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\*Source- NDTV.com

### NEARBY



#### Apex court stays order on 'virtual' campaigns

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Monday stayed a Madhya Pradesh High Court order which directed "virtual" election campaigning for the by-election to 28 Assembly seats in the State. The court *prima facie* agreed with the petitions filed by the Election Commission and BJP candidate Pradyuman Singh Tomar.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

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## Centre promises law to check stubble burning

Not consulted, says Agriculture Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre will bring in a law to address air pollution and check stubble burning in Delhi as well as the surrounding National Capital Region, the Supreme Court was informed on Monday.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said a draft legislation would be ready this week.

"The new law is for tackling air pollution in NCR and the adjoining areas. It's an ordinance," Secretary in the Ministry of Environment R.P. Gupta told *The Hindu*.

However, no consultation seems to have been undertaken so far with the Ministry

## SC withholds order on committee head

The Supreme Court on Monday decided to "keep in abeyance" its pre-Dussehra order appointing former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur to a one-man committee to prevent stubble-burning in U.P., Haryana and Punjab.

On October 16, the court had asked Justice Lokur with the help of student volunteers from NCC, NSS and Scouts and Guides to protect Delhi-NCR from air pollution. ▶ PAGE 10

of Agriculture on this.

With an increase in stubble burning – the burning of rice straw by farmers to clear fields for winter sowing in Punjab and Haryana – the Ministry has in recent years been tasked with funding the use of subsidised combine harvesters and machin-

ery to dissuade the farmers.

"The ordinance is coming from the Environment Ministry and so far no consultations have been held with Agriculture Ministry officials," said a person in the Ministry.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

ary-to-military cooperation, secure communication systems and information sharing, defence trade and industrial issues" and also discussed ways to take bilateral cooperation forward, the statement said.

Mr. Esper and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in the national capital on Monday.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Mr. Pompeo held talks in the evening at Hyderabadi House. India and the U.S. will take up "specific issues" on security concerns in Asia on Tuesday, said government sources after the talks.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

The four convicts were fined ₹10 lakh each, while Castron Technologies Limited and Castron Mining Limited were asked to pay a fine of ₹60 lakh and ₹10 lakh respectively.

Ray, who was Minister of State for Coal in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, was later granted bail on furnishing a bond of ₹1 lakh.

Earlier this month, the court convicted him, along

## Coal scam: jail term for ex-Minister Dilip Ray

3-year term for 1999 mine allocation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A special court on Monday sentenced former Union Minister Dilip Ray and three other individual convicts to three years of jail term for irregularities in the allocation of the Brahmapuri coal block in Jharkhand in 1999.

The four convicts were fined ₹10 lakh each, while Castron Technologies Limited and Castron Mining Limited were also convicted.

Castron Technologies Limited, its director, Mahendra Kumar Agarwalla, and Castron Mining Limited were also convicted.

Earlier this month, the court convicted him, along



Former Minister of State for Coal Dilip Ray

with then Additional Secretary Pradip Kumar Banerjee and then Adviser (Project) Nitayanand Gautam, in the Coal Ministry.

Castron Technologies Limited, its director, Mahendra Kumar Agarwalla, and Castron Mining Limited were also convicted.

Earlier this month, the court convicted him, along

## Anti-cow slaughter law in U.P. being misused: Allahabad HC

Court grants bail to man jailed since August



Seized cows should be kept in shelters or with owners, the court said. ▶ FILE PHOTO

also informed the court that he was not arrested from the spot, but he had been in jail since August 5. "Whenever any meat is recovered, it is normally shown as cow meat [beef] without getting it examined or analysed by the forensic laboratory. In most of the cases, meat is not sent for analysis," said Justice

Counsel for the petitioner

Siddharth.

In an order dated October 19, the court observed that some continue to be in jail for an offence that may not have been committed at all, or was triable by a Magistrate Class I and carried a maximum sentence of up to seven years. The judge said whenever cows were shown as recovered, no proper recovery memo was prepared and one did not know where the cows went after the recovery. Goshalas did not accept non-milching or old cows and they were left to wander on the roads.

"Some way out has to be found to keep them either in the cow shelters or with the owners, if U.P. Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act is to be implemented in letter and spirit," the court said.

## India to sign geo-spatial cooperation deal with U.S.

BECA signing at 2+2 dialogue today; Ministers hold talks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT



**Strengthening ties:** Rajnath Singh with U.S. Defence Secretary Mark Esper in New Delhi on Monday. ▶ PTI

bilateral talks between Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and U.S. Secretary of Defense Mark Esper.

The two Ministers reviewed bilateral defence cooperation spanning "mili-

tary-to-military cooperation, secure communication systems and information sharing, defence trade and industrial issues" and also discussed ways to take bilateral cooperation forward, the statement said.

Mr. Esper and U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo arrived in the national capital on Monday.

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CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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## Mysuru keeps annual Dasara fete short

Cultural tableaux lasted just 30 minutes

SHANKAR BENNUR  
MYSURU

The first Dasara for tusker Abhimanyu in Mysuru, in the company of 'Kumki' elephants Kaveri and Vijaya, was a short affair as he had to traverse just 270 m rather than the usual 5 km.

The 10-day Mysuru Dasara festivities concluded on Monday under the shadow of the COVID-19 pandemic, with the world famous Jamboo Savari being the shortest and the quickest.

The distance of about 270 m was covered in under 30 minutes, with a nominal presence of cultural troupes and tableaux.

In a normal year, the Savari is a big spectacle with multiple cultural events taking over three hours to complete. This year, the celebrations were only aimed at keeping the centuries-old tradition alive.

The finale of Vijayadasami was confined to the Amba Vilas Palace.

Of the two tableaux presented, one was a tribute to COVID-19 warriors striving to save people. It showed a health worker wearing a mask and a PPE suit. Only six troops took



Elephant Abhimanyu flanked by Kaveri and Vijaya during the Jamboo Savari in Mysuru on Monday. ▶ M.A. SRIRAM

part – two groups of nadaswaram artistes, Veeragase Kunita and Chande Mela artistes, stilt walkers and Chilipi Golme artistes. One stilt walker, as Chamundeshwari, and another as COVID-19 virus, depicted the deity killing the demon with a trishul. The finale, however, exceeded the ceiling of 300 attendees.

Jamboo Savari was limited to the palace in the past too: in 1994 due to the Surat plague and in 2002 due to the severe drought.

Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa flagged off the Savari, showering flowers on the Chamundeshwari idol in the 750-kg golden howdah on elephant Abhimanyu.

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08/11/2020	MTS-GS2-03	The Constitution and Polity of India
15/11/2020	MTS-GS3-04	Indian Economy and Development and Disaster Management
22/11/2020	MTS-CS4-05	Ethics and Human Interface and Related Case Studies
28/11/2020	MTS-ESS-06	Essay
29/11/2020	MTS-GS1-07	Geography of India and the World
06/12/2020	MTS-GS2-08	International Relations, Social Justice and Governance
13/12/2020	MTS-GS3-09	Science and Technology, Environment and Internal Security
20/12/2020	MTS-GS4-10	Ethics in Public Administration and Related Case Studies
25/12/2020	MTS-ESS-11	Essay
	MTS-GS1-12	Indian Heritage and Culture, History and Geography of India and the World and Indian Society
	MTS-GS2-13	Indian Constitution and Polity, Governance, Social Justice and International Relations
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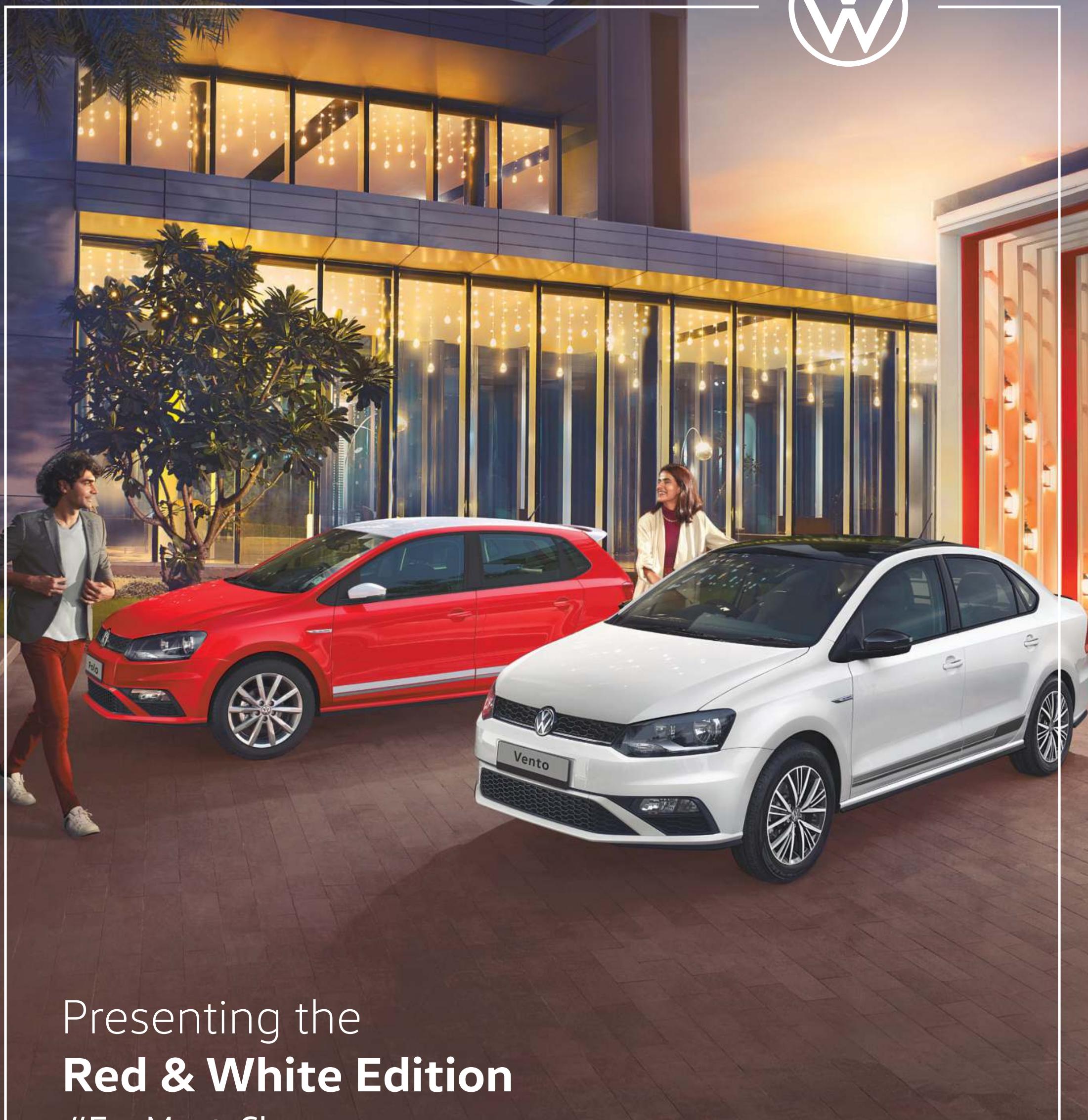
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Timings  
DELHI

TUESDAY, OCT. 27
RISE 06:30 SET 17:41
RISE 15:44 SET 02:34
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 28
RISE 06:31 SET 17:40
RISE 16:14 SET 03:28
THURSDAY, OCT. 29
RISE 06:31 SET 17:39
RISE 16:43 SET 04:19

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	33	15
Safdarjung	33	15
Palam	32	18

Delhi Palam Today  
33°C Pleasant hazy morning and warm sunny day with light dry winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow  
33°C Mist/haze would continue during. Dry and warm weather with mainly clear sky.

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IN BRIEF

Woman moves HC for son's passport

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court has asked the Centre to respond to a mother's plea seeking directions to the government to provide a passport to her son who has been stuck in Italy for eight years as he does not have a valid travel document. The HC asked the Ministry of External Affairs to give its stand on the mother's plea, which claims her son's passport was damaged when he was in Italy and had applied for a duplicate in 2012. The Indian consulate in Italy had refused to issue him a passport as a dowry case was pending against him here, the woman said in her plea.

THE HINDU  
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# Family of ASI denied ex gratia

He worked in Crime Branch, passed away in May after testing positive for COVID



My father caught the virus after visiting a murder spot in Nabi Karim... the deceased was COVID-19 positive  
KRISHNA KUMAR PANDEY  
Son of the deceased

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI  
The family of a 53-year-old Delhi Police Assistant Sub-Inspector has been denied ex gratia of ₹1 crore by the Delhi government.

ASI Shesh Mani Pandey was posted in Crime Branch's fingerprint bureau and passed away on May 30 after testing positive for COVID-19 on May 26.

In a letter dated October 7, accessed by *The Hindu*, it is stated that the case had been examined and "is not found covered under the Cabinet Decision No. 2835 dated 13.05.2020, as the deceased was performing his routine duty assigned to him and was not deployed for COVID-19 duty which is a mandatory condition to become eligible for grant of ex-gratia of ₹1 crore".

Mr. Pandey's case filed had been processed in June.

Employees in rest of the country were asked to work from home but people in the force did not have that option. My father caught the virus after visiting a murder spot in Nabi Karim and the deceased was COVID-19 positive

"We were informed by Delhi Police that our file has been rejected. We were shocked because we were heavily dependent on this money. Also, we were always assured by authorities that we would get this money," he said.

"How can they say he was not on COVID-19 duty? He was a policeman... em-

Commissioner of Police S.N. Shrivastava, after Mr. Pandey's demise, had tweeted: "Delhi Police family mourns the loss of 2 brave police officers in our fight against Corona pandemic despite best efforts to save them. We pay homage to ASIs Vikram and Shesh Mani Pandey and may their souls rest in peace. We are committed to providing all help to their families [sic]."

Mr. Pandey was an ex-serviceman who retired as Naik Subedar in 2012 and joined Delhi Police in 2015. He was from Madhya Pradesh's Rewa, and is survived by his wife and two sons. "My brother is pursuing engineering in Delhi. I, along with my mother, wife, son and grandparents live in Rewa. We had received about ₹25 lakh from Delhi Police and managed to repay our loans," added Krishna.

## Over 2,800 new cases, 54 deaths in 24 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

As many as 2,832 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the tally to 3,59,488, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Monday.

The death toll has increased to 6,312 with 54 more fatalities reported in a single day. Of the total cases, 3,27,390 patients have recovered and there are currently 25,786 active cases in the city. Delhi government data show that 34,411 tests were conducted in 24 hours.

There are 16,396 patients in home isolation and 6,558 in hospitals. Delhi's current



A child getting tested for COVID-19 in Delhi.  
■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

recovery rate is 91.07%.

The number of containment zones has now reached 2,930.

## Man held for sexual assault

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 27-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting his friend in south-east Delhi's Govindpuri, the police said on Monday.

On October 19, the police was informed that a woman was lying injured under a footover bridge in Harkesh Nagar. She was shifted to AIIMS. Her husband said she had gone missing on October 18.

CCTV footage and technical surveillance helped police nab the accused, who had fled to Patna, Bihar. He allegedly told them that he was in a relationship with the victim.

On October 19, the police was informed that a woman was lying injured under a footover bridge in Harkesh Nagar. She was shifted to AIIMS. Her husband said she had gone missing on October 18.

## Mayors sit on dharna outside CM residence

They seek dues worth ₹13,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Mayors of the three BJP-ruled Municipal Corporations sat on a dharna outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's official residence on Monday demanding financial dues to the tune of thousands of crores.

North Delhi Municipal Corporation Mayor Jai Prakash, South Delhi Municipal Corporation Mayor Anamika Mithilesh Singh and East Delhi Municipal Corporation Mayor Nirmal Jain demanded that the Delhi government release ₹13,000 crore to the civic bodies.

The alleged fund crunch is understood to have affected an estimated two lakh municipal employees, including doctors, nurses and sanitation workers.

The three Mayors said they had reached Mr. Kejriwal's official residence at 6, Flagstaff Road, in the morning to meet him but were not allowed to enter the premises. They remained outside his residence till 8 p.m., following which Health Minister Satyendar Jain met them and, according to the

## Two held for stabbing driver over ₹20 fare

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Two persons have been arrested for allegedly stabbing an e-rickshaw driver in Hazrat Nizamuddin after a fight over ₹20 fare.

DCP (South East) R.P. Meena said the accused have been identified as Mohammed Shamim and Mohammed Bilal. On Sunday,

BJP, assured them that the needful would be done.

"I told the three Mayors that the Centre is supposed to give ₹12,000 crore to the civic bodies. The Centre is supposed to give ₹488 per individual as grant to civic bodies but they have not paid for years. The Delhi government also has outstanding loan of ₹6000 crore on the municipalities and if there is any due on us we will repay them," Mr. Jain said, adding that he had received instructions from Mr. Kejriwal to meet the Mayors at 2 p.m. but the BJP leaders did not turn up.

He accused the Mayors of politicking over the issue instead of seeking to solve it. "If they were facing trouble in running civic bodies, they could have asked the Centre for help," Mr. Jain said, adding: "We have given an open invitation to hand over the civic bodies to us."

Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta said the Mayors will seek a meeting with the CM again on Tuesday and added that the funds were being deliberately stalled by the Delhi government.

Meanwhile, senior doctors of North Corporation-run hospitals went on a day-long casual leave en masse on Monday as the crisis over pending salaries deepened with no resolution in sight.

R.R. Gautam, president of the Municipal Corporation Doctors' Association (MCDA), said, "If our demands are not met, we will go on indefinite strike from Tuesday."

Hindu Rao crisis a sign of systemic failure: IMA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Indian Medical Association (IMA) on Monday said that it "takes serious exception to the unfortunate situation in Hindu Rao Hospital, which is under the management of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation".

Highlighting the issue of non-payment of salaries to the municipal doctors for several months, the association said the situation pointed towards systemic failure. "Doctors who have served the nation during the pandemic deserve appropriate accolades and incentives. It defies logic when they have to resort to roadside agitations to get their salaries. Retreat of the political class from governance across India seems to be a byproduct of the pandemic," the IMA said in a statement.

All the three municipal corporations in Delhi are controlled by the BJP.

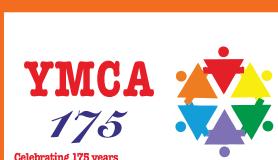
"The Supreme Court had directed that salaries of healthcare workers should be paid in time. The IMA demands that the authorities should pay the salaries of the doctors along with the dues immediately," said the IMA.

Meanwhile, senior doctors of North Corporation-run hospitals went on a day-long casual leave en masse on Monday as the crisis over pending salaries deepened with no resolution in sight.

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## Man arrested for mowing down cyclist in south Delhi

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 26-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly mowing down a person in south Delhi's Fatehpur Beri, the police said on Monday.

The accused has been identified as Rohit from Gurugram. The victim, Akhilesh (30), was on a cycle when the incident took place. On Saturday

day at 8.40 p.m., the police received information regarding an accident near Rosewood farm. When a team rushed to the spot, they saw Akhilesh and rushed him to a

hospital where he died during treatment.

During probe, the police analysed the CCTV cameras and found the accused's car at the time of the incident.

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



General Public is hereby informed that one lady **Name:** Saneh Lata, **W/o:** Jitender, **R/o:** Near NDPL Office, Pana Udhian, Narela, Delhi, **Age:** 36 Years, **Height:** 5'2", **Complexion:** Fair, **Hair:** Black, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** Red Colour Suit & Salwar has been missing since 28.09.2020 from the area of P.S. Narela, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 97A, Dated 12.10.2020, has been lodged at P.S. Narela, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform the undersigned.

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in>  
E-Mail ID: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Fax: 011-24368639  
DP/548/ON/2020 Ph.: 011-27280435, 27282350 & 7065036323

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a boy **Name:** Ram Bahadur Mukhiya, **S/o:** Jogi Mukhiya, **R/o:** Village- Bagrashi, Post- Virol, PS Jamalpur, District Darbhanga, Bihar, residing at Shalimar Guest House, Basant Road, Pahar Ganj, Delhi has been missing since 07/01/2017 from the area of P.S. Pahar Ganj, Delhi. In this regard, FIR No. 24/2017 u/s 363 IPC dated 11.01.2017 has been registered at P.S. Pahar Ganj, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the missing boy but no clue has come to light so far. The description of the missing boy is as under:

**Name:** Ram Bahadur Mukhiya, **Gender:** Male, **Age:** 17 years, **Height:** 5'3", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Face:** Round, **Built:** Thin, **Identification:** Unstable mind, **Wearing:** Grey colour pant, jacket and black colour slippers on his feet.

If anyone has any information regarding this missing boy, kindly inform SHO/P.S. Pahar Ganj, Delhi.

E-mail: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)  
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641  
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DP/439/CD/2020

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Holding the director of a travel agency here guilty of sexually harassing a woman employee at the workplace, the Local Committee (Gurugram) has directed the accused to pay ₹10.8 lakh to the complainant as one-time compensation and tender an

unconditional apology. It also ordered his immediate removal from his current role.

#### Fine on start-up too

The committee also imposed ₹50,000 fine on the agency for failing to provide a safe environment to the employees. Set up under the Sexual Harassment of Wo-

men at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, the Local Committee, also known as Local Complaints Committee, has the mandate to hear cases for companies without Internal Complaint Committees or in case the accused is a director/CEO of the firm. The 27-year-old complai-

nant had accused the company's director Amit Rai Malhotra, 45, of sexually harassing her on several occasions between September 2019 and January 22, 2020.

She said she brought up the matter with her supervisor, department head, and even the Chief Executive Officer, but to no avail.

### IN BRIEF

#### Sub-Inspector held in molestation case

New Delhi Sub-Inspector Puneet Grewal, involved in a molestation case in Dwarka, has been arrested and dismissed from service. In another development, Assistant Sub-Inspector Vijay of Lodhi Colony station has been suspended after a man was found dead on station premises. Departmental action has been initiated against him and others.

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Chief Engineer (MM), HPSEB Ltd., Shimla-4.

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No. AE/N/7867/SWM Dt. 23/10/2020

#### TENDER NOTICE

Sub:- Appointment of NGO for providing Housekeeping cleaning services at Vigilance office, Building no.2, A-wing, CTS No. 045A-1/A, 4045A-1/B & 4045A-1/C, Nityanand Nagar, MTNL road, Kirol, Ghatkopar (W), Mumbai-400086.

Ref:- DMC (Z-VI) sanction u/no.MDE/1565/Gen dt. 22.10.2020

Asstt. Commissioner 'N' ward re-invites lacquer sealed quotations for above mentioned work in N ward.

Sr. No.	Quotation No.	Ward	Quotation Deposit (EMD) Rs.	Cost of quota- tion document (Rs.) (non- refundable)	Sale of Blank Qtn Document	Due Date for submission of sealed quotation
1	AE/N/7448/ SWM Dt. 16.10.2020	N	7500/-	Rs.700/- +5% GST = Rs.735/-	26.10.2020 to 30.10.2020 Between 11.00 Am to 4.00 Pm	31.10.2020 up to 01.00 PM

A complete set of quotation documents may be purchased by interested parties from 11 am to 4 pm at any working day on payment of non-refundable fee of Rs. 700+5% GST i.e. Rs.735/- each per set at the C.F.C. from office of A.E. (S.W.M.) 'N' ward. No quotation copy will be issued on 30.10.2020 and 31.10.2020. Earlier deposited EMD will not be considered. Quotations has to deposit fresh EMD.

Quotation deposit (EMD) as above will have to be paid by Bank Draft/ Pay order drawn in favor of Municipal Corporation of Greater Mumbai or Cash only on any working day up to the 29.10.2020 before 4.00 pm due date at C.F.C. of N Ward or any MCGM ward for which challan will be issued from the office of A.E. (S.W.M.) 'N' ward at the address given below. The EMD will be accepted at CFC of 'N' ward or any MCGM Ward between 08.00 am to 08.00 pm.

A complete set of quotation documents collect from office of A.E. (S.W.M.) 'N' ward at below address:-

Office of Asstt. Engg. (SWM) 'N' ward  
Ground Floor, N ward office Bldg., Jawahar Road, Ghatkopar (E), Mumbai: 400 077.

Tel. No. 022 25010161-65, Extension 721/722, Mobile No. 9820284445

The quotation duly lacquer sealed must be submitted before 1.00 p.m. on or before 'due date and packet A and b opened on 02.11.2020 at 11.00 am and Packet C will be opened after scrutiny of Packet A and B.

PRO/941/ADV/2020-21

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DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

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### SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON

General public is hereby informed that one person namely Rajesh Kumar S/o Sohan Pal R/o H.No. 60, Harjan Basti, Gadaipur, New Delhi, Age 43 years, Height 5'5", Complexion shallow, Face long, Built strong wearing Cream colour T-shirt, Badami colour Pant and Hawaii sleeper in feet has been missing since 28.09.2020 from the area of PS Fatehpur Beri, New Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out this person, but no clue has come to light so far. In this regard a DD No. 28-A dated 29.09.2020 has been lodged at PS Fatehpur Beri, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing person may kindly inform to the undersigned at the address or telephone nos. given below.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>

Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in)

Fax: 011-23011334

Ph: 011-23014046, 23015218

DP/262/SD/2020

SHO

PS Fatehpur Beri, New Delhi

Ph. 011-26656911, 26659511

Mob. 8750870826

SHO

P.S. Amar Colony, Delhi

Ph. No.: 011-26412194, 26474748

Mob.: 8750870931

SHO

P.S. Amar Colony, Delhi

Ph. No.: 011-26412194, 26474748

Mob.: 8750870931

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... .32.8	23.6	14.4	Kozhikode	... .33.5	24.5	13.5
Ahmedabad	... .35.5	22.1	14.5	Kurnool	... .34.1	23.7	17.6
Aizawl	... .26.8	17.0	11.5	Lucknow	... .32.7	17.6	11.5
Allahabad	... .34.8	19.4	12.5	Madurai	... .32.3	23.1	18.4
Bengaluru	... .7.8	30.0	19.4	Mangaluru	... .31.9	23.4	17.5
Bhopal	... .33.3	15.8	12.5	Mumbai	... .33.5	24.8	17.5
Bhubaneswar	... .31.5	23.3	14.4	Mysuru	... .30.3	19.4	13.5
Chandigarh	... .32.5	16.1	11.5	New Delhi	... .32.8	15.0	11.5
Chennai	... .33.6	14.8	11.5	Patna	... .33.2	18.4	12.5
Coimbatore	... .35.2	23.0	14.5	Pond Blair	... .32.0	23.8	14.5
Dehradun	... .30.7	13.0	11.5	Puducherry	... .32.4	24.2	17.5
Gangtok	... .5.2	16.5	14.9	Pune	... .13.8	28.8	20.0
Goa	... .32.4	25.3	18.5	Raipur	... .33.6	21.0	17.5
Guwahati	... .32.5	23.8	14.5	Ranchi	... .29.9	16.8	13.5
Hubballi	... .28.0	21.0	14.5	Shillong	... .19.1	21.1	18.4
Hyderabad	... .31.8	20.2	14.5	Shimla	... .23.1	13.5	11.5
Imphal	... .29.1	18.1	12.5	Srinagar	... .20.0	24.4	17.5
Jaipur	... .34.2	19.5	12.5	Thiruvananthapuram	... .32.4	24.6	17.5
Kochi	... .31.4	24.8	18.5	Tiruchi	... .15.1	34.8	25.6
Kohima	... .22.4	16.8	12.5	Vijayapura	... .33.4	23.7	17.5
Kolkata	... .32.8	24.6	17.5	Visakhapatnam	... .33.0	26.6	17.5

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	20	.96	.42	.155	.11	...
Bengaluru	13	.41	.50	.155	.12	...
Chennai	5	.20	.8	.120	.12	...
Delhi	25	141	100	.405	.414	...
Hyderabad	.5	.70	.10	.158	.127	...
Kolkata	11	.22	.3	.183	.124	...
Lucknow	.4	.51	.30	.368	.351	...
Mumbai	2	.30	.76	.126	.118	...
Pune	...	—	.50	—	—	...
Visakhapatnam	14	.45	.36	.114	—	...

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

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

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

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

**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Kalaburagi, Karnataka recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 500 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 18.

# Bulandshahr bypoll: ASP and AIMIM trade charges

Both lodge complaints about attacks during campaigning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GHAZIABAD



Azad Samaj Party chief Chandrashekhar Azad

The Bulandshahr police have lodged FIRs under Section 307 (attempt to murder) after the Azad Samaj Party (ASP) and All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) accused each other of attacks on their party chief and party candidate respectively during the campaign for the bypoll for the Bulandshahr Sadar seat. Police sources said while the AIMIM candidate Dilshad Ahmed had named the ASP in the complaint, the latter had blamed unidentified persons for the attack.

The incident gained traction late after ASP chief Chandrashekhar Azad tweeted that his convoy had been fired upon by unidentified men in Bulandshahr when he was campaigning in the old city area. He said their rivals had committed the cowardly act worried by the rise of the party.

Madan Pal Gautam, the district president of ASP, who had lodged the complaint, said the incident occurred when Mr. Azad was campaigning for the seat.

"I was part of the convoy and heard 5-6 gunshots. We don't know what party the assailants belonged to. It is for the police to investigate. Our rivals are worried about increasing voter base of the party. They want to silence us but we will continue our struggle for the deprived," he said.

However, Dilshad Ahmed, the AIMIM candidate for the seat, said he was holding a meeting in the area when the members of the ASP attacked his party workers and fired in the air. "My clothes were torn off and chairs were thrown at us. I had to run to save my

life. The brother of the ASP candidate has a criminal record and he has brought his cronies to Bulandshahr. I appeal to the administration to provide me security," he told reporters.

SSP, Bulandshahr Santosh Kumar Singh, however, said the skirmish was more incidental than deliberate.

"There was no firing from either side. We have videos of party workers from both sides where they deny that shots were fired. The locality is so congested that had there been firing, it would not have gone unnoticed," said Mr. Singh.

"It was a minor incident that happened because the ASP convoy reached the same lane where AIMIM candidate was holding a meeting. There was a wedding in the area as well. As the lane got blocked, the ASP workers started throwing chairs which led to a heated argument and pushing and shoving," he said.

Mr. Singh claimed it was Mr Azaad's tweet that created a buzz around the incident. "So, I urged both the parties to lodge complaints."

## 'Effort on to block child pornography'

Google responds to HC query on removing 'offending images'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Search engine major Google has informed the Delhi High Court that there is an ongoing effort to develop more effective automated tools to prevent hosting of child pornographic content on its platforms.

Google said that when any child pornographic content hosted on its platform is reported, it is removed immediately. "However, it is difficult to prevent uploading of the same prior to the content being reported," senior advocate Sajan Poovaya, appearing for Google said.

Google was responding to High Court's query on removing "offending images" of children and preventing them from resurfacing.

**Technology limitations'** Mr. Poovaya submitted that Google does use artificial intelligence and Machine Learning to prevent the uploading of child porno-

graphic content in respect of any known and reported image. "However, the said technology has its limitations because a known hash file or a digital fingerprint is then applied for removing images with the same value," the senior advocate said.

The senior advocate explained that even a minor change in the properties of the image would enable it to evade discovery or action through the automated processes.

## Anti-traffic pollution drive launched in Delhi

State govt. seeks support of people

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Minister, answering a question regarding whether the government was considering issuing any advisory on pollution for the people in the coming days said the governments and all agencies concerned such as the Supreme Court, the EPCA, the DPCC were monitoring the situation and would take action wherever needed.

He alleged that the Delhi government had not received a positive response from the BJP MLAs and MPs.

On October 16, a video had gone viral where Babita Verma could be seen purportedly beating a woman identified as Rukmini by the local media.

According to local sources, Rukmini had opposed some men who were demolishing the wall of her rented accommodation. She could be seen pleading with Ms. Verma but the latter did not stop the men from demolishing the wall.

Ruchi Gupta, Circle Officer Hathras (City) said a case regarding a councillor who is facing charges getting the award had been brought to her notice. "I am looking into the matter and action would be taken," she said.

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## + Odisha temple priests to resort to unusual protest

We are left with no income, they say

**SATYASUNDAR BARIK**  
BHUBANESWAR

The unusual decision to bang gongs or ring bells in front of all temples across Odisha on Wednesday as a mark of protest against non-opening of temples may make the State government see red. But, by doing so, priests across the State would be venting their anguish.

Ask Bhabani Shankar Mishra (54), a priest at Balunkeswar Temple at Dandamukundapur in Puri district, why he would bang gongs and ring bell which is not part of any worshipping.

"Since March 22, I have been confined to my home. The income has since dried up. Before the COVID-19 pandemic struck, I used to earn from the donation of devotees. My family did not face any food shortage as the monthly income of around ₹10,000 was enough," said Mr. Mishra.

During past eight months, the priest's family has already exhausted the little savings they had and also borrowed from their relatives. His family members have meanwhile resorted to making brooms and selling them in market.

## Low-profile immersion of idols in Bengal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA

A low-key immersion on idols on Monday marked the end of week-long Durga Puja festival in West Bengal that was held amidst the COVID-19 pandemic under extreme caution. No immersion procession was allowed at the immersion ghats and only one or two members of the Durga Puja committees were allowed to go to the river.

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(Sd/-) MANAGING DIRECTOR

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## The shade of grey

Pakistan has little option but to complete its FATF mandated tasks in the next four months

**T**he decision by the Paris-based watchdog, the Financial Action Task Force, last week to retain Pakistan on its greylist has clearly disappointed the Imran Khan government. His cabinet had projected confidence that the country would be taken off the greylist – monitored jurisdictions on terror financing and money laundering activities – having been cleared on 21 of the 27 mandated action points. Pakistan will now face international strictures on its markets and on its ability to procure loans until the next FATF plenary in February 2021, by which time it is expected to complete the six pending issues. A bigger problem for Islamabad was that Turkey was the only other country in the 39-member FATF to push for Pakistan to be let off, by making a suggestion that the last six points be cleared by an “on-site” visit by an FATF team. The proposal was dropped when even other traditional backers of Pakistan such as China, Saudi Arabia and Malaysia did not support it. Clearly, Pakistan has little option but to complete its tasks in the next four months, which include: more action against UNSC-banned terrorists and terror groups, action against charitable organisations (Non-Profits) linked to these banned entities, tracing fugitive terrorists and pursuing convictions against them, revising the list of banned entities under the Anti-Terrorism Act to reflect all those banned by the UNSC, and cracking down on other channels of terror financing through narcotics and smuggling.

For those in New Delhi watching the outcome of the FATF decision, there are some broader dividends to consider from this process. To begin with, the fact that the FATF has retained Pakistan on the greylist for the third time this year, and not automatically downgraded it to the blacklist (with Iran and North Korea) when its deadline for action ended in September 2019, has ensured the pressure has continued to make Pakistan accountable on terror. The Khan government has been forced to make a real legislative push to bring Pakistani anti-terror laws in line with international standards, while, at least for the interim, also ensuring sufficient pressure on groups such as the LeT and the JeM that target India, to refrain from public comments and publicly raising funds. Meanwhile, Pakistan’s support to the U.S.-led Afghan process and talks with the Taliban are crucial to the peace process, and the FATF process has made Islamabad more amenable to helping Afghanistan. It remains to be seen if the actions it takes will permanently change Pakistan’s course in supporting and sheltering cross-border terror groups. India’s eventual goal is not just in stopping attacks by these groups, but for Pakistan to fully dismantle the infrastructure of terror in the understanding that it is in Pakistan’s own interests to do so. It is hoped that the prolonged FATF process will enable this realisation in Islamabad.

## Clearing the air

Trump’s criticism may be gratuitous, but India’s air quality needs urgent attention

**P**resident Donald Trump’s scathing description of India’s air as “filthy” may have come as an embarrassment for the government, but it has not provoked a fierce nationalistic backlash in response to a foreign leader’s insult. Looking at the worsening pollution in northern parts of the country, triggered by stubble burning and later the Dussehra festivities, even Mr. Trump’s critics found no cudgels to pick up, while others readily agreed with him. The U.S. President’s remarks are, of course, gratuitous, considering that he has spent his term dismantling many environmental regulations, including those relating to pollution and emissions from coal plants and automobiles; his criticism of India and China is also incongruous as they have pledged to implement the Paris Agreement while Mr. Trump has pulled the U.S. out of the pact. Unfortunately, mere resolve cannot raise India’s stature. Sensors of the Central and State Pollution Control Boards and other private stations across the north currently show PM<sub>2.5</sub>, or fine particulate matter levels, in the very unhealthy or even hazardous bands. There is mounting concern about the health impacts, but the Centre has so far attempted to brazen it out by denying any confirmed link between bad air quality and a shorter lifespan. Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar last year said no Indian study on such a correlation was available. That view has been challenged, and WHO expressed worry about the situation. There is the added dimension of COVID-19 infection today, with the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health contending that a one microgramme rise in PM<sub>2.5</sub> is associated with an 8% increase in the death rate due to the novel coronavirus, based on long-term exposure data in the U.S.

India is seeking to address its chronic air quality crisis partly by raising emission standards and fuels. The country adopted the BS-VI fuel standard earlier this year, potentially lowering vehicular pollution, although the national air quality standard for annual average PM<sub>2.5</sub> is 40 mcg per cubic metre, which is four times the WHO limit. It took the COVID-19 lockdown to let people experience clean air once again, with the conspicuous absence of vehicles. The unlock phase has reversed the ephemeral experience, as the burning of vehicular fuels has reverted to pre-lockdown levels, with no significant transition to green mobility, such as bicycle use, in urban centres. Continued burning of crop stubble in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh shows that the central sector scheme providing remedies in the form of farm mechanisation and management alternatives needs fresh impetus. No more time can be lost in addressing the crisis of foul air, as the country prepares to hasten with development in a post-COVID-19 era.

# The President who called a spade a spade

K.R. Narayanan was creative in upholding institutional obligations of an office and preserving the republic’s equilibrium



HARISH KHARE

**T**his October 27, K.R. Narayanan would have been 100 years old. But no one would perform any rites of remembrance. Another day and another time, Narayanan would have been showcased as a prime success story of an India that made one and all ‘meritorious’ Indians believe that they could find a place under the constitutional sun. A man from an ordinary, humble background could get inducted into the elite Indian Foreign Service – all that counted was his calibre and competence. He had no godfather or a clan to speak up for him.

**Example of an inclusive India**  
And that K.R. Narayanan would hear the call of public office, get elected to the Lok Sabha, become the Vice-President of India and preside over the Rajya Sabha, and, then, go on to occupy the Rashtrapati Bhavan, told the tale of a Nehruvian India where all that mattered was the requisite temperament and character. India could take pride that it was an open system, a democratic arrangement, and a society committed to an egalitarian social order – and was comfortable with excellence and accomplishment.

In the process, K.R. Narayanan became a prime example of an inclusive India. He had the distinction of being the first Dalit President of India. His elevation to the Rashtrapati Bhavan had more than

a token significance; and, even though the new, aggressive Ambedkarites may not think much of him, his election as President did announce the arrival of a new social assertion. It needs to be kept in mind that he was the presidential choice of the United Front coalition, political dispensation that sincerely believed that if India had to progress and become a great nation, then it must be a country for all Indians, from all strata, unimpeded with competitive parochialism.

In his long innings of public service, K.R. Narayanan conducted himself as a modern man, well-tutored in scientific temper; he became the first Indian public figure when as Vice-President, he shook hands with an HIV-infected person, whereas the self-proclaimed charismatic saviours were shying up making the gesture. He was urbane and cosmopolitan, at ease with the best and the brightest at home; he never felt overawed and certainly never felt intimidated in the world’s chancelleries because of his immense faith in the nobility of the great democratic experiment under way in the country he represented. However, it was as the President that K.R. Narayanan repaid his debt to the republic. Circumstances demanded that he creatively explored the potential of the office; and, he turned out to be a responsible custodian of the Constitution.

### Reining in Governors

In the process he became the protector of constitutional morality, the most cherished republican virtue. Most gratifyingly, he twice used his position to rein in errant Governors, even though they had the ruling establishment’s



K.R. NARAYANAN

patronage.

First, it was Romesh Bhandari at the Lucknow Raj Bhavan, who fell afoul of President Narayanan’s sense of constitutional fairness. Within months of taking over as the President, Narayanan stood up to the United Front political bosses and would not go along with the I.K. Gujral cabinet’s preference to invoke Article 356 to get rid of the Kalyan Singh Government in Uttar Pradesh. In his memoirs, *Matters of Discretion: An Autobiography*, Gujral himself notes that the President firmly reminded him of the *Bommai* judgment and the Sarkaria Commission recommendations. It was the first time that a President had asked the Union Cabinet to reconsider a proposed constitutional act.

The second time President Narayanan ticked off a Governor’s conduct was in July 2001 when the Raj Bhavan in Chennai disappointingly remained a mute spectator as a former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister, M. Karunanidhi (and two serving central Ministers) were roughed up by the Tamil Nadu police, at the behest of an extremely vindictive Chief Minister Jayalalitha. It was President Narayanan who suggested to Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee to demand a report from Tamil Nadu Governor

M. Fathima Beevi. A presidential rebuke was implicit in the Rashtrapati Bhavan suggestion; soon, the Governor was recalled.

In both these instances, the Governors had allowed the Raj Bhavan to be used to give respectability to shabby political calculations. Not on his presidential watch, insisted Narayanan.

### Speaking his mind

The Indian Constitution does not envisage the President of India to be a power centre, leave alone set himself up as a rival power centre (to the Prime Minister). Yet, there is always considerable wiggle room for a President to have his presence felt.

Once A.B. Vajpayee became the Prime Minister, the National Democratic Alliance bosses learnt to their discomfort that the man occupying the Rashtrapati Bhavan was no push-over. No wonder, L.K. Advani, in his memoirs, disparagingly called him an ‘activist president’. Perhaps, for good reason.

After its 1999 Lok Sabha victory, the BJP crowd thought that it had earned a licence to make amendments to the Constitution. There was even a commission to review the ‘working’ of the Constitution. K.R. Narayanan used the prestige and the pulpit of his office to warn the nation of inherent danger to the Constitution from small minds, strutting around with an over-inflated sense of self importance.

And, a few months later, K.R. Narayanan again made his presence felt during U.S. President Bill Clinton’s visit to India. At the Rashtrapati Bhavan banquet for the visiting American, President Narayanan horrified the ministerial posse by reminding everyone

of non-alignment as an instrument of Indian foreign policy in pursuit of autonomy and independence. That was the time when the Vajpeyi government was doing all it could to cosy up to the Americans. The ruling coterie was not amused; it thought the President had gone off the reservation. Yet, it was a battle that the ruling politicians lost in the face of a resolute presidential rectitude.

President Narayanan, also, had a sense of political moment. In 1999, when A.B. Vajpayee lost the vote of confidence by a solitary vote, and, when an alternative government had to be formed, he tried to nudge the non-BJP forces to suggest the possibility of the West Bengal Chief Minister, Jyoti Basu, becoming a prime ministerial choice. The upper caste Congress leaders, led by M.L. Fodar and Pranab Mukherjee, were dead set against the idea of a ‘communist’ becoming prime minister. Had President Narayanan’s hint been taken up, there would have been no second term for A.B. Vajpayee, and there would have been no “Gujarat, 2002” and no Narendra Modi.

As the President, Narayanan was nobody’s man. A President need not be anybody’s man or woman. The Constitution thrives on a dynamic interlocking institutional balance; failure of one functionary to perform his or her *dharma* ends up injuring the health of the entire Republic. Narayanan demonstrated how it was possible to be brilliantly creative in upholding the institutional obligations of an office – and, preserve the republic’s equilibrium.

Harish Khare is a senior journalist based in Delhi

## Contesting neighbours, revised geopolitical playbooks

The engagement by India and China in the West Asia region is a good example of their metamorphosing approaches



KABIR TANEJA

**T**he year 2020 has been a watershed moment for relations between India and China following the most serious clashes between the two countries in the Galwan region of Ladakh since the 1962 war; relations between New Delhi and Beijing are at new lows. These events have had a cascading effect on the very thought process of foreign policy, not just for New Delhi with regard to its neighbourhood but also Beijing’s understanding of its own threat perceptions as well.

**What dictates alignment now?**  
Strategic autonomy is today a term New Delhi’s power corridors are well-acquainted with. According to a former Foreign Secretary of India, Vijay Gokhale, the ideation of ‘strategic autonomy’ is much different from the Nehruvian era thinking of ‘non-alignment’. Speaking in January 2019, Mr. Gokhale said: “The alignment is issue based, and not ideological.”

For Beijing and New Delhi, one region where both contesting neighbours have employed similar versions of ‘non-alignment’ think-

ing is in West Asia, and the ethos of equitable engagement with the three poles of power in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Israel, without stepping into the entanglements of the region’s multi-layered conflicts and political fissures. Such were the commonalities in thinking that at one point in time, suggestions were made to construct an ‘importers OPEC’ in order to put forward the interests of major oil importers, mostly developing Asian economies, against the producers’ cartel. However, the year 2020 and the tectonic geopolitical shifts it has brought in its wake, from deteriorating U.S.-China ties, to the COVID-19 pandemic that started in China, followed by the Ladakh crisis, is forcing a drastic change in the geopolitical playbooks of the two Asian giants, and, by association, global security architectures as well.

Pre-dating 2020, India’s outreach to West Asia sharpened since 2014 with the coming of the Narendra Modi government. As the powerful and oil-rich Gulf states looked for investment alternatives away from the West to deepen their own strategic depth, persuaded by Mr. Modi’s centralised decision-making style, India doubled down on its relations with the likes of Abu Dhabi and Riyadh, giving open economic and political preference to the larger Gulf region. While engagements with Israel moved steadily forward, Iran

lagged behind, bogged down by U.S. sanctions, which in turn significantly slowed the pace of India-Iran engagements.

### Advantage Beijing

Meanwhile, China’s overtures have been steadily more adventurous as it realises two major shifts that have taken place in West Asia. First, Beijing has tried to capitalise around the thinking in the Gulf that the American security safety net is not absolute, and they need to invest more in others. China, being second only to the U.S. in both economic and military terms today, is the obvious engagement. The fact that the United Arab Emirates (UAE) obtained Chinese Wing Loong drones in 2016 – a copy of U.S.’s infamous armed MQ-9 ‘Reaper’ drone that Washington refused to sell – offers a good example of the Gulf’s resolve of attaining military capabilities from wherever possible. Second, the Gulf economies such as Saudi Ara-

bia, even though attempting a hard shift away from their addiction to the petro dollar, will still need growing markets to sell oil to in the coming decade as they reform their economic systems. The obvious two markets here are China and India.

### Sharp contrasts

However, Beijing’s recent plays in the region have not been subtle. A report in September shone light on a \$400 billion, 25-year understanding between Iran and China, with Beijing taking advantage of U.S. President Donald Trump’s abandonment of the Iran nuclear deal. Scholars such as Scott J. Harr have pontificated that China is no longer happy with a passive role in West Asia, and through concepts such as “negative peace” and “peace through development”, in concert with tools such as the Belt and Road Initiative, Beijing is now ready to offer an alternative model for “investment and influence”. Over the past month, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi during an in-person meet with Iranian Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif suggested the development of a “new forum” to address the region’s tensions – an alternative to the West-led ecosystems that have prevailed for decades. It remains to be seen, however, how China balances itself between the poles of power while backing one so aggressively.

From India’s perspective, as it maintains its trapeze-wire balancing act of diplomacy in West Asia, the overt outreach to the Gulf and the ensuing announcements of multi-billion-dollar investments on Indian shores by entities from Saudi Arabia and the UAE is only New Delhi recognising the economic realities of the region. Despite entanglements in the Yemen war and general tensions between the Gulf states and Iran, the likes of Saudi Arabia, the UAE and so on have maintained relatively strong and stable economic progression. Israel’s recent peace accords with the UAE and Bahrain add much further weight towards a more stable Gulf region – the caveats notwithstanding that the operationalisation of the accords is smooth and long-lasting.

The theory of interests supereding ideology in foreign policy is fast unravelling practically, both from the perspectives of India and China. While in the recent past, the Indo-Pacific, with the development of the Quad, has taken centre stage, other geographies such as West Asia have also started to showcase bolder examples of New Delhi and Beijing’s metamorphosing approaches towards the international arena.

Kabir Taneja is Fellow, Strategies Studies Programme and Head, West Asia Initiative, Observer Research Foundation. The views expressed are personal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### Quota Bill

The question of 7.5% horizontal reservation for students in Tamil Nadu who have studied in government schools has unfortunately come in for unjustifiable criticism. These students are not exposed to the same conditions as those who study in private schools. The social and economic backwardness of such students cannot bear comparison to those who can afford to join private schools which are run on different lines. Further, the Governor, who acts on the aid and advice of the State Cabinet, has a limited role to play. According to Article 200 of the Constitution, he has to sign the Bill as soon as possible after its presentation. If not, he has to return the Bill requesting reconsideration, and in case the Bill is passed again, he has to give assent. When such is the peremptory language of Article 200, it is surprising the Governor is

seeking time of four weeks to make a decision (Tamil Nadu, “Need 3 to 4 weeks to decide on 7.5% quota Bill”, says Governor”, October 23). The Governor, instead of playing a constitutional role, is playing a controversial role, unmindful of the responsibilities of the government. To claim that the benefit of 7.5% reservation should be equally available to those from private schools is diluting the constitutional purpose of reservation for the socially and educationally backward and is encouraging privatisation which seems to be the agenda of the Centre. There are political overtones to this issue, which ultimately has to be decided on the basis of constitutional priorities and guarantees in education for students studying in government schools.

N.G.R. PRASAD,  
Chennai

**Metrics of happiness**  
Happiness for a plurality of people cannot be gauged by narrow metrics (Editorial page, “Metrics of world happiness and the Muslims of India”, October 24). Rather than beneficiaries, Indian Muslims are losers/victims under Indian democracy and have been marginalised in terms of the sharing of political power and delivery of justice. Consolidation of the majority community under a prominent political party itself would lead to the entrenchment of the majority religion. Thus, the governance of India could also exclude the minorities. There are many examples of riots against the Muslims that demonstrate their painful conditions – their dignity, self-respect and pride are fading. The rise of majoritarian hatred is unfortunate. The unvarnished fact is that happiness for the marginalised and the

powerless in India is still elusive.  
A. BASHEER,  
Bengaluru

**Raining woes**  
The illegal occupation of lakes, either completely or partially, in the historical city of Hyderabad is a key reason why it faces misery and destruction in extreme weather events (‘Ground Zero’ page, “The revenge of the lakes in Hyderabad”, October 24). State governments, past and present, have failed to book cases against the real estate sharks. In the name of layout regularisation schemes, governments have instead collected lakhs of rupees from innocent buyers of land. No action has been taken against the actual culprits. This farce has been allowed to continue with periodical extension of the validity of these ‘schemes’. There has to be preparation and implementation of a

scientific master plan to end this urban anarchy.  
M.V. NAGAVENDER RAO,  
Hyderabad

**Biopic ‘800’**  
Expectedly, the biopic, “800”, on Sri Lankan cricketer Muttiah Muralitharan, has been jettisoned by actor Vijay Sethupathi, who was to play a lead role (Editorial page, “A compelling life story, lost in the fog of illogic”, October 23). Protesting against the film just because it is about the feats of a cricketer from the island nation is stifling creativity. This does not mean that the genocide in that country is correct. Sport, films and music can help bridge many divides between nations.  
S. RAMAKRISHNASAYEE,  
Chennai

**The pressure of ‘crowd censorship’ on the freedom to think and act cannot be wished away.** Even the

Governor was not spared when he attempted to clear the cobwebs in the administrative set-up in many universities. Certain political parties, some of which exist only on letter pads, appear to be forming this chorus to intimidate artists.  
T.M. RANGANATHAN,  
Srirangam, Tamil Nadu

**The attempt to portray the cricketer as a ‘hill country Tamil’** would be to whitewash the cries of Tamil mothers seeking answers and justice for their lost sons who vanished in the genocide. It is also pertinent to note that the condition of hill country Tamils, whether in Sri Lanka or India, has not improved at all. A narrative of appropriating the interests of one group to pit it against another related group would be intellectual dishonesty.  
KAVIN CASTRO,  
Tiruchi, Tamil Nadu

CM YK



# The many lessons from COVID-19

What we have done so far, and what all remains to be done



**SOUMYA SWAMINATHAN**

The global pandemic is marching on. As I had said at the JRD Tata Oration, hosted by the Population Foundation of India on its 50th anniversary, of the lessons I have learned over the last nine or 10 months, the most important one is the significance of investing in public health and primary healthcare. Countries that invested in primary healthcare over the past decade or two are reaping the benefits now. Another lesson is the positive role of science and scientists. The global collaboration between scientists to take forward advances in knowledge so that science is continuously informing our response to the pandemic has been encouraging.

#### Gendered impact

In India, the pandemic has had a differential impact on women. Despite gaps, India had seen progress in maternal mortality. There have been significant gains in infant mortality, institutional births and replacement level fertility. However, there is still a high unmet need for family planning and improved access is required to contraceptive services and safe abortions. A recent modelling study showed that because of the reduction in coverage of essential services, the prevalence of wasting in children could increase by 10% to 50%. There could also be 60% more maternal deaths because interventions like the administration of uterotonics and antibiotics, and clean birth environments, are no longer available.

COVID-19 has also disrupted the education system. It has also adversely affected access to nutritious food as a huge number of children depend on school meals.

Another worrying development is the surge in domestic violence. In India, a third of women said that they had previously experienced domestic violence, but less than 1% sought help from the police. Governments can include response to violence against women in the package of essential services.

Many women have lost their work and livelihoods. More women than



men work in the informal economy and therefore their income fell by over 60% during the first month of the pandemic. In India, the number of women and girls living in extreme poverty is expected to increase from 87 million to 100 million.

A few months ago, the World Health Organization (WHO) emphasised the importance of gender analysis and gender-responsive public health policies. One of the major issues is the lack of availability of data that is disaggregated by sex and age. We also do not have data on violence against women and children. We have urged WHO Member States to collect data, report and analyse it, disaggregated by sex, and include responses to violence against women as an essential service.

Over 70% of countries reported partial or complete disruption of immunisation services. Other services disrupted include diagnosis and treatment of non-communicable diseases, cancer diagnosis and treatment, family planning, contraception, antenatal care, malaria and TB case detection, treatment facility-based births, and urgent blood transfusions, as well as emergency surgery. This will have a huge impact.

On the one hand, essential services have to be provided; on the other hand, we must ensure financial protection. This can be guaranteed only if there is either a health coverage scheme, like Ayushman Bharat, or through private health insurance.

Out-of-pocket payments cause about 100 million to fall into extreme poverty every year, and 800 million globally spend more than 10% of their household budget on healthcare. The World Health Organization has been urging countries to ensure financial protection and effective

coverage of health services.

The effective coverage index is a useful measure of the quality of health services – it looks at the provision and efficacy of services in terms of health outcomes. This metric suggests that 3.1 billion people worldwide would still not be covered if we continue to do what we're doing. The index enables us to move away from just measuring process towards measuring outcomes. Many countries do not have the data systems to be able to accurately measure both mortality and the incidence of certain diseases. India needs to invest more in its vital registration system.

#### What can we do better?

Many countries have moved to digital technology, especially using platforms to provide telemedicine, for example, to overcome the problem that people could not meet physically. Platforms like ECHO have been used in many States to train healthcare workers and the government's e-Sanjeevani platform is enabling telemedicine appointments.

We now have a national digital health blueprint and a road map. We want to move towards electronic and portable health records. It is important to think about not only data governance principles, but also new ways of collecting, using and sharing data, enabling local, contextualised decision-making.

We also need to think about working with the private sector, which is already playing a very big role in technology. But we need to think about technologies that are considered public health goods. At the Aravind Eye Hospital in Puducherry, for example, they did an experiment with shared medical appointments. This seemed to result in better health

outcomes as well as higher productivity, apart from reducing costs and saving a lot of time for doctors.

We need to further integrate social protection systems, food systems and health systems in order to really have an impact on nutrition. India has done much to ensure these services, but it needs to expand these to protect its most vulnerable population groups. We must ensure that the pandemic does not further increase food insecurity.

False or misleading information leads to harmful behaviours, and mistrust in governments and the public health response. In the last eight months we have done an incredible amount of work with many tech companies. But infodemic management is not straightforward; it is linked to people's beliefs and behaviour. Therefore, we've set up a behavioural insights group to provide advice on behaviour change.

We often think about health as purely as delivery of services to take care of the sick. The risk factors and the social and environmental determinants of health, such as the quality of water and air impact our health. But investments here are much more difficult as they lie outside the health sector. It is a question of all arms of the government looking at the impact of their policies on health.

Empowering our frontline health workers will yield rich dividends. We need to invest in them to ensure that they have the tools they need, receive regular training and mentoring, and are well paid.

We need to invest in strong institutional mechanisms and capacities in our regulatory bodies, research centres and public health institutions. We have seen so much fear, stigma and discrimination circulated on social media. This must be countered by health literacy.

India is on the path to investing in Universal Health Coverage. Financial resources are very important for this, but we also need investment in human resources and to engage and empower communities. A health system cannot only be about the supply side. It has to keep in mind how to involve citizens and the people it is trying to serve and have them involved in developing the services that we are bringing to them.

*Soumya Swaminathan is Chief Scientist at WHO*

# The magic of mythmaking

If we meekly allow advertisements to be withdrawn, we will foreclose for good the possibility of our cultural reinvention



**VAISHNA ROY**

Social historian Daniel Boorstin, writing in the 1960s, called advertising "the most characteristic and remunerative form of American literature". Writing around the same time, Marshall McLuhan ranked advertising among the 20th century's greatest art forms.

As it has played out, neither man was exaggerating. The 'persuasion industry' is well entrenched today, and it is hardly surprising that the 45-second commercial created by jewellery brand Tanishq should have taken up so much mindspace these past few weeks.

We are no strangers to religious controversy nor has fanaticism been the preserve of any one community. From the exile of M.F. Husain to the blacklisting of Taslima Nasreen to regular book burnings and film bans, the fanatics excel at outrage. But this time they outdid themselves. The ad that was trolled showed a Muslim mother-in-law celebrating her Hindu daughter-in-law's pregnancy with Hindu rituals. In other words, they were offended not by intolerance but by tolerance.

#### A tenuous argument

Besides the usual commentariat on either side of the debate, a third stream emerged asking if brands need ideology. This argument is tenuous. Through the 20th century, as advertising took upon itself the role of shaping the aspirations and desires of entire societies, its function expanded vastly beyond the mere selling of products to selling a way of life. The streaming images – beautiful woman, muscular man, uniformed chauffeur – point not just to a car but to mindsets and life choices that can make that car come true. That's why Roland Barthes called advertising the supreme mythmaker of our age and ads the closest modern approximation to ancient myths. When Nike uses Serena Williams to relate the story of women in sports, it isn't just selling sports shoes, it is selling the myth of women's empowerment – the social condition that lets women play sports and buy sports shoes.

By 'selling' at this subliminal level, advertising insinuates itself into everyday customs and practices, and becomes popular culture. It defines social constructs, such as 'modernity' or 'success' – 'modern' men load washing machines; 'successful' women use food delivery apps. And via these definitions, advertising is able to construct new social mores – where men aren't ridiculed for washing clothes, nor women for not cook-

ing. The motive might be commercial, but that advertising is constantly moulding and reflecting society is indubitable.

#### Creating desirable myths

Less than 3% of marriages in India are inter-religious, and this figure is unlikely to change dramatically anytime soon. A majority of Indians will continue to marry within their own religion and community, just as a majority of women will continue doing the house-hold chores. But by depicting an inter-religious marriage, advertising creates a certain desirable myth – not of a society where such marriage is a norm but one that accepts it when it happens. When online portal 'Mynta' featured a lesbian couple in its 2015 ad, it essentially conjured up a society that accepts a non-heterosexual relationship. By placing them within conventional tropes of shopping, clothes and parents, it erased the taboos and ostracism such couples face in real life. It allowed them social sanction.

As society gets more secularised and modernised, we begin to seek our moral markers from places other than religion. Cultural studies scholar Judith Williamson said, "Advertising has a function which I believe in many ways replaces that traditionally fulfilled by art and religion – it creates meaning." This meaning-making is not optional but intrinsic to advertising. The Amul girl doesn't just innocently sell butter – she sells an image of the nation, reflected through sporting triumphs, national tragedies, election results or, increasingly, even Rafale plane deals. As we consume, we subconsciously also seek such reflections that let us reimagine ourselves and the world we inhabit through the lens of the ad.

Whether the Tanishq commercial or the Surf Excel ad last year that showed a Hindu girl protecting a Muslim boy from being splashed with Holi colours on his way to namaz, both propose a myth of harmonious co-existence – of the kind an *Amar Akbar Anthony* created – which could well be self-fulfilling in the long run. (Just as men who load washing machines are no longer unicorns.) These myths reflect not just who we are but who we want to be. The trolls shut down these stories not because they are real but because they could become real. It might no longer be possible to eradicate trolls in this hyper-malevolent era, but we need to cling at least to our myths. If we meekly let these be destroyed and the dream factories shut down, we will foreclose for good the possibility of our cultural reinvention. And that will signal our final bankruptcy of imagination. Yet, it's more clear than ever now that imagination, after all, is also a nation.

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## Women at the heart of recovery

India has an opportunity to build climate resilience and address gender equality issues

**SHOKO NODA & ATUL BAGAI**

India's fight against COVID-19 is at a critical juncture. Against the backdrop of recent economic reforms by the government, and significant stimulus packages, recovery measures are poised to lift millions from this unprecedented economic and health crisis and tackle widening inequalities.

The recovery is offering India two golden opportunities: one, to build climate resilience for the most vulnerable by ensuring that stimulus measures are green; and two, to meaningfully address long-standing gender equality issues.

The pandemic has exacted a heavy toll. Fragile health systems and frontline health workers are overburdened and lives and livelihoods impacted. The poor, Adivasis, migrants, informal workers, sexual minorities, people with disabilities and women all face a greater brunt than most. Beyond this, the causes and effects of climate change – stressed agriculture, food insecurity, unplanned urban growth, thinning forest covers, rising temperatures and shrinking water resources – have also hit vulnerable groups disproportionately.

**Vulnerable group**  
Women in particular have their work cut out for them. Greater demands of unpaid care work during the pandemic and rising rates of reported violence are a stark reminder of the work that remains to be done. According to the India Voluntary National Review 2020, female labour force participation rate for the 15-59 age group is showing a declining trend and stands at 25.3%. This is one of the lowest rates in the world.

Meanwhile, the International Monetary Fund estimates that equal participation of women in the workforce will increase India's GDP by 27%.

The Indian government has invested nearly \$22.5 billion in COVID-19 recovery. Strengthening social protection using targeted and appropriate fiscal and policy measures is a good start. Aligning these recovery packages with India's commitments on climate change by investing in green jobs will improve lives and make our planet healthier. These green investments ought to be



#### DATA POINT

### Rural-urban divide in Bihar polls

In the upcoming Bihar Assembly elections, the NDA has chosen to field candidates from the BJP in more than 80% of the urban seats. In contrast, in rural areas, the JD(U) has the upper hand. The BJP's strong show in the urban seats in the recent polls, where the JD(U) is relatively weaker, may have influenced such a seat-sharing pact. In contrast, both the RJD and the Congress have maintained similar vote shares across the rural-urban divide in the recent polls. And so, for the 2020 polls, the RJD's and the Congress' candidates are equally spread among all the areas. By Vignesh Radhakrishnan and Naresh Singaravelu

**1. NDA's rural-urban divide** | The BJP won more than 45% of the urban votes it contested in the 2015 Assembly election, at least 7% points higher than its contested vote share in all other areas. On the other hand, in 2015, JD(U) won only 37.7% of the urban votes it contested. Notably, after joining the NDA for the 2019 LS elections, the JD(U)'s urban performance dramatically improved. The table lists contested vote share (a party's votes divided by total votes polled in seats contested by the party)

Seat type*	BJP		JD(U)	
	2015 (%)	2019 (%)	2015 (%)	2019 (%)
Urban	45.2%	60.1%	37.7%	58.4%
Semi urban	37.8%	56.3%	40.3%	53.9%
Semi rural	35.3%	57.6%	42.2%	51.1%
Rural	36.4%	54.5%	39.7%	50.9%

**2. No clear divide** | There is no significant rural-urban skew for the parties in the 'grand alliance'. In 2015, when the alliance won [JD(U) was part of it in 2015], support was drawn equally from all the areas. When they lost in 2019, support was withdrawn equally from all areas. The table lists contested vote shares across rural-urban areas

Seat type	RJD		Congress	
	2015 (%)	2019 (%)	2015 (%)	2019 (%)
Urban	43.9%	36.1%	36.5%	31.5%
Semi urban	47.6%	31.7%	46.7%	38.5%
Semi rural	43.5%	33.0%	36.5%	34.6%
Rural	42.3%	32.5%	40.4%	31.6%

\*Total seats: 243 (Urban: 21 seats; semi urban: 42; semi rural: 81; rural: 99)

#### NDA

Seat type	BJP	JD(U)
Urban	81.0%	14.3%
Semi urban	50.0%	42.9%
Semi rural	39.5%	55.6%
Rural	40.4%	49.5%

#### Grand alliance

Seat type	RJD	INC
Urban	57.1%	28.6%
Semi urban	64.3%	26.2%
Semi rural	54.3%	32.1%
Rural	61.6%	27.3%

The rural-urban seats were segregated based on night lights data from the SHRG database which is used as a proxy for electrification or economic activity, which in turn differentiates a rural area from an urban area. The data for the 2019 elections is calculated based on leads secured in the

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Hopes rise for Oxford varsity COVID-19 vaccine

Work began on the Oxford vaccine in January. Called AZD1222 or ChAdOx1 nCoV-19, the viral vector vaccine is made from a weakened version of a common cold virus that causes infections in chimpanzees.

Immunogenicity blood tests carried out on a subset of older participants echo data released in July which showed the vaccine generated "robust immune responses" in a group of healthy adults aged between 18 and 55, the *Financial Times* reported earlier.

"We need to see the data before concluding that the responses were 'similar,'" Stephen Evans, a professor of pharmacoepidemiology at London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said.

He said that reactogenicity, which refers to common side-effects of vaccines like

soreness and redness of the arm, was "often, but not always" associated with a vaccine's immunogenicity.

"Studies carried out in the first stage of development of a vaccine will result in choosing a dose that does not cause too much reactogenicity," he said.

AstraZeneca has signed several supply and manufacturing deals with companies and governments around the world as it gets closer to reporting early results of a late-stage clinical trial.

It resumed the U.S. trial of the experimental vaccine after approval by U.S. regulators, the company said on Friday. Staff at a London hospital trust have been told to be ready to receive the first batches of the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, *The Sun* newspaper reported on Monday.

"We need to see the data before concluding that the responses were 'similar,'" Stephen Evans, a professor of pharmacoepidemiology at London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, said.

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## Centre promises law to check stubble burning

The Delhi NCR already has a Graded Response Action Plan, which is overseen by the Environment Pollution Authority, that has specified a number of measures that governments must take – from banning diesel gensets to restricting vehicle movement – depending on the degree of pollution.

**Punjab efforts**  
To check stubble burning this kharif (summer) season, the Punjab government has appointed 8,000 nodal officers in villages that grow paddy. Over 23,000 crop residue management machines are being given to farmers for on-site management of straw.

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh last week appealed to farmers not to burn crop residue because the practice

could aggravate conditions leading to the spread of COVID-19, besides causing pollution.

He said the State was taking measures to sensitise the farmers and had been pressuring the Centre to give ₹100 per quintal to farmers for managing the paddy straw without burning.

However, Executive Director, Centre for Science and Environment Anumita Roychowdhury said new legislation was not the need of the hour.

"We don't yet know what this proposed law will be about. There are strong laws in place for checking pollution but inadequate infrastructure at the level of State and municipal bodies to implement them...what we need now is better enforcement," she told *The Hindu*.

## India to sign geo-spatial cooperation deal with U.S.

The sources said the meeting between the two Ministers had been "warm and productive" and both sides were "satisfied" that Indo-U.S. ties had grown in all spheres over the last four years of the Trump administration.

The two Ministers also discussed "shared concerns and interests" over how best to ensure stability and security in Asia, said the sources, adding that specific issues would be discussed during the 2+2 talks that include Mr. Rajnath Singh and Mr. Esper. Mr. Pompeo and Mr. Jaishankar also discussed their government's positions on Afghanistan.

After the talks on Tuesday, U.S. officials will leave for Sri Lanka, Maldives and Indonesia.

As reported by *The Hindu* last month, in the run up to the 2+2, the U.S. was keen on India signing BECA and

discussions continued to iron out the differences. One of the major differences was the issue of reciprocity in exchange of geo-spatial data.

The Defence Ministry said the two Ministers "also discussed requirements of expanding deployment of liaison officers."

India has posted a liaison officer at the U.S. Navy Central Command in Bahrain recently and is also considering a U.S. request for posting liaison officers at the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command (USINOPACOM) and the U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM).

A U.S. State department official said in Washington on Saturday that the talks will focus on four themes – regional security cooperation, defence information sharing, military-to-military interactions, and defence trade.

## Coal scam: jail term for ex-Minister Dilip Ray

The case pursued by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) alleged corruption in the allocation of 105.15 hectare of the abandoned coal mining area in Giridih in favour of Castron Technologies.

The CBI registered the case on January 7, 2014. It was alleged that Dhanbad-based Castron Technologies Limited, Castron Mining Limited of Kolkata and others conspired with public servants for allocation.

**'Undue favour'**  
According to the agency, the beneficiary company was given an undue favour by violating the guidelines framed

for the allotment of Brahmapuri coal block.

"Investigation also revealed that the company was to establish the end use plant for consuming the coal, but it did not establish the same. It was also alleged that the Brahmapuri coal block was not included in the list of captive coal mining at any point of time," said the CBI.

**Chargesheet filed**  
After investigation, the agency filed a chargesheet against the six accused. During the court proceedings, it examined around 51 prosecution witnesses through their affidavits.

**'Undue favour'**  
According to the agency, the beneficiary company was given an undue favour by violating the guidelines framed

## Kerala move against CBI draws fire

Congress, BJP oppose withdrawing general consent for probe by the agency

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Central government has used the CBI to destabilise non-BJP ruled States, and Kerala is no exception. The LDF is aware of the plot to use the central law enforcement agency to discredit the government in an election year

KANAN RAJENDRAN  
CPI State secretary



A purported move by the government to withdraw the general consent given to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to operate in its territory appears to have become an irritant in the State's arguably fraught relationship with the Centre.

If implemented, Kerala will join a line-up of non-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-ruled States – West Bengal, Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra – to ban the agency from launching investigations on its own and functioning

in their respective jurisdiction without the explicit consent of the provincial government.

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said the Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) would oppose the move.

He said the Left Democratic Front wanted to con-



## India is much safer against tsunami threat

However, communities need to be prepared better, says new INCOIS director

V. GEETANATH  
HYDERABAD

India is much safer against the threat of tsunamis than it was in 2004, thanks to the state-of-the-art tsunami early warning system established in Indian National Centre for Ocean Information Services (INCOIS) here. However, the best of warning systems could fail, if communities are not prepared, if they do not understand the official and natural warning signs of a tsunami, and if they do not take appropriate and timely response, warns Tummala Srinivasa Kumar, the new INCOIS Director.

"We have made impressive progress in building tsunami early warning capability. From absolutely no warning capability or for



Tummala Srinivasa Kumar

that matter any public knowledge of tsunamis in the Indian Ocean, we have reached a stage where we can detect large under sea earthquakes in real-time and provide a tsunami warning

in 10-20 minutes after the earthquake occurrence. In fact, for Indian Ocean earthquakes where the network of seismometers is reasonably good, quakes can now be detected in less than five minutes and a tsunami warning issued within 10 minutes if the quake occurs elsewhere in the globe," says the 48-year-old.

After a stint as head of Intergovernmental Coordination Group for Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning and Mitigation System (ICG-IOTWMS) secretariat of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC) of UNESCO stationed at Perth, Australia, he has returned to take over as director.

He says the focus in recent times has been on enhancing community awareness and response through several capacity building activities, biennial Indian Ocean-wide tsunami drills and piloting of the UNESCO-IOC Tsunami Ready initiative to provide a structured framework to build and measure capacities of coastal communities to respond effectively to tsunamis, through 11 important indicators.

**'Tsunami-ready'**  
Two villages – Venkatapura in Ganjam district and Nolia-sahi in Jagatsingpur district in Odisha – are now 'Tsunami-ready.' "This has to be replicated in other vulnerable coastal communities as it also enhances ability to respond to cyclones and storm surges too," says Dr. Kumar.

## Sachidananda Bharati is new seer of Edneer Math of Kerala

He succeeds Kesavananda Bharati who attained samadhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

Sachidananda Bharati was anointed the pontiff of the Edneer Math of Kerala at a function held at Orikai, Kancheepuram, on Monday. Sachidananda Bharati succeeded Kesavananda Bharati Swamiji who attained samadhi on September 6 at the age of 80. The succession function was organised in the presence of Vijayendra Saraswathi, the pontiff of Kanchi Kamakoti Mutt. Sachidananda Bharati's puravashrama name is Jayarama Manjathaya.

According to the official release from the Edneer Math, Kesavananda Bharati Swamiji, renowned for protecting the basic rights in the Constitution by filing a case in the Supreme Court in the 1970s, had expressed his desire to nominate Jayarama



Sachidananda Bharati, the new pontiff of Edneer Math, with Kanchi Acharya Vijayendra Saraswathi.

Manjathaya as his successor, among his devotees and matha administrators. The seer had also advised his devotees and administrators to approach the Sankaracharya of the Kanchi Mutt for initiating the succession formalities.

As per the advise and desire of Kesavananda Bharati Swamiji, Jayarama Manjathaya, accompanied by the administrators and devotees of

the Edneer Math, visited the Kanchi Mutt on October 2 to become the pontiff. The initiation ceremony of Sachidananda Bharati started with the pontiff taking a yatra to various temples and commenced his Purvanga Karyakrama of taking the vow of sanyasi on October 19. The Purvanga Karyakrama ceremony concluded with the Ashrama Sweekara on Monday.

## With lower testing, Kerala reports over 4,200 cases

Karnataka, A.P. too record sharp drop in fresh cases

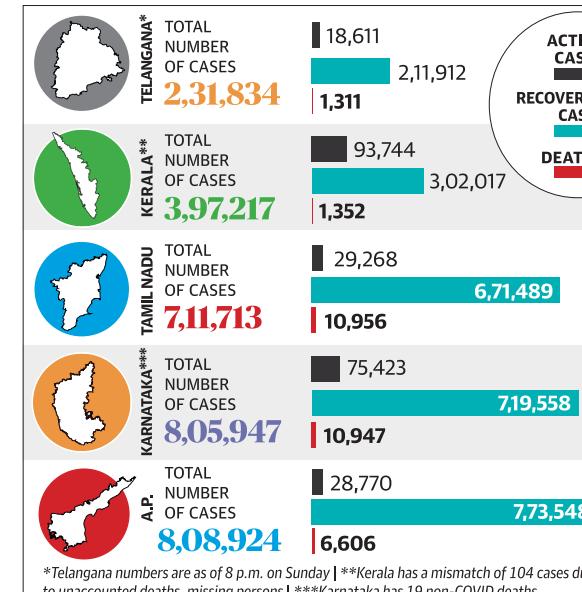
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's COVID-19 case graph dropped as sample testing slumped over a long weekend. The State recorded 4,287 cases on Monday from 35,141 samples.

### COVID-19

However, the test positivity rate hovered around 12%-14% for a week, with 12.19% recorded on Monday.

The Health Department added 20 more deaths from the past few weeks to the COVID-19 mortality list. Thrissur and Wayanad reported



four deaths each, Kannur three, Kasaragod and Alappuzha two each, while Kotayam, Ernakulam, Palakkad, Malappuram and Kozhikode reported one death each. Telangana recorded 582

cases on Sunday, with 14,729 people getting tested. In September, around 55,000 to 60,000 samples were tested every day. Four more COVID-19 patients died. The 582 new cases included 174 from Greater Hyderabad.

Andhra Pradesh reported 1,901 new infections and 19 fresh deaths on Monday.

Tests conducted in the past day were low compared to the previous several days, yet a positivity rate at 3.69% was the lowest in three and a half months. The overall positivity rate so far was 10.61%.

Karnataka's incidence was the lowest in several weeks at 3,130 new cases on Monday; 1,603 were reported in Bengaluru Urban. Testing on Monday reduced to 65,892, while on Sunday the figure was over one lakh. COVID-19 deaths reported on Monday

were also lower at 42.

A total of 2,708 persons tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday on Tuesday. In view of COVID-19 restrictions, the TTD has resolved to provide about 19,000 tickets a day. The TTD already resumed issuance of sarva darshan tickets from Monday. About 3,000 tickets will be issued on a daily basis at its counters in the Bhudevi complex.

**Tigress that triggered panic in Wayanad caught**

A tigress that triggered panic among residents in the Chethalayal forest range of the South Wayanad Forest Division, was captured from a tribal settlement on Sunday. The tigress, aged about nine years, had triggered panic for the past three weeks after it killed about 15 goats in the area. It was shifted to the nearby forest station at Iruvan.



Fresh start: Telangana Minister for Energy G. Jagadish Reddy at the relaunch of the hydroelectric station on Monday.

## Two units of Srisailam power plant relaunched

They were damaged in a fire in August

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Minister for Energy G. Jagadish Reddy on Monday relaunched the first two units of the 6X150 megawatt Srisailam Left Bank Hydroelectric Station near Eegalapenta in Telangana's Nagarkurnool district that was damaged in a major fire on the night of August 20.

Chairman and managing director of Telangana State Power Generation Corporation (TS-Genco) D. Prabhakar Rao, its directors Ch. Venkata Rajam (Hydel), M. Sachidanandam (Projects) and A. Ajay (Civil), Chief Engineer of Srisailam LBHES M. Prabhakar Rao and other staff of the power station participated during the formal switching-on of the two units.

**Trial run successful**  
Experimental run of Units 1 and 2 was taken up for short durations in phases on October 22 and 23 for checking their vital parameters and, after their synchronisation with the grid on October 23 evening, they had been on trial run till Monday morning, when they were switched off for the formal

The Minister said the two units could have been re-launched in September, but several engineers and staff of Genco, including its director (Hydel), had contracted COVID-19 during the restoration work. Mr. Reddy said Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao had been keeping tab on the work and talking to senior executives frequently.

**SC/ST entrepreneurs to get a leg-up in A.P.**  
VIJAYAWADA  
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday launched 'Jagananna YSR Badugu Vikasam - 2020-23', an industrial policy that caters to the SC and ST entrepreneurs. The

About 20 TDP activists and a few farmers were on the tractor-trailer when the accident occurred. The MLAs and other party leaders had a miraculous escape. The tractor was stuck in the waters in the canal.

"A major mishap was averted as the vehicle was overloaded. Had the tractor overturned or run into Upperuteru, it would have been a major incident," said a farmer.

The online quota of ₹300 special entry darshan tickets for November will be released at 11 a.m. on Tuesday. In view of COVID-19 restrictions, the TTD has resolved to provide about 19,000 tickets a day. The TTD already resumed issuance of sarva darshan tickets from Monday. About 3,000 tickets will be issued on a daily basis at its counters in the Bhudevi complex.

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IN BRIEF



Unnao MP raises question on size of burial grounds

LUCKNOW  
The size of graveyards and cremation grounds available in a village should be as per the population of the communities living there, BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj has said. Mr. Maharaj alleged that Hindus are facing "injustice" as Muslims had larger graveyards. The comments were made by the Unnao MP during a 'nukkad sabha' on Sunday while campaigning for the Bangermau Assembly bypoll.

**BJP announces 8 names for Rajya Sabha polls**

NEW DELHI  
The BJP on Monday named eight candidates for 10 vacancies going to polls in the Rajya Sabha from Uttar Pradesh and one candidate for Uttarakhand. The polls are scheduled for November 9. Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, BJP general secretary Arun Singh and RS MP Neeraj Shekhar have been repeated as candidates. Geeta Shakya, Seema Dwivedi, Brijal, Haridwar Dube and B.L. Verma are the other candidates.

**18% M.P. candidates have criminal cases**

NEW DELHI  
An analysis of the affidavits of all 355 candidates for the Madhya Pradesh Assembly bypoll to 28 seats by the Association for Democratic Reforms found that 18% of the nominees had declared criminal cases against themselves. The ADR report said 50% of the Congress and 43% of the BJP candidates had declared criminal cases. The report said 23% of the 355 candidates had declared assets worth ₹1 crore and 82% of the BJP candidates and 79% of the Congress candidates were corepats.

**Campaigning picks up in Manipur for bypoll**

IMPHAL  
Campaigning for the November 7 bypoll to four Assembly constituencies in Manipur has gained momentum. The major players are the ruling BJP, the Opposition Congress and the National People's Party, a coalition partner Chief Minister N. Biren on Monday said, "The BJP-led coalition government will wipe out all tears of the have-nots. The coalition government was saved by six Congress MLAs who had tendered resignations from the party. It is in recognition of their support that some former Congress MLAs were inducted into the Ministry."

# Ladakh poll: 15 seats for BJP, Cong. wins 9

NC, PDP did not participate in election



Ram Madhav  
seylang, Khatse and Chuchot.

The seats won by the Congress are Lower Leh, Upper Leh, Igo, Saspol, Basgo, Sakti, Phyang, Skurbuchan and Temisgam. Independent candidates won the Chushul and Nyoma seats.

"First major victory for BJP in UT Ladakh...Congrats team BJP, Ladakh UT," tweeted party leader Ram Madhav.

The BJP had won 17 seats in 2015.

It was the first poll since Ladakh was made a Union Territory (UT) last year.

The National Conference and the Peoples Democratic Party did not participate in the election.

# BJP raises Article 370, temple

Launching the campaign in Seemanchal, Nadda praises Nitish government

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PURNIA

Kick-starting the campaign in Purnia in the Seemanchal region of Bihar, BJP president J.P. Nadda and Law Minister Ravishankar Prasad reiterated the "jungle raj vs development" narrative and also touched upon the dilution of Article 370 and the construction of the Ram temple.

Mr. Nadda said that in the 2015 election, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had given a special package of ₹1.25 lakh crore to Bihar. In addition, ₹40,000 crore had been spent on Bihar's infrastructure in the past couple of years. Crediting Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for constructing roads, providing electricity and maintaining law and order in the State,



**Poll pitch:** BJP chief J.P. Nadda, left, and others at a public rally in Aurangabad, Bihar, on Monday. ■ PTI

Mr. Nadda said all these would be reversed if any other party came to power.

"Who is CPI(ML)? Who killed Ram bhakts? They are anarchists. And now the anarchists and the RJD, which is a destructive party, have come together. To add to this is the Congress," Mr.

Nadda said, adding that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had opposed the dilution of Article 370 that gave special status to Kashmir. "Pakistan Prime Minister used the same logic presented by Rahul Gandhi in the U.N. Shashi Tharoor criticises India on a Pakistani platform.

Don't start opposing the country while opposing PM Narendra Modi," Mr. Nadda said.

The rally was thinly attended as the audience had been waiting since noon and had started leaving by the time the BJP leaders reached the venue at 4.30 p.m.

Pointing at the scattered crowd, many of whom had their phones out to click pictures of the rally, Mr. Prasad said, "Could you have openly flashed your phone during the Lalu regime. Nitish Kumar and Sushil Modi's government is giving computers and mobile phones in your hands," he said. Mr. Prasad obliquely mentioned the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. "Ram Lala ke vakil kaun the? Hum hi toh the," he said.

## SC stays order on 'virtual' campaigns

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday stayed a Madhya Pradesh High Court order which directed "virtual" election campaigning and rallies for the byelection to 28 Assembly seats in the State.

A Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar *prima facie* agreed with the petitions filed by the Election Commission and BJP candidate Pradyuman Singh Tomar.

The court asked the commission to consider the issues raised in the petitions and the High Court order of October 20 and "proceed in the matter in accordance with law". It refused to "say anything on the merits" of the case.

# Tej Pratap goes all out to woo Hasanpur

Lalu's elder son chooses 'safer' seat

AMARNATH TEWARY

HASANPUR

In the Hasanpur Assembly constituency, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) candidate and elder son of party chief Lalu Prasad, Tej Pratap Yadav, is going all out to woo the voters – playing cricket with youngsters, driving a tractor, and sharing *sattu* (gram flour) and *litti-chokha*, a local snack, with young voters.



Tej Pratap Yadav

main RJD office, the discussion, as the sun sets on a cool evening, turns inevitably to the forthcoming election.

**In Lalu's name**

"Who is going to vote for a candidate like him (Tej Pratap Yadav)... We'll vote for Lalu Prasad, not him," says Ramadhin Yadav, a voter in his sixties.

But why not?

"When he doesn't meet us here, how can we meet him in Patna after his election," one of the men asks.

"But, we'll vote for him in the name of Lalu Prasad and Manish Kumar, respectively, in the constituency, which is likely to divide the Yadav votes."

"RJD leader Tej Pratap Yadav might have chosen this constituency as a safe seat for it is being dominated by M-Y [Muslim and Yadav] voters, which has been core vote bank of RJD since long," political analyst Ajay Kumar told *The Hindu*.

Hasanpur has more than 70,000 Yadav, nearly 40,000 Muslim, 18,000 Paswan, 12,000 Kushwaha and more than 10,000 upper caste voters.

Ahead of his younger brother and party's CM face Tejaswi Yadav's campaign in Hasanpur on Monday, Mr. Yadav tweeted saying his "Arjun" was coming to address them.

Hasanpur is known for a defunct sugar mill, the Magadh Sugar & Energy Limited, with Mr. Yadav's campaign office located at the iconic Chini Mill (sugar mill) Chowk.

At a tea shop outside the

+

"Voting for Rajkumar Rai is to bring Nitish Kumar again to power which we don't want... We've nothing against the JD(U) candidate but we don't want Nitish Kumar as CM again," they say firmly.

**ANDHRA PRADESH MEDICAL SERVICES & INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Plot No. 9, Survey No.49, IT Park, Mangalagiri-522 503.  
email : apmsidc@gmail.com & ed.apmsidc16@gmail.com

**Tender Notice No.12/APMSIDC/2020-21, Dated : 26-10-2020**

APMSIDC invites tenders through e-procurement platform for Equipment Wing: 1. Procure and supply of rproc machines to VRDL Labs (Short Tender) 2. Perform the test of RTPRC Tests samples on per test basis at various Government Hospitals in AP (Short Tender)

Civil Wing: 1. T. No.5/APMSIDC/Technical/2020-21, Dt.26.10.2020 - Construction of third floor for establishment of SNCU, Geriatric ward, Eye ward at District Hospital, Almatkur in SPSR Nellore District.

APMSIDC will reserve the right to cancel the tenders at any time without assigning any reasons.

DIPR 407P/CL, Dt.26.10.2020

Sd/- Managing Director

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Hyderabad - 500051, INDIA

**NOTICE INVITING TENDER**

Sealed Tenders are invited from following tenders:

S.No.	Description
1.	Hiring of containers for dispatch of coin blanks as per Tender No. 600001518/216/Containers Dated 27.10.2020
2.	Hiring of transportation services for dispatch of coin blanks as per Tender No. 600001525/224/Containers Dated 27.10.2020
3.	Hiring of civil maintenance agency for IGMH Township as per Tender No. 600001523/223/Civil Dated 27.10.2020
4.	Hiring of civil maintenance agency for IGM Factory as per Tender No. 600001522/222/Civil Dated 27.10.2020
5.	Supply, Installation and Retrofitting of Air Circuit Breaker as per Tender No. 600001534/234/Electrical Dated 27.10.2020

For further details the interested bidders may visit the Mint website <http://igmhyderabad.spmcl.com>. The bidders may also download the tender document from 27.10.2020 onwards. Further Amendment/Corrigendum, if any, to this tender will be notified in the Mint website only.

Sd/-  
Chief General Manager

**BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD**  
Office of The Chief Engineer (Kaveri),  
5th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, KG Road, Bangalore - 560009  
IFT No:BWSSB/CEKTE/T-A/1030/2020/524/2020-21 Date:21.10.2020

**INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER**  
(only Through Electronic Tendering)

BWSSB invites tenders in two stage system from eligible tenderers for the work of Comprehensive Operation & Maintenance of 550 MLD Water Treatment plant at T.K. Halli under Cauvery Water Supply Scheme, Stage-IV, Phase-II for Three years.

Amount Put to Tender: Rs. 2012.17 Lakhs

EMD Amount : Rs. 30.20 Lakhs

The Last Date and Time for submission of tender document is on 11.12.2020 upto 3.00 pm. Opening of technical tender is on 14.12.2020 at 4:00 PM. The details regarding participation in the e-procurement can be obtained by logging on to <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>. For further details contact undersigned office during working hours

Sd/-  
Chief Engineer (Kaveri)

DIPR/DDU/Zen/R0-1453/2020-21

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION OF KERALA FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019-2020

Transport Bhavan, Fort P.O, Thiruvananthapuram - 695023

E-TENDER NOTICE

KRRTC is one of the largest fleet owners in India with a fleet strength of 6200 Nos. of buses.

As part of restructuring, E-tenders are invited for the procurement of following items.

SL. NO. NAME OF ITEM DATE OF RELEASE BID SUBMISSION BID OPENING

1 Electronic Ticketing Machine (ETM) - 5500 nos. 16.10.2020 06.00 PM, 11.11.2020 12.00 PM, 13.11.2020

2 CNG Propelled Buses of BS VI Norms - 310 nos. 23.10.2020 06.00 PM, 24.11.2020 11.00 AM, 26.11.2020

Upcoming tenders

1 LNG Retro Fitment Kits in 400 HSD Buses 23.10.2020 06.00 PM, 25.11.2020 11.00 AM, 27.11.2020

2 Single Axle 12 Mtr Non-AC Electric Buses - 50 nos. 10.11.2020 06.00 PM, 11.12.2020 11.00 AM, 14.12.2020

3 Vehicle Location Tracking Device - 5500 nos. 02.11.2020 06.00 PM, 25.11.2020 12.00 PM, 27.11.2020

4 Various Garage Equipments (44 items) 04.11.2020 06.00 PM, 25.11.2020 01.00 PM, 27.11.2020

e-mail: [tenders@krtc.org.in](mailto:tenders@krtc.org.in)

For details: [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in), [www.keralartc.com/tenders/purchase](http://www.keralartc.com/tenders/purchase)

Sd/-  
Chairman & Managing Director

DIPR/DDU/Zen/R0-1453/2020-21

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## IN BRIEF



## First seaplane service set to be launched soon

AHMEDABAD  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi is likely to inaugurate the country's first seaplane service in Gujarat, between Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad and the Statue of Unity near the Narmada Dam in Kevadia, on October 31. The 19-seater seaplane will fly four times a day. The fare is ₹4,800 per passenger.

## BJP takes on Shiv Sena for Hindutva jibe

MUMBAI  
The Shiv Sena's Hindutva had become contaminated as it joined hands with the Congress and the NCP for the sake of power, BJP MLA Ashish Shelar said, adding that the Sena would have to take "certificate of Hindutva from the BJP and the RSS". The BJP attack came a day after Sena president Uddhav Thackeray challenged the BJP on its ideology of Hindutva.

## Single male parent can take child care leave

NEW DELHI  
Male government employees who are single parents will now be entitled to child care leave, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Monday. "Single male parent" includes staff who are unmarried, widower or divorcee. The leave could be granted at 100% of leave salary for the first 365 days and 80% of leave salary for the next 365 days, he said. PTI

## SC rejects plea to probe death of actor's manager

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a plea for a court-monitored CBI probe into the death of Disha Salian, the manager of Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, and asked the petitioner to approach the Bombay High Court. Ms. Salian died on June 8. Six days later, Rajput was found hanging in his Bandra home.

## Contempt proceedings against Pokhriyal stayed

NEW DELHI  
The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the contempt proceedings against Union Education Minister and former Uttarakhand Chief Minister Ramesh Pokhrayal for alleged non-compliance of an Uttarakhand High Court order last year to the former CM to pay rent for government accommodation. The High Court issued the order on May 3 last year.

## Court live-streaming could be abused: CJI

Attorney General had pushed for it

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Attorney General of India K.K. Venugopal on Monday pushed for live-streaming court proceedings to make hearings accessible to all.

But Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, heading a three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, sounded a cautionary note, saying it was susceptible to "abusus."

The exchange came on a day when the Gujarat High Court live-streamed its court hearings. "Live-streaming should be something on My Lords' minds... Everyone can then watch the court," the Attorney General submitted.

He reminded the Supreme Court of its own judgment of September 2018 in favour of "opening up" the apex court through live-streaming. The order has remained unimplemented. Mr. Venugopal hinted that the pandemic offered a fresh opportunity.

"There are problems which should not be discussed publicly... There are certain abuses... We will take a decision soon enough, otherwise successive Chief Justices [turning to Justice D.Y. Chandrachud who is in line to be CJI] will do," said CJI Bobde.

Justice Chandrachud was one of the three judges on the Bench that gave the verdict on live-streaming in

## Army to review border situation

Readiness for winter deployment, human resource reforms on agenda of meet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

With the stand-off continuing along the disputed boundary in eastern Ladakh, the situation on the ground in Ladakh and the Army's winter preparations will be reviewed at the highest level at the Army commanders' conference, chaired by Army chief General Manoj Naravane, which began on Monday. The conference also has a series of reforms on its agenda.

The first day has been scheduled for deliberating on matters related to human resource management, an Army source said.

The commanders will brainstorm on a series of reform measures to cut down on ceremonial practices, among other measures, a second source said.

There will be a comprehensive review of the situation across all the borders in-



Scrutiny time: An IAF jet flying over Leh on Monday. ■ AFP

cluding Ladakh, the second source said.

China has deployed close to 50,000 troops along the LAC, which has been matched by India, and with no breakthrough in talks for disengagement, both sides have made preparations for deployment at high altitudes in the harsh winters.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) Gen. Bipin Rawat as well as the Navy and Air Force chiefs are scheduled to address the conference on Tuesday. The biennial conference is attended by senior officers of the Army including the vice-chief, seven Army commanders, principal

staff officers (PSOs) of the Army headquarters and other senior officers.

## Air defence command

On Wednesday, the Commander-in-Chief of the Andaman and Nicobar Command, the only tri-service command, will update the Army commanders.

Several studies are currently underway for the formation of integrated tri-service commands beginning with a joint air defence command.

The last day of the conference will include an update by the Director General of Border Roads Organisation (BRO) on the various infrastructure development projects being undertaken by BRO and allied formations. Automation initiatives to optimise utilisation of manpower at various levels of the Army will also be discussed, the first source added.

## SC keeps Lokur committee's appointment in abeyance

Bench informed of proposed law against stubble-burning

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday decided to "keep in abeyance" its pre-Dasara order appointing former Supreme Court judge Justice Madan B. Lokur to a one-man committee to monitor/prevent stubble burning in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Punjab.

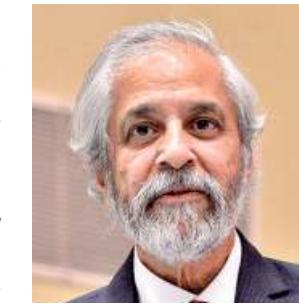
The decision to put on hold its October 16 order

came soon after Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta informed a bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde that the Centre had "proposed a legislation to tackle the problem" which occurs annually and chokes the capital.

Mr. Mehta said the new law may come out in the next few days that proposed to have a permanent body to deal with stubble burning.

"Having regard to the statement made, we consider it appropriate that the measures adopted in the order of October 16 be kept in abeyance until further orders," the court recorded in its order.

On October 16, the court asked Justice Lokur with the help of student volunteer forces deployed from the Na-



Justice Madan B. Lokur

tional Cadet Corps, the National Service Scheme and the Bharat Scouts and Guides to protect Delhi NCR from air pollution caused by stubble burning in neighbouring Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh this winter.

## Student patrol

The court had said the student forces could patrol highways and fields in the three States and ensure that no fires were started in the fields.

It asked the Chief Secretaries of the three States to provide facilities to the committee and provide student volunteers with adequate transportation to aid their vigil. It directed the existing mobile teams and nodal officers of the States to report to the committee.

## Polio networks helped curb COVID-19: WHO

Surveillance staff went house-to-house in 75 districts in Uttar Pradesh and identified risk groups

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Uttar Pradesh, the most populous State in the country, used polio micro-plans twice in the last three months to help identify over two lakh people with COVID-19 symptoms. These persons were then followed-up and tested for COVID-19, said Poonam Khetrapal Singh, regional director WHO South-East Asia, while citing U.P. as an example of applying strategies from polio eradication programmes, to help contain the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a release issued by the WHO, South East Asia Region, Dr. Singh also indicated that in the coming months "polio networks, with their vast knowledge on vaccination and tools and strategies tailored to reach the un-reached and the most vulnerable, could play a critical role for COVID-19 vaccination rollout".

She added that in U.P., the surveillance medical officers' team coordinated with the State government and a massive initiative of house-to-house surveillance to identify people with symptoms of influenza-like illness and co-morbidities was con-

## Viral tracker

With 34,545 COVID-19 cases recorded on Monday, India's tally stood at 79,44,320. As many as 466 new deaths were registered, taking the toll to 1,19,522. A total of 10.34 crore samples were tested as of October 25, according to the ICMR

## NEW CASES AND DEATHS

CASES 34,545 7 DAY-CHANGE -32.2%  
DEATHS 466 7 DAY-CHANGE -29.2%

The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases and deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases and deaths are rising; if they are lower, then dropping; if they are similar, then cases and deaths are flattening in that State

ducted. This covered 208 million people across all 75 districts.

## To test, track, isolate

Stating that the polio-network had been effectively used in south-east Asia region during the pandemic, she said: "Within weeks of the COVID-19 outbreak, the integrated surveillance and immunisation networks in

five polio priority countries of the region were re-purposed to support preparedness and response. Working among the most vulnerable population and areas, these networks are helping health authorities to detect, test, track, isolate and even prepare hospitals to provide timely treatment."

Dr. Singh said that from assisting coordination at the

national and sub-national levels, to training and building capacities for laboratory and other health workers for detecting cases, tracing contacts, and assessing public perceptions to hospital readiness and preparedness, the WHO's polio surveillance networks in Bangladesh, India, Indonesia, Myanmar and Nepal, were supporting with strategies and initia-

tives, refined over the years and which helped the region achieve polio-free certification in March 2014.

## 480 deaths in 24 hours

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry in its release on Monday said India had recorded less than 500 deaths (480) in the last 24 hours.

"As part of the COVID-19 management and response policy, there has been a sharp focus by the Central government on not only containing COVID-19, but also reducing deaths," it said. The fact that many States had conducted surveys to map and identify the vulnerable population like the elderly, pregnant women and those with comorbidities, had also helped. "At the ground level, frontline health workers like ASHAs and ANMs have helped to manage the migrant population and to enhance awareness. As a result, 14 States and UTs have case fatality rate lower than 1%", said the Ministry.

"45,148 new confirmed cases were registered in the last 24 hours in the country. This is the lowest since July 22 when 37,000 new cases were added," it said.

## Scindia's candidate wrestles with sullen BJP workers

Local cadre grapple with new equations

SIDHARTH YADAV  
CHHARACH

For Chhattur Singh, a BJP worker, the task of convincing voters to side with the candidate who recently crossed over from the Congress is daunting. "Well, I am not sure why Maharaj [Yotiraditya Scindia] and his supporters changed sides. Maybe because they felt ignored?" he said, stuttering, when confronted by a voter attending Mr. Scindia's public meeting in Shivpuri district.

As 25 of the 28 Assembly seats are up for by-election in Madhya Pradesh, older BJP workers in Pohari Vidhan Sabha constituency have reluctantly buried the hatchet to canvass for their former political adversary, who they vehemently campaigned against in the 2018 election.

On the podium in Chharch village, BJP leader Prahlad Bharti found himself standing awkwardly next to its candidate Suresh Dhakad, who defeated him on a Congress ticket. And Mr. Scindia's strong influence, which he successfully thwarted twice to be elected to the Assembly, now looms over him.

"The BJP is one family, and we welcome those who join us with open arms," said Mr. Bharti with a smile pasted on his face. "The sangathan is supreme and we will follow its instructions. Anyway Mr. Dhakad was elected for five years so why not let him continue? At least the BJP government is back."

"We will vote in the wind's direction," quipped Mausambi Adavasi. "I didn't understand what was said from the stage, as they were all shouting in the microphone. I will press the hand button and vote for Mr. Scindia," said Ms. Adavasi, unaware of the leader's new political affiliation.

## I can't stand the bombast on TV: CJI

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, giving a rare insight into his personal side, said he "cannot stand" the bombast on TV.

"Frankly, I cannot stand it... This was never a part of our public discourse," Chief Justice Bobde orally addressed senior advocate Harish Salve, who represents Republic TV editor-in-chief Arnab Goswami, on Monday.

Chief Justice Bobde said there had to be responsibility in reportage.

The case concerned the registration of criminal cases against Mr. Goswami by the Mumbai police for allegedly inciting communal hatred.

## Monsoon to withdraw by tomorrow

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon is likely to completely withdraw from the country by Wednesday and northeast monsoon to begin over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, coastal Andhra Pradesh and parts of Kerala and Karnataka, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

## BJP takes out 'tiranga yatra' on Accession Day

It seeks action against Mehbooba for remarks on unfurling tricolour; 3 PDP leaders quit in protest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Monday organised "tiranga yatas" in the twin capitals of J&K to commemorate Accession Day, when the then Maharaja, Hari Singh, signed the Instrument of Accession with India in 1947. The day was declared a holiday for the first time since the region was designated a Union Territory (UT) last year.

A "tiranga yatra" was organised in Srinagar, where the BJP activists hoisted the tricolour on a cavalcade of cars and marched from Tare Hall to the Boulevard around the Dal lake.

"The purpose of the 'tiranga yatra' is to send a mes-

sage to those parties, especially [Peoples Democratic Party president] Mehbooba Mufti, who don't accept the tricolour. These parties have been acting like a virus for

the past 70 years, and we will not allow their spread any more," BJP leader Ali Muhammad Mir said.

BJP leaders Sofi Yousaf and Altaf Thakur, who raised

pro-India slogans, demanded action against Ms. Mufti for her remarks that "she will not unfurl the tricolour till J&K's flag was returned".

## Three detained

Three BJP leaders were detained in Srinagar on Monday when they marched to unfurl the tricolour. They were shifted to the Kothi Bagh police station. "They were heading towards a busy centre and could have caused interruption in traffic. They were also violating the standard operating procedures laid down for the COVID-19 pandemic," a police official said.

Those detained are BJP spokesman from Kupwara Mir Basharat, Mir Ishfaq and Akhtar Khan.

J&K's flag was returned.

Three Jammu-based PDP leaders quit the party "in protest against the recent remarks of Ms. Mufti".

"Some of the actions and utterances are unforgivable. We feel uncomfortable and suffocated in the party," PDP's T.S. Bawa, Ved Mahajan and Hussain A Waffa wrote in a joint resignation letter.

during processing of the case, sources in the railways said on Monday.

To avoid recurrence of such instances, it is advised that the version of suspect official should normally be taken during investigation for arriving at an objective conclusion.

"The process of obtaining response affords an opportunity to the suspect official to explain his/her stand and might clarify the differences in understanding, perception and interpretation of issues," the Railway Board said in a note to all Senior Deputy General Managers/Chief Vigilance Officers of Zonal Railways, Production Units, Public Sector Undertakings etc.

## Expedited disposal

All investigating officials were directed to demonstrate due diligence during staff accountability exercise and after thorough scrutiny only cases should be submitted to the Vigilance Directorate of the Railway Board for further action.

After the CVC recommended major punishment against the official, the railway authorities realised that he had no role to play in the composite vigilance case. When the matter was reverted, the CVC expressed displeasure for adopting a "lax" attitude

Order to vigilance officials after error by zonal railway

S. VIJAY KUMAR  
CHENNAI

The Railway Board has directed its vigilance officials to follow due diligence while investigating cases by giving an opportunity to suspect employees to give their version.

The advisory follows a mistake in one of the Zonal Railways where an official

&lt;p

REVIEW

# Yet another OnePlus sequel

With four smartphone releases in a pandemic year, the 8T may be a good stage for OnePlus to take a breather

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

There was a time when smartphone releases used to be anticipated. Of course, much of the suspense was a result of savvy marketing. But a brand released one phone a year. And, there weren't any 'leaks', so to speak. Now, phone release schedules are like the *Fast and Furious* movies; by the time one comes out, you can be fairly certain that the next is on its way. Do not get swayed by phrases like 'one last ride'; the 'ride' might be nearing its end

+

but none of the smartphones, in the foreseeable future, are likely to be the ultimate one.

The OnePlus 8T is not. It is the fourth smartphone OnePlus has released this year. There was OnePlus 8; a week later came the flagship OnePlus 8 Pro. Then OnePlus Nord, a 'midrange' phone which was a wild card for the brand. Now, as predicted since the launch of the annual 'T' series in 2016, we now have OnePlus 8T (starting from ₹42,999), which is difficult to categorise. That, per se, is not a big concern. But it begs the question: why do we need another phone so soon? If you don't want to get into all that and want to know only about 8T, here goes.

## Adept as usual

There are no big surprises with the 8T and that is not necessarily a bad thing. Most of its features, of course, are present in its three predecessors released this year. It is perhaps better to repeat

## SPECIFICATIONS

<b>SCREEN SIZE &amp; WEIGHT:</b>	6.55"; 188 g
<b>RESOLUTION:</b>	2400 x 1080 pixels
<b>402 ppi</b>	(Fluid AMOLED)
<b>CAMERA: REAR:</b>	48+16+5+2 MP;
<b>Front:</b>	16 MP
<b>CPU:</b>	Qualcomm Snapdragon 865
<b>RAM AND STORAGE:</b>	8GB/12GB & 128GB/256GB UFS 3.1 2-LANE
<b>BATTERY:</b>	4500mAh (non-removable) Warp Charge 65 (10V/6.5A)

what has been working so well for the brand.

The 8T has all the solid features that we have come to expect in a OnePlus phone. Ready with Android 11 and OnePlus' minimally-designed Oxygen OS, the device also has great display and processor, super-quick refresh rate, fast charging, and more.

The 6.55-inch phone (available in Lunar Silver and Aquamarine Green) has a flat display, compared to the curved edge top of its cousin, 8. With the Snapdragon 865 processor backed by an 8 gigabyte RAM, you seldom ex-

perience a lag and overheating. The AMOLED 2400x1080 display comes with a refresh rate of 120 Hz. The operations, hence, are butter-smooth. But compared to the shift from 60 to 90 Hz, the 90 to 120 Hz increment is almost unnoticeable, unless you are gaming.

Among the most impressive things about the 8T is its combination of 4,500 millampere-hour battery and a Warp Charge 65 charger, a match for Oppo's fast-charge tech. You can use this charger for tablets and other smartphones, too. But the 8T does not support wireless charging. In 15 minutes, the charge surged from 15 to 68%, which was enough to last a day (full charge in 38 minutes).

## Same old peeves

You know what is coming, don't you? Yes, the camera, indeed. The 48-megapixel Quad Camera is one of the key selling points of 8T. The broad, rectangular four-camera-plus-two-flash strip is a departure from OnePlus' usual vertical three-camera set-up. The extra camera in the 8T is a 2 megapixel monochrome sensor for taking black-and-white photos. It saves you from an additional step(s) of making the photo black and white. But I did not find it significantly better than a good black-and-white filter.

You might find it easier to take close-up shots though as the macro lens has been upgraded from 2 megapixels to 5 megapixels. The 48-megapixel main lens and 16-megapixel wide lens are unchanged. You can get way better pictures with minimum effort than you would with most midrange phones. But, if you compare the camera to iPhone's or Pixels', it falls short.

Is there a flickering hope for the return of the 3.5-millimetre AUX headphone jack in phones that are and above midrange? We should probably start a hashtag campaign or a candle-light march to bring it back.

Like the previous versions, it does not have an IP rating for water resistance either; though OnePlus continues to promise that the device can withstand inclement weather.

Overall, if you already got the 8, 8 Pro, or Nord, you need not kick yourself, for the 8T is not significantly better than its antecedents.

# Disruption in droves

Dubbed the 'rajma earbuds', Samsung's Galaxy Buds Live offer a snug and high-fidelity audio experience — for a hefty price



**Novel sounds** The Samsung Galaxy Buds Live earbuds (Mystic Black) in their charging case • DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

immersive sound but the invasive nature brought up by doctors always concerned me. The Buds Live, however, sit neatly without feeling too loose or dizzyingly tight. It helps that each earbud is just 5.6 grams, quite light given the deceptively heavy look.

## Now, press play

Oh, the sound: great acoustics that elevate vocals to true-to-life clarity, offering an intimate audio experience.

Thanks to the 12mm drivers with AKG tuning, look forward to high-fidelity and glitch-less listening. The dynamic bass levels are not too jarring and the snares have a hard knock while synths feel delightful.

The touch and tap commands are fairly easy to learn, ranging from single to triple taps. The Buds Live offer a game-upper in the form of Active Noise Cancellation which can be activated at will using touch commands. This is ideal for fitness regimes and streaming sessions that don't require external sounds.

The battery on the Buds Live is, as expected, powerful; it offers a pretty decent wear time. The battery case has a 472mAh capacity while each bud has 60mAh, enough for a solid few hours and a few workout sessions. Recharging takes just a few minutes, but I haven't reached a point yet where the buds were fatigued.

This year saw a number of entries into the earbud market, but none with the pull of the Samsung Galaxy Live Buds.

ingly is ABS plastic, putting off the premium target. The case itself is not a stunner to match what is within. A better design would have complemented the buds' chromatic sheen, which are certainly an eye-catcher even when worn.

The first time I tried the Buds Live, it took a couple of tries to get the fit right; essentially the speaker has to slide closer to the ear entrance while the wing-tip sits snugly within the arc. There is breathability to avoid excess moisture build-up for long stretches of wear time,

which is a plus for the in-ear earbuds segment. I am a big fan of in-ear earbuds

purely because they promise



Those who want the long-haul experience of cinematic sound can opt for these if ready to splurge.



**Power up**  
OnePlus 8T comes with a Warp Charge 65  
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

gram (3GPP) nodes to use the cell site's Radio Frequency energy based on the subscription and the status of the phone," he adds. This also means that the cellular company will have the capability to start and stop the wireless charging once it crosses a particular value. "It can differ from tower to tower and be custom-made depending on requirements," he explains.

## Driven by the future

Tamil Nadu-born Srinivasan's passion is an extension of his everyday job that revolves around system design, analysis and quality engineering of advanced telecommunication Technologies such as 5G, 4G and the Internet of Things.

"The newer versions of Apple's iPhone and Watch, and Samsung Galaxy smartphones can charge themselves while they are placed on a wireless charging pad. However, these devices must be in physical contact and must literally be placed on the exact position designed for it to work properly," he says.

Over-The-Air Wireless Charging, on the other hand, is "contactless and truly wireless" according to him. "One might not even notice that their phone is charging while it is

constructed using logical algorithms based on Artificial Intelligence (AI) that would decide when to charge the battery based on the energy levels from the source and existing battery percentage," puts forth Srinivasan, explaining that a smartphone and a wearable smart watch can be charged by a wireless source simultaneously.

## Looking ahead

With several companies working on over-the-air wireless charging technologies, the day might not be far when we can get rid of the charger we hold dearly to.

"Technically, India is fully prepared to adopt over-the-air wireless charging once the Government bodies approve it after duly examining any safety concerns," adds Srinivasan, who did his schooling in Chennai and Coimbatore, before working with leading telecommunication companies in India and the US over the last 15 years. The number of wireless providers in India has been a cause of concern — Rajinikanth's film 2.0 broached this topic as well — but it could be a blessing in disguise for this new charging concept.

"More wireless providers mean more cell sites and more dissipated radio frequency energy potentially available to be used as the 'source' for wireless charging. Also, most of the urban middle class today have an in-home Wi-Fi router which would enable us in adopting the technology."



SRINIVASA RAMANUJAM

"My phone ran out of charge." This is probably one of the most often-used excuses for avoiding work-related calls today.

If Srinivasan Sridharan has his way, this might be history. The Seattle-based innovator recently filed a patent for 'Systems and methods for authorisation and billing of users for wireless charging' — where he is listed as an 'inventor' — on billing 'over the air' wireless charging. Let us say you pay ₹100 a month to your telecom service provider and you never have to charge your phone using a wired charger, because it can automatically charge 'over the



How Seattle-based technologist Srinivasan Sridharan conceptualised an innovative 'over-the-air' charging mechanism

# Chuck that charger

'air' using the cell tower site's dissipated radio frequency energy.

This is the core concept behind Srinivasan's latest project. His day job, as a Principal Engineer-System Design (5G) with T-Mobile, helps him to keep updated on the latest developments in technology, which in turn, gets him thinking about such innovations. The idea behind the current patent took shape when he wondered if a cell site tower could be viewed as an energy source and if that can be billed. "My patented algorithm would check if a user is a subscriber with the cellular company for the wireless charging service. It would authorise the user's smartphone based on 3rd generation partnership pro-

gram (3GPP) nodes to use the

cell site's Radio Frequency

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Over-The-Air Wireless Charging, on the other hand, is "contactless and truly wireless" according to him. "One might not even notice that their phone is charging while it is

in their pocket or handbag," he adds. His patent ties in with the latest cutting-edge inventions in the consumer electronic battery industry across the world that questions the need for wires and electricity, for charging. Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence are the backbones of this technology.

"The wireless charging circuit on the devices would be

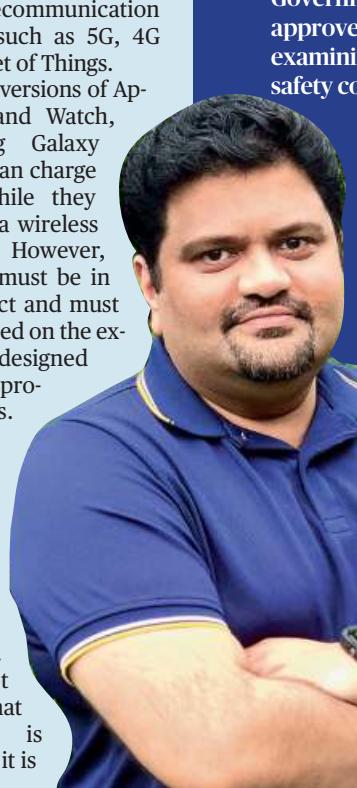
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Technically, India is fully prepared to adopt over-the-air wireless charging once the Government bodies approve it after duly examining any safety concerns

# Inked, naturally

Kerala-based artist Thaj Backer experiments with an ink made of burnt rice and tree gum, from his hometown Ponnani

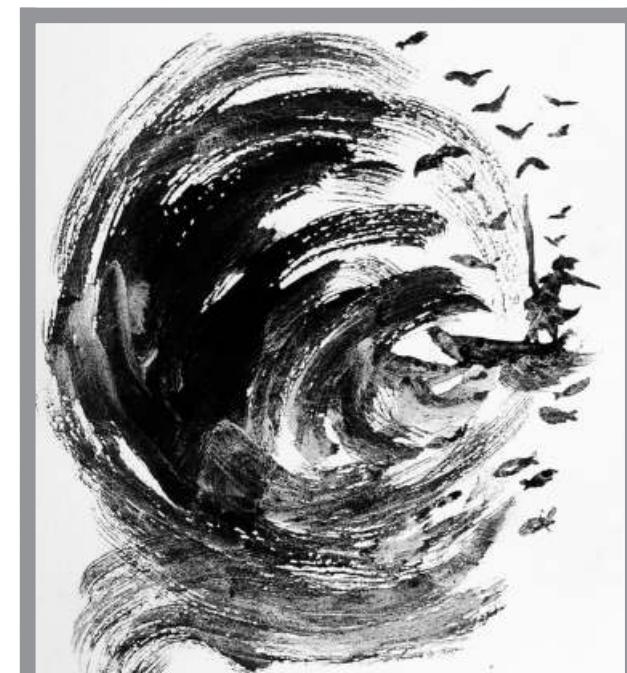
ANASUYA MENON

On one of his strolls around his hometown Ponnani, artist Thaj Backer stumbled on something that ignited his curiosity: a vendor who sold Arabic ink to the *madrasas* in the locality. The ink, he found, was used in the ceremonial initiation of a child into the world of letters. Intrigued, Thaj began to learn more about it.

Available only in a few shops selling the *Quran* in the area, this natural ink is made using burnt rice and tree gum (as a binder) and is powdered. "I believe there is a certain honour in working with local resources and this ink was a discovery," says Thaj, who wasted no time in buying it.

The powdered ink is usually mixed with either boiled and cooled water or rose water. The mixture is then poured into a piece of muslin, tied and hung up so that the pure ink is collected," he says. It is jet black and flows easily on paper, Thaj adds.

He has been felicitously using the Arabic ink for the drawings he has been doing as part of Inktober, a month-long global art challenge, which has artists showcasing their inking skills. Participating artists are expected to submit one drawing a day through the month, based on the theme provided.



"I am the kind of person who takes off on a train journey without a particular destination in mind when I feel stressed. It is stifling not being able to do that."

Thaj is also a performing artist. For the past 10 years has explored mediums that include theatre, painting, sculpture and designing.

He was part of ABC (Art by Children), a programme initiated by the Kochi Muziris Biennale Foundation to run research-driven art interventions for children and art educators to help them reach their creative potential.

Thaj is currently working on a series that explores the nuances of romance, the body and nudity. Titled Udalakalude Unmaadam, (Ecstasy of the Body), it has over 60 works done in charcoal on paper.



nuances of romance, the body and nudity. Titled Udalakalude Unmaadam, (Ecstasy of the Body), it has over 60 works done in charcoal on paper.

He will be part of a virtual residency organised by House Conspiracy, an arts organisation based in Australia. He will also be showcasing his work in an online group show, For the Kisans.

**Go local**  
Artist Thaj Backer relies on local resources for his works; his paintings for the Inktober challenge

\* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



an online group show, For the Kisans.

The works done for Inktober will be documented as a personal collection and can be viewed at @Thajbackerofficial on Instagram.

# For such a time as this

*Night of the Restless Spirits* is author Sarbpreet Singh's recounting of the Sikh massacre of 1984

RUTH DHANARAJ

Like most Indians who were not in Delhi during those three fateful days in November 1984, Sarbpreet Singh considered any account of the massacre as an instance of civil unrest blown out of proportion.

"Even though I had to bunk in a friend's hostel room for two days to avoid miscreants, I considered it a stray incident," says Sarbpreet, who was a 24-year-old engineering student, at the time.

"It was only a couple of years later, when I was in the United States and read accounts by the People's Union for Civil Liberties and the People's Union for Democratic Rights, that the enormity of what had transpired began to dawn on me. The fact that the documentation was undertaken by non-Sikhs who had nothing to gain added to its credibility."

Responding to the turmoil in his heart, Sarbpreet penned *Kultar's Mime*, a poem that captures the trauma of children who witnessed their parents being butchered. Written in 1990, *Kultar's Mime* was resurrected in 2014 by Sarbpreet's daughter, J Mehr Kaur, who adapted it for the stage. It ran to packed houses for two years in over 90 countries, including India.

"The feedback was terrific. People were grateful the play provided them with a platform to address their trauma, to open up about their experience of this incident which they had never shared with a spouse or child before this," says Sarbpreet, over a phone call from his home in Massachusetts.

The overwhelmingly positive response to *Kultar's Mime* encouraged Sarbpreet to revisit his notes, which resulted in *Night of the Restless Spirits*.

The book is a fictionalised version of real happenings comprising just eight chapters. Not for the faint-hearted, *Night of the Restless Spirits*, shows the events of 1984 through the prism of many lives and explores its far-reaching impact on members of the community as well as on non-Sikhs associated with them.

"It was difficult to write," admits Sarbpreet. "It was hard to delve into the complexities of these events and strike a nuanced balance."

The events of 1984 have been successfully pushed under the carpet for decades. "There was never an incentive for any party to talk about it – neither the perpetrators who allowed things to get out of hand nor the victims who had always identified themselves as warriors and defenders of the weak, throughout India's history."

As cathartic as the process of writing this book was, Sarbpreet hopes above all else that the book stirs up the vestiges of humanity that he believes lie dormant in his fellow men. "There is an increasing intolerance towards those who are different. I hope *Night of the Restless Spirits* mitigates the numbness that society has against minorities; that the voices of the stifled and subdued are given a just hearing, that we learn from the past and such horrors are not repeated."

With this book, Sarbpreet Singh touches on the fragility of life, survivor's guilt, mob mentality, the power of one's conscience, as well as theickleness, to bring out the best and worst of human nature.

*Night of the Restless Spirits* is published by Penguin.

**Short but powerful**  
Sarbpreet's eighth-chapter book tells fictionalised versions of true incidents

\* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

# Pachchadi that tastes like home

PRABALIKI M BORAH

"So what if I can't see? Other people can and I can teach them to cook my specialties," says Nellore-based Boddu Naga Lakshmi, who along with her sister-in-law Bondala Kavitha launched Kavitha Naga Vlogs for food videos and friendly chatter in September.

What makes the videos of these 26-year-olds based in Andhra Pradesh stand out is the simplicity with which they are presented. So much so, that this month-old vlog has pulled in 40,000 subscribers and gets between 1 million and 5.5 million views per video.

Naga Lakshmi, who is blind in her left eye and has about 18% sight in the right, is a bundle of energy. She loves the camera and is always up for fun. She says, "I always wanted to be on YouTube but didn't know how. My sister-in-law and I discussed it and decided to make home-cooking videos."

Proud of her cooking skills, she says, with all honesty, that though she cooks everything well, her *pappu charu* and *pachchadi* are the best.

"I never used to cook when my mother was around. After she passed

Naga Lakshmi, a cook with visual impairment, and her sister-in-law Bondala Kavitha use their cheery vlog to remind us that the best kind of food is simple



**Simply successful**  
(Left) Kavitha and Naga Lakshmi; (far left) the duo preparing its hit *chukka kura pachchadi*

\* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

mi also makes an amazing chutney with *urad dal*."

It is obvious that they enjoy each other's company as well as creating the vlog. They are excited about the channel's earnings so far, though they are yet to withdraw the amount.

"When it increases some more, I want to buy something nice in gold for Naga Lakshmi," says Kavitha.

The two recently posted a video of *Nellore chepala pulusu*, with side notes on why the dish is famous. For this, they asked Kavitha's sister for help, to find the most authentic recipe possible.

Naga Lakshmi says, "Akka's *chepala pulusu* is top class in Nellore." Through Kavitha Naga Vlogs, they want to show regional dishes, some forgotten and some yet to be discovered. On their channel, they say the aim is "to show

village life style."

Says Naga Lakshmi, "We want to shoot a video with Kavitha's mother. She makes an excellent mutton dish that lasts many days without refrigeration. Kavitha is the chicken expert in the family and we love whatever chicken dish she makes."

When asked how she learnt to face the camera and speak confidently, Naga Lakshmi laughs, "TV. With whatever eyesight is left, I watch all the Kannada serials. I learn from there. I have studied till class five and can manage a little in English as well."

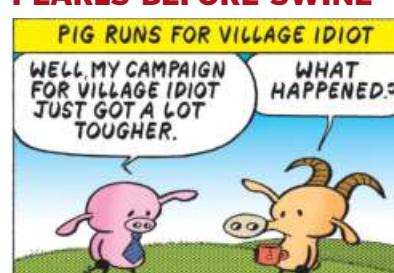
Kavitha adds that Naga Lakshmi's positive and cheerful demeanour is a big attraction. "She never indulges in self-pity. She is always looking to do something new and keeping us all engaged and happy."



## POOCHE CAFE



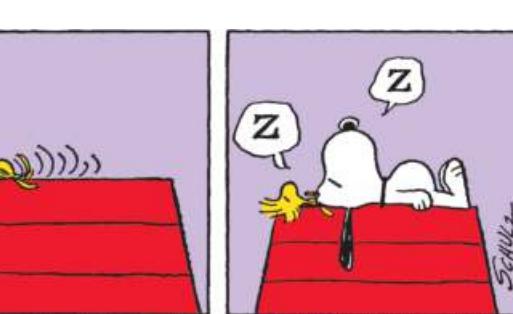
## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



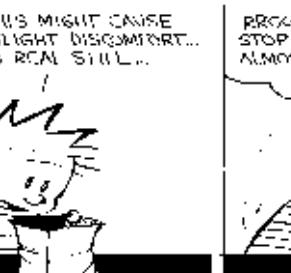
## PEANUTS



## TIGER



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



# Biden, Trump on final campaign blitz

The election battle heats up amid surging virus cases and White House staring at a second outbreak

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump plans to intensify an already breakneck travel schedule in the final full week of the presidential campaign, overlooking a surge of coronavirus cases in the U.S. and a fresh outbreak in his own White House.

Mr. Trump is expected to hit nearly a dozen states in his last-ditch effort to recover ground from Democrat Joe Biden, including Sunday's trip to Maine and Tuesday's to Nebraska. Both States award electoral votes by congressional district and could be crucial in a tight election. Mr. Trump will hold 11 rallies in the final 48 hours alone.

Mr. Biden is staying close to his Wilmington, Delaware, home on Monday. But he plans to pick up his travel schedule later in the week, aiming to hit the six battleground States the campaign sees as key to his chances, some with socially distanced in-person events and others with virtual events. On Tuesday, the former vice president is traveling to Georgia, a state that hasn't voted for a Democratic presidential candidate in more than a quarter-century but where polls show a tight race.



Closing message: Democratic nominee Joe Biden and wife Jill during a drive-in campaign event in Dallas. ■ NYT

The final week of the campaign is colliding with deepening concerns about a public health crisis in the U.S. Mr. Trump is eager for voters to focus on almost anything else, worried that he will lose if the election becomes a referendum on his handling of the pandemic. Mr. Biden is working to ensure the race is just that, hitting Mr. Trump on the virus and presenting himself as a safer, more stable alternative.

**Pence's aides infected**  
The stakes were clear this weekend as the White House became the locus for a second outbreak of the virus in a month. Several close aides to Vice-President Mike Pence

tested positive for the virus, including his chief of staff, Marc Short. Mr. Pence, though, was insistent on maintaining his aggressive calendar, even though he was deemed a "close contact" of his adviser, claiming the privileges of being an "essential employee."

The latest outbreak has served as a potent metaphor for the divergent approaches the Trump and Biden campaigns have taken to the virus. On Sunday, White House chief of staff Mark Meadows said that "we're not going to control the pandemic" and the focus should be on containment and treatment. Mr. Trump aims to pack thousands of people, most with-

out face coverings, across some of the upper Midwestern states bearing the brunt of the surge. "We want normal life to resume," Mr. Trump said on Sunday. "We just want normal life."

Mr. Meadows, pressed to explain why the pandemic cannot be reined in, said, "Because it is a contagious virus just like the flu." He told CNN's "State of the Union" that the government was focused on getting effective therapeutics and vaccines to market.

#### White flag of defeat

Mr. Biden, in a statement, said Mr. Meadows' comments continued with the Trump administration waving "the white flag of defeat" in the face of the virus.

Mr. Meadows, for his part, attempted to do some cleanup on Monday, telling reporters that while the administration is "not going to control" the virus it "will try to contain it as best we can."

"The only person waving a white flag along with his white mask is Joe Biden," Mr. Meadows said.

Mr. Biden's team argues the coronavirus is likely to blot out any other issues that might come up in the final days of the campaign – including Mr. Biden's recent

debate-stage comment in which he affirmed he'd transition away from oil, later walked back as a transition away from federal subsidies. That strategy appeared to pay off as the outbreak in Mr. Pence's staff refocused the national conversation once again on the pandemic.

Mr. Trump and his team, meanwhile, have struggled to settle on a closing message, with the undisciplined candidate increasingly trusting his gut over his advisers. He's grasped for dirt on his Democratic rival and used apocalyptic terms to describe a Mr. Biden presidency, but Mr. Biden has thus far proven more resilient to such attacks than Mr. Trump's 2016 rival.

"You can certainly expect that (Biden) will focus on COVID as it continues to, unfortunately, rise all across the country," Biden deputy campaign manager Kate Bedingfield said in an interview. "It is disrupting people's lives and people are looking for a leader to put in place plans to get it under control."

With more than a third of the expected ballots in the election already cast, it may become increasingly challenging for Mr. Trump and Mr. Biden to reshape the contours of the race.

# China's Communist Party holds key policy conclave

Plenum to chalk out economic policies for the next 5 years

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China's Communist Party (CPC) on Monday began a key conclave of top leaders that will set the direction for the country's economic policies for the next five years.

The 14th five-year plan (2021-2025) and a longer-term "Vision 2035" blueprint will be in focus at the fifth plenary session, or plenum, of the CPC's Central Committee, which meets for such sessions once a year.

China's State media reported President and CPC General Secretary Xi Jinping on Monday delivered a work report at the start of the plenum, attended by the

around 200 members of the Central Committee, and "explained a draft document of the CPC Central Committee's proposals for formulating the 14th Five-Year (2021-2025) Plan for Economic and Social Development and future targets for 2035."

This is the first such party meeting since the COVID-19 pandemic, and is also the highest-level economic policy meeting held once every five years. The party will likely hold two more such party plenaries, focusing on other themes such as party



Xi Jinping

governance, before its next leadership congress in 2022 when it will choose a new Politburo and Central Committee.

As with the economy-focused plenum five years ago, the current four-day session, being held at the high-security Jingxi hotel in Beijing, will firm up the next five-year plan. The 14th plan (2021-2025), the official Xinhua news agency reported, will "lay out measures to nurture a new development pattern".

Three themes are expected to be in focus. The first is what Mr. Xi has pushed as a new "dual circulation" model, placing greater emphasis on self-reliance and the domestic market as a driver of growth – a task that has taken on greater urgency

against the backdrop of the trade war with the U.S. and the pandemic triggering a collapse in global demand and unemployment problems domestically – while striking a better balance with external demand.

#### Rising debt

China's rising debt problem is another concern, one exacerbated by the pandemic with the government loosening the purse-strings to sustain growth. According to a forecast by UBS, China's debt-to-GDP ratio is expected to rise by 25 percentage points to 300% of GDP this year because of recent measures.

The five-year plan and the 2035 blueprint are also expected to highlight more balanced growth, with a focus on greener development. To meet the target announced last month by Mr. Xi at the United Nations General Assembly for the country to go carbon neutral by 2060, China will need to reduce the share of coal in its energy mix from the 58% as of 2019 to less than 50% by 2025, according to an estimate from Zou Ji, head of Energy Foundation China, reported Reuters.

## U.S. Senate likely to confirm Barrett to Supreme Court

Once confirmed, the SC will have 6-3 conservative majority

REUTERS  
WASHINGTON



Amy Coney Barrett

The Republican-controlled U.S. Senate is expected on Monday to confirm President Donald Trump's nominee, Amy Coney Barrett, as the next justice to the Supreme Court, a move that will tilt the country's highest court further to the right for years to come.

No nominee to the Supreme Court has ever been confirmed by the Senate this close to a presidential election, with more than 58 million ballots already cast ahead of Election Day on November 3.

The rush to confirm Judge

Barrett, 48, has bitterly divided Democrats and Republicans, who are expected to split along party lines on the final vote. Trump has said repeatedly he wants her in place to vote on any election-related cases that go to the court.

Several Republicans who

previously expressed concerns about rushing the process are expected to approve Judge Barrett's nomination.

Senate Democrats and some Republicans expressed unease at the possibility that Vice-President Mike Pence, several of whose close aides have tested positive for COVID-19, might attend Monday's vote.

With Judge Barrett confirmed, the Supreme Court will have a solid 6-3 conservative majority. She is expected to participate in a hearing on November 10, where Republicans will ask the court to strike down the Affordable Care Act.

Thousands of people flocked onto the streets of Santiago amid a cacophony of horn-blaring to celebrate a crushing victory for the "Approve" campaign – by 78.28% to 21.72 with over

## Chileans vote for new Constitution

78.28% back reform aimed at expanding role of the State in providing welfare

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SANTIAGO



Landmark win: People celebrating in Valparaiso. ■ REUTERS

99% of the votes counted.

"I never imagined that us Chileans would be capable of uniting for such a change!" said a jubilant María Isabel Nunez, 46, as she walked in the crowd hand-in-hand with her daughter.

Acknowledging the result, President Sebastian Pinera

called on the nation to work together for a "new Constitution" in a speech broadcast from his Moneda Palace residence.

#### It's the beginning

"This plebiscite is not the end, it is the beginning of a path that we must all walk to-

gether to agree on a new constitution for Chile," Mr. Pinera said. "Until now, the Constitution has divided us. From today we must all work together so that the new Constitution is the great framework of unity, stability and the future."

The new Constitution would expand the role of the state in providing a welfare safety net, ensuring basic rights to health, education, water distribution and pensions.

Many conservatives, however, say the Constitution has been key to Chile's decades of economic growth, and a greater state role would add pressure on an economy struggling to emerge from the pandemic.

## Russian strikes kill 78 Turkey-backed rebels in Syria'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIRUT

Russian airstrikes killed 78 Turkey-backed rebels in northwestern Syria on Monday, a monitor said, in the bloodiest surge in violence since a truce almost eight months ago.

More than 90 others were wounded when Russian warplanes targeted a training camp of the Faylaq al-Sham faction in the Jabal Duwayhi area in Idlib province, the Syrian Observatory for Hu-

man Rights said.

In March, a truce brokered between Moscow and Ankara stemmed a deadly months-long Russia-backed regime military offensive on the country's last major rebel stronghold in Idlib.

That onslaught from December had displaced almost a million people from their homes in one of the worst humanitarian crises of the nine-year civil war.

Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman described

Monday's strikes as the "deadliest since the ceasefire came into force".

The National Liberation Front, an umbrella group of Ankara-backed rebels based in Idlib that includes Faylaq al-Sham, told AFP that Monday's Russian strikes hit one of its positions and caused casualties. It did not give an exact death toll.

NLF spokesman Sayyad Raad denounced the "Russian aircraft and regime forces continually violating the Tur-

kish-Russian deal in targeting military positions, villages and towns".

Of the almost one million people displaced in the last Idlib offensive, more than 2,000,000 have returned home to their towns and villages, most since the ceasefire went into force.

**Endangers truce**  
The March truce has largely held, despite some intermittent bombardment in the area from both sides.

Russian air strikes have from time to time targeted military positions, including those of Turkey-backed groups, Abdal Rahman said.

After a string of military victories backed by Russia,

the Syrian government has regained control of around 70 percent of the country, the Observatory says.

Syria's war, which broke out after the brutal suppression of anti-government protests in 2011, has killed more than 3,800,000 people.

## China to levy sanctions on U.S. companies

Firms targeted for arms sale to Taiwan

REUTERS

BEIJING

China will impose sanctions on Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defense, Raytheon and other U.S. companies it says are involved in Washington's arms sales to Taiwan, a Foreign Ministry spokesman said on Monday.

Zhao Lijian told journalists that China was acting to protect its national interest, but did not spell out what form the sanctions would take.

The U.S. State Department has approved the potential sale of three weapons systems to Taiwan, including sensors, missiles and artillery that could have a total value of \$1.8 billion, the Pentagon said last week.

Beijing considers Taiwan a wayward province it has vowed to bring under

trol, by force if necessary. "To safeguard our national interests, China decided to take necessary measures and levy sanctions on U.S. companies such as Lockheed Martin, Boeing Defense, and Raytheon, and those individuals and companies who behaved badly in the process of the arms sales," Mr. Zhao said.

China has imposed sanctions on Lockheed Martin and other U.S. companies in the past for selling weapons to Taiwan.

The Trump administration has ramped up support for Taiwan through arms sales and visits by senior U.S. officials, adding to tensions in relations between Beijing and Washington, already strained by disagreements over the South China Sea, Hong Kong, human rights.

Workers washing a bus terminal to check the spread of COVID-19 in Colombo. ■ AP

transmission of COVID-19 and any neglect on the part of the authorities could spell dangerous consequences.

As the number of COVID-19 positive cases continues rising, Sri Lanka's coronavirus infrastructure, including the army-run quarantine centres, appeared to be under pressure.

On Monday, Army Commander Lieutenant General Shavendra Silva, who heads the National Centre for the Prevention of COVID-19, told media that first-tier contacts

of COVID-19 patients will henceforth be asked to self-quarantine themselves in their homes, instead of being taken to quarantine centres.

**Source unidentified**  
After the global pandemic hit Sri Lanka in March, the country went into a stringent lockdown for about two months, in addition to closing its borders. The country's early measures to contain the pandemic drew high praise including from the World Health Organization, allowing authorities to go ahead with the general elections in August.

However, the recent wave appears to have caught the country unaware. Health authorities are yet to identify the source of this outbreak, identified on October 4, that has since spread to 19 of the island's 25 districts, according to data published by the Epidemiology Unit.

## Erdogan for boycott of goods, amid Macron row

Standoff over Islam, freedom of speech

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
ANKARA

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Monday joined calls for a boycott of French goods, ramping up a standoff between France and Muslim countries over Islam and freedom of speech.

Mr. Erdogan has led the charge against President Emmanuel Macron over his robust defence of the right to mock religion following the murder of a French schoolteacher who had shown his class cartoons of the Prophet Mohammed.

In the aftermath of Paty's murder, Mr. Macron issued a passionate defence of free speech and France's secular values, vowing that the country "will not give up

cartoons over which 12 people were massacred at the satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo in 2015.

As the backlash over France's reaction widened, European leaders rallied behind Mr. Macron.

**European support**

German Chancellor Angela Merkel condemned Mr. Erdogan's "defamatory" remarks about the French leader. The Prime Ministers of the Netherlands and Greece also expressed support for France, as did European Commission president Ursula von der Leyen.

French goods have already been pulled from supermarket shelves in Qatar and Kuwait, among other Gulf states, whereas in Syria people have burned pictures of Mr. Macron and French flags have been torched in the Libyan capital Tripoli.

The October 16 beheading of high-school teacher Samuel Paty by a Chechen extremist caused deep shock in France.

Paty had shown his pu-

CMYK

## MARKET WATCH

	26-10-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	40,146	-1.33
US Dollar	73.84	-0.31
Gold	51,034	-0.07
Brent oil	40.63	-0.08

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	363.70	-0.65
Asian Paints	2080.45	-39.80
Axis Bank	493.35	-13.85
Bajaj Auto	2895.15	-187.10
Bajaj Finserv	5700.95	-130.60
Bajaj Finance	3292.90	-23.00
Bharti Airtel	434.05	-0.35
BPCL	346.10	-5.45
Britannia Ind	3485.40	15.65
Cipla	747.15	-10.40
Coal India	114.55	-3.15
Divis Lab	3042.15	-26.70
D Dr Reddys Lab	4978.10	-40.15
Eicher Motors	2108.10	-73.80
GAIL (India)	85.50	-1.80
Grasim Ind	780.00	-5.20
HCL Tech.	847.80	-4.65
HDFC	2073.35	13.65
HDFC Bank	1210.90	-24.90
HDFC Life	578.65	14.15
Hero MotoCorp	2897.95	-213.10
Hindalco	172.40	-9.85
Hind Unilever	2166.75	22.90
ICICI Bank	404.45	-12.50
IndusInd Bank	616.65	8.50
Infosys	1112.45	-10.05
Indian Oil Corp	78.10	-0.15
ITC	168.55	-2.20
JSW Steel	308.30	-12.95
Kotak Bank	1416.90	33.85
L&T	951.75	10.50
M&M	597.15	-28.00
Maruti Suzuki	7054.80	-48.45
Nestle India Ltd.	16259.35	393.90
NTPC	85.95	-0.30
ONGC	68.20	-0.80
PowerGrid Corp	172.05	1.90
Reliance Ind	2029.10	-83.95
SBI Life	778.85	8.15
State Bank	196.70	-6.10
Shree Cement	20424.70	-96.45
Sun Pharma	474.50	-10.00
Tata Motors	133.70	-3.30
Tata Steel	406.40	-15.05
TCS	2688.20	1.40
Tech Mahindra	819.25	-29.00
Titan	1215.50	-26.20
UltraTech Cement	4485.40	-19.15
UPL	433.40	-17.55
Wipro	339.80	-2.60

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on October 26		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar.....	73.65	73.97
Euro.....	86.98	87.36
British Pound	95.92	96.34
Japanese Yen (100).....	70.22	70.53
Chinese Yuan.....	10.99	11.04
Swiss Franc.....	81.19	81.55
Singapore Dollar.....	54.15	54.40
Canadian Dollar.....	55.86	56.12
Malaysian Ringgit.....	17.68	17.76
Australian Dollar.....	52.56	52.78

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## Mercedes-Benz delivers 550 cars during festivals

MUMBAI  
Mercedes-Benz India has announced a 'record' delivery of 550 new cars during Navratri and Dussehra despite the 'current challenging times'. Delhi NCR led the deliveries with a record 175 cars sold during the festive period. The other key markets were Mumbai, Punjab and Gujarat, the firm said, adding that further demand was expected during the upcoming Diwali and Dhanteras. "This impressive number of deliveries makes us confident of a good festive season," said Martin Schwenk, MD and CEO, Mercedes-Benz India.

## Bharti enters cloud communications market

NEW DELHI  
Telecom services provider Bharti Airtel announced an entry into the \$1-billion cloud communications market with the unveiling of 'Airtel IQ'. The company has already onboarded clients such as Swiggy, Justdial, Urban Company, Havells, Dr. Lal Path Labs and Rapido as customers for Airtel IQ during the beta phase which had been on for the past two quarters. The new platform could translate into 30-40% cost savings for enterprises as compared with traditional models, according to Adarsh Nair, chief product officer, Bharti Airtel.

## Bajaj Auto rolls out upgraded CT100 bike

MUMBAI  
Bajaj Auto has rolled out an upgraded version of the CT100 motorcycle, with eight new features, priced at ₹46,432 (ex-showroom, Delhi), making it the 'most affordable' entry-level 100cc motorcycle, the company said. "Our CT range has sold more than 68 lakh units. The upgraded features in the new CT100 KS will definitely attract customers aiming to choose a motorcycle that is feature-rich, fuel efficient, and provides the best value for money in its segment," said Narayan Sundaraman, head of Marketing, Bajaj Auto Ltd.

CM YK

# Future shrugs off Amazon challenge

Not party to agreement cited by Amazon, says Future Retail; 'deal with Reliance enforceable under law'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

A day after Amazon.com Inc. secured an interim order from Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC) restraining Future Retail Ltd. (FRL) and Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd. (RRVL) to go ahead with their ₹24,713 crore assets acquisition deal, Future Retail said it was not party to the agreement under which Amazon has invoked arbitration proceedings and it would proceed with the proposed transaction 'unhindered' without any delay.

RRVL has also said that it would enforce its rights without delay. "The company has received a communication from the SIAC, enclosing an interim order of the Emergency Arbitrator in the arbit-



**Ceding no ground:** Reliance Retail Ventures said that it would enforce its rights without delay. ■ REUTERS

tration proceedings under shareholders' agreement between Amazon, Future Coupons Private Ltd. and the promoter group," Future Retail informed the BSE.

"The company is examining the communication and the order. It may be noted

that the company is not a party to the agreement under which Amazon has invoked arbitration proceedings," it said.

"All relevant agreements are governed by Indian law and provisions of Indian Arbitration Act... and this mat-

ter raises several fundamental jurisdictional issues which go to the root of the matter. Accordingly, this order will have to be tested under the provisions of Indian Arbitration Act in an appropriate forum," FRL said in a regulatory filing.

"In any enforcement proceedings, FRL would take appropriate steps to ensure that the proposed transaction will proceed unhindered without any delay," it added.

In a statement issued late Sunday, RRVL, the subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), said, "the rights and obligations are fully enforceable under Indian law."

Soon after the order, an Amazon spokesperson said, "We are grateful for the order which grants all the re-

liefs that were sought. We remain committed to an expeditious conclusion of the arbitration process."

"SIAC's decision to put a stay on the sale of Future Group's consumer business to RIL is unlikely to impact the latter's credit profile, given its position as the leading retailer in India and its strong financial position," Sweta Patodia, analyst, Corporate Finance Group, Moody's Investors Service, said.

"In any enforcement proceedings, FRL would take appropriate steps to ensure that the proposed transaction will proceed unhindered without any delay," it added.

RIL's shares dropped 4% to ₹2,028.70 on the BSE on Monday, while Future Retail's shares plunged 5% to ₹73.85.

"Nonetheless, the 'decision will likely delay RIL's plans to expand its retail footprint in India," she added.

"We are grateful for the order which grants all the re-

## Aurobindo to sell Natrol to PE entity for \$550 mn

Sale to help cut debt, says pharma firm

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Drugmaker Aurobindo Pharma has reached a definitive agreement to sell Natrol LLC, a wholly owned subsidiary of Aurobindo Pharma USA Inc., to private equity firm New Mountain Capital and its affiliate Arrow Formulas.

The all-cash transaction is valued at \$550 million (₹4,048 crore at the current exchange rate), Aurobindo Pharma intimated the stock exchange Monday morning. The transaction is expected to close by January.

Aurobindo Pharma had acquired the assets of Natrol in December 2014. "Natrol has been a consistently profitable business, growing on all fronts under Aurobindo's

ownership," the company said. "Natrol's annual sales for the 12 months ended March 31, 2020 was about \$157 million," it added. The net worth of Natrol as on March 31 was \$82.41 million.

"We are pleased to sell the Natrol business to an outstanding private equity player, who could focus additional resources to grow Natrol, its products and brands further," Managing Director N. Govindarajan said.

The proceeds from Natrol's divestiture will be used to reduce debt and for other new strategic initiatives, he said. Jefferies served as the sole financial adviser, and Sullivan & Cromwell LLP acted as legal counsel to Aurobindo.

## Aiming to make CG Power debt-free in 5 years: TII

Exports, services are growth drivers'

N. ANAND  
CHENNAI

Tube Investments of India (TII) Ltd., which recently received the Competition Commission of India's (CCI) nod to acquire CG Power and Industrial Solutions, has set a five-year target to make the latter a debt-free firm, said a top TII official.

"We see significant growth drivers such as exports, new product development and service revenues in the existing business," S. Vellayan, MD, TII, said during an analyst call.

"In the five-year time frame, we will also make the company debt-free."

CG Power had total debt of ₹2,161 crore, out of which TII benefited from a haircut of ₹1,100 crore of original debt as of March 2020.

CG Power has a restructured term loan of ₹650 crore, a

## CCI probe on e-tailers: HC to decide on plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Karnataka High Court to decide on the CCI's plea for vacating a stay on the investigation against Amazon and Flipkart for alleged anti-competitive practices.

The Bench comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar, Dinesh Maheswari and Sanjiv Khanna asked the Competition Commission of India (CCI) to approach the High Court for relief.

In deference to the observation made by the Court, learned Solicitor General (appearing for CCI) has agreed to move the HC, in the first instance, for appropriate directions, including for modification and vacating the interim relief granted to the respondents (e-com-firms), the bench said.

CCG would have halved if the waiver were allowed only for cases where moratorium was availed of, it added.

The government has asked lenders to credit the amount to eligible borrowers by November 05, 2020.

The amount will be the difference between compound interest and simple interest over six months (March 1 to August 31).

Borrowers who had availed of higher-yielding loans would benefit more than others.

Consequently, borrowers of unsecured, micro and gold loans will benefit more than those who had taken home loans.

Such loans account for more than 40% of systemic credit and 75% of borrowers, Crisil said. The cost to the

## 'Responsible' fuel pricing needed: PM

'Prices on roller coaster for too long'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Global energy producers must pursue more 'responsible pricing' policies and India needs 'affordable and reliable' energy sources,

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday, arguing that world fuel prices have been on a 'roller coaster' for far too long.



Narendra Modi

markets for both oil and gas," Mr. Modi said at the forum where top officials and Ministers from OPEC nations as well as India's large energy suppliers such as the U.S. and Saudi Arabia were present.

"India believes that access to energy must be affordable and reliable. That is when social economic transformation can take place. We view the energy sector [as one] that empowers people and improves ease of living," he said, highlighting the government's ambition to 'ensure energy justice'.

The PM listed seven key drivers of change on India's energy map – accelerating efforts towards a gas-based economy; cleaner use of fossil fuels, particularly petroleum and coal; greater reliance on domestic sources to drive biofuel; achieving the renewable energy target of 450 GW by 2030; increasing the contribution of electricity to decarbonise mobility; moving into emerging fuels, including hydrogen; and digital innovation across all energy systems.

The 2019 exploration and licencing policy has shifted the focus from revenue to production maximisation, he said, expressing plans to raise India's refining capacity from about 250 million metric tonnes (MMT) a year to 400 MMT by 2025.

'Govts. should modify response to another wave of pandemic'



## Kapil Dev discharged

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

India's first World Cup winning-captain Kapil Dev was on Sunday discharged from a city hospital, two days after undergoing an angioplasty, and was said to be doing fine.

"Mr. Kapil Dev got discharged today [Sunday] afternoon. He's doing fine and can resume his regular daily activity soon. He'll be under regular follow-up consultation with Dr. Atul Mathur," the Fortis Escorts Heart Institute said in a statement.

### TV PICKS

**Champions League:** Sony Ten 2, 3 & Six (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Wednesday)  
**FIH Pro League:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 9 p.m. & 11.30 p.m.

### IN BRIEF



MCG may open gates for India's Boxing Day Test

MELBOURNE  
Fans are expected to be allowed into the Melbourne Cricket Ground for the Boxing Day Test between Australia and India, officials said on Monday. Australia's second largest city has been under a coronavirus lockdown for months, and on Sunday a decision was made to bar spectators at next week's Melbourne Cup horse race. But on Monday officials announced an easing of restrictions after no new daily cases or deaths, opening the door to some good news for fans. AFP

**McGowan wins Italian Open; Bhullar T-5**

BRESCIA  
Gaganjeet Bhullar shot an even par 72 to finish tied 55th at the Italian Open golf championship on Sunday. The other Indian, S.S.P. Chawrasia had missed the cut. Ross McGowan claimed his first title win in 11 years. PTI

**Asian online chess: Indian women win gold**

CHENNAI  
The Indian women's team claimed a 6-2 win over Indonesia to win the gold but the men's side settled for silver after losing to Australia 4.5-3.5 in the final of the Asian Nations (Regions) Online chess championship here on Sunday. PTI



**Alexander Zverev triumphs again**

Cologne  
Alexander Zverev made it back-to-back ATP Tour titles when he beat Diego Schwartzman 6-2, 6-1 in the final of the Cologne Championship. It was Zverev's 13th title overall, and the third time the U.S. Open finalist has won back-to-back titles after wins in Washington and Montreal in August 2017, and Munich and Madrid the previous May. He had won last week's Cologne Indoors final. AP



**Sabalenka wins Ostrava Open**

PRAGUE  
Third seed Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus won the Ostrava Open WTA tournament beating a visibly struggling compatriot Victoria Azarenka 6-2, 6-2 on Sunday. It was World No. 12 Sabalenka's second title this year after the Qatar Open in February. Sunday's match was also the first-ever all-Belarusian final on the WTA Tour. AFP

# Hamilton on top of the world

Passes Schumacher for most wins besides setting a slew of records

### PORtUGUESE GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PORTIMAO

Lewis Hamilton became Formula One's record all-time race-winner on Sunday when he claimed his 92nd victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix to pass Michael Schumacher at the top of the list.

His win lifted him one clear of Schumacher's 14-year-old record of 91 tri-

umphs after a thrilling inaugural F1 race at the Algarve International Circuit.

#### Historic

"Get in there Lewis, what a race. You are rewriting the history books," Mercedes told him over the team radio. Mercedes team boss Toto Wolff said simply: "92 Lewis, 92."

Hamilton fought back after an early scare, when he led but dropped to third after a rain shower, to demon-



King of the track! Hamilton celebrates his coronation. ■ REUTERS

strate impeccable tyre management and flawless judgement as he claimed an eighth win in 12 races this year.

The six-time World champion finished 25.5 seconds clear of his Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas with Red Bull's Max Verstappen a familiar third. Hamilton's triumph added another unprecedented feat to his roster of records. He now has the most wins, a record 97 pole positions, a record 161 podium finishes and a record 45 consecutive points finishes.

The 35-year-old Briton extended his championship lead over Bottas to 77 points.

A seventh World title, which would equal another Schumacher record, now looks all but inevitable with only five races remaining this year.

#### Leclerc fourth

Charles Leclerc was fourth for Ferrari ahead of a surging Pierre Gasly after an excellent drive in his Alpha Tauri.

Carlos Sainz came home sixth for McLaren to beat Ser-

gio Perez, who recovered from a first-lap clash with Verstappen, to finish seventh for Racing Point ahead of the two Renaults of Esteban Ocon and Daniel Ricciardo. Sebastian Vettel, in his final season at Ferrari, was 10th.

### THE RESULTS

1. Hamilton (Mercedes) 1h 29m 56.828s; 2. Bottas (Mercedes) +25.592s; 3. Verstappen (Red Bull) 34.508s; 4. Leclerc (Ferrari) 1:05.312; +1 lap; 5. Gasly (AlphaTauri); 6. Sainz Jr. (McLaren); 7. Perez (Racing Point); 8. Ocon (Renault); 9. Ricciardo (Renault); 10. Vettel (Ferrari); 11. Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo); 12. Albon (Red Bull); 13. Norris (McLaren).

14. Russell (Williams); 15. Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo); 16. Magnussen (Haas); 17. Grosjean (Haas); 18. Latifi (Williams); 19. Kvyat (AlphaTauri); DNF: Stroll (Racing Point).

**Standings: Drivers:** 1. Hamilton 256; 2. Bottas 179; 3. Verstappen 162; 4. Ricciardo 80; 5. Leclerc 75.

**Constructors:** 1. Mercedes 435; 2. Red Bull 226; 3. Racing Point 126; 4. McLaren 124; 5. Renault 120.

### NEW WORLD RECORD



#### Those who ruled the world

With his 92nd victory at the Portuguese Grand Prix at Algarve on Sunday, Lewis Hamilton became the most successful F1 driver in history in terms of wins. A look at the previous five World record holders and when they scaled the summit.



Michael Schumacher  
91 (52nd win, 2001 Belgian GP, Spa-Francorchamps)



Alain Prost  
51 (28th victory, 1987 Portuguese GP, Estoril)



Jackie Stewart  
27 (26th win, 1973 Dutch GP, Zandvoort)



Jim Clark  
25 (25th win, 1968 South African GP, Kyalami)



Juan Manuel Fangio  
24 (14th win, 1955 Argentine GP, Buenos Aires)

**THE HAMILTON FILE**  
Date of birth: January 7, 1985  
Debut: Australia 2007 (finished third)

**Teams:** McLaren (2007-2012), Mercedes (since 2013)

**CAREER HIGHLIGHTS**  
Drivers' title: 6 (2008, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018, 2019)

Races: 262  
First win: Canada 2007

Victories: 92

Podiums: 161

Pole positions: 97

Fastest laps: 52

Points scored: 3,687

## Hanuma Vihari excited about Test series down under

Says there will be enough time to adapt to take on Australia

### CRICKET

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM  
HYDERABAD

Hanuma Vihari says that there will be enough time to adapt and get back into the desired mode, as the team will play a couple of practice games too, to take on Australia in the forthcoming tour down under.

"Personally it is all about mindset. I just want to be mentally and physically fresh in the run-up to the first Test.

"But our captain (Virat Kohli) and the coach (Ravi Shastri) always ensure that we have a positive approach to any task on hand," he said. "Their attack is similar to what we played last time. Of course, we have to expect tough battles," he added.



Vihari. ■ V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

"We have to work more on fitness and fielding once we land there," he said.

"It certainly takes time for anyone to get back to competitive cricket after such a long break. It is fine with batting and bowling which I have not missed in the last seven months thanks to the makeshift nets at my place of residence," Vihari said. "Fortunately, I worked with our Indian team fielding coach Sri Sir (R. Sridhar also from Hyderabad) a lot on catching and fielding," he said.

I just want to be mentally and physically fresh in the run-up to the first Test

Vihari said this Australia series would be different as some of the big names are back and in form too.

"But our captain (Virat Kohli) and the coach (Ravi Shastri) always ensure that we have a positive approach to any task on hand," he said. "Their attack is similar to what we played last time. Of course, we have to expect tough battles," he added.

#### Pink ball Test

The soft-spoken Vihari is also excited at the prospect of playing a pink ball Test. "It will be great to play in that pink ball Test at Adelaide. My earlier playing experience is only in the Duleep Trophy match," he said.

On his targets, Vihari says he wants to be a key performer in the Indian team which is aiming to clinch the prestigious ICC world Test championship.

The soft-spoken Vihari is also excited at the prospect of playing a pink ball Test. "It will be great to play in that pink ball Test at Adelaide. My earlier playing experience is only in the Duleep Trophy match," he said.

That loss has PSG under some early pressure, and Neymar's performance was widely criticised.

Sergio Aguero, just back from a long-term knee injury, sustained a muscle problem

## Vardy's header ends a drought

Leicester finally wins at Arsenal after 47 years

### Euro LEAGUES

REUTERS  
LONDON

Leicester City won at Arsenal for the first time in 47 years on Sunday, with substitute Jamie Vardy's late close-range header enough to secure victory in the Premier League at The Emirates.

The win lifted Brendan Rodgers' side to fourth on 12 points, while the Gunners stay in 10th place on nine after six games.

Vardy, who came on with half an hour to play having missed Leicester's previous two games with a calf injury, broke the deadlock in the

80th minute, heading home Cengiz Under's cross.

The striker's 11th Premier League goal against Arsenal – more than any other player apart from Wayne Rooney – gave his side its first win away to Arsenal since 1973.

**Everton tops despite loss**

Everton, which lost to Southampton 2-0, remains top of the standings with 13 points and a healthier goal difference than champion Liverpool.

The Reds had beaten Sheffield United 2-1 on Saturday on a day when Manchester United and Chelsea had drawn goalless.

Juventus substitute Dejan



Leicester's hero: Jamie Vardy celebrates his decisive goal against Arsenal. ■ REUTERS

## Bopanna & Middelkoop lose in final

**SPORTS BUREAU**  
ANTWERP

Rohan Bopanna and Matwe Middelkoop lost 6-3, 6-4 to second seeds John Peers and Michael Venus (NZ) bt Matwe Middelkoop (Ned) & Rohan Bopanna 6-3, 6-4; **Semifinals:** Middelkoop & Bopanna bt Sander Gille & Joran Vliegen (Bel) 4-6, 6-3, [10-8].

**The results:** Premier League: Arsenal 0 lost to Leicester 1 (Vardy 80); Southampton 2 (Ward-Prowse 27, Adams 35) bt Everton 0; Wolves 1 (Jimenez 89); Liverpool 2 (Firmino 41, Jota 64) bt Sheffield United 1 (Berge 13-pen).

**Serie A:** Cagliari 4 (Lykogiannis 25, Simeone 35, Sottil 45, Joao Pedro 84) bt Crotone 2 (Mesias 21, Molina 43); Benevento 1 (R. Insigne 30) lost to Napoli 2 (L. Insigne 60, Petagna 67); Parma 2 (Gagliolo 34, Kucka 90+3-pen) drew with Spezia 2 (Chabot 28, Agudelo 31); Fiorentina 3 (Castrovilli 11, 51, Milenkovic 21) bt Udinese 2 (Okaka 43, 86); Juventus 1 (Kulusevski 77) drew with Hellas Verona 1 (Favilli 60); Lazio 2 (Alberto 54, Immobile 76) bt Bologna 1 (De Silvestri 90+1).

**LaLiga:** Valladolid 0 lost to Alaves 2 (Pina 55, Sainz 85); Cadiz 0 drew with Villarreal 0; Getafe 0 lost to Granada 1 (Montoro 45+3-pen).

**Real Sociedad 4** (Oyarzabal 35-pen, 54, Portu 68, Isak 75) bt SD Huesca 1 (Mir 46); Sevilla 0 lost to Eibar 1 (Kike 41); Osasuna 1 (Santos 81-pen) bt Athletic Bilbao 0; Atletico Madrid 2 (Llorente 46, Suarez 90+1) bt Real Betis 0.

Manchester United's Paul Pogba said on Monday he will be "taking legal action" after reports claimed he had retired from international duty in protest against French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about radical Islam.

According to reports in the Middle East picked up by British tabloid *The Sun*, World Cup-winner Pogba wanted to end his international career after Macron vowed to take the fight to Islamic radicals after the October 16 beheading of history teacher Samuel Paty.

"I am appalled, angry, shocked and frustrated some 'media' sources use me to make total fake headlines in the sensible subject of French current events and adding my religion and the French National Team to the pot," Pogba posted on Instagram.

"I am taking legal action against the publishers and spreaders of these 100% Fake News," he added.

## Pogba to take legal action

**AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE**  
LONDON

Manchester United's Paul Pogba said on Monday he will be "taking legal action" after reports claimed he had retired from international duty in protest against French President Emmanuel Macron's comments about radical Islam.

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