



FORMER PM MANMOHAN SINGH PART OF FIRST BATCH OF 550 PILGRIMS

Kartarpur opening tomorrow, Pak Army overrules Imran Khan: Passport needed

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

BARELY 48 hours before the first batch of Sikh pilgrims, including former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, takes the corridor to Kartarpur Sahib across the border, conflicting statements emerged from Pakistan's government and Army over a key requirement for Indians — a passport.

Hours after Pakistan's Army overruled an offer made by

Prime Minister Imran Khan that passports would not be required for Sikh devotees from India, its Foreign Office underscored the PM's decision.

Pakistan Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal tweeted, "As a special gesture, #Pakistan announced concessions on the auspicious occasion of 550th Birth Anniversary of #BabaGuruNanak to facilitate pilgrims." Faisal went on to claim that India had refused "these facilitative measures".

New Delhi, however, pointed

to the "conflicting reports" from Pakistan and said they will go by the pact signed between the two countries last month, which says passports will be needed but not visa.

India had earlier asked the Pakistan government to clarify whether Khan's offer, which he posted on his official Twitter account, has been operationalised. On Thursday, Pakistani media quoted Pakistan Army spokesperson Major General Asif Ghafoor as saying that passports

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EXPLAINED

Pak doublespeak angers Delhi

CONFLICTING STATEMENTS from Pakistan on passports for Sikh pilgrims from India expose the faultlines between its government and Army. While Delhi views the Kartarpur project as a pilgrimage corridor, it has been suspicious of Islamabad's intent and feels that the mask has slipped across the border with the Pakistan Army contradicting Prime Minister Imran Khan's offer — and photos and videos in Pakistan's publicity material showing pro-Khalistan elements.

Insurers may be allowed to offer OP treatment, gym & yoga membership

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

HEALTH INSURANCE holders are likely to get more wellness and preventive features, including outpatient (OP) consultations or treatments, pharmaceuticals, health check-ups and diagnostics and discount vouchers in gyms and yoga centres as part of the policy package.

"Insurers may endeavour promoting wellness amongst health insurance policy holders by offering health specific services provided by network providers or other empanelled hospitals and service providers," the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority (IRDAI) has said in its draft guidelines.

The services proposed include "outpatient consultations or treatments, pharmaceuticals, health check-ups/diagnostics", including discounts on these services by redeemable vouchers.

IRDAI has also proposed redeemable vouchers to obtain protein supplements and other

consumable health boosters, and membership in yoga centres or gymnasiums for participating in fitness activities. The draft norms also cover discounts on premiums and/ or increase in sums insured at the time of renewals based on the wellness regime followed by holders in the preceding policy period.

"The new proposals open up direct incentives to policy holders. But many of these will require monitoring to prevent unhealthy competition and misuse. Fraud monitoring and prevention steps will also become critical," said K K Srinivasan, former member, IRDAI. Some insurers now offer health check-ups and diagnostics as part of their coverage.

IRDAI has said that the increase in sum insured should be independent and not linked to cumulative bonus offered, if any.

The regulator has proposed that insurers should assess the pricing impact of wellness and preventive features offered, if any, and disclose them upfront under product filing guidelines

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THE REAL MESSAGE FROM RCEP PULLOUT
BY PRATAP BHANU MEHTA
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CENTRE ALERTS STATES ON AYODHYA
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For faster resolution, NBFCs to be brought under IBC purview

SANDEEP SINGH & SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

THE CENTRE is expected to notify rules under Section 227 of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code which will allow the National Company Law Tribunal to order a resolution plan for non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) too. At present, under IBC, financial institutions cannot be taken for resolution to NCLT.

A source in the government, who did not wish to be named, told The Indian Express, "The government is working to put in place regulations under the IBC to ensure resolution of stressed NBFCs and HFCs." Cases including that of DHFL is expected to gather pace once the section and rules are notified.

The notification will allow existing consortium of lenders

and the existing resolution professional to take the financial service provider or the NBFC to the NCLT and seek a resolution plan that is binding on all parties.

In the case of DHFL, while most stakeholders agreed for resolution, some bondholders and mutual funds were not in favour and had sought repayment of their full dues and filed cases in courts, sources familiar with the development said.

Once banks take an NBFC for resolution to the NCLT, cases filed by disparate creditors against the NBFC get nullified, paving the way for faster resolution. "What is currently holding up resolution in cases like DHFL, is that different creditors pursue recovery in their own ways. For instance, many bondholders move debt recovery tribunals fearing a haircut. Under the NCLT mechanism, once a

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VALLEY ANNOUNCES WINTER

Snowfall in Lal Chowk in the heart of Srinagar, Thursday. Shuaib Masoodi REPORT, PAGE 8

Govt revokes author Taseer's OCI card for hiding father's Pak origin

SHUBHAJIT ROY & DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

ACCUSING HIM of concealing the fact that his late father Salmaan Taseer was a Pakistani national, the government has revoked author Aatish Taseer's Overseas Citizen of India card. Taseer had published an article critical of Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Time magazine in May this year, calling him the "Divider-in-Chief".

A spokesperson for the Union Home Ministry Thursday said that Taseer, while submitting his PIO application, "concealed the fact of Pak origin of his late father". "Taseer was given the opportunity to submit his reply/objections regarding his PIO/OCI cards, but he failed to dispute the notice," the spokesperson said. "Thus, Aatish Ali Taseer becomes ineligible to hold an OCI card as per the Citizenship Act, 1955. He has clearly not complied with very basic requirements and

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Shiv Sena guards its MLAs in hotel as BJP calls on Governor



Security outside Hotel Rang Sharda in Bandra. Prashant Nadkar

VISHWAS WAGHMODE
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

TO KEEP its flock together while it drives a hard bargain with ally BJP over government formation in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena Thursday herded all its legislators into Rang Sharda, a three-star hotel in suburban Mumbai, less than four kilometres from the party headquarters.

While Sena said it would not accept anything less than the Chief Minister's post as a precondition to government formation, party chief Uddhav Thackeray retained space for reconciliation and said he did not want to break the pre-poll alliance.

The BJP, meanwhile, called on the Governor to apprise him of the political situation following the Assembly elections in which no party secured enough seats to form a government on its

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RELATED REPORTS
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Asthana case: Polygraph report says bribe claim appears truthful

JAY MAZOOMDAAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

A POLYGRAPH test conducted on Hyderabad businessman Satish Babu Sana, whose complaint led to the registration of a corruption case against former CBI special director Rakesh Asthana last year, has concluded that Sana's claim of paying a bribe through a businessman for protection in a 2016 case against meat exporter Moin

Qureshi appears to be truthful, The Indian Express has learnt.

The CBI has time until December 8 to complete its investigation in the case. The agency, it is learnt, has concluded a major part of the investigation and is awaiting replies to Letters Rogatory (LRs) sent to the US and UAE.

It is learnt that polygraph (lie-detector) tests were conducted on Sana on March 12 and 13. Tests were also conducted on

Sunil Mittal, father-in-law of alleged middleman Manoj Prasad, and accused Someshwar Srivastava, Prasad's brother, on March 8 and 13, respectively. Punit Kharbanda, a witness in the case, was tested twice, on March 7 and April 5.

The Forensic Psychological Assessment and Forensic Statement Analysis Report of the Central Forensic Science Laboratory, submitted in the

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Students' suicides: Centre recruits 1,176 counsellors for 635 Navodaya schools

RITIKA CHOPRA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

LESS THAN a year after an investigation by The Indian Express found that Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas (JNVs) had witnessed 49 student suicides from 2013 to 2017, including that of 25 Dalit and tribal students, the government has hired 1,176 full-time counsellors for these residential

schools.

The Navodaya Vidyalaya Samiti (NVS), an autonomous body under the HRD Ministry tasked with running the JNVs, has recruited 634 women and 542 men to work as counsellors in 635 schools.

"For schools that have less than 250 students, we have deputed one counsellor in each. For those with more than 250, we

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After 12 yrs in jail, Faheem Ansari is out: Karkare told officials I was innocent

ZEESHAN SHAIKH
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

ACQUITTED NINE years ago after being accused of aiding the 26/11 terror attack but unable to leave prison till his sentencing in another case, 49-year-old Faheem Ansari walked out of Bareilly Central Jail last Wednesday. He has one big regret — the two men he wanted to meet most after his release are no longer alive.



Was acquitted of charge of aiding 26/11 terrorists

"The two men that I wanted to meet were lawyer Shahid Azmi who defended me in the 26/11 case and ATS Chief Hemant Karkare who had told officials that I was innocent. Sadly, both have fallen prey to the bullets of terrorists," Ansari said while sitting in the Mumbai office of the Jamiat-e-Ulema Maharashtra, hours after he reached the city.

A calligrapher who used to work at his brother's printing

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PAGE 1 ANCHOR

JOHNSON T A
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 7

RECORDS HAVE revealed that Sumalatha Ambarish, the well-known actor who defeated the then Karnataka chief minister H D Kumaraswamy's film-star son Nikhil Kumaraswamy in the Lok Sabha polls in April, was among those whose phones were allegedly tapped illegally during that period by Bengaluru Police, sources told The Indian Express.

Investigations show that Sumalatha, who won the Mandya seat against great odds, and a group of her supporters —

actors Darshan and Yash, local political leaders and their associates — were among those whose calls were intercepted by clubbing them with persons being investigated for crimes like sandalwood smuggling and betting, sources said.

"The widespread phone-tapping of those in the Sumalatha group seems to have occurred since there were concerns in the (Congress-JDS) administration on which way the elections would turn," sources said.

The calls of Nirmalananda Swami, a prominent seer of the Vokkaliga community that dominates the Mandya constituency,

were also illegally intercepted in a similar manner as part of a larger political strategy to gain an upper hand over the Sumalatha group, it has emerged.

In August, the new BJP state government had ordered a full-fledged CBI investigation after a preliminary probe by Bengaluru Police revealed that largescale illegal tapping had allegedly occurred during the tenure of the previous JD(S)-Congress coalition government.

During campaigning in March, audio clips of phone conversations of members in her camp were released in the pub-



Her phone 'tapped during Lok Sabha elections'

lic domain, and Sumalatha had complained to the Election Commission that she was being placed under telephone surveillance. "We suspected that our phones were being tapped at the time of the elections but who and how it was happening was not clear to us. The CBI probe should bring out the facts," Sumalatha had said at the time.

"I stated during the campaign itself that the government machinery was being misused. If it has been done, it is definitely something wrong. We have to see what happens," she had said.

Sumalatha is the wife of M H Ambarish, the former film star

turned Congress and JD(S) mass leader from Mandya. She defeated CM Kumaraswamy's son with the support of Congress rebels and the BJP.

Kumaraswamy has denied links to the alleged illegal tapping of phones by the Bengaluru police during his tenure. "Phone tapping has occurred during the tenure of every chief minister. Let them investigate me if they want. There are no worries," he said after the scandal emerged in public.

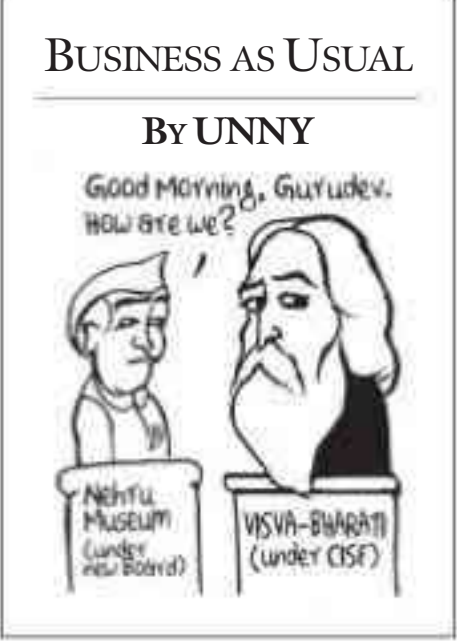
While a regular investigation into a major red Sanders smuggling gang was used as a cover to carry out much of the surveil-

lance against political persons in the period of the Lok Sabha polls, probes into cricket betting and other illegal rackets were also used as a cover to snoop, sources said.

The CBI has quizzed several police officers linked to a technical cell of Bengaluru Police — and former police chief Alok Kumar — over the last few weeks to obtain statements on the extent of phone tapping done in an "unauthorized, illegal, unwanted manner".

The CBI has also conducted searches at the home of Kumar, as much of the alleged

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WORLD

TRUMP ASKED HIS A-G TO SAY NO FAULT IN UKRAINE CALL P 16



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WEB EXCLUSIVE



BRU MIGRANTS WITHDRAW ROAD BLOCKADE AFTER STATE RESTORES FOOD SUPPLY

Eight days after they started an indefinite road blockade in North Tripura, Bru migrants living in relief camps here withdrew their agitation Thursday, after Deputy Chief Minister Jishnu Devvarman announced restoring of ration supplies to the camps

VIDEO OF THE DAY



SRINAGAR, GULMARG GET COVERED IN SNOW

The winter chill has set in early this year in Kashmir

FULL COVERAGE



'CALL ME IF READY TO GIVE CM'S POST'

Sena chief said Thursday he did not intend to break the alliance

EXPRESS AUDIO

The Ayodhya series: Bracing for a verdict

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

As the Supreme Court verdict on the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case draws closer, reporters unpack how political leaders, UP police and Ayodhya locals are preparing to curb any communal tension

FROM PAGE ONE

Asthana case

third week of April, concluded that Sana and Kharbanda appear to be truthful about the delivery of money for the purpose of getting a favourable CBI decision.

On Mittal and Srivastava, the test report furnished no opinion because their statements were insufficient, not revealing information about the incident under investigation.

In January this year, the CBI had moved an application in Delhi's Patiala House Courts, seeking consent for conducting polygraph tests on the accused and the complainant in the case. While others consented, Manoj Prasad, accused of accepting the bribe money, refused to undergo a polygraph test.

Under the law, Article 20(3) of the Constitution and Section 161(2) of the Code of Criminal Procedure provide protection to an accused from self-incrimination. When *The Indian Express* sought comments from Asthana's lawyer Amit Anand Tiwari on the polygraph test, he said: "I have no knowledge of any polygraph test. I didn't deal with the trial court matter... But the issue (polygraph test) never came up in any of the hearings in the High Court. They (CBI) have submitted a status report (to court) but I do not know the contents of the said report."

The CBI spokesperson is yet to respond to a query on the status of the polygraph test results.

On October 9, the Delhi High Court gave the CBI two months to wrap up the investigation. This is the second extension after the court allowed four months in May. Earlier, in January, the court refused to quash the FIR against Asthana and asked the CBI to conclude the probe within 10 weeks.

The case against Asthana, alleging criminal conspiracy, corruption and criminal misconduct under sections of Prevention of Corruption Act, was registered in

October 2018.

Sana had alleged that he paid a bribe through Dubai-based businessman Manoj Prasad to get relief in a case based on an FIR lodged by the CBI against meat exporter Moin Akhtar Qureshi and others. In the Qureshi matter, there were allegations of receipt of illegal gratification from various persons for securing favours from influential public servants.

The then CBI director Alok Verma and his deputy Asthana had accused each other of corruption. Both were sent on forced leave by the government in October 2018. On January 10, 2019, Verma was removed as CBI director and, a week later, Asthana was transferred to the Bureau of Civil Aviation Security.

Aatish Taseer

hidden information," the spokesperson said. The government has invoked Clause 7A of the OCI card rules: "Provided further that no person, who or either of whose parents or grandparents or great grandparents is or had been a citizen of Pakistan, Bangladesh or such other country as the Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify, shall be eligible for registration as an Overseas Citizen of India Cardholder under this sub-section."

According to sources, the government had sent a notice to Taseer in September and had given him 21 days to respond. But, Taseer, who received the notice on the 20th day, responded through a lawyer in 24 hours.

Responding to the Home Ministry's tweet, and posting a screenshot of the reply from the Indian Consulate in New York, Taseer said on Twitter: "This is untrue. Here is the Consul General's acknowledgment of my reply. I was given not the full 21 days, but rather 24 hours to reply. I've heard nothing from the ministry since."

Taseer was given an OCI card

Kartarpur opening tomorrow

will be needed for Indian pilgrims, and there will be "no compromise on security or sovereignty".

With the corridor opening Saturday, the Ministry of External Affairs' official spokesperson Raveesh Kumar accused Pakistan of creating "confusion" at the "last moment".

"You must have seen conflicting reports coming from Pakistan on what is required to undertake the visit. Even today, that sense of confusion continued as there was a statement from the Pakistan Foreign Office (FO), while DG ISPR tweeted something else," Kumar said.

"As of now, we are aware that there is a bilateral document which has been signed between India and Pakistan which very clearly specifies the documents which are required to undertake the visit. Any amendment to the existing MoU, it can't be done unilaterally. It requires consent of both parties," he said. He asserted that for the time being, the Indian side will go by the requirements as stipulated by the existing MoU. "So those undertaking the journey on November 9 and also later should go by what is contained in the MoU till it gets revised or amended," the MEA spokesperson said.

Kumar also "condemned" Pakistan for "undermining" the spirit of the corridor by releasing videos and propaganda material depicting pro-Khalistan elements. "They should remove the video, and abide by the commitments given by them that no anti-India elements will be given space during the pilgrimage," he said.

"From the beginning we have gone ahead with this initiative with a very open mind, very constructively because we realised that it involves the sentiments of the Sikh community and members of other religions, it involves matter of faith," Kumar said.

"We have been repeatedly assured by the Pakistani side during discussions that they will not allow anti-India elements, anti-India propaganda during the pilgrimage and during the event. They should now stick to the spirit under which they have agreed to this," he said.

Earlier in the day, the volte-face by Pakistan on passports for Sikh pilgrims was reported in its domestic media. "As we have a security link, the entry would be a legal one under a permit on a passport-based identity. There will be no compromise on security or sovereignty," Dawn News quoted the Army spokesperson as telling *Hum News* channel.

On November 1, Khan, while announcing the completion of the corridor, had tweeted that he had waived two requirements relating to passport and registration 10 days in advance for Sikh pilgrims coming to Kartarpur from India.

He said that Sikh pilgrims from India would only need a valid ID to travel to Kartarpur. The service fee of US\$ 20 for those coming for the inaugural ceremony and on the 550th birth anniversary of the Sikh Guru on November 12 was also abolished. The MEA spokesperson, meanwhile, said that

on the basis of the fact that he is a child of an Indian national. He was first given a PIO card in 1999 and then in 2016, he was issued the OCI card, following the merger of the PIO and OCI cards.

While his father Salmaan Taseer was a Pakistan national, his mother Tavleen Singh, senior journalist and columnist at *The Indian Express*, raised him as a single mother and the sole legal guardian as they were never married and were estranged. Salmaan Taseer was a prominent politician of Pakistan and was assassinated for raising his voice against his country's blasphemy law.

Aatish Taseer holds a British passport and a Green Card in the US. He grew up in India, but he was never stamped an Indian visa. Singh, his mother, had given an affidavit in 1982 that she was the sole guardian. He never met his father till he was 21, in 2002, and after a few years, in 2005-06, he was estranged again from his father. Salmaan Taseer was born in undivided India, in Shimla, and his mother was a British passport-holder.

Insurers

or other applicable norms.

According to the draft norms, insurers should not publish trade names or logos of third party merchandise in any of their advertisements, but may refer to the product or service offered in generic terms. However, insurers should disclose specific items of products and services offered on their website and provide a link in their advertisements and contracts.

"Insurers shall not accept any liability towards quality of the products or services offered by third parties and shall specify upfront that the said third party is responsible for providing the products or services stipulated under the wellness features of the product and insurer is not liable for any defects or deficiencies," the draft norms state.

Insurers should also ensure that service providers of wellness and preventive programmes have an appropriate mechanism to discharge their obligations by offering the agreed services or products. "Other than the monetized value of the rewards points redeemed by the policy holders, no payments should be made by insurers to the third party merchants," the norms state.

Insurers should not receive any consideration amount for offering third party products and services, they state. Third party merchant-wise and product-wise payouts should be disclosed in the

annual public disclosures by insurers. "The costs towards the wellness services should be factored into the pricing of the underlying health insurance product and price factored should be disclosed in all insurance advertisements wherever wellness features are disclosed and promoted," the norms state.

In family floater plans, insurers should clearly define and disclose the manner in which accrual and redemption of wellness benefits is considered for all members covered, IRDAI has said.

Insurers should also clearly specify in the policy contract whether the accrued benefits can be carried forward or not when the policy is renewed — and the period of validity of accrued benefits. "The benefit accrued should be at periodic intervals at rates/amounts declared upfront at the commencement of the policy and should not be linked to any dynamic factor such as interest rate, etc. The same should be specified in the policy document," the norms state.

Insurers should notify the benefits accrued to a policy holder under the wellness feature at periodic intervals — at least once in a year, the norms state.

During FY 2017-18, insurance companies collected Rs 37,029 crore as health insurance premium, registering a growth of 21.8 per cent over FY 2016-17. Five states — Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi UT and Gujarat — contributed 68 per cent of total health insurance premium, IRDAI says.

According to IRDAI's Annual Report 2017-18, the insurance sector covered 48 crore people under the health segment, out of which 36 crore were covered under various government schemes. The industry processed 1.6 crore health claims during that year.

Shiv Sena

own. It has been two weeks since the results.

In its editorial, the Sena mouthpiece Saamna indirectly accused the BJP of poaching newly-elected MLAs to form the new government. "Those who don't have anything to do with BJP or Hindutva are contacting the newly-elected MLAs and are using the language of thailly (bag). These complaints are rising."

While Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis remained at his official residence Varsha and met BJP MLAs and other party leaders, state BJP president Chandrakant Patil met Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari at Raj

Bhawan. In the absence of support from its pre-poll alliance partner, the BJP appears to be exercising caution. Despite being the single largest party with 105 MLAs in the 288-strong Assembly, it did not stake claim to form the government.

After meeting the Governor, Patil said: "We met the Governor to brief him about the political developments since the formation of government was taking longer than normal. Various legal and constitutional implications were discussed. We informed the Governor that the election results showed people have given mandate for the formation of a BJP-Shiv Sena government."

State Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni also met the Governor shortly after the BJP leaders. An official in Raj Bhawan said, "The Governor was consulting legal and constitutional experts following political developments in state."

A senior Sena MLA, who was present at Thackeray's meeting with legislators at his residence Matoshree, said, "Uddhavji said he wants BJP to accept what has been decided before the Lok Sabha polls. He put the onus of keeping the alliance on the BJP, and asked BJP to honour the words given or break the alliance."

Uddhav simultaneously held out a threat to BJP and said if it formed the government without Sena, it would be the end of the saffron alliance. A Sena leader told *The Indian Express*: "We will defeat the BJP's Speaker candidate on the floor of the House."

Another legislator said there was no change in the party chief's stand. "He is firm on getting the CM post for a Sena nominee. He is ready to talk with BJP only if it is ready to share the CM post for two-and-a-half years. Uddhavji told us if he had wanted to accept anything less than CM, he would not have wasted 15 days," he said.

"We have given all powers to Uddhavji to take a call on talks with BJP or to form government or to explore other options or to sit in Opposition," said Abdul Sattar, a Sena legislator from Sillod in Aurangabad. All legislators were told to stay at Rang Sharada Hotel in Bandra (West) till further orders and there was no threat of any legislator defecting, he said.

Addressing the media after Thackeray's meeting with legislators, Sena leader and MP Sanjay Raut reiterated Maharashtra would have a Sena CM. "We have alternatives and numbers as well. But the BJP should first announce that it is unable to form the gov-

ernment. Then Sena will think about the next move," he said.

Raut also slammed BJP Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar's statement that Fadnis is a Shiv Sainik and he will be Sena CM. "A Shiv Sainik never lies and keeps his word. A Shiv Sainik never backstabs anyone," he said.

—(WITH INPUTS FROM SHUBHANGI KHAPRE)

Note printing

and Rs 2000, the inter-se revision of new security features among various denominations of bank notes has now been proposed by the RBI for approval."

It was also stated by RBI officials at the meeting that in view of demonetisation, the quantum of proposed new security features will change. According to the minutes, "Post demonetisation, the size and design of the bank notes have changed but the same security features are continuing. However, due to change in the size of bank notes of all denominations, the quantum of security features envisaged at the time of the floating of PQBN (Pre-qualification Bid Notice) 2017 will also undergo a change."

The meeting was informed that the most expensive security feature would be the security thread with moving images. The thread, the Managing Director of BNPMMPL (Bank Note Paper Mill India Private Limited) told the Strategic Planning Group, was likely to take the cost of production of bank note paper up by as high as 30%-50%.

The rejig of denominations during demonetisation could have also altered the market demand for currencies. Thus, at the review of the bank note printing schedules for the current year, it was decided to limit the production of Rs 10 bank and Rs 20 bank notes by BRBNMPL (Bharatiya Reserve Bank Note Mudran Private Limited) to the existing level of available paper stocks. On Rs 20 banknotes, the minutes reveal, the RBI said it was facing a situation of "reverse flow of coins". The flood of coins was described as "peculiar" by the RBI and the meeting was told that, "financial incentives provided by the RBI to banks for exchange may not work as there is a need for space for storage of coins at first".

NBFCs

resolution plan is decided upon, creditors cannot go to separate forums for relief," a source said.

Section 227 of the IBC states: "Notwithstanding anything to the contrary examined in this Code or

any other law for the time being in force, the Central government may, if it considers necessary, in consultation with the appropriate financial sector regulators, notify financial service providers or categories of financial service providers for the purpose of their insolvency and liquidation proceedings, which may be conducted under this Code, in such manner as may be prescribed."

Sources said the government has held consultations on this issue with financial regulators. The Ministry of Corporate Affairs is expected to put in place a set of rules that would be notified soon.

On Thursday, the Financial Stability and Development Council chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman discussed issues concerning NBFC and credit rating agencies. Since the existing mechanism of Inter Creditor Agreement has not been successful in finalising resolution plans for stressed NBFCs, resolution via NCTL mechanism is being seen as binding on all creditors.

DHFL, with outstanding loans of around Rs 78,000 crore (as per the debt resolution plan in July 2019), has been facing liquidity pressure since the IL&FS crisis hit the sector in September 2018. A series of debt defaults by IL&FS had spiraled into a broader liquidity crisis for the markets putting pressure on several NBFCs.

Various stakeholders have been in contention over the payments received from the company. While mutual funds approached the courts to recover their dues, after banks took the bulk of Rs 1,300 crore that the company paid between June and July 2019, the Bombay High Court has restrained Dewan Housing Finance Corporation from making further payments or disbursements to any lender. While bondholders have exposure of around Rs 40,000 crore to DHFL, banks have exposure of around Rs 27,000 crore.

DHFL has been facing stress to honour its debt repayments started selling profitable subsidiaries to raise funds. DHFL and promoter firm Wadhawan Global Capital sold about 80% combined stake in education loan company Avanse Financial Services Ltd to private equity major Warburg Pincus. Wadhawan Global Capital also sold its entire 70% stake in Aadhar Housing Finance to Blackstone. DHFL also exited the affordable housing finance company by selling its entire 9.15% stake.

Navodaya

have deputed two (one man and one woman)," NVS commissioner Bishwajit Kumar Singh told *The Indian Express*.

All counsellors have either a Master's degree in psychology or a post-graduate diploma/ Master's in clinical psychology or a Master's degree in child development/social work with a one-year diploma in counselling. They have been hired on a ten-month contract, which can be extended up to five years, at a salary of about Rs 45,000 per month.

Their scope of work includes providing personal and group counselling to students, diagnosing students with learning disability and helping new students adapt to the residential environment at these schools located in rural areas. "Everyone has received their appointment letters. We have asked them to report to their respective schools by November 12," Singh said.

In its investigative reports — the first was published on December 24, 2018 — *The Indian Express* also found that there were few trained counsellors on campus. Expressing "serious concerns" over these findings, the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) had issued a notice to the school education secretary in the HRD Ministry on January 1, seeking a response within six weeks. The matter was

also raised in Parliament by Congress RS MP Viplove Thakur.

Besides, the HRD Ministry set up a task force in the last week of December, headed by psychiatrist Dr Jitendra Nagpal, to look into the circumstances leading to the suicides by students, and to suggest ways to arrest the trend. The government even approved a budget of Rs 56 crore to hire full-time counsellors in JNVs.

Faheem Ansari

unit, Ansari was accused of having drawn the maps which aided the 26/11 terrorists, including Ajmal Kasab, zero-in on their targets. He was acquitted in the 26/11 case in May 2010 but had to remain in prison as the Uttar Pradesh STF had arrested him in February 2008, claiming he was involved in the attack on a CRPF camp in Rampur which left seven personnel and a civilian dead.

Ansari was subsequently charged with holding a fake Pakistani passport, fake Indian driving licences, some maps of Mumbai and a pistol. A Rampur court last week found Ansari guilty of holding fake documents but did not find evidence against him on the charge of waging war against the State. He was subsequently sentenced to a 10-year term in jail but he walked out free Wednesday since he had already spent 11 years in prison.

"The UP police had picked me up from Lucknow when I had gone to shop for some dresses for my friends in Dubai. A week later, they said I was arrested from Rampur. I had no inkling why I was arrested," Ansari said.

The youngest of nine siblings, Ansari spent much of his life in Mumbai before moving to Dubai in 2008 to work at a printing press. Two years into his job, he was arrested when he returned on vacation. "I was in jail eight months before the 26/11 incident. One day I managed to read a newspaper which said I was involved in the 26/11 terror attacks. That really broke me," he said.

He claimed that following his arrest, he was brought to Mumbai and handed over to the Maharashtra ATS who had given him a clean chit. "The UP STF had handed me over to the Maharashtra ATS much before the 26/11 terror attacks. Hemant Karkare was the ATS chief then. He had told the UP police that there was nothing against me. Yet I was booked," he said.

He said he does not plan to contest the UP court verdict. "I don't have the resources to fight the State. My family has been worn out, both financially as well as mentally. I don't want to take on the State. I feel I have paid my dues. My God and I know that I am innocent," Ansari said.

He said his priority is to ensure that his daughter, who is in college, completes her education. "She was three when I was arrested. I want to make sure she gets a good education. I also want to rebuild my life. People had stopped giving jobs to my brothers after my arrest. I don't know how things will pan out now that I am free, but I want to make an honest living."

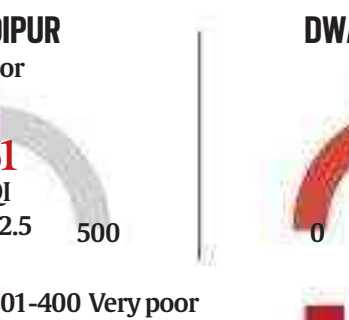
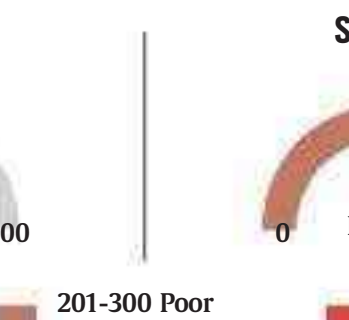
Phone-tapping

phone-tapping occurred during his tenure in Bengaluru as commissioner and additional commissioner (crime). Kumar has also been linked to the alleged leak of an intercepted phone conversation in August that blew the lid on the episode.

Earlier, an FIR was registered at the Bengaluru City cyber crime police station by the crime branch regarding the alleged phone-tapping under section 72 of the IT Act 2000, for breach of confidentiality and privacy, and section 26 of the Indian Telegraph Act 1885, for illegal tapping of phones without proper authorisation or divulging of tapped information.



0-50 Good



401-500 Severe

3,000 BUSES WILL BE FLAGGED OFF IN NEXT SIX-SEVEN MONTHS: CM 100 standard-floor buses with CCTVs, panic buttons rolled out

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

HUNDRED NEW standard-floor cluster buses — fitted with hydraulic lifts for the differently abled, CCTVs, GPS and 14 panic buttons — joined the 5,000-odd bus fleet in the capital Thursday.

Flagging off the buses at the Rajghat depot Thursday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said: “Delhi is being recognised all over the world for quality education and health... We are also trying to strengthen our transportation system. Around 3,000 buses will hit the roads in the next six-seven months, out of which 1,000 will be electric buses — the biggest such deployment.”

He was accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia and Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot.

Of the 1,000 standard-floor buses that are to be procured by the Delhi government, 129 hit



CM Arvind Kejriwal with Deputy CM Manish Sisodia at Rajghat depot, Thursday; live feed from cameras will be displayed on a monitor on the driver's dashboard. Amit Mehra



the streets last month.

Explaining the new features, officials said the hydraulic lift opens out from the side of the bus and is capable of lifting people on wheelchairs. Seven panic buttons on each side and CCTVs are for safety purposes, especially of women and children. Live-feed from the cameras is displayed on a monitor on the

driver's dashboard and in the control room. Each bus has 37 seats.

Balwinder Singh, one of the directors of Uniworld Transerve Pvt Ltd, with whom the government signed a PPA for the 1,000 buses, said: “The target is to get all buses by December-end or January first week.”

On the safety measures, he

said, “The CCTVs display live-feed and the back-up period is for 15 days. If anyone presses the panic button, the signal goes to the control room and the nearest police station, the network for which we have set up with a company.”

Kapil Gupta (34), one of the newly recruited bus drivers, said, “There is a live camera feed that

I can see at all times through the monitor right next to me.”

On the delivery of services by the AAP government, Kejriwal said, “Budgets have been sanctioned even by previous governments to maintain schools and hospitals, but only this government has worked on maintaining schools and hospitals with that budget. In the same way, this government will ensure timely maintenance of all features of the buses.”

The bid for the 3,000 buses — 1,000 each of standard-floor CNG, low-floor AC CNG and electric buses — has been opened, said the government in a statement.

Meanwhile, the CM said the proposal to revoke the odd-even scheme on November 11-12 for Guru Nanak Jayanti is being discussed: “We respect the sentiments of the Sikh community, and many Sikh organisations have requested relaxation of the odd-even drive on the two days... We will hold a meeting and take a decision.”

Haryana CM orders Rs 25 lakh fine on waste management firm

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GURGAON, NOVEMBER 7

HARYANA CHIEF Minister Manohar Lal Khattar Thursday directed the Commissioner of the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) to impose a fine of Rs 25 lakh on the company responsible for waste management in the district, for neglecting the

dumping point near the Old Jail Chowk in the city.

The direction was given after the CM visited the ground in the morning. Speaking to the media, Khattar said, “A provision has been made to ensure cleanliness and hygiene here, as per which a company has to undertake door to door waste collection, daily removal of garbage from dumping points... I have been receiving

complaints that waste is not picked up from here regularly.”

“The company has been directed to pick up waste regularly. If this is not done, penalties will be imposed in future too,” he said.

The CM also directed the Deputy Commissioner to form a separate committee that will conduct an inspection of the dumping ground and ensure that waste is picked up at least once a day.

Railway catering firm faces flak for casteist ad

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

ONE OF the largest hospitality contractors working for the Railways, RK Associates, found itself in trouble after posting a newspaper advertisement seeking “100 male candidates from Agarwal Vaish community” and from a “good family background” to serve in the railway system. The Indian Railways does not stipulate the

intake of candidates by contractors on the basis of caste or religion.

Published Wednesday, the advertisement sought candidates for managerial positions in food plazas at stations, train catering, base kitchen and stores. It went viral on social media, with the top brass of the Railway Board and the Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), of which RK is a vendor, taking note.

On Thursday, IRCTC asked

the company for an explanation. “RK confirmed that the manager of its HR department, responsible for the recruitment ad, has been removed from the job because of this ad,” a Railway spokesperson told *The Indian Express*. IRCTC officials said the contractor has placed the HR manager under suspension for the lapse.

Railways also issued what it termed a “strong displeasure letter” to the company. Some in the ministry were of the view that

this kind of advertisement is illegal and RK's contract should be cancelled. However, a view emerged in the morning that this did not, technically, amount to a violation of the contract conditions. The advertisement was from Brandavan Food Products, an RK company.

Issuing an apology to IRCTC, the contractor claimed that two different advertisements got mixed up due to a clerical error. “Our objective was not to hurt anyone and not bound to offer

the job to any specific community and are open to offer the job to suitable, eligible and skilled candidates, which we are doing since the inception of our company,” the company said in a statement.

“The advertisement will be changed and the revised will be published in due course,” it added.

RK Associates was in the past embroiled in a CBI case on what was labelled the “Rail Neer scam”.

FOG EXPECTED TODAY

After light rain, air quality dips to ‘very poor’ in capital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

A BRIEF improvement in the capital's air quality ended Thursday after it dipped to the 'very poor' range and a layer of "smoke" surrounded parts of the NCR. Dispersion of pollutants, despite high wind speed, remained low as a slight drizzle in the morning hours increased moisture content in the air, with which pollutants got attached, experts said. "Light rainfall Thursday morning increased moisture content in the air hindering dispersion of pollutants," said Kuldeep Srivastava, scientist at the India Meteorological Department.

As per the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), Delhi's average air quality index (AQI) on Thursday was 309 in the 'very poor' range. A day earlier, it had improved to 214 ('poor') after witnessing one of the worst air quality episodes this season on Sunday, when the AQI had crossed emergency levels and was recorded at 494 in the 'severe' category.

However, real time air quality data from CPCB Thursday showed the city's AQI was deteriorating as the day progressed. At 10.30 am it was around 250, but spiked to 273 around 1.30 pm. Around 4 pm, it reached 309 and fell further to 343 by 9.30 pm.

Air quality in NCR towns also remained in the 'very poor' range except in Gurgaon, where AQI was 284 ('poor').

The IMD said south-southeast wind of 16 km/hr were recorded in the capital Thursday, which could reduce in the evening and become as low as around 3-4 km/hr in the morning hours.

A shallow to moderate fog is likely to be noticed in Delhi-NCR Friday until 10 am during which visibility would be around 200-300 metres, IMD said. With high moisture content in the air during this time, and low wind speed, pollution levels may spike before



A slight drizzle in the morning hours increased moisture content in the air, which pollutants got attached to. Abhinav Saha

cloud cover over Delhi starts receding by noon and wind speed picks up again later in the day. The share of pollution from stubble burning in Punjab and Haryana has dipped significantly and is predicted to be 3% Friday, according to the central government's SAFAR air quality monitoring system. More than 42,000 farm fires have been recorded in Punjab between September 23 and November 6, much higher than over 30,000 fires recorded last year in this period. In Haryana, over 5,400 fire counts have been recorded as of November 6, a reduction of 472 from last year.

However, since the wind direction is south-southeast, transport of PM2.5 from stubble burning is unlikely, experts said, unless it changes to northwest direction. A Delhi environment official said, "There are no external pollutants in the air... A situation similar to last Sunday is unlikely Friday."

Pollution from stubble burning in Delhi's air is expected to go higher by Saturday, when the wind direction changes. Air quality is also expected to deteriorate to the higher end of the 'very poor' category by Saturday, SAFAR said.

2013-18: Greenpeace claims PM 2.5 didn't drop but PM 10 did

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

A GREENPEACE India report released Thursday has claimed that no noticeable reduction in PM2.5 levels was observed in the capital between 2013 and 2018, but PM10 reduced significantly during this period.

In its report, the NGO said that its assessment showed "an increase in NO2 (nitrogen dioxide) levels... Satellite data showed no statistically significant reduction in PM2.5 levels over the period from 2013 to 2018, and only shows slight reductions in later part of 2018 as compared to the past three years."

The NGO analysed data from 10 CPCB monitoring stations in Delhi under the National Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Programme (NAMP). The annual

average PM10 concentration at these stations was between 220 and 237 from 2011 to 2015, and 225 in 2018. Later, an assessment of data from real-time monitoring stations of the CPCB and the Delhi Pollution Control Committee showed reduction in PM10 levels, but not in PM2.5, it stated, adding that an increase in NO2 levels was also noted.

Meanwhile, a report published by Praja Foundation, titled "The State of Health in Delhi", claimed that as many as 31,000 people in Delhi lost their lives to respiratory illness from 2015-2017. The data, collected through RTIs, claimed that on an average, 27 people died every day in 2015 and 2017, and 33 in 2016.

Of these, almost 40% of the deaths were reported due to pneumonia, influenza and other lung diseases, followed by 19% due to lower respiratory diseases.

Jamia student stabbed by two pickpockets in DTC cluster bus

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

ON HIS way to college, a 23-year-old BEd student from Jamia Millia Islamia was stabbed, allegedly by two pickpockets, inside a DTC cluster bus Wednesday noon.

According to police, the victim, Mohd Asad Shah, and his friend tried to resist a pickpocketing attempt by the accused when the latter allegedly attacked Shah with a blade and fled. Shah, who received stab wounds to his abdomen and hands, is being treated at AIIMS Trauma Centre, said police.

The victim's brother Ansar Ahmed said Shah had identified one of the accused as the same pickpocket who had stolen his phone a while ago and was trying



The victim, Mohd Asad Shah, is a second-yr BEd student

to avoid being robbed again when he was targeted.

In his complaint, Shah's friend, Krishan Chand, who also suffered a minor injury on his wrist, said, "We noticed a man trying to touch the pocket of Shah's trousers. As we tried to push him off, another man whipped out a surgical blade and stabbed Shah twice and attacked me as well. After people started shouting, the men fled."

The incident took place near the university campus and Shah

was rushed to a hospital by Krishan, said police.

Ahmed alleged: "The bus did not stop and the conductor didn't help... my brother and his friend got out and took a friend's car to go to the hospital."

Ahmed alleged that minutes before the incident, Shah had realised the men were pickpockets. "He was robbed of his phone months ago near the campus. He saw the men and recognised one of them... When one of the accused tried to touch his trousers, he resisted and even tried to catch the men," said Ahmed.

DCP (South East) Chinmoy Biswal said, "We have registered a case against the accused under IPC sections 324 and 34 at New Friends Colony police station. The statement of the victim's friend has been recorded."

Goel now targets AAP over Punjab farm fires, party hits back

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

ACCUSING AAP MLAs in Punjab of "encouraging stubble burning", BJP MP Vijay Goel, along with other party leaders, cycled to Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia's residence carrying crop residue Thursday.

"We are carrying paddy stubble for Sisodia to protest against the AAP government's failure to curb air pollution in Delhi, as well as the role of AAP MLAs in Punjab behind stubble burning... AAP is attributing the spike in pollution to stubble burning... however, according to a NASA report, most cases of farm fires in Punjab have been in areas that are under 19 AAP MLAs," alleged Goel.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and AAP leaders have repeatedly attributed the increase in pollution levels to farm fires in Punjab and Haryana.

"Sisodia ji did not meet us as he does not have any answer..." claimed Goel.

Hitting out at Goel, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj claimed: "BJP volunteers were seen bursting crack-



BJP MP Vijay Goel cycled to Deputy CM Manish Sisodia's residence with crop residue to mark their protest

ers at MP Parvesh Verma's birthday on Thursday, after bursting crackers on Diwali. In terms of tackling local sources of pollution, the Delhi government has done a lot. The Centre, in an affidavit in the SC, has admitted that Delhi saw more good air days this year. The governments of Haryana and Punjab should check stubble burning."

On the allegation that AAP MLAs were seen burning paddy residue, he said: "Whoever is burning stubble should be acted against by the state governments concerned."



ONION PROTEST

Delhi Congress chief Subhash Chopra leads a protest against 'soaring onion prices'. AAP said they have requested the Centre to supply 10 trucks of onion daily so that the govt can restart distribution of onions through mobile vends. PTI

Arrested once for Sehwa kin murder, man nabbed after shootout in Dwarka

New Delhi: Police arrested a man allegedly involved in four cases of murder, including that of former Indian cricketer Virender Sehwa's relative in 2008, Wednesday. Police said the man, Darshan Dabas, had been absconding since 2018, after he allegedly killed another man in Najafgarh over a property dispute. Dabas was arrested from Dwarka following a brief exchange of fire.

"Dabas had shot dead Sehwa's relative, Hitender Dagar, when the latter was re-

turning home from a wedding in his car. He was arrested and sent to jail. In 2011, he was granted bail," said a senior officer. Dabas had allegedly shot Dagar over a property dispute, said police.

Rajesh Deo, DCP (Crime Branch), said, "On Wednesday, police came to know that he would visit Dwarka Sector 23. On seeing police, he tried to escape. But he crashed into a police vehicle and fired shots, one of which hit an officer's bulletproof jacket... he has been arrested." **ENS**

BRIEFLY

Pizza delivery agent mowed down by bus

New Delhi: A 35-year-old pizza delivery agent died after the bike he was on was mowed down by a UP Roadways bus in East Delhi's Patparganj Wednesday. Police said that the victim, who worked at a pizza joint in Noida, was on his way to his workplace when the bus hit his bike. An eyewitness said the victim was knocked off the bike and came under the wheels of the bus, which didn't stop after the accident. Police said that they are investigating the matter and trying to identify the driver. The victim, who lived with his family in Nand Nagri, was rushed to the hospital but was declared dead by the doctors. The bus was allegedly a Pink Express bus (a bus for women passengers). **ENS**

Man shot in revenge attack

New Delhi: Angry at his sister's marriage, a man allegedly shot and wounded her father-in-law after a motorcycle chase in Mukherjee Nagar, police said on Thursday. The accused and another person were caught by the victim and his son and handed over to police.

4 SDMC staff suspended

New Delhi: Two officials and two sanitation workers of South MCD were suspended Thursday for alleged negligence of duties in carrying out activities meant for curbing pollution, officials said. **PTI**

2 Ghaziabad cops, wanted in Rs 60 lakh fraud case, surrender

AMIL BHATNAGAR
NOIDA, NOVEMBER 7

A GHAZIABAD inspector and a constable, absconding for more than a month for allegedly stealing Rs 60 lakh from a loot recovery, surrendered at an Anti-Corruption Court in Meerut Thursday. Five other accused officers are on the run.

Police said inspector Lakshmi Singh Chauhan, posted as the SHO of Link Road police station, and constable Dheeraj Bharadwaj who also surrendered, will be taken into remand custody after their statements are recorded before a magistrate.

On September 25, Singh and six other officers were booked and suspended for taking a cut from more than a crore of alleged loot recovery.

“Ghaziabad Police had obtained a non-bailable warrant against Lakshmi Chauhan and the other policemen of Link Road station. Lakshmi’s official residence was raided, from where we recovered more than Rs 1 lakh. She was declared a proclaimed offender and her properties were attached. After we declared a reward of Rs 25,000 for her arrest, Lakshmi and another officer surrendered Thursday. The other absconding officers will be apprehended soon,” said Atish Kumar Singh, Circle Officer (2nd).

DU protests against building on campus — with food

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

A TENT was put up, the crowd huddled below, as *littis* were fried and CHOKHA served near the Vishwavidyalaya Metro station Thursday evening. It wasn’t a feast, but a protest by students, staff and teachers of Delhi University who are opposed to the construction of a 39-storey building near the Metro station

The loot case dates back to April 22, when an agent from a cash depositing agency in Sahibabad was booked for alleged theft of Rs 72 lakh. During investigation, it was found that the actual theft amount exceeded Rs 3.5 crore.

A police team, led by Inspector Lakshmi Singh, arrested accused Rajiv Sachan and Aamir in connection with the case on September 24. Police, in their official records, showed that approximately Rs 45 lakh was recovered from the accused.

When the two accused were questioned by a senior officer, they claimed that police recovered more than Rs 1.05 crore from them. When other police officers began enquiring about the missing Rs 60 lakh, seven officers involved in the recovery, included Lakshmi, absconded.

According to police, the accused claimed that as they were being taken to the police station, a part of the recovered cash was transferred to a private vehicle. Police also found CCTV footage, which showed the vehicle approaching the police car at the spot mentioned by the accused.

A case under relevant sections of the Anti-Corruption Act has been registered against inspector Lakshmi, SI Naveen Pachauri and constables Bacchu Singh, Faraz, Dheeraj, Saurabh and Sachin Kumar.

by a private builder. A candle light march was also taken out by the protesters.

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation had acquired 3.05 hectares of land from the Defence Ministry in 2001, of which the Metro station was built on 1 hectare of land. The rest was given to a company, which is planning to build residential flats.

A student said: “We will escalate our protest...”

Tis Hazari clash: New video shows group chasing woman DCP

Cops inside lock-up had guns cocked to fire: Probe

MAHENDER SINGH
MANRAL & SOMYA
LAKHANI

NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

DAYS AFTER lawyers and police clashed at Tis Hazari court, a video emerged Thursday showing DCP (North) Monika Bhardwaj, along with senior police officers and personnel, being chased out of the premises by a group of advocates.

In the video, DCP Bhardwaj, with police personnel in tow, initially rushes towards the spot where the lawyers have gathered. The video then shows Bhardwaj, with two officers on either side providing her cover, being chased away by a large crowd. A man in the crowd attempts to hit the DCP but is intercepted by the officers.

Reacting to the video, Rekha Sharma, NCW chairperson, tweeted: “Seeing a video where lawyers are manhandling and misbehaving with a woman police officer... behaving like goons. I strongly condemn it. I’m going to take suo motu and will be writing to Bar Council and CP Delhi.”

A senior official said DCP Bhardwaj will record her statement before the SIT investigating the incident in the coming days.

Meanwhile, the SIT investigation showed that police personnel of the 3rd Battalion of the Delhi Armed Police, carrying self-loading rifles and MP5 sub-machine guns, had “cocked their weapons” minutes after two rounds were fired by an ASI.

The probe by the Crime Branch’s special investigation team, headed by Delhi Police Commissioner Amulya Patnaik, found that they were stopped by Additional DCP Harender Singh, who entered the lock-up after



(Top) Footage of the incident; (left) police chief Amulya Patnaik meets the injured personnel. *Express*

which they had ‘cocked’. They were ready for more firing... But I shouted and pushed them inside. I strictly told them no armed man would stand near the lock-up gate and only unarmed personnel would stand beside me to guard the lock-up.”

Sources said the SIT found that soon after the conversation between advocates and police personnel turned confrontational, the ACP (3rd Battalion), who joined his post last Thursday, and the in-charge of the lock-up, had left their offices.

“I did not find either officer in the lock-up. The policemen were so agitated... had I not gone inside and pacified them, they could have fired 10-20 more rounds,” said Singh, who later directed them to make a human chain and rescue 155 undertrial prisoners, including Unnao rape accused Kuldeep Singh Sengar.

Police chief Amulya Patnaik, meanwhile, met injured police personnel Thursday.

Following a Delhi High Court order, Special CP (Law & Order) North Sanjay Singh has been transferred to the licensing and transport department and Additional DCP (North) Harender Kumar Singh has been



Lawyers at the Saket district court distribute flowers to litigants, Thursday. All lawyers at district courts continued to be on strike following the lawyer-police clash. *Express*

Meeting between lawyers, cops cancelled; DCPs visit courts

ANAND MOHAN J
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

A DAY after the Delhi High Court advised a joint meeting between advocates and Delhi Police officers, in the aftermath of the Tis Hazari clash, it was cancelled after lawyers walked out.

This happened after coordination committee members of the district court bar associations found that only a Joint Commissioner of Police-rank officer turned up for the meeting, while they expected at least two Special Commissioners to be present.

“Meeting with police was cancelled by coordination committee as senior police officers were not present. Only JCP Rajesh Khurana was there. We told police that he was not the competent person to deal with the talks,” Mahavir Sharma, chairman of the coordination committee, told *The Indian Express*.

On Wednesday, the HC had expressed anguish over the “dissonance and friction” prevailing between the bar and police and suggested a meeting between “responsible representatives” of both sides to “sort out their dif-

ferences amicably”.

Delhi Police Additional PRO Anil Mittal said, “Coordination committee members thought they would be meeting senior officers to discuss the situation as prevailing in the city as a whole. Regretting the communication gap, it was clarified that issues pertaining only to North district courts were intended to be discussed in order to resume normal functioning. A separate meeting will be held, at a higher level, to suitably address the larger issues.”

Meanwhile, local DCPs from all police districts tried to reach out to the legal fraternity.

DCP (Shahdara) Amit Sharma visited Karkardooma court and met the district judge. “It was discussion on the law and order situation on the ground,” he said.

Likewise, DCP (Rohini) SD Mishra visited the Rohini court and met the district judge and members of the Rohini Bar Association. DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur is expected to visit the Saket court Friday to assess the law and order situation.

Lawyers across all district courts, however, said they will continue their strike until their demands are met.

Plea in HC seeks action against cops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

A PIL was filed in the Delhi High Court Thursday seeking action against the police officers who protested against lawyers, in the wake of the lawyer-police clash at Tis Hazari district court last week.

The plea, which also sought action against the officers who issued statements on social media when the matter is sub judice, has been listed for hearing Friday.

The plea sought directions to the Centre to initiate a departmental inquiry against the officers who sat on “dharna”, “made provocative slogans” and issued “inciting” statements on electronic and social media.

“Personnel of Delhi Police...sat on an unwarranted dharna in contravention of Rule 7 of the Central Civil Services Conduct Rules, 1964...,” the petition read.

The petition has been filed by lawyer Rakesh Kumar Lakra.



DELHI **CONFIDENTIAL**



SPECIAL RAPPORT

WEST BENGAL Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee may be unkind in her public attack on political rivals, especially the BJP. But she is particular in maintaining a personal rapport with many leaders. Recently, Banerjee, who is known for her personal charm, arranged security personnel for former Kolkata mayor Sovan Chatterjee. Chatterjee, who recently joined the BJP, went to visit the chief minister to greet her for Bhai Dooj. During the meeting he told Banerjee that he was not able to go for his regular morning walk as he no longer had personal security. Banerjee immediately picked up the phone and gave instructions to provide him security.

DIFFERENT FOCUS

THE BJP-SHIV SENA tussle over government formation in Maharashtra has gone down to the wire. However, BJP's working president JP Nadda seemed untouched by the tension. On Thursday, he was planning the BJP's preparations for the Jharkhand election. Unlike in the past, Nadda met every party MP from Jharkhand to take inputs. There was a common meeting followed by one-to-one meetings with each of them.

INTERNET ALERT

IN THE 14 months of its existence, Ayushman Bharat-PMJAY seems to have caught the fancy of internet cheats. There were no less than 158 fake sites for the flagship health scheme. All but one have been closed, and 684 fake apps have been taken down. In a public notice issued recently, the National Health Agency warned against such phenomena.

UP TO DATE

MINISTER OF Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Ram Vilas Paswan is working from home, having fractured his foot during Chhath Puja. But he has reviewed the prices and availability of onions from home. Top officers of his ministry went to his residence and apprised him of the situation.

Bihar BJP chief writes to CM over 'graft' in road construction

SANTOSH SINGH
PATNA, NOVEMBER 7

BIHAR BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal on Thursday wrote to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, alleging "corruption in the construction of over 14,000 rural roads" under the Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY).

Jaiswal, the West Champaran MP, said, "I want to bring your attention towards reports of irregularities in construction of 14,000 rural roads. The construction is not being done as per given standards and this cannot be possible without involvement of engineers."

The letter added, "If there is a high-level inspection... you may find complicity of engineers and contractors."

Citing a specific example of alleged corruption from West Champaran Lok Sabha segment,

Jaiswal said for a 2017-18 PMGSY road (LO-141) under Manjhaulia block, payments of Rs 29,33,455 on December 14, 2018, Rs 46,90,559 on January 15 this year and Rs 16,97,986 on February 18 were made in advance to the contractor "without any construction in connivance with engineer".

"The engineer, along with politicians, has been trying to justify the payments and they are showing some areas (as) flood-hit which were never affected by floods," said Jaiswal. His letter comes as Nitish visited West Champaran on Thursday.

Meanwhile, Bihar Information and Public Relations Minister and JD(U) spokesperson Neeraj Kumar told *The Indian Express*, "We have followed up the matter and found that the contractor in question had already been debarred. The government will further look into the matter..."

872 cattle deaths in 2 Patna gaushalas in past 2 years, PMC orders probe

Patna: The Patna Municipal Corporation (PMC) has ordered a probe into the deaths of 872 heads of cattle in two major cowsheds in the state capital in the past two years.

Some 530 animals died in the last year at the Bihar Veterinary College farm and 342 bovines died at Srikrishna Gaushala in Katra over the last two years.

A source at the veterinary college farm said: "Most stray cows

and calves do not get the requisite amount of food — seven kg fodder per animal. The animals would often consume polythene."

Patna Mayor Sita Sahu said: "We have asked municipal commissioner to look into the matter. Veterinary doctors have been also asked to submit a report."

While cowsheds are maintained by the PMC, the district administration is responsible for their functioning.

MAHARASHTRA STALEMATE

As Sena goes into huddle, BJP expects ally to soften stand

SHUBHANGI KHAPRE, LIZ MATHEW & PRADEEP KAUSHAL
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, NOV 7

THE STALEMATE in Maharashtra continued on the 14th day since the announcement of Assembly election results. While a BJP delegation on Thursday called on Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari but stopped short of staking a claim for government formation, the Shiv Sena, which stuck to its guns, demanding the chief minister's post for half the government's tenure, sent its MLAs to a Mumbai suburb hotel.

Sena leader Sanjay Raut told *The Indian Express* that as the single-largest party in the Assembly (with 105 seats), the BJP should stake claim and wondered why the party did not request Governor Koshyari to extend an invite to form the government. BJP state unit chief Chandrakant Patil, who led the party delegation, said, "We met the Governor to brief him about the political developments. This is because government formation is taking longer than normal. Various legal and constitutional implications were discussed."

A senior minister said, "Although a minority government is not impossible, we are not in a hurry to experiment."

The BJP believes if a government is not formed, the Sena will have to explain to the people why it failed to honour the public mandate. Instead of giving an unstable government, party leaders said, the BJP will prefer mid-term polls.

BJP leaders also believe the Sena would not be able to sustain its strength without being in power, and that taking an "adamant stance" beyond a point could boomerang, adversely affecting the party in future polls.

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis and other senior leaders



BJP leaders with Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, in Mumbai on Thursday. *ANI*

'90% NEW CONG MLAS FOR BACKING SENa'

Mumbai: While state Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat and other senior party leaders are expected to fly to New Delhi on Friday to discuss sentiments of the newly elected MLAs with the central leadership, Leader of Opposition in outgoing Assembly Vijay Wadettiwar on Thursday claimed that 90 per cent of Congress MLAs want to keep the BJP at bay by extending support to a Sena government. **ENS**

explored options before the party through the day and held consultations with legal and constitutional experts on implications if a government is not formed before November 9, when the term of the present Assembly ends.

At the BJP meeting in Mumbai, the leaders are learnt to have discussed two possibilities: either a BJP-Sena government through

some "give and take", or in the absence of government formation, the Governor asking Fadnavis to continue as caretaker CM for the next 15 days. According to BJP leaders, that would be followed by President's rule for six months, and subsequent elections.

Unwilling to buckle under Sena's pressure on power-sharing arrangements, BJP leaders have adopted an aggressive stand. A senior leader who is part of the core committee said, reiterating what party chief Amit Shah is learnt to have told Fadnavis during their meeting in Delhi on Monday, "Our stand is clear. We want to form the government with Shiv Sena to give stable government, but there is no question of negotiations on Fadnavis as chief minister."

Raut, however, maintained that the BJP will be unable to pass a floor test without the Sena's support. He also accused the saffron party of trying to create a situation for imposition of President's rule by not taking steps to form the government. BJP leaders also insist the Sena will not cross the

Rubicon. "The BJP and Shiv Sena are like ideological brothers...the mother here is the Hindu community," a party leader said.

They pointed out that even in 2014, when the two parties had contested separately, Fadnavis had taken oath without an alliance on October 31, and it took more than a month for the Sena to join the government.

Shiv Sena had initially decided to boycott the swearing-in ceremony, but last-minute phone calls from Amit Shah and late Arun Jaitley had brought Uddhav Thackeray to the dais, they pointed out.

This time, too, they believe, a breakthrough will come before November 9, with a central BJP leader expected to intervene on Friday to mollify Sena leaders.

While BJP leaders ruled out any attempt to split either the Sena or opposition NCP and Congress, both Maharashtra Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat and senior NCP leader Dhananjay Munde accused the BJP of using unethical means and trying to poach newly elected MLAs.

AHEAD OF AYODHYA VERDICT

States get MHA advisory, RPF cancels leave

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY & AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

THE MINISTRY of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday sent a general advisory to all states and Union territories asking them to deploy adequate security personnel at all sensitive places ahead of the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya dispute.

Sources said general inputs about possible unrest in selected areas in Uttar Pradesh and elsewhere have been shared with states. Intelligence agencies have also warned of lone wolf attacks by disgruntled elements depending on the nature of the verdict.

"A general alert and advisory has been sent to all states. All agencies are on alert," a ministry official said.

The Indian Express had on Thursday reported that the MHA has agreed to send 40 companies (3,500 personnel) of the CRPF to Ayodhya. Sources said the forces have been sent even as nine companies of CRPF and RAF in the state are on standby.

The Railway Protection Force (RPF) has also issued a security advisory and deployed 14 additional companies to protect railway property and religious structures identified in railway premises across India. It has cancelled leave of its personnel and decided to escort all trains.

UP Police, meanwhile, has taken steps to ensure no untoward incident happens. The task has been compounded by upcoming festivals. Sources said the state is witnessing 15-20 lakh floating population and more people are expected during Kartik Purnima between November 11-13. The police have identified trouble zones and areas with mixed popula-



Police personnel on vigil in Ayodhya on Thursday. *PTI*

tion and regular flag marches are being held there, sources said.

"With the galvanising of the entire force, UP Police is committed to maintain law and order. All steps are being taken for intensive contact with the community by holding peace committee meetings. We are strategising the forces through foot patrolling, random checking and keeping an eye on anti-social and communal elements," UP DGP O P Singh said.

The police have also set up a social media monitoring cell to not only flag incendiary messages, but also scotch rumours, sources said.

The RPF has also been gearing up, with armed personnel being deployed on escorting duties and sniffer dogs pressed into service. "We have identified religious sites within railway premises and issued instructions to safeguard them," Arun Kumar, Director General of RPF, said.

The RPF advisory said that close watch should be kept on all religious structures near railway stations or within its premises as they may become "flashpoints" in case tempers run high. The RPF has identified 80 stations with high footfall. Strict operational guidelines have been issued in case a mob is sighted on railway premises.

Police identifying colleges for makeshift prisons

AVANEESH MISHRA
LUCKNOW, NOVEMBER 7

ANTICIPATING A large number of preventive arrests to maintain law and order ahead of the Ayodhya case verdict, the police and district administrations have started identifying colleges and government buildings that can be used as makeshift prisons in the neighbouring districts of Ayodhya.

So far, eight colleges in Ambedkar Nagar, and six colleges and government buildings in Barabanki have been selected. According to district officials of the two districts, a directive on makeshift prisons was issued to them by the government.

However, college principals have raised concerns that the move may lead to delays in completing syllabus and possible closure of institutes.

"In view of the Ayodhya verdict, we have made all the preparations and divided the whole district in five zones and 18 sec-

tors. Quick response teams have been formed at all the police stations with 12 check points," Ambedkar Nagar SP Virendra Kumar Misra said.

Ambedkar Nagar Additional SP Avaneesh Mishra further said that no permanent police teams would be deployed in the chosen colleges, and that the District Inspector Of Schools (DIOS) has asked the administration of these schools and colleges to be prepared to handover the building immediately when required by the police.

Tej Pratap Verma, principal of Dr Ashok Smarak Degree College, which is one of the identified colleges, told *The Indian Express* that at a time when they were scrambling to complete the syllabus, classes as well as exams will be affected by this order.

"We were not consulted. We are yet to receive any letter... If people are to stay here, we will have to make arrangements. Studies will be affected and will certainly have to shut the college," said the principal.

UP minister sends defamation notice to state Cong chief

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Power Minister Srikant Sharma on Thursday sent a "defamation notice" to state Congress chief Ajay Kumar Raju for remarks against him on the controversy surrounding the investment of Rs 2,600 crore from the employees provident fund of the UP power corporation into the scam-hit DHFL — a private entity.

Lallu had demanded Sharma's resignation accusing him of corruption and alleged that the BJP leader had gone to Dubai in 2017 in connection with the dubious investment. "If Lallu does not apologise, then action would be taken against him under sections 499 and 500 of IPC and steps would also be taken to seek compensation," Sharma said.

When asked about the notice, the Lallu said that the minister was just "trying to divert attention" from the alleged scam. **ENS**

50-50 SEAT-SHARING AGREEMENT LIKELY WITH AIADMK

BJP aims for foothold in TN through local body polls

ARUN JANARDHANAN
CHENNAI, NOVEMBER 7

THE BJP is looking to get a foothold in Tamil Nadu through the much-delayed local body polls, which are set to be announced soon.

It is learnt that the NDA and the ruling AIADMK may agree on a 50-50 seat-sharing formula for the about 1.25 lakh seats and the BJP is looking to get at least 15 per cent seats from the NDA's share.

Top sources in the AIADMK confirm that they will have to share half of seats with the NDA, also comprising the PMK and the DMDK.

These seats comprise posts in municipal corporations, municipalities and panchayats.

A senior AIADMK minister

EXPLAINED

A win-win situation for BJP

IRRESPECTIVE OF how many seats it eventually wins, the BJP would emerge as a key player in Tamil Nadu politics if it manages to contest 10,000-odd seats as part of its alliance with AIADMK for the local body polls. But for AIADMK, which is ruling the state for nearly nine years now, another alliance pact with the BJP after the setback in the Lok Sabha polls is going to be tricky terrain.

said, "The percentage of share has been decided. Details of the deal, number of seats for NDA in rural and urban bodies and the key demand of three mayor posts for BJP are to be finalised," said the minister, adding that his party is "almost sure" that the Coimbatore mayor post may go

to the BJP. But, he said, AIADMK cannot afford to give three mayor posts to a single party, as the BJP has demanded. "BJP wants one mayor post in a prominent city and two in smaller cities," he said.

A senior BJP leader involved in the negotiations said there

liance since they are not scaling down their demand for 5-6 seats. Sources in the Congress said the party is ready to offer them 2-3 seats. The Babul Marandi-led JVM (P) will not be part of the alliance as Marandi had already announced his decision to go it alone.

According to the agreement arrived at, the Congress is likely to contest 30 out of the 81 Assembly seats. The JMM is set to contest at least 42 seats. The JMM is in talks with the RJD separately. It could either contest in 44, leaving 5 for the RJD or contest 42 and offer 7 seats to the RJD, sources said.

Although the two Left parties will not be part of the alliance, sources said the alliance is unlikely to field candidates in two of their sitting seats, Nirsra and Danwar.

The JMM had earlier de-

clared that it would contest at least 45 seats.

The Congress has conceded some of its key seats to the JMM. One of them is Ghatsila, the turf of former state Congress chief Pradeep Balmuchu. Balmuchu has represented Ghatsila in the past, but in 2014, his daughter Cinderella lost from the seat.

The Congress had contested 62 out of the 81 seats in the 2014 state polls, but ended up winning only 6 seats and forfeiting deposits in 42 seats. It won two more seats in subsequent bye-elections. "We had won 6 seats and had come second in 10 seats last time...we won two seats in by-elections, later including one seat where we had come second. So we were first and second in a total of 17 seats...Even if we get to contest 25 seats, it is a good deal," a senior party leader said earlier in the day.

will be hundreds of BJP leaders in the state's local bodies after this election. "This is going to be historic. BJP hopes to win 3,000 to 5,000 seats...we will rule corporations, we will have at least three mayors when we used to have only a handful of panchayat members and councillors in the past," he said.

According to the BJP leader, a good show in the local body polls will help the BJP and the RSS grow faster in the state. "More than MLAs and MPs, elected representatives in rural and urban bodies will help make the party powerful at the grass-roots," he said.

BJP national general secretary H Raja said, "It is too early. I cannot talk about the alliance deal and number of seats. But I can undoubtedly say that AIADMK is part of NDA alliance

in this local body election," he said.

Raja added that this is a very important election for NDA as the BJP and the AIADMK were routed in the Lok Sabha polls, but the AIADMK managed to win the recently held bypolls. "The Opposition had managed to mislead people (in the Lok Sabha polls) against us. But people have realised the mistake, DMK is nowhere near victory in local body polls," he said.

C Ponnaian, AIADMK organising secretary, said the NDA is part of the AIADMK alliance in the local body polls. Asked about reports of AIADMK sharing half of the total seats with NDA allies, he said, "There is no doubt about NDA alliance... But it may be premature... to talk on seat-sharing decisions taken before the election is announced."





Pradyut Bordoloi

MP’s message to AICC caught on camera: Act fast, name a face for 2021 Assam polls

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

ASSEMBLY POLLS in Assam are two years away, but a leadership battle is heating up in the state Congress unit.

Congress leader and Lok Sabha MP Pradyut Bordoloi was caught on camera telling Congress general secretary in charge of Assam, Harish Rawat, that “AICC is notorious for indecisiveness” and should act fast if it wants to contest the 2021 elections seriously.

The video of Bordoloi’s purported remarks started doing the rounds a day after 12 party MLAs wrote to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, demanding that Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly Debabrata Saikia be replaced.

The developments come at the time when the party high command is said to be mulling a leadership change in Assam.

Former CM Tarun Gogoi has thrown his hat in the ring and was reported as saying that he is confident of reviving the Congress in Assam if he “takes the responsibility of APCC president”. Gogoi met Gandhi in Delhi earlier this week.

In the video, Bordoloi is purportedly heard telling Rawat, “The countdown has started... If the Congress wants to seriously take up 2021 elections...because AICC is notorious for indecisiveness. They don’t take decisions at all. That should not happen.”

The two were getting ready for a press meet in Guwahati on Wednesday and apparently did not realise television microphones were on.

“If you give the charge to someone after two-three months, nobody will be able to deliver. If you have to do something, do it now. Immediately. Because we have to create a narrative, mobilise resources, decide the strategy...ad hoc strategies won’t work now. We will have to do micro management,” Bordoloi is heard saying.

“I have told as much to Sonijai. I met her recently. I told her, ‘Madam aap jo decisions lete hain bohot der se lete hain’. If you have to take decisions, take it immediately. It is like a race course. Bet on one person on whom you have confidence. Faceless competition does not work nowadays,” he adds.

Another Congress functionary, who could not be identified, is seen arguing that people should have no doubt that the Congress will be able to form the government. Agreeing, Rawat is heard saying, “*Logon ko lagana chahiye ki hum sarkar banana ke liye kaam kar rahe hain.*”

When contacted, Bordoloi told *The Indian Express* that the conversation did happen. “My comments were specifically related to Assam. I am concerned only about Assam. A decision has to be taken at the earliest. That is what I have said,” he said.

Tihar DG: Can’t act against Dec 16 rape convicts, one has filed a mercy plea

SOMYA LAKHANI
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

WITH ONE of the four death row convicts in the December 16, 2012 gangrape case filing a mercy petition before the President of India, Tihar Jail authorities Thursday said “we cannot move against the other three since one mercy petition is pending now”. On October 29, the jail authorities had given them seven days to file a mercy plea or face “proceedings as per law”.

Sandeep Goel, Director General of Delhi Prisons, told *The Indian Express*: “In a case, even if one convict files a mercy petition, then we have to wait in case of all co-accused persons as well till a decision on the petition is made.”

The four convicts, Mukesh

(31), Pawan Gupta (24), Vinay Sharma (25) and Akshay Kumar Singh (33), received a notice from Tihar Jail on October 29 — it was signed by the Superintendent, Central Jail No. 2 — informing them that “all legal remedies in your case, as available in the Constitution of India, have been exhausted except the provision of filing of mercy petition against the capital sentence before the President of India”. And if they do not file a mercy petition within seven days, the “jail administration will initiate further necessary legal proceedings as per law”.

The seven-day period ended November 4.

“Vinay Sharma filed a mercy petition within the seven-day period, which we will now forward to the Home department of the Delhi government. They

will then forward that to the President,” Goel said.

Jail authorities told *The Indian Express* that convict Mukesh said he “doesn’t want to file a petition,” while the other two convicts, Pawan and Akshay, have replied to the Tihar Jail notice. “In the reply, one convict claimed he was a juvenile at the time of the incident. This claim has already been rejected by the lower court. In the reply, he also says that the age claim case is going on in the Delhi High Court. We have checked and that’s not true. The second convict has said he will file a curative petition,” jail authorities said.

On December 16, 2012, a 23-year-old woman was gangraped and assaulted on a moving bus in south Delhi by six persons, before being thrown out on the road. She died in a Singapore

hospital on December 29, 2012. Accused Ram Singh hanged himself in jail while another, a juvenile, was convicted of rape and murder and given the maximum sentence of three years’ imprisonment in a reform facility.

In September 2013, a fast-track court held the remaining four convicts guilty of 13 offences including gangrape, unnatural sexual assault and murder of the woman, and attempt to murder her male friend. On July 9, 2018, the Supreme Court dismissed the pleas of three of the convicts — Mukesh, Pawan and Vinay — seeking review of its 2017 judgment upholding the capital punishment given to them by the Delhi High Court and the trial court. The fourth convict, Akshay, did not file a review plea in the Supreme Court.

VISVA-BHARATI UNIVERSITY

Students opposed, staff split as CISF gets back on security

ATRI MITRA & SANTANU CHOWDHURY
BOLPUR, KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 7

HOURS AFTER *The Indian Express* reported that the Union Human Resource Development Ministry had written to the CISF seeking permanent deployment of its personnel at Visva-Bharati University, unease prevailed on the campus in Shantiniketan, Bolpur.

A majority of the faculty, students and staff opposed the move, that followed a request by Vice-Chancellor Bidyut Chakraborty to the HRD for CISF security. The SFI, the student wing of the CPM, announced an agitation if the CISF was deployed.

However, the V-C found support among a section of the teachers and Executive Committee (EC) members.

While no educational institution in the country has ever had CISF cover, in 2017, Banaras Hindu University had asked for such a cover but the request was not cleared by the Home Ministry. Currently Visva-Bharati has its own security, provided by a private agency.

The Indian Express had reported on October 30 that Chakraborty had written to the HRD Ministry, with a copy to the Prime Minister’s Office, seeking deployment of the CISF citing incidents of confrontation between university administration and students and employees.

Approached by *The Indian Express*, Chakraborty said, “I have no comments to make.”

In May this year, students had gheraoed the V-C and other professors of the university protesting a hike in the price of admission forms. Later, non-teaching employees had gone on protest and ceased work over non-payment of arrears arising from the Seventh Pay Commission in 2016.

In his letter, Chakraborty said that the private security personnel owed their allegiance to “TMC local bosses” and “disobey” Visva-Bharati’s security officer with “impunity”.

Home Ministry sources said the letter had been received by



The university currently has around 270 private security personnel who man the campus as well as the two museums on the premises. *Express*

the CISF. “The CISF has sent a reply to Visva-Bharati and detailed its procedure for deployment. These require conduction of security checks and surveys and payment has to be borne by the university. The force has also forwarded the request to us to seek further directions in this regard,” a ministry official said.

Kishore Bhattacharya, leader of the Adhyapak Sabha (an association of Visva-Bharati professors), said, “Right now I feel central security is needed. We have seen valuables like the Nobel awarded to Tagore getting stolen from a museum on the campus. Later, sandalwood trees were chopped by miscreants. Private security cannot help.”

Also supporting the V-C’s move, Sushovon Banerjee, an EC member, said, “The kind of agitations being seen at Visva-Bharati, with the V-C frequently being harassed, pose a security issue. If by bringing in central forces, normalcy can be restored, why not?”

The university currently has around 270 private security personnel who man the campus as well as the two museums on the premises. There are 10 security in-charges and officers, who are all employees of the university.

A large section of the non-teaching staff, however, opposed the proposal. Said Gagan Sarkar, leader of the Karmi Sabha (a union of non-teaching employ-

ees), “Visva-Bharati is a seat of learning where police have never stepped in, but the V-C is bringing in paramilitary forces. To prevent protests, the authorities must have the right mindset and a democratic environment.”

Supriyo Thakur, former principal of Patha Bhavana (an institution providing primary and secondary education in Visva-Bharati) and a descendant of Visva-Bharati founder Rabindranath Tagore, said that while he agreed that security was needed, “I do not think a central paramilitary force is the answer”. “The V-C has got a bit too scared.”

Hinting that Chakraborty’s “fear” could stem from the fact that “he is not close to the ruling party in Bengal”, Thakur regretted that the university itself was losing touch with Tagore’s vision of an open and free seat of learning. “Shantiniketan is a town now. Maybe Tagore’s thoughts are no more reflected anywhere here. The good and bad effects of any town life have crept in here too,” he said.

The head of the TMC students’ wing (Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad) on the campus, Adrish De, said, “This V-C has taken many wrong decisions. Students and other organisations agitated about this. Now, to bulldoze these movements, he has called for CISF security.”

Some employees said the CISF could man the museums on campus and the university offices, but not the entire campus. “The museums have valuable art pieces and belongings of the Tagore family. But the CISF should not be deployed near student areas or classes,” said staffer Bhramar Bhandari.

Speaking on condition of anonymity, the students opposed the move. “I am not sure whether this is the answer to security issues. I would not like armed forces standing near classrooms or when we have open air lessons, which is often in Visva-Bharati,” said a student.

Opposing the move, the SFI central executive committee said this would curtail the democratic space on campus and the rights of students. “We have seen the same taking place on other campuses as well. As per HRD instructions, the cost to deploy paramilitary forces will be borne from grants to the university. The SFI has been asking repeatedly for development of higher education infrastructure, but the government is more concerned about spending money for deployment of paramilitary forces inside an eminent university instead,” a statement by the SFI on Thursday said.

The President is the Visitor of Visva Bharati University and the Prime Minister its Chancellor.

PM to visit Brazil next week for BRICS summit

SHUBHAJIT ROY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi will be in Brazil from November 13 to 14 to attend the 11th annual summit of BRICS, the government announced on Thursday. The BRICS is a grouping of five countries — Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Ministry of External Affairs Secretary (Economic Relations) T S Tirumurti told reporters that the leaders at the summit would deliberate on boosting overall cooperation among the member nations.

Brazil is the current chair of the grouping, which represents more than 3.6 billion people, or half the world’s population, and a combined nominal GDP of \$16.6 trillion.

The theme of the BRICS Summit this year is ‘Economic Growth for an Innovative Future’. This will be the sixth time Modi will participate in the BRICS Summit. His first was at Fortaleza in Brazil in 2014.

The PM will be accompanied by an official delegation. A large business delegation from India is also expected to be present during the visit, especially to attend the BRICS Business Forum where the business community of all five countries are represented.

Tirumurti said that an MoU between trade and investment promotion agencies of BRICS



Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Prakash Thakur at an investors’ meet in Dharmsala on Thursday. At the meet, Modi pitched for competition among the states on ease of doing business, adding that all states have a role in helping make India a \$5 trillion economy by 2025. *Pradeep Kumar*

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would be signed. The BRICS leaders will also agree to establish the Women Business Alliance.

“We have also worked closely within BRICS to not only take a strong stand against terrorism but also work to bring about focussed consultations on specific aspects related to terrorism,” Tirumurti said. This year, the joint working group on counter-terrorism has decided to constitute five sub-working groups on counter-terrorism in the following areas — terrorist financing, use of internet for terrorist purposes, countering radicalisation, issue of foreign terrorists fighters and capacity building, he said. It is expected

that India will be chairing the sub-group on use of internet for terrorist purposes, he added.

The i-BRICS — Innovation BRICS Network — will be launched, which will include networking of research institutes like science parks, incubators and accelerators. The leaders will also be looking at launching BRICS institutes of Future Networks, the concept of which has been agreed on by the telecom ministers in August. “Greater focus will be given in the area of tuberculosis research,” he said.

Apart from participating in the BRICS Summit, Prime Minister will have a bilateral meeting with Brazil’s President Jair Bolsonaro.

Justice Kureshi elevation to Tripura HC cleared

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

ALMOST FIVE months after the Supreme Court collegium recommended his elevation as a Chief Justice of a High Court, President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday issued the warrant appointing Justice Akil Kureshi as the Chief Justice of the Tripura High Court, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

Sources said the official notification of the appointment, to be issued by the Department of Justice under the Union Law Ministry, will be issued soon.

The Centre’s move to clear the file elevating Justice Kureshi comes after Solicitor General of India Tushar Mehta had on Monday told a Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi that one more week was “needed for administrative measures”.

The collegium, comprising the CJI and Justices S A Bobde and N V Ramana, had on May 10 recommended that Justice Kureshi, the “senior-most Judge from Gujarat High Court”, be appointed Chief Justice of Madhya Pradesh High Court.

However, the government referred the proposal back to the CJI through two communications dated August 23 and 27 along with “accompanying material”. The collegium went through them and on September 5, recommended Justice Kureshi’s elevation as Chief



Justice Akil Kureshi

Justice, this time of the Tripura High Court.

Meanwhile, with the Centre delaying Justice Kureshi’s elevation despite the collegium’s recommendation, the Gujarat High Court Advocates’ Association moved the apex court. The lawyers’ body termed the Centre “withholding the appointment” despite the May 10 recommendation of the collegium as “arbitrary inaction”.

On Thursday, the SC bench said that it will hear the matter related to the implementation of the decision of the collegium by the Centre on the elevation of Justice Kureshi on November 13.

The bench, comprising CJI Gogoi and Justices Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, said the matter will be listed next week, and Justice Bobde — the chief justice-designate — would be a part of the two-member bench headed by CJI Gogoi.

“Post the matter November 13, 2019, before a Bench comprising of The Chief Justice and Justice S A Bobde,” the bench said.

ELGAR PARISHAD CASE

Navlakha involved in ‘Maoist fact-finding mission’, court told

CHANDAN HAYGUNDE
PUNE, NOVEMBER 7

THE PROSECUTION in the Elgar Parishad case on Thursday alleged that Delhi-based activist Gautam Navlakha, one of the 23 accused in the case, was involved in a “fact-finding mission” as per instructions of the banned CPI-Maoist to create “false propaganda” that innocent people were being killed by state and paramilitary forces.

The prosecution made these claims while opposing the anticipatory bail application filed by Navlakha in a special court in Pune. Navlakha is among the 23 accused who, according to Pune City Police, have active links with the CPI-Maoist.

Defence lawyer Ragini Ahuja argued that fact-finding was a completely legal activity, adding that there was no evidence that any such ‘fact-finding’ actually took place. She pointed out that the planning commission of the government had also formed fact-finding groups to determine



Gautam Navlakha

the scope of development in areas affected by left-wing extremism. “If the government also does fact-finding, then how can it be called an illegal activity?” she said.

Prosecution lawyer Ujjwala Pawar argued that the mission’s agenda was “false propaganda” about innocent people being killed by state and paramilitary forces.

Ahuja said Navlakha’s custody was not required as he was a journalist and peace activist who had served as an interlocutor when five persons were abducted by Maoists in 2011, and had openly opposed Maoist violence.

Pawar, however, countered

this with allegations that Navlakha had tried to link the CPI-Maoist with terror group Hizbul Mujahideen. She cited a purported document seized from a co-accused, which stated that Navlakha allegedly introduced himself to Shakil Bakshi, chairman of the Islamic Student’s League in Srinagar in the mid-2000s, and told him that the “Maoist party wants to establish contact and a working relationship with the HM.”

Pawar said custodial interrogation of Navlakha was needed to probe his links with HM and CPI-Maoist, as well as his meetings with underground operatives, and also to investigate the documents allegedly seized from his possession, which were submitted to the court in a sealed envelope.

Ahuja objected to the submission of these documents in a sealed envelope, stating that if the material was recovered from Navlakha’s possession, it should be shown to her.

The special court will take a decision on Navlakha’s anticipatory bail plea on November 12.

Fake marksheet scam effect: Haryana to verify certificates of all govt employees, college students

VARINDER BHATIA
CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

THE HARYANA government is set to verify Class 10 and 12 mark-sheets and other educational certificates of all state government employees and college students across the state after the CBI unearthed a fake marksheet scam, discovering that an allegedly fake educational board had issued educational certificates to people across the country.

According to sources, state governments across the country are also in the process of conducting a similar exercise after the CBI alerted them last month that several states have “given equivalence to the examinations” conducted by the Board of Secondary Education, Madhya Bharat, Gwalior for “the purpose of appointment in different government/private organisations and for taking admissions for

higher studies”.

The matter came to light after a Division Bench of the Allahabad High Court asked the CBI Director to conduct a thorough inquiry about the board last year.

Based on a communication sent by CBI last month, Haryana’s Chief Secretary Keshni Anand Arora has now asked all the Administrative Secretaries, Heads of Departments, Commissioners of Ambala, Hisar, Gurgaon, Karnal, Faridabad and Rohtak divisions, Registrar of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, Deputy Commissioners, Managing Directors and Chief Administrators of all the Boards and Corporations across Haryana, and Registrars of all universities across the state to verify the marksheets and certificates of all employees.

Dated November 5, the Chief Secretary’s note states that if someone is found to have procured appointment in Haryana on the basis of marksheets or certi-

The matter came to light after a Division Bench of the Allahabad High Court asked the CBI Director to conduct a thorough inquiry about the Board of Secondary Education, Madhya Bharat, Gwalior last year

cates issued by the board, “his appointment may be cancelled with immediate effect and suitable action as deemed fit may be taken.”

The CBI’s Anti-Corruption Branch in Dehradun filed two criminal cases in December against the board, which “issued a large number of fake mark-sheets and certificates with/without conducting examinations and solely for the purpose of financial

gains”, according to the Chief Secretary. The agency found that several schools and colleges across the country were affiliated to the board and informed all state governments last month.

This board claims on its website that it is registered under “Government of India, Planning Commission” and is “run under the Indian Trust Act, 1882”. The contact numbers on the website were not reachable.

A senior CBI officer told *The Indian Express*, “It is not a registered board. It is not entitled to conduct any examination or issue any mark-sheets or certificates. Based on the orders of the High Court of Uttar Pradesh, an enquiry was conducted by CBI’s Dehradun branch... We found that it was not a board recognised by statute. We found that some of the persons have obtained employment or admissions in higher studies in various states across the country, based on the mark-sheets or certificates issued

by this board... Thus, we decided to write to the Chief Secretaries of all the states... We have already registered cases against beneficiaries in Uttar Pradesh.” The CBI has also informed the Union Ministry of Human Resource Development of the issue.

Explaining how the board came into existence, the Haryana Chief Secretary wrote, “All the boards which were functional prior to Independence became invalid and ceased to exist after the establishment of Central Board of Secondary Education in 1952. But, the name of some educational boards, including Board of Secondary Education Madhya Pradesh, Gwalior, inadvertently remained mentioned in the Uttar Pradesh Intermediate Education Act, 1921. Taking advantage of this fact, the accused persons re-established this board through Registered Trust Deeds in 2010-11 and still continue operations all over the country.”



NORTH

7 UP cops given compulsory retirement for ineffective duty

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday handed out compulsory retirement to seven police officers for not performing their duties effectively, officials said. The officers are from the Provincial Police Service (PPS) and of 50 years of age or above, an official statement said. “Following orders

of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, the state government has given compulsory retirement to seven police officials...” Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Awasthi said. They were not effectively discharging their duties and a number of probes were pending against them, the statement said. **PTI**



Candidates undergo a physical test during an Indian Army recruitment camp in Bhopal on Thursday. *PTI*

EAST

CRPF man killed in encounter with Maoists

Bijapur: A CRPF personnel was killed in an encounter with Maoists in Chhattisgarh’s Bijapur district on Thursday, police said. Some Maoists are also suspected to have been killed in the gunfight and security forces are combing the area, they said. The gunbattle took place around 4 am when a joint team of the CRPF, its elite unit

CoBRA and state police were carrying out a search operation in Pamed area, Deputy Inspector General (anti-Naxal operation) Sundarraj P said. “Constable Kamta Prasad received bullet injuries in the incident. He succumbed to injuries while being shifted to Cherla Hospital in neighbouring Telangana,” the DIG said. **PTI**

WEST

‘Thief’ escapes police custody, nabbed within 12 hours

Mumbai: A 38-year-old accused in a theft case, who managed to escape police custody on Wednesday, was nabbed within 12 hours from suburban Vile Parle railway station, police said on Thursday. Afzal Ansari, a resident of Sahar village in the western suburb of Andheri, was arrested on Wednesday for allegedly robbing a shop

in the locality, an official from Vile Parle police station said. Ansari was brought to the police station but managed to flee the premises. Policemen noticed his disappearance and went to his house, where they found Ansari had fled with his wife’s mobile phone. They traced him by tracking the phone. **PTI**

SOUTH

Man who set tehsildar on fire in Telangana succumbs

Hyderabad: The man who allegedly burnt a woman tehsildar alive in her office near here succumbed to his injuries at a hospital here on Thursday, police said. On November 4, tehsildar Vijaya Reddy died after she was allegedly set on fire by K Suresh. “Suresh succumbed to his injuries around 3.25 pm on Thursday at the hos-

pital,” a senior police officer said. The assailant had walked into the tehsildar’s chamber, poured petrol on her and set her on fire using a lighter. He had also suffered burns in the attack. Police said a scientific investigation was underway to ascertain what had provoked Suresh to take the extreme step. **PTI**

WRITER NABANEETA DEV SEN DIES AT 81

‘She represented blend of humour and original vision’

PAROMITA CHAKRABARTI
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

IN HER last column published on November 3 in a Bengali magazine, writer and academic Nabaneeta Dev Sen, 81, wrote “*Thik achhe. Na hoy cancer-i hoyechhe. Cancer to ekhon alakhhi-r jhapir moto ghore ghore guchhiye boshechhe. Ami-i ba bad jai keno? Hothat ashiti-por Nabaneeta-r jonye eto shok kisher?*” (So what if I have cancer. It has settled down like bad luck in so many households. Why should I be left out? Why should there be an outpouring of grief for octogenarian Nabaneeta?)”

On Friday, when the Sahitya

Akademi award-winning writer passed away in her Hindustan Road residence in Kolkata, the outpouring of grief from generations of readers was a tribute to her original literary voice, her sparkling wit and her striking forthrightness.

Born to poets Narendranath and Radharani Dev in January 1938, Nabaneeta Dev Sen grew up in Kolkata and graduated from Presidency College. Her first collection of poetry, *Pratham Pratayay*, was published in 1959 and her first short story collection, *Monsieur Hulor Holiday*, in 1980. Her repertoire included poetry, short stories, novels, travelogues and essays that had, at their core, the feminine experience — in books like *Nati*

PLEA CHALLENGING CURBS IN J&K

Should govt have waited for riots to begin, SC asks Azad

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

THE SUPREME Court on Thursday asked Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad if the government should have waited for riots to take place before imposing restrictions in Jammu and Kashmir in view of its decision to scrap the special status on August 5. The three-judge bench comprised Justices N V Ramana, R Subhash Reddy and B R Gavai.

Justice Gavai asked Senior Advocate Kapil Sibal, who was representing Azad, if the state could not take preventive action, for instance in situations where there is apprehension of breach of communal peace. “Then they should have the material,” replied Sibal. “Should they have waited for the riots to take place?” asked Justice Gavai. “Why assume there will be riots?” answered Sibal, adding, “that shows it’s on the mind”.

“So what kind of material do



Ghulam Nabi Azad

you expect in situations like this?” asked Justice Reddy. Sibal replied that it can be material in the form of intelligence inputs. “Government cannot act in anticipation of a possibility,” he said, adding, “There was nothing on August 4...only (apprehension) in the mind of the government”.

Arguing before the court, Sibal had taken the stand that patients were unable to access hospitals in Jammu and Kashmir

in the wake of the curbs following August 5.

On Thursday, he faced questions from the bench over a news article submitted with Azad’s petition which said that 8,308 outpatients had visited the Super Speciality Section of Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital in Srinagar and 7,073 had visited the Khyber Hospital in August.

Sibal had cited the article by Indiaspend.com to illustrate how patients were suffering after August 5. The article showed a dip in outpatient visits compared to July.

“There is no movement, no transport,” said Sibal, stating that even farmers were unable to sell their produce due to non-availability of transport.

After going through the article, Justice Reddy asked Sibal, “So by your own admission, 8,308 patients visited?”

Justice Reddy then referred to the figures for the previous months and said the number for June was less than July, which

being a rainy month may have led to more people falling sick. The bench added that “everything can’t be linked to this (situation following Article 370 amendment)”.

Justice Reddy said that “there can’t be any doubt that in a situation like this, there will be difficulties”.

Sibal responded that the state had a duty to protect people’s interests. “If you take such a drastic action that affects seven million people, you need to prepare for it. You need to protect their fundamental rights too,” Sibal contended.

Azad moved the apex court after he was stopped at Srinagar airport while attempting to visit the state the first time after August 5.

“Stopping me at the airport is unreasonable restriction, not allowing patients to visit hospitals is unreasonable restriction...,” Sibal told the bench, adding, “they have failed to take steps to facilitate my rights”.



The season’s first snowfall in Srinagar’s Lal Chowk on Thursday. *Shuaib Masoodi*

Army: Pak intel using fake gurus to target soldiers, families for info

KRISHN KAUSHIK
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

PAKISTANI INTELLIGENCE is using fraudulent “babas” (religious leaders) and spiritual gurus to entrap serving officers and their dependents to “extract sensitive information”, the Army has told its personnel.

In an advisory sent to all its personnel in mid-October, the Army is learned to have said that Pakistani intelligence officers “posing as babas or spiritual gurus” are using video platforms such as YouTube to target service personnel and their families in an attempt to “win over their trust”.

After they gain trust, the Pakistani intelligence personnel use platforms such as WhatsApp or video-calling services like Skype “to extract sensitive information”.

The Army has listed these religious or spiritual gurus in the

advisory, which also warns soldiers against Pakistani intelligence officials posing as women on social media to honeytrap. The advisory cautions that these intelligence agents are trying to “honeytrap, lure, entice or subvert” serving Army personnel, targeting even senior officers.

Close to 150 such Pakistani intelligence personnel, found to be using fake identification, have been “profiled” by the Army. Their communication with Indian soldiers and their dependents has also been reportedly intercepted.

The advisory is intended to create awareness about the technology and modus operandi of the “aggressive campaign” of Pakistani intelligence to target Indian Army personnel, dependents, units, etc, to “extract information pertaining to military and national security”.

The advisory mentions several

methods to trap these serving personnel and their dependents, including creating fictitious “female profiles” on social media and then trying to establish contact, creating fraud lottery or chain marketing schemes, forwarding malicious apps or malware to gain access to the target’s phones, spoof-calling by acting as senior Army officers, and spreading rumours.

They “exploit social media” platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, TikTok, Telegram, Skype, YouTube, among others, to gather sensitive information and to cultivate serving and retired officers and their dependents, the advisory warned.

The advisory pointed out that these Pakistani intelligence agents also take “pseudo identities” such as insurance agents, senior officers of Army Headquarters or commands, representatives of Army Welfare Education Society, etc.

“My father was not a thief. Even if something happened, people knew him, he could have been handed over to the police. We were targeted and there was a conspiracy... (otherwise) my father would have been alive today,” said Mubarak’s only son Yusuf.

Mubarak Ansari and Akhtar Ansari (26) were assaulted by a mob in Govindpur — less than 2 km from his residence — allegedly while they were returning with the stolen battery. He was later rushed to the hospital, but doctors declared him brought dead. Akhtar is currently undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Mubarak’s wife Farjana Khatun trashed the theft allegation. “We had sufficient money to lead our lives. My husband went to jail many years ago in a petty case. In the last 20 years, there was no case against him. We have farm land and were supposed to harvest the paddy

First time in two decades, new HIV subtype found by genetic sequencing

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

FOR THE first time in almost two decades, a new subtype of the Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) that causes AIDS has been identified through genetic sequencing. The subtype belongs to the M group of HIV that is said to have caused the most infections.

Pharma major Abbott has reported that a team of Abbott scientists have identified the HIV-1 Group M, subtype L virus. The findings have been published in the *Journal of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndromes* (JAIDS).

Specimen CG-0018a-01, which has been sequenced to reveal that it is a hitherto unknown subtype of HIV, was collected in 2001 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as part of an HIV prevention of mother to child transmission (PMTCT) study.

“In an increasingly connected world, we can no longer think of viruses being contained to one location. This discovery reminds us that to end the HIV pandemic, we must continue to out-think this continuously changing virus and use the latest advancements in technology and resources to monitor its evolution,” according to Carole McArthur, professor, oral and craniofacial sciences departments, University of Missouri, Kansas City, and one of the study authors.

To determine whether an unusual virus is in fact a new HIV subtype, three cases must be discovered independently. The first two samples of this subtype were discovered in DRC in the 1980s and the 1990s. The third, collected in 2001, was difficult to sequence at that time because of the amount of virus in the sample and the existing technology.

“We conclude that the epi-

EXPLAINED

Subtype of Group M HIV

THE ABBOTT research marks the first time a new subtype of “Group M” HIV virus has been identified since guidelines for classifying new strains of HIV were established in 2000. Group M viruses are responsible for the global pandemic, which can be traced back to the DRC in Sub-Saharan Africa.

demologically unlinked isolates CG-0018a-01, 83CD003, and 90CD121E12 may now be classified as HIV-1 group M, subtype L. This is the first new subtype classification identified since the nomenclature guidelines were established in 2009,” the researchers wrote in the JAIDS article.

“Despite being the most recently sequenced subtype L strain, CG-0018a-01 branched basal to the two older strains from 1990 and 1983, consistent with CG-0018a-01 being more closely related to the ancestral subtype L strain than the other two isolates. Therefore, the CG-0018a-01 sequence will be important for determining the origins and age of subtype L,” the researchers noted.

Senior faculty member at AIIMS, New Delhi, who did not want to be named said that sequencing of this strain is a significant development in understanding, prevention and treatment of HIV because it is part of what has caused the most infections in humans.



Mubarak Ansari’s family in Bokaro. *Express*

JHARKHAND MAN BEATEN TO DEATH

Kin trash theft charge: out to check his farm

ABHISHEK ANGAD
BOKARO (JHARKHAND), NOVEMBER 7

THE EERIE silence at Nayibasti in Jharkhand’s Bokaro Thermal area is occasionally broken by wails from the home of Mubarak Ansari (48), who was beaten to death by a mob in the early hours of Wednesday, allegedly because he and another man from the neighbourhood stole a battery from a vehicle.

“My father was not a thief. Even if something happened, people knew him, he could have been handed over to the police. We were targeted and there was a conspiracy... (otherwise) my father would have been alive today,” said Mubarak’s only son Yusuf.

Mubarak Ansari and Akhtar Ansari (26) were assaulted by a mob in Govindpur — less than 2 km from his residence — allegedly while they were returning with the stolen battery. He was later rushed to the hospital, but doctors declared him brought dead. Akhtar is currently undergoing treatment at the hospital.

Mubarak’s wife Farjana Khatun trashed the theft allegation. “We had sufficient money to lead our lives. My husband went to jail many years ago in a petty case. In the last 20 years, there was no case against him. We have farm land and were supposed to harvest the paddy

in a few days. Last night, my husband went to check the farm because he feared that our crops would be destroyed by stray cattle,” she said.

Farjana said she regrets falling asleep after he left. “In the morning, I came to know that he was beaten and then he had died,” she said, adding, “*hume in-saaf chahiye* (we want justice).”

She also indicated that the assault on Mubarak could be a fallout of an earlier clash between her husband and residents of Govindpur. “People would drink and throw bottles in our farm. A few years ago, there was a ruckus. I think they wanted to take revenge,” she said.

Bokaro SP P Murugan said, “Mubarak Ansari apparently went to jail for cable theft in 1998.” On the ruckus Farjana referred to, he said, “We have no information on it. As of now, he was beaten for stealing a battery. We have also recovered a battery.”

Karim Ansari, a resident of Nayibasti and a member of Sadar Anjuman Committee, said he had received information of the assault from a Govindpur villager. “On reaching there, I saw both of them writhing in pain. I wanted to untie them, but the mob stopped me. I called up the police and only after they arrived, the two were rushed to the hospital. His hands appeared to be dislocated, jaw broken and he was barely breathing,” said Karim.

Pass an order we can understand, SC tells Bombay HC

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

THE SUPREME Court has set aside an order of the Aurangabad bench of Bombay High Court, saying that it was “unintelligible” and that the court “could not decipher what has been decided by the High Court”.

“We accordingly set aside the order and remit the matter to the High Court. We request the High Court to pass an order we can understand,” a bench of Justices Deepak Gupta and Aniruddha Bose ordered.

The court was hearing an appeal by Surekha Nitin Kapse, a resident of Pimpalas, in Maharashtra’s Ahmednagar district, against the August 18 judgment of a bench of Justices T V Nalawade and K K Sonawane of Aurangabad bench of Bombay HC.

In her petition, filed through advocate Dilip Annasaheb Taur, Surekha stated that the High Court had passed a “cryptic order” without even dealing with her submissions, and “without recording any finding to that effect”.

The matter related to two cross-complaints filed at Rahata police station by Surekha and one Sitaram Babasaheb Kapse.

In her petition in the apex court, Surekha stated that her husband Nitin Gautaram Kapse

had lodged a police complaint on August 21, 2016 against one Avinash Babasaheb Kapse for allegedly threatening to attack their son. She alleged that a day later, Avinash and a few other men arrived at their home with swords and sticks and abused her for making a police complaint. They allegedly attacked her son and nephew. The petitioner stated that she filed an FIR the same day.

On August 23, another FIR was registered on a complaint by Sitaram Kapse, accusing Nitin Kapse of murdering Avinash.

According to Sitaram, Avinash and Nitin were members of the BJP, but Avinash’s decision to join the Congress allegedly led to the crime.

Surekha’s petition stated while the police had submitted chargesheet in the murder case, the investigating officer filed a B summary (filed when police do not find any evidence against the accused to file a chargesheet). She said the Sub Divisional Officer did not accept the investigating officer’s report and sought further probe.

Meanwhile, trial in the murder case had already started, following which she moved HC seeking a stay on it. Surekha argued that it would prejudice her case if the trial proceeded.

The HC, in a two-page order, declined to stay the trial.

VVIP CHOPPER DEAL

Kickbacks laundered, invested in company owned by Puri: ED

DEEPTIMAN TIWARY
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

ALLEGED KICKBACKS to the tune of several hundred crores of rupees in the Rs 3,600-crore VVIP chopper deal were allegedly laundered and invested in a company directly owned by Ratul Puri, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has told a special court.

Puri, the nephew of Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath, also tried to systematically destroy evidence and threatened witnesses against disclosing information with regard to his “father and uncle”, the ED has alleged.

In a supplementary prosecution complaint (equivalent to a chargesheet) filed before a Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court, the ED recently cited detailed evidence in the form of email exchanges and financial transactions to prove that front companies floated by Puri received \$1.24 million and Euro 0.7 million from companies associated with AgustaWestland deal middlemen Christian Michel and Guido Haschke. Part of this money was eventually invested through a maze of transactions into Hindustan Power



Ratul Puri

Projects Pvt Ltd (HPPPL), a company directly owned by Puri, ED said in the complaint.

Part of this money was used for personal purposes by Puri, which included “jetsetting” globally, vacationing in Phuket, Thailand and splurging in casinos in Las Vegas, the ED alleged. “Statements of the American Express credit card of Ratul Puri for the period November 2011 to October 2016 reveals that the amounts spent on the same are USD 4.5m,” the complaint said.

The agency stated that much of this evidence was gathered during a September raid on the residence of a woman known to Puri. The ED said that the woman’s association with Puri is a matter of judicial record as Puri had chosen to meet her over his family members while he was in jail. The agency also alleged that Puri used her to destroy evidence related to the case.

Claiming it learnt this through intelligence inputs, the ED said, “...the fact of burning of documents have been established and ashes recovered... Rajiv Saxena has also been threatened and pressurised by... Puri not to give evidence against Ratul’s father and uncle.” The complaint did not specify who this uncle was.

Using technical evidence, the ED claimed to have proved that emails related to laundering of chopper deal money emanated from an IP address at MoserBaer company in Okhla, Delhi. MoserBaer is owned by Puri’s family. It also demonstrated how MoserBaer allegedly over-invoiced purchase of BluRay DVD machines to mask alleged illicit funds and eventually pumped them into HPPPL.

When contacted, Puri’s lawyer Vijay Aggarwal refused to comment.

According to the ED, Puri’s name cropped up during the interrogation of co-accused in the case Sushen Mohan Gupta and Rajiv Saxena, who was deported from the UAE this January.

Saxena, who became an approver in the case only to be rejected recently by the ED, provided a large chunk of evidence in terms of “the account of Ratul Puri maintained with him” and emails and details of transactions carried out by Puri through his companies or “companies maintained/incorporated for the benefit of Ratul Puri”.

“On Scrutiny of the email instructions, it was seen that Ratul Puri was giving instructions from the email accounts of ratul.puri@hpppl.in, nokiaasamsung35@yahoo.co.uk and nokiaasamsung35@yahoo.com for laundering the proceeds of crime in the instant case,” the complaint said.

The chargesheet listed nine companies that it claimed were incorporated by Saxena and other people in foreign countries “for the benefit of Ratul Puri” for laundering money received from Interstellar Technologies, IDS Tunisia and Global Services Sarl, floated by Michel and Haschke among others. These included Technostone Ltd, Hendon Global Ltd, Trade Services Agency, Prodexco Iberia, Melleger Ltd, Pacific International FZC, Midas Metals International, Metolix Ltd and Euro Trade Ltd.

According to the complaint, money flowed from Intersteller to Hendon, Technostone and other entities. From here transfers were made to one Pangea Emerging Infrastructure Fund in Maritius. In turn, Pangea invested Rs 190.5 crore in Cobol Technologies Pvt Ltd, a company owned by HPPPL.

Lawyers in Alwar booked after clash with police

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
JAIPUR, NOVEMBER 7

FIVE FIRs have been filed against lawyers in Rajasthan’s Alwar after they clashed with police on Wednesday. The incident occurred when the lawyers were protesting against the clash between lawyers and the police at Delhi’s Tis Hazari court last Saturday.

“The lawyers were urging people and witnesses not to participate in court proceedings and were also misbehaving with them. When the police arrived, they started misbehaving with the force, which resulted in the clash by a mob of lawyers. They manhandled police personnel and civilians,” said Alwar Additional Superintendent of Police Vishnaram. He said four of the FIRs were registered by the police.

“The mob misbehaved with a lady constable and a case has been registered for outraging modesty of a woman against 6-7 people who were inciting the crowd. We have also lodged cases against the mob for hindering in official duty of a public servant,” he said, adding that the fifth case against the lawyers has been filed by a person with whom they had misbehaved.

The ASP added that an investigation is being conducted and any decision on arrests will be taken soon.

Meanwhile, the lawyers denied that they had misbehaved with the police and public.

“We were taking out a rally inside the Alwar court complex against police atrocities against lawyers during the incident in Delhi when the police charged at us. It is totally false that the mob misbehaved with a woman constable. We are convening a meeting today to decide our further course of action and are mulling filing FIRs against the police violence against us,” Uday Singh, president of the Alwar district bar association told *The Indian Express*.



The tiger had sustained injuries after it reportedly jumped off a bridge. *PTI*

Tiger stuck in river bed drowns: officials

VIVEK DESHPANDE
NAGPUR, NOVEMBER 7

A TIGER which was stuck in a river bed in the Bhadravati tahsil of Maharashtra’s Chandrapur district has drowned, officials said on Thursday.

The tiger in question was found stuck in a slushy part of the river on Wednesday morning by commuters on the bridge above the river, in the Majri area of Western Coalfields Limited (WCL) mines. A Forest Department team rushed to the spot. They, however, couldn’t tranquilise the tiger, as tranquilisation is not allowed when the animal is in water, where it can drown.

Officials tried to lower a cage near the tiger but it refused to get inside. In the process, its jaw got entangled with the cage and started bleeding. They also bust crackers to force the tiger to come out of water, but that too failed to elicit the desired response.

Officials had said the tiger probably had some injury on its back, due to which it was unable to move out. Hoping that the tiger might come out of water, the Forest team was waiting on the river bank through the night but found him dead in the water on Thursday morning.

REVIEW PETITION OF CONVICT DISMISSED

SC: No hard rule of not awarding death based on circumstantial evidence

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

THE DEATH sentence can be awarded even in cases where the evidence is only circumstantial, the Supreme Court said on Thursday, as it dismissed the review petition of a man convicted and sentenced to death for raping and murdering a ten-year-old girl, and murdering her seven-year-old brother in Coimbatore in 2010.

“It is no longer res integra that there can be no hard rule of not awarding death in cases based on circumstantial evidence owing to recent developments in medical science and the possibility of abuse by seasoned criminals,” a bench of Justices R F Nariman and Surya Kant said, rejecting the review petition filed by Manoharan, the convict.

According to the case registered by the police in Coimbatore, the two siblings were picked up by one Mohanakrishnan from outside a temple while they were preparing to go to school on October 29, 2010. He met up with Manoharan and the two men took the children to a remote area, where they raped the girl after tying her hands.

Thereafter, they fed them milk laced with cow dung powder — a poisonous substance added to cow dung to keep insects away. The children, however, did not die as they ingested only a small quantity of the poi-

sonous milk. The two then threw the children in a canal.

Mohanakrishnan was arrested the same night while Manoharan was detained on October 31. Mohanakrishnan, however, killed in an encounter with the police on November 9.

Though Manoharan confessed to his crime in his statement before the Magistrate, he subsequently retracted it.

On August 1, the Supreme Court, in a 2:1 judgment, had upheld the death sentence awarded to Manoharan. While Justices Nariman and Surya Kant agreed with the death penalty, Justice Sanjiv Khanna had favoured life sentence “till his natural death, without remission/commutation”, considering that Manoharan was only 23 at the time of commission of the offence, was from a poor family, was a first-time offender and was not the mastermind of the crime.

On Thursday, the Supreme Court dismissed his review petition, saying, “It is clear that even in the retraction statement, the petitioner has made substantial admissions which read together with prosecution evidence, are sufficient to convict him.”

Manoharan said though he had told the truth to the Magistrate, his statement was not read out to him and hence the Magistrate’s affirmation is incorrect. Rejecting this, the apex court said, “A comparison of the retraction with the confession... further shows that it is merely an improvement.”

BSNL employee kills self over non-payment of salary

Thiruvananthapuram: Denied salary for several months, a BSNL employee committed suicide at his office in Kerala’s Malappuram district Thursday.

Kanjirampadam Kunnathu Ramakrishnan had not received his salary for the last seven months and was a person with disabilities. He had been a part-time sweeper with BSNL for the last 30 years.

On Thursday morning, he came to office at Nilambur and hanged himself at the switch room, police said. **ENS**

Family heckled for not standing up for National Anthem faces FIR

RALPH ALEX ARAKAL
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 7

POLICE HAVE filed a suo motu case against a family for allegedly disrespecting the National Anthem, more than a fortnight after they were heckled by a group of people for not standing up for the anthem at a cinema hall in Bengaluru.

An FIR has been filed “against the individuals who were being heckled” in the video posted on social media under Section 3 of the Prevention of Insults to the National Honour Act, 1971, officials at Subramanya Nagar police station said.

The incident took place at a PVR hall inside a mall on October 23.

DCP (North) N Shashikumar said a notice had been sent to PVR to furnish details of the people involved to help the investigating team.

“Once the individuals who were heckled, as seen in the video, are traced, we will record their statements... The people who made the video will also be summoned for an inquiry to confirm whether there was an instance of disrespect to the National Anthem that was observed,” he said.

The police said the FIR was filed after suo motu cognizance of the video following thorough consultation with legal experts. In the video, Kannada actors Arun Gowda, BV Aishwarya, and others were seen questioning a family for not standing up for the National Anthem, which was being played before the screening.

Police said that they are looking into all the aspects of the case, including statements made by people who recorded and posted the video.

Arun had said the incident turned into a heated argument when the family started speaking about “the Army in a disrespectful manner.”

Arunachal student outfit demands end to benefits for ‘non-STs’

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, NOVEMBER 7

THE ALL Arunachal Pradesh Students’ Union (AAPSU) on Thursday called for the identification of individuals, born to Arunachal Pradesh Scheduled Tribe (APST) mothers and non-APST fathers and claim APST benefits under their mother’s name, across the state within 30 days. The AAPSU has also asked such individuals to “surrender” their ST certificates.

AAPSU president Hawa Bagang said, “In Indian society, except for Meghalaya, children are given the surname of their father. Then why do these people often take up the surname of their APST mothers and not that of the non-APST fathers? They use their mother’s surname and identity to get benefits reserved for APST communities.”

Bagang said, “Our concern is that if such individuals are taking the benefits reserved for APSTs, then it dilutes tribal society and eats into our rights. We cannot let this happen. It is not a personal attack against any individual or any call for vigilantism, but this is an appeal for a strict policy. We will urge the state government to pass a law regarding this matter.”

In September, Mizoram’s apex and most influential students’ body, the Mizo Zirlai Pawl (MZP), administered pledges to hundreds of students across the Christian-majority state not to marry outside the Mizo tribe. The oral pledges, administered in high schools and higher secondary schools, came as part of the body’s campaign to “protect” the tribal community from getting “assimilated”.

Man held for posing as IPS officer, duping people of Rs 2.5 cr: Kerala cops

SHAJU PHILIP

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOVEMBER 7

OVER THE last three years, a 29-year-old from Kannur allegedly introduced himself as an IPS officer, moved around in police uniform, enjoyed salutes and admonished constables on traffic duty. On the sidelines, he cheated several banks and individuals to the tune of Rs 2.5 crore, police said.

Vipin Karthik was arrested on Thursday. He was allegedly assisted by his mother Kuniyil Shyamala (58), who was arrested on October 27.

The duo hailed from Thalassery in Kannur district, but mainly operated at the temple town of Guruvayur in Thrissur district, police said. Shyamala was removed as a last-grade government employee following a for-

gery case years ago. When she was arrested last month, Vipin had managed to escape.

Thrissur Range DIG S Surendran said, “Vipin used to admire police officials. That admiration made him pose as an IPS officer. He got a police uniform stitched in Guruvayur and manufactured the official chest name plate. The gift of the gab left little doubt in people’s minds.”

Vipin does not have any degree. He had attended a technical course and later a hotel management course, but did not complete either.

About Vipin’s modus operandi, police said that he would forge his bank statement as an IPS officer and approach banks for car loans. Everywhere he would use his photographs in police uniform and give the Guruvayur address, which was also forged. After purchasing a car with a bank loan, he would



Vipin Karthik cheated several banks and individuals, say police. *Express*

sell it without clearing bank dues. To get the sale deal cleared at the transport department, he would present a forged bank statement showing that he had paid all the bank dues. A fresh car

loan would be used to pay the previous one. In this way, he allegedly bought 15 cars with bank loans posing as an IPS officer.

Vipin and Shyamala also allegedly befriended an official with Indian Overseas Bank at Guruvayur, where he had opened his first bank account with forged documents. Shyamala tricked the official into believing that Vipin was seriously ill and required financial assistance. Thus, the duo allegedly pocketed Rs 25 lakh and 50 sovereigns of gold from the official.

The DIG said that as these were vehicle loans, bank officials did not go for any detailed inquiry about the antecedents of the applicant. “We have got 15 complaints regarding cheating and more complaints are coming up from across Kerala. Before moving to Guruvayur pretending to be an IPS officer, Vipin had been jailed for six months in Kannur in

another cheating case,” he added.

The DIG said that though Vipin went everywhere as an IPS officer, sometimes in uniform, he never appeared before any IPS officer in the last three years. “He ensured that he reached police functions after senior officials had left. Then he would apologise for being late. He had even forged the letter pad of the Kupwara police superintendent,” said the DIG.

A month ago, Vipin went to meet an inspector in Malappuram to seek a favour for his friend in a cheating case, and introduced himself as an IPS officer hailing from Guruvayur. But the inspector contacted his counterpart in Guruvayur temple town station.

Guruvayur Inspector Premanandakrishnan said, “Initially we registered a case for misuse of police uniform. But later we realised that he had cheated several banks and individuals.”

Cyclone ‘Bulbul’ likely to move towards Bengal

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA, NOVEMBER 7

A CYCLONE over the Bay of Bengal is likely to intensify into a “very severe” cyclonic storm over the next two days and set to head towards the West Bengal and Bangladesh coasts, skirting Odisha, the Met department said on Thursday.

Cyclone ‘Bulbul’, which lay around 930 km south-southeast of Kolkata, “might turn into a severe cyclonic storm by Thursday midnight and further intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm by Saturday evening”, leading to rough sea conditions, Regional Met Director G K Das said.

Fishermen have been advised

to return to the coast by Thursday evening and not venture into the seas.

“It is very likely to move initially north-northwestwards for next 12 hours and then nearly northwards till November 9 morning and then re-curve northeastwards towards Bangladesh and adjoining West Bengal coasts,” Das said.

The maximum sustained windspeed within and around the area of cyclone ‘Bulbul’ had been recorded at 70 to 80 km per hour, with gusts up to 90 kmph.

IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra said the cyclonic system was being monitored to ascertain the direction of the storm and the possible location of its landfall.

Families of two ‘Maoists’ claim fake encounter, refuse to take bodies

DIPANKAR GHOSE
RAIPUR, NOVEMBER 7

TWO DAYS after the Chhattisgarh Police announced that two Maoists have been killed in an operation in Dantewada district, the families of the deceased on Thursday claimed that the encounter was fake.

According to the police, Tuesday’s encounter took place in the jungles of Munga and Badegadam, where Hidma and Lakhma — both in black uniform — were killed and Maoist material recovered. Police said the deceased carried a reward of Rs 1 lakh each on their head.

On Thursday, however, the families of the two as well other villagers from Badegadam ar-

rived in Dantewada, and refused to take the bodies, alleging that they were killed in a fake encounter. They said that at around 7 am on Tuesday, a team of the Chhattisgarh Police that contained members of the District Reserve Guard, including former Maoists who have now joined the mainstream, came to the village and picked up Hidma and Lakhma from the fields.

The villagers alleged that the two were not wearing black uniforms. They claimed that the police took them away on the pretext of questioning, but they were later killed in what was claimed to be an encounter.

Chhattisgarh DGP D M Awasthi said, “I have been told about this and have given instructions to the Inspector General of

Police, Bastar, that this should be enquired into. As a rule, there are instructions to everyone posted in Bastar that nothing that is not as per the law is acceptable.”

Civil rights activists working in Bastar have said that despite promises made by the Congress before the Assembly elections, after coming to power, very little has changed on the ground. They claim that there are still allegations of fake encounters, pointing to questions being raised about an encounter in Ghumiyapal in Dantewada recently as well.

Activist Bela Bhatia said, “In this case, a team of the Sarva Adivasi Samaj has gone to the village... This is not the first time this is happening under this government, and the situation doesn’t seem to have improved.”

Traders upset as camels fetch low prices at Pushkar

HAMZA KHAN

JAIPUR, NOVEMBER 7

AT THE world-renowned Pushkar fair in Rajasthan last year, for every camel that was sold nearly three went unsold. The situation this year, however, has worsened, with buyers reportedly quoting prices as low as Rs 1,000 per camel.

“Last year, the situation was abysmal at Pushkar fair, with camels fetching just Rs 3,000 to 4,000. But this year, the prices have declined further, partly because pastoralists have brought female camels in large numbers as a last resort since male camels were not selling,” said Hanwant Singh, secretary of Lokhit Pashu Palak Sansthan (LPPS), an NGO which works with camel pastoralists. Traditionally, male camels

are sold at the fair while pastoralists keep female camels for breeding. “But this time, as many as 40 per cent of the camels here are females,” Singh claimed.

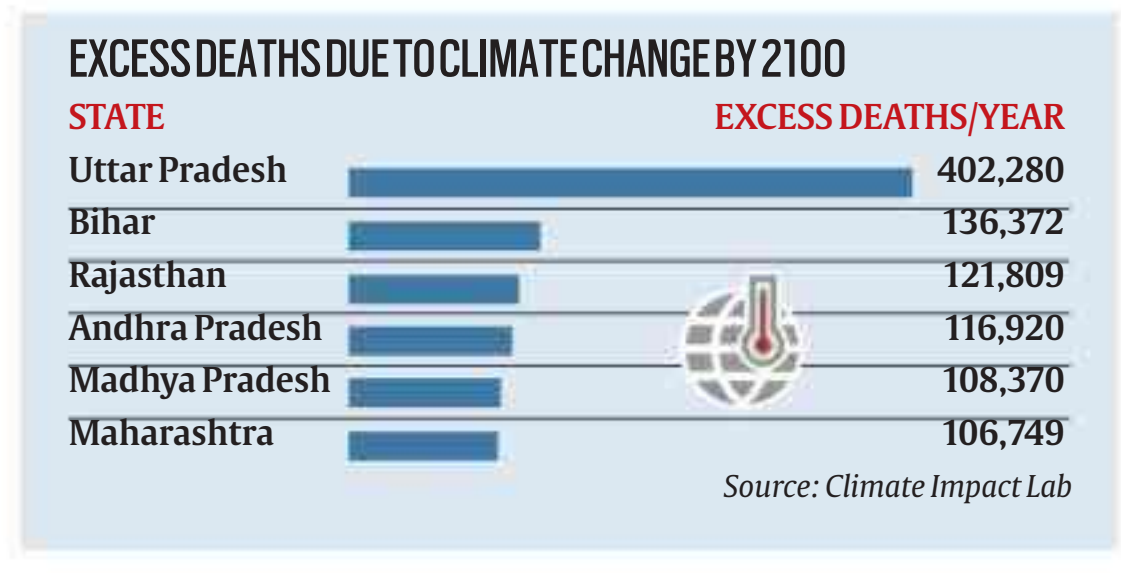
Under the banner of Singh’s LPPS, camel pastoralists had called a protest on Wednesday. However, officials led by Animal Husbandry Department director Sailesh Sharma reached Puhskar on Wednesday and heard their issues, after which they called off their protest.

Aman, 70, belonging to the Raika community which are traditionally known as camel herders, said, “I brought 30 camels from Pali. However, buyers are quoting Rs 500 to Rs 1,500. This does not cover any of my costs. What’s the point of selling?”

FULL REPORT ON
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TELLING NUMBERS

Excess deaths due to climate change, projected state by state



A NEW study has projected that 1.5 million more Indians may die per year from extreme heat due to climate change by 2100, and that India's energy use will more than double in the next 20 years, driven largely by fossil fuels. If emissions continue to be as high as they are at present, India will see a death rate of about 60 per 100,000 by 2100, the study says. This projected death rate is double the current death rate from oral cancer in India, which is the most common cancer in the country. The study, 'Climate Change and Heat-Induced Mortality in India', was conducted by the Climate Impact Lab in collaboration with the Tata Centre for Development at the University of Chicago.

It says the average annual temperature in India is expected to increase from 24°C to 28°C. The number of extremely hot days (above 35°C) across India is expected to increase by over eight times, from 5.1 per year in 2010 to 42.8 in 2100. By 2050, there are expected to be 15.8 extremely hot days a year.

The National Capital Region is projected to see 22 times more extremely hot days and more than 23,000 cli-

mate-related deaths annually by 2100 in a high-emission scenario. Odisha is projected to see the highest increase in the number of extremely hot days, at about 30 times more than what it is today. Punjab is projected to experience 85 extremely hot days a year, the highest among all states.

Overall, the six states of Uttar Pradesh (4,02,280), Bihar (1,36,372), Rajasthan (1,21,809), Andhra Pradesh (1,16,920), Madhya Pradesh (1,08,370) and Maharashtra (1,06,749) are projected to account for over 64 per cent of the heat-related deaths.

While the projected death rate in a high-emission scenario is 60 per 100,000 by 2100, mitigation of emissions will bring down the death rate to roughly about 10 per 100,000, the study says. According to the report, the risks associated with extreme temperatures vary around the world and are dependent upon the wealth of a country. For instance, the impact of a single hot day on the annual mortality rate of a wealthy and warm city such as Houston, US, will be 0.4 deaths per 100,000. The same will be double for a warm and poorer city such as Delhi, at 0.8 deaths per 100,000.

TIP FOR READING LIST

ARE THERE REALLY MANY WORLDS?

CONCEPTS OF quantum mechanics have been at the centre of much recent discourse, thanks largely to the Marvel Cinematic Universe and partly to the quantum breakthrough claimed by Google. The plots of many of the Marvel films hinge on the Many Worlds Theory, which states that if a number of outcomes are possible from an event into time, all of those events will take place along separate timelines that branch out of that event — simply put, many worlds existing simultaneously. Quantum computing works on the principle that a bit of information can exist as 0 and 1 at the same time, and on the separate probabilities of multiple states existing. It is a concept that appears so weird, even to scientists, that many of them limit themselves to doing the mathematics of these probabilities.

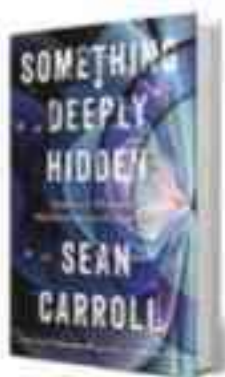
Sean Carroll, a physicist at the

California Institute of Technology, has now proposed that if you measure multiple possible outcomes, it means that these multiple universes do exist. "We just have to accept that there is more than one of us in the universe. There are many,

many Sean Carrolls. Many of every one of us." That is the idea Carroll explains in his new book, *Something Deeply Hidden: Quantum Worlds and the Emergence of Spacetime*.

"As quantum books go, Carroll's is exceptionally clear, conversational and enjoyable. He has a knack for linguistic lubrication that helps make some highly technical concepts rea-

sonably smooth to swallow. His is by far the most articulate and cogent defense of the Many-Worlds view in book-length depth with a close connection to the latest ongoing research (in the arena known as quantum foundations)," *Science News* writes in its review.



SANDEEP ASHAR

MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

THE CLOCK is ticking for the outgoing Maharashtra government, which needs to step down by Saturday, November 9, when the term of this Assembly ends.

It has been two weeks since the results of the Assembly election were announced, but no party has staked claim yet to form a government. While the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance has a clear majority, they have been wrangling over power-sharing and the Chief Minister's post, held by BJP's Devendra Fadnis in the outgoing government.

Usually the moment an election is won or lost, the Chief Minister resigns and is then asked by the Governor to continue as 'caretaker' until a new government is in place. The spotlight is therefore on Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari.

How do things stand at the moment?

On Thursday, Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni met the Governor to "advise the Governor on the legal and the constitutional options besides precedents available before him to explore all the possibilities regarding the next government's formation:..

While the existing Legislative Assembly will cease to exist post November 9, legal experts noted that there is no binding that the government should be in place by that day. The Election Commission of India published a notification on October 25, convening the newly elected Assembly.

What is the Governor's role in such circumstances?

According to sources, Governor Koshyari has already begun holding consultations with representatives of major political parties regarding government formation. On Thursday, a BJP ministers' delegation held discussions with him.

Sources said the Governor would be expected to go as per an order of preference set out in the Sarkaria Commission recommendations, which have also been ratified by the Supreme Court. By the order of preference, the Governor can invite 1) a pre-poll alliance of parties; 2) invite the single largest party



BJP leaders at Raj Bhavan on Thursday, after meeting the Governor. Nirmal Harindran

which stakes a claim to form government; 3) invite a post-poll alliance of parties, with all the partner in the coalition joining the government or 4) invite a post-poll alliances of parties, with some becoming part of the government and some supporting from outside.

The Opposition and even Shiv Sena leaders have been demanding that the Governor invite the BJP, the single largest party, to form the government. So far the BJP's strategists have been reluctant to stake claim without the Shiv Sena's support. Incidentally the Governor can only summon the new House for the first sitting only after a new government is sworn in and the Cabinet has suggested a suitable date. The process of swearing-in of the newly elected members and appointment of the new Speaker can be held thereafter.

Have there been precedents?

Maharashtra's current political stalemate is not unlike that in 2009, when the Congress-NCP alliance, despite winning an election, had delayed government formation for 13 days due to a power-sharing tussle. Then Governor SC Jamir even had to step in.

Both parties eventually buried their differences to share power.

How do the present numbers stack up?

Out of 288 Assembly seats, the BJP has the highest number (105) but is nowhere near the halfway mark of 144. The Shiv Sena has 56 seats. The NCP and the Congress have 54 and 44 seats, respectively. While the BJP has been reaching out to independents and smaller parties, it still doesn't have the numbers to form the government without the Sena's support. And while the Sena has been eyeing the CM's post, it is not in a position to form the government without the BJP either, unless both the Congress and the NCP prop up a government formed by the Sena.

What happens if any of these parties is invited to form the government?

Any government formation will have to involve the BJP or the Shiv Sena, or both. Once any formation is sworn in, it will need to pass the floor test, which will reveal whether the executive enjoys the confidence of the legislature as mandated by the Constitution. In the floor test, the person sworn in as the CM

has to prove that s/he enjoys the confidence of the House. If the confidence motion fails, the Chief Minister has to resign. If more than one person stake claim to form the government and the majority is not clear, the Governor has the powers to call a special session to assess who has the majority. The date for the floor test is decided by the Governor in consultation with the new government.

In 2014, the BJP, which had 122 members, had passed the floor test on a voice vote amid din and controversy, becoming the only instance in the state's history when a minority government was sworn in. The Shiv Sena, then the principal Opposition party, later joined the Fadnis government.

If no government can be formed, is President's rule likely?

Article 356 of the Constitution provides for the imposition of President's Rule in a state in "case of failure of the constitutional machinery in the state". As per the constitutional stipulation, it can be imposed in cases where the President, on receipt of report from the Governor of the state or otherwise, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the state cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution.

In Maharashtra's current case, imposition of the President's rule is still a remote possibility. According to legal experts, Governor Koshyari would first need to exhaust all options and possibilities of government formation before making any such recommendation. He will first have to hold consultations with all parties to examine if any one of them is in a position to cobble together the numbers required. Only after he is satisfied that no party or alliance can form a stable government would he recommend imposition of President's rule.

In the event that the BJP is unable to form the government, both the Congress and the NCP camps in the state have dropped several hints that they would be willing to prop up a government formed by the Shiv Sena. In Maharashtra's 59-year-long history, President's rule has only been imposed twice — for 112 days between February and June 1980, and for 33 days between September and October 2014.

FACT CHECK, GROUND REALITY

Delhi smoke, Punjab water: the tradeoff

KANCHAN VASDEV

CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

A 10-year-old Punjab law is being blamed for contributing to the air pollution over Delhi and surrounding areas. The law led to the sowing and transplantation of the summer paddy crop to be delayed by about a fortnight, and moved the harvesting season to end-October and early November — a time when the moist air and largely inactive wind systems cause particulate matter and gases from burning paddy stubble to hang in the atmosphere. This air is carried by northwesterly winds towards Delhi, which lies to the southeast of Punjab.

What is The Punjab Preservation of Subsoil Water Act, 2009?

The law, brought by the SAD-BJP government of Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal, aimed at conserving groundwater by mandatorily delaying the transplanting of paddy to beyond June 10, when the most severe phase of evapotranspiration (transfer of water from land to the atmosphere through evaporation

from the soil and plant transpiration) is over. Farmers were forbidden from sowing paddy before May 10, and transplanting it before June 10. Haryana has a similar law.

Why was the law enacted?

There has been serious concern over the drastic fall in the water table in Punjab. Paddy is procured by the government at minimum support price (MSP), and leads to over-exploitation of underground aquifers, as a very large number of tubewells (more than 14 lakh in 2015-16) running on free power pump out virtually endless amounts of water.

The Punjab State Farmers Commission (PSFC), led by the late Dr GS Kalkat, pushed for the law — he suggested it to Capt Amarinder Singh's Congress government in 2006, and followed up with the Badal government that took over in 2007. Despite farmers being a formidable votebank, Dr Kalkat was able to convince the government that early transplanting of rice (before mid-June) resulted in unsustainable withdrawals of groundwater with the monsoon still far, temperatures very high, and the evapotranspiration rate (ETR) at its peak.

What is the law's link with air pollution?

Farmers' organisations say late sowing and transplanting delays the harvesting as well (it is end-October by the time operations end), and they are left with a very small window to prepare their fields for the next (wheat) crop. In this situation, setting the stubble ablaze is a quick-fix solution. By this time, temperatures have started to fall, and a combination of atmospheric and meteorological conditions ensure that the smoke cannot disperse easily. A part of the smoke from the farm fires is carried by westerly winds towards the NCR and further down the Indo-Gangetic plain. Last year, the date for paddy transplantation under the Act was pushed to June 20; it was advanced this year to June 13.

But does the Act really help conserve groundwater?

A study, 'Impact of Preservation of Subsoil Water Act on Groundwater Depletion: The Case of Punjab, India' (*Environmental Management*, 2016) by Amarnath Tripathi, Ashok K Mishra, and Geetanjali Verma, reported "a robust effect of the 2009 Act on re-

ducing groundwater depletion". Between 2008-09 and 2012-13, the average annual rate of decline of groundwater in Punjab was 0.7 metres, less than the 0.9 m during the period 2000-01 to 2008-09, the study found.

What is Punjab's underground water situation currently?

According to a report in May 2019 by the Central Ground Water Board under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, 105 out of 138 blocks are in the dark zone. At current rates of depletion, good quality water in the first aquifer up to a depth of 100 m shall be exhausted in 10 years, and the entire subsurface water resource could be finished in the next 22 years.

Is Punjab willing to do away with the subsoil water preservation law?

No. The government argues that the main reason for the declining water table is the cultivation of paddy, which Punjab produces for the central pool. Stubble burning can be managed, especially if the Centre helps with money to compensate farmers — but dry aquifers cannot be recharged, it says.

Who are the Brus in Tripura camps, and why are they not returning to Mizoram?

DEBRAJ DEB

KANCHANPUR (TRIPURA), NOVEMBER 7

SINCE OCTOBER 1, six members of the Reang or Bru community have reportedly died in relief camps in Tripura, after the Centre decided to stop food supplies and cash dole. They were among 32,000 Brus living in these camps since 1997, when they fled their homes in Mizoram.

On Thursday, the Tripura government announced that it would restore food supplies, leading to the Brus withdrawing a road blockade they had set up for eight days. The restoration of supplies, however, is only until a deadline of November 30, within which the Brus have to decide whether they will accept a package for repatriation to Mizoram.

Who are the Brus?

Bru or Reang is a community indigenous to Northeast India, living mostly in Tripura, Mizoram and Assam. In Tripura, they are recognised as a Particularly Vulnerable

Tribal Group. In Mizoram, they have been targeted by groups that do not consider them indigenous to the state. In 1997, following ethnic clashes, nearly 37,000 Brus fled Mamit, Kolasib and Lunglei districts of Mizoram and were accommodated in relief camps in Tripura. Since then, 5,000 have returned to Mizoram in eight phases of repatriation, while 32,000 still live in six relief camps in North Tripura.

What have they been surviving on?

Under a relief package announced by the Centre, a daily ration of 600 grams rice was provided to every adult Bru person and 300 grams to every minor. Some salt too was given to each family. The package also provided for a daily cash dole of Rs 5 per adult and Rs 2.5 for every minor, besides essentials like soap, slippers and mosquito nets over various periods.

Most of the migrants would sell a part of their rice and use this money, along with the cash dole, to buy various supplies including medicines. Most of their vegetable supplies would come from wild growth



Politician and activist Pradyot Deb Barman meets Bru refugees during their protest, now withdrawn. PTI

nearby, where some of them have been practising slash and burn cultivation.

They live in makeshift bamboo thatched huts, without permanent power supply, a safe drinking water supply system, health centres, or schools.

Why are they still here?

In June 2018, community leaders from the Bru camps signed an agreement in Delhi with the Centre and the two state governments, providing for repatriation in Mizoram. But most camp residents rejected the terms of the agreement as "insufficient". Only 5,000 have gone back and the ongoing ninth phase has succeeded in sending back only about 700 of the remaining 32,000. The camp residents say the package does not guarantee their safety in Mizoram. They have demanded resettlement in cluster villages, among other things.

In Tripura, scion of the erstwhile royal family Pradyot Deb Barman and others have called for resettling the Brus in the state. No government organisation, however, has taken up such a discourse.

Why did the Centre stop supplies?

After a series of meetings over repatriation failed to make headway, the government suspended food supplies. It offered a final package, which expires on November 30: Rs 25,000 for each family that accepts

the package and gets ready to be repatriated within two days. This did not find any takers either.

Rations had been stopped twice in the past, including in October 2018. These decisions had come right before a phase of repatriation was about to start.

What happened after the move?

Six persons including four infants reportedly died in the camps, which were claimed to be due to starvation. The local administration has confirmed only four deaths and have not confirmed that these were caused by starvation. A huge group of Brus blockaded the streets in protest, which ended after the state government stepped in with its assurance.

Did they get medical care, and what caused the deaths?

At least three Primary Health Centres — Dasda, Gachirampara and Anandabazaar — are close to the camps. Only one of the Brus was treated at Dasda PHC, but it was too late. Bru leader Apeto Sawibunga said the

families could not afford to go to the hospital after the government dole was stopped.

The local administration initially claimed two persons died due to "unknown disease". Since then, officials have conceded four have died. Amid an outcry, authorities have exhumed the body of a 65-year-old woman for a *postmortem*. An senior official told *The Indian Express*: "We have done *post-mortem* examination of two deceased persons. We cannot say anything for sure now. Samples were sent to Agartala Government Medical College and the forensic laboratory." Medical officers at Kanchanpur Sub-Divisional Hospital, where the *postmortem* was done on two deceased Brus, refused to speak about their findings.

What happens now?

The Brus plan to lobby with the government in Delhi. A four-member Bru delegation headed by Apeto Sawibunga were scheduled to fly to Delhi on Thursday and hoped to meet Home Minister Amit Shah. Asked if they have an appointment, Sawibunga conceded that they do not.



The IndianEXPRESS

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

DOWN HOME STRETCH

Fund for stalled housing projects is a good idea. But kickstarting a virtuous cycle will need an enabling economic climate

ON WEDNESDAY, THE government approved the final structure of an Alternate Investment Fund (AIF) which will provide funding for stalled housing projects in some of the major metros in the country. That's a positive measure, which, with its promise of a multiplier effect, could help kickstart a sputtering economy. The proposed fund will have a corpus of Rs 25,000 crore to start with, with the government providing Rs 10,000 crore, while the State Bank of India and Life Insurance Corporation of India contribute the balance to ensure last mile funding for housing units worth less than Rs 2 crore in Mumbai and Rs 1.5 crore in the Delhi-NCR area and a few other metros and Rs 1 crore for other parts of the country. The government reckons that the corpus of the AIF would swell once other investors, such as sovereign wealth funds and pension funds besides banks and institutional investors, participate and unlock a good number of the 4.58 lakh housing units spread across 1,600 stalled projects in the country.

It is also good that the government has carried out design changes to the original proposal first announced in September this year, which restricted access to this fund only to projects which were at least 60 per cent complete, and were non-NPA and non- National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) projects, which meant that the original proposal would have been a non-starter. Instead, the government has specified that even projects which are now under the insolvency process but where liquidation has not been initiated could be eligible, provided they had a positive net worth. The intentions are no doubt good, yet it is not clear how some of the stalled projects, especially the NCLT ones, will be untangled with this condition linked to a positive net worth. During a previous downturn over a decade and a half ago, a group of housing finance firms and some developers had joined hands for completing some last mile projects, which yielded them dividends once the slowdown was reversed. But the scenario is different this time.

Many shadow banks or NBFCs which had also funded developers are now struggling with the snapping of liquidity support after the collateral impact of the IL&FS collapse. Coupled with that is the challenge of a huge inventory of unsold homes in some of India's major cities and the issue of demand, except perhaps in the affordable home category. An AIF featuring multiple investors will surely have to generate positive returns, which presupposes an experienced and professional team with more housing industry and operational experience and with adequate safeguard protection against fishing expeditions by investigative agencies looking to further expand their turf. But for a broader impact, it is important for the government to foster an enabling economic environment and re-pose far more trust in wealth creators, to get the economic engine firing again before these projects are completed, so that it becomes a virtuous cycle.

THREAT PERCEPTION

Tagore's Visva-Bharati will make history with a permanent police presence — a fallout of administration's own ineptitude

IN 2017, THE vice chancellor of Jawaharlal Nehru University had sought the help of two central ministers to have a tank installed on campus, ostensibly to strengthen the nationalist fibre of the student body. The ridiculous plan fizzled out. But in the east, another vice chancellor has succeeded in his slightly less ambitious quest for central armed police on his turf, the Visva-Bharati University in Tagore's Santiniketan. In his letter to the HRD ministry in October, Bidyut Chakrabarty had sought the induction of the Central Industrial Security Force, while commending their "steadfastness and commitment to the nation". Now, Visva-Bharati will be the first campus in India with a permanent police presence — in a polarised political climate, it may not be incidental that it is in an Opposition-ruled state. The university will pay the expenses, though in September, Chakrabarty had declined to pay arrears of the Seventh Pay Commission because it was in financial trouble.

That had sparked off unrest on campus. This year, there was also a confrontation over transfers, and a gherao by students following a 20 per cent hike in the cost of admission forms. But these are symptoms of administrative incapacity, and rather than a threat perception, amount to an admission that the vice chancellor's office is isolated from the university. A vice chancellor who needs protection from his own staff and students cannot possibly serve the institution well, or iron out points of friction. The function of a university administration is to nurture an environment of learning, in which students and teachers can think freely and collaborate to create fresh knowledge. A university fails its mandate if it becomes a place where teaching is a top-down process and students must be kept in line.

The modern university is a Western construct, and one of its fundamental beliefs is that it must be self-regulating, and not under the law and order apparatus of the state. Traditionally, the forces of royalty and parliaments were consciously kept off campus, because academic thought cannot flourish if it must be constantly mindful of the politics of the day. While many campuses worldwide have their own police, answerable to the administration, regular police cannot enter except at the request of the vice chancellor. This could be countenanced only in extreme circumstances — in recent times, there was much debate in Greece about violent anarchist movements sheltering in campuses, for instance. However, differences of opinion in Santiniketan scarcely qualify. It only indicates administrative ineptitude, and the need for a review and rethink at the top.

GOD'S OWN SENA

The private force mooted by the Catholic Church in Kerala may be a case of history repeating as farce

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH in Kerala wants to have its own private force, the Gabriel Sena — it says it wants it for crowd control. The plan is to enlist retired military and para-military men, who will become "guardians of faith and warriors of ideals". Many of the faithful, however, are wondering who this crowd is, that so scares the church. What are these "threats" to faith and ideals and how grave are they that the Church needs to rope in a private force? Could it be that the clergy feels under siege from the faithful themselves? In fact, in recent times, the laity has often been seen protesting against the clergy for what it perceives to be the latter's deviation from Christian ideals.

Six decades ago, the Catholic Church had raised a similar private force, the Christopher Sena, to safeguard its interests when the then Communist government introduced laws to reform land tenure and the education sector. Then, the Church had feared that the CPI-led government would legislate for a state takeover of its educational institutions and land. At its peak in 1959, the Christopher Sena, interestingly inspired by Spanish religious groups that rallied for General Franco against the Republicans, had a membership of a lakh. The Church and the Christopher Sena were at the forefront of the direct action movement — "the Liberation Struggle" — that led to the dismissal of the CPI government by the Centre.

Much has changed in Kerala since, and Gabriel is no Christopher if initial responses to the formation of the Sena are any indication. The hold of the clergy on the laity has surely weakened since the 1950s. Not surprisingly, on Thursday, the Church, following public criticism, shelved a meeting of the Sena planned for November 15.



PRATAP BHANU MEHTA

INDIA'S SUSPENSION OF its bid to join the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership should be an opportune moment to take stock of India's place in the world economy. Both the supporters of the decision and those disappointed by it are, in fact, arguing on the same ground. For supporters of the RCEP, the decision not to join it seems like an admission of defeat, an acknowledgement that India is simply not in a position to compete strongly in the global economy, without risking serious trade imbalances and domestic economic disruption. Those opposing it are also, for the most part, saying the same thing: India is not ready. The price of joining will be too high.

Most of us who, on balance, prefer freer trade must acknowledge how the global context has changed. It is true, as Macaulay once said, "free trade, one of the great blessings which a government can confer upon its people, is in every country unpopular." But if there is one lesson we need to learn from the last decade, it is that the political backlash against globalisation needs to be managed. If as sophisticated and historically open an economy as the United States can experience as deep a backlash against trade imbalances, why expect India to be any different? Indeed, there is a political case to be made for going slow and not setting yourself up for a backlash. Given the unanimity against the RCEP, Modi had no choice.

The relationship between trade and strategy needs to be rethought. The honest truth is that our enthusiasm for FTAs was often driven by strategy more than economics. During the 2000s, that was the flavour of thinking in India. We somehow thought that the strategic tail could wag the economic dog. But the idea that you can define strategic ambitions far in excess of your economic clout is deeply misplaced, and all our pretensions in that regard, like "Look East," now "Indo-Pacific", always had a ring of exuberant hollowness to them. You can bank on strategic narratives to solve economic problems only so much. In one sense, then, there is a nice modesty and consistency to the Swadeshi Jagran Manch vision of things. They don't want India dependent on foreign capital. They want India to grow from its own

Closing a door

By not joining RCEP, India sends signal of shrinking possibilities — at home and abroad

Opponents of the RCEP should acknowledge the truth. The RCEP has been stopped not because there is a coherent alternative vision of India's development in place. It has been stopped because the whole range of interests, from agriculture to industry, that have made domestic reform difficult have also come out against the RCEP. Don't convert India's global weakness into an ideological virtue. The truth is that India's domestic agenda of reform will, in most respects, need to be the same, RCEP or no RCEP: Cheaper logistics, better human capital, better governance, regulatory certainty, better banking, better forms of urbanisation and so forth.

savings. But nor do they have ambitions of a global footprint.

Given the political objections, and uncertain economics, not joining the RCEP may have been the right thing to do. But the incongruity of not joining is greater for Modi, because he wants all three things simultaneously: Dependence on foreign capital, and an exaggerated sense of India's power, and yet a recoiling from trade openness. You cannot do the third, without affecting the first two. The best thing Modi might have done for India is that he has made it clear that we are, in the end, a modest power with much to be modest about.

The economic gains from those FTAs did not turn out to be as great as India hoped, particularly in employment. Globally, there is no more room for nuanced thinking on the benefits of trade. The idea that trade agreements would, on their own, provoke domestic reform, turned out to be wishful thinking. There is no point denying that the current state of the economy, with its regulatory sclerosis, broken financial system, no serious investment in human capital, infrastructure constraints, is not competitive, and it is hard to see the prospect of the trade deficit correcting that. Reform has its own political economy dynamics that is not going to be easy to circumvent simply in the name of trade. So the risk of ending up in a worse equilibrium exists, where you have opening without reform.

There is also the changing outlook on China. A decade or so ago, when the RCEP talks started, the world was still a place where there was more confidence that the imperatives of economic integration and interdependence would lead China to a path of liberalisation and moderate its global ambitions. But China's own economic downturn, its turn to nationalism and authoritarianism, places a question mark over the nature of its outward economic engagement. It has a series of instruments with which to maintain its dominance for the foreseeable future, and unless you are sure you have a means of countering them, some prudence might be in order.

This prudence is not a decisive argument against joining. It could be balanced by two other considerations. First, the fact that other

Asian powers were quietly facilitating our joining suggests we will forego a loss in standing in the short run. Second, the fact is that there is no seriously new avenue available for trade liberalisation. We have closed off the South Asia route, given our relations with Pakistan. The protectionist sentiment that exists in the US, even beyond Trump, makes it unlikely that multilateral trade liberalisation is going to be an option anytime soon. An FTA with the US, another one of those bad faith arguments the government floats, is also a pipe dream. In any case, a trade agreement with the US or the EU will arguably come with even deeper regulatory intrusions into the Indian economy. So all things considered, even with attendant risks, the RCEP might have been worth it. But if our frank assessment is that we are not in a position to take advantage of the RCEP on the current terms, we should honestly admit that rather than engaging in wishful thinking, openness will solve our problems.

But opponents of the RCEP should acknowledge the truth. The RCEP has been stopped not because there is a coherent alternative vision of India's development in place. It has been stopped because the whole range of interests, from agriculture to industry, that have made domestic reform difficult have also come out against the RCEP. Don't convert India's global weakness into an ideological virtue. The truth is that India's domestic agenda of reform will, in most respects, need to be the same, RCEP or no RCEP: Cheaper logistics, better human capital, better governance, regulatory certainty, better banking, better forms of urbanisation and so forth. In fact, a more "swadeshi" agenda, ironically, needs even deeper reform since it requires more capacity building.

The consequences of going slow in the RCEP will unfold in time, and depend on what we do now. But the real worry in Modi's climbdown is not that he turned his back on the RCEP. It is that he is sending a clear signal that India's economy and politics is so fragile that we should not expect effective reform anytime soon.

The writer is contributing editor, The Indian Express.



YOGINDER K ALAGH

THE PROBLEM of periodic cyclones in the Arabian Sea, which cause havoc to agriculture in the western coastal states, has not received adequate attention because the formation of a government in Mumbai has become the overwhelming concern today. But misery in agriculture should not be ignored. Positive employment data from the organised sector should not be used to paper over the plight of small farmers and landless labourers. Ignoring the medium and long-term needs of agriculture can prove to be very expensive in a land and water-deficit regime. We anxiously await the Niti Aayog's efforts on the promised seven-year plan (policy) for water. In this context, I am reminded of a period in the Seventies that resonates with the current times.

In the second half of the mid-Sixties, India was going through a "ship to mouth" phase of grain shortage. There were large grain imports in the form of the PL 480 aid from the US. Indian scientists took the risk of importing the dwarf varieties of wheat from the IWRI (International Wheat Research Institute), Mexico. M S Swaminathan and other scientists of the ICAR (Indian Council of Agricultural Research) helped in replicating the seeds here. But there was still considerable pessimism about the growth potential of Indian agriculture. W Paddock and P

SEEING A BLIND SPOT

Agriculture urgently needs higher resource allocation, policy support

As head of the powerful perspective planning division of the Planning Commission, I insisted we make conservative estimates about land reserves and productivity so that the resource allocation for agriculture — particularly irrigation — got high priority in the budget. We argued that if this was done, we could produce 125 million tonnes of grain in 1978/79, notwithstanding World Bank estimates.

Paddock of the conservative Hudson Institute in the US argued in *Famine 1975!* that "it will be beyond the US to keep famine out of India during 1970s".

In the late Sixties, it was the received wisdom from studies — amongst others by Keith Griffin — that the Green Revolution strategy would not impact small farms. Also, that such farms would not participate in diversified agriculture. This assessment was made by a variety of institutions and experts. Think tanks like the Hudson Institute, the social scientist Francine Frankel, the Bretten Woods institutions and the development studies experts, Paul Streeten and Michael Lipton — all had a dim view of India's agricultural prospects. Some argued that India did not even have medium-term growth prospects, since poor agriculture would lead to a wage goods constraint. The initial spurt of grain growth had petered out and the Green Revolution was seen as a misnomer. India's grain production, after reaching 108 million tonnes in 1971, was hovering between 101 and 104 million tonnes in the early Seventies. The World Bank and, in fact, even the Indian finance ministry (led by its then chief economic adviser, Manmohan Singh) said that India would not achieve its target of 125 million tonnes of grain by 1978/79 — the es-

timates ranged between 118 and 120 million tonnes instead.

It was at that time that planning in India focussed on resource allocation and policy support to agriculture. Priorities were set by the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, who saw food security as a central issue. This was the first job I was tasked with. The PM was clear: We must produce grain to feed ourselves. As the head of the powerful perspective planning division of the Planning Commission, I insisted we make conservative estimates about land reserves and productivity so that the resource allocation for agriculture — particularly irrigation — got high priority in the budget. We argued that if this was done, we could produce 125 million tonnes of grain in 1978/79, notwithstanding the World Bank's estimates. Indira Gandhi backed us with funds.

By 1978/79, India was producing 127 million tonnes and was a net exporter of grains. In 1979, at a seminar in Washington, I was asked by a World Bank Official how India had exceeded its target of foodgrain production. I told him that I was from Ahmedabad, where we always keep reserves.

The writer, a former union minister, is an economist



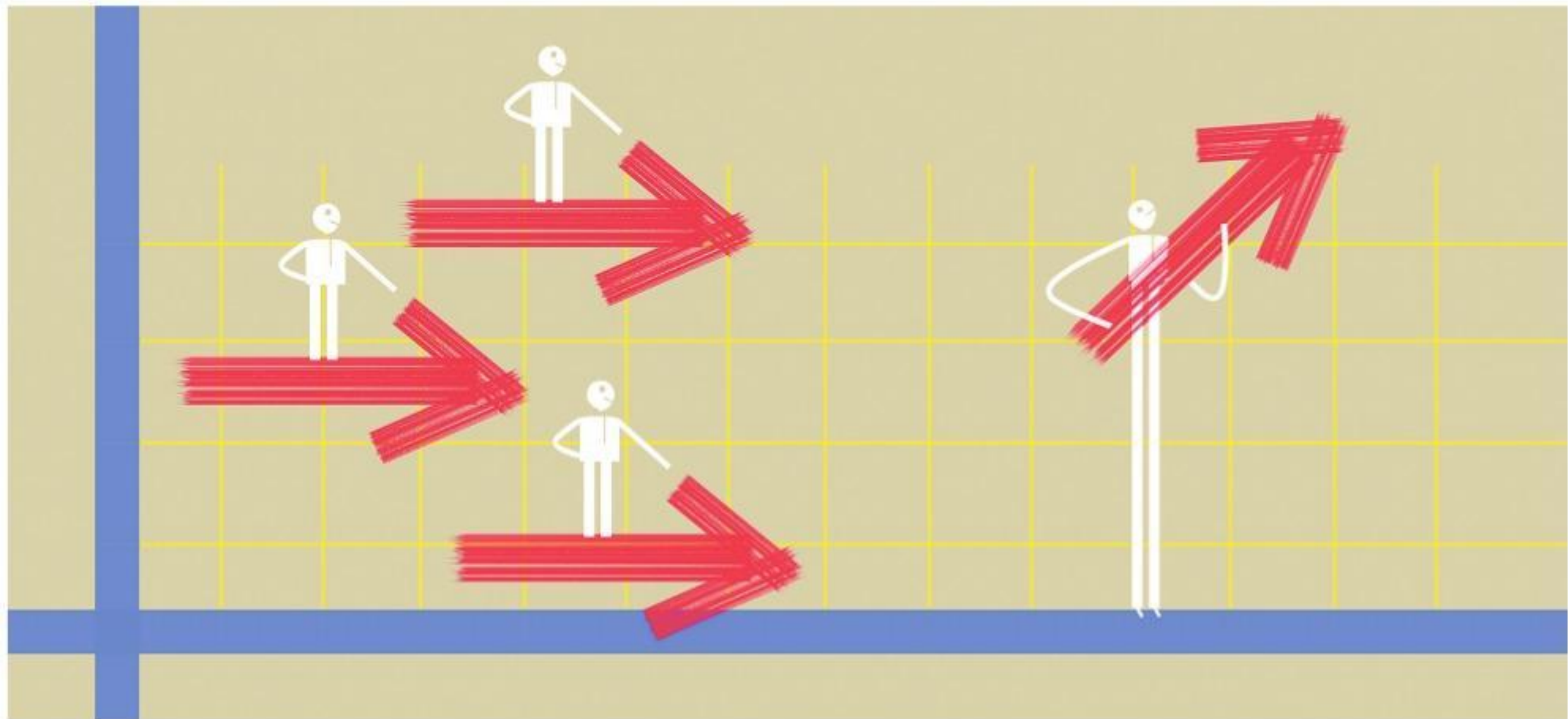
NOVEMBER 8, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

JANATA CANDIDATES THE JANATA PARTY president, Chandra Shekhar, and eight former ministers have been renominated for the Lok Sabha elections. The prominent party candidates whose names figure in the list of 123 from seven states and two union territories finalised by the Central Election Committee are two former union ministers — Asoka Mehta, who replaces former prime minister Morarji Desai from Surat and Dinesh Singh, who will contest from Pratappgarh in Uttar Pradesh. Desai had announced his decision not to seek re-election immediately after his government fell. Piloo Mody, a Rajya Sabha member, will seek reelection from Godhra in Gujarat.

IOC STRIKE THE AGITATING INDIAN Oil workmen are likely to call off their 14-day-old go-slow protest tomorrow to facilitate resumption of talks between the leaders of the nine unions and the government authorities. This optimistic scenario has emerged after informal talks which the leaders, Y D Sharma and Raja Kulkarni, had first with the cabinet secretary and later, with the petroleum minister. This was followed by consultations with the workers' representatives. The All-India Petroleum Workers Federation leaders have called an urgent meeting of the representatives of the nine protesting unions early tomorrow morning for a final decision.

AMERICAN HOSTAGES THE FORMER ATTORNEY general and well-known liberal and civil rights leader, Ramsey Clark, and a senate intelligence committee member, William Miller, left Washington last night for Teheran with a letter from President Carter to secure the release of the American hostages held in the embassy there. In his letter, presumably addressed to Ayatollah Khomeini, Carter reportedly seeks to assure the Iranians that the United States will not arm the Kurds who are in rebellion. Carter has appealed for the release of the hostages. Clark and Miller have been authorised by the White House to assure the Iranians that the Shah will not be given asylum in the USA.





CR Sasikumar

Experts, dissent and the economy

Creating spaces for different, even dissenting opinions, is the only way to craft policies that encourage investment and sustained growth



ECONOMIC GRAFFITI
BY KAUSHIK BASU

I HAVE STRONG *political* differences with the present Indian government. That is what democracy is about — having space for different opinions and ideas. Where I had expectations from this government was in terms of the *economy*. In terms of its stated objectives — growth, development, job-creation and higher standard of living for the poor — there was little to contest. As an Indian citizen I had hoped — even though my politics was different — the government would succeed in its economic objectives.

What has, therefore, come as a disappointment is the sharp deterioration in the economy. India's annual growth rate in the first quarter of this financial year is down to 5 per cent, the unemployment rate is at a 45-year high, inequality has risen sharply, the banks are under strain with money supply growth (M3) lagging GDP growth for two years now, and average exports virtually stagnant over the last six years.

Not surprisingly, all this is being written about widely in the Indian media and also in international news outlets. India's outstanding growth performance from 2003 to 2011 had raised hopes, among all well-wishers, of a new normal for the country. Hence, this unexpected turnaround is a puzzle and source of discontent.

Why did this happen? I believe India's economy is fundamentally strong. In this column, I do not want to dwell on the nitty gritty of corrective policies—there is enough talent in the country to figure those out. I want to speculate about the larger question of why we are failing to marshal the talent

to get India back to the 9 per cent growth it had achieved earlier.

All nations in the world today face a challenge of expertise. Because the world has become so complex, it is impossible for all of us to know everything. We therefore have some people (engineers) who have the expertise to build bridges, some (doctors) who know how to cure infections, some (lawyers) who can advise you on how to fight a legal battle, and some (economists) who know how to design auctions, taxes and monetary policy.

With the rise of the importance of experts, there is an unavoidable heightened tension that has to do with asymmetric information — one party having the knowledge that another party needs. In economics, the breakthrough work on this happened in the early 1970s with George Akerlof's seminal paper, 'The market for lemons' — the paper shows how second-hand car markets work poorly because of asymmetric information. (As an aside, I may mention that Akerlof wrote the paper after a long stay at the Indian Statistical Institute in Delhi. I wonder if part of the credit for the paper should go to some car dealer who introduced Akerlof to the hazards of buying a used car.)

The seller of a second-hand car will typically know more about the car than the buyer, and will have a propensity to misrepresent its quality. I can testify to this from my days in Delhi in the early 1980s. Virtually all second-hand car salesmen would assure you that the car was driven by "a South Indian lady" — a South Indian lady being the ultimate prototype of gentleness, honesty and professionalism at that time, thereby creating the assurance of a well-maintained car. The only way this could have been true was for the world to have had more South Indian women than it did. So, the car-dealers were clearly distorting the truth to serve their own interests.

This is the difficulty with asymmetric information. We know that some experts will use this to their own advantage. And, at the same time we have no escape from the expert in today's complex world.

The problem with economics is even bigger

because economics is part common-sense and intuition, and part algebra and expertise. No politician would ask the engineer to move aside and try to take over the building of spacecraft. There is just too little scope for doing that with mere common-sense. In economics, there is a lot that intelligent persons with basic intuition can do. But there is a lot that they cannot. It is this that makes politicians fall into the trap of designing economic policies on their own and with the support of cronies. What is urgently needed in India today is to draw in the best talent and restore confidence in the markets and banks — institutions in general.

Even if one does not want to go outside the country in search of talent, there is no big loss. Having worked in India, as professor and as policymaker, I am aware that there is a huge amount of talent — in the universities, the private sector and the bureaucracy. We have to create space to draw from this reservoir of talent.

One fundamental precept for this, however, is space for dissent. If we bring in advisers who will simply endorse what the political bosses say, the government may look more orderly, but will achieve little. The true expert will inevitably have opinions which are often different from those of the leaders. There are risks in this, as pointed out above, but this is unavoidable, given the complex character of the modern economy. To create valves for different and even dissenting opinions is the only way to craft policies that encourage investment and sustained growth.

The famed music-conductor, Charles Hazlewood, had put his finger on the problem when he observed that to have a truly great orchestra you have to have trust, and give individual musicians freedom. There has to be space to create, improvise and even dissent. With strong top-down control, where every musician does exactly as the conductor commands, there can be order but never true excellence.

The writer is C. Marks Professor at Cornell University and former Chief Economist and Senior Vice President, World Bank

THE Urdu PRESS

WHATSAPP, PRIVACY

THE STORY OF rights activists, journalists and lawyers being spied upon by Israeli software, via WhatsApp has been discussed threadbare in editorials.

Inquilab on November 3, writes; "It is surprising that an international agency has stolen private and other details from consumers and despite this, the government is quiet. It has tried to shake off responsibility by hiding behind Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad's statement that WhatsApp has been questioned on the nature of the breach." The paper writes "that instead of taking refuge behind these statements, the government should have appointed a committee of experts and should have started enquiries about what had happened, why and at whose behest?"

Siasat's editorial on November 4 notes: "Technology brings in positive change but its negative effects cannot be denied. Now the fact that Israeli agencies are snooping on thousands of people worldwide is public, and social media app WhatsApp has also admitted that the app has been used for hundred of tappings." The paper concludes by emphasising the government's role and of actions by them, beyond just talk: "The government cannot just rely on statements. Otherwise there will be more suspicion about their role."

On November 5, in another editorial, *Etemad* (the Hyderabad-based AIMIM daily) writes, "It's an 'attack on the Right to Privacy'. The editorial argues: "The world has morphed into a global village in this era of modern technology. Smartphones are needed by everyone. In the meanwhile, spying on WhatsApp has shocked the people of India. During the general elections, an assortment of the country's journalists and human rights activists were tapped via WhatsApp and that has raised many kinds of questions." The newspaper adds: "The government must alleviate fears of the people and the Opposition and reassure that it is the custodian of the people's right to privacy." It rues that "no concrete statement related to this matter has come from the government. This needs to be investigated — who allowed this company to allow these hackers, and who got it done?" It concludes, sardonically, that the "honourable purposes" for spying "must be revealed to the people and they must be reassured of their right to privacy being secure."

EU MPs IN KASHMIR

THE CONTROVERSIAL TRIP of some European Union MPs, mostly from far-right parties, to Srinagar has attracted wide comment. *Munsif* on October 31 ran an editorial which states "an EU MP told the media that

this was an unofficial group and they wanted to know the ground situation in the state. They realised that people are happy with the Centre's decision and want development." It terms "interesting" that the BJP leaders and the central government have been saying the same thing for two-and-a-half months. It asks: "What is the secret behind all this? What does the government fear?"

Etemad on October 30 writes: "This bunch of EU MPs is touring Kashmir when local leaders are under house arrest. When this group reached Srinagar, even the commercial establishments which are open in the morning and evenings were found shut." It asks: "When the group reached Srinagar, they found its SMS service cut off, then will it accept what is shown to them by the Centre or will they personally try and get to the truth? The government is trying to project 'normalcy' but the situation on the ground says otherwise."

STATE ELECTIONS

THERE IS SOME frisson visible in most Urdu dailies, on the poll results in Maharashtra and Haryana, especially because no party has got a clear majority. *Inquilab* on October 25 has an editorial titled, 'Exit polls ki khuli pol' (Exit Polls exposed). "Here, exit polls again have failed in their claims. They have

been exposed, as the results in both states are not according to their estimation. The analysis of the results makes it clear that the BJP has suffered heavy losses. The government hoped its actions in Jammu and Kashmir, especially abrogating Article 370 will help the BJP win the polls in the two states by a heavy margin, as well as the by-polls. However that did not happen."

Urdu Times on October 25 has an editorial which picks its title from a 1970s Hindi film song, *Yeh Kya hua, kaise hua*. The paper describes terms the Maharashtra and Haryana election results as "stunning". It then goes to argue that "In Haryana, the BJP had to take a knocking and in Maharashtra too, their position has worsened." The editorial also claims that the paper had been prescient in its analysis. "We had predicted, that the Congress-Nationalist Congress Party alliance will put up a better show and that has been proved correct. Compared to last time, this time, the two parties have got more seats. The BJP has suffered in many seats." In another editorial, again on November 5, the paper cannot conceal its glee at the drama unfolding in Maharashtra. The government has not yet been formed in the state. The editorial's title conveys its mood aptly, "Time Shuru Hota hai..Up.." (Time starts and its up).

Compiled by Seema Chishti

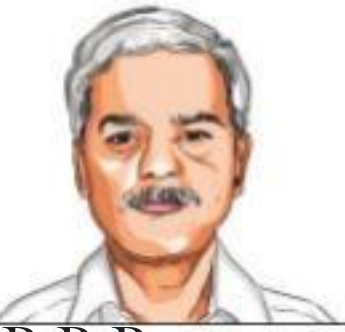
WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

Boris Johnson promises to lead a 'one-nation' Conservative government, but events of the past week expose the improbability of that claim.

— THE GUARDIAN

How markets can serve climate

Kyoto Protocol's emission trading mechanisms could become redundant after 2020. India needs to plan for the changed scenario



R R RASHMI

THE NEXT CLIMATE conference to be held in Madrid in December has the challenge of deciding how markets can be deployed in the service of climate. The Clean Development Mechanism (CDM), a product of the Kyoto Protocol, is one such market instrument that can help industry as well as climate. Alongwith China and Brazil, India is a leader in CDM since its inception in 2007. A number of small and medium projects in the field of energy efficiency and renewable energy, set up in India in the last two decades, owe their origin to the financing support available from CDM. Unfortunately, its future hangs in balance.

The situation may change in 2021 when market mechanisms mandated under the Paris Agreement come into operation. Most developed countries are strongly opposed to permitting the carryover of CDM projects and their credits into the Paris Pact's mechanisms. The credits lying unsold with the CDM projects could lose their economic worth. Besides, the CDM projects will have to go through the process of validation and registration again with the new mechanism. This will involve additional financial and administrative costs.

India has about 250 million Certified Emission Reduction (CER) units under CDM issued by the UNFCCC, the global administrator of Kyoto mechanisms. The number of CDM projects registered in India is 1,376 (out of total 7,979 globally) and 89 per cent of these projects are still active. The demand in EU, which has been the largest market for CDM credits, has declined sharply over the last decade because of regulatory barriers. The unrealised value of CDM credits could be in the range of almost \$5 billion — estimated at a very conservative price of US\$20 per unit. India stands to lose substantially if the doors on the existing CDM projects and credits are closed in 2020.

What does one do to help CDM find a place in the post-2020 markets? This requires one to understand the arguments against CDM. There are three main concerns. One, it has failed to demonstrate environmental benefits in addition to the "business as usual" scenario, or provide technological benefits. Two, its transition to new mechanisms will have adverse impacts on carbon prices and investor sentiments in future markets. Three, double counting could compromise global ambition on reducing GHG emissions.

The argument on "lack of addition to the business as usual scenario" appears to be a contrived one. Credits for CDM projects are issued after their compliance with internationally approved criteria is ascertained. CDM project proponents should be free to choose available cost-effective tech-

nologies as long as the objective of emission reductions is achieved. Moreover, "additionality" in CDM projects should not be judged solely on the criterion of technology; they are also about investments and overcoming market barriers. All CDM projects have passed these tests.

The argument that a full-scale transition of CDM credits may flood the market and lead to deterioration in the carbon prices in future markets is also over-stretched. Validation and registration of projects under the new mechanism may take at least three years. Assuming that all CDM units available globally till 2020 are traded immediately, they may be fully absorbed by 2024 — as demand for credits for meeting the Paris commitments increases. In fact, more than 60 per cent of the credits may be used fully even before 2022 if we take into account the demand from airline operators to meet commitments under CORSIA — an emission reduction scheme for international civil aviation effective from 2021.

The question of impact of CDM on global environmental integrity is, however, an important one. Environmental integrity is an objective of the market mechanisms under the Paris Agreement. Environmentalists believe that, in case of project/programme-based mechanisms, countries should make arrangements to prevent double counting of emission reduction units in their national accounts. The proponents of sustainable development, however, argue that difference in levels of development of countries requires that the adjustment principle should not be applied uniformly to developed and developing countries. The question, therefore, is: Should the pre-2020 CDM credits be discounted from the national emission reductions in case this principle is adopted for post 2020 credits?

Recent developments in the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) warrant an urgent examination of the issue. ICAO is actively considering a plan that seeks to limit the use of CDM credits to those issued after 2015. This could deal a body blow to CDM in the future carbon market. It may still be possible for the countries having a stake in CDM to influence the ICAO process if they negotiate the conditions for the long-term use of credits originating in their host country. It will be important for India to have a strategy that ensures that it does not get shut out of the CORSIA market even as ICAO enlarges the source of supplies from other countries. A pragmatic assessment of likely gains and losses from competing approaches to CDM transition into new mechanisms is the need of the hour.

It is time that we rethink the relationship between the project/programme-based emission reduction units and the national pool of emission reductions so as to establish a firm basis for access to future carbon markets. CDM has been a useful source of finance to industry and we may build a viable domestic carbon market in future on the foundations of industry interest as well as environmental protection.

The writer is a distinguished fellow in TERI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

REAL ESTATE WOES

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Rs 25,000 cr fund to help complete stalled housing projects' (IE, November 7). RERA generated much hope among home buyers but it has failed to live up to their expectations. The realty sector is on a downhill path primarily due to demonetisation and the uncertainties of GST. The builders fraternity has compounded the problem by launching projects indiscriminately. This has resulted in a slowdown in the ancillary sectors. The government's financial stimulus to rejuvenate the real state is perplexing from the perspective of the home buyer who is wondering why projects are stalled on account of liquidity crunch when majority of them have already coughed up 90 per cent of the cost of the flat? Recently a builder was exposed by the Supreme Court's forensic auditors. Due diligence is necessary before salvaging the builders lobby.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

ONUS ON COURTS

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Above the law'.The judiciary must act impartially when it comes to adjudicating an altercation between the protectors of the rule of law, the police, and preservers of rule of law, the lawyers. Bias would only result in trust deficit among people.

Divya Singla, Patiala

MATTER OF TRUST

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Drawing dark lines' (IE, November 7). The abroga-

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

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

tion of Article 370 and 35A in Jammu and Kashmir is being viewed by the Valley's residents as an assault on their identity. Militants will look for soft targets like migrant workers to desist outsiders from making Kashmir their home. The government needs to assuage fear of the local people. New Delhi has never been able to win the Kashmiris' trust. That seems even more difficult today.

Kamna Chhabra, Gurugram

ISOLATIONIST MOVE

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, 'Lost opportunity' (IE, November 6). RCEP would have provided India with a chance to integrate into global supply chains. India's decision to stay out of RCEP could prove detrimental to its economy. The government should formulate policies to make industries globally competitive.

Sanya Bansal, Chandigarh



TOP OF THE WORLD



Amsterdam's Schiphol airport is one of Europe's busiest.

NETHERLANDS
Lockdown at airport after pilot accidentally hits hostage alarm

Amsterdam: A pilot accidentally triggered a hijacking/hostage taking alarm in a plane's cockpit, causing a major security lockdown on Wednesday at Amsterdam's Schiphol airport, one of Europe's busiest. An investigation is underway to determine what went wrong. Dutch military police said, "In a plane (set to fly) from Amsterdam to Madrid tonight an alarm was accidentally activated which set off safety protocols at the airport," Spanish-owned Air Europa said. "There was no cause for alarm. All passengers were fine and waiting for the flight to take off."

NETHERLANDS
Congo warlord gets harshest ever ICC sentence

The Hague: The International Criminal Court sentenced Congolese rebel chief Bosco "Terminator" Ntaganda to 30 years in jail for war crimes and crimes against humanity on Thursday, the highest ever penalty issued by the tribunal. Ntaganda was convicted in July of offences including murder, sexual slavery and using child soldiers in a mineral-rich region of the Democratic Republic of Congo in the early 2000s. Most of the charges against Rwandan-born Ntaganda, 46, related to a series of gruesome massacres of villagers carried out by his fighters.

MAURITIUS
Mauritians vote in 1st polls since PM succeeded father

Port Louis: Mauritians are voting in the first election since Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth was installed in the job after his father stepped down in 2017. Jugnauth succeeded his father Anerood Jugnauth as prime minister without a popular vote when the older man stood down two years ahead of schedule. The 57-year-old is asking voters to judge him on his short time in office, pointing to his record on modernising public infrastructure and economic reforms in the former British colony. But he faces two opponents who say his appointment to the island's top job amounted to little more than nepotism.

AUSTRALIA
'Burger bought in 1995 never decomposed'

Sydney: A McDonald's burger bought in 1995 and kept in an Australian shed for years has never decomposed, according to two men who now refer to the quarter-century Quarter Pounder as their "mate". Casey Dean, 39, and Edwards Nits, 38, claim they ordered the Quarter Pounder with cheese from a McDonald's outlet in Adelaide as teenagers — and have hung onto it ever since. Though the burger has shrunk a little from its original size, its shape remains intact, there are no signs of mould, and it doesn't smell.

IMPEACHMENT EFFORTS GATHER STEAM

Trump asked A-G to declare nothing illegal in Ukraine call, he declined

MICHAEL D SHEAR,
MICHAEL S SCHMIDT &
MAGGIE HABERMAN
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 7

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump asked that Attorney General William Barr hold a news conference to declare that he had broken no laws in a telephone call with Ukraine's President that is now at the heart of the Democratic impeachment inquiry, but Barr declined, according to two people with knowledge of the matter.

Trump's request came shortly after the White House released a reconstructed transcript of a July 25 call in which the president pressed President Volodymyr Zelenskyy of Ukraine to launch investigations into former Vice President Joe Biden and other Democrats. An intelligence whistleblower pointed to the call as evidence that the President had tried to enlist a foreign power to help him in the 2020 presidential election, and House Democrats launched an impeachment inquiry into whether the President's conduct war-



Trump's request to Barr came soon after the release of the transcripts of the US President's call with his Ukrainian counterpart that has become key to the impeachment probe. *Reuters*

ranted his removal from office.

Trump, who has aggressively pushed Republicans and administration officials to say he did nothing wrong, has repeatedly said the call was "perfect". In the days after the reconstructed transcript was released to the public, the White House told the Justice Department of Trump's desire for Barr to appear publicly, according to the person who was told of it. The request was first reported by *The Washington Post*.

The President wanted Barr to personally deliver the message to the news media that Trump had done nothing wrong, much as he did in a news conference he held shortly before the release of the report by Robert Mueller, the special counsel who investigated Russia's interference in the 2016 elections, according to a person with knowledge of the events.

A spokeswoman for the Justice Department declined to comment. **NYT**

Giuliani pushed for probe into Dems: Top diplomat

NICHOLAS FANDOS
WASHINGTON, NOVEMBER 7

THE TOP US diplomat in Ukraine identified Rudy Giuliani, President Donald Trump's personal lawyer, as the instigator behind the drive to get Ukraine's president to announce investigations into Trump's political rivals, telling impeachment investigators last month that Giuliani was acting on behalf of the President.

House Democrats released a transcript of the private testimony by the diplomat, William Taylor, as they named him as the first of several witnesses who will testify publicly next week in a slate of impeachment hearings. They will begin laying out a case that Trump abused his office to secure political favours from Ukraine.

While the transcript of Taylor's testimony did not unearth substantial new information about the Ukraine affair, it made it clear

JAPAN
ZOO: 60 ENDANGERED TURTLES DISAPPEAR

More than 60 endangered turtles have disappeared from a zoo in Japan's southernmost province in a suspected theft, officials said. "We feed them twice a week and a keeper noticed their number was clearly low," said Kozue Ohgimi, an official of the Okinawa Zoo, said. They found cable ties used to secure netting over the enclosure housing the turtles were removed at several spots.



Centrifuge machines at Natanz uranium enrichment facility in central Iran. *AP*

Iran injects gas in new centrifuges as nuclear deal unravels

UN inspector blocked from Natanz site

JON GAMBRELL
DUBAI, NOVEMBER 7

IRAN INJECTED uranium gas into centrifuges at its underground Fordow nuclear complex early Thursday, taking its most-significant step away from its 2015 nuclear deal with world powers.

Tehran, meanwhile, also acknowledged blocking an official from the International Atomic Energy Agency from visiting its nuclear site at Natanz last week, the first known case of a UN inspector being blocked amid heightened tensions over its atomic programme. Iran's representative to the IAEA, Kazem Gharib Abadi, said Tehran had asked the agency never to send the inspector again.

Abadi alleged that the inspector tested positive for suspected traces of explosive nitrates. The IAEA disputed Iran's account, without elaborating.

These latest steps by Iran put additional pressure on Europe to offer Tehran a way to sell its crude oil abroad despite the US sanctions imposed on the country since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew America from the nuclear deal over a year ago.

The gas injection began after midnight at Fordow, a facility built under a mountain north of the city of Qom, the Atomic Energy Organisation of Iran said. A UN official from the IAEA witnessed the injection, it said. The centrifuges will begin enriching uranium up to 4.5 per cent, which is just beyond the limits of the nuclear deal, but nowhere near weapons-grade levels of 90 per cent.

Fordow's 1,044 centrifuges had spun without uranium gas for enrichment under the deal, which saw Iran limit enrichment in ex-

EXPLAINED
E
Why West sees latest step as most worrying

THE FORDOW plant, Iran's second uranium enrichment facility, has worried Western powers even before its existence was officially confirmed. Iran disclosed the existence of the facility in 2009, but only after Western intelligence agencies had put it under surveillance. While Iran has always maintained that its nuclear programme was meant for peaceful purposes, the West worried that the secretive and highly fortified Fordow facility was being used to ultimately fuel nuclear weapons. Under the 2015 nuclear deal, Iran had agreed to stop uranium enrichment at the facility. But over a year after the US pulled out of the deal, Iran has started enrichment again. It says it is enriching uranium to 4.5% at the plant as of now, slightly more than the 3.67% that the nuclear deal allowed Iran to reach at its Natanz facility. But Western powers fear this is a first step towards achieving higher grade uranium that could be used for weapons.

change for the lifting of sanctions. The deal had called for Fordow to become "a nuclear, physics and technology centre". **AP**



MASKED GRADUATION FOR HONG KONG STUDENTS

At a graduation ceremony at the Chinese University of Hong Kong on Thursday. Students, many wearing banned masks, chanted slogans at their graduation, with some holding up banners urging "Free Hong Kong, Revolution Now". A man singing the Chinese national anthem and holding a knife during the graduation ceremony was taken away by security officers. *Reuters*

US prosecutors: Saudis recruited Twitter employees to spy on critics of kingdom

DAISY NGUYEN
& BRIAN MELLEY
SAN FRANCISCO, NOVEMBER 7

SAUDI ARABIA, frustrated by growing criticism of its leaders and policies on social media, recruited two Twitter employees to spy on thousands of accounts that included prominent opponents, prosecutors alleged Wednesday.

The complaint unsealed in US District Court in San Francisco detailed a coordinated effort by Saudi government officials to recruit employees at the social media giant to look up the private



Two twitter employees were charges with acting as agents of Saudi Arabia. *AP*

data of Twitter accounts, including email addresses linked to the accounts and internet protocol

addresses that can give up a user's location.

It appeared to link Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the powerful 34-year-son of King Salman, to the effort.

The accounts included those of a popular critic of the government with more than 1 million followers and a news personality. Neither was named.

The complaint also alleged that the employees — whose jobs did not require access to Twitter users' private information — were rewarded with a designer watch and tens of thousands of dollars funnelled into

secret bank accounts. Ahmad Abouammo, a US citizen, and Ali Alzabarah, a Saudi citizen, were charged with acting as agents of Saudi Arabia without registering with the US government.

The Saudi government had no immediate comment through its embassy in Washington. Its state-run media did not immediately acknowledge the charges.

The complaint marks the first time that the kingdom, long linked to the US through its massive oil reserves and regional security arrangements, has been accused of spying in America. **AP**

NO GAMING AT NIGHT, ONLY 90 MINUTES AT A STRETCH DURING THE DAY

China imposes curfew on minors in gaming crackdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BEIJING, NOVEMBER 7

CHINA HAS imposed a curfew to limit the time spent by children playing games online, in the latest part of a government crackdown on youth gaming addiction.

The regulations will mean those under 18 cannot play games online between 10pm and 8 am, and for only ninety minutes at a time during the daytime.

In addition, the guidelines

will reduce the amount of money minors can spend online playing games to 200 RMB (\$28) per month, rising to 400 RMB for those between 16 and 18 years old.

The new rules will also require all gamers to use a real-name registration and details such as a WeChat account, phone number or ID number to sign up.

In the statement published Tuesday, the government also calls for games producers to "modify the game content, functions or rules" to avoid causing addiction in young players.



China is the world's biggest video game market, but the government has been tightening up on the industry amid concerns about health, worsening near-sightedness in children and online addiction.

A hashtag about the new rules was one of the most dis-

dren and online addiction.

cussed on China's social media platform Weibo on Thursday with 210 million views.

"This statement just means that teenagers can't play the games, because for most teenagers in China, they need to go to school from 6.30 am and end at 10 pm," one user complained.

"It's a bit of a one-size-fits-all thing," wrote another, saying a graded rating system of games made more sense.

Another claimed that it was easy to obtain fake ID numbers online and that gamers would just

use these to create their accounts.

Last year Beijing announced new controls on the number of games that can be played online, limited new releases, and imposed rules on underage players to reduce their screen time.

Chinese giant Tencent — the planet's biggest game company — announced in March it was implementing new curbs on underage video-game playing.

The gaming group had already launched a real-name identification system for "Honour of Kings" to enforce playtime restrictions on youths.

17 ECONOMY

SENSEX: 40,653.74 ▲ 183.96 NIFTY: 12,012.05 ▲ 46.00 NIKKEI: 23,330.32 ▲ 26.50 HANG SENG: 27,847.23 ▲ 158.59 FTSE: 7,415.43 ▲ 18.78 DAX: 13,260.77 ▲ 80.88

*International market data till 1900 IST

POLICY WATCH RCEP

Failure of dumping duties on China weighed on govt before pullback

PRABHARAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

APART FROM political considerations, India's decision to pull out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) earlier this week was precipitated by the realisation that existing safeguards against a flood of imports from countries, such as China, had largely failed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday walked out of the mega trade deal, citing unresolved "significant outstanding issues". Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said the decision is "absolutely final" unless "all" of India's demands are met and its national interests are safeguarded "without allowing India to become the dumping ground for other countries".

The decision assumes significance in the wake of complaints filed by the domestic industry on dumping of products. For instance, despite anti-dumping duties covering 75-80 per cent of Chinese steel products, India was unable to prevent the neighbouring country from pumping them into the country. Steel imports from China recorded an 8 per cent increase in the 12 months ended March 31, 2018, states a Parliamentary committee report submitted in February.

"This clearly shows that anti-dumping measures have become completely ineffective," stated the committee in its report. The Department of Commerce's view was that an increase in basic customs duty "will not be able to check the imports arriving from countries with which we have FTAs ... Hence, it is suggested that the current trade remedial measures (i.e. anti dumping on various products) may be converted to fix duty rates in USD per tonne in lieu of existing reference prices".

The Finance Ministry in October took action on dumping of flat rolled steel products from RCEP countries like China, Korea and Vietnam, imposing anti-dumping duties between \$28 and \$200 per metric tonne for six months.

The Parliamentary committee also found trade remedial measures like anti-dumping or countervailing duties to be ineffective in certain cases of imports as Chinese suppliers were "apparently re-routing the products from markets of other countries with which India has Free Trade Agreements". Such evasions of duties were depriving the government of "huge revenue."

"One estimate suggests that due to the dumping of Chinese solar panel there is a loss of nearly two lakh jobs as nearly half of our domestic industry capacity remains idle," it said.

RCEP, touted to be the "largest" regional trade pact, will be signed in 2020 by ASEAN nations, China, Korea, Japan, New Zealand and Australia.

EXPLAINED

The reasons behind the decision

DESPITE ANTI-DUMPING duties covering nearly 75-80 per cent of Chinese steel products, steel imports from China recorded an 8 per cent increase in the 12 months ended March 31, 2018.

Combined with this, the Department of Commerce's view that a rise in basic customs duty "will not be able to check" the imports arriving from countries with which preferential trade pacts are in place, led to India's decision to pull out of RCEP.

Various stakeholders had raised concerns that joining RCEP would leave India vulnerable to a "flood" of cheaper, mass-manufactured products, especially from China. The Commerce Ministry's Directorate General of Trade Remedies (DGTR) had initiated 888 investigations against imports from various countries till early this year. Between April 1, 2014 and November 6, 2019, DGTR had overseen 87 anti-dumping cases, of which nearly 68 per cent were against China.

The cost of initiating trade defence measures is high and, by the time duties are notified after "protracted" investigations by the Directorate General of Anti-Dumping and Allied Duties, "the injury caused to the domestic industry leaves it weak and bleeding forever," it said.

Some trade experts had also flagged issues with implementation of the proposed "auto-trigger" mechanism that India had been pushing for during RCEP negotiations.

"Implementing safeguard mechanisms can prove difficult ... It is complicated to establish the causality between the increased imports and injury to the industry ... Chinese firms often escape via the net in anti-dumping cases. Even if Indian firms make valid arguments, establishing dumping by China becomes a tricky issue," said JNU Professor Biswajit Dhar.

In order to address the "poor implementation" of DGTR findings, quarterly coordination meetings have been conducted since August 2018 with Department of Revenue and Customs officials, wherein various issues are discussed.

PROJECT-BASED NET-WORTH CRITERIA TO HELP JAYPEE CUSTOMERS

About 40% stalled units to benefit from special window, say analysts

SANDEEP SINGH & SUNNY VERMA
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

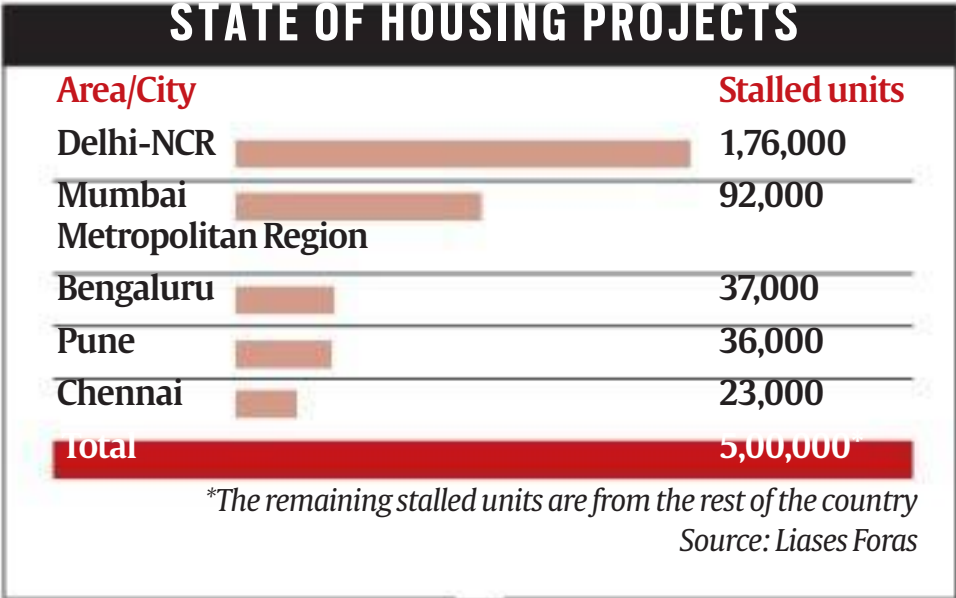
THE GOVERNMENT'S decision to expand the scope of the special window to provide last mile funding for stressed housing projects classified as NPA or those undergoing resolution at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) is likely to benefit a large number of homebuyers, including customers of Jaypee Group's housing project.

Industry insiders say the special funding window may help completion of around 40 per cent of nearly 5 lakh housing units that currently stand stalled.

Customers of Jaypee Group's housing projects may finally see some light of the day as experts say that since the positive net-worth criteria will be looked at project level, some Jaypee projects would qualify for this funding.

"Jaypee projects may also get funding. Since the government has said that net-worth criteria will be seen at project level and not at company level, so the towers that will have positive net-worth can come under this and qualify for funding," said Pankaj Kapoor, founder and MD, Lias Foras, a real estate research firm.

In an FAQ released on Thursday, the government clarified that net-worth positive projects stand for projects where value of receivables plus the value of unsold inventory is greater than the



completion cost and outstanding liabilities at the project-level.

"The idea is to fund viable projects that are stuck due to lack of funding on account of market failure, which could be due to liquidity crunch. Since the criteria of net worth is being looked at at the project level, and not at the company level, the scheme will cater to many projects even of companies that may be having negative net worth," a Finance Ministry official said. Since projects have their projected cash flows from sold and unsold inventory of housing units, even after accounting for all construction and completion costs, the project may be viable to deliver positive expected returns to the special fund, the official said.

According to a study done by Lias Foras, there are around 2,000 stalled residential projects across the country with around 5 lakh housing units. Delhi-NCR accounts for almost 35 per cent of

such housing units with stalled units amounting to 1.76 lakh. While Mumbai Metropolitan Region accounts for 92,000 such housing units, Bengaluru, Pune and Chennai have 37,000, 36,000 and 23,000 such housing units, respectively. The remaining are in other cities across the country.

Ramesh Nair, CEO and country head, JLL India, said Delhi-NCR contributes to over 60 per cent of delayed residential units, followed by Mumbai, which constitutes nearly one-fifth of the delayed units across the top seven cities.

Kapoor said since all stalled projects have positive net-worth, around 1.5 lakh units may benefit from the same. "NCR has the largest number of stalled projects and units but projects with receivable potential are much lower in NCR than in MMR," he said.

Nair said stringent criteria with respect to projects being net worth positive, registration with RERA,

appraisal by investment committee will ensure "safety and protection of commercial returns for the investors." While the real estate industry players welcomed the government's Wednesday announcement, they now await the implementation of ground.

Sanjay Dutt, MD and CEO, Tata Realty and Infrastructure said, "This is a much-required boost to bring the real estate sector back on its feet and alleviate the concerns of homebuyers that were facing the burden of unfinished projects. However, the deployment time of this initiative holds the key to its success."

On Wednesday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced the creation of a special window to provide last-mile funding for stressed housing projects. While the commitment of funds to be infused by the Centre in the affordable and middle-income group housing sector via the special window was set at Rs 10,000 crore, the fund would seek matching contributions from banks, LIC and others to generate a corpus of about Rs 25,000 crore, said the Centre in its FAQ on Thursday. It stated AIFs created/funded under the window would solicit investment into the fund from the Centre and other private investors, including cash-rich financial institutions, sovereign wealth funds, public and private banks. The government has decided to raise the scope of investments to include NPA and NCLT projects.

‘Startups giving growth impetus to economy’

The recent ‘slowdown’ in the Indian economy notwithstanding, startups are emerging and playing a crucial role of not only sustaining but also giving growth impetus to the overall economy, a KPMG report said

Impetus from ‘golden triangle’: The ‘golden triangle’ of government, private sector and academia are important players who can provide the impetus needed to grow the startup ecosystem

NBFC credit crisis behind ‘slowdown’: The economic ‘slowdown’ could be partly blamed on credit crisis due to NBFC funding being ‘dried up’ and banks’ continued struggle with NPAs

Breakdown of investment cycle: With liquidity being



sucked out of the system, there has been a near complete breakdown in the investment cycle

Traditional businesses

Startups giving boost to economy: With traditional businesses holding further investments, startups are emerging and helping not only sustain but also give a growth impetus to economy

\$7.67 billion: Capital inflow in the startup economy in first three quarters of CY2019

21: Number of fundings to startups that crossed the \$100-million mark

29: Number of ‘unicorns’ in India

₹2,000 notes can be demonetised: SC Garg

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

AN ACTIVE policy of de-nationalising public sector undertakings and promoting privatisation, self management by the government of its own debt instead of the RBI, discontinuing off-Budget borrowing, and demonetising Rs 2,000 notes are some suggestions given by former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg in a note published on Thursday.

Garg, who demitted office as Power Secretary on October 31 after opting for voluntary retirement, after being shifted out as Finance Secretary, in a 72-page note said India's fiscal management system "uses practices that are not sound and stable and runs levels of deficits and debt which

Former Finance Secretary Subhash Chandra Garg said off-Budget borrowings need to be discontinued to bring the fiscal deficit down to 3%

are high and unsustainable".

Garg said the high debt levels are "a deterrent on our credit ratings" and a big part of the revenues go in servicing these debts. He further said there would be no impact of bank consolidation on expansion of credit and that the government's shareholding in 5-6 large consolidated entities (SBI, BoB and others) should be transferred to "a holding company

(Indian Banking and Insurance Assets Corporation)", which should be managed as a sovereign wealth fund along with reforming cooperative banks.

Listing 100 major policy and governance reforms and investment stimulating measures across the economy and financial system, Garg in his note said that he "left a copy of this note with the senior functionaries of the government" before demitting office.

"... Off-Budget borrowings, payment of food subsidies by extending loans from NSSF, deferring of fertiliser subsidies by enabling availing of loans from banks — all this needs to be discontinued and merged in the goal of 3 per cent," Garg said.

It was under his term as the Economic Affairs and Finance Secretary that the government

pegged fiscal deficit at 3.3 per cent of GDP in its full Budget for 2019-20, as against 3.4 per cent in the interim Budget.

On the Rs 2000 currency notes, Garg said, "A good chunk of Rs. 2000 notes are actually not in circulation, having been hoarded. Rs 2000 note, therefore, is not presently working as a currency of transaction. It can be demonetised, without causing any disruption."

Garg suggested forming a Land Management Corporation, which could be a sovereign wealth fund. All the land and buildings of loss-making PSUs that are to be closed should be transferred to this corporation and the surplus land of PSUs, which are to be privatised, should be transferred to this Corporation, he said. He pushed for the need to raise Sovereign Bonds in foreign currency.

CBIC makes DIN mandatory for probe-related communications

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

AFTER THE mandatory usage of Document Identification Number (DIN) by income tax authorities, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes (CBIC) has also decided to make DIN mandatory for investigation-related communications for Goods and Services Tax (GST), customs and excise beginning on Friday.

No search authorisation, summons, arrest memo, inspection notices and letters issued in the course of any enquiry shall be issued by any officer under the Board to a taxpayer or any other person without such computer-generated DIN being quoted in the communication, a CBIC circular said.

Revenue Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey on Thursday said, "The DIN system would ensure greater accountability and transparency in the indirect tax administration as well. It would also provide the taxpayer a digital facility to verify any communications."

"Further, the DIN system would be extended to other communications by the end of next month. No communication would be issued without DIN except only if it is in the specified exceptional circumstances," he added. The CBIC circular states that communication may be issued without DIN where there are technical difficulties, and that when the communication is required to be issued at short notice or in urgent situations, the same nonetheless needs to be regularised within 15 working days of its issuance.

The genuineness of the communication can be checked and verified by visiting the CBIC's website by GST taxpayers and recipients of summons, search war-

No search authorisation, summons, arrest memo, inspection notices can be issued without a computer-generated DIN, a CBIC circular said

nants. "The Board, in exercise of its powers under Section 168(1) of the CGST Act, 2017 and Section 37B of the Central Excise Act, 1944, directs that no search authorisation, summons, arrest memo, inspection notices and letters issued in the course of any inquiry shall be issued by any officer under the Board to a taxpayer or any other person, on or after the 8th day of November, 2019 without a computer generated Document Identification Number (DIN) being duly quoted prominently in the body of such communication," the CBIC said.

It added that any specified communication not bearing electronically-generated DIN shall be treated as invalid and deemed to have never been issued.

It said this move is aimed at increasing transparency and accountability in indirect tax administration and this would create a digital directory for maintaining a proper audit trail of such communications.

The directive requires immediate mapping of authorised officers who need to generate the DIN, in order to successfully add users for the DIN utility and enable them to electronically generate DINs. "The circular would help taxpayers verify the genuineness of the communication along with creating a digital directory for maintaining a proper audit trail of such communication," Tanushree Roy, Director—GST, Nangia Andersen Consulting, said.

Have no interest in AI, only IndiGo: Qatar Airways CEO

ENSECONOMIC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

QATAR AIRWAYS on Thursday ruled out participation in the sale of national carrier Air India. However, the airline's chief executive officer (CEO) Akbar Al Baker said it can look to invest in IndiGo at an appropriate time.

"We have no interest in buying stake in Air India. We are interested in buying stake in IndiGo, but this is not the right time as issues among promoters are yet to be resolved," Baker told reporters.

In the past, Baker has expressed interest in picking up stakes in an Indian carrier and setting up a domestic airline.

Meanwhile, IndiGo and Qatar Airways have signed a one-way codeshare agreement giving the middle-eastern carrier further access into the Indian market. The codeshare pact will enable Qatar Airways to place its code on IndiGo flights between Doha and Delhi, Mumbai and Hyderabad. It means that Qatar Airways can now sell IndiGo tickets for onward journey from these three cities.

IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta said both carriers were working on a reciprocal agreement which would be announced soon. This is



IndiGo CEO Ronojoy Dutta (left) with Qatar Airways CEO Akbar Al Baker in New Delhi on Thursday. Amit Mehra

the second codeshare agreement for IndiGo as part of its growth strategy for international markets; it signed a two-way codeshare agreement with Turkish Airlines in December last year.

Qatar Airways has been looking to increase its presence in one of the fastest growing aviation markets in the world. The full-service carrier has been urging the government to increase the bilateral flying rights between Qatar and India.

Under the current bilaterals, both have a quota of 24,292 weekly seats each. As per the Civil Aviation Ministry, the Qatari side has exhausted its quota, utilising 24,655 seats with 102 weekly flights between Doha and 13 destinations in India. **FE**

RISEING HIMACHAL GLOBAL INVESTORS’ MEET 2019

Cooperation of different states can help India become a \$5-trillion economy: PM

PRABHARAGHAVAN
DHARAMSHALA, NOVEMBER 7

EVERY STATE has the potential to and will play a crucial role in achieving India's target of becoming a \$5-trillion economy by 2030, said Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi on Thursday at Himachal Pradesh's first global investors meet.

"This dream of achieving a \$5 trillion economy does not belong only to the Centre. This goal can only be achieved with the cooperation of different states," said the PM at the Rising Himachal Global Investors' Meet, taking



Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur in Dharamshala. Pradeep Kumar

place till Friday.

"In our country, every state has a lot of potential. Every district of

these states hold great potential," he said. "The sooner this potential is exploited by our MSMEs and

our services sector ... the faster our country will progress."

As per him, states have moved on from an era of using sops to attract investment, and are now engaged in creating an easier environment for businesses to invest. Their "healthy" competition can boost India's own global competitiveness, he said.

"Some decades ago, our country saw a situation where (states would compete over who) would give more 'charity', or which state would give more incentives. Some would offer tax cuts, some would give free electricity and some, land," said the PM, adding that giving such sops

did not yield expected results.

"Because of this, the investors would also stall their investments in the hopes for a better opportunity in another state," he said.

"Now the states are taking initiatives to change systems, change the laws and do away with redundant rules. The more such competition increases... the more empowered our industries will be to compete on a global platform," he said. The PM also stressed the importance of creating a "transparent and clean" system to attract investments, and said overt interference from governments would be detrimental to the country's growth.

"It is essential for an investor to find a suitable ecosystem. It should be free from 'inspector raj' and not become a victim of 'permit raj'. Nowadays, states are trying to compete in provide such an ecosystem," said Modi.

"Too much of the government's interference will somehow or the other slow down the growth of the industry," he said.

The PM, who calls Himachal Pradesh his second home, pushed for the state as an attractive investment destination, citing its share of the country's improving infrastructure and the quality of the state's manpower. The Centre has taken steps to improve the state's

rail and road connectivity.

"The country's investment of Rs 100 lakh crore in its overall infrastructure in the past few years is also set to benefit Himachal Pradesh," said Modi.

"There is an innate enterprising spirit within the people of Himachal Pradesh which should be taken advantage of by investors... Himachal's community and its potential, along with your capital (of the investors) and clarity in the government's policies, can help be a medium for making a big difference," he said.

"Himachal is going to shed new light on India's growth story," he added.

BUSINESSMAN'S OVERTURE

B R Shetty, founder and chairman, BRS Ventures, said: "I came here as a karyakarta, Modiji's follower... Modiji, I am here, as I said, your chela, but I am also here to fulfill your dreams".

'BRAND' FACTOR

The crowd flocked to actress Yami Gautam, the brand ambassador of the event, when the Prime Minister left.

Standing Committee invites views, suggestions on OSH Code

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

SUGGESTIONS HAVE been invited on The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2019, which was earlier referred to the Standing Committee on Labour. The committee, headed by Member of Parliament Bhartruhari Mahtab, has invited views and suggestions from the public and experts, stakeholders, NGOs and institutions on the Code.

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (OSH Code), which was introduced in the Lok Sabha in July, may see some changes after the panel receives views and suggestions from outside stakeholders.

The Code will replace 13 labour laws relating to safety, health and working conditions, including the Factories Act, 1948, the Mines Act, 1952, and the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970.

The OSH Code applies to establishments employing at least 10 workers, and to all mines and docks, along with providing for special provisions for certain types of establishments and

CODE LIKELY TO SEE SOME CHANGES

■ The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (OSH Code), which was introduced in the Lok Sabha in July, may see some changes after the panel receives views and suggestions from outside stakeholders

■ A National Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Board, having tripartite representation from trade unions, state governments, employer associations, has been proposed in the Code in place of multiple committees under 5 labour Acts at present

classes of employees, such as factories, mines, and building and construction workers.

The Code proposes one registration for an establishment instead of multiple registrations; at present, six labour acts from 13 provide for separate registration of the establishment. The Code also provides for one licence and one return instead of multiple licenses and returns in the existing 13 labour laws, which will be subsumed in the Code.

A National Occupational Safety and Health Advisory Board, having tripartite representation from trade unions, employer associations, state governments, has been proposed in the Code in place of multiple

committees under five labour Acts at present.

Women, after their consent, would be permitted to work beyond 7 pm and before 6 am subject to the safety, holidays, working hours or any other condition as prescribed by the state or the central government.

Apart from the OSH Code, the Centre has proposed three labour codes by amalgamating various labour laws, out of which the Code on Wages, 2019 has already received legislative approval and the draft of Social Security Code has been circulated for public comments and which has been opposed recently by trade unions, including RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh.

ISSUES CONCERNING NBFCs, CRAs ALSO DISCUSSED

Financial sector stress, state of economy taken up at FSDC meet

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

FINANCE MINISTER Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday chaired a meeting of the Financial Stability and Development Council (FSDC), which reviewed the state of the economy, including stress in the financial sector.

The FSDC is the apex body of financial sector regulators, headed by the Finance Minister. The Council reviewed the current global and domestic macro-economic situation and financial stability and vulnerabilities issues, including those concerning NBFCs and credit rating agencies (CRAs).

“Overall macro-economic issues and the state of the economy were discussed in details. There were some inter-regulatory issues which were also discussed. We also discussed about cybersecurity issues that were one important component of the discussion,” Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das told reporters after the meeting.

The 21st meeting of FSDC



Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman (right) and Reserve Bank of India Governor Shaktikanta Das at the 21st FSDC meeting in New Delhi, Thursday. ANI

comes against the backdrop of the economy hitting a six-year low growth rate of 5 per cent in the first quarter of fiscal 2019-20.

Going forward, what kind of approach the regulators take on various issues particularly where there is inter-regulatory overlap were discussed, he said. The current status of the NBFCs was also discussed. Das said, adding, there are a large number of non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) that are functioning well.

“Even today, we have quite a good number of NBFCs, a large

number of NBFCs which are well-functioning, which are able to access funds from the market which are able to access loans from the banks, and in fact, some of them have got overseas funding also,” he added.

The RBI is very closely monitoring the top 50 NBFCs, which represent roughly 75 per cent of the asset size of the sector.

“We are having regular interaction with the management of those NBFCs where we see any signs of vulnerability and whenever there is any vulnerable signs

Sebi asks MFs to create separate portfolios for unrated debt defaults

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

THE SECURITIES and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has decided to permit creation of segregated portfolio or ‘side-pocket’ of unrated debt or money market instruments by mutual fund schemes. Market regulator in its circular on Thursday said, “Segregated portfolio of such unrated debt or money market instruments may be created only in case of actual default of either the interest or the principal amount.”

In its circular in December 2018, Sebi had permitted creation of segregated portfolio of debt and money market instruments by MF schemes. Segregation of portfolio was allowed subject to conditions like credit event at issuer level, which is a downgrade in credit rating by credit rating agency or downgrade of a debt or money market instrument to the ‘below-investment grade’.

“As per SEBI circular dated December 28, 2018, credit event is considered for creation of segregated portfolio. However, for the purpose of this circular, ‘actual default’ by the issuer of such instruments shall be considered for creation of segregated portfolio,” said Sebi in its circular on Thursday. Market participants say

this circular will bring in more clarity as earlier there was no announcement made with regard to investments in unrated debt instruments.

Sebi also said AMCs shall immediately inform the Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) about the actual default by the issuer. On being informed about the default, Amfi shall immediately inform the same to all asset management companies (AMCs). Side-pockets separate stressed assets from other investments and cash holdings. The side-pocketing ensures that while some of the investor money in a debt mutual fund scheme linked to stressed assets gets locked until the fund recovers money from the stressed company, investors are free to redeem their money from other investments.

“Creation of segregated portfolio shall be optional and at the discretion of the AMC. It should be created only if the scheme information document (SID) of the scheme has provisions for segregated portfolio with adequate disclosures. All new schemes to be launched after the date of this circular shall have enabling provisions included in the SID for creation of segregated portfolio,” said Sebi in its circular. This new provisions will be effective with immediate effect. **FE**

₹180-cr undisclosed income detected at Pune firm’s premises

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

THE INCOME-Tax department has detected an undisclosed income of Rs 180 crore during searches at the premises of Pune-based housekeeping firm Bharat Vikas Group (BVG), CBDT officials said on Thursday. In another search in Pune region, the Department said it made an all-time high cash seizure of Rs 9.55 crore, after it raided a local businessman in connection with a tax evasion case.

“The search and seizure action has led to unearthing of incrimi-

In another search in Pune region, the Income Tax Department said it made an all-time high cash seizure of Rs 9.55 crore, after it raided a local businessman in connection with a tax evasion case

nating evidence regarding bogus claim of brought-forward losses of Rs 91 crore pursuant to a scheme of de-merger which is not found in accordance with the provisions of I-T Act... bogus expenses in the form of unsubstantiated purchases to the tune of Rs 77 crore have also been detected so far and further verification is in

progress,” the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said in a statement, without naming BVG.

It, however, said the group has diversified business activities and provides services in areas such as mechanised house-keeping, landscaping and gardening, civil and electrical maintenance, fabrication services, turnkey solutions

and logistic support, and other services required by government agencies and municipal corporations. BVG is responsible for undertaking cleaning of railway coaches for the Indian Railways. It also maintains the facilities of the Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi.

Evidence has also been found in respect of cash expenses to the tune of Rs 20 crore, CBDT said. “Further, unaccounted cash of Rs 60 lakh has been found. Several lockers have been found and put under restraint. Based on evidence unearthed so far, undisclosed income to the tune of Rs 180 crore, from assessment year

2016-17 onwards has been detected,” it said, adding that search proceedings are still underway.

The searches were carried out on Wednesday at over two dozen locations linked to the business group in Pune, Mumbai, Nagpur, Delhi, Bengaluru and Noida. BVG Group, started by its chairman and managing director Hanmantrao Gaikwad, had on Wednesday in a statement said that I-T officials conducted routine searches at the premises of the company.

In the second case, the Department said the assesses are in the business of construction, sub-contracting and real estate activities.

IRDAI directs Reliance Health to cease business

ENSECONOMICBUREAU
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

THE INSURANCE Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has directed Reliance Health Insurance Company (RHICL) to stop selling new policies and transfer the entire policyholders’ liabilities along with financial assets to Reliance General Insurance Co Ltd (RGICL) with effect from November 15, 2019.

IRDAI said RHICL, which began operations in October last, has not been able to maintain the required solvency margin since June 2019. The solvency ratio of RHICL had fallen to 63 per cent as on September 2019 and the difference between assets and liabilities had fallen to Rs 31.66 crore as against the stipulated Rs 50 crore.

After it came to the knowledge of IRDAI in the latter part of August, a direction was issued to RHICL to restore the required level of solvency margin within one month, IRDAI said. “... despite repeated follow up, this has not been carried out so far ... insurer was issued a show cause notice and given another opportunity to present its case,” IRDAI said.

Beijing says it has agreed with Washington to cancel tariffs in phases

YAWENCHEN & MARTIN POLLARD
BEIJING, NOVEMBER 7

CHINA AND the United States have agreed to cancel in phases the tariffs imposed during their months-long trade war, the Chinese commerce ministry said on Thursday, without specifying a timetable. An interim US-China trade deal is widely expected to include a US pledge to scrap tariffs scheduled for December 15 on about \$156 billion worth of Chinese imports, including cell phones, laptop computers and toys.

Tariff cancellation was an important condition for any agreement, ministry spokesman Gao Feng said, adding that both must simultaneously cancel some tariffs on each other’s goods to reach a “phase one” trade deal.

“The trade war started with tariffs, and should end with the cancellation of tariffs,” Gao told a regular news briefing.

The proportion of tariffs cancelled for both sides to reach a “phase one” deal must be the same, but the number to be cancelled can be negotiated, he added, without elaborating.

“In the past two weeks, the lead negotiators from both sides have had serious and constructive



Chinese Commerce Ministry spokesperson Gao Feng said tariff cancellation was a key condition for any deal. AP file photo

discussions on resolving various core concerns appropriately,” Gao said. “Both sides have agreed to cancel additional tariffs in different phases, as both sides make progress in their negotiations.” He did not give a timeline.

In what could be another gesture to boost optimism, China’s state news agency Xinhua reported late on Thursday that the Chinese customs and the Ministry of Agriculture are considering removing restrictions on US poultry imports. China has banned all US poultry and eggs since January 2015 due to an avian influenza outbreak. Beijing’s signal that a ‘phase 1’ trade deal with the United States was close to being sealed helped Europe’s share markets hit a more than 4-year peak on Thursday. **REUTERS**

BRIEFLY

22K employees opt for BSNL VRS plan

New Delhi: More than 22,000 employees of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) have opted for its VRS plan, within two days of the state-owned corporation announcing the scheme, a senior official said on Thursday. In all, nearly one lakh BSNL employees are eligible for the VRS out of its total staff strength of 1.50 lakh.

Raymond hives off consumer business arm

New Delhi: In a major rejig, textile player Raymond on Thursday announced hiving off the consumer and lifestyle businesses into a separate entity that will be publicly traded valued at around \$1 billion. The company also announced a preferential allotment of equity to the promoters, which will raise their stake by 5 per centage points to over 48. Chairman-managing director Gautam Singhania expects return on capital from the new company will be almost three-times the peers.

Sept: ‘India’s air traffic growth rose just 1.6%’

New Delhi: India’s air traffic rose by just 1.6 per cent in September as against 4.5 per cent in August 2019, global airlines body IATA said Thursday, adding the pace of growth has “slowed significantly” throughout 2019 due to weaker economic activity and Jet Airways bankruptcy. “Growth in domestic India RPKs (revenue passenger kilometres) eased to 1.6 per cent year-on-year, from 4.5 per cent observed in August,” said a release by International Air Transport Association (IATA).

Open house discussion on IUC by Trai

New Delhi: The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India’s (Trai) has scheduled for November 15 its open house discussion on the interconnect usage charges (IUC) issue that has seen old and new operators erupt in a war of words recently. **PTI**

‘Global debt surges to record high of \$188 tn’

Washington: The global debt load has surged to a new all-time record equivalent to more than double the world’s economic output, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva warned Thursday. While private sector borrowing accounts for the vast majority of the total, the rise puts governments and individuals at risk if the economy slows, she said. “Global debt — both public and private — has reached an all-time high of \$188 trillion. This amounts to about 230 per cent of world output,” she said at a conference. **REUTERS**

HUMAN EVOLUTION

Eden?

Where was Eden? Perhaps in a sun-baked salt plain in Botswana

NORTHERN BOTSWANA is a land of strange contrast. Drive west from Francistown, the country's second city, and you skirt Makgadikgadi, a white, salt-encrusted plain that is bone dry for most of the year, but which blossoms into sudden, abundant life during the wet season. Follow the road farther and you arrive at Maun, on the edge of the lush inland delta of the Okavango river, the fourth-longest in southern Africa. Two hundred thousand years ago, though, Makgadikgadi was also lush. Both it and the delta were part of a lake, then the largest in Africa, surrounded by wetlands. For wildlife, the result was a veritable paradise—and also for people, for, if the latest research is correct in its claims, an intriguing episode in humanity's origins was played out there.

That Homo sapiens began as an African species was pretty-much proved in the 1980s by Allan Wilson of the University of California, Berkeley. He developed what has come to be known as the Mitochondrial Eve hypothesis by looking at a special type of DNA which is passed, unmixed by sexual reproduction, from a mother to her children. This so-called mitogenome is independent of a cell's nucleus, where the rest of the genes are found. It resides in structures called mitochondria that are the descendants of once-free-living bacteria and which now act symbiotically as a cell's power packs.

Wilson's research showed that the family trees of present-day human mitogenomes, their branches caused by mutations over the millennia, converge in a way which makes clear that their common ancestor lived in Africa. Hence the nickname Mitochondrial Eve. This woman was by no means the first human being. But everyone now alive can claim descent from her.

What is true for Eve is also true for Adam. Part of the DNA on the y-chromosome, which is passed unmixed from father to son, can be used to draw up a similar tree that is also rooted in Africa. Where, exactly, y-chromosomal Adam resided has not yet been established. But as they describe this week in Nature, a group of researchers led by Vanessa Hayes of the Garvan Institute in Sydney, Australia, think they have found that Mitochondrial Eve—or, at least, people closely related to her—lived for tens of thousands of years in splendid isolation in northern Botswana.

That northern Botswana was a habitat of early humans has been known for years. Makgadikgadi is littered with stone tools dropped there aeons ago by Palaeolithic hominids. Which particular hominids, however, is not clear. Unlike later artefacts, Palaeolithic tools are not species-specific. Though they were invented about 1.8m years ago by Homo erectus, an early human that spread over Africa and Asia, they were also used by erectus's numerous daughter species, one line of which leads eventually to Homo sapiens.

People of the lake

The story that Dr Hayes and her colleagues are proposing is that, whoever might have been living there beforehand, by 200,000 years ago the land around Lake Makgadikgadi



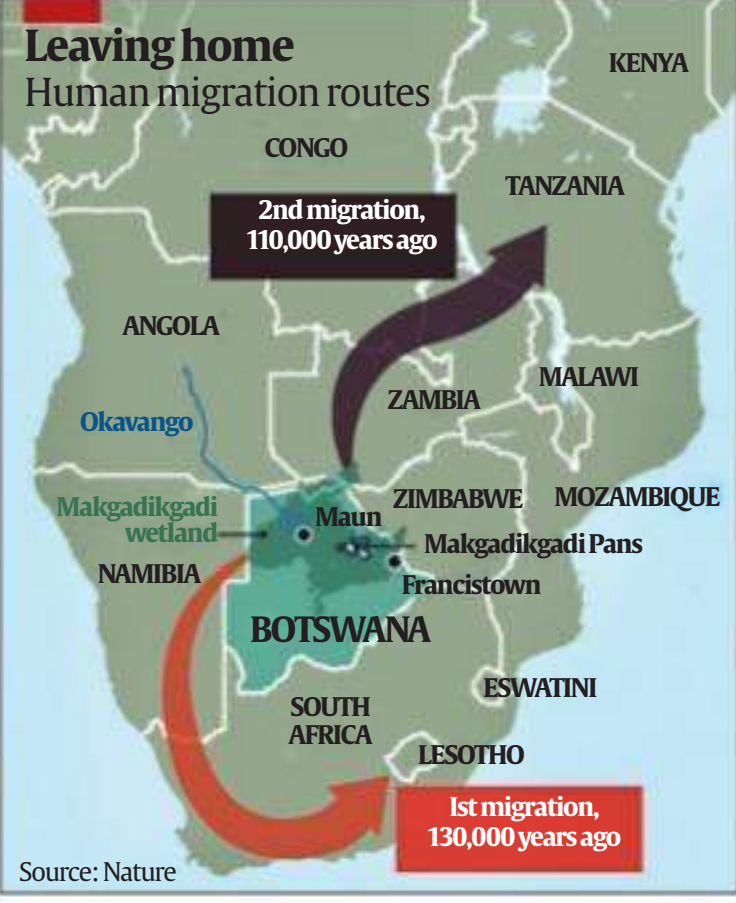
Makgadikgadi is littered with stone tools dropped there aeons ago by Palaeolithic hominids. Which particular hominids, however, is not clear. *Diego_cue/Wikimedia Commons*

was indeed occupied by Homo sapiens. For the following 70,000 years these people evolved in isolation, penned into their homeland by desertlike surroundings. Then, in two bursts—one 130,000 years ago and the other 110,000 years ago—they were unleashed on the wider world.

Mitogenomic ancestral trees are made by looking for typos in the sequences of genetic “letters” in mitogenomes—places in the DNA where a single chemical base differs from one individual to another. Because mitogenomes do not recombine during sex, these changes are all the results of random mutations. By comparing mitogenomes, it is possible to work out in what order the mutations happened. And because even random processes have measurable averages, it is also possible to estimate when a particular mutation arose.

Follow the branches of the human mitogenomic tree back through time and they converge on a group of mitogenomes known as I0. This group is largely confined to southern Africa. It is the characteristic mitogenome of the Khoesan people, who long predate the arrival in the area of both Bantu from farther north in Africa and

Europeans from overseas. Dr Hayes and her colleagues therefore gathered all of the existing versions of I0 that they could find, and also collected 198 new ones, to bring together a total of 1,217 variants from which they sought to refine the ancestral tree.



With that information, and data about where the samples were collected, maps of how people who share I0 spread can be constructed. And that is what Dr Hayes and her colleagues did. The branches of their new tree converge in time about 200,000 years ago. In space, they converge on northern Botswana.

The tree also suggests that the I0 population lived in one place for perhaps 70,000 years before part of it moved south-west, and a further period of about 20,000 years before another part moved north-east. This suggestion of an isolated population that underwent two outward migrations is supported by work by Dr Hayes's collaborator, Axel Timmermann of the Institute for Basic Science in Busan, South Korea. He is a climatologist and has pieced together, from paleogeographic and astronomical evidence, a history of Makgadikgadi and its surroundings. In particular, he has looked at the effects on the climate there of the shifts in Earth's orbit and axial spin that cause ice ages.

His conclusion is that for most of this time Lake Makgadikgadi was surrounded

by desert, but that this encircling wall was twice penetrated by green corridors along which animals, people included, would have been able to migrate. The first corridor opened 130,000 years ago to the south-west. The second, 110,000 years ago to the north-east.

The mitogenomic and climatic data thus seem to match. The south-western dispersal would have carried the ancestors of today's I0 individuals into other parts of southern Africa. In particular, it would explain the traces of habitation along South Africa's coast that date from shortly after.

It was the north-eastern dispersal, though, that unleashed the children of Makgadikgadi

Mitogenomic ancestral trees are made by looking for typos in the sequences of genetic 'letters' in mitogenomes—places in the DNA where a single chemical base differs from one individual to another

on the wider world. Their descendants spread through what is now Zambia and into the rest of Africa, interbreeding with people already living there, including the descendants of y-chromosomal Adam, as they merged into the wider gene-pool of humanity. Indeed, the history of human nuclear genes resembles a web more than it does a tree, which is one reason Wilson sought the clarity of the mitogenome in the first place.

Eventually, about 50 millennia after these events, some intrepid adventurers crossed to Asia, took up residence there, and thence spread to Australia, Europe and the Americas. The DNA of these travellers was further changed by interbreeding with at least two other species of human: Neanderthals in Europe and Denisovans in Asia.

Not everyone believes Dr Hayes's version of history. The further back the human mitogenomic tree is traced, they point out, the more uncertainty creeps into it, so further investigation would be desirable. But the mix of evidence, genetic and climatic, that she and her colleagues present does paint quite a plausible picture of the experiences of one particular branch of modern people's ancient ancestors.

INDONESIA'S ARMED FORCES

About turn

Indonesian politicians are giving the armed forces a big role in government

ALONG A dirt track bordered by rice paddies and studded with potholes, soldiers and villagers labour side by side. They are levelling the rutted surface so that it can be paved over with concrete. The road they are building will make it much easier for farmers to transport their crops to market. But this is not what really brings the soldiers to Sukawangi, a sprawling village in western Java. Their primary purpose is to forge friendships with the locals or, as Lieutenant-Colonel Yogi Nugroho puts it, to “build the chemistry between the military and the people”. Such efforts are paying off. A poll conducted in 2015 showed that 90% of Indonesians trust Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI), the armed forces, making it the most respected institution in the country. Mission accomplished.

For most of Indonesia's history, the army has been deeply involved in civilian life. Since its founding in 1945 as a guerrilla force to overthrow Dutch colonial rule, it has seen itself as the breastplate of the people. This narrative bolstered an ideology known as dwifungsi, or “dual function”, which held that the armed forces should be responsible for maintaining Indonesia's political and social order as well as its territorial cohesion. Suharto, a strongman who held power from 1966 to 1998, reserved a fifth of the seats in parliament for the armed forces and appointed officers to important positions in government. Over his three-decade regime, he made use of the “territorial system”, under which soldiers were stationed in almost every village across the archipelago, to control and repress the population. So when Suharto resigned in 1998, ushering in an age of democracy, lawmakers abolished military representation in parliament and dramatically narrowed the

Politicians need TNI's help to implement their policies. Both the central and local bureaucracies are hobbled by corruption, inertia and conflicting regulations. TNI, by contrast, is a disciplined organisation that can mobilise personnel across the country at short notice

armed forces' responsibilities, obliging them to end all business activity, for example, and hiving off the police as a separate force. TNI was permitted to conduct “military operations other than war”, but only in cases such as disaster relief and humanitarian assistance.

Twenty years later these reforms not only remain incomplete, but are being eroded. Under Joko Widodo, popularly known as Jokowi, who has been president since 2014, the political influence of TNI has grown. Jokowi has installed retired generals in powerful civilian posts such as presidential chief of staff and head of the state intelligence agency, and in April agreed to assign several hundred active-duty generals and colonels to civilian agencies and ministries. With Jokowi's blessing, TNI has also regained a role in internal security, to help fight terrorism, and has set up a special counter-terrorism unit. On October 23rd Jokowi appointed as his minister of defence Prabowo Subianto, a retired general whose party would like to erase the distinction be-

tween external defence and internal security.

TNI is also expanding the definition of military operations other than war. Between 2014 and 2017, it or the defence ministry signed 133 deals with dozens of ministries, civil-society organisations and universities, promising, among other things, to help the national population agency provide family planning, the National Logistics Agency to monitor food prices, prisons to educate inmates, the ministry of agriculture to identify suitable land for farming and farmers to organise the harvest. Activists and scholars worry that, taken together, these developments constitute a resurrection of dwifungsi. TNI's persistent belief that it is at one with the people—the outgoing minister of defence, also a retired general, describes his philosophy of warfare as “total people's defence”—only stokes their fears.

TNI has successfully agitated to roll back the reform that prevented serving officers from taking civilian jobs. But Evan Laksmana of the Centre for Strategic and International Studies, a think-tank in Jakarta, argues that this is motivated not so much by a lust for power as by TNI's poor personnel-management, which has produced more officers than there are suitable positions. In fact it is the politicians who are luring soldiers back out of the barracks, argues a recent paper by Leonard Sebastian, Emirza Syailendra and Keoni Marzuki of the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies in Singapore. When Jokowi was first elected president in 2014, he was new to national politics and lacked allies. To counter the hostile forces arrayed against him, he turned to TNI.

Politicians need TNI's help to implement



Since its founding in 1945 as a guerrilla force to overthrow colonial rule, TNI has seen itself as the breastplate of the people. *Reuters*

their policies. Both the central and local bureaucracies are hobbled by corruption, inertia and conflicting regulations. TNI, by contrast, is a disciplined organisation that can mobilise personnel across the country at short notice. Mr Sebastian and his colleagues examined a number of deals struck by civilian institutions and TNI between 2013 and 2018. They found that these arrangements were initiated at the behest of civilian leaders, “often due to a lack of confidence in their own abilities”.

Though politicians are usually pleased

with the work TNI does on their behalf, over-seeing it is difficult. An incident in a village on the island of Sumatra in 2015 illustrates how badly wrong non-military missions can go. When the local army command, charged with implementing the government's programme of “food self-sufficiency”, attempted to acquire land for cultivation, villagers protested. Soldiers proceeded to intimidate them. The conflict escalated, with soldiers beating up disgruntled farmers on several occasions. Members of the armed forces cannot be tried in civilian courts, however, so no

one was ever punished.

In the years following Suharto's downfall, politicians vowed to subordinate the armed forces to civilian authority. Today they seem to regard TNI as a partner in government. As Mr Sebastian and his colleagues write: “The ongoing reliance on military solutions for civilian problems is symptomatic of a weak democracy.” Tell that to the villagers of Sukawangi, who cannot wait to use their tni-built road.





NOAH’S ARCLIGHT

Stand-up comic and late-night show host Trevor Noah is bringing his Loud and Clear tour to India on his maiden visit to the country in April 2020. India will be the only Asia stop for the presenter, with Mumbai and New Delhi as venues.

SNAPSHOT

In the Running



SIX BOOKS have been shortlisted for the \$25,000 DSC Prize for South Asian Literature 2019, the chair of the jury panel Harish Trivedi formally announced on Wednesday at the London School of Economics & Political Science. It includes four authors of Indian origin and one author each of Pakistani and Afghan origin. Contending for the prize are Amitabha Bagchi’s *Half the Night is Gone*, Jamil Jan Kochai’s *99 Nights in Logar*, this year’s JCB Prize for Literature winner Madhuri Vijay’s *The Far Field*, Manoranjan Byapari’s *There’s Gunpowder in the Air*, translated from Bengali, *The Indian Express* Chief Editor Raj Kamal Jha’s *The City and the Sea*, and Sadia Abbas’ *The Empty Room*.

“The shortlist comprises six novels — for the good reason that the five jurors, located in five different countries, could not agree on just five novels. There are two women here, and three debut novelists including both the women. What is it about writing novels that one can get it so right the very first time of asking? Three of our writers live in South Asia and three live abroad, which fact may not come as a complete surprise. There is now a South Asia beyond South Asia,” says Trivedi.

The prize, founded by Surina Narula and Manhad Narula in 2010, received 90 entries this year from 42 publishers and 55 imprints from across the globe, out of which the five member jury — Jeremy Tambling, Kunda Dixit, Carmen Wickramagama and Rifat Munim — selected a longlist of 15 novels, announced at the Oxford Bookstore in New Delhi in September.

AROUND TOWN



Looking East

THERE WILL be over 100 craft stalls selling handloom products, more than 40 food stalls and fashion shows by about 20 designers at the seventh edition of the North East Festival. From November 8 to 10, 11 am to 10 pm, at Indira Gandhi National Centre for Arts. Entry is free.



City Scapes

THE SIXTH edition of the Urban Lens film festival is back with a wide range of fiction and non-fiction films that explore the urban condition. The opening film will be the world premiere of Lalit Vachani’s *Recasting Selves* at Goethe-Institut/Max Mueller Bhavan. It also pays tribute to Agnès Varda with the screening of her film *Jacquot de Nantes*. The closing film is Anamika Haksar’s *Ghode Ko Jalebi Khilane Le Ja Riya Hoon*. On November 8 and 9. Entry is free.

Book Talk

THE IHC-ILF Samanvay 2019, the languages and literature festival, will host discussion of a variety of topics over the span of three days. While Ranjit Lal will talk about nature writing in the age of global warming, cartoonist Vishwajyoti Ghosh will talk about graphic fiction narratives. From November 8 to 10, at India Habitat Centre. For more info, log on to www.illfsamanvay.org

Curtain Call

THE ODA Theatre Festival will stage productions by known playwrights from the state. *Sagar Manthan*, written by Manoranjan Das, is an adaptation of *An Inspector Calls* by JB Priestley, revolves around the apparent suicide of a young woman, will be staged on November 8. Political drama *Sei Ten Jon* will be staged the second day, and *Goittha Baba*, a satire, on November 10. At 7.15 pm on all days, Jawahar Bhawan, Raisina Road.



Elliott Verdier/NT

It’s time to take down the Mona Lisa

Even as it houses the greatest collection of art anywhere in Europe, the Louvre is being held hostage by Leonardo da Vinci’s artwork

JASON FARAGO

EVEN IN a city like Paris, saturated with excellent fall exhibitions, from the Grand Palais’ retrospective of El Greco to the Fondation Louis Vuitton’s showcase of Charlotte Perriand, the show of the season is the decade-in-the-works “Leonardo da Vinci”, at the Musée du Louvre. Mandatory timed tickets are sold out through November for this thorough, deeply serious exhibition, which sloughs off the myths that cling to this least productive of Renaissance masters. You will find here a cleaner, sprightlier Leonardo — or at least you will in the show downstairs, where four of the Louvre’s five paintings by the artist have been relocated. Upstairs, where Leonardo’s most famous work remains, is still a fiasco.

The Louvre houses the greatest collection of art anywhere in Europe, within a palace that is a masterpiece in its own right. It is, by some distance, the most popular museum in the world. In 2018, a record 10 million visitors, three-quarters of them foreign tourists, besieged the joint: up 25 per cent on the previous year, and more than triple the attendance of the Centre Pompidou or the Musée d’Orsay.

Yet the Louvre is being held hostage by the Kim Kardashian of 16th-century Italian portraiture: the handsome but only moderately interesting Lisa Gherardini, better known (after her husband) as *La Gioconda*, whose renown so eclipses her importance that no one can even remember how she got famous in the first place.

Some 80 per cent of visitors, according to the Louvre’s research, are here for the *Mona Lisa* — and most of them leave unhappy. Content in the 20th century to be merely famous, she has become, in this age of mass tourism and digital narcissism, a black hole of anti-art who has turned the museum inside out. Enough!

This past summer, amid 100-degree-plus heat, the Louvre undertook a renovation of *Mona Lisa*’s gallery: the arching Salle des Etats, in the museum’s Denon wing, which once housed Parliament of France. What a mess this was. Relocated to the Richelieu painting wing, the *Mona Lisa* reduced the museum’s Flemish collection into wallpaper for a cattle pen, where guards shoed along irritated, sweaty selfie-snappers who’d endured a half-hour line. The overcrowding was so bad, the museum had

MY FIRST ENCOUNTER
Vandana Kalra speaks to artists on their first impression of the *Mona Lisa* and whether the painting needs a new home

ARPANA CAUR



Mona Lisa was important to me, just like *The Last Supper*, Rembrandt’s *The Night Watch* or Monet’s *Water Lilies*. I first saw *Mona Lisa* in 1979,

when I was having a solo in (FN) Souza’s wife’s gallery in London. When you are young, you want to see all the masterpieces that you have heard about as a teenager and I, as a child, had heard about *Mona Lisa* and its mysterious smile. When I saw it, it was like confronting history, being face-to-face with something of great historical value. The beauty of art is that it survives so many generations. It will be silly to remove *Mona Lisa* from Louvre Museum. It is a big attraction, and draws several people to the museum. It is good for the museum to have so much footfall. For me, going to Louvre was like going for a pilgrimage. I have been there at least four times.

SUJATA BAJAJ



I first saw *Mona Lisa* in 1988, when I was in Paris on a scholarship. I had studied about *Mona Lisa* as part of art history. It is important to understand that *Mona Lisa* is not famous just because it is a masterpiece, there

SAMIT DAS



Having born and brought up in Jamshedpur and studied fine art at Santiniketan, I had never travelled abroad, but had grown up knowing about Leonardo da

Vinci and *Mona Lisa*. In the late ’80s, I used to purchase books from the series *Great Artists*, through which I was introduced to western art, Louvre and other great museums. In 2001-2002, I was travelling across Europe and started with Paris, where I went to the Louvre Museum and headed to see *Mona Lisa*. My first impression was that it wasn’t as gigantic as I had perceived it to be. It was a strange feeling, and I kind of wondered why it was so famous. I have been to Louvre several times since, but don’t really want to go back to *Mona Lisa*. It may be very famous and important, but I am more interested in Leonardo’s futuristic works, or even *The Last Supper*.

GR IRANNA



I don’t think *Mona Lisa* should be removed from Louvre museum. There is a long association that it shares with the work and vice-versa. There is also

a lot of revenue that the museum perhaps gets because of *Mona Lisa*. Many people just visit it for *Mona Lisa* and removing it might be like removing the soul of the museum. Some people might argue that it does not deserve all the publicity that it gets, but it is already iconic. For instance, Taj Mahal is highly publicised but when you go to Hampi or Mahabalipuram, you feel they are equally impressive and represent different values. When I first saw *Mona Lisa*, I was an art student in London in 1999. I was traveling to Paris to see art and Louvre was one of the museums on my list. I too had heard a lot about the work and spent time studying it. It is no doubt impressive.

10 minutes away from the Louvre, and anyone who visits Paris wants to see Eiffel Tower and *Mona Lisa*. Even those not interested in art have heard about *Mona Lisa*. Some might argue that people crowd around the painting, but it could also be that because of *Mona Lisa*, many people visit Louvre and see other art pieces. It’s extraordinary that this one work has become so famous that everybody has a wish to see it.

to shut its doors on several days. “The Louvre is suffocating,” said a statement from the union of the museum’s security staff, who went on strike.

Now the *Mona Lisa* is back in her regular spot, on a freestanding wall that’s been re-

ainted an admittedly chic Prussian blue. I went up with the crowds recently. Things were no better. Now, you must line up in a hideous, TSA-style snake of retractable barriers that ends about 12 feet from the Leonardo — which, for a painting that’s just

2 1/2 feet tall, is too far for looking and way too far for a good selfie.

Apparently the painting is beneath some nifty new non reflective glass, but at this distance, how could I tell? My fellow visitors and I could hardly see the thing, and we were

Heart of Darkness

As the sequel of Stanley Kubrick’s *The Shining* releases today, a look back at the film that continues to define horror for many

SHUBHRA GUPTA

FOR FANS of Stephen King, and I am a life-long, card-carrying one, *The Shining* has a very special place in the best-selling author’s heart-stopping hierarchy of thrills-chills-spills: like so many other readers, (King calls us his “constant readers”), I couldn’t sleep for nights on end. You closed your eyes, and there was the lurking, lurching monster about to break down your door and swallow you up in a single gulp.

The novel was scary enough, but Stanley Kubrick’s adaptation of it ratcheted up the fear factor so high that I don’t remember be-

ing able to breathe through it. Or do I mean, I remember every breath I took because it was short and shallow and careful in order to keep the monster at bay. And a meaner, scarier monster than Jack Torrance, played unforgettably by Jack Nicholson, did not exist. Has not existed.

When you meet him, there’s nothing to suggest that there’s anything off-kilter about Torrance. He sits there, an author who needs some time and space for the words to begin flowing, in the lobby of Overlook Hotel, along with his wife and son. Yes, he’s happy to be caretaker. Yes, he’s aware of just how isolated the snow-bound countryside can be. And no, there’s nothing to



Stills from *The Shining* and (right) *Doctor Sleep*

worry about.

I won’t be giving out any spoilers if I tell you just how beguilingly Kubrick leads us down the primrose path. How a little twitch becomes a little niggles, and then the unease starts building. At a placid dining table sit the wife, played by the fragile Shelley Duvall, and their little boy, who asks if he can go out to play. Won’t it be fun, he asks, all inno-



cence. Yes, it will be fun, she says.

We already know that the fun and games are over. Of one kind. The other, which takes these three down the labyrinth, deeper and deeper, is just beginning. Ghostly, menacing figures start appearing. Past sins come visiting. And by the time Torrance has flipped all the way over, and is chasing his family down the empty, echo-

ing hallways of the hotel, the terror is full-blown.

Why the book (1977) and the film (1980), resonated so heavily, and is to be found in most horror-lovers’ library, is something that King’s best works lock into with such simplicity: yes, there is evil that is to be found in other spheres of the universe, but the blackness that can reside in the human heart is the most frightening of them all.

Those who were on set remember the feelings impacting the actors: from all accounts, Duvall was the most affected, and it took her a long time to get over the shoot. Kubrick was famously exacting, demanding many retakes of the most difficult scenes. Imagine covering behind a door being slashed through by a maniac, and having to do it over and over again. “Heeeeeeere’s Johnny”, that long-drawn out phrase which Jack playing Jack sang out, was the stuff of nightmares. And still is.

Today, the sequel, *Doctor Sleep* is out. I will catch it and let you know how I’m doing on the sleep front. Hush. There be monsters.

Big catch: IPL regular arrested for match-fixing

CM Gautam, wicket-keeper batsman who played for RCB, Daredevils and Mumbai Indians, accused of unfair play in several KPL games, including 2019 final

JOHNSONTA
BENGALURU, NOVEMBER 7

A ONE-TIME India fringe player who has played for Indian Premier League teams like Royal Challengers Bangalore, Delhi Daredevils and Mumbai Indians has been arrested on match-fixing charges. A former Karnataka Ranji Trophy regular, CM Gautam, 33, was named as an accused by the Central Crime Branch unit of the Bengaluru Police that is probing the match-fixing scandal in the Karnataka Premier League.

Also in the dock on the same charges was Gautam's 29-year-old Ballari Tuskers team mate Abrar Kazi. Already in the police net are four other players, two coaches and an entertainer - all involved in the dubious league.

Produced before a magistrate on Thursday, Gautam and Kazi were remanded to seven days of police custody. The police said the two were held on the basis of information provided by another KPL player Nishant Shekhawat, who was arrested two days ago. Shekhawat, who has played for multiple teams in the KPL, has been accused of helping bookies get in touch with players and coaching staff with the intention of fixing games.

The police have accused Gautam, Kazi and other players who are yet to be identified - of "conspiring with team owners and bookies" to fix at least four games, including this year's KPL final, over the last two seasons. In most cases, they have been alleged to have intentionally batted slowly. "They spot-fixed the KPL 2019 final between Hubli Tigers and Ballari Tuskers. They were paid 20 lakh for slow batting," police said regarding the arrests of Gautam and Kazi. The Ballari Tuskers team was bought in 2017 by real estate businessman Arvind Venkatesh Reddy. He roped in Kannada film actress Ragini Dwivedi as co-owner. The police have questioned him over multiple sessions regarding involvement in spot-fixing.

Earlier, a member of the Tuskers team for the 2019 season, Bhavesh Gulecha, told police that he was approached on behalf of bookies by Bhavesh Bafna, 26, a celebrity drummer, to underperform during a KPL match. Gulecha has given a statement to the police saying he was asked by Bafna to concede more than 10 runs an over in a match in the 2019 edition.

The arrests of Shekhawat, Gautam and Kazi by the CCB police follows the arrest of the bowling coach of the Bengaluru Blasters Vinu Prasad and a batsman for the same team in the 2018 season, M Vishwanathan, on charges of cheating and conspiracy through slow batting in a KPL tie - for which Vishwanathan allegedly got Rs five lakh. Shekhawat "was in touch with bookies and contacted Vinu Prasad to fix players," the police said. He is accused of helping Prasad lure Vishwanathan into the fixing net on behalf of a Chandigarh bookie identified as Manoj Kumar alias Monty. Prasad was allegedly introduced to Monty by Shekhawat, a player for the Shivamogga Lions at the time, police said in an initial report on the probe which led to the arrests of Vishwanathan and Prasad in Bengaluru last week.

Bengaluru crime branch had in September arrested the owner of the Belagavi Panthers team Ali Asfak Thara, Bafna, the celebrity drummer in the KPL and other tournaments like the IPL and TNPL, and named two Delhi bookies Sanyam Gulati and Jatin Sethi for involvement in the betting racket. None of the bookies named in the four separate cases filed have been arrested as yet. "Further investigations are on and more arrests will be made," crime branch chief Sandeep Patil said on Thursday.



WHAT WERE YOU THINKING: Television grab from the final moments of 2019 KPL final, the game for which CM Gautam allegedly got Rs 20 lakh to bat slowly.

‘It’s easy to say that the players are greedy, but definitely higher-ups are also involved’

SRIRAM VEERA
MUMBAI, NOVEMBER 7

THE KARNATAKA cricket circuit was in a state of shock on hearing the news about the state's Ranji Trophy mainstay, CM Gautam, being picked up by the police on charges of match-fixing.

Those who had shared the dressing room with the wicket-keeper batsmen were tight-lipped about the involvement of their team mate with dubious bookies but they did expressed surprise over the spate of arrests in the Karnataka Premier League match-fixing scandal.

"I don't know about Gautam's case but questions must be asked why there are so many players' names are coming out. It's easy to say that it was just the greed of the players but we definitely feel higher-ups are also involved. Then the players feel that the corruption seems to be so rampant, and they go with it," says another player. Some owners and coaches have already come under the police scanner.

Gautam is easily the biggest name to have emerged in the police investigations into KPL. His breakthrough season was 2012-13 when he made 943 runs at an average of 118 with couple of double hundreds.

He had hoped that he would come into national reckoning that year but it didn't turn out that way. In 2016 he spoke about the disappointment. "Obviously, it was very disappointing. The way I was getting runs that year, no keeper has got that much runs in domestic cricket so far. I was picked in the India A to play Australia in Chennai.

GCA terminates Gautam’s contract

Rajkot: The Goa Cricket Association (GCA) on Thursday terminated C M Gautam's contract and named Darshan Misal as the new captain for the Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 tournament which begins on Friday, after the wicket-keeper batsman was arrested for spot-fixing in a domestic league. Gautam, a former Karnataka wicketkeeper-batsman, was earlier on Thursday arrested by the Bengaluru Central Crime Branch along with Abrar Kazi for allegedly accepting money to spot-fix in the scandal-ridden Karnataka Premier League (KPL).

"Once the news came out, we have terminated his (Gautam's) contract and we have written to BCCI as well regarding this. He has been replaced by Darshan Misal as the captain and we have sent a player Prathamesh as his replacement (for the tournament)," Goa

Cricket Association secretary Vipul Phadke told *PTI*. In the first match in the Mushtaq Ali Trophy, Goa will take on Baroda in Visakhapatnam.

According to the Bengaluru Police, the two (Gautam and Kazi) were involved in fixing in the KPL 2019 finals between Bellary Tuskers and Hubli Tigers after accepting Rs 20 lakh each for slow batting. Hubli Tigers won that match by eight runs.

The 33-year old Gautam is a seasoned campaigner having turned up for Delhi Daredevils, Mumbai Indians and Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL. Gautam, perhaps the biggest name to be caught in the KPL fixing scandal, has 94 first-class games to his credit and was a regular in the Karnataka team. He shifted allegiance to Goa this season. **PTI**

I got runs there as well, After that, I played a few more India A matches and never got a call after that. I thought I was ready at that point in time am ready now as well and it was disappointing," he had told *Sportskeeda*.

"I thought I could have made my debut in 2013 or 14. I was really confident with my batting at that time."

He continued to do well for Karnataka in Ranji Trophy and was selected for three IPL teams – Royal Challengers Bangalore, Delhi Daredevils, and Mumbai Indians.



Rohit Sharma celebrated his 100th T20I with a blistering 43-ball 85. PTI

ing grace, as the 22-year-old otherwise didn't have a good day at the office. Chahal changed the game in the 13th over, removing Mushfiqur Rahim and Soumya Sarkar inside five deliveries. Rahim had won the match for the visitors at Feroz Shah Kotla. In Rajkot, he fell to a trap.

The deep mid-wicket was placed a little squarer to collect a mistimed sweep, and as Chahal bowled full on the off stump, Rahim took the bait. The leggie's reaction to the dis-

missal showed how badly India wanted to win this game. They made mistakes on the field. Catches were dropped and misfields happened. But Chahal's bowling followed by Rohit's batting more than made up for the slip-ups.

Sarkar fell to a Chahal googly, as he danced down the track and missed the slog. Yet again, the matter was sent upstairs to check if Pant had collected the ball in front of the stumps. And when the third umpire pressed the not out

"If you want to disturb a player, there are thousands of other ways to do it. But not like that. It's not right like that. This handful, and I say it again because the idiots aren't numerous but they exist, those who did that are stupid. Racist behaviour is not acceptable, it never has been, and never will be."

MARIO BALOTELLI,
ON THE RACIST ABUSE HE FACED AT VERONA

CM Gautam is easily the biggest name to have emerged in the police investigations into KPL. His breakthrough season was 2012-13 when he made 943 runs at an average of 118 with couple of double hundreds. He had hoped that he would come into national reckoning that year but it didn't turn out that way.

As news broke about police accusing Gautam and skeletons keep tumbling out of KPL, the Karnataka cricketers aren't surprised. One of them said that doubts were expressed by dubious behind-the-scenes happenings in KPL. "Couple of years ago, a senior player in fact was so disturbed that he nearly decided to walk out," says a cricketer.

Last year, another player, a captain, even chose to announce his final playing eleven after taking the field, in the team huddle. He was suspicious of some of his team-mates and thought this was better way to tackle it.

A player talks about how his suspicions about the league cropped up when he saw "fans" from as far away as Haryana come to Hubli, in Karnataka, to watch the KPL matches. "I was thinking we aren't that big, why would they come from so far? Definitely fishy, illegal betting and what not..."

GAMES UNDER SCANNER

2019
FINAL: BALLARI TUSKERS VS HUBLI TIGERS.
SUSPICION: The Tigers scored 152 runs from 20 overs and the Tuskers were all out for 144 with the captain – who had scored 96 of 63 balls in the first qualifier – scoring 29 off 37 balls. Kazi scored 13 off six before being run out and gave away 26 runs in his four overs.

LEAGUE GAME: BENGALURU BLASTERS VS BALLARI TUSKERS
SUSPICION: Gautam scoring 7 runs off 10 balls in a truncated game.

LEAGUE GAME: BALLARI TUSKERS VS MYSURU WARRIORS
SUSPICION: Ballari lost despite scoring 240 runs in 20 overs. Gautam scored 92 off 50 while Kazi gave 31 runs off three overs and did not bowl his full quota after complaining of a suspicious injury.

2018
LEAGUE GAME: BALLARI TUSKERS VS SHIVAMOGGA LIONS:
SUSPICION: Both teams scored 151. Gautam scored 56 (52) and later 13 (3) in the Super Over. Kazi returned figures of two for 32 off his four overs. Tuskers won in a Super Over by 12 runs

LEAGUE GAME: BENGALURU BLASTERS VS HUBBALI TIGERS
SUSPICION: M Vishwanathan was tasked by bookies with scoring less than 10 runs in 20 balls and he scored nine off 17 balls. Vishwanathan allegedly received Rs 5 lakh for the slow batting. He allegedly sent out signals of his agreement to bookies with a change of bat and rolling up of his sleeves, police have alleged.



Disturbing piece of news. It wasn't too long ago that Gautam's name was doing the rounds for a back-up keeper role for Team India."

AKASH CHOPRA,
FORMER INDIA OPENER

SECOND T20I

Trailing after Kotla loss, India sprint at Rajkot to draw level

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NOVEMBER 7

ROHIT SHARMA'S innings in the second T20 international at Rajkot on Thursday, offered a throwback to Sachin Tendulkar's mauling of Henry Olonga at Sharjah 21 years ago. Olonga had bounced out Tendulkar in the previous game, hurting his pride. The great man took out his anger on the Zimbabwe fast bowler.

In Delhi, with India playing to stay alive, he decimated the Bangladesh bowling during his 43-ball 85 that had six sixes and as many fours. His fifty came off just 23 deliveries. In a 118-run opening wicket partnership between him and Shikhar Dhawan, the latter's contribution was 31 off 27 balls. It was Rohit's 100th T20I and a century would have been befitting for the occasion. But he wouldn't mind, for when he departed in the 13th over, victory was all but secured. Big players become even more dangerous when their pride is hurt.

Chasing 154 for victory, India were home with 26 balls remaining, winning by eight wickets to level the series. Rohit's sublimity in front of 28,000 fans earned him the Man of the Match award. But the prize should have gone to Yuzvendra Chahal, because he was the game-changer on the night. Chahal's bowling – his googlies and pace variation – took the wind out of the visitors' sail and forced them to surrender the advantage.

Khaleel taken to the cleaners

Bangladesh, after being sent in, were 54 for no loss at the end of the Powerplay. Young Mohammad Naim had taken Khaleel Ahmed to the cleaners and the hosts were under pressure. Chahal should have had Liton Das in his very first over. The Bangladesh opener had charged out to hit a tossed-up delivery but failed to make any contact. Pant whipped the balls off but he had collected the ball in front of the stumps. Third umpire Anil Chaudhary rightly called it a no-ball, and to rub salt into the wound, Das scored a boundary off the free-hit followed by another four next ball. Pant was nicely set up for a customary social media backlash.

In the first T20I, Krunal Pandya's dropped catch had proved to be the turning point. Here, with India already under the pump, Pant, always under scrutiny because he is MS Dhoni's replacement, made a serious error. Chahal extended a helping hand. He bowled a fabulous googly in his next over and trapped Das plumb in front. Umpire C Shamshuddin somehow wasn't convinced and with the bowler and the 'keeper in the middle of a vigorous appeal, Das set off for a non-existent single. Pant was alert to the situation and he was quicker than Das. The run-out gave India the breakthrough they needed. As for Pant, the run-out was the sav-

EXPLAINED

When Pant crossed the line

WHEN THE umpires disallowed Rishabh Pant's stumping, despite the batsman Liton Das almost half way down the pitch, they were invoking a less-discussed old law. The problem concerned Pant's point of collection. Law 27.3.1 states that 'the wicket-keeper shall remain wholly behind the wicket from the moment the ball comes into play until it touches the bat or passes the wicket at the striker's end'. In other words, the wicket-keeper needs to be behind the stumps while gathering the ball.

Replays showed, Pant had his gloves slightly ahead of the stumps at the time of 'collection'. Instead of waiting for the ball to pass the wicket, anxiousness had got the better of the young wicket-keeper. This resulted in his hands crossing the line of the stumps. It caught the sharp eyes of the umpires, who went by the book, and ruled

Part of Rishabh Pant's gloves was in front of the stumps when the ball made contact.

it a no-ball. Das survived the scare and got a life.

Cagers get into a ‘fight’ off court; federation forms probe committee

NITIN SHARMA
CHANDIGARH, NOVEMBER 7

LATE ON Wednesday night, outside the national camp where India’s basketball team was preparing for the upcoming South Asian Games, two cagers were embroiled in an altercation that ended in a broken pair of spectacles, a damaged gold chain and injuries. The pair, Amjyot Singh Gill and Arshdeep Singh Bhullar, was accompanied by team-mate Amritpal Singh for the trip away from camp on their day off, only for Amjyot and Arshdeep to engage in yet another incident after what happened last year.

Last year, Amjyot had allegedly slapped Arshdeep while the team was in Gold Coast, Australia for the Commonwealth Games. The incident prompted the Basketball Federation

of India (BFI) to impose a one-year ban on the 27-year-old power forward, and also banned fellow cager Palpreet Singh for uploading a derogatory post on social media about the BFI. The ban was lifted in May this year, but the latest clash is expected to result in “action against the three players.”

In this case, though, there are more than one version of the story.

Amjyot, who has plied his trade in Japan and has turned out for Oklahoma City Blue and Wisconsin Herd in the NBA’s G-League, alleged that his colleagues tried to force him into drinking alcohol during the trip outside camp at Vidya Nagar in Bangalore. Upon his refusal, he and Arshdeep got into an altercation, and the latter assaulted Amjyot in his hostel room.

“Last night, Arshdeep, Amritpal and I went to the nearby hill outside our training

In his complaint, Amjyot also alleged being “dragged on the road” when he refused alcohol. The Chandigarh lad posted photographs of his broken chain, spectacles and wounds he suffered from the alleged altercation with Arshdeep.

centre as it was our day off from practice. Arshdeep offered me coke which had rum in it and we had a minor altercation,” Amjyot told *The Indian Express*.

“Later when I got to my room in the hostel, Arshdeep was sitting on my bed and he thrashed me. He broke my gold chain and

spectacles and pushed me holding my throat. He was apparently angry about things I had posted on social media about my ban being unfair when it was finally lifted. He told me that he will kill me if I enter Jalandhar or Punjab. Later our team-mates Amritpal Singh and Satnam Singh stopped Arshdeep and locked us in separate rooms to stop the fight. Later I filed my complaint with Bengaluru Police. Last time when I was handed the ban, BFI had told me not to file any case.”

Amjyot went further to claim that Arshdeep’s father Mukhwinder, a DCP in the Punjab Police, forced the cager to resign from his post in the police before going back to the United States.

In his complaint, Amjyot also alleged being “dragged on the road” when he refused alcohol. The Chandigarh lad posted photo-

graphs of his broken chain, spectacles and wounds he suffered from the alleged altercation with Arshdeep.

None of Arshdeep, Amritpal or Mukhwinder (who is abroad on vacation) responded to phone calls.

BFI secretary general Chander Mukhi Sharma, however, refuted Amjyot’s claims about the incident. Sharma’s account describes Amjyot’s injuries coming as a result of him and Arshdeep falling off a motorbike. Additionally, Sharma claims Amjyot was in a deeply “inebriated” state when he returned to the camp. “The whole issue has been blown out of proportion by Amjyot. The three players went outside the camp since it was an off-day for them, and had alcohol. Later when they were returning, Amjyot and Arshdeep, who were on a motorbike, fell and Amjyot created a ruckus about the event and

had a fight,” Sharma stated. “A traffic inspector saw them and later came to the training camp building. Amjyot was in a heavily inebriated state and could not even speak. The police officials took him to the police station at midnight and he was later told to go to the camp at 3:30 am after the coaches went to the police station. Amjyot was not even in a condition to speak properly. The issue of fight by Arshdeep was created by Amjyot to hide the accident and the alcohol issue. We will take action against the three players and form a committee to probe the issue.”

The camp began in Bangalore on October 15 in preparation for the South Asian Games in Nepal in December. But based on what Sharma asserted, it may be unlikely that Amjyot, Amritpal and Arshdeep will make the cut.

AITA keeps door open for Bhupathi, but after Pakistan tie

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 7

A DAY after Mahesh Bhupathi hit out at the All India Tennis Association for sacking him as non-playing captain for the Davis Cup tie against Pakistan, the federation said it hadn’t shut the door on the former doubles specialist completely.

But AITA was standing firm in the decision to not take Bhupathi onboard for this tie. He could be considered for future national duties, AITA CEO Akhuri Bishwadev said at a press conference in the Capital on Thursday. “Mahesh is welcome for national duty. Whatever duty AITA requires from Mahesh, then he will be approached,” said Bishwadev.

There was no headway in terms of team selection for the tie, with Pakistan appealing against the International Tennis Federation’s decision to move the tie to a neutral venue. Newly-appointed captain Rohit Rajpal said the selection committee will meet soon and would “keep in mind” the fact that certain players had put their hand up even when the contest was scheduled to be held in Islamabad.

“When the tie was supposed to be played in Pakistan, a lot of players backed out. But the moment it was learnt that it might happen in a neutral venue, everyone is back. But there were those who put their hand up when the chips were down, we will consider this fact. At the same time, we need to find the best team. National interest comes first and we cannot please everybody all the time,” said Rajpal.

Rajpal, who is also the chairman AITA’s selection committee, said he sees no reason why Bhupathi can’t return to the scene again. “Never say never. It’s the executive commit-

AITA was standing firm in the decision to not take Bhupathi onboard for this tie. He could be considered for future national duties, AITA CEO Akhuri Bishwadev said at a press conference in the Capital on Thursday.

tee’s decision on the captain but if Mahesh is required in future, why not have him and also he can make more contribution in other capacities being a legend of the game. Everything is open,” he said.

Earlier, Bhupathi, Rohan Bopanna and a few others had made themselves unavailable for the tie originally scheduled in Pakistan. AITA decided to appoint Rajpal in place of Bhupathi on Monday just hours before ITF announced its decision to move the tie to a neutral venue due to security concerns. Bhupathi vented his ire on Twitter saying players were not consulted before taking a call.

“To everyone so concerned for my thoughts and comments. All I know is from a phone call with Mr Chaterjee on Monday where I was told that Rohit is replacing me as Captain because I wasn’t comfortable going to Pakistan (love the country been there before - not this time). I have not heard from the AITA since Monday or after the ITF addressed the players concerns on venue and approved a neutral location - so I am available and believe I am still Captain unless I hear otherwise! Glad to ‘comment’ when I know what I know,” Bhupathi had posted.

Chinki in line for Olympic quota

Doha: Chinki Yadav kept alive India’s hopes of securing the second Olympic quota in women’s 25m Pistol, clinging to fifth place in the first round qualification of the Asian Shooting Championship here on Thursday. Chinki shot an exceptional 292 and will be looking to make the final on Friday and take a shot at clinching one of the four available Tokyo berths. Rahi Samobat has already secured the other quota place for India in the event in earlier competitions.

Apart from Chinki, Vivaan Kapoor and Esha Singh won two gold each as India dominated the junior competitions, where they have accounted for 18 of the 23 medals won so far by the country. The icing on the cake at the Lusail Shooting complex was the 1-2 finish in the junior men’s trap competition where Vivaan

shot his way to an individual gold with compatriot Bhowneesh Mendiarratta following him through the day to clinch silver. The pair also combined with Manavadiya Singh Rathore to secure the team gold in the event. Vivaan, who picked up his second and third yellow metal of the competition after winning the junior trap mixed team event on day one partnering Manisha Keer, continued his good form by topping qualification with a solid 120 out of 125. Bhowneesh was second with 118, while Manavadiya missed out on the final, finishing eighth with a score of 109. Vivaan then missed five birds in the final but still emerged triumphant, with a score of 45, as Bhowneesh missed eight for the silver. Li Siwei of China won bronze. **PTI**

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NOVEMBER 7

IT WILL be a match to savour as India’s sizzling doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty take on the Chinese in their backyard when they go up against Li Jun Hui and Liu Yu Chen at the Haixia Olympics Sports Center in Fuzhou on Friday.

India’s top shuttlers - Saina Nehwal, PV Sindhu and K Srikanth - have all picked a title in China so when the unseeded Indian pair take on the Chinese in the quarterfinals of the China Open, expectations will be high.

Satwik-Chirag are newbies in the Top 10, but there’s always a hint of drama in the air when they take to the court these days. These are heady days for India’s doubles stars. Satwik-Chirag made the finals in Paris last fortnight, and it came at the back of the Thailand Open title earlier this year. These results make them a novelty in Indian badminton given that neither Jwala Gutta-V Diju nor Ashwini Ponnappa and Jwala could repeatedly beat the top names like these two have.

Beyond the top two Indonesian pairs, this Chinese duo is the next best combination on the circuit. Seeded No.3, they bring to the court the sort of efficiency that’ll draw the Indians into a high intensity, no-inch-ceded battle from the start.

This will also be a grudge match of sorts since the Chinese lost to the Indians in the Thailand final. In fact, on that historic Sunday, they were completely bamboozled by the cerebral game the Indians dished out. The Chinese are 1-1 in head to head against the Indians having won in Australia two months before they were tied in knots in Thailand. The Chinese are a tall combination - both 190 cm-plus and 24. Liu is a junior World champion and Li, a lanky athlete who was pushed into the sport because he was a reedy thin child. They are effective and relentless but as was proven in Thailand, not immune to being wrong-footed by the clever Indians.

Winners in Macau last week, the Chinese will be wary of the Indians who will fancy their chances if it’s a long drawn-out battle, given the psychological advantage of the 62-minute win in Bangkok.

Japan stymied

The Indians reached their second Super 750 competition quarters beating the higher-ranked Japanese pair of Hiroyuki Endo and Yuta Watanabe. The left-right combine, with the younger Watanabe a southpaw and senior Endo at 32 years, faced their second straight defeat against the Indians.

It was more of the same from the French Open semifinal. Satwik-Chirag rotated well against the retrieving duo to take the opener 21-18. The Indians were two match points up in the second, when defensive errors crept in. Satwik faulted on his serve on the second match point and Chirag was crossed by Endo to drag the match into a decider.

Once there, and annoyed by the missed opportunity to wrap things up in straight



Rankireddy and Shetty beat their Japanese opponents 21-18, 21-23, 21-11. *File*

Winning a title in China is almost a rite of passage for India’s top shuttle names. Satwik and Chirag are on a roll, but it’s a steep draw ahead with the top pairings bunched up in their half. To get to the top of the podium in the next three days, they will need to jump through hoops - World Nos 3, 1 and 2.

sets, the Indians went on a rampage giving the Japanese short shrift, to lead 10-1. Perhaps the biggest challenge was playing out this low-pitched match that drawled out ramblingly before the Indians won 21-18, 21-23, 21-11. This is not Japan’s top pair but with a rank of No. 7, the converts from mixed doubles specialise in prolonging short men’s doubles matches to an average hour-long slugfest with their attritional defence.

The Indians needed to stay patient after botching the two match points and responded admirably to get a stranglehold in



Parupalli Kashyap (pic) and B Sai Praneeth lost in the second round of the men’s singles. *File*

the third. The pace might have lulled them, but they can expect the Chinese to come hard at them on Friday. Winning a title in China is almost a rite of passage for India’s top shuttle names. Satwik and Chirag are on a roll, but it’s a steep draw ahead with the top pairings bunched up in their half. To get to the top of the podium in the next three days, they

will need to jump through hoops - World Nos 3, 1 and 2.

Kashyap, Praneeth out

PTI adds: Parupalli Kashyap and B Sai Praneeth were both ousted in the second round of the men’s singles event.

World No. 11 Praneeth fought hard for one hour 24 minutes against fourth seed Anders Antonsen of Denmark before going down 20-22 22-20 21-16.

Kashyap, ranked 25 in the world, ran out of steam after a decent start against seventh seed Victor Axelsen and went down 13-21 19-21 in a match that lasted 43 minutes. Praneeth’s loss marked the end of India’s campaign in the singles.

This is the second time Kashyap had lost to Axelsen this year. The former Commonwealth Games champion, who reached the semifinals of India Open and Korea Open earlier this year, had lost to the world number six at the India Open in March.

It was also the end of the road for the mixed doubles pair of Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa. The unseeded Indian duo lost 21-23 16-21 to fifth seeds Seo Seung Jae and Chae Yujung of South Korea.

[SPORTS BAR]



Injured Cilic pulls out of Davis Cup finals

Defending champions Croatia will be without Marin Cilic in the Davis Cup finals later this month after the former US Open winner announced his withdrawal on Thursday because of a knee injury. Croatia, who beat previous winners France in last year’s final, play the inaugural match in Madrid against Russia on November 18. “My recurring knee injury has continued to give me problems, and as the season progressed it was becoming more evident that surgery was inevitable,” Cilic, world number 39, wrote on Facebook. The “rehab work was successful enough that surgery is not necessary at this stage,” he continued. Cilic was supposed to play in a squad of five Croatian players which includes Borna Coric, Mate Pavic, Ivan Dodig and Nikola Pietrangeli.

ISL: FC Goa beat Mumbai FC 4-2

FC Goa returned to winning ways and climbed to the top of the Hero Indian Super League table with a 4-2 win against Mumbai City FC in Mumbai on Thursday. The goal-fest began with Lenny Rodrigues giving Goa the lead in the 27th minute. The visitors doubled their lead with a Ferran Corominas (45’) strike just before half-time. The second half saw three goals in the space of ten minutes, with Mumbai City equalising in quick session through Sarthak Golui (49’), Souvik Chakrabarti (55’) and later Hugo Boumous (59’) putting the visitors back in lead. Carlos Pena (89’) scored another late in the game to rub further salt into Mumbai’s wounds.

Ridhima opens huge lead in Pro Golf Tour

Ridhima Dilawari, who has already won three times this season, opened up a massive six-shot lead with one more round to go in the 14th Leg of Hero Women’s Pro Golf Tour in Noida on Thursday. Overnight co-leader Ridhima, who was one of the four players to shoot a sub-par round on the first day, was the only one of them to repeat the effort, as she brought home 71 to go with her first round 69 and get to four-under 140 in the Rupees Eight lakh event. Amandeep Drall was the only other player to shoot under par in the second round.



Samuel Eto’o believes African players are not appreciated. *File*

No respect for Africans in Ballon d’Or: Eto’o

African players still do not get the recognition they deserve, Cameroon legend Samuel Eto’o told AFP in an exclusive interview, as he hopes that this will finally be the year another player from the continent wins the Ballon d’Or. George Weah, the former Paris Saint-Germain and AC Milan striker who is now the president of Liberia, won the Ballon d’Or in 1995 but remains the only African player ever to have claimed the award. “Western media dominate our media in Africa, so they definitely have an influence. People prefer to see a Lionel Messi goal,” Eto’o, 38, told AFP during a visit to Paris last month. The former Barcelona star, once a teammate of Messi, believes that “African players are not respected” and are “not always properly appreciated”. He recently hung up his boots after a glorious career in which he won the UEFA Champions League three times and the Africa Cup of Nations twice. He never won the prize for the world’s best player, although he insists he has no regrets.

SAI clears proposals worth Rs 70 lakh

The Sports Authority of India’s (SAI) Mission Olympic Cell has cleared financial proposals amounting to more than Rs 70 lakh across seven sports. During a meeting of the Mission Olympic Cell, chaired by SAI Director General Sandip Pradhan here, three national federations -- athletics, boxing and wrestling -- shared their roadmap for the 2020, 2024 and 2028 Olympics with regards to strategy, planning and talent identification. In table tennis, the committee has approved the proposals of three players -- G Sathiyam, Achanta Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra -- for their training and competition requirements in India and overseas.

We didn’t fudge data: Russian minister

Russia’s sports minister insisted that data handed to the World Anti-Doping Agency was not doctored, while WADA has asked Moscow to explain “inconsistencies.” “Nothing was removed there, our experts insist this didn’t happen,” sports minister Pavel Kolobkov said, Interfax news agency reported. The electronic data handed to WADA investigators early this year came from RUSADA’s former Moscow anti-doping laboratory. In September, WADA asked Russia to respond to “inconsistencies” in the data. “They are linked to the system,” he added.



Guardiola is the world’s best manager: Klopp

Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp has hailed Manchester City boss Pep Guardiola as the best manager in the world as the Premier League rivals gear up for Sunday’s top-of-the-table clash at Anfield. Leaders Liverpool have a six-point advantage over the defending champions and the match is a crucial one for both sides. “We constantly get asked questions and sometimes we say what is in that second in our mind without thinking about anything else, that we are in public, that there is a camera,” said the German. “I couldn’t have more respect for Pep Guardiola, that’s how it is. I’ve known him for so long, for me still it’s a big thing to be his contender. For me he’s the best manager in the world and we have the chance to win against his team which is very difficult but possible,” Klopp said.



Real’s Rodrygo,18, rises to the occassion

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MADRID, NOVEMBER 7

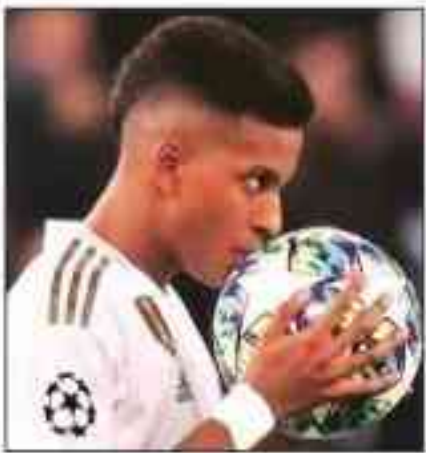
IT TOOK less than 15 minutes for Real Madrid to erase fears of another setback at home as it put its Champions League campaign back on track. With three goals in the first 14 mins, Madrid cruised to a 6-0 win over Galatasaray, moving closer to the knockout stages and ending the Turkish team’s chances of advancing in the European competition.

Brazilian teenager Rodrygo had a dream Champions League debut at home, scoring the quickest brace in tournament history and his first hat trick with Madrid. Karim Benzema got a double to reach 50 Champions League goals with the Spanish club, surpassing Alfredo Di Stefano’s tally.

Rodrygo scored twice in the opening seven minutes, and Sergio Ramos added the third from a penalty in the 14th to put Madrid on its way to a comfortable home victory. Benzema added the fourth just before halftime and scored again late in the second half, while Rodrygo sealed his hat trick in stoppage time.

The result ended Madrid’s three-game winless streak at the Santiago Bernabeu Stadium in the Champions League, leaving the 13-time champion in good position in Group A after a winless start that had fans fearing the team’s first group-stage elimination since the 1989-90 season.

Madrid has seven points, five more than third-place Club Brugge, which lost 1-0 at leader Paris Saint-Germain in the group’s other match. PSG remained perfect with 12 points – and has secured its spot in the knockout stages – while Galatasaray is last with one point. Madrid had lost twice and drawn once in its previous



Rodrygo after scoring his hat-trick. Reuters

KEY RESULTS			
Crvena	0	4	Tottenham
Bayer	2	1	Atletico
PSG	1	0	Club Brugge
Atalanta	1	1	City
Dinamo	3	3	Shakhtar
Real	6	0	Galatasaray

three home games in the Champions League. It has never gone four matches in a row without a win at the Bernabeu in the European tournament. Madrid’s last Spanish league game at home also was a draw – 0-0 against Real Betis on Saturday. Madrid had opened its Champions League campaign with a 3-0 loss at PSG and a 2-2 draw against Club Brugge at home, then earned a 1-0 win at Galatasaray in the previous round. It needs two points from its last two matches to guarantee it will advance.

Galatasaray has only two wins in its last 24 Champions League games and is winless in nine straight. It hasn’t won in 16 consecutive away matches in the European competition. “It was really difficult after we started losing 3-0,” Galatasaray coach Fatih Terim said. “Real Madrid was amazing tonight, we have to recognize that. But we made everything easier for them. We did not put on a fight. If we are going to lose, we at least have to put on a fight, and we did not do that.”

Djokovic has World no 1 Nadal in his sights at London finale

REUTERS
LONDON, NOVEMBER 7

IF NOVAK Djokovic is to claim the year-end number ranking for a record-equalling sixth time he will have to do it the hard way at the ATP Finals next week in London.

The Serb was knocked off top spot by Rafael Nadal on Monday despite winning the Paris Masters last week and will need a strong

finish alongside the River Thames to snatch it back. Only Pete Sampras has finished a year on top six times and Djokovic’s hopes of emulating the American are not in his own hands with Nadal leading by 640 points heading to the climax. Nadal, 33, is bidding to become the ATP’s oldest year-end number but with 200 points awarded for round-robin wins, 400 for a semi-final win and 500 for winning the final the door is still

ajar for Djokovic to deny him.

Spaniard Nadal has often struggled physically in London and pulled out of his Paris Masters semi-final against Denis Shapovalov last week citing an abdominal issue when victory would have put him virtually out of reach.

He intends to play in London having been drawn in a round-robin group alongside 2018 ATP Finals champion Alexander Zverev and debutants Daniil Medvedev

and Stefanos Tsitsipas.

If Nadal fails to win a round-robin match, Djokovic would still need to win two group matches and reach the final to dislodge him. Djokovic will also finish the year as number one by winning the title, providing Nadal does not reach the semis. Djokovic faces a tough group though, with six-time champion Roger Federer, French Open runner-up Dominic Thiem and Italian Matteo Berrettini, the

third newcomer in this year’s event, who he will play in Sunday’s opening singles. “It’s an extremely difficult task considering who my opponents are going to be,” Australian Open and Wimbledon champion Djokovic said. “As a consequence, if I manage to get the year-end number one, that would be fantastic. It is a motivation and a goal every day.”

Federer, ranked third, will be a particularly dangerous obstacle for

Djokovic even if he has not added to his ATP Finals title haul since winning in 2011. The Swiss, who has a record 57 match wins at the event, bowed out to Zverev in the semi-finals last year but continues to defy the passing years at the age of 38. Last month he claimed the Swiss indoor title without dropping a set. It was his fourth title in 2019, during which he lost an epic Wimbledon final to Djokovic having held match points.