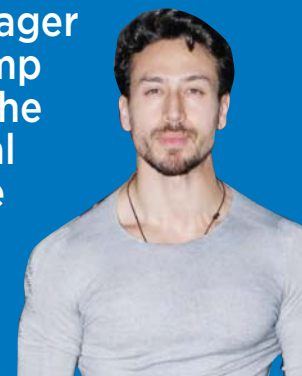


# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER 2019

**TABLOID**  
**25**  
Tiger Shroff not eager to jump into the digital space



**NATION | Pilgrimage**

India, Pak sign pact to operationalise Kartarpur Corridor

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**NEWSMAKERS | #MeToo**

Pakistani filmmaker Jami Moor says he was raped 13 years ago by media tycoon

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**WINDOWS**



Bollywood actor Sonakshi Sinha at a Diwali party, hosted by producer Ramesh Taurani, in Mumbai, late on Wednesday. — PTI

**SC allows Centre to recover ₹92Kcr from telecom firms**

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday rejected telecom companies' appeal against the government's definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) and allowed the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) to recover dues worth ₹92,000 crore from telecom companies — Bharti Airtel, Reliance Communications (RCOM) and Vodafone Idea. Full report on Page 9

**Govt mulls personal Income Tax relief**

New Delhi: Government is considering tax relief for individuals as it looks at measures to accelerate consumer demand and boost economic growth, people with direct knowledge of the matter said. The Modi's government is mulling a proposal to hike the taxable income limits. Full report on Page 9

**39 dead in UK were Chinese, says media**

London: The 39 people found dead in a truck in Britain were Chinese nationals, British media outlets reported on Thursday, citing sources. The victims were discovered in a container on the back of a truck in Grays, east of London, on Wednesday. Full report on Page 11

**COUNTERPOINT**



Some light at end of the tunnel, at last!

**WEATHER**

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**ASTROGUIDE**

**Vikari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Ashwayuja Bahula Dwadasi till 7.05 pm  
**Star:** Pubbai till 10.58 am  
**Variyam:** 5.24 pm to 6.50 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 8.33 am to 9.19 am, 12.22 pm to 1.08 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 10.30 am to 12 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.42 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.28 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 4.10 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 4.06 PM**

**ASSEMBLY ELECTION VERDICT 2019 MAHARASHTRA, HARYANA**

# BJP leads, but loses heft

## BJP-SHIV SENA TO FORM GOVT IN MAHA, MANOEUVRING BEGINS IN HARYANA

SANJAY BASAK  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

Taking the voters for granted did not work for the BJP this time. The slogan, "Ab ki baar 75 paar" about the 90 seats in Haryana and 220-plus target of 228 Assembly berths in Maharashtra fell by the wayside.

The BJP, which brazenly ignored local issues, refused to address economic slow down, unemployment and stuck instead to contentious national issues — abrogation of Article 370 and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) — was delivered a body blow by voters in both the states.

**People of Maharashtra have blessed NDA with immense affection. We are humbled to have got the people's support yet again.**

— Narendra Modi

There are already talks of replacing Punjab chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar with a Jat face in Haryana.

If Haryana turned into an unmitigated horror show for the BJP with a hung Assembly and six ministers losing the polls, in Maharashtra, despite the NDA's win, BJP was put on the racks as its ally and bugbear Shiv Sena began talking of a "50-50 deal" for the chief minister's post.

Despite the poor show in Haryana, the BJP, which was six short of the simple majority of 46 Assembly berths has won the support of four of the seven Independent candidates. Now just two seats short of majority, chief minister Khattar is all set to stake claim to form the government. The party has flown the Independent MLAs to Delhi to "keep them safe" from "poachers".

The by-polls held in 51 Assembly seats also did not go the BJP way. Even though the BJP held on to 30 Assembly berths, the Congress managed to win 12



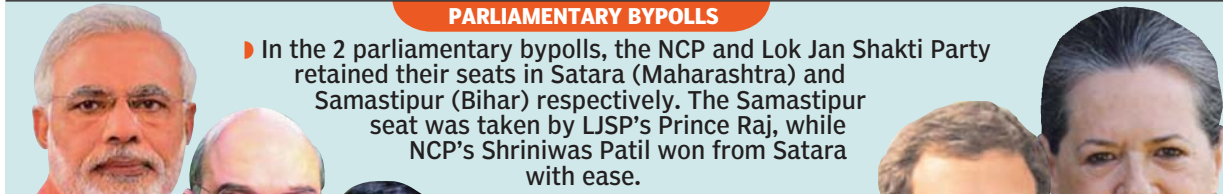
**MAHARASHTRA 288 TOTAL SEATS | 146 MAGIC MARK**

**BJP 105 + SS 56 TOTAL 161** | **CONG 44 + NCP 54 TOTAL 98** | **OTHERS 29**

**AADITYA WINS WORLI**  
Shiv Sena's Aaditya Thackeray won from Worli. He is the first Thackeray to stand for elections.

**AJIT PAWAR TAKES BARAMATI**  
Former Maharashtra dy CM and NCP leader Ajit Pawar won from Baramati with over 1.65 lakh vote margin

**PANKAJA MUNDE LOSES**  
Maha minister loses to her cousin and NCP candidate Dhananjay Munde from Parli



**HARYANA 90 TOTAL SEATS | 46 MAGIC MARK**

**BJP 40** | **CONG 31** | **JJP 10** | **OTHERS 09**

**SURJEWALA LOSES, AGAIN**  
Congress spokesperson loses to BJP's Leela Ram from Kaithal by 1,246 votes. He had also lost LS polls.

**MANTRI ABHIMANYU LOSES**  
Abhimanyu, Cabinet minister in Haryana, loses to JJP's Ram K. Gautam in Narnaud by 18,243 votes.

**'KINGMAKER' DUSHYANT?**  
Great-grandson of Devi Lal seemed set to play 'king-maker' after his JJP won 10 seats in its debut elections

**PARLIAMENTARY BYPOLLS**

In the 2 parliamentary bypolls, the NCP and Lok Jan Shakti Party retained their seats in Satara (Maharashtra) and Samastipur (Bihar) respectively. The Samastipur seat was taken by LJSP's Prince Raj, while NCP's Shrinivas Patil won from Satara with ease.

and eight went to others. Gujarat, the home turf of both, PM Narendra Modi and home minister Amit Shah, threw up a major surprise with the Congress winning three of the six Assembly by-polls.

BJP has won two and was leading in one. Turncoat Alpesh Thakor, who had quit the Congress to join the BJP, lost the bypoll to Radhanpur Assembly seat in Gujarat. Even though the Congress

has miles to go, it was celebrating the triumph of the old guard. Despite Congress leader Rahul Gandhi's open attempts to sideline former chief minister and Jat Turn to Page 5

### Crafting caste alliance revives woe-hit Cong

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY AND ASHAR KHAN  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

More than the BJP forming the government, it was the resurgence of the Congress that made news in this round of Assembly polls on Thursday. However, it wasn't the clout of Rahul Gandhi's brigade, but a carefully crafted social alliance of Jats and dalits that brought cheer to the flagging party in Haryana. In Maharashtra, it was the change in the state leadership and the alliance with Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party that did the trick for the Congress in increasing its tally. The decision to make Jat strongman Bhopinder Hooda the party's face and dalit leader Kumari Selja the state committee chief just before polls is what led to the party's impressive performance in Haryana

Along with this, the campaign strategy of focussing on economic distress Turn to Page 5

### JJP emerges as 3rd force in Haryana

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

The Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) has emerged as a third force in Haryana as results for the Assembly polls came in on Thursday. With the party securing at least 10 Assembly constituencies, it may emerge as one of the key factors in formation of a new government.

With the Bharatiya Janata Party falling short of half-way mark in the 90 member House, it is learnt that party is in touch with Turn to Page 5

### Uddhav insists on 50-50 power share

BHAGWAN PARAB and SONU SHRIVASTAVA  
MUMBAI, OCT. 24

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiv Sena will form the next government in Maharashtra, albeit with a reduced margin, and some compromises.

Indicating that he would drive a hard bargain in talks with the BJP during government formation, Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray said on Thursday that it was time to implement "fifty-fifty" formula for power-sharing decided during the Lok Sabha polls.

"Despite the 50:50 formula, I agreed to contest fewer seats in the Vidhan

It is time to remind the BJP about the formula arrived at when BJP chief Amit Shah visited my home... We had decided on fifty-fifty formula for the alliance.

— Uddhav Thackeray

Sabha polls taking into consideration the BJP's difficulties. However, I am now not ready to empathise with the BJP every time as I have to look after my own party's growth," he said. Claims Turn to Page 5

### Pawar magic leads to NCP's remarkable poll comeback

BHAGWAN PARAB  
MUMBAI, OCT. 24

When campaigning began for the Lok Sabha polls, the chances of Sharad Pawar-led Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) was all but written off by poll pundits. Badly hit by a series of defections, NCP was expected to hit rock bottom in the Assembly polls. However, the party rose like a phoenix from the ashes and surprised everyone by winning 54 seats.

The NCP emerged as the third-largest party in the state, relegating the Congress to the fourth position. If the BJP-Sena alliance decides to form a government together, NCP will stake claim to the position of Leader of Opposition in the legislative Assembly.

The credit for the revival of NCP's fortunes goes to its 79-year-old party chief Sharad Pawar, who single-handedly ran the party's campaign, notwithstanding his poor health. He also took on BJP's star campaigners, PM Narendra Modi and CM Devendra Fadnavis aggressively, which energised the party's cadre.

### Bypolls spring surprises for BJP in Bihar, Gujarat

VINEETA PANDEY  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24:

The Bharatiya Janata Party's popularity took a hit as the results of the bypolls, that were conducted in two parliamentary and 51 Assembly seats across 17 states, were declared on Thursday. Even though in the Assembly bypolls, the BJP took 14 and the Congress bagged 12 seats, the results threw a few surprises in Bihar and Gujarat.

The BJP managed to get only one out of the five Assembly seats in Bihar, while Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) got two. Gujarat results were also surpris-

**OWAISI'S PARTY OPENS BIHAR ACCOUNT**

Bypolls were held for 2 parliamentary, 51 Assembly seats across 17 states in India

The BJP took 14 and the Congress bagged 12 seats

BJP's popularity took a hit as the results of the bypolls

Asaduddin Owaisi's Telangana-based AIMIM opened its account in the north with its first victory in Bihar. Its candidate Qamrul Hoda defeated Sweetly Singh of the BJP in Kishanganj

ing as both, the Congress and the BJP, got three each out of the six seats that went for bypolls.

In all, the saffron party and its allies grabbed a total of 30 seats.

Another surprise was

Asaduddin Owaisi's Telangana-based party AIMIM (All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen), which opened its account in the north with its first victory in Bihar after its Turn to Page 5

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**Congress workers must believe that the BJP can be defeated in an election. Calm and quiet patriotism can defeat muscular nationalism**  
— P. Chidambaram  
Senior Congress leader

**AKHILESH YADAV TERMS THE VICTORY OF SP CANDIDATES IN UTTAR PRADESH BYELECTION AND MAHARASHTRA ASSEMBLY POLLS AS A MANDATE TO SAVE DEMOCRACY**

FRIDAY | 25 OCTOBER 2019 | NEW DELHI | THE ASIAN AGE

## REACTIONS

**SHARAD PAWAR**  
NCP chief

People have not accepted the talk of 220 seats (out of 288)... The election result shows people did not like the arrogance of power.

**SANJAY RAUT**  
Shiv Sena leader

It will be a BJP-Shiv Sena government. Seats may increase or decrease in an election. We will talk to Uddhavji, he will then speak with the CM. And what was agreed before the election, 50-50.

**PANKAJA MUNDE**  
BJP leader

I worked for the constituency. Though, I was in the government, my struggle for my constituency and people continued.

**BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA**  
Former Haryana CM

We (Congress) would have won a full majority if we had more time. The trends are in our favour. People want a strong government with the Congress, JJP and other parties.

**DUSHYANT CHAOTALA**  
JJP chief

Counting of slips from a VVPAT is underway. As soon as I get certificate, I'll discuss with everyone and decide future course of action.

**AJAY KUMAR LALLU**  
UPCC president

Till the 27th round, the Congress candidate was leading by 4,753 votes and then the DM got the counting stopped and the candidate and counting agents to leave the counting centre.

**SITARAM YECHURY**  
CPM general secretary

Results show that communal jingoism does not work at a time when people are in misery over lack of jobs and economic slowdown.

**AKHILESH YADAV**  
Former CM UP

People have seen through BJP game plan and will no longer be fooled by their false promises. They are now talking about our regime and comparing it with BJP.

# Bypolls deal body blow to NDA, hold glimmer of hope for RJD AIMIM opens account in Bihar

**NAYEAR AZAD**  
PATNA, OCT. 24

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar suffered a huge setback after NDA lost three of the five assembly seats during the by-polls on Thursday.

The LJP, which is also a member of NDA in Bihar; however, managed to retain its Samastipur parliamentary seat which fell vacant upon the demise of senior party leader and MP Ram Chandra Paswan. His son Prince Raj won the seat by a comfortable margin by defeating Congress rival Ashok Kumar.

Simri Bakhtiyarpur and Belhar Assembly seats were won by the RJD. Daraunha seat where a rebel BJP leader Karanjeet Singh alias Vyas Singh contested as an independent against the JD(U) nominee also won by a huge margin.

In Kishanganj, BJP candidate Sweety Singh was defeated by Asaduddin Owaisi's party AIMIM nominee Qamarul Hoda by more than 11,000 votes. According to political experts, AIMIM's entry in Kishanganj could influence a large group of voters in the Seemanchal region where Muslims have maximum representation.

During the Lok Sabha polls, AIMIM's candidate Akhtarul Imam was defeated by Congress nominee Mohammad Javed.

Political analysts are of the view that poor performance by the ruling alliance may cause trouble for the JD(U) which has been trying to maintain a status of "big brother" in the NDA. Sources said that a section in the BJP wants introspection at the orga-



Nitish Kumar

nizational level to find reasons behind the humiliating defeat.

Speaking on the issue JD(U) spokesperson Arvind Nishad said that, "NDA's performance in the by-election is a matter of introspection. We will soon review the poll results to find reasons behind our defeat".

Upbeat over the party's victory in the by-elections RJD spokesperson Mrityunjay Tiwary on Thursday said, "People of Bihar have suffered during the current regime and now want a change. We are sure that the RJD led alliance will be able to form a government in 2020".

Using the occasion to charge Nitish government for poor handling of flood crisis and AES outbreak in the state, RJD leaders said, "He remained in power for almost 15 years but failed in providing even basic facilities for the people. By-elections is an indication that people of the state are not happy with the government".

By-polls on five assembly seats in Bihar were necessitated after MLAs who represented them won the Lok Sabha elections earlier this year.

The byelections to 51 Assembly seats and two Lok Sabha constituencies across 17 states and the Union Territory of Puducherry have thrown up a few surprises, especially in BJP-ruled Bihar and Gujarat

### RAJASTHAN

► Congress candidate Rita Chaudhary on Thursday won the Mandawa assembly bypoll in Rajasthan by a margin of 33,704 votes.  
► On the other Assembly constituency of Khinwsar in Nagaur, RLP candidate Narayan Beniwal has defeated Congress leader Harendra Mirdha, who hails from the Mirdha family

### HIMACHAL

► Ruling BJP retained both Dharamshala and Pachhad seats in Himachal Pradesh where bypolls were held earlier this week. In Pachhad, Reena Kashyap of the BJP defeated her nearest rival former minister Gangu Ram Musafir of the Congress by a margin of 2,742 votes.  
► In Dharamshala, BJP's Vishal Nehria defeated his nearest rival Rakesh Kumar by a margin of 6,758 votes.



Rakesh Kumar by a margin of 6,758 votes.

### PUNJAB

► The ruling Congress won three Assembly seats, while the opposition Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) won one in the Punjab bypolls  
► Congress candidate and former IAS officer B.S. Dhaliwal defeated BJP's Rajesh Bagha by a margin of 26,116 votes in Phagwara.  
► Congress's Indu Bala won from Mukerian by defeating BJP's J.L. Mahajan.  
► Congress's Raminder Awla defeated SAD's R.S. Dibiapur by 16,633 votes in Jalandhar



Raminder Awla defeated SAD's R.S. Dibiapur by 16,633 votes in Jalandhar

### KERALA

► In Vattioorkavu in Thiruvananthapuram district, CPM's young face VK Prasanth won with 14,465 votes  
► In Konni, situated in Pathanamthitta district where Sabarimala is located, CPM's Janeesh Kumar is won with 9,940 votes.  
► Congress candidate Shanimol Usman won with a slight majority of 2,079 votes in Aroor

### ASSAM

► The BJP has retained Rangapara and Ratabari constituencies in the assembly bypolls while its party candidate also won in Sonari.  
► BJP's Rajen Borthakur defeated his nearest Congress candidate Kartik Kurmi by a whopping 50,104 votes in Rangapara  
► Bijoy Malakar was declared winner in Ratabari.

### BIHAR

► Ram Vilas Paswan's LJP retained the Samastipur reserved Lok Sabha seat from where his nephew Prince Raj made a successful debut in the by-election necessitated by the death of his father  
► The AIMIM registered its first electoral victory in Bihar with its candidate, Qamrul Hoda, winning from Kishanganj  
► RJD's Zafar Alam and Ramdeo Yadav won from Simri Bakhtiyarpur and Belhar respectively

# Barring two, all exit polls off the mark again

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

The credibility of the Exit Polls came under cloud once again with almost all barring two — TV9 Bharatvarsh and Indian Today-Axis — that had predicted a close fight and a hung assembly in Haryana. Majority of the Exit Polls had, however, had predicted a Saffron Tsunami indicating huge majority for the BJP-Shiv Sena alliance where the NCP and Congress combination did not do as bad as predicted.

In Maharashtra, the 'Poll of Exit Polls' showed BJP-SS alliance were to bag 218 seats in the assembly of 288 while the Congress-NCP was to get 57 and others 13. In Haryana too the 'Poll of Exit Polls' gave BJP 66 seats in the Assembly of 90, while giving 14 to the Congress, 2 to INLD and Akali Dal alliance and 8 to others.

However, Haryana was where majority of the Exit Polls went wrong as they failed to catch the mood on the ground. India Today which announced its Exit Polls the next day kept its estimates conservative and predicted a close fight between the BJP and the Congress. It predicted 30-40 seats for the Congress and 32-42 for the BJP.

The ABP-C Voter had predicted 70 seats for the BJP and eight for the Congress, while the CNN-IPSONS and Times Now forecast of 75 and 71 for the BJP and 10 and 11 for the Congress respectively.

► Haryana was where majority of the Exit Polls went wrong as they failed to catch the mood on the ground.

In Maharashtra, the India Today-Axis poll predicted 166-194 seats for the BJP-Shiv Sena, 72-90 for the Congress-NCP and 22-34 for other smaller parties and independents. In Maharashtra, the BJP-Shiv Sena combine is set to bag 159 seats and the Congress-NCP alliance 102 seats. The ABP-C Voter had made a forecast of 210 seats for the BJP and 63 seats for the Congress-NCP alliance, while the Times Now gave 230 and eight for 48 for the BJP-Sena and the Congress-NCP combine.

This is not the first time that the majority of Exit Polls have failed to give correct predictions. The situation was similar to the Exit Polls of Bihar in 2015 where majority of the pollsters went wrong after they predicted huge majority for the BJP-led NDA and giving little to the then Grand Alliance of Janata Dal-U, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Congress and others. Today's Chanakya, which had earned a reputation for being most accurate had to issue an apology after it went way off mark in Bihar.

In fact, the only one that had got it right in Bihar 2015 was Axis-Ad-Print-Media that had to post its findings on website after the news channel it had tied up with refused to air.

# 'Maha, Haryana have reposed trust in BJP'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

Thanking people of Maharashtra and Haryana for reposing faith in the BJP, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday praised both the incumbent chief ministers — Devendra Fadnavis and Mahohar Lal Khattar.

Asserting that the BJP led governments in both states will work even harder in the next five years to serve them, Mr Modi said while governments often lose power after five years, it is "remarkable" that the BJP have been given a fresh mandate for five years in both states. The BJP's tally, however, decreased in both states as compared to last Assembly polls.

While addressing the BJP workers at the party headquarters, Mr Modi described the party's performance in Haryana, where it failed even to get simple majority, as "unprecedented". He also said that the party's vote share went up to 36 per cent from 33 per cent in 2014.

Congratulating Mr Khattar and Mr



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives to address supporters at the BJP headquarters in New Delhi on Thursday. BJP president Amit Shah and working president J.P. Nadda are also seen.

Fadnavis, the Prime Minister said the Khattar government took along all sections of society while his Maharashtra counterpart ran an untainted administration and became the first Maharashtra chief minister in 50 years to complete term.

Mr Modi said both the chief ministers had no prior administrative experience when they took over in 2014 but their people "have put their stamp of approval on the works on these chief ministers".

Recalling his organisational work in Haryana, Mr Modi said the BJP

would often fight elections as a junior partner of one party or another in the state and considered itself lucky if it crossed even 10 seats in assembly polls before 2014. Noting that it used to be a junior partner to Shiv Sena in Maharashtra before 2014, Mr Modi said the BJP-run states work "seamlessly" to implement central schemes while the opposition-ruled states are busier in renaming them.

Earlier, BJP president Amit Shah hailed the mandate and said the party has won the first round of elections in the Modi 2.0 government.

# 98.3% polling in first-ever BDC polls in J&K

**Srinagar/Jammu, Oct. 24:** The first democratic exercise in Jammu and Kashmir after the scrapping of its special status in August was held on Thursday, with all major political parties, other than the BJP, staying away from the Block Development Council (BDC) elections because of continued detention of their leaders.

Out of the 26,629 eligible 'panch' and 'sarpanch', 98.3 per cent voted to elect 310 chairperson for their respective blocks, Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) Shailendra Kumar said. Panch and Sarpanch are elected by people at the village level. These representatives go on to elect chairpersons of Block Development

Councils which are second tier organisation in the Panchayati Raj system.

The state has 316 blocks but elections were held in 283 blocks on Thursday. In 27 blocks, chairpersons were elected unopposed.

Elections couldn't take place in two blocks as they did not have an elected panch and sarpanch, while in four blocks reserved for women, there was no elected woman panch.

The panch and sarpanch in Srinagar were taken in a bus under security cover to facilitate them in polling and the district, which has been witnessing a tense atmosphere since August 5 when the state's special status under Article 370 was abrogated by the Centre,

► The panch and sarpanch in Srinagar were taken in a bus under security cover to facilitate them in polling.

saw 100 per cent polling by 11 am.

The similar exercise was followed in all remaining districts in Kashmir, where terrorists had threatened to disrupt the democratic exercise.

The poll percentage for the 10 districts in the Kashmir region was 93.65 per cent and 99.4 per cent for the 10 districts in the Jammu region, Kumar said.

There were 26,629 panch and sarpanch voters — 8,313 women and 18,316 men — for

the polls to elect chairpersons of BDCs, officials said.

PRIs have three levels — village, block and district — and election for the first time were held last year, which was also boycotted by the National Conference (NC) and the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Congress, CPI(M), NC and PDP did not take part in the elections, which are being held on party basis, leaving the field open to the BJP, that had candidates in 280 blocks, and Independents.

The National Conference had made clear that it would be able to decide on participating in the BDC elections only after its leadership was released so that a broader consultation could be held.



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Prime Minister Modi, BJP chief Amit Shah and its entire leadership are away from the ground realities

— Anand Sharma  
Cong leader

ALMOST HALF OF RULING BJP'S SITTING MLAs LOST THE ELECTIONS, INCLUDING EIGHT MINISTERS, AS HARYANA THREW UP A FRACTURED MANDATE ON THURSDAY.

FRIDAY | 25 OCTOBER 2019 | NEW DELHI THE ASIAN AGE

# BJP's 'nationalism' plank backfired?

YOJNA GUSAI  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

An "overconfident" BJP floundered in both Maharashtra and Haryana in the Assembly polls, though the party continued to remain as the largest political outfit and indicated that it will stake the claim for government formation in both states under the incumbent chief ministers. Results of Maharashtra and Haryana assembly polls were declared on Thursday.

Poll results were a clear indication that the BJP's nationalism plank, including the abrogation of Article 370, and also its claim of "pro-incumbency" factor, failed to garner the expected results. Just few months ago, the BJP strategists had given credit to both nationalism and pro-incumbency — for its thumping majority in the parliamentary polls. Ticket distribution, overconfidence and anti-incumbency against the local BJP leadership, are also being blamed for the party performance, especially in Haryana where the BJP remained short of six seats from the half way mark.

While the party leaders got in touch with independents in Haryana, including controversial leader Gopal Kanda, BJP national president and Union home minister Amit Shah will speak to ally Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray regarding government formation. Speculation is rife that Mr Thackeray's son, Aditya, who made his electoral debut, could be the deputy chief minister in Devendra Fadnavis led NDA government. The

## Haryana: Cong keeps post-poll options open

New Delhi, Oct. 24: The Congress is adopting a wait-and-watch approach and has kept its post-poll options open in Haryana after the BJP failed to get a majority on its own in a hung verdict. Sources said the Congress is seeking to woo all other non-BJP parties and its leaders have appealed to them to come together in a bid to stop the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) from retaining power in the state. Congress's former chief

Bhupinder Singh Hooda arrived in the national capital late in the evening for talks with the party leadership. He met some Congress leaders in Delhi and is set to meet party president Sonia Gandhi on Friday. Mr Hooda will also hold discussions with All India Congress Committee (AICC) general secretary in-charge of Haryana Ghulam Nabi Azad and senior party leader Ahmed Patel. Earlier in the day, Mrs Gandhi called up Hooda to discuss the election verdict. — PTI

BJP leadership also clarified that the saffron party will continue to remain the "big brother" in the ruling alliance, thus trashing reports on the chief ministerial issue coming from the Sena's side. Mr Thackeray again raised the 50:50 power sharing formula. Speculation is also rife that the BJP is also in touch with Dushyant Chautala, whose fledgling outfit, JJP was the biggest gainers in Haryana other than the Congress. Mr Chautala however, remained non-committal on whether his party would support the BJP or not. The BJP parliamentary board met in the evening and was also attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Earlier, BJP Mr Shah and Mr Modi addressed the party workers and thanked the voters for retaining faith in both the

states. Mr Modi appreciated both Mr Khattar and Mr Fadnavis for retaining the people's faith in their respective state and running a corruption free government and reminded that after 50 years Maharashtra saw a chief minister completing five years term. Mr Khattar is expected to meet Mr Shah on Friday morning over government formation issue. In Haryana, where the BJP had set a target of "Mission 75 plus," the party remained short of few seats from the half-way mark in the 90-member assembly. Reports reaching the BJP leadership showed that the numerically dominant Jats and the Dalits favoured were in favour of the saffron party's opponents. Dushyant Chautala led JJP, a fledgling outfit, and the Congress were the biggest gainers.



Senior Congress leader Bhupinder Singh Hooda from Garhi Sampla Kilo constituency celebrates after his victory in the Assembly elections in Rohtak on Thursday. — PTI

## 8 Haryana ministers lose polls

Chandigarh, Oct. 24: Eight Haryana ministers lost the assembly elections, which saw just two of the 10 ministers fielded by the ruling BJP returning to the state assembly. Cabinet minister and five-time MLA Anil Vij retained his traditional bastion of Ambala Cantonment, whereas minister of state Dr Banwari Lal emerged victorious from Bawal.

Mr Vij drubbed Congress rebel Chitra Sarwara, who fought as independent, by over 20,000 votes. Dr Lal retained Bawal, defeating Dr M.L. Ranga by over 32,000 votes.

The minister who lost the elections are Ram Bilas Sharma (Mahendragarh), Capt Abhimanyu (Narnaund), Om Prakash Dhankar (Badli), Kavita Jain (Sonapat), Krishan Lal Panwar (Israna), Manish Kumar Grover (Rohtak), Krishan Kumar Bedi (Shahbad), and Karan Dev Kamboj (Radaur).

The BJP had earlier denied tickets to two of its ministers-Vipul Goel and Rao Narbir Singh. The saffron party's idea of shifting minister Karan Dev Kamboj from Indri to Radaur also failed to yield positive results. Khattar retained his Karnal constituency. Grover and Kamboj lost to their rivals by just over 2,000 votes, whereas other ministers faced defeat by over 10,000 votes. Lone woman minister in the Khattar cabinet, Kavita Jain, a three-time MLA, lost her traditional Sonapat seat. — PTI

## Election verdict moral defeat of BJP: Congress

New Delhi, Oct. 24: The poll verdict in Haryana and Maharashtra is a moral defeat of the BJP and what it stands for, the Congress said on Thursday, hoping that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will now focus on the problems confronting the country and its people. Senior Congress spokesperson Anand Sharma said BJP president Amit Shah's claim of victory in Haryana does not hold as the party is short of a majority.

There has also been a significant drop in the BJP's vote percentage in just four months after its Lok Sabha election victory in the state, he said.

Claiming that the verdict of Haryana is against the BJP, Mr Sharma said all parties opposing the BJP must come together as has been appealed by former Haryana chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

"We accept the verdict of the people with humility. This verdict is a moral defeat for the BJP and what



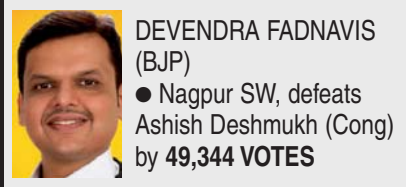
Anand Sharma they stand for," he told reporters at a press conference. Prime Minister Modi, BJP chief Amit Shah and its entire leadership are away from the ground realities and their campaigns did not talk about people's issues, Mr Sharma said. Even after "misuse" of official machinery and state resources in massive campaigns in the two states, the BJP's vote share fell significantly, he claimed. There is a need to create a massive awareness programme that will come out in the form of a 'jan andolan'. "They cannot terrorise the Indian voters anymore", Mr Sharma said. The Congress party hopes that "Mr Modi will now look into the problems confronting the country." — PTI

## BIG WINNERS

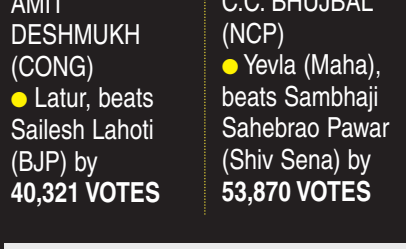


ANIL VIJ (BJP)  
● Ambala Cant, defeats Chitra Sarwara (Independent) by 20,165 VOTES

BHUPINDER SINGH HOODA  
● Garhi Sampla-Kiloi, defeats S. Nandal (BJP) by 58,213 VOTES



DEVENDRA FADNAVIS (BJP)  
● Nagpur SW, defeats Ashish Deshmukh (Cong) by 49,344 VOTES

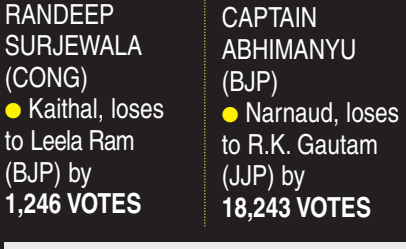


AMIT DESHMUKH (CONG)  
● Latur, beats Sailesh Lahoti (BJP) by 40,321 VOTES

C.C. BHUJBAL (NCP)  
● Yevla (Maha), beats Sambhaji Sahebrao Pawar (Shiv Sena) by 53,870 VOTES



M.L. KHATTAR (BJP)  
● Karnal, beats Tarlochan (Cong) by 45,000 VOTES

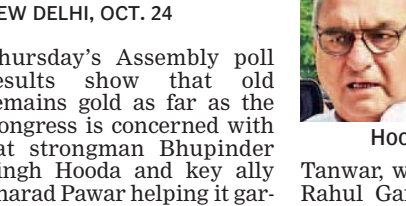


RANDEEP SURJEWALA (CONG)  
● Kaithal, loses to Leela Ram (BJP) by 1,246 VOTES

CAPTAIN ABHIMANYU (BJP)  
● Narnaund, loses to R.K. Gautam (JJP) by 18,243 VOTES



YOGESHWAR DUTT (BJP)  
● Baroda (Har), loses to S.K. Hooda (Congress) by 5,000 VOTES



BABITA PHOGAT  
● Dadri, loses to Somvir Sangwan by 14,272 VOTES

## JJP, with 10 seats, may get to play kingmaker

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

The Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) has emerged as a third force in Haryana as results for the Assembly polls came in on Thursday. With the party securing at least 10 Assembly constituencies, it may emerge as one of the key factors in formation of a new government.

With the Bharatiya Janata Party falling short of half-way mark in the 90 member House, it is learnt that party is in touch with several of these newly-elected MLAs. However, it is also understood that the BJP is also trying to woo several newly elected independent MLAs for possible post poll alliance.

JJP chief Dushyant Chautala has proved he is a force to reckon with in the state, with the chance that he could even play kingmaker in case of a hung assembly. The party, formed in December 2018, is understood to have banked on its strong and influential Jat votebank in the state. The young and energetic leadership of Dushyant Chautala, led his less than an year old party from the front and ensured that it emerged as a viable alternative that has a future in the state politics.

The JJP worked on an expectation that a repeat of recent Lok Sabha polls defeat would not be possible.

### HARYANA 90 SEATS

PARTY	SEATS
BJP	40
CONG	31
JJP	10
OTHERS	9

▶ The party was forced to contest the polls alone after its much-touted alliance with BSP fell through just days ahead of the voting day

The alliance of the JJP with the Aam Aadmi Party in the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year had proved to be a disaster, where it had to suffer a humiliating defeat, being unable to secure even a single seat. The party was confident that the situation before October 2018 and after were different as over 80 percent of Chaudhary Devi Lal loyalists have returned to the JJP fold, sources claimed.

The party was forced to contest the Assembly polls alone after its much-touted alliance with Bahujan Samaj Party fell through just days ahead of the voting day.

However, the failure to get into an alliance has seemingly turned into a boon for the party.

his support for JJP's Dushyant Chautala.

The bitter rivalry continued during campaigning with things coming to such a pass that Mr Hooda did not even attend the two rallies by Rahul Gandhi.

The results were though satisfactory for the Congress with Mr Hooda largely delivering with a kitty of 31 seats in an election which had earlier been seen to be a no contest.

In Maharashtra, the party adopted a completely different strategy outsourcing the entire campaign to Mr Pawar. The old war horse, an ex-Congressman, not only kept his own pocket borough of Marathwada intact, but also helped the NCP-Congress alliance breach the respectable mark of 100 seats. The veterans

versus new leadership rivalry in Congress came out in the open right after the Lok Sabha polls.

Days after the results of the general elections, Mr Gandhi had resigned as the party president owing responsibility for the defeat. Sources say what he probably expected was that all of the top leadership would follow suit thus helping him effect a structural change. However, what it led to was a bitter turf war between the old and new leaders.

While many of Rahul Gandhi loyalists or the "new guard" quit, the old leadership largely stayed put though officially asking Mr Gandhi to continue. It was only after three months since the May 23 results that Sonia Gandhi took over as the interim chief.

## Cong old guard proves itself yet again

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

Thursday's Assembly poll results show that old remains gold as far as the Congress is concerned with Jat strongman Bhupinder Singh Hooda and key ally Sharad Pawar helping it garner a decent seat count in Haryana and Maharashtra. Largely written off by the pollsters, who had predicted a tally of less than 10 seats in both states for the Congress, the proverbial old guard of the party showed its mettle.

The biggest takeaway was in Haryana where the senior Hooda and his son Deepinder had been embroiled in a bitter turf battle with then state PCC chief Ashok Tanwar. Mr



Tanwar, who is seen to be a Rahul Gandhi pick, fought bitterly to save his post, but eventually was ousted when the Hoodas threatened to leave the party.

Bowing to the pressure tactic, Congress president Sonia Gandhi removed Mr Tanwar and made Dalit leader Kumari Selja the new PCC chief and Bhupinder Hooda the chief of the campaign committee as well as the legislative party leader. After this, it was Mr Tanwar's turn to rebel which he did by announcing

# Attention!

## Hon'ble Supreme Court Guidelines

### FOR SALE & USE OF FIRECRACKERS

- ▶ No item(s) other than the Reduced Emission firecrackers (Improved crackers) and Reduced Emission firecrackers Green crackers: Safe Water and Air Sprinklers (SWAS) as prescribed and approved by the Petroleum and Explosive Safety Organization (PESO) shall be sold in the premises.
- ▶ Categories of firecrackers banned/not permitted
  - Joined Firecrackers (series crackers or laris)
  - Fireworks containing barium salts/ lithium/ arsenic/ antimony/ lead/ mercury
  - Firecrackers manufactured earlier but non-permissible as per above Hon'ble Supreme Court judgement.
- ▶ Only those crackers permitted to be sold whose decibel (sound) level are within the permissible limits (125 dB(AI) or 145 dB(C)pk at 4 meters from the point of bursting)
- ▶ Bursting of fireworks not allowed in silence zones : Silence Zone is an area comprising not less than 100 meters around hospitals, educational institutions, courts, religious places or any other area which is declared as such by the competent authority.
- ▶ Timings of Firecracking as per directions of Hon'ble Supreme Court:
 

From 08.00 PM till 10.00 PM	on Diwali Days
From 04.00 AM till 05.00 AM	on Gurburab
From 09.00 PM till 10.00 PM	on Christmas Eve & New Year Eve.
From 11.55 PM till 12.30 AM	
- ▶ Community fire cracking to be undertaken at pre-identified areas/fields as far as possible.

ALL CONCERNED TO PLEASE NOTE & ABIDE.

Delhi Police Wishes You A Happy Diwali





Odisha government plans to make state child marriage free by 2030

India, Pak sign Kartarpur pact

Pilgrims can carry ₹11,000, a 7kg bag ■ Online registration for pilgrimage starts

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

India on Thursday signed an agreement with Pakistan government on the modalities for operationalisation of the Kartarpur Sahib Corridor at the "Zero Point, International Boundary, Dera Baba Nanak" in Punjab that will allow pilgrims access to the historic Kartarpur Sahib Gurudwara near the border in Pakistan's Punjab for the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of the founder of Sikhism and the first Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Nanak.

Kartarpur Sahib Corridor. A robust security architecture has been put in place while facilitating smooth and easy passage of pilgrims.

The Indian government said, "Pilgrims of all faiths and of Indian origin can use the Corridor. The travel will be visa-free and pilgrims need to carry only a valid passport.

Persons of Indian Origin need to carry Overseas Citizenship of India (OCI) card along with the passport of their country. The corridor is open from dawn to dusk. Pilgrims travelling in the morning will have to return on the same day."

The corridor will be operational throughout the year, except on notified days, to be informed in advance. They will have a choice to visit as individuals or in groups, and also

INDIA TO ASK COUNTRIES TO SHUT 'KASHMIR CELLS' SET UP BY PAK

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

India on Thursday said that it would request foreign nations to shut down "Kashmir cells" established in Pakistani diplomatic missions abroad, whose job was to "incite the local population in those countries" against India and "radicalise" them.

India also termed

Pakistan's move to take foreign diplomats stationed in Islamabad to areas near the LoC as "drama", saying "everyone knows there are launch pads in proximity". The MEA accused Pakistan of indulging in "naked propaganda", adding that the Islamabad should instead show the world what credible action they are taking against terrorists.

home affairs, children below 13 years and elderly persons of about 75 years and above will have to travel in groups.

Eco-friendly material, preferably cloth bags, should be used during the pilgrimage and the surroundings should be kept clean.

Wi-Fi and broadband devices, flags and banners challenging the territorial integrity of India or Pakistan, liquor and a host of other items have been put in the prohibited list.

The Indian government further said, "The main issue that has been a point of discussion is the insistence of Pakistan to levy \$20 as a service charge per pilgrim per visit. For registration of pilgrims, the online portal (prakashpur550.mha.gov.in) has gone live on Thursday.

to travel on foot. India will send the list of pilgrims to Pakistan 10 days ahead of travel date. Confirmation will be sent to pilgrims 4 days before the travel date. Additionally, pilgrims

will be allowed to carry a maximum of ₹11,000 and a 7kg bag, and will not be allowed to venture beyond the shrine. According to the "do's and don'ts" issued by the ministry of

3 Cong ex-MLAs under CBI lens for horse-trading

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

A day after registering a case against the former chief minister of Uttarakhand, Harish Rawat for the alleged attempts of horse-trading in 2016, the CBI is now probing the role of at least three former Congress MLAs in connection with the case.

Sources said, "The CBI will soon call three former Congress MLAs for questioning in connection with the case. It is suspected that these three former MLAs were in constant touch with Harish Rawat".

The CBI on Wednesday filed an FIR against Harish Rawat and his then cabinet colleague Harak Singh Rawat, who is now a member of 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.

The CBI had registered a preliminary enquiry to probe 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 an analysis, which opined that the recording was "genuine" and there was no evidence of any "addition/dele-

UTTARAKHAND

The CBI filed an FIR against Harish Rawat and his then cabinet colleague Harak Singh Rawat, who is now a member of the state's BJP-led government, for alleged attempts of horse-trading in 2016

tion/insertion/tampering/morphing" in the video files, they added.

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 the Congress could get back to power.

Recently, the Uttarakhand high court gave its nod to the CBI to go ahead with its investigation in the case and lodge an FIR against Mr Rawat after the agency submitted a report in a sealed cover on the preliminary inquiry.

Besides Harish Rawat and Harak Singh Rawat, the CBI has also booked editor-in-chief of Noida-based Samachar Plus channel Umesh Sharma, who had purportedly carried out the sting operation in the airport lounge, sources said.

I am very grateful to our Congress workers. We have to show our strength.

— D.K. Shivakumar, Congress leader

SHORT TAKES

Prime Minister to visit Saudi Arabia on Oct. 29

New Delhi: Prime Minister Narendra Modi will make an official visit to Saudi Arabia on October 29, even as New Delhi said that the "understanding" showed by the Saudis on India's position regarding the Kashmir issue has "had a salutary effect on Pakistan". An agreement between the two countries on the Strategic Partnership Council will be signed on the occasion. The Council will be chaired by PM Modi and the Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman and is intended to be an institutional mechanism to monitor the strategic partnership between the two nations. PM Modi will attend the third session of the Future Investment Initiative Forum and will deliver the keynote address on the occasion. The FIIL is also referred to as the "Davos in the Desert". During the visit, PM Modi will meet both Saudi King Salman and Saudi Crown Prince Mohammad bin Salman. Speculation is rife that PM Modi may brief the Saudi King and Crown Prince on the latest developments in Kashmir.

How long Kashmir restrictions stay: SC asks Centre

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Thursday has asked the J&K government to cleanly spell out on how long they are going to continue with the restrictions in the Kashmir Valley, which were imposed with the abrogation of Article 370 and converting the state in two union territories. "You have to give us a clear-cut picture of how long you are going to continue with these restrictions. Already two months have been passed," asked Justice N.V. Ramana sitting with Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice B.R. Gavai. Seeking response from the J&K government as to when are they going to ease the situation and restore the Internet, Justice Ramana said that ultimately people should have a mode of communication. Joining Justice Ramana, Justice Reddy also said that the government has to review the restrictions imposed by it. "Mr. solicitor general, you have to review the situation", said Justice Reddy.

2 truckers killed as militants torch vehicles in Valley

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, OCT. 23

Two more truck drivers were killed and a crew member was critically wounded in a sneak attack carried out by suspected militants in Jammu and Kashmir's southern Shopian district on Thursday evening, officials said.

The assailants also torched two trucks in which apple boxes were being loaded for transportation to a Delhi fruit market and also a three-wheeler load-carrier owned by a local resident, a report said.

Confirming the incident, Shopian's DCP Muhammad Yasin Chaudhary said that the seriously injured conductor of one of these trucks, identified as Jeevan Singh, has been evacuated to a hospital.

The police said that gunmen targeted the truckers and their vehicles in Chittergang Kalan village of Shopian, about 50-km south of summer capital Srinagar. One of the slain men is Ilyas Khan, a resident of Alwar district of Rajasthan, whereas the other victim could not be identified immediately but he appears to be a Hindu, a police officer said over the phone from Shopian.

DC Chaudhary said that the corpses of the slain drivers and injured conductor bore both bullet and burn injuries. An earlier report had said that the identity of one of the slain drivers could not be ascertained as his body had been charred beyond recognition.

Former DU prof SAR Geelani dies

New Delhi, Oct. 24: Former DU professor Syed Abdul Rahman Geelani, who was sentenced to death by a special court but later acquitted by the Supreme Court in the 2001 Parliament attack case, died here on Thursday following a cardiac arrest, his family said.

"He passed away on Thursday evening due to cardiac arrest," a family member confirmed. Geelani, who used to teach Arabic at DU's Zakir Hussain College, is survived by his wife and two daughters.

He was also charged with sedition in 2016, after he had organised an event against the hanging of Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru. —PTI

The security forces laid siege to a vast area around Chittergang Kalan to conduct searches, the sources said. On October 16, two apple buyers from Punjab were shot by suspected militants in Tranz area of Shopian. While one of them Charanjit Singh was brought dead at a government-run hospital in neighbouring Pulwama district, the condition of the other identified a Sanjiv Kumar who is admitted in a Srinagar hospital continues to be critical. The assailants had also torched the truck in which the apple boxes bought by the duo were being loaded.

K'taka Speaker to take call on rebel MLAs, SC told

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

The Supreme Court on Thursday told that the Karnataka Assembly Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri can hold a fresh hearing on the resignation coupled with plea for the disqualification of 17 unseated lawmakers of state Assembly, belonging to Congress and Janata Dal (Secular), if court so decides.

Noting that the order unseating 17 lawmakers of Congress and JD(S) was ex-parte and suffered from procedural disabilities as disqualified lawmakers were not given required time under the rules, solicitor general Tushar Mehta told the bench comprising Justice N.V. Ramana, Justice Sanjiv Khanna and Justice Krishna Murari that the current Speaker Vishweshwar Hegde Kageri can give



V.H. Kageri

them fresh hearing.

"Under the rules, a member whose disqualification is being sought would be given a minimum of 7 days time to reply to notice by the Speaker. In the case the lawmakers were given just 3 days time," said SG Mehta, during the second day of the hearing of disqualified lawmakers from the state Assembly for the rest of its term.

The then Speaker of Karnataka Assembly had disqualified and unseated 17 lawmakers belonging to Congress and JD(S) after they had defied the whip

to vote in the favour of motion of trust moved by the former chief minister H.D. Kumaraswamy.

The former chief minister had moved the trust motion after he lost majority support following rebellion by 17, now unseated, lawmakers.

Seeking the quashing of the former Speaker Ramesh Kumkar's order, these disqualified lawmakers have assailed the Speaker Ramesh Kumar's decision on the grounds that their resignation was prior to issuance of the whip and their defiance of the same.

Appearing for former CM Kumaraswamy, senior counsel Rajeev Dhavan assailed the argument by the unseated lawmakers that then Speaker should have accepted their resignations as they were both voluntary and genuine and were presented to the Speaker in person.

March on Kashmir is planned by pro-Pak separatist groups UK bans protest near Indian high commission on Diwali

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI/LONDON, OCT. 24

A march planned by pro-Pakistani separatist groups on Kashmir to coincide with Diwali on Sunday has been denied permission by the UK authorities to assemble outside the Indian high commission (IHC) in London.

A day after Prime Minister Boris Johnson told MPs in the House of Commons that any kind of violence during such

demonstrations was "wholly unacceptable", it emerged on Thursday that the groups behind the protest will have to steer clear of the Indian mission area of Aldwych in Central London.

The route of the march will now reportedly end up at Trafalgar Square instead, a requirement imposed due to concerns of violence in the wake of clashes at a previous demonstration by similar groups on August 15. The Metropolitan police is yet to confirm the details of

Britain had told India that it will prevent recurrence of the violence seen a few weeks ago outside the Indian high commission during a similar demonstration

the restrictions, but it followed various interventions over the last few days, including a diplomatic "note verbale" from the IHC expressing safety concerns, according to a

report of news agency PTI from London.

On Wednesday, Conservative Party MP Bob Blackman had raised his fears of violence during the weekly (British) Prime Minister's Questions session in Parliament.

He urged the British Prime Minister to take action as he told the House about violent protests by similar pro-Pakistani groups at the London mission during Indian Independence Day celebrations on August 15. This is a police operational matter and the home secretary

Priti Patel will be raising it with the police, Mr Johnson responded. We must all be clear in this House that violence and intimidation anywhere is wholly unacceptable in this country, he said.

With an anti-India demonstration being planned in London by pro-Pakistan elements and Kashmiri separatists on Diwali day, Britain had told India that it will prevent recurrence of the violence seen a few weeks ago outside the IHC during a similar demonstration.

Uddhav for 50% power

Continued from Page 1 for government formation will be made after discussing the formula, Mr Thackeray added.

Shiv Sena, which fought Assembly elections in Maharashtra in alliance with the BJP, has won 56 seats, and was leading in one more constituency as the results came in on Thursday. With the BJP's tally coming down to 105 from 122 in 2014, the Shiv

Sena's bargaining power has increased.

While the two parties can form the government comfortably, the BJP fell short of its target of reaching near the half-way mark on its own, giving more leverage to the Sena.

The predictions of all pollsters were way off the mark, as the saffron allies could not repeat their remarkable performance in the Lok Sabha polls.

JJP 3rd force in Haryana

Continued from Page 1 several of these newly-elected MLAs. However, it is also understood that the BJP is also trying to woo several newly elected independent MLAs for possible post-poll alliance. The JJP chief Dushyant Chautala has proved he is a force to reckon with in the state, with the chance that he could even play kingmaker in case of a hung assembly. The party, formed in December 2018, is understood to have banked on its strong and influential Jat votebank in the state. The young and energetic leadership of Dushyant Chautala, led his less than an year old party from the front and

ensured that it emerged as a viable alternative that has a future in the state politics.

The JJP's worked on an expectation that a repeat of recent Lok Sabha polls defeat would not be possible. The alliance of the JJP with the Aam Aadmi Party in the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year had proved to be a disaster, where it had to suffer a humiliating defeat, being unable to secure even a single seat. The party was confident that the situation before October 2018 and after were different as over 80 per cent of Chaudhary Devi Lal loyalists have returned to the JJP fold, sources claimed.

Bypolls surprise BJP in Bihar, Gujarat

Continued from Page 1 candidate Qamrul Hoda defeated Sweety Singh of the BJP in Kishanganj.

The states that strongly backed the BJP were Himachal Pradesh, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Sikkim. The BJP had an upper hand in UP where 7 out of 11 seats went to it and another one went to its ally, Apna Dal (S), while the Samajwadi Party bagged three seats. The state witnessed some high drama with Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi accusing the UP government of manipulating the counting in Gangoh Assembly seat where the Congress' Noman Masood lost to the BJP's Kirat Singh by over 5,000 votes.

An upbeat UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath gave credit to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's policies for the party's victory. "In 8 out of the 11 seats, BJP and its allies have registered victory. I congratulate all the candidates who have won today. PM Modi's mantra of Sabka saath sabka vikas has become the mantra of the politics in India," Mr Adityanath said. In Bihar, where JD-U chief Nitish Kumar is hop-

ing for his fourth term in 2020, the BJP and its ally seem to be losing ground as it managed only one out of the five Assembly seats where bypolls took place. Lalu Prasad Yadav's Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) bagged two seats.

The AIMIM, which had fielded six candidates in Bihar Assembly elections in 2015 and one in 2019 in Lok Sabha elections but had failed to open its account, registered its first victory in Bihar's Kishanganj. The fifth seat in the state went to Independent candidate Karnjeet Singh who defeated JD-U's Ajay Kumar Singh.

Gujarat results were also surprising as the Congress and BJP both bagged three seats each. Among the big defeats was that of OBC leader Alpesh Thakor, who had jumped from Congress to join the BJP. Mr Thakore was an MLA from Radhanpur on Congress seat since 2017 before he quit the party to join the BJP after differences with state party leadership. He was defeated by the Congress' Raghubhai Desai by 3,807 votes.

Congress' revival

Continued from Page 1 and local issues as well as avoiding falling into the nationalism trap by not discussing Article 370 also paid off.

Mr Hooda along with his son Deependra Hooda, a former two-time MP from Rohtak, started campaigning in all the constituencies of Haryana immediately after the Lok Sabha debacle in which the Congress lost all 10 seats in the state. Hooda senior held almost 200 small and big rallies in the state.

Capturing the local mood, Mr Hooda announced that one person from every family would be given a job. He also promised job reservation in the state for locals on the lines prevalent in several other states like Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra. Among the other promises made was free electricity for farmers, loan waiver for farmers having land holdings of two acres.

PCC chief Kumari Selja also did her bit by keeping the focus on local issues. "Be it the PM (Narendra Modi) or other top BJP leaders or the Haryana CM, they did not talk about even one issue of Haryana because they know that they are on the back foot. The people of Haryana said that first you should give your report and then ask for vote. They could not give a report and tried to divert attention continuously," she said.

In Maharashtra, the Congress' state and Central leadership stayed away from the infighting

between former Union minister Milind Deora and former Mumbai Congress chief Sanjay Nirupam. Instead they asked former chief ministers Ashok Chavan, Prithviraj Chauhan and family members of late Vilasrao Deshmukh and Sushil Kumar Shinde to contest. This bolstered the fortunes of the party as they were able to attract the Maratha vote.

Like Haryana, in Maharashtra also the Congress concentrated on local issues of unemployment, farm crisis and the state of the economy. The party also did well in the byelections, winning Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. In Gujarat, the Congress and the BJP both won three seats each in bypolls.

The Congress leadership both at the state and the national level avoided getting into verbal duels with disgruntled former state unit chief Ashok Tanwar, who had been replaced with Ms Selja. Before resigning from the party, Mr Tanwar even held a demonstration outside the residence of the Congress president and went on to accuse the Congress of selling tickets. There was also a scare that he may put up independent candidates who could diminish the chances of Congress candidates.

Sources told this newspaper that Congress president Sonia Gandhi called Mr Hooda on Thursday morning and asked him to take the lead in government formation if needed.



For a successful technology, reality must take precedence over public relations

I don't mind being the one people talk about. It doesn't weigh on me.

# THE ASIAN AGE

25 OCTOBER 2019

## Merger fine, but BSNL not out of the woods

The Union Cabinet's decision to clear a nearly ₹69,000 crore bailout package, albeit long delayed, for Bharat Sanchar Nigam Ltd (BSNL) and Mahanagar Telephone Nigam Ltd (MTNL) — two loss-making public sector telecom service providers — is a step in the right direction. After two failed attempts to merge MTNL with BSNL in the last 15 years, the government has finally bitten the bullet. MTNL — which was set up 14 years before BSNL in 1986 to cater to two metropolises, New Delhi and Mumbai, that ostensibly required better services than rest of India — has lost its relevance in view of mobile telephony and the internet revolution. Today, Indians living in both metropolises as well as small towns have access to the same content with same quality. The allocation of 4G spectrum to BSNL — though much delayed — could help it compete in a data-driven market, while a handsome voluntary retirement package for 1.9 lakh employees could reduce salary cost that eats away 77 per cent of its profits, leaving virtually nothing for capital expenditure.

These decisions are positive for ailing BSNL and MTNL. However, the government should be under no illusion that BSNL would have achche din henceforth as the malaise in government-run companies runs deeper. Unless the management structure and work culture of BSNL are reformed, the state-owned telecom company cannot daydream of competing with the highly-focused private telecom trio — Jio, Airtel and Vodafone. Air India is a classic example of how a PSU, bogged down by bureaucratic shortcomings, could go bankrupt despite having the best of equipment — aircraft in case of Air India. BSNL too has been the victim of bureaucratic procedures that had put it at a disadvantage compared to the private companies. After the allocation of 3G, BSNL was still in the process of inviting tenders for telecom gear when the private companies were ready to roll out the service. The telecom PSU must jettison this kind of lethargic decision-making, if it wants to spare itself the ignominy of going to the government seeking a bailout once again. On its part, the government should allow functional autonomy to BSNL.

**The government should hive off all the military-related services offered by the public sector telecom company into a new department under the defence ministry. Later, it should divest 51 per cent of its stake in BSNL...**

Speaking about the issues behind cautious lending by government-owned banks, Nobel Laureate Abhijit Banerjee has recently claimed that public sector lenders are scared of the Central Vigilance Commission (CVC). While the mandate of the CVC to control corruption in government-run organisations is important, the government should not lose its sight of the fact that most PSUs — BSNL included — are functioning in a competitive market and not a monopoly. The processes must be, therefore, suitably changed to make them competitive.

For making BSNL market-ready, the government should hive off all the military-related services offered by the public sector telecom company into a new department under the defence ministry. Later, it should divest 51 per cent of its stake in BSNL and list it on stock exchanges. The government should fund all operations that BSNL undertakes to connect areas that are not served or underserved by private companies from the Universal Obligation Fund corpus. If the government lacks the will to take these steps, one should have no doubt that BSNL too would go the Air India way — if not now, a few years later.

## Dynasts and the cricketer

It's a positive strike for democracy that the elected representatives should be running the BCCI once again. The choice of Sourav Ganguly, a reliable batsman of his time, engenders optimism that what's right for cricket and its players will be done. The wounds the game suffered by way of major hits to its image as metaphor for fairplay may have been self-inflicted as administrators indulged their offspring or "damads".

The top court had to entrust revival of the game to a bureaucrat and a retired Indian woman cricketer as they were about the only ones who stuck to their SC-appointed-administrators' tasks. Would you believe that Vinod Rai and Diana Edulji are to be paid ₹3.5 crores each for holding the reins for 33 months, a princely sum a first class cricketer would not have earned in his career as match fee for sweating it out under the unforgiving sun in a test of skills against his peers!

Cricket in India is a "stinking" rich game, with a reported ₹2,400 crore revenue surplus in 2018, about 95 per cent of which comes from the cash cow IPL. A sense of perspective is lost when riches pour in like that. Even so, it seems excessive when the suit and tie media plan executives and number crunchers are paid comparatively extravagant salaries when the Prime Minister of India gets a basic pay of ₹1.6 lakhs per month.

Administrative efficiency after an in-demand game sells itself for billion is vastly over-rated. While CoA and BCCI associations were at loggerheads all through the interregnum, the cricketers held the Indian pennant high, winning mostly every prize in the Test arena and performing well enough in unpredictable white ball cricket. So much so, it raises the point about why so many in India line up for honorary jobs in cricket administration. But at least a Test cricketer gets to direct the game while dynasts of the political, industrial and cricket admin variety claim their share of reflected glory.

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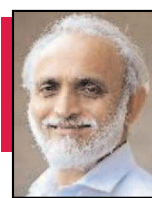
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Subhani



# Returns on rhetoric diminishing for BJP



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) president Amit Shah have turned the state Assembly elections into referendums of the party's government at the centre, a test of the party's standing in the country as such. It is because of the political markup of the provincial electoral contests that Assembly election results in the large western state of Maharashtra and the small northern state of Haryana become bigger than they really are.

The BJP is winning in Maharashtra but it is not a case of winner takes all. The Shiv Sena, though in a second position, becomes a key partner. The BJP cannot form the government without the Sena. It is not the case that the BJP is generous towards its ally though it can form the government on its own as it is in the Lok Sabha where it is in a majority on its own.

And in Haryana, the BJP gets a jolt and the Modi juggernaut is literally halted. Given the gung-ho spirit of Mr Modi and Mr Shah, they will declare that the people in these two states have reposed faith in the Prime Minister because Mr Modi has been made the fulcrum of the party's politics, a premise of doubtful value as well as a flawed strategy at the best of times. But the party is willing to risk it all on Mr Modi, and it seems to have paid off in the last five years, in a manner of speaking. The Haryana result shows that the Modi factor is subject to the law of diminishing marginal utility.

In retrospect, the BJP seems to have been nervous about the outcome

in Maharashtra which forced it to make that vulgar electoral promise of conferring Bharat Ratna on Vir Savarkar, an insult to Savarkar, to Bharat Ratna and to Maharashtra. The BJP did not win because of this singularly shameful promise, but it betrays the fear of defeat that the party and its leaders seemed to have sensed in the run-up to the polls. It has won in the state, and with a comfortable majority with the help of its ally, the Sena. But it becomes clear that the party sensed the discontent and disenchantment of the people. The party's market savvy-leaders are sure to laugh at the suggestion that they were quite apprehensive and the Bharat Ratna-for-Savarkar was a political insurance policy. The Devendra Fadnavis government has to be on its toes now. It cannot bask in the reflected glory of Mr Modi.

Mr Modi, Mr Shah and the rest of the top brass in the BJP are likely to argue that they did not fight the Assembly elections in these two states on the issue of abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, and that the Prime Minister and the home minister mentioned it in passing in the election rallies they held, and the media had played it up. This was the argument that was

**In Haryana, the BJP gets a jolt and the Modi juggernaut is literally halted. Given the gung-ho spirit of Mr Modi and Mr Shah, they will declare that the people in these two states have reposed faith in the PM...**

**The BJP is winning in Maharashtra but it is not a case of winner takes all. The Shiv Sena, though in a second position, becomes a key partner. The BJP cannot form the government without the Sena.**

proffered when critics pointed out that the BJP won the Lok Sabha election by raking up national security, terrorism and Pakistan, and that they had no positive agenda of their own. It is true that Mr Modi had spoken belligerently about development and the economy in the 2014 election, but he could not do the same in 2019. The achievements of the governments of Fadnavis and Manohar Khattar were nothing to write home about. Mr Modi and Mr Shah had to shout from the rooftops about what they believe to be historic decision to do away with the temporary special status of Jammu and Kashmir. The BJP may have to review its propaganda offensive based on national security, terrorism and Pakistan. Mr Modi and Mr Shah should strive for a time when they can fight and win an election without referring to Pakistan.

These Assembly election results prove that the people are not hypnotised by the Modi charisma, and that they would vote for his party based on performance and when the Opposition fails to provide a reasonable alternative. The BJP will have to get off its high horse of ranting nationalism and address the more serious economic and social challenges of the country. They cannot win elections by fomenting fear psychosis about Pakistan.

The Congress, which appeared to be slipping into oblivion, has made an emphatic comeback in Haryana. It has successfully challenged the BJP's triumphalism in the state. In Maharashtra, it is the Opposition that has done well, led by Sharad

Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and not the Congress. The Congress is set to become the junior partner in the alliance. The lesson for Congress in these elections is quite clear. It had found a reliable and strong leader in Bhupinder Singh Hooda in Haryana. There was no leader of the party in Maharashtra. Pawar was the face of NCP. There is a lesson if someone wants to learn from it.

There is also much need to hector either Congress' working president Sonia Gandhi or former president Rahul Gandhi about reviving the party, of vacating their privileged space to the non-existent claimants. The grand old party is likely to trundle along its disgraceful path of depending on the Nehru-Gandhis to maintain cohesion in the rickety party. And there will emerge local satraps like Mr Hooda who will salvage the fortunes of the party in the states. Satraps like Mr Hooda do not entertain national ambitions while providing a safety valve at the ground level.

The BJP and the Congress face the same problem. While the BJP has to come out of the Modi trance, the Congress will have to get out of the Nehru-Gandhi syndrome and throw up leaders at the national level as it does in the states. Leadership is important but when a party depends on an individual as the sole leader, it is going down the slippery path of decline and heading towards defeat.

*The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst*

**These results prove that the people are not hypnotised by the Modi charisma, and that they would vote for his party based on performance and when the Opposition fails to provide a reasonable alternative**

### LETTERS

#### NOT HIS TURN

It is for the first time that someone from the Thackeray family has fought elections. However, I feel that the aspiration of young Aditya Thackeray to become chief minister is out of place as he is yet to gain political experience. If someone from the Sena family wants to become a CM, it should be Uddhav Thackeray, as he has more experience and his finger on the pulse of the entire state.

Jubel D'Cruz  
Mumbai

#### BUILD CONSENSUS

**APROPOS THE EDITORIAL,** "Kashmir internationalised" (Oct 24), though it has not happened yet, Pakistan, too, is hell bent on internationalising the Kashmir issue backed by its all-weather friend, China, which currently heads the Financial Action Task Force. After the drubbing of its team at the hearings, the Narendra Modi government has no choice but to comply with the powerful US Congressional Committee's urgings to lift restrictions in the Kashmir Valley to pre-empt such a predicament. It should also try and reach out to the people to build a consensus among them regarding their political future.

S.S. Paul  
Chakdaha, West Bengal

#### FINETUNE REFORM

This refers to the news titled "Govt throws open fuel retailing to all players". This is indeed the biggest oil sector reform in many years. Lowering the investment threshold for entering fuel retailing is also a welcome decision. The government has put a clause for opening at least one CNG, LNG or electric charging station simultaneously in the next three years. But it should have increased the cap for setting up these pumps in rural areas from five per cent to at least 20-25 per cent, depending on viability. Also, some clarity on how long it will allow sale of diesel to private vehicles given that it plans to sell only electric cars in the future would have been useful.

Bal Govind  
Noida

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# Where is the Muslim statesmanship on Ayodhya?



Saeed Naqvi  
Wide Angle

As was the custom in medieval times, Ottoman Sultan Mehmet the Conqueror in 1452 transformed the greatest Byzantine cathedral, the Hagia Sophia, into a mosque. But the founder of modern Turkey, Mustafa Kemal Pasha Ataturk, in 1935 discarded medieval insensitivities and transformed the Sophia mosque into a Byzantine museum. An Europeanist, he knew that the ancient cathedral, as a mosque, at the entry point to Europe, would continue to hurt Europeans for generations. In 1526, someone associated with Babar is alleged to have transformed a comparably holy Hindu place into a mosque.

Alas, there is no Ataturk around to take a statesman-like position on Ayodhya. Already, intemperate whippers are afloat that should the Supreme Court verdict favour the mandir, some members of All India Muslim Personal Law Board would go in appeal. Years ago, a radically different way out for Muslims was spelt out by my mother, Atia Naqvi. She had accompanied me to Ayodhya, not specifically to watch the brick laying ceremony in August, 1989, but to be able to spend time with me because soon after the Ayodhya assignment, I would catch the flight to New Delhi from Lucknow, where she lived. She made three observations: First, she found a mosque on a high ground jarring in a patently Hindu temple town. Secondly, by her understand-

ing of Muslim names, Mir Bai, who is supposed to have built the mosque, was quite clearly a Shia. Why then was there no agitation in the Shia enclaves of Lucknow? And finally, and most importantly, if the Hindus had claimed it to be the birthplace of Ram, why had the Muslims raised their objection to the highest pitch. Let me try to quote her verbatim from memory: "A Muslim can spread out his prayer mat anywhere facing the Kaaba and say his 'namaz' (prayer). A Hindu consecrates the idol which is then alive eternally for worship." It is not wise for Muslims to argue against the Hindu claim that Ram Lalla was born under what became the central dome of the mosque, now demolished. What archaeologists say is, in political terms, not as important as what the vast majority of people have been induced to repose absolute faith in. Since this faith is being exploited by political interests towards their agenda of a "Hindu Rashtra", the Muslim opposition to this transformational plan provides grist to the Hindutva mill. It enables Hindutva to

**If you study the Treaty of Hidaybiyyah as a parable alongside some of Iqbal's couplets which Justice Sibgat Ullah Khan so aptly quotes, his message becomes clear: 'communal disharmony' is what has to be conquered**

sharpen Muslim-Hindu polarisation on an even larger scale. The boost from two BJP seats in 1984 in Parliament to 350 now would not have been possible without the Muslims having been ensnared into opposing the agenda. This posture of Muslims, ironically, served Hindutva's purpose. Muslims were first led into faulty politics by Syed Shahabuddin, a brilliant officer of the Indian Foreign Service whom Atal Behari Vajpayee, as foreign minister in the first Janata government (1977-80), handpicked as a "Muslim" face of the Janata Party. Shahab fell into the trap of wanting to be a leader of Indian Muslims rather than

being a "Muslim leader". Communal polarisation is built into the approach. Little wonder he found himself digging his heels in for the mosque when the Ayodhya dispute erupted. The VHP and the BJP had reheated an old issue as a strategy to neutralise V.P. Singh's promotion of caste forces in the Hindi belt. L.K. Advani's Rath Yatra was intended to serve more than one purpose: to contain the ogre of casteism let loose by V.P. Singh and to accentuate the anti-Muslim slant of the BJP. This is where Shahab's fierce opposition helped the BJP. What Mr Advani initiated has spiralled into the stratosphere which is where the BJP today is. I must, of course, add in parenthesis, that Shahab was far from being communal. He was a deeply religious gentleman. In amoral politics, devoid of honesty, such a person can easily be cast as "communal" by those on an agenda of majoritarianism. Shahab had the honesty to recognise his naivety and withdraw from politics. Shahab did not have the "tact" which Justice Sibgat

Ullah Khan stressed in his 2010 Allahabad high court judgment on Ayodhya. Justice Khan gave the example of the Treaty of Hidaybiyyah which Prophet Mohammad signed with the hostile tribe of Quraysh in 628 AD. It had been six years since the Prophet and his followers had left Mecca for Medina. After these years, the Prophet with a caravan of 1,000 men on his way to Mecca for the Haj reached Hidaybiyyah. Quraysh had made it known that they would block Muslim entry to Mecca. The Prophet consulted his companions: should the caravan return to Medina or proceed, risking a battle? Intermediaries carried messages back and forth. All that the Muslims wanted was to perform Haj at Mecca. This, the Quraysh were determined to prevent. Eventually a truce was agreed upon. Ali, the Prophet's cousin, drafted a treaty. The prophet dictated that it was a treaty between "Mohammad, the Prophet of Allah, and Quraysh". Interlocutors for Quraysh objected. They did not recognise him as God's Prophet. Ali, his cousin, refused to drop the preamble. The Prophet inter-

vened and himself deleted the phrase, thus paving the way for a treaty which declared a truce between the two sides. The terms of the treaty were considered a surrender. For instance, despite the compromise, Muslims would not be allowed to perform Haj that year. Next year, they could, provided they stayed in Mecca for only three days and so on. In modern military terms, the treaty turned out to be a sort of tactical retreat, because in a matter of a few years, Muslims had conquered Mecca. At this stage, the story becomes a parable. What "conquest" was Justice Khan recommending? If you study Hidaybiyyah as a parable alongside some of Iqbal's couplets which Justice Khan so aptly quotes, his message becomes clear: "communal disharmony" is what has to be conquered. But that precisely is what majoritarianism does not want. Its meteoric rise since 2014 is based on polarisation and more polarisation.

The writer is a senior journalist and commentator based in New Delhi

# Slowdown due to corporate reform



Rajeev Ahuja

Recently, India's FM Nirmala Sitharaman blamed a former Indian PM, Manmohan Singh, and a former RBI governor, Raghuram Rajan, for the current banking mess in India. In her lecture, delivered at Columbia University, she said that under their combined leadership, the Indian banking sector had its worst phase. Earlier, Mr Rajan had put the blame for slower growth of the Indian economy during the NDA's first term on an extremely centralised government and a lack of a consistent articulated vision. Regardless of this spat between them, the fact remains that the Indian economy is going through a tough phase. One of the key drivers of economic growth — namely, private investment creating jobs/employment which in turn generate incomes that people spend on consumption — has not been very effective. And much of the reason for a slowdown in private investments can be attributed to the corporate cleansing that the Narendra Modi government is having to do.

This cleansing is a major reform in itself, and is the hardest one as it relates to dealing with the mindset of India Inc. Things had gotten really bad. Examples abound of loans taken by businesses with the intention of not repaying, bribes taken to pursue policies/decisions favourable to a select few, payments made to legitimise illegalities, money paid to get coveted positions or to win government contracts and so forth. Things had gone to such a pass that somebody had to do this cleansing. PM Narendra Modi happens to be the one leading it. This reform isn't confined to the corporate sector alone. Actually, this reform touches people from all walks of life, be it politicians, bureaucrats, judges, bankers, etc whose financial interests span outside of their work domain. People often wear more than one hat. Mr Modi is indeed having to reset the moral compass of Indians that had gone awry. To carry out such epochal reform, a certain degree of centralisation is indispensable. Given its nature, this reform can't be decentralised or delegated to other constituents as it involves dealing with resourceful and influential people. They are also smart people who have covered their dealings beneath several layers to make those opaque. Money has been diverted and misappropriated from businesses to the personal accounts of their relatives and friends and to their offshore accounts. Funds have been routed and rerouted through several shell companies and invested in benami properties and other unaccounted assets. It is precisely because of the tightening of the noose by the Narendra Modi government that some people are now cooling their heels in jails; some have fled the country to escape the judiciary; some are still fighting legal battles; some have chosen to commit suicide; and some have come forward to settle their dues. And many are living under a constant fear that their hanky-panky dealings may also come to the surface. Through their proxies they are trying to create an impression that something is wrong with the Narendra Modi gov-

**Private investment creating jobs... has not been very effective. And much of the reason for a slowdown in private investments can be attributed to the corporate cleansing that the Narendra Modi government is having to do.**

and indeed the country, is paying a heavy collateral for the system clean-up. The collateral is in terms of a slowdown of economic growth, job losses and reduced investors' confidence which is having a cascading effect, engulfing almost every section of the society. The root cause of this problem is not the fact of a system clean-up but the conduct of the people at large indulging in hanky-panky dealings. The Narendra Modi government seems to be pro-private sector, provided it plays by the rules. India's growth story remains intact. The Indian market is also quite lucrative for any long-term investor. To access this market, however, the private sector needs to balance their profit motive with the motive of serving society. In her recent visit to the US, Ms Sitharaman told international investors that they will find no better place than India to invest in. India has a reform-oriented government, the rule of law works here, and the environment is capitalism-respecting. Further, the government is open, transparent, and receptive to ideas and inputs from the corporate

sector on the ease of doing business, making India investor-friendly and so forth. Those who have been critical of the Narendra Modi government's economic policies need to not talk in generalities. They need to come up with specific ideas and suggestions. They have the advantage of a government that is listening and is responsive to good ideas and suggestions. The government may not agree with all their suggestions but good ideas have a high chance of getting acted upon. As more and more cases of corporate malfeasance are coming to notice, the government is trying to plug loopholes, tighten the law and strengthen accountability mechanisms. The corporate sector too needs to recognise that the terms of doing business in India have changed too. In keeping with this change, they need to change their mindsets and business ethos.

The writer is a development economist, formerly with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the World Bank



'Enough portraits — respect my privacy!'

# Big brother handles media in Kashmir



Anand K. Sahay  
TROUBLE IN PARADISE-5

Srinagar/Baramulla/Shopian: Aside from the communications lockdown and the jailing of leaders of the non-BJP parties, a major casualty in Kashmir has been the sanctity of the news flow on account of tight surveillance. This has come in the way of letting the country know of the stifling of the public voice, of practically all economic activity, and of the experience of people's interface with the security forces present in fighting gear. Thus, the unreal parades as the real — the media is crudely suppressed — both television and print. With the closure of the Internet, the social media — egregious though its contents can be — is dead. The newspapers in the Valley, which used to be lively if somewhat partial to the Separatist aspiration, have been obliged to become the government's voice exclusively. There is a sorry dullness and unanimity about them. The government's spokesmen have full play. No other entity has any say. Editorials, which reflect a newspaper's opinion on key issues, are not written now. Long, boring articles on esoteric and arcane themes typically fill the op-ed space. District correspondents have little work to do. Very slow Internet lines have of late been made available at district headquarters for use by people in emergencies. The same lines are also meant for the media. The process takes long. In any case, news that is fit to print does not make the cut. Hawk-eyed minor officials see to that. Congress leader and former J&K chief minister Ghulam Nabi Azad was in Baramulla about three weeks ago. Some half-a-dozen delegations called on him (several were prevented from doing so). Local journalists got their stories by talking to them, but these could not be filed, some of them told me. The unofficial censors would not let them. The editor-in-chief of Greater Kashmir, the English-language paper with the largest circulation in the Valley, was recently called to New Delhi by the National Investigation Agency for questioning. The Kashmir correspondent of a television channel, who had shown up the discrepancy in an official claim, had to be hurriedly called to headquarters for a temporary period as a protective gesture. The message has gone down the line. As a special dispensation, on their request, senior journalists in Srinagar were offered the restoration of broadband Internet connections in their offices (so that they may avoid the inconvenience of having to queue up to email their reports from the government's media centre where

the wait can be long), provided they signed an undertaking that they would not "misuse" the facility. Since the meaning of this term was not made clear, there were no takers. As a consequence of the press gag, everyday happenings cannot be reported. Drawing the big picture is out of the question. Vague rumours float about. Mostly, people are kept unaware of events happening even near their homes. What they consume in dollops, though, are the national television channels, which the government chose not to interrupt when the clampdown came on August 5. These tend to be downright derogatory to the people of Kashmir and injure their pride, turning in the knife psychologically and deepening alienation. Visiting Baramulla's congested old city recently, I learnt that there have been frequent public protests. The papers cannot carry such news. In Srinagar, the proprietor of a successful hardware store says he has kept his establishment shut for a long time. He says there are no construction trade workers left in the Valley, not even a handful to load goods into trucks. A government advisory issued on August 2 raised fears and drove the approximately 4.5-5 lakh workers — just under 10 per cent of the Valley's population — from other states out of Kashmir. They were farm labourers, construction workers, carpenters, plumbers, electricians, motor mechanics, even shopkeepers. All fled. A transporter in Baramulla, whose business has also suffered badly on account of the policy-imposed labour constraint, confirms this. The impact of the serious labour shortage on Kashmir's economy is yet to be assessed. The short-sighted advisory has since been recalled. But the non-state workers, a large chunk from Bihar, have not returned. Local media reports are unable to offer an understanding of any of this. That would amount to discussing the current situation. That is out of bounds. In Shopian, a political figure explains that Kashmir valley is mostly a "middle class" place, unlike other states. Nearly every family owns a car or two-wheeler. Sometimes these choke roads, although shops and schools and colleges are shut. The reason is that public transport is off the roads and government employees must attend office. The sick must be taken to hospital. There are social visits to make. Visuals of tight traffic have been presented on national television to suggest normality in Kashmir, and as a sign of happy acceptance of their present fate.

(Concluded)

# When desire arises, we must be vigilant



Swami Tejomayananda

How does desire arise? It comes in diverse ways. Sometimes it happens when you see an object. Let us take a familiar illustration. You go to an elderly aunt's home and she asks, "What would you like to have — something hot or cold? What about a snack to go with it?" "No, no, I am full. I just had my lunch. I don't want anything." Your aunt refuses to take "No" for an answer. A slice of

chocolate cake and delicious mango ice cream are placed in front of you. You see them and say, "Well, on second thought, anytime is dessert time!" Now what changed your mind and created desire? It arose because you saw the object. Had you not seen it, there may not have been any yearning for it. At times, desire arises when someone describes an object. For instance, your friend narrates the story of a fascinating movie. The longing to see

it arises in your mind. You think, "What a wonderful movie. I should also go and see it soon." A craving can arise after hearing about an object without seeing it. Even an aroma can create desire. These analogies are related to eating, but similar comparisons can be applied to other situations as well. Desires that trouble man rise from seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting and touching — that is, they emanate from the senses. Sometimes, while sitting alone the mind relives an earlier enjoyable experience. That very memory creates a desire to repeat it. "I must go again on a vacation to Europe. It was so wonderful." Here, though the object

is not in front of us, our memories have kindled a longing to repeat that joyful experience. Perception by itself does not create desire. Yearning rises when the mind starts projecting beauty, joy and enjoyment on a particular object or experience. Sometimes, perception acts as an excuse or a trigger for the mind to fantasise. At other times, there is nothing; but the mind continues to crave objects and experiences. Here, the mind has little to do with the present. It associates with and remembers pleasant past experiences, giving birth to desires. The intellect has the ability to plan, think and improvise;

it also knows how to improve upon previously experienced pleasures. The senses see objects in the present; the mind focuses on the past; and the intellect plans the future. Therefore, desires arise by perception, remembrance, thinking and planning. When longing arises, it creates agitation, veils our faculty of thinking and discrimination. When desire arises, we must be vigilant; we should examine whether it is sattvik, rajasic or tamasic in nature; question its impact on the mind and ask whether it should be fulfilled or not.

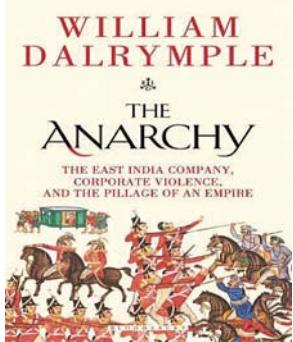
Swami Tejomayananda is from Chinmaya Mission. To find out more about Chinmaya Mission and Swamiji, visit www.chinmayamission.com © Central Chinmaya Mission Trust.



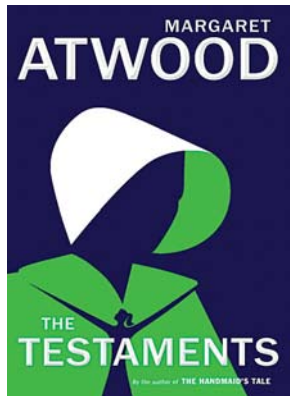


**INDIAN TOP 10 BESTSELLERS**

**NON-FICTION**



- 1 **THE ANARCHY**  
William Dalrymple, Bloomsbury, ₹699
- 2 **GOOD ECONOMICS FOR HARD TIMES**  
Abhijit V. Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Juggernaut, ₹699
- 3 **KASHMIR'S UNTOLD STORY: DECLASSIFIED**  
Iqbal Chand Malhotra, Maroof Raza, Bloomsbury, ₹599
- 4 **POOR ECONOMICS: RETHINKING POVERTY AND THE WAYS TO END IT**  
Abhijit V. Banerjee, Esther Duflo, Penguin, ₹499
- 5 **WHAT THE ECONOMY NEEDS NOW**  
Editors: Abhijit Banerjee, Gita Gopinath, Raghuram Rajan, Mihir S. Sharma, Juggernaut, ₹599
- 6 **BOTTLE OF LIES**  
Katherine Eban, Juggernaut, ₹699
- 7 **THE HINDU WAY- AN INTRODUCTION TO HINDUISM**  
Shashi Tharoor, Aleph, ₹799
- 8 **REMNANTS OF A SEPARATION**  
Aanchal Malhotra, HarperCollins, ₹599
- 9 **ARTICLE 370: A CONSTITUTIONAL HISTORY OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR**  
A.G. Noorani, Oxford India, ₹595
- 10 **NEHRU SAGA**  
Arun Bhatnagar, Blue Rose, ₹399



- FICTION**
- 1 **THE TESTAMENTS (BOOKER PRIZE 2019 WINNER)**  
Margaret Atwood, Chatto & Windus, ₹799
  - 2 **GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER (BOOKER PRIZE 2019 WINNER)**  
Bernardine Evaristo, Hamish Hamilton, ₹799
  - 3 **GRAND UNION (STORIES)**  
Zadie Smith, Hamish Hamilton, ₹699
  - 4 **THE GUARDIANS**  
John Grisham, Hodder, ₹399
  - 5 **NOTHING VENTURED**  
Jeffrey Archer, Pan Macmillan, ₹399
  - 6 **THE SECOND SLEEP**  
Robert Harris, Hutchinson, ₹599
  - 7 **DRIVE YOUR PLOW OVER THE BONES OF THE DEAD**  
Olga Tokarczuk, Fitzcarraldo Editions, ₹599
  - 8 **KALKI-SWORD OF SHIVA (MAHAYODHA BOOK 3)**  
Kevin Missal, Fingerprint, ₹250
  - 9 **MUSIC TO FLAME LILIES**  
Megha Rao, Tara India Research Press, ₹299
  - 10 **LETHAL AGENT**  
Vince Flynn, Simon & Schuster, ₹599, Bahrisons, New Delhi

## Conservatives can co-opt the new Indian aesthetic



**Jaithirth Rao**  
extract

In *The Indian Conservative*, the author's bold objective is to explore the philosophical underpinnings of modern Indian conservatism. With this vision, he has analysed the influence and predominance of conservative thought and practices in the political, economic, social, cultural, and aesthetic and educational spheres, often with interesting results. Here is an excerpt:

It all started with orientalism. Let me state the basic orientalist premises. Indian sculpture lacked classical simplicity. It was too ornate, confused and bordering on the grotesque. The only partially sophisticated Indian sculpture was on account of Greek influence on the Gandhara school. Indian painting lacked an understanding of perspective and was therefore childish. Indian music lacked harmony and therefore could not be considered an evolved art. There was nothing in Indian drama comparable to the Periclean or the Elizabethan stages. Because it was sculptural in its tone, Hindu, Buddhist and Jain architecture was unimpressive. The only Indian architecture worth talking about was the Islamic school. There, too, ornate schools like the Gujarati Muslim school of architecture needed to be at a discount. Indian literature was almost exclusively focused on religion and myths. It was as if it had never come of age. India lacked any sound aesthetic theory. Art remained at best at the folk level. Indian crafts, as distinct from art, in the form of its textiles, brass, bronzes, carpets and furniture had a childlike and primitive charm. But none of these could stand up to solid aesthetic standards.

In fairness, side by side with this hypercritical orien-

talism, there was a school of British thinkers led by William Jones, and which included James Prinsep, Alexander Cunningham, Robert Sewell, G.V. Pope and Edwin Arnold, that oscillated between a balanced, sober affection for Indian culture and occasionally an enthusiasm which was a tad excessive.

Over the years, the extreme condescending orientalist positions have been pretty much demolished. A tradition of aesthetic scholarship going back to the legendary Bharata Muni, to Sarangadeva, to Abhinavagupta, to Appayya Dikshita, to Jagannatha Pandita and many others existed in our country. The Navarasa theory, which posits that the aesthetic experience emanates from the rise and fall of nine emotive states, has retained its originality and its relevance, and today seems to fit in with some of the insights of neuroscience. The texts of the Natya Shastra and Shilpa Shastra traditions continue to be mined for insights that are timeless and refreshing.

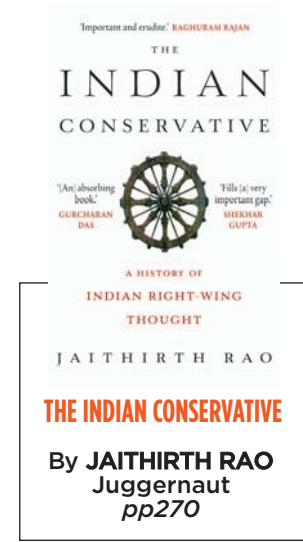
And while conquests and

destruction did lead to some discontinuities, there remained a flowing stream within the tradition. For example, even as there was what our erstwhile rulers liked to call pre-British anarchy in the land, Tanjore maintained and enhanced artistic traditions right from the Chola period of the tenth-eleventh centuries through the Nayaka and Maratha periods from the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries. And isolated Himalayan kingdoms, such as in Ladakh, Kashmir, Chamba and Spiti, produced astonishingly important and beautiful art from the tenth century onward right through till the early twentieth century.

Another kind of subterranean continuity also operated. Kakanakote, by Maasti, the great twentieth-century Kannada writer, can be seen as deriving its inspiration from Kalidasa's classic *Abhijnanashakuntalam*. They both deal with the theme of an urban sophisticate marrying a nature nymph, represented by a maiden from the forests.

For that matter, when in the seventeenth century a Nayaka king wrote a dance drama depicting the divine wedding of Senkamala Nachiar to Rajagopalaswamy, he was deriving his content and his technique from another monarch, the sixteenth-century Vijayanagara emperor Krishna Deva Raya, who wrote the graceful *Amukta Malyada*. The tradition of kings writing plays and composing music that their subjects admired goes back to Mahendra Varma Pallava in the seventh century and comes down all the way to Wajid Ali Shah in the nineteenth century, whose compositions and choreographies around Lord Krishna were loved by his subjects.

Despite the attempts at suffocation on the part of orientalist British administrators and puritanical Christian missionaries, Indian art of all kinds — the classical, the folk, the pan-Indian and the regional — not only did not die, but it demonstrated an astonishing vitality. In fact, British rule and colonial dis-



## Ideas crystallise in the Kasauli sun



**Sudeep Sen**  
Polyphony

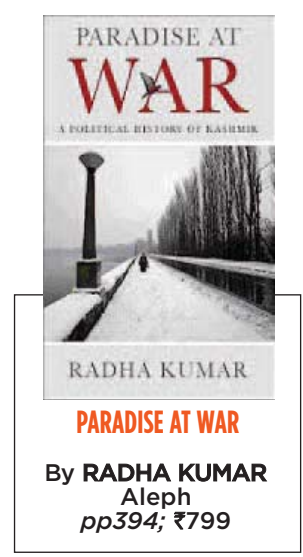
The incipient crisp winter sun lit up the multi-hued marquee at the Kasauli Club as it prepared to host the eighth edition of Khushwant Singh Literature Festival. This year's theme 'Of Saints & Sinners' also commemorated 550 years of Guru Nanak, 150 years of Mahatma Gandhi, 20 years of the Kargil conflict, centenaries of Jallianwala Bagh and the great Urdu poet Kaifi Azmi. So unsurprisingly, the bulk of the sessions concentrated on history, military matters (the club being housed in the cantonment area), politics, sainthood, sinners, godmen, art, poetry, and of course a good dose of Bollywood quotient provided by Sharmila Tagore, Shabana Azmi and Manisha Koirala.

Radha Kumar's "Kashmir: Past Imperfect, Future Tense" was one my favourite sessions. She is the author of several books, including the excellent recent one, *Paradise at War: A Political History of Kashmir* (Aleph, pp.394, ₹799), which was the basis for the discussion. The discussants — General Ata Husnain, Tavleen Singh and Tuhin Sinha — were feisty, contrarian and controversial; but amid all that Radha Kumar held her head high with grace, linguistic erudition and sound scholarship.

Sagarika Ghose, author of the new book, *Why I Am A Liberal* (Penguin, pp.480, ₹599), in a similar mode, was simultaneously intelligent and forceful while discussing "State Powers & Liberal Values". She did not mince her

words, as one has come to expect of her, and her plea for an egalitarian secular India rang true loud and clear. Another session of parallel interest was "Gandhi: The Disobedient Indian", which included Ramin Jahanbegloo and Brinda Puri, finely moderated by the journalist Sunit Arora.

Anurag Tripathi, author of *Dera Sacha Sauda* and Gurmeet Ram Rahim (Penguin, pp.216, ₹299); Ushinor Majumdar, author of *God of Sin: The Cult, Clout and Downfall of Asaram Babu* (Penguin, pp.356, ₹350); and Priyanka Pathak-Narain, author of *Godmen to Tycoon: The Untold Story of Baba Ramdev* (Juggernaut, pp.237, ₹299) — provided a fascinating panel "Godmen: Of Cults, Sinners, Saints" and their "empire of exploitation". One of the points that emerged was, often journalists covering these controversial stories are out on a limb on their own, without the support of the organization they report on. So the only way forward, especially if the reporter is passionate and conscientious to get the story out into the world, is to publish a full-



**By RADHA KUMAR**  
Aleph  
pp394; ₹799

length book. The writers showed honesty, grit and immense determination — not only as they spoke — but also through their written word and books. At the time of the festival Priyanka's book had a stay order against it, which she had challenged, and the case is in the Supreme Court.

Another interesting session for me was appropriately titled "Delhi: From Sujana Singh to Khushwant Singh". Both Swapna Liddle [author of *Chandhi Chowk: The Mughal City of Old Delhi* (Speaking Tiger, pp.196, ₹499)] and Giles Tillotson [author of *Delhi Darshan: The History and Monuments of India's Capital* (Penguin, ₹499)] showed the trajectory of Delhi's growth as a city with understated élan.

Jallianwalla Bagh has been the subject of long celebrations recently, and rightly so. Kishwar Desai and her team's excellent initiative made the much-needed Partition Museum in Amritsar possible. It restores dignity and a sense of history to the rightful players and celebrates the rich important history of that time. The session, "Punjab at the Time of Jallianwalla Bagh" included two star speakers — Navtej Sarna, author of *The Book of Nanak* (Penguin, pp.160, ₹250) and Navdeep Suri, author/translator of *Khooni Vaisakhi* (HarperCollins, pp.128, ₹399) — both former Indian ambassadors to the UK, USA and Saudi Arabia. The level of discourse was cerebrally calibrated and emotionally restrained at the same time.

Kargil: 20 Years On" was wonderfully moderated by the prime-time NDTV news-anchor, Vishnu Som. He brought in a soft touch as he narrated the deeds of some of our war heroes. Officer-soldiers Col

Shantanu Ray Chaudhuri. Tagore highlighted the importance of family (especially her Bengali upbringing), lineage, and education. The session was a potted slide show of the Hindi and Bengali film industry, with personal anecdotes punctuating the discussion.

We have produced scholars of aesthetics. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkande, Ananda Coomaraswamy and the extraordinary multifaceted genius Rabindranath Tagore stand out as significant art historians and philosophical minds. Fortunately, not all foreign scholars were of the patronizing variety. Stella Kramrisch and Heinrich Zimmer made significant positive contributions to the study of Indian art.

With the coming of Independence, the country found a new pride and new energy in its art scene. It was not just painting, sculpture, music, dance and drama that flourished. Aesthetics as a branch of philosophy and as a close cousin of political philosophy also got its fair share of attention. Kamaladevi Chattopadhyaya, B.N. Goswami, Sivaramamurti, K.K. Nair who wrote under the pseudonym of Krishna Chaitanya and others were joined by brilliant and sympathetic foreigners like Anna Dallapiccola, David Shulman, George Michell and Richard Blurton in this endeavour.

Conservatives have every reason to be happy about the current state of both high-brow and popular art in India. We have not abandoned traditions and sought refuge in sterile modernism or that abomination, post-modernism. If anything, declining folk and other traditions have been revived and the disdain for so-called folk art has disappeared. It has become fashionable to talk of India's soft power. If such a thing exists, it is because despite all the glitzy influences of technology, we have kept faith in our unique artistic traditions, our diversities and our connections with the sacred.

Excerpted with permission from the publisher, Juggernaut

S.C. Tyagi and Col Sonam Wangchuk (MVC) spoke with patriotic gravitas, highlighting the sense of camaraderie and brotherhood our soldiers show on the front-lines.

Another emotionally charged session included the cancer-survivor, Bollywood actress, Manisha Koirala. She spoke and read from her new book, *Healed* (Penguin, pp.240, ₹499), a memoir and her journey through the vicissitudes of her illness. Sathya Saran guided the conversation with sensitivity and many in the audience were left tearful-eyed. Another wonderfully crafted book in a similar vein that is well worth reading is Lisa Ray's *Close to the Bone* (HarperCollins, pp.336, ₹599) — one that Deepa Mehta describes as containing "beautiful prose which is accessible, honest, often ironic and heartbreaking all at the same time".

An epitome of elegance and class, Sharmila Tagore held forth in the session "60 Years of Filmistan" adroitly anchored by the extremely knowledgeable film-buff, editor and publisher,



**By MANISHA KOIRALA**  
Penguin  
pp240; ₹499

Shantanu Ray Chaudhuri. Tagore highlighted the importance of family (especially her Bengali upbringing), lineage, and education. The session was a potted slide show of the Hindi and Bengali film industry, with personal anecdotes punctuating the discussion.

The grand finale included the actress and activist Shabana Azmi, Saif Mahmood and I as we did the Kasauli launch of *Kaifi Azmi: Poems / Nazms* (Bloomsbury, pp.224, ₹499) — a book I have edited, introduced and co-translated. Azmi read the Urdu poems of her father with perfect pitch and musicality — her side-notes that preceded each reading providing a glimpse into the life of the man himself. Mahmood in his typically exuberant and passionate style moderated the session displaying his immense knowledge of the Urdu poetic tradition. The 200-odd copies of this book in the bookstore sold out within minutes, and the people were left with paper napkins, handkerchiefs and stray pages in notebooks to get signatures.

There was music, performances and film screenings (including an excellent documentary, *Peering Souls*, by Amardeep Singh, that beautifully traced nearly 100 disused gurdwaras in Pakistan). "The hills [were truly] alive with the sound of music", dance, fiercely argued debates, and finely crafted words — a kaleidoscopic mosaic that came together beautifully under the able directorship of Rahul Singh and Niloufer Billimoria — in an atmosphere full of camaraderie and celebration.

Sen is an award-winning poet, translator, editor and photographer; whose most recent book is *Kaifi Azmi: Poems / Nazms* (Bloomsbury)



Housing  
sales  
inching  
towards  
pre-demon  
levelsYoung  
entrepreneurs  
look for  
social causes

Overleaf

quick  
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,020.39	-0.10
Nifty 50	11,582.60	-0.19
S&P 500	3,006.99	+0.08
Dollar (₹)	71.01	+0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	91.54	+0.34
Euro (₹)	79.00	+0.16
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	38,110.107	+0.28
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	\$61.79	+0.62
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.678	—
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.740	-0.019

\* As of 9:30 pm IST

Fitch cuts FY20  
GDP growth  
forecast to 5.5%

Fitch Ratings slashed India's GDP growth forecast in the current fiscal to 5.5 per cent, saying a large credit squeeze emanating from shadow banks has pushed economic growth to a six year low. Fitch, which had in June this year put India's GDP growth at 6.6 per cent for the fiscal year that began in April 2019, said the recent government measures to boost economy will gradually nudge growth.

Nifty Midcap150  
Quality 50 Index  
launched

NSE Indices Ltd launched a new smart beta index, Nifty Midcap150 Quality 50 Index, which will track performance of mid-cap companies based on profitability, leverage and earnings growth variability. The beta index includes top-50 companies from its parent Nifty Midcap 150 Index, selected based on their 'quality scores'.

Trump says Fed  
'derelict in its  
duties'

President Donald Trump again attacked the US Fed on Thursday, calling for more interest rate cuts to stimulate the American economy just days before the key policy meeting. "The Federal Reserve is derelict in its duties if it doesn't lower the Rate and even, ideally, stimulate," he said on Twitter, a relatively mild epithet after calling policymakers "boneheads."

Smartphone  
shipment  
touches 49 mn

India smartphone shipment reached the highest-ever quarterly shipment at 49 million units in the July-September 2019 quarter, growing 10 per cent year-on-year and beating concerns of slowdown in the segment, a Counterpoint Research report said. The growth was driven by new launches, discounts and various pre-Diwali sale channel fill by all the leading brands.

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The country now ranks 63 on the World Bank index  
India jumps 14 places  
in ease of doing bizMADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, OCT 24

India has moved up 14 notches to the 63rd spot in the World Bank's ease-of-doing-business global rankings 2019, released on Thursday. India figured among the world's top 10 most improved countries for the third consecutive year on the back of faster bankruptcy resolution and issuance of construction permits.

The improved rankings are expected to facilitate higher foreign investment into the country to pace up growth at a time when the Reserve Bank of India, International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have slashed India's economic growth forecast for 2019-20.

India also ranked Number One in South Asia. India went up ahead by 23 and 30 places, respectively, in the past two years. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said that besides implementation of Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, efforts would be made to simplify Goods and Services Tax for further improving India's ranking in the index. "In the next ranking, the World Bank will include the business climate in Kolkata and Bengaluru as well. Currently, it takes into account only Delhi and Mumbai," she said.

The report, however, said the challenges India is facing would continue. "The

## Govt to simplify GST

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

In a move to improve India's ranking in the World Bank's ease of doing business index, the government is likely to further simplify Goods and Services Tax (GST). Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said that efforts would be made to further the simplify GST system.

Sitharaman said effort would also be now to achieve the target to reaching within top 50 rank.

"In GST, it is an ongoing process to understand where the difficul-

ties are. We are also looking at what were the glitches in using online filing of returns. So, GST is an ongoing process in improving. Even now for the next meeting, as and when it happens, we want to make sure that several steps are taken to simplify compliance," she said.

country needed to do more in areas such as enforcing contracts and registering property where India ranks a dismal 163rd and 154th globally. Also, in the most fundamental of them all—ease of starting a business—India's rank rose by just a single place in the latest report," the World Bank noted.

Industry bodies said the jump in India's ranking is a testimony to the remarkable improvement in the country's business climate owing to the series of reforms undertaken by the Narendra Modi-led govern-



Nirmala Sitharaman

ment. The report said India had broken into the club of 100 easiest nations to conduct business two years ago when it managed to jump 30 spots from the 130th position. "The World Bank has named India as one of the economies with the most notable improvement for the third year in a row, along with Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait, and neighboring Pakistan and China," it said.

As far as resolving insolvency is concerned, the country had the best performance in 'Resolving

Insolvency' where it jumped by 56 places to become the 52nd easiest place in addressing bankruptcy. Streamlined procedures allowed by the implementation of the IBC are largely to thank for this.

"Since its implementation, more than 2,000 companies have used the new law. Of these, about 470 have commenced liquidation and more than 120 have approved reorganization plans, with the remaining cases still pending," it said.

The report quotes studies that have found that restrictive labour regulation in India is associated with a 35 per cent increase in firms' unit labour costs while a 10 per cent increase in judicial quality increases firm sales by 1-2 per cent.

Welcoming the WB rankings, CII president Vikram Kirloskar said, "India achieved another significant milestone in the area of 'trading across borders, where we now stand at 68th rank, up from 146th in 2018. Procedures, time and cost for export and imports have been coming down sharply with continuous introduction of trade facilitation reforms."

"We have a long way to go in several other indicators of 'doing business' report, including enforcing contracts, registering property, and starting a business. With continuing reform momentum and government-industry partnership, I am confident of

Telcos suffer ₹1.4 L cr jolt  
as SC asks them to pay upPRAMOD KUMAR  
with agency nputs  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

In a jolt to the troubled telecom sector, the Supreme Court on Thursday ordered the service providers, including Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and many defunct telecom companies, to pay the government Rs 92,000 crore dues arising from sharing of adjusted gross revenue (AGR).

The court said that apart from the fee on account of termination of call and roaming charges, all revenues coming to telecom service providers would be counted in AGR.

The apex court upheld the government's position on including revenue from non-telecommunications businesses in calculating the annual AGR of telecom companies, a share of which is paid as licence and spectrum fees to the exchequer.

While the government had raised a demand of Rs 92,000 crore from Bharti Airtel, Vodafone, Idea and many now-defunct telecom operators in licence fees based on revised revenue, the actual payout will be around Rs 1.4 lakh crore after including spectrum usage charge, penalty and interest, it is learnt.

Over the next few days, the numbers will get further calibrated. Older telecom companies would be the worst hit, while Reliance Jio, which entered in 2016, owes the least among all.

"Fresh calculation will be done now for all the liabilities of telecom opera-

Banks say no material  
impact from SC orderFC BANKING BUREAU  
MUMBAI, OCT 24

The Supreme Court's decision that upholds the DoT demand is unlikely to have much material impact on banks. Bankers said except Jio, other telecom players have not borrowed from banks in the last one-and-a-half years while the existing stressed loans to the sector have been provided for.

However, analysts said that the Supreme Court decision comes as a major setback to the incumbent telcos as it implies higher payments when the industry is facing a price-war and intense competition. The payment terms for these liabilities would remain a key monitorable for the asset quality of

banks as well as the debt servicing ability of telecom companies, they said.

"Around a year-and-a-half ago, the Reserve Bank of India had identified the telecom sector as stressed and had asked banks to make additional provisioning towards their exposure. Technically, there has not been any borrowing from the telecom companies since then. Only Jio has borrowed from banks and it too has been bringing down the debt by monetising its assets. Whatever exposure we have towards the telecom sector, we have provided higher for those loans as it is already a stressed sector in terms of revenue generation and profitability," said a banker with a large public sector bank.

tors. The total amount is around Rs 1.34 lakh crore. It is likely to go up by 4-5 per cent as the liability of one more quarter will get added to it," an official said.

Directing the cash-strapped telecom service providers to cough-up the past dues, a bench of Justice Arun Mishra, Justice S. Abdul Nazeer and Justice M.R.Shah said they would decide on the time-line for the payment of Rs. 92,000 crore by the service providers.

The court will pass a sep-

arate order on the time-frame within which Rs. 92,000 crore would be paid by the telecom operators.

Telcos have to pay around 3 per cent of AGR as spectrum charges and another 8 per cent as licence fees.

The court has not accepted the contention by the telecom service providers that AGR should exclude the earnings from non-telecom revenues, including rent, dividend income, interest income, profit from the sale of fixed assets, etc.

## Govt mulls income-tax relief for top bracket after scrapping exemptions

VRISHTI BENIWAL  
OCT. 24

India is considering tax relief for individuals as it looks at measures to accelerate consumer demand and boost economic growth, people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government is mulling a proposal to hike the taxable

income limits, especially the Rs 10 lakh slab, which attracts a 30 per cent tax rate at present, the people said, asking not to be identified as the discussions are private.

The move will be accompanied by scrapping some tax breaks, including the one offered on house rent payments and interest earned on some bank deposits.

The measures may form

part of the federal budget to be unveiled in February, the people said. A spokesman for the Finance Ministry couldn't be immediately reached for a comment.

If the government tinkers with personal taxes, it will add to the list of measures taken in recent months to boost growth that's expanding at the slowest pace in nearly six years. Apart from last



month's cut in corporate taxes, the government has also rolled back a levy on foreign funds, injected \$10 billion into banks, relaxed

foreign direct investment rules, and merged state-run lenders.

A steep reduction in corporate tax rate to 22 per cent meant companies pay taxes at a lower rate than many individuals who are in the top 30 per cent rate bracket. That's raised the clamor for a relief in personal income tax rates.

As Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman aims to narrow the fiscal

deficit to 3.3 per cent of the gross domestic product (GDP) this year, the government has limited fiscal space for fresh give-aways after the \$20 billion corporate tax stimulus. It's now banking on companies and individuals to boost consumption and add to revenue collections.

Personal tax kicks off on income above Rs 250,000 a year, levied at 5 per cent.

Top marginal tax rate in India is 42.74 per cent for income above Rs 5 crore. That's higher than the Asia average of 29.99 per cent, according to data compiled by KPMG. Only about 5 per cent of the population pays taxes and the country's tax-to-GDP ratio of about 11 per cent ranks lower than the global average.

— Bloomberg

IndiGo reports  
biggest  
quarterly lossSACHIN RAVIKUMAR &  
ADITI SHAH  
BENGALURU/NEW DELHI,  
OCT. 24

India's biggest airline IndiGo reported its biggest ever quarterly loss on higher maintenance costs and cut capacity expansion targets, at a time when the industry is grappling with slowing passenger growth.

IndiGo parent InterGlobe Aviation Ltd's net loss grew to Rs 1,066 crore in the three months to Sept. 30 from Rs 652 crore a year earlier, the only other instance that the airline reported a quarterly loss.

Maintenance costs spiked as IndiGo was forced to reassess the expense of leasing and maintaining older Airbus A320 planes to fill a gap caused by the grounding of newer A320neo aircraft due to engine issues, Chief Financial Officer Aditya Pande said on a call with analysts on Thursday.

The company also cut its expectations for capacity expansion for 2019-20 to 25 per cent from 30 per cent, blaming a 3-4 month delay in aircraft deliveries by Airbus.

—Reuters

## Maruti Q2 profit tanks 39%

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, OCT. 24

Hit by subdued demand in the Indian passenger car market, Maruti Suzuki, India's biggest car maker, on Thursday reported a massive 39.4 per cent year-on-year drop in net profit for the September quarter at Rs 1,358.60 crore due to weak auto sales amid subdued demand in the economy. The Delhi-based maker of popular models like Vitara Brezza and Baleno had clocked Rs 2,240.4 crore in profit in the same period in 2018.

A sharp fall in corporate

tax expenses (as the company enjoyed the maximum benefits because of the corporate tax rate cut announced by the government in September) and higher other income helped the company limit the profit decline.

"Net profit fell on account of lower sales volume, higher sales promotion expenses and higher depreciation expenses, partially offset by cost reduction efforts, higher fair value gains on invested surplus and reduction in corporate tax rate," Maruti said in a BSE filing.

The revenue during the

quarter dropped 24.3 per cent year-on-year to Rs 16,985.3 crore as volumes fell 30 per cent year-on-year. "This year, the automobile industry has seen a significant decline in sales owing to several factors," Maruti said.

"One of the main factors is increase in the cost of acquisition of the car due to various reasons coming together like implementation of more stringent safety and emission (BS6) norms, increase in vehicle insurance expenses and hike in road taxes in many states, the company explained.

Jewellers expect better  
DhanterasSANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, OCT. 24

Dussehra sales had disappointed the jeweler fraternity. However, they hope to see the latent demand for gold to support Dhanteras sales this time.

Gold demand has remained subdued for previous festivals, where Dussehra sales were 20 per cent lower than previous year, finds Motilal Oswal Financial Services. Customers have been keeping away from the market for the past four months as the prices were rising. Prices



had come closer to Rs 40,000 per 10 gm levels in the domestic market amidst rising international rates and weakening rupee. However of late, there has been some stability in the market and jewellers expect that customers will make use of the stability.

"The prices have reduced a bit and the customers now understand that prices may not fall further much. There is a latent demand in the market and we have started seeing sales picking up slowly since Navarathri. Jewellers are seeing an increasing trend in pre-festival bookings. We expect 10 to 12 per cent growth in sales during this Diwali," said Bachhraj Bamaalwa, former chairman of All-India Gem & Jewellery Domestic Council (GJC). Wedding purchases too have started picking up.

## Infosys confirms US SEC probe

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, OCT. 24

In a regulatory update, Infosys on Thursday confirmed probe into the whistleblower's allegations by the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) and the US Securities Exchange Commission (SEC). The Bengaluru-based IT major also said a class action lawsuit has been filed against it in the US.

Surprisingly, amidst all the trouble, in an apparent move to lift the sagging morale of its employees, the software major announced grant of stock incentives of around 23 lakh shares to around 7,000 thousand mid-level eligible employees.

The Infosys stock remained the whipping boy of the market for the fourth day, closing 2.36 per cent down at Rs 635.40 on the BSE.

Reports said the Sebi has sought additional information from the company, while the National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA)—which is part of the corporate affairs ministry—has been asked to look into the matter.

Infosys said, "The company has been in touch with the Securities and Exchange Commission regarding the anonymous whistleblower complaints and has learnt that the SEC has initiated an investiga-



tion into this matter. The company will cooperate with the SEC's investigation. Also, Securities and Exchange Board of India has requested additional information from the company concerning the anonymous complaints. The company will provide the information as per Sebi's request."

"The company is also aware of a securities class action lawsuit that has been filed against the company in federal court in the United States based on the generalised allegations in the anonymous complaints. The company intends to defend itself vigorously in such a lawsuit," Infosys said.

On BSE questioning it over late disclosure of whistleblower's complaints, Infosys said, "Before conclusion of the generalised allegations in the complaints, a disclosure under Regulation 30 of LODR Regulations was not required. The disclosure made on October 22, 2019 was to respond to multiple

media inquiries and reports."

"The anonymous whistleblower complaints have been placed before the audit committee who has retained the law firm of Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co. to conduct an independent investigation," Infosys said.

Makarand Joshi, partner at Mumbai-based MMJC and Associates LLP—a corporate compliance firm—said, "So far, as per the prevalent Sebi LODR Regulations, there are no clauses that makes it mandatory to disclose such information to the stock exchanges, however, as a principle every material information needs to be informed to stock exchange under regulation 30 of Sebi LODR Regulations.

However, between the period when the whistleblower complaint was received and the information was made public, if some insider including the whistleblower himself had traded in Infosys share, it will without doubt violate the norms of insider trading."

"Legal liabilities in such cases can be exponential and Infosys has already informed that a securities class action lawsuit that has been filed against the company in the US federal court based on the generalised allegations in the anonymous complaints," Joshi said.



**OPENING BELL**  
PROJECTION FOR TODAY

**Market consolidating in range of 11720-11470**

The market continued to be volatile in the busy earnings season; on Thursday Supreme Court order on telecom companies license and spectrum usage charges to be paid to the government led to higher volatility as telecom stocks fell sharply. Assembly election results for Maharashtra and Haryana also were not as per market expectations with Haryana's hung assembly verdict. The Sensex closed nearly flat at 39,020.39, down 38.44 points or 0.10 per cent, in a volatile trading session, the index touched an intra-day high of 39,327.15 after opening in the green but later touched a low of 38,840.76.

Telecom major Bharti Airtel fell close to 10 per cent intra-day, but recovered later posting more than 3 per cent gain. Infosys also fell in the last hour of trade closing 2.36 per cent down at Rs 635.40 on the BSE as both Indian and US market regulators have begun probe in the whistle blower matter.

Bharti and Vodafone Idea's overdue licence fee stands at Rs 6,800 crore each. Including the interest and penalty, the total outstanding amount for all the companies is Rs 92,600 crore. The decision comes as a major setback to the incumbent telecom companies as it implies higher payments when the industry is facing price-war and intense competition, analysts said.

Nifty-50 index closed at 11,582.60 down 21.50 points or 0.19 per cent.

The sectoral indices closed mixed the losers included BSE Bankex (-1.16 per cent), Power (-1.24 per cent), IT (-0.71 per cent), Telecom(-0.67 per cent), Auto (-0.32 per cent).

The market didn't get much support from either domestic institutions who were net sellers of equities worth Rs 738.75 crore or the foreign portfolio investors also were net sellers by Rs 72.87 crore.

**Technical View**

Shrikant Chouhan, senior vice-president Technical Research, Kotak Securities said, "Mixed news flow on the domestic front kept the market volatile throughout the day. Supreme court's verdict for telecom carrier to pay past dues of \$13 billion has shaken the telecom companies, as well as their lenders like private and public banks. Also, assembly elections results were little below expectations that has increased short term nervousness in the market."

"However, the market is preparing for a major trending move and such type of negative news flow offers buying opportunity for those who have missed the opportunity at lower levels. Technically, we are of the view that the market is consolidating between the range of 11,720 and 11,470 to surpass its resistance level of 11,720 decisively," Chouhan said.

**Market View**

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said, "Market has been flattish during the week assessing the ongoing Q2 result which is marginally better than expected till date. Given the trading holiday, volume has reduced taking a conservative approach. Going forward weak crude oil prices, positive global sentiments and further reforms from the government are expected to provide positive momentum."

—RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

# Housing sales inching towards pre-demon levels

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 24

Despite the subdued sentiments, the residential market has started looking up. While the industry is confident that sales will get back to pre-demonetisation levels, it is not sure about touching 2013 levels.

As per the data from JLL India, residential sales in the top seven cities have moved up to 1.15 lakh units in the first nine months of 2019 from 1.01 lakh units in the same period last year. Post demonetization, in the first nine months of 2017, sales had fallen to 72,300 units — a decline of 40 per cent from 1.19 lakh units in the previous year period.

According to Samantak Das, Chief Economist and Head of Research & REIS, JLL India, the first benchmark would be the pre-demonetisation levels, which is achievable for the industry. However, it will be difficult for the market to get back to 2013 levels when 1.48 lakh units were sold in the first nine months.

"The 2013 level is the ultimate benchmark. But whether the industry will get back to those levels is a big question. The investor fraternity which was active in the real estate market till 2013 is not likely to come back. Till then, it was investor-driven sales and now it is an end-user market. The industry as such will be in a better position in 2020," said Das.

The disruptions in the market, including RERA, GST and the changes in the

Benami Act, have almost settled down. "The real estate market has become more dependable. Further, the declining interest rates also have started manifesting positively, especially in the affordable and mid-segment residential units. Once the economy starts picking up, things will improve," he added.

Meanwhile, the government measures to boost the affordable segment sales are expected to support faster delivery of units. PropTiger estimates that nearly 4.5 lakh affordable homes will be delivered by 2020 in India's 9 major cities.

Real estate developers have changed their approach amid changing market dynamics, showing a greater commitment towards project delivery than on new launches. "The demand for affordable homes is expected to increase in the near future amid record low-interest rates and higher tax benefits. In the past, project delays have resulted in developers attracting negative publicity, which has dented the fortunes of many and left several others struggling for survival. A reset in this regard is absolutely necessary to bring back the missing trust factor among home buyers. Now that the government has announced last-mile funding for stuck projects through the launch of the Rs 20,000 crore stress fund, project delivery rates will hopefully improve further in the near future," said Dhruv Agarwal, Group CEO, Elara technologies, which owns PropTiger.

The 2013 level is the ultimate benchmark. But if the industry gets back to those levels is a big question

# Rising enthusiasm among youth globally to work for a mission Young entrepreneurs look for social causes

BELINDA GOLDSMITH, SARAH SHEARMAN, ADDIS ABABA/SAN FRANCISCO, OCT. 24



**GRETA EFFECT**  
A Deloitte report on the rise of social enterprise in 2018 highlighted that for the first time in mature markets, young people believe their lives will be worse than their parents

As the brains behind a hydroponics farming system in rural Kenya, 17-year-old Jefferson Kang'acha struggled to get noticed but he now expects the youth climate movement led by Greta Thunberg to bolster other young people on a mission.

Kang'acha, a computer technology student, decided to apply technology to farming when his parents were hit by another drought and he came up with an automated hydroponics unit built from recycled waste and plastic bottles.

After his first unit produced 2 tonnes of tomatoes, he founded the Eden Horticultural Hub, a social enterprise that now runs four hydroponics systems in his home town of Limuru to supply the local community and lunches to 1,500 school pupils.

Echoing many young social entrepreneurs attending two of the sector's big annual events this week, Kang'acha said he was brushed off at first but eventually — similarly to Swedish teenager Thunberg — people started to listen.

"At first it was hard to be heard, particularly as the average age of a farmer in Kenya is about 60," said Kang'acha, now 20, speaking on the sidelines of the 12th annual Social Enterprise World Forum (SEWF) in Ethiopia.

"But young people have the advantage of exposure to technology and can bring solutions to old problems, working together with the

experience of older people, not as rivals."

A Thomson Reuters Foundation poll released this week found there was rising enthusiasm among young people globally to work for businesses with a mission to do social good.

Three in four of about 900 experts surveyed said more young people — under the age of 25 — were interested in working in social enterprises, which tackle a host of issues, from healthcare to climate change.

"We don't just want jobs, we want meaningful jobs," said Sabrina Chakori, 27, who set up a "tool library" in Brisbane in Australia in 2017 that charges an annual membership fee to borrow donated tools, camping equipment and sports gear.

"The current economic system does not work for the majority of us and we are starting to look at new economic systems," she said, adding the library not only used equipment filling up landfills but also cut consumerism.

As well as concerns about the global economy and climate change, young entrepreneurs said a lack of jobs and worries about affording their own homes weighed on their generation.

Having previously worked for a Wall Street hedge fund, New Yorker Bree Jones decided to use her skills to help people so founded Parity, a social enterprise that converts abandoned homes in Baltimore into affordable ones.

Jones, 28, said younger generations have been spurred on by the "existential threats" they face, from mass incarceration, police brutality and maternal mortality rates afflicting black people in the United States, to issues like climate break-

down. "For me it was about using my college education and career skill set and bringing that back into my community in a way that lifts my community," Jones told the Thomson Reuters Foundation at the sidelines of SOCAP in San Francisco.

"We realise we have been extracting so much from the earth without replenishing and that is not sustainable — we can do business, make a profit, make money, but also give back to our customers, community and the environment."

A Deloitte report on the rise of social enterprise in 2018 highlighted that for the first time in mature markets, young people believe their lives will be worse than their parents.

This was making them question corporate behaviour and the economic and social principles that guide it, with 86% of millennials saying business success should be measured in terms of more than just financial performance.

At the same time, technological advances were opening up new opportunities for businesses to positively impact society.

Ellen Chilemba, 25, a DJ and founder of Tiwale, a community-based organization set up in 2012 to give microloans, training and school grants to women and girls in Malawi, said people were starting to take young people more seriously.

"For us, our future is not as visible as for older generations," said Chilemba at the SEWF, pointing to the global climate movement spurred by Thunberg. "It is time for movements and not just individual efforts."

— Reuters

# Growing preference for e-com in festive shopping

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 24

As the most preferred channel, e-commerce is being opted by 76 per cent of the festive shoppers this time. Similarly, credit card is the most preferred and growing mode of payment.

Adoption of e-commerce has been growing year-after-year. The Festive Shopping Index by Retailers Association of India and Litmus World found that 89 per cent customers were willing to make some purchases during this festive season. Of this 89 per cent, a whopping 76 per cent found online as

the preferred channel. Last year also e-commerce was the most preferred channel, but the share of customers was lower at 65 per cent. In 2017, it was much lower at 53 per cent. Festive season sales have become major shopping events on the online platform with huge discounts, offers and credit facilities. The event has been growing in size year-after-year with new customers coming in.

Similar to e-commerce, malls too have been growing their share of customers. In 2017, malls had a share of 49 per cent, which grew to 64 per cent in 2018. By 2019, this has further



gone up to 71 per cent.

Shops have a smaller share of 41 per cent, which has grown from 37 per cent last year. However, their

share was higher at 48 per cent in 2017.

Meanwhile, the widespread adoption of e-commerce has helped the

growth of credit cards and debit cards as preferred payment modes. Additional offers like cash-back and loyalty points available for card purchases too have led to their increased use during festive sales.

Credit cards are preferred by 55 per cent customers and this share was 42 per cent in 2018. In 2019, debit cards are being used by 28 per cent, up from 26 per cent in 2018. Cash has lost its share significantly from 19 per cent in 2018 to 9 per cent in 2019. Mobile Wallets and Net Banking modes of payment also show a downward trend with 5 per cent and 3 per cent respectively

this season as compared to 8 per cent and 6 per cent respectively last year.

"Product features followed by discounts are the most influencing factors for purchase decisions this festive season. However, consumers are also looking at unique experiences and cashback offers, followed by attractive EMI offers and the opportunity to redeem their kitty of loyalty points," said Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India.

The survey was conducted on a sample size of 50,000 consumers across metros, tier II and III cities.

## STREETbuzz

### ITC Q2 net profit up 37%

FMCG major ITC on Thursday reported a 37.06 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 4,173.72 crore for the second quarter ended September 30.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 3,045.07 crore in July-September quarter a year ago, ITC said in a regulatory filing.

Its net sales rose 6.16 per cent to Rs 12,759.44 crore during the quarter under review from Rs 12,018.61 crore in the corresponding quarter a year ago.

Total expenses rose 4 per cent to Rs 8,455.16 crore in July-September from Rs 8,129.19 crore in the year-ago period.

Shares of ITC on Thursday closed 0.82 per cent lower at Rs 248.95 apiece on the BSE.

### PNB Housing net rises 45%

PNB Housing Finance reported a 45 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 368.8 crore in the second quarter ended September of this fiscal. The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 253 crore in the corresponding July-September period last fiscal. Total income rose to Rs 2,230.34 crore during the quarter under review from Rs 1,808.26 crore a year ago.

Net interest income rose 36 per cent year-on-year to Rs 628.4 crore.

### USL net down 28.6%

Liquor major United Spirits Ltd (USL) reported a 28.59 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 157.6 crore for the second quarter ended September on consumption slowdown and liquidity challenges. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 220.7 crore in the July-September period last fiscal. Its revenue from operations rose 2.26 per cent to Rs 7,299.9 crore during the quarter.

### Praj Industries net up 81%

The Pune-based Praj Industries, the global biofuels technology and renewable energy firm, has reported 81.2 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 16.1 crore. The revenue was up 17.2 per cent at Rs 294.1 crore versus Rs 251 crore in the same quarter last year.

—FC BUREAU

# Audi drives in all-new A6 luxury sedan

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, OCT. 24

Audi, India's third biggest German luxury car maker, on Thursday introduced the much awaited eighth generation all new Audi A6 sedan to take on archrivals Mercedes-Benz, BMW, Jaguar Land Rover, Volvo Cars and Lexus in Asia's third biggest economy.

Priced between Rs 54.20 lakh and Rs 59.20 lakh at pan India showroom, news A6

takes on the likes of the BMW 5 Series, Mercedes-Benz E-class and the Jaguar XF.

The A6 costs about Rs 4 lakh more than its predecessor, and it is also priced just below rivals like the Mercedes E-Class, BMW 5 Series and Jaguar XF to entice buyers.

In fact, the A6 sedan is the German car-maker's first all-new product in the

40,000 luxury car unit Indian market in over a year.

The new A6 model is available in two variants—Premium Plus and Technology—and comes with a petrol engine only.

Powered by the 2.0-litre turbo-petrol engine, it generates 245 hp and 370 Nm of torque propelling the car from 0-100 kmph in 6.8 seconds.

The engine comes paired to a 7-speed dual-clutch automatic gearbox as standard.

The fully connected, comfortable, sporty and elegantly sculptured new A6 is now available across Audi dealerships in the country.

"With the launch of the new Audi A6, we are presenting the eighth generation of the successful full size sedan that brings numerous innovations to the segment," Babir Singh Dhillon, Head of Audi India, said.



# The 'choice' factor in startup valuations

ANUJ BALI

Steep start-up valuations have become a global concern, with many stocks disappointing investors post-IPO. Many believe the valuations often do not commensurate with a start-up's competitive market share, size, pricing, customer base and growth rate. What shakes the very foundation of a fair valuation is misleading accounting reporting structures and presentation of accounts.

In India, the accounting regulatory bodies have laid down certain principles for presentation of accounts for consistent analysis and to present a true and fair view of a company's books for shareholders and other stakeholders. But there is scope for manipulation of this if not carefully scrutinised.

It is noticed that certain regulations have been tweaked by startups to their advantage for securing funds from investors. In such cases, investors end up losing their money.

Collectively, more than 27 Indian Accounting Standards prescribed by the ICAI attempt to ensure truthful, consistent and fair presentation of incomes, expenses, assets and payables. These have been, to a large extent, embraced by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, thereby imposing compliance to these standards for consistent reporting for all.

However, due diligence exercise by investors primarily focuses on the numbers presented, not on the accounting principles followed in the recognition of revenue, expenses and capitalisation.

Globally, more than 20 per cent of the companies have seen a sharp decline in their overall valuation owing to irregular and inconsistent reporting methodologies. This has been observed at later stages than the early stage, which points to the fact that these deficiencies get highlighted on professional scrutiny. One reason for this is that most accounting principles that are mandatory are applicable to bigger sized companies only, hence the reporting of certain heads becomes mandatory only in later stages.

Revenue recognition principles for sale of goods, rendering of services and proportionate completion of work have certain rules to be followed as per Indian Accounting Standard 9. But this is applicable primarily for companies with more than Rs 50 crore turnover. Others, may adopt a different approach that suits them.

More than \$4.88 billion has been invested in the first half of 2019 in Indian startups. But a shift has been observed in the investment pattern—from investing into pre-revenue to revenue-earning startups. This makes reporting and presentation of financials all the more critical in decision-making. Any startup with a less than a certain threshold limit of turnover has the elasticity of "choosing" the reporting methodology. Investors have to be aware of this.

(The author is Founder, Anbac Advisors)





# Conspiracy

### The PML-N said the government was delaying treatment to Nawaz Sharif as part of a campaign against him and his family



### I denounce, in front of the Bolivian people that a coup d'etat is in progress

— Evo Morales on Bolivia situation

## Imran Khan vows not to resign

Islamabad: A defiant Imran Khan has vowed not to step down as Pakistan Prime Minister despite the opposition mounting pressure on him and dismissed the next week's planned mega sit-in as agenda-driven, saying it has sent a wave of joy in India. The Azadi March in Islamabad on October 31 will be led by Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) chief Fazlur Rehman. All major opposition parties including the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz of jailed former prime minister Nawaz Sharif and the Pakistan Peoples Party of former president Asif Ali Zardari have announced their support. Fazl has demanded Khan's resignation, alleging that the election held in July, 2018 was rigged to help his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf party. Geo News reported.

## Hong Kong rallies for Catalan leaders

Hong Kong: Hong Kong protesters plan to rally in support of demonstrators pushing for a separate Catalonia in northeastern Spain as a Chinese official denounced months of "mad violence" and forces pushing for independence. The protests in Spain's wealthiest region of Catalonia bear some resemblances to the demonstrations in Chinese-ruled Hong Kong, where millions have taken to the streets for five months to vent their anger over what they see as Beijing's tightening grip on the city. Most protesters want greater democracy, among other demands, although a small minority is calling for independence, a red line for Communist Party leaders. "It has become more and more clear that it is not a peaceful demonstration at all, but a violent crime that is mad," said Xie Feng, the Commissioner for the Chinese Foreign Minister.

## ZUCKERBERG DEFENDS FB'S CURRENCY

Washington: Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg endured hours of prickly questioning from lawmakers as he defended the company's new globally ambitious project to create a digital currency while also dealing with widening scrutiny from US regulators. The immediate focus of the hearing by the House Financial Services Committee was the project for the currency, to be called Libra. Zuckerberg took pains to reassure lawmakers that he wouldn't allow Facebook to move forward without explicit approval from all US financial regulators. Members of the House Financial Services committee were not convinced. Rep. Maxine Waters, the California Democrat who chairs the House Financial Services Committee, said that Facebook's cryptocurrency project Libra "create many concerns" and argued that maybe Facebook should be broken up. On the Republican side, Rep. Ann Wagner of Missouri asked Zuckerberg why several high-profile corporations have recently departed the Libra project. Zuckerberg, momentarily at a loss for words, noted that "it's a risky enterprise". While the hearing is focused on the digital currency, the full range of Facebook's policies, conduct and market dominance is attracting congressional attention. It's the Facebook chief's first testimony to Congress. The company 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.

# Trump impeachment disrupted

## Ukrainian Prez faced pressure from Trump, Dems target December

Washington, Oct. 24: A US House of Representatives impeachment inquiry devolved into chaos as Republican lawmakers, encouraged by President Donald Trump to get tougher in fighting Democratic efforts to impeach him over dealings with Ukraine, stormed into a high-security hearing room and delayed testimony by a witness.

The more than two dozen Republican lawmakers, who were not authorized to attend the hearing, entered before Laura Cooper, the US defence official who oversees Ukraine and Russia matters, was due to testify behind closed doors before Republican and Democratic lawmakers. The Republicans yelled complaints that the Democrats in charge of the inquiry were conducting it in private, lawmakers and aides said. Republicans who are members of the three congressional committees conducting the inquiry have taken part in the process throughout. After a delay of about four hours, Cooper began her testimony. It was a dramatic confrontation in the House of Representatives inquiry that threatens Republican Trump's presidency even as he seeks re-election next year. Democrats are investigating whether there are grounds to impeach Trump over his July 25 request in a phone call to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskiy to investigate a domestic political rival, former Vice President Joe Biden. Biden is a front-runner for the 2020 Democratic presidential nomination. Federal election law prohibits candidates from accepting foreign help in an election. The content of the phone call was revealed by a whistleblower complaint against Trump by a person in a US intelligence agency. The top Republicans on the three committees sent



### UKRAINIAN PREZ Volodymyr Zelenskiy felt pressure from Trump months before July call on Biden investigation

a letter to House Intelligence Committee Chairman Adam Schiff calling on him to have the whistleblower testify publicly. They said Schiff had decided that the committees would not hear the whistleblower's testimony. A Schiff spokesman declined to comment. Trump had suggested the person committed treason, leading Democrats to worry that their testimony could put

them at risk of exposure. By having Republican lawmakers barge into the hearing room, Trump's allies sought to put the focus on what they portray as unfair Democratic tactics rather than on the president's conduct. Meanwhile, more than two months before the phone call that launched the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump, Ukraine's newly elected leader was already worried about pressure from the US president to investigate his Democratic rival Joe Biden. Volodymyr Zelenskiy and his group of advisers on May 7 in Kyiv had a three-hour discussion talking about how to navigate the insistence from Trump and his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani for a probe and how to avoid becoming entangled in the American elections. The meeting came before Zelenskiy was inaugurated but about two weeks after Trump called to offer his congratulations on the night of the Ukrainian

leader's April 21 election. The full details of what the two leaders discussed in that phone call are not publicly disclosed. Meanwhile, Democratic lawmakers hope to complete their impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump by year's end and are coalescing around two articles of impeachment, abuse of power and obstruction, lawmakers and aides said. But some Democrats fear that a costly distraction may be the looming battle between the Republican Trump and Congress over funding the government when money runs out for many federal operations on Nov. 21, Democratic aides said. Some Democratic lawmakers said they believed they already had gathered enough evidence from the testimony of current and former US officials to impeach Trump for asking Ukraine to investigate a political rival, Joe Biden, a leading contender for the presidential nomination in 2020. — Reuters

# 16 get death for burning alive teen

Feni, Oct. 24: Sixteen people were sentenced to death on Thursday for burning alive a Bangladeshi teenager who refused to withdraw sexual assault charges against her head teacher. The case highlights what activists say is a culture of impunity over sexual violence in the South Asian country of 168 million people, as well as abuse of power and influence in around 20,000 seminars that educate mostly poor and rural students. Nusrat Jahan Rafi was doused in kerosene and set on fire on April 6 after she made a sexual harassment complaint against the principal of her rural Islamic seminary. The head teacher, who a court in the southern coastal town of Feni found had ordered the brutal killing from jail after being arrested over the harassment claim, was among those sentenced to death. Others included activists from the ruling Awami League party and some students — including two females — who either participated in the killing or guarded the gates of the seminary while it took place. "The verdict proves that nobody will get away with murder in Bangladesh. We have the rule of law," prosecutor Hafez Ahmed told reporters at the verdict in a crowded court-



Nusrat Jahan Rafi

room. Rafi was lured to the rooftop of the seminary in Sonagazi where her attackers pressed her to withdraw the complaint she had filed with police. When she refused, she was tied up, doused in kerosene and set on fire. She suffered burns to 80 per cent of her body and died in hospital four days later. Her death triggered widespread horror across the nation, with protesters in the capital Dhaka staging days of demonstrations seeking "exemplary punishment" for the killers. The murder put pressure on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to do more to protect women, with her government ordering some 27,000 schools to set up committees to prevent sexual violence. Rafi had gone to police in late March to report the sexual harassment, and a leaked video shows the local station chief registering her complaint but dismissing it as "not a big deal". — AFP

# Victims in UK truck were chinese: Police

Grays, Oct. 24: British police said on Thursday that 39 people found dead in a truck near London were all believed to be Chinese nationals, in a case that has triggered national outrage over the human trafficking business. Emergency workers discovered the bodies early on Wednesday inside the refrigerated container of a truck parked in an industrial area east of London, shortly after it had arrived on a ferry from Belgium. Police are conducting the country's largest murder probe in more than a decade into what Prime Minister Boris Johnson described as an 'unimaginable tragedy'.

Chinese authorities had read the reports with a "heavy heart" and were in close contact with police "to seek clarification and confirmation". The deaths echoed the discovery of 58 Chinese immigrants hidden in a Dutch truck in the English port of Dover in 2000. Only two people survived. With the help of immigration officials and the National Crime Agency (NCA), Essex Police are leading the biggest murder probe in Britain since the 2005 London terror attacks that killed 52 people. The force confirmed officers had searched three properties in Northern Ireland overnight in connection with the probe. The addresses are believed to be linked to the arrested truck driver, a 25-year-old man from the province, said the police. — Agencies

Emergency workers discovered the bodies early on Wednesday inside the refrigerated container of a truck parked in an industrial area east of London. Police are conducting the country's largest murder probe in more than a decade into what Prime Minister Boris Johnson described as an 'unimaginable tragedy'.

Chinese nationals, Essex Police said. China's foreign ministry said its embassy staff in London were heading to the scene "to verify this situation". An embassy spokesperson said

Govt. of W.B. Office of the Assistant director of fisheries, Meen Bhawan, Contai, Purba Medinipur. 1. NIT No. WBDOF/DDF/WZ/eNIT-22/2019-20/3rd call Dated : 23.10.2019, Tender ID No : 2019\_DOF\_249817\_1

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer (Project)-I. Shahdara (North) Zone, G.T. Road, Opposite Shyam Lal College, Shahdara, Delhi-110032. NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The online tenders are invited on behalf of the Commissioner, EDMC from the contractors/firms who fulfill the conditions for execution of the following works vide NIT No. : D/EE(PR)-I Shah (N)/19-20/15 dated 22.10.19.

NORTHERN RAILWAY 1st Corrigendum to the Expression of Interest notice no. DY-CE-C-TKJ-ROK-EOI dt. 24.10.2019. Name of work: Notice for Expression of Interest for "Providing proven methodology for analyzing bridge structure for various stresses generated due to continuation of long welded rails over Railway Bridge at Rohtak".

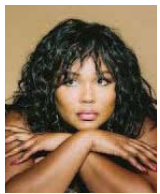
NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE Invitation of tender through E-tendering (E-Procurement Systems). S. No. N.I.T. No. NIT-30-19-20-W-2

EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer M-II/Shah (N) C-12, Yamuna Vihar, Delhi-110053. NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NORTH DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION Office of the Executive Engineer (M-I)-RZ Road No. 44, Village Pitam Pura, Delhi-110034. NOTICE INVITING TENDERS

CAN FIN HOMES LTD. 59-60, 1st Floor, Neelam Bata Road, NIT Faridabad-121001 Email : faridabad@canfinhomes.com. DEMAND NOTICE





## Legal woes

### Singer-rapper Lizzo hits back at the plagiarism accusers for her song, *Truth Hurts*, with legal action



I do intermittent fasting, so there's no food in morning. Just green juice & coffee.

— Jennifer Aniston, American actress

## IN BRIEF

### Chazelle & Hamilton expecting 1st child

Los Angeles: Filmmaker Damian Chazelle and wife Olivia Hamilton are set to welcome their first child together. The news was shared by Hamilton, 32, on Instagram where she recently posted photos from her trip to Rattlesnake Canyon with Chazelle. On Tuesday, Hamilton shared a photo with friends Lauren Rodman and Yas Yeganeh placing their hands over her glowing baby bump. "Magic hour with magic humans," she captioned the image. Chazelle, 34, and Hamilton got married in September 2018. — PTI

### French media to drag Google to court

Paris: French media firms said Thursday that they would drag Google before the country's competition regulator over its refusal to pay for displaying their content in search results, setting up a legal fight over a new EU copyright law. The APIG press alliance, which groups dozens of national and regional newspapers, said it would also press the French government to take action against the US internet giant. "We are outraged," said Jean-Michel Baylet, APIG president. — AFP



### Samuel comes to Tarantino's rescue

Los Angeles: Actor Samuel Jackson defended Quentin Tarantino over usage of N-word in his films. Jackson, who featured in the documentary *QT8: The First Eight*, questioned the double standards in outrage against the use of the slur. "You take 12 years a slave. Steve McQueen is different than Quentin. When you have a song that says (N-word) in it 300 times nobody says s\*\*t. So it's ok for Steve McQueen to use (N-word) because he's artistically attacking the system and the way people feel, but Quentin is just doing it to just strike the blackboard with his nails. That's not true..." he said. — PTI

### MIRREN ONCE SECRETLY TOOK MOMOA'S PHOTO

Los Angeles: Veteran Helen Mirren has said that she once secretly clicked a photo of the *Aquaman* star Jason Momoa aboard a plane. The 74-year-old actor shared the incident during her appearance on CBS chat show *The Talk*. "I had secretly sort of done something rather uncool on an airplane. I didn't know him at all at that point. "He was with his beautiful wife (Lisa Bonet) and my heart just went... I was with my husband (Taylor Hackford), but my heart just went, "Oh my God, that is just the most beautiful man I have ever seen in my life," Mirren recalled. The veteran star said she was "floored" by the personality of the actor and it prompted her to take his photo without his knowledge. "Oh my God, he was so gorgeous," she said. But fate was not yet done with the actor as she was asked to present an award with Momoa during the Oscars this year. "When they said, "Would you like to present with Jason?" I thought, "My dream has come true," Mirren said. — PTI



Helen Mirren

# Pak #MeToo: Director says media tycoon raped him

## Rocks Pak social media with tweets describing 13-year-old assault

Islamabad: Acclaimed Pakistani filmmaker Jamsheed Mahmood Raza has added new momentum to the country's fledgling #MeToo movement after airing allegations that he was raped by an unnamed media tycoon.

The director, who is popularly known as Jami, rocked Pakistani social media over the weekend after he published several tweets describing the alleged assault that happened 13 years ago.

"Why I'm so strongly supporting #metoo? cuz I know exactly how it happens now, inside a room then outside courts inside courts and how a survivor hides confides cuz I was brutally raped by a very powerful person in our media world," he wrote Sunday evening. The tweets were in response to a backlash online after a professor in the eastern city of Lahore committed suicide after allegedly being falsely accused of sexual harassment. Amid the backlash, Jami pleaded with social media users to



Jamsheed Mahmood Raza

trust victims of sexual assault and avoid ignoring their accusations.

"I told my few close friends but no one took it seriously," added Jami, whose 2015 film *Moor (Mother)* was a massive hit.

The filmmaker has so far refused to name the tycoon allegedly behind the assault, while the allegations have unleashed a torrent of differing reactions online. "@jamiizaad I see you. I hear you. I stand with you. Always," tweeted popular actress Meesha Shafi — who helped kickstart Pakistan's #MeToo movement in 2018 after accusing a popular singer in the country of harassment — on Thursday.

## McGowan files lawsuit against Harvey Weinstein

Los Angeles: Actor Rose McGowan has filed a lawsuit against disgraced Hollywood producer Harvey Weinstein over alleged attempts of silencing her. McGowan was one of the first women to speak up about Weinstein's alleged history of sexual harassment and abuse incidents in the year 2017. In her lawsuit, which also targets attorneys David Boies and Lisa Bloom. She said the producer tried to dis-



Rose McGowan and Harvey Weinstein

credit her after she accused him of rape. "This case is about a diabolical effort by one of America's most powerful men and his representatives to silence sexual assault victims," the documents filed in LA court stated. — PTI

suffering by both #metoo & misuse of #MeToo," wrote Ali Raj.

"#MeToo and #Timesup campaigns have gone global since allegations of sexual misconduct by Harvey Weinstein in 2017, sparking an avalanche of accusations against other powerful men. — AFP

## NEWS NUGGETS

### HK BIZMAN PAYS \$1M FOR PARKING SPACE

Hong Kong: Hong Kong might be heading for recession after months of violent protests but that hasn't stopped one businessman from forking out almost \$1 million for a parking spot.

The mind-boggling sum paid by Johnny Cheung highlights the gaping inequality that has helped fuel nearly five months of demonstrations in the financial hub, where one in five people live below the poverty line. The HK\$7.6m (\$9,70,000) price tag is more than 30 times the average annual wage in HK and about same as a one-bed apartment in London's plush Chelsea area. It is situated in The Centre, the city's fifth-highest skyscraper, which hit headlines in October 2017 when it became the world's most expensive office building. After HK's richest man sold it for over \$5bn. — AFP

### 500 YEARS ON, DA VINCI SHINES AT THE LOUVRE

Paris: Leonardo da Vinci is the star in a blockbuster retrospective opening Thursday at the Louvre museum in Paris to mark 500 years since the death of the Renaissance master. Some 2,40,000 people have already reserved their place in line for the exhibition, the biggest ever organised to showcase the Tuscan polymath's indelible contributions to



### IRAN TV AIRS INTERVIEW WITH JAILED INSTA STAR

Tehran: Iranian state television has aired an interview with an Instagrammer famous for drastically altering her appearance through plastic surgery to look like a zombie and arrested for alleged "blasphemy".

The social media celebrity known as Sahar Tabar was arrested on the orders of Tehran's Islamic guidance court on October 5 after "numerous requests from the public" for her to be detained, the broadcaster said.

She faces charges including blasphemy, inciting violence, gaining income through inappropriate means and encouraging corruption among the young. — AFP



humanity — with an emphasis on his painting.

A decade in the planning, the show simply titled *Leonardo da Vinci* groups 162 works, including 24 drawings loaned by Queen Elizabeth II of Britain from the Royal Collection. — AFP



Adult film actress Sophie Dee at the world premiere of *LadyKillerTV* at the Brenden Theatres inside Palms Casino Resort in Las Vegas, Nevada on Wednesday. — AFP

# Dogs show nose for archaeology, help find ancient tombs

London: The scent-tracking abilities of trained dogs have helped archaeologists discover iron age tombs in Croatia dating back nearly three thousand years.

The dogs sniffed out burial chests containing human bones and artefacts in a hilltop fort in the Velebit mountains along the Adriatic coast. Experts have said that using dogs could be a good way to identify archaeological sites, as it is less destructive than many traditional methods, the *Guardian* reported.

"Dogs' noses obviously don't make mistakes," said Vedrana Glavaš, an associate professor of archaeology at the University of Zadar in Croatia and the lead author of the study, which was published in the *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*.

Glavaš had already found a few tombs in a necropolis near the prehistoric hilltop fort of Drvišica, which dates back to the eighth century BC. Hoping to find more, she contacted Andrea Pintar, a trainer who works with dogs used for sniffing out graves in criminal investigations.

Pintar brought Belgian malinois and German shepherds to the remote site in 2015.

Glavaš first sent the dogs to graves they had dug up the previous year

## The dogs sniffed out burial chests containing human bones and artefacts in a hilltop fort in the Velebit mountains along the Adriatic coast

but which were not apparent, without telling the trainers the location.

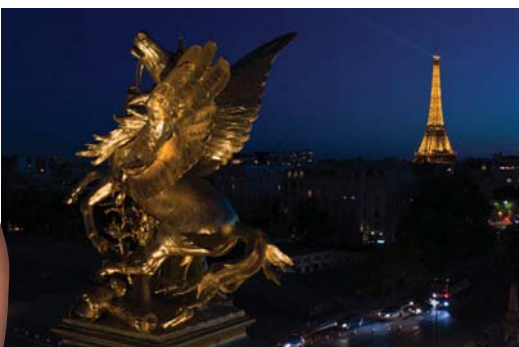
"We always use at least two dogs to confirm the position," Glavaš said, adding that the second trainer and dog were not told where the first dog and trainer had indicated a grave.

The canines discovered all three graves, even though the human remains, associated artefacts and surrounding soil had been removed. The area had also been exposed to wind, sun and rain since the excavation.

Glavaš said the porous rock around the excavated soil had probably absorbed enough of the aroma of decomposition that the dogs could still detect it. Glavaš then let the dogs loose in an area they suspected more remains could be found, and excavated six new tombs — five of which are described in the recent paper.

The dogs were extremely accurate in every case. The tombs consist of small stone burial chests. — Agencies

Lily Aldridge (left) and model Georgia Fowler attends the world premiere of *Very Ralph* at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City on Wednesday. — AFP



The gilded bronze statue of the French sculptor Pierre Granet "La Renommée au Combat" depicting a woman holding a winged horse at night with the Eiffel Tower in the background in Paris. — AFP



Meerkats inspect a pumpkin in their enclosure of the zoo in Hanover, northern Germany on Thursday days before Halloween. — AFP

# In land of patriarchy, Afghan girls create their superheroes

Herat, Afghanistan: Like the princess who hops over goblins and throws daggers at evil wizards in the video game they built, a team of women coders in patriarchal Afghanistan wants to inspire a generation of girls to smash obstacles.

The young women are part of an after-school training programme called Code to Inspire in the western city of Herat, where they learn tech skills and create games and apps to educate girls across Afghanistan and beyond. Their highest-profile success has been this year's release of "Afghan Hero Girl", built over six months by 12 young women, a phone



Afghan students attend a class at the Code to Inspire school in Herat. — AFP

app in which a princess wearing a green veil leaps around a crumbling castle in a quest to defeat a wizard and rescue her family.

Fereshteh Forough, a computer science teacher and a former refugee who founded Code to Inspire in 2015, said students were sick of the lack of female

representation in the gaming industry and told her they were bored of "playing games where men are superheroes".

The game represents "the challenges and obstacles that women are facing every day in Afghanistan and despite all the backlashes they keep fighting and going through it." Forough, who is now based in New York, said in an email exchange with AFP.

In a country where girls often have limited educational opportunities, internet access is patchy and women face deeply ingrained discrimination, Forough sees tech skills as having a transformative potential. — AFP

# Jordan urged to stop imprisoning women for defying wishes of men

London: Amnesty International has called on Jordan to end what it has described as an abusive system that jails women if they disobey their male "guardians" or have relationships deemed inappropriate.

Despite recent efforts to give women better protections, Amnesty said in a new report published on Wednesday that Jordan still allows the arbitrary detention of women, including when male family members — usually fathers or brothers — complain to the authorities that they have been absent without permission.

Report accuses Jordan of applying 'coercive power to reinforce male guardianship, colluding with males to ensure male control' over women

In Jordan, women require permission from a male guardian to get married if they are under 30 and sex outside marriage is punishable by up to 3 years in prison

Under the male "guardianship" system, which Amnesty said is at the centre of a web of discriminatory provisions, men are empowered to control "women's lives and limit their personal freedoms", while women could be subjected to degrading practices such as "virginity tests", aimed

at determining whether they've had sex outside marriage, the *Guardian* reported.

The report accuses Jordan of applying "coercive and penal power to reinforce male guardianship, effectively colluding with male guardians to ensure male control" over women. Women can also

# Thai king dismisses 6 palace officials for misconduct

Bangkok: The Thai King has fired six palace officials for "severe disciplinary misconduct," only days after stripping his royal consort of her titles and military ranks, CNN reported.



Thai King

According to two official notices from the Thai Royal Household on Wednesday, King Maha Vajiralongkorn dismissed six officials and stripped them of their ranks. They range from officials in the police and army, to a "khun ying," or a lady in the Royal Household.

Among those dismissed is Sakolke Chantra, a high-ranking police lieutenant general of Royal Household Bureau.

"His Majesty the King's order accused them of severe disciplinary misconduct and exploiting their bureaucratic position for personal gains," the palace statement read.

These dismissals are the latest development in a turbulent week at the palace. On Tuesday, the King stripped his royal consort of her titles for being "disloyal" only three months after she was anointed. Sineenat had been bestowed the title of royal consort on July 28, the first woman to be given the rank by a King in nearly a century — but palace announcement on Tuesday accused her of trying to obstruct the King's wife from being crowned queen. — Agencies



# DELHI SPECIAL

NEW DELHI FRIDAY 25 OCTOBER 2019

DELHI AGE

Matinee

24

Kiara starts shooting for *Indoo Ki Jawaani*



SPORT | Cricket

Captain Kohli looks forward to Dada time

14



SPORT | Basketball

Irving's 50 points not enough in Brooklyn Nets debut

15



## GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

1 Which philosopher produced "Essay Concerning Human Understanding" in 1690?

- Sir Isaac Newton
- John Locke
- David Hume

2 In 1154, Henry II became the first English sovereign from which House?

- Norman
- Tudor
- Plantagenet

3 What name is given to the line in the Scottish Highlands that runs from Inverness to Thurso and Wick?

- The Far North Line
- The Grampian Line
- The Highland Line

## SHORT TAKES

### Maharatna status for Powergrid

**New Delhi:** The Power Grid Corporation of India Limited has been conferred with the Maharatna status by the Government of India, Union minister of state for power, new and renewable energy R.K. Singh announced at the 30th Raising Day celebrations of the company in New Delhi on Wednesday. The Maharatna status provides enhanced powers to the board of Powergrid to facilitate expansion of operations, both in domestic as well as global markets. Powergrid, the third largest CPSE in India, is also the third largest transmission company globally. It has been recognised as "fastest growing electric utility in Asia Pacific" successively for the last six years, since 2014.

### Mobile of woman scribe snatched

**New Delhi:** A man snatched the mobile phone of a 45-year-old female journalist, working with an English newspaper, in central Delhi's Daryaganj area on Thursday morning, barely 100 metre away from Daryaganj police station. The police said that the incident happened when the victim, was travelling in auto-rickshaw from Daryaganj to Connaught Place when near 24x7 store a man snatched her Samsung A-50 phone. The victim and the auto-rickshaw driver ran behind the snatcher but before the Delhi Gate traffic signal the snatcher managed to flee, said the police. A case under relevant section of Indian Penal Code (IPC) has been registered at Daryaganj police station. Police teams are scanning CCTV footages in the area to identify and nab the culprit, said a police official.

### Man killed by unknown vehicle

**New Delhi:** A man was killed after a vehicle hit him in northeast Delhi's Khajuri Khas area, police said on Thursday. During patrolling at around 5.45 am, the police team noticed a body lying near the service road in Khajuri Khas, said Ved Prakash Surya, DCP (north-east), adding that skid marks were also present at the spot. The police analysed the CCTV footage and found that the victim was hit by an unknown vehicle, following which a case under sections 279 (rash driving) and 304A (causing death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered. Efforts are being made to identify the victim and the vehicle, the DCP said.

## Poll effect: City BJP keen to woo back traditional voters

Saffron party failed to win support of Punjabi, baniya voters after 1993

SHASHI BHUSHAN  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

The outcome of the Haryana Assembly elections has set the Delhi unit of the BJP thinking on how to woo back its traditional voters to ensure the party's victory in the coming elections.

The party has been out of power in Delhi since 1998. The saffron party, which first rode to power in 1993 with the support of the Punjabi and baniya voters, had failed to retain its traditional vote bank and was reduced to just three seats in the 70-member Assembly in the 2015 elections.

A senior party leader told this newspaper that from the poll outcome in Haryana and Maharashtra, it is clear that any imbalance in the traditional vote bank will not give the desired results to any political outfit. "Initial analysis shows that Jats and Marathas have voted against us in Haryana and Maharashtra. In the last couple of years, the party leadership has not focused

▶ BJP has been out of power in Delhi since 1998. It first rode to power in 1993 with the support of Punjabi and baniya voters, but failed to retain its traditional vote bank and was reduced to just three seats in the 70-member Assembly in the 2015 elections.

▶ BJP has so far not paid much attention to its erstwhile traditional vote bank in Delhi. A party leader suggested that the saffron leadership must woo Poorvanchalis but at the same time make serious attempts to win back the Punjabi and baniya voters.

much on its traditional support base of Punjabi and Baniya (traders) voters in the national capital. Instead, the party's focus has been on wooing only the Poorvanchali voters," he said.

"Everyone is important and the party must make inroads into the new vote bank. The message from the outcome of the two state Assembly elections is loud and clear that one should not stray away from its traditional support base," the senior party leader added.

Another senior saffron leader said that Congress

has already appointed Subhash Chopra, a Punjabi, as its Delhi unit president and cricketer-turned-politician Kirti Azad, a Poorvanchali, as the head of its campaign committee to woo traditional and new voters.

However, things are quite different with BJP, which has so far not paid much attention to its erstwhile traditional vote bank of Punjabis and Baniyas in Delhi.

A party leader suggested that the saffron leadership must woo Poorvanchalis but at the same time make serious attempts to win

back the trust of the Punjabi and baniya communities.

"Leaders from the Punjabi and Baniya community must be promoted and given key role in the organisational set-up along with the Poorvanchalis," he added.

Concerned over the disgruntled Jat community, which voted against the party in Haryana, a senior party leader from South Delhi said that if the community does not vote in its favour, it will be very difficult to win the Jat-dominated seats like Mundka, Najafgarh, Narela, Bawana, Kirari, Nangloi Jat, Vikaspuri, Matiala, Bijwasan, Mehrauli, R.K. Puram and Rithala.

The BJP had failed to win even a single Assembly constituency dominated by the Jats in the 2015 polls. "If we fail to woo back the Jat community, it will weaken our chances to return to power after two decades. Now, it is necessary to win back all the traditional voters of the city," a BJP MP said.

## 4 DU students beaten up by bouncers at cafe

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

Four students of Delhi University's law faculty were allegedly beaten up by bouncers at a cafe over raising the volume of music in Northwest Delhi's Mukherjee Nagar area, the police said on Thursday.

The injured have been identified as Samar, Mukul, Abhigyan, and Mayank, all hailing from the Purvanchal area.

Samar and his friends had gone to a cafe in Hudson Lane on Wednesday evening to celebrate his birthday.

During the celebration, a scuffle broke out between the victims and bouncers of the cafe for raising the volume of music, following which the accused started beating them, a senior police officer said.

"Based on the complaint of Samar, a case



DU students sit on a dharna

under Sections 323 (punishment for voluntarily causing hurt), 341 (punishment for wrongful restraint) and 34 (acts done by several persons in furtherance of common intention) was registered at the Mukherjee Nagar police station. The accused have been identified and they will be arrested soon," said DCP (Northwest) Vijayanta Arya.

Former DUSU president Shakti Singh said that some students of the law faculty were having a birthday party at the

Houseful Cafe in Hudson Lane where an altercation broke out over raising the volume of music. Following this, the cafe bouncers thrashed four students severely. The thrashing was so brutal that one of the students, Mayank, had to be referred to RML Hospital.

"Incidents like these are a common sight in the university area where cafe owners and bouncers assault students," Mr Singh said, adding "As initially the authorities failed to deliver justice, we were left with no option but to protest. However, later the police registered a case."

The owner of the cafe did not get the verification of his employees done, including the bouncers. Owing to this, a case has been registered against the cafe owner, the police added.

## Woman, aide held for ₹7 lakh theft

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

A 31-year-old woman and her accomplice were arrested for robbing ₹7 lakh cash and Jewellery from a house in Greater Kailash-II where she used to work as a domestic help.

The accused were identified as Kavita Kumari (name changed), a native of Faridabad, and Ravi Rajbhar (29), a native of Madhubani, Bihar. Stolen cash ₹5,10,520 and jewellery have been recovered from their possession, said DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur.

A complainant reported that he had hired a domestic help 17-18 months ago. On October 14, his domestic help left the house on the pretext of some emergency.

Soon, the complainant realised that some ornaments and cash, which were kept in the almirah, were missing.

During investigation,

▶ The accused were identified as Kavita Kumari (name changed), a native of Faridabad, and Ravi Rajbhar (29), a native of Madhubani, Bihar.

footages of the CCTV cameras installed in the vicinity of the area were analysed. Further information was received regarding her friend Ravi.

Later, it was revealed that both had fled to Bihar. When the team reached Bihar, it was learnt that the duo had moved towards Delhi. The staff nabbed them from Delhi.

They confessed to committing the theft and were arrested in the case. On questioning, they disclosed that they knew each other for last 6-7 years and owing to their poor financial condition, they had committed the theft.

## SDMC collects ₹21.35L fine, issues 310 challans

**New Delhi, Oct. 24:** Continuing its drive against dust and air pollution, the SDMC has in one day issued 310 challans amounting to ₹21.35 lakh for burning of solid waste, dry leaves and other violations, officials said on Thursday.

In Central Zone, 175 challans were issued amounting ₹10.5 lakh as fine during night patrolling on Wednesday for violations related to solid waste management and pollution-related laws.

The teams looked for violations such as burning of solid waste, garbage, dry leaves, and plastic, rubber, and construction activities.

In Najafgarh Zone, 63 challans have been issued while in the West Zone, 46 were issued. In all, 310 challans amounting to ₹21.35 lakh were issued across the four zones. —PTI



Newly-appointed president of Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee Subhash Chopra and Congress campaign committee chairman Kirti Azad with Congress president Sonia Gandhi at her residence in New Delhi on Thursday.

## Traffic logjam continues as divyangs protest for 2nd day

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

Commuters had to face inconvenience as traffic snarls were reported in Central Delhi, on Thursday, owing to a protest at Mandi House by differently-abled people who had applied for group D jobs with the Railways.

They had staged a protest at Mandi House on Wednesday, demanding that railway officials meet them.

They continued their protest on Thursday. The police had to divert the traffic on the route, which caused jams.

"We have blocked the

▶ Commuters were advised to use Tilak Marg and India Gate to reach Mandi House since Sikandra Road and Bhagwan Das Road had to be closed owing to the protest

Mandi House roundabout area for traffic and the vehicles have been diverted to other routes," a senior traffic police official said.

"Traffic is affected on Vikas Marg from Laxmi Nagar to ITO due to demonstration at the Mandi House. Traffic

coming from Akshardham towards ITO has been diverted towards Geeta Colony," the Delhi traffic police tweeted.

The Bhagwan Das Road is currently closed for traffic and other roads at the roundabout are functioning.

Commuters were advised to use Tilak Marg and India Gate to reach Mandi House since Sikandra Road and Bhagwan Das Road had to be closed owing to the protest.

The agitators blocked the road on Wednesday and said they will end their protest after getting their appointments.

## Lull at Sadar Bazaar as crackers' sale takes a hit

**New Delhi, Oct. 24:** Festivities appear to have peaked in the capital's wholesale market Sadar Bazaar, colourful, glittering and all lit up ahead of Diwali, but it is almost impossible to find any firecrackers.

With Delhi's air quality plummeting to dangerous levels around Diwali every year, the Supreme Court in 2018 banned polluting firecrackers and ordered that only green firecrackers, which cause 30 per cent less pollution, can be manufactured and sold. Narendra Gupta, presi-

dent of the Sadar Bazaar fireworks and general traders association, said only 12 people applied for licences this time out of which seven got the licences this week in the bazaar, which is also the city's largest wholesale market for firecrackers.

"Earlier, around 80 licensed merchants would sell firecrackers. There aren't enough green crackers and varieties in the market. The sales are low. No one is ready to take the risk," he said.

In the nearby Jama Masjid market, several

▶ With Delhi's air quality plummeting to dangerous levels around Diwali every year, the Supreme Court in 2018 had ordered that only green firecrackers can be manufactured and sold

merchants have desisted from selling firecrackers this time. During a spot visit on Wednesday, 10-12 shops were found selling only green firecrackers, with the owners ruing a

drastic dip in sales. "There's only 'anaar' (flowerpot) and 'phuljhari' (sparklers) so far, that too are hard to come by. There is a lack of variety and the stock is limited," said a shopkeeper.

A proprietor at Majestic fireworks alleged "there's a conspiracy to finish the industry". "The crowd of customers has thinned out over the last two years. That's obvious. Why would anyone buy only 'phuljhari' and 'anaar', which are much more expensive than the conventional firecrackers.

The fun of Diwali is lost," he said.

Another merchant at Vishal fireworks said, "We have been selling government-approved green firecrackers only. Despite that, there was a protest by schoolchildren here on Monday."

A buyer said it's good that green crackers are finally available in the market, but they are very costly. "People do not have many options to choose from. The green crackers are almost double the price of conventional ones," he said. —PTI

## THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- The Far North Line
- Plantagenet
- John Locke





Yuvi time

Former India batsman Yuvraj Singh named Maratha Arabians' icon player for the upcoming Abu Dhabi T10 tournament



I have a bit of natural power and I work on that. I love power-hitting. — Shivam Dube after being drafted into the Indian T20 side for the Bangladesh series.

SHORT TAKES

India to face SL in U-19 WC opener

Dubai: Holders India will begin their Under-19 World Cup defence with a clash against Sri Lanka on January 19 at the Mangaung Oval in Bloemfontein, South Africa. Four-time champions India have been grouped alongside New Zealand, Sri Lanka and first-timers Japan in Group 'A' in the tournament, starting on January 17. India will take on Japan and New Zealand on January 21 and 24 respectively in the 16-team tournament, the final of which is scheduled for February 9. Three-time champion Australia will take on West Indies in Group 'B' opening encounter that also features England and debutants Nigeria. Group 'C' will see Pakistan battle alongside Bangladesh, Zimbabwe and Scotland. South Africa will play their opening match against Afghanistan on January 17. — PTI

ECB chief defends 100 tournament

London: England cricket chief Tom Harrison says the controversial Hundred competition will help protect other formats of the game despite fears over its potential impact. The Hundred, starting in 2020, is a new tournament consisting of eight city-based franchises. #StopThe100 trended on Twitter while the draft was taking place and several people were asked to remove "Oppose the 100" T-shirts during an evidence session held by British lawmakers involving England and Wales Cricket Board chairman Harrison and other ECB officials. "The 100 is a really good way of protecting everything that we are serious about. It's about protecting Test match cricket, it's about protecting four-day Championship cricket, it's about getting kids playing more cricket at school," Harrison said. — AFP

GANGULY TO DECIDE ON SELECTORS

New Delhi: The selection committee, headed by M.S.K. Prasad, is nowhere close to completing its tenure as per the new BCCI constitution but new Board President Sourav Ganguly will decide whether the panel completes the mandated five years in office. The selectors' term was four years according to the old constitution but the amended constitution, which has come into effect now, has a provision of a maximum of five-year term. The clause 26(3) of the new constitution states: "No person who has been a member of any Cricket Committee for a total of five years shall be eligible to be a member of any cricket committee." The Prasad (south zone) and Gagan Khoda (central zone) were appointed at the 2015 BCCI Annual General Meeting (AGM) and technically their term would end in September, 2020 as per the new constitution. On the other hand, Jatin Paranjpe (East zone), Sarandeep Singh (North zone) and Devang Gandhi (east zone) have two years left as they started in 2016. The matter is expected to be discussed during BCCI president Sourav Ganguly's meeting with the selectors. There is a clause in the selectors' contract that states that a renewal is required at every AGM. Since there were no AGMs in 2017 and '18 due to the Board being governed by Committee of Administrators, the panel continued. Ganguly has indicated that Prasad and Khoda are set to be replaced while Paranjpe, Gandhi and Sarandeep have a year left. It is believed that Ganguly's statement was based on the old constitution which had provision of a four-year tenure. — PTI

KOHLI GETS A BREAK

Captain asked to put feet up for upcoming Twenty20 series against Bangladesh

Mumbai, Oct. 24: India captain Virat Kohli was on Thursday rested from the upcoming three-match T20 series against Bangladesh while Mumbai all-rounder Shivam Dube was rewarded with a maiden call-up for his "phenomenal" exploits with the India A team.

The prolific Sanju Samson and leg-spinner Yuzvendra Chahal returned to the side for the T20 Internationals.

The 24-year-old Samson from Kerala has played his only T20I, against Zimbabwe in 2015. A regular in the India A set up, Samson has been rewarded for a good Vijay Hazare Trophy season, having amassed 410 runs in eight innings, including a double-century earlier this month.

Dashing all-rounder Hardik Pandya was not discussed in the selection meeting as he underwent a surgery in the UK for a back injury this month, paving the way for the 26-year-old rookie Dube's inclusion in the shortest format.

Dube pipped Vijay Shankar as the second choice all-rounder, primarily based on his big-hitting prowess.

Chairman of selection committee MSK Prasad said, "You can see, earlier we had Hardik Pandya, then we also tried Vijay Shankar. All of us agreed in unison that the role we have, he (Dube) fits in very well."

"He bats aggressively, his performances in the India A Series in West Indies and also against South Africa in the ODIs (for India A) was phenomenal. He has gone up by leaps and bounds, a notch higher and we are convinced about it."

As has been the case in the past, Rohit Sharma will lead the squad in Kohli's absence.

Apart from the three-match T20 series which starts in New Delhi on November 3, followed by matches at Rajkot and Nagpur on November 7 and 10 respectively, Bangladesh will also play two Tests as part of the World Championship, in Indore and Kolkata, from November 14-18 and November 22-26 respectively.

The squad for the Test series against the neighbours remained unchanged after India's 3-0 white-wash of South Africa recently. Left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem, who picked up four wickets on his Test debut against South Africa, was not considered for selection.

Shahbaz, though, was not part of the original squad against the Proteas, coming in as replacement for the injured Kuldeep Yadav ahead of the Ranchi Test. — PTI



Indian cricketer Rohit Sharma (left), captain Virat Kohli, BCCI secretary, Jay Shah, President, Sourav Ganguly and chief selector, MSK Prasad share a light moment during their selection meeting for Bangladesh's tour of India at the BCCI headquarters in Mumbai on Thursday. — BCCI

SQUAD FOR T20I SERIES

Rohit Sharma (captain), Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Sanju Samson, Shreyas Iyer, Manish Pandey, Rishabh Pant (wk), Washington Sundar, Krunal Pandya, Yuzvendra Chahal, Rahul Chahar, Deepak Chahar, Khaleel Ahmed, Shivam Dube & Shardul Thakur.

TEST TEAM

Virat Kohli (captain), Rohit Sharma, Mayank Agarwal, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari, W. Saha (wk), R. Jadeja, R. Ashwin, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Shubman Gill & Rishabh Pant.

ALL EYES ON HAZARE FINAL AS TN TAKE ON KARNATAKA

Mumbai, Oct. 24: The spotlight will be on India players Mayank Agarwal, R. Ashwin and K.L. Rahul when the evenly-matched Karnataka and Tamil Nadu lock horns in the title clash of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Friday.

The Manish Pandey-led Karnataka were convincing in their victories in the knockout games but Tamil Nadu, who dominated the league phase, was a tad lucky as the rain rule allowed them to go past Punjab in the quarter-finals before young M. Shikhar Khan guided them home in the semifinal against Gujarat.

The two sides are equally matched, with a formidable batting line-up and a set of quality bowlers, though the presence of R. Ashwin gives the TN attack more experience and variety.

The Friday's clash will be decided by how the two bowling attacks perform given that both teams have a lot of depth in batting.

The home side has been well served by out-of-favour Test opener K.L. Rahul (546 runs in 10 games), who has come into his own in the quarterfinals and semis and his opening partner Devdutt Padikkal. — PTI

Kohli upbeat about Dada time

Mumbai, Oct. 24: India captain Virat Kohli on Thursday said he is looking forward to a "high-level, professional" discussion with newly-elected BCCI President and former skipper Sourav Ganguly when the two meet to thrash out the way forward for the national cricket team.

After taking charge as BCCI President here on Wednesday, Ganguly had called Kohli the most important man in Indian cricket and said he was there to make life easier for the skipper, not difficult.

"I am going to meet him now. I am looking forward to a good discussion. He is someone who has played a lot of cricket before, who knows the situation we are in, what the team needs, the requirements of Indian cricket," said Kohli at an Audi event here on Thursday.

"So you need a good, professional, high-level discussion. It will be a healthy discussion because I am playing currently and he has played before, there will be an understanding of these things. I have had good discussions in the past with

him and I expect the same this time," he added. One thing Ganguly wants from Kohli is to lead India to trophies in ICC tournaments, something that the country has not done since the Champions Trophy.

On Wednesday, the 47-year-old Ganguly said he has a fair understanding of Kohli and the team's requirements and he was

committed to fulfilling those during his tenure.

WILL BACK PANT, ASSURES MSK

Chief selector M.S.K. Prasad on Wednesday made it clear that they are willing to give Rishabh Pant a long rope, saying Mahendra Singh Dhoni is on the same page with the selection committee's decision to back youngsters.

While Dhoni has made himself unavailable for selection since the 2019 World Cup, the

selection committee on Thursday included Sanju Samson as a back-up wicket-keeper for Pant in India's T20 squad. Prasad said he has already mentioned that it's time to think beyond Dhoni and it reflected in their team selections. "I made it very clear, post World Cup that we are moving on. We are giving opportunities to youngsters and see that they establish themselves in the side. With Rishabh Pant doing so well and Sanju Samson coming into the side, I am sure, you must be understanding our thought process. We definitely had a chat with Dhoni and he also endorses our view of backing youngsters," Prasad said.

Putting his weight firmly behind Pant, Prasad said, "Post World Cup, I have been very clear on this, and now, we have started backing Rishabh Pant," Prasad said. — PTI



Sourav Ganguly and Virat Kohli in this file photo.

BCCI needs to get back its power, says Dhumal

Treasurer wants to keep a tab on rising expenditure

New Delhi, Oct. 24: India not having a "say" in the International Cricket Council is a major concern for newly-appointed BCCI Treasurer Arun Dhumal, who has questioned the very relevance of the world body if it doesn't have the country in a prominent role.

After taking charge under new President — the legendary Sourav Ganguly, Dhumal spoke about his immediate priorities, which include increasing the Board's revenue despite the fact that the BCCI remains the richest body in international cricket.

"Could we have ever imagined that BCCI will not have a say in ICC's roadmap? It was never imagined. What is ICC without BCCI?" asked Dhumal referring to India's absence from the ICC's newly-created working group to chalk out a fresh governance model for the body.

He also made it clear that BCCI is not on board with the ICC as far as the Future Tours Programme (FTP) for the 2023-2031 cycle is concerned. "We are not agreeable to



Arun Dhumal

Could we have ever imagined that BCCI will not have a say in ICC's roadmap? It was never imagined.

— Arun Dhumal, BCCI treasurer on the Board's road map in the ICC

the new proposal of the ICC with regards to increase of tournaments," he said. Dhumal said cutting down on unnecessary expenditure would be high on his priorities. He would look to use that money to improve the financial position of first-class crick-

eters. Dhumal, brother of former BCCI President Anurag Thakur, is "surprised" at the amount of money that has gone into covering legal expenses. Since 2017, the Board was being managed by a Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators, which demitted office on Wednesday.

"My goal is to increase the BCCI revenue as what has happened now is that revenues are stable but expenses have gone up. Administrative and legal expenses need to be checked," Dhumal said.

"There are few other issues that we need to handle including the tax liabilities and issues with the past IPL franchises also need to be addressed," Dhumal said.

He echoed Ganguly's sentiment that first-class cricketers need to be taken care of.

"We need to increase the revenue so that it can benefit first-class cricketers as we would be able to distribute the amount among them. Because they are required to be looked after," he said. — PTI

New Delhi, Oct. 24: The newly appointed BCCI treasurer Arun Dhumal's primary objective is to increase the board's revenue generation by curbing the unnecessary expenditures and instead use that money to improve the financial health of first-class cricketers.

Dhumal, another young face in "Team Sourav Ganguly's cabinet, has been "surprised" at the amount of expenses that had gone up in past few years mainly due to the legal hassles.

"My goal is to increase the BCCI revenue as what has happened now is that revenues are stable but expenses have gone up. Administrative and legal expenses need to be checked," the BCCI treasurer said during an interaction.

"There are few other issues that we need to handle including the tax liabil-

ities and issues with the past IPL franchisees also needs to be addressed," Dhumal said. He echoed president Ganguly's sentiment that first-class cricketers need to be taken care of and hence they need more financial resources.

"We need to increase the revenue so that it can benefit first-class cricketers as we would be able to distribute the amount among them. Because they are required to be looked after," he said.

While they haven't decided on any amount, Dhumal is confident they will have a figure once

there is a meeting of the senior members and Apex Council.

"We need to sit with the president and other senior members of Apex Council and decide on an amount. But it will depend on the quantum of increase in revenues as we have to check how much we are earning from the bilateral and other ICC tournaments," he said.

But one thing Dhumal is hellbent on is to check the undue expenses and said that is something non-negotiable. "Definitely, the legal expenses have shot up in past few years. Not only am I surprised but all the members are surprised with the kind of expenses incurred. This needs to be checked and we will definitely do it."

He also made it clear that BCCI is not on board as far as the FTP for the 2023-2031 is concerned. — PTI

BANGLADESH'S TOUR OF INDIA IS ON TRACK

Dhaka, Oct. 24: Bangladesh cricketers, led by star allrounder Shakib Al Hasan, have called off their strike over pay and benefits after getting assurance from the country's board that all their demands will be met, putting their tour of India back on track.

The deadlock between the players and Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) ended after a two-hour long meeting which went on close to midnight on Wednesday.

The truce means that the team's T20 and Test tour of India, beginning November 3, will go on as per schedule and players will be joining the preparatory camp on Friday.

"As Papon bhai (BCB boss Nazmul Hassan) said, it was a fruitful discussion. He and the rest of the directors assured us that our demands will be met as soon as possible. Based on their assurance, we will start playing the NCL and attend the training camp," Shakib said. — PTI





## Awarded

Los Angeles FC coach Bob Bradley was named MLS Coach of the Year for the third time. LAFC set a new single season points record (72) as well as equalling the goals record (85)

## SWISS | INDOORS

# Roger into 17th Basel quarters

Basel (Switzerland), Oct. 24: Roger Federer crushed Radu Albot 6-0, 6-3 on Wednesday to win his 22nd match in a row at the Swiss Indoors and earn a quarter-final place at his home event for the 17th time.

The nine-time champion was ruthless in a 22-minute opening set, finishing the entire job in 63 minutes in front of 9,000 fans.

He will on Friday face the winner from Stan Wawrinka and Frances Tiafoe, who both earned straight-set wins earlier in the day.

"It's a super feeling to know exactly where the ball is going, what the other guy is doing," said top seed Federer.

"I was hitting a lot of winners, those kind of moments are really rare."

Federer's Swiss compatriot Wawrinka fired 10 aces and 30 winners to overwhelm fellow veteran Pablo Cuevas 6-3, 6-4 to make it into the second round, keeping alive his outside chances of making the ATP Finals.

Federer, who is playing

It's a super feeling to know exactly where the ball is going, what the other guy is doing. I was hitting a lot of winners (against Albot), those kind of moments are really rare.

— ROGER FEDERER  
Tennis star

in Basel for the 19th time, won his first set to love at the tournament since 2006.

His loss of just three games on Wednesday was his most powerful showing on the ATP since beating Andreas Seppi at the Paris Masters 6-1, 6-1 four years ago.

"I'm very happy, it was important to start the second set with a break," said 38-year-old Federer. "Even though I was playing well, I was not overconfident, I was always worried that he might make a comeback."

If Wawrinka beats America's Tiafoe in their second-round match, the Swiss pair will clash in the quarters. — AFP



Switzerland's Roger Federer acknowledges the crowd after beating Moldova's Radu Albot. — AFP

# Wolves net win

## Irving's 50 points not enough in Brooklyn Nets debut

New York, Oct. 24: Kyrie Irving dazzled in his Brooklyn debut, but his 50 points weren't enough as the Nets fell 127-126 in overtime to the Minnesota Timberwolves in their NBA season-opener.

"Outstanding," was the verdict of Nets coach Kenny Atkinson. "Great debut for him."

Irving, whose arrival from the Boston Celtics as a free agent helped stamp the Nets as contenders this season, opened the night with an emotional address to fans in Brooklyn -- not far from where he grew up in New Jersey.

"I'm eternally grateful to be here, be back home in front of you guys with my teammates," Irving said, choking up at one point.

But it was the Timberwolves who jumped out to the faster start, leading by as many as 18 in the second quarter.

Then came Irving, who scored 13 points in the fourth quarter. His step-back three put Brooklyn up 115-112 with 1:16 left in regulation, but Karl Anthony Towns -- who led Minnesota with 36 points and 14 rebounds -- answered with a three-pointer as they went to overtime.

They traded the lead five times in the extra period, two driving baskets from Andrew Wiggins giving the Timberwolves a 127-124 lead.

Irving sank two free throws, but with the ball in his hands for a potential game-winner he lost his balance, recovered and kept the play alive but missed the final shot.



Kyrie Irving (right) of the Brooklyn Nets guards Treveon Graham of the Minnesota Timberwolves as he dribbles the ball during the second half of their game at Barclays Center on Wednesday. — AFP

Irving finished without a turnover and broke the previous record of 47 for most points by a player in his first game with an NBA team.

"It's a great starting point," Irving said. "Obviously you wanted to come out and get a win in front of our home crowd, but we've got another chance on Friday."

The Celtics' post-Irving life began with a 93-107

loss to the 76ers in Philadelphia.

Ben Simmons, who opted not to play for Australia in the World Cup to focus on his preparations for the season, led the Sixers with 24 points, eight rebounds and nine assists.

Five 76ers in double figures included Joel Embiid, who took a beating on the way to 15 points and 13 rebounds.

Al Horford added 16 points for Philadelphia. Gordon Hayward led the Celtics with 25 points. Jayson Tatum had 21 and Kemba Walker added 12.

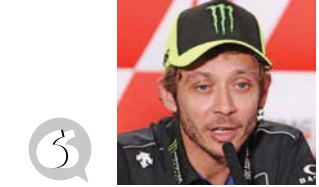
## Washington shines

Charlotte rookie PJ Washington, the 12th overall pick in the draft in June, made a splashy debut, scoring 27 points to help the Hornets to a nail-

bitting 126-125 victory over the Chicago Bulls.

Hornets coach James Borrego gave Washington the start in his first NBA game, saying he'd seen in the pre-season that the first-year player isn't afraid of the big moment.

Washington justified that faith, making his first three shots -- all from three-point range. He made seven of 11 from three-point range. — AFP



It's good to make 400 here in Phillip Island because it is an iconic place for motorsport.

— Motorcycle driver Valentino Rossi ahead of Austrian GP

## SHORT TAKES

### Beverley fined \$25K by NBA

Los Angeles: Los Angeles Clippers guard Patrick Beverley was fined \$25,000 by the NBA on Wednesday for hurling the ball into the stands at the finish of his team's season-opening victory Tuesday. Beverley was standing next to a referee after the Clippers defeated the Los Angeles Lakers 112-102. But instead of handing the official the ball after the final seconds expired, Beverley hurled the ball a considerable distance into the spectator area. The fine on Beverley marked the first fine or punishment of any sort imposed by the league following the start of the 2019-20 campaign. The 31-year-old American had 10 rebounds and six assists for the Clippers despite a 1-for-7 shooting performance for two points against the Lakers. Beverley played in Ukraine, Greece and Russia after college before joining the Houston Rockets in 2013 and spending four seasons with the club before being traded to the Clippers as part of a deal that brought Chris Paul to the Rockets. — AFP

### Hope And Glory wins Delhi races

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 24

Hope And Glory wins the Champion Sprinters Cup, the main event at the Delhi races here on Thursday.

#### RESULTS

1st race: The Flying Brave Plate (1000 mts)  
1. Master Badal, 2. Artaxias, 3. Darjeeling

2nd race: The Taurian Plate (1000 mts)  
1. Mister Stunner, 2. Powerhaus, 3. Master Jefferson

3rd race: The Cellin Dion Plate (1400mts)  
1. Responsibleforlove, 2. Jungle Wave, 3. Seahorse

4th race: The Champion Sprinters Cup (1200mts)  
1. Hope And Glory, 2. Organic, 3. Master Cristiano

5th race: The Romantic Hero Plate (1200mts)  
1. Mighty, 2. Ashwa Maithili, 3. Fly Away

6th race: The Desert Eagle Plate (1100mts)  
1. Forever Yours, 2. Miss Blue Fairy, 3. Imbali

## WORLD CUP NEXT FOR CHINA?

Shanghai: China, the world's second-biggest economy, is becoming increasingly influential in football under Xi Jinping, a known fan of the game. He and Gianni Infantino met last week. Xi and his communist government's stated aim is for the country of 1.4 billion to host and eventually win a World Cup. A bid for the 2030 World Cup has long been mooted. Mark Dreyer, a Beijing-based expert on China's sports industry, said that the country has a proven track record in staging major sporting events and views a World Cup as the ultimate aim. But Dreyer, founder of the China Sports Insider website, added: "I worry from China's perspective whether the other competing bids (for 2030) will use this (hosting the Club World Cup) against China and say they already have something from FIFA and have rewarded the country for its financial support, so give the World Cup to someone else." Infantino largely dodged questions that could be raised over China's human rights record as a result of the Club World Cup decision. He was also asked by AFP whether players coming to China may have to self-censor. "Everyone can say what they want," he said. "As far as we are concerned, we are trying to use football as a catalyst for positive, and never for negative," he added. — AFP

## MOTOR RACING

# Hamilton doubts title chance

Mexico City, Oct. 24: If things go his way, Lewis Hamilton can clinch his sixth drivers' world title triumph in the rarefied atmosphere of the Mexican Grand Prix this weekend.

It would be a monumental achievement, nudging him ahead of five-time champion Juan Fangio and making him the second most successful driver in Formula One history behind only Michael Schumacher whose seven titles between 1994 and 2004 remain the pinnacle.

The 34-year-old Englishman, though, holds out little hope of either winning the race at a venue ill-suited to the strengths of his Mercedes car or sealing the title.

"Mexico is generally our worst race of the year because of the way our car is set up and it's going to be a tough one for us," said Hamilton.

History shows that this is one of his least favoured tracks -- he has won just once, in 2016, in four races although he



Lewis Hamilton spars with Mexican former boxing champion Julio Cesar Chavez in a promo event. — AP

did enough in 2017 and 2018 to secure the world titles in Mexico.

Hamilton, who leads the championship by 64 points with four races, including Mexico still to come, knows he can take a cautious approach without scrapping for victory on Sunday.

He will secure the title by out-scoring his Mercedes team-mate Valtteri Bottas, who lies second, by at least 14

points. But he accepts that the Finn will be a very competitive rival and unlikely to wave him through to the chequered flag.

## Resurgent Ferrari

Both the in-form Ferrari team and Red Bull, for whom Max Verstappen will hope to complete a hat-trick of Mexican victories after his wins in

2017 and 2018, have high hopes of success at a track where Mercedes have admitted they expect to struggle.

Although Mercedes completed a record sixth consecutive constructors' and drivers' championship double at the Japanese Grand Prix earlier this month, the team have been overhauled by Ferrari, in terms of pure speed and performance, since the Belgian GP.

Charles Leclerc won in Belgium, where Ferrari began a run of five successive pole positions.

That domination yielded three victories, two for Leclerc and one for four-time champion Sebastian Vettel, and two opportunities lost due to mistakes and misfortunes.

"After two races in which we could have done better, we arrive in Mexico determined to win. We will be aiming for our sixth consecutive pole, before looking to convert that into victory," said Ferrari team chief Mattia Binotto. — AFP

## RICCIARDO AND HULKENBERG DISQUALIFIED

Paris, Oct. 24: Renault drivers Daniel Ricciardo and Nico Hulkenberg were disqualified from the Japanese Grand Prix on Wednesday after their team was punished for breaching regulations over brakes, the governing body FIA announced.

Ricciardo was sixth and Hulkenberg 10th in the race at Suzuka on October 13 but the French team will now lose the nine points accrued by the Australian driver.

"Renault have been disqualified from the results of the Japanese Grand Prix after a protest brought by rivals Racing Point was upheld," said an FIA statement.

"Racing Point's protest regarded an alleged breach of the Sporting and Technical Regulations and the FIA International Sporting Code, relating to a 'pre-set lap distance-dependent brake bias adjustment system'." — AFP

# Marquez keen to better Oz record

Phillip Island (Australia), Oct. 24: Phillip Island is one of Marc Marquez's favourite places and the already-crowned MotoGP world champion has no intention of easing up this weekend in Australia, where he lays claim to a bizarre record.

The gifted Spaniard, who equalled Australian Mick Doohan's premier class wins tally with his 54th victory in Japan last weekend, is eager to keep his incredible season going.

"It's one of my favourite tracks. I enjoy a lot, riding there, especially the left corners," said Marquez, who will be gunning for his 11th victory of the year, and fifth in a row, on the island south of Melbourne.

"But it's a circuit where many others, and especially Yamaha can be strong," he added.

"Normally we have a lot of competition there and it will be a challenge as always. Our target is of

course to try to win, but once the weekend begins, we will see where we are and assess the situation."

He has a chequered history in Australia. Marquez won at the picturesque circuit in 2015 and 2017 but was dramatically forced out after a frightening high-speed collision last year.

Starting from pole, he was shunted by Yamaha's Johann Zarco on lap six as they were screaming down the track at 250 kph. While he managed to stay on his bike, his back seat was mangled and his suspension damaged, forcing him to call it a day.

It meant Marquez has failed to finish in Australia on three occasions after clinching the world title in Japan -- 2014, 2016 and 2018.

He sealed his sixth world crown this year a race earlier in Thailand, while wrapping up a 25th constructors' championship in Motegi for Honda. — AFP

## INTERNATIONAL GOLF

# Dice set to roll from next year

Chiba (Japan), Oct. 24: The US PGA Tour is ready to roll the dice and unveil gambling at tournaments "from next year" to tap into new audiences, Commissioner Jay Monahan has revealed to AFP.

Gaming restrictions are being relaxed across the United States and golf has been preparing for legalised sports betting for years, Monahan said in an exclusive interview on the sidelines of the inaugural Zozo Championship in Japan.

"You'll start to see product in the market place next year," he said, with the primary aims to attract new fans and to prolong interest over a tournament day, which can stretch to 12 hours or more.

The \$9.75 million Zozo Championship, which began Thursday featuring Tiger Woods and Rory McIlroy in a star-studded field, is the middle leg of the Tour's new Asian swing, worth almost \$30 million in prize money.

It began last week in South Korea at the \$9.75 million CJ Cup won by Justin Thomas and concludes at the \$10.25 million WGC-HSBC Champions in Shanghai next week.

"It's all about engagement," said Monahan. "When done right, it gives fans the opportunity to engage with your sport over a longer period of time," he added. — AFP

# Tiger roars back to share lead in Japan

Inzai (Japan), Oct. 24: Tiger Woods got off to a horrific start before roaring back with nine birdies in 15 holes to share the inaugural Zozo Championship lead in Japan Thursday as Rory McIlroy struggled.

Woods, three over after three holes, bounced back in stunning fashion with a back-nine of 29 and a six-under round of 64 to top the leaderboard alongside US Open champion Gary Woodland.

"I certainly was not expecting to shoot six-under par after that start," admitted Woods.

"It was ugly early and it was nice to be able to flip it. Now I'm in a position where we're going to have a long, long weekend of a lot of golf. Hopefully I can keep it going."

The American duo head into Friday with a one-shot lead over home favourite Hideki Matsuyama at Accordia Golf Narashino Country Club in Inzai City.



Tiger Woods of the United States watches his tee shot on the 11th hole in Tokyo on Thursday. — AP

"I was excited that fans were calling out my name," said Matsuyama, who at 27th in the world is the highest-ranked Japanese player in the event. "We don't normally have such big crowds."

Woodland, who won his first major at Pebble Beach in June, never looked troubled in a blemish-free round with six birdies.

"I drove the ball well. Any time I can control the ball on the greens from the fairway and make some putts, that adds up to a pretty good day," said the world number 18. McIlroy is ranked the

second best player on the planet, but you wouldn't have known it as he scratched around with a cold putter in a two-over 72, the low point being a double-bogey six at the 12th.

Remarkably, Woods's 64 was the lowest season-opening round of his long career and came as the 43-year-old chases an 82nd US PGA Tour victory to tie the all-time record held by Sam Snead.

It was the most birdies Woods has scored in 18 holes since the first round of the 2013-WGC Mexico Championship. But all that had not seemed remotely possible when Woods, who won his 15th major at the US Masters in April, creaked into action after a two-month layoff for arthroscopic left knee surgery.

Starting his round on a 10th hole lined by massive crowds more than 10 people deep, Woods dropped three shots in as many holes with three consecutive bogeys.

He steadied himself with a par at the 13th before turning his round on its head with three birdies in a row. His fourth gain in five holes at the 18th saw him turn for home in one-under 35, with only two pars on his card.

Three more birdies from the third, his 12th hole, took Woods to a share of the lead at four under with Matsuyama and Woodland.

A two at the short seventh put Woods out on his own to a deafening roar from the golf-crazy crowd. — AFP



**Ray of hope**  
Inter Milan interested in signing former Germany star Thomas Mueller, who has lost his starting place at Bayern Munich, says report



It is really an incredible record. I hope Leo will continue to do well.  
— Ernesto Valverde, Barcelona coach on Lionel Messi making history in the Champions League

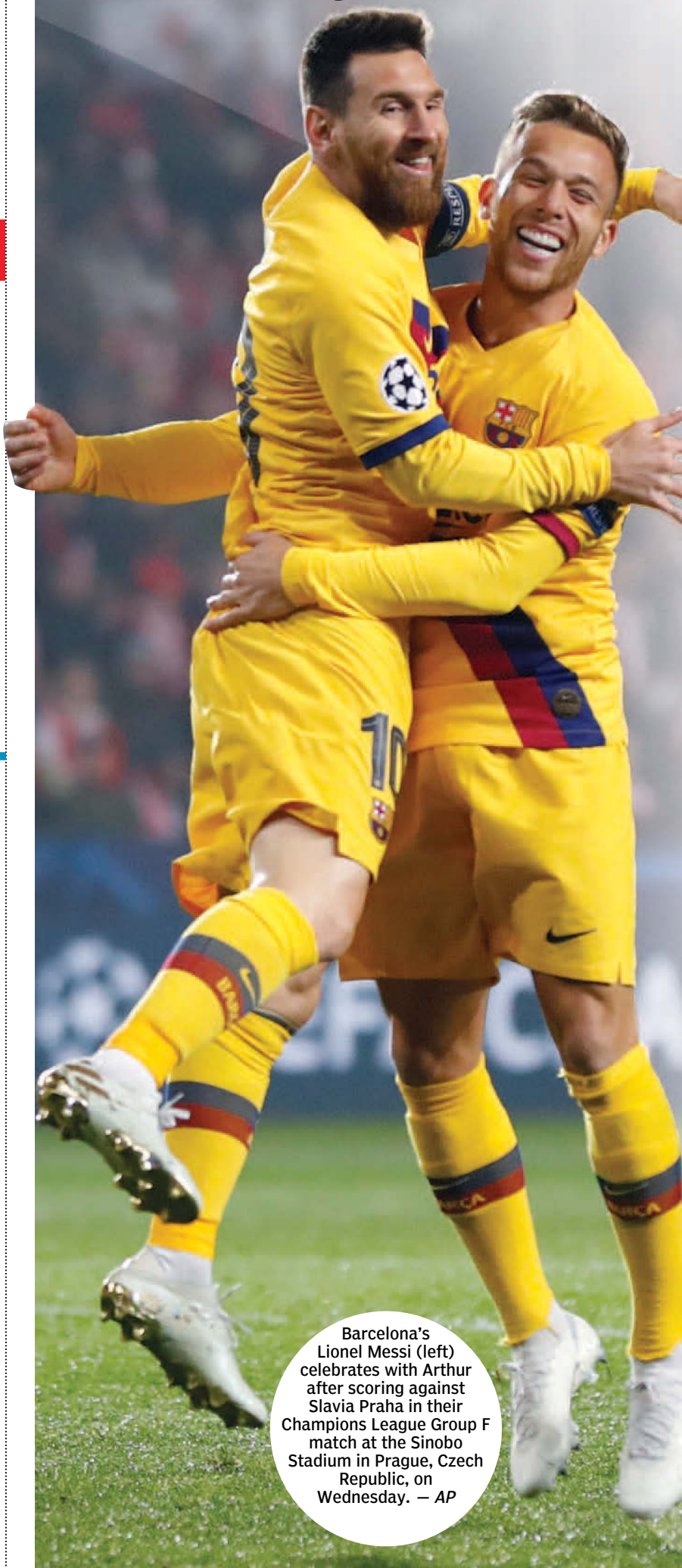
**SHORT TAKE**  
**India drop 2 spots in Fifa rankings**

**New Delhi:** The Indian football team dropped two places to 106th position in the latest Fifa rankings issued on Thursday. The downward slide came following the Blue Tigers' 1-1 draw against lower-ranked Bangladesh in the Fifa World Cup qualifier earlier this month. The draw against Bangladesh came after India's impressive 0-0 stalemate against Asian champions Qatar in September. Bangladesh, however, benefited from the draw, jumping three rungs to 184th spot. Belgium has managed to hold on to the top spot, followed by France and Brazil. Top-ten rivals Uruguay (5th, up 1), Croatia (7th, up 1), Argentina (9th, up 1) have edged closer to the summit. England are placed fourth ahead of Uruguay, Portugal, Croatia, Spain, Argentina and Colombia. — PTI

**RAMOS FINED BY SPANISH TAX AUTHORITY**

**Madrid:** Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos has confirmed he has been fined by Spanish tax authorities for irregularities relating to his image rights between 2012 and 2014. According to the newspaper *El Mundo*, Ramos was fined one million euros for transferring revenue to his own company Sermos 32 SL, which is based in Spain, in order to pay less tax. The Spain and Real Madrid captain has paid the fine but said in a statement late on Tuesday he plans to appeal as he claims he was unfairly penalised by a change in the law. Ramos joins a growing list of high-profile footballers targeted in recent years by the Spanish tax agency, who have cracked down on loopholes in regulations on image rights. But while the likes of Cristiano Ronaldo, Lionel Messi and Neymar have faced criminal proceedings, Ramos has emphasised his case is administrative. "It is an administrative fine, not a criminal offence," Ramos said in the statement. "Given the information published recently, I would like to emphasise that I declare all my income in Spain. I have a team of professional advisors who analyse, manage and resolve all my tax matters." — AFP

**Liverpool, Chelsea win on road as Messi, Mertens and Haaland set goals records**



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (left) celebrates with Arthur after scoring against Slavia Praha in their Champions League Group F match at the Sinobo Stadium in Prague, Czech Republic, on Wednesday. — AP

# Heavyweights have it easy

**Paris, Oct. 24:** Liverpool and Chelsea clinched impressive victories on the road in the Champions League on Wednesday as Lionel Messi, Dries Mertens and teenage sensation Erling Braut Haaland claimed impressive goal-scoring landmarks. Defending champions Liverpool defeated Genk 4-1 which saw Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain score twice while Michy Batshuayi gave Chelsea a 1-0 win at Ajax.

Elsewhere, Messi became the first player to score at least once in 15 successive Champions League seasons as Barcelona beat Slavia Prague 2-1. Napoli defeated Salzburg 3-2 in a game which saw Mertens go past Diego Maradona's 115-goals tally for the Italian club while Haaland's two strikes for the Austrians in the same game made him the first player to score six times in his first three Champions League games.

England international Oxlade-Chamberlain, who missed almost all of last season due to injury, opened the scoring in the second minute at the Luminus Arena and scored Liverpool's second just before the hour mark. Sadio Mane and Mohamed Salah then set up each other for late goals to wrap up the victory before substitute Stephen Odey pulled one back for Genk. Liverpool remain a point behind Napoli in Group E. Haaland, 19, and widely tipped for a big-money move to England or Spain, had the ball in the Napoli net after just 10 minutes in



Liverpool's Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain (right) celebrates after scoring a goal against Genk at the Luminus Arena in Genk on Wednesday. — AFP

Austria. However, a VAR review scrubbed off the goal for offside. The Italians made the most of their reprieve when veteran forward Mertens converted a cross from captain Jose Callejon to score. It was the Belgian's 115th goal for Napoli and took him level with Maradona.

Haaland levelled from the penalty spot in the dying moments of the first half. Mertens, however, grabbed his second on 64 minutes, again with Callejon the provider to go past Maradona's record set between 1984-1991 and close in on Marek Hamsik's all-time club high of 121. Haaland equalised again but just a minute later, Napoli restored their lead through Lorenzo Insigne in

a breathless second half. Haaland at least had the consolation of becoming the first player to score six goals in his first three Champions League games.

**'HUGE' WIN FOR CHELSEA**

Chelsea showed that their young side were ready for the European stage after Batshuayi's late winner fired them to a 1-0 win at Ajax. Substitute Batshuayi struck in the 86th minute and put Chelsea level on six points with last year's semi-finalists at the top of Group H. "It's feels huge, which always scares me because there's a lot to do. We're entitled to be excited about the way we played tonight," said coach Frank Lampard. — AFP

**THE RESULTS**

Red Bull Salzburg	2
(Haaland 41-pen, 72)	
Napoli	3
(Mertens 17, 65, Insigne 73)	
Genk	1
(Odey 88)	
Liverpool	4
(Oxlade-Chamberlain 2, 57, Mane 77, Salah 87)	
Inter Milan	2
(Martinez 22, Candreva 89)	
Borussia Dortmund	0
Slavia Prague	1
(Boril 50)	
Barcelona	2
(Messi 3, Olayinka 57-og)	
RB Leipzig	2
(Laimer 49, Sabitzer 59)	
Zenit St Petersburg	1
(Rakitskiy 25)	
Benfica	2
(Rafa Silva 4, Pizzi 86)	
Lyon	1
(Depay 70)	
Ajax	0
Chelsea	1
(Batshuayi 86)	
Lille	1
(Ikone 90+5)	
Valencia	1
(Cheryshev 63)	

**REDS CONDEMN 'RACIST' ORIGI BANNER**

**Genk (Belgium), Oct. 24:** Liverpool condemned a "racist" banner depicting Divock Origi that was displayed in the away end before their Champions League clash with Genk in Belgium on Wednesday. The banner appeared to show Origi's head photoshopped onto a naked body alongside the Champions League trophy. It was removed before the start of the

match, which Liverpool won 4-1. A club statement said: "Liverpool Football Club condemns the offensive banner displayed in our section of the ground, prior to kick-off. "To be clear, the image used perpetuated a racist stereotype. This is completely unacceptable. "We acted swiftly to have the banner removed and we are now working

with the local authorities and stadium team in Genk to identify those responsible. "Any subsequent action will be taken in keeping with our sanctions process." Asked for his reaction after the game, manager Jurgen Klopp replied: "I didn't see it yet but I heard we already gave a statement so I have nothing to add." — AFP

**WOMEN'S | SQUASH**

**Chinappa aims to be back in top-10**

**Chennai, Oct. 24:** India's leading female squash player Joshna Chinappa is working harder than ever as the world number 12 aims to break back into the top-10 of PSA rankings, starting with a good showing in the World Championship in Cairo. The 33-year old, who achieved a career-high ranking of world number 10 in 2016, will be competing at the World Championship starting on Thursday.



Joshna Chinappa

"I am looking forward to competing at the World Championship. I would like to break back into top 10 this season, better my career high rank of 10 and take it from there," Chinappa said. Chinappa will face 42nd-ranked Haley Mendez of USA in the first round followed by either Mariam Metwally (27) or Ho Tze-Lok of Hong Kong. In the pre-quarters, the Indian could face world number 2 Nour El Sherbini of Egypt. "Right now, I am seeded 12 in the tournament. I have a couple of tough first and second round matches. I have the current world No. 2 in my pre-quarter, so, right now, I am just looking forward to take it match by match," she said. The world number 12 player said she is also look-

ing forward for to representing her country in the upcoming South Asian Games (SAF) starting in December. "After the World Championships I will go to the UK to train for few weeks. We have been informed that we have SAF Games coming up. And hopefully I can be part of Indian team that plays there in Nepal." Indian players have been training without a full-time coach ever since Egyptian Achraf Karargui left on a bitter note ahead of the Commonwealth Games last year. Talking about the standard of Indian squash presently, Chinappa, who won her 17th national title in June, said the competition at the domestic level has got a lot stronger. — PTI

**Satwik-Chirag stun world champs Sindhu, Saina too enter French Open quarterfinals**

**Paris, Oct. 24:** The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty shocked reigning world champions Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan to join P V Sindhu and Saina Nehwal in the quarterfinals of the \$750,000 French Open here on Thursday. Satwik and Chirag, who had claimed their maiden Super 500 title at Thailand Open in August,

notched up a stunning 21-18, 21-13 win over the world No 2 pair, a winner of the 2013, 2015 and 2019 World Championships. The world No. 11 pair will next face Denmark's Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen. World champion Sindhu, who made early exits in the last three tournaments at China, Korea and Denmark, beat Singapore's Yeo Jia Min 21-10, 21-13 in 34 minutes

to snap her recent run of early exits and enter the quarterfinals. The world No. 6 Indian is expected to meet world No. 1 Tai Tzu Ying of Chinese Taipei next. The eighth-seeded London Olympics bronze medalist Saina, who had won the Indonesia Masters early in the year before going through a rough patch, dispatched Denmark's Line Højmark Kjaersfeldt 21-10, 21-11 in 27 minutes to make it to

the last eight. The reigning Commonwealth Games champion, who had lost in the first round in last three successive events, will next take on Korea's An Se Young, who had last week knocked out India's P.V. Sindhu in the opening round of Denmark Open. Saina had defeated Hong Kong's Cheung Ngan Yi 23-21, 21-17 in the opening round on Wednesday night. — PTI



**Mumbai City open account in Kochi**

**Kochi, Oct. 24:** A late goal from Amine Chermiti saw Mumbai City FC stun Kerala Blasters FC 1-0 in a closely-fought Hero Indian Super League clash here on Thursday. The teams had several half chances to break the deadlock but lacked an end product for most of the game until Chermiti's smart 82nd-minute finish settled the contest. While the result meant Mumbai start their season with a win, it was also their first-ever victory over Kerala Blasters in Kochi.

**ATK SEEK FIRST POINTS AGAINST HYDERABAD FC**

**Kolkata, Oct. 24:** Back home after suffering an away defeat, former champions ATK will look to regroup and pick their first points when they begin campaign in the sixth season of the Indian Super League against Hyderabad FC here on Friday. For Hyderabad FC, who were formed after Pune FC were disbanded last season for financial irregularities, this will be the first match of the season. Despite a sixth minute lead by Carl McHugh, ATK were left to rue some good opportunities as Kerala Blasters restored parity by converting a spotkick in the 30th minute and sealed the issue before half-time in the ISL opener in Kochi on Sunday. Most of the players from the now-defunct Pune FC have been retained by the Hyderabad side. Phil Brown, who joined Pune last season in January and guided the club to a seventh-place finish, will continue to guide Hyderabad as they play their first match. — PTI