

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 21 NOVEMBER 2019

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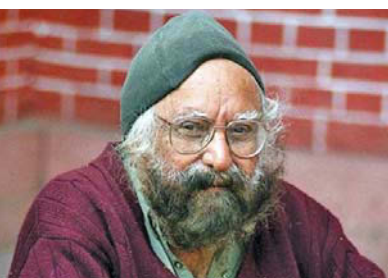
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competition
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Actress Aishwarya Rai Bachchan poses during an event in Mumbai on Wednesday.

— AFP

25 migrants found alive in refrigerated truck on UK ferry

The Hague: A ferry crew found 25 migrants in a refrigerated container on a boat sailing from the Netherlands to Britain on Tuesday, emergency services said. The cargo vessel bound for Felixstowe returned to the Dutch port of Vlaardingen, near Rotterdam, as soon as the stowaways were found. The people found in the container received medical attention at the port.
Full report on Page 11

Singapore to test its missiles in India

New Delhi: Singapore defence forces will soon use the integrated test range at Chandipur in Odisha for the firing of missiles. Singapore’s military has been using India’s facility for training of its defence forces, including airbase for its F-16s.
Full report on Page 3

JNU row: Divyang students stage stir

New Delhi: Visually challenged students of Jawaharlal Nehru University on Wednesday protested outside the old police HQ here against the alleged lathicharge by the force on differently abled students of the varsity.
Full report on Page 13



The government has replaced your Black Cat commandos with them, sir!

WEATHER

Max: 28°C
Min: 11°C
RH: 61%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Clear sky

ASTROGUIDE

Vikari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Bahula Navami till 11.26 am
Star: Poorvaphalguni till 6.26 pm
Varjyam: 1.06 am to 2.35 am (Friday)
Durmuhurtam: 10.10 am to 10.55 am and 2.37 pm to 3.22 pm
Rahukalam: 1 pm to 3 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.26 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.48 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.52 AM
MOONSET TODAY 1.24 PM

‘NRC to be carried out across India’

There will be no discrimination on the basis of religion: Shah

Assam govt asks Centre to reject recently-published NRC

AGE CORRESPONDENTS with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/
GUWAHATI/KOLKATA
NOV. 20

Union home minister Amit Shah on Wednesday announced in Parliament that the National Register of Citizens (NRC) process will be carried out across the country and added that there would be no discrimination on the basis of religion.

“The process of National Register of Citizens will be carried out across the country. No one irrespective of their religion should be worried. It is just a process to get everyone under the NRC,” he said while replying to a supplementary during Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha.

The home minister said that in Assam, people whose names have not figured in the draft list have the right to go to the Foreigners Tribunals. “Tribunals will be constituted across Assam. If any person doesn’t have the money to approach tribunals, then the Assam government will bear the cost to hire a lawyer,” he said.

But within hours of Mr Shah’s announcement, Assam finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma called a press conference

6 The process of NRC will be carried out across the country. No one irrespective of their religion should be worried. It is just a process to get everyone under the NRC
—Amit Shah, Union home minister

■ At a recent meeting, the RSS top brass told BJP leaders that NRC should be implemented nationwide to check illegal immigrants. The NRC issue is often highlighted by BJP leaders during election campaigns.

■ The BJP in Assam is not happy with the outcome of the Supreme Court-monitored NRC as many of the 19 lakh people left out are from the majority community

6 The Assam government has not accepted the NRC. There were ineligible people who were included, while scores of genuine Indian citizens were excluded. The government of Assam and BJP have requested the home minister to reject this NRC
— Himanta Biswa Sarma, Assam finance minister

I want to make it very clear, we will never allow NRC in Bengal. No one can take away your citizenship and turn you into a refugee. There can be no division on the basis of religion
— Mamata Banerjee, West Bengal CM

in Guwahati to say that the state government has requested the Centre to reject the recently published NRC in the state. “The Assam government has not accepted the NRC. The government of Assam and the BJP have requested the home minister to reject the NRC,” he said, and pitched for a fresh

pan-India NRC with a single cut-off date. In Assam, the NRC aims to identify illegal immigrants who entered the state and settled after March 25, 1971. Though the implementation of the NRC in Assam has raised questions of discrimination on the basis of religion, the BJP

in Assam is not happy with the outcome as many of the 19 lakh people left out of the NRC are from the majority community. Mr Shah’s countrywide pitch for NRC drew sharp reaction from West Bengal chief minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee. “A total of 19

Assam: Fate of 19 lakh out of NRC list unclear

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, NOV. 20

When Union home minister Amit Shah prepares the National Register of Citizens (NRC) for the entire country, the fate of over 19 lakh people left out in the Assam NRC hangs in the balance with the authorities not sure about the legal status and course of action against all those who refuse to move applications before the Foreigners Tribunals in Assam.

Saying the NRC authorities are yet to start the process of issuing rejection letters to over 19 lakh people whose application for inclusion of their names into the NRC were rejected, sources engaged in updating the NRC in Assam told this newspaper that the Central government, which is custodian of the NRC, has not taken any decision on the fate of people who refuse to move applications
■ Turn to Page 4

■ Rajapaksas ‘close’ to China

Mahinda named new Lanka PM as Ranil resigns

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI with agency inputs
NEW DELHI/COLOMBO, NOV. 20

In what is being seen as a setback to India, Ranil Wickremesinghe, seen as very close to New Delhi, resigned on Wednesday, after which Sri Lanka’s new President Gotabaya Rajapaksa reportedly named his older brother, former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, as the new Prime Minister.

This means the Rajapaksa brothers will occupy the post of both President and Prime Minister in the island nation and once again become all-powerful, a factor that may worry India, given the earlier proximity of the two brothers towards China. International news agencies reported that Mahinda Rajapaksa will assume charge as the new PM soon after Mr Wickremesinghe steps down formally on Thursday. It may be recalled that Mahinda Rajapaksa was earlier



■ Ranil Wickremesinghe (left), seen as very close to New Delhi, resigned on Wednesday, after which Sri Lanka’s new President Gotabaya Rajapaksa reportedly named his older brother, former President Mahinda Rajapaksa (right), as the new PM

appointed the Prime Minister on October 26, 2018 by then President Maithripala Sirisena, who sacked Mr Wickremesinghe in a controversial move that had plunged the country into an unprecedented constitutional crisis. However, Mahinda Rajapaksa had resigned a few weeks later after two crucial Sri Lankan Supreme Court decisions which made it clear Mr Wickremesinghe would
■ Turn to Page 4

TMC MP denied NOC to visit China, slams govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Trinamul Congress MP and Bengali actress Satabdi Roy on Wednesday sought to know from the Centre the reason behind being declined a NOC to her for visiting China last month in connection with a film festival, despite having a valid visa to travel to that country. Raising the issue during Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, the three time MP from Birbhum sought



the Speaker’s intervention into the matter, saying that despite being a lawmaker, she was not allowed to attend a film festival. While raising the matter, the TMC MP apparently tried to make a reference on the Prime Minister but was admonished by the Speaker Om Birla to maintain decorum, amid protests by BJP members.
■ More on Page 2

‘Total normalcy’ in J&K, says Shah

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Union home minister Amit Shah on Wednesday asserted in Rajya Sabha that “total normalcy” prevails in Jammu and Kashmir and added that not a single person has died in police firing since August 5 when the Centre abrogated special status of the state although many feared there would be bloodshed and more killings.

Prohibitory orders under Section 144 are prevalent only in certain



■ As the home minister read out figures supporting his claim of normalcy in the Valley, Leader of Opposition in the Upper House Ghulam Nabi Azad said, “It looks like the home minister is referring to the report of some other state.”

areas from 8 pm to 6 am in the Valley, Mr Shah told the Rajya Sabha while responding to a series of questions on the situation in Jammu & Kashmir during Question Hour. “The situation there was

always normal. There were many notions spread all over the world. There is total normalcy prevailing. After August 5, not a single person has died in police firing although many feared

there would be bloodshed and more number of killings,” he said.

All restrictions imposed in Kashmir have been successful. Stone pelting incidents have come down to 544 so far in 2019 from 802 incidents in 2018, he said.

Replying to a question by Leader of Opposition in the Upper House, Ghulam Nabi Azad, on when Internet Services will be restored, the home minister said the local administration will take a call on it. Ms Shah said,
■ Turn to Page 4

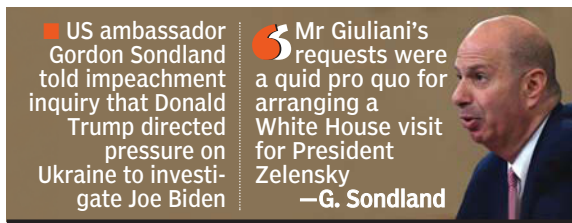


The CSMT station is illuminated in blue light on the occasion of 30 years of the Convention on the Rights of the Child in Mumbai on Wednesday. The convention was adopted by the UN General Assembly on November 20, 1989.

— PTI

‘Followed Trump orders on pressuring Ukraine’

Washington, Nov. 20: Gordon Sondland, US ambassador to the European Union, testified on Wednesday that he and other US officials were working at the “express direction of the President” when they cooperated with Rudy Giuliani to urge Ukraine to open investigations into the 2016 election and Burisma — the Ukrainian energy company of which Joe Biden’s son was a board member — as conditions for President



■ US ambassador Gordon Sondland told impeachment inquiry that Donald Trump directed pressure on Ukraine to investigate Joe Biden

6 Mr Giuliani’s requests were a quid pro quo for arranging a White House visit for President Zelensky
—G. Sondland

Zelensky to get a meeting at the White House. “We followed the President’s orders,” he said. In an explosive opening statement, Mr Sondland testified that Mr

Trump’s personal lawyer initiated the “quid pro quo” that has been at the heart of the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump. “Mr Giuliani’s requests were a

quid pro quo for arranging a White House visit for President Zelensky,” Mr Sondland said. “Mr Giuliani was expressing the desires of the President of the United States.” In remarks that also put secretary of state Mike Pompeo at the center of the Ukraine controversy, Mr Sondland said Mr Pompeo was “fully supportive” of the efforts to push Ukraine into carrying out two investigations that would benefit Mr Trump. — Agencies

Govt to sell stake in five top PSUs

Entire 53.29% in BPCL to be sold

ANIMESH SINGH
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

In a major decision aimed at boosting its depleting coffers in the face of gloomy economic growth and unemployment breaking decades-old records, the Centre on Wednesday approved strategic sale of its stake in five major public sector undertakings, mainly Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), Shipping Corporation of India (SCI) and Container Corporation of India (Concor).

The Union cabinet also decided to reduce its shareholding in select public sector firms below 51 per cent to boost reserves.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) approved sale of the Centre’s entire 53.29 per cent stake, along with the transfer of management control in the country’s second-biggest state-owned refiner BPCL.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman told mediapersons after the Cabinet meeting that the strategic disinvestment of Centre’s entire shareholding of 53.29 per cent in BPCL along with transfer of management control to a strategic buyer has been cleared. However the government’s equity shareholding of 61.65 per
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Viewpoint

Enable children to learn languages without ignoring mother tongue, says vice-president Venkaiah Naidu



ULB poll results broke illusion of BJP strong hold in Rajasthan's urban areas

— Sachin Pilot, Rajasthan Cong chief

SHORT TAKES

Cong dissolves its unit in Himachal

New Delhi/Shimla: The Congress has dissolved its unit in Himachal Pradesh, the party said on Wednesday. However, the president of the state Pradesh Congress Committee (PCC) shall remain unchanged, a press release signed by party general secretary K.C. Venugopal said. In Shimla, state unit president Kuldeep Singh Rathore said that the All-India Congress Committee (AICC) has dissolved the unit with his consent and given him a free hand to reconstitute it. Mr Venugopal's statement said Congress president Sonia Gandhi had decided to dissolve the executive committees at the state, district and block levels in Himachal Pradesh.

First Hindi daily in Arunachal Pradesh

Itanagar: Arunachal Pradesh chief minister Pema Khandu on Wednesday hailed Hindi, as the only language that has kept the states people as one besides connecting with people from outside and personnel of the Indian Armed Forces. Hindi language is the bond that unites the diverse ethnic tribes of the state who speak different dialects, the CM said at the launch programme of 'Aruna Bhoomi' the first Hindi daily in the north-eastern state. He lauded the initiative to start a newspaper in Hindi, saying it would strengthen the bond between the people.

HCs urged to clear 10-year-old cases

New Delhi: Law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Wednesday said his ministry has requested all high courts to clear 10-year-old cases immediately to bring down pendency of cases. The government has taken various measures to improve the infrastructure of various courts across the country so that justice delivery is expedited, he said during Question Hour in Lok Sabha. The Modi government has already given 50 per cent amount for infrastructure improvement, he said, adding, the National Judicial Database is now in place.

3 RAFALE JETS HANDED OVER TO AIR FORCE: GOVT

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Centre said on Wednesday that three Rafale fighter aircraft have been handed over to the Indian Air Force (IAF) till date which are being used for training of IAF pilots and technicians in France. This information was given by defence ministry in a written reply in LS. India is procuring a batch of 36 Rafale fighter jets from France at a cost of ₹58,000 crore. These will be armed with deadly Meteor missiles considered much better than AMRAAM missile with which Pakistan's F16 are armed. Pakistan's Air Force had fired AMRAAM missiles at IAF fighter jets during their failed attempt on February 27 to bomb Indian military installations. There are some 13 India Specific Enhancements to be made in the Rafale jet. While the first Rafale jet was handed over to India on October 8, the first batch of four Rafale jets will arrive in India by May 2020. Centre said that the Performance Audit Report of CAG on Capital Acquisition in Indian Air Force presented in Parliament on February 13 has brought the entire package price of the 36 Rafale procurement to 2.86 per cent lower than the Audit Aligned price.

Political circles abuzz as Pawar meets Modi

NCP chief claims he discussed only farm distress

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

A meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) supremo Sharad Pawar left the political circles abuzz on Wednesday as whether or not the two leaders discussed anything political during their almost an hour-long meeting in the Parliament.

Though officially Mr Pawar met the Prime Minister to seek his urgent intervention in addressing farmer distress in Maharashtra, the meeting took place at a time when Congress-NCP are holding talks over government formation.

Later in the evening, senior Congress and NCP leaders held a meeting at Mr Pawar's residence to chalk out the finer points of government formation.

After the meeting, senior Congress leader and former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan said the meeting was an effort towards ending the uncertainty in the state and to



NCP chief Sharad Pawar, Congress leader Ahmed Patel and others at Mr Pawar's residence during a meeting regarding government formation in Maharashtra. — PTI

provide a stable government and the leaders will meet again for further discussion.

He also said that most issues have been resolved but final touches still remains.

While, NCP's Nawab Malik said that it is clear that NCP-Congress and Shiv Sena will have to come together to form the government.

Sources disclosed that NCP and Congress leaders will meet again on Thursday and after that a

meeting with the Sena leaders could be held.

Mr Pawar's meeting with the PM Modi came two days after his meeting with the Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi.

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut also said that by Thursday afternoon things will be clear. Insiders claim that the chief minister's post will be given to Sena, deputy CM to NCP and the Speakers post to the Congress. Most of the contentious issues have been ironed out, he said.

BJP MLA's pregnant daughter 'made to wait' in govt hospital

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, NOV. 20

Pregnant daughter of a tribal BJP MLA of Madhya Pradesh was 'made to wait' for around 12 hours in a government hospital where she was taken for delivery, forcing the lawmaker to shift her to a private hospital.

MLA from Vijaypur in Sheopur district in MP Sitaram Adivasi admitted his daughter in the district hospital at Sheopur for delivery at around 10.30 on Monday morning.

Doctors in the hospital however referred her to another government hospital due to non-availability of the specialist doctor who had gone to attend a health camp, Mr Adivasi said.

According to him, doctors said a cesarean surgery was needed to be performed on her due to lack of adequate fluid in her uterus.

Mr Adivasi later shifted his daughter to a private hospital in nearby Shivpuri where she gave birth to a baby girl in normal delivery.

INSIDE INDIA

Cong MLA blows kiss to Odisha House Speaker

AKSHAYA KIJMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 20

Firebrand Congress MLA Tara Prasad Bahinipati, who is also known for his good humour, has courted a controversy for blowing a flying kiss at Speaker Dr Suryanarayan Patro after being allowed to raise issues faced by his constituency.

The Jeypore MLA, who on Tuesday blew the flying kiss at the Speaker for allowing him to ask question, on Wednesday clarified that he did not mean to insult the Speaker and that the gesture was a mark of gratitude.

"I wanted to thank the Speaker for allowing me to ask questions to the treasury bench. The flying kiss was a mark of my appreciation as he showed concern for the areas in my constituencies," he said.

"I am indebted to the Speaker for giving me the opportunity among the 147 members," said Mr Bahinipati.

LS passes bill to raise chit fund amount by three times

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Amid demand for stricter action against chit fund managers who siphon off money of the people, Lok Sabha passed the Chit Funds (Amendment) Bill, 2019 on Wednesday.

The Bill plans to raise the monetary limits for chit funds and higher commission for Foreman. The maximum chit amount is

proposed to raised from ₹1 lakh to ₹3 lakh for those managed by individuals or less than four partners, and from ₹6 lakh to ₹18 lakh for firms with four or more partners.

It also specifies that a chit will be drawn in the presence of at least two subscribers. The Bill seeks to allow these subscribers to join via video-conferencing. The Bill also seeks to increase the commission of foreman.

RS to send Transgender Bill to select panel for review

New Delhi, Nov. 20:

Several members in Rajya Sabha on Wednesday sought review of a bill on protection of rights of transgenders and demanded that it be referred to a select parliamentary committee.

The Transgender Persons (Protection of Rights) Bill, 2019, which seeks to provide a mechanism for social, economic and educa-

tional empowerment of transgenders, was moved for consideration and passage in Rajya Sabha by Social Justice Minister Thawar Chand Gehlot.

As soon as he moved the bill, DMK leader Tiruchi Siva moved an amendment to the motion that it be sent to a select committee.

The bill was passed by Lok Sabha in August. — PTI

completing the formalities, yet was denied the NOC."

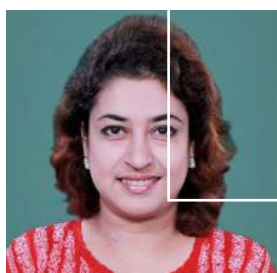
She further added, "When I sought to know the reason, I was not given a clear reply. Speaker sir I want your intervention in this matter that despite being an MP, I cannot travel abroad. Why is that? What is the reason behind the denial of NOC?" Ms Roy sought to know.

While raising the matter, the TMC MP apparently tried to make a reference on the Prime Minister but was admonished by the Speaker Om Birla to maintain decorum, amid protests by BJP members.

While raising the matter, the TMC MP apparently tried to make a reference on the Prime Minister but was admonished by the Speaker Om Birla to maintain decorum.

engagement.

"When I was applying for the visa to China, I was asked by home ministry and external affairs ministry to seek an NOC. I obtained the visa but was denied the NOC. I faced a lot of harassment while



Satabdi Roy

Govt denied NOC for China visit: Roy

TMC MP raises issue in LS, says wasn't allowed to attend film fest

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Trinamul Congress MP and noted Bengali actress Satabdi Roy on Wednesday sought to know from the Centre the reason behind being declined a 'no objection certificate' (NOC) for her China visit last month in connection with a film festival, despite having a valid visa to travel to that country.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour in Lok Sabha, the three time Member of Parliament (MP) from Birbhum sought the speaker's intervention



Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut (from left) with BSP MP Danish Ali at the Parliament House on Wednesday. Congress president Sonia Gandhi arrives at the Parliament House. —PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY



Members were divided over discussing it Parliamentary panel probes WhatsApp snooping issue

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

The parliamentary standing committee on information technology on Wednesday called the representatives of the ministry of electronics and information technology, the ministry of home affairs and the department of atomic energy for a briefing during a discussion on citizens' data security and privacy in the wake of the WhatsApp snooping incident.

The committee also discussed the attempted cyber-attack on the Kudankulam nuclear power plant recently. While the details of the meeting are yet to be known, Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, who heads the committee, in a letter to the panel members said that the alleged use of technology for snooping on Indian citizens was a matter of grave concern.

However, the meeting saw heated arguments between members after some opposed the move to take up the issue for discussion. This led to voting



AAP MP Bhagwant Mann at Parliament on Wednesday. Congress leader Shashi Tharoor is also seen. — PTI

and the matter was finally taken up after members outvoted those opposing the move. The secretaries of the home affairs and electronics and information technology ministries, meanwhile, kept waiting for over two hours while the MPs argued and finally voted.

The issue of snooping through Israeli spyware Pegasus was flagged by WhatsApp and alerted several Indians, mainly journalists, human rights activists and politicians to spying by unidentified entities.

Pegasus is owned by

Israeli firm NSO that usually deals directly with governments.

Seventeen out of 22 human rights activists who were allegedly targeted by the Pegasus spyware had written to Dr Tharoor requesting his committee to summon the relevant government departments to answer questions related to their unauthorised surveillance operations and explain if the government had purchased and used Pegasus.

The activists said they too were willing to provide oral testimony to the standing committee.

Opp. to govt: Define 'close relative' in Surrogacy Bill

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Opposition members Wednesday asked the government to come out with the definition of "close relative" who can be a surrogate mother and suggested that the "changing reality" be included in the Surrogacy Bill, 2019, and single parents, transgenders and live-in couples, too, be included in the ambit of commissioning parents.

The bill, which bans commercial surrogacy, mandates only a "close relative" to be a surrogate mother and also has a provision of five years of marriage for the commissioning parents.

Although the Bill was supported by most members cutting across party lines, a majority sought modifications regarding the time frame for abortion, time limit of age and prior informed consent, provision of allowances and insurance along with maternity leave for the surrogate mother, besides relaxation in the numbers of surrogacy.

Termining the bill as a "very complicated bill", Congress's Jairam Ramesh said that the government should get an amended bill passed after considering the suggestions of the members. He also suggested that the bill should have come after the Assisted Reproductive Technology bill as the government was "dealing with surrogacy but not with the technology of surrogacy".

His party colleague, Amee Yajnik, said that although the bill concentrated on appropriate authority, national data board, data banks and other issues, somewhere, the child that was at the centre of this particular bill, had been forgotten.



PARLIAMENT DIARY

— BY GAUTAM LAHIRI —

CCTV SHOWS WRONG FACE, NEW SYSTEM FAILS

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla has introduced a new system inside the House. Whenever a MP speaks, his name is flashed in the close circuit TV so that other members can recognise him easily. But the system ensures that only name of those MPs will flash if he or she speaks from his or her designated seat. When minister of state for agriculture was replying to a question on Wednesday, the close circuit TV showed minister of state for labour and employment Santosh Gangwar. When it was pointed out, the Speaker observed that perhaps the minister was not replying from his own seat.

TMC FINDS A STRANGE ALLY IN YSR CONG

The Speaker has made some changes in the sitting arrangement of leaders in front row of Lok Sabha. In the last Lok Sabha, BJD leader Bhartruhari Mahataab used to sit next to Trinamul Congress leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay. In the present Lok Sabha, leader of the YSR Congress Mithun Reddy was given the seat next to the TMC Leader. A newcomer, Mr Reddy seeks advice from Mr Bandyopadhyay everyday. This way, TMC got a new friend in YSR Congress. TMC leaders feel that they might get cooperation from YSR Congress in near future.

BJP TO MPs: BE PRESENT IN FULL STRENGTH

Many MPs were curious when they came to know on Wednesday that all the BJP MPs were told by the government to be present in both the Houses of Parliament from December 1. Even they were advised not to leave the capital from that date. There is obvious speculation about possible tabling of controversial Citizenship Act amendment bill. Following the announcement by Union home minister Amit Shah on Wednesday the speculation got more credibility. Senior members of the ruling party are not saying about only Citizenship Act Bill but there could be more surprises from the Treasury benches in the coming month.

CONG, NCP FEEL THE HEAT

There is widespread perception among the political classes of the capital that announcement by Union home minister Amit Shah to bring Citizenship Act amendment bill during the winter session has forced both Congress and NCP to rewrite the common minimum programme for forming a Shiv Sena government in the state. Both Congress and NCP are opposed to the bill. But Sena is supportive of giving citizenship to distressed Hindus from neighbouring countries like Pakistan and Bangladesh. If the bill comes in the house then Congress, NCP and Shiv Sena will have to be on the same boat. Otherwise, it would be difficult for Congress to support a Shiv Sena led government.



Angry

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh slams govt after special mention on privatisation of PSUs disallowed in Parliament

Nation

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THE ASIAN AGE

THURSDAY | 21 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI



There is no scope for any third party role or mediation (over Kashmir)

— G. Kishan Reddy, Union minister

SHORT TAKES

Sinha plans to visit Kashmir Nov. 22

New Delhi: A civil society group, which includes former Union minister Yashwant Sinha, will go on a four-day visit to Jammu and Kashmir on November 22 to assess the ground situation in the region after the central government nullified Article 370, which gave the erstwhile state special powers. The members of the Concerned Citizens' Group plan to return on November 25 and will then release their report on the ground situation in the region, Sinha said. He said the group had visited the Valley in September as well and though he was not allowed by authorities to leave Srinagar airport and forced to return to Delhi, its other members were allowed outside. — PTI

Journo held for torturing 2 women

Bhubaneswar: A woman and her mother of Tangarapali area in Sundergarh district were allegedly confined in a room and sexually assaulted by a man in Basanti Colony here for over 40 days. However, Udit Nagar police rescued the mother and daughter on Tuesday night and arrested the accused. Sources said the two women were staying in the house of one Ashok Mohanty, who claims to be a journalist, at Basanti Colony without informing their family members. A missing complaint was lodged by the family of the two before. As per a fresh complaint, Mohanty used to torture the two women.

FARMERS TO 'SHINE' AT INDIAN SCIENCE CONGRESS

Bengaluru: Farmers from across the country, who have developed innovative methods, will stand out at the annual science jamboree, the Indian Science Congress, commencing here on January 3, 2020 and will provide growers' details of novel techniques of cultivation besides offering tips on how to sustain their families during natural calamities. For the first time, 'Farmers Science Congress' would be held as part of the annual science jamboree with the Indian Council for Agricultural Research (ICAR) set to support the proposal to invite at least two from each state — along with experts at National Innovation Foundation, Ahmedabad, and organizations such as Gram Bharati Samiti, to interact with farmers. The hosts, University of Agricultural Sciences (UAS), Bengaluru, would request farmers of all districts of Karnataka to participate in this event, says Dr S Rajendra Prasad, Vice Chancellor of UAS and Chairman of the local organizing committee. He said this event would help farmers at a time when some parts of the state are inundated by rivers in spate while in other parts, rain has remained elusive through the year.

Bring new law to run Sabarimala: SC to Kerala

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked Kerala government to enact a law exclusively for the administration of Sabarimala temple on the lines of Tirupati and Guruvayur temples.

Asking Kerala government to come out with a separate law for the administration of Sabarimala temple and the welfare of the pilgrims, a bench of Justice N.V. Ramana, Justice R. Subhash Reddy and Justice B.R. Gavi gave the state government time till January next year to frame the law.

The court asked Kerala government to place the proposed law before it by the third week of January.

At present the Sabarimala temple is administered by the Travancore Devaswom Board created under the Travancore-Coachin Hindu Religious Institutions Act.

While giving Kerala time to come forward with a separate law for the administration of Sabarimala temple, the court took exception that it had directed the State government come forward with the exclusive law for the administration of the historic temple and the welfare of the pilgrims but all that it has come forward is with draft amendments to the Travancore-Cochin Hindu Religious Institutions Act.

Telling Kerala government that this was not enough, the court said that there was a need for a separate law for the administration of the temple.

During hearing on August 28, 2019, the top court was told by Kerala government that it was considering enacting a separate legislation with regard to the administration of the Sabarimala Sree Ayyappa Swamy Temple.

Having apprised the court of its intention to enact a separate law for the administration of Sabarimala temple, Kerala had sought the adjournment of the hearing and since then the matter was listed today.

Posters threaten traders in Valley, several areas shut

Several schools reopen, but students asked not to wear uniforms

Over 5K separatists, stone-pelters, others held in Valley since Aug. 4

New Delhi: There have been 5,161 "preventive arrests", including politicians, separatists and stone pelters, in Kashmir Valley since August 4, the day before Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 was revoked, the government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

"With a view to prevent commission of offences

involving breach of peace and activities prejudicial to the security of the state and maintenance of the public order, 5,161 preventive arrests, including stone pelters, miscreants, OGWs (over ground workers), separatists and political workers, were made since August 4, 2019, in Kashmir Valley," Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy said.

— PTI

establishments, appeared at some places overnight.

There was lesser movement of public transport in these areas, they added.

However, in the Civil Lines areas of the city and other parts of the Valley, life was limping back to

normalcy, the officials said.

Several schools reopened here on Tuesday after remaining closed for over three months due to the unannounced shutdown following the Centre's decision to abrogate the Jammu and Kashmir's spe-

'J&K arrests not as bad as those of Emergency'

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

In a dig at the Congress, Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy on Wednesday referred to the cases of detention in Kashmir saying the government took the decisions in the interest of the country but during Emergency, 36 MPs were booked to "save the chair of one person". The minister was responding to supplementary questions being asked members in the house. He informed the House that there have been 5,161 "preventive arrests", including politicians, separatists and stone pelters, in Kashmir Valley since August 4, the day before Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 was revoked, the government also informed Parliament on Wednesday.

Mr Reddy added that the decision to detain leaders such as former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah was taken to maintain law and order. "The country's interest, different people were arrested at different



Shahriyar Khanam, daughter of incarcerated former minister and senior PDP leader Nayeem Akhtar, comes out of the government accommodation, where all former ministers, MLAs and mainstream political leaders are kept under detention, on the 108th day of strike in Srinagar on Wednesday.

— PTI

time...

During Emergency, you arrested 36 MPs to save one person's chair ... We are working in the interest of the nation and its law and order," he said in response to a query on how long the government will prevent Abdullah from attending Lok Sabha.

When asked about the European parliamentary delegation visiting Kashmir Mr Reddy informed the house that, "The government of Jammu and Kashmir has reported that a group of

27 members of European Parliament (MEPs), who belonged to different political parties including ruling and opposition parties, paid a private visit to India from October 28, 2019 to November 1, 2019 at the invitation of International Institute for Nonaligned Studies, a Delhi based think tank." On the query of internationalising the Kashmir issue Mr Reddy refuted the charge saying, "There is no scope for any third party role or mediation."

MHA cancels citizenship of Telangana MLA

New Delhi: The home ministry on Wednesday cancelled the citizenship of Telangana MLA Ramesh Chennamaneni for concealing facts about his visits abroad.

The information was related to his visits during the 12-month period immediately preceding his application seeking Indian citizenship.

"His misrepresentation/concealment of fact misled the government of India in making its decision initially. Had he revealed the fact that he had not resided in India for one year before making the application, the competent authority in this ministry would not have granted citizenship to him," a home ministry order said.

— PTI

Kerala honours 105-old Class 4 student



An official from Kerala State Literacy Mission felicitates Bhageerathi Amma who reportedly appeared for the 4th standard equivalency exam at the ripe old age of 105 in Kollam district on Tuesday. Saddled by the burden of mothering her younger siblings following the death of her mother and then her own four daughters and two sons, Bhageerathi Amma was forced to quit school at a tender age.

— PTI

BHU row: Muslim prof's dad sings bhajans

Jaipur, Nov. 20: The father of a Muslim professor whose appointment at the Banaras Hindu University's Sanskrit department has triggered a row himself sings bhajans at temples and serves at a cow shelter. Nobody protests.

At a temple in the premises of Shree Ramdev Gaushtala Chetanya Dham in Bagru, 35 kilometres from the Rajasthan capital, Ramzan Khan on Wednesday participated in the aarti, sitting at a harmonium and singing a devotional song.

Although the BHU has backed Feroze Khan, he has been unable to take classes over the past several days. The protesters say only a Hindu can teach Sanskrit at the university in Varanasi.

But a visit to Bagru, where the family lives in a modest three-room house, reveals that the professor grew up in an atmosphere immersed in Sanskrit and "Hindu traditions". His father Ramzan Khan himself holds the Shastri qualification in Sanskrit, composes religious songs and performs "gau sewa" at the nearby cattle shed. At the same time, he visits offers namaz at mosque.

The local Hindu community as well as his own rela-



Feroze Khan

tives are okay with this.

"I was very happy when my son was appointed at the prestigious Banaras Hindu University. The protest by students is unfortunate and I would like to urge the agitating students to recognise my son and see what kind of background he has," he said.

— PTI

'By ABVP logic, Rafi could not sing bhajans'

Mumbai: Actor and former BJP MP Paresh Rawal said that he was "stunned" by the protests against the Muslim professor who is facing Opposition from the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). By this logic, he said, neither the legendary Mohammed Rafi nor music composer Naushad should have collaborated on bhajans (devotional songs). — PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE

To be known to all that I, Arvind Chitkara son of Shri Rohit Singh resident of LIG Flat No. 148, Pt-4, Ground Floor, Sector-2, Rohini, Delhi, the legal owner of LIG Flat No. 148, Pts-4, Ground Floor, Sector-2, Rohini, Delhi, has applied for conversion of the aforesaid property from lease hold to free hold in DDA. The original Demand Letter of the above Flat have been lost. An FIR/NCR to this effect has been lodged in P.S. Crime Branch, Delhi Vaidi L.R. No. 191095/2019. Any person(s) claiming any right, interest, having any objection or found in possession of original documents, may write/contact with above named person at above address/phone No. 9313214735 within 15 days from the date of publication of this notice. The person claiming any right, interest or objection with respect to this property can personally inform or write to Dy. Director (Housing) R. Block 3rd Floor, or Director(H), A Block, Vikas Sadan, INA, New Delhi.



एसजेवीएन लिमिटेड
(भारत सरकार और हिमाचल प्रदेश सरकार का एक संयुक्त उपक्रम)
SJVN LIMITED
(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of H.P.)
A MINI RATNA and Schedule 'A' PSU
CIN - L40101HP1988 GOI 008409

NATHPA JHAKRI HYDRO POWER STATION

PRESS NOTICE

E-Tender No. PCD-2597

Online bids (e-tender) on Domestic Competitive Bidding (DCB) are invited on behalf of SJVN Ltd. for, "Routine repair & maintenance of major civil works from Nathpa to Wadhwa and Infra Works at Nathpa (Township, subordinate field hospital, officer's mess, subordinate mess and offices) at NJHPS, Nathpa for 1 year" (PCD-2597). For details, please visit websites www.sjvn.nic.in, <https://sjvn.abcpocure.com> & www.eprocure.gov.in. Last date for downloading of bid documents is 12.12.2019 (12:00 Hrs.). Last date for bid submission is 13.12.2019 (13:00 Hrs.). Amendment(s), if any, shall be issued on above websites only.

For and on behalf of SJVN Ltd.
Dy. General Manager, (P&C)
NJHPS, SJVN Ltd., Jharkhand.

SAVE ENERGY FOR THE BENEFIT OF SELF & NATION

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown Age: approx 35-40 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Wheatish, ID Mark: A tattoo mark on right hand, Wearing: Red & Blue coloured half T-shirt-without pant, was found dead on 11.11.2019 at 12:45 P.M. at Y-Block, Mangolpuri, Delhi. In this regard a FIR/DD No.23-A, dated 11.11.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Mangolpuri, Delhi.

If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.

SHO
P.S. Mangolpuri, Delhi
Ph.: 011-27922186, 27921168
DP/2885/OD/19 Mob.: 7065036121

Singapore to use Indian facility to test-fire missiles

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Singapore defence forces will soon use the integrated test range at Chandipur in Odisha for the firing of missiles.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh and defence minister of Singapore Dr N.G. Eng Hen co-chaired the 4th Singapore-India Defence Ministers' Dialogue in Singapore on Wednesday.

Both ministers commended the progress in defence technology collaboration. "They witnessed the exchange of a Letter of Intent to register both sides' commitment to conclude a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate the use of Chandipur Integrated Test Range by the Singapore defence establishment," said a defence ministry release.

Mr Singh also offered setting up of a Joint Test Facilities under the Defence Testing Infrastructure Scheme of India. Dr N.G. agreed to explore opportunities for joint collaboration. The ministers also agreed to explore co-operation in the fields of Artificial Intelligence, Geo-Spatial

Defence minister Rajnath Singh and his counterpart Dr N.G. Eng Hen co-chaired 4th Singapore and India Defence Ministers' Dialogue in Singapore

Data Sharing and Cyber Security. Singapore's military has been using India's facility for training of its defence forces including airbase for its F-16s.

Both ministers expressed satisfaction at the deepening defence ties between India and Singapore and reaffirmed their commitment to support further initiatives that would promote stability to the region. Singapore's defence minister appreciated India's continued support for the training of the Singapore Armed Forces in India. "Of note, in commemoration of the 10th anniversary of the Singapore Air Force-Indian Air Force Joint Military Training this year, the exercise was expanded to include an air-sea training component for the first time," defence ministry said.

No proposal for 1 nation, 1 language: Govt in House

New Delhi, Nov. 20: The Constitution accords equal importance to all the languages of the country and there is no proposal for "one nation, one language", the government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy was replying to a written question in Rajya Sabha whether there is a proposal to have a single language for the country.

"There is no proposal for one nation-one language," Mr Reddy said.

The minister's reply comes in the backdrop of protest by leaders of sever-

al non-Hindi speaking states and pro-Kannada organisations, who had taken to the streets in September after Union home minister Amit Shah spoken of proposal of 'One Nation, One Language'.

The minister further said that the "Constitution accords equal importance to all the languages of the country."

"Language matters are in the concurrent list of the Constitution of India and are within the executive spheres of the central government and the respective state governments," he said.

— PTI

OFFICE OF THE RAIPUR SMART CITY LIMITED
e-Procurement Tender Notice (Main Portal: <http://eproc.cgstate.gov.in>)

NIT NO: 196/RSC/L/2019,
RAIPUR DATED: 13/11/2019

Online bids are invited for the following of works up to 16/12/2019 at 17:30 hours.

Sl. No.	System Tender No.	Name of work / Description of work	Tender Amount:	EMD Amount	Time Period	Tender Fee
1	58529	Design, Engineering, Construction of Smart Road Components at Maharajbandh Talab Road	₹ 356.34 Lakhs	₹ 2.67 Lakhs	06 Months (including monsoon season)	Nil

The details can be viewed and downloaded online directly from the Government of Chhattisgarh e-Procurement Portal <https://eproc.cgstate.gov.in> from 13/11/2019 17:30 Hours (IST) on wards.

For more details on the tender and bidding process you may please visit the above mentioned portal.

NOTE:-
1. All eligible/interested contractors are mandated to get enrolled on e-Procurement portal.
2. Contractors can contact Help Desk for any clarification of their doubts regarding the process of Electronic Procurement System: **Help Desk at Toll Free No. 1800 419 9140** or through Email helpdesk.eproc@cgswan.gov.in
3. For More Details please download NIT details.

MANAGING DIRECTOR
RAIPUR SMART CITY LIMITED, RAIPUR (C.G.)

The Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport Undertaking
(Of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation)

TENDER NOTICE
e-tenders are invited for the supply of following items.

(1) Hiring of 300 Mini AC Diesel Buses (Package I & II - 150 Nos. Each),
(2) 45587 - Tapex Straight and Transition Joining for 11KV Cable,

Re-invited e-tenders

(3) 44795 - Procurement of Services for Implementation and Support of ERP Project at BEST Undertaking along with the Cloud Hosting Services and Procurement of COTS Licenses, (4) 45094 - Selection of Managed Service Provider for Automated Street-Lighting Management System (ASMS) (Corrigendum), (5) 45287 - 10(60) Amps Single Phase Static Energy Meter with Optical Port, (6) 44293 - Display of Advertisements by Affixing Kiosks on Street Lighting Poles, (7) 44381 - Cable Fault Locating Van.

Note : For more details, at (Sr. No. 1 to 5) log on to website <https://mahatenders.gov.in> & (Sr. Nos. 6 & 7) www.besttender.com.

PRO/AAM(M)/108/2019.
GENERAL MANAGER

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person 35 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown had been found dead at Gate No. 5, Safdarjung Hospital, Delhi on 04.11.19 at 16: 44. In this regard a vide has been registered with DD No: 30-A dated 04.11.19 at P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:
Sex: Male, **Age:** 35 years, **Height:** 5'7", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Oval, **Hair:** Black, **Wearing:** Blue and red colour t-shirt and white colour lower.

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/ Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi.

SHO
P.S. Safdarjung Enclave, Delhi
Ph.: 011-24106345, 24106346

DP/7154/SWD/19



Buddhist meet

Tibetan spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, to address Global Buddhist meet in Aurangabad



The biggest 'gaddha' is BJP's corruption, without filling it all the efforts are useless

— Akhilesh Yadav, SP president

SHORT TAKES

Fearing job loss, techie hangs self

Hyderabad: A 24-year-old woman working as a junior software developer at an IT firm here allegedly committed suicide by hanging fearing job loss after her company announced layoffs, the police said on Wednesday. Her body was found hanging from the ceiling fan in her hostel room, it said. A police official said she resorted to the extreme step on Tuesday night, apparently depressed following a notice from the IT firm to her and some other employees informing them that it will go for job cuts from December. The woman, a native of Mahabubnagar district, was working at the company for the past two-and-half years, the official said. — PTI

SC seeks ED reply on PC bail petition

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought the ED's response on former finance minister P. Chidambaram plea for bail in the INX Media money laundering case being investigated it. Seeking response from the ED, a bench of Justices R. Banumathi, A.S. Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy said that the ED would file its reply by November 25 and directed the next hearing of the matter on November 26. As senior counsel Kapil Sibal appearing for Mr Chidambaram sought an early hearing of the matter, Justice Banumathi said, "On November 26, we will decide on the date of hearing which could be next day or the day after."

DGCA to staff: Don't hold spot checks

New Delhi: The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has asked its officers not to engage in spot checks or deliberations wherever there is conflict of interest. The DGCA added that it expects its officers to suo moto disclose any conflict of interest while conducting unannounced and random checks of airports, airlines and aviation personnel adding that non-complying officers will be dealt strictly under the services rules.

SC comes to rescue of DJ operators in UP

Stays blanket ban on disc jockeys at events by HC

New Delhi, Nov. 20: Coming to the rescue of disc jockeys who make their living by performing at marriage and birthday parties in UP, the Supreme Court has stayed the blanket ban imposed on their operations by the Allahabad high court.

Ahead of the upcoming marriage season, the top court has asked the authorities to grant permission to the DJ operators in accordance with law.

The Allahabad high court had on August 20, imposed a blanket ban on DJ services terming the noise generated by them as "unpleasant" and of "obnoxious level".

A bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Vineet Saran was told by advocate Dushyant Parashar, appearing for the petition-

► Ahead of the upcoming marriage season, the SC has asked the authorities to grant permission to the DJ operators in accordance with law

ers, that due to the high court order these DJs are getting unemployed across the state.

Mr Parashar, who represented 13 members of the Bundelkhand Sound and DJ Association, said the DJ players used to make their living by offering their services during marriages, birthdays and other ceremonies but due to the blanket ban, they are unable to take care of their families.

The bench noted that on

October 14, the apex court while seeking reply from the state government had stayed the operation of direction for blanket ban issued by the high court in the month of August.

"Pending further consideration, we grant interim direction in same terms and direct that as and when any applications are preferred, the applications shall be considered by the concerned authorities; and if the same are otherwise in accordance with law, the permission may be granted despite the direction issued by the High Court," the bench said.

During the hearing, Mr Parashar submitted that the direction for blanket ban on DJ operators was violative of Article 16 of the Constitution. — PTI

Enhancing security ties key element of Bimstec

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Security cooperation is an important element of the (regional grouping) Bimstec and member countries are looking at enhancing partnership in this sphere, secretary (east) in the MEA Vijay Thakur Singh said on Wednesday.

"As we are providing and looking for unhindered sea lanes of communication and economic integration of the region, we have to be mindful of the security at sea... We have been looking at security issues clearly under the Bimstec umbrella," the MEA's secretary (east) was quoted by news agencies as saying.

With South Asian grouping Saarc virtually in cold storage due to Indo-Pak tensions, India has been increasingly investing its hopes for regional cooperation in Bimstec (Bay of Bengal Initiative for Multi-Sectoral Technical and Economic Cooperation), which does not have Pakistan as a member. Bimstec comprises India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. With the exception of Southeast Asian nations Myanmar and Thailand, which are members of Asean, the rest of the Bimstec countries are also members of Saarc.

India's passport rank expected to improve

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

As "more countries permit Indian passport holders to visit visa free or grant them visa on arrival facility the rank of the Indian passport on the Henley Passport Index is expected to improve", the government informed Parliament on Wednesday.

"As per information available on the website www.henleypassportindex.com, the Henley Passport Index ranks all the passports of the world according to the number of countries their holders can travel without a prior visa. The ranking is based on exclusive data from the International Air Transport Association and lists the countries that can be accessed visa-free, with an electronic visa (e-TA),

or with a visa on arrival. According to the Henley Passport Index 2019 available on this website, India is ranked at 82," the MEA informed Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

"As more countries permit Indian passport holders to visit visa free or grant them visa on arrival facility, the rank of the Indian passport on the Henley Passport Index is expected to improve," it added.

"Extension of visa on arrival and visa-free entry is a unilateral decision of the receiving country. The government has been continuously liberalising the visa policy with the objective of promoting investments and tourism into India from other countries. The e-visa scheme has been further liberalised to allow business visits and medical treatment in India.

NIA to probe MLA's killing as HC quashes C'garh plea

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, NOV. 20

The Chhattisgarh high court on Wednesday rejected a petition by the Bhupesh Baghel government seeking to stop the NIA from probing the recent killing of BJP MLA from Dantewada Bheema Mandavi by Naxals.

Delivering its judgment, a division bench of the HC upheld the verdict pronounced earlier by a

single bench of the HC directing the state government to handover relevant files in the case to the NIA to help the probe agency to start inquiry into the incident. The HC division bench ruled that the NIA was empowered to probe the incident.

Earlier, the NIA had moved the Chhattisgarh HC seeking a directive by it to the state government to handover the relevant files in the case to it.

Jawan killed in avalanche laid to rest



Family members grieve at the funeral of martyr Manish Thakur, who was killed after being hit by an avalanche in the northern part of the Siachen Glacier, at his village Dochi in Solan district of Himachal Pradesh on Wednesday. The 21-year-old soldier was cremated with full state and military honours at his native village.

— PTI

Rly panel chief objects to Khushwant 'obscene' book

Bhopal, Nov. 20: The chairman of a railway committee on Wednesday directed a book vendor at the city's railway station to stop selling renowned writer Khushwant Singh's book *Women, Sex, Love and Lust*, saying that such "obscene" literature may spoil the future generation.

He also directed officials to ensure "such obscene things" are not sold at book stalls at Bhopal station.

Ramesh Chandra Ratn, chairman of Railways' Passenger Services Committee, who was on an inspection drive at the station, spotted late Singh's novel and another book on preventive measures during pregnancy put on display for sale at a stall. He immediately asked

► The panel chief directed a book vendor at a station to stop selling the renowned writer's book Women, Sex, Love and Lust, saying that such 'obscene' literature may spoil the future generation

the vendor to take the books off the shelf.

Mr Ratn also warned him that if such literature is kept on sale in the future, a fine would be imposed.

"This is a multi-purpose stall, so obscene things with such (covers) words should not be displayed. Officials have been cau-

tioned and directed to ensure such obscene things are not sold at the vends," Mr Ratn told reporters at the station.

On being asked that one of these books belonged to a renowned author, he said, "Look, whosoever may be the writer... I want to inform you all that, according to the by-laws, it is not permissible here. This is a stall of the Railways which runs according to a system."

"We don't want to spoil the future generation. Chetan Bhagat, too, is a writer of national fame," he said.

Two months ago, during an inspection at the New Delhi station, the official had reportedly also objected to Bhagat's novel *Half Girlfriend*. — PTI

■ Javadekar lauds role of cinema in growth of nation's culture

Glittering ceremony kickstarts Iffi

NITIN MAHAJAN
PANJIM, NOV. 20

With the promise of establishing a single window clearance system for promotion of foreign film shooting in the country, the 50th International Film Festival of India (Iffi) began in Panjim on Wednesday amid a glittering ceremony attended by legends from the film industry. The day also saw the festival celebrate the contribution of cine legends Amitabh Bachchan and Rajinikanth.

Speaking on the occasion, Union information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar lauded the role of Indian cinema fraternity in the growth of country's culture. "For promotion of the film industry we will soon



I&B minister Prakash Javadekar, superstars Amitabh Bachchan and Rajinikanth light the ceremonial lamp at the opening of the 50th edition of the Iffi.

— PTI

establish a single window system to allow easier clearances to film makers from abroad to shoot in India," Mr Javadekar added.

Pointing towards a new feature introduced in this

year's Iffi, Mr Javadekar said that films with special narrations will be screened for the visually-impaired. He called on the industry to emulate this feature so as to enhance its reach and involve this

section of society in the total film viewing experience.

Hindi film legend and superstar Amitabh Bachchan, also known as Big B, was honoured as a chief guest. A visibly emotional Amitabh thanked his fans for their continued support through his good and bad times. South Indian film legend Rajinikanth received the Icon of the Golden Jubilee. As the two icons were honoured on stage, the entire Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Stadium was on its feet to cheer them on.

Speaking on the occasion, Rajinikanth said "Amitabh Bachchanji is my inspiration" and dedicated his award to all his directors, producers, technicians and fans.

'NRC to be carried out across India'

■ Continued from Page 1
lakh people have been left out of the Assam NRC list. Those omitted include Hindus, Bengalis, Muslims, Gorkhas and Buddhists. They have been sent to detention centres. In West Bengal, we (TMC) will never allow any detention centre," she said, assuring people that she will never allow such a citizens' register in the state.

Ms Banerjee added the NRC in Assam was part of the Assam Accord signed during the tenure of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and that the exercise can never be implemented across the country. "There are a few people who are trying to create disturbances in West Bengal in the name of implementation of the NRC. I want to make it very clear; we will never allow NRC in Bengal. No one can take away your citizenship and turn you into a refugee. There can be no division on the basis of religion," Ms Banerjee said while addressing a public

meeting at Sagardighi in Murshidabad district. Before talking about implementing the NRC in West Bengal, the BJP should answer why 14 lakhs Hindus and Bengalis were omitted from the final NRC list in Assam, she said.

Mr Shah told the Rajya Sabha that though the Centre accepts that refugees — Hindus, Buddhists, Jains, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis — who left Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan due to religious atrocities should get Indian citizenship, he added that all citizens of India irrespective of religion will figure in the NRC list. "There is no provision in the NRC that people belonging to other religions will not be included in the register," he added. The NRC exercise in Assam followed a Supreme Court order in December 2014 for time-bound implementation, and remains under the court's direct monitoring. The RSS has been pushing for

the nationwide implementation of the exercise. The RSS' and the BJP's top leaders, in fact, held a meeting ahead of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid title suit verdict by the apex court and the RSS top brass, it was learnt, told the BJP leadership that the NRC should be implemented nationwide to check illegal immigrants. The NRC issue is often highlighted by the BJP leaders during election campaigning.

Assam's senior BJP leader Sarma, who is also the convener of the North-East Democratic Alliance, said on Wednesday that there were many flaws in the updated NRC, which was published on August 31 this year, as the mammoth exercise was carried out "unilaterally" by the then NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela.

He said since there was no scope to amend it, the state government as well as the ruling BJP have urged the Centre to "dismiss" the NRC in its current form.

ing on television, confirmed that the government will be formed at the earliest and the CM will be from Shiv Sena.

When asked about who will be the CM, Mr Raut said, "People of Maharashtra want Uddhav Thackeray to lead the government. The Congress and NCP's sentiment is also the same."

Assam: Fate of 19L out of NRC list unclear

■ Continued from Page 1

before the tribunals. Referring to the existing provision after the NRC's publication, the authorities said individuals whose names were not included in the NRC could not be declared as foreigners. "The NRC authorities would issue a rejection letter to all those whose names were not included. To establish their Indian citizenship, they will have to move the Foreigners Tribunals

in the stipulated period of 50 days," sources said, adding only Foreigners Tribunals or a court of law could declare an individual as a foreigner.

However, the NRC authorities are yet to get any directive from the MHA about individuals who refuse to go before the Foreigners Tribunals.

Admitting that the ministry was yet to take a decision on how to handle such situations, sources said there had been

instances of a large number of people failing to present their claim before the NRC authorities due to poverty. Noting that a large number of beggars and homeless people failed to present their case for inclusion, sources said the process of updating the NRC was aimed at stripping the citizenship of people whom the authorities describe as illegal immigrants from Bangladesh. People have to prove that they or

their family had moved to Assam before March 1971, when neighbouring Bangladesh gained independence.

Though it is yet to be assessed if the prime objective of updating the NRC was fulfilled or not, former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi has hailed the NRC as a "document for the future". Justice Gogoi said there was an "urgent need" to identify the illegal migrants in Assam.

'Total normalcy in J&K'

■ Continued from Page 1
"Internet in Kashmir will be restored as soon as local administration feels it is fit to do so."

Restrictions on public movement and communications were enforced in Jammu and Kashmir on August 5 as the government divested the state of its special status and bifurcated it into two Union territories — J&K and Ladakh.

Several top political leaders of the Valley, including National Conference's Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, and Peoples Democratic Party's Mehbooba Mufti, have been kept under deten-

tion. Citing figures, Mr Shah further said, "About 99.7 per cent of students have given Class 9 and 10 exams. Hospitals are also functioning and the number of people visiting the Out Patient Department (OPD) has increased in Srinagar. Medicines are being made available in the valley and there is no shortage. Mobile vans and vending machines were also made available... If any one has information that a particular person in a remote area is not getting medical facility, they can contact me directly. I will get it done in 24 hours."

Govt to sell stake in 5 PSUs

■ Continued from Page 1
cent in Numaligarh Refinery Limited (NRL), which is part of BPCL and its management control thereon have been kept out of the ambit of the Cabinet decision.

Ms Sitharaman said that NRL will be handed over to a public sector oil company to allay concerns of the Northeast over the decision of the Centre. The Centre has also decided to divest its 63.75 per cent share in SCI along with transfer of management control to a strategic buyer.

Similarly, in Concor too, the government has decided to divest 30.8 per cent of its share out of the 54.8 per cent equity it

holds in the company, along with transfer of management control to a strategic buyer.

Apart from this, the Cabinet also decided to divest its 74.23 per cent shareholding in Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Limited THD-CIL along with transfer of management control to an identified CPSE strategic buyer, namely, NTPC, the finance minister informed further.

In North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Limited, the government will completely divest its 100 per cent stake along with transfer of management control to an identified CPSE strategic buyer, namely, NTPC.

Mahinda named new Lanka PM

■ Continued from Page 1

remain Prime Minister. It may also be recalled that during the spat between Mr Sirisena and Mr Wickremesinghe, it was Mr Wickremesinghe who was seen as very close to India and his departure from the prime ministership is now being seen by many as a setback to India.

It may further be recalled that during the presidency of Mahinda Rajapaksa from 2005 to 2015, Chinese submarines were found moving in Sri Lankan waters and India had expressed its concerns at that time. New Delhi hopes to stave off any renewed pronounced pro-China tilt now by Colombo through a policy of active engagement with Sri Lanka.

As reported on Tuesday, new Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa will visit India on November 29, with New Delhi having swiftly extended an invitation to him on Tuesday in person through external affairs minister S. Jaishankar in Colombo. Mr Jaishankar had dashed off to Sri Lanka on a two-day visit beginning Tuesday, and had met the Sri Lankan President.

Epitomising the style & the totality of the teacher's vision of a form



Leela Venkataraman
focus

■ In New Delhi last week were two dancers, Ragini Chandrasekhar and Sujatha Mohapatra, faithfully epitomising in every detail of their respective recitals in Bharatanatyam and in Odissi, the style and the totality of the guru's vision of the particular form

How much of the Guru is reflected in the art of even those who could be counted amongst the most eminently teachable of students in their younger days, is interesting to see, for the Guru-shishya alchemy works differently in each case. Among some of the stalwarts who trained under Meenakshi Sundaram Pillai (amongst others) like Shanta Rao, Rukmini Devi, Mrinalini Sarabhai, U.S. Krishna Rao and Chandrabhaga — no two danced the same way. In New Delhi last week were two dancers, Ragini Chandrasekhar and Sujatha Mohapatra, faithfully epitomising in every detail of their respective recitals in Bharatanatyam and in Odissi, the style and the totality of the Guru's vision of the particular form.

While Ragini credited the moulding of her dance sensibilities to the cumulative teaching of her mentors — K.J. Govindarajan, K.N. Dakshinamoorthy, Kalanidhi Narayanan, Karaikudi Shivakumar — all with the oversight of her mother Jamuna Krishnan, her lifetime Guru and inspiration, it was Jamuna Krishnan's dance perception and compositions one was treated to in the tribute to her mother, at the IIC — the poignancy of the occasion entailing mind-body involvement bringing out the best in the dancer. Even the demanding rhythmic virtuosic sequences, as in the curtain raiser *Pushpanjali* in Nalinakanti with Karaikudi Shivakumar's khanda nadai/tisranadai nritta setting of the laghu/dritam of the Aditalam, it was an absorbed inner dancer's expression, with nothing of showmanship. The dancer's evolved maturity, able to search the depths of what she had received as a strong foundation, was best revealed in the centre-piece of the Lalgudi Jayaraman Varnam in Charukesi "*Innum en manam ariyaa-davarpol*" for which the dance visualisation was the handiwork of two Gurus no longer with us — Jamuna, who set the lyrics, and Karaikudi Shivakumar, who created the jatis. Ragini's rendition was further inspired by evocative orchestral support, starting with the Laya: taut clarity in enunciation of Sharanya Chandran's nattuvangam — totally sans histrionic flourishes, *bhav* evocative singing by vocalist K. Venkateshan, incisively melodic violinist Raghavendra Prasad, and not least, the experienced mridangam percussion by M.V. Chandrasekhar.

Starting from the Mukundamala prelude sung in viruttam in ragas, the very first statement in Charukesi revealed the *abhinaya* sensitivity, with Ragini while showing the *navika* questioning the justice of Krishna's pretence of not knowing her feelings towards him, in a fleeting punctuational

moment, showing Krishna's attitude, prompting the query. The expressive part combined the narrative with the interpretative, with metaphors like the bee and the lotus revealing the mercurial nature of Krishna. The rendition touched a crescendo in the charanam refrain, wherein the *navika* calls out to the beautiful charmer with the flute to come and put an end to her unfulfilled desire. "*Kuzhal oodum azhaga Kanna kurai teera va*". The flawlessly executed teermanam links were a frequent pointer to the rhythmic genius of Karaikudi Shivakumar — in the manner the sollukettus were put together and the way he seemed to play with rhythm — with nothing predictable about any teermanam (and the variety he could weave into chaturam and tisram combinations was his own) — not forgetting the sudden changes in tone bringing in an element of surprise. Each of the performers seemed charged, with Ragini herself revelling in the "rasa" of both rhythm and music.

No homage to Jamuna can ignore her special research into Vidayapathi's verses (her collections covered *navikas* — Radha in this poet's case — in all situations of love with Krishna). With music also composed by her, the totality represented that aspect of her creative sensibilities enriched by both the poetry and the music of North India. Ragini presented Krishna in Viraha with the *sakhi* pleading with Radha to abandon her baseless pride and put an end to the agony of her beloved. As in many Padam compositions — that even the all-powerful are made weak by unrequited love — is mentioned here too with the *sakhi* pleading Krishna's case, saying that the mighty one who carried the Govardhan on his little finger and who danced on the hood of Kaliya, now lies supine, pining for his loved one. Jamuna's composition in Sindhubhairavi was given a lilting raga prelude on the violin. Ragini's interpretation left little to be desired. The Javali in Kamas was what the dancer had imbibed from Kalanidhi Narayanan. It shows the Mugdha Nayika struggling between the intense temptation to respond to Lord Venkateshwara's call of love, and the warnings by the *sakhi* not to fall for his wiles. "*Apudo Manasu nilchunute*," she says. How does one still the natural sparks when one like Lord Venkatesh himself makes the advances? The erotic feelings of an inexperienced *navika* were subtly brought out. With the Tillana finale in Tilang, a Lalgudi Jayaraman composition, Ragini had done her mother's memory proud.

Experiencing for the umpteenth time the standing ovation given to Odissi dancer Sujatha Mohapatra at the Kamani for her recital on the second evening of Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan's 11th Sangeet Samaroh commemorating 81 years of service in preserving and nurturing India's cultural traditions, one wondered at the oft-made remark about the same old repertoire creating a *deja vu* rejection in audiences. Never aspiring to go beyond what Guru

Kelucharan Mohapatra instilled in her, daughter-in-law Sujatha Mohapatra teaching at Srjan today seems totally unruffled about repeating the Guru's repertoire, proving the shelf life of this teacher's creations and/or Sujatha's ability to keep them ever fresh through endless repetitions. The only inclusion in her presentations, over the years, beyond Guruji's work has been a few compositions choreographed by his son now heading Srjan, Ratikant Mohapatra. She began with the customary Odissi start with Mangalacharan, the Stuti in Raga Kedar (Raghunath Panigrahi's musical composition) dedicated to Ram — the poetry describing the Lotus-eyed Lord (Sarasijanayana) — ever pleasant ("Suprasannam"), clad in Peethavastram, as the strong Bowman — travelling to Ayodhya in the Pushpan Viman, to be crowned king. Sujatha's incredible *nritta* perfection in profile and *Jaya* had full play in the Pallavi (Damodar Hota's music composition) "*Yugmadwanda*" in Bageshri, with its blend of grace and verve. Roopak Parida's vocal support with Ekalavya Mudali on the mardal percussion did full justice to the music with melodious instrumental interventions by Rameshchandra on violin and Srinivas Satpathy on flute. The Ashtapadi with Bhuvaneshwar Misra's music in Pahadi set to Jati tala showing Radha's confiding in the *sakhi* about her maiden intimate encounter with Krishna contained sringar rasa in all the underplayed intensity of desire.

But nothing could beat the finale of Shabari, portraying the encounter of the near-blind, aged tribal devotee of Lord Ram offering the simple berries growing in her backyard as her offering after tasting each fruit to be satisfied on its ripeness and taste. Ram's reactions and joyful acceptance were again fleetingly shown. One has to admire the choreography of Ratikant Mohapatra, wherein an episode was given a treatment making it into a composition, and with a story which could so easily be exaggerated, Sujatha's contained *abhinaya* had all the conviction, bringing tears to the eyes of the beholder. What this writer had seen a year and a half back (when it was a bit over the hill) has been tautened a great deal. Kudos to the entire team!

The writer is an eminent dance critic



Will Fukushima's food be served at 2020 Olympics?

Karyn Nishimura
aside

FUKUSHIMA, JAPAN: For years, Japan's government has sought to convince consumers that food from Fukushima is safe despite the nuclear disaster. But will it serve the region's produce at the Tokyo Olympics?

It's a thorny subject for the authorities. They pitched the Games in part as a chance to showcase the recovery of areas affected by the 2011 tsunami and nuclear disaster.

Government officials tout strict checks on food from the region as evidence that the produce is completely safe, but it remains unclear whether athletes and sports teams from around the world will be convinced.

In the Fukushima region, producers are keen to see their products served at the Olympic village and have submitted a bid to the organisers. "The Fukushima region has put forward food from 187 producers and is second only to Hokkaido when it comes to meeting the specified crite-

ria in terms of range of products," said Shigeyuki Honma, assistant director general of the local government's agriculture and forestry planning division.

"Fukushima wants to serve athletes its rice, its fruits, beef and vegetables. But the committee still has to decide."

In the years since the nuclear disaster, when tsunami waves overwhelmed the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear plant, strict measures have been in place to screen all manner of local products. And officials say the figures speak for themselves.

Japan allows a maximum of 100 becquerels of caesium radioactivity per kilogramme (Bq/kg). The European Union, by comparison, sets that level at 1,250 Bq/kg and the US at 1,200. From April 2018 to March this year, 9.21 million bags of rice were examined, with not a single one exceeding the Japanese limit. The same for 2,455 samples of fruit and vegetables, 4,336 pieces of meat and 6,187 ocean fish. "Only river fish and wild mushrooms have on just six occasions been found to exceed the limits," said Kenji Kusano, director of the Fukushima Agricultural Technology

Centre, in Koriyama, the government's main screening site.

But the figures have only gone some way to reassuring foreign officials: numerous countries including China, South Korea, and the United States maintain restrictions on the import of some or all produce from Fukushima. South Korea, which is currently locked in a dispute with Japan over wartime issues, has been vocal about its concerns ahead of the Olympics, even raising the possibility of bringing in its own kitchen and food.

"We have requested the Olympic organisers to provide objective data verified by an independent third body," the South Korean Sports and Olympic Committee said in a statement earlier this year.

"Since Japan repeatedly said its food from Fukushima is safe, we have demanded they provide statistics and data to back up their claims," an official with the committee told AFP.

The position underlines a long-running problem for Japan: while it points to its extensive, government-mandated checks as proof of safety, many abroad feel the government is not an objective arbiter. — AFP

Every nice piece of work needs the right person in the right place at the right time

Can one ever get to a superior society based on co-operation and love by appealing to selfishness and hatred?

THE ASIAN AGE

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THE ASIAN AGE

21 NOVEMBER 2019

Why can't Farooq, PC attend Winter Session?

There is deep irony in that two of the most senior, most experienced and most articulate members of Parliament — Farooq Abdullah, a former J&K chief minister and former Union minister, a sitting member of the Lok Sabha, and P. Chidambaram, a former Union home and finance minister, who is a Rajya Sabha member — are in jail and can't attend the Winter Session.

Their imprisonment is a sorry reflection on the working of our democracy. This is because, to an ordinary observer, both arrests would seem arbitrary, unjustified, flowing from executive hubris and ill-will, and shot through with a streak of political animosity.

Strictly speaking, the arrests may not be illegal. This is because, in Dr Abdullah's case, the government chose to first arrest him without citing any reason (on a preventive detention basis after the constitutional dismemberment of J&K state) but later implausibly pulled him in under the draconian Public Safety Act.

The Centre can fairly be questioned for ill-treating an 83-year old. Not only has a nervous Centre arrested an elderly public figure, it also sought to malign him and his family — besides hundreds of other Kashmiri leaders also jailed — as being corrupt without an ounce of proof.

(The story of Kashmir being locked down for over 100 days since August 5 is a separate discussion. Even so, it's necessary to point out that Parliament has not been informed of the reasons for doing so, as some European Parliament members were given a guided tour and feted in Srinagar in a desperate bid to appease international opinion.)

Mr Chidambaram was arrested in dramatic fashion from his Delhi residence on August 21 midnight. The investigative agencies' officers clambered over walls without warning as though they were dealing with a dreaded terrorist.

Since then the former minister has been lodged in Tihar Jail or in the CBI lockup. He has been subjected to intensive and lengthy investigation-related interviews by officials of the CBI, Enforcement Directorate and income-tax department in two separate matters, the INX Media case and a money-laundering case. Three months of custodial interrogation when all the evidence is document-based is shocking. To a lay person, this would suggest the government has a poor case. Therefore, it would seem that his arrest — which also seems an attempt at personal humiliation — may be rooted in political vendetta. Even the decisions of the judicial authorities to virtually hand the CBI and ED a carte blanche to practically arrest Mr Chidambaram at will is likely to make a disbelieving public worry about the state of our judiciary.

The presiding officers of the two Houses have not informed members of the reasons for these two high-profile arrests. They must do so right away. The way things stand, it would appear that the government is worried that Dr Abdullah and Mr Chidambaram, were they present in Parliament and spoke, would expose its arbitrariness and misuse of power.

US sets a bad example

Reversing decades of established policy, the United States has softened its stance on Israeli settlements in the occupied West Bank, saying such occupation is not inconsistent with international law. This turns on its head not only America's stance but that of the West on these settlements that have not only changed the land's demographics but also its topography. The US move won't change the fundamentals of the ground situation, where great insecurities prevailed for years among Israelis and Palestinians since 1967.

What the Donald Trump-inspired move does is to license Israel's occupation and emboldens it, further deepening the depression of the Palestinians. Mr Trump may have acted not only to lift Israeli morale but also to give the tottering Benjamin Netanyahu a chance to remain in power. It's also a deeper message to American Jews, whose votes Mr Trump needs as he seeks re-election next year.

In the world's eyes, the Jewish settlers on the West Bank have been outlaws for over half a century, their presence a cruel infliction on Arabs. The US action doesn't alter international law, which rightly forbids states from moving their civilians on to occupied land at the expense of local populations. Israel has held the West Bank territory, once part of the Ottoman Empire, after seizing it from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War.

There is nothing new in the US bias towards Israel, except that Mr Trump is going way beyond the norm in not only shifting the US embassy in Jerusalem but also recognising Israel's absolute right to the occupied territory. What signal this gives to countries that eye territories of others and are willing to breach the sovereignty of nations is anybody's guess.

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Zahid Hussain

View from Pakistan

PML-N needs a leader; split looms for PTI

Nawaz Sharif has finally flown out but it's not curtains yet. It's now the beginning of Act 2 of the ongoing political saga. The ailing former Prime Minister is not likely to return soon to resume his prison sentence and his departure has not lowered the political temperature.

Sharif's departure, following protracted legal and political battles, may have also given the PML-N some relief, but the political party's trials and tribulations are far from over. There are other factors that have helped Sharif's departure, even if rumours of a backroom deal are not true. With a number of its leaders behind bars, or facing NAB investigations, combined with Sharif's deteriorating health condition, the PML-N has a serious leadership crisis on its hands.

Even though the former PM was in prison, his presence in the coun-

try had given the party something to rally around. The strong probability of his not returning, even on health grounds, is likely to affect his credibility. The immediate issue before the PML-N is how to maintain unity in its ranks in the face of a clampdown, and continue to fight back. Maryam Nawaz, who is out on bail, will be guiding the party, but her restrictions are obvious.

There is no sign of the PTI government pulling back from the politics of vendetta. Sharif's release on bail, and the court order allowing him to leave the country by removing the indemnity condition, seems to have hardened Imran Khan's rhetoric against the opposition. His speech on Monday betrayed his anger and frustration, and brought out his authoritarian streak. He was visibly upset with the judiciary for what was perceived as "unfavourable" rulings. True to form, Imran

is unwilling to see the ominous signs on the political horizon. The ongoing political crisis has exposed fault lines in a fragile coalition. There was a sharp divide over whether to allow Sharif to fly out for medical treatment. For the first time since coming to power 15 months ago, the ruling alliance faces the possibility of a split.

Not only did the allied parties come out publicly with their dissent, the divisions within the PTI were also noticeable. The most scathing criticism of the government's approach in dealing with political issues came from the PML-Q leadership. Interestingly, while Imran Khan was on a warpath with Maulana Fazlur Rehman, the Chaudhry brothers were hobnobbing with the JUI-F leader eulogising his "political acumen". They also distanced the PML-Q from the government's position on the

Nawaz Sharif issue. The position of the MQM, another key ally, has not been very different.

Indeed, the JUI-F dharna ending with a whimper has been met with sighs of relief by the PTI government, but the problem has not gone away completely. The crafty Maulana Fazlur Rehman is not going to give up easily. Imran's unyielding fight on all fronts may cost his government, that is confronted with serious economic challenges, dearly. The cracks in the ranks could widen if the PM does not exercise prudence. Nothing could be more damaging for a government with a weak governance record than to open up too many fronts. The problem is that Imran Khan has become a prisoner of his own rhetoric.

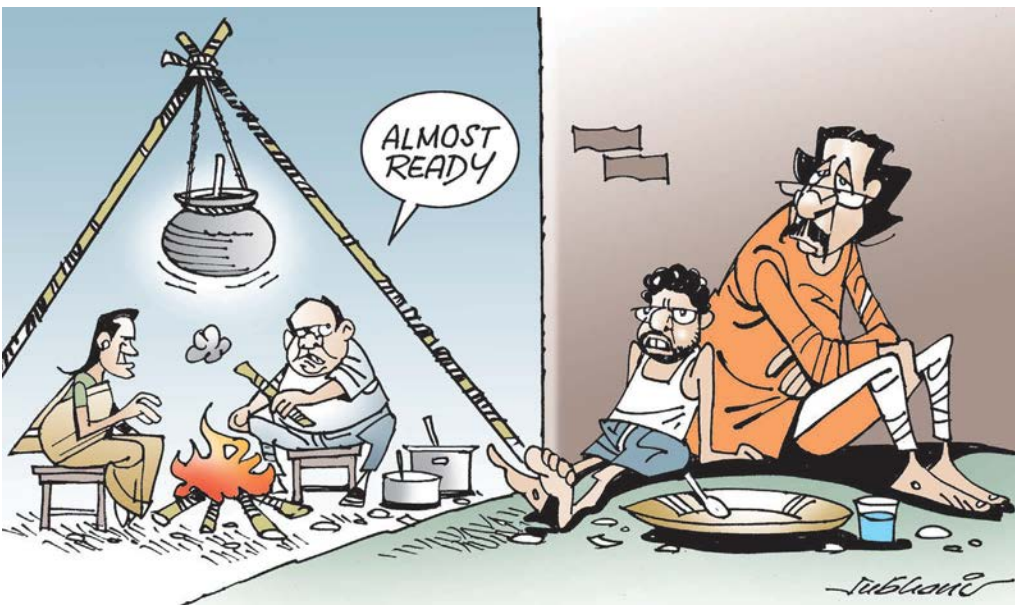
In the midst of all this, the latest statement from ISPR emphasising that the civil and military leaderships are on the same page has

raised eyebrows. A major question is, what was the need of such a statement at this point? Of course, there have been all kinds of conspiracy theories circulating around regarding a perceived conflict between the government and military leadership. Still, there is no rational reason for issuing a clarification.

The present political crisis is largely of the government's own making. Publicly abusing opposition leaders and making speeches that threaten to put everyone in jail will not end corruption. Imran Khan's arbitrary style of governance has weakened the institutional workings of the state. His threatening declarations have made the whole accountability process questionable. The challenges for Imran Khan are no less in Act 2 of the political saga.

By arrangement with Dawn

Subhani



Amid a changing world, can Brics find new role?



P.S. Raghavan

Geopolitical and economic challenges formed the backdrop to the recent Brics (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) summit in Brasilia. Its declaration confirmed convergences, nuanced differences and several suppressed disagreements.

A British economist had coined the acronym "Bric" in 2001, identifying four high-growth economies that could dominate the world by 2050. The idea of forming a group, to translate this economic potential into political influence, came from Russia's President Vladimir Putin in 2007. Russia hosted a Bric foreign ministers' meeting in 2008 and the first Bric summit in 2009.

The Bric partnership gave Russia an alternative to its worsening ties with Nato over the Western alliance's eastward advance towards its borders. An economically resurgent China appreciated a platform to demand the democratisation of global economic governance, from which it had much to gain. India welcomed a vehicle to promote multi-polarity in global decision-making. The induction of Brazil provided comfort that Bric would not be drawn into a Russia-China confrontation with the West. This construct also tied in with Brazil's ambition for expanding its global footprint.

By 2012, a self-perception of its global influence encouraged "Brics" (South Africa joined it in 2011) to pronounce views on every major global development. Its 2013 declaration envisaged a coordination mechanism on key global political and economic issues. In a flight of hyperbole, the 2015 declaration described Brics as a "strategic partnership". This exaggerated notion was undermined by developments such as the acrimonious standoff between Russia and the United States, intensifying the Russia-China partnership, China's

assertiveness in India's near and extended neighbourhood, the India-US partnership in the Indo-Pacific and a new Brazilian government with a different worldview from that of his predecessors. China's growing economic clout in Brics also influences its dynamics: its GDP is more than double, and its foreign exchange reserves nearly triple, those of the other countries combined.

These realities are reflected in the Brics summit declarations. The Brasilia declaration notes shared perceptions on global economic and financial governance. The primacy of the UN, commitment to an equitable multipolar world order, strengthening multilateralism, respecting sovereignty and non-intervention in internal affairs of states are staple Brics tenets, though their interpretation by each country depends on its national interest in specific circumstances. The same goes for Brics' support for the UN Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

The Chinese "all-weather" support for Pakistan precludes references to cross-border terrorism or Pakistan's role in terror sponsorship. Hence, the Brasilia declaration (like its predecessors) has boilerplate text, condemning terrorism "in all its forms and manifestations" and exhorting countries to prevent terror financing. The absence of substantive content is compensated by new dialogue mechanisms: the Brics counter-terrorism working group constituted five sub-groups on various aspects of counter-terrorism. India is to chair one of them.

The Chinese views are also the main obstacle to Brics support for India's permanent membership of the United Nations Security Council. Brazil is also an aspirant. South Africa's candidature needs endorsement by the African Union. As in earlier years, the leaders

merely reaffirmed Chinese and Russian support for the aspirations of Brazil, India and South Africa "to play a greater role in the UN".

The Brics leaders supported the UN-led efforts for a Syrian political process, acknowledging the contribution of the "Astana guarantors" (Russia, Turkey and Iran) and calling for urgent humanitarian aid to all Syrians, as distinct from the US opposition to aid for areas under Syrian government control. The leaders called for a peaceful resolution of the conflicts in Yemen and Libya, an "Afghan-owned and Afghan-led" reconciliation process in Afghanistan, denuclearisation of the Korean peninsula and a two-state solution of the Israel-Palestine impasse, though the actions of some deviate from these precepts. The current US consultations on Afghanistan with Russia, China and Pakistan are neither an "Afghan-owned" nor "Afghan-led" process.

The formulation on Israel-Palestine does not mention the status of Jerusalem: the new Brazilian government supports the US endorsement of Israel's claim on it. Another victim of the Brics consensus is the 2015 international nuclear deal with Iran (JCPOA). Brics supported JCPOA even after the US withdrawal from it. Brazil's support for the US position meant the absence of JCPOA from the Brasilia declaration.

Over the years, Brics has established an elaborate dialogue architecture. The Brasilia declaration lists 116 meetings, conferences and other events in 2019, at ministerial, official, technical, business, judicial, legislative and people-to-people levels. Though this proliferation may have been motivated mainly by the desire to rack up numbers, it does seem to have generated some mutually beneficial cooperation. Among the promising ones are plat-

Expectations of an international organisation should be pegged to realities. The geographical, political and economic diversity of Brics defines the limits of its cohesion.

forms for agriculture research and energy research cooperation, partnership in elements of the New Industrial Revolution, and collaborative research on tuberculosis.

Intra-Brics trade is regularly discussed in meetings at ministerial, official and technical levels. A Brics Business Council, established in 2013, has made recommendations on trade in national currencies, visa liberalisation and standards harmonization, but with limited success. A Women's Business Alliance was launched at Brasilia, to bring a new perspective on business issues.

The New Development Bank (NDB) is Brics' most tangible achievement. It finances infrastructure projects, setting priorities and lending guidelines as per the countries' requirements. Every Brics country contributes equally to its capital of \$50 billion (to be increased to \$100 billion) and has equal voting rights. This sets the bank apart from other international financial institutions. In about three years, NDB has approved projects with a total value of \$12.5 billion, considerably higher than the portfolio of the better-resourced China-led Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, established at around the same time. NDB is now considering new members, within the condition of its founding agreement that Brics capital in the bank shall not fall below 55 per cent.

Expectations of an international organisation should be pegged to objective realities. The geographical, political and economic diversity of Brics determines the limits of its cohesion. Its leaders have shown the pragmatism to stress convergences and downplay divergences. Shared multilateral interests temper inimical behaviour in bilateral relations. Mutually beneficial intra-Brics cooperation is a useful cementing factor. In its decade of existence, Brics has found new ways to sustain its relevance for its members.

The writer is a former diplomat, and chairman of the National Security Advisory Board. The views expressed here are personal.

LETTERS

CRUSHING BLOW

India's state-run banks reported fraud worth ₹958 billion (\$13.3 billion) from April to end-September of this year, Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said. This news comes as the country is struggling in the face of a major economic slowdown that is fast taking the shape of a recession. With major industrialists and businessmen like Vijay Mallya, Jatin Mehta, et al, flying out of the country leaving it with a huge non-performing assets burden, this news of more bank frauds even after Modi 2.0 has settled in office is crushing. Any comments, FM?

Siddhartha Robin
New Delhi

THE IDEA OF JNU

THIS REFERS to the editorial, "Govt backlash intensifies against the idea of JNU" (Nov. 20). Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee got his master's degree from JNU. He said that JNU gave him the opportunity to know about real India for the first time. JNU's fee structure and its strict adherence to the policy on which it was created — which is to give the opportunity of education even to the poverty-stricken provided they are deserving — has helped it become a model for pluralistic India. Meritorious students from rural India, adivasi India, dalit India and economically challenged India get a chance to pursue higher studies in JNU. Instead of destroying the egalitarian idea of JNU, it is necessary to spread this idea to other universities as well.

Sujit De
Kolkata

BACKWARD-LOOKING

THE YOGI ADITYANATH government in UP will now change the name of Agra district, apparently renaming it "Agrawan", even as "evidence" is being compiled by professors of Delhi's Ambedkar University to justify the change. It seems the place was known as Agrawan in the days of the Mahabharata, though there is no surety as to when this epic was written — scholars say it is anywhere between 5,000 BC and 1,000 BC. Perhaps the government should give up on this count and focus on reducing farm distress and improving law and order in the state.

Mohammed Arif
Bengaluru

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Rap music with lyrics that emphasise responsibility and morality

A student who has poor research skills and lacks the ability to think critically

THE ASIAN AGE

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Oped

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The long and short of Shiv Sena’s rebellion



Sunil Gatade

As the Hindutva allies fell apart over power sharing in Maharashtra, the obituary reference to Arun Jaitley in the Rajya Sabha on the opening day of the Winter Session this week showed the Shiv Sena’s bitterness against the BJP’s top brass. Paying glowing tributes to Jaitley, Sena leader Sanjay Raut recalled the departed leader’s qualities of head and heart, noting that Jaitley’s death was a huge loss for the Sena as “we have learnt from him on how to maintain relations” (in politics). He said whether in politics or personal life, Jaitley never spoke untruths. His remarks were an oblique attack on BJP president Amit Shah, whom the Sena has accused of “betrayal” on the chief ministership issue. Without doubt, the unthinkable has happened in Maharashtra. The BJP and the Shiv Sena, which always pro-

claimed themselves as Ram bhakts, have formally parted ways over government formation in the state soon after the Ayodhya verdict. Shiv Sena MPs have been granted seats on the Opposition benches in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha, a signal from the BJP that the erstwhile ally is “persona non grata” in the NDA. The BJP and the Shiv Sena were once inseparable twins in what was a Congress-dominated state where the grand old party held sway till 1995, when the first Sena-BJP government was elected, and the coalition era began in the state. Not long ago, the BJP was the laggard in the state and it was known as “shetji-bhatji” party (Bania-Brahmin outfit) like its predecessor, the erstwhile Jan Sangh. With Uddhav Thackeray’s refusal to go along with the BJP after the polls, the ruling party at the Centre has been given a sudden jolt. But for those who follow the politics of Maharashtra, the jolt was not unexpected.

The BJP might deny it, but signals were clear that it was getting ready to dump the Sena after the Assembly polls as it was more than confident of gaining a majority on its own in the 288-member House or making up the majority with a few Independents. Such a situation would have left no room for the Sena. Former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis’ frequent boast that “I will be back” had left no one in doubt that the Sena was there to either play second fiddle or to be kicked out. Now with the BJP’s calculations going awry, Mr Thackeray has struck accusing the BJP of betrayal on the issue of granting chief ministership to the Sena, a claim flatly rejected by the BJP. Maharashtra’s politics has been thrown into a churn. The parting of ways between the saffron allies is set to have a deep impact on Maharashtra’s politics, where the BJP is the elephant in the room since Narendra Modi became Prime Minister in May 2014. The BJP has suddenly become the common enemy of three key political outfits in the state — the Shiv Sena, the Sharad Pawar-led NCP and the Congress. How the three parties go about in their opposition to the BJP would decide how politics take shape in the months and years ahead. No doubt Maharashtra has

The BJP and the Shiv Sena were once inseparable twins in what was a Congress-dominated state where the grand old party held sway till 1995, when the first Sena-BJP government was elected, and the coalition era began in the state

entered into an uncertain political phase with “big brother” BJP watching silently for the right opportunity to strike. Amit Shah is not a man known to take things lying down. But the real question is — why did the Sena revolt? Those who follow the Maharashtra political scene had been observing the growing unease in the Sena since it suddenly became junior to the BJP in state politics and losing its “elder brother” status from the start of the alliance that arose from the need for a united fight against the then dominant Congress. The BJP under Narendra Modi and Amit Shah is a different outfit for the Sena unlike the BJP under Atal Behari Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani. Mr Modi, ably assisted by Mr Shah, was the first BJP leader to secure a majority for the BJP in the Lok Sabha. The Modi-Shah duo won the Lok Sabha elections for the second

time with a spectacular 303 in the 543-member House. The best the BJP could get was 182 in the Lok Sabha in the Vajpayee-Advani era in 1999, in the wake of the Kargil conflict. Whenever in Mumbai, Mr Vajpayee and Mr Advani would visit “Matoshree”, the Thackeray residence in suburban Bandra, to meet Bal Thackeray. That stopped after Mr Modi became Prime Minister and in the early days, the BJP made it a point to plant stories in the media ahead of the PM’s or the party chief’s visits to Mumbai that they did not intend to visit Matoshree. It was to drive home the point that the Sena was no longer a vital ally for the BJP in the changed circumstances. The first major shock to the Sena was the surprise announcement by the BJP ahead of the Assembly elections in October 2014 that it was going solo. The announcement came in the midst of talks on seat-sharing with the Sena when Uddhav was not giving the requisite number of seats as sought by the BJP. It was a bolt from the blue for the Sena, while for the BJP it was a well-crafted strategy to leave its oldest ideological partner high and dry in the middle of the election season. The resource-rich BJP made most of the breakup with the Sena by admitting several leaders from the Congress and the

NCP to ensure that it hits the bulls’ eye. The BJP got 122 seats in the 288-member House to emerge as the single largest party. The Sena, which fought valiantly, won just 63 seats. Interestingly, Sharad Pawar’s decision to support the BJP from outside on the plea of ensuing stability in Maharashtra resulted in the Sena’s bargaining power going for a toss. For a brief time, the Sena was in the Opposition and its leader Eknath Shinde also got Leader of the Opposition status. With great difficulty, the Sena managed to get into the government but failed to get good ministries. At the Centre too, the Sena was given the heavy industries portfolio, a “passenger” ministry with which it was not comfortable. After the Lok Sabha elections in May this year, the Sena was again handed the same ministry despite the fact that the party had made it clear it did not want that ministry. The BJP’s unwritten message was “take it or leave it”. What made matters worse for the Sena was the way the BJP was making strides in local elections at the cost of other parties, including the Sena. The Opposition leaders used to allege at that time that the “resource-rich” BJP was using every trick in the trade to marginalise its rivals and Sena leaders too used to privately agree with such charges.

Since the BJP and the Sena share the same political space of Hindutva in Maharashtra, it was clear the growth of one would be at the cost of the other. Some two years back, a sulking Uddhav Thackeray had lamented that the Sena’s 25 years in alliance with the BJP were “wasted” years. At the same time, the Sena passed a resolution at its national convention declaring that henceforth, it would fight all elections on its own. Just before the Lok Sabha polls, Amit Shah visited Matoshree and had extended the olive branch, apparently to ensure there was no division of the Hindutva vote in the polls, including that of the Assembly. Uddhav apparently sensed a plot by the BJP, and drove a hard bargain. When the BJP campaign on Kashmir, Article 370 and triple talaq failed to make any impact and local issues, including agrarian distress, played a part, it threw up a verdict that was unpalatable to the BJP. Sulking for long under the BJP’s “big brother” attitude, the Sena chief sensed that it was the time to strike, and sought the chief ministership as per the “50:50” power-sharing deal arrived at with the BJP. The BJP denied any such agreement and the rest, as they say, is history.

The writer is a journalist based in New Delhi

Hong Kong’s authorities have dug themselves a hole and there’s no way out



Mahir Ali

The Polytechnic University of Hong Kong was under siege at the time of writing, surrounded by riot police. The authorities declared that the protesters holed up on the campus, most of them students, had no option other than to surrender. The unrest in Hong Kong, sparked some five months ago by a legislative bill that would have formalised extradition to mainland China, has since morphed into a far broader rebellion, which helps explain why the withdrawal of the offending legislation has failed to mollify the citizenry, particularly its younger components. When Hong Kong was finally decolonised 22 years ago, the agreement under which the British colonial power handed it over to China specified “one country, two systems”, which entailed relative autonomy for the “special administrative territory” for the next 50 years. Not surprisingly, the extradition bill was widely perceived as a further dilution of that promised autonomy. At the same time, factions among the protesters who have been waving the Union Jack or seeking American intervention tend to consist of those who are too young to remember the depredations of British colonialism. Thirty years before the 1997 handover, for instance, when a labour dispute at a factory producing plastic flowers transmogrified into demonstrations and riots, the confrontation led to 51 deaths. The protesters at the time were attracted, rather than repelled, by what Peking — as it was then known — stood for. Their identification with Mao Zedong’s Cultural Revolution may have been misguided, but perhaps no more so than the tendency among some of today’s revolting multitudes to look to Donald Trump or Boris Johnson as the means of salvation. Overall, though, the thrust of the current rebellion is towards democratisation and self-determination, which militates against everything Xi Jinping stands for. The Chinese President’s attitude towards nonconformists has lately been underlined by official documents leaked to the *New York Times* about Beijing’s repression of Uighurs in Xinjiang province, which seeks to effectively obliterate the identity of an ethnic minority on the basis that a minuscule proportion within it strayed towards Islamist extremism. It should hardly come as a surprise that the vast majority of Muslim nations have turned a blind eye to Chinese excesses on this front. And, among the few exceptions, Turkey can credibly be accused of hypocrisy, given its own attitude towards the Kurds.

The dastardly attitude towards the Uighurs, millions of whom have been incarcerated in “re-education” camps cannot be replicated in Hong Kong, a regional financial hub that hosts hundreds of thousands of expatriates. The idea that the territory would operate under special rules for 50 years may have seemed reasonable at a time when it was presumed that political liberalisation would accompany China’s tendency towards capitalist growth. But Xi’s ascendancy, in particular, has shattered that presumed paradigm. The economic growth rate has lately slowed, but remains far ahead of the average in the so-called developed world. That hasn’t prevented China from throwing its weight about, including on foreign campuses where Chinese students loyal to Beijing have vociferously resisted any tendencies towards token support for the dissidents in Hong Kong. Meanwhile, Chinese-controlled state and social media is increasingly inclined towards maligning the refuseniks as not just traitors but terrorists — in what could be seen as another reflection of the Uighur situation. The *People’s Daily*, a mouthpiece for the Chinese Communist Party, has declared that there is no room for compromise. If that is, indeed, the official position, there’s no telling where the mass revolt in Hong Kong might lead. The local security forces have thus far resorted to tear gas, water cannons and rubber bullets, with the protesters improvising a violent response with bows and arrows, slingshots, bricks and incendiary Molotov cocktails. The chaos in Hong Kong has repeatedly shut it down, and it has been suggested that next Sunday’s municipal elections may be put off. That, again, would be provocative. On the other hand, given the predilections of both sides, it is difficult to see where all this will end. There have been threats of replacing rubber bullets with live fire, but the authorities must be aware that they cannot possibly afford another massacre like Tiananmen Square. And even that, like all other acts of repression — apparently aided in some cases by criminal elements that have a stake in the status quo — would serve only to further inflame passions. Yesterday, the news was that the security forces were telling the mostly young resisters taking refuge on the Polytechnic University campus that surrender was the only option. Tomorrow’s news may well be that the authorities discover they have dug themselves into a hole from which there is no way out.

By arrangement with Dawn

‘What fruits do I and my actions produce?’



Dominic Emmanuel

It is almost the end of autumn here in Europe. The trees have practically shed their leaves. It is a wonderful scene. At times one feels as if the forest is on fire because the leaves slowly turn from green to light red and then fully yellow before falling off the trees. Despite Austria being a small country, its vast expanse is covered with lovely forests, which many people use for their long walks. During one such walk,

observing the trees and reflecting on God’s magnificent creation, a couplet from Kabirdas learnt in school flashed through my mind: “Karta raha so kyo raha, ab kari kyo pachhataye; Boye beej babul ka, so amua kaha se paaye”, meaning: “Why were you doing what you were doing, now what use is it of regretting; if you sowed an acacia seed, how do you expect to get mangoes”? And was Kabirdas not absolutely right?

Much before Kabir though, Jesus Christ, while warning the people — beware of people who make dishonest promises — once said to his listeners, “Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit... So then, you will know them by their fruits”. The trees in the forest stand as God planned them and each serves its own purpose. They produce differ-

ent fruits according to their inbuilt nature. Not all fruits are good for human consumption. We need to be aware and cautious of them. Similarly God has created us human beings to worship Him, to care for nature and to live in peace with all by cooperating with one another. The Bible says, “God created man in His own image, Male and female. He created them,” and “God is Love”. One wonders then, as to how evil came into this world. Christian theology teaches that God also gifted human beings with absolute freedom. Humans, however, misused that freedom and due to selfishness went

against God’s plan. That brought evil in the world and gave birth to what Jesus describes as false prophets. Jesus compares them simply with bad trees producing bad fruits. Though we know and see who those people are who produce bad fruits, what we need to ask ourselves really is, “What kind of fruits do I and my actions produce? Are they in keeping with God’s plan? Am I planting the right trees that will bring forth good fruits? Can I even wake up now to recognise God’s plan for my life? And finally, am I living in peace with nature, others and myself?”

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





Indian shores

In its bid to strengthen its position, Amazon said it will bring in ‘Echo Flex’ to India next month

SHORT TAKES



GOOGLE ENTERS GAMING BIZ WITH STADIA

Los Angeles, Nov. 20: Google on Tuesday launched Stadia, a cloud-based service that allows users to stream games including “Assassin’s Creed Odyssey” and “NBA 2K20” on Chrome web browser.

The service will start with a slate of 22 games and stream 4K videos at 60 frames per second, which can also be accessed through Google’s Chromecast and Pixel devices.

Google is offering the 4K version as part of its premium service, Stadia Pro, priced at \$9.99 per month. The free high-definition version is expected to roll out next year.

“We have over 450 games in development right now that will be coming out in 2020 and beyond,” Google Vice President and General Manager Phil Harrison told Reuters.

Stadia will need at least 10Mbps internet speed for the base 720p resolution and 35Mbps to stream games in 4K. Early reviews of Stadia have complained of latency, the time delay between pressing a button and getting the reaction on screen.

The success of cloud gaming depends heavily on the underlying network and how much controlled-latency traffic it can support during periods of peak demand, said Steve Alexander, chief technology officer at Ciena, a telecom equipment maker.

Analysts are also pinning the success of Stadia on the content it offers as most of the games on the platform are already available on consoles. “Stadia will live or die by its content,” said George Jijlshvili, senior analyst at Ovum, a brokerage firm, adding that underwhelming number of launch titles was making it difficult to generate real excitement.

Stadia will compete with Microsoft’s Project xCloud, which is likely to be launched next year, and Nvidia’s GeForce Now that is out on public beta. Sony also offers a game streaming platform PlayStation Now at \$9.99 per month that includes over 800 games across its console titles.

Google is billing Stadia for non-gamers, but it will need to work out some kinks to make it more attractive than a console or a personal computer, Chaim Seigel, an analyst with Elazar Advisors, said.

— Reuters

■ The service is currently available in 14 countries, including the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Norway, France and Germany.

■ While analysts are also pinning the success of Stadia, early reviews suggest that the service has yet to launch most of its much-hyped features and games.

Tech cos offer defence in antitrust probe

Cos have seen their reputations tarnished by privacy lapses and allegations of abuse of dominance

Washington/San Francisco, Nov. 20: Four top US tech companies, Google, Facebook, Amazon and Apple, responded to questions from a congressional committee by defending their practices and declining to answer some questions.

The House of Representatives Judiciary Committee, which released the answers Tuesday, had sent the queries as part of its antitrust probe of the four giants, which face a long list of other antitrust probes. The companies, long a symbol of the dynamism of the US economy, have seen their reputations tarnished by privacy lapses and allegations they abused their perch on top of the market to hurt small and nascent rivals.

Facebook and Apple declined comment for this story while Amazon and Google had no immediate comment.

In its responses, Google, which owns YouTube, denied favouring its own services over those of competitors in search,

Amazon uses aggregated seller data to help

Washington, Nov. 20: Amazon uses “aggregated data” from sellers in its third-party marketplace to improve its overall business, the online retailer said in response to a congressional antitrust probe that could raise concerns with such sellers.

Such data, also culled from public sources and Amazon’s first-party sales, is available to the company’s retail and private brand teams, it said in an October 11 document released by the US House of Representatives Judiciary Committee on

Tuesday. The panel, which is investigating potential breaches of antitrust law by big technology companies, also made public the responses from Facebook, Google and Apple.

Data on individual sellers is not used to improve Amazon’s business, the company said, and its teams do not use seller data to launch, source or price private label products, which number about 1,58,000.

Amazon’s response offers a glimpse into how data from sellers, who

compete with Amazon’s retail business, informs the Seattle-based company’s decisions. Merchants on Amazon’s platform have long worried that the world’s largest online retailer would use information at its disposal to undercut them.

Amazon did not immediately respond to a request seeking comment.

In the congressional response, it said use of public and aggregated sales data to spot in-demand products is standard practice in retailing, one of Amazon’s many

businesses.

In October, the committee said it expected a final report on its probe by the “first part” of next year.

Amazon also said it may ask third-party merchants to lower prices on Amazon.com when it finds the sellers asking for less on a competing website.

Asked how it ranks shopping results on its website, Amazon said its algorithm does not consider factors such as whether it has a competing private label brand, if a competing third-party seller has purchased ads, or if the seller

is enrolled in Amazon’s logistics program.

It instead considers a product’s availability, price and how frequently it was purchased.

Amazon did not offer details on several items requested by the subcommittee. These include how many of its private label products are sold at cost or below cost, how much revenue and profit Amazon makes from selling private brands, and its pricing rationale for third-party marketplace services.

— Reuters

answers to other questions on the company’s handling of prospective competitors. For example, asked for the timing and “exact circumstances” that led it to remove apps Photo, MessageMe, Voxer and Stackla, Facebook replied that it “will restrict apps that violate its policies,” without disclosing details.

On a related note, Senators Josh Hawley, a Missouri Republican, and Chris Coons, a Delaware Democrat, wrote to Facebook Tuesday to ask how the social media giant acquires users’ locations, why locations are collected and if collection occurs when users have asked that it not be.

Apple answered questions about its browser and commissions it pays in its App Store, and addressed other issues, most of which are generally known. It said exactly two employees had sought to take disputes to arbitration. But asked how much it had spent on its map app that competes with Google, it said only “billions.”

— Reuters

IBM LAUNCHES NEW TOOL FOR CYBER RESPONSE

Bengaluru, Nov. 20: Technology giant IBM on Wednesday launched ‘Cloud Pak for Security’, featuring innovations to connect with any security tool, cloud or on-premise system, without moving data from its original source.

The platform includes open-source technology for hunting threats, automation capabilities to help speed response to cyberattacks, and the ability to run in any environment, the company said in a statement.

It is the first platform to leverage new open-source technology pioneered by IBM, which can search and translate security data from a variety of sources, bringing together critical security insights from across a company’s multicloud IT environment, the company claimed.

The platform is extensible, so that additional tools and applications can be added over time, the statement said.

As businesses move further into cloud maturity, applications and data are frequently spread across multiple private and public clouds and on-premise resources, IBM noted.

Attempts to protect this fragmented IT environment often require security teams to undertake complex integrations and continuously switch between different screens and point products. General Manager, IBM Security, Mary O’Brien was quoted as saying, “With Cloud Pak for Security, we’re helping to lay the foundation for a more connected security ecosystem designed for the hybrid, multicloud world.”

— PTI

HUMAN PATIENT PUT IN SUSPENDED ANIMATION FOR FIRST TIME

After decades of debate over suspended animation, officially called the emergency preservation and resuscitation (EPR), scientists at the University of Maryland School of Medicine have for the first time put the technique into practice. Suspended animation involves putting the functions of the human body on a medical ‘pause’ while performing critical surgical procedures to avert or delay death due to traumatic conditions like cardiac arrests.

■ THE FIRST ever suspended animation trial could lead to a turnaround on the future of emergency room surgeries.

■ SCIENTISTS SAY the trial is being performed on patients who have a survival rate of less than 5%

■ DURING THE trial, the patients are cooled rapidly by replacing their blood with ice-cold saline. As a result, the heart stops beating and brain activity almost completely stops.

■ AT NORMAL body temperatures, cells need a constant supply of oxygen to remain alive, but the cold temperature slows or stops the chemical reactions in cells, which need less oxygen as a result.

■ THE MAN was healthy until minutes before he died and it could have been averted if we had enough time — a duration long enough to conduct medical procedure. This idea led to research in the direction of suspended animation.

■ THE HUMAN brain can survive for around five minutes without oxygen before damage occurs, but through EPR a surgical team has two hours to work on the patient’s injuries before they’re warmed up and their heart is restarted.

■ FULL RESULTS of the trial are expected to be announced by the end of 2020.

■ TISHERMAN, SCIENTIST at the university, raised an interest in trauma research after coming across an incident in which a young man was stabbed in the heart.

■ ANIMAL STUDIES showed that pigs with acute trauma could be cooled for 3 hours, stitched up and resuscitated.



Once we can prove it works with humans, we can expand the utility of this technique to help patients survive that otherwise would not

— SAMUEL TISHERMAN, Team member, Baltimore facility

Sony cooks up AI unit for food revolution

Tokyo, Nov. 20: Cooking robots and tastier recipes: Japanese electronics giant Sony on Wednesday launched a new artificial intelligence unit they hope will change the way we cook and eat.

The new research arm, Sony AI, will operate in Japan, Europe and the United States and also focus on the traditional areas of gaming, imaging and sensor equipment, as

well as “gastronomy”.

The firm that produced the PlayStation franchise and the “Spider-man” movie series is the latest multinational tech company wanting a piece of the pie in the food business, where data are increasingly driving new dishes to pique the palate.

“AI and robotics will not replace chefs. We are aiming to offer new tools to expand their creativity

with AI and robotics,” Sony spokesman Shinichi Tobe told AFP.

“The field of food requires a study of molecular structures. By using AI and its analytical capacity, we can create new things,” Tobe said.

“It involves taste, but also aroma. Through sensing technologies, we can perhaps create new dishes that will please the human sense of taste,” he

said.

The Tokyo-based gadget-and-entertainment conglomerate is not the only tech company tapping into this seam.

IBM earlier this year teamed up with seasoning maker McCormick to use artificial intelligence in flavour and food product development.

In the future, Sony foresees the creation of a robotic kitchen to help

elderly people make meals at home, but without use of open flames.

It may also result in the creation of a restaurant where robots cook in front of guests.

“There might be ways of cooking that can only be done by robotics. It might be about temperature control. Maybe about precise timings of when or where to apply heat,” Tobe said.

— AFP

HIGH-TECH JAPAN USES AI IN SONG TO WELCOME POPE

Tokyo, Nov. 20: Few aspects of life escape the touch of high tech in cutting-edge Japan, including an official song written to welcome Pope Francis when he visits Japan from Saturday.

Written by Jun Inoue, the song, “Protect all Life - The Signs of the Times”, is based on the theme of the pope’s Japan visit and was partly composed using an artificial intelligence (AI)-powered programme Inoue created that can write a piece of music in a few seconds.

Inoue, a producer and composer who has written for top bands such as Arashi, and is Catholic, said he agonised over using the AI programme but finally decided to include it because the history of music and technology were intertwined. “I thought I should give everything I had to the song, so I decided to put in all the cutting-edge technology I had,” he told Reuters. He shares composing credit with “Amadeus Code AI”.

The song, which was written



at the behest of the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan, will be played at masses in the city of Nagasaki as well as Tokyo and comes in several versions, including instrumental and karaoke.

There are also dance steps and stylised hand gestures that are the Japanese sign language version of the lyrics, with a teaching video posted on the official website for the pope’s visit. Inoue hopes worshippers at the public masses, to be held at stadiums, will sing and dance along with the song.

— Reuters

Amazon considered face scanning to doorbells

Police aren’t allowed to seek recordings that are longer than 12 hours in duration: Amazon

San Francisco, Nov. 20: Amazon has considered adding facial recognition technology to its Ring doorbell cameras, according to a letter to a US senator defending its video-sharing partnerships with police.

The company told Sen. Ed Markey that facial recognition is a “contemplated, but unreleased feature” of its home security cameras but that there are no plans to coordinate that feature with its law enforcement partnerships.

Markey wrote to Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos in September raising privacy and civil liberty concerns about Ring’s video-sharing agreements with police departments across the country. The company encourages police to tap into Ring’s Neighbors app, a forum for residents to share videos of suspicious activity captured by their

home security cameras. The Massachusetts Democrat also expressed alarm that Ring may be pursuing face-scanning technology after a patent application showed the company is exploring a system that could flag certain people as suspicious and automatically alert police. Markey released Amazon’s responses on Tuesday.

Amazon’s initial response to Markey said Ring doesn’t currently offer facial recognition. Then Markey sent another letter to Bezos asking why it’s mentioned in Ring’s privacy policy. In a November 1 follow-up, Amazon’s vice president of public policy, Brian Huseman, said that the company frequently innovates based on customer demand and that facial recognition is an increasingly common feature in



cameras made by competitors such as Google’s Nest vision.

“If our customers want these features in Ring security cameras, we will only release these features with thoughtful design including privacy, security, and user control,” Huseman wrote.

Markey’s questions about facial recognition were part of broader concerns that some lawmakers and civil liberties advocates have about Ring and

its police partnerships. Amazon sought to address those concerns in its letters to Markey, emphasizing that camera owners have a choice about whether to share videos.

The company noted that police aren’t allowed to seek recordings that are longer than 12 hours in duration or that cover a geographical area that is too specific or broad.

But Amazon also said it doesn’t require law en-

forcement to delete a user’s video footage after a certain period. Nor would it entertain Markey’s request that it commit to never selling users’ biometric information, saying only that it doesn’t do so now.

Markey said Tuesday that Amazon is not doing enough to ensure that its products don’t run afoul of civil liberties.

“Connected doorbells are well on their way to becoming a mainstay of American households, and the lack of privacy and civil rights protections for innocent residents is nothing short of chilling,” he said in a statement.

“If you’re an adult walking your dog or a child playing on the sidewalk, you shouldn’t have to worry that Ring’s products are amassing footage of you and that law enforce-

ment may hold that footage indefinitely or share that footage with any third parties,” he added.

More than 600 police departments have signed up to Ring’s network since last year and many say it is becoming a useful crime-fighting tool.

Among them is the police chief of Markey’s hometown of Malden, Massachusetts. Chief Kevin Molis said he is Markey’s neighbor and has known him since the 1970s but disagrees with him about Ring.

“We consider it a valuable tool for public safety,” Molis said in an interview. “Is it a bad thing that private citizens, in order to make their streets safer, are investing their own money in a product that’s allowing crimes to be solved and crimes to be prevented?”

— AP

Finance panel may reject \$12 bn package to utilities

Chinese bike-maker CFMoto enters India



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,651.64	+0.45
Nifty 50	11,999.10	+0.49
S&P 500	3,114.60	-0.18
Dollar (₹)	71.86	0.15
Pound Sterling (₹)	92.75	-0.11
Euro (₹)	79.39	0.01
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	38,127.78	-0.20
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	\$62.64	+1.73
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.458	-0.015
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.753	-0.001

* As of 9:30 pm IST

Promoters to divest 16.5% more in ZEEL

Essel Group said it is planning to sell a 16.5 percent stake in its flagship ZEE Entertainment Enterprises to financial creditors to meet its loan repayment obligations. Of this 16.5 per cent, 2.3 per cent stake will be sold to QF Global China Fund/ its affiliates. After these transactions, the group's overall holdings in ZEEL will come down to 5 per cent, the firm said.

BSNL-MTNL merger may be done in 2 years



The government said the merger of BSNL and MTNL is likely to be completed in 18-24 months. "The process of merger is likely to be completed in 18-24 months," Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said in a written reply in the Lok Sabha. The Centre has earlier said that till the completion of the merger, MTNL will operate as a subsidiary of BSNL.

Women allowed to work in night shifts in Karnataka

The Karnataka government issued a notification allowing women to work in night shifts (7 pm to 6 am) in all factories registered under the Factories Act. The state government has in the notification cited Madras High Court judgement striking down Section 66(1)(b) of the Factories Act, 1948, which prohibited employment of women to work in night shifts.

Citi India's ex-head Pramit Jhaveri quits

Pramit Jhaveri, the former country head of Citi India, has quit for unspecified reasons, sources said. The 56-year-old Jhaveri had joined Citigroup in 1987 and had a steady rise to become Vice-Chairman of banking, capital markets and advisory for Asia Pacific earlier this year, after heading the India operations for almost a decade between 2010 and 2019.

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Budgetary constraints come into play Army to cut sniper rifle orders by 70%

N. C. BIPINDRA NOV. 29

The Indian Army plans to buy just 1,800 state-of-the-art sniper rifles and 2.7 million rounds of ammunition—less than a third of its total requirement—driven by budgetary constraints and the need to speed up deliveries, people with knowledge of the matter said.

The military pruned its original requirement of 5,720 sniper rifles and 10 million rounds of ammunition, which would have cost \$140 million, to prioritise spending and advance the purchase of more modern equipment, they said, asking not to be identified as the information isn't public.

Indian Army spokesman Aman Anand said he had no comment to offer on the change in procurement plans.

The Indian armed forces have 450,000 infantry soldiers, of whom only half go into ground battle and an even a smaller number of them use sniper rifles to take out specific enemy targets through precision firing.

The move is part of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's \$250-billion modernisation plan for the Indian defence forces, as the infantry soldiers continue to face the brunt of deadly attacks in disputed border areas such as Kashmir and the Northeast.

Plans to buy new equipment from global manufacturers, however, has been hit by bureaucratic delays and the Modi government's desire to meet the needs of the armed forces through the domestic industry under his 'Make in India' initiative, a key plank to boost local defence manufacturing and woo his core supporters.

The 1.3 million-strong Indian Army's previous efforts to buy 5,720 sniper



rifles in a process that began in February 2018 was scrapped in July this year after four vendors, including the US-based Barrett, Indonesia's PT Pindad and Russia's Rosoboronexport, failed to meet technical requirements, such as technology transfers for making the ammunition by local industry.

Through the new bid to buy a smaller quantity of 8.6 mm sniper rifles and .338 Lapua Magnum ammunition, India wants to overcome the hurdles in first identifying the vendor to buy them in a fast-track mode, before placing future orders for 4,000 more sniper rifles.

—Bloomberg

Rhodes to field for Boost, train young Indians

RITWIK MUKHERJEE KOLKATA, NOV. 20

It's catch 'em young, grow them old for Boost, the health food drinks brand from the GSK stable. Boost has roped in Jonty Rhodes, acclaimed as one of the greatest fielders, to train sports enthusiasts on its online platform-Boostcamp. Through this platform, cricketing heroes will train aspirants about various facets of sports.

"Boost has a strong association with stamina, energy and winning spirit. We are delighted to bring on board one of the greatest cricket legends to our Boost family, who perfectly represents the brand's persona..We look forward to provide every kid with access to learn from one of the best sportsmen in the world," said Vikram Bahl, Area Marketing Lead, Nutrition & Digestive Health, GSKCH Indian subcontinent.

On the Boostcamp, Rhodes will be sharing his experience through training videos on 'Fielding', an integral feature of modern-day cricket. The videos that will be rolled out on the online platform will include modules on catching, fielding inside/outside the circle and running out.

Boostcamp was launched with the aim of inspiring young sports enthusiasts to play a bigger game and take on bigger and tougher opponents. Through this initiative, young talent are given tips and tricks on how to improve skills, build stamina, handle tough situations and take the right nutrition by Virat Kohli, MS Dhoni, Rishabh Pant and Shreyas Iyer.

RBI supersedes DHFL board

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 20

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Wednesday superseded the board of debt-laden Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) owing to governance concerns and defaults in meeting various payment obligations by the mortgage lender. The central bank also said it would shortly initiate the process of resolution of the company under the insolvency and bankruptcy rules.

R Subramaniam, former Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of the Indian Overseas Bank, has been appointed as the company's administrator.

However, corporate watchers said the RBI superseding the DHFL board is an action that has come too late, as DHFL is now left with assets that its management could not sell and the mortgage lender has lost franchise value.

J.N. Gupta, Former Executive Director of Sebi, told Financial Chronicle: "DHFL is a bad case and action could have been initiated earlier. But our legal and financial system is such that action are mostly taken very late. I will reiterate that the RBI has to look at its backyard and introspect as to how things have been allowed to come to this pass because the signals (of a crisis) were there in infrastructure, real estate and NBFCs for long. Unless RBI finds a solution to the asset liability mismatch, it will not be wrong to say that DHFL will not be an isolated case."

DHFL will be the first financier to land up in bankruptcy court after the Corporate Affairs Ministry a few days back allowed the RBI to refer NBFCs, including housing finance companies with asset size of more than Rs 500 crore, for resolution under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC). DHFL's total debt is around Rs 85,000 crore while exposure of banks stands at Rs 38,000 crore.

Talking to reporters in Mumbai post-the Sebi board meeting, Sebi Chairman Ajay Tyagi said mutual funds, which have lent substantial sums of money to DHFL, will join the resolution process of DHFL.

"Under the IBC, mutual funds are also considered as lenders and they will follow that rule," Tyagi said.



NCLAT approves delisting of Alok Inds.

New Delhi, Nov. 20: The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has allowed Reliance Industries to delist textile manufacturer Alok Industries, which it has acquired through the insolvency process.

A two-member NCLAT bench headed by Chairperson Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya has modified the order passed by the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT), Ahmedabad, which denied such permission.

While approving the Rs 5,052-crore bid of RIL for Alok Industries on March 8, 2019, the NCLT did not give its approval to RIL's plea for granting exemptions for delisting of Alok Industries' shares from the bourses. Later, RIL again sought permission, but was denied on July 26, 2019.

"The Appellant (RIL) is directed to comply with the plan forthwith," said the NCLAT.

The appellate tribunal observed that Sebi in its affidavit had also said there is no requirement for permission of the markets regulator for such delisting.

—PTI

Sebi tightens default disclosure norms

ASHWIN J PUNNEN with agency inputs MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Markets watchdog Sebi on Wednesday approved stricter disclosure norms for listed companies on loan defaults and set revised regulations for portfolio managers and for rights issues.

The changes will be effective from January 1, 2020.

The regulator made it mandatory for listed companies to disclose default in repayment of principle or interest on loans beyond 30 days within 24 hours.

It has also decided to amend the norms for portfolio managers by raising net worth and minimum investment requirements.

Speaking to reporters after its board meeting here, Sebi Chairman Ajay

SEEKING SPEED

- ▶ Listed companies have to disclose default in repayment of principle or interest beyond 30 days within 24 hours
- ▶ Overall time taken for rights issue will be cut to 31 days from 55

sage, Tyagi also said that action will be taken against companies that do not disclose about whistleblower complaints in the garb of finding them as "not material". "If companies are 'fooling' by disclosing information to boost sentiment, action will be taken," Tyagi said. It may be noted that Sebi is probing the issue of whistleblower complaints against Infosys.

With a view to keep retail investors away from portfolio management schemes (PMS), Sebi decided to raise the minimum investment amount of clients for such schemes to Rs 50 lakh from the earlier Rs 25 lakh.

Besides, it has decided to increase the networth requirement of portfolio managers to Rs 5 crore from 2 crore. It further said the existing portfolio managers will have to meet the enhanced requirement within 36 months.

"Hiking the investment limit for PMS from Rs 25 lakhs to Rs 50 lakhs is a bit restrictive. Many potential investors are likely to be denied the benefits of PMS," said V. K. Vijaykumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The markets regulator also decided to reduce the overall time taken for rights issue to 31 days from the current 55, a move aimed at making the process more efficient.

Besides, the regulator has made ASBA facility as a mandatory mode of payment for all investors applying to shares on rights basis.

Telecom stocks rally on relief hope

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV.20

Reliance Industries, promoter of Reliance Jio, closed with a gain of 2.57 per cent at Rs 1547.05 after soaring intra-day to a new 52-week high of Rs 1,571.85 on the BSE. Reliance's market capitalisation inched closer to the Rs 10-lakh crore mark, touching a high of Rs 9,90,366.80 crore in the morning trade.

Vodafone Idea gained 17.44 per cent on the BSE, closing at Rs 7.07 and surged intraday to a high of Rs 8.15 on the NSE. Its shares have surged more than 150 per cent from recent lows after it declared record second quarter losses of over Rs 50,000 crore.

Bharti Airtel shares saw profit-taking after surging to a new 52 week high of Rs 452.95 on the BSE while another group company Bharti Infratel surged to a high of Rs 260 but later closed 3.64 per cent lower on profit taking. The BSE Telecom Index closed 0.23 per cent lower, pulled down by Bharti Group stocks.

Analyst are seeing current rally in telecom stocks as a reaction to the news on tariff hike from an oversold position.

Kishore P Ostwal, Chairman and Managing Director, CNI Research, said, "The rally in the telecom stocks is a reaction, since the sector was oversold on bad news it is seeing a temporary pull-back, which won't sustain, unless we come to know how much will be the tariff hike for voice call and data services. Since it was an oversold sector buying has to come."

Santosh Meena, Senior Analyst, TradingBells, said, "The market is factoring that tariff rates in the telecom sector have bottomed out".

Only machines do the talking in Federal Bank hiring

Mumbai, Nov. 20: Federal Bank is transforming its traditional HR practices by shifting almost the entire hiring process to a tool driven on artificial intelligence—arguably a first in the domestic banking space.

FedRecruit, the new HR tool of the Kochi-based private sector lender, employs technology to drive the HR function to the fullest, under which the only human intervention of its multi-stage hiring process is the final round where top HR executives meet up with the new recruits.

Federal Bank is arguably the first in the domestic banking space to almost fully switch to technology for hiring as its large peers like HDFC Bank, which uses a lot of tech for banking, employs AI only at the primary screening level.

FedRecruit relies on a series of connected events or data points and goes beyond the conventional one-sided resume to construct a 360-degree narrative of the candidate. These data points are gathered through multiple stages—robotic interviews, psychometric and game-based assessments processes etc., Federal Bank HR chief Ajith Kumar KK told PTI.

The robotic interview process scans the candidates' personality traits, uses integrated videos for virtual face-to-face interviews and also employ live videos for real-time engagement and notification for better candidate management.

To begin with the AI-enabled chatbot screens, updates on a real-time basis and takes the applicant through a slew of steps before the final hiring. The chatbot's role ends with an SMS to the parents of the selected person.

Even the offer letter is sent out by the chatbot, Assistant Vice-President for HR Raj Gopal chips in, adding the bank has already hired 350 probationary officers from campuses since October and 350 more will be hired through December to complete the annual target of 700 for FY20. Of the 350 hired, 150 were selected in the first month itself—at the pilot stage.

Enthused by the success of its pilot experiment, Kumar says the bank will extend technology for lateral hiring as well as to take in non-core staff as well.

Globally organisations are using advanced technologies for recruitments and onboarding whereby they create seamless candidate experiences, he said.

—PTI

Alibaba raises \$12.9 billion in HK listing

SCOTT MURDOCH,
JULIE ZHU
HONG KONG, NOV. 20

Chinese e-commerce giant Alibaba Group raised up to \$12.9 billion in a landmark listing in Hong Kong, the largest share sale in the city in nine years and a world record for a cross-border secondary share sale.

The deal will be seen as a boost to Hong Kong following more than five months of anti-government protests and its recent slide into its first recession in a decade.

Alibaba said in a statement it had priced the shares at HK\$176 (\$22.49) each, a discount of 2.9 per cent to its New York closing price.

The price means Alibaba will raise at least HK\$88 billion (\$11.3 billion) — a symbolic total because the number 8 is associated with prosperity and good fortune in Chinese culture.

Alibaba has also chosen the stock code 9988 for its listing, which for Chinese speakers combines two of the luckiest numbers, together symbolizing long-lasting prosperity. —Reuters

New Maruti S-Presso enters top 10

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, NOV. 20

Maruti Suzuki's new entry level car S-Presso has become one of the 10 best-selling cars within a month of its launch.

The company said in an exchange filing that it sold 10,634 units of the mini-SUV in October, bagging 8th rank.

Priced from Rs 3.69 lakh upto Rs 4.91 lakh, S-Presso was launched on September 30. It competes primarily against Renault Kwid which was a runaway success since its launch in 2015.

Maruti Suzuki has long been a dominant figure in the top 10 monthly sales charts.

The top 10 models in October, according to Siam, are Maruti Suzuki Dzire selling 19,569 units, Maruti Swift 19,401 units, Maruti Alto 17,903 units, Maruti Baleno 16,237 units, Hyundai Elite i20 14,683 units, Maruti WagonR 14,359 units, Kia Seltos 12,854 units, Maruti S-Press 10,634 units, Maruti Vitara Brezza 10,227 units and Maruti EECO 10,011 units.

Nadella is top business person of Year

New York, Nov 20: Microsoft's India-born Chief Executive Officer Satya Nadella has occupied the top spot in Fortune's Businessperson of the Year 2019 list, an annual compilation that also includes Mastercard CEO Ajay Banga and Arista head Jayshree Ullal.

Fortune's annual Businessperson of the Year list features 20 business leaders "who tackled audacious goals, overcame impossible odds, found creative solutions".

The list is topped by Nadella, who has been at the helm of the technology giant since 2014.

"In a year dominated by political chaos and bluster, it was a rare brand of steady — even quiet — leadership that won the day in the business world. And no one epitomises that brand of obsessively results-driven, team-based leadership more than our new No. 1 Businessperson of the Year," Fortune said.

Banga is ranked 8th, while Ullal comes in at the 18th spot in the list for which Fortune looked at 10 financial factors. —PTI

■ Sops were proposed to help power firms cut emissions

Finance panel may reject \$12 bn package to utilities

SUDARSHAN VARADHAN
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

India's Finance Commission has told the power ministry that its proposal to award utilities Rs 83,500 crore (\$11.6 billion) in incentives to install equipment to curb emissions is "unviable," a senior official at the ministry told Reuters on Tuesday.

The ministry submitted its proposal to the Finance Commission, which reviews government spending, in February.

The proposal was intended to help plants comply with new sulphur dioxide emissions standards originally set by the environment ministry in 2015.

The standards mandate installation of pollution cutting equipment. Some plants must comply by the end of this year, while others have up to the end of 2022 to do so.

More than half of India's coal-fired power plant units ordered to retrofit equipment to curb air pollution are already set to miss the deadline, Reuters reported on Friday.

The Finance Commission was likely to reject the power ministry's spending



proposal, according to the ministry official, who is not authorised to speak to media and so did not wish to be identified.

A spokeswoman for the Commission said the government body has not finalised its recommendations, but declined to comment further. If the Finance Commission rejects the proposal, the plans are unlikely to be approved by the government.

A power ministry spokesman declined to comment. Emissions from power plants are one of the biggest

causes of the chronic smog now seen in New Delhi and some other Indian cities.

The Association of Power Producers (APP), a lobby group for private utilities in India, estimates it will cost private companies roughly \$38 billion to retrofit their plants to cut emissions.

It contends that debt-laden power producers, which are still owed over \$11 billion in dues by government-owned distribution companies, cannot afford to invest such vast sums at this time.

India has identified 34 eco-

nomically stressed power plants with a combined capacity of 40 gigawatt (GW). They are owned by companies, including Adani Power, Essar Power, the GMR group, the Lanco Group and Jaiprakash Power Ventures Ltd.

The Ministry of Power wants to extend deadlines for some economically stressed power plants that have been ordered to retrofit equipment to curb air pollution, the official and two other power ministry officials familiar with the matter said.

Among the 34 plants, the debt of 28 plants are in various stages of resolution and some of those plants may be able to meet the emission deadlines, one of the officials said. The ministry wants to grant an extension for the other six plants, the official said, but did not name the plants.

The Supreme Court, which is hearing a petition on air pollution, will make the final call on the issue.

"We will finalise a list of plants which need extension and then submit to the Supreme Court, which will take a call," the official said.

— Reuters

Chinese bike maker CFMoto enters India

MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, NOV. 20

CFMoto, the Chinese motorcycle manufacturer, is the latest to enter the lucrative 21.18 million Indian motorcycles market by opening its first showroom in India at Thane, near Mumbai on Wednesday and it introduced four motorcycle models to lure buyers.

The Chinese firm has partnered with the Indian Anvita Autotech Works company to form a joint venture to sell the Chinese motorcycles. At present CFMoto sells a range of its bikes in about 100 countries.

India is the world's largest motorcycles market where over 14 international and Indian bike brands such as American Harley-Davidson, Japanese Kawasaki, Italian Ducati, British Triumph Motorcycles, American Indian, Italian Benelli, Japanese Honda, Italian

MV Augusta, Japanese Yamaha and Suzuki, among others, compete for market share.

CFMoto, which has tied up with the Indian auto firm AMW which later changed its name to Anvita Autotech Works, has introduced four bikes called 300NK, 650NK, 650MT and 650GT priced at Rs 2.29 lakh, Rs 3.99 lakh, Rs 4.99 lakh and Rs 5.49 lakh respectively at pan India showroom.

Some of these bikes are cheaper by 12,000 to Rs 1.7 lakh compared with rivals such as Kawasaki, BMW and Honda bikes, officials disclosed.

"We as an Indian partner have invested Rs 80 crore in setting up an assembly plant near Bangalore and marketing the range of bikes in India," Vamsi Krishna Jagini, CEO at Anvita AutoTech Works told *Financial Chronicle*.

He said the present four new models called 300NK, 650NK, 650MT and 650GT would be upgraded to BS-VI norm compliant and start selling them in the Indian market from April 2020.



Sugar output falls 64% till Nov. 15

New Delhi, Nov 20: India's sugar production declined 64 per cent to 4.85 lakh tonnes till November 15 in the current marketing year that started last month, as mills in Maharashtra have not yet begun their operations, industry body Isma said on Wednesday.

The sugar marketing year runs from October to September. "As on November 15, 2019, 100 sugar mills were crushing sugarcane, as compared to 310 sugar mills last year on November 15, 2018. During the current 2019-20 sugar season, sugar production as on November 15, was 4.85 lakh tonnes as compared to 13.38 lakh tonnes produced as on November 15, 2018, in 2018-19 sugar season," the Indian Sugar Mills Association (Isma) said in a statement. It attributed the reason for fall in production to sugar mills in Maharashtra not yet starting their sugar-



cane crushing operation this season. The state had produced 6.31 lakh tonnes till November 15, 2018. Production in Uttar Pradesh, however, increased to 2.93 lakh tonnes from 1.76 lakh tonnes.

Sugar output in Karnataka has fallen to 1.43 lakh tonnes from 3.60 lakh tonnes during the period under review as lesser number of mills have started operations so far.

"Maharashtra and Karnataka faced drought last year, because of which the area planted under sugarcane therein has dropped by about 30 per cent as compared to last season," Isma said. —PTI

Realty sees 115 insolvency cases, \$1 bn stressed deals

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 20

The real estate sector has filed 115 insolvency cases till September and \$1 billion has already been transacted under stressed asset deals in 2019.

Corporates saddled with huge debt have been increasingly liquidating real estate assets and investors are evaluating options including acquiring non-performing assets, distress sale and entity level stake. Around \$1 billion has already been transacted in the current year, as per the data from JLL India.

Some of the recent stressed asset deals include sale of an IT park in Bengaluru by Café Coffee Day Enterprise for \$385 million to reduce its debt. Blackstone and Salarpuria Sattva Developers have acquired the 90-acre, IT-focussed Global Village Tech Park. Similarly in hos-



pitality sector, Brookfield has received approvals to acquire assets of Hotel Leela Venture comprising key hotel properties in Delhi, Bangalore, Udaipur and Chennai for \$564 million.

As per the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India, a total 115 insolvency cases have been filed as of September 2019 under real estate category. Of these 87 cases are under process while 28 are closed.

Residential real estate segment presents the maximum number of stressed

assets. India's residential sector has been reeling under the pressure of delayed/stalled projects with 4.54 lakh units running behind their completion dates. Some of them are already under bankruptcy proceedings. The value of these projects is estimated to be \$66 billion, according to JLL.

"The capital commitment by institutional investors gives comfort to the lenders leading to faster resolution in these deals. Such deals also provide opportunity for investors to optimise their returns in line with underlying risks," said Ramesh Nair, CEO and country head, India, JLL.

Though government has announced a special fund to infuse liquidity into the sector, it will fall short of meeting the entire requirement. So, several projects will move into insolvency process, providing an opportunity for investors.

Asia needs \$800 bn over a decade to feed itself

RANJEETHA PAKIAM
NOV. 20

Asia's food and agricultural industry will need additional investments of \$800 billion over the next decade to grow to a sustainable size and reach a point where it can feed itself, according to a report released on Wednesday.

Population growth, changing consumer needs and climate change are among the challenges. The region is urbanising rapidly, and by 2030 will be home to 250 million more people, equivalent to another Indonesia, with a growing appetite for healthy food sustainably and ethically sourced, according to PwC, Rabobank and Temasek Holdings Pte, Singapore's state investment company.

Most of the investment, or about

\$550 billion, will fund core needs revolving around sustainability, safety, health and convenience, while the other \$250 billion is to provide increased amounts of food for the growing population.

Asia is unable to feed itself, relying on imports flowing through long supply chains from the Americas, Europe and Africa, and it's expected to more than double its spend on food over the next decade, according to the report. As the population booms, issues of food security, supply, depleting natural resources, and availability of arable land and water are set to become more important.

"A fundamental change is required across the entire food supply chain in Asia to enable and sustain the region's food security," Anuj Maheshwari, Managing Director of Agribusiness at Temasek, said in a



statement on Wednesday. "We see immense opportunities for start-ups, businesses and governments to work together in creating innovative solutions."

Singapore, Tokyo, Beijing and Mumbai are among some Asian cities with the potential to become

"agri-food tech hubs," according to the report. In addition to other initiatives, Singapore will set up a new research institute in the first half of 2020, covering food, nutrition, public health, biotechnology and food safety, among other topics, according to Koh Poh Koon, senior minister of state at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

According to the report, Asia is urbanising faster than any other region, and will house all of the world's expected three 30 million+ cities and 65 per cent of the world's middle-class by 2030. The region's food spend will rise to more than \$8 trillion by 2030 from \$4 trillion this year. Net imports of food have tripled since the turn of the century, and now stand at around 220 million tons a year, it said, citing the FAO.

— Bloomberg

OPENING
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Nifty upside capped due to fair valuations

The market continued its positive momentum for second consecutive day with the Sensex touching all time high, while the Nifty crossed 12k mark during the day.

The BSE Sensex gained 182 points to close just shy of its lifetime high on Wednesday, propelled by index heavy-weight Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma and IndusInd Bank.

After scaling a new intra-day record of 40,816.38, the 30-share index ended 181.94 points, or 0.45 per cent, higher at 40,651.64. It is just 2 points shy of its all-time closing high, hit on November 7, 2019.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty closed just below the crucial 12,000-mark, advancing 59 points, or 0.49 per cent, to end at 11,999.10.

Post the Q2 results season, the focus has now shifted toward government policy action as well as global developments. Market interest in select PSUs increased post-talks of divestment in Union cabinet meeting. Going forward, while the Nifty upside remains limited due to fair valuations, stock specific action is likely to continue.

Technical view

"Technically, Nifty formed a Doji Candle on daily scale which indicates indecisiveness at higher levels. But it managed to hold above previous day's high throughout the session and formed higher highs-higher lows on second consecutive session. The support for Nifty is now inching higher towards 11900 and then 11850 levels; while immediate hurdle remains intact at 12100 – 12150 zones," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Private Ltd. "Markets usually run ahead of macros and price future growth. There are three positive indicators for growth – reduction in corporate tax rate, proposed divestment of large public sector units, and a possible resolution of the US-China trade impasse. Therefore we see growth coming back in 2020," said Sanjiv Bhasin, Director, IIFL Securities.

Market view

"Second Quarter Earnings were rescued by corporate tax cuts and with Fund Houses piling on to large cap index components we have seen record highs today led by RIL which is rapidly gaining market share in its Telecom vertical," S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

—ASHWIN J PUNNEN

The Sun stops shining for property mogul Pallonji Mistry

ANDY MUKHERJEE

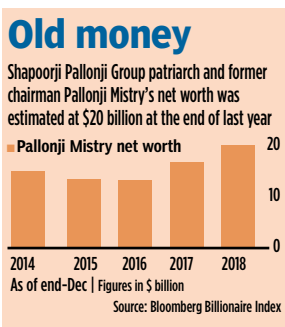
Interest rates could surge, exchange rates may collapse, the sun might stop shining brightly.

Every conceivable danger an investor needs to be aware of in an initial public offering is discussed in the August prospectus of Sterling and Wilson Solar Ltd., among the world's biggest engineering contractors to solar farms. And yet, the risk that struck hapless shareholders was buried under related-party transactions on Page 37: that the Indian company's storied founders won't keep their promise.

The 42 per cent carnage in Sterling and Wilson shares over three trading sessions in Mumbai is the story of

this broken pledge. Controlling shareholders had promised to return with interest what they owe the business — but are now dragging their feet. That's shabby treatment of minority investors, and that, too, within just three months of the firm being floated to the public. It's also a cautionary tale about India's beleaguered real estate industry and its inability to raise cash.

A debt-saddled India Inc. has bungled its cash-flow forecasts, triggering a \$200-billion-plus bad loan problem. The stress in the banking system has filtered into the balance sheets of shadow financiers who provide the lifeblood of financing to the property industry. Their own funding under strain,



these lenders have started mistreating borrowers that not long ago were ranked among the bluest of chips.

The 154-year-old Shapoorji Pallonji Group, which constructed the Reserve Bank of India's Mumbai headquarters as well as the Sultan of Oman's palace, had given

its word to IPO investors. In 90 days after the listing of Sterling and Wilson Solar, the founders — Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Pvt and partner Khurshed Daruvala — would return the loan of 23 billion rupees (\$325 million) they had taken from the firm.

"What's \$325 million to these rich backers?" investors must have thought, as they wrote their IPO subscription checks. Pallonji Mistry, the 90-year-old patriarch of the group, now run by son Shapoor, is worth more than \$20 billion, according to Bloomberg data. The privately held construction unit garners \$1.75 billion in annual operating income, according to a rating agency estimate.

The solar company's public issue went through, though it didn't pull in as much money for the founders as the Mistry family had hoped for. Still, the group's struggle to keep its IPO commitment became clear only late last week. Four days before the Nov. 18 payment deadline, the founders wrote to the company's board, asking for a more lenient payment schedule and a reduction in the principal amount, citing "significant and rapid deterioration in the credit markets." Shares in Sterling and Wilson Solar, a profitable business with a global order book, tanked.

More crucially, the Shapoorji Pallonji Group's

money problems gave Mumbai's already-jittery financial community another reason to feel nervous. Several of India's current and former billionaires are in trouble. But this isn't just any tycoon. The Mistry family owns an 18.4 per cent stake in India's salt-to-software conglomerate Tata Group.

That shareholding is worth \$14 billion. Or that's what Pallonji Mistry's younger son, Cyrus, claimed in a legal appeal after he was ousted as Tata Group chairman in a 2016 boardroom coup. It used to be child's play to raise money against those shares. But as the fight rolled on, Tata Group amended its

charter and became a private limited firm. That has presumably limited the liquidity of the Mistry family's shareholding, even though rating firms don't acknowledge any such loss of flexibility.

Then came the sudden collapse in September 2018 of highly rated infrastructure financier IL&FS Group. Funding for shadow banks froze up, forcing them to raise borrowing costs — particularly for real-estate players who were juggling long-term assets by rolling over short-term loans. Icrs Ltd, an affiliate of Moody's Investors Service, said the Shapoorji Pallonji Group's flagship construction firm was "exposed to refinancing risk."

— Bloomberg



Moral boost

Pope Francis is touring Thailand and Japan, to boost the morale of the tiny minority Catholic communities and speak about issues of concern including human trafficking and peacemaking

THE ASIAN AGE

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World

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We have pushed back the enemy in the military arena and enemy in the political war

— Ayatollah Ali Khamenei
Iranian leader

IN BRIEF

2 civilians killed in Israeli attack

Cairo: Two civilians were killed and a number of people were injured in an Israeli attack on the Syrian capital of Damascus, Syrian state media said on Wednesday. Israel attacked Iranian and Syrian military targets in Syria in what it said was retaliation for rockets fired toward Israel the day before, military spokesman Lieutenant-Colonel Avichay Adraee said. Syria's air defences were able to destroy most of the missiles fired by Israeli jets over the capital Damascus before they reached their targets, Syria's. Israel's military said its missile defense system shot down four rockets fired from Syria toward Israel.

AMA for ban on vaping products

Washington: The American Medical Association called for an immediate ban on all electronic cigarettes and vaping devices. The group adopted the sweeping stance at a policy-making meeting in San Diego. It aims to lobby for state and federal laws, regulations or legal action to achieve a ban, but the industry is sure to fight back. The AMA cited a surge in underage teen use of e-cigarettes, which typically heat a solution that contains nicotine. "It's simple, we must keep nicotine products out of the hands of young people," Dr. Patrice Harris, AMA's president said. A separate health issue also prompted its action — the recent US outbreak of lung illnesses linked to vaping.

At least 106 dead in Iran protests

Dubai: Days of protests over rising fuel prices and a subsequent government crackdown have killed at least 106 people across Iran, Amnesty International said, adding that the real figure may be much higher. Iran's government has not released a toll of those arrested, injured or killed in the protests that has spread quickly across at least 100 cities and towns. But it disputed Amnesty's report through its mission to the United Nations, calling it 'baseless allegations and fabricated figures'. However, a UN agency earlier said it feared the unrest may have killed 'a significant number of people'. Amnesty cited 'credible reports' for its tally and said it 'believes that the real death toll may be much higher, with some reports suggesting as many as 200 have been killed'. Iranian authorities shut down internet access to the outside world

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN CHILE



Riot police chases demonstrators during a protest against the government in Santiago on Wednesday. President Sebastian Pinera vowed no impunity for police abuses in dealing with protesters. The violent unrest that has rocked Chile has left 22 people dead and more than 2,000 injured.

— AFP

Boris, Corbyn spar in UK poll debate

London, Nov. 20: British Prime Minister Boris Johnson and opposition leader Jeremy Corbyn attacked each other's policies on Brexit, health care and the economy in a televised election debate that likely failed to answer the question troubling many voters: Why should we trust you?

The two politicians hammered away at their rival's weaknesses and sidestepped tricky questions about their own policies in the hourlong encounter, which was the first-ever head-to-head TV debate between a British prime minister and a chief challenger.

It was a chance for Corbyn to make up ground in opinion polls that show his Labour Party trailing Johnson's Conservatives ahead of the Dec. 12 election.

For Boris, the matchup was an opportunity to shake off a wobbly campaign start that has seen the Conservatives thrown on the defensive by candidates' gaffes and favouritism allegations involving Johnson's relationship with an American businesswoman while he

was London's mayor.

Both men stuck to safe territory, with Corbyn touting Labour's plans for big increases in public spending and Johnson trying to keep the focus on his promise to "get Brexit done."

Speaking in front of a live audience at ITV in Salford, northwest England, the two men traded blows over Britain's stalled departure from the EU, the reason the election is being held. The UK is due to leave the bloc on Jan. 31.

Boris pushed to hold the election more than two years ahead of schedule in an effort to win a majority in the House of Commons that could pass his departure agreement with the EU. He blamed the opposition for "dither and delay, deadlock and division" and said a Conservative government would "end this national misery" and "break the deadlock." Corbyn said a Labour government would also settle the Brexit question by negotiating a new divorce deal before holding a new EU membership referendum within six months. — AP



Britain Prime Minister Boris Johnson and Labour Party leader Jeremy Corbyn on Wednesday debate on the set of 'Johnson V Corbyn'.

— AFP

It was no secret: Sondland

Ambassador says he pressured Ukraine to appease President Trump



Gordon Sondland

with Rudy" on those matters. "So we followed the president's orders."

Sondland also confirmed that he spoke with Trump on a cellphone from a busy Kyiv restaurant the day after the president prodded Ukraine's leader to investigate political rival Joe Biden. Sondland said he kept Mike Pompeo and top administration officials in the loop. He said he specifically told vice-president Mike Pence he "had concerns" that US military aid to Ukraine "had become tied" to the investigations.

"Everyone was in the loop," Sondland testified in opening remarks. "It was no secret."

Sondland has told lawmakers the White House has records of the July 26

Trump slams 'sick' media

Washington, Nov. 20: US President Donald Trump slammed the mainstream media for spreading rumour about his health and called them sick. Trump visited a military hospital over the weekend which many news channels and media reported that was a sign that he is not well. Some of the news reports speculated that he had heart ailments.

"These people are sick. They are sick. We don't have the freedom of the press in this country. We have the opposite. We have a very corrupt media, and I hope they can get their act straight," Trump, 73, told reporters. "I went for



Donald Trump

a physical on Saturday," he said. Noting that he was at the Walter Reed Military Hospital in Bethesda, Maryland only for a short time and for a very routine physical, the president said that the rest of the physical will take

place in January. When he got back to the White House, Trump told his Cabinet colleagues that he "was greeted with the news that, 'We understand you had a heart attack.'"

A presidential physician said Trump had no chest pain nor was he evaluated for any acute issues. "Despite some of the speculation the President has not had any chest pain, nor was he evaluated or treated for any urgent or acute issues. Specifically, he did not undergo any specialised cardiac or neurologic evaluations," president's physician Sean P. Conley said in a statement. — PTI

Imran govt's days numbered: Cleric

Karachi, Nov. 20: Firebrand cleric-cum-politician Maulana Fazlur Rahman has fired a fresh salvo at Prime Minister Imran Khan, saying the 'Gorbachev of Pakistan' was heading a government that has its days numbered.

Speaking at a sit-in in Bannu city in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the hard-line cleric and leader of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl hit out at the prime minister for calling Opposition leaders 'thieves', alleging that the 'selected' government has offered National Reconciliation Ordinance to Khan's sis-



Maulana Fazlur Rahman

ter. Rahman claimed the time for Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government led by Khan was running out. "The roots of this government have been cut. They have only a number of days left," he warned. — PTI

Oli to continue as Nepal PM for 5 yrs

Kathmandu: K.P. Sharma Oli will continue as Nepal's Prime Minister for the rest of the tenure of the ruling Nepal Communist Party's government after he struck a deal with senior party leader Prachanda on Wednesday over the division of the premiership.

It was decided during the high level meeting of the ruling NCP, according to high level party sources.

In exchange, co-chairman of the ruling party Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" will get full executive powers of the party's affairs.

The deal was reached between Prime Minister

Oli and former Premier Prachanda during the central secretariat meeting of the party on Wednesday.

Two chairpersons of the ruling Nepal Communist Party Oli and Prachanda reached a deal that Prachanda will be the executive chairman of the party. — PTI

Last campus protesters hold out as HK schools reopen

Hong Kong, Nov. 20: Hong Kong schools reopened on Wednesday after a six-day shutdown but students and commuters faced transit disruptions as the last protesters remained holed up on a university campus.

City officials tried to restore a sense of normalcy as primary and secondary classes resumed. Workers began cleaning up debris blocking a major road tunnel, but it was unclear how soon it could be reopened. A small group of protesters refused to leave Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the remnants of hundreds who took over the campus for several days. They won't leave because they would face arrest. Police have set up a cordon around the area to prevent anyone from escaping. The occupation of

■ A small group of protesters refused to leave Hong Kong Polytechnic University, the remnants of hundreds who took over the campus for several days. They fear arrests.

Polytechnic capped more than a week of intense protests, the latest flareup in the often violent unrest that has gripped the semi-autonomous Chinese city for more than five months.

Since a police siege of the campus began, more than 1,000 people have been arrested and hundreds of injured treated at hospitals, authorities said. It was unclear how many protesters remained, but they appeared to number less than 100. About two

dozen scrounged through supplies in the cafeteria looking for food in the morning.

Trash litters public areas, and a stench permeates the campus. One adamant protester said, "I think if you go out and surrender, it just shows you agree with what the police and that government are doing or have given up the fight."

There were scattered incidents of protesters stopping trains by opening emergency doors and blocking traffic on Wednesday but on a much smaller scale than last week.

Long lines at stations were witnessed because of train delays while a few stations remained shut. Even as the latest violence wound down, a fundamental divide suggests the protests in the former British colony are far from over. — AP

Migrants found alive in container

The Hague, Nov. 20: A ferry crew found 25 migrants in a refrigerated container on a boat sailing from the Netherlands to Britain, emergency services said.

The cargo vessel bound for Felixstowe returned to the Dutch port of Vlaardingen, near Rotterdam, as soon as the stowaways were found, they said in a statement. The people found in the container received medical attention at the port and two were taken to hospital for further treatment for possible hypothermia.

The discovery comes a month after 39 Vietnamese people were found dead in a refrigerated truck in Britain, again laying bare the risks of illegal migrant routes to Europe. "On board a ship it turned out that several people were found in a cooling container. The ship returned to the harbour," said the Rotterdam region emergency services on Twitter.

"The 25 people were taken off the ship and given the medical care they need. Earlier the message came from the ship that no people died. "Two people were trans-

■ THE discovery comes a month after 39 Vietnamese people were found dead in a refrigerated truck in Britain, laying bare the risks of illegal migrant routes to Europe

ported to hospital for extra medical care. Twenty-three people were transferred to a police location after a medical check-up."

DFDS Seaways, which operates the cargo ferry, said that the migrants had come on board on a lorry trailer. The driver of the truck had been arrested, it added.

A bus took away the mainly male group, some of whom were wrapped in silver thermal blankets. Their nationalities were not immediately known.

The mayor of Vlaardingen, Annemiek Jetten, said 'more and more' people were trying to cross the Channel and had not been put off by the deaths of the Vietnamese migrants. "I think people are so desperate they keep trying, despite the tragic events in the UK," Jetten said. — AFP

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Age: Approx 45-50 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Round, Hair: Black, Wearing: Blue white check shirt & cream coloured pent, was found dead on 15.11.2019 at Behind Heritage School, Near Garbage D-2, Vasant Kunj (S) New Delhi. In this regard a DD No. 19-A dated 15.11.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Vasant Kunj, New Delhi. If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.



SHO
P.S. Vasant Kunj, New Delhi
Ph. No.: 011-26139360, 26139361, 62
Mob: 7065036225

DP/7156/SW/19



Noir classic

TV prequel to director Roman Polanski's Oscar-winning *Chinatown* in the works



We need more women's voices supported with money and that's power — Elizabeth Banks, American actress

IN BRIEF

Bush's service dog statue on display

Houston: A life-size statue of former President George H.W. Bush's beloved service dog will go on display next month at the presidential library in College Station, Texas. Sully, 3-year-old labrador assisted Bush during the last six months of his life before the 41st US President passed in November 2018 at age 94. The dog became famous after he was photographed next to Bush's casket last December. The bronze statue of Sully was created by artist Susan Bahary and it will go on display on December 6. — PTI

Breakout star Lizzo tops Grammy noms

New York: Singer and rapper Lizzo scored eight Grammy nominations Wednesday to lead a field packed with newcomers, including bold pop iconoclast Billie Eilish and overnight sensation Lil Nas X, for music's biggest honours. The diverse slate of budding talent appeared to reflect the Recording Academy's recent efforts to appease critics of the organisation behind the gala, who have lambasted it as too white, too male and too generous to music world mainstays. — AFP



'Can't stand people in tight-fitting clothes'

Los Angeles: Filmmaker Bong Joon-Ho has an affinity for superhero films but he would still like to maintain distance from them as he just can't stand people in tight-fitting clothes. He told *Variety* that he understands the concerns of veteran filmmaker Martin Scorsese but he does like certain superhero films. "I have so much respect for Scorsese...But if I look at the films individually, I enjoyed *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Winter Soldier* by the Russo Brothers. There are great cinematic moments in those films," Joon-Ho said. — PTI

EMILIA DID NOT GIVE IN TO NUDES DEMAND

Los Angeles: *Game of Thrones* star Emilia Clarke says post *Game of Thrones*, she was often pressured into performing nude scenes but she never gave in to the demands. Talking to actor Dax Shepard on his podcast *Armchair Expert*, Clarke, without naming them, said some producers thought she would be willing to do the nude scenes because she did so in HBO's epic fantasy series, that ended in May. "I'm a lot savvier with what I'm comfortable with, and what I am okay with doing. I've had fights on set before where I'm like, 'No, the sheet stays up' and they're like, 'You don't wanna disappoint your *Game of Thrones* fans. And I'm like, 'F**k you.' I feel like I've seen enough now to know what is actually needed," Clarke, who played Daenerys Targaryen in the show, said. The 33-year-old actor said she has immense respect for Jason Momoa, who starred opposite her as Khal Drogo in the first season of *GOT*, as he helped her get through the nude scenes. "It's only now that I realise how fortunate I was with that....He was so kind and considerate and cared about me as a human being," she said. —PTI



Emilia Clarke

Burger king sued for cooking vegan patty on meat grill

Miami: A vegan customer is suing Burger King for cooking its plant-based patties on the same grills it uses for meat, BBC reported. Philip Williams said the way the Impossible Whopper is grilled leaves it "coated in meat by-products". He said tagline, "100% Whopper, 0% Beef" was misleading. Burger King did not comment, but print on website says people wanting a meat-free option can request "non-broiler preparation". — Agencies

British village that keeps finding cash & 'honestly' hands it to authorities

London: Blackhall Colliery has one claim to fame — its beach featured in the climax of the Michael Caine film *Get Carter*. Apart from that, it is like many struggling former mining villages in England. But the village on the County Durham coast is now at the centre of a mystery — as bundles of cash keep turning up in the

street. Durham police said a total of \$33,500, 30,300 had been found over the past five years — 13 packages of £2,000 in £20 notes. "These bundles are always left in plain sight such as on pavements and discovered by the public who have handed them in," said Detective Constable John Forster.

The latest discovery on Monday was the fourth this year, he added, speculating that a Good Samaritan could be dropping off the cash parcels. Forster praised the "incredible community spirit" of the locals who handed in the cash — with newspapers suggesting village may be the most honest place in Britain. — AFP

Scientists crack mystery of how pigeon flock together

Beijing: In a first, researchers have found how each individual in a pigeon flock is influenced by the other members during flight, an advance that may lead to a better understanding of biological networks. The researchers, including those from the Southeast University in China, studied the synchronised flight of three flocks of ten pigeons each to understand the mechanisms behind coordinated behaviour. Until now synchronised flight in birds was believed to be influenced

by three basic rules — avoid collision with peers, match speed and direction of motion with the rest of the group, and try to stay near the centre, they said. The study in *Chaos*, examined how every individual pigeon within a flock is influenced by others, and revealed that the dynamics are not so simple. The researchers sampled each bird's position, velocity, and acceleration with time, used this data to estimate which pigeons directly influenced each other individual in the group. — PTI



A file photo of the house where Adolf Hitler was born in Braunau, Austria.

Peschorn said in a press release. The EU-wide architecture competition will be launched this month with a jury of experts, including a representative of the town, expected to make a decision on the best design in the first half of next year. Austria's highest court ruled earlier this year that Pommer was entitled to some \$9,00,000 in compensation, less than she had sought but still more than she had been originally offered. Pommer had been renting the 800-square-metre property — which also has several garages and parking spaces located behind the main building — to the interior ministry since the 1970s. — AFP

Hitler's birthplace in Austria is set to be a police station

Vienna: The house where Adolf Hitler was born will be turned into a police station, Austria's interior ministry announced Tuesday after years of legal wrangling as the government looks to prevent the building from becoming a neo-Nazi shrine. The yellow corner house in the northern town of Braunau on the border with Germany, where Hitler was born on April 20, 1889, was taken into government control in 2016. But the destiny of the building was subject to a lengthy legal battle with the family of Gerlinde Pommer, which owned the house for nearly a century. That only ended this year when the country's highest court ruled on the compensation Pommer would receive. The interior ministry will now invite submissions from architects to have the building house the town's police force. "The house's future usage by the police should set a clear signal that this building will never be a place to commemorate Nazism," interior minister Wolfgang

Nasa detects water vapour on Jupiter's moon Europa

Washington: Scientists at Nasa have detected water vapour for the first time above the surface of Europa, a finding that supports the idea of a liquid water ocean sloshing beneath the miles-thick ice shell of the Jupiter's moon. The study in *Nature Astronomy*, measured the vapour by peering at Europa through Keck Observatory in Hawaii. Missions to the outer solar system have amassed enough information about Europa to make it a high-priority target of investigation in Nasa's search for life. What makes this moon so alluring is the possibility that it may possess all of the ingredients necessary for life, said researchers from Nasa's Goddard Space Flight Centre in the US. Scientists have evidence that one of these ingredients, liquid water, is present under the icy surface and may sometimes erupt into space in huge geysers. However, no one is able to confirm the presence of water in these plumes by directly measuring the water molecule itself. — PTI



Kacey Musgraves at the premiere of *The Kacey Musgraves Christmas Show* in New York on Tuesday. — AP



Karisma Kapoor walks on a ramp during a fashion show in Amritsar on Tuesday. — AFP



Migratory birds fly over the Ganga river in Prayagraj on Wednesday morning. — PTI

Noisy ducks can keep quacking: French court

Dax, France: A French court has allowed a group of ducks in the southwest of the country to keep on quacking after complaints from neighbours over their noisy behaviour, at least pending a detailed investigation of noise levels. The case of the ducks in the southwestern Landes region was the latest in the country to pit traditions of rearing animals against the tastes of newcomers, following the well-publicised legal dispute over a rowdy rooster in western France. A couple who bought a neighbouring property last year had complained of "significant noise" from the group of around 50 ducks and geese kept the back garden of Dominique Douthe, 67, in the town of Soustons. She said that the ducks were given a stay of execution in Dax in a decision issued on Tuesday, adding that she was "relieved" by ruling. — AFP

FIR against Yash Raj Films for 'pocketing' ₹100cr

Mumbai: An FIR was registered against Yash Raj Films company and its directors for allegedly pocketing ₹100 crore by collecting music royalties of members of the Indian Performing Rights Society by Economic Offences Wing of the Mumbai police, an official said on Wednesday.

The Indian Performing Rights Society recently filed a complaint against the Bollywood production house with the EOW. The society alleged that Yash Raj Films did not let them collect royalties from telecom companies, radio stations, and music streaming platforms. The first information report mentions names of Yash Raj Films company and its directors Aditya and Uday Chopra, an official said. The complainant claimed the IPRS has the exclusive right to collect royalties on behalf of artists and music producers but the YRF collected it unauthorisedly. — PTI



Aditya Chopra



Uday Chopra

"Yash Raj Films Company and its directors allegedly pocketed ₹100 crore by collecting music royalties of members of the Indian Performing Rights Society (IPRS)," the official said quoting the complaint. The case has been registered under sections 409 (criminal breach of trust) and 34 (common intention) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and relevant sections of the Copyright Act, the official said. "Since this is a legal case the board cant comment about it until tomorrow," said a representative of the Indian Performing Rights Society. — PTI

Pregnant woman killed by hunting dogs in woods

Lille, France: A pregnant woman has been killed by dogs while walking her own dog in a forest in northern France during a hunt with hounds, investigators have said. The body of the 29-year-old woman was found on Saturday in a forest outside the town of Villers-Cotterêts, about 90km north-east of Paris, the prosecutor's office in nearby Soissons said. An autopsy showed that she had died of "bleeding after several dog bites to the upper and lower limbs and the head," prosecutor Frederic Trinh said on Tuesday. Some of the bites were "post-mortem", he added. Trinh said that tests had been carried out on 93 dogs, including some hounds from the hunt and five dogs belonging to the woman herself, to try to establish which ones attacked her. The police have launched an investigation into manslaughter by dog attack. *Le Courrier Picard* reported the dogs were hunting deer. — AFP



An interior view of the after party (top), Mogley (dog) and Allysa Seely; and Oksana Masters with her award at the 2019 Team USA awards in Universal City, California, on Tuesday. — AP

NEWS NUGGETS

YOGA EFFECTIVE AGAINST SLEEP DISTURBANCE & PAIN

Boston: Yoga or physical therapy may be effective in treating joint occurrences of sleep disturbance and back pain, according to a study which suggests the two exercises can reduce the need for medication. The study, published in the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, said sleep quality improved significantly for 52 weeks after 12 weeks of yoga classes or one-on-one PT with a therapist. The researchers, including those from Boston Medical Centre in the US, said there are long-term benefits from these non-pharmacologic approaches. They said sleep disturbance and insomnia are common among people with chronic low back pain, with previous research showing that nearly 60 per cent of people with cLBP experienced poor sleep quality and 53 per cent diagnosed with insomnia. According to the researchers, the medication for both sleep and back pain may have serious side effects, with increased risk of drug-related overdose and death. — PTI

MALTA BUSINESSMAN 'ARRESTED ON YACHT' IN JOURNALIST MURDER PROBE

Valletta: Malta on Wednesday arrested a tycoon in connection with the murder of journalist Daphne Caruana Galizia, the day after an alleged middleman was offered a pardon to identify the mastermind behind the killing. Maltese national Yorgen Fenech was detained on his yacht at dawn as he tried to leave Malta, a police source said, in the latest development in the long-running case that raised questions about Malta's rule of law. Galizia is described by supporters as a "one woman WikiLeaks." — AFP



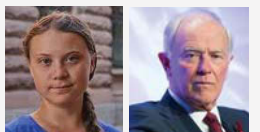
Yorgen Fenech



Daphne Galizia

AM A CLIMATE CHANGE BELIEVER, SAYS AIRLINE CHIEF AS HE HAILS THUNBERG

London: The president of Emirates Sir Tim Clark, the biggest long-haul airline in the world, was no climate change denier. "I'm a climate change believer. I have to say, it took me a long time to get there." "And we [in the aviation industry] aren't doing ourselves any favours by chucking billions of tons of carbon into the air," he told the BBC. Another surprise is his admiration for climate change activists. — Agencies



Greta Thunberg



Sir Tim Clark

"I quite like Extinction Rebellion and Greta Thunberg for having brought a real focus to the issue," he said. "They have a role to play... We really need this kind of thing to force us to make decisions". — Agencies



SPORT | Cricket

Day/Night game marks new start for Test cricket: Ashwin

14



SPORT | Basketball

Triple-double again for James as Lakers roll Thunder

15



GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

1 When was SAARC founded?

- 1985
- 1982
- 1980

2 Who composed the famous song *Sare Jahan Se Achha*?

- Mohammad Iqbal
- Jaidev
- Rabindranath Tagore

3 What piece of clothing was invented by French fashion designer Louis Reard in 1946?

- Tank top
- Bikini
- Mini-skirt

SHORT TAKES

2 held in attempt to murder case

New Delhi: With the arrest of 19-year-old youth and apprehension of a minor, the Delhi Police has claimed to solve an attempt to murder case. The accused was identified as Shamsad (19) and his minor accomplice is nabbed along with the weapon of offence (knife). DCP (Northeast) Ved Prakash Surya said, on Saturday information about the stabbing incident was received at Seelampur police station. The victim sustained two stabbed injuries on the chest by three unknown assailants on a bike. During the probe, tip-off was received that Shamshad, Junaid and a minor were involved in the attack. After which Shamshad and minor were nabbed. During interrogation, it was revealed that following an altercation after the vehicle of the victim and accused persons were about to collide they attacked him with a knife.

30 cartons of liquor seized

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has recovered 1500 qtrs of illicit liquor from a car in Bawana area. However, the accused fled away from the spot. DCP (Outer North) Gaurav Sharma said that the ASI Suresh and CT Sukhdev on Tuesday were performing duty when they noticed a suspicious car in Pooth Khurd area. The staff chased the car for almost a kilometre after which they compelled it to stop. While the staff was approaching the vehicle, the driver took advantage and fled away. During the inspection of the car, 30 cartons containing 1500 qtrs were recovered, DCP added.

2 held for duping ₹25L in ATM fraud

New Delhi: Delhi Police on Wednesday claimed to have arrested two persons who used to dupe people by cloning their ATM cards. The police said that the duo had looted over ₹25 lakh from people in the city by making 500 ATM clones in last three months. The accused have been identified as Rajesh Sharma (52) and Shamsheer (22). The police said that the duo was also involved in dozen other cases. Deputy commissioner of police (Dwarka) Anto Alphonse said on Monday tip-off was received that Sharma had withdrawn money by using cloned cards. A trap was laid and he was nabbed. On his search, 10 cloned debit and credit cards, four transaction slips, and one VeriFone Data Saving Machine were recovered. Further, on his instance, Shamsher was also apprehended.

THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- Bikini
- Mohammad Iqbal
- 1985

JNUSU office-bearers demand resignation of vice-chancellor High-power panel to visit JNU

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

A high-power committee constituted by the HRD ministry will visit the JNU campus on Friday to meet the students and find a solution to the current issues concerning the university, officials said on Wednesday.

Earlier in the day, Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) office-bearers met the committee members at Shastri Bhawan here. The students have been agitating for over three weeks, demanding rollback of a recent hostel fee hike.

"The high-power committee of the human resource development (HRD) ministry met students from JNU on Wednesday and took stock of their views at a cordial meeting at Shastri Bhawan. They agreed to meet the students again on Friday at the JNU campus to find solutions to the current issue," a senior official of the ministry said. "The committee appealed to the students to restore normalcy on the campus immediately, to which the students responded positively," he added.

The meeting commenced at around 10.30 am. The JNUSU office-bearer attended it along with student councillors from different schools of the university. The JNUSU put forth the demand for a complete rollback of the hostel fee hike and said till the time the committee submitted its report, the fee hike must be put in abeyance. "We demanded that the inter-hall administration committee meeting that

was held on October 28 without the students' union be reconvened and the hostel manual be passed only after suggestions are taken from us," JNUSU secretary Satish Chandra Yadav said. "We also put forth the point about the vice-chancellor not meeting us, which has brought the situation to this level," he added.

The JNUSU issued a statement, saying, "Our demand is to arrive at a new manual through an acceptable deliberative process. The current manual disregards affirmative action and does not guarantee reservations to SC, ST and PWD (persons with disabilities) students in hostel seats, which we cannot accept."

"We shall neither deviate nor deter from our demands – complete withdrawal of the manual and the decisions taken at the council meeting. The HRD ministry must ensure accountability of the JNU administration through the resignation of the vice-chancellor or recommendation of constitution of a visitatorial enquiry," the statement added.

The committee members also met the hostel presidents of JNU later in the day. The HRD ministry constituted the three-member committee on Monday to recommend ways to restore normal functioning at JNU.

The panel members met JNU officials on Tuesday. While the JNUSU alleged that the registrar and the V-C refused to meet the panel members, the university maintained that only the deans of all schools were called for the meeting.



Visually challenged students of JNU protest against lathicharge on them on Wednesday. JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh (L) with other student-leaders after meeting with HRD ministry officials at Shastri Bhawan in New Delhi. Bombay University students protest against the fee hike in JNU in Mumbai on Wednesday. PTI



Divyang students protest at old police headquarters

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

Visually challenged students of JNU on Wednesday protested outside the old police headquarters at ITO where they protested.

"We want a written apology from police who had beaten up the students. A few days back, police were protesting after they were beaten up by lawyers. How could they forget that students also have a right to protest?" said the protesting students.

"The students have submitted a memorandum to the police demanding action against those police

and taken to Vasant Kunj police station. Later, they said their bus was brought to the old police headquarters at ITO where they protested.

"We want a written apology from police who had beaten up the students. A few days back, police were protesting after they were beaten up by lawyers. How could they forget that students also have a right to protest?" said the protesting students.

"The students have submitted a memorandum to the police demanding action against those police

personnel who allegedly beat them. The students were given assurance that an enquiry will be conducted and appropriate action will be taken," said Anil Mittal, additional public relation officer, Delhi Police.

Students of Delhi University on Wednesday protested against the "police lathicharge" on their JNU counterparts during a demonstration over hostel fee hike. They also protested against the New Education Policy and said it is an "attempt" to privatise education.

Anger in BJP over 'tainted' engineer's entry

SHASHI BHUSHAN
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

The recent joining of an assistant engineer, who was forced by the BJP-led North Delhi Municipal Corporation to take compulsory retirement, in the BJP's city unit has created sharp differences in the rank and file of the party with a section of leaders alleging that involvement of such "tainted" officers could harm the party in the coming Assembly elections.

Sharafat Ali joined the

saffron fold at its city unit headquarters at Pundit Pant Marg in presence of Delhi BJP vice president Shazia Ilmi, state minority morchha president Mohammed Haroon and media department head Ashok Goel on Tuesday evening. Mr Haroon who was present at the event, however, said he had no role in Mr Ali's joining the party. "I had no knowledge about his (Mr Ali) joining the BJP. Ms Ilmi and Mr Goel felicitated Mr Ali's joining. No one consulted or informed me about Mr

▶ A section of Delhi BJP leadership said that allowing joining of an officer of doubtful credential would ultimately harm the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's fight against corruption

Ali joining the BJP. I participated in the function after seeing the presence of people from minority community. I have no

knowledge about his past or anything about Mr Ali," said Mr Haroon.

In an order dated October 31, North Corporation commissioner Varsha Joshi while excising her powers had ruled compulsory retirement of Mr Ali along 38 other engineers of the civic body. Citing ground of Mr Ali's compulsory retirement, a section of Delhi BJP leadership said that allowing joining of an officer of doubtful credential would ultimately harm the Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's fight against corruption.

A senior party leader also questioned the state leadership for allowing Mr Ali to join BJP. "Is anyone being held responsible for this? Who allowed him to join the party? Why his background was not checked," he asked.

To avoid any such misadventure, a party leader suggested that a panel or committee of senior office bearers must be formed to get background checked of any new entrant in the BJP.



Securitymen detain a member of the Youth Congress during a protest in New Delhi on Wednesday. — AFP

Court spares AAP MLA of jail, asks to pay ₹10K fine

New Delhi, Nov. 20: An AAP MLA, convicted for creating ruckus near a polling booth during 2013 Assembly polls here, got away with lighter punishment as a special court on Wednesday overruled a lower court's three-month jail term and asked him to pay only ₹10,000 fine.

Special judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar passed the order on an application filed by Manoj Kumar against the June 25 order of a magisterial court. The sessions court upheld the conviction of the Kondli MLA for disorderly conduct in or near

polling stations. It said the reasoning given by the magisterial court for not extending the benefit of probation to the MLA was appropriate.

The court, however, acquitted Kumar of the offence of obstructing public servant in discharge of public functions. It further said that although Kumar had caused obstruction in taking out the EVMs/ballot boxes and election material from the polling station "but there is no disturbance in the casting of the votes."

— PTI

'Very poor' air likely to turn 'severe' in next 2 days

New Delhi, Nov. 20: Air quality in the national capital entered the very poor category on Wednesday and is likely to turn severe over the next two days due to prevailing calm winds and increased incidents of farm fires, officials said.

The national capital's air quality index (AQI) was 301 at 4 pm on Wednesday, up from 242 at 4 pm on Tuesday, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). With an AQI of 366, Ghaziabad was the most-polluted in the country on Wednesday, the CPCB data revealed.

Greater Noida (340) and Noida (320) also recorded their AQI in the "very poor" category. An AQI between 201 and 300 is considered "poor", 301-400 "very poor" and 401-500 "severe".

The government's air quality monitoring and forecasting service SAFAR said the air quality in Delhi may enter the severe category in some parts of Delhi by Friday. It will be mainly due to two factors — calm surface



A foreigner wearing a mask walks at IGI Airport, in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

winds in Delhi are likely to prevent dispersion of pollutants and the fire count has increased significantly (around 1,000) as compared to last week.

However, the direction of transport-level will continue to fluctuate between easterly to northerly and may not bring significant farm fire plume to Delhi on Thursday. The smoke from stubble burning accounted for 14 per cent of Delhi pollution on Wednesday. It is likely to dip to decrease to 7 per cent.

Weather experts said a fresh western disturbance

Ghaziabad mall fined ₹25L for using gensets

Ghaziabad, Nov. 20: The district administration and the pollution control board slapped a fine of ₹25 lakh on the management of the Pacific Mall in Kaushambi area here on Wednesday for allegedly using diesel generators, officials said.

It booked two general managers of the mall for violating anti-pollution norms, district magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey said. The action followed after complaints were received through WhatsApp, he said. The DM said he had received complaints regarding pollution caused in the area due to the use of diesel generators. — PTI

is expected to increase the wind speed and improve ventilation which will help bring down pollution levels.

— PTI

30-yr-old escapes as abductors get stuck in traffic

Noida, Nov. 20: The abduction bid of a 30-year-old man went comically wrong, allowing him to flee as his abductors' car as it first got caught in heavy traffic on the Noida-Delhi road and then it broke down, police said on Wednesday.

The victim, Sachin Pathak, escaped the clutches of his abductors when they got out of their Honda City, which had a flat tyre, to stop a random Maruti WagonR to flee the spot, officials said. Six people, including the four who were in the car, were arrested on Tuesday on charges of kidnapping, robbery, among others, a police official said.

Mr Pathak alias Chini was abducted on Monday from Okhla Bird Sanctuary Metro station. Bundled into a car, they sped towards Kalindi Kunj in Delhi but were met with heavy traffic on the route.

The abductors then decided to take a U-turn and drove in the wrong lane for some distance. Later their car had a flat tyre near Sector 94 "gaushala" and they got down to stop an oncoming WagonR but Mr Pathak fled from the Honda City and jumped across into the "gaushala" to escape the abductors, the official said.

On Tuesday, a complaint was registered at the Sector 39 police station after which an FIR was registered and investigation taken up, the official

▶ Sachin Pathak was abducted from Okhla Bird Sanctuary Metro Station by the assailants. They sped towards Kalindi Kunj in Delhi but were met with heavy traffic on the route. The assailants then decided to take a U-turn and drove in the wrong lane for some distance. Later their car had a flat tyre.

added. During probe, it emerged that the abductors and Mr Pathak had a dispute over the leadership of a tempo union operating from Sector 94 Metro station after which the conspiracy was hatched.

Later on Tuesday, four accused — Mustaqeem (23), Mohit Awana (24), Deepak (22) and Gaurav (22) — were arrested from Yamuna Pusta Road while they were travelling with illegal firearms and ammunition in a stolen car, the official said.

Based on information received from them, two more accused, Balendra (32) and Raheesh (24), were also arrested for their role in the conspiracy, the police said.

One of the accused, Pala Pradhan, involved in the conspiracy is absconding and efforts are on to arrest him, the police added. Four stolen cars were impounded from their possession.

— PTI

'Aadhaar not mandatory for property registration'

New Delhi, Nov. 20: Aadhaar is accepted as proof of identity for property registration and land mutation, but it is optional requirement and there is no provision in the law making it mandatory. AAP told the Delhi High Court on Wednesday.

The submission by the state was made in an affidavit filed before a bench in response to notice issued to it on a PIL by BJP leader Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay seeking linking of immovable and movable property documents of citizens with Aadhaar number to curb corruption, black money generation and "benami" transactions.

"Aadhaar is one of the documents which executants of conveyance deeds are required to submit as proof of identity for registration of properties, however, the same, as on date is only an optional requirement," said AAP government.

The Delhi government also said that in Supreme Court judgement of September, it has been categorically held that mandatory production of Aadhaar details or number may only be insisted upon for welfare schemes.

The Centre said that it needs more time to file its response and therefore, the court listed the matter for further hearing on February 18.

— PTI



Ruled out

Bangladesh's reserve opener Saif Hassan was on Wednesday ruled out of the Day/Night Test against India owing to a finger injury

Party in pink at Gardens



A pink-ball Test is like officiating five back to back ODIs. More or less same timing.

— S. Ravi, ICC Elite Panel umpire

SHORT TAKES

India lose to Pak, out of ACC Cup

Dhaka: India crashed out of the Asian Cricket Council Emerging Teams Cup after losing by three runs to arch-rivals Pakistan in the first semifinal here on Wednesday. Pakistan dished out a strong top-order display to put up 267 for seven on the board after opting to bat. Openers Omair Yousuf (66 off 97 balls) and Haider Ali (43 off 60) put on a 90-run opening stand to lay a solid foundation. Thereafter, Said Badar (47 not out off 48), skipper Rohail Nazir (35) and Imran Rafiq (28) made useful contributions with the bat to take Pakistan to a defendable score. Pacer Shivam Mavi (2/53), off-spinner Hritshik Shokeen (2/59) and Saurabh Dubey (2/60) shared six wickets between them. Chasing, skipper Belur Ravi Sharath (47 off 43 balls) and Aryan Juyal (17 off 17) made a bright start, stitching 43 runs off just 38 balls for the opening wicket. After the dismissal of Juyal, Sharath held fort in the company of top-scorer Sanvir Singh (76 off 90) with a fifty-plus stand, but India's chase hit a roadblock once the duo got out. India were dealt a severe blow when Armaan Jaffer (46 off 53) and Yash Rathod (13) were dismissed in quick succession, reducing the team to 211 for five in 38.1 overs. — PTI

Malinga may play for 2 more years

Colombo: Sri Lanka captain and veteran pacer Lasith Malinga has had a rethink on his decision to retire after next year's Twenty20 World Cup, saying he can carry on for another two years. Malinga, in March, had stated that he wanted to retire after the Twenty20 World Cup scheduled in October-November in Australia next year. But the 36-year-old, who captains Sri Lanka in the shortest format, now says he can play on beyond that. "T20 is four overs and I feel with my skill, I can manage T20 as a bowler. As a captain, because I've played so many T20s around the world that I feel I can manage that period for maybe another two years," Malinga told *'ESPNCricinfo'*. The veteran said he is waiting to hear from Sri Lanka Cricket on whether he would be leading the side in the Twenty20 showpiece. — PTI

FOCUS ON SHAW, DHAWAN IN SUPER LEAGUE STAGE

Surat: The spotlight would firmly be on the likes of Shikhar Dhawan and young Prithvi Shaw when the Super League stage of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament begins here on Thursday. The focus will be on out-of-form opener Dhawan, who has not had a great run in recent times as well as Shaw, who recently returned to competitive cricket after serving an eight month retrospective ban for a doping violation. Dhawan is currently going through a rough patch. The Delhi left-handed batsman had scores of 0 (9) against J&K, 9 (6) against Jharkhand, 19 (18) against Sikkim and 35 (33) against Odisha in the league stage of the national T20 championship and he would be more than keen to turn things around. Another promising opener who would want to make most of the opportunity is Shaw, who returned with a bang from a doping ban, slamming a half-century against Assam in the last game of the league stage for Mumbai. Shaw will have to make optimum use of the Super League stage if he has to impress the national selectors and make a comeback to the national team. In all probability, Shaw will open for Mumbai, replacing an in-form Jay Bista, with senior pro Aditya Tare. His teammates and three India players — Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube and Shardul Thakur — also have an opportunity to cement their places in the Indian T20 squad for the West Indies series with good outings. — PTI

New Delhi, Nov. 20: Senior Indian off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin feels Day/Night Tests will mark a new beginning for the traditional format in the country as the spectator count will improve drastically owing to the match timings.

India will play their maiden Day/Night Test starting Friday, against Bangladesh in Kolkata. The daily proceedings in the match will start at 1pm and wind up by 8pm.

"I just hope this marks the beginning of where we get huge crowds coming into the stadium and test cricket gets its credit and obviously with the change in timings people can afford to finish their work and come into the game, watch it and enjoy it," Ashwin said. His teammate Mohd. Shami is focussed on the challenges that await him in the game. "The middle session should be the main focus for batsman while using the pink ball unlike the morning session that is usually considered the most important in a test match as it will have more of a swing in Eden Gardens," he said.

Shami said the bowlers will have to work very hard to extract any assistance from the pink ball. "...the pink ball is only useful when there is a hard and grassy wicket because the ball goes straight."

"Pink ball is a very different ball and doesn't work like the white or red ball at all so there is a very low possibility that in the last session we get a swing or reverse so we will have to work very hard," he said.

Coach Vettori wants Bangla to be excited

Kolkata, Nov. 20: Bangladesh's spin bowling consultant Daniel Vettori is done dwelling on the "negatives" and wants his team to feel excited about competing in its maiden Day/Night Test even though it happens to be against an incomparably formidable-at-home India.

India and Bangladesh will square off in their maiden Day/Night Test starting here on Friday and the talk has been all about the challenges of coping with the pink ball under floodlights.

"We are excited to play rather than think about the negatives," Vettori told reporters ahead of the Test.

"Visibility is fine, but the only anecdotal conversation I have heard is around being a little bit hard to pick up from point and square-leg. It will be interesting to find

Shami can be deadly: Saha
India wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha on Wednesday brushed aside concerns about pink ball being a challenge for bowlers like

Mohammed Shami who, according to him, can be trusted to come good irrespective of the ball's colour or the nature of the surface. I Shami had a match-haul of seven wickets among the Indian pace attack's collective haul of 14 scalps in the home team's innings and 130-run victory over Bangladesh in the first Test in Indore. "With the form they (Shami, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav) are in, the pink ball is not a factor. Especially (Mohammed) Shami, he can be deadly on any wicket. He has pace and is able to extract reverse swing," Saha said when asked whether colour of the ball will make more difference. Saha said that they haven't yet checked how much movement is on offer as far as pink ball is concerned. "We are yet to see the movement of the pink ball. But the colour of the ball won't matter with the current form of our pacers," Saha added. — PTI



Daniel Vettori

out if slips, gully and umpire is picking it up well. They say there's a small halo effect," he pointed out.

While a handful of players from India have played a pink-ball game in domestic cricket, Bangladesh's only experience with that was a one-off Day/Night four-day match in 2013 but none of the current team players were a part of that fixture. — PTI

Ashwin says Day/Night game marks new start for Test cricket



▲ R. Ashwin during a training session ahead of India's first D/N Test against Bangladesh at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday. — AP

Bring Ashwin back in limited overs: Bhajji

New Delhi, Nov. 20: Spin great Harbhajan Singh feels Ravichandran Ashwin deserves a comeback in India's limited overs set-up as a reward for his recent exploits with the red ball.

With the management and selectors exploring options ahead of the T20 World Cup next year, opportunities have been given to the likes of W. Sundar and Rahul Chahar.

As the selectors meet to pick the ODI and T20 squads for the West Indies series next month, Harbhajan said Ashwin should get another chance in the shorter versions of the game.

"This is what I feel, if you are looking to bowl a spinner upfront (which Sundar has been doing in T20s), you rather have a wicket-taker which Ashwin is. Why not (give him a chance)? He has also done a good job with the red ball recently," Harbhajan said on Tuesday.

"Ashwin spins the ball, he has got more variations. Someone like a Sundar needs to learn. I want him to do well. I am all for blood in youngsters but they must learn else they will be replaced, considering the stiff competition," said the 39-year-old.

Ashwin last played a limited overs game for India in July 2017, following which he and Ravindra Jadeja were overlooked for the shorter formats with wrist-spinners Yuzvendra Chahal and Kuldeep.

Jadeja was able to make a comeback but Ashwin hasn't. The selectors are trying out various combinations for the T20 World Cup in Australia.

Kuldeep has not been part of the last three T20 series while Chahal made a successful comeback against Bangladesh. — PTI



BCCI president Sourav Ganguly inspects the pitch at the Eden Gardens on Wednesday. — AFP

Yesteryear stars to descend on Kolkata

Kolkata, Nov. 20: India's finest cricketers including Sachin Tendulkar, Sunil Gavaskar and Kapil Dev will assemble during the country's first-ever day-night Test against Bangladesh, starting here on Friday.

The iconic Eden Gardens is all set to witness a musical extravaganza in the presence of former cricketers, celebrities and politicians during India and Bangladesh's first-ever pink ball Test.

According to BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, the second Test of the two-match series will be one to remember. "Sachin (Tendulkar), (Sunil) Gavaskar, Kapil (Dev), Rahul (Dravid), Anil (Kumble) everyone will be there. In tea time, there will be carts going around the stadium with former captains in them," Ganguly said.

"There is a musical performance at tea time and at the end of the day there is a felicitation. Both the teams, former captains, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, Chief Minister will be there.

"Runa Laila will be performing, Jeet Ganguly will be performing. I am very excited. Just see the excitement, four days are already sold out in a Test match," he added.

Asked whether after the Eden Test, India will play a day-night Test in its upcoming tour to Australia in January next year, Ganguly replied: "We will see."

The Cricket Association of Bengal (CAB) and BCCI have put in place several plans to mark India's maiden pink ball Test. Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina is expected to ring the 'Eden Bell' along with West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on the first day of the match.

Besides, a host of sporting starts, including star shuttler P V Sindhu, chess ace Viswanathan Anand and tennis sensation Sania Mirza are expected to grace the occasion.

As per plans, paratroopers are expected to fly into Eden to hand a pink ball each to captains Virat Kohli and Mominul Haque just before the toss. — PTI

Rohit's workload and Dhawan's form to be discussed by selectors

Kolkata, Nov. 20: Vice-captain Rohit Sharma's workload management and opener Shikhar Dhawan's poor form are expected to dominate the deliberations when the national selection committee meets here on Thursday to decide on India's limited-overs squads for the home series against the West Indies.

This is likely to be the last meeting chaired by MSK Prasad as he and central zone selector Gagan Khoda are on their way out having completed four years. If all goes well, Rohit may get some well-deserved rest during the three-match ODI series against the Caribbean team so that he is fresh and rejuvenated for the tough tour of New Zealand next year where India will play

five T20 Internationals, three ODIs and two Test matches.

The Indian team is scheduled to play three Twenty 20 Internationals against the West Indies with the series-opener in Mumbai on December 6 followed by matches in Thiruvananthapuram (December 8) and Hyderabad (December 11). The three ODIs will be played in Chennai (December 15), Visakhapatnam (December 18) and Cuttack (December 22).

Rohit's workload will be the prominent point of discussion as he has played close to 60 competitive matches (including IPL) this year. In the current calendar year, the limited overs vice-

captain has played 25 ODIs, 11 Twenty20 Internationals, which is three ODIs and four T20Is more than skipper Virat Kohli, who has been rested twice.

While the onus will also be on Rohit to give his viewpoint, the possibility of him being given a break in at least one of the two formats looks strong.

The other person, who might feel the heat is senior opener Shikhar Dhawan. Dhawan hasn't been in the best of forms since he returned to cricket after sustaining an injury.

Mayank Agarwal's stupendous form in Test cricket and a very good List A career average of 50-plus and an above 100 strike-rate makes him a good choice to partner KL Rahul. — PTI

No shame in showing tears, it's ok for men to cry: Sachin

New Delhi, Nov. 20: "There's no shame in showing your tears," said Sachin Tendulkar on Wednesday, recalling a time when he believed that crying makes a man weak, a belief he wants none to have now.

In an open letter to fellow men in the ongoing International Men's Week, the cricket icon said his tribe should never pretend to be tough when things are falling apart.

"There's no shame in showing your tears. So why hide a part of you that actually makes you



stronger? Why hide your tears?" he asked in an emotional note. "Because that's what we

There's no shame in showing your tears. So why hide a part of you that actually makes you stronger? Why hide your tears? — SACHIN TENDULKAR

are brought up to believe — that men are not supposed to cry. That crying makes a man weak.

"I grew up believing this. And the reason I'm writing to you today, is because I realised that I was wrong. My struggles and my pain made me who I am, shaping me into a better man," he added.

The 46-year-old, arguably the greatest batsman to have played cricket, said crying does not mean weakness.

"It takes a lot of courage to show your pain and your vulnerability. But just as sure as the morning, you'll emerge from it tougher and better. So I encourage you to move

past these stereotypes and notions of what men can or cannot do. Whoever you are, wherever you are, I wish you this courage," he said.

Tendulkar said his tribe will face "fear, doubts and experience great tribulations" and it is fine if some of it leads to a breakdown.

"Undoubtedly, there will be times when you fail, and you will feel like crying and letting it all out. But sure enough, you'll hold back the tears and pretend to be tough. Because that's what men do," he wrote. — PTI



A file photo of Australia's Steve Smith who had broken down while apologising for the ball tampering incident.



New manager

Former Hamburg manager Hannes Wolf was named as the new coach of struggling Genk, the Belgian champions announced on Tuesday



We've been talking about improving our defense everytime. Tonight we showed it.

— Golden State Warriors veteran Draymond Green

SHORT TAKES

England to host Denmark team

London: England will host Denmark in one of two friendlies to be played at Wembley in March in preparation for next year's European championships. The Three Lions will welcome the Danes, who sealed their place at Euro 2020 with a 1-1 draw against the Republic of Ireland on Monday, on March 31. Three days earlier, England will also feature in a friendly at Wembley with the opposition to be confirmed early next year. A final two friendlies before Euro 2020 in June will see England play one match at home outside London and one in Europe, with details over the opposition and location of those matches still to be finalised. Gareth Southgate's men will enjoy home advantage for much of the Euros that will be hosted in total 12 cities across the continent. England will play all three of their group games at Wembley, which will also host the semi-finals and the final. — AFP

Germany eye Spain for friendly

Frankfurt: Germany coach Joachim Loew has revealed that the side are "certain" to face Spain next March with Belgium or Portugal also potential opponents in the build-up to the Euro 2020 finals. Serge Gnabry hit a hat-trick and Bayern Munich team-mate Leon Goretzka scored twice Tuesday in a 6-1 routing of Northern Ireland, which confirmed the Germans as winners of their qualifying group ahead of the Netherlands. Loew revealed the German Football Association (DFB) are on the verge of confirming a friendly against Spain, which Spanish media report could be played in Madrid, with potentially Belgium or Portugal in another friendly match also in March. "Spain is certain. The last conversations are taking place," said Loew. "The second opponent is not yet decided. We are trying to get Portugal or Belgium. "We are waiting until after the draw" for the Euro 2020 finals on November 30. "We're relaxed," about the draw, added Loew, "we'll take it as it comes." — AFP

FANS IN KL DETAINED FOR TROUBLE

Kuala Lumpur: More than 40 football fans were detained following a World Cup qualifier between Malaysia and Indonesia in Kuala Lumpur after they hurled flares and bottles at each other, police said Wednesday. It was the latest instance of trouble at a match between the arch-rivals after Malaysian fans were threatened and pelted with projectiles at a World Cup qualifier in Jakarta in September. In Tuesday evening's match in Malaysia, rival fans started throwing projectiles during the match, which ended in a 2-0 win for the home side. But the most serious trouble occurred after the game, with supporters lighting flares and hurling bottles in front of an entrance to the Bukit Jalil stadium. Security officials arrested 27 fans from Malaysia and 14 from Indonesia, senior police official Mohamed Mokhssein Mohamed Zon told local media. They were released soon afterwards but police are still investigating the incident. Some Indonesian fans stayed in the stadium until the scuffles had ended and waited to be escorted out by police. The trouble at the September match — which ended in a 3-2 victory for Malaysia — was more serious. Malaysia's sports minister was evacuated from the stadium as violence erupted and police fired tear gas to disperse a crowd outside. FIFA fined Indonesia's national FA \$45,000 over the chaos, another blow for football in a country where the game has long been beset by problems. — AFP

HISTORY MAKER

Triple-double again for James as Lakers roll Thunder

Los Angeles, Nov. 20: LeBron James became the first player in NBA history to record a triple-double against every team in the league on Tuesday as the Los Angeles Lakers powered to victory over the Oklahoma City Thunder.

James finished with 25 points, 11 rebounds and 10 assists in a hardfought 112-107 win over the Thunder at the Staples Center.

Anthony Davis led the Lakers scoring with 34 points, while adding seven rebounds and four assists.

The win saw the Lakers improve to 12-2 to remain on top of the Western Conference.

But it was James' 86th career triple-double that grabbed the headlines, the Lakers star sealing the milestone with an assist to Davis with just over four minutes remaining in the fourth quarter.

James said the record would not have been possible without the support of coaches and team-mates over the years.

"I really don't know what to think about it to be honest," James told reporters when asked about the feat.

"I've had some great team-mates and great coaches who've put me in position to facilitate. My team-mates have made shots for me throughout my career, coaches have put me in position to be successful.

"Hopefully in all those triple-doubles I've got a winning record because that's what's most important. But it's a pretty cool stat and I'm glad it happened."

Houston's Russell Westbrook is hard on James' heels with triple-doubles against 29 of the league's 30 teams.

Westbrook would complete his set with a triple-double against his former team Oklahoma City, who he left this year.

In New Orleans, Carmelo Anthony made



LeBron James of the Los Angeles Lakers in action against the Oklahoma City Thunder during the second half of an NBA game at Staples Center on Tuesday. — AFP

an unsuccessful return to the NBA after more than a year out of the game as the Portland Trail Blazers slumped to a 115-104 loss to the Pelicans.

Anthony, whose move to Portland was confirmed by the team earlier Tuesday, finished with

just 10 points after 23 minutes on court after shooting just 4-of-14 from the field.

It was cool: Anthony

It was a largely frustrating night for the 35-year-old 10-time All-Star, with

Portland giving up 17 turnovers as the Pelicans dominated a shaky Blazers defense.

Anthony however was simply happy to have made his return to the league, just over a year after he was released from the Houston Rockets.

"My body felt good, better than what I expected," Anthony said. "It was cool.

"I just enjoyed being back out there, getting into the flow of things, the routines, putting the uniform on and getting up and down the court."

Jrue Holiday led the scoring for the Pelicans with 22 points while Brandon Ingram had 21 points off the bench.

In Memphis, the crisis-hit Golden State Warriors ended a seven-game losing streak with a comfortable road victory over the Grizzlies, winning 114-95.

Although the Warriors continue to prop up the Western Conference standings with three wins against 12 defeats, the Dubs' injury-ravaged lineup drew confidence from a deserved win.

Alec Burks finished with 29 points while Glenn Robinson III had 20 points as the Warriors scored a morale-boosting victory.

"We came in fighting," Warriors veteran Draymond Green said. "We've been talking about improving our defense each and every time we step on this court. Tonight we showed it."

Warriors coach Steve Kerr, who has seen his roster decimated by injuries, hailed what he called a "great win."

"I'm just happy for the guys. They've been playing hard and working hard. It's good to see them rewarded. Losing losing seven in a row is miserable," Kerr said.

Elsewhere Tuesday, Bogdan Bogdanovic had 31 points from the bench as the Sacramento Kings downed the Phoenix Suns 120-116.

Bogdanovic led the Sacramento scorers with Richuan Holmes adding 20 points and Nemanja Bjelica 17.

Devin Booker led the Phoenix scoring with 30 points while Kelly Oubre Jr and Mikal Bridges had 20 points apiece. — AFP

HONG KONG | PROTESTS

Fans turn backs on China anthem

Dubai, Nov. 20: Hong Kong fans turned their backs to the Chinese national anthem once again but supported their team and were rewarded with a first win in Asian qualifying, 2-0, over Cambodia, on Tuesday.

Before the match, home fans jeered and turned their backs to the pitch as the Chinese national anthem played.

FIFA fined the Hong Kong Football Association 15,000 Swiss francs (13,700 euros or HKD 117,944) following a similar incident before the September 10 match against Iran.

On Tuesday, James Ha put the hosts ahead with a close-range half-volley in the 21st minute.

Cambodia, under pressure for most of the match, were reduced to 10 men in the 78th minute when Soeuy Visal was sent off after flicking the ball out of the goalkeeper's hands to collect a second yellow card.

Despite the disparity in numbers, the hard-working Roberto Affonso Junior was still surrounded by four Cambodian defenders when he spun on the edge of the box five minutes later and curled

● **Home fans jeered and turned backs as the Chinese national anthem played**

● **Fans got reward with a first win in Asian qualifying, 2-0, over Cambodia**

the ball into the net. Hong Kong have five points in Group C, while Cambodia stayed bottom with one. Iraq, playing against Bahrain at the neutral venue of the Amman International Stadium in Jordan, remained on top of Group C with 11 points despite being held to a goalless draw.

Across town, at the King Abdullah II International Stadium, Jordan secured the biggest win of the day when they beat Chinese Taipei, 5-0. Jordan moved level with Kuwait in Group B at 10 points, two behind leaders Australia who have played one fewer match.

Qatar, the 2022 World Cup hosts, secured their third successive win in Group E with a 1-0 away triumph over a battling Afghanistan. — AFP

NEXT WEEK'S OPEN GOLF TOURNEY POSTPONED

Hong Kong, Nov. 20: Next week's Hong Kong Open, one of the biggest golf tournaments in Asia, was postponed on Wednesday following months of anti-government protests in the city.

"Regrettably the European Tour, in conjunction with our tournament co-sanctioning partner at the Asian Tour, has taken the decision to postpone next week's Hong Kong Open," a European Tour statement said. European Tour chief executive Keith Pelley said he hoped the event, whose winners include Rory McIlroy, Colin Montgomerie and Peter Thomson, could be rescheduled for early next year.

"The decision has been taken due to the ongoing level of social unrest in Hong Kong," Pelley said.

"As the safety of our players, staff, stakeholders and everyone involved in each and every one of our tournaments around the world is our top priority, we feel this is the correct, but unfortunate, course of action." Asian Tour commissioner Cho Minn Thant said: "It is regrettable that the Hong Kong Open has to be postponed due to the ongoing unrest in the city. — AFP

CONCACAF LEAGUE

Sargent, Morris star in US win

Los Angeles, Nov. 20: Jordan Morris and teenager Josh Sargent scored two goals apiece as the United States eased into the final four of the CONCACAF Nations League on Tuesday with a 4-0 win over Cuba.

Seattle Sounders forward Morris struck twice in the first half as manager Gregg Berhalter's side bagged three points to finish top of Group A, ahead of Canada on goal difference.

Werder Bremen's 19-year-old striker Sargent bagged the other goals in a game played at George Town's Truman Bodden Stadium in the Cayman Islands after Cuba's proposed home venue failed to meet CONCACAF standards.

The US had put them-



Josh Sargent (in this file pic) scored two goals as the United States beat Cuba 4-0 on Tuesday. — AFP

selves in the driving seat to qualify after a comprehensive 4-1 defeat of Canada on Friday.

Needing only a win to advance against a Cuban side they had already beaten 7-0 earlier in the qualifiers, the US wasted

no time in taking the lead when Sargent bundled in the opener after just 34 seconds.

Despite relentless US pressure however, Berhalter's side were made to wait until the 26th minute before they

doubled their lead.

A flicked header by Schalke 04's Weston McKennie found Morris unmarked inside the penalty area and the Seattle man made no mistake with a cool finish past Cuba goalkeeper Sandy Sanchez.

Morris was then on target again six minutes before half-time, tapping in Aaron Long's goal-bound cross to effectively seal the outcome.

Sargent then grabbed his second of the night in the 66th minute, rifling home a low shot after Tyler Boyd's assist.

The US will now face Honduras in the semis of the CONCACAF Nations League next June, with Mexico and Costa Rica meeting in the other half of the draw. — AFP

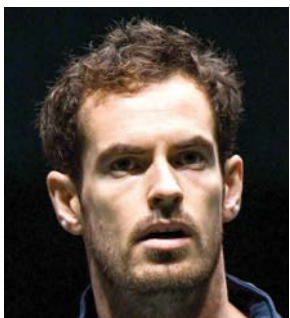
Murray urges sceptics to give new format a chance

Madrid, Nov. 20: Andy Murray believes negativity around the reformed Davis Cup has been unfair and is urging people to give the new competition a chance to succeed.

The inaugural Finals of the 119-year-old tournament started on Monday in Madrid, where 18 teams will now compete across the week at the Caja Magica for the chance to play in Sunday's final.

Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique has been at the heart of the changes after his marketing company Kosmos struck a \$3billion deal over 25 years with the International Tennis Federation.

"I think generally people have been fairly negative about the new concepts,"



Andy Murray

Murray said in a press conference on Monday.

"I just feel in tennis sometimes we are quite reluctant to make changes and this is a big change. I feel we should give it an opportunity to see how it goes."

Participation from the game's top players had

dwindled as the previous system required winning teams to play four week-ends across the year.

Organisers hope the prestigious trophy can be revitalised in a more congested format, with Murray, Novak Djokovic and Rafael Nadal all in attendance this week. "They've done a really good job with the facilities," said Murray.

"The team room is really good, the food and the transport has been good. There's nothing really to complain about so far.

"It feels like there's a few people that want to bash the event before it's started. I think they have to let that go and wait for the event to finish before we give a fair view on what this event is now." — AFP

FRENCH ATHLETICS

Track in doldrums after another doping case

Brussels, Nov. 20: Struggling with results on the track, the French athletics federation is facing yet another doping controversy after middle-distance runner Ophelie Claude-Boxberger tested positive for EPO before the world championships.

Claude-Boxberger, who was eliminated in the 3,000-meter steeplechase heats in Doha a few days after failing an out-of-competition test, has denied wrongdoing.

In a short interview with local newspaper L'Est Republicain late Tuesday, the four-time national champion denied taking the blood-boosting EPO drug and said she has asked for her "B" sample to be tested.

In addition to her positive test, the 31-year-old Claude-Boxberger is also the target of a probe by

French judicial officials.

The Paris prosecutor's office told The Associated Press they have opened an investigation into whether she breached French doping legislation after her case was referred to the judicial body by the French anti-doping agency, known as the AFLD.

The AFLD declined to answer questions from the AP.

Claude-Boxberger's case surfaced months after European marathon silver medalist Clemence Calvin was provisionally suspended by the AFLD for allegedly obstructing a doping test in Morocco in March.

Calvin, who is facing a lengthy suspension, has been summoned to a hearing on Wednesday, with a decision expected before the end of the year.



In this file photo, Morhad Amdouni from France celebrates European 10,000m gold in Berlin last year. — AP

During the world championships, German TV channel ARD reported that another French athlete, Morhad Amdouni, exchanged messages on a social medial chat application with an alleged drug dealer who asked for pay-

ment for EPO and growth hormone from the 2018 European 10,000-meter champion.

With the Tokyo Olympics looming, the three cases have rocked the French track federation, whose chief doctor Jean-Michel

Serra is involved in a romantic relationship with Claude-Boxberger. Serra, who abruptly left the world championships citing personal reasons, was officially reprimanded by the federation earlier this year after he sent a letter to the AFLD asking the body to reduce the number of tests carried out on Claude-Boxberger.

Serra is currently on medical leave and will be questioned by French track officials when he returns to work, federation president Andre Giraud said.

"These cases create discomfort, we can't deny it," Giraud said. "Obviously we can't put somebody behind every athlete night and day. We can rue the fact that we, in France, are doing the job (of testing). Is it being done in other countries? I doubt it."

After her elimination, Claude-Boxberger had blamed the poor weather conditions for her showing in Doha, where the French team collected only two medals.

According to L'Equipe newspaper, Claude-Boxberger tested positive on Sept. 18 in the Pyrenean ski resort of Font-Romeu, where she fine-tuned her preparations for the worlds. After finishing last in her heat, she said she was sad to conclude her season on such a disappointing note, especially following "a great month-long training in Font-Romeu."

Claude-Boxberger's positive test sparked a series of negative reactions from other French athletes, but decathlon world record holder Kevin Mayer saw some hope in the recent spate of cases. — AP

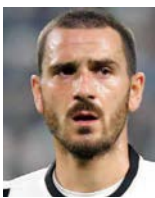
LEGA SERIE A CHIEF RESIGNS AMID PROBE

Milan, Nov. 20: Lega Serie A president Gaetano Micciche announced on Tuesday he was stepping down from his position amid a probe into his election in March 2018.

Genoa owner Enrico Preziosi's claims that there had been irregularities concerning Micciche's election prompted an Italian Football Federation (FIGC) investigation.

"I wish to announce my immediate resignation as president of Lega Serie A," Micciche said in a statement.

"The disclosures published today and related to the closure of the investigation on my appointment 20 months ago and its possible outcome are unacceptable and required me to take this decision." — AFP



Longer haul

Defender Leonardo Bonucci renews his contract with Juventus by one year, will remain with the Italian champions until 2024

KOREAN | MASTERS

Srikanth, Sameer in 2nd round

Gwangju (Korea), Nov. 20: India made a promising start at the Korea Masters with shuttlers Kidambi Srikanth and Sameer Verma advancing to the second round of the men's singles competition here on Wednesday.

The sixth seed Srikanth defeated Hong Kong's Wong Wing Ki Vincent 21-18, 21-17 in match that lasted 37 minutes.

The former World No.1 Srikanth now enjoys a dominant 11-3 head-to-head record over the Hong Kong shuttler. He will face Kanta Tsuneyama of Japan in the second round.

Sameer Verma also reached the second round after his opponent Japan's Kazumasa Sakai retired midway with the score reading 11-8 in favour of the Indian.

However, it was end of the road for Sourabh Verma, who went down after winning the first game to local favourite Kim Donghun 21-13, 12-21 13-21.

Sameer will take on Donghun in the second round. — *PTI*

● **Sixth seeded Kidambi Srikanth defeated Hong Kong's Wong Wing Ki Vincent 21-18, 21-17 in a 37 minutes match.**

● **Sameer Verma also reached the second round after Japan's Kazumasa Sakai retired with the score reading 11-8 in favour of the Indian.**

Blame it on scheduling, quips Gopi

Kolkata, Nov. 20: India's chief badminton coach Pullela Gopichand on Wednesday attributed P. V. Sindhu's lean run since her World Championship triumph to hectic scheduling.

Sindhu has fallen in the early stages at all tournaments except the French Open since winning her maiden World Championship title in August.

"Sindhu has had tough times in the last few matches, but I am sure she'll bounce back. I think she's had a tough schedule after the World Championships.

"Doing intercontinental with matches from China, Korea. Then she went to Denmark, France and then she comes back to play China, Hong Kong again... So I think it's been a tough last two months for her," Gopichand said.

"A lot of players in the world are finding it difficult. I think she is somebody who's a contender any day and I am sure she'll bounce back," Gopichand added. — *PTI*



I haven't played that much but I took time off to get ready for this event.

— **Nick Kyrgios, post his 6-4, 6-4 win over Colombia's Alejandro Gonzalez in their Davis Cup match**

SHORT TAKES

Mourinho takes over Spurs reins

London: Jose Mourinho was on Wednesday appointed Tottenham's new manager to replace the sacked Mauricio Pochettino, with the club languishing 14th in the Premier League.

The Portuguese former Chelsea, Real Madrid and Manchester United manager signed a contract until the end of the 2022/23 season, the north London club said in a statement.

Pochettino, 47, transformed Spurs' fortunes after arriving from Southampton in 2014 and although he failed to win a trophy he took the club to the Champions League final for the first time in their history just six months ago.

But the Argentine was sacked on Tuesday, with Tottenham struggling in the league after picking up just three wins from their opening 12 games.

This season they were knocked out of the League Cup by fourth-tier Colchester United and suffered an embarrassing 7-2 defeat at home to Bayern Munich in the Champions League. — *AFP*

Maradona steps down at Gimnasia

Buenos Aires: Diego Maradona has quit as coach of Argentinian Superliga side Gimnasia, less than three months after taking over, the club announced on Tuesday.

"Maradona is no longer the Gimnasia coach. He said he was here to add to things, not to divide," club president Gabriel Pellegrino said on Argentina's Radio La Red said on Maradona's decision to leave. Reports in Argentina suggested Maradona's departure was linked to an imminent management shake-up at the club in La Plata, 50 kilometres from Buenos Aires.

Maradona was no longer keen on remaining at the club after Pellegrino, the man who brought him back to Argentine football, pulled out of running for re-election as the side's president next Saturday.

Before his last match in charge, he tied his future to Pellegrino's: "I talked to the president and told him that I would continue if he continues." — *AFP*

ROCKY NAMES 30 PLAYERS FOR CAMP

New Delhi: The Indian women's football team coach Maymol Rocky on Wednesday named 30 members for a preparatory camp ahead of the South Asian Games (SAG) starting in Kathmandu on December 1. The squad will head for a 10-day camp starting in Kolkata from Wednesday with Maymol at the helm.

Making their return to the national team fold are the likes of Dalima Chhibber and Sandhiya Ranganathan, who were part of the team that won the SAFF Women's Championship earlier this year — the last time this side played in Nepal. "It is good to have them (Dalima and Sandhiya) back. Certainly, with the other new players coming in as well, the senior players will be on their toes and there will be a healthy competition within the squad," Maymol said. Talking about the camp, Maymol stated that there is "increased confidence" in the team after the result against Vietnam and these 10 days will offer her a great opportunity to assess the fresh faces.

THE SQUAD: Goalkeepers: Aditi Chauhan, M. Linthoingambi Devi, E. Panthoi Chanu, Esther H. Defenders: Ashlata Devi, Sweetey Devi, Jabamani Tudu, Ranjana Chanu, W. Linthoingambi Devi, Ritu Rani, Michele Castanha, Dalima Chhibber, Anline Fernandes. Midfielders: Sangita Basfore, Sanju, Manisha, Ratanbala Devi, Grace Lalrampari, Roja Devi, Sumithra Kamraj, Karthika Angamuthu, Soni Behera. Forwards: Anju Tamang, Sandhiya R. Bala Devi, Dargmei Grace, Daya Devi, Renu, Sharda Kumari, Karishma Shirovkar — *PTI*



Aaron Ramsey (left), Gareth Bale (second from left) and Ethan Ampadu (right) celebrate their 2-0 win over Hungary during their UEFA Euro 2020 Group 'E' qualifying match at the Cardiff City Stadium, in Cardiff, Wales, on Tuesday. — *AP*

Hungary? Ramseys yes

Aaron scores two goals as Wales qualify for 2020 Euros

Paris, Nov. 20: Aaron Ramsey sent Wales to Euro 2020 with a brace to give them a 2-0 win over Hungary and a spot in next summer's finals, while Belgium completed their perfect qualifying campaign with a mauling of Cyprus.

Ramsey hit his decisive double either side of half-time at the Cardiff City Stadium to ensure that Ryan Giggs's side leapfrogged Tuesday's opponents into second place in Group 'E' to snatch a spot at the multi-host tournament.

Wales also held off Slovakia, who beat Azerbaijan 2-0 but finished a point behind in third thanks to their defeat at group winners Croatia in the previous round of matches.

Ramsey's match-winning display came in his first start of qualifying and capped a superb performance that belied a characteristically injury-dogged season in Serie 'A'.

The 28-year-old made an immediate impact by charging into the box to meet Gareth Bale's inch-perfect cross to settle the home side's nerves on 15 minutes.

There was no way back for the visitors once Ramsey controlled Kieffer Moore's knockdown to smash home from close range two minutes into the second half.

BELGIUM BLAST SIX PAST CYPRUS

One of the favourites for the tournament which kicks off in Rome on June 12, Belgium, made it a perfect 10 wins from 10 with a 6-1 thrashing of Cyprus that saw Christian Benteke score twice.

The Crystal Palace forward is yet to score in the Premier League but opened Belgium's account

in the 16th minute with a tap-in two minutes after Nicholas Ioannou stunned the Group 'I' winners with a superb run and shot.

He rounded off the scoring in the 68th minute when he collected a neat through ball from Kevin De Bruyne and slotted past Neofytos Michael.

Russia, who finished two points behind Belgium, thumped San Marino 5-0 in one of a host of dead rubbers.

FREE-SCORING GERMANY NAIL NORTHERN IRELAND

Germany and the Netherlands thumped Northern Ireland and Belarus to close their campaigns in style.

Serge Gnabry said Germany were heading to the Euros in a positive mood after hitting a hat-trick that sank the Northern Irish 6-1 and gave them top spot in Group 'C'.

WIJNALDUM NETS HAT-TRICK FOR DUTCH

Georginio Wijnaldum meanwhile made another stand against racism as he also scored three times in the Netherlands' 5-0 crushing of Belarus.

Liverpool midfielder Wijnaldum was angered at Excelsior striker Ahmad Mendes Moreira being subjected to racist chanting by FC Den Bosch fans during a Dutch second division match.

And after opening the scoring in the sixth minute he and Frenkie de Jong joined on the sidelines to bring their arms together to draw attention to their different skin colour: Myron Boadu made it a night to remember by scoring on his international debut to make it five three minutes from the end, collecting Kevin Strootman's pass before slotting home. — *AFP*

RESULTS

The Netherlands 5
(Georginio Wijnaldum 6, 66, 79, Nathan Ake 19, Myron Boadu 87)
Estonia 0

Germany 6
(Serge Gnabry 19, 47, 60, Leon Goretzka 43, 73, Julian Brandt 90+1)
Northern Ireland 1
(Michael Smith 7)

Wales 2
(Aaron Ramsey 15, 47)
Hungary 0

Slovakia 2
(Robert Bozenik 19, Marek Hamsik 86)
Azerbaijan 0

Poland 3
(Sebastian Szymanski 3, Robert Lewandowski 54, Jakub Goralski 81)
Slovenia 2
(Tim Matavz 14, Josip Illicic 61)

Latvia 1
(Marcis Oss 65)
Austria 0

North Macedonia 1
(Boban Nikolov 45+2)
Israel 0

Belgium 6
(Christian Benteke 16, 68, Kevin De Bruyne 36, 42, Ferrel Carrasco 44, Kypros Christoforou 51-og)
Cyprus 1
(Nicolas Loannou 14)

San Marino 0
(Daler Kuzyaev 3, Sergei Petrov 19, Aleksey Miranchuk 49, Lonov 56, Komlichenko 78)

Scotland 3
(McGinn 48, 90+1, Nisimith 64)
Kazakhstan 1
(Zainutdinov 34)



Gareth Bale (second from right) is seen sharing a light moment with his teammates after their Euro Group 'E' win over Hungary.

Bale's celebration after win triggers Real row

Cardiff, Nov. 20: Gareth Bale laughed and danced with his Welsh international teammates behind a flag that had the message: 'Wales. Golf. Madrid. In That Order.'

The forward can look forward to playing in another major tournament with Wales after helping the national team secure a place in next year's European Championship on Tuesday.

Given the way he celebrated qualification, Bale's future with Real Madrid might not be so rosy.

Much will hinge on the

● **After the win Gareth Bale was seen dancing and laughing behind a flag with a message that read: Wales. Golf. Madrid. In That Order.**

fitness of Bale and Ramsey, who are both injury prone. This was the first time they started together for Wales since a Nations League qualifier against Denmark last November.

"This is where we want

to be. We will go there and have some fun again," Bale said about Wales reaching a major tournament for only the third time. He looked like he was having fun after the match as he danced on the field behind a flag whose message was seemingly linked to recent comments made by former Real Madrid player Predrag Mijatovic when discussing Bale's current priorities at Madrid. Bale, who is big golf fan, has rarely appeared for Madrid in recent weeks because of injury but was able to play for Wales. — *AP*

● **After senior players Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi and Aqeel Khan pulled out of their Davis Cup tie against India, Pakistan named two 17-year-olds in their squad.**

● **The Pakistan Tennis Federation picked teenagers Huzaifa Abdul Rehman and Shoaib Khan, both of whom are ranked as lowly as 446 and 1004 respectively in the junior ITF ranking list.**

Kamil, also teenagers, along with Amjad complete the squad.

With Pakistan's top players Aisam and Aqeel pulling out of the tie in protest against shifting out of matches to a neutral venue, the PTF was left with no option but to pick junior players.

"It could have been a good tie but for India. We

are sending junior players. Our senior Davis Cup team is not coming. We are sending our junior Davis Cup team. They are all 16-17 years old and will gain some experience," PTF President Salim Saifullah Khan said.

"India wanted to win this tie, so now they can win this tie easily. Everyday hundreds of Indians are

coming to Pakistan. Our hotels in Islamabad are full of Indians but the six Indian players can't come. It's a shame," Khan added.

In the last tie, Pakistan hosted against Uzbekistan in April 2018, apart from Aqeel and Aisam, Muzammil Murtaza, Heera Ashiq and Shahzad Khan were part of the squad, which had lost 0-4. In the same year, Pakistan had beaten Korea 4-0 at home.

NADAL PRAISES HOME CROWD POST WIN

Meanwhile in Madrid, Rafael Nadal instigated a Spanish comeback against Russia in the Davis Cup on Tuesday by capitalising on a raucous home crowd to beat Karen Khachanov in straight sets.

Nadal, who will finish the year as world number one, came through a second-set tie-break to defeat Khachanov 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) and level the Group 'B' match.

Marcel Granollers and Feliciano Lopez then won the deciding doubles rubber 6-4, 7-6 (7/5) against Khachanov and Andrey Rublev, who had earlier given Russia the lead with a 3-6, 6-3, 7-6 (7/0) win over Roberto Bautista Agut.

A new format this year means the Davis Cup takes place in one venue, across a single week, with organisers — among them Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique — hoping a tighter schedule will revitalise the prestigious trophy. The three stadiums at

the Caja Magica were all far from full for Tuesday's early matches but Nadal enjoyed a bumper crowd of local fans for his hard-fought contest in the evening.

"The atmosphere was amazing," said Nadal.

Asked about the success of the competition so far, he added: "It is difficult to answer today. Let me wait until the tournament is over to have a clear and better opinion."

The last doubles match finished at just before 2:00 am, with Spain due to be back in action against Croatia on Wednesday afternoon. "The only negative in my opinion is we are just starting the last match and it's 12.45am," Nadal said ahead of the doubles. — *Agencies*