

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI TUESDAY 22 OCTOBER 2019

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Salman Khan shares another poster of Dabangg 3



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WINDOWS



Fast bowler Umesh Yadav celebrates the dismissal of South African Heinrich Klaasen during the third day of final Test between India and South Africa at JSCA Stadium in Ranchi on Monday.

Report on Page 14 — PTI

SC: Demolished Ravidas temple can be rebuilt

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to allow construction of a shrine to Guru Ravidas, revered by the dalits, in south Delhi, on a 400 square metre plot of land at the same site where a Ravidas temple was demolished in August. The court also ordered the release of people arrested for protesting.

Full report on Page 13

Siachen is now open to tourists

New Delhi: Siachen glacier, world's highest battlefield known for extreme cold weather and tough mountaineering terrain, has been opened for tourists. "The Siachen area is now open for tourists," said defence minister Rajnath Singh.

Full report on Page 3

SC ruling on PC bail appeal likely today

New Delhi: The Supreme Court is likely to pronounce on Tuesday its verdict on former finance minister P. Chidambaram's plea for bail in INX Media case investigated by the CBI relating to the alleged criminality and corruption in the case.

Full report on Page 3

COUNTERPOINT



Are we the real target?

WEATHER

Max: 32°C
Min: 18°C
RH: 35%
Rainfall: 0%

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Ashwayuja Bahula Navami till 3.30 am (Wednesday)
Star: Pushyami till 4.33 pm
Variyam: 4.36 am to 6.06 am (Wednesday)
Durmuhurtam: 8.32 am to 9.19 am, 10.46 pm to 11.36 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.45 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.26 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.51 AM
MOONSET TODAY 1.54 PM

Cong may do worse in Maharashtra, Haryana than in LS polls Exit polls predict landslide win for BJP in both states

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

The exit polls have predicted a landslide victory for the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance in both the Maharashtra and Haryana Assembly polls held on Monday. While most exit polls predicted a saffron tsunami, the TV9 Bharatvarsh poll indicated a hung Assembly in Haryana.

Going by the exit polls, the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance is expected to form the government in Maharashtra again, while in Haryana incumbent CM Manohar Lal Khattar will get a second term. Once elected, Shiv Sena's Aditya Thackeray, who made his political debut, is likely to get a major portfolio as he makes a start in governance.

In Maharashtra, the "Poll of Exit Polls" showed that the BJP-Sena alliance had a clear roll over their rivals, Congress and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), with 218 seats predicted for the ruling alliance in the 288-member Assembly.

The Congress-NCP is expected to get 57 seats, while others may get 13. Interestingly, the BJP-Sena had contested the 2014 Assembly polls separately and later came together to form the government. But this time they decided to be together from the beginning itself to avoid splitting of votes and giving the Congress-NCP alliance an advantage.

EXIT POLLS 'NO DENT TO BJP'S GRIP ON POWER'

HARYANA: TOTAL SEATS - 90					Voter turn out 63%
	BJP+	CONG+	INLD	JJP	OTHERS
TIMES NOW	71	11	0	0	8
CNN NEWS 18	75	10	0	0	5
NEWS X	75-80	9-12	0	0	1-4
REPUBLIC TV	52-63	15-19	0-1	5-9	7-9
TV9 BHARATVARSH	47	23	0-1	11	8
Poll of Exit Polls	66	14	2	4-6	2

MAHARASHTRA: TOTAL SEATS - 288				Voter turn out 63%
	BJP+	CONG+	OTHERS	
REPUBLIC	223	54	11	The BJP-Sena will have a record-breaking victory and Fadnis will be the chief minister again — Nitin Gadkari
ABP NEWS	204	69	15	
INDIA TODAY	166-194	72-90	22-34	
TIMES NOW	230	48	10	
CNN NEWS 18	243	41	4	
NEWS 24	230	48	10	
Poll of Exit Polls	218	57	13	



(From left) Former cricketer Sachin Tendulkar, actresses Diya Mirza and Deepika Padukone show their inked fingers after voting in Mumbai on Saturday. — PTI

In Haryana too, the "Poll of Exit Polls" gave the BJP 66 seats in the Assembly of 90, while giving 14 to the Congress, two to the INLD and Akali Dal alliance and eight to others.

The results of these exit polls are a major blow to the Congress, which was hoping to revive its fortunes in the two states. The party had hoped to encash on the brewing dissent among people

over economic slowdown and loss of jobs. However, the BJP juggernaut apparently rolled on unhindered in both states as the Congress was bogged down by internal strife and factionalism.



Sharad Pawar

Pawar: There will be change

Mumbai: Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar expressed confidence here on Monday that there will be a change of guard in Maharashtra after the Assembly elections. "Youngsters want change. The BJP and Shiv Sena ruled the state and people hoped their expectations would be fulfilled. That trust, however, has been betrayed," Mr Pawar told reporters afterwards.

More on Page 2

The Assembly elections were also the first big test for both first-time chief ministers — Devendra Fadnis and Manohar Lal Khattar. The main BJP plank for both the states was largely polarising national issues, ranging from the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir to the National Register of Citizens, and the ruling party avoided local issues and the economic slowdown. The BJP also strategically changed several sitting MLAs to handle

Turn to Page 4

We'll go inside PoK if needed: Malik, Rajnath

Mend your ways, behave, Pak told

YUSUF JAMEEL
with agency inputs
SRINAGAR/LEH, OCT. 21

Jammu and Kashmir governor Satya Pal Malik warned Pakistan on Monday of stern military action if it continued to push in terrorists into J&K to foment trouble in the state. "We will dismantle all the terrorist camps. If they don't desist we will go inside (Pakistan-occupied-Kashmir)," he said while talking to reporters on the sidelines of a function organised by the police to pay tribute to its martyrs at Zewan on the outskirts of Srinagar.

The governor also said: "War is bad and Pakistan should behave. If they don't mend their ways, what will happen in future will be worse than what happened yesterday." In a message to the people of the Valley, particularly its youth, Mr Malik said: "There will be a new Kashmir from November 1... participate in it and take it ahead. I would like

'No terror camps destroyed': Pak Army rejects India claim

SHAFQAT ALI
ISLAMABAD, OCT. 21

Pakistan military on Monday rejected India Army Chief's claim of destroying four alleged camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir, saying there were no such camps. Director general Inter

Pakistan troops violate 2003 truce yet again

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, OCT. 21

Pakistan troops on Monday again violated the November 2003 ceasefire understanding by resorting to unprovoked small arms firing and mortar shelling along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. A defence spokesman in Jammu said that the Pakistani troops targeted the Indian forward positions and civilian areas in Shahpur and Gotriya area of Poonch.

to ask the boys here what did they achieve, so far (through confrontation)?" Defence minister Rajnath Singh also talked tough on Monday, saying the armed forces will keep giving a befitting reply to

Turn to Page 4

Canadians vote in a tight race, Trudeau might lose

Ottawa, Oct. 21: Canadians began voting in a general election Monday, with surveys predicting a minority government as Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's Liberal Party risks losing its majority or even being kicked out of office.

The Liberals and the Conservatives, led by Andrew Scheer, could be set for a near dead heat with pundits calling it one Canada's closest elections ever. Neither the Liberals nor the Conservatives — the parties that have led Canada since Confederation in 1867 — is forecast to win enough support to secure an absolute majority of seats in parliament. At final campaign stops in western Columbia on Sunday, former golden boy Trudeau made an emotional appeal to voters to enable him to build on the achievements of his first term. He warned against Scheer's pledged rollback of environmental protections including a federal carbon tax that discourages the use of large amounts of fossil fuels. "We need a strong, progressive government that will unite Canadians and fight climate change — not a progressive Opposition," he said.

Blow to Boris as Speaker rejects new Brexit deal vote

London, Oct. 21: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson was dealt another blow Monday when the Speaker of Parliament denied him a second shot at winning MPs' approval for his EU divorce deal, with Brexit looming in just 10 days' time. House of Commons Speaker John Bercow — a colourful figure who has played a starring role in the Brexit drama — said Mr Johnson was not allowed to push for the same measures twice in the same parliamentary sitting. Lawmakers, meeting on a Saturday for the first

Bercow said. "Today's motion is in substance the same as Saturday's motion and the House has decided the matter." Lawmakers refused on Saturday to give their backing to Mr Johnson's revised settlement plan until all the domestic legislation needed to ratify it has passed. Mr Johnson's foes are now forging new alliances and trying to attach amendments that could either force him to push for closer trade ties with the EU — or abandon the deal and accept a third delay this year.



Boris Johnson and John Bercow

time in 37 years, had voted to demand that the Conservative PM delay Brexit while they further consider his newly-agreed EU divorce agreement. "The motion will not be debated today because it would be repetitive and disorderly to do so," Mr

Singhvi triggers new Savarkar row

Cong MP calls Hindu Mahasabha leader an 'accomplished' man

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

Wading into the ongoing debate over a Bharat Ratna for V.D. Savarkar, senior Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi on Monday praised the Hindutva ideologue and said he was an "accomplished" man who fought for dalit rights and had taken part in the freedom struggle. Mr Singhvi's comments came days after the BJP's Maharashtra unit had proposed a Bharat Ratna for Mr Savarkar. After this, former PM Manmohan Singh too had toned down the Congress' stand against Savarkar, saying the party only opposes his Hindutva ideology. Referring to the Hindu



Abhishek Singhvi

I personally don't subscribe to Savarkar's ideology but that doesn't take away the fact that he was an 'accomplished man' who played a part in the freedom struggle

— A.M. Singhvi, Congress MP

Mahasabha leader with a reverential "Savarkar ji", Dr Singh said former PM Indra Gandhi had issued a postal stamp in Savarkar's memory. "But we are not in favour of the Hindutva ideology Savarkar ji patronised and stood for". Earlier, however, the Opposition parties had

launched a scathing attack on the BJP over the Bharat Ratna demand for Savarkar, with the Congress itself saying Savarkar, while acquitted later, had faced criminal charges over the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. On Monday, Mr Singhvi added, however, that he

does not subscribe to Savarkar's ideology. "I personally don't subscribe to Savarkar's ideology but that doesn't take away the fact that he was an accomplished man", who played a part in the freedom struggle, fought for dalit rights and went to jail for the country," the Rajya Sabha MP, who was elected with Trinamul Congress support, tweeted with the hashtag "never forget". Mr Singhvi had earlier set off a controversy when he tweeted that the Congress Party should not needlessly criticise every move of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He had been supported by many leaders in the party, including his Rajya Sabha colleague Jairam Ramesh.

Henry Kissinger at Delhi conference



Union minister Piyush Goyal greets former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger at the second annual India Leadership Summit hosted by US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum with the theme 'Partners of Growth' in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

Winter meet of Parliament to start Nov. 18, key bills listed

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

The Winter Session of Parliament will be held from November 18 to December 13. Sources said that the decision was conveyed to the secretariats of both the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha by the parliamentary affairs ministry. The government is likely to introduce several major bills, including the Citizenship Amendment Bill, nullifying the National Registrar of Citizens to a considerable extent. Two crucial ordinances are also on the list to be converted into laws during the session, one the ordinance reducing the corporate tax rate to reverse the slowdown, issued in September, and the other banning the sale and manufacture e-cigarettes.

This, however, will be a very short session, compared to the last few years, when winter sessions were convened on November 21 and ended in the first week of January. The 20-day session is the first after the dilution of Article 370 and the complete shutdown in Kashmir. The government, for the first time in six years, is comfortably placed in the Rajya Sabha, with a fractured Opposition and numbers in its favour and is unlikely to face much of a hurdle in passing legislation.



BSP president Mayawati says that ever since the BJP came to power in Uttar Pradesh, crimes have been increasing



I am confident that we will see the result we (Congress) are expecting

— Shashi Tharoor, Congress leader

SHORT TAKES

Elderly standing in queue to vote dies

Pune: A 62-year-old man fainted while standing in the queue outside a polling station in adjoining Pimpri-Chinchwad industrial township on Monday and later died of brain hemorrhage in a hospital, said police. According to the police, the deceased, Abdul Rahim Shaikh, a resident of Shantinagar, which is part of the Bhosari assembly constituency, was suffering from cancer for the last one year. "He, along with his wife, had come to cast his vote at one of the polling stations in Bhosari. While standing in the queue, Shaikh fainted and was taken home by family members and others," said a senior official attached to the Bhosari police station. — PTI

AIMIM MP roughed up near poll booth

Aurangabad: AIMIM MP Imtiaz Jaleel received minor injuries in a clash between workers of the NCP and his party in Aurangabad Central assembly constituency in Maharashtra on Monday, the police said. Elections to the Maharashtra Assembly were held on Monday. The incident took place near a polling booth in Katkat Gate locality, a local police official said. There was a scuffle between workers of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen and the Nationalist Congress Party, and when Jaleel intervened, he too was attacked by unidentified men, said a local police official. — PTI

Bhujbal too busy to cast his vote

Mumbai: Senior NCP leader Chhagan Bhujbal on Monday said he could not cast his vote in the Maharashtra assembly elections on Monday as he was busy in the Yvela Assembly constituency in Nashik district from where he is seeking another term. Mr Bhujbal is a registered voter in Nashik city. "I was in my constituency, which is big in size. I fanned parts of the constituency since this morning. I could not even cover all parts of it," Mr Bhujbal told a news channel. Meanwhile, the former deputy chief minister claimed that he would win with a margin of at least one lakh votes. He also exuded confidence that the Congress-NCP combine will bag at least 12 of the total 15 seats in the region. — PTI

110-YEAR-OLD MAN CASTS VOTE IN ODISHA

Bhubaneswar: A 110-year-old man in Odisha's Baragarh district on Monday cast his vote during Bijepur assembly by-poll. Ramaji Sahu, the elderly man, came in a wheelchair and exercised his voting right at Polling Station 108 at Sankarsana Government Upper Primary School in Bijepur. "I have been voting my franchise right since the first elections were held in 1952. It is a sacred duty of a citizen and I never want to miss the opportunity to perform this," said Ramaji. Another centenarian woman - Lochana Nayak - cast her vote at a polling booth at Agalpur under Barpali block. Sources in the CEO, Odisha, said polling in Bijepur recorded 72 per cent by 5 PM. The CEO sources also said that this was a tentative figure and it may increase when the final figure comes out. "Voting was held peacefully and no violence has been reported at any booth," said Chief Electoral Officer Sushil Kumar Lohani.

There will be change, says NCP chief Pawar

NCP supremo says BJP-Sena betrayed people

Mumbai, Oct. 21: Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar expressed confidence on Monday that there will be a change of guard in Maharashtra after the Assembly elections.

Voting for the 288 Assembly seats in the state began at 7 am on Monday. The BJP-Shiv Sena combine, which ousted the Congress and NCP from power in 2014, is seeking a second term this time. Pawar, his grand-daughter Revati Sule and son-in-law Sadanand Sule voted at a polling booth in south Mumbai in the morning. "Youngsters want change. The BJP and Shiv Sena ruled the state and people hoped their expectations would be fulfilled. That trust, however, has been betrayed," Mr Pawar told reporters afterwards.

Maharashtra lagged behind in sectors such as agriculture and industries, and there were job losses too, the former Union minister claimed. "All this has created restlessness among people...I got good response across the state (during the campaigning). I do not have any doubt that there will be a change," he said. Election results will be out on October 24.

'DON'T KNOW IF FEAR OF LOSING BEHIND PANKAJA'S FAINTING'

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 21



Pankaja Munde

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar asked on Monday why Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Pankaja Munde should get up and set a record for fainting during a rally merely because her estranged cousin Dhananjay Munde called her "Bahinabai" (sister). He did not know if Pankaja, the Maharashtra Women and Child Welfare Minister, fainted due to fear of losing to Dhananjay, NCP nominee from Parli Assembly constituency, Mr Pawar said in a sarcastic vein.

Talking about the episode, Pawar said during her 40-minute speech the BJP leader made alle-

gations against Dhananjay Munde. "But later she fainted...I saw her interview subsequently. In that she said she was referred to (by Dhananjay) as 'Bahinabai'," Mr Pawar said. "I did not understand why one would be pained or faint when referred to as Bahinabai. Nothing happens to you while you give speech for 30-40 minutes and you faint at the end of it," Mr Pawar said. "I don't know if behind this episode there was some fear that there could be a different (unfavourable poll) result," the NCP chief added.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil ridiculed Mr Pawar's statement that it would not be an easy win for the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance as the situation in the state had changed in the last few days. "Since the 2014 elections, people's faith in politics and politicians has increased. The reason for that is the transparent government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he said. "Body language of voters shows that the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance would achieve a huge victory," Mr Patil added. — PTI



Voters display their identity cards as they wait in a queue to cast their votes for the Maharashtra Assembly polls in Sangli on Monday. — PTI

Keralaites brave rains to cast their vote

Lucknow/Kochi, Oct. 21: A moderate turnout of nearly 57 per cent was reported on Monday in the bypolls to 51 assembly seats and two Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 18 states, while voters braved heavy rains in Kerala where streets were inundated and water entered some polling booths. Uttar Pradesh saw a low voter turnout of 47.05 per cent in 11 assembly seats. Gangoh in Saharanpur district saw a high of about 60.30 per cent voting while Lucknow Cantonment assembly seat witnessed the lowest at 28.53 per cent in the state.

The overall voting percentage in the bypolls to 51 assembly seats was nearly 56.84 per cent, the Election Commission said while releasing data available till 7 pm, adding that the polling passed off peacefully. The bypolls to the five assembly constituencies in Kerala were marred by heavy rains, especially in Ernakulam, as voters waded through water-logged roads to exercise their franchise and water seeped into some booths on Monday. Ernakulam saw a relatively low turnout at 53.27 per cent.

The state generally has high polling percentage. High voter turnout was reported in Khonsa West seat in Arunachal Pradesh (90 pc), Naxalhit Chitrakot in Chhattisgarh (74 pc), Huzurnagar Telangana (84 pc) and Jhabua in Madhya Pradesh (62 pc) per cent and Shella in Meghalaya (84.56 pc), according to data released by the EC. — PTI

Bihar grand alliance in turmoil on bypoll day

Patna, Oct. 21: Beset with squabbles since its inception, the Opposition grand alliance in Bihar appeared to remain adrift on Monday when bypolls were under way in a Lok Sabha seat and five Assembly seats, being billed as the "semi-final" ahead of Assembly elections next year.

In two of the five Assembly segments — Nathnagar in Bhagalpur and Simri Bakhtiarpur in Madhepura — more than one constituent of the five-party alliance have fielded their respective candidates.

Having failed to defuse the crisis in time, Lalu Prasad's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), which leads the pack, on Monday sought to make light of its allies Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) and Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), which have fielded their candidates in the two seats.

"Grand alliance is united. The presence of HAM and VIP candidates has not been taken seriously by anybody. Their candidates may not have been able to withdraw their nominations since it would have demoralised

ties, and, on the other, he goes on demeaning his alliance partners. Let the results come out. He will learn what is our worth and how strong the RJD is without the support of its allies".

There had been bad blood between the RJD and its junior allies after the Lalu Prasad-led party surreptitiously distributed tickets for four assembly segments, leaving only two for the Congress.

Manjhi and Sahni had lambasted RJD heir apparent Tejashwi Yadav for ignoring their wish to contest the by-polls and went on to announce their own candidates for Nathnagar and Simri Bakhtiarpur, while stating that they would be supporting Grand Alliance candidates in the remaining seats.

They also campaigned enthusiastically for each other's candidates and canvassed for the Congress nominee in Samastipur, but stayed away from the campaign in Belhar and Daraundha constituencies, where only the RJD was in the fray. — PTI

Sahni, a former Bollywood set designer who had floated the VIP about a year ago, said, "On one hand, Raghuvansh Prasad Singh keeps talking about the need for unity of opposition par-



Jitan Ram Manjhi

Bypolls crucial for both NDA, grand alliance

NAYEAR AZAD PATNA, OCT. 21

Bypolls on one parliamentary and five Assembly seats held on Monday is being seen as semi-finals ahead of assembly elections due next year.

Political analysts are of the opinion that poll results will also decide the future of Tejashwi Yadav who has been facing a leadership crisis in the RJD.

Sources claim that RJD's decision to contest on four

of the five assembly seats had created a flutter in the grand alliance last month.

Former chief minister Jitan Ram Manjhi who had joined the grand alliance in February 2018 has been giving indications of joining hands with other like-minded secular forces before the Assembly polls scheduled in 2020.

Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) leaders said that differences within grand alliance had sur-

Naxal-hit C'garh seat sees 74% turnout

Raipur, Oct. 21: A high voter turnout of 74.39 per cent was recorded in the bypoll to the Naxal-hit Chitrakot Assembly constituency in Chhattisgarh till the scheduled deadline of 5 pm on Monday, an election official here said.

The voting till 5 pm was peaceful and those standing in queues in the premises of polling booths after the official end of voting will be allowed to exercise their democratic right and this may push up the final turnout figure, he said.

Six candidates are in the fray from the Naxal-affected seat reserved for Scheduled Tribe (ST) nominees, but the main contest is between the ruling Congress and the opposition BJP.

The bypoll in the assembly segment, which falls in the Bastar region, became necessary after sitting Congress MLA Deepak Bajj resigned after winning from the Bastar Lok Sabha constituency in May.

The voting in Chitrakot, which has 1,67,911 eligible voters, is spread across two districts, began at 8 am amid tight security.

"After the deadline for voting ended at 5 pm, 74.39 per cent voter turnout was recorded in the Chitrakot seat," he said.

However, the figure is provisional and might go up as voters were waiting in queues outside several polling booths after the deadline for voting ended, the official added.

No untoward incident was reported in the constituency during the polling process which was by and large peaceful, he said.

The presiding officer at the Matnar polling booth (No. 15) was replaced after a complaint was received against him, the official said without providing details. — PTI



Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar arrives on a bicycle with his supporters to cast vote during the Haryana Assembly elections in Karnal on Monday. — PTI

Violence mars polling in Haryana, leaves 7 injured

Chandigarh, Oct. 21: Haryana on Monday recorded a voter turnout of 65 per cent in the assembly polls, a sharp drop from the 2014 elections which brought the BJP to power in the state.

Seven people were hurt in stone-pelting between two groups in a Nuh village and there were "minor incidents" in Rohtak, Narnaul and Bahadurgah districts, police said. But they maintained that polling over the 90 assembly constituencies was largely peaceful.

The turnout was less than the 76.54 per cent in the 2014 assembly elections and the 70.36 per cent recorded over the state's 10 parliamentary constituencies in the Lok Sabha elections this year.

Currently, the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party has 48 members in the state assembly and the Congress 17.

Addressing reporters in the evening with Haryana's Chief Electoral Officer Anurag Agarwal, he said there were "minor incidents of clashes" in Nuh, Rohtak and Narnaul districts. Altogether, 13

BOGUS VOTING IN HARYANA VILLAGE, ALLEGES DUSHYANT

Jind, Oct. 21: JJP leader Dushyant Chautala levelled allegation of "bogus voting" in connivance with a police official at a booth in Dumerkha Kalan village of the Uchana Kalan assembly constituency here on Monday.

Dushyant Chautala (31), a former MP from Hisar, is in the fray from Uchana Kalan and contesting against sitting BJP MLA Prem Lata, who is the wife of former Union Minister Birender

Singh. Mr Chautala said when he objected to it, an attempt was made to hurl a glass at him by some persons.

"When I said a woman's vote was cast in a bogus manner, five to six persons tried to hurl a glass at me. I have complained to the returning officer concerned about the police official and others," Jannayak Janata Party leader said, demanding that repolling be held at the booth. — PTI

FIRs were registered. He said there were two incidents of firing in Nuh district during the day but these were not poll-related. Seven people, including a woman, were hurt when supporters of a village sarpanch and a former headman clashed outside a polling booth in Malaaka village in Nuh district in Mewat region, police said.

Nuh Superintendent of Police Sangeeta Kalia said an argument broke out between the two local leaders, and this was followed by stone-pelting. "However, the polling process was not hampered," she said. There were reports of minor fights taking place between the supporters of the BJP and the Congress in Rohtak and Bahadurgah districts. — PTI

INSIDE INDIA

MAHA VOTER WITHOUT ARMS GETS TOE INKED

Mumbai, Oct. 21: In a rare instance, polling officials in Deolali assembly constituency in Nashik district on Monday applied the indelible ink to one of the toes of a farmer who had lost his arms in an accident a few years ago.

In Deolali, the polling officer applied the indelible ink to one of toes of Bajirao Mojad, who had lost both his arms in an accident.

In another incident, villagers joined tractor trolleys together in Baramati constituency in Pune district so that voters can reach a polling booth avoiding waterlogged area of the polling station. — PTI

CRECHES AT POLL BOOTHS FOR KIDS OF WOMEN VOTERS

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 21

In a bid to make the polling process convenient for female voters, temporary creches for children were set up for the first time in some Assembly segments, an official said Monday.

As several female voters have no option but to carry their children along with them to the polling booths, the Election Commission came up with this initiative, the official said.

Additionally, around 12 hydraulic vans specially designed for pick up-and-drop services for specially-abled people were made available, considering there were 3,085 specially-abled voters from Colaba to Sion.

TN CONG MP ARRESTED FOR CORRUPT PRACTICES, LATER RELEASED ON BAIL

Tirunelveli (TN), Oct. 21: Congress MP H. Vasanthakumar was arrested for alleged corrupt practices and staying in Nanguneri assembly constituency in the district in 'violation' of election rules during a bypoll held there on Monday, police said. A case has been registered against him under Indian Penal Code sec-

tions, including 171-H (Illegal payments in connection with an election), and under section 123 of the Representation of the People Act (corrupt practices), they said. Earlier, after being detained, he was taken to the Nanguneri police station. — PTI



Rahul Gandhi

RIGGED EVMS

H'yana MLA most honest: Rahul takes dig at BJP

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Taking a dig at the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday described the BJP's candidate from Haryana's Assandh as the "most honest man" in the ruling party after a video went viral in which he is purportedly heard saying no matter which button is pressed on the EVM, the vote would go to the BJP.

Mr Gandhi posted the video in which sitting MLA Bakhshish Singh Virk purportedly makes the remarks. Virk has dubbed it as a "fake video" and alleged that it was a conspiracy by his opponents to defame him and his party. "The most honest man in the BJP," the former Congress chief tweeted along with the video.

After the video went viral, the Election Commission on Sunday issued a show-cause notice to the BJP leader and appointed a special observer to the constituency to take "corrective action".

It said former deputy election commissioner Vinod Zutshi is being sent to Assandh constituency in Karnal "in light of the video circulating in social media".

In the video, Virk also purportedly tells a small gathering of his supporters, "We will come to know who has voted for whom, there should be no misconception about this..." — PTI



Accept mistake

Own up fault of riding 2-wheeler sans helmet, pay fine: L-G Kiran Bedi to Puducherry CM, V. Narayanasamy



Pakistan has made a business (\$20 fee for Kartarpur pilgrims) out of faith

— Harsimrat Kaur Badal, Union minister

SHORT TAKES

HDK meets jailed leader Shivakumar

New Delhi: Former Karnataka chief minister and JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy met Congress leader D.K. Shivakumar at Tihar Jail on Monday. Mr Shivakumar is accused of evading tax and being involved in alleged hawala transactions worth crores of rupees. He was arrested on September 3 by the Enforcement Directorate and his judicial custody has been extended till October 25. "It was a cordial meeting. He looked very confident despite in this situation. He is mentally very strong. He is prepared to fight the next battle," Mr Kumaraswamy told reporters after meeting his former Cabinet colleague in the Congress-JD(S) coalition government. — PTI

Chinmayanand writes to UP cops

Shahjahanpur: Former Union minister Swami Chinmayanand, who is accused by a law student of raping her, on Monday sent a letter to the police demanding that the Gangster Act should also be slapped on the woman for allegedly blackmailing him. The 23-year-old law student was arrested last month by a SIT on charges of extortion. According to the SIT, the law student and her three friends allegedly demanded ₹5 crore from Chinmayanand, failing which they threatened to upload online video clips showing him getting massages from her. — PTI

Woman gets stuck in lift shaft, dies

Mumbai: A 45-year-old woman died on Monday after getting trapped in the lift shaft of a building in a Navy residential colony in Colaba in south Mumbai, the police said. Arti Pardeshi, a domestic help, got trapped in the lift shaft and was pinned against a wall between two floors of a multi-storied building in the colony around 12.15 pm, an official said. "Pardeshi, who works in a third-floor flat, was going out to walk a pet dog when she fell into the gap between the lift and the wall while trying to enter the lift," he said. An accidental death case has been registered. — PTI

BANERJEE TO VISIT KOLKATA HOME TODAY

Kolkata: Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee will come to his paternal home in the city on Tuesday to visit his 83-year-old mother after winning the global award. Mr Banerjee will be in the city for two days and his mother Nirmala Banerjee, an economist in her own right, is busy overseeing the last minute preparations to welcome him. She said she is personally preparing the room where her elder son will stay at their home in an apartment. Mr Banerjee, who was declared to be winner of the Nobel Prize, is now in New Delhi. He will be at his home on October 23 and leave for the US early next morning, a family member said. Nirmala Banerjee told reporters that she would be preparing fish items for food to welcome her Nobel laureate son. "He loves fish and eats fish items whenever he is in Kolkata. I will prepare Katla fish curry and other fish items," she said. The family and his friends have decided not to make it a gala affair this time as he will be on a tight schedule. "He will be in the city in December-January and we are planning some big celebrations then," Mr Banerjee's childhood friend Bappa Sen said. — PTI

INX case: SC verdict on PC bail plea likely today

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

The Supreme Court is likely to pronounce on Tuesday its verdict on former finance minister P. Chidambaram's plea for bail in the INX Media case, investigated by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The judgment was reserved on October 18 by a bench comprising Justices R. Banumathi, A.S. Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy.

The judgment will be pronounced by Justice Banumathi.

The CBI had vehemently opposed the plea for bail, contending that given the position and stature of Mr Chidambaram, his mere presence was enough for influencing witnesses. The CBI had told the court that Mr Chidambaram should not be set free till the examination of crucial witnesses.

The CBI had filed the chargesheet in the case on October 18.

However, even if the top court grants bail to Mr Chidambaram, it would not come into effect as he is in the custody of the Enforcement Directorate for seven days and solicitor-general Tushar Mehta had told the top court on October 18 that they would be seeking the extension of his custody.

Envoy: Many opportunities for French to invest in India

New Delhi, Oct. 21: India and France have huge untapped potential for developing business relations and there are many opportunities for French businesses to invest and create jobs in India, the European nation's envoy Emmanuel Lenain said on Monday.

Calling relations between India and France "fabulous", Mr Lenain said the two countries share a great level of confidence and partnership in sectors, including military, defence and culture.

"We have a solid relationship in terms of political ties between the two countries. But as compared to political ties, the two countries still have a huge potential for developing business relations," he said at the launch of the second edition of the annual Indo-French business forum "Ambition India 2020".

Mr Lenain noted that India has many fast growing sectors such as IT that can be tapped.

"We would also like to welcome Indian investment to my country. In context of Brexit and huge reforms there is a huge potential of business between India and France. We are a pro-business country and we see India as one of the major players," he said.

"They (French businesses) come forward as partners and engage in a lasting relationship with this country (India). They can invest in India, create jobs in India, 'Make in India', and also innovate in India, as India is offering huge opportunities," the French envoy said. — PTI

ED to quiz Indrani again, seek fresh clarifications

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

A team of Enforcement Directorate (ED) officials is likely to visit Byculla prison in Mumbai to seek fresh clarifications from Indrani Mukherjea in connection with the agency's probe pertaining to the INX Media case in a day or two. Indrani, a former director of INX Media (P) Ltd, is lodged in Byculla prison in connection with the Sheena Bora

murder case. "There are certain fresh evidences related to the case that need to be verified from her. If required, the agency may send a team of its officials to Byculla prison," sources said.

The ED has already recorded her statement in the case. Indrani has turned approver in this case. A Delhi court recently sent former finance minister P. Chidambaram for custodial interrogation by the ED till October 24 in the INX Media case.

The former finance minister is in Tihar Jail under judicial custody since the rejection of his anticipatory bail by the top court on September 5.

However, the high court ruled against Mr Chidambaram on the issue of influencing the witnesses.

Sex CD case: SC stays Baghel trial

New Delhi, Oct. 21: The Supreme Court on Monday stayed the ongoing criminal trial in the alleged sex CD case involving Chhattisgarh chief minister and senior Congress leader Bhupesh Baghel as an accused.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S.A. Bobde and S.A. Nazeer also issued a notice to Mr Baghel on a plea of the CBI seeking transfer of the criminal case out of Chhattisgarh on grounds, including that the chief minister has been allegedly threatening the witnesses in the case.

The CBI had registered a case against Baghel in September 2018, then Chhattisgarh Congress president on a com-

plaint that he had allegedly tried to frame the then state PWD minister and BJP leader Rajesh Munat in the fake sex CD case.

Solicitor-general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the CBI, said that two prosecution witnesses have lodged complaints with the probe agency that they have been threatened at the behest of accused for giving statement against the chief minister in the case. — PTI

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India to sign Kartarpur Corridor pact on Oct. 23

MEA makes final attempt to convince Pak on \$20 fee

VINEETA PANDEY NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

With time running out to sign the agreement on Kartarpur Corridor, India on Monday made one last attempt to convince Pakistan to drop its plan to charge \$20 from the Indian pilgrims, who will be visiting Kartarpur Sahib Gurdwara using the corridor.

In a statement issued on Monday, the MEA urged Pakistan government to shed rigidity and drop the ideas of charging \$20 "Service Fee" from the pilgrims.

India has said that it is a matter of disappointment that while understanding has been reached on most of the elements for facilitating the visit of pilgrims from India, Pakistan continues to insist on levying a service fee of \$20 per pilgrim per visit. "Government has consistently urged Pakistan that in deference to the wishes of the pilgrims, it should not levy

a fee," the Indian government said in a statement.

The agreement will be signed on October 23. However, the ministry of external affairs said that while agreeing to sign the agreement, the government of Pakistan has been once again urged to reconsider its insistence

to levy service fee on pilgrims. "India would be ready to amend the agreement accordingly at any time," MEA said.

"In view of the long pending demand of the pilgrims to have visa free access to Gurdwara Kartarpur Sahib and in the interest of operationalisation of the corridor in time before the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak falling on 12 November 2019, government has today conveyed that we would be ready to sign the agreement on Kartarpur Sahib Corridor on 23 October 2019," MEA said.

MEA added that the Indian government has taken the initiative to put in place the state of art infrastructure and open the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor on the occasion of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, so that the pilgrims from India and those holding overseas citizen of India card can undertake visit to Kartarpur Sahib.

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Manipur outfit, Cong oppose Autonomous Naga Council

Local body warns of consequences over Article 371A extension

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, OCT. 21

Amidst the sudden outbreak of violence in remote districts of Nagaland, the United Committee Manipur (UCM) and Opposition Congress have threatened to oppose the formation of autonomous council and extension of Article 371A for Nagas in Manipur. The Government of India has agreed to create an Autonomous Council for Nagas in Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh by rejecting the demand of NSCN(I-M) for integration of Naga dominated areas into Nagaland.

The issue came into focus suddenly with the Government of India setting the deadline of October 31 to conclude the ongoing Naga peace talks.

Manipur Congress president Gaikhangam, who on Monday asked the ruling BJP to clarify their stand on Autonomous Council for Nagas and extension of 371A to Manipur, told

reporters that they would not accept any compromise with territorial integrity of Manipur. Formation of Autonomous Council and extension of Article 371A to Manipur amounts to interference with the territorial integrity of the state, he added.

The United Committee Manipur (UCM) also reaffirmed its strong opposition to any kind of settlement, including arrangements for territorial council, 6th Schedule and ethnic-based administration, to the ongoing peace talk between the NSCN(I-M) and the Government of India.

UCM president Sunil Karam said that they were already made aware of a distinct possibility of making an arrangement to provide a territorial council or 6th Schedule for bringing a settlement.

He reiterated that the UCM has been strongly opposing such type of ethnic administrative division and if the Central government tries to

extend Article 371(A) of Constitution related with Nagaland in the state.

The UCM leaders also regretted that the Government of India is going to conclude the Naga peace accord but they have not been consulted as yet on the formation of autonomous district council for Nagas and extension of Article 371A to Manipur. It is significant that Nagas of Nagaland and their land and resources are protected under Article 371A of the Indian Constitution.

The UCM which has started holding meetings to formulate their future strategy has also asked all the legislators of the state to clarify their stand on proposed Naga peace accord which extends to territorial boundary of Manipur a well.

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Judgment that upholds justice in Ayodhya issue would reinforce rule of law: AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi



English-speaking liberal media didn't present 'fair picture' on Article 370

— S. Jaishankar, External affairs minister

SHORT TAKES

Fire engulfs Indore hotel, no casualties

Bhopal: A huge fire broke out in a luxury hotel in district headquarters of Indore in MP on Monday, the police said. However, no casualty was reported in the incident. The fire had spread to entire four-floor building in no time. However, borders and staff members of the "Golden Gate Hotel", comprising some restaurants and 25 rooms, were evacuated by firemen. Fire tenders were pressed into service to douse the blaze.

Odisha couple weds by Constitution

Berhampur, Odisha: A young couple in Odisha has set an example by solemnising their marriage in a novel way. They did not take the help of any priests, nor were any hymns chanted. They took oath on Constitution declaring themselves as life partners. Biplab and Anita, the couple, kept their marriage a low-key affair. Reports on Monday said Biplab Kumar and Anita took the marital vows on the Indian Constitution on Sunday in the presence of guests and their relatives. A blood donation camp was also organized to mark the occasion. "I am a rationalist and do not believe in age-old religious practices. We kept it simple and got the marriage solemnized in a unique way," said Biplab's father Mohan Rao.

Leopard enters godown in Ambala

Ambala: A leopard entered a wheat godown in Baldevnagar area of Ambala city creating panic among the locals on Monday. A woman noticed the leopard hiding in the wheat husk late on Sunday night and locked the godown's door. The residents of the area then informed the authorities. Later, the forest department personnel with the assistance of police, tranquillized the feline and trapped it in a net, they said. The police said the forest department will release the leopard in a forest area. There is no dense forest nearby, so it could not be ascertained from where the leopard reached the city. — PTI



Farooq Abdullah

FAROOQ TURNS 82, HAS A QUIET BIRTHDAY

Srinagar: It was a quiet birthday for Lok Sabha parliamentarian and three-time chief minister of Jammu and Kashmir Farooq Abdullah, who is detained under stringent Public Safety Act (PSA), as he turned 82 on Monday. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee was among the first ones to greet Mr Abdullah, who continues to remain confined to his house. "Birthday wishes to Farooq Abdullah Ji. These are difficult times for you. We stand by you. Please stay positive. We pray for your good health @OmarAbdullah," she posted on twitter. Mr Abdullah was wished by his wife Molly and daughter Safia, who were permitted to see him on Monday. The former chief minister has been detained along with other political leaders of the state since the Union government abrogated Article 370 on August 5. — PTI

VHP reciprocates Muslims' peace gesture

Cancels all programmes proposed after Ayodhya verdict, advocates harmony

Ayodhya, Oct. 21: Reciprocating Muslims' gestures to preserve peace and communal harmony in Ayodhya after the Supreme Court verdict on the title suit over the disputed Ram Janambhoomi-Babri Masjid land is delivered, the VHP on Monday announced cancellation of all its programmes proposed after the ruling. For the maintenance of peace and communal harmony post-ruling, the Muslim parties to the title suit earlier had announced deferring the construction of Masjid at the disputed site in Ayodhya if the verdict goes in their favour. The two communities have put their best foot forward even as the Ayodhya police is making its own concerted efforts to ensure that no communal trouble erupts after the apex court delivers its verdict on the vexed issue. "All of our proposed programmes and different activities of our various outfits regarding the upcoming Ayodhya verdict next month have been cancelled," Vishva Hindu Parishad's Uttar Pradesh spokesperson Sharad Sharma told PTI on Monday. Reciprocating the Muslim parties gesture,

The two communities have put their best foot forward even as Ayodhya police is making its own concerted efforts to ensure no communal trouble erupts after the verdict

Mr Sharma added, "Whether the verdict be in favour of Hindus or Muslims, it is the high time that both communities must present the greatest example of harmony and brotherhood." "We all must have to ensure that no such inci-

dent should occur that mix venom in the cordial relation between the two communities," he added. "We have cancelled all our programmes and gatherings of Hindu workers. We are fully conscious about what happened in Godhra and its aftereffects in whole Gujarat. We are committed to ensure that no such situation is repeated here or anywhere else in the country," he said. Two days ago, the Muslim parties to the suit announced deferring the construction of the mosque in Ayodhya even if they win the case. "We must take care of peace and communal harmony in the country first. The Muslims will definitely establish cordial relations with Hindus as we are having close and peaceful relations since ages. The court verdict will never be allowed to affect the harmonious relationships between us," Haji Mahboob, one of the key Muslim litigants to the Ayodhya dispute, had said on Saturday. Amid the two communities taking up measures to preserve communal harmony after the verdict, police too are beefing up security in the temple town, besides taking up several inter-community coordination steps. — PTI



Madhya Pradesh governor Lajji Tandon meets the family members of martyred police personnel after the parade on Police Commemoration Day in Bhopal Monday. — PTI

HC steps in to monitor MP honeytrap scandal probe

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, OCT. 21

Madhya Pradesh high court has begun monitoring the high profile honey trap racket that purportedly hooked several babus and political leaders in the state.

The Indore bench of MP high court on Monday pulled up Kamal Nath government for frequently reconstituting the special investigation team (SIT) set up to probe the scandal and ordered it not to change the investigating officers (IOs) of the case without its permission. The state government has changed SIT chief twice in a span of eight days, raising eyebrows in several quarters. The Indore bench of MP HC would now monitor the probe into honey trap

HC pulled up Nath government for frequently reconstituting the SIT set up to probe the scandal and ordered it not to change the investigating officers of the case without its permission.

scandal, the petitioner in the case Manohar Dalal told the media. A division bench of the Indore HC, comprising justice Satish Chandra and justice Sailendra Shukla also expressed its displeasure over the status report that was filed by the SIT before it and ordered the SIT to submit a report detailing progress made in the investigation so far, on the next date of hearing on November two. The court

also directed the SIT chief and director general of police Rajendra Singh to ensure that all the electronic documents, including videos, sex chats and mobile call data seized were tested in CFSL at Hyderabad and not in the laboratory run by the state government. Around 4,000 smut videos, sex chats and pictures of the trapped playboys in compromising position were recovered from the laptop, cell phones and pen drives seized from the five women arrested on charges of honey trapping and then blackmailing their victims for money. In a related development, the SIT issued notices to people, purportedly hooked by the honey trapping gang, named in the dossier submitted to the DGP of MP V.K. Singh.

Scindia renews attack on Kamal

Questions bailing out of spurious food traders by MP Cong govt

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, OCT. 21

AICC general secretary Jyotiraditya Scindia on Monday renewed his attack against Kamal Nath government questioning how people arrested for their alleged involvement in spurious food trade were let off without punishment.

Mr Scindia's fresh attack against the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh comes in the wake of his exposure of failure by the chief minister Kamal Nath to fulfill his promise of waiving farm loans up to ₹20 lakh of each peasant in the state. He was addressing Congress workers in Gwalior in MP. "It is not proper to bail out the businessmen involved in illicit trade of spurious food", he said. Mr Scindia indicated that cases against such people were being closed without knowledge of



Kamal Nath and Jyotiraditya Scindia

state health minister Tulsii Silawat and urged the minister, who was present on the occasion to ensure that such people were brought to book.

Mr Scindia's vituperative attack on the Kamal Nath government has caused huge embarrassment to the chief minister as well as the ruling party. Mr Scindia, who has been sulking ever since Mr Nath was chosen over him by the Central party leadership to become chief minister of the state after Congress returned to power in MP after a gap of 15 years, appeared upset over the delay in replacing Mr Nath with him as president of MP Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC).

Govts should stay above religious choices: Rice

'Nothing can be more dangerous than people going after each other for religious reasons'

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Cautioning that nothing could be more dangerous than people going after each other for religious reasons, former US secretary of state Condoleezza Rice on Monday said governments should stay above religious preferences in a democracy. Ms Rice, while speaking at the US-India strategic partnership forum here, expressed concern over the safety of religious minorities across the world, saying their protection is becoming a problem worldwide and there are lot of people in the US, who worry as they see rise in hate crimes against cer-

tain religious people. There is "nothing more emotional, more dangerous than when people go after each other for religious reasons and to the degree that the state can stay above it and say you are American or Indian or whatever your religious preferences, that is absolutely critical for functioning any state particularly a democratic state," she said. Her remarks came in response to a question that there was more and more emphasis on religion across the world. "We will all suffer badly if we go down this road. And I just hope that every



Condoleezza Rice

leader is cognisant of whatever the pull there may be in speaking of religion in politics," Ms Rice said, while adding that though she is "deeply religious", it never occurred to her to impose her faith on others, when she was in a position of power. Separation of state from

religion is preferable, she added. When Ms Rice was asked about her advice for India-US trade deal negotiators, she said, "...Get the deal," while adding that this region is challenged by a growing and sophisticated China. "My advice for trade negotiators is get a deal...I would not want to see this possibility elude us when so much is going on in the region...This region is challenged by a growing and sophisticated China," she said. However, she added neither of the two countries wants to isolate China, but they should take advantage of the possibilities for

US-India partnership to help this region reflect upon the values of openness for sovereignty for freedom of navigation. "Let's not get tied by the new trade agreement," she said. Ms Rice, who was the secretary of the state, when India signed the nuclear deal with US, said it opened up possibilities for more sophisticated India-US relationship. The deal was not only about civil nuclear power, it was about removing number of the constraints on the ability of the United States and India to have defence cooperation and others, she added. — PTI

With 3,59L FIRs, crimes against women rise for 3rd year in a row

New Delhi, Oct. 21: As many as 3,59,849 cases of crime against women were registered across the country in 2017, continuing the upward trend for the third consecutive year, the latest National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data released on Monday showed. In 2015, 3,29,243 cases of crimes against women were registered and 3,38,954 cases were registered in 2016. The cases categorised as crimes against women mostly include murder, rape, dowry death, suicide abetment, acid attack, cruelty against

women and kidnapping. According to the NCRB data for 2017, which was released after a delay of more than a year, the maximum cases were registered in Uttar Pradesh (56,011) — the country's most populated state. Maharashtra recorded the second-highest number of crimes against women with 31,979 cases, followed by 30,992 in West Bengal, 29,778 in Madhya Pradesh, 25,993 in Rajasthan and 23,082 in Assam, the data said. Delhi, however, saw a decline in crimes against women for the third

straight year. Assam recorded the highest crime rate of 143 in the country in 2017. Odisha and Telangana recorded the second-highest crime rate of 94 each, followed by Haryana (88) and Rajasthan (73). Eight states — Arunachal Pradesh, Goa, Himachal Pradesh, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim, Tripura — registered crimes against women only in three digits, with not even one per cent contribution to the all-India figures, according to the NCRB data. — PTI



Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath holds a child while honouring widows of police martyrs on the occasion of Police Commemoration Day in Lucknow on Monday. — PTI

DG rules out Sasikala's premature release

D. SEKAR CHENNAI, OCT. 21

Amid active social media traffic on hot speculation over AMMK chief V.K. Sasikala gaining premature release papers in respect of over 140 lifers on the occasion of Karnataka Rajyotsava, state's formation day on November one. The people now released belonged to a different category of convicts, most of them being accused of murder and attempt to murder; whereas, the case of Sasikala was different as she was convicted under the 'Prevention of Corruption Act', the DG

reformed and be given concessions such as early release after taking into account their 'good conduct' in prison. DG Mergharikh seemed perturbed that the social media has been afire with reports that Sasikala is all set to get released prematurely—she was sentenced by the Supreme Court in February 2017 to four years in jail in the 21-year-old disproportionate assets case, in which the late chief minister and AIADMK supremo Jayalalithaa was the first accused, followed by Sasikala and foster son



V.K. Sasikala

told Thanthi TV. He apparently implied that the tag of 'good conduct' would not apply to Sasikala as she fell into a different category—obviously under the economic offences tag and not the violent criminals, who could be

Sudhakaran and Sasikala's kin Ilavarasi. "These are all motivated and false news; it's nothing to do with what we do; we don't react to all that", said the DG, when he was asked about the huge social media traffic on Sasikala getting premature release. "We are not responsible for any speculation or social media traffic. We want Chinnamma to be released and we are taking recourse to legal action for securing that", insisted prominent AMMK spokesperson C.R. Saraswati.

Army expecting more infiltration bids by terrorists

PAWAN BALI NEW DELHI, OCT. 21

Indian Army is expecting more infiltration attempts by terrorists in next one and a half month despite destruction of launch pads in Pakistan. Occupied Kashmir (PoK) through targeted shelling. "Before snow closes the paths in mountains along the line of control (LoC), we are expecting more attempts by terrorists to intrude into India," said a senior Army official. "We were expecting Pakistan trying to up the terrorist flow after the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meeting early this month. Now, with Pakistan getting time from FATF, it will go back to its old game," said sources.

Pakistan has got reprieve from Financial Action Task Force (FATF) till February 2020. Indian Army on early Sunday morning had killed at least 6 Pakistani soldiers and destroyed three terror launch pads along the line of control, opposite Tangdhar sector through heavy targeted artillery shelling.

Indian Army Chief General Bipin Rawat had said that in last one month, there have been repeated attempts from different sectors to infiltrate terrorists. Sources said that there are still 6-7 terror launch pads in PoK along the LoC in North of Pir Panjal range. "The number of launch pads is dynamic. These are makeshift structure,

Pak violates ceasefire again, Army retaliates

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, OCT. 21

Pakistan troops on Monday once again violated the November 2003 ceasefire understanding by resorting to unprovoked small arms firing and mortar shelling along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district. A defence spokesman in Jammu said that the Pakistani troops targeted the Indian forwards positions and civilian areas in Shahpur and Grotiya area of Poonch. However, there were no immediate reports of any casualties. The spokesman further added that the Indian troops retaliated "strongly and effectively" to the Pakistani firing and shelling.

A report from J&K's Kathua said the Pakistan Ranger and Border Security Force (BSF) have again exchanged small arms fire along the international border (IB) in the district's Hiranagar sector. The Pakistani border guards resorted to unprovoked firing at a few places in Hiranagar sector to which the BSF gave befitting reply, the police sources said.

where 10-15 terrorists are kept by their handlers, before trying to push them into India," said sources.

We'll go inside PoK if needed: Malik, Rajnath

Continued from Page 1

Pakistan until it stops infiltration. The assertions by Mr Singh and Mr Malik came a day after Army Chief Gen. Bipin Rawat said that six to 10 Pakistani soldiers were killed and three terror camps destroyed in retaliatory action by the Indian Army across the LoC opposite the Tangdhar and Keran sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

Mr Singh, speaking at a function in Leh for the inauguration of the 1,400-ft Col Chewang Rinchen bridge in eastern Ladakh over the Shyok River, the highest-altitude permanent bridge in the country, said that after the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, the Ladakh region will now only "draw friends" and "leave

no scope for enemies". "However, our neighbour Pakistan... Our armed forces have never been offensive on the Pakistani side. We have never done the first firing," he said. "But, by supporting terror activities, attempts have been made from the other side to destabilise, weaken and compromise the integrity of India," he added. On Sunday, the Army had said it destroyed three terrorist camps and damaged a fourth one just across the LoC in PoK's Neelam valley, killing six to 10 Pakistani soldiers. The Army claimed it used artillery guns to target terrorist camps in PoK, from where the terrorists were being pushed into J&K.

Landslide win for BJP

Continued from Page 1

the possibility of an anti-incumbency mood against the local leaders. The BJP had also fielded sportspersons like Babita Phogat and Yogeshwar Dutt and TikTok star Sonali Phogat to encash on their wide popularity. In Maharashtra, the Congress seemed to have handed over the baton to NCP chief Sharad Pawar to lead the campaign. Mr Pawar exuded confi-

dence and predicted a change of government even as voting was going on. The polling for the Assembly seats in both the states ended on Monday. The votes will be counted on Thursday, October 24. The day started with a lukewarm response by voters with only 37.64 per cent turnout by 2 pm in Haryana and 30.91 per cent in Maharashtra.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Former ministers denounce EMS' leadership

Trivandrum: The ultimate fate of the attenuated United Front Cabinet of Kerala headed by E. M.S. Namboodiripad stood postponed to Friday when the Assembly adjourned at midday today to meet again tomorrow to take up a motion introduced by T.A. Majid (CPI) to discuss the chief minister's statement of October 17 with particular reference to the steps initiated to deal with the corruption charges levelled against four ministers.

A strong police force stood guard outside a packed House in which the RSP, the CPI, the ISP and the Muslim League had moved away from the treasury benches, heard seven out of eight ministers who tendered their resignations and mounted a vigorous attack on the CPI, Marxist and particularly on Mr Namboodiripad.

It was noticed that Mr P.N. Namboodiripad had "vindictiveness and double standards" in his approach to the problem of dealing with the corruption charges. Chandrasenan (ISP) was sitting along with supporters of the CPI (Marxists).

M.N. Govindan Nair, T. V. Thomas (both CPI), P.R. Kurup (ISP), C.H. Mohammad Koya, Avukaderkutty Naha (both Muslim League) and T. K. Divakaran (RSP), all of whom resigned on last Friday in protest against the chief minister's action against four colleagues, and P. K. Kunju (ISP), who left the Cabinet in May, described the chief minister's decision as discriminatory and vindictive. B. Wellington (KTP) denounced the "four-party front" as traitors to the cause of the United Front.

The Business Advisory Committee of the Kerala Assembly, meeting here this afternoon, decided to allot three days for the debate on the motion introduced today by CPI member T. A. Majid to discuss the chief minister's statement on October 17 in the Assembly.

Poking around this Diwali: How poker kings and queens are 'acing' the sport



Reshil Charles

focus

■ 'I don't gamble that much. In fact, I don't gamble.' When the maths is done, actor Arjun Rampal's clarification adds up to 'I play a game of skill. It's called poker.'

I'm not a gambler. I don't gamble that much. In fact, I don't gamble". When the maths is done, actor Arjun Rampal's clarification adds up to "I play a game of skill. It is recognised in the world over. It's called 'poker.'" Yes, there is a monetary aspect to it with cash to be won and lost, but in his capacity as brand ambassador and promoter of the Indian online poker website — pokerhigh.com, Arjun hopes his association with the "sport" will disassociate it from falling under the gambit of gambling, possibly the first impression that it gives out to the many "naive people who think it is just another gambling card game". The reason for this naivety, however, is a mix of climate and a deep-rooted tradition that is widely popular.

The worst of summer is behind us. Feelers of the signature autumn nip can

be felt post sundown in the capital. For seasoned drinkers, this is reason enough to crack open the bottle especially as the build up to the day of lighting (green) crackers approaches. But apart from the nibbles, a key accompaniment to glasses filled with brands of alcohol that cover a wide spectrum in keeping with the consumers' economic capacity, is a deck of cards. I'm not sure how many people use goddess Parvati's win over Lord Shiva in a game of dice as inspiration (widely believed to be the mythological reason for a round of cards being considered "auspicious" on Diwali), but the term "card party" is a welcome cover for "heavy drinks and snacks till 3 am followed by butter chicken" along with the possibility of making or losing anywhere between a few hundred to a few lakh rupees, depending on the "stakes" being played. College students can plan their last minute, pick up a few beers and pass out on the table by round three. The more evolved in age and affluence create a setting with decor and staff in attendance, suited to make sure gambling into the night is as pleasant a package as can be! And the highest of high rollers hire event companies to re-create Vegas in South Delhi.

But over the last few years, and more so this season, a small but growing lot has moved well beyond the staple card game "teen patti", a game where winning is based almost entirely on luck, and developed a rather strong fancy for poker. Plastic chips replace bundles of cash and "skill" becomes the key requirement, reducing luck to a bite-sized side plate — with intoxication falling in an equally low ranking. "Quite a few cards parties I go to in Delhi around Diwali time have started keeping maybe one or two



Arjun Rampal

tables for the classic card party games, while the rest are all playing poker. Residential poker is a bit more social than a tournament. A few drinks maybe and some chatter, but no one is really getting smashed", confirms Mandira Singh while sipping on coffee at a 5 pm Sunday evening poker get-together. An example of both the growing number of women playing poker and the shift in gamblers to "players", she has been playing for the last few years, and has been involved in it professionally too as an affiliate for an online poker website, and lost as well as "made enough money to fund one of my holidays". Well, all this does not happen in the one-month build-up to Diwali. What started off as a "cool" game that Indian students who went to the United States and England for college and started bringing back in small numbers over the last two decades, has branched off into a year-round activity with its rise in India spreading across tournaments, online games, residential games and recently launched poker leagues (similar to any sporting league with celebrity brand ambassadors, multi-city teams et al). The fact that "it is more refined than teen patti, which is

clearly a loud, fun party game, and involves a classy setting with the ability to bluff more", is another factor responsible for the large exodus to poker, according to Mandira. So, what is poker? Very simply put: a card game with an element of betting where the winner is determined on the basis of the combination of cards they have been dealt and how they use strategy and skill to their advantage. Your favourite search engine will give a more elaborate definition along with the various types of games and rules on the poker table, but Arjun Rampal adds another layperson fact that "You always have an out. Even before you've placed your bet, you can fold your cards at the start of the game itself. That's why it is considered a sport worldwide. But because it is cards and there is money involved, people like to call it gambling here." The casinos off the Mandovi river in Goa have always been considered the safe place

for poker, with live tournaments being held all year in elaborate poker rooms, as they are officially licensed. But Vaibhav Gaggar, a leading Delhi-based lawyer, who is lobbying hard for poker tournaments to be held officially in cities across India, addresses the elephant in the room. He recently managed official permission for a licensed poker event in Delhi with members of the judiciary and some top cops in attendance. "Culturally, poker had been officially allowed in India since the West Bengal Gambling and Prize Distribution Act in 1957. It is treated as a 'game of skill' by the courts wherein the element of skill outweighs the element of chance, and hence real money, gaming and cash prizes are legitimate. This makes playing poker at home perfectly board, as long as no one is charging 'rake' (a fee/commission charged for hosting a poker game). In Odisha, Telangana,

Assam and Gujarat, 'games of skill' that involve money are not permitted in any form (online or offline). But barring these states, it is legitimate to hold commercial poker events as long as licences are in place. The challenge is that when you go to the authorities for permissions for game rooms in cities, they consider it gambling as they don't know better." In a nutshell, Rampal is safe! As with most activities that have their roots in a time before the Internet, it was inevitable that poker would get online worldwide. While some Indian poker websites are licensed under the Nagaland Prohibition of Gambling and Promotion & Regulation of Online Games of Skill Act, others float along unofficially in the vast ocean of the Web till discovered and banned. The debate between which is more the real experience is an amusing one. Since a large part of the game is dependent on reading the body language of your opponent and "facetime" on a table, online loses points there — given it is just the individual and the screen. But being able to play on your own time, not needing to chase people to set up a game and the logistics that come with it, and the pri-

vacy of an individual experience, ranks online higher than offline for the few hardened online gamers I spoke to. They make up for lack of "face-reading" by "noting the betting pace and style" of their (invisible) opponents that are logging in from all parts of India including tier two cities. Navin Goyal, CEO of adda52.com, one of the more popular Indian online poker websites, has found an interesting way to merge the two platforms by organising the annual "World Poker Tour" (with a grand prize of ₹3.25 crore) at the Deltan Royale Casino in Goa, where "It is a mix of online and offline. Part of the festival happens online and those who qualify, fly to go and play at the casino." For a website that has been active eight years running, his observations about how poker can help an individual holistically by "preparing people to stay calm under pressure," given the high stakes and prize money involved, and "being able to take calls on when is right and wrong, when to stay in the game and when to cut off," come with a pinch of salt.

While doing some workshops at a residential boarding school in Mussoorie recently, the spread of poker made itself apparent when I was invited to play a round at a staff member's cottage on a Sunday afternoon. Since I'm not a player (yet) I chose tandoori chicken and gulab jamuns on the mall road instead. But the invitation broke the association the game has with going on "into the wee hours". On the hillside, its supper by 6 and bed by 8 pm. Sports are played before.

Reshil Charles is a Web and TV producer, presenter and writer who tracks trends

'Residential poker is a bit more social than a tournament. A few drinks maybe and some chatter, but no one is really getting smashed', says Mandira Singh at a Sunday poker get-together

The king who had wanted to become a concert pianist



Shona Adhikari aside

This is the centenary year of Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur, a king who had set his heart on becoming a concert pianist and a composer of music. To ensure that his dream would be fulfilled, as a gift for his talented nephew, his uncle Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar bought a large palatial mansion known as Arni House that had been built in 1903. Named after Jayachamarajendra, the Jayamahal Palace was meant to be a place where he would be able to devote his full attention to music. Interestingly, all the Mysore rulers were known to be lovers of art, literature and music and for them it was necessary that all the royal children should have knowledge of music, even if they were not musicians. In this case we would have expected a prince who knew South Indian music, but instead we have one who has learnt only Western classical music!

Jayachamarajendra's piano concerts among friends and family clearly showed his talent. In 1939, a world tour gave him the opportunity to learn from the maestros of Western classical music. During his travels, he met Nikolai Medtner, a lesser known Russian composer. Realising his genius, Jayachamarajendra introduced Medtner to the Western world — financing the recording of a large number of Medtner's compositions. Some years later, the

pianist dedicated his Third Piano Concerto to the Maharaja of Mysore. Internationally recognised as a real connoisseur of Western music, in 1945 Jayachamarajendra was made an honorary Fellow of the Trinity College of Music and in 1948, he became the first President of the Philharmonia Concert Society in London.

However, his hopes of becoming a concert pianist were cut short by the untimely death in 1939, of his father Yuvaraja Krishnaraja Wadiyar — Krishnaraja's younger brother and heir to the throne. This was followed soon after by the death of his uncle the Maharaja Krishnaraja Wadiyar IV in 1940 and Jayachamarajendra's dreams of being a concert pianist had to be pushed to the backburner as it dawned on him that he was the obvious choice for the throne of Mysore.

Maharaja Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur, born on July 18, 1919, was officially crowned as the 25th ruler of the kingdom of Mysore at the Mysore Palace on September 8, 1940 and ruled as the Maharaja till January 25, 1950. When monarchy was abolished in 1950, he continued to hold the title of maharaja until princely titles were abolished in 1971.

As the Mysore Maharaja, Jayachamarajendra soon realised that it was necessary for him to learn the nuances of South Indian classical music. He began his initiation by learning to play the veena and mastered the nuances of Carnatic music under the tutelage of the veteran composer Asthan Vidwan Sri Vasudevacharya — under the assumed name of Chitprabhananda. What is quite unbelievable is that within a few years, he began to compose Carnatic music and over the years composed as many as 94 Carnatic music *krutis* under



The many moods of Maharaja Jayachandrajendra Wadiyar

another assumed name — Shri Vidya! All his compositions are in different ragas and some are even considered the very first compositions ever made on these ragas. Jayachamarajendra: tall, handsome, well read, a musician and a sportsman, was what would be considered a real "catch" among royalty. His marriage to Sathya Prema Kumari of Charkhari was celebrated with great pomp in May 1938. Unfortunately, the marriage appears to have failed and there were no children from this marriage. Maharani Sathya Prema Kumari decided to leave Mysore and settle in Jaipur. Leaving the well read, a musician, a sports-

man — left without an heir, in April 1944, Jayachamarajendra married Tripura Sundari Ammani Avaru. This was a very successful marriage, with six children — one son and five daughters. His heir, Prince Srikantadatta Narasimharaja Wadiyar succeeded to the throne after Jayachamarajendra's death. Jayachamarajendra was also a keen sports lover. He was a competent horseman and a good tennis player — who is known to have helped Ramanathan Krishnan to be included and participate at Wimbledon! He was also well known for his marksmanship and was highly sought after by his subjects

whenever a rogue elephant or a man-eating tiger attacked their immediate surroundings. When, India's famous cricketer and spin bowler E.A.S. Prasanna was chosen as part of the Indian cricket team to play in the West Indies, Jayachamarajendra was responsible for persuading his father to allow his son to go with the Indian team. During his reign, Jayachamarajendra encouraged historical research on modern lines and this can be seen in the work of C. Hayavadana Rao, entitled *History of Mysore* in three volumes, published between 1943-46. Rao's dedication to the Maharaja in his

books is illuminating. "Dedicated by gracious permission to His Highness, Sri Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar Bahadur, Maharaja of Mysore — ruler, scholar and patron of arts and sciences and supporter of every good cause aiming at the moral and material progress of the people — in token of His Highness' deep and abiding interest in the scientific study of history and pursuit of historical research along modern lines." Unfortunately, the author was unable to complete the work as originally intended and had to stop at the year 1949, as the Maharaja had to accede to the wishes of his people and merge

● Jayachamarajendra's piano concerts among friends and family clearly showed his talent. In 1939, a world tour gave him the opportunity to learn from the maestros of Western classical music.

his kingdom with the Republic of India in 1950.

It also important to mention that Jayachamarajendra Wadiyar was the first ruler to accede to the merging of his kingdom with the newly-formed Indian Union after India's Independence in 1947. He signed the Instrument of Accession with the Union of India on the eve of India attaining Independence in August 1947.

The state of Mysore merged with the Republic of India on January 26, 1950. At that time, Jayachamarajendra held the position of rajpramukh (governor) of the state of Mysore from January 26, 1950 to November 1, 1956. After the integration of the neighbouring Kannada-majority parts of the states of Madras and Hyderabad, he became the first governor of the reorganised Mysore state, from November 1, 1956 to May 4, 1964 and was the governor of the state of Madras from May 4, 1964 to June 28, 1966.

Jayachamarajendra died at the young age of 55 years on September 23, 1974. He can be considered the last living person who had been the Maharaja of a state with 21-gun salute status in British India.

The writer is an author, a professional communicator and an intrepid traveller

THE ASIAN AGE

22 OCTOBER 2019

Pact to end ceasefire violations now dead

Though many ceasefire violations, some quite serious, have occurred since 2003, when Pakistan signed an agreement with India to not allow this, transgressions were sorted out by invoking this deal. By and large, the spirit of the ceasefire was not thought to be dead. The events across the Line of Control last weekend, when India said it retaliated hard as Pakistan violated the ceasefire in Tangdhar area to give covering fire to infiltrating terrorists from launchpads across the LoC, will guide us in understanding whether even the spirit of the agreement between Gen. Pervez Musharraf, as President, and then PM Atal Behari Vajpayee, now survives.

India had prided itself on its troops not violating the LoC, rightly holding violations were done by Pakistan to aid infiltration. This was needed to persuade the world of Islamabad's use of terrorism as an instrument of policy in Kashmir and elsewhere.

Without giving thought to the larger picture, the Narendra Modi government adopted the "surgical strike" posture in 2016 to look valiant. This was for electoral reasons. In doing so, it turned its back on the long-held view that violating the truce and crossing the LoC was a Pakistani speciality.

India had prided itself on its troops not violating the LoC, rightly holding violations were done by Pakistan to aid infiltration. This was needed to persuade the world of Islamabad's use of terrorism.

In response to the Pulwama attack on a CRPF convoy, the Balakot attack in late February, in which Indian fighter jets crossed the LoC to hit targets inside Pakistan, effectively put a seal of finality on a new tactical line regarding Pakistan. This renders the 2003 pact on not violating the ceasefire wholly irrelevant. The new mantra is — if Pakistan violates the truce, India reserves the right to reply in kind.

What this does, in turn, is to allow the theoretical possibility of things getting out of hand — a strategic miscalculation by either side, quite by accident. This bespeaks a parlous state in policy terms.

Whether this derives from poverty of thinking, or a display of pseudo-nationalistic fervour in which the readiness to go to any military length to appear bold (to intimidate the foe) is paramount, is not easily discernible. Nobody outside India is impressed, of course. Within the country, it's those in the top tiers of government who are the most impressed.

There is a case for dispelling this air of self-congratulation in the aftermath of the August 5 move on Kashmir, which appears to have had a negative effect on the internal security situation in the Valley despite the greatly enhanced force levels. Resort to diplomacy is always available to persuade Pakistan that a show of belligerence on the LoC is in no one's interest. It's also time our military leaders lowered their own decibel levels.

The politics of selfie love

Love *aaj kal* is blossoming. Specifically, and quite spectacularly, on Twitter, where Bollywood biggies have been tweeting selfies with Narendra Modi. Appended to these smile please photos are mushy messages about the honour of posing with the honourable PM.

Karan Johar, Salman Khan, Kangana Ranaut and Akshay Kumar have been among Modi's happy and regular Bollywood posers for long. But there are some Johnny-come-latelys to this selfie lovefest that's known to restore stars' self worth.

In 2015, Aamir Khan talked about rising intolerance in Bharat. Incredible India frowned and dropped his mug. Modi has since been the face of InIn, and Khan a regular at 7, Lok Kalyan Marg, to pose and post selfies. Last Saturday it was the turn of Shah Rukh Khan, who too, in 2015, was all negative and anti-national when he spoke of religious intolerance taking us away from *achech* din.

A month later, his film flopped and he quickly went on to make serious amends. First he said, I never said. Then he said, I am a proud Indian. And then he almost made Rajat Sharmaji weep on TV by saying, *kabhi kabhi* I feel like crying when the likes of Kailash Vijayvargiya, BJP general secretary, say my heart lies on the wrong side of the LoC.

But now that he has tweeted his first selfie with PMji, and has been given homework to complete and submit soon, things should look up.

But it seems PMji's love for Bollywood is making southern stars suffer acute bouts of FOMO. Upasana Konedelaji, daughter of Chiranjeevi and missus of Telugu star Ram Charan, got her *langu voni* in a twist over this northern bias and cutely complained to Modi, suggesting that he look at stars beyond the Vindhya.

Given that Modi is so busy, it's not easy to take time out for selfies with all stars. He does so only to keep up the nation's *josh* and everyone in the service of Bharat Mata. Yet, we believe, Modi listens to everyone's *mann ki baat* and tries to adjust.

The lawns of the PM's bungalow will soon be lit up for stars from the unconquered South. So all Tollywood, Kollywood, Mollywood worthies must keep their kanjivarams and crisp mundus ready for an outing with PMji, to pose, praise and post.

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Subhani

Amid Brexit furore, will Boris have to eat his hat?



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Reflections

If a politician has to eat today what he said yesterday, Britain's ebullient Prime Minister might suffer acute indigestion from too hearty a repast. First, Boris Johnson announced that he would "rather be dead in a ditch" than ask for the "do or die" October 31 Brexit deadline to be postponed. Then, after Saturday's humiliating defeat in the House of Commons, he proclaimed: "I will not negotiate delay". Yet, with prosecution and even jail looming ahead for defying the law, he sent not one but three letters to the European Union asking for precisely that, and then telephoned Donald Tusk, the EU Council president, and other European leaders, pleading that the request was from Parliament and not him.

"Super Saturday", as it's called, made history. It was the House of Commons' first Saturday sitting in 37 years. It was democracy in action of a vibrant kind never seen in India, for all that 900 million voters queue up in the heat and rain to make their mark against a picture. That is why it would have been educative for Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Rahul Gandhi and all our rumbustious MPs to watch the day-long session with probably every one of nearly 650 British members of Parliament popping up to catch the Speaker's eye. A large screen in the Central Hall projecting the BBC's live coverage of the momentous occasion would have given them a glimpse of the difference between governance and tub-thumping.

Not that the question-and-answer parrying resolved the dilemma of

a country that having lost an empire, is still seeking a role, as Dean Acheson put it. Britain remains poised in the uncertainty of no-man's-land. But Saturday's session ventilated public concerns and regional anxieties. The million massed protesters chanting outside the Palace of Westminster demonstrated popular support for not leaving the EU now that there is better understanding of the costs involved. John Bercow, the Speaker, was at his best as a larger-than-life version of West Bengal's valiant Bijay Kumar Banerjee who in 1967 — when the rule of law was much stronger in India — thunderingly denounced the governor, Dharam Vira, as another English King Charles I. To no one's surprise, Mr Johnson tried to slip deviously through loopholes that lesser mortals didn't even know existed, recalling that another Tory Prime Minister, fellow Etonian David Cameron, had accused him of "sharp practices."

Gordon Brown, the last Labour Prime Minister, once predicted that Mr Johnson would be the last Prime Minister of the United Kingdom. The cracks began to appear on Saturday when 322 MPs voted for (with 306 against) an amendment moved by Sir Oliver Letwin, one of Mr Johnson's 21 rebel

The million massed protesters chanting outside the Palace of Westminster demonstrated popular support for not leaving the EU now that there is better understanding of the costs involved

If a politician has to eat today what he said yesterday, Britain's ebullient Prime Minister might suffer acute indigestion from too hearty a repast

Tories. The purpose was to compel the Prime Minister to obey the similarly defiant Benn Act — the European Union (Withdrawal) (No. 2) Act 2019 — requiring him to seek an extension to avoid a no-deal crashout on October 31, thereby delaying Brexit well beyond the deadline. Neither law may have been thought necessary if parliamentarians had trusted Mr Johnson. The absence of trust was highlighted when Ian Blackford, the Scottish National Party's rhetorically aggressive leader in the Commons, said bluntly that he wouldn't buy a house from "this Prime Minister". Earlier, he had called Mr Johnson "racist" and, referring to his journalism, accused him of making a career out of lying.

More important, he complained that the deal Mr Johnson had negotiated with Brussels "shafted" Scotland where 62 per cent of voters want to remain in the EU. The Scottish government, which failed to push independence through in the September 2014 referendum, is now demanding another vote on seceding from the UK. It feels that the fear of a separatist Scotland not having enough clout in the EU if Britain withdrew explained the anti-independence sentiment in 2014. That argument has gone. Wales, which voted Leave three years ago, "is now a Remain nation again", says Adam Price, leader of the pro-independence party, Plaid Cymru, and wants a second referendum on the EU. Northern Ireland's discontent was evident from the refusal of the province's 10 Democratic Unionist Party MPs, on

whom Mr Johnson relied for support to vote for him, although he boasts of having worked out a compromise that gives the British province the best of both worlds.

It soon became clear that Mr Johnson was indulging in tortuous manipulation to wriggle out of his legal obligation under the Benn and Letwin Acts to inform Brussels of the outcome of Saturday's debate and ask for more time. He sent an apology of a letter by ordering a senior diplomat to email an unsigned photocopy of the request by MPs set out in the Benn Act — the Labour Party's Sir Keith Starmer, responsible for Brexit, called the deception "childish" and "silly". A second letter, which Mr Johnson signed, warned of the "corrosive impact" of delay, and blamed Parliament for "missing the opportunity to inject momentum into the ratification process", and said "a further extension would damage the interests" of both parties and UK-EU relations. There was a third covering letter from the British ambassador in Brussels.

Ignoring the subterfuge, Mr Tusk responded exactly as if Mr Johnson had made a straightforward request for more time without any pussyfooting or prevarication. In consequence, the British are trying desperately hard this week to rush through in 10 days the procedural requirements under the Letwin amendment to keep to the deadline.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister might take a tip from the politician who had a hat made of barley sugar for just such contingencies. Indian politicians of course never face this situation, not because they don't wear hats they might have to eat but because they never admit to being in the wrong. No wonder Mr Johnson claims kinship with India.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

BUDGET FOR KIDS

It is unfortunate that despite being the world's second largest producer of wheat and rice, India ranks poorly on the Global Hunger Index (102nd among 117 countries). To tackle the problem, there is a need for the government to work on a budget for children's nutrition. The problem is all the more complex because the food basket differs from region to region. It is, therefore, essential that we have an efficient and integrated system for food production, processing, preservation and distribution that can address children's food budget needs region by region.

Srishti Mathur Ujjain

WELL DONE, ARMY

KUDOS TO the Indian Army for its counter-attack along the LoC opposite the Tangdhar sector of Jammu and Kashmir, killing at least six Pakistani soldiers and destroying four terror launchpads, which was in retaliation for the Pakistan Army's ceasefire violation a day earlier in the sector, killing two Indian soldiers and a civilian. Our Army interrupted the Pakistan's Army's plan to push terrorists into India and our attack inflicted heavy losses on terrorists. It is unfortunate that in spite of global criticism, Pakistan has not stopped sponsoring terrorists.

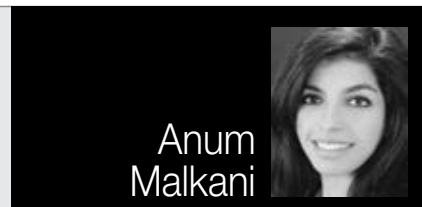
M.C. Joshi Lucknow

WAY TO GO, HITMAN!

ROHIT SHARMA appears to have made the opening slot his own by coming out with a string of big scores in the current series against South Africa. The "Hitman's" double hundred in the third and final Test at Ranchi, coming on the back of successive tons in the opening Test, makes him average an incredible 99.84 in Tests at home, eclipsing Donald Bradman's record of 98.22. Way to go!

N.J. Ravi Chander Bengaluru

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: letters@asianage.com Else, send to Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110002



Anum Malkani

Weaponisation of social media: Defence in DNA of tech sector

A recent BBC investigation revealed the use of social media bots to promote a pro-government agenda in Papua, Indonesia, where the military has played a controversial role in cracking down on a separatist movement. The social media bots have been deployed in a well-coordinated campaign to skew perspectives.

Modern tech gives us great reason for optimism about the future, with its potential to solve so many of our greatest challenges. At the same time, it appears to bring us ever closer to a dystopian nightmare. As Don DeLillo describes in his novel *White Noise*, "This is the whole point of technology. It creates an appetite for immortality on the one hand. It threatens universal extinction on the other."

A bot is an automated programme designed to run simple and repetitive tasks. Bots are not always bad. For example, customer service is a popular application of bots where they can carry basic conversation and assist with spe-

cific tasks such as food delivery or technical support. If you have chatted with a customer service representative on a website, chances are you were chatting with a bot.

Social media bots, however, are often designed for nefarious goals — censorship, propaganda, surveillance and/or bullying. They take on fake personas and advocate certain ideas, observe activity and amass followers. These bots may spread misinformation, create the illusion of mass support for certain ideas, bully dissidents and engage in innovative techniques such as "hashtag hijacking".

A recent study by the Oxford Internet Institute found evidence of organised social media manipulation campaigns conducted by state actors in 70 countries in 2019, up from 48 in 2018 and 28 in 2017. Social media in these countries has been co-opted to crush dissent, conduct smear campaigns against opponents, and suppress political participation and freedom.

In many other countries around the world, including Pakistan, we

see a growing militarisation of cyberspaces, with the systematic creation of disinformation to mislead citizens, including memes, videos, fake news and manipulated media. The presence of state actors is prevalent across platforms — Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, WhatsApp — with online spaces being usurped by bot accounts as well as human-run accounts.

Significant resources appear to have been allocated towards such campaigns in Pakistan — teams working year-round, with strategies around social media control and manipulation. Data-driven strategies are also employed to maximise the impact of disinformation campaigns by profiling citizens and targeting specific groups.

This is just one symptom of the corruption at the heart of the technology sector. The dirty little secret, which leaders in this space now take great pains to hide, is that defence work has been in their DNA throughout history.

The companies that we have increasingly come to rely on for

technology needs are at the forefront of the relationship between technology, defence and increasingly sophisticated warfare techniques. Many technologies we now use, such as GPS, have their origins in military-funded research. This centuries' old affinity lends itself well to the use of modern technology in the state's war against its citizens. Globally, information warfare and psychological operations (psychological techniques used to alter the state of mind and behaviour) have been in military playbooks throughout history. While they are not new concepts, the scale and impact are unprecedented with the advent of social media, algorithms and automation.

Social media was once seen as a democratising force, giving people access to more information than ever before, as well as a space to connect and debate. It has now been weaponised, and the digital space is the new battlefield where state agencies wage war and exert control.

Access to private online spaces is a fundamental right in a democrat-

ic society. There is a lack of transparency on how much of our data is being collected, by whom and for what purposes, and what surveillance techniques are being used against us. The legal system is currently inadequate to deal with social media and data-driven manipulation campaigns. Technology companies are unwilling to open up their business models and algorithms to scrutiny, and governments are unwilling to reveal the extent of their use of our data and social media.

While these are greater challenges to resolve, on an individual level, it is crucial to be wary of whom one follows and befriends on social media, and to be critical of the information one consumes. As Indonesian human rights lawyer Veronica Koman told the BBC, "We are fighting machines, the only thing individuals like me can do is remain hopeful that the truth will be stronger than any kind of propaganda."

By arrangement with Dawn



2025: A glimpse of the geopolitical future



Krishnan Srinivasan

To look too far into the future is speculative: 2025 is a better horizon; President Donald Trump will have finished a possible second term; Prime Minister Narendra Modi will have finished his second term, and China's targets set by President Xi Jinping can be assessed. In many countries, populist-nationalist parties have squeezed traditional political parties; only they seem to fire up enthusiasm among voters. The public is abandoning mainstream political parties because the social contract that promised equal opportunity and rising incomes for both the elites and the masses is discredited. Financial corporates made profits in globalisation while the working class lost jobs; in the United States, the average income of the top one per cent is 138 times higher than the bottom 50 per cent. The Western flagship model of democracy and free market

prolonged itself through widening the franchise, but voters everywhere distrust elected representatives and democracy looks headed for a long drawn out decline. Liberalism is used in India today to attack the government and by the government against its detractors. Russia and China are not the only countries to believe they have a different kind of civilisation where sovereignty trumps democracy and stability trumps human rights. India, Turkey, Iran and many others feel they present an alternative model to Western-style liberalism. The desire for freedom is universal, but freedom to shatter the economy in protests as in Hong Kong, or freedom to blaspheme as in the French Charlie Hebdo or Russian Pussy Riot cases, or freedom to bear arms as enshrined in the American Constitution, are examples that show that liberty has limitations, even if self-imposed. The relative success of street protests in Algeria, Sudan, Iraq, France, Ecuador,

Catalonia and Hong Kong are indications that this trend will continue, driven by the social media. No country will find the golden mean between free-range liberalism and statism. In international relations, the centre ground for concepts like strategic autonomy will shrink with polarisation, and affect countries like India, which has already, with a wary eye on China and Pakistan, moved towards a more aligned position with all the liabilities that this entails. Mr Trump's foreign policies are more popular than commonly perceived, with support for isolationist and protectionist policies. So, whether or not Mr Trump is re-elected, the America First doctrine will endure. This makes US foreign policy essentially bilateral, generating less chance for the expansion of permanent membership of the UN Security Council to which India aspires. Leaks are a feature of American politics ever since the founding fathers and will grow apace. Impeachment will be on the agenda if Mr Trump wins a second term. The Zelensky telephone scandal will make every foreign leader cautious in talking to the US President. America perceives China as its greatest threat. China is regarded as an affront, since the presumption is that being American implies Number One status. China's rise is

The growth of India's economy and the democratic system remains our best insurance policy. India is one of the world's big economies, but big-player status is difficult without being pivotal in South Asia.

something that the world has to adjust to. Despite the slowdown, China grows at around six per cent and will overtake America's GDP before 2030. The Belt and Road Initiative will succeed in bringing Central Asia, Eurasia and West Europe into greater economic cooperation and enabling China's reach into Latin America and Africa. Connectivities are never exclusive but the political implications are clear when China becomes lender of first resort rather than the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank put together. President Xi Jinping has set 10 objectives for global leadership for China by 2025; among them, Artificial Intelligence, driverless cars, robotics, and quantum engineering. There is unlikely to be a China-US war other than by accident. Iran and the South China Sea are unlikely to cause accidents, but North Korea

may. India's efforts to normalise relations with China will flounder because of Pakistan. An India-China war is also unlikely, but China will use Pakistan as a proxy to hinder India's rise. The growth of India's economy and the democratic system remains our best insurance policy. India is one of the world's big economies, but big-player status is difficult without being pivotal in South Asia where India's leadership is insufficiently credible. Multilateralism is the answer to managing China's rise. The West will regret their refusal to grant China its rightful share of control in the multilateral financial institutions. Multilateralism is also the means to counter trends towards unilateralism, ethnocentrism, protectionism and racial intolerance. On the "frozen" disputes of Cyprus, Palestine, Ukraine and North Korea, little progress is possible unless Washington's position changes on the last three. If the situation in Kashmir deteriorates, the issue may be revived in international forums, although no third party has enthusiasm for India-Pakistan disputes. Kashmir cannot be solved bilaterally except on the basis of the status quo. Eighteen years after the Twin Towers fell, 75 per cent of Americans call terrorism a national priority and 50 per cent prioritise security over

civil liberties, but the number of fatalities directly attributed to terror is microscopic compared to the 700 killings a year by so-called law enforcement agencies. The same is the case with India, where the number of road deaths is 364 times higher than terrorism casualties. The ability of intelligence agencies worldwide against terrorism has enormously increased. The race is on for supremacy in artificial intelligence and 5G. Cyber attacks will proliferate. The role of the intelligence agencies will grow with technological capability; governments will increasingly rely on them and eventually be in thrall to them. It will be impossible to distinguish between the role of intelligence organisations and conventional diplomacy. The quality of democratic debate will plummet. Opponents will be regarded as enemies. Interference in elections by the US, Russia, China and smaller fry will increase. The green movement will continue to grow, but remain on the political fringes for want of corporate financing. Muslim grievances, which can take extremist form, will remain as long as the Kashmir and Palestine issues remain unresolved and the Shias believe the West is hostile. Iran will continue to be a stone in the throat of the West. So too Turkey, to a lesser extent. The

oil monopoly of the Middle East and its political influence will diminish sharply. The West will attempt to drive a wedge between Russia and China, but the price to pay for this will be high. The World Trade Organisation will fall into disuse, unable to engineer global agreements. It is arguable that China and India no longer deserve special differentiated status as developing nations. In the US, Europe and everywhere, it will be harder for the minorities, refugees, economic migrants and asylum seekers. The mainstream media will be on the defensive to show accuracy as it scrambles to compete with an ever-growing number of news sources. The Responsibility to Protect doctrine will be back on the shelf where it belongs. As for humanitarian arguments, such reasoning has been appropriated by Russia in Georgia and Ukraine. The International Criminal Court will remain without credibility. The time has come for a new Geneva Convention to replace the existing four, a new global agreement to replace the WTO, and treaties on the use of plastics and ocean sanctuaries. Action to protect the environment against global warming, despite US opposition, has a greater chance of success.

The writer is a former Indian foreign secretary

Fruitless in Kashmir, no sign of Pak hand



Anand K. Sahay

TROUBLE IN PARADISE-2

Srinagar/Baramulla/Shopian: Says a 30-year-old, a minor government functionary in Baramulla, in an uncomplicated way, "Aap apne Pakistan ka gussa Kashmir par nikal rahe hain!" (You are taking it out on us in Kashmir because you are angry with Pakistan!) He is angry. "Look at what Modi has done. Militancy had tapered off, but you scrapped Article 370 on the pretext of stopping terrorism. Life was running quite smoothly until the Burhan Wani killing. And then, after an interruption, it was back to normal again." "New Delhi has cooked up the fear of terrorism," says the young man. After this, who knows what will happen? Militants are gathering already. The Army says hundreds have crossed over from Pakistan. Young men here can't be unaffected. They are hurt and angry. The government has cut our mobile phones. So now the militants can go about organising, and no one can know." (This was the day before the embargo on post-paid connections ended after 70 days.) One morning, I rise early and rush to get to the famous apple trade mart — the apple "mandi" at Sopore in northern Kashmir, the biggest in India after New Delhi's Azadpur mandi, by about eight in order to get there ahead of the closing time imposed by the "people's resistance". These days shops in Kashmir, other than the local vegetable seller or butcher, don't stay open beyond 9-9.30 in the morning, if they open at all. The place is practically empty. It is supposed to be so packed with trucks on a normal day around this time of the year that visitors must park their cars more than 2 km away and walk. But we drive right in. There are no more than a dozen trucks and a few tempos and tractors scattered about, and this is peak season. On a normal working day, around 1,400 trucks laden with the lush apple crop start revving out of Sopore for destinations as far away as Bangladesh. But this year the fruit economy is in shambles, badly denting the incomes of practically every single Kashmiri home since nearly everyone owns a few apple trees, or is connected with the fruit trade in some way — as financier, transporter, commission agent, loader, push-cart apple seller, labourer, the dhaba people who feed the thousands who come to the mandi every day. I accost a couple of commission agents, who are just hanging around, not having much to do. Both have very sad faces. They explain the trading mech-

anism — the orchard-gate-to-loading-the-trucks process to me, and fall silent. One of them begins again, and asks: "What was wrong with the way the Congress used to do things in Delhi? Why have these people ended 370 and ended everything that was normal?" I shrug this off and ask, "So, when will the people's protest end — why not lift the self-imposed embargo and get on with it?" Hearing this, the other man comes to life, "No! We must carry on with our strike. Why does the government think it can do anything it likes and get away with it?" Shopian in the south produces Kashmir's best apples and has the second-most important apple mandi after Sopore. It too is shut, I find two days later. Completely shut. Since all commercial establishments are closed in Kashmir these days, a few trucks show up in the villages to load the fruit. In a normal year, about 800-1,000 trucks leave Shopian every day, laden with the apple. Business worth crores of rupees is transacted. In the current season, local traders say, only around 20 trucks go out every day. According to a high-ranking district official in northern Kashmir, apple could account for about 25 to 30 per cent of Kashmir's GDP. The season is practically over but apple growers have no interest in selling to Nafed, the government market intervention agency. The open market is a well-oiled system and offers a much better price than the government's fixed rate. The growers won't mind selling to Nafed the apples that fall off trees and get somewhat damaged but would still be first rate for juice and jams. But Nafed has shown no interest. Since all the phones were dead until a few days ago, the apple grower and trader could not be in touch with their destination markets in faraway places and gain access to market intelligence, which usually helped them regulate daily supplies. This too has led to a drop in earnings. Apparently, in order to keep markets shut, suspected militants have killed an apple trader in Sopore, and last week hit at a transporter from Punjab and a trader from Rajasthan in Shopian and Pulwama respectively. In September, a shopkeeper was killed in Srinagar. Plain murder is naturally culpable, but the militants' game also seems foolish since an angry Kashmir appears to seek to press on with the peaceful strike anyway — at least for now. There appears to be no Pakistani hand in this.

(To be concluded)



2nd attack

Czech antivirus maker discloses second attack aimed at compromising CCleaner releases.

SHORT TAKES

PRASAD: USE DIGITAL INDIA FOR RURAL AREAS

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Digital India initiative should be leveraged to transform rural India and create avenues for those in smaller towns and cities, IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Monday.

The minister said Digital India should become a beacon for inclusion, healthcare, education and entrepreneurship. He launched the next version of the government's mobile payment app Bharat Interface for Money (BHIM) called BHIM 2.0 that is packed with new features and capabilities. The minister also launched an Indian software products registry, which will act as a single window portal to collate Indian software product database.

Speaking at the 'Ministry of Electronics and IT (MeitY) StartUp Summit' here, Prasad said there is compelling case for social startups and that these should be encouraged so they unleash their power in India's changing digital narrative. "I want Digital India platform to transform rural India and create aspirations in tier 3 and tier 4 cities and towns," the Minister said. Citing success stories of technology platforms Unified Payments Interface (UPI) and GSTN (GST-Network), the Minister said government entities such as NIC, STPI should also become competitive.

"For Digital India to succeed, the government entities must also become competitive. I have told National Informatics Centre (NIC) that your people have to become competitive and innovative...they have changed. Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) also must change," the Minister said.

—PTI

ANDROID GETS TWITTER'S 'LIGHTS OUT'

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 21

Months after having rolled out a dark mode for Twitter's iOS users, the social media company has finally done the same for its android app users. Rolled out only for its select group of invitation admitted 'alpha' users, the mode is called the 'Lights Out Mode'. While Twitter's android users had already received a version of a dark mode for its application, this still had a bluish-grey background. Dark modes are known to provide battery conservation with pitch black UIs, where OLED screens are known to be able to switch off some parts of the screen.

This flaw reportedly gets corrected within the new update, according to reports saying that, the pitch-black interface would be available upon opting for the 'lights out' mode. Thus, the new version will also retain the older, bluish-grey coloured background in the interface under the name 'dim' mode. If you are a member of the 'Alpha' group of users, you can check the availability of this version 8.19.0 through by going through the Settings and privacy menu.

GOOGLE TO FIX 'BUG' FOR IPHONE PICS

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 21

Google is soon going to patch a bug in its Photos app that allowed iPhone devices free services of the Google Photos backup feature that allowed users to a backup an unlimited number of photos at its original resolutions. On Android, users could either choose between 15GB of backup for original resolution photos and videos or unlimited backup at a lower resolution. Getting both features would require a fee.

As Apple's HEIC file format is more efficient than Google's reduced quality JPEG files, the app would simply take the original pictures, but this would not add up in the limited 15GB storage. While the solution is not yet clear, it would be easy to assume that the patch would in some way make it mandatory for the HEIC files to be first converted to JPEG for free users. This would mean iOS users not paying for service would actually end up letting the app use more of the phone's resources to convert and upload the 'lower quality' images.

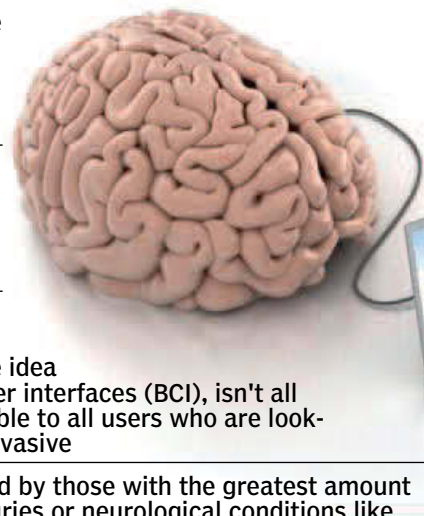
BRAIN-COMPUTER INTERFACE — THE NEXT BIG THING?

● While Elon Musk's Neuralink may be one of the best-known brain-computer interface (BCI) companies in the world right now, Facebook recently acquired CTRL-labs thus officially kicking off the race among the big tech giants.

● However, like every new big technological advances, BCI, which allows us to connect our brains to computers for some limited purposes, comes with its own set of challenges and nightmares.

● Neural interfaces are devices implanted in the body, or worn externally, which are capable of recording or stimulating activity in the brain. The idea of such technology, also known as brain-computer interfaces (BCI), isn't all that new. Currently, there are two options available to all users who are looking at this new technology — Invasive and non-invasive

● While invasive systems will continue to be used by those with the greatest amount to gain from BCIs, such as people with spinal injuries or neurological conditions like Parkinson's disease, broader uptake among consumers is likely to be concentrated on non-invasive systems.



Currently, BCIs can gather data that is more based around measuring the physical movements people want to make or their emotional state. But, as machine-learning algorithms become more sophisticated and BCI hardware becomes more capable, it may be possible to read thoughts with greater precision.

● Once the data is collected by BCI and passed on to other software, it's just as secure as any other set of information.

● However, in the wake of recent data breaches it's clear there are no guarantees that sensitive information is better protected than others.

● A report from the Royal Society — the UK's national science academy — said the government should launch an investigation into neural interface technologies, including looking at regulations around their development and the ethics of using them.

● The Royal Society warned that if developments are dictated by a handful of companies then less commercial applications could be sidelined. It said regulation should not be so onerous, complicated and expensive that it allows 'big tech' to dominate the emerging field.

● The Royal Society said that the government needs to investigate the ethical issues presented by neural interfaces, to address questions of what data should be collected, how it is kept safe, and the acceptability of enhancements.

Russian hackers hijacked Iranian spying operations

In the past, Moscow, Tehran denied Western allegations

London, Oct. 21: Russian hackers piggy-backed on an Iranian cyber-espionage operation to attack government and industry organizations in dozens of countries while masquerading as attackers from the Islamic Republic, British and US officials said on Monday.

The Russian group, known as "Turla" and accused by Estonian and Czech authorities of operating on behalf of Russia's FSB security service, has used Iranian tools and computer infrastructure to successfully hack into organizations in at least 20 different countries over the last 18 months, British security officials said.

The hacking campaign, the extent of which has not been previously revealed, was most active in the Middle East but also targeted organizations in Britain, they said.

Paul Chichester, a senior official at Britain's GCHQ intelligence agency, said the operation shows state-backed hackers are working in a "very crowded space" and developing new attacks and methods to better cover their tracks.

In a statement accompanying a joint advisory with the US National Security Agency, GCHQ's National Cyber Security Centre said it wanted to raise industry awareness about the activity and make attacks more difficult for its adversaries.

Apple Inc starts selling iPhone XR assembled in India

APPLE INC has started selling its popular iPhone XR phones assembled in India, as it looks to expand its share in the world's second-largest smartphone market where it has struggled against cheaper products from rivals.

The phones are being assembled at Chinese contract manufacturer Foxconn's India factory, helping the Cupertino, California-based company avoid high levies on the import of fully-built devices as well as meet local sourcing norms for opening its own retail stores in India.

iPhone XR boxes with an "Assembled in India" tag were seen on Monday in many of the country's electronic product retailers, including Croma, with a price tag of 49,900 Indian rupees (₹542) for the 64 GB version.

The company has slashed iPhone XR prices in India to counter a prolonged sales slowdown amid fierce competition from premium smartphones from Samsung and OnePlus. Earlier this year Reuters had reported that the company would assemble its top-end iPhones in India.

Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has tried to position South Asia's third-biggest economy as a hub for smartphone manufacturing. — Reuters

MSSQL SERVER BACKDOOR FOUND

● Chinese cyberespies have developed malware that alters Microsoft SQL Server (MSSQL) databases and creates a backdoor mechanism that can let hackers connect to any account by using a "magic password."

● Furthermore, the backdoor also hides user sessions inside the database's connection logs every time the "magic password" is used, helping hackers remain undetected even when administrators may suspect something is wrong.

● In a report published today, ESET said hackers deployed the backdoor as a post-infection tool, after compromising networks through other methods.



"We want to send a clear message that even when cyber actors seek to mask their identity, our capabilities will ultimately identify them," said Chichester, who serves as the NCSC's director of operations.

Officials in Russia and Iran did not immediately respond to requests for comment sent on Sunday. Moscow and Tehran have both repeatedly denied Western allegations over hacking.

GLOBAL HACKING CAMPAIGNS

Western officials rank Russia and Iran as two of the most dangerous threats in cyberspace, alongside China and North Korea, with both governments accused of conducting hacking operations against countries around the

world. Intelligence officials said there was no evidence of collusion between Turla and its Iranian victim, a hacking group known as "APT34" which cybersecurity researchers at firms including FireEye FEYE.O say works for the Iranian government.

Rather, the Russian hackers infiltrated the Iranian group's infrastructure in order to "masquerade as an adversary which victims would expect to target them," said GCHQ's Chichester.

Turla's actions show the dangers of wrongly attributing cyberattacks, British officials said, but added that they were not aware of any public incidents that had been incorrectly blamed on Iran as a result of the Russian operation. The US and its

Western allies have also used foreign cyberattacks to facilitate their own spying operations, a practice referred to as "fourth party collection," according to documents released by former US intelligence contractor Edward Snowden and reporting by German magazine Der Spiegel.

GCHQ declined to comment on Western operations. By gaining access to the Iranian infrastructure, Turla was able to use APT34's "command and control" systems to deploy its own malicious code, GCHQ and the NSA said in a public advisory.

The Russian group was also able to access the networks of existing APT34 victims and even access the code needed to build its own "Iranian" hacking tools. — Reuters

New artificial skin will help devices feel ticklish

London, Oct. 21: Scientists have developed an artificial skin that allows devices such as smartphones and computers to 'feel' the user's grasp, pressure and location, and can even detect interactions such as tickling, caressing, twisting and pinching.

The Skin-On interface, developed by researchers at the University of Bristol in the UK in partnership with Telecom ParisTech and Sorbonne University in France, mimics human skin in appearance as well as sensing resolution.

The researchers adopted a bio-driven approach to developing a multi-layer, silicone membrane that mimics the layers present in human skin. This is made up of a surface textured layer, an electrode layer of conductive threads and a hypodermis layer, the researchers said.

Not only is the interface more natural than a rigid casing, it can also detect a plethora of gestures made by the end-users, they said. — PTI



New lithium-ion battery won't catch fire: Scientists

Washington, Oct. 21: Scientists have developed a flexible lithium-ion battery that can not only operate under extreme conditions — including cutting, submersion, and simulated ballistic impact — but also does not catch fire.

Current Li-ion batteries are susceptible to catastrophic fire and explosion incidents — most of which arrive without any discernible warning — because they are built with flammable and combustible materials, according to researchers from Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory in the United States.

They noted that some phones were banned from airlines as a result of this danger, and the US Navy's prohibition of e-cigarettes on ships and submarines is a direct response to the need to reduce the flammability of such devices.

With these batteries emerging as the energy storage vehicle of choice for portable electronics, electric vehicles, and grid

storage, these safety advancements mark a significant step forward in transforming the way Li-ion batteries are manufactured and used in electronic devices, the researchers said.

In the research published in the journal *Chemical Communications*, the team described a new class of "water-in-salt" and "water-in-bisalt" electrolytes — referred to as WiS and WiBS, respectively.

These electrolytes, when incorporated in a polymer matrix, reduce water activity and elevate the battery's energy capabilities and life cycle while ridding it of the flammable, toxic, and highly reactive solvents present in current Li-ion batteries.

It's a safe, powerful alternative, the researchers said.

"Li-ion batteries are already a constant presence in our daily lives, from our phones to our cars, and continuing to improve their safety is paramount to further advancing energy storage

technology," said Konstantinos Gerasopoulos, a senior research scientist and principal investigator at APPL.

"Li-ion battery form factors have not changed much since their commercialisation in the early 1990s; we still use the same cylindrical or prismatic cell types. The liquid electrolyte and required hermetic packaging have a lot to do with that," Gerasopoulos said.

"Our team's efforts have generally been focused on replacing the flammable liquid with a polymer that improves safety and form factor. We are excited about where we are today," he said.

Additionally, the damage tolerance initially demonstrated with the team's flexible battery in 2017 is further improved in this new approach to creating Li-ion batteries.

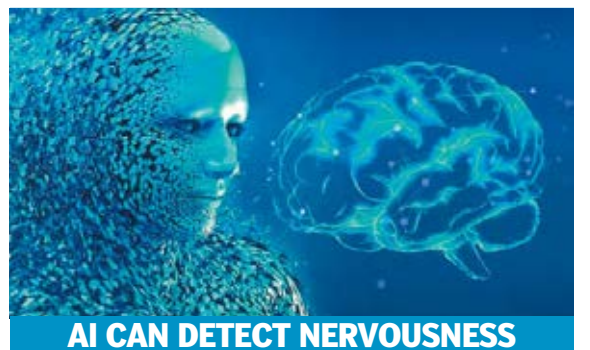
"The first generation of flexible batteries were not as dimensionally stable as those we are making today," Gerasopoulos said. — PTI

COMPANIES LEAKING DATA TO VIRUS SCANNER

San Francisco, Oct. 21: Despite the growing mainstream focus on data security, companies are still being quite careless about sensitive data being uploaded online, according to a report on Bloomberg.

Citing cybersecurity firm Otorio, Bloomberg reported that companies using Alphabet's virus scanner and similar products are unwittingly leaking sensitive data such as blueprints to intellectual property online.

The report further stated that the firm has discovered thousands of unprotected files from firms in the pharmaceutical, industrial, automotive and food industries as part of a project to research the malware logged by VirusTotal, which is owned by Alphabet cyber security subsidiary Chronicle. "From what we found, we could design a very constructive hack. We found files that gave us a blueprint of how to infiltrate the production floor," said Otorio CEO Daniel Bren. — Agencies



AI CAN DETECT NERVOUSNESS

● Fujitsu Laboratories has developed a technology that is more accurate at tracking complex facial expressions such as awkward giggles, nervousness or confusion.

● The company's laboratories have come up with an AI-based technology that can track subtle changes of expression such as nervousness or confusion. Companies like Microsoft are already using emotion tools to recognise facial expression, but they are limited to eight "core" states: anger, contempt, fear, disgust, happiness, sadness, surprise or neutral.

● Fujitsu mentioned various potential applications for its new technology, which include pushing the uncanny valley by making robots that are capable of both recognising our most subtle changes of humour, and of recreating those shifts themselves. It could also improve road safety by detecting even small changes in drivers' concentration.

● Whether the tool can achieve a high level of accuracy, however, is likely to be a topic of debate for psychologists, who argue that AUs do not on their own reflect emotion.

Facebook open to currency-pegged stablecoins

Due to scepticism, FB said Libra could use cryptocurrencies based on fiat currencies

Washington, Oct. 21: Facebook, facing growing scepticism about its digital currency project Libra, on Sunday said the initiative could use cryptocurrencies based on national currencies such as the dollar, instead of the synthetic one it initially proposed.

David Marcus, who heads the Libra project for Facebook, told a banking seminar the group's main goal remained to create a more efficient payments system, but it was open to looking at alternative approaches for the currency token it would use.

"We could do it differently," he said. "Instead of having a synthetic unit ... we could have a series of stablecoins, a dollar stablecoin, a euro stablecoin, a sterling pound stable coin, etc." Marcus told the panel.

"We could definitely approach this with having a multitude of stablecoins that represent national currencies in a tokenized digital form," he said. "That is one of the options that should be considered."

Marcus said he was not suggesting currency-pegged stablecoins were the group's new preferred

FB ROLLS OUT DARK MODE

● Facebook has begun rolling out a new interface for desktop users, with an optional dark mode in addition to the traditional white design.

● When they log into the desktop site, some users have reported seeing a pop-up asking whether they would like to try the new design, which is referred to as 'Facebook Beta'.

option. "What we care about is the mission and there are a number ways to go about this," Marcus told Reuters after the panel, adding that the Libra needed to "demonstrate a lot of agility."

The Facebook-led project suffered severe setbacks earlier this month, as major payment companies Mastercard and Visa became the latest part-

ners to quit the group behind the project.

Other key members that have pulled out included Stripe, eBay and Booking Holdings and PayPal.

Global policymakers and regulators have also worry that creation of a new synthetic global currency could upend the global financial system, threaten users' privacy, and facilitate money laundering.

Group of 20 finance leaders on Friday agreed to set strict regulations on cryptocurrencies and said such stablecoins should not be issued until various global risks were addressed.

Marcus told Reuters that Facebook was still aiming for a June 2020 launch of Libra, but acknowledged it could miss that target due to regulatory hurdles. "We'll see. That's still the goal," Marcus told Reuters when asked if the recent departure of several major partners from the project would delay the planned 2020 launch.

"We've always said that we wouldn't go forward unless we have addressed all legitimate concerns and get proper regulatory approval. So it's not entirely up to us," he said. — Reuters

World
economy is
stumbling
towards
disasterUltraTech
Cement net
up 62% to
₹578 crore
in Q2

Overleaf

quick
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,298.38	+0.63
Nifty 50	11,661.85	+0.65
S&P 500	3,002.29	+0.54
Dollar (₹)	71.14	0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	92.05	+0.21
Euro (₹)	79.09	-0.16
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	38,955*30	-0.07
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	58.65	-1.30
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.692	-0.008
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.778	+0.028

* As of 9:30 pm IST

Gold bonds
price fixed at
₹3,835 a gram

The government on Monday rolled out the sixth tranche of sovereign gold bonds. The Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) Scheme 2019-20 - Series VI will close for subscription on the day of Dhanteras, on Oct. 25. The issue price has been fixed at Rs 3,835 per gram with settlement date as Oct. 30. A discount of Rs 50 per gram is available for digital buyers.

Banking staff
to strike work
today

Services in state-owned banks may be affected as some employees unions will observe a nation-wide strike on Tuesday to protest against bank mergers and the fall in deposit rates. But officers and private sector banks are not part of the strike call given by the All India Bank Employees Association and the Bank Employees Federation of India.

China now has
more unicorn
startups than US

China now has more startups valued by investors at over \$1 billion than the US. There were 206 Chinese firms out of a global total of 494 unicorns in June 2019, says Hurun Report. Thus, China is No. 1 in unicorns, with the US placed second with 203 such companies. China's top 3 Ant Financial, ByteDance and Didi Chuxing—have a combined value of \$280 bn.

Energy trade
with US to jump
40% to \$10 bn

India's energy trade with the US is likely to jump by over 40 per cent to \$10 billion in 2019-20, as the world's third-largest oil consumer seeks to move away from suppliers in the Middle East, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said. India in October 2017 began importing crude oil from the US and in March 2018 it got the first shipment of LNG from there.

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■ NBFCs, HFCs still rely heavily on securitisation
Securitisation market
to cross ₹2L cr in FY20FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, OCT. 21

Funds raised through the securitisation route have seen an unprecedented rise in the last one year as non-banking finance companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs) facing a shortage of funds since the IL&FS crisis in September 2018 have resorted significantly to this route for raising funds. The HFCs and NBFCs have raised as much as Rs 2.36 lakh crore over the last one year (October 2018 to September 2019) through sell down of their loan assets under either the securitisation or direct assignment route. This unprecedented increase in sell down volumes reflects the chocking up of traditional borrowing channels such as loans, bonds and commercial paper issuances. As per Icr, the domestic securitisation market is expected to remain robust and FY2020 is poised to be another good year in terms of issuance volumes.

Securitisation involves creating a financial instru-



ment by pooling together loans such as home mortgages, automobile loans or credit card debt obligations and future receivable and then selling them to investors as securities. Abhishek Dafria, Vice-President and Head of Structured Finance at Icr, "NBFCs and HFCs continue to rely heavily on securitisation as a tool for raising funds, manage liquidity and to correct any ALM mismatch. In addition to this, the partial credit guarantee scheme (PCG) of the government will also add bulk to the overall market volumes. With the public sector banks directed to disburse funding of Rs 1

lakh crore under the PCG scheme by February 2020, we believe that the size of the securitisation market would be at an all-time high, in excess of Rs 2 lakh crore for FY2020." "Growth rode on both, established and new originators entering the market to augment their resources profile in a challenging financing environment. The number of active originators was close to 100 in the first half of this fiscal, compared with 70 in the corresponding period of last fiscal. Overall, growth was broad-based with both mortgage backed securitisation (MBS) and asset-

(ABS) logging healthy uptick in volume," said Rohit Inamdar, Senior Director at Crisil.

A bigger boost, however, is expected from regulatory interventions, say analysts. Among recent regulatory interventions, the Reserve Bank has relaxed the guidelines on minimum holding period in securitisation transactions backed by long-tenure loans till December 31, 2019. This would ensure increased supply of eligible assets available for MBS transactions.

Krishnan Sitaraman, Senior Director, Crisil Ratings said, "The partial credit guarantee scheme launched by the Ministry of Finance is expected to further lift demand for securitisation from public sector banks. Many of these banks have already sanctioned loans under the scheme and disbursements are expected over the next few months."

Securitisation of gold loan receivables, personal loan receivables, two-wheeler loan receivables and lease rental receivables are now mainstream.

'Low inflation
focus hurting
farm sector'

New Delhi, Oct. 21:



Abhijit Banerjee

Stringent commitment of the government to low inflation is hurting the agriculture sector and has resulted in farm distress, Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee said here. He also said disinvestment is not a long-term solution for bridging fiscal deficit. Attributing farm distress to the government's commitment to low inflation, winner of Nobel Prize for Economics said it has affected support price. On banking sector stress, he said part of the problem is that decision-making is absolutely frozen. He said probably the moderation in direct tax could push the growth northward. —PTI

Amid economic gloom, household
wealth grows 5.2%, debt 11.5%SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, OCT. 21

Amidst the economic slowdown, India's household wealth grew 5.2 per cent to \$12.6 trillion in 2019. But its household debt grew faster at 11.5 per cent, says a report. As per the Global Wealth Report by Swiss bank Credit Suisse, Indian households added \$625 billion by mid-2019 from mid-2018 levels, taking their total wealth to \$12.6 trillion. The country recorded 5.2 per cent growth in household wealth, which was higher than the global growth of 2.6 per cent. Total wealth in India increased four-fold between 2000 and 2019. Credit Suisse finds that personal wealth in India is dominated by property and



other real assets, which make up the bulk of household assets.

Growing by 6.9 per cent or \$708 billion in absolute terms, non-financial assets had a higher share in the wealth of households. This included real estate and gold. Financial assets grew by \$37 billion, or by 1.4 per cent, in 2019.

Much of the year-on-year variation in wealth levels is due to changes in asset prices and exchange rates.

Exchange-rate fluctuations between the dollar and the local currency are mostly the source of the biggest gains and losses, finds the study. Further, India with 6 per cent and China with 9 per cent rise in prices were among the nations experiencing a robust housing market. Gold too has appreciated significantly this year.

Wealth per adult grew a bit slower in India at 3.3 per cent to \$14,569 in 2019. But this was higher than the global growth of 1.2 per cent. Wealth per adult grew by an average of 11 per cent annually over the period 2000-2019. Prior to 2008, wealth rose strongly, from \$2,127 in 2000 to \$6,378 in 2007. After falling 29 per cent in 2008, it rebounded and grew at an average rate of 12 per cent up to 2019.

Unorganised trade sees muted sales

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, OCT. 21

Unorganised traders, who have alleging that e-commerce companies have been grabbing away their business, anticipate a drop of 50 to 60 per cent of sales during the festive season this year.

With a week more to go for Diwali, the commercial markets in different cities, comprising of small and medium traders, are wit-

nessing a slump in business. Usually, the retail trade in India does an annual business of about Rs 45 lakh crore of which festive season alone accounts for about Rs 6 lakh crore.

According to the Confederation of All-India Traders (Cait), traders are witnessing around 60 per cent drop in business as a major chunk of the sales has shifted online.

The mobile phone category

is witnessing a slump of 60 per cent. Sales of FMCG goods, consumer durables and electronics goods have dropped 35 per cent and electrical appliances, 30 per cent, Cait said. In apparels, which is a major category for Diwali season, a 25 per cent drop is expected. A 20 per cent fall is expected in footwear and watches and 30 per cent in beauty and cosmetics and bags.

Festival-specific items too are seeing a slump—35 per cent in gift items, 25 per cent in furnishing goods and 25 per cent in decorative items.

Building hardware is seeing a 15 per cent decline in sales, 30 per cent in kitchen equipment, 30 per cent in computer and computer goods and 30 per cent in fitness and sports goods, finds Cait.

There are about seven crore small businesses in the country, generating about 45 crore jobs, it said.

Whistleblowers allege
window-dressing by Infosys

Bengaluru, Oct. 21: An anonymous group claiming to be employees of IT major Infosys has written to the company's board accusing CEO Salil Parekh and CFO Nilanjan Roy of indulging in "unethical practices" to boost short-term revenue and profits.

"We have high respect for all of you and bring to your notice the unethical practices of CEO in recent quarters. Same measures are taken up in the current quarter also to boost short term revenue and profits," the letter addressed to the Board of Directors dated September 20, read.

Calling themselves as "ethical employees", the "whistleblowers" have said that they have emails and voice recordings on these matters.

"We hope the Board will conduct immediate investigation and take action," they added.

The Bengaluru-based Infosys said the whistleblower complaint has been placed before the Audit Committee as per the company's practice.

"The whistleblower complaint has been placed before the Audit Committee as per the Company's practice and will be dealt with in accordance with the Company's whistleblower policy," it said in a statement.

The whistleblowers have also written to the US-based office of the Whistleblower Protection Programme on October 3, alleging willful misstatement and accounting irregularities for the last two quarters.

Stating that in the last quarter, they were asked not to fully recognise costs like visa costs to improve profits, the whistleblowers have claimed: "We have voice recordings of these conversations. When auditor opposed, the issue was postponed."

"This quarter, there is lot of pressure to not



CASTING DOUBT

Whistleblowers say they were asked not to fully recognise costs like visa costs to improve profits in last quarter

"This quarter, there is lot of pressure to not recognise reversals of \$50 mn of upfront payment in FDR contract"

Infosys said the complaint has been placed before the Audit Committee

recognise reversals of \$50 mn of upfront payment in FDR contract, which is against accounting practice. As this will reduce profits for the quarter and negative for stock price, they are putting pressure not to take the charge," they claimed.

Alleging that "critical information" is hidden from the auditors and Board, the letter claimed that in large contracts like Verizon, Intel and JVs in Japan, ABN Amro acquisition, "revenue recognition matters are forced which are not as per accounting standards."

"We have emails and voice recordings and we will share when investigators ask us. We are asked not to share large deal information with auditors," they said.

"Large deal approvals

have irregularities. The CEO is bypassing reviews and approvals and instructing sales not to send mails for approval. He directs them to make wrong assumptions to show margins. CFO is compliant and he prevents us from showing in board presentations large deal issues," they further alleged.

"The CEO told us, no one in the Board understands these things, they are happy as long as share price is up...," the group alleged.

Claiming that several billion dollar deals of last few quarters have nil margin, the whistleblowers have urged the Board to ask auditors to check deal proposals, margins, undisclosed upfront commitments made and revenue recognition.

"All information is not shared with auditors."

"In board meetings, we are told not to present data on large deals and important financial measures as it will get board attention. The CEO and CFO are asking us to show more profits in treasury by taking up risks and make changes to policies. This will provide short term profits. They ask us not to make key disclosures in 20F and annual report and to share only good and incomplete information with investors and analysts," they wrote.

"Whoever, disagrees is sidelined and many of them leave," they claimed. —PTI

Bigwigs give polls a miss

Mumbai, Oct. 21: Business tycoons like Ratan Tata, N. Chandrababu Naidu, the Ambani brothers, Sajjan Jindal and so on were conspicuous by their absence at the polling booths for Assembly elections that recorded 63 per cent turnout on Monday.

Their spokespersons said these leaders had unavoidable prior commitments, forcing them to stay out of the city on the important day. The island city alone sends as many as 38 legislators to the 288-member house.

Those who did cast their votes included Mahindra group Chairman Anand Mahindra, HDFC Chief Executive Keki Mistry, Marico Chairman Harsh

Mariwala, and M&M Managing Director Pawan Goenka who also appealed to citizens to cast exercise their domestic right.

The polls saw a voter turnout of around 63 per cent, almost matching the 63.38 per cent polling recorded in the last elections held in 2014.

According to official sources, Tata and Chandrababu Naidu and Jindal were not in town.

Jindal, however, took to Twitter to appeal to voters to exercise their rights saying, "I urge each and every one of you to exercise your duty towards our democracy."

The Ambani brother Mukesh and Anil, who normally come out with

their families on the polling day, did not cast their votes this time around.

Why they did not make it this time around is not known yet.

After casting his vote, Mahindra tweeted: "Casting your vote is one of the most empowering experiences in life. And it's the privilege of living in a democracy—a privilege we often take for granted."

As many as 3,237 candidates, including 235 women, are in the fray for the 288-member house. Their fate will be known on October 24.

Due to the polls, major markets like equities, currency and debt were shut. —PTI

Start-up founder to join Indonesia's new cabinet

YOOLIM LEE &
VIRIYA SINGGHI
OCT. 21

Indonesian President Joko Widodo has offered the 35-year-old co-founder of the country's biggest startup, Gojek, a position in his new cabinet, affirming the importance of the internet sector in propelling Southeast Asia's largest economy.

Nadiem Makarim on Monday told reporters he has accepted a cabinet post after resigning with immediate effect as chief executive officer of the

ride-hailing giant he started nine years ago. That leaves the \$10 billion startup, one of Southeast Asia's largest, without its most visible leader at a time it's pursuing funding to compete with arch-rival Grab Holdings Inc. Gojek said President Andre Soelisty and co-founder Kevin Aluwi will take the helm as co-CEOs. The company will outline its next steps in the coming days, Gojek said in an emailed statement.

Widodo, commonly known as Jokowi, will specify the role to be



Nadiem Makarim

taken up by Makarim in a later announcement. Makarim's appointment — in line with the Indonesian president's stated desire to include professionals and millen-

nials in his second-term team — shouldn't disrupt operations at Gojek given its deep bench of experienced managers.

"This means President Jokowi's new cabinet will be filled with young people with ability to execute," said Willson Cuaca, Managing Partner of East Ventures, one of the most active Indonesian-focused venture capital firms. "It shows that Indonesia appreciates what they've done for the country. For Gojek, it's reached a point that even if Nadiem resigns, it's business as

usual."

The Gojek co-founder hails from a prominent Indonesian family. His grandfather was part of the delegation that won the country's independence from the Netherlands in a 1949 conference at The Hague.

"Since the beginning, my mission in Gojek has been to display Indonesia on the world's stage," Makarim told reporters when he announced his resignation in Jakarta on Monday. "So, this is a continuation of that mission, but this is certainly for

the state and within a big-scale."

Gojek is the largest player in an Indonesian internet industry that's booming as smartphone adoption there explodes. The world's fourth most populous country with 264 million people has produced other unicorns including Tokopedia and Bukalapak, which are driving e-commerce and the digital economy more generally.

Makarim started Gojek in 2010 as a call center arranging couriers in Jakarta. At that early

stage, everything was done manually — employees called motorbike drivers one by one until someone accepted an order — and Makarim had to work at other startups in order to sustain Gojek.

It was only in 2014 that the Gojek chief decided to introduce a mobile app, with backing from private equity investor Northstar Group. When that debuted in January 2015, the service was so popular that Gojek couldn't cope with demand, Makarim said in an interview in 2016. —Bloomberg

OPENING BELL
PROJECTION FOR TODAY

Q2 results to drive market sentiments

Market may see a lot of action this week in the run up to Diwali on Sunday as people buy gold and stocks on this occasion.

The market would also track busy earnings season in progress, results to be declared on October 24 for the assembly elections in Maharashtra and Haryana as well as other vacant Lok Sabha and Assembly seats that went for polling. Attack on terrorist camps in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir and global cues like US-China trade negotiations and EU, UK Brexit deal in the final phase of Parliament approval would come into play as market opens on Tuesday after.

BSE and NSE will conduct one-hour special muhurat trading session on the occasion of Diwali on Sunday, October 27 making it an extended week for the market.

Since Monday was a holiday, second quarter results declared by Reliance Industries, HDFC Bank, LIC Housing Finance among others would boost market sentiments with robust performances.

Ajit Mishra, Vice President — Research, Religare Broking said, "It's going to be an important week on the earnings front as big names like HDFC Bank, Axis Bank, SBI, ITC, Bajaj Auto, Hero Motocorp, L&T and HCL Technologies will announce their numbers along with several others. Participants will first react to the Reliance results and minutes of RBI's MPC's meet which came in after the market hours on Friday."

"Technically, Nifty looks buoyant for further surge but 11,800 would be tough to cross. In case of profit-taking, 11,540-11,370 zone would provide the needed support. The underperformance of the banking index is still a concern and perhaps the upcoming results from the banking majors may help in triggering a sustainable move ahead. Amid all, we do not see easing in volatility," Mishra said.

Buying in equities by the foreign portfolio investors last week was quite encouraging for the market as both Sensex and Nifty-50 indices rose for the sixth consecutive session. It will be interesting to see when the profit booking comes in the market this week as traders would like to book some profit before Diwali while institutions like mutual funds would take advantage of sharp fall in prices of the Mid-Cap and Small-Cap stocks and go for buying before the prices soar on account of FPIs buying. FPIs are net buyers by Rs 4,790 crore in October so far.

How the overnight US market performs and opening of Asian markets would also define Indian markets performance on Tuesday.

—RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

Share of ready housing units rises to 12% in Sept qtr



SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 21

Top seven cities have a total of 81,300 ready-to-move-in unsold units, which is 12 per cent of the total unsold stock. Their share has risen from 11 per cent or 77,100 in Q2, despite demand picking up for affordable and mid-segment units.

The top cities had a total of 6.56 lakh unsold units at the end of September quarter. Of this 12 per cent of 81,300 were ready-to-move-in units.

According to Anuj Puri, Chairman, Anarock Property Consultants, the share of ready homes among overall unsold stock has seen a quarterly rise. "Out of the overall unsold stock in Q2 2019, ready homes were more than 77,100 units across the top seven cities comprising nearly 11 per cent share. As many as 4,200 units since then completed in one quarter, thereby increasing unsold ready stock to 81,300 units as on Q3 2019 with overall share of ready homes increasing to 12 per cent in Q3 2019," he said.

Nearly 35 per cent or approximately 28,830 units are in the affordable bracket and 32 per cent or 26,180 units in the mid-segment -

homes priced within Rs 45-80 lakh- are ready-to-move-in.

Recent government announcements, including tax benefits and interest rate deduction for affordable housing to a large extent will attract first-time homebuyers. As ready homes are in demand and property prices are at their lowest best, those homebuyers waiting to take the plunge will come forward, finds Puri.

Trends also suggest that the sops for affordable segment are beginning to show some positive signs as ready inventory of affordable homes has declined by nearly 3 per cent on quarterly basis while mid segment saw it fall by 2 per cent. However, with new ready inventory getting added, their share will remain higher in the near future as well.

Mumbai has 21,000, National Capital Region 16,800 and Pune 14,260 ready-to-move-in units. However, Chennai with 10,640 units, has the highest share of ready-to-move-in units among its total unsold stock. While Bangalore's 17 per cent unsold stock are ready homes this is just 9 per cent in Mumbai and NCR.

Revenue from ops rises 4% to ₹9,620 cr, domestic sales fall 1.2% UltraTech Cement net up 62% to ₹578 crore in Q2



New Delhi, Oct. 21: UltraTech Cement on Monday reported a 62.59 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 578.55 crore in the second quarter ended September 2019.

The company had recorded a net profit of Rs 355.82 crore in the July-September quarter a year ago, the Aditya Birla Group firm said.

Its revenue from operations rose 4.01 per cent to Rs 9,620.47 crore as against Rs 9,249.26 crore in the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal.

UltraTech Cement's total expenses rose marginally to Rs 8,877.92 crore as against Rs 8,868.43 crore in the year ago period. The consolidated results also include the cement business of Century Textiles, whose acquisition process was completed by UltraTech Cement on October 1, 2019.

On a standalone basis, Century Textiles had net sales of Rs 746 crore in July-September quarter. "UltraTech completed the acquisition of Century Textile's cement business, with the Scheme of Demerger becoming effective from 1st October, 2019.

With this acquisition, UltraTech's cement manufacturing capacity stands augmented to 117.4 mtpa, including its overseas capacity," the company said.

"This makes UltraTech the 3rd largest cement company in the world, outside of China. It is also the only company in the world to have a capacity of over 100 million tonnes in a single country, outside of China," it added.

However, UltraTech Cement's domestic sales fell 1.20 per cent to 17.19 million tonnes in July-September as against 17.40 million tonnes in the corresponding quarter last year.

"Monsoon quarter results in lower volumes," the company said in its investor presentation.

During the first half (April-September) of this fiscal, Ultratech Cement's net profit almost doubled to Rs 1,859.82 crore from Rs 940.84 crore in the corresponding period of previous fiscal.

Revenue from operations rose 11.87 per cent to Rs 21,025.41 crore in the first half as against Rs 18,794.11 crore in the corresponding period of 2018-19.

— PTI

Infratel profit up 61% to ₹964 crore

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Bharti Infratel posted 61 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 964 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2019.

The mobile tower arm of Bharti Airtel had recorded a profit of Rs 600 crore in the same quarter a year ago.

"We continue to believe that there is a strong growth potential in telecom passive infrastructure in the country as telecom networks keep pace with the continuing exponential data consumption growth," Akhil Gupta, Chairman, Bharti Infratel, said.

The company reported a marginal dip in revenue to Rs 3,638 crore from Rs 3,668 crore in the year-ago period.

— PTI

Ujjivan Fin profit doubles to ₹93 crore

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Ujjivan Financial Services reported over two-fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 93 crore for the second quarter ended September 30.

The company had registered a profit of Rs 44.3 crore in July-September 2018-19.

Total income increased 55 per cent to Rs 710 crore in the quarter under review as against Rs 459.04 crore in the year-ago period, Ujjivan Financial Services said in a release.

The company's subsidiary Ujjivan Small Finance Bank has filed its DRHP with SEBI in August 2019 and is committed to complying with the listing condition within the stipulated timelines, it said.

— PTI

Piramal Q2 net up 15% to ₹554 cr

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Diversified business group Piramal Enterprises on Monday reported 15.33 per cent increase in its consolidated net profit at Rs 554.08 crore for the second quarter ended September, 2019.

The company had reported a net profit of Rs 480.42 crore for the July-September quarter a year-ago,

— PTI

Piramal Enterprises said. Its total income was up 14.55 per cent to Rs 3,666.24 crore as against Rs 3,200.41 crore in the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal.

Piramal Enterprises' total expenses was up 2,934.29 crore as against Rs 2,630.60 crore, up 11.54 per cent.

— PTI

Sterling hits 5-month peak above \$1.30

London, Oct. 21: The pound hit a five-month peak above \$1.30 Monday on renewed Brexit optimism after Prime Minister Boris Johnson requested another extension to Britain's scheduled departure from the European Union. At about 0830 GMT, the pound reached the highest level since May at \$1.3012, up from \$1.2984 late in New York on Friday. The euro steadied at about 86 pence.

"Markets (are) starting to price in a best case scenario in terms of the deal getting passed this week and then a short extension to pass any necessary legislation," CMC Markets analyst Michael Hewson told AFP.

"Whether that optimism turns out to be premature is another matter; only time will tell."

Johnson was on Monday attempting again to push his EU divorce deal through parliament and avoid the political damage of delaying Brexit beyond next week.

Lawmakers on Saturday mandated the prime PM to break his promise and send a letter to Brussels asking for more time.

— AFP

China Banks keep prime loan rate at 4.2%

Beijing, Oct. 21: China's base rate for new corporate loans stayed unchanged in October, defying expectations of a reduction as the economy sees its slowest pace of growth since 1990s.

The one-year loan prime rate was kept at 4.2 per cent, according to a People's Bank of China. That compares to the 4.15 per cent median estimate compiled by Bloomberg. The five-year tenor was also kept unchanged at 4.85 per cent.

The LPR is a revamped market indicator of the price that lenders charge clients for new loans, and is linked to the rate at which the central bank will lend financial institutions cash for a year. It's made up of submissions from a panel of 18 banks, though Beijing has a role in setting the level. The rate is released monthly.

A static 1-year rate shows China "may be trying to balance the shrinking margins of banks with support to the economy," said Zhou Hao, Economist at Commerzbank AG.

— Bloomberg

India to import refined copper after 18 yrs: Care

New Delhi, Oct. 21: The closure of Vedanta's copper smelter plant at Tuticorin in Tamil Nadu has led to a rise in imports of the metal, making the country a net importer of refined copper after 18 years, Care Ratings has said.

"India used to be a net exporter of copper cathodes till FY18. Now with the closure of the Tuticorin smelter, the drop in domestic production has led to the domino effect of increasing the country's imports and decreasing its exports. India has become a net importer of refined copper after 18 years," Care Ratings has said.

During FY2018-19, exports fell by 87.4 per cent, whereas imports increased by 131.2 per cent, it said.

India imported refined copper from, Japan, Congo, Singapore, Chile, Tanzania, the UAE and South Africa while exported refined copper to China, Taiwan, Malaysia, South Korea and Bangladesh during 2018-19.

— AFP

Almost resolved broad issues in India-US trade package: Goyal

New Delhi, Oct. 21: India and the US have almost resolved broad issues of the proposed trade package and an announcement is expected soon, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday.

He said that the two countries should look at a much larger engagement in the days ahead, possibly even leading to an announcement for a bilateral agreement which will go beyond near tinkering which "we are doing at present".

The minister said that trade negotiations are complex in nature but things are going smoothly between the two countries.

"We have almost resolved the broad contours of what we are going to announce. I do not see any great difficulty in closing the gap on the first announcement," he said here at a USISFP programme.

He said that probably by now, both the sides could have announced something, but certain other engagements including the US talks with Japan and China delayed the announcement.

"Both I and US Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer have understood

'Will protect interest of industry'

New Delhi, Oct. 21: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Monday that the government will protect the interest of domestic industry before entering into the proposed mega free-trade pact RCEP, which is in the last phase of negotiations.

The RCEP (Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership) agreement is being negotiated among 10 ASEAN members (Brunei, Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and

Vietnam) and their six free-trade pact partners Australia, China, India, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand.

"Every interest of domestic industry and the people of India has to be protected before we execute any free-trade agreement," he told reporters when asked whether RCEP negotiations would be concluded next month.

The member countries have fixed a target to conclude the talks in November and sign the agreement in June 2020.

— PTI

that we have huge potential which we still need to tap... We will hopefully come out with a first set of agreements soon."

"But we both believe that India and the US should look at a much larger engagement in the days ahead, possibly even leading to an announcement for a bilateral agreement which will go beyond near tinkering which we are doing at

present," Goyal added. When asked about the visit of USTR here, he said as soon as both the sides are in a position to come to a reasonable conclusion, USTR would visit India. The minister said things are on the right track and India is looking to the US for technology, innovation, skills and quality education.

— PTI

It's neither RERA nor HIRA in Bengal realty

RITWIK MUKHERJEE KOLKATA, OCT. 21

In a curious turn of events, two ministries of the Mamata Banerjee government seem to have locked horns over a policy related issue pertaining to the real estate sector. While one department prefers taking the sides of the consumers, that is home or property buyers, the other seems more concerned about expanding the state's coffers.

Quite significantly, the issue also leads to a much bigger question of whether two separate Acts on the subject of regulation of the real estate sector — one enacted by the Centre (RERA) and the other by a particular state (HIRA) — can coexist. The matter relates to the existence of Real Estate (Regulation & Development) Act, 2016 (RERA), which is a central government legislation, and the Housing & Industrial Regulation Act, 2017 (HIRA), which was enacted by the West Bengal government.

RERA had been fully notified in 2017 and states were given powers to notify their respective rules and appoint regulatory authorities.



While this is applicable across the country, except in J&K, the West Bengal government is the only one that has come out with its separate legislation, HIRA.

Interestingly now, one of the departments of Bengal government is neither following RERA. Nor is it complying with the provisions of WBHIRA.

West Bengal consumer affairs minister, Sadhan Pande, in a letter (MIC/432/2019), dated August 21, addressed to Onkar Singh Meena, secretary, housing department and designated authority, WBHIRA, unequivocally said, "WBHIRA came into force in the year 2017 and according to the Act of HIRA it was decided that a customer will only pay for

the carpet area of the apartment or property, which he/she is buying. This has enabled to develop more transparency between the builder and the customer. But to my surprise, we came to know that still the directorate of registration and stamp revenue is conducting the registration process in super built-up area, thus forcing a customer to pay much more stamp duty and registration cost than he/she should have actually paid if the registration had been conducted on the carpet area of the property."

"As a consumer protection minister, I have received several complaints from the consumers regarding this contradiction in the rules of WBHIRA and directorate of registration and stamp revenue. So please rectify this problem as soon as possible and charge the stamp duty and registration cost on the basis of carpet area as per the rules of WBHIRA," the letter from the minister added.

The letter from the consumer affairs and protection minister, however, is yet to elicit any response from the other department, that is housing.

World economy is stumbling towards disaster

BLOOMBERG EDITORIAL BOARD

The world's finance ministers and central-bank governors gathered this past weekend in Washington and looked out at a global economy badly in need of treatment. Most say they understand the dangers, but that seems open to question. With the facts in plain sight and the need for policy changes all too apparent, they've shown little sense of urgency, and even less sign of action. Prodded by an unhinged US administration, the world could be stumbling into the next global recession.

The International Monetary Fund has lowered its growth forecasts yet again. Global output is projected to rise by just 3 per cent this year (down from

the 3.3 per cent predicted in the spring) and by a still-sluggish 3.4 per cent (down from 3.6 per cent) in 2020. Economic momentum is fading almost everywhere — the IMF calls it a "synchronized slowdown." The revised outlook is already the weakest since the crash in 10 years ago, and the risks in the forecast are very much, as economists say, to the downside.

This would be concerning under any circumstances, but the prospect of recession under current conditions is truly alarming. The hesitant recovery of the past decade has depleted the conventional tools of macroeconomic policy. In many countries — not least the US — fiscal stimulus and persistent budget deficits have boosted ratios of public debt to national

income. Next time, governments will be reluctant to lean as heavily on extra public borrowing to raise demand, rightly or wrongly fearing lack of fiscal space. Monetary policy is all but exhausted too, with interest rates either close to their effective lower bound (as in the US) or slammed down against it (as in the European Union).

Another legacy of that previous recession, and the extraordinary measures taken to contain it, is heightened financial fragility. With abundant quantitative easing and super-low interest rates, financial conditions have been kept loose to support asset prices, press down on yields and strengthen demand. The measures were necessary,

but the result is outlandish asset valuations and heightened credit risk. Recklessly inflated house prices were a main cause of the crash; in many countries, they've soared again on the back of cheap credit. Banks have added capital since 2009, but not enough to make them safe in another big downturn. The notorious "doom loop" of risky sovereign debt and bank insolvency — recognized as a major risk after 2008 — remains substantially unaddressed in Italy and other countries.

With all these vulnerabilities to the fore, and with few if any policy options for dealing with the crash they might cause, US President Donald Trump chose to embark on his trade war

with China, and threatened any other country that caught his attention with the same. This astounding recklessness, unaccountably tolerated by Congress, has already caused enormous economic damage, not least in the US. Should the synchronized slowdown become an outright worldwide recession, the US government will get, and deserve, much of the blame.

But the responsibility goes wider. Other countries could be doing far more to guard against these heightened risks.

China, for instance, has been too slow to address its financial imbalances. No doubt, Trump's trade war has made this harder, but the Beijing government has made little progress in repairing its credit-allocation system. Under pressure, the resulting financial vulnerabilities could surface abruptly, with consequences not just for China. The UK has lately seemed intent on wrecking its economy and system of government in pursuit of Brexit. The EU has had years to equip the euro area with two basic necessities of a single-currency area — a common budget to mitigate recessions and a functioning banking union — and has provided neither. In every part of the world, governments have dithered over reforms that would make their economies more productive and robust. With risks mounting almost wherever you look, political dysfunction has conspired to make things worse.

Given the will, all of these problems are fixable. Some, to be sure, could be solved at

a stroke. The risks posed by Trump's trade wars, for instance, would evaporate if he merely refrained from stirring pointless conflict. Others are much more complex. Reducing fragility requires smarter regulation, to recognize the risks that arise from constantly evolving financial systems. Reviving macroeconomic policy in a world of persistently low interest rates demands fresh thinking on both monetary and fiscal fronts. Answers will be found and are starting to emerge, but governments should step up the pace.

These questions can't wait any longer. The world economy is at a dangerous juncture, and stands desperately in need of wiser and more effective leadership. Until it gets some, the risks are unlikely to subside.

Column





Fitness battle

Limited-overs captain Aaron Finch is battling to be fit for Australia's opening Twenty20 against Sri Lanka after picking up a side strain.

Fast & furious

Pacers Shami and Yadav let it rip as India on brink of 3-0 Test series sweep over South Africa

SCORECARD

India (1st Innings): 497-9 dec
South Africa (1st Innings): D. Elgar c Saha b Shami 0, Q. de Kock c Saha b Yadav 4, Z. Hamza b Jadeja 62, F. du Plessis b Yadav 1, T. Bavuma st Saha b Nadeem 32, H. Klaassen b Jadeja 6, G. Linde c Rohit b Yadav 37, D. Piedt lbw b Shami 4, K. Rabada run out (Yadav) 0, A. Nortje lbw b Nadeem 4, L. Ngidi (not out) 0. **Extras (b8, lb3, nb1) 12. Total (in 56.2 overs) 162.**
FoW: 1-4, 2-8, 3-16, 4-107, 5-107, 6-119, 7-129, 8-130, 9-162.

Bowling: Shami 10-4-22-2, Yadav 9-1-40-3, Nadeem 11.2-4-22-2, Jadeja 14-3-19-2, Ashwin 12-1-48-0.
South Africa (2nd Innings, follow-on): Q. de Kock b Yadav 5, D. Elgar (retired hurt) 16, Z. Hamza b Shami 0, F. du Plessis lbw b Shami 4, T. Bavuma c Saha b Shami 0, H. Klaassen lbw b Yadav 5, G. Linde run out (Nadeem) 27, D. Piedt b Jadeja 23, T. de Bruyn (batting) 30, K. Rabada c Jadeja b Ashwin 12, A. Nortje (batting) 5. **Extras (b5) 5. Total (for 8 wickets in 46 overs) 132.**
FoW: 1-5, 2-10, 3-18, 4-22, 4-26 (Elgar retired), 5-36, 6-67, 7-98, 8-121.
Bowling: Shami 9-5-10-3, Yadav 9-1-35-2, Jadeja 13-5-36-1, Nadeem 5-0-18-0, Ashwin 10-3-28-1.

Saha injured, Pant keeps wickets

Ranchi, Oct. 21: India's first-choice Test wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha suffered an injury on his right ring finger during the South African second innings as Rishabh Pant kept wickets in the final hour. The 35-year-old Saha, who was phenomenal behind the stumps in the second Test in Pune, was hurt in the 27th over, while keeping to off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. The latest injury adds to the long list of on-field setbacks that the Bengal stumper had suffered in his career including a career-threatening shoulder injury for which he had to undergo surgery which forced him out of national team for 20 months. — PTI

innings. An early tea was taken as both the teams were left shaken after opener Dean Elgar was hit on the helmet by a 145kmph bouncer from Yadav. The batsman took a pause, sat on the ground before going off the field. India wrapped up the South African first innings for 162 in 56.2 overs in yet another meek batting surrender that lasted less than two sessions after the visitors resumed the day at nine for two in five overs. Local lad Nadeem cleaned up the tail by trapping Anrich Nortje in front to make it a memorable debut, returning with figures of 11.2-4-22-2. Nadeem had his "big moment" when he dismissed Temba Bavuma (32) for his first wicket in international cricket. He foxed Bavuma with his flight as the batsman stepped out of the crease, leaving Wriddhiman Saha to do the rest. Nadeem's first international wicket incidentally came even before any batsman could score run against him. South Africa began the second session staring at an imminent follow-on as they lost their seventh wicket on the fourth ball after the lunch-break when a hapless Dane Piedt was beaten by Shami's raw pace as it cut back in to trap him in front. What followed was a body blow in 39th over where Shami made Nortje hop all over with his sharp incoming bouncers though the tail-ender managed to survive the hostile spell. — PTI



Umesh Yadav celebrates a South African wicket. — AP



Mohammed Shami



South African Dean Elgar is felled by an Umesh Yadav bouncer. — AP

Elgar suffers concussion after being hit by bouncer

Ranchi, Oct. 21: South Africa opener Dean Elgar was on Monday ruled out of the third Test against India as he suffered concussion after being hit by a bouncer from pacer Umesh Yadav. Minutes before the tea break, Elgar tried to duck a short delivery

from Yadav, who was in the middle of a hostile spell of short-pitched bowling. Elgar was hit just above the ear and immediately fell on the ground, calling for medical help. He was batting on 16 off 29 balls when Umesh bouncer struck him. "Dean Elgar is still being

assessed and we are following the standard ICC concussion protocol. I will send an update as soon as there is one to send. The Match Referee has approved Theunis de Bruyn as Dean Elgar's replacement as result of concussion," South Africa media manager

issued a statement on behalf of the team. Elgar is the third concussion substitute after Marnus Labuschagne of Australia (in place of Steve Smith during Ashes Test at Lord's) and Jermaine Blackwood (vs India replacing Darren Bravo). — PTI



I don't think playing the Hundred will dilute our chances of winning the next World Cup
— Joe Root, England Test skipper

SHORT TAKES



McDonald named RR head coach

Mumbai: Rajasthan Royals on Monday appointed former Australian cricketer Andrew McDonald as their new head coach for a three-year term. McDonald has been a part of the Indian Premier League, having played for Delhi Daredevils in the 2009 season before being signed up by Royal Challengers Bangalore in 2012-2013. He was also the bowling coach of Royal Challengers Bangalore. The 38-year-old former Australian all-rounder has coached Leicestershire, Victoria and the Melbourne Renegades. McDonald, who played four Tests for Australia, had guided Victoria to the title win in Sheffield Shield in his first year as senior coach. The Victorian then moved the Renegades from 7th position to winning the Big Bash this year. "We are delighted to appoint Andrew as our head coach. He shares our belief of discovering potential and championing dreams and is aligned with our vision to continue to drive innovation in the IPL," said Ranjit Barthakur, Executive Chairman, Rajasthan Royals in a team statement. — PTI

I'll meet Kohli on Oct. 24: Ganguly

Kolkata: BCCI president-elect Sourav Ganguly on Monday left it to skipper Virat Kohli to take a call on his availability for the upcoming three-match T20 series against Bangladesh, starting November 3. There is a speculation that Kohli, who has played 48 of the last 56 international games across formats, will take rest for the T20s but come back for the two Test matches in Indore and Kolkata. "I will meet him on October 24. I will talk to him like a BCCI president talks to the captain. He is the captain and he can take a call," Ganguly told reporters at the CAB headquarters. He was all praise for Rohit Sharma, who has been a smash-hit with 529 runs in his kitty, including a maiden double hundred. — PTI

Bangladesh cricketers go on strike

Dhaka/Kolkata, Oct. 21: Bangladesh's upcoming tour of India was on Monday thrown into jeopardy after their national team players refused to participate in any cricketing activity until their demands, including a hike in salary, are met. The boycott plan was announced by the country's top players such as Test and T20 captain Shakib Al Hasan, Mahmudullah and Mushfiqur Rahim at a press conference here. Nearly 50 players are part of the protest. A boycott of any cricket activity for the foreseeable future will have an immediate impact on the National Cricket League, currently in progress. The action could also jeopardise the training camp for next month's tour of India and possibly the tour itself. During the tour starting November 3, Bangladesh are scheduled to play three T20 Internationals and two Test matches as part of the World Championship. "We have to respect the local coaches, physios, trainers and groundsman. They get really a little amount of salary at the end of the month," senior opener Tamim Iqbal said on behalf of the players at the



Flanked by his teammates Bangladesh cricketer Shakib Al Hasan (centre) addresses the media at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium in Dhaka on Monday. — AFP

press conference. The camp was supposed to start this week with the team's spin consultant Daniel Vettori in attendance. BCCI president-elect Sourav Ganguly said in Kolkata that he was confident that Bangladesh will not call-off the series. "It is the internal matter of BCB but it's not under my purview," Ganguly said.

However, many in the Indian Cricket Board feel that Ganguly's cordial relations with both players and officials in Bangladesh cricket might help in salvaging the situation. "There is a Test match in Kolkata, which will certainly generate a lot of interest among the Bangladesh fans keeping the local connect in mind. A lot of fans are expected to travel from

Dhaka and it's surrounding towns to watch the match, a first in Kolkata. I believe that they will pay heed to our president's request if the situation demands," another BCCI official said. One of the major points raised by the players was better remuneration for those competing at the first-class level. "Match fee for the first-class cricket should be increased to one

lakh (Bangladesh Taka), which is now 35 thousand only. At the same time, the salary of first-class cricketers also should be increased by 50 per cent," said their most decorated player Shakib. "A first-class cricketer gets only 1500 taka as the daily allowance. I don't think this is enough for a cricketer in order to get a healthy lifestyle. At the same time, we are demanding to increase the travel allowance. We will be happy if BCB ensures the air tickets for travelling for the First-class cricketers around the country." Some of the players' main demands are: Bangladesh Premier League (BPL) must go back to franchise model, Dhaka Premier League (their domestic first-class competition) must go back to open market transfers, central contract salary should be higher, and include more players, higher first class match fees, players association to no longer have conflict of interest. "We just came to know about it we will discuss it in the board and try to resolve it as soon as possible," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said. — PTI

Chhattisgarh, Tamil Nadu make semis; Mumbai out

Bengaluru, Oct. 21: Rain ended Mumbai's Vijay Hazare Trophy campaign here on Monday as Chhattisgarh made it to the semi-finals on the basis of more wins against their quarterfinal opponents in the league phase. Tamil Nadu also reached the semi-finals on the basis of more wins than Punjab in the league stage after their quarter-final game was cut short by rain. Tamil Nadu had won nine out of nine matches in Group C, while Chhattisgarh emerged victorious in five out of eight games in Group A. Mumbai won four. While Tamil Nadu will take on Gujarat in the semifinals on Wednesday, hosts Karnataka will clash with Chhattisgarh on the same day. In pursuit of a revised target of 195 from 39 overs, Mumbai were cruising at 95 for no loss in 11.3 overs with young Yashasvi Jaiswal batting on 60 (38 balls, 5 fours, 5 sixes) and Aditya Tare on 31. However, the skies opened up and the match was abandoned, ending Mumbai's topsy-turvy campaign.

VIJAY HAZARE BRIEF SCORES

Chhattisgarh 190 for 6 in 45.4 overs (Harpreet Singh Bhatia 83, Amandeep Khare 59 not out, Dhawal Kulkarni 2 for 9) vs Mumbai 95 for no loss in 11.3 overs (Yashasvi Jaiswal 60 not out, Aditya Tare 31 not out). Tamil Nadu 174 for 6 in 39 overs (Baba Aparajith 56, Washington Sundar 35 not out, Gurkeerat Singh 2 for 25) vs Punjab 52 for 2 in 12.2 overs. (Note: Both matches were abandoned due to rain)

As per rules, Mumbai needed to bat a minimum of 20 overs to get a result in this game. But as the game was abandoned, Chhattisgarh qualified. Put into bat at the Alur cricket stadium III, Mumbai bowlers did well to restrict Chhattisgarh to 190 for six in 45.4 overs, when play was halted due to rain. Experienced medium-pacer Dhawal Kulkarni sent Chhattisgarh opener Jivanjot Singh Chauhan (0) back after he edged to keeper Tare. Shardul Thakur got rid off Shashank Chandrakar to leave Chhattisgarh in trouble at 3 for 2. Ashutosh Pratap Singh (27), who came in at one drop, was unable to convert his start as Chhattisgarh slipped to 40 for 3. Skipper Harpreet Singh Bhatia (83) and Amandeep Khare (59 not

out) led the recovery with a 135-run stand. In the other last eight game, Punjab restricted Tamil Nadu to 174 for six in 39 overs when rain stopped play. Tamil Nadu had a shaky start after openers Murali Vijay (22) and Abhinav Mukund (17) failed to convert starts. But the in-form Baba Aparajith came up with a patient 76-ball 56 (2 fours, 2 sixes) to pull his side out of trouble. He lacked support as all-rounder Vijay Shankar (13) and skipper Dinesh Karthik (11) didn't last long enough. Thanks to Washington Sundar's unbeaten 35 off 39 balls, Tamil Nadu breached the 170-run mark. Punjab were 52 for two in 12.2 overs, having lost Abhishek Sharma (6) and Anmolpreet Singh (9) when rain stopped play. — PTI



National duty

World number two Rafael Nadal has been named in the Spain squad for the Davis Cup finals in Madrid next month. He missed Shanghai Masters due to wrist injury

TENNIS | ROUND-UP



Andy Murray of Britain poses with the trophy after winning the European Open final in Antwerp on Sunday. — AP

Murray wins first ATP title in 2 yrs

Antwerp (Belgium), Oct. 21: Andy Murray said he was "very proud" after earning his first ATP title since March 2017 on Sunday with a 3-6, 6-4, 6-4 victory over fellow three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka in the Antwerp final. Former world number one Murray, who contemplated retirement earlier this year before undergoing career-saving hip surgery, fought back from a set and 3-1 down to claim his 46th career title. "It means a lot. The last few years have been extremely difficult," Murray, who broke down in tears at the end, told Amazon Prime. "Both me and Stan have had a lot of injury problems in the last couple of years. It's amazing to be back, playing against him in the final like that. I think it was a great match. I didn't expect to be in this position at all. I'm happy, very happy," added Murray. Murray became the lowest-ranked ATP champion since No. 355 Pablo Andujar triumphed at the 2018 Marrakech Open. "I've really enjoyed my week here. The atmosphere the last few days has been amazing. I'm very proud of the win this week," said Murray. Wawrinka, who was also hunting a first title in over two years, was full of praise for an opponent who in January tearfully revealed he was in constant agony from a hip injury. "I think the tennis world, including me, was really sad in Australia after that press conference. To see you back at this level, it's amazing. We're all really happy," said Wawrinka. — AFP

Back on course

Marseille end four-match slump with Strasbourg win

Paris, Oct. 21: Marseille ended a four-match winless streak in Ligue 1 after Boubacar Kamara's early strike and a late Kevin Strootman penalty saw them to a deserved victory over lowly Strasbourg.

Kamara, 19, struck the opener with just two minutes on the clock when his shot was deflected home by Strasbourg defender Ludovic Ajorque, and Strootman finished off with a calm spot-kick deep in stoppage time after Dario Benedetto was brought down by Mohamed Simakan.

The win sends Andre Villas Boas' inconsistent side fourth, one point off the Champions League places, while Strasbourg drop to the bottom of the league after a performance that offered little.

However, Marseille are still eight points behind leaders Paris Saint-Germain, who swatted Nice aside 4-1 on Friday.

Marseille and bitter rivals PSG meet next weekend but Villas-Boas played down the significance of the fixture.

"It will be a totally different match, against a team that is not in the same league," he said.

"We will play the match for the match, but it is not a game that matters too much for me."

The hosts could have easily won by more, striking the woodwork either side of half-time through Duje Caleta-Car and Nemanja Radonjic.



Marseille's Valentin Rongier (right) duels for the ball with Strasbourg's Lionel Carole during the French League One match in Marseille on Sunday. — AP

Benedetto also wasted a chance with Marseille still just a goal up when he failed to get a contact on Maxine Lopez's cross.

Wissam Ben Yedder fired Monaco out of the Ligue 1 mire with a stoppage time winner that earned an entertaining 3-2 win over

Rennes on Sunday. Yedder pounced on Keita Balde's flick two minutes into added time to lash home a powerful left-foot finish and send Leonardo Jardim's side up to 14th just as it looked as if a handball spotted by VAR had denied them the

three points. The scores were level thanks to Islam Slimani equalising. Faiout Mauassa and Adrien Honou's strikes for Rennes when Balde thought he won the game for Monaco seconds before Yedder's winner. — AFP

INJURED SUELE TO MISS REST OF SEASON, EUROS

Berlin, Oct. 21: Germany central defender Niklas Sule will miss the rest of the season and Euro-2020 after injuring his knee playing for Bayern at the weekend, club president Uli Hoeness said on Monday.

"Apparently, the season is over for him, he can forget about the Euros," Hoeness said.

The 24-year-old tore his left knee anterior cruciate ligament on Saturday in Bayern's 2-2 Bundesliga draw in Augsburg. He had surgery on Monday.

Joachim Loew, the national coach, said it was "very bad news" and called Sule to be "a pillar" in his reconstruction project for the Euros.

Loew put his faith in Sule when he said in March that he would no longer pick veterans Jerome Boateng and Mats Hummels, who between them had won 146 caps and started together in the 2014 World Cup final.

The German team's displays since then suggest that Loew had not yet found the right partner for the 6ft 5in Sule at the heart of his defence.

Bayern coach Niko Kovac has other options in central defence. — AFP



I had the procedure a little bit early and got ahead of it. — Star golfer Tiger Woods said his fitness was ahead of schedule after knee surgery

SHORT TAKES

Murray, Bencic rise in rankings

Paris: Former world number one Andy Murray was rewarded for his victory in Antwerp at the weekend, with another dramatic rise in the ATP rankings which were released on Monday. The Scotsman, who is on the comeback trail after career-saving hip surgery, climbed 116 places to 127 following his first title in two years. Murray, who has won three Grand Slam titles and spent 41 weeks at number one from November 2016 to August 2017, saw his ranking slip as low as 839 in July 2018 as his injured hip threatened to end his career. Novak Djokovic remains at number one, the 273rd week in his career that he holds the top spot, with Rafael Nadal just 320 points behind. Belinda Bencic completed an excellent week, which saw her win the Kremlin Cup and qualify for the year-ending WTA finals, with a three-place climb to number seven in the WTA rankings released on Monday. The Australian Ashleigh Barty retains the number one slot ahead of the Czech Karolina Pliskova. — AFP

Sharma finishes 40th in France

Paris: Shubhankar Sharma carded an unimpressive 73 on the final day to finish tied 40th at the Open de France Golf Championship where compatriot Indian golfer SSP Chawrasia wasted three good days to end tied 48th. Chawrasia wasted a good start with a double bogey and a bogey in his final few holes to have a below-par round of 76 on the final day, slipping to 48th position. Nicolas Colsaerts (72) held on to seal a gripping one-shot victory over Denmark's Joachim Hansen (68) claiming his first European Tour title for seven years on Sunday at Le Golf National. The big-hitting Belgian led by three strokes overnight but made several errors as South African George Coetzee and Hansen both moved ahead briefly on the back nine.

ROMA SORRY FOR ABUSE ON VIEIRA

Milan: Roma issued an apology for their supporters racially abusing Sampdoria's English midfielder Ronaldo Vieira during their goalless Serie A draw. "AS Roma would like to apologise to Ronaldo Vieira for the racist boos he was subjected to," Roma said on Twitter on Sunday. "Roma does not tolerate racism of any kind and the club will support the authorities in identifying and subsequently banning any individuals found guilty of racially abusing the midfielder." Monkey chants were directed at 21-year-old Vieira towards the end of the first half of Sunday's match with an announcement made over the stadium loudspeaker, but the match was not interrupted. The English U21 international, who was born in Guinea Bissau and raised in Portugal and England, joined Sampdoria in 2018 from Leeds United. "This happens too often, it shouldn't be this way," Vieira told Italian television Rai Sport. The English footballer later wrote on Instagram: "Football has a responsibility to punish and educate the idiots in the stadium today. Nonetheless, it was a good point for the team." Sampdoria later thanked Roma via social media for their message: "Thank you. Always together for a better football #stopracism" The problem of racism is a recurring one in Italian football. This season Inter Milan's Belgian striker Romelu Lukaku and AC Milan's Ivorian midfielder Franck Kessie have been targeted by monkey chants without any sanctions being applied. Atalanta were fined 10,000 euros (\$11,000) earlier this month for racist abuse by their fans. — AFP

INTERNATIONAL GOLF

Colsaerts seals his first title in seven years

Paris, Oct. 21: Nicolas Colsaerts held on to seal a gripping one-shot victory over Denmark's Joachim B Hansen at the French Open, claiming his first European Tour title for seven years on Sunday at Le Golf National.

The big-hitting Belgian led by three strokes overnight but made several errors as South African George Coetzee and Hansen both moved ahead briefly on the back nine.

But Colsaerts recovered and kept his nerve on the final three holes to card a one-over-par fourth round of 72 and win on 12-under for the tournament.

"It's very special. I mean, the French Open for me is very special because I'm French-speaking," said the 36-year-old, who was part of Europe's 2012 Ryder Cup-winning team in the 'Miracle at Medinah', but has since slipped to 424th in the world rankings.

"I've been coming here for I don't know how many years. It's been a long road."

"So many people have supported me over the years. That's why I get so emotional. I went



Nicolas Colsaerts of Belgium reacts after winning the Amundi French Open in Paris on Sunday. — AP

through ups and downs for so many years now."

It was Colsaerts' third European Tour triumph in total and his first since the Volvo World Match Play Championship in May 2012. The return to the winners' circle also secures his tour card for the next two years, having started the week 114th in the Race to Dubai standings, perilously just inside the top 117 who qualify automatically for next season.

Colsaerts got off to a dream start with a birdie on the first as Coetzee

made bogey, opening up a five-shot lead over his playing partner.

The Belgian then stumbled as world number 289 Coetzee reeled off three straight birdies around the turn to seize a one-shot advantage.

An eagle on the par-five 14th put Colsaerts back in the lead. He stood on the 18th tee needing a par to finally put the tournament to bed and he managed just that.

"To lock it in like this on 18, which is one of the most difficult par-fours on tour, is very satisfying," he added. — AFP

Fit Woods hints he'll pick himself

Narashino, (Japan), Oct. 21: Tiger Woods said Monday his fitness was ahead of schedule after arthroscopic knee surgery, and dropped a heavy clue he might use one of his four Presidents Cup captain's picks on himself.

"I'm probably a week early. My season had ended a little bit earlier than I had expected it," the 15-time major winner told reporters at Accordia Golf, Narashino Country Club near Tokyo before coming through an exhibition match unscathed.

"I had the procedure a little bit early and got ahead of it," he added.

Woods is in Japan this week to play in the US PGA Tour's inaugural Zozo Championship, the second \$9.75 million tournament of an almost \$30 million three-event Asian swing.

He intends to end his year by playing in the Hero World Challenge beginning December 4, before going to Australia to captain Team USA in the Presidents Cup a week later.

Woods, who completed a good return from years of injury and personal problems to win the US Masters in April, said his knee had been giving him more pain as the year wore on.

"It progressively got worse and got to the point where it was affecting even reading putts," the 43-year-old Woods said.

Woods has a large depth of talent from which to make his four captains picks ahead of the match against Ernie Els's International team at Royal Melbourne.

Needling and jabbing

"I've been pretty consumed by it," he said, adding his return to fitness made it more likely that he would use one of his wildcards on himself.

"It made me more hopeful that I could play this week, play Hero and play Australia," said Woods, who has dropped one place to number 10 in Monday's new world rankings.

"The way I was feeling towards the middle part of the year, it was going to be a tall order to be able to do it all."

If Woods burns one of his picks on himself that leaves him the difficulty of choosing three players from the likes of US Open champion, Gary Woodland, Tony Finau, Rickie Fowler, Kevin Kisner and Jordan Spieth. Woods also wants to come back to Japan next year for Olympics. — AFP

NBA SEASON

Lakers, Clippers set to sizzle

Los Angeles, Oct. 21: It's a whole new ballgame in the NBA, where a seismic shift in star talent has flung the door wide open to an array of 2020 title contenders.

The NBA, whose sudden row with China promises to linger, will be hoping on-court excitement in the wake of unexpected off-season moves will pull attention from simmering tensions when the 2019-20 campaign tips off on Tuesday.

With Kevin Durant gone and Klay Thompson ruled out for the first half of the season after knee surgery, the Golden State Warriors' march to the finals that has defined the past five seasons looks to be a thing of the past. Stephen Curry says a championship is "still the



Lakers' Devontae Cacok (left) and Warriors' Marquese Chriss in action during their game on Friday. — AP

goal" for him, Draymond Green and the rest of the Warriors' new-look team after Golden State fell to the Toronto Raptors in last year's title series. But just as the Warriors

open their glitzy new \$1.4 billion Chase Arena in San Francisco, the center of gravity in the still powerful Western Conference has shifted south. The Los Angeles

Clippers are the top pick to contend in a survey of NBA general managers, thanks to the arrival of Kawhi Leonard from the reigning champion Toronto Raptors and Paul George from Oklahoma City.

The revamped Clippers are out to usurp the Lakers as Los Angeles' top team, although the LeBron James-led Lakers won't go quietly.

A "very motivated" James, whose first campaign in LA ended with him missing the playoffs for the first time since 2005, says the team is ready to contend with former New Orleans Pelicans star Anthony Davis lining up alongside Dwight Howard, Kyle Kuzma and newly arrived Danny Green. — AFP

LAKERS' KUZMA RULED OUT FOR OPENING MATCH

Los Angeles, Oct. 21: The Los Angeles Lakers say Kyle Kuzma won't play when they open the NBA season against the Los Angeles Clippers on Tuesday as he continues to recover from a stress reaction in his left foot.

Kuzma, who averaged 18.7 points and 5.5 rebounds per game last season for the Lakers, was hurt while he was with the United States team in the run-up to the World Championships in China.

He was cleared for non-contact practices after the Lakers returned from playing two NBA pre-season games in China last week. Lakers coach wants to see Kuzma do more work. — AFP

ANOTHER LANDMARK IN SIGHTS FOR FEDERER

Basel, Oct. 21: Roger Federer will check off another landmark on Monday when he starts his bid for a 10th Basel title by playing the 1,500th match of his career.

The 38-year-old begins his bid for his 103rd title against German qualifier Peter Gojowczyk.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion has beaten the German twice - including at Indian Wells last March. "My preparation had to be a little faster than usual since I have to start Monday," said Federer ahead of the Swiss Indoors tournament, which he first attended as a ballboy.

"I've already practiced Friday and Saturday in Basel. I hope to really start strong and have a great indoor season." Federer, who has made the Basel final on all of his last 12 visits, owns ATP titles this season in Dubai, Miami and Halle.

Despite not adding to his tally of majors, he still stands at 47-8 for the year; a record bettered only by eternal rival Rafael Nadal, whose triumphs at Roland Garros and the US Open have taken the Spaniard to 19 Grand Slams.

Federer made the final at Wimbledon in July where he had two match points before losing to Novak Djokovic in a five-set epic. — AFP

Rublev, Bencic win Kremlin Cup title

Moscow, Oct. 21: Russia's Andrey Rublev celebrated his 22nd birthday in style by clinching the Kremlin Cup on Sunday to bag his second career title.

The sixth-seeded Rublev eased past France's Adrian Panarino, who was runner-up to another Russian Karen Khachanov last year, 6-4, 6-0 in a one-sided final.

Rublev, the world number 31 whose first title came in Umag in Croatia in 2017, had never won a match at his hometown tournament before this week.

"I'm at a loss. I can't find the right words for what it means to me to win here," Rublev said.

"I grew up with this tournament. I spent my whole childhood at the Kremlin Cup. I will remember this tournament and this win for many years, and I'll hopefully be playing this tournament for many years down the road."

In the women's final, Belinda Bencic fought back from a set down to beat home star Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova 3-6, 6-1, 6-1.

The victory came a day after the 22-year-old Swiss clinched the final slot at the season-ending WTA Finals in Shenzhen, a tournament boasting record \$14 million (12.53 million euros) prize money.

It is the first time that Bencic has reached the WTA Finals where she will line up with Ashleigh Barty, Karolina Pliskova, Simona Halep, Bianca Andreescu, Naomi Osaka, Petra Kvitova and Elina Svitolina. "It feels unbelievable right now. I still can't imagine it," Bencic said. Earlier this season Bencic won the WTA event in Dubai and later reached the final at the Mallorca Open. — AFP

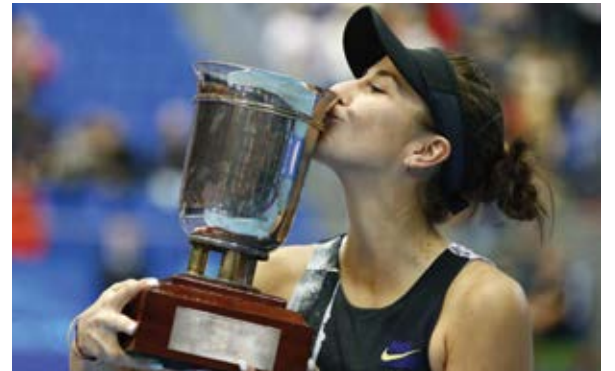
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Earlier this season Bencic won the WTA event in Dubai and later reached the final at the Mallorca Open. — AFP



Belinda Bencic of Switzerland kisses her trophy after final win over Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova of Russia. — AP



Not quite champions

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola believes his side are still not strong enough to count themselves as realistic contenders to win the Champions League for the first time

French toast on Sindhu's mind

Paris, Oct. 21: World champion P. V. Sindhu would look to snap her recent run of early exits when she begins her women's singles campaign at the \$750,000 French Open badminton tournament, beginning here on Tuesday. Since claiming her maiden World Championships title in August, Sindhu has looked awfully out-of-form as she had failed to cross the second round in three tournaments. She faltered in the second and first rounds at the China Open and Korea Open respectively last month. Sindhu again exited in the second round in straight games against Korea's An Se Young in Denmark Open last week. The Olympic silver medallist looked a tad slow in her movement in the last three tournaments, showing signs of dip in her form. Seeded fifth in the tournament, Sindhu, a 2017 semifinalist, will be up against Canada's world number 9 Michelle Li, who has beaten the Indian in the past twice. If Sindhu gets past the early rounds, the world number 6 Indian is likely to face top seed Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei in the quarterfinals. World number 8 Saina Nehwal, who is also taking part in this BWF World Tour Super 750 event, has also been struggling with her fitness and has made three first-round exits in her last three tournaments. The 29-year-old, who had finished runner-up at the 2012 edition, will meet Hong Kong's Cheung Ngan Yi in the opening round. In the men's singles, 2017 champion Kidambi Srikanth too will be desperate to turn around his poor run in form when he steps out at the Stade Pierre de Coubertin here. However, it will not be an easy outing for the world number 9 Indian as he opens his campaign against second seed Chinese Taipei's Chou Tien Chen. Parupalli Kashyap would look to prove that the first-round exit last week at Denmark Open was an aberration when he locks horns with Hong Kong's NG Ka Long Angus. Sameer Verma, who had reached the semifinals of the World Tour Finals last December, will meet Japan's Kenta Nishimoto in the opening round. World number 12 B. Sai Praneeth, who had claimed a bronze at the World Championships, will once again face the legendary Lin Dan of China in the opening round. In the doubles, the women's pair of Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy will square off against fifth seeded Korean duo of Lee So Hee and Shin Seung Chan. The men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty face the Dutch combination of Jelle Maas and Robin Tabeling. Another men's doubles pair of Manu Attri and B. Sumeeth Reddy and the mixed duo of Satwiksairaj and Ashwini are also in the fray. — PTI

IT'S A RED LIGHT

Liverpool's unbeaten run halted by Manchester United

Manchester, Oct. 21: Liverpool failed to record a record-equalling 18th straight Premier League win, but Adam Lallana's late equaliser saved the European champions from a shock defeat at Manchester United in a 1-1 draw on Sunday. Marcus Rashford's controversial goal handed Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's struggling Red Devils a 1-0 half-time lead, but they could not hold out for a much-needed victory as they left substitute Lallana unmarked at the back post to level with five minutes to play. Liverpool move six points clear of Manchester City at the top of the table, but will still feel this was a missed opportunity to inflict more pain on a United side sitting 13th in the Premier League, just two points off the relegation zone. The two most successful sides in English football could not have come into the game in more contrasting form. However, United answered Solskjaer's calls to rise to the occasion in style. Liverpool were without Mohamed Salah through injury and the Egyptian's pace and trickery was badly missed. The visitors were able to welcome back goalkeeper Alisson Becker for the first time in two months after a calf injury, but the Brazilian was rarely tested as United were happy to sit back and counter-attack. Solskjaer changed his formation to a 3-5-2 in an attempt to limit Liverpool's flying full-backs Trent Alexander-Arnold and Andy Robertson and it was largely effective as the hosts restricted the league leaders to precious few chances. Liverpool's best opening before the break came when Sadio Mane finally found some space to counter-attack, but from his cut-back Roberto Firmino fired too close to David de Gea. United had not scored in their two previous matches prior to the international break, but finally produced a moment of quality going forward to take the lead, even if fortune was also on their side for the goal to stand. Victor Lindelof looked to have upended Divock Origi in half-way, but no foul was given by Martin Atkinson and as United broke forward, Daniel James's cross perfectly picked out Rashford to prod past Alisson. Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp was furious on the touchline even before a VAR review failed to overturn the decision. — AFP



Manchester United's Scott McTominay (left) vies for the ball with Sadio Mane of Liverpool during their English Premier League match at the Old Trafford stadium in Manchester on Sunday. The match ended in a 1-1 draw. — AP

Inter close gap at the top

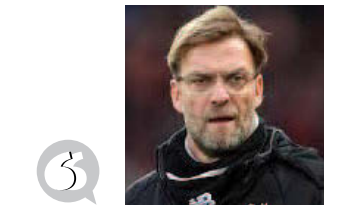
Milan, Oct. 21: Inter Milan held off a late Sassuolo surge to win 4-3 and keep pace with leaders Juventus in Serie 'A' on Sunday as Claudio Ranieri settled for a goalless draw against former club Roma in his first game as Sampdoria coach. Romelu Lukaku and Lautaro Martinez each bagged a brace for Inter in a seven-goal thriller to keep Antonio Conte's side second, a point behind Juventus who beat Bologna 2-1 on Saturday. The match at Sassuolo's Mapei Stadium was briefly interrupted before the break after a parachutist inexplicably landed on the pitch just as Lukaku was about to take a penalty. The man was quickly led off by security agents as players and fans looked on bewildered. Then the former Manchester United striker slotted in to give Inter a 3-1 lead. Martinez had opened the scoring after two minutes. He added a penalty after 71 minute, following Lukaku's quick-fire double on 38 and 45 minutes. Inter were in control 4-1 with 20 minutes to go, when Antonio Conte brought on winger Matteo Politano and midfielder Valentino Lazaro for their first appearances this season. Then Filip Djuricic (74) and Jeremie Boga (81) hit back for the hosts to add to Domenico Berardi's first-half goal. Inter held on for a win after consecutive defeats against Barcelona in the Champions League and Juventus in Serie A. "Once it goes to 3-1 and 4-1, it should be over," said Lukaku who has now scored five Serie 'A' goals in eight games. "In the first half, we did everything well. However, we should have scored in the first 15 minutes after the restart to really kill off the match. The positive we take is that we got the three points, but we need to defend better than that," he said. — AFP

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SUSHILA SURE HOCKEY SIDE WILL MAKE TOKYO

Bhubaneswar, Oct. 21: Midfielder Sushila Chanu is confident of the Indian women's hockey team qualifying for the Tokyo Olympics as she feels the country has made a lot of improvement in the last three years. The Indian team, which returned to the Olympic fold in Rio in 2016 after a gap of 36 years, plays against United States here on November 1 and 2 for a berth in next year's Tokyo Games. "We know how it felt representing India at Olympics when we qualified for it after a 36-year gap in Rio. However, when we came back from that outing, there was a unanimous feeling around the group that we need to push ourselves and make sure we consistently put in the performances which will help us in qualifying for the next edition," Sushila said. "We have made huge strides from the previous Olympics, and now we are all very determined to secure our place in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics," said the 26-year-old Sushila who captained the side in 2016 Rio Olympics. "We have 10 players in this current side who were there in Rio as well, and all of us collectively want to experience that feeling again. Not just that, we want to win a medal for the country this time in Tokyo," said the midfielder from Manipur. — PTI



There was clear contact and Divock Origi goes down. They carried on and counter-attacked. — Jurgen Klopp, Liverpool manager cries foul over draw with Man U

Seeded players lose at squash

Chennai: There were a number of upsets on the penultimate day of the Sub-Junior/Junior National Championships at the Indian Squash Academy (ISA) here on Monday. Higher-seeded players went down in four different categories (Boys Under-11, Boys Under-15, Girls Under-13 and Girls Under-15) in the semi-finals. In the Girls Under-15 final four stage, local girl Pooja Arthi fought hard to defeat seed No.1 Kaavya Bansal (Maharashtra) 11-6, 11-6, 4-11, 7-11, 11-4 in a see-saw duel. Unseeded Diya Yadav of Maharashtra reached the Girls Under-13 final by beating second seed Unnati Tripathi (Uttarakhand) 12-10, 11-4 11-5. In the Boys Under-11 section, Aryaveer Dewan (Delhi) upset top seed Agastya Bansal in straight games (11-1, 12-10, 11-3) to sail into the summit clash. Tamil Nadu's Darshil Parasampuria also secured a shock 8-11, 11-6, 11-1, 11-3 win, overcoming Subhash Choudhary (Rajasthan), seeded second. — PTI

Ocean of support for football body

Mumbai: The Western India Football Association (WIFA) has further strengthened their relationship with the Oceania Football Confederation (OFC) and is implementing the 'OFC Just Play' programme. The theme of 'OFC Just Play' is about spreading the awareness of sanitation and hygiene among young footballers. OFC General Secretary Franck Castillo and Fiji Football Association President and FIFA Council Member Rajesh Patel paid a visit here to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between OFC and WIFA. The programme will be delivered by WIFA, OFC's national implementing partner in India. Souter Vaz, General Secretary of WIFA, and Henry Menezes led the WIFA signing delegation and discussions. "We thank the OFC for their valuable support to the WIFA-Just Play in India. We ensure our strong commitment towards this programme," said Vaz in a media release. — PTI

SHOOTERS IN UGLY SPAT AT THE RANGES

New Delhi: The National Rifle Association of India's Athletes Commission on Monday launched an inquiry into the scuffle involving two marksmen inside the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range here, promising appropriate action at the earliest. The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has cancelled the membership of the two marksmen — Babar Khan and Yoginder Pal Singh — while the national federation referred the matter to its Athletes Commission, headed by former international shooter Morad Ali Khan. Ugly scenes were witnessed at the range on Sunday when the two errant shooters got into a fight after an argument regarding the scheduling of rounds. "The process of inquiry has started and we will come out with the findings as soon as possible, and then pass our recommendation to the NRAI president for appropriate action. I will call not just the two shooters involved but all those present there at the time of incident, the inquiry will be very detailed," Morad said. Earlier, the breach of discipline had forced the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) to act against the shooters. "The NRAI has referred the matter to the Athletes Commission and asked them to look into it, send them a notice and launch an inquiry. Meanwhile, their 'pay and play' scheme membership has been cancelled by SAI," an official of the federation had said. — PTI

Ronaldo's Juve ready to attack left, right, centre

Rome, Oct. 21: Juventus forward Cristiano Ronaldo gave coach Maurizio Sarri a vote of confidence on Monday when he said he was happy with the "more attacking" approach the club had adopted since Sarri came on board in the summer. "I think the team is getting better," said Ronaldo on the eve of Juve's Champions League Group 'D' meeting with Lokomotiv Moscow. "We are getting more and more confident. We are playing a different brand of football, more attacking. I like the way he (Sarri) wants the team to play. We are creating more opportunities, we have more confidence in ourselves, I'm happy with these changes," Ronaldo said. "Maybe we could score a little more but I'm proud of what we are doing," he added. So far this season, Ronaldo has scored five goals in nine games and was on target at the

Live on	TV
CHAMPIONS LEAGUE	Galatasaray vs Real Madrid from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony SIX, HD
Shakhtar Donetsk vs Dinamo Zagreb from 10.25 pm on Sony Six, HD	Manchester City vs Atalanta from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony TEN 1, HD
Atletico vs Leverkusen from 10.25 pm on Sony TEN 2, HD	Tottenham vs Crvena Zvezda from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony TEN 3, HD
Juventus vs Lokomotiv Moskva from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony TEN 2, HD	Club Brugge vs Paris Saint-Germain from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony ESPN, HD

weekend when Juventus beat Bologna 2-1 to consolidate top spot in Serie 'A'. "My role hasn't changed, perhaps I have a bit more freedom," he said. "I am happy because, bit by bit, we are getting to where Juventus ought to be. We have a different coach, a different system, new players. We changed in order to improve," he said. Last week, the five-time Ballon d'Or winner scored his 700th career goal while playing for Portugal. "That's already in the past. I want to move on, reach new heights to help the team. I want to play and help the team win trophies. Of course I am proud of the individual records but the priority is to win games for Juventus and Portugal," Ronaldo said. The Italian champions top Group 'D' in the Champions League having drawn with Atletico Madrid and beaten Bayer Leverkusen 3-0 in the last round of games. — AFP



Tottenham Hotspur's English defender Eric Dier takes part in a drill during a training session at Tottenham's Enfield Training Centre in north London on Monday, ahead of their UEFA Champions League Group 'B' match against Crvena Zvezda. — AFP

Gritty NorthEast hold Bengaluru

Bengaluru FC and NorthEast United played out a goalless draw in the second match of the Indian Super League at the Sree Kanteereva Stadium on Monday amidst relentless rain. This was the first time a game ended in a stalemate since the Blues entered the ISL. Coach Carles Cuadrat opted for a 4-3-3 line up with a three-man midfield with Dimas Delgado, Harmanjot Khabra and Raphael Augusto while North East started Asomah Gyan as a lone striker in a 4-2-3-1 formation. BFC started on the right note maintaining possession that restricted the Highlanders to playing on the break and the first chance came from the new signing Ashique Kurinyan. The former Pune City FC player deployed as a left-back picked the ball near the halfway mark and sprinted down the left, bypassing the North East United defence and drilled a shot across the goal. Another chance went begging as the Blues could not divert one on target as Sunil Chhetri drove a loose ball that evaded the near post. Udanta Singh then missed a glorious chance after being played by Raphael Augusto. The BFC winger shot wide of the target with only the goalkeeper to beat. NorthEast got into the groove as Martin Chaves had the first sight on goal after linking up with Gyan. Gurpreet Sandhu made a routine save. Gyan then put the ball in the net but his position was ruled offside. A defensive error almost gifted North East the opening goal late in the first half after Rahul Bheke headed a ball back to Sandhu only for it to be intercepted by Chaves who pulled it wide. Gyan rattled the goal post in the second half with his left foot, after being played in by Chaves but once again was ruled offside.