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OLED

 AI Processor
Gen4

 Dolby
VISION IQ

 Dolby
ATMOS

 NVIDIA
G-SYNC

 Eye Comfort
Display (OLED)

 ThinQ AI

AWARDS 2021



Power of Desire



CES 2021
Innovation Awards
LG OLED 48C1



CES 2021
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LG OLED 65C1, 2021-04-16



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OLED evo | G1

195cm (77) / 164cm (65) / 139cm (55)



Gallery Design | Self-Lit OLED | a9 Gen4 AI Processor 4K | Dolby Vision IQ | Dolby Atmos | webOS 6.0 | ThinQ AI | Game Optimizer | Eye Comfort Display | Hands-free Voice Control | Built-in Google Assistant & Amazon Alexa

Range starts: ₹239990 EMI starts: ₹2999

*TONEFree FN7 free with OLED 55G1PTZ Model

OLED | Z1* | C1 / C1X* | B1*

222cm (88) / 210cm (83) / 195cm (77) / 164cm (65) / 139cm (55) / 121cm (48)



Self-Lit OLED | a9 Gen4 AI Processor 4K | Dolby Vision IQ | Dolby Atmos | webOS 6.0 | ThinQ AI | Game Optimizer | Eye Comfort Display | Built-in Google Assistant & Amazon Alexa | New Magic Remote

Range starts: ₹179990 EMI starts: ₹2999

*Available models for C1X - 164cm (65), 139cm (55) and 121cm (48)

*Available models for Z1 - 222cm (88) with a9 Gen4 AI Processor 8K

*B1 Model with a7 Gen4 AI Processor

NanoCell | NANO99 | 95 | 83 | 80 | 79 | 75

217cm (86) / 189cm (75) / 164cm (65) / 139cm (55) / 126cm (50) / 108cm (43)



NanoCell™ Display | AI Brightness Control | AI Sound | Game Optimizer | webOS 6.0 | ThinQ AI | New Magic Remote | Built-in Google Assistant & Amazon Alexa

Range starts: ₹63990 EMI starts: ₹1999

*TONEFree FN7 free with 55Nano83TPZ, 65Nano83TPZ and 55Nano75TPZ Models

UHD TV | UP80 | 77 | 75

189cm (75) / 177cm (70) / 164cm (65) / 153cm (60) / 139cm (55) / 126cm (50) / 108cm (43)



Real 4K Display | Quad Core Processor 4K | AI Brightness Control | AI Sound | Game Optimizer | webOS 6.0 | ThinQ AI | New Magic Remote | Built-in Google Assistant & Amazon Alexa

Range starts: ₹50990 EMI starts: ₹999

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₹999*

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1 EMI FREE*

*T&C Apply. All the offers unless mentioned are from 1st Oct to 15th Nov '21. Win an OLED every day is a Lucky Draw contest applicable at Selected stores in All India except Tamil Nadu and Kerala or wherever expressly barred by law. ₹11Cr. Is the total perceived value of all gifts in program as per MRP. This Offer is from 16th Oct to 15th Nov '21. 5 Year Assurance Applicable from 15th Sep to 30th Nov '21 on all UHD, NanoCell & OLED models. This includes 1 Year standard warranty of the new product, 2 Year free of Cost promotional warranty (2nd & 3rd Year) & additional 2 Year (4th & 5th) to be bought by customer at up to 70% Discount. Up to 20% Instant Cashback is applicable with select Credit & Debit cards on 195cm(77) & above OLED TV models (Maximum Cashback is up to ₹20000). Maximum of three transactions per card are allowed during offer period (Oct-Dec). Cash back should appear on charge slip for applicability. 2% customer buy down in Debit Card EMI & 1% Customer buy down on credit card EMI for 9 months & above tenors, ₹199 + GST applicable on HDFC bank cards for EMI transaction. Offer Valid on 6 months & above tenor for HDFC/ICICI/SCB. HDFC has additional 8/10 month EMI available. Cash back offer is not from LG Side and bank/finance Company is solely liable and LGEIL expressly disclaims any liability/responsibility in any manner whatsoever. 1 EMI Free is applicable on finance through Bajaj Finserv in specific schemes on 108cm(43) & above TVs. Finance is at the sole discretion of financier, Finance offers are by third party banks / finance company in accordance with their terms, LGEIL shall not be liable for any finance related claims / disputes/ queries in any manner what so ever. Customer will receive 1 EMI Off after successful clearance of 3 EMI's, within 45 days of clearing 3rd EMI. Customers' needs to pay all his 3 EMI's successfully to avail this offer. Free Audio Products worth up to ₹64990 on OLED G Series only. TONEFree FN7 free with OLED 55G1PTZ, 55 Nano83TPZ, 65 Nano83TPZ and 55 Nano75TPZ models. This offer is applicable from 10th Oct'21 to 15th Nov '21. Offers may not be available on purchase from any other e-commerce websites. World's Number 1 OLED TV Brand - Source is Omdia (Research by independent third party). Unit Shipments, 2013 - 2020. Results are not endorsement of LG Electronics. Any reliance on these results is at the third-party's own risk. Logos shown in the Creative belong to respective trademark owners only. Prices Mentioned are Per Unit and Inclusive of Taxes. Features may vary as per TV Model. LG reserves the right to modify, alter, withdraw or extend the offer at any point of time without any prior notice or justification or correspondence. LG decision regarding all matters under offers shall be final and binding. By participating in offers, the customer agrees to all the above terms & Conditions and shall be treated as deemed consent under Privacy Laws. Gifts cannot be redeemed for cash at any point of time. Products are available for Purchase without offers also. The images shown here are for representation only and may differ from actual product. All disputes are to be settled / adjudicated in Delhi Courts only. Please ask the retailer/store manager for detailed offers, gifts etc. before purchase. For more information, please visit www.lg.com/in



Puneet Rajkumar, actor and son of Rajkumar, passes away at 46

page 4



Congress steps up attack on former CAG Vinod Rai

page 8



Modi holds talks with European Union leaders in Italy

page 9

Asif and Babar star for Pakistan; WI pips Bangladesh

page 13



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IN BRIEF



Crucial byelections in 11 States today
 NEW DELHI
 Saturday will see bypolls across 11 States for three Lok Sabha and 29 Assembly seats that will have implications for the politics of each of these States. Haryana, the State closest to Delhi, will see an Assembly bypoll in Ellenabad.

NEWS PAGE 8

Aryan Khan to spend another night in jail

MUMBAI
 Aryan Khan, son of actor Shah Rukh Khan, will spend one more night in the Arthur Road Jail as his bail papers did not reach the authorities in time.

NEWS PAGE 9

No money left in MGNREGA coffers; 21 States in the red

States are asking field authorities to artificially create demand, says Centre

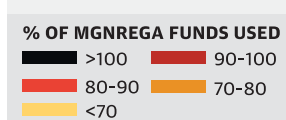
PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
 NEW DELHI

The Centre's flagship rural employment scheme has run out of funds halfway through the financial year, and supplementary budgetary allocations will not come to the rescue for at least another month when the next Parliamentary session begins. According to its own financial statement, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme shows a negative net balance of ₹8,686 crore.

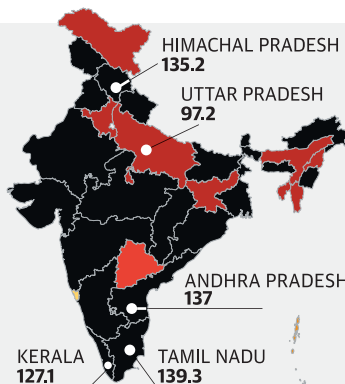
This means that payments for MGNREGA workers as well as material costs will be delayed, unless the States

Out of funds

As many as 21 out of 35 States/UTs have utilised over 100% of their allocated funds under MGNREGA for FY22 till October 29



SOURCE: MGNREGA PORTAL



dip into their own funds. Activists say the Centre is condemning workers to "forced labour" by delaying wage payments at a time of economic distress. However, the Centre is now accusing many

States of "artificially creating demand" for work on the ground.

The MGNREGA is a demand-driven scheme, guaranteeing 100 days of unskilled work to any rural

household that wants it. During last year's COVID-19 lockdown, the scheme was ultimately given its highest budget of ₹1.11 lakh crore.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Suicides among farm workers rose 18% in 2020

Deaths among landowning farmers dropped slightly: NCRB

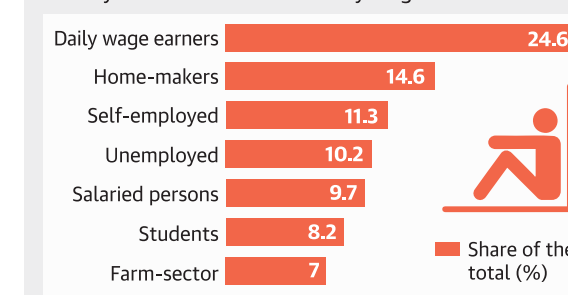
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

The number of agricultural labourers who died by suicide in 2020 was 18% higher than the previous year, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) report released on Thursday. However, suicides among landowning farmers dropped slightly during the pandemic year.

The farm sector was one of the few bright spots in the Indian economy last year, recording growth on the back of a healthy monsoon and the continuation of agricultural activities during a lockdown that crippled other sectors. However, landless agricultural labourers,

Job hazard

As many as 37,666 (24.6%) of the 1.53 lakh people who died by suicide in 2020 were daily-wage earners



who did not benefit from income support schemes such as PM Kisan, may have faced higher levels of distress during the pandemic. The NCRB report does not include any indication of the specific

causes of suicide among the farm community. Overall, 10,677 people engaged in the farm sector died by suicide in 2020.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Barriers go from farmers' protest sites

Our stand in SC vindicated, say protesters

HEMANI BHANDARI
 ANUJ KUMAR
 NEW DELHI/ GHAZIABAD

Months after barbed wires and layers of barricades were put up at Delhi's borders, the police have begun removing them from the Ghazipur and Tikri borders. Farmers protesting at the sites said the move vindicat-

ed their stand in the Supreme Court and paved the way for their entry into the Capital.

Bharatiya Kisan Union general secretary Yudhvir Singh said the farmers never wanted to create problems for the public and only wanted to enter Delhi to raise voice against the three laws.

No barricades have so far been removed from the Singhu border, the police said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



Free passage: Barricades put up by the police on the Delhi-Meerut Expressway being removed on Friday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Top officials liable for sale of toxic crackers: SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
 NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday said Chief Secretaries and top administrative and police officials will be held personally liable if banned varieties of firecrackers are found to be used in any of the States.

"Celebration cannot be at the cost of others' health... Nobody can be permitted to play with the life of others, more particularly that of senior citizens and children," a

Bench of Justices M.R. Shah and A.S. Bopanna underscored. The order, just days ahead of Deepavali, is significant. "Any lapse on the part of the State Governments/ State Agencies and Union Territories shall be viewed very seriously," the SC said.

"If it is found that any banned firecrackers are manufactured, sold and used in any particular area, the Chief Secretary of the State (s), the Secretary (Home) of the State(s) and the Commis-

sioner of Police of the area, District Superintendent of Police of the area and the SHO/police officer in-charge of the police station shall be held personally liable," the top court ordered.

'Can't flout directions'
 The court said nobody, however high, should be permitted to flout the directions of the Supreme Court.

"Any wilful and deliberate disobedience shall have to be viewed very seriously,"

the Supreme Court emphasised in the 19-page order.

The order came on a plea, represented by senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, that manufacturers were blatantly flouting the court's ban on using toxic chemicals, such as barium salts, in firecrackers.

The court had allowed the use of 'green' or environment-friendly crackers made without toxic ingredients.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

UIDAI seeks indemnity from Data Bill

SOBHANA K. NAIR
 NEW DELHI

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has asked for exemption from the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law.

In an interaction with the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Data Protection Bill 2019 on Thursday at its office in Bengaluru, UIDAI functionaries said the authority is already being governed by the Aadhaar Act and there cannot be duplicity of laws.

Ironically, it was making Aadhaar compulsory for many key services including the banks that first triggered the data privacy debate. The genesis of this Bill lies in the report prepared by a Committee of Experts headed by Justice B.N. Srikrishna.

DETAILS PAGE 8

Remove objectionable posts on Hindu deity: Delhi HC to Twitter

'Platform should respect public sentiments'

STAFF REPORTER
 NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday asked Twitter to remove objectionable posts on a Hindu deity from its platform, observing that the social media giant should respect the sentiments of the general public as it was doing business for them.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh said: "You should respect sentiments of general public as you are doing business for public at large. Their sentiments shall be given due importance... Why you should do things like this. You should remove this."

Senior advocate Sidharth Luthra, representing Twitter, said the platform would remove the posts once the



court mentions it in its order. The court has posted the matter for further hearing on November 30.

The petitioner, Aditya Singh Deshwal, said he saw obnoxious posts on Goddess Kali put up by an account with the username @AtheistRepublic and the deity was represented in a disgraceful and outrageous manner.

"The said objectionable posts shook the collective conscience of the followers and practitioners of Hinduism," the plea said. "It

would not be out of place to mention here that the said Twitter user @AtheistRepublic has put filthy and degrading content about every religion, let alone Hinduism. The said posts have the potential to disturb the tranquility of society," it added.

'Violation of IT Rules'

The petitioner said he informed Twitter's grievance officer that the posts were in grave contravention of the Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021, and non-compliance of rules would make Twitter lose legal immunity provided under the Information Technology Act.

He said Twitter stated the posts cannot be removed as the content was not of a category for which it takes action. The plea sought direction to Twitter to remove the posts and permanently suspend the user's account.

North, South Blocks to turn museums

They will be a 'public space', Govt. tells SC

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
 NEW DELHI

The Central Government has informed the Supreme Court that the North and South Blocks, which house core Ministries and the Prime Minister's Office, will be turned into "national museums" based on a theme called "India in making: pre-historic to present date", as part of the Central Vista redevelopment plans.

The future museums would be a "public space". Presently, the nation's most important decisions are made in these buildings, where access is limited.

"Museums will be open to the public at large and serve important public purposes,"



New heritage: A petition in court questioned the proposed change of land use in a plot in the Central Vista. ■ FILE PHOTO

an affidavit submitted by the Central Public Works Department, which is part of the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, disclosed to the top court.

The affidavit was in response to a petition questioning the proposed change of land use in a plot in the Central Vista area. Initially, the plot was allotted for a recrea-

tional park and bus terminal. The Government replied that 'plot number one' had housed Government offices for 90 years. It had never been opened for the public or sported recreational space. On the other hand, shifting the residence of the Vice-President to the plot was a wise move. It would be close to Parliament. "This

will help ease traffic situation in Central Vista," the Government reasoned.

'Defence Enclave'

Besides, the proposed residence would have the best of technology and security. The current Vice-President's residence would become the "Defence Enclave".

All the Central Ministries would be relocated in the Common Central Secretariat buildings developed on the two sides of the Rajpath.

The Government assuaged apprehensions that the Central Vista plans do not take into account the public's need for space.

"Central Vista Master Plan has increased, qualitatively and quantitatively, public areas and added numerous recreational facilities for the larger benefit of the public," the affidavit stated.

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HOB MAXUS HT 904 CRS BR CI AI 4 Brass Burner: 2 x 2.5Kw + 2 x 1.5Kw Brass Burner with Black Enamel Coating	COOKTOP: JUMBO 4BB SS - 4 Brass Burner, Size L*W*H: 635*500*50mm Double Round Drip Tray, SS Finish Frame	COOKTOP: ONYX 3BB BK CI - 3 Brass Burner, Size L*W*H: 635*380*50mm Diamond Coated Drip Tray, Black Powder Coated Frame	FOTG BK 34L RC 34L OTG with Convection and Rotisserie, 1600 Watts, 60 min timer, 100 - 250° C Adjustable Temp.	FABER WP: ALTROZ (RO+UV+UF+MAT) 10L Tank, 9 Stage of Filtration Works on TDS upto 3000 ppm	FMG CANDY 1000 3J+1 1000 Wattage, Powerful 100% copper motor, SS 304 Jar & Blade with lockable jar lids.
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Timings
DELHI

SATURDAY, OCT. 30
RISE 06:32 SET 17:38
RISE 00:28 SET 14:22

SUNDAY, OCT. 31
RISE 06:32 SET 17:38
RISE 01:29 SET 14:59

MONDAY, NOV. 01
RISE 06:33 SET 17:37
RISE 02:29 SET 15:34

Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 30 14
Safdarjang 30 14
Palam 29 16

Delhi Palam Today
28°C Pollution level will be moderate with dry weather. Day will be comfortable with mainly clear sky. Night will be cold and hazy.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
28°C The weather will be dry. Day will be slight warm with mainly clear sky. Night remains slight cold and hazy.

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DDMA bans Chhath Puja on Yamuna banks

Cinema halls, theatres can now operate with full capacity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The celebration of Chhath Puja will be allowed at public places except on the banks of the Yamuna and cinema halls can run with 100% capacity, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) said on Friday.

The ceiling on the number of attendees at weddings and funerals has also been increased, the DDMA said, adding that due caution is needed to be taken even though the number of COVID-19 cases and the positivity rate have declined considerably.

The Chhath celebrations will be permitted only at designated sites located outside the containment zones. Chhath Pooja samitis or organisers will have to submit an undertaking to the respective District Magistrate.

Such designated sites will



Devotees at India Gate pond in Delhi. • FILE PHOTO

be identified by the Revenue Department in coordination with Delhi Police and civic bodies, along with other land-owning agencies. Devotees can offer such pooja material which can then be collected by municipal workers and other agencies for proper disposal under the supervision of the District Magistrate. However, no sites will be notified on the banks of the Yamuna, the DDMA order said.

According to the order,

while all educational institutions will be permitted to open up to 50% of their capacity, cinema halls, theatres and multiplexes are allowed to operate with 100% of their seating capacity, subject to strict adherence of the standard operating procedures and COVID-19 appropriate behaviour.

Weddings as well as last-rite ceremonies, the order said, will have maximum 200 people in attendance.

Assembly Committee summons Facebook

It is probing violence during Delhi riots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Legislative Assembly's Committee on Peace and Harmony has summoned Facebook in connection with its examination into the "unprecedented communal disharmony and violence in Delhi" during the riots in February 2020.

The Committee has called representatives of Facebook India to depose on "the important role of social media in curbing the spread of false, provocative and malicious messages which can fan violence and disharmony".

The proceedings, scheduled for November 2, will be live-streamed to maintain "the utmost transparency" in the functioning of the Committee, the Assembly said.

So far, the Committee has examined crucial witnesses, including senior journalists, fact checkers, digital rights activists, and Facebook

employees.

The Committee issued a notice for appearance to Facebook India Online Services Private Limited on October 27 to depose before it at 12.30 p.m. on November 2.

"The Committee is examining the unprecedented communal disharmony and violence in Delhi in February 2020, with a view to recommend suitable measures to defuse the situation and restore harmony among religious communities, linguistic communities, or social groups," the Assembly said.

According to the Assembly, the summons was issued in furtherance of the judgment of the Supreme Court in the 'Ajit Mohan & Others Vs. Legislative Assembly, NCT of Delhi' case, dated July 8, 2021, where the court upheld the powers of the Committee to summon both members and non-members, including representatives of Facebook.

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12 held for duping cyber fraud victims through fake websites

They swindled ₹1.74 cr. in last one year

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Twelve people, including two women, have been arrested for allegedly posing as government officials and cheating cyber fraud victims through an online redressal system. The accused have managed to swindle ₹1.74 crore in the past one year, the police said on Friday.

The police said they had received a complaint where the complainant alleged that while he was trying to report an incident of cheating, he came across a website www.jansurkashakendara.in. When the complainant called on the mobile phone number pro-

vided on the website, they informed him that they were the authorised persons working with the Government and they would lodge his complaint.

"On the pretext of lodging and investigating his complaint, the alleged people charged ₹2,850. Once the payment was done, they blocked the number of the complainant," DCP (Cyber Crime) K.P.S. Malhotra said.

Officers found similar complaints registered on the National Cyber Crime Reporting portal. Further investigation revealed that the fraudsters have received ₹1.74 crore in the past one year.

Art for heart's sake: Deepavali with Raja Ravi Varma

From oleographs to coasters, an ongoing exhibition allows you to take a bit of the legendary artist home

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With Deepavali around the corner, it is time to bring the gods home. What better way to celebrate than investing in a Raja Ravi Varma masterpiece. More than a century after his demise, his works continue to attract aesthetes and devotees alike.

Inspired by her mother Rupika Chawla, noted art conservator and author of the acclaimed book, *Raja Ravi Varma: Painter of Colonial India*, Delhi-based creative designer Mrinalini Chawla is holding an exhibition showcasing a collection of original Raja Ravi Varma oleographs. The oleographs depict themes like goddesses Lakshmi, Saraswati, Mohini and Lord Krishna, which are available in a wide range of sizes and prices.

The exhibition has collectibles like 19th century European enamel, Burmese lacquer bowls, and Tanjore paintings from 1950s. Also available are limited-edition home products that Mrinalini designs and hand decorates, such as trays, stoles, wrapping paper, coasters and even an adult-child interactive colouring book inspired by Raja Ravi Varma's works.

Art accessibility

"My intent is to make high-end art accessible to all through affordable and stylish home products. My aim is that the energies of beautiful, aesthetic art should flow in everyone's homes,"



Timeless classic: A Raja Ravi Varma oleograph. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

says Ms. Mrinalini.

Having collected the originals from "dusty corners and interesting streets", she reminds that "Ravi Varma's oleographs were created specifically for the common man, who could not afford his oil on canvas works." Over the years, she says, the appeal of his work has expanded to all age groups.

Enriching experience

Mrinalini has been designing products, intimate spaces for theatre and exhibitions for years. "Often, one has been short of production funds. Therefore, I had to rely on imagination, inner aesthetics and improvisation. That has been so enriching. Raja Ravi Varma's stunning works and other beautiful works, discovered after a great deal of searching and time, have helped me design and create anew," says

the designer, who also runs Scrapilicious, an organisation dedicated to upcycled products.

At the exhibition, Deepavali diya made and decorated by the students of The Lepira India Trust (TLIT) are on sale. The diya is either wrapped in recycled products or with European enamel and Burmese lacquer to give them a unique look.

"Recycling is an integral part of my work and exhibition. We encourage that after use, all diya are returned to TLIT for recycling. Please get in touch with me if you would like to return your unbroken diya for recycling," says Mrinalini, adding that a percentage of sale proceeds from the exhibition shall go to TLIT and the Yuva Ekta Foundation.

(The 20 Drawers Exhibition cum Sale is on till November 2 in Nizamuddin East, New Delhi)

Students seek reopening of DU colleges; protest on

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Despite the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) clearing the decks for opening of schools, colleges and other educational institutions, the Delhi University has not taken an official call yet on complete reopening. Various student organisations, though, have been protesting demanding the reopening of the campus.

Members of the All India Students' Association (AISA) have been on a hunger strike outside the arts faculty building for over five days. AISA said

even though it has received support from students across the university, no university official has come to meet or listen to its demands.

AISA questioned why the university administration is not willing to listen to students' demands and reopen the campus when they have been given the go-ahead by the Government authorities.

The ABVP has also called for a protest across all college campuses on Friday and protests outside the venue of the executive committee meeting of the university.

Air quality in city drops to 'poor' category

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The air quality in the city deteriorated to the higher end of the "poor" category on Friday, official data showed. The effect of stubble burning has increased and the air quality is expected to be in the "very poor" to "poor" levels on Saturday.

The air quality index (AQI) of Delhi was 283 on Friday, up from 268 on Thursday, as per the CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletin.

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Gaurav Jain (AIR 08)	Shreyas Srivastava (AIR 09)	Dhivya N (AIR 10)	Chavan Suhas Madhukar (AIR 11)	Ramkrishna Saran (AIR 12)
Vikalpa N Vishwakarma (AIR 14)	Mridula Singh (AIR 15)	R Vidyadhar (AIR 16)	Dilip K Kainikkara (AIR 18)	Tapas Mihir (AIR 19)
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₹825 crore for development work in Narela

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Friday approved development schemes in Delhi's Narela - Sector G-2 and Sector G-6 - at an estimated cost of ₹824.73 crore.

Approved by the DDA vice-chairman, Manish Kumar Gupta, the works will include construction of roads, storm water drains and sewerage system, a press note said.

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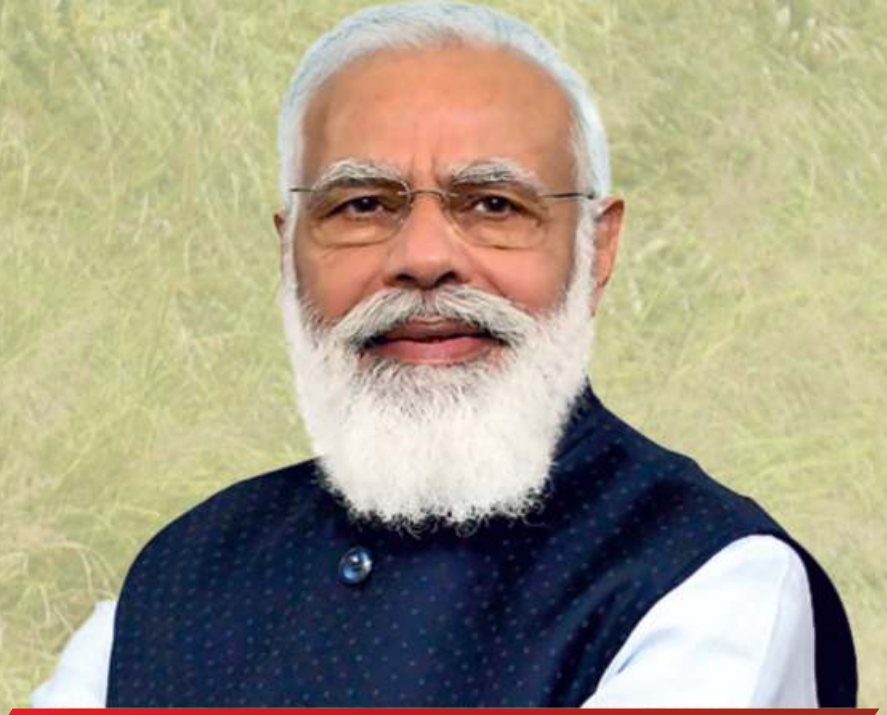


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मुख्यमंत्री घस्यारी कल्याण योजना



नरेन्द्र मोदी, प्रधानमंत्री

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लाभार्थियों को टोटल मिक्सड, पैकेज साइलेज व पौष्टिक आहार से पूर्ण चारा उपलब्ध करवाया जाएगा।

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जिस समय महिलाओं को चारा लेने के लिए जंगल जाना पड़ता है उस समय वह अब अन्य कामों को भी कर सकती हैं।

शुभारंभ

अमित शाह

गृह एवं सहकारिता मंत्री, भारत सरकार

के कर कमलों द्वारा

पुष्कर सिंह धामी

मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

डॉ. धन सिंह रावत

सहकारिता मंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

अजय भट्ट

रक्षा एवं पर्यटन राज्य मंत्री, भारत सरकार

अध्यक्षता

विनोद चमोली

विधायक, धर्मपुर

की गरिमामयी उपस्थिति में सम्पन्न होगा।

दिनांक : 30 अक्टूबर, 2021 | **समय :** प्रातः 11:00 बजे
स्थान: बन्नू इंटर कॉलेज, रेस कोर्स, देहरादून

इस अवसर पर आप सादर आमंत्रित है।

हमारी सरकार द्वारा ग्रामीण महिलाओं के उत्थान एवं उनके सिर से घास का बोझ कम करने के लिए **मुख्यमंत्री घस्यारी कल्याण योजना** प्रारंभ की जा रही है। इस योजना का मुख्य उद्देश्य चारे के लिए महिलाओं की जंगल पर निर्भरता कम करना, जंगली जानवरों एवं दुर्घटनाओं से उनकी रक्षा करने के साथ ही पशुओं के लिए पौष्टिक आहार उपलब्ध कराना है।

पुष्कर सिंह धामी, मुख्यमंत्री, उत्तराखण्ड

आयोजक : सहकारिता विभाग, उत्तराखण्ड



Silly point

Support for the national cricket team or its players is no litmus test for patriotism

People who allegedly celebrated the victory of Pakistan against India in a T20 cricket World Cup match on October 24 are facing the brunt of the state. All of them are Muslims. In Rajasthan, a young schoolteacher has been terminated by a private school and the police have charged her under IPC Section 153B for 'imputations, assertions prejudicial to national integration'. In Jammu and Kashmir, the police have registered two cases against unknown persons under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) and other sections. In Uttar Pradesh, three students from J&K have been charged under IPC Sections 153A (promoting enmity between groups), 505 (creating or publishing content to promote enmity) and, later, Section 124A, sedition. The wisdom, propriety or acceptability of celebrating Pakistan's victory is beside the point. From moral, tactical, and practical perspectives, this sweeping policing is unwise. No democracy, least of all a country of India's size and diversity, can demand unyielding uniformity and conformity from its population, on all questions and at all times. It is unlikely that any of these charges will stand judicial scrutiny, but that only makes this spectacle a ridiculous distraction for the stretched law enforcement system. Far from enforcing national integration as the purported aim of this heavy-handed police action is, it will only brew more resentment and social disharmony apart from derailing young lives.

An unremitting loyalty test of citizens can be a self-defeating pursuit for a country like India that has global ambitions. People of Indian origin live around the world, with split loyalties. There are U.S. citizens who chant victory for India at gatherings in their home countries addressed by the Indian Prime Minister, and there are British and Australian citizens who boo their own country in favour of India during sporting events. Sports teams around the world have members of foreign origin. Infusion of toxic hyper-nationalism in sports is bad in such a world; more so for India. While the BJP has been championing this link between cricket and nationalism, other parties are not far behind as the incident in Rajasthan, a Congress-ruled State, shows. AAP in Delhi was one step ahead and questioning the Narendra Modi government for allowing the cricket match with Pakistan. Had all this been on account of an unspoken link between cheering for the national cricket team and support for a united India, the police would have also charged those who mercilessly trolled Mohammed Shami, a Muslim in the Indian cricket team. True, it would have been wonderful for the Indian cricket team to enjoy the unqualified support of the entire nation, but, surely, there is no reason to charge those who support another team with sedition. The Indian state looks silly now, and the whole episode bodes ill for cricket, and the country.

Descent into chaos

The Myanmar junta should immediately end the violent suppression of democratic protests

The decision by ASEAN to exclude Myanmar's military junta from its annual summit held on October 26-28 is a major setback for the Generals' attempts to gain regional legitimacy for their brutal regime. Ever since it seized power by toppling the democratic government of Aung San Suu Kyi in February, the junta has unleashed a reign of terror claiming an estimated 1,000 lives. Ms. Suu Kyi, who had been the State Councillor for five years from 2015 heading the quasi-democratic government, has been in detention since the coup and is facing absurd charges such as "illegally owning walkie-talkies". Thousands of others were arrested by the military, notorious for its reprisal of democratic protests in the past. But this time, the crisis seems much worse. Months after the seizure of power, the junta, led by Gen. Min Aung Hlaing, is still struggling to restore order. If in the past the National League for Democracy (NLD), Ms. Suu Kyi's party, had upheld non-violence even in the face of repression, this time, NLD leaders have called for a "revolution". The remnants of the old regime have formed a National Unity Government, which claims to be the true representative of Myanmar. In cities, protests slid into armed fighting between pro-democracy protesters and security personnel, while in the jungles, anti-junta groups joined hands with rebels for military training. The situation was so grave that the UN Special Envoy warned this month that Myanmar had descended into a civil war.

One of the regional groupings with some leverage over the junta is ASEAN. In April, Gen. Min Aung Hlaing was invited to Jakarta for emergency talks with ASEAN members. The bloc asked him to immediately end violence, start the reconciliation process and allow a regional special envoy to meet with all stakeholders, including Ms. Suu Kyi. None of these requests was met. Most recent reports suggest that the junta has been systematically torturing political prisoners. A special envoy was appointed as part of the ASEAN plan, but he was not allowed to meet Ms. Suu Kyi. Regime violence, political crises and strikes and counter-attacks by protesters have all pushed Myanmar to the brink of collapse. According to the UN, some three million people are in need of life-saving assistance because of "conflict, food insecurity, natural disasters and COVID-19". Still, the Generals do not show any signs of compromise and are not even ready to talk with the NLD. Violence might allow them to hold on to power for now, but that is not sustainable. The ASEAN snub is a reminder that continuing violence could cause regional isolation of the regime, which could worsen the crisis. The international community should continue to put pressure on the junta and urgently start a reconciliation process.

In India, the steady subversion of equality

The sharp turns away from democracy seen recently in the country must jolt citizens into stopping the descent



SEEMA CHISHTI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has loudly reiterated India's embrace of democracy internationally, hailed its 'diversity' when abroad and is seeking India's relevance as an ally of the West on 'democratic values'. Therefore, it is imperative to measure the distance between today's India and democratic values.

The central edifice of a democracy, or what makes it a revolutionary idea, is equality, or that it accords an equal status to all its people. But the E-word is in rapid remission. A commitment to all being equal as a desired ideal – even if not fully realised in reality – accorded India its sheen and power in the past. India now, from being a truly remarkable case of composite nationalism, appears happy to huddle in that corner of the room which many of its neighbours occupy.

Faith as differentiator

The promise of the far-sighted Indian Constitution was of equal rights to all. If any benefit was accorded to smaller groups, religious or linguistic minorities or Dalits, it was in order to achieve substantive equality. This cut across all markers of identity – colour, race, language, faith, caste, region or food. But faith seems to have increasingly emerged as a visible differentiator between citizens. It must be recognised that laws – and not just the spirit – are in the process of being rewritten in India.

First and foremost, the basis of citizenship under the Citizenship (Amendment) Act 2019, allowing for non-Muslims from three countries to fast-track their citizenship, was the most serious push to introduce religion into citizenship.

Second in terms of marital choices, laws in the country in States where the national ruling party holds sway have drawn

harsh attention on inter-faith couples. Imaginary fears of a 'love-jihad', the basis for new legislations have meant that inter-faith marriages are seen as crimes unless proven otherwise. The Gujarat law criminalising inter-faith marriages has been called out by the Gujarat High Court, but the ordinance introduced in Uttar Pradesh (Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020), which is now a law, till July, saw 63 FIRs filed against it, and 80 people arrested among 162 people who were booked, the majority being Muslim. A similar law in Madhya Pradesh has a similar trajectory, and a differential impact on Muslims, emphasising the rapid unspooling of the E-word. In terms of personal law, only Muslim men divorcing their wives through the triple talaq, now outlawed by the Supreme Court, is deemed a criminal act; not so for men of other faiths.

Drastic changes

Third, food has been criminalised. Stringent laws on cattle end up penalising those who have a certain diet, namely beef. The mood in the country created and abetted by people close to the powers that be, has led to lynchings. IndiaSpend has recorded bovine-related hate violence since 2010 and concluded that 98% of these attacks occurred post-May 2014, after the Bharatiya Janata Party assumed office. State governments and the Union government have mostly ignored the Supreme Court's directions in 2018 to set up fast track courts, advice to take steps to stop hate messages on social media, or compensation to victims, or bringing in an anti-mob lynching law.

Fourth, consider the Gujarat Prohibition of Transfer of Immovable Property and Provision for Protection of Tenants from Eviction from Premises in Disturbed Areas Act, popularly known as the Disturbed Areas Act, which circumscribes where one can reside. Brought in an atmosphere where there was communal rioting and forced displacement, to ostensibly protect communities from distress sales, the twist accorded to it over the years firmly makes the forced



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separation of communities evident. Vijay Rupani, till recently the Chief Minister of Gujarat, said in an interview on July 27, 2019; "A Hindu selling property to a Muslim is not okay. A Muslim selling property to a Hindu is also not okay." He added, "We have set this rule in areas where there have been riots to tell them (Muslims) that they must buy property in their own areas."

Hostile environment

That the environment in even the informal sector where minorities sought refuge in vocations to battle the prejudices of the formal sector is now curdling, is clear from recent studies on the subject. The linkages between those wielding extraordinary power in high offices with those making vicious noise on social media, and with the violent mobs on the ground trying to shut down Muslim businesses – or attack vegetable sellers or bangle sellers to prevent them to operate – are becoming more explicit by the day. It is old hat to say that several purveyors of hate are "proud to be followed by the Prime Minister" on social media. But even that is just the tip of the iceberg.

Those in power actively support and reward those who head mobs, raise slogans or demonstrate hate enough to shut down cities and regular life. Ministers garland them and the anti-minority hate spewed by them is a CV building exercise for better political prospects within the ruling party. The Member of Parliament representing Bhopal, Pragya Thakur, a public defender of the Mahatma's assassin, is only one of the many who exemplify the career path available to those who sharply de-

nounce amity or calls for harmony.

Scholars like Thomas Blom Hansen and Paul Brass have unhesitatingly pointed to the role of violence that has historically been acceptable in Indian society and politics. The stark difference between now and a few decades ago is a difference in top leaders being silent at important moments when mob violence is reported prominently. Dissenters are sought to be marked out "by their clothes" as the Prime Minister said infamously in December 2019 about those protesting the discriminatory citizenship laws. Far from discouraging those indulging in hate speech, they are given a place in the party hierarchy.

The line was drawn simply but sharply by no less a person than Sardar Patel on September 11, 1948 when the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) was banned after the Mahatma's assassination. Patel wrote to the RSS chief M.S. Golwalkar, that he had no problem with the Sangh indulging in activities organising or benefiting Hindus, but had a problem with actions that were aimed at solely spreading anti-Muslim hate – "All their speeches were full of communal poison. It was not necessary to spread poison in order to enthuse the Hindus and organize for their protection."

Exclusive entitlement

There was clearly a sentiment in Indian society and politics that wanted a country in the mirror image of Pakistan, as one for a Hindu majority. This view did not want to better the lives of Hindus. This was about claiming that those adhering to one religion have exclusive entitlement to Indianness. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, an organisation very much in the family of the ruling party, rubbishes the idea of the mosaic that India is, when its secretary-general, Milind Parande said on September 7, 2021, that "the very idea of Ganga-Jamuni tehzeeb (term used to denote the coming together fusion of Hindu and Muslim cultures in the country), is irrelevant. What exists is one culture, and the rest can simply merge into it. The Hindu

cause must be prime." Statements like these to denigrate the idea of India as a shared palette are never denounced by those in power. In fact, increasingly, there is little to distinguish these from statements of those in power and wielding authority representing the Indian state. The seriousness of what is afoot must be acknowledged.

The backbone

Scholars like Christophe Jaffrelot have pointed out that there will not be a seamless transition to an "ethnic democracy". There is no smooth path towards a 'Category two' or diminished citizenship status for large numbers of people who deviate from a prescribed cultural path. The Indian nation is one formed on the promise of shared and participatory kinship, which recognised Indian nationalism as being distinct from the faith you practised at home. Prioritising any one identity will have disastrous consequences and history provides enough evidence of this. Rwanda, South Africa or Germany are reminders that the E-word is as much a pragmatic consideration as it is a normative ideal.

India was proud of its hallowed constitutional precepts. More so as it was in a region which has seen a precipitous slide; Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan and Myanmar prioritised one ethnicity/religion and defined belonging and nationhood in the narrowest sense possible. But differences between them and India are fast fading and not merely due to hothouses or mobs on the street. The formal ruling establishment, with its silences, utterances and formalising of new laws and norms, is indistinguishable with the ideas guiding mobs. The mobs read together with actions of the Union government and that of State governments mark a sharp turn away from the democracy India claims it is. That must jolt us into recognising the distance we have already travelled down the wrong path. That may be the first step to try to wrest the descent into the darkness of an apartheid state.

Seema Chishti is a journalist. The views expressed are personal

The Evergrande-sized question over Chinese politics

The Evergrande crisis is significant, with answers linked to the Communist Party of China's political and social outlook



AVINASH GODBOLE

China's construction giant, the Evergrande Group, was in the news about a month ago as it ran out of money, had no options to get more loans or overdrafts, and had almost \$310 billion worth of liabilities and several angry lenders, suppliers and homebuyers wanting clear answers that did not seem to come from anywhere. It began in January 2021 when regulators in China changed lending regulations with an aim to "strengthen [the] anti-monopoly push and prevent disorderly expansion of capital" which brought in more curbs in lending to big private businesses. While this was a delayed structural reform, it also marked the beginning of the end for Evergrande.

Housing as a bubble

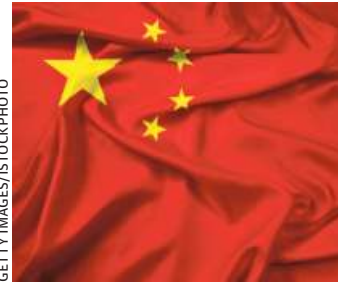
The Evergrande crisis is a significant recent development that has struck the country's ruling elites. However, at least since 2014, China's housing sector has been labelled as a "bubble waiting to burst". What kept it going on over the seven years or so and why Evergrande has imploded so suddenly is the real story that can be

answered only with reference to the Communist Party of China's (CPC) present political and social outlook.

Developments in China tend to be explained with the help of Chinese idioms. One such popular idiom is to "kill the chicken to scare the monkey". Perhaps what China did with the Ant Financial IPO late last year was akin to killing the chicken. But now it seems that Evergrande was indeed the monkey that is now about to die, and the party does not know how exactly to handle it. In other words, did the Chinese government want to make an example out of Evergrande?

Factors behind China's rise

China's spectacular rise thus far is based on two pillars of exports and infrastructure. There is a realisation now that this has led to what was called "unbalanced and inadequate growth" when the new principal contradiction was declared during the 19th Party Congress in 2017. Recently, exports have slowed down and are not as profitable as before. The infrastructure sector, on the other hand, is at the centre of the guanxi (social network) induced corruption and cronyism, and is adding to the country's debt problem. China's President Xi Jinping has spoken of a need for course correction right since 2012, primarily to avoid a heating of the economy; expensive



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houses would make the middle class angry and it may have cascading implications for the party's credibility.

Second, the ostentatious lifestyle of the Evergrande boss is also something the party wants to distance itself from, and may be punished; in China, it is okay to make money but let it be about your hard work and acknowledge the party's guidance but do not be nouveau riche. This feeling has only got stronger since the 2012 incident involving a fatal Ferrari crash involving Ling Jihua's son. China's netizens are also aware of this problem and they often take to social media to vent their anger. Chinese youth are angry as jobs are hard to find, and recently, there have been popular protests targeting several icons. Such protests may even be managed from inside the party to underwrite its imminent policy choices as it helps the party appear more responsive and engaged. Thus, celebrities with businesses outside China, non-conforming youth, fin-tech

and ed-tech moguls who were too autonomous for the party's liking were targeted because the party leads everything as Mr. Xi proclaimed in 2019.

Common prosperity is the central explanation for what is happening in China right now in several diverse sectors. This idea did not make a sudden appearance in the party lexicon. It was mentioned in the 19th Party Congress document as a target for the Chinese people "... to work together and... ultimately achieve common prosperity for everyone" and more as a wishlist in the previous two reports. For the same reason, Alibaba will invest \$15.5 billion in corporate social responsibility under the party's guidance. There is also a strong influence of China's new left thinkers who have for long argued that China is moving from being a market economy to a market society where corruption and cronyism are rampant and where distribution of social goods takes a back seat.

Domestic consumption

However, there is another dilemma that the CPC must resolve soon. China needs companies such as Evergrande to operate because the country has ambitious twin targets of expanding urbanisation and increasing domestic consumption as was highlighted in the Dual Circulation strategy. Today, China's construction sector

directly accounts for 7% and along with allied industries accounts for close to 17% of the country's GDP. So, the role of the construction sector is critical in terms of employment, wealth creation, contribution to tax, and in terms of the overall expansion of the urban middle class. The CPC already finds it hard enough to make the Chinese middle class spend its money since it is a savings driven class. Any sign of contraction may drive the middle class away from consumption and that may indeed be a bad sign for the economy.

Also, China consumes 50% of the global steel and cement production. So the Evergrande crisis does have global implications. Is it possible then that this is one that is actually a party-engineered crisis to assert Chinese centrality for the world economy? There are economic reasons to consider and whether China would let Evergrande fall. However, beyond that is the political issue of whether it might happen because it is closer to the Jiang Zemin faction and has links to the family of former Premier Wen Jiabao. Depending on how these questions are answered one might find the clues to what happens in the next party congress in fall next year.

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

Where India stands

With the disastrous consequences of climate change making their presence felt rather forcefully in the world today, the veritable truth is that the man-made-catastrophe of global warming can be mitigated only through collective efforts. India has become one of the world's largest emitters of greenhouse gases, and it is imperative that it joins the climate mitigation bandwagon (Page 1, "India will stress 'climate justice' at global summit, says

Minister", October 29). However, what is unjust and unacceptable is that historical polluters are conveniently overlooking the clause of 'common but differentiated responsibility' enshrined in the Paris Accord of 2015. The points that the Indian Prime Minister and his French counterpart together launched the International Solar Alliance; the country has set a target of installing 450 GW of renewable energy by 2030; has a robust electric vehicle policy in place, besides a mission for hydrogen, and

is steadily increasing its forest cover, all prove that India has recognised need for global climate change mitigation efforts. NALINI VIJAYARAGHAVAN, Thiruvananthapuram

■ Committing to net zero carbon emissions is a tall order. India is a developing nation, with the lion's share of its energy produced through thermal power. The country should for now focus on gradually turning to and relying on renewable sources of energy. AANYA SINGHAL, Noida, Uttar Pradesh

'Drug bust' case

The recent case of alleged drug seizure on a cruise ship and the arrest of high-profile celebrities only highlight the growing danger of the consumption of narcotics in India, especially among the young. It is no exaggeration to say that there is a culture of rave drug parties in Mumbai. Why does the Narcotics Control Bureau not crack the whip? While walking down Colaba Causeway, one can often spot youngsters smoking narcotics in the narrow lanes and bylanes. There are also those who are on the fringes

of society who indulge in drugs. There need to be concerted moves to educate all, especially youngsters, on the dangers of narcotic use. JUBEL D'CRUZ, Mumbai

■ The way the high-profile case has proceeded only raises more questions than answers. Of concern is the way the investigation has proceeded. The seriatim of controversies that have arisen will certainly open a Pandora's box. Let the case not drag on for months. MANI NATARAJAN, Chennai

Films and the messages Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu while appreciating the standing of the iconic thespian, Rajinikanth, also indirectly highlighted the status of cinema today that vastly differs from its purpose of being a carrier of social, moral and ethical messages. This should serve as a reminder to actors and producers. The selectors of the National Film Awards should also choose films that shun violence in their plots. BABY HARLINE, Palayamkottai, Tamil Nadu

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The hunter gets captured by the game

Following the arrest of superstar Shah Rukh Khan's son in a drugs-related case, allegations of professional and personal impropriety have been made against Sameer Wankhede, the officer heading the investigation. **Alok Deshpande** reports on the events of the last three weeks which have grown into a political slugfest

In the wee hours of October 3, a crowd gathered outside the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) office in south Mumbai. When an officer stepped out of the building and under the glare of television cameras, reporters, hungry for bites, pounced on him, many almost pushing their mikes into his mouth. "Yes, we have taken eight to 10 people in our custody," said the officer, Sameer Wankhede, Mumbai Zonal Director of the NCB. "Investigation is in progress."

"Eight or 10?" a reporter demanded to know, but this voice got lost in the volley of questions that were being thrown at the officer. Little did anyone in that crowd know that this question would haunt the NCB in general and Wankhede in particular in the coming days. But that is for later.

On that day, the famed NCB officer had everything under control. Aryan Khan, the 23-year-old son of Shah Rukh Khan, who is one of the biggest film stars in the world, was sitting inside the NCB office. He and his friends Arbaaz Merchant and Munmun Dhamecha were being probed by the agency for alleged drug abuse on board the *Cordelia* cruise ship the day before, at a party organised by *Fashion TV*. Of the 1,300 guests at the party, the NCB had picked up a few youngsters, later alleging that they were part of an international drug racket. The arrests of the three accused immediately caught the country's attention. But no one would have expected it to spiral into what it has become today – a bewildering story of accusations and counter-accusations involving politicians, government servants and Bollywood stars.

In the limelight

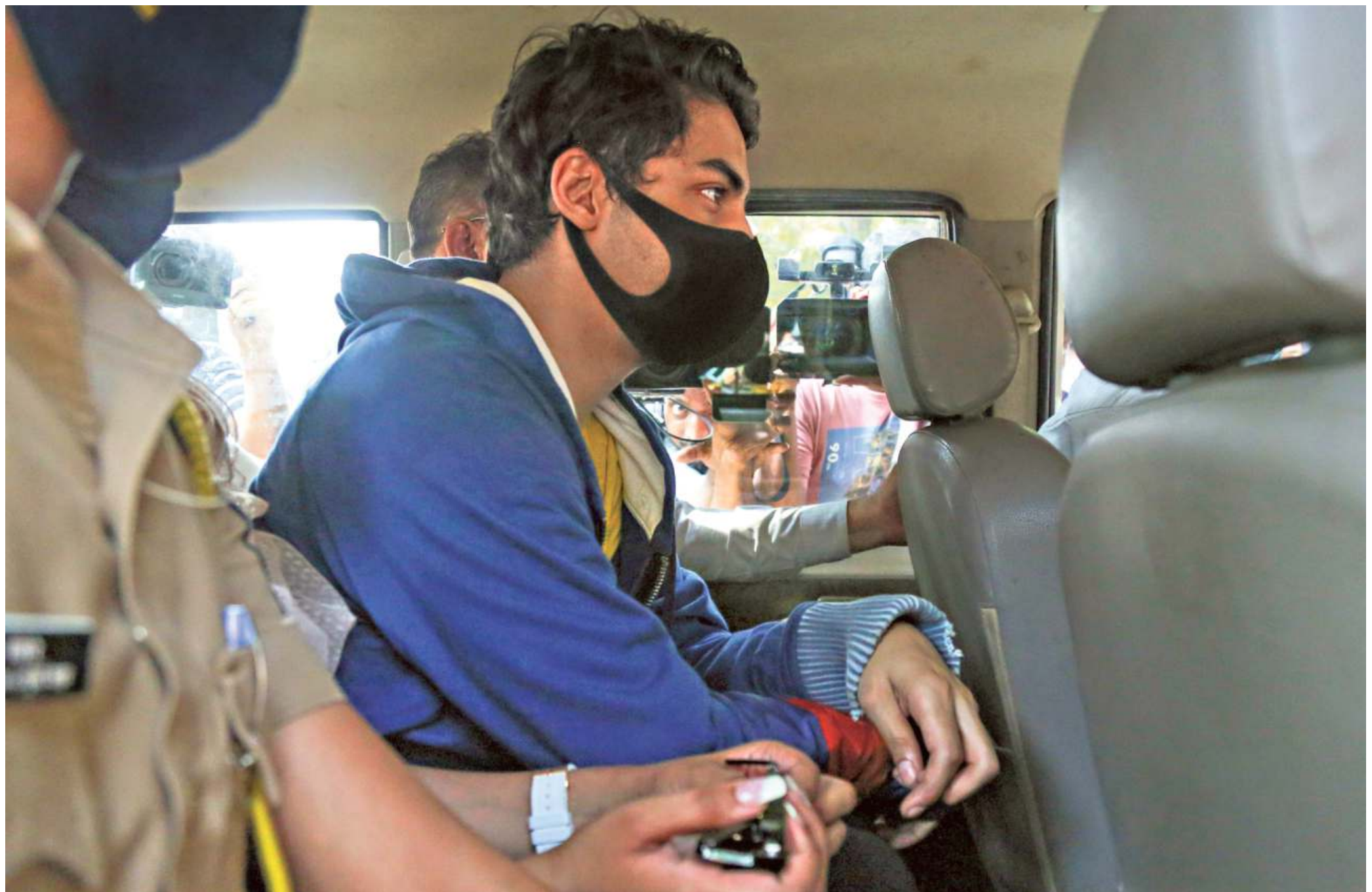
Wankhede's brush with fame, glamour and controversy is neither new nor surprising. The 2008-batch Indian Revenue Service officer from the Customs and Central Excise branch was posted at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport in Mumbai from 2010 to 2013. In 2011, he made headlines when, as Assistant Commissioner of Customs, he imposed a fine of ₹1.5 lakh on none other than Shah Rukh Khan, who had returned from a family holiday in Holland and London, for excess luggage.

Besides Shah Rukh Khan, Minishha Lamba and Anushka Sharma and team members of Katrina Kaif, Bipasha Basu, Ranbir Kapoor, Vivek Oberoi, Anurag Kashyap and Mika Singh have come under Wankhede's radar during his stint at the airport and then at the Service Tax department for reportedly not declaring imported valuables such as watches, perfumes and footwear.

Many say they were surprised when Wankhede went to the National Investigation Agency on deputation in 2013. In 2017, he was assigned to the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence. "What attracted the attention of many and resulted in him being deputed to the NCB was that he had a wide network of informants," an official with the NCB says on the condition of anonymity.

In 2020, Wankhede began to probe the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. It all began on June 14 when Rajput, 34, was found dead at his Bandra home. The Mumbai Police began an investigation stating that the death was being treated as a suicide. The autopsy report confirmed that the actor had died by suicide. Nevertheless, an unprecedented political storm occurred in the wake of his death, with the Bihar Assembly elections scheduled to take place a few months later. Rajput was a native of Bihar. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) saw an opportunity to denounce the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government in Maharashtra, especially the Shiv Sena. Senior BJP leaders alleged that Rajput had been murdered and that the incident was being covered up to protect an influential, young leader of the Sena. An FIR was registered in Bihar. The allegations, all made without any evidence, received extraordinary media coverage. Rajput's girlfriend and actor Rhea Chakraborty was blamed for his death and was then accused of killing him. Following the BJP's claims, which were aided by Rajput's family members, central investigating agencies were brought in to probe the case. A team of the Central Bureau of Investigation questioned all those related to Rajput, including Chakraborty. In July 2020, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) filed a money laundering case based on the FIR registered in Bihar and the allegations made by Rajput's father against Chakraborty. According to sources, the ED's audit showed references to drugs in Chakraborty's WhatsApp chats. And so, the NCB was brought in.

On August 31, 2020, Wankhede, who was in the DRI, was inducted into the NCB for six months. The NCB categorically denies that he was brought in especially for the Rajput case. A statement issued by Mutha Ashok Jain, Deputy Director General, South West region, NCB, read, "The vacancy circular for filling the post of ZD/DD was initiated in the year 2019. Sh. Sameer Wankhede



(Clockwise from top): Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan's son Aryan Khan being brought to court from the Narcotics Control Bureau office in Mumbai; NCB officer Sameer Wankhede; and NCP leader Nawab Malik • EMMANUAL YOGINI; SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Wankhede has said in interviews that his mother worked for street children and his father, who is from the uniformed services, always wanted to see him work for the nation. All these personal details have added to his image as a daredevil officer.

Nawab Malik's salvos

Wankhede's actions were countered for the first time when the NCB arrested comedian Bharti Singh and her husband Haarsh Limbachiya in November 2020 and allegedly seized 86.5 grams of ganja from their home and office. Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and Minister for Minority Affairs and Skills Development Nawab Malik said then that drug addicts should be sent to rehabilitation centres and not jail. "The NCB's duty is to track down drug traffickers but no action is being taken against them," said Malik, a five-time MLA who is close to NCP chief Sharad Pawar.

Two months later, on January 13, 2021, messages were sent to reporters about a "high-profile" interrogation at the NCB office. The accused, the reporters found out on rushing there, was Sameer Khan, Malik's son-in-law. On January 9, the NCB had seized 200 kilograms of marijuana and arrested British national Karan Sejnani and two sisters – Rahila and Shaista Furniturewala – from Bandra. Sameer was summoned by the NCB after an alleged online transaction of ₹20,000 between him and Sejnani was found. Asked for his reaction then, Malik had said, "Law will take its due course and justice will prevail. I respect and have immense faith in our judiciary." Sameer remained in jail for nearly eight months.

Months later, Malik paid keen attention to the visuals that were flashing on television screens of some men with Aryan Khan inside the NCB office. Malik decided to hear what Wankhede was saying in front of the camera. "He said 'eight to 10 are in our custody'. What is this? A joke? It is either eight or 10. An officer always knows how many are in custody," Malik said.



Malik's eyes were also drawn to the footage of a bearded man on the cruise ship where Aryan Khan was also present. "An officer with a styled beard?" he wondered. Around the same time when Malik's suspicions rose, a bald and hefty man's selfie with Aryan Khan went viral on social media. Wankhede, who was now unknowingly being sucked into a whirlpool, quickly responded that the person in the photo was not an NCB officer. The media ran the clarification. But Malik decided to dig deeper. A photo search on Google led him to K.P. Gosavi, an accused in a cheating case in Pune. Through Gosavi, and using his own network of contacts in the Gujarati trading community, Malik also identified the bearded man on the ship as Manish Bhanushali, a BJP worker. Malik knew he had got hold of something.

Malik, who Wankhede says harbours a personal grudge against him, does not deny his past altercations with team Wankhede. He says he was quiet when his son-in-law was arrested as he believed that the law would take its course. But when the judiciary found no evidence against Sameer Khan and the court order stated that what was seized was herbal tobacco, he decided to speak out, he said. He alleged that the NCB had framed his son-in-law.

Following these revelations, the NCB aggressively defended the use of Gosavi and Bhanushali as independent witnesses on the first day of allegations and even hinted that Malik's outburst was due to personal reasons.

Undeterred, Malik then addressed Wankhede's vague statement that "eight to 10 people" had been detained. He said that 11 people, in fact, had been detained by the NCB during the October 2 raid but three of them – BJP leader Mohit Kamboj's brother-in-law Rishabh Sachdev, Pratik Gabha and Amir Furniturewala – were let off.

Malik kept the heat up on Wankhede. Two days later, he raised questions about the involvement of a man cited by the NCB as an independent witness in as



many as three cases. He asked whether the man, Fletcher Patel, was an independent witness or a close aide of Wankhede's. The NCP leader also took to Twitter to post a screenshot of an Instagram picture of Fletcher Patel with a woman described as "lady don". The woman in the picture is Yasmeen Wankhede, Sameer Wankhede's sister. A few days later, Malik claimed that Wankhede was extorting money from Bollywood celebrities by threatening them and released photos of the NCB official's trip to the Maldives.

Malik also alleged that Wankhede is originally Muslim and used a fake caste certificate to get his government job. On the same day, another independent witness, Prabhakar Sail, who was a bodyguard of K.P. Gosavi, filed an affidavit claiming that the NCB had demanded ₹25 crore from Shah Rukh Khan of which ₹8 crore was to go to Wankhede. Sail also said that Wankhede asked him to sign on blank papers. The next day, Malik released the 'nikahnama' of Wankhede's first marriage with Shabana Qureishi where the officer's father's name is mentioned as Dawood instead of Dnyandeve as per his caste certificate. The Qazi who officiated the marriage in question said that both families involved in the wedding were Muslims.

The NCB has been on a defensive mode. For the first time, it has been forced to issue a string of clarifications. Things came to a head with Sail's affidavit which left the NCB with no option but to form a five-member vigilance team to probe the allegations against Wankhede. The NCB's Deputy Director General (Northern Region), Gyaneshwar Singh, appealed to Sail to come and depose in front of the agency, but Sail has gone underground.

Facing the heat

Meanwhile, the NCB officer's family says they are being harassed and have been receiving threats ever since Malik claimed that Wankhede's caste certificate is fraudulent. Wankhede says he is Hindu by birth and was married to Qureishi under the Special Marriage Act. "The nikahnama was done as my late mother, who was a Muslim, wanted Islamic rituals," he said. His father claims that he never converted to Islam and was lovingly called Dawood by his wife.

Wankhede's wife Kranti Redkar-Wankhede, an actor, has also denied all the allegations. She says Wankhede is a Hindu and an honest officer. She has written to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray demanding "justice" while invoking her Marathi roots.

"I do not have a problem with him being a Muslim or a person from any other religion. We have the freedom to practise the religion of our choice. However, Wankhede, by faking his caste certificate, has denied the right of a hard-working child from the Scheduled Caste community by usurping a seat," Malik said.

Malik's tweets every morning have

kept the pot boiling for the NCB. The BJP has targeted Malik, claiming that the MVA government has been working hard to save Shah Rukh Khan's son. BJP MLA Atul Bhatkalkar complained to the Kurla Police station alleging that Malik, by claiming that Wankhede was a Muslim, was creating communal disharmony. Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale held a press conference where he termed Malik's allegations baseless. "Wankhede is a Dalit officer, who is doing good work... and it is not right to target him," he said.

A political slugfest

Following Rajput's death as well as the bomb scare in Antilia in February this year, where a car laden with explosives was found parked near the house of industrialist Mukesh Ambani, the BJP strongly advocated the use of central agencies for investigations claiming that the Maharashtra Police were being misused by the MVA government. The Union government ensured that central probe agencies took control of the investigations in these cases. All three parties in the MVA government have alleged several times that the BJP is using central agencies to tarnish the State's image and destabilise the government.

The BJP's outburst against Malik came after he exposed the party's direct connection with the Aryan Khan case. The party could not deny Bhanushali's presence during the raid. BJP leader Mohit Kamboj, whose brother-in-law was let off by the NCB, has threatened to file a defamation suit against Malik.

After spending more than three weeks in jail, Aryan Khan was granted bail on October 28. Gosavi, who was on the run after his identity was revealed, has now been arrested by the Pune Police in a 2018 cheating case. Bhanushali is nowhere to be found. Wankhede has approached the Bombay High Court seeking protection from possible arrest by the Mumbai Police on the charge of extortion. A departmental inquiry has been initiated against him too.

In the midst of the political slugfest, social media has flared up with one section supporting Shah Rukh Khan and the other, Wankhede. Several social media accounts have been running hashtags personally targeting Shah Rukh Khan, demanding rejection of bail to his son and calling for a boycott of all the products he endorses. Attacks were also mounted against Malik using hashtags such as #SendNawabMalikToJail.

In the blockbuster film *Om Shanti Om*, Shah Rukh Khan's character famously says, 'Picture abhi baaki hai, mere dost' (The show is yet to get over, my friend). The Aryan Khan case has created ripples everywhere and brought many under the scanner. The son of the famous actor may be out on bail, but with Malik continuing to make allegations against Wankhede and the officer now running to court for protection, the show is yet to get over.

FROM PAGE ONE

No money left in MGNREGA coffers

This provided a critical lifeline to a record 11 crore workers.

However, the scheme's 2021-22 budget was set at just ₹73,000 crore, with the Centre arguing that the nationwide lockdown was over, and that supplementary budgetary allocations would be available if the money ran out.

As on October 29, the total expenditure, including payments due had already reached ₹79,810 crore, pushing the scheme into the red. Already, 21 States show a negative net balance, with Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal faring the worst.

"We are facing a situation of MGNREGA closing down halfway through the year. Who is going to absorb the cost? The poorest and most vulnerable communities, who have already been crushed by the pandemic's impact," said Nikhil Dey, a founder of the Mazdoor Kisan Shakti Sangathan.

"The Government of India is, on the face of it, pushing crores of people into

forced labour, as held by the SC," added Mr. Dey.

"It is somewhat early this year [to run out of funds]," admitted a senior official of the Rural Development Ministry, who did not wish to be named. "People will continue to get work. Only thing that might happen is that the payment will only be made once funds are available. But many States can provide temporary funds out of their own kitty and then once the fund is available, it can be reimbursed [by the Centre]."

The official blamed the State governments for the current situation.

"My apprehension is that the States are using it not as a demand driven scheme, but as a supply-led scheme. The States are asking their field authorities to artificially create demand," said the official.

Activists say the exact opposite is happening on the ground. MGNREGA data shows that 13% of households who demanded work under the scheme were not provided work.

Barriers removed from farmers' protest sites

"It was the Delhi Police that had put these barricades after the January 26 episode [when protesters entered the Red Fort and indulged in violence]. It seems after the SKM's affidavit in the Supreme Court, the Delhi Police have corrected their mistake," Mr. Singh said.

Mr. Singh said the move was not an indication of the government reaching out to farmers for the peaceful resolution of the protest against the contentious farm laws and that the protest would continue at the Ghazipur border with "even more vigour". "My 40 years of experience in holding protests for farmers' cause tells me that the government wants to stretch it [the impasse] further rather than arriving at a decision," he said.

Notably, at the Ghazipur border, the police chose to remove the barricades from the lanes which lead to the

Farm laws, protests not our business: panel

NEW DELHI
The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Agriculture will not discuss the three contentious farm reform laws nor the 11-month long agitation by farmers demanding that the laws be repealed. The newly reconstituted panel held its first meeting on Friday, to discuss and select subjects for examination this year. Chairperson and BJP MP P.C. Gaddigoudar told *The Hindu* that the agricultural marketing reform laws and the protests against them would not be among the subjects to be looked into by the Committee.

main stage and the langar of the protesting farmers.

At the Tikri border, the police started removing the layers of barbed wire on Thursday and the process was still under way on Friday.

Suicides among farm workers rose 18% in 2020

This is slightly higher than the 10,281 who died in 2019. Most of these deaths were among those whose primary work and main source of income comes from labour activities in agriculture or horticulture. In 2020, a total of 5,098 of these labourers died by suicide, an 18% rise from the 4,324 who died last year.

However, among farmers who cultivate their own land, with or without the help of other workers, the number of suicides dropped 3.7% from 5,129 to 4,940.

Among tenant farmers who cultivate leased land, there was a 23% drop in suicides from 828 to 639.

The worst among the States continues to be Maharashtra, with 4,006 suicides in the farm sector, including a 15% increase in farm worker suicides.

Other States with a poor record include Karnataka (2016), Andhra Pradesh (889) and Madhya Pradesh (735). Karnataka saw a dismal 43% increase in the number of farm worker suicides in 2020.

Top officials liable for sale of toxic crackers: SC

The court said an equal blame should lie with the authorities who turn a blind eye to the violation of the law.

The court, however, made it clear there was no

total ban on the use of fire-crackers. "Only those fire-crackers are banned which are found to be injurious to health and affecting the health of citizens," it clarified.

Akali Dal flays Congress over decision on Tylter

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The decision by the Congress party to name Jagdish Tylter as permanent invitee in Delhi Pradesh Congress's Executive Committee has invoked sharp criticism from the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab. SAD president Sukhbir Singh Badal said the decision has yet again showed the Congress's insensitivity

towards the Sikh community. "This is a brazen display of shocking insensitivity to the Sikh wounds by AICC president Sonia Gandhi and the Congress. They have chosen the eve of the painful anniversary of the massacre of Sikhs to announce this decision. Could there be a worse way to rub salt into the wounds than this decision and its timing?"

Crucial byelections in 11 States today

Outcome of contest for three Lok Sabha and 29 Assembly seats set to have political implications

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

October 30 will see bypolls across 11 States for three Lok Sabha and 29 Assembly seats that will have implications for the politics of each of these States.

Haryana, the State closest to Delhi, will see an Assembly bypoll in Ellenabad and is important for the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) led by former Chief Minister Om Prakash Chautala after his release from jail after nearly a decade and the breaking away of his grandson, Dushyant Chautala, who floated a new outfit calling on the same support base as the INLD.

Abhay Chautala, son of Chautala senior, resigned from the seat in protest against the three contentious Central farm laws. Therefore, this is not just a turf war within the Chautala family for the Jat vote base. It's also on just how much political hit the BJP has taken over the farm laws. The BJP has fielded controversial MLA Gopal Kanda's brother Govind Kanda.

Bihar is seeing bypolls to

two Assembly seats. This follows the death of the Janata Dal (U) MLAs and is crucial for the NDA government's stability, as the majority of the government rests on a slender margin with just four more than the required mark.

Allies Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and the Congress have each announced candidates for the seats after much verbal sparring between them. The RJD feels that the Congress's low strike rate in the Assembly polls brought the alliance low, while the Congress thinks it needs to assert itself. The bypolls are, therefore, crucial for the ruling as well as the Opposition alliance.

While the news from Maharashtra has been all about the cruise chip drug bust, a tough bypoll contest is on in Deglur in Nanded district. It was necessitated by the death of MLA Raosaheb Antapurkar, considered close to former Chief Minister Ashok Chavan. The Congress has fielded his son, Jitesh Antapurkar. The seat, a reserved one, was won by the Shiv Sena in 2014 and the



Election fervour: Officials carrying EVMs leave for polling stations on the eve of bypolls to the Musalpur seat in Bakasr district of Assam on Friday. •PTI

Congress in 2019. The BJP has decided to challenge the Maha Vikas Aghadi's (MVA) dominance in the area by fielding former Shiv Sena man Subhash Sabne.

The implications of this contest for the personal career of Mr. Chavan are significant, but the question of whether or not the MVA as a grouping can have a complimentary electoral equation will be put to test.

As the second wave of COVID-19 was barely on the wane earlier this year, the BJP managed to gain a big catch-up former Health Minister in the Telangana Rashtra

Samithi (TRS)-led government Eatala Rajendra. This necessitated a bypoll in the Huzurabad seat. Mr. Rajendra is being fielded by the BJP and the TRS has put up Gellu Srinivas Yadav. The Congress has joined the battle by placing Venkat Balmoor as its candidate.

Grudge match

It is, however, at the basic level, a grudge match between the TRS and the BJP over Mr. Rajendra's defection. Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu in fact launched the Dalit Bandhu scheme, with Huzurabad as the site of the

pilot project for distribution of grants upto ₹ 10 lakh to Dalit entrepreneurs.

For Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, bypolls to five Assembly seats will be his first test after being sworn in to the top job. While two seats fell vacant due to the death of MLAs, the three vacancies arose due to the defection of two Congress and one All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) MLAs to the BJP. The BJP has fielded all the defectors in the three seats, with two seats given over to allies. If the BJP wins the three seats it is contesting, it will be two seats short of a full majority in the Assembly sans allies.

In Karnataka, bypolls to Sindagi and Hanagal will be a similar test for the newly-appointed Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai, who replaced strongman B. S. Yediyurappa recently. But the test is also for the latter, as his son, B.Y. Vijayendra, is one of the party in charge of the Hanagal poll. The outcome of the bypoll will affect the chemistry of power in Bengaluru.

Power being misused in Bihar: RJD

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

A day before the bypolls for two seats in Bihar, Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Friday accused the Nitish Kumar-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the State of putting pressure on officials to influence voters in favour of the Janata Dal-United (JD-U) candidate.

Mr. Yadav also alleged that the Nitish Kumar government had been distributing liquor, sarees and money to voters.

Both the ruling JD(U) and the principal Opposition party, the RJD, are locked in close contest for Tarapur in Munger and Kusheshwarthan in Darbhanga district. The Congress and the Lok Janshakti Party too have put up their candidates for the bypolls.

Earlier, Mr. Tejashwi Yadav had filed a complaint with the Election Commission against a particular police officer's posting in Kusheshwarthan by the government to influence voters there.

Mamata makes her pitch against BJP

She says Trinamool Congress is ready to 'give blood' in the fight in Goa

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Friday began her political engagements in Goa by targeting the Congress. She said that party could not be trusted to fight the BJP. The Trinamool Congress (TMC) chairperson assured the voters of the western coastal State that her party would never compromise with the BJP.

"Somebody can tell us why are you contesting. Let the Congress contest. They contested for 70 years, what have they done... Last time Congress MLAs went to the BJP to help them form government. You [Congress] cannot control your MLAs. You cannot take a decision in proper time. You allowed the BJP to form government. Who can say it won't be repeated. How do we trust them?" she told TMC workers.

The remarks by Ms. Banerjee, who is on a three-day visit to Goa, assumes signifi-



New roles: Nafisa Ali, left, and Leander Paes joining the TMC, in Panaji on Friday. •PTI

cance as questions were raised that a split of votes will only help the BJP. A section of Congress leaders has alleged that by dividing Opposition votes in Goa, Ms. Banerjee is helping the BJP. "If you can trust us, I can tell you that the Trinamool Congress will fight the battle. They are ready to give blood but will not compromise with the BJP. It's our promise," she asserted.

Earlier in the day, tennis

legend Leander Paes and Congress leader Nafisa Ali joined the Trinamool Congress.

"Leander is my sweet and cute younger brother. He will be an inspiration for the younger generation," Ms. Banerjee stated. The 48-year-old tennis veteran stressed that he had retired from tennis and wanted to serve people through the vehicle of politics. Ms. Ali observed that the "Congress has let its voters down and

the Trinamool Congress is the new Congress of India".

During her interactions with media persons and party workers, Ms. Banerjee spoke of a number of issues, including the similarities between Goa and West Bengal and how her party has given maximum representation to women.

"There are three similarities between Goa and Bengal — fish, football and folk culture," she said.

Chidambaram slams Centre on 'snooping'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Friday targeted the Government over the snooping allegations, claiming that the Israeli envoy's statement on the Pegasus spyware made it clear that "the buyer was Government of India [GoI]".

"After the Supreme Court's wise and bold order in the Pegasus controversy, the first skeleton has tumbled out. Yesterday, Israel's Ambassador publicly stated that Pegasus spyware was sold only to government. So, in India's case, the buyer was certainly the Government of India," he tweeted.

UIDAI seeks indemnity from Data Bill

It was implementation of Aadhaar that first triggered the data privacy debate

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

The Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) has asked for exemption from the Personal Data Protection (PDP) Law. In an interaction with the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Data Protection Bill 2019 on Thursday at its office in Bengaluru, UIDAI functionaries said the authority is already being governed by the Aadhaar Act and there cannot be duplicity of laws.

Ironically, it was making Aadhaar compulsory for many key services including the banks that first triggered the data privacy debate. The genesis of this Bill lies in the report prepared by a Committee of Experts headed by

Justice B.N. Srikrishna. The committee was constituted by the government in the course of hearings before the Supreme Court in the right to privacy case (*Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India*).

The Personal Data Protection (PDP) Bill 2019 has a contentious section 35, which invokes "sovereignty and integrity of India," "public order", "friendly relations with foreign states" and "security of the state" to give powers to the Central government to suspend all or any of the provisions of this Act for government agencies.

The UIDAI during the interaction with the Joint Parliamentary Committee, sources

said, demanded that it should get a blanket exemption from the act under this section. It further argued that it already is being governed by the Aadhaar Act and the PDP bill could be counterproductive.

The 2019 Bill already has clauses which are open to interpretation. As Prasanth Sugathan, Legal Director, Software Freedom Law Centre pointed out, "Section 12 of 2019 Bill gives UIDAI some leeway from the rigours of the Bill as it enables for processing data for provision of a service or benefit to the data principal. However, even then prior notice has to be given."

Sources indicate that UIDAI might not be the only

one to seek exemption. "Our fear is that the Bill, if implemented in the present form, may create two distinct ecosystems. One with the government agencies who will be completely out of the ambit of the law, giving them complete freedom to deal with the personal data. And the second will be private data fiduciaries who will have to deal with every letter in the law," one of the members said. The committee is on a tour to meet various data fiduciaries for a last round of discussion on "operational issues" in the implementation of the law. The panel which has already got five extensions has to submit its report at the upcoming session of Parliament.

Elect Yogi again if you want Modi as PM in 2024: Shah

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday said that if people of Uttar Pradesh want to see Narendra Modi as their Prime Minister again in 2024, they must elect Yogi Adityanath as their Chief Minister for a second term in 2022.

While Mr. Shah lavished praise on Mr. Adityanath on several fronts, especially law and order and making Uttar Pradesh *mafia mukt* (free of

mafia), he also said that it was "impossible" in five years to fill the "large pothole" left behind by previous governments.

"If you want to make Modi PM again in 2024, then in 2022 you will have to make Yogi CM once again. Then, the country's development can move forward. Because without development of Uttar Pradesh, the country cannot develop," said Mr. Shah while launching the BJP's fresh membership drive in



Amit Shah

the State ahead of next year's Assembly election.

Mr. Shah said that under Mr. Modi as PM all wishes of Uttar Pradesh were fulfilled just like a child visiting his or

her maternal house got all he or she desired. Victory in the 2022 Assembly election would serve as the foundation stone for a win in 2024 Lok Sabha election under the leadership of Mr. Modi, said Mr. Shah.

Mr. Adityanath and his team had fulfilled 90% of the promises made by the BJP in its manifesto released in 2017, said Mr. Shah, expressing the wish that in the coming two months the Chief Minister would work to take it

to 100% as much as possible. "So that people believe that the BJP does what it promises," said Mr. Shah.

Mr. Shah said Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav would mock the BJP over the date of the construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya.

"Akhilesh babu, the foundation stone of the mandir has already been laid. But you missed out from even donating ₹5,000," said the Home Minister.

SC to examine pleas against HC order

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to examine appeals against the Kerala High Court's decision to strike down the 80:20 ratio in the allotment of minority scholarships among Muslims and Christians in the State.

A Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao issued notice on the State government's plea that the May 28 judgment of the High Court was erroneous.

The High Court had held that the action of the State government to sub-classify minorities and provide them scholarship at an 80:20 ratio was legally unsustainable.

The government was also directed to issue orders guaranteeing scholarships to members of notified minority communities on an equal basis.

The top court also issued notice on two other connected petitions filed by MSM Kerala State Committee and Minority Indians Planning and Vigilance Trust, represented by advocate Haris Beeran, challenging the High Court decision.

One of the petitions pointed out that the High Court had quashed three Government Orders of the Kerala Government passed in 2008, 2011 and 2015.

U.S. to deepen relations with Taiwan

Actively working on new areas of cooperation, such as cybersecurity and supply chains, says diplomat

ASSOCIATED PRESS
TAIPEI

The U.S. wants to deepen its relationship with Taiwan, the self-ruled island that has become a major point of conflict in the strained U.S.-China relationship, and will work to counter Beijing's "malign" influence, a U.S. diplomat said on Friday.

In her first public news conference, Sandra Oudkirk, the new director of the American Institute in Taiwan, the de facto embassy, reiterated that the U.S. remains deeply committed to Taiwan and is actively working on new areas of cooperation, such as cybersecurity and supply chains.

"The value of our partnership and our support for Taiwan is rock solid," Ms. Oudkirk said. "We are committed to deepening our ties with



Help at hand: A file photo of U.S. vessels transiting the Taiwan Strait amid tensions with China. *AP

Taiwan." The U.S. support for Taiwan comes as tensions between China and the island are now at the highest in decades, with Beijing stepping up its military harassment by flying fighter jets toward Taiwan. China has not

ruled out force to reunify with Taiwan, which split from the mainland during a civil war in 1949.

The U.S. switched diplomatic recognition of China from the ruling Nationalist Party government in Taipei

to the Communist Party in Beijing in 1979, but has continued to maintain a strong unofficial relationship with the self-ruled island.

Ms. Oudkirk declined to comment on any security initiatives or give any details about the presence of U.S. troops on the island, after Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen confirmed on Thursday that U.S. boots were indeed on the ground, though less than what people would think.

'Malign PRC influence'

"We are going to continue to advance global and regional goals of the Biden administration, including countering malign PRC influence, recovering from the devastating impacts of the pandemic and addressing the threat of climate change," Ms. Oudkirk

said, referring to the People's Republic of China, China's official name.

Washington has supported Taiwan with arms sales to boost the island's ability to defend itself, and also routinely navigates the waters around the island in what it calls freedom of operation movements.

Ms. Oudkirk, who became director over the summer, also reaffirmed that the U.S. will support Taiwan in its role on the international stage, without giving details.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken on Tuesday called on other members of the United Nations to support Taipei's independent participation in international organisations related to transportation, health, climate change, culture and education.

Ensure Afghan soil is not used for terror, U.S., India tell Taliban

Both sides agree to continue consultations on Afghan issue

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
WASHINGTON

India and the U.S. have called on the Taliban to ensure that Afghanistan is not used as a safe haven for terrorists, as officials from the two countries concluded their joint dialogue on counter-terrorism to expand their cooperation to combat the scourge.

The Indian and the U.S. sides also called for concerted action against all terror groups, including those proscribed by the UN Security Council such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba and the Jaish-e-Mohammad, a joint statement issued after the meeting here said on Thursday.

Reaffirming counter-terrorism cooperation as an im-

portant pillar under the U.S.-India Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, both sides pledged to further expand cooperation on law enforcement, information sharing, exchange of best practices and strategic convergence on counter-terrorism challenges, it said.

During the meeting here on October 26 and 27, the U.S. reiterated its commitment to stand together with the people and the Government of India in the fight against terrorism. They called on the Taliban to ensure that Afghanistan is not used as a safe haven for terrorists. According to the joint U.S.-India statement, the two countries strongly condemned any use of terro-

rist proxies and cross-border terrorism in all its forms, and called for the perpetrators of the 26/11 Mumbai attack to be brought to justice.

"In line with UNSC Resolution 2593 (2021), both sides called on the Taliban to ensure Afghan territory is never again used to threaten or attack any country, shelter or train terrorists, or plan or finance terrorist attacks," it said. Both sides committed to continuing close consultations on developments in Afghanistan and potential terrorist threats emanating from there. They also exchanged views on countering narco-terror networks and transnational illegal weapons smuggling networks.

New PM within a week, says Sudan coup leader

New premier will share leadership

ASSOCIATED PRESS
CAIRO

The Sudanese General who seized power in a coup this week said the military he heads will appoint a technocrat Prime Minister to rule alongside it within a week.

In an interview with Russia's state-owned Sputnik news agency published on Friday, Abdel-Fattah Burhan said the new premier will form a Cabinet that will share leadership of the country with the armed forces. "We have a patriotic duty to lead the people and help them in the transition period until elections are held," Gen. Burhan said.

On Monday, Gen. Burhan dissolved the transitional government and detained

Prime Minister Abdalla Hamdok, many government officials and political leaders in a coup condemned by the U.S. and the West. The military allowed Mr. Hamdok to return home under guard the following day after international pressure.

The Generals have not yet produced a list of candidates for the premierships, Gen. Burhan said. The decision to appoint such a premier follows earlier calls by the Generals for a non-partisan technocrat Cabinet.

The military takeover came after weeks of mounting tensions between military and civilian leaders over the course and pace of Sudan's transition to democracy.

Biden hails pope as a 'warrior of peace'

President and pontiff discuss climate change, pandemic and the issue of refugees

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
VATICAN CITY

U.S. President Joe Biden, only the second Catholic to hold his office, had a private audience with Pope Francis on Friday at the start of a European trip aimed at reasserting U.S. international credentials.

The President hailed the pontiff as "the most significant warrior of peace I have ever met", in a meeting at the Vatican.

It was closed to the media but footage released by the Vatican showed a good-humoured gathering full of smiles, with Mr. Biden at points visibly moved, and elsewhere telling the pope "God love ya". He gave the pontiff a presidential coin recalling the regiment in



Sharing thoughts: U.S. President Joe Biden, left, with Pope Francis at the Vatican on Friday. *AP

which his son Beau Biden, who died from cancer in 2015, had served, saying: "I know my son would want me to give this to you."

Mr. Biden, who is open about his faith and how it gives him strength, has already met Pope Francis three times before but this was

their first tete-a-tete since he entered the White House.

It was arranged to coincide with the G20 leaders summit in Rome and next week's crunch UN climate talks in Glasgow, in which Mr. Biden hopes to push his mantra that "America is back" after the Trump years.

Both Mr. Biden and the pope have been outspoken on the need to tackle global warming and this was a dominant theme of their talks.

"I thanked His Holiness for his advocacy for the world's poor and those suffering from hunger, conflict, and persecution, and lauded his leadership in fighting the climate crisis and ending the pandemic," the President tweeted later. He said the meeting, part of which was with his wife Jill, had been "an honour".

The Vatican said they discussed climate change, the pandemic and the issue of refugees and migrants, as well as "the protection of human rights, including freedom of religion and conscience".

Suu Kyi aide jailed for 20 years for 'treason'

80-year-old to appeal sentence: lawyer

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YANGON

Myanmar's military sentenced a close aide of ousted civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi to 20 years in prison on Friday, his lawyer said, the first high-ranking member of her party to be jailed by a junta court.

The country has been in turmoil since a February 1 coup ousted Ms. Suu Kyi's National League for Democracy (NLD) government, accusing it of fraud in the 2020 elections it won in a landslide.

Former member of Parliament and NLD speaker Win Htein was handed 20 years in jail for treason by a special court in the capital Naypyidaw, lawyer Myint

Thwin said. He added that he would appeal the sentence, and that his client was in good health.

Considered Ms. Suu Kyi's right-hand man, Mr. Win Htein, 80, is the first high-ranking NLD member to be sentenced by the junta after a trial.

The wheelchair-bound politician requires oxygen to help him breathe, according to local media, and suffers from hypertension, diabetes, and heart and thyroid diseases.

Ahead of his arrest three days after the coup, he told local media the military putsch was "not wise", and that its leaders "have taken (the country) in the wrong direction".



Amid fertilizer row, China blacklists Sri Lankan bank

Court had blocked payment over contaminated consignment

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

China has blacklisted a top state-owned bank in Sri Lanka, citing a "vicious" Letter of Credit "default" in relation to a recent order for organic fertilizer placed by Colombo with a Chinese company. Last week Sri Lankan authorities rejected the consignment that they found to be contaminated.

China's Ministry of Commerce said the "default" had caused "huge losses" to Chinese enterprises in international trade with Sri Lanka. Responding to a tweet from the Colombo-based Chinese Embassy on the decision, People's Bank in Sri Lanka said it was only following a court order, restraining the bank from paying the Chinese company. "Once the legal barriers in effect are removed, the LC payment will be effected promptly as per the usual trade practices," the bank said in a statement on Friday.

Last week, Sri Lanka barred a Chinese ship carrying organic fertilizer, after the National Plant Quarantine Service tested samples and confirmed presence of "organisms, including certain types of harmful bacte-



PM Mahinda Rajapaksa said Colombo cannot accept the tainted fertilizer stock.

ria". A Commercial High Court banned any payment to Qingdao Seawin Biotech Group Co. Ltd. for the 96,000 tonnes of fertilizer, news agency AFP reported.

China's subsequent blacklisting of the Sri Lankan bank, and the public clash between officials on both sides, come as concerns of an acute agriculture crisis grow in the island nation, following Colombo's decision to abruptly switch from chemical to organic fertilizers in May this year.

Critics have slammed President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's move as "ill-timed" during the pandemic and "ill-advised", due to its likely adverse impact on food production. The decision has

also triggered farmers' struggles that are fast spreading, even as Colombo tries sourcing organic fertilizer from other countries.

Meanwhile, the Chinese Embassy in Colombo, on its Twitter page, sought to give a "timeline" of events, and said Seawin [Chinese company Qingdao Seawin Biotech Group] had won an open bid, signed contracts, passed tests of China and an international agency designated by Ceylon Fertilizer Company, and shipped the consignment ahead of schedule. Sri Lankan authorities "disagreed in halfway", called the consignment "toxic/harmful", the Embassy's tweet said, adding: "Ship refused. Third party test refused. L/C payment obligation refused. PBSL blacklisted," omitting the October 22 court order.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Thursday told the Chinese Ambassador, who met him at his official residence, that the government cannot accept the "tainted" fertilizer stock but is willing to purchase fertilizers that meet Sri Lanka's "expected standards", the state-run Daily News reported on Friday.

Tedros set to continue as WHO chief

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, one of the most prominent figures during the COVID-19 pandemic, is the sole candidate to lead the World Health Organization once his current term expires, the WHO announced on Friday.

In his application letter, the former Ethiopian Health and Foreign Minister said COVID-19 had "ravaged the world" and in a second term, he wanted to make sure the planet was "truly ready" to deal with another such crisis.

Elected to the WHO leadership in 2017, his five-year mandate runs out in August. "A single candidate was proposed by member states by the September 23, 2021 deadline: Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus," the WHO said in a statement.

China tightens control over company data

'Measure needed to protect the public and safeguard national security'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

Companies in China would need government approval to transfer important data abroad under proposed rules announced on Friday that would tighten Beijing's control over information and might disrupt operations for international corporations.

The measure is needed to

protect the Chinese public and "safeguard national security", the Cyberspace Administration of China said.

President Xi Jinping's government sees information about China's 1.4 billion people as a potential security risk in private hands. It has issued a flurry of rules tightening control over how companies gather and handle information. A crackdown on

data security launched in late 2020 fuelled anxiety among investors, who have knocked more than \$1.3 trillion off the total market value of e-commerce platform Alibaba and other tech giants.

Companies that want to transfer important data abroad would have to report on how much and what type of information is involved

and security measures, according to the CAC. Regulators would decide within a week whether to accept that or conduct their own review, which could last up to 60 days. The rules would apply to transfers that involve "sensitive personal information" of at least 10,000 people or any company that handles information on more than 1 million people.

Office Of The Superintending Engineer
9th Circle Public Work Department Dehradun
Office of the Superintending Engineer, 9th Circle PWD, Dehradun Uttarakhand
Website- <http://pwd.uk.gov.in> E-mail: sepwdddun@rediffmail.com

Letter No. 8545/IC-9/21 Dated: 28/10/2021

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING e-tender Notice(Short term)

The Superintending Engineer 9th Circle, Public Works Department, Dehradun on behalf of "Governor of Uttarakhand" invites short term tender in two bid system for the following work. Information regarding tender shall be available on <https://www.uktenders.gov.in> from date 01.11.2021.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Earnest Money (Rs. in Lacs)	Validity of Tender (In days)	Cost of Tender Document (In Rs.)	Period of Completion (In Month)	Contractor Category of Registration
1	Construction of Road & Drain in Dharampur Assembly ward no 89 & 90 at Durga vihar, Harbhajwala, Kumauli basti, Nanda endave, Tuntowala, chandratat, Vishnu Maya endave & Neelwala Under State Sector, Distt Dehradun	3.94	60	5000.00 + 18%G.S.T.	12	Registered in 'B' & above category in Road works in Central Govt./State Govt./any Govt. Undertaking

GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA
Public Works (North) Division, Pune
New Administrative Building, First Floor, Pune -411 001
e-mail- northpune.ee@mahapwd.com Phone No. 020 - 26123305
Fax No. 020/26123305

E-TENDER NOTICE NO. 49 FOR 2021-2022 (Online)

The Executive Engineer, Public Works (North) Division, Pune - 411 001 (Telephone No. 020- 26123305) invites tender in " B-1 " Tenders for following work through e-tendering process from contractors who fulfills terms and condition mentioned in bid document.

Bid document can be download from website [https:// mahatenders.gov.in](https://mahatenders.gov.in) Right to reject any or all online bid of work without assigning any reasons thereof is reserved by competent authority. Conditional Tender will not be accepted.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost Rs. Lakh
1	Construction of Payarimarg and Praveshdwar at Shri Kshetra Bhimashankar Tal. Ambegaon, Dist. Pune	Rs.1229.84 lakh

E-Tender Time Table

1	E-tender Document Sale Start & End Date and Time	9.11.2021 from 10.00 hrs. upto 18.15 hrs.	3.12.2021 upto 18.15 hrs.
2	Place, Date & Time of Pre-bid Meeting	In the office of the Chief Engineer, P.W. Region, Central Building, Pune on or before dt. 23.11.2021 at 12.00 hrs.	
3	Bid Submission Start & End date, Time	9.11.2021 from 10.00 hrs. upto 18.15 hrs.	3.12.2021 upto 18.15 hrs.
4	Place, Date & Time of Bid Opening of Technical & Financial Bid	Dt. 8.12.2021 at 11.00 hrs. in the Office of the Superintending Engineer, P.W. Circle, Pune (If Possible)	

All information about e-tender are available in the following web sites-
1) www.mahapwd.com (only Tender Notice)
2) <https://mahatenders.gov.in>
(Any Change in tender notice will be informed on the web sites)
3) Notice Board of Executive Engineer, P.W.North Division, Pune
(Note - Tenderers Bidding Capacity shall be ascertained as per Post Qualification Criteria)

sd/-
(R. Y. Patil)
Executive Engineer,
Public Work (North) Division,
Pune 411 001.

DGIPR/2021/2022/2526

North Eastern Railway
Invitation for Tender through e-Procurement System

Sr. Divisional Material Manager, North Eastern Railway, Lucknow and on behalf of The President of India, invites tenders through e-Procurement system for the supply of the following item. Complete description of the item and other conditions are available on website www.ireps.gov.in.

S.No. : 1, Tender No. : 60216121, Due Date : 08.11.2021, Description of Material : Supply installation testing and commission of passenger elevator (Lift) without machine room suitable for 15 persons, operating on 415v, 3 phase AC, supply with rear side glass, stainless steel car door, all landing doors and falls ceiling in hair line finish with automatic rescue device and as per section-I (in conjunction with chapter 01, 02 & 04) of CPWD specification: general specification for electrical works (Part-III - Lift & Escalator) 2003, Confirming to IS: 14665 (Part-I to Part-V) physical dimension as under 1.) Load (a) person-15 (b) Kg-1020, 2) Car inside (a) inside width-1000 mm (b) Inside depth-2400 mm, 3) Lift well (a) Inside width-1850 mm (b) Inside depth-3000 mm, 4) Entrance cab door & landing doors of 1000 mm width Emergency stop button should be provided. Note- 02 No. Lift will be commissioned at Sitapur Railway station and 02 No. at Aishbagh Railway station. Qty. : 04 Nos. Earnest Money : Rs. 1,70,000.00. Note : Above tender has been uploaded on the website www.ireps.gov.in. The firms, who desire to participate in e-tender are advised to electronically register themselves on the above website for which they would require to have a class-III Digital Signature Certificate Authority licensed by CCA India. Manual offers against e-tenders will not be considered. For details, please visit the website www.ireps.gov.in.

Senior Divisional Materials Manager, CPRO/S-70 N.E. Railway, Lucknow
About any Passenger Amenty complaint SMS on Mob. No. 09794845955
Do not travel with inflammable article in train

