to its unique ecosystems.

The ecological overkill that happened in recent decades cannot be seen independent of the political decision-making. The colonial rationality of exploiting natural resources cannot be the guiding principle of any socially responsible political party. However, that aggressively happened in Kerala. The majority of the State Legislative Committees on En-



In the absence of a strong and determined political leadership, Kerala is seeing powerful real estate mafia, liquor mafia, forest mafia, etc. hijacking the development process. The Maradu building complex of Kochi that attracted the wrath of the Supreme Court. ■ PTI

vironment, except the 16th, which submitted its Report to the Assembly on July 4, 2019, were lukewarm to the issue of Kerala's unique environment. The 16th Report speaks of the "cruel and mean" interventions in Idukki and Wayanad districts, besides pointing out that the illegal quarries were "ten times" the legal ones. That even after the floods and landslides, more quarrying and crushing units were granted amidst protests shows that the concern for the future of the State is but rhetoric. Despite the constraints of a State in India's quasi-federation, the quality of State and local politics is key to reducing corruption, conserving the environment, improving higher education and health care, and making policy choices that enhance freedom and social equity. That Keralites voted a Communist government to power in 1957, which initiated several progressive measures besides delivering an uncorrupt regime in the early years, cannot be forgotten. Kerala has come a long way from there.

**Trajectory of development**  
In retrospect, the development trajectory over the last 62 years shows an early phase which sought to sustain the egalitarian project whereas the period between 1979 and 1988 witnessed a stagnation of the economy. This was followed by two events which radically altered the character of Kerala's polity, society and economy: (a) the growing outmigration of Keralites following the Gulf boom which resulted in a steady flow of re-

mittances and (b) the introduction of Central government-led economic reforms towards liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation which not only accelerated the foreign remittance inflow, but also promoted the market-mediated growth process. These forces triggered an unprecedented increase in per capita consumption (resulting in generation of waste) and unleashed a construction boom that adversely impacted the environment, widened inequalities, and created a service-led growth process. In the absence of a strong and determined political leadership to steer the State towards a better tomorrow (which was contingent on the productive management of the inflow of foreign remittances), we see powerful real estate mafia, liquor mafia, forest mafia, sand mafia, quarry mafia, and so on hijacking the development process. Mafia groups can bend rule of law and accountability norms. The Maradu building complexes of Kochi that attracted the wrath of the Supreme Court and the Palarivattom bridge that is under demolition are standing monuments of the endemic corruption underway. The State Finance Minister, Thomas Isaac, wrote in 2000: "Contractors made big profits, which were shared with politicians who connived to grant the work, engineers who gave technical sanction and monitored the work, as well as clerical staff who approved payment of bills."

Looking back the situation has only worsened. Frequent custodial deaths, political murders, increase in

crime, atrocities against women, increase in liquor consumption, increase in per day deaths caused by road accidents, and so on are disquieting signs. Can the political class ignore the writing on the wall?

**Where is public action?**  
A moot question any concerned citizen may ask is: what has happened to Kerala's public action tradition? That public reasoning worked well in Kerala cannot be denied. Unseeability, untouchability and agrestic slavery that alienated the Dalits, and several rituals and superstitions among the Namboodiris, came to be accepted as irrational by the public. Of late, particularly after the emergence of innumerable political parties with the support of religious and community leaders, Kerala has become a virtual post-truth society. The TV debates of many Malayalam channels will bear this out. Civil society is fast slipping away from public rationality and public morality.

True, public action will affect different social groups with diverse initial endowments differently. The ethnographic study of Osella and Osella (2000) documents how the progress of the Ezhava community from a former untouchable class achieved tremendous social mobility and progress by making the best use of their exposure to modernity. On the other hand, the Dalits, the real tillers, got only homestead rights and many were confined to 'colonies of Harijans' which were certainly not uplifting choices for them. Similarly the Adivasis and fisherfolk were marginalised because they too were outside the political society and its discourse. That the marginalised communities remain as outliers is a conspicuous social failure.

The divided communities and multiplicity of political parties have fragmented the society and slackened the expansion of a reasoned public sphere. University and the higher education system have become a caricature of what they ought to be. Student, teacher and bureaucrats' politics dissipate the time and energy of universities whose primary purpose is the production and dissemination of knowledge. Has the stream of reason lost its way in Kerala?

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# Enhancing insurance coverage for bank deposits

Denying people the right over their hard-earned money is a colossal hazard for the financial system



When word got out about the Reserve Bank of India (RBI)'s capping of withdrawals from the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank at ₹1,000, it did not take long for tragic stories to start pouring in. The death count had risen to three by the time the HDIL angle was discovered. With the Non-Performing Assets (NPA) situation not improving in most banks, the advent of another major crisis brought into focus, once again, the deposit insurance cover provided by the Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation (DICGC), a subsidiary of the RBI.

Most people agree that the insurance limit of ₹1 lakh, set in 1993, needs to be raised to a higher amount, with some suggestions being made to raise it to ₹15 lakh, which will cover 90% of the accounts completely. But the discussion around deposit insurance must extend beyond the amount of coverage. The lack of DICGC coverage for deposits at NBFCs (many of whom the RBI regulates) and primary cooperative societies is one such aspect. These entities often serve vulnerable sections and their depositors must not be left in the lurch in case of a crisis. Further, customers who want more coverage than the statutory cover on their deposits should be able to purchase this by paying additional premium. This option should be extended directly to banks that wish to increase the coverage of deposits to above the statutory requirements.

**Freeze in withdrawal**  
Another deficiency in the current DICGC cover is that the ₹1 lakh insurance amount only needs to be released if a bank goes belly up. Without liquidation of the bank, no liability accrues on the insurance company to pay such a claim. The flaw in this scheme is obvious today – the 'freezes' in withdrawal directed by the RBI essentially cut the depositor's access to his money. Hence, during such periods, at least the statutory amount should be released. This will go a long way in preventing bank runs, which could be triggered when customers get alarmed about the ability of banks to repay their deposits.

Currently the DICGC charges a flat 0.1% insurance premium on the deposits of banks.

However, as suggested by an RBI panel in 2015, premium should be based on differential risk based on the lending practices of the bank, among other things. An SBI report states that 93% of the premium collected by the DICGC in 2018-19 came from commercial banks (public sector: 75%, private sector: 18%), but over 94% of the claims settled (ever since the inception of the DICGC) have been those of cooperative banks. Clearly, poor governance in cooperative banks has been cross-subsidised by the better-performing commercial banks. The DICGC must draw inspiration from standard insurance practices and charge higher premiums from banks with a past history of higher claims, so that public sector banks (PSBs) – which have made zero claims so far – need not foot the bill for someone else's mistake. This will also provide a level-playing field for PSBs which are often disadvantaged due to tight government control and inflexibility.

**Bringing in private insurers**  
Another possibility that needs to be analysed is that of bringing private sector insurers and re-insurers into the deposit insurance segment, which could drive down premium prices. In FY19, the DICGC collected ₹12,043 crore as premium and settled ₹37 crore worth claims. Clearly, this is a lucrative area for private players who can bring in more accurate risk-based pricing of these policies. And since underwriting such policies entails significant risk-bearing on which the country's economy thrives, it needs to be reinsured by credible entities even beyond traditional re-insurers like Lloyd's of London.

Compared to other BRICS nations, India today has the lowest deposit insurance cover to per capita income ratio, at 0.9 times. Denying people the right over their hard-earned money is a colossal hazard for the financial system, which runs on the trust of depositors. Already, trust in banks could be waning – in FY18, growth in bank deposits fell to a five-decade low. If the government is serious about formal financial inclusion, the stated objective of flagship schemes like the Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, it must realise that an immediate availability of funds is as important as the insurance coverage of funds to increase the confidence of citizens in the banking system. Hence, it must take purposeful strides in expanding and rectifying the deposit insurance scheme as a safety net of the financial system.

Amerikai V. Narayanan is chairman of Easy Insurance India and a Certified Public Accountant

# Refusing to bite the bullet

Joining RCEP would have helped India integrate with Asian trade regionalism

SOURABH GUPTA

On November 4, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was on the horns of an unenviable dilemma at the Leaders Summit in Bangkok, Thailand, finally decided to stay out of the 16-member Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP).

**An unenviable dilemma**  
On the one hand, India registered a bilateral trade deficit with 11 of 15 RCEP participating countries in 2018-19. There was every reason to believe that these deficits would increase if India joined RCEP. An unmistakable pattern is evident in India's prior preferential trade agreements with East Asian countries. An uptick in overall exports is overshadowed by a larger rise in manufactured goods imports, which displaces many vulnerable domestic producers. The scale of deficit in electronic goods and related parts could have even tipped the economy towards a current account contingency. Economists will argue that plurilateral trade agreements, such as RCEP, are "welfare enhancing" for India. Be that as it may, without the politically challenging reform of India's factor markets, which would enable its small and medium enterprises to profitably slot themselves within East Asia's vibrant value chains, the likelihood of displacement and steep unemployment is high and cannot not be glazed over.

On the other hand, India desperately needs to sign-on to both an export-oriented growth model and a regional integration strategy if it is to ever stimulate its latent manufacturing prowess and overcome its steep development challenges. RCEP provided a gateway on both these fronts. Export sophistication, i.e. the production of sophisticated tradable goods, has been shown to be the most important determinant of sustained growth in late-developing and industrialising economies. To the extent that the other standard determinants of growth raise an economy's growth potential, they do so insofar that they contribute to increasing the economy's production of sophisticated tradable goods. It is little wonder, then, that no major industrialising

economy has maintained a 7% plus growth rate without a sharp and sustained growth in manufactured goods exports. Investment and exports acting in concert must become a key foundation of India's growth. RCEP furnishes a concerted liberalisation framework which, if paired with domestic factor market reforms, could have propelled the country towards its 'Make in India' targets in ways that no amount of tinkering with the 'Ease of Doing Business' rankings will achieve.

**Regional implications**  
The implications of joining RCEP on the regional integration front and for Mr. Modi's 'Act East' policy were as acute. India does not participate in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, where best practices in trade and digital economy endeavours are formulated. It is not a member of the Chiang Mai Initiative, which has evolved from a currency swap arrangement into an embryonic form of Asian financial regionalism. It was excluded from the Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership negotiations, and is only marginally attached to the region by way of shallow economic partnership agreements with Japan, South Korea and the ASEAN countries. RCEP afforded a fleeting opportunity for New Delhi to hitch its wagon to the global epicentre of 'open regionalism' at a time when protectionism and populism are casting a pall over India's economic rise in the global system. Without an economic integration strategy in Asia, India will have no strategy in Asia and the sum total of its 'Act East' policy will amount to little more than becoming the naval doorman of the Indo-Pacific. By signing on to RCEP and instituting structural reforms at home, Mr. Modi had an opportunity to integrate India within Asian trade regionalism. To ensure that such an opportunity does not go abegging next time, he should pursue factor market reforms so that he will never have to face such a dilemma again.

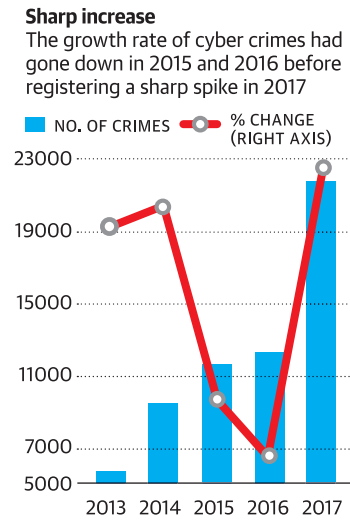
Sourabh Gupta is a senior fellow at the Institute for China-America Studies in Washington, D.C.



## DATA POINT

### Unsafe online

India recorded 21,796 cyber crimes in 2017, an increase of 77% from 2016. Countrywide, 1.7 cyber crimes were committed per one lakh population in 2017. Over half the crimes were committed to gain money by fraudulent means. New crime heads such as cyber blackmailing, cyber stalking, and dissemination of fake news were introduced in the 2017 NCRB report. By Sumant Sen

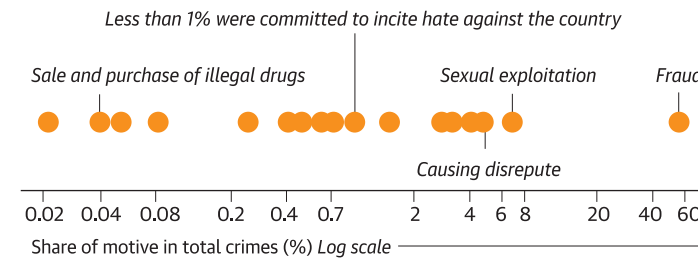


**State-wise split**  
Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of cyber crimes in 2017. Most of the northeastern States recorded fewer instances of such crimes. Karnataka had the highest crime rate (per one lakh population)

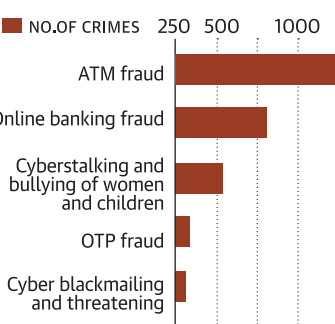
States with most crimes	
State	No of crimes
Uttar Pradesh	4,971
Maharashtra	3,604
Karnataka	3,174

States with high crime rates	
State	Crime rate
Karnataka	5
Assam	3.4
Telangana	3.3

**Criminal intent**  
Over 50% of cyber crimes (12,213) were done for monetary gains through fraudulent means. Nearly 1,500 crimes were committed with the objective of sexually exploiting the victim



**New additions**  
Under the new crime heads introduced in the 2017 report, the most cases were recorded under ATM fraud. Over 500 women and children were victims of cyberstalking and bullying



The **Hindu**.  
**FROM THE ARCHIVES**  
**FIFTY YEARS AGO** NOVEMBER 5, 1969  
Vagaries of a draft Constitution

The outlines of a three-unit federal-type internal constitution for Jammu and Kashmir, proposed in October last by the Steering Committee of the State People's Convention headed by Sheikh Abdullah, are being studied in different circles in the State. But in the absence of an "agreed solution" of the larger Kashmir question..., the outlines of the draft constitution have left everybody guessing. Curiously, when he was still the Prime Minister of the State, Sheikh Abdullah announced... on April 17, 1953, that it had been decided to give "autonomy" to different cultural units in Jammu and Kashmir so that no unit entertained the fear of being dominated by the other. The State Constituent Assembly was then functioning and it was assumed that appropriate provisions would be incorporated in the Constitution "to ensure voluntary co-operation among various cultural groups in the State." Apparently, Jammu and Kashmir State is a "museum" of languages, cultures and geographical conditions. The Sheikh's announcement was thus an admission that internal stresses ... existed in the border State. Keeping this in view, the outlines of a draft constitution were then reportedly prepared envisaging Jammu and Kashmir to be a federal and autonomous republic within the Indian Union.

**A HUNDRED YEARS AGO** NOV. 5, 1919.  
The Khalifat Question.

Delhi, November 1. – Mr. M.K. Gandhi has addressed the following letter to the press: – Several friends have enquired what should be the position regarding the forthcoming peace celebrations. At the Khalifat day I know that resolutions were passed at some meetings to the effect that Mahomedans could not participate in the celebrations if the Khalifat question was not satisfactorily settled. There can be no peace in Indian estimation so long as the great question remains unsolved and the Mahomedan sentiment is in danger of being lacerated and millions of Mahomedans remaining in suspense or grief, it is hardly possibly for the Hindus, Parsis, Christians, Jews and others for whom India is the land of their adoption or birth to take part in the forthcoming rejoicings. I venture to think that His Excellency the Viceroy can, if he will, tell his Majesty's Ministers that Indians cannot participate in the celebrations so long as the Khalifat question remains unsettled.

# India walks out of RCEP, says will hurt farmers

# End stubble burning immediately, says SC

# Pawar meets Sonia

# Opposition to meet Kovind on snooping

‘Compensate us, don’t  
treat us as criminals’

nipat and not a single instance of crop burning was reported there this year. "Why would the farmer burn when he can make good money out of it," he asked.

"With the farmers failing to fetch adequate price for their produce, ₹3,000 per acre for parali is a welcome money for them," said Shamsher Singh, from the neighbouring Saidpur village.

# U.P. man killed in Srinagar blast

## 41 people injured as militants target shoppers in crowded commercial hub

# 1,300 still under detention in Valley

Nearly 6,300 people, including political leaders, were rounded up since August.

Security personnel helping an injured colleague in Srinagar on Monday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

The police also said they

The Lt. Governor also praised the role of the J&K Police for maintenance of law and order and complimented them for the peaceful conduct of elections to the panchayat and urban local bodies last year. He advised the police officers to stay alert and deal firmly with the elements inimical to the safety and security of the Union Territory.

According to the police data, from just one report of stone throwing on October 28, the number shot up to 51 the next day, resulting in unprecedented damage to vehicles.

# Coalition allies jockey for seats in Jharkhand

## JMM may have reached deal with RJD

# Vietnam for one-China policy: envoy

**NISTULA HEBBAR**  
NEW DELHI

BJP spokespersons were huddled in a day-long meeting at the party headquarters on Monday, with preparations for the messaging from the party on the forthcoming Supreme Court verdict in the Ayodhya case being the focus of the meeting's agenda.

Monday's brainstorming session follows a series of meetings that Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat held last week on the same subject.

The message that has

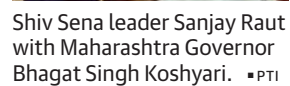
# Indian mariner's kin meet envoy

Captain Sidhu was arrested by Chinese authorities off the port of Ningbao in July

# We are not hindering govt. formation: Raut

## Shiv Sena leader meets Governor

Mr. Raut maintained that it was a courtesy call and not a political one.



“Since we met, the political situation in Maharashtra was discussed. So we also put forth our points. The Governor heard us out patiently. We only wanted to tell him that the government not forming, the political confusion... we are not responsible for it. We want government to be formed and Sena is not obstructing in any government formation. Whoever has majority will make government,” he told mediapersons after the meeting.

## Pak. skips opening session of SCO joint exercise

Amit Shah

He said the joint exercise would be helpful in developing understanding among counterpart teams to tackle any disaster situation.

# Indian mariner's kin meet envoy

Captain Sidhu was arrested by Chinese authorities off the port of Ningbao in July

The vessel had also done a similar journey without legitimate documents on the instructions of the owner," said Sanjay Parashar, chairman of the Mumbai-based International Maritime Foundation (IMF), which is

(With inputs from M.  
Kalyanaraman in Chennai)

# Congress takes stock of Naga situation

Jairam Ramesh, MP, who led the team, said that while welcoming the talks, the Congress would not remain silent if the agreements hurt the interests of the northeastern States.

matory statements come from the party on the issue. The RSS had earlier cancelled a meeting of the organisation's top brass, scheduled to be held between October 31 and November 4, in order to counsel calm. The "Ekal Kumbh", scheduled for November 17 in Lucknow, has also been put "on hold".

A docket with a time line and some legal nuances of the case was also circulated among the party's spokespersons at the meeting, which was also attended by BJP working president J.P. Nadda.

# Congress, BJP trade barbs over RCEP

Shah says UPA had ceded ground; Surjewala says govt. move win for those fighting for national interest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Union government's decision not to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will guide others on how to uphold the national interest, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) said on Monday.

"We are very happy and grateful to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for taking this decision. We know this was not an easy decision. But we also know that there was a lot of pressure that was resisted. It is a demonstration to other leaders on how to protect national interest and the interests of our farmers, dairy workers and the manufacturing sector," SJM national co-convenor Ashwani Mahajan said.

**'UPA to blame'**

"History is witness to the fact that the RCEP negotiation was started by the UPA government and it's only when they saw that there was a pu-



**Breaking ranks:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi with other world leaders during the RCEP summit in Bangkok on Monday. •PTI

blic opinion against RCEP that they changed their tune at the last minute," Mr. Mahajan said.

The organisation had earlier strongly warned the government about aspects of the RCEP that it described as "disturbing".

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said, "Prime Minister Narendra Modi's firm stand over the years of not

going ahead with a deal if our interests are not taken care of, is a welcome break from the past, where a weak UPA government ceded precious ground on trade and could not protect national interest."

Responding to the decision, the Congress said the government's decision was a victory for those fighting for the national interest.

"With rampant unemployment, a sinking economy and deep agrarian crisis emanating from utter mismanagement of economy by BJP government, signing RCEP would have been catastrophic," said party spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala, who emphasised that the interest of farmers and micro, small and medium enterprises would have been

hit by the agreement.

Congress MP Rahul Gandhi had said earlier in a social media post that joining the RCEP would flood India with cheap goods.

However, the BJP hit back and said it was the UPA government that had entered into RCEP negotiations in 2012.

Monday's decision was welcomed by trade bodies.

## Brus claim starvation as 4 die in camps

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Displaced Brus from Mizoram have said that four members of the community, including a four-month-old infant, had died of starvation at the refugee camps in Tripura after the Centre stopped providing free rations to them.

The four deaths are said to have occurred after October 30, the day relief was stopped, across six refugee camps housing about 35,000 displaced Brus.

The Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF) said the four had died because the refugees were running out of food. Hunger has forced them to resort to a road blockade, the forum added.

While two of the refugees were cremated, the bodies of the other two, including one that was exhumed on Monday within 24 hours of the burial, were sent for autopsy.

Local authorities said the post-mortem report would reveal the cause of death.

A medical report issued by a primary health centre in the area said the infant had been suffering from a fever for 12 days before admission.

# Official blames confusion over EV policy for auto slowdown

Heavy Industries Secretary appeared before MPs' panel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

One of the key reasons for the slowdown in the automobile sector is the confusion over the policy on electric cars, the government told a parliamentary panel on Monday.

A.R. Sihag, Secretary of the Department of Heavy Industries, made a presentation to the Standing Committee on Industry.

In August, the government think tank NITI Aayog got into a public spat with the automobile sector over the proposal to ban sale of three-wheelers with internal combustion engines by 2023 and two-wheelers with engine capacities less than 150 cc by 2025.

The 150-cc and below segment forms almost 90% of the two-wheeler market in the country.

The industry termed the proposed plan "unrealistic", while knocking on the Centre's door pitching for a EV roll-out road map over a "practical" time frame.

While various Union Ministers, including Highways and Road Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari, later clarified at many forums that the go-



**For a smooth drive:** The industry has asked the Centre for a EV roll-out road map over a 'practical' timeframe. •NAGARA GOPAL

vernment did not intend to ban sales of vehicles powered by fossil fuels, the confusion added to the already low consumer sentiment.

"We told the government officials that it is skewed logic that the fear of electric cars could sway the consumer sentiment to such an extent to bring a slowdown in the industry. They did not come up with concrete measures to counter such a slow-

down," a member said.

Mr. Sihag, according to sources at the meeting, also said that the sales were down because of "curtailment" of automobile loans that so far were easily available.

The sharp increase in road tax in many States added to the problem. The switch from BS IV to VI engines for improved emission standards has also led to the slump, the Secretary added.

# India, Russia to conclude mutual logistics agreement

It is likely to be signed during Rajnath's visit

DINAKAR PERI  
SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

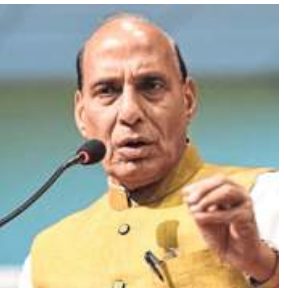
India and Russia are expected to conclude a mutual logistics agreement and review the setting up of joint ventures for manufacturing spares for Russian defence platforms in India during the visit of Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to Moscow from November 5 to 7, official sources said.

"The Agreement on Reciprocal Logistics Support (ARLS) is expected to be signed," diplomatic sources said, indicating that all issues have been resolved.

**Year-long discussions**

Moscow sent a draft ARLS early last year and discussions have been on since. Earlier, it was expected to be signed during the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Vladimir Putin in September on the sidelines of the Eastern Economic Forum (EEF) in Vladivostok, but was held back.

Mr. Singh will co-chair the 19th India-Russia Inter-Governmental Commission on Military and Military Technical Cooperation with his



Rajnath Singh

Russian counterpart, General Sergei Shoigu. Another major issue on the agenda will be the purchase of the S-400 air-defence missile systems, over which the U.S. is continuing a tough stance with respect to waiver from sanctions under the Countering America's Adversaries Through Sanctions Act. The deliveries are expected to begin by 2020-end, 24 months after the signing of the contract, and that is when the sanctions are expected to kick in.

A 50-member industry delegation is accompanying Mr. Singh to Russia, the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) said in a statement. "The objective of the delegation is to explore ways to jointly manufacture spares

and components with Russian original equipment manufacturers (OEM) under 'Make in India'."

The delegation to Russia is a follow-up of the Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) signed on September 4 by India and Russia to "operationalize a mechanism for collaboration on joint manufacturing of spare parts, components, aggregates and other products for the maintenance of Russian-origin arms and defence equipment in India under the 'Make in India' programme through the transfer of technology and setting up of joint ventures."

**High-level visits**

There have been a flurry of high-level visits between the two countries surrounding the EEF in which energy cooperation in Russia's Far East was in focus. As a follow-up of the forum, Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel Dharmendra Pradhan was in Russia and Japan from October 22 to 26, during which "possible areas of collaboration in other sectors like coking coal, and shipping routes" were discussed.

# Act against cross-border insurgents, Modi tells Suu Kyi

PM says a peaceful border will help expand bilateral ties

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BANGKOK

A stable and peaceful border will help the bilateral partnership to expand further, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has told Myanmar's State Counsellor Aung San Suu Kyi. He also asked her to prevent insurgent groups from finding a space to operate across the India-Myanmar border.

Mr. Modi informed her of India's readiness to expand its socio-economic projects in Rakhine, months after New Delhi implemented a housing project in the restive province. He made the proposal at a meeting on the sidelines of the ASEAN summit on Sunday, the Ministry of External Affairs said. Mr. Modi said the speedy return from Bangladesh of the displaced Rohingya Muslims to their homes in Rakhine was in the interests of the region.



Aung San Suu Kyi

The Ministry said the Prime Minister expressed India's readiness to carry out more projects in Rakhine. Mr. Modi emphasised the priority India attached to Myanmar as a partner at the crossroads of India's Look East and Neighbourhood First policies.

**PM meets Abe**

Mr. Modi and his Japanese counterpart Shinzo Abe on Monday reviewed the security situation in the Indo-Pac-

ific region and agreed to further increase bilateral cooperation in third countries for peace, prosperity and development. They met on the sidelines of the East Asia Summit here during which China's military and economic expansionism in the region figured prominently, officials said.

The Ministry said the Prime Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific region rooted in rules. "They agreed to further strengthen the bilateral cooperation, including in third countries, for achieving the shared objective of peace, prosperity and progress in the region," it said. Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar wrote on Twitter that the leaders prepared the ground for the two-plus-two dialogue and the annual summit.

# Sasikala's assets attached under Benami Act

'9 properties bought after note ban'

R. SIVARAMAN  
CHENNAI

Properties worth about ₹1,600 crore, said to belong to ousted AIADMK leader V.K. Sasikala, have been provisionally attached under the provisions of the Benami Transactions (Prohibition) Act, Income Tax Department sources said on Monday.

The nine properties, located in Chennai, Puducherry, and Coimbatore, were allegedly procured after the November 8, 2016 demonetisation, the sources said.

**Provisional attachment**

They said the Initiating Officer of the Benami Prohibition Unit (BPU) under the Income Tax Department, Chennai, has issued attachment orders under Section 24(3) of the Act, and sent them to the respective Sub-Registrars and Registrar of Companies. The provisional attachment is for 90 days.



V.K. Sasikala

A communication has also been sent to the authorities of the special prison in Bengaluru, where Sasikala has been lodged since 2017 after being convicted in a 'disproportionate assets' case against her friend and late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Jayalalithaa.

According to the sources, after demonetisation, she allegedly procured the properties by using up ₹1500 crore in demonetised notes under fictitious names. This was unearthed during massive raids conducted in November 2017.

# Raids unearthed Sasikala's benami trail

R. SIVARAMAN  
CHENNAI

Two years ago, income tax officials had conducted 'Operation Clean Money', with the objective of unearthing benami assets of ousted AIADMK leader V.K. Sasikala, at 37 locations across Chennai, Coimbatore and Puducherry. "Incriminating documents" were seized from about 150 other locations.

The Income Tax Department concluded that the seized documents pertained to benami assets, as they were found to have been purchased in the names of household staff, including car

drivers and assistants.

Around 1,800 officials had been involved and the places searched included the former Chief Minister Jayalalithaa's Poes Garden residence, the premises of the AIADMK-owned television channel, party mouthpiece, offices, farms and farmhouses of Sasikala's relatives across India. The attachment order mentioned Spectrum Mall of Ganga Foundation in Chennai, a resort in the name of Sri Lakshmi Jewellery of Puducherry and property in the name of Senthil Papers and Boards, Coimbatore, among others.

# We will shut down entire Pakistan: cleric

Maulana Fazlur Rehman says the protests will continue, and Imran Khan's government should go

MEHMAL SARFRAZ  
LAHORE

As the two-day ultimatum he issued to Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan expired on Sunday night, Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said his supporters will continue the sit-in until their goals are met.

"We have decided that we will not go to any tribunal or Election Commission or any court. The PTI's (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) foreign funding case is still lying around with the Election Commission after five years. This 'illegitimate' ruler's foreign funding case has not been decided, how will this Election Commission settle rigging cases?," he said while addressing Azadi March' in the capital on Sunday.

"This is a movement. After this march, we will not stop our journey... Today, we



**Standoff continues:** Maulana Fazlur Rehman, centre, waving at his supporters in Islamabad on Sunday. ■AP

have shut down Islamabad. Tomorrow we will shut down the entire country. Today, we have a huge rally here; tomorrow we will make the entire Pakistan a rally-ground," he said.

"Whenever there is an election, there is interference...

Our Army, which is respectable for us, needs to ensure that next time, it will have nothing to do with the elections of Pakistan. Such interferences have made our institution controversial. We have to go back to the supremacy of the Constitution."

On Monday, Mr. Rehman convened an all-party conference (APC) in Islamabad to chart out their future strategy. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) president Shehbaz Sharif did not attend the meeting.

### Talks with govt.

A government delegation led by Defence Minister Perviz Khattak also met members of the JUI-F in Islamabad. Mr. Khattak said he hoped something good would come out of it.

Mr. Rehman announced at the march that it has been decided by all Opposition parties that the protest will continue. "All rumours should be put to rest about divisions in the Opposition. They have told me that they will be by my side."

He said the government

delegation came with some conditions. "I told them that we will be the ones giving conditions, not you." He also criticised Mr. Khan for thinking that Narendra Modi will resolve the Kashmir issue. "He [Imran Khan] thought Modi will be a blessing for him. He said Kashmir issue will be resolved if Modi wins elections. Modi was successful. Look at how he resolved Kashmir!" Maulana added that the government will have to go. Referring to Mr. Khan, he said: "He was 'selected' earlier but he has now been rejected."

In another development, the Lahore High Court on Monday granted bail to Nawaz Sharif's daughter, Maryam Nawaz, in the Chaudhry Sugar Mills case. She will not be allowed to travel abroad during her bail. The court asked Ms. Nawaz to surrender her passport.

# Iran announces latest nuclear deal violations

Rallies mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of U.S. Embassy takeover

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TEHRAN

Iran announced on Monday its latest violations of the nuclear deal with world powers, saying that it now operates twice as many advanced centrifuges banned by the 2015 accord and is working on a prototype that's 50 times faster than those allowed by the deal.

The announcement came as the country marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1979 U.S. Embassy takeover that started a 444-day hostage crisis.

By starting up these advanced centrifuges, Iran further cuts into the one year that experts estimate Tehran would need to have enough material for building a nuclear weapon if it chose to pursue one.



Protesters at a rally to mark the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Iran hostage crisis. ■AFP

The nuclear deal limited Iran to using only 5,060 first-generation IR-1 centrifuges to enrich uranium by rapidly spinning uranium hexafluoride gas.

Meanwhile, thousands of protesters rallied outside the former U.S. embassy in Tehran. Rallies also took place in several other cities.

### U.S. sanctions

The U.S. is sanctioning members of Iranian supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's inner circle.

Separately, the administration is issuing an up to \$20 million reward for information about missing former FBI agent Robert Levinson. He disappeared in Iran in 2007 but the Iranian government has never acknowledged arresting him.

# 5 protesters killed in Iraq

Despite crackdown, demonstrators continue to gather

REUTERS  
BAGHDAD

At least five people were killed as Iraqi security forces opened fire on protesters in Baghdad on Monday as thousands continued to gather in the largest wave of anti-government protests for decades.

A Reuters witness saw one man shot dead, his body carried away by fellow protesters, when security forces opened fire with live rounds on demonstrators near Baghdad's Ahrar bridge.

A Reuters cameraman saw at least four others get killed.

However, security and medical sources put the toll



**Chaos on the streets:** Demonstrators blocking the Al-Sanak bridge during a protest in Baghdad. ■REUTERS

at one dead and 22 wounded, adding that rubber bullets and tear gas, not live ammunition, were used. The Interior Ministry could not be immediately reached for comment.

More than 250 Iraqis have

been killed in demonstrations since the start of October against a government they see as corrupt and beholden to foreign interests. Monday's deaths were in addition to three protesters killed late on Sunday.

# Lebanon in turmoil after demonstrators block key roads

Politicians fail to make progress on appointing a new govt.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIRUT

Demonstrators in Lebanon blocked key roads on Monday after a weekend of mass rallies confirmed that political promises had failed to extinguish the unprecedented protest movement.

Nationwide cross-sectarian rallies have gripped Lebanon since October 17, demanding a complete overhaul of a political system deemed inefficient and corrupt.

The movement forced the government to resign last week and has spurred a raft

of promises from political leaders, who have vowed to enact serious reforms to combat corruption.

But on Monday demonstrators battled on, vowing to keep up their street movement until all their demands are met, including the formation of a technocratic government.

"The people in power are not serious" about forming a new government, said Aadi, a 30-year-old demonstrator. "They think we are playing".

In the capital Beirut, they sat cross-legged on a key flyover and gathered near

the Central Bank, which protesters blame for fuelling Lebanon's economic crisis.

Lebanon's under-fire political class has repeatedly warned against the chaos a government resignation would cause, but they have yet to make progress on appointing a replacement.

President Michel Aoun has asked the outgoing government to stay on in a caretaker capacity until a new one can be formed, but Lebanon has entered a phase of acute political uncertainty, even by its own dysfunctional standards.

# Indian taken hostage in Myanmar dies

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
YANGON

A 60-year-old Indian national has died in Myanmar after being taken hostage by an ethnic rebel group in the country's restive Rak-hine province, media reports said on Monday.

Vinoo Gopal was among 10 people, including four Indians and U. Whei Tin – a lawmaker from Aung San Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy, abducted on Sunday by the Arakan Army from two boats, *The Irrawaddy* newspaper reported.

The Indian workers were part of the ongoing construction on the Kaladan Multi-Modal Transit Transportation Project.

# 41 migrants found alive in a truck in Greece

Most of them are Afghans; none injured

REUTERS  
ATHENS

Greek police found 41 migrants, mostly Afghans, hiding in a refrigerated truck at a motorway in northern Greece on Monday, officials said.

The discovery came 10 days after 39 bodies, all believed to be Vietnamese migrants, were discovered in the back of a refrigerated truck near London. Two people have been charged in Britain and eight in Vietnam over the deaths.

The refrigeration system in the truck had not been turned on, and none of the migrants were injured, though some asked for medical assistance, a Greek police official said.



Emergency staff attending to migrants inside the truck in Xanthi, Greece. ■AFP

Police stopped the truck near Xanthi for a routine check, arresting the driver and taking him and the migrants to a police station for identification.

# Turkey says it will send back IS prisoners

REUTERS  
ANKARA

Turkey said on Monday it would send jihadist prisoners back to their countries of origin, regardless of whether they had been stripped of citizenship.

Interior Minister Soyleyman Soyulu said Turkey had nearly 1,200 foreign members of the Islamic State group (IS) in custody, and had captured 287 during its recent Syria operations.

"The world has devised a new method. They say 'Let's strip them of their citizenship. Let them be tried where they are'. It is impossible for us to accept this view... We will send Daesh (IS) members to their countries,"

## ELSEWHERE



### MPs vote on Speaker after Bercow's departure

**LONDON**  
The U.K. Parliament will select a new Speaker on Monday. Seven MPs are running to replace John Bercow, who placed himself front and centre of the Brexit saga to frustrate Britain's departure from the EU. ■AFP

### Trump officials defy impeachment subpoena

**WASHINGTON**  
The lead lawyer for the National Security Council defied a subpoena on Monday to appear in an impeachment hearing, as did other White House witnesses, following President Donald Trump's orders not to cooperate. ■AP

# 'Saudi Prince's rise saw reforms, but repressions too deepened'

HRW says critics of the kingdom still face various sanctions

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DUBAI

Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman has pursued landmark reforms since coming to power, but his rise has been accompanied by "deepening repression and abusive practices", Human Rights Watch said Monday.

Despite a perception that the outcry over the October 2018 murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi had left the Saudis chastened, critics of the kingdom are still being vigorously pursued with measures such as arbitrary travel bans and harassment of their families, it said.



Mohammed bin Salman

"Detaining citizens for peaceful criticism of the government's policies or human rights advocacy is not a new phenomenon in Saudi Arabia," the New York-based group said in a report.

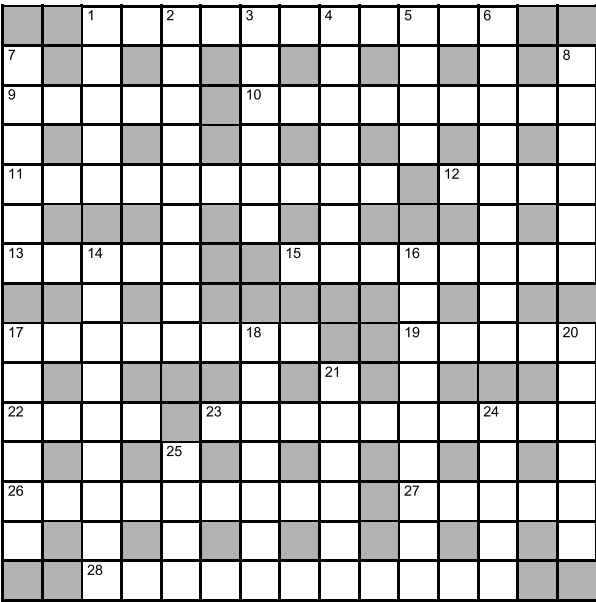
"But what has made the post-2017 arrest waves notable and different, however, is the sheer number and range of individuals targeted over a short period of time as well as the introduction of new repressive practices."

Since becoming de facto ruler two years ago, Prince Mohammed has been on a modernisation drive with reforms, including allowing women to drive, receive passports and travel abroad without permission from male relatives.

However, HRW said those moves were a smokescreen for the ongoing detention of dozens of dissidents.

## THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12772

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



### ■ ACROSS

- 1 Free India from French writer's diatribe expressing no trust, for starters (11)
- 9 To a large extent, goblet's shattered, but it's round (5)
- 10 Game girl carries a gun (9)
- 11 Backs advertisements pasted around capital city (10)

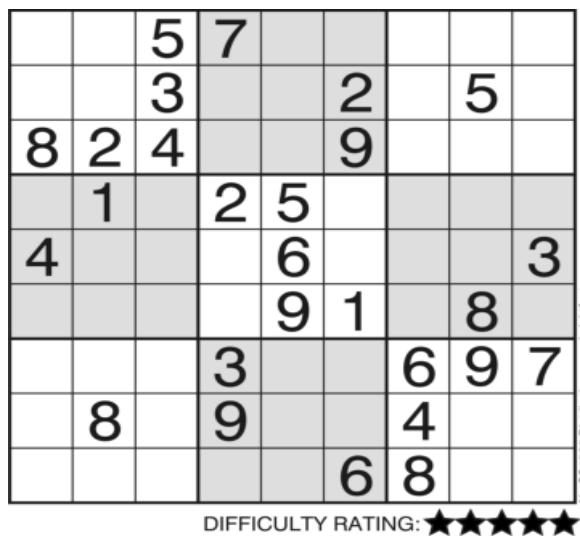
### ■ DOWN

- 1 Presses for some golf clubs (5)
- 2 Increasing depth of river enclosure in Germany (9)
- 3 Local insurance company's open to all (6)

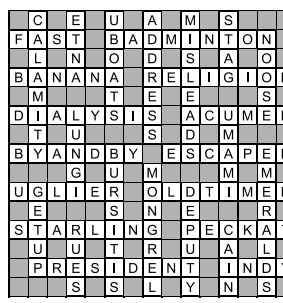
(set by Incognito)

- 12 Anagram "anagram" after clumsy man leaves for city (4)
- 13 Indian mystic floated in front of setter (5)
- 15 Madly ran crazy state (8)
- 17 Horse-handler Wagner works using both hands (8)
- 19 Wildly rush around English theatre employee (5)
- 22 Deliberately misinforms, I hear, Head Residents (4)
- 23 Jump and turn over to get something to eat (6,4)
- 26 Bite hazel-nuts for 'ER? (9)
- 27 Number of occasions victim escapes to some extent (5)
- 28 Person who gives orders for dislocation and mutilation of errant serf in front of King (11)
- 4 Gin's returned by Earl by air – sent back to African country (7)
- 5 Consumes European pastas regularly (4)
- 6 Wire for great help foolishly (9)
- 7 Early Christian celebrations in renovated parsonage after Ron was expelled (6)
- 8 Medieval officer held gunners in captivity (6)
- 14 Revolutionary saint built around Roman structure (9)
- 16 Orgy tunes composed for teenager (9)
- 17 Phantom's pedestrian, perhaps (6)
- 18 Fast train, say (7)
- 20 Tail half of saurel is hot. Enjoy! (6)
- 21 Fruit Chile processed before the end of June (6)
- 24 Snail obtained from outdoor merchant (5)
- 25 Father follows Oscar (4)

## SUDOKU



### Solution to puzzle 12771



### Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



## FAITH

# Placing trust in God

Nayanmars, Azhvars and other saints have expressed their desire to be with God always. Their outpourings in verse are moving expressions of their love for God, said M.A. Manickavelu, in a discourse. Manickavachagar sings that he wants nothing anymore. He does not seek relatives, fame, or even the company of scholars. How does any of this matter to a devotee whose only attachment is to Lord Siva's feet? And Manickavachagar is interested only in seeking refuge at Siva's feet, which are adorned with anklets. Kulasekara Azhvar says that he would rather be a fish in one of the streams in Tirumala, than be ruler either on this earth or in the celestial world.

Vallalar, in his Deivamanimalai says that placing his trust in other gods, instead of in Muruga of Kanda Kottam, is like eating the bitter neem fruit, when sweet fruits are available. If he does not worship Muruga, but turns his attention to others, then he will be like a man who waters weeds instead of paddy crops. Abhirami Bhattar, in his Abhirami Andadi, says, "Oh beautiful Mother Abhirami! It is praise of You alone, which will always occupy my thoughts. I will always be with Your devotees. Every day I will recite Your praises as given in the Agamas."

It is hard to judge people. They may speak kind words to us, but in their hearts, they may nurse hatred against us. The didactic Tamil work Pazhamozhi Nanuru says that if a man speaks ill of his friend, we should not trust him, for how long will it take for him to betray us? Pazhamozhi Nanuru is right to caution us about the nature of people. But there is no need for second thoughts, when it comes to placing our trust in God. He will never let down those who are devoted to Him. That is why jnanis ache for His merciful glances.



To play an interactive version of this crossword online, scan the QR code

MARKET WATCH

	04-11-2019	% CHANGE
Sensex	40,302	0.34
US Dollar	70.77	0.06
Gold	39,263	0.20
Brent oil	62.65	3.23

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	391.00	1.25
Asian Paints	1785.90	19.55
Axis Bank	742.60	-5.70
Bajaj Auto	3212.05	-20.60
Bajaj Finserv	8706.60	321.85
Bajaj Finance	4113.00	43.15
Bharti Airtel	378.00	4.95
BPL	522.20	2.80
Britannia Ind	3239.85	-28.70
Cipla	468.30	-0.90
Coal India	215.00	7.90
Dr Reddys Lab	2797.80	41.20
Eicher Motors	21740.70	-235.45
GAIL (India)	137.05	1.90
Grasim Ind	783.80	8.10
HCL Tech	1155.90	3.90
HDFC	2181.30	52.70
HDFC Bank	1236.85	-3.20
Hero MotoCorp	2643.50	-63.65
Hindalco	197.95	4.20
Hind Unilever	2158.15	-21.20
ICICI Bank	470.50	8.25
IndusInd Bank	1352.30	-27.55
Bharti Infratel	214.85	12.40
Infosys	709.00	21.10
Indian OilCorp	138.70	-3.95
ITC	260.75	-0.55
JSW Steel	250.20	12.60
Kotak Bank	1571.05	-8.85
L&T	1452.20	2.80
M&M	586.40	-3.35
Maruti Suzuki	7424.00	-194.65
Nestle India Ltd.	14813.35	-146.45
NTPC	120.55	-0.95
ONGC	147.40	3.25
PowerGrid Corp	194.75	-2.55
Reliance Ind	1457.65	0.75
State Bank	314.30	0.75
Sun Pharma	437.95	0.40
Tata Motors	172.20	-2.85
Tata Steel	409.15	9.65
TCS	2193.95	-6.95
Tech Mahindra	769.50	9.05
Titan	1298.80	-3.10
UltraTech Cement	4238.70	75.95
UPL	594.25	5.70
Vedanta	157.60	4.55
Wipro	256.60	-2.00
YES Bank	66.15	-0.45
Zee Entertainment	296.10	-13.40

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit equals given at 4 p.m. on November 4

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	70.57	70.89
Euro	78.78	79.14
British Pound	91.20	91.62
Japanese Yen (100)	65.06	65.36
Chinese Yuan	10.04	10.09
Swiss Franc	71.42	71.75
Singapore Dollar	52.00	52.23
Canadian Dollar	53.63	53.88
Malaysian Ringitt	17.00	17.09

Source:Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

November 04 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	50.5	(50.6)
22 ct gold (1 g)	3701	(3713)

# No prima facie evidence in whistle-blower plaint: Infosys

IT major’s shares surge up to 6% after it cites absence of supporting proof

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Information technology major Infosys on Monday said there was no prima facie evidence in the complaints made by anonymous whistle-blowers against the management. This led Infosys shares to surge up to 6% during Monday’s trade before settling for a 3% gain at the end of the day.

“The anonymous complaints make certain allegations. There is no supporting evidence that has been received by the company along with these anonymous complaints to substantiate the allegations,” Infosys said in a statement to the NSE.

“With respect to the anonymous complaints, there is no prima facie evidence that



The company said it was not in a position to determine the credibility of the anonymous complaints. •REUTERS

the company has received until date to corroborate any of the allegations made,” the statement said, adding that given the circumstances at this stage, where the anonymous complaints were still under investigation, the

company was not in a position to determine the concreteness, credibility and materiality of the anonymous complaints.

The audit committee of the company has retained the services of the law firm,

Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. to investigate the matter.

Before the appointment of the independent investigator, the audit committee began consultations with internal auditors Ernst & Young.

Processes reviewed

The internal auditors were given a mandate to review certain processes on the basis of the allegation in the anonymous complaints, the statement said.

“We will update the stock exchanges on the basis of key findings of the investigation reports once these are concluded,” said the company.

Infosys shares rose 3.05% to ₹709 apiece on the BSE.

# Ashok Leyland showcases BS VI trucks and buses

Vehicles to be rolled out from January 1, 2020

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Commercial vehicle maker Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) showcased its range of BS-VI trucks and buses built on modular platform.

ALL is the first original equipment manufacturer to meet the BS VI emission norms across the full range of heavy duty trucks, said Anuj Kathuria, COO, ALL.

The firm had started seeding the market and the vehicles would be rolled out from January 1, 2020. It was too early to talk about the production numbers or the pricing details, he said.

Stating that a slowdown was the time to incur capital expenditure, ALL chairman Dheeraj G. Hinduja said during the last slowdown in 2013, the firm had invested



Anuj Kathuria

₹1,500-₹2,000 crore.

“This financial year, our capex will be close to ₹2,000 crore but predominantly in core business, BS VI and the modular platform. Going forward, it will come down to ₹500-₹600 crore per year, which is the normal investment,” he said.

Drawing a parallel to the 2013 slowdown, he said the firm had gained market share in the bus and medi-

um and heavy commercial vehicle segment. ALL’s share now stands at 31%.

Mr. Hinduja said the firm would enter new markets such as Russia, Indonesia and Malaysia as large distributors had evinced interest.

Currently, it was exporting products to Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, West Asia, Bhutan, the east and west African markets.

“We will be entering Russia in the next 12 months and have identified a local assembler to take our franchise,” he said.

Mr. Hinduja said the firm’s vision was to be ranked among the top 10 global firms from the present 24th position. It calls for producing about four lakh vehicles a year. Last year, ALL sold two lakh units.

# Sensex closes at new high, Nifty nears 12,000-mark

HDFC, ICICI Bank lead BSE pack

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The benchmark equity indices rose for the seventh straight session on Monday, with the 30-share Sensex closing at a new all-time, high even as the broader Nifty again came close to breaching the 12,000-mark in intraday trading.

The benchmark Sensex gained 136.93 points or 0.34% to close at 40,301.96, surpassing the earlier closing high of 40,267.62 touched on June 3. In the last 7 trading sessions, the index has surged 1,300 points. The 50-share Nifty rose 50.7 points, or 0.43%, to 11,941.3.

“Positive factors like decent earnings season so far,

better-than-expected festive sales, hopes of stimulus from the government and continued FII inflows helped improve sentiment,” said Siddhartha Khemka, head, Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net sellers on Monday at ₹138.53 crore.

However, FPIs were net buyers at ₹12,368 crore in October, the highest monthly net purchases since April. Gains in Sensex were led by HDFC, Infosys and ICICI Bank. Investor sentiment was also lifted by the positive trend in global markets on the back of optimism over an interim deal in the ongoing U.S.-China trade talks.

## INTERVIEW | DHEERAJ HINDUJA

# Pre-buy may buoy industry, says ALL chairman

‘Seeing some improvement in LCV sales; prospective buyers making enquiries, there’s some positivity’

RAGHUVIR SRINIVASAN  
N. ANAND

*The fourth quarter is always very strong in this industry and with the transition to BS VI happening, the pre-buy expected in Q2/Q3, might happen in the next few months, says Dheeraj Hinduja, chairman, Ashok Leyland, in a chat. Excerpts:*

**Are we seeing a structural shift in the industry with ICVs growing faster than heavy vehicles?**

■ There is definitely change in heavy vehicles demand with efficiency gains from GST and with higher axle load norms. As a result, we are seeing decline in this segment.

The fall in ICVs (intermediate commercial vehicles) has not been as drastic as in the heavier segment. Our

market share in ICV is 21%. So we have quite a lot of headroom for growth.

**How is the industry right now and when do you see a turnaround?**

■ It is difficult to say because everyone had planned for this year to be a very strong pre-buy year.

But, due to a number of events, the markets have become negative, something which none of the original

equipment manufacturers expected.

But one issue was the availability of finance in the system. We have met quite a number of financiers and they are giving us the feeling that the worst is behind us and that they are willing to finance vehicles once again.

As soon as that changes and the people have the availability of funds to buy, things should start picking up. The fourth quarter is always a very strong quarter in this industry and with the transition to BS VI happening, the pre-buy that we were expecting in Q2/Q3 might happen in the next few months.

There’s been some im-



**We may not be able to liquidate the entire inventory. Today, the inventory is back to the normal level we keep**

provement in LCV sales. A lot of people are making more enquiries with finance firms and that’s increasing. If that’s anything to go by, then

there is some element of positivity, but it will take some time. It will not happen in November.

**What’s your inventory like right now and how do you plan to liquidate it?**

■ It is very difficult for any one to predict how many vehicles are needed by the end of this year. Undoubtedly, there will be a certain level of inventory left over. I don’t think we’ll be able to liquidate the entire inventory. But, we have created a separate project team that would focus on transition from BS IV to BS VI and the inventory. Today, the inventory is back to the normal level we keep.

# IOB Q2 loss widens on higher bad loans provision

Net NPAs dip to 9.84% in Sept. quarter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

State-owned Indian Overseas Bank’s (IOB) second-quarter net loss widened to ₹2,253.64 crore from ₹487.26 crore last year, due to higher provisions for bad loans.

The Chennai-headquartered bank had made a provision of ₹2,600 crore for bad debts in the second quarter.

Overall provisions increased to ₹2,996.04 crore in the second quarter from ₹2,016.6 crore in the same quarter last year.

IOB, which is under RBI’s Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) measure, said its gross non-performing assets (NPAs) stood at ₹28,673.95 crore at the end of the September quarter, compared to ₹37,109.96 crore in the

same period last year.

“The percentage of net NPAs came down to 9.84% in the second quarter from 11.04% in the June quarter,” Karnam Sekar, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, CEO, Indian Overseas Bank, said in a press conference.

PCA framework

He pointed out that the bank had to bring new NPAs down to 6% to meet one of the criteria to come out of PCA. This means the bank has to reduce the net NPA by ₹4,500 crore, which Mr. Sekar was confident of achieving in the next quarter through a slew of recovery measures.

He also said the other criterion of being profitable, to come out of PCA, would be achieved by March 2020.

# RBI tightens norms for NBFC liquidity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has tightened the liquidity management framework for non-banking financial firms to strengthen their asset-liability management following the liquidity crisis faced by these firms in the past year.

As per the new norms – applicable to all non-deposit taking NBFCs with an asset size of ₹100 crore and above, systemically important Core Investment Companies and all deposit taking NBFCs irrespective of asset size – the net cumulative mismatches for 1-7 days, 8-14 days, and 15-30 days shall not exceed 10%, 10% and 20% of the cumulative cash outflows in the respective time buckets. The RBI also mandated liquidity coverage ratios.

# HDFC profit rises 61% on one-off gains

Gruh stake sale spurs bottomline

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

HDFC Ltd. reported a 61% increase in its standalone net profit to ₹3,961.53 crore for the second quarter of the current financial year, compared with the ₹2,467.08 crore reported during the year-earlier period.

The profit was boosted by a one-time pre-tax gain of ₹1,627 crore from sale of stake in Gruh Finance and also dividend income of ₹1,070 crore. However, the impact of gain was partially offset by the ₹320-crore mark-to-market loss for RBL Bank stake and deferred tax asset mark-down of ₹240 crore.

“Our total loan approvals increased 14% for individual loans and disbursement growth was 12%. Total loan growth on AUM basis was 13% during this period,” said



Keki Mistry

Keki Mistry, vice-chairman and CEO, HDFC Ltd.

Mr. Mistry said the lender had been cautious and selective on non-individual loans.

“Our focus continues to be on affordable housing. This segment continues to do well. [As much as] 36% of the loans that we gave, in numbers, during this period were to economically weaker sections or lower income groups,” he said.

# Sundram Fasteners profit dips 36% on lower sales

Lower production dents revenue

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Sundram Fasteners Ltd. (SFL), part of the \$8.5-billion TVS Group, reported a 35.8% drop in its standalone net profit for the second quarter ended September 2019 to ₹71.07 crore, following a drop in sales due to slowdown in commercial and passenger vehicles segments.

During the period under review, the company’s revenue from operations declined to ₹766.82 crore from ₹998.62 crore on account of lower production.

Domestic sales were lower at ₹450 crore against ₹631.59 crore recorded during the corresponding year-ago period.

Export sales also slipped



to ₹290.88 crore from ₹334.76 crore, said the company in a statement.

Standalone revenue from operations for the half year ended September 2019 included exports of ₹639 crore (₹656 crore). Other income included net foreign exchange gain of ₹3.47 crore against ₹20.16 crore.

The board declared an interim dividend of ₹1.35 per share for the year 2019-20.

# Tata Trusts’ tax liability may surge

I-T Dept., which cancelled trusts’ registration, says reports of demand notice untrue

PIYUSH PANDEY  
SHARAD VYAS  
MUMBAI

Tata Trusts, the dominant shareholders of Tata Sons, will see their tax liability shooting up significantly after the Income Tax (I-T) Department cancelled their registration.

The department has invoked Section 115 (TD) of the I-T Act, a special provision introduced in 2016 with respect to certain category of trusts.

Additional income tax

Under Section 115 (TD), a trust whose registration is cancelled is required to pay tax on its “accreted” or past exempted income.

The section deals with additional income tax if the trust converts or merges into

a non-charitable trust, or if it gets dissolved and fails to transfer its assets/liabilities.

**Surrendered registration** Tata Trusts’ contention is that they had in 2015 surrendered, on their own volition, their registration under the I-T Act and decided not to claim the associated tax exemptions.

A Tata Trusts’ spokesperson in an e-mail response said, “The trusts have not received any demand notice from the Income Tax Department pursuant to the cancellation.

“We have already stated that the trusts are examining the order and will take necessary next steps in accordance with the law. The trusts have effective legal options to vindicate their grie-

vances against the order both factually and legally.”

Anil Singhvi, chairman, I-Can Investment Advisors, felt that the big question was why the Tata Trusts, being a public charitable trust, would give up exemptions when it was doing public good. “I don’t understand why a public charitable trust will give up its exemptions when people seek exemptions for doing charity.

“The Charity Commissioner should be asking why the Trust is giving up exemptions that it enjoyed for over 30-40 years as they are not discretionary or private trusts. “What is the point of paying the highest rate of taxation of over 42% to the government by giving up the exemptions, when they are doing a good job,” Mr. Singh-

vi told *The Hindu*.

According to I-T officials, reports of sending a demand notice, amounting to several thousand crores, to the Tata Trusts are not true. The provision of a demand for tax on accumulated income is done only in the case of an assessment and not in the case of a cancellation of registration.

“There is no question of sending a demand notice and reports to this effect are untrue.

“We are awaiting their response to the order, which could be in the nature of an appeal against what the trust thinks is contentious, whether it is to do with the freezing of assets or date from which the cancellation may take effect,” said a person in the I-T Department.

# Tata Global Beverages to change nomenclature

Firm eyes ₹10,000-crore in turnover

INDRANI DUTTA  
KOLKATA

By March 2020, Tata Global Beverages Ltd. (TGBL) expects to become Tata Consumer Products Ltd., emerging as an FMCG company with a portfolio of food products and marking a significant expansion beyond its present play in the beverage segment only.

It is now undergoing the process of a scheme of arrangement with Tata Chemicals Ltd. (TCL).

“We expect an expeditious closure (of the scheme)...before March 2020, but not everything is in our hands,” Ajay Misra, managing director and CEO, TGBL, told *The Hindu* after addressing shareholders at a meeting convened by the

(NCLT). Under the proposed arrangement, TCL’s consumer products business will be demerged in favour of TGBL. This will enable TGBL, which now has major brands such as Tata Tea and Tetley, to add to its portfolio, the foods brands of TCL like Tata Salt and Tata Sampann. TGBL is a global company and there is an export market for all these products, he told shareholders. The results of the merger are expected to flow to the new company within 18 months post regulatory approvals. Efforts will be made to hit the ₹10,000-crore-mark in turnover [from about ₹7,251 crore for TGBL in 2018-19], executive director and group CFO L. Krishnakumar told *The Hindu*.



VASUDHA RAI

When I hear about any new “wonder ingredient”, I regard it with a healthy amount of scepticism. For me, the best beauty ingredients are those that have stood the test of time – fruit acids, vitamin C, niacinamide. But what really piqued my curiosity about bakuchiol was that it was touted to be a retinol replacement.

Among all cult skincare additives, retinol is the one I don't really enjoy. I'm not sure it works very well for Indian women, because our primary concern is pigmentation and not wrinkles. I use a very mild retinol product, Zelens Power A, which contains three different types in an oil base, but even this I use no more than once or twice a week. So when I heard about bakuchiol I was more than interested, because it gives the same effects

# Better with bakuchiol

Find out why everyone is talking about skincare's new wonder ingredient, which is touted as a milder, yet effective, alternative to retinol

**Indian roots** (Left) The bakuchiol seeds and (below) the Herbivore Bakuchiol Retinol Alternative Serum • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Kiran Kaur Sethi, Delhi-based, Columbia-educated, integrative skin, aesthetic and wellness expert. She explains that not only does it boost collagen, it reduces the enzymes that break down collagen and elastin. “It also reduces inflammation and DHT receptor activity,” she says. DHT is an androgen which causes acne and balding, so Sethi thinks that it may even have applications on the scalp.

As far as its effects on vitiligo are concerned, she explains that there is a compound called psoralen in these seeds. “It makes you super sensitive to the sun, you tan and the colour patches on the skin become normal.” She also talks about a psolaren-induced therapy where this ingredient is applied on the skin, and then exposed for 20 minutes in UVA light. “It helps

with psoriasis, some types of cancers and eczema.” Even though there are many studies done on this wonder ingredient, all of them are in-vitro. “Only when we see large-scale studies on humans can we actually confirm it is indeed as wonderful as it seems.”

**Tried and tested**  
After looking at the



reviews of various products, I settled on the Herbivore Bakuchiol Retinol Alternative Serum. The first few ingredients (or the only ones that matter) include aloe, glycerin, bakuchiol 4%, with 1% PHA (poly-hydroxy acids). I have been trying the serum for a month without my usual exfoliants. The first week, I didn't see any difference, but after two weeks, my skin felt butter-smooth, without using a potent exfoliant like Biologique Recherche's Lotion P50. The best part was that it did it without any irritation. In addition, I noticed that even when I used the product without adding moisturiser on top, my skin felt hydrated in the morning. However, I don't know if these effects are because of the bakuchiol or PHAs, which are very sophisticated and effective exfoliants.

If you want to layer your bakuchiol product, the options are aplenty. “It is safe to be mixed with other ingredients except something which has a metallic ion like a copper isolate,” says Sethi. I have combined it with vitamin C, a niacinamide cream, and hyaluronic acid, and it has worked well every time. But even though it makes my skin look good with short use, the jury is still out on the long-term effects. Sure it makes the skin smooth and glowing, but can it erase long-standing signs of sun damage? Or soften acne scarring? Or reduce deep-seated frown lines? Only time will tell.

#DELHIMOVES

## Off-ice engagement

The Indian Women's Ice Hockey team is currently entirely composed of women of Leh – but some of them are based in Delhi

VANGMAYI PARAKALA

Noor Jahan, the 29-year-old goalkeeper of the Indian Women's Ice Hockey team, is finding breathing difficult. She has spent over eight years in Delhi, before recently moving back to her hometown, Leh. But coming back to the city on Thursday, she says she feels like she's choking.

On October 31st, Noor, along with her teammates, Diskit Chonzom Angmo, 23, and Tsewang Chuskit was on stage at the Ambience Mall in Gurugram as part of global sportswear brand Under Armour's #IndiaWill campaign that tells the stories of sportspersons who have overcome all odds. The managing director of Under Armour India, Tushar Goculdas, moderated a brief session with them, spotlighting their



**Puck up** (Clockwise from top) A player of the Indian Women Ice Hockey team in action; Diskit Chonzom Angmo; and Noor Jahan • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

struggles in sticking with a hardly recognised sport. Later, Under Armour announced that they would kit out the team with winter gear for tournaments and training.

Currently, all of the team's players are from Ladakh. Noor, who is doing her PhD in art conversation from the National Museum Institute in the capital, clarifies that while people from around the country try out, currently it's by chance that those from Leh have made the cut.

In 2008, Noor had moved to Delhi for college. She was

first at the Delhi College of Arts and Commerce, and later, finished a Masters from IP University. Through these years, she would run near the Ridge in North Campus, where she'd stayed. It was something she did only because she liked to, and because it gave her a break from her daily routine. It wasn't because of a responsibility towards the team either – it didn't even exist formally until 2016. Today, back in Leh, she continues on her evening-run routine, after a long day of writing her thesis. “Ladakh is quite beautiful,

so this is my break [from work],” she says.

But Diskit, who recently completed her undergraduate degree in English Literature at Daulat Ram College, and stays in the capital is preparing to write the UPSC examinations. “I have to deal with [the pollution] because I have to study,” she says. It's the gym that keeps her going.



The team, spread across the country in order to pursue either their education or career, gets to train together only twice a year – first over the summer, when there's no ice for them to practise on; and second during season, when they train and meet for tournaments.

Through the year therefore, they all train independently. Chuskit, 25, who recently finished her masters in Urdu from The University of Jammu made sure to take part in local volleyball and football tournaments to keep active. She also worked out in her room by watching YouTube videos – especially ones of stickhandling drills to hone her control for when she got back in the rink. “Also, I'm from a village [near Leh], so when I'm back home just working in the fields [with family] is quite the workout in itself,” Chuskit adds.

Lately, their coaches have started sending them regular fitness schedules, and the players send back videos of specific activities to show how



far they've progressed.

Noor says her runs also help her in her field work. “I work mostly in monasteries, and these are hardly at flat grounds.” Climbing up to a mountain to get to the site itself requires a level of fitness. “The days when we're actually doing the restoration work, we work just with our hands...on those days, I make sure I get out for an evening run,” she adds.

In Leh, they are forced to train outdoors on natural ice rinks. This lack of infrastructure is not as big a problem in Delhi, with a few indoor ice rinks available – but there's also the problem of high AQI numbers that give them better reason to stay indoors. “If there's one plus point to not having proper infrastructure [back in Leh],” says Diskit, “is that it lets us have more stamina indoors.”

PLACES

### Changes with the weather

How hotel chefs in the city take their menus from summer to winter



Around Diwali, when winter was traditionally declared, chefs put out new menus in the city. Here, city chefs in hotels tell us what they keep in mind while building them.

Hotel bookings

Alfred Prasad, the mentor chef at Omya, The Oberoi New Delhi, says hotels take into account occupancy that goes up to 80% or higher, and the fact that the balance of in-house guests who eat in the hotel goes up, with many more people from abroad. This also means that hotels must keep in mind what's happening internationally. Right now, people prefer a relaxed dining experience. There's also the reflection of the financial times and a concern for the environment, so small plates are preferable to large servings, to cut down on wastage.

Nuts and seeds

Gravies are heavier and there's an acceptance for those that are nut-based, says Prasad. Omya has Badami Murgh – chicken in almond-onion sauce with caramelised onion, for instance. Similarly, Arun Sundararaj, the Executive Chef at the Taj Mahal, New Delhi, talks of changing up room amenities as well – from chocolate to amla candy or the jaggery-sesame-seed rewari.

Full-flavoured ingredients

“We pick ingredients at their maximum flavour,” says Sahil Arora, the Executive Chef at Shangri-La's Eros Hotel. “Take sweet potato: Their quality and taste are at their peak now.” Expect seasonal produce, with more tubers, like turnip, baby spinach, peaches and plums. Because hotels have the advantage of global procurement networks and supply chains, there will also be ingredients harvested abroad at this time – white truffles, for instance. Shangri-La will have a truffle promotion at Sorrento, November 21 to 28.

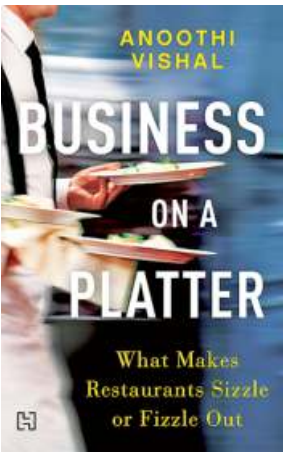
Grills and smoked foods

“These give you the feeling of being out in the open, around a bonfire,” says Sundararaj. His hotel would have opened out the al fresco dining area of contemporary Indian restaurant Varq, for snacks and drinks, but are waiting for the pollution levels to improve. People are open to a little more fat in the food as well and ask for comfort food, like sarson ka saag, says the chef, adding that they do takes on these, like the gajar ka halwa hot soufflé.

SUNALINI MATHEW

PAGES

### Business of food



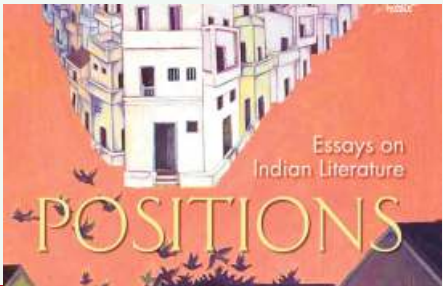
Food writer and founder of the Great Delhi Pop-Up Anoothi Vishal launched her new book recently. Called *Business on a Platter*, the book deconstructs the complex nature of the restaurant business, with an objective look at the direction it's taking. With observations and learnings amassed over two decades, Anoothi analyses businesses that survived and those that didn't, while also touching upon successful turnarounds. She traces

the history of food retail from the time of the Mughals, to contemporary India.

From Hachette India, at ₹499; available in bookstores and online

Contact us at [delhimetro@thehindu.co.in](mailto:delhimetro@thehindu.co.in)

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



LITERATURE

Book launch

This evening, Prof Indra Nath Choudhury will release the book *Positions: Essays on Indian Literature*, authored by academic and poet K. Satchidanandan. The book features a selection of the latter's essays on Indian literature, written over the past 25 years. Later, the author will be in discussion about the work.

**VENUE:** Kamaladevi Complex, IIC  
**TIME:** 6:30 p.m.



FOOD

New menu

The Wine Company, a wine bistro, has a new menu with both vegetarian and non-vegetarian options. The veg menu has Wombok Momos, Sriracha Hummus, Zucchini Kulcha, Jackfruit Tacos, and Barley and Quinoa Salad. The non-veg platter includes Chicken Liver Pate, Fried Fish Soft Tacos, Twice Baked Crab Soufflé, and more.

**VENUE:** Cyber Hub, DLF Cyber City, Gurugram  
**TIME:** 12:30-4 p.m. and 5 p.m.-1 a.m.

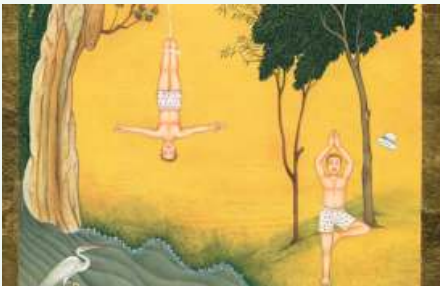


DANCE

Mohiniyattam

The International Academy of Mohiniyattam and IHC are hosting the 10th Swathi Thirunal Festival. Artist Jayaprabha Menon will perform a solo Mohiniyattam recital to Swathi Thirunal compositions. Later, Purvadhanasree will feature in a Vilasiniyattam performance. Dr. Aditi Sharma Garg will also sing Hindustani vocals.

**VENUE:** Stein Auditorium, India Habitat Centre  
**TIME:** 7 p.m.



ART

Miniatures collaboration

An ongoing show titled 'Like a Leaf in Autumn', showcases a suite of miniature paintings conceptualised by American photographer and poet Waswo X. Waswo and executed by R. Vijay, a miniature painter from Udaipur. The show features new and previously unseen paintings, which depict the foreigner's life in India.

**VENUE:** Gallery Espace, New Friends Colony  
**TIME:** 10 a.m. - 7 p.m.



GIG

Indie music

The Piano Man Jazz Club is hosting Esha & Prakriti live tonight. Gurugram-based Esha Gopinath Nair is a singer-songwriter and her musical palette ranges from RnB to indie pop. Delhi-based Prakriti Nanda is a guitarist and vocalist. Her playing style is influenced by musicians like John Mayer and John Butler.

**VENUE:** B 6-7/22 Safdarjung Enclave Market  
**TIME:** 9 p.m. - 11:55 p.m.

# Mind your language

Tech-based education company EnglishHelper makes the language experience a breeze in Government schools across India

AKILA KANNADASAN

It is time for English period for students of Class VII in Chennai Middle School, MGR Nagar. Instead of pulling out their textbooks from their bags and waiting for the teacher to walk in, the students sit facing a projector screen. Their textbook plays out on the screen and they sit glued to it, as a recorded voice reads out the spelling of the word ‘surrounded’ slowly, pausing after every letter. The boys and girls, dressed in maroon and cream-coloured uniforms, repeat after the voice in gusto. They will probably never forget the word’s spelling.

EnglishHelper, an education company, has made this possible. Its RightToRead initiative, launched in 2013, reads out English textbooks with the help of ReadToMe, powered by Artificial Intelligence. Says Sanjay Gupta, the company’s global CEO, “We learn languages in a multi-sensory way. Even before we learn to speak, we listen to sounds, relate it to everyday objects; we then move on to exposure to the written aspect – our software has been designed taking this multi-sensory aspect into account.”

Sanjay, who is based in Gurugram and has worked for large corporations in India and around the globe, decided to take the plunge into education in 2010. “I met Venkat Srinivasan, a Boston-based entrepreneur and cognitive scientist of Indian origin in 2009, who was working on an interesting technology for learning English,” he recalls. Venkat is the founder of EnglishHelper and when the two of them met again two years later, Sanjay decided to join the team full-time. “Our pilot programme, which launched in 2013, covered six states in India,” he explains. The programme has grown multi-fold today, reaching more than 3.5 million students across 15,000 schools, according to data shared by the company. Given this data-driven mission, for 2017-18, the team did impact analyses – with 20 schools in South Delhi Municipal Corporation, 10 schools in Uttar Pradesh and 11 schools in Telangana – across various grades.

EnglishHelper has a simple goal: to make the teaching and learning of En-



glish easier in Government schools. To do so, Sanjay says that all the school requires is “one computer and a projector”. He adds that the institution can have a dedicated room which students can take turns to make use of during their English class.

The company partners with various agencies to take its mission forward. These include the United States Agency for International Development. In Tamil Nadu, for instance, RightToRead was launched in partnership with American India Foundation. In certain districts

## BREAKING THE BARRIER

Sanjay hopes that by 2020, 20 million students in 100,000 schools use their RightToRead programme.

The software can be used offline and across multiple devices and systems, such as the PC, Linux, and Android.

Two years after the launch in 2013, the programme reached 5,000 schools in eight states, covering one million students.

In Maharashtra, RightToRead is being implemented in 65,000 schools, while the numbers stand at 300 in Tamil Nadu.



**ABCs of screen time**  
Some of the sessions done around the country •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

such as Thoothukudi, Kanyakumari, Tirunelveli and The Nilgiris, the programme is being sponsored by the local administration.

## The back-end

So, how does it work? Once the school partners with EnglishHelper, it can send its prescribed English textbooks to be worked on by their software. Once this is done, the teacher can teach lessons by projecting the book onto a screen, and the ReadToMe software will read out every word, the speed of which can be altered according to students’ needs. The control lies with teachers. “They can highlight words, change the pace of the recorded voice, translate words into

Tamil, and so on,” Sanjay explains.

And all this happens during the class’ English period. “Students can learn the language more easily and syllabus is covered as well,” he points out. He adds that teachers have been supportive: “Teachers are all for technology-enabled solutions,” he says, adding that the initiative has been able to do away with fear for the language among certain students.

Back at the Chennai Middle School, the class is almost over and the teacher asks a child to spell the new word they learnt. “S-u-r-r-o-u-n-d-e-d,” says a girl in two long braids, to applause from her classmates. She gets back to her seat, a smile forming on her lips.

## REVIEW



# Good to go

The TicWatch Pro by Mobvoi is an apt smartwatch to gauge your lifestyle and fitness

SUNALINI MATHEW

It has become almost an existential question now: do you really need a smartwatch? The short answer is yes. The long answer is that even if you are not fartlek-ing (interval training) it is best to have an exercise routine, and a device helps you to get excited about, say, doing a 4k in 30 minutes. Now to the Tic-Watch Pro from Mobvoi, a smart-watch (launched last year abroad) that took me time to get used to its bulk. On the bright side, it has a large screen, so it is easily readable.

The strap is leather on the outside and silicone on the inside, so sweat doesn’t ruin the leather. It has also got an IP68 rating i.e. the highest possible Ingress Protection, protecting against dust (the first number) and water (the second number). Drop the device into water up to 1.5 metres deep for half an hour and it should come out okay.

Powered by Wear OS by Google, it syncs easily with an Android device, so you get mobile notifications and can see messages and take calls. I didn’t find I needed to take a call on the device, because I used it for fitness and to keep a track of my lifestyle: to measure steps (generally set to target 10,000), exercise (at least 30 minutes) and check heart rate (should be between 60 and 100 at rest). It is helpful that it has GPS, so on a walk or

run, you don’t need to carry your phone. You can also download Spotify or Google Play Music.

One of the good things about the device is that even when the battery dies, it converts into a regular watch, so you can check on the time. There is also an essential mode which helps you save battery life. In this mode, it will only tell you the time and give you foot-steps. On regular smartphone mode though, you will get a day-and-a-half of juice, especially if you are constantly waking up the phone with a flick of the wrist (yes, there is gesture control).

I enjoyed that the watch detects a workout, so begins recording a run without you having to programme it. It also has a walking, freestyle workout, and cycling mode, though it once recorded that I’d cycled 60 miles in 60 minutes, which made me think I was The Flash. Unfortunately, it doesn’t have an interval workout mode, nor can you swim with it. But it will tell you what distance you’ve walked, your active hours and calories burnt.

The Find My Phone, Flashlight, FitSleep (that tracks sleep), and FitBreathe (you take a break and just breathe) options are useful. It’s a useful device, but at something over ₹20k, I’d have hoped to be able to take it into the pool too.

Priced at ₹22,999 and can be purchased from major online retailers

Please send your feedback and queries about all Wireless stories to [techknow@thehindu.co.in](mailto:techknow@thehindu.co.in)

## POOCH CAFE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## TIGER



## WUMO



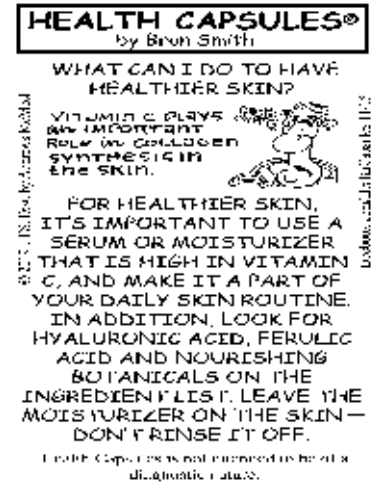
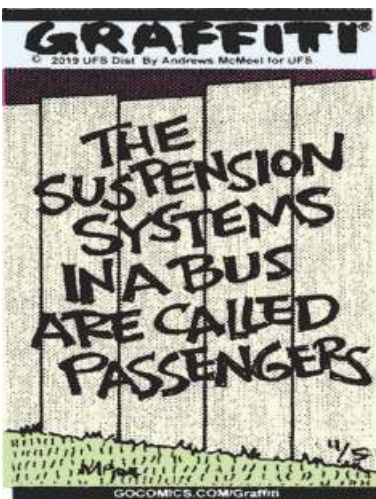
## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



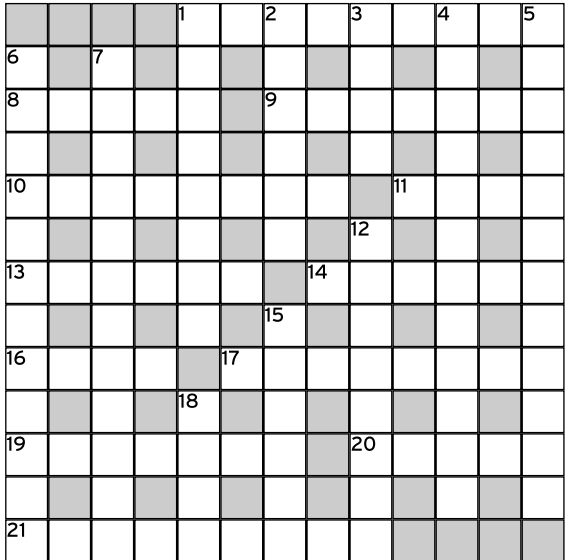
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBS



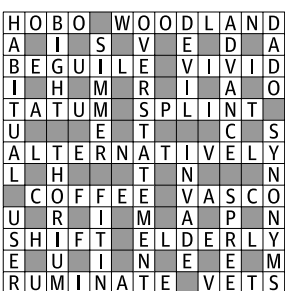
## THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13216



- optimistic (6)
- 3 Rigid circular band (4)
- 4 Reminder of the true state of affairs (7,5)
- 5 Special liking or preference (12)
- 6 Position affording a good view (7,5)
- 7 Motionless street entertainer (6,6)
- 12 Large choral work (8)
- 15 German port city and state (6)
- 18 Ship's company (4)

Solution will appear in The Hindu dated November 6, 2019.

Solution No. 13215



- Across
- 1 Medicated sweet (5,4)
- 8 Spirit in The Tempest (5)
- 9 Thick material with a raised pattern (7)
- 10 Three-hulled craft (8)
- 11 Flightless New Zealand bird (4)
- 13 Paid male escort (6)
- 14 Breakwater (6)

- 16 Way for pedestrians (4)
- 17 Musical note equal to half a minim (8)
- 19 For the time being (7)
- 20 Right-hand page of an open book (5)
- 21 Korean martial art (3,4,2)
- Down
- 1 Guilty (8)
- 2 Cheerful –