

Jadhav review:
Pak says looking
at legal options

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, NOVEMBER 13

ISLAMABAD IS considering various legal options for the review of death row convict Kulbhushan Jadhav's case, the Pakistan Army said on Wednesday amid reports that its government was preparing to amend the Army Act to implement the ICJ's verdict.

Pakistan Armed Forces spokesperson Major General Asif Ghafoor, however, termed as "speculation" the reports that the government was planning to amend the Army Act to allow

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

BUSINESS AS USUAL

By UNNNY



When lords close a door,
Lordships open a window.

WORLD DIABETES DAY

A RED initiative appears in today's edition of *The Indian Express*. This page is an initiative of the marketing solutions team of The Indian Express Group and contains content paid for by advertisers. This page should be read as an advertisement.

'POTENTIAL CONFLICT' IN DECIDING CHALLENGE TO FINANCE ACT

SC has doubts over Aadhaar as money Bill, turns to big Bench

Says 2018 ruling did not discuss effect of 'only' in Art 110(1) on money Bill

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 13

EXPRESSING DOUBTS over the correctness of a five-judge Constitution Bench's 2018 verdict upholding the Aadhaar Act which had been passed as a money Bill, a five-judge Constitution Bench, hearing a challenge to certain provisions of the amended Finance Act, 2017, Wednesday decided to refer the question to a seven-judge Bench.

Like the Aadhaar Act, the amended Finance Act, 2017 too had been passed as a money Bill.

The Bench said "the analysis in K S Puttaswamy (Aadhaar-5) makes its application difficult to the present case and raises a potential conflict between the judgements of coordinate Benches". Incidentally, petitions seeking review of the Aadhaar Act ruling are still pending in the Supreme Court.

"It is clear to us that the majority dictum in K S Puttaswamy (Aadhaar-5) did not substantially discuss the effect of the word 'only' in Article 110(1) and offers little guidance on the repercussions of a finding when some of

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Finance Act: Tribunal rules struck down, Govt told to draw fresh norms

APURVA VISHWANATH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 13

IN A setback to the government, a five-judge Constitution Bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, Wednesday struck down provisions of the amended 2017 Finance Act, passed as a money Bill which altered the structure and functioning of various tribunals. It directed the government to formulate fresh

norms on the appointment of tribunal members.

The Bench, also comprising Justices N V Ramana, D Y Chandrachud, Deepak Gupta and Sanjiv Khanna, said the amendments are struck down in entirety as these are "contrary to the principles envisaged in the Constitution as interpreted by this Court".

On the issue of whether the amendments could have been

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Supreme Court opens itself: Office of Chief Justice under RTI

Rider: Need to factor in judicial independence

ANANTHAKRISHNAN G
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 13

THE SUPREME Court Wednesday ruled that the office of the Chief Justice of India was a "public authority" under the Right to Information Act but with the rider that "when the public interest demands the disclosure of information, judicial independence has to be kept in mind while deciding the question of exercise of discretion".

A Constitution bench of Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi and Justices N V Ramana,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED
Big step, details matter

THE VERDICT underlines the balance Supreme Court needs between transparency and protecting its independence. The step is significant because it opens the doors to RTI requests that will test the frontiers of what has been a rather opaque system. What new red lines are drawn will decide how effective the step is.

MORE REPORTS
PAGES 10, 16

Financial deals with Ranbaxy brothers, admits Beas sect head

AASHISH ARYAN & PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 13

THE HEAD of Radha Soami Satsang Beas, Gurinder Singh Dhillon, has, for the first time, admitted to financial transactions between himself and ex-Religare Enterprises (REL) promoters Malvinder and Shivinder Singh.

In an affidavit filed with the Delhi High Court dated November 12 and reviewed by *The Indian Express*, Dhillon admitted that the Singh brothers had in 2010, through RHC Holding (a company controlled by the brothers), approached him and his family to subscribe to a rights issue of REL that was not fully subscribed "at that moment". A part of the rights issue was funded by RHC and the Singh brothers, who

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Kohli on depression: 'Had a phase, thought it was end of the world'

SRIRAM VEERA
INDORE, NOVEMBER 13

DEPRESSION HAS mostly been a taboo subject in Indian sport. But on Wednesday, cricket captain Virat Kohli opened up on the topic to reveal that during a tough phase in his career five years ago, he thought "it was the end of the world".

Kohli was speaking to reporters on the eve of the Test against Bangladesh in Indore — and days after Australian allrounder Glenn Maxwell's



Virat Kohli in Indore on Wednesday. PTI

decision to take a break from the game, a day after he had scored an international hundred,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Minister-diplomat Jaishankar will deliver RNG Lecture in Delhi today

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 13

AT A time when India is negotiating its way through a dynamic geopolitical landscape — from the US to China and Pakistan to the Middle East — External Affairs Minister Subrahmanya Jaishankar has been entrusted with the task of translating the government's foreign policy objectives into concrete outcomes.

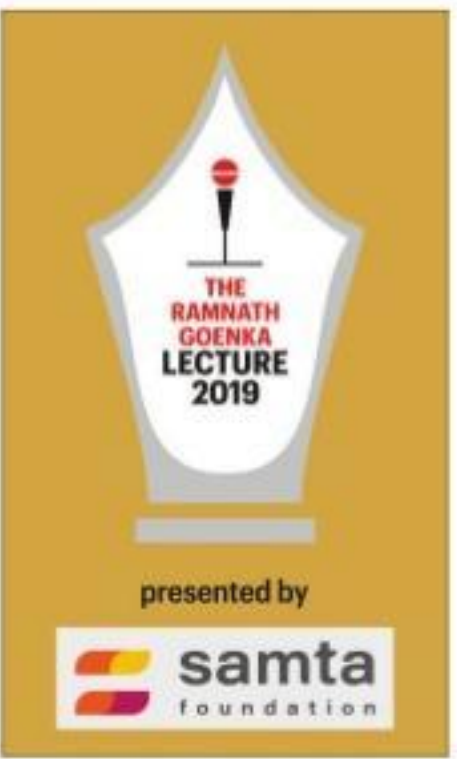


External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar

Five months into his new role, Jaishankar will deliver the 4th Ramnath Goenka Memorial Lecture Thursday in New Delhi. The Ramnath Goenka Memorial Lecture was instituted in 2016 by The Express Group to mark 25 years of the passing of its founder.

After the first three RNG

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



TOREX



don't bother for scars any more.

To get blemish free skin use
NO SCARS. It helps to reduce and remove, scars and marks.

Also Available



TORQUE

Get dazzling
Glamour with...

Long Lasting
Premium Quality Soap

Nothing makes a woman more beautiful than the belief that she is beautiful. This belief paves the way to real beauty inside which reflects outside. **No Scars beauty soap** helps making your skin look soft and radiant. The components of **No Scars** make it a wonderful moisturizer & provides nourishment to all the skin types.



100%
Pure
Vegetarian
Soap

NO SCARS®

PREMIUM QUALITY SOAP

For more information,
please contact:
+91 97792 14455
care@torquepharma.com

Ayodhya verdict: Ahead of meet, many in AIMPLB favour review petition

ABANTIKA GHOSH
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 13

AHEAD OF the All India Muslim Personal Law Board's (AIMPLB) working committee meeting on November 17, a "dominant view" is emerging within the organisation that a review petition should be filed in Supreme Court on its verdict in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid case, said sources.

"The dominant view emerging within the board is that we

have fought this for so long and we should file a review petition. However, there is another view that what has happened is done. They feel it (filing a review petition) will be a waste of time. A final picture will emerge only after the working committee meets," said a source.

A section within AIMPLB believes that since the judgment was unanimous, there is little "ray of hope" for a review petition.

The Supreme Court on Saturday ruled that the disputed

area be handed over to a trust for construction of a Ram Temple. The court, however, held that the act of placing idols inside the mosque in 1949 was "desecration", that there is no evidence that Babri Masjid was built after demolishing a temple and that the 1992 demolition of the mosque was against the rule of law.

The court also ruled that Muslims be given a five-acre plot for construction of a mosque.

There are differences within the community about whether

the five-acre land should be accepted.

"There is a proposal for a review petition but no call can be taken before the working committee meets...whatever the decision, the aim will be to build consensus," said AIMPLB secretary and advocate Zafaryab Jilani, who argued the case for the Muslim parties.

Another member of the board said various Muslim organisations are holding internal meetings to arrive at a decision.

India denies Bangla reports on PM pat for CJI

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, NOVEMBER 13

INDIA ON Wednesday termed as "malicious" and "fake" reports by a section of Bangladesh media that claim Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi

over the Ayodhya verdict.

Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted, "We strongly condemn those responsible for deliberately spreading such fake and malicious news, to divide communities, create disharmony and undermine friendship between the people of India and Bangladesh."

The Indian High Commission in Dhaka too issued a statement. "It has come to the notice of the High Commission that a letter said to have been written by Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi to Chief Justice of India is being circulated in the local media," the High Commission said. "This letter is completely fake and ma-

licious. It is intended to mislead people in Bangladesh and create social disharmony," it added.

The High Commission said it was "most egregious" and "wrong" on the part of those who are deliberately circulating fake and incorrect information to create misunderstanding about India in the public domain.

Cong MP urges Sonowal to rethink choice of NRC coordinator

ABHISHEK SAHA
GUWAHATI, NOVEMBER 13

CONGRESS'S BARPETA MP Abdul Khaleque on Wednesday wrote to Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, urging him to reconsider the appointment of Hitesh Dev Sarma as the new NRC state coordinator.

Sarma, a 1989-batch Assam civil service officer, was appointed last week after the incumbent, Prateek Hajela, was released from duty for inter-cadre deputation to MP after a Supreme Court order.

Khaleque wrote that Sarma was neither "unbiased nor trustworthy" and referred to his "posts on Facebook". In a post on February 13, Sarma said there were "lakhs and lakhs of Bangladeshis in the NRC". In another post on November 15, 2017, he said, "Minority appeasement policy for the last seven decades has changed the definition of secularism."



Indian Overseas Bank
KILPAUK BRANCH

477, Kilpauk Garden Road, Kilpauk, Chennai-600 010, Ph: 044-2646 1141 / 0178
E-mail: iob0571@iob.in

POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable Properties (Rule 8(1)))

Whereas, the undersigned being the **Authorised Officer of Indian Overseas Bank**, under Securitisation & Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, **issued Demand Notice Dated 03.07.2019 calling upon the following Borrowers / Guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.**

The Borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrowers/guarantors and the public in general that the undersigned **has taken possession of the properties described herein below** in exercise of the powers conferred on him under section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules **on this 7th Day of November of the Year 2019**

The Borrowers / Guarantors in particular and the public in general are hereby cautioned not to deal with the properties and any dealings with the properties will be subject to the charge of the **Indian Overseas Bank** for the amounts and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to the provisions of Sub - Section (8) of the section 13 of the Act in respect of the time available to redeem the secured assets.

SI.No.1: Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : M/s.AKS Alloys Pvt. Ltd, R.S.No.81/1,3 To 7, Eripakkam Village, Nettapakkamcommune, Puducherry-605 106. (hereinafter Referred as 'Borrowers')

Amount Claimed as per Demand Notice: Rs.21,98,93,335.56 as on 29.06.2019 with further interest at contractual rates and rests, charges etc, from the aforesaid date mentioned in the demand notice till date of payment less repayments, if any, made after issuance of Demand Notice; **The dues payable as on 31.10.2019 is Rs.23,00,69,494.56** payable with further interest at contractual rates & rests, charges etc., till date of payment.

SI.No.2: Borrower / Mortgagor / Guarantor : M/s.SAR Ispat Pvt.Ltd., Factory: R.S.No.214 & 215, Village Kalithirthaikuppam, Thirukanoor Road, Madagadipet Post, Puducherry-605 107. (Hereinafter referred as 'Borrowers')

Amount Claimed as per Demand Notice: Rs.25,85,87,524.98 as on 29.06.2019 with further interest at contractual rates and rests, charges etc, from the aforesaid date mentioned in the demand notice till date of payment less repayments, if any, made after issuance of Demand Notice; **The dues payable as on 31.10.2019 is Rs.27,17,99,139.98** payable with further interest at contractual rates & rests, charges etc., till date of payment.

COMMON SECURITY OF BOTH ACCOUNTS (SI.Nos.1 & 2)

Entire second floor only without roof rights in the free hold property bearing No. 24 in Block-G build upon land measuring 169 sq. mts. situated at Community Centre G Block Vikasपुरi New Delhi – 110118 along with proportionate undivided rights beneath land in the name of M/s. Prudent Constructions Pvt Ltd. Entire Plot No. G 24 bounded as under: North – Plot No. 25, East – Open, West – Open, South – Plot no. 23. Registered at Sub-Registrar –VII, INA VikasSadon New Delhi.

Date : 07.11.2019
Place: Kilpauk, Chennai

Authorised Officer
Indian Overseas Bank



Regd. Office : Village Aaron, Distt. Shahid Bhagat Singh Nagar (Nawanshahr)-144 533, Punjab. CIN : L50101PB1983PLC005516, Website: www.smlisuzu.com, Email id : investors@smlisuzu.com, T: 91 1881 270255, F: 91 1881 270223

EXTRACT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND HALF YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2019

Rs. Crores, except per equity share data

Particulars	Unaudited		Audited	
	Quarter Ended	Half Year Ended	Year Ended	
	30.09.2019	30.06.2019	30.09.2018	30.09.2018
Total income	472.09	296.48	749.91	1,413.71
Net profit / (loss) for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	22.52	(10.95)	15.97	24.33
Net profit / (loss) for the period before tax (after exceptional items)	22.52	(10.95)	15.97	24.33
Net profit / (loss) for the period after tax (after exceptional items)	16.66	(7.74)	12.37	19.57
Total comprehensive income for the period (comprising Profit / (loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax))	16.48	(7.23)	14.43	18.15
Equity Share Capital	14.48	14.48	14.48	14.48
Other equity (excluding revaluation reserves)	-	-	-	399.11
Earnings Per Share (of Rs.10/- each) (for continuing and discontinued operations)				
1. Basic (Rs.) :	11.51	(5.35)	8.55	13.53
2. Diluted (Rs.) :	11.51	(5.35)	8.55	13.53

Notes:
The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Annual Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly / Annual Financial Results are available on the websites of Stock Exchange(s) (www.bseindia.com, www.nseindia.com) and on Company's website (www.smlisuzu.com).



For and on behalf of the Board of Directors

(Yugo Hashimoto)
Managing Director & CEO
DIN: 08165797

Place : New Delhi
Date : 13.11.2019



CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF HARYANA
Mahendergarh - 123031

EMPLOYMENT NOTICE
Advt. No.: 3/NT/R/2019 Date: 13.11.2019
Applications are invited from the eligible candidates for appointment to the post of Junior Engineer (Civil) on short term contract basis. Application Form and other related details are available on the University's Website **www.cuh.ac.in**. The last date for submission of application is 12.12.2019, 05:30 PM.


Registrar



DELHI ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION
Vinnyamak Bhawan, C-Block, Shivalik, Malviya Nagar, New Delhi-110 017.
Telefax: 26673608, 41080417

ENGAGEMENT OF STAFF CONSULTANTS (TARIFF-FINANCE) IN TARIFF DIVISION OF DERC.
DELHI ELECTRICITY REGULATORY COMMISSION invites applications for engagement of **03 Staff Consultants (Tariff-Finance)** to assist the Tariff Division of the Commission in the matters related to Tariff determination.
For details such as eligibility, qualifications, experience and other terms & conditions of engagement, application format etc, please refer to DERC website **www.derc.gov.in**. **The last date for receipt of application is 30 days from the date of publication of advertisement in newspapers.**
Sd/-
(Mukesh Wadhwa)
Secretary
Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission
DIP/SHABDARTH/0983/19-20





PRICOL LIMITED
CIN. L34200TZ2011PLC022194
Regd. Office : 109, Race Course, Coimbatore - 641 018.
Phone : + 91 422 4336000, website : www.pricol.com, e-mail: cs@pricol.co.in

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER AND HALF YEAR ENDED 30TH SEPTEMBER, 2019 (₹ in Lakhs)

PARTICULARS	Standalone		Consolidated			
	For the Three Months Ended 30-Sep-2019	For the Half Year Ended 30-Sep-2019	For the Three Months Ended 30-Sep-2019	For the Half Year Ended 30-Sep-2019		
	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited	Unaudited		
1. Total Income	31858.56	36995.57	63888.65	32305.15	37478.53	64652.67
2. Net Profit / (Loss) before Exceptional items & Tax	(1188.66)	528.77	(1628.84)	(1153.83)	554.34	(1617.14)
3. Exceptional Items (Refer Note No. 2)	(564.29)	-	(2056.50)	-	-	-
4. Net Profit / (Loss) before tax (after Exceptional items)	(1752.95)	528.77	(3685.34)	(1153.83)	554.34	(1617.14)
5. Net Profit / (Loss) after tax from Continuing Operations (after Exceptional items)	(1790.25)	287.84	(3697.48)	(1204.59)	299.33	(1656.61)
6. Profit / (Loss) from Discontinued Operations (Net of Tax Expense)	-	-	-	(4762.58)	(1749.99)	(6924.30)
7. Net Profit / (Loss) after tax from Continuing and Discontinued Operations (after Exceptional items)	(1790.25)	287.84	(3697.48)	(5967.17)	(1450.66)	(8580.91)
8. Total Comprehensive Income for the period	(1781.86)	238.94	(3680.70)	(5384.66)	(1536.34)	(7997.60)
9. Paid-up-Equity Share Capital (Face Value of ₹ 1/- each)	947.97	947.97	947.97	947.97	947.97	947.97
10. Earnings per Equity Share for profit / (loss) from Continuing and Discontinued operations (Face Value of ₹ 1/- each) in Rupees						
(a) Basic	(1.89)	0.30	(3.90)	(6.29)	(1.53)	(9.05)
(b) Diluted	(1.89)	0.30	(3.90)	(6.29)	(1.53)	(9.05)

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Quarterly / Half Yearly Financial Results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the Stock Exchange websites www.bseindia.com, www.nseindia.com and Company's website www.pricol.com.
- The Share Purchase Agreement for hiving off 80.50% of its investment in wholly owned subsidiary, Pricol Espana S.L., Spain, along with its stepdown subsidiaries and 74% of its Investment in Pricol Wiping Systems India Limited, is pending implementation and the approval of the lenders and regulatory authority is awaited. During the current half year, the Company has made an additional investment of ₹ 2,056.50 Lakhs which has been provided and charged to Profit & Loss account as an exceptional item. Any further charge or reversal to / from Profit and Loss account will be appropriately dealt with in the period in which the transaction reaches finality.
- Consequent to the proposed divestment as stated above, which significantly represents a separate geographical area of operations, these have been classified as assets held for sale - Discontinued Operation (Disposal group) as required under Ind AS 105 - Non Current Assets held for sale and Discontinued Operations. Discontinued operations are excluded from the results of continuing operation and have been presented as a single amount of Profit / (Loss) in the consolidated results.

Coimbatore
12th November 2019

By Order of the Board
VANITHA MOHAN
CHAIRMAN
DIN : 00002168



CIN: L52109DL1977PLC025405
Registered office: A-26/4, 2nd Floor, Mohan Co-operative Industrial Estate, New Delhi-110044, India
Website: www.singerindia.net; E-mail: mail@singerindia.net; Tel: +91-11-40617777

Statement of Unaudited Standalone and Consolidated Financial Results for the quarter and half year ended 30 September 2019
(Rupees in lakhs, except for the share data and if otherwise stated)

S. No.	Particulars	Standalone				Consolidated							
		Quarter ended		Half year ended		Quarter ended		Half year ended		Year ended			
		30 September 2019	30 June 2019	30 September 2018	30 September 2019	30 September 2018	31 March 2019	30 September 2019	30 June 2019	30 September 2018	30 September 2019	30 September 2018	31 March 2019
		(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Unaudited)	(Audited)
1.	Total income	10,337	12,415	10,625	22,752	21,703	48,469	10,339	12,419	10,628	22,758	21,709	48,490
2.	Net Profit for the period before tax	246	222	248	468	548	1,459	245	223	250	468	551	1,470
3.	Net Profit for the period after tax	157	142	158	299	350	926	156	143	159	299	352	939
4.	Total comprehensive income for the period / year (comprising profit for the period after tax and Other Comprehensive Income after tax)	155	140	157	295	348	918	154	141	158	295	350	931
5.	Paid-up equity share capital (face value of Rs. 2 each, fully paid)	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074	1,074
6.	Reserves excluding revaluation reserve as per balance sheet				-	-	4,820	-	-	-	-	-	4,845
7.	Earnings Per Share (of Rs. 2 each) (not annualised for quarters /half years)												
a. Basic (Rs.)	0.29	0.26	0.29	0.56	0.65	1.72	0.29	0.27	0.30	0.56	0.66	1.75	
b. Diluted (Rs.)	0.29	0.26	0.29	0.56	0.65	1.72	0.29	0.27	0.30	0.56	0.66	1.75	

Notes:

- The Company doesn't have any exceptional and extraordinary item to report during the above periods.
- The above Unaudited financial results were reviewed by the Audit Committee and approved by the Board of Directors of the Company at the Meetings held on 13 November 2019.
- The above is an extract of the detailed format of Standalone and Consolidated Financial Result for the quarter and half year ended 30 September 2019 filed with Stock Exchange under Regulation 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulation, 2015. The full format of the financial results are available on the stock exchange website, www.bseindia.com and on the Company's website, www.singerindia.net.

Place: New Delhi
Date : 13 November 2019

For Singer India Limited
Sd/-
(Rajeev Bajaj)
Managing Director

Salesman shot dead by gunmen at Tral market

J&K ENCOUNTER LeT terrorist killed in Tuesday's Ganderbal gunfight a Pak national: Police

Mir Ehsan
■ letters@hindustantimes.com

SRINAGAR: Gunmen killed a salesman in South Kashmir Tral town on Wednesday, the police said. The deceased was identified as Mehraj ud din Zarger, a salesman at a garment shop in the main market of Tral town.

Zarger was standing outside the shop around 4pm when he was shot. He is survived by his wife and two minor daughters.

Awantipora superintendent of police Tahir Saleem said they were investigating the killing.

On August 30, unidentified gunmen killed 65-year-old shopkeeper Ghulam Mohammad Mir at Parimpora on the city outskirts. Police had then said terrorists were behind the killing. At a press conference soon after, J&K director general of police Dilbag Singh also said terrorists killed Mir to enforce a shutdown and create fear among people.

Since August 5, the day the Centre nullified Jammu and Kashmir's special status, shopkeepers open their shops in Srinagar and rural towns only for a few hours every day. The shutdown entered 101 days.

In a separate development, the police said a militant killed in an encounter in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district on Tuesday has been identified as a Pakistani who was affiliated with Lashkar-e-Taiba. Police said the militant was identified as Khalid, alias Zebran, a resident of Pakistan. Officials said Zebran was associated with Lashkar and had been operating in Ganderbal and Bandipore



■ Protests against internet blockade in Srinagar on November 12.

AFP FILE

districts from last several months. The militant was killed in a joint operation after the police and the Rashtriya Rifles launched a joint operation in Kulan Gund village in central Kashmir's Ganderbal district.

JOURNALISTS PROTEST In the Valley, as the shutdown imposed after the nullification of Kashmir's special status crossed 100 days, journalists held protests against restrictions on internet services.

"...rail services have been restored which is sign of normalcy still government is hesitant to restore the broadband services," said Aseem Mohindin

Bhat, an editor of weekly newspaper and web portal. "It's frustrating and humiliating to wait in a long queue just to browse internet and check the emails." "If situation has improved then government should atleast restore broadband connections to the media houses, if not the mobile internet?"

Opposition parties have criticised the lockdown, which was imposed hours before Union home minister Amit Shah moved a resolution in Parliament to nullify Article 370 on August 5.

The government says it has taken necessary steps to maintain security.

PAK SHELLING ALONG LOC

JAMMU: Pakistani troops on Wednesday shelled forward posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir, an official said. The Indian Army effectively retaliated. "At about 0700 hours, the Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation ...in Keri sector", the defence PRO said. **PTI**

Centre may table bill on Ayodhya temple trust in Winter session

HT Correspondent
■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Centre is contemplating introducing a Bill that will give legislative backing to a Trust that will oversee the construction of a Ram temple on the 2.77-acre site in Ayodhya and the running of the shrine in line with the Supreme Court's November 9 judgment, a senior government official who did not want to be named said.

The legislation is likely to be introduced in the coming Parliament session which starts on November 18. "The issue is being discussed at the highest level, and it is being fine-tuned," the senior official said and added, "the proposed legislation is likely to lay down in detail the functioning and responsibilities of the Trust."

The Centre is acting in line with the Supreme Court order, which cleared the way for the construction of a Ram temple on the site in Ayodhya and directed it to allot a 5-acre plot at a "prominent" location to the Sunni Waqf Board for building a mosque. Legislative backing will give the plan a stronger footing.

In its 1,045-page verdict, a five-judge bench of the apex court headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi ruled: "The Central Government shall, within a period of three months from the date of this judgment, formulate a scheme" under the Acquisition of Certain Area at Ayodhya Act, 1993. The scheme shall envisage the setting up of a trust with a board of trustees or any other appropriate body..."

Although deliberations are still underway, there is a strong possibility that the ministry of culture would be entrusted with the responsibility of piloting the legislation and the subsequent formation of the trust in line with the proposed legislation.

"We shall look at the provisions of the proposed legislation if it comes and then react. However what I have read off the judgement it does not say that legislation is required to institutionalise the trust. The Supreme Court has used it's remit under Article 142 of the Constitution- substantial justice therefore the direction to the government is not an obiter but a commandment " senior Congress leader and member of Lok Sabha Manish Tewari said.

On the proposed legislation, senior counsel and Constitution expert Rakesh Dwivedi said, "The Supreme Court in its order has asked for a formation of a trust. I think it is proper that it comes in the form of a law."

MODI MEETS PUTIN AT BRICS SUMMIT



■ Prime Minister Narendra Modi with Russian President Vladimir Putin during a meeting on the sidelines of the 11th BRICS summit in Brasilia on Wednesday.

PTI

■ "Reached Brazil to take part in the BRICS Summit. Will also meet various world leaders during this visit," Modi tweeted soon after his arrival. "I am sure the BRICS Summit will enhance cultural and economic linkages between BRICS nations," he said. During the summit, the five major economies of the world will aim to significantly strengthen their cooperation in science, technology and innovation, Modi said in his departure statement. This is the sixth time Modi is participating in the BRICS summit, his first being at Fortaleza, also in Brazil in 2014.

■ Describing PM Modi's welcome as "as vibrant as BRICS itself", spokesperson of the ministry of external affairs Raveesh Kumar tweeted, "PM @narendramodi arrives in Brasilia to participate in the 11th #BRICS Summit. This year's Summit under the theme "BRICS: Economic Growth for an Innovative Future" will further strengthen the traditional ties among the BRICS countries." Brazil is the current chair of the grouping which represents over 3.6 billion people, or half of the world population and they have a combined nominal GDP of USD 16.6 trillion.

Doubts surface over Amaravati as capital

Srinivasa Rao Apparasu
■ letters@hindustantimes.com

HYDERABAD: The termination of the Amaravati start-up Area Project, which was to be developed jointly by the Andhra Pradesh government and a Singapore consortium, comprising Ascendas Singbridge Pte. Ltd and Sembcorp Development Ltd, has lent credence to speculation that Amaravati may not be developed as the Andhra capital.

The start-up area, which was to be developed on 1,691 acres of land, was aimed at kickstarting economic growth in the proposed new capital city. The Singapore consortium was supposed to build multistoried structures to sell commercial space to information technology and other companies.

According to Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders, the termination could spell the end of TDP leader and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu's dream project.

"AP [Andhra Pradesh] was brimming with confidence when the Singaporean government signed up with us to cooperate in building Amaravati. The dream lies shattered today with them pulling out. Hope is lost, investments are gone. Trust has disappeared. Andhra Pradesh is on

BUILDING AND DISMANTLING AMARAVATI

2014 December: The then CM N Chandrababu Naidu announced in the assembly that the new capital city Amaravati would come up in around 50,000 acres on the banks of Krishna river

2015 October: Prime Minister Narendra Modi laid the foundation stone for Amaravati

2016 September: The interim secretary at Velagapudi made functional

2017 May: Amaravati master plan designed by Singapore government approved.

2018 November: Capital city designs approved



May: New government headed by YS Jagan Mohan Reddy stops all works on Amaravati

2019 July: World Bank and Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank

pull out from funding plans
September: Jagan government appoints expert committee to study relocation of capital

November: Government terminates the proposed Start-up Area Project with Singapore consortium

the path of devastation," Naidu tweeted.

The Singapore government on Tuesday declared that it was opting out of the capital city start-up area plan, the announcement coming months after the World

Bank pulled out of the project. Naidu's successor YS Jaganmohan Reddy, who replaced him as chief minister in May, has said the city's development would not be a priority of his government.

Finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy dropped enough hints that the closure of the start-up area project was an indication that the Amaravati capital city project, in its present form, would be wound up.

Imtiaz Ahmad
■ letters@hindustantimes.com

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Army on Wednesday dismissed media reports about amendments to a military law to allow Kulbushan Jadhav, an Indian sentenced to death by a military court, to file an appeal in a civilian court.

Maj Gen Asif Ghafoor, the military's chief spokesman, tweeted that "various legal options" were being considered to review the death sentence given to Jadhav, and that a decision is yet to be made in the matter.

Earlier in the day, reports in the Pakistani media cited sources as saying that the Pakistan Army Act would be amended to allow Jadhav, a former Indian Navy officer, to appeal to a civilian court. The reports further said this was being done in line with a judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ), which had directed Pakistan in July to review the conviction and sentence given to Jadhav.

"Speculations for amendment

Former RBI, CCI chiefs among CBI's key witnesses in INX case

Neeraj Chauhan
■ neeraj.chauhan@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Former Reserve Bank of India (RBI) governor D Subbarao and ex-chairman of the Competition Commission of India Ashok Chawla have claimed that their subordinate officers in the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB), including then additional secretary Sindhushree Khullar, ex-joint secretary Anup K Pujari and director Prabodh Saxena, didn't inform them that INX Media had already made substantial downstream investment in INX News - well before making a formal application for this -- or that the department of revenue had sought an investigation in the matter.

The two senior bureaucrats, both of whom headed the department of economic affairs in the finance ministry between May 2007 and September 2011, are among key witnesses of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in its charge sheet against former finance minister P Chidambaram in the INX Media case.

HT has reviewed details of their statements recorded before the agency, which are now part of the charge sheet filed against P Chidambaram, his son Karti Chidambaram, INX Media co-founder Peter Mukerjee, Khullar, Pujari and Saxena on October 18.

As chairman of FIPB between September 2008 and January 2011, Chawla chaired the body's 124th meeting on October 24, 2008, in which 57 proposals were cleared including that of INX. The 1973 batch Indian Administrative Service officer has claimed that it was primarily the duty of FIPB officials lower in the hierarchy, including Saxena, Pujari and Khullar, to detail the circumstances in the board meeting.

He also referred to correspondence from the intelligence wing of the Income Tax department as early as April-May 2008

Twists and turns of India-Pak tussle over Jadhav

2016 MARCH 3: Pakistan says it has arrested Kulbushan Jadhav, a retired Naval officer, from Balochistan

MARCH 26: The then MEA spokesperson Vikas Swarup releases a statement, stating that while Jadhav was a former naval officer, he had no links with RAW

2017 APRIL 10: Pakistan announces that Jadhav has been sentenced to death for espionage and waging war against the country

MAY 15: International Court of Justice begins hearing

MAY 18: ICJ says Pak can't hang Kulbushan Jadhav till final order, Prime Minister Modi expresses satisfaction



2019 FEB 18: Final hearing begins

JULY 17: ICJ orders that Jadhav should be given consular access. It stays Jadhav's execution

SEPT 2: Pakistan offers consular access to Jadhav

NOVEMBER 13: Pakistan Army denies media report of amending the Army Act

in Pak Army Act to implement ICJ verdict regarding convicted Indian terrorist Cdr Kulbushan Jadhav are incorrect. Various legal options for review and reconsideration of the case are being considered. Final status shall be shared in due course of time," Ghafoor tweeted.

There was no word on the development from Indian officials. A person who declined to be identified said, "We have only seen press reports on this matter

and there is nothing formal from Pakistan."

Media reports had said the proposed amendment of the Pakistan Army Act was the first step in complying with the ICJ's direction to let Jadhav appeal.

Jadhav was tried by a field general court martial in Pakistan under the Pakistan Army Act, which bars any intervention by civilian courts. On September 2, Pakistan had granted India consular access to Jadhav, 49, for the

first time since his arrest in 2016. The charge d'affaires of the Indian mission in Islamabad met Jadhav at a "sub-jail" in Rawalpindi. Pakistani officials were present at the meeting, which was recorded. Since then, Pakistan has said there are no plans to grant further consular access.

The ICJ ruled in July that Pakistan had violated Jadhav's rights under the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations and stayed his execution.

India slams fake letter ascribed to PM in B'desh media

HT Correspondent
■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: India on Wednesday described a fake letter ascribed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and circulated in the Bangladeshi media as a "malicious" attempt to mislead people in the neighbouring country and to undermine bilateral ties.

The fake letter, which figured in reports in sections of the Bangladeshi media, purportedly conveyed "congratulations" to the Chief Justice of India for the Supreme Court's ruling on the Ayodhya issue, which it claimed was a "stupendous contribution to Hindu Rashtira".

A statement issued by the Indian mission in Dhaka said: "It has come to the notice of the High Commission that a letter said to have been written by...Prime Minister...Narendra Modi to (the) CJI is being circulated in the local media. This letter is completely fake and malicious".

"It is intended to mislead people in Bangladesh and create social disharmony. It is most egregious and wrong on part of those who are deliberately circulating fake and incorrect information to create misunderstanding about India in the public domain."

The origin of the letter could not immediately be ascertained. It was also not clear who had circulated it in the Bangladeshi media.

External affairs ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar tweeted: "We strongly condemn those responsible for deliberately spreading such fake and malicious news, to divide communities, create disharmony and undermine friendship between the people of India and Bangladesh." India and Bangladesh currently have strong ties in areas ranging from security to infrastructure development and the rapport between Modi and his Bangladeshi counterpart Sheikh Hasina has played a key role in driving relations in recent years.

SAMBHAR MYSTERY

Death toll of migratory birds at Rajasthan lake crosses 4,000

Sachin Saini
■ sachin.saini@hindustantimes.com

SAMBHAR: Scientists from the Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS) and forest department officials found and buried hundreds of carcasses of migratory birds at India's biggest inland salt lake, Sambhar (Rajasthan) on Wednesday, taking the four-day count of avian deaths in the area to 4,330.

As many as 1,991 carcasses of 13 species of birds were discovered and buried, said Rajasthan's chief conservator of forests Arindam Tomar. He did not rule out the possibility of a substantial increase in the number of deaths because several areas around the large lake are yet to be scoured. Since Sunday, 4,330 birds belonging to 25 different species have died in the area, and the reason for the deaths remains a mystery.

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot tweeted: "State government has taken all necessary steps to first find out what is causing the loss of



■ Civics workers prepare to bury birds, which were found dead at the Sambhar Salt Lake in Rajasthan, on November 12.

PTI FILE

avian lives and also to take immediate steps to prevent deaths during this migratory season..." He said a ground level assessment was that because of heavy rains in Sambhar, many new water bodies have been formed, raising saline levels and causing water toxicity. Once investigations are complete, the government will do "everything possible" to prevent bird deaths, he added.

The CM said that water samples have been taken and sent for testing. The viscera from the carcasses have been sent to Bhopal for testing for

bird flu, he said, adding that toxicologists have also been called from the Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, and the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology and Natural History, Coimbatore.

The deaths of the birds on Sunday were discovered and reported by volunteers of an NGO. "We had come here to watch birds and spotted some carcasses...we reported it to the forest department," said the NGO's Dinesh Yadav, who claimed that it was the first time that so many bird deaths had taken place in the lake.

Expanding the RTI

The SC’s judgment to bring the CJI under the law is welcome

In a bold and reformist judgment, a five-judge bench of the Supreme Court (SC) on Wednesday ruled unanimously that the office of the Chief Justice of India (CJI) comes under the Right to Information (RTI) Act. The SC recognised the CJI as a “public authority”. It added that “judicial independence and accountability go hand in hand”, and held that “transparency strengthens independence”.

ourtake

The decision by the bench, headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, marks the culmination of a complex legal journey. In 2010, the Delhi High Court had ruled that the office of the CJI was a public authority. The SC’s secretary-general and the central public information officer had subsequently appealed against the ruling.

The landmark judgment must be welcomed for several reasons. One, by opening its doors, the SC has signalled its confidence in the robust processes and procedures it follows, and this enhances its prestige. This was a case where the court itself was a stakeholder. It could have sought to remain opaque behind the veil of independence. But it chose otherwise, and wisely so. Second, the order comes at a time when the judiciary is playing an increasingly key role. Its decisions have a far-ranging impact on politics, society and the economy. And interest in judicial affairs has grown. The judgment will provide a greater understanding of the institution. Third, the order gives a much-required boost to the RTI Act itself, which has been facing pressures of dilution.

To be sure, Wednesday’s order has certain caveats. There will continue to be restrictions on information on issues regarding the collegium, correspondence between the chief justice and the executive, and the apex court’s internal correspondence and reports. The judgment also refers to the need to respect the right to privacy of judges, confidentiality, and ensure that RTI does not become a tool of surveillance. But this in no way diminishes the import of the judgment. The SC order has marked the contours of access for information seekers, and provides enough room to open up the institution further to scrutiny. By upholding transparency as the other side of justice, the SC has stayed true to constitutional principles.

The continued confrontation in JNU

The university has made partial corrections. But it needs to do more

This week, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) students, across political persuasions, protested against the proposed steep hike in hostel fees and other issues. This involved gheraoing the human resource development minister, Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’, during the university’s convocation on Monday, who promised them their concerns would be heard. On Wednesday evening, JNU partially rolled back the proposed hike in room rents for a segment of students. But the fee structure, broadly, remains the same.

The episode throws up a key question about higher education in general, and JNU in particular. Public higher education in India is subsidised, and students must be open to periodic revisions. But it is also important to note that cost recovery cannot be a sustainable model for providing egalitarian higher education. JNU’s low fee structure has enabled thousands of students from marginalised backgrounds to access education, and move up the socioeconomic ladder. The university’s own report shows that 40% of students are from underprivileged families. Any change in the fee structure must take these realities into account. Wednesday’s decision shows the government is concerned about the protests and is willing to make corrections. But it may not be enough, for students remain agitated. It also offers a lesson — future decisions on fees must be done in consultation with the larger student community.

The administration also wanted to implement curfew timings and dress code for students. The idea itself was draconian. The administration had no business imposing a moral code on adult students. It has now stepped back on this, which is welcome. The larger crisis is of a trust deficit between the vice-chancellor (VC), M Jagadesh Kumar, and the university community of teachers and students, who accuse him of weakening academic standards, pushing an ideological agenda, and autocratic decision-making. The VC should allay these concerns and listen to students.

Muslims should accept the five acres

A mosque in Ayodhya will reflect how our plural national existence calls for accommodation



The sobriety and restraint shown nationwide in the wake of the Ayodhya judgment is commendable. We are all advised not to see the outcome in terms of winning or losing. However, despite the universal acceptance of the judgment, as had been announced repeatedly by social groups and political parties, there are some people who have expressed their disappointment. Furthermore, we hear voices, some reputed to be sane and sensible, exhorting the Sunni Waqf Board to refrain from accepting five acres of land directed to be given to them as part of complete justice in the circumstances. This might be myopic and may detract from the moral capital that the Muslim side has gained in the course of the judgment.

There are several reasons that might be cited for not accepting the offer of five acres. During the aborted or unsuccessful negotiations for an out-of-court settlement, some Muslims felt that this would create a precedent of willingness to exchange an existing mosque for another place, and could lead to complication for other sites, including in Mathura and Varanasi.

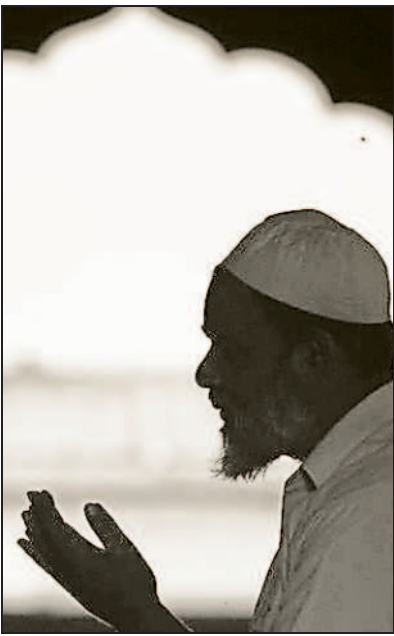
There was a more fundamental theological

reason about the character of a mosque being permanent and not susceptible to alteration by an act of man. Be that as it may, now that the decision has been given, it may be advisable to consider the matter in its entirety, and not forego an opportunity for greater reconciliation between the communities.

It is important to note that the court was very candid in holding that 1934 (when the first attempt was made to intrude), 1949 (when the mosque was desecrated and idols placed), and 1992 (when the mosque was demolished) were acts in violation of the rule of law. At least, to that extent, the contested narrative that has beguiled politics for decades has firmly been put to rest in favour of the truth.

The court also did not endorse the claim that the Babri Masjid was constructed on the site of a temple (leave alone Ram temple) after demolishing it. Nor did the court accept the proposition that the mosque had been abandoned. The Places of Worship Act was upheld without the qualification sought to be added by the Allahabad High Court. The concept of juristic personality was restricted to a deity and not expanded, as was sought by the Hindu side, to include the birthplace of Ram. The Muslim side came within a whisker of complete success. Then, how did the court end up giving the 2.77 acres of disputed land to the Hindus, having made it clear that a title suit was being adjudicated, and is not a matter of faith?

In deciding the title suit as a matter of law, the court noted that the outer courtyard along with the Ram Chabutra was admit-



Rejecting the land for the mosque will be myopic and detract from the moral capital the Muslim side has

tedly and uninterruptedly in the possession of Hindus, and Muslims conceded that Ram was born in Ayodhya (but not at any particular spot). On the other hand, the inner courtyard and the three-domed structure had repeatedly been subjected to adverse claims. It is another matter that much of that was irrelevant to establish title. It is at this point that the court seems to have considered faith in the context of finding a sustainable solution. Giving the Muslims the inner courtyard, and the rest of the land to

Hindus, would have left scope for confrontation and clash with the Muslims squeezed into a small mosque. Instead, the court granted five acres elsewhere.

Accepting the five-acre plot for a mosque should not be seen as surrender, but acceptance of the decision we had all vowed to respect and honour. A mosque built there will remain a permanent symbol of our collaborative endeavour to build our secular fabric despite the cracks that threatened it, and sacrifice and cooperation of Muslims to help the court find closure to what was described as a conflict between faith and the Constitution.

As it turns out, faith and honour have survived; it remains for us to make them prosper together. A mosque in Ayodhya will be a reassurance to succeeding generations that our plural national existence periodically calls for accommodation and compromise, through direct dialogue or through our cherished constitutional institutions.

The absence of that mosque may mislead future generations to believe that complete justice might not have been done. One right step today will go down in history as the moment Indian Muslims chose to participate in the nation building project as equal and respected citizens of the country.

The mosque of reconciliation will be a living tribute to our Indian humanism. History has witnessed such great moments as in Toledo, Spain, where the cathedral houses an effigy of the Muslim Imam Abu Walid who saved the life of the Queen Constance when King Alfonso VI returned from travel and asked who destroyed the mosque. We might learn to rewrite history from medieval Spain.

Salman Khurshid is former Union Cabinet minister and a senior Congress leader. The views expressed are personal

Why the Shiv Sena parted ways with the BJP in Maharashtra

It had become the junior partner both electorally and ideologically. Splitting was essential to remain relevant



The Shiv Sena, the oldest ally of the Bharatiya Janta Party (BJP), surprised everyone by parting ways with the BJP after the assembly election results came out on October 24. On the face of it, the Sena had two key demands: the chief minister’s post, and a better deal in the power-sharing arrangement between the two parties. But at a deeper level, beyond the two demands, the Sena was concerned about two other issues.

One, Sena chief, Uddhav Thackeray, though mild-mannered, did not want to play second fiddle to the BJP in state politics. Two, he wanted to secure the future of his 29-year-old son, Aditya, who won from the Worli assembly constituency.

In Maharashtra politics, since the days of late Bal Thackeray, the Sena has never played the role of a junior partner. The National Congress Party (NCP) chief, Sharad Pawar’s Silver Oak residence, and Bal Thackeray’s Matoshree residence, have long been the two power centres in the state. But the Lok Sabha and the assembly polls of 2014, and the emergence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and BJP president, Amit Shah, shattered the old political matrix, pushing parties such as the Sena into a corner. After the 2014 assembly elections, the Sena got insignificant portfolios. The files of its ministers were routinely stalled or sent back with questions by chief minister Devendra Fadnis’s office.

Uddhav Thackeray also sensed that tying up with the BJP was not yielding him and his party the desired results. In 2014, the Sena went alone in the assembly polls and won 68 seats, while in the 2019 assembly polls, despite the alliance with the BJP, it could only win 56 seats. The Sena’s stature has been diminishing with every election, even as the BJP has increased its footprint in the state’s politics.

In 1995, the Sena won 73 seats, while the BJP won 65 in the 288-member assembly. The two parties joined hands to form the first saffron government in the state, and Sena’s Manohar Joshi became the chief minister. In 2009, the Sena won 44 seats

while the BJP got 54. This was the turning point for the Sena. It not only lost the stature of big brother, but lost the post of the Leader of Opposition in the assembly. In the 2014 and 2019 assembly polls, the BJP won 122 and 105 seats respectively.

Since 2014, the BJP leadership also stopped visiting Matoshree as much as they did earlier. During Bal Thackeray’s time, no deal with the Sena would happen without a visit to Matoshree. This change hurt Uddhav Thackeray’s ego. During the post-mortem of the 2019 assembly election, Sena’s leaders found that the BJP had fielded party rebels against official candidates of the Sena — something which had damaged the latter. Before the Lok Sabha polls, the BJP had also poached many Sena leaders, though all senior leaders (Chandrakant Khaire, Shivaji Adalrao Patil, Vasant Gite) lost the Lok Sabha polls in 2019.

The dip in the Sena’s strength was not limited only to the assembly. The BJP has steadily been eating into the Sena’s vote bank in the local government structure also. In the 2017 Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) polls, the BJP and Sena fought separately, and the former was about to snatch the power from Sena in Asia’s richest civic body that has a budget of over ₹35,000 crore. The Sena got 84 seats while the BJP got 82 seats. Contrast this with the previous BMC election of 2012. The Sena had then got 75 seats, and the BJP won 31 seats.

The 2017 BMC poll result was a warning to the Sena that if the BJP continued in power in the state and the Centre, then, one day, the Sena would have to cede power to the BJP in the BMC, the soul of the party. The Congress and the NCP are opponents of the Sena, but they always gave way to the Sena in the BMC polls. The Congress and NCP tactic was to let the Sena rule the BMC, while they presided over the state government.

At a more fundamental level, the BJP wanted to encroach into the Sena’s vote bank because both share the same ideology. Unless one goes down, the other will not grow. The BJP ran with the Sena’s Hindutva agenda, while the Marathi manooos agenda was taken over by the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena chief Raj Thackeray.

All of this, put together, convinced the Sena that it had no option but to break the alliance with the BJP in order to secure its political future. The Sena was then waiting for the right opportunity.

After the assembly results, Sharad Pawar called up Uddhav Thackeray and convinced him, with facts and figures, that the Sena could not grow under the shadow of the BJP. For their part, NCP leaders feel that they are strong in rural Maharashtra while the Sena is strong in Mumbai and its peripheral urban pockets. If the Sena is with them, they together can stop the BJP and rule Maharashtra for several years.

The key question now is if the Sena’s calculations translate into a real, durable, political alliance or increase its power, or whether it turns counterproductive.

Sudhir Suryawanshi is a Mumbai-based political journalist. The views expressed are personal

For clean air, Delhi must look beyond just man-made solutions

Cities belong to more than just human beings. To safeguard their future, adopt a biophysical understanding



As the smog around the National Capital Region (NCR) intensifies, so does despair. Over a thousand people protested against the life-threatening air pollution in Delhi recently. Both the protest, and the state of the air, are annual affairs. As the Air Quality Index (AQI) shot above 500 after Diwali, barbs were exchanged between Delhi and its neighbouring agrarian states of Punjab and Haryana, which burn crop stubble. The odd-even scheme for cars started from November 4. But at the end, it was strong winds blowing over Delhi after Diwali that brought the AQI down to 100 temporarily. It has once again shot up this week.

Despite Delhi being a metropolis, it is still severely affected by rural activities like farming. And despite the lofty nature of centralised politics, the climate is influenced by events in the hills. When it snows in Kashmir or Shimla, it often rains in Delhi. Air pollution is a Delhi poll issue, but is not tackled with the seriousness and severity it deserves. Yet, an ethnography of the city should not be drawn just through failed policy action.

After Diwali, many ecological changes have taken place, despite, and in spite of, our failure to control air pollution. Avenues and roundabouts are in blossom with trees like the silk floss with its luxurious flowers. From the Himalayas, the little Hume’s warbler has landed. Flycatchers are small birds that eat flies, and the brilliantly blue Verditer Flycatcher has come to Delhi from Nepal and the Himalayan regions. From locked-down Kashmir, the Black Redstart is flitting about in Delhi.

While we are determined to see a city as a human construct, the fabric of cities is much more than what is man-made. It is the moisture in the air and scents of the season, it is the biophysical setting, as much the immediate inhabitable area as its surroundings. Delhi adjoins the Thar; Mumbai and Kolkata, the sea. These natural features have profound impacts on the climate and, ultimately, how people live their lives. For birds that migrate thousands of kilometres — or butterflies that migrate hundreds of kilometres downwards of the Himalayas — Delhi is an important refuge or pit stop.

Thus, natural workings should inform our understanding of the city. The Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) for air pollution is put in place only after a veritable air emergency is declared, and has an overwhelming reliance on technology. Directions by the Central Pollution Control Board make only passing references to nature-based solutions, including creating green buffers and water fountains. To draw a true ethnography of a great city like Delhi though, we need a biophysical understanding that is greater than the simplistic ambit of technology.

The first issue is that Delhi adjoins a desert, and a degradation towards a more desert-like



Air pollution is a Delhi poll issue, yet is not tackled with the seriousness and severity it deserves

state is a real possibility. The NCR needs to stop pretending it is Switzerland, and cease construction of glass-fronted buildings with easily-heated facades and inflated electricity bills.

Second, this dust bowl need trees more than they need us. Let’s look at pollution through the year, not just in winter. A 2016 IIT Kanpur study found that in the summer, a whopping 26% to 28% of particulate matter (PM) comes from soil and road dust. Trees absorb dust, and more surfaces need covering. Covering these surfaces with concrete would be a further folly. It would create more heat and add to the dust bowl effect. A government that looks to cut 16,000 trees for colony redevelopment loses its moral standing to talk about NCAAP.

Third, we can’t blame our neighbours alone for crop burning — though that needs immediate government-led interventions to be tackled. An unacceptable amount of waste is also burned in Delhi, comprising 8% of pollution in both the summer and winter. Nature never has any waste; it is the greatest lesson in recycling. Leaves and organic matter need to be composted, and incinerators cannot be the only solution. Facilities to recycle or repurpose waste should be made on a war-footing.

Finally, if we take a bird’s eye view of the NCR, the city is still valued for Yamuna’s riverine tracts, where Brown-headed gulls from central Asia will visit in winter. Wetlands like Basai, which receive our waste, are also habitat for beautiful birds like the Black-necked Stork. These are water bodies that create buffers against dust and provide respite in congested spaces. Instead of building individual labyrinths of air purifiers, we need to prioritise restoration of natural settings of forests and wetlands as common spaces for more people.

A treescape, a riverscape and Aravalli hillscape have existed for years before us — and in writing the future of the city, they need to be tightly woven into urgent plans to save collective lives.

The structural injustice of air pollution asks for more than man-made solutions; and though the city is partially man-made, it belongs to more than just human beings.

Neha Sinha is with the Bombay Natural History Society. The views expressed are personal