

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI FRIDAY 22 NOVEMBER 2019

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24

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honoured  
at IIFI  
event



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### WINDOWS



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AGE CORRESPONDENT  
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"Despite opposition from the Reserve Bank and the Election Commission, the government went ahead with this scheme," said Congress MP Manish Tewari during Zero Hour. "Prior to 2017 there used to be control over the influence of the rich in politics but since this scheme was introduced in the 2017 Budget, under which anonymous donations can be accepted, neither can you know who is the donor, nor who is the receiver and how much money was given. This has made the government corruption official (formal)," he said.

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Sri Lanka's President Gotabaya Rajapaksa (right) greets his brother Mahinda after appointing him as Prime Minister at the presidential secretariat in Colombo on Thursday.

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Mahinda Rajapaksa assumed duty in his new capacity on Thursday itself. The 74-year-old leader will function as the Prime Minister of the caretaker Cabinet until the general election in August 2020.

"I'm honoured to have taken oaths as Sri Lanka's new Prime Minister. I look forward to serving all Sri Lankans as we take our country forward with a new vision to further develop and protect it for future generations," the new Prime Minister tweeted, reaching out to all Sri Lankans.

Mahinda Rajapaksa took the oath as the new Prime Minister at the Presidential Secretariat, three days after Gotabhaya Rajapaksa was sworn in as the president. Former Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, former President Maithripala Sirisena and other political leaders were present on the occasion.

"I wish to congratulate and extend my warmest wishes to Hon Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister of the Democratic, Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka," President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa tweeted.

This is Mahinda Rajapaksa's second innings as the Prime

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India's hope was conveyed when external affairs minister S. Jaishankar met new Sri Lankan President in Colombo on Tuesday. President Rajapaksa will be visiting India on November 29 and 30. The new Sri Lankan President has said he is committed to the development of his country's northern and eastern provinces (with a large Tamil population) and considers India a "valued partner" in this, the MEA pointed out.

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"Starting today and for 21 days the decision of who to task with forming the government is in the hands of the members of the Knesset (Parliament)," Rivlin said, a day after Gantz admitted he would be



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Parliament will now have until December 11 to find a candidate who can command the support of the majority of the country's 120 MPs or a new general election will be called for early 2020.

It would be the third such poll within 12 months.

Mr Rivlin, who has been urging a compromise to break the political deadlock, met with Knesset speaker Yuli Edelstein Thursday and formally handed over the mandate.

It was the first time in Israeli history the President had been forced to ask Parliament to find a government.

"The disruptive politics must end," Rivlin said, addressing MPs from all parties. He reminded them they have a responsibility to keep the country running and said: "Your political fate is not more important than the fate of an old lady in a hospital."

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— AFP





## Sanskrit row

Chief minister Ashok Gehlot urges UP counterpart to intervene in row over appointment of Muslim professor at BHU

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The removal of SPG cover from the Gandhi family is part of politics.

— Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Congress general secretary

## SHORT TAKES

### 'Tough to give quota in lateral recruitment'

**New Delhi:** The Centre on Thursday said it is difficult and not viable to provide reservation in lateral entry of professionals in the government sector. Minister of state in the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) Jitendra Singh said lateral entry of professionals in the government will not result in any kind of discrimination against existing cadre of officers. "...It was decided that it is difficult to provide reservation in these single cadre posts and it is not perhaps viable," he said in Rajya Sabha. While replying to supplementaries during Question Hour, Singh said the subject of lateral entry has been raised in this House earlier as well. — PTI

### BJP supporter files case against Sena

**Mumbai:** A complaint of "cheating" has been filed against Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray and two other leaders in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district for seeking votes in the name of Hindutva, but not forming government with pre-poll ally BJP, an official said on Thursday. A written application in this regard against Thackeray and two other party leaders was submitted at the Begumpura Police Station in Aurangabad district, around 325km from here, by a BJP supporter, Ratnakar Choure, on Wednesday night, the official said. — PTI

### Over ₹255cr spent on chartered flights

**New Delhi:** An expenditure of over ₹255 crore was incurred on chartered flights during PM Narendra Modi's foreign engagements in the past three years, the Rajya Sabha was told on Thursday. In a written reply, minister of state for external affairs V. Muralideharan said that in 2016-17 ₹76.27 crore was spent on chartered flights while in 2017-18 ₹99.32 crore was spent. In 2018-19, ₹79.91 crore was spent while the bill for 2019-20 has not been received, he said, adding in 2016-17, ₹2,24,75,451 were incurred on hotline facilities. — PTI

## MULLAPERIYAR DAM IS SAFE: UNION MINISTER

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

Though Congress and DMK are together on almost all issues, in Lok Sabha their MPs took differing views while discussing Mullaperiyar Dam on Thursday. Not only watercreated a divide between these two allies but within the Congress too there were difference of opinion as MPs talked about river interlinking. Mullaperiyar Dam is located in Idukki district, Kerala but is operated and maintained by Tamil Nadu. Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat while replying to questions from members said that the Mullaperiyar Dam is safe and the Union government will have no objection if the governments of Kerala and Tamil Nadu agree for construction of a newdam near the existing one. This invoked sharp reaction from DMK bench. "The minister is categorical that the dam is in safe condition. Now, what is incumbent upon the Government? When the minister is saying that the dam is in safe hands, what prompted the environment ministry to have a pre-feasibility study and why did they approve the terms of reference to construct a new dam in the same place?" DMK MP A. Raja said.

# All is not well in Maha Cong over alliance with Shiv Sena

Former Mumbai unit president Nirupam calls tieup 'suicidal'

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 21

Even though the Congress has almost finalised its decision to form the government with the Shiv Sena, some party leaders are still raising their voice against the decision.

Former Mumbai Congress president Sanjay Nirupam on Thursday said that joining hands with the Sena would be suicidal for the Congress and urged Sonia Gandhi to detest from taking the decision under pressure from local leaders.

"Partnering as the third largest party in a Shiv Sena-led government is like 'burying' Congress in the state. It will be better that the Congress president doesn't come under any pressure, (sic)" he tweeted.

"Years ago, Congress had made a mistake in Uttar Pradesh by forging an alliance with BSP. After that, it was beaten in such manner that it has not been able to revive till date. We are repeating the same mistake in Maharashtra (sic)," Mr Nirupam tweeted.

The former city chief's statement has once again exposed the differences within the Congress over its plan to form the state government along with the Sena.

Some MLAs admitted that while influential leaders of the party are excited with the opportunity to form the government, all voices are not being heard. "We have been opposing the decision to tie up with the Sena. But nobody is listening to us," said a Congress MLA on the condition of anonymity. However, some leaders are of the view that the party should support the Sena to keep the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) out of power.

After the BJP turned down its demand for rotational chief ministership, the Shiv Sena snapped ties with the saffron party and sought the support of the NCP and Congress for forming the government.



Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray, Aditya Thackeray and Eknath Shinde visit the Thane Municipal Corporation to congratulate the newly-appointed mayor Naresh Mhaske on Thursday.

— PTI

## Alliance christened Maha Vikas Aghadi

SONU SHRIVASTAVA  
MUMBAI, NOV. 21

The name of the alliance of the three parties — Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress — will be Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA), revealed a source on Thursday.

Moreover, both parties have decided to invite other smaller parties, including the Samajwadi Party, Bahujan Vikas Aghadi and CPI to join in the formation of the government.

The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) has also been finalised, and will be tabled before Sena leaders at Y.B. Chavan Friday. If the Sena agrees to the CMP, there will be talks about the sharing of portfolios, the source added.

Meanwhile, the Congress in Maharashtra will also hold a meeting with its smaller allies on Friday noon in order to take them into confidence. "All legislators will be taken into confidence. All the processes of extending support to the Shiv Sena are expected to be completed such as taking signatures of the legislators on the letter," said a Congress leader familiar with the development. After this, a final meeting will be held with the Sena and NCP. Sources said that the state Congress may elect its leader of the legislature party Friday.

A senior Congress leader told *The Asian Age*, "NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray will meet Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi before formal announcement of government formation."

His short speech was mostly confined to the contributions of Munda. But he later made a brief mention of Savarkar as well. "Freedom fighters like Veer Savarkar should also be given Bharat Ratna," he said.

Palghar MP Gavit, interestingly, was a NCP leader until 2018, when he crossed over to the BJP and won a Lok Sabha bypoll. He tactically switched over to the Sena before the 2019 polls and won once again.

The Sena has been a vocal support of awarding the Bharat Ratna to Savarkar. At a recent book launch, Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray had said, "We don't refute the work done by Gandhi and Nehru but the country saw more than just two families being born in the Indian political scenario."

Speaking during Zero Hour in the Lok Sabha, Mr Gavit on Thursday demanded Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian honour bestowed by the Union government, for Savarkar and tribal icon Birsu Munda.

Despite reservations from the NCP and Congress, a Shiv Sena MP indicated that his party would not budge from its hardline Hindutva agenda. Sena MP Rajendra Gavit reiterated the party's stand in Lok Sabha that Hindutva icon Veer Savarkar should be awarded the Bharat Ratna.

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and Congress had demanded that the Sena set aside its Hindutva agenda if it wanted to join hands with them to form the state government.

Desai, Naresh Gujral, Sushil Kumar Gupta, V. Vijayasai Reddy, Hishey Lachungpa, Parimal Nathwani and Sambhaji Chhatrapati. The Union health minister also told the House the panel has been instructed to submit its report to Rajya Sabha by the last day of last week of the next session.

However, Mr Vardhan did not name the chairman of the committee. Rajya Sabha chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu said that the head of the committee would also attach an annexure in its report, providing details of the number of members attending the meetings of the select committee.

Mr Vardhan, who is assigned to Uttar Pradesh (West) at the AICC, did not give any further details. But the move appears to have been triggered by the absence of several party veterans from two recent meetings called by the new Uttar Pradesh Congress Committee (UPCC) chief Ajay Kumar Lallu.

The veterans felt sidelined when the new UPCC) was formed by party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. Some of them are now planning to meet party president Sonia Gandhi to voice their concerns, an old-timer, who did not wish to be named, said. A letter seeking an appointment for the delegation of about

20 people will shortly be mailed to her, he said.

Another disgruntled leader claimed that only 53 of the 325 invited people turned up on Wednesday at a meeting in Lucknow of former Congress MLAs, MLCs and MPs to discuss ways to revive the party in the state after its poor showing in the last parliamentary elections.

At an earlier meeting, 75

Lok Sabha on Thursday saw a quick discussion on monkey menace after BJP Member of Parliament from Mathura, Hema Malini raised the issue saying that the simians are getting violent because people are changing their natural food habits by giving them Frooti, samosas and even "Mathura ka peda" in her constituency. She even suggested having a 'monkey safari' to keep them in a restricted area to avoid man-animal conflict.

She was backed by LJP MP Chirag Paswan who said that the situation is similar in Delhi's Lutyens 'zone where people are scared of stepping out of their homes. "Their terror

## Sena may not distance itself from Hindutva

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 21

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## Congress terms it 'unfortunate for country'

# Pragya nominated in key MoD panel, triggers row

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

Controversial BJP MP from Bhopal and Malegaon blast accused, Pragya Singh Thakur has been included in the crucial Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Defence. The 21-member committee, headed by defence minister Rajnath Singh, also have Srinagar MP and former J&K CM Farooq Abdullah, who is currently under detention under the Public Safety Act, NCP supremo Sharad Pawar, TMC's Sougata Roy and Shiv Sena's Anil Desai among others. It which will comprise 12 members from Lok Sabha and nine from Rajya Sabha.

Taking on the government over Ms Thakur's inclusion in the crucial panel, the Congress on Thursday slammed the government and said it was "unfortunate for the country".

"It is unfortunate for the

country that an MP accused of spreading terror has been nominated as member of a defence-related committee. Modi 'has not been able to forgive her from the heart' but she has been given the responsibility of important issues such as the country's defence. That is why if there is Modi, anything is possible," Cong-ress

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## Detained under PSA, Farooq nominated on defence panel

**New Delhi, Nov. 21:** Detained under the stringent Public Safety Act (PSA) after being accused of having "tremendous potential to create public disorder", former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah has been included in a 21-member consultative committee on defence.

The name of the 81-year-old National Conference leader, in detention at his Srinagar home for over 100 days, tops the list of members of the panel headed by defence minister Rajnath Singh.

The committee's other

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## Odisha-UAE flights

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan urges Centre for direct flight between Bhubaneswar and UAE



There is no disqualification for Indian employers in US

— S. Jaishankar, Minister for external affairs

## SHORT TAKES

### MEA: US sees 370 as internal decision

New Delhi: India on Thursday said it had “received full understanding from across the political spectrum in the US” that New Delhi’s revoking of Article 370 is “purely India’s sovereign and internal decision”. In the wake of the statements made recently by US Congressman Pete Olson endorsing India’s move, the MEA said, “We have seen the statement made by Congressman Olson, recognising the rationale behind the decision of the government of India w.r.t. Jammu and Kashmir, carried out as per India’s Constitution... We remain engaged with various US stakeholders, including the Administration, Congress, civil society and others, to address their questions.”

### ‘Pak should return 2 Indian nationals’

New Delhi: India on Thursday said two of its nationals who had inadvertently crossed the border and strayed into Pakistan should be repatriated to India at the earliest. The MEA said a note verbale had been issued to Pakistan and asked Islamabad to ensure their safety and security, adding that consular access had also been sought. MEA Spokesperson Ravesh Kumar also said the two “innocent” persons should not become a “victim of Pakistani propaganda”, adding that Islamabad had been informed much earlier that the two may have crossed over separately.

### CBI all set to issue summons to Rawat

New Delhi: The CBI is all set to issue summons to former chief minister of Uttarakhand, Harish Rawat, in connection with its investigation into his alleged role in a 2016 sting video that purportedly showed him negotiating a deal to buy the support of rebel MLAs. The central probe agency, sources said, will issue summons to Rawat in a day or two. The former chief minister may be asked to appear before the investigating officer of the case next week, sources said adding that role of at least two Congress MLAs are also being probed by the agency sleuths.

### ED SEIZES ASSETS BELONGING TO J&K TERRORISTS

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has taken possession of six immovable assets belonging to alleged terrorists based in Kashmir in connection with a terror financing case against Syed Salahuddin, the Pakistan-based terrorist and chief of the globally banned group Hizbul Mujahideen. The ED had provisionally attached 13 such assets in March this year under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). After the adjudicating authority of the said law recently upheld the order, the possession notice was issued, said the central probe agency in statement issued here on Thursday. The ED said these properties are located in three districts — Anantnag, Bandipora and Baramulla — and are in the name of Hizbul Mujahideen terrorists identified as Mohammad Shafi Shah, Talib Lali, Gulam Nabi Khan, Zaffar Hussain Bhat, Abdul Majeed Sofi, Nazir Ahmad Dar, and Manzoor Ahmad Dar. The ED had said that the total worth of the thirteen properties is ₹1.22 crore and the people who held it allegedly worked for the terror outfit. Possession of the remaining assets will also be taken soon, officials had said.

## Hasina, Mamata to meet during India-Bangla tie

Kolkata, Nov. 21: Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will hold a brief one on one meeting on the sidelines of the India-Bangladesh cricket test match here on Friday.

Ms Banerjee told reporters in the city on Thursday that there will be a courtesy meeting between Hasina and her at 6 pm on Friday at the hotel where the Bangladesh Premier will be staying.

“Tomorrow Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will be coming to the city to watch the day and night India-Bangladesh cricket test match. Apart from being present at the grounds during the inauguration and felicitation programme, we (Hasina and herself) will also have a one on one courtesy meeting at 6 pm on Friday,” Ms Banerjee said.

According to sources in the Bangladesh Prime Minister’s office, both the leaders will be present during the match and the felicitation ceremony.

Ms Hasina and Banerjee share a very cordial relation and have mutual respect for each other, the sources said.

The Bangladesh premier will watch the day and night cricket test match between India and



Sheikh Hasina



Mamata Banerjee

Bangladesh in Kolkata on Friday, the ministry of external affairs had said on Thursday.

The agenda of the meeting was not disclosed neither by the CMO nor by the Bangladesh Prime Minister’s office.

It is also not known whether the issue of Teesta water agreement that both New Delhi and Dhaka are keen to seal since September 2011, will be discussed by the two leaders.

Ms Banerjee, who is a key stakeholder in the issue as she is at the helm in West Bengal, has been opposed to the agreement as she maintains that it will affect the people of the state.

The Teesta water agreement was to be signed during the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh’s visit to Bangladesh in September 2011.

It was postponed due to objections raised by Banerjee, who had also dropped out of the prime ministerial delegation.

— PTI

## In Assam, brides to get ₹30K to buy gold

MANOJ ANAND  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 21

In what is said to be the part of the population policy, the Assam Cabinet has envisaged an ambitious scheme worth ₹800 crore to check the child marriage by committing gold worth ₹30,000 to every bride.

The benefit of the scheme, which is called Arundhati scheme, will go to bride only if marriage is solemnised and registered under the Special Marriage (Assam) Rules, 1954 after January 1, 2020.

Asserting that the scheme was aimed at empowering the women,

state finance minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said that the state Cabinet has approved the scheme and it will come into effect from January 1, 2020.

“Assam government has decided in our budget that we will give one tola [10gm] of gold to the bride if a marriage is solemnised and registered. Because, if you register a marriage then there will be a minimum age which is notified as 18 years and 21 years for the bride and bridegroom,” said Mr Sarma adding that the state Cabinet has approved this scheme in last Cabinet meeting.

“Now any marriage

which will be registered, the bride will get Rs 30,000 from the state government to purchase gold. But, to have benefit from the scheme, your minimum age has to be 18 years and 21 years and you have to be matriculate (Class 10 pass),” said Mr Sarma, pointing out that admit card of the board examination would be treated as age certificate.

The Assam minister further said: “It is a part of our larger women empowerment policy. So that in Assam, you can establish a correct age of marriage — 18 and 21 years — and also you get a society which is full of educated boys and girls.

## Baby on Navy boat



A woman gave birth to baby on Indian Navy’s fast interceptor craft as she was being rescued in Daring, a remote village in Andaman & Nicobar Islands. The fast interceptor craft from *INS Kardip* in Kamorta island rescued the woman from the village after getting information about need for medical assistance.

## 31 convicted in Vyapam scam

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPLAL, NOV. 21

A CBI special court here on Thursday convicted 31 accused in infamous Vyapam scam involving irregularities in admission in various medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh and recruitment of class three and class four employees in state government departments.

Twelve imposters who wrote entrance tests for candidates and seven middlemen were among the 31 accused convicted by the CBI special judge S.B. Sahu in the Vyapam scandal, according to CBI special prosecutor Satish Dinakar.

The court was scheduled to pronounce quantum of punishment to the convicted on November 25, Mr Dinakar said.

▶ 12 imposters who wrote entrance tests for candidates and 7 middlemen were among convicts

Earlier on August 31 this year, the CBI special court convicted four accused involved in irregularities in recruitment of police constable in 2013, also a part of Vyapam scam.

Vyapam, the Hindi acronym of Madhya Pradesh Professional Examination Board (MPPEB), conducts entrance tests for various professional colleges in MP and recruitment tests for class three and class four jobs of MP government.

The Special Investigation Team of MP police first probed the scam. Later, the probe was handed over to CBI.

## ‘World needs India’s tradition of non-violence, compassion’

New Delhi, Nov. 21: India’s ancient traditions of non-violence, kindness, love and compassion are needed in today’s world where people are fighting on the basis of religion and countries over territorial disputes, Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama said here on Thursday.

India also needs to bring some kind of “revolution” in its education system by combining its 3,000-year-old ancient tradition of high moral teachings with the modern education, he said.

“Those mental quality subjects like non-violence, love, kindness and compassion should be included as an academic subject instead of religious teachings,” the 84-year-old said.

Delivering the 24th Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan memorial lecture on “universal ethics” organised by the Indian Institute of Advanced Study, he said India’s message of “ahimsa, kindness, love and compassion” spread even during religious



Former governor of Jammu and Kashmir N.N. Vohra holds hands of Tibetan spiritual leader the Dalai Lama as he arrives to deliver S. Radhakrishnan Memorial lecture at India International Centre in New Delhi on Thursday.

— SONDEEP SHANKAR

conflicts and World Wars. Unlike in parts of the world where Shia and Sunni Muslims fought with each other, there was no fighting within India, he said.

“Such high moral teachings of ancient Indian culture and tradition are need of the hour the world over now,” said the Dalai Lama, who escaped Chinese occupation of his homeland in 1959.

There should be “genuine compassion (even) without attachment,” he

stressed. Paying rich tributes to Radhakrishnan for his role in bringing modern education system to India, he said the former President was an example of combination of modern education and ancient vedic knowledge, culture and traditions.

Later, answering a question from the audience on how he could always smile and remain happy, the Dalai Lama said a person should treat even the enemy as the best teacher.

## Pak national crosses LoC, sent back

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 21

A Pakistani national who had entered Jammu and Kashmir illegally after crossing the Line of Control (LoC) was on Thursday repatriated to PoK through Teetwal crossing point along the Line of Control (LoC) “as a goodwill gesture”, the officials said. A statement issued by the J&K police said that Shabir Ahmad, a resident of Pakistan’s Pajkote area, had been earlier arrested near India Army’s Dilar Chak Post in Karnah along the LoC in J&K’s Kupwara district on May 18 this year. “He had crossed over into the Indian territory without seeking requisite permission following which a case was registered against him,” the police said.

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
(Through e-tendering)  
Name of work with its location Annual repairing and return contract for repairing of faulty cards in Delhi Division.  
App. Cost of the work (₹) ₹ 1563370.2 only  
Tender Document Fee (₹) ₹ 2,360/- only  
Earnest Money Deposit (₹) ₹ 13100/- only  
Address of the office Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-I, Northern Railway, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055.  
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender Tender uploading / closing date & time 18.12.2019 up to 15.00 hrs.  
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc. See the Northern Railway website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in) & Notice Board at S&T branch, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, DRM Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.  
Tender No. 558-Sig-16-Tele-AMC-561, Dated : 21.11.2019 3736/2019  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**OPEN TENDER NOTICE (E-Tender)**  
DRM/Engineering acting for and on behalf of The President of India invites following Single packet system E-Tenders closing date 20.12.2019 at 15:00 hrs. Bidders will be able to submit their original/revised bids upto closing date and time only. Manual offers are not allowed against this tender, and any such manual offer received shall be ignored. Contractors are allowed to make payments against this tender towards tender document cost and earnest money only through online payment modes available on IREPS portal like net banking, debit card, credit card etc. Manual payments through Demand Draft, Banker's cheque, Deposit receipts, FDR etc. are not allowed.  
NIT No. 09502019 dated 19.11.2019  
1 Name of work LKO: Construction of Badminton Hall with wooden surface and 01 Synthetic Lawn Tennis Court, Construction of New Trainee Mess/Hostal with 16 A C rooms for Trainee. Construction of 01 VVIP Suite, 02 VIP Suite, 01 Type-VI Bungalow, 01 Type-V Bungalow for officers at JRRPF Academy in the section of SSE/WIAMV-West/LKO and Construction of Multipurpose Hall for Badminton, Table Tennis and chess etc. including complete facilities, provision of Varandah in front of Gymnasium building including two additional toilets and renovation of pavilion shed by Galvalume sheet in the section of SSE/W/CBL/KO under ADEN/HQ/LKO.  
2 Approximate Cost 1 Rs. 5,43,01,678.64  
3 Earnest Money 1 Rs. 4,21,500.00  
4 Completion Period 1 Nine (09) months from the date of issue of acceptance letter.  
5 Bidding Start Date For S.No.: 1 06.12.2019  
6 Tender Closing Date and Time For S.No.: 1 20.12.2019 at 15:00 hrs.  
7 Website [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in)  
Note:- 1.'No post tender correspondence for submission of additional documents shall be entertained after opening of the Technical & Commercial offers. Even suo-moto post letters of the tenders shall be treated as NULL & Void.' (Authority N.Ry.HQ letter No. 74-W/O/PLXXV/WA/Loose Dated 07.04.2015). 3730/2019  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

## UP commission suggests law to check ‘conversions’

Lucknow, Nov. 21: The UP State Law Commission on Thursday submitted a report to chief minister Yogi Adityanath, suggesting a new law to check forcible religious conversions. “The report was submitted along with a draft legislation, Uttar Pradesh Freedom of Religion Bill, 2019,” law commission secretary Sapna Tripathi said.

The report was prepared after going through pre and post-independence laws in the country and neighbouring countries like Nepal, Myanmar, Bhutan, Sri Lanka and Pakistan besides keeping in mind court judgments.

The 268-page report included recent newspaper clippings regarding forcible conversions. — PTI

**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
**Corrigendum**  
Tender notice 170-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 07.11.2019, Date of Opening 10.12.2019  
In NIT header of Tender invited vide Tender notice No. 170-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 07.11.2019 to be open on 10.12.2019, for the work of Repair to road surface & speed breaker of Level crossing in BLM-BGMU section of SSE/Works/BLM under ADEN/HRI-II, published in Amar Ujala news paper on 09.11.2019 vide advertisement No. 3598/19. Due to change in general condition of contract the tender Notice No. 170-DRM-MB-18-19 dt. 07.11.2019 should be read as Rates are Excluding of GST in all SOR Items. Tenderer to quote his/her rate keeping in mind that rates are exclusive of GST and his offered rates should also be exclusive of GST and GST at the rate as applicable will be paid extra. The other terms & conditions of the tender will remain same. 3745/2019  
**SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE**

**CANCELLATION / SHORT TERMINATION/ ORIGATION / PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF PASSENGER TRAINS**  
Due to Infrastructural and Maintenance Work the following Passenger Trains will remain cancelled upto 30.11.2019  
**CANCELLATION OF TRAINS**  

Train No. & Name	Train No. & Name
51915 Delhi Junction - Farukhnagar Passenger	54255 Varanasi - Lucknow Passenger
51916 Farukhnagar - Delhi Junction	54256 Lucknow - Varanasi Passenger
64034 Shakurbasti - Ghaziabad EMU	64213 Lucknow Jn. - Kanpur Central MEMU
64087 H. Nizamuddin - New Delhi EMU	64254 Kanpur Central - Lucknow Jn. MEMU
64092 H. Nizamuddin - H. Nizamuddin EMU	54251 Lucknow - Saharanpur Passenger
64093 H. Nizamuddin - Shakurbasti EMU	54252 Saharanpur - Lucknow Passenger
64096 Shakurbasti - H. Nizamuddin EMU	54232 Lucknow - Faizabad Passenger
64097 New Delhi - Shakurbasti EMU	54233 Faizabad - Lucknow Passenger
64913 Delhi Jn. - Rohtak MEMU	54228 Rae Bareilly - Unchahar Passenger
64916 Rohtak - Delhi Jn. MEMU	54227 Unchahar - Rae Bareilly Passenger
64036 Shakurbasti - Ghaziabad EMU	54283 Sultanpur - Lucknow Passenger
64090 H. Nizamuddin - H. Nizamuddin EMU	54282 Lucknow - Sultanpur Passenger
64091 H. Nizamuddin - H. Nizamuddin EMU	54211 Rae Bareilly Jn. - Kanpur Central
64098 Shakurbasti - H. Nizamuddin EMU	54212 Kanpur Central - Rae Bareilly Jn.
74201 Partapgarh - Lucknow EMU	54377 Prayag - Bareilly Passenger
74202 Lucknow - Partapgarh EMU	54378 Bareilly - Prayag Passenger
64207 Lucknow - Kanpur Central MEMU	64208 Kanpur Central - Lucknow MEMU
64212 Kanpur Central - Lucknow Jn. MEMU	64209 Lucknow - Kanpur Central MEMU
54281 Sultanpur - Lucknow Passenger	64235 Barabanki Jn. - Kanpur Central
54284 Lucknow - Sultanpur Passenger	64236 Kanpur Central - Barabanki Jn.
54261 P. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Jaunpur Passenger	64221 Lucknow - Shahjehanpur MEMU
54262 Jaunpur-P. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Passenger	64222 Shahjehanpur - Lucknow MEMU
54293 Partapgarh - Lucknow Passenger	54313 Chandausi - Moradabad Passenger
54294 Lucknow - Partapgarh Passenger	54314 Moradabad - Chandausi Passenger
54110 Faizabad-P. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Passenger	74301 Moradabad - Sambahal Hatim Sarai Passenger
54109 P. Deen Dayal Upadhyaya-Faizabad Passenger	74302 Sambahal Hatim Sarai - Moradabad Passenger
54201 Lucknow - Rahimabad Passenger	64483 Kurukshetra - Ambala Cantt. DEMU

**SHORT TERMINATION/ ORIGATION / PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF TRAINS Upto 30.11.2019**  

Train No. & Name	Train to terminate at / originate from station	Train to remain partially cancelled between stations
64413 Khurja Jn. - Shakurbasti EMU (Daily)	At Ghaziabad	Ghaziabad - Shakurbasti
64017 Palwal - Shakurbasti EMU (Daily)	At H. Nizamuddin	H. Nizamuddin - Shakurbasti
64015 Palwal - Shakurbasti EMU (Daily)	At H. Nizamuddin	H. Nizamuddin - Shakurbasti
64910 Shakurbasti - Mathura Jn. EMU (Daily)	From H. Nizamuddin	Shakurbasti - H. Nizamuddin
64553 Moradabad - Anand Vihar (T) MEMU (Daily)	At Ghaziabad	Ghaziabad - Anand Vihar (T)
64554 Anand Vihar (T) - Moradabad MEMU (Daily)	From Ghaziabad	Anand Vihar (T) - Ghaziabad

**Note:- For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in)**  
**Security Helpline No. 182 and Passengers Complaint Helpline No. 138**  
Please join us on   
  
**NORTHERN RAILWAY**  
visit us at: [www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in](http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in)  
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**Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts**  
On the occasion of Foundation Day Presents  
**3rd Overnight Classical Music Concert**  
Delhi's only Overnight Concert  
23 November 2019, 7:00 PM onwards  
At Media Centre Lawns, IGNCA, New Delhi  
**Artist**  
Carnatic Vocal - Ranjani & Gayatri,  
Sarod - Basant Kabra,  
Hindustani Vocal - Rabindra Bharali,  
Percussion Ensemble - Zaheer Khan (Tabla)  
Salman Khan (Pakhawaj), Varun Rajasekharan (Ghatam),  
Manohar Balachandran (Mridangam),  
Sitar - Adnan Khan,  
Flute - Pravin Godkhindi,  
Hindustani Vocal - Sanjeev Abhyankar  
ENTRY FREE  
[www.ignca.gov.in](http://www.ignca.gov.in) 09599443393 IGNCA [ignca, delhi](https://www.facebook.com/ignca)

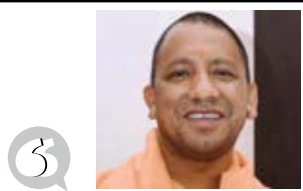
**SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED**  
  
**Radha**  
General public is hereby informed that a girl (depicted in the photo) namely : Radha D/o : Sh. Sukh Raj, R/o Jhuggi No. 298, Shankar Garden, Vikas Puri, Delhi, Age : 17½ Years, has been reported missing/kidnapped since 04.11.2019 from her house, vide FIR No. 451/19 u/s 363 IPC dated 08.11.2019 registered at Police Station Vikas Puri, Delhi.  
Her physical description is as under:-  
**Complexion :** Shallow, **Height :** 4'10", **Face :** Round, **Physique/Build :** Thin, **Clothing :** Blue Colour Suit-Salwar and Pink Colour Shoes (Juti) in Feet.  
Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/kidnapped girl, may inform SHO, Vikas Puri, Delhi at E-mail : [cic@cbi.gov.nic.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.nic.in), website : <http://cbi.nic.in> Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax : 011-24368639  
**SHO**  
**DP/8510/WD/19.** **PS. Vikas Puri, Delhi**  
**Ph. No. 011-25551213, 25592600, 9013216598**





## Hitting out

Union home minister Amit Shah accuses Congress of stalling Ayodhya judgment, keeping Kashmir problem hanging



Unlike previous governments, we ensured that projects are inaugurated

— Yogi Adityanath, UP chief minister

## SHORT TAKES

### Haren murder: SC rejects pleas of 9

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court has dismissed the pleas filed by nine convicts, who were awarded life term for murdering former Gujarat home minister Haren Pandya in 2003, seeking review of its verdict holding them guilty. The review petitions did not mention any error apparent on the face of record in its July 5 this year judgement, the apex court said. “We have perused the review petitions and record of the appeals and are convinced that the order, of which review has been sought, does not suffer from any error apparent warranting its reconsideration. The review pleas are, accordingly, dismissed,” said a bench of Justices Arun Mishra and Vineet Saran. — PTI

### Wife kills man over extra-marital affair

**Bhubaneswar:** In a bizarre incident, a woman on Wednesday night allegedly hacked his husband to death with her brother at Patadhar village over suspected extra-marital affair. According to reports, deceased Tulu Pradhan, who was working as an autorickshaw driver in Bhubaneswar, had come to his in-laws’ house at Patadhar village on Wednesday evening. A heated exchange of words erupted between Tulu and his wife, who was suspecting him of having an affair. Moments later, the woman and her brother hacked Tulu to death with a sharp weapon.

### NIA files charges against 4 terrorists

**New Delhi:** A chargesheet was filed in a special NIA court in Mohali on Thursday against four alleged Babbar Khalsa International terrorists for planning and conspiring to carry out terror acts in Punjab, officials said. The accused have been identified as Kulwinderjit Singh, alias Khanpuria, of Ludhiana, Ravinderpal Singh, alias Ravi, of Moga, Jagdev Singh, alias Sonu, of Fatehgarh Sahib in Punjab and Harcharan Singh of Nihal Vihar in Delhi, they said. The Punjab Police had arrested Ravinderpal and Jagdev in May this year. — PTI

## Rajapaksas’ raj: Mahinda takes charge as new PM

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
election debacle of his United National Party (UNP).  
Mr Gotabhaya Rajapaksa defeated UNP’s deputy leader Sajith Premadasa in the presidential election held on November 16.  
Soon after he was sworn in as the President on Monday, Mr Gotabhaya Rajapaksa thanked the powerful Buddhist clergy for backing his presidential bid and vowed to protect all communities, while giving foremost priority to Buddhism. He also thanked the Sinhala-majority people for electing him.  
“I knew I would win the presidency with support coming only from the Sinhala majority. I told the minorities to join me. I did not receive their support. But I will make sure that I will be President for everyone,” he said.  
Muslims make up nearly 10 per cent of Sri Lanka’s over 21 million people, who are predominantly Sinhalese Buddhists. About 12 per cent of the population are Hindus, mostly from the ethnic Tamil minority. Some seven per cent of the population are Christians.  
There are already concerns in the country that Gotabhaya Rajapaksa’s remarks may have led to apprehensions among the minority communities, who are already worried about the possibility of the return of an iron-fist rule under the Rajapaksa-duo’s regime.  
Mahinda Rajapaksa’s attempt to win an unprecedented third term — after changing the Constitution to allow such a bid — had failed previously.  
Mahinda Rajapaksa, who describes himself as “a rebel with a cause”, earli-

er served as the country’s President from 2005-2015, a period which was mired by allegations of human rights abuses, especially against the Tamils.  
Mahinda was appointed the Prime Minister on October 26, 2018 by the then President Sirisena, who sacked Wickremesinghe in a controversial move that plunged the country into an unprecedented constitutional crisis.  
He resigned on December 15 as two crucial Supreme Court decisions made the former strongman’s efforts to cling to premiership untenable.  
The apex court later unanimously declared that the dissolution of Parliament by President Sirisena was “illegal”.  
Mahinda Rajapaksa, a lawyer-turned politician became the country’s youngest ever parliamentarian in 1970 at the age of 24.  
The two brothers — Mahinda and Gotabhaya — led a decisive campaign that helped end the island nation’s three decade-long civil war against the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE).  
However, the brother-duo were accused of condoning sexual violence and extrajudicial killings allegedly by Lankan security forces during the civil war, which ended in May 2009 with the death of LTTE supremo Velupillai Prabhakaran.  
In New Delhi, the ministry of external affairs on Thursday said it was ready to work very closely with the new government in Sri Lanka and expressed hope that it will fulfil aspirations of the minority Tamil community living in the country. — PTI

## Girl dies of snake bite after denied treatment for hours

Teacher, 2 docs suspended ■ Rahul writes to Kerala CM over issue

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
WAYANAD, NOV. 21

A snake ended the life of a fifth standard student of a government school at Sulthan Bathery on Wednesday, triggering an uproar over the negligence of the school authorities and the medical personnel of three hospitals where she was taken.

The authorities concerned suspended a teacher of the school and two doctors of taluk hospitals. The girl, Shehala Sherin, 10, of Sarwajana HSS, is the daughter of Azeez and Shajna, lawyer couple of the district. She was reportedly bitten by a snake through a hole in the concrete floor of the classroom where she was sitting. The teachers initially told her class-



A hole in the concrete floor of the classroom (left) through which the snake bit the deceased. Class 5 student Shehala Sherin.

mates that it was an injury caused either due to a nail, stone or a similar object. “We asked the teacher on the spot why she could not be taken to a doctor,” one of the students told reporters.

“After almost an hour, we saw her feet turn into a blue colour. It was only after that her father reached the school and

took her to the hospital,” a student said.

“She herself kept telling the teachers that she had been bitten by a snake,” another student said.

As Shehala’s father reached the school, he saw her sitting in the class with a bandage on her foot. While she was being taken to the Kozhikode Medical College, her con-

dition worsened and was taken to a private hospital at Vythiri, where she died.

Earlier, though one of the teachers insisted on taking the student to a hospital, another teacher P.V. Shijil did not allow it, according to students. The teacher was later suspended by the education department.

Chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan said the incident was unfortunate and assured strong action against those responsible for the lapse in saving the child’s life.

On hearing about the incident, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who was elected to the Lok Sabha from Wayanad, wrote to Mr Vijayan, stating that the school’s “crumbling infrastructure” needed urgent attention of the state government.

## MEA: India will work closely with Lanka govt

Delhi expects Gotabaya to meet aspirations of Tamil community

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

India on Thursday said it had conveyed its “expectation” to new Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa that Colombo would take forward the policy of national reconciliation to meet the aspirations of Sri Lankan Tamils for “equality, justice, peace and dignity”. India’s hope was conveyed when external affairs minister S. Jaishankar met the new Sri Lankan President in Colombo on Tuesday. President Rajapaksa will be visiting India on November 29 and 30. The new Sri Lankan President has said he is committed to the development of his country’s northern and eastern provinces (with a large Tamil population) and considers India a “valued partner” in this, the MEA pointed out.

New Delhi also said it would work “very closely” with the new government in Sri Lanka. It also said bilateral ties should not be seen through the prism of any third country.

MEA spokesperson



Jaishankar

Raveesh Kumar said, “Our relations with Sri Lanka, or for that matter with any neighbouring country, are independent of our relations with third countries. Our multifaceted relationship with Sri Lanka stands on its own footing and is rooted in our geographical proximity and historical connections. As the PM himself has noted in his congratulatory tweet to the incoming Sri Lankan President, we look forward to working closely with the Sri Lankan government for deepening our relations and for the peace, prosperity and security of the region. EAM met the Sri Lankan President and conveyed the PM’s message of friendship. President Gotabaya has accepted the PM’s invitation to visit India on November 29.”

The MEA added, “During his meeting with President Rajapaksa, EAM (Mr Jaishankar) discussed our close and bilateral relations with Sri Lanka.



Chinese tourists visit ‘Krishna’s Butterball’ in the heritage site area near the Shore Temple in Mamallapuram on Thursday. — PTI

## TN people will create ‘wonder’ in 2021 Assembly polls: Rajini

**Chennai, Nov. 21:** Superstar Rajinikanth on Thursday asserted people of Tamil Nadu will create a “wonder and marvel” in the 2021 Assembly elections in the state, remarks that come amidst indications of him of politically aligning with his contemporary and MNM chief Kamal Haasan.

The actor, who had announced he will float his own political party and face the 2021 polls, also said issues such as sharing power in case of an alliance with Haasan of Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) could be discussed only in the run-up to the elections.

He was replying ques-



tions from reporters at the airport here. “In 2021, people of Tamil Nadu will 100 per cent create a big wonder and marvel in politics,” Rajinikanth said in an apparent reference to the polls due in two years and possibly about a major role by him then.

The actor’s response was to a query about an AIADMK leader insisting Rajinikanth’s “spiritual politics” was not possible in the “Dravida land” of Tamil Nadu.

Incidentally, AIADMK mouthpiece Namathu Amma carried an article

on Thursday saying Rajinikanth’s “spiritual politics” and Haasan’s pro-Left leanings cannot go hand-in-hand in the event of them aligning politically.

Asked about his possible alliance with Haasan and who would be the Chief Minister, Rajinikanth said such issues could be discussed only during poll time, adding he also has to discuss it within his proposed party.

Such issues will be “decided then and upon the prevailing situation. That too, I have to consult my party men after I start a party. Till then I don’t want to talk about these matters,” he added. — PTI

## ■ Increase on ‘no profit no loss’ rule: Pokhriyal CBSE hikes examination fees for Classes 10 and 12

**New Delhi, Nov. 21:** The examination fee has been increased by the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on “no profit no loss” principle, Union Human Resources Development minister Ramesh Pokhriyal “Nishank” said on Thursday.

“The Board has increased the examination fees of Class 10 and 12 examination 2020 for all students on ‘no profit no loss’ principle,” he told Rajya Sabha in response to a written question.

The CBSE had in August announced hike in board exam fees across categories.

The CBSE had notified an increase in the examination fees for Classes 10 and 12, registration fees for Classes 9 and 11 and migration fees. The fees for general category students for Classes 10 and 12

► **The fees for general category students for Classes 10 and 12 were doubled from ₹750 to ₹1,500 for five subjects**

► **The Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe students, who were paying ₹375 earlier, will now pay ₹1,200**

were doubled from ₹750 to ₹1,500 for five subjects.

The Scheduled Caste (SC) and Scheduled Tribe (ST) students, who were paying ₹375 earlier, will now pay ₹1,200 for five subjects.

Under a special arrangement in the national capital, these students were only paying ₹50, while the

Delhi government was paying the rest of the amount as subsidy.

Following the CBSE notification, the Delhi government had announced that students at state-run and aided schools will not have to pay any fees for Class 10 and 12 Central Board of Secondary Education examination and the cost will be born by the city dispensation.

The CBSE officials had then claimed that a deficit of over ₹200 crore in conducting board examination for Class 10 and 12 has forced the CBSE to hike fees.

“Early board results, measures to make examination leak proof and error-free evaluation have imposed a financial burden on the CBSE,” a senior board official had said.

— PTI

## Iffi exhibit to attract support of kids, youth

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
PANJIM, NOV. 21

In an attempt to attract the support of children and youth for the International Film Festival of India (Iffi) at Goa, the information and broadcast ministry on Thursday unveiled an interactive exhibition. The exhibition, inaugurated by I&B secretary Amit Khare, aims to make the festival interactive for viewers. It also showcases various new techniques being used by the film industry.

The Interactive Digital Exhibition IFFI@50 has been organised by the Bureau of Outreach and Communication under the ministry. “The main aim of the exhibition is to attract youth towards the film sector which has shown a growth rate of 13.5 per cent last year. Along with Film Bazaar and the festival, this exhibition will also become a source of attraction for youth and delegates here,” said Mr Khare at the event.

On the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Iffi, the exhibition — IFFI@50 — is a tribute to Iffi journey from its inception in 1952 till now. The aim of the exhibition is to show how Iffi helps showcase Indian cinema to the world and also make India a platform where world cinema can be showcased.

## Huge row erupts as Pragya nominated to defence panel

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
Defence. This move is an insult to our nation’s defence forces, to our nation’s esteemed parliamentarians & to every Indian”, a tweet by the AICC said.

The constitution of the 21-member parliamentary consultative committee on defence was notified on October 31. Pragya Thakur, 49, who is currently on bail in the 2008 Malegaon blast case on the ground of ill-health, has landed in controversies every now and then ever since she was fielded by the BJP in Bhopal to contest against veteran Congress leader Digvijay Singh in the recently-held Lok Sabha elections. She made uncharitable

► **Pragya won the Lok Sabha polls in Bhopal by defeating Congress candidate Digvijay Singh by a margin of over 3.60 lakh votes**

comments against Maharashtra anti-terrorist squad chief Hemant Karkare, martyred in the Mumbai 26/11 terror attack, inviting action by the Election Commission a couple of weeks before the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

She had later glorified Mahatma Gandhi’s assassin Nathuram Godse, calling him a “patriot”, triggering nationwide outrage. She won the Lok

Sabha polls in Bhopal by defeating Congress candidate Digvijay Singh by a margin of over 3.60 lakh votes.

Pragya has recently sparked a controversy when she snubbed her constituents for complaining about the lack of hygiene and cleanliness in Sehore, a part of her constituency, by saying: “I am not elected to get drains and toilets cleaned”.

The BJP has, however, defended her nomination to the defence panel. “She is a member of Parliament and hence has every right to be member of a panel like other members of Parliament”, BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said here.

## Shutdown again in Kashmir

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
open their establishments in Srinagar’s commercial hub Lal Chowk and its neighbourhood and in various towns of south Kashmir after “miscreants” issued threats to traders and transporters. However, life was unaffected in Baramulla and Sopore, two major towns

of north Kashmir, they said. Meanwhile, the police said it has arrested a “terrorist associate” involved in issuing threats to and intimidating locals in Tral area of southern Pulwama district. A police statement here said the accused, Asif Ahmad Bhat, a resident of Larow Jageer Tral, was

“involved in publishing and circulation of threat posters in the area”. The police claimed Bhat is linked to Hizb-ul-Mujahideen and was “communicating with terrorists of the proscribed outfit, and was also involved in arson and damaging a local chemist shop in the area”.

## Cong targets govt on poll bonds, SPG for Gandhis

■ **Continued from Page 1**

of which an agitated Congress bench, including party president Sonia Gandhi, walked out in protest.

Mr Tewari was referring to a report in Huffington Post that has claimed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s office had directed the finance ministry to break its own rules to approve the special and illegal sale of electoral bonds just before the Assembly elections in Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Mizoram, Rajasthan and Telangana.

Later, another Congress MP, Ravneet Singh Bittu, was cautioned by Mr Birla after he accused the Speaker of having “joined hands” with the BJP. Mr Bittu had raised security concerns with regard to the Gandhi family after the with-

drawal of SPG cover. He said former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi had been assassinated after his high-level security was downgraded and that the Gandhi family too faces a high threat level. However, when Mr Birla cut short his speech, Mr Bittu protested and questioned the Speaker himself. This agitated Mr Birla, who cautioned the MP, saying: “Don’t speak in such a manner about the Chair. You will get another chance to speak.”

Earlier, the Congress started protesting against the privatisation of PSUs and issuance of electoral bonds when the House met in the morning. “This is a big scam. The country is being looted. Please allow us to speak,” said Congress’ Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

## NCP, Cong netas to meet Uddhav in Mumbai today

■ **Continued from Page 1**

stand, Mr Raut said the country and its Constitution was based on secularism. “When we accept that, then you don’t distinguish between farmers, the unemployed. Chhatrapati Shivaji took care of every religious and caste. So Maharashtra does not have to import new ideas. Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray had publicly advocated that oaths sworn

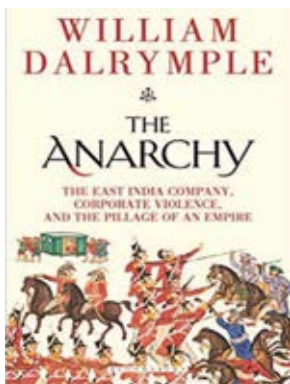
on religious books in courts should be stopped and replaced by the Constitution. So don’t teach us the meaning of the word secular,” Mr Raut said.

Earlier, Thursday began with a Congress Working Committee meeting in New Delhi, where its members were apprised of the discussions held between the Congress and the NCP on Wednesday.

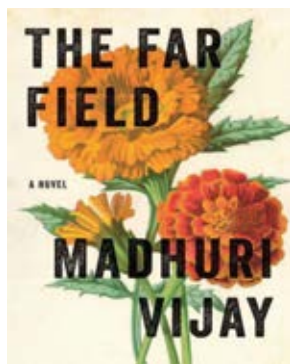


INDIAN TOP 10  
BESTSELLERS

## NON-FICTION



- 1 THE ANARCHY**  
William Dalrymple,  
Bloomsbury, ₹699
- 2 DARA SHUKOH:  
THE MAN WHO  
WOULD BE KING**  
Avik Chanda  
HarperCollins, ₹699
- 3 GOOD ECONOMICS FOR  
HARD TIMES**  
Abhijit V. Banerjee,  
Esther Duflo  
Juggernaut, ₹699
- 4 POOR ECONOMICS:  
RETHINKING POVERTY  
AND THE WAYS  
TO END IT**  
Abhijit V. Banerjee,  
Esther Duflo  
Penguin, ₹499
- 5 SHAHJAHANABAD**  
Rana Safvi  
HarperCollins, ₹999
- 6 THE BODY- A GUIDE  
FOR OCCUPANTS**  
Bill Bryson  
Doubleday, ₹999
- 7 REMNANTS OF A  
SEPARATION**  
Aanchal Malhotra  
HarperCollins, ₹599
- 8 WHAT THE ECONOMY  
NEEDS NOW**  
Edited by Abhijit  
Banerjee, Gita  
Gopinath, Raghuram  
Rajan, Mihir S. Sharma  
Juggernaut, ₹599
- 9 NOBODY CAN LOVE  
YOU MORE: LIFE IN  
DELHI'S RED LIGHT  
DISTRICT**  
Mayank Austen Soofi  
Penguin, ₹299
- 10 I AM A STRANGER  
HERE MYSELF**  
Bhaichand Patel  
HarperCollins, ₹699



## FICTION

- 1 THE FAR FIELD**  
Madhuri Vijay  
4th Estate UK, ₹599
- 2 BLUE MOON (THE NEW  
JACK REACHER  
THRILLER)**  
Lee Child  
Bantam Press, ₹599
- 3 A MINUTE TO MIDNIGHT**  
David Baldacci  
Pan Macmillan, ₹599
- 4 GIRL, WOMAN, OTHER  
(BOOKER PRIZE 2019  
WINNER)**  
Bernardine Evaristo  
Hamish Hamilton, ₹799
- 5 THE TESTAMENTS  
(BOOKER PRIZE 2019  
WINNER)**  
Margaret Atwood  
Chatto & Windus, ₹799
- 6 AGENT RUNNING IN  
THE FIELD**  
John Le Carré  
Penguin, ₹599
- 7 THE GUARDIANS**  
John Grisham  
Hodder, ₹399
- 8 GRAND UNION  
(STORIES)**  
Zadie Smith  
Hamish Hamilton, ₹699
- 9 MUSIC TO FLAME LILIES**  
Megha Rao  
Tara - India Research  
Press, ₹299
- 10 NOTHING VENTURED**  
Jeffrey Archer  
Pan Macmillan, ₹399

Bahrison, New Delhi

Executed for 500 bucks:  
Tihar's sorriest hanging

Sunil Gupta &amp; Sunetra Choudhury

extract

Billa and Ranga in 1982, Maqbool Butt in 1984, Kartar and Ujagar Singh in 1985, Satwant and Kehar Singh in 1989, and finally, Afzal Guru in 2013. This is the roll call of the hanged men that provide the most morbid highlights of my career, ensuring that they and I will always be inextricably linked. If I reflect upon these cases one by one, I can see evolving trends or patterns that are very recognisable in our society today. The sadistic duo of Billa and Ranga forever robbed Delhi of the innocent belief that young women and children could move freely without fear on its streets. Butt, the separatist anti-national, terrified the State so much that they removed all traces of him, even his last words. In the case of Kartar and Ujagar Singh, it showed how our justice system favoured the rich and powerful. All of these cases became leitmotifs for crime and punishment in India. Justice Kochehar was a visibly distressed man when he signed the black warrants for the two brothers — Kartar and Ujagar Singh. I was the one who had to collect the warrant from him and it was apparent that he had misgivings. The two men were very poor, so poor that they could not even afford decent counsel. The two had been hired by Dr. Narendra Singh Jain (who was the personal eye surgeon to the then president, Dr V.V. Giri) for only ₹500 to murder his wife, Vidya. The murder was planned by Dr. Jain and his co-conspirator Chandresh Sharma, who was his secretary as well as

lover. The two had worked together but their affair had been discovered by Vidya who had then got Chandresh fired. Dr Jain with his paramour then made an elaborate plan to get rid of Vidya.

On 4 December, 1973, as Dr Jain and Vidya were leaving their home in posh Defence Colony in south Delhi, Chandresh, who was waiting nearby, signalled to the two hitmen to attack Vidya. While Kartar pinned her down, Ujagar used a knife to stab her 14 times, killing her almost instantly. The entire plot was soon unravelled by the prosecution because there were so many holes in the case. There was no apparent motive for the attack on Vidya. Why did Dr Jain not

raise an alarm when the killers attacked his wife? Why was he spared?

The details of this case shocked us all but what was particularly strange is that the trial court's life sentence for all the accused was amended by the high court, which gave the death sentence only to the hitmen and spared Chandresh and Dr Jain, who were sentenced to life imprisonment instead.

It was apparent that Kartar and Ujagar, who spent their time peacefully in jail, doing mundane work such as carpentry, knew why they had met their fate while the others had got away. In their late fifties, they told me, "If we had a good lawyer representing us, this wouldn't have happened." The Delhi High Court ruled that the crime of the conspirators, Jain and Chandresh, was "at a lower plane" than the hitmen and enhanced their punishment "to be hanged by the neck till they are dead". So Kartar and Ujagar were hanged to death on 9 October, 1983, while the two lovers who had planned it all, were spared. In fact, two years after the hanging, on 22 July 1985, the Delhi High Court accepted Dr. Jain and his lover's application that they had been punished enough by spending 16 years in jail.

While Dr Jain had exemplary conduct on his side, Chandresh had attacked a woman matron in jail so the same could not be said about her. Nevertheless, their lawyers were able to get them off and they were set free.

Not all plotters have it so easy though. The next men to be hung in Tihar were

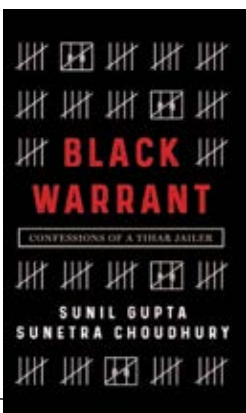
the killer and the "plotter" of a brutal political assassination. Another man was almost hanged at the same time. His crime? He was a Sikh police officer who took a lot of days off work, arousing suspicion. Fortunately for him, high-profile lawyers like Ram Jethmalani and P.N. Lekhi took an interest in his case.

On 31 October 1984, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi left her home on Safdarjung Road in the Capital to walk a few steps to her home-cum-office in an attached bungalow on Akbar Road. An Irish television crew, along with the actor and writer Peter Ustinov was waiting to interview her. It would have been a very newsworthy interview because in the summer gone by, Mrs Gandhi had conducted a controversial operation to eliminate Sikh militants led by a radical sect leader Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, who was rallying for a separate state of Khalistan.

Codenamed Operation Bluestar, the mission which was to flush out armed militants from inside the Golden Temple was very controversial because it meant that the army had to enter the Sikhs' holiest shrine to flush out militants who were hiding inside there. It was Prime Minister Indira Gandhi who had ordered the army to go in.

The case files say that Constable Satwant Singh and Sub-Inspector Beant Singh were on the prime minister's protection duty on 31 October. Sub-inspector Balbir Singh was also rostered but came on his shift much later at 3 pm... In fact, Satwant Singh is said to have told colleagues that he needed to be posted there because it had a toilet nearby and he was suffering from a bout of diarrhoea.

Excerpted with permission from the publishers, Roli Books, from Black Warrant



**BLACK WARRANT:  
CONFESSIONS OF A TIHAR  
JAILER**  
By **SUNIL GUPTA  
and SUNETRA  
CHOUHURY**  
Roli Books  
pp.208, ₹395

## Explosive prose: Hanif's work out in Urdu

Featuring bumbling generals, assassination plots, and homosexual romance, Pakistani military satire *A Case of Exploding Mangoes* by Mohammed Hanif has finally been released in the country's official language Urdu — even as the army tightens its grip on freedom of expression.

The former fighter pilot

turned journalist, novelist and librettist is best known for the 2008 novel which chronicles the final days of headline dictator General Zia-ul-Haq's rule and the myriad conspiracies behind the plane crash that killed him in 1988.

Zia, a pious and far-right dictator in real life, is portrayed by Hanif as a para-

noid buffoon backing the Afghan jihad against the Soviets while battling a case of rectal worms.

Although *Mangoes* is generously salted with heavy doses of humour, the book unleashes harsh criticism at Pakistan's military establishment. In the book, it relies on torture, extrajudicial murder, and covertly supports a

jihadist insurgency to pursue its goals — accusations made by rights activists, but which the military denies. "I love the army. Some of my best friends have died in combat," says the 55-year-old. "But if the military does something wrong, if they get involved in politics, if they disappear people, I have to write about it." — AFP

## A historian and a painter chronicle the subcontinent



Sudeep Sen

Polyphony

Om Ma Ni Pad Me Hum / Oh, the Jewel in the Lotus! — a Buddhist prayer chant. A *Journey Within* by artist Olivia Fraser (HarperCollins, pp.200, ₹2,999) is her first monograph, a result of a substantial aggregation of the best of her past exhibition catalogues, plus much more. This beautifully-produced, bold, wide-format book has some illuminating essays and prose pieces by B.N. Goswamy, Virginia Whiles, Navina Haider, Robert Macfarlane and Conor Macklin. It also contains a moving and poetical personal opening essay, eponymously titled, by the artist herself.

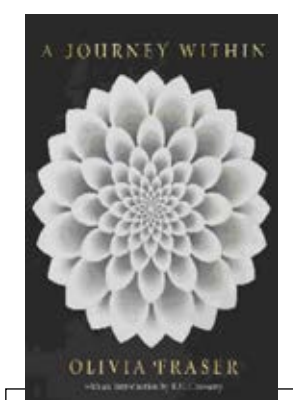
But the most important part of the book is the stunning and lavishly produced art-plates of her works, including at the end of the book, thumbnail-sized soft-toned early watercolours — scenes from everyday Indian life, people, and Indian monuments — acting as an important prelude to her later work. Some of these have also graced the pages and covers of her husband, author and historian William Dalrymple's books, such as *City of Djinns* and

others.

There is something intensely magnetic, yet gentle — an aura that is simultaneously piercing, penetrative, probing and prophetic — about Olivia Fraser's art. In every frame, the human eye deeply is drawn towards an aesthetic centre or focus — whether it is the bindi, third eye, jewelled pupil or adorned iris ('Darshan I-IV', 'Kama Diptych') — or lotus ('Lotus Eyes'), bee ('Brahmri'), golden hour ('Godhuli Bela') — each of them bearing a distinct personal signature, anchored within the whirls of a private fountainhead.

Yet, her gaze is universal, both inward and outward — a view that is both centripetal ('Churning') and centrifugal ('Creation') — all following a cosmic pattern and precise geometric axes. Mixing Hindu ('Krishna'), Buddhist and Mughal motifs, as well as miniature styles — she incorporates in these paintings, aspects of computer-generated modern graphic art. Except, nothing is machine or software generated — everything is painstakingly drawn and painted with utmost care and minuteness.

"I feel there is a natural affinity between a traditional Indian artistic aesthetic, whether it be Tantric art or miniature painting, and the Western ideas of Minimalism, Op art and Geometric Abstraction. All explore essence, sensation and perception," writes Fraser in her introduction. "I have sought to combine these perspectives by focusing in on the iterative, pairing it down to the minimal and ultimately striving to reach for an essence while also pursuing the idea of movement, which is innate in the texts and practices of yoga."



**A JOURNEY  
WITHIN**  
By **OLIVIA  
FRASER**  
HarperCollins  
pp.200,  
₹2,999

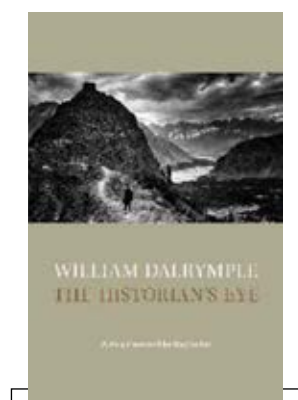
For her new show Amrit at Nature Morte gallery in New Delhi, she says, "I moved on from the lotus to the bee, a motif in ancient and modern poetry that is also vitally present in the iconography of Buddhist and Hindu art. Beautiful women in Sanskrit poetry are often trailed by a cloud of bees because they are irresistibly desirous. The insect is invoked in another context in the *Gheranda Samhita*, an early 18th century treatise on yoga, composed in Sanskrit."

Olivia's work is profoundly meditative and possesses immense power in its quietness. Her lines are precise, her curves elegant, her focus yogic, and her overall canvas is akin to a *mandala* where large multifarious narratives are embedded in the specific art of precis-storytelling. A *Journey Within* is a collector's item from an immensely gifted and exceptional contemporary artist.

William Dalrymple is widely known as a historian, travel writer and literary journalist. He is the co-director of the world's biggest literary festival, the Jaipur Literature Festival; has been a broadcaster of several historical television series — but what is not as well known about him is that he is also a very fine photographer. In 2016, he had published his first book of photography, *The Writer's Eye* (HarperCollins, pp.71, ₹999), with a foreword by Siddh-

arth Dhanvant Shangvi. More recently, his second book of photographs, *The Historian's Eye* (HarperCollins, pp.112, ₹1,299), for a foreword by Raghu Rai, has been published.

William's signature tone is his high-contrast, controlled depth-of-focus, noirish black-and-white photographs that cast sharp shadows with their extreme 'black point levels' — characteristics that lend a moody quality to his frames. One of the lovely textual aspects of this new book is his short pithy side-notes that accompany the photographs, setting them in context.



**THE HISTORIAN'S  
EYE**  
By **WILLIAM  
DALRYMPLE**  
HarperCollins  
pp.112,  
₹1,299

What keeps ties between  
US and Pakistan ticking

Indranil Banerjee

review

The strategic establishment in the United States realised in the late 1940s the importance of Pakistan's geography in the emerging world order with the Soviet Union hanging over Asia and the oil rich Middle East wedged between unstable, competing regional forces. Pakistan thereafter became a key factor in Washington's Asia policy. And while much might have changed in the US-Pakistan equation, this fundamental fact has not.

This explains why relations between Washington and Rawalpindi, despite all the strife and bad blood, have not snapped. The subject of strategic writer Shuja Nawaz's latest book, *The Battle for Pakistan*, addresses precisely this fact.

"The US-Pakistan relationship has often been compared to a bad marriage," the author writes in his preface. "In many ways, the seventy-year-old US-Pakistan relationship, with its many ups and downs, alternately filled with both tantrums and fulsome praise for each other, has become a tragicomedy on a regional political stage, with numerous bad actors and confused heroes and heroines."

Although the author has dealt with this troubled relationship in a previous book (*Crossed Swords*), times are rapidly changing which calls for a follow up. Global equations are changing and the United States, once hostile to India, has become a friend and Americans in general have become less tolerant of Pakistan's Islamists, especially after Osama bin Laden was found hiding in its backyard.

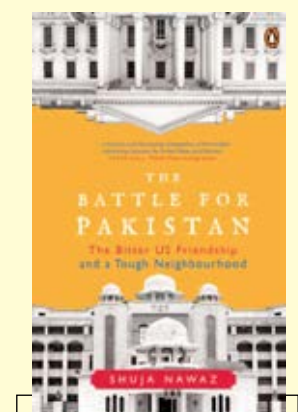
The author believes that Washington cannot absolve itself of blame for the soured relationship: "During the period 2008-2018, the US chose to continue to deal with the powerful Pakistani military as its preferred and main interlocutor, despite the emergence of a fledgling democracy in Pakistan... America failed Pakistan by relying too

much on its military partners in Pakistan and mollicoddling the corrupt civilian leadership. It also failed the Pakistani people by ignoring them in the main..."

"The arrival of President Donald Trump in 2017 brought with it a new muscular US foreign policy and a shortsighted view of regional relationships. Hence, the US risks losing not just the war in Afghanistan and peace in South Asia, but also losing Pakistan as a potential friend in stabilising the Middle East."

The US decision to make Pakistan an ally and stand by it no matter what has often hurt India. Few in India will ever forget how in 1971 when the Pakistan Army in East Pakistan was butchering Bengalis by the thousands, Washington instead of admonishing or curbing the Pakistani war machine threatened India by sending the US Seventh Fleet into the Bay of Bengal.

Subsequently, the US decision to ignore Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme in order to ensure the success of the anti-Soviet Afghan jihad turned out to be a



**THE BATTLE FOR PAKISTAN:  
THE BITTER US FRIENDSHIP  
AND A TOUGH  
NEIGHBOURHOOD**  
By **SHUJA NAWAZ**  
Penguin Random  
House  
pp.374, ₹799

huge strategic setback for India and an enduring threat for the entire region.

Many would therefore contest the author's view that Washington is not mindful or fully appreciative of "Pakistan's existential struggle". For, it could be argued that much of Pakistan's fundamental problems arise from the fact that it chose to make India its enemy right from the time of its creation. The belief that Hindu India is an "existential threat" to Pakistan is of its own making and no outsider can do anything about it.

All this is one reason why Indian strategic experts might find fault with many of the author's assertions and explanations. But that is not what the book is about and nor does that ultimately reveal its worth.

The greatest strength of the book is the author's mindset. Nawaz is no Islamist zealot or a Pakistani Army lackey; nor is he a Pakistan-baiter. Despite leaving Pakistan and migrating to the United States where he has taken up citizenship, Nawaz is known to have maintained good relations with the powers in his home country. He remains proud of his Rajput ancestry which naturally places him on the side of Pakistan's martial classes.

At the same time, he continues to be a critic of his country's military, especially its propensity to dwarf and manipulate genuine democratic forces. In his previous, much acclaimed book titled *Crossed Swords: Pakistan, its Army and the Wars Within* (2008), the author dispassionately traced the Pakistan Army's tradition of interfering and often sabotaging civilian governments.

Yet the author is not completely hostile to the Pakistan Army and this allows him to analyse without prejudice many of its important actions and explain much of its motivation. As in his previous book, Shuja Nawaz provides the reader an invaluable glimpse behind the steel curtain that the Pakistan Army shrouds itself in. That in itself is reason enough for Pakistan watchers to treat this book as a must read.

The writer is an independent commentator on political and security issues

Then there is William's fascination for the Mughals, amply borne out by his various books on the subject. "What probably first drew me to the Mughals, as with so many people, was their architecture." One of my favourite photographs in this series is that of a cyclist and the way his body and bicycle cast an elongated shadow on the stone paving, under the entrance arch of Delhi's Safdarjung Tomb. The sun's rays flare out, cutting out a crescent shape on main tomb's inverted lotus dome. The light here is dynamic, pungent and assertive — yet, there is a calmness to this mise-en-scene.

In his architectural images, there is precision in framing, balance in composition, subtle and clever use of natural light — but for all the technical finesse, his images are never without humanity or humanism. Even as he portrays religion, it is always through the lens of secularism. But beyond the traditional boundary of the vertical and horizontal frames, there is always depth and gravitas — William Dalrymple's photography is of a very high order.

Sudeep Sen [www.sudeepsen.org] is a writer, translator, literary editor and photographer. His newest book is Kaifi Azmi: Poems | Nazms: New & Selected Translations (Bloomsbury).







# Ayodhya: Seek compromise, don't stoke fires



Saeed Naqvi

Wide Angle

*"Has the tumult of the Day of Judgment ended? I half opened my eyes from the sleep of death. But I found the tumult was still continuing. I went back to sleep."*  
— Shah Sarmad

After the Supreme Court verdict, its merits or demerits notwithstanding, one imagined that the tumult would subside. But lawyers and sundry busybodies clustered around the clergy have obviously got accustomed to the limelight which, in their case, will only last as long as the tumult does. So they are busy stoking the

fires. "We shall appeal, we shall appeal."

The mandir-masjid dispute was a clear case of politics exploiting faith. In other words it was for Hindutva "the bird that lays the golden egg". The Sangh Parivar, it would follow, would like to keep the "bird" alive until its larger purpose had been served. The Ayodhya verdict is only a brick in the larger architecture. Leaders whom Muslims would listen to were duty bound to explain the "politics" of it to the community. They did not. Religious leaders and lawyers took over.

A great deal of forethought and strategy had gone into building up the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. "Shila puja" or the "consecration of bricks" for the Ram temple was brilliant market-

ing, never mind if it generated anti-Muslim hate all along the route from even the most far flung villages all the way to Ayodhya. The Bhagalpur anti-Muslim pogrom was one of the many eruptions the "shila" processions of 1989 provoked. So seamlessly had religious faith been amalgamated with political purpose that a critical mass of Hindus were over a period of time firm in their belief that Ram was born on the "disputed" plot. All the brownie points of these Hindus went to the BJP.

Watching its Hindu vote haemorrhage consistently, the Congress too began to weakly raise its voice for Ram Rajya. While the Muslims ran helter skelter in search of alternate political protection, the clergy and their gang pitched it on pure religion — shariah, shariah. They don't know how the National Register of Citizenship will plague them, but let the Uniform Civil Code come up, and a frenetic chant will rent the air. "Shariah, shariah".

Whatever the archaeological evidence, a large number of Hindus had expressed their faith that the mosque stood on

**The march towards the Hindu Rashtra has quickened, but sensible folk have not given up... The ailing cleric, Saiyid Kalbe Sadiq has repeatedly said, 'Muslims should gift the land for the temple even if they win the case'.**

Ram's birthplace. In such a situation, protection of a medieval mosque, one of the thousands in the country, was not tenable. After all, Muslims were not claiming it as a place associated with revered figures in Islam. Trust the myopic religious leaders to have misled the community so comprehensively. Nothing has harmed the Muslim cause more than continuous harping on Shah Bano, Salman Rushdie and Babri Masjid.

In my disgust, I generally revert to poetry: "Beautiful Aheliya, who had turned to stone because of a curse, came back to her gorgeous self when, you, O'Lord, touched the stone;

you transformed one from the animal kingdom into your most trusted, Hanuman; you humanised a demon. I have no attributes that you have to undo. When will you ever bestow your boon on me?" The one seeking a boon from Ram is, a pious Muslim, Abdul Rahim Khan e-Khana (1556-1627), one of Mughal Emperor Akbar's most powerful courtiers and a contemporary of Tulsidas, author of the *Ramayana*. What is more, this shloka by Rahim is in Sanskrit. The two were in correspondence on subjects of common interest, including a poetic metre, much favoured by Tuls — Barvai chhand. There is an abundance of poetry on Ayodhya.

How would Rahim, a remarkable poet in Awadhi and Sanskrit, have contemplated the events of December 6, 1992, or the Ayodhya verdict? Indeed, what would have been the reaction of my late mother, who accompanied me to Ayodhya in 1989 to watch the shilanyas, or brick-laying ceremony, ordered by Rajiv Gandhi? She found Ayodhya a temple town where a mosque on the ground claimed by

Hindus as the birthplace of Ram was an "incongruity".

According to her, a Muslim could spread out his prayer mat in the direction of Mecca anywhere and say his "namaz". A Hindu consecrates his "idol", which then "lives" in the temple eternally. Muslims must withdraw from a "masjid e fitna", or a mosque of conflict. Likewise, the Gyanvapi Masjid in Kashi and Shahi Idgah in Mathura.

If any Muslim accompanied me to Varanasi, he would require minimal sensitivity to see that the Gyanvapi Masjid insults the Hindu. It sits on the shoulder of one of Hinduism's most important shrines — Kashi Vishwanath Mandir.

The temple lights must have cast a spell on Urdu's finest poet, Mirza Ghalib. He wrote his longest poem "*Chiragh e dair*", "*Mandir ka diya*", or the Lamp in the Temple. He wrote: "*Ibadat khana e naqoosian ast Hama na kaabay e Hindostan ast*"

(This is the place of worship for those who make music from conch shells

This, truly is the Kaaba of Hindustan)

The march towards the Hindu Rashtra has quickened, but sensible folk have not given up. They are still talking of compromises. The ailing cleric, Saiyid Kalbe Sadiq has repeatedly said, "Muslims should gift the land for the temple even if they win the case". This mood of generosity and compromise should be encapsulated for the opinion poll on which my friend, pollster Ranjit Chib, is working. The basic question Muslims should be asked is simple. Does the Supreme Court judgment, good or bad, enable you to move on and focus on real bread and butter issues — jobs, education, women's upliftment, recruitment in services? Or would you rather keep fighting for a mosque which can never be built and, in the process, lose all else?

Can anyone spot a chink of light?

"*Bada maza us milap mein hai Jo sulah ho jaaye jung ho kar.*" (There is exceptional pleasure when warring sides, compromise and embrace each other.)

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

## A women's 'caliphate' on the Syrian-Iraq border that would otherwise not exist



Rafia Zakaria

By all accounts, the conditions in the Al-Hawl internment camp, which is located on the Syrian-Iraq border, are terrible. The camp is now home to over 70,000 people, most of whom are women and children. Everyone lives a haphazard and precarious existence in ragged tents and the occasional shipping container. Sanitation is nearly non-existent and disease prevails and takes away children every day. NGOs provide some food and some assistance, but it is usually too meagre to mean much, let alone lift the occupants of this camp from a hapless existence.

A month or so ago, an unusual development came to light. A woman whose identity is unknown has proclaimed the creation of a new so-called caliphate inside the camp. The new female leader of Al Hawl has decided to impose a set of complex rules and laws that must be followed by the women in the camp. In exchange, they receive some small level of protection.

Among the structures that have been set up by the new "caliphate" in Al Hawl are secret court systems that adjudicate disputes (which are constant and unrelenting) and mete out punishments, including death sentences. Three other brigades of women fulfil other functions; one patrols the streets enforcing strict face veiling and good moral behaviour such as prayers, etc; another brigade functions as informants, watching and reporting the location and intentions of the guards of the camp; finally, one brigade actually carries out the sentences meted out by the courts, with the worst offenders killed for their "crimes".

It is quite likely that the last month and a half has created only more tumult in the camp. After the Turkish invasion, most of the Kurdish guards who were in charge of guarding the camp, enforcing rules and maintaining order in the camp have left for the front lines. According to one report from the Spanish newspaper *El Pais*, only 300 of the 800 guards remain on duty. Other personnel such as those who provided medical help to camp inmates, particularly the babies (of which there are many) have also left for staff hospitals on the front lines.

All of this has magnified the already existing power vacuum in the camp. It is no surprise then that a matriarchal system, a women's "caliphate" of sorts, has emerged as a powerful force, while the "international" members of the camp, the women and children from Western countries, are housed in a separate area of the camp. Despite this, the women have used their "imprisonment" in the camp as a means of developing contacts and connections with other women. Ironically, the women, now without any of the men of the militant Islamic State (IS) group present, are free to meet each other and to develop their own system of governance.

This system appears to be based on a caliphate. The leader is wanted by Kurdish and Turkish authorities and allegedly sleeps in

a different tent every night in order to escape arrest. In addition to the brigades of informants and thugs, she has also permitted the development of religious schools to educate girls and women about Islam in general. No other educational material is permitted in these schools.

Camps, particularly internment camps housing mostly if not all women and children (only five per cent of the camp's inmates are men), are places of vulnerability. A strong female presence makes them ideal places for human traffickers to obtain women that can then be bought and sold. Without means to support themselves, and with the guards having no incentives to actually improve the lives of inmates, there is huge pressure on women to turn to prostitution to support their families. Then again there is the threat of men infiltrating the camp and committing sexual assaults on the female inmates of the camp.

There are also issues of citizenship. As we saw earlier this year, Western countries such as the UK have refused to take back women who left the country to go to Syria and join IS. The most well-known of these women was Shamima Begum who appealed to the UK government to permit her and her newborn son to return to the UK so she could be reunited with her family. The UK refused to take her back, saying that she should return to Bangladesh, a country from which her parents had migrated and that she had never visited. Nor is she alone: more than 40 countries are at this point refusing to take back women or even young children who are being held at the camp.

With all this lawlessness and uncertainty, and the world's turn towards treating all such women and children as "contaminated", it is perhaps inevitable that these former-IS women would turn back to the ideology that brought them to Syria and to IS in the first place. Amid the brutality of camp life, where murders and beatings supposedly occur every day, some order — even repressive order — may seem like a panacea against the otherwise existing lawlessness. The creation of the "matriarchal caliphate" seems to have little to do with matters of actual religious dogma such as the fact that a female "caliph" is against the views of many Islamic scholars.

Instead, in the desert on the border, is the sort of women-led movement that would otherwise never exist. The needs of the camp inmates, the power vacuum that exists, the lack of service provision and security and the unwillingness of home countries seem to have precipitated the creation of this all-women, religiously inspired domain and the so-called ordination of the first woman caliph. With it has come the brash and oppressive order typical of neo-jihadist movements — but repressive and cruel order, galvanised by fear and terror, may, for those held in the camp, be better than no order at all.

*By arrangement with Dawn*

## The mind is the human body's software



Swami Tejomayananda

The faculty of thinking, the mind, is a continuous flow of various kinds thoughts like desire, will, intention, imagination, ideas and so on. While the body is the vehicle through which we transact with the world outside, the mind is the instrument of our experiences. It is the mind alone that performs all actions. For example, when the mind is dormant as in deep sleep or in a coma, we are incapable of any conscious action or interaction. The

body is similar to the hardware and the mind is like the software of a computer.

Since the mind is the most sophisticated and delicate instrument, it should be handled with great care and caution. It is much better to understand its functioning rather than fight a losing battle with it. Always in search of happiness, the mind follows the senses into the world of objects and enjoys various experiences — TV shows, a dance or just window-shopping! But, does happiness lie in

the objects of the world? Is happiness the nature of objects? If it were so, they would give the same degree of happiness to all, at all times. In fact, we experience the law of diminishing returns — most things that we imagine to be "joy-giving", eventually turn out to be disappointments.

To gain happiness we contact and acquire objects through the senses. What happens when we enjoy objects? When a certain desire is fulfilled, the mind temporarily becomes calm, which results in manifestation of happiness within. Unaware that the joy experienced was from within, we superimpose feelings of delight on the object. We are convinced the object

made us happy and become attached to it.

Some people are attached to gross objects like food; others pursue the subtler joys of literature, music, and art. Yet others enjoy even subtler pursuits like meditation — all under the false notion that they are joy-giving. The more the joy superimposed, the greater the attachment. This causes dependence, possessiveness, jealousy and fear — leading to sorrow, tension and agitation.

Dependence is sorrow. We feel we cannot live without the objects. Having imagined happiness in them, we remain bound by the rope of attachment, like an animal leashed to a post. Only when this false notion is

destroyed, is the mind detached and free.

How do we become free from attachments? Since the mind cannot remain without holding on to something, it is impossible to unhook it from objects without giving it a greater source of happiness. The mind usually pursues objects because of its likes and dislikes. The choiceless performance of one's duties as worship of God frees it from their grip.

To such a purified mind absorbed in God, one's divine nature is revealed. The person then is happy, liberated and fulfilled.

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





# Engaging Rajapaksas will be India's best bet

The first option could take us towards the beginning of a new chapter of good neighbourly relations based on mutual trust; even more important, it could try denting the fast-growing influence of China in the region

R. BHAGWAN SINGH  
CHENNAI

We can do either of the only two options now available responding to the Rajapaksa victory. We can go beyond congratulating him on the Twitter and genuinely reach out in trying to consolidate relations with Mahinda in the larger interests of regional development in terms of economy, Tamil reconciliation and most importantly the fight against Islamic terror. The other option is to cry real loud so it would please our friends and foes in Tamil Nadu, that the poll victory of Gotabhaya would mean the resurgence of state-sponsored racial violence targeting the minorities in the north and the east.

The first option could take us towards the beginning of a new chapter of good neighbourly relations based on mutual trust; even more important, it could try denting the fast-growing influence of China in the region. The Red Dragon has already spread its wings and buried the claws deep into the little Indian Ocean island it sees as a strategic partner in not just protecting its sea traffic bringing the wealth mined in Africa but also as a military ally should any need arise to torment India.

The second option would take us nowhere; particularly since Gotabhaya has won a decisive victory in the Saturday poll and his elder brother Mahinda has already made it clear he has plans to get elected as the Prime Minister early next year, so that the two brothers could run the

government effectively. MR, as he is known, said so in clear terms in an interview he gave this writer on the eve of the massive convention of the resurgent Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna in Colombo on August 11, where he announced his brother Gotabhaya as the SLPP's Presidential candidate.

Detractors see the present electoral victory as the return of the Rajapaksa brothers to take control of Sri Lankan governance and more importantly, crushing the rival organisations with an iron hand the way they ran the country soon after winning the Eelam war in May 2009.

India would do well in trying to sew up its damaged equations with the Rajapaksas instead of further screwing up its relations with the southern neighbour. Indian diplomacy should ruminate on its past mistakes and look at long-term strategies to keep Sri Lanka a friend rather than continue playing smart tricks-not so smart actually as Delhi has been steadily yielding space on the ring to Beijing-hoping to keep the 'pigmy' subservient to the 'Big Brother'.

In the modern world, piggies do not remain piggies to be bullied, as they grab opportunities to ally with other powerful nations not quite friendly towards the 'Big Brother'. It's time that the Indian foreign ministry counts on its fingers the number of truly friendly neighbours and those that Delhi let slip away from the lap.

Shortly after the announcement of Gotabhaya's victory, a prominent member of Tamil



Security personnel stand guard near the Election Commission office in Colombo, before the arrival of President-elect Gotabaya Rajapaksa. —AFP

Diaspora in London, Charles Antonidas, called to express anguish and share thought on what the Tamils should do in the hostile Rajapaksa dispensation. It did not take him long to concede that the Diaspora, as well as those 'back home' in Lanka, should seek ways of working closely with the new dispensation in Colombo in order to get the Tamil issues solved.

"We must now understand that the Rajapaksas are here to stay, and stay strong in the government, and that we must work with this dispensation to get our issues solved," said Charles, who had represented the India-sponsored peace talks between the Tamil militants and the Sri Lankan government in Thimpu (1985).

Another Tamil Diaspora leader, who wished anonymity, said it was "surprising and is a matter for concern" that Indian attempts to help Sajith Premadasa in the Presidential election did not succeed. Asked



Narendra Modi

what made him think India backed Premadasa at the cost of Mahinda, he shot back, "Well, we all know India helped Sajith with funds and helicopter for his campaign".

Perhaps this Diaspora friend is misinformed, perhaps. But the suspicion remains strong in the Rajapaksa camp that India continues to be hostile. And that should get Delhi to seriously think if tripping Rajapaksa



Gotabhaya Rajapaksa

because he is seen as pro-China would mean trying to replace him with a weak dummy. Rewind to the charge made by Mahinda after losing to his little-known minister Maithripala Sirisena in the Presidential poll of 2015; he had accused India and its RAW of orchestrating his defeat.

And perhaps recalling just that, albeit indirectly, the Sinhala strongman said in his opening response to brother

Gotabhaya's victory now that the voter must be saluted, "for decisively defeating the 2015 style attempt made to once purloin the mandate of the people through backroom deals with various chauvinistic ethnic and religious groupings organized around narrow political agendas". The time has now come to put an end to "this dangerous game of promoting religious and ethnic chauvinism for political purposes", he has said, indicating there would be some drastic measures planned in reviewing neighbourly relations and the future governance internally.

In that post-victory statement, Mahinda has also claimed that this presidential election "differs from all previous presidential elections, because of the complications in the system of governance brought about by the 19th Amendment".

He has made known he would study the provisions of the 19th Amendment and plan the "immediate programme of action accordingly" so as to provide "a sense of direction to this country which has been drifting rulerless for five years" and also, as stated in his candidate's election manifesto, "introduce constitutional and legal reforms" to achieve better governance and improved economy. Needless to say, India should try best to influence through diplomatic forums without appearing to 'poke its nose' into the neighbour's affairs.

While releasing his poll manifesto (October 25), Gotabhaya had stated unequivocally that his government "will not allow outsiders to interfere in Sri Lanka's domestic affairs". It does not need great intelligence and wisdom to detect that the 'warning' was aimed at the neighbour up north across the Palk Strait.

And it does need sustained diplomatic efforts initiated by better planners than those holding fort at present, to convince Rajapaksa that sharing mutual concerns and the burden of seeking solutions in transparent manner, is no 'interference in domestic affairs'.

"We must quickly reach out to Rajapaksa in not just congratulating but also planning an effective

roadmap at winning back his trust. This would need some tinkering of the priorities for the country that would focus on long-term national interests instead of remaining locked down by regional and local pressures", said a senior officer who has been handling the Lankan issue for many years. "We must know that Rajapaksa is a strong leader there and will remain so for a long time. And he is actually pro-India, has great affinity for our country and its people. He does not do anything major without worshipping at Tirupati. We should use all these factors to reach out", he said.

Sri Lanka observers also point to BJP senior Dr Subramanian Swamy as another possibility as the peace negotiator with Rajapaksa. He has been in touch with the former President for a long time and in fact said recently that he would get the Tamils their due political rights from Rajapaksa if they vote for Gotabhaya in this elections. Well, Tamils did not vote for the SLPP but that should not stop Dr Swamy from trying to carry out his promise.

Apart from Dr Swamy and Lord Venkateswara, Gautama Buddha too could play a role in helping the Indian foreign ministry to mend its fences with Rajapaksa. Remember Prime Minister Narendra Modi had visited Colombo for a major International Buddhist Conference in May 2017? Quick revival of the mutual interests in The Dharma could help bridge relations not only between India and the Buddhist-dominated Lankan government but also in trying to get relief for the Hindu Tamils up north. "We need to strengthen relations with Rajapaksa to address our problems with Islamic terror", said a senior intelligence official, pointing out that the Easter blasts in Colombo has created the dire need for such collaboration.

"The two countries need to fight terror together. India should engage MR (Mahinda Rajapaksa). Gotabhaya is a democratically elected leader. We could belong to two different religions but ethnically, we are one and the same", he said.

## Lost in translation: Migrants or criminals?

**The Bengaluru police has been cracking down on illegal immigrants of Bangladeshi origin. Apartment associations are willing to comply but have no way to access the antecedents of the Bengali-speaking workers they employ. Could citizen registries help deal with migrant labour in cities and the crimes associated with them, ask M.K. Ashoka and Vishaka V. Warriar**

Lakhs of migrant workers enter Bengaluru every year, cater to its booming real estate and development sectors. However, profit takes center stage in the real estate sector, so much so that few companies bother to conduct background checks on the workers they bring in for construction. Not checking antecedents poses a larger threat, especially to Bengaluru's children. The migrant workers are unidentified and nearly impossible to trace, so those inclined to criminal activity proceed with impunity.

Presently, the situation is so lacking that there is no provision or mechanism by which the police can check on migrant workers, or create a database of any kind. Presently, the police departments pitch on only when agencies approach them asking for background checks on their workers. Now, questions are rightly being raised about workers who could pose a threat to the local population, women and children in particular.

"The police department doesn't have the required data base. Many of these people come from Odisha



**The police don't have a database to keep track of migrant workers or alleged crimes connected with them. Many of these people come from Odisha and Nepal and if they commit a crime, cannot be traced. — LEHAR SINGH, BJP MLC**

and Nepal and if they commit a crime, they cannot be traced." BJP MLC Lehar Singh stresses the need for close monitoring as criminals now enter the city pre-

tending to be migrant labourers, which gives them access without providing identity proof. "Caterers,

especially those who operate in Palace Grounds, should be checked, as they bring unverified migrant workers to the city as cheap

- No door-to-door verification done yet
- Cops act only when requested
- No national data base available
- Migrants turned criminals going scot-free
- Caterers, bar, pub owners bring in unverified workers as cheap labour

labour. The owners of pubs, bars and clubs also employ hundreds of undocumented labourers."

Singh adds that it's high time police took action against the owners and prepare a database of labourers. "People have to be careful when they deal with those who say they are from Odisha, West Bengal and Bihar, as these are the states from which the majority of migrant workers hail."

## The poor don't have a monopoly on crime

Migrant labourers aren't the only people committing crimes, for the wealthy and educated are just as prone. I will not take a position that migrant workers are more inclined to crime.

There is a public perception that migrants commit crimes. However, if you look at sexual crime statistics, particularly in places like Delhi, there is nothing to indicate that disadvantaged classes of migrants have committed heinous acts. Of course, being poor and alienated can be triggers but those aren't the only things. The rich commit the same acts, whether they crimes for money or sexual crimes. For example, you won't find a single migrant construction worker on the MeToo list. This list almost exclusively features senior academicians, professors and opinion makers.

What I am saying is that crime in India and anywhere else is not particular-



DR SUPRIYA ROY CHOWDHURY

ly to be identified with poor people. They do commit them but how can we say only poor commit crimes.

The government should provide them with education, employment and proper housing, giving them access to a decent life if they are to be steered away from a life of crime. And then, one would expect that the crime would decrease. It's every citizen's right to expect all this.

I don't think migrant workers are particularly a threat to woman and children. Crimes against children are in a category of their own and if you really look at it, these happen within homes. Within middle class and upper class homes, it appears. I am just saying that there might be a correlation but I don't think one can push it too far.

*The author has specialisation in areas of Globalisation and labor: Urban poverty: Social movements: Comparative development*

## 'Can you prove your grandfather was an Indian?'

As the state police departments flounder in terms of creating a database of migrant workers, or at least keeping a record of those who have been accused of crimes, the Central government has been hard at work on the National Register for Citizens. This poses a different set of problems, for proof of citizenship is difficult to provide, especially as it requires knowledge of one's forefathers. Crimes committed by migrant workers in major cities go unchecked and untraced, while journalists near the border campaign against the NRC, say people are detained in camps or rendered stateless and that the majority of these are Muslim.

Work on updating the

National Register for Citizens (NRC) began in 2015 and seemed to be about more than Assam. Political journalist Rohini Mohan, who was present at a session at the Bangalore International Centre on Monday, said the project to identify illegal immigrants of Bangladesh threatens to rob many genuine Indians of their citizenship. The talk was based largely on the speaker's ground experiences of reporting in Assam during the floods, elections and multiple encounters with regard to the NRC in the state.

Citizenship, said Mohan, is taken for granted until the time when it is no longer dependent just on oneself but requires proof of one's forefathers. The individuals who didn't



make it to the recent NRC list in August 2019 had owned documents like driving licenses, land records, proof of stay and even passports, all documents issued by the State.

While it is true that women and other minorities are the most vulnerable groups, the NRC also includes journalists, academicians and defence personnel as 'victims'. There

were situations in which some people made it to their list but their children did not. Requests of elderly women were denied on grounds of weak document proof. Assam is

subject to floods, twice a year, she claimed, so documents of identity are often lost. Also, the duration of stay in a particular place cannot be proved due to frequent migration due to floods.

Mohan filed RTIs with the 100 existing tribunals for copies of verdicts issued in the last six months. She was shocked to note that only six responded, while others denied the information on grounds of resource scarcity, demands for an HC order, false claims of non-payment of fees and so on.

"82 percent of orders I saw declared the individuals to be foreigners. I met 113 of them, they were all Bengali speakers, 89% of the declared foreigners were Muslim. Nine out of 10 Muslims were declared

foreigners and four out of 10 were Hindus. 78% of the people declared as foreigners didn't face trials. Some didn't know they had been declared foreigners. Fake cases of absconding were registered and so on."

The BJP, she said, battled for NRC but not anymore. "The party is now underplaying and discrediting it after realizing that their own constituencies are getting stuck. Many MLAs have expressed this. Since BJP is disturbed with the number of Hindus in detention camps, it has sowed seeds of hope with regard to their release." During her discussions with the former NRC coordinator, she said, "The coordinator confessed to the pressure to declare people as foreigners. The

judges of the Foreign Tribunal have also said the same thing. There have been times when tribunal judges were fired for restoring citizenship in several of their cases."

A significant number of people have been proved innocent and released from detention camps, Mohan admits, adding, "There is no compensation for the years they have lost. In an environment of battling for citizenship, a number of people have been rendered stateless as there is no treaty signed between India and Bangladesh to deport individuals. A murderer in an Indian prison has more rights than these people. Bangladesh on the other hand has declared it an internal issue of the Indian state."



Germany fines carmakers over steel buying cartel

App to display carbon footprint in shopping bag

## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,575.17	-0.19
Nifty 50	11,968.40	-0.26
S&P 500	3,099.48	-0.29
Dollar (₹)	72.00	-0.06
Pound Sterling (₹)	66.06	-0.34
Euro (₹)	79.46	+0.01
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	38,036▼119	-0.31
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	\$63.40	+1.00
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.505	+0.047
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.764	+0.026

## PSBs disburse ₹2.5-lakh cr loans in October

Public sector banks disbursed a record Rs 2.5 lakh crore of loans during October. Of the Rs 2,52,589 crore of loans disbursed, Rs 1,05, 599 crore was given towards new term loans while Rs 46,800 crore was disbursed as new working capital loans, the Department of Financial Services said. So fresh lending was 60 per cent of the total disbursement, it said.

## Deferment of spectrum payment hailed



Industry chambers PHDCCI, Ficci and Assocham welcomed the Centre's decision to defer receipt of spectrum auction installments due from telecom service providers, saying the move will provide headroom to the stressed sector. The Centre on Wednesday doled out a Rs 42,000 crore relief to the telcos by agreeing defer spectrum payments for the next 2 years.

## India, Japan inks pact for speedy grant of patents

The patent offices of India and Japan have inked an agreement for expeditious grant of patents to Indian entities and individuals, the Commerce and Industry Ministry said. The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a proposal for Bilateral Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) programme between the Indian Patent Office and patent offices of other interested countries.

## Bank unions to stage stir before Parliament

Various bank unions plan to stage dharna on December 10 in front of Parliament to protest against the government decision to merge 10 public sector banks. "Govt has been pursuing the policy of merger of public sector banks despite the adverse implications. Experience of mergers in the country and elsewhere has shown that no benefit accrues to any of the stake holder," bank unions said.

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■ Will ₹16.5K-cr import substitution project move to pvt hands?

# BPCL: Kochi Refinery fate hangs in balance

K.P. SETHUNATH  
KOCHI, NOV. 21

The Union government's decision to divest its entire stake in Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) has created apprehensions over the fate of the nearly Rs 16,500-crore projects for import substitution petrochemical products, having huge potential for manufacturing a slew of downstream products, by Kochi Refinery coming under the PSU.

The petrochemical products from the company are expected to save foreign exchange to the tune of Rs 13,000 crore a year.

The BPCL-Kochi Refinery, the largest public sector undertaking in Kerala, has already commenced the trial run of its Rs 5,246-crore propylene petrochemical plant before its formal commissioning by December. The refinery is also moving ahead with the Rs 11,300-crore polyol project, with the target of commissioning in 2023.

The refinery has made a foray into petrochemicals as part of the Integrated Refinery Expansion Project (IREP) to enhance the refining capacity to 15.5 million tonnes per annum (MTPA) from the levels of 9 MTPA and make it the largest PSU refinery in the country.

The Centre's decision late Wednesday has also raised a question mark on the fate of an ambitious project by the state government to set up a petrochemical park in Kochi. The petrochemical park has been envisaged based on the availability of import-substitution raw materials for manufacturing a large number of



## Govt may not let other PSUs to buy into BPCL

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, NOV 21

A day after the Centre announced its plans to divest its majority stake in BPCL, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Thursday reiterated his earlier statement that the government has no business to be in business, hinting that other public sector oil companies, including Indian Oil Corporation, may not be allowed to bid for buying the government stake in BPCL.

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCA) had on Wednesday

products having wide use in industries such as paints, water treatment, super absorbent polymer, detergent, adhesives, solvents and plasticisers.

The petrochemical complex of the Kochi Refinery is located in 170 acres bought by the company from the Fertilizers and

cleared to sell the government's entire 53.29 per cent stake in the country's second-largest state refiner along with other four PSUs, including country's largest shipping company Shipping Corporation of India. The government expects to garner Rs 90,000 crore from the BPCL sale.

At the current trading price of BPCL, the government's stake is valued at a shade less than Rs 62,000 crore. On top of this, the acquirer will have to make an open offer to buy an additional 26 per cent stake from minority shareholders for about Rs 30,000 crore.

"Since 2014, we have a clear vision that the government has no business to be in business," Pradhan told reporters, adding that nitty-gritty and details of the disinvestment process will have to be worked out.

BPCL will give buyers ready access to 14 per cent of India's oil refining capacity and about one-fourth of the fuel-marketing infrastructure in the world's fastest-growing energy market. It, however, will be sold after carving out Numaligarh Refinery from its portfolio and given to a public sector unit.

Chemicals Travancore Ltd (FACT). The state government is also setting up a park dedicated for petrochemical products in 470 acres.

Many political leaders in the state have opposed the Centre's decision to sell off BPCL while the state government has written to

the Centre on the matter. Congress MPs Benny Behanan and Hibi Eden from Kochi have asked the Union government to withdraw the decision while members cutting across political parties in the state Assembly opposed the move a few days ago.

# Viscose yarn imports soar on dumping

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, NOV. 21

Import of viscose yarn has shot up close to 200 per cent since May as China and Indonesia are dumping cheaper yarn into the Indian market. The industry is in a catch-22 situation while demanding increase in duties to check heightened imports, as it would work against the competitiveness in the downstream segments.

Between May and September this year, the country has imported 14,510,000 kg of viscose yarn, 195 per cent higher than 4,920,000 kg imported in the same period last year. Since May, imports have been drastically going up, with July witnessing a 342 per cent growth in imports and August seeing an 816 per cent rise.

"Since the US-China trade war started slowing down the demand for viscose yarn globally, India has been increasingly witnessing dumping of viscose yarn. China and Indonesia have been dumping cheaper yarn into the country, thus affecting the spinning industry severely," said Sanjay Jain, former chairman of the Confederation of Indian Textile Industry (CITI).

According to Rakesh Mehra, Convenor, CITI's Sub-Committee on Man-Made Fibre & Yarn, the inverted duty structure in viscose yarn and fibre also has led to the situation. "For viscose fibre, India levies import duty as well as anti-dumping duty, which leads to a total tax incidence of around 20 per cent, whereas yarn attracts only 5.5 per cent import duty. This makes



importing yarn cheaper than getting domestically produced costlier fibre," he said.

India is self-sufficient in yarn and it does not need imports. "While most of the spinning mills are running on lower capacity, some smaller mills in south India are facing a tough time," he said. Availability of cheaper viscose yarn will also affect cotton yarn demand as fabric-makers will use more viscose than cotton in their products.

The industry has requested the government to levy anti-dumping duty on yarn as well. "We want the total tax incidence to be 15 per cent or at least 10 per cent on yarn to deter increasing imports," said Jain.

But this has put the industry in a difficult situation. If the yarn duties are increased, either fabric imports will go up or the entire value chain will become costlier, affecting the competitiveness of Indian products in the global market. But if the duties remain the same, imports will continue to impact the domestic spinning industry.

"Ideally, there should not be anti-dumping duty in any segment to keep the prices under check down the value chain," said Mehra.

# Micro-lenders face a crisis in Assam

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, NOV 21

The micro-finance sector is witnessing yet another crisis, this time in Assam. Borrowers in a few districts have been protesting against micro-lenders and this has brought down collection efficiencies down to 70 per cent. Around 30 to 35 lender entities are facing a tough time in the North-eastern state.

Since the third week of October, several micro-finance borrowers in five-six districts of Assam have stopped repayment of their loans. The collection efficiency that stood at 98-99 per cent has now dropped to 70 per cent.

These five-six districts account for 15 to 20 per cent of the total customer base of the state, which stands at 27 lakh. These districts also account for 10 per cent of the state's total loan portfolio outstanding of Rs 1,300-Rs 1,400 crore.

According to Manoj Nambiar, Chairperson of Micro Finance Institutions Network (MFIN), over-exposure per borrower is the main reason behind the current crisis.

"The customers of these districts have an exposure that is one-third higher than the national average. Apart from NBFC-MFIs, all other lending entities, including banks, small finance banks, NBFCs and unorganised lenders, have been active in the market. Among them only NBFC-MFIs are highly regulated

by the RBI. Hence the per borrower exposure in some cases have gone up more Rs 1.5 lakh," he said.

When some of the borrowers found loan exposure higher than their incomes, they started defaulting. They also received support from local student unions and other groups. The groups allege the micro-lenders are charging higher interest rates and are following tough recovery methods. They have been demanding waiver. Around 30 to 35 micro-lenders are active in these districts. They are talking to the district administration to solve the

issue. Micro-lenders have suggested a Special Grievance Redressal Mechanism for the defaulters.

Financial Chronicle had earlier written about the industry's concern about steady growth in average ticket size and exposure per borrower in the sector and the fast pace at which micro-finance has grown in the eastern states. Eastern region increased its share of the total loan portfolio of NBFC-MFIs from 16 per cent to 36 per cent in the past two years to become the top region in terms of loan outstanding. Industry watchers were worried

Many micro-finance borrowers in five-six districts of Assam have stopped repayment of their loans

that the loan exposure was going up above the income levels for many borrowers.

Micro-finance has gone through a similar situation after demonetisation. In five states—Maharashtra, MP, UP, Uttarakhand and Karnataka—vested interests with political aspirations started spreading rumours and the loanees were made to believe that the Centre would waive the micro-loans hence there was no need to pay back the loans. This increased the delinquencies and eventually several lenders wrote off part of their stressed assets. After this crisis, micro-lenders had started focusing on the eastern states, which had low levels of exposure and no history of delinquencies.

# India fares well in attitude towards women leaders

RITWIK MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA, NOV. 21

Canada and France are countries with the most equal attitudes towards women and men in leadership, while India and Brazil are more or less on equal ranks with advanced European countries like Germany and Italy on this score. Surprisingly, the US and the UK, two proponents of gender equality, are showing regression in attitudes.

That is what Women Political Leaders (WPL), the global network of female politicians, and Kantar, the world's leading data, insights and consulting firm, have found out.

The mission of WPL is to increase both the number and the influence of women in political leadership positions and current-

ly WPL members comprise women in political office—Presidents, Prime Ministers, Cabinet Ministers, Members of Parliaments.

The Reykjavik Index for Leadership, as they call it, measures the extent to which society is comfortable with women in leadership positions as compared to men. Interestingly, Brazil (66) and India (67) show Index scores similar to Germany (69) and Italy (68). India shows relatively high scores in Education (76) and Media/Entertainment (78).

Significantly, the 2019 index has been extended this year to also measure Brazil, China, India and Russia.

The findings from the second Reykjavik Index for Leadership also show regression in attitudes in



Silvana Koch-Mehrin

the US and the UK while Japan, Germany and Italy have seen improvements in how equal they perceive women and men to be as leaders.

"The launch of the Index in 2018 enabled conversations not just on the where and how women aren't

viewed equally—but on the why. With the continuation of the evidence provided by the Reykjavik Index and a global community of purpose, both public policy and the private sector can further progress to equality in leadership," said Silvana Koch-Mehrin, President and Founder of Women Political Leaders.

Dr Michelle Harrison, Global CEO, Public Division, Kantar, on his part, said "Evidence is a crucial tool to measure our social norms. Without evidence we cannot hold ourselves, our leaders or our actions to account. The inclusion this year of Brazil, Russia, India and China advances the conversation. This year's study reveals that in every country studied, there are significant prejudices against women and that we have a

long way to go until equality is the social norm. The Reykjavik Index for Leadership will measure our progress on the journey ahead of us."

The UK drops down the index, because of worsening male perceptions as women's views have remained the same as 2018—the number of men who say that men and women are equally suitable to lead has fallen by eight points. There is also a widening gap (11 points this year, three points in 2018) between the views of men and women.

In the US, several sectors have seen a regression in scores, including: government and politics (77, -5 vs 2018), judiciary (80, -5 vs 2018), foreign affairs and diplomacy (74, -5), economics and political science (81, -5).



## Germany’s Nord opens third plant

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, NOV. 21

Nord Drivesystems, the Indian arm of the Getriebebau Nord, the Euro 699 million German global leader in developing and manufacturing drive technology, which opened its third factory in Pune on Thursday is targeting 11 per cent growth to Rs 200 crore in its topline in December 2019 calendar year.

“We will touch Rs 200 crore sales turnover this calendar year ending December 2019 despite slowdown challenges,” PL Muthusekhar, Managing Director at Nord Drivesystems India told *Financial Chronicle*. Last year it had clocked revenues of Rs 171 crore.

He said despite headwinds in some sectors, the demand for our drive systems has been growing. “In order to meet this demand and future demand, we have opened our third factory in Pune with an investment of 2 million euros or Rs 18 crore,” Muthusekhar said.

The company has an installed capacity to produce 42,000 geared motors per annum.

## Kiran settles insider trading case

New Delhi, Nov. 21: Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, lead independent director of Infosys, has settled with Sebi a case of alleged delay in making disclosure regarding change in her shareholding in the IT company by paying over Rs 3 lakh as settlement charge.

Mazumdar-Shaw, who is also chairman of Biocon, was alleged to have violated provisions of the Prohibition of Insider Trading (PIT) regulations.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India had conducted an examination in the matter of Infosys and observed that Mazumdar-Shaw had delayed making the requisite disclosures with respect to change in her shareholding in the company.

However, before proceeding further and initiating proceedings against her, the regulator sent notice of settlement to her, intimating that the proceedings may be settled and disposed of upon filing of an application settlement mechanism.

—PTI

## Plastic exports to remain flat on slowdown

Mumbai, Nov 21: The plastics exports are likely to remain flat this year following the global economic downturn and a decline in raw material prices, however, the government has set a target to triple exports to \$1 trillion in five years, the exporters body said on Thursday.

“Plastic exports have been growing since the last two years. It grew by 17 per cent in 2017-18 at \$8.85 billion and 24 per cent in 2018-19 at \$10.89 billion. However, it declined by 3.9 per cent in the first half of this year and is expected to recover in second half finish the year flat compared to last year, the Plastics Export Promotion Council (Plexconcil) ED Sribash Dashmohapatra said here.

The main reason for the slowdown in exports is the economic downturn in the export markets and a decline in raw materials prices, he said.

However, he said, there has been 6.6 per cent growth in exports of value-added plastics and the due to the trade war the shipments grew by 13 per cent to the US in the first half.

—PTI

# Germany fines carmakers over steel buying cartel

Frankfurt Am Main, Nov. 21: Germany's competition watchdog said on Thursday it would fine carmakers BMW, Daimler and Volkswagen a total of 100 million euros (\$111 million) for "anticompetitive practices" in buying so-called "long steel".

Representatives from the car companies and steel producers met twice a year "between 2004 and the end of 2013" and "discussed" prices for the vital raw material, used for building items like crank shafts, piston rods and cogs, the Bundeskartellamt said in a statement.

"Where there was no further individual negotiation with the suppliers following these conversations, competition was prevented" on some elements of the price, the authority said.

The companies had acknowledged their participation in the talks and accepted the fine, it added.

Thursday's fine is separate from a competition probe by the European

## GM sues Fiat Chrysler over bribes to auto union

New York, Nov 21: General Motors is suing Fiat Chrysler, alleging its rival benefitted from bribes to auto union officials that gave FCA an unfair benefit in labour talks, GM announced on Wednesday.

The lawsuit references guilty pleas by former FCA officials, who bribed former United Auto Workers officials, in a long-running case involving a UAW employee training program, that has tarnished the union's image.

The suit comes only weeks after the UAW ended a lengthy strike at GM. The union is currently immer-

sed in labor talks with FCA, the last of Detroit's "Big Three" to negotiate after workers ratified contracts with GM and Ford.

"FCA was the clear sponsor of pervasive wrongdoing, paying millions of dollars in bribes to obtain benefits, concessions, and advantages in the negotiation, implementation, and administration of labor agreements over time," GM said in its announcement. It alleges FCA's actions "corrupted the implementation of the 2009 collective bargaining agreement" as well as "the negotiation, implementation, and

administration of the 2011 and 2015 agreements."

FCA dismissed the lawsuit as "meritless" and said it was timed to disrupt the company's proposed merger with French automaker PSA, as well as ongoing talks with the UAW. "We are astonished by this filing, both its content and its timing," FCA said in a statement that also alluded to the company's ongoing labour talks with the UAW.

"We can only assume this was intended to disrupt our proposed merger with PSA as well as our negotiations with the UAW."

—AFP

Commission into BMW, Mercedes-Benz parent Daimler and VW, who are suspected of agreeing not to compete on emissions reduction technologies.

And still another investigation by the German competition watchdog targets

# India leads in mobile payments

FC BUREAU  
CHENNAI, NOV. 21

India's usage of mobile for commerce and payments is much higher than the global average, finds a study. Both consumers and merchants prefer making payments through mobile devices.

The study by PayPal and IPSOS found that 88 per cent consumer respondents in India use mobile devices for purchases or payments online, way above than the global average of 71 per cent.

The survey was conducted across 11 countries, including the UK, France, Germany, Italy, Spain, Australia, India, Japan, the USA, Mexico and Brazil.

Almost 70 per cent of Indian consumers prefer mobile-optimised experiences against the global average of 43 per cent. Also, 81 per cent of Indian merchants are optimized to accept mobile payments to meet the growing demand and responding to consumer preferences against the global average of 63 per



cent. Moreover, 45 per cent of Indian businesses have listed down mobile optimization as a priority.

Apps are a popular way of transacting wherein 98 per cent of Indian mobile shoppers pay via apps against 90 per cent of the global aver-

age. Bill payments and fashion are the key sectors where app purchases take place. According to the report, 47 per cent millennial mobile shoppers have made spontaneous purchases on their mobiles.

However, slow page loading and security or trust issues were the top barriers for consumers to make mobile payments.

"Mobile penetration gives an impetus to the adoption of digital payments," Anupam Pahuja, MD, PayPal India, said.

# CSB Bank IPO: Analysts say give it a miss

FALAKNAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, NOV. 21

CSB Bank, formerly known as Catholic Syrian Bank, is set to launch its IPO on Friday, and will close on November 26. The Bank is going for the IPO mainly to meet the Reserve Bank of India's requirement of listing the bank.

The IPO size will be about Rs 410 crore, including fresh sale of Rs 24 crore and the balance being offer for sale of Rs 385 crore, at a price range of Rs 193-195 by existing investors.

However, the key strategic-investor-cum-promoter Fairfax India Holdings-Mauritius (FHIM) that holds a 50.1 per cent stake remains committed and is not tendering any shares in the IPO although it will have to reduce stake to 15 per cent from 50.1 per cent over 15 years.

CSB in its old avatar was plagued with issues relating to unions, weak asset quality and sub-par capital position, pushing the bank to near-PCA like restrictions by the RBI. However, it has seen a major trans-

formation after the appointment of incumbent MD& CEO C.V. Rajendran, a veteran banker. The bank has seen steady decline in GNPA ratio to 2.9 per cent from a high of 7.9 per cent in FY18, mainly due to heavy write-offs. Within the corporate book, it has increased the share of A-rated and above portfolio to 77 per cent from 35 in FY17. While financials improved, risks remain.

For instance, the RBI restrictions on opening new branches remain, though the regulator May

13, 2019 granted it permission to to open 10 branch offices. Secondly, the bank has regional concentration in southern India.

"Overall the SMA pool stands at 1.6 per cent of loans. However, we remain concerned about its corporate/SME portfolio, particularly in the current stressed environment and its sub-par non-technical provision coverage ratio of 32 per cent, which will keep credit cost higher and thus remain a drag on Return on assets," says Anand Dama, Analyst at Emkay Global.

"The second phase of transformational journey to take the bank to new growth phase will be challenging, particularly given current stressed scenario and rising competitive intensity, where even established (Federal Bank) and promising banks (RBL) have slipped," added Dama.

"We recommend investors to give it a miss as other banks, such as Federal Bank, DCB Bank, Karur Vysya Bank, South Indian Bank, are available at cheaper valuations," said another analyst.

## Sundaram opens feeder FoF of Global Advantage Fund

FC BUREAU  
MUMBAI, NOV. 21

Sundaram Mutual Fund announced opening of Sundaram Global Brand Fund from Nov. 21 by repositioning existing Sundaram Global Advantage Fund.

"This is a Fund of Fund scheme, which will invest as a Feeder Fund into the Sundaram Global Brand Fund, Singapore, launched and managed since June 2015 by Sundaram Asset Management Singapore, a 100 per cent subsidiary of Sundaram Asset Management Company," Sundaram Mutual said while announcing the new fund.

The current asset under management of Sundaram

Global Brand Fund is \$11 million.

Sundaram Global Brand Fund, Singapore has a 30-stock portfolio and the current top 10 holdings are Apple, Amazon, McDonalds, Walt Disney, Coca Cola, Procter & Gamble, Microsoft, Alphabet, IBM and Toyota Motor Corp.

Commenting on the re-branded fund, Sunil Subra-maniam, MD, Sundaram Mutual said, "The fund invests in leading global brands that we use every day, companies characterised by strong financials and solid business models that have stood the test of time...the fund is an opportunity for investors to benefit from their growth."

## LVMH raises Tiffany bid by over \$1 bn to \$16 bn



New York, nov. 21: French luxury group LVMH has raised its bid to acquire US jewelers Tiffany by over one billion dollars, two sources close to the matter told AFP on Wednesday.

LVMH, the owner of Louis Vuitton, Dior and Moet & Chandon increased its bid for the storied New York-based company to around \$130 per share from \$120 per share, the sources said.

The move lifts the overall value for Tiffany to around \$16 billion from \$14.5 billion. Neither LVMH nor Tiffany immediately responded to a request for comment.

LVMH, which is led by billionaire Bernard Arnault, has sought to acquire Tiffany as a means to boost its presence in the US market.

The transaction has also been seen as way forward for Tiffany, which has not matched some rivals in terms of sales growth in recent years.

Some analysts have predicted a price hike would seal the transaction.

—AFP

## OPENING BELL

## Stock market enters a consolidation phase

The market closed marginally lower on Thursday amid profit booking, even as the Union cabinet approved the government's mega divestment exercise.

The Sensex shed 76.47 points or 0.19 per cent to close at 40,575.17, while the Nifty fell 30.70 points or 0.26 per cent to close at 11,968.40.

According to analysts, the market is closely awaiting the GDP data, due on 29 November, before making the decisive move. The GDP data is likely to indicate that the slowdown in the economy was deepening.

The BSE Midcap and Smallcap fell 0.73 per cent and 0.43 per cent respectively. The market breadth was negative. On the BSE, 1,101 shares rose and 1,454 shares fell. A total of 206 shares were unchanged. On the Nifty, 14 stocks advanced while 36 stocks declined.

Among sectoral indices, BSE Metal was the biggest laggard, ending down 2.23 percent, followed by BSE Oil&Gas with 2.14 per cent lower. The BSE Realty gained 0.45 per cent.

### Technical view

"The consolidation phase below 12K continues. The region around previous all-time highs of 12,100 is witnessing some profit booking. It's not at all unexpected to witness some retrace-ment near all-time highs. Broader structure continues to remain positive and the uptrend is intact. Near term corrections towards the support, zone should be utilized to build long positions," said Manav Chopra, CMT, Head Research - Equity, Indiabulls Ventures Ltd.

The state owned company stocks were in focus today as the government kicked off a blockbuster divestment plan on Wednesday, lining up the sale of five public sector units (PSUs), including majority stakes in bluechip oil company BPCL and Shipping Corporation of India. BPCL was the top loser on NSE, closing 6 per cent lower at Rs 512.10, while SCI slumped over 6 per cent to Rs 64.05 on BSE.

### Market view

"We strongly feel that market is set for profit taking or consolidation prior to further rise. Traders should limit their naked leveraged trades in the index and book profits on every rise. In case of decline, 11,800-11,850 zone would act as a cushion in Nifty. Stocks, on the other hand, would continue to see movement on both sides thus maintain extra caution in the stock selection," said Ajit Mishra Vice President, Research, Religare Broking.

— Ashwin J Punnen

# US Fed members unanimously reject negative rates: Minutes

DOUGLAS GILLISON  
WASHINGTON, NOV. 21

US central bankers last month dismissed the idea of taking interest rates into negative territory, something President Donald Trump has called for many times, according to meeting minutes released Wednesday.

Evidence for the benefits of negative interest rates — lenders must pay borrowers rather than the other way around—has proven "mixed" in countries where it has been tried, according to members of the Fed's rate-setting Federal Open Market Committee.

Federal Reserve policymakers

also said at the October 29-30 meeting that the world's largest economy has "proven resilient" in the face of persistent global difficulties but risks remain "elevated," including from Trump's trade war.

But the minutes also confirmed Fed members believe further rate cuts should be unnecessary in the near term, barring major changes to the outlook.

The Fed cut the benchmark lending rate last month for the third time this year, bringing it down to a range of 1.5-1.75 per cent.

Trump has relentlessly attacked the central bank, demanding lower and even nega-



Jerome Powell, Chairman, US Fed

tive interest rates, claiming that relatively higher US interest rates put the country at a disadvantage against weaker economies in Europe and Asia.

During an appearance in New York last week, Trump said the Fed was blocking America from

the kinds of stimulus other countries enjoyed.

"Give me some of that money. I want some of that money," Trump said of negative rates.

"Our Federal Reserve doesn't let us do it." The minutes of the Fed deliberations made clear that under the current circumstances US central bankers have all but shut the door.

"All participants judged that negative interest rates currently did not appear to be an attractive monetary policy tool in the United States," the minutes said.

There is "limited scope" to adopt such a policy, which has not clearly benefited other countries and could have untold consequences

for bank lending and household spending, the minutes said.

And negative rates would introduce "significant complexity and distortions" into the US financial system, Fed members said.

However, they "did not rule out" that circumstances could arise that would cause them to change their position.

Meanwhile, in general, the American economy appears to be doing well, with the risk of recession lessening in recent weeks.

But, while job markets and consumer spending remain strong, Fed members generally felt businesses will remain skittish about investing and exports will remain weak due to "trade uncertainty

and sluggish global growth."

The Fed this year has reversed most of last year's four increases to bolster a slowing economy and provide "insurance" against looming dangers, including Trump's trade wars.

After three straight rate cuts, current interest rate levels are "well calibrated" to support growth and "likely would remain so" as long as the outlook remains broadly the same.

Efforts to end the trade wars, however, appear to be stumbling, with a partial deal announced last month sliding out of view as Trump threatens to jack up tariffs to pressure Beijing to cooperate.

— AFP





Word of caution

Former US secretary of state Henry Kissinger warned that an armed conflict could break out between the US and China if they fail to resolve their trade war



Harris is unfortunately continuing to traffic in lies and smears and innuendos.

— Tulsi Gabbard Congresswoman

IN BRIEF

Time is not right for Asean: Kim

Seoul: North Korea rejected an invitation for leader Kim Jong Un to attend a planned summit in South Korea next week with Southeast Asian nations, saying it would be "pointless" due to strained ties with Seoul. South Korean President Moon Jae-in sent a letter of invitation to Kim on Nov. 5, with an offer for an envoy to attend if he was unable to participate. Moon has said Kim might join when he hosts leaders of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in the South Korean port city of Busan next week to celebrate the 30th anniversary of their partnership.

Quake rattles Thai-Laos border

Bangkok: A strong earthquake struck on Thursday near the border of Thailand and Laos, setting high-rise buildings swaying in Bangkok, and prompting at least one power plant in Laos to suspend operations for precautionary checks. There were no reports of casualties or major damage from the quake, which had a magnitude of 6.1, the United States Geological Survey said, and hit at a depth of 10 km, about 92 km northeast of Muang Nan. The quake was felt across northern Thailand and by people in tall buildings as far away as the capital. Residents near the epicentre felt several aftershocks. In Laos, the Hongsa Thermal Power Plant suspended operations.

Genocide: Suu Kyi to defend Burma

Yangon: Myanmar said its leader Aung San Suu Kyi will head the legal team contesting a genocide case filed against it in the International Court of Justice over the crackdown on Rohingya Muslims two years ago that set off their exodus to Bangladesh. Myanmar's military has been accused of carrying out mass rapes, killings and arsons against Rohingya during a counterinsurgency campaign initiated in western Myanmar in August 2017 after rebel attacks. Myanmar's population is overwhelmingly Buddhist, and the country has long denied citizenship and other rights to the Rohingya. Gambia filed the genocide case on behalf of the OIC, and the court would hold public hearings in December. The head of a UN fact-finding mission warned last month that "there is a serious risk of genocide recurring."

Witness slams fictional narrative about Ukraine

Hill won't promote falsehoods that help Russia's interest



Fiona Hill

Washington, Nov. 21: A former White House Russia analyst on Thursday denounced as "fictional" the contention from some Republicans that Ukraine interfered in the 2016 election and warned lawmakers not to advance a politically motivated narrative helpful to Russia as they defend President Donald Trump in the impeachment probe.

"I would ask that you please not promote politically driven falsehoods that so clearly advance Russian interests," says Fiona Hill in prepared opening remarks to the House intelligence committee.

Hill was an aide to national security adviser John Bolton and stressed that she is "nonpartisan" and has worked under Republican and Democratic presidents.

"I have no interest in advancing the outcome of your inquiry in any particular direction, except toward the truth," Hill said.

But she said the conclusion by US intelligence

agencies that Russia meddled in the election "is beyond dispute."

She said the assertion by some Republicans that Ukraine interfered in the election "is a fictional narrative that has been perpetrated and propagated by the Russian security services themselves."

"I refuse to be part of an effort to legitimise an alternative narrative that the Ukrainian government is a US adversary, and that Ukraine — not Russia — attacked us in 2016," she said.

Hill said US support for Ukraine, "which continues to face armed Russian aggression, has been politicised."

How holding up US aid worried Ukraine

Avdiivka, Nov. 21: US-made medical equipment, night-vision devices and counter-mortar radar make a difference for Ukrainian troops fighting Kremlin-backed separatists on the front line of the standoff between Russia and the West. Sometimes, it's the difference between life and death.

So when \$400 million in US military aid to Kyiv was held up this year, Ukrainians got nervous.

Every little bit of assistance helps in the World War I-style trenches of Avdiivka, where conscripts and volunteer soldiers use shovels to shore up mud walls, chop wood for makeshift stoves, and cook their own food from local vegetables and canned supplies.

As impeachment hearings play out in Washington, Ukrainian troops at the front

described their hopes and fears in the five-year conflict that has taken 13,000 lives and still simmers on, sporadic gunfire punctuating the autumn calm.

The holdup in aid wasn't something palpable that immediately affected the Ukrainian troops in action; it had more of a psychological impact, raising fears here that the US was turning its back on Ukraine. The aid was later released, but the scandal has effectively frozen US-Ukrainian relations and thrown long-term US backing into doubt.

While the US aid helped fill some of the gaps in Ukraine's military capability, with counter-mortar radars being one highly welcome addition, its army continues to rely on aging Soviet-era weapons and often lacks essential supplies.



Gotabhaya Rajapaksa

COURT LIFTS TRAVEL BAN ON SRI LANKA PRESIDENT

Colombo, Nov. 21: Sri Lanka's newly-elected President Gotabhaya Rajapaksa was on Thursday absolved of all corruption charges linked to the embezzlement of nearly USD 1.85,000 by a high court which also lifted the overseas travel ban on him and released his impounded passport.

Rajapaksa, 70, stormed to victory on Sunday in the presidential election, trouncing his nearest rival Sajith Premadasa by a margin of over 13 lakh votes — 52.25 per cent of votes polled against 41.99 per cent.

The former defence secretary, who is credited with helping end the island nation's long civil war against the LTTE is the seventh Sri Lankan President.

The Western province-based Permanent High Court Trial at Bar ordered the lifting of overseas travel ban imposed on Rajapaksa and told the court registrar to release the President's impounded passport. President Rajapaksa will embark on his first foreign tour with a visit to India on November 29 at the invitation of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The special High Court last year imposed a travel ban on Rajapaksa, the younger brother of former Sri Lankan president Mahinda Rajapaksa, and six others in a corruption case.

China demands Trump veto bills on Hong Kong

Beijing, Nov. 21: China on Thursday demanded President Donald Trump veto legislation aimed at supporting human rights in Hong Kong and renewed a threat to take "strong countermeasures" if the bills become law.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang said the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act undermined both China's interests and those of the US in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

"We urge the US to grasp the situation, stop its wrongdoing before it's too late, prevent this act from becoming law (and) immediately stop interfering in Hong Kong affairs and China's internal affairs," Geng said at a daily news briefing.

"If the US continues to make the wrong moves, China will be taking strong countermeasures for sure," Geng said.

Foreign minister Wang Yi joined in the criticism, telling visiting former US defense secretary William Cohen that the legislation constituted an act of interference in China's internal affairs and ignored violent acts committed by protesters.

"This bill sends the wrong signal to those violent criminals and its substance seeks to throw Hong Kong into chaos or even to destroy Hong Kong outright," Wang said.

The human rights act mandates sanctions on Chinese and Hong Kong officials who carry out human rights abuses and requires an annual review of the favorable trade status that Washington grants Hong Kong.

US LEGISLATION ON HONG KONG: WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

The US House of Representatives has passed legislation to back protesters in Hong Kong and send a warning to China about human rights, sending two bills to the White House where President Donald Trump is expected to sign them into law



A woman stages a sit-in at a Hong Kong mall.

What next?

The state department must certify at least once a year that Hong Kong retains enough autonomy to qualify for the special US trading consideration

■ Officials responsible for human rights violations in Hong Kong could also be sanctioned under the Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act.

■ It could alter the nature of relations between the United States and Hong Kong.

■ Beijing promised Hong Kong a 'high degree of autonomy' for 50 years when it regained sovereignty over the city in 1997, but protesters say freedoms have been steadily eroded.

■ The Human Rights and Democracy Act would put Hong Kong's autonomous status under closer scrutiny.

■ The other bill would ban the export to Hong Kong of items such as tear gas, pepper spray, rubber bullets and stun guns.

Effect of Legislation

From a business perspective, one of the most important elements of Hong Kong's special status has been that it is considered a separate customs and trading zone from China.

■ That has meant, for instance, that trade war tariffs don't apply to exports from Hong Kong.

■ The American Chamber of Commerce in Hong Kong has said that anything that changes the status of Hong Kong "would have a chilling effect not only on US trade and investment in Hong Kong but would send negative signals internationally about Hong Kong's trusted position in the global economy."

Appeal for Identification



General public is hereby informed that one male Name: Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, Age: 45-50 Years, Height: 5'6", Sex: Male, Face: Round, Complexion: Wheatish, Place of Recovery: Found on 11.11.2019 at gate no. 1 of S.J. Hospital and admit in S.J. Hospital,

during treatment he was dead.

In this regard DD No. 06A, dated 11.11.2019 has been lodged at Police Station, S.J. Enclave, New Delhi. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

PS. S.J. Enclave, New Delhi Ph.: 011-24106345, 24106346

Chhattisgarh Gramin Aajeevika Samvardhan Samiti (CGSRLM- Bihan) (Under the Rural Development Department, Govt. Of Chhattisgarh) Block -IV, 1st Floor, Indrawati Bhawan, Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar (CG) Phone No. 0771-2420220, 221 Email-mdcgsrlm@gmail.com Website- www.bihan.gov.in No. -CGSRLM/NRL M/EOI-02/2019 Dated: 20 Nov.. 2019 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR EMPANELMENT OF STATE RESOURCE PERSON UNDER CGSRLM-BIHAN Expression of Interest is invited from eligible dynamic & experienced professionals to be empanelled as State Resource Person (SRPs) for Supporting CGSRLM in training and capacity building of different thematic viz Farm L.H, Non-Farm L.H, SMIB, SISD, FI, FM and HR across its districts & blocks. Interested professionals may submit their "Expression of Interest" in a sealed envelope clearly superscripted as "Expression of Interest for SRP under CGSRLM" latest by 16.30 hours on or before 12 Dec 2019 only through speed post. Further information and procedures for submitting "Expression of Interest" can be obtained from official website www.bihan.gov.in. Mission Director, CGSRLM Nava Raipur, Atal Nagar, (CG) S-23620/6

PROMOTING RELIGIOUS PEACE



Pope Francis greets Thailand's Supreme Buddhist Patriarch at Wat Ratchabophit temple in Bangkok. Pope called for women and children to be protected from exploitation, abuse and enslavement.

— AFP

EU urges Iran to show restraint, end violence

Brussels, Nov. 21: The European Union on Thursday urged Iran to show "maximum restraint" in handling protests that have rocked the country in recent days, leaving several people dead, urging an end to violence.

Demonstrations erupted in sanctions-hit Iran, hours after the price of petrol was raised by as much as 200 per cent and unrest spread to at least 40 urban centres, with officials confirming five deaths.

A EU official expressed condolences to the families of the dead and called for dialogue to resolve the tensions.

"We expect Iran's security forces to exercise maximum restraint in handling the protests and for protesters to demonstrate peacefully. Any violence is unacceptable," Maja Kocijanec said in a statement. "The rights to freedom of expression and assembly must be guaranteed." She added that the EU expects the Iranian authorities to restore communications and end a near-total internet blackout in place since the weekend.

Saudi asks Iran to quit expansionism

Riyadh, Nov. 21: Saudi Arabia's King Salman urged arch-rival Iran to abandon an expansionist ideology that has "harmed" its own people, following violent street protests in the Islamic republic.



Salman bin Abdulaziz

A wave of demonstrations erupted in the sanctions-hit country. "We hope the Iranian regime chooses the side of wisdom and realises there is no way to overcome the international position that rejects its practises, without abandoning its expansionist and destructive thinking that has harmed its own people," the king said.

The region's leading Shiite and Sunni powers have no diplomatic ties and are at odds over a range of issues, including the wars in Syria and Yemen.

"The kingdom has suffered from the policies and practises of the Iranian regime and its proxies," King Salman

said, reiterating that Riyadh does not seek war but is ready to defend its people. Saudi leaders regularly accuse Iran of stirring conflicts by supporting Shiite movements in the region. Tehran denies the charges and in turn says Riyadh supports radical Islamist groups. Separately, the Saudi foreign ministry said it welcomed a US decision this week to halt sanctions waivers for Iran's Fordow plant, which ended a key part of a landmark nuclear deal after Tehran said it had resumed enrichment activities.

IAEA ASKS IRAN TO EXPLAIN URANIUM PARTICLES

Vienna, Nov. 21: The UN nuclear watchdog on Thursday urged Iran to explain the presence of uranium particles at an undeclared site, as a landmark deal aimed at curbing Tehran's atomic activities threatens to collapse.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in a report that its inspectors had "detected natural uranium particles of anthropogenic origin at a location in Iran not declared to the agency." The agency's acting "The matter remains unresolved. It is essential that Iran works with the agency to resolve this matter promptly," he said at a meeting of the agency's board of governors. A diplomatic source said that the IAEA would send a high-ranking technical delegation to Iran next week.

SALE NOTICE (for sale of assets in accordance with the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016) Details of the Corporate Debtor Name of the Company: J. V. STRIPS LIMITED (under Liquidation) Regd. Office: Plot No. 1B1, Twin District Centre, 8th Floor, Kings Mall, Sector-10, Rohini, South Delhi Details of the E-Auction Date of e-auction: 27th November, 2019 Time of e-auction: 11:00 AM to 12:30 PM (with unlimited extension of 5 minutes each) Authorized Person Name: Mr. Ravi Chaudhary | Contact No. +91-9711813299 This notice is for sale of Assets and Properties owned by the J. V. Strips Limited (under Liquidation) forming part of Liquidation Estate formed by the Liquidator, appointed by the Hon'ble National Company Law Tribunal, New Delhi Bench-Court II, New Delhi vide order dated 18th February 2019. The Sale will be done by the undersigned through the E-Auction platform: https://www.eauctions.co.in

Asset	Block	Reserve Price	EMD Amount
Plant and Machinery (installed at factory premises of the corporate debtor situated at 44Km Milestone, Delhi Rohtak Corridor, Bahadurgarh, Haryana EXCLUSIVE OF INDUSTRIAL SHED, VEHICLES, FURNITURE ETC)	Block-1	Rs.3,07,42,410	Rs.30,74,241

Notes : This Sale Notice shall be read in conjunction with the complete "E-Auction Process Document" containing therein the details of the assets, online e-auction bid form, declaration and undertaking forms, general terms and conditions of the e-auction Sale, is available on the website: https://www.eauctions.co.in. You may please contact Mr. Jinesh Jariwala @ +91-9537046315 Email: admin@eauctions.co.in for any support and assistance, if required.

- E-Auction will be conducted on "AS IS WHERE IS", "AS IS WHAT IS" and "WHATEVER IS THERE" basis through approved service provider, M/s. Liquidator Infopri Private Limited.
- The intending bidders, prior to submitting their bid, should make their independent inquiries regarding the title of properties, local tax dues, electricity and water charges, maintenance charges, if any and inspect the properties at their own expenses and satisfy themselves. The property mentioned above can be inspected by the prospective bidders at the site with prior appointment, by contacting Mr. Ravi Chaudhary.
- The reserve price of the assets is based on latest valuation carried out strictly in accordance with the provisions of the Insolvency & Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and the rules & regulations made thereunder.
- The intending bidders are required to do due diligence of the said plant and machinery and e-auction process document prior to submitting their bid, liquidator reserve the right to reject erroneous form or incomplete form in any manner at any point of time.
- The intending bidders are required to deposit Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) amount either through NEFT/RTGS or Deposit through Cash/Cheque in the bank account detailed hereunder or through DD drawn on any Scheduled Bank in the name of J.V. STRIPS LIMITED IN LIQUIDATION. Details of Bank Account: Bank Name and Branch: YES Bank, Shakarpur Delhi Name of Account: J.V. STRIPS LIMITED IN LIQUIDATION Account Number: 610763300001328 IFSC Code: YESB00060107
- The intending bidders should submit the evidence for EMD Deposit along with Request Letter for participation in the E-Auction along with self-attested copy of (1) Bid Application Form; (2) Proof of Identity; (3) Proof of Address (Current); (4) PAN Card; (5) Valid e-mail ID; (6) Landline and Mobile Number; (7) Affidavit and Undertaking; (8) Declaration by Bidder. The formats of these Annexures can be taken from the Complete E-Auction Process Document. These documents should reach the office of the Liquidator physically or by Email, at the address given below before 04:00 PM on 26th November 2019.
- The Names of the Eligible Bidders will be identified by the Liquidator to participate in E-Auction on the portal https://www.eauctions.co.in The E-Auction Service Provider will provide User ID and Password through E-mail to all the Eligible Bidders.
- The Eligible Bidders, participating in the E-Auction, will have to Bid for at least the Reserve Price and increase their Bid by a minimum incremental amount of Rs. 5 Lakh for Block 1 or in multiples of this amount.
- In case a bid is placed in the last 5 minutes of the closing time of the E-Auction, the closing time will automatically get extended for 5 minutes with unlimited extension. The bidder who submits the highest bid amount (not below the Reserve Price) on the closure of E-Auction shall be declared as the Highest Bidder and a communication to that effect will be issued through electronic mode by the E-Auction Service Provider. However, the declaration of successful bidder will be subject to approval by the Liquidator.
- The EMD of the Successful Bidder shall be retained towards part of the sale consideration and the EMD of unsuccessful bidders shall be refunded. The EMD shall not bear any interest.
- The Liquidator will issue a Letter of Intent (LOI) to the Successful Bidder and the Successful Bidder shall require to deposit the balance amount (Successful Bid Amount minus EMD Amount) within 90 days of issuance of the LOI by the Liquidator; provided that payments made after thirty days shall attract interest at the rate of 12%.
- Default in depositing the balance amount by the Successful Bidder within the time limit as mentioned in the LOI would entail forfeiture of the entire amount deposited (EMD plus Any Other Amount) by the Successful Bidder.
- The Successful Bidder shall bear the applicable stamp duties/transfer charges, fees etc. and all the statutory / non-statutory dues, taxes, rates, assessment charges, fees etc. in respect of the properties put on E-Auction.
- After payment of the entire sale consideration, the Sale Certificate/Agreement will be issued in the name of the Successful Bidder only and will not be issued in any other name.
- The Liquidator has absolute right to accept or reject any or all bids or adjourn/postpone/cancel the E-Auction or withdraw any property or portion thereof from the E-Auction at any stage without assigning any reason therefor.
- The Sale shall be subject to the provisions of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and Regulations made thereunder.

Debashish Nanda Liquidator J. V. Strips Limited IBBI Regn. No.: IBBI/PA-003/IP-N000402017-18/10316 Date: 22.11.2019 Address: CS-14, C Floor, Ansal Plaza, Vaisali, Ghaziabad, Uttar Pradesh Place: New Delhi Email ID: liquidator@jvstrips@gmail.com, chanda.cma@gmail.com





## Upcoming film

Clint Eastwood seeks to restore Atlanta bomb hero's legacy



I felt protected and cared for during Harry Potter's shooting

— Robert Pattinson, American actor

## IN BRIEF

### Apple abruptly cancels *The Banker's* premiere

Los Angeles: Apple on Wednesday abruptly canceled the world premiere of *The Banker* over unspecified concerns, just one day before the film was due to close a major Los Angeles festival. The movie, starring Samuel L. Jackson, is based on the true story of two black businessmen who hired a working-class white man to front their empire and combat racism in 1960s America. "Last week some concerns were brought to our attention. We, along with the filmmakers, need some time to look into these matters," Apple said. — *AFP*

### Phoenix likely to play *Joker* again

Los Angeles: Despite his repeated denials, it seems Joaquin Phoenix is coming back as *The Joker* in another film. Todd Phillips, who directed the actor in billion dollar blockbuster *Joker*, has started working on a sequel that will further explore the story of the iconic DC villain. Sources said the sequel to *Joker* is "on the way" with Phillips as director. He will write the screenplay to the second part along with co-writer Scott Silver. — *PTI*



### Whoopi Goldberg is happily single

Los Angeles: Veteran actor Whoopi Goldberg says she is "very happy" being single and does not want to live with anyone. The EGOT winner said she is not waiting for the love of her life. "People keep saying 'Well, you'll find somebody'. I'm not looking for anyone. I am very happy. I don't want to live with anybody," Goldberg, 64, said in an appearance on *The Tamron Hall Show*. The long-time *View* moderator said she has Oliver, her cat, who is protective of her. — *PTI*

### I'M FAR FROM TIRED, SAYS HALLE BERRY

Los Angeles: Actor Halle Berry, who was injured on the sets of her upcoming film *Bruised*, has thanked her fans for all the love and support. The Oscar winner suffered an injury earlier this week while she was shooting for a fight scene. Berry, 53, took to Instagram on Wednesday to update the fans about her health and said she was "far from tired" and "wide awake".



Halle Berry

"Thank you to all the folks that have showered me with love since my injury. It's par for the course when you do your own stunts, and I wouldn't have it any other way. "Just know I'm far from tired. I'm wide awake... And just getting started! *#BruisedTheMovie*," she captioned her photo. Berry's injury has slightly delayed the film, which also marks her feature directorial debut. She is also producing the project. Executive producer Brian Pitt earlier said filming is likely resume on Friday. *Bruised* follows the story of a disgraced MMA fighter who has to face one of the rising stars of the combat sport world and deal with the return of her six-year-old son to the mother he deserves. — *PTI*

## EPSTEIN CONTROVERSY

# Prince Andrew should join probe in US: Victims' lawyer

London: A lawyer for some of the alleged victims of Jeffrey Epstein on Thursday said that they wanted to speak to Prince Andrew about his links to the late convicted sex offender.

Queen Elizabeth II's second son, 59, has faced outrage for days after he gave a television interview in which he defended his friendship with the disgraced financier.

The prince is accused of having had sex with a 17-year-old girl procured by Epstein, who was found dead in a New York prison in August.

Andrew denies the allegations.

But on Wednesday he said he was stepping down from public duties because the outcry was causing "major disruption" to the royal family and the charities and organisations associated with it.

He said he was "willing to help any appropriate law enforcement agency with their investigations, if required".

► The prince is accused of having had sex with a 17-year-old girl procured by Epstein. He has denied the allegations

► Andrew has been accused of failing to show sympathy for Epstein's victims, prompting companies to reassess their ties

► US lawyer Lisa Bloom, who represents five women allegedly assaulted by Epstein, said that Andrew should speak to everyone probing the allegations

► Ms Bloom also said that if he refused to come, they may have a diplomatic situation between UK and U.S.



Prince Andrew

US lawyer Lisa Bloom, who represents five women allegedly assaulted by Epstein, told *BBC radio* that Andrew should speak to everyone probing the allegations — including her.

"All of the staff who work for Prince Andrew should come and give information and evidence and the documents should be turned over — emails, texts, calendars, phone logs, travel logs — so we can get to the bottom of this," she said.

Bloom did not rule out

approaching the prince directly to secure a sworn statement.

She said, "We believe that nobody is above the law and that everybody should have to answer questions if they have relevant information — and he clearly does have relevant information."

"It's not going to be easy to subpoena someone like Prince Andrew, he's obviously not walking down the street where a process server can just hand him a piece of paper. It's a lot more complicated. If he

refused to come we may have a diplomatic situation between the UK and the US. I hope it doesn't come to that, she added.

Since the interview, Andrew has been accused of failing to show sympathy for Epstein's victims, prompting companies and organisations to reassess their ties with the royal.

Firms including telecoms giant BT and bank Barclays were among a growing number of multi-million-pound businesses, universities and charities which distanced themselves from Andrew or said it was under review.

Others have faced calls for Andrew to be dropped as a patron. It is understood there have been ongoing discussions within the royal family about the situation, with Andrew talking to the Queen and the Prince of Wales. The duke went to see the Queen in person on Wednesday, visiting her at Buckingham Palace before his decision to step down was announced.

— *Agencies*



Actresses Naomi Scott, Ella Balinska, Kristen Stewart and Elizabeth Banks during a photocall of the film *Charlie's Angels* in London on Thursday. — *AP*



Models present creations from the Lithuanian designer Juozas Statkevicius' collection at Vilnius in Lithuania on Wednesday. — *AP*

## WET CATWALK FOR STEFANO RICCI



Models pose prior to the presentation of Italy's iconic Florence-based fashion house Stefano Ricci. Stefano Ricci's latest silk tuxedos may be sharply tailored, but they

are not ideal wear for the exceptional flood that swept through Venice as they were unveiled. "For our next collection, remind me to include rain boots," quipped creative director

Filippo Ricci said as he presented his father's Fall/Winter collection as a record high tide left the heart of the Unesco city underwater last week.

— *AFP*

## Johnson & Johnson loses pelvic mesh lawsuit in Oz

Sydney: An Australian court found on Thursday that Johnson & Johnson was "negligent" in supplying thousands of women pelvic meshes without adequate testing or health warnings, a ruling that exposes the firm to millions of dollars in damages.

Federal Court Justice Anna Katzmann upheld a class action from more than 1,000 Australian women who say the mesh — designed to support weakened muscles holding up the pelvic organs — had disastrous side-effects.

The amount of damages will be set in next year, but the ruling said three companies in the Johnson & Johnson group rushed to get the sub-standard products to market without adequate testing, while vastly underplaying potential dangers.

"The risks were known, not insignificant, and on the respondents' own admission, could cause significant and serious harm," the judge said. "A far more cautious approach was warranted." Lawyers for the women said the devices caused "incontinence, infection and chronic pain" among a litany of problems.

"It has been a long journey towards justice for the many women whose lives were destroyed by the defective pelvic mesh and incontinence tape implants," said Rebecca Jancauskas, special counsel for Shine Lawyers — which helped bring the class action. — *AFP*

## NEWS NUGGETS

### 'SNAKE ANCESTORS HAD CHEEKBONES, LEGS 100M YRS AGO'

Toronto: Snake ancestors that lived nearly 100 million years ago, had legs and a cheekbone which have disappeared entirely in their modern day descendants, according to a study which examined fossils of an ancient rear-limbed reptile called Najash rionegrina.

The study, published in the journal *Science Advances*, showed that snakes possessed hind legs during the first 70 million years of their evolution, and had cheekbones — also known as a jugal bone.

The researchers, including those from the University of Alberta, also revealed how the flexible skull of the ancient snake evolved from their lizard ancestors. Until now, understanding of the evolutionary history of early snakes was limited by unavailability of fossil records, they said. The nearly 100 million year old fossil snakes were found in Northern Patagonia — a region at the base of South America spanning the lower sections of Argentina and Chile, they added. — *PTI*

### QUEEN PRESENTS ATTENBOROUGH WITH PRIZE FOR BLUE PLANET SERIES

London: Legendary naturalist David Attenborough on Wednesday urged international action to tackle pollution as he received a prestigious award from Queen Elizabeth II, recognising the role his *Blue Planet* series played in highlighting the issue.

The 2019 Chatham House Prize was awarded in London to Attenborough and Julian Hector, head of



Queen Elizabeth II and David Attenborough

*BBC Studios* Natural History Unit, for the "galvanising impact" of the *Blue Planet* II series on tackling ocean plastic pollution. — *AFP*

### ONLINE FUNDRAISER FOR KOALAS INJURED IN BUSHFIRE TOPS AU\$1M

Sydney: An online fundraiser for koalas injured in devastating bushfires topped Australian dollar 1 million on Thursday, making it Australia's biggest campaign on the GoFundMe platform this year.

Deadly bushfires have ravaged vast swathes of eastern Australia, and wildlife carers estimate the blazes have killed hundreds of koalas this month in New South Wales state alone. A crowdfunding page



set up by the Port Macquarie Koala Hospital to provide automatic water drinking stations for wild koalas soared past Australian dollar 1 million, with donations from more than 20,000 people from the U.S., France and England. — *AFP*

## THUNBERG GETS INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S PEACE PRIZE

The Hague: Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg was awarded an International Children's Peace Prize on Wednesday, for her work in the struggle against climate change which has resonated



across the world. Thunberg could not accept her award as she is crossing the Atlantic on her way to an international climate conference in Madrid. However she sent a mes-

sage saying she was "incredibly grateful and honoured for this prize". The 16-year-old climate campaigner left the U.S. in mid-November, hitching a ride to Europe aboard a catamaran to attend a UN climate summit in Madrid. — *AFP*

## ■ Ethiopia, Tanzania, Congo regions at higher risk A third of tropical African plants face extinction

Washington: A third of the species of tropical plants in Africa are potentially threatened with extinction, according to a preliminary estimate published by the journal *Science Advances*.

The most authoritative list of threatened species is the famous "Red List" maintained by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

While this list is relatively complete for mammals and birds, it is full of gaps when it comes to plants, only 10 per cent of which have been assessed. These assessments are fastidious and time-consuming, and there are more than 350,000 plant species in all. To work around this



The mountain forests in Africa contain many threatened and rare plant (inset) species.

problem, a team coordinated by a botanist from the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development, Thomas Couvreur, carried out a computer analysis of the status of more than 22,000 vascular plant species in tropical Africa. To perform the analysis, they used information compiled in a database called Rainbio that is maintained by the French Foundation for Biodiversity Research. The result was that 32 per cent of the species, or nearly 7,000, were classified as likely or potentially threatened, based on

either of two criteria recognized by the IUCN — a recent reduction in population size or geographical distribution.

The regions found to be most at risk were Ethiopia, the centre of Tanzania, the Southern Democratic Republic of Congo and the forests of West Africa.

This rapid method is "a cost-effective way to initiate the Red List assessment process for a large number of species," the researchers wrote.

But "the two approaches are complementary. There still needs to be an important international effort to evaluate all the plant species in Africa," Couvreur said in a statement. — *AFP*





## SPORT | Cricket

Delhi beat Maha but Dhawan fails again

14



## SPORT | Shooting

Manu, Elavenil, Divyansh win maiden World Cup Final gold

15



## GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

1 Where was the yo-yo invented?

- USA
- Philippines
- Bangladesh

2 When was the Nobel Prize first awarded?

- 1901
- 1910
- 1899

3 Who directed the film *Little Buddha*?

- Mani Kaul
- Bernardo Bertolucci
- Richard Attenborough

## SHORT TAKES

### 2 arms smugglers held, pistols seized

**New Delhi:** With the arrest of two criminals, the Delhi Police on Thursday busted a syndicate involved in illegal weapons manufacturing and smuggling in Uttar Pradesh and Delhi-NCR. Police said that they have also recovered two half-manufactured “desi katta” (country-made pistols), firearms making tools and 40 barrels (unfinished), 50 trigger springs, three drill machines, one air blowers, three gripper machine, one punching die, iron rods and welding electrodes from a room in village Radhana, Meerut, where accused used to manufacture arms. The accused have been identified as Asif Ali (24), a resident of Aamroha in Uttar Pradesh, and Istkar (55), a resident of village Radhana in UP. On September 22, an arm smuggler, Masroor, was arrested who revealed that he used to buy the firearms from Asif. Asif revealed that he used to purchase firearms from Istkar. Istkar was arrested from his home. Asif used to purchase each firearm for ₹2500 from Istkar further sold it to Masroor for ₹4000. Masroor would supply them in Delhi. Istkar revealed that he used to prepare two firearms in a day and it cost around ₹500 per firearm.

### Man killed in road mishap at Okhla

**New Delhi:** A 30-year-old man was killed allegedly after his scooter rammed into a divider on Okhla Estate Road in southeast Delhi, police said on Thursday. The victim has been identified as Verma Kumar, a resident of Indra Kalyan Vihar in Okhla. He is survived by wife and two daughters, they said. Kumar was on his way to attend a party on Wednesday, when he met with the accident, the police said. A passerby had rushed Kumar to a private hospital, where he was declared brought dead, Chinmoy Biswal, DCP (Southeast), said. According to Kumar’s wife, her husband had left home at 4 pm, he added. Preliminary investigation suggested that Kumar sustained a head injury in the accident, the DCP added. A case has been registered at Govindpuri police station. — PTI

### No injury in fire at sales tax building

**New Delhi:** A fire broke out on a 13th floor office in the sales tax building at ITO on Thursday morning, a Delhi Fire Service official said. Chief fire officer Atul Garg said the fire started in office equipment and was brought under control within 10 minutes. No injury was reported. The fire department said a call about the fire was received at 8.20 am after which five fire tenders were rushed to the spot. — PTI

## THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- Bernardo Bertolucci
- 1901
- Philippines

■ JNUTA ‘hand in glove’ with protesters, say some teachers

## JNU teachers want V-C to go, complete fee rollback

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

The JNU Teachers’ Association (JNUTA) met the HRD ministry-appointed high-powered panel on Thursday and demanded a complete rollback of the hiked hostel fee besides removal of the university’s vice-chancellor, even as some teachers disassociated themselves from the group owing to their “indifference” towards the alleged attack on their colleagues by protesters.

The three-member panel was constituted on Monday to recommend ways to restore normal functioning of the Jawaharlal Nehru University and mediate between the administration and students who have been protesting for over three weeks over the hostel fee hike.

“The HRD ministry panel met the JNUTA representatives which demanded a complete rollback of the hostel fee hike. In the meeting that lasted for over two hours, the teachers also demanded removal of the vice-chancellor,” sources said. The panel will visit JNU campus on Friday to hold a second meeting with the students. The first meeting was held with JNU Students Union (JNUSU) office-bearers, student counsellors and hostel presidents on Wednesday at HRD ministry.

However, a section of JNU teachers accused the JNUTA of “being hand in glove” with the protesters. They alleged that the students had held a professor hostage for over 24 hours during fee-hike protests.

The agitation over hiked hostel fee escalated on November 11 when thou-



A student is detained during a ABVP-led protest march by students of JNU, Delhi University and Jamia Millia Islamia in New Delhi on Thursday.

— PTI

sands of JNU students clashed with police, leaving HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal ‘Nishank’ stranded for over six hours at the venue of the university’s convocation.

A week later, students staged a march from the university campus to HRD ministry but were stopped at multiple locations and finally outside the Safdarjung tomb. The protesters alleged that the police had lathicharged and manhandled them, including a blind student, which led to a fresh protest by a group of visually challenged students.

The mother of missing JNU student Najeeb Ahmed visited the university on Thursday and met the visually challenged student Shashi Bhushan Pandey at the campus and expressed solidarity with the cause of the protesting students.

### JNU lists mess dues of over ₹2.79cr from hostel residents

**New Delhi, Nov. 21:** The Jawaharlal Nehru University administration has issued list of pending mess dues from hostel residents, amounting to over ₹2.79 crore, a move JNUSU vice-president Saket Moon claimed is an attempt to threaten students.

The details of pending dues from hostel residents were released on Wednesday by the assistant registrar of inter-hall administration. According to the details issued, mess dues from July to October from 17 hostels stand at ₹2,79,33,874. Over ₹44 lakh is pending from the month of July, while dues of August stand at ₹55 lakh. The mess dues pending

from September and October amount to ₹73,71,808 and ₹1,13,95,634 respectively.

Asked about the circular, dean of students Umesh Kadam said: “The hostel mess is run on a no-profit, no-loss basis. How are we supposed to run them when we have close to ₹3 crore pending dues?”

Moon said the fellowships through which a majority of JNU students pay their dues never come on time, they are disbursed once in either three or six months.

“If the UGC and the JNU administration ensure that these are timely, these dues would not accumulate,” he said.

— PTI

## JNU, Jamia & DU students clash with cops, 160 detained

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

The RSS-affiliated Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) on Thursday staged a protest demanding scrapping of the high-power committee set up by the HRD ministry following the agitation by JNU students against hostel fee hike.

Several students from Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), Delhi University and Jamia Millia Islamia, under the banner of Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), who were protesting against JNU hostel fee hike, were stopped by the police at Parliament Street.

However, the scuffle between Delhi Police, Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) ensued after the protesting students climbed over the barriers.

► The ABVP is demanding scrapping of the high-power committee set up by the HRD ministry following the agitation by JNU students

acades. Around 160 students including Delhi University Students’ Union president Akshit Dhaliya, and ABVP’s state secretary Siddharth Yadav were detained by the police on Parliament Street.

According to Ashutosh Singh, a member of ABVP, the students began their protest march from Mandi House. “They were marching towards the office of human resource development (HRD) minister in Shastri Bhawan but were stopped midway,” said Singh.

The ABVP is demanding scrapping of the high-power committee set up by the HRD ministry following the agitation by JNU students against hostel fee hike. “All we want is a complete rollback of fees hike. The temporary relief by administration is just a lollipop,” said Rajiv Mittal, a protester.

“Besides, the rollback of hostel fee hike, we also want that some of the other issues pertaining to dress code, time restrictions on library hours must also be looked into,” said another protester.

Gajender, a PhD scholar said: “We have raised objections to certain rules imposed by the administration. Earlier we didn’t have to pay for electricity, water and sanitation but with this new rule, we will have to end up spending more money.”

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

While the AAP on Thursday demanded the resignation of Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan for giving out a “false” report which said national capital’s water is most unsafe among 21 major cities of India, Delhi Jal Board vice-chairman Dinesh Mohaniya alleged that the minister acted “irresponsibly” and “tabled a fake report” in Parliament about the water quality. Carrying water samples from vari-

ous parts of Delhi, BJP members, however, staged a protest near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s residence.

Even as AAP senior leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh asked Mr Paswan on whose provocation he lied and defamed Delhi through his allegations, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said that Mr Kejriwal was forcing people to drink this “polluted” water in the name of free supply by his government.

Citing media reports, Mr Mohaniya alleged that

## ‘Farmers alone can’t be blamed for air pollution’

Give incentives to end stubble burning, say MPs

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

Even as the discussion on air pollution continued for the second day on Thursday in the Lok Sabha, with Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar scheduled to give a reply on Friday, members cutting across party lines said that stubble burning alone cannot be blamed for rising levels of air pollution in and around Delhi.

They called upon the government to provide incentives to farmers so that they dispose of stubble in a more scientific manner.

Some members also suggested that minimum support price should be extended on produce like pearl millet (bajra) and sunflower as after harvesting they do not leave stubble.

Congress member Shashi Tharoor said the government should follow a legislative approach to implement the national clean air programme. AAP member Bhagwant Mann and Apna Dal leader Anupriya Patel said that farmers should not be blamed for stubble burning, considered as one of the main reasons for air pollution in the national capital region, and demanded that they should be encouraged to grow crops which do not leave stubble.

They also said that the government should explore ways of using stubble in biogas and cardboard manufacturing to encourage farmers to sell it.

Mr Mann said farmers grow crops which leave stubble as they get minimum support price (MSP). If the government announces a reasonable MSP on pearl millet and sunflower, then farmers

### Air quality turns ‘severe’

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

Air quality in many parts of Delhi and the national capital region turned “severe” on Thursday due to calm winds and high humidity. The overall air quality index in the national capital was 356 at 9:30 am on Thursday. The AQI at Rohini (411), Anand Vihar (411) and Bawana (404) entered the severe zone in the morning.

According to the India Meteorological Department, very low wind speed and high humidity due to shallow fog in the morning led to the accumulation of pollutants. The air quality is expected to remain severe on Thursday and Friday.

According to the government’s air quality monitoring and forecasting body, SAFAR, relief is expected only on Saturday with an increase in wind speed.



BJP MP Vijay Goel arrives at the Parliament House on a bicycle on Thursday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

would be encouraged to cultivate it, Mr Mann, who represents Sangrur in Punjab, said.

Ms Patel said stubble can be used for biogas and cardboard manufacturing and farmers should be encouraged to sell it.

Speaker Om Birla said climate change was the most widely debated topic in the world.

The Rajya Sabha on Thursday discussed the issue of rising pollution in the city. According to a

report tabled by Union environment minister Prakash Javadekar, the national capital’s air quality has improved in the last three years.

Mr Javadekar said a high-level task force, set up under the chairmanship of principal secretary to the Prime Minister in November 2017, is closely monitoring the implementation of measures related to management of air pollution in Delhi-NCR.

The environment ministry also launched the national clean air programme (NCAP) in January to tackle the problem of air pollution in a comprehensive manner with targets to achieve 20 to 30 per cent reduction in PM 10 and PM 2.5 concentration.

Congress Rajya Sabha MP Pratap Singh Bajwa said health minister Harsh Vardhan recently tweeted that people should eat carrots for protection from pollution related harm to health. “They are asking us to eat carrots. Are we goats,” was the query of a Congress member in Rajya Sabha on Thursday as he took a dig at Mr Harsh Vardhan.

### Highway robbers’ gang busted, 4 arrested

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

With the arrest of four criminals, the sleuths of Delhi Police crime branch on Thursday claimed to have busted a gang of highway robbers who used to target cab drivers and passengers in the national capital. The police have also recovered tablets used for drugging victims, three country-made pistols along with four cartridges, one app based cab used in commission of crime and four robbed mobile phones from the possession of the accused.

The accused have been identified as Hashim (25), Satyabir Pandey (36), Sachin Paswan (22) and Majid Salmani (22), all residents of Loni near Ghaziabad.

Specific inputs were received that the gang members of “Hasim Gang” would come to Anand Vihar ISBT, Delhi to commit a robbery.

“Acting on the inputs, a trap was laid on the spot. After a few hours, four persons arrived in a cab but sensing the presence of the police team they tried to flee away. But, they were overpowered by the team after a brief scuffle. During the search of the accused persons, three loaded country made pistols and eight live cartridges were recovered from their possession,” said the police.

the city failed quality tests.

Quoting media reports, Mr Mohaniya said people at two places denied that water samples were taken from their houses. He alleged that water samples have been collected from the house of LJP vice president. “It is petty politics ahead of the assembly elections in Delhi. A fake report has been tabled in Parliament and Paswanji has acted irresponsibly.”

The DJB vice-chairman said an independent agency has again collected samples from these 11 places.

“gross irregularities” have surfaced in the process of water sample collection in the city. He said: “We have come to know that a Lok Janshakti Party worker collected water sample from a house and not BIS officials. It’s politics in the run-up to elections. An issue is being made out of it.”

The Centre and the city government have been trading allegations since Mr Paswan released a BIS report on November 16 that said water samples collected from 11 places in

## Paswan tabled false report in Parliament: DJB

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 21

While the AAP on Thursday demanded the resignation of Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan for giving out a “false” report which said national capital’s water is most unsafe among 21 major cities of India, Delhi Jal Board vice-chairman Dinesh Mohaniya alleged that the minister acted “irresponsibly” and “tabled a fake report” in Parliament about the water quality. Carrying water samples from vari-

ous parts of Delhi, BJP members, however, staged a protest near Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal’s residence.

Even as AAP senior leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh asked Mr Paswan on whose provocation he lied and defamed Delhi through his allegations, Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari said that Mr Kejriwal was forcing people to drink this “polluted” water in the name of free supply by his government.

Citing media reports, Mr Mohaniya alleged that





## Bangla Boss

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina will witness the opening day's play of India's maiden Day-Night Test match in Kolkata on Friday

# Cricket

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THE ASIAN AGE

FRIDAY | 22 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI



Captains will now need to use their fast bowlers differently.

— Gautam Gambhir, former Indian cricketer, on pacers being more effective under lights

TEST

CORNER

## STARC LEADS AUSTRALIAN ROUT OF PAK

**Brisbane:** Australia seized the advantage on the opening day of the first Test when they bowled Pakistan out for 240 just before stumps at the Gabba in Brisbane on Thursday. After the visitors resisted stubbornly in the first session, reaching 57 for no wicket at lunch, pace trio Mitchell Starc (4/52), Josh Hazlewood (2/46) and Pat Cummins (3/60) tore through the Pakistan batting order to put the home side in charge at the close of play. Australia seized the initiative after lunch when they reduced Pakistan from 75 for none to 78 for four, then 94 for five. Pakistan were rescued from disaster by Asad Shafiq, who played a lone hand, scoring 76 well-made runs. Shafiq came to the crease with his side 75 for two, then saw Haris Sohail (1) and Baba Azar (1) fall for the addition of only two runs.

But good partnerships of 49 between Shafiq and Mohammed Rizwan, who made 37, and then 84 with Yasir Shah (26) enabled the visitors to achieve a respectable score.

Rizwan, who was counter-attacking fearlessly, fell controversially with Cummins appearing to have just overstepped the mark, only for TV umpire Michael Gough to give the benefit of the doubt to the bowler. The visitors had frustrated the Australian pace attack in the first session, going into lunch at 57-0 with openers Azhar Ali and Shan Masood unbeaten on 28 and 21 respectively. Pakistan had caused a major surprise when they left out experienced seamer Mohammad Abbas, for pacemen Shaheen Afridi, Imran Khan and 16-year-old Naseem Shah — **AFP**

**Brief scores: Pakistan 240** (Shafiq 76, Azhar 39, Rizwan 37, Starc 4/52, Cummins 3/60, Hazlewood 2/46) **vs Australia**

## STOKES KEEPS ENGLISH HOPES ALIVE

**Mount Maunganui, New Zealand:** New Zealand targeted the wicket of "freak" Ben Stokes on Thursday as they battle to get back into the first Test against England at Mount Maunganui.

The honours were even when the New Zealand-born Stokes went to the middle just before tea on day one with England 120 for three.

But by stumps, with Stokes in imperious form, the score had doubled and England will resume on Friday on 241 for four, with the 28-year-old all-rounder unbeaten on 67.

"He's a special talent. He's a bit of a freak at times," New Zealand short-ball specialist Neil Wagner said after Stokes clubbed his bouncers four times to the boundary.

"Everyone wants to get him out because you know what an important wicket it is... but that's my thing, we always try and strive to get the good players out," he added.

Stokes has tormented New Zealand this year after he played a key role in England's nail-biting victory on boundary countback in the 50-over World Cup final in July.

As well as dispatching Wagner's short stuff, he also showed a liking for the fuller delivery when he took four boundaries off successive balls from Trent Boult, including one that burst through the hands of the usually reliable Ross Taylor at first slip.

It was a drop that frustrated the New Zealanders who had earlier seen opener Rory Burns survive three chances including a waist-high edge that went between Taylor and Tom Latham in the slip cordon. — **AFP**

**Brief scores:** England 241 for 4 in 90 overs (R.J. Burns 52, J.L. Denly 74, Stokes 67n.o., Pope 18 n.o., C Grandhomme 2/28) **vs New Zealand.**



Virat Kohli goes for a catch during a training session on Thursday, the eve of the first pink-ball Day/Night Test match against Bangladesh at the Eden Gardens in Kolkata. — **PTI**

# PINK BALL AT EDEN

## Kohli and his men gear up for night party in Kolkata

**Kolkata, Nov. 21:** Indian cricket will finally embrace the pink revolution after initial reluctance when Virat Kohli's seemingly infallible galacticos lock horns with a deflated Bangladesh in their maiden Day/Night Test starting here on Friday. It took India a new BCCI regime under maverick former captain Sourav Ganguly to take the pink ball plunge, a good seven years after the International Cricket Council approved the format to revive interest in Tests.

Ganguly convinced the Bangladesh Cricket Board to agree to a Day/Night Test just a few days before their team was to land in India.

So far, 11 Day/Night Tests have been played worldwide since Australia set the ball rolling against their Trans-Tasmanian rivals New Zealand four years ago in Adelaide.

Australia had proposed a Day/Night Test at the same venue against India last year but the wary tourists didn't agree to the proposal.

### Live on TV

SECOND TEST

India vs Bangladesh from 1 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

At home too, the Indians were not open to the idea until Ganguly stepped into the picture within a week of taking charge of the BCCI. The bone of contention was the SG pink ball, which many still believe is difficult to sight after sunset. Add to it the dew factor, which players believe aggravates the bowlers' problems.

But Ganguly found Kohli on the same page and the current Indian captain took just "three seconds" to agree to the Board President's idea.

So far, the build-up to the Test has been smooth. A sellout crowd for the first four days has been managed, something that has been the primary goal of playing the traditional format under lights.

Amid all the hype, there is also the small matter of India bracing

up for a 12th successive home series victory.

The challenge for the players would be when the dew comes in to play after the sun sets early and it remains to be seen how both the teams and the groundsmen cope with the pink ball.

The Cricket Association of Bengal has made all efforts to turn the match into a carnival for fans with several gimmicks. So, there are pink-ball mascots, Army paratroopers to deliver the match ball and a galaxy of sports and political dignitaries, including Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, are also expected at the venue.

The menacing pace attack of Mohammed Shami, Ishant Sharma and Umesh Yadav wrapped up the Indore Test inside three days with an innings and 130 runs victory — the 10th innings win for India.

The pace attack along with the blazing form of the new-found opening duo — Rohit Sharma and Mayank Agarwal — has been the story of the season in Indian cricket. — **PTI**



Imagine the boost our bowlers have standing at the mark with some 80,000 (67,000) fans cheering for them. I am expecting very exciting cricket in the first hour because the energy level will be very high.

— Virat Kohli  
Indian Captain

## INDIA, SEVENTH COUNTRY TO HOST DAY/NIGHT TEST

When India take on Bangladesh in their second Test of the series, they will become the seventh country to host a Day/Night Test. Australia (five), United Arab Emirates (two), England (one), South Africa (one), New Zealand (one) and West Indies (one) are the other counties to have hosted Day/Night Tests. The Kolkata Test will also be the first Day/Night Test match for both the teams. So far eight teams have played at least one Day/Night Test.

### BEST BOWLING IN A INNINGS

- **8-49** Devendra Bishoo (West Indies) vs Pakistan at Dubai 2016-17
- **6-23** Pat Cummins (Australia) vs Sri Lanka at Brisbane 2018-19
- **6-32** Trent Boult (New Zealand) vs England at Auckland 2017-18

### BEST BOWLING IN A MATCH

**10-62** Pat Cummins (Australia) vs Sri Lanka at Brisbane 2018-19

**10-174** Devendra Bishoo (West Indies) vs Pakistan at Dubai 2016-17

**9-60** Jason Holder (West Indies) vs Sri Lanka at Bridgetown 2018

### DAY/NIGHT TEST MATCHES

#### PLAYING RECORD OF EACH TEAM

TEAM	P	W	L	SUCCESS%
Australia	5	5	—	100.00
Sri Lanka	3	2	1	66.66
New Zealand	2	1	1	50.00
South Africa	2	1	1	50.00
Pakistan	3	1	2	33.33
England	3	1	2	33.33
West Indies	3	—	3	00.00
Zimbabwe	1	—	1	00.00



The scoreboard at Eden Gardens is all pink for the Test.

### LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS

<b>58</b> England vs New Zealand at Auckland 2017-18	<b>68</b> Zimbabwe vs South Africa at Port Elizabeth 2017-18
<b>93</b> West Indies vs Sri Lanka at Bridgetown 2018	

### HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS

<b>579-3</b> decl. Pakistan vs West Indies at Dubai 2016-17	<b>514-8</b> decl. England vs West Indies at Birmingham 2017
<b>482</b> Sri Lanka vs Pakistan at Dubai 2017-18	

### HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES

<b>302*</b> Azhar Ali (Pakistan) vs West Indies at Dubai 2016-17	<b>243</b> Alastair Cook (England) vs West Indies at Birmingham 2017
<b>196</b> Dimuth Karunaratne (Sri Lanka) vs Pakistan at Dubai 2017-18	

Stats: S. PERVEZ QAISER

## HAQUE RUES NOT GETTING A D/N WARM-UP MATCH

**Kolkata, Nov. 21:** Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque rued that his team didn't even get a practice game to prepare before taking on the formidable India.

It was only two days before embarking on their tour to India that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly convinced the Bangladesh Cricket Board to play a 'Pink Ball Test'. "We did not get any opportunity to play a practice match and at that moment (when it was decided) we could not do anything. The only way to prepare for us was by preparing mentally. But definitely, if you play any Test match with the pink ball, you have to play practice matches," Mominul said on the eve of the Test.

The current Bangladesh team have no pink ball experience even at the domestic level. — **PTI**

## It's hard and heavy as hockey ball: Virat

**Kolkata, Nov. 21:** The pink ball feels like a "heavy hockey ball" to Virat Kohli, who is extremely wary of the challenges its weight, hardness and colour could pose while fielding.

Indian cricket will finally embrace the pink revolution when Kohli's formidable team lock horns with a deflated Bangladesh in their maiden Day/Night Test starting here on Friday.

"One thing that surprised me was the fielding sessions. In the slips balls hit so hard it almost felt like a heavy hockey ball, all those synthetic ball that we're used to play with in the younger days," Kohli said on the eve of the match.

"It's purely because of the extra glaze on the ball, it is definitely much harder. For some reason it felt heavy and even the throws took a lot more effort than the red colour to reach the wicketkeeper," the skipper said.

India had their first brush with the SG pink ball after they wrapped up the opening Test inside three days in Indore.

"I think during the day, high catches will be very difficult. With the red or white ball you have the idea of when the ball reaches you but with the pink ball if you don't look at it your palms are gone."

"Fielding session for me was far more challenging. People are going to be surprised how challenging it can be," he added.

Visibility in twilight has also been cited as one of the biggest challenges. "Not having a great visibility and the ability to pick that colour makes it even more difficult. The decision making has to be very precise like the idea of off stumps. Even when we practised yesterday we felt as if the ball is far but it hits you very quickly. The extra glaze of the ball is making it travel faster. It hits the hand hard," Kohli said. — **PTI**

en Day/Night Test starting here on Friday.

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"Fielding session for me was far more challenging. People are going to be surprised how challenging it can be," he added.

Visibility in twilight has also been cited as one of the biggest challenges.

## Quality of Test shouldn't be compromised, says Sachin

**Kolkata, Nov. 21:** Sachin Tendulkar is all for the buzz and eyeballs that India's first ever Day/Night Test has generated but at the same time would like the stakeholders to ensure that quality of cricket is not compromised at any level.

India are the last among top Test playing nations to join the 'pink ball bandwagon' as they take on Bangladesh in Kolkata from Friday but the cricket icon would like to wait and watch as how things pan out.

"The whole thing is to bring in more people in the stadium adds a new element to Test

cricket. That is important but at the same time, I feel we should also evaluate after the game, how much dew was there and whether cricket — the standard of play — was compromised there," the cricket legend said.

Tendulkar, who had earlier voiced his concern about tackling the dew factor, said the Indian cricket think-tank should do a postmortem after the match gets over.

"I think there are two sides to it. One is to bring more spectators, but also at the same time, not compromising the standard of play. If the ball starts getting

**One is to bring more spectators but if the ball starts getting wet and if the game starts getting affected, then I think we need to sit back and decide what we want to do. If these two things come together, I think it's a win-win story.**

— Sachin Tendulkar  
on Day/Night Test

wet and if the game starts getting affected, then I think we need to sit back and decide what we want to do. If both these things come together then I think it's a win-win story," the maestro said.

"But if there's going to be some dew and if those elements don't allow you to produce good

cricket, then there could be a meeting where they can discuss and do a post-mortem on how the event was."

Tendulkar is headlining a list of dignitaries who will be present for India's first ever pink ball experiment, four years after Australia set the ball rolling against New Zealand at

the Adelaide Oval.

"It's a good thing. We've shown that we also as a nation want to move forward and try out new things. We try and then we see whether it's successful or not. Success should not be just measured by the number of people inside the stadium. I think that is just one aspect," he said.

Asked whether spinners will have to be effective with the pink ball on a grassy pitch, the cricket icon straightway pointed out the Perth Test last year where Nathan Lyon returned with a match-winning eight-

wicket haul to seal Australia's 146-run win.

"Generally, people feel spinners cannot do much on hard and grassy surfaces. But if you see, last year when India went to Australia, on the Perth pitch (new Stadium), which was helping pacers, Nathan Lyon did well."

The SG pink ball is yet to be used in a D/N match in India as Duleep Trophy was played with kookaburra.

"I think if you're trying out new things and there always be a first time," he said. — **PTI**





## Under cloud

French 3,000 metre steeplechase specialist Ophelie Claude-Boxberger said she failed to understand how she tested positive for EPO

# Sport

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THE ASIAN AGE

FRIDAY | 22 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI



Having my whole family out here, too, is really nice and just feels really homey.

— Nelly Korda on LPGA Tour Championship in Naples, Florida

## SHORT TAKES

### Big Apple wins Delhi feature race

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 22

Big Apple is favourite to win the Mysore Race Club Cup, the feature event at the Delhi races on Thursday.

#### RESULTS

**1st race: The Red Rose Lover Plate (1000 mts)**

1. Franco, 2. Big Daddy, 3. Miss Arts

**2nd race: The Brindavan Garden Plate Div-I (1100 mts)**

1. The Cheetah, 2. Tapi, 3. Noble Storm

**3rd race: The Brindavan Garden Plate-II (1100 mts)**

1. Golden Magic, 2. Captain Cool, 3. Niche Currency

**4th race: The Mysore Race Club Cup (1100 mts)**

1. Big Apple, 2. Hello Hello, 3. Go My Girl

**5th race: The Tipu Sultan Plate (1600 mts)**

1. Terrific, 2. Ashwa Chicago, 3. Hot Blood

**6th race: The Mysore Palace Plate (1200 mts)**

1. Summer Palace, 2. Master Badal, 3. Black Swan

### Online tickets go live for FIH league

New Delhi: Hockey India on Thursday announced that tickets for the country's home matches in the much-anticipated FIH Pro League next year are available online now. It will be the first time that India will be participating in the FIH Hockey Pro-League, which will see the country host the likes of The Netherlands, Belgium, Australia and New Zealand in a total of eight matches between January 18-May 24 in Bhubaneswar. The tickets for India's eight home matches are priced at Rs 200, Rs 300 and Rs 500 respectively. The online ticket sales have gone live at <https://in.ticketgenie.in/Tickets/FIH-Hockey-Pro-League-2020>. The six-month long FIH Hockey Pro League 2020 will see world No.5 Indian men's hockey team start off their campaign by hosting world No.3 The Netherlands in two home matches on January 18 and 19. This will be followed by two more home matches against the world champions Belgium on February 8 and 9 respectively. India will then play Australia on February 21 and 22. These home games will be followed by away games. — PTI

## AQUATICS CENTRE UNVEILED

Tokyo: Tokyo 2020 organisers on Thursday unveiled the \$523 million venue for swimming, diving and artistic swimming that will seat 15,000 fans for the Olympic and Paralympic Games next year. Construction is 90 percent complete at the four-storey Aquatics Centre and is due to be finished on schedule by the end of February, officials said. "We are aiming to construct a swimming venue to the world's highest standards equipped with the latest facilities," Tokyo 2020 venue official Daishuu Tone told reporters. The main pool features a movable wall allowing the 50m facility to be converted into two 25m pools. The depth of the bottom can also be adjusted. The building cost \$6.7 billion yen but Tokyo hopes to make the most of the facility after the 2020 Games, aiming to attract one million users a year — 850,000 through swimming competitions and another 150,000 casual users. Organisers also unveiled the Ariake Arena on Thursday, a 37-billion-yen site for Olympic volleyball and wheelchair basketball. Construction on the main venue, the 159 billion yen National Stadium, has been completed and will be unveiled in a gala opening on December 21. Musicians and star athletes will join the event, with Usain Bolt featuring in an exhibition relay. — AFP

# BHUVI BACK IN BLUE

## Kohli returns, ODI call-up for Dube; Khaleel, Krunal dropped

Kolkata, Nov. 21: A fit-again Bhuvneshwar Kumar on Thursday made a comeback to the Indian teams for the upcoming ODI and T20 series against the West Indies while captain Virat Kohli returned after skipping the T20s against Bangladesh.

All-rounder Shivam Dube earned his maiden ODI call-up weeks after making his T20 debut against Bangladesh. Ace seamer Mohammed Shami was also back in the T20 squad in place of left-arm pacer Khaleel Ahmed, while Kuldeep Yadav came back in place of Krunal Pandya.

Pacer Bhuvneshwar has been nursing a hamstring and sides train since the team's tour of the West Indies in August. 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 and Hyderabad.

The three ODIs will be played in Chennai, Visakhapatnam and Cuttack.

**ODI Squad:** Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant, Manish Pandey, Kedar Jadhav, Shreyas Iyer, Ravindra Jadeja, Shivam Dube, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Deepak Chahar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

**T20I Squad:** Virat Kohli (C), Rohit Sharma, Shikhar Dhawan, KL Rahul, Rishabh Pant, Manish Pandey, Shreyas Iyer, Ravindra Jadeja, Shivam Dube, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, Deepak Chahar, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Washington Sundar. — PTI



Indian women's team are all smiles after clinching the five match Twenty20 International series 5-0 against hosts West Indies.

— BCCI

## Indian Women whitewash West Indies

Providence (Guyana), Nov. 21: The Indian women's cricket team completed a 5-0 series whitewash over the West Indies after half centuries from Veda Krishnamurthy and Jemimah Rodrigues, complemented by the bowlers' clinical show, steered the side to a 61-run triumph in the fifth and final T20 International here.

Rodrigues (50) and Krishnamurthy (57 not out) shared 117 runs for the third wicket as India Women scored 134 for 3 after electing to bat.

The decision seemed to have backfired when India were reduced to 17 for 2 in the fourth over with Shafali Verma (9) and captain Smriti Mandhana (7)

getting out cheaply.

But the Rodrigues-Krishnamurthy duo steadied the innings and took the side to a decent total. Rodrigues needed 56 balls for her 50, which was studded with three boundaries, while Krishnamurthy's unbeaten 57 came off 48 deliveries, which included four hits to the fence.

In the West Indies run chase, the Indian Women bowlers produced a disciplined performance to restrict the hosts to 73 for 7 in their allotted 20 overs.

The West Indies were 13 for 2 in the fourth over and they never recovered from that. Half of their batters were out for 53 runs in the 14th over.

Opener Kyshona Knight

### BRIEF SCORE

**India Women: 134 for 3 in 20 overs**  
(Jemimah Rodrigues 50, Veda Krishnamurthy 57 not out; Hayley Matthews 1/23) **bt West Indies Women: 73 for 7 in 20 overs** (Kyshona Knight 22; Anuja Patil 2/3).

was the top-scorer with 22 while Shemaine Campbelle remained not out on 19.

Off-spinner Anuja Patil grabbed two wickets for just three runs while Radha Yadav, Poonam Yadav, Pooja Vastrakar and Harleen Deol took a wicket each. — PTI

## Delhi beat Maha but Dhawan fails again

Surat, Nov. 21: Opener Shikhar Dhawan's lean patch continued but Delhi still managed to register a comfortable 77-run win over Maharashtra in their opening Super League match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament here on Thursday.

Delhi made 167 for five after being invited to bat and produced a disciplined bowling effort to bundle out Maharashtra for 90 in 17.2 overs. Part-time off-spinner Nitish Rana stole the show with the ball with figures of four for 17. But the spotlight was clearly on Dhawan (24 off 22 balls) after Delhi were put into bat at the C B Patel Ground, and the left-

handed opener started well in the company of Hiten Dalal (16 off 13 balls) as the duo put on 44 for the opening stand in 5.3 overs.

Dhawan looked in good touch, hammering two fours and a six during his brief stay but yet again he threw away his wicket.

Dhawan was dismissed by off-break bowler Shamshuzama Kazi in the seventh over as Delhi lost two quick wickets to slump to 44 for two.

One down Anuj Rawat (10) too fell cheaply but skipper Dhruv Shorey (48 not out in 37 balls) resurrected the innings first in the company of Rana (21) and then Himmat Singh (32).

Shorey stitched 32 and



India's Shikhar Dhawan after his dismissal during the 2nd T20I against Bangladesh earlier this month. — AP

37-run partnerships for the fourth and fifth wicket respectively with Rana and Singh.

Shorey hit five fours and a six during his knock to take Delhi close to the 170-run mark.

### BRIEF SCORE

**Delhi 167/5** (Dhruv Shorey 48 not out, Himmat Singh 32; Shamshuzama Kazi 2-20) **beat Maharashtra 90 all out** (Ruturaj Gaikwad 42, Digvijay Deshmukh 9; Nitish Rana 4-17) **by 77 runs.**

Maharashtra's chase never got going as they lost wickets at regular intervals to fold inside 100 runs.

Barring young opener Ruturaj Gaikwad (42), not other Maharashtra batsmen could manage double digit scores.

Besides Rana, Simarjeet

Singh (1/14), Lalit Yadav (1/20), Varun Sood (1/15) and Pranshu Vijayran (1/12) were the other wicket-takers for Delhi.

Dhawan, meanwhile, suffered an injury on his left knee during fielding and had to be taken to a hospital for medical attention. He later posted a picture of a bandaged left knee on his twitter page but looked in jovial mood.

"We Fall, We Break, but then... We Rise. We heal and we overcome, and the only thing you have control over is how you respond to any situation. Here's to being positive and happy in every situation that life throws at you. Will be back in action in 4-5 days," he tweeted. — PTI

## NBA SEASON

## LA Clippers defeat Celtics in overtime

Los Angeles, Nov. 21: Kawhi Leonard and Paul George combined for 42 points in their first game together as the Los Angeles Clippers pulled out a 107-104 overtime victory over the Boston Celtics on Wednesday.

The game marked the first time George and Leonard played together since both joined the Clippers in the offseason.

Leonard, who scored 17 points on seven-of-20 shooting, was coming off a three game rest and George -- who missed the start of the season with a shoulder injury -- was playing in his fourth game.

Rivers said George, who finished with 25 points, is still trying to play himself into shape. "I was more concerned minute wise with Paul than Kawhi," Rivers said. "It is funny. He (George) told me in the first half 'I got to play more because I got to get in better shape. I am exhausted out here.' This game helped. He was pretty strong at the end."

Lou Williams scored a team high 27 points and Patrick Beverley grabbed a career-best 16 rebounds to go along with 14 points and seven assists. JaMychal Green also



Los Angeles Clippers guard Patrick Beverley (right) reaches in on Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum during the second half of an NBA game on Wednesday. — AP

added 10 points as Los Angeles won its third straight game.

Jayson Tatum led the Celtics with a season-high 30 points. Marcus Smart recorded 15 points and eight assists. Brad Wanamaker added 14

points, and Kemba Walker had 13 points and nine rebounds.

"It was a high-level game," said Celtics coach Brad Stevens. "Both teams competed, even when the shots weren't going down."

Boston had their chances as Tatum missed a tying three-point attempt with two seconds left, and Leonard blocked Walker's desperation three-point attempt just before the buzzer in overtime.

"That was an ugly win, but it was beautiful," Rivers said.

Elsewhere, Luka Doncic posted his league-leading seventh triple double of the season en route to a 35-point performance as the Dallas Mavericks trounced the Golden State Warriors 142-94.

The 20-year-old Slovenian scored 35 points in just 26 minutes of playing time and he finished with 11 assists and 10 rebounds in front of a crowd of 19,500 at the American Airlines Center. "He's doing his thing, knocking down threes, drawing fouls. He took it to us," said Warriors coach Steve Kerr of Doncic.

Doncic scored 33 of his points in the opening half en route to his second consecutive triple double. He was coming off a career-best, 42-point performance in a triple double Monday against San Antonio.

Tim Hardaway Jr. Finished with 20 points and went four-for-four from beyond the arc for the Mavs, who posted their third straight win to start a four-game homestand.

Rookie Eric Paschall led Golden State with 22 points. — AFP

## Ko eyes top prize at LPGA finale

Miami, Nov. 21: World number one Ko Jin-young is hoping a nagging ankle injury will not prevent her from finishing her historic season on a high note at the LPGA Tour Championship in Naples, Florida, this week.

"Still worried a little bit," admitted the South Korean star, who pulled out of the third round of the Taiwan Swinging Skirts tournament three weeks ago after hurting her left ankle late in the first round.

Since then, Ko said she has focused on recovery, and she will be hoping for a fitting end to a season in which her four wins include two major titles at the ANA Inspiration and the Evian Championship.

She has already clinched Player of the Year honors, and her 12 top-10 finishes are the most for the season. The 24-year-old can also lock up the Vare Trophy for low scoring average at this week's tournament at Tiburon Golf Club, where a \$1.5 million winner's prize — the richest ever in women's golf -- is on offer.

Ko, whose season included a remarkable stretch of 114 holes without a bogey — a streak that bettered Tiger Woods' record of 110

## VIJENDER OK WITH ONE FIGHT EVERY 5-6 MONTHS

New Delhi, Nov. 21: Gearing up for his 12th professional bout in four years, Indian boxing star Vijender Singh on Thursday said he is content with his progress in the circuit despite the fight schedule not being particularly busy.

The 34-year-old, who is undefeated so far, will square off against Ghana's two-time former Commonwealth super middle-weight (76kg) champion Charles Adamu in Dubai on Friday. Adamu is eight years older to him.

"I don't expect him to put up too much of a challenge because I have noticed he is slower than me. So, despite his experience, I think I will have the edge," Vijender said on the eve of the 10-round clash.

"So I am relaxed, nothing to worry there."

He didn't compete at all in 2018 and his last appearance in front of home fans was back in December 2017 in Jaipur.

"Once in five-six months suits me just fine because I also need to spend time with my family. It's already been two months since I have been with my wife and children and it is difficult for me to manage beyond that," he said. — PTI

## WADA BANS LAB IN BANGKOK FOR SIX MONTHS

Montreal, Nov. 21: The National Doping Control Centre in Bangkok has been suspended for up to six months for failing to conform to the International Standard for Laboratories, the World Anti-Doping Agency announced here on Wednesday.

WADA said in a statement that the unspecified "non-conformities" had been identified during a site visit and subsequent follow-up of the laboratory's routine activities.

Under the suspension, which took effect on Monday, the lab is barred from carrying out any anti-doping analyses of urine and blood samples.

While the facility is suspended, relevant samples must be securely transported to another WADA-accredited laboratory for analysis.

The lab may appeal the suspension to the Court of Arbitration for Sport, and it may apply to WADA for reinstatement before the suspension expires once it has addressed the problems identified by the anti-doping body. — AFP





## Italy calling?

Italian giants AC Milan offer Sweden star Zlatan Ibrahimovic six-month deal, say reports



It's one of the longest days I've had sitting in the chair. It's been another day of incredible drama.

— Leon Smith, Britain's Davis Cup captain after Andy Murray clawed back a 1-4 deficit in the deciding set to win 6-7(7) 6-4 7-6(5)

## SHORT TAKES

### Ghosal in quarters of world tour event

**Surrey, England:** India's Saurav Ghosal moved into the quarter-finals of the Channel VAS Championship, a PSA world tour gold event, after beating Tom Richards of England 11-3, 11-5, 11-5.

Ghosal looked in good touch as he opened his campaign with a win in the second round at the St George's Hill Lawn Tennis Club.

The seventh seeded Indian is again pitted to face top seed Mohamed ElShorbagy of Egypt next. The two had only a few days ago met in the World Championship where El Shorbagy won after staving off a stiff resistance from the Indian. — PTI



Saurav Ghosal

## Rashid tied-fifth in Malaysia

**Kota Kinabalu, Malaysia:** Rashid Khan carded a four-under 67 to emerge as the best Indian after the first round of the \$300,000 Sabah Masters on Thursday.

Three other Indians — Aman Raj, Udayan Mane and Khalin Joshi — carded three-under 68 each to be inside Top-10 on the opening day. The lead was shared by four players led by young Thai talent Phachara Khongwatmai, who hit some solid approach shots to sign for a five-under-par 66.

The 20-year-old Thai shared the lead with Indonesia's Joshua Andrew Wirawan as well as Aaron Wilkin and David Gleeson of Australia at the Sutera Harbour Golf and Country Club. Among other Indians, Jyoti Randhawa (69) was T-22, Aadil Bedi (70) was T-32, Karandeep Kochhar (71) was T-44, Abhijit Chadha and Himmat Rai with 72 each were T-60, Priyanshu Singh (74) was T-87 and Jeev Milkha Singh (75). — PTI

## ANAND EYES LONDON BERTH IN TATA CHESS

**Kolkata:** Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand will have London on mind when he starts his campaign in the second edition of the Tata Steel Chess tournament, part of this year's Grand Chess Tour, here on Friday. While the organisers missed the presence of reigning world champion Magnus Carlsen last year as the Norwegian was busy preparing for his world championship match, this time things have turned out to be better thanks to the association with the Grand Chess tour.

The tour, a brainchild of the legendary Garry Kasparov, has grown from strength to strength and the Tata Steel tournament is already the sixth edition before the grand finale to be held in London in a week after the conclusion of this event.

Good news for Anand is that he is not under any pressure to win in order to qualify for the Grand finale.

If the Indian ace is in top six of the overall standings of this 10-player rapid and blitz event, there is almost a certainty that Anand will make it to London.

Carlsen starts as the hot favourite to win the crown but stiff challenge might come from Ding Liren of China, the newly crowned world champion, Wesley So of United States and Levon Aronian of Armenia.

Hikaru Nakamura of United States, Anish Giri of Holland and the Indian duo of P. Harikrishna and Vidit Gujrathi complete a star-studded lineup. — PTI

# SHOOTING STARS

Manu, Elavenil, Divyansh win maiden World Cup Final gold

**Putian (China), Nov. 21:** India's young shooters touched another sensational high with Manu Bhaker, Elavenil Valarivan and Divyansh Panwar winning gold medals in their respective events for the country's best-ever show in the ISSF World Cup Finals here on Thursday.

The 17-year-old Manu fired her way to the gold with a junior world record in the women's 10m air pistol event, while the 20-year-old Elavenil claimed the top honours in the women's 10m air rifle competition.

Later, another teen sensation Divyansh, who is all of 17, finished on top in the men's 10m air rifle competition with a final score of 250.1. India are currently top of the table with three gold medals, followed by China (two gold, one silver, one bronze).

Manu shot 244.7 to notch up the top prize in the prestigious season-ending tournament of International Shooting Sport Federation (ISSF). The Haryana girl beat a classy field for her maiden WCF gold.

In the same event Manu's compatriot, Yashaswini Singh Deswal, finished sixth in the final.

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● **Later, another teen sensation Divyansh, who is all of 17, finished on top in the men's 10m air rifle competition with a final score of 250.1**

Serbia's Zorana Arunovic won the silver with 241.9, while Quian Wang of China bagged the bronze with a score of 221.8.

Elavenil shot a score of 250.8 to edge past Taiwan's Lin Ying-Shin (250.7). Romania's Laura-Georgeta Coman finished third with a score of 229.

Elavenil had qualified second for the finals with a score of 631.1 behind Ying-Shin (632.3).

Mehuli Ghosh also qualified for

the same event's final but ended sixth with a score of 163.8.

Divyansh then ensured that women didn't hog the limelight completely with his stellar performance. He qualified third for the final with a score of 627.1.

In the final he steered ahead of Hungary's Istvan Peni (250) and Slovakia's Patrik Jany (228.4) to clinch the top prize.

In the men's 10m air pistol event, Abhishek Verma and Saurabh Chaudhary qualified for the final but couldn't claim medals.

Verma topped the qualifications with 588 but ended fifth in the final with a score of 179.4, while Chaudhary was seventh in the qualification with 581 before signing off sixth in the last-eight stage with 159.8.

Manu had a tight qualification round and was behind at the start of the finals as well. She took the lead after the 11th attempt of the 24-shot final and then kept getting stronger to finish a massive 2.8 points ahead of two-time former world champion Arunovic.

It was then the turn of Elavenil, who first returned a solid 631.1 in qualification to finish second overall quite comfortably. — PTI

## JUNGSSHER JOINS KYNAN AT TOP IN NATIONALS

**New Delhi, Nov. 21:** Young Jungsher Virk joined Olympian Kynan Chenai at the top on the second day of qualification in the 63rd National Shooting Championship Competitions for Shotgun events here on Thursday.

Two perfect rounds of 25, put Virk right on top with one more round of qualification to go at the Dr. Karni Singh Shooting Range on Friday.

Hyderabad's Kynan followed up his perfect score of 50 on day one with another round of 25, but ended with a 23 to be tied with Virk on 98.

Former world champion Manavjit Singh Sandhu also had two perfect rounds on Thursday, which has put him well in contention to make another Nationals final — his four rounds yielding 96 out of 100 hits so far.

Among other prominent names, Prithviraj Tondaiman and Zoravar Singh Sandhu were also in contention with 96. So was the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) President Raninder Singh, who has a score of 93 so far for his efforts over two days. Virk is also leading in the junior men's category. — PTI



Manu Bhaker (from left) Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan pose with their World Cup Final gold medals.

## Stimac regrets going out of WC reckoning

**New Delhi, Nov. 21:** India football coach Igor Stimac on Thursday said he was disappointed with the side's performance in the last few matches and cited injury to key players as the main reason behind the country going out of reckoning of a World Cup berth.

Speaking at the sidelines of the launch of the 13th edition of the I-League, Stimac also expressed his unhappiness at the clubs for not playing Indian players as strikers in the domestic leagues.

"We came back home a bit disappointed after the last two matches but that did not undermine our faith and believes in what we do. We faced big difficulties with the regard to opponents and climatic conditions. The injury

## 'THERE IS NO REPLACEMENT FOR CHHETRI'

**New Delhi, Nov. 21:** Indian football team coach Igor Stimac feels that talismanic captain Sunil Chhetri is "playing like a 29-year-old" and remains irreplaceable for the next few years.

The 35-year-old Chhetri has been in prolific form in recent years but since netting India's lone goal in the 1-2 loss to Oman in September, he has not found the target in the last three matches of the 2022 World Cup qualification campaign.

Asked if he has found any player



Sunil Chhetri

ing campaign. Asked if he has found any player

in India who can replace Chhetri in the future, Stimac said, "I don't know why people mention about replacing Sunil, he is not going anywhere. He is fit and doing his best. He is very valuable to us. His body is like a 29-year-old."

"As long as he is training like he is doing right now and giving his best for the national team, he will be with us, I can assure you that," the head coach added. — PTI

to the results," the Croatian said.

The Indian team is virtually all out of contention of advancing to the third round of the 2022 World Cup qualifiers after los-

ing to Oman 1-0 in Muscat on Tuesday. They played out three consecutive draws — against Qatar,

Bangladesh and Afghanistan — after losing to Oman at home.

The team is now with three points from five matches and are at fourth spot in the Group E table. Stimac's side has not won a single match out of the five it has played so far in this second round of the qualifiers.

The head coach informed that three players — Halder, Adil Khan and Rahul Bheke — injured themselves during the away match against Oman. — PTI



Indian Football team coach Igor Stimac poses with the trophy along with 11 team members at the launch of the 13th edition of the Hero I-League in New Delhi on Thursday. — BIPLAB BANERJEE

INDIA VS PAK TIE

## Paes happy with Davis Cup return

**New Delhi, Nov. 21:** Worrying about the venue is never an option when it comes to playing for India, asserted Leander Paes, days after several of his colleagues expressed reservations about travelling to Islamabad for their Davis Cup tie.

A number of top players and captain Mahesh Bhupathi had refused to play in the Pakistan capital due to security concerns but Paes, along with Saketh Myneni and Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, were available.

All three are now part of India's Davis Cup squad which will travel to Nur-Sultan for the November 29-30 tie, the winner of which will compete in the 2020 World Group Qualifiers. "I am very pleased to be playing for the country again. My job is not to worry about the location or the opponent, my job is to put my best foot forward. Given the circumstance, part of my job was to motivate the youngsters," Paes said after a practice session.

"We did not want India to either default or forfeit this tie. When it comes to playing for India, I don't ask where and who my opponent is," he added firmly.

Does it mean that Paes was not worried about his safety in Pakistan?

"Regardless of where we play, we do due diligence to make sure safety of the team is there. That being said, I knew that once venue was decided, players were picked, homework was being done and right measures were taken for us to play."

It was widely believed that Paes had played his last Davis Cup tie for India



when he got the record-shattering 43rd doubles win while playing against China in April 2018.

He was not considered for selection after that. However, the AITA had to fall back on the iconic player when the country's top doubles player Rohan Bopanna refused to travel to Islamabad and Divij Sharan was unavailable due to his wedding reception.

"There were a lot of rumblings going on behind the scene in the Indian tennis fraternity that Leander has played his last Davis Cup tie but for me playing for my country has been greatest honour. It (the call) caught me off guard but I had enough time to prepare and I have done so."

Despite the other top players' willingness to play in Kazakhstan's capital, the AITA rewarded Paes, Myneni and Jeevan by picking them in the squad. — PTI

DAVIS CUP FINALS



Great Britain's Andy Murray serves to Tallon Griekspoor of Netherlands during their singles match at the Davis Cup Finals in Madrid on Wednesday. — AFP

## Murray digs deep as Britain edge Holland

**Madrid, Nov. 21:** The Davis Cup has a new format but Andy Murray's love of a comeback remains intact after the Scot battled from behind to beat Tallon Griekspoor on Wednesday as Great Britain edged past Holland.

Murray came from a set down and then trailed 4-1 in the decider in Madrid before beating the spirited Griekspoor, ranked 179 in the world, 6-7 (7/9), 6-4, 7-6 (7/5). "I've found a way to win matches many times in my career when I've not been playing well," Murray said. "You can draw on that a little bit."

A scrappy victory gave Great Britain the lead in their opening Group E tie and while Dan Evans lost the second singles rubber to Robin Haase, Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski finished the job in the doubles.

Rafael Nadal won his 26th consecutive Davis Cup singles match later on Wednesday as Spain booked their place in the quarter-finals with a 3-0

victory over defending champions Croatia.

Nadal saw off Croatia's Borna Gojo 6-4, 6-3 and then helped Spain win the doubles rubber alongside Marcel Granollers.

Novak Djokovic, meanwhile, cruised past Yoshihito Nishioka to help Serbia beat Japan by the same scoreline.

Murray had given short shrift on Tuesday to those he believes have been too quick to criticise the revamped Davis Cup, which for the first time is featuring all 18 World Group countries competing for the trophy across a single week in one venue.

And in what will be music to the ears of the organisers, among them Barcelona footballer Gerard Pique, Murray was full of praise for the atmosphere inside the Caja Magica's cosy Stadium 3.

"The atmosphere was brilliant. That was the one concern I had about the event, about it being on neutral ground, but it was great," Murray said. — AFP