

# THE ASIAN AGE

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Deepika Padukone in talks to do a dark romantic film

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I'm here to make Kohli's life easier, not difficult, says Sourav

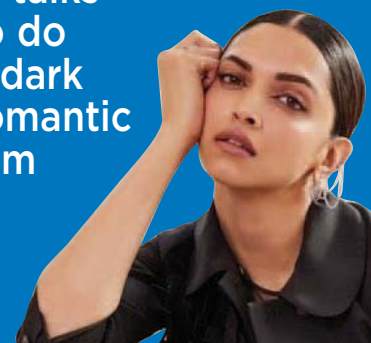
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## WINDOWS



A demonstrator protests on top of the monument of Chile's former Prez General Manuel Baquedano during an anti-government march in Santiago, Chile, on Tuesday.

## Indian mission was also target of Lanka Easter terror: Report

New Delhi: The select committee of Sri Lankan Parliament in its report on Easter day terror attack has said that as per intelligence information the Indian high commission and a hotel frequented by high number of Indians were the potential targets of the attack. "It was also conveyed that the Indian high commission in Sri Lanka was to be a target. No dates were given as to when the attack was to be carried out," it said.

## US lifts sanctions against Turkey

Washington: President Donald Trump on Wednesday announced the lifting of US sanctions against Turkey and defended his abrupt pullout from Syria, saying "let someone else fight" over the "blood-stained" country.

## Justice Mishra won't recuse in land case

New Delhi: The SC on said that Justice Arun Mishra would not recuse from hearing a matter relating to the correctness of the two conflicting judgments on the payment of compensation under the old land acquisition law.

## COUNTERPOINT



Will it be happy Diwali or Diwala? We spent all our money in polls!

## WEATHER

Max: 32°C  
Min: 18°C  
RH: 47%  
Rainfall: 10%  
Forecast: Sunny

## ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Ashwayuja Bahula Ekadasi till 10.15 pm  
Star: Magha till 1.14 pm  
Varjyam: 8.29 pm to 9.55 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 10.05 am to 10.51 am, 2.41 pm to 3.27 pm  
Rahukalam: 1.30 pm to 3 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 5.43 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.27 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.25 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 3.03 PM

# BSF jawan killing by Bangla Guards unprovoked: Probe

RAJIB CHOWDHURI  
KOLKATA, OCT. 23

An investigation by the Border Security Force (BSF) into the killing of its head constable Vijay Bhan Singh in firing by the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in Murshidabad on October 17 has revealed that the shooting was "unprovoked and unwarranted" and was carried out after the flag meeting between the two forces over Indian fisherman Pranab Mondal's detention.

The probe, conducted by BSF South Bengal Frontier, has identified the accused as BGB Havildar Sayed who opened fire on the BSF boat, and given a detailed account of how the attack took place under the nose of BGB's post commander at Charghat although he was known to BSF border out post (BOP) commander at Kakmarichar.

The startling findings come a few days after Bangladesh home minister

## 'FIRING FOLLOWED FLAG MEETING'

BSF head constable Vijay Bhan Singh was killed and one of his comrades injured when his patrol team came under fire from the Bangladeshi Border Guards in Murshidabad on October 17



Vijay Bhan Singh  
BSF probe finds BGB firing was 'unprovoked and unwarranted' and was carried out after flag meeting between two forces

Noting that a 'misunderstanding between the forces' led to the killing of BSF head constable, A. Khan Bangla home minister Asaduzzaman Khan said last week that he was confident that the incident won't have an impact on bilateral ties

Asaduzzaman Khan said a "misunderstanding" between the BSF and BGB had led to the shooting.

On October 17, three Indian fishermen were apprehended by BGB patrol. Of these, one, Pranab Mondal, was pulled inside the BGB's trawler while the other two were let off, but told to go to BSF post in Kakmarichar and convey the message that the post commander of

Charghat has asked for a flag meeting to release the Indian fisherman.

According to the report, the BSF's commander proceeded for the flag meeting while taking adequate precaution, which included putting an orange flag of the appropriate dimension on the speed boat to indicate a friendly move.

When the BSF team drew close to the pre-designated point, they were guided by

the BGB personnel on the ground to a point where the depth of water was sufficient for mooring the boat as twin-engine boats require at least three to four feet deep water for the same.

The BSF team then parked the boat, took out the heavy iron anchor, placed it on the ground and tied the boat, expecting a friendly environment and

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# Ailing BSNL, MTNL to merge

4G spectrum, bonds, VRS are part of ₹68,751cr package

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

Aiming to revive its two loss making telecom arms, Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL), the government on Wednesday decided to merge the two ailing firms as part of a ₹68,751-crore revival package which includes 4G spectrum allocation, raising sovereign bonds, monetising assets and voluntary retirement scheme for employees.

## Court orders FIR against Kathua SIT members

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 23

A court in Jammu on Tuesday directed the Jammu & Kashmir police to register an FIR against six members of its Special Investigation Team (SIT) that probed the gangrape and murder of an eight-year-old nomad girl in the state's Kathua district in January 2018 for allegedly torturing and coercing witnesses to give false statements.

The order comes four months after six people were convicted in the case. Of these, three main convicts in the gangrape-and-murder case were given life imprisonment.

Judicial magistrate Prem Sagar gave the direction to senior superintendent of police (SSP) of Jammu on an application by Sachin Sharma, Neeraj Sharma and Sahil Sharma. Directing registration of FIR against the then SSP RK Jalla (now retired), ASP Peerzada Naveed, deputy superintendents of police Shetmbari Sharma and Nissar Hussain, sub-inspector Urfan Wani and Kewal Kishore of crime branch of police, court asked SSP (Jammu) to report compliance by next date of hearing on November 11.

The Modi administration's aim is to leverage the spectrum allotment to make BSNL and MTNL compete more effectively in the domestic telecom market

The merger would include the allotment of 4G services at 2016 prices to the two companies with the costs borne entirely by the Central government

Sharing details of the revival package, he said that it includes raising ₹15,000 crore sovereign bonds to meet the immediate capital requirement of both the companies, 4G spectrum allocation worth ₹20,140 crore, ₹29,937 crore for VRS covering 50 per cent of their employees, and

₹3,674 crore for goods and services tax that will be levied on allocation of radiowaves.

"In case of BSNL and MTNL, the government's view is clear. These are strategic assets of India. The entire army network is maintained by BSNL. The VRS package approved by

the Cabinet will give eligible employees 125 per cent of income that they would have earned by serving the company till the age of 60 years. With this decision, we have taken care of the interests of lakhs of employees of these PSUs," Mr Prasad said.

BSNL has around 1.68 lakh employees and MTNL around 22,000. "The VRS is voluntary and nobody can be forced to opt for it," the telecom minister said.

The total debt of both the companies stood at Rs 40,000 crore, of which half is owed by MTNL alone that operates in Delhi and Mumbai. Both the companies have been demanding spectrum

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# HK dumps extradition bill that sparked street protests

Hong Kong, Oct. 23: Hong Kong's government has formally withdrawn an unpopular extradition bill that sparked unruly protests, which morphed into a broader campaign for democratic change in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

The security chief announced in the legislature on Wednesday that the bill was being withdrawn.

Hong Kong's leader had proposed amendments to extradition legislation as a way to resolve a case involving a man wanted



Protest on Wednesday.

for murder in self-ruled Taiwan, who could not be sent to face charges because there was no extradition agreement.

But the proposals sparked widespread fears that residents would be at risk of being sent to mainland China's Communist Party-controlled courts.

Lam was forced to back down and said last month she would drop the bill.

A murder suspect whose proposed deportation to Taiwan was a catalyst for massive anti-government protests in Hong Kong was also released from prison on Wednesday.

The proposed law — which was formally scrapped Wednesday — was prompted by the case of Hong Konger Chan Tong-kai, 20, who is wanted in Taiwan for the 2018 murder of his pregnant girlfriend, Poon Hiu-wing.

— Agencies  
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# Trump hit by envoy's explosive testimony

Washington, Oct. 23: President Donald Trump's impeachment battle hit dangerous new territory Tuesday with what a Democrat called "explosive" testimony supporting allegations that he pressured Ukraine for dirt on a political opponent.

Beset by tensions at home and abroad, Trump sparked yet more controversy with his use of the racially charged word "lynching" to describe his predicament. His impeachment looked ever more likely after the Democratic-led lower house of Congress questioned the acting US ambassador to



Ukraine, Bill Taylor. Mr Taylor is seen as a crucial witness in the case against Trump, who is accused of abusing his power to push Ukraine to investigate one of his main 2020 election rivals, Democrat Joe Biden. The hearing was behind

closed doors, but according to The Washington Post and CNN, Taylor used opening remarks to confirm that the White House repeatedly sought to pressure Ukraine — and said it would not deliver US military assistance without results. Mr Taylor said he

President Trump did insist that President Zelensky go to a microphone and say he is opening investigations of Biden and 2016 election interference that President Zelensky, himself, had to 'clear things up and do it in public'.  
— Bill Taylor

# Centre's move comes ahead of Delhi polls 40L in illegal Delhi colonies set to get ownership rights

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

Less than three months ahead of Assembly elections in Delhi, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave its approval for regularisation of unauthorised colonies. Delhi has 1,797 unauthorised colonies which account for about 40 lakh residents.

While announcing the Cabinet's decisions, Union minister Prakash Javadekar said: "Ownership rights have been given to nearly 40 lakh people living in unauthorised colonies in Delhi. The Cabinet has taken this decision today."

Union housing and urban affairs minister Hardeep Singh Puri said the Centre will move swiftly to execute the decision and bring a bill to this effect in the winter session of Parliament beginning on November 18. He also slammed the Arvind

The decision is for 1,797 unauthorised colonies, which are inhabited by lower income group people. The decision does not apply to 69 affluent colonies identified by the DDA.

Ownership rights will enable residents to get legal status for their properties. With official property documents, property holders will be able to enter into valid property transactions.

The decision will encourage property holders to invest in safe structures, thereby improving the living conditions in these colonies substantially

Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party government, accusing it of trying to "delay" the decision to grant people from low-income groups ownership rights.

Mr Puri said the city government had sought time till 2021 to give the inputs sought from it for taking the decision and added that the Narendra Modi government decided to "take the initiative when it became clear that the Delhi government will do nothing".

The decision is politically significant as it will benefit millions of poor migrants who are crucial to the Assembly election results and had backed the AAP in large numbers in the 2015 Assembly polls.

Welcoming the Union Cabinet's decision, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the Centre has taken an important decision on the long-pending demand of Delhiites. He said: "The Union Cabinet

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# BJP mantri also booked U'khand ex-CM booked by CBI for horse-trading

NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

New Delhi, Oct. 23: The CBI has filed an FIR against former Uttarakhnd chief minister Harish Rawat and his then Cabinet colleague Harak Singh Rawat, who is now a minister in the state's BJP-led government, for alleged attempts of horse trading in 2016, which was caught on tape by an editor of a news channel, officials said on Wednesday.

The agency had conducted a preliminary inquiry into the alleged horse trading attempt on March 23, 2016, when the state was under President's rule.

It sent the tape to the Forensic Science Laboratory, Gandhinagar in Gujarat, for analysis which said that the



Harish Rawat

recording was "genuine" and there was no evidence of any "addition/deletion/morphing" in the video files. The video purportedly showed the Congress leader discussing money to win back the support of disgruntled MLAs who had crossed over to the BJP so that he could get back to power. Recently, the

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# Sonia sets up Congress panel to finetune strategy on key issues

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

Having faced dissenting voices over some key issues like abrogation of Article 370, the Congress party on Wednesday formed a 17-member policy study group which would advise her on crucial upcoming issues like the Citizenship Amendment Bill, National Registrar of Citizens and the strategy

for the coming winter session of Parliament.

The group would be headed by the Congress president Sonia Gandhi herself and would comprise of leaders including her son and former party President Rahul Gandhi, former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal and others.

More on Page 2

# 39 bodies found in truck in Essex, probe ordered

Grays, UK, Oct. 23:

Britain launched a major murder investigation after 39 bodies were found Wednesday in a truck from Bulgaria, as police tried to establish where the victims were originally from. All victims were pronounced dead at the scene in an industrial park in Grays, east of London, triggering revulsion among politicians and once again putting the spotlight on the shadowy people trafficking business. The local Essex Police

force, who are working with immigration officials, said their priority was to try to identify the victims, thought at this stage to be 38 adults and one teenager.

The truck driver, a 25-year-old man from Northern Ireland, has been arrested on suspicion of murder.

"This is a tragic incident where a large number of people have lost their lives," Essex Police chief superintendent Andrew Mariner said in a statement.

More on Page 11



Merge, mismanage, show mega losses, sell cheap to crony capitalists: says Rahul Gandhi on BSNL-MTNL merger



# Counting of votes today in Haryana, Maharashtra

Bypoll results of 51 Assembly, 2 LS seats in 18 states also to be declared

New Delhi, Oct. 23: The stage is set for counting of votes for assembly polls in Haryana and Maharashtra on Thursday with stakes high for Congress, which could not do well in the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year and also for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), which is incumbent in the two states.

Along with the two states, results will also be declared for assembly bypolls to 51 seats across 17 states and will have political implications for the parties in power.

The BJP and its allies held nearly 30 of these assembly seats, while the Congress had won 12 and the rest were with regional parties. The bypolls are a battle of prestige for the parties as the results will not substantially change the seat arithmetic in the legislatures and will be more of a morale booster.

A moderate turnout of 57 per cent was recorded in the by-elections held on Monday.

Among the states ruled by the BJP and its allies, counting will be held for the maximum 11 seats in Uttar Pradesh, followed by six in Gujarat, five in Bihar, four in Assam and two each in Himachal Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

The other states where bypolls were held are Punjab (4 seats), Kerala (5 seats), Sikkim (3 seats), Rajasthan (2 seats) and one seat each in Arunachal Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Puducherry, Meghalaya and Telangana.

Counting of votes will also be held in Satara (Maharashtra) and Samastipur (Bihar) Lok Sabha seats, which were held by the NCP and the LJP respectively.

In politically crucial Uttar Pradesh, the polls are seen as a litmus test for the Yogi Adityanath government which has completed 30 months in office.

—PTI



Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis and his wife Amruta visit Kedarnath temple, in Rudraprayag on Wednesday.

## Fadnavis visits Kedarnath before Maha poll results

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 23

Following in the footsteps of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had visited the Kedarnath shrine in Uttarakhand a day after campaigning for the Lok Sabha elections, Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnavis offered prayers at the holy site, a day before the state election results are to be declared.

Mr Fadnavis on Wednesday performed a puja at the famous Himalayan shrine and spent about an hour at the site talking to priests.

Sharing pictures from his visit, the chief minister tweeted, "Took darshan and blessings at

## 'BJP will not be able to form next govt sans Sena support'

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 23

Senior Shiv Sena leader and spokesperson Sanjay Raut Wednesday asserted that the BJP would not be able to form the next government in Maharashtra without the support of his party. The Sena leader's statement comes on the eve of counting of votes for the high-stake polls.

Talking to a regional news channel, the senior Kedarnath temple this morning. Har Har Mahadev! (sic)"

Mr Fadnavis' visit to the temple was personal and the district administration had no prior information, Mangesh Ghildiyal, the district magistrate of



Sanjay Raut

Sena leader also claimed that his party would win 100 out of the total 124 seats it had contested. The Sena's alliance partner, the BJP, contested 164 out of the 288 seats along with smaller allies. The smaller allies contested on the BJP's lotus symbol.

Rudraprayag, said.

Badrinath-Kedarnath temple committee sources said the chief minister performed puja at the Himalayan shrine and spent about an hour on its premises talking to 'teerth purohiths' (priests).

## Victim stabbed 15 times, post-mortem reveals UP to seek fast-track trial of Tiwari's killers

Lucknow, Oct. 23: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath Wednesday asked officials to seek trial by a fast-track court of the main suspects in the murder of Hindutva outfit leader Kamlesh Tiwari, found in a pool of blood last week at his home here.

Ashfaq Sheikh (34) and Moinuddin Pathan (27), the two men who allegedly killed him, were arrested by the Gujarat anti-terror squad (ATS) on Tuesday evening.

The victim's body bore 15 stab or cut wounds and a gunshot injury, according to a post-mortem report.

Adityanath Wednesday announced immediate financial help of ₹15 lakh to Tiwari's wife and sanctioned a house for the family in Sitapur district's thesil Mehmoodabad, an official said.

Expressing satisfaction over the arrest of the two men, Tiwari's family called for capital punishment. "I am very happy with the arrest of the killers. Now, they should



Kamlesh Tiwari

be hanged," victim's mother, Kusum Tiwari, told reporters.

Adityanath directed officials that the main accused should be tried in a fast-track court, a UP government statement said.

Tiwari, 45, was found murdered at his home in Naka Hindola area of Lucknow last Friday.

He was shot once in the face and the bullet was embedded below his chin.

According to experts, it appears that the assailants first fired at Tiwari. They apparently tried to fire a second bullet but it got stuck in the pistol.

Tiwari was then repeatedly stabbed with a knife

and another pointed object, the post-mortem report indicated.

There were two knife wounds on the right side of the victim's chest, seven wounds caused by some pointed object on its left side, a cut on the throat 6 cm below the chin, a deep wound mark on the neck, two wound marks on the left shoulder, a wound mark on the back and another on the right shoulder.

The police has already recovered the pistol and the knife allegedly used by the two men arrested Tuesday by the Gujarat ATS near Shamlaji on the state's border with Rajasthan.

Preliminary interrogation revealed that they committed the crime "in retribution to the purported statements by Tiwari", an ATS release said in Ahmedabad.

Sheikh, a resident of the Limbayat area in Surat, used to work as a medical representative. Pathan, a resident of Umarwada, was employed as a food delivery boy.

—PTI

### SHORT TAKES

#### Cong dissolves its Gujarat unit

New Delhi: The Congress on Wednesday dissolved its Gujarat unit, but asked the Pradesh Congress Committee chief, Amit Chavda, to continue.

The Congress president has approved the proposal for dissolving the panel of office bearers and executive committee of Gujarat Pradesh Congress Committee. The PCC president shall remain unchanged, an official communication from All India Congress Committee general secretary organisation K.C. Venugopal said.

The Gujarat unit of the party would be revamped and a new body would be formed soon, sources said, but the dates have not been announced. —PTI

#### Priyanka to visit Amethi today

Amethi: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will visit Amethi on Thursday to attend a party programme, a spokesperson said. Ms Vadra will arrive at the Amethi office in the afternoon and take part in the swearing-in function of newly-appointed district unit president Pradeep Singh, party spokesperson Anil Singh said. Besides addressing the party workers, she is also likely to meet them individually, Mr Singh said. This would be Ms Vadra's second visit to the constituency after the defeat of her brother, Rahul Gandhi, in the Lok Sabha election. She was here on September 27 to meet the family members of Ram Autar, who had allegedly died in police custody.

—PTI

#### MP booked for obstructing cops

Hyderabad: Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee working president and MP A Revanth Reddy has been booked for allegedly obstructing police personnel from performing their duty, police said on Wednesday.

On October 21, Revanth Reddy was among several leaders and workers of the Congress taken into preventive custody in the city and other districts as they attempted to lay siege to the Pragathi Bhavan, chief minister K Chandrababhu Naidu's official residence complex-cum-office here, they said. —PTI

#### EX-BJP MLA BOOKED OVER COMMUNAL RANT

Bhopal, Oct. 23: Former BJP MLA from Bhopal Central, Surendra Nath Singh, has been booked for allegedly promoting enmity between two groups in view of his "communal rant" over his daughter's association with a man from a different faith, the police said on Wednesday. Singh allegedly made the controversial remarks after his daughter Bharti Singh (28), who had been "missing" for some days, was brought to Bhopal from Maharashtra along with her friend Faheem Khan (32), a resident of Bhopal. "It is not so that only they can form a terrorist organisation. Why can't we also form the same?" Mr Singh had said while speaking to reporters on Tuesday night while his daughter was being counselled at a government centre. Singh was booked under sections 153A (promoting enmity between two groups on ground of religion) and 505 (statements conducing to public mischief) of the Indian Penal Code by the Habibganj Police. "We are in possession of a video in which the former MLA Singh can be heard making a controversial statement," said inspector P. Saxena. He said no arrest is made so far. —PTI



Congress president Sonia Gandhi hands over a chadar to a party delegation for offering at Dargah Aala Hazrat Bareilly Sharif on his 101st Urs, at 10 Janpath, New Delhi.

## SC stays HC trial of K'taka bypoll order

PARMOD KUMAR NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

The Supreme Court on Wednesday stayed proceedings before Karnataka high court relating to the challenge to the Election Commission's notification rescheduling byelection to fill 17 vacancies, caused by the disqualification of rebel legislators belonging to earlier ruling Congress-JD (S) alliance, in the state Assembly.

A bench of Justice N.V. Ramana, Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Krishna Murari, while staying the proceedings before the high court, did not interfere with the proceedings on a petition seeking that as the Model Code of Conduct that came into force in the wake of earlier September 21, 2019, the notification should continue to remain in operation. "In view of the proceedings going on before this court relating to the conduct of byelections for the Karnataka legislative

Assembly vide notification dated 27-09-2019, issued by the election commission of India, we think it is appropriate to stay the further proceedings... pending adjudication before the high court of Karnataka at Bengaluru," said the order by the top court.

The order came on a plea by the Election Commission seeking that the proceedings before the Karnataka high court be put on hold. One Venkatesa Setty had challenged the revised election schedule by the poll panel.

The bypolls to 17 Assembly seats were deferred after top court had on September 26 said that it would decide on the petitions by the disqualified legislators challenging their unseating for the then Speaker K.R. Ramesh Kumar for the rest of the term of the Assembly till 2023.

The then Speaker Ramesh Kumar, while rejecting the resignations of 17 legislators, disqualified them.

## Merkel on 3-day visit next week

New Delhi, Oct. 23: German Chancellor Angela Merkel will pay a three-day visit to India beginning October 31 with an aim to further broadbase strategic ties in an array of key areas including defence and security.

Official sources said Ms Merkel and Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in their wide-ranging talks, will particularly focus on giving a new momentum to the bilateral ties by significantly scaling up cooperation in several sectors.

During her visit from October 31 to November 2, Merkel will also meet top executives of major Indian companies which are active in Germany. The two sides are likely to explore ways to further ramping up ties in areas of defence, security, renewable energy, high technology, skill development, railways, education, water and waste management. —PTI

## 6 Opp. MLAs join BJP ahead of J'khand polls

NAYEAR AZAD PATNA, OCT. 23

Six MLAs belonging to the Congress and other regional parties in Jharkhand joined the BJP on Wednesday.

The political development is being seen as a major boost to the saffron party, which has been making an effort to retain power in Jharkhand for a second term. All the six legislators were inducted into the BJP in the presence of chief minister Raghubar Das.

Sources claim that legislators who joined the BJP are likely to be fielded from their sitting constituencies during the Assembly poll, which is to be held later this year. Among the six MLAs who joined BJP on Wednesday three are from Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) and two from the Congress. One independent legislator also joined the saffron brigade along with others.

### Several retired bureaucrats including former Director General of Police (DGP) D.K. Pandey, were among those who were inducted into the BJP.

JMM legislators who have joined the BJP include Kunal Sarangi, Jai Prakash Bhai Patel and Chamra Linda. Two Congress MLAs who switched sides are former state president Sukhdeo Bhagat and veteran leader Manoj Yadav.

Several retired bureaucrats including former Director General of Police (DGP) D.K. Pandey and former IPS officer and Congress leader Arun Oraon were also among those who were inducted into the BJP.

Both Sukhdeo Bhagat and Manoj Yadav had contested Lok Sabha polls earlier this year but were

defeated by BJP candidates. Sources said that Mr Bhagat took the decision to quit the Congress due to his political differences with party's state president Rameshwar Oraon whom he has been holding responsible for his defeat in the Lok Sabha polls.

Mr Das while welcoming the legislators said that a new "political culture" had emerged under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and party chief Amit Shah and "those who are against the politics of vote bank and dynasty have left the Congress and JMM and joined the BJP".

The BJP in alliance with the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) had won 42 seats (BJP-37 and AJSU-5) in the 2014 assembly elections. However, the strength went up 48 after six Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (JVM) legislators joined the BJP in February 2015.

## Cong sets up panel to fine-tune strategy

SREERPARNA CHAKRABARTY NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

Having faced dissenting voices over some key issues like abrogation of Article 370, the Congress party on Wednesday formed a 17-member policy study group which would advise Congress president Sonia Gandhi on crucial upcoming issues like the Citizenship Amendment Bill, National Registrar of Citizens and the strategy for the coming winter session of Parliament.

The group would be headed by Mrs Gandhi herself and would comprise of leaders including her son and former party president Rahul Gandhi, for-

### The first meeting of the group has been called by Mrs Gandhi at 10 am on October 25.

mer Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Ahmed Patel, Randeep Surjewala, Sushmita Dev, Rajiv Satav and Kapil Sibal. "Whenever the Congress president needs advice on key policy issues, this group will meet and deliberate," Mr Venugopal told this newspaper.

The first meeting of the group has been called by Mrs Gandhi at 10 am on October 25, just a day after the results of Assembly in Maharashtra and Haryana are announced. Though the Congress is expected to continue its downward spiral as far as

public opinion was in its favour. The party had initially put forward a nuanced stand, saying though it was in-principle in support of the decision, it opposed the manner in which it was effected. There were, in fact, acrimonious scenes at a meeting of the Congress Working Committee in August, where Mr Gandhi asked Jyotiraditya Scindia to give an explanation for his tweet supporting the abrogation of Article 370.

Following this, a meeting of all its general secretaries, state in-charges, chairpersons of AICC departments and MPs was called to explain the party's stand on the issue.

Confusion was galore in the Congress' reaction to the event, with many leaders openly saying they supported the decision as





## Bihar law & order

### RJD leader Tejawshi Yadav slams Nitish Kumar over law and order situation in Bihar



The JeM is trying to coordinate with every militant group in Kashmir

— Dilbag Singh, J&K DGP

### SHORT TAKES

#### Raj IAS officer duped of ₹6.10L

Jaipur: A conman committed a cyber fraud with an IAS officer posted in Udaipur by sending a fake Know Your Customer (KYC) link on her mobile phone and allegedly siphoned-off ₹6.10 lakh from her bank account. Dr T. Shubhamangla, presently posted as sub-divisional magistrate in Jhadi of Rajasthan's Udaipur district, had received a message link on her mobile phone on October 21. "The incident had happened on Monday. I had filled personal information on the KYC link which appeared to be from SBI," Shubhamangla said. — PTI

#### Lady doc alleges sexual abuse

Bhubaneswar: A lady doctor in Boudh district on Tuesday lodged a police complaint against a man for allegedly sexually harassing her in the pretext of marriage. According to the complaint by the lady doctor, one Amulya Kumar Padhi, who worked as a Block Programme Manager, developed love relationship with her two years ago and even promised her to marry her. However, as days continued to pass, when the lady insisted him for marriage, Amulya reportedly rejected her proposal and even threatened to kill her. Dejected, the lady doctor on Wednesday approached the town police seeking justice.

#### SHIVAKUMAR RELEASED FROM TIHAR JAIL

New Delhi: Karnataka Congress leader D.K. Shivakumar was released from Tihar Jail on Wednesday evening following the Delhi high court order granting him bail, said a jail official. He is accused in a money laundering case filed by the Enforcement Directorate (ED). After the court order was received in the evening, he was released following a medical check-up and other formalities at 9.15 pm, the official added. The judge, who granted him bail, also said that Shivakumar, 57, cannot tamper with the evidence as the documents are with the investigating agencies. The ED had challenged his bail plea. Shivakumar was arrested by the ED on September 3 in the money laundering case. He was lodged in Tihar jail under judicial custody and had challenged the trial court's order denying him bail in the case. Shivakumar, a seven-time MLA in Karnataka, was booked along with Haumanthiah — an employee at Karnataka Bhavan in New Delhi — and others for alleged offences under Prevention of Money Laundering Act. — PTI

## Top cop made same claim 5 months ago J&K DG: Qaeda offshoot wiped out from Kashmir

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, OCT. 23

Jammu and Kashmir police on Wednesday claimed that Ansar Gazwat-Ul-Hind (AGH), Al Qaeda's offshoot in India, has been wiped out from Kashmir after the killing of its local chief along with his two associates during a gunfight with the security forces in Rajpora area of southern Pulwama district a day ago.



AGH chief Lehlari

"The Ansar Gazwat-Ul-Hind has been wiped out but some elements, who are over-ground workers (OGW) of the outfit, are there. They suddenly crop up and join militant ranks. But, as of now, it (AGH) has been wiped out from Kashmir," J&K's director general of police, Dilbag Singh said at a press conference here.

The police chief said that among the AGH militants killed in Wednesday's fire fight was his chief Hameed Lone Lehlari alias Haroon Abbad. The two other slain militants were identified by as Naveed Ahmed Tak and Junaid Rashid Bhat.

Lehlari had replaced Zakir Rashid Bhat alias Zakir Musa, who headed Al Qaeda's India cell AGH, after he was killed in a gunfight that took place in Dadasara village of Tral on May 23, this year.

The Ansar Gazwat-Ul-Hind has been wiped out but some elements, who are over-ground workers of the outfit, are there.

— Dilbag Singh, J&K DGP

Even then, Mr Singh had claimed that he was the last surviving cadre of "Ansar Ghazwat-Ul-Hind." He had also said that a new idea of militancy primarily to establish Islamic Caliphate in the restive state introduced by Zakir Musa has ended with his killing.

The police chief said on Wednesday that all the three militants killed on Tuesday were residents of Pulwama district and as per press records, were part of the Zakir Musa group and were wanted by law for their complicity in a series of terror crimes.

He also said that this group of militants was working closely with the Jaish-e-Muhammad (JeM) outfit which is trying to coordinate with other groups in the Valley to carry out attacks.

He said, "The JeM is trying to coordinate with every militant group in Kashmir. The JeM and the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) get their direction from Pakistan on who to target, what type of violence to incite and at which level." He further said, "So, the JeM and the LeT are both trying to coordinate with every group. If you remember, two Gujar brothers were killed in Tral and Pakistani militant Yasir of the JeM was involved in that. He was in contact with this group."

In June this year, a video circulated by AGH through its media channel al-Hurr Media had named Lehlari as its new chief and Ghazi Ibrahim Khalid as his deputy. This came two weeks after the security forces had killed top Kashmiri militant commander Zakir Musa, who had in 2017 revolted against J&K's main indigenous militant outfit Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and was subsequently appointed by Al-Qaeda as the head of its newly created cell in India.

#### Pakistan singer posts pic with suicide jacket, threatens Modi

Islamabad, Oct. 23: A provocative photo posted by Pakistani pop singer Rabi Pirzada in which she was seen wearing a suicide jacket and threatening Prime Minister Narendra Modi for revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir has gone viral in social media.

As the photo appeared on social networking site Twitter, it attracted huge attention with some praising her for her bravery, while others reprimanding the Lahore-based singer-actress for projecting a bad image of the country to the outside world, the urdupoint.Com reported.

In the photo, 27-year-old Pirzada was seen wearing a jacket with explosives attached to it. The provocative picture came at a time when Pakistan has launched an anti-India campaign over the Kashmir issue.

In September, Pirzada had posted a video clip on Twitter in which she was seen posing with pythons and an alligator and threatening to unleash the reptiles on Prime Minister Modi.

After the video went viral, the Punjab Wildlife Protection and Parks Department took legal action against her for keeping wild animals as pets in violation of law.

— PTI

## Justice Mishra won't recuse from land case

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 23



Justice Arun Mishra

The Supreme Court on Wednesday said that Justice Arun Mishra would not recuse from hearing a matter relating to the correctness of the two conflicting judgments on the payment of compensation to the landowners whose lands were acquired prior to 2013 under the old land acquisition law and were yet to be paid compensation.

"I am not recusing", said Justice Mishra heading a five-judge constitution bench also comprising Justice Indira Banerjee, Justice Vineet Saran, Justice M. R. Shah and Justice S. Ravindra Bhat.

Justice Shah said, "We have given a concurring judgment..." While five-judge constitution bench rejected the plea by certain landowners seeking the recusal of Justice Mishra, the court today framed question relating to the interpretation of Section 24(2) of the 2013 law — The Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act.

The question framed on Wednesday by the five-judge constitution

bench would be addressed by both the sides in the course of the hearing that would commence from November 6, 2019. The question finalised by the court are based on the questions suggested by the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and senior counsel Shyam Divan.

The Section 24(2) of the 2013 land acquisition law, the interpretation of which is under consideration of the constitution bench, says that if an award for acquiring land under 1894 land acquisition law has been made five years or more prior to the commencement of 2013 law but physical possession of the acquired land has not been taken or compensation for the same has not been paid then same would stand lapsed. And if government still wants to acquire that land then fresh proceedings under the 2013 land law had to be initiated.

## Freedom of speech is not absolute, says A-G Venugopal SC to examine if free speech can be curtailed

PARMOL KUMAR NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

The Supreme Court on Wednesday commenced hearing on the question whether a minister in a government or a person holding a public office could be saddled with additional restrictions, beyond those provided under the Constitution, on his freedom of speech curbing him from commenting on the matters being investigated by the state agencies.

The core issue being examined by the court is whether the right conferred under Article 19(1)(a) is to be controlled

singularly by the restrictions under Article 19(2) or whether Article 21 too would have any impact on it.

Addressing the question whether "reasonable restriction" spelled out under Article 19(2) could be enlarged to restrict a minister from commenting on sensitive matters being probed by investing agencies, Attorney General K.K. Venugopal pointed to a five-judge constitution bench about the collective responsibility of the government including for the acts of individual ministers. Headed by Justice Arun

Mishra, five-judge constitution bench has Justice Indira Banerjee, Justice Vineet Saran, Justice M.R. Shah and Justice S. Ravindra Bhat.

Addressing the questions to be examined in the course of the hearing Attorney General said the State could proceed against an individual on the ground that his statement violated the fundamental right to life including right to life with dignity of another individual.

Saying that freedom of speech was not "absolute", the AG wondered whether existing restrictions under the Article 19(2) could be

expanded to introduce further restrictions on the freedom of speech of a minister.

At this Justice Mishra queried whether free speech could be restricted by invoking right to life under Article 21 of the constitution on the grounds that affects another persons right to lead a dignified life.

Saying that instead of introducing new restrictions on the right to free speech of a minister, Justice Bhat said that there should be a statutory regime and recourse could be taken under Article 226 to deal with such situation.

## 'File FIR against SIT members'

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, OCT. 23

A court in Jammu on Tuesday directed the Jammu and Kashmir police to register an FIR against six members of its Special Investigation Team (SIT) that probed the gangrape-and-murder of an eight-year-old nomad girl in the state's Kathua district in January 2018 for allegedly torturing and coercing witnesses to give false statements. Judicial magistrate Prem

### KATHUA GANGRAPE AND MURDER CASE

Sagar gave the direction to senior superintendent of police (SSP) of Jammu on an application by Sachin Sharma, Neeraj Sharma and Sahil Sharma, who were witnesses in the case, saying cognizable offences are made out against the six.

In his order, the sub-judge asked the police to register the FIR against Ramesh Kumar Jalla (former SSP Crime Branch, Jammu), Peerzada Naveed (addition-

al superintendent of police Crime Branch, Jammu), Shwetambari Sharma (deputy SP crime branch, Jammu), Nassir Hussain (deputy SP crime branch Jammu) Urfan Wani (sub-inspector crime branch Jammu) and Kewal Kishore (crime branch).

The court order reads, "From the gist of the complaint, cognisable offences are made out against the members of the SIT. Therefore, application of

the applicant under section 153 (3) CrPc is allowed with the direction to SSP Jammu to register FIR against the non-applicants under relevant provisions of law and report compliance by next date of hearing on November 11."

The specially convened Pathankot fast-track court headed by district and sessions judge Tejwinder Singh had in June, this year awarded life imprisonment to the three main convicts in the gangrape-and-murder case.

एस्जेवीएन लिमिटेड  
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Tender Document Fee (₹)	₹ 2,360 only.
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 16,700 only.
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-1, Northern Railway, 3rd Floor, Annex-1, DRM office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time 20.11.2019 up to 15:00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> & Notice board at S&T branch, 3rd Floor, DRM office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.

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No. EE M-I/Sh-S/2019-20/D-989 Dated: 23.10.2019  
Due to some technical error in Tender No. 316897 of NIT No. EE-M-I(Shah-South)/TC/2019-20/10 on e-tendering site, the tender cannot be released. Now, the new tender no. may be read as 317066 instead of 316897.  
The other particulars of the tender are remains same.  
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PayUse BOT23-2019	Ballabhgarh	800	60,000	15,07,741	30,200	2,360
PayUse BOT24-2019	Sahibabad	800	50,000	12,56,451	25,200	2,360
PayUse BOT25-2019	Jind	480	18,000	4,52,322	9,100	1,180
PayUse BOT26-2019	Okhla	800	30,000	7,53,871	15,100	2,360
PayUse BOT27-2019	Shivaji Bridge	800	2,40,000	60,30,965	1,20,700	5,900
PayUse BOT28-2019	Tilak Bridge (A)	500	1,50,000	37,69,353	75,400	3,540
PayUse BOT29-2019	Tilak Bridge (B)	500	1,50,000	37,69,353	75,400	3,540
PayUse BOT30-2019	Sadar Bazar	200	60,000	15,07,741	30,200	2,360

Interested bidders may please visit official website for E-tendering i.e. [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) for further details and submitting tender. Date of bidding close on 18.11.2019 at 11:00 hrs.

**Important Note:**  
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2. The bidder has to register, if not registered earlier with [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) using DSC to participate in tender process. Detailed procedure for registration, system requirements and bidding are also available on [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in).  
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# The Ramayana Ballet: That which repetition cannot age



Leela Venkataraman

■ Lalit Arpan was the annual festival mounted by Shovana Narayan's institution, Asavari. This year it was built around the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and the 111th birthday of poet Ramdhari Singh Dinkar. Film extracts of Asavari's old productions were also screened...



It was all of 63 years ago that the Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, which had been in existence for almost a decade by then, launched the first edition of its magnum opus Ramayana Ballet, with the then Prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru in 1957 donating money from the Prime Minister's Relief Fund for the first Ramlila. Apart from being visited by Presidents and Prime Ministers, and being the first programme to be aired when television came to India in 1967 in B/W and only in satellite villages, Doordarshan has rerecorded this work twice more in black and white and three times more in colour. Not even Ramanand Sagar's *Ramayana* could dent the popularity of this production, which in freestyle technique, not wedded to any classical dance form, makes for universal appeal. From initial shows held at the Ramilila grounds on a stage of magnificent proportions made out of converting a parking lot, to being staged at the Kamani auditorium to its present venue in the open grounds of the Bharatiya Kala Kendra, the ballet had had its shifts — necessitating no mean accommodation in terms of organisation. The soundtape with background dialogues after all the initial research in the well known voices of Manohar Singh, Abhinav Chaturvedi and Shanti Sharma, scripted by Arvind Kumar, Neelabh and Ashk with music in the voices of Shanti Sharma, Jwala Prasad, Jeetendra Singh, Indu Prakash, Anuradha Nirala, Hameed, Manjeet Singh and Mahesh Pandey, have provided the unchanging rock base for the production. From a fortune spent on daily flowers and garlands and borrowed jewellery, to today's handmade flowers and jewellery under the direct artistic guidance of production director Shobha Deepak Singh



(whose own evolution as a producer, over the years this work has gained from), to dancers who had become bynames for the main characters having left, not to speak of production advisors and choreographers, the cast of dancers frequently shifting, change has been a constant factor: In a way the absence of a status quo has helped in injecting new ideas saving the producers from complacency, and ensuring a freshness of approach. While one could see movement segments in the past inspired by different classical styles, the choreography today sees a predominance of Mayurbhaji Chhau like movements along with folk form movements. This multimedia sound and light extravaganza, bridging the gulf between the divine and the human, continues to create its magical world for over two-and-a-half hours of strutting gods and demons. Starting with Valmiki's hidden muse, gushing out as the Ramayana verses, after witnessing the 'Kraunch Vadh' of mating birds thanks to the hunter's cruel arrow, to the coronation of Rama, the story progresses at a very fast clip. Some frozen tableaux of persecution, the rich costumes, the delightful palanquin in which Sita is carried in the scene where she takes leave of her parents proceeding to her newly wedded husband's home, the hut in Panchavati, the myriad lamps in the last scene, Ram and Sita and Lakshman crossing the river on a boat with Guha and much more are all unforgettable images. The best of the characterisations came from the dancer who took the role of Kaikeyi — her slow mind change, the strutting swagger despite being isolated by the angry subjects very convinc-

ingly brought out. Manthara was another very competently portrayed character. The other very evocative role was that of Shabari, sensitively enacted. Anurag Jha as Jatayu, in the threshings of death presents a fine performance. The Bharat Milap scene in one movement of Bharat's prostrate form, from one end of the stage sliding across the entire space to land at Rama's feet at the other end, catches the younger brother's undisguised loyalty. The dancer as Sita suited the role. Upendra Singh as Dashrath and Swapan Mazumdar as Ravan were effective. The role of Vishwamitra, however, neither in physical presence nor enactment, was assertive enough.

**Upendra Singh as Dashrath and Swapan Mazumdar as Ravan were effective. But the actor who played Vishwamitra, was not assertive enough.**

While the backdrop visuals were extremely helpful in portraying actions like Hanuman crossing the sea, or showing the optical illusions of Meghnad assuming a double image, and enriching certain scenes showing eagles like Jatayu zooming through the air long beak in front, they were often for this critic very distracting. Why when a peacock dance is being performed on stage should the backdrop flash a colourful peacock with feathers fanned out dancing? Some of the stage formations got totally lost with the predominance of overwhelming visuals.

Many more Ramlila productions have now commenced all over the capital. Constant provocation for SBKK to keep wringing the new touches!

Seems to have been a week for dance drama productions, with Lalit Arpan, the annual festival mounted by Shovana Narayan's institution Asavari in memory of her mother, the main inspiration behind her artistic career. This year, the festival was built round two significant themes, this being the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi and also the 111th birthday of Rashtrakavi Ramdhari Singh Dinkar. Film extracts of Asavari's old productions, *Sanmati* on Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi based on Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's verses and their production, *Gandhi*, based on Ramachandra Gandhi's play written in 1996, were screened, with the festival curtain-raiser being the conferring of the Lalit Arpan Sammaan on this year's select awardees from the world of art — namely dance critic Dr Sunil Kothari, Shobha Deepak Singh, director Shriram Bharatiya Kala Kendra, Mangatram Sharma, Mohiniyattam dancer Bharati Shivaji and column writer/dancer/teacher of Odissi Sharon Lowen.

Asavari's dance drama *Rashmirathi*, based on Ramdhari Singh Dinkar's work, had as its central figure *Mahabharata*'s Karna, arguably the most unfortunate of all the main players in the epic. Notwithstanding involved rendition, the choreography by Shovana, Mahesh Pawar and Shailaja Nalwade, in an overlay of Kathak pirouettes (chakkars — which gave the viewers a head spin), evoked a restlessness —

the quiet intensity and tragedy of a human situation where Karna, after a life of unfairness, being even in death denied fairness. And Shovana Narayan's female disciple as Karna, when male dancers were in the troupe, despite her genuine efforts, just did not look the role.

Among the solo recitals Shovana's student Komal Biswal reflecting Gandhi's ideas on women's emancipation and empowerment, acquitted herself well. In the other envisaged solo programme dancer Mullah Afzar Khan from Singapore, by including in the programme his student, Purush Priya, who still has a long way to go, botched up his performance, neither nritta in Dhamar and Teental nor the Shiva/Shakti duet based on Ramdhari Dinkar's poem communicating to the audience.

The Swacch Bharat dance ballet by Kavita Thakur and group incorporating Kathak, Mayurbhaji Chhau, and Odissi and Bharatanatyam dances, did a very intelligent job of ensuring within the choreography, short solo spurts for each of the dance forms, with the total crew coming together in a "tadharita radharana dheem tarana". Songs like *Vande Mataram*, "Sur bana hamara" and "Ao ham milke banayenge Swacch Bharat" formed the base for a production where different dance forms blended without getting in one another's way. And symbolising through an amalgamation of dance forms, a larger societal cooperation, the work managed to hold the audience together in the finale, through a theme like Swacch Bharat — without sounding didactic.

The writer is an eminent dance critic

## Rekha: 'I have never taken any kind of training in dance'



Sandip Soparrkar vox trot

Films, films and more films — this is one medium of art which has been ruling our hearts for decades now. Stars in films have been icons in the past and more so today — they not only epitomise beauty and style but are also fabulous examples of elegance and grace. When we look at Indian cinema and its super gorgeous actresses, one actress that comes to our mind is the one and only diva of Indian cinema: Rekha.

Rekha has been a symbol of beauty for almost half a century and there has been no looking back for her since the time she first appeared on the silver screen for the very first time in the 1970 film *Sawan Bhado* directed by Mohan Sehgal.

Bhanurekha Ganesan, better known by her cinema name, Rekha, is truly considered one of the most beautiful Indian film actresses. She is not only known for her drop dead beauty but is also known for her versatility and acknowledged as one of the finest actresses in Indian cinema. Rekha started her career in 1966 as a child actress in the Telugu film *Rangula Ratnam*, though her film debut as a lead happened four years later. Despite the success of several of her early films, she was often panned for her looks and it was not until the mid-to-late 1970s that she got recognition as an actress.

Rekha has acted in more than 200 films in her career spanning over 60

years. Throughout her career, she has often played strong female characters and, apart from mainstream cinema, appeared in arthouse films, known in India as parallel cinema. She has won three Filmfare Awards, two for Best Actress and one for Best Supporting Actress for her roles in the 1980 film *Khubsoorat*, the 1988 film *Khoon Bhari Maang* and the 1996 film *Khiladiyon Ka Khiladi*, respectively.

Her portrayal of a classical courtesan in Muzaffar Ali's 1981 film *Umrao Jaan* won her the National Film Award for Best Actress. Talking about Rekha, Kathak legend Pandit Birju Maharaj told me "Uski aakhe, ussi adaa, lakho ke baatien karte hai (her eyes and her style speak a million words)," and this is so true when she comes on stage to dance — one cannot look anywhere but at her perfect expressions and *adaa* (style).

I have met the ultimate diva of Bollywood at a few occasions: first was at the Mr India contest, where I was a contestant, and during one-on-one interviews, when I came face to face with her, I was speechless on seeing her beauty. Later, I choreographed her in my first film *Zubaidaa*, and then we bumped into each other at many social events. I recollect a few of my dance-based conversations with her and with help of timeless Indian melodies and the magician photographer Jayesh Sheth, I am penning down a few things for you to get a bit of insight into the life of the reclusive and mysterious beauty of Indian cinema — Rekha:

**Are you conscious that of the fact that you are a superstar?**

I am conscious of the fact that everyone thinks that I am a

superstar. For me, I am an artiste.

**To reach this position has been a difficult path for you.**

I got success overnight with my first film, it is only after a few years that I realised that I want to be an artiste.

**Your father and your mother both were well-known actors? Did they ever guide you and help you?**

Yes, my mother did, but like most actors, if you talk, they will say that they always wanted to be an actor since childhood but in my case it was totally different. I never wanted to be an actor — in fact *mujhe toh maar maar ke actor banaya gaya* (I was forced to become an actor) (laughs).

**When did your casual attitude towards films change?**

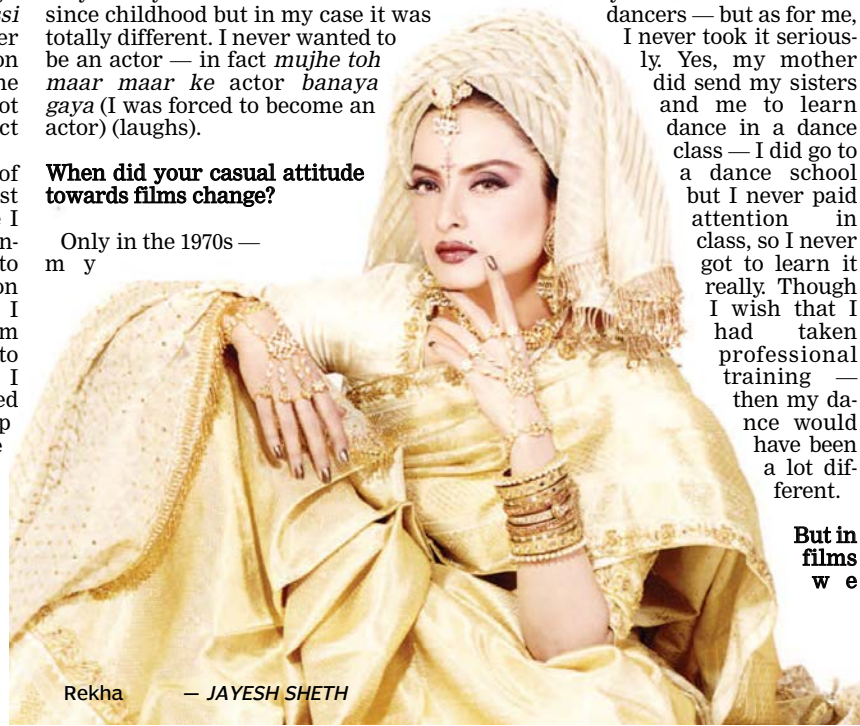
Only in the 1970s — m y

first film was a success — I became an overnight star, but for me what was nice is that my school and my friends loved my film, and that made me happy, I really did not know what I was doing at the start.

**We all love your dance. Where did you learn your dance from?**

You will not believe me, but I have never taken any kind of dance training or have never learnt dance in its literal sense. Everyone in my house, in my family — they dance. My mother, my sisters — all are dancers — but as for me, I never took it seriously. Yes, my mother did send my sisters and me to learn dance in a dance class — I did go to a dance school but I never paid attention in class, so I never got to learn it really. Though I wish that I had taken professional training — then my dance would have been a lot different.

**But in films w e**



Rekha — JAYESH SHETH

have seen so many of your legendary movies?

Yes I agree, but for me dance is about feels — how one feels from inside — if you feel it from your soul then *woh aapke aang aang mein aa jata hai* (it pours out of your body). It is the natural grace that one has which matters and in my family, everyone is very graceful.

**You have worked in so many films. Which has been your favourite?**

At the start, I did not like any of my films — but in 1975, in my film *Ghar* — I felt I should start taking an interest in acting. I loved the rape scene in that film and that is when I decided that I should pay more attention to my acting skills.

**Till date, dancers from all over the world try to copy your Umrao Jaan moves. Did you take any training for all the tehzeeb and adaa that you showcased so perfectly in the film?**

(Smiles) I know it is very difficult to believe — you will not believe it too — but I did not learn the Urdu language or anything of that sort. *Umrao Jaan* was okay — I do not think I deserved a National Award for it. The best part of the film was its *mahol* (atmosphere), and because of which it happened the way it did, and in those days I was going through a certain phase in my life, such that it came on my face too. To add to that, Muzaffar Ali was a fabulous painter and because of the textures of the clothes, the background — all were in complete detail — it is because of this detailing that the film became such a success.

**There has been much gossip and rumour about you in the media. When you read all about it, how do you feel?**

In the beginning, I did not understand anything. I came to Mumbai in 1969, and till 1974, I did not bother, but there was a time when people started to take advantage — they started to paint a picture that was not me. Then from 1975-76 onwards I decided that I will not talk much because what I say is rarely written.

Yes, it is true that Rekha rarely speaks to the press, but whenever she does, she speaks from the heart. Her life has been filled with super success and loads of controversies, yet she fought through it all and made a benchmark that no one can touch. Even today, draped in her exquisite kanjivaram sarees, wearing her trademark red hot lipstick when she makes an entry into any event, performs on stage or comes on a television show, millions lose their hearts and minds. That is the supremacy, the power, the mystery and the enigma of the diva of Indian cinema — the one and only Rekha. This week is her birthday, and through this story, I would like to wish my most favourite Rekha a fantastic year ahead.

**Sandip Soparrkar holds a doctorate in world mythology folklore, is a World Book Record holder, a well known Ballroom dancer and a Bollywood choreographer who has been honoured with three National Excellence awards, one National Achievement Award and the Dada Saheb Phalke award by the Government of India. He can be contacted on sandipsoparrkar06@gmail.com**



# THE ASIAN AGE

24 OCTOBER 2019

## Fraud whiff: Will Infy go the Satyam way?

The IT major Infosys' dramatic meltdown after a whistleblower alleged questionable accounting practices, laying the company open to a potentially damaging class action suit in the United States, couldn't come at a worse time for the country's highest software exporter. Or, for that matter, the Indian economy, hit by an unprecedented slowdown, facing one financial crisis after another, with the latest corporate fraud disclosure coming from the state-run Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank.

Infy stocks have crashed, and its 9.19 lakh shareholders have lost ₹52,922.18 crore — that's a wipeout of roughly \$7 billion in one day, with market capitalisation dipping from ₹3.28 lakh crore to ₹2.75 lakh crore.

Infosys chairman and co-founder Nandan Nilekani has stepped in to institute an in-house inquiry, keeping both CEO Salil Parikh and chief financial officer Nilanjan Roy, the two men accused of indulging in "unethical practices to boost short-term revenue and profits", and whose conduct will be the primary focus of the inquiry, out of the investigation. And while that is the correct thing to do, IT insiders have raised questions on the ambit of the Infosys' audit committee and whether it will go far enough. Second, in a sign that the company may have been slow to tackle the issue head-on, it took

**If anything, this is an indication that in this reprise of 2017, few lessons had been learned from the setback two years ago when its then CEO Vishal Sikka stood accused of alleged irregularities in a \$200 million acquisition that finally saw founder Narayana Murthy step in and ultimately force Mr Sikka to leave...**

Infosys a full month since the whistleblowers sent the letter to the company's board on September 20 to institute an inquiry by an independent body, with some reporting it was not the first such complaint that the whistleblowers had made over the last two years. The company has also now admitted that it is in receipt of a further complaint dated October 3, which was written to the Office of the Whistleblower Protection Programme in the US.

If anything, this is an indication that in this reprise of 2017, few lessons had been learned from the setback two years ago when its then CEO Vishal Sikka stood accused of alleged irregularities in a \$200 million acquisition that finally saw founder Narayana Murthy step in and ultimately force Mr Sikka to leave, albeit with no charges ever being proven.

Clearly, the whistleblowers' accusations of impropriety against Mr Parekh and Mr Roy, for the second time in as many years, in a company that is synonymous with the IT boom in this southern tech hub could not have come at a worse time for Infosys, trying to keep one step ahead of younger and more nimble-footed rivals.

The whistleblowers' allegations of impropriety against Mr Parekh, who allegedly insisted that employees inflate profits on large deals as well as his own travel bills — none of which Mr Parekh has responded to, and is unlikely to, given Mr Nilekani's tamped-down comment on the matter — is a signal that Asia's second biggest software exporter, should have acted faster on the many complaints sent to it, since Mr Parekh took over in January 2018.

Infosys founders, once a byword for financial probity, must clean house. Or go the way of outsourcing firm Satyam Computers, and its ₹7,000 crore accounting scam of 2009.

## Kashmir 'internationalised'

The United States Congressional hearing on human rights in South Asia last Tuesday turned out to be principally about criticism of India in the context of Kashmir. Besides raising concerns in the US, the lockdown imposed on the Valley and the ensuing "humanitarian crisis" appears to be prejudicing ties with Malaysia and Turkey.

The leaders of these countries had sharply criticised India on the Kashmir issue from the floor of the UN General Assembly last month. Since then, the decision of our palm oil importers — presumably at the government's behest — to eschew imports from Malaysia, an important source for decades, threatens to complicate an otherwise smooth bilateral relationship with a leading Asean country.

It also appears Prime Minister Narendra Modi is contemplating skipping a proposed visit to Turkey in order to show his displeasure. It is evident, however, that New Delhi cannot appear punitive with Washington.

While observations made during the Congressional hearings implied deep unhappiness with India's actions on Kashmir, assistant secretary of state Alice Wells, presenting the US State Department view to Congress, also asked Pakistan to "pull down" its terror infrastructure as a way to restore dialogue with New Delhi. This general advice is all that India could draw solace from.

When Congressman Jackson Lee asked another State Department official, Robert Destro, who appeared at the hearing, whether there was a "humanitarian crisis" in Kashmir, the official replied in the affirmative. Ms Wells said the US was "disappointed" New Delhi had not permitted it to send a delegation to Kashmir. She told the Congressional committee, "We are concerned about the detention of local politicians...We have been very persistent and urgent."

Unwittingly, the government's actions have internationalised Kashmir, something that New Delhi aims to avoid doing.

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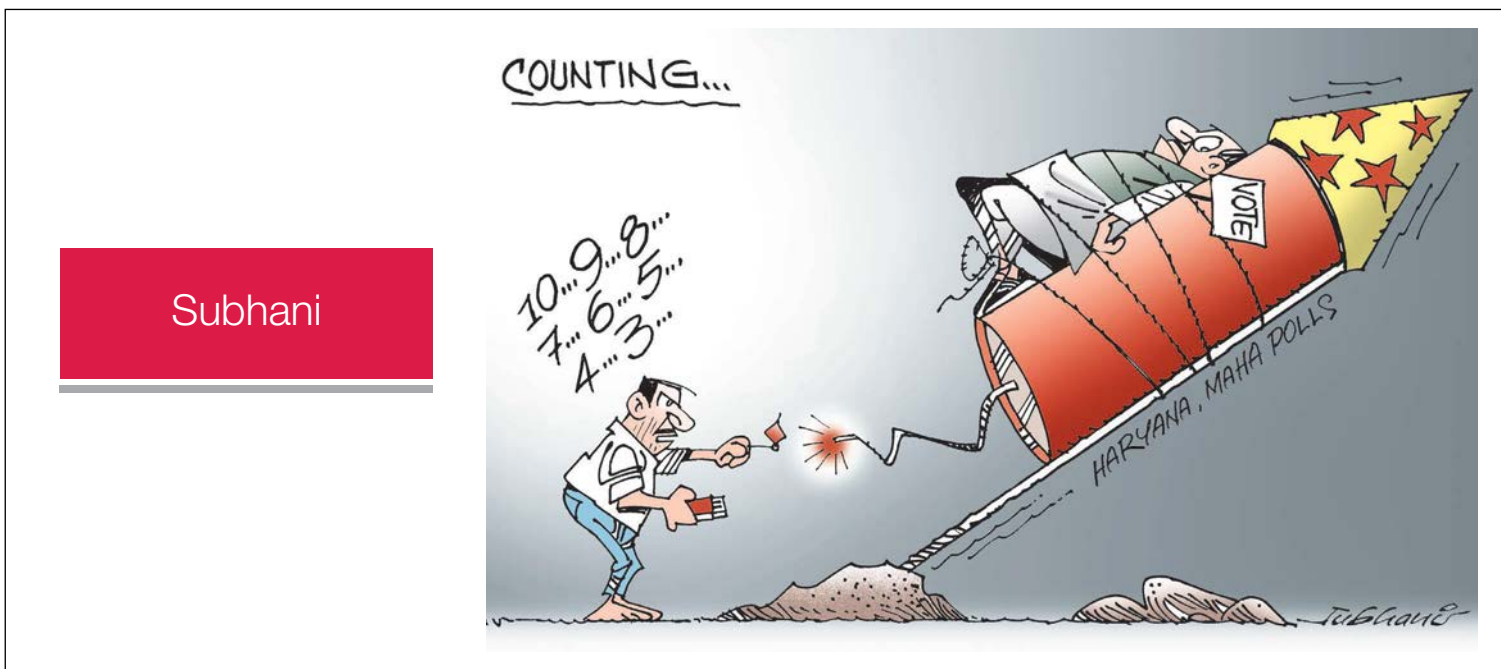
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Subhani

# An empty accord won't usher in Naga peace



Bharat Bhushan

Are those who do not learn from history condemned to repeat it? It would certainly seem so in the case of the proposed Naga settlement that the Narendra Modi government hopes to reach with the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs). The main insurgent group with whom the government has been negotiating for 22 years is likely to stay out of the agreement.

India's first Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, did something similar. In July 1960, the Nehru government signed an agreement with the Naga Peoples' Convention instead of the underground insurgents led by Angami Zapu Phizo. Known as the 16-Point Agreement, it led to the merger of the Naga Hills District of Assam and the Tuensang Frontier Division of NEFA into a single administrative unit, the present state of Nagaland. The Naga Peoples' Convention was initially organised to facilitate dialogue between the armed insurgents and Delhi. However, the facilitators themselves became the main party to the agreement. That did not resolve the Naga insurgency.

The Modi government, reluctant to learn anything from the Nehru regime, may be headed towards a similar misadventure.

Three major hurdles have emerged: The Naga insurgents do not want to be a part of the "Indian Union"; they want a separate flag and a separate Constitution. The roots of these differences lie in an agreement reached in 2015 which has become different to sustain after the developments in Jammu and Kashmir after August 5.

After 18 years of prolonged negotiations with the largest armed insur-

gent group, the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) or NSCN(IM), a "Framework Agreement" was signed with them on August 3, 2015. It was precipitated by the ill-health of Isak Chishi Swu, chairman of the NSCN(IM), who was fighting for life in the Intensive Care Unit of a private hospital in Delhi. An agreement to guide future negotiations was hastily put together and Swu's signature appended to it from his hospital bed. As a Sema Naga from Nagaland, Swu's agreement indicated the wider acceptance of the peace process since Thuingaleng Muivah is from Manipur. The agreement was projected as historic and lent legitimacy to subsequent negotiations.

Perhaps it was the hasty drafting of the Framework Agreement that has led to the present impasse. Celebrating "better mutual understanding" between the two sides, the agreement notes that after "due appreciation of the imperatives of the contemporary realities and regard for future vision" they agreed to end violent confrontation to "usher in comprehensive progress in consonance with the genius of the Naga people".

Further, recognising that in democracies sovereignty lies with the people, the two sides committed themselves to respecting the peoples' wishes "for sharing the sovereign power as defined in competencies [referring to subjects in Union, State and Concurrent Lists of the Indian Constitution]".

This was followed by the statement that, "it is matter of great satisfaction that dialogue between the Government of India and NSCN has successfully concluded and we are confident it will provide for an

enduring inclusive new relationship of peaceful co-existence of the two entities (emphasis added)". This phrase is the nub of dispute now.

The use of the term "two entities" had created confusion earlier in a ceasefire agreement signed in June 14, 2001. Since then the standing instruction to Indian negotiators was to never use the term which suggests that India and Nagaland are two separate entities. It is difficult to understand why then it was used again in 2015.

By the term "two entities" the Indian side probably meant the two signatories to the agreement, India and the NSCN (IM). However, it is being interpreted by the Nagas to mean that India and the Nagas are different sovereign entities. And as two different entities they have decided to forge a new relationship by sharing sovereign power, they believe that they have a right to retain their own flag and Constitution.

Similarly by an "inclusive" relationship Delhi means inclusion of other Naga groups in negotiations. This was used to justify dealing with the NNPGs. The NSCN(IM) insists that "inclusive" means applicability of the agreement to all Nagas whether living in Nagaland or in contiguous states. Their fear is that the settlement could be with the state of Nagaland alone as the NNPGs are based there.

After removing the separate flag and Constitution of J&K, the Modi government cannot concede them to the Prime

Minister himself has apparently set a deadline to conclude the peace agreement by October 31, the attempt is to either bring the NSCN(IM) to heel or sign the agreement with those who were never a part of the 22-year-old negotiation but are eager to assume political power in Nagaland.

However, instead of trying to force a separate and meaningless "peace", the Modi government can still avoid repeating Nehru's mistake.

To begin with, it can admit that the framework agreement had been drafted in ambiguous language. Since that cannot now be undone, the government can suggest to the NSCN(IM) leadership that it take the draft final agreement of power sharing, which is indeed unique, to the Naga people through public consultations.

The people may well conclude that the power sharing they can achieve through this agreement is sustainable, pragmatic and satisfies their political aspirations even without a separate flag and a Constitution. That may give the NSCN(IM) leadership the opportunity to sign the agreement citing the people's wishes.

If the people say that they are willing to convert the flag into a state insignia or emblem and that the peace agreement itself, incorporated in the Indian Constitution, can be called "Yehzabo" or the Naga Constitution, then that could be considered favourably. Then the "Naga Constitution" would become an Article of the Indian Constitution.

However, setting artificial deadlines and not allowing time for the NSCN(IM) to hold public consultation on the flag and Constitution would be unwise. Thuingaleng Muivah who has led the Naga peace negotiations with great patience and commitment is already 85 years old. Should these peace talks fail, it will take a few more decades for another visionary Naga leader to emerge.

The writer is a journalist based in New Delhi

### LETTERS

#### MAXIMUM UNSAFETY

It is sad to learn that Mumbai stood second after Delhi in terms of crimes against women as per the newly published data by the National Crime Records Bureau. In 2017, the city witnessed 287 cases of rape and 1,713 gropings. A corrupt and inefficient police force hand in glove with criminals has not helped matters. Mumbai had always had a good reputation when it came to women's freedom of movement. That alone had acted as a deterrent to these crimes. Let us work to protect the good name of this city.

Bhagwan Thadani  
 Mumbai

#### MUDDY WATERS

KUSUM TIWARI, the mother of Hindu Samaj Party leader Kamlesh Tiwari who was murdered in his office in Lucknow's Khurshed Bagh on Friday, raised questions against the ruling party, saying that the murder was being politicised. She also said that her meeting with chief minister Yogi Adityanath had not been satisfactory and that her family had been forcibly brought to meet him. She wanted the police to not view the matter through the communal lens but rather conduct a fair and thorough investigation to find and punish the culprits. She must be having a tough time dealing with her grief as well as resisting the government's efforts to muddy waters and fish for gains.

Ansari Niyaz  
 Bengaluru

#### DON'T SHUN MALAYSIA

IT'S UNFORTUNATE that India's old friend Malaysia has been favouring Pakistan in the Jammu & Kashmir standoff. The Indian government has censured Malaysia for its stance. But it hasn't taken any steps regarding bilateral trade. Nonetheless, the Solvent Extractors' Association of India, India's top vegetable oil trade body, asked its members to stop buying palm oil from Malaysia. Malaysia said last week that it would consider raising imports of raw sugar and meat from India in a bid to ease trade tensions. Both governments should resolve their political difference without disturbing their trade relationship.

Khokan Das  
 Kolkata

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Mahir Ali

## Lessons from Lebanon, Chile: Hard to tell the last straw

Just a few days before his capital and several other cities descended into anarchy, Chile's billionaire president, Sebastian Piñera, was heard extolling his country's virtues as an oasis of stability in a region prone to chaos. It brought to mind a similar declaration at the cusp of the 1980s by General Ziaul Haq, who sought to advertise Pakistan as "an island of stability" just as the nation was descending into the worst phase of its brief history. Piñera was evidently taken by surprise when a three per cent hike in public transport fares unleashed a youth rebellion that rapidly transmogrified into a much broader revolt against his right-wing government's policies.

Healthcare and education costs, and more generally the poor delivery of government services to those who most need them, have been cited by Chilean protesters as reasons for their angst. Piñera lost little time in rescinding the fare increase, declaring that he was bowing in humility to

the demands of his compatriots, while decrying the "violence and delinquency" of those who had taken to the streets.

The trouble with tipping points is that it's hard to tell when they will kick in. Hence the Lebanese elite, much like that of Chile, was taken entirely by surprise when a proposed tax on WhatsApp voice calls sparked a full-fledged rebellion against what is perceived, with considerable justification, as a corrupt, self-serving ruling class. It may or may not be a coincidence that Lebanon's prime minister, much like the Chilean president, is one of the richest men in his country. Saad Hariri has blamed the uprising in his nation on the recalcitrance of his ruling coalition partners towards economic reform.

In the lingua franca of the neoliberal upper crust, however, "reform" all too often implies measures that target the poor at the expense of the rich. Perceptions of corruption are a key factor in the Lebanese uprising, which stands out not least because it

embraces all communities in a country whose polity is based on a sectarian division of power.

That's the basis on which the Lebanese civil war was concluded in 1990 after 15 years of strife. However, in recent weeks the Christian president, Michel Aoun, and the Shia parliamentary speaker, Nabih Berri, have been at the receiving end of popular wrath almost as much as Hariri, the Sunni prime minister who attracted much public sympathy after he was held hostage in Riyadh a couple of years ago at the behest of the Saudi crown prince.

Lebanon isn't the only Middle Eastern country, though, where perceptions of corruption at the highest level have lately led to outrage on the streets. Iraq has been coping with explosions of anger on the streets, as has Egypt, somewhat more surprisingly, given that Abdel Fattah el-Sisi brooks no dissent, much like his counterpart in Turkey.

The relatively small protests in Egypt, apparently launched partly

because of exhortations from a self-exiled former government contractor, were just hundreds strong, yet have led to an estimated 2,000 arrests. They have consequently petered out, but served as a useful reminder to the man Donald Trump describes as "my favourite dictator" that his extraordinarily repressive status quo cannot indefinitely be maintained, regardless of what "friends" such as the US, Israel or Saudi Arabia may favour.

The trend towards fascist tendencies is by no means uniquely an Egyptian phenomenon, though, what with a number of European electorates leaning increasingly towards the far right. In almost every case, a backlash will inevitably follow in due course — even if no one knows for certain what the last straw may turn out to be.

It is notable, though, that the attempted implementation of self-harming agreements with the IMF all too often proves incendiary. It certainly did in the case of Ecuador,

whose president, Lenin Moreno — who was elected on a centre-left platform but has since veered sharply to the right — was obliged to relocate his government after his indigenous compatriots revolted against an increase in fuel prices which affects the cost of living.

As Hong Kong's chief executive, Carrie Lam, discovered soon after proposing an unacceptable law that would enable the semi-autonomous territory to extradite people to the Chinese mainland, rescinding a proposed law that aggravates tensions is never enough. There is invariably a plethora of grievances in the minds of those who put their consciences and sometimes their lives on the line.

In a world that seems to be going to the dogs, whether or not ordained by the IMF, it's somewhat heartening to be reminded that the popular will frequently continues to gravitate towards amorphous but nonetheless preferable alternatives.

By arrangement with Dawn



# To reform politics, ensure inner-party democracy



Mohan Guruswamy

**A** former chief election commissioner, T.S. Krishnamurthy, had recently plugged for state financing of political parties. This uncooked suggestion is fraught with huge consequences for the nation and its polity and is nothing more than a DBT to political clans and our little "fuhrrers". We now have no political parties in the constitutional conception of the term. What we have are mostly warring and then coalescing factions led by certain families and shadowy cabals. What has made this system solid and lost lasting are, ironically enough, the anti-defection laws enacted in the Rajiv Gandhi era by a dominant, yet insecure Congress Party, despite having over 400 MPs in its cattle pen.

Discussion. Discourse has almost entirely disappeared from our politics. Politics has come to be dominated by the political clans and families. The debate on electoral reforms focuses almost entirely on the funding of political parties and the expenses incurred in campaigning — as if just taking care of these would ensure a clean polity. As usual, we are barking up the wrong tree.

Funding is a problem, but it is the lesser of the problems. Issues of inner-party democracy and the constitutional functioning of political parties almost never figure in any discussion. We never seem to consider whether many of our political parties are political parties in fact, or just disorganised assemblies driven by primitive impulses?

When Rajiv Gandhi introduced the anti-defection bill in Parliament soon after his massive electoral victory in 1984, Madhu Dandavate welcomed it, exclaiming in the Lok Sabha that he felt he was "hearing the voice of Jawaharlal Nehru again!" He was to soon realise that the bill was only meant to

keep the party under the jackboots of a small coterie. This prompted him to make up for his misplaced initial enthusiasm by appending his name to a petition challenging the bill in court. His conversion provoked many to acidly comment that the poor man had thought he heard Jawaharlal Nehru's voice when, in fact, it was Indira Gandhi speaking!

My friend the late S. Jaipal Reddy, then a leading Opposition MP, had at that time publicly welcomed the bill in the Lok Sabha while privately criticising it. He justified his two-facedness by saying it was not the right time to oppose the bill, as public sentiment was in favour of it. Only Chandra Shekhar and Madhu Limaye had the vision and courage to attack the bill for what it was — an attempt to institutionalise the illegitimate power of undemocratically installed party leaderships over the elected representatives of the people.

The original bill was later somewhat modified to distinguish between a split and a defection, even though it did not address the main reasons for the opposition to the bill.

The Constitution of India does not recognise the institution of political parties, as is the case with the constitutions of other major democracies of the world. The term "political party" does not appear even once in any of them. Political parties are, therefore, extra- or non-constitutional arrangements to organ-

**I have been plugging for inner-party democracy to be made legally required as the first step to save democracy in India. Having periodic elections alone doesn't make a nation democratic. Democracy also means government by discussion.**

ise people on the basis of shared ideas, philosophies, perceptions and interests.

Members of Parliament or the legislatures are representatives of the people. That they are, or are not, members of a political party is only incidental. The elected members are intended to represent and protect the interests of the people who elect them, and not that of a handful of party leaders.

It follows that if a representative defies the party whip, the most the party must be allowed to do is to remove the member from the party. Expulsion of the member from Parliament can only be the right of the House or of the people. Each time that power is invoked, it must be for a specific reason, such as an act of receiving a bribe, for instance, which may be considered unbecoming of a member, or brings disrespect to the institution. In our case, we do not give the people the right of recall, possibly because it is seen as impractical. Even if a mechanism and a

set of conditionalities were codified to set the process of recall into action, would anyone among the present crop of MPs be willing to legislate it?

The argument that most members are elected because of the party has some validity, but only if it is a justly constituted and functioning party. If political parties are to be incorporated as constitutional institutions, the structure, functioning and working must be legislated too. Except for a few parties like the BJP and the CPI(M) that have off-and-on systems of inner-party democracy — somewhat assured by increasingly rare inner party elections, and consensual and collective decision-making — most other parties are very poor examples of democracy at work.

We know how the Congress Party conducts its internal "elections" or makes decisions by deferring them to the "high command". Leaders like the Thackerays, Lalu Prasad Yadav, the Karunanidhi clan, Jayalithaa's acolytes, Mulayam Singh Yadav, the Badals and others like Mayawati consider these niceties as sheer hypocrisy and, as such, don't have even a single-page constitution to legitimise the workings of their parties.

Yet these "fuhrrers" have the authority and legitimacy to issue a diktat or a whip to suit their private interests and whims. Remember how a nominated Congress president, Sitaram Kesri, issued a directive to the elected leader of the

Congress Parliamentary Party, P.V. Narasimha Rao, ordering him to send in his resignation within 24 hours. Consider the implications — a leader chosen by popularly elected representatives is dismissed by a hand-picked courtiers' coup.

There are other implications to consider as well. What if a member of a party promising people the nationalisation of all property is directed to vote for a rich man's dream budget? Suppose the member was to vote as per the party's commitment to the people, and not in accordance with the convenience of its leaders? Who is more important — the people who elect the legislators, or the leaders who select them for party tickets?

The argument that if the law did not restrain members, anarchy would prevail, may still have some validity to it. The demands of this can be met by ensuring that whips are restricted to votes of confidence alone, with the rider that representatives voting against a whip must seek the confidence of the people within a stipulated period, say six months. To deny a membership to a "defecting" member is silly, as it implies that a ministership is somehow a reward to enjoy and not a call to service or recognition of ability.

Similarly, all this hair-splitting about what percentage constitutes a defection is equally silly.

That the Election Commission recognises these parties and the

authority of their leaders is evidence of its utter helplessness, indifference or ignorance on all these basic issues.

To give the anti-defection laws even the thinnest veneer of political and philosophical legitimacy, it is first essential that inner-party functioning conform to the letter and spirit of democracy. Parties have shown that they are incapable of doing this by themselves. The EC has made some noises in this regard. But adding to the cacophony is not enough. It must speak out loudly and insist that Parliament empowers it to oversee regular party elections and their compliance with the provisions of their registered constitutions.

State funding of political parties, too, has often been discussed as a solution. But can we allow the State to fund these political parties, which do not have any inner-party democracy or democratic structures — and some with husband and wife "high commands", if not father-son or mother-son "high commands"? Giving them State funding would only help make public money serve private purposes. With our democracy now preferring cobbled-up coalitions to single-party dominance, the issue of defections will always loom large.

*The writer, a policy analyst studying economic and security issues, held senior positions in government and industry. He also specialises in the Chinese economy.*

## National, anti-national and the new politics in Kashmir



Anand K. Sahay

### TROUBLE IN PARADISE-4

**Srinagar/Baramulla/Shopian:** In an extraordinary display of deployment amidst nationalistic fervour, not seen since the militancy of the early 1990s, the country's armed forces are spread across the towns and villages of the Kashmir Valley, guns at the ready. Men of the Jammu and Kashmir Police, doing duty alongside them in urban areas, no longer carry a weapon.

Apparently, since August 5 this year — the date which has gone into history for stripping J&K of its statehood and its unique status — the police is only issued the innocuous staff or small "danda".

The Kashmir police has been "disarmed", the locals believe.

On a drive from Baramulla in the Valley's north to Shopian in the south, past the capital Srinagar, I made it a point to observe carefully, just to be sure. There wasn't a single policeman with a gun anywhere on the 120-km drive.

Before 1989-90, when militancy burst out in Kashmir, the police force in the state was sloppy, and poorly equipped and trained. But in only a few years, it became a crack anti-insurgency unit, often leading the way in the fight against terrorism.

If people here are to be believed, a shadow has now been cast on the loyalty of the J&K Police when on duty in the Valley, although they have given no cause for doubt.

I ask an old friend, who was a victim of militant violence in the early 1990s, how he would compare the pervasive presence of the security forces then and now. He says spontaneously, "The forces did some terrible things back then too, but the widely shared feeling was that they were around to deal with Pakistan-encouraged militancy. Today, the sense is they are here to watch us."

These stinging words are a testimony to the dichotomous "national", "anti-national" perception that finds preference in policy quarters in Delhi.

Military fixation, and throwing out the old, is the new politics for Kashmir that the Centre is busy crafting. This is all too evident. Hence, the incarceration for an indefinite period of established mainstream politicians, notably Farooq and Omar Abdullah, and Mehbooba Mufti — all former chief ministers of J&K. They are not wanted anymore by Delhi, which is on the lookout for new politicians and a new politics.

Security merges seamlessly with politics in Kashmir. This is why, while the many are impris-

oned, a few will be contesting elections on October 24 — for chairmen of block development councils (BDC). There is an obvious agenda — everyone thinks.

"If India can't trust even Farooq Abdullah, who will it ever trust?" I am asked everywhere — by villagers in Baramulla; by an articulate MLA (a former MLA, really, since the Assembly was ruthlessly dissolved before time last year — to prepare for the present moment, it seems in retrospect) who is under house-arrest but is not in the glare of the state and can beat the system and receive an occasional visitor; by high and low alike in Shopian, and everywhere in Kashmir, where one treads carefully on account of potential militant trouble.

In the eyes of Kashmir, the senior Abdullah is the most "committed" votary of India imaginable, and he too has been cast aside along with the leaders of the separatist Hurriyat Conference. No crime, but the same punishment.

Whenever the Abdullahs and other "mainstream" leaders might be released, with the substance of Article 370 extinguished, Kashmir's India-centric political actors would be without an agenda. (Will they choose new paths?) There can't be better preparation for the BDC polls.

BDC elections are being held for the first time in Kashmir — and in sneaky circumstances. The state is under lockdown, leaders of all parties except the BJP are in jail. Yet, the Election Commission has announced these polls on "party lines". People wonder about the fairness of the poll body. Perhaps this is the way to get one-party dominance for the BJP in the Kashmir Valley — so far a no-go area for it — and Assembly elections, people suspect, might be held on similar lines.

BDC polls are indirect elections in which the panch and sarpanch "elected" in November 2018 will now elect a chairman for their respective blocks. In 61 per cent of the panchayats, polls could not be held. In most of the remaining seats, a single candidate filed his nomination and was declared elected. For some seats, two votes were cast. In general, the "candidates" were from among former drug addicts or peddlers, it is said, or petty criminals who were duly incentivised to file their nominations. These characters will now be "electing" block chairmen. Welcome to the new politics in Kashmir.

*(To be concluded)*

## 'Park & Pray' and 'eRosary': New ways to pray



Dominic Emmanuel

**C**ycling by far is one of the common means that Westerners use as exercise. It was thus not surprising when last year someone in my church in Austria approached me about a new initiative called "Park & Pray". "Oh! Sure. That is an attractive way of inviting people to pray", said I. And a board with those words was hung at our church immediately.

Apart from bringing solace to the poor and the needy, one of the important tasks that the Church engages in is to help people find God

through different means — but especially through prayers. Jesus demonstrated through his life that despite being busy ministering to people during the day, he would find time at "night to go and pray in a lonely place".

Though churches, temples, mosques and gurdwaras provide good environments to pray and meditate, one can actually, like Jesus, find any quiet place to pray.

Unfortunately, the word prayer itself sometimes poses a challenge, solely because as one often hears people saying, "I don't know how to pray", or "the moment I begin praying, my thoughts start wandering all over". Probably, with these problems in mind, I was pleasantly surprised to learn last week, that a Pope's network has introduced a novel but techno-friendly method of praying the Rosary.



The Vatican website interestingly describes this new venture thus: "The 'Click To Pray eRosary', is an interactive, smart and app-driven wearable device that serves as a tool for learning how to pray the rosary for peace in the world. It can be worn as a bracelet and is activated by making the sign of the cross. It is synchronised with a free app of the same name, which allows access to an audio guide, exclusive images and personalised content about the praying of the Rosary". This innovation was launched by the "Pope's Worldwide Prayer Network".

Organisers of this network say that it is within everyone's reach. "Aimed at the peripheral frontiers of the digital world where young people dwell, the 'Click To Pray eRosary', serves as a technology-based teaching tool to help young

people pray the Rosary for peace and to contemplate the Gospel".

Incidentally, the Church designates the month of October as Rosary month. The tradition of praying the Rosary goes back to the 13th century. Even though down the centuries its original form has changed, the Rosary remains one of the most popular ways for ordinary people to pray.

The eRosary is a new way to capture the imagination of the tech-savvy generation to pray for peace in the world. Though the Rosary is only one way of prayer, all of us, regardless of our religion and faith, can always pray for the urgent need of peace in the world, including while cycling, driving and indeed after parking.

*Father Dominic Emmanuel, a founder-member of the Parliament of Religions, can be contacted at frdominic@gmail.com*





SHORT TAKES

## EU JOURNALISTS SEEK ACTION AGAINST GOOGLE

Paris, Oct. 22: Hundreds of journalists on Wednesday called for European officials to take action against Google over its refusal to pay media companies for displaying their content in defiance of a strict new EU copyright law.

France was the first country to ratify the law, which was passed this year and comes into force on Thursday to ensure publishers are compensated when their work is displayed online.

But Google said last month that articles, pictures and videos would be shown in search results only if media firms consent to let the tech giant use it for free.

If they refuse, only a headline and a bare link to the content will appear, Google said, almost certainly resulting in a loss of visibility and potential ad revenue for the publisher.

Around 800 journalists as well as photographers, filmmakers and media CEOs signed an open letter published in newspapers across Europe urging governments to ensure that Google and other tech firms comply with the new EU rule.

"The law risks being stripped of all meaning before it even comes into force," the letter said, calling Google's move "a fresh insult to national and European sovereignty". "The existing situation, in which Google enjoys most of the advertising revenue generated by the news that it rakes in without any payment, is untenable and has plunged the media into a crisis that is deepening each year," it said. —AFP

## HUAWEI ROLLS OUT 5G MATE X IN CHINA

Shenzhen/Shanghai, Oct. 23: Huawei has started taking orders on Wednesday in China for its eagerly awaited foldable smartphone, as it ramps up marketing at home to make up for weak overseas sales amid US trade sanctions.

The launch of the 5G Mate X smartphone has been delayed twice this year, as Huawei, the world's No.2 smartphone maker, was forced to deal with tech supply disruptions caused by a US trade blacklist imposed on the firm in May.

The move has dealt a blow to Huawei's smartphone sales in Europe, its key overseas market, but the company saw its third-quarter revenue rising 27 per cent thanks to solid sales in China and higher shipments of models launched before the May ban.

The new smartphone, a competitor to Samsung's Galaxy Fold which went on sale last month, will be launched officially on Nov. 15 in China at prices starting from 16,999 yuan (\$2,403), a Huawei spokesman said. —Reuters

# Infrared-enabled bulbs used to steal info

Most users don't know that infrared can be controlled to spoof other connected IoT devices: Researchers

Houston, Oct. 23: Infrared-enabled 'smart' light bulbs may be used by hackers to either steal data or spoof other connected devices on the home Wi-Fi network, according to scientists in the US.

The researchers at The University of Texas at San Antonio (UTSA) conducted a review of the security holes that exist in popular smart-light brands.

Smart lighting technology involves high efficiency fixtures and automated controls that make adjustments based on conditions such as occupancy or daylight availability.

"Your smart bulb could come equipped with infrared capabilities, and most users don't know that the invisible wave spectrum can be controlled," said Murtuza Jadliwala, a



## ALEXA AND GOOGLE HOME ABUSED TO EAVESDROP AND PHISH PASSWORDS

Despite the threat to privacy, consumers are adopting voice-controlled devices at an astonishingly fast rate. However, a new concern has emerged that eclipses the threat of workers for both companies routinely listening to audio of users and the sounds the devices capture used in criminal trials.

According to researchers at SRLabs, malicious apps developed by third parties and hosted by Amazon or Google can turn these voice-controlled devices into "smart spies."

These "smart spies," as the researchers call them, surreptitiously eavesdropped on users and phished for their passwords.

Whitehat hackers at Germany's Security Research Labs developed eight apps—four Alexa "skills" and four Google Home "actions"—that all passed Amazon or Google security-vetting processes.

ing to the researchers.

The owner might not know about the hack because the commands are communicated within the owner's home Wi-Fi network, without using the internet, they said. "Think of the bulb as another computer. These bulbs are now poised to become a much more attractive target for exploitation even though they have very simple chips," said Jadliwala.

Jadliwala recommends that consumers opt for bulbs that come with a smart home hub rather than those that connect directly to other devices.

He also recommends that manufacturers do a better job in developing security measures to limit the level of access that these bulbs have to other smart home appliances. —PTI

## GOOGLE TOUTS QUANTUM SUPREMACY

San Francisco, Oct. 23: Google said it has achieved a breakthrough in quantum computing research, saying an experimental quantum processor has completed a calculation in just a few minutes that would take a traditional supercomputer thousands of years.

The findings, published Wednesday in the journal *Nature*, show that "quantum speedup is achievable in a real-world system and is not precluded by any hidden physical laws," the researchers wrote.

Quantum computing is a nascent and somewhat bewildering technology for vastly sped-up information processing.

Quantum computers might one day revolutionise tasks that would take existing computers years, including the hunt for new drugs and optimizing city and transportation planning.

The technique relies on quantum bits, or qubits, which can register data values of zero and one simultaneously. Big tech firms including Google, Microsoft, IBM and Intel are avidly pursuing the technology.

"Quantum things can be in multiple places at the same time," said Chris Monroe, a University of Maryland physicist who is also the founder of quantum startup IonQ. "The rules are very simple, they're just confounding."

Google's findings, however, are already facing pushback from other industry researchers. A version of Google's paper leaked online last month and researchers caught a glimpse before it was taken down. —AP

## TOYOTA BETS ON OLYMPICS TO BOOST HYDROGEN TECH

Toyota showcases its next-generation hydrogen-powered Mirai model at Wednesday's Tokyo Motor Show, but with the technology still lagging behind electric, the Japanese firm is hoping for an Olympic boost.

By the end of 2018, there were just 381 hydrogen stations in service worldwide, while there were 5.2 million lithium-ion battery recharge stops.

Some experts believe more efficient hydrogen production will follow naturally if demand for the vehicles increases.

The firm is also boosting production capacity in Japan, with the goal of being able to deliver 30,000 fuel-cell vehicles a year by 2021, which is 10 times more than currently possible.

Already a champion of lithium-ion battery electric cars, China last March adopted a hydrogen plan that envisions putting a million fuel-cell cars on its roads by 2030.

And Toyota has quickly sought to take advantage, signing a deal in April to supply hydrogen equipment to Foton, a subsidiary of China's Beijing Automotive Group (BAIC).

Analysts say hydrogen-powered vehicle producers might be smart to focus on commercial vehicles initially.



# SM use not related to teen anxiety, depression: Study

Washington, Oct. 23: The amount of time spent on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter is not directly increasing anxiety or depression in teenagers, according to a study.

Researchers from Brigham Young University in the US noted that the amount of time teenagers spend on social media has risen significantly since 2012 and continues to grow.

"We spent eight years trying to really understand the relationship between time spent on social media and depression for developing teenagers," said Sarah Coyne, a professor at Brigham Young University.

"If they increased their social media time, would it make them more depressed? Also, if they decreased their social media time, were they less depressed? The answer is no. We found that time spent on social media was not what was impacting anxiety or depression," said Coyne.

Researchers noted that mental health is a multi-process syndrome where no one stressor is likely the cause of depression or

The study shows that it is not merely the amount of time spent on social media that is leading to an increase in depression or anxiety among adolescents.

The study, published in the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*, shows that it is not merely the amount of time spent on social media that is leading to an increase in depression or anxiety among adolescents.

"It's not just the amount of time that is important for most kids. For example, two teenagers could use social media for exactly the same amount of time but may have vastly different outcomes as a result of the way they are using it," Coyne said.

The researchers worked with 500 youth between the ages of 13 and 20 who completed once-yearly questionnaires over an

eight-year span. Social media use was measured by asking participants how much time they spent on social networking sites on a typical day. To measure depression and anxiety, participants responded to questions with different scales to indicate depressive symptoms and anxiety levels. These results were then analysed on an individual level to see if there was a strong correlation between the two variables.

At age 13, adolescents reported an average social networking use of 31-60 minutes per day, the researchers said. These average levels increased steadily so that by young adulthood, they were reporting upwards of two hours per day, they said. The study found that this increase of social networking, though, did not predict future mental health.

Adolescents' increases in social networking beyond their typical levels did not predict changes in anxiety or depression one year later, the researchers found. —PTI

# Congress to grill Zuckerberg on Libra, privacy lapses

Washington, Oct. 23: Mark Zuckerberg is again appearing before Congress to face questions about his company's massive market power, privacy lapses and tolerance of speech deemed false or hateful.

Zuckerberg has been summoned to testify at a hearing Wednesday by the House Financial Services Committee on Facebook's plan to create a global dig-

ital currency, which has stirred opposition from lawmakers and regulators in the US and Europe. But the full range of policies and conduct of the social media giant with nearly 2.5 billion users will be under the public glare.

It's the Facebook chief's first testimony to Congress since April 2018.

The firm seems to spark public and official anger at

every turn these days, from its shift into messaging services that allow encrypted conversations to its alleged anticompetitive behavior to its refusal to take down phony political ads or doctored videos.

Lawmakers from both parties and top regulators including Treasury secretary Steven Mnuchin and Federal Reserve chairman Jerome Powell have criti-

cised Facebook's plan for the new currency, to be called Libra. They warn that it could be used for illicit activity such as money laundering or drug trafficking. Rep. Maxine Waters, the California Democrat who heads the financial services panel, this summer asked Facebook to not move forward with the currency and a digital wallet called

Calibra that would be used with it. Waters has called Libra "a new Swiss-based financial system" that potentially is too big to fail and could require a taxpayer bailout.

Several companies that had signed on as partners in Facebook's governing association for Libra have recently bailed, spelling a potentially rough road for the project. But many

experts don't believe it's doomed. Zuckerberg, in written testimony prepared for the hearing, aimed to reassure lawmakers that his company won't try to evade financial regulators as it readies Libra. Facebook "will not be a part of launching the Libra payments system anywhere in the world unless all U.S. regulators approve it," he said. —AP

# High-tech rivals pose a threat to 200-yr-old stethoscope

At many medical schools in US, it's the newer devices that get students' hearts pumping and not the stethoscope that is gifted

New York, Oct. 23: Two centuries after its invention, the stethoscope — the very symbol of the medical profession — is facing an uncertain prognosis.

It is threatened by hand-held devices that are also pressed against the chest but rely on ultrasound technology, artificial intelligence and smartphone apps instead of doctors' ears to help detect leaks, murmurs, abnormal rhythms and other problems in the heart, lungs and elsewhere. Some of these instruments can yield images of the beating heart or create electrocardiogram graphs.

Dr. Eric Topol, a world-renowned cardiologist, considers the stethoscope obsolete, nothing more than a pair of "rubber tubes." It "was OK for 200 years," Topol said. But "we need to go beyond that. We can do better."

In a longstanding tradition, nearly every US medical school presents incoming students with a white coat and stethoscope to launch their careers. It's more than symbolic — stethoscope skills are still taught, and proficiency is required for doctors to get

their licenses.

Over the last decade, though, the tech industry has downsized ultrasound scanners into devices resembling TV remotes. It has also created digital stethoscopes that can be paired with smartphones to create moving pictures and readouts.

Proponents say these devices are nearly as easy to use as stethoscopes and allow doctors to watch the body in motion and actually see things such as leaky valves. "There's no reason you would listen to sounds when you can see everything," Topol said.

At many medical schools, it's the newer devices that really get students' hearts pumping.

"Wow!" "Whoa!" "This is awesome," Indiana University medical students exclaimed in a recent class as they learned how to use a hand-held ultrasound device on a classmate, watching images of his lub-dubbing heart on a tablet screen.

The Butterfly iQ device, made by based by Guilford, Connecticut-based Butterfly Network Inc., went on the market last

## NEW-AGE MEDICAL DEVICES

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Proponents say these devices are nearly as easy to use as stethoscopes and allow doctors to watch the body in motion and actually see things such as leaky valves. "There's no reason you would listen to sounds when you can see everything," Topol said.

With medical advances and competing devices over the past few decades, "the old stethoscope is kind of falling on hard times in terms of rigorous training," said Dr. James Thomas, a cardiologist at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago.



To improve detection of heart murmurs, Eko is developing artificial intelligence algorithms for its devices, using recordings of thousands of heartbeats. The devices produce a screen message telling the doctor whether the heart sounds are normal or if murmurs are present.

An update will include artificial intelligence to help users position the probe and interpret the images. Students at the Indianapolis-based medical school, one of the nation's largest, learn stethoscope skills but also get training in hand-held ultrasound in a program launched there last year by Dr. Paul Wallach, an executive associate dean. He

created a similar program five years ago at the Medical College of Georgia and predicts that within the next decade, hand-held ultrasound devices will become part of the routine physical exam, just like the reflex hammer.

The devices advance "our ability to take peek under the skin into the body," he said. But Wallach added

that, unlike some of his colleagues, he isn't ready to declare the stethoscope dead. He envisions the next generation of physicians wearing "a stethoscope around the neck and an ultrasound in the pocket."

Modern-day stethoscopes bear little resemblance to the first stethoscope, invented in the early 1800s by Frenchman Rene Laennec,

but they work essentially the same way.

Laennec's creation was a hollow tube of wood, almost a foot long, that made it easier to hear heart and lung sounds than pressing an ear against the chest. Rubber tubes, eartpieces and the often cold metal attachment that is placed against the chest came later, helping to amplify the sounds.

When the stethoscope is pressed against the body, sound waves make the diaphragm — the flat metal disc part of the device — and the bell-shaped underside vibrate. That channels the sound waves up through the tubes to the ears. Conventional stethoscopes typically cost under \$200, compared with at least a few thousand dollars for some of the high-tech devices.

But picking up and interpreting body sounds is subjective and requires a sensitive ear — and a trained one.

With medical advances and competing devices over the past few decades, "the old stethoscope is kind of falling on hard times in terms of rigorous training," said Dr. James Thomas, a cardiologist at Northwestern Medicine in Chicago. "Some recent studies have shown that graduates in internal medicine and emergency medicine may miss as many of half of murmurs using a stethoscope."

Northwestern is involved in testing new technology created by Eko, a Berkeley, California-based maker of smart stethoscopes. To

improve detection of heart murmurs, Eko is developing artificial intelligence algorithms for its devices, using recordings of thousands of heartbeats. The devices produce a screen message telling the doctor whether the heart sounds are normal or if murmurs are present.

Dennis Callinan, a retired Chicago city employee with heart disease, is among the study participants. At age 70, he has had plenty of stethoscope exams but said he feels no nostalgia for the devices. "If they can get a better reading using the new technology, great," Callinan said.

Chicago pediatrician Dr. Dave Drellicharz has been in practice for just over a decade and knows the allure of newer devices. But until the price comes down, the old stalwart "is still your best tool," Drellicharz said. Once you learn to use the stethoscope, he said, it "becomes second nature."

"During my work hours in my office, if I don't have it around my shoulders," he said, "it's as though I was feeling almost naked." —AP



Real-time insurance for farm credit helps Kenyans

FADA to sue UM Lohia for closing operations



Overleaf

## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,058.83	+0.24
Nifty 50	11,604.10	+0.14
S&P 500	3,000.20	+0.14
Dollar (₹)	70.93	-0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	91.21	-0.79
Euro (₹)	78.89	-0.21
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	38,040.159	0.42
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	\$60.35	+0.65
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.678	-0.022
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.738	-0.028

\* As of 9:30 pm IST

### Kolkata, B'luru to join WB's doing biz report

The World Bank will now include Kolkata and Bengaluru, besides Delhi and Mumbai, for preparing the ease of doing business report. "The country of the size of India was not properly represented by just two cities, and now with the inclusion of Kolkata and Bengaluru, Indian ranking in the report will present a much better picture," an official said.

### Maharatna status for HPCL, Power Grid Corp

The Union government accorded 'Maharatna' status to Hindustan Petroleum and Power Grid Corporation, thus giving them greater operational and financial autonomy. Two separate orders to this effect were issued by the Department of Public Enterprises, under the Ministry of Heavy Industry and Public Enterprises.

The Centre on Wednesday announced higher minimum support price (MSP) for rabi crops, or winter crops, for the marketing season 2020-21. The crops will be marketed from next April.

### Housing sales up 16% at ₹1.5L cr during Jan-Sep

Housing sales rose by 16 per cent in value terms during the January-September period of this year to ₹1.54 lakh crore across seven major cities, according to property consultant Anarock. Sales increased to nearly 2.02 lakh units during the nine-month period from 1.78 lakh units last year, Anarock Consulting's Chairman Anuj Puri said.

### Amazon India, Rlys tie up to carry packages

Amazon India said it has partnered with the Indian Railways for a pilot programme to carry out inter-city transport of e-commerce packages. Amazon India would transport customer packages with the Railways on three routes from New Delhi to Mumbai, Mumbai to New Delhi and New Delhi to Kolkata. Amazon India is working with the Railways to build an e-commerce transportation product.

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## ■ New rules allow any firm with ₹250-cr net worth to enter field Govt throws open fuel retailing to all players

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

In a landmark oil sector reform, the government on Wednesday relaxed rules for setting up petrol pumps and allowed non-oil companies to venture into the business in the world's fastest-growing fuel retailing market. The relaxed rules, which includes a far lower investment threshold for entering fuel retailing, is expected to help private and foreign firms to move into this lucrative market.

At present, to obtain a fuel retailing license in India, a company needs to invest Rs 2,000 crore in either hydrocarbon exploration and production, refining, pipelines or liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals. However, this rule has now been changed.

"Companies with a net worth of Rs 250 crore will be allowed to sell petrol and diesel subject to the condition that they install facilities for marketing of at least one new generation alternate fuel such as CNG, LNG, biofuels or electric vehicle charging within three years of start of operations," Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said, briefing reporters about the decision taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



The retailers will have to set up 5 per cent of the total outlets in rural areas within five years, he said. "The new policy will bring in more investment and give a fillip to 'Ease of Doing Business'. It will boost direct and indirect employment in the sector. Setting up of more retail outlets (ROs) will result in better competition and better services for consumers," Javadekar said.

The government had last set fuel marketing conditions in 2002 and the review now is based on the recommendation of a high-level expert committee.

The move will facilitate entry of global giants such as Total SA of France, Saudi Arabia's Aramco, BP Plc of UK and Trafigura's downstream arm Puma Energy.

Total in partnership with Adani Group had in November 2018 applied for a licence to retail petrol and diesel through 1,500 outlets. BP, too, has formed a partnership with Reliance Industries to set up petrol pumps, but is yet to make a formal application.

While Puma Energy had applied for a retail license, Aramco was in talks to enter the sector.

State-owned oil marketing companies Indian Oil (IOC), Bharat Petroleum (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum (HPCL) own most of 65,554 petrol pumps in the country.

Reliance Industries, Nayara Energy - formerly Essar Oil - and Royal Dutch Shell are the private players in the market but with limited presence. Reliance, which operates

the world's largest oil refining complex, has less than 1,400 outlets.

Nayara has 5,344 outlets while Shell has just 160 pumps. BP of UK had a couple of years back secured a licence to set up 3,500 pumps but hasn't yet started operations. It is now venturing into the business with Reliance with plans to scale up Reliance's present network strength to 5,500.

"The entities seeking market authorisation for petrol and diesel are allowed to apply for retail and bulk authorisation separately or both," an official statement issued on the CCEA decision said.

The companies have been given flexibility in setting up a joint venture or subsidiary for market authorisation.

### Support price for rabi crops raised

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 23

The Centre on Wednesday announced higher minimum support price (MSP) for rabi crops, or winter crops, for the marketing season 2020-21. The crops will be marketed from next April.

The Union Cabinet cleared the MSP hike for wheat by Rs 85 to Rs 1,925 a quintal and for pulses by up to Rs 325 per quintal. While the MSP of barley has been raised from Rs 1,440 to Rs 1,525, support prices for rapeseed and mustard oil, gram, safflower and lentils have also been increased.

The pro-farmer's decision was taken by the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "In a move to increase farmers' income, the Cabinet has increased the MSP of rabi or winter-sown crops for the current year," Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar told reporters.

The MSP announced for this year is in line with the recommendation of



the government's farm price advisory body, the Commission for Agricultural Costs & Prices (CACP).

Wheat has been taken as a top priority, as this rabi crop will be sown next month.

In order to encourage farmers to cultivate more pulses, the government has hiked the support price of masoor by Rs 325 to Rs 4,800 per quintal from Rs 4,475 last year. The MSP for gram has also been increased by Rs 255 to Rs 4,875 per quintal from Rs 4,620.

Among oilseeds, the MSP of rapeseed, or mustard, has been increased by Rs 225 to Rs 4,425 per quintal from Rs 4,200 and that of safflower by Rs 270 to Rs 5,215 per quintal from Rs 4,945.

## Datsun brand set to go as Nissan spikes Ghosn plans

NORIHICO SHIROUZI  
YOKOHAMA, JAPAN,  
OCT. 23

Nissan Motor Co Ltd is likely to axe its Datsun brand, drop some unprofitable products and close a number of assembly lines worldwide as it seeks to boost profits by getting smaller, two company sources with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Known internally as the "performance recovery plan", the proposed steps mark a sharp break with Nissan's strategy under ousted leader Carlos Ghosn, who pursued ambitious vehicle sales targets in the United States and other major markets.

The plan is the Yokohama-based automaker's latest attempt to pull itself out of crisis after Ghosn was arrested for financial misconduct—charges he denies. The scandal has further strained an already dysfunctional alliance with Renault SA and thrown Nissan into disarray as it finds itself on course to book its lowest operating profit in 11 years.

The sources said Nissan will likely kill loss-making

variants for the Titan full-size pickup. Unprofitable variants include the single-cab and diesel versions.

A planned shuttering of under-utilised production lines will most probably hit plants in emerging markets building Datsun and other small cars hardest, they added.

"We need to chart a recovery but the rot goes deep," one of the sources said of the many problems facing Nissan.

The second source said all markets with factories except China were being looked at for possible reductions in production capacity. That source also said, however, that there were no plans to close an

entire plant or withdraw completely from any country.

A team led by Jun Seki, a Senior Vice President and incoming Vice Chief Operating officer, is expected to unveil the wide-ranging plan this month though some aspects are still being finalised, said the sources, who were not authorised to speak to media and declined to be identified.

Nissan declined to comment.

Seki is part of a new management team that will see Makoto Uchida, Nissan's head of China operations, take the helm—an appointment that is expected to take effect by Jan. 1.

The new steps follow

plans unveiled in July to cut headcount by 12,500 globally by early 2023.

Overall, the plan's aim is to free up resources to focus more on the US and China, the sources said.

To that end it will roll back an aggressive expansionist strategy Ghosn set in motion under a five-year plan called Power 88 which aimed to raise profit margins and global market share to 8 percent by fiscal 2016—goals which were never achieved.

The Datsun brand—revived for emerging markets under Ghosn after being phased out in the 1980s—will likely bear the brunt of the restructuring. The models are manufactured in Indonesia, India and Russia.

The sources said problems emerged after Nissan began deploying the no-frills cars in 2014 in small markets such as Indonesia, India, Russia and South Africa where it also sells vehicles under its mainstay Nissan brand.

In Indonesia, for example, after a relatively good start, Datsun cars soon began eating into Nissan sales.

—Reuters

## Infosys in mess over disclosure

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
with agency inputs  
MUMBAI, OCT. 23

Troubles seem mounting for Infosys. The software major faces more trouble ahead as it has failed to inform the stock exchanges about the complaints received from whistleblowers, which could lead to more trouble at the hands of market regulator Securities and Exchange Board of India.

The Sebi has reportedly begun its probe into alleged non-disclosure of price-sensitive information by the Infosys management and also corporate governance lapses alleged by the whistleblower group. The regulator is also examining possible insider trading in the company's securities.

The regulator has reportedly asked the stock exchanges to collate trading data of Infosys shares as well as derivative positions, while details are being sought about alleged non-disclosure of key information.

The regulator may also summon the company's top management and others, while information might be sought from some board committees, including those dealing with audit and other financial matters at the company, depending on progress in the investigation.

The role of independent directors may also come under the scanner



in case it is found they did not press for timely disclosure and other necessary actions after receipt of the whistleblower complaint.

Stock exchange BSE has sought clarifications from Infosys, for which the reply was awaited at the press time.

The BSE has sought clarifications from the company about the non-disclosure of the whistleblower complaint, which it received earlier last month and was announced by company Chairman Nandan Nilekani on October 22.

"It is observed that Infosys has not made any disclosures under Regulation 30 of SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015, with respect to receipt of whistleblower complaint mentioned in the announcement (made by Nilekani)," the BSE communication said.

The Infosys stock was in focus for second consecutive session. In volatile trading, the stock dipped to a low of Rs 615 on the BSE, but later recovered to touch a high of Rs 656.40 before finally closing 1.16 per cent up at Rs 650.75.

### IMF sees growth rebounding to 7% in FY21

GURDIP SINGH  
SINGAPORE, OCT. 23

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) sees Indian economic growth rebounding to around 7 per cent in the next financial year, supported by measures like monetary policy stimulus and corporate income tax cuts.

"We see the Indian economy rebounding from our projected 6.1 per cent growth this fiscal year to something like 7 per cent in the next fiscal year (2020). We see the factors that will support growth, including monetary policy stimulus, working their way through the pipeline," Jonathan Ostry, Deputy Director, Asia Pacific Department at the IMF, told reporters.

The recent tax cuts, government's progress in addressing lingering weaknesses in the financial sector and measures to support growth sectors as seen as factors underpinning growth in the near term, Ostry said.

Talking about the slowdown in Indian economy in recent quarters, he said: "indeed (it) took many of us by surprise, including the IMF."

"There wasn't a single cause for the slowdown... there were many different causes at work including corporate and regulatory environmental uncertainties, the stresses in the non-bank financial sector, (and) stresses in the rural sector, among others," he said.

Asked about the RECP, he underlined the importance of having services included in the free-trade partnership pact. —PTI

## Season is a wash-out for Kashmir tourism

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

Despite the government opening up the destination for travellers, this season could be a wash-out for Kashmir: Both tourists and travel operators are going slow with bookings.

After remaining locked down for around two months, on October 10 the government had opened Kashmir for tourists. But the uncertainties still continue, finds the trade.

"This season has been

wiped out. Though officially tourists are allowed, several clearances are needed. Before taking tourists to the place we will have to make inspection visits so that we are confident enough," said Rajeev Kale, President and Country Head - Holidays, MICE, Visa, Thomas Cook India.

With the season already on, tour operators do not expect much from Kashmir. However, the travel operators are receiving messages from the tourism department,



house boat owners and travel agents assuring that it is safe to travel to the place.

"This December will not be like those in the past. But we are receiving messages from the local trade and government. After

Diwali, we will make our inspection of the place," said Kapil Goswamy, MD, Big Breaks.com.

As a silver lining, BigBreaks has started receiving some enquiries from tourists, including foreigners. But tourists do

not want to venture out of Srinagar due to security concerns.

Kashmir usually has 20 to 25 per cent share of the country's tourist arrivals. In 2018, Kashmir witnessed the lowest arrivals in seven years. Only 8.5 lakh domestic and foreign tourists visited the valley last year; a decline of 23 per cent from 2017. Tourist arrivals have been declining since 2016 due to the political unrest. In 2012, the state had received 13 lakh visitors.

Summer is the biggest tourist season for Kashmir. Unfortunately, this summer turned out to be cold for Kashmir tourism after the Pulwama attack and the Balakot strike in February. Some of the key source countries like the US, UK and Canada had released travel advisories for their citizens visiting the region. Both tourists and travel operators were slightly reluctant to make bookings for the destination in the summer.



**OPENING BELL**  
PROJECTION FOR TODAY

**Domestic cues point to volatility**

The market made a recovery after a volatile trading session to close in the green with several blue chips announcing their second quarter performance during the trading session. Infosys recovered after dipping further to Rs 615 intraday, as it closed at Rs 650.75 up 1.16 per cent which boosted market sentiments. The Sensex closed 94.99 points up at 39058.83 gaining 0.24 per cent while the broader Nifty-50 index closed just 15.75 points or 0.14 per cent up at 11,604.10. The broader market too closed flat with BSE Mid Cap Index down 0.08 per cent while the BSE Small Cap Index was up 0.25 per cent. Profit taking continued for the second session by the domestic institutions as well as the foreign portfolio investors as they were net sellers of equities worth Rs 137.38 crore and Rs 213.23 crore respectively as per the provisional data.

**Technical View**

Mustafa Nadeem, CEO, Epic Research, said, "Nifty seems to be struggling at 11700 because it is an important swing high. Global markets haven't been supportive while the domestic cues are pointing to volatility. "The earnings are yet to come from some of the heavyweights like SBI and Maruti. So the market is actually seen oscillating between a range of 11,700 and 11,500. With that, we have seen Infy weighing on the index as it fell almost 15 per cent. A rebound today helped the index to sustain the lower levels. "This is a very important level for Nifty and important in the sense as it will give us a short term view for the next few weeks. Above 11,700 we don't see any resistance till 12,000 or previous all-time high and if we are not able to take out 11,700, the bears may take advantage of a low-risk opportunity. So this is going to be a tug of war and whoever wins at this point may be controlling the index for the next few weeks."

**Market View**

Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "Market was lacklustre, with Nifty closing marginally in green at 11,604, amid weak global cues and FPIs outflow. Market sentiments turned a little negative as hopes are waning on conclusion of Brexit deal by next week...Market is also cautious ahead of state assembly poll results."

—RAVI RANAJAN PRASHAD

—Reuters

**ITC Fabelle truffles come at a record ₹1 lakh**

RITWIK MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA, OCT. 23

A set of 15 truffles come with an indulgent price tag of Rs 1 lakh. Hyperbole? Not really. Not at least, if you consider what Fabelle Exquisite Chocolates, the home-grown luxury chocolate brand from the stable of ITC Ltd, has just done to enter into the Guinness Book of World Records. Fabelle has now come up with the world's most expensive chocolate - Fabelle Trinity-Truffles Extraordinaire, albeit as limited edition. The limited edition offering will be encased in a unique, hand-made wooden box, each containing 15 truffles, each weighing about 15 gms. The made-to-order box will be available at an indulgent price of Rs 1 lakh (inclusive of taxes), the company said. "We at Fabelle have now

set new benchmarks not just in the Indian luxury chocolate market but also now in the world with achieving the Guinness World Record feat," said Anuj Rustagi, Chief Operating Officer—Chocolates, Confectionery, Coffee and New Categories—Food Division, ITC Limited. He said that this master piece is a reflection of best of both the worlds coming together. With Chef Philippe Conticini's international expertise and Fabelle's understanding of Indian chocolate consumer preferences and institutional strength, the company has been able to deliver a world-class product. The chocolate was unveiled in the presence of the Legendary, Michelin Star Chef Philippe Conticini, who is the co-creator of Fabelle's Trinity - Truffles Extraordinaire.

Luxury chocolate brand from ITC has entered the Guinness Book of World Records

**Legal notice says firm caused ₹150 cr loss to its 80 dealers FADA to sue UM Lohia for closing operations**

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, OCT. 23



The Federation of Automobile Dealers Association or FADA on Wednesday issued a legal notice to premium Delhi-based bike maker UM Lohia Two Wheelers (UM Lohia), alleging fraud that caused a loss of Rs 150 crore to 80 dealers across the country in setting up the infrastructure.

There is also a direct job loss of 2,500 people at these dealerships, with many shutting down operation and burdened with five to 10 bikes unsold at each dealership.

"We will be responding to the legal notice legally and it takes time," Ayush Kumar Lohia, founding partner of UM Lohia told *Financial Chronicle*, adding that he had committed no fraud.

"We had some difficulties with our American partner who did all the research and development and produced bikes for the Indian market which were not BS IV emission norms compliant," he said, stating that he was left alone to face the heat from the dealers.

UM Lohia, a joint venture (JV) between the Delhi-based Lohia Group and US-based UM Motorcycles, which started retail sales in 2016, stopped operations in India abruptly last October, leaving around 80 dealers in the lurch. UM Lohia was started by Ayush Kumar Lohia and Jose Miguel Villegas of the US in an equal joint venture with an investment of Rs 100 crore. It claimed to manufacture and sell "American style, American Made" motorcycles under the brand UM Motorcycles and attracted dealers by showcasing its models at an automobile exhibition.

US-based UM Motorcycles, promoted by the Villegas Family, produces several models of motorcycles and cruisers, including the Renegade range of motorcycles. Soon after the India JV's dealerships were signed, it emerged that the motorcycles were made using Chinese components assembled at a manufacturing plant in Kashipur, Uttar Pradesh, allege dealers. This resulted in the brand losing its value and customers avoiding purchase. The company also launched vehicles compliant with BS-III emission norms in the second half of 2016, even as the regulation mandating BS-IV was already scheduled to come into force from April 2017.

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**Real-time insurance for farm credit helps Kenyans**

WESLEY LANGAT  
MACHAKOS, KENYA, OCT. 23

For the past two years, Beatrice Ndavi, a 56-year-old farmer in central Kenya, has received vouchers for good-quality seeds and fertiliser, as well as training to improve her yields.

The support is offered on credit as part of an insurance scheme that provides security for the farmer's loan by paying it down if her harvest is damaged by extreme weather.

Ndavi, a mother of six from Masii village in Machakos County, explained that in the past, farmers ended up taking out cash loans to cover their needs in an emergency, which they then struggled to pay back.

But under the Risk-Contingent Credit (RCC) scheme she is part of, it has become easier for her to keep going, even if the weather is bad, she said. "I get the right farm inputs - quality seeds and fertilisers on time - and I'm not worried about how to repay the loan as it's insured," she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Millions of rural households in Kenya rely on agriculture for their income, but a warming climate is bringing more intense and frequent droughts, disrupting production.

Recurring losses due to sometimes consecutive years of drought, coupled with the high cost of certified seeds and other inputs, have made poor farmers reluctant to invest in their land, organisations working on the RCC project found.

Apurba Shee, lead researcher with the Natural Resources Institute at Britain's University of Greenwich, said the credit scheme differs from traditional insurance as it takes into account rainfall patterns as they unfold rather

**Tap seeds used in tribal, hilly areas: Study**

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, OCT 23

In India's agriculture sector, the seed delivery system suffers severe deficiency, as over 60 per cent of seeds in use is unlabelled. However, the system can be significantly strengthened through investments in the formal sector and by channelling high-quality seed varieties used by tribal and hilly communities into the informal seed chain.

A recent joint study, titled, 'Sowing the policy seeds of a flourishing agriculture sector', conducted by ASSOCHAM and PwC, found that about 60-65 per cent of seeds in use in the country is unlabelled. To overcome this handicap, the study suggested that "high-quality seed varieties used by tribal and hilly communities be brought into the informal seed chain with some



amount of genetic purity." "These farmer varieties are important for future breeding programmes, as they possess useful traits developed through natural evolution. Their integration would enable effective seed delivery to farmers at affordable costs," it said. When asked about this, an official in the agriculture ministry said, "The agri sector has huge potential for growth supported by seed policies in favour of seed producers and

exporters... We are aware of the fact of deficiency and the government is working on it"

India has a share of four per cent in the global seed market. The Indian seed market had a value of \$3.6 billion in 2017, exhibiting a compounded annual growth rate (CAGR) of about 17 per cent during 2010-2017.

The Indian seed market is dominated by maize, cotton, paddy, wheat, sorghum, sunflower and millets.

The study also said strengthening the seed village programme will improve seed delivery. It suggested putting in place a measure to improve seed traceability to control the distribution of spurious seeds. "Besides deterring spurious seeds, using a unique code could also help in tracing their origin in case of quality issues," suggested the study.

than paying out only when harvests fail. Remote-sensing satellite technology is used to track rainfall in real-time, and if the average drops below a set threshold in any 21-day period during the growing season, it triggers digital payouts that cover farmers' loans.

The system allows for multiple payments spread throughout the season, as rain volumes fluctuate, Shee said.

The RCC programme aims to tackle both credit constraints and risks linked to drought, he said in an interview. "We are getting clear positive indications in terms of increased farming invest-

ments (and) farmers going back to farming more often, even after a devastating drought," he added. According to a 2018 survey, nearly 1,200 farmers in Machakos had enrolled in the RCC scheme, with 40% taking out insured loans to buy farm inputs.

The average amount they received was 8,500 Kenyan shillings (\$82), compared with 6,000 shillings (\$58) for traditional loans.

In the neighbouring county of Embu, about 800 farmers are taking part in the US government-backed project. Shee said the RCC scheme had now proved itself to be commercially viable and had the potential to be expanded to other parts of

Kenya and semi-arid regions across southern and eastern Africa, as well as along the borders of the Sahara.

Before joining the scheme, Ndavi struggled when persistent drought brought water shortages, as she - like many other farmers in Kenya's drylands - relies on regular rainfall to keep her crops in good health.

In 2017, she lost five acres of planted maize worth \$100 because of drought. More severe droughts are leaving many farmers vulnerable, said Sarfraz Shah, project manager at Nairobi-based APA Insurance, which underwrites the RCC scheme.

**Strides' ranitidine gets Oz nod**

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, OCT. 23

As many as 20 batches of heartburn drug ranitidine manufactured by Strides Pharma for the Australian market have been found to have N-nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA) within permissible limits. These batches are now back on the retail shelves in that country. Meanwhile, Dr Reddy's Laboratories have recalled all its ranitidine medications in the US.

Strides had suspended the manufacturing and sale of its ranitidine tablets for the US and Australian markets on September 27, 2019 due to the concerns about the presence of NDMA, which is associated with an increased risk of cancer. On 13 September, the US FDA had issued a safety alert citing traces of NDMA in ranitidine.

Dr Reddy's meanwhile said it had initiated a voluntary nationwide recall on October 1 of all its ranitidine medications sold in US due to confirmed contamination with NDMA above levels established by the FDA.

**SoftBank confirms WeWork deal**

Tokyo, Oct. 23: SoftBank announced on Wednesday it will pump billions of dollars into struggling office-sharing start-up WeWork, in a deal that will see co-founder Adam Neumann taking a huge payout and exiting the board.

The package, which involves new financing, speeds up already pledged money and includes a new tender offer for existing shareholders, is worth a total of \$9.5 billion.

Neumann, who has already been forced to step down as chief executive, will exit the board for an "observer" role, but is said to be receiving more than \$1.5 billion as he departs.

SoftBank Group's Marcelo Claure will take over as executive chairman of the board. The agreement caps a turbulent period for the once-vaunted start-up, which was valued by some at around \$47 billion at the start of the year, and represents a significant shot in the arm as the company haemorrhages money.

—AFP

**US electronics factories hurt by tariffs**

Oct. 23: U.S. electronics factories are investing less and slowing hiring or laying off workers in some cases due to the rising costs of trade tariffs, according to an industry survey set for release on Wednesday.

The IPC, a global electronics trade association, found that nearly a third of all the dollar value of what its members with U.S. operations import has been hit by increased costs from the protracted U.S.-China trade war.

The electronics industry has increasingly sourced raw materials, components and manufacturing equipment from Chinese factories. They are then assembled into final products, ranging from control panels for tractors to medical imaging machines, in factories closer to customers, including in the United States.

The survey from the IPC, based in Bannockburn, Illinois, found that one in five companies with US operations said they were investing less in the United States due to the new tariffs.

—Reuters

**PERFORMANCE STREET**

**HCL Tech Q2 net up 6.9%**

HCL Technologies posted a 6.9 per cent rise in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,711 crore for the September quarter, and raised its revenue growth forecast to 17 per cent for 2019-20. The company also announced a bonus share offer. Its revenue from operations grew 18 per cent to Rs 17,527 crore in the quarter under review, from Rs 14,860 crore a year ago.

**L&T Q2 profit rises 13%**

Larsen & Toubro posted over 13 per cent rise in its consolidated profit after tax at Rs 2,527.26 crore for the September quarter. The consolidated total income increased to Rs 35,924.89 crore, over Rs 31,086.59 crore in the year-ago period. Consolidated PAT from continuing operations was Rs 2,309 crore, registering a growth of 10.3 per cent.

**Indian Bank profit zooms**

Indian Bank reported over a two-fold rise in net profit at Rs 358.56 crore for the second quarter. It had posted a net profit of Rs 150.1 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total income increased to Rs 6,045.32 crore from Rs 5,129.16 crore. Asset quality remained stable with the gross NPAs marginally rising 7.20 per cent of the advances against 7.16 per cent a year ago.

**Hero MotoCorp net down 10%**

Hero MotoCorp reported a 10 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 883.78 crore in the September quarter from Rs 981.99 crore a year ago. Revenue from operations stood at Rs 7,660.60 crore compared to Rs 9,168.24 crore. During the quarter, the company said it sold 16,91,420 units against 21,34,051 units in the same period last year, down 20.7 per cent.

**Bajaj Auto net rises 22%**

Bajaj Auto's second-quarter profit beat estimates on higher other income, lower tax expense and better-operational performance. The firm reported a 22 per cent rise in its net profit at Rs 1,402.42 crore, aided by a tax expense reversal of Rs 182 crore due to the recent lowering of corporate tax rate. Revenue from operations dipped 4 per cent YoY to Rs 7,707 crore.

**JSW Steel net jumps 21%**

JSW Steel reported a 21.51 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit to Rs 2,536 crore for the September quarter. Total income dropped to Rs 17,728 crore, compared with Rs 21,608 crore in the year-ago period. However, its total expenses during the quarter fell to Rs 17,025 crore, against Rs 18,583 crore a year ago.

—FC BUREAU

**Autocracy is no model for developing economies**

SAM HILL

It's hard to believe, but in the early 1960s, Singapore and Sierra Leone were in pretty much the same place economically. And Sierra Leone, rich in resources and with a stable democracy, appeared to be on the rise.

Instead, Singapore has since become one of the most successful countries in the world, with a GDP per capita of \$94,000 (according to the CIA's World Factbook). Sierra Leone has remained one of the most woeful, with a GDP per capita of \$1,600. Singapore is ranked seventh in the world. Sierra Leone is ranked 200 places lower, near the bottom.

During a speech I gave recently, a former high-level American intelligence official interrupted me to make the case that the primary reason for Singapore's success was autocracy. When I disagreed, he stomped out. He's not

alone in his opinion. Autocracy is very much in vogue. Perhaps it's just the pendulum swinging. We're coming off a 30-year trend toward democratic, or at least elected, governments and have an entire generation with no firsthand knowledge of failed socialist dictatorships. Or perhaps it's the economic success of China over the last few decades that explains the shift.

Whatever the reason, autocracy is now often put forward as the solution for the developing world, and Singapore is the model often used. (South Korea and China are the others.) It's a compelling example. Lee Kuan Yew, Singapore's authoritarian first leader, was arguably the greatest economic leader of the 20th century. What Lee accomplished for a swampy, cobra-infested, war-torn island with no resources (while fighting a Communist insurgency) was nothing short of

phenomenal. However, his success doesn't mean that autocracy is a good thing. Autocracy is a high beta solution. It can turn out very good, as it did in Singapore's case, or it can turn out very badly. It turns out badly 99% of the time, measured both by the rights of people in those countries and their economies.

That's math, not hyperbole. As the world's leading development economist, Paul Collier of Oxford, told me, "If autocracy were a formula for success, African nations would be rich." I tested his argument. I analyzed 53 African countries since independence, which for most was in the early 1960s, to see just how many have had dictators and whether they'd been more successful than countries with democratically elected governments. I defined autocrats as those who

came to power and held on to it through undemocratic means. I found 117 autocrats, and that is almost certainly an undercount. Some of these countries have had dozens of coup attempts, so my count may not be exhaustive. It may also undercount because not all democratically elected governments are democ-

racies. I found 47 of the 53 African nations had at least one stretch of autocracy since independence. The exceptions are Cape Verde, Botswana, Djibouti, Namibia, Sao Tome and South Africa. I found only one autocratic leader who might conceivably be compared to Lee Kuan Yew, Paul Kagame of Rwanda, and that comparison isn't clear cut. The takeaway? Countries that trade freedom for prosperity are going to regret it most of the

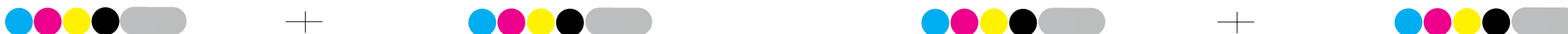
time, and likely for a long time. Unlike democracies, dictatorships allow for no do-overs. Further, although neither group has done well, on average countries with a democratic tradition ranked 130 on the UN's Human Development Index (2018 Report), while the others have ranked 156 (of 189). Any simple analysis like this raises all sorts of questions.

Daron Acemoglu of MIT and James Robinson of the University of Chicago have dug much deeper in their bestsellers "Why Nations Fail" and "The Narrow Corridor." Their conclusion is that some countries get a short-term boost under authoritarian governments that turn from socialism to capitalism, but it doesn't last. Long-term success, under any measure including economic, requires democracy. Autocracy or authoritarianism is an easy answer. And it's easy to

make the case by cherry-picking Asian examples like Singapore, South Korea and China. It works especially well if those banging the drum for autocracy leave out non-autocratic nations that have performed well economically, like Japan and Taiwan. (And, by the way, South Korea is now rated as free as Japan on the Freedom House rankings.) And also if they leave out regimes with a history of authoritarianism that haven't done so well, like Myanmar, the Philippines, Indonesia and North Korea. Or that since independence in the 1960s, Singapore has had 25 years of autocracy. Sierra Leone has had 32. Anecdotes and selective sampling don't replace analysis, and the numbers say autocracy isn't a good solution — even for those countries desperate enough to try it.

—Bloomberg

Column







## Honour

Former South Africa skipper Graeme Smith has been elected an Honorary Life Member of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), custodians of the game's law



I'm absolutely satisfied with my career. I have no regrets.

— Abhishek Nayar, veteran Mumbai all-rounder after announcing his retirement from all forms of cricket

## SHORT TAKES

### Rohit enters top 10 in all three formats

**Dubai:** Rohit Sharma has become the third India batsman to reach the top 10 of ICC rankings in all three formats after a memorable series against South Africa in which he donned the new role of Test opener. Rohit emulated captain Virat Kohli and retired opener Gautam Gambhir as his knock of 212 in the third Test in Ranchi helped him advance 12 places to 10th position in the ICC Test Player Rankings. Ajinkya Rahane's knock of 116 in Ranchi has helped him equal his career-high rank of fifth place, achieved earlier in November 2016. He remains the third-best Indian batsman in terms of Test rankings after Kohli and Pujara. With Mayanka Agarwal in 18th position, India have finished the series with five batsmen in the top 20. Rohit's player of the series effort of 529 runs helped him make huge strides from 44th place before the series. The 'Hitman' has held a career-high ranking of second in ODIs (in February 2018) and seventh in T20Is (November 2018). — PTI

### Mortaza named Bangla mediator

**Dhaka:** Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has reportedly appointed ODI captain Mashrafe Mortaza as the mediator to resolve the dispute between country's cricket board and its cricketers, who have gone on an indefinite strike over pay and benefits. According to a report in 'ESPNCricinfo', the players are likely to meet with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) officials later on Wednesday. "After the media conference last evening, I spoke to a senior player who told me that they would get back to us at any time after discussing among themselves. We expect to sit with them at 5pm today," BCB CEO Nizamuddin Chowdhury said in a press briefing at noon. Samakal, a local daily, quoted BCB Director Mahbubul Anam as saying that Hasina enquired about the crisis with Mortaza, who led the team in the 2019 World Cup. "She wanted to know the latest about cricket's situation," he said. Then she asked Mashrafe to tell the players to return to the field. — PTI

### TN TO MEET KARNATAKA IN TITLE ROUND

SUMIT SINGH BENGALURU, OCT. 23

Karnataka marched their way into the final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy by scripting a nine-wicket win over Chhattisgarh here at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium on Wednesday. Karnataka's V. Koushik, a 27-year-old fast bowler who was playing his fifth List A game, did the star turn with an impressive figures of 4/46. Devdutt Paddikal and KL Rahul put on 155 runs for the opening wicket as Karnataka steamrollered Chhattisgarh. In the second semi-final, Tamil Nadu got the better of Gujarat. An unbeaten 85-run partnership between Shahrukh Khan (56 not out) and Washington Sundar (27 not out) helped TN chase down the target of 178 with an over to spare. A soggy outfield delayed the start of the game and was reduced to a 40-overs-a-side. Karnataka openers started the chase cautiously as they maintained less than four runs per over in first 15 overs. Chhattisgarh bowlers were let down by their fielders as Amandeep Khare dropped Rahul when he was on 24. **Brief scores:** Chhattisgarh 223 in 49.4 overs (Amandeep Khare 78, Sumit Ruhikar 40, V. Koushik 4/46) lost to Karnataka 229/1 in 41 overs (Devidutt Paddikal 92, KL Rahul 88\*, Ajay Mandal 1/51). Gujarat 177/9 in 40 overs (Dhruv Ravai 40, Axar Patel 37, M. Mohammed 3/23) lost to Tamil Nadu 181/5 in 39 overs (Shahrukh Khan 56\*, Dinesh Karthik 47).

# Dada takes fresh guard

## Ganguly vows corruption-free BCCI after becoming president

**Mumbai, Oct. 23:** Clad in his captain's navy blue blazer, Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday promised a "corruption-free, same-for-all BCCI", a philosophy that, he said, guided his tenure as India skipper from 2000 to 2005. Elected unopposed to the top position in the world's richest cricket Board, the bespectacled 47-year-old also gave enough indications that he would run the show the way he wants and is unlikely to be influenced. "I will do it the way I know, I will do it the way which I feel is best for the BCCI with no compromise on credibility. Corruption-free and same for all BCCI. That's the way I led India and that's the way I will take this organisation forward," said the man with more than 18,000 international runs under his belt. Hard to miss at his maiden press interaction after taking charge was the India blazer that he was wearing. "I got it when I was captain of India but I did not realise that it is so loose. But I decided I will wear it," he said. He will be at the helm for nine months because the Supreme Court-mandated reforms require a cooling off period after a six-year run as an office-bearer. Ganguly has already been Cricket Association of Bengal Secretary and President. Ganguly couldn't help but recall the time he took over as team captain. The sport's integrity was in tatters that year after the 2000 match-fixing scandal and Ganguly was handed the responsibility of resurrecting it. Resurrection is once again what is required after three years of administrative limbo, incidentally also caused by corruption — the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal. Ironically, Mohammed Azharuddin was at the centre of the 2000 scandal and will now be his Board colleague as Hyderabad Cricket Association President. The two former teammates hugged each other after Wednesday's meeting. "Coincidentally, fortunately or unfortunately, there was a similar situation when I took over as captain and captained India for six years," Ganguly said referring to, what are widely considered, the dark days of Indian cricket. "It's a similar sort of a situation where things need to be brought back to place, reforms need to be done, huge amount of money to be paid to state associations so it's a lot of work," he added.

### 'Here to make Kohli's life easier'

Laying down his immediate priorities, Ganguly said a call to current skipper Virat Kohli is in order. "Virat Kohli is the most important man in Indian cricket, we will listen to him. I will speak to Virat Kohli tomorrow, we will support him in every possible way whatever he wants," he said. "We are here to work for Indian cricket. We will do that to the best of our ability," he added. Ganguly said he will also sit with the team management which also includes head coach Ravi Shastri. "It will be a proper discussion and everything will be mutually discussed but be rest assured, we are here to make their life easier, not make their life difficult. Everything is on the basis of performance," the BCCI president was clear.

### 'Conflict is still an issue'

Ganguly was recently caught in the conflict of interest turmoil that has plagued the game and was asked to explain his multiple roles — CAB President and Delhi IPL franchise mentor — by the Board's Ethics Officer. He acknowledged the issue is noteworthy but said it won't come in the way of appointing the Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC), which handles appointments of coaches, support staff and other committees. "Conflict is still an issue... (But) we have to create CAC because they will appoint a lot of selectors and other members which are important part of Indian cricket, so we will do that and we will make sure that they don't have any conflict of interest," he asserted.

### 'Dhoni's stature will be given respect'

Ganguly said the matter of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's future in international cricket will be addressed but vowed to accord the two-time World Cup winning captain respect during his tenure. Ganguly said he doesn't know what is in Dhoni's mind but promised that a player of his stature will be given respect. "It depends on him. Even when I was left out and when the entire world said he will never make it, I believed in myself and came back and played for four years,"

Ganguly said. "You know champions don't finish quickly. I don't know what's in his mind and what he thinks about his career. So we will deal with that you know," he added.

### 'Focus on relationship with ICC'

The relationship with the International Cricket Council will also be in focus during his tenure and Ganguly is confident of getting India its due. "India is to get \$372 million from the ICC in the five-year cycle. Till now we have got whatever it is and we will make sure we get our due. We will work with the ICC and take this forward," he said. He reiterated his commitment to improving the domestic cricket structure. "The structures are there, the tournaments are there. In the last three years the matches have doubled actually. When I played for Bengal and some of my colleagues played for the other states there were about 1000 games to be played at. Now there are 2000 games between states and the affiliates.

"So we have to account for it. We have to make sure the best tournament in the country is competitive, and it remains important to everyone now because that's where you get the Kohlis and MS Dhonis, Ajinkya Rahanes and Rohit Sharmas of Indian cricket," he said. In the end, Ganguly said it is about respect and everybody would get that. "Till the time I am around."

### 'Hopeful of Bangla tour'

Ganguly expressed optimism that Bangladesh's tour of India will go ahead as planned as their Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has "given her consent". The upcoming tour 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. However, Ganguly has maintained that Bangladesh will turn up for the tour starting November 3. "It's their internal matter. (But) the Bangladesh PM has said she will turn up for the Test in Kolkata. If she has given her consent, I don't see how the national team won't," Ganguly said. — PTI



Sourav Ganguly with the newly elected apex council members. — BCCI

### ALL THE PRESIDENT'S MEN

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly needs no introduction but the four other office-bearers who were elected unopposed here on Wednesday do. Following is the synopsis of their journey in cricket administration.

#### JAY SHAH, secretary

The 31-year-old is the youngest office-bearer in the BCCI. Jay, who is Home Minister Amit Shah's son, has been with the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) since 2009. He was elected GCA joint-secretary in September 2013.



#### ARUN SINGH DHUMAL, treasurer

He too hails from a political family with his elder brother Anurag Thakur currently being a Minister of State (Finance and Corporate Affairs). Thakur was removed as BCCI president in January 2017. Dhumal, 44, served as vice-president of Himachal cricket body, HPCA between 2012 and 2015 when Thakur was its president. Dhumal also led a three-member ad-hoc committee which was formed to run HPCA in the wake of Lodha panel recommendations to reform Indian cricket. He also has the experience of representing HPCA in the BCCI.



#### JAYESH GEORGE, joint secretary

The 50-year-old has years of experience in cricket administration, having been part of Kerala Cricket Association (KCA) as its secretary, joint secretary, treasurer and most recently the president. He has been part of the KCA since 2005.



#### MAHIM VERMA, vice-president

His father P C Verma has served as secretary of the Cricket Association of Uttarakhand (CAU). Mahim, 45, himself was CAU's joint-secretary for 10 years until September when he was elected the association's secretary, soon after the body got BCCI's recognition.



#### ROLL OF HONOUR (SINCE THE MILLENNIUM)

AC Muthiah	(1999-2001)
Jagmohan Dalmiya	(2001-2004)
Ranbir Singh Mahendra	(2004-2005)
Sharad Pawar	(2005-2008)
Shashank Manohar	(2008-2011)
N. Srinivasan	(2011-2013)
Jagmohan Dalmiya (Interim)	(2013-2013)
N. Srinivasan	(2013-2014)
Shivlal Yadav (Interim)	(2014-2014)
Sunil Gavaskar (IPL Interim)	(2014-2014)
Jagmohan Dalmiya (died in office)	(2015-2015)
Shashank Manohar (Resigned)	(2015-2016)
Anurag Thakur (Sacked)	(2016-2017)
CK Khanna (Interim)	(2017-2019)
Sourav Ganguly	(2019-Present)



Newly-elected president of the BCCI Sourav Ganguly during a press conference at BCCI headquarters at Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. — Debashish Dey

### DADA'S CHALLENGES

BCCI President Sourav Ganguly will have his hands full during his nine-month tenure as he deals with the impending challenges both cricketing as well as administrative. Here are the issues that the former India captain will need to tackle as the head of world cricket's richest body.

- Position of India in the ICC
- Tax rebates for 2016 World T20 and future ICC events in India
- Payment of domestic cricketers
- Domestic Structure
- Day/Night Test cricket
- Conflict of Interest Issue

## No better person than Ganguly to lead: Rai

**New Delhi, Oct. 23:** After an eventful 33-month tenure, during which he was witness to the "Good, the Bad and the Ugly" of Indian cricket, Committee of Administrators chief Vinod Rai is happy that someone of Sourav Ganguly's stature is taking over the reins of Indian cricket.



**How do you look at Sourav Ganguly's ascension to the BCCI president's post?** I have great respect for Sourav...My respect for him grew even more watching him efficiently

manage the Cricket Association of Bengal and the fact that cricketer of that capability and distinction will be running

### Historian Guha turns down BCCI payment

**New Delhi, Oct. 23:** Noted historian Ramchandra Guha on Wednesday said he didn't expect to be paid for his tenure in the outgoing Committee of Administrators and had made this clear in the CoA's very first meeting. Guha declined a payment of ₹40 lakh along with another former CoA member, banker Vikram Limaye, who was to be paid ₹50.5 lakh. "I had indicated in the first meeting itself that I did not expect or want any payment," Guha said. — PTI



**How do you look at your 33-month tenure?** It has been a very satisfying experience because there are four former players in major administration

now. There is Sourav, IPL chairman is Brijesh Patel, Anshuman Gaekwad and Shantha Rangaswamy are in the Apex Council. We have been able to create a Players' Association, which wasn't initially being accepted. We had women's IPL, even though on a smaller scale but the matches were of high quality. We have been totally transparent. The minutes of 100-plus CoA meetings are available on the board's website. — PTI

## BANGLADESH SERIES: SAMSON SET TO BE INCLUDED AS COVER FOR PANT

**Mumbai, Oct. 23:** India skipper Virat Kohli's workload could be a topic of discussion while Rishabh Pant could have prolific Sanju Samson for cover during three T20s when the selection committee picks the squad for the upcoming series against Bangladesh here on Thursday.

Kohli has featured in 48 out of the 56 games India have played across formats since October 2018. However, the selection committee will leave it on Kohli to decide whether he needs a break or continue playing. There is expected to be serious discussions about rookie Mumbai all-rounder Shivam Dubey, who might replace an injured Hardik Pandya for the all-rounder's slot, primarily based on his big-hitting prowess. Apart from the three-match T20 series which starts in New Delhi on November 3, followed by matches at Rajkot and Nagpur, Bangladesh will also play two Tests. — PTI





On top

Slovenia's Primoz Roglic ends 2019 top of the rankings as cycling's world No.1, winning the World Tour ahead of Frenchman Julian Alaphilippe and Denmark's Jakob Fuglsang



Sometimes when you don't know a course, that's a better thing.

— Star golfer Rory McIlroy who is playing in Japan for the first time in 11 years

SHORT TAKES

Serie A looking into more abuse

Milan: Italian soccer authorities have opened an investigation after another player was racially abused during a Serie A match this past weekend. Sampdoria midfielder Ronaldo Vieira was subjected to racist chants by Roma fans during the teams' 0-0 draw but the league's sporting judge said Tuesday that he has asked for more information before deciding on a possible punishment. Roma has already said it "will support the authorities in identifying and subsequently banning any individuals found guilty of racially abusing the midfielder." Vieira, who was born in Guinea Bissau and is black, plays for England's Under-21 team. Offensive chants have also been aimed at Romelu Lukaku, Franck Kessie, Dalbert Henrique and Miralem Pjanic this season. — AP

Spain women to go on strike

Madrid: Women soccer players in Spain plan to go on strike after failing to reach a deal with clubs over working hours and minimum wages. About 200 players met in Madrid late Tuesday and voted in favor of the strike, which is expected to begin in November after legal requirements are met. More than 90% of voting players favored the strike. The players' and clubs' associations have been in negotiations for a collective agreement over the last year. They disagree over issues including the clubs' decision to limit working hours to 20 per week. Players want at least 30 hours to be guaranteed. — AP

Red Bulls tamed since F1's break

Mexico City: Max Verstappen and Red Bull were riding high at Formula One's summer break. The driver and team have been in a funk ever since. And returning to a favorite track in Mexico City may not get them out. Not with Ferrari and Mercedes flying around the track and Lewis Hamilton taking aim at a career sixth season championship. Red Bull and Verstappen appeared ready to rumble with Mercedes over the stretch run of the season when Verstappen stormed to wins in Austria and Germany, then took pole position in Hungary. Only a strategic move for new tires allowed Hamilton to snatch victory in Budapest. — AP

PARIS LOGO GETS ONLINE RIDICULE

Paris: The new 2024 Olympics logo is supposed to evoke French history but has instead earned ridicule online for its apparent resemblance to a stereotypical Parisian woman. Unveiled on Monday, the design incorporates the art deco style in vogue the last time Paris hosted the Games in 1924, depicting an Olympic flame within a gold medal. It also incorporates the lips and outline of Marianne, the personification of liberty and the French Republic since the revolution of 1789 — an addition that some mocked for adding an unnecessarily seductive character to the motif. "The French Olympic logo tumbles out of bed on a Parisian morning," wrote Paris-based journalist Megan Clement on Twitter. "She tousles her messy bob, dons breton stripes and ballet flats and whisks down the stairs from her fifth-floor apartment to grab a baguette before enigmatically texting two men who are pursuing her romantically." (She) has an espresso and a cigarette for lunch. She hops on a vintage bicycle and pedals past the Eiffel Tower on her way to a cafe where she will sit and read Baudelaire with her fluffy white dog at her feet." — AFP

CLIPPERS SHINE

Leonard's team outfox Lakers in Los Angeles battle

Los Angeles, Oct. 23: Kawhi Leonard and the Clippers won the opening round of Los Angeles's revitalised battle for basketball supremacy on Tuesday, defeating LeBron James and the Lakers 112-102 in a pulsating season-opening clash at the Staples Center.

Leonard, who arrived at the Clippers in the off-season after leading Toronto to the NBA title last season, wasted no time roaring back into action, leading the scoring with 30 points.

"It was great. A lot of emotions, game one," said Leonard, who grew up in Riverside, 50 miles east of Los Angeles.

"I am just happy we came out and got a victory. We had great practices and some carry over from that tonight."

The Clippers attacked the rim, forced easy turnovers, used a stingy defence to keep James and his new sidekick Anthony Davis in check.

Leonard also had six rebounds and five assists, reserve guard Lou Williams finished with 21 points and power forward Montrezl Harrell tallied 17 points and seven rebounds.

James shot seven-of-19 for 18 points and Davis shot eight-of-21 for 25 points for the Lakers who are hoping their offseason changes will boost the team's fortunes after they finished a disappointing 37-45 and failed to qualify for the postseason for the sixth season in a row.

"It is the first game," said James. "It was a huge test. We have a lot of room to improve. We are a new group with a new system. We did some good things and we did some not so



Los Angeles Lakers' LeBron James (right) is defended by Los Angeles Clippers' Kawhi Leonard during the first half of an NBA game on Tuesday. — AP

good things. "We look forward to getting some film and seeing some of the mistakes we made."

The one bright spot for the Lakers was newcomer Danny Green who scored 28 points by hitting 10 of his 14 field-goal attempts, including seven of nine from beyond the arc.

Junior Varsity barb

The two Los Angeles teams made some of the most significant changes but the Clippers appeared to have added more value.

Every one of their bench players reached double figures on Tuesday as they outscored the Laker

reserves 60-19. Williams outscored the Lakers reserves by himself.

He said the Clippers didn't want to just win. That they are tied of playing second fiddle to the Lakers and wanted nothing more than to dominate their city rivals.

"We always play with a chip on our shoulder," Williams said.

"For last two months all the talk has been about the Lakers versus the Clippers."

"We hear that we are the Junior Varsity team, or little brother, or whatever. We are pros too. That's why we have a chip on our shoulder." — AFP

RAPTORS START TITLE DEFENCE WITH WIN

Los Angeles, Oct. 23: Fred VanVleet scored a career-high 34 points as the Toronto Raptors got their NBA title defence off to a winning start with a 130-122 overtime win over the New Orleans Pelicans on Tuesday.

Pascal Siakam also tallied 34 points and added 18 rebounds before fouling out of the NBA's season-opening contest at Scotiabank Arena which featured the Raptors' championship banner and ring ceremony.

Both teams were missing some big names as the Raptors began life without Kawhi Leonard and the Pelicans lost Anthony Davis in a trade and were missing injured first pick Zion Williamson.

"We had to reach into our bag of tricks," said Raptors coach Nick Nurse. — AFP

108 non-USA players in NBA

Los Angeles, Oct. 23: The 2019-20 NBA season opened on Tuesday with 108 international players from 38 nations, including 16 Canadians a record for the most players from any non-US nation, the league announced.

It is the sixth consecutive season the NBA has opened with more than 100 players from beyond US borders. The league set records with 113 global players from 42 non-US nations to begin the 2016-17 and 2017-18 campaigns.

Nine Australians, eight Frenchman, seven Croatians and six Serbians are the

biggest groups from other nations on NBA opening night rosters.

Six Canadians were taken in June's NBA Draft, breaking the record of five French players in 2016.

Among NBA clubs, the Dallas Mavericks have an NBA-high seven international players. Philadelphia and Phoenix each have six. Memphis, Utah, San Antonio, Toronto, Oklahoma City, Sacramento and Washington all have five.

The NBA's 74th campaign began with a 30 players who took part in the development program. — AFP

Shaquille backs Rockets' GM over China-NBA row

Los Angeles, Oct. 23: NBA legend Shaquille O'Neal gave his support to Houston Rockets general manager Daryl Morey on Tuesday, saying the executive "was right" in his comments that ignited a furore between the NBA and China.

Speaking on TNT television's Inside the NBA show, former Los Angeles Lakers star O'Neal said Morey was entitled to tweet support for Hong Kong pro-democracy protesters earlier this month.

"Daryl Morey was right," O'Neal said. "Whenever you see something wrong going on anywhere in the world, you should have the right to say 'That's not right' and that's what he



Shaquille O'Neal

did." O'Neal said nothing should inhibit free speech.

"We as American people do a lot of business in China," O'Neal said.

"They know and understand our values, and we understand their values. "And one of our best val-

ues here in America is free speech.

"We're allowed to say what we want to say and we're allowed to speak up about injustices, and that's just how it goes.

"And if people don't understand that, that's something that they have to deal with."

Morey triggered a crisis earlier this month after tweeting an image captioned "Fight for Freedom. Stand with Hong Kong."

It came right before the LA Lakers and Brooklyn Nets arrived in China for what proved to be a tense exhibition tour, with broadcasters refusing to air the games, public anger raging, and local sponsors cutting ties with the NBA. — AFP

Zverev crashes out in first Rd

Basel (Switzerland), Oct. 23: World number six Alexander Zverev lost a 7-6(9/7), 6-4 battle at the first round of the ATP Swiss Indoors to Taylor Fritz on Tuesday as the American hit 14 aces.

The defeat for the German to the 21-year-old came barely a week after losing in the Shanghai Masters final to Daniil Medvedev.

With Zverev next in the queue to qualify for November's eight-man ATP Finals in London - the seventh-ranked player has his work cut out to make it into the year-ending showpiece.

Zverev, a semi-finalist last year in Basel, fought in the opening set to take it into a tiebreaker but was overwhelmed in the second by his American opponent in 86 minutes.

Fritz, ranked 31st and a winner at Eastbourne in June, saved both break points against his serve. Fabio Fognini picked up his London qualifying

pace with a 6-2, 6-4 defeat of Australian Alexei Popyrin.

The Italian winner reached the second round in 78 minutes to reinforce his year-end bid.

The Monte Carlo Masters champion stands 11th in the chase for one of the remaining eight spots in the field and is duelling with compatriot Matteo Berrettini.

Fognini said he is not particularly bothered about the race outcome.

"I'm 11th and that is still far away. If I qualify — fine. "If not, then I can spend more time with the family, that's the most important thing anyway.

"I'm not a huge fan of playing all the big servers of today, for me it's not tennis. But I'm glad to still be playing at 33," he added.

The US' Riley Opelka hammered 27 aces in his 7-6(7/5), 7-6 (12/10) defeat of Chile's Christian Garin and will face either sixth seed David Goffin or Marin Cilic. — AFP



Germany's Alexander Zverev returns to Taylor Fritz of the United States during their first round match. — AP

GOLF ROUND-UP

Woods, Spieth, McIlroy in lead

Inzai City (Japan), Oct. 23: With a field that includes Tiger Woods, Jordan Spieth and Rory McIlroy, the PGA Tour's first tournament in Japan has plenty of star power.

The Zozo Championship, which begins on Thursday, will be held at the Accordia Golf Narashino Country Club, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) east of Tokyo in Inzai City.

It is part of three tournaments that make up the PGA Tour's Asia Swing, including the CJ Cup in South Korea won last week by Justin Thomas and the HSBC Champions in Shanghai next week.

The Japanese tournament, co-sanctioned with the Japan Golf Tour, is a 78-man, no-cut field with a \$9.75 million purse.

The weather could prove to be a factor on the weekend. Japan is bracing for two more storms heading its way a week after a typhoon devastated the country's central and northern regions. A forecast for another typhoon has been downgraded to a

tropical storm. Woods last played in an official tournament in Japan in 2006 at the Dunlop Phoenix, where he lost in a playoff to Padraig Harrington. He won the Dunlop Phoenix the two previous years.

"It's going to be a lot of fun to be back here in front of fans that really understand and respect the game of golf," Woods said in a pre-tournament interview. "The game of golf is so strong here in Japan, and to have seen it grow like it has over 20-some odd years that I've been playing is very special."

The Masters champion is making his first start in his 23rd season on the PGA Tour, needing one victory to reach 82 wins and tie the career record held by Sam Snead.

Jason Day, who beat Woods in the Skins game, is also part of the field as well as Japanese star Hideki Matsuyama and Thomas, whose win in the CJ Cup was his 11th PGA Tour event and his second in South Korea. — AP

PARALYMPIC ATHLETICS

Vervoort dies by euthanasia

Brussels, Oct. 23: Belgian Paralympic champion Marieke Vervoort ended her life through euthanasia at the age of 40 on Tuesday, Belgian media reported.

Euthanasia is legal in Belgium and the spiky-haired athlete announced her intentions after the Rio Games in 2016 to follow that path if her degenerative condition worsened her suffering.

But she said at the time that sport had given her a reason to keep living.

"I'm still enjoying every little moment. When the moment comes when I have more bad days than good days, then I have my euthanasia papers, but the time is not there yet," she told a news conference during the 2016 Paralympic Games.

Vervoort suffered a degenerative muscle disease that caused constant pain, paralysis in her legs and left her barely able to sleep, and gradually her life became torture.

She was just 14 years old when diagnosed but Vervoort pursued a sporting life with passion -- playing wheelchair bas-



In this file pic, Belgium's Marieke Vervoort reacts after winning the silver medal for the women's 400 m (T52) of the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games. — AFP

ketball, swimming and racing in triathlons.

She won the 100m gold and 200m silver wheelchair races at the 2012 London Games, as well as the 400m silver and 100m bronze in Brazil four years later.

By then her eyesight had deteriorated and she suffered from epileptic attacks, and she said that

Rio would be her last competition.

"After the Paralympic Games, when I quit, I'm going to enjoy every little moment in my life and I'm going to put more energy in my family and friends, which I couldn't do with top sports because I had to train every day," she said in 2016.

Vervoort signed the paperwork to be euthanised back in 2008.

She said in Rio that access to legal assisted dying had given her the courage to continue living for as long as she had, and insisted the practice should not be characterised as "murder".

"It gives a feeling of rest to people." — AFP

RIVER REACHES COPA FINAL DESPITE LOSS

Buenos Aires, Oct. 23: Argentinian powerhouse River Plate will defend its Copa Libertadores title after eliminating archrivals Boca Juniors in the semifinals.

River Plate lost to Boca 1-0 on Tuesday at La Bombonera stadium, but advanced thanks to a 2-0 win in the first leg at the Monumental de Nunez earlier in October.

Venezuelan Jan Hurtado scored the only goal of the match at 80 minutes after a free kick from the right wing. It was one of the few opportunities Boca had in the entire match.

River seeks its fifth South American crown in the single-match final in Santiago on Nov. 23.

Street protests against transportation rises have rocked the Chilean capital, but South America's soccer body CONMEBOL said it does not have an alternate plan for the Copa Libertadores decider.

River's opponent will be known on Wednesday, when Brazil's Flamengo hosts Gremio. — AP

Postage stamp on US great Palmer

Washington, Oct. 23: Iconic golf champion Arnold Palmer, a seven-time major winner and sports marketing pioneer, will be recognized with a US postage stamp in 2020, the US Postal Service announced on Tuesday.

Palmer, who died in 2016 at age 87, was a four-time Masters champion from 1958-1964 who also won the 1960 US Open and 1961 and 1962 British Opens. He won 62 US PGA Tour events and was a 1974 inductee into the World Golf Hall of Fame.

The US Postal Service will pay tribute to Palmer for his positive impact and rise from humble beginnings to global champion, noting, "with drive and charisma, he helped transform a game once seen as a pastime for the elite into a sport enjoyed by the masses."

The stamp, designed by art director Antonio

Alcala, features a photo by James Drake of Palmer competing at the 1964 US Open at Congressional Country Club in Bethesda, Maryland, with Palmer's name in the top left corner. "To have my father celebrated in this way is a true honor," said Amy Saunders, Palmer's daughter and chairwoman of the Arnold and Winnie Palmer Foundation.

"It's something I think he would be proud of as both an individual and as an American and it's a wonderful way to preserve his legacy." The "Forever" stamp, set to always be equal in value to the US first class mail price, will be the second for a Latrobe, Pennsylvania, native after children's television show host "Mr. Rogers", Fred Rogers, was honored in 2018.

An exact date and site for First Day of Issue will be declared later. — AFP





## Kane-ology

Tottenham's skipper Harry Kane wants his team to carry on the momentum from their 5-0 win over Red Star into the upcoming matches

All the credit is for him. He's a guy whose physicality is incredible.

— Pep Guardiola, Manchester City coach, on Raheem Sterling's heroics in their Champions League game against Atalanta

### SHORT TAKES

#### Sai moves up to 11th, Sindhu 6th

New Delhi: Top Indian shuttler B. Sai Praneeth jumped one place to reach career-best 11th spot while world champion P.V. Sindhu remained unchanged at sixth in the BWF world rankings released on Tuesday.

Praneeth, who won a bronze in the World Championships in August, had a best men's singles career rank of 12th before Tuesday. He had beaten Olympic champion Lin Dan in the Denmark Open last week in the round of 32 before losing to Kento Momota of Japan in the pre-quarterfinals.

Kidambi Srikanth dropped one place to 10th while Sameer Verma also slipped one spot to be 18th in the list headed by Momota.

In the women's singles, Sindhu remained static at sixth while another Olympic medallist Saina Nehwal moved down one place to be ninth in the list headed by Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei.

— PTI

#### Bayern fans are beaten in Greece

Piraeus, Greece: A UEFA Youth League match between Olympiakos and Bayern Munich in Athens was abandoned on Tuesday after a masked gang attacked visiting fans leaving at least seven people injured. Police said 80 people arrived at the Rentis Athletic Centre in Piraeus on 40 scooters. About 30 of them, wearing masks or helmets, invaded the venue and assaulted Bayern fans with clubs.

The attack came with Bayern Munich leading 4-0 after 84 minutes. The match was abandoned. Six Bayern Munich fans were injured as well as one Greek security guard. Two of the visiting fans were taken to the hospital for treatment. The few police at the venue were unable to stop the attack or make arrests. After the incident, Olympiakos players went into the stands and asked the Bayern Munich supporters for forgiveness. "Olympiakos FC strongly condemns today's hooligan attack at the Rentis Athletic Centre during the match," a statement from the club said. — AFP

#### SPANISH BODY APPROVES EL CLASICO DATE

Madrid: The rearranged Clasico between Barcelona and Real Madrid will be played on December 18 despite opposition from La Liga, the Spanish Football Federation (RFEF) confirmed on Tuesday. Spain's most prestigious fixture, which was due to take place at Camp Nou on Saturday, was postponed last week because of violent pro-independence protests in Catalonia.

La Liga had proposed December 4 or 7 and may decide to appeal. "The decision of the Competition Committee has taken place after analysing in recent days the proposals of both clubs, who were invited to agree a date and decided on December 18," an RFEF statement read.

"It has also analysed a report from the RFEF Competitions Area as well as numerous reports submitted by La Liga, which are not binding. "At today's meeting, the Committee also analysed the latest reports from both clubs, who maintain their initial proposal to play the match on 18 December."

It means Barcelona, who insisted the original match should have gone ahead this weekend, will face a testing few weeks before Christmas. In December, they are already scheduled to play away at Atletico Madrid, Inter Milan in the Champions League and Real Sociedad, who sit fourth in La Liga. — AFP



Manchester City's midfielder Raheem Sterling (left) scores his side's fifth goal during their UEFA Champions League Group 'C' match against Atalanta at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester, northwest England, on Tuesday. City won 5-1. — AFP

# STERLING STEERS CITY

### Citizens' midfielder scores hat-trick; Five-star PSG bash up Brugge

Manchester, Oct. 23: Pep Guardiola saluted the "extraordinary" Raheem Sterling after Manchester City's majestic winger hit a brilliant 11-minute hat-trick in Tuesday's 5-1 thrashing of Atalanta.

Guardiola's side were rocked by Ruslan Malinovsky's first half penalty in the Champions League clash at the Etihad Stadium.

But City responded superbly as Sergio Agüero struck twice before the interval. Sterling had provided the assists for both of Agüero's goals, but the England star was just getting warmed up.

After the interval, Sterling struck three times to complete a personal masterclass that underlined his rise in the Guardiola era from enigmatic playmaker to lethal finisher. Sterling has emerged as City's driving force over the last 18 months and his second hat-trick of the season confirmed his place among the world's best players.

#### DYBALA SLAMS TWO TO HELP JUVE WIN

Maurizio Sarri praised Juventus for not losing their heads as Paulo Dybala's quick-fire second-half double rescued a come-from-behind 2-1 win over Lokomotiv Moscow in their Champions League Group D clash in Turin on Tuesday.

Dybala pulled the hosts level on 77 minutes and added a second two minutes later to keep Juventus on course in Group D with seven points after three games. Sarri's side had drawn with Atletico Madrid and beaten Bayer Leverkusen 3-0 in the last two games. — Agencies



Paris Saint-Germain's French forward Kylian Mbappe (centre) scores during their UEFA Champions League Group 'A' match against Brugge at the Jan Breydel stadium in Bruges on Tuesday. PSG won the match 5-0. — AFP

# Mbappe serves triple treat

Bruges (Belgium), Oct. 23: Substitute Kylian Mbappe scored a hat-trick as Paris Saint-Germain moved a step closer to the Champions League last 16 with a 5-0 victory over previously unbeaten Club Brugge on Tuesday.

The World Cup winner, who has only started four games this season because of thigh and hamstring injuries, netted three times in the space of 20 minutes to help PSG go five points clear of Real Madrid going five points clear in the Group A.

Mauro Icardi netted the other two goals as fellow Argentinian Angel Di Maria directly set-up three of his side's efforts. For the third time in Europe this season PSG's Thomas Tuchel was unable to start his first-choice attacking trio of Neymar, who is

I wanted to start and I thought I was going to start, but the coach made his choice and I had to accept it. I also wanted to show that it's difficult to get by without me. It's been two months since I played a full game. It feels good to come back.

— KYLIAN MBAPPE

PSG striker after scoring three goals

suspended in Europe. Mbappe and Edinson Cavani who is injured. Brugge coach Philippe Clement, who has guided the club to the top of the Belgian Pro League, was without captain Ruud Vormer as the Netherlands midfielder served a suspension for a red card he received in the draw at Real.

The visitors claimed an early lead as Di Maria received a long-range ball on the right flank. The Argentina winger curled in an early cross with the outside of his left foot and Icardi beat Simon Mignolet at his near

post after seven minutes.

Champions League debutant Charles De Ketelaere missed a good chance to equalise after half an hour but the 18-year-old failed to worry Keylor Navas.

Icardi had a chance to double the Parisians' advantage six minutes into the second-half but his effort was well-saved by Mignolet.

The Ballon d'Or candidate repeated his feats from Friday's Ligue 1 victory over Nice by scoring and claiming an assist within 30 minutes. — AFP

# Spurs spray goals at Star

London, Oct. 23: Tottenham's 5-0 Champions League mauling of Red Star Belgrade will count for little unless they use it as a catalyst to turn around their miserable Premier League form.

Tuesday's result at home against the Serbian champions revives Mauricio Pochettino's sides hopes of European progress after a humiliating 2-7 defeat by Bayern Munich earlier this month.

Spurs are second in Group B with four points after three matches, behind leaders Bayern.

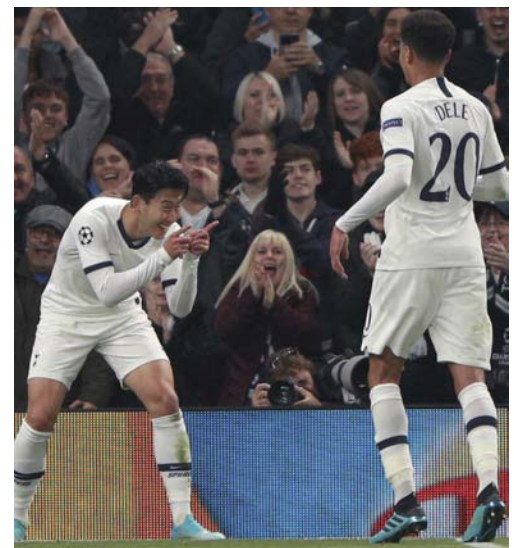
Kane hopes Tottenham would take the momentum from their win into their upcoming games.

"At home we were expected to win this game so we can't get too carried away with it," he said. "We have to stay focused and take the positives and take them into the Premier League," the skipper added.

#### LEWANDOWSKI DOES THE RESCUE ACT

The Germans needed two Robert Lewandowski goals to dig themselves out of trouble in their 3-2 win at Olympiakos in the Champions League on Tuesday.

Lewandowski maintained his phenomenal record, scoring for his 12th game in a row, to leave him with 18 goals in 13 games in all competitions. — Agencies



Tottenham's Son Heung-min (left) celebrates after scoring his side's third goal during their Champions League, Group 'B', match against Red Star Belgrade at Tottenham Hotspur stadium in London on Tuesday. Spurs won 5-0. — AP

# RUSSIA BRACE FOR LENGTHY OLYMPIC BAN

Moscow, Oct. 23: Russia's anti-doping chief is predicting a lengthy Olympic ban for the national squad, lashing out at Moscow authorities who he says handed over falsified lab data to international investigators.

The accusations are the latest scandal to hit Russian sport after the country was banned from competing in several international competitions over state-sponsored doping.

"Russia's Olympic squad will be prevented from participating fully in the Olympic Games in Tokyo... I think that this will also happen at the (Winter Olympic) Games in China," the head of Russia's RUSADA agency, Yuri Ganus said.

The best-case scenario in his view is very limited participation "by certain athletes, by invitation", as happened at the 2018 Pyeongchang Winter Olympics. He expects other penalties too, including restrictions on holding international tournaments in Russia, exclusion of Russians from international sports federations and fines.

In September, the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) demanded Russia explain "inconsistencies" in electronic data it handed over which listed results of tests carried out under the laboratory's previous leadership. — AFP

#### ● The previous Russian body had submitted falsified lab data to international investigators. Now, the RUSADA head expects a long ban.

# Praveen 1st to clinch Wushu gold

Shanghai, Oct. 23: Praveen Kumar on Wednesday became the first Indian man to win a wushu World Championships gold, beating Russel Diaz of Philippines in the 48kg category here.

The Indian saw off his Filipino opponent 2-1 in the men's sanda event of the 15th World Wushu Championships.

Praveen had earlier defeated Uzbekistan's Khasan Ikromov 2-0 in the semifinal on Tuesday to set up the summit clash with Diaz.

In 2017, Pooja Kadian became the first Indian to be crowned world champion in wushu after she defeated Evgeniya Stepanova of Russia in the women's 75 kg sanda event. — PTI

#### ● Praveen Kumar beat Russel Diaz 2-1 in the men's 48kg final, making him the first Indian to win a gold at the wushu World Championships.

# Goa open ISL account in style

Goa, Oct. 23: FC Goa struck the right chords on the field to ease past Chennaiyin FC 3-0 in their first game of the Hero Indian Super League 2019-20 season at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium here on Wednesday.

The ISL runners-up were a step ahead of their opponents in all areas of the field and were the better team overall.

New signing Seiminlen Doungel scored on his debut to break the deadlock in the 30th minute.

All-time ISL top-scorer Ferran Corominas struck in the 62nd minute and substitute Carlos Pena added a third in the 81st minute to consign an unimpressive Chennaiyin to a defeat.

In the 19th minute, Ferran Corominas picked up the ball from midfield and released Seiminlen



Chennaiyin FC goalkeeper Vishal Kaith (in green) and defender Lucian Goian foil an FC Goa attempt during their ISL match on Wednesday. Goa won 3-0.

Doungel into the box. Chennaiyin goalkeeper Vishal Kaith was on to the ball in a flash before

Goa's new signing could pounce and take a shot. A minute later, Manvir Singh attempted a strike

after making room for himself at the edge of the box and once again, Kaith was up to the task.

# Heartbreak for Srikanth, Kashyap, Sikki, Ashwini

Paris, Oct. 23: India's Kidambi Srikanth and Parupalli Kashyap were both ousted in the opening round of the French Open here on Wednesday.

While Srikanth fought hard for 55 minutes against second seed Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei before losing 15-21, 21-7, 21-14, Kashyap was no match for Hong Kong's Ng Ka Long Angus, losing 11-21, 9-21.

Another Indian male shuttler Sameer Verma suffered the same fate as he lost 22-20, 18-21, 18-21 to Japan's Kenta Nishimoto in the first round.

Shubhanker Dey now remains the lone Indian in the men's singles contest, having progressed to the second round where he will

#### ● Kidambi Srikanth went down 15-21, 21-7, 21-14 to Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei in the opening round. ● Parupalli Kashyap lost to Hong Kong's Ng Ka Long in straight games 11-21, 9-12.

be up against Shesha Hiren Rhustavitto of Indonesia.

India's challenge, however, came to an end in the opening round of the mixed doubles event with the ouster of the pairs of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa and Pranaav Jerry Chopra and N. Sikki Reddy. — Agencies

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While Rankireddy and Ponappa lost 17-21, 18-21 against fourth seed Seo Seung Jae and Chae Yujung of Korea, Chopra and Reddy combination was shown the door by England's Chris Adcock and Gabrielle Adcock 13-21, 18-21.

The only Indians left at the event are Shubhanker Dey and P.V. Sindhu.

Earlier, Shubhanker had notched up an upset win over Tommy Sugiarto of Indonesia 15-21, 21-14, 21-17 to make the second round. While Sindhu beat Li 21-15 21-13 in a match that lasted 44 minutes in her opening round of the BWF Super 750 tournament. — Agencies