

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2019

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Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas celebrates victory against Switzerland's Roger Federer during the semi-final of the ATP World Tour tennis tournament in London on Saturday.

— AFP

Son of former BJP MLA held over role in PMC Bank Scam

Mumbai: One of the directors of the scam-hit Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank, Rajneet Singh, son of ex-BJP MLA Sardar Tara Singh, was on Saturday arrested by the Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing (EOW), an official said. Rajneet was taken into custody in evening at the EOW office, as investigators found his replies unsatisfactory and unconvincing.

Full report on Page 2

Navy MiG crashes in Goa, pilots safe

Panaji: An Indian Navy MiG trainer aircraft crashed outside a village in Goa on Saturday noon, a senior defence official said. Both the pilots ejected safely, said a Naval officer. The aircraft was on a regular training sortie when the incident occurred.

Full report on Page 4

CBI seeks nod to grill PC in AI case

New Delhi: Fresh trouble seems to be in store for P. Chidambaram as the CBI is preparing to approach the court for seeking its permission to examine him in connection with a money laundering probe related to losses suffered by Air India.

Full report on Page 2

COUNTERPOINT



Believe me, dear... that is an oxygen bar!

WEATHER

Max: 29°C
Min: 15°C
RH: 55%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Strong wind

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Bahula
Panchami till 6.19 pm
Star: Punarvasu till 10.55 pm
Variyam: 11.04 am to 12.39 pm
Durmuhurtam: 4.07 pm to 4.51 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.28 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.45 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 8.42 PM
MOONSET TODAY 11.00 PM

Sabarimala opens amid row over women's entry

Tight security around shrine ■ Cops send back 10 women below age of 50

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SABARIMALA, NOV. 16

Amid tight security, the gates of the Lord Ayyappa temple at Sabarimala were thrown open on Saturday for the two-month long Mandala-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season.

The police sent back at least 10 women devotees, including some from Andhra Pradesh below the age of 50 after checking their identity cards on Saturday afternoon. The AP women had come with a 15-member group from Vijayawada and they told the police that they were unaware of the restrictions.

Kandararu Mahesh Mohanararu opened the sanctum sanctorum of the temple at 5 pm, and performed pujas, as hundreds of devotees from Kerala, Tamil Nadu and other neighbouring states thronged the shrine located in a reserve forest of the Western Ghats in Pathanamthitta district of the state.

Devotees, who were allowed to trek the hill from 2 PM, climbed the sacred 18 steps to the temple with the "irumudikettu" (sacred bag contain-



Women devotees above 50 years of age arrive at the Lord Ayyappa temple that opened on Saturday for the two-month long Mandala-Makaravilakku pilgrimage season in Sabarimala on Saturday.

ing the offerings to the Lord) after the priests performed the "padi pooja".

Last year the state and temple precincts had witnessed frenzied protests by right wing outfits and BJP workers after the LDF government decided to implement the Supreme court's verdict of September 28, 2018, allowing women of all age groups to offer prayers at the shrine.

However, this year, even though the top court has not stayed its verdict on

entry of young women into the shrine while posting various petitions on the matter to a larger bench, the government is exercising caution.

Devaswom minister Kadakampally Surendran has made it clear that Sabarimala is not a place for activists to display their activism and said the government would not encourage such women who want to visit the shrine for publicity.

Those who want to visit the temple can procure a

court order to enter the temple, he has said. Punnala Sreekumar, general secretary of the Renaissance Values Protection Committee, criticised Mr Surendran's stand and said his statement that women who intend to visit Sabarimala should obtain a special order from the Supreme Court is "anti-constitutional".

The V.S. Achuthanandan government in 2007 and the present Pinarayi Vijayan

■ Turn to Page 4

India win first Test by beating Bangladesh in just 3 days



Indian cricketers celebrate the dismissal of Bangladesh's Mushfiqur Rahim during the first Test match of a two-match series between India and Bangladesh at Holkar Cricket Stadium in Indore on Saturday. India

annihilated Bangladesh inside three days for a resounding innings and 130 run-victory in the first Test, riding on one of the most hostile fast bowling performances in recent times. The quick victory was on predicted lines.

Having bowled Bangladesh out for 150 in the first innings, India bundled them out for 213 in the second essay after declaring their first innings on their overnight score of 493 for six.

— AFP
■ Report on Page 14

Top envoy lauds Odd-Even Diplomats worried over Delhi pollution

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 16

With pollution in Delhi and its neighbouring areas reaching alarming levels due to rampant stubble-burning in Punjab, it's become an annual ritual for foreign diplomats to brace themselves for the horror before the onset of winter.

Though they have been raising the issue with the Union government every year, they feel frustrated that they have to face the same experience every November without any improvement.

Now, dean of the Diplomatic Corps, ambassador Hans Dannenberg

Castellanos, has expressed concern over the poor quality of air in Delhi and said the Even-Odd four-wheeler vehicular road rationing scheme is a good start, but suggested that a real solution can only be found by working closely with farmers in Punjab on the issue of crop residue burning.

"It (pollution) affects all of us. And it does not have a diplomatic solution nor is the MEA responsible for solving it. This is a problem of major proportions to be solved by city and federal government..." The Even-Odd scheme is a good start, but working closely

■ Turn to Page 4

Rodney Reed: Texas court halts execution in high-profile case

Texas, Nov. 16: Five days before he was due to die by lethal injection, a court in Texas has halted the execution of Rodney Reed, convicted for murder in a case that has attracted huge public attention in the US.

Reed was convicted of the 1996 murder of 19-year-old Stacey Stites who was found strangled after failing to turn up for work. Reed has been on death row for 21 years and his execution was due on 20 November.

The Texas Court of Criminal Appeals halted Reed's scheduled execution on Friday, shortly after the Texas Board of Pardons and Paroles recommended a 120-day reprieve for the inmate.

Reed says he is inno-

'Probability of lone wolf hit in metros'

VIKRAM SHARMA
HYDERABAD NOV. 16

With various terror groups "unable" to execute a major terror strike in the aftermath of scrapping of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir and the Supreme Court's verdict on Ayodhya, there is a "high probability" of a "lone wolf attack" in any of the metros across India.

This is the latest assessment made by Intelligence agencies after reviewing the security scenario post the two major developments.

Based on the assessment, a note is being prepared and sent to all states shortly to take adequate measures.

■ More on Page 4

BJP disarray makes Congress upbeat about Jharkhand

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY
NEW DELHI, NOV. 16

Having sorted out its alliance with the JMM and RJD well in time, an upbeat Congress Party in Jharkhand says that Assembly polls in the state will be fought on local issues and their alliance would form the next government in the state.

Matters like Ram Temple and Article 370 will have no bearing on how people vote, Congress' in-charge of the state, R.P.N. Singh said.

"It is a localised election... in Jharkhand, we are talking of (starvation) deaths in 21st century, we are talking of corruption charges raised (against the government) by BJP

It is a localised election... In Jharkhand, we are talking of starvation deaths in 21st century, people accused of scams are getting tickets of the ruling party

— R.P.N. Singh, Cong leader

ministers themselves, people accused of scams in medicine getting tickets of the ruling party, the lack of 24 hour supply of electricity is also a big issue," Mr Singh told this newspaper.

Asked if issues like Ram Temple and Article 370

NZ woman found dead in Delhi hotel

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 16

A 49-year-old woman from New Zealand, who had come to India to get married, was found dead inside a hotel in Paharganj on Saturday morning. The victim has been identified as Tuailli Polly Anne.

According to a police official, her boyfriend found her unconscious on Saturday morning. He informed the hotel staff and took the woman to Lady Hardinge Hospital where she was declared dead. During initial investigation, it was revealed that Anne was a patient of hypertension.

■ More on Page 13





Welcome move

Arunachal CM Pema Khandu welcomes Centre's initiative to solve Naga problem



Some news channels are promoting superstition which is not correct

— Sushil Kumar Modi, Bihar deputy CM

SHORT TAKES

Thieves steals at judge's house

Rewa: A gang of five thieves struck at the residence of a district court judge here and chopped off four sandalwood trees from the premises before decamping with the logs, police said on Saturday. The incident took place during the intervening night of Thursday and Friday, police said, adding that the thieves cut the trees after threatening the judge's police guard at gunpoint. The police guard, Budhi Lal Kol, lodged a complaint with the police in this regard. "As per the complaint, one of the thieves first entered district and sessions court judge Arun Kumar Singh's bungalow in Civil Lines area on the intervening night of November 14 and 15. He

50 kids fall ill after eating midday meal

Jajpur: As many as 50 students of two government schools in Odisha's Jajpur were taken ill after consuming mid-day meal on Saturday, officials said. The first incident occurred at Sibantpur Upper Primary School under Haridaspur panchayat of Dhamasala block, they said. The meal was served at about 10 am in the school and about 40 students were vomiting, feeling nauseous and complaining of stomach pain after consuming it, an official said. They were immediately rushed to the nearby Dhamasala community health centre (CHC) and treated. — PTI

Rajnath in Bangkok for Asean meet

New Delhi: Defence minister Rajnath Singh arrived in Bangkok on Saturday to attend the ADMM-Plus meeting where defence ministers of Asean countries and eight other nations would gather and discuss the way forward for security cooperation. "Rajnath Singh arrived in Bangkok today to attend Asean Defence Ministers' Meeting-Plus (ADMM-Plus) and the opening ceremony of defence and security 2019 exhibition," a government press release said. Mr Singh is scheduled to attend the ADMM-Plus meeting in Bangkok, Thailand, on Sunday. — PTI

SHAH: CONG USED TRIBALS AS VOTEBANK

New Delhi: Union home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday accused the Congress of using the tribal population as vote bank and "doing nothing" for their welfare, and said the Modi government has changed their lives through a series of development initiatives. Inaugurating the national tribal festival 'Aadi Mahotsav' here, Mr Shah said PM Modi has been standing solidly behind the tribal population like a "brother" and ensuring that they get benefits of government welfare schemes. "In 70 years since Independence, the tribals were used by the Congress as vote bank. The party did nothing for the welfare of the tribals. Whenever the BJP came to power, it initiated a series of development schemes for the tribals," he said. The home minister said the Union tribal affairs ministry came into existence when BJP's Atal Bihari Vajpayee was the Prime Minister and the tribals are the biggest beneficiaries of the Modi government's welfare schemes for free houses, cooking gas supply, electricity connections. — PTI



Amit Shah



'Women should uphold tradition of Sabarimala'

Political vacuum in TN after deaths of Karuna, Jaya : BJP leader

Coimbatore, Nov. 16: Women should allow to follow the tradition and heritage of the Sabarimala shrine, BJP Tamil Nadu general secretary Vanathi Srinivasan said Saturday.

They should realise this and allow to maintain the sanctity of the temple, Ms Vanathi told reporters here to a question on the Supreme Court verdict in the Ayyappa temple issue. Endorsing Tamil Nadu chief minister K. Palaniswami's view on actor Rajinikanth that he was not a political leader, she said that it was for him to decide whether to join BJP or not.

However, there is a political vacuum in Tamil Nadu after the death of M. Karunanidhi and J. Jayalalithaa, she said. Ms Vanathi, who received the applications from party workers for the

Withdraw cases on Ayyappa devotees, says BJP leader

Kochi, Nov. 16: Senior BJP leader P.P. Mukundan on Saturday urged the Kerala government to withdraw cases registered against Ayyappa devotees for participating in the protests last year against the bid to implement Supreme Court's 2018 verdict permitting entry of women in the menstrual age group into Sabarimala temple.

According to him, cases were registered against 55,650 Ayyappa devotees for participating in the

protests against the alleged move by the government to violate the age-old custom of the temple. Sabarimala Karma Samithi leaders S.J.R. Kumar and K.P. Sasikala have been made accused in 1,100 cases, Mr Mukundan said in a statement here.

His statement came two days after the five-judge bench of the Supreme Court, with a 3:2 majority, referred Sabarimala temple case to a larger bench of seven judges. — PTI



local body elections, said that the saffron party has gained new strength in the state. Expressing deep sorrow over the suicide of IITM

Sudarsan Pattnaik gets Italian Sand Art Award

London, Nov. 16: Renowned sand artist Sudarsan Pattnaik received the Italian Golden Sand Art Award 2019 at a ceremony in Rome.

Neeharika Singh, deputy chief of mission, represented the Embassy of India at the award ceremony on Friday and Mr Pattnaik later called on ambassador Reenat Sandhu, who congratulated him on his achievements. "I feel very glad and honoured to receive this prestigious award," said Mr Pattnaik, the famous sand sculptor from Odisha.

He represented India at the International Scorrano Sand Nativity event held in Lecce, Italy, earlier this week.

At the event, Mr Pattnaik was joined by Pavel Minilkov from Russia as they created an eight-foot-high sand sculpture of Mahatma Gandhi on his 150th birth anniversary.

There were eight sculptors from different countries who participated in this festival. — PTI



Devotees arrive at the Lord Ayyappa temple that opened on Saturday for the two-month long Mandalam-Makaravillakku pilgrimage season in Sabarimala on Saturday. At least 10 young women from Andhra Pradesh, who arrived at Pamba on Saturday to offer prayers at the Lord Ayyappa temple here, were sent back. — PTI

Constable dies in Sabarimala

Pamba: A 32-year-old civil police officer posted near the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple complex, for security duty, collapsed and died on Saturday morning, police said. Though the CPO was rushed to the hospital from the police barracks, he was declared brought dead, they said. The special police officer, Biju, hails from Perambra in Kozhikode and leaves behind a wife and a seven-month-old daughter. — PTI

Ms Vanathi also sought adequate compensation for Rajeswari who was run over by a lorry, while trying to avoid a leaning flagpole in the city. — PTI

C'garh film actress injured in acid attack

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, NOV. 16

An unidentified assailant on Saturday threw acid on Chhattisgarh film actress Maya Sahu when she was coming out of her house in the district headquarters of Durg in Chhattisgarh.

The actress suffered burn injuries in her neck and hand as she tried to protect her face. According to the police, a motorcycle-borne youth suddenly appeared and threw some harmful chemicals, probably acid, at her. He then fled the spot on his bike.

The actress was admitted to a local hospital.

Bullet-proof vehicle, jammer for Vijayan

AGE CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 16

Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's security was tightened during his visit to Delhi on Saturday. The Chief Minister, who arrived in Delhi to attend the two-day politburo meeting of CPM, was given bullet proof vehicles. A jammer-mounted vehicle was attached to his convoy.

Earlier, seven personnel used to be deployed by Delhi Police for providing security to the Chief Minister.

Now the number of security officials has been enhanced to 15. The number of commandos has also been raised from two to four.

Besides, there is also enhancement in the deployment of the Kerala police commandos.

Though a bullet proof vehicle was sent to the airport for picking the



Pinarayi Vijayan

chief minister, the latter preferred to travel by the car provided by Kerala House as has been the practice.

The bullet-proof vehicle and jammer were parked at the venue of the party politburo meeting.

The Chief Minister was issued a threat by Western Ghat Kabani dalam in connection with the killing of Maoists at Manjakkandi in Attappadi. The letters carrying the death threats signed by Kabani dalam vice president Badar Musam, were sent to Vadakara police station and office of a newspaper.

Yogi seeks report on mantri threatening cop

Lucknow, Nov. 16: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday asked for an inquiry report on a purported audio clip in which state minister Swati Singh allegedly threatened a police officer here.

"A report in this connection has been sought from the SSP, Lucknow and will be submitted to the chief minister at the earliest," the state's DGP O.P. Singh said.

In the audio clip that surfaced on social media, the minister is heard directly questioning circle officer, Lucknow Cant., Binu Singh about an FIR filed against Ansal Developers and expressing displeasure over it.

Opposition parties including Samajwadi Party and Congress have attacked the Adityanath



Yogi Adityanath

government over the clip, questioning its claim of zero tolerance on corruption.

In the audio, the minister is allegedly telling the CO that a 'fake case' had been filed and that there were orders from the higher-ups that a case will not be registered against the Ansans.

Mr Singh is also apparently saying that the case in question is a high-profile case and that the chief minister is aware of it. She is heard asking the CO

CPM says no decision yet on issue of Sabari

AGE CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 16

The CPM state secretariat on Saturday said that the reports claiming that the party has taken a stand on Sabarimala issue in the backdrop of Supreme Court verdict were only part of the imagination of a section of the media.

In a statement, the secretariat said the CPM's well stated position is that man-woman equality should be ensured in all spheres. However, the government has to function on the basis of rules, laws and court verdicts.

It said the Chief Minister had already pointed out that clarity would be sought on SC verdict from legal experts and the government will take a stand accordingly.

The secretariat said the LDF governments had acted on the Sabarimala young women entry issue as per the High Court verdict of 1991 and till September 28, 2018 the same stand was applicable. After getting clarity on the recent verdict of the Supreme Court constitution bench, the government will discharge its constitutional responsibility of implementing the judgment.

Though it is government's responsibility to implement the current Supreme Court judgment, there is a general feeling in legal circles about certain confusion related to the verdict.

After getting the legal opinion, it is the constitutional responsibility of the government to discharge its duty of implementing whatever the majority verdict of top court has stated.

The government's stand has disappointed those forces who want to use the verdict for vested political interests and their intention reflects in the reports that are coming out.

■ Jajji is accused of changing castes during various elections

MP Cong MLA faces disqualification

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, NOV. 16

A Congress MLA in Madhya Pradesh is facing the prospect of losing membership of the House on charges of producing fake caste certificate to contest from a reserved seat in the 2018 Assembly elections.

State-level scrutiny committee has recently has rejected claims by Ashok Nagar (SC) MLA Jajpal Singh "Jajji" that he belonged to other backward class (OBC) community and Scheduled Caste (SC) community, made on separate occasions.

"Jajji" is accused of changing castes during various elections he has contested to gain political

office. He was first elected as a Janpad Council member under the general quota and then became the president of Ashoknagar municipal council, a post reserved for the OBCs, claiming to be from the Keer caste.

Later, he presented himself from the "Nat" caste while contesting the Assembly seat reserved for the Scheduled Castes from Ashoknagar.

However, during the investigation of the police and the administration, he was found to be of Sikh faith as claimed in educational documents submitted for an arms licence. That led to questions on whether he could claim the benefits of the caste.

The Gwalior bench of Madhya Pradesh high



Jajpal Singh "Jajji"

court has, however, intervened in the matter directing the scrutiny committee to give an opportunity to the lawmaker to place his version before it.

According to official sources, the Ashok Nagar district collector has submitted a report that the MLA has a habit of making fake caste certificates to get political posts.

The state SC/ST welfare department of the MP gov-

ernment has sought an explanation from the MLA following the report submitted by the Ashok Nagar district collector.

"The MLA has sought 15 days to respond to the report. He was expected to reply by November 20. We will place the entire issue before the scrutiny committee after getting his reply," principal secretary, SC/ST welfare department, Vinod Kumar told reporters here.

According to official reports, the MLA was elected as member of a local panchayat body in Ashok Nagar district as a general category candidate in 1994.

He was later elected as chairman of Ashok Nagar municipality, reserved for OBC, in 1999.



Rafale probe

SC could have ordered CBI, JPC probe into Rafale deal, says Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot on Saturday



Govt working on policy to push micro, small and medium enterprises' exports

— Nitin Gadkari, Union minister

SHORT TAKES

Babul Supriyo likens Owaisi to Zakir Naik

Asansol (West Bengal): Union minister Babul Supriyo on Saturday dubbed AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi as 'second Zakir Naik' for demanding the restoration of Babri mosque in Ayodhya. "Asaduddin Owaisi is becoming the second Zakir Naik. If he speaks more than required, then we do have law and order problem in our country," Mr Supriyo told reporters here. Zakir Naik is a controversial Islamic preacher. The government is seeking his extradition on charges of money laundering and hate speech. The AIMIM lawmaker came under attack after he demanded the reconstruction of Babri mosque, which was demolished by Hindu activists in 1992. "I want my masjid back," Mr Owaisi tweeted on Friday, days after the Supreme Court ordered the construction of Ram Temple on the disputed site in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh. — ANI

Bees attack govt college in K'taka

Koppal (Karnataka): A swarm of bees attacked staff of a government college in Yelburga area of Koppal district of Karnataka on Saturday. Seven people were injured in the incident who were later taken to a government hospital for treatment. BJP MLA Halappa Achar later visited the hospital to meet the injured.

FIR AGAINST HINDU GROUP MEMBERS

Gwalior: An FIR was registered against some activists of Hindu Mahasabha for allegedly distributing pamphlets containing "objectionable words" about Mahatma Gandhi in Madhya Pradesh's Gwalior, police said on Saturday. No arrest is made so far. The pamphlets distributed on November 14 in Daulatganj area of the city also praised Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse. On Friday, the Mahasabha had observed Godse's death anniversary and demanded that his statements during the assassination trial be included in the school curriculum in the state. "A day before Mahasabha activists observed Godse's anniversary, its activists on Thursday allegedly distributed the pamphlets (describing Mahatma Gandhi in an objectionable manner) in Daulatganj," said Kotwali police station in-charge Vivek Ashthana. He said the FIR was lodged by one Ravindra Singh Chouhan alleging that the language used in the handbills had hurt the sentiments of Gandhians. A case has been filed against Mahasabha members Naresh Batham and others under section 153-A (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). — PTI

Cong's Bharat Bachao rally Nov. 30

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV 16

The Congress on Saturday said that it will hold a massive rally against the "anti-people" policies of the BJP government on November 30 in the national capital. The "Bharat Bachao Rally" at the Ramlila Maidan will be a culmination of the protests being held by the Congress at the district and block levels across the country. The party had earlier planned to hold the rally on November 1 but postponed it,

citing security issues due to the Ayodhya verdict. The date for the rally was finalised at a meeting of AICC secretaries, general Secretaries, in-charges, frontal organisation chiefs and department heads along with PCC presidents and CLP leaders held here. AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said: "We discussed about the latest leakage of NSO reports also regarding the consumption of food items and consumption of everything. This is very much shocking,"

NC, PDP reject idea of holding J&K polls

Our leaders should be released immediately: NC MP

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, NOV. 16

Jammu and Kashmir's two major political parties-National Conference (NC) and People's Democratic Party (PDP)-have scoffed at lieutenant governor Girish Chandra Murmu for his suggestion that elections to the Assembly in the recently carved out Union Territory (UT) will be held soon.

"We've been pushed into a very difficult situation after the illegal and unconstitutional repeal of Article 370 and bifurcation of our state. People are angry and at loss. Their leadership, including three former chief ministers, has been incarcerated and the situation is fluid," said senior NC leader and MP Muhammad Akbar Lone. "How can one think of taking part in any election in such a situation?" he asked. However, he added, "Our leaders should be released immediately. Once they are out, they will hold deliberations on the issue within the party and take the final call."

Meanwhile, PDP leader Parvez Wafa told reporters in Jammu Saturday, "How can elections be held in a situa-



Farooq Abdullah Mehbooba Mufti

► PDP leader Parvez Wafa said holding polls is unjustified, ironic and uncalled for.

tion where leaders of major political groups have been detained in hordes?"

"The way in which the authorities are mulling holding polls is unjustified, ironic and uncalled for. Since the leadership of major political parties and important office leaders are under detention, the idea of holding polls itself loses relevance and is contrary to the democratic ideas. In a democratic setup, polls are a part of the mechanism that delegates power to the people to choose their representatives and it is the duty of the state to ensure free and fair elections," he said.

Mr Wafa lamented that the PDP's request to

allow its delegation of leaders and workers meet detained party president Mehbooba Mufti was rejected even as NC leaders were allowed to meet their party president and vice-president, both of whom were under detention since August 5.

Mr Murmu Thursday hinted that the Assembly polls in the UT will be held soon. "Elections will come. It is a Union Territory with a legislature. It will not continue like this (under the Centre's rule)," he said. He also said that the process for holding the democratic exercise will begin soon and that the J&K police will have to play a major role in it.

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 special status within the Indian Union.

The last Assembly of the united J&K elected through the 2014 elections was dissolved by the then governor Satya Pal Malik on November 22 last year to stall the attempt by PDP, NC and Congress to form a government.



Youth Congress members protest against the government's decision to take away the elite SPG protection from Gandhi family in Mumbai. — PTI

Pawar postpones Sunday meeting with Cong chief

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 16

The process of government formation in Maharashtra could take longer as Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar postponed his meeting with Congress president Sonia Gandhi, which was to be held on Sunday in New Delhi.

According to sources, Mr Pawar was expected to meet Sonia at her residence to discuss the grand alliance of three parties — Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP. However, the meeting has now been postponed to November 18, as Mr Pawar will attend a party meeting in Pune on Sunday.

The party chiefs will discuss the Common Minimum Program drafted by the leaders of the three parties on Monday. Despite the reports of the meeting being cancelled, NCP leader Nawab Malik said that Mr Pawar would hold talks with Congress leaders.

"The meeting with Sonia was never planned. But Mr Pawar will go to New Delhi to meet other Congress leaders by Tuesday," he said.

The Congress has authorised three senior leaders — Ahmed Patel, Mallikarjun Kharge and K.C. Venugopal — to hold discussions on government formation with the NCP chief.

Interestingly, a meeting scheduled on Saturday between leaders of the Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress and governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari to discuss the agrarian crisis in the state has also been postponed.

Senior Sena leader Eknath Shinde said, "The meeting has been postponed as all top leaders and MLAs of the three parties are on tour to visit their constituencies. They are also busy submitting the details of election expenses and affidavits."

Former BJP MLA's son arrested in PMC scam

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 16

The Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Mumbai police arrested Rajneet Singh, son of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Sardar Tara Singh in connection with the ₹4,355 crore Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank scam.

The accused, ninth arrest in the case, was the director of the scam-hit bank for 13 years and the investigators found his role in the current crisis that the bank is facing.

The EOW officials said that Singh was not just one of the directors of the bank, but was also a director and member of the recovery committee of the PMC bank for a considerable span. The EOW had interrogated Singh pertaining to the loan allotted to the Housing Development and Infrastructure Limited (HDIL) — the accused entity in the case.

"He was questioned on the long-pending dues and the efforts made to recover the same from the HDIL. His responses were unsatisfactory and evasive, which furthered his active involvement in the offence," stated an EOW statement.

The investigators questioned him on Saturday and after due deliberation, placed him under arrest at around 8 pm, the officials said.

Singh will be produced before a holiday court on Sunday and the EOW will seek his custody for further investigation in the case. The officials said that holding the important post in the loan recovery department, Singh did not take strong action against HDIL.

FAKE NEWS BIGGER MENACE THAN PAID NEWS: JAVADEKAR

New Delhi, Nov. 16: Union minister Prakash Javadekar said that fake news was a bigger menace than paid news and urged

the media fraternity to introspect about ways to deal with it. Speaking at an event to confer National Awards for Excellence in

Journalism, he also touched upon the issue of "lynching" and how only "one kind of lynching" was being talked about. — PTI

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2	Paediatric Rigid Bronchoscopy set	01No's	60,000/-	-do-	Paed Surgery
3	Basic & General Spine Instruments	As per technical specifications	22,000/-	-do-	Ortho
4	Filling Instruments	500 Sets	56,000/-	-do-	OHS
5	Portable colour Doppler Ultrasound Unit	01No's	40,000/-	-do-	Gastroenterology
6	Coughing Assisted Device	01No's	50,000/-	-do-	Paediatrics
7	Stand Alone High Frequency Oscillator Ventilator	01No's	60,000/-	17.12.2019	Paediatrics
8	Balance System	01No's	36,000/-	-do-	Physiotherapy
9	Radiostopes and Pharmaceutical kits	As per technical specifications	92,260/-	-do-	Nuclear Medicine
10	Surgical Instruments	As per technical specifications	40,000/-	-do-	CTVS
11	Cystourethroscopy	01No's	40,000/-	-do-	TSR
12	Rapid Infuser System	01No's	30,000/-	-do-	Neurosurgery
13	Surgical Instruments Sets	20No's	20,000/-	18.12.2019	OHSC
14	Plating Set	02No's	30,000/-	-do-	Ortho
15	CO2 Incubator	02No's	28,000/-	-do-	Biochemistry
16	Micro Vascular Set	As per technical specifications	20,000/-	-do-	General Surgery
17	Magneto Therapy	01No's	32,000/-	-do-	Physiotherapy
18	Ice Flaking Machine	01No's	20,000/-	19.12.2019	Biochemistry
19	Endoscope for ATC OT	01No's	30,000/-	-do-	Neurosurgery
20	SAS-1, IFE 4.0	1400 Tests	20,000/-	-do-	Immunopathology
21	PET Radiopharmaceuticals	As per technical specifications	3,00,000/-	-do-	Nuclear Medicine
22	Radiation Protection Gears	01No's	20,000/-	-do-	Gastroenterology
23	Foot & Ankle Instruments	As per technical specifications	22,000/-	-do-	Ortho
24	Orthognathic Surgery Instruments	01No's	20,000/-	20.12.2019	OHSC
25	Autoclave Machine	01No's	20,000/-	-do-	Obst & Gynae
26	Gel Patient Supporting System	As per technical specifications	1,60,000/-	-do-	General Surgery
27	Integrated Non-Invasive Hemodynamic (Hemisphere) for Liver ICU	03No's	1,68,000/-	-do-	Hepatology
28	Portable Colour Doppler Ultrasound Unit for APC X-Ray Section (on buy back basis)	01No's	80,000/-	-do-	Radiodiagnosis
Pre Bid Cases					
29	Biplane DSA System with Portable Vascular Ultrasound Unit	01No's	30,00,000/-	-do-	Radiodiagnosis
30	MINI PACS	01No's	28,00,000/-	-do-	Radiodiagnosis
31	256 Slice CT Scanner on buy back basis including Anaesthesia Equipment and Reporting Workstation for APC Section(On TURKEY BASIS)	01No's	28,00,000/-	23.12.2019	Radiodiagnosis
32	Portable Colour Doppler Ultrasound Unit for ATC X-Ray Section(On buy back basis)	02No's	1,60,000/-	-do-	Radiodiagnosis
33	High End Color Doppler Ultrasound Unit(One for Interventional Suite and one for Radiology Clinic)	02No's	4,00,000/-	-do-	Radiodiagnosis
34	Biplane,Flat Panel Cardiac Digital Fluoroscopy-01 No. on buyback basis of Existing Cath Lab.	01No's	20,00,000/-	-do-	Cardiology
35	Electrocardiography with cortical stimulator	01No's	1,00,000/-	-do-	Neurology
36	Platelet Incubator and Agitator (capacity:192bags)	02No's	50,000/-	30.12.2019	BTD
37	Vo2 Max Analyzer With Treadmill	01No's	60,000/-	-do-	Physiotherapy
38	C-Arm Image Intensifier for main OT	01No's	50,000/-	-do-	Neurosurgery
39	C-Arm Image Intensifier for Skill Lab	01No's	80,000/-	-do-	Neurosurgery
40	MRI Compatible Transport Ventilator	01No's	60,000/-	-do-	Paediatrics
41	Arthroscopy Optical Instruments Set	03No's	2,00,000/-	31.12.2019	Ortho
42	ICU Ventilators	05No's	4,00,000/-	-do-	CTVS
43	Nasal Endoscope	20No's	60,000/-	-do-	ENT
44	Open care system for Neonates	28No's	2,24,000/-	-do-	Paediatrics
45	Storage Cabinet for Endoscopes	02No's	40,000/-	-do-	Gastroenterology

Tender List can also be downloaded from website www.pgimer.edu.in and Item wise Tender Form with specifications can be downloaded from website www.eprocure.gov.in. Cost of Tender is Rs.200/- (non-refundable) which can deposited in the shape of Demand Draft in favour of Director, PGIMER, Chandigarh. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) must be in the form of FDR /TDR valid for a period of one year from any scheduled bank in the name of the Director, PGIMER, Chandigarh. EMD in any other form will not be accepted. Tender can be dropped in the tender box placed in the Procurement Branch (Import) manually by 2:30 PM on or before the date mentioned against respective item. The tenders shall be opened on the same date at 03:00 PM in the presence of the authorized intending tenders. Tenders not submitted on the prescribed form, not accompanied with valid Earnest Money and tender cost shall be summarily rejected straightaway. The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason thereof. **"PRE-BID CONFERENCE" WITH INTENDING BIDDERS FOR ITEM Sr. No. 29 to 45 shall be held on 29-11-2019 from 2:30 P.M. ONWARDS in the PI(EP), OFFICE, PGIMER, CHANDIGARH** For more details contact: 0172-2756469 at Procurement Branch (Import).

NOTE: If any of the tender opening dates happens to be a holiday in PGIMER, Chandigarh, then the same shall be opened on next full working day.

Professor In-Charge (EP)


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Tend. No: HCSSL/PROJ/157/TEN/2019-20 for Steel Fabrication of Slipway Cradles at HCSSL, Kolkata, EMD is Rs. 9.756 Lakhs.

Sealed tenders are invited from experienced and reputed contractors/firms satisfying the eligibility criteria for "Steel Fabrication of slipway cradles for end launching at M/s Hooghly Cochin Shipyards Ltd (HCSSL), Nazirgunge, Kolkata". The details of tender and documents can be obtained from Site office, Hooghly Cochin Shipyards Limited (HCSSL), Satyen Bose Rd, Nazirgunge, Howrah, 711109, WB. The tender documents can be downloaded from CSL website www.cochinshipyard.com or <http://www.eprocure.gov.in>. Cost of tender form is Rs.5600/-. Tender procedure /administration will be handled by Cochin Shipyards Limited/HCSSL and contract will be placed by Hooghly Cochin Shipyards Limited (HCSSL). Last date of submission of tender is 15.00 hrs on 10 Dec 2019. All updates will only be available on website. *Hindi version of this advertisement is published in the website (www.cochinshipyard.com) of CSL

CEO (HCSSL)



Leading the way

India will lead world in combating poverty, climate change and terrorism, says Goyal



It is a matter of great satisfaction that they (Navy pilots) managed to eject in time

— **Rajnath Singh,**
Defence minister

SHORT TAKES

Goa DGP dies of cardiac arrest

Panaji: Goa's Director General of Police Pranab Nanda died of cardiac arrest in New Delhi last night, a senior official said. Inspector General of Police Jaspal Singh confirmed Nanda's death. He was on a Delhi visit after attending official functions in Goa on Friday. "We were informed by his family that Nanda is no more. He died due to cardiac arrest. It's shocking," he said. The 1988-batch IPS officer was transferred to Goa on February 25, this year by ministry of home affairs. Former MP Narendra Sawaikar tweeted, "Saddened by the news of demise of Director General of Goa Police Shri Pranab Nanda (IPS)." — **PTI**

Couple killed as house catches fire

Bareilly: A young couple was killed when their house caught fire in Vanshi Nagala locality under the jurisdiction of Subhash Nagar police station here, police said. Vijay Saxena (35) and his wife Rajni (30) were found dead on Saturday morning when their neighbours broke into their house seeing smoke coming out of it, said Subhash Kumar, SP, City. Police suspect that the fire was caused by a mosquito coil that was lit under a wooden cot. Most household goods were damaged in the fire, the SP said, adding that both bodies have been sent for post mortem. — **PTI**

7 Naxals surrender in Chhattisgarh

Bijapur: Seven Naxals carrying ₹1 lakh to ₹3 lakh rewards on their heads, including three women, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Saturday, police said. The cadres turned themselves in before Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P, citing "disappointment with the hollow Maoist ideology and exploitation of lower-rung cadres by senior naxal leaders", an official said. Of the surrendered ultras, Ramji alias Bicchem Karam (24), deputy commander of Udanti LOS (local organisation squad) and Lakhmu Modiyam (32) had reward of ₹3 lakh each on their heads.

SENA SET TO SKIP NDA MEET

■ **Continued from Page 1** Narendra Modi government, Arvind Sawant, had resigned on November 11. According to the Rajya Sabha MP, the Sena has not received an invitation to attend the NDA meeting. "It's all alright if the invitation is not there. We had already decided against it," he added. The Sena MP also took a dig at the BJP saying NDA is nobody's property. "Bal Thackeray and Akali Dal are equally important founders of the NDA," he said. The seating arrangement of Shiv Sena's MPs in Rajya Sabha was changed on Saturday. Sources said that Sena MPs Sanjay Raut and Anil Desai will now sit in the Opposition benches during the winter session of the Parliament. Sena's Lok Sabha MP Vinayak Raut warned the BJP saying it will have to face the consequences. "The seating arrangement of Sena MPs in the Rajya Sabha has been changed deliberately, but it will not have any impact on the changing equations in the state," he said. Maharashtra was placed under President's rule on November 12 after no party or alliance staked claim to form the government. The Sena reached out to the Congress-NCP combine for support after its alliance with the BJP collapsed.

Intel warns of lone wolf attack in cities

Intel agencies review security, send report to states

VIKRAM SHARMA
HYDERABAD NOV. 16

With various terror groups "unable" to execute a major terror strike in the aftermath of scrapping of Article 370 from Jammu and Kashmir and the Supreme Court's verdict on Ayodhya, there is a "high probability" of a "lone wolf attack" in any of the metros across India. This is the latest assessment made by Intelligence agencies after reviewing the security scenario post the two major developments. Based on the assessment, a note is being prepared and sent to all states shortly to take adequate measures.

The agencies feel that while a host of measures has been taken to ensure that terror groups do not succeed in planning and executing a major strike, they say that the threat of a lone wolf attack in such a scenario is looming large.

Sources in the security establishment told this newspaper over phone from New Delhi that though retaliation in the form of a major terror strike was expected soon after Article 370 was abrogated from J&K, the strict

► **Post the Ayodhya verdict and the heightened security measures in place, which included close monitoring of social media, the assessment report says that terrorist groups are finding it 'increasingly difficult' to execute a major strike.**

restrictions which included a ban on the Internet ensured that the communication between terrorists and their handlers across the border was snapped. The increased security measures taken by agencies have made it "difficult" for planning and executing terror strikes, they said.

Terror groups use various apps to communicate and in the absence of the Internet in the Kashmir Valley, either side could not establish contact with the other.

Post the Ayodhya verdict and the heightened security measures in place, which included close monitoring of social media and telephone calls, the assessment report says that terrorist groups are

finding it "increasingly difficult" to execute a major strike. "In this backdrop, there is a high probability of a lone wolf attack which would create panic and could trigger a wave of communal clashes. This time around, the possibility of such an attack is very high," says the note that was prepared after a detailed analysis was done based on the ground situation, the mood among sections of people and the inputs available before a host of agencies.

In the note, the officials pointed out how, over the last 27 years, ever since the Babri Masjid was demolished by frenzied mobs comprising members of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and allied outfits on December 6, 1992, terror groups like the Lashkar-e-Tayyaba, Jaish-e-Mohammed, Hizbul Mujahideen and Harkat-ul Jihad Al Islami have repeatedly cited it to brainwash youth and take them into their fold. "Though large sections of people have respected the verdict, there are some individuals linked to various fundamentalist organisations who can indulge in mischief," says the note.

■ Mahatma architect of India's partition, says MP leader

Leader booked for Gandhi remark

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, NOV. 16

A leader of a fringe right wing party in Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh was on Saturday booked for making objectionable comments against Mahatma Gandhi.

Police registered a case under section 153 (A) (promoting enmity between different groups on ground of religion, race, etc, and doing acts prejudicial to maintenance of harmony) against local Hindu Mahasabha leader Naresh Batham for making defamatory comments

against Mahatma Gandhi.

The FIR was registered following a complaint lodged by a local social activist Ravindra Singh Chouhan saying that the actions of Hindu Mahasabha leader who called Mahatma Gandhi the architect of partition of India have hurt sentiments of those who believed in philosophy of the Father of nation and also threatened to disturb peace and harmony in the area, according to additional director general of police, Gwalior-Chambal range, Rajababu Singh.

The complainant produced leaflets purportedly

► **The Hindu Mahasabha had a few months ago sparked a controversy by building a temple for Godse**

being circulated by the leader of the right wing party that made offensive remarks against Mahatma Gandhi, besides glorifying Gandhi's assassinator Nathuram Godse.

"We have launched a manhunt for the Hindu Mahasabha leader and his associates involved in circulation of the controversial pamphlet. They will

Two LeT associates arrested by J&K police

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, NOV. 16

The Jammu and Kashmir police on Saturday claimed arresting three persons who were allegedly issuing threats to local residents in the Valley's north-western town of Sopore and separately two "terrorist associates" from neighbouring Kupwara district.

The three accused arrested in Sopore were identified as Hilal Ahmed and Sahil Nazir, both residents of Brath-Kalan locality of Sopore, and Peerzada Mohammad Zahir of nearby Check Brath.

"They were arrested and incriminating materials including threat posters were recovered from their possession," the police said. It added that initial investigation into the matter reveals that these individuals were involved in publishing and circulation of threat posters.

The police also said that separately its officers at a checkpoint in intersection Kupwara district intercepted and arrested two "terrorist associates" identified as Ulfat Bashir Mir and Aijaz Ahmad Bhat.



Outgoing Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi seeks blessings from a elephant at the hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala in Tirupati on Saturday. — **PTI**

Bhutan foreign minister to visit India from today

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 16

Bhutanese foreign minister Lyonpo Tandi Dorji will begin a week-long official visit to India from Sunday. He will also visit Bodh Gaya and Kolkata besides New Delhi, where he will hold talks with his Indian counterpart S. Jaishankar.

In a statement, the MEA said, "The minister of foreign affairs of Bhutan H.E. Lyonpo (Dr.) Tandi Dorji will be paying a visit to India from 17-23 November 2019. During the visit, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Bhutan will hold bilateral discussions with his counterpart external affairs minister Dr. S. Jaishankar and review the entire gamut of India-Bhutan relations. He will also pay a visit to Bodhgaya and Rajgir, Bihar on 19-20 November and Kolkata, West Bengal on 21-22 November 2019."

The MEA added, India and Bhutan share a unique and time-tested bilateral relationship, characterised by mutual trust, goodwill and understanding. During the visit, the two sides will hold discussions on various aspects of bilateral relations, including eco-



Lyonpo Tandi Dorji

nomic cooperation, development partnership and hydro-power cooperation. Lyonpo Tandi Dorji's visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular visits and exchange of views at the highest level between the two countries."

It may be recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Bhutan in August this year. During that visit, the two neighbours had "reaffirmed their commitment to maintain close coordination on matters affecting each others' security and national interests". India's efforts at increasing engagement with Bhutan come at a time when China has been keen to strengthen ties with Bhutan.

The region had been shaken by the military stand-off between the Indian and Chinese armies at Doklam in Bhutanese territory two years ago.

SI found in widow's residence, assaulted

Madhepura (Bihar), Nov. 16: A sub-inspector of police was assaulted by a group of villagers after he was caught in the house of a widow at night in Bihar's Madhepura district, a police officer said on Saturday.

The policeman was on duty when he was found at the widow's house located near Phulaut police outpost in the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, Udakishanganj SDPO C P Yadav said.

The 50-year-old married sub-inspector and the woman were not in a compromising position when the villagers stormed the house, police sources said adding that they beat up the policeman but spared the widow.

After getting the information about the incident, Yadav said, he himself and Udakishanganj Sub-Divisional Officer Z Hasan reached the spot along with force and freed the SI after promising the villagers that stern action will be taken against him.

"He will be suspended. Senior officials have been informed of the incident," Mr Yadav said.

— **PTI**

Congress upbeat in Jharkhand

■ **Continued from Page 1** Temple would make a difference, Mr Singh added that the Congress has already made a statement on the Supreme Court order, reiterating that Jharkhand would be a totally localized election.

The former Union minister steered clear of other polarising issues like deaths due to lynching saying, "You will have to wait for our manifesto". Though he refused to give any number, Mr Singh expressed confidence that JMM-Congress-RJD alliance would form the government in Jharkhand.

He said considering the total disarray in NDA in Jharkhand, it seemed highly improbable that the BJP would cross the "25-seat mark" in the state.

"The JD(U) and LJP are nowhere in the alliance (NDA). They are fighting separately. There is a huge problem on the AJSU front. The reality is that the BJP can't keep its house in order," he said.

The BJP has not yet sealed a seat-sharing arrangement with its existing ally — the All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU). The LJP, its ally in Bihar, too want-

ed to join hands with it but has now decided to contest the election on its own.

On whether the results in Haryana and Maharashtra, where the BJP could not manage to get a majority of its own, would affect voter sentiment, Mr Singh said: "What is more important is not the amount votes the BJP got, what is important if that just after the Lok Sabha elections, the turnaround in the people — they have seen through the lies and deceit of the BJP. In Jharkhand, we will continue to raise the issues which plague the people of the state".

He went on to add that even during the Lok Sabha polls earlier this year, the performance of the Congress Party was not really bad. "In that kind of juggernaut of the BJP we managed to win only one, but lost one seat by just 1,400 votes, which we have challenged in court... there has been a momentum in favour of the Congress".

The Congress, which is contesting 31 seats in the 81-member Assembly, is definitely looking at increasing its tally, Mr Singh said.

Sabarimala temple opens

■ **Continued from Page 1** government had given an affidavit in the Supreme Court in favour of the entry of young women. "By deviating from the stand now, the political leadership is justifying the allegations of UDF," he added.

While Mr Vijayan has been guarded in his reaction to the Supreme Court verdict and the entry of

young women, Mr Surendran and law minister A.K. Balan have been more vociferous. The latter had termed the verdict "highly complicated" which posed more problems for the government. "There is no question of taking women between the ages of 10 and 50 to Sabarimala under government's protection and security," he said.

Delhi-NCR pollution

■ **Continued from Page 1** with the farmers in Punjab on the issue of burning crops should also be strongly considered," Mr Castellanos, ambassador of the Dominican Republic, was quoted by news agencies as saying.

On Friday it was reported that the blog post of the Costa Rican ambassador to India, Mariela Cruz Alvarez, has gone viral after she declared that she had moved out of Delhi to the more environmentally friendly Bangalore.

"I'm a living proof that our planet is dying today, coughing as I write with my Indian bronchitis," she wrote.

"I am sick with a serious upper respiratory infection due to New Delhi's unbreatheable air. My tropical lungs couldn't take the toll. It is not funny to see your lungs expelling a dark residue as if I was a smoker — which I am not... We need to wake up fast. India I love you and it hurts me to see you drowning in loads of plastic and toxic air. Where is the leadership? Clean air and water are basic human rights," she added in her blog post.

"Our concern is the health of all citizens and residents of Delhi and of those nationals from our countries that work, live and visit Delhi," Mr Castellanos was quoted as saying. According to reports, he will receive suggestions from diplomats of other foreign missions in New Delhi on what to propose to the Central government to improve the air situation in the Capital. "The situation is very bad. Whenever we go out, we have to wear masks," a diplomat said.



Pilots Captain M Sheokhand and Lieutenant Commander Deepak Yadav (right) after they managed to eject safely from their MiG-29K fighter jet that crashed shortly after it took off from INS Hansa in Goa on Saturday. — **PTI**

Naval MiG-29K crashes in Goa

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 16

A MiG-29K twin seater aircraft of the Indian Navy crashed on Saturday afternoon in Goa after a bird hit. Both the pilots were able to safely eject from the aircraft.

"The pilots, Capt M. Sheokhand and Lt. Cdr. Deepak Yadav are safe and have been recovered. There has been no loss of life or damage to property on ground," said Indian Navy spokesperson Vivek Madhwal.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh also spoke

to the pilots. "Spoke to the pilots, Capt Mrigank and Deepak Yadav of the MiG-29K which crashed after the take-off from Goa today. It is a matter of great satisfaction that they managed to eject in time and both of them are safe," tweeted Mr Singh. According Indian Navy, at about noon, the MiG-29K on a routine training sortie, encountered a flock of birds after take off from Dabolim. "The pilot observed that the left engine had flamed out and the right engine had caught fire. Attempts to recover the aircraft were unsuccessful," said Indian Navy.

The leaders with Muslim names are in political parties but have donned the role of being party stooges

In search of a leader

Despite being 200 million strong, Muslims in the country do not have a common platform, a common face or a common leader who can represent them in their time of crisis. It is important that this vacuum must be filled.

KANIZA GARARI

The Muslim community in India is in turmoil. In the last 150 days they have been systematically targeted by government policies and resolutions. Yet there is no leader who can channelise and bring to light their deep sense of betrayal.

Insecure and unsure but resilient, they have maintained a brave front with a “social silence” on the Ayodhya verdict, the triple talaq law, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and Citizenship Amendment Bill, and the emasculation of Article 370. Yet it shows only a shade of the level of their tolerance.

Despite a fire within, Muslims feel an inability to express themselves. A vacuum in social and political forums exists like never before. Their despair and anger cannot be conveyed to the government because of the limitations of Constitutional rights. Despite being 200 million strong, they do not have a common platform, a common face or a common leader who can represent them in their time of crisis.

Why are Muslims leaderless? What has led to this vacuum?

HISTORY OF SUBMISSION

The answer lies partly in the pre-Independence era where different communities worked towards special and separate interests to safeguard their religious rights. During the British rule, the community’s first priority was to safeguard communal rights, job reservations, separate legislatures and separate electorates. Then came the fight against British rule. The Muslim League and the Hindu Mahasabha are examples that show that they worked towards claiming the legitimate rights of Muslims and Hindus first, and only then did the agenda come to Hindu-Muslim unity, and then the Indian Nation.

It was Hindu-Muslim unity that the British successfully sought to disrupt. But responsibility or blame are not the British’s alone.

Two ideologies developed in India: nationalism and communalism. Nationalism was a new consciousness to fight against the British. Communalism was based on the interests of a religious community.

“Feelings of extreme communalism began in 1937,” says Professor Salma Ahmed Farooqui, of the H.K. Sherwani Centre for Deccan Studies at the Maulana Azad National Urdu University. “Socio-political organisations like the Muslim League, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh took hold. There were two types of Muslims that emerged in India. One set were nationalist Muslims fighting against British rule and another were Muslims who supported British rule. Their fight is an important element of India’s freedom struggle. It is a reason that a situation developed where effective Muslim leadership could not emerge.” The turning point came with the Khilafat movement and



All India Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen President, Asaduddin Owaisi, sees himself in the role of the leader of Indian Muslims.

The formation of Pakistan took with it the leaders of the Muslim League. With them went the wealth of leadership acumen. Those left behind were nationalist Muslims who were not only against the British but also against Pakistan. Their language, traditions and culture were those of the region they belonged to.

the Non-cooperation Movement of 1919-1920 where prominent Muslim leaders like Maulana Muhammed Ali Jauhar, Shaikat Ali, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad and Shibli Numani condemned secularization in Turkey. Indian Muslim sentiment was aligned with that in Turkey. It was the first time that undivided Indian Muslims came together against the British. But for leadership they had looked to the Ottoman Caliph. They had not developed the confidence to independently charge of the political situation and lead.

DEPENDENT ON OTHERS TO LEAD

The formation of Pakistan took with it the leaders of the Muslim League. With them went the wealth of leadership acumen. Those left behind were nationalist Muslims who were not only against the British but also against Pakistan. They were scattered around India.

Their language, traditions and culture were those of the region they belonged to. For instance, the socio-economic status or aspirations of Muslims from Kerala and from Kashmir differ. The lifestyle and thought-process of Muslims in Assam and in Gujarat or Maharashtra differ. Regional differences were, and still are, a barrier in their ability to follow a common leader.

“The leaders with Muslim names are in political parties but have donned the role of being party stooges,” Farooq Abdul Gaffar Bawani, a retired government servant and scholar from Rajkot, says. “They only approach the community when they need political support, but when it comes to standing for the community’s issues they are nowhere. This has been the problem since Independence. Also, certain sects among Muslims openly patronise political parties, creating conflict and deep distrust within the community. How can one have a leader when there is large-scale distrust?”

FAILURE TO FIND COMMON GROUND

With 73 sects of Muslims, religious scholars, the ulema, the jamaats and various religious bodies have worked towards strengthening their organisations but at the cost of bringing Muslims on one platform. Notably, on the triple talaq issue, religious scholars made statements and showed dissent, but when it came to Article 370, the NRC, and the Ayodhya

judgment, they did not utter a word. The few voices that did make an effort were silenced by police arrests. But in the larger public domain, there was no word.

“There is a common ground of issues like cleanliness, unemployment, education and health on which all sects can come together,” Abdul Hafiz Lakhani, general secretary of the All India Milli Council of Gujarat, said. “But the problem is that none of the sect leaders wants to talk about it openly. Whatever is talked about is done so at the local level because they do not want their leadership in their sect to be challenged.”

The biggest pressure on all sects comes from the youth and from women, who are keen for reform. It is evident in the demands of Muslim women across sects. A recent gathering of jamaats discussed the demands of young urban Muslim women, who were unwilling to settle for marriage to uneducated, low-income and undependent men. This forced the clergy to address the problem. The changing situation is bringing these two groups to the forefront as they are the backbone of the community.

EDUCATED BUT UNWILLING TO LEAD

Those who are educated and have the caliber and energy to lead have been sidelined in the past. They are still victim to those “leaders” who use base and opportunist tactics. Is there no one who can bring Muslims together on one platform

to lead?

“We have young people who can write, articulate, speak and present very well,” says Tinat Atifa Masood, socio-political activist, poet and blogger. “It is high time they are motivated and guided by elders towards a platform. It is important as this vacuum must be filled. The time has come to create a group of leaders who will reach out to all stakeholders on a common ground. Indian Muslims have lost trust in all political parties.”

Reason and debate within the community over having a new leader has gathered momentum. The present atmosphere of fear has many of them worrying about future generations. How will they survive in this country if their rights are not protected? A need for a common ground on social and political causes is felt like never before.

Will the sectarianism make way for a common social and political leadership? Will there be a united effort for a common ground to allow budding leaders to emerge?

“Our charity work comprises people from different sects where we concentrate only on the work,” Association of Muslim Professionals member Aamir Edresy says. “This model has been successful in that people have come together. We need similar platforms for interaction to do away with the differences our religious practices. We owe it to future generations in India to fight the fear-mongers and assert our constitutional rights.”

Asad: Like grandfather, like grandson

MIR QUADIR ALI

Like his grandfather Abdul Wahed Owaisi, it’s clear that Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi loves a challenge. While Abdul Wahed Owaisi stepped up to take charge of the Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (or Majlis as it is commonly known) when it was virtually on the brink of being obliterated, his grandson has been at the centre of resistance to the Hindutva forces.

When Abdul Wahed Owaisi took over the reins of the Majlis in 1957, the party was in a shambles, some of its leaders still in jail, sent there on trumped up charges, some recently released and others struggling just to survive.

When he volunteered to lead the party, his name was proposed by Nawab Khader Ali Khan Abul-Ulail and seconded by Khasim Razvi.

Bit by bit, Abdul Wahed Owaisi rebuilt the party, taking immense pains to propel it to its stated goal — a platform to unite Muslims.

When Asaduddin Owaisi took charge of the MIM from his father, the late Sultan Salahuddin Owaisi, the party had been split, with Amanullah Khan breaking away to form the Majlis Bachao Tehreek.

Asad Owaisi has not only weathered the storm, but has in fact gathered strength from it.

The Old City long been considered an impregnable fortress of the Majlis, it has expanded to other states, and has now two MPs and also an MLA from Bihar.

People who have known both say Asad Owaisi is a charmer just like his grandfather. The MP can put anyone at ease within minutes.

Abdul Wahed Owaisi was a creature of habit; he never missed his morning walk. At 12 pm sharp, he used to have food at the Madina Hotel, mostly biryani. He generally used a bus to travel around.

Like his grandfather, Asad Owaisi is particular about his physical fitness. While he does not use a bus, he is as accessible to anyone who wishes to meet him at Darussalaam, the party headquarters six days of the week when he is in the city. He was educated in London and if not for politics, he could have been a handy pace bowler for any team.

Abdul Wahed Owaisi migrated to Hyderabad from Ausa, a town in Latur district of Maharashtra, then part of the Nizam’s Dominions. He was known as a brilliant lawyer and an orator, just like his grandson is.

These oratory skills have served Asad Owaisi well both in Parliament and outside; he has time and again proven to be a thorn in the side of the Sangh Parivar in Parliament.

Well-versed with the law, he knows exactly what to say without inviting legal trouble. This has earned him a large fan following across India, with not just youngsters but also the elderly seeing in Asad Owaisi a leader they had been searching for.

While Asad Owaisi has the unquestioned support of a majority of the religious elders across the country, he still has to bridge the sectarian divide that has been plaguing the community.

If he manages to do so, the MP from Hyderabad will be a real threat to the long-term goals of the Sangh Parivar.



Abdul Wahed Owaisi

S. A. ISHAQUI

After the November 9 Supreme Court verdict giving the title of the disputed land for the construction of a temple — and ordering that Muslims be given five acres elsewhere in lieu of the demolished Babri Masjid — the Indian Muslim has been forced into introspection. One of the critical questions that now arise is why Indian Muslims have not, since Partition, had one voice to speak for them.

All India Majlis Ittehadul Muslimeen President Asaduddin Owaisi perhaps sees himself in the role of the leader of Indian Muslims. After the verdict, he outrightly asked the key question: “Are we to live in this country as second-class citizens?” *Deccan Chronicle* caught up with Owaisi for an in-depth interview. Excerpts:

You have called the five acres offered to the Sunni Waqf Board as ‘khairaat’. What is the difference between charity and a settlement?

Our struggle was for a legal right for the sake of the mosque, not for a piece of land. Though it was a ‘Title Suit’ in nature, the main purpose was to defend the mosque’s existence.

‘Muslims require political empowerment’

Judges have stated that the demolition was an illegal act and putting the idols was a criminal act. You admitted these things but denied our claim. When you deny our adverse position on the site, then why are you giving 5 acres of land? This is like charity. This is not a settlement. If the mosque was demolished illegally then the site should go to Muslims. If the mosque was not demolished you could deny the site. The ASI report did not certify that the mosque was built by demolishing a temple. There is no clarification that the temple existed earlier, it just talks of non-Islamic remnants.

The implication is that in future everyone may claim that his faith is associated with every particular structure. Where is an end to it? Because this was a civil suit, Court said that one community believed that Ramji was born beneath the central dome of the Babri Masjid. This means it was a victory of faith. Though there is the Places of Worship Act of 1991, no one can stop the BJP and the Sangh Parivar.

Already the VHP has said that *Ayodhya jahnki hai*. The 1991 Act says that the

status of religious structures on August 15, 1947, will remain, but no one stops them.

You said the SC verdict brings the country further on the path of Hindu Rashtra. Elaborate.

If not so, then what are the NRC and the Citizenship Amendment Bill? They say that refugees will be given citizenship based on the indigenous religion. They are the agenda of an aggressive Hindutva ideology. Meanwhile, the economy goes down further. Unemployment increases. Agrarian crises deepen.

Is it a strategy by so-called secular parties to keep their mouths shut? Do you think the Congress has been playing the soft Hindutva card?

Yes, this is a question one must ask and I have been raising it for years. Why they are keeping their mouths shut? It is the same Congress when P.V. Narasimha Rao was Prime Minister that the Masjid was demolished. He had promised it would be reconstructed at the same place. Now the party has taken a



Asaduddin Owaisi

Q&A

SHALL WE LIVE IN THIS COUNTRY AS FIRST-CLASS CITIZENS OR SHOULD WE LIVE AT THE MERCY OF POLITICAL PARTIES?

different stand. Congress is not playing soft Hindutva, but real Hindutva. Now the Congress is ready to enter into an alliance with the Shiv Sena.

Since Independence, Indian

Muslims have not had a national leader. Why did this happen?

Muslims of India always accepted the leadership of various political parties. They posed faith on Nehru, Indira Gandhi, Rajiv Gandhi, N.T. Rama Rao, Chandrababu Naidu, Lalu Prasad Yadav, Mulayam Singh Yadav, Sharad Pawar, Mayawati and others. They reposed their confidence in them, but what did they get in return? Social-economic indicators and empirical evidence show that the parties only took our votes. In the regime of Indira Gandhi massive communal riots occurred. Rajiv Gandhi unlocked Babri Masjid. Major riots took place in the Mumbai during 1992-93 after the demolition of Babri Masjid.

Why could not A.R. Antulay or Farooq Abdullah become the leader of Indian Muslims?

Congress never allowed Abdul Rahman Antulay or for that matter any Muslim leader to emerge as a national leader. No one emerged after Maulana Abul Kalam Azad in the Congress or any other

party. The Congress itself does not want to promote any Muslim as a national figure. Farooq Abdullah was not a leader of even Jammu and Kashmir, but his father Sheikh Sahab (Sheikh Abdullah) was a towering personality.

Is the lack of leadership of Indian Muslims a legacy of Partition?

What Muslims require is political empowerment, not leadership. Political empowerment will come from political representation and how does political representation come? It comes from independent political leadership. When a community or caste has proportional political representation then it will get a rightful share in employment and education. Discrimination to a certain extent will be controlled. Muslims lack political empowerment. They are just used for votes.

Have the Masjid demolition and the verdict proved Jinnah correct in saying Muslims would become second-class citizens under Hindu rule?

Indian Muslims had rejected the Jinnah’s ideol-

ogy and it was a right decision. Organisations and political parties who want to convert India into a Hindu theocratic country, that will be a great disservice to all freedom fighters or Constitution-makers like B.R. Ambedkar, who wanted India to be a pluralistic country, where its diversity would be celebrated, where people believe in Indian nationalism, not in one religion or Hindu nationalism. They promoted Indian nationalism. Now these people speak about Hindutva nationalism.

Indian society seems to have shifted to the Right. Is this the new normal?

This is the reality. The BJP increased their Hindu vote-share from 37 per cent in 2014 to 44 per cent in 2019. The BJP has no elected Muslim MP. Secular parties have completely lost ground.

Congratulations on the MIM opening its electoral account in Bihar. However, it is still said by some that by cutting into the votes of secular parties, the MIM enables the electoral dominance of the BJP. Some even say Owaisi is a BJP

agent. Is it not better to work unitedly with the ‘secular’ parties?

What is the Congress’ and NCP’s role? They have now become ‘vote katwas’. We had contested only three seats in Lok Sabha elections in 2019 and won two. On both, we defeated the BJP and the Shiv Sena.

In the Kishanganj Lok Sabha seat, MIM got three lakhs votes, while JD(U) secured 3.32 lakhs and Congress 3.5 lakhs votes. If we had not contested, then the JD (U) would have won.

When the Supreme Court verdict was pronounced, voices were raised. If I had not spoken they would ask “Why is Owaisi keeping quiet?”. When I speak then they brand me as anti-national. When we contest they brand our party as B-team of the BJP. Did they want us to become deaf and dumb, or like a corpse? Did they want that we should not react or use our freedom of expression?

Shall we live in this country as first-class citizens or should we live at the mercy of political parties?

Now the Congress and NCP may enter into an alliance with Shiva Sena. The only party that remains secular is mine. Who is secular now? The word ‘secular’ becomes a stick to beat MIM.



You are cordially invited to the funeral of Balie Vizo

The wind is not so chilly. The weather is surprisingly quite pleasant. The moon looks like it changed its mind at the last minute and didn't want to be fully round for this one night. Ngabu, the handsome village rooster had forgotten to crow that morning. A little crowd has now gathered at the door, jostled awake from their sleep. There aren't enough morrahs for all the people coming in. The widow sits in silence, numb with shock. Everyone pities her. But no one pities poor Balie Vizo, cold and dead on the floor, a *dao* lodged in his skull.

Nino the grumpy neighbour has made tea for everyone. The tea tastes quite bad. They all drink out of politeness. Do they bury him with the *dao* still lodged in his skull, they wonder. Will she move back to her own village, they wonder. Who will clear his pending credit at the booze joint, they wonder. One of the villagers steps forward and takes a few pictures on his phone. He will later send it to all his WhatsApp contacts. One of the recipients of the image would have a nightmare that night.

Investigating Officer Nongo would rather be at home sleeping right now. He is hungry but too embarrassed to ask for an extra pack of biscuits.

"It was an accident," says Villager # 1.

"The *dao* probably fell on him," says Villager # 2.

"It was certainly an accident," says Villager # 3.

Nongo doesn't believe any of this.

Poor Balie Vizo, cold and dead for an hour is now inside a coffin, with a bandaged head to hide the hole in his skull.

"It could have been a suicide," says Villager # 1.

"Yes he probably wanted to kill himself," says Villager # 2.

"It was certainly a suicidal accident," says Villager # 3.

Nongo doesn't believe any of this.

The old woman Dietho is wailing out loud. Finally somebody is crying, for a burial with no crying is not a dignified burial. She is served not just one but two pieces of chicken leg later for lunch.

The widow sits in silence. Her nose has finally stopped bleeding but her lips have not stopped swelling. Some ice would have helped. If only there was a refrigerator in the house.

"She injured her nose while trying to save him," says Villager # 1.

"She tried her best to shield him from the *dao*," says Villager # 2.

"It was certainly an accidental suicide," says Villager # 3.

Nongo doesn't believe any of this.

Village Pastor Theja enters the house, Bible in hand. He had had a bad dream two nights before. He is wearing his least favourite polka dotted navy blue shirt.

Sleepy Inspector Nongo, with no body to take back to the medical examiner's office is now one of the attendees at the funeral of poor Balie Vizo, cold and dead, no longer aggressive, nestled in a coffin.

"What nice words can I use to describe him," wonders Village Pastor Theja.

"Will she finally be at peace?" wonders Villager # 1.

"Is there really a burning pot of fire in hell?" wonders Villager # 2.

"Why do people's bodies swell up after they die?" wonders Villager # 3.

"Did I lock the door properly before leaving?" wonders Funeral Attendee Nongo.

They sing the widow's favourite hymn. They don't know if Balie Vizo ever had a favourite hymn. It's too late to ask now.

Poor Balie Vizo, cold and dead and no longer dangerous, is sealed inside the coffin with a small cross kept next to him, just in case he is able to negotiate his fate when he crosses over.

He is lowered six feet under as the rooster finally crows and the dogs bark back.

The widow speaks.

"He was my husband and I loved him dearly. I hope he finds his peace as I find mine."

Nongo believes this.

His coffin is covered in soil and dirt and parts of the earth. For dust he was and unto dust he was returning.

They planted some lilies near the freshly made grave, for they were the widow's favourite. They didn't know if Balie Vizo ever had a favourite flower. It was too late to ask now.

They sang him one last song and marked his new home with a cross so that people would never forget that Balie Vizo once treaded this earth.

And that was the day we buried Balie Vizo, beloved husband and enthusiastic drinker, who died of an accident when his wife accidentally picked up a *dao* as he came charging toward her as usual, fist in the air, spirit in his system and rage in his eyes.

May he rest in peace.

Merenla Imsong is an actor and comedian who recently had to migrate from Facebook to Twitter because her family wasn't very appreciative of her inappropriate jokes. She lives in Bombay with her flatmate and 42 plants.

Subhani



Sena wins, Cong gains in Maha battle of wills



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Politics is difficult to predict, but in all probability Maharashtra will see, in due course, a Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress coalition come to power. The state has, for the moment, been put under President's rule. The Assembly is in suspended animation. However, as and when the non-BJP coalition puts its act together, it would be free to apprise the governor that it has the requisite majority, and the governor would be duty-bound to convene the Assembly and give the claimants the right to prove their majority on the floor of the House.

The first takeaway from this likely scenario is that the BJP-Shiv Sena coalition has failed. There were many who believed that the Shiv Sena's recalcitrance was but brinkmanship to get the best possible deal — and ministerial portfolios — in an eventual — and inevitable — reconciliation with the BJP, its pre-poll alliance partner. But the Shiv Sena did not bend or blink, belying the optimistic noises being made by Devendra Fadnavis, the outgoing BJP chief minister.

Why was the Shiv Sena so unyielding, so inexplicably adamant, in asserting the 50:50 power sharing formula with the BJP, including a rotational CM? Was it just petulance, stubbornness, or cussedness (as some in the BJP would like to see it), and plain and simple loyalty to the newly emergent scion of the Thackeray clan, Aaditya, the first in his family to have fought and won an election? Or, was it that the BJP had actually reneged on a more gener-

ous promise it may have made under the imperative to tie up a pre-poll alliance with the Shiv Sena? The BJP maintained that it had made no such promise. It (rightly perhaps) believed that the CM must be from the BJP, since the party had 105 seats against the Sena's 56. But, the Shiv Sena was emphatic that the promise was made. Where the truth lies between these opposing narratives only the leaders of the BJP and the Shiv Sena know.

Is the breakup between the BJP and the Shiv Sena indicative of a failure on the part of the BJP in managing coalition politics? The Shiv Sena is one of the oldest allies of the BJP and ideologically close to it. And yet, we see an unseemly rupture. Perhaps, after its stupendous victories in the 2014 and 2019 parliamentary elections, the BJP is suffering from triumphal rigidity that precludes the accommodation required to successfully handle the complexities of coalition arrangements, wherein, very often, the larger party yields more in order to gain alliance good will. After all, as the Congress-JDS government in Karnataka proved — albeit on a short lived basis — the CM does not always have to come from the larger party in a coalition. The BJP will have to decide whether it wants resilient coalition politics or an imperium in which it will always have its way, and in which allies will be dispensable on the altar of numerically dominated unilateralism. The latter approach may be more in consonance with the new political aggression demonstrated by Amit

Shah, but as Maharashtra has shown, it is not without its pitfalls. The bottomline is that the BJP has been shown the door in that state.

The unexpected gainer in this imbroglio is the Congress. It got the least number of seats — 44 — among the parties. However, now it is poised to be a participant in the Maharashtra government, with possibly a dozen cabinet portfolios, and a deputy chief ministership to boot. Yet, the final word cannot be said about what the Congress will do. It can justify aligning with a party like the Shiv Sena — which it has always opposed — only if the BJP is seen as the bigger opponent that must be vanquished. Chanakya has said that this, indeed, should be the strategy: identify the principal enemy, and then use every instrumentality to defeat it. Such an approach requires singleminded focus and clarity of thought, something the Congress often lacks. The best option for the Congress would have been to give the NCP — the local party — the lead, and say that it will go along with what its pre-poll alliance partner decides, thereby retaining — at least to some extent — its ideological chastity. However, a common minimum programme is the next best option, and while reports say that it is close to finalisation, there could be surprises until the deal is finally done.

While the circus of politics goes on, the people of Maharashtra rightly

want a quick end to this process, and the installation of a stable and effective government. The three allies now absorbed in negotiations on pelf and principle must understand this. The governor must play an impartial role, in accordance with the dignity of the post he occupies, and the provisions of the Constitution. If an alternative government is possible, and clear evidence is provided for this, he is duty-bound to give it a chance, in preference to the reflex promulgation of President's rule.

In spite of being the single largest party, the BJP will remain the outsider, a spectator to this frenetic exercise in stitching up an alternative government. But, it is to be seen if it will remain a mute spectator. The party believes that it has been denied its due role in running Maharashtra due to the obduracy of a junior partner bent on making unreasonable claims. In my view, it will watch very carefully the progress of this non-BJP government, and assiduously prey — as any opposition party should do — on its weaknesses and internal contradictions. Power lost can mean another opportunity gained in the future, or an opportunity denied in the present, depending on how you view things. If the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress combine works well, and provides effective governance, the BJP will be the loser. If it does not, the BJP may just be the surprise gainer in the next round, whenever that comes about. Either way, the BJP must be surprised by the turn of events, and the extent to which the Shiv Sena was willing to go in order not to play second fiddle to the BJP, its alliance partner for the longest period of time.

The writer, an author and former diplomat, is a member of the JD(U). The views expressed are personal.

In spite of being the single largest party, the BJP will remain the outsider, a spectator to this frenetic exercise in stitching up an alternative government. But, it is to be seen if it will remain a mute spectator.

LETTERS

'UNISLAMIC' BURQA

Swiss-Yemeni scholar Elham Manea has spoken out against the burqa or the face veil saying it is a political construct and not an Islamic one as no text explicitly calls for covering a woman's person. The word, *hijab*, means modesty and the custom in its present form originates from women of the Caliphate being asked to cover their chests and elbows to distinguish themselves from courtesans, a move that was counterintuitive in that it targeted the commoner rather than members of the particular group. A tip for policymakers?

Siddhartha Robin

New Delhi

SABARIMALA DOWNER

Apropos the editorial, "Supreme Court call on Sabarimala is counter-intuitive" (Nov. 16), by seeking an omnibus reconsideration of all issues related to religious freedom, the Supreme Court displayed a disquieting inability to stand by its previous transformative judgment. The move to club the issues is aimed to compromise women's interests by giving them sops and to confuse people.

S.S. Paul

Chakdaha, West Bengal

BREATHER FOR SHIVA

The top court dismissing the ED's petition, challenging the Delhi high court order granting bail to D.K. Shivakumar must come as a reprieve for the harassed Congress leader. The verdict comes at a time when Mr Shivakumar plans a comeback by helping his party upstage the BJP in the Dec. 5 Assembly bypolls and reinforce his chances of taking over as KPCC president. No such luck for his party colleague, P. Chidambaram.

N.J. Ravi Chander

Kalyannagar, Bengaluru

NO JOB FOR MUSLIM

Students of the Sanskrit department in BHU are up in arms against the appointment of Firoz Khan. Mr Khan holds BA, MA, BEd and PhD degrees from the Rashtriya Sanskrit Sansthan in Jaipur and was appointed in line with UGC guidelines. The protesters do not want him to teach Sanskrit because he is a Muslim. This is deplorable as his faith has no connection with his knowledge or skills as a teacher.

Seraj Ali

Barkatpura, Hyderabad

HEAVY-HANDED DM

The Uttar Pradesh government has removed Amethi district magistrate Prashant Sharma, a day after a video clip of him meeting the bereaved family of Vijay Kumar (Sonu) Singh went viral. In the clip that has gone viral, the DM is seen dragging a cousin of the deceased by the collar for questioning the police who did not act in time to prevent Singh's murder. Locals expressed anguish over Mr Sharma's behaviour. The action of the state government will be a deterrent against further highhandedness by officials against the public.

Mahmudul Hasan

Gorakhpur, UP

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Minimum *sarkari naukri*

After the news of the merger between Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV, more bad news is leaking out of the temple of democracy. Employees at Parliament are being asked to opt for the government's voluntary retirement scheme. The Narendra Modi regime, contemplating a new Parliament house, reportedly wants to prune staff in the new premises. Informed sources said some senior level officials have already been shown the exit while many departmental heads have been asked to identify "deadwood". Is this the minimum government mantra at play, at last?

Politically-correct Priyanka

Senior Shiv Sena leader Priyanka Chaturvedi is a tad worried these days. Her predicament has little to do with delay and uncertainty over a possible Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress alliance; it is over her own social media accounts. When Priyanka defected from the Congress Party during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, the then AICC spokesperson had deftly deleted her anti-Sena-BJP tweets. The Sena was then an ally

Pruning scissors are out in Parliament

of the BJP. Now with prospects of the Sena joining hands with the Congress and the Sharad Pawar-led NCP, Priyanka is contemplating deleting her offensive posts against them as well. Her well-wishers wonder if Priyanka will be left with mere "good morning" and politically-correct posts.

Tourism snub for Nath

The political developments in Maharashtra managed to hurt Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath's pride. It so happened that when the Congress decided to move its MLAs out of Maharashtra to avoid poaching, Bhopal and Jaipur were shortlisted as destinations as both have Congress governments. But Bhopal lost out to Jaipur on the ground of having better resorts, air connectivity and other facilities. It came as a shock to Nath who not only considers himself as a more senior and more



By WAQYANAWIS

astute political player than Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, but also showcases Bhopal as a most tourist- and business-friendly place. It came as an unpleasant surprise to him that

his own party thinks otherwise.

Some like Rahul on top

There is utter confusion within the Congress *parivar* over the choice of a new party president. Initially, Congressmen at various levels of hierarchy were pleased to see the back of Rahul Gandhi. However, the return of Sonia Gandhi included the old guard making a noisy comeback. The clout of Ahmed Patel and others is said to be so strong that even the anti-Rahul group within the Congress now wants the young Gandhi to be back in the saddle. Some confused souls are quietly humming a Ghalib couplet, "Ab toh ghabra ke yeh kehthe hai ki mar jayenge... marke bhi chain na paya toh kidhar jayenge..."

The balance of Pawar

What is Sharad Pawar up to with regard to the attempts at ministry formation

in Maharashtra? The perception of trust deficit has been an important factor in Pawar's political journey. When young Pawar became Maharashtra CM for the first time at the age of 38 in 1978, he had treacherously toppled the Congress government led by Vasantdada Patil. Pawar helped Patil survive a vote of confidence in the house and then drove to Raj Bhavan withdrawing support and informing governor Sadiq Ali that he was forming a government in coalition with the Janata Party under the banner of the Progressive Democratic Front. Would Pawar prove his detractors wrong now?

Not so *achhe din* for Khattar?

Whodunnit? BJP circles are intrigued over Sanjay Joshi's front row presence at the swearing in of the M.L. Khattar ministry in Haryana. Joshi, once a towering RSS functionary, is considered a *persona non grata* in the present-day BJP. So who gave him the front row honour? Some insiders think it either signals *achhe din* for Joshi or *not-so-achhe din* for Khattar in the coming days.

'Our top priority is to stop the BJP from coming to power'

Maharashtra: Modi's poll prowess fearsome

T.N. SESHAN: THE BABU WHO ROARED

There were demands by Malik Barkat Ali and K.L. Guha for legislation to override the Privy Council's judgment. The premier Sikandar Hayat Khan refused. Qaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Muslim League backed him. The gurdwara remained.



Virus

Mild Zika infection in foetuses may lead to brain abnormalities in healthy young animals

IN BRIEF



'Weight-reduction surgery prevents strokes in obese'

Washington: Weight-reduction surgery lengthens lives and prevents clot-caused by a stroke in obese people, says a study. "Obesity is associated with a number of risk factors for heart disease and we know that bariatric surgery, which alters the digestive system to induce weight loss — can help reduce these risk factors and improve their control. In this study, we examined if bariatric surgery helps reduce stroke risk," said Maddalena Ardissino, co-lead author of the study and academic foundation doctor at the Imperial College London. The results of the study were published in the journal *AHA Scientific Sessions* 2019. In the largest and longest study of bariatric surgery to-date, researchers analysed the health care records of more than 4,200 patients in the UK who had bariatric surgery and compared them to an equal number of people who did not have bariatric surgery, matched by age, gender, and weight-for-height. At the time of the surgery, none of the participants had previously had a stroke. The records were part of the Clinical Practice Research Datalink, a large ongoing initiative that contains anonymously coded primary and some secondary health care data on more than 7 per cent of all patients in the country. During an average follow-up of 11 years and after adjusting for all major risk factors and medication use, researchers found: 73 of the participants had a brain bleed, clot-caused stroke or mini-stroke; 229 patients died from any cause; Those who received bariatric surgery were 69 per cent less likely to experience a clot-caused stroke; Rates of brain bleeds were not reduced by weight loss surgery; and Those who underwent bariatric surgery were 68 per cent less likely to die during the follow-up period than those who did not have surgery. — ANI



Apple removes vaping apps from iOS App Store

San Francisco: Apple on Friday said it is banning vaping-related apps from its App Store due to concerns that e-cigarette use can damage the lungs or even kill people. Apple vets what is allowed on the shelves of its virtual shop that serves as the sole outlet for apps available to its popular mobile devices, including some 900 million iPhones in use around the world. "Recently, experts ranging from the CDC to the American Heart Association have attributed a variety of lung injuries and fatalities to e-cigarette and vaping products, going so far as to call the spread of these devices a public health crisis and a youth epidemic," Apple said. "We agree, and we've updated our App Store Review Guidelines to reflect that apps encouraging or facilitating the use of these products are not permitted." Apple has pulled 181 vaping-related apps from the App Store worldwide. Tobacco along with vaping cartridges were never allowed at the virtual shop, so the apps involved social networks, news, games, hardware or stores, according to the California-based company. "We are grateful that Apple is joining with us and others on this historic day to stand against big Vape and their lies by removing all vaping apps in the App Store," American Heart Association chief executive Nancy Brown said. "Our hope is that others will follow our lead and follow with their own powerful message that nicotine and nicotine addiction caused by e-cigarette use are leaving thousands sick and dying across the globe." — AFP

US nod to new drug to manage sickle cell

Washington, Nov. 16: U.S. regulators on Friday approved a new medicine that can help reduce extremely painful sickle cell disease flare-ups.

The Food and Drug Administration approved Novartis AG's Adakveo for patients 16 and older. The monthly infusion, which halves occurrences of sickle cell pain episodes, will carry a list price of roughly \$85,000 to \$113,000 per year, depending on dosing. Insured patients generally will pay less.

Sickle cell disease is one of the most common inherited blood disorders, affecting about 100,000 Americans, most of them black, and about 300 million people worldwide.

Its hallmark is periodic episodes in which red blood cells stick together, blocking blood from reaching organs and small blood vessels. That causes intense pain and cumulative organ damage that shortens the lives of people with the disease.

"The duration and severity of these pain crises worsens with aging. Often patients die during one of these crises," said Dr. Biree Andemariam, chief medical officer of the Sickle Cell Disease Association of America. Andemariam, a former Novartis advisory board member, said the drug appears to work better the longer patients receive it.

The Swiss drugmaker is continuing patient testing to determine whether Adakveo, also known as crizanlizumab, lengthens patients' lives, said Ameet Mallik, the company's head of U.S. oncology and blood disorders. He said severe pain episodes send U.S. patients to emergency departments about 200,000 times per year. About 85% are hospitalized for days to a week, running up big bills.

— AP

Half of adults surveyed believed they were to develop disease

Will you get dementia? Many may not understand their risk

Many older American adults may inaccurately estimate their chances for developing dementia and do useless things to prevent it, new research suggests.

Almost half of adults surveyed believed they were likely to develop dementia. The results suggest many didn't understand the connection between physical health and brain health and how racial differences can affect dementia risk.

Substantial numbers of people who rated their health as fair or poor thought their dementia chances were low. At the same time, many who said they were in excellent health said they were likely to develop the memory robbing disease.

Many said they tried at least one of four unproven memory-protecting methods, including taking supplements like fish oil and ginkgo. The most popular strategy was doing crossword puzzles. Mental stimulation is thought to help, but there's stronger evidence for more challenging activities than puzzles — things like playing chess, taking a class, reading about unfamiliar topics, said Keith Fargo, who oversees research and outreach programs at the Alzheimer's Association. He was not involved in the study. Research has shown that regular exercise, a good diet, limiting alcohol and not smoking make dementia less likely. Supplements have not been shown to help.

"We really haven't done a good job of getting the word out that there really are things you can do to



lower your risk," said Dr. Donovan Maust, the study's lead author and a geriatric psychiatrist at the University of Michigan.

The study was published online Friday in *JAMA Neurology*. It's based on a nationally representative health survey of 1,000 adults aged 50 to 64.

The survey asked people to assess their likelihood of developing dementia and whether they had ever discussed ways to prevent it with their doctor. Few people said they had, regardless of their self-rated risk for dementia.

— AP

Researchers develop cell therapy to improve memory

Breakthrough

► Researchers have developed a cell therapy to improve memory and prevent seizures in mice following traumatic brain injury

Washington, Nov. 16: Researchers have developed a breakthrough cell therapy to improve memory and prevent seizures in mice following traumatic brain injury.

The study — "Transplanted interneurons improve memory precision after traumatic brain injury" — was published in the journal of 'Nature Communications.'

Traumatic brain injuries (TBI) affect two million Americans each year and cause cell death and inflammation in the brain. People, who experience a head injury often, suffer from lifelong memory loss and can develop epilepsy.

In the study, the team transplanted embryonic

progenitor cells capable of generating inhibitory interneurons, a specific type of nerve cell that controls the activity of brain circuits, into the brains of mice with traumatic brain injury. They targeted the hippocampus, a brain region responsible for learning and memory.

The researchers have discovered that the transplanted neurons migrated

into the injury where they formed new connections with the injured brain cells and thrived long term.

Within a month after treatment, the mice showed signs of memory improvement such as being able to tell the difference between a box where they had an unpleasant experience from one where they did not.

They were able to do this just as well as mice that never had a brain injury. The cell transplants also prevented the mice from developing epilepsies, which affected more than half of the mice who were not treated with new interneurons.

— ANI

Keto diet may help fight flu infections, says study

New York, Nov. 16: A ketogenic diet containing high fat and low carbohydrates is linked to a better ability to fight off flu virus infections in mice, than food rich only in carbohydrates, according to a study.

The researchers, including Indian origin scientist Vishwa Deep Dixit from Yale University in the US, said the keto diet — which includes meat, fish, poultry, and non-starchy vegetables — activates subset of the immune system's T cells in the lungs.

The study, published in the journal *Science Immunology*, said these cells — which were previously not associated with the immune system's response to influenza — enhance mucus production from airway cells to effectively trap the flu virus.

The researchers had earlier found that immune system activators — called inflammasomes — can cause harmful immune system responses in their host.

In earlier studies, they had also found that a ketogenic diet blocked formation of inflammasomes. The findings of the current study revealed that mice fed a ketogenic diet, and infected with the influenza virus, had a higher survival rate than mice on a high-carb normal diet.

The researchers said the ketogenic diet triggered the release of gamma delta T cells — the immune system's cells which produce mucus in the cell linings of the lung — while the high-carbohydrate diet did not generate this effect.

— PTI

Smoking soars back pain, affects tissues of body

Going for a walk, eating healthy, taking all the precautions to avoid hurting your back but still have low back pain? Adding smoking to the above activities and your answer will not be a mystery. Smoking or the use of nicotine adversely affects almost all tissues and systems in the body. It is proven that the use of tobacco increases the risks of cancer, lung & heart disease, stroke, and mental disorders as well. It's one of the leading factors for osteoporosis and degenerative disc diseases.



Priyanka Rodge
Harmful habit

► When you smoke, carbon monoxide is introduced into blood and from there to tissue which inhibits the body tissue's ability to use other vital nutrients from blood.

Smoking and degenerative disc Pathomechanics

An intervertebral disc connects one vertebral bone to the next. It is essential for providing spinal stability. In degenerative disc disease, this disc gets weakened; and loses its water content, no longer able to act as a cushion between the vertebrae. Gradually the disc begins to weaken with tears especially in its outer surface called annular tear leading to a reduction between the joint space.

All these can create a disc bulge, nerve irritation, and stenosis, which can lead to pain and discomfort.

Adverse effects of nicotine

When you smoke, carbon monoxide is introduced into blood and from there to tissue which inhibits the body tissue's ability to use other vital nutrients from blood. The result is a dehydrated disc that can lead to degeneration or tear. The use of nicotine causes cell damage in the disc. This impacts the health of the disc and its functional ability.

Thus, smokers not only damage healthy discs but also accelerates disc degeneration in the already damaged disc.

Besides this, smoking alters the perception of pain and so increases sensitivity towards pain.

Smoking and osteoporosis

Osteoporosis means "porous bone", a condition that weakens bones and makes them susceptible to fractures. Spinal fractures are the most common type of osteoporotic fractures. There are many risk factors to develop osteoporosis and one of them is smoking. Recent studies reveal that women who smoked more than one pack per day throughout adulthood had an average of 5-10% lower bone density than non-smokers in the lower back by the time of menopause. Even passive smoking negatively affects bone mineral density. According to research the lifetime risk of developing a spinal fracture is increased by 32% in men and 13% in women for smoking.

Adverse Effects

Smoking delays or inhibits bone healing after fractures, surgeries, and trauma. This is likely due to the toxic activity of nicotine which stops the growth of cells essential for healing and reduces blood and oxygen supply to the affected part.

Smoking and physical activity

Smokers have less physical endurance than nonsmokers, due to decreased lung function. Cigarette smoking reduces the amount of oxygen in the blood and increases the level of harmful substances, such as carbon monoxide.

Note: Positive improvements can be seen if you quit smoking. Complete cessation can improve healing, reduce post-operative complications, and also decrease hospital stay. One can take help from family, friends and even a doctor for this.

Take the help of exercises to quit smoking

Researchers state that aerobic exercises can help in reducing the urge to smoke and also prevent weight gain, which is likely to happen after cessation of smoking.

Smoke cravings and withdrawal reduce considerably for a duration of time after exercising. Quit smoking for strong bones and a healthy body!!

The writer is a Physiotherapist,

US panel backs wider use of fish oil to stop heart attack

Washington, Nov. 16: US government health experts on Thursday recommended broader use of a prescription-strength fish oil drug to help many more patients at risk for heart attack, stroke and related health problems.

Currently the drug, Vascepa, is approved for a relatively narrow group of patients with extremely high levels of triglycerides, a type of fat in the blood linked to heart disease.

Irish drugmaker Amarin is seeking approval for a much larger group of patients who have lower fat levels but are still at risk of heart problems, despite taking cholesterol-lowering statin drugs like Lipitor and Zocor.

The panel of advisers to

the Food and Drug Administration unanimously supported the expansion based on recent study results showing the drug can cut rates of life-threatening heart problems in high-risk patients.

"There is no doubt this drug could benefit a substantial portion of the U.S. population and meet an unmet need," said Dr. Jack Yanovski, a panelist and hormone specialist from the federal National Institutes of Health.

The FDA is not required to follow the group's advice and is expected to make its decision by the end of the year.

Financial analysts predict that broader use could translate into billions in sales for Amarin.

— AP

A recent study reveals, taller people are more likely to develop atrial fibrillation (AFib), an irregular and often rapid heartbeat that can lead to stroke, heart failure, and other complications.

The research, which reveals a strong link between the genetic variant associated with height and one's risk for AFib, is among the first to demonstrate that height may be a causal — not correlated — a risk factor for AFib. The findings were presented at the American Heart Association's 2019 Scientific Sessions in Philadelphia.

Researchers found that the risk for AFib climbed as one's height increased, with every one-inch increase in height trans-

lating to about a three per cent increase in the risk of Afib — independent of other clinical factors — as compared to those at average height (5 feet and 7 inches). "Our findings suggest it may be beneficial to incorporate height into risk-prediction tools for AFib," said the study's lead author Michael Levin, MD, a cardiovascular medicine fellow at Penn.

"While current guidelines advise against widespread screening for AFib, our findings show that a certain group of patients — specifically, very tall patients — may benefit from screening," added Levin.

AFib, which affects more than 33 million people worldwide, is a common, abnormal heart

Strong link

► Researchers found that the risk for Afib climbed as one's height increased, with every one-inch increase in height translating to about a three per cent increase in the risk of Afib as compared to those at average height (5ft and 7 inch)

rhythm. There are a number of clinical risk factors for developing AFib, including high blood pressure, heart disease, diabetes, and obesity.

Observational studies, examining population-

level data, have found that taller individuals appear to have a higher risk of developing AFib. However, questions exist about whether height can cause AFib, or if it's just a common, insignificant factor.

To further examine the association between height and Afib, the Penn team leveraged data from the Genetic Investigation of Anthropometric Traits (GIANT) consortium, which studied more than 700,000 individuals to identify genetic variants associated with height.

They also examined data from the Atrial Fibrillation Genetics (AFGen) consortium, which studied more than 500,000 individuals to identify genetic variants associated with AFib. Their analysis revealed

that genetic variants associated with height were also strongly associated with Afib, suggesting that increased height may be a cause of atrial fibrillation. This relationship

remained strong even after adjusting for traditional AFib risk factors, like heart disease, high blood pressure, and diabetes, among others. From there, researchers used a similar statistical method to conduct an individual-level analysis of nearly 7,000 individuals enrolled in the Penn Medicine Biobank. They found that height, and genetic variants associated with height, are strongly associated with an increased risk of AFib, independent from traditional clinical and echocardiographic risk factors. — ANI

'Taller people likely to develop atrial fibrillation'

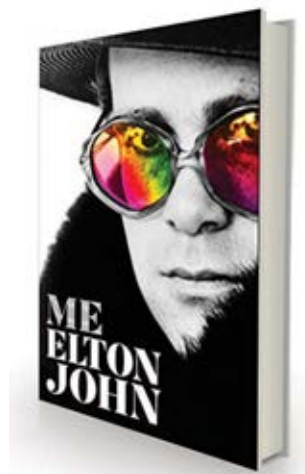


The last wish of Vladimir Nabokov (of *Lolita* infamy) was to burn *The Original of Laura*, his incomplete novel. His wife did not fulfil his wish and his son published it 32 years after its death.

The evolution of Elton John, with his music, drugs, family



Palash Krishna Mehrotra
review



ME

by Elton John
Pan Macmillan, ₹999

Elton John, now 72, was born Reginald White in the London suburb of Pinner. He was playing the piano by the time he started at his first school: “I was born with a good ear... If I heard something once, I could go to the piano and, more or less, play it perfectly.”

Rock ‘n’ roll arrived as the great disruptor of the times, so loud and raucous it was “a bomb that wouldn’t stop going off”. Sinatra-loving parents hated it; Elton’s father warned him of its morally corrupting influence which turned listeners and practitioners into “wide boys” or petty criminals. There was moral panic in the air.

But for Elton, the piano player, he’d found his idols in Little Richard and Jerry Lee Lewis: “They played with such aggression, like they were assaulting the keyboard. It was the way they stood up while they played, the way they kicked the stool and jumped on the piano. They made playing the piano as visually exciting and sexy as playing the guitar or being a vocalist. I’d never realised it could be any of those things before.”

Elton talks a fair bit about twists of fate in his memoir, one of them being how he met Bernie Taupin, his long-standing collaborator: Elton had the music, Bernie had the words, and there began one of the most enduring relationships in the

The father is a distant disapproving figure, who doesn’t ever seem to come around to his son’s homosexuality. Elton has fond memories of watching football games with him. He buys Watford, his father supports and takes it to First Division, and yet the father is unmoved.

history of music. Their working arrangement has the simplicity of genius: Bernie writes the words and leaves them on the piano or the table. Elton hits the piano after breakfast: “I just know straightaway where the melody is going to go. I’ve never sat down with one of Bernie’s lyrics and nothing has come out. I don’t know why. I can’t explain it and I don’t want to explain it. Actually, I love that I can’t explain it. It’s the spontaneity of it that’s beautiful.” Together they have forged an original path where they have had a staggering number of hits, without ever having to stoop to the clichés of assembly-line production. On average, it takes Elton forty minutes to compose a melody.

If you love the history of music, there is a lot in here, right from the time Elton first arrives at Denmark Street to work: it was “where writers went to sell songs to publishers,

who’d in turn sell them to artists”. This was before the Beatles, the Kinks, the Who, a time when it wasn’t usual for a band to have a songwriter in their ranks. Elton talks at length about white musicians appropriating the black person’s music, and how he earned the unerring respect of black America.

There is plenty here too about Elton’s difficult relationship with his parents. His mother toilet-trains him “by hitting me with a wire brush until I bled” and, as a remedy for constipation, “stuck carbolic soap up my arse”. She spends her last years rueing why Elton doesn’t sound more like Robbie Williams; on her ninetieth birthday she hires an Elton John tribute band to spite him. She auctions off his gifts, some of which Elton buys back.

The father is a distant disapproving figure, who doesn’t ever seem to come around to his son’s homosexuality. Elton has fond memories of watching football games with him. He buys the club, Watford, his father supports and takes it to First Division from Fourth, and yet the father is unmoved.

There are glorious accounts of self-destructive coke binges (“I liked the fantasy of it”) and is candid about why he never got AIDS: “I was an observer, a voyeur. I’d kind of set up my perversion, have two or three guys

doing things for me to watch.”

One can also read this autobiography not for Elton’s story but the stories he tells about famous people: Dusty Springfield, John, Yoko and Ringo, Diana, Keith Moon, George Michael, Eminem, Madonna, Lady Gaga, Elvis, Dylan, Andy Warhol, Rod Stewart, Freddie Mercury, Versace, and a host of others. Each anecdote is a polished gem of outrageousness.

Elton also speaks his mind about cancel culture and the pointlessness of boycotting — the importance of building bridges. He turns up to play for homophobic right-wing host Rush Limbaugh and defends Eminem for using slurs in his lyrics.

After the sex, drugs and rock ‘n’ roll, comes hard-fought sobriety at the age of forty-three. Elton describes the hundreds and hundreds of NA and AA meetings he attends in various cities; there are medical scares along the way: operations of the throat, prostate cancer; and some existential ones, if one includes the multiple attempts at half-hearted suicide. As *Me* ends, Elton is living happily ever after with his husband, David, and his two sons Zachary and Elijah, born from surrogacy.

The writer is the author of The Butterfly Generation and the editor of House Spirit: Drinking in India

How ethnic Bihari Thackerays championed Marathi pride



Sushila Ravindranath
review

Families rule in India. Politics is family business. Once the family expands it is inevitable that rivalries develop and there are fights between siblings, daughters-in-law and sons-in-law and in joint families between cousins. Journalist Dhaval Kulkarni gives an account of the fallout between cousins Uddhav (born 1961), son of the founder of Shiv Sena Bal Thackeray and his nephew Raj Thackeray (born 1968).

The uncle was a demagogue and a fiery orator. Raj too is a good orator, charismatic and aggressive while Uddhav is more reserved. Raj a good mimic is supposed to have modelled himself after his uncle. It was expected that with the flamboyance with which Raj entered the family business and his uncle’s overt affection for him, he would take over the top position after Balasaheb. But that was not to be. Uddhav slowly and steadily consolidated his position and his father handed over the party to him.

Kulkarni gives an account of the rise and fall of Raj and the rise and rise of Uddhav. Neither

were willing to talk to him. The narrative therefore relies on the author’s own experience in reporting on Shiv Sena and MNS and the two cousins. He has talked to senior journalists, political analysts, friends of Raj and Uddhav and family members.

Shiv Sena was founded by Balasaheb Thackeray in 1966. Bal Thackeray’s father Prabodhankar Keshav Sitaram Thackeray was an orator, writer, poet, artist and an intellectual spearheading the anti-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra. He gave the party its name. Shiv Sena was formed to build a movement to ensure that job opportunities in Mumbai go to Marathi job aspirants. It touched the core of the Maharashtrian heart and has grown into a strong regional party. It is also a party which believes in divisive politics and violent methods to prove its point. The larger parties in the state have used Shiv Sena to instigate and quell violence whenever it has suited them.

The story starts when Raj rises like a comet from the late 1980s and Uddhav remains low key and works behind the scenes. Raj was getting associated with

Bharatiya Vidyarthi Sena (BVS), Shiv Sena’s youth wing and was made its President in 1988 marking his entry into politics. It was seen as the right move to attract youth to the party.

While Raj was addressing meetings and building his network and following the violent path of Shiv Sena like digging up cricket stadiums and spewing venom on outsiders, not all party members were happy. Many considered him high handed. His close associate being accused in the

Ramesh Kini murder case did not help his reputation or image.

The rivalry between Uddhav and Raj was coming into the open. The patriarch’s health was failing. He had lost his wife and his elder son one after the other and Balasaheb was beginning to rely more and more on Uddhav who was working behind the scenes and was not as visible as Raj. Party members and supporters started taking sides and playing games.

Uddhav was appointed executive president of the party in 2003. Narayan Rane the powerful Shiv Sena leader and Raj Thackeray left the the party in 2005. Raj launched his party Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) in 2006. At that time it was widely believed that this was the end of Shiv Sena. The passing away of Bal Thackeray in 2012 strengthened this feeling. MNS also doing well electorally before it started caving in.

As it happened, Shiv Sena did not fade and Uddhav Thackeray has emerged a strong leader and is waiting to make his 29-year-old son Aaditya Thackeray the chief Minister of Maharashtra. Raj has been all sound and fury signifying nothing. He is described as all bluster and no action. However nobody is writing Raj off. People seem to like him in spite of his repeated failures.

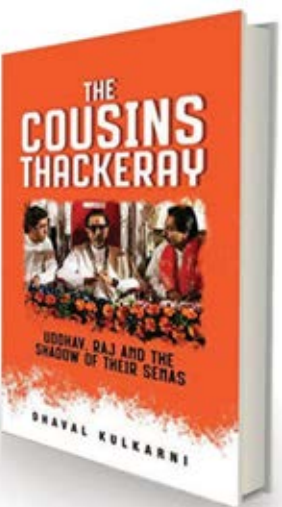
Most of these events from the 1980s to now form the major part of the book. Unfortunately, it tries to cover too many things in these pages. Shiv Sena’s dalliance with other parties for elec-

toral alliances, its relationship with BJP in the last 30 years, leadership struggles have all been packed in the dense narrative. A reader not so familiar with Maharashtra and its politics has to wade through a bewildering array of people events and dates. Cousins Raj and Uddhav sometimes disappear in this information onslaught. Not much is mentioned about the family dynamics and alignments.

In conclusion the author summarises the cousins’ personalities. “One is abrasive, a fire breathing demagogue, who is blunt to the point of being arrogant, but remains one of the most popular crowd-pullers in Maharashtra despite a string of electoral reverses, the other is an introvert, soft-spoken, an enigma for many associates, and with his penchant for boardroom strategies, seems to be out of character for his rough and tumble party, which dominates the streets of India’s financial capital thanks to its muscle”.

It is possible to glean some nuggets from *Cousins Thackeray*. The Thackeray family’s origins can be traced to Bihar according to Balasaheb’s father Prabodhankar. The irony cannot be missed considering that both Shiv Sena’s and MNS’s are virulently anti-North Indian, anti Bihari.

The writer is a senior journalist and author of Surge: Tamil Nadu’s Growth Story. She is now consulting editor for the Financial Express.



THE COUSINS THACKERAY

by Dhaval Kulkarni
Penguin India, ₹399

A multi-generational food trail that doesn’t shy from hard facts



Neha Bhatt
review

Culinary secrets and family recipes, passed down through generations, are impossibly precious. In author Shashi Warriar’s new book, *Sara*, they take on an altogether different meaning. Moving away from the landscape of his previous gritty books (*The Hangman’s Journal*, *The Man Who Wouldn’t Be God*), Warriar lays out a satisfying buffet of culinary inheritance, mystery and romance. *Sara* takes us through a winding, multi-generational food trail, moving between London and Fatehgarh in Uttar Pradesh, unfolding over several decades, while taking us back in flashes to the pre independence, Nawab-era.

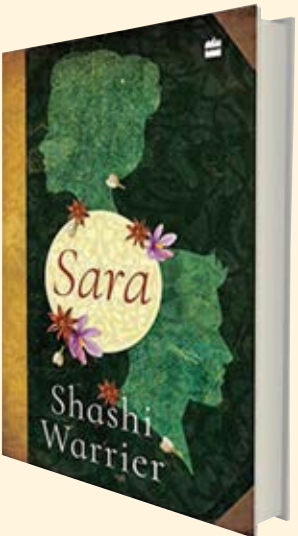
The book is told through the perspective of Junaid, a London-based chef and restaurateur who has made it big abroad on the strength of his traditional Awadhi style cooking techniques and a particular spice mix he inherited from his family. Being a “slave to the cooking fire” runs in his blood, as he comes from a family of chefs with roots in Fatehgarh, near Lucknow. When he meets his match in the lovely “*firangi*” Alice Munro in London, who visits his Regent Street restaurant one summer day, Junaid discovers that though he shares with her not his skin colour, religion or culture, certain strands of their lives are inextricably linked by a complicated and fascinating history.

In Alice’s great grandmother’s diary, Junaid finds curious mention of the spice mix he uses and his own grandfather, whom she met when she was based in Fatehgarh during the British Raj. This triggers Junaid to think about why his grandfather killed himself, and if it had anything to do with the spice mix recipe. Alice and Junaid travel to India to do a little digging to tie up the loose ends. But once in India, Junaid must contend with several challenges: his conservative parents and sisters’ disapproval of his choice of partner, the clash between Indian and western culture, and finding the right people to answer his many questions about the family history. What did his grandfather have to do with the execution of a group of Indians fighting for independence back in the ‘30s? And how is it linked to the treasured family recipe?

The book builds the suspense slowly and steadily, with the central mystery that fuels the flow unravelling over several decades and generations as Junaid tries to trace the contemporaries and descendants of his grandfather’s time. The narrative is wonderfully steeped in food culture and culinary traditions, which is really what ties all the characters together. Tragedy strikes several times over and finally, it is *Sara*, Junaid and Alice’s daughter, who must make the journey to Fatehgarh with her father to find the last few pieces of the puzzle.

Warrior writes simply and impactfully, moving seamlessly across time to spin a multilayered tale slow cooked like a good biryani. Junaid and Alice’s deeply felt love story lights up the novel; the narrative also soars when it explores the intergenerational bonds and their shifting nature: between Junaid and his parents, and later, his bond with his daughter, *Sara*. While history’s walk on part gives the book much sepia-tinted flavour, what imbues it with an urgency is its engagement with the changing Muslim identity in a global time, the intersecting new and old world orders and our role in it. *Sara* holds all its ingredients in a fine balance.

The writer is an independent journalist and book critic based in Delhi. She tweets @nehabhatt70 and @bookishbadish on insta



SARA

by Shashi Warriar
HarperCollins, ₹399



De Niro-Pacino effect

Something magical happens in *The Irishman* between old friends and actors Robert De Niro and Al Pacino, says Martin Scorsese

Newsmakers

PAGE 12

THE ASIAN AGE

SUNDAY | 17 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI



I like being another character. At this time, I don't necessarily love being myself

— Bella Hadid, American model

IN BRIEF

Kate shoots down Foxx dating rumours

Los Angeles: Actor Kate Beckinsale has set the record straight on reports that she and Jamie Foxx are dating. Beckinsale took to Instagram to shut down the rumours, which started after the duo attended the Golden Globes Ambassadors Party in Hollywood on Thursday night. "(Last) night at #hfpa party with Adewale Akinnuoye Agbaje, Jamie Foxx and Jonathan Voluck. I would like to point out that standing next to someone does not mean I am dating them," Beckinsale wrote on Instagram. — PTI

Lynette, Allain to produce 2020 Oscars

Los Angeles: Veteran producers Lynette Howell Taylor and Stephanie Allain have teamed up to produce the 92nd Academy Awards, the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has announced. The February 9 award night will be the first Oscar-producing gig for both Howell Taylor and Allain, reported *Variety*. "Combined producing talents of Lynette and Stephanie will bring dynamism to the 92nd Oscars show," Academy president David Rubin said. — PTI



Inventor of human toe cocktail dies

Dawson City, Canada: Captain Dick Stevenson, the man behind the famed "Sourtoe Cocktail" served at a hotel bar in Canada's Yukon Territory since the 1970s, has died at 89. Visitors to the Downtown Hotel in Dawson City are able to order any alcoholic cocktail served with a mummified human toe floating in it, BBC reported. Nearly 1,00,000 people from all over the world have tasted it. The key rule: "You can drink it fast, you can drink it slow, but your lips have gotta touch the toe". The tradition first began in 1973. — Agencies

DUA LIPA THANKS SHAH RUKH FOR B'WOOD MOVES

Singing sensation Dua Lipa who posed for a picture with romance king Shah Rukh Khan ahead of her performance in Mumbai, thanked the star for teaching her some Bollywood moves. The singer shared a picture where both the stars can be seen striking a picture-perfect pose. The actor sported a casual look in a blue shirt and jeans along with a white t-shirt, while the 24-year-old singer looked chic in a tan crop top paired well with black denim. "So fun hanging with @iamsrk today! Thank you for teaching me your Bollywood moves!!" she captioned the picture on Twitter. Shah Rukh posed for a picture with Dua and also extended his best wishes for the performance on Saturday. "Have decided to live by 'New Rules' and who better to learn them from but @DUALIPA herself!! What a charming and beautiful young lady...& her voice!! Wish her all my love for the concert tonight. Dua if you can, try the steps I taught u on stage," he wrote on Twitter. The *Electricity* singer will be seen sharing the stage on Saturday with Katy Perry while performing for a music festival. — ANI



Lipa and Khan

Italy TV show to reveal abuse at youth seminary in 1980s, 90s 3 more altar boys say they were abused by priests in the Vatican

Vatican City: Three more former altar boys have claimed they were sexually abused by two priests in the Vatican, as the child abuse scandal that has rocked the Catholic church zeroed in for a second time on its headquarters.

The allegations of abuse in the Vatican's youth seminary, to be set out in an Italian TV show on Sunday, date back to the 1980s and 90s when the boys were aged between 10 and 14. The accusations came two months after the Vatican said it would seek to indict Father Gabriele Martinelli, 28, for allegedly abusing several altar boys in 2012 when he was trained at the St Pius X youth seminary. That move was prompted by the Italian show *Le Iene*'s first investigation into the school in 2017.

The Vatican said in September that an indictment was also being sought against a former rector at the youth seminary, Father Enrico Radice, who was accused of aiding and abetting the alleged crimes. The Catholic church has faced thousands of child sexual



► The accusations came two months after the Vatican said it would seek to indict Father Gabriele Martinelli, 28, for allegedly abusing several altar boys in 2012

► In programme *Le Iene*, one of the victims alleges that one of the priests, tried to remove his bathrobe and that 'he wanted to undress me'

abuse allegations from around the world but *Le Iene*'s investigation in 2017 was the first time claims of paedophilia within the Vatican's walls were exposed.

"We decided to keep digging as we had the feeling that the previous cases were not isolated," said Gaetano Pecoraro, one of the two authors of the investigation. "There were more victims and more priests involved in sexual abuse within the Vatican".

In the latest investigation, three former altar boys who served at papal

masses claimed they were sexually abused by two priests, one a teacher.

In the programme, seen by the *Guardian*, one of the victims alleges that one of the priests, who was managing the school's communal showers, tried to remove his bathrobe. "He wanted to undress me," the victim alleges. "I tried to wriggle away. I was 13 years old. I fell to the ground and asked him 'what are you doing?'. I then got up and ran away."

All three boarded at the youth seminary. The second victim alleges he was abused at the Casa Santa

Marta, where many priests stay, by a priest at the youth seminary when he was 10 or 11 years old. "He asked me to go upstairs to his room, made me sit on his legs, began to stroke my thigh and then put a hand on my private parts," he told *Le Iene*. The priest allegedly persisted with the abuse and after the boy refused the advances he stopped.

The victims, now aged between 37 and 40, came together a few years ago to share their stories. Third victim made similar allegations but chose not to go into detail. — Agencies



Eva Longoria at the 2019 Eva Longoria Foundation dinner gala in Los Angeles on Friday. — AP



Spanish actresses Rosi de Palma (left) and Loles Leon at a photocall for the *A Chorus Line* musical premiere, as part of the opening of the Teatro del Soho in Malaga, Spain on Friday. — AFP



Kate, the Duchess of Cambridge, meets a child as she arrives for a visit to view East Anglia's Children's Hospices in Norfolk, England, on Friday. — AP



Candice Swanepoel at the 3rd Annual #REVOLVE Awards in Hollywood, California on Friday. — AFP

Eva Marcille at Watch What Happens Live red carpet event in New York on Friday. — AP

No recollection of sex accuser, says Andrew



Virginia Roberts

"He knows what he's done and I hope he comes clean about it," Virginia Roberts said on Aug. 27. Earlier, she had said she was forced to have sex with Prince Andrew.



Prince Andrew

I have no recollection of ever meeting this lady (Virginia Roberts), none whatsoever. I stayed with him (Epstien) and I kick myself for it on a daily basis.

Maxwell standing in the background, has been widely published. Supporters of Andrew, however, have disputed its authenticity.

Epstein pleaded guilty in 2008 to procuring a girl under the age of 18 for prostitution and served 13 months in US prison before being released on probation. Pressed in the interview over the fact that he remained friends with Epstein even after his conviction, Andrew, 59, admitted that he regretted that decision. "I stayed with him and that's... That's... That's the

bit that... That... That, as it were, I kick myself for on a daily basis," the prince said.

"Because it was not something that was becoming of a member of the royal family and we try and uphold the highest standards and practices and I let the side down, simple as that," he told Maitlis of the BBC's *Newsnight* programme.

Epstein, 66, who was arrested in New York in July on charges of trafficking underage girls for sex, was found dead in his New York jail cell on August 10. — AFP

NEWS NUGGETS

STARBUCKS OPENS ITS BIGGEST STORE EVER IN CHICAGO

New York: Chicago just got a major caffeine jolt from Starbucks. The coffee chain opened its world's largest Roastery location on Friday. The five-story location is 35,000 square feet, overtaking the Tokyo Roastery as Starbucks' biggest location. Located in the city's Magnificent Mile neighborhood, the new roastery is replacing a former Crate and Barrel location, CNN reported. It was first announced in 2017. Starbucks said the Chicago Roastery is a tribute to the city and region. — Agencies

OZ MAN SURVIVES CROC ATTACK BY GOUGING ITS EYES

Cairns, Australia: An Australian wildlife ranger has recounted his terrifying escape from the clutches of a "particularly cunning" crocodile, after wrestling with the reptile and sticking a finger in its eye. Craig Dickmann, who made a split-second decision to go fishing last Sunday in a remote part of Northern Australia known as "croc country" last Sunday, said a 2.8-metre crocodile came up from behind him as he was leaving the beach. "As I've turned to go, the first thing I see is its head just come at me," he said. "That noise will haunt me forever I think." — PTI

RARE 1838 HALF DOLLAR COIN SELLS FOR \$5,04,000

New York: A 1838-O Capped Bust Half Dollar coin was worth half a dollar when it was made in 1838. It has now sold for \$504,000 at auction. It was auctioned on Friday in Baltimore by auction house Stack's Bowers Galleries, which described it as "a truly legendary coin ... that will forever be revered, studied and dreamed



about," CNN reported. It isn't just old, it's extremely rare. Only 20 were ever created, and the Smithsonian Institution believes only 11 still exist. Stack's Bowers says it could be as few as nine. The specific coin auctioned is called the Cox Specimen. — Agencies

Ben-Adir to play Barack Obama in upcoming Comey miniseries

Los Angeles: *Peaky Blinders* actor Kingsley Ben-Adir has been roped in to play Barack Obama in CBS Studios' upcoming mini-series based on James Comey's book *A Higher Loyalty*. Jeff Daniels was previously confirmed for the role of Barack Obama, the former FBI director, with Brendan Gleeson set to play President Donald Trump, reported

Deadline. The show also features Michael Kelly (acting as FBI director Andrew McCabe), Jennifer Ehle (Patrice Peter Coyote (Robert Mueller), Steven Pasquale (Peter Strzok) and Oona Chaplin (Lisa Page). Billy Ray has adapted the book and will be directing the as-yet-untitled series. — PTI



Barack Obama



Kingsley Ben-Adir

Clive Owen cast as Bill Clinton in Impeachment Crime Story

Los Angeles: Actor Clive Owen will star as Bill Clinton in *Impeachment: American Crime Story*, the third season of FX's acclaimed limited series franchise. The season will focus on the impeachment scandal that surrounded Clinton during his Presidency due to his affair with Monica Lewinsky, reported *Entertainment Weekly*.

It is based on Jeffrey Toobin's bestselling book *A Vast Conspiracy: The Real Story of the Sex Scandal That Nearly Brought Down a President*. The cast also includes Sarah Paulson, who will play Linda Tripp and Clive Owen Ashford, who will play Paula Jones. Lewinsky is attached as a producer. — PTI



Bill Clinton



Clive Owen

U.S. real estate heiress cleared of murder

San Francisco: A San Francisco Bay Area real estate heiress whose family posted \$35 million bail to keep her out of jail until her trial was acquitted Friday of killing the father of her children.

After deliberating for 12 days, jurors said Tiffany Li is not guilty of conspiring with her boyfriend to kill 27-year-old Keith Green in 2016 over a custody dispute. The case drew global



Tiffany Li

► After deliberating for 12 days, jurors said Tiffany Li, who posted \$35m bail, is not guilty of conspiring with her boyfriend to kill 27-year-old Keith Green in 2016 over a custody dispute

attention when Li's family, who made a fortune in real estate construction in China, posted \$35 million bail for her, one of the highest on record in the United States.

San Mateo county prosecutors said Li lured Green to her mansion in Hillsborough, south of San Francisco, to discuss custody of their children. They say Bayat shot Green

in the mouth and the two hired a friend to dispose of the body. Prosecutors presented evidence that Green's blood was found in Li's Mercedes and gunshot residue was discovered in her garage.

Li's attorneys argued that Green was killed in a botched kidnapping plot and that she had nothing to do with his death. She had settled the custody issues with her former boyfriend. — AP

Oscar Wilde's stolen ring found by 'Indiana Jones of the art' world

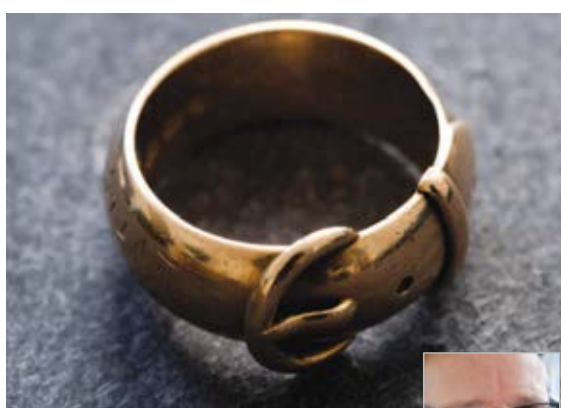
It was taken during a burglary in 2002 at Magdalen College

Amsterdam: A golden ring once given as a present by the famed Irish writer Oscar Wilde has been recovered by a Dutch "art detective" nearly 20 years after it was stolen from Britain's Oxford University.

The friendship ring, a joint gift from Wilde to a fellow student in 1876, was taken during a burglary in 2002 at Magdalen College, where the legendary dandy studied. At the time it was valued at \$45,000. The trinket's whereabouts remained a mystery for years and there were fears that the ring — shaped like a belt and buckle and made from 18-carat gold — had even been melted down.

But Arthur Brand, a Dutchman dubbed the "Indiana Jones of the Art World" for recovering a series of high-profile stolen artworks, used his underworld connections to finally find it.

Mark Blandford-Baker, home bursar of Magdalen



An 18-carat golden friendship ring which is said to have belonged to Irish playwright Oscar Wilde (1854-1900). The trinket's whereabouts remained a mystery for years. — AFP



College, said they were "very pleased to have back a stolen item that forms part of a collection relating to one of our more famous alumni." "We had given up hope of seeing it again," he told AFP. The ring will be handed back "at a small ceremony"

on December 4, said Blandford-Baker, adding "we are extremely grateful to Arthur Brand for finding it and returning it to us." The ring was an important part of Magdalen's large collection of memorabilia related to Wilde. — AFP



Revolution

England's new 100-ball cricket format could fashion a revolution in the sport similar to the Twenty20 form, feels Yuvraj Singh



We have no experience of Day/Night Test cricket, we'll just enjoy the game.

— Mominul Haque, Bangladesh captain

SHORT TAKES

Rajat resigns as DDCA president

New Delhi: Senior journalist Rajat Sharma on Saturday resigned from the post of president of Delhi & Districts Cricket Association (DDCA), citing his inability to continue amidst "various pulls and pressures" within the organisation. Sharma's nearly 20-month tenure was a tumultuous one with his public differences with general secretary Vinod Tihara, who enjoys a fair amount of support base in the organisation. "The cricket administration here is full of pulls and pressures all the time. I feel that vested interests are always actively working against the interest of cricket," Sharma said in a statement. "It seems that it may not be possible to carry on in DDCA with my principles of integrity, honesty and transparency, which I am not willing to compromise at any cost," he added. Within hours of Sharma's resignation, CEO Ravi Chopra also put in his papers. The two member Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) comprising Sunil Valsan and Yashpal Sharma also tendered resignation. It will be interesting to see whether the Atul Wasan-led selection committee and coach KP Bhaskar will continue for the Ranji Trophy team or not. Sharma had joined cricket administration after receiving active backing from former finance minister late Arun Jaitley. — PTI



Bharath Arun

Bowling coach lauds pace trio

Indore: An extremely skilful bunch with each speed merchant bringing in a different facet makes the current Indian pace unit best in the world, feels team's bowling coach Bharath Arun. More than the wickets, it's the impact that the pacers have created over the last 20 months has left a lasting impression. "I think at present we are the no. 1 team in the world. Getting there is difficult, staying there is even more difficult. I think to do that over a period of three years, you need to stay constantly hungry," Arun said. India's most successful bowling coach Arun then spoke about each of the three pacers. On Ishant coming round the wicket to left-hander (Shadman Islam dismissal), Arun said: "Actually started working on that variation from yesterday. So if you look at the way he signalled after he got the wicket, he was very happy that he could do that. "Each time you try to explore new avenues in your bowling, you constantly look to improve. And this would give him the much needed fillip to experiment more and try out," he added. It's Ishant's experience that has made him the bowler that he is. "Ishant is probably the most experienced bowler we have. He has played over 90 Test matches." — PTI



Ajinkya Rahane, Virat Kohli, Rohit Sharma and Cheteshwar Pujara celebrate a Bangladesh wicket on day three in Indore.

— AFP

SCORECARD

Bangladesh (1st innings): 150
India (1st Innings): 493-6 decl.
Bangladesh (2nd innings): Shadman Islam b I. Sharma 6, Imrul Kayes b Yadav 6, Mominul Haque lbw Shami 7, Mohammad Mithun c Agarwal b Shami 18, Mushfiqur Rahim c Pujara b Ashwin 64, Mahmudullah c R. Sharma b Shami 15, Liton Das c & b Ashwin 35, Mehidy Hasan b Yadav 38, Taijul Islam c Saha b Shami 6, Abu Jayed (not out) 4, Ebadat Hossain c Yadav b Ashwin 1. Extras (b2, lb9, nb1, w1) 13. Total (in 69.2 overs) 213.
FoW: 1-10, 2-16, 3-37, 4-44, 5-72, 6-135, 7-194, 8-208, 9-208.
Bowling: Ishant 11-3-31-1, Umesh 14-1-51-2, Shami 16-7-31-4, Jadeja 14-2-47-0, Ashwin 14.2-6-42-3.

Indore delivery

High-flying Indian pacers pack off Bangla for an emphatic innings win inside three days

Indore, Nov. 16: India annihilated Bangladesh inside three days for a resounding innings and 130 run-victory in the first Test, riding on one of the most hostile fast bowling performances in recent times.

The quick victory was on predicted lines. Having bowled Bangladesh out for 150 in the first innings, India bundled them out for 213 in the second essay after declaring their first innings on their overnight score of 493 for six.

The victory also gave India 60 points, and they strengthened their position in the World Test Championship table with 300 points in their kitty. The thrashing also completed a hat-trick of innings wins for them, having beaten South Africa in the second and third Test in the previous series.

The gulf was huge between the two teams and it could only get worse for Bangladesh from here onwards as the Indian pace attack, in the upcoming Day/Night Test with pink ball, is expected to cause more damage to their batsmen's psyche.

It was a game where Mohammed Shami (match haul of 7 wickets), Umesh Yadav (4 wickets overall) and Ishant Sharma (3 wickets) scared the hell out of an opposition that showed little stomach for a fight, save senior player Mushfiqur Rahim (64, 150 balls, 7x4), who delayed the inevitable.

Ravichandran Ashwin (match haul of 5 wickets) complemented the pacers, chipping in with wickets at regular intervals. Bangladesh may have lost a lot of Test matches but



Mohammed Shami (centre), Umesh Yadav and Ishant sharma shared 14 wickets among them. — BCCI

the one in Indore has left them with scars that will remain for a long time. An international team looked frightened in the face of relentless hostility.

There were no angry gestures or over-the-top celebrations but scorching pace, mesmerising swing and the red cherry rearing at the throat from good length. It created a spectacle and Bangladesh didn't have the where-withal to handle it. The best part about this Indian attack is that its intensity is same even in the third session as it is early in the morning.

Mehidy Hasan Miraj, despite sharing a 59-run stand with Rahim, being bounced out by Umesh, was a case in point. It was a 'heavy ball' in cricketing parlance that grew big on Miraj, hitting him on his chest and then tickling the stumps. It was pure intimidation as the batsman looked in physical pain as he left. — PTI

Skipper proud of his dream combination of fast bowlers

Indore, Nov. 16: Indian captain Virat Kohli on Saturday termed his fast bowling arsenal as a "dream combination" that can torment any opposition on any kind of surface.

The pace trio of Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami shared 14 Bangladeshi wickets among them while the two spinners — R Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja — took five.

Asked about India's current fast bowling resources, Kohli reminded that the team is without Jasprit Bumrah, who is undergoing treatment for an injury. "These guys (fast bowlers) are on top of their game, when they bowl, it looks like any pitch is a good pitch. Jasprit is not a

part of the attack and when he comes back, it will be a one heck of an attack to counter (by opposition teams)," Kohli.

"They can take wickets in every spell. The slip fielders are ready as they know the ball can come any over. This is a dream combination for any captain. Having strong bowlers is the most important thing in any team," he added.

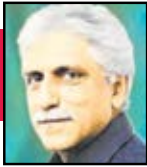
Talking about the match, he said, "Don't know what to say, it's another clinical performance. It was very professional with the bat, playing five batters with one guy taking responsibility is what we want with overseas tours coming up. Hats off to the boys." — PTI

MOST WICKETS BY INDIAN PACERS IN A HOME TEST

Wkts	Opponents	Venue	Season	Result
17	Sri Lanka	Kolkata	2017-18	Drawn
16	England	Chennai	1933-34	Lost
16	Pakistan	Delhi	1979-80	Drawn
16	Pakistan	Kolkata	1998-99	Lost
15	Pakistan	Chennai	1979-80	Won
14	West Indies	Ahmedabad	1983-84	Lost
14	Bangladesh	Indore	2019-20	Won

Stats: S. PERVEZ QAISER

Class and consistency come together in Mayank batting



Ayaz Memon Over The Top

It was terribly disappointing to see Bangladesh keel over so easily in the first Test at Indore. Winning the toss was just about the only thing that went right for them. The batting was badly exposed, bowling was flawed and the fielding was below par, adding up to a pitiable performance. Frankly, few would have expected Bangladesh to pull off an upset with a side considerably weakened in the absence of senior pros Shakib Al Hasan and Tamim Iqbal (not touring) and Mustafizur Rahman who was injured. But a more determined contest was certainly expected.

The pitch played true, the weather was excellent, and above all, we are now in the throes of the inaugural Test World Championship. Every match has significance in terms of points won or squandered. Every player in every team has to be conscious of this.

No team, however inexperienced, can take the field with a sense of hopelessness, as seemed to be the case with Bangladesh. That the Test was completed in less than three days tells the story of how abject they were in the field.

That said, I'd like to flip the narrative from here and focus on India, who made Bangladesh look so hapless on a batting beauty. To win by an innings and 130 runs, despite a few hiccups along the way, shows how brilliantly the Indian team is playing currently.

The fact that they could overcome the cheap dismissals of their two main batsmen Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli — both of whom have

been in prolific form this season — to post a formidable total was quite remarkable.

At 119-3, it appeared that India might finish with 300-325 at most, but went on to post 493-6 before declaring. This reflected not just depth in the batting, about which there has been prolonged concern, but also intense desire to move the game ahead stridently.

This was evident from the scorching scoring rate. India's 493 runs came in just 114 overs. Towards the latter half of the innings — with Jadeja and Umesh Yadav going hammer and tongs — the scoring rate was hovering around 10! By the time the declaration came, Bangladesh had thrown in the towel.

It was good to see Kohli eschewing niceties (prevalent for so long in Indian cricket) of allowing Jadeja to chase a century. There was so much time remaining in the match that prolonging the innings would

hardly have been faulted. How gratifying to see a new mindset which puts the team's interest above the individual's!

The highlight of the Indian innings, of course, was Mayank Agarwal's 243, his second double century since this season began. In eight Tests since breaking into the Test side, Agarwal has scored 800-plus runs, which is phenomenal.

He is equally at ease against pace and spin, has a penchant not just for centuries, and also extends these into skyscraper scores. More importantly, he is a dominating batsman, scoring runs at a fast clip to keep the bowling under constant pressure.

Class and consistency come together in Agarwal's batting. It's still early days in his career to make any prediction for the future. But there is no doubt that he has been a great find. Pushing 29, and having struggled to get to this stage, he seems intent on making up for lost time.

While Agarwal was surely the player of the match, the story of the Test had to be the success of India's pace bowlers, Ishant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami, who picked up 14 wickets between them, scuttling Bangladesh in both innings.

Usually, spinners are feared on Indian tracks. But as seen even against South Africa earlier, India's fast bowlers have been hostile and penetrative, and absolutely thrilling to watch.

All three are quick, but with varied skill sets, combining to make a potent force. Add to them Jasprit Bumrah when he is fit and it not only gives a sharp edge to the Indian attack, but in fact has added a fascinating new dimension to Indian cricket.

<<< Mayank Agarwal

Gritty Sajjan is a special net bowler

BIPIN DANI MUMBAI, NOV. 16

Born with incomplete upper limbs because of a congenital chromosome imbalance, Shankar Sajjan has overcome many an obstacle. The 19-year-old from Bengaluru has only four fingers in his right arm, but the gritty youngster has already made a name for himself in cricket circles despite the deformity.

Sajjan, who has rubbed shoulders with the likes of Rashid Khan in Afghanistan nets and IPL

stars during RCB training sessions, got the biggest surprise of his life last week when Delhi Bulls, a franchise in Abu Dhabi-based league, invited him to bowl at their nets under the supervision of England captain Eoin Morgan and former New Zealand skipper Stephen Fleming.

It was his first trip outside India and he had to arrange passport and visa in three days.

"The passport and visa were arranged in 72 hours and I reached Abu Dhabi," said Sajjan. "Morgan, Fleming and

other team members gave me a warm welcome. It was a great experience to have bowled to some of the leading international cricketers," added Sajjan.

Sajjan's first big break came through former India coach Anil Kumble who had organised a 'Spin Hunt' in 2015.

"I was playing for a local club in Bengaluru. Of the 3,000-plus participants, only 21 were selected and I was the only one with special abilities," recalled Sajjan who idolises former India spinner B.S. Chandrasekhar.



Shankar Sajjan



End of era

Harrison Dillard, the only Olympic runner to win gold medals in both the sprints and high hurdles, has died. The former United States athlete was 96.

THE ASIAN AGE

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I don't know if we have three-tenths to get where the Ferraris are.

— Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton on his chance in the Sunday's Brazilian Grand Prix

SHORT TAKES

Janet to be face of Pune Marathon

Pune: Olympian Janet Cherobon-Bawcom of the United States has been named the face of the 2019 Bajaj Allianz Pune Half Marathon. Having already set a target of 20,000 registrations in its second edition, the marathon has appointed Janet as its event ambassador. Janet grew up in Kenya and went on to attend college in the United States. Having represented the US in the 2012 London Olympics, Janet won several accolades during a successful career. Apart from being the former US record holder in 25K and 10 miles, she has had a plethora of achievements some of which include being the 2011 Boston Half Marathon Champion, a two-time USA Running Champion and a resounding eight-time All-American. Janet is training for the 2020 US Olympic Trials Marathon, her third consecutive Olympic Trials Marathon. At 41, she continues to inspire long-distance runners with her fitness and resilience. Having qualified for the Olympic trials, winning the gold at the Phoenix Marathon, and silver at Mt Sneffels Half Marathon, Janet is having a great 2019. — PTI

Fabio quickest again in practice

Valencia: French rookie Fabio Quartararo was fastest for the third straight practice session at the season-ending Valencia Grand Prix on Saturday, with world champion Marc Marquez second quickest. The 20-year-old Quartararo is hoping to end an impressive debut top-class season with his maiden MotoGP win, after five pole positions and six podium finishes. The Yamaha-SRT man will be expected to lock down a place on the front row in qualifying later on Saturday. Honda's Marquez, who sealed his sixth MotoGP world championship last month, was 0.224 seconds slower than Quartararo, ahead of third-placed Jack Miller and Italian great Valentino Rossi in fourth. Marquez's teammate Jorge Lorenzo, who will retire from the sport after Sunday's race, improved slightly on his displays from Friday's practice but was still over a second slower than Quartararo down in 14th on the time-sheets. Quartararo had timing of 1.30:232 with Marc Marquez second at 0.224sec and Jack Miller third at 0.311. — AFP

ASIAN TOUR GOLF EVENT SHORTENED

Gurgaon: The Asian Tour event in smog-hit northern India was shortened to 54 holes Friday amid the severe weather conditions, as Thailand's Itthipat Buranatanayarat took a two-shot lead after the delayed first round. Organisers of the four-day \$400,000 tournament delayed the start of the event on Thursday "due to poor visibility and weather conditions", with the first rounds played on Friday. Itthipat, wearing a face mask against the hazardous air pollution, fired an eight-under-par 64 on Thursday, with Indonesia's Danny Masrin just two shots adrift with a 66. Myanmar's Ye Htet Aung, with his career-best score, and Australia's Terry Pilkadaris joined Masrin on 66 after completing their rounds on Friday. Nine Indians were tied-fifth after recording 67s. "I kept all distractions out and was solely focused on making good shots today," Aung said. "I'm really happy as this is possibly my lowest round I had on Tour. I've been playing well." A four-tee start was scheduled for Saturday's second round with the third and final round to be played on Sunday. The first edition of the Panasonic Open was played in 2011, with Indian players winning seven of the previous eight tournaments. — AFP

HARDEN-ED WIN

James powers shorthanded Rockets past Pacers

Los Angeles, Nov. 16: James Harden scored 44 points and had eight rebounds as the Houston Rockets beat the Indiana Pacers 111-102 on Friday night to stretch their winning streak to six games. Harden scored 40-plus points for the fourth time in six games.

When he needed a rest in the third quarter, Ben McLemore picked up the slack, scoring 10 of his season-high 21 points in the third.

In the late game, Anthony Davis made a clutch defensive play at the buzzer just moments after LeBron James hit the go-ahead free throws as the Los Angeles Lakers beat the Sacramento Kings 99-97.

Harden scored 12 straight points in the fourth to give Houston a double-digit lead at one point. He also tallied five assists and four steals.

Houston played without Clint Capela (concussion), Eric Gordon (right knee surgery) and Danuel House Jr. (sore back).

Russell Westbrook had 17 points but shot just five of 21 from the floor for the Rockets.

Domantas Sabonis finished with 18 points and 13 rebounds for the Pacers, who shot just eight for 33 from beyond the arc.

In Los Angeles, Davis blocked Harrison Barnes' layup with two seconds left, allowing the Lakers to beat the Kings and win their 10th game in the last 11.

James scored 18 of his 29 points in the second half and recorded 11 assists and Davis finished with 17 points. Davis missed the previous game with a sore shoulder.

He has played a lot of minutes for the Lakers this season and Friday was no exception as he finished with 39.

"There are going to be games where I got to play half minutes. The coach doesn't want that so we got to try to keep those minutes down. I felt really good tonight," he said.

Kentavious Caldwell-Pope added 16 points for Los Angeles, and Kyle Kuzma chipped in 13, all in the first half.

Hornets down Pistons

Elsewhere, Malik Monk nailed a 26-foot three-pointer at the buzzer as



Houston Rockets' Ben McLemore (right) is fouled by Indiana Pacers' T.J. Warren during the second half of an NBA game on Friday. The Rockets won 111-102. — AP

the Charlotte Hornets stepped up their game at both ends of the floor for a 109-106 win over the Detroit Pistons.

Marvin Williams and Monk each had a three-pointer in the last 24 seconds after Langston Galloway hit a shot from beyond the arc to give Detroit a three-point lead with 50 seconds remaining in the fourth.

Pistons Derrick Rose turned the ball over with one second on the clock to

give Charlotte an opportunity to steal the win.

Monk took the inbound pass from teammate Cody Martin and drained the winning shot to snap the Hornets' four-game losing streak.

Monk and Terry Rozier scored 19 points apiece for the Hornets.

Devonte Graham poured in 18 points, P.J. Washington added 11 points, and Cody Zeller and Bismack Biyombo each had 10 points as

Charlotte's balanced scoring was backed up by some superb defense.

Galloway scored 32 points and Blake Griffin finished with 19 for the struggling Pistons, who have lost four straight games.

Evan Fournier hit two clutch three-pointers in the final two and half minutes to boost the Orlando Magic to a 111-109 win over the San Antonio Spurs after trailing by 16 points in first half. — AFP

RUSSELL ACCEPTS HALL OF FAME RING 44 YRS LATE

New York, Nov. 16: Bill Russell accepted his Basketball Hall of Fame ring on Friday after refusing it in 1975, the 11-time NBA champion saying other black players deserved to be enshrined before him.

The 65-year-old NBA legend led the Boston Celtics to a record 11 league crowns from 1957 to 1969 and was selected as the NBA Most Valuable Player five times.

He also served as coach of Boston's NBA championship teams in 1968 and 1969, the first black coach in North American professional sports.

The dominating center became the NBA's first black superstar but did not feel it was his place to become the first black player in the Hall of Fame given the pioneers who came before him.

That issue was somewhat eased this year when Chuck Cooper was inducted into the sporting honor shrine in Springfield, Massachusetts. In 1950, Cooper and fellow Hall of Famers Earl Lloyd and Nat Clifton became the NBA's first African-American players. Cooper was the first black player drafted by an NBA club, taken by Boston with the first pick of the second round in 1950.

Russell, who helped spark the US squad to men's basketball gold at the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, accepted the ring alongside retired NBA pals Bill Walton and Alonzo Mourning and former women's star Ann Meyers.

"In a private ceremony w/my wife & close friends A. Mourning @AnnMeyers @billwalton & others I accepted my #HOF ring," Russell tweeted.

"In '75 I refused being the 1st black player to go into the @Hoophall I felt others before me should have that honor. Good to see progress; ChuckCooperHOF19."

Russell scored 14,522 points, grabbed 21,620 rebounds and passed off 4,100 assists. — AFP

FORMULA ONE



Ferrari driver Sebastian Vettel of Germany (right) greets a teammate after the second free practice. — AP

Vettel tops times in Ferrari show

Sao Paulo, Nov. 16: Sebastian Vettel topped the times despite a "scruffy" lap on Friday as Ferrari delivered a resounding one-two to prove they are back on form in second free practice for this weekend's Brazilian Grand Prix.

The four-time champion clocked a best lap in one minute and 9.217 seconds to outpace Charles Leclerc by 0.021 seconds in a close finish to a session that, like the first, ended with a red flag and two cars off the track.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen was third ahead of Valtteri Bottas in the leading Mercedes, six-time champion Lewis Hamilton in the second Mercedes and Kevin Magnussen for Haas.

"It was not a very tidy lap," said Vettel, who felt satisfied at his efforts, before turning his attention to the way in which Ferrari had been linked to unconfirmed allegations of "cheating" in the aftermath of the United States Grand Prix.

"I just said earlier that

It was not a very tidy lap. In one race, in one and a half hours, it can be so different — and in one race can change again. I just think we can provide all our answers on the track.

— SEBASTIAN VETTEL
Ferrari driver

opinions swing so quickly nowadays," he explained. "In one race, in one and a half hours, it can be so different — and in one race can change again. I just think we can provide all our answers on the track."

Verstappen said he also felt he had a "bit of a messy day because of the changing weather."

He added: "I think the lap times are not really representative as the track and ambient temperatures are pretty different to what it looks like for tomorrow and Sunday.

"It's positive that the car was straight away working well," Verstappen added. — AFP

'WE CAN IMPROVE IF WE DO OUR HOMEWORK'

Sao Paulo, Nov. 16: Sebastian Vettel said Ferrari can improve on their strong performance in Friday's second practice at the Brazilian Grand Prix where they were first and second.

The German four-time champion, who was fastest ahead of Charles Leclerc, said: "The car was decent today, but we can improve. I'm confident of a step forward."

"In the race, it will be difficult because others are quite a bit faster than us, but that's pretty much in line with the picture we've seen in the last couple of races so I'm not surprised," he added.

"I think we can work on ourselves and be in better shape for tomorrow. We do our homework from now and see where it takes us."

Leclerc, who is set to face a 10-place grid penalty for Sunday's race after taking a new engine, said he was satisfied in challenging wet and then dry conditions. "It was a positive day in general, even though the conditions were quite tricky," he said. — AFP

EUROPEAN FOOTBALL

Hoeness steps down at Bayern

Munich, Nov 16: After 40 years in charge, Uli Hoeness fought back tears as he officially stepped down as Bayern Munich president on Friday, when it was also confirmed interim coach Hansi Flick will remain in charge "at least until Christmas".

Hoeness bowed out after former Adidas CEO Herbert Hainer was voted in as Bayern's new president by members at the club's annual general meeting.

The biggest surprise however at Munich's Olympiahalle came when club chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge stated that Flick would remain in charge for the rest of 2019 "and possibly beyond".

Flick, the assistant coach when Germany won the 2014 World Cup, took over as caretaker boss after Niko Kovac was sacked a fortnight ago.

Flick, Kovac's former assistant coach, oversaw their 2-0 home win over Olympiakos to qualify for the last 16 of the Champions League with two games spare.

He was also in charge of last Saturday's 4-0 thumping of Dortmund which moved Bayern up to third in the league, four points

● **Herbert Hainer was voted in as Bayern's new president**

● **Flick will stay on as interim coach for the next eight games**

adrift of leaders Moenchengladbach.

Flick will stay on as interim boss for the next eight games — two of which are in Europe — until the Bundesliga breaks for winter on December 22.

"I say this with conviction: we trust Hansi Flick," said Rummenigge.

Ajax coach Erik ten Hag, Paris Saint-Germain's Thomas Tuchel and former Bayern boss Pep Guardiola, who is currently Manchester City coach, have been linked to the job.

However, the evening in Munich belonged to the outgoing Hoeness.

Former Bayern stars Arjen Robben and Franck Ribery, who helped win the 2013 treble of Bundesliga, German Cup and Champions League titles, returned to present him with parting gifts.

Hoeness told emotional members: "That was it. I am done. Thank you". — AFP

Conte to receive Police protection after threat

Milan, Nov. 16: Conte is receiving police protection after a threatening letter containing a bullet was sent to him through the post, Italian media reported on Saturday.

According to Corriere della Sera, the former Italy and Chelsea manager received the anonymous threatening letter containing a bullet in recent days.

Serie A club Inter Milan later said in a statement to Italian news agency Ansa that "the letter arrived at the club and not personally to the coach".

"In relation to the news published today, Inter Milan states that Antonio Conte did not personally receive any threatening letters and, consequently, he did not go in person to file a complaint," the club statement said.

"It was the club that received a letter and, as is the practice in this kind of situation, it contacted the competent authorities." An investigation has now been launched while Conte is receiving police surveillance outside his home and at Inter's training ground, Gazzetta dello Sport reported.

Meanwhile, Conte's wife Elisabetta Muscarello wrote on social media: "For the record: the story of the bullet is a hoax!" Conte joined Inter in the summer and the Italian outfit are currently one point behind his former club Juventus at the top of Serie A.



Inter Milan's head coach Antonio Conte during the Serie A match against Hellas Verona last Saturday. — AP

The 50-year-old led Juventus to three consecutive Serie A titles from 2012 to 2014 before taking over as Italy national coach.

He also spent two seasons at Chelsea, winning both

the Premier League and the FA Cup during his time at Stamford Bridge.

Conte took over from Luciano Spalletti, who led Inter to a fourth-place finish last season. — AFP

Hamilton unveils another helmet

Sao Paulo, Nov. 16: Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton has unveiled another helmet in tribute to his boyhood hero Ayrton Senna at the Brazilian Grand Prix.

Hamilton started Friday's practice sessions wearing a helmet designed with a Brazilian flag on the top, Senna's yellow and green on the back, a drawing of Rio de Janeiro's Christ the Redeemer statue, and six stars to note each of his F1 titles.

Hamilton also used his helmet colors to honor Senna's memory in previous Brazilian GPs.

Three-time F1 champion Senna died after a crash at the San Marino GP in 1994. Hamilton said this week the Senna-inspired helmet was also designed to please Brazilian fans, who have no home driver on the grid at Interlagos. AP

Early advantage

Hamilton believes his Mercedes team have an advantage over their rivals ahead of the 2020 world championship after wrapping up their unprecedented sixth consecutive title double with two races to go this year.

The six-time drivers'

● **The new Hamilton helmet is tribute to his boyhood hero Ayrton Senna**

● **Mercedes claim have an advantage ahead of the 2020 world championship**

champion, who retained his crown in Texas, said he was as keen as ever to win the final events in Brazil and Abu Dhabi, but added that Mercedes can take more risks.

"It's almost a different approach now for me, because we can be a little bit more aggressive," said Hamilton.

"We can try some different strategies and we can try some different ways how we go about our weekend and the process.

"We've basically got two freebies to try some new things that can take place next year.

"Next year, we have even less testing before the first race. I think it's only six days, as opposed to eight..."

"So every tiny bit of an advantage you can gain in changing things and adapting and being dynamic, hopefully, could pay dividends." — Agencies



Shiv in lead

Shiv Kapur carded a second straight five-under 67 to grab a share of the three-way lead at the Panasonic Open

Games

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THE ASIAN AGE

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I definitely have more excitement playing for Wales. I feel comfortable playing for Wales.

— Gareth Bale on playing for Wales' football team

SHORT TAKES

Sarita elected to AIBA athlete body

New Delhi: Veteran Indian boxer L. Sarita Devi has been elected unopposed to the International Boxing Association's (AIBA) first-ever athletes commission to represent the Asian bloc. Sarita was in the running for the position as the sole candidate from the region. The commission features one male and a female boxer from each of the five regional confederations (Asia, Oceania, Europe, Americas, and Europe). "...it is my great pleasure to inform you that you were uncontestedly elected as AIBA Athlete Commission member," AIBA interim President Mohamed Moustahsane said in a letter to Sarita. "I am confident that with your knowledge and experience, you will be an important contributor to the activities of this commission," he added. The 37-year-old is an eight-time Asian Championships medalist five of them gold and is currently an athlete representative in the executive committee of the Boxing Federation of India, which nominated her for the position in the world body as well. The athletes' commission is part of the reforms that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has recommended for AIBA. — PTI

Boxing League from December

New Delhi: A first-ever Olympic style Indian Boxing league will be held from December 2 to 21, the organisers said on Friday. The league will witness the participation of Olympic medalists & world champions, including MC Mary Kom, Sonia Lather, Amit Panghal, and Manoj Kumar. ProSportify and SportzLive owners have joined hands to create the Big Bout- Indian Boxing League with an aim to be the biggest Boxing Event in Asia. The two companies, who are the executors of the Pro Wrestling League (PWL) and Premier Badminton League (PBL), will organise the league which will be aired on Star Sports 1 and Star Sports 1 HD. Six franchisee-based teams are likely to fight it out in the league which is expected to be played in three cities. — PTI

RAMKUMAR BEATS SUMIT IN PUNE

Pune: Ramkumar Ramanathan scored an upset win over favourite Sumit Nagal in an exciting all India contest to enter the semifinals of the KPIT MSLTA Challenger here on Friday. In their first meeting this year at the Challenger level, 25-year-old Ramkumar, seeded sixth, notched up a 6-4, 7-6 (5) win over Indian No 2 Sumit Nagal, seeded third, in a 97-minute thriller. Ramkumar will now take on second seeded James Duckworth, who went through close moments to stop another Indian Sasikumar Mukund 7-5, 4-6, 7-5 in a 2 hour and 16 minute battle. It turned out to be an exciting contest between Ramkumar and Nagal as both the players held serves till 4-4 in the first set. Ramkumar broke Nagal in the 10th game to take the first set 6-4. In the second set, Sumit was broken in the 6th game but he broke back Ramkumar in the 7th game. Sumit then held his eighth game and again broke Ramkumar to go up 5-4. In the 10th game, Ramkumar played some classic tennis to break Sumit on the third breakpoint and level scores at 5-5. Both Ramkumar and Sumit held serves in the next two games to level scores at 6-6 and force a tiebreak. In the tie-break, Sumit raced off to a 3-0 lead before Ramkumar came back to level scores at 3-3. — PTI

Finland into Euros

Pukki's brace helps Finns qualify for first major event

Paris, Nov. 16: Finland qualified for the first major tournament in their history with a 3-0 win over Liechtenstein while Sweden sealed their place at the Euro 2020 finals following a victory in Romania. Norwich City forward Teemu Pukki scored twice in Helsinki and Jasse Tuominen also netted to bring the home crowd pouring onto the pitch at the final whistle as Finland wrapped up second place behind Group 'J' winners Italy on Friday. Roberto Mancini's Italy registered a record 10th straight win as they eased past Bosnia and Herzegovina 3-0 in Zenica. Francesco Acerbi, Lorenzo Insigne and Andrea Belotti scored for Italy, who have bounced back impressively after failing to qualify for last year's World Cup year for the first time since 1958. Sweden qualified for a sixth straight European Championships after a 2-0 success in Bucharest that eliminated Romania from contention. Marcus Berg and Robin Quaison scored first-half goals for Sweden who secured second place behind Group 'F' winners Spain, leaving Romania hoping for a play-off berth. Berg headed in an inviting cross from Emil Forsberg as Sweden surged ahead on 18 minutes and then turned provider as he cushioned the ball off for Quaison to double the lead.

CAZORLA SCORES ON RETURN FROM INJURY

Meanwhile, seven different players were on target for already-qualified Spain in a 7-0 thrashing of lowly Malta in Cadiz. Alvaro Morata opened the scoring on 23 minutes before former Arsenal midfielder Santi Cazorla bagged his first international goal in four years. Pau Torres, Pablo Sarabia and Dani Olmo, Gerard Moreno and Jesus Navas completed the rout as Spain secured top spot. Alexander Sorloth struck twice for Norway in a 4-0 win over the Faroe Islands. Tore Reginiussen and Iver Fossum got the other goals in Oslo for the hosts who will head into the playoffs. Denmark require a draw from their final game against the Republic of Ireland after a 6-0 demolition of Gibraltar. Christian Eriksen and Robert Skov both hit a brace in Copenhagen with Martin Braithwaite and Christian Gytkjaer also on the scoresheet. Switzerland occupy second place in Group 'D' behind Denmark after a nervy 1-0 win over Georgia courtesy of Cedric Itten. — AFP



Finnish players celebrate a goal during their UEFA Euro 2020 Group 'J' qualifier against Liechtenstein in Helsinki, Finland, on Friday. Finland won 3-0. — AFP



Spain's Santi Cazorla celebrates after scoring a goal during their Euro 2020 Group 'F' football qualifier against Malta at the Ramon de Carranza stadium in Cadiz, on Friday. Spain won 7-0. — AFP

COACH WANTS STERLING IN SIDE FOR KOSOVO TIE

Pristina, Nov. 16: Gareth Southgate is set to bring Raheem Sterling back from his brief England exile in Sunday's Euro 2020 qualifier against Kosovo as he seeks to end the controversy over the Manchester City star's row with Joe Gomez. Sterling was dropped for Thursday's 7-0 rout of Montenegro after clashing with England teammate Gomez in the Three Lions' training base. It is believed Sterling was unhappy with Gomez following an altercation with the Liverpool defender during City's Premier League defeat at Anfield last weekend. Although Sterling was left out of the Montenegro game as punishment for his attack on Gomez, Southgate has confirmed the winger will return for England's final Group 'A' fixture. Both Sterling and Gomez are said to have patched up their relationship, but the centre-back was jeered by England fans at Wembley when he came on as a substitute against Montenegro. — AFP

Messi on target for Argentina

Riyadh, Nov. 16: Lionel Messi struck on his return to international duty following a three-month ban as Argentina defeated fierce rivals Brazil 1-0 in a friendly in Riyadh. The Barcelona forward was suspended by CONMEBOL for accusing South American football's ruling body of "corruption" after he was sent off in July's third-place play-off with Chile at the Copa America. Messi netted the only goal of the game at the King Saud University Stadium on 13 minutes on Friday, tapping home the rebound after his penalty was saved by Brazil goalkeeper Alisson. His effort came shortly after Manchester City striker Gabriel Jesus rolled a spot-kick wide for Brazil, who were playing without the injured Neymar. Messi, who scored with a pair of free-kicks in his last game with Barcelona, twice threatened from set pieces in the second half before Liverpool 'keeper Alisson beat away a powerful drive from Leandro Paredes. Rodrygo, the 18-year-old who scored a sensational

It's important to win and it is always nice to beat Brazil, for the rivalry, which feels a lot of late. It's good for everything that is to come.

— LIONEL MESSI after the match against Brazil

Champions League hat-trick with Real Madrid this month, made his Brazil debut as he replaced Willian for the final 20 minutes. However, Brazil were unable to find an equaliser as their winless run since capturing the Copa America title extended to five matches. "It's important to win and it is always nice to beat Brazil, for the rivalry, which feels a lot of late," said Messi. "It's good for everything that is to come, to continue growing while looking towards the qualifiers and the next Copa America (in 2020)." The meeting between the two South American giants was the second in Saudi Arabia in little over a year. Brazil beat Argentina 1-0 in Jeddah in October 2018. — AFP

Zverev in semis, Rafa goes home

London, Nov. 16: Rafael Nadal headed home from the ATP Finals after defending champion Alexander Zverev's win against Daniil Medvedev confirmed the Spaniard's exit from the season-ending ATP Finals tournament. The World No.1 recovered to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 7-5 in the early round-robin match at London's O2 Arena but knew he was dependent on the later result. Following his win Nadal was in the strange position of not knowing whether he would qualify for the knockout rounds or not. He received the trophy for finishing the year as the top-ranked player on the court at the O2. Zverev's 6-4, 7-6 (7/4) win on Friday meant he qualified for the semifinals from Group Andre Agassi alongside Tsitsipas. Tsitsipas, who topped the group, will play six-time champion Roger Federer in Saturday's semifinal while Zverev will meet Dominic Thiem, who finished ahead of Federer in Group Bjorn Borg. German seventh seed Zverev broke the fourth-seeded Medvedev early, with the Russian knowing he was already heading out of the tournament after two defeats. But Medvedev dug deep in the second set, fending off the single break point engineered by Zverev and took it to a tie-break. The pair swapped mini-breaks but Medvedev double-faulted to give Zverev a 5-3 lead and the German held his nerve to seal his first match point with an ace. "I'm in the semis again, this arena is where I play

● Alexander Zverev's win over Daniil Medvedev confirmed Rafael Nadal's exit from the season-ending ATP Finals tournament.

● Stefanos Tsitsipas, who topped the group, will play six-time champion Roger Federer in Saturday's semifinal while Alexander Zverev will meet Dominic Thiem, who topped the Group Bjorn Borg.

my best tennis. We don't play in this atmosphere anywhere else in the world. Today because Daniil had nothing to lose he could just enjoy it, but for me it was must-win. He's been the best player since the summer so all credit to him," said Zverev after the victory. Zverev, who beat Novak Djokovic in the final last year, has had a mixed season but now has the chance to end it on a high in London. Nadal, who has already secured the year-end number one ranking, has never won the end-of-season tournament and had a miserable start at the O2 Arena, being outplayed by Zverev in his opening match. But the 19-time Grand Slam champion produced an astonishing comeback to defeat Medvedev on Wednesday and give himself a chance of qualifying from the round-robin phase. — AFP



Rafael Nadal holds aloft the 2019 ATP Tour Year-End Number One trophy at a presentation ceremony during the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Friday. — AFP

Mukerjea hits out at tennis body

Kolkata, Nov. 16: Former Davis Cup captain Jaidip Mukerjea is unhappy with the way the All India Tennis Association handled the issue of selecting the team for India's Asia/Oceania Group 1 match versus Pakistan to be held on November 29-30. The AITA unceremoniously removed the non-playing captain Mahesh Bhupathi and on Thursday named an eight-member team with Leander Paes making a comeback since April 2018. Bhupathi and some senior players had refused to travel to Pakistan before the International Tennis Federation (ITF) shifted the tie out of Islamabad to a neutral venue. "I think Bhupathi was badly treated. They should have asked him to leave earlier itself, could've been communicated properly. It leaves a bad taste for Indian tennis," Mukerjea said. "AITA has done what it thought was best. Safety and security for our players is a big issue. But what baffled me the way AITA handled stars like Paes and Bhupathi," the former Davis Cup captain added. "They could have handled this in a better way. I've observed that when Paes gets selected, Bhupathi is left out and vice versa. This has been happening for last 10-15 years. This is not good for Indian tennis," the 77-year-old said. — PTI

Srikanth is out of Hong Kong Open

Hong Kong, Nov. 16: A profligate Kidambi Srikanth was knocked out of the \$400,000 Hong Kong Open following a straight-game semifinal defeat to local favourite Lee Cheuk Yiu here on Saturday. The former World No.1 squandered six game points in the second game to suffer 9-21, 23-25 in contest that lasted 42-minutes. Srikanth fell back early in the opening game with Lee opening up a 6-1 lead. The Indian tried to catch up but failed to narrow the gap. In the second game, Srikanth stepped up the gas taking an early 5-1 lead. However, Lee soon restored parity. The shuttlers fought neck and neck with Srikanth surging ahead but the Indian lost momentum, eventually conceding the match. Srikanth had beaten the 23-year-old Lee in straight games at the India Open last year in their only career meeting. — PTI

Stage set for shooting event

All eyes on Angad, Mairaj at Shotgun Nationals

New Delhi, Nov. 16: Fresh from securing Olympic quotas, Asian Championship medallists Angad Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan will headline the 63rd National Shotgun Shooting Championship, beginning here on Sunday. Besides Bajwa and Mairaj, who clinched Olympic quotas last week by winning the gold and silver medals respectively in the men's skeet event at the Asian Championship in Doha, several top shooters including Kynan Chenai, Shreyasi Singh and Manavjit Singh Sandhu are expected take part in the fortnight long competition. As many as 585 shooters will represent 58 state associations, union territories and institutional teams at the event. The women's trap qualification will kick off the competition at the Dr Karni Singh Shooting Range. Several top names including the likes of



Asian Championship medallists Angad Bajwa (left) and Mairaj Ahmad Khan in this file photo.

Shreyasi Singh, Seema Tomar, Manavjit Singh Sandhu, Kynan Chenai, Prithviraj Tondaiman, Angad Bajwa and Mairaj Ahmad Khan are expected take part in the fortnight long competition in the national capital. The women's trap has seen 71 entries across the senior and junior categories. Qualification matches

are scheduled for a 9 AM start. The women's trap finals are scheduled for 2pm on Monday, while the junior women's final is at 3pm. — PTI