

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 31 OCTOBER 2019

TABLOID 19  
Sunny Leone called out for plagiarism



**NATION | Politics**

Chapters glorifying Tipu Sultan to be removed from books: Yediyurappa **2**



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Activist Greta Thunberg declines climate prize, urges more action **11**



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Model Hoang Thuy presents a creation by designer Hoang Hai during the Vietnam International Fashion Week in Hanoi on Tuesday. — AFP

**Chidambaram sent back to Tihar jail till November 13**

**New Delhi:** Former finance minister P. Chidambaram was on Wednesday sent back to Tihar jail till November 13 in the INX Media money laundering case by a Delhi court which said sufficient time has been given to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for his interrogation. The court also directed the Tihar Jail authority to provide adequate security to the senior leader. **Full report on Page 4**

**Toxic smog, haze chokes Delhi-NCR**

**New Delhi:** Delhi remained blanketed by a thick haze on Wednesday with its air quality dropping further, largely due to the heavy load of smoke from stubble burning in neighbouring states of Haryana and Punjab, according to government agencies. **Full report on Page 13**

**'Mumbai could be submerged by 2050'**

**Washington:** India's financial capital Mumbai, one of the most densely populated cities in the world, is at risk of being submerged by 2050, according to a study that gives new estimates on the impact of rising sea levels. **Full report on Page 2**

**COUNTERPOINT**



Forget Sena... let's offer deputy CM posts to all the MLAs who support us!

**WEATHER**

Max: 30°C  
Min: 20°C  
RH: 63%  
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky

**ASTROGUIDE**

**Vikari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Kartika Shudda Chavithi till 1.04 am (early hours of Friday)  
**Star:** Jyeshtha till 9.36 pm  
**Variyam:** Nil  
**Durmuhurtam:** 10.05 am to 10.51 am, 2.39 pm to 3.24 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 1.30 pm to 3 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.38 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.32 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.40 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 7.35 AM

## Centre plans gold amnesty scheme soon

**MADHUSUDAN SAHOO & SANGEETHA G.**  
NEW DELHI/CHENNAI, OCT. 30

In a move that is going to cause a lot of heartache to individuals, the government is all set to announce a new gold amnesty scheme wherein individuals will have to disclose their unaccounted gold holdings and pay taxes on the value that falls beyond a certain threshold. Gold jewellery of married women worth a certain amount will be exempted from this scheme. A top source told The Asian Age, "The government at the Centre is mulling a special scheme on gold which aims at legalising unaccounted wealth in India's most consumed asset — yellow metal. We have learnt that the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), in consultation with the finance ministry, will finalise the scheme soon." "The tax will have to be paid on the entire value of gold declared by an individual that has been

**The scheme is the latest move by the government to bring back hordes of black money used to buy the yellow metal, considered a safe investment**

purchased without any receipt," it said, adding that the scheme will be in line with other "amnesty" schemes floated during 2014-16. The rate of tax is yet to be worked out by the government, a source said, but hinted that the thinking is to keep the rate around 30 per cent level, with an effective rate of 33 per cent, including education cess. The gold amnesty scheme is the latest move by the government to bring back hordes of black money used to buy the yellow metal considered a safe investment option in India. After demonetisation in November 2016, this will be the second major measure by the government **Turn to Page 4**

## Fadnavis softens stand, says Maha to get BJP-Sena govt

*Tieup important, no compromise on respect: Sena*

**BHAGWAN PARAB and SONU SHRIVASTAVA**  
MUMBAI, OCT. 30

A day after he rubbished Shiv Sena's claim that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had agreed to share Maharashtra chief minister's post, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis softened his stand and said that since Maharashtra had voted for the alliance, it would get an alliance government.

## JD-U seeks 'proportional representation' in Cabinet

**SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

At a time when Shiv Sena is playing hardball with the BJP, the JD-U has upped the ante and is pushing for "proportional representation" in the Cabinet. Reminding the BJP that CM Nitish

Kumar has given the party proportionate representation in Bihar, JD(U) spokesperson K.C. Tyagi said that if PM Modi or Amit Shah take the initiative for the party's inclusion in Cabinet, they would welcome the move. **More: Page 2**



There was speculation on Wednesday that the BJP may have offered an olive branch to the sulk-

ing ally by way of some plum portfolios. Making a special mention of Shiv Sena chief

Uddhav Thackeray in his address to the BJP's newly-elected MLAs after being unanimously re-elected the leader of the state BJP legislative party in Mumbai on Wednesday, Mr Fadnavis said, "I thank Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray for his support. Also my special thanks to PM Narendra Modi who handed over the responsibility of the Maharashtra government to a common party worker like me in 2014 and 2019." Mr Fadnavis also expressed confidence that the Mahayuti (alliance) would form the next **Turn to Page 4**

## Cong nation-wide protest from Nov. 5

**SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Buoyed by its performance in the recent Assembly polls that was well beyond its expectations, the Congress has called a meeting of all Opposition parties on November 4 to finalise a nationwide campaign on the state of the economy. Senior Congress leader and Leader of the

Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad is coordinating with all other Opposition parties, sources told this newspaper.

The Congress, which has already announced plans for a nationwide protest from November 5 to 15 on four key issues — the economic downturn, unemployment, the agrarian distress and the proposed signing of the RCEP **Turn to Page 4**

## Rahul on a 'meditational visit' abroad, will return soon: Cong

**New Delhi, Oct. 30:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi is on a "meditational visit" abroad and is likely to return shortly, party sources said on Wednesday.

Responding to speculation on the former Congress president's absence, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said Gandhi was away at one of his regular "meditational visits". Sources added that Mr Gandhi is possibly in Indonesia. **PTI**

## Naga talks to go on today in search of a consensus

**MANOJ ANAND**  
GUWAHATI, OCT. 30

The ongoing negotiations to take the NSCN (I-M) on board failed to make any headway on Wednesday, and talks between the Prime Minister's envoy R.N. Ravi and the collective NSCN (I-M) leadership of led by Th Muivah was postponed till Thursday. Saying that the NSCN (I-M) was still adamant on their demand for a separate flag and constitution, security sources told this newspaper that the issues being discussed included the process and roadmap for the surrender of arms. Indicating that a consensus on surrendering arms by the NSCN (I-M) **Turn to Page 4**

## RSS: Accept SC Ayodhya verdict 'wholeheartedly'

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

With the Supreme Court likely to deliver its verdict on the politically-sensitive Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit before November 17, the RSS urged people on Wednesday to accept the verdict "wholeheartedly", saying it was everyone's responsibility to ensure that harmony was maintained in the country whatever be the ruling. The RSS top brass, including its chief Mohan Bhagwat, held a meeting here on Wednesday to discuss the matter, which was also attended by senior BJP leaders, who

**Whatever be the verdict, everyone should accept it wholeheartedly. It is everybody's responsibility to ensure that social harmony is maintained across the country...**  
— Arun Kumar, RSS leader

apprised the RSS brass on the party's performance in the recent elections in Maharashtra and Haryana, where the BJP remained short of a simple majority in **Turn to Page 4**

## Kashmir attack: Mamata seeks probe, truth

**Kolkata, Oct. 30:** Expressing her shock over the killings of five labourers from Murshidabad by terrorists in J&K, CM Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday demanded to the Centre for a "strong" probe into the "pre-planned" shooting to know the truth. **More on Page 4**

## Article 370 move India's internal issue: EU MPs

**YUSUF JAMEEL**  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 30

European MPs, who were on a two-day visit of Srinagar, on Wednesday said that abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution was an internal issue of India. They also said that they stand by New Delhi in its fight

against terrorism as it (terrorism) is a common problem of the world which ought to be fought by all. They delegation urged India and Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue in order to create peaceful South Asian region. **More on Page 4**

## Democrats unveil Trump impeachment procedure

**Washington, Oct. 30:** The Democratic Party, which controls the US House of Representatives, has unveiled a resolution setting out the next steps in their impeachment efforts against President Donald Trump. President Trump, a Republican, is accused of trying to pressure Ukraine into investigat-

ing unsubstantiated corruption claims against his political rival, Joe Biden, and his son who worked with Ukrainian gas company Burisma. The eight-page resolution made public on Tuesday sets out a more public phase of the inquiry and hands the lead role in hearings to the chair of the intelligence committee, Adam Schiff. The House is expected to vote on the measure on Thursday. "There is mounting evidence that the president abused his power and betrayed our national security while compromising the integrity of America's elections," Rules Committee Chairman James P McGovern said. — AFP **More on Page 8**



"No one benefits by lawlessness and violence, except those who want to harm the unity and integrity of the country."

— Indira Gandhi

19<sup>th</sup> November, 1917 - 31<sup>st</sup> October, 1984

REMEMBERING  
**INDIRA GANDHI**  
ON THE 35<sup>th</sup> ANNIVERSARY  
OF HER MARTYRDOM



INDIAN NATIONAL CONGRESS





Uttar Pradesh is fulfilling PM Modi's dream to make air travel affordable for the poor, says Yogi Adityanath

Rising sea will sink Mumbai by 2050: Study

Washington, Oct. 30: The financial capital is at risk of being submerged by 2050, according to a study that gives new estimates on the impact of rising sea levels.

The southern parts of Mumbai may sink at least once a year below the projected high tide line, according to the study. The research was published by Scott A. Kulp and Benjamin H. Strauss of Climate Central in the US.

India and other Asian countries, including Bangladesh and Indonesia, may see a five to tenfold increase in the population living below the projected high tide line by the end of the century, added the study published in the journal Nature Communications.

Published on Tuesday, it put together estimates of future water level rise with current projections of population density increase in major parts of the world. Much of the southern parts of Mumbai may sink at least once a year below the projected high tide line — the mark on coastal lands up to which the highest high tide reaches in a year — by mid century, the New York Times said in a report based on the study.

Mumbai has a population of 12.5 million, according to the last census in 2011.

The research was published by Scott A. Kulp and Benjamin H. Strauss of Climate Central in the US, a non-profit news organization comprising scientists and journalists that analyses and reports on climate science, and contains new estimates

on the impact of rising sea levels. It noted that three times as many people may be affected as earlier projections estimated. The scientists used an improved model of coastal elevations across several regions of the world to provide the new estimates of the vulnerability of densely populated low-lying areas to rising oceans at global and national scales.

According to the researchers, nearly 250 million people around the world currently live on land that may go below water levels during annual floods.

By the new estimate, the researchers wrote in the study, one billion people now occupy land that is less than 10 metres above current high tide lines, including 250 million below one metre.

The researchers said eight Asian countries — China, Bangladesh, India, Vietnam, Indonesia, Thailand, the Philippines, and Japan — housed more than 70 per cent of the total number of people currently living on affected lands worldwide. — PTI

Smaller parties in BJP-Sena grand alliance also want their share Fresh trouble in grand Maha tieup

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 30

Sena summons MLAs for meet

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, OCT. 30

While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Shiv Sena continue to spar over the sharing of power, even smaller parties in their grand alliance now want their share in the power.

Four parties of the alliance — Republican Party of India, Rashtriya Samaj Paksh (RSP), Shiv Sangram and Rayat Krantikari Sanghatana (RKS) — will be meeting Thursday to decide their stand on the sharing of power.

The leaders of these parties will meet Thursday at the residence of RPI general secretary and minister Avinash Mahatekar to discuss their participation in government and the distribution of power.

RPI chief Ramdas Athawale, RSP chief Mahadeo Jankar, Shiv Sangram chief Vinayak Mete and RKS chief Sadabhau Khot will attend the meeting.

Mr Athawale met state BJP chief Chandrakant Patil to discuss the share of power of smaller allies in government formation.

According to sources, there is discontent brewing among the smaller allies as bigger parties like the BJP and Shiv Sena continue to spar over government formation, leaving them very little of the power share. The leaders of these parties coming together is a tactic to put pressure on bigger allies.

On Tuesday, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief spokesperson Nawab Malik said the formation of an alternative government can be given a thought in case the BJP fails to prove its numbers on the floor of the state Assembly. Earlier in the day, NCP

With the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) refusing to accept its demand that the chief minister's chair be shared on a rotational basis, the Shiv Sena has called a meeting of its newly-elected MLAs on Thursday.

In addition to discussing the power-sharing deal with the BJP, the party is also likely to elect the legislature party leader on this occasion.

The party has even cancelled the Konkan tour of Yuva Sena chief Aaditya Thackeray for the meeting, which will be held at the Sena Bhavan in Dadar and addressed by Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray.

Ever since the results for the Vidhan Sabha polls were announced, there has been an intense tussle between the Sena and the BJP over the sharing of power in the next government.

leader Ajit Pawar was unanimously re-elected as the legislature party leader of the NCP at the meeting of the newly-elected MLAs here. Newly-elected MLAs of the Shiv Sena will elect the legislature party leader on Thursday.

A meeting for this purpose will be held at the Sena Bhavan in central Mumbai, a party leader said on Wednesday.

In the recent state polls, the BJP won 105 seats, a loss of 17 seats compared to its 2014 tally. The Sena's tally also came down to 56 seats from 63 in 2014. A resurgent NCP won 54 and the Congress bagged 44 seats.



Newly elected BJP MLAs pose for a selfie during a meeting to announce the Maharashtra BJP legislature party leader, in Mumbai, Wednesday. — RAJESH JADHAV

After Sena, now JD-U's turn to play hardball with BJP

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

At a time when the Shiv Sena is playing hardball with the BJP over the government formation in Maharashtra, another of the party's allies, the Janata Dal (United), also upped the ante on Wednesday by pushing for "proportional representation" for itself in the Union Cabinet.

The party also said that it would contest the coming Assembly polls in Delhi and Jharkhand on its own wherever it has pockets of strength.

Reminding the BJP that Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar had given the saffron party proportionate representation in the state government, JD(U) national spokesperson K.C. Tyagi said that if Prime Minister Narendra

Modi or BJP president Amit Shah would take an initiative for the party's inclusion in the Union Cabinet, they would welcome the move. "If Mr Modi and Mr Shah take an initiative for the JD(U)'s proportionate representation in the government, we will welcome it," he said, adding adequate representation of the JD(U) would make Bihar more representative in the Union government and it would be socially more broad-based and cohesive.

The former Rajya Sabha MP was addressing the media after Mr Kumar was re-elected the JD(U) president for the next three years at its national council in the capital.

After its massive victory in the Lok Sabha polls in May this year, the BJP had offered one ministry to each of its allies. However, the JD(U) had been stuck

on at least three ministerial berths.

Mr Tyagi said that the JD(U) was not inducted in the first Modi government as well though it had inducted BJP leaders in the state government after exiting the Congress-RJD Grand Alliance in 2017. He, however, added that his party was imposing no condition on the BJP over the issue.

He also noted that the mandate of the 2015 Bihar Assembly polls was "against" the BJP but Mr Kumar conceded to it the post of deputy chief minister besides sharing ministerial berths.

However, he was quick to add that was no "confusion" in his party's alliance with the BJP after Mr Shah's recent statement that the NDA would fight the 2020 Assembly polls in Bihar under Mr Kumar's leadership.

The people whose kin face allegations of land grabbing should introspect.

— Smriti Irani, BJP leader

SHORT TAKES

Plaint against BJP leader for hate post

Aligarh (UP): Social activists from Aligarh and Delhi have filed multiple complaints with police and the home ministry's cyber-cell against BJP leader Kapil Mishra, alleging his social media post incited hatred against Muslims, official sources said Wednesday. They said former president of Aligarh Muslim University Students' Union Faizul Hasan is among those who have registered the complaints with the cyber-cell. In August, Mr Mishra, then with the Aam Aadmi Party, was disqualified as a member of the Delhi Legislative Assembly under the anti-defection law. Mr Hasan has accused Mr Mishra of repeatedly posting comments on social media that incited hatred. — PTI

Naqvi: Tolerance is in Hindus' DNA

New Delhi: Minority affairs minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi on Wednesday told a US delegation that "communal harmony and tolerance is in the DNA of the majority community in India." The delegation led by US Ambassador-at-Large for International Religious Freedom, Samuel Brownback, was told by the Union minister that social, religious and constitutional rights of minorities are absolutely safe in India. The delegation, it was learnt, was also informed about the various initiatives taken by the government for the socio-economic and educational empowerment of minorities.

JJP NOW VYING FOR PLUM PORTFOLIOS

New Delhi, Oct. 30: After bagging the deputy chief minister's post in the Manohar Lal Khattar-led Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-Jannayak Janata Party (JJP) government in Haryana, the Dushyant Chautala led party, JJP is now vying for the plum portfolio of either agriculture or finance. Both the BJP and the JJP had promised a number of sops for the agriculture community in the state, whose majority population is into farming. Mr Khattar met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday and Mr Chautala met BJP national president and Union home minister Amit Shah. The JJP is likely to get one Cabinet and one MoS portfolios in the state government as Mr Chautala is the deputy chief minister in the state government. Mr Khattar was sworn in on October 27 as the chief minister of Haryana for the second consecutive term. Along with him, Mr Chautala also took oath. The two allies are yet to finalise portfolios allocation.



Dushyant Chautala

'Govt firm on not celebrating Tipu Jayanti'

AGE CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU, OCT. 30

Chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa was firm on Wednesday that his government would not celebrate the birth anniversary of 18th century Mysuru king Tipu Sultan on November 10 and revealed it was also considering removing a lesson glorifying him in the state's primary school textbooks.

The chief minister, who has completed 100 days in office, was addressing the Bengaluru Reporters' Guild and Bengaluru Press Club in the city at their invitation.

Soon after the BJP came to power in the state, it cancelled the Tipu Jayanti celebrations and he made it clear that there was no change in its stance. "I am 101 per cent sure that we will not celebrate Tipu Jayanti. The district authorities have been directed to give up the annual event. We will also consider removing a portion of a lesson glorifying him in the primary school textbooks," he



B.S. Yediyurappa

said. Madikeri MLA, Appachu Ranjan had recently submitted a memorandum to primary and secondary education minister, Suresh Kumar, demanding the removal of a lesson portraying the Mysuru king as a freedom fighter, calling it misleading as he was a "tyrant", who had killed innocent people in Kodagu and Mangaluru.

In response, Mr. Kumar had referred the issue to a committee, but the chief minister was categorical that the government would consider removing this portion of the lesson on Tipu in the textbook.

Mr Ranjan had also appealed to the state government to cancel the Tipu Jayanti celebrations in a memorandum to it.

Cong leaders revolt against Odisha chief over 'failures'

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, OCT. 30

A fresh spell of dissensions has started brewing in Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee with a host of state leaders demanding change of guard in the state unit.

A group of top leaders led by Bapi Sarkhel held on Wednesday a meeting at Panthanivas and adopted a resolution seeking appointment of Cuttack-Barabati MLA Mohammed Moquim as the new OPCC in place of Niranjana Patnaik.

"Given the fact that the party has become directionless under the leadership of present OPCC chief Niranjana Patnaik, there is little doubt that Mr Patnaik can take the responsibility ahead. Odisha Congress needs a leader who is dynamic, conventional and has an uncompromising mentality, and Mohammed Moquim is perfect for the role," stated a release issued after the meeting.

The leaders opposing Mr Patnaik's leadership also mentioned that the people have become repugnant seeing performance of Congress in the recent general polls.

Cong in fix over support to TMC

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Congress is in two minds over supporting the TMC in the forthcoming bypolls West Bengal. Senior Congress leader Abdul Mannan has written a letter to Congress president Sonia Gandhi expressing party's weak position in Kharagpur and suggesting that only way to stop BJP in the coming by poll in Kharagpur is to support the ruling TMC in West Bengal.

While in the other three seats he has suggested that the Congress should tie-up with the left parties. The bypolls in West Bengal will

be held on November 25 and the last date of filing the nominations is November 6.

The Assembly segments include Kaliaganj in North Dinajpur, Kharagpur Sadar in West Midnapur and Karimpur in Nadia district.

In his letter to the Congress president, Mr Mannan wrote, "I would like to inform you that I had discussed primarily with the Left Front leadership regarding Kaliaganj seat and the Left Front leadership agreed to support the Congress candidate at Kaliaganj to prevent BJP. And in Karimpur seat, where the Left Front is much stronger than us, we

Congress leader Abdul Mannan has written a letter expressing party's weak position in Kharagpur.

would support the Left Front candidate to prevent BJP (sic)." He further added, "I would like to inform you further that at this moment our organisational capacity is very poor at Kharagpur due to the defection of a large number of Congress workers and leaders after the demise of our beloved veteran MLA (10 times) and leader Gyan

Singh Sohanpal. Therefore, in this situation, I would suggest that to prevent BJP we should support TMC candidate at Kharagpur Sadar Assembly seats. Now, it is up to you, whatever decision you would take I must abide by your direction."

As of now, the Congress had decided only to tie-up with the left parties. In a meeting of the West Bengal unit chief Somendra Nath Mitra with the Congress president the indication was only for a tie up with the left front. But the feedback on the ground has made the Congress go in for a rethink on the issue.

Advertisement for Delhi Police featuring a historical image of a man in a white shawl walking past a line of police officers. Text includes: 'Our Respectful Homage To the Country's First Hon'ble Home Minister on The National Unity Day 31.10.2019', 'DELHI POLICE SHANTI SEWA NYAYA', and 'WE ARE PROUD WE GOT HIS BLESSINGS; TODAY WE RENEW OUR PLEDGE TO SERVE THE NATION.'





### Simplification

Research findings need to be translated for better reach, says V. Naidu



Won't be part of delegation to Kartarpur if led by Amarinder Singh

— Pratap Bajwa, Congress MP

### SHORT TAKES

#### Bengal MLA booked for extortion bid

**Kishanganj:** An MLA from the adjoining state of West Bengal and his associates have been booked here for allegedly trespassing a property owned by a local resident and threatening him that he should either part with the land or give away ₹10 lakh. The incident took place on Tuesday in Subhash Palli Chowk area of the town. In a complaint with the police, landowner Tapan Das said Forward Bloc MLA Ali Imran Ramz barged into a shop owned by him after pulling down the boundary wall. — PTI

#### Rain, snow likely in HP from Nov. 1-3

**Shimla:** The meteorological department has forecast rain and snowfall in Himachal Pradesh over this weekend. The high hills of the state may receive rains and snowfall from November 1 to 3, Shimla met centre said. He said isolated places of middle hills in the state may witness rain and snowfall on November 2 and 3. It has also forecast rainfall in the plain on November 2. Keylong in Lahaul-Spiti district registered the lowest temperature at 2° Celsius. Minimum temperatures in Manali, Kufri, and Shimla were 4.8, 8.4, and 10.9° Celsius respectively. — PTI

## 'Modi needs to show his reformist instinct'

Economist: Govt failed to recognise dangers to economy

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

The *Economist* in its latest issue has carried a special report on India's economic situation for which it has blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his policies for the slowdown, claiming, "India is stumbling because its Prime Minister has not pursued his reformist instinct."

The article — "The Two Modis" — authored by Max Rodenbeck, the *Economist* South Asia bureau chief, stated that Modi government "has failed to acknowledge looming dangers to India's economy", which is at the present is struggling to cope with an "alarmingly sharp slowdown."

Citing slipping growth figures, the author added that the present economic downturn desperately needs deeper reforms. "Now with alarming speed, India has gone from being the world's fastest-growing large economy to something like a rumbling Indian Railway train" and even "sales of cheap biscuits and soaps have contracted."

In a hard-hitting article, the author went on to say that in spite of the "Modi effect" seen in the general elections, the mood of the Indian population at present is "anxious and unsettled." The article further argued, "Unless Indians resist Modi's push towards heavy Hindu majoritarianism and instead embrace their diversity, what will soon be the world's most populous country may remain a largely unhappy one."

The article also said that though Mr Modi was seen as a "can-do, a pro-business pragmatist who



Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets officers and staff of PMO during Diwali Milan function at Lok Kalyan Marg in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

would wipe clean and shape up a government widely seen as venal and rotten", his first five years proved in many ways "a wasted opportunity" which can hardly be called transformative and this is mainly because the Modi government has not delivered on the reforms related to reshaping old administrative structures and restrictive land and labour laws.

The article was also critical of Mr Modi's "shock demonetisation" topped with "fancy new taxes," and "heavier enforcement" that overall saw a collapse of small businesses and other mistakes that also saw government forcing healthy state-owned companies to take over sick ones.

Talking about rich getting richer and poor getting poorer, the article says that India's new wealth has accumulated disproportionately "at the very top." It added that though fewer top-level scams have emerged under the present dispensation, low-level, "rent-seeking graft is still pervasive."

The article also criticised the Prime Minister of "appointing relatively weak ministers," to keep more powers within his office. "He has skillfully

and ruthlessly used state institutions to influence the media, punish perceived enemies and undermine the Opposition."

Quoting bureaucrats, the article went on to say how in his office, Mr Modi's preference for "hard work over fancy degrees has often meant "rewarding loyalty over competence."

As for foreign policy, the article maintained, "except for hardening of rhetoric towards Pakistan, there were no big shifts in foreign policy." Terming Mr Modi's foreign policy as "cautious" and "unimaginative," the article says that though India has no real enemies but for Pakistan, it also has few friends. On the "relatively muted" global response to Kashmir issue raised by Pakistan, it claimed it was more due to "compassion fatigue and dislike of Pakistan more than Delhi's diplomatic skill."

Talking about India's US policy, Mr Rodenbeck said that despite all the "razzmatazz" of PM's "Howdy Modi" event in Houston, in which he shared stage with US President Donald Trump to show closeness in India-US ties, "there has been little progress on difficult issues" like trade talks.

## Merkel to arrive in India today

Ministerial delegation to accompany her, hold talks with PM Modi

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Speaking ahead of German Chancellor Angela Merkel's visit to New Delhi from Thursday evening to Saturday morning, German Ambassador Walter J. Lindner on Wednesday said the Chancellor's delegation would comprise representatives from 12 German ministries including ministers and that both India and Germany would discuss cooperation in a wide array of sectors including trade and economy, innovation, artificial intelligence, climate and sustainable development, security and foreign policy.

The two countries are

expected to ink a slew of agreements, probably as many as 20 pacts, in various sectors. Incidentally, speculation is also rife that PM Modi may also brief the German Chancellor on developments in Jammu and Kashmir following New Delhi's move nearly three months ago to revoke Article 370 that had granted special status to J&K. New Delhi has been briefing the leadership of important and influential global powers to convey the reality in J&K and counter Pakistani propaganda.

Ms. Merkel will land in New Delhi on Thursday evening. She will hold bilateral including delegation-level talks with PM Modi on Friday during which the two nations will



Angela Merkel

Angela Merkel has a keen interest in India," German envoy Lindner told reporters at his residence on Wednesday morning. The German Chancellor will meet women leaders in various fields including lawyers, start-up entrepreneurs and business leaders. She will leave New Delhi and head back to Germany shortly after Saturday noon.

It may be recalled that the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) had recently stated, "At the invitation of the Prime Minister of India, Dr. Angela Merkel, Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, will visit India on 01 November 2019 for the Fifth Biennial Inter Governmental Consultations."

discuss ways to strengthen their strategic partnership. PM Modi and Ms. Merkel will hold the Fifth Biennial Inter Governmental Consultations (IGC) between the two nations. The German Chancellor will also be accompanied by a high-powered business delegation. "German Chancellor

## Cops asked to take oath not to lie about leave

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA, OCT. 30

Police officials in Bihar's Samastipur seem to have found a unique way to stop policemen from taking leave for Chhatti Puja.

Sources said that cops seeking leave for the festival have been asked to sign a letter of oath stating that they will observe fast during the festival and if they lie, their children will face the consequences of nature.

The matter surfaced on Wednesday when images of a letter filled up by

policemen were circulated on social media.

Bihar police association has reacted strongly and demanded immediate action against officials who passed the bizarre order. According to the association president, Mrityunjay Kumar Singh, the step would demoralise the police force in the state, "Asking policemen to sign a letter of an oath before proceeding on leave is like doubting their credibility. They work without any break and when few policemen approach their senior

officers for leave they are humiliated like this. The move will demoralise the entire police force."

The allegation was, however, denied by the district police headquarter after the letter went viral on social media. Speaking on the issue, Samastipur SP Vikas Burman said, "No orders have been passed by the district police headquarters to take the application along with such affidavit. It is not appropriate for anyone to seek or sub-

mit such kind of undertaking for leave. The police line sergeant has been asked to investigate the matter and submit a report at the earliest."

Sources said around 85 policemen desiring to take leave for Chhatti festival have submitted the oath letter, which states "curse may befall" on their family and kids if they told a lie. Reports suggest that the situation arised after the administration asked officials to deploy adequate police security on all the Ghats for peaceful Chhatti festival.

## Kundra visits ED in Mirchi case

**Mumbai, Oct. 30:** Businessman Raj Kundra appeared before the ED on Wednesday in connection with a money-laundering probe against late gangster Iqbal Mirchi and others. They said Mr Kundra arrived at the

ED office in Ballard Pier area at about 11 am.

He was asked by the agency to appear on November 4 but it is understood that he sought an early date to depose owing to some engagement at that time. — PTI

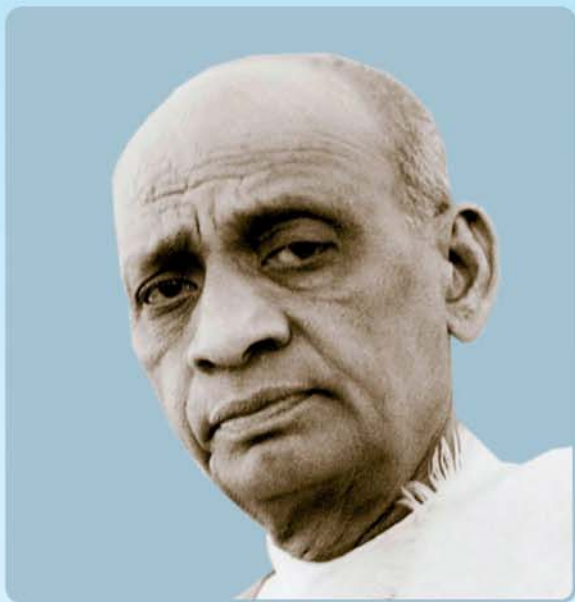
**GREATER VISAKHAPATNAM MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

'e' Procurement Tender Notice No.21/2019-20/SE(W)/EE-III/DB/Dt:28-10-2019

01. Number of Works	: 2 Nos
02. Value of Works (ECV)	: Rs.1,85,12,289/-
03. Down Loading Starting Date	: 29-10-2019 @ 8:00 PM
04. Down Loading End Date	: 13-11-2019 @ 3:30 PM
05. Last date of submission of Bid	: 13-11-2019 @ 3:30 PM
06. Date of Technical/Bid opening	: 13-11-2019 @ 4:00 PM
07. Date of opening Tenders	: 16-11-2019 @ 4:00 PM

Note: For any other details required in respect of above tender notice, please contact the office of EE-III before applying for tender schedules and visit us: @ [www.aapeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.aapeprocurement.gov.in)

## Remembering



31 October 1875 | 15 December 1950

“ The problem of the States was so difficult that you alone could solve it. The integration of 562 princely states was a wonder of world history. This was the bloodless revolution of India

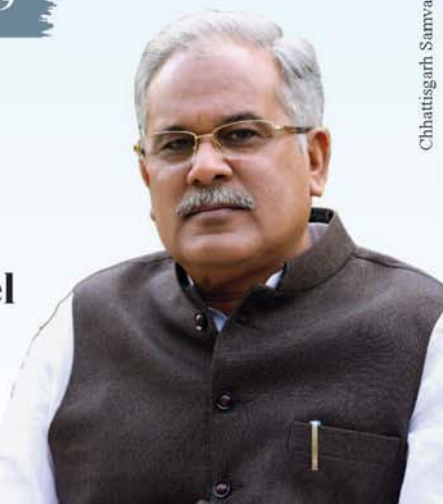
(Mahatma Gandhi to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel)

### National Unity Day, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2019

Homage to  
Bharat Ratna  
the unifier of modern India  
first Deputy Prime Minister of India  
**Iron Man Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel**  
on his 144<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary



**Bhupesh Baghel**  
Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



Chhattisgarh Samvad RO 23309

## Humble Tribute



19 November 1917 | 31 October 1984

“ Even if I died in the service of the nation, I would be proud of it. Every drop of my blood will contribute to the growth of this nation and to make it strong and dynamic.

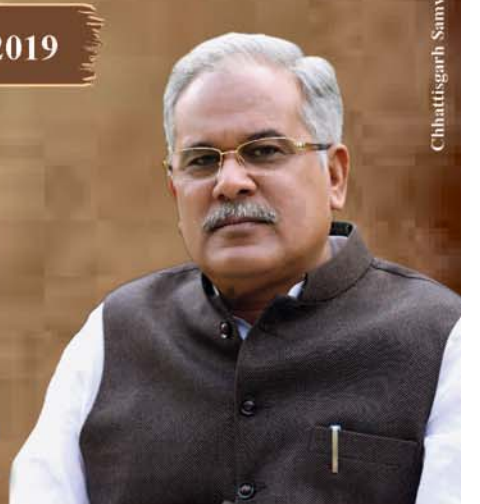
- Indira Gandhi  
At Parade Ground in Bhubaneswar, 30 October 1984

### National Unity Day, 31<sup>st</sup> October, 2019

Homage to  
Former Prime Minister  
**Martyr Smt. Indira Gandhi**  
on her 35<sup>th</sup> Death Anniversary



**Bhupesh Baghel**  
Chief Minister, Chhattisgarh



Chhattisgarh Samvad





## Health drive

Efforts are on to identify about 5.5 lakh tuberculosis cases, says minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey

## Art 370 internal issue: EU MPs

### Urged India and Pak to resolve all issues through dialogue

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 30

European MPs, drawn mainly from far-right parties, who were on a two-day visit of Srinagar, on Wednesday said that abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution was an internal issue of India.

They also said that they stand by New Delhi in its fight against terrorism as it (terrorism) is a common problem of the world, which ought to be fought by all. They urged India and Pakistan to resolve all outstanding issues through dialogue in order to create peaceful South Asian region.

Before flying back to New Delhi, four members of the delegation—Bill Newton Dunn, Henri

Malosse, Thierry Mariani and Ryszard Czarnecki—spoke to a select group of media persons at Srinagar's Old Airfield to claim that they had had "good interaction" with various delegations that met them here on Tuesday. They said they got fair idea about overall situation, militancy scenario and ongoing developmental activities in J&K.

Replying questions, Mr. Malosse of France said, "If we talk about Article 370, it is India's internal matter. What concerns us is terrorism, which is a global menace and we should stand with India in fighting it".

Referring to the killing of five labourers in southern West Bengal in southern

### 'India should let Opp. visit J&K'

New Delhi, Oct. 30: Indian government should permit its own Opposition leaders visit J&K if it allowed foreign leaders to do so, a member of European Union delegation told news agency ANI. "I think if you let in EU parliamentarians, you should also let in Opposition from India. There is some kind of imbalance," Nicolaus Fest of Germany said.

Kulgam district of the Valley on Tuesday night, he said, "There was an unfortunate incident of the killing of five innocent labourers by terrorists. We condemn it."

He said that Europe is also victim of terrorism and, therefore, "we stand with India in its fight against terrorism". Mr. Dunn of Britain said, "We belong to a place (called) Europe, which is peaceful after years of fighting. And we want to see India becoming the most peaceful country in the world. And for that we need to stand by India in its fight against global terrorism". He also said, "This visit has been an eye opener and we would definitely advocate what we have seen on ground zero." Mr. Malosse added that the delegation members received a briefing from the Army and police as well as young activists and exchanged "ideas of peace" during their stay in Srinagar.

## Mamata urges strong probe on Bengal workers murder

RAJIB CHOWDHURI  
KOLKATA, OCT. 30

Expressing her shock over the killings of five labourers from Murshidabad of West Bengal by the terrorists in Jammu and Kashmir, chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday demanded to the Centre for a "strong" probe into the "pre-planned" shooting to know the "truth".

Holding the Narendra Modi government responsible for the law and order situation in the Valley, she announced a compensation of ₹five lakhs for each victim's family.

Mr Dhankar also condemned the killings. Calling the terrorists "enemies of humanity", he appealed to the Centre to provide financial assistance to the victim's families. Trinamul supremo tweeted, "In a most unfortunate incident in Kashmir yesterday, five innocent labourers were brutally killed in a pre-planned manner. We are

In a most unfortunate incident in Kashmir yesterday, five innocent labourers were brutally killed in a pre-planned manner.

— Mamata Banerjee  
West Bengal CM

totally shocked! Presently, there are no political activities in Kashmir and entire law and order is with the government of India."

She added, "We, therefore, demand a strong investigation, so that the real truth comes out. We are deputed Shri Sanjay Singh ADG South Bengal to find out details from them. Our party MPs and MLAs have reached Murshidabad to meet the family members of victims. Our government is providing ₹five lakh each to the victim's family and render all assistance to

them." Meanwhile, Mr Dhankar said, "When I got this news, I was pained at this cowardly, dastardly attack by the terrorists on innocent migrant workers."

He elaborated, "It's a shocking, heart-rending incident that must be condemned by one and all. The perpetrators are the enemies of humanity. They are the enemies of this nation. I have been pained earlier also with regard to the incident of death of a teacher and his pregnant wife and a child on October 8 in Jiyaganj. No words are sufficient to condemn such inhuman act. We have our hon'ble PM who raised the issue at global level that for terrorism, we must have zero tolerance."

Mr Dhankar noted, "Recently, America had a great success against one of the most feared terrorist. I make an appeal to the government here and in Delhi that they should impart assistance to the victim's family."



Killing of migrant labourers in JK fallout of Article 370 decision

— CPI(M) member Prakash Karat

## SHORT TAKES

### Ravi Kishan boards train after 20 years

Hajipur, Bihar: Actor-turned-BJP MP Ravi Kishan on Wednesday boarded a New Delhi-bound train from here and said he alighted a train after 20 years. He boarded the Vaishali Express to travel to his Lok Sabha constituency of Gorakhpur and give his feedback on facilities made available to passengers during the Chhath festival rush to railway minister Piyush Goyal. Kishan told journalists present on the occasion that it was after a gap of 20 years that he was travelling by train. "Goyal had asked me to see for myself the facilities available to passengers on trains running on the busy Delhi-Bihar route. I shall travel up to Gorakhpur and give my feedback to him," Mr Kishan said. — PTI

### Guards intercepts 2 fishing boats

New Delhi: The Coast Guard has intercepted two fishing boats operating under suspicious conditions off the Lakshadweep and Minicoy islands, the maritime security agency said. The boats were intercepted by a Coast Guard ship on patrol and brought to Kavaratti for investigation. However, due to the weather and limited resources at Kavaratti, the vessels were escorted to New Mangalore for detailed investigation. The 15 crew members are safe. "Prima facie, it is evident that the boats were engaged in poaching activities within the India's exclusive economic zone," the coast guard said. — PTI

### Animals from 17 nations for Guj zoo

Vadodara: A number of animals and birds have been brought to Gujarat from 17 countries and will be kept at the world-class zoo being developed near the Statue of Unity in Narmada district. "The world-class zoo, which is being developed, is part of the plan to make the region near the Statue of Unity a major tourist attraction. Lions, tigers, leopards, 12 types of deer and antelopes, giraffes, zebras, rhinos, bison, and other exotic animals have arrived at the safari park from 17 countries," Rajiv Gupta, MD of Sardar Sarovar Narmada Nigam Ltd, said. — PTI

## Naga talks will go on

Continued from Page 1 military wing was yet to be arrived at, the sources said the NSCN (IM) had revived its demand for a separate flag and constitution which was almost resolved during the talks. Pointing out that the government was reluctant to extend the deadline for concluding the Naga talks, the sources said Mr Ravi and the NSCN (IM) leaders will be meeting again on Thursday in an attempt to iron out the differences to create a consensus.

Meanwhile, with the Government of India sticking to its October 31 deadline to finish the talks on the Naga problem, the governments of Assam, Nagaland and Manipur have taken steps to meet any eventuality and have put their respective police forces on "high alert".

Security sources in Kohima said the Nagaland government had directed all deputy commissioners of districts and administrative officers to stay at their posts and within their jurisdiction till further orders.

The Nagaland police headquarters has issued an order banning all leave and directed all unit commanders to recall all officers and personnel on leave immediately. In neighbouring Manipur, where Nagas have a sizeable presence, the security forces in the state were also put on alert.

## 'Ayodhya one of most important cases in world'

New Delhi, Oct. 30: Supreme Court judge Justice Sharad Arvind Bobde, who will take over as the next Chief Justice of India in November, said Wednesday the Ayodhya title dispute case was one of the most important cases in the world today.

In an interview to a news channel, Justice Bobde, who is set to succeed CJI Ranjan Gogoi on November 18, said the Ayodhya dispute was a very important case in judicial history. Justice Bobde is part of the five-judge Constitution bench that heard for 40 days appeals against the 2010 verdict of the Allahabad high court in the case.

Speaking to PTI, Justice Bobde said he is not in favour of disclosing the deliberations of the Supreme Court's collegium on rejection of names for higher judiciary, saying it is not a question of secrecy but the right to privacy. Justice Bobde, who will become the 47th CJI on November 18, said a conservative approach on the issue of disclosing the entire deliberations of the collegium was necessary as "people's reputation are at stake" and it cannot be sacrificed just to satisfy the desire of citizens to know.

The statement by justice Bobde, who was part of a nine-judge Constitution bench which declared right to privacy as a fundamental right, assumes significance in the wake



Justice Bobde

of a growing clamour for more transparency in the functioning of the apex court's collegium.

Justice Bobde, 63, also rued the criticism of judges on social media for their judicial actions and said most of the judges, who are not "thick skinned", get perturbed.

"I still think that we need to be conservative. The reason is that people's reputation is at stake. We need to be conservative. Half of the complaints which come are not true. I am saying half as a phrase. And I think that the collegium and the court should be conservative in these matters," he told PTI, a day after he was appointed as the next CJI.

Justice Bobde was responding to a question whether any steps are required to make the collegium's functioning more transparent. Barring for the right to privacy of those, who have not been selected by the collegium for appointment or elevation as judges in the higher judiciary, he said they also have a "life to live" and why should their negative details be put in public domain.



Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh flags off nine cancer detection units (buses) from Kapurthala House in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

## 5 children among 7 hurt, 1 killed in Pak's shelling

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 30

A civilian was killed and seven others, including five children were injured as Pakistani troops targeted Indian forward positions and civilians areas with small arms fire and mortars along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Kupwara district on Wednesday.

The police and Army officials said that the Pakistan Army violated the November 2003 ceasefire understanding by

resorting to "unprovoked" firing and shelling in LoC's Machil sector, killing a local resident 50-year-old Muhammad Yusuf Khan. Seven other civilians, including five children were injured, they said, adding that the Indian troops retaliated by using the same calibre weapons "to give a befitting response to the Pakistani aggression."

The injured children have been identified as Nayeema Banoo, 10, Tariq Ahmed Khan, 9, Munir Khan, 8, Aaqib Khan, 9 and Uzair Ahmed Khan, 8.

## HC quashes case against Pehlu, sons

Jaipur, Oct. 30: The Rajasthan high court on Wednesday quashed a case against Pehlu Khan, who was lynched by cow vigilantes in April 2017, his two sons and a truck driver for allegedly illegally transporting cows for slaughter.

A single bench of Justice Pankaj Bhandari quashed the case under Rajasthan Bovine Animals Protection Act and the charge sheet against the four, saying there is no evidence to show that the cows were being transported for the purpose of slaughtering.

The petition was filed by the truck driver, Khan Mohammed, and the two

sons of Pehlu Khan. It was contended by advocate Kapil Gupta, appearing for the accused, that the criminal case was a sheer misuse and abuse of the process of law since there was no evidence that the cows were being transported for illegal purposes.

Mr Gupta contended that the report of medical experts established the fact they were milch cows and calves were only a month old.

There was also a receipt from the local animal selling market that the cows were in fact purchased for rearing them in dairy, the lawyer submitted.

Pehlu Khan (55), his two



Pehlu Khan

sons and a few others were transporting cows when they were allegedly stopped and thrashed by a mob near Behror in Alwar district on April 1, 2017.

Khan died in hospital on April 3, triggering outrage over the murder and focusing attention on attacks by cow vigilantes.

An Alwar court had acquitted all six accused

on August 14 this year, giving them the benefit of doubt. However, the Rajasthan government has filed an appeal in the high court against the acquittal.

After the lower court verdict, the state government had constituted a special investigation team (SIT) to identify errors and irregularities in the investigation and fix the responsibility for botching up the investigation on individual officers.

Khan and others were on their way to Nuh district in Haryana from Jaipur when the cow vigilantes stopped them in Behror on the Jaipur-Delhi national highway. — PTI

## Govt gold amnesty scheme

Continued from Page 1

to curb black economy. "The new scheme is being considered as yet another attempt to unearth lakhs of crores of black money still lying in the system in the form of unaccounted gold," the source said.

The proposed scheme, believed to have been prepared jointly by the department of economic affairs and the department of revenue under the finance ministry, will be implemented in this financial year itself.

What the threshold will be hasn't yet been decided, and that task is likely to fall on a special "gold board" that will be set up by the government with representatives from both the government and private sector soon.

Once implemented, the government is likely to impose heavy penalties on those who hold unaccounted wealth in the form of gold beyond the prescribed limit. "The finance ministry will form a gold board shortly and the board will announce the scheme, asking that individuals disclose unaccounted gold beyond a certain threshold and pay taxes on the disclosed value. This holding limit will be fixed under the scheme. Once the scheme is closed, heavy fines will be imposed on those holding unaccounted gold beyond the prescribed limit," the source said. When asked about the prescribed threshold limit, the source did not disclose it but said that the final call will be taken by the gold board in this regard.

"The government-approved valuer will certify the value of

gold and action will be taken accordingly. However, gold jewellery of married women below a certain amount will be exempted from this scheme," the source added.

Industry experts, however, reject the possibility of introducing such a scheme. "Such rumours have been doing rounds through social media and elsewhere for some time. But the government cannot bring out any such amnesty scheme for unaccounted gold," said P.R. Somasundaram, managing director, India, World Gold Council. "Why would individuals reveal the quantum of gold held by them? Gold is not in circulation and the government does not have any account of the gold held by individuals. Why should individuals reveal their holdings and pay tax?" he asked.

Industry bodies, including the World Gold Council, had recommended an amnesty scheme for the gold monetisation, under which the depositor was not to be asked questions about the source of gold. "This was intended to bring out the idle gold lying with individuals, households and institutions and make them productive. This will also lower the import burden of gold," an industry source said.

"The government was working on a Gold Policy before the end of its last tenure. It consulted with the industry as well. However, as elections got nearer, the announcement of Gold Policy was postponed. Post elections, government has been busy addressing various other issues plaguing the

economy and hence Gold Policy moved down its priority list," Mr Somasundaram added. It is estimated that the total stock of gold held by Indians would be in the region of 20,000 tonne and, valued at current prices, it'll be worth \$1 trillion. However, the actual holdings, after taking into account unaccounted imports, ancestral holdings etc, would be in the region of 25,000-30,000 tonne.

The country imports over 900 tonne of precious metal each year, spending more than ₹250,000 crore (\$35 billion) annually. Most of this gold lies locked in safe deposit boxes, thus turning into unproductive asset and wasting India's foreign earnings.

The government's move comes at a time when many temples and trusts have reportedly been found to be holding tonnes of physical gold worth crores of rupees, which come as devotees' offering to the deities. Besides, in the second week of October, customs officials in Kerala seized roughly 123 kg of smuggled gold valued at around ₹50 crore during raids at 23 premises in Kerala's Thrissur district. Along with the gold amnesty scheme, the government is also planning to revamp the existing Sovereign Gold Bond Scheme to make it more attractive to buyers. "The decision to float the new gold plan had to be taken in the second week of October at a Cabinet meeting, but the proposal got deferred due to state elections in Maharashtra and Haryana," the source said.

## Fadnavis stand

Continued from Page 1

government in the state.

"We sought votes for the Mahayuti, and the government will be formed by Mahayuti alone," he said. The election of Mr Fadnavis as the leader of the state BJP legislative party is a mere formality, but it paves the way for him to be the chief minister of the state again.

The BJP is likely to offer the education or agriculture portfolio to Shiv Sena to keep it placated, a Mahayuti source told The Asian Age. Currently, Sena ministers hold the transport, industries, public health and environment portfolios.

Government formation talks are likely to resume on Thursday, the source added.

The chief minister also termed the rumours of an "alter-native formula" being worked out to form the state government "entertainment."

"Though there are several rumours floating around in the state about alternate formulae being worked out to form the government, it is more of an entertainment (sic)," he stated.

Commenting on the performance of his party in the Vidhan Sabha polls, Mr

Fadnavis said that it was a big win, as no party had won more than 75 seats since 1995.

"But in 2014 and 2019, the BJP won more than 100," he added. Shiv Sena too seems to have softened its stand over the stalemate with its leader Sanjay Raut saying on Wednesday that it is necessary for his party to stay in the BJP-led alliance in the larger interest of Maharashtra, but added that the party would "not compromise its respect".

He also said that there was no hurry to form the next government, but rejected speculation that the Sena might split if there was a delay in the formation of the government.

The Bharatiya Janata Party, which had claimed it would win 220 out of Assembly 288 seats during its poll campaign, bagged 105 in alliance with the Sena, as opposed to 122 in 2014 when it had contested solo.

Though the BJP emerged as the single largest party in the Assembly, it still needs 40 legislators to form the government. As a result, Shiv Sena is flexing its muscle and demanding a rotational chief ministership for two-and-half-years in the state.

## Cong protest from...

Continued from Page 1

by Prime Minister Narendra Modi—would first hold a meeting of its top office-bearers, including all AICC general secretaries, on Saturday. This meeting will be chaired by Congress president Sonia Gandhi. AICC general secretary K.C. Venugopal said that the party will also organise press conferences across the country from November 1 to 8.

The protests starting November 5 will culminate in a "massive programme" in New Delhi in the last week of November when Parliament will be in session. At the state level, the PCC presidents, CLP leaders and senior AICC figures will provide the leadership, while central leaders will participate in the protest in Delhi, he said.

## RSS on Ayodhya verdict

Continued from Page 1

both states. Earlier this week, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had referred to the issue during his monthly radio address, when he recalled how the government, political parties and civil society had foiled attempts to create fissures when the 2010 Allahabad high court ruling on the disputed land in Ayodhya was to be delivered.

The statement further said the protests against the BJP government's "misrule" will be carried out in all state capitals and district headquarters. The Congress has already decided to depute 31 senior party leaders as observers to various states/UTs to monitor this country-wide agitation programme. Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said the party would highlight the issues of the adverse impact of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the current economic crisis, mounting unemployment, spiralling prices, the collapse of the banking system, heavy loss of jobs in the public and private sectors and the omnipresent farm distress.

Mr Modi described it as an example of how a united voice could strengthen the country. A meeting of senior RSS parasharaks was earlier due to be held from October 30 in Hardwar, but was cancelled. The RSS core group, which was to meet on the Ayodhya issue at Hardwar, rescheduled its meeting to New Delhi.



50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Giri calls for world without war, hunger

New Delhi: The 57th Inter-Parliamentary Conference opened here today with President V. V. Giri firmly reaffirming the ideal of "one world" and a world without war and without hunger.

Opening the 55-nation conference attended by nearly 500 Parliamentarians from all over the world Mr Giri, however warned that "mankind is today facing the grim alternatives of annihilation or survival." But he said he was sure "we have enough wisdom left in us to choose the right path."

This august assembly, he told the Parliamentarians in the jam-packed Central Hall of Parliament was an "affirmation of faith in an emerging world order."

"In spite of the chaos and confusion that we face today, I firmly believe that the world is groping towards unification and one could perceive, perhaps dimly, the birth of a world without war and without hunger," Mr Giri said. A nation's strength, he said, must be used in the pursuit of peace not in the pursuit of aggressive ambitions.

Peace

Mr Giri said: "The task of building a durable peace lies alike on the leaders and the people of every nation, big or small." "The more affluent should likewise freely come to the assistance of those who are less fortunately placed," he added. Quoting Mahatma Gandhi, he said: "Man becomes great exactly in the degree in which he works for the welfare of his fellow-men."

Acknowledging, "with gratitude the assistance India had received from friendly countries for economic development Mr. Giri urged the nations to evolve procedures and programmes to share the fruits of new discoveries by man in scientific and technical knowledge.

ODDLY ENOUGH Teens defend Monty Python 'silly walk'

Athens: A Monty Python-inspired "silly walk" during Greece's solemn remembrance of anti-fascist resistance in World War II has sparked anger, with the teens responsible saying it was a stand against militarism. The 10 girls said they were pretending to be insubordinate soldiers at an October 28 parade in Athens, in a stunt inspired by the cult British comedy troupe. — AFP

# Nehru, Patel shared joint legacy that can never be torn asunder

## A TRIBUTE TO SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL ON HIS 124TH BIRTH ANNIVERSARY



Praveen Davar focus

■ Those who are trying to break this 'unbreakable combination' by distorting and twisting historical facts today do not realise the disservice they are rendering to the memory of Sardar, whose name they often invoke for their narrow political objectives. In November 1948, 10 months after Gandhiji's assassination that led to a ban on the RSS, Patel had said: 'Since Gandhiji's death we have realised that our leader's judgement was correct.' Those in power today obviously cannot be wiser than Gandhiji and Patel.

The Nagpur session of the Indian National Congress (INC), in December 1920, when the first major battle against imperialism, the Non-cooperation Movement was launched, was a turning point in the history of freedom movement. With this session, Mahatma Gandhi emerged as the supreme leader of not only the Congress but the entire country. Earlier, after his return from South Africa, in January 1915, Gandhiji had taken up the cause of Indigo planters in Champaran (Bihar), the textile workers in Ahmedabad and the peasants of Kheda (Gujarat). But these were all outside the framework of INC.

It was at Kheda where Vallabhbhai Patel, later to become popular as Sardar Patel, first came into contact with Gandhiji and impressed him with his organisational ability, earnestness and determination in getting relief for the farmers. Vallabhbhai soon became a close lieutenant of the Mahatma, gave up his legal practice, and plunged into the independence movement playing an active role in the Non-cooperation Movement in his home state of Gujarat. At the annual session of the Congress held in Ahmedabad, in 1921, Vallabhbhai was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee that virtually made him the most prominent leader of the Gujarat Congress. But it was the Bardoli Satyagraha, in 1928, that saw the emergence of Vallabhbhai Patel as a national leader with the honorific title of "Sardar". The provincial government had increased the land revenue in Bardoli taluka (Surat district) without any justification. Vallabhbhai started a non-violent resistance movement against the unjust demand of the government. He advised the people to refuse to pay their land revenue dues. He went from village to village infusing the people with national spirit and boosting their morale. The Bardoli Satyagraha shook the imperial government and it expressed its readiness for negotiations which ultimately settled the dispute. With Bardoli that conferred on him the title of "Sardar", Vallabhbhai became a national hero. So tall had his stature become that Pandit Motilal Nehru recommended his name for the presidentship of the 1928 Calcutta (now Kolkata) session of the INC. Wrote Motilal Nehru to Gandhiji on July 11, 1928: "— Now comes the question of the crown. I am clear that the hero of the hour is Vallabhbhai, and the least we can do to appreciate his public services



Mahatma Gandhi with Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

is to offer him the crown." But Gandhiji was thinking far ahead. He had made up his mind to offer the "crown" to Motilal Nehru himself as prominent Bengal leaders, including Subhas Chandra Bose and J.M. Sen Gupta, though belonging to opposite camps, had pitched in very strongly for Motilal Nehru to be the president for the Calcutta Session.

Sardar Patel, however, became president of the Karachi session of the INC in 1931. Earlier, in 1929 Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru was elected President of the Lahore session where a call was given for Purna Azadi (complete independence) for the first time. Equally important as the Lahore session, the Karachi session passed a resolution on economic policy and fundamental rights. Some of the salient features of the resolution, like universal franchise and equality of religions, were later incorporated in the Constitution of India. The Karachi session also ratified the Gandhi-Irwin pact which had been signed earlier between Gandhiji and Viceroy Lord Irwin.

Jawaharlal Nehru again became president of INC in 1936 and 1937 when elections were held to the Central Assembly and Provincial Assemblies under the 1935 Act. The Congress won in most of the provinces and formed governments in other provinces, in coalition with smaller parties and independents. The Muslim League won only in two provinces and lost even in

seats reserved for Muslims in non-Muslim majority provinces.

The outright victory in the elections was primarily due to Nehru's charisma and aggressive campaigning, on one hand, and on the other, organizational skills of Vallabhbhai Patel. E.M.S. Nambodripad observes in *India's Freedom Struggle*: "Nehru to attract the masses and secure their votes, and Patel to control the ministries after winning the elections—such was the division of labour inside the Congress." This enabled Gandhiji to remark in December 1937 that "I have cast all my cares on the broad shoulders of Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel". C. Rajagopalachari, Patel and Rajendra Prasad were considered the "Old Guards" in the Congress who, on many occasions, differed with the young leaders led by Nehru and Bose. Earlier, when the manifesto for the provincial elections was finalised, Patel wrote to Gandhiji: "We have been getting on beautifully this time — I cannot speak too highly of Jawaharlal, we found not the slightest difficulty in co-operating with him."

After the failure of the Cripps Mission, Gandhiji prepared the country for its final battle against imperialism. The AICC met in Bombay (now Mumbai) on August 8, 1942, and passed the "Quit India" resolution which was moved by Nehru and seconded by Sardar Patel. The slogan "Karo ya Maro (Do or Die)", coined by Mahatma Gandhi,

inspired millions of Indians to free themselves from the shackles of slavery even at the cost of their lives.

On the morning of August 9, 1942, Gandhiji and all the front ranking leaders of Congress were arrested and taken to different destinations for long jail terms that followed. Patel, along with Nehru and the then Congress president Maulana Azad, were incarcerated in Ahmedabad Fort. The Sardar spent two years and nine months in jail in the distinguished company of Azad and Nehru who completed his last magnum opus, *The Discovery of India*, before completion of their jail term in mid 1945.

When the interim government was formed on September 2, 1946, with Nehru as the vice-president of the Executive Council (the Viceroy being the president), Sardar Patel was given the home portfolio along with information and broadcasting. On August 1, 1947, Nehru, the Prime Minister designate wrote to Sardar Patel formally inviting him to join his Cabinet: "The writing is superfluous because you are the strongest pillar of the Cabinet." Patel wrote back: "My services will be at your disposal, I hope, for the rest of my life and you will have unquestioned loyalty and devotion for me in the cause for which no man in India has sacrificed as much as you have done. Our combination is unbreakable and therein lies our strength."

Sardar Patel became India's first Deputy Prime Minister

and was allocated the portfolios of Home, States and Information and Broadcasting. Thereafter, began the vital task of consolidating India's newly won freedom. He integrated 562 princely states within the Indian Union with tact, vision and statesmanship. According to former Prime Minister Morarji Desai "the integration of the states could certainly be termed as the crowning achievement of Vallabhbhai Patel's life. But for him, this may not have been achieved easily and quickly".

Born on October 31, 1875, at Nandiad in Gujarat, Sardar Patel died in Mumbai on December 15, 1950. Prime Minister Nehru had the Parliament assembled within an hour after Patel's death and paid a touching tribute to his colleague of 30 years in freedom struggle and formative years of independence. Calling Sardar Patel as the "builder and consolidator of New India", Nehru stated: "We shall remember him as a friend and a colleague and a comrade above all, and I, who have sat here on this bench side-by-side with him for these several years, will feel rather forlorn and a certain emptiness will steal upon me when I look at this empty bench."

Only a year earlier, Sardar Patel in a message to a publication brought out on the sixteenth birthday of Jawaharlal Nehru had written: "Having known each other in such intimate and varied fields of activity we have naturally grown fond of each other; our mutual affection has increased as years have advanced — how much we miss each other when we are apart — No one knows better than myself how much he (Nehru) has laboured for his country in the last two years of our difficult existence."

Such were the emotional and close bonds between Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Patel. Those who are trying to break this "unbreakable combination" by distorting and twisting historical facts today do not realise the disservice they are rendering to the memory of Sardar whose name they often invoke for their narrow political objectives. In November 1948, 10 months after Gandhiji's assassination that led to a ban on RSS Patel had said: "Since Gandhiji's death we have realised that our leader's judgement was correct." Those in power today obviously cannot be wiser than Gandhi and Patel.

The writer, an ex-Army officer, is a former member of the National Commission for Minorities and a political analyst

# The killer loneliness epidemic is a public health issue



Archana Dalmia meanwhile

■ Despite the reputation for practical societal advancements, our technologically advanced time is also being linked to a loneliness epidemic that has assumed the scale of a global epidemic as communities the world over break down

I was once sad and lonely, Having nobody to comfort me, So I wore a mask that always smiled, And hide my feelings behind a lie... Before long, I had many friends; With my mask, I was one of them. But deep inside I still felt empty. Like I was missing a part of me...

The loneliness epidemic is a reality in today's hyper-connected world. Although we live in an era in which communication seems simpler than the past, we are in fact growing apart as a society. In essence, a co-worker is one email away, a friend is one text away, and a loved one is one video chat away and yet... there is a vacuum an inability to speak about what is really bothering us. In the world of emoticons we are often forced to put on a smiley face where instead we are terribly lonely inside. Although communication may be easier and faster, connection may still be complicated. Therefore, despite the reputation for practical societal advancements, our technologically advanced time is also being linked to a loneliness epidemic.

U.S. Surgeon General Vivek Murthy emphasises that loneli-

ness and emotional well-being are serious public health concerns. Loneliness is the subjective experience in which a person feels solitary. Loneliness is a common human emotion, and when fleeting, it is possible that an individual may not be gravely impacted. However, persistent and pervasive sentiments of isolation can be harmful to our state of health and wellbeing.

Studies have shown that loneliness has been associated with cardiovascular problems and premature death. Lonelier individuals are less likely to achieve quality sleep. Lonely individuals experience reductions in reasoning and creativity. In addition to these reduced abilities, loneliness affects workplace productivity, as lonely individuals report less job satisfaction and are more likely to face unemployment. Loneliness is commonly correlated with mental health concerns such as anxiety, depression, and suicide. Similarly, loneliness is often associated with poor coping mechanisms, such as compulsive technology use, smoking, and self-harm like cutting or taking self-prescribed drugs.

In her article in *Psychology Today*, Shainna Ali a Ph.D., at LMHC, stated that according to Cigna's Loneliness Index, those who live with others are less likely to be lonely. However, Ali states that it was not a sureshot way to overcome loneliness since just simply living with



others does not protect one against loneliness. It is possible to feel lonely in the company of others as well. It is the ability to connect with people to actually have a real conversation and to overcome the fear of being vulnerable, which has to be worked upon in order to ensure that one is not trapped in the vicious cycle of loneliness.

A recent study published in the *Harvard Business Review*, indicates that workers who experienced higher levels of loneliness also reported fewer promotions, less job satisfaction, and a greater likelihood for frequently changing jobs. Moreover, the study illuminated that lawyers, doctors, and engineers were the occupations reporting the highest levels of loneliness. Since a large proportion of time is spent at work,

individuals who are dissatisfied with their current levels of social support and connectedness at work may have feelings of loneliness evoked, or prior sentiments fostered. Sometimes inversely, people on the top are the loneliest and achievers feel that by achieving they are going to be more accepted by people so it becomes a driving force to be accepted. This leads to a vicious cycle.

Turning to technology is often seen as an easy fix. However an overuse of technology is in fact the root cause of isolation and loneliness in big cities and metropolitans. It was in a survey which explored the social media patterns of 1,781 young adults, it was found that individuals who logged in for a half an hour per day felt less lonely com-

pared to individuals who logged on for more than two hours daily. Within that target group it was also discovered that number of hours spent on social media was not the only factor; it was also the way in which social media was used that defined the loneliness quotient. Those who spent time on chat groups and connected with other people were less likely to feel lonely than those who simply posted images and got likes. These likes are not a real indication of how much a person is actually liked and who will step forward in a real crisis to help and uplift that person.

Looking at the global rise in this sense of isolation and loneliness one of the major reasons that was cited is a confluence of societal factors, such as the stress of migration and cultural integration (including among refugee populations); an increasingly polarised world fueled by "us versus them" narratives; lack of available economic and employment opportunities; persistent gender- and race/ethnicity-based inequality, discrimination, and violence; shifting cultural norms and a feeling of "culture under threat"; and the role of tech and social media, fueling everything from tech addiction to loneliness to body image issues. Furthering this trend is the opioid crisis (opioids are a diverse class of moderately strong painkillers, including oxy-

codone, hydrocodone), with signs of it being exported from the US to the rest of the world.

So what can we do about this loneliness crisis that seems to have infected our global population?

Talking about it certainly helps and can be seen as one of the first steps. There are several help lines that have been set up all over the world including the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI). Getting more involved in social activities and meeting new people can usually help one move forward. One can volunteer for a cause, or just meet up with people with similar interests one can even adopt a dog or cat to serve as a loyal companion.

Experts like Gross and Dattilo say that practicing optimism can help reduce anxiety. "Human beings have something called human negativity bias, which means we are hardwired to pay more attention to threatening and scary information than positive, assuring information," Gross told *Healthline*, a health news magazine. In order to reduce this constant need to stay in flight or fight mode, we as a species need to practice being optimistic to reduce anxiety. I hate to be quoting a cliché here, but yes meditation helps!

The writer is the chairperson of the AICC grievance cell. The views expressed here are personal.



I believe every human has a finite number of heartbeats. I don't intend to waste any of mine.

At the end of the movie all of us have this shared redemption

# THE ASIAN AGE

31 OCTOBER 2019

## 2 new UTs born in J&K: What is govt really up to?

The dubious constitutional decision of the Narendra Modi government on August 5 will result, with effect from today, in the dissolution of the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the creation in its place of two Union territories — Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Since 1947, when the princely state of J&K acceded to India, these three were regions that made up constituent parts of the state, in addition to some areas that now lie in Pakistan and to which India from the beginning has laid juridical claim as J&K's last princely ruler, Hari Singh, acceded the totality of his dominions to India.

With New Delhi itself engaging in the constitutional destruction of J&K state that existed within its territorial jurisdiction, India's case for the return of the regions of J&K under Pakistan's illegal control so that the original state of J&K may become a unified entity under its sovereign jurisdiction, is now arguably depleted.

Different regions and territories — with their own, sometimes unique, history of becoming a part of India — were made states of the Union in 1947 to constitute the Union of India. The process in each case marked evolutionary pathways for the making of today's India. These processes are at the core of the basic structure of the Constitution, which underpins — among other key aspects — the relationship between the Union and the states.

**It is wholly deplorable that the Supreme Court should postpone hearing by two months writs challenging the decision of the government to alter the constitutional status of J&K. The unconscionable delay has indeed underwritten a constitutional travesty.**

The Centre's decision to strike at the heart of Article 370, and to dissolve J&K state, thus strikes at the basic structure of the Constitution. It is in order to prevent such a perversity from being enacted that the dissolution of a state of the Union is not permissible, although the borders of a state may be subject to alteration.

It is wholly deplorable for this reason that the Supreme Court should postpone hearing by two months writs challenging the decision of the present government to alter the constitutional status of J&K

wholesale. The unconscionable delay, in allowing the UTs of J&K and Ladakh to be formed unhindered, has indeed underwritten a constitutional travesty.

Regrettably, a member of the Constitution Bench, echoing the government's concerns, said "security" considerations must be kept in view while examining the case. This is unlikely to find validity in law.

Indeed, the facts on the ground also give the lie to the government's view that a key reason for overturning Article 370, and creating two new UTs, was that the very existence of J&K state was giving rise to terrorism, although it had never explained how.

In the past three years, terrorism had virtually ended in J&K. But since the ending of Kashmir's special status it has gained a fresh lease of life, as can be seen from the brutal killings in recent days, although every town and village in the Kashmir Valley is crawling with armed soldiers. It is strange that terrorists have a free run in the presence of so many soldiers. What are the security forces and their political masters up to?

## Chasing quantum uncertainty

Surprise! We are on the cusp of yet another powerful new technological revolution. Google's AI Quantum team of researchers led by Charles Neill, Pedram Roushan, Anthony Megrant and head John Martinis have created a chip that has performed in under three minutes a computational task that they say would have taken the world's fastest supercomputer 10,000 years to complete — IBM contends this time is 60 hours! All the same, that opens a mindboggling array of life-changing possibilities.

Quantum mechanics is certainly one of the most profound scientific ideas around. It is based on the property of particle/wave duality at the subatomic level. First proposed in the thought experiment of Schrödinger's cat, this means that an object exists in different locations at the same time. The scientific term for this is called superposition and harnessing it speeds up calculations exponentially. So promising is its potential that, starting with the IBM in 1990, 73 companies are currently invested in building quantum computers.

Key to the quantum computer is the qubit, the individual unit of quantum memory. Unlike a bit which is a small electric current the absence or presence of which determines, respectively, the two states of zero and one, a qubit can simultaneously exist in a superposition of zero and one with its identity along a spectrum.

How to harness this "quantum uncertainty"? First of all, it could be used by banks to defeat hackers by creating fluid private keys to encrypt messages. Second, it can transform healthcare by enabling accurate simulations of drug molecules and leading to treatments of hitherto-incurable diseases like Alzheimer's. There can be many more such exciting applications. Innovation is alive, so take heart!

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Subhani



# When will climate, bad air be a live poll issue?



Sharmistha Mukherjee

There was a time that New Delhi used to be a beautiful city in the winter. Anyone growing up in Delhi in the 1970s or earlier would recollect with nostalgia the azure blue skies, the crisp winter mornings, basking in the warm golden sun in the afternoons and the clear nights when not enveloped in fog (not smog). Though it's hard to believe now, one could actually see the stars despite all the ambient lights. The children painted the sky with the colour blue, not grey, as today's children would perhaps be more prone to do.

Today, Delhi is the most polluted capital city in the world. As the winter approaches, the discourse on pollution in the media and the social media gets more intense. There are frequent reports and panel discussions on television news channels about the worsening AQI (Air Quality Index). As seen in the past couple of years, schools are shut down during the really bad days. People could be seen walking around the streets wearing masks for protection. At times, one could almost feel and touch the thickest layer of haze that surrounds the entire National Capital Region — which includes Delhi and its neighbouring areas in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan — on the bad air days. And it's not just Delhi, going by a recent Greenpeace report, 22 of the 30 worst cities for air pollution in the world are in India.

Living in an age of information technology, forest fires in the Amazon, floods in Ethiopia and the Philippines, an earthquake in China and a drought in Somalia elicit a response from citizens across the world. While there is ever-increasing

concern and environmental activism is on the rise, there has not been any real public discourse and engagement on a scale large enough to influence a fundamental impact on policymakers to arrest and reverse the flow of environmental damage. This holds true not just for India, but globally.

In India, there have been several instances where public protests led to some changes or withdrawal of policy decisions. The Chipko movement, the protests to save the Silent valley in Palakkad, Kerala, and recent protests in Delhi, Bengaluru and Mumbai over the felling of trees indicate that people's involvement and agitation can have the desired impact of reversing, or at least a temporary withdrawal, of anti-environmental policies by governments. But pollution, climate change and the environment in general are yet to become prime election issues.

One of the reasons behind it is the perceived dichotomy between the environment and development in voters' psyche. That perhaps is the reason why the first green parties were formed in developed countries. In some countries like Germany and Finland, they have had some limited success, being a part of coalition governments. But in a developing country like India, where the fulfilment of basic material necessities is still a major concern for a large section of people, growth rather than environment is associated with opportunities for a better life in the voters' mind. The government and its agencies need to come out with viable and sustainable alternatives that neither compromise on development nor on the environment. But there's not always an

easy solution.

To play the devil's advocate, one may take up the problem of using chemical fertilisers and pesticides, both of which are detrimental to the health of the soil, pollute ground water and there is the ever-present danger of chemical residues in fruits and vegetables. India achieved food sufficiency through the Green Revolution with heavy use of chemical fertilisers and insecticides, both heavily subsidised. Can the government take the risk of substantially reducing the subsidies or easing off their usage? It will not only create hardships for farmers and lead to food inflation, but also reduce productivity. Organic farming by the use of organic fertilisers and insecticides are not feasible on a large scale as it has low productivity and the costs of production are much higher. The fancy shops selling organic fruits and vegetables at a much higher price cater to a niche clientele. It's not for mass consumption, and beyond the reach of most ordinary people. More important, if India is unable to feed its 130 crore people and is not self-sufficient in food production, it will seriously compromise its food security, which is no lesser a threat than national security. No other country can take the responsibility of feeding 130 crore people. With major reforms in the agricultural sector, including structural reforms and heavy investment in agricultural infrastructure, the government might induce farmers to reduce use of chemicals, but perhaps not totally

stop it. Experts need to come out with viable solutions that do not contaminate, pollute and permanently damage soil and water resources without compromising with the nation's food security.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, both the Congress and the BJP had addressed environment concerns in their respective manifestos. But these were not the key issues that determined voting patterns. Even in a place like Delhi, which will hold elections soon, one wonders if pollution would play a decisive role in influencing the results. Despite visibly being under the grip of terrible and sustained air pollution, despite the lack of solid waste management that contaminates the soil, water and air; perhaps the key issues in the elections will be free water, free electricity and free rides (for women) in public transport buses and the Metro.

In India, a green political party called India Greens Party was founded in 2018 and registered with the Election Commission in July 2019. It is yet to make its electoral debut. Even at the cost of sounding sceptical, one may easily surmise its fate if it ever decides to fight elections. Perhaps it will be a better strategy for the party to create pressure groups through mass mobilisation on environmental issues and lend its support to parties or candidates that make environmental concerns a part of their key agenda.

In her landmark speech at the first global conference on the human environment in Stockholm in 1972, then PM Indira Gandhi had asked "are not poverty and need the greatest polluters?", and thus laid the foundation for collective responsibility and the need for cooperation between the rich and poor nations that would further develop into key principles of the politics of climate change.

The writer is an AICC national spokesperson and president of the Delhi Mahila Congress

### LETTERS

#### BJP HUMBLLED

The results of the Maharashtra and Haryana state elections have once again proven that Lok Sabha and Assembly elections are completely different ball games. Nationalism has few takers in state elections. The BJP was gung-ho about achieving 220-plus in Maharashtra and 75-plus in Haryana but it only managed to cross the line in Maharashtra and could only form the government with the help of JJP in Haryana. Reasons? First and foremost are issues at grassroots level like the agrarian crisis and unemployment that could not have been overlooked. The Jats consolidated against the BJP in Haryana while the co-operative sugar belt rallied behind the NCP's Sharad Pawar. BJP must take this as a warning.

Bal Govind Noida

#### COALITION DRAMA

THE GAME OF THRONES in Maharashtra has turned bitter with chief minister Devendra Fadnavis disclosing that the chair of CM was never offered to ally Shiv Sena. Soon after Mr Fadnavis' statement, Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray cancelled the party's meeting with the BJP. His aide Harshal Pradhan released a video of the CM's press meet in which he talks of equal sharing of posts and responsibilities. With both sides unwilling to cede an inch, government formation could drag on.

N.J. Ravi Chandrer Bengaluru

#### BOOST FOR CRICKET

THE BANGLADESH Cricket Board on Tuesday agreed to play the second Test against India at Eden Gardens under lights. This will be India's first day-night Test. It will be played with pink balls. The iconic ground is the first in the country to host it. And it's a historic decision. I think it's a great move for Test cricket, one that will hopefully bring the crowd back to the ground.

T. Anwar Bengaluru

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



Mahir Ali

## Good riddance to 'Caliph', but no need to take Trump seriously

GOOD riddance, unequivocally. The man who adopted the nom de guerre Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi was by most accounts a monster of depravity. The mindless brutality of the outfit he presided over is incontestable, and it conforms with multiple testimonies about his personal predilections, including a reputation as a serial rapist. It does not follow, of course, that the account of his final moments offered by the US president deserves to be taken at face value. Donald Trump simply cannot help uttering untruths almost every time he opens his mouth, so it's possible his insistence that the cornered quarry was "whimpering" and "screaming" before he detonated his suicide vest in a dead-end tunnel was a product of the presidential imagination.

He was, after all, barely able to pronounce Baghdadi's name while taking full credit for the hunt. He also claimed that access to real-time video in the White House Situation Room (right after a Saturday after-

noon bout of golf, mind you) was like watching a movie, even though the aerial footage being transmitted depicted only heat signatures in the dark and could not possibly have penetrated the tunnel. His defence secretary as well as the chairman of the joint chiefs of staff, both of whom were present in the Situation Room, refused to corroborate Trump's narrative. Trump could not conceivably have had access by that point to video footage from cameras worn by special forces commandos, and it is in fact not even clear whether any of them witnessed Baghdadi's explosive exit. Only a military dog, described by the commander-in-chief as "talented" and "beautiful" (although its name is classified information), is said to have been seriously injured when the leader of the Islamic State, in the president's parlance, "died like a dog". Even his animal instincts are contradictory.

There are contested versions of where the crucial evidence for locating Baghdadi's hideout in Syria's

northern Idlib province came from, with both the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces and the Iraqi authorities claiming credit, amid other indications that the information pinpointing Baghdadi's refuge — possibly owned by the leader of a separate group associated with Al Qaeda — was derived from the interrogation of one of his wives (two others are said to have been killed during the operation, with their suicide vests intact) and a courier.

It is likely that the facts, for what they are worth, will continue to be contested for a long time to come. Russia, which was on the top of Trump's list of acknowledgements when he recited his version of events on Monday, has expressed its doubts about the operation. The Russians, who control the airspace in the Idlib region, were seemingly informed about the mission but not its target.

The US congressional Democratic leadership, meanwhile, is livid that it was even further out of the loop than Moscow. Trump has said that

House of Representatives speaker Nancy Pelosi and intelligence committee chief Adam Schiff were not informed in advance because the latter in particular is a notorious leaker. The implication that the Democrats would directly or indirectly alerted IS to the raid is absurd, of course, but also a reminder of how deep the partisan divide in Washington has become.

Trump's critics have been quick to link his declaration of a US withdrawal from Syria to the complications in the mission against Baghdadi, but what's perhaps more pertinent is that US forces are staying in the country to 'protect' oil wells that, the president says, may prove profitable to US firms, yet were unwilling to maintain a minimal presence that might have dissuaded Turkey's Recep Tayyip Erdogan from invading northern Syria in his vendetta against the Kurds.

It is also useful to remember in this context that IS was effectively incubated by the consequences of the US

invasion of Iraq in 2003. It grew out of the Iraqi branch of Al Qaeda, whose sectarian brutality appalled even Osama bin Laden (a less valuable target than Baghdadi, according to Trump, largely because his extinction was organised by the Obama administration) and Ayman al-Zawahiri (who remains at large).

Baghdadi is a graduate not only of what was then known as Saddam University but also of Camp Bucca, the US military prison that a disproportionately large number of Iraqi jihadists passed through at the cusp of the millennium.

Al Qaeda did not perish with bin Laden, the rather more measured account of whose end has also been disputed, not least by Seymour Hersh. Hardly any analyst is willing to argue that the demise of Baghdadi spells the end of IS, which in all too many cases represents a state of mind, related more often than not to US foreign policy.

By arrangement with Dawn



A reverse acronym: a regular word that also doubles as an acronym | Art that is sold cheaply or donated because the owner is deeply in debt

# Why India should not become a part of RCEP



Abhijit Bhattacharyya

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP, isn't what it appears to be. If India signs up for it, as the government has indicated it is planning to do, the potential fallout for this country's 1.3 billion people may be difficult to calculate at this point. Why? Because there are several nations in the vicinity, which are commercially competent and industrious, even if not necessarily bigger than India. A close scrutiny of economic and commercial data can indicate the future scenario and possible harmful effects on India. It's time to peruse the figures of the last 20 years. Let the facts speak.

India's foreign trade contains three broad sectors. First, the (total) annual surplus (if any), and deficit. Second, the Sino-Indian bilateral. Third, the bilateral trade figures with 14 of the 16 proposed RCEP countries (China and India being 15th and 16th of the group). Unfortunately, and regrettably, India, in all three sectors, so far, has performed well below par, with chronic deficit. That is a cause for worry, because if India falls into an uncontrollable tailspin even

once, it may become impossible for any course correction. Hence, it must be reminded that India's demography alone equals the entire African continent's 54 nations. Similarly, Europe's demography of 51 countries is 60 per cent of India's population. The Americas (North and South), of 51 nations, are less than 80 crore people. The 30-plus nations of Australasia are three crore people, to India's 130 crore. India, therefore, cannot be compared with any country, except itself. Therefore, India-related issues have to be analysed and resolved by Indians, and not by any international body or a RCEP-type trade conglomeration.

Hence, long-term policy planning and implementation is required to take India forward, as long years of deficit loom. The records of the past two decades are too dismal to be ignored, and too grave not to be addressed. Thus, whereas India's total trade deficit stood at \$12,915.48 billion (included in which was minus \$743 million with China) in 1999-2000, the same deficit zoomed to \$184,000.33 billion (China, minus \$57,567.44 billion).

Incidentally, India's latest defence budget, according to the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, stands at \$58 billion. In other words, only one year's trade deficit (2018-19) can finance India's defence budget for three years!

What, however, became more serious was the total trade deficit of 2012-13 which hit a record \$190,336.07 billion (with China, minus \$38,713.45 billion). It's a real tragedy because the collective wisdom of India's rulers, irrespective of political affiliations, till now have failed to address the two

**Today is India's day of reckoning. New Delhi's national self-interest reigns supreme in front of the industrially advanced and financially robust China, Japan, South Korea and the likes of Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand, who inflict a consistent and ceaseless high trade deficit on India.**

decades of ballooning trade deficit in all sectors, thereby inflicting irreparable damage to New Delhi's development plans and national economics.

The most amazing thing, however, is that despite the chronically "minus-deficit" trade figures, India has continued to progress! How? There must be some divine intervention from somewhere in the Indian economy, for its hard to explain this through logic. In fact, India's cumulative loss of billions of dollars in global trade is one of the main reasons for its macroeconomic deficiencies, leading to an eternal gap between revenue and expenditure and the pressure on the State to sell its stake in public sector undertakings, its core assets, unlike China.

In reality, India's foreign trade deficit woes continue unabated even today, thus leading to the desperation for quick remedial measures. Unfortunately, however, once international commerce and the interlinked national economy of a country like India derails, leading to recurring financial losses, it will be an agonisingly long haul for the adminis-

trators to put the house in order. The downhill economics for a country of 1.3 billion people cannot go for quick-fix remedies. India has to remain rock steady for the steep climb. Hasty steps may only inflict more damage than can be visualised at this stage.

Things have remained bad for the past five years. In 2014-2015, India's trade stood at minus \$137,694.93 billion (China, minus \$48,478.92 billion); in 2015-2016 minus \$118,716.67 billion (China, minus \$52,696.59 billion); in 2016-2017 minus \$108,504.60 billion (China, minus \$51,111.14 billion); in 2017-2018 minus \$162,054.83 billion (China, minus \$57,868.90 billion) and in 2018-2019 minus \$184,000.33 billion (China, minus \$53,567.44 billion).

World trade and China aside, the situation doesn't get any better for India even with the Asean countries, which constitute the 10 core countries of the proposed 16-nation RCEP. With a trade deficit of \$9,610.77 billion (Australia); \$534.91 million (Brunei); \$10,574.07 billion (Indonesia); \$7,910.94 billion (Japan); \$4,372.30 billion (Malaysia); \$12,053.90 billion (South Korea); \$250.91 million (New Zealand); \$3,000.41 billion (Thailand); \$4,709.37 billion (Singapore) and \$684.85 million (Vietnam), where does India go? How will India gain from a multilateral forum which already has pushed it into a corner? Will they allow India to move forward? That looks impossible. Hence, it's got to be bilateral deals, rather than multilateral. "You give me this, and I will give you that". Bilateral deals result from a dialogue, while a multilateral trade forum means the "survival of the fittest" and the "thriving of the biggest".

Today is India's day of reckoning. New

Delhi's national self-interest reigns supreme in front of the industrially advanced and financially robust China, Japan, South Korea and the likes of Australia, Brunei, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and Thailand, who inflict a consistent and ceaseless high trade deficit on India.

In the end, India needs to learn a lesson or two; partly from China and partly from the United States. "China's path to success was dictated by the State," a US scholar wrote, adding: "It was export-driven economic nationalism". Earlier, by 1984, the Beijing government had "lost control over imports", that led to a massive trade balance deficit. China severely curbed all non-essential imports and promoted the export of manufactured goods. Unfortunately, that is an option India doesn't have any longer, and the only thing it can do is to drastically cut imports. China turned around, from a chronic trade deficit and a "loss of self-reliance", to a trade surplus.

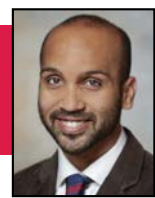
The United States too, in its early days as a new nation, had started with "national self-interest", as propounded by its first treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton. He defended the protection of US manufacturing on the ground of national security, saying: "I too am a friend of free trade, but it must be free trade of perfect reciprocity". Without total reciprocity, India today should not get into a club that will not serve its national interest. India's own trade, business and industry needs to come first, foremost and last.

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College. The views expressed are personal.

## 'Lifebuoy' for tandurusti: Can CSR build a healthy and TB-free India?



Pranav Sinha & Pranay Sinha



**The Indian government struggles at times to bring medicines and rations to the interiors of India, but Coca Cola is able to maintain a steady stock of beverages. In the smallest villages, children still enjoy Horlicks and adults their cup of Lipton tea...**

India shoulders a quarter of the global burden of tuberculosis and hunger. The Global Hunger Index (GHI) ranked India 102nd of 119 countries in 2019 because one in seven Indians — about 19.5 crores — are undernourished. Affected Indians suffer stunting, are physically depleted, and are vulnerable to illnesses. In 2018, over 27 lakh Indians developed active TB disease and an estimated 4.4 lakh Indians died of TB — the highest number of cases and deaths of any country worldwide. Both these conditions insidiously deplete India's human capital. If India is to soar to the heights to which we aspire, we must address two insidious conditions that weigh down the economy — malnutrition and tuberculosis.

Malnutrition and TB not only hurt individuals and families, but also businesses and the economy. Tuberculosis acutely decreases productivity at work, increases risk of infecting co-workers, and may force businesses to hire and retrain new workers to replace ailing ones. The economic stress of TB diminishes disposable income for discretionary purchases: from real estate to air tickets and vacations; from automobiles to durables; from fashion to even fast-moving consumer goods. Families that earn more than 3.2 lakh annually lose five per

cent of their annual income to TB; and those that earn 0.5-1.2 lakh annually lose as much as 20 per cent of their annual income. This contributes to reduced sales and depressed margins for private sector firms across industry sectors. Studies estimate that India loses up to 2.5 per cent of its GDP due to micronutrient (vitamins and minerals) deficiencies alone. The loss is likely larger when we account for deficiencies in proteins, carbohydrates, and fats. Similarly, in 2016, TB cost the Indian economy 23.7 billion USD: around one per cent of India's GDP. Given the complexity of estimating direct and indirect costs, these figures may underestimate the economic impact of malnutrition and TB in India.

It is not coincidental, that India has a high burden of both malnutrition and TB. Doctors have known for many decades that malnutrition weakens the immune system. Consequently, malnourished individuals are more likely to develop TB. In some areas of India, more than half the cases of TB can be attributed to severe malnutrition and is the leading accelerator of the TB epidemic. Not only does malnutrition increase the risk for TB, it also increases the severity of disease. Malnourished patients recover more slowly and are also more likely to die of TB disease. Food is the most

needed medicine, the most needed vaccine.

Recognising that malnutrition and TB are intertwined is vital to designing good public health policy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration aims to eliminate TB by 2025. Although the national programme has made substantive advances in improving access to TB testing and treatment, efforts to address the pervasive malnutrition in our country have been anaemic. The ₹500 monthly subsidy offered by national TB program to buy food is a step in the right direction, but — to quote Robert Frost — we have "miles to go" before we sleep. And while India can take pride in programmes like the public distribution system and the midday meal program, these programs have inherent problems and limitations. Without rapidly improving nutrition for the most vulnerable Indians, India's audacious plan to end TB will be doomed to fail. The government must invest in meals as it does in medicines.

The Indian private sector has a history of contributing to national needs at moments when the government's capacity was limited. For instance,

at the dawn of Independence when India was dependent on imports for subsistence, visionaries like Jehangir Ratanji Dadabhai Tata invested strategically in core industries like steel, chemicals, hydroelectric power, and atomic research. Tata even gave India its first airline. Such private sector efforts helped the fledgling economy flutter into the skies.

Today, we believe India's private sector also needs to bring its considerable resources and original thinking to bear on this important aspect of nation-strengthening: the elimination of malnutrition and TB. Private businesses often have the logistical networks, reach, span and innovative spirit that are necessary to make grassroots interventions a success. The Indian government struggles at times to bring medicines and rations to the interiors of India, but Coca Cola is able to maintain a steady stock of beverages. In the smallest towns and villages of India, children still enjoy Horlicks and adults their cup of Lipton tea even as they shave with Palmolive shaving cream and launder with Surf.

"Eradicating hunger, poverty and malnutrition, promoting health care including preventive health care" is in fact the first subject in Schedule VII of the Companies Act 2013 which prescribes the core areas to be targeted with corporate social responsibility funds. Private business can contribute through monetary support of existing products, logistical support in getting food products to the most vulnerable Indians, and pro-bono donation of nutritional products. We believe these would constitute the most cost-effec-

tive, timely, and necessary use of corporate social responsibility (CSR) funds.

In particular, providing nutritional assistance to vulnerable households impacted by TB will decrease the likelihood of family members developing the disease, while also easing the household's financial burden and increasing likelihood of treatment success for persons already affected by the disease. It will also, we believe, help achieve the important goal of a "TB-mukt Bharat (TB-free India)".

Becoming involved in the fight against malnutrition will not only serve to fulfill the CSR mandate, but shall also enhance the company's brand reputation in the local communities and have a direct and tangible impact on the health of the community and the country. Seventy-two years since independence, India remains fettered by the steady erosion of our human capital. It is a time for nation strengthening. It is a time-again-for visionaries. Who will answer the call?

*Pranav Sinha is the Global Technical Community Leader for Audits at ERM and has advised more than 100 multinational corporations on maximising their positive impact on the environment and local communities in Asia, Africa, North America, and Europe over two decades.*

*Pranay Sinha is a physician who is currently working as an Infectious Diseases Research Fellow at Boston University School of Medicine. His research focuses on the impact of malnutrition on India's tuberculosis epidemic.*

## Fungus net: A giant underground brain with unimagined potential



Zarrar Khuhro

It is bright yellow and has 720 sexes (imagine the preferred pronouns for that, if you will). It has no nervous system or brain but yet is capable of solving problems like navigating through a maze (thanks to algorithms embedded in its biochemistry) and it can learn from experience and also transmit that knowledge. If it merges with another of its species, the newly formed creature possesses the knowledge of both halves.

It also has no stomach, eyes or mouth but can seek out and digest its favourite food which, you'll be glad to know, isn't human flesh but oatmeal. You'll also be relieved to hear that its maximum speed is about four centimetres an hour so if this creature changes its mind regarding its diet there's a good chance you'll be able to run away.

Oh, and did I mention that it is also functionally immortal? The only things it doesn't like are light and drought but in the worst-case scenario it can just go to sleep for a few years or even decades and wake up once the danger has passed.

Because this sounds like something out of a science fiction movie, the people at the Paris zoological park where this creature is exhibited are calling it 'the blob' in a nod to the classic 1950s horror movie, though its actual name, which translates to 'the many-headed slime', may be even cooler. While scientists admit that they 'don't actually know what it is' they are pretty sure it's not an animal or a plant, but may well be some form of fungus.

If so, it belongs to a truly ancient family; in 2014, scientists digging in the Canadian arctic found a billion-year-old fossil of a fungus they named *Ourasphaira giraldae*. When thinking about the implications of its age, please note that the first dinosaurs only appeared a mere 270 million years ago and that this discovery basically upends everything we thought we knew about how life on earth evolved.

Until now we thought that fungi and plants acted mostly together to colonise the surface of the earth, but given that the oldest plant fossils only date back some 470m years, this means that the fungi were first. This, in turn, means that animals (closely linked to fungi in the 'tree of life') may also have appeared on earth far earlier than we imagined.

While we are familiar with the descendants of this ancient fungus: mould, yeasts and mushrooms (magic and otherwise), it may come as a surprise that it is also related

to the largest living organism in the world. No, that's not the blue whale but is in fact the *Armillaria ostoyae*, which is also appropriately dubbed the 'humongous fungus'. Humongous because not only does it weigh over 400 tons, this single organism covers about 2,385 acres in Oregon's Malheur National Forest.

That's close to four square kilometres, a size a little larger than Male, the capital city of the Maldives and it was alive and kicking around the time Socrates was born. It, and other giant fungi (yes, there are quite a few... that we know of) live largely underground, and feed and multiply by literally sucking the life out of the trees in the forests where they live and planting their spores in the rotting husks.

If you think that's rather unpleasant, then you haven't met the downright evil *Ophiocordyceps unilateralis*, the zombie-ant fungus. This sinister 'shroom' not only invades ants' cells but also creates its own linked networks inside the ants' body, killing its neurons and forcing it to move and act according to the fungus' wishes.

These franken-ants then find an appropriate plant and sink their jaws into the leaves at the precise height dictated by these body-snatching fungi and wait there while the fungal stalks sprout out of its body to rain down spores on other, unsuspecting ants. Nature certainly does give off serial killer vibes sometimes. And if that is not mind-blowing enough, did you know that fungi can also act like an internet for plants? Known as the 'fungal internet' or the "wood wide web", this is an interlinked underground network of fungi that actually helps plants communicate and exchange not just nutrients but information as well.

For example, if a tomato plant at one end of the network is attacked by aphids or a disease, tomato plants at the other end of the mycorrhizal network learn about it and implement countermeasures making themselves less susceptible to the infestation.

How far do these networks span? We don't know for sure but they may well be continent-wide in some cases — an underground brain with potential beyond what we can currently imagine. Indeed, the more we learn, the less we know about how to define 'life' itself, let alone sentience. Think about that the next time you're enjoying your cream of mushroom soup.

By arrangement with Dawn

## Face your world with a smile



Francis Gonsalves

Getting dressed this morning, you must have certainly looked into a mirror. You probably took great care to make yourself look presentable, even lovable. But, did you check about wearing a big smile to light up your face? A song from the Broadway musical *Annie* insightfully says: "You're never fully dressed without a smile". How true.

Your face is your passport to enter into people's lives. Today, your face will reveal to those you meet whether you're glad or sad, whether you wish to talk to them or ignore them, and whether you wish them well or are simply uninterested in

their welfare. So, why don't you put your best face forward to everyone you'll face today?

In the Bible, "face" has many meanings. Face stands for the "self". To honour one's face is to honour the person her/himself.

When the king asks: "Why is your face sad?" it means, "Why are you sad?" With childlike simplicity, when Moses desires to hide himself, he covers his face and his radiant face amply indicates that he has seen God. The face reveals nature and character. Gospel writer Luke describes the face of Christianity's first martyr, Stephen, as the "face of an angel" and the transfigured face of Jesus "shone like the sun" indicating his divine

nature. The face indicates presence. To "see the face" simply means to be in the presence of someone. The psalmist "seeks the face of God" ever yearning to experience divine presence and power.

Moreover, the face stands for light and blessing. "O God, may your face shine upon us that we may be saved" and "May the Lord make his face to shine upon you". Finally, the face reveals emotions: "No longer shall Jacob be ashamed, no longer shall his face grow pale," and, "A glad heart makes a cheerful countenance". Prophet Ezekiel reproaches the wicked by saying: "Shame shall be

on their faces".

Be attentive to those you will face today. The faces of those you call *chaiwalla*, *sabziwalli*, *chowkidar*, *maali* or driver might only interest you for providing the services you need. But they all have names, besides being fathers, mothers, sisters and brothers of someone who loves them dearly. Wouldn't it be good to put names to faces?

Giving a few extra bucks to the driver who drove you to work, asking the maali about his family, or gifting your cook a new sari occasionally cause faces to brighten and smiles to lengthen.

Every face tells a story. Let's get behind the faces we see today and strive to brighten up a few of them with a kind word, a generous deed or a contagious smile. Even if others' faces do not light up; surely, one will: yours.

*Francis Gonsalves is a professor of theology. He can be contacted at fragnons@gmail.com*







## Regional stability

The 'Quad' supports rules, norms and regional resilience amid China's growing influence in the region, says Aussie FM Marise Payne

## BREXIT

# Britain goes to polls on Dec. 12

London, Oct. 30: Britain's political leaders tested their election pitches on Wednesday after parliament backed Prime Minister Boris Johnson's bid for a pre-Christmas poll aimed at breaking the lengthy Brexit deadlock.



IT WILL BE A tough election but we will do our best.

**BORIS JOHNSON, British Prime Minister**

trade unions as well as party leader Jeremy Corbyn. But the veteran socialist is an energetic campaigner who nearly managed to secure an upset victory in the last general election in 2017.

Corbyn calls the vote "a once in a generation chance to transform our country" and is promising "the most ambitious and radical campaign for real change".

His deputy and finance spokesman John McDonnell hailed his boss's abilities on the stump. "I think we'll have a majority government by Christmas, so I can't think of a better Christmas present," he said.

Labour's Brexit promise is to seize power and then strike a more European-friendly agreement with Brussels that preserves many of the existing trade ties.

It would then let voters choose between that deal and the option of simply staying in the EU.

"We're saying democracy, the people decide," McDonnell said.

The two other main players are adopting much firmer Brexit stances.

The fast-rising Liberal Democrats are going into the vote on a simple promise of stopping the EU-UK divorce by any means. — AFP

# Democrats unveil Trump impeachment procedure

US Prez accused of pressurising Ukraine to investigate political rival

The procedures offer Trump several protection including that his counsel will receive copies of any statements of information and related documents and other evidentiary material furnished to the members of the committee.



The president and his counsel may attend the presentation of evidence by majority and minority committee counsel.

The president's counsel may submit written summaries of additional testimony or evidence the President wishes the Judiciary Committee to consider.

The president and his counsel may attend all hearings of the Judiciary Committee, including any held in executive session.

The resolution permits the minority to issue subpoenas with the concurrence of the chair or authorised by a committee vote.

Reacting sharply to the move of the Opposition Democratic Party, the White House described the resolution an "illegitimate sham".

"The resolution put forward by Speaker Pelosi confirms that House Democrats' impeachment has been an illegitimate sham from the start as it lacked any proper authorisation by a House vote," White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

Later, justifying the impeachment procedure, House Judiciary Committee Chairman Jerrold Nadler said: "These procedures confer, among other things, rights for the President equal to those provided during the (Richard) Nixon and (Bill) Clinton inquiries. This committee is committed to executing its part of the House's ongoing impeachment investigation with the highest fealty to the Constitution." — PTI

Washington, Oct. 30: The Democratic Party, which controls the US House of Representatives, has unveiled a resolution setting out the next steps in their impeachment efforts against President Donald Trump.

President Trump, a Republican, is accused of trying to pressure Ukraine into investigating unsubstantiated corruption claims against his political rival, Joe Biden, and his son who worked with Ukrainian gas company Burisma.

The eight-page resolution made public on Wednesday, sets out a more public phase of the inquiry and hands the lead role in hearings to the chair of the intelligence committee, Adam Schiff.

The House is expected to vote on the measure on Thursday. "There is mounting evidence that the president abused his power and betrayed our national security while compromising the integrity of

America's elections," Rules Committee Chairman James P McGovern said.

"The House impeachment inquiry has collected extensive evidence and testimony, and soon the American people will hear

from witnesses in an open setting. The resolution introduced in the House Rules Committee will provide that pathway forward," the heads of four House committees said in a joint statement.

Following in the foot-

steps of previous impeachment inquiries, the next phase will move from closed depositions to open hearings where the American people will learn firsthand about the president's "misconduct", they said.

# Pak Min: Nations backing India on Kashmir will be hit by missile

Islamabad, Oct. 30: A Pakistan minister has courted controversy by saying that any country that will support India over the Kashmir issue will be hit by a missile by Pakistan and considered as an "enemy" of Islamabad.

"If tensions with India rise on Kashmir, Pakistan will be compelled to go to war. Those countries backing India and not Pakistan (over Kashmir) will be considered our enemy and a missile will be fired at India and those nations supporting it," minister for Kashmir affairs and Gilgit Baltistan Ali Amin Gandapur said.

Pakistan-based journal-



Ali Amin Gandapur

ist Naila Inayat tweeted a part of the video in which the minister is seen making the inflammatory remarks.

The Pak leader's rhetoric on Kashmir issue comes at a time when Pakistan has been snubbed globally over the

matter. Islamabad has unilaterally downgraded bilateral ties after it cried foul over New Delhi's move to abrogate Article 370 that granted special powers to Jammu and Kashmir. India has maintained that the decision is its internal matter, a stance which has been supported by several countries, including the Saarc nations and the Arab World.

In his maiden address at the UN General Assembly in New York in September, Prime Minister Imran Khan had devoted his 50-minute speech on Kashmir and resorted to anti-India rant. Even at that time, Khan raked up the

dire consequences in the event of a nuclear war with India.

"If a conventional war starts between the two countries anything could happen. A country seven times smaller than its neighbour what will it do — either surrender or fight for its freedom," he had said.

"My belief is we will fight and when a nuclear-armed country fights till the end it will consequence far beyond the borders. I am warning you. It's not a threat but worry about where are we heading. If this goes wrong you hope for the best but prepare for the worst," he had added. — ANI

## Raging inferno



Firefighter Alex DeLeon of South Lake Tahoe, California, bundles up against the cold wind on a ridge between Sonoma and Lake County as the Kincadee Fire burns in northern California. The flames prompted a flurry of false fire reports on the Santa Rosa plain. — AP

## LeT, AN IDEAL PROXY FOR ISI: US EXPERT

Washington, Oct. 30: Lashkar-e-Taiba, a UN-designated terrorist outfit, is a "perfect proxy" for Pakistan's spy agency ISI, a leading American expert on security issues has said.

"Literally, the Pakistan Army trains, the LeT. Which is why they are so competent," Christine Fair from the Georgetown University said in an apparent reference to some of the high-profile terrorist strikes inside India, during a roundtable at the Hudson Institute think-tank.

"And they are very pro-State. So, in some ways LeT was made that way. LeT is an ideal proxy. LeT is as close as you get to a perfect proxy," said Fair, who is author of the book *In Their Own Words: Understanding Lashkar-e-Taiba*. Fair said she supported the government's decision to revoke Article 370 from the Indian Constitution. — PTI

## WHAT | NEXT ISIS chief's killing is a big blow to militant group that flourished under his leadership

# Chaos, fear of riots grip ISIS post Baghdadi's elimination

Beirut, Oct. 30: One of Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi's last audio messages was an appeal for his followers to do everything in their power to free Islamic State detainees and the women being held in jails and camps in northeastern Syria.

With news of the extremist group's leader's death, Kurdish security forces worried about the possibility of attacks or rioting have been tightening security at these facilities, which hold more than 80,000 members and supporters of the militant

group, including women and children.

Fear of chaos already was running high over the fate of those detained after this month's Turkish military invasion of northeastern Syria, which ushered in major troop changes in the area about two weeks after al-Baghdadi's message. Kurdish officials said they needed to divert fighters and logistics to the front line to ward off the Turkish offensive. Turkey moved troops into areas along the border, while Syrian border guards were deployed in others.

The nighttime raid by US special operations forces was a blow to the militant group that became a global organization under his leadership.



A shaky cease-fire is in place and an agreement to redeploy Kurdish forces

ushers in a new phase for IS amid uncertainty over the new leadership as thousands of its supporters and members languish in jails

away from the borders. While news of al-Baghdadi's death had not

been announced in the camps, many of his supporters living in detention facilities and camps in Syria have telephones and they most likely heard the news.

"If our men are in prison, we are the soldiers of the Caliphate," some of the women held in al-Hol, the largest holding camp in northern Syria chanted, according to a security official with the Kurdish-led internal security agency. The camp is home to 70,000, most of them women and children including about 11,000 for-

eigners. More than 10,000 prisoners, including 2,000 foreigners, are in detention facilities in northeastern Syria.

The nighttime raid by US special operations forces was a blow to the militant group that became a global organization under his leadership. His demise only few months after losing the group's territorial hold ushers in a new phase for IS amid uncertainty over the new leadership as thousands of its supporters and members languish in prisons. The decentralized group,

with members estimated anywhere between 14,000 or 30,000, has already pivoted toward insurgency after losing its territory in the last couple of years. But its branches abroad and the number of those who pledged their allegiance have increased.

Who the next leader is will likely determine whether the group will dig in to consolidate its hold on Syria and Iraq — or focus on global outreach.

The group has not officially announced his death or named a new leader. — AP



I'm happy to leave the House of Commons as a Conservative MP, on good terms

— Amber Rudd  
Former home secretary

## BRIEF

### Shooting at LA Halloween party

Los Angeles: At least three people were killed and nine others injured in a shooting at a Halloween party in southern Los Angeles. Aerial footage from local TV news channels showed paramedics treating the injured in a yard between a nail salon and a residential home in Long Beach. Neighbours said the shooting took place at a Halloween party. The wounded were transported to local hospitals, the Long Beach Fire Department said on Twitter. The local fire department confirmed three fatalities and said nine patients were transported to local hospitals. People in costumes could be seen limping out of the building, a witness said.

### Thai guards fired over adultery

Bangkok: Thailand's king has sacked four royal guards, two of them for "adultery", in a fresh wave of palace purges a week after his royal consort was stripped of all titles for "disloyalty". Thai King Maha Vajiralongkorn ordered the dismissal of two male guards from the "bedroom section". "They have committed inappropriate acts and adultery," the statement said. The other two officers failed to meet the standards of the royal guard and were dismissed without compensation. Thailand's royal family is protected by a defamation law that makes scrutiny of its actions all but impossible within the kingdom. But the purges have offered a rare glimpse into the powerful palace.

### FB to pay Britain for data breach

London: Facebook agreed to pay a 5,00,000 pounds fine for breaches of data protection law related to the harvesting of data by consultancy Cambridge Analytica, Britain's information regulator said. The Information Commissioner's Office last year fined Facebook after it said data from at least 1 million British users had been among that harvested by Cambridge Analytica and used for political purposes. Meanwhile, Facebook on Wednesday said it took down accounts linked to a Russian ally of President Vladimir Putin seeking to spread disinformation on the social platform in eight African countries.

### HARIRI TO STAY ON AS CARETAKER

Beirut, Oct. 30: Lebanon's President on Wednesday acknowledged the government's resignation following almost two weeks of unprecedented protests but asked it to stay on until a new cabinet is formed. Michel Aoun "asked the government to continue to conduct affairs until a new cabinet is formed," his office said. He said the measure followed the constitutional provision for cases in which the government steps down. Prime Minister Saad Hariri announced his cabinet's resignation on Tuesday, the 13th day of a wave of protests triggered by a proposed tax on calls via free phone applications. Though that proposal was then scrapped, the demonstrations swelled into a broad cross-sectarian call for an end to a political system viewed as corrupt and inefficient. Many of the country's ruling elite hail from political parties or families that have been in power since the end of the 1975-1990 civil war



Michel Aoun





Srei, United  
Bank team  
up to offer  
MSME  
loansFiat Chrysler, Peugeot  
mull \$50 billion tie-up

Overleaf

quick  
BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	40,051.87 +0.55
Nifty 50	11,844.10 +0.49
S&P 500	3,034.29 -0.09
Dollar (₹)	71.08 +0.23
Pound Sterling (₹)	91.65 +0.45
Euro (₹)	79.20 +0.52
Gold (10gm) (₹)	38,010.94 +0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)	\$61.13 -0.46
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.664 -0.015
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.812 -0.023

\* As of 9:30 pm IST

Standard Life  
sells 5% in HDFC  
Life for ₹5,750 cr

UK's Standard Life divested 4.95 per cent stake in HDFC Life Insurance Co. for over Rs 5,750 crore through open market transactions. The US-based Capital Group is among the buyers which picked up shares of the insurance firm. Standard Life (Mauritius Holdings) 2006 Ltd, one of the promoters, sold 10 crore shares at an average price of Rs 575.15.

HDFC acquires  
9.89% stake in  
Bandhan Bank

Mortgage firm HDFC Ltd has acquired 9.89 per cent stake in Bandhan Bank as part of scheme of merger. As many as 15.93 crore shares of the bank was transferred to HDFC. Bandhan said in a regulatory filing. Earlier this month, the bank merged with Gruh Finance, which brought down the promoter shareholding from 82.26 per cent to 60.96 per cent.

India ranks 3rd  
in Asia for  
sustainability

Indian companies have ranked third in Asia's overall environmental sustainability out of eight markets studied, with an average score of 63.12, slightly above the regional average of 62.34 points, says a Refinitiv survey. Companies in Hong Kong had the best overall performance with an average score of 70.06, followed by S. Korea (64.57) and India (63.12).

Hyundai, Kia  
stake buy in  
ANI, Ola okayed

The Competition Commission said it has approved acquisition of minority stake by Hyundai Motor and Kia Motors in ANI Technologies and Ola Electric. The CCI, in a tweet, said it "approves acquisition of shares in ANI Technologies and Ola Electric by Hyundai Motor and Kia Motors subject to compliance of modifications." In India, ANI provides radio taxi services under Ola name.

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Firm tells lenders it won't be able to honour commitments for long  
Voda Idea seeks debt recastP R SANJAI & ANTO  
ANTONY  
OCT. 30

Vodafone Group Plc's Indian venture, reeling under \$14 billion of net debt, mounting losses and dwindling subscribers, has approached creditors for better payment terms to revive the sinking carrier, people with direct knowledge of the matter said.

Vodafone Idea Ltd., formed by last year's merger of the British telecommunications firm's local unit with billionaire Kumar Mangalam Birla's Idea Cellular Ltd., has warned lenders that it won't be able to honour its commitments for long under current conditions, the people said, asking not to be named as the discussions are private. One of its requests was a temporary halt to loan payments, although no formal proposal has been made, two of the people said.

A spokesman for Vodafone Idea said the company hasn't asked lenders to rework payment terms and the carrier continues to pay all its debts as and when they fall due. "The financial stress in the telecom sector is well acknowledged and all telecom operators have asked for requisite help in reducing it," the firm said in the statement. A spokesman for the Newbury, UK-based Vodafone Group pointed to a filing by the India ven-

## War erupts as Jio slams COAI 'blackmailing'

New Delhi, Oct. 30: Leading telecom players Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea will face an "unprecedented crisis" if the government refuses to relax its demand for \$13 billion in outstanding dues, says the Cellular Operators Association of India (COAI), a lobby group.

The lobby group has joined the fray, seeking the intervention of telecoms minister in a letter dated Oct. 29, arguing that such huge payments will lead to a crisis at the companies and cause distress for the sector as a whole.

"Investments could be curtailed, services could deteriorate, jobs could be lost and investor confidence will most definitely be shattered," COAI Director General Rajan S. Mathews said in the letter. "The impact of this crisis could exacerbate the stress in the industry and

potentially be catastrophic for the nation." Bharti and Vodafone both backed COAI's views in the letter. But rival Reliance Jio, a COAI member, said the lobby group's letter does not represent industry views.

Reliance "completely disagrees with the intent, tone, contents and connotations of the COAI letter", it said in a letter to COAI, which it released to the media.

Jio slammed COAI for its "threatening and blackmailing" tone in its communication to the government on non-existent crisis in the sector.

Jio accused COAI of "serious breach of trust" and having a "prejudiced mindset completely laced with one-sided thought process"...It seems there were extraneous consideration to sent this letter," Jio said.

—Agencies

ture in July that stated Vodafone Idea had been in discussions with lenders for some waivers in the prior quarter. He didn't comment further.

The distress at India's No. 2 phone operator deepened last week after the nation's top court ordered it to pay about \$4 billion in past dues, dealing a fresh blow to the struggling business. Vodafone Idea has been losing subscribers and reporting losses every quarter since the two partners announced their merger in 2017, while the entry of billionaire Mukesh Ambani's wireless provider Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd. a year ear-

## Baseless: Voda

New Delhi, Oct. 30:

Vodafone Idea said it has not made any debt recast request to any lender or asked for reworking of payment terms, and said it will continue to pay all its debt as and when it falls due. It said reports over this is "baseless and factually incorrect". —PTI

er with free calls and cheap data added to the venture's woes.

The court ruling on October 24 was part of a

wider legal dispute over the way Indian carriers calculate revenue. The nation's top court upheld the government's method, and told several companies, including now-defunct ones, to pay about \$13 billion in total.

An upfront liability for Vodafone Idea may compel it to appeal to the National Company Law Tribunal, analysts G.V. Giri and Balaji Subramanian at IIFL Securities Ltd wrote in a report last week, referring to the quasi-judicial body that handles insolvency petitions.

Should the government take substantial steps to ease the burden of the car-

—Bloomberg

## Sensex crosses 40K mark again

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, OCT. 30

The Sensex on Wednesday regained the 40,000 level after a gap of more than four months. Gaining for the fourth consecutive session, the index closed at 40,051.87, up 220.03 points.

The Sensex had made huge gains in May-June following the NDA victory

and touched a high of 40,312.07 on June 4, 2019.

The broader Nifty-50 Index also closed 0.40 per cent, or 57.25 points, to end at 11,844.10.

The market's gain in the last four sessions came largely on the back of good second quarter earnings announced by blue chip companies, auto and retail sales picking up during the

festival season as well as the buzz in the market that the government may rationalise securities transaction related long-term capital gains tax, dividend distribution tax and the securities transaction tax.

But the Sensex's 40K level can be largely credited to corporate tax cut announced by the government last month, which led

to better second quarter earnings and festival season sales.

The broader market, however, is yet to recover, as the measures announced by the government are likely to benefit large-caps, analysts said. The Nifty-50 is up 15.54 per cent per cent in the last one year but the Nifty Midcap-50 Index is down 0.77 per cent.

Aramco to keep 4.6 mn  
barrels in Indian storage

New Delhi, Oct. 30:

India will lease a quarter of its strategic petroleum reserve in Padur to Saudi Aramco to store about 4.6 million barrels of oil, a government official said on Wednesday, as New Delhi seeks global investment in its expanding energy infrastructure.

Global oil producers are eager to gain a foothold in India, where fuel demand is expected to rise as the country's economy grows.

Indian Strategic Petroleum Reserves Ltd, a government company charged with building oil storage, signed a memorandum of understanding with the Saudi state firm for its participation in the 2.5-million-tonne facility in Karnataka state.

"Aramco has signed an MoU for only one compartment," said HPS Ahuja,

Chief Executive of the Indian company. The Padur storage facility has four equal-sized compartments.

So far, Abu Dhabi National Oil Co is the only foreign company storing oil in India's strategic reserves, at Mangalore, also in Karnataka. Last year it signed a preliminary agreement to use half of the Padur reserve.

Ahuj said Aramco would have to keep some of the 4.6 million barrels for India's strategic needs, but could sell the rest to Indian refiners.

India, which relies on imports for about 80 per cent of its oil needs, has underground emergency storage in three locations to protect against any supply disruption. The reserves can hold 36.87 million barrels.

—Reuters

Lenders court risky borrowers  
to push up retail loan growthFALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, OCT. 30

Banks and non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) are increasingly focussing on lending to riskier segments such as credit cards and personal loans to maintain their topline, as growth in home, auto loans and loan against property (LAP) segments decline. With economic growth plunging to a six-year low and unemployment rising to a 45-year high, growth in consumer loans decelerated in the second quarter, driven primarily by secured lending products.

According to a latest TransUnion Cibil Industry Insights Report, consumer loans grew 17.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in Q2 2019, compared to 23.5 per cent in Q2 2018. Growth in credit cards and personal loans significantly outpaced growth witnessed in auto loans, home loans and loans against property.

At the close of Q2 2019, a record 2.77 crore consumers held a credit card, driving outstanding balances to almost Rs 1 lakh crore. Origination



volumes continue to exhibit a robust growth of 30.2 per cent to 36 lakh. During Q2 2019, there was a shift in credit card originations to higher risk tiers observed Cibil. In Q2 2019, 32.1 per cent of card originations were to consumers with poor credit scores (below prime risk tiers) compared to 26.4 per cent in Q2 2018. Similarly in the case of personal loans, the data showed a shift in loan origination towards high risk tiers with 44.8 per cent of total originations in Q2 2019 to borrowers in below prime segment (sub-prime and near prime) compared to 36.4 per cent in Q2 2018. Near prime borrowers are

those with credit scores between 650 and 700, while sub-prime borrowers are those with scores between 300 and 650. According to the report, almost 50 per cent of the NBFC originations in Q2 2019 were to borrowers in below-prime segments, which represented an increase of 8.5 per cent over Q2 2018.

On the other hand, auto loans recorded the slowest rate of growth of all major lending categories in Q2 2019. Auto loan balances grew 10.9 per cent YoY in Q2 2019 to Rs 4.17 lakh crore, down significantly from growth of 23.3 per cent in Q2 2018. This was primarily due to soft results in public and private sector lenders, whose balances grew at 8.3 per cent and 10.1 per cent, respectively, in Q2 2019, compared to 21.4 per cent and 26 per cent in Q2 2018.

In the housing market, originations volumes and balances declined YoY in Q2 2019, implying likely soft market conditions going forward. Home loan delinquencies saw a small YoY improvement. LAP origination balances declined by 20 per cent YoY.

## J&amp;J's own expert found asbestos in Baby Powder

CHAD TERHUNE,  
LISA GIRION  
OCT. 30

Ever since Johnson & Johnson disclosed this month that a government test had turned up asbestos in its Baby Powder, the company has attacked the validity of the result.

On Tuesday, for example, J&J announced that other labs it hired ultimately found no asbestos in samples from the bottle tested by the US Food and Drug Administration or from the

same production lot.

In challenging the FDA's finding, however, the healthcare giant is casting doubt on one of its own experts. The private Maryland lab that found asbestos in Baby Powder under a contract with the FDA is run by a paid expert witness for J&J.

Andreas Saldivar, laboratory director of AMA Analytical Services Inc, has served as a litigation expert on several occasions for J&J since 2017 in its defence against plaintiffs'



claims that asbestos in talc caused their cancers.

He testified in a May 2018 deposition that testing he did in 2010 for the FDA showed no evidence of asbestos in Johnson's Baby Powder, helping to bolster the company's argument that its iconic brand is safe.

Saldivar's lab began testing cosmetic talc products for the FDA again this year, and in September it found asbestos in an unmarked sample that the FDA later identified as Johnson's Baby Powder.

"I have never heard of anything like this," said Richard Aunsness, a University of Kentucky law professor who specialises in product liability, referring to Saldivar's dual roles. "This is bad news for J&J. The plaintiffs are clearly going to say this lab

director worked for J&J for years, and he found asbestos so there must be asbestos there."

J&J's challenge now is to discredit the single test result as erroneous without undermining the reputation and track record of its expert witness, Aunsness said.

"J&J could try to frame it as not so much this lab director is unreliable or incompetent, but false positives do happen and additional tests are called for," Aunsness said.

The company appeared to do just that on Tuesday, saying testing done by other laboratories J&J hired had found no asbestos in the same bottle of Baby Powder tested by Saldivar for the FDA, nor in the lot of Baby Powder recalled as a result of Saldivar's finding.

In an interview with Reuters, FDA officials said they stood by the AMA lab and its results. They also said they were not surprised by J&J's findings.

—Reuters



**OPENING BELL**  
PROJECTION FOR TODAY

**Overall trend remains positive**

The Sensex regained the 40000 level on Wednesday as the market gained for the fourth consecutive session on heavy buying by the foreign portfolio investors.

The Sensex closed at 40051.87 gaining 220.03 points or 0.55 per cent, the gains came after over 1.4 per cent gain on Tuesday, as reports of tax rationalisation on securities transactions and better festivals season sales for autos and retailers were getting stronger.

Broader Nifty-50 index also closed 0.40 per cent or 57.25 points up at 1844.10.

FPIs were net buyers of Indian equities worth Rs 7,192.42 crore in a single trading session due to large block deals in shares of HDFC Life Insurance and HDFC Asset Management Company.

The broader market also gained with BSE Mid Cap Index up 0.65 per cent and BSE Small Cap Index up 0.36 per cent.

**Technical View**

Sameet Chavan, Chief Analyst-Technical and Derivatives, Angel Broking said, "Tuesday's strong broad based rally was followed by a decent bump up at the opening on Wednesday... We still remain sanguine and expect this rally to extend towards the next immediate level of 11,900 first and then towards the magical figure of 12000. For the coming session, 11800-11784 would now be seen as immediate support base."

Jay Thakkar, head - Technical and Derivatives Research, Anand Rathi Shares and Stock Brokers, said, "The index after having provided a breakout above 11,700 levels the upward momentum has begun and with that the probability of it inching towards 12,000 levels and thereafter 12,300 levels is quite high. Now, till 11,700 levels aren't broken the overall trend remains positive."

**Market View**

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "Market is positive in expectation of fresh reforms from the government and change in the long-term capital gain tax in the future. After a long-time the market is seeing incentive to invest in equity due to reduction in taxation producing better than expected Q2FY20 result, providing a hope that earnings growth will revamp further in H2FY20."

—RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

# Srei, United Bank team up to offer MSME loans

**RITWIK MUKHERJEE**  
KOLKATA, OCT. 30:

In first such initiative, Srei Equipment Finance Limited, an arm of Srei Infrastructure Finance Limited (Srei), has teamed up with United Bank of India to jointly offer loans to MSME sector and retail customers under a co-lending arrangement.

As a starter, Srei Equipment and UBI have already organised loan utavs across 20 cities including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Pune, Nagpur, Jaipur, Haldia, Durgapur, Ranchi, Keonjhar, Bolangir, Patna, Vijaywada, Rajkot, Chandigarh, Karnal, Udaipur, Lucknow, and Bhopal.

"The joint initiative is aimed at fulfilling the government's vision of making credit available to MSME and retail customers at affordable cost. While providing best in class financial solutions to our customers has always been our key focus, our customers also had the opportunity to acquire equipment from leading global OEMs (original equipment makers) in this Loan Utsav. The gatherings in this campaign offered both, United Bank of India and our OEM partners the prospect to expand their customer base. The initiative additionally furthers our strategy of sustaining and strengthening our leadership position in the equipment finance space," said Devendra Kumar Vyas, Managing Director, Srei Equipment Finance.



Srei Equipment's OEM partners—including Komatsu, JCB, Volvo Equipment, SANY, Kobelco, Tata Hitachi, Hyundai, Liugong and L&T Construction and Mining Machinery—participated actively at the Loan Utsav and presented a wide range of infrastructure equipment such as excavators, tipplers, loaders, motor graders, etc. to the customers.

"United Bank of India and Srei are the first in the industry to enter into an arrangement for co-origination of loans under the Co-origination Model between Banks and NBFCs (non-deposit taking) for providing competitive credit to priority sector... In today's environment collaboration is the key to success and make credit available to the MSME sector is also in line with Govt. objective. The conduct of joint Loan Utsavs will provide an opportunity for us to increase our customer base," said Ashok Kumar Pradhan, MD & CEO, United Bank of India.

# Pact with Germany for using AI in farming likely

**New Delhi, Oct. 30:** Germany and India are likely to sign agreements including a partnership on the use of artificial intelligence in farming during a three-day visit to New Delhi by Chancellor Angela Merkel that begins on Thursday, the German ambassador said.

Merkel will be accompanied by several cabinet colleagues and a business delegation, ambassador Walter J. Lindner told reporters.

Merkel and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi are expected to discuss trade, investment, regional security and climate change.

Both countries could sign agreements in areas such as artificial intelligence and green urban mobility, Lindner said. "This time, the focus will be on economic and trade relations, innovation and digitalization, and climate protection and sustainable development," Merkel said in a message ahead of the visit released by the Indian embassy in Berlin.

Bilateral trade between the two countries rose to \$24.06 billion in the 2018/19 fiscal year ending in March from \$22 billion the previous year, while German companies have invested nearly \$12 billion in India since 2000.

Germany is India's largest trading partner in Europe and more than 1,700 German companies are operating in India.

—Reuters



# Bid to overcome tech & regulatory challenges Fiat, Peugeot mull \$50 billion tie-up

**GIULIO PIOVACCARI & SUDIP KAR-GUPTA**  
MILAN/PARIS, OCT. 30

Talks between Fiat Chrysler and Peugeot owner PSA over a potential tie-up that could create a \$50 billion (£39 billion) car giant gathered pace on Wednesday, with one source saying a deal could be announced as early as Thursday.

The two groups said in separate statements they were holding discussions aimed at creating one of the world's leading auto makers, better placed to tackle a host of costly technological and regulatory challenges facing the global auto industry.

A deal could be announced soon, a source familiar with the discussions said. A Fiat Chrysler Automobiles (FCA) spokesperson declined to comment on a timeline.

After ditching a proposed merger with Renault in June, FCA Chairman John Elkann confirmed the group's bid to pursue an alternative alliance as carmakers face huge investments in electrification, emission reduction and autonomous driving technologies.

Even if a combination of PSA and FCA succeeds in overcoming political, financial and governance hurdles, the new enterprise would still face substantial challenges.

The deal is being put together as automakers face a global downturn in demand at a time when the

cost of investments into low-emission technologies are rising as deadlines to meet ever more stringent anti-pollution rules loom.

Morningstar senior equity analyst Richard Hilgert said in a note that total volume of FCA and PSA, including China joint venture partners, amounted to 8.7 million vehicles last year, ranking the eventual combined group fourth behind Volkswagen, Toyota and the Renault/Nissan Alliance, each at more than 10 million vehicles.

"We view the combination of these two companies as reasonable given global competition, high capital intensity, and industry disruption from electrified powertrain as well as autonomous technologies," Hilgert said.

France is closely monitoring the merger discussions, with special attention given to governance matters, a French finance ministry source told Reuters on Wednesday. Paris has a 12 per cent stake in PSA through state bank BPL.

Italy's Industry Minister Stefano Patuanelli said on Wednesday that Rome—which has no stake in FCA—was following talks between the two groups but declined to comment further on a "market operation".

Rome is keen to avoid major job losses in Italy, where 58,000 workers are employed by FCA, and with most of its Italian plants heavily underused.

Closing factories is politically problematic, but carmakers can glean savings by combining vehicle platforms and plants, pooling research and development efforts and increasing economies of scale in procurement.

The talks come as European carmakers struggle to meet tough carbon dioxide emissions targets.

Strategy firm PA Consulting has forecast FCA faces a fine of 700 million euros (\$777 million) unless it radically changes its emissions profile to sell more electric and hybrid cars.

—Reuters

# Blackstone takes 37.5% in Aakash Edu.

**New Delhi, Oct 30:** Private equity firm Blackstone has picked up 37.5 per cent stake in competitive examination preparation firm Aakash Educational Services Ltd for \$500 million (over Rs 3,545 crore), according to sources.

Blackstone, which last week received approval from the Competition Commission of India (CCI) for picking up 51 per cent stake in Aakash Educational Services Ltd (AESL), is keeping options open to hike stake in the institute.

In a statement, the two companies said their partnership will help in building AESL as India's largest digitally enabled, omni-channel education company.

"The 37.5 per cent stake picked up by Blackstone is valued at \$500 million. Considering the fact that the PE firm received CCI approval for 51 per cent stake last week, it still has headroom to increase stake in AESL," a source said.

However, picking up of any additional stake will depend on how AESL performs going forward.

—PTI

# Women too cautious with savings

**New Delhi, Oct 30:** Women are 'recklessly cautious' when it comes to saving as nearly 58 per cent prefer to park their money in either fixed deposits, public provident fund (PPF) or letting it lie in their savings account, according to a survey. Besides, 6 per cent respondents said they preferred to buy gold, while 15 per cent of them picked mutual funds to invest their excess income, the survey by Scripbox, which provides online financial services, said.

Scripbox, which undertook this survey in the first two weeks of October 2019 on leading Facebook Communities, received inputs from 400 women. Of these, 54 per cent were millennials, 56 per cent were non-millennials.

Three-fourths of millennial women overwhelmingly favour saving, the survey noted.

Setting aside money for vacations emerged as the goal for one in six millennials. In contrast, half of non-millennials pursue investment goals such as building up a retirement corpus.

—PTI

# US economy grows 1.9% in Q3

**DOUGLAS GILLISON**  
WASHINGTON, OCT. 30.

The American economy slowed a touch in the third quarter but remained solid, thanks to a pickup in home sales and steady consumer spending, government figures showed Wednesday.

GDP growth avoided the steeper dropoff feared by economists but the US-China trade war still walloped the business sector, according to Commerce Department data.

The steady expansion offered President Donald Trump a measure of relief for his economic agenda, which has failed to produce the three per cent growth he touted.

The economy expanded 1.9 per cent in the July-September period, well above economists' expectations but a notch lower than the 2.0 per cent growth seen in the second quarter.

The result, which is subject to revision, muddies the waters a bit for the US Federal Reserve, which later Wednesday is expected to announce a third consecutive interest rate cut.

—AFP

## PERFORMANCE STREET

### UBI posts ₹124-cr net profit

United Bank of India reported a net profit of Rs 123.88 crore in the quarter ended September 30, on the back of substantially lower dud loans, leading to lower provisioning requirement. The Kolkata-headquartered bank had posted a net loss of Rs 883.17 crore in July-September 2018-19. The lender's total income rose to Rs 3,013.74 crore in the September 2019 quarter, compared with Rs 2,600.47 crore earned in the year-ago period.

During the quarter, the lender reported slippages

of around Rs 1,000 crore, out of which Rs 800 crore was from corporate accounts, MD and CEO Ashok Pradhan said.

UBI brought down its net non-performing assets to 7.88 per cent as on September 30, from 14.36 per cent a year ago. Gross NPAs reduced to 15.51 per cent of the gross advances from 22.69 per cent. In absolute terms, the net NPAs were Rs 5,380.93 crore against Rs 8,658.10 crore, while the gross NPAs were Rs 11,544.19 crore from Rs 15,163.28 crore.

### Graphite India net dips 83%

Graphite India reported an 83.37 per cent dip in its consolidated net profit to Rs 185 crore for the September quarter, mainly on account of lower sales. The graphite electrodes maker had posted a net profit of Rs 1,113 crore for the same period last fiscal. Its consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 882 crore vs Rs 2,345 crore. The Q2 performance was impacted due to lower volumes and realisation, Graphite India Chairman K K Bangur said.

### TGBL Q2 net down 17%

Tata Global Beverages Ltd (TGBL) reported a 17.12 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 152.47 crore in Q2 compared to Rs 183.96 crore in the year-ago period. Consolidated revenue from operations stood at Rs 1,834.06 crore as against Rs 1,760.87 crore in the year-ago period, a growth of 4.12 per cent. TGBL said it had a one-time impact of tax rate change on the group net profit with a charge of Rs 9 crore, arising from reversal of opening net deferred tax assets.

—FC BUREAU

# China steelmaker default sparks contagion fear

**Oct. 30:** A Chinese company's bond default is causing market concern that trouble may spread to other firms in the province.

Shandong-based steelmaker Xiwang Group Co.'s failure to repay 1 billion yuan (\$142 million) of bonds last week, saw investors dump neighboring firms' notes on contagion fears as companies in this province are well known for providing guarantees for each other's debt.

China Hongqiao Group Ltd.'s dollar bond due 2023 and Shandong Sanxing Group Co.'s 2021 dollar bond have both dropped to their lowest levels after Xiwang's default, according



to data compiled by Bloomberg. The bulk of Hongqiao's bond plunge happened on Wednesday. The company's bonds didn't recover much even after it said it won't help Xiwang Group. The firms are all based in Zouping county.

"Xiwang's default onshore has raised con-

cerns that other privately owned enterprises in Shandong, particularly those from the same locality, may have been associated with the firm," said Wu Qiong, executive director at BOC International Holdings Ltd. in Hong Kong.

Shandong's privately-owned companies are fre-

quent users of the cross guarantee, which has the potential to send one company's liquidity issues cascading through the credit system, S&P Global Ratings said in a note last week. "Simply, chained borrowing relationships could send dominos toppling, with a series of companies sequentially unable to fulfil guarantee commitments," it said.

A Hongqiao unit, Shandong Hongqiao New Material Co., provided 6.4 billion yuan of debt guarantees to other firms as of March, accounting for more than 11 per cent of its net assets, in July.

—Bloomberg

# Unicorns to come from social commerce

**SANGEETHA G**  
CHENNAI, OCT. 20

Social commerce may see emergence of the next set of unicorns as several start-ups are reaching out to 200 million-strong social media user base. The new entities have also started grabbing attention of venture capital firms.

Compared to e-commerce which has a user base of 90 million, social commerce has greater access to the larger vernacular audience of over 200 million, who are active on WhatsApp, Facebook or other social media sites. As per the esti-

mates of RedSeer Consulting, social commerce is a disruptive model which is expected to double every year between 2018 and 2022.

Venture Capital funds have already identified this potential and have started funding social commerce start-ups. Mall91 recently raised \$7.5 million in its Series A round of funding led by Go-Ventures. Beenext, Kalaari Capital and AngelList India also participated in the funding round.

CityMall, a vernacular social e-commerce platform, received funding from a

clutch of angel investors, including Jitendra Gupta of Citrus Pay, Alvin Tse of Xiaomi, Manish Vij and Harish Bahl from Smile Group, Rishab Malik, ex-co-founder of Droom, Rajesh Sawhney of GSF and M&S Partners. Bulbul, a live social commerce app, raised \$5 million in a round that was led by Sequoia. Dealshare raised \$11 million in two investment rounds led by Matrix Partners and Falcon Edge and participated by DST Global and Omidyar Network.

"Social commerce sites are able to reach out to the remotest villages where e-

commerce has not ventured into. We get orders from Naujheel in Uttar Pradesh, Sandhi in Madhya Pradesh, Chhappra in Bihar and Sikar in Rajasthan. More than 90 per cent of our customers are from tier II cities and beyond. The sellers too are from these cities and towns. The content is shared through the social media sites and thus we are able to build trust within user groups," said Nitin Gupta, CEO and co-founder of Mall91.

Payments, he said, are done through Google Pay or Paytm or customers opt for cash on delivery.

# TELECOM: INDIA IS HANGING UP ON THE FUTURE

**MIHIR SHARMA**

India's growth this century has been fuelled by one sector above all: telecommunications. The connectivity revolution has powered India's information technology behemoths and helped hundreds of millions of young Indians get onto the grid, giving them a chance to improve their prospects. If India is to become the sort of entrepreneurial superstar that its government hopes it will, then the telecom sector is obviously going to be central to that plan.

So why does the Indian state seem determined to push telecom businesses into crushing debt and possible bankruptcy, instead of ensuring the sector remains healthy and competitive? This week, one of India's three remaining large telecom companies, Bharti Airtel Ltd., postponed the announcement of its financial results for the last quarter. This isn't good news, given that in the quarter ending in June 2019 it

reported a loss for the first time ever. Bloomberg News' average of analysts' expectations from the quarter ending in September is that the company will lose 14 billion rupees, almost \$200 million.

The immediate reason for the delay is clear: a recent Supreme Court judgment that ordered Bharti Airtel and other legacy telecom companies, including Vodafone Idea Ltd., to pay billions of dollars to the government. The decision sprang from a long-running dispute between the sector and the state on how to calculate the government's share of revenue, which it receives as part of the fee for handing over telecommunications spectrum. The companies argued that only their revenue from the use of spectrum should count; the government wanted a share of everything including, for example, revenue from rent.

The Supreme Court has now ordered the companies to pay the government not just the dues but a hefty penalty — as well interest

on both. The total amount the companies owe approaches \$13 billion. Vodafone Idea owes \$4 billion of that, Bharti Airtel around \$3 billion.

The companies are supposed to pay up in three months, though it's far from certain how that's possible. They're already snowed under with debt — thanks, in large part, to the Indian state. Vodafone Idea's debt in March 2019 was \$14 billion; Airtel's was over \$15 billion. Some of that debt burden is thanks to the exorbitant amount they've already shelled out for spectrum. The government changed an earlier policy that subsidised spectrum to one involving auctions that would maximize the amount that it receives as revenue — great news for the drafters of the budget, bad news for investment in the sector and overall growth.

It doesn't help that the sector's caught in a bruising price war thanks to a cash-rich new entrant:

Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd., which can call upon the massive war chest of petrochemicals major Reliance Industries Ltd. Jio's two rivals have long accused

it of receiving favourable regulatory decisions, such as one that allowed 4G spectrum that had been assigned for data to be used for voice services as well. Jio's entrance into the market has been great news for Indian consumers, who now get high-speed data at some of the lowest rates in the world. But it means that Jio's already heavily burdened competitors may go under.

The government now says it will convene a panel of senior bureaucrats to consider how to ease financial stress among telecom companies. Yet, this comes after it's attempted to squeeze every last rupee out of the sector to pay for spectrum, imposed adverse regulation and then appealed legal decisions all the way to the

Supreme Court. Moreover, the government is also planning to spend \$6 billion to revive moribund state-owned telecom companies and assign them 4G spectrum at an "administrative" cost. The price war will now include not just deep-pocketed Jio but the even deeper pockets of the Indian state.

There's no point making the laissez-faire argument and shrugging one's shoulders if Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel shut down. It's hard to see why any new investors would want to enter a market in which the playing field is so uneven. Besides, past investors have already been burnt by state action: Norway's Telenor ASA, the UAE's Emirates Telecommunications Group Co. PJSC and Russia's Sistema PJSC wrote off investments worth about \$2.5 billion after the Supreme Court canceled licenses en masse a few years ago, following corruption allegations that have not been upheld by the courts.

Foreign investors will also note that they can't even appeal to international arbitration anymore, since the Indian government unilaterally cancelled the investment treaties that made that possible. Investment by existing operators into the new infrastructure that could power India's future — such as 5G — looks unlikely in the near future.

India's statist politicians seem to assume that every sector is a cash cow for their welfareism, and that foreign investors can't quit India. They had better think again. Aviation has already been decimated by state action; it looks like telecom is next, in spite of the fact that it is the backbone of any realistic growth strategy for India. The government's boasts about improving the ease of doing business in India, or of being a magnet for investment, ring awfully hollow given how hard politicians are making it for healthy, competitive markets to survive.

—Bloomberg





## Rest in peace

Actor-comedian John Witherspoon, best known for the hit *Friday* franchise and *The Wayan Brothers*, passes away at 77



When god talks, you gotta listen. I honestly feel like god told me to sit down

Kevin Hart, American comedian

### BRIEF

#### Martin & Yosef give birth to 4th child

Los Angeles: Pop star-actor Ricky Martin and husband, artist Jwan Yosef have announced the birth of their fourth child, a boy. The singer took to Instagram to share the news on Tuesday and revealed the name of the baby as Renn Martin-Yosef. "Our son Renn Martin-Yosef was born," Martin captioned the photo which featured him holding the little one in his arms with Yosef on his side. The singer announced their pregnancy in September at the Human Rights Campaign Dinner in Washington DC with his family. — PTI

#### Swift to receive artist of the decade award

Los Angeles: Superstar singer Taylor Swift will receive the artist of the decade award at the American Music Awards next month. Swift will be honoured during an ABC live telecast on Nov. 24 at the Microsoft Theatre in Los Angeles. At the show, she has a chance to break Michael Jackson's record for most wins. Swift has won 23 AMAs and has 5 nominations this year; Jackson holds the record for most wins with 24 trophies. Swift has won more awards at this show than anyone else during this decade. — AP

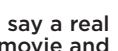


#### Musk to face trial for 'pedo guy' tweet

Los Angeles: Elon Musk will go to trial in December, after a judge denied his request to throw out a defamation lawsuit by a British man Musk called a "pedo guy", the *Guardian* reported. Los Angeles district judge Stephen Wilson said a jury would now decide whether Musk's statements about Vernon Unsworth, a British diver who helped rescue a team of young football players from an underwater cave in Thailand in 2018, amount to defamation. Musk, the billionaire chief executive of Tesla, is being sued over a series of comments he made about Unsworth following dramatic rescue. — Agencies

#### 'I WILL ALWAYS LOVE YOU WAS OFFERED TO ME'

Los Angeles: Veteran singer Patti LaBelle has revealed she was Dolly Parton's original choice to sing *I Will Always Love You*, the track that went on to become one of Whitney Houston's biggest hits. Before LaBelle could come on board officially, the song, penned by Parton, featured in the 1992 film *The Bodyguard*, sung by Houston. "Dolly Parton offered it to me before *The Bodyguard*. And I said to Dolly, 'Oh yes, I want to do that song.' And before I could say a real yes, it was in the movie and Whitney killed it," LaBelle said on *Watch What Happens Live With Andy Cohen*. The *Lady Marmalade* singer praised "girlfriend" and "so phenomenal" Houston for her singing performance and recalled jamming with her back in the day. "So, I have not done it since Whitney but I plan to put it in my show one day. But I was so happy that Whitney got that song. But Dolly Parton and I had planned," she said. Parton wrote the song and recorded its country version in 1973. — PTI



## Greta Thunberg declines climate award, \$52,000

### Urges countries more action on climate issues

Stockholm: Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg on Tuesday refused to accept an environmental award, saying the climate movement needed people in power to start to "listen" to "science" and not awards.

The young climate activist, who has rallied millions to her "Fridays for Future" movement, was to be honoured at a Stockholm ceremony organised by the Nordic Council, a regional body for inter-parliamentary cooperation.

Thunberg had been nominated for her efforts by both Sweden and Norway and won the organisation's annual environment prize.

But after it was announced, a representative for her told the audience that she would not accept the award or the

**The climate movement does not need any more awards. What we need is for our politicians and the people in power start to listen to the current, best available science.**

— Greta Thunberg, Climate activist



prize sum of \$52,000, the TT news agency reported. She addressed the decision in a post on Instagram from the United States. "The climate movement does not need any more

awards," she wrote. "What we need is for our politicians and the people in power start to listen to the current, best available science." While thanking the Nordic Council for the "huge honour," she also criticised Nordic countries for not living up to their "great reputation" on climate issues.

"There is no lack of bragging about this. There is no lack of beautiful words. But when it comes to our actual emissions and our ecological footprints per capita... Then it's a whole other story," Greta Thunberg said.

Still only 16 years old, she rose to prominence after she started spending her Fridays outside Sweden's parliament in August 2018, holding a sign reading "School strike for climate". — AP



Models present chocolate studded dresses as part of the chocolate fair in Paris on Tuesday. — AFP



Revellers take part in the annual Washington DC High Heel race walk down the city's 17th Street on Tuesday. — AFP



Carrie Underwood performs at the United Centre in Chicago on Tuesday. — AP

## Kevin Spacey won't face charges in sexual assault as accuser dies

Los Angeles: Veteran actor Kevin Spacey will not face criminal charges in a sexual assault case involving a massage therapist who died unexpectedly last month, the Los Angeles county district attorney's office has said.

According to *LA Times*, the county DA's office said it would be declining the case filed against the *House of Cards* actor. Allegations of sexual harassment, assault and rape were levelled against Spacey, who was among many high-profile names called out in #MeToo movement.



Accuser's death, during the course of investigation, is the reason for dropping charges. The man was an anonymous masseur who claimed the actor forced him to touch his genitals in Oct. 2016

Prosecutors cited the death of the accuser during the course of their investigation as the reason of dropping the charges. The man was an anonymous masseur who claimed the actor forced him to touch his genitals during a treatment of Spacey's house in Malibu in October 2016. "The sexual assault allegations cannot be proved without participation of the victim. Thus, the case was declined," said charging documents provided to *The Times*. — PTI

## Falklands banks on king penguins to drive tourism

Stanley, Falkland Islands: Waddling up the beach in single file, their heads held high with an almost self-important demeanor, king penguins are a major draw in the Falkland Islands' tourism industry.

Their fluffy brown chicks are nearly fearless of humans, meaning tourists at Volunteer Point, a peninsula on East Falkland Island, might get almost close enough to touch one. "We're the furthest location north in the world that you can see king penguins," said Tony Heathman, a former sheep farmer who has spent the last 16 years



King penguins

taking tour groups to Volunteer Point, where a thousand pairs of the islands' signature species go to breed. "We get lots and lots of people who...Love to come here and get as close to king penguins as they possibly can," the 70-year-old said. Kings are just one of 5 penguin species in the Falklands, alongside the wacky-looking rockhoppers which have yellow tassels sprouting from the side of their heads, gentoos and the burrowing magellanic. The Falklands have incredibly rich biodiversity, including more than 25 species of whales and dolphins, but it is the guaranteed ability to get up close with penguins that makes it a particularly enticing destination. — AFP

## Woman said 'no' many times during 90 minutes inside the hotel China actor slapped woman as male producer raped her

Sydney: A Chinese film star laughed and slapped a Sydney woman as a male producer raped her in a luxury hotel room, a jury has heard.

The woman gave tearful evidence on Wednesday about the alleged March 2018 attack by the TV and film star Yunxiang Gao and the Chinese producer Jing Wang.

Both men aged 37 have pleaded not guilty to all charges, including rape and indecent assault, with their barristers telling the New South Wales district court jury that all of the acts were consensual.

The Chinese woman says during the attack she was forced to perform a sex act on Wang, who was lying on the bed in his room at Sydney's Shangri-La hotel.

At that time, Gao asked her if she was going to finish before the sun came out, and laughed at her, she said.

"He slapped on my bum a few times," the complainant told the jury.

She said Gao left the room soon after as Wang began raping her again.

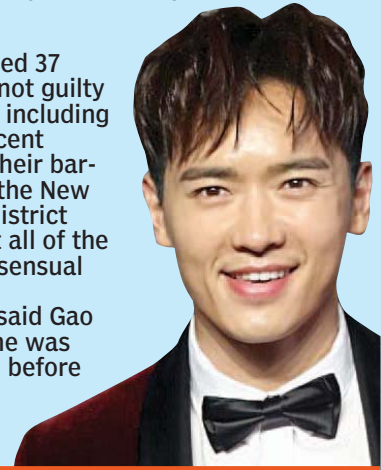
CCTV footage shows Gao leaving the room at 3.07am — about an hour before the woman left.

The woman told police

The woman gave tearful evidence on Wednesday about the alleged March 2018 attack by the TV and film star Yunxiang Gao and the Chinese producer Jing Wang

Both men aged 37 have pleaded not guilty to all charges, including rape and indecent assault, with their barristers telling the New South Wales district court jury that all of the acts were consensual

The woman said Gao asked her if she was going to finish before the sun came out, laughed at her



about the alleged indecent assaults later that day but it wasn't until the following day that she alleged she'd been raped.

She said she was scared and in shock during the first police interview.

"(In China) no woman would report this kind of thing to the police and because they are famous people, they got power, they are wealthy," she told the jury.

The woman, who can't be identified for legal rea-

sons, worked as a crew member with Gao and Wang on Australian-shot episodes of the Chinese TV series *Love in Aranya*.

She told the court Wang repeatedly tried to kiss her during a wrap party and outside the hotel before telling her people from the production were going to meet in his room.

No one was there when she arrived, but she said she felt a bit safer when Gao arrived minutes later.

"He is always very polite

and is a public figure and he got married and he has a daughter and is someone I can trust," she said.

Told Gao wanted to chat, the woman asked him what he wanted to talk about. "He said: 'What chat do you think we're going to have?'"

She responded that she didn't know before she heard Wang walk to the bathroom and say words to the effect of "I'll leave (her) to you", she said.

Gao began kissing and undressing her before he pulled her to the bathroom and forced her to perform a sex act on him, she said.

She told the jury she said "no" on several occasions during the 90 minutes inside the hotel room.

"I was so scared in a horrible room... I didn't know what to do."

Under cross-examination, Gao's barrister, Murugan Thangaraj SC, suggested she told Australian crew members a different story about the morning of 27 March, including that Gao and Wang were drunk and needed to be taken back to the hotel.

"I can't remember," she said. "I never tell lies."

The trial before Judge Penelope Hock continues. — AP

## US woman leading robbery gang gets 37-yr jail

Washington: An American woman, who led a gang of robbers, has been sentenced to 37 years in prison on the charge of conducting armed home invasions of families specifically of Asian and Indian ancestry across the United States.

Chaka Castro (44) of Houston, Texas, was sentenced on Monday by US district court judge Laurie J Michelson of the eastern district of Michigan.

After a five-week trial, Castro was convicted of one count of Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt

Organisations conspiracy, four counts of assault with a dangerous weapon in aid of racketeering and four counts of use of a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence. According to evidence presented during the trial, Castro and her

accomplices committed a string of home invasions in Georgia, New York, Ohio, Michigan and Texas from 2011 to 2014.

Leader of the gang was Castro. She would make lists of robbery targets in various states around the county. — PTI

ALL INDIA RADIO  
प्रसार भारती  
India's Public Service Broadcaster

## SARDAR PATEL MEMORIAL LECTURE

All India Radio will broadcast the 62ND Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture on 31st October, 2019 at 9.30 pm on Rajdhani Channel, FM Rainbow and the entire network of All India Radio

This year the lecture will feature:

- Excerpts of the speech delivered by Hon'ble Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi at the Statue of Unity at Kevadia, Gujarat and Mann-ki-Baat.
- Excerpts of the speech of Hon'ble Union Home Minister, Shri Amit Shah at Major Dhyan Chand National Stadium, New Delhi on the occasion of Sardar Vallabh Bhai Patel's Birth Anniversary.
- The programme will also feature rare audio bites of Sardar Patel from the central archive of All India Radio.

"It is the responsibility of every citizen to feel that his country is free and to defend its freedom is his duty." - Sardar Patel



# NOW, FREE AND SAFE TRAVEL FOR WOMEN IN DELHI'S BUSES



Dip/Shabdarth/d/0217/19-20

## FREE RIDE FOR WOMEN IN DELHI'S BUSES AND BUS MARSHALS FOR YOUR SAFETY

“I want every Delhi-ite to progress and prosper and every woman to fulfil her dreams and aspirations. This is why we are making travel in buses free for all women.”

- Arvind Kejriwal  
Chief Minister, Delhi







**SPORT | Cricket**

Dada meets NCA head Dravid in Bengaluru

14



**SPORT | Football**

Messi nets brace as Barca hit five against Valladolid

15



**GUIDE TO FORTUNE**

Tick the answer and check them below.

**1** Which of the following names is given to the planetary winds blowing between the tropics?

- Westerlies
- Trade winds
- Polar winds

**2** Where is Dead Sea situated in the following continents?

- Africa
- Asia
- Australia

**3** From which of the following longitude the Indian standard time is determined?

- 80° West
- 82° 30' East
- 90° East

**SHORT TAKES**

**Man arrested with stolen bike, pistol**

**New Delhi:** The Delhi police has arrested a 26-year-old man and recovered a country made pistol along with a cartridge and a stolen bike from his possession. The accused was identified as Faiz Khan (26), a resident of Karam Puri, Delhi. The accused was previously involved in eight cases. On Tuesday, during patrolling the staff of PS Nand Nagri received a tip-off following which a trap was laid and Faiz was nabbed, said DCP (Northeast) Ved Prakash Surya. During interrogation it was revealed that Faiz fell in the bad company in the early age and in order to satisfy his drug requirement, he resorted to steal and commit theft. He was planning to commit some crime for which he had stolen the motorcycle and acquired the country made pistol from some person in Bhopra (UP).

**Bootlegger held, 1680 bottles seized**

**New Delhi:** A 38-year-old bootlegger was arrested by the Delhi police PCR unit for trying to supply a huge quantity of liquor in the national capital. The accused was identified as Sameen (38), a resident of Shamli in UP and 35 boxes containing 1680 quarter bottles of illicit liquor was recovered from him along with the car used for transporting the liquor, said DCP (PCR) Sharat Kumar Sinha. On Monday night, the MPV staff consisting of SI Jaibhan Singh and ASI Ranbir intercepted the car near Singhu border and nabbed Sameen after a brief chase. The accused was later handed over to the local police.

**Debate organised on human rights**

**New Delhi:** A debate on the topic "Do police have sufficient powers under the human rights act to effectively uphold human rights on the field?" was organised by Delhi police under the aegis of National Human Rights Commission. Participation was open for all ranks of Delhi police. The debate was organised in two phases, preliminary and final round. The participants spoke on many social, legal and other issues. The final round of the competition was held on Wednesday and on the basis of the jury's decision, the first, second and third Prizes were awarded to SI (Exe.) Amit Kumar, HC (Exe.) Pawan Sharma and W/ASI Sunita Sharma respectively. The Mandal trophy was awarded to Northern Range. The jury was headed by K.C. Dwivedi, IPS (retd.), with Ajay Kumar, IPS (retd.) and M.C. Bhardwaj, IPS, SP/CBI.

## Thick smog engulfs city, pollution level 'severe'

AAP govt to distribute masks among schoolchildren from tomorrow

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

As the national capital reels under heavy pollution, demand for masks are going up in markets, especially for the N95 variant, which is generally recommended by doctors. On Wednesday, the city remained blanketed by a thick haze with its air quality dropping further, largely due to the heavy load of smoke from stubble-burning in neighbouring Haryana and Punjab, according to government agencies.

Twenty-seven of the 37 air quality monitoring stations across Delhi recorded the air quality index in the "severe" category.

The demand for masks has gone up, Mohammad Monish, owner of Neelkanth Chemists in east Delhi's Dilshad Garden, said. "People have been asking mostly for the N95 face masks as suggested by experts," he said. Proprietors at Aggarwal Medicos in Greater Kailash said most of the people are purchasing N95 masks, cost of which ranges from ₹200 to ₹2000, depending on company to company.

The city's pollution levels peaked at 2 am on Wednesday, touching the 423 mark. The overall AQI oscillated between 410 and 420 during the day, according to data from the Central Pollution Control Board. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the Delhi government will start distributing masks among school students from Friday following a spike in the pollution level.

Fifty lakh N95 masks would be given to students in both government and



A smog-covered road in Anand Vihar which was the most polluted area in the capital on Wednesday. A Nasa image (left) shows smoke and clouds over Delhi. — G.N. JHA, PTI

**'Kejri blaming others for own failures'**

**New Delhi, Oct. 30:** Terming the Aam Aadmi Party's proposed protest outside the Punjab Bhawan in Delhi as an obvious political stunt, Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Wednesday lashed out at his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal over the latter's brazen lies on the grave issue of air pollution. By blaming others, Mr Kejriwal is showing signs of poor leadership, said the CM in a release.

private schools in Delhi, he said on Wednesday. Also, schools in Delhi-NCR have advised parents to send their children for classes wearing masks and shift outdoor activities indoors to deal with the pollution.

Delhi remained blanketed by a thick haze on Wednesday with its air

## Hospitals witness 25% increase in OPD queue

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

As air pollution levels continued to be in the "severe" category post Diwali, health experts claimed that there is a rise in the number of people reporting to hospitals with respiratory and eye problems.

According to pulmonologist at Dharamshila Narayana Superspecialty Hospital, Dr Navneet Sood, the cases on the first day after Diwali were certainly less than the previous years but they were up by 25 percent against a usual OPD.

Senior consultant at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, Dr Arvind Aggarwal said that after Diwali, smog brings a lot of medical problems in Delhi, especially in kids.

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Senior consultant at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, Dr Arvind Aggarwal said that after Diwali, smog brings a lot of medical problems in Delhi, especially in kids.

Weather experts said the problem aggravated due to unfavourable wind speed that led to accumulation of pollutants. A relief is likely on the weekend,

they said. Twenty-seven of the 37 air quality monitoring stations across Delhi recorded the AQI in the "severe" category. Anand Vihar was the most polluted area in the capital with an AQI of 464 and Wazirpur following with an AQI of 462. NSIT, Dwarka, was the least polluted with an AQI of 355.

## Bus driver tries to loot cashier, nabbed by staff

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Under financial debt, a bus driver allegedly attempted to loot money from a cashier at Srinivaspuri depot, where he had worked earlier, by intimidating him and firing in the air on Wednesday morning, police said.

Police said they received information at around 9.42 am regarding "gunshot" at the depot.

On reaching the spot, police found that 59-year-old Mahavir Singh, a resident of Trilokpuri, who works as a cashier in Srinivaspuri bus depot was injured during the commotion, police said, adding Singh had ₹4.53 lakh cash at that time.

According to police, the accused Bharat Bhusahan Tyagi (38) is presently working in Gazipur bus depot as driver and had worked in Srinivaspuri bus depot eight years ago.

On Wednesday, he came to Srinivaspuri depot to loot cash from the cashier since he had knowledge of possible cash available with the cashier. A scuffle ensued between them and Tyagi fired one shot in the air to intimidate Singh. He also hit him with the butt of the pistol.

Hearing commotion, the staff came to the rescue of the cashier and managed to overpower the accused on the spot, police said. The accused was thrashed and apprehended by the depot staff.

## Cong to remind voters of rapid development during its 15-yr rule

SUNIL THAPLIYAL NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Buoyed by the Haryana Assembly poll results, the Congress has devised strategies to connect with the people and make them aware about the false propogandas of the AAP and the BJP before the Assembly elections in the national capital. A party leader said that the recently held parliamentary election has proved that there is triangular contest in the national capital.

The grand old party is gearing up to woo voters with their X-factors of good governance and rapid development of Delhi under their 15 years

rule to win the upcoming Assembly election.

Corruption, law-and-order, public transport, food security and other issues have been dominating the election for decades across the nation, but here in Delhi, pollution has become an important issue and no political party can take a chance to ignore it especially in Assembly election.

"The Delhi CM is just doing lip service by urging Punjab and Haryana to take concrete steps against stubble-burning in the states and prevent the national capital from turning into a "gas chamber" but he himself failed.

**▶ In Delhi, pollution has become an important issue and no political party can take a chance to ignore it especially in Assembly election**

He even failed to improve the public transport that can help to reduce the pollution here," said Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) president Subhash Chopra.

"The ruling AAP is feeling the heat of public anger due to the incompetence to perform as they locked horn with central government and wasted

four-and-half years on fighting and blaming others for their misdeeds," he added.

"Both BJP and AAP are trying to woo people ahead of Assembly polls by deciding to regularise unauthorised colonies in the national capital. Furthermore, Delhi and Central government vow to speed up the development works in these colonies. However people know that it was Congress who provided these colonies basic amenities, connectivity and other facilities during its rule. We will make people aware about Congress's contribution in this regard," said Mr Chopra.

## Shah to inaugurate new police HQ in Lutyens' zone today

**New Delhi, Oct. 30:** Delhi police will on Thursday get its swanky new headquarters, a 17-storey building in Lutyens' Zone slated to be inaugurated by Union home minister Amit Shah, officials said.

The event will coincide with 144th birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, the first home minister of independent India. Delhi police will get a new headquarters after 44 years. Presently, the headquarters of the force is housed in the towering PWD Building at the Income Tax Office area.

**▶ The first headquarters of Delhi police came up in 1912 at Kashmere Gate. It was shifted to PWD Building near ITO in 1975-76**

Delhi police commissioner Amulya Patnaik, along with senior police officers of special CP and joint commissioner ranks, will be shifting to the new building on Jai Singh Marg in central Delhi on Thursday, officials said. The first headquarters

of Delhi police came up in 1912 during the colonial era at Kashmere Gate. After Independence, the headquarters was shifted to the PWD Building in 1975-76, officials said. The state-of-the-art building is earthquake-resistant, police officials said. It houses an auditorium and will also have a police museum. Special meeting halls have also been built, they said.

The building will have a parking capacity of 1,000 cars and several residential flats have also been constructed, the officials added. —PTI



Students celebrate after the annual convocation at Jamia Millia Islamia University in New Delhi on Wednesday. —PTI

## Kejriwal boards buses to get feedback Over 4.77 lakh women avail pink tickets for free bus ride

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal boarded public buses on Wednesday to get feedback from women passengers about his government's free-ride scheme. According to official figures released by the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) on Wednesday, over 4.77 lakh women availed pink tickets for free-ride on the first day of the scheme on Tuesday.

"I boarded a few buses just now to get direct feedback from women. In addition to students, working women, women going for shopping, I also met a few who have to visit doc (doctor) regularly. They are also v (very) happy," Mr Kejriwal said, in response to a tweet. In another tweet, the chief minister said the presence of bus marshals deployed by the Aam Aadmi Party government was creating a sense of safety among women passengers and "fear



CM Arvind Kejriwal interacts with women passengers inside a DTC bus in New Delhi on Wednesday. —PTI

amongst eve-teasers." There are around 5,600 DTC and cluster buses where women can avail free-ride under the scheme through a pink ticket having face value of ₹10 each. The government has set aside ₹140 crore to implement the scheme.

A DTC official said the number of ticketed passengers on Tuesday was 13.65 lakh, of which 4.77 lakh pink tickets were issued to women passengers, who comprise 34.94

per cent of the total riders. The highest number of pink tickets — 1.33 lakh — were issued in the north zone of DTC, while the lowest number of pink tickets — 1.03 lakh — were issued in the east zone.

Launching the scheme on Tuesday on the occasion of 'Bhai Dooj', Mr Kejriwal had hailed the move as "historic", saying it would increase women's role in Delhi's economy besides empowering them.



Union ministers Dr Harsh Vardhan and Hardeep Puri, Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari and other party leaders perform bhoomi puja for upcoming Assembly election office in New Delhi on Wednesday. —BIPLAB BANERJEE

## Security guard robbed at knife point; 1 held, 3 on run

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, OCT. 30

A 28-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly robbing a security guard at knife point after beating him and later tying him in a bid to loot a factory where he worked in outer Delhi's Samaypur Badli, police said on Wednesday.

Two policemen were patrolling on a motorcycle late on Monday night when they heard someone squeaking in Libaspur. They found a person with his hands, legs and mouth tied with nylon rope, copper

wire and white cloth respectively, police said. After the person, Ram Niwas Yadav, was untied, he told the police that he was a security guard of a copper melting factory, an officer said. According to Yadav, four men robbed Rs 1,000 and other documents from him at knife point after beating him. Later, they tied him up, the officer said.

When the police and the security guard reached the factory, its locks were found to be broken. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said.

On seeing the police, the suspects tried to flee, but one of them, Sanjay Kumar, was nabbed, the police said. Efforts are on to nab his three associates who managed to escape.

- 82° 30' East
- Asia
- Trade winds





## Historic!

Former Australian international Lisa Keightley became the first woman to be appointed full-time coach of the England women's team

# The pink banter

## DAY/NIGHT TEST: Former curator calls for more grass on pitch, less on outfield

New Delhi, Oct. 30: Former BCCI chief curator Daljit Singh on Wednesday proposed more grass on the 22 yard-strip and lesser than usual on the outfield to counter the "unavoidable" dew factor for the first ever day-night Test to be played in India next month.

The BCCI and its Bangladesh counterpart on Tuesday agreed to playing a historic Test at the Eden Gardens from November 22, leaving little time for preparation. What goes in favour of the Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) is that it has some experience of hosting a multi-day game with pink ball.

"One of the main worries will be the dew. There is no doubt about that. They will have to understand that it will be a handicap which you can't eliminate," Daljit, who retired as BCCI chief curator last month after 22 years of service to Indian cricket, said.

"To counter that, you have to have thin grass cover on the outfield and



Preparations have started at the Eden Gardens for India's first-ever pink ball Test. — PTI

taller than usual grass on pitch. The heavier the outfield, the more, it will attract dew. They need to start doing that from today itself," said the 77-year-old former first-class player, who remains involved with pitch preparation for the Punjab Cricket Association.

The game is expected to start around 1.30 pm local time with play lasting till 8.30 pm. To ensure that pink-ball lasts long, Daljit feels more grass is needed on the pitch. He and his team did something similar in the Duleep Trophy experiment of 2016, when



games were played under lights with pink ball in Greater Noida.

One of the main worries will be the dew. They will have to understand that it will be a handicap which you can't eliminate. — DALJIT SINGH, Former BCCI chief curator

"The pink ball gets dirty very quickly so they have to keep more grass on the

pitch. If you remember, when the first day-night Test was played at the Adelaide (in 2017), they left 11 mm grass on the pitch, that too you will have culture (nurture) it. You can't just shave it off just days before the game or else pitch will play slow.

"The dew was an issue (when Duleep Trophy was played), the ball got really dirty. The match was played with 7mm grass on the pitch, normally the grass is 2.5 to 4 mm long. And taller grass means the ball will seam a lot," said Daljit, expecting good reward for the pacers.

Another experienced curator, requesting anonymity, advised against watering the outfield two-three days before the game.

"Dew factor will be there but it won't be so cold at that point of time. Antidew chemicals will have to be used besides the super-soppers, grass on the outfield will have to be cut a lot, irrigation has to be stopped two days before the game because it attracts moisture." — PTI

## Dada meets Dravid in Bengaluru

New Delhi, Oct. 30: BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday met NCA head Rahul Dravid to chalk out a roadmap for the improvement of the academy, Indian cricket's biggest feeder line for many years.

The long-time former India teammates discussed their plans for the academy with Ganguly also giving his inputs.

The former India skipper, who took over the BCCI's reins last week, also visited the proposed land where the new NCA facility is supposed to come up.

BCCI had signed a 25-acre deal with the Karnataka government in May and now it has got an additional 15 acres of land from the government for setting up the Centre of Excellence near the Bengaluru international airport. — PTI



No sympathy what's so ever for Shakib. Two years isn't enough, it should have been longer.

— Michael Vaughan, Former England captain

## SHORT TAKES Scotland, Namibia seal T20 WC spots

Dubai: Scotland thrashed United Arab Emirates by 90 runs on Wednesday in Dubai to book a place in next year's T20 World Cup tournament joining Namibia and Netherlands. Opener George Munsey belted 65 as Scotland made 198 in their innings. In reply, UAE were all out for 108, with nine balls left, after 18.3 overs as Mark Watt and Safyaan Sharif each took three wickets. Scotland joined Namibia, Netherlands, Papua New Guinea and Ireland, who had already booked their places but are still competing for the winner's trophy in UAE.

The 14-nation tournament decides which six nations complete the 16-team field for the World Cup in Australia from October 18 to November 15 next year. — AFP

## Bangla team arrive in Delhi

New Delhi: Controversies chased them like shadows culminating in the suspension of Shakib al Hasan but Bangladesh's T20 skipper Mahmudullah Riyad said on Wednesday that the top player's absence from the India tour will act more as motivation than handicap. A 15-member squad arrived in the national capital a day after one of their greatest players was handed a two-year ban for failing to report three corrupt approaches from an alleged Indian bookie, Deepak Aggarwal. Bangladesh will be playing three T20 Internationals in New Delhi (November 3), Rajkot (November 7) and Nagpur (November 10) and two Tests in Indore (November 14-18) and Kolkata (November 22-26), which will host the first-ever day-night pink ball Test between the two nations. — PTI

## BCCI orders 72 pink balls from SG

New Delhi, Oct. 30: The BCCI has asked manufacturer SG to deliver 72 pink balls by next week for India's first-ever day night Test, to be held at the Eden Gardens from November 22.

The BCCI president Sourav Ganguly has already confirmed that SG pink balls will be used for the landmark game, leaving the manufacturer with very little room for error.

Producing a ball fit for a Test match under lights is a big challenge for SG as its pink ball is yet to be tested in a competitive game. The Duleep Trophy was played with



Kookaburra pink balls for three seasons and not SG before the BCCI switched back to red ball this year. "The BCCI has ordered six dozen pink balls and we will deliver them by middle of next week. As you have seen in the South

Africa series, we made significant improvements with our red 'SG Test' and we have the same level of research and development for pink ball," company's sales and marketing director, Paras Anand, said on Wednesday.

SG had faced strong criticism from some Indian players in the previous home season with India skipper Virat Kohli saying that the red ball got scuffed up way too early in comparison to the Dukes used in England and Kookaburra in Australia.

Kohli acknowledged the improvements made on the ball this season but wants it last to at least 60 overs. Considering the bowlers have faced issues with the red 'SG Test', it remains to be seen how the company steps up to the pink ball challenge. Anand is confident that top quality balls will be

delivered for the Kolkata Test between India and Bangladesh.

"We were told last week about a possible requirement of pink balls so we were ready. Though the pink ball Test is happening now, we have been working on the ball since the 2016-17 season and are in constant touch with the concerned people in the BCCI. It is a challenge but we are up for it," said Anand.

Compared to the red ball, the pink one attracts a lot more dust and tends to get dirty rather quickly, making it tougher to sight. — PTI



David Warner and Steve Smith after guiding Australia to a clinical win over Sri Lanka in the second T20. — AFP

## Warner, Smith thump Sri Lanka

Brisbane, Oct. 30: David Warner and Steve Smith each smashed half-centuries as Australia hammered Sri Lanka by nine wickets to win the second Twenty20 in Brisbane on Wednesday and wrap up the series.

It was another massive wake-up call for the Sri Lankans, who arrived in Australia on the back of a 3-0 series win against Pakistan but have now been outplayed twice, after being crushed by 134 runs in Adelaide on Sunday. They must now regroup for the third and final match in Melbourne on Friday.

Warner and Smith came together after Aaron Finch was caught down the leg side off Lasith Malinga for a golden duck, and the pair produced a batting masterclass. Warner was unbeaten on 60 and Smith not out 53.

Chasing 118 to win after Sri Lanka were restricted to 117 all out off 19 overs, they reached their target with 42 balls to spare. "The bowlers did a terrific job, we bowled in the

### BRIEF SCORES

Sri Lanka 117 in 19 overs (D. Gunathilaka 21; Stanlake 23/2, Zampa 20/2) lost to Australia 118/1 in 13 overs (D. Warner 60 not out, S. Smith 53 not out; Malinga 23/1).

right areas and created chances and restricted them to 117, which wasn't enough on this wicket," said Smith.

"It's nice and easy batting at the other end from Davy," he added. "He's doing a terrific job. Played beautifully the other day and backed it up tonight as well."

Warner scored his first-ever T20 century when Australia crushed Sri Lanka on Sunday, and he brought that scintillating form into Brisbane.

In his first knock in the short format at international level since 2016, Smith was also firing — producing some glorious drives and clever singles as he and Warner raced each other to see who could make 50 first. — AFP

## Shakib vows to come back stronger

Dhaka, Oct. 30: Suspended Bangladesh all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan on Tuesday pleaded for support from the cricketing fraternity and expressed his determination to return after he completes his ban.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) handed Shakib a two-year ban from cricket, with one year suspended, after he failed to inform authorities about being approached by a bookmaker on multiple occasions in 2018.

"Those who have supported me over the years I hope they the fans, Bangladesh Cricket Board, the government, the journalists will continue to support me in my bad and good time," Shakib told reporters in Dhaka hours after the ban was announced.

"If you continue your support, I am hopeful I will come back to cricket soon. I will be stronger and will perform my responsibilities with more sincerity," he said. Shakib will be free to resume international cricket from October 29, 2020 subject to his satisfying the conditions in respect to the suspended part of the sanction, the ICC said.

### Mortaza backs Shakib to return

Dhaka, Oct. 30: ODI captain Mashrafe Mortaza on Wednesday said he will spend many sleepless nights after the ban on his colleague Al Hasan but exuded confidence that he will make a successful comeback. "But I can also sleep in peace soon knowing fully well that he will lead us to the 2023 World Cup because the name is Shakib Al Hasan." — PTI



Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan (right) and BCB president Nazmul Hassan. — AFP

The ban effectively ruled out Shakib from next year's ICC World Twenty20, which will be held from October 8 to November 15 in Australia. Shakib, who has played 56 Tests, 206 ODIs and 76 Twenty20 internationals, is by far Bangladesh's best known player, having topped the ICC all-rounder rankings in all three formats several times since 2009.

He starred for the team during the recent World Cup in England, where he scored over 600 runs and collected 11 wickets. In the World Cup, he also became

### Protests erupt in Bangladesh

Dhaka, Oct. 30: Hundreds of people staged a demonstration in a Bangladesh town on Wednesday against a two-year ban on cricket captain Shakib Al Hasan for not declaring attempts to bribe him. Police said about 700 people took to the streets in Shakib's hometown of Magura, demanding the ICC revoke the ban. — PTI



Cricket fans shout slogans in front of the Sher-e-Bangla National Stadium in Dhaka. — AFP

### Shakib steps down from MCC

London, Oct. 30: Suspended Bangladesh captain and top all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan has stepped down from the World Cricket Committee of the MCC — the custodians of the game's laws. "MCC can today confirm that Al Hasan has stepped down from his involvement with the MCC World Cricket committee," the club stated in a press release. — PTI

### Bangla selector Bashir shocked

New Delhi, Oct. 30: Former Bangladesh captain and national selector Habibul Bashir is shocked that a "mature" man like Shakib Al Hasan didn't report corrupt approaches to the ICC and believes it would be tough, if not impossible, for the banned all-rounder to regain his peak position. While Bashir expects the 32-year-old to be back after the ban, he also admitted that it will be easier said than done. — PTI

### SHAKIB'S CHATS WITH BOOKIE

Following is the timeline of the conversations between Bangladesh captain Shakib Al Hasan and suspected Indian bookie Deepak Aggarwal that was released by the International Cricket Council.

- In January 2018, he (Shakib) was selected as part of the Bangladesh team participating in a Tri-Series between Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Zimbabwe. During this series, he and Aggarwal engaged in further WhatsApp conversations.
- He received a WhatsApp message from Aggarwal that day asking him whether a particular player was going to be playing in the game that day, i.e. again asking for Inside Information.
- Aggarwal continued this conversation with him by talking about bitcoins, dollar accounts and asked him for his dollar account details. During this conversation, he told Aggarwal that he wanted to meet him "first".
- These messages on 26 April 2018 included a number of deleted messages. He confirmed that these deleted messages contained requests from Aggarwal for Inside Information.
- He confirmed that he had concerns over Aggarwal, feeling he was a bit "dodgy", and that, following their conversations, he had the feeling that Aggarwal was a bookie.
- He did not report any of the contact and approaches received from Aggarwal on 26 April 2018 to the ACU or any other anti-corruption authority.
- Al Hasan told the ACU that he did not accept or act upon any of the approaches he received from Aggarwal, in particular, he did not provide him with any of the information requested, nor did he accept or receive any money or other reward from Aggarwal. However, he did not at any time report any of the approaches to the ACU or any other relevant authority.
- On 19 January 2018, he received a WhatsApp message from Aggarwal congratulating him for being named man of the match in that day's game. Aggarwal followed this message with a message saying "do we work in this or I wait till the IPL".
- The reference to "work" in this message was a reference to him providing Inside Information to Aggarwal.
- He did not report this contact from Aggarwal to the ACU or any other anti-corruption authority.
- On 23 January 2018, he received another WhatsApp message from Aggarwal in which Aggarwal made another approach to him to provide him with Inside Information, saying "Bro anything in this series?"
- He confirmed that this message related to Aggarwal's request to him to provide Aggarwal with Inside Information in relation to the ongoing Tri-Series.
- He did not report this request for Inside Information from Aggarwal to the ACU or any other anti-corruption authority.
- On 26 April 2018, he played for the Sunrisers Hyderabad team in its IPL match against Kings XI.





Lucky Lakra

Birender Lakra (in pic) replaces injured dragflicker Varun Kumar in India's hockey team for Olympic Qualifiers against Russia



We always know he will do something special. His talent can't be compared to anything.

— Ernesto Valverde, Barcelona coach on Lionel Messi

SHORT TAKES

Shiva, Pooja in final, Nikhat loses

Tokyo: Former world bronze-winner Shiva Thapa (63kg) advanced to the final with a hard-fought triumph along with Pooja Rani (75kg) but two other Indians ended with bronze medals after losing their opening bouts at the Olympic Test event for boxing here on Wednesday. In the morning session of the semifinals, Thapa, a four-time Asian medalist who claimed his third national title earlier this month, defeated Japan's Daisuke Narimatsu in a split verdict. Rani, a former Asian Games bronze-medallist, got the better of Brazil's Beatriz Soares in a unanimous decision. Rani had won a silver medal at the Asian Championships earlier this year. However, former junior world champion Nikhat Zareen (51kg) and Vahlimpua (75kg), in the men's draw, lost their respective semifinal bouts to end with bronze medals. Both the pugilists had made the last-four stage without any preliminary contest. — PTI

Ravinder in U-23 wrestling final

Budapest: Ravinder secured India's first medal at the Under-23 World Wrestling Championship after advancing to the 61kg category final here. The 22-year-old pinned senior European champion Arsen Harutyunyan of Armenia to storm into the final with a 4-3 win on Tuesday night, a statement from Wrestling Federation of India said. Earlier, he had notched up a 12-1 win over Hungary's Marcell Budai Kovacs in his opening bout and then followed it up with an 11-0 demolition of Russia's Dinislam Takhtarov in the quarter-finals. The Sonipat grappler, who won gold at the South Asian Games in 2016 and also a bronze at the Cadet Asian Championships in 2014, will be aiming for the biggest achievement of his career when he takes on Kyrgyzstan's Ulukbek Zholdosbekov in the summit showdown that is scheduled to take place on Wednesday night. — PTI

SATWIK AND CHIRAG BACK IN TOP 10

New Delhi: Indian men's doubles pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty has reclaimed its position in the top 10 of the latest BWF rankings. Satwik and Chirag, who became the first Indian pair to enter the finals of a BWF World Tour Super 750 event at the French Open last week, gained two places to grab the ninth place. The Indian duo had broken into the top 10 for the first time in August following its historic triumph at the Thailand Open BWF Super Tour 500 event. Satwik and Chirag had shocked the then reigning world champions Li Jun Hui and Liu Yu Chen of China in the Thailand Open final to become the first Indian men's pairing to win a super 500 event. Last week, the pair dished out a superlative performance, stunning reigning world champions Mohammad Ahsan and Hendra Setiawan, World No.8 Kim Astrup and Anders Skaarup Rasmussen and World No.6 Hiroyuki Endo and Yuta Watanabe on way to the finals. Meanwhile, PV Sindhu and Saina Nehwal remained static at the sixth and ninth places respectively. Lakshya Sen moved up a place to 51st, while Shubankar Dey jumped four places to No.38. Parupalli Kashyap is placed 25th while Sameer Verma is 17th. Women's doubles pairing of Ashwini Ponnappa and N. Sikki Reddy were out of the top-25 after slipping two positions to be placed 26th. — PTI



Oxford players celebrate after winning the penalty shootout in their Carabao Cup, fourth round match, against Sunderland at Kassam Stadium in Oxford on Tuesday. Oxford won the match 4-2 on penalties after the game was tied at 1-1 at the end of stipulated time. — AP

OXFORD LEARN TO PURR

Robinson's men down Black Cats, make quarters of League Cup, first since '86

London, Oct. 30: Manchester City cruised into the League Cup quarter-finals as Sergio Aguero's double added to struggling Southampton's misery in a 3-1 win on Tuesday.

Pep Guardiola's League Cup holders were two up by half-time at the Etihad Stadium thanks to goals from Nicolas Otamendi and Aguero. Guardiola had made nine changes to the team that beat Aston Villa in the Premier League on Saturday, giving a debut to 18-year-old midfielder Tommy Doyle. The breakthrough came in the 20th minute when Bernardo Silva looped in a cross and Otamendi headed home. City's second arrived in the 38th minute when Kyle Walker sent over a cross and Aguero, on his 350th club appearance, produced a precise close-range finish for his 11th goal of the season.

Southampton are languishing in the Premier League relegation zone amid speculation boss Ralph Hasenhuttl is in danger of being sacked. Hasenhuttl's cause was hardly helped when Aguero made it three for City in the 56th minute, the Argentine poking in after Riyad Mahrez's shot deflected high into the penalty area. Meanwhile, Everton eased the pressure on beleaguered boss Marco Silva with a 2-0 win over his former club Watford. Silva's team are just outside the Premier League relegation zone after Saturday's last-gasp defeat at Brighton. Leicester joined City and Everton in the last eight



Manchester City's Gabriel Jesus (right) vies with Southampton's goalkeeper Alex McCarthy during their League Cup fourth round match at the Etihad Stadium in Manchester on Tuesday. City won 3-1. — AFP

with a 3-1 victory at League One side Burton. Sitting third in the Premier League, Brendan Rodgers' side maintained their impressive form despite nine changes. Kelechi Iheanacho, Youri Tielemans and James Maddison scored for Leicester. Oxford beat fellow third tier side Sunderland 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw. The 1986 League Cup winners are into the last eight for the first time since 1988 having thrashed West Ham in the last round. — AFP

Messi nets brace as Barca hit five against Valladolid

Madrid, Oct. 30: Lionel Messi made it clear he is fit and back to his scintillating best by tearing apart Real Valladolid on Tuesday in a thumping 5-1 victory for Barcelona.

Messi scored another spell-binding free-kick at Camp Nou after his sumptuous pass had already teed up Arturo Vidal for Barca's second. He then drove home his second late on before sliding through Luis Suarez to make it five.

Yet in truth his two goals and two assists were just the start of it, the defining moments of another mesmeric all-round performance that was dotted with flicks, passes, dribbles, and two humiliating nutmegs. "I don't know what more I can say," said Barcelona coach Ernesto Valverde. Valladolid had threatened to make a game of it when Kiko Olivas benefited from a rare Marc-Andre ter Stegen error to equalise, after Clement Lenglet had struck in the second minute. But with Messi in this sort of mood, the result never felt in doubt as victory sent Barcelona back to the top of La Liga, after Atletico Madrid were held to a 1-1 draw by Alaves a couple of hours before. Valverde's side have now won seven consecutive matches in all competitions, a run that began by beating Villarreal on September 24. — AFP



Barcelona's Lionel Messi (left) shoots to score his second goal during their Spanish league match against Real Valladolid FC at the Camp Nou stadium in Barcelona on Tuesday. Barcelona won 5-1. — AFP

XHAKA TO UNDERGO COUNSELLING

London, Oct. 30 Arsenal will offer counselling to Granit Xhaka after the Gunners captain found himself in trouble for swearing at his own fans.

Xhaka cupped his ears and gesticulated towards Arsenal fans who booed him when he was substituted during Sunday's 2-2 draw against Crystal Palace at the Emirates Stadium. Xhaka appeared to shout "F\*\*k off" at the crowd as he stormed towards the tunnel and pulled off his shirt. Arsenal manager Unai Emery admitted Xhaka was wrong to react that way and refused to confirm if he would remain skipper. Xhaka has held three meetings with Emery since the incident but the club are putting the player's welfare ahead. Reports in the British media said counselling will be offered should Xhaka decide on such a course of action, with Emery describing Xhaka's mood as "upset, devastated and very sad". — AFP

of their experienced midfielder Arnold Isoko, he has several good midfielders to deliver and these include Machado, Raynier Fernandes, Diego Carlos, Mohammed Rafique. Mid-fielder Sourav Das will sit out due to an injury, it was learnt. An area of concern for Mumbai was that they were over-dependent on Sougou last season and this time, they will look to overcome this shortcoming. Mumbai's line will be manned by Pratik Chaudhari, Subasish Bose, Souvik Chakrabarti, who are expected to give a tough time to the Odisha forwards. It is understood that defender Mato Grgic will sit out of the game owing to an injury. Mumbai are expected to go in with Amrinder Singh as their goal-keeper and his role will be crucial for the team's chances. — PTI

Chhetri backs players to shine

New Delhi, Oct. 30: "We will put our best foot forward against Oman and Afghanistan," promised India captain Sunil Chhetri, days after his defenceless team left its scoring boots at home in a 1-1 stalemate with Bangladesh in the FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

On a high after holding Asian champion and 2022 World Cup hosts Qatar to a goalless draw, a struggling India escaped with a 1-1 draw against lower-ranked Bangladesh in their previous second round qualifying match in Kolkata. "I think one of them is going to be in Dushanbe because they (Afghanistan) play their home games over there and then against Oman (in Muscat). Both are very difficult and important games, but we back ourselves. If we play the way we played against Qatar, we can do it. We are not scared," Chhetri said. Yet to taste a win, India are scheduled to play



Indian men's football team captain Sunil Chhetri (centre) trains with teammates in this file photo.

Afghanistan on November 15 and Oman on November 20. Having squandered a one-goal advantage to lose 1-2 to Oman in their opener at home, India held fancied Oatar in Doha before the underwhelming result against Bangladesh in Kolkata. "We felt bad after the game because we felt we could have done a lot better than what we did. We are over it. We will put our best foot forward against Afghanistan and Oman, two away games, which are very important," he added. — PTI

Mumbai eye Odisha win in their first home game

Mumbai, Oct. 30: Mumbai City FC will aim to start their home leg with a win over newcomers Odisha FC when the two sides clash here on Thursday in their Indian Super League (ISL) game.

Mumbai have so far played two games, in which they have won one and drawn the other against Chennaiyin FC on Sunday last in Chennai. Mumbai defeated Kerala Blasters in an away game in Kochi 1-0. Hence the hosts, who have never won the coveted ISL title, would like to add more points to their kitty by winning the game, to be played at the Andheri Sports Complex, which has been their home turf for quite some time. The Jorge Costa-coached team will have their hopes pinned on star forward Senegalese Modou Sougou, who was their leading goal-scorer last season. If 34-year-old Sougou fires

- Out of the two matches played so far this season, Mumbai won 1, and drew the other. ● Jorge Costa's men take on newcomers Odisha FC in their first home game.

and plays to his potential, then the Odisha defence will have a really hard time. Last season, Sougou's chemistry clicked with skipper Paulo Machado and if the duo clicks again, then the hosts could have an easy outing. However, Sougou will also have to adjust with the new set of forwards which include Tunisian Amine Chermitti. Though the head coach would not have the services

Frank backs Odoi in dive controversy

London, Oct. 30: Frank Lampard says he doesn't need to warn Callum Hudson-Odoi to cut out diving after the Chelsea winger was booked at Burnley.

Hudson-Odoi was initially awarded a penalty when he tumbled in the Burnley area during Chelsea's 4-2 win on Saturday.

But the England international was then booked for simulation after the decision was overturned by VAR. Burnley boss Sean Dyche was critical of Hudson-Odoi, calling it "shambolic how people just dive all over the place", while claiming it was worse because it involved a young player.

Yet Chelsea manager Lampard is adamant the 18-year-old did not dive, so he doesn't need to discipline him over the issue. "Nothing, I've said nothing. I didn't feel the need to," replied Lampard when asked what he had said to Hudson-Odoi.

"I asked him on the day of the game, straight afterwards, after my press, he said he got a touch.

"Clearly when you see it back from behind he gets a hand on his back. I know it's light," he added. — AFP

I asked him on the day of the game, straight afterwards, after my press, he said he got a touch. When you see it back from behind he gets a hand on his back. I know it's light.

— FRANK LAMPARD Chelsea coach on Hudson-Odoi diving issue

Minerva is renamed Punjab FC

Mohali, Oct. 30: Former I-League champions Minerva Punjab FC has been renamed as Punjab Football Club, a statement from the club said on Wednesday.

All teams of Minerva Punjab FC will now be known as Punjab Football Club as per an agreement with Round Glass Sports Private Ltd.

Round Glass Sports has expanded their youth and grassroots football talent program by including the players of Minerva Punjab FC's U-11 to U-18 teams.

The players are already training under UEFA/AFC/AIFF certified coaches at Round Glass Sports.

The club's director Ranjit Bajaj said, "There is a sense of positivity and excitement for the upcoming season and we are confident of putting up a good show." — PTI



# POLLUTION IN DELHI DOWN BY 25%

## BUT SMOKE FROM STUBBLE BURNING IS REACHING DELHI



DIP/Shabdarth/D/0218/19-20

## ODD EVEN ONCE MORE

4 TO 15 NOVEMBER

1. On odd dates - 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15 November - only vehicles with number plates ending with an odd number - 1, 3, 5, 7, 9 - can ply on the roads
2. On even dates - 2, 4, 6, 8, 12, 14 November - only vehicles with number plates ending with an even number - 0, 2, 4, 6, 8 - can ply on the roads.
3. This rule is applicable from Monday to Saturday, from 8am to 8pm
4. Odd Even rules are not applicable on two-wheelers
5. Only women cars or cars carrying children wearing school uniform will be exempt
6. Violation of Odd Even will attract a fine of Rs 4,000

