











Politics

People are unhappy with the atmosphere in the country, says Rajasthan deputy CM Sachin Pilot



Success of parliamentary democracy rests on respecting the Opposition's view

— Om Birla, Speaker

IN BRIEF

Tharoor visits Tihar to meet PC

New Delhi: Senior Congress leaders Shashi Tharoor and Manish Tiwari met former finance minister P Chidambaram in Tihar Jail here on Monday. Mr Chidambaram was first arrested by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on August 21 in the INX Media corruption case and was granted bail by the Supreme Court on October 22. The senior Congress leader was also arrested by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the money-laundering case on October 16 and is in judicial custody till November 27 under the order of a trial court. — PTI

Disappointed with Punjab govt: MLA

Chandigarh: Ruling party MLA Nirmal Singh on Monday alleged that development work in his constituency in Punjab has come to a standstill, saying he is disappointed with his own government. The legislator from Shutrana threatened to stage a sit-in at the residence of chief minister Amarinder Singh. "I am disappointed with the state government and bureaucracy. If they do not start development work in my constituency, I will hold a dharna in front of the chief minister's residence from January 1," said Nirmal Singh. — PTI

4 MLAs get plum posts in H'yana

Chandigarh: Four among seven independent MLAs supporting the BJP-JJP government in Haryana were on Monday given plum positions in various boards and corporations. While independent legislator Ranjit Singh Chautala has already been made a minister in the BJP-JJP government, the state government has now appointed four other independents as chairmen of various boards and corporations. The newly appointed chairmen are MLAs representing Dadri, Faridabad, Pundri and Nillokheri assembly constituencies. — PTI

2 KASHMIRIS RELEASED FROM HOUSE ARREST

Srinagar, Nov. 25: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Monday announced release of two political leaders, who have been under detention since August 5, besides shifting of two others to their houses from the MLA hostel. Dilawar Mir, who is from PDP, and Ghulam Hassan Mir, were under detention for over 110 days and were released by the new union territory administration, officials said. They were former MLAs and they had been under detention at their respective residences from August 5, the day when Centre announced abrogation of provisions of Article 370. Ashraf Mir and Hakeem Yaseen, who were MLAs in the last state assembly of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir, would be shifted to their residences but remain under detention, the officials said. Both Mir and Yaseen were among the 34 political leaders who were lodged at the MLA hostel after being shifted from Centaur hotel in Srinagar. Meanwhile, one militant was killed in an encounter with security forces in Jammu and Pulwama district on Monday, police said. The encounter broke out after militants fired on security personnel posted at a vehicle checkpoint on Shadimarg in the south Kashmir district, a police officer said. One militant was killed in retaliatory action. — PTI

Modi govt moots bill to liberalise print media

NITIN MAHAJAN  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

In a major move aimed at liberalisation of the print media and publishing regime in the country, the Narendra Modi government has decided to discard a British-era Act and introduce a new liberal law for the industry for the first time in 70 years. The proposed law, the Registration of Press and Periodicals (RPP) Bill, 2019, aims to replace the imperial era Press and Registration of Books Act, 1867 which is often criticised for being draconian in nature.

The proposed law also aims to do away with the stringent punishments and jail terms for infringement under the current imperial era law. For the proposed law also allows the publishers of news on digital media platforms to register themselves with the Registrar of Newspapers of India in a prescribed manner.

The move is significant as the legislation has been proposed by the Narendra Modi government, which has been facing criticism over the years for its tough position on media-related issues.

Sources stated that the

MAJOR FEATURES OF THE PROPOSED LAW

▶ The bill proposes to do away with the existing procedure of furnishing of declaration by publishers/printers before the district magistrate and its subsequent authentication.

▶ The process of title and registration of periodicals, including newspapers, is proposed to be effected centrally by the Press Registrar General as a simultaneous process.

▶ The bill enables the Central government and

the state government to frame appropriate rules/regulations to regulate the criteria/conditions for issuing government advertisements in newspapers, accreditation of newspapers and such other facilities for newspapers.

▶ The bill proposes to have a simple system of registration of e-papers.

▶ The bill proposes to do away with the earlier provision under the PRB Act, 1867 of prosecution of publishers.

proposed law aims to restrict the power of local administration and government officials in the publishing industry. At the same time, it would also de-criminalise the publishing of newspapers and periodicals without the permission of the administration.

Under the proposed law there would be no requirement to seek permission for establishing a printing press and only the local administration would need to be informed. Currently, anyone wishing to start a printing

press needs to seek permission from the local administration for the same.

The Union information and broadcasting ministry has sought suggestions and views of the common people and stakeholders within a month on the proposed law.

Sources stated that once the process of seeking suggestions is over the bill is expected to be put before the union council of ministers for its approval and then introduced in Parliament for passage.



Rajya Sabha MP Mary Kom arrives at the Parliament House in New Delhi on Monday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

30 Vyapam accused sent to jail for 7 yrs

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, NOV. 25

A CBI court here on Monday sentenced a key accused in the infamous Vyapam scam involving irregularities in admissions in various medical colleges in Madhya Pradesh and recruitments in class three and class four jobs in the state government, to ten years in prison, besides handing out seven-year-jail term each to 30 others.

The CBI special court judge S.B. Sahu sentenced the alleged middleman in the scam, Pradeep Tyagi (29), to ten years in prison for his involvement in fixing the recruitment tests for constable posts conducted in 2013.

The court also sentenced 30 others involved in the same case to seven years in prison each.

Let Ayodhya issue lie, say influential Muslims

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

Around 100 prominent Muslims, including actor Naseeruddin Shah, Shabana Azmi, journalist and social activist Javed Anand, and professionals like lawyers, scholars and journalists have issued a joint statement opposing the decision to file a review petition in the Supreme Court challenging the Ram jannabhoomi dispute judgment.

The signatories have agreed that the court order is judicially flawed but keeping it alive would harm and not help Indian Muslims.

"We, the undersigned, are deeply concerned over the decision of several of the Muslim litigants in the Ayodhya dispute to challenge the recent unanimous decision of the constitution bench of the Supreme Court in favour of a Ram Temple at the



Naseeruddin



Shabana Azmi



Javed Anand

disputed plot. We share the unhappiness of the Indian Muslim community, constitutional experts and secular organisations over the fact that the highest court in the land has placed faith above law in arriving at its decision," the statement read.

"Many have been advising Muslims to 'move on'. Our appeal to fellow Muslims is to 'move away' from the mandir-masjid dispute since it only helps to mask the real agenda of the Sangh Parivar: the replacement of our secular-democratic republic with a Hindu Rashtra. We believe that continua-

tion of the dispute in the court will add fuel to anti-Muslim propaganda and Islamophobia, aid further communal polarisation."

Mr Anand said, "It is not finalised yet, but we are contemplating holding a public meeting on this issue, perhaps a fortnight from today."

Referring to the news, that appeared a few days back in which Jamiat-e-Ulema Hind Mehmodi Madni faction had apparently stated that they are not in favour of the review petition, Mr Anand said, "Opinion within the community itself is sharply divided."

nka in the Indian Ocean, as India and China, and their proxies will exert pressure," the foreign policy adviser told this newspaper.



Mr Rajapaksa will, however, reassure New Delhi, which had sent its foreign minister S. Jaishankar to Colombo within a day of his election victory, that this Rajapaksa government will "not allow its territory to be used in any way that could be a threat to India", while cautioning, at the same time, that "neither can Sri Lanka be fully aligned to India."

Mr Rajapaksa is, however, committed to "pursuing the concept of neutrality".

Nov. 26 to be observed as Constitution Day in J&K

Jammu, Nov. 25: Jammu and Kashmir will celebrate the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India on November 26 for the first time since the unforeseen abrogation of Article 370 that ended the Jammu & Kashmir Constitution that was in place since 1957.

"To acknowledge the contribution of the framers of the Constitution and sensitise people regarding the exalted values and the precepts enshrined in it, November 26 is being observed as Constitution Day. This year will mark the 70th anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution," additional secretary, general administration department (GAD), Jammu & Kashmir, Subash C. Chhibber said in an order issued by the government.

All institutions including government offices will read out the Preamble to the Constitution at 11 am followed by a pledge to uphold the fundamental duties, Mr Chhibber said.

— PTI

Nation

THE ASIAN AGE

TUESDAY | 26 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI

BJP leader kicked, punched in Nadia

Attacked by TMC for 'foiling looting of votes': MLA

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
KOLKATA, NOV. 25



A screenshot of BJP candidate Jay Prakash Majumdar being beaten up, allegedly by TMC men.

Sporadic incidents of violence marked the Assembly byelections in three constituencies in West Bengal on Monday as BJP candidate at Karimpur in Nadia Jay Prakash Majumdar was beaten up by Trinamul Congress activists in front of the police personnel and the Central paramilitary forces jawans. Mr Majumdar was also allegedly driven out of a polling booth by the central forces jawans for his "interference".

Till 5 pm, a voter turnout of 77.79 per cent was recorded in Kaliaganj in North Dinajpur and 81.23 per cent at Karimpur and 67.62 per cent at Kharagpur Sadar in West Midnapore.

The attack on Mr Majumdar took place at around 11.30 am when he visited a polling booth at Giyaghat Islampur Primary School in Pipulkhola. Finding a group of around 20 villagers beside the booth he started questioning them.

Some members of the group turned furious and

attacked him. They kicked and punched him mercilessly. Losing balance the state BJP vice-president fell into a bush. Later he claimed, "All the attackers were from the Trinamul. I was assaulted by them because I tried to prevent the looting of votes by them." The BJP later identified nine persons as his attackers.

It also named them as Tarekul Sekh, Habibur Rahaman Biswas, Kamaluddin Biswas, Dukhu Malitha, Khuda Box Sekh, Dinarul Biswas, Masadul Alam, Bankim Mandal and Habib Biswas.

BJP leader Mukul Roy later lodged a complaint with the Election Commission. He also demanded the removal of the district magistrate and superintendent of police of Nadia.

"I have never seen a candidate being beaten up and pushed into a bush. The responsibility of the area domination goes to DM, who is also the district election officer, and the SP. But they have failed miserably to discharge their duties. The goons should have been arrested immediately," Mr Roy said in the afternoon.

Vote for stable govt in J'khand: PM

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA, NOV. 25

Kick-starting the BJP's campaign for the Assembly elections in Jharkhand, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said that the BJP-led state government has been working on five principles — stability, good governance, development, self-respect and security.

While campaigning for BJP candidates in Gumla and Palamu, the Prime Minister urged the masses to "vote for the BJP for a strong and stable government" in the state.

"Jharkhand is still in its youth and for a better future, you should vote for

a strong and stable government. The BJP has provided a stable, safe and corruption-free environment in Jharkhand. It is the BJP which saved this state from the clutches of those who wanted power but did not work for the welfare of people", he said while addressing an election rally in Palamu.

Assembly elections in Jharkhand will be held in five phases, scheduled to begin from November 30. During the first phase, polling will be held in thirteen constituencies.

While addressing the rally, the Prime Minister asserted that the BJP government at the Centre and the state would protect

Jharkhand is still in its youth and for a better future, you should vote for a strong and stable government

— Narendra Modi, PM

Jharkhand's Jal, Jungle and Jamin (water, forest and land). He also condemned last week's Naxalite violence and paid tribute to four policemen who were killed in the attack.

"The BJP at the Centre

and the state would continue to protect the state's Jal, Jungle and Jamin, no matter what the opposition parties say. The state government has always worked hard to curb Naxalism in the state and would continue to fight against it. Naxalism reached Jharkhand due to the political instability", Prime Minister said while addressing the rally.

In the 2014 assembly polls, BJP had won 37 out of 72 seats it had contested while its alliance partner All Jharkhand Students Union (AJSU) won 5 out of 8 seats. However, this year the BJP has fielded candidates on all 81 seats in Jharkhand.



PARLIAMENT DIARY

BY GAUTAM LAHIRI

SONIA GANDHI PUSHES FOR BOYCOTT OF TODAY'S SPECIAL SESSION



When most Congress MPs were in the Well of the House to protest against the recent developments in Maharashtra, party president Sonia Gandhi was seen talking to many Opposition MPs. She reportedly proposed a boycott of today's joint session of the Parliament to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution. She argued that the developments in Maharashtra were against the spirit of the Constitution and it would be inappropriate for the Opposition to hear the President and Prime Minister speak about the Constitution in such a situation. Immediately, Opposition MPs sought advice from their respective party bosses over the phone. While Sudip Bandyopadhyay, leader of the TMC parliamentary party, spoke to chief minister Mamta Banerjee, DMK MPs spoke to their leader MK Stalin. In the afternoon, Mamata gave her consent to Derek O'Brien, TMC's leader in the Rajya Sabha, after which he informed Congress leaders of his party's participation in the boycott.

'BJP CAN'T BUY OUT LONE LEFT MAHARASHTRA MLA'

Most of the MLAs belonging to the Shiv Sena, MNC and Congress are camping in five-star hotels of Mumbai for the fear of poaching. However, a Left leader on Monday claimed the lone Left MLA in Maharashtra is neither hiding nor staying in any five-star hotel since the BJP would not be able to buy him out. One senior BJP MP joined him and opined that nobody is untouchable for the BJP these days. He noted how the Left machinery has been switching over to the BJP in West Bengal.

TRINAMUL CONGRESS SATISFIED WITH SPEAKER'S INITIATIVE

A few days back, Trinamul leader Sudip Bandyopadhyay had written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla seeking his intervention in restraining BJP MPs from West Bengal from raising state-specific issues. The Trinamul leader had argued that BJP should be reminded that this was Parliament and not the state Assembly. Following the letter, one officer from the Speaker's office contacted Mr Bandyopadhyay and informed him that Speaker had called three BJP MPs of West Bengal for a discussion.





## Power-obsessed

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut says that BJP leaders will go crazy if they remain without power

# LS, RS stalled over ‘murder of democracy’

Congress MPs storm into the Well, evicted by marshals ■ Speaker says he was hurt by MPs’ behaviour

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

Upset over the sudden swearing-in of BJP’s Devendra Fadnavis as Maharashtra chief minister, the Congress on Monday protested vociferously in both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha, forcing both the Houses to be adjourned till noon and later for the day.

While in the Upper House, Congress and other Opposition members such as Left and DMK shouted anti-BJP slogans after Chairman M. Venkaiah Naidu rejected their notices under Rule 267 seeking setting aside of the business to take up the political developments in Maharashtra forcing an adjournment. Lok Sabha saw much more drama.

Shouting slogans and showing banners and placards in the Well, Congress MPs also jostled with marshals to foil attempt to evict them. The Congress MPs had stormed in to the Well the moment proceedings began. They raised slogans such as “Modi government hai hai,” and waved placards with “save Constitution” and “save democracy” written on them along with a black banner that read “stop murder of democracy.”

Speaker Om Birla, who had asked Congress MP Rahul Gandhi to ask his question during the

Question Hour, urged the members to go back to their seats. However, as the banners and placards continued to be waved, he warned Congress MPs of action while asking them to remove these.

In the meanwhile, Rahul Gandhi got up and said that though he had come to ask a question, but it has no meaning now as “democracy has been murdered in Maharashtra.”

As Congress members intensified their sloganeering and showing banners, a visibly agitated Speaker first warned Hibi Eden and T.N. Prathapan to “put down the pamphlets” else they will be “sent out”.

Since these MPs did not yield to the request, Om Birla ordered removal of Eden and Prathapan who were holding a big banner with ‘stop murder of democracy slogan — by the marshals.

At this time other Congress women MPs particularly Ramya Hariharan and Jothimani tried to resist marshals and prevent them from removing Eden and Prathapan. With so much ruckus, Speaker adjourned the House first till 12 pm, then till 2 pm.

This is the first time it was adjourned during the 17th Lok Sabha.

In between the first and second adjournments, Congress president Sonia Gandhi was seen discussing the protest strategy with her party MPs.



Congress president Sonia Gandhi along with senior party leaders leads a protest against Maharashtra government formation at Paliamment House in New Delhi on Monday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

## Opp. parties likely to boycott joint session of Houses today

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY  
NEW DELHI, NOV 25

As a mark of protest against what they called the “murder of democracy” in Maharashtra, all Opposition parties are expected to boycott the joint sitting of both Houses of Parliament to be held on Tuesday, to mark 70 years of adoption of Indian Constitution.

The function is scheduled to be addressed by both President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, who is also the

Rajya Sabha Chairman, and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla are also to be present.

The decision to boycott the programme was taken after day-long discussions among Opposition parties following calls made by senior Congress leaders Ahmed Patel and Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad.

Apart from the Congress, the parties which would boycott the Parliament proceedings include Trinamul Congress, Left, NCP, Shiv Sena, DMK and the RJD.

The parties are also likely to meet for a strategy ses-

sion on Tuesday morning.

In fact none other than Congress President Sonia Gandhi made a call to Trinamul Congress leader in Lok Sabha Sudip Bandyopadhyay to bring his party on board for the boycott.

On Tuesday, first all the Opposition parties would gather under the statue of B.R. Ambedkar to protest against the “murder of democracy” in Maharashtra and then boycott the Joint House proceedings which are supposed to be held in the Central Hall of Parliament, a senior Congress leader told this newspaper.

## 3 of 4 NCP MLAs back after ‘rescue’

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) on Monday claimed that three more MLAs who were incommunicado since Saturday morning have come back to the party fold. The MLAs claimed that they were following Ajit Pawar’s instructions believing that it was the party’s decision to join hands with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

With this, the NCP now claims that all 53 MLAs, barring Ajit Pawar, have returned to the party and that the junior Pawar’s coup has failed.

The three MLAs who returned to Mumbai are Daulat Daroda, Nitin Pawar and Narhari Zirwal, who represent the Shahapur, Kalawa and

Dindori seats respectively. They were kept in a hotel in Gurgaon and were watched by BJP workers and local police, the NCP claimed.

“Local NCP workers from Gurgaon carried out a daring rescue operation and freed three MLAs, who had been trapped in a hotel there. They have been brought back to Mumbai before the trust vote in the legislature,” NCP’s spokesperson Nawab Malik said.

On the other hand, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut claimed that the MLAs were “rescued in a joint operation” by Shiv Sena and NCP workers.

Mr Raut alleged that the NCP MLAs were detained by either the BJP or the state police of Haryana where the saffron party is in power.

## Not behind Ajit’s decision to ally with BJP: Pawar Sr

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
PUNE, NOV. 25

Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Monday said that he was not behind Ajit Pawar’s decision to ally with the BJP and become the deputy chief minister and asserted that his party along with Congress and Shiv Sena will form the next government in Maharashtra.

Addressing reporters in Karad town of neighbouring Satara district, the NCP chief reiterated that the decision of aligning with the BJP was that of his nephew Ajit Pawar and not of the NCP.

“It is not the party’s decision and we do not endorse it,” the former Union minister said.

He also said that he has no contact with his nephew, who rebelled against the NCP.

## Even before SC gives it verdict, Fadnavis takes charge as CM

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

Even before the Supreme Court gives its decision on the political crisis in the state, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis took charge of his office in Mantralaya on Monday. On the very first day, he sanctioned ₹5,380 crore from the state contingency fund to provide relief to farmers affected by unseasonal rains.

While Mr Fadnavis was sworn in chief minister on Saturday morning, he officially took charge of his office on Monday.

The decision to sanction ₹5,380 crore for rain-affected farmers came in the wake of a meeting between Mr Fadnavis and deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar on Sunday evening. Both the leaders had discussed various measures for providing additional assistance to the farmers affected by unseasonal rains. However, Mr Pawar was conspicuous by his absence in the meeting on Monday.

The state government earlier this month had approved ₹10,000 crore as a special provision to provide immediate assistance to farmers affected by unseasonal rains. Crops like jowar, paddy, cotton, maize, tur and soyabean on 54.22 lakh hectares spread across 325 talukas in 10-12 districts have been damaged across the state.

The CM also chaired a meeting to discuss proposed “climate resilience improvement and flood & drought management programme” with representatives from the World Bank. This programme includes diversion of floodwater to drought prone area.

“All technical modalities got discussed in this meeting. World Bank will spend ₹3,500 crore on this project out of which ₹350 crore is for technical assistance (sic),” the CM tweeted.



Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray along with NCP, Congress and Shiv Sena MLAs after taking a pledge during the gathering to display their strength at Grand Hyatt Hotel in Mumbai on Monday. — RAJESH JADHAV

## NCP leaders meet Ajit, urge him to quit govt

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

Even as deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar asserted in the Supreme Court that the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) is supporting the Bharatiya Janata Party-led government, the NCP is still trying to convince him to resign. Several NCP leaders, including senior leaders Chhagan Bhujbal, Dilip Walse-Patil and Sunil Tatkare met him at Vidhan Bhavan throughout the day.

It is likely that Ajit Pawar will issue a whip on voting day as the legislative party leader of the NCP, even though his uncle Sharad Pawar has announced that the junior Pawar had been removed from the post after took his oath as deputy chief minister along with chief minister Devendra Fadnavis.

Most of the leaders who met Ajit Pawar refused to reveal anything from their meeting with the leader. Vidya Chavan, who was one of them, said she paid just a courtesy visit. “We are all with the NCP and Sharad Pawar. None of us has defected and we are confident that Ajitdada will also resign and come back,” she said as she was leaving Vidhan Bhavan.

According to sources, Ajit Pawar will issue a whip on the day of the floor test of the Fadnavis government. This was also indicated by

## PRO-TEM SPEAKER HOLDS KEY, BJP MAY PUSH FOR ITS PICK

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

In the engrossing political battle in the state, even the appointment of a pro-tem Speaker has assumed a lot of significance. According to sources, the ruling BJP is planning to install its own person on the position.

The pro-tem Speaker has a limited role of administering oath to the newly-elected legislators and supervising the process of the election of a new speaker, who then

conducts the floor test for the chief minister to prove his majority.

However, sources said the appointment of a pro-tem Speaker is the sole discretion of the governor.

“It is not mandatory for governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari to follow the convention, and he can appoint any other person on that position,” said a senior official.

In the changed political scenario, the BJP would want to have its own MLA occupy the seat.

Ajit Pawar from his post as leader of the party’s legislature wing and membership of the party. Hence, he is still the leader of the NCP in the Assembly and he will issue the whip,” he said.

Meanwhile, an editorial in Shiv Sena mouthpiece Saamana launched a scathing attack on the BJP, saying that those who did not respect their 25-year-long friendship with the Uddhav Thackeray-led party would one day dump Ajit Pawar as well.

The editorial also said that Ajit Pawar’s rebellion had failed and this would be evidence in the next few days.

## ‘Routine closures, could be reopened’ ACB: 9 irrigation scam cases closed, but none involved Ajit

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
with agency inputs  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

Days after the Ajit Pawar-led faction broke off from the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and he was sworn in as the deputy chief minister, the state Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Monday closed nine cases in the irrigation scam, in which the deputy chief minister is alleged to have played a major role. However, ACB officials confirmed that none of the nine cases involved him.

ACB officials added that these were routine cases that could be reopened for investigation in case of fresh evidence. They also confirmed that they were investigating a series of tenders of the Vidarbha Irrigation Development Corporation in connection with the various projects undertaken by it. At least 2,654 tenders in 45 projects were part of the investigation, following two Public Interest Litigations (PILs) that were filed before the Nagpur bench of the Bombay high court.



Ajit Pawar

ACB officials added that these were routine cases that could be reopened for investigation in case of fresh evidence. ACB reiterated that 9 closures were part of the 45 enquiries that were closed

The statement issued by the ACB read: “We have completed probing 212 tenders so far, and 24 cases had been registered pertaining to them with charge-sheets filed in five. We have also closed the open enquiry into 45 tenders as no offence was found during the enquiry. In all 28 instances, administrative lapses were found, in which departmental enquiries against the concerned officials have been recommended.”

The ACB reiterated that the nine closures issued on Monday were part of the 45 enquiries that were closed. The same had been recommended by the respective ACB units

that were probing them over the past five months, ACB officials said.

The ACB confirmed that all 24 cases filed in connection with the PILs were under investigation and none had been closed. Open enquiries into various projects and tenders of the VIDC were also in progress. The upcoming date for the court hearing of the PIL was Thursday, ACB officials said.

The Congress party, however, smarting from the recent political developments in the state, hit out at the closure of the corruption cases, alleging that the move was undemocratic.

Ajit Pawar could not be reached for a comment.

## Sena, NCP fear poaching by BJP, shift MLAs to new hotels

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

Not willing to take any chance, the Shiv Sena and NCP on Monday changed the locations of their MLAs fearing

rebellion within their ranks. While the leaders of both the parties are claiming that none of their MLAs will defect, their confidence has been shaken since Ajit Pawar took oath as deputy chief minister

on Saturday. Shiv Sena MLAs, who were put up at Hotel Lalit in Andheri, were shifted to nearby Hotel Lemon Tree, which will be the fourth hotel for Sena MLAs in the last 10 days. The sources said that

the Shiv Sena is also fearing rebellion in its rank, specially because some of its erstwhile leaders have now joined the BJP and these leaders still have personal relationship with Sena legislators.

### TIMELINE

**9.38 PM:** Some Opposition parties led by the Congress are likely to boycott the joint sitting of Parliament on Tuesday called to commemorate the Constitution Day and will hold a protest against the political developments in Maharashtra

**9.19 PM:** A day before the SC rules on floor test for Maharashtra government led by Devendra Fadnavis, the three parties paraded 162 MLAs in a show of strength

**9 PM:** NCP chief Sharad Pawar told a gathering of MLAs that he would personally ensure that none of them loses membership for voting against the BJP during floor test in the Maharashtra Assembly

**5.32 PM:** The Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress will “parade” 162 MLAs in a five-star hotel in Mumbai as a proof of their combined strength in the 288-member Assembly, Sena leader Sanjay Raut said.

**2.24 PM:** Vehement protests by Opposition members, especially those from the Congress, forced adjournment of the Lok Sabha proceedings for the day

**3.14 PM:** Congress president Sonia Gandhi led a protest in Parliament premises against the BJP’s move to form the government in Maharashtra

**2.49 PM:** The Congress said its alliance with the NCP and the Shiv Sena had the support of 154 MLAs and the BJP will get a ‘befitting reply’ in the Assembly floor test

**2.42 PM:** Sharad Pawar said he was not behind Ajit Pawar’s decision to align with the BJP and asserted that his party along with Congress and Sena will form the next government

**2.41 PM:** Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day after the Congress and other Opposition parties stalled functioning of the House

**2.11 PM:** Amid the political uncertainty, NCP chief spokesperson Nawab Malik posted a motivational couplet on Twitter to send across a message that nothing could deter them from succeeding

**1.14 PM:** NCP MLAs Daulat Daroda, Nitin Pawar and Narhari Zirwal, who were ‘missing’ since Saturday, return to Mumbai

**12.13 AM:** The court will give its order on Maharashtra government formation on Tuesday, says the Supreme Court while hearing the Shiv Sena-NCP. Congress combine’s plea against the governor’s decision

**11.23 AM:** NCP chief Sharad Pawar asserts that his party along with the Congress and Shiv Sena will form government in Maharashtra.

**10.46 AM:** The Supreme Court commences hearing on a plea filed by the Shiv Sena-NCP. Congress combine against the governor’s decision

**10.44 AM:** The NCP shifted its legislators from a five-star resort to two other hotels

**9.45 AM:** The Congress parliamentary strategy group meets at Sonia Gandhi’s residence in Delhi in the backdrop of the Maharashtra political situation

**9.40 AM:** The Sena hits out at BJP, says those who did not respect their 25-year-long friendship will one day dump NCP leader Ajit Pawar as well

**9.09 AM:** Priyanka Gandhi Vadra accuses the BJP of disregarding the Constitution in Maharashtra and repeating the ‘game’ it played in Karnataka



Sanjay Raut



Nawab Malik



Priyanka

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION



General public is hereby informed that one unknown dead body of male, Age about 28 years, Height 5’4”, Complexion Shallow, Round Face, Normal Built, Identification Mark “PHOOL PATI” tattoo mark on right hand and a moti found on right ear. Wearing Blue colour T-shirt, orange colour lower & gamcha and two colour hawai chappal in feet was found daed at Near Delhi Ashrey Sudhar Board, infront of Bungalow No. 28, Karol Bagh, New Delhi on 22.11.19. In this regard a DD No. 32-A dated 22.11.19 has been lodged at PS Desh Bandhu Gupta Road, New Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly inform to the undersigned.

SHO

PS : Desh Bandhu Gupta Road, New Delhi  
Ph.: 23613252, 23537374

DP/6760/CD/19





## Kashmir scene

Situation in Kashmir far from normal, says Yashwant Sinha after visit to Valley



We are strengthening our defence capability through increased domestic production

— **Rajnath Singh**  
Defence minister

### SHORT TAKES

## 5 held for posing as Naxals in Odisha

**Koraput:** The Odisha police on Sunday night arrested five persons on charges of blackmailing a mine owner in the area by posing as Maoists. As per reports, a granite mine owner, C. Venugopal in Peta area under Motu police limits in Malkangiri district was charged an extortion of '50 lakh through telephone from one of the arrestees, failing which, he threatened that Venu and his office in the area would be bombed. Not only Venugopal, even his office staff were threatened to comply with the demands of the imposters, sources said. After frequent threat calls for nearly 15 days, Venugopal decided to take help of police and finally registered an FIR.

## 3 hockey players killed in mishap

**Bhubaneswar:** Three hockey players were killed and another injured after a bus hit their two-wheeler near Laxmiposh village in Sundergarh district on Sunday evening, reports said on Monday. As per reports, the players were returning home on a two-wheeler after participating in a match at Sanabarsa village. The deceased were identified as Hemant Bada, Krishna Pradhan and Sandeep Pradhan of Dalaki village. The injured, Rabindra Rout has been admitted to Jamabahal hospital. A bus en route to Kutra from Dalaki collided head on with the two-wheeler of the players.

## Soldier dies after falling into gorge

**Jammu:** A 29-year-old army jawan died after he slipped and fell into a gorge during patrolling along the Line of Control (LoC) in north Kashmir's Kupwara district, officials said on Monday. Due to inclement weather and snowfall, the jawan slipped and fell into the gorge during patrolling along the LoC in Keran sector of Kupwara district on Sunday night, they said. The jawan has been identified as Naik Peera Ram of Rajasthan. — PTI

## SPG FOR EX-PM, FAMILY ONLY FOR 5 YEARS

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
official residence. The minister said in the existing law there is no cut-off period for providing SPG protection to former PMs or members of their immediate families. Thus, the number of individuals to be provided SPG cover can potentially become quite large. In such a scenario, there can be constraints on resources, training and related infrastructure of the SPG. This can also impact the effectiveness of the elite force in providing adequate cover to the principle protectee — the incumbent Prime Minister, the bill says. The proposed legislation says that therefore, it is considered essential to amend the law to focus on the core mandate, as the security of the Prime Minister, as head of the government, is of paramount importance. The Special Protection Group Act 1988 was enacted to provide for the constitution and regulation of the SPG as an armed force of the Union for providing proximate security to the PM and his immediate family members. It was amended in 1991, 1994, 1999 and 2003 to extend SPG cover to former PMs and their immediate family members too, for different periods from the day the PM demitted office. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is now the only person to be protected by the 4,000-strong SPG.

■ **'Drought, scanty monsoon pushed people to eastern & southern parts of India around 3,000 years ago'**

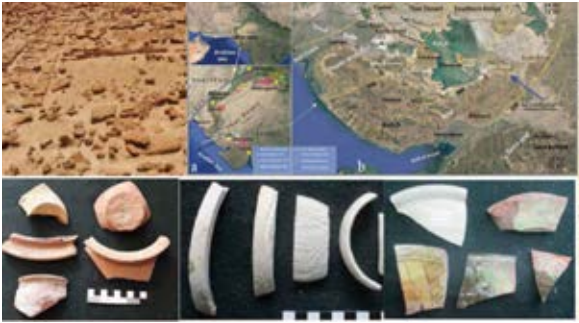
# Climate change not a new phenomenon: Study

**B.R. SRIKANTH**  
BENGALURU, NOV 25

A team of scientists, which reported that the Indus Valley Civilisation is much older than it was thought earlier, has discovered that climate change and scanty monsoon is not a new phenomenon, but was witnessed thousands of years ago, forcing people to migrate from western territory to greener pastures in the east and southern areas of the country.

In a study sponsored by Isro and Infosys Foundation, these scientists have discovered two unexplored settlements of early Iron Age to early

Historic and Historic to Medieval age, close to the Indo-Pak border in the hyper-arid region of western Great Rann of Kutch near the southern fringe of Thar Desert, Gujarat, as well as how human colonies moved towards the east and south because of poor monsoon and drying up of rivers in the west. The uncovering of remains of 3000 years-old Iron Age era marks a breakthrough in archaeology as that period was considered a 'Dark Age' because of lack of evidence. Apart from artifacts like pitcher, jars and bull figurines, numerous animal remains like bones, and teeth have been



Materials and maps linked to the study; the four researchers (right).

recovered which helped in reconstructing the social subsistence pattern. The site also yielded black glass bangles, pieces of blue glass, and large number of copper coins. The study was facilitated by

the Indian army in view of the region's proximity to the Indo-Pak border.

Prof Anindya Sarkar of Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Kharagpur, leader of the research team, told this

newspaper, the two sites—Karim Shahi region of the Rann and Vigakot in the Thar desert—were perhaps trade hubs. At Vigakot, the team discovered a 1100 year old Chinese Qingbai porcelain

probably manufactured in Guangdong province of south China and Sgraffiato potteries of tenth century Persia, suggesting it to be a part of a long distance trade between West Asia and China. He said "We found that bigger plants which are normally seen when the monsoon is good gave way to plants which are noticed in grasslands and ultimately changed to a dry zone. Of course, climate change in that era was due to natural reasons, and depended on earth's rotation around the Sun. Sparse rain created large scale climate refugees who took refuge in areas with good rain-

fall. If it could have happened in the past, it will happen in future too."

The study involved analysis of sediments, pollen and oxygen isotopes in fossil molluscan shells, indicating presence of active river system and some rainfall that probably sustained human habitation from the Early Iron Age to medieval times.

In addition to Prof Sarkar and his colleagues at the Department of Geology at IIT, Kharagpur, other scientists involved were from Physical Research Laboratory (PRL), Ahmedabad, Dean College, PGRI, Pune, and Department of Botany, Calcutta University.

## NSCN's recruitment bid foiled, 32 youth rescued

*Youth lured on pretext of jobs post Naga solution*

**MANOJ ANAND**  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 25

In what has set the alarm bell ringing, the NSCN (I-M), holding ceasefire and engaged in peace-talks with New Delhi, has suddenly intensified their activities on various front as Assam Rifle on Monday claimed that they have busted a covert recruitment racket of NSCN (I-M) in Mon district of Nagaland recently.

This has come close on the heels of Myanmar Army busting a camp of NSCN (I-M) and recovering a huge cache of arms and ammunitions with Indian currency worth ₹3.70 crore. PRO (Defence) Lt Col Sumit Sharma said the covert recruitment racket of NSCN (I-M) was busted in Mon on November 21.

Referring that on specific input regarding a

■ **This has come close on the heels of Myanmar Army busting a camp of NSCN (I-M) and recovering a huge cache of arms**

group of youth being taken by NSCN (I-M) cadres to Aopao camp from villages under Mon district for recruitment, the PRO said that Army and Assam Rifles pursued a Bolero pick-up vehicle and intercepted it on Mon-Aboi road, foiling a major recruitment bid. Two NSCN (IM) cadres were apprehended and 32 people hailing from Laokkun, Tizit town, Jaboka, Nokzang, Hatothi (Naginimora) and Chingphoi villages were rescued.

It was also revealed that youths from local areas have been lured away by various groups on the

pretext of providing jobs post Naga solution, the PRO stated.

Meanwhile, Assam Rifle has handed over all those apprehended youths to Mon police.

Admitting that recent activities of NSCN (I-M) starting from recovery of huge cache of arms and ammunition in Myanmar to recruitment drive in Nagaland has been alarming, security sources said that NSCN (I-M) leadership looks reluctant to distance itself from the culture of arms and ammunition.

Fearing that a section of NSCN (I-M) leaders may try to form their own armed units to hold back sophisticated arms and ammunitions, security sources admitted that NSCN (I-M) has been given ample freedom to work out strategy to hold back arms and ammunitions even if the peace-agreement is signed.

## J&K scheme to empower panchayats

**YUSUF JAMEEL**  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 25

The Jammu and Kashmir government, in its first major attempt to reach out to the people at rural level after abrogation of Article 370 and the state was split up into two separate Union Territories (UTs), launched the second phase of its "Back to Village" (B2V2) programme on Monday.

The week-long flagship programme is aimed at providing governance at the doorsteps of the rural populace and enlisting community participation across the UT of J&K, an official spokesman said here. "The week-long pub-

■ **The week-long flagship programme is aimed at providing governance at the doorsteps of the rural populace and enlisting community participation**

lic outreach campaign would be more intense than the earlier phase as it shall mainly focus on empowering Panchayats, follow up of 'B2V1, cent percent coverage of beneficiary oriented schemes and doubling income of rural people by giving more impetus to the rural economy'.

Reports reached here

from different parts of the Valley said that the endeavour, like the first phase of the programme, evoked only a lukewarm response from the people at many places on the first day of its commencement. However, the officials who spoke to this newspaper said that they were hopeful of the programme falling into place and drawing the attention of the masses in village across all the twenty districts of J&K in coming couple of days.

As per an official statement, the second phase of the programme will see more than five thousand gazetted officers and 657 UT and directorate level

officers visit their assigned Panchayats to receive the first-hand appraisal reports at the grassroots level about the developmental works.

"The officers shall prepare a report card and critical gap analysis at the end of their two-day visit to a village on a pre-circulated format," the statement said.

It added that J&K's lieutenant governor, Girish Chandra Murmu, his two advisors, the chief secretary and other senior officers of the UT will be visiting various halga panchayats in both Kashmir and Jammu divisions between November 25 and 30.

## ED to grill 3 top officials of Bhushan power & steel

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has decided to confront three senior employees of Bhushan Power and Steel Ltd (BPSL) with their former CMD Sanjay Singal during custodial interrogation. Besides, Mr Singal will be confronted with officials of nationalised banks during questioning, sources said.

Sources said, "Investigations have revealed that BPSL through its directors/staff, fraudulently diverted about ₹2,348 crore from the loan account of Punjab National Bank (Delhi and Chandigarh), Oriental Bank of Commerce (Kolkata), IDBI Bank (Kolkata) and UCO Bank (Kolkata) into the accounts of various companies or shell companies without any obvious purpose". The agency has already identified senior employees of BPSL, who will be confronted with Singal, sources said, adding investigators are also probing the suspected role of these employees in diversion of the funds. Role of certain officials of nationalised banks, who gave loan to BPSL is also being probed and they will be called for clarifications, they added.

The ED on Friday arrested Singal in connection with its probe into the case. Singal was arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after he was questioned for several hours in connection with the case.

## Army to study exercise of its proposed 'Battle Group'

**PAWAN BALI**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

As part of its new warfare tactic, the Indian Army is doing an assessment of the recently concluded exercise of its proposed Integrated Battle Groups (IBGs) to fine tune them.

The exercise was held in October in Sela in Arunachal Pradesh around 90 kilometres from Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China.

The initial assessment

by the Indian Army has shown that there is need to strengthen communication of the IBGs.

"Since IBGs are supposed to be leaner, the number of personnel from signals were reduced. This effected the communication during the exercise. In mountains, we found that communication could be difficult. So, this aspect will be looked at," said sources.

The Eastern Command is preparing a detail report of the exercise.

strengthening Indian Air Force's precision targeting. IAF's commanders will also discuss indigenisation of the Air Force, streamlining procurement of equipment,

strengthening training and optimisation of the HR policies.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh chaired the inaugural session of the conference.

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

Some nine months after the Balakot strike and the subsequent aerial combat with the Pakistan Air Force on February this year, current IAF chief R.K.S. Bhadauria told his top Commanders on Monday that the IAF needs to further enhance its operational capabilities to deter any misadventure by India's adversaries.

Addressing the second bi-annual IAF Commanders' Conference, Air Chief Marshal Bhadauria said that there was a need for enhanced joint training with the Indian Army as well as the Indian Navy for fostering jointmanship and ensuring national security.

The two days Commanders' Conference will discuss joint operations, anti-drone operations and further

## Scindia Twitter bio drops 'Congress'

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
results in Lok Sabha, with Mr Scindia losing his own Lok Sabha seat, the changes were put on hold.

Mr Scindia's old Twitter profile introduced him thus: "Former member of Parliament, Guna (2002-2019), former minister for power (I/C); MoS Commerce and Industry; MoS Communications, IT& Post", whereas his latest Twitter bio simply states: "Public servant, cricket enthusiast".

Mr Scindia also justified omitting his party affiliation in his Twitter account, saying he never mentioned it in his Twitter bio earlier. He explained he had revised his Twitter bio to make it

shorter on some people's advice.

The BJP, however, wondered aloud why the change of status by Mr Scindia in his Twitter profile had drawn the media's attention.

"It seems Mr Scindia is not comfortable with his present identity (Congress) and seeks to change his profile to give him a new identity. Does it not indicate that he is not feeling comfortable in the Congress?" BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said in Bhopal.

Mr Scindia's recent exposure of the Kamal Nath government's failure on several fronts, particularly the chief minister's inability to fulfil his prom-

ise to waive off farm loans up to ₹2 lakh, raised many eyebrows in party circles in Madhya Pradesh.

Some MP Congress leaders feel Mr Scindia is just using pressure tactics to force the Congress to make him the PCC president.

After Lok Sabha election results in May this year, the then Congress president Rahul Gandhi resigned taking moral responsibility of the party's electoral performance and Mrs. Sonia Gandhi was made the interim party chief. Mr Kamal Nath met the Congress chief regarding changes in the state unit. Several names were doing the rounds. Supporters of

Mr Scindia in the MP Cabinet came out openly in support of him. But sources say that Mr Kamal Nath was not very keen, and instead proposed other names.

It has been three months since the discussions on change in the state unit chief took place and there has been no movement. In the meantime, there was an Assembly byelection in which the Congress candidate won, consolidating the Congress' position. As of now, Mr Scindia has clarified his position on the missing link in his bio. However, if the party doesn't soon take steps to sort out differences, it could well be staring at a crisis in the state.

## SC judgment on Maharashtra floor test today

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
November 23, after the revocation of President's Rule at 5.47 am, the governor had granted him seven days to prove his majority in the House, which falls on November 30. Solicitor-general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre and the secretary to the governor, handed over the letter inviting Mr Fadnavis to form the government and said that the governor had administered the oath to Mr Fadnavis after he claimed

the support of 170 newly-elected lawmakers — 105 of the BJP, 54 of the Nationalist Congress Party and another 11 Independents and MLAs belonging to other parties.

While recalling the sequence of events since October 24, when the results of the Maharashtra Assembly elections were declared, he also said that the governor was immune to the proceedings in the Supreme Court. After perusing Mr Koshyari's

letter inviting Mr Fadnavis, the bench said it has to be decided whether the chief minister enjoyed a majority on the floor of the House.

Appearing for the CM, BJP and Independent MLAs, Mukul Rohatgi said that Mr Fadnavis went to governor Koshyari with the letter of support from deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar and added that "it is nobody's case that documents are forged or falsified". After he handed over the letter of

support by 54 MLAs of the NCP and 11 others, including Independents, to the court, Justice Bhushan said: "The list of 54 MLAs nowhere says that they are supporting Devendra Fadnavis... They never said that they are supporting Devendra Fadnavis."

Leaving nothing to doubt, Justice Khanna added that the "question today is very, very limited — whether chief minister (Fadnavis) enjoys majority support and for that there has to be a floor

test", a position conforming to the 1984 judgment by a nine-judge Constitution Bench which had, in the S.R. Bommai case, said whether a chief minister has majority support or not can only be tested on the floor of the state Assembly.

Maintaining that the BJP had the support of all 54 NCP MLAs, Mr Mehta sought two to three days' time to file a response to the petition filed by the Shiv Sena, NCP and the Congress.



# A new-look Mahabharata: Epic dance drama with a Bollywood, TV star cast



Sandip Soparrkar  
voxtrot

■ All history and mythology is based on cause and effect. 'Mahabharata: The epic tale' deals with the primary emotional and psychological causes that are the genesis of this destructive war. This play deals with three main characters, Duryodhan, Karna and Draupadi, who were the pivotal causes of the conflict. For the first time in history, Felicity Theatre unravels the friendship between Duryodhan and Karna.

There have been many dances, dramas, television shows and films made on the great Indian epic, the Mahabharata. We all have seen the BR Chopra's *Mahabharata* and also the recent Ekta Kapoor one. But what I saw a few days back was above the two Mahabharatas. I am talking about the theatre production "*Mahabharata: The epic tale*" written and directed by the very talented film, television and theatre stalwart Puneet Issar and presented by Felicity Theatre. This magnum opus dance drama is choreographed by the legendary Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan, Kathak Ustad Pandit Birju Maharaj and has renowned Bollywood and television stars playing various larger than life characters in the epic tale.

All history and mythology is based on cause and effect. "*Mahabharata: The epic tale*" deals with the primary emotional and psychological causes that are the genesis of this destructive war. This play deals with three main characters, Duryodhan, Karna and Draupadi, who were the pivotal causes of the conflict. For the first time in history, Felicity Theatre unravels the selfless and unconditional friendship and loyalty between Duryodhan and Karna. This dance drama presents the point of view of these two characters and highlights the causes that led to the annihilating war.

Bringing the epic alive on stage was not easy at all. The play has 24 dynamic actors, 15 junior artistes, and 10 dancers along with mesmerising music. While I watched the play with delight, it appeared to me as if I was watching a film on stage with actors coming out of the film and performing live in front of me. The show has some great use of technology, LED screens and 3D backdrops of the Kurukshetra war. The key moment when Krishna reveals his *virat roop* (universal form) is totally spellbinding and enthralling.

The planet has witnessed destruction based on the whims of a few people. In this dance drama, the narrative is done via Dharti Maa (Mother Earth) played beautifully by the renowned TV actress Meghna Malik, who explains no



matter what the causes have been, the end effect has always been the same: destruction of the planet and mankind.

Like I mentioned before, this play deals with three main characters, Duryodhan, Karna and Draupadi, who were the pivotal causes of the conflict. Apart from friendship between Duryodhan and Karna, the dance drama also presents the arrogance of Draupadi, the shrewdness of Shakuni and the obstinacy of Duryodhan which may have caused the conflict. But under the debris of all evil was buried the forgotten story of true friendship, unconditional sacrifice and bond between two friends — Duryodhan and Karna.

"*Mahabharata: The epic tale*", which runs for three hours spotlights that, "There is a little good in every bad and a little bad in every good". The dilemma of the Pandavas, Kunti's pain, Gandhari's helplessness, and Lord Krishna's guidance that has been created for eternity is all portrayed by an ensemble of stars, some of the best from the television and film fraternity with larger than life sets and production. The music requires a special mentioning which has been specially recorded to augment the overall experience of the viewers. The leading theatre production company, Felicity Theatre, headed by my dynamic and very enterprising friend Rahul Bhuchar presented this magnum opus in a poetic format, with rhythmic rendering of dialogues and tells us a story about good prevailing over evil.

A galaxy of iconic stars from the world of film, television and theatre that includes Puneet Issar (as Duryodhan), Rahul Bhuchar (as Karna), Meghna Malik (as Dharti), Urvashi Dholakia (as Draupadi), Gufi Paintal (as Shakuni), Surendra Pal (as Dronacharya), Aarti Nagpal (as Gandhari), Vijayta Bhargava (as Kunti), Danish Akhtar (as Bheem), Yashodhan Rana (as Lord Krishna), Karan Sharma (as Arjun) and Siddhant Issar (as young Duryodhan). This mythological extravaganza truly dazzles its audiences with its exquisite costumes, vibrant choreography

and powerful performances.

Talking about the play, Puneet Issar said, "This rendition of the *Mahabharata* brings forth Duryodhan's version of reality and truth as he saw it — the play throws light on the human aspects of his life such as his rock solid bond of friendship towards his friend Karan, his relationship with the elders of the Kuru clan and with Draupadi. This dance drama is an eye opener for many and it allows audiences to view this epic tale with a fresh new perspective".

My very handsome friend Rahul Bhuchar, producer and MD, Felicity Theatre, added: "Recreating the *Mahabharata* with some of the finest talent from cinema and television has truly been a fascinating journey. It is a blockbuster production with magnificent sets and a storyline that will keep the audiences captivated and gripped all through the performance".

Watching this Mahabharata is like watching a 70 mm performance on stage: It is on the level of a Broadway performance. Having competed 40 shows in a span of seven to eight months, Felicity is hoping to complete a golden jubilee of 50 shows by the end of the year and plans are on to take the production abroad next year too. The dates are already booked and on April 2020 America will experience this extravaganza. So, if you hear that this dance drama is in your city or around your city, then I suggest you better take out time to experience this brilliant show.

**Sandip Soparrkar** holds a doctorate in world mythology folklore, is a World Book Record holder, a well-known ballroom dancer and a Bollywood choreographer who has been honoured with three National Excellence awards, one National Achievement Award and Dada Saheb Phalke award by the Government of India. He can be contacted on sandipsoparrkar06@gmail.com









The economics of giving  
away goods or services

A pair of socks chosen to make an impression, to  
stand out or to express something about oneself

THE ASIAN AGE

TUESDAY | 26 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI

Oped

PAGE  
7

# In Kashmir, ‘democracy and morality can wait’



Gowhar Geelani

When it comes to Kashmir, both “democracy” and “morality” can wait! The dawn of August 5, 2019 came on Kashmiris like a “betrayal”. In the eyes of many perceptive Kashmiris, “the latest betrayal should not be a cause of real surprise or shock if one were a good student of history and the Kashmir conflict”.

For them, what happened on August 5 this year was a stark reminder that something similar had happened several times before — first in August 1953, and then again in 1964.

For Kashmir, the season of betrayals has been never-end-

ing. On August 9, 1953, the “prime minister” of Jammu and Kashmir, Sheikh Abdullah, was unceremoniously dismissed as the head of the state, and then imprisoned for over two decades in separate stints from 1953 to 1975. To begin with, Sheikh Abdullah, on charges of “treason”, remained in prison for 12 years with two brief intermissions — in 1958 and 1964.

Independent India’s first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru allowed Sheikh Abdullah, once his bosom friend, to visit Pakistan to meet the Pakistani military dictator, Gen. Ayub Khan, in Rawalpindi in 1964. However, Sheikh Abdullah was again put behind bars on his return to Srinagar. This time, however, for a longish term. By then,

Nehru had also passed away.

Celebrated historian Perry Anderson noted in *The Indian Ideology*: “The Intelligence Bureau had little difficulty convincing (Pandit Jawaharlal) Nehru that he (Abdullah) had become a liability, and overnight he was dismissed by the stripling heir to the Dogra throne he had so complacently made head of state, and thrown into an Indian jail on charges of sedition.”

Not only was the Sheikh accused of being “seditious” he was also falsely accused of “receiving money from Pakistan” in what became known as the Kashmir Conspiracy Case.

In the 1940s, Sheikh Abdullah was largely seen as an unrelenting figure of Kashmiri nationalism. He was the founder of the National Conference, which in 1931 began as the Muslim Conference and was the first political party of the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir. Besides this, Sheikh Abdullah became the first Muslim “prime minister” of Jammu and Kashmir after a Kashmiri Pandit (Hindu), Ramchand Kak. He had also

**In the eyes of many key Kashmir watchers, there has been hardly any difference between how the BJP is operating in Kashmir at the moment, or how the so-called secular Congress Party has dealt with Kashmir in the past**

spearheaded the Quit Kashmir movement against the Dogra ruler, Maharaja Hari Singh.

The late Professor Balraj Puri, a well-known academic from the Jammu region, was enraged over Sheikh Abdullah’s dismissal as prime minister and his detention. With the aim of registering his protest over the issue, he met Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru in New Delhi. But Puri’s earnest trip to Delhi did not bear any fruit.

He wrote in his book *In Kashmir Towards Insurgency* that “Nehru warned me against being too idealistic and asserted that the national interest was more important

than democracy”.

Historian Anderson, while referring to Puri as “an anguished admirer (of Nehru) from Jammu”, wrote: “When an anguished admirer from Jammu pleaded with him not to do so, he replied that the national interest was more important than democracy: ‘We have gambled at the international stage on Kashmir, and we cannot afford to lose. At the moment, we are there at the point of a bayonet. Till things improve, democracy and morality can wait’.”

Similarly, according to a Kashmiri academic, Prof. Ghulam Rasool Malik: “Nehru’s quiet reply (to Balraj Puri) had been that democratic rights were not applicable to Kashmir.” This was written by Prof. Malik in his essay “In The Arms of Fire” in a book titled *A Desolation Called Peace*.

Meanwhile, soon after Sheikh Abdullah’s dismissal from office and later arrest in 1953, the Congress Party installed Ghulam Mohammed Bakshi’s regime. Bakshi’s government was considered both brutal as well as corrupt and, according to Anderson,

“depended entirely on the Indian security apparatus”.

When after a decade in office, Bakshi’s utility was over and he too was considered a liability for New Delhi, the Congress installed another man named G.M. Sadiq. Unlike Sheikh Abdullah and Bakshi (both “prime ministers”), Sadiq was installed as chief minister. Sheikh Abdullah was discarded for Bakshi, and Bakshi for Sadiq. As an aside, all Assembly elections till 1977, and also the one in 1987, were rigged.

Additionally, it was during Sadiq’s government that the nomenclatures of Sadr-i-Riyasat (president) and Wazir-e-A’zam (prime minister) were dispensed with, and replaced by those of “governor” and “chief minister”, which was perceived by native Kashmiris as a major assault on Kashmir’s regional autonomy after the Sheikh’s arrest and removal.

In the mid-1960s, chief minister G.M. Sadiq dropped all cases against Sheikh Abdullah and his associates, including the infamous Kashmir Conspiracy Case.

In the eyes of many key Kashmir watchers, there has been hardly any difference between how the Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is operating in Kashmir at the moment, or how the so-called secular Congress Party has dealt with Kashmir in the past. Both parties have stripped off Kashmir’s autonomy in the name of “national interest”, “national security” and “national integration”.

On August 5, 2019, the BJP not only removed Kashmir’s autonomy, the saffron party also divided the state into two separate Union territories — Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir. Native Kashmiris have interpreted the BJP’s move as a “strategy of revenge and repression”, with an ideological and civilisational view on Kashmir. A Kashmiri on the street says that it is a “smash and grab” operation.

But please do remember, when it comes to Kashmir, “democracy and morality can wait”!

The writer is a journalist, author and political commentator

# Confidential EC meet exposes govt lies to Parliament



Nitin Sethi

This is Part 2 of the 6-part #PaaisaPolitics investigative series by HuffPost. Reprinted with permission from the Huffington Post.

Eager to legalise a route to anonymously funnel corporate money into the coffers of political parties, the Narendra Modi-led government dismissed the Election Commission of India’s strident opposition to electoral bonds, lied to the Indian Parliament and finally resorted to a hurried cover-up when its misstatements were caught out.

Previously unpublished documents obtained by *HuffPost India* reveal that three senior bureaucrats came up with six different convoluted explanations to protect then minister of state P. Radhakrishnan when he was caught lying about electoral bonds on the floor of the Parliament, Indian democracy’s most hallowed ground.

A confidential note, included in the documents, show senior bureaucrats knowingly sought to mislead Election Commission officials in an ultimately unsuccessful attempt to blunt the EC’s opposition to electoral bonds.

The Election Commission wasn’t the only one to see its suggestions summarily disregarded. The government made a show of asking Opposition political parties for their views on the matter, even as the finance ministry continued to design the scheme without waiting to hear back from them or responding to their queries.

Taken as a whole, the documents reviewed by *HuffPost India* expose the Narendra Modi government’s double-peak on electoral bonds, a controversial financial instrument first unveiled in 2017 by then finance minister Arun Jaitley, that allows any corporation, trust, NGO or individual to donate unlimited amounts of money to India’s political parties.

Ninety five per cent of the money gathered by the first tranche of such bonds has gone to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), according to data compiled by the Association for Democratic Reforms.

The Supreme Court is currently hearing a petition on the legality of such bonds. Now, documents obtained under the Right to Information Act by transparency activist Commodore (Retd.) Lokesh Batra suggest that the government’s utterances and assurances on the matter cannot be trusted, even when they are made before institutions like the Parliament.

In the winter session of Parliament in 2018, Rajya Sabha member Mohammad Nadimul Haque asked the government a simple question: Had the Election Commission of India raised concerns about electoral bonds?

The then minister of state for

finance, P. Radhakrishnan, replied that the government had not received “any concerns from the Election Commission on the issue of Electoral Bearer Bonds”.

This was false, as internal communications between the government — also exposed by Batra, the transparency activist — soon made clear. Haque filed a breach of privilege complaint against the minister for lying to Parliament, and the media picked up the story.

Now, *HuffPost India* can reveal just how the government tried to walk back from Radhakrishnan’s false utterances in Parliament. Even the government’s response to the breach-of-privilege complaint was not wholly honest. Implicit in all this correspondence is one simple question: Why was the government so eager to muzzle the Election Commission’s opposition to Electoral Bonds?

The finance ministry told *HuffPost India* it would not be able to provide detailed responses to specific questions as it was busy preparing next year’s Union Budget, but said that all the decisions were taken “in good faith”.

All the issues raised in the email are on the policy decisions taken by the then respective competent authorities. In this context, it may be mentioned that in the government organisations all the decisions are taken in good faith and in the larger public interest. Interpretation of decisions taken may have different perspectives, hence an appropriate explanation may only be given, after taking into consideration all the aspects factored into the decision making process,” the finance ministry said in an email.

## COVERING UP EC OBJECTIONS

In May 2017, the Election Commission of India wrote to the Union ministry of law and justice, warning that electoral bonds would help political parties hide illegal donations from foreign sources. Dubious donors could now set up shell companies to funnel black money to politicians and mask the true source of the money.

The Commission wanted electoral bonds and other legal changes made by the government to reduce transparency in funding of political parties to be rolled back.

On July 3, 2017, the law ministry forwarded the Election Commission’s concerns to the department of economic affairs of the finance ministry; but the finance ministry simply pretended it had never heard from the Commission.

Rather than responding to the Commission’s fundamental concerns in writing to the law ministry, then finance minister Arun Jaitley ordered a meeting be called with both the RBI and the Election Commission to “finalise the structure of the Electoral Bonds”.

## ELECTORAL BONDS-2

**Documents obtained by HuffPost India reveal that three senior bureaucrats came up with six different explanations to protect then minister of state P. Radhakrishnan when he was caught lying about electoral bonds on the floor of the Parliament**

In the face of such strident opposition from the EC, the government chose to steamroll ahead, rather than revisit its insistence on a secrecy-laden funding route for political parties.

The meeting was held on July 19, 2017, and attended by two officials from the Election Commission. Economic affairs secretary S.C. Garg later recorded in his files that he briefed the two and “laid emphasis that the scheme does provide a level-playing field and encourage transparent funding of political parties”.

Records from the law and justice ministry show the Election Commission was still not impressed.

A note dated September 22, 2017, by Garg, addressed to the finance minister and marked “confidential”, points to another meeting that he held on July 28, 2017, directly with the then Chief Election Commissioner Achal Kumar and two Election Commissioners Om Prakash Rawat and Sunil Arora.

In his note, Garg wrote that he had told the Commissioners that companies would make accounting entries in their books when buying electoral bonds, which would ensure “complete transparency” regarding “source of funds used for buying electoral bonds” as well as the “quantum of political donations”.

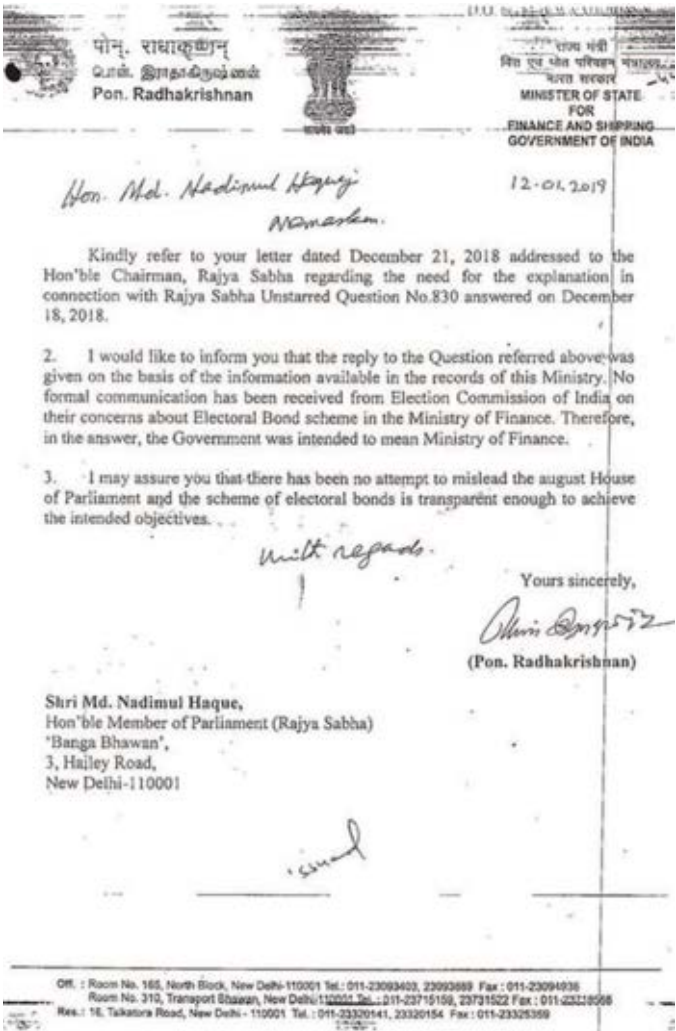
This was false: Companies are not required to detail to whom they donated electoral bonds in their profit-and-loss statements and balance sheets. Only the aggregated profit-and-loss accounts and balance sheets, which form part of the annual submissions to the government, are available for public scrutiny.

Garg said he explained to the Commissioners the “provisions and justification for key features of the electoral bonds for ensuring anonymity of the donations made, which ensures greater degree of freedom to the donors and provide a level playing field to the political parties”.

Garg’s confidential note points to several concerns raised yet again by the Election Commissioners in person in this meeting, including that the bonds could allow shell companies to launder money to political parties. It also points out how the Commission still wanted the government to change some provisions to provide more transparency.

Yet, he records, “It is my understanding that the Commission was reasonably satisfied about the electoral bonds being a fair and more transparent system of political donations.”

This was, once again, a false statement.



The letter sent by P. Radhakrishnan

Even as late as October 2018, the law and justice ministry records show, the Election Commission continued to insist upon the rollback of the bonds and other anti-transparency provisions the government had introduced. The ministry’s records also show the finance ministry continued to ignore reminders to respond to the Commission’s formally submitted views.

These records of face-to-face meetings between officials of the finance ministry and the Election Commission, and all the correspondence detailed above, makes clear that the finance ministry knew of the Election Commission’s objections to the electoral bond scheme.

Which makes it all the more puzzling why minister of state for finance Radhakrishnan, responding to Haque’s question in the winter session of 2018, confidently told Parliament that the government had not received “any concerns from Election Commission on the issue of Electoral Bearer Bonds”.

Transparency activist Batra’s revelations that the Election Commission had indeed written to the ministry of law and justice with its objections were published in the press. Based on these, Haque sent a notice for breach of privilege, which was forwarded by the Rajya Sabha secretariat for the finance ministry’s response on December 28, 2018.

Radhakrishnan had been caught misleading Parliament, and the finance ministry tied itself in knots to defend the indefensible.

Several options, all of them lies, each more convoluted than the other, were proposed as a way to hide the facts.

One official, deputy director Vijay Kumar, who had been

handling the electoral bond scheme all through, advised on January 1, 2019, that while the economic affairs secretary Garg had even met the Election Commissioner officials personally on the issue, they could still say that the Election Commission had not directly apprised them of their concerns in writing. So, he advised his seniors that the minister of state for finance, Radhakrishnan, had not lied to the Parliament.

The economic affairs secretary Garg had a more sophisticated argument, steeped in deeper bureaucratise, to make. He first admitted Radhakrishnan had given a wrong statement to Parliament. On January 2, 2019, he penned down his views, “There is a flow in the answer given. It has been stated that the government had not received any concerns from the Election Commission. If it was noted that the ministry of finance did not receive any concern it could have been correct in light of the facts brought out above.”

Then he suggested two options: “Either clarify to the minister that the government in answer for parts (d) and (e) was meant to be ministry of finance or make a clarificatory statement in the House about correct facts of the case. Please examine and let us discuss with FM,” he penned down.

Based on the inputs from his boss, Garg’s subordinate, joint secretary of the budget division, came up with three innovative excuses to claim that the minister of state had not told a lie.

Two of these were based on bureaucratic jargon and the third on obfuscation of the truth. He said, “There exists no official communication

between the Election Commission of India and the ministry of finance informing the ministry of finance of any concerns on the issue of electoral bonds. The newspaper reports refer to the letter of EC dated May 26, 2017. This letter was not received in the ministry of finance. Therefore ministry of finance never had any opportunity to examine the letter referred to in the newspapers.”

This was a lie. As other media reports have revealed, the Election Commission’s letter had been received by the finance ministry, including by the division that was drumming up these lies and the department of revenue, from where the idea of electoral bonds had originated on government records. To top it all, as *HuffPost India* has revealed for the first time above, the department of economic affairs secretary, Garg, had personally met the Election Commissioners on July 28, 2018 to discuss their apprehensions over electoral bonds.

Yet, Garg agreed with the argument that the government should brazen it out in the Parliament. So did finance minister Jaitley.

Consequently, on January 12, 2019, the minister of state for finance, Radhakrishnan replied to Haque, “No formal communication has been received from the Election Commission of India on their concerns about electoral bonds scheme in the ministry of finance. Therefore in the answer, government was intended to mean the ministry of finance. I may assure you there is no attempt to mislead the August House of Parliament and the scheme of electoral bonds is transparent enough to achieve the intended objectives.”

Batra, the transparency activist, exposed this cover-up as well. He found that the finance ministry had also received the Election Commission’s letter of objections through the law and justice ministry on July 3, 2017. This particular letter from the Election Commission was circulated to all departments and divisions that dealt with electoral bonds.

One of them — the financial sector reforms and legislation division under the department of economic affairs, which was supervising the implementation of the bonds — even agreed with the Election Commission’s views. But the finance ministry just would not respond in writing to the objections. To do so would have meant acknowledging the Commission had conceptual and fundamental problems with the electoral bonds and not just procedural concerns.

The Election Commissioners remained consistently opposed to the bonds even after meeting in person with economic affairs secretary, documents with *HuffPost India* show.

The Commission’s continued objections became public knowledge when, in March 2019, it reiterated its opposition to electoral bonds in an affidavit submitted to the Supreme Court. But by now, electoral bonds worth more than ₹1,400 crores had already been purchased by corporations and donated to political parties.

In August 2019, the incumbent finance minister Nirmala

Sitharaman sought to lay the controversy to rest. She tabled a “corrected reply” to Haque’s question in the Parliament.

The corrected reply, which now forms part of the parliamentary record, acknowledges that the Election Commission had raised serious concerns about electoral bonds. This time around, the finance ministry did not use the technical interpretation of bureaucratic rules to deny the facts.

Yet, rather deftly, Ms Sitharaman also avoided answering the other key question Haque had originally asked: What had the government done to address the concerns of the Election Commission?

To this question, the minister merely furnished a cut-paste answer detailing the features of the electoral bonds scheme that the government has been running for nearly two years.

## WHO’S LISTENING?

It was not just the Election Commission or the RBI which the government pretended to consult during the setting up of the electoral bonds scheme even as it steamrolled ahead with its plans. It did the same to political parties as well, show documents.

On May 2, 2017, finance minister Jaitley wrote to India’s Opposition parties, asking for suggestions on how to improve and implement the electoral bond scheme.

Several wrote back. “I note that the government is concerned with the issue of transparency in electoral funding of political parties,” the Congress’s then treasurer Motilal Vohra wrote. “Transparency implies that the electorate must know 1) Who is the donor 2) Which is the donee political party and 3) What is the amount donated.”

In the absence of any specific scheme, Vora said the finance minister’s speech and public comments suggested the “donor’s names will be known only to the bank issuing the bond and the donee’s name will be known only to the income tax department. In effect only the government will know the names of the donors and the donee and the people will not know.”

He concluded, “We will be able to comment further only after we have studied the scheme promised to be made by the government.”

Having heard back from the political parties, some outlining serious misgivings about electoral bonds and some asking for more information, the finance ministry mandarins worked feverishly to draft out a scheme that served their political masters. Once done, they asked the then finance minister if the prepared draft structure and scheme of the electoral bonds should be shared with all political parties. Jaitley stayed silent on the question, indicating the details of the scheme should not be shared with other political parties.

The supposed dialogue with the Opposition was just another perfunctory exercise for the government to claim that the electoral bond scheme had been formulated after due consultations, just as it had tried to do with the RBI and with the Election Commission.

■ To be continued





Charging tech  
Finally, Oppo bring the much-awaited 20W VOOC power bank to India

SHORT TAKES



APPLE SET TO EXPAND OPS IN INDIA: PRASAD

New Delhi, Nov. 25: India's information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said on Monday Apple Inc would expand its operations in the country and the iPhone maker's supplier Salcomp would make components at a plant near Chennai in southern India.

Salcomp will invest ₹20 billion (\$278.67 million) over the next five years to make chargers and other components at the plant and the move will also create 10,000 jobs, Prasad said.

Apple's phones made in India will also be exported, he said, adding that exports of mobile phones and components from the country would be worth \$1.6 billion each this year.

— Reuters

AIRTEL X LABS ACQUIRES QUIKMILE

New Delhi, Nov. 25: Telecom company Bharti Airtel on Monday announced the 'acquire' of Gurgaon based Quikmile, a start up focused on building tech-enabled logistics platforms for India.

The company did not disclose the size of the 'acquire' deal, which typically entails acquisition of people or teams.

"Quikmile's team will now be a part of Airtel X Labs. Airtel's digital innovation factory, which focuses on IoT, Digital Engineering, Artificial Intelligence, and Machine Learning," Airtel said in a statement.

Airtel X Labs team comprises of professionals from India and abroad, the statement said, adding that it is building advanced digital capabilities to serve the emerging needs of Digital India and is rapidly scaling up its teams and scope of work.

— PTI



TESLA NOW HAS 2L ORDERS FOR CYBERTRUCK

San Francisco, Nov. 25: Tesla CEO Elon Musk indicated in a tweet on Sunday that the electric carmaker received 200,000 orders for its electric pickup truck within three days of its launch.

Musk, who has been regularly tweeting about the Cybertruck's features since its launch late Thursday, has also been updating his followers with the number of orders the company has received.

In an earlier tweet, Musk said the company had received 146,000 orders for Cybertruck, and tweeted again on Sunday saying "200K" - an apparent reference to the number of orders.

The company's website shows that an immediate payment of \$100 is required to reserve an order for the Cybertruck, which has a starting price of \$39,900.

The launch of its futuristic pickup on Thursday suffered a setback when the electric vehicle's "armored glass" windows shattered in a much-anticipated unveiling. The overall look of the electric vehicle had worried Wall Street on Friday, driving the automaker's shares to close 6.1 per cent lower. During the launch, Musk had taken aim at the design, power and durability of mainstream trucks, only to be shaken when his boast about his new vehicle's windows backfired.

— Reuters

Web inventor launches plan to stop abuse

Aims to build 'a roadmap to build a better web'; more than 150 organisations have backed the plan

S'pore invokes 'fake news' law for 1st time

Singapore, Nov. 25: Singapore used its law to combat misinformation for the first time Monday, ordering an opposition figure to correct a Facebook post authorities said could "smear the reputation" of state investment funds.

The legislation, which came into force last month, gives government ministers powers to order social media sites to put warnings next to posts authorities deem to be false, and in extreme cases get them taken

down.

Tech giants including Google and Twitter have criticised the law, as have activists who fear it could stifle online dissent, but the government insists the measure is necessary to stop the circulation of damaging falsehoods.

Brad Bowyer, a member of opposition group Progress Singapore Party, was ordered to correct a November 13 Facebook post in which he questioned the independence of state-linked investment vehicle

Temasek and sovereign wealth fund GIC.

It came as speculation mounts that a general election could be called within months, although a weak and divided opposition is seen as no match for the long-ruling People's Action Party.

The government's fact-checking site said authorities do not control the investment funds' commercial decisions: "The government does not influence, let alone direct, the individual investment decisions

made by Temasek and GIC." The statement, published alongside a screenshot of Bowyer's post stamped with the word "false" in red, corrected what it said were falsehoods and accused him of seeking to "smear the reputation" of the investment funds.

Bowyer — a naturalised Singapore citizen originally from Britain — issued a "correction notice" to his original post, which directed readers to click on the link of the government website

for the "correct facts".

Bowyer said he had no problem following the request but vowed not to be intimidated: "A responsible and vocal citizenry is as much a vital part of our democratic nation as is a responsible and listening government". He used to be a member of the People's Action Party but recently joined the Progress Singapore Party, a new opposition group backed by the prime minister's estranged brother.

— AFP

years he has grown alarmed by abuse of the technology in society, business and politics.

The WWW Foundation highlighted rising cyber-bullying, growing use of the web by politicians to manipulate news media and widespread online scams.

It also noted that rates of web access in emerging economies lag far behind those in industrialised nations, with 46 per cent of people worldwide not online.

"We need real and durable involvement of emerging and developing countries," Germany's Altmaier said.

"Free access to the internet must be a fundamental, human right, valid for people around the world." As well as his "Contract for the Web", Berners-Lee has looked to tackle the web's issues from a technical angle, in 2018 launching a development platform called "Solid" aimed at giving users control of their data.

— AFP

Uber loses licence in London, vows to appeal

London, Nov. 25: London's transit authority on Monday refused to renew Uber's license to operate, putting the ride-hailing company's future in the British capital in doubt.

It's the latest chapter in Uber's rocky history with London transport officials, who have been subjecting the San Francisco-based company to ever tighter scrutiny over concerns about passenger safety and security.

Uber vowed to appeal the decision, which it called "extraordinary and wrong." The company, which has 21 days to file an appeal, can continue operating while the appeals process is under way.

Transport for London cited "several breaches that placed passengers and their safety at risk" in its decision not to extend Uber's license, which expires at midnight Monday.

The transit authority, known as TfL, said that despite addressing some issues, it "does not have

confidence that similar issues will not reoccur in the future."

As a result, it deemed Uber "not fit and proper at this time."

The company fired back, pointing out that TfL had found it to be fit and proper in September, when it was given a two-month license renewal. "We have fundamentally changed our business over the last two years and are setting the standard on safety," Jamie Heywood, Uber's regional general manager for Northern and Eastern Europe, said in a statement.

TfL had already been keeping Uber on a tight leash following concerns about aggressive corporate tactics and passenger safety. It had revoked Uber's license once before, in 2017, but a court later granted it a license lasting only 15 months, which TfL then extended for two more months in September, while also imposing a set of 20 stricter conditions.

In the latest decision, the

transit authority said it was concerned that Uber's systems "seem to have been comparatively easily manipulated" by drivers.

One key issue was a change to Uber's systems allowing unauthorized drivers to upload their photos to other driver accounts.

This let them pick up passengers as though they were the booked Uber driver on at least 14,000 trips, which means all those journeys were uninsured, TfL said.

The change also resulted in some passengers traveling with unlicensed drivers, including one whose license was previously revoked by TfL.

TfL also faulted Uber for another "failure" that allowed dismissed or suspended drivers to create a new account and carry passengers. And it cited other "serious breaches" involving unspecified insurance-related issues.

Shares in Uber were down almost 6% in pre-market trading in New York.

— AP



YET ANOTHER WINDOWS 10 UPDATE MESS

WINDOWS 10 USERS HAD HOPED THAT THE NOVEMBER 2019 UPDATE, SUPPOSEDLY A MINOR RELEASE, WOULD BE RELATIVELY PROBLEM FREE. HOWEVER, DASHING ALL HOPES, THE OS SEEMS TO HAVE BROKEN THE FILE EXPLORER

■ File Explorer is the app you use to browse the files and folders on your PC. So pretty important, then.

■ The biggest change the Windows 10 November 2019 Update brought was to update how you search File Explorer, giving you suggested files, and searching your online OneDrive account, when you use the search box to look for something.



■ This is yet another Windows 10 update that has included some annoying issues, and continues a pretty embarrassing run for Microsoft, where each new Windows 10 update the company releases appears to break more things than they fix.

■ The November Update, as well as the May 2019 Update, have been blocked from being installed by users of older versions of Avast and AVG.

■ As Windows Latest reports, people have been posting on Microsoft's community forum complaining about how when they click on the search box in File Explorer, they have to wait ages for the box to become responsive and a cursor appear.

5G subscribers to touch 2.6 bn by 2025

Stockholm, Nov. 25: Sweden's Ericsson expects the number of 5G subscriptions to reach 2.6 billion by the end of 2025, up from 13 million in 2019, with network coverage offering access to 65 per cent of the world's population, it said on Monday.

With its current momentum, 5G uptake is expected to be significantly faster than that of LTE, the telecoms network equipment maker said in its biannual Mobility Report.

It added that 5G subscriptions would account

for 29 percent of all mobile subscriptions in 2025.

Ericsson, which competes with China's Huawei and Finnish rival Nokia, said that North America is expected to lead the 5G uptake with 74 per cent of anticipated mobile subscriptions in its region in six years, followed by North East Asia and Europe.

"It is encouraging to see that 5G now has broad support from almost all device makers. In 2020, 5G-compatible devices will enter the volume market, which will scale up 5G adoption,"

Fredrik Jeydling, head of Ericsson Networks, said in a statement. The company's previous forecast in June predicted 1.9 billion 5G subscriptions in 2024 and network coverage to have reached more than 45 per cent of the world's population.

Ericsson said that China's 5G launch in October had led to an update of estimated 5G subscriptions for year-end 2019 to 13 million from 10 million.

The mobile network industry has faced a tough period with subsidising

demand for 4G and older network equipment. 5G spending in North America has helped to fuel a return to growth.

LTE (4G) will remain the dominant mobile access technology by subscription during 2019-2025, Ericsson said, with 5.4 billion subscriptions in 2022 and 4.8 billion expected by the end of 2025. The new generation of mobile phone technology will bring faster data speeds and better accommodate a greater variety of connected devices.

— Reuters

Now, brace for robots carrying your daily grocery

Italian company, Piaggio, joins the race for delivery robots along with giants such as FedEx, Amazon

Boston, Nov. 25: The first cargo-carrying robot marketed directly to consumers is on sale this holiday season. But how many people are ready to ditch their second car to buy a two-wheeled rover that can follow them around like a dog?

Corporate giants like Amazon, FedEx and Ford have already been experimenting with sending delivery robots to doorsteps. Now Piaggio, the Italian company that makes the Vespa scooter, is offering a stylish alternative to those blandly utilitarian machines — albeit one that weighs 50 pounds (23 kilograms) and costs \$3,250.

It's named the Gita (JEE'-tah) after the Italian word for a short, pleasurable excursion — the kind you might take to pick up some lacinato kale and gourmet cheese at the farmers market. Its creators have such trips in mind for the "hands-free carrier" that can hold produce and other objects as it follows its owner down a

sidewalk.

"We're trying to get you out into the world and connected to that neighborhood you decided to move to because it was so walkable," said Greg Lynn, CEO of Piaggio's tech-focused subsidiary, Piaggio Fast Forward.

Tech industry analysts are already declaring the Gita as doomed to fail unless it finds a more practical application, such as lugging tools around warehouses, hospitals or factory floors.

"That's a lot of money for what is in effect just a cargo-carrying robot that's going to carry your groceries," said Forrester technology analyst J.P. Gownder.

On a recent November morning, Lynn was hunched over in a Boston waterfront park, pushing a button that triggered a Gita to "see" him with its cameras and sensors. Then came a musical whirring sound as the device — a squarish, bright red bucket with two oversized

wheels — rose up and signaled it was ready for a neighborhood stroll.

A young boy in a stroller pointed excitedly. Another pedestrian asked to try it, and playfully shouted "ah!" as it

swerved around, keeping in pursuit as she switched directions.

The Gita doesn't require a phone or intrusive people-tracking technology such as facial recognition or GPS.



"It basically just locks onto you and tracks you," said Piaggio Fast Forward's other co-founder, Jeffrey Schnapp.

Other startups like Starship Technologies have a more conventional business plan for their own delivery robots. The company charges a delivery fee starting at \$1.99 if you order its rovers to bring you a Starbucks coffee or a lunch from Panda Express.

So far, the best habitat to find Starship's six-wheelers are relatively confined spaces such as college campuses; the University of Houston and the University of Wisconsin-Madison rolled them out this fall.

The robots, which look like oversized ice chests on wheels, can carry up to 20 pounds (9 kilograms).

"I love them. I think they're so cute!" University of Houston freshman Sadie Garcia said as one of the machines rolled up with a

bagel sandwich she'd ordered. She said she was so cold she didn't want to leave her dorm.

Starship co-founder Ahti Heinla said his San Francisco startup once looked at selling the machines directly to consumers, but dropped the idea after realizing it would have to price them at more than \$3,000.

Amazon is experimenting with a similar-looking machine that delivers retail goods in a handful of U.S. neighborhoods. FedEx is testing its own delivery rover in partnership with Pizza Hut, Walmart, Target and Walgreens.

Ford showed off a gangly two-legged robot to carry items to homes. So far, none are as far along as Starship, which has hundreds of its machines already in service.

While Forrester's Gownder isn't impressed with the Gita, he's bullish about delivery robots of the Starship variety because their autonomy will help save labor costs.

Gownder said it's more of a question of whether ground-based rovers or aerial delivery drones will prove more successful.

The wheeled cargo robots that have already made it out into the wild have significant limitations.

Starship's machines still require plenty of manual supervision to load them with food orders. They rely on remote pilots to troubleshoot navigation problems. Customers also have to check a phone app to tell the vehicle where to go and to unlock the bin once it arrives.

The Gita, meanwhile, might still be impractical for many people. It favors paved environments that are dense enough to have stores in walking distance, but not so dense that the machines get lost in the crowd.

And anyone who is simply looking to pull home groceries without heavy lifting can find durable wagons online for less than \$100.

— AP



Investor wealth rise by ₹1.81 tn as Sensex rallies

Tech antitrust cases may include privacy lapses

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,889.23	1.31
Nifty 50	12,073.75	1.34
S&P 500	3,127.48	+0.55
Dollar* (₹)	71.94	-0.07
Pound Sterling* (₹)	92.82	-0.44
Euro* (₹)	79.33	-0.33
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	37,895	+58
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	\$63.35	-0.04
IN 10-Yr bond yield*	+6.468	-0.028
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	+1.760	+0.001

\* As of Sunday

Attend Dec. 16 meet or get arrested: NCLT

The Mumbai NCLT on Monday ordered the CEOs of Axis Bank and StanChart Bank to be personally present at the next hearing on December 16 in a case relating to the IL&FS fraud, failing which it threatened to get NBWs issued against them. An NCLT bench issued the ultimatum while hearing a contempt petition against them.

RCom shares rally 6% on asset sale buzz

Shares of RCom hit their upper circuit on Monday, rising over 6 per cent, amid reports that Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries and three others may bid for the assets of debt-ridden company. On the BSE, shares of the company closed 4.55 per cent up at 69 paise apiece. Similarly, the stock advanced 6.67 per cent to settle at 80 paise on the NSE.

NephroPlus raises ₹316 crore for SE Asia expansion

Alternative asset manager Investcorp on Monday said it has closed ₹316 crore investment in dialysis service provider NephroPlus. The primary capital raised in this round will be utilised towards organic growth in India and taking the proven business model of NephroPlus to other markets, starting with South East Asia, Investcorp said.

InMobi's Glance acquires short video platform

Glance on Monday said it has acquired short-video platform Reposo for an undisclosed amount, a move that will provide it access to Reposo's network of professional, vernacular content creators and over 42 million users. The acquisition will enable Glance to tap into Reposo's regional influencers and create professional vernacular, video content in line with Glance's editorial guidelines.

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Early adapters of FASTags include commercial vehicles 63 lakh FASTags issued so far

# Congested NH tolls set to continue

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 25

With less than a week left before FASTags become a compulsory requirement at National Highway toll plazas, the slow adoption of the RFID tags means passengers will continue to face long congestion at the National Highways. Currently, FASTags, only 63 lakh issued so far, would account for about 40 per cent of the transactions at toll plazas.

According to the June quarter data of Worldline India, 52.2 lakh tags have been issued at the end of the quarter. Deepak Chandnani, MD, South Asia and Middle East, Worldline finds that the



total issuance would have moved up to 63 lakh by now. While millions ply on the national highways every day, only a fraction, currently, have FASTags. E-transactions account for just 35 to 40 per cent of the total payments at the 537 NH toll plazas. By December 1, all the lanes in National Highway

toll plazas, except one, would become electronic toll collection compliant. One lane will also accept other modes of payment including cash. Entering a FASTag lane without the tag will be penalised by double charge. Though the ministry is planning to issue on-the-spot tags for those without one, this will lead to a lot of confusion and inconvenience in the single lane dedicated for other payment modes.

"Initially there could be some convenience in the toll plazas," said Chandnani. "Though 63 lakh tags have been issued, half of them are not active. Once the new arrangement becomes operational we would see a

large number of the inactive tags becoming active," said Chandnani.

Among different types of vehicles, fleets of trucks, cabs, taxis and buses have been early adapters of FASTags. Personal vehicles have witnessed comparatively slower adoption. However, he hopes that once the electronic toll collection becomes mandatory in state highways in one or two years, the number of FASTags issued will double. "Currently, a large number of vehicles do not use the national highways or use them once in a month or so. However, many of them ply through state highways more frequently and this will necessitate FASTags.

## 2.75L houses will be ready by 2020

FC BUREAU CHENNAI, NOV. 25

Stricter compliance of RERA will make nearly 2.75 lakh new ready-to-move houses available in top seven cities over the next one year. This is 21 per cent of the under-construction units in these cities.

According to property consultants, Anarock, developers have to complete their projects on time as per the new RERA norms. Though currently the demand is slow, they hope that demand will pick up by next year, especially in the affordable housing segment. Ready-to-move units usually meet higher demand as they do not attract GST.

"RERA is gaining stronger ground in most states and many of these projected 2.75 lakh units are likely to be completed on time by December 2020. Developers are aware that ready-to-move homes are in greatest demand and will spare no effort in completing their projects on time," said Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock.

Over 41 per cent or 1.13 lakh units will be in the affordable segment, 33 per cent or 90,770 units in the mid-segment and 16 per cent in the ₹80 lakh - ₹1.5 crore budget range. Only 10 per cent will be in the luxury and ultra-luxury segments.

NEW INVENTORY

Though, currently, the demand is slow, Anarock hopes that demand will pick up by next year, especially in the affordable housing segment.

NCR will see the maximum inventory of nearly 68,070 units, followed by Mumbai Metropolitan Region with 56,760 units and Pune with 44,480 units.

## Sebi plans to tighten rules for brokers after Karvy debacle

ASHWIN J PUNNEN MUMBAI, NOV. 25

Market regulator Sebi is planning to further tightening the rules to deal with brokers misusing the client funds. This move comes as a fallout of the recent fraud in Karvy Stock Broking.

The measures likely to be taken by Sebi include barring brokers from offering clearing and settlement services.

According to sources, regulator is looking at allowing only well-capitalised banks to offer services like clearing of trades, custody of client

collateral and settlements.

The regulator feels that there is a systemic risk that needs to be addressed especially after the recent spike in incidents of broker defaults and misuse of client funds. Last week, Sebi banned Karvy from taking on new clients following alleged misuse of client securities for trades that were not authorised by clients. At an estimated ₹2,000 crore, it is one of the largest defaults by a stock broker in India.

In fact, Sebi had been considering introducing a revised structure a few years back.

As per the plan, the

client money will continue to be kept with depositaries such as NSDL and CDSL or a custodian and can be transferred to a broker only under the direction of the clearing corporation.

Sebi, which has been getting many complaints of misuse of client money by brokers, now wants to put in place a structure like a banking system where client money can't be misused.

The system will be similar to foreign institutional investors trade, where client money and security are kept at different places.

In the case of Karvy Stock Broking which manages accounts of 2,44,000 clients, several investors complaints came to Sebi on delayed payouts. An annual inspection conducted by NSE also pointed to discrepancies in trading between April 1, 2016 and October 2019.

"Prima facie a net amount of ₹1,096 crore has been transferred by KSBIL (Karvy Stock Broking Ltd) to its group company i.e. Karvy Realty Pvt. Ltd between from 1 April 2016 to 19 October 2019," said Sebi in the order citing the NSE inspection report.

## Airtel, Jio bid for RCom assets

New Delhi, Nov. 25: Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio, Varde Capital and UV Asset Reconstruction Company have submitted bids to buy assets of debt-ridden Reliance Communications, according to banking sources involved in the process.

RCom committee of creditors, which was to open the bid on Monday, has decided to meet again on Friday to finalise the winner, sources said.

"Bharti, Reliance Jio, Varde Capital and UVAR-CL have submitted their bids. Total 11 bids have

come for the assets of three companies — RCom, Reliance Telecom and Reliance Infratel," sources said. I Squared Capital, which was expected to buy for RCom's data centre and optical fibre, did not submit bid, sources added.

RCom's secured debt is estimated to be around ₹33,000 crore. Lenders have submitted claims of around ₹49,000 crore in August. "The CoC (committee of creditors) will meet again on Friday to finalise the bids," sources added.

RCom has put its all

assets for sale which include spectrum holding of 122 MHz that the company before insolvency proceedings estimated to be around ₹14,000 crore, towers business for ₹7,000 crore, optical fibre network ₹3,000 crore and data centres worth ₹4,000 crore.

As per the NCLT order, resolution professional (RP) has to complete the process by 10 January, 2020. RCom in the past had tried to sell assets to various companies, including Jio, to clear debt but the deals did not crystallise. Jio cancelled agreement

to buy RCom assets, including spectrum, as it did not want to bear the past liabilities of the firm.

Later, the insolvency proceedings against RCom started on a plea filed by Swedish telecom gear maker Ericsson after the company failed to clear its dues. RCom chairman Anil Ambani has tendered his resignation after the company posted a consolidated loss of ₹30,142 crore for July-September 2019 due to provisioning for liabilities after the Supreme Court ruling on statutory dues.

— PTI

# Fewer women, minorities get patents in US: Data

EVAN SULLY

Plenty of women and members of minority groups are hoping to invent the next iPhone, blockbuster medicine or top-selling toy, but too often they don't get patents that would ensure they get paid for their ideas.

A new report from the US Patent and Trademark Office concludes that those disparities could cost the US its technological leadership because patents are frequently the first step to attracting investors. "Innovation in the United States is highly concentrated, and vast swaths of our population are not fully participating," the study, released last month, concludes.

PATENT DISPARITY

Minority group members are underrepresented among those getting patents. The magnitude of the problem isn't precisely known because the patent office only collects the name, mailing address and residence of applicants.

Studies by independent groups such as the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation are based on surveys. A

Harvard University study last year found whites are more than three times as likely to become inventors as blacks. Other research commissioned by the Institute for Women's Policy Research concluded that only 18 per cent of US patents list a woman as an inventor.

The October patent office study recommends Congress give the office authority to collect demographic data with its own confidential, voluntary surveys — conceding that they need to be careful to avoid the perception that such data might be used in examining patent requests and deter underrepresented groups from applying.

The study found a variety of factors that led to the under representation of women and minorities among patent holders, including a history of legal, economic and educational impediments — from slavery and segregation to laws that limited the ability of women to own property. There also continues to be a lack of diversity in the types of fields in which more ideas are patentable, including science, technology, engineering and math. "It's difficult to tell where



in the system the exact breakdown occurs, but we do know it does occur," Patent and Trademark Office Director Andrei Iancu said in an interview.

Ultimately, the nation would benefit from expanding the diversity of patent holders, Iancu said. "For an individual, it helps with your career growth and potential. For a company, it helps you make and sell your product and be more successful at it," he said. "In the aggregate, it helps the United States."

One person who overcame the odds is Janet Emerson Bashen, president of Bashen Corp., a

Houston-based HR consulting firm, who became the first African-American woman awarded a software patent in 2006 along with her cousin.

NO CREDIT

"I was looking at historic people and one of the things I ran across is a lot of African-American women who came up with something and didn't get credit for it," Bashen said in an interview. "I wanted to make sure I could protect what I was developing and I wanted to monetise it. What better way to monetise it than to patent it?"

Though American inventors still command the

largest portion of the nation's patents, the percentage is declining in high-tech fields such as artificial intelligence and blockchain. Consequently, that could reduce any advantage the US may hold in areas such as AI, wireless phones and the internet of things, according to a yearlong study conducted by the law firm Kilpatrick Townsend & Stockton LLP and researchers at GreyB Services Pte.

"This is critical for our nation's economic vitality as our country becomes more diverse and technologically complex," said Leslie Flynn, a clinical assistant professor at the

University of Iowa's Tippie College of Business who testified before Congress in May on the issue.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections from the US Census Bureau show that in 2045, whites will make up 49.7 per cent of the population compared to 24.6 per cent for Hispanics, 13.1 per cent for blacks, 7.9 per cent for Asians and 3.8 per cent for multiracial populations.

"I don't see how we can remain competitive if we're only allowing a small slither of the population to participate in innovation," said Charles Hudson, whose San Francisco-based Precursor Ventures firm specializes in investing in minority-owned startups.

"Right now, the amount of capital in the hands of people that are committed to supporting these folks is well, well below what the market needs."

Despite being underrepresented among patent holders, women and minority inventors throughout history have revolutionised their fields. Stephanie Kwolek in 1965 invented Kevlar, the lightweight

fiber in bulletproof vests. Elijah McCoy was a 19th century Canadian-born inventor and engineer of African descent who invented a lubricant that improved train travel and is reputed to be the source of the phrase "the real McCoy." His name is on the patent office's Detroit regional office.

NOBEL WINNER

More recently, the patent office touts such inventors as Frances Arnold, a woman chemist who has a patent for directed evolution of enzymes and in 2018 won a Nobel prize, and Marian Rogers Croak, a voice-over-Internet protocol pioneer who also patented text-to-donate technology after Hurricane Katrina and transformed the way Americans donate to charities.

Earl S. Bell, an African-American designer who obtained a patent in 2004 for an ergonomic chair, said "there are many people with inventions but they don't have the ability to patent them, much less attract investment funds."

"If that disconnect could be solved, the floodgates would be opened," he said.

— Bloomberg



## LVMH aims to restore Tiffany's sparkle

Paris, Nov. 25: Louis Vuitton owner LVMH has agreed to buy Tiffany for \$16.2 billion in its biggest acquisition yet, as the French luxury goods maker bets it can restore the U.S. jeweller's lustre by investing in stores and new collections.

The \$135-per share cash deal will boost LVMH's smallest business, the jewellery and watch division that is already home to Bulgari and Tag Heuer, help it expand in one of the fastest-growing industry sections and grow its US presence.

It will have challenges to overcome too, as spending patterns shift and Chinese shoppers retreat from the US to buy more at home, one of the side effects of a Beijing-Washington trade war that has weighed on Tiffany.

And the US jeweller is still in turnaround mode as it tries to rejuvenate its image and lure shoppers online.

— Reuters

## Novartis acquires drug firm for \$9.7 bn

Zurich, Nov. 25: Swiss drugmaker Novartis is betting on heart drug prospect iclinsiran in a \$9.7 billion takeover of The Medicines Co as it challenges cardiovascular medicines from Amgen, Sanofi and Regeneron Pharmaceuticals.

Novartis is paying \$85 per share in cash, a 24 per cent premium over The Medicines Co's closing price of \$68.55 on Friday, to acquire the US biotech firm's lone drug, the cholesterol-lowering injection iclinsiran.

The deal shows Novartis CEO Vas Narasimhan is ready to spend billions on not just rare disease treatments, as it did in 2018 when it paid \$8.7 billion for gene therapy specialist AveXis, but also for cardiovascular medicines aimed at a market with potentially millions of patients.

Iclinsiran, which still must win regulators' approval, is set to require twice-yearly injections by doctors, far less frequently than the 26-injection regimens of Amgen's Repatha and Sanofi's and Regeneron's Praluent cholesterol-lowering drugs. — Reuters

## Godrej set to spend ₹700cr on expansion

FC BUREAU  
CHENNAI, NOV. 25

Godrej Appliances will invest another ₹700 crore by 2022 to increase the annual appliance production capacity. The company will also introduce newer technologies and carry out backward integration.

With the latest funding, Godrej Appliances' investment in capacity and technology expansion over a period of six years will go up to ₹1,100 crore. The company will use ₹700 crore to increase the total capacity of appliances to 65 lakh units. In the washing machine category, Godrej plans to double the current capacity for both fully automatic top load washing machines and semi-automatic washing machines at its Shirwal and Mohali plants respectively.

The brand also plans to introduce a new product line for fully automatic front load washing machines with four lakh annual capacity.

For the refrigerator category, the brand further intends to augment the production capacity of its range by 33 per cent.

■ Easy monetary stance of US Fed has improved liquidity

# Investor wealth rises by ₹1.81 tn as Sensex rallies

ASHWIN J PUNNEN  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

The massive rally that took the Sensex to record highs have made investors richer by ₹1.81 trillion.

The market capitalisation (m-cap) of the BSE-listed companies rose to ₹154.55 trillion as the BSE benchmark surged 530 points to hit a fresh closing high of 40,889.23.

“Signs of a cooling in rhetoric between the US and China has contributed to a resumption in foreign flows into India — today's (Monday) market move is in line with similarly strong sentiment across Asian markets,” S. Hariharan, head (sales trading), Emkay Global Financial Services, said.

“The prolonged trade war between the US and China was weighing heavily on Indian indices. Positive statements made by officials (from both the countries) last week indicating that a trade pact is likely by the end of December 2019 are being welcomed,” Sandeep Nayak, executive director and CEO of Centrum Broking, said.

Analysts said FIIs are preferring emerging markets such as India as the recent easy monetary stance of US Federal Reserve and the European Central Bank has improved liquidity in world markets.

“Whereas, India's economy is seeing a demand revival especially in the sectors of auto and consumer durables. The government providing relief to telecom companies over spectrum related dues and impending price increase planned by players has also revived interest in the sector,” Nayak said.

From the 30-share pack, 28 stocks closed the day with gains led by Bharti Airtel, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank and Axis Bank.

On the BSE, 1,413 scrips advanced, while 1,086 declined and 208 remained unchanged.

Analysts said indications that US and China will conclude a deal by next month lifted the sentiment across the globe.

Apart from that the reconstruction of Sensex indices and new developments over divestment to curb fiscal deficit provided confidence in Indian market.

Expectations of further cut in interest rate by the RBI gave advantage to rate-sensitive stocks.

## Time to move away from expensive stocks: Analysts

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD  
MUMBAI, NOV. 25

Despite market indices Sensex and Nifty-50 at an all-time high, there are several blue chip stocks and sectors that are trading at a discount to their historical averages and only now they are beginning to see some pull back.

So far, the market rally has centred on some heavy weights stocks and benchmark indices are not reflecting the health of the economy as expected.

Select stocks from financials (HDFC Bank, HDFC, ICICI Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, SBI, Bajaj Finance), IT (TCS, Infosys, HCL Technologies), consumer focused (Hindustan Unilever, Titan Industries), select auto names (Maruti, Eicher Motors) among others have been powering the rally for long.

There are several stocks in the engineering & infrastructure space (L&T), PSUs (ONGC, NTPC, Coal India, BHEL), cyclical like metals (Tata Steel, JSW Steel, Hindalco) and cement, pharma (Sun Pharma), telecom stocks (Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea) which have not been part of the rally.

But analysts say it's time to move away from expensive stocks.

Sunil Sharma, CIO, Sanctum Wealth Management said, “As we head into 2020, markets and the economy have diverged somewhat meaningfully. Avoiding the most expensive parts of the market and reducing beta risk in portfolios is a prudent choice in the current environment, post a fairly strong rally, in a weak economic environment with high valuations, and a stagnant consumer. We advise gradually reducing exposure to high valuation, low growth equities.”

Among the financials besides private banks off late life and general insurance companies (SBI Life Insurance, HDFC Life Insurance, ICICI Pruden-

### SENSEX OUTPERFORMERS AND LAGGARDS

Stock	CMP/52 Week Low( Rs)
Hindustan Unilever	2061/1649.70
ONGC	130.90/115.55
HDFC Bank	1271.45/1004.98
Mahindra & Mahindra	547.75/502.85
Bajaj Finance	4142.20/2330.00
Reliance Industries	1560.70/1055.35
ITC	247.80/234.10
Maruti	7237.40/5447
NTPC	118.05/106.71

Source: FC Research/BSE

tial Life Insurance, ICICI Lombard General Insurance) and AMCs (HDFC AMC, Reliance Nippon AMC) have shown big investor appetite and have become the darlings of the market participants.

Sector-wise, Telecom and Metal stocks rallied on Monday, in anticipation of their improving outlook. Bharti Airtel (7.20 per cent), Bharti Infratel (7.76 per cent), Reliance Industries (0.92 per cent), Jindal Steel (7.24 per cent), Tata Steel (4.99 per cent), Hindalco (4.81 per cent), JSW Steel (3.58 per cent) and Vedanta (2.74 per cent).

For the telecom stocks recent Supreme Court judgment on pending dues was a wake up call for the telecom players.

The government announcing two-year moratorium on spectrum charges and other levies as well also provides some leg room for the heavily indebted players like Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea to make some headway in meeting government dues demand within the given time frame.

Metal stocks rallied on news of US-China trade deal getting through by the end of the year.

Cement stocks have been also underperforming barring a few big names like Ultratech, Shree Cement as the sector has

seen prolonged monsoon period this year which has led to lower demand but demand revival is on the cards.

“Cement industry volumes likely declined in mid-single digit year on year in October 2019 impacted by extended monsoon, festive season and a sharp decline in South region volumes on a high base. Demand in Delhi turned weak in

November 2019 due to the construction ban (as a pollution control measure) till November 25. However, demand across most regions improved meaningfully month on month as construction activities resumes,” a report by ICICI Securities said.

PSU stocks are next to watch out for as the busy divestment season kicks off and also their dividend yield potential is on display with government requiring their profit sharing to meet the fiscal deficit target.

Similarly in the broader market, the mid-cap and small-cap stocks have not rallied, rather seen carnage of shorts, which may now get corrected as rich valuations of select large caps in the financials and consumer focused stocks segment may lead to profit taking now over a period of time and investors will start looking at beaten down mid-cap and small-caps as better options.

## Bengaluru tops in office rental growth in APAC

FC BUREAU  
CHENNAI, NOV. 25

The central business district (CBD) of Bengaluru has recorded the highest growth in office rentals in the Asia-Pacific region for the September quarter, according to a Knight Frank report.

According to the report, India and Australia were the only two countries which saw rentals growing in the quarter.

Bengaluru's CBD, which consists of areas such as MG Road, Infantry Road and Residency Road, saw the highest 17.6 per cent y-o-y growth in office rentals in Q3 2019, according to Knight Frank's Asia-Pacific Prime Office Rental Index.

New and higher priced stock coming online in the CBD along with higher rentals being charged by renovated properties saw rentals rising.

After Bengaluru, CBDs of Melbourne and Bangkok witnessed office rental growth of 15.5 per cent and 9.4 per cent respectively.

In India, CBDs of Delhi and Mumbai too found themselves in the 20-city index. Connaught Place in Delhi saw 4.4 per cent rental growth and Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai recorded a 2 per cent rise.

“The office market has been witnessing a steady growth in India, which is adequately reflected in the growth in rental values in prime office markets. Bengaluru, in particular, has seen continued growth

► In India, CBDs of Delhi and Mumbai too found themselves in the 20-city Knight Frank index. Connaught Place in Delhi saw 4.4 per cent rental growth and Bandra Kurla Complex in Mumbai recorded a 2 per cent rise.

► In terms of rentals, Delhi topped among the three cities at \$51.8 sqm per month

in leasing activities, due to the competitive pricing offered by its CBD, as against its counterparts in New Delhi and Mumbai. Bengaluru CBD sees continuous demand, which in turn has pushed the rental values upwards,” said Shishir Bajjal, chairman and managing director of Knight Frank India.

However, in terms of rentals, Delhi topped among the three cities at \$51.8 sqm per month, followed by Mumbai at \$46.2 and Bengaluru at \$20.5. “Bengaluru has seen an exemplary growth due to its competitive rental values which is less than 50 per cent of Mumbai as well as Delhi CBD rental rates,” said Parth Mehta, MD, Paradigm Realty.

Hong Kong, with a monthly rental value of \$206.6 per sqm, was the most expensive office market in Asia-Pacific in Q3, followed by Tokyo (\$110.9 per sqm) and Singapore (\$ 80.5per sqm).

## FM introduces Bill to cut corporate tax

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

In a move to replace the Ordinance that slashed the corporate tax rate recently, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman introduced the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2019 in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

The Bill will, however, replace the Taxation Laws (Amendment) Ordinance, 2019, promulgated on September 20, 2019.

Besides, the International Financial Services Centres (IFSCs) Authority Bill, 2019, that provides for creation of a unified financial regulator for IFSCs was introduced at the same time as well.

On September 20, the finance minister had announced the lowering of the base corporate tax rate to 22 per cent from 30 per cent for companies that do not seek exemptions, and reduced the rate for some new manufacturing companies to 15 per cent from 25 per cent. Including surcharges and cesses (levies to raise funds for specific purposes), the effective corporate tax rate will drop by nearly 10 percentage points to 25.2 per cent.

The move came after the country faced criticism over unprecedented growth of gross domestic product or GDP that slowed for a fifth consecutive quarter in April-June to 5 per cent, the slowest pace in six years. Also, credit rating agencies have slashed India's GDP growth forecast for 2019-20 pronounced slowdown due to long-lasting factors.

Besides, the country also underwent several financial pressure, such as mute domestic demand, weak global trade environment, uphill task of asset-quality growth at banks and liquidity pressure on non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) as well.

The healing measure of corporate tax cut was followed by other measures by the government to prop up GDP growth. These include efforts to reduce corruption and boost FDI and consolidation of PSU banks.

The finance minister also produced the International Financial Services Centres Authority Bill, 2019. The Bill provides for the establishment of the International Financial Services Centres Authority.

## Do more to fix engines: DGCA to Indigo

New Delhi, Nov. 25: India's air safety watchdog said IndiGo must do more to fix its aircraft fitted with Pratt & Whitney engines, linked to in-flight shutdowns, as it fears the budget airline may not meet its Jan. 31 deadline to replace them.

Deliveries of new planes taken by IndiGo must be used to replace the aircraft that are fitted with the problem Pratt engines, the Directorate General of

Civil Aviation (DGCA) said on Monday. Those planes should then be grounded until their engines are replaced with new ones, after which they can fly again. Indigo is the biggest customer of Airbus A320neo jets. The regulator's move effectively prevents India's top airline from expanding its network until it has replaced all the P&W engines.

Pratt & Whitney engines

have consistently caused issues since they entered into service in 2016, forcing IndiGo to ground its planes several times.

In a recent review meeting with the airline, the DGCA felt that the steps taken by IndiGo so far to replace all the engines “do not instil enough confidence with regard to the timely completion of the said task”. “If left unaddressed, we may find our-

selves in a situation, in which, we remain saddled with large number of aircraft with unmodified engines ... and we are left with the only option i.e. to ground them,” the regulator said in the statement.

On Nov. 1 the regulator had ordered the airline to replace all P&W engines on its fleet of almost 100 twin-engined Airbus A320neo family aircraft.

— Reuters

## Tech antitrust cases may include privacy lapses

BEN BRODY

Antitrust authorities probing Facebook and Google have struggled with scrutinising companies whose products are popular and free. Now they may have a solution: Use privacy as a test.

As the US Justice Department, Federal Trade Commission, Congress and the states investigate whether internet companies are flouting antitrust laws, academics and even some regulators are pushing to go beyond the traditional focus on price as a determinant of harm.

Enforcers, they say, should also consider privacy lapses as a proxy for anti-competitive behavior.

Their legal reasoning goes like this: Monopolists generally stop innovating, let product quality slip and treat customers poorly, knowing no competitor has the ability to grab market share. Repeated privacy lapses can be a sign that a company — Facebook is often cited as a prime exam-

ple — has let product quality and customer service slip, knowing its dominance is unassailable.

Senator Josh Hawley, the Republican senator from Missouri, buys this argument. Facebook, he said, has suffered few real consequences despite its shoddy record on protecting users' privacy.

Consumers have nowhere else to go to get the totality of what Facebook offers — a classic antitrust problem of degrading quality.

“One of the reasons data privacy concerns are so pressing is because these companies are monopoly size,” Hawley, a big-tech antagonist who sued Google when he was his state's attorney general, told Bloomberg last week. “If we had a viable alternative to Facebook that wasn't scooping up someone's data, that wasn't selling our information without telling us, then I would be less concerned.”

Hawley echoed a view that is gaining traction with federal and state antitrust enforcers, as well as the



leaders of a congressional probe into big internet platforms. One advantage of the privacy-erosion-is — antitrust theory is that no new laws are needed to enforce it.

Days after the Justice Department's Google probe was revealed in June, for instance, its antitrust chief, Makan Delrahim, linked the two issues, noting that quality can figure in antitrust analysis in addition to price and that “privacy can be an important dimension of quality.”

Delrahim noted that the

1998 case against Microsoft didn't revolve around higher prices. Instead, the US alleged that the software company illegally maintained a monopoly over personal-computer operating systems by blocking manufacturers from installing a browser that competed with its own. Both browsers were free to consumers.

Including privacy in the probe would expand the range of issues enforcers are known to be looking at, including Facebook's past acquisitions and Google's conduct in the digital advertising market. Facebook

and Google declined to comment.

US Representative David Cicilline, the Rhode Island Democrat leading the House probe of the tech sector, referred in a hearing earlier in November to “the obvious cost to personal privacy that has resulted from consolidation in the digital marketplace.”

Privacy and competition have long been treated as distinct areas of the law. Google and Facebook have agreed to pay fines for privacy violations under consumer-protection statutes, but they have faced little antitrust action.

One reason is that federal courts have clung to the consumer-welfare standard and often demand evidence of higher prices before deciding cases in favor of enforcers. Just last year, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled 5-4 for American Express Co. and against the U.S. and 11 states alleging that cardholders were harmed when American Express prohibited merchants from steering customers to cards with

lower fees. The majority's rationale? There was no evidence that American Express's policy harmed consumers by pushing up the price of credit-card transactions.

Now, Hawley, Delrahim and Cicilline are signaling a shift in the way the government thinks about antitrust enforcement, particularly in technology. State attorneys general are exploring similar ideas.

New York Attorney General Letitia James, who is leading the states' Facebook probe, said the coalition will “use every investigative tool at our disposal to determine whether Facebook's actions may have endangered consumer data, reduced the quality of consumers' choices, or increased the price of advertising.”

The public interest in the overlap is relatively new, said Dina Srinivasan, a former digital ad executive who has written that Facebook's data practices could form the basis of an antitrust case. — Bloomberg

OPENING  
BELL  
PROJECTION FOR TODAY

## Pattern indicates an upside breakout

Boosted by renewed optimism over US-China trade deal and the divestment measures to curb fiscal deficit, the market saw massive buying, taking Sensex to a record closing high of 40,889, up 530 points. Hopes of a further rate cut by the Reserve Bank in the upcoming monetary policy meet also triggered buying interest.

NSE Nifty closed with a gain of 159.35 points, or 1.34 per cent, at 12,073.75 — just shy of its life-time closing high. Sectorally, BSE telecom index zoomed nearly 7 per cent on the BSE, lifted by a positive sentiment in the sector in the wake of government's relief measures and plans to raise tariffs by telcos.

All sectoral indices closed with gains.

In the Sensex pack, Bharti Airtel was the top gainer, rallying over 7.20 per cent, followed by Tata Steel 4.99 per cent, IndusInd Bank 3.49 per cent, Axis Bank 3.26 per cent and Vedanta Ltd 2.57 per cent.

### Technical View

“On the first day of the week, the market has been able to control the bears with Nifty expanding and closing above these critical levels of 12,000-12,050 which has been controlled by bears. Further support of positive data from derivatives points out a bullish week ahead. We believe the levels of 11,80-11,750 will now act as a short term base for the next leg of the bullish rally,” said Mustafa Nadeem, CEO, Epic Research.

According to analyst, the derivatives data has pointed an upward shift despite a minor correction we have seen in the second half of the previous week. The shift is visible with long addition in 11200 - 11300 strikes while some good long build-up is seen in heavy-weight stocks from Metals and Autos making impending breakout further imminent.

“We observe a formation of long bull candle at the new swing high of 12,083 levels. Technically, this pattern indicates an upside breakout attempt of the sideways range of the last 8-10 sessions. The Nifty is currently placed at the key resistance point of 12050-12100 levels and a sustainable move above this area could pull Nifty towards the new all-time high of 12,300 levels in the next one week,” said Nagaraj Shetti, Technical Research Analyst, HDFC securities.

### Market View

The recent government move on privatisation to boost revenue collections that have been hit by slowing economy has boosted investor sentiments.

“Cues that US & China will conclude a deal by next month lifted the sentiment across the globe. Reconstruction of Sensex indices & new developments over divestment to curb fiscal deficit provided confidence in Indian market. Expectations of further cut in interest rate by RBI, gave advantage to rate sensitive stocks,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services



— ASHWIN J. PUNNEN





Golden words

Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urges China to preserve a free Hong Kong and backed Beijing's 'one country, two systems' principle of governing it



We cannot afford four more years of Trump's reckless and unethical actions

Michael Bloomberg  
New York City Mayor

IN BRIEF

Britain in a mess, says Tony Blair

London: Former prime minister Tony Blair said on Monday that Britain was in a dangerous mess and that neither his own Labour Party nor Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservatives deserved to win a Dec. 12 election. Britain is holding an election three years ahead of schedule because parliament was deadlocked over Brexit, unable to agree on how or even whether to leave the European Union. "We're a mess," Blair said, adding, "The buoyancy of the world economy has kept us going up to now, but should that falter, we will be in deep trouble." Blair said both major parties were peddling fantasies.

Kenya landslide claims 43 lives

Nairobi: The toll from landslides that hit villages in northwestern Kenyan county of West Pokot has reached 43, local officials confirmed. "I have received reports from search teams that the death toll has risen to 43," John Lonyangapuo, the Governor of West Pokot County said. At least seven children are among the total number of deceased. The bodies of the victims have been recovered and dozens of more people are injured, West Pokot County Commissioner Apollo Okello said. Flooded roads and bridges were swept away after the incident, hindering rescue operations, Okello added. President Uhuru Kenyatta sent out condolences to those lost in the disaster.

'CPEC opposition part of US policy'

Islamabad: United States Ambassador to Pakistan Paul Wayne Jones Monday said his country's opposition to the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) was in accordance with the US foreign policy. Responded to Pakistan's criticism of US principal deputy assistant secretary of state for South and Central Asia Alice Wells' statement about the CPEC, he said: "Pakistanis should understand her statement. It should be taken positively. Different aspects of this statement needed to be understood. The US wants to observe development and prosperity in Pakistan." Meanwhile, foreign office official Mohammad Faisal said the people and government of Pakistan would carry forward the CPEC projects for prosperity of the region. He said the economic corridor "is a colossal engine for generating employment, alleviation of poverty and betterment of economy."

DRIVER PLEADS GUILTY TO UK TRUCK DEATHS

London: A Northern Irish man, who is charged with the manslaughter of 39 Vietnamese nationals found dead in a truck near London last month, pleaded guilty to assisting unlawful immigration and to acquiring criminal property. Maurice Robinson, 25, was not asked to enter a plea to 41 other charges, including 39 counts of manslaughter. No trial date was set and Robinson is next due in court on Dec. 13. The victims, 31 men and boys and eight women, were found on an industrial estate in Grays, Essex, not far from docks on the River Thames, on Oct. 23. The oldest of the victims was 44 while three were aged under 18. Another 23-year-old man from Northern Ireland was separately charged with conspiracy to arrange or facilitate the travel of people with a view to exploitation and conspiracy to facilitate the commission of a breach of UK immigration law. — Agencies

ALL IN THE GAME



Iraqi children play a game of football on a street blocked with burning tyres, amid a general strike in the southern city of Basra. The demonstrations rocking the capital and Shiite-majority south since October 1 are the biggest grassroots movement the country has seen in decades. Sparked by outrage over rampant government corruption, poor services and lack of jobs.

— AFP

'Iran plotted attacks on Saudi' Tehran opted to target oil installations in the kingdom, say insiders

Bahrain, Nov. 25: Four months before a swarm of drones and missiles crippled the world's biggest oil processing facility in Saudi Arabia, Iranian security officials gathered at a heavily fortified compound in Tehran. The group included the top echelons of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps, an elite branch of the Iranian military whose portfolio includes missile development and covert operations.

The main topic that day in May: How to punish the United States for pulling out of a landmark nuclear treaty and re-imposing economic sanctions on Iran, moves that have hit the Islamic Republic hard. With Major General Hossein Salami, leader of the Revolutionary Guards, looking on, a senior commander took the floor. "It is time to take out our swords and teach them a lesson," the commander said, according to four people familiar with the meeting.

Hard-liners in the meeting talked of attacking high-value targets, including American military bases. Yet, what ultimately emerged was a plan that stopped short of direct confrontation that could trigger a devastating US response. Iran opted instead to target oil installations of America's ally, Saudi Arabia, a proposal discussed by top Iranian military officials in that May meeting and at least four that followed.

This account, described



PEOPLE SAID Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei approved the operation, but with strict conditions: Iranian forces must avoid hitting any civilians or Americans

by three officials familiar with the meetings and a fourth close to Iran's decision making, is the first to describe the role of Iran's leaders in plotting the Sept. 14 attack on Saudi Aramco, Saudi Arabia's state-controlled oil company. These people said Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei approved the operation, but with strict conditions: Iranian forces must avoid hitting any civilians or Americans.

There was no confirmation of their version of events by Iran's leadership. A Revolutionary Guards spokesman declined to comment. Tehran has steadfastly denied involvement.

Alireza Miryousefi, spokesman for the Iranian Mission to the United Nations in New York, rejected the version of events the four people described. He said Iran played no part in the strikes, that no meetings of senior security officials took place to discuss such an operation, and that Khamenei did not authorize any attack. "No, no, no, no, no, and no," Miryousefi said to

detailed questions on the alleged gatherings and Khamenei's purported role. The Saudi government communications office did not respond to a request for comment. The US Central Intelligence Agency and Pentagon declined to comment. A senior Trump administration official did not directly comment on the findings but said Tehran's 'behaviour and its decades-long history of destructive attacks and support for terrorism are why Iran's economy is in shambles'.

Yemen's Iran-aligned Houthi rebels, at the center of a civil war against Saudi-backed forces, claimed responsibility for the assault on Saudi oil facilities. That declaration was rebuffed by US and Saudi officials, who said the sophistication of the offensive pointed to Iran.

The kingdom is Iran's principal regional rival and a petroleum giant whose production is crucial to the world economy. It is an important U.S. security partner. But its war on Yemen, which has killed thousands of civilians, and the brutal murder of Washington-based

journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi agents last year, have strained its relations with US lawmakers. There was no groundswell of support in Congress for military intervention to aid the Saudis after the attack.

The 17-minute strike on two Aramco installations by 18 drones and three low-flying missiles revealed the vulnerability of the Saudi oil company, despite billions spent by the kingdom on security. Fires erupted at the company's Khurais oil installation and at the Abqaiq oil processing facility, the world's largest.

The attack temporarily halved Saudi Arabia's oil production and knocked out 5% of the world's oil supply.

The assault prompted US secretary of state Mike Pompeo to accuse Iran of an 'act of war'. In the aftermath, Tehran was hit with additional US sanctions. The United States also launched cyber attacks against Iran, U.S. officials told Reuters.

The plan by Iranian military leaders to strike Saudi oil installations developed over several months, according to the official close to Iran's decision making. "Details were discussed thoroughly in at least five meetings and the final go ahead was given" by early September, the official said.

All of those meetings took place at a secure location inside the southern Tehran compound attended by supreme leader Khamenei. — Reuters



Benjamin Netanyahu

IRAN PLANNING ATTACKS ON ISRAEL: BIBI

Jerusalem, Nov. 25: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Iran of planning attacks against the Jewish state and said everything possible would be done to prevent them.

The premier, who was indicted on corruption charges and is seen to be battling for his political life, made his remarks on a visit to an army base near the border with conflict-ravaged Syria. "Iran's aggression in our region, and against us, continues," Netanyahu said.

"We are taking all actions to prevent Iran from entrenching our region. This includes thwarting the transfer of lethal weaponry from Iran to Syria, whether by air or overland. We will also take action to thwart Iran's effort to turn Iraq and Yemen into bases for launching rockets and missiles at Israel." — AFP

Pro-democrats grab HK power

Hong Kong, Nov. 25: Hong Kong's leader pledged to listen to public opinion on Monday and referred to deep-seated problems in society after a landslide election victory by opponents of Chinese rule amid months of sometimes violent pro-democracy unrest.

Democratic candidates secured almost 90% of 452 district council seats in Sunday's poll, held during a rare weekend lull in clashes with police, despite a strongly resourced and mobilised pro-establishment opposition.

Hong Kong's pro-Beijing chief executive, Carrie Lam, said the government respected the results and wished "the peaceful, safe and orderly situation to continue".

"Quite a few are of the view that the results reflect people's dissatisfaction with the current situation and the deep-seated problems in society," Lam said.

The government would "listen to the opinions of members of the public humbly and seriously reflect," her statement said.

The elections saw record turnout after six months of protests and brought upset wins for democrats against heavy-weight pro-Beijing opponents, greeted in some voting centres by chants of 'Liberate Hong Kong' and 'Revolution Now'.

While district councils deal with local issues such as transport, their members also form part

The government would listen to the opinions of members of the public humbly and seriously reflect.



CARRIE LAM, Pro-Beijing leader

of the election committee for Hong Kong's chief executive. This could give them some influence over the next vote in 2022, although they only account for 117 of its 1,200 members.

Democratic Party chairman Wu Chi-wai described the election as the first step in the long way to full democracy. "This district election shows that the central government needs to face the demands of a democratic system," he said.

Along with universal suffrage, the protesters' demands include an independent inquiry into perceived police brutality.

The voting ended with no major disruptions across the city of 7.4 million people on a day that saw massive, though orderly, queues form outside voting centres.

"This is the power of democracy. This is a democratic tsunami," said Tommy Cheung, a former student protest leader who won a seat in the Yuen Long district close to China's border. — Reuters

Esper fires Navy secy in SEAL row

Washington, Nov. 25: Defense secretary Mark Esper has fired the Navy's top official, ending a stunning clash between President Donald Trump and top military leadership over the fate of a SEAL accused of war crimes in Iraq.

Esper said that he had lost confidence in Navy secretary Richard Spencer and alleged that Spencer proposed a deal with the White House behind his back to resolve the SEAL's case. Trump has championed the matter of Navy Chief Petty Officer Edward Gallagher, who was acquitted of murder in the stabbing death of an Islamic State militant captive but convicted of posing with the corpse while in Iraq in 2017.

Spencer's firing was a dramatic turn in the fast-changing and politically charged controversy. It exposed fissures in Trump's relationship with the highest ranks of the US military and raised questions about the appropriate role of a commander in chief in matters of military justice.



Edward Gallagher

Gallagher was demoted from chief petty officer to a 1st class petty officer after his conviction by a military jury. Trump, however, restored Gallagher's rank this month.

The situation escalated again in recent days. On Wednesday, the Navy had notified Gallagher that he would face a Navy SEAL review board to determine if he should be allowed to remain in the elite force. While Trump then tweeted that he would not allow the Navy to remove Gallagher from the SEALs by taking away his Trident Pin, which designates a SEAL member, the White House told the Navy it could proceed as planned, according to a Navy officer. — AP

TURKEY NOT TO RESUME SYRIA OFFENSIVE

Ankara: Turkey is fully abiding by the agreements it reached with Russia and the US regarding northeast Syria and is not resuming its military offensive. Ankara reached separate agreements with Moscow and Washington last month to remove the Kurdish YPG militia from a swathe of land in northeast Syria bordering Turkey, which in return stopped its military offensive. — Reuters

SHOCKING FACTS Leaked papers reveal brainwashing, not job training, at camps

Secret papers reveal oppression in Xinjiang

Shanghai, Nov. 25: Classified Chinese government documents made public by an international group of journalists describe the repressive inner workings of detention camps in Xinjiang, in a second rare leak in days of secret files concerning the troubled western region.

The publication on Sunday of the documents by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists follows a New York Times report on Nov. 16 based on a cache of secret papers revealing details of China's clampdown on ethnic Uighurs and other Muslims in the region.

United Nations experts and activists say at least 1 million Uighurs and members of other largely Muslim minority groups have been detained in camps in Xinjiang.

The ICIJ says it obtained a 2017 list of guidelines 'that effectively serves as a



A guard tower and barbed wire fences are seen around a section of the Artux City Vocational Skills Education Training Service Centre in Xinjiang.

— AP

manual for operating the camps', with instructions on how to prevent escapes, maintain secrecy about the camps' existence, indoctrinate internees and 'when to let detainees see relatives or even use the toilet'.

Other documents it obtained include 'intelligence briefings' showing how police have been 'guided by a massive data collection and analysis system that uses artificial intelligence to select entire cate-

gories of Xinjiang residents for detention'.

Foreign ministry spokesman Geng Shuang told a news conference on Monday that Xinjiang affairs were an internal matter of

China's, and that a stable and prosperous Xinjiang was the best response to what he said amounted to slander.

The Guardian newspaper, an ICIJ affiliate, reported the Chinese embassy in London as saying 'the so called leaked documents are pure fabrication and fake news'.

Reuters was unable to independently verify the authenticity of the documents. — Reuters

NORTHERN RAILWAY				
Tender Notice No. 15/2019-2020 Dated : 22.11.2019				
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement System				
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001 for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-				
S. No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
01	07190299	DUMP VALVE	321 NOS	20.12.2019
02	09192570	DRAFT GEAR ARRANGEMENT INCLUDING DRAFT GEAR	1340 NOS	31.12.2019
03	07191913	EMERGENCY BRAKE ACCELERATOR EB3/S/L	128 NOS	31.01.2020
NOTE: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.				
Fax No.: 011-23364008 E-mail Address: cos@nr.railnet.gov.in.				3779/19
Serving Customers With A Smile				





## A Pope's appeal

Pope Francis has urged for renewed help for victims of Japan's 2011 earthquake, tsunami and Fukushima disaster, saying 'nobody can start over alone'



I admire you (Camila Cabello) so much. Thank you for being you  
— Shawn Mendes, Canadian singer

### IN BRIEF

## Pompeii's grand baths opened to public

**Pompeii, Italy:** Magnificent thermal baths designed to be the jewel of Pompeii but destroyed by a volcanic eruption before they could be completed opened to visitors for the first time on Monday after a painstaking excavation. Marble pillars and blocks lie where they were abandoned when the city was submerged by pyroclastic flow from Mount Vesuvius in the 79 AD disaster. But excavators also had discovered a victim of the disaster, the skeleton of a child who had sought shelter there in vain. — *AFP*

## Lohan remembers 'best friend' Morton

**Los Angeles:** Actor Lindsay Lohan paid tributes to her former boyfriend, restaurateur Harry Morton, who passed away over the weekend. Morton, owner of Pink Taco restaurant chain, reportedly died last Saturday. He was 38. Lohan took to Instagram on Sunday to remember her ex. "Best friends. Best life," she captioned a photo of the two together at the Bobby premiere at the Venice Film Festival in 2006. The LA county coroner confirmed Morton's death to *People* magazine and the autopsy is currently pending. — *PTI*

## Taylor Swift moonwalks past MJ's record of most awards at AMA



Singer Taylor Swift emerged the biggest winner in the history of American Music Awards with 28 total wins, beating King of Pop Michael Jackson's record of 24 all-time wins. In addition to Artist of the

Decade award, Swift bagged trophies in Favorite Album — Pop/Rock, Favorite Music Video, Favorite Female Artist — Pop/Rock, Favorite Artist — Adult Contemporary and Artist of the Year categories,

making her the artist with the most AMAs of all time. The singer headlined the ceremony with a performance spanning a decade with hits such as *Love Story*, *I Knew You Were Trouble*, *Lover* among others. — *PTI*



Keith Urban performs during the halftime show of the Grey Cup CFL football game in Calgary, Alberta in Canada. — *AP*



Paula Abdul



Dua Lipa at the American Music Awards in Los Angeles on Sunday. — *AP*



Lauren Jauregui

## Doctors fear Assange 'could die' in UK jail

**London:** More than 60 doctors wrote an open letter published Monday saying they feared Julian Assange's health was so bad that the WikiLeaks founder could die inside a top-security British jail. The 48-year-old Australian is still fighting a US bid to extradite him from Britain on charges filed under the Espionage Act that could see him given a sentence of up to 175 years in a US prison.

In the letter to home secretary Priti Patel, Britain's interior minister, the doctors call for Assange to be moved from Belmarsh prison in southeast London to a university teaching hospital. They based their assessment on "harrowing eyewitness accounts" of his October 21 court appearance in London and a November 1 report by Nils

■ In an open letter to home secretary Priti Patel, more than 60 doctors have called for WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange to be moved from Belmarsh prison in southeast London to a university teaching hospital



Melzer, the United Nations special rapporteur on torture. The independent UN rights expert said Assange's "continued exposure to arbitrariness and abuse may soon end up costing his life". Assange used WikiLeaks to publish classified military and diplomatic files

in 2010 about US bombing campaigns in Afghanistan and Iraq that proved highly embarrassing to the US government.

"We write this open letter, as medical doctors, to express our serious concerns about the physical and mental health of Julian Assange," the doctors said in their 16-page open letter.

They said they had "concerns about Mr Assange's fitness" to go through the full extradition hearing, which is set for February.

"Mr Assange requires urgent expert medical assessment of both his physical and psychological state of health," the wrote. "Any medical treatment indicated should be administered in a properly equipped and expertly staffed university teaching hospital (tertiary care)." — *AFP*

## Thai court acquits son of ex-PM in loan scandal

**Bangkok:** A Thai court has acquitted the son of former Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra of money laundering in a case involving \$328 million in loans extended by a state-run bank to a real estate developer when his father held power.

The central criminal court for corruption and misconduct cases ruled Monday that Panthongtae Shinawatra was not guilty in the case involving loans extended in 2003 and 2004 by Krungthai Bank to Krissamahanakorn company. The Krungthai Bank is a state-run bank, extended to subsidiaries of real



Thaksin Panthongtae

estate developer Krissamahanakorn between 2003 and 2004 while his father Thaksin Shinawatra was PM.

Panthongtae had said a 10m baht (\$3,31,000) check he received from the son of the real estate company owner was an unrelated business venture. Thaksin, ousted from power by a 2006 military coup, was acquitted in the case this year. — *AP*

## Uber to not operate in London

**London:** Uber has lost its licence to operate private hire vehicles in London after authorities found that more than 14,000 trips were taken with uninsured drivers, BBC reported.

Transport for London announced the decision not to renew the ride-hailing firm's licence at the end of a two-month probationary extension granted in September. Uber was told then it needed to address issues with checks on drivers, insurance and safety, but has failed to satisfy the capital's transport authorities. — *Agencies*

# FOLLOWING THE CONSTITUTION IS ITS TRUE RESPECT!



## BEST WISHES TO ALL CITIZENS OF DELHI ON CONSTITUTION DAY

"The India of Baba Saheb's dreams lives in the Constitution. Every word of the Constitution is a sacred oath for us."

- Arvind Kejriwal  
Chief Minister, Delhi







## SPORT | Cricket

Tim Paine takes early shot at Virat Kohli

14



## SPORT | Tennis

Nadal won all 8 of his matches to help Spain win 6th Davis Cup

15



## GUIDE TO FORTUNE

Tick the answer and check them below.

**1** Following is the most widely discussed impact of climate change

- Increase in sea level
- Deforestation
- Soil erosion

**2** What kind of book is a Nebula Award given for?

- Science fiction
- Drama
- Poetry

**3** How many chapters are in the Qur'an?

- 114
- 12
- 47

## SHORT TAKES

### 2 arrested for robbing ₹1.52cr

**New Delhi:** With the arrest of two persons, the Delhi police on Monday solved a robbery from a cash delivery van in national capital. The van dealing in transferring Bank cash in ATMs, was robbed of ₹1.52 crores on a gunpoint in Dwarka on November 21. Police said that they have also recovered around ₹54 lakhs robbed amount from the possession of the accused. The accused have been identified as Dheeraj Puri (35), a resident of Burari area and Madan Lal (41), a resident of Rohini. Police said that the accused Madan Lal is also found previously involved in two cases of murder and two cases of robbery registered across the city. "Since, the incident took place in broad daylight and cash van of the bank was targeted by armed robbers, various teams of district were pressed into service to solve the case," said the police.

### 25-yr-old held for autolifting

**New Delhi:** With the arrest of a 25-year-old armed auto lifter, the Delhi police has claimed to solve four cases and recovered four stolen two wheelers. The staff of Bharat Nagar police station arrested, Rakesh (25), and recovered a country-made pistol along-with a live cartridge. Deputy commissioner of police (Northwest) Vijayanta Arya said, following a tip off, a raid was conducted near Satyawati Colony and Rakesh was nabbed. During interrogation, he disclosed his involvement in several cases of autolifting and three more stolen vehicles were also recovered on his instance. Rakesh was previously involved in five criminal cases of motor theft, snatching, robbery etc and is a bad character of Bharat Nagar.

### Man arrested on burglary charges

**New Delhi:** A 32-year-old burglar was arrested by the Delhi police, while he was trying to fled away after jumping from the first floor of a house in Vikaspuri. The accused was identified as, Jasson James (32) and was previously involved in a murder case. DCP (PCR) Sharat Kumar Sinha said that on late Sunday night, MPV staff comprising of ASI Dhanpat Lal and Ct. Satpal received a PCR call regarding a burglary. At the spot, Ct. Satpal entered the room from the window, where the thief was hiding. In order to fled away, the accused jumped from the first floor but was nabbed by the staff. On searching, 10 water taps, including two jet connections were recovered from his possession and was handed over to the local police.

THE ANSWERS TO TODAY'S GUIDE TO FORTUNE

- 114
- Science fiction
- Increase in sea level

■ Top court fumes, seeks report on pollution, water quality

## Better to get explosives, kill everyone: SC to Centre, states

**New Delhi, Nov. 25:** The Supreme Court issued a notice to all states on Monday seeking a report on air quality, drinking water and garbage disposal, and asked the Centre to take a concrete decision within 10 days on having smog towers in Delhi-NCR to combat pollution which has shortened the life span of millions of citizens.

Expressing displeasure over the failure of states in preventing stubble burning, the apex court said: "Should this be tolerated? Is this not worse than internal war? You better finish them all with explosives."

The bench said that the life span of millions of citizens has shortened and people are "suffocating" due to pollution in Delhi-NCR.

"Can you treat people like this and permit them to die due to pollution," asked the bench.

"Why people are in this gas chamber? You better finish them all. This wrong is going on for long," it said.

The apex court expressed displeasure over the performance of Punjab, Haryana, Uttar

■ The Supreme Court slammed the Punjab, Haryana governments for increase in stubble burning despite its order prohibiting it

■ The bench said that the life span of citizens has shortened and Delhiites are 'suffocating'

Pradesh and Delhi to combat pollution and sought to know as to why they should not be asked to compensate people affected by bad air quality.

A bench of justices Arun Mishra and Deepak Gupta termed as alarming the stubble burning situation and said not only the state machinery but farmers were also responsible for it.

It also sought a report from the Central Pollution Control Board and the concerned states on steps taken to check pollution in rivers, including Ganga and Yamuna.

It has asked the Centre

■ It also asked to explain within 6 weeks as to why states should not be made liable to pay compensation to persons affected

■ Taking serious note of water pollution, it said people have the right to get pure drinking water

and concerned stakeholders to take concrete decision within 10 days on having smog towers in Delhi-NCR to combat air pollution.

The court slammed the Punjab and Haryana governments for increase in stubble burning despite its order prohibiting it and said people in Delhi can't be left to die due to air pollution.

The apex court slammed the Centre and states for "blame game" on the issue of water and air pollution in Delhi.

The bench said that "right to life of human is being endangered" by the

bad air quality and water pollution and the states have to deal with the situation as "life span is being shortened" due to this.

The Supreme Court also asked all the states to explain within six weeks as to why they should not be made liable to pay compensation to persons affected by bad air quality saying it is their bounden duty to provide basic civic amenities, clean air and drinking water to citizens

"Time has come to require the state governments to explain why they should not be asked to compensate persons who are affected by bad air quality," the bench said and asked the states, "Why liability should not be saddled for the tortious act of government machinery for their failure in discharging their duties".

Taking serious note of water pollution in Delhi, it said people have the right to get pure drinking water.

"We are 'literally shocked' that water is polluted in Delhi and blame game is going on. What is this happening," the bench said.

— PTI

## Court allows transfer of Nirbhaya case

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

A Delhi court on Monday transferred the 2012-gangrape cum murder case to another judge to decide whether to direct Tihar Jail authorities to expedite the execution of the convicts.

District Judge Yashwant Kumar sent the case to additional sessions Judge Satish Arora, on an application by victim's parents in this regard, who will hear the matter on November 28.

The application was moved since the earlier two judges hearing the matter got transferred and the matter is getting adjourned continuously, the applicants had said.

The special fast track court, set up to hear cases of sexual harassment cases exclusively, is currently vacant at Patiala House Court and no judge has been appointed till now.

The application said that victim's parents approached the court since the convicts have exhausted all legal remedies.

## AAP takes dig at BJP as Puri makes U-turn on CM nominee

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), on Monday, claimed that "strong infighting" within the Delhi BJP forced Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri to clarify that they have not finalised the chief ministerial candidate for the Assembly elections due early next year.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh asserted that his party will win more seats this time than it did in the 2015 Assembly polls.

Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari, however, accused AAP leaders of raising the issue of the chief ministerial candidate to divert attention from the 'failures' of the Kejriwal government. He said that the Parliamentary board of BJP will decide who will be chief minister if the party wins the Assembly polls in Delhi.

AAP leader Sanjay Singh took a jibe at BJP for taking back the name of Manoj Tiwari as the chief ministerial candidate minutes after announcing it.

Mr Puri's remark came a day after he said that he had no intention to run



Sanjay Singh

▶ Delhi BJP chief Manoj Tiwari accused AAP leaders of raising the issue of the chief ministerial candidate to divert attention from the 'failures' of the state government

for the post of Delhi CM. He said that BJP has a well-defined leadership in Delhi and there are "people who have grown up in the city."

When asked if he will run for Delhi chief minister's post, Mr Puri told reporters, "I have no such intention. I was a bureaucrat and now I am a minister. There are several leaders in Delhi who are born and brought up here and are senior BJP leaders."

Mr Singh said the taking back of the name also shows that there is infighting within BJP.

"There is a strong infighting within BJP and at least three to four people are in the race. BJP has no face to fight against Kejriwal," he said.

He also said that before the elections, people should know who will be the chief minister.

## BSES, Ola to set up battery swapping stations in city

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

The BSES power discoms, BYPL and BRPL, will set up battery swapping stations in the city for two and three wheelers in collaboration with Ola Electric Mobility.

A BSES spokesperson said that a memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed recently between the BSES discoms and Ola Electric Mobility for setting up battery swapping stations at identified locations in South, West, Central, and East Delhi areas.

The co-founder of Ola Electric Mobility, Ankit Jain, said that the agreement will augment the company's efforts for lay-

ing a strong foundation to enable smooth functioning of electric vehicles (EVs) across the country by creating a widespread network of charging solutions that vehicle owners and operators can rely on.

Mr Jain said, "As part of the agreement, Ola Electric will manage and operate these stations through a cloud based software system. On its part, BSES will facilitate the identification of strategic locations for battery swapping (and charging) stations depending on the optimum usage and potential of electric vehicles in the area."

The agreement, valid for a period of three years, will hasten adoption of electric vehicles in the city.

## World's largest kidney, weighing 7.4 kg, removed

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

Surgeons at a leading city hospital have removed a kidney weighing 7.4 kilogram, claimed to be the world's largest, from the abdomen of a 56-year-old man.

According to Dr Sachin Kathuria, the urology consultant at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, the kidney, which was removed after a two-hour-long surgery performed recently, had occupied almost the entire abdomen of the patient.

To put things into perspective, doctors explained that the kidney weighed more than two human newborn babies combined. A normal kidney weighs about 120-150 grams. The dimensions of the removed kidney are



Doctors holds a diseased kidney after a surgery in New Delhi.

— AFP

The Guinness Book of World Records reports a kidney weighing 4.25 kg as the world's largest kidney till now which was removed by doctors at a hospital in 2017 from a patient suffering from polycystic kidney disease.

32x21.8 cm and this happens to be the largest kidney removed till date globally.

"Although pre-operative scans showed a huge kidney, we did not expect that it would be the heaviest," said Dr Kathuria.

## Head constable dies after being runover by train

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV 25

A head constable of the Delhi Police died after he was run over by a train while crossing the tracks near Lodhi Colony Railway station, police said on Monday.

The deceased has been identified as Badri Prasad Meena (45), a resident of Dausa district in Rajasthan. He was posted at the Malviya Nagar police station, a senior police officer said.

The police received information at around 8.40 pm on Sunday that Meena had been run over by a train. He was rushed to hospi-



Badri Prasad Meena

tal where he was declared brought dead. He was returning from Pragati Maidan after finishing his duty, they said. His family members have been informed and the body shifted to Sabhi Mandi mortuary, police said, adding that he is survived by his wife, a son and two daughters.

He was rushed to hospi-

tal where he was

declared brought

dead. He was return

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idan after finishing

his duty, they said.

His family members

have been informed

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on and two daughters.

## Man mowed down by unidentified vehicle at ITO

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

A 25-year-old man died on Monday evening after he was mowed down by an unidentified vehicle near a bridge in ITO area, the police said.

The victim has been identified as Vikas Pawar, a resident of East Shahdara area. He used to work as a data entry operator at a private company in Gandhi Nagar. Pawar was accompanied by his colleague who sustained minor injuries and has been discharged from the hospital, police said.

During preliminary investigation, it was revealed that Pawar applied the brakes of his two-wheeler near the bridge. Following this he and his female colleague fell on the either side of the road, police added.

Meanwhile, an unidentified vehicle came from behind and ran over the man. He was rushed to the hospital where he was declared brought dead, the officer said.

The police received information at around 5.00 pm regarding the accident. Both the injured persons were rushed to the LNJH hospital. The police is checking the CCTV footage of the area to identify the alleged vehicle.

A case under relevant sections have been registered the officer said.

His family has been informed about the incident and post-mortem will be conducted today, it added.

— PTI





## Bailey's back

Former limited-overs captain George Bailey is set to be Australia's new national selector along side coach Justin Langer and chairman Trevor Hohns



He's never been to this part of the world where you have to perform in a certain way out.

— England's Joe Root urges pacer Jofra Archer to improve in Australia

## SHORT TAKES

### Archer hit with racial abuse in NZ

**Mount Maunganui:** New Zealand Cricket bosses said on Monday they will personally apologise to England fast bowler Jofra Archer after he was racially abused during the first Test in Mount Maunganui. The Barbados-born Archer, considered one of the most promising all-rounders in world cricket, tweeted he was disturbed to hear racial insults "whilst battling to help save my team". The 24-year-old featured in a late show of resistance with Sam Curran in a 59-run stand for the ninth wicket before New Zealand wrapped up the match for an innings and 65 runs victory. "A bit disturbing hearing racial insults today whilst battling to help save my team, the crowd was been amazing this week except for that one guy," Archer tweeted. New Zealand Cricket's (NZC) public affairs manager Richard Boock said there is "zero tolerance towards abusive or offensive language" at all cricket venues in New Zealand. NZC "will contact Mr. Archer to apologise for the unacceptable experience, and to promise increased vigilance in the matter when the teams next meet in Hamilton," Boock said. — AFP

### Change selectors: Bhajji to Ganguly

**New Delhi:** Veteran Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh is hoping that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly will "change" the current selection panel and bring "strong people" on board. The 39-year-old was reacting to wicketkeeper-batsman Sanju Samson being dropped from the Indian Twenty20 squad without getting a game in the recent home series against Bangladesh. "I guess they r testing his heart #selectionpanelneedto-bechanged need strong people there.. hope dada @SGanguly99 will do the need-ful," he tweeted. Harbhajan quoted a tweet from Congress MP Shashi Tharoor, who represents Thiruvananthapuram in the Lok Sabha, to make his point. Tharoor had expressed disappointment at the 25-year-old Kerala player not getting an opportunity. — PTI

## MUMBAI THRASH KARNATAKA

**Surat:** Skipper Suryakumar Yadav blazed his way to an unbeaten 94 as Mumbai defeated Karnataka by seven wickets in a Group 'B' Super League match of the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy here on Monday to end the rival's winning spree. Mumbai were chasing a stiff 172-run target and Surya, who has been in great form, single-handedly guided the domestic giants to victory with an over to spare. Surya (94 not out off 53 balls, 11 fours, 4 sixes) walked in to bat after Mumbai were in a spot of bother at 44 for 2, losing openers Aditya Tare (12) and Prithvi Shaw (30) and still needing over 100 runs to win. The aggressive right-hander steadied the ship by stitching together a 46-run stand with Shreyas Iyer (14) for the third wicket. However, Karnataka pegged Mumbai back by removing Iyer in the 11th over. After Iyer departed, it was 'Surya show' at the C B Patel Ground as he toyed with the Karnataka bowlers, who wilted under his blistering attack. He hammered 11 fours and hoisted four towering sixes to stamp his class. His 53-ball 94 would have surely impressed the national selectors. The Mumbai captain then strung together a match-winning unbeaten 84-run stand for the fourth wicket with Shivam Dube (22 not out off 18 balls), who played the perfect second fiddle. Surya 2.0 was on display as he had all shots in the book and smashed the ball around to guide his side home. — PTI

# BCCI to tinker with constitution

## ■ Board treasurer says cooling-off clause is set to be amended

**New Delhi, Nov. 25:** BCCI treasurer Arun Dhimal on Monday said the Board is not looking to dilute the age cap of 70 years for its office-bearers in the upcoming AGM but will discuss amending the cooling-off clause as experience of the officials "must be utilised".

In the agenda released for the Annual General Meeting, the first since former captain Sourav Ganguly took over as BCCI President, the Board has proposed significant changes to the existing constitution which dilutes some of the reforms recommended by the Supreme Court-appointed Lodha panel.

As per the current constitution, which is approved by the Supreme Court, an office-bearer who has served two three-year terms either at the BCCI or at the state association, goes into a compulsory

cooling-off for a three-year period. The current dispensation at the BCCI wants the cooling off period to kick in after the individual has finished two terms (six years), at the board and state association separately.

"We have not touched the age cap (of years) we have kept it like that. We have not made any amendment to that. With regards to the cooling off, our point of view is if somebody has gained experience by running the state association why give him a cooling-off, that experience should be utilised in the best interest of the game. If he can contribute in BCCI, why not," Dhimal said.

"If someone reaches 67 years of age after spending six years in a state association. If he has cooling off of three years, he is already 70 by then. He won't be able to contribute anything to the BCCI."



BCCI secretary Jay Shah, president Sourav Ganguly and treasurer Arun Dhimal.

The BCCI wants that the president and secretary be allowed to serve two consecutive terms before the cooling-off sets in while the treasurer and other office-bearers should be allowed to complete three terms (nine years) in one go. The current dispensation, led Ganguly, took charge last month ending the 33-month tenure of the

Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA).

"You must have seen in the BCCI election (last month). Out of the 38 members part of the electoral roll, only four or five members had the experience of attending meetings previously. "So in case someone has gained experience in the state associa-

The BCCI wants that the president and secretary be allowed to serve two consecutive terms before the cooling-off sets in while the treasurer and other office-bearers should be allowed to complete three terms (nine years) in one go.



**Few of the recommendations were diluted by the Supreme Court itself. They understood that there are technical difficulties with regards to one state one vote. We don't have any issues with most of the recommendations but there are technical difficulties with some.** — ARUN DHIMAL, BCCI treasurer

## CHANGE IN TERM

Supreme Court has relaxed some Lodha recommendations in the past, including one state one vote, considering the technical difficulties in implementation.

Supreme Court. We will put across our point of view. What are the practical difficulties we are facing with regards to few things. In case the court agrees with our idea, then will have those amendments," he said.

Will the Lodha reform be compromised if the amendments are ratified? "It is not like that," said Dhimal.

"Few of the recommendations were diluted by the Supreme Court itself. They understood that there are technical difficulties with regards to one state one vote. We don't have any issues with most of the recommendations but there are technical difficulties with some. "Even the CoA recommended changes to the conflict of interest of clause in the existing constitution. So we will go back to Supreme Court on the practical difficulties we are facing. If they don't then we continue with whatever we have." — PTI

# Pace battery is full

## Charged-up Indian fast bowlers earn high praise from different quarters

**Kolkata, Nov. 25:** India's fast bowlers are enjoying a rare moment in the sun after they combined to dismantle Bangladesh in the maiden day-night Test on Indian soil.

Shant Sharma, Umesh Yadav and Mohammed Shami took all 19 Bangladesh wickets to fall in Kolkata, a rarity on the sub-continent's pitches where spinners usually rule.

It surpassed the record 17 wickets taken by pacemen in a home Test in 2017 against Sri Lanka, also at Kolkata's Eden Gardens.

In the first pink-ball Test for both sides, India beat Bangladesh by an innings and 46 runs in just over two days to sweep the two-match series.

Skipper Virat Kohli has been all praise for his pacemen and said workload management was the key to keeping them in top shape.

"They gained more experience, now they're bowling well together," Kohli told reporters after India sealed the one-sided win on Sunday.

"They take ownership of their own preparation, their own fitness and communication is very clear... We want you fresh for Test cricket, don't worry about anything else.

"And they feel secure as well that if they

**Doesn't happen often in India when the spinners hardly roll their arm over in the test match.**

—IRFAN PATHAN, Former India pacer

don't play, we have back-up bowlers to come and do the job as well. So that bench strength is also helping us a lot."

The three quicks have been on a roll despite the absence of yorker specialist Jasprit Bumrah, who is recovering from a stress fracture of the back. Shami and Yadav took 24 wickets between them in India's 3-0 Test whitewash of South Africa last month.

**S p i n n e r s** Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja bowled a total of just seven overs against Bangladesh, who fell for 106 and 195.

"Doesn't happen often in India when the spinners hardly roll their arm over in the test match," Indian fast bowler Irfan Pathan wrote on Twitter.

However, the real test for the Indian quicks will come in January and February, when India will play two Tests in seamer-friendly New Zealand.

— AFP



Umesh Yadav



Ishant Sharma



Mohammed Shami

## Umesh says change in grip helped achieve consistency

**Kolkata, Nov. 25:** Attributing his recent success to a tweaked bowling grip, India speedster Umesh Yadav said it has helped him achieve better control and more consistency in delivering outswingers.

Yadav finished with match figures of 8/81, which included a five-wicket haul in the second innings, to set up India's innings and 46-run win in their first ever day-night Test against Bangladesh on Sunday.

"Tweaking my bowling grip helped immensely," Yadav said during a conversation with India opener

Rohit Sharma on 'bcci.tv'. "My grip was different earlier so one or two balls would swing while a couple of them would either get deflected from the legs or run down the leg side for boundaries as byes. So it was difficult to control with this grip.

"So I spoke to my coaches and also while discussing within ourselves, I felt when I hold the ball properly, I have more control and chances of moving the ball. So my outswinger became consistent and I could also throw in a few inswingers after making that change."

Fellow pacer Ishant Sharma, who claimed five

wickets in Bangladesh's first innings and four in the second, said changing his wrist position helped him create angles which made life difficult for batsmen, especially left-handers.

"I created angles in my bowling on the basis of my wrist position. If I come round the wicket to the left-hand, it would be more difficult for the batsman," Ishant said.

"I used to bowl but I couldn't get the edge because it would land on the off stump and would go out. Now, I bowl at the stumps, so it becomes difficult for the batsman." — PTI

**Mount Maunganui, Nov. 25:** New Zealand said their comprehensive innings victory over England was among their very best after Neil Wagner's five-wicket burst sealed the first Test in Mount Maunganui on Monday.

The fireless left-armer took the last two England wickets in successive balls for a five-wicket haul and to complete the rout by an innings and 65 runs late on the final day.

While England captain Joe Root lamented a disappointing batting effort, and the lack of a bowler with Wagner's application, New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson celebrated his side's match-defining innings of 615 for nine declared.

"To lose the toss and be 350 behind in the first innings it required something special," Williamson said.

"It's certainly right up there in terms of a tough, grinding Test victory."

BJ Watling's 205 and Mitchell Santner's 126 laid the platform for New Zealand's colossal 262-run first-innings lead.

England, resuming the final day at 55 for three and needing to bat through to stumps to save the Test, progressed patiently to 121 for four before New Zealand removed the last six wickets for 76 runs.

Wagner finished with five for 44 while Santner took three

## BRIEF SCORES

England 353 & 197 in 96.2 overs (J. Denly 35, J. Archer 30, Santner 3/53, Wagner 5/44) lost to New Zealand 615-9 dec.

for 53.

"We saw the wicket deteriorate and knew if you could hit the wicket hard you would get some variable bounce. That allowed us to make the breakthroughs," Williamson said, admitting that he had concerns about how the match would finish.

"England have experience and some world-class players who've batted out draws before. If they were better than us today they were going to be able to save it. It did come down to the wire."

Root said England did not help themselves with the way they batted.

"Clearly some of the shots today were not good. Everyone's very aware of that. You can't fault effort but I put my hand up as well, that ball was treated with far too much respect."

Root said the England bowlers also needed to learn from the effort Wagner put in.

"He runs in all day and makes sure every ball means something," Root said, adding there were times England quick Jofra Archer could "unleash a little bit more". — AFP

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New Zealand's Neil Wagner celebrates after taking a wicket.

— AFP

# Paine takes early shot at Kohli

**R. MOHAN**  
MELBOURNE, NOV. 25

Tim Paine has thrown an open challenge to Virat Kohli to come out to Australia and play a day-night Test match with the pink ball. Cock-a-hoop after beating Pakistan by an innings despite a fighting century from Babar Azam, the visitors were well beaten at the Gabba, the traditional Test series opener venue to any Australian cricket season. The Australian captain has in fact, poked the Indian elephant in the ribs with a hint that Team India and its skipper Virat Kohli like to pick an choose where they play their Test cricket. The last time the Indians came out to play Down Under they skipped Brisbane and the Gabba where the home team has not lost a Test for 31 years, not since 1988. "That's where we like to start our summer and it

has been so for long," Paine said in continuing to rub it into Kohli, whose team not only skipped the Gabba but Also the pink ball 'test' in the traditional Adelaide Oval venue.

The Indians are due to play Tests in Australia next summer and 12 months before that Paine has kicked off a war of words, even if it's not quite psychological warfare as yet. Even more cheekily, Paine said at the Gabba on Sunday, "We'll ask Virat and see if we can get his permission to play here and even get a pink ball Test if he's in a good mood."

The suggestion is as the big bully of international cricket, Team India can pick and choose where and when to play.

"We'll certainly be trying to play the first match there, we'll have to run that by Virat. We'll get an answer from him at some stage, I'm sure," Paine went on to say with a flow of vitriol.

After beating Bangladesh, skipper Kohli said India were open to playing a day-night Test in Australia.

Team India is a runaway leader now in the world Test championship, but the tough games and series are yet to begin whereas India have played in the

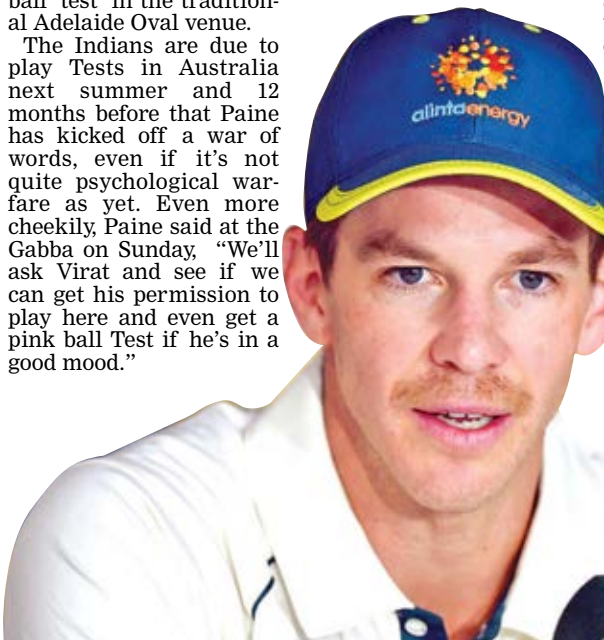
West Indies and then at home beating both South Africa and Bangladesh by huge margins.

Australia are second after the win over Pakistan. While India may have a seemingly unassailable lead, the big challenges are yet to meet and they all lie in the future, like playing in Australia and England, and South Africa too.



**We'll ask Virat and see if we can get his permission to play here and even get a pink ball Test if he's in a good mood. We'll certainly be trying to play the first match at the Gabba, we'll have to run that by Virat. We'll get an answer from him at some stage, I'm sure.**

— TIM PAINE, Aussie skipper







Kim Class

Kim Sei-young sank a 25-foot birdie putt at the final hole to win the CME Group Tour golf Championship



It's any player's dream to represent the country, it's the highest honour.

— Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, Indian Davis Cup player on making his Davis Cup debut



Sneha Sharma

Sneha finishes sixth in Formula 4

Sepang, Malaysia: India's top woman racer Sneha Sharma came up with a stellar performance to finish overall 6th in Race Round 9 of the prestigious Formula 4 South East Asia Championship 2019, here at the Sepang International formula 1 Circuit, Malaysia. Sneha, one of the first women to break into the racing circles in the country, was the only Indian driver in the race, she was also the only woman competitor among all boys this round. Racing in a Formula 4 car and supported by Indigo Airlines & JK Tyre Motorsport, she was up against a formidable line up of drivers from seven different countries, mostly from Europe.

The 29-year-old clocked a best time of 2:16:665 in qualifying to finish 6th in race 4. She finished first race in 8th position before taking the 7th position in race 2 and 3. Despite facing power issues in race 1, she gradually grew into the round to finish 6th in the last race of the round.

Caicedo nets winner for Lazio

Milan: Felipe Caicedo snatched a late winner to keep Lazio third in Serie 'A' with a 2-1 victory over Sassuolo on Sunday, as England defender Chris Smalling scored and set up two other goals for city rivals Roma in a win against Brescia to move fourth. Champions Juventus maintained their grip on the top of Serie 'A' with a 3-1 win at Atalanta on Saturday, to stay one point ahead of Inter Milan who eased past Torino 3-0 under the rain in Turin. The two Roman outfits are now third and fourth respectively before Cagliari, a point behind in fifth, play at lowly Lecce after their game Sunday was washed out. Serie 'A' top-scorer Ciro Immobile struck to put Lazio ahead on 34 minutes with his 15th league goal this season.

Rafa juggernaut rolls on

Nadal won all 8 of his matches to help Spain win 6th Davis Cup

Madrid, Nov. 25: Rafael Nadal put the finishing touches to his extraordinary year by clinching a sixth Davis Cup title for Spain on Sunday as he beat Denis Shapovalov in Madrid to seal victory over Canada.

Nadal's 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) win over Shapovalov in front of an adoring home crowd at the Caja Magica gave Spain an unassailable 2-0 lead after Roberto Bautista Agut earlier battled past Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6 (7/3), 6-3.

The 33-year-old had been an unstoppable force in Spain's pulsating semifinal against Britain on Saturday and never looked like letting this chance slip, with King Felipe VI and Real Madrid's Sergio Ramos watching on, along with Barcelona defender Gerard Pique.

Nadal's brilliance has been outstanding, even if this will surely go down as one of the finest seasons of the 19-time Grand Slam champion's career.

He added a fourth Davis Cup final success — three more than Roger Federer — to the ones he claimed in 2004, 2009 and 2011, while capping a remarkable 12 months that has included winning the French and US Opens, and ending the year as world number one. The Spanish team will also pocket a cheque worth \$2.1 million.

Nadal won eight out of eight rubbers played this week and at times on Saturday, as when he stormed to singles and doubles victories against Britain, it was tempting to view Spain's progress as something of a solo effort.

But, unlike Canada, Spain have used all five of their squad, with Bautista Agut, Pablo Carreno Busta and Feliciano Lopez all playing at least one singles match, and Lopez and Marcel Granollers joining forces in the doubles.

Bautista Agut's win over Auger-Aliassime was particularly poignant, given Agut was returning after withdrawing from the team on Thursday, following the death of his father Joaquin. "I could not have played today without all the work of my teammates this week," said Bautista Agut on court.

I could not have played today without all the work of my teammates this week. After such a complicated week, I had to get out there and face it. Everything was difficult today. — ROBERTO BAUTISTA AGUT Spain's Davis Cup player, who lost his father on November 21



Rafael Nadal (right) clicks a selfie along with the trophy and his teammates after Spain defeated Canada 2-0 to win the Davis Cup final in Madrid on Sunday. In their first match, Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut battled past Felix Auger-Aliassime 7-6 (7/3), 6-3, while Nadal beat Canada's Denis Shapovalov 6-3, 7-6 (9/7) to help the hosts win the second and with it the tie.

Had nothing left, says elated Nadal

Madrid, Nov. 25: Rafael Nadal admitted he gave everything he had left to lead Spain to their sixth Davis Cup success on Sunday after they beat Canada in the final in Madrid.

"I played one of the toughest possible opponents at the end of a long and difficult week, physically too because I put into this whole event all the energy that I had inside me," said Nadal.

"Honestly it's the perfect end to the season for all of us. We know how difficult it is to win this and how difficult it will be to win it again. We knew we had to convert this opportunity," the World No.1 added.

Feliciano Lopez, who played alongside Nadal during Spain's doubles win against Britain's Jamie Murray and Neal Skupski on Saturday, said Nadal had been a "superhero".

"There are things you can't describe with words," said Lopez. "If you ask me for my opinion, I will tell you he is a superhero. He can do things none of us can do. He is a great person and an extraordinary tennis

If you ask me for my opinion, I will tell you he is a superhero. He can do things none of us can do. He is a great person and an extraordinary tennis player. — FELICIANO LOPEZ Spain's Davis Cup player on Rafael Nadal

player," the left-handed player added.

At the end of his win, Nadal hoisted up Bautista Agut, who had returned to the team after withdrawing on Thursday due to the death of his father Joaquin.

"It was very difficult," Bautista Agut said.

"I took the decision to go home on Thursday morning and I was back yesterday (Saturday) afternoon to support the team.

"I had the opportunity to play today (Sunday) because all the team and all the players and the rest of the team have made an unbelievable effort since the first day. It was an amazing feeling on the court," Agut said after the win.

— AFP



Spain's Roberto Bautista Agut (left) and Rafael Nadal celebrate Spain's 2-0 win over Canada at the Davis Cup Finals in Madrid on Sunday.

**SPANISH RUMBLE**

- The Spanish team will also pocket a cheque worth \$2.1 million.
- Spain won their sixth Davis Cup title, first since 2011. Their other four titles have come in 2009, 2008, 2004 and 2000.
- Of the six titles that Spain have won, Rafael Nadal has been a part of the squad for five — 2019, 2011, 2009 & 2004 of them.
- Roberto Bautista Agut, who lost his father, three days ago, left the team to be with his family, attended his father's funeral on Saturday, and then returned to help his side win on Sunday.
- In their semifinal against Britain, Spain had left space for Agut during their anthem.

Mavericks fly past Rockets

Los Angeles, Nov. 25: Slovenia's Luka Doncic continued his otherworldly start to the NBA season, scoring 41 points as the Dallas Mavericks won their fifth straight with a 137-123 victory over the slumping Houston Rockets.

Doncic, whose remarkable start has his per game averages at triple-double levels, also had 10 assists and six rebounds while Rockets superstar James Harden finished with 32 points and 11 assists in a showdown of dominant scorers.

The 20-year-old's fellow European sideskick Kristaps Porzingis, of Latvia, also recorded a double-double on Sunday with 23 points and 13 rebounds as the Mavericks led wire-to-wire for the victory.

Heading into Sunday's contest, Doncic was averaging 33.3 points, 10.8 rebounds and 11.0 assists during the Mavericks' five-game streak which included back-to-back wins over Cleveland and Golden State.

The Rockets dropped their third straight game following an eight-game winning streak. Houston had their moments when they came close to forcing a tie but they always fell just short.

Dallas shot 48 per cent overall and hit 17 of 44 three-pointers. The Rockets finished 10 of 44 from beyond the arc as Harden alone missed 13 of the 15 three-pointers he attempted.

— AFP

VEERABHADRA TIPPED TO WIN DELHI FEATURE

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 25

Veerabhadra is favourite to win the Jagatjit Industries North India 1000 Guineas, the feature event at the Delhi races on Tuesday. The first race will begin at 2 pm.

- SELECTIONS**
- 1st race: The Aristocrat Premium Plate Div-I (1000 mts)**  
1. Master Badal, 2. Dance Of Fire, 3. Big Hit
- 2nd race: The Aristocrat Premium Plate Div-II (1000 mts)**  
1. Truly Majestic, 2. Miss Zachary, 3. Like My Child
- 3rd race: The An's Black Plate Div-I (1400 mts)**  
1. Conquering Bid, 2. Miss Colombiana, 3. Warrior Thrive
- 4th race: The An's Black Plate Div-II (1400 mts)**  
1. Ashwa Vijeta, 2. Victorious King, 3. Udaan
- 5th race: The Jagatjit Industries North India 1000 Guineas (1400 mts)**  
1. Veerabhadra, 2. Ashwa Sabira, 3. Tapi
- 6th race: The Ruby Tuesday Plate (1100 mts)**  
1. Bhitski, 2. Miss Arts, 3. Snow Bell
- Day's best:** Truly Majestic

Motorsport scene has been stagnant, says Narain

C. SANTHOSH KUMAR CHENNAI, NOV. 25

Having completed a mind-boggling 25-year journey as a professional race driver, Narain Karthikeyan belongs to that rare breed of Indian sportspersons who have proved age is just a number. The 42-year-old from Coimbatore who pulled off a stupendous drive to win the SuperGT race in Japan last Sunday is showing no signs of slowing down.

In a free-wheeling chat, Narain spoke about the importance of maintaining fitness, valuable lessons he learnt in Japan and the sorry state of Indian motorsport.

It's 26 years since you turned professional, competing in the Formula Vauxhall Junior championship in the UK as a teenager. What keeps you going in a sport where sheer passion alone is not enough to sustain a career?

There are many factors. Of course, you have to love your sport enough to pursue it with the same passion you had as a youngster. Apart from that, you have to accomplish results at regular intervals to keep the

sponsors happy and meet your own standards. And in motorsport, you have to be in the right place at the right time. Being a professional racer from India is not easy, as all these factors have to fall in place. I am extremely glad I have survived this long.

**Fitness plays a major role in the success of a race driver. How has your training regimen changed over the last few years?**

I don't train like a 20-year-old. There's no high-intensity training required for my physique. Also, this year's SuperGT car is not as physical as the Super Formula car that I was driving until last year. SuperGT is, however, hard to drive, but it comes with some sophisticated technology.

For example, the specially-made airconditioning system keeps you cool inside the car.

One of the key factors is that there are no injury worries. My long-time physical trainer Ramji Srinivasan and my support system in Coimbatore take good care of me. Every day, I spend one hour for workout and one hour for recovery. I split these into two sessions.

**After Formula One, you dabbled in LeMans Sports cars and then moved to Super Formula in Japan without much success. In your maiden season in SuperGT, you have finished on the podium twice, including a win. Do you feel that you should have joined this series a little earlier?**

I think I found some success in Super Formula where I spent four years. Yes, I couldn't win a race. It's a highly-competitive series. Japan's Kamui Kobayashi has been racing in Super Formula since 2015.

He is a very talented and experienced driver. He finished on the podium in F1 (third in the 2012 Japanese Grand Prix). But he hasn't won a race in Super Formula. It clearly underlines the competition level in Japan. The Super Formula season is very short; only seven races in a calendar and you don't get time to build up. To add to that, testing is limited. SuperGT cars are also quick; probably 4 to 5 seconds slower than Super Formula. But then, there are a lot of tyre manufacturers who pump in insane resources into the sport. During winter testing in



Narain Karthikeyan on the podium.

Malaysia, we used 150 sets of tyres! SuperGT is a packed grid and you should know how to manage traffic. So, winning in Japan is always special.

**This win should inspire you to go on for two-three years more in the same series...**

Two-three years is a lot of time in motorsport. It's a yearly contract that I have signed. The manufacturers (Honda) will take a call on the extension.

**Sunday's win at the Fuji Speedway came after almost six years. How do you rate the win in Japan compared to your previous triumphs in A1 GP, Auto GP, Nissan World Series?**

When I won in the Nissan World Series (2004), my competitors were all young drivers, trying to move to Formula One. On an experience level, World Series was a level-playing field. In the current SuperGT, drivers come with a wealth of experience. Winning in Japan is

always tough, perhaps the toughest outside of Formula One. Apart from driver experience, the technology that the series uses makes even Formula One look small. It's a different world, altogether.

**You have raced in different parts of the world. You have been racing in Japan since 2014. What was your biggest takeaway from the Japan stint?**

Tracks here are very challenging. They are old-school; narrow and very fast. A small error is enough to throw you out of the race. The local knowledge of these experienced drivers is phenomenal. In the beginning, I was finding it difficult to communicate with the Japanese engineers.

Then, I made an effort to learn a few racing terms in Japanese. The time I have spent in Japan has taught me some valuable lessons. Japanese people are very orderly and do everything meticulously. They have a system in place and if you follow it, you will achieve success.

Being accepted in Japan, I would say, is one of the craziest experiences. They have made me feel like I am

a part of them. The Japanese love racing. The number of fans who throng the circuits on race weekends is crazy. They recognise you in restaurants. They look after you better than the Europeans.

**Aren't you bored spending time in flights and hotels?**

Travelling is the hardest part of any professional sportsperson's life. But I feel, it's getting easier. There are different route options and direct flights to faraway places. As a youngster, when I first started travelling, I didn't have the luxury of flying business class.

**Indian motorsport has seen quite a few controversies in the recent past. You're one of the very few to have stayed away from all that. What's your take on the status of motorsport in India?**

What saddens me is the fact that motorsport is still such a small sport in India. It's like a blip on the radar or nothing at all! But there are so many unwanted controversies. I think the fraternity should invest their energy in moving to the next step. The motorsport scene has

been stagnant. Except for a handful of drivers who are out on their own, nothing has changed.

**Would you take up a role in the administration, just like your father, when you retire from the sport?**

99.99 per cent, I will not involve myself in administration. Seriously, I don't have time to waste! It's not about one individual changing the system.

A set of people have to come together and work towards that change. Of course, there are some good people in the federation and I am not doubting them. But there are also people with an agenda. In every sport, this is the case, but all the more in motorsport which is still trying to take baby steps. Administration is something I am not cut out for.

**Who is the next big bet in Indian motorsport?**

Jehan Daruvala who is currently competing in the FIA Formula 3. Maini brothers — Arjun and Kush — are also good. Jehan has the talent to become a professional driver at the highest level. But as we know, talent alone won't take you to F1!





Dedicated

Chelsea owner Roman Abramovich is not interested in “bargain” bids for the Premier League club and remains fully involved at Stamford Bridge



It was a very poor performance. I could have changed all the players at halftime, except David (De Gea) as he kept us in it. — Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, Man United manager

SHORT TAKES Archers bag Asian recurve bronze

Kolkata: The embattled Indian archers overcame all odds to ensure two medals in the recurve and compound mixed event of the Asian Archery Championships here on Tuesday. Competing under a neutral flag due to the suspension of Indian federation, the Indian archers opened their account with a bronze medal in the recurve mixed pair event where Atanu Das and Deepika Kumari defeated Yichai Zheng and Shaoxuan Wei of China 6-2 without breaking a sweat. But it was the compound mixed pair team of Abhishek Verma and Jyothi Surekha Vennam who produced a stunner ousting Korea 159-154 in a one-sided affair to set up a gold medal clash with Chinese Taipei, slated for Wednesday. The team eliminations are also slated from Wednesday while Indian women will also vie for Olympic quotas in the qualifications round on Thursday. — PTI

Sangram, Varsha win national titles

New Delhi: Haryana's Sangram Dahiya and Madhya Pradesh's Varsha Varman won the men's and women's double trap titles respectively at the 63rd National Shotgun Shooting Championship here on Monday. Sangram shot 142 out of 150 targets to leave behind former world champion Ankur Mittal of ONGC, who managed 137 hits over the five rounds of 30 targets each. Punjab's Prithvi Singh Chahal won bronze with a score of 135. Varsha, in the women's category of 120 targets each, had 97 to her name to clinch the gold ahead of state-mate Manisha Keer, who had 93 hits. Mahima Vishwakarma ensured a MP sweep in the category, winning bronze with 92. Both Sangram and Varsha also won the team gold for their respective states. — PTI

CARLSEN SET TO WIN FINAL LEG, ANAND JOINT 5TH

Kolkata: Viswanathan Anand suffered two defeats but as many victories kept him in the joint fifth place at the Tata Steel Rapid and Blitz tournament, a part of the Grand Chess Tour. Reigning world champion Magnus Carlsen continued his dominating run as he took his lead to an almost unassailable five points. The Norwegian is virtually assured of the title despite a whole day and many games to come. Anand now has 4.5 points out of a possible nine and remains in contention for a berth in the Grand Finale of this tournament, to be held in London in December. The five-time world champion started with a loss to Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi but then recovered well to beat Aronian and Wesley So in round two and four. The rest of the games were drawn except against Carlsen when the Indian suffered another defeat. With nine games on Tuesday still to come, Carlsen has a huge five-point lead with 21.5 points to his credit out of a possible 27 points. Carlsen will win this event even if he scores just two more points in remaining matches. American Hikaru Nakamura is currently the distant second with 16.5 points followed by his compatriot Wesley So, who has 13.5 points. Anish Giri (13) of Holland is in sole fourth place while Anand shares the fifth spot with Ding Liren of China and Nepomniachtchi. P. Harikrishna holds the eighth spot on 12 points. For Anand, it is crucial to remain close to Wesley, who is the closest competitor for the Grand finale of this tour. If he can keep the momentum and finish joint fifth or sole sixth place tomorrow he will qualify to the finale. — PTI



Sheffield United's Oliver McBurnie (second from left) scores past Harry Maguire (right) of Manchester United in their EPL match in Sheffield on Sunday. — AFP

SHEFFIELD DAY

Red Devils pegged back by Blades after dramatic comeback

Sheffield, Nov. 25: Manchester United and Sheffield United shared the spoils after a dramatic 3-3 draw at Bramall Lane on Sunday, with the home side scoring a late equaliser after a three-goal blitz from the visitors in just seven minutes. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's team, outplayed for 70 minutes by the promoted side, trailed 2-0 after a first-half goal from John Fleck and a second-half effort from Lys Mousset. Chris Wilder's team had been hungrier and more incisive all over the pitch but, from nowhere, United were back in the game and when 19-year-old Brandon Williams scored in the 72nd minute. Manchester United suddenly looked full of ideas, with the game turned on its head. Solskjaer threw on Mason Greenwood to

THE RESULTS

Sheffield United 3 (Fleck 19, Mousset 52, McBurnie 90) Manchester United 3 (Williams 72, Greenwood 77, Rashford 79)

replace Andreas Pereira, meaning United were operating with an attacking quartet of Greenwood, Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial and Daniel James. Just five minutes after Williams' strike, Greenwood equalised from close range after Rashford's cross. With the home side rocking badly, United poured forward again. Rashford swept home in the 79th minute. The drama was not over, with Oliver McBurnie controlling the

ball and firing past David de Gea to level at 3-3 in the 90th minute. The goal stood after a VAR check for handball. The result means Manchester United are ninth in the Premier League table, nine points behind fourth-placed Chelsea while Sheffield United are sixth, a point ahead. SHEFFIELD DOMINATE Earlier, Solskjaer's men were indebted to goalkeeper De Gea, who produced a stunning double-save to keep the score at 0-0 early in the game. Solskjaer's team looked rattled, with Williams, on just his second Premier League start, making a couple of early errors and Phil Jones, on his first league appearance of the season, looking like an accident waiting to happen. — AFP

BANEGA PENALTY SENDS SEVILLA THIRD IN LA LIGA

Madrid, Nov. 25: Ever Banega's first-half penalty proved enough to seal Sevilla a 1-0 win at Real Valladolid on Sunday as Julen Lopetegui's men jumped to third in the Liga table. Sevilla are unbeaten in six league matches since a 4-0 thrashing at Barcelona last month and trail the reigning champions and Real Madrid by only one point, although they have played a game more. A tight encounter was settled by the only goal in the 13th minute, as Javi Moyano brought down former Manchester City winger Nolito and Argentinian international

Lucas Ocampos of Sevilla was sent off late on after receiving a second yellow card for time wasting, but the visitors held on to continue their excellent start to the season under former Spain and Real Madrid coach Lopetegui. Barcelona lead the table on goal difference ahead of Real Madrid after beating Leganes on Saturday. Earlier on Sunday, substitute Kenan Kodro scored a late winner as Athletic Bilbao claimed a 2-1 win at Osasuna to move fifth. — AFP

Live on TV CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

Lokomotiv Moscow vs Bayer Leverkusen from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD
Galatasaray vs Club Brugge from 11.25 pm on Sony ESPN, HD
Real Madrid vs PSG from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD
Tottenham vs Olympiacos from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 3, HD
Man City vs Shakhtar Donetsk from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six, HD
Juventus vs Atletico Madrid from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD
Crvena Zvezda vs Bayern from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony ESPN, HD

ISL SEASON 7 CHENNAIYIN PIP HYDERABAD FOR FIRST WIN

Chennai, Nov. 25: Chennaiyin FC registered their first win of the Hero Indian Super League season six in dramatic fashion after edging past Hyderabad FC 2-1 at the Jawaharlal Nehru stadium here on Monday. After seeing poor finishing hamper them for most of the game, Chennaiyin thought they had the winner when Andre Schembri (90+2') put them ahead in injury time. A few minutes later, Hyderabad equalised through Matthew Kilgallon (90+5'), but Nerijus Valskis sealed a sensational win seconds later, bringing the roof down in the stadium. The win saw Chennaiyin leapfrog Hyderabad to the ninth spot while the ISL debutants suffered their fourth defeat in five games. The game got off to a scrappy start with neither side able to assert themselves in a frantic opening period. Chances fell for Chennaiyin but poor decision-making meant the scores remained level. Just as it seemed Chennaiyin's goal drought would continue for yet another game, substitute Andre Schembri took matters into his own hands. The forward latched on to a cross from Edwin Vanspaul in injury time, held off his marker and fired a low shot past Kamaljit at the near post, registering Chennaiyin's first goal of the season. But there was another twist in the tale as Kilgallon headed in an unlikely equaliser from a corner in the fifth minute of injury time. — Agencies

SCOTTISH OPEN BADMINTON

Sen wins fourth title of season

Glasgow, Nov. 25: Fast-rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen claimed his fourth title in three months, bagging the Scottish Open with a thrilling win over Brazil's Ygor Coelho in the men's singles summit clash here. The top-seeded Indian overcame his Brazilian opponent 18-21, 21-18, 21-19 in a 56-minute final on Sunday night. The 18-year-old from Uttarakhand has now clinched three titles out of the four tournaments that he has played since September — SaarLorLux Open, Dutch Open, and Belgian International. After losing in the second round of Irish Open, Lakshya made amends this week and dished out some superb performances right from the start. "Happy to win the scotish open title! A hard fought match against my friend @co3lho12. It was really nice training with you in Denmark and playing a good match against you today," Sen tweeted. The Indian began his campaign with a straight-game win over Austria's Luka Wraber, before defeating compatriot Kiran George to reach the quarterfinals. The world no. 41 Indian then recorded another straight-game win over sixth-seed Brian Yang before seeing off France's Christo Popov in the semifinals. After this win, Lakshya will break into the top-40 in the BWF rankings and inch closer to a direct qualification in the top grade 2 events. Lakshya thus joined fellow Indians Anand Pawar (2010 and 2012), Arvind Bhatt (2004) and Pullela Gopichand (1999) in winning the Scottish Open title. During the final, Lakshya had fallen behind in the opening game but he managed to turn the tables and grab a 10-8 lead. Lakshya came out firing in the second round and jumped to a 7-0 lead in the second game. The Brazilian slowly clawed back at 17-17 but Lakshya managed to bounce back into the contest. The decider turned out to be an evenly-fought contest and both the shuttlers battled hard to gain the lead. Coelho enjoyed an 11-8 advantage at the break but a gritty Lakshya kept drawing parity and eventually had the last laugh. — PTI



Lakshya Sen (left) poses with his trophy after winning the Scottish Open title in Glasgow on Monday.

SYED MODI INTERNATIONAL

Saina withdraws, focus on Lakshya

Lucknow, Nov. 25: Saina Nehwal pulled out at the last moment to take some sheen off the Syed Modi International, beginning here on Tuesday, when the in-form Lakshya Sen will seek a third BWF World Tour title. Three-time former champion Saina, who has been battling illness and injuries, is going through a bad patch, having lost six times in the first round this season. The 29-year-old from Hyderabad has already pulled out of the Premier Badminton League to prepare for the next season. World champion P.V. Sindhu has chosen to give the tournament a miss. The 18-year-old Lakshya, on the other hand, will look to grab his maiden Super 300 crown this week following his title triumphs at two Super 100 events — Dutch and SaarLorLux Open — this year. Focus will also be on the men's doubles pairing of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty, who won the Thailand Open Super 500 title and then reached the finals of French Open Super 750 this season. Lakshya, who has been in Denmark for a two and half month training-cum-competition stint, claimed title wins at the Belgian International and Dutch and SaarLorLux Open. In the women's singles,



Saina Nehwal

Mugdha Agrey will be one of the Indian challenges. A host of Indian shuttlers, including 2016 winner Kidambi Srikanth, defending champion Sameer Verma and world championship bronze-medallist B. Sai Praneeeth, will eye the top spot in the men's singles this week. Third seed Srikanth, who had reached the finals at India Open this year, will hope to end his two-year long title drought and gather valuable points to arrest the slide in his ranking in the pre-Olympic year when he takes on Russia's Vladimir Malkov. Former Commonwealth Games champion Parupalli Kashyap, who grabbed the title in 2012 and 2015, will lock horns with France's Lucas Corvee. — PTI



Tottenham Hotspur head coach Jose Mourinho (second from left) at a team training session in London on Monday, the eve of their Champions League Group B match against Olympiakos. — AFP