

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2019



NATION | Royal visit

Prince Charles marks 71st b'day in Mumbai, wraps up 2-day visit

2



WORLD | Italy

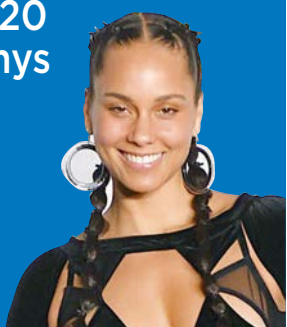
Venice braces itself for more rising waters as govt prepares to take emergency measures

11

TABLOID

32

Alicia Keys to return as host of the 2020 Grammys



Vol. 26 No. 269 | 32 PAGES | ₹5.00

WINDOWS



Virat Kohli celebrates with teammate Mohammad Sami after the wicket of Mohammad Mithun on the first day of the first Test with Bangladesh at the Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore on Thursday. — AFP

■ Report on Page 14

Disqualified K'taka MLAs join BJP, 13 get bypoll ticket

Bengaluru: The BJP on Thursday fielded 13 disqualified Congress-JD(S) legislators as its candidates for the December 5 Assembly bypolls in Karnataka hours after the rebels joined the ruling party in the state. The party aiming to win a majority of the 15 seats that will go for the bypolls announced a list of 14 candidates with the nominee for Ranebennur constituency yet to be named. Full report on Page 2

10 Haryana MLAs join Khattar govt

Chandigarh: Nearly three weeks after taking oath, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday gave shape to his council of ministers by inducting 10 new members including one from ally JJP and an independent. — PTI

■ Full report on Page 3

Moody's cuts India growth forecast

New Delhi: Moody's Investors Service on Thursday slashed India's economic growth forecast to 5.6% for 2019, saying government measures do not address the widespread weakness in consumption demand. Full report on Page 9

COUNTERPOINT



It was a really very happy birthday... no one blamed me for anything today!

WEATHER

Max: 27°C
Min: 15°C
RH: 56%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Mostly sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Bahula
Tadiya till 7.42 pm
Star: Mrigasira till 11.09 pm
Varjyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 8.38 am to 9.23 am and 12.22 pm to 1.07 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.27 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.43 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 7.47 PM
MOONSET TODAY 9.05 AM

■ One judge gives a divergent view on CBI probe, filing FIR

SC rejects pleas, gives clean chit to govt over Rafale deal

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

The Supreme Court on Thursday junked the petitions seeking reconsideration of its 2018 decision giving a clean chit to the Narendra Modi government's acquisition of 36 Rafale fighters in a ready-to-fly state and a direction to the CBI to register an FIR for alleged commission of "cognisable offences" in the deal. The court in its December 14, 2018 verdict said there was no occasion to doubt the decision-making process in the procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets from French company Dassault Aviation.

Speaking for himself and Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul said: "We are, thus, of the view the review petitions are without any merit and are accordingly dismissed, once again, re-emphasising that our original decision was based within the contours of Article 32 of the Constitution."

The majority judgment also rejected the plea by former finance minister Yashwant Sinha, journalist-politician Arun Shourie and activist Prashant Bhushan, seeking a direction to the CBI to register an FIR on their complaint

TOP COURT REBUKES, CAUTIONS RAHUL

■ The Supreme Court rebuked Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for wrongly attributing to the apex court his 'chowkidar chor hai' remark against PM Narendra Modi in connection with the Rafale case

■ On April 10, Rahul had said his statement was made in purely political context to counter the 'misinformation campaign' being led by BJP as well as the govt that the Dec. 14, 2018, verdict was a 'clean chit' to the Centre

It was 'unfortunate' that Mr Gandhi did not 'verify' and made repeated statements in this regard as if the top court had given an approval to his allegations against the PM — Supreme Court

Justice Joseph of the Supreme Court has opened a huge door into investigation of the RAFALE scam. An investigation must now begin in full earnest. A Joint Parliamentary Committee must also be set up to probe this scam — Rahul Gandhi Congress leader

Now, it has been proved that disruption of Parliament over #Rafale was a sham... After today's rebuke from SC, Congress and its leader, for whom politics is above national interest must apologise to the nation — Amit Shah Home minister

relating to alleged "cognisable offences" in the deal.

Noting that in their December 14, 2018 verdict they had elaborately dealt

with three aspects of the deal involving the "decision-making process", "pricing" and "offsets partner", Justice Kaul

■ Turn to Page 4

Blow to Cong, but it still seeks probe

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

In a big blow to former Congress president Rahul Gandhi, the Supreme Court on Thursday gave a clean chit to the Narendra Modi government in the Rafale fighter deal, saying the review petitions were without merit. Mr Gandhi had made the Rafale deal a poll plank not just in the Lok Sabha polls but also in the recently-held Maharashtra elections. In the

Lok Sabha polls, one of the Congress key planks to attack Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the Rafale deal. Mr Gandhi went all out to accuse Mr Modi of "favouring his corporate friends".

After the judgment the BJP took a dig at the Congress for repeatedly raising the Rafale deal. In a series of tweets, BJP president Amit Shah said the verdict of the court has proved that the disruption of Parliament

over the Rafale deal was a "sham". He added: "The Supreme Court's decision to dismiss the review petition on #Rafale is a befitting reply to those leaders and parties who rely on malicious and baseless campaigns."

The Congress, meanwhile, said the judgment "leaves the door open for investigation".

Mr Gandhi tweeted: "Justice (K.M.) Joseph of the Supreme Court has opened a huge door into

investigation of the Rafale scam. An investigation must now begin in full earnest. A Joint Parliamentary Committee must also be set up to probe this scam," He tweeted with the hashtag "BJP Lies On Rafale". Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the BJP should stop celebrations and the focus should be on investigations, as the court's decision has paved the way for a probe into the Rafale deal.

■ More on Page 3

7-judge SC bench on Sabari women entry

To take up Muslim, Parsi & Bohra women's issues too

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

The Supreme Court on Thursday referred to a seven-member Constitution Bench the question of the entry of menstruating women in the 10-50 age group at Lord Ayyappa's Sabarimala temple and issues about discriminatory religious practices relating to women in Muslim, Parsi and Dawoodi Bohra communities.

The reference to a seven-judge Constitution Bench was made by a majority of three judges in a five-judge bench, in which Justices Rohinton Fali Nariman and D.Y. Chandrachud took a dis-

■ The majority judgment framed seven questions to be addressed by the bench, including interplay between the freedom of religion

senting position.

Referring to an endeavour by a batch of petitioners to resuscitate the debate about what is essentially religious, essential to religion and integral part of the religion, Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, also speaking for Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Indu Malhotra, said the decision of the larger

bench would put at rest the "recurring issues touching upon the rights flowing from Article 25 and 26 of the Constitution".

Having pointed to the importance of the entire matter involving the rights under Article 25 and 26, CJI Gogoi said: "It is our considered view that the issues arising in the pending cases regarding entry of Muslim women in dargahs/mosques, of Parsi women married to non-Parsi in Agvari and the practice of female genital mutilation (among) Dawoodi Bohras ... may be overlapping and covered by the judgment

■ Turn to Page 4

■ Modi invited to V-E day event in Moscow in May

Brazil's Prez Bolsonaro to be chief guest for R-Day

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

Brazilian President Jair Messias Bolsonaro will be the chief guest at India's Republic Day celebrations in January. The Brazilian President accepted Prime Minister Narendra Modi's invitation which was extended during their bilateral meeting in Brasilia on Wednesday afternoon. Mr Modi is in Brazil for the Brics summit. After another bilateral meeting between Mr Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin there, it was also officially confirmed that Mr Modi will visit Russia in May next year to participate in the 75th anniversary celebrations marking the victory of Russia (then the Soviet Union) and the Allies



PM Narendra Modi with South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa (from left), Chinese President Xi Jinping, Russian President Vladimir Putin and Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro during the Brics summit at the Itamaraty Palace in Brasilia, Brazil, on Thursday. — AP

over Nazi Germany in 1945 in the Second World War.

In a statement, the external affairs ministry said: "Prime Minister

■ Turn to Page 4

■ Modi, Xi reiterate importance of maintaining peace in border areas

PAGE 3

■ Modi, Xi reiterate importance of maintaining peace in border areas

J&K L-G: Assembly polls to be held soon

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, NOV. 14

Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant-governor Girish Chandra Murmu on Thursday gave enough hints of Assembly polls in the Union territory being held soon.

"Election will come. It is a Union territory with a legislature. It will not continue like this," he said, speaking at a police passing-out parade at Talwara in Reasi district of Jammu. He said the process for holding elections will begin soon.

J&K was split up into two UTs on October 31, more than 12 weeks after the abrogation of Article 370, that gave the erstwhile state a special status within India. The last Assembly of united J&K elected in 2014 was dissolved by governor Satya Pal Malik on November 22 last year.

■ More on Page 2
■ 2 new advisers to L-G Murmu appointed: Page 2

Lanka all set to hold Prez polls Nov. 16

Colombo, Nov. 14: Sri Lanka holds presidential elections on Saturday with a possible comeback by the powerful Rajapaksa clan sparking fears of a return to murky disappearances, murders and Chinese submarines docking in Colombo.

The frontrunners among the record 35 candidates are Sajith Premadasa, 52, son of assassinated President Ranasinghe Premadasa, and Gotabaya Rajapaksa.

— AFP

IMPEACHMENT INQUIRY

Fireworks on 1st day of televised hearings

New anti-Trump revelations by 2 US envoys

Washington, Nov. 14: Two top US diplomats delivered gripping testimony Wednesday about Donald Trump's efforts to get Ukraine to investigate his potential 2020 rival Joe Biden, as the impeachment inquiry into the president shifted into a new phase of high-stakes televised hearings.

Mr Trump dismissed the probe in the Democratic-led House of Representatives as a "witch hunt" and said he was "too busy" to

watch the first public hearings, during which he received staunch backing from Republican legislators.

William Taylor, the top US diplomat in Ukraine, began his testimony before the House Intelligence Committee with a new revelation about Mr Trump's efforts to pressure Kiev — the main issue of just the fourth impeachment process in US history.

Democrats accuse Mr Trump of abusing his

power by using US military assistance and a possible White House meeting to pressure President Volodymyr Zelensky into opening a probe into the Democrat Biden and his son Hunter, who served on the board of Ukrainian gas company Burisma.

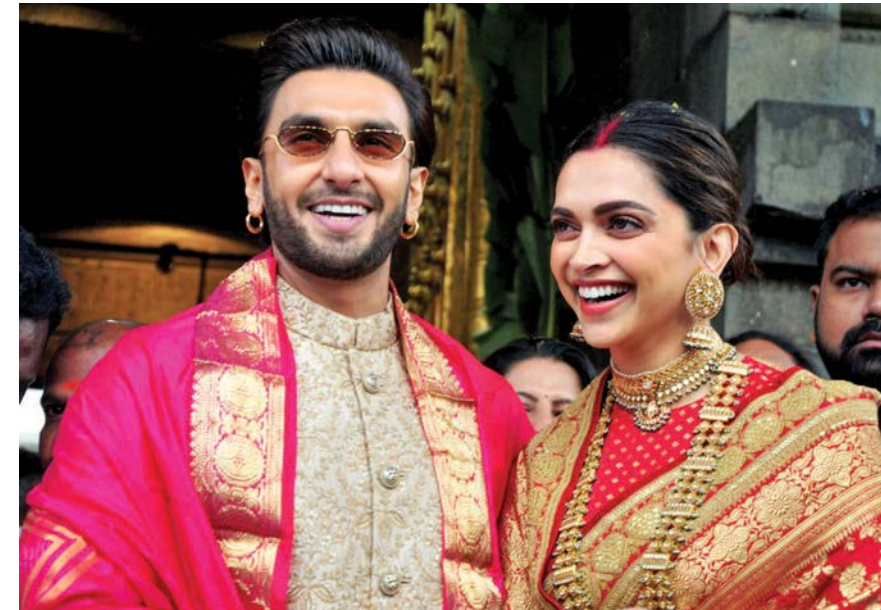
The key evidence is the official White House transcript of a July 25 telephone call between Mr Trump and Mr Zelensky in which the US President asked his Ukrainian coun-

terpart to investigate the Bidens. Mr Taylor testified that he was told Mr Trump cared more about the probe than he did about Ukraine.

The grey-haired former Army officer and veteran diplomat said he had since become aware of a telephone call between Trump and the US's EU ambassador Gordon Sondland, which a member of Mr Taylor's staff overheard.

— AFP

■ More on Page 11



Actors Ranveer Singh and Deepika Padukone at the Tirumala temple in Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, on their first wedding anniversary on Thursday. — PTI



Politics

Consider drug addiction as illness, treat those suffering without discrimination, said social justice minister Thaawarchand Gehlot.

Nation

PAGE
2

THE ASIAN AGE

FRIDAY | 15 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI



What will anyone do when no one is able to form the govt (in Maharashtra)

— Nitish Kumar, Bihar chief minister

SHORT TAKES

EC announces bypoll to two seats

New Delhi: Bypolls in two Rajya Sabha seats in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, which fell vacant recently will be held on December 12, the Election Commission announced on Thursday. The counting of votes will take place on December 12 after the polling concludes. The Karnataka seat fell vacant after Congress member K C Ramamurthy resigned to join the BJP. The seat from Uttar Pradesh fell vacant after Samajwadi Party member Tazeen Fatma resigned to contest the Rampur assembly bypoll, the seat once represented by her husband Azam Khan. Khan had resigned from the Rampur assembly seat after he won the Lok Sabha polls.

J'khand: BJP names 15 more candidates

New Delhi: The BJP on Thursday released its third list of 15 candidates for the Jharkhand assembly polls, taking to 68 the total number of seats for which it has declared its nominees. Assembly Speaker Dinesh Oraon has been fielded from Sisai and ministers Neelkant Munda and Amar Kumar Bauri from Khunti and Chandankyari respectively, according to the list. However, the name of minister Saryu Rai has been missing from the list of BJP candidates so far, fuelling speculation that the party may be planning to drop the senior leader as its candidate in the elections to 81-member assembly.

Congress leaders to meet Saturday

New Delhi: The Congress has called a meeting of its general secretaries and in-charges of various states on Saturday to discuss the modalities and chalk out a programme for its proposed country-wide agitation against the slowdown in economy, unemployment and agrarian crisis. Congress general secretary, organisation, K C Venugopal has convened the meeting of all leaders to plan a big agitation in the national capital where Congress president Sonia Gandhi and former chief Rahul Gandhi would participate.

'MAKE SONIA FULL-FLEDGED PRESIDENT'

Bengaluru: Sonia Gandhi should become full-fledged President of the Congress to end uncertainty over the leadership issue, senior party leader M. Veerappa Moily said on Thursday. "I feel that she should be the President, not to be called as interim President... Should not be left in this kind of an uncertain situation," the former Union Minister told PTI. Sonia Gandhi was made interim president last August, barely 20 months after she voluntarily relinquished the top post in favour of son Rahul Gandhi who refused to continue on as Congress chief after a humiliating 2019 general election defeat. "In the absence of any other arrangement, particularly when Rahulji is not willing to be active, I think somebody has to take up the responsibility and she would not like the Congress to be left behind without a leader," Mr Moily said. "According to me, she has to be full-fledged President," the former Karnataka Chief Minister said. — PTI



16 disqualified MLAs join BJP

13 MLAs who played role in pulling down JD(S)-Cong govt get bypoll tickets

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU, NOV. 14

In what could be considered a "thanksgiving" of sorts, the state BJP on Thursday allotted tickets for 13 of the 15 Assembly seats going to bypolls on December 5 to the disqualified legislators who played a pivotal role in pulling down the JD(S)-Congress coalition government in July.

Earlier in the day, 16 of the 17 disqualified MLAs were inducted into the safe from party at a function at the BJP office at which most party stalwarts including chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa were present.

The BJP, however, sent ripples through political circles by not inducting veteran Muslim leader and disqualified MLA

Roshan Baig and instead giving the ticket to a corporator, M. Sharavana.

The second surprise pertained to the Ranabennur Assembly seat for which the party chose not to announce the name of disqualified Independent MLA R. Shankar though he was inducted into the party with sources saying the BJP is not sure of his poll prospects against Congress candidate and former Assembly Speaker K.B. Koliwad.

There is speculation that K.E. Kantesh, son of senior BJP leader K.S. Eshwarappa, is a frontrunner for the seat.

Shankar has been highlighting the large number of Kurubas (the community he belongs to) in Ranabennur to push his case and has been lobbying with the BJP national



Karnataka chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa, BJP state unit president Nalin Kumar Kateel and BJP national general secretary Muralidhar Rao hand over the party flag to MLA Anand Singh during a programme to induct the disqualified MLAs in Bengaluru on Thursday.

— PTI

leadership and pontiffs of his community, said sources. It's believed that the BJP will decide on the Ranabennur ticket by Friday.

The bypolls are being

held for only 15 constituencies though 17 MLAs were disqualified with polls for RR Nagar which was represented by Munirathna, and Maski which was held by

Pratapgouda Patil, yet to be announced.

Explaining the reason for leaving out Roshan Baig from the list of candidates and not inducting him into the BJP, sources said the party high command and the RSS vetoed the proposal on the ground that he is an accused in the multi-crore IMA investor scam now being probed by the CBI.

His name had also cropped up during the investigation into the murder of a RSS worker, Rudresh, said sources.

The Athani ticket went to Mahesh Kumatali and a disappointed deputy CM Laxman Savadi, whose name was doing the rounds for the seat (he is not a member of either House) skipped the induction ceremony of the disqualified MLAs.

■ Sena chief to directly communicate with leaders

Uddhav takes charge of alliance talks in Maha

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, NOV. 14

In a significant development, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray has decided to take matters into his own hands and is holding talks with Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress leaders over forming the government. However, despite his efforts, things are not likely to be expedited as the talks are expected to prolong till the next week.

According to party sources, Uddhav had earlier asked top leaders of his party to hold talks with the NCP and Congress. But nothing much transpired in these meetings.

As a result, the Sena embarrassed itself by failing to garner necessary support for government formation within the deadline stipulated by the governor.

These leaders had spread the impression that the Sena would succeed in the getting the required numbers. But in the end, the party failed to get the sup-



Uddhav Thackeray

port from the NCP and the Congress for the government formation.

Sources said that the Sena had entrusted a leader, who had recently joined the party after quitting the Congress, to hold talks with Congress leaders and ensure their support.

The leader had assured to get the Congress support before the deadline. However, the letter from Congress remained elusive till the last moment. Hence, the NCP, too, refrained from announcing their support.

Taking a lesson from this fiasco, Uddhav has decided to personally hold talks with the leaders of NCP and Congress.

"Now that he is directly involved in talks, things

will fall in place soon," said a party insider. Meanwhile, the leaders of all three parties — Sena, NCP and Congress — on Thursday held a meeting to decide the common minimum programme (CMP).

The draft of the CMP is ready and will be released after getting approval from party high command, said a source. The meeting was attended by Sena leaders Eknath Shinde, Subhash Desai, NCP leaders Jayant Patil, Chhagan Bhuibhal, and Congress leaders Prithviraj Chavan and Vijay Wadettiwar.

Mr Wadettiwar said, "We held discussions with the Sena and NCP on several issues. The CMP draft is ready and will be sent to party president Sonia Gandhi."

■ House is under suspended animation since June 2018

Assembly polls in J&K soon: L-G

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, NOV. 14

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Girish Chandra Murmu on Thursday hinted that the Assembly polls in the Union Territory (UT) is likely to be held soon.

"Election will come. It is a Union Territory with a legislature. It will not continue like this (under Centre's rule)," he said while speaking at a police attestation-cum-passing out parade at Talwara in Reasi district of Jammu division.

He added that the process for holding the democratic exercise will begin soon.

J&K was split up into two

UTs on October 31, more than twelve weeks after the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution under which the erstwhile state enjoyed a special status within the Indian Union.

The last assembly of the united J&K elected through 2014 elections was dissolved by the then Governor Satya Pal Malik on November 22 last year to stall the attempt by Peoples' Democratic Party (PDP) and National Conference (NC) and Congress to form a government.

The 87-member House had been under suspended animation since June 20, 2018 when the State was brought under Governor's rule following the collapse



Girish Chandra Murmu

of PDP-BJP coalition government.

Earlier during the day on Thursday, J&K Assembly Speaker Nirmal Kumar Singh met Lt. Governor Mr. Murmu at Raj Bhavan in Jammu. An official spokesman had said in winter capital of the UT that Mr Singh discussed with the Lt. Governor var-

Das: BJP alone will get over 65 seats in J'khand

NAYEAR AZAD
PATNA, NOV. 14

Suspense, whether the BJP and All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) will remain in alliance, continued on Thursday with both sides refusing to call off talks over the issue of seat-sharing in Jharkhand.

The BJP state unit hinted that the party was not willing to accept AJSU's demand for 17 seats. Sources said that BJP's top leadership made the decision during a meeting in New Delhi on Thursday.

Speaking on the issue chief minister Raghubar Das said, "The BJP will achieve the target of 65 plus seats in Jharkhand with the support of party workers."

When asked about the seat-sharing deal with AJSU, Mr Das said that BJP central leadership is keeping a close watch on the situation and will make a decision soon.

Political analysts in Jharkhand are of the view that the BJP is waiting for the AJSU to announce its departure from the NDA. A section in the BJP, however, has been urging the central leadership to consider contesting Assembly polls independently on all 81 seats.

The BJP has so far announced candidates for 53 seats, and also decided to extend support to an independent candidate Vinod Singh in Hussainabad constituency. Reports suggest that the BJP may also soon announce candidates for the 27 assembly seats.

Sources said that the BJP is likely to make a final offer of 10 seats to the AJSU before taking any decision on the issue besides going for a friendly fight on three seats.

"BJP has never ditched any of its partners. Alliances break due to ambitions of political parties and as far as the seat-sharing deal is concerned, a final decision will be announced by our top leadership soon," said a BJP leader requesting anonymity.



BJP central leadership is keeping a close watch on the seat-sharing situation with AJSU. A decision will be taken soon.

— Raghubar Das, Jharkhand CM

The rift between both the partners had surfaced last week when the AJSU released a list of twelve candidates out of which the BJP had already fielded candidates on four seats.

In 2014, the BJP had won 37 out of 72 seats it had contested, while the AJSU won 5 out of 8 seats. AJSU was considered a strong NDA partner with a large support base in the tribal belt.

Political experts are also of the view that AJSU's exit from the NDA may cause trouble for the BJP which has been trying to achieve a target of 65 plus during the assembly polls slated to begin from November 30.

Sources said that the AJSU on the hand has kept its door open for top leaders who were dropped by their respective parties during ticket distribution.

Meanwhile, on Thursday veteran tribal leader and former Congress state president Pradeep Balmuchu joined AJSU.

Besides AJSU, two other NDA partners — JD(U) and LJP — have also decided to contest assembly polls on its own in Jharkhand. On Tuesday LJP national president Chirag Paswan in had tweeted, "The Jharkhand unit has decided to contest assembly polls independently on 50 seats."

2 advisers to J&K L-G appointed

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

In a bid to expedite restoration of normalcy in the newly-created Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the home ministry on Thursday appointed two advisors to the Lt Governor Girish Chandra Murmu. The new advisors are former IAS officer KK Sharma and retired IPS officer Farooq Khan.

The two were also advisors to former Governor Satya Pal Malik when he was Governor of J&K when it was a full State before October 31.

Home ministry sources said the two advisors have been re-appointed since the two officers played a crucial role in the transition of J&K from a state to the UT following revocation of Article 370. Mr Sharma and Mr Khan were also closely involved both with the Centre and the local administration in managing the law and order situation to ensure that the Valley remained peaceful following Centre's crucial decision to create two new UTs of J&K and Ladakh.

"The two are very seasoned officers who know the area very well and it was felt that their feedback and inputs would be extremely useful for the new Lieutenant-Governor Murmu during this crucial phase of transition in the sensitive region," a senior Ministry official said. Mr Khan will primarily focus on the security situation and work closely with Union home ministry.

Sonia flays BJP govt at Nehru memorial lecture

New Delhi, Nov. 14: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Thursday launched a scathing attack on the Modi government accusing it of disrespecting the country's diversity, denying its pluralism and seeking to take it backward.

Delivering her speech at the Jawaharlal Nehru Memorial Lecture at the Nehru Museum and Library, she alleged the Modi government lacked the capacity, vision and wisdom to uphold Nehru's legacy.

On the 130th birth anniversary of the country's first prime minister, Mrs Gandhi called upon all to unite and speak up against the "bigotry, injustice and misman-



Sonia Gandhi

agement" of the last six years. Jawaharlal Nehru's vision stood on four pillars — democratic institution-building, staunch secularism, socialist economics and a non-aligned foreign policy — and they remain at the core of true India, she said.

"It is lamentable that those who are in power today are blind to this truth. They lack the capacity, the vision and the wisdom to uphold this legacy. The forces unleashed by our present rulers want to dictate to us what we can do, say or think. — PTI

Charles celebrates 71st b'day in Mumbai

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

Heir to the British throne Prince Charles wrapped up his two-day visit to India by celebrating his birthday in Mumbai on Thursday with children there. The Prince of Wales turned 71 on Thursday.

In a statement on the Mumbai leg of his visit on Thursday, the British High Commission said, "On arrival in Mumbai, His Royal Highness (HRH) joined a British Asian Trust meeting to gain an update on the work of the Trust in India. The meeting included discussion around the Quality Education Development Impact Bond."

It further said, "He then attended a discussion with influential Indian business leaders on how to



Britains Prince Charles celebrates his birthday with schoolchildren during his official visit in Mumbai on Thursday.

— PTI

accelerate a transition to sustainable markets. Senior attendees representing finance, transportation, technology and life sciences explored how

to connect sustainable investors to sustainable opportunities around the world. The discussions will inform how HRH and the Sustainable Markets

Council might advance specific initiatives. Issues discussed included access to green finance markets, biodiversity, waste and plastics reduction and renewable energy."

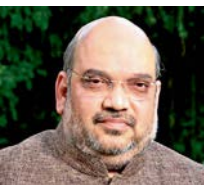
The British High Commission added, "HRH (Prince of Wales) also had the opportunity to meet artist Haribabu Natesan whose artwork — made of recycled material was on display during the meeting. HRH finished his programme by meeting children who have benefited from support from the British Asian Trust. The Prince was also sung happy birthday by the children to celebrate his 71st year."

In Mumbai, Charles joined a British Asian Trust meeting to gain an update on the work of the Trust in India.



Tribal affairs

Development and uplift of tribal population govt's priority, says Union minister Renuka Singh



Now, it has been proved that disruption of Parl over #Rafale was a sham

— Amit Shah, Union home minister

SHORT TAKES

Shia chief gives ₹50K for mandir

Lucknow: Uttar Pradesh Shia Central Waqf Board chairman Wasim Rizmi on Thursday announced he is donating ₹51,000 for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. Mr Rizvi said the Board favoured the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya and the Supreme Court judgment on the decades-old issue is the "best verdict" that could have been possible. In a unanimous verdict, the Supreme Court last week cleared the way for the construction of a Ram temple at the disputed site in Ayodhya and directed the Centre to allot a separate 5-acre plot to the Sunni Waqf Board to build a mosque. — PTI

2 more held for UP discom EPF scam

Lucknow: The Uttar Pradesh economic offences wing arrested two more people in connection with the UP power corporation's ₹2,600-crore PF investment in scam-hit DHFL, taking the total number of arrests to five. "Abhinav Gupta and his friend Ashish Chowdhury have been arrested in the case," R.P. Singh, DG, EOW, said. Three people were earlier arrested in connection with this case. The arrests followed an FIR filed on November 2 against Praveen Kumar Gupta, former secretary of the UP State Power Employees' Trust and the Provident Fund Trust of the UP Power Corporation Limited, and Sudhanshu Dwivedi, former director of finance at the UPPCL. — PTI

Navy sailor dies due to bullet injury

Mumbai: A 25-year-old Navy sailor died due to a bullet injury at naval station INS Angre in south Mumbai on Thursday, a defence statement said. Akhlesh Yadav, the sailor, was found in a pool of blood on Thursday evening. The bullet was fired from his service rifle, but the statement did not specify if it was a case of accidental firing or something else. He was rushed to naval hospital INS Ashvini where he was declared dead on arrival. The Colaba police and naval authorities are investigating the matter further, the statement added. — PTI

BHU STUDENTS CLASH; PETROL BOMBS HURLED

Varanasi: A brawl over a trivial issue turned violent at the Benaras Hindu University campus on Thursday with two groups of students hurling petrol bombs and stones at each other, the police said. A fight broke out between the two groups of students, who live in the Lal Bahadur Shastri and Birla hostels, in the morning which turned violent in a few hours. However, they didn't specify the exact cause of the clash. Members of the varsity's proctorial board and guards tried to pacify the students but the situation went out of control after which police were called in, they said. Senior police officials, including SP (city) Dinesh Singh, soon reached the spot. The police said they used "mild force" to bring the situation under control. Several petrol bombs, a country-made pistol and a large number of stones stacked inside Lal Bahadur Shastri hostel were found. Stones were also found inside Birla hostel, they added. The Lal Bahadur Shastri hostel was vacated after the clash in order to prevent any further flare up, they said. Around a dozen outsiders were taken into custody from the campus for their alleged involvement in the incident. — PTI

■ BJP terms ruling 'victory of truth' demands apology, Rahul seeks JPC Rafale ruling sparks verbal duel

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14



BJP upbeat, Cong suffers setback

Aug. 28, 2007 Defence ministry issues request for proposal for procurement of 126 MMRCA fighters
MAY 2011 IAF shortlists Rafale and Eurofighter jets
JAN. 30, 2012 Dassault Aviation's Rafale aircraft is the lowest bid
MARCH 13, 2014 Work share agreement signed between HAL, Dassault Aviation for 108 aircraft
APRIL 10, 2015 New deal for acquisition of 36 direct 'fly-away' aircraft from France announced

JAN. 26, 2016 India and France sign MoU for 36 Rafale aircraft
NOV. 18 Government states in Parliament that the cost of each Rafale aircraft to be approximately ₹670 crore and that all aircraft will be delivered by April 2022
DEC. 31, 2016 Dassault Aviation's annual report reveals the actual price paid for the 36 aircraft at about ₹60,000 crore, more than double the government's stated price in Parliament
MARCH 13, 2018 PIL in SC seeks independent probe into Centre's decision to procure 36 Rafale fighter jets and disclosure of the cost involved in the deal

before Parliament
SEPT. 5 SC agrees to hear PIL seeking stay on Rafale fighter jet deal
OCT. 31 SC asks Centre to place before it in a sealed cover within 10 days the pricing details of 36 Rafale fighter jets.
NOV. 12 Centre places price details of 36 Rafale fighter jets in a sealed cover before SC. It also gives details of steps that led to finalisation of the Rafale deal
DEC. 14 SC says there is no occasion to doubt the decision-making process of the Modi government and dismisses all the petitions seeking direction to the CBI to register an FIR for alleged irregu-

larities in the jet deal
JAN. 2, 2019 Bhushan, Sinha and Shourie move SC seeking review of its December 14 judgment
FEB. 26 SC agrees to hear review petitions in open court
APRIL 12 MP Meenakshi Lekhi moves SC against Rahul Gandhi for wrongly attributing his 'chowkidar chor hai' remarks on Rafale to the apex court
APRIL 23 SC issues contempt notice to Rahul for his remarks
MAY 8 Gandhi tenders unconditional apology
NOV. 14 SC dismisses review pleas against its verdict in the Rafale deal closes contempt plea against Rahul Gandhi

lead the nation from road to Parliament". Law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad questioned if he raised the issue at the behest of the French firm's rivals. In Tawang in Arunachal Pradesh, defence minister Rajnath Singh said the allegations of corruption in the Rafale deal were aimed at maligning Mr Modi's image of a clean and honest leader and demanded an apology from the Congress. "The allegation of corruption in Rafale deal was nothing but an attempt to malign the clean and honest image of Prime Minister Modi and his government. The people of India will not forgive the Congress for their slander-

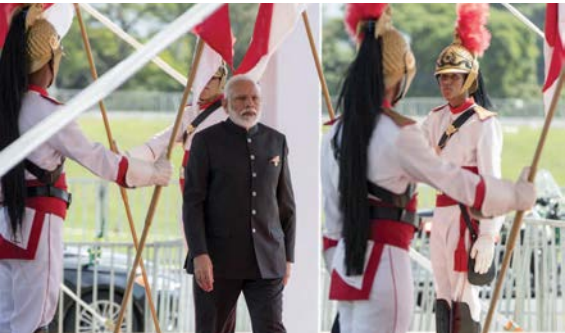
ous campaign and calumny," he said. Countering BJP narrative, Mr Gandhi, tweeted, "Justice Joseph of the Supreme Court has opened a huge door into investigation of the RAFALE scam. An investigation must now begin in full earnest. A Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) must also be set up to probe this scam." Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala claimed that the Supreme Court judgment has paved way for a comprehensive criminal investigation into Rafale "scam" but the BJP government was "misleading" the country on the impact of the verdict.

SC LETS OFF RAHUL WITH UNCONDITIONAL APOLOGY

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

The Supreme Court let off Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in a contempt plea for wrongly attributing to the top court his election campaign rhetorical "chowkidar chor hai" remark against the Prime Minister in connection with the Rafale case. Telling Mr Gandhi to be "more careful in the future", the bench of CJI Ranjan Gogoi, Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul and Justice K.M. Joseph, refer-

ring to his second affidavit, said, "Better sense having prevailed, we would not like to continue these proceedings further and, thus, close the contempt proceedings with a word of caution for the contemnor to be more careful in future." "We do believe that persons holding such important positions in the political spectrum must be more careful. As to what should be his campaign line is for a political person to consider," the court said.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi arrives to attend Brics Summit in Brasilia, Brazil, on Thursday. — PTI

Modi, Xi discuss trade, border issues in Brazil

SRIDHAR KUMARSWAMI
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday met Chinese President Xi Jinping in a crucial bilateral meeting in Brazil in which the two leaders "reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and security in the border areas" and also discussed the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which India recently refused to join. After the Chinese President told Mr Modi how he fondly recalled the warm welcome given to him at Chennai last month for the second informal summit between the two leaders at Mamallapuram near the southern metropolis, he invited Mr Modi for the third edition of the informal summit in China in 2020 for which "the date and venue for which will be determined through diplomatic channels".



Xi Jinping

The meeting between the two leaders is the first since the fresh war of words between the two countries on October 31 after India bifurcated its J&K state into the two UT of J&K and Ladakh. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi met Xi Jinping, President of the People's Republic of China, on the sidelines of the 11th Brics summit at Brasilia. The leaders noted that the special representatives will have another meeting on matters relating to the boundary question and reiterated the importance of maintaining peace and security in the border areas. The leaders also exchanged views on multilateral issues,

including WTO, Brics and RCEP. They both agreed on the importance of maintaining close dialogue on matters relating to trade and investment," the ministry of external affairs said in a statement. "President Xi Jinping conveyed his deep appreciation to PM for hosting him at the second Informal Summit in Chennai... He invited the PM for the third informal summit in China in 2020," the MEA added. Mr Xi thanked PM for India's substantial participation in the just concluded China Import Export Expo in Shanghai. The two leaders agreed that the new high-level mechanism on trade and economy should meet at an early date. It may be recalled that just two weeks ago, the two Asian giants had been involved in a fresh war of words, with Beijing calling the creation of two new UTs of J&K and Ladakh as "unlawful and void".

'1962 China conflict hit India's standing globally'

New Delhi, Nov. 14: India's position at world stage seemed assured but the 1962 conflict with China significantly damaged the country's standing, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday. Delivering the fourth Ramnath Goenka memorial lecture, he also said the Simla agreement of 1972 resulted in a revanchist Pakistan continuing problems in Jammu and Kashmir. In his address, Mr Jaishankar touched upon a variety of issues while giving a run down



Jaishankar

of India's external engagement over the last few decades. "If the world is different (today), we need to think, talk and engage accordingly. Falling back is unlikely to help," he said, adding "purposeful pursuit of national interest is shifting global dynamics." Highlighting India's new approach in dealing with terrorism, he compared "lack of response"

to the Mumbai terror attack to the way the country responded to the Uri and Pulwama strikes. On India walking away from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), he said no agreement was better than having a bad agreement. Giving a historical perspective to geopolitical issues, Mr Jaishankar said, "For years India's position on the world stage seemed assured, but the 1962 conflict with China significantly damaged India's standing." — PTI

Brics call for 'urgent' need to reform UN

Brasilia, Nov. 14: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other four Brics leaders on Thursday called for an "urgent need" to strengthen and reform the United Nations and other multilateral organisations, including the WTO and the IMF, to address the significant challenges being faced by the developing countries. Prime Minister Modi was in the Brazilian capital of Brasilia to attend the 11th Brics Summit. In a joint statement, the

leaders of India, Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa said they are committed to multilateralism, cooperation of sovereign states to maintain peace and security, advance sustainable development and ensure the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms for all and build a brighter shared future for the international community. They said they are committed to "helping overcome the significant chal-

lenges currently facing multilateralism, as well as upholding the central role of the UN in international affairs and respecting international law". "We reiterate the urgent need to strengthen and reform the multilateral system, including the UN, the WTO, the IMF and other international organisations, which we will continue working to make more inclusive, democratic and representative, including through greater participation of

emerging markets and developing countries in international decision-making," they said. China and Russia reiterated the importance they attach to the status and role of Brazil, India and South Africa in international affairs and support their aspiration to play a greater role in the UN. They also expressed serious concern over persistent threats to international peace and security and committed to work for lasting peace for all. — PTI

Khattar ministry finally takes shape, 10 MLAs sworn in

Chandigarh, Nov. 14: Nearly three weeks after taking oath, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Thursday gave shape to his council of ministers by inducting 10 new members, including one from ally JJP. Mr Khattar and deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala took oath on October 27 but no other member was sworn in over the next 17 days. The induction of six Cabinet-rank and four ministers of state now takes the strength of the ministry to 12, leaving room for two more in any future expansion. Altogether, the state with a 90-member Assembly can have 14 ministers. Haryana governor Satyadeo Narain Arya administered the oath to new ministers at a ceremony on the lawns of the Raj Bhawan here. Among the 10 new ministers, eight are from Mr Khattar's BJP and one from Mr Chautala's JJP, besides an independent. Seven independents are supporting the BJP-JJP government. Barring former hockey player-turned-BJP MLA Sandeep Singh, all ministers took oath in Hindi. Donning a saffron turban, Mr Singh said the words in Punjabi. Kamlesh Dhandha, the BJP MLA from Kalayat Assembly seat, is the lone woman minister. Those inducted as

NEW CABINET

- Om Prakash Yadav
- Sandeep Singh
- Kamlesh Dhandha
- Anoop Dhanak
- Anil Vij
- Kanwar Pal Gujjar
- Mool Chand Sharma
- Jai Parkash Dalal
- Banwari Lal (Bawal).
- Ranjit Singh.

Cabinet ministers include five BJP members: six-time MLA Anil Vij (Ambala Cantonment), former Speaker Kanwar Pal Gujjar (Jagadhri), Mool Chand Sharma (Ballabgarh), Jai Parkash Dalal (Loharu) and Banwari Lal (Bawal). The sixth Cabinet-rank minister is the independent from Rania, former CM Om Prakash Chautala's estranged brother Ranjit Singh. The new ministers of state are Om Prakash Yadav (Narnaul), Kamlesh Dhandha (Kalayat), Sandeep Singh (Pehowa) and Anoop Dhanak (Uklana), the lone JJP member inducted in this expansion. Mr Dhandha, Mr Singh and Mr Dalal are first-time legislators. In the council of ministers, which now has 12 members, including the chief minister, nine are from the BJP, two from the JJP and one is an independent. — PTI

ANDHRA PRADESH STATE CIVIL SUPPLIES CORPORATION LIMITED
Head Office : 10-15/21, Ashoknagar, Sri Sai Towers, Bandar Road, Vijayawada - 520 007.
No.Mktg.M2/1920 (S)/KMS/WB Dated: 13.11.2019

TENDER NOTICE
TENDER NOTICE FOR TRANSPORTATION OF GUNNY BALES FROM VARIOUS JUTE MILLS OF WEST BENGAL TO ALL THE DISTRICTS OF ANDHRA PRADESH
Appointment of Transport Contractors for one year for transportation of Gunny Bales from various Jute Mills of West Bengal to the designated godowns of APSCSCL. Applications are invited from all over India for registration to participate in the e-reverse auction to be conducted by NCDEX E Markets Limited on behalf of APSCSCL Ltd. Visit www.neml.in or www.apscsc.gov.in for approximate Tender Quantity, application forms and detailed terms & conditions. For registration, contact at 9642332994/9962059599. Last date for online registration and completion of formalities for e-reverse auction shall be up to 03.12.2019, 5.00 pm. Auction processing fee & EMD shall be paid through e payment mode only by using Net Banking, Debit Card, Credit Card and NEFT/RTGS. The date of online reverse e-auction through www.neml.in platform will be on 05.12.2019, 11.00 am onwards. Sd/- VC & MANAGING DIRECTOR

एसजेवीएन लिमिटेड
(भारत सरकार एवं हिमालय प्रदेश सरकार का संयुक्त उपक्रम)
SJVN Limited
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of H.P.)
A 'Mini Ratna' & Schedule 'A' PSU
CIN No. L40101HP1988GCO08409

NATHPA JHAKRI HYDRO POWER STATION
CORRIGENDUM-I
The last date of uploading, downloading and opening of e-tender No. PCD-2578 for the work "Hiring of one (01) No. fully built-up Ambulance of any reputed manufacturer for NJHPS duties" is hereby extended as under:-
Last date and time of downloading of document : 21.11.2019 upto 12:00 hrs.(IST)
Last date and time of uploading of duly filled bids : 22.11.2019 upto 13:00 hrs.(IST)
Date and time of opening of bids : on 22.11.2019 at 14:00 hrs.(IST). All other terms and conditions shall remain unchanged. DGM (P&C)
Deptt., NJHPS, SJVN Ltd., Jhakri - 172201.
SAVE ENERGY FOR BENEFIT OF SELF & NATION

Can Fin Homes Ltd
(Sponsor: CANARA BANK)
Greater Noida Branch
[Provision to Rule 9 (1)]

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES
SALE NOTICE for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 9 (1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002
NOTICE is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd., Greater Noida Branch, will be sold on "As is where is" "As is what is" and "Whatever there is" on 04.12.2019, for recovery of Rs. 15,99,978/- (Fifteen Lakh Ninety Nine Thousand Nine Hundred and Seventy Eight Only) due to Can Fin Homes Ltd. from Praveesh Kumar & Rajender Prasad (Borrowers) and Manoj Sharma (Guarantor), as on 01.12.2018, together with further interest and other charges thereon. The reserve price will be Rs. 12,00,000/- (Twelve Lakhs Only) and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 1,20,000/- (One Lakh Twenty Thousand Only)
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY
Flat No FF - 4, 1st Floor, (RHS Back Side), Plot No-16, 17A, 17B & 18, Khasara No-1473, Balaji Enclave, Raipur, Dasna, Ghaziabad - 201002.
Boundaries of The Property Are As Under
North : Flat No-FF-3 South : Other Property
East : Open Plot West : 25 Feet Wide Road (Entry)
Known encumbrance if any: NIL
The detailed terms and conditions of the sale are provided in the official website of Can Fin Homes Ltd., (www.canfinhomes.com). Please refer to the following link <https://canfinhomes.com/SearchAuction.aspx>

Date : 14.11.2019
Place: Greater Noida

Sd/-
Authorised Officer
Can Fin Homes Ltd

COCHIN SHIPYARD LIMITED
(A GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ENTERPRISE)
REF: MAT/CSH/0038/19-20 Dated: 15th November 2019

GLOBAL TENDER NOTICE - DESIGN AND MATERIAL SUPPLY OF ACCOMMODATION ITEMS FOR SHIP 023 AND 024 (1200 PASSENGER VESSELS)
1. Sealed Tenders are invited from reputed and experienced firms for Design and Material Supply of Accommodation items for 1200 Passenger Vessels being built at Cochin Shipyard Limited, Cochin.
2. The details and conditions of the above referred tender can be downloaded from CSL website: www.cochinshipyard.com and Govt. Website <http://eprocure.gov.in>. Amendments, if any, will be uploaded in the website only and will not be published in newspapers. Bidders are requested to monitor the website till the due date for bid submission.
3. Last date for the receipt of offers is up to 10.00 am IST on 10th December 2019.
"Hindi version of this advertisement is published in the website (www.cochinshipyard.com) of CSL"
Sd/-
Assistant General Manager (Materials)



Policy

WCD, Niti Aayog to prepare framework for states, UTs for better implementation of schemes, says Union minister Smriti Irani

THE ASIAN AGE

FRIDAY | 15 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI

Nation

PAGE 4



BJP should accept Sabarimala like they accepted Ayodhya ruling.
—Digvijaya Singh, Congress leader

SHORT TAKES

Women among 5 hurt in Pak shelling

Srinagar: At least, five civilians, including a woman were injured when hit by shrapnel as Pakistani troops resorted to what the officials alleged was unprovoked mortar shelling along the Line of Control of J&K's Kupwara district. Two residential houses were extensively damaged in the shelling. In Muza-ffarabad, PoK authorities claimed that the shelling was initiated by the Indian troops resulting into the death of one Pakistani soldier and injuries to two civilians in the Neelam valley. The Army said that Pakistan Army violated the November 2003 ceasefire understanding by resorting to unprovoked shelling.

7 arrested for gas leak in Odisha

Bhubaneswar: Odisha police on Thursday arrested seven officials of Falcon Marine Exports in connection with reported leakage of chlorine gas in its prawn processing factory located in Khantapada area of Balasore district. As many as 88 workers, most of whom are women, fell sick last night. The general manager, production manager, human resources manager, two supervisors, shift in-charge and safety manager of the factory were arrested after interrogation, police said. The factory was sealed following the mishap and a case has been registered. At Khantapada police station in this regard.

Maoist camp busted in Odisha

Rayagada: Security forces on Thursday busted a Maoist camp at Karkamarka forest under Ambadala police limits in Odisha's Rayagada district and defused a bomb near the spot. Acting on a tip-off about presence of several Maoists in the forest, Special Operation Group and District Voluntary Force jawans conducted a joint-combing operation. Besides defusing a bomb, jawans seized explosives, clothes and other articles from the place.

MP 'miracle tree' out of bounds for its 'devotees'

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, NOV. 14

A day after a frenzied mob clashed with police for being denied to enter the buffer zone of Satpura Tiger Reserve in Madhya Pradesh's Hosangabad district to "embrace" a "Mahua" plant believing that it has healing power, local administration on Thursday imposed prohibitory orders under Section 144 in the area to bar the people from worshipping it.

Local administration imposed prohibitory orders in the forested village of Nayagaon, which had suddenly turned a pilgrim centre with people from surrounding areas pouring there to touch a "miracle tree" to stop the people from approaching it.

"Section 144 was imposed in the area to stop the people from worshipping the tree", sub-divisional officer Lokesh Nirapure, who visited the spot along with local sub-divisional magistrate and police officers to take stock of the situation, said.

The forest department along with the local administration has meanwhile launched a drive to create awareness among the locals that the tree has no healing power and vested interests have spread all kinds of rumours about it for commercial purposes.

"We have started mobilizing local youths to spread the message that the tree has no healing power", he added. Irrate mob on Wednesday attacked policemen deployed in the village for regulating them, leaving 11 cops injured.



A combo of two photos shows Bohoto Kiba and his newly married wife posing with assault rifles on their wedding reception in Dimapur on Saturday, Nov. 9, 2019. The Dimapur police took suo moto cognizance of the photo of the couple posing with assault rifles and arrested them on Wednesday, Nov 13, 2019, for



an unauthorised display of firearms in contravention to the ceasefire ground rules. Bohoto Kiba's father Kilo Kilonser is a senior member of the NSCN (NK). Two other NSCN(NK) militants, who gave the couple the weapons to pose with, were also arrested by the police.

— Twitter/PTI

Now ED arrests Malvinder in money laundering case

New Delhi, Nov. 14: The ED on Thursday arrested former Fortis Healthcare promoter Malvinder Singh and former CMD of Religare Enterprises Ltd (REL) Sunil Godhwani in a money-laundering case related to alleged misappropriation of funds of Religare Finvest Ltd (RFL).

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) took both the accused in its custody inside the Tihar central jail here, where they are currently lodged in a case filed by the Delhi police in relation to the alleged scam.

A court here was informed about the development by the agency's lawyer, Nitesh Rana, who urged it to issue a produc-



Malvinder Singh

tion warrant against the accused for seeking their custodial interrogation.

The court, however, directed that the accused be produced before a metropolitan magistrate in the central jail itself since trial prisoners are not being produced in the Saket district court, either physically or through video-conference, due to the ongoing lawyers'

strike. "The court is informed that accused Malvinder Mohan Singh and Sunil Godhwani are lodged in central jail numbers 8 and 7 respectively at Tihar Jail. The applications filed by ED be put up before the concerned duty MM, Tihar jail on November 15, for disposal in accordance with law," Special Judge Sandeep Yadav said. Both Singh and Godhwani are accused of laundering money punishable under sections 3 and 4 of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. They were in judicial custody along with Singh's brother Shivinder and two others - Kavi Arora and Anil Saxena - in a case filed by the Economic Offences Wing.

Air pollution claimed over 5L lives in India, claims report

New Delhi, Nov. 14: More than five lakh people died prematurely in India in 2016 due to dangerous levels of outdoor air pollution and over 97,000 of them died after being exposed to pollutants from coal burning, a new report revealed on Thursday.

The Lancet Countdown 2019 on health and climate change also cautioned that the impact of air pollution in India will worsen if the country does not shift from coal-based energy.

It emphasised on rapidly decreasing coal use to zero, saying it was crucial to meeting the commitments of the Paris

Agreement.

"Total energy supply from coal increased by 11 per cent in India from 2016 to 2018 and out of over 5.29 lakh premature deaths in 2016 due to dangerous levels of outdoor fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5), over 97,400 deaths were from coal.

"The energy landscape will have to change drastically and nothing short of a 7.4 per cent year-on-year cut in fossil carbon dioxide emissions from 2019 to 2050 will limit global warming to the more ambitious goal of 1.5 degree Celsius," the report, authored by 35

institutions worldwide, said.

It said coal phase-out is essential, not only as a key measures to mitigate climate change, but also to reduce morbidity and mortality from air pollution.

"Coal continues to be the second largest contributor to global primary energy supply (after oil) and the largest source of electricity generation (at 38 per cent, compared with gas, the next highest at 23 per cent)," the report said, adding that most of the growth in total primary energy supply (TPES) of coal has been in Asia,

notably China, India and Southeast Asia. Overall, carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels have risen by 2.6 per cent from 2016 to 2018, the report said.

Another global study from Switzerland held earlier this year, revealed that

China and the US may be the largest producers of coal power, but power plants in India take the highest toll in the world when it comes to health as coal-fired power plants produce more than just carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming.

Coal burning also releases particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury — thus, damaging the health of many people around the world.

According to Lancet, "Concerningly, the previous downward trend in coal supply has reversed

with a 1.7 per cent increase recorded in total primary energy supply from 2016 to 2018."

The report also talks about heatwaves limiting the labour capacity of various countries.

"Temperature rise and heatwaves are increasingly limiting the labour capacity of various populations. In 2018, 133.6 billion potential work hours were lost globally, 45 billion more than the 2000 baseline and southern areas of the USA lost 15-20 per cent of potential daylight work hours during the hottest month of 2018," the report said.

ber 12. "As Prime Minister Narendra Modi was about to leave for Brazil to attend the Brics summit on Tuesday, the BJP asked Mr Patel to inform the governor about his party's decision so that the governor could initiate further action," the sources added.

This ensured that the Centre could take a decision before the PM left the country.

The NCP's decision to inform the governor way before the deadline given to them ended also raised eyebrows in the Congress as party interim president Sonia Gandhi had deputed her close aide Ahmed

NCP is in talks with BJP too?

■ **Continued from Page 1**
with two berths at the Centre," the source added. The offer involves making NCP chief Sharad Pawar's daughter Supriya Sule a Union Cabinet minister.

A senior BJP leader and former Cabinet minister, requesting anonymity, confirmed the development. Another BJP leader, requesting anonymity, said the NCP does not want to invite the wrath of the BJP by aligning with the Shiv Sena.

Sources also claimed the BJP leadership used Praful Patel to impose President's Rule in Maharashtra on Novem-

ber 12. "As Prime Minister Narendra Modi was about to leave for Brazil to attend the Brics summit on Tuesday, the BJP asked Mr Patel to inform the governor about his party's decision so that the governor could initiate further action," the sources added.

This ensured that the Centre could take a decision before the PM left the country.

The NCP's decision to inform the governor way before the deadline given to them ended also raised eyebrows in the Congress as party interim president Sonia Gandhi had deputed her close aide Ahmed

Patel, Malikarjun Kharge, and K.C. Venugopal for talks with the NCP.

Sources in the Congress said the party was serious about aligning with the Shiv Sena. Sources said a formula had been chalked out, wherein the chief minister's post would remain with the Sena, while the Congress and the NCP would get a deputy chief minister each.

State leaders of the Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena met in Mumbai to finalise the draft of a "common minimum programme", that will become the basis of government formation by the three parties.

SC gives clean chit to govt over Rafale deal

■ **Continued from Page 1**

described as an "unfair sub-mission" that without ordering the registration of an FIR and investigations by the CBI the court had adjudicated the Rafale issue "prematurely" without the benefit of investigation and inquiry into the disputed questions of facts.

"No doubt there was a prayer made for the registration of an FIR and further investigation, but once we had examined the three aspects on merits we did not consider it appropriate to issue any directions, as prayed for by the petitioners, which automatically covered the direction for registration of FIR," said

Justice Kaul in the majority judgment.

While concurring with the majority ruling rejecting the review petitions, Justice K.M. Joseph in his separate judgment appears to have taken a divergent view on the CBI registering FIR and undertaking the investigation.

"If the complaint of the petitioner does make out the commission of the cognisable offence, an FIR is to be registered and the matter investigated. It will be no answer to suggest that this court has approved of the matter in judicial review proceedings under Article 32 of the Constitution, and making it clear that the

entire exercise must be viewed from the prism of the limited judicial review the court undertakes in such proceedings, and this court would end up paying less than lip service to the law" laid down by the Constitution Bench mandating the investigating agency to register an FIR and undertake the probe on a complaint."

Referring to Section 17A of Prevention of Corruption Act, inserted into the anti-corruption law in 2018, that provides for prior approval of the government before seeking an inquiry or investigation against an official, Justice Joseph said that Mr Sinha, Mr Shourie and Mr

Bhushan had approached the CBI "fully knowing that Section 17A constituted a bar to any inquiry or investigation unless there was previous approval."

"17A (1) of the Prevention of Corruption Act says: 'No police officer shall conduct any inquiry or investigation into any offence alleged to have been committed by a public servant under this Act, where the alleged offence is relatable to any recommendation made or decision taken by such public servant in discharge of his official functions or duties, without previous approval...'"

Addressing a hypothetical situation, Justice Joseph

said: "Even proceedings on the basis that on the petitioners complaint, an FIR must be registered as it purports to disclose cognisable offences and the court must so direct, will it not be a futile exercise having regard to Section 17A?"

Having said this, Justice Joseph went on to say: "However, it is my view the judgment sought to be reviewed would not stand in the way of" the Central Bureau of Investigation "from taking action on the... complaint in accordance with the law and subject" to CBI obtaining previous approval under Section 17A of the Prevention of Corruption Act."

7-judge SC bench on Sabari women entry

■ **Continued from Page 1**

under review." Having referred the entire matter to a seven-judge bench, the majority ruling did not say anything critical about the September 28, 2018 order that permitted the entry of women of all ages at the Sabarimala temple.

The majority judgment framed seven questions to be addressed by the seven-judge bench, including interplay between the freedom of religion under Articles 25 and 26 and the fundamental rights, particularly Article 14. This includes constitutional

morality and the extent to which the court can enquire into the issue of a particular practice as an integral part of the religion or religious practice of a particular religious denomination or should that be left only to be determined by the head of the religious group.

Another question framed by the majority judgment relates to the "permissible extent" a PIL could be entertained on calling into question religious practices of a denomination or a section at the instance of those who do not belong to such a reli-

gious denomination. CJI Gogoi also referred to an earlier decision of a seven-judge bench, which held that what are essential religious practices of a particular religious denomination should be left to be determined by the denomination itself.

Both sections of the same religious group, the CJI said, have "a right to freely profess, practise and propagate their religious beliefs as being integral part of their religion by virtue of Article 25."

Speaking for himself and

Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, Justice Rohinton Nariman, apparently responding to one of the reference questions on the permissibility of PILs in religious matters, said the majority judgment pronounced on September 28, 2018 had entertained the PIL raised by the petitioner Indian Young Lawyers Association as it raised the "grave issues of gender bias on account of a physiological or biological function which is common to all women".

Addressing the question of religious denomination,

Justice Nariman referred to the majority judgments of September 28, 2018, which said devotees of Lord Ayyappa do not constitute a separate religious denomination and cannot, therefore, claim the benefit of Article 26 or the proviso to Section 3 of the Kerala Hindu Places of Public Worship Act... The majority judgments were pronounced by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra, also speaking for Justices A.M. Khanwilkar, D.Y. Chandrachud and one by Justice Nariman himself.

Brazil Prez to be R-Day chief guest

■ **Continued from Page 1**

Narendra Modi met Jair Messias Bolsonaro, President of the Federative Republic of Brazil, on the sidelines of the 11th Brics summit at Brasilia. Prime Minister Modi invited the President of Brazil to be the chief guest at Republic Day 2020. The Brazilian President has accepted the invitation with pleasure."

"Both leaders agreed that on this occasion the two countries can comprehensively enhance our strategic partnership. PM Modi said that he looked forward to discussing matters relating to trade.

He also outlined areas for potential investment from Brazil, including in areas of agricultural equipment, animal husbandry, post-harvest technologies and biofuels. The President of Brazil expressed his readiness and informed PM that a large business delegation will accompany him to India. They also discussed other areas of cooperation, including space and defence sectors. The Prime Minister welcomed the decision of the President to grant visa-free travel to Indian citizens," the MEA added.

On the bilateral meet between Mr Modi and Russian President Putin, the MEA said: "Prime Minister Narendra Modi met H.E. Mr Vladimir Putin, President of the Russian Federation, on the sidelines of 11th Brics summit at Brasilia on 13 November... President Putin reiterated the invitation to PM to visit Moscow to participate in the Victory Day celebrations next year, which PM gladly accepted."

The MEA said: "During the meeting, both leaders reviewed the progress in the bilateral relationship since PM's visit to Vladivostok."

Kids face lifelong burden of climate change: Lancet

Children born today will face a world that will be on average over 4 degrees Celsius warmer by their 71st birthday, threatening their health at every stage of their lives, the report notes

SHAKOOR RATHER
NEW DELHI

Climate change will damage the health of an entire generation of children, particularly in India, due to food shortages, infectious diseases, floods and deadly heatwaves, unless there are immediate cuts to fossil fuel emissions, according to a major new report published in *The Lancet* journal on Thursday.

The Lancet Countdown on Health and Climate Change is a comprehensive yearly analysis tracking progress across 41 key indicators.

If the world follows a business-as-usual pathway, with high carbon emissions and climate change continuing at the current rate, children born today will face a world that will be on average over 4 degrees Celsius

warmer by their 71st birthday, threatening their health at every stage of their lives, the report notes.

The annual project is a collaboration between 120 experts from 35 institutions, including the World Health Organisation and World Bank.

The authors noted that climate change is already damaging the health of the world's children, and is set to shape the well-being of an entire generation unless the world meets Paris Agreement targets to limit warming well below 2 degrees Celsius.

Poornima Prabhakaran, co-author of the report, noted that few countries are likely to suffer from the health effects of climate change as much as India, with its huge population and high rates of health-care inequality, poverty, and malnutrition.

"While the report highlights the effects of climate change on people

THE WRITING ON THE WALL



► Diarrhoeal infections, a major cause of child mortality, will spread into new areas, whilst deadly heatwaves, similar to the one in 2015 that killed thousands of people in the country, could soon become the norm
► Despite many initiatives, this report shows the public health gains achieved over the past 50 years could soon be reversed by the changing climate

► The energy landscape will have to change drastically, and soon, for the world to meet its UN climate goals and protect the health of the next generation, the report warns

of all age groups, here what we are trying to do is to bring the focus back on children, because there is a sense of urgency about the issue," the professor at New Delhi's Public Health Foundation of India said.

"For every child who is born today, the future will be decided by the changing climate," she said.

In India, she noted, diarrhoeal infections, a major cause of child mortality, will spread into new areas, whilst deadly heatwaves, similar to the one in 2015 that killed thousands of people in the country, could soon become the norm.

While the government has launched many initiatives and programmes to address a variety of diseases and risk factors over the past two decades, this report shows the public health gains achieved over the past 50 years could soon be reversed by the changing climate.

The energy landscape will have to change drastically, and soon, for the world to meet its UN climate goals and protect the health of the next generation, the report warns.

Nothing short of a 7.4 per cent year-on-year cut in fossil CO2 emissions from 2019 to 2050 will

limit global warming to the ambitious goal of 1.5 degrees Celsius, it says.

"Children are specifically more vulnerable to the health risks of a changing climate. Their bodies and immune systems are still in a developing stage, leaving them more susceptible to disease, pollution and environmental pollutants," Ms Prabhakaran explained.

Nick Watts, executive director of *The Lancet Countdown*, added, "The damage done in early childhood is persistent and pervasive, with health consequences lasting for a lifetime."

"Without immediate

action from all countries to cut greenhouse gas emissions, gains in wellbeing and life expectancy will be compromised, and climate change will come to define the health of an entire generation," Mr Watts said in a statement.

The report notes that harvests will shrink as temperatures rise, threatening food security and driving up food prices.

Infants and small children are among the worst affected by malnutrition and related health problems such as stunted growth, weak immune systems, and long-term developmental problems, say authors of the report.

Also, children will be particularly susceptible to infectious diseases such as dengue that rising temperatures and changing rainfall patterns will leave in their wake.

Nine of the 10 most "hospitable years" for dengue transmission have occurred since 2000. Around half the world's population is now at risk.

The report also points out that through adolescence and into adulthood, young people are poised to suffer the most damage as their lungs are still developing, making them prone to worsening asthma, and an increasing risk of heart attacks and stroke. — PTI



Odisha Pradesh Congress Committee president Niranjana Patnaik during the 2019 election campaigning.

A torn Congress set to fight battle for survival

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR

Pushed to the brink in successive Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in Odisha, the Congress seems to be fighting its last battle of prestige in the state. The party will try its luck in the forthcoming urban local body polls in order to stage a comeback to the centre stage of Odisha politics.

With no strong leader to lead the party from the front, the grand old party's state unit is now in tatters and requires urgent course-correction to remain in existence. The decimation of the party, beginning with the fall of Hemananda Biswal government in 2000, continues. It appears to be approaching a state of complete disappearance.

After the fall of the party from power, no state leader holding the PCC chief post has ever been able to steady the ship. Except during the period from 2002 to 2004 when the party under the leadership of the then PCC chief Sarat Patnaik showed some semblance of fighting spirit, the party has not been able to put up a spectacular fight to its opponents — the BJD and Congress.

In the panchayat elections held in 2002, Sarat Patnaik put up a brave fight against the Naveen Patnaik government and won 282 zilla parishad seats, 21 short of the BJD. When the Congress was chasing the BJD with a killing spirit, the AICC leaders changed the young and dashing PCC chief Sarat Patnaik and replaced him by Jayadev Jena just on the eve of 2004 Assembly elections.

When Mr Jena was consolidating the party, he was dropped from his position and replaced by K.P. Singhdeo, a former Union minister belonging to Dhenkanal royal family. Mr Singhdeo, who did not have much acceptance at grassroots, failed to impress people. He was replaced by Niranjana Patnaik in 2013.

The new PCC chief (Niranjana Patnaik)

Odisha
LOST GLORY

► Struggling at number three spot, the Congress desperately looks at the urban local body polls to be held later this year in order to revive its lost glory

► Except during the period from 2002 to 2004 when the party under the leadership of the then PCC chief Sarat Patnaik showed some semblance of fighting spirit, the party has not been able to put up a spectacular fight to its opponents — the BJD and Congress

► When Congress was chasing BJD with a killing spirit, the AICC leaders changed the dashing PCC chief Sarat Patnaik

worked with renewed spirits and ensured victory of the party in three urban body polls — Attabira, Hindol and Nuapara. Surprisingly, he was replaced again by Jayadev Jena on the eve of 2014 Assembly polls. The party fared miserably in the 2014 Lok Sabha and Assembly polls.

After the poll debacle, there was again a change of leadership. Prasad Harichandan took over as the new head of the state unit. However, he did not get required support of his colleagues to strengthen the party.

On April 19, 2018, he was replaced by Niranjana Patnaik. However, things had already changed for worse this time for the Congress.

The BJP, taking advantage of a weakened Congress, had positioned itself in number two position in the rural polls and inducted most of the potential leaders of the grand old party into its organisation.



The Belgadia Palace: A paradise for nature-loving tourists

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO
BARIPADA

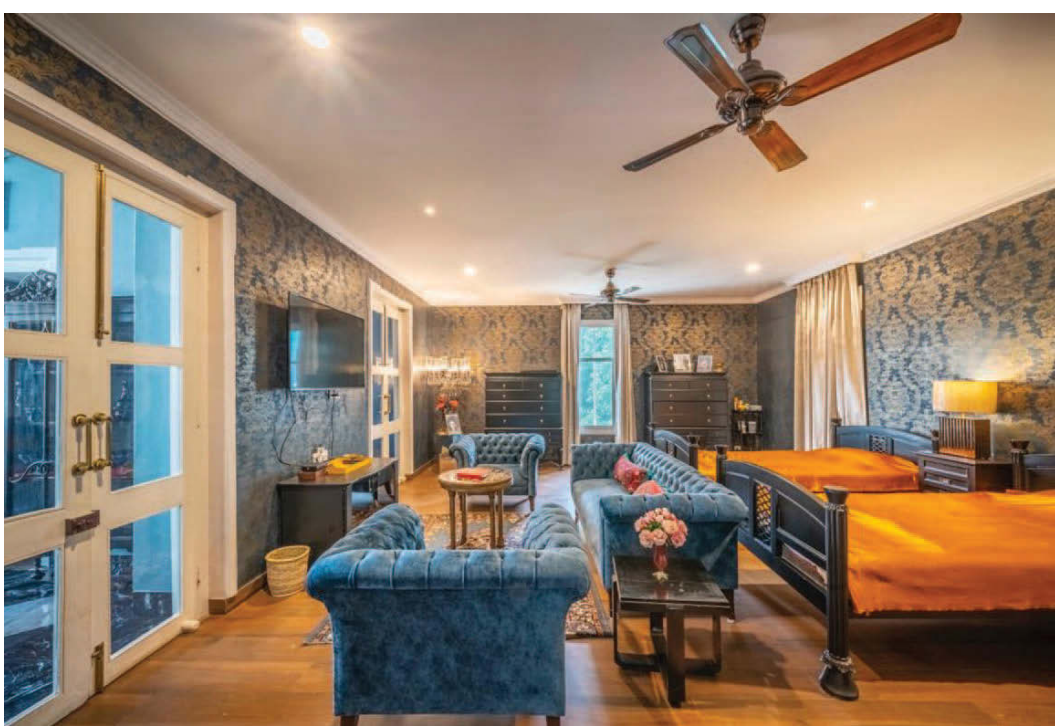
Nestled amidst a lush green backdrop of rolling hills and sparkling waterfalls of the rich and diverse Eastern-Indian countryside is 'The Belgadia Palace'. Established in 1804, this brick-built double-storey structure in the classical Western style of Doric-Corinthian column is a fine blending of Greek and Victorian architecture. And this architectural marvel, located in the tri-juncture of Odisha, West Bengal and Jharkhand, is attracting a large number of domestic and foreign tourists every year.

Home to the erstwhile royal family of Mayurbhanj, this palace invites guests to take a trip down memory lane and introduces the idea of purposeful travel by engaging with the local tribal community and through curated tours to explore Odisha, the soul of incredible India. This unique blend of old and new is encapsulated at this off beat location which is an adventure lovers' paradise a few hours from the Simlipal, an Elephant and Tiger Unesco Biosphere, the second largest national park in India.

The Belgadia Palace's construction began on the orders of Maharani Sumitra Devi Bhanj Deo in 1804, who ruled the state from 1796 to 1810. In a phased

development, the palace gets its aura of majesty with intricate designs being added during the rule of her descendants who used it as a royal guest house for state visitors. The interiors are designed on the orders of the Bhanja dynasties most famous ruler Sri Ram Chandra Bhanj Deo, popularly known as 'The Philosopher King' for his second wife Maharani Sucharu Devi, daughter of Keshab Chandra Sen, founder of the Brahmo Samaj movement famous during the Bengal Renaissance.

The palace sits on a raised hill overlooking sprawling lawns on either side, with the entrance highlighted by a long drive-in with indigenous flora and fauna dotting either side and ending at the Elephant Porch or 'Hathi Baramdah' which is a high arched porch built to accommodate the ruler when he would mount the howdah on an elephant for ceremonial processions. The double-storeyed mansion with turrets flanked on either side, has rooms envisioned for work and leisure with the Maharajah and Maharani wing having black and white checkered marble verandahs overlooking the sprawling lawns, with the royal insignia embossed along the glass windows. A natural lake is situated at one border and a manicured walking path criss-crosses the



A view of the bedroom suite

entire estate. The open verandahs were meant to be viewing parlours for the women of the family to watch the chhau performances at the main lawn, a martial arts dance form practised by the state military and flourished

under the patronage of the erstwhile rulers.

The original palace's (which is now a college) exterior was built to be a replica of The Buckingham Palace. The annals of history come alive with vintage vinyl records, Persian car-

pets, old-world chandeliers and century-old oil paintings placed along the halls and porches of the estate.

"The paintings and art around the palace juxtapose the untamed and ethereal beauty of the district. Nothing like the

smell of monsoons hitting the red laterite soil as you lounge in the verandah enjoying the natural landscape," says David Corb, a tourist from London.

The suites offer hints and whispers of a royal era with the dark winding mahogany staircase at the lobby draped with a red carpet used for receiving the Maharajah, connecting the first floor rooms to the upper chambers. With each step into the palace, the jewel toned colours have a soothing effect with soft wooden finishes transporting you to a bygone era.

The palace's restoration to its former glory included landscaping of its surrounding, fruit and flower orchards and an organic farm for a fresh array of local cuisines served on embossed cutlery. The careful restoration of its interiors was done in stages keeping in mind the unique pieces of furniture and furnishings handcrafted for the family.

Additionally, the rooms have antiques and collections of artwork belonging to the royal family from their travels around the world. The modern and luxe design of its interior contrasts the ancient and ornate architecture of its exterior making the property and its surroundings a walk through the annals of history.

The present-day occupants of the palace, apart from the

Maharajah, include the present Queen Mother and the Queen of Mayurbhanj who belong to the royal families of Nepal and Jaisalmer respectively. They bring their own aesthetic to the unique interiors which include 10 rooms, each designed to highlight the numerous personalities who have either visited the Palace or have connections to the erstwhile royal family of Mayurbhanj.

Belgadia Palace is 3.5 hours from Kolkata and also 3.5 hours from Bhubaneswar. Similarly, it is 4.5 hours from Jamshedpur town in Jharkhand.

Tourists coming to the Palace visit local tribal villages and witness age-old art forms with them such as Dhokra and learn dying arts such as chhau (martial arts dance form). They also visit villages and learn the different art forms such as black stone carving with visits to famous temples to understand the intricate architecture native to Odisha (Khiching). The temple of Kichakeswari at Khiching, built entirely of chlorite slabs, is unique in India. The small museum situated here boasts of highly important historical specimens of sculpture, art and architecture.

One of India's most famous wildlife parks, Barheipani Falls, Simlipal National Park, Jaranda Falls are other attractions for the tourists.

MIND

PRINCE CHARLES

As long as I do not take myself too seriously, I should not be too badly off

POWER

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

Facts are facts and will not disappear on account of your likes

THE ASIAN AGE

15 NOVEMBER 2019

SC ruling on MLAs to encourage defections

In the Karnataka case, the unanimous ruling of a three-judge Supreme Court bench on Wednesday upheld the decision of the Assembly Speaker to disqualify 14 Congress MLAs and three JD(S) legislators under the Tenth Schedule — the anti-defection law — but struck down the Speaker’s order to disqualify them for the remainder of the Assembly’s term, which ends in 2023. The judgment may stick to the letter of the law, but not its spirit.

As such, upon incurring disqualification, the members are not debarred from contesting the coming byelections for 15 Assembly seats. These MLAs let down their parties, leading to the Congress-JD(S) coalition government’s fall and the induction of a minority BJP government in Karnataka. The BJP has indicated the disqualified MLAs will soon join the saffron party. Some may be given party tickets for the byelections. If they win, the BJP’s minority status may be converted into a majority. In effect, their disqualification (by the former Speaker) will be negated. The question naturally arises that the Tenth Schedule is a faultily-drafted law.

The court pointed out, rightly, that under the Tenth Schedule the Speaker’s decision to disqualify a legislator on the ground of defection is not subject to judicial review. But it also noted the same law doesn’t give the Speaker power to lay down the period of disqualification, or to prevent a disqualified MLA from seeking re-election. The law only stipulates that upon re-entering the House, a disqualified member should not be made a minister.

If the idea is to avoid rewarding defections to uphold the party system in our democracy, then it fails to consider that for an MLA who stands disqualified following an act of defection (as defined in the Tenth Schedule), re-election as a member of the House is reward enough.

The judgment in the Karnataka case is likely to make defection easier rather than more difficult — and attractive, to boot — provided the party to which an MLA defects can throw in enough incentives to induce defection

more difficult — and attractive, to boot — provided the party to which an MLA defects can throw in enough incentives to induce defection — even at the cost of incurring disqualification. This appears to be the case with the 17 disqualified Karnataka MLAs. The “taint” of defection — to use the language of the judgment — is thus rendered meaningless. The Supreme Court’s verdict is apt to attract emulation of the Karnataka defectors by unscrupulous elements in other states as well as Parliament.

Since the Tenth Schedule permits the Speaker to appoint a defector from membership of the House without granting the presiding officer latitude to lay down the period of disqualification, the Speaker’s authority is rendered a joke.

In the present case, the Supreme Court remained insensitive to the fact that MLAs of two different parties acted in tandem in order to achieve a certain political end and were, for that reason, entitled to be punished as they had let down those who voted for them in the first place.

Primacy of RTI upheld

The primacy of RTI has been upheld. A Constitution Bench ruled that the office of Chief Justice of India comes under the ambit of the Right to Information Act. The verdict, emphasising what the Delhi high court ruled nine years ago, is very significant though it comes with many caveats to protect the right to privacy of judges.

Checks and balances are the very foundation of a democracy, and bringing public institutions, including the Supreme Court, under the RTI is a major check. Of course, what information commissioners do when providing RTI information to do with various arms of official India will determine how transparent and accountable public institutions will be.

The law can only lay down the broad principle that transparency be seen as a desirable quality in the running of the administration. How far the balances come into play in protecting judicial independence will determine how effectively RTI can be used with regard to the judiciary.

What the ruling establishes is the primacy of the RTI Act as a democratic tool in people’s hands. Had the RTI been applicable to the highest judiciary when Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi faced awkward moments in a sexual harassment claim by a law clerk, we may have known more about what transpired. But in leading this bench towards striking a blow for transparency, he will leave a positive legacy.

A significant point made by one judge is that the judiciary, while wielding sweeping powers through the collegium on the appointment of judges, cannot function in total isolation. The judgment itself goes way beyond the judiciary, and stresses the RTI Act’s importance at a time when the executive has run it into the ground with its stranglehold on the appointment of information commissioners.

THE ASIAN AGE

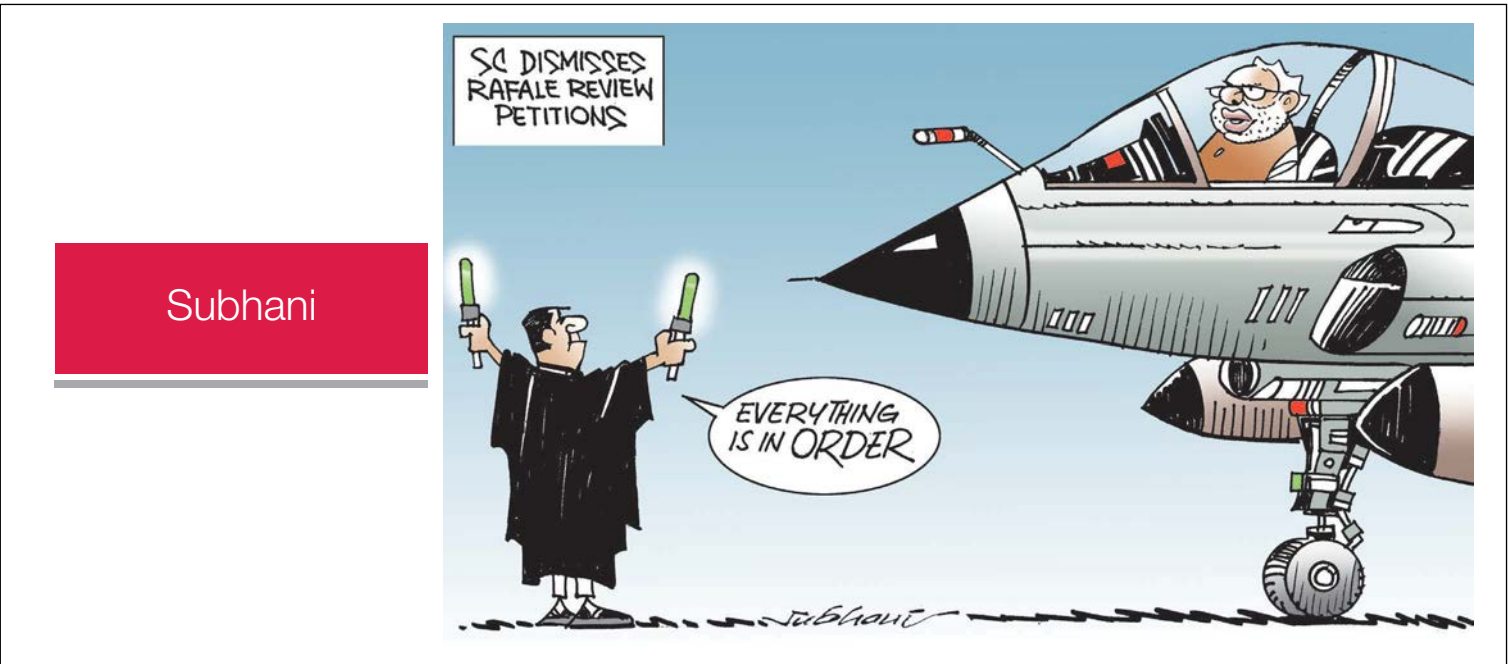
T. VENKATRAM REDDY

Editor in Chief

Printer & Publisher: T. VENKATESWARLU
THE ASIAN AGE offices are located at:
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.
Mumbai: Sigma House, # 43, Ground Floor, R. A. Kidwai Marg, Near Wadala Rly Station, Wadala (West), Mumbai - 400 031 Phone (022) 24195301 Fax (022) 24195347
Kolkata: 4th Floor, Chowdhury Building, 81A Little Russell Street, Kolkata 700 071. Phone: (033) 2289 0676/77 Fax (033) 2289 0686
Registered as a newspaper at the Post Office in the United Kingdom
Air surcharge for Kathmandu and J&K ₹1

Published and Printed on behalf of and for
► Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida -201301.
► Mumbai: Dangat Media Pvt Ltd, Plot No 22, Digha MIDC, TTC Industrial Estate Area, Vishnu Nagar, Digha, Navi Mumbai-400708.
► Kolkata: Satyajug Employees Cooperative Industrial Society Ltd, 13/A, Prafulla Sarkar Street, Kolkata 700 072.
► London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.

RNI Registration number: 57290/94
Postal registration numbers: DL(S)-05/4189/15-17



Advantage Gotabaya as Lanka votes tomorrow?



Mohan K. Tikku

As Sri Lankans prepare to elect their next President on Saturday (November 16), they seem to be spoilt for choice. This time over, there are an unprecedented 35 candidates in the fray for the post of President. The highest number of candidates in a presidential election so far was in 2010, when 22 candidates had joined the race — which itself was a record at the time. This time, the number is up by more than half. A surfeit of candidates may be seen as an indication of greater public enthusiasm for participation in the democratic process. On the other hand, it may as well be reflective of an underlying cynicism. A vague feeling that the people are not getting the leadership choices they would perhaps prefer to have. In this situation, the latter seems to be the case.

Traditionally, elections in Sri Lanka have mainly been a two-horse race between the right-of-centre United National Party (UNP) and the left-of-centre Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP), with a select few smaller parties — such as the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), Sri Lanka Muslim Congress (SLMC) and the JVP — representing regional or sectional interests and occupying the margins. An odd Independent was often seen as an aberration, intended to make a point rather than to make an impact on the outcome. This time four Muslims, two Tamils and two Buddhist monks are among the several others who have jointed the race.

Most of the Independents may not make much difference to the final outcome, but groups representing the regional or sectional interests are bound to cut into the votes of the

two main contenders — former defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa and sitting minister Sajith Premadasa.

Even as Gotabaya Rajapaksa’s presidential aspirations had been in public knowledge for some time, it was only in April this year that he was able to renounce his American citizenship to qualify for the contest. He had since entered the field as the candidate of the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), a party earlier launched by his elder brother and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. The ruling coalition led by President Maithripala Sirisena and Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe was taking even longer in naming their candidate. Their dilemmas were manifold.

For one, President Sirisena continued to weigh his options about setting himself up as a candidate. But once Gotabaya Rajapaksa announced his entry into the fray, President Sirisena ruled himself out of the race. As for Prime Minister Ranil Wickremasinghe, he had been harbouring presidential ambitions for even longer. But in the current situation, he did not enjoy the party’s unanimous support. It took the party some time to persuade him to step aside in order to make way for a candidate who could command better support within the party than he could muster. It

The Rajapaksa camp is not worried. They are banking on the fact that any loss of minority votes would be more than made up by the majority Sinhalese.

In the event of Gotabaya Rajapaksa winning, he has given enough indications about who the new Prime Minister is going to be — none else but his senior sibling and ex-President Mahinda Rajapaksa

was thus that the ruling coalition was finally able to zero in on Sajith Premadasa, a sitting minister and the son of former President Ranasinghe Premadasa, as its choice.

Perhaps, aware of the fact that given his wartime record as defence secretary he may not be able to cut much ice with Tamil voters, Mr Rajapaksa has since been focusing on consolidating the Sinhalese vote-bank. Since last month, he has made several speeches indicating his future priorities as President. In one case, for example, he promised to release the soldiers who were in jail on charges of excesses committed against many innocent civilians (mostly Tamil) during the operations. That was supposed to help him consolidate his support base among the majority Sinhalese — many of whom see the war against the LTTE as a patriotic duty. And so, they believe any excesses committed during the operations deserved to be applauded rather than punished.

Many Muslim voters, who had backed the senior Rajapaksa earlier, have since moved away in view of the stringent Sinhala rhetoric of the present campaign. But the Rajapaksa camp is not worried. They are banking on the fact that any loss of minority votes would be more than made up by the majority Sinhalese.

Thus, on balance, Gotabaya Rajapaksa does seem to be enjoying some edge over his main rival. But even so, there still are a whole lot of allegations pertaining to the human rights record of the period when he was in office that

remained to be dealt with. These include cases involving the murder of journalists and killing of unarmed Tamil civilians — including some in custody — pending against Mr Gotabaya in the courts in Sri Lanka and in the United States.

Apart from the high-profile case of the murder of *Sunday Leader* editor Lasanatha Wickramatunga, which attracted international attention, there are others such as the disappearance of journalist Prageeth Ekanaligoda and attacks on journalists Upali Temnakoon and Keith Noyahr. These pertain to the period when defence secretary Gotabaya Rajapaksa was acting as the principal hatchet man of the regime while President Mahinda Rajapaksa was waging an all-out war against the Tamil Tigers. It was no surprise, therefore, that a section of the Sri Lankan elite recently started the “Stop Gota Movement” as a counter to the winning streak in the Rajapaksa camp. But movements such as these often make an intellectual point, but rarely make an impact on the wider constituency. More so in a society that has been no stranger to polarisation on ethnic lines.

In the event of Gotabaya Rajapaksa winning, he has given enough indications about who the new Prime Minister is going to be — none else but his senior sibling and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa. It is going to be a strong government, as the former defence secretary has promised during the campaign. And as earlier, too other Rajapaksa siblings are due to play an important role in the government. As President, Mahinda Rajapaksa had earlier quite adeptly used the threat of a “tilt” towards China to influence Indian positions. How that plays out in the future one can only wait and see!

The writer is a journalist and the author of After the Fall: Sri Lanka in Victory and War

LETTERS

SAY NO TO BJP

Let the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress come out with a common minimum programme (with the Sena accommodating the wishlist of the other two parties as a precondition for support) and form the government in Maharashtra. This is preferable to the BJP coming to power as it is guilty of ditching the Sena after aligning with it before the polls and running a joint campaign. Is the BJP not deviating from the promises it made to the public by pushing for a different set of demands from its opponents just to be in power? Can such a party be trusted ever by the common man who batted for it and voted for it?

Akhilesh Krish
Navi Mumbai

TACTLESS RAHUL

THE SUPREME COURT accepting former Congress president Rahul Gandhi’s apology for his witless “Chowkidaar chor hai” remark is like a Children’s Day gift to the scion of the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty. It is Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru’s birthday that is celebrated in India as Children’s Day. In his eagerness to pull down his political rivals, Mr Gandhi made the mistake of wrongly attributing his remark to the court, and has been duly reprimanded. It ill behoved a leader of his stature.

Krishnan Subramaniam
Navi Mumbai

LEVERAGE TO BJP

THE SUPREME COURT clearing the decks for the 17 rebel MLAs to contest the December 5 Assembly byelections while simultaneously upholding the Assembly Speaker’s decision to disqualify them must come as a godsend to the BJP. The court held that the legislators’ ouster is no bar to contesting elections afresh. That tainted MLA R. Roshan Baig does not figure in the list of legislators who will join the saffron party is not surprising.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

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



Mahir Ali

After the coup, future unclear: Will Bolivia head for polls?

When a nation’s elected president is compelled to resign because the military chief commands him to relinquish his post, it is hardly unfair to describe it as a coup.

That’s essentially what happened in Bolivia on Sunday, when Evo Morales was forced out of office, just hours after he had agreed to a fresh presidential election following weeks of occasionally violent unrest.

The mobilisations began shortly after the October 20 presidential poll. No one seriously doubts that Morales was genuinely ahead in the vote count, but he appeared to be falling short of the 10 per cent margin required to seal victory in the first round. Then the vote count was suddenly suspended, and when it resumed the requisite advantage was in place. It certainly seems suspicious, although there is an alternative explanation — namely that the last votes to be tallied were from far-flung rural regions, where Morales’ popularity has steadily been greater

than in urban areas.

Anyhow, an “audit” by the Organisation of American States — which is funded mainly by the US, and over the decades has frequently fallen short of objectivity — revealed significant discrepancies, and it called for the vote to be annulled. Morales agreed and vowed to constitute a new electoral commission. Within hours, he was out of a job. The president had also stirred resentment by insisting on aiming for a fourth term, after marginally losing a referendum on term limits, and then persuading Bolivia’s constitutional court to rescind them altogether.

Among the leading lights of the “pink tide” that swept through much of Latin America at the turn of the century, Morales was a relatively quiet achiever. The kind of bluster associated with Venezuela’s Hugo Chavez was seemingly alien to his nature. Even his detractors acknowledge, however, that the Morales presidency has been remarkably success-

ful in reducing both inequality and absolute poverty. The economy has ticked along smoothly, with average growth at almost five per cent since Morales first assumed power in 2006. There has been visible development, the illiteracy rate has sharply declined, and healthcare has substantially improved. Morales led a movement of coca farmers before he became the first indigenous Bolivian to take charge in a nation two-thirds of whose citizens are “Indians”. Until 2006, they had broadly been excluded from the power structure.

It must be acknowledged, though, that in recent years some of the complaints about the Morales administration have also come from the left, especially in instances where the government seemed to be colluding with vested agricultural and industrial interests, to the detriment of the rural population and its environment. When, a few months ago, fires raged through the Bolivian countryside, much of the blame was laid at the government’s door.

It is also not completely clear whether Morales’ primary motivation for extending his tenure arose from concern that his task was unfinished, or could be attributed to a growing taste for power.

It was unclear at the time of writing how the unexpected power vacuum in Bolivia would be filled. The army showed no immediate inclination to directly assume power, which is a small mercy given Bolivia’s history of military rule, not least a half-century ago, when Che Guevara was assassinated. It is not surprising that elements in the military reacted badly when the Morales government decided to elaborately commemorate the 50th anniversary of Che’s martyrdom in Bolivia two years ago.

The vice president and head of the Senate resigned alongside Morales, and the US has recognised the deputy leader of the Senate, opposition politician Jeanine Anez, as interim president. The crucial question is what happens next? Will there be another election sooner rather than

later? And will Morales, whose Movement for Socialism has majorities in both chambers of parliament, be allowed to contest?

There are echoes in La Paz of events in Islamabad 42 years ago, when perceptions of electoral fraud provoked widespread unrest, and then the army struck just as negotiations between the government and the opposition reached agreement on how to proceed.

A nightmare unfolded thereafter, and Pakistan is still living with its consequences. Bolivia in 2019 will hopefully avoid such a dire fate. For the moment, though, no one can confidently predict whether the clear-cut advances of the past 13 years will be preserved. A relapse into the instability of the pre-Morales period — in which his main presidential rival this year, Carlos Mesa, was credited with a key role — would be disastrous, but cannot be ruled out.

By arrangement with Dawn

Congress, NCP played inept game in Maha crisis



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

The odds were long, but the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress did have a clear opening, although it was only a brief one, thanks to the games being played by New Delhi and its chief instrument, Maharashtra governor B.S. Koshiyari, who is a former BJP chief minister of Uttarakhand.

The imposition of President's Rule in Maharashtra makes it evident that what the BJP recently lost on the swings in the post-Assembly election scene, when it failed to cobble together the numbers with its pre-poll ally Shiv Sena, it has made up on the roundabout.

This is thanks to the deeply inept play by the Congress,

which was disrespectful of the opportunity it was presented with, and possibly motivated play by the NCP leadership whose real moves appear to have been thoroughly camouflaged because they were never meant to discomfit the BJP, whatever the outer optics.

The BJP won't have a chief minister. But for the next six months it is likely to have an overlord in Union home minister Amit Shah. In conditions of Central rule under Article 356 of the Constitution, the Union home minister calls all the shots. The governor is the carrier of the Centre's messages.

The BJP couldn't play the defection game in the first instance, as it has done with such dexterity in practically every state. This was because the defectors from other par-

ties it gave tickets to for the state polls mainly lost. The would-be defectors in the post-poll situation were thus wary.

That wariness is now likely to melt away. Those from the Shiv Sena, NCP or Congress ranks looking for the loaves and fishes of office are apt to become easy prey. Not just the Congress and the NCP, but also the Shiv Sena, the supposedly ideological party, had now better watch out. Reining in their flock may not be easy.

The Shiv Sena has a valid grievance. The governor gave the BJP a long window of time — about a fortnight since the declaration of results — to pull itself together and manage the numbers. Even when it became clear that the MLAs from other parties weren't stepping forward to be counted, Mr Koshiyari gave the BJP 48 hours to stake its claim. But the Shiv Sena was given only 24 hours, with its appeal for an extension being peremptorily dismissed.

If the governor genuinely desired that elected members of the Assembly take charge as the government, he would have permitted every next-best

The BJP won't have a chief minister. But for the next six months it is likely to have an overlord in Union home minister Amit Shah. In conditions of Central rule under Article 356 of the Constitution, the Union home minister calls all the shots.

option a decent shot at it. He did not. This was in sharp contrast, for instance, with the way former J&K governor Girish "Gary" Saxena had conducted himself in the post-1996 state election situation, although the late Mr Saxena had been a former RAW chief and not a politician. A seasoned politician like Mr Koshiyari could have displayed at least the same degree of fidelity — and sensitivity — to the working out of the democratic process.

The Shiv Sena has moved the Supreme Court to gain a reprieve. Its plea is that it received too little time to produce the numbers. Given the track record of the present

Supreme Court in a succession of matters of a political nature, which has gone with the interests of the Centre and the ruling party, while appearing to parse legal arguments and evidence, the Sena may be nursing a forlorn hope.

As for the Congress, its leadership found itself caught up in knots — essentially fending off imaginary charges of helping a chauvinist right-wing party to form the government — essentially praying to the false god of imagined ideology. Quite frankly, it failed to even raise the question — what was the primary contradiction before it? To keep the BJP away from power since the saffron party had been unable to win at the hustings, or to fall into the trap of the ayatollahs who falsely — and foolishly — invoke ideology to prevent this happening?

It was overlooked, for instance, that a top leader of the party, then Congress presidential candidate Pranab Mukherjee, had the party's sanction to visit "Matoshree" in Mumbai to solicit the vote of the Shiv Sena for the presidential election.

It is typical that the Congress leadership seldom speaks up

when it really matters, although in anodyne fashion it routinely inveighs against communalism and the high-handedness of the government. And it did not speak at the height of the political drama — and crisis — in Maharashtra.

Because it operated through its lightweight spokesman, and several others who are hardly leaders except notionally, no one outside the hollowed-out Congress Working Committee — which has seen far better days in terms of the stature of its members — knew what the so-called "high command" thought. Who knows, maybe it had no thoughts. And if it did have any thoughts, it lacked the courage of conviction to speak it out in public.

As for the NCP, too much is made of the supposed magic of its most significant leaders. The "plain tales from the Raj" are suggestive of the fact that these leaders can have their tails squeezed. So, they played it real slow, hoping that the blame would eventually fall on the Congress' indecisiveness, which is everyone's handy whipping boy, and this time around it would be with reason.

Maratha supremo Sharad Pawar, when he was in the Congress, shared one thing with his rival, the late Arjun Singh. They were both adept at working at a long "alaap" — the overture that precedes a maestro's musical performance — but short on political courage. This failing had let Arjun Singh down in the aftermath of the Ayodhya demolition in December 1992 when he travelled by train from New Delhi to Lucknow, and then returned from the station itself instead of marching on to Ayodhya. If he had done that, then the job of Prime Minister, displacing P.V. Narasimha Rao, would have been his for the asking.

After Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, Mr Pawar had given Narasimha Rao a run for his money. He had campaigned hard for himself (when his tail was not being squeezed). But he was handily beaten by Rao's ragtag band. Mr Pawar had failed to invite trust and he did not have the courage to unfurl his right-of-centre agenda to Congress MPs who would have been voters in the prime ministerial stakes.

Don't question... be happy: The lesson from JNU stir



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

Jawaharlal Nehru University, named after India's first Prime Minister, is back in the news. This comes as no surprise to anyone who is familiar with the history of this iconic public-funded educational institution, known for its open and progressive ethos and illustrious alumnae, and the increasingly turbulent relationship between the vast majority of its students and teachers on one hand and the government's education establishment on the other.

The immediate trigger for the most recent clash between the students and the JNU administration was over the new hostel manual that proposed sweeping changes to existing rules and the huge hike in fees which students say would keep out young deserving people from the most marginalised communities in the country who normally could have never dreamt of world-class higher education.

Nearly 40 per cent of the students on the campus are reportedly from below poverty line (BPL) families. On Wednesday, the JNU administration announced a partial rollback in the fee hike and assistance for students from economically weaker sections and doing away with some of the proposed restrictions such as curfew timings, dress codes, etc. The protesting students are not convinced that this is enough, and the rollback has not quelled the protests at the time of writing. Unnamed human resources development ministry officials have been quoted in the media saying that the university will soon elaborate on who are covered in the said (BPL) category. There is also a great deal of concern about people who may not be technically BPL, but are from lower middle class families and for whom any extra cost could mean foregoing higher education in a world-class institution like the JNU. Students allege that key decisions are being taken without consulting them. But behind every clash, be it between individuals or in the context of an institution, there are always two reasons — the immediate and the long-simmering.

The tug of war between the

students and the JNU administration in hyper-polarised India is between two conflicting ways of looking at education and pivots around two critical questions about affordable and high-quality education for the poor, including higher education, and about the purpose of education.

Should higher education only be a means to a job or is it also about fostering a questioning spirit and about human development? The visceral and frequently venomous reactions to the recent protests by JNU students by a large number of Indians, including many in the social media, make it clear that the real issues are located elsewhere.

Unsurprisingly, the clash over hike in fees and new hostel manual has become an occasion for many to express their resentment about JNU as an institution, what it stands for, its students and its philosophy. Take the ongoing verbal slugfest in the social media about the desirability or otherwise of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) studies over social sciences. This is a familiar trope and pops up each time JNU jumps to national headlines. Those who are vitriolic in their animosity towards JNU typically locate the source of troubles in the institution within the vocal social sciences community and argue that if only the STEM crowd outnumbered the humanities crowd, all would be well. Some go as far as to advocate shutting down the university to weed out "anti-nationals".

Then, there is the other old trope about taxpayers and JNU students, who are

Unsurprisingly, the clash over hike in fees and new hostel manual has become an occasion for many to express their resentment about JNU as an institution, what it stands for, its students and its philosophy

smearred as "freeloaders" because they can study for very nominal fees. Curiously, in a country where less than 10 per cent of people pay taxes, a similar wrath is not visible against those who dodge taxes. Nor are there similar displays of angst against subsidised meals for legislators, and building of statues everywhere with taxpayers' money. Those championing the cause of STEM the loudest today are also silent when it comes to the stream of unscientific statements from people in positions of power.

JNU is often in the eye of the storm because it fosters an ethos where people are encouraged to ask uncomfortable questions. JNU's rigorous entrance tests and the quality of discourse within its premises also ensure that most students are equipped to come up with coherent responses if they are questioned.

The same is the story for many other educational institutions like Jadavpur University in Kolkata, Tata Institute of Social Sciences in Mumbai, etc.

As Happymon Jacob, a professor at JNU, recently tweeted: "It's not hard to understand why social sciences are suspect in the eyes of the establishment. Social sciences tend to, by and large, make students challenge the established wisdom, think out of the box and simply ask a lot of questions. Questions make some people uncomfortable... Not all challenges are wise, not all out-of-the-box thinking

is great, and not all questions are wonderful. But that is not the point. We must engage in them, nevertheless. That's the point of social science education." Or as Swara Bhaskar, award-winning Bollywood actor who studied at JNU, put it in a recent magazine article: "JNU changes lives by freeing its residents of the limitations they come from. It provides a safe space for people from diverse and different backgrounds to have an equal access to resources. JNU taught me that the India I knew was not the only India that existed. JNU is special because it changes lives by recognising that education is not, and should not be, a privilege of the few, but rather a birthright of everyone."

The animus against JNU stems from the fact that it is seen by many as an institution that breeds activists. But activism is not the monopoly of social science students anywhere in the world. A growing number of medical students in the United States, for example, take courses in social activism.

It is no secret that the religious and political organisations committed to a robustly, and exclusively, Hindu version of India — "Hindutva" — are not fond of JNU. The key issues at stake, however, go beyond any one institution. It goes to the heart of a critical question.

Should the poor be priced out of world class higher education? And the even more critical question: What is education? Is it just a means to get a job, doing things mechanically even if efficiently, preserving the status quo? Or is education also about empowerment, when the poorest of the poor feel confident, through education, to ask uncomfortable questions of the system?

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com



Happymon Jacob, a professor at JNU, recently tweeted: 'Social sciences tend to, by and large, make students challenge the established wisdom, think out of the box and ask questions. Questions make some people uncomfortable.'

After RCEP, what's the road ahead?



Abhijit Bhattacharyya

The Indian government must be complimented for showing conviction in standing up to pressure, both internal and external, and not bowing to conditions that didn't take account of its core national interests in Bangkok last week. It's clear that India refused to play ball as the proposed

Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, or RCEP, in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's words, "does not fully reflect the basic spirit and the agreed guiding principles of RCEP. It also does not address satisfactorily India's outstanding issues and concerns. In such a situation, it's not possible for India to join the RCEP Agreement". The entire proceedings, as is usually the case in a multilateral diplomatic jamboree, revolved around words like "free" and "fair", notwithstanding the fact that things emerged contrary to it for India. Thus, the joint statement too conceded: "India has significant outstanding issues which remain unresolved... India's final decision will depend on a satisfactory resolution of these issues".

Clearly, India's position stood vindicated, that was further reinforced by the commerce minister's statement: "India's decision to be out of RCEP is final unless other countries involved... uphold its demands... India's decision will depend on a satisfactory resolution of these issues." Thus, there emerged a fissure in the RCEP (participating) states to feel good and come to a consensus in pushing through the programme. As of date, it's an aborted takeoff, the preparations of which began more than seven years ago at the behest of 10 Southeast Asian nations, that subsequently proposed to include six more, three from the Far East (China, Japan, South Korea); one from South Asia (India) and two from the Pacific region (Australia, New Zealand).

An astonishingly ambitious plan of action without doubt, RCEP invariably had to have its bumps. This was mainly due to big differences in virtually everything — demography and geography; economics and export; import and industry; polity to state policy. A simple calculation based on the well-known "54 factor" — the calculation and analysis of each country does not indicate a smooth flight for RCEP anytime soon, notwithstanding the fact that "RCEP is without India" at this point.

No doubt it was conceived with good intent, but the future (the "Matsanyaya" of Indian philosophy): "big fish gobbling small fish", to this writer, appears more than a

reality. Else, China wouldn't have had come with a prompt statement through its foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang within 24 hours of the Indian withdrawal: "We will follow the principles of mutual understanding and accommodation to negotiate and resolve those outstanding problems raised by India, and we welcome an early joining by India". When did we hear such Chinese eagerness to address Indian concerns in a multilateral forum? It's hard to recall.

"It (RCEP) is conducive to the entry of Indian goods into the China... It will also help Chinese goods enter markets in India". But Chinese goods are already all over India. Obviously, China wants more. Much more than what stands today. And India? What sort of goods from India will enter China? Without hindrance? Without matching technology? The Chinese spokesman tried to explain: "We do not deliberately pursue a trade surplus against India. We can expand and increase our cooperation in investment, production capacity and tourism and make a bigger pie out of cooperation for sustainable and balanced development". Good words, but without specifics, from the high table. The idea is more focused. India must be taken on board for Beijing's meat and India's morsels. What happens to India's human resources and service industry? There is silence! The real truth is that it's only to "help Chinese goods enter markets in India", much more than ever before. China is under pressure owing to industrial overcapacity and emerging counter-pressures by the West to make Beijing open up its markets, finance, banking and service industries.

That said, what lies next for India? To this writer, though India has done well in the past 25 years, it's time to focus more on structural and procedural economics. There are a few issues to be revisited, if deemed fit. Taking a cue from three countries as case studies — Japan, the US and China: Bank; budget; currency; import; saving; fiscal deficit; current account; and agriculture investment.

Japan stood demolished in 1945. By 1970, Japan dazzled the world. How? Thanks to Joseph Dodge (ex-Detroit Bank) who steadied Japan through "banker's conservative philosophy": sound currency, balanced budget, financial stability and fiscal discipline. First, the traditional Japanese deficit spending was reversed. Japan got a "balanced budget" after a long time, supplemented by credit restrictions and expansion of trade production;

stringent curtailment of expenditure and expansion of government revenue. And finally, through currency stabilisation: Dodge fixed 360 yen to the dollar, which remained unchanged for 22 years. Japan emerged as an economic superpower.

Earlier too, in the US, its first treasury secretary, Alexander Hamilton, sowed the seeds of future prosperity when he submitted his plan for a national bank in 1790. His logic was simple: "Banks are nurseries of national wealth". Although the Hamilton action plan lasted only 22 years, the subsequent role of US banks in the development of its economics was there for all to see. However, India today needs to watch more over "bank scams" rather than "bank service". Else, the economy can only dip, not develop.

In the Chinese case, the indelible impression of the Japanese model is clearly visible. Deng Xiaoping admired the spectacular two-decade Japanese recovery and took the cue. First, China went into its shell. With single-minded determination, Beijing curbed all non-essential imports, devalued its currency and made it rock steady like what Dodge had earlier done to Japan, and gave all facilities to foreign corporations to bring capital, technology and shift their production facilities to China. The result? High rates of domestic savings and investments and exports. China controlled its current account deficit (pertaining to excess import and deficit export) in no time; started having a balanced budget, thereby making its fiscal deficit history; and took direct and strict control of the entire economic system under the state, thereby transforming comrades into capitalists. Proletariat yesterday; bourgeoisie today and tomorrow!

In one sector, however, China looked somewhat vulnerable, as almost two per cent of fertile agricultural land was reportedly lost owing to massive industrialisation of the countryside, thereby compelling Beijing to revisit agrarian distress and irrigation.

For India, therefore, the challenges today are many. From these case studies of Japan, the US and China emerge food for thought. Apart from bank, budgets, currency, the import/export imbalance, domestic savings, fiscal deficit and current account deficit, India faces a gigantic challenge in developing agriculture with investment and technology. It's because, even today, despite stabilisation, the average annual rise of the Indian demography stands at almost 1.8 crore, and the Indian government's Economic Survey 2018-2019 (Volume 2) reports that "the growth in the agriculture sector witnessed tapering".

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College and the author of China in India

‘Nunchi’: Korean tips to make your life better



Euny Hong
extract

Nunchi (noon-chee): ‘eye measure’, or the subtle art of gauging other people’s thoughts and feelings to build harmony, trust and connection.

Let’s imagine you have just started a new job at a big company, and you’re invited to a party where you want to make a great impression. When you walk into the room, everyone is laughing a bit too hard at the not-particularly-funny joke of an older woman you’ve never seen before. Do you:

A) Step in with a really funny joke, definitely much better than the one you just heard. Your new colleagues are going to love this!
B) Laugh along with the others, even though it’s not very amusing.
C) Find a tactful moment to introduce yourself to the older woman, who you’ve correctly assumed must be the head of the company.

If you chose A, you seriously need to work on your nunchi. If you chose B, good work, you read the room correctly and picked up the right cues from your new colleagues. If you chose C, congratulations, you’re already on your way to mastering the power of nunchi.

Nunchi is the Korean superpower. Some people even go so far as to say it’s how Korean people can read minds — though there’s nothing supernatural about it. Nunchi is the art of instantly understanding what people are thinking and feeling, in order to improve your relationships in life. Having great nunchi means continuously recalibrating your assumptions based on any new word, gesture

or facial expression, so that you are always present and aware. Speed is paramount to nunchi; in fact, if someone is highly skilled at nunchi, Koreans don’t say they have ‘good’ nunchi, they say they have ‘quick’ nunchi.

In the short term, nunchi will save you from social embarrassment — you can’t make a faux pas if you’ve read the room correctly. In the long term, nunchi will make the waters part for you. People will open doors that you never even knew existed. Nunchi will help you live your best life.

There’s an old Korean expression about the power of nunchi: ‘If you have quick nunchi, you can eat shrimp in a monastery.’ Admittedly, this makes no sense until you understand that traditional Korean Buddhist monasteries are strictly vegetarian. In other

words, the laws bend to your will.

Everyone can improve their lot by honing their nunchi; you don’t have to be privileged, know the right people or have an impressive academic pedigree. In fact, Koreans refer to nunchi as ‘the advantage of the underdog’ for just those reasons. It’s your secret weapon, even if you’ve got nothing else. As for those who were born with a silver spoon in their mouth, well, there is no faster way to lose your advantages in life than a lack of nunchi.

As Koreans say, ‘Half of public life is about nunchi.’ A well-honed and quick nunchi can help you choose the right partner in life or business, it can help you shine at work, it can protect you against those who mean you harm, and it can even reduce social anxiety. It can make people take your side even when they aren’t sure why. Conversely, a lack of nunchi can make people dislike you in a way that is as mysterious to them as it is to you.

So if you’re thinking, ‘Oh dear, not another Eastern fad — I’ve already thrown away half my clothes’ thanks to Marie Kondo, first of all, it’s not a fad. Koreans have been using nunchi to evade or overcome more than 5,000 years’ worth of slings and arrows.

You need only look to recent Korean history to see nunchi at work: the country went from Third World to First World in just half a century. Only seventy years ago, after the Korean War, South Korea was one of the world’s poorest nations — poorer than most of sub-Saharan Africa. To make matters worse, it had no natural resources at all: not a drop of oil, not an ounce of copper. By the twenty-first century, South Korea had become one of the richest, coolest and most technologically advanced nations on the planet.

It now manufactures most of the world’s semiconductors and smart-

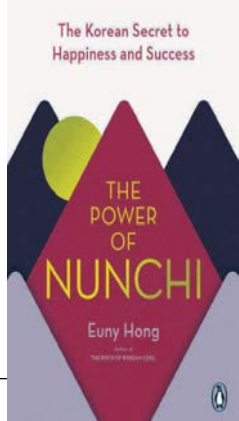
phones. It is the only member nation of the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) that started out as a borrower of money and then became a lender of money.

Sure, some of that was down to the usual luck, hard work, and a little help from their friends, but if it were that simple, any number of other developing nations could have achieved exactly the same thing. Yet none did. The Korean economic miracle has always been based on nunchi: the ability to ‘eye-measure’ other nations’ rapidly evolving needs, to manufacture export products that evolve as quickly as those needs, and to recalibrate plans based on the universe’s only constant — change.

Nunchi is woven throughout all aspects of Korean society. Korean parents teach their children about the importance of nunchi from a very young age, on a par with lessons such as ‘Look both ways before crossing the street’ and ‘Don’t hit your sister.’ ‘Why do you have no nunchi?!’ is a common parental chastisement.

Nunchi is a part of daily life in Korea, because Korean culture is what is known as ‘high context’, which is to say that a great deal of communication is based not on words, but on the overall context, which has countless factors: body language, facial expressions, tradition, who else is present, and even silence. In Korea, what is *not* being said is every bit as important as the words that are spoken, and a person who pays attention merely to the words is getting just half the story. But this in no way means that you need nunchi only in Korea. Even in the West, life is full of high-context scenarios requiring your nunchi — even if you didn’t know such a word existed.

Excerpted with permission from the publishers, Hutchinson/Penguin Random House



THE POWER OF NUNCHI: THE KOREAN SECRET TO HAPPINESS AND SUCCESS

By **EUNY HONG**
Hutchinson/Penguin
Random House
pp240, ₹499

Full & fancy life of a Fijian who found his roots in Delhi



Aruna Vasudev
review

Bhaichand Patel is a combination of many things. Despite having known him for many, many years, I had no idea he had in him all the many experiences he recounts in this engaging memoir — with wit, humour, moments of sadness which emerge despite his brushing them away with witty asides.

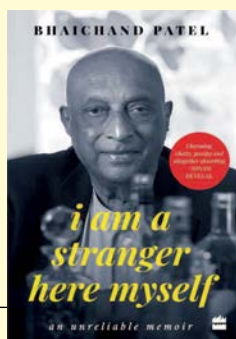
This book is anything but an autobiography. He talks about his life, yes, but in a novel manner, describing episodes, people he met and knew, his travels across the world in the work he did. Coming from Fiji, he studied in Delhi, went on to London as a lawyer and ended up joining the United Nations to the end of his working life. He describes in the most light-hearted manner the people he met, the number of countries and cities he travelled to, with 15 years of working in New York, spending eight years of his working life in Delhi, and finally in Manila. After Manila he settled down into a retired life in Delhi — after spending two years in Mumbai exploring the possibility of living there. Not satisfied with Mumbai he moved to Delhi — into a life which has been anything but retired! Parties galore, friends all over Delhi and all over the world.

He has led a full and fancy life, which started as a fairly frugal existence as a child in Fiji where his parents went from Gujarat and where he grew up, to college in Delhi, and on to London to study law. Then the amazing life began, from studying law in England, to the UN in New York with assignments which took him around the world — from several years in New York, to Cairo and Haiti, to Caracas and Helsinki, to Jerusalem, to Delhi and on to his last posting in Manila. He was posted for eight years in Delhi, ending as head of the UN

Information Centre which must have been when he decided he would spend his retirement years and where he is still in great form, partying with a host of caring and loyal friends — and editing and writing a large number of books — this being the latest one about his full and adventurous life.

The surprising aspect of the book — surprising but typical of Bhaichand — is that he mentions nothing about the very interesting work he did but concentrates on incidents, the people he met, the relations he had with them — with amusing mentions of his sexual relations from the start in college in Delhi! — but nothing about his marriage. A few mentions of his two daughters, but whose daughters?

He does not say. Who did he marry, what happened to his marriage? Who knows... What was his work like with the United Nations — that is a part of his life that Bhaichand also does not go into. Instead, he has chosen to write an altogether very entertaining story of his personal life, from the people he



I AM A STRANGER HERE MYSELF: AN UNRELIABLE MEMOIR

By **BHAICHAND PATEL**
HarperCollins
pp 260; ₹699

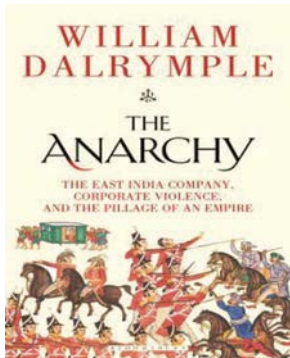
met, the variety of experiences he had in his life — all recounted with wit and humour and obviously with vivid memories of the several lives he has lived and the memorable relations he has had with a vast variety of people across the world. There are photographs of him with Pandit Nehru, with Indira Gandhi, with the UN Secretary-General, the King of Bhutan and, surprisingly him with two high-level Indians — Barrister Rajni Patel and Russi Karanjia — at his wedding reception who gave him his first break as a lawyer and as a journalist, after he graduated. But wife? Obviously this is something he does not want to mention. It leaves one wondering who she was and what happened to the marriage... His vast and varied experiences of life — and the people he knew — in different places across the world, are what have clearly stayed with him all these years. And they make very entertaining reading — about parties, food, sexual encounters, details about liquor and food and in the last pages a great deal about cinema. Films were a passion in his life from his very young days and it is a passion that still continues...

Now he has decided to spend the last years of his life in Delhi, which he considers home more than Fiji which he left a long, long time ago. He still visits Fiji occasionally — and the US annually where both his daughters are settled — but his life is centred in Delhi along with the many, loyal friends he has.

He is a great raconteur — a book filled with incredible memoirs told in an absorbing, light-hearted manner of the many worlds he lived in, the many relationships he had, the many, many friends across the world and in Delhi where he has chosen to spend the rest of his memorable life.

The writer is an eminent film critic and historian, author and maker of documentaries, a member of several international festival juries and one of the top scholars of Asian cinema.

INDIAN TOP 10 BESTSELLERS NON-FICTION



1 THE ANARCHY
William Dalrymple,
Bloomsbury, ₹699

2 DARA SHUKOH: THE MAN WHO WOULD BE KING
Avik Chanda
HarperCollins, ₹699

3 GOOD ECONOMICS FOR HARD TIMES
Abhijit V. Banerjee,
Esther Duflo
Juggernaut, ₹699

4 POOR ECONOMICS: RETHINKING POVERTY AND THE WAYS TO END IT
Abhijit V. Banerjee,
Esther Duflo
Penguin, ₹499

5 THE BODY - A GUIDE FOR OCCUPANTS
Bill Bryson
Doubleday, ₹999

6 SHAHJAHANABAD
Rana Safvi
HarperCollins, ₹999

7 KASHMIR'S UNTOLD STORY: DECLASSIFIED
Iqbal Chand Malhotra,
Maroof Raza
Bloomsbury, ₹599

8 REMNANTS OF A SEPARATION
Aanchal Malhotra
HarperCollins, ₹5999

9 WHAT THE ECONOMY NEEDS NOW
Editors- Abhijit Banerjee,
Gita Gopinath, Raghuram
Rajan, Mihir S. Sharma,
Juggernaut, ₹599

10 INSURGENT EMPIRE- ANTICOLONIAL RESISTANCE AND BRITISH DISSENT
Priyamvada Gopal
Simon & Schuster, ₹799



FICTION

1 BLUE MOON (THE NEW JACK REACHER THRILLER)
Lee Child
Bantam Press, ₹599

2 GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER (BOOKER PRIZE 2019 WINNER)
Bernardine Evaristo
Hamish Hamilton, ₹799

3 THE TESTAMENTS (BOOKER PRIZE 2019 WINNER)
Margaret Atwood
Chatto & Windus, ₹799

4 THE FAR FIELD
Madhuri Vijay
4th Estate, ₹599

5 THE GUARDIANS
John Grisham
Hodder, ₹399

6 AGENT RUNNING IN THE FIELD
John Le Carré
Penguin, ₹599

7 NOTHING VENTURED
Jeffrey Archer
Pan Macmillan, ₹399

8 GRAND UNION (STORIES)
Zadie Smith, Hamish
Hamilton, ₹699

9 MUSIC TO FLAME LILIES
Megha Rao
Tara-India Research
Press, ₹299

10 SUN-CATCHER
Romesh Gunasekera
Bloomsbury, ₹599

Bahrison, New Delhi

Is your reading carnal or spiritual, for wisdom or comfort?



Sridhar Balan
meanwhile

Waiting at Chennai airport recently, I was pleasantly surprised to meet my neighbour waiting for the same flight. The discovery was pleasant for two reasons. I was glad for some company for we had just learned that our flight was an hour late and he was carrying a copy of David Baldacci’s latest thriller *One More Deed* and it would give us a chance to discuss books and reading. I had Andrew Whitehead’s *The Lives of Freda*, the fascinating and extraordinary story of Freda Bedi. Over coffee, my friend lamented the noticeable lack of books among the waiting passengers. “The reading habit is disappearing among people and even more so, among the younger generation,” he said. “More people have

transferred their reading on to devices like the Kindle, the i-Pad, other e-Readers and even the mobile phone,” I said. My neighbour shook his head ruefully. “Even on devices like the i-Pad or the phone, no real reading is done. They just check the headlines for any breaking news,” he said, concluding that sustained reading was fast becoming a lost art among the young.

I reflected on this during the flight. I realised that when Jeff Bezos released the first version of Amazon’s Kindle at the Jacob Javits Center in New York City, it was to have far-reaching consequences. The Kindle was not merely to transfer reading from the print format to a device but it was to transform the act of reading itself. The e-book had already existed before

the Kindle and what Bezos did was to create a device dedicated exclusively to reading. His idea was to make reading such a pleasurable experience from the Kindle that people would no longer go back to the printed book.

Thus, he provided wireless internet connectivity in the first version of the Kindle, so that readers could look up references from the Kindle itself. In short, reading was to be a complete experience.

Since that time, not only has the Kindle become more sophisticated and better, the market has been flooded with a range of e-Readers to tap a growing readership.

Conscious of the need to not merely match the reading experience from a print format but to surpass it, even Bill Gates hired Bill Hill in Seattle to lead Microsoft’s charge to transform reading. Bill Hill was a visionary. He experimented with text and typeface, sound, graphics and visuals and even colour to make the reading experience on the electronic device so extraordinary and compelling, that one would never go back to the staid book again. Before die-hard champions of the

print book could finalise their plans to travel to Seattle to enact their version of “Kill Bill”, poor Bill Hill quietly passed away before writing his own epitaph of the print book.

E-books had certainly existed before the Kindle and other devices for they were an alternate form of publishing and for publishers, certain genres of publishing required the e-book format and now technology became an enabler. The early embracers of the e-format were multi-volume encyclopedias and reference works, journals and more recently, science, medical and professional books for a specialised community. Edited works or multi-author books in this category are only published as e-books and print copies are only available on a ‘print-on-demand’ (POD) basis. Professionals download chapters of their choice on a chargeable basis. Publishers are now increasingly treating books as “consumer products” and are prepared to publish in any format according to choice or preference. So, we have e-books very often published simultaneously with the print

book based on a philosophy of “to each his own”. Consumers can now read in any format of their choice.

They can also read in any device of their choice. It need not only be on the Kindle, i-Pad and other devices but also on mobile phones and even on wrist-watches. The reading devices seem to be getting smaller but the worry is, so is the attention span of the reader.

Newspaper editors now routinely tell columnists not to exceed a thousand words, partly for reasons of space but more importantly, not to lose the attention of the reader. Most publishers prescribe a certain word length not only to make costing and pricing viable but also to keep the reader interested.

The emphasis therefore should be on the ‘content’ of reading and not on its format. Print books and e-books are quite compatible and while publishers have tailored their print runs as the e-book version too is there, should demand increase, technology is always there to put in a quick reprint. To go back to Baldacci, all his books combined have a print of 130

million copies in spite of having the e-versions too.

The problem seems to lie elsewhere. The limited attention span among perhaps both young and old alike has resulted in a demand for reading in a capsule or abridged format. People want matter in a gist or just a quick summary will do. There is a great worry that sustained reading or reading over a longer period is distinctly passe. My friend at the airport moaned “we have neither the time nor the patience”. Pointing to the Baldacci, he said, “sustained reading would enable me to finish the book in about seven or eight hours time”. But it would never be and the book would take a month or two to finish. Fair enough I thought, we are not in a speed race here, for it’s the engagement with the book that continues.

David Ulin in his book *The Lost Art of Reading* recalls his conversation with his 15-year-old son in ninth grade at the time. “Reading is over,” pronounced the boy. “None of my friends like it and nobody wants to do it anymore.” Ulin, the long-time books editor of the *Los Angeles Times* and the

author of 10 books, was clearly shocked. “I almost asked for a towel to clean up the blood,” he said. Instead, he went to work on *The Lost Art of Reading*. In it, a distinction is made between the cursory or “dip into” reading and more sustained or serious reading. The former is called “carnal reading” not on its subject-matter but on its manner and the latter is called “spiritual reading”. Our effort should be to increase this, says Ulin.

I had an encounter at home recently. My son’s friend, a classmate from his school days, dropped in for dinner recently. My son told him my book was about to be published. “What’s the book about,” asked friend between mouthfuls. “It’s about books,” I said. “A book about books,” he asked incredulously. “It’s also about some iconic books people and nice book places,” I added somewhat lamely, but the damage had been done. Too late now, for it’s in press!

The writer is a senior publishing industry professional who has worked with OUP and is now a senior consultant with Ratna Sagar Books

India resumes buying Malaysian palm oil

Gold supply by domestic refineries dips by a third

Overleaf

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,286.48	+0.42
Nifty 50	11,872.10	+0.27
S&P 500	3,092.69	-0.04
Dollar (₹)	71.97	-0.17
Pound Sterling (₹)	92.31	-0.42
Euro (₹)	79.01	-0.48
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	38,995.15	+0.03
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	62.46	+0.14
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.516	-0.184
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.836	-1.766

* As of 9:30 pm IST

Postal life insurance may be hived off

The postal department is "seriously studying" the option of hiving off the postal life insurance (PLI) business into a separate entity. Chief Postmaster General of West Bengal circle Gautam Bhattacharya said PLI was earlier restricted to government and semi-government officials, but it is now open to listed corporate bodies and professionals.

Gangwar pitches for 'Ministry of Cooperatives'



Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar pitched for a separate ministry for promoting cooperatives, saying they are effective institutions where people can find job opportunities. Cooperatives now come under the Agriculture Ministry. "There is a need to form Ministry of Cooperatives so that cooperatives can develop as professional and effective institutions," he said.

Walmart logs \$290 mn Jabong impairment

Walmart took a non-cash impairment charge of \$290 million for the value of the 'Jabong' trade name in the third quarter. Walmart logged 2.5 per cent rise in revenue at \$128 bn for Q3. Walmart EVP & CFO Brett Biggs said, "Since there was value ascribed to the Jabong name at the time of the Flipkart acquisition, we are taking a non-cash impairment."

IndiGo looking at wide-body planes, biz class

Pursuing aggressive expansion plans, IndiGo is actively considering operating wide-body planes with business class seats for long haul routes like London and Tokyo. CEO Ronojoy Dutta said the airline might also look at Boeing planes for long haul flights, those that are more than nine hours duration. "We are studying about wide body...it is not imminent but it is on the drawing table," he said.

Walmart logs \$290 mn Jabong impairment

Walmart took a non-cash impairment charge of \$290 million for the value of the 'Jabong' trade name in the third quarter. Walmart logged 2.5 per cent rise in revenue at \$128 bn for Q3. Walmart EVP & CFO Brett Biggs said, "Since there was value ascribed to the Jabong name at the time of the Flipkart acquisition, we are taking a non-cash impairment."

IndiGo looking at wide-body planes, biz class

Pursuing aggressive expansion plans, IndiGo is actively considering operating wide-body planes with business class seats for long haul routes like London and Tokyo. CEO Ronojoy Dutta said the airline might also look at Boeing planes for long haul flights, those that are more than nine hours duration. "We are studying about wide body...it is not imminent but it is on the drawing table," he said.

Printed & Published by T Venkateswarlu on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: T.Venkattram Reddy, RNI Registration number 30074/09. Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle © is prohibited.

Govt sets up 49 more CPSEs between 2014 and 2018

Number of CPSEs rises under Modi

S. UMAMAHESHWAR
HYDERABAD, NOV. 14

Despite repeated calls for reducing the government's ownership of businesses, the Narendra Modi-led government has ended up floating more Central Public Sector Enterprises (CPSEs) between 2014 and 2018. According to the Department of Public Enterprise (DPE) data, there are 339 CPSEs — excluding insurance companies — as on March 31, 2018 compared to 290 CPSEs on March 31, 2014. In the four years, the BJP government has set up 49 more central government-owned companies. The increase in CPSEs runs counter to the widely prevalent perception of Prime Minister Narendra Modi being a believer in the concept of less government and more governance. "Government has no business to be in business," Mr Modi said in October 2015, a few months after he took over power. However, the role of the government in business has only increased. Though the consistent disinvestment policy of successive governments has been to shed the management control of public sector units either by selling the companies to private sector entities or by bringing down the government stake to less than 50 per cent, the Modi government did not match the success of the Atal Behari Vajpayee government on this front. While the Vajpayee government managed to bring down the government stake to less than 50 per cent in many companies,

GOVT IN BUSINESS

▶ The Centre has raised ₹1,36,018 cr from 2014 to 2019 by selling minority stakes in 41 public sector firms

▶ But it did not sell any PSU to a private company. From 1998 to 2004, the Vajpayee government had sold 14

CPSEs and 19 hotels to private entities

▶ The government raised ₹82,448 cr from Bharat 22 ETFs and CPSE ETFs from 2014 to November 2019

▶ It also raised ₹52,829 cr from CPSE to CPSE stake sale

data available on BSE indicates that the Modi government has been following the cautious approach adopted by the Left-leaning UPA governments by selling stake in single-digit percentages. The Centre has raised Rs 1,36,018 crore from 2014 to 2019 by selling minority stakes in 41 public sector companies, which include Navratna PSUs as well as others. But it did not sell any PSU to a private company. From 1998 to 2004, the Vajpayee government had sold 14 CPSEs and 19 hotels to private entities.

The BSE data also shows that the big-ticket stake sale under the Modi government has been to exchange traded funds. While a CPSE buying another CPSE amounts to the transfer of cash from one hand to another, ETFs do not involve ending inefficient government-led management systems at CPSEs—both of which paint the current policy preference as status quoist. The Modi government raised Rs 82,448 crore from Bharat 22 ETFs and CPSE ETFs from 2014 to November 2019. It also raised Rs 52,829 crore by way of imperfect disinvestment of selling the government's stake in a CPSE to another CPSE. The government has also raised Rs 18,300 crore by selling partial stake that erstwhile UTI had in some blue-chip companies. In July this year, however, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Thakur informed the Lok Sabha that the government has given an in-principle nod for the strategic disinvestment of 23 CPSEs.

Moody's cuts GDP growth forecast to 5.6% for this fiscal

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

After downgrading the rating outlook on India to negative from stable last week, Moody's Investors Service on Thursday cut India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year to 5.6 per cent from 5.8 per cent estimated earlier, saying the economic slowdown is lasting longer than previously expected. Citing that the government steps do not address the widespread weakness in consumption demand in the country, Moody's said, "We have revised down our growth forecast for India. We now forecast slower real GDP growth of 5.6 per cent in 2019, from 7.4 per cent in 2018." The rating agency's move comes in the backdrop of other rating agencies, brokerages and banks cutting the gross domestic product (GDP) growth forecast between 6.2 and 4.9 per cent for this financial year (see table). Japanese brokerage Nomura estimated the lowest GDP growth of 4.9 per cent for the year ending March 2020, while domestic rating agency Icria projected the highest growth rate at 6.2 per cent. Moody's had on October 10 cut India's economic growth forecast for 2019-20 fiscal to 5.8 per cent from an earlier estimate of 6.2 per cent. The rating agency then attributed the trend of deceleration to

Growth projections for FY20	
Rating	Estimates (in %)
Care	6.2
HDFC Bank	5.8
ICRA	5.8
Moody's	5.6
Edelweiss	5.7
Bandhan Bank	5.5
SBI	5.0
Kotak Mahindra Bank	5.0
Nomura	4.9

an investment-led slowdown due to low consumption, financial stress among rural households and weak job creation. The country's economy grew at the weakest pace since 2013 at 5 per cent year-on-year between April and June. Ahead of the second quarter GDP data that will be released later this month, the ongoing slowdown trend forced the government to take many healing measures like slashing corporate taxes. The RBI took a slew of interest rate cuts. As far as the government's measures are concerned, the Finance Ministry took a slew of initiatives to boost growth. They include bank recapitalisation, the merger of 10 public sector banks into four, support for the auto sector, plans for infrastructure spending, tax benefits for startups etc. "However, none of these measures directly address the widespread weakness in consumption demand, which has been the chief driver of the economy," Moody's said.

Voda Idea, Airtel suffer ₹74K-cr quarterly loss

New Delhi, Nov. 14: Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel on Thursday reported a whopping combined loss of nearly Rs 74,000 crore in the September quarter as the leading telecom players were hit by statutory dues arising from a recent Supreme Court ruling.

While Vodafone Idea posted a loss of Rs 50,921 crore — the highest-ever quarterly loss by any corporate in India—Airtel reported loss to the tune of Rs 23,045 crore. Previously, Tata Motors had logged India Inc's biggest quarterly loss of Rs 26,961 crore in the 2018 December quarter. Vodafone Idea and Airtel have made provisions for their liabilities arising from the Supreme Court order in their latest September quarter results. The apex court has upheld the government's position on including revenue from non-telecommunication businesses in calculating the annual adjusted gross revenue (AGR) of telecom companies, a share of which has to be paid as licence and spectrum fee to the exchequer. Stung by colossal losses, Vodafone Idea said its ability to continue as a going concern is dependent on obtaining relief from the government and positive outcome of the proposed legal remedy. The company is also in the process of filing a review petition against the Supreme Court order. Vodafone Idea has estimated a liability of Rs 44,150 crore post the apex court order, and made a provision of Rs 25,680 crore in the second quarter of the current fiscal. The company said it has

Telecom stocks crash over DoT move

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 14

Faced with huge payments obligation to the Department of Telecommunications (DoT) post the Supreme Court order last month, telecom stocks, led by Vodafone Idea, fell 5 to 22 per cent on Thursday. Telcos came under pressure as DoT issued a notice to the operators to pay their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues within three months as directed by the Supreme Court. Rough estimates indicate Vodafone Idea may have to pay Rs 28,300 crore and Bharti Airtel, Rs 21,000 crore as per the Supreme Court order. Vodafone Idea shares fell a whopping 21.62 per cent to an all-time low price of Rs 2.90 on the BSE and Rs 2.85 on the NSE and closed



finally at Rs 2.95. Bharti Airtel fell 4.88 per cent intra-day on the BSE, but recovered later to close 1.59 per cent down at Rs 362.65. Another Bharti Group company Bharti Infratel fell 4.42 per cent to Rs 208.70 and state-owned MTNL fell 4.92 per cent, closing at Rs 11.02. The BSE Telecom Index was the top loser among the sectoral indices, falling 2.76 per cent. The fall in the share

price of Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea came ahead of their scheduled second quarter results announcements on Thursday and extremely negative outlook for Vodafone Idea after the comments made by the top executives of both Vodafone and Aditya Birla Group. Vodafone Idea is already burdened with a debt of around Rs 1 lakh crore. Vodafone Idea shareholders were disappointed as reports citing senior executives said Aditya Birla Group will not infuse fresh equity into its telecom joint venture with Vodafone Group of UK and let the company go insolvent if the government doesn't help. Bharti Airtel and Vodafone announced their results after the market hours.

ating various options available to us," he said. The consolidated revenue of Bharti Airtel was up by 4.7 per cent at Rs 21,199 crore in the just-ended quarter. As per latest estimates by Department of Telecommunications, Bharti Airtel faces a liability of around Rs 62,187 crore (including share of Tata Group of companies and Telenor India), while Vodafone Idea may have to pay about Rs 54,184 crore. The remaining liability is with state-owned BSNL/MTNL and some of the shut/ bankrupt telecom companies. — PTI

BRICS mulls using national currencies in mutual trade

Moscow, Nov. 14: BRICS members Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa back the idea of developing a common payment system, a Russian official said on Thursday.



South Africa's President Cyril Ramaphosa (L), Prime Minister Narendra Modi, China's President Xi Jinping (C), Russia's President Vladimir Putin (2nd R), Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro (R) wave to press before posing for a family picture during the 11th BRICS Summit on Nov. 14 in Brasilia, Brazil.

Russia and its BRICS peers have been looking for ways to decrease their dependence on the dollar and have advocated using their national currencies in mutual trade. Kirill Dmitriev, the head of the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF), said "increasing non-market risks of the global payment infrastructure" was behind the plan to integrate the group's national payment systems. "An efficient BRICS payment system can encourage payments in national currencies and ensure sustainable payments and investments among our countries, which make up over 20 per cent of the global inflow of foreign direct investment," Dmitriev, a member of the BRICS Business Council, told reporters. He did not give details about the payment system envisaged, but Russia began developing a national payment system

as an alternative to the Belgium-based SWIFT financial messaging service in 2014 after Western sanctions were imposed on Moscow. US and other Western sanctions aimed to punish Russia for the annexation of Crimea and its role in the Ukrainian crisis. Dmitriev said the five BRICS nations had also discussed creating a common cryptocurrency for mutual payments as the grouping was reducing the share of payments in the dollar. The share of the dollar in Russian foreign trade

payments has fallen to 50 per cent from 92 per cent over the past few years, he said. Dmitriev did not say whether Russia supported the idea of the common BRICS cryptocurrency. Previously, Russian officials spoke against any cryptocurrencies, warning that they could be used in money laundering or financing terrorism. The BRICS Business Council has also supported the Russian initiative to create coordination centres for mutual investments within BRICS, he said. — Reuters

Deadline for filing GST annual returns extended

New Delhi, Nov 14: In a relief to taxpayers, the government on Thursday extended the due dates for filing GST annual returns for 2017-18 to December 31 and for the financial year 2018-19, to March 31 next year. The dates for filing the reconciliation statement has also been extended accordingly. In another relief, it has also decided to simplify the two GST forms by making various fields of these forms as optional, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said in a statement. "The government has decided today (Thursday) to extend the due dates of filing of Form GSTR-9 (Annual Return) and Form GSTR-9C (Reconciliation Statement) for 2017-18 to December 31, 2019 and for 2018-19 to March 2020," it said. The earlier deadline for filing of GSTR-9 and GSTR-9C for 2017-18 was November 30, 2019, while that for 2018-19 was December 31, 2019. Notifications regarding the extension of the dates have been issued. The CBIC in the revenue department has also notified the amendments regarding the simplification of the annual return and reconciliation statement forms. A reconciliation statement allow taxpayers to not provide split of input tax credit availed on inputs, input services and capital goods for 2017-18 and 2018-19. CBIC further said it is expected that with the simplifications in the two forms and the extension of deadlines, "all the GST taxpayers would be able to file their annual returns along with reconciliation statement in time". Various representations regarding challenges faced by taxpayers in filing of GSTR-9 and GSTR-9C were received on which by the Government has "acted in a very responsive manner", the CBIC statement added. — PTI

Brexit effect: Indian ultra-rich rush for London property

SANGEETHA G.
CHENNAI, NOV. 14

Indian ultra-high net-worth individuals are making most of the discount available in the London property market due to Brexit uncertainties and weakening pound. London continued to be the most preferred overseas market for Indian UHNWIs and witnessed 11 per cent rise in the number of homebuyers. London property was available at an effective

discount of about 20 per cent, taking into account the currency and price movements in prime central London between the EU referendum and October 2019. Knight Frank's London Super-Prime Sales Market Insight-Winter 2019 has shown 11 per cent year-on-year increase in the number of Indian homebuyers in prime London markets in the 12 months to June 2019. "When compared to investments in Indian

markets, the yields for both capital and rental are higher. As the domestic economy hits a slow block, we can expect Indians to continue the momentum of investments in mature markets such as London that offer higher returns and relatively shorter hold period," said Shishir Bajjal, Chairman & Managing Director of

Knight Frank India. According to Anuj Puri, chairman of Anarock Property Consultants, Brexit is seen as an opportunity for hawk-eyed Indian property buyers who have been waiting to take the plunge into the exorbitantly high-priced UK real estate market. The main areas of interest for Indian homebuyers

are Mayfair, Belgravia, Hyde Park, Marylebone and St John's Wood. London property market has remained one of the most preferred destinations for wealthy Indians. Knight Frank found that 21 per cent of Indian UHNWIs showed affinity towards purchasing homes outside of their domicile country and out of these UHNWIs, 79 per cent are looking to make property investment in the United Kingdom. This was much higher than the

global average and Asian average of 32 per cent. At 52 per cent, the United States is the next preferred property market and 14 per cent of Indian UHNWIs want to invest in Australia and Singapore. Canada is another preferred market. The profile of wealthy Indian buyers is becoming younger. Around 73 per cent of super-prime buyers were below 50 in the year up to September 2019, up from less than 50 per cent at the start of 2015.

London property was available at an effective discount of 20% between the EU referendum and Oct. 2019

WPI eases to 0.16% in October

FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

With drop in prices of manufactured goods, wholesale prices based inflation or WPI eased to about three-and-a-half-year low of 0.16 per cent in October, which was well prevented to enter into the negative zone. The previous low was in June 2016 when the WPI inflation was a negative 0.1 per cent, according to government data.

The data further said that though food products remained dearer, the overall prices slipped to a comfort level. "In September this year, the WPI inflation was at 0.33 per cent, while it stood at 5.54 per cent in October 2018," the data said, adding that the rate of price rise for food articles was 9.80 per cent during the month, while for non-food articles it stood at 2.35 per cent.

WPI in potato remained in the negative zone at 19.60 per cent (from -22.50 per cent in September). "However, for vegetables, the inflation jumped to 38.91 per cent in October from 19.43 per cent a month ago.

NFOs by Tata MF, Union MF to open from 15th

FC BUREAU
MUMBAI, NOV. 14

Two new fund offers — Tata Asset Management Tata Focused Equity Fund and Union Asset Management Company-Union Large & Mid-Cap Fund—open for subscription from Nov. 15.

Tata Focused Equity Fund is an open-ended equity scheme that will invest in a concentrated portfolio of up to 30 stocks across market caps i.e. Multi-Cap.

The benchmark for Tata Focused Equity Fund will be S&P BSE 200. The NFO is open for subscription from Nov. 15 to 29.

Union AMC's Large & Mid-Cap Fund is also an open-ended equity scheme investing in both Large-Cap and Mid-Cap stocks. Union Large & Mid-Cap Fund also opens on Nov. 15 and closes on Nov. 29. The scheme is benchmarked against S&P BSE 250 Large Mid-Cap Index.

The scheme will predominantly invest in equity and equity-related instruments of large & mid-cap companies.

Hanoi seeks to curb fake Made in Vietnam items

Hanoi, Nov. 14: Vietnam is struggling to curb fraud in exports destined for America, custom officials said, as manufacturers seek to dodge punishing tariffs due to the US-China trade spat by illegally using "Made in Vietnam" labels.

Exporters have started shifting production from China to Vietnam to avoid steep tariffs imposed by US President Donald Trump on Chinese goods. The move has also concerns on a rise in manufacturers illegally claiming their products are from Vietnam when they in fact originate in China — and authorities have vowed to crack down with more inspections and punishments. Custom officials in Hanoi said they currently lack the resources to properly tackle the issue, and only 5 per cent of all declaration forms are verified. "We can't check all the goods. Only when we identify the risks or signs of violations will the customs authorities check," said Au Anh Tuan, Director of Customs Control and Supervision at Vietnam Customs.

— AFP

■ Deep price discounts render local refining unviable Gold supply by domestic refineries dips by a third

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 14

The share of gold provided by local refineries has fallen by one-third in the first nine months of 2019. The gold in the bullion market was available at a discount for some months, making refining unviable.

In the first nine months, refiners supplied 142.6 tonnes of gold compared to 213.8 tonnes last year, down by 33 per cent. The overall share of refined gold remained at 48 per cent of 299.7 tonnes during nine months of this year. It was 55 per cent of 390.8 tonnes last year during the same period, finds precious metals agency GFMS. This was contrary to the trend in the past few years when local refineries were seen increasingly importing dore and supplying refined gold to the market.

Bulk of the damage took place in the September quarter as the deep price discounts made the refin-



ing business completely unviable. When gold was available at a 3 per cent discount in the retail market there was no room left for banks or refiners to bring gold in at the international rate. The market discount widened to \$60 per ounce at times during August and September, while the average discount remained in the range of \$40 for the quarter.

The market could provide gold at a discount due to the

increase in import duties and the rising prices. "Bullion dealers had imported gold at a lower tariff rate with a lower import duty applied until June. When, in the first week of July, the government increased the import duty from 10 per cent to 12.5 per cent, the bullion dealers immediately gained 2.5 per cent on the stock they had held. When the price started to surge in the international market, it

gave them additional incentive to sell the metal at lower than the existing gold rate," said Debajit Saha, Senior Analyst, Precious Metals Demand, South Asia and UAE, GFMS.

Further, the demand for gold at the consumer-end remained stagnant when the gold prices rose. Usually the premium or discount at which gold is available in the bullion market is also an indicator of the demand for the metal.

Moreover, when the prices rose, scrap supply also went up and this increased the availability of the metal in the market. As per the estimates of GFMS, scrap supply increased 19 per cent in Q3, on a year on year basis, to an estimated 25 tonnes.

Supply of gold by banks also remained stagnant during the first nine months due to increased availability of gold at discount and contracted demand.

India resumes buying palm oil from Malaysia: Traders

RAJENDRA JADHAV
MUMBAI, NOV. 14

Indian refiners have resumed buying Malaysian palm oil after a gap of nearly a month and contracted around 70,000 tonnes of shipments in December as Kuala Lumpur has been offering a \$5 per tonne discount over supplies from rival Indonesia, five traders told *Reuters* on Thursday.

The resumption in purchases by India, the biggest buyer of Malaysian palm oil this year, could support Malaysian palm oil prices, which are near their highest in two years.

Palm oil is crucial for Malaysia's gross domestic product last year and 4.5 per cent of total exports.

Indian refiners stopped purchases from Malaysia last month, fearing New Delhi could raise import taxes or curb imports after Kuala Lumpur criticised New Delhi for its actions in Kashmir.

Malaysian palm oil is available at a \$5 discount amid congestion at Indonesian ports, said a Mumbai-based dealer with



a global trading firm.

"This is giving a few buyers a reason to start buying Malaysian oil in small quantities to run their refineries."

Malaysian crude palm oil (CPO) for December shipment on the Indian west coast was available at \$603 on a cost and freight basis (C&F) on Thursday, while Indonesian CPO was quoted at \$608, dealers said.

Indonesia is the world's biggest producer of palm oil, followed by Malaysia.

In October, India's top vegetable oil trade body told members to stop buying palm oil from Malaysia in a call aimed at helping New Delhi punish the country for criticising India over its policy towards Kashmir.

— Reuters

CBI set to file fresh charges in \$2 bn PNB fraud case

ABHIRUP ROY
MUMBAI, NOV. 14

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) will soon file fresh charges in the \$2 billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud case and detail how the alleged wrongdoing was carried out, according to a source with direct knowledge of the matter.

In the police's initial charges, billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi, 21 other people, including PNB officials, and three Modi companies were accused of being involved in fraudulent transactions that led to losses of roughly Rs 65 billion for PNB.

Three other Modi employees, a PNB officer, and a relative of Modi's are now also likely to be charged, said the source, who asked not to be identified as the charges have yet to be made public.

"The investigating officer's report is in and the chargesheet is ready. It is being reviewed by the head office," said the source.



CBI did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

PNB, India's second-biggest state-run bank, in 2018 alleged that a few rogue employees had issued fake bank guarantees over several years to help jewellery groups — controlled by Modi and his uncle Mehul Choksi — raise funds in foreign credit. Both have denied any wrongdoing.

Modi was arrested in London in March and is currently fighting extradition to India. Police filed their first charges in May last year and at the time detailed

only some of the alleged fraudulent transactions to Modi and his associates.

The new chargesheet will include 150 transactions and provide details on how fake bank guarantees were used to funnel funds between countries and dummy companies, the source said.

A separate second chargesheet against Choksi and his associates, is still pending and will take time as police link 142 other transactions to that case, another source told *Reuters* on condition of anonymity.

PNB has said losses related to Choksi and his associates were more than Rs 70 billion. PNB and a lawyer for Modi and Choksi did not immediately respond to *Reuters'* requests for comment on Thursday.

The first source said that while the employees of Modi would be being charged with facilitating the funneling of funds, Modi's relative would be charged with destruction of evidence.

— Reuters

Aurobindo unit gets 14 observations

ASHWIN J. PUNNEN
MUMBAI, NOV. 14

India pharma companies continued to be hit by warning letters from US Food and Drug Administration (US FDA). Aurobindo Pharma Ltd is the latest casualty, having received a Form 483 with 14 observations for its injectable plant in Hyderabad, Aurobindo Pharma stock plunged 8.5 per cent on Thursday. Earlier three major Indian drugmakers — Cadila Healthcare Ltd., Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd. and Lupin — received similar warning letters from the US health care watchdog in the last two months.

Aurobindo's Unit IV, its general injectable formulation manufacturing facility in Pashamylaram, Hyderabad, underwent a US FDA inspection from 4-13 November, following which the drug regulator issued a Form 483 with observations to the unit.

Given the sizeable number of observations, it has overshadowed the company's decent September



quarter numbers.

Meanwhile, Aurobindo has said none of these observations was related to data integrity issues and that the company will respond to the US FDA within the stipulated timeline.

The unit contributes significantly to revenue and operating profit. Besides, this unit has around 47 pending filings, and about 30 per cent of overall filings, according to a brokerage report.

"According to our assessment, Unit IV accounted for around 9-10 per cent of US sales and 8-9 per cent of overall Ebitda in FY19. It accounts for around 50-60 per cent of total injectable

sales of \$213 mn in FY19, with the rest being from Unit XII, Eugia and Auronext facilities," Emkay Global said in a note to its clients.

Meanwhile, Aurobindo reported better-than-expected second-quarter numbers. Sales surged 18 per cent year-on-year (YoY) in Q2FY19. This was largely led by the US market and Europe, which rose by 27.3 per cent and 21 per cent YoY respectively. Higher sales of existing products coupled with new launches were the main reasons for the strong overseas growth. Net profit also beat analysts' estimates.

The markets have seemingly overlooked these numbers and chose to focus on larger US FDA issues, experts said. "While we remain positive on Aurobindo Pharma based on the limited price erosion in the base business and the robust ANDA pipeline, including complex generics, regulatory issues may remain an overhang over the near term," said Motilal Oswal Financial Services in a note.

Future First, Arohan MFI plan to cover 3 mn people

RITWIK MUKHERJEE
KOLKATA, NOV. 14

Future First Insurance Broking has teamed up with Arohan Financial Services, part of the Aavishkaar Group, eastern India's largest NBFC MFI, to offer simple, customized and affordable insurance products in areas of major livelihood threats including health, accident, natural calamities, theft etc. While Arohan has 2.2 million touch points across the country, Future First has already distributed insurance products to 5 lakh under-served people. Future First, now has plans to cover 3 million people from the underserved segment over the next couple of years.

Manoj Kumar Nambiar, Managing Director & Board Member, Arohan Financial Services, said; "Enabling financial inclusion has been the foremost focus of Arohan's unique products and

service propositions, made possible on an end-to-end technology-driven platform which has been recognised as the best in the industry. I am certain that our partnership with Future First will play a significant role in the realisation of our vision of impacting over 20 million lives by the year 2025."

Vineet Rai, Founder & Group Chairman, Aavishkaar Group, said, "Aavishkaar Group exists to bridge the opportunity gap for the emerging 3 billion in Asia and Africa. Across Aavishkaar Capital — the equity vertical, Intellect — the knowledge vertical and the group's lending businesses, we seek to ensure that access to finance is made available to the underserved." He said that since Arohan already has such large ecosystem, it can come up with vital feedbacks while designing of the customized products, which is Future First's forte.

Vedanta beats all profit estimates on tax gain

SWANSY AFONSO
NOV. 14

Vedanta reported a 61 per cent jump in quarterly profit as a one-time tax benefit countered lower metal prices and slowing demand.

Net income advanced to Rs 21.58 billion (\$300 million) in the three months to September from Rs 13.43 billion a year earlier, the Anil Agarwal-owned company said in a statement. That beat the Rs 6.87 billion average analyst estimate. Sales declined 3 per cent to Rs 217.4 billion.

Prices of most commodities produced by Vedanta were lower during the quarter. The slowest growth in India in six years also weighed on sales and margins of domestic metal makers, including rival Hindalco Industries, which earlier this week posted a 33 per cent slump in profits.

The company saw a tax gain of Rs 16.1 billion com-

UBI posts net loss of ₹1,194 cr

Mumbai, Nov. 14: Union Bank of India on Thursday reported a net loss of Rs 1,194 crore for the September quarter owing to higher provisioning.

The bank had a net profit of Rs 139 crore in the same quarter of 2018-19. Total income for the September quarter rose to Rs 10,556.57 crore from Rs 9,438.26 crore in the same period a year ago, the bank said.

Its provisioning for bad loans jumped to Rs

3,328.30 crore from Rs 1,710 crore parked aside for the same a year ago. Overall provisioning was of Rs 3,858.75 crore as against Rs 1,715.55 crore.

The asset quality of the bank continued to remain bad, as the gross non-performing assets stood at 15.24 per cent of the gross loans at the end of September 2019, as compared to 15.74 per cent a year ago.

— FC Bureau

pared with an expense of Rs 7.18 billion during the same period a year earlier.

Tax gains lifted quarterly net income by 15 per cent at unit Hindustan Zinc Ltd., which contributed more than half of Vedanta's prof-

it in the year ended March. Vedanta's earnings were boosted by higher volumes at its Gamsberg zinc mine in South Africa, lower costs at its aluminum unit and increased sales of iron ore in Karnataka.

— Bloomberg

Flipkart to collect plastic packets from consumers

FC BUREAU
CHENNAI, NOV. 14

Flipkart is conducting a pilot project to collect plastic packaging back from consumers at select hubs across Mumbai, Bengaluru, Dehradun, Delhi, Kolkata, Pune, and Ahmedabad.

The pilot aims at ensuring existing plastic packaging in the system is recycled and reused. Under the programme, Flipkart will send out an intimation to consumers asking them to voluntarily hand over plastic packaging to Flipkart wish-masters for its proper disposal, at the time of product delivery. The collected packets will then be sent to registered vendors to ensure it is disposed of responsibly to avoid ending up in landfills.

Wish-masters have also been provided proper training in explaining the various facets of this initiative to consumers to ensure high

participation.

This programme is in continuation of Flipkart's sustainability agenda under which it has already reduced the utilization of single-use plastic by 33 per cent and aims to move towards 100 per cent recycled plastic consumption in its supply chain by March 2021. Towards this goal, Flipkart has filed for EPR (Extended Producer Responsibility) and is targeting 30 per cent collection back in the first year. The company is also committed to maximizing recycled content in single-use plastic to boost the recycling ecosystem and reduce virgin plastic consumption.

Earlier this year, the company announced the introduction of electric vehicles in its last-mile delivery network with the aim to replace nearly 40 per cent of its existing last-mile fleet of delivery vans with EVs by March 2020.

OPENING
BELL
PROJECTION FOR TODAY

Nifty has to hold above 11850 for major up-move

The market ended higher after a choppy day of trading with hopes of further cut in repo-rate to boost consumer sentiment amid macro-economic challenges. The Sensex closed 170 points or 0.42 per cent higher while the Nifty ended with a gain of 31.65 points, or 0.27 per cent, at 11872.10. Broader BSE Mid-Cap and Small-Cap indices ended on a flat note.

Technical View

Siddhartha Khemka, Head — Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, said, "Technically Nifty formed a small bodied candle with comparatively long lower shadows on daily scale which indicates that dips are being bought while resistances are intact at higher levels. It has been forming lower lows from last four trading sessions as supports are drifting lower but a decisive hold of 11850 could pause in the recent consolidation to test the higher band of the trading zones. Now it has to hold above 11850 levels to witness an up-move towards 11950 then 12000 zones while on the downside major supports is seen at 11780 levels."

Market View

Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said, "Trend of the market is dictated by macro releases, as WPI inflation numbers indicated weak demand in the manufacturing segment. RBI is likely to give focus on growth rather than rising inflation in the near term which may influence a few more rate cuts. In-terms of earnings growth, we notice that the strength of Q2 result slowed by the end of the season, which can put pressure on stock performance."

— ASHWIN J. PUNNEN

Ultraviolette unveils high performance e-bike F77 at ₹3 lakh

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, NOV. 14

After the Revolt 400 electric motorcycle and the Bajaj Chetak electric scooter launches in August and October respectively, comes India's first performance-oriented electric motorcycle called the Ultraviolette F77 bike.

With an acceleration of 0-60 kmph in 2.9 seconds, top speed of 140 kmph, and a range of 150 km on a single charge, the F77 bike is all set to completely redefines the identity for electric mobility

in India with revolutionary design, technology and user experience.

Priced between Rs 3 lakh and Rs 3.25 lakh on road pan India, the Ultraviolette F77 bike introduced on Wednesday gets a 4.2kWh battery that offers a range between 130-150 km depending on the power riding mode one opts for — Eco, Sport and Insane.

The F77 bike will first be rolled out in Bangalore in October next year and expand to other cities.

The Bangalore-based Ultraviolette Automotive



company said the new F77 electric bike will be available in three variants — Lightning, Shadow and

Laser.

"Over the last 3 years we have been on an extensive journey of researching,

innovating and developing various prototypes of motorcycles, modular batteries and chargers. Today, the F77 is a testimony of our vision of building an entirely new ecosystem of electric mobility in India," Narayan Subramaniam, Founder-CEO at Ultraviolette Automotive, said.

The new F77 bike, which has undergone several thousand kilometres of testing will be a compelling alternative to internal combustion or IC Engine motorcycles, he added.

The F77 bike is powered by

an air-cooled motor that the company claims produces a max power output of 25kW (33.5hp) and an impressive peak torque of 90Nm.

Powering the motor is a battery with a maximum capacity of 4.2kWh. It uses three slim lithium-ion battery packs and the entire unit takes 5 hours to charge fully via the standard charger, while the fast charger will do it in 1.5 hours.

Ultraviolette has revealed that the F77 does not require all three battery packs to run, but it performs optimally with all of them in

use. On a full charge, the F77 has a claimed range of 130-150km.

The battery system also comprises a comprehensive list of safety, thermal and battery management features, some of which are patented technologies.

The company has also revealed that the F77 bike will come with accessories like a portable fast charger, crash guards, panniers, and a different view. The bike is also quite light, with a kerb weight of 158kg, and has an accessible seat height of 800mm.



Blast from the past

In an undated video, former Pak Prez Pervez Musharraf can be heard claiming that terrorists like Laden and Haqqani were 'Pakistani heroes'



The US applauds Jeanine Añez for stepping up as Bolivia's interim

President — Mike Pompeo US secretary of state

BRIEF

Russian student opens fire, kills 1

Moscow: A 19-year-old male student shot and killed a fellow student and wounded three others at a vocational college in Russia's Far East before committing suicide. School and college shootings are rare in Russia which has strict gun laws, and it was not immediately clear what the shooter's motive was. Investigators said the student opened fire with a hunting rifle at the college, which is located in the city of Blagoveshchensk, around 3,500 miles east of Moscow near Russia's border with China. He shot dead another 19-year-old male student, and three other students had been taken to hospital after receiving gunshot wounds.

Warmer climate affects kids: Docs

Washington: Children are growing up in a warmer world that will hit them with more and different health problems than their parents experienced, an international report by doctors said. With increasing diarrhea diseases, more dangerous heat waves, air pollution and increases in mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue fever and malaria, man-made global warming is already harming public health around the world, the annual climate change and health report from the medical journal *The Lancet* said. But the report and its authors said they worry that the future health of the world's youngest people will get even grimmer if emissions of heat-trapping gases aren't curbed.

No breakthrough in US-Turkey talks

Washington: President Donald Trump says he and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan are 'very good friends', but their meeting at the White House failed to resolve an issue that has badly strained relations between the two Nato allies. Trump and Erdogan concluded a visit without achieving an agreement on Turkey's decision earlier this year to accept delivery of a Russian air defense system that poses such a threat to Nato security that the US suspended Turkish participation in the multinational F-35 fighter jet programme. "Hopefully we'll be able to resolve that situation," Mr Trump said.

ISRAEL-GAZA VIOLENCE ENTERS DAY 3

Gaza City: The death toll from Israeli airstrikes on the Gaza Strip rose to 32 in three days after Palestinian officials said six members of the same family were killed. Triggered by the targeted killing of a top militant in Gaza, the two sides have been exchanging fire since Tuesday, and Israel's military said it has recorded more than 350 incoming rockets. The Israeli military has been targeting what it said were Islamic Jihad militant sites and rocket-launching squads in the coastal Palestinian enclave of Gaza. "Six members of the Abu Malhou family, including three children and two women, were killed in an Israeli strike on their family home in Deir al-Balah in the southern Gaza Strip," the Palestinian ministry said. The previous day, Israel said it targeted two Islamic Jihad militants preparing to fire anti-tank missiles. Air raid sirens wailed and fireballs exploded as air defence missiles intercepted rockets, sending Israelis rushing to bomb shelters. In Gaza, residents surveyed damage and mourned the dead outside a mortuary and at funerals.

Power struggle in Bolivia: Añez vs Morales in exile

La Paz, Nov. 14: Where does the power line stand in crisis-torn Bolivia?

Jeanine Añez, the Senate leader who has claimed the interim presidency of the Andean country, seems to have the backing of the police, the military and the Roman Catholic Church.

But even in self-exile in Mexico after resigning under pressure from the armed forces, former President Evo Morales says he would be willing to return to Bolivia, and his supporters are making a show of force in the streets while his party controls a majority in both houses of Congress.

Normal life briefly returned just hours after Añez assumed power. Morales' foes celebrated by waving national flags before they lifted road-blocks nationwide. Businesses rolled up metal sheets protecting them from looting. Public transportation resumed in La



Jeanine Añez

Paz. Then, violent clashes erupted between Morales loyalists and police in Bolivia's capital and raged well into the night.

The unrest is a sign of the challenges facing Añez, who was a second-tier lawmaker before she thrust herself into the presidency, citing the power vacuum created by Morales' departure.

She needs to win recognition, stabilise the nation and organise new elections within 90 days, rebuilding after weeks of violent protests against Morales. — Reuters

MORALES JOINS FAMOUS MEXICO REFUGEES LIST

Mexico, Nov. 14: Mexico's decades-long history of sheltering political exiles was thrust into the spotlight this week as Bolivia's Evo Morales was granted asylum and flown to the Mexican capital in a government plane amid fears his safety was at risk at home.

Morales, who declared victory in a widely disputed presidential election is the latest in a long line of leaders and agitators to have taken refuge in Mexico. Morales' famous predecessors include Cuba's revolutionary poet and essayist Jose Martí, Leon Trotsky, Mohammad Reza, the deposed shah of Iran and Guatemala's Rigoberta Menchu. — Reuters

Impeachment: Democrats, Republicans harden stance

Washington, Nov. 14: With historic impeachment hearings underway, Democrats and Republicans are hardening their arguments over the actions of President Donald Trump as they set out to win over a deeply polarised American public.

Democrats say Thursday's extraordinary public session in the House revealed a striking account of Trump abusing his office by pressing the newly elected president of Ukraine for political investigations of rival Democrats, all while holding up needed military aid. "Bribery," they said, and "extortion".

Republicans counter that the hearing showed none of that. They say the two seasoned diplomats at the witness table had, at best, secondhand accounts of Trump's July 25 call that's central to the impeachment inquiry. There was no pressure on the young Ukraine leader, they argue, and eventually the aid flowed, though only after Congress intervened.

Day One of the rare public hearings in the House — part of only the fourth formal impeachment effort in US history — set the contours for a once-in-a-generation political struggle. Images and audio from the hearing popped up on television, in earbuds and on the partisan silos of social media, providing the first close-up look at the investigation. "The president sought to advance his political and personal interests at the expense of US national security," said Rep. Adam Schiff. — AP



UKRAINE AID TIMELINE

MILITARY AID promised by the US to Ukraine and the strange circumstances under which it was held up and eventually released is at the heart of the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump

JULY 3: The hold Lt. Col. Alexander Vindman, a national security official working at the White House, learns of the military aid being held up.

JULY 10: The meeting A meeting at the White House with Ukrainian officials is cut short when Gordon Sondland, the US ambassador to the EU, says he has an agreement with the acting White House chief of staff that Ukraine's president would get a meeting with Trump if Ukraine agreed to launch investigations.

JULY 18: The hold-up announcement In a secure call with national security officials, a staff member of the White House office of management and budget announces there's a freeze on Ukraine aid until further notice, based on a presidential order to the budget office.

JULY 25: The phone call Trump speaks with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, asking him for favours that include an inquiry into Joe Biden's son Hunter's dealings with Burisma, a Ukrainian gas company

AUGUST: The questions Catherine Croft, the special adviser for Ukraine, says two Ukrainians ask her about the status of military aid.

AUG. 12: The complaint A whistleblower files a formal complaint addressed to Congress that details concerns over the July 25 phone call and the hold placed on military aid. The complaint is withheld from Congress until Sept. 25.



AUG. 28: The article Politico publishes details that the military aid to Ukraine is on hold, setting off a scramble among diplomats in Ukraine and the US

AUG. 29 AND AFTER: Ukraine's desperation William Taylor, the acting US ambassador to Ukraine, testified that he did not know the aid had been withheld until after the article appeared, when he started receiving desperate calls from Ukrainian officials.

SEPT. 9: The investigations begin Three House committees launch a wide-ranging investigation into the allegations that Trump, his personal lawyer Rudy Giuliani, and possibly others, tried to pressure the Ukrainian government to help the president's reelection campaign by digging up dirt on a political rival.

SEPT. 11: The aid is released The funds are suddenly released. Senate Republicans said that happened in part because Sen. Dick Durbin, an Illinois Democrat, threatened to block \$5 billion in Pentagon spending for 2020 if the aid wasn't given to Ukraine. They said the aid was held up while Trump looked into whether Zelenskyy was serious about fighting corruption. Diplomats involved in Ukraine weren't given a reason for the release.



A protester holds a bow and arrow as protesters gather at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University on Thursday.

— AFP

HK protesters ready flaming arrows, petrol bombs Students turn varsity into weapons factory

Hong Kong, Nov. 14: Under a November full moon, hundreds of young people dressed in black set about turning several of Hong Kong's top universities into fortresses, well stocked with improvised weapons.

At City University, protesters used ping pong tables, potted plants, furniture, sports equipment, and bamboo to form a network of barricades to block roads and fortify the entrances to the student residence complex.

Hundreds of protesters wearing gas masks and helmets tore up piles of paving bricks and ceramic tiles to hurl at police, while others stockpiled dozens of petrol bombs, distributing them to their forward positions.

Small groups sat chatting as they fashioned garden hose and nails into spikes to puncture car tyres. The scene this week

'Protests closer to terrorism'

Hong Kong, Nov. 14: Hong Kong police warned protesters on Thursday that they were moving "one step closer to terrorism" by sinking the city into chaos, as riot squads skirmished with militant students at major universities.

Police spokesman Tse Chun-chung denied his department had been asked to enforce a possible curfew this weekend. A Chinese state media outlet later removed its tweet saying authorities

were considering a weekend curfew that cited unidentified sources.

"We are aware of the relevant report circulating online," Tse said adding the authority to order a curfew lies with Hong Kong's leader, chief executive Carrie Lam, and "that's why police are not in a position to comment."

"The force is certainly capable and determined to control Hong Kong's social unrest at the moment. We welcome

any new measures that can help us to achieve the goal of restoring the public safety and order in Hong Kong," Tse added.

In unusually harsh language, he said students were turning university campuses into "weapons factories" and a "hotbed" of crime.

"Their acts are another step closer to terrorism," Tse said, warning of a major disaster if gasoline bombs stored on campuses were to catch fire. — AP

was repeated at nearly half a dozen campuses across Hong Kong.

Until now, the anti-government protesters have used fast-moving, hit-and-run tactics to "be like water" and avoid arrest in

clashes with police. But now with protesters beginning to wield bows and arrows and occupying improvised breastworks, the tactics threaten to take the pro-democracy campaign to a new level of

risk for all sides.

The protesters say their non-violent efforts have been met by brutal police tactics, and their weapons are needed to protect themselves. — Reuters

'Govt seeking ransom to lift Nawaz ban'

SHAFQAT ALI ISLAMABAD, NOV. 14

Pakistan Muslim League on Thursday alleged the government was seeking 'ransom' to allow former prime minister Nawaz Sharif's treatment abroad.

Speaking at a news conference in Lahore, PML-N President Sheh-baz Sharif said Prime Minister Imran

Khan's politics was condemnable.

"The incumbent government (led by the Pakistan Tehrik-e-Insaf) wants to take ransom from Sharif family in the name of indemnity bond," he said.

Shehbaz Sharif, the opposition leader in National Assembly, said that the game of Prime Minister Khan and his political team against Nawaz Sharif depicted narrow mindedness.

Brexit will turn UK into a second-rate player: Tusk

Brussels, Nov. 14: Britain will lose influence in international affairs and become a 'second-rate player' after it leaves the EU, European Council president Donald Tusk said.

Backers of Britain's 2016 vote to exit the EU, the world's largest trading bloc, say that the country — the world's fifth largest economy will achieve a new global status unshackled from EU rules and closer to the US.

Tusk said only a unit-

ed Europe could confront an assertive China and play an effective global role.

"I have heard repeatedly from Brexiters that they wanted to leave the European Union to make the United Kingdom global again, believing that only alone, it can truly be great," Tusk said.

"But the reality is exactly the opposite. Only as part of a united Europe can the UK play a global role," said Mr Tusk. — Reuters

PM Conte calls flooding 'blow to heart of country', meets mayor & locals

Italy to declare emergency in Venice after floods

Venice, Nov. 14: Italy was poised to declare a state of emergency for Venice Tuesday after an exceptional tide surged through churches, shops and homes, causing millions of euros worth of damage to the UNESCO city.

Tourists larked around in the flooded St. Mark's Square in the sunshine, snapping selfies in their neon plastic boots and taking advantage of a respite in bad weather which has driven the high tides. Sirens warning of fresh

flooding rang through the canal city early Thursday but the water level remained low compared to Tuesday's tide, the highest in 50 years.

Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte, who has called the flooding "a blow to the heart of our country", met Venice's mayor and emergency services before jumping in a speed boat to visit businesses and locals affected by the tide.

Residents whose houses had been hit would immediately get up to 5,000

euros in government aid, while restaurant and shopowners could receive up to 20,000 euros and apply for more later, he said.

Several museums remained closed to the public on Thursday. As authorities assessed the extent of the damage to Venice's cultural treasures, such as St Mark's Basilica where water invaded the crypt, locals were defiant.

"It's my way of making a living, what can I do?" Stefano Gabbanoto, 54,

told AFP as he opened his newspaper kiosk despite the flooding.

Austrian tourist Cornelia Litschauer, 28, said she felt mixed emotions seeing Venice's famous square half submerged.

"For the tourists it's amazing, it's something to see. But for the people who live here it's a real problem," Litschauer said, cradling her white Chihuahua Pablo

"It's strange. Tourists are taking pictures but the city is suffering."

The Locanda Al Leon hotel said its bookings had suffered from the international media coverage of the flood, with some guests cancelling their rooms after seeing images of Venice underwater.

Under the arches of the Ducal Palace, a couple from Hong Kong posed for photos in the chilly morning sun.

"This (trip) was planned a long time ago so we couldn't change it," groom Jay Wong, 34, said. — AFP

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Name of work and its location	30-Elect-43-T-2019-20-E3 One time Rehabilitation of Lift make Kone in Block no. 301,302,303 & 304 at Chelmsford Road new Delhi.
Approx cost of the works in	Rs. 45.46 lacs
Address of the office	Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Earnest Money	Rs. 90900.00
Date & time of submission of tender	10.12.2019, 15.00 Hrs.
Opening of tender	10.12.2019, 15.00 Hrs.
Website & notice board	www.irops.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi
3654/2019	

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	
CAN FIN HOMES LTD. S L TOWER, SHOP NO - 4, 4TH FLOOR, ALPHA-1, GREATER NOIDA (UP) Ph. : 0120-4569974 / 7625079164 Email : greaternoida@canfinhomes.com CIN : L85110KA1987PLC008699 [Proviso to Rule 8 (6)]	

SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES	
SALE NOTICE for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8 (6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002. NOTICE is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the Physical Possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. Greater Noida Branch, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 19.12.2019, for recovery of Rs. 14,01,512/- (Fourteen Lakh One Thousand Five Hundred Twelve Only) due to Can Fin Homes Ltd. from Mrs. Shashi & Mr. Pawan Kumar (Borrowers) and Om Pal (Guarantor), as on 01.06.2019, together with further interest and other charges thereon. The reserve price will be Rs. 13,50,000/- (Thirteen Lakh Fifty Thousand Only) and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 1,35,000/- (One Lakh Thirty Five Thousand Only).	

DESCRIPTION OF THE IMMOVABLE PROPERTY	
Flat No F- 5, Rear Middle Flat, 1st Floor, Plot No-101, Vrindavan Garden, Sahibabad, Ghaziabad -201005 Boundaries of The Property Are As Under North : Plot No- 100 East : Road South : Other Land West : Gali Known encumbrance if any: (NIL) The detailed terms and conditions of the sale are provided in the official website of Can Fin Homes Ltd., (www.canfinhomes.com). Please refer to the following link https://canfinhomes.com/SearchAuction.aspx	
Date : 14.11.2019 Place: Greater Noida	Sd/- Authorised Officer Can Fin Homes Ltd



Honour

Lil Nas X nabs award at country music gala where women take spotlight



Artistes resort to method acting only when they do not play 'lovely' characters

— Robert Pattinson
American actor

BRIEF

Spike Lee all set to direct *Prince of Cats*

Los Angeles: Oscar-nominated director Spike Lee is developing a 1980s-set hip-hop Shakespearean romance-tragedy based on the graphic novel, *Prince of Cats*. With the film, Lee is returning to his favourite Brooklyn, which has served as the setting of many of his films, including "She's Gotta Have It", "Do the Right Thing", among others. The *BlackKklaxman* director will also rewrite the script and work with novel's author-illustrator Ron Wimberly, and Selwyn Seyfu Hinds.

— PTI

Schindler's List producer dies

Zagreb: Croatian film producer and Holocaust survivor Branko Lustig, who won Oscars for *Schindler's List* and *Gladiator*, died on Thursday in Zagreb aged 87, state-run HINA news agency reported. Lustig was born into a Croatian Jewish family in the Eastern town of Osijek in June 1932. He was held as a child in the notorious Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen death camps with the number A3317 tattooed on his arm, and most members of his family died in Nazi camps throughout Europe. — AFP



Pink takes yearlong break from music

Los Angeles: Singer Pink is taking a year off to spend some quality time with her family. The singer, who shares daughter Willow and son Jameson with husband, former motocross racer Carey Hart, said she had been working nonstop for almost three years and wanted some time to take it all in. "We did two-and-a-half years (recording and on tour) and Willow is back in school now and Jameson's going to start preschool soon, so it's kind of the year of the family," Pink said. — PTI

I'M TOO OLD TO BE NERVOUS: JAMES MCAVOY

Los Angeles: Actor James McAvoy says he was not at all nervous about portraying Lord Asriel in HBO's *His Dark Material* as he liked the character's boldness and ruthlessness. Based on Philip Pullman's three-part epic series about two children — Lyra Belacqua and Will Parry — who embark on a magical adventure through parallel universes in which science, theology and magic are entwined, McAvoy said Lord Asriel is against the concept of organised religion where the belief systems and rituals are systematically arranged and formally established. "I'm never nervous about doing anything anymore, I'm too old for that. I was more filled with the excitement of getting to play him and getting to do something that's actually quite bold and dangerous in mainstream entertainment, which have a very strong viewpoint on organised religion. "There's no hiding from it: Asriel's against it and not only is he against it, he thinks it is holding us back, that it is actually a form of abuse and torture against humanity. It's a pretty clear and emphatic thing to go after and that's something that I was excited by because we don't get to do that very often," the actor said. — PTI



James McAvoy

FBI busts \$6 million iPad & iPhone counterfeit ring

Scammers involved in importing more than 10,000 counterfeit

San Francisco: The FBI busted a counterfeit ring centred on iPhones and iPads that reportedly cost Apple over \$6.1 million.

The scheme involved importing more than 10,000 counterfeit iPhones and iPads from China, United States Attorney Robert Brewer said in a press release. The counterfeit devices were intentionally damaged and exchanged at Apple stores for authentic products, which were then shipped to China and other countries and sold at a markup, according to the release.

Genuine Apple (AAPL) iPhones and iPads have International Mobile Equipment Identity (IMEI) and serial numbers that are unique to each device.

As part of the scheme, the counterfeit devices were equipped with IMEI and serial numbers that matched those of real devices covered by an Apple warranty in the US

▶ The counterfeit devices were equipped with IMEI and serial numbers that matched those of real devices covered by an Apple warranty in the US or Canada

▶ Genuine iPhones and iPads have IMEI and serial numbers that are unique to each device

▶ The counterfeit devices were intentionally damaged and exchanged at Apple stores for authentic products, which were then shipped to China and other countries and sold at a markup

▶ The scheme involved importing more than 10,000 counterfeit iPhones and iPads from China

or Canada, according to the release.

"The manufacture of counterfeit goods - and their use to defraud US companies - seeks to fundamentally undermine the marketplace and harms innocent people whose identities were stolen in furtherance of these activities," Brewer said.

Using other people's IMEI or serial numbers is a form of aggravated iden-

tity theft, according to the indictment, because of the perpetrator "knowingly and without lawful authority, transferred, possessed, and used a means of identification of another person, that is, telecommunication identifying information."

Apple did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

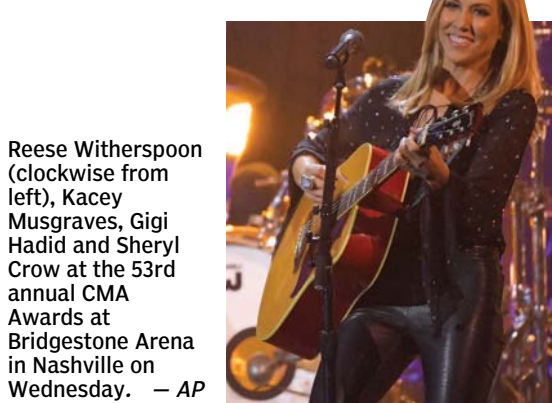
The FBI's investigation took years and spanned across many jurisdictions.

The scheme allegedly involved 14 people who now face dozens of fraud, conspiracy, identity theft and money laundering charges. The FBI arrested 11 people but is still looking for three others.

The release noted that the bust occurred early Wednesday in San Diego, California, where law enforcement seized roughly \$250,000 in cash and 90 iPhones that may be counterfeit.

It also noted that the alleged ringleaders, three brothers, were arrested with their wives. The brothers are naturalized US citizens born in China, according to the release from the US Attorney's Office in the Southern District of California. Most of the others allegedly involved are US citizens, naturalized from China, Vietnam and Russia.

— Agencies



Reese Witherspoon (clockwise from left), Kacey Musgraves, Gigi Hadid and Sheryl Crow at the 53rd annual CMA Awards at Bridgestone Arena in Nashville on Wednesday. — AP



Chiquinquirá Delgado, Paz Vega arrive at the Latin Recording Academy Person of the Year gala honoring Juanes at the MGM conference centre in Las Vegas on Wednesday. — AP



Actress Gillian Anderson poses for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of *The Crown* Season 3 in London on Wednesday. — AP

Porn actress fights Trump request for settlement

Columbus: Attorneys for porn star Stormy Daniels are challenging a request by President Donald Trump's lawyers to stake claim to a settlement between Daniels and Ohio's capital city.

A federal judge last year said Daniels, whose real name is Stephanie Clifford, must pay Trump nearly \$293,000 for his attorneys' fees and another \$1,000 in sanctions after her defamation suit against him was dismissed.

Earlier this year, the city of Columbus reached a \$450,000 settlement with Daniels over the porn actress' arrest at a strip club in 2018.

Trump's lawyers noted in a filing to the court involved in the Columbus judgment last week that Clifford owes him \$293,052. — AP

Journalist 'free' after 6 yrs in Oz detention camp

Wellington: An Iranian asylum seeker and award-winning author held in an offshore Australian detention camp for more than six years said Thursday he had arrived in New Zealand, and was celebrating "freedom".

Behrouz Boochani was sent to Manus Island in Papua New Guinea after fleeing Iran in 2013. He was picked up on a vessel packed with asylum seekers attempting to reach Australia from Indonesia.

The 36-year-old journalist later won the Victorian Prize for Literature for a book detailing his life under Australia's harsh offshore detention policy.

"I just arrived in New Zealand. So exciting to get freedom after more than six years," Boochani tweeted on Thursday. "I will never go back to that place, I just want to be free of the system, of the process. I just want to be somewhere where I am a person, not just a number, not just a label 'refugee' Thank you to all the friends who made this happen," he added.

His arrival in New Zealand will be of acute political sensitivity in Australia. The Australian government has consistently refused overtures

from New Zealand to resettle refugees held in offshore detention, arguing it would undermine Australia's headline policies towards boat arrivals. Boochani said that he was elated to be free and was trying to adjust to a still-indeterminate liberty.

Under a policy meant to deter asylum-seekers from reaching Australia by boat, Canberra has for years sent arrivals to remote Pacific camps on Nauru and Papua New Guinea's Manus Island for processing, barring them from ever resettling in Australia.

The UN, rights groups and leading health professionals have slammed Canberra for its treatment of detainees, as stories of violent riots, self-harm, dire living conditions and even murder have emerged from the camps over the years.

Since 2013, New Zealand has offered to accept 150 refugees each year from Australia's offshore processing centres on Manus and Nauru. Australia has rebuffed this, arguing that refugees could, if they eventually became New Zealand citizens, ultimately travel to Australia.

— Agencies



Behrouz Boochani (left) at the airport welcomed in New Zealand as he arrives at Auckland Airport.

Author-philanthropist Murty to deliver Penguin Annual Lecture

New Delhi: Award-winning author and philanthropist Sudha Murty will deliver this year's Penguin Annual Lecture, publishers Penguin Random House India announced on Thursday. Murty, who will be speaking on *Storytelling and Social Change: How Literature Influences Who We Are and What We Do*, will deliver the lecture at The Imperial here on December 11.

During the course of the lecture, Murty will bring two of her passions to the lecture — storytelling and social work — to showcase the deep-rooted connection between literary arts and philanthropy.

"Writing is a medium of



Sudha Murty

my expression and experience. I have been blessed that my personal experiences have touched the hearts of readers. In my life's journey of literature and social work, I have unexpectedly found that reading has sparked an interest in some men, women and even children to begin to make a difference in a small way. To me,

that is the real success of my work," the author said.

Widely known for her philanthropic efforts as the chairperson for Infosys Foundation, a public charitable trust founded in 1996, Murty will share her views on storytelling as a catalyst to bring about change in the way we think and thereby transform society.

Taking cues from her written work and life experiences, she will also talk about how literature transcends borders and languages and has the power to initiate conversations to bring about social revolutions. — PTI

Japan Emperor's \$25m dinner date with sun goddess

Tokyo: Japan's new Emperor Naruhito on Thursday performed an elaborate and secretive ritual dating back 1,300 years, giving thanks to the sun goddess Amaterasu as part of his enthronement rites.

The Daijosa, considered the most important ritual for Japan's imperial household, comes three weeks after Naruhito proclaimed his ascension to the Chrysanthemum Throne and is performed only once in an emperor's reign.

The emperor took a ritual bath in a specially constructed complex of wooden buildings in the imper-

al palace known as the Daijokyu and wore white silk vestments.

The main section of the ritual took place at two halls overnight with the emperor offering newly harvested rice to Amaterasu, from whom the Japanese imperial line is considered to have descended, and other deities of heaven and earth.

He recited prayers for peace and "shared" a feast with the goddess including salmon, abalone, jujube fruit, and millet, washed down with sake.

Empress Masako, wearing a white-layered



Japan's Emperor Naruhito with wife Empress Masako in Tokyo. — AP

kimono, offers her own prayers in separate halls within the Daijokyu. Other royals and several

hundred attendants, including Prime Minister Shinzo Abe, also took part in separate pavilions. No

foreigners attended the sacred rite. The rite was mentioned in historical documents dating back as far as the seventh century but was discontinued for more than 200 years because of civil war and financial constraints, starting up again in the late 17th century.

The Daijosa, which is carried out whenever a new emperor ascends the throne, is estimated to cost 2.7 billion yen (\$25 million), including building and dismantling the Daijokyu and later banquets at the palace. — AFP

DELHI SPECIAL

NEW DELHI FRIDAY 15 NOVEMBER 2019

DELHI AGE

Matinee

Suchitra
Sen biopic
resurrected

25



SPORT | Cricket

Fiery fast bowlers
bundle Bangladesh
out for 150 on Day 1

14

SPORT | Basketball

James erupts for 47
points as Hoston
down Clippers

15

GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

1 The world's largest what is situated in the city of Cholula, in the Mexican state of Puebla?

- Bullring
- Pyramid
- Traffic roundabout

2 Which spirit is used to make a Lemon Drop cocktail?

- Gin
- Tequila
- Vodka

3 Who was known in the 1950s as 'The Man With The Golden Trumpet'?

- Eddie Caldwell
- Eddie Calvert
- Eddie Campbell

SHORT TAKES

2 Thak-Thak gang members arrested

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has arrested two members of Thak-Thak gang in South Delhi and recovered '10 lakh from them. The accused have been identified as Amar (36) and Babu (35), both residents of Indrapuri area in Delhi. According to Atul Kumar Thakur, DCP (South district), on November 13, specific inputs were received that the members of Thak-Thak gang who had committed a theft of ₹10.5 lakh in Sarai Rohilla area three days ago would be coming to Madangir area. A trap was laid and Amar and Babu were apprehended. During interrogation, the accused confessed to their involvement in the theft. The accused Babu told police that his son, who is a juvenile, was also involved in the commission of the crime," said the DCP. A manhunt has been initiated to nab the remaining culprit and further investigation is on.

Mason falls from balcony, dies

New Delhi: A mason died after he fell from a balcony while doing repairing work in North Delhi's Sarai Rohilla area. The deceased was identified as Gangaram, a native of Rajasthan, and was currently living in Delhi. According to the deceased's co worker Gajender, on Tuesday morning at about 9 am, they came to work at a house in Inderlok area. The deceased asked the owner of the house to provide with the safety equipment, however he allegedly denied and rather said to do it by climbing up on the balcony. Gangaram climbed up on the balcony without any gear and started doing the work but all of a sudden he lost control and fell from the balcony. He became unconsciousness and was rushed to the hospital where doctors declared him brought dead. An FIR has been lodged against the owner of the house and a probe initiated.

2 held at IGI for smuggling gold

New Delhi: Two men have been arrested by the customs officials at IGI Airport for allegedly trying to smuggle gold into the country, an official statement issued on Thursday said. The accused were intercepted after their arrival from Bangkok on Tuesday. A detailed personal and baggage search of the passengers resulted in the recovery of two silver gold "kadas", two gold chains worn by the passengers and two gold thick circular discs which was concealed in wrist watches. The gold, worth ₹25.85 lakh, has been seized and the duo arrested.

THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- Eddie Calvert
- Vodka
- Pyramid

'Overwhelming support from over 150 varsities'

Battle against hostel fee hike to continue: JNUSU

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

The JNUSU on Thursday said it has received an "overwhelming support" from more than 150 universities and institutes across the world in its battle against the hostel fee hike.

Following protests from the students' union, the administration partially rolled back the hostel fee hike on Wednesday and also removed the clauses pertaining to dress code and curfew timings from the draft hostel manual.

In a statement on Thursday, the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) said that "the ongoing struggle to safeguard public education has received overwhelming support and solidarity" from over 2,000 members of the academic community, currently placed in more than 150 universities and institutes around the world.

"Members of the academic community from Asia, Africa, North America, Europe, and Australia have extended their solidarity to JNUSU and the entire JNU students' community," it said, adding that its battle against the hostel manual will continue.

Facing an intense agitation for over two weeks, the JNU administration partially rolled back the hostel fee hike for BPL (below poverty line) students, not availing any scholarship, on Wednesday, a move that failed to satisfy the

Vandalism writ large on base of Swami Vivekananda statue

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

Objectionable messages were found written on the pedestal of a yet-to-be-unveiled statue of Swami Vivekananda on the JNU campus on Thursday. There was no immediate reaction from the varsity's administration over the incident, which came to light after a video went viral. The statue, which is covered in a saffron-coloured cloth, is located at the varsity's administrative block.

Representatives of JNUSU denied their involvement in the incident and said they will issue a statement soon. The incident, which came to light after a video of the messages at the statue's base went viral, triggered a blame game between the RSS-affiliated Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and the Left-backed JNU Students' Union (JNUSU).

Heeraman Tiwari, dean at the JNU's school of



A yet-to-be-unveiled statue of Swami Vivekananda on JNU campus

management, said that he was shocked to see the "vandalised" statue and the writings at its base.

"Shocked beyond belief & with tears in my eyes: went there to express my horror & perhaps to meditate what kind of JNU students would vandalise the statue of #SwamiVivekananda ji, an inspiration & icon of our youth. Notice the marks on the left shoe of the statue. Ashamed, once again (sic)," he tweeted.

protesting students who dubbed it as an "eyewash" and decided to continue with the strike.

JNU vice-chancellor M. Jagadeesh Kumar on Thursday said the univer-

sity will file a complaint against those who had defaced the administration block. He said that the varsity has video evidence and has identified the perpetrators.



Congress president Sonia Gandhi pays tribute to Jawaharlal Nehru on his birth anniversary at Shanti Van in New Delhi on Thursday.

Teachers protest against New Education Policy

New Delhi, Nov. 14: Teachers and students from various universities of the national capital on Thursday took out a protest march from Mandi House to Jantar Mantar against the New Education Policy and demanded its withdrawal. The issue of the Jawaharlal Nehru University's hostel fee hike also echoed during the march. JNU Students' Union president Aishe Ghosh participated in the march.

"What is happening in JNU is an attack on public education. It is also happening in other universities. We have received messages expressing solidarity with our cause from many students across the country and we are thankful to them," she said.

The march saw the presence of teachers and students from Delhi University, JNU, Jamia Millia Islamia, Ambedkar

'WITHDRAW NEP'

► The march saw the presence of teachers and students from Delhi University, JNU, Jamia Millia Islamia, Ambedkar University and IGNOU. Slogans were raised against the government and cries of 'Inquilab Zindabad' and 'Halla Bol' resonated through the protest.

University and IGNOU, who rallied under the banner of the Federation of Central Universities Teachers' Associations (FEDCUTA).

Slogans were raised against the government and cries of "Inquilab Zindabad" and "Halla Bol" resonated through

the protest.

D Raja of CPI, Subhashini Ali from CPI (M), Dilip Pandey (AAP) and Ashok Tanwar (Congress) were among those who participated and expressed their solidarity.

"Every organisation is crumbling under the present regime. They are attacking institutions. We have to unite and save institutions and our Constitution. We will save democracy and we will safeguard the right of education for our children. I congratulate the children who faced lathi-charge and raised their voice," she added.

The NEP, presently awaiting cabinet approval, makes a mockery of public trust in higher education and research by removing all standards of quality and equity from public-funded institutions, the teachers' bodies said.

— PTI

Air quality deteriorates to alarming level Centre not keen despite SC order to curb pollution: AAP

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

As the air quality in Delhi again deteriorated to alarming levels, the AAP on Thursday hit out at the Centre for not taking "concrete steps" to tackle pollution despite a Supreme Court direction to expedite deliberations to find a permanent solution to the problem.

The air quality remained in the "severe" category on Thursday and the Delhi-NCR region was shrouded by a thick layer of toxic smog.

It neared the "emergency" level for the second time in a fortnight on Wednesday due to raging farm fires in neighbouring states and unfavourable weather.

Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh alleged that BJP is trying to "politicise" a sensitive issue like pollution and the Centre is not taking concrete steps to tackle the issue.

"The BJP, on the other hand, is trying to increase pollution in the national capital. I think it is time that the Centre clarifies why no concrete steps are being taken despite the Supreme Court's direction," Mr Singh told reporters.

The AAP MP claimed that a meeting on pollution held by environment minister

Prakash Javadekar was not attended by state environment ministers of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan.



Commuters ride through heavy smog in Noida on Thursday.

— PTI

Goel protests against Odd-Even, says city still a 'gas chamber'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

Former Delhi BJP president and Rajya Sabha member Vijay Goel on Thursday staged a fresh protest against the Odd-Even vehicle rationing scheme, saying Delhi has become a "gas chamber" despite its implementation. The Delhi Congress, meanwhile, demanded a CBI enquiry into the various corrup-

tion cases involving the AAP government in the national capital in the name of ending air pollution in the city.

Mr Goel, who had last week violated the Odd-Even rule and was fined ₹4,000, was joined by his supporters who carried placards that read "Pradushan Ki Jimmedar Kejriwal Sarkar, Odd-Even Hai Bekar" at the ITO crossing.

"I request these ministers to show some seriousness towards the sensitive issue. Just to portray AAP in bad light, you are putting people at risk not only in Delhi but also in

Punjab and Haryana who are suffering due to pollution owing to stubble burning," he said.

Schools in the Delhi-NCR region remained closed as per the direction

of the authorities on Wednesday night. The closure of the schools was recommended by the Environment Pollution Control Authority (EPCA) citing hazardous air quality.

Many students wrote letters to the Prime Minister urging him to take measures to ensure clean air for them. A student from Noida said that the air pollution has forced him to stay indoors.

"I cannot play outside because the air is too toxic to breathe in," he said.

Another student wrote to the PM: "We need a strong directive from the Centre and the governments of the states affected to control this serious condition. We do have belief in our beloved Prime Minister, who will surely take strong decision on this."

2 cattle thieves nabbed after shootout

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NOIDA, NOV. 14

Two suspected cattle thieves were held in Noida after an exchange of gunfire with police early on Thursday when the accused and two of their partners were allegedly slaughtering a calf, officials said.

"When the police team inquired about their presence along with a calf, the men opened fire and tried to escape. Two of the accused got injured while two others escaped," Noida SP Vineet Jaiswal said.

Cops reunite 11 boys with families on Children's Day

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

The Delhi Police crime branch reunited 11 missing children with their families on the Children's Day on Thursday, officials said.

A team of anti-human trafficking unit, crime branch in Rohini rescued 27 children from the railway stations and ISBT, Delhi, between November 1 and 14.

Further, the Delhi police PCR unit has reunited 146 missing children with their families and have rescued six kidnapped or abducted children between January 1 and November 13 this year, said DCP (PCR) Sharat Kumar Sinha.

Out of 27 rescued, 11

children were reunited with their families with the help of Sathi NGO.

These rescued children, all boys, had either run away from their homes or had been abandoned by their guardians and had landed up in Delhi, police said.

BK Singh, additional commissioner of police (crime branch) said: "The children were counselled, we traced their parents after we spoke to them and checked police records from other stations and then probed the matter. On the Children's Day, the parents were called and reunited with their children."

The children were offered books, clothes and other gifts by the police, Mr Singh said.

DDA announces waiver of conversion charges

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 14

In a major sop ahead of the Delhi Assembly polls, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Thursday announced a waiver of conversion charges in 100 major markets in the national capital.

Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly and member of DDA Vijender Gupta said that shop-cum-residence plots, complexes, or shop plots have been exempted from paying any conversion charges.

Some of the prominent markets, such as G.K-II M Block Market, Defence Colony Market, Sunder Nagar Market, and about 100 such markets fall in this category.

Mr Gupta pointed out that these markets were designated as local shop-

ping centers (LSCs) and have been auctioned as purely commercial on premium rates and the lease deed in such cases also specifies the use of property only for commercial use of the same.

In such shop plots, residential use was permitted besides other commercial uses. Mr Gupta informed that the decision was taken in DDA board meeting chaired by lieutenant-governor Anil Bajjal.

According to Mr Gupta, the DDA has also approved major amendments providing relief to household industrial units in residential areas and it will be applicable to both existing and new units.

"The approved amendments would lead to cut in red-tapism as they would do away with statutory clearances from labour

and industries department as well as the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) to household industrial units in residential areas," Mr Gupta added.

Mr Gupta demanded scrapping of Delhi government's high power committee to which all applications for giving license to household industries in residential areas are pending. He said that it is a major stumbling block and municipal corporations should be fully empowered to give license to these industries.

"The authority has also approved the final proposal for amalgamation of two plots upto 200 square meters as compared to 64 square meters as existing in the Master Plan. It will facilitate housing activity," he added.



Almost Epidemic

Former Australia captain Ian Chappell said the burgeoning issue of mental health, forcing players into sabbaticals, has reached “almost epidemic proportions” and urged the board to address the matter

Cricket

PAGE
14

THE ASIAN AGE

FRIDAY | 15 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI



Warner just wouldn't shut up, I had extra personal motivation.

— Ben Stokes, England all-rounder on leading England to victory in the Ashes Test at Headingley

SHORT TAKES

Rajasthan trade Rahane to Delhi

New Delhi: Rajasthan Royals on Thursday traded their most-capped player Ajinkya Rahane to Delhi Capitals in exchange of leg-spinner Mayank Markande and bowling all-rounder Rahul Tewatia. Rahane, who captained Royals in 24 of his 100 IPL games between 2011 and 2019, was also their top run-getter having scored 2810 runs at an average of 34.26 and strike rate of 122.65. India's Test vice-captain also scored two centuries for the Royals besides 17 half-centuries. The trade announcement came on the final day of the IPL players' transfer window. "Ajinkya Rahane will now move to Delhi Capitals following a successful trade," read an IPL statement. Rahane, who has been trying to get back into India's limited overs set-up, established his T20 credentials as an opener after moving to Royals from Mumbai Indians in 2011. He was removed as captain in the middle of the 2019 season with Steve Smith taking over the leadership. Rahane did rather well last year, scoring 393 runs in 14 games at 32.75, including an unbeaten 105. The 31-year-old, who has a price tag of Rs 4 crore, last played a T20 for India in August 2016 and an ODI in February 2018. In exchange of Rahane, Markande and Tewatia were traded to the Royals. After the 12th IPL edition, Markande was traded to Delhi Capitals by Mumbai Indians. — PTI

Shaw eligible to play from Sunday

Mumbai: Young batsman Prithvi Shaw, who was banned for eight months for failing a dope test, has been included in the 15-member Mumbai squad for Syed Mushtaq Ali tournament, but will be eligible to play from November 17. Shaw was banned from all forms of cricket by the BCCI for a (retrospective) period of eight months in July after failing a dope test during the Mushtaq Ali Trophy in March and his ban ends on Friday. The squad for the last two games and for the super league stage of the national T20 tournament was announced by the Mumbai Cricket Association on Thursday. The 20-year-old Shaw will be eligible to play only from the November 17 when Mumbai takes on Assam in their last league game at the Wankhede stadium here. Mumbai are so far unbeaten in the tournament, having won all their five games and are set to qualify for the super league stage. On November 9, when Shaw had turned 20, he had assured that his 2.0 version would be displayed. "I turn 20 today. I assure it will be Prithvi Shaw 2.0 going forward. Thank u for all the good wishes & support. Will be back in action soon. #motivation #hardwork #believe," he had tweeted on his birthday. — PTI



Sachin Tendulkar

Pace trio spit fire

Fiery fast bowlers bundle Bangla out for 150 on day 1

Indore, Nov 14: India's pace troika was at its menacing best against an under-confident Bangladesh, helping the home team seize control of the first Test here on the opening day itself. On one of the bounciest tracks in recent times, Bangladesh were bundled out for 150 in 58.3 overs, lasting barely two sessions and a few overs more here on Thursday. With ample time at their disposal, India ended the day at 86 for 1 in 26 overs, losing Rohit Sharma's (6) wicket to Abu Jayed. The notable aspect during the Indian innings was Cheteshwar Pujara (46 batting) outscoring the more flamboyant Mayank Agarwal (37 batting) during their unbroken 72-run stand, leaving ominous signs for the four-man Bangladesh attack.

The first day's proceedings starkly highlighted the gulf between world's No.1 and No.9 Test sides. Umesh Yadav (2/47 in 14.3 overs), Ishant Sharma (2/20 in 12 overs) and Mohammed Shami (3/27 in 12 overs) made life difficult for a team whose batsmen lacked both in technique and temperament. A luckless Ravichandran Ashwin (2/43 in 16 overs), let down by Ajinkya Rahane in the slips cordon, also had a couple of clean-bowled dismissals in his kitty in the post-lunch session.

The three Indian pacers consistently bowled at 140 kmph, with seam, swing and bounce making life miserable for Bangladeshi batsmen. Each of the three displayed different qualities and it was evident from the manner of dismissals. Ishant's bowling was about disconcerting bounce from length that had opener Shadman Islam caught behind and the occasional fuller delivery holding its line that forced Liton Das to edge one to Virat Kohli in the slips.

For Umesh, it started with brisk pace and getting it to seam into other opener Imrul Kayes and making him expect more incoming deliveries. Just when Kayes was getting used to a pattern, Umesh produced away going deliveries for the left-hander, squaring him up and the edge flew to slips. He

again came in the post-tea session during which the tailenders looked scared, retreating towards square leg in fear of getting hurt.

Mohammed Shami, probably the craftiest among the contemporary Indian pacers, showed there is no one better when it comes to getting reverse swing with 50-over old SG Test ball. Mushfiquur Rahim (43), Bangladesh's top-scorer, who led a charmed life and was dropped twice, didn't have a clue when one swung back to knock the stumps back after he was beaten by away going deliveries.

The next one by Shami swung even more as Mehidy Hasan Miraj (0) was adjudged leg-before although a DRS call could have saved him had he opted for one. In the first session, Shami had dismissed Mohammed Mithun with conventional inswing. Even without Jasprit Bumrah, who is nursing a stress fracture, the unit looked so formidable that one could sympathise with Bangladeshi batsmen facing their combined might. They attacked relentlessly and it didn't matter that India weren't exactly having a great day as far as slip catching was concerned.

Umesh could have got Mushfiquur early had Kohli latched on to one in the third slip. Ashwin had both Mushfiquur and Mahmudullah Riyad dropped by Rahane at first slip. It didn't cost the team much but the frustrated bowler then decided that breaching the defence was the best option as Mominul Haque (36) and Mahmudullah were dismissed due to poor judgement and shot selection respectively. First he angled one to left-hander Mominul, who thought it will be a conventional off-break and decided to leave the delivery. To his horror, it came in with the angle to peg the off-stump back. — PTI



Mohammed Shami celebrates a Bangladesh wicket during the first day of first Test in Indore. — AP

SCORECARD

Bangladesh (1st Innings): Shadman Islam c Saha b Sharma 6, Imrul Kayes c Rahane b Yadav 6, Mominul Haque b Ashwin 37, Mohammed Mithun lbw b Shami 13, Mushfiquur Rahim b Shami 43, Mahmudullah b Ashwin 10, Liton Das c Kohli b Sharma 21, Mehidy Hasan lbw b Shami 0, Taijul Islam run out (Jadeja/Saha) 1, Abu Jayed (not out) 7, Ebadat Hossain b Yadav 2. **Extras (lb3, w1) 4. Total (in 58.3 overs) 150.**
FoW: 1-12, 2-12, 3-31, 4-99, 5-115, 6-140, 7-140, 8-140, 9-148.
Bowling: Ishant 12-6-20-2, Yadav 14.3-3-47-2, Shami 13-5-27-3, Ashwin 16-1-43-2, Jadeja 3-0-10-0.
India (1st Innings): M. Agarwal (batting) 37, R. Sharma c Liton b Abu 6, C. Pujara (batting) 43. **Total (for one wicket in 26 overs) 86.**
FoW: 1-14.
Bowling: Ebadat 11-2-32-0, Abu 8-0-21-1, Taijul 7-0-33-0.

FASTEST TO 250 WICKETS AT HOME

Bowler	Tests	Innings
Muttiah Muralitharan (Sri Lanka)	42	72
Ravichandran Ashwin (India)	42	81
Anil Kumble (India)	43	77
Rangana Herath (Sri Lanka)	44	82
Dale Steyn (South Africa)	49	93
Harbhajan Singh (India)	51	94

250

R. Ashwin became the joint-fastest with Muttiah Muralitharan to 250 Test wickets at home, getting there in 42 Tests. Ashwin achieved the feat when he cleaned up Mominul Haque for 37 on day one in Indore.

Indian pace attack is one of most lethal in world: Ashwin

Indore, Nov. 14: The current Indian pace attack is “one of the most lethal” in world cricket since it has the ability to create openings in every spell, reckons senior off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin. “I think Shami, Ishant and Umesh have been bowling well as a pack and if you add Bumrah to it over the last few months or a year in Test cricket, I think it's one of the most lethal pace attacks going around in the world if not the best,” Ashwin said at the end of play on the first day.

“And I am saying that as a disclaimer, I don't want people judging me on that comment. But it's right up there and one of the best bowling attacks I have seen in recent times,” he said. “Sometimes you feel that every spell they bowl, something is happening or they make it happen,” the off-spinner added.

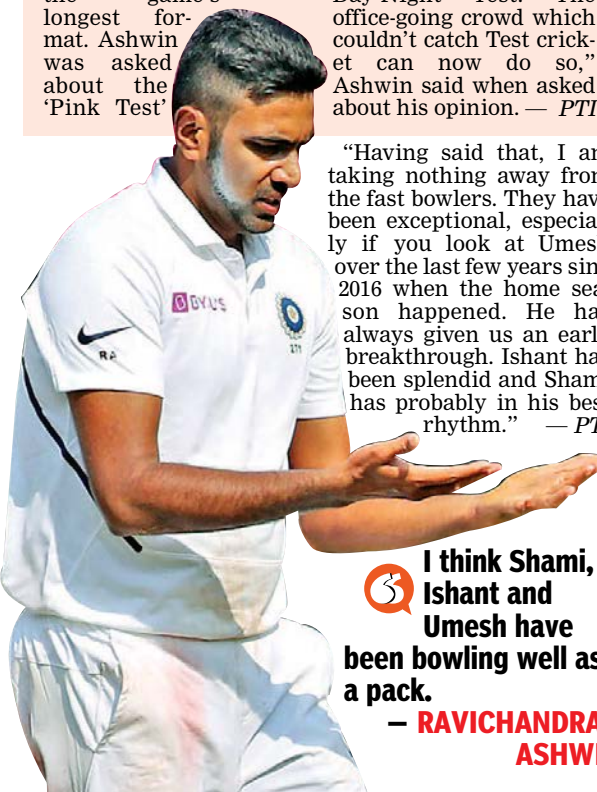
Ashwin however denied that he and Jadeja will be changing their approach because the pacers have started taking the lead. “As a bowler, I personally never looked at it that way. It's my job to pick up a wicket and try and capitalise if the pacers don't pick a wicket then get a breakthrough.

Ashwin says D/N Test is a move in the right direction

Indore, Nov. 14: Day-night Test is a “move in the right direction”, feels Ravichandran Ashwin, who also supports his skipper Virat Kohli's rationale of having five permanent centres for the game's longest format. Ashwin was asked about the ‘Pink Test’

and if he is ready to accept the change with open arms.

“The pink ball Test match is a great welcoming sign. India as a Test playing country, it was necessary for us to play Day-Night Test. The office-going crowd which couldn't catch Test cricket can now do so,” Ashwin said when asked about his opinion. — PTI



I think Shami, Ishant and Umesh have been bowling well as a pack. — RAVICHANDRAN ASHWIN

MOST WICKETS ON INDIAN SOIL IN TESTS

Bowler	M	I	Overs	Wkts	AVG
Anil Kumble	63	115	3465.2	350	24.88
Harbhajan Singh	55	103	2831.3	265	28.76
R. Ashwin	42	81	2073.1	251	22.83
Kapil Dev	65	119	2035.1	219	26.49
Ravindra Jadeja	32	62	1454.3	157	20.68

Stats: S.PERVEZ QAISER

WE NEED TO BE MENTALLY STRONG: MOMINUL

Indore, Nov. 14: Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque on Thursday admitted his team lacked the mental strength required to counter India's formidable pace attack on the first day of the opening Test here. Bangladesh were all out for 150 after opting to bat with Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav sharing seven wickets between them. More importantly, Bangladesh's lower-order batsmen looked scared to face the Indian pacers.

“The wicket wasn't unplayable at all or else myself or Mushfiquur (Rahim) wouldn't have scored the runs that we scored. The problem is that when you are playing the world's No. 1 Test team, you have to be mentally far more stronger,” Mominul said. When asked about his decision to bat first on a bouncy track, the skipper tried to defend it. “If we had started well, the question wouldn't have been asked in first place,” he replied. — PTI

Mominul Haque

Sachin rues lack of rivalry in Tests

Indore, Nov. 14: A dearth of quality pace bowlers has all but put an end to the iconic duels which once added to the charm of Test cricket, said the iconic Sachin Tendulkar, who is worried about the traditional format's health. A Sunil Gavaskar vs Andy Roberts, Dennis Lillee or Imran Khan was worth the wait during the 1970s and '80s. Similarly a Tendulkar vs Glenn McGrath or Wasim Akram used to be a connoisseur's delight. But not anymore, feels the man, who played 200 Test matches

in his illustrious 24 years in international cricket.

“Rivalries which people invariably looked forward to are no longer there because there are very few world-class fast bowlers right now. That element I am sure is missing. The quality of fast bowling can surely be better without any doubt,” Tendulkar said while analysing how cricket has evolved in the past 30 years (15th November, 1989) since he made his debut.

Asked if the competitiveness, as far as Test cricket is concerned, is confined to only three countries (India, Australia and England), the maestro agreed. “The standard of cricket has gone down which is not great news for Test cricket. The standard needs to

go up and for that, I would again say that the root cause is the playing surfaces,” he said.

“I think it has also got to do with the kind of pitches that are provided. If we provide fair pitches where fast bowlers as well as spinners get help, then balance between bat and ball will be restored.

“If the balance is missing then the contest becomes weak and it fails to grab eyeballs. Test cricket must have good wickets,” added the man, who has scored 15,921 runs with 51 hundreds.

For Tendulkar, the model pitches are the ones on which the Ashes was played in England. “I feel this year's Ashes had some of the best Test pitches in recent times. Magnificent I would say. The only time they moved to Old Trafford, you saw

that Test wasn't as exciting as the ones at the Headingley, or the Lord's Test or for that matter even the one at the Oval. I thought those Test matches were exciting,” he said.

For someone, who has seen the evolution of the game from Test cricket to T20s, Tendulkar remains a purist at heart, who would never endorse an IPL performance as being good enough to merit selection in the ODI and Test team. Unless, of course, the player in question is as exceptional as Jasprit Bumrah.

“I think if somebody has done well in the IPL, then he is fit to represent India in T20 Internationals. But because of that performance he is picked for Tests and ODIs, I think there would be a question mark.” — PTI

BCCI EO clears Dravid of conflict of interest charges

New Delhi, Nov. 14: In a big relief for Indian cricket legend Rahul Dravid, BCCI ethics officer D K Jain on Thursday dismissed the conflict of interest complaint against him, saying it was “bereft of any merit”.

“I have rejected the complaint. Rahul Dravid doesn't have conflict of interest,” Jain said after issuing the order. “I am convinced that on facts at hands, a case of conflict of interest as enshrined in the Rules is not made out. Resultantly, the complaint is dismissed being bereft of any merit,” read Thursday's order.

MPCA life member Sanjiv Gupta had filed a complaint against Dravid, alleging conflict of interest in his current role as National

● **D K Jain on Thursday dismissed the conflict of interest complaint against him, saying it was “bereft of any merit”.**

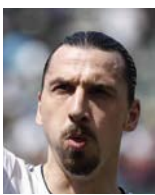
Cricket Academy (NCA) Head and being an India Cements employee. Jain had conducted a second round of hearing on Tuesday when Dravid was represented by his lawyer.

The 46-year-old former India captain had earlier explained his case in a personal hearing held in Mumbai on September 26. Dravid is currently the NCA Director in Bengaluru besides being a vice-president in the India Cements group, which owns the IPL

franchise Chennai Super Kings. He was also the head coach of the India A and Under-19 teams before being handed the NCA role, which includes monitoring the progress of these two sides as well.

In his earlier submission, Dravid had defended himself saying he has taken leave of absence from India Cements and he has nothing to do with the Super Kings. As per Rule 38 (4) of BCCI constitution, no individual can hold more than one post at the same time.

However, in Dravid's case the ethics officer has interpreted the rule a bit differently while in the order passed in June, Jain had found Ganguly and VVS Laxman conflicted for holding multiple posts. — PTI



Part ways

Zlatan Ibrahimovic and the MLS Club LA Galaxy are officially parting ways after two eventful seasons, the 38-year-old Swedish superstar and the club announced

Sport

PAGE
15

THE ASIAN AGE

FRIDAY | 15 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI



I very much look forward to taking on this extremely important challenge.

— FIFA's New Global Football Development Chief Arsene Wenger

SHORT TAKES

Wenger is FIFA's global dev. chief

Lausanne: Veteran coach Arsene Wenger has been named FIFA's chief of global football development, the governing body announced on Wednesday. FIFA said the former Arsenal and Monaco coach would be responsible for the growth of the game "for both men and women around the world", and would also be the "leading authority on technical matters", including potential changes to the sport's laws. It added that Wenger, 70, would also be tasked with coach education and aiding a programme designed to help former players enter management. "I very much look forward to taking on this extremely important challenge," Wenger said in a statement. "Not only because I have always been interested in analysing football from a broader perspective but also because FIFA's mission as world football's governing body is truly global," the former Arsenal manager said. — *AFP*

Odisha CM greets Dutee Chand

Bhubaneswar: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has congratulated sprinter Dutee Chand for being named in the TIME 100 Next list of most influential persons in the world and extended her best wishes. The chief minister said the state is proud of her achievements. "Congratulations ace sprinter from #Odisha @DuteeChand for making it to @TIME magazines #Time100Next list of influencers who are shaping the future of business, entertainment, sports, politics, health, science and activism. #Odisha is proud of your achievements. Best wishes," Patnaik said in a twitter post. Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also congratulated Chand for her achievement. "Congratulations to @DuteeChand, the fastest woman of India, on being short-listed in the esteemed Time 100 Next 2019 list. May she always sprint her way to glory on and off the track," Pradhan tweeted. Chand has been named in the TIME 100 Next, an expansion of the TIME 100 list of the most influential persons. — *PTI*

HOENESS SET TO END ERA AT BAYERN

Berlin: Having transformed Bayern Munich into one of Europe's strongest clubs, then been jailed for tax evasion, Uli Hoeness will bring the curtain down on a glorious 40-year reign at the German giants when he steps down as club president on Friday. Hoeness will officially stand down at Friday's annual general meeting having nominated Herbert Hainer, a former CEO of sportswear firm Adidas, to succeed him, but he will stay on the club's supervisory board for at least four more years. Since the 67-year-old joined club management after retiring as a three-time European Cup winning player four decades ago, Bayern have dominated the Bundesliga and been crowned kings of Europe two more times. "I think that someone like Uli Hoeness will never stop, he's got a Bayern heart, so he will always stay connected to us," said Bayern captain Manuel Neuer on Wednesday. He hands the reins to Hainer with Bayern Munich in rude health, generating 750 million euros (\$825 million) in turnover and reported profits of 52 million euros. The club has a vast army of 300,000 members and over 1,000 employees, while their Allianz Arena stadium has been paid off. It is a far cry from his first day as club manager on May 1, 1979, following a career-ending knee injury, with Bayern carrying debts of seven million Deutschmarks. His drive and recruitment has yielded 24 German league and 14 German Cup titles. — *AFP*



Houston Rockets' James Harden (centre) goes up for a shot as LA Clippers' Maurice Harkless (left) and Ivica Zubac defend during the second half of an NBA game on Wednesday. The Rockets won 102-93. — *AP*

Harden Rockets

James erupts for 47 points as Hoston down Clippers

Los Angeles, Nov. 14: James Harden was labeled "amazing" by Houston coach Mike D'Antoni after erupting in a fourth-quarter scoring spree to lead the Rockets to a 102-93 victory over the Los Angeles Clippers on Wednesday. Harden led the scoring with 47 points, including seven three-pointers, while the former NBA MVP also added six rebounds and seven assists. The Houston talisman plundered 17 points late in the fourth quarter to help transform an 84-80 deficit with 5min 52sec remaining into victory. "It's not like we haven't seen it before, and we'll see it again," Rockets head coach D'Antoni said. "He's amazing. He's just a master of the game. It's what I expect. He's a special player, no doubt about it." Harden shouldered the bulk of the Rockets' offensive duties, with Russell Westbrook (17) and Clint Capela (12) the only other Houston players to score double figures. The Clippers were led by Kawhi Leonard, who had 26 points, 12 rebounds and seven assists. Lou Williams had 20 off the bench for the Clippers while JaMychal Green added 14 as the Clippers fell to 7-4 with the defeat. The Clippers also had coach Doc Rivers ejected in a surreal exchange late in the fourth quarter which saw his son -- Rockets shooting guard Austin Rivers -- urging officials to toss him. "It was a really good moment," Austin Rivers joked afterwards. "I enjoyed it a lot. I'm not gonna lie to you. I really did enjoy that."

Lakers rout Warriors
The Rockets improved to 8-3, leaving them hard on the heels of the Los Angeles Lakers, who cruised to a blowout 120-94 win over the injury-decimated Golden State Warriors on Wednesday. The Warriors, who reached five consecutive NBA Finals from 2015-2019 have endured a nightmare start to the season, with a long-term injury to Stephen Curry depleting a squad already attempting to adjust from the loss of Klay Thompson (knee) and departure of Kevin Durant to the Brooklyn Nets. The Lakers were in no mood to show the Warriors any mercy at the Staples Center on Wednesday. LeBron James scoring 23 points and Kyle Kuzma 22 in a comfortable win. The Lakers, who have not have reached the playoffs since 2013, lead the Western Conference with a 9-2 record. In the Eastern Conference, the Boston Celtics improved to 9-1 to

remain on top of the table after a 140-133 defeat of the Washington Wizards. Kemba Walker had 25 points in an impressive all-round scoring display by the Celtics, who saw seven players reach double digits. Walker was backed by Jayson Tatum with 23 points and Jaylen Brown with 22. Turkish star Enes Kanter meanwhile pulled down nine rebounds as well as contributing 13 points. But it was a frustrating night for Washington's Bradley Beal, who finished with 44 points, five rebounds and six assists yet somehow ended on the losing side. — *AFP*

HAYWARD FRUSTRATED OVER BROKEN HAND

Boston, Nov. 14: Boston Celtics forward Gordon Hayward says he's frustrated over his broken hand, which is expected to sideline him for six weeks just as he was back to form from his last injury. Hayward said that he's happy about the prognosis from doctors. He says it was "relatively good news." Hayward broke his hand when he collided with LaMarcus Aldridge in Saturday night's game against the San Antonio Spurs. The Boston forward had surgery on Monday. Hayward missed all but five minutes of the 2017-18 season after breaking his leg in the first quarter of the season opener. — *AFP*

Los Angeles, Nov 14: Carolina Panthers safety Eric Reid expressed scepticism about an NFL-organized workout for close friend and former teammate Colin Kaepernick on Wednesday, questioning whether this weekend's scheduled practice was little more than a publicity stunt. In an unexpected move on Tuesday, the NFL said it had invited teams to attend a private workout by Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback who ignited controversy by kneeling during the US national anthem to protest racial injustice. The timing of the NFL's workout has puzzled many across the sport. Scheduling the workout on a Saturday is potentially problematic because most coaches of NFL teams will be preparing for Sunday's round of fixtures. NFL scouts are also more likely to be deployed at college games, which traditionally take place on Saturdays. Speaking to reporterson Wednesday, Reid questioned whether the workout was a sincere attempt

NATIONAL FOOTBALL LEAGUE

Colin to audition for NFL teams

Atlanta, Nov. 14: Colin Kaepernick plans to audition for NFL teams on Saturday in a private workout arranged by the league to be held in Atlanta. The exiled former Pro Bowl quarterback posted on Twitter: "I'm just getting word from my representatives that the NFL league office reached out to them about a workout in Atlanta on Saturday. I've been in shape and ready for this for three years, can't wait to see the head coaches and GMs on Saturday."

The NFL hasn't confirmed Kaepernick's workout details. A person familiar with the plans told The Associated Press the league's decision to invite all 32 teams to watch Kaepernick "came out of the blue with no prior communication." The person said Kaepernick's team was given a 2-hour window to accept the invitation and was denied a request to schedule the tryout on a Tuesday or another Saturday. Kaepernick's representatives have asked the league to provide a rolling



Colin Kaepernick

list of teams that plan to attend the workout to ensure it's a "legitimate process," according to the person who spoke on condition of anonymity because details haven't been made public. Kaepernick hasn't played since 2016 with the San Francisco 49ers. He helped start a wave of protests about social and racial injustice that season by kneeling during the national anthem. The NFL in February settled a collusion grievance Kaepernick and former teammate Eric Reid filed against the league. Reid now plays for the Carolina Panthers. — *AP*

Reid is sceptical over workouts

Los Angeles, Nov 14: Carolina Panthers safety Eric Reid expressed scepticism about an NFL-organized workout for close friend and former teammate Colin Kaepernick on Wednesday, questioning whether this weekend's scheduled practice was little more than a publicity stunt. In an unexpected move on Tuesday, the NFL said it had invited teams to attend a private workout by Kaepernick, the former San Francisco 49ers quarterback who ignited controversy by kneeling during the US national anthem to protest racial injustice. The timing of the NFL's workout has puzzled many across the sport. Scheduling the workout on a Saturday is potentially problematic because most coaches of NFL teams will be preparing for Sunday's round of fixtures. NFL scouts are also more likely to be deployed at college games, which traditionally take place on Saturdays. Speaking to reporterson Wednesday, Reid questioned whether the workout was a sincere attempt

● **NFL said it had invited teams to attend a private workout by Colin**

● **Reid questioned whether the workout was a sincere attempt to help Colin**

by the NFL to help Kaepernick, who has repeatedly been targeted for criticism by US President Donald Trump. "It feels like the same play from the NFL," Reid said. "It feels disingenuous. At this point it feels like a PR stunt." "They told Colin that he has the opportunity. But it's the Saturday before a game. Teams are traveling on Saturdays." "What head coach or general manager is going to be able to make this trip? But, as far as I know, Colin is going to be there and he's going to perform, cause I know he's ready." ESPN meanwhile reported that Kaepernick's camp had asked for the workout to be held on Tuesday next week. — *AFP*

WWE STAR IN INDIA

Mumbai kids see Flair of brilliance

Mumbai, Nov. 14: On the first day of her visit to India, WWE Superstar Charlotte Flair was given the warmest reception by the Special Olympics Bharat Athletes in Mumbai. Charlotte kickstarted her three-day visit with a special celebration with the young and exceedingly talented group on the occasion of Children's Day. Charlotte received a traditional Indian welcome and proceeded to celebrate the special day by spending quality time with the Special Olympics Bharat athletes, filled with love, laughter and fun.

It was a morning brimming with bright smiles as Charlotte shared her love and magic with the kids, interacting with each of them individually. She also gave them a signed goody to remember her by and cut a cake with them. "For me, the most important thing about being a part of WWE is putting smiles on the kids' faces," said Charlotte. The Superstar will be seen engaging with a Bollywood celebrity during her time in the city. She will also be heading to Bangalore to meet eager fans at Comic Con. Stay tuned! — *Agencies*



WWE Superstar Charlotte Flair cuts cake with the Special Olympics Bharat Athletes in Mumbai on Thursday.

AFRICAN CUP OF NATIONS

Senegal, Nigeria register wins

Thies (Senegal), Nov. 14: Senegal and Nigeria started with wins on the first day of the final stage of qualifying for the 2021 African Cup of Nations on Wednesday. Senegal was comfortable in a 2-0 victory over Republic of Congo, and Nigeria less so when it came from behind to edge Benin 2-1. Senegal opened its qualifying campaign less than four months after losing to Algeria in the final of this year's African Cup in Egypt. Sidy Sarr and Habibou Diallo sealed the win over Congo in Group I with first-half goals. Sadio Mane also played. Semifinalists at this year's African Cup, the Nigerians made a fumbling start to the decisive group stage when they went behind in the third minute at home in Uyo to Stephane Sessegnon's goal following a defensive error. Victor Osimhen converted a penalty on the brink of halftime and Samuel Kalu scored the



Ivory Coast's forward Max-Alain Gradel (right) and teammate attend a training session. — *AFP*

winner in the second half to put three-time African champions Nigeria top of Group L. The result provided some relief for Nigeria head coach Gernot Rohr, whose relationship with the Nigeria Football Federation has become uneasy since failing to make the African Cup final in Egypt. Cameroon, the 2021 host, was held 0-0 at home by Cape Verde to draw another blank under new coach Toni Conceicao, the second goalless draw in two games under Conceicao. Cameroon has already qualified as host but is playing in qualifying for match practice. The Cameroonians couldn't find the target again in

their Group F opener after a 0-0 draw against Tunisia in the Portuguese coach's first game in charge a month ago. Conceicao replaced former Netherlands international Clarence Seedorf, who was fired after Cameroon's title defense at this year's African Cup in Egypt ended with a round of 16 defeat by Nigeria. The top two in each group will qualify for the 24-team finals except in Cameroon's group, where just one other team will make it through. The qualifiers run until November next year. There were also wins in Wednesday's qualifiers for Namibia, Malawi, Sudan, Gambia, Central African Republic and Guinea-Bissau. Sudan provided the most resounding result with a 4-0 rout of 10-man Sao Tome and Principe. Sierra Leone and Lesotho drew 1-1 in an eventful game in an empty stadium. — *AP*

SPANISH LEAGUE

Financial control measures made it more competitive

La Liga proud of tight fight for the top

Madrid, Nov. 14: The Spanish league says financial control measures implemented a few years ago are the main reason the league has become more competitive. It has never been tighter at the top of the Spanish league since victories were awarded three points in 1995, with the distance between the leader and the eighth-place team at five points after 13 rounds. The closest it had been before this season was in 1998, when six points separated the top eight. There are nine teams within five points of leaders Barcelona and Real Madrid, which have a game in hand because



The financial control measures that the league implemented six years ago allowed the teams to lower their debts and gave them a greater capacity to invest and to maintain their players
— JAVIER TEBAS
La Liga President

their clasico was postponed from October until Dec. 18 because of a separatist rally in the Catalan capital. Valladolid, in 13th place, is only three points from the qualification positions for European competitions, and Eibar, sitting

15th, is closer to the European spots than to the relegation zone. Among the teams near the top of the standings this season are Real Sociedad, Getafe, and promoted Granada. "The financial control measures that the league

implemented six years ago allowed the teams to lower their debts and gave them a greater capacity to invest and to maintain their players," Spanish league president Javier Tebas said. "The smaller teams have improved." Tebas said the 2015 change to a centralized method for the sales of television rights instead of each team negotiating them separately also helped increase the league's competitiveness as it significantly increased the revenue of most smaller clubs. "The top teams will always be fighting at the top, but not as comfortably as in previous years, when

we used to have the 100-point league winners," Tebas said in a meeting with international media on Wednesday. "It's harder for the top teams to win matches now, there's more parity." Two-time defending champion Barcelona already has three losses this season to Levante, Granada, and Athletic Bilbao. Real Madrid lost at promoted Mallorca, and Atletico Madrid fell against Real Sociedad. Barcelona has won only 66% of its potential points, the smallest percentage among the leaders in the top five European leagues. — *AP*



Salah hurt

Injured Mohamed Salah will not play for Egypt against Kenya in their 2021 Africa Cup of Nations qualifying



Rafa (Nadal) fought his best. We all know Rafa is not about giving up.

— Daniil Medvedev after his 7-6 (7/3), 3-6, 6-7 (4/7) loss to Rafael Nadal at the ATP Finals

SHORT TAKES

Wrestler Ritu to debut in MMA

New Delhi: Indian wrestler Ritu Phogat is set to make her professional mixed martial arts debut, taking on Korea's Nam Hee Kim in an atomweight contest at the Cadillac Arena in Beijing, China on November 16. "I want to become a mixed martial arts World Champion, and everything I'm doing now is preparing me for that," said the 25-year-old Indian ahead of her first foray into the mixed martial arts arena. "I made the decision to jump into this with my full heart and will. My goal is to become the first Indian woman to win a mixed martial arts World Championship. I believe I'm in a great position to represent my country and I want to inspire as many women as I can. It's an honor." Phogat is a Commonwealth Wrestling Championships gold medalist, World U23 Wrestling World Championships silver medalist, Asian Wrestling Championships bronze medalist, and multiple-time Indian National Wrestling Champion. — PTI

12 Indian boxers assured of medals

Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia: India's tally of assured medals at the Asian Youth Boxing Championships swelled to 12 after four more boxers from the country advanced to the semifinals here on Wednesday. Satender Singh (91kg) defeated Korean Haneul Jung to make the last-four in the men's draw. Joining him was Selay Soy (49kg), who put it past Taiwan's Tzu-Chen. In the women's draw, Poonam (54kg) and Arundhati Choudhary (69kg) made the medal rounds. While Poonam out-punched Philippines' Caranagan Kaye, Arundhati defeated Taiwan's Pin-Ju Chen. However, it was curtains for the other Indians in fray in Thursday's quarterfinal bouts. In the men's competition, Akshay Kumar (64kg) lost to Darkhan Duissebay of Kazakhstan. Also bowing out were Vijaydeep (69kg) and Lakshya Chahar (81kg). Vijaydeep lost in a split verdict to Rustambek Uulu Nuradin of Kyrgyzstan. — PTI

SHIV GRABS LEAD IN GOLF TOURNAMENT

Gurugram: Indian golfers Shiv Kapur, Arjun Prasad, M. Dharm and Shankar Das shot identical scores of five-under-67 to be tied third behind leader Thai Itthipat Buranatanayarat on the first day of the \$400,000 Panasonic Open India 2019 here on Thursday. The clubhouse lead was held by Itthipat, who fired a breath-taking eight-under-64. The round began at 11 am, four hours and 10 minutes behind schedule, due to poor visibility and weather conditions. The 60 golfers in the first session of play completed their rounds while the 66 golfers in the second session will play their first round on Friday. Kapur, the 2017 champion, started the week in high spirits as he delivered a bogey-free 67. Kapur, who teed off from the 15th, enjoyed a hot start as he birdied three of his first four holes. He added two more birdies to his card on the sixth and 10th. The 20-year-old Arjun Prasad, who has had an ordinary season this year, was glad to shoot a low number after a long time. Prasad set up some birdie opportunities on the front-nine but couldn't capitalise on them until the ninth. Prasad got on a roll from the ninth hole onwards as he sank four birdies on the trot. The best of the lot was the birdie on the 10th where he hit a fantastic shot from the fairway bunker, 130 yards out, to land it within a couple of feet of the flag. — PTI

Rafa raises the roof

Rallies from 1-5 down in final set to beat Medvedev 6-7, 6-3, 7-6

London, Nov. 14: Rafael Nadal came back from the dead against Daniil Medvedev on Wednesday to keep his ATP Finals hopes alive and boost his chances of finishing as the year-end number one.

The Spaniard was on the brink of defeat when facing a match point on his own serve after being broken twice in the deciding set but stormed back to win 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

Both players were under intense pressure after losing their opening round-robin matches in Group Andre Agassi ahead of the match at London's O2 Arena.

Nadal is on a double mission in London — aiming to win the end-of-season event for the first time in his illustrious career and to secure the year-end number one spot.

Russia's Medvedev took the first set on a tie-break to leave Nadal staring down the barrel.

The Spanish veteran broke his 23-year-old opponent early in the second set, repeating the trick to level the match.

But Medvedev was quickly into his stride in the decider, sprinting to the net to dispatch a cross-court backhand past his opponent and earn a double break.

Nadal, who came into the tournament under an injury cloud, avoided the embarrassment of a "bagel", which looked a distinct possibility at one stage.

Nadal fended off a match point on his own serve and then, roared on by the crowd, broke Medvedev twice to level the match at 5-5 and edged ahead 6-5.

But just when it seemed Medvedev was slipping inexorably towards defeat, he managed to hit the reset button and hold to take the third set into a tie-break.

Medvedev was first to falter in the shootout, hitting a regulation forehand wide to hand Nadal two match points and he sealed the win on the next point.

TSITSIPAS DOWNS CHAMP ZVEREV IN STRAIGHT SETS

Meanwhile, Stefanos Tsitsipas coasted past defending champion Alexander Zverev in straight sets to advance to the last four of the ATP.

The Greek broke his opponent three times in the match to seal a 6-3, 6-2 win and advance to the semifinals. — AFP

Today is one of those days that one out of 1,000 you win and it happened today. In that moment (facing match point), what you think is probably in five minutes you are in the locker room. In that moment, you play with not much pressure because you are almost lost.

— RAFAEL NADAL World No.1 after beating Daniil Medvedev



Rafael Nadal celebrates after defeating Daniil Medvedev in their men's singles round-robin match on Day Four of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Wednesday. Nadal won 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) — AFP

Zverev denies using his cell phone

London, Nov. 14: Alexander Zverev denied he was using his phone illegally during his ATP Finals round-robin defeat to Stefanos Tsitsipas at London's O2 Arena.

The defending champion was asked about the incident during the post-match press conference following his 3-6, 2-6 defeat on Wednesday.

TV footage that circulated on social media appeared to show him touching something in his bag at a changeover during the match.

Rules state players cannot access any electronic devices during matches.

But Zverev, 22, insisted he did not have his phone with him on court.

"My phone was in the locker room. I always leave it there. I don't know what they saw, but it was definitely not a phone," the champion said.

When asked what he might have been touching in his bag, the German said: "I mean, a water bottle? Empty water bottle maybe?" he added.

Zverev beat Rafael Nadal earlier in the week but his comprehensive defeat by Tsitsipas leaves his tournament hopes in the balance ahead of his final group match against Daniil Medvedev. — AFP

● Television footage circulated on social media appears to show him touching something in his bag at a changeover during the match.



Bob Bryan (left) and Mike Bryan chest bump each other to celebrate a point in this file photo. — AFP

Bryan brothers to retire in 2020

Los Angeles, Nov. 14: US men's doubles duo Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan said Wednesday they will retire at the end of the 2020 season, bringing the curtain down on one of the most successful pairings in tennis history.

The 41-year-old twins said in a statement they planned to hang up their racquets after taking part in next year's US Open, where they made their Grand Slam championship debut in 1995.

Since that first Slam appearance, the Bryans have racked up a record 118 trophies including 16 Grand Slam doubles titles. They also won Olympic gold at the 2012 London Games.

Bob Bryan said the duo had opted to end their 2019 season after the US Open in order to remain fresh for next year. "We decided that it would be best to rest our minds and strengthen our bodies in preparation for 2020 which will be our final season on the ATP Tour," Bob Bryan said in a statement.

At their peak, the Bryans were a formidable doubles duo, rising to No.1 in the rankings for the first time in 2003. They spent a total of 438 weeks at the top of the rankings and ended 10 seasons as the No.1 team. — AFP

Stage set for first ATP Cup event

Sydney, Nov. 14: A Grigor Dimitrov-led Bulgaria was among the final six teams announced Thursday for the ATP Cup in Australia — the new world tennis team event.

Chile, Poland, Uruguay, Moldova and Norway were the other countries to make the grade, based on the ranking of their number one singles player at the second entry deadline of November 13.

The rest of the 24-nation field was announced in September, although Switzerland later pulled out after Roger Federer opted to skip the tournament. The field will be split into six groups across Sydney, Brisbane and Perth. — AFP

THE DRAW

Group 'A' (Brisbane): Serbia, France, South Africa, Chile. Group 'B': Spain, Japan, Georgia, Uruguay. Group 'C' (Sydney): Bulgaria, Belgium, Great Britain, Moldova. Group D (Perth): Russia, Italy, USA, Norway. Group 'E' (Sydney): Austria, Croatia, Argentina, Poland. Group 'F' (Brisbane): Germany, Greece, Canada, Australia.

DAVIS CUP

Paes is back in squad for Pakistan tie

New Delhi, Nov. 14: India on Thursday picked an unprecedented eight-member Davis Cup squad for the tie against Pakistan, rewarding players who agreed to travel to Islamabad when top players had refused.

Veteran star Leander Paes returned to the Indian team after more than a year along with top players Sumit Nagal, Ramkumar Ramanathan, Sasi Kumar Mukund and Rohan Bopanna, who had reservations on travelling to Pakistan due to security concerns.

In the squad announced by the All India Tennis Association (AITA) selection committee here, Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, Saketh Myneni and Siddharth Rawat also found places in the team.

AITA usually names five-member squad apart from one or two reserve players.

While the International Tennis Federation (ITF) is still deliberating upon Pakistan Tennis Federation's appeal to shift the November 29-30 tie out of Islamabad, AITA went ahead with the team selection.

In the absence of top player Prajnesh Gunneswaran, India's singles challenge will be led by in-form Nagal (ranked 127) and Ramkumar (190).

Mukund (250) and Myneni (267) will be back up singles players. Perhaps for the first time, the squad has three doubles specialists in Bopanna, Paes and Nedunchezhiyan.

Nedunchezhiyan has been waiting in wings for long and has been rewarded for his consistent performances in the past two years. THE SQUAD: Sumit Nagal, Ramkumar Ramanathan, Sasi Kumar Mukund, Saketh Myneni, Rohan Bopanna, Leander Paes, Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan and Siddharth Rawat. Captain: Rohit Rajpal, Coach: Zeeshan Ali, Physio: Anand Kumar, Team Manager: Sunder Iyer. — PTI

Ramkumar, Sasi, Nagal in quarters

Pune, Nov. 14: India's top singles player Prajnesh Gunneswaran bowed out of the KPIT-MSLTA Challenger but Sumit Nagal and Ramkumar Ramanathan set up an all-Indian quarterfinal, here on Thursday.

Also moving to the quarterfinals was Sasi Kumar Mukund as the home players continued to be in title contention.

India number two Nagal just walked into the quarterfinals as his Russian opponent Ivan Nedelko retired at the beginning of the contest due to back spasm. Nagal was leading 2-0 in the opening set when Nedelko withdrew. — PTI

Srikanth advances; Sindhu, Sourabh, Kashyap bow out

Hong Kong, Nov. 14: World champion P.V. Sindhu exited the \$400,000 Hong Kong Open in the pre-quarterfinals but Kidambi Srikanth made the quarters for the first time in seven months after claiming a thrilling win in men's singles here on Thursday.

It was also curtains for H.S. Prannoy and Parupalli Kashyap after they suffered contrasting losses in the second round.

World No.6 Sindhu went down 18-21, 21-11, 16-21 to Busanan Ongbamrunphan of Thailand in 69 minutes to continue her recent dismal run. It was Sindhu's first loss to the Thailand player in 11 meetings.

Sindhu has made early exits from a series of recent tournaments in China, Korea and Denmark.

● Kidambi Srikanth remained the lone Indian survivor after defeating Sourabh Verma 21-11, 15-21, 21-19 at the Hong Kong Open.

● World No.6 Sindhu went down 18-21, 21-11, 16-21 to Thailand's Busanan Ongbamrunphan.

Earlier, Srikanth, who slipped to the 13th spot in the latest BWF rankings this week, emerged as the only Indian survivor after notching up a 21-11, 15-21, 21-19 win over compatriot Sourabh Verma in the men's singles second round.

Srikanth had last reached the quarterfinals at the

Singapore Open in April. The Guntur shuttle, who received a first-round bye from World No.1 Kento Momota of Japan, will face Olympic champion Chen Long of China next.

Earlier, H.S. Prannoy suffered a 12-21, 19-21 loss to sixth seed Indonesian Jonatan Christie in the second round.

Former Commonwealth Games champion Kashyap played his heart out before going down narrowly to World No.2 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei 21-12, 21-23, 10-21 in a match that lasted exactly an hour.

In other results, fourth seeded Japanese pair of Arisa Higashino and Yuta Watanabe beat Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa 21-19, 21-12 in 42 minutes in the mixed doubles. — PTI

IOA-CGF DISCUSSION FRUITFUL: RIJIJU

New Delhi, Nov. 14: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Thursday said the Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) has taken a serious note of India's concern over shooting's exclusion from the 2022 CWG and has agreed to work towards finding a solution. Rijiju, along with Indian Olympic Association (IOA) president Narinder Batra and secretary general Rajeev Mehta, met CGF chief Louise Martin and CEO David Grevenberg.

"We understand that shooting is an optional sport at the Commonwealth Games, but we had expressed our concern on the sport being excluded and

the issue has been well received by the Commonwealth Games Federation president Louise Martin," Rijiju said.

"We had a fruitful discussion today and I appreciate that the CGF has taken serious note of the issue. We will need a few more rounds of discussions, but I am happy with the fact that we have made a positive start," the optimistic minister added.

The meeting between the two parties was agreed upon following IOA's proposal to the Sports Ministry in July, to boycott the Games over shooting's exclusion. Shooting has always been one of India's top medal contributors in the CWG. — PTI

Doungel nets to help India draw

Dushanbe (Tajikistan), Nov. 14: India escaped with a 1-1 draw after an injury-time goal saved them the blushes against lower-ranked Afghanistan in their FIFA World Cup Qualifier match here on Thursday.

The result meant the 106-ranked India remained winless in their qualifying campaign so far.

When the visitors seemed headed for their second defeat, substitute Seiminlen Doungel (90+3) provided India with a lifeline, outjumping his markers to head one into the far post.

Afghanistan had taken the lead through Zelfagar Nazary's strike (45+1), putting India on the backfoot.

India remained at the fourth position in Group 'E' with three points from four matches, while

Afghanistan continued to be on the third with four points.

Starting the away game, being played in extremely cold conditions at the Central Republican Stadium, on a bright note, India conceded a goal in the first half's injury time (45+1).

Afghanistan managed to put pressure on the Indian defence manned by Mandar Rao Desai, Adil Khan, Rahul Bheke and Pritam Kotal.

The visitors showed urgency and looked desperate for an equaliser. At the other end, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu made a diving save.

While he will be disappointed to end the match in a stalemate, Stimac's decision to bring in Doungel in place of Kotal paid dividends. — PTI