





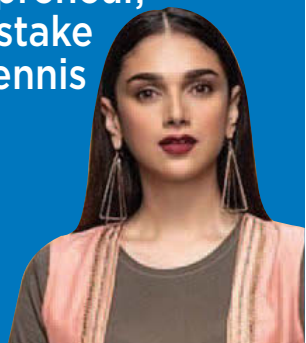
# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 30 NOVEMBER 2019

TABLOID

19

Aditi Rao  
Hydari turns  
entrepreneur,  
buys stake  
in a tennis  
team



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NATION | Honour

Celebrated Malayalam poet Akkitham wins 2019 Jnanpith Award

2



NEWSMAKERS | People

2 K-pop stars sentenced to prison for raping a drunk, unconscious woman

12

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## WINDOWS

### Cops shoot man, many stabbed at London Bridge

**London:** Armed police shot a man on London Bridge after several people were stabbed on Friday, reviving memories of a terror attack two years ago that killed eight. Scotland Yard said they were treating the situation as “terror-related” as a precautionary measure while the ambulance services declared a “major incident”. One man was being detained. Britain’s home secretary Priti Patel said she was “very concerned” at events while Prime Minister Boris Johnson cut short a visit to his constituency in northwest London. Footage filmed by eyewitnesses circulating on Twitter showed a scrum of people surrounding a man on the ground. One man wearing a coat and tie, retreating from the scene, appeared to be holding a knife in his right hand. Three armed officers then appeared on the scene and surrounded the scrum. One officer pulled a man away before two shots appeared to be fired. Mr Johnson’s spokesman said the PM was on his way back to Downing Street, where he would receive further updates. — **AFP**

### After protests, Iraq PM plans to resign

**Baghdad:** Iraq’s embattled Prime Minister Adel Abdel Mahdi announced on Friday he will resign in keeping with the wishes of the country’s top Shia cleric, after nearly two months of anti-government protests that have cost more than 400 lives. — **AFP**  
Full report on Page 5

### FASTags pose major data privacy threat

**Chennai:** FASTags that are going to be mandatory soon for all vehicles passing through national highway toll booths, pose a data privacy threat to the vehicle owners. It can also be a serious security threat for women owners. Full report on Page 9

## COUNTERPOINT



Get some onion dishes from the Parliament canteen, available at subsidised rates!

## WEATHER

Max: 25°C  
Min: 11°C  
RH: 60%  
Rainfall: 10%  
Forecast: Sunny

## ASTROGUIDE

**Hemalaba:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Vaishakha Bahula  
Dasami till 4.34 pm  
**Star:** Purvabhadra till 11.05 am  
**Variyam:** 8.17 pm to 9.49 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 4.56 pm to 5.47 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.23 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.55 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.15 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 8.51 PM**

# Uddhav gov't faces trust vote in Assembly today

Cabinet stays Aarey metro shed; Walse-Patil new pro-tem speaker

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 29

The Uddhav Thackeray government in Maharashtra will face a floor test in the Assembly on Saturday — as decided at the alliance government’s first Cabinet meeting on Thursday night.

Senior NCP leader Dilip Walse-Patil was, meanwhile, appointed pro-tem speaker of the Assembly on Friday. Opposition leader Devendra Fadnis accused the government of trying to change the pro-tem speaker “illegally”. Mr Fadnis said the Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP were not confident about their majority, and so had kept their MLAs in five-star hotels.

Ambegaon MLA Patil, serving his seventh term as a legislator, replaced the BJP’s Kalidas Kolambkar, who was appointed as pro-tem speaker earlier when the MLAs were administered the oath.

Chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday said the new government had decided to stay the construction of the metro car shed project in the city’s green lung, Aarey Colony, after widespread protests last month over the cutting of trees there.



Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray formally takes charge of his office in Mumbai on Friday. — **PTI**

Speaking to reporters soon after formally taking charge as CM at the Mantralaya, Mr Thackeray said not a single leaf will be cut until further notice. It should be noted that the Sena had

been at the forefront of opposing the car shed at Aarey. It had also proposed Kanjurmarg as a possible alternative site for the car shed.

The election of a full-fledged Assembly Speaker

## Sena eyeing an anti-BJP front in Goa

**Mumbai:** A day after a Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress government took over in Maharashtra, Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Friday said an anti-BJP coalition would be formed in neighbouring Goa.

Mr Raut also spoke to leaders of the Maharashtra Gomantak Party and Goa Forward Party, both of which are, like the Sena, former BJP allies.

While GFP leader Vijai Sardesai met Raut in Mumbai and supported the Sena’s proposal, MGP’s Sudin Dhavalikar also said that such a coalition was possible.

“After Maharashtra, (it is) Goa, there will be a big movement across the country. We will form a non-BJP front,” Mr Raut said. **PAGE 2**

is likely to be held on Sunday, but the Congress has still not decided the name of its candidate. As per the agreement between the three parties, the deputy chief minister’s

■ Turn to Page 4

# Gota tells Modi: Will work closely with India \$400m Indian credit for Lanka to counter China

Lankans to free seized boats of India fishermen

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

Announcing a new \$400 million line of credit to Sri Lanka for infrastructure development, and a separate “special” \$50 million line of credit to help Sri Lanka boost its fight against terrorism and also swift activation of an earlier announced \$100 million for solar projects in the island nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday — after holding extensive talks with visiting Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa here on Friday — said both countries “should be alert to each other’s security concerns and sensitivities”. Both countries also decided to further strengthen bilateral ties. Perhaps in a veiled reference to India’s concerns over the earlier movement of Chinese submarines in Sri Lankan waters and also the fast increasing Chinese footprint in the island nation, President Rajapaksa is understood to have assured Mr Modi that “India will remain his top



Prime Minister Narendra Modi greets Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa as President Ram Nath Kovind looks on during a ceremonial reception at Rashtrapati Bhavan in New Delhi on Friday.

— **SONDEEP SHANKAR**

► **Mr Gotabaya also conveyed to Mr Modi that he would also work for the economic development of Lanka’s northern and eastern provinces that have a significant Tamil population**

priority and that he will not allow any third force to come in between cooperation” of the two countries. The assurance comes in the wake of China’s growing influence in Sri Lanka and perceived earlier proximity of the Rajapaksa brothers (President Gotabaya

Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa) towards Beijing. The lines of credit announced by India are also being seen as an effort to counter the Chinese financial muscle in the island nation.

After Mr Modi expressed confidence that Colombo would fulfil the aspirations of Sri Lankan Tamils for “equality, justice, peace and honour” and take forward the process of “national reconciliation”, including implementation of the 13th Amendment (for devolution of power to the provinces), President Rajapaksa is learnt to have told Mr Modi that

■ Turn to Page 4

# Growth falls to 4.5% in Q2, lowest in 6 yrs

Hopes of 6th rate cut by RBI in early Dec.

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

It may be a shocker, but true. Beating all estimates predicted recently by leading rating agencies, banks and surveys, India’s economic growth, or gross domestic product (GDP), shrank further to an unexpected level, hitting an over six-year low of 4.5 per cent in the July-September quarter, down from five per cent in the previous quarter.

Confirming the fear of economic slowdown, the data also mirrored its justification of lower growth due to a number of factors, including weak private consumption, mute investment and exports, lack of credit growth and demand in the market. The current slowdown was visible across other sectors as well.

According to the data released by the National Statistics Office (NSO), the GDP was at the previous low of 4.3 per cent in the January-March period of 2012-13, while it was registered at seven per cent in the corresponding quarter of 2018-19. “The growth in gross value

## 4.5% GDP growth rate worrying: Manmohan

**New Delhi:** Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday said the GDP growth rate of 4.5 per cent was unacceptable and worrisome, and urged his successor Narendra Modi to set aside “deep-rooted suspicion” of society and nurse India back to harmonious, mutually trustworthy society that can help the economy soar. **PAGE 3**

added, or GVA, in the manufacturing sector contracted by one per cent in the September quarter, compared with an expansion of 6.9 per cent last year. Similarly, farm sector GVA growth remained subdued at 2.1 per cent, down from 4.9 per cent in the year-ago period,” it said.

“Also, construction sector GVA grew 3.3 per cent in July-September 2019, compared to 5.7 per cent in the previous quarter, and 6.8 per cent in the second quarter of the previous fiscal year. Similarly, GVA in real

■ Turn to Page 4

# Pragya forced to apologise in LS twice over Godse remark

Bhopal MP privilege notice on Rahul for calling her a ‘terrorist’

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

After setting off a nationwide furore by calling Mahatma Gandhi’s assassin Nathuram Godse a “patriot”, controversial BJP MP and terror accused Pragya Singh Thakur, amid unrelenting pressure from the Opposition, was forced to apologise for her remarks twice in the Lok Sabha on Friday.

The BJP member from Bhopal, earlier Friday morning, offered an “apology”, but this was swiftly rejected by the



calling her a “terrorist”.

Later in the afternoon, after Speaker Om Birla convened a meeting of all parties’ floor leaders, it was decided that Ms Thakur would read out her apology from a text that was approved by all parties.

Half an hour after the Lok Sabha reconvened post lunch, Ms Thakur reached the House

and read out the apology.

She began by saying she had faced a lot of attacks from her “enemies”. but immediately Congress’ Lok Sabha leader Adhir Ranjan Choudhury along with many other Opposition leaders protested, at which point the Speaker asked her to read out from the prepared text.

Ms Thakur again pleaded that she wants to put across her views as earlier too she could not convey her views, but Speaker Birla asked her to stick to the text. At this point,

■ Turn to Page 4

## This winter will be warmer than average

**New Delhi, Nov. 29:** With rising global temperatures and keeping with forecasts of past three years, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Friday this year’s winter season — from December to February — will be warmer than average.

In its winter forecast released on Friday, the IMD

said, “DJF (December, January, February) season average minimum temperatures are likely to be warmer than average over most parts of the country except over northernmost parts of India.”

The India Meteorological Department has been issuing seasonal forecast for winter since 2016, and every forecast

has predicted a warmer winter.

Even 2018 was the warmest year globally.

The weatherman also said there is relatively “higher probability” for above-normal minimum temperatures in the core cold wave zone during December 2019 to February 2020. — **PTI**

## Fresh snowfall in Manali



Tourists play on a hillside after fresh snowfall at Solang Nala in Manali district on Friday. Manali on Friday saw the season’s lowest temperature of minus 0.6 degree Celsius. — **PTI**

# Trump: Taliban talks back on track

Taliban say ‘way too early’ to speak of resuming peace talks with Washington

**Kabul, Nov. 29:** The Taliban said Friday it was “way too early” to speak of resuming direct talks with Washington, a day after President Donald Trump suggested negotiations to end America’s longest war were back on track during a surprise visit to Afghanistan.

The statement from insurgent spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid sounded a note of caution after Mr Trump said during a lightning visit to Bagram Airfield on Thursday that the Taliban “wants to make a deal”.

“We’re meeting with them and we’re saying it has to be a

ceasefire,” he told reporters during the visit to mark the Thanksgiving holiday with troops at the base.

His statement indicated progress, though Mujahid’s suggested roadblocks remain. “It is way too early to talk about the resumption of talks for now,” the insurgent spokesman told AFP in a WhatsApp message, adding that the Islamist group would give an official reaction later.

In September the US and the Taliban had appeared on the verge of signing a deal that would have seen Washington begin pulling troops out of Afghanistan. — **AFP**



President Donald Trump greets Afghan President Ashraf Ghani during a surprise Thanksgiving Day visit at Bagram Airfield in Afghanistan on Thursday. — **AP**





Politics

Pragma Singh Thakur showed no guilt for calling Nathuram Godse a patriot, says MP CM Kamal Nath



The Ram temple will bring peace, foster Hindu-Muslim brotherhood

— Sri Sri Ravi Shankar, Spiritual leader

BRIEF

Brazil looks like Goa, says Supriyo

**Panaji:** Union minister of state for environment, forest and climate change Babul Supriyo on Friday claimed Brazil looks like Goa and both have similar “natural beauties.” He was speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the Canacona Bypass, built at a cost of ₹227 crore, and named after former chief minister late Manohar Parrikar. “Brazil looks like Goa. I won’t say Goa looks like Brazil. Both the destinations have similar natural beauties,” Mr Supriyo said in the presence of chief minister Pramod Sawant. The minister also praised Mr Parrikar.

— PTI

Bill to amend Arms Act introduced in LS

**New Delhi:** A bill which seeks to enhance punishment for illegally possessing and making prohibited arms besides other changes in the six-decade-old Arms Act was introduced in Lok Sabha on Thursday. The Arms (Amendment) Bill makes provision that a person can have a maximum of two firearms, as against the present norm of three. Those who own more than two firearms will have to deposit the third one with authorities or authorised gun dealers within 90 days for de-licensing once the amendment is approved by Parliament, according to the bill.

— PTI

4 held in Gwalior for vilifying Babu

**Gwalior:** The police has arrested four Hindu Mahasabha activists for allegedly distributing pamphlets containing “objectionable” words about Mahatma Gandhi here in Madhya Pradesh, an official said on Friday. The action comes amid a raging row over BJP Lok Sabha MP Pragma Singh Thakur’s remarks on Mahatma Gandhi’s assassin Nathuram Godse in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday. The activists had observed the death anniversary of Godse at the outfit’s office here.

— PTI

ODIA SONG ON ONIONS TAKES NET BY STORM

AGE CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 29

As the onion price rise has been a hot topic across the country, a special Odia song dedicated on the issue has taken the internet by storm in Odisha. Interest-ingly, the song which is doing round on different social networking sites has been composed by N. Guru Dutta, who himself is an on-on trader. Guru Music has produced the song while S. Chandrakant has directed it. Opening up about the musical piece, Mr Dutta said, “The song is based on my own experience. I used to sell at least three to four packets of onions everyday but now I find it very difficult to sell even 10 kilos. Therefore, I decided to share my experience through this song to spread social awareness among the people on this serious issue.” “The song has now gone viral and people have accepted it so much so that they have now started calling me ‘Piaja Bhai’,” said Mr Dutta. Not only onion price rise, people involved in the alleged blatant misappropriation and corruption in various government schemes like KALIA (Krushak Assistance for Livelihood) and Income Augmentation), Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana and Aahar Yojana have also been targeted through the song. “I feel happy that I was a part of the project,” said singer Mamali.



Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray in a meeting with senior officers at mantralaya in Mumbai after formally taking charge of his office Friday.

— PTI

PM, Centre must aid Maha: Sena

Saamana says Uddhav, Modi still share brotherly ties despite strained ties

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 29

A day after Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray was sworn in as the chief minister of Maharashtra, the party reminded Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the central government of its responsibility to “co-operate” with the state and extend help to its farmers. In an editorial in its mouthpiece *Saamana*, the Sena said that though its relationship with the BJP was “strained,” Mr Thackeray and Mr Modi shared “brotherly ties.” The editorial read, “The relationship between the BJP and Sena in the current scenario has soured but Mr Modi and Mr Thackeray share brotherly ties. Hence, it is Mr Modi’s responsibility as PM to cooperate with his younger brother from Maharashtra.” Referring to Mr Modi as “Our Prime Minister”, the editorial said that while he had wished the state

Anti-post-election alliance plea nixed

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court Friday dismissed a plea challenging the post-poll alliance of Shiv Sena, NCP and Congress to form government in Maharashtra saying in democracy it cannot curtail the rights of a political party to align with other parties. A bench of Justices N.V. Ramana, Ashok Bhushan and Sanjiv Khanna observed, referring to earlier verdicts, that constitutional morality is different from political morality. “In democracy, we can’t curtail the rights of political parties to align with other parties,” the bench said.

— PTI

speedy development under Mr Thackeray’s leadership, the Centre should also cooperate with the state for speedy develop-

ment. “The Centre will have to extend assistance to alleviate the misery of Maharashtra’s farmers,” the editorial read. Delhi should respect the decision taken by the people of Maharashtra and ensure that the stability of the government is not impacted in any way, the piece said. “Delhi is the capital of the country for sure. But Uddhav Thackeray, son of late Balasaheb Thackeray who took a firm stand all along that Maharashtra is not Delhi’s slave, has now become the chief minister. So, there is surety that the government will have its spine intact,” it stressed. The Sena reminded the PM that he did not belong to any single party but the entire country and that the people of the state had fought with Delhi for its creation.

Raut: Will repeat experiment in Goa

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 29

Buoyed by its success in Maharashtra, the Shiv Sena on Friday dared the BJP that the Maha Vikas Aghadi experiment would be repeated in Goa. Sena leader Sanjay Raut made the announcement in the presence of Goa Forward Party (GFP) leader Vijay Sardesai and MLAs Jayesh Salgaonkar and Vinod Palayekar, who were in Mumbai to meet the Rajya Sabha MP. Like the Sena, both the GFP and MGP are former BJP allies. Mr Raut said, “There will definitely be an earthquake. Mr Sardesai is here with all his MLAs. Some other MLAs, who have backed the (BJP) govern-

ment, are in touch with us. There will be a big movement across the country. You will soon see a big movement in Goa, where a government has been founded on immoral grounds. After Maharashtra, it’s the time of Goa now.” Mr Raut claimed that he had already spoken to Maharashtrawadi Gomantak Party’s (MGP’s) Sudin Dhavalikar in this regard. He said, “A (non-BJP) front is being formed with Mr Sardesai in Goa... like we did in Maharashtra. BJP pointed fingers at us that we went with the Congress and NCP. But in Goa, BJP formed the government with those facing corruption charges and the people of Goa did not like it.”

‘Sule rightful heir to Pawar’s legacy’

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 29

Congress leader Milind Deora Friday said that three-time Lok Sabha MP from Baramati, Supriya Sule, is the “rightful heir” to the “great legacy” of her father and Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar. Mr Deora said that he shares Ms Sule’s principles that social work and policy change are the path to political empowerment and development. “Supriya Sule is the rightful heir to her



Milind Deora



Supriya Sule

father’s great legacy. She is effective because she believes that social work and policy change are the path to political empowerment. I share these values and admire her for staying the course (sic),” Mr

Deora tweeted. The former Mumbai south MP made the comment while replying to a tweet. Baramati is the bastion of the Pawars. Media reports in the past have claimed that there is competition between Ms Sule and her cousin and former Maharashtra deputy chief minister Ajit Pawar to inherit the 79-year-old NCP patriarch’s legacy. Sharad Pawar, whose political career spans 52 years, has been a four-time chief minister of Maharashtra and also served as a minister in the

Union Cabinet where he handled key portfolios like defence and agriculture. He co-founded the NCP after quitting the Congress in 1999 over Sonia Gandhi’s foreign origin issue. The NCP, which spent the last five years in the Opposition, is a key constituent of the three-party alliance, Maha Vikas Aghadi, which formed the government in Maharashtra Thursday. The Sena and the Indian National Congress are the other main partners of the ruling coalition.



Children dive into the polluted water of the Bay of Bengal at Marina Beach in Chennai on Friday.

— PTI

GOLDEN WORDS

His works reflect deep compassion, bridge tradition and modernity

Malayalam poet Akkitham wins 55th Jnanpith award

AGE CORRESPONDENT THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 29

Akkitham Achuthan Nampoothiri, 93, who handled Malayalam poetry to modernism in the fifties and sixties, has bagged this year’s Jnanpith Award, the highest literary prize in India given in recognition of outstanding contribution towards literature. The award was announced in New Delhi on Friday after a meeting

of the Jnanpith selection board chaired by novelist Pratibha Ray. Akkitham is the sixth Malayalam writer to bag the honour after G. Sankara Kurup, S.K. Pottekkat, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, M.T. Vasudevan Nair and O.N.V. Kurup. Born in 1926, Akkitham Achuthan Nampoothiri, popularly known as Akkitham, has displayed unfathomable compassion and displayed imprints of



Akkitham

Indian philosophical and moral values in his works which functioned as a bridge between tradition

► He is the sixth Malayalam writer to bag the honour after G. Sankara Kurup, S.K. Pottekkat, Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, M.T. Vasudevan Nair and O.N.V. Kurup.

and modernity. His works include poems, dramas, critical essays, children’s literature, short stories and translation that delve

deep into human emotions in a fast-changing social space. Akkitham has authored 55 books out of which 45 are collections of poems. The most celebrated of his poems are *Irupatham Noottandinte Ithihasam* and *Idiunjupolinja Lokam*. His other works include *Veeravadam*, *Balidarsanam*, *Nimisha Kshetram*, *Amrita Khatika*, *Akkitham Kavithakal*, *Epic of Twentieth Century* and *Antimahakalam*.

A Padamshree recipient, Akkitham was awarded the Ezhuthachan Puraskaram, the highest literary honour instituted by the government of Kerala. He is the recipient of many other awards including Sahitya Akademi Award, Moortidevi Award, Kerala Sahitya Akademi Award (twice), Mathrubhumi Award, Vayalar Award and, Kabir Samman. His works have been translated into many Indian and foreign languages.

Will burn Pragma alive if she sets foot in MP: MLA

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, NOV. 29

A ruling Congress MLA of Madhya Pradesh has triggered an unsavoury row by threatening to burn alive controversial BJP MP Pragma Singh Thakur for terming Mahatma Gandhi’s assassin, Nathuram Godse, a patriot.

Gobardhan Dangi, MLA from Biora in Rajgarh district, dared Thakur to set foot in his constituency, saying, “We will burn her alive.”

“We will not just burn her effigy... If she sets foot here, we will burn her alive,” the lawmaker said while staging a demonstration in Rajgarh late on Thursday in protest against the attempt to glorify Godse by Thakur.

Thakur had sparked a furore in Lok Sabha on Thursday when she termed Godse a patriot while intervening DMK MP A. Raja during a debate in the upper house. She, however, later denied her actions.

The 49-year-old saffron leader, an accused in the 2008 Malegaon blast in which six people were killed and more than 100 others injured, was also barred from campaigning during the last Lok Sabha elections by the Election Commission for stating that Maharashtra anti-terrorist squad (ATS) chief Hemant Karkare, who was martyred in the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, was killed because of her curse.

In a related development, a Dangi community leader on Friday

‘Terrorist slur worse than killing Gandhi’

VINEETA PANDEY NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

While trying to defend his party colleague Pragma Thakur, BJP MP from Jharkhand, Nishikant Dubey, on Friday scored a self-goal when he said that calling Thakur, who is a woman, a terrorist was “worse than murdering Mahatma Gandhi.”

“Calling a member of this House, that too a woman is shameful. Congress party and Rahul Gandhi should apologise in this House. Calling a woman a terrorist, calling a member of this House a terrorist, is worse than killing Gandhi,” Mr Dubey said resulting in an uproar in the House by Opposition members.

However, Mr Dubey, again tried to pin down the Congress by saying that the party has allied with Shiv Sena in Maharashtra which had in its mouthpiece *Saamana* called Nathuram Godse a patriot.

slammed the MLA, saying that it “amounted to breaching the traditions of the community.” “The Dangi society shuns violence, particularly against se-ers. We will call a meeting of our community leaders to discuss the issue and, if needed, summon the legislator to apologise,” the president of Dangi society H.L. Dangi said.

Cong leaders toying with idea of alliance with JD-S

Deve Gowda open to backing Shivakumar

BHASKAR HEGDE BENGALURU, NOV. 29

The Congress and the NCP joining hands with the Shiv Sena in neighbouring Maharashtra to form a government seems to have inspired a few Congress leaders in the state to attempt a revival of the party’s partnership with the JD(S) if the BJP fails to get the required number of seats in the December 5 byelections.

The Yediyurappa government can get a simple majority in the lower House with its 228 seats if it wins from at least eight of the 15 assembly constituencies going to the polls.

It is, however, hoping to win at least 10 of the 15, which are not dominated by the Vokkaligas, who are more partial to its rival parties. Leading those in the Congress hopeful of reviving the party’s relations with the JD(S) to install a Congress-led coalition government in the state, is former minister, D.K. Shivakumar, who had announced in Chikaballapur on Thursday that the BJP government in Karnataka would fall post the bypolls.

Significantly, a day before, JD(S) supremo, H.D. Deve Gowda had remarked that, “Anything

Sidda, HDK booked for sedition over protest against I-T raids

**Bengaluru, Nov. 29:** The police has booked former chief ministers Siddaramaiah and H.D. Kumaraswamy along with the then Bengaluru police commissioner T. Sunil Kumar, his subordinates and some Congress and JD(S) leaders on sedition charges for protesting the income tax raids during the Lok Sabha polls.

Based on a complaint by activist Mallikarjuna A, a city court recently directed the commercial street police to register a case under various sections of the IPC including criminal conspiracy and attempting or abetting waging war against the Government of India, the police said. The case relates to protests near the I-T



Siddaramaiah



HDK

office here by the leaders including Mr Kumaraswamy against the Income Tax raids at the residence of Congress and JD(S) leaders.

The charges are that Mr Kumaraswamy had informed public about the possible raids after getting inputs about the action. Mr Kumaraswamy had told the media on March 27 that there was every likelihood of raids as a large number of central security forces had arrived at Kempegowda International Airport.

can happen, it all depends on AICC president, Sonia Gandhi.”

It’s no secret that Mr Shivakumar enjoys a good rapport with the Gowda family and should he persuade the Congress high command to swing the pendulum his way, it

could be his ticket to becoming CM, say sources. Moreover, they point out that Mr Deve Gowda is desperate to destroy former chief minister Siddaramaiah politically, and would be open to backing Mr Shivakumar for the top job.





## Change in perception

Need to change people's perception about police: Union home minister Amit Shah



Policy makers in government and other institutions are scared to speak the truth

— Manmohan Singh, Prime Minister

### IN BRIEF

## EC recognises JJP as Haryana party

**New Delhi:** The Election Commission on Friday recognised the Jannayak Janta Party as a state party of Haryana. The JJP, founded by Haryana deputy chief minister Dushyant Chautala, won 10 seats in the 90-member Assembly in the recent polls. It extended support to the BJP to form the government. "The commission has granted recognition to the Jannayak Janta Party as a state party in the state of Haryana... As per party's request... The commission has allotted the key symbol for the party," the poll panel said in a letter to the JJP. The JJP was formed December 9 last year after a split in INLD. — PTI

## 3 Maoist suspects held in Dantewada

**Bhopal:** Three suspected Maoists including a woman were on Friday arrested following an encounter with security forces in the forest of Nahada in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district. According to Dantewada district superintendent of police (SP) Abhishak Pallav, acting on a tip off on presence of hardcore Maoist Gudidhwar along with his armed cadres in the forest of Nahada, a search operation was launched by security forces early on Friday morning. The ultras opened fire on security forces when the latter were cordoning off the area, leading to a fierce gun battle between them.

## PIB sets up unit to curb fake news

**New Delhi:** In a bid to combat fake news, the Press Information Bureau (PIB) has set up a fact-checking unit to verify news related to the government's ministries, departments and schemes. The ministry on Thursday urged people to email snapshots of any "dubious material" they come across on any platform including social media and it will get it checked. "Received a forward that looks too good to be true!!! or maybe came across a piece of news that you want verified!! Send it across and we will Fact Check it for you, no

## CBI TO GRILL U.P. OFFICIALS IN DHFL SCAM

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

The CBI, probing the alleged investment of provident fund contribution of the Uttar Pradesh government employees in the scam-hit Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL), is set to examine three senior officials, including an IAS officer, of the state government. Sources said, "Preliminary investigation by the agency has revealed that certain public servants played crucial role in investing Employees Provident Fund (EPF) contribution in the DHFL. It is also suspected that it was done deliberately". This is the reason that CBI is contemplating seeking clarifications from three senior officials, including an IAS, of the UP government. "The agency will soon register a preliminary enquiry (PE) to probe the scam", sources said. The UP government recently recommended CBI probe into the matter. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath last month transferred to the CBI the ongoing probe into the investment of UP power corporation's employees provident fund money in scam-hit DHFL. The issue sparked a major controversy, especially since DHFL's promoters were recently grilled by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) over their alleged links with a front company owned by Iqbal Mirchi.

# Bypolls trigger bickering in Bengal BJP

Shah seeks report, senior leaders divided over reasons for party's poor show

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI**  
KOLKATA, NOV. 29

A sharp division of opinion has surfaced within the West Bengal BJP over the party's poor performance in the Assembly byelections in three constituencies in the state as party chief and Union home minister Amit Shah has sought a report from state party chief and Midnapore MP Dilip Ghosh to know the reasons.

While one camp found that the BJP campaign on the National Register of Citizens and Citizenship Amendment Bill in the

polls has boomeranged due to controversies over them, another section accused the Trinamul Congress of winning by orchestrating attacks on the BJP. State BJP vice-president Chandra Kumar Bose tweeted, "Its essential for @BJP4Bengal to cleanse the party system & devise a strategy specific to Bengal. Pan India strategy would not apply to the land of Swami Vivekananda & Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose."

He added, "Political parties must take interest in Bengal genuinely to work for its people & develop the



C.K. Bose

basic infrastructure for upliftment & not just treat it as a vote bank for political victory. This would not work as the people of Bengal are politically sharp & astute."

Mr Bose later noted, "We were supposed to win the by-polls. But we could not because of some organisa-



Rahul Sinha

tional faults and some issues which we took to the people during the polls. These were non-issues. It would have been better if they were not raised in the present political situation here. NRC has been an issue of Assam since 1985."

He argued, "It has not been discussed in detail here however. Mr Shah had earlier stated that NRC would be discussed after the CAB would be passed. So NRC campaign was not needed in the by-polls. There were many other issues like employment and industry the people, politically conscious, want to know how the BJP can help them."

BJP national secretary Rahul Sinha however argued, "We have won 18 seats in Lok Sabha Elections without attacking anyone. The TMC is always attacker here while the BJP and the opposition face their attack."

## Gender-neutral loos likely in JU

**Kolkata, Nov. 29:** The Jadavpur University is considering a proposal by the students' union to set up gender-neutral toilets in the campus, varsity authorities said on Friday.

The administration has received a proposal for setting up two gender-neutral toilets in the campus that could be used by men, women and persons of the third gender and is considering it, a senior JU official said.

Noting that the proposal was sent some time ago, Arts Faculty Students Union (AFSU) member Dwaipayan said the union would be happy if the authorities take note of it and set up the gender-neutral toilets.

"The proposal is yet to be placed before the panel that looks after developmental works in the campus. We are considering setting up not only gender-neutral toilets but also differently-abled-friendly ones," a professor said.

He said the university

**► The university has an inclusive culture and that should get reflected in its amenities, said a professor**

has an inclusive culture and that should get reflected in its amenities.

Schoolteacher Suchitra Dey, who was Hiranmay Dey before undergoing sex reassignment surgery in 2017, said gender-neutral toilets would be very helpful. Ms Dey said she faced predicament while using toilets at JU while studying post-graduation in English there before undergoing surgery but got a lot of support from the faculty.

"I could not go to men's washroom as I was a woman deep inside even before surgery. Going to women's washroom was also equally difficult. I hope no one goes has to go through such experiences now," said Dey, who is also an LGBT activist. — PTI

## Mamata humiliating me on every occasion: Bengal gov

**Kolkata, Nov. 29:** West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, who is at loggerheads with the TMC government in the state, on Friday hit out at chief minister Mamata Banerjee for "humiliating" him "on every occasion" and not briefing him regularly.

This will only "belittle" her own stature, Dhankhar told PTI in an interview and urged Banerjee, for whom he professed "enormous respect", to introspect and find the way forward.

The governor also slammed Speaker Biman Banerjee for "violating protocol" by inviting him to speak at the Constitution Day special session in the Assembly on November 26 after other dignitaries.

"Have you ever seen in any part of India that a governor of a state (is) being asked to address the assembly in a queue at number five and precedence being given to for-



Jagdeep Dhankhar

mer governor (M.K. Naryanan), former Lok Sabha Speaker (Meira Kumar) and former chief election commissioner (S.Y. Quraishi)? "This is a gross violation of protocol. Suffering this great indignity looking at the importance of the day I went... His conduct leaves much to be desired." Mr Dhankhar said.

Keeping up his attack against Mamata Banerjee, he said under the Constitution the CM is obliged to brief the governor but he has not been informed by Ms Banerjee even once. "It is her constitutional duty as chief

minister to brief the governor," he asserted. "After Cyclone Bulbul I wrote a letter to her asking her to brief me. But most unfortunately it was replied by the principal home secretary. I take exception to such kind of conduct. My communication to the chief minister has to be replied only by her and none else," he said.

He refuted allegations against him that he is crossing his "constitutional limits" and is "trying to run a parallel government".

"I am working as per the Constitution. It is not my job to run the government. But it is my job to ensure that the government is run in accordance with the Constitution. If there is violation of the Constitution anywhere, I will step in. Her (Banerjee's) oath is allegiance to the Constitution, my oath is to protect the Constitution," he said. — PTI

## Precarious economy mirror of worried society, says Singh

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on Friday argued that the "fundamental" reason for precarious state of the economy of the country was the "worrying" state of the society.

"A nation's state of the economy is also a reflection of the state of its society. An economy is a function of the numerous exchanges and social interactions among the people and institutions. Mutual trust and self-confidence are the bedrock of societal transactions that fosters economic growth. Our social fabric of trust and confidence is now torn and ruptured," he said at a conclave on economy organized by the Samriddha Bharat Foundation. The former Prime Minister asserted that mere changes in economic policy alone will not help revive the economy. "We need to change

**A nation's state of the economy is also a reflection of the state of its society. An economy is a function of the numerous exchanges and social interactions among the people and institutions.**

— Manmohan Singh, Former PM

the current climate in our society from one of fear to one of confidence for our economy to start growing robustly again".

Recounting his days as a student of economics at Cambridge University in the 50s where he learnt that economic growth and development are shaped by societies, Dr Singh said one cannot separate society from the economy in any nation. "There is a palpable climate of fear in

our society today. Many industrialists tell me they live in fear of harassment by government authorities. Bankers are reluctant to make new loans, for fear of retribution. Entrepreneurs are hesitant to put up fresh projects, for fear of failure attributed to ulterior motives.

"Technology start-ups that are an important new engine of economic growth and jobs, seem to live under a shadow of constant surveillance and deep suspicion. Policy makers in government and other institutions are scared to speak the truth or engage in intellectually honest policy discussions. There is profound fear and distrust among our various economic participants," he said. He said that the cause of the economic crisis was the government's policy doctrine that seems suspect every industrialist, banker, policy maker, regulator, entrepreneur and citizen.

## India to Bangla: NRC our internal matter

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

Bangladesh high commissioner to India Syed Muazzem Ali on Friday said that India has clearly conveyed to his government that National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise in Assam is its internal matter which would be resolved internally.

Te envoy, who will be returning to Bangladesh next month after completing his tenure in India, said that as long as India maintains NRC is its internal issue, Bangladesh will not interfere in any of such matters or make statements. He added that this matter was discussed during Bangladesh Prime Minister's Sheikh Hasina's meeting with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and

during ministering meetings.

"No body has been sent back to Bangladesh after NRC so far and no one would be sent back because it is India's internal matter. We have been told that this is India's internal issue and it would be resolved internally so Bangladesh need not concern itself," Ali said during a media interaction at the Indian Women Press Corps (IWPC).

"Bangladesh and India share 54 rivers and the issue of water sharing during the lean season has been an important issue as it has a direct impact on food production and quality of life of our teeming millions. The two countries are working for a solution for an interim water sharing arrangement of Teesta River," Ali said.

### SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a girl namely Darshita Sawant D/o Late Sh. Bal Kishan Sawant, R/o D-40, 3rd Floor, Main Shakarpur Market, Delhi, Age : 17 yrs., Height : 5 ft., Complexion : Wheatish, Face : Round, Built : Thin, Wearing : White Colour Top and Black Colour Jeans, has been missing / kidnapped since

29.10.2019 from the area of PS. Shakarpur. In this regard a case FIR No. 363/19 dated 02.11.2019 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at PS. Shakarpur, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped girl but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped girl please inform undersigned

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: [cic@cbi.gov.in](mailto:cic@cbi.gov.in), Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

DP/127/ED/19. PS. Shakarpur, Delhi Ph.: 011-22542441, 8750870661

### NORTHERN RAILWAY

#### E-TENDER NOTICE

The Dy. Chief Electrical Engineer (Const), Northern Railway, Moradabad for & on behalf of President of India invites E- Tenders under single packet system for the under noted work:-

e-Tender NIT No.	17-Elect/C/T/GPS/UMB/54-C
2. Name of work with its location	Electrification of 44 units Type-II Quarters in Railway colony Ambala including Electrification work of additional rooms constructed in Officers Rest House Chandigarh along with electrification work of Goods platform at Ghagghar Railway Station.
3. Completion period of the work	12 months
4. Approx. Cost of work	₹ 54,28,642.04
5. Earnest Money amount (to be deposited Online)	₹ 1,08,600/-
6. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on date 23.12.2019 on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs on 23.12.2019.
7. Validity of offer	45 Days from the date of opening of tender.
8. Northern Railway Website	Additional Relevant information may be checked on the website <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a>
9. Eligibility Criteria	The tenderer (s) shall be eligible only if he/they fulfill eligibility criteria as under. 1. Total contract amount received during the last three financial year (i.e. current year and three previous financial year) should be minimum of 150% value of the tender. 2. The tenderer must have successfully completed any of the following during last 07 (seven) years, ending last day of month previous to the one in which tender is invited, under Government / Semi Government / PSU, from the date of publishing of tender. Three similar works costing not less than the amount equal to 30% of advertised value of the tender. OR Two similar works costing not less than the amount equal to 40% of advertised value of the tender. OR One similar work costing not less than the amount equal to 60% of advertised value of the tender. The similar work is defined as:- Supply erection testing & commissioning of electrical wiring in residential Quarters/Railway Stations/Service Buildings/ High Bay Sheds etc. OR Supply erection testing & commissioning of Tubular pole/Octagonal Poles and Luminaries including erection of rail poles in streets/yards, washing lines & circulating area with or without timer. OR Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of facade lighting arrangement at Railway Station & Service Building/office building. work of all types of signage-LED/Glowlign. 3. The tenderer must submit attested copy of Electrical contractor license along with his offer.

No. 17-Elect/C/GPS/UMB/54-C Dated : 28.11.2019. 3631/19  
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**Red light jumping can cause serious accident.**

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## Railway asset

No question of closing Integral Coach Factory at Chennai, says Goyal



My thoughts & prayers are with the victim's family at this time of immense grief

— Rahul Gandhi  
Cong leader

### SHORT TAKES

## J&K: 28 arrested for militant inks

**Srinagar:** In a stepped up campaign against alleged Over-Ground Workers (OGWs) and active sympathisers of separatist militants, the Jammu and Kashmir police has arrested as many as 28 persons across the Union Territory (UT) over past one month. A statement issued by the police here on Friday said that the accused were running six terror modules which were busted jointly by it, the Army and other security forces during this period. "The coordinated efforts by the security forces have mounted tremendous pressure on the terrorists and their OGWs, leading to the arrest of 28 OGWs," the statement said.

## Navy inducts new Dornier squadron

**New Delhi:** Indian Navy on Friday inducted a new squadron of 4 surveillance Dornier aircraft which will help it to keep an eye on Gujarat coast and North Arabian sea. Indian Naval Air Squadron 314 — Raptors—the sixth Dornier aircraft squadron was commissioned at a ceremony in Porbandar. These are medium range surveillance aircraft which can continuously fly for four hours. The squadron will operate the Dornier aircraft, a multi-role SRMR aircraft. The aircraft can be used for electronic warfare missions, maritime surveillance, search and rescue and to provide targeting data to weapon platform.

## Rafales to land in Bengal base by May

**Kolkata:** One of the first batch of Rafale fighter aircraft will land in May next year in West Bengal, where the second squadron of the Medium Multi-Role Combat Aircrafts (MMRCA) of the IAF is going to be raised at Hasimara Air Force Station near Alipurduar. Significantly, the first batch of four Rafale aircrafts is expected to arrive in India around the same time. The issue came up during the meeting between French envoy Emmanuel Lemaire and West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar on Friday.

## PRAGYA FORCED TO APOLOGISE

■ Continued from Page 1 she said during the discussion on the SPG Bill on November 27 "I did not call Nathuram Godse a patriot and I did not even take his name, but still if it has hurt somebody, then I apologise while expressing my regret". She again tried to say something beyond the text, but the Speaker turned off her mike. Her first apology was panned by Opposition parties for its reference to other issues, as they insisted on an unconditional apology. The BJP MP targeted Rahul Gandhi without naming him and also claimed that her comments were twisted. Earlier in the House, she had said she respects and pays tribute to Mahatma Gandhi for his contribution to the country. Ms Thakur also said: "One member has publicly termed me a terrorist, though I have not been convicted by the court... It is an insult to a woman and a sadhvi," and added that making such remarks too was against the law. Ms Thakur is an accused in the Malegaon blast case. Embarrassed by her remarks, the BJP's top leadership summoned Ms Thakur on Friday morning. In Parliament, BJP working president J.P. Nadda and parliamentary affairs minister Prahlad Joshi met her, after which it was decided she would read the statement in the Lok Sabha. At this meeting, sources said, it was also decided she will move a breach of privilege notice against Rahul Gandhi.

# 5 scientists injured in lab blast

Explosion in Bengaluru lab during analysis of material seized in Raichur

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU, NOV. 29

Five scientists and an attendant at the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) at Madiwala in the city sustained injuries on Friday after an explosion during the chemical analysis of material seized in Raichur last year.

The explosion occurred at the Chemistry Lab on the first floor of the FSL building around 3 pm while the scientists were analysing the chemical. The injured were rushed to St. John's Hospital



Police personnel and others stand outside the FSL lab in Bengaluru on Friday.

where they are undergoing treatment. According to sources, a chemical reaction is suspected to have triggered the blast while the scientists

were testing the explosive material seized from a blast site in Yarmaras on the outskirts of Raichur city on October 5, 2018.

The injured scientists have been identified as Srinath (36) from Kolar, Navya (29), Basavaprabhu (27), Vishwanatha Reddy (33) and Manjunath Babbalakatti (33). The lab attendant was identified as Anthony. Srinath is said to be critical after sustaining injuries on the head, hands and upper torso. The police said that the six injured included new recruits and trainees.

# J&K L-G announces steps to empower village bodies

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 29

At his first public appearance in restive Valley after assuming office on October 31, Jammu and Kashmir's lieutenant-governor Girish Chandra Murmu on Friday announced a slew of measures to empower village councils in the Union Territory (UT).

The gathering held in Sonpah village of the Valley's central district of Budgam as part of the government's week-long public outreach programme "Back to Village II (B2V2)" — was attended by several hundred people including government officials, a report said.

A tight security umbrella had been put up in Sonpah and its neighbour-



Girish Chandra Murmu

hood. The police sources said that as many as thirteen companies (approximately 1,400 personnel) of the J&K police and other security forces were deployed in the area and en-route hours before Mr. Murmu's visit. An official handout said that it was a "huge gathering" held during "B2V2", the flagship programme aimed at providing governance at the doorsteps of the rural populace and enlisting community participation across the UT.

# Electronic record can be treated as document: SC

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

The Supreme Court on Friday held that the electronic record — the contents of the memory card/pen drive — was a document and if prosecution was relying on it in the course of criminal trial the same should be shared with the accused so that he could present an effective defence.

However, the court in a caveat said that in the cases involving the privacy of the complainant or victim or witness or his/her identity, the court could restrict the availability of such document to inspection by the accused, his lawyer or IT expert.

For the inspection of the electronic evidence, the top court said, "The

(trial) court may issue suitable directions to balance the interests of both sides."

"We hold that the contents of the memory card/pen drive being electronic record must be regarded as a document. If the prosecution is relying on the same, ordinarily, the accused must be given a cloned copy, said a bench of Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari in their judgment pronounced on Friday.

The court said this while partly allowing criminal appeal by Malayalam actor P. Gopalkrishnan who had challenged the Kerala high court's order refusing him access to electronic record relating to a recording of the alleged assault on a noted actress.

## ■ 'Our ATGM is in advanced stages of development'

# DRDO, Israel firm in war of words

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 29

The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Friday reacted angrily after an Israeli-Indian joint venture firm challenged the need for its programme to develop portable Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) after the Indian Army bought Spike missiles. "A news item relating to Spike missile testing at the Infantry school MHOW purportedly based on a press release is circulating incorrect facts. The DRDO Anti-Tank Guided Missiles (ATGM) is a state of art missile in advanced stages of development,"

■ The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Friday reacted angrily after an Israeli-Indian joint venture firm challenged the need for its programme to develop portable Anti-Tank Guided Missiles

said DRDO on Friday. The Indian Army has acquired Spike anti-tank missiles to be deployed at Line of Control (LoC) with Pakistan from Israel's Rafael Advanced Defense Systems, which

has established a joint venture with the Kalyani Group in India. The Indian Army on Wednesday test fired two newly acquired Spike missiles at the Infantry School at Mhow, Madhya Pradesh which was also witnessed by Indian Army Chief Bipin Rawat. India had shelved plans to buy anti-tank guided missiles (ATGM) from private firm in favour of indigenous development by the DRDO. However, to meet its urgent security requirement, Army acquired Spike missiles from Rafael.

A press release by the PR firm of joint venture on Thursday said while there seems to have been some progress on the

DRDO development programme, it will take a long time for it to reach the user in the field. It said that Spike is a 4th generation missile, which can engage a target with precision at ranges up to 4 kilometre.

"With the confidence in the Spike missile established, the Indian Army may need to revisit their plans for 3rd Generation (Gen) missiles. Both the DRDO ATGM programme, as well as the invitation to Indian industry to develop a 3rd Gen missile will need a rethink, as having a 4th Gen missile will put the plan for development of a 3rd Gen missile questionable," said a press release issued by its PR agency.

# GDP falls to 4.5%

■ Continued from Page 1 estate during the quarter grew 5.8 per cent, compared to seven per cent in the previous quarter and 6.3 per cent in July-September 2018," it added.

For last over a month or so, both domestic and international rating agencies had cut the gross domestic product or GDP growth forecast, ranging between 6.2 and 4.7 per cent this financial year. Out of all agencies, Care rating agency estimated the highest of 6.2 per cent Q2 GDP growth, while Reuters Polls showed the lowest of 4.7 per cent a day before, but the government data settled an unexpected number at 4.5 per cent.

The Narendra Modi government recently took several measures to boost investments and bolster economic growth. These include withdrawal of the super-rich surcharge imposed on foreign investors, exemption of start-ups from "angel tax", the infusion of Rs 70,000 crores in public sector banks, a significant cut in the corporate tax rate and slashing of the lending rate by the RBI five times this year.

However, the government is hopeful that the steps by the finance ministry will show positive results by next quarter

onwards. "The fundamentals of the Indian economy remain strong, GDP growth is expected to pick up from the third quarter of FY 2019-20," said Atanu Chakraborty of the department of economic affairs.

Economists hope that the Reserve Bank may cut its repo rate for the sixth time in a row, by 25 basis points, to 4.90 per cent at its December 5 meeting. "Economic growth is picking up in the second half of this fiscal, after the government took steps to support real estate and non-bank finance companies," they went on to say.

Despite the several steps, analysts and experts and the Opposition, however, raised a hue and cry over the economy's downward trend, saying the government didn't do enough to address the slowdown in demand for the past 2-3 years. "Declining demand is among the prime reasons for the slowdown," they claimed.

The data indicates that the economy started falling gradually since demonetisation in November 2016, though the GDP in Q2FY17 was 8.87 per cent at that point. It has been also observed that all key sectors felt the heat and the GDP shrank gradually.

# Uddhav

■ Continued from Page 1 post was given to the NCP and the Speaker's post went to the Congress.

"We are expecting names from the Congress by tomorrow (Saturday) morning as the forms for the election will have to be filled tomorrow itself. Once the names are finalised by the Congress leadership in Delhi, one of them will be chosen as the MVA's official candidate. We have already completed the rest of the formalities and only the candidate's name remains to be written on the form," NCP leader Ajit Pawar said.

Former chief minister Devendra Fadnis attacked the new government, alleging that it preferred discussing proving a majority at its first Cabinet meeting rather than giving relief to farmers. The former CM said the state wanted to know why the MVA was "scared" when it earlier claimed to have the numbers to prove its majority on the floor of the Assembly.

"The new government preferred discreetly discussing how to prove its majority than giving help to farmers who are in trouble. Why make claims of having numbers then?" Mr Fadnis asked on Twitter.





## Trying times

South African court rejects an appeal by ex-Prez Jacob Zuma seeking to prevent his prosecution on corruption charges over a \$2 billion arms deal



Britain would leave the European Union by January 31 at the latest

— Boris Johnson  
British PM

## IN BRIEF

### PIOs smuggle drugs in chicken

**London:** Two Indian-origin brothers have pleaded guilty to participating in the activities of an organised crime group, which was involved in smuggling millions of pounds worth of illegal drugs into the UK via a series of front firms linked with the importation of chicken from the Netherlands. Manjinder Singh Thakhar and Davinder Singh Thakhar pleaded guilty after being caught following a probe by the UK's National Crime Agency and will be sentenced in January next year. Two ringleaders of the Birmingham-based organised crime group, Wasim Hussain and Nazrat Hussain, have been jailed for a combined sentence of around 44 years. — PTI

### Ex-Japanese PM Nakasone dead

**Tokyo:** Yasuhiro Nakasone, one of Japan's longest reigning PMs and known for his friendship with Ronald Reagan, has died at the age of 101, a top ruling party official said on Friday. Nakasone, PM from 1982 to 1987, hobnobbed on the world stage with Reagan and Margaret Thatcher while battling with bureaucrats over domestic reforms. He himself said he failed to achieve a dream of revising the country's pacifist, post-war constitution to clarify the ambiguous status of the military. "Revising the constitution takes time. I stressed to the public that it was necessary, but it was not possible to begin the revision quickly," the straight-talking Nakasone had said in an interview.

### Farogh Naseem reappointed

**Islamabad:** Farogh Naseem was reappointed as Pakistan's minister of law on Friday, two days after resignation. President Arif Alvi administered oath to the minister, who had resigned from his post to represent Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Qamar Javed Bajwa in Supreme Court in tenure extension case. On Thursday, SC had given a six-month conditional extension to Bajwa in his services as COAS, and ordered the government to complete the required legislation within six months for extension/appointment of an army chief. Earlier, the apex court had suspended the COAS tenure extension, citing a series of irregularities and ordering the government to produce legal provisions and detailed arguments on the reasoning behind the move. Bajwa was appointed to lead the military in 2016.

## Nepal ex-PM calls for trilateral partnership with India & China

SHIRISH B. PRADHAN  
KATHMANDU, NOV. 29

Former Nepal PM Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda" on Friday rejected the India-China Plus formula mooted by Beijing but favoured a trilateral strategic partnership between Nepal, India and China based on mutual benefit. Interacting with journalists at a day-long programme here, the Nepal Communist Party supreme said, "I believe, the China-India Plus or 2+1 concept does not talk about equal shares between China, Nepal and India, rather, it suggests that the first two countries will have bigger roles and the third one will have fewer roles when it comes to forging such partnership." "Nepal cannot become merely a transit point between the two immediate neighbouring countries.



Prachanda

Rather, Nepal should also have its equal share when we forge such partnership," he said at the programme titled "Strengthening Cooperation Between Nepal and China; People to People Relations and Role of Media". Nepal being a sovereign and independent country should have equal status and say in the trilateral partnership, Prachanda was quoted as saying My Republica portal. In October, China's vice-foreign minister Luo Zhaohui said his country is interested in furthering India-China Plus formula to develop a common strategy for Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan and Africa. "One of the consensus of the Wuhan meeting (held

last year between PM Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping) is to carry out China-India Plus cooperation, because China and India are neighbours that cannot move away from each other. Both countries are major countries and their cooperation on international and regional issues is very important," Luo said in Beijing. On Friday, Prachanda was speaking as the chief guest at the 'Nepal-China relations and media's role to strengthen people-to-people ties' programme organised by Nepal-China Media Forum in Kathmandu. "We should understand why Chinese President Xi Jinping last month came to Nepal on a state visit via India after holding meeting with PM Narendra Modi. This showed China's acceptance of the trilateral partnership," he added. — PTI



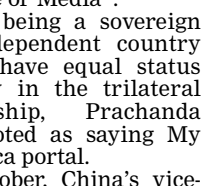
Macys Herald Square opens its doors at 5 pm on Thanksgiving Day for thousands of Black Friday shoppers in search of amazing sales and doorbuster deals in New York. — AP

## Angry China weighs options

**Beijing, Nov. 29:** China's fury over President Donald Trump's decision to sign legislation supporting human rights in Hong Kong is evident. What's less clear is what counter-measures Beijing may take in response to what it said were 'extremely evil' and dangerous moves. Before signing the bills, Trump said he was concerned that trade talks

with China might be disrupted. Analysts say the potential consequences could extend well beyond the current round of negotiations in the tariff war between the world's two largest economies. The Hong Kong Human Rights and Democracy Act of 2019 passed both houses of Congress nearly unanimously. It amends a law passed in 1992 to but-

teress the former British colony's status as a semi-autonomous region after China took control in 1997. It's that special status that has enabled Hong Kong residents to take to the streets in massive, often violent protests in the past six months, exercising civil liberties the ruling Communist Party prohibits in mainland China. — AP



Prachanda

Between Nepal and China; People to People Relations and Role of Media".

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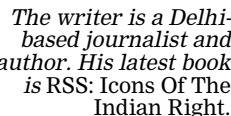
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A pile of discarded clothes on the floor of a person's room

Extreme diversity, particularly with respect to the ethnic and racial mix of a population

THE ASIAN AGE

SATURDAY | 30 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI

Oped

PAGE  
7

# Maha ghotala and 'Gondhal' in Maharashtra...



## Shobhaa's Take

Forget about the grandly titled Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra for the moment. It is obvious to all that what we are witnessing is a *maha ghotala*, with a strange bunch of people getting together to form a government by hook or by crook (more crook, less hook) with just a single-point agenda — power-grabbing. It is nothing more than a moneymaking opportunity for most of them. Sharad Pawar has outfoxed everyone, including Mota Bhai Amit Shah and emerged as the wildest of them all. This may have come as a surprise to those

who have not followed Pawar's trajectory (clearly, his nephew Ajit Pawar forgot a few key chapters), but close observers of the Maratha strongman will be able to trot out hundreds of incidents from the past which stand testimony to his cunning and guile. Nothing wrong with any of this — which successful politician can survive without employing both? Now with Mr Pawar being in such an enviable position, it will be interesting to monitor all the new real estate deals that get sealed while this lot is in power.

A few days before the dramatic swearing-in ceremony, I was attending an evening of Sufi music on the lawns of our historic museum in Mumbai. There on stage was an aston-

ishing performer from rural Maharashtra. He was leading his troupe of traditional Gondhal artistes (mainly from Pandharpur) with infectious zest and energy. Nandesh Umap sang devotional songs, but with an earthy, naughty twist. He himself was dressed in a floor length angarkha created out of 50 m of handspun fabric (maybe this authentic costume had inspired designer Rohit Bal?). The rough translation of "Gondhal" is "confusion". Several threads create a revue-like performance, which provides a sharp commentary on life and issues. "Gondhal" is entertaining all right. But it is not mere "entertainment". It can also be watched as a satirical critique on society. Nandesh sang an old favourite of mine — "*Vinchhoo Chawala*". Vinchhoo is the Marathi name for the deadly scorpion. And "chhawala" means a bite. We know what happens when a person gets bitten by a scorpion — right? Listening to the lusty rendition of the old hit (frequently performed by lavni dancers), my mind kept wan-

**The optics were there for all to see and deconstruct. Uddhav Thackeray lay prostrate on the stage, bowing to the people of Maharashtra after taking the oath. It shows humility. Not the quality one associates with the Shiv Sena.**

dering to what was going on a few kilometres from where I was seated. A farcical new government had been announced — that's what. No, not the latest one with Uddhav Thackeray as chief minister, but the earlier crazily shortlived one featuring Devendra Fadnis. Here's the question: Who was the scorpion and who the victim? That there was a maha "gondhal" going on, with Maharashtra's pliant and very accommodating governor playing the starring role, was the most annoying part of the political narrative. That night, I am sure countless citizens of India's pre-

mier state felt totally let down and betrayed. We'd been had!

The story remains unchanged today. We have seen two swearing-in ceremonies within a week. Fadnis' aborted second term lasted for 80 hours. And let's not forget Ajit Pawar as his deputy! What a monumental joke! But nobody is laughing this time. Mumbaikars are known to shrug, grin and get going with their lives in the metro. But this time, the mood has shifted from being philosophical to being outraged. Who enjoys being taken for a ride? That's the exact sentiment right now, as we wait for more *tamasha*. Will Ajit Pawar be back in the saddle as deputy chief minister? How's the haggling going for more ministerial berths — who'll bag what once the monies are in place? What happened to Aaditya Thackeray's boasts saying he was 100 per cent ready to take on the responsibility as — listen to this — Maharashtra's chief minister? It's okay, honey. Daddy-O got the job, *na?* It's all in the family. Relax, *bachchey*.

The night of the swearing-in, I was attending the 50th year celebrations of the iconic NPCA. The opening day event was a gala concert featuring musicians and dancers from overseas, and of course, our very own Symphony Orchestra of India (SOI), which in a remarkably short period of time, has established itself globally. After watching graceful dancers from the Abay Kazakh State Academic Opera and Ballet Theatre enchant the audience (special mention: Malika Yelchbayeva as The Swan), I got talking with a few prominent Mumbaikars. Some had managed to catch a few clips of the ceremony on television, some had deliberately skipped watching the pantomime. But everybody without an exception expressed disgust and concern about the state of Maharashtra's politics. Whether Uddhav and the Thackeray family move out of Balasaheb's stronghold "Matoshree" and into "Varsha" — the official residence of the chief minister — is not important. We want to

know what Uddhav's plans are for the immediate future. How will we benefit as citizens? Patience is running out. On that lawn at Nariman Point, as we mingled with the cosmopolitan crowd, made up of so many different nationalities, it was easy to lull ourselves from facing the stark reality of "convenience store" politics being played out at another historic venue — Shivaji Park, less than 10 km away. The irony was not missed by anybody. The optics were there for all to see and deconstruct. Uddhav Thackeray lay prostrate on the stage, bowing to the people of Maharashtra after taking the oath. It is a good gesture. It shows humility. Not the quality one associates with the Shiv Sena. If Uddhav's gesture does indeed go beyond symbolism and a great photo-op, at least it can be taken as a positive start to what one sincerely hopes is a government that will work for the good of the people. *Jai Maharashtra!*

Readers can send feedback to [www.shobhaade.blogspot.com](mailto:www.shobhaade.blogspot.com)

## Govt admits that it lied about donors asking for secrecy



## Nitin Sethi

This is the 6th and last part of the #PaisaPolitics investigative series by HuffPost. Reprinted with permission from the Huffington Post.

In 2017, when finance minister Arun Jaitley unveiled electoral bonds, a secretive way for anonymous corporates, individuals and trusts to funnel money to political parties, he justified his decision, claiming, "Donors have also expressed reluctance in donating by cheque or other transparent methods as it would disclose their identity and entail adverse consequences".

Since then, members of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have repeatedly raised the spectre of these unnamed donors who had asked for anonymity. Union minister Piyush Goyal made the same point at a press conference called to address *HuffPost India's* investigation into electoral bonds.

"Donors were reluctant to declare their political contributions due to fear of political retribution," said a press note circulated by the BJP immediately after Goyal's press conference.

Three years since Jaitley's speech, after bonds worth ₹6,108.47 crores have been given to political parties by anonymous donors, the finance ministry has now admitted that no donor ever told the government to create an opaque system of funding political parties.

"No representation or petition or communication

has been received from the donors, regarding the need for maintaining the confidentiality of their identity while making donations to political parties," the finance ministry admitted in response to a Right to Information request filed by Venkatesh Nayak.

The ministry, it is worth noting, was forced to respond to the RTI and did not do so out of its own volition. Nayak filed the RTI application in July 2017. Under the law, the ministry was required to respond in 30 days. Instead, Nayak's application was first met with radio silence for a month. When he appealed against this stone-walling, the finance ministry resorted to another delaying tactic. It bounced Nayak's application around from department to department for five months.

In January 2018, Nayak finally approached the Central Information Commission, which ordered the finance ministry to provide an answer. It took another year and ten months for Nayak to finally get his answer: no one had approached the government to create a secretive route for funding political parties. Former FM Jaitley had stated yet another lie in Parliament to legitimise the creation of electoral bonds.

If Nayak's RTI quest proved that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government had not received any formal representations for electoral bonds, Commodore (Retd.) Lokesh Batra's tranche of electoral

## ELECTORAL BONDS-6

**Batra's RTI inquiries revealed how the RBI, the EC and several Opposition parties had bitterly opposed the bonds. The papers revealed how ministers in the Modi government had lied to Parliament about the bonds.**

bond-related documents, also obtained using the Right To Information, revealed what appears to be an informal representation by an unknown author.

The note, as *HuffPost India* has previously noted, was printed on a plain sheet of A4 sized paper with no date, letterhead, signature or stamp.

"Government record systems do not permit such unsigned documents by officials," said an official within the finance ministry, who wanted to stay anonymous, referring to the unsigned note. "It is likely that someone did write or suggest the idea of anonymous donations. The department of economic affairs has not asked all departments, such as the department of revenue about it. The department of revenue began this exercise. All the documents on the conceptualisation of the bonds are perhaps still not available".

For Batra, the transparency activist, the explosive revelations he uncovered are testament to the power of the RTI Act. An act that the Modi government is doing its best to defang.

"It was mind-boggling that while the BJP claimed it was introducing electoral bonds for the sake of transparency in electoral funding, it, along with other political parties, refused to

fall in line with the CIC Order of 2013," Batra said.

The 2013 order placed political parties under the purview of the RTI Act, and would have ensured transparency in political funding, Batra said. "Hence it was important for me to know the full facts of the FM's proposal on transparency in political funding".

In the event, Batra's RTI inquiries revealed how the Reserve Bank of India, the Electoral Commission and several Opposition parties had bitterly opposed the bonds. The papers revealed how ministers in the Modi government had lied to Parliament about the bonds, that the Prime Minister's Office had broken the finance ministry's rules to open a special window for electoral bonds, and that the finance ministry broke its own rules when it allowed for expired bonds to be cashed.

These disclosures have prompted a fresh flurry of questions:

Which department in the finance ministry conceptualised the electoral bonds, and how?

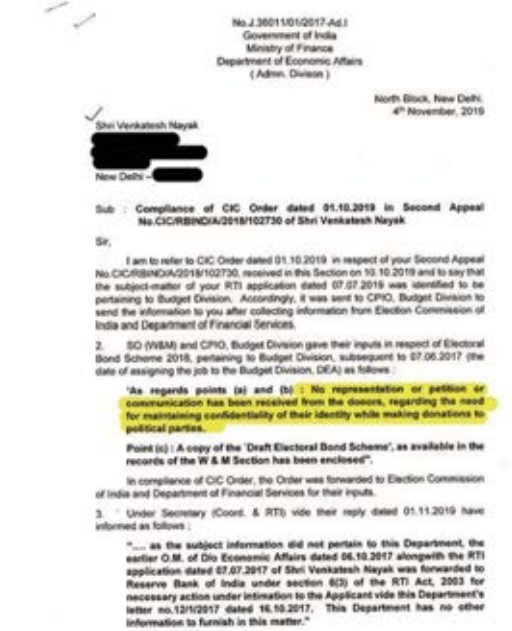
Was the law ministry consulted at all while the amendments were being planned to various laws to give effect to electoral bonds, as is the practice?

Why did the Election Commission not pursue its objections to the bonds with the government after it did not hear back for over a year from the latter about it?

And why did the government bury the Commission's letter containing the objections in the first place?

Yet now, the act that made these disclosures possible is itself under attack. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has diluted provisions to the RTI Act, and securing answers to questions such as those posed above could become yet more difficult.

## ■ Concluded



The reply to Venkatesh Nayak's RTI request

## Cambridge flashback: Of life and times with Clive James



## Farrukh Dhondy

## Cabbages & Kings

*"In the beginning was the word The single word was 'OM' It represented the big bang Under the universe's dome It was as though the heavens sang To bring a message home..." From A Bend in the Liver by Bachchoo*

Clive James died last week — and you may be wondering, gentle reader, who the hell Clive James was. Or perhaps you do know him as a poet and have seen him reading and boasting at some literary festival.

To me he was someone who showed me small kindnesses when I left India at the age of 20 and came with great expectations and mild apprehensions to Cambridge University.

My first day at Pembroke College was uncomfortably memorable. The train from London was delayed owing to trouble on the track. I was consequently late for my first tutorial appointment and felt immediately wrong-footed by fate.

Nevertheless, I soon acquainted myself with college routines and at dinner in the 16th century wooden-beamed "Hall" made the acquaintance of an Australian undergraduate, also a "fresher", who struck up a conversation exchanging names, countries and courses. We walked out of dinner together and this John Hay encountered Clive James and two American undergraduates in the Junior Common Room. Being the only other fellow Australian, he introduced himself to Clive and soon, including me in the group of "foreigners", we went off to the pub a few streets from the college. Clive bought me my first drink of beer.

He was a talker, and though my circle of friendship increased in the following weeks, this group of Australians, Americans and myself met routinely in Hall. He could talk about anything, from Tom Paine to Tom Mix.

A few weeks into the term, I got into an altercation with someone who, without the least provocation, shouted some racist abuse at me and when I turned to challenge him, caricatured what he took to be an Indian accent. I think I gave as good as I got and turned to walk away when he grabbed me and attempted to kick me. Other undergraduates stopped the scuffle.

The incident was the subject of gossip through the college. At dinner Clive asked me what had happened, and recounting the escapade, I said, "He tried to kick me in the groins".

John Hay immediately said, "Where was the other one?" and the group, all except Clive, laughed at my mistake. Of course I knew that groin was singular but, searching for the right euphemism confused it with "loins" and it came out as a plural.

"F\*\*\* them," Clive said. The laughter stopped. I said I meant "groin" and Clive asked, "But did he get you in the groins?" and so I laughed and the moment of awkwardness passed.

Clive, having done a degree in Australia and spent time working between universities, was five or six years older than the rest of us undergraduates and, together with his fellow Australian, Germaine

Greer, became one of the prominent figures in Cambridge. He was all over the place, writing for and acting in *The Footlights*, the university's satirical review platform.

He was an active organiser of events and approached me to participate on two occasions.

The first was a reading of the poets of the 1930s — Auden, Spender, McNeice, etc. I was assigned several poems of C. Day Lewis, only realising later that Clive and the other readers thought my Indian accent was closest to that of Day Lewis' Welsh.

Clive was obviously aware of which side I took in the great international political controversy of the day — the American Vietnam War. He had organised an Oxford-Cambridge debate on the war with Oxford being for the American presence to stop the spread of Communism and Cambridge being for the Vietnamese and Ho Chi Minh.

Our side took the debate seriously as did two of the three speakers from Oxford. The last of these, in a mockingly satirical mood, treated the subject as a joke and as an allegory of cowboys and Indians. It was clever and marginally funny but desperately irreverent to the subject and to the audience's concerns.

We won the debate overwhelmingly, but I can't help wondering to this day if the irreverent speaker was the Rhodes scholar later to become a very clever, if not-perfectly-behaved, President of the United States.

In the late 1960s, very many poetry societies existed in Cambridge, as they probably do today. Clive read his poems at these societies and distinguished himself and alienated the other poets by insisting that verse should be metrical and musical and by writing in strict if inventive rhyme. He openly mocked the free-verse practitioners as talentless versifiers — not exactly the way to win friends and influence poets.

In my final year, I inherited the role of editor of a poetry magazine called *Carcanet*. In its second edition, I featured 12 poems by Clive as I thought they were the best of the submissions we had received. The literati of the university didn't like it and my editorial preference certainly earned me a few enemies.

In later years, our paths crossed at TV occasions. Clive was a famous, controversial presenter, though the volume of his biography covering these years is entitled *The Blaze of Obscurity*.

In these years Clive visited India and wrote a book about it which he called a "novel". A British newspaper asked me to review it. I did and wasn't very kind. When we next came face to face he mentioned the review but then conversed as though it hadn't happened, recalling Cambridge days.

In his last years, knowing he was suffering from leukemia, he wrote three books with morbid ironic titles about waiting for the end. I recalled some of what I've written above in the last chapter of my autobiography *Cambridge Company* as an affectionate letter to Clive. When in Cambridge, I cycled to his house to give him a copy. He was very ill and I wonder if he read it.

## Why do we celebrate festivals in India?



## Sadhguru

In Indian culture, there was a time when there used to be a festival every day of the year — 365 festivals in a year — because a festival is a tool to bring life to a state of exuberance and enthusiasm. The entire culture was in a state of celebration. If today was ploughing day, it was a kind of celebration. Tomorrow was planting day, another kind of celebration. Day after tomorrow was wedding, that was a celebration. Harvesting, of course, is still a celebration. But in the last 400 or 500 years, poverty has come to our country, and we have not been

able to celebrate every day. People are satisfied if they just get some simple food to eat. So all the festivals fell away and only 30 or 40 festivals remain. We are not even able to celebrate those now because we have to go to the office or do something else daily. So people usually celebrate only around eight or 10 festivals annually.

Nowadays, unfortunately, a festival means they give you a holiday, and you wake up only at 12 noon. Then you eat a lot and go for a movie or watch television at home. It wasn't like that earlier. A festival meant the whole town would gather in a place and there would be a big celebration. A festival meant we got up at four in the morning, and very actively, lots of things happened all over the house.

To bring back this culture in people, Isha celebrates four important

festivals: Pongal or Makarasankranti, Mahashivaratri, Dussehra and Diwali. If we don't create something like this, by the time the next generation comes, they will not know what a festival is. They will just

eat, sleep and grow up without concern for another human being. All these aspects were brought into Indian culture just to keep a man active and enthusiastic in so many ways. The idea behind this was to turn our whole life into a celebration.

If you approach everything in a celebratory way, you learn to be non-serious about life but absolutely involved. The problem with most human beings right now is, if they think something is important, they will become dead serious about it. If they think it is not so important, they will become lax about it — they don't show the

necessary involvement. You know, in India when someone says, "He is in a very serious condition," that means his next step is you know where. A lot of people are in a serious condition. There is only one thing that is going to happen to them which is of any significance. The rest will bypass them because with anything that they think is not serious, they are unable to show involvement and dedication towards that. That is the whole problem. The passage, the secret of life is to see everything with a non-serious eye, but be absolutely involved — like a game. That is the reason the most profound aspects of life are approached in a celebratory way — so that you don't miss the point.

**Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, an internationally renowned spiritual leader, is a visionary, humanitarian, author, poet and speaker. He can be contacted at [www.ishafoundation.org](http://www.ishafoundation.org)**





## Strong start

Aditi Ashok, playing only her sixth LET event of season, followed up a first round two-under 70 with five-under 67 to get to the second place in Spain

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle Falaknuma Palace to become posh hotel

Hyderabad, Nov. 29: The famous Falaknuma Palace owned by the Nizam of Hyderabad is to be converted into a 5-Star Hotel in collaboration with a firm of leading hoteliers.

Disclosing this here today, the Minister for Tourism, Mrs. Roda Mistry, said that the State Government had received a proposal to the effect from the owner of the Palace.

Mrs. Mistry was talking to newsmen after presiding over the first meeting of the State Tourist Development Committee at Jubilee Hall.

The Minister said that it was proposed to celebrate Tourist Week in the State from December 24. During the Week it was proposed to enact "Siege of Golconda" with the assistance of Defence Forces.

It might be recalled that the "Siege of Golconda" was enacted by the Artillery Centre a few years back.

The Committee, the Minister said, decided to have a Tourism Act for the State to give supervisory and inspection powers to the Tourism Department against the misuse of tourist taxies and to see that the hotels approved by the department were being run according to standards laid down. A sub-committee was formed to look into the details of the Act.

Mrs. Mistry said that a Tourist Reception Centre would shortly be set up in the city which all facilities such as post office, restaurant, rail and air bookings etc. The Centre would also have a few residential rooms apart from assisting the tourist in securing hotel accommodation. There will also be a shopping arcade at the Centre.

## VIDAL THREATENS TO LEAVE BARCA

Barcelona: Barcelona midfielder Arturo Vidal plans to leave the Spanish champions "in December or at the end of the season" if he does not "feel important", he told Catalan television channel TV3 on Friday.

The 32-year-old Chilean international joined Barca last year from Bayern Munich, but has started only three La Liga games this term.

"If in December or at the end of the season, I don't feel that I'm important here, I should make a decision and find another opportunity where I feel important," he said.

"I would like to stay here forever, but I have to be realistic and live from day to day."

Vidal has scored four league goals this campaign despite being a bit-part player.

The former Juventus star did not say where he might move to.

"There are always offers, but for the moment I'm focused on Barcelona, working and helping my team as much as possible," he added.

Vidal has slipped behind close-season arrival Frenkie de Jong and Ivan Rakitic in the pecking order at Barca, who lead rivals Real Madrid on goal difference at the top of the La Liga table. — AFP



# Are Spurs Champions League contenders or pretenders?

■ Securing a place in the knockout stages for a third straight year means time is on Spurs' side to sort themselves out and allow Mourinho to implement the changes he sees fit before the competition starts again in February

London: Jose Mourinho's home debut as Tottenham Hotspur manager was not without drama as his new side fell 2-0 behind to Olympiakos before roaring back to book their place in the last 16 of the Champions League with a 4-2 victory.

That fighting spirit was often in evidence on a rollercoaster ride to last season's final, the first in the club's history.

But the defensive disorganisation of the opening half-hour against the Greek side, who have not won away in the Champions League for four years, has been a familiar sight for Spurs this season.

It ultimately cost Mauricio Pochettino his job last week after five and a half years of progress that catapulted Spurs into European football's elite.

So will Mourinho's Tottenham truly be Champions League contenders come the new year or cannon fodder for the competition's favourites as Bayern Munich showed with a 7-2

mauling of their hosts in London last month?

### GOALS GALORE

Securing a place in the knockout stages for a third straight year means time is on Spurs' side to sort themselves out and allow Mourinho to implement the changes he sees fit before the competition starts again in February.

The Portuguese's success over the past two decades has been built on a solid defensive structure and if he can get that right, there is no doubt he has the quality at his disposal going forward to worry even the best teams in the competition.

Despite a difficult start to the group stage, Spurs still boast two of the top five goalscorers in the competition this season in Harry Kane and Son Heung-min.

Among Mourinho's first priorities has been to get Dele Alli back to being the same player who was one of

Europe's rising stars.

The England international started the fightback against Olympiakos and was highly impressive in a 3-2 win over West Ham United on Saturday that got Mourinho off to a winning start in the Premier League.

Captain Hugo Lloris should be back in goal for the last 16 and Mourinho is banking on the confidence of his side coming back with every passing victory.

"The next game at home I expect the boys to start without ghosts, to start immediately open and confident because the players are very, very good players," he said after citing his belief that the scars of the Bayern defeat were still apparent early on against Olympiakos.

### SECOND BEST

However, the thrashing by the German champions could still have a lasting effect on Tottenham's Champions League chances.

They will go into the last-16 draw as second seeds, opening themselves up to the possibility of facing the likes of Paris Saint-Germain or Juventus in February.

"When a team arrives in quarter-finals, it has the same chances as the other seven," said Mourinho.

"When you arrive in the last 16, no, because when you arrive in the last 16 you have finished first or second.

"If you finish first you play against a second, if you finish second, the second match will

be away, so to finish second diminishes the percentage chance (of going through)."

Mourinho revelled in a game-changing substitution after just 29 minutes on Tuesday as he summoned the wantaway Christian Eriksen from the bench to add a creative spark.

However, Eriksen may not be there to call on come February as Spurs will need to sell in January to recoup any money on the Dane prior to his contract expiring in the summer.

Toby Alderweireld and Jan Vertonghen are in the same position and, according to reports, Spurs will need to sell before any money is handed to Mourinho to reinforce his squad. Tottenham beat the odds time and again under Pochettino to progress further in the Champions League every season.

Mourinho will need to work similar miracles if they are to take the biggest step from finalists to champions come May. — AFP

Despite a difficult start to the group stage, Spurs still boast two of the top five goalscorers in the competition this season in Harry Kane and Son Heung-min

## MOURINHO SAYS HE IS EMOTIONALLY STRONGER AT TOTTENHAM

London: After touting his humility and willingness to learn from past mistakes, Jose Mourinho couldn't resist a flash of the old familiar cheekiness.

Even after opening his first comments as Tottenham manager by praising his predecessor Mauricio Pochettino, Mourinho couldn't resist a one-liner that reminded everyone — however unintentionally — that Tottenham had replaced a coach who never landed a title with a serial trophy winner.

It came when he was asked how much of Spurs' current struggles in the Premier League was a result

of the disappointment of the Champions League loss to Liverpool in the final in June?

"I don't know," Mourinho flashed back, "because I never lost a Champions League final."

He has, however, won two of them. With Inter Milan in 2010 and Porto in 2004 — the signature success that set Mourinho on the path to managerial superstardom, sprinkled with a heavy dose of feuds and divisive bravado.

It's 15 years since Mourinho first arrived in England at Chelsea, calling himself a "Special One" in a swaggering introduction.

The message Mourinho tried to portray at his Tottenham presentation on Thursday was that he is meekier now.

"I'm humble enough to try to analyze what I did in my career," Mourinho said. "The evolution, the problems, the solutions."

"The principle of the analysis was not to blame anyone else."

Asked if he was no longer as brash, Mourinho responded: "I was always humble but you didn't understand that."

This was a more introspective Mourinho, reprising the charm seen at Chelsea (twice), Real

Madrid and Manchester United before he grew irritated with the club and too often his own players.

"I'm stronger," Mourinho said. "When I say I'm stronger ... from the emotional point of view. I'm relaxed, I'm motivated. I'm ready. I think the players felt that in two days."

By the time he was fired by Manchester United in December 2018, it became clear Mourinho's relationship with the players had fractured. Being out of work gave Mourinho time to contemplate on his own style. — AP

# Meet first Saudi woman driver to race car in kingdom

Diriyah, Saudi Arabia: Sliding behind the wheel of a sleek electric SUV, Reema Juffali is set to blaze a trail in male-dominated motor sports as the first Saudi woman to race in the kingdom.

Such adrenalin rushes were unimaginable for women in the ultra-conservative Islamic kingdom until June last year, when it overturned the world's only ban on female motorists as part of Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman's wide-ranging liberalisation drive.

Juffali, a 27-year-old who made her motoring debut just months after the decades-old ban ended, will compete Friday and Saturday in the Jaguar I-PACE eTROPHY, an all-electric race in Diriyah, close to the capital Riyadh.

"The ban was lifted last year and I never expected to race professionally," said Juffali, sitting in her black-and-green Jaguar I-Pace, an electric sports utility

vehicle. The fact that I am doing it... is amazing," Juffali, clad in a racing suit, told AFP in an interview close to the racing circuit in Diriyah.

Juffali, who hails from the western city of Jeddah and was educated in the United States, will participate as what organisers call a "VIP" guest driver, becoming the first Saudi woman to race on home soil.

Prince Abdulaziz bin Turki al-Faisal, Saudi Arabia's sports authority chief, has touted it as a "watershed" moment for the kingdom.

"Reema will have thousands cheering her on, as a professional racing driver," the prince told AFP.

Juffali, who made one of her first appearances in competitive racing at the F4 British Championship at Brands Hatch in April, has only about a year of professional racing experience under her belt.

But she has had a passion for fast cars since her teenage years and grew up watching Formula One.

She passed her driving test after she moved to the United States to study some years ago, and is now one of only a handful of Saudi women to have obtained a "racing licence" in her home country, a mandatory requirement to race professionally.

Even outside the Kingdom, only a few Saudi women have raced professionally.

"For a lot of women who haven't had the opportunity to learn how to drive, to get behind the wheel is definitely something scary," explained Juffali.

"For a lot of women in Saudi it's something so far away."

Juffali said her dream is to one day race at Le Mans — a 24 hour competition in France that is one of the world's most prestigious and gruelling competi-

tions.

In Riyadh she will be racing against the season's veterans but will not score any points.

### THRILL OF SPEED

Prince Mohammed has sought to shake off his country's ultra-conservative image by allowing greater freedoms for women, including easing so-called "guardianship" rules that give men arbitrary authority over female relatives.

But alongside reforms he has also overseen a sweeping crackdown on dissent.

Around a dozen women activists who long campaigned for the right to drive are on trial after being arrested last year, sparking wide-

spread condemnation.

Some allege they were tortured and sexually harassed by interrogators; Saudi authorities deny the allegations. — AFP



Reema Juffali



Snapdeal bets on non-metro markets

Overleaf

Sum insured limit cut for standard health policy



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,793.81	-0.82
Nifty 50	12,056.00	-0.78
S&P 500	3,146.36	-0.23
Dollar (₹)	71.89	0.13
Pound Sterling (₹)	92.73	-0.18
Euro (₹)	79.21	0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	37,905▲182	0.48
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	\$62.51	-1.36
IN 10-Yr bond yield	+6.460	+0.007
US 10-Yr T-bill yield	+1.781	+0.014

\* As of 9:30 pm IST

### Winding up of Adarsh Credit Coop ordered

The Centre ordered the winding up of Ahmedabad-based Adarsh Credit Cooperative Society and appointed a liquidator for it. An official release said the society has been found to be indulged in misusing the funds of members and depositors for personal gains, indulged in gross irregularities and has violated co-operative principles.

### Patanjali gets ₹3,200 cr from banks for Ruchi



Patanjali Ayurved said it has tied up loan worth Rs 3,200 crore from a consortium of lenders led by the SBI to fund its acquisition of Ruchi Soya through the insolvency process. Patanjali said it has got loans of Rs 1,200 crore from SBI, Rs 700 crore from PNB, Rs 600 crore from Union Bank, Rs 400 crore from Syndicate Bank and Rs 300 crore from Allahabad Bank.

### Forex kitty moves up, nears \$449-bn mark

Foreign exchange reserves continued the upward move, gaining by a modest \$347 million to touch a new high of \$448.6 billion in the week to November 22. In the previous week, the reserves had increased by \$441 mn to reach \$448.249 bn. Foreign currency assets rose by \$254 mn to \$416.725 bn in the reporting week. Gold reserves rose by \$87 mn to \$26.796 bn.

### RBI ex-deputy governor Khan to head MFI panel

Former deputy governor of the Reserve Bank of India H R Khan has been appointed as the first chairman of the steering committee of the Code for Responsible Lending (CRL) in micro-credit. The CRL is a self-regulatory step for the micro-credit industry, making diverse entities like banks, NBFC-MFIs and NBFCs adhere to standards of customer protection, am MFIN statement said.

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## ■ Criminals, Govt agencies can access data; threat to women's safety FASTags pose serious data privacy and security threat

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 29

FASTags that are soon going to be mandatory for all vehicles passing through National Highway toll booths pose a data privacy threat to the vehicle owners. It can also be a serious security threat for women owners.

FASTag is no more an option for vehicle owners but a mandatory requirement. But with FASTags it is possible to access the ownership and other data pertaining to the owner and it will be easy for tracking a vehicle not just by government agencies and other stakeholders of the system, but for private persons as well since RFID readers are easily available in the market at very low cost.

"Worldwide, mass warrant-less surveillance of cars is a major human rights issue," finds Fennel Aurora, Security Advisor at F-Secure, a Finnish cyber security and privacy company.

"Worldwide, this is mainly implemented via

SURVEILLANCE STATE?

▶ It will be easy for tracking a vehicle by government agencies and other stakeholders of the system

▶ Worldwide, mass warrant-less surveillance of cars is a major human rights issue

▶ It may be possible

for criminals to use cheap RFID scanner to obtain information about vehicle owners by walking past parked cars

▶ Women who can be easily tracked and targeted by violent men waiting near identified cars

far more invasive and non-optional automatic number-plate recognition (APNR) via pervasive video surveillance cameras. There is a movement across the US of local governments trying to pass ordinances banning police departments from buying this kind of technology," he said.

According to Aurora, depending on the implementation, it may be possible for persons with malicious intent to use a cheap RFID scanner to obtain sensitive information about vehicle owners from the tag by walking past parked cars and this information can be used for further crimes.

"Potentially the payment information could be retrieved, and fake payments forced to pass onto the linked account. Tags could be cloned to use on the criminals' vehicle—a form of identity theft," he said.

For women owners, there is an additional threat. If the name/gender of the vehicle owner is available, this can be a sig-

FASTag date extended to Dec. 15

New Delhi, Nov 29: The government on Friday extended the date for making FASTag mandatory for toll payments to December 15 from December 1. "To facilitate sufficient lead time to citizens to obtain FASTag, it has now been decided that all the lanes in the Fee plazas shall be declared as 'FASTag lane of Fee Plaza' by December 15," a Ministry of Road Transport and Highways communication said. Over 70 lakh FASTags had been issued till Wednesday.

—FC Bureau

nificant risk for women who can be more easily tracked and targeted by

violent men waiting near identified cars, he said.

"The tag is primarily a unique signature and the data is out there. Being a privacy enthusiast, it is my top most priority to ensure that my data remains protected. FASTag should be an option and not forced upon individuals," said Farrhad Acidwalla, Founder, Cybernetiv Digital.

According to Sunil Sharma, Managing Director-Sales, India & SAARC, Sophos, all the software systems can be breached and FASTags also carry the cyber security threats that any software system carries.

"Given the widespread security, privacy, safety, and corruption issues around the Aadhar system, there are obvious reasons to doubt this new system also. Like many similar convenience measures that come with built-in surveillance, one has to wonder whether the few seconds saved is worth the potentially extreme costs," added Aurora.

## Gold hallmarking must from 2021

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 29

The government will make hallmarking for gold jewellery and artifacts mandatory from January 15, 2021. The Department of Consumer Affairs will issue a notification in this regard by January 15, 2020.

In order ensure quality of gold jewellery and gold artifacts sold across the stores in the country, government will bring in mandatory hallmarking, Consumer Affairs Minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Friday. A one-year period will be provided for implementation of this decision to enable jewellers clear their existing stock, he said.

However, the stock lying with the consumers will not be subject to hallmarking. Bureau of Indian Standards provides hallmarking of gold jewellery in three grades – 14 carat, 18 carat and 22 carat. Retailers will have to display prices of these three quality grades at their shops and selling of non-hallmarked jewellery after the deadline will attract a fine of a minimum Rs one lakh and up to five times of the value of article as well as one year jail.

At present, there are 877



assaying and hallmarking centres in 234 district locations and 26,019 jewellers have registered with BIS. The government plans to open hallmarking centres in all districts of the country and register all jewellers during this one year window.

Financial Chronicle on Friday had reported that the government had notified to World Trade Organisation its intention to bring in mandatory hallmarking. However in the notification, the government had not specified the date as to when it would publish this in the official Gazette.

According to Somasundaram PR, managing director, India, World Gold Council, almost 40 to 50 per cent of the gold in the market are hallmarkd. "It would take 8 to 12 months to get the rest of the stocks to be hallmarkd. Government is likely to keep this in mind while announcing the deadline," he had said.

## Zurich Airport pips Adani & DIAL, bags UP's Jewar airport

Noida (UP), Nov 29: Zurich Airport International AG will develop the Jewar Airport on the outskirts of Delhi, officials said after the Swiss company on Friday outbid competitors like Adani and DIAL for what is billed to be the biggest airport in the country.

The Switzerland-headquartered company that runs the Zurich airport made the highest per passenger bid, beating Delhi International Airport Limited (DIAL), Adani Enterprises and Anchorage Infrastructure Investments Holdings Limited, the officials said.

The airport in Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar district will be the third in the National Capital Region after Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport and in Ghaziabad's Hindon.

The Jewar Airport, or the Noida International Greenfield Airport, will be spread over 5,000 hectares when fully built at an estimated to cost Rs 29,560 crore, Shailendra Bhatia, the project's nodal officer said.

"Zurich Airport International AG has made the highest bid for developing the Jewar airport and has been selected as the con-



cessionaire for the airport," he added.

On Wednesday, the four firms were announced to have cleared the technical criteria as proposed developers for the new airport.

The financial bids were on Friday opened before their representatives at the Noida International Airport Limited office in Greater Noida, he said.

The selection for concessionaire has been done on basis of premium per passenger (pax) offered by the four bidders.

Anchorage Infrastructure Investments Holdings offered Rs 205 per pax, Adani Enterprises Rs 360, DIAL Rs 351 and Zurich Airport International Rs 400.97, said Bhatia.

He said the winning bid will now be put up before the project monitoring and implementation committee (PMIC) on Monday for approval from the Uttar Pradesh government.

The global tender was floated on May 30. —PTI

## RBI takes DHFL to NCLT

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 29

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday sent debt-laden Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Limited (DHFL) to the bankruptcy tribunal, making it the first financial services company to be sent to the NCLT for a possible debt resolution after the government notified the rules for referring NBFC/HFC to the tribunal this month.

A few days back, the RBI had superseded the Board of DHFL and appointed an administrator on concerns over its corporate governance and defaults. The central bank has filed the application to

begin insolvency proceedings against the mortgage lender with the Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT).

An interim moratorium shall commence from the date of filing of the application till its admission or rejection, the central bank said in a statement.

As of July 2019, the third largest pure play mortgage lender owed Rs 83,873 crore to banks, the National Housing Board, mutual funds and bondholders, including retail bondholders. Of this secured debt is Rs 74,054 crore and unsecured debt is Rs 9,818 crore.

The government on November 15 had empow-



ered RBI to refer stressed NBFCs and HFCs with assets worth at least Rs 500 crore to insolvency courts after notifying Section 227 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code.

"The Reserve Bank has today filed an application for initiation of corporate insolvency resolution process against DHFL under Section 227 read with clause (zk) of sub-

section (2) of Section 239 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016 read with Rules 5 and 6 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy (Insolvency and Liquidation Proceedings of Financial Service Providers and Application to Adjudication Authority) Rules, 2019 ("FSP Insolvency Rules"), the central bank said.

DHFL had last week informed the exchanges that it will not be able to declare its financial results on the scheduled date as the new administrator needs to have detailed discussions with the statutory auditors. DHFL was scheduled to announce its financial results on November 25.

## Future Group stocks soar over CCI nod to Amazon deal

FC BUREAU MUMBAI, CHENNAI, NOV. 29

Shares of Kishore Biyani-promoted Future Group companies rallied on Friday after the Competition Commission of India on Thursday approved the Amazon-Future Coupon deal.

The deal is expected to help Future Group strengthen its online sales and Amazon expand offline reach in India through Future Group's retail stores.

Future Group owns close to the 2,000 retail stores, covering over 24 million sq ft of space in over 400 cities

and towns. The group's owns Big Bazaar, Central, Brand Factory, and FBB stores along with a growing chain of neighbourhood stores, EasyDay and Heritage Fresh, and convenience stores WH Smith and 7-Eleven.

The top Future Group gainers on the BSE included Future Enterprises, which rose 19.86 per cent, hitting the upper circuit at Rs 26.55 and Future Retail, which closed with gains of 3.43 per cent at Rs 339.35, after going up 18 per cent intra-day. Future Consumer gained 8.88 per cent closing at 27.60 and Future

Market Networks gained 4.85 per cent.

Future Coupons is a subsidiary of Future Group, which owns 7.3 per cent of Future Retail that owns Big Bazaar brand.

In August, Amazon had picked up 49 per cent stake in Amazon Coupons and 3.6 per cent stake in Future Retail indirectly. It also has the option to acquire another 47.02 per cent stake in Future Retail in the future.

Future Coupons, a promoter entity, was issued 3.96 million warrants by Future Retail in April this year. Conversion of these

warrants into equity will make for 7.3 per cent stake in Future Retail. By picking up 49 per cent stake, Amazon had indirectly acquired 3.6 per cent stake in Future Retail. Though the deal value was not announced, the market had assumed that the deal was done for a likely consideration of Rs 1,500 crore.

As part of the deal agreement, Amazon would have a call option to acquire all or part of the promoters' shareholding in Future Retail of 47.02 per cent between the third and tenth year of the transaction, subject to law.

## Market tanks over growth worries

ASHWIN J. PUNNEN MUMBAI, NOV. 29

The Sensex tanked over 300 points, as investors turned cautious before the release of the GDP growth numbers on Friday post-market hours.

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty fell from record highs as investors scrambled to book profits in recent high-flying stocks amid fears that India's second quarter GDP numbers may slip further.

The Sensex plunged 336.36 points or 0.82 per cent to close at 40,793.81. The index swung about 466 points during the day. Likewise, the broader NSE Nifty also settled 95.10 points, or 0.78 per cent, down at 12,056.05.

Weak cues from global markets also weighed on the market mood, analysts said.

On a weekly basis, the Sensex advanced 434.40 points, or 1.07 per cent, while the Nifty rose 141.65 points or 1.18 per cent.

Investor sentiment during the week was mainly driven by positive news about US-China trade talks progress—which took a disturbing turn on Thursday—and more government measures to boost consumer demand.

## Pilots revving engines too hard led to IndiGo's Airbus woes

ANURAG KOTOKY & SIDDHARTH PHILIP NOV. 29

IndiGo and Go Airlines India Ltd use the same type of engine made by Pratt & Whitney that's susceptible to mid-flight shutdowns. Yet IndiGo, one of Airbus SE's biggest customers, is the only one to encounter turbine failures this year, drawing heavy scrutiny from the aviation regulator.

The reason could be linked to how the budget airline flies. India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation told IndiGo's operator, InterGlobe Aviation Ltd, that its practice of revving A320neo jets at full thrust right after takeoff could wear down

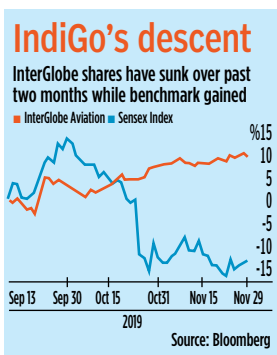
the engines, people familiar with the matter said. By contrast, Go Air—India's fourth-largest carrier by market share—typically uses a so-called alt-climb approach that applies less thrust, the people said, asking not to be identified discussing a private matter.

Climbing at full thrust can help planes burn less fuel, two of the people said. IndiGo has suffered 13 engine shutdowns related to low-pressure turbines during climbs this year, according to one of the people who was directly involved in an investigation where the DGCA ran a comparative analysis on how both airlines operate.

The issue has been costly. The DGCA this week said

every time a new plane joins IndiGo's fleet, it must ground one A320neo that hasn't had its engines modified. That essentially prevents Asia's biggest budget airline by market value from adding new flights until the issue is fixed. IndiGo has 730 of the latest model on order — making it the world's top A320neo customer — and wants to expand its network beyond cities such as Istanbul to destinations including London.

Pratt, a unit of United Technologies Corp., invested \$10 billion to develop its fuel-efficient geared-turbofan engine for single-aisle jets like the A320neo, but it's suffered repeated setbacks since its commercial introduction in 2016,



including a cooling problem, durability issues and delivery delays. IndiGo shifted away from the engines in June with a \$20 billion order from CFM International Inc, a joint venture between General Electric Co. and France's Safran SA, although those

deliveries have yet to take place.

An IndiGo spokeswoman said the matter is "strictly between the airline and the concerned authorities." The US Federal Aviation Administration hasn't established any connection between the climb procedure and engine problems, she wrote in a text message, adding that the safety of passengers, crew and aircraft remains the utmost priority.

An Airbus spokesman said the planes are designed to handle full thrust, but it is "established best practice" for pilots to lower the thrust while climbing to reduce stress on the engine.

IndiGo has a lot of aircraft operating in an

"aggressive environment" and flies them "hard" with a high number of hours, Michael Schreyoegg, Chief Programme Officer at Germany's MTU Aero Engines AG, a partner with Pratt on the GTF, said on Wednesday at an investor event in Langenhagen near Hanover. His comment was in response to a question why IndiGo keeps having engine issues while others don't.

Pratt declined to comment if the climbing procedure can impact engines. A representative for the aviation ministry, which oversees the DGCA, referred queries to the regulator, saying it was a "technical" question. A Go Air spokesman didn't immediately comment.

India originally asked IndiGo to replace all its faulty engines by January 31, but the DGCA said on Monday that the airline's efforts to meet the deadline didn't "instill enough confidence." In a meeting with the regulator on Monday, IndiGo offered to replace all unmodified engines by January 2021, but the request was denied, one of the people said, adding that the initial deadline stays.

IndiGo still needs to replace 110 engines out of 196 that were affected, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Wednesday. He said Go Air hasn't had the problems IndiGo encountered on its A320neo jets, without giving a reason.

—Bloomberg



## Reliance Jio likely to bag Rlnfra assets

New Delhi, Nov 29: Reliance Jio has emerged as the highest bidder for mobile tower and optical fibre assets of Reliance Infratel by placing bids of around Rs 3,600 crore, according to banking sources privy to the development.

Bharti Airtel has placed a bid of around Rs 1,800 crore for the same, according to the sources.

"Reliance Infratel's tower and fibre is likely to go to Reliance Jio as its bid of Rs 3,600 crore is the highest and the company has committed to make the payment in 60 days. Bharti Airtel has placed a bid of Rs 1,800 crore for the same," a banking source said.

Another source privy to the development said the process of finalising the bids will take a minimum of one-two weeks as committee of creditors (CoC) will meet all the bidders and negotiate with them and then vote on it.

Bharti Airtel has also made conditional bid for spectrum of Reliance Communications.

—PTI

## India a R&D, sourcing hub for Xylem Inc

RITWIK MUKHERJEE  
KOLKATA, NOV. 29

India is fast emerging as the global R&D and sourcing hub for the New York Stock Exchange-listed, \$5 billion company, Xylem Inc, a global leader in developing innovative water solutions through smart technology. The company also sees India as a strategic market and has been investing in it for the last 5 years. It is in talks with a number of civic bodies in different cities across the country and is already collaborating with Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) to provide 2,75,000 smart water meters in the first phase over a period of 3 years. The overall water solutions market in India is estimated to be \$1.5 billion- \$2 billion and has been witnessing a double digit growth in the past couple of years. Xylem India is keen on tapping this large market, said Nitin Bhate, senior director, marketing, Xylem Water Solutions India Pvt Ltd.

The company has facilities at Vadodara and Bengaluru.

## 22% Indians made all US visa searches

Mumbai, Nov 29: India accounted for 22 per cent of all visa-related searches to the US from abroad in 2018, according to a survey. This is not surprising given that nearly 62.7 per cent of initial H1B approvals in 2017, were for Indian nationals, according to a report by job site Indeed.

The report is based on data on job searches on Indeed platform in 2018. The number of visa-related searches from outside the US peaked in November 2018.

In August 2019, the share of the US visa-related searches from abroad were 75.6 per cent, more than double its August 2017 level of 36.5 per cent.

"In 2018, job searches from India to the US that contained visa-related terms like 'H1B visa' or 'work visa' surged. When broken out by region we see that, for 2018, the Maharashtra region accounted for 11.3 per cent of all visa-related job searches from India to the US," Indeed Hiring Lab Chief Economist Jed Kolko said. This was followed by Delhi region (9.6 per cent) and Gujarat (8.5 per cent).

—PTI

■ Irdai sets ₹1 L to ₹5 L indemnity on individual & family floater policies

# Sum insured limit cut for basic health policy

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, NOV. 29

The insurance regulator has brought down the sum insured limit for the proposed standard indemnity-based health insurance product from Rs 10 lakh to Rs 5 lakh. It has also clarified the specifications for Ayush hospitals that are being covered under health insurance policies.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India in February had proposed that all general and health insurers should offer a standard health insurance product.

"With the objective to facilitate the public to choose a suitable health insurance policy which provides coverage to basic hospitalization related expenses, Irdai proposes to mandate all general and health insurers to offer a standard indemnity based health insurance product with a sum insured ranging from Rs 1,00,000 to Rs 5,00,000 on individual as well as family floater basis. The only differential would



be the premium rates that are charged by various insurers," it said.

In February, it had proposed that the sum insured for the product should be in the range of Rs 50,000 and Rs 10 lakh.

The Irdai also clarified the specifications required by Ayush hospitals under the Guidelines on Standardization in Health Insurance. It should be a central or state government Ayush Hospital or teaching hospital attached to Ayush College recognised by the Central

Government/Central Council of Indian Medicine/Central Council for Homeopathy.

In case of Ayush hospital, standalone or co-located with in-patient health-care facility, it should have at least five in-patient beds, qualified Ayush Medical Practitioner in charge round the clock, dedicated Ayush therapy sections or equipped operation theatre and should maintain daily records of the patients.

Ayush Day Care Centre includes Community Health Centre, Primary

Health Centre, dispensary, clinic, polyclinic or any such health centre which is registered with the local authorities. They should have facilities for carrying out treatment procedures and medical or surgical/para-surgical interventions or both under the supervision of registered Ayush Medical Practitioner on day care basis without in-patient services.

They should also have qualified registered Ayush Medical Practitioner(s) in charge, dedicated Ayush therapy sections or equipped operation theatre and should maintain daily records of the patients.

Ayush Hospitals and Ayush Day Care Centres shall also obtain either pre-entry level certificate or higher level of certificate issued by National Accreditation Board for Hospitals and Healthcare Providers (NABH) or State Level Certificate under National Quality Assurance Standards (NQAS), issued by National Health Systems Resources Centre (NHSRC).

## Snapdeal bets on non-metro markets

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, NOV. 29

Snapdeal, India's third largest e-commerce marketplace, is eyeing double-digit sales revenues this financial year, banking on the fasted growth in non-metro market in Asia's third biggest economy.

Over 70-80 per cent of Snapdeal's orders are from non-metro markets like Nagpur, Nashik, Kolhapur, Dhule and Jalgaon.

"We are betting big on the fasted growth in non-metro markets in the country to take our sales revenues to high double-digit growth this year," Rajnish Wahi, senior vice president at Snapdeal told *Financial Chronicle*.

Last fiscal, Snapdeal's consolidated revenues grew 73 per cent at Rs 925.30 crore from Rs 535.90 crore in FY2018. It also reduced its loss by 71 per cent to Rs 186 crore in FY2019 from Rs 611 crore in FY2018.

"Our total festival sales jumped 52 per cent and it is a good year of growth for us this financial year," Wahi said, adding that sales momentum has been growing in non-metro markets across the country.

Snapdeal competes with the market leader American e-commerce giant Amazon and Flipkart, second largest Indian online marketplace.

Wahi said Snapdeal's daily sales volume had increased to over 2 lakh units without disclosing its value.

He said unlike ordering online branded products like mobile phones and electronics, today the con-



sumers were increasingly buying personal care appliances like trimmers, shavers, dryers and multi grooming kits on the platform.

"Furnishings like cushion covers, table runners, trays and boxes made of Khan, an old and traditional material also sell well on all parts of India," Wahi pointed out.

He said Snapdeal was building a better pan-India bazaar, that offered more choice, more deals, higher convenience, and user-friendly policies.

"Snapdeal's marketplace makes shipping fun, recreating the buzz and bargains of the bazaars of India," Wahi said.

He said India's retail sector, which at present was pegged around Rs 56 lakh crore would reach Rs 138 lakh crore by 2025. Online shopping, which was about 2-3 per cent of the total retail, would grow to 10 per cent of overall retail by 2025. Thus, the online market in India is likely to be worth Rs 14 lakh crore in the next 6-7 years, from the present Rs 2.8 lakh crore.

# RECORD WHEAT OUTPUT LIKELY

RAJENDRA JADHAV  
MUMBAI, NOV. 29

India's wheat production could jump to a second consecutive annual record in 2020 as the wettest monsoon in 25 years is set to help farmers in expanding the area under the winter-sown crop while also boosting yields, industry officials said.

But that higher production would add to India's already swelling inventories, potentially forcing the world's second-biggest wheat producer to ramp up procurement of the grain from farmers and provide incentives for overseas sales to support local prices.

"The area under wheat and yields would rise due to good rainfall. We can cer-

tainly produce more than last year's record production," said Gyanendra Singh, Director at the state-run Indian Institute of Wheat and Barley Research.

India grew 102.19 million tonnes of wheat in 2019.

The country received monsoon rains during the June-September season that were 10 per cent above average and the rainfall contin-

ued during October and November, increasing soil moisture levels required for crop sowing.

Rainfall also lifted the water level in India's key reservoirs to 86 per cent of capacity compared to 61 per cent a year ago and a 10-year average of 64 per cent, according to government data.

—Reuters

## Packaging material from banana plants

Melbourne, Nov 29: Scientists, including one of Indian origin, on Friday claimed to have developed a novel method to turn banana plantation waste into biodegradable and recyclable packaging material.

According to the researchers from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia, the banana growing industry produces large amounts of organic waste, with only 12 per cent of the plant being used while the rest is discarded after harvest.

"What makes the banana growing business particularly wasteful compared to other fruit crops is the fact that the plant dies after each harvest," said UNSW Associate Professor Jayashree Arcot. "We were particularly interested in the pseudostems - basically the layered, fleshy trunk of the plant which is cut down after each harvest and most-

ly discarded on the field. Some of it is used for textiles, some as compost, but other than that, it is a huge waste," Arcot said in a statement. Arcot and Martina Stenzel, a professor at UNSW, wondered whether the pseudostems would be valuable sources of cellulose— an important structural component of plant cell walls.

This cellulose could then be used in packaging, paper products, textiles and even medical applications such as wound healing and drug delivery, the researchers said. Using a reliable supply of pseudostem material from banana plants grown at the Royal Botanic Garden Sydney, the researchers extracted cellulose to test its suitability as a packaging alternative. "The pseudostem is 90 per cent water, so the solid material ends up reducing down to about 10 per cent," Arcot said.



"We bring the pseudostem into the lab and chop it into pieces, dry it at very low temperatures in a drying oven, and then mill it into a very fine powder," she said. The researchers then take this powder and wash it with a very soft chemical treatment. This isolates nano-cellulose which is a material of high value with a whole range of applications, they said.

"One of those applications

that interested us greatly was packaging, particularly single-use food packaging where so much ends up in landfill," said Stenzel.

When processed, the material has a consistency similar to baking paper. Arcot said depending on the intended thickness, the material could be used in a number of different formats in food packaging.

"There are some options at this point, we could make a shopping bag, for example," she said. "Or depending on how we pour the material and how thick we make it, we could make the trays that you see for meat and fruit. Except of course, instead of being foam, it is a material that is completely non-toxic, biodegradable and recyclable," said Arcot.

Tests confirmed that the material breaks down organically after putting 'films' of the cellulose material in soil for six months. —PTI

## Daimler to axe 10,000 jobs worldwide

MICHELLE FITZPATRICK  
FRANKFURT AM MAIN, NOV. 29

Luxury automaker Daimler said Friday it would scrap at least 10,000 jobs worldwide, the latest in a wave of layoffs to hit the stuttering German car industry as it battles with a costly switch to electric.

The Mercedes-Benz maker said it wanted to save 1.4 billion euros (\$1.5 billion) in staff costs by the end of 2022 as it joins rivals in investing huge sums in the greener, smarter cars of the future.

"The total number worldwide will be in the five-digits," Daimler personnel

chief Wilfried Porth said in a conference call about the job cull. He declined to give a more detailed breakdown.

The group said in an earlier statement that "thousands" of jobs would be axed by the end of 2022, after clinching a deal with labour representatives.

The cull includes slashing management jobs "by 10 per cent", Daimler said, reportedly amounting to some 1,100 positions around the world. "The automotive industry is in the middle of the biggest transformation in its history," Daimler said.

"The development towards CO2-neutral mobility requires large investments,"

it added.

Along with other manufacturers, Daimler is scrambling to get ready for tough new EU emission rules taking effect next year, forcing it to accelerate the costly shift to zero-emissions electric cars and plug-in hybrids.

The group, which employs 304,000 people globally, said the job cuts would be achieved through natural turnover, early retirement schemes and severance packages.

Daimler's announcement comes as the mighty German car industry is buffeted by trade tensions, weaker Chinese demand and a dark-

ening economic outlook.

Other major car companies have in recent months already unveiled plans to cut some 30,000 jobs in the sector over the next years.

Germany's Audi said it wants to axe 9,500 jobs, followed by more than 5,000 at Volkswagen, some 5,500 at car parts supplier Continental, while Bosch aims to cut more than 2,000 roles.

US car giant Ford plans to scrap some 5,000 jobs in Germany alone.

Electric engines require fewer parts and are less complicated to assemble than internal combustion engines, needing fewer hands. —AFP

OPENING  
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PROJECTION FOR TODAY

## Overall sentiment remains positive

The market saw profit-taking after the recent gains with Sensex falling below 41,000 and Nifty started the December F&O series on a weak note. The Sensex was down 336.36 points to close at 40,793.81, while the Nifty plunged 95.20 points to 12,056.

The broader markets outperformed with the Nifty Midcap index was flat with a positive bias and Smallcap index gained 0.94 percent.

Yes Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding 2.50 per cent, followed by HUL that fell 2.37 per cent, M&M 2.12 per cent, SBI 2.03 per cent, Tata Motors 2.03 per cent and Vedanta 1.97 per cent. On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, HDFC Bank and NTPC ended with gains.

Sectorally, BSE energy, metal, auto, oil and gas, capital goods and FMCG indices fell up to 1.46 per cent.

Next week, Auto stocks would be reacting to their November sales data. Also some of the mid and smaller banks would be in focus as the IPO of Ujjivan Small Finance Bank would open to raise Rs750 crore. While overall market sentiments continue to remain positive, there is some cautiousness as well as profit booking seen at higher levels. Further, weakness in underlying economy as well slower earnings growth leave limited room for upside. However the current momentum can sustain in the near term on the back of strong liquidity flows and positive sentiments.

### Technical View

"Technically, Nifty formed a Red body candle on daily chart. While the index concluded the week with gain of 1.19% and formed a green body candle on weekly chart. A positive momentum after the formation of three consecutive Doji candles on weekly chart is a positive sign for the market. Thus, till the time, Nifty holds above 12000 zones, we maintain our positive stance on market for an up move towards 12250 levels," said Siddhartha Khemka, Head-Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

The market traded cautiously markets before the Q2 GDP data release. Concern of US-China trade deal have a negative impact on metal stocks. Auto stocks saw profit booking ahead of November monthly data announcement.

### Market View

"Profit booking ahead of economic data and selling pressure in Asian peers due to risk of retaliation from China add volatility in the market. The recent rally has lifted the market to supreme valuation which may limit the headroom of key indices to perform well in the short-term. Consequently, investors are likely to shift focus for quality mid & small caps, which are likely to out-perform in the near term," Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services, said.

—Ashwin J Punnen

## US shoppers stay away from stores, spend online as Black Friday begins

MELISSA FARES  
NEW YORK, NOV. 29

US consumers splurged more than \$2 billion online in the first hours of Thanksgiving shopping on Thursday, while crowds were largely thin at retailers on the eve of Black Friday, reflecting the broader trend away from shopping at brick-and-mortar stores.

Early discounts offered this month by chains seeking to extend this year's shorter holiday season saw a dip in the numbers lining up at stores across the country, according to con-

sultants and analysts making spot checks on the ground.

"We've seen many merchants start their promotions pretty much right after the trick-or-treaters have gone to bed," said Lauren Bitar, head of retail consulting at analytics firm RetailNext.

Sales made prior to Thanksgiving and Black Friday could erode "the spike that we have seen in sales dollars historically," Bitar said.

The day after Thanksgiving has been America's biggest shopping day, and this year more than 165 million people are



expected to take part over the weekend, according to the National Retail Federation (NRF).

While Black Friday still matters, its relevance is fading as the holiday shopping season now begins the week before Halloween and stretches to Christmas Eve with retailers

offering deep discounts throughout the season.

The condensed shopping season this year accelerated early promotions and spending. Retailers have six fewer days to make sales between Thanksgiving and Christmas Day this year.

That has pulled spending into early November — more than half of consumers polled by the NRF in the first week of this month had already begun making purchases. On average, Americans had already completed almost a quarter of their shopping, the most in the histo-

ry of NRF's surveys. Store openings on Thanksgiving evening have also reduced store crowds lining up for door-buster deals at the crack of dawn on Friday.

While store traffic still remains an important indicator, a lot of shopping during Thanksgiving and Black Friday now happens online. Adobe Analytics, which measures transactions from 80 of the top 100 US online retailers, estimates \$7.5 billion in sales for Black Friday online, a growth of over 20.5 per cent year-over-year. As of 5 p.m. ET on

Thanksgiving Day, shoppers had spent \$2.1 billion online, up 20.2 per cent on a year ago.

Companies, including Walmart Inc, Target Corp, Costco Wholesale Corp and Best Buy Co Inc have bulked up their online presence, deliveries and fast in-store pickups to attract customers.

At the other end of the divide, specialty apparel retailers Gap Inc, Victoria Secret-owner L Brands Inc and department stores Macy's Inc and Kohl's Corp have slumped as they struggle to lure shoppers to malls. —Reuters





Denzel Washington has frequently said that detective Alonzo Harris in *Training Day* (2001) is the favorite character that he's played

OUR CRITIC'S RATING Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

# One of the most entertaining films in years

**Knives Out (U/A) 130 min**  
**CAST:** Daniel Craig, Chris Evans, Ana de Armas  
**DIRECTOR:** Rian Johnson  
**RATING:** ★★★★★

BRIAN TALLERICO

Rian Johnson's *Knives Out* is one of the most purely entertaining films in years. It is the work of a cinematic magician, one who keeps you so focused on what the left hand is doing that you miss the right. And, in this case, it's not just a wildly fun mystery to unravel but a scathing bit of social commentary about where America is in 2019. Great mystery writers throughout history have dissected class in ways that were palatable to audiences looking for escapism, and Johnson is clearly doing that here too, using a wonderfully entertaining mystery structure that would make Agatha Christie smile. Directing a wildly charismatic cast who are all-in on what he's doing, Johnson confidently stays a step or two ahead of his audience, leaving them breathless but satisfied at the end.

Harlan Thrombey

(Christopher Plummer) is a wildly successful mystery writer and he's dead. His housekeeper Fran (Edi Patterson) finds him with a slit throat and the knife still in his hand. It looks like suicide, but there are some questions. After all, who really slits their own throat? A couple of cops (the wonderful pair of LaKeith Stanfield and Noah Segan) come to the Thrombey estate do a small investigation, just to make sure they're not missing anything, and the film opens with their conversations with each of the Thrombey family members. Daughter Linda (Jamie Lee Curtis) is a successful businesswoman with a shit husband named Richard (Don Johnson) and an awful son named Ransom (Chris Evans). Son Walt (Michael Shannon) runs the publishing side, but he's been fighting a lot with dear old dad. Daughter-in-law Joni (Toni Collette) is deep into self-help but has been helping herself by ripping off the old man. Finally, there's Marta Cabrera (Ana de Armas), the real heroine of *Knives Out* and Harlan's most trusted confidante. Can she help solve the case? The case may have just been closed if not for the arrival of the famous detective Benoit Blanc, played by Daniel Craig, who spins a southern drawl and oversized ego into something



instantly memorable. Blanc was delivered a news story about the suicide and envelope of money. So someone thinks this is fishy. Why? And who? The question of who brought in Blanc drives the narrative as much as who killed Harlan. Johnson is constantly presenting viewers with the familiar, especially fans of the mystery movie — the single palatial setting, the family of monsters, the exaggerated detective — but then he subverts them ever so slightly, and it feels fresh. So while Blanc feels like a Poirot riff, Johnson and Craig avoid turning it

into a caricature of something we've seen before. Craig is delightful — I love the excitement in his voice when he figures things out late in the film — but some of the cast gets lost. It's inevitable with one this big, but if you're going to *Knives Out* for a specific actor or actress, be aware that it's a large ensemble piece and your fave may get short shrift. Unless your favourite is Ana de Armas, who is really the heart of the movie, allowing Johnson to imbue *Knives Out* with some wonderful political commentary. The Thrombeys claim to love

Marta, even if they can't remember which South American country she comes from, and Don Johnson gets a few razor sharp scenes as the kind of guy who rants about immigration before quoting "Hamilton". It's not embedded in the entire piece as much as *Get Out*, but this "Out" is similar in the way it uses genre structure to say something about wealth and social inequality. And in terms of performance, the often-promising de Armas has never been handed a role this big, and she totally delivers. *Knives Out* crackles visu-

ally, although regular collaborator Steve Yedlin never allows his cinematography to get too showy to distract from the mystery or ensemble. It's a film that works because of Johnson's palpable love for the genre, but never becomes too meta or referential. A lot of talented directors have returned to genre movies after making a fortune and brought too much self-awareness with them, but that's not the case here. Ultimately, as in the films and books that inspired this one, it's all about the whodunit, which is revealed in such unexpected ways that just when you think you have it all figured out, you realise something doesn't add up. When it's actually over (and my God does Johnson stick the landing with one of the best final shots of the year) you'll unpack its ingenuity like a detective yourself, marvelling at not just how the details of what happened that night revealed themselves, but the social message embedded in all of it. It's tempting to say that it's a mystery that Harlan Thrombey himself would have loved, but he probably never wrote one this good.

This review was filed from the Toronto International Film Festival. By arrangement with Asia Features



## Cinematic pop patriotism fails to impress!

ARNAB BANERJEE

Vidyut Jammwal is one actor who is best suited to fight, kick, slide, whirl, chase, fly in the air, and do staggeringly splendid stunts few among Bollywood stars can match. Filmmakers too love to cash in on his sculpted body and make him the hero in films that deal with a semi-realistic storyline. And so, as a single man army in nearly all his films, his individual efforts as the good guy are enough to chase and catch criminals who pose a threat to his homeland.

As the commando Karanveer Singh Dogra in the action thriller *Commando 3*, he adds yet another one of his capabilities as the unstoppable patriot to pump up action to the maximum, and wrestles with *pehelwaans* who trouble young schoolgirls.

His acting proficiencies are well defined in the primary manoeuvring technique he invariably applies in a solid punch of his fist to the right guy (the bad guy in the film, of course!). But make no mistake: he is always on the right side of the law; never ever morally wrong, though he sure is someone who takes ample liberties by being unlawful himself.

In short, he is a giant among mere mortals, not just physically, but figuratively too.

As expected, in this Aditya Datt (who is remembered for the Emraan Hashmi-Tanushree Dutta starrer *Aashiq Banaya Aapne*) directed movie, it is merely his blows and combative attacks at the enemies that take precedence over elements like characterisation or complex plotting. Understandably, other than his charismatic and prefect body, there's not much to go gaga over his talent accessories.

Probably tired and having exhausted all themes that this genre could have, Datt plays it safe here: He constructs the present-day Islamophobia spread across worldwide as the central premise to camouflage his unskillfulness to script a believable plot, and manages to give us a 133-minute film that focuses more on Jammwal's muscles than his acting potential.

The cool guy Commando Karanvir Singh Dogra (Jammwal) is called by the Indian handler (Tailang), who has a direct telephonic link with India's defence minister (no less), to go on a secret encounter mission to London with two accompanying encounter specialists, the British Intelligence agents Bhavana Reddy (Sharma) and Mallika Sood (Dhar) by his side for support. He is a man in a hurry: The indoctrinated Indians (all Muslims), are on a mission to destroy peace in India as they plot much worse than 9/11 terror attacks in as many as eight Indian cities.

Religious fundamentalist Buraq Ansari (Devaiah) masterminds, and is determined to take on any wrong against his religion but lives in a posh apartment in the UK. Needless to mention, Dogra is much smarter than anyone one could imagine, and could easily give his British counterparts a harrowing time locating him, let alone outmanoeuvring him. As he, along with Reddy, Sood and another BI agent Arhaan (Sumeet Thakur), locate Buraq, a cat and mouse chase begins in the bylanes of London over rooftop buildings and hideouts. That Karan can overcome any challenge that may pose a threat to him is a foregone conclusion as his posse fearlessly treads territories to locate Buraq, who, by the way, is quite easy to trace. His divorced wife Zahira (Feryna Wazheir) and son Abir (Atharva Vishwakarma) lead normal lives but live in mortal fear of him.

The success of the first two in the *Commando* series must have prompted producer Vipul Amrutlal Shah to go for the third franchise, and instead of risking a new venture, he must have thought of reaping the benefits to exploit the pretty muscular Jammwal to carry on with a tried and tested formula in the fast-changing tastes of the masses. Datt's action hero may have few universally definable traits, but that he must always be ripped, and be easy on the eyes and be ready to smugly spit out a semi-comical one-liner if need be, are safe bets for two-hours long of entertainment.

In a film that has the action /fight choreographers and coordinators more to do than the director, Jammwal as Commando Karan relies on his single trait: he says everything not by articulating anything but by doing (read: fixing, resolving) plentiful. And though, in the midst of countless gunshots, cars getting smashed and gory cold-blooded killings, not much drama emerges as an edge-of-the-seat thriller.

I don't think any other Bollywood hero who at any time wants to have a go at being an action hero would want to compete with Jammwal. With his ensemble of fast-punching combinations and spinning heel kicks, he embodies the ethos of individualism and self-determination so extremely that the two women (both Sharma and Agira) despite displaying their agility and great fighting skills, get reduced to vying for his attention. *Commando* doesn't even look at the two sexy girls romantically — for him, his mission is everything, though assuming that he would marry both, one even asks the other, "Which side of the bed would you sleep?"

Jammwal, with his effortless cool and nimbleness does a routine job by now, but if there's one actor who seems to be enjoying playing the wicked, ruthless bad guy, it is Gulshan Devaiah as Buraq Ansari who scores over every one else.

To be fair though, the director uses Jammwal's character to oppose, contest and fight in ways that relate directly to the main driving force of the story — he only uses his muscle power. Even in the modern age of action movies where we have a host of CGI driven sequences, we don't have a star actor who could stand out as a replacement for the cool dude Jammwal. So what if he isn't a great actor, he is definitely a superstar in his own right without whom this particular genre would feel empty. And since as a protagonist he is expected to make use of his primarily fighting skills to achieve his goals in a story, he knows nothing better than beating up guys. He also doesn't have the patience or skills for any other method, and is running short of time. That's *Commando* for you, who already must be planning his next move, er... next film!

**Commando 3 (U/A) 133 min**  
**CAST:** Vidyut Jammwal, Adah Sharma  
**DIRECTOR:** Aditya Datt  
**RATING:** ★

# Anthony Maras' searing, confident debut

**Hotel Mumbai (U/A) 128 min**  
**CAST:** Dev Patel, Armie Hammer, Nazanin Boniadi  
**DIRECTOR:** Anthony Maras  
**RATING:** ★★

TOMRIS LAFFLY

How do we establish a proper ethics code around a narrative film that dramatically recreates an act of real-life terrorism? How much time do we need to allow between the tragedy's actual occurrence and its Hollywood-ised on-screen reflection, with which people would eventually fill their entertainment-hungry eyeballs while munching on their popcorn?

I bring up these questions because they kept crawling in my mind as I watched and wrestled with Anthony Maras' searing, startlingly confident debut *Hotel Mumbai*, where every fatal bullet fired out of the ruthless terrorists' semi-automatic weapons hit me at my core. I must admit: this skilled, historical action film was one of the toughest, most disquieting sits I can remember in a while.

A small amount of relief: In *Hotel Mumbai*, the writing duo persistently emphasises the com-



plex humanity of the characters. In that, we are not just watching a jingoistic, thinly sketched battle between the good and the bad. There are shades of nuance in the good here and an abusive hierarchy within the evil, delicately portrayed not to make the audience feel for the terrorists but to help them understand the chilling indestructibility of terror networks and the terrorist mindset. The ones that murder dozens

at random in the hotel are a group of merciless yet disposable men; brainwashed by religious lies, radicalised and sent to carry out massacres by the powerful, those who coldly give commands at the other end of a phone line.

Before we reach the glorious hotel, Maras swiftly familiarises us with the players, starting with the Lashkar-e-Taiba jihadists, who approach the city by boats and begin their fatal attacks

across the bustling metropolis, including a major transportation hub and a restaurant. We then meet the happily married father Arjun (an astonishingly brave Dev Patel, carrying most of the narrative), an employee and waiter at the Taj, who is about to lose a lucrative shift of large tips after misplacing his shoes. His (soon-to-be-a-hero) boss Hemant Oberoi (the legendary Anupam Kher of *The Big Sick*) surely won't let him run his errands in sandals at such a highbrow, first-class establishment that takes pride in treating the guests as God. Borrowing a pair too small for his feet at the last minute (a tiny but rich detail you will hold on to while following him), Arjun earns his spot back in the service roster. The evening would be populated by a number of VIP guests, including an arrogant, womanising Russian businessman (Jason Isaacs with a curious accent) and a well-off family consisting of the architect David (Armie Hammer, excellent with little to do), his wife Zahra (Nazanin Boniadi, who steals the film), their newborn baby (his cries while in-hiding are a recurring source of suspense) and a heroic babysitter (Tilda Cobham-Hervey).

The characters (apart from Oberoi) are fictional for the most part and come with plenty of dramatic embellishments that supplement the basic story. Along the way, phones run out of battery (among the most Hollywood

plot details that repeat), families get separated, egotism becomes certain individuals' worst enemy and racial profiling plagues a group of exhausted survivors' unity. Thankfully, Maras and Collee don't give white privilege an easy pass when the circumstances grow direr by the second. (Except, in an earlier scene, they somehow grant David the overconfidence to order an extremely Americanised burger meal at Taj's world-class restaurant.) Maras establishes unassailable directorial authority throughout, guiding the viewer through a maze of rooms, hallways and backdoor escape routes with clear orientation, even when one loses count of the fallen bodies. Nick Remy Matthews' documentary-like cinematography and the work of co-editors Maras and Peter McNulty weave together a massive canvas, making all of it feel like a claustrophobic horror film unfolding in real-time.

Still, after the substantially scaled catastrophe comes to an end, the question remains: what do we do with all this filmmaking dexterity when it serves an effort that, despite the best of intentions, feels exploitative and too soon? I will leave that decision up to you, as I suspect the answer will depend on your tolerance level. For my part, I will look forward to seeing what the promising Maras does next.

By arrangement with Asia Features

# Not a lot of explicit talk about race

**21 Bridges (A) 99 min**  
**CAST:** Chadwick Boseman, Sienna Miller, J.K. Simmons  
**DIRECTOR:** Brian Kirk  
**RATING:** ★★★

GLENN KENNY

The film *21 Bridges* begins with the funeral of a cop, a uniformed officer who took out three of the men who shot at him before falling. That cop's young son is there, and he'll grow up to be the police detective André Davis, played by Chadwick Boseman, on whose shoulders this movie's narrative will roll. The sermon is passionate, the grieving deep. Director Brian Kirk cuts to an overhead shot of the outside of the church. The kind of thing you've now seen hundreds of times, taken from a drone, looking directly down on the scene from a great height. But it's not like

every other drone shot because the cut occurs directly before the moment that the hundreds of cops outside the church snap a perfectly synchronised salute. This is a drone shot that justifies its existence with a significant action, one that demonstrates with action the full import of this event.

It's this kind of mindful direction and editing that helps make *21 Bridges* one of the most entertaining and thoughtful American policemen in recent memory. Boseman, who also is a co-producer of the movie, does a lot of running and driving and gun-pointing and car-hood slamming here, but his character also does a lot of thinking — and a lot of manoeuvring. While there's not a lot of explicit talk about race, he's positioned as an African-American cop entering territory that's all the more dangerous because of his skin colour. *21 Bridges* is again very smart in making that more implicit than explicit.

The lawbreakers here, and boy do they ever break the

law, are a white guy and a black guy: Taylor Kitsch (who's finding a fruitful niche in character roles) and Stephan James are armed-to-the-teeth small-timers who break into a restaurant to lift 30 kilos of cocaine from its freezer. Only it's more like 100 kilos, and a near-army of cops comes to stop them. A massacre ensues, and it's Davis, who has a history of shootings that gets Internal Affairs' hackles up, that's dispatched to track them. That works fine for J.K. Simmons, as the captain of the dead cops, who expects Davis to take the killers out once he finds them. Davis has a late-night strategy: close off Manhattan (hence the title — this entails shutting down 21 bridges, a major inconvenience even in the wee hours of the morning) and "flood the island with blue". One blue Davis doesn't want with him is a narcotics detective and single mother played by Sienna Miller, but she says "you can use me or fight me" and given how eager NYPD brass is for her to be there, he capitulates.

You sense that some things

are amiss here? So do the robbers played by Kitsch and James, who are a lot more sympathetically portrayed than most cop killers tend to be. Not that *21 Bridges* condones their actions. But once the bad guys find themselves in a safe house, with a "cleaner" whose last instructions to the fellows is to take a couple of thumb drives with them on the way ahead of the other cops on their tail, the Something Rotten In Denmark theme takes definite hold. Piecing things together, Davis realises that he's got to keep at least one of these guys alive.

The script, by Adam Mervis and Matthew Michael Carnahan, doesn't seek to spin the viewer's head with a lot of twists. Instead, it aims to keep you invested in Boseman/Davis' own ratiocinations and the moral imperatives he attaches to each new discovery he makes. But, of course, the movie is also about standoff, shoot-outs, foot chases, car chases, and more. Which Kirk delivers in tight, economic style. And all in less than an hour and 40 minutes. These days it's no

small feat to tie up an intelligent action thriller with such assuredness, and it's refreshing to see.

By arrangement with Asia Features







## Lifeline

Sri Lanka on Friday gave former skipper Dinesh Chandimal a new chance to fight his way back into the national team by naming him in the squad for a two-match Test series in Pakistan

THE ASIAN AGE

SATURDAY | 30 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI

# Cricket

PAGE  
14



It was just amazing to be out there with Davey and to put on a really big partnership.

— **Marnus Labuschagne, Australian batsman after an unbroken 294-run stand with David Warner**

## SHORT TAKES

### DDCA allows Rajat to quit as president

**New Delhi:** The Delhi and Districts Cricket Association ombudsman Justice (Retd) Badar Durrez Ahmed on Friday accepted senior journalist Rajat Sharma's resignation from the position of DDCA President, nearly a fortnight after putting a stay on it. Sharma had resigned on November 16, citing "various pulls and pressures" within the organisation. His resignation was stayed by Ahmed a day later but has finally been accepted after a fresh request from the media personality. "I wrote to him in the morning and told him to relieve me of my responsibilities," Sharma said. In his letter to Ahmed, Sharma stated that he could not continue in an organisation, which is in a "chaotic" state. "I resigned on November 16 from post of President DDCA for the reasons stated in the letter. I however continued to honour the directions of the ombudsman and later reiterated by the High Court. However, the situation in DDCA is completely chaotic and I find it impossible to continue any further as President," he wrote. — *PTI*

### Latham's ton gives solid start for Kiwis

**Hamilton:** Tom Latham's unbeaten hundred and his century stand with Ross Taylor laid a solid foundation for New Zealand before rain brought an early end to day one of the second Test against England in Hamilton on Friday. Latham was on 101 when the rain swept in, just three deliveries after the tea break with New Zealand 173 for three. While Latham played down his 11th Test century as "nice", England were left to regret dropping the left-hander on 66 and not meeting expectations after winning the toss and bowling first. "On day one if you get a team six or seven down by the close you've probably had a pretty good day," said Chris Woakes who took two of the three wickets to fall. Woakes was added to the line up to give them five seamers on a wicket renowned to assist the side bowling first. Instead England toiled for little reward, saw Ross Taylor benefit from a dubious decision during a century partnership with Latham and lost the use of Ben Stokes as a bowling weapon. — *AFP*  
**Brief scores:** New Zealand 173/3 in 54.3 overs (T. Latham (batting) 101, R. Taylor 53; C. Woakes 2/14) vs England.

## Warner, Labuschagne smack tons as Oz dominate Pakistan

**Adelaide, Nov. 29:** David Warner and Marnus Labuschagne both plundered back-to-back centuries as Australia stamped their authority on the opening day of the day-night second Test in Adelaide on Friday.

At the close on a rain-interrupted day, the home team were a dominant 302 for one with the pair building an ominous 294-run partnership, leaving Pakistan with a huge battle to stay in touch. Warner was not out 166 and Labuschagne unbeaten on 126, following on from their 154 and 185 respectively in the first Test at Brisbane. Their Adelaide partnership was the highest ever in a day-night Test.

"It's a bit surreal at the moment. It was just amazing to be out there with Davey and to just put on a really big partnership," said Labuschagne. "Really happy. We were running hard, I love the intensity of the crease."

Warner paid tribute to the maturity of his partner, who is playing in only his 11th Test. "Credit

to Marnus for the way he came out and took the bowlers on again," he said. "We're just thrilled to get through that tonight and want to come out tomorrow and put some more runs on the board."



David Warner celebrates his century against Pakistan. — *AFP*

Pakistan need to win to square the two-match series. The odds were heavily stacked against them before the game began, having lost 13 consecutive Tests in Australia, and their chances are even slimmer now. Over the years, taking wickets in Australia has been a challenge for Pakistan and they shuffled their bowling attack for the pink-ball Test in a bid to make the most

of the conditions. Veteran seamer Mohammad Abbas, who tormented Australia when he took 17 wickets in two Tests in the UAE last October, returned in place of Imran Khan while 16-year-old pace sensation Naseem Shah was rested. — *AFP*

**BRIEF SCORES**  
Australia 302/1 in 73 overs (D. Warner (batting) 166, M. Labuschagne (batting) 126; Afridi 1/48) vs Pakistan.

## It's all in mind

### Dravid says mental health is a challenge and it is important to maintain balance



Rahul Dravid

**New Delhi, Nov. 29:** Former India captain and batting great Rahul Dravid feels maintaining good mental health is a "big challenge" in a "tough game" like cricket and players should strike a balance in everything they do to overcome the stress of busy schedules and uncertain futures.

Dravid, who is the National Cricket Academy (NCA) Director, said it is difficult to cope when one spends a considerable time on the sidelines.

"It is a big challenge. This is a tough game. There is so much competition, a lot of pressure, and kids are playing all year round now. It is a game in which you do sometimes spend a lot of time waiting around, having a lot of time to think," he said when asked for his take on the issue.

Three Australian cricketers, including the seasoned Glenn Maxwell and young Will Pucosvski, recently took a break from the game, citing mental health issues. India skipper Virat Kohli lauded Maxwell for opening up on the subject and recalled a time in his own career when he battled "end of the world" thoughts but struggled to

communicate them. Dravid, who is mentoring India's young cricketers in multiple roles, said stiff competition demands that players pay enough attention to their well-being.

"....you really need to look after yourself on and off the field, and look after stuff like mental health. That's again something that, as much as we talk to these boys about, it's really important to maintain a certain level of balance in everything you do," he said.

"Be able to find that balance between not getting too excited when you succeed and not getting too disappointed when you fail. I just think being able to lead a slightly balanced life potentially helps."

Dravid said as NCA Director, he has been trying to put a system in place where professional help is at hand when a player needs it. "There has been some work on that as well, wherein eventually we'll get to a point where hopefully we should have professionals on board. Some of these things need to be handled by professionals," he said.

"I don't think some of the coaches have the ability to deal with some of the issues. Some things we might be able to, but there may be some things where we might need to look at professional for help."

"It's one of the things we are definitely keen on doing at the NCA: giving some of these boys access to some level of professional help if they do require it."

— *PTI*

## Mithun scalps five in an over as K'taka reach final

**Surat, Nov. 29:** Pacer Abhimanyu Mithun, openers Devdutt Padikkal and KL Rahul starred as defending champions Karnataka romped into the final of the Syed Mushtaq Ali trophy after thrashing Haryana by 8 wickets in the first semi-final here on Friday.

Karnataka will now face Tamil Nadu, who defeated Rajasthan by seven wickets in the second semi-final, in the summit clash, to be played on Sunday.

The highlight of the Karnataka-Haryana match was Mithun (5/39) taking five wickets in an over including a hat-trick and registering his name in the record books.

Mithun became the first bowler in the domestic circuit to claim hat-trick in all the formats. He had snared a hat-trick in the Vijay Hazare (national ODI championship) final against Tamil Nadu earlier this year.

The right-arm speedster did not have a good time until he bowled his last over in which he wreaked havoc. In the 20th over, he dismissed Himanshu Rana (61) and Rahul Tewatia (32) off the first two balls and completed his hat-trick by sending back Sumit Kumar (0). There was more drama in store as Mithun got a wicket on the fourth ball, that of Amit Mishra (0), and then sent back Jayant Yadav (0) on the final ball of the over. Asked to bat first, Haryana piled up 194/8 on the board but Karnataka chased it in 15 overs, thanks to blazing half-centuries by openers Devdutt Padikkal (87) and Rahul (66), who took the opposition attack to the cleaners.

For Haryana, opener Chaitany Bishnoi (55 off 35 balls; 7x4, 1x6) and Rana (61 off 34 balls; 6x4, 2x6) shone with the bat, while Harshal



Abhimanyu Mithun took five wickets including a hat-trick.

### BRIEF SCORES (SEMIFINALS)

Haryana 194/8 (Himanshu Rana 61, Chaitanya Bishnoi 55; Abhimayu Mithun 5/39) lost to Karnataka 195/2 (Devdutt Padikkal 87, K L Rahul 66; Harshal Patel 1/28). Rajasthan 112/9 (Rajesh Bishnoi 23, Ravi Bishnoi 22 not out; Vijay Shankar 2/13) lost to Tamil Nadu 116/3 (Washington Sundar 54 not out; R Ashwin 31; Deepak Chahar 1/11).

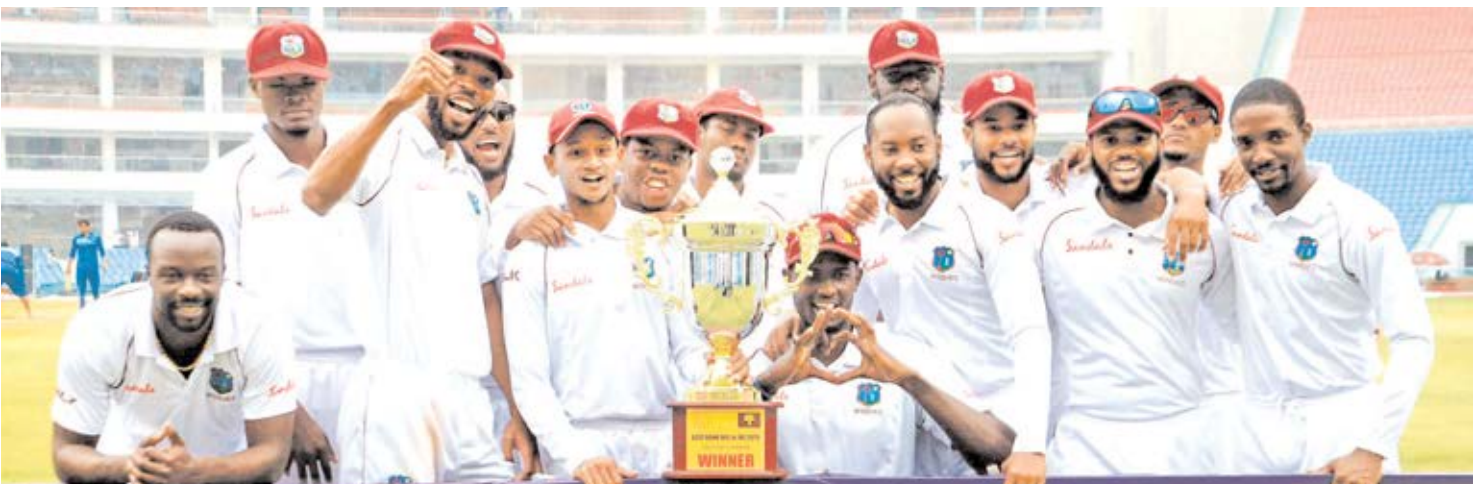
Patel (34 off 20 balls; 6x4, 1x6) and Tewatia (32 off 20 balls; 6x4) also played their parts to perfection. Haryana were going all guns blazing at 192-4 when Mithun pagged them back with his fine effort with the ball.

The chase was a walk in park as Paddikal and Rahul conjured a 125-run stand for the first wicket in just 9.3 overs to lay the foundation stone of the win.

Tamil Nadu bowlers dished out a clinical show to restrict Rajasthan to a meagre 112/9 after putting them to bat. For Rajasthan, barring two-down Rajesh Bishnoi (23), no batsman showed spine as the south-

ern outfit grabbed wickets at regular intervals. A patient unbeaten 22 by number nine batsman Ravi Bishnoi helped Rajasthan cross the 100-run mark.

For TN, all-rounder Vijay Shankar (2-13) was the pick of the bowlers. Tamil Nadu then rode on a gritty unbeaten 54 by all-rounder Washington Sundar as they overhauled the target with 2.1 overs to spare. Sundar played a responsible knock as he held the innings from one end. India's key spinner R Ashwin, in a surprise move, opened the batting and scored valuable 31 runs off 33 balls. After Ashwin departed, Sundar took the side home. — *PTI*



West Indies celebrate with the trophy after winning the one-off Test against Afghanistan. — *AFP*

## Afghans blown away by Windies

**Lucknow, Nov. 29:** Giant spinner Rakheem Cornwall starred as the West Indies thrashed Afghanistan by nine wickets early on day three of their one-off Test on Friday.

Cornwall took a match haul of 10 wickets as the West Indies bowled out Afghanistan for 120 on day three and reached their target of 31 to seal the win in just over an hour of the first session in Lucknow.

It was a reality check for Afghanistan, who were awarded Test status in 2017 and won their first two victories in the five-day format earlier this year.

Skipper Jason Holder claimed all three Afghan wickets to fall in the morning as the Windies needed just 7.1 overs to see off Afghanistan after they resumed the day on 109 for seven.

"Really important win. We had a tough series against India. Was important to finish the year well," said Holder, whose team suffered a 2-0 white-wash against India at home in August and September.

"Very pleasing to see new guys come in and take the opportunity. Shamarrh (Brooks) did that. He scored a fifty in the last innings and followed it with a hundred here. And then Rakheem getting seven in the first innings, in just his second Test, is amazing."

John Campbell made an unbeaten 19 and sealed the win with a boundary

### BRIEF SCORES

Afghanistan 187 & 120 (Ibrahim Zadran 23, Javed Ahmadi 62; Rakheem Cornwall 3/46, Jason Holder 3/20, Roston Chase 3/10) lost to West Indies 277 & 33 (J. Campbell (not out) 19, S. Hope (not out) 6; Amir 1/5).

after losing his opening partner Kraigg Brathwaite for eight off Amir Hamza.

But it was the Cornwall-led spin attack that dismantled Afghanistan on day two as they collapsed from 53 for no loss to 109/7.

### We've been struggling, says Rashid

Opener Javed Ahmadi top-scored with 62 before becoming the final wicket to fall on day two, which earlier witnessed the West Indies take a lead of 90 as they were 277 all out. Shamarrh Brooks made 111 — his maiden Test century — to extend West Indies' dominance after the minnows were bowled out for 187 on the opening day, largely thanks to Cornwall's 7/75.

Left-arm spinner Amir remained the only bright spot for Afghanistan with his five-wicket haul on Test debut as he returned figures of 5/74.

"I think, what I've seen, we've been struggling in the longer formats. Especially in batting. That's the only area we need to improve," said Afghanistan skipper Rashid Khan. — *AFP*

## All-rounders Russell, Bravo left out of limited-overs squads for India series

**St John's (Antigua), Nov. 29:** Experienced all-rounders Andre Russell and Dwayne Bravo were left out of West Indies' ODI and T20 squads for the upcoming series against India beginning next month.

Senior player Kieron Pollard will continue to lead both the ODI and T20 squads with Nicholas Pooran as his deputy in the shorter format and Shai Hope taking over the role of the vice-captain in the ODIs.

Russell, who played six games at the recently-concluded Abu Dhabi T10 league, didn't find a place despite being fit, while Bravo, who had earlier hinted of an international comeback, was also not considered. — *PTI*

**ODI Squad:** Kieron Pollard (C), Sunil Ambris, Shai Hope, Khary Pierre, Roston Chase, Alzarri Joseph, Sheldon Cottrell, Brandon King, Nicholas Pooran, Shimron Hetmyer, Evin Lewis, Romario Shephard, Jason Holder, Keemo Paul, Hayden Walsh Jr.  
**T20 squad:** Kieron Pollard (C), Fabian Allen, Brandon King, Denesh Ramdin, Sheldon Cottrell, Evin Lewis, Sherfane Rutherford, Shimron Hetmyer, Khary Pierre, Lendl Simmons, Jason Holder, Hayden Walsh Jr, Keemo Paul, Nicholas Pooran, Kesrick Williams.



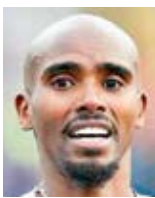
West Indian players Sherfane Rutherford, Evin Lewis and Nicholas Pooran at a promotional event in Mumbai on Friday. — *PTI*

## West Indies trying to adapt to Indian pitches: Rutherford

**Thane, Nov. 29:** Gearing up for next month's T20 series, West Indies all-rounder Sherfane Rutherford on Friday said his team has been trying to adapt to the Indian pitches and would look to put up a good show against India. "I am happy to get the opportunity. Preparation have been coming along well, we had a lot of time to train and to get some work done. So over the past few days we have been putting in some hard work and are looking forward to give our best against India,"

Rutherford said. "Most of the Indian pitches are good wickets to bat on. We have been working on adapting to the pitches so we can improve our game. I don't think players are thinking too much about the World Cup or IPL, it's just about performance and everything else will follow from there." The Windies team has been based in India for the last one month, playing their bilateral series against Afghanistan which featured three ODIs, three T20s and a one-off Test. — *PTI*





## Mo eyes Tokyo

Mo Farah is targeting a return to the track to compete in the 10,000 metres at next year's Olympic Games



Right now, we are only showing flashes of what we feel we can achieve.

— Maurizio Sarri, Juventus coach on his side's performances in the Italian league

### SHORT TAKES

## Philippines hit out at SEA Games

**Clark, Philippines:** Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte has called for a probe into the preparations for the Southeast Asian Games, which start on Saturday after a messy build-up marked by construction and logistical problems. Complaints over transport, accommodation and food stacked up as thousands of athletes flood in for the biggest ever edition of the Games, which are also threatened by an approaching typhoon forecast to hit the northern Philippines early next week.

Red-faced organisers apologised and promised to do better, but after criticism grew under a mocking hashtag, #SEAGamesfail, Duterte waded into the furore late Thursday. "I said let us investigate. Do not create a firestorm now because we are in the thick of preparations. To me personally there was a lot of money poured into this activity. Now I suppose that with that kind of money you can run things smoothly. Apparently, maybe something went wrong," he told reporters. Earlier, however, the PHISGOC organising committee chairman Alan Peter Cayetano remained upbeat. — AFP

## FIFA look to build African League

**Lubumashi:** FIFA president Gianni Infantino said on Thursday he would like to see an African league created and investment of more than \$1 billion (900 million euros) on stadium on the continent. "We have to take the 20 best African clubs and put them in an Africa league," Infantino said during a visit to the DR Congo to celebrate the 80th birthday of club TP Mazembe. "Such a league could make at least 200 million in revenue, which would put it among the top 10 in the world," he added. Infantino added he planned to launch an appeal "to collect a billion dollars before being able to give every African country a real football stadium up to FIFA standards."

The 49-year-old who took over as head of world football's governing body in February 2016 said his ideas were to help the sport in the continent compete on a global level.

"We'll take the best African referees and pay them. We will depoliticise it and professionalise African refereeing," he said.

"I want to take African football to the top of the world," he added. — AFP

## KHO KHO TEAMS SET TO DEFEND TITLE

**New Delhi:** Kho Kho Federation of India on Thursday announced 15-member men's and women's team for the upcoming 13th South Asian Games which is scheduled from December 1 to 10 in Kathmandu, Nepal. After inclusion of kho kho in the South Asian Games for the first time in 2016, both men's and women's team finished at the top of the podium. The defending champions will be aiming to repeat their gold medal-winning performances in Kathmandu. After some good performances in the recently concluded test matches against Nepal, both the teams are heading into the competition with a boost in their confidence. Maharashtra's Balasaheb Pokarde will lead the men's team in the competition. Pokarde, who made his debut during last edition of the Games and played a crucial role to help team win gold, is confident of defending the title. Meanwhile, women's team skipper Nasreen is wary of challenges home team Nepal may pose, but said her team has prepared well to defend the title. — PTI

# CR7 returns for Juve

## Ronaldo back in training post knee niggle

**Milan, Nov. 29:** Juventus and Inter Milan return to their duel at the top of Serie A after midweek European successes, with Napoli carrying the momentum of a 1-1 draw at Liverpool as they look to snap a seven-game winless run and climb up the table.

Serie 'A' leaders Juventus are at home to 14th-placed Sassuolo on Saturday after ensuring they will finish top of their Champions League group with a 1-0 win over Atletico Madrid in Turin. The eight-time reigning Serie 'A' champions are unbeaten this season and are one point ahead of Inter Milan, who kept their European ambitions burning with a 3-1 win at Slavia Prague.

Juventus have a perfect home record against Sassuolo with six wins in as many games.

"Right now, we are only showing flashes of what we feel we can achieve and we would like to show more consistently," said Juve coach Maurizio Sarri.

Cristiano Ronaldo has returned after a slight knee problem, giving Sarri a selection dilemma with Paulo Dybala and Gonzalo Higuain in top form.

Veteran goalkeeper Gianluigi Buffon, 41, could start in place of Wojciech Szczesny, as he looks to close in on Paolo Maldini's record for Serie A appearances.

Antonio Conte's Inter have a chance to keep the momentum going as they host SPAL, who have never won in the San Siro. But Conte sees the side from Emilia-Romagna, who are second-bottom of the league, as "another test" as they build towards their Champions League clash with Barcelona.

Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli host Bologna after a 1-1 draw at Anfield left them well-placed to reach the knockout stages of the Champions League.

The Italians had travelled to Merseyside in disarray with Ancelotti seemingly on the brink of being sacked after a slump to seventh in Serie A'.

President Aurelio De Laurentiis has also threatened to sell the entire squad and take legal action against the players after they refused his orders to be confined to a week-long training camp earlier this month.

Napoli have taken just four points from their last five league games. — AFP

### Live on TV

#### ITALIAN LEAGUE

**Genoa vs Torino**  
from 10 pm on Sony TEN 2 & HD

**Juventus vs Sassuolo**  
from 5 pm (Sunday) on Sony TEN 2 & HD

**Inter Milan vs SPAL**  
from 7.30 pm (Sunday) on Sony TEN 2 & HD

**Parma vs AC Milan**  
from 7.30 pm (Sunday) on Sony TEN 1 & HD

**Napoli vs Bologna**  
from 10.30 pm (Sunday) on Sony TEN 2 & HD



Cristiano Ronaldo of Juventus in this file photo.

## Marseille have task cut out

**Paris, Nov. 29:** Andre Villas-Boas' Marseille host Brest on Friday evening with the aim of turning a mini-revival into something more substantial.

Villas-Boas endured a wretched run soon after his arrival at the Stade Velodrome, the Portuguese even describing his team's performance in the League Cup loss to Monaco last month as "disgraceful" and "shameful".

Four weeks on and three wins on the trot have lifted fans' spirits and the former European champions into second place.

With Paris Saint-Germain not playing until Sunday evening, victory against Brest will push Marseille to within five points of Thomas Tuchel's champions.

Villas-Boas set as an objective on his arrival at the south coast giants a top three finish — and that hasn't changed, he says as Marseille eye a return to the Champions League.



PSG players during a training session in this file photo.

OM host Brest on the back of victories against Lille, Lyon, and last Sunday's 2-0 win at 10-man Toulouse.

Nemanja Radonjic got the second on that occasion, the Serb winger's first goal since joining Marseille 16 months ago,

to the satisfaction of his boss. "He's an important player for us and (after this goal) I hope he's going to grow in confidence," the boss said.

Radonjic is one of four fighting to fill the shoes of the injured Florian Thauvin on the right.

## Top spot at stake for Munich

**Berlin, Nov. 29:** Bayern Munich are eyeing a return to top spot in the Bundesliga this weekend with interim boss Hansi Flick enjoying the best start in the club's impressive history.

They are third in the Bundesliga table ahead of Saturday's home game against Bayer Leverkusen, only a point behind leaders Moenchengladbach, who host fourth-placed Freiburg on Sunday.

Bayern underlined their form in Tuesday's 6-0 win at Red Star Belgrade in the Champions League when Robert Lewandowski scored four goals in 15 stunning minutes.

The romp handed Flick a fourth straight win, with 16 goals scored and none conceded, in the three weeks since being made interim coach after Niko Kovac was sacked. No other coach has enjoyed a better start at Bayern.

With a game to spare, Bayern are through to the last 16 of the Champions League as guaranteed group winners. Now Rummenigge has set the challenge of regaining top spot in the Bundesliga for the first time since early October.

A fifth straight win under Flick would set Bayern up for a showdown at Gladbach's Borussia Park a week on Saturday.

The secret to his immediate success has been how quickly Flick has won over Bayern's stars — no easy feat.

— AFP

### Live on TV

#### GERMAN LEAGUE

**Bayern Munich vs Bayer Leverkusen**  
from 11 pm on Star Sports 2 & HD

### FORMULA | ONE

## Finn Bottas leads practice session

**Abu Dhabi, Nov. 29:** Valtteri Bottas topped the times for Mercedes ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen and his Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton in Friday's opening free practice for the Abu Dhabi Grand Prix.

The Finn, who is assured already of finishing second behind six-time champion Hamilton in this year's title race, clocked a best time of one minute and 36.957 seconds to outpace Verstappen by half a second and Hamilton by six-tenths.

Bottas, who announced the break-up of his marriage on Thursday, will start from the back of the grid on Sunday regardless of how he does in qualifying after being sanctioned for taking a new power-unit.

He clocked his best lap on a set of medium tyres mid-way through a session stopped twice for red flags following a blown engine in Daniel Ricciardo's Renault and a late crash by Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel.

The four-time champion Vettel had arrived late at the circuit on Friday morning following the birth of his third child, a son, on Wednesday.

Red Bull new boy Alex Albon was fourth, Vettel fifth and Romain Grosjean sixth for Haas ahead of Charles Leclerc in the second Ferrari, Kevin Magnussen in the second Haas, Alfa Romeo's Antonio Giovinazzi and Renault's Nico Hulkenberg

● **Valtteri Bottas, who is assured of finishing second behind six-time champion Lewis Hamilton in this year's title race, clocked a best time of one minute and 36.957 seconds to outpace Max Verstappen by half a second and Hamilton by six-tenths.**

who is set to start his final Grand Prix with the team.

Bottas dominated the session from the start and was only replaced briefly early on by Hamilton before the stoppages on a hot day of blue skies at the Yas Marina circuit.

Ricciardo's engine failure dumped a lot of oil on the track, which led to a 10-minute clean-up before the action resumed and Vettel spun backwards into the barriers.

Williams's George Russell took part in the session and wound up 20th despite doubts about his fitness due to illness. He went through a medical check before taking part.

Hamilton ran briefly in the session with number one on the nose of his car and, when asked earlier about Bottas' private predicament, said that balancing the demands of racing with a full private life was difficult.

— AFP

## STAGE SET UP FOR JK FESTIVAL OF SPEED

**Greater Noida, Nov. 29:** The JK Tyre Festival of Speed, will get underway at the Buddh International Circuit this weekend, with India's celebrated racers and many international stars lining up for top honours and glory.

The JK FOS will unveil its marquee event, the X1 Racing League powered by JK Tyre, boasting of six franchise-based teams involving high profile owners and international and Indian drivers and promises to reignite the country's motorsports hemisphere.

Along with India's first

Formula 1 driver Narain Karthikeyan, the League will also see the likes of former Force India driver Tonio Liuzzi, Malaysian hero Alex Yoong and legendary F1 driver Niki Lauda's son, Mathias, in an exciting new format that should thrill the over 35,000 fans at the BIC on Sunday. Each team boasts of an international male, international female, Indian international and two Indian domestic drivers who will not only have to show great skill and speed but also perfect teamwork and co-ordination to clinch the first of the two rounds.



Akhil Rabindra and Anindith Reddy analysing strategy at the Buddh International Circuit in Noida on Friday.

## Rajiv, Senthil top shows at ARRC

**Buriram (Thailand), Nov. 29:** India's Rajiv Sethu and Senthil Kumar clocked their personal-best timings in the practice session of the AP 250 cc class of the seventh and final round of the Asian Road Racing Championship (ARRC) at Chang International circuit here on Friday.

Eyeing a top-10 finish in the main races, the 21-year old Sethu of the Idemitsu Honda Racing India team was at his fastest ever in free practice sessions at the Chang circuit.

With a gap of only 2:045 seconds from the Indonesian lead rider Rafid Topan, who stopped the clock at 1:53:039, Sethu clocked his best practice lap time of 1:55:084 in the category witnessing intense competition among Asian riders.

Senthil also showed con-

sistent improvement. The rookie finished 21st on the grid, recording his personal best practice lap time of 1:56:942.

The 18-year-old Senthil seems to be gaining confidence with each round of the ARRC and has significantly reduced his risk with lead rider to 3.903 seconds in comparison to the 4.628 sec gap in round 3 at the same circuit.

The title in the Asia Production 250 class title is still up for grabs and there was not much to separate the top 15 riders. Coming out on top in Friday's combined practice sessions was Indonesian Rafid Topan Sucipto (1:53:039) followed by AP Honda Racing team's Thai rider duo of Piawat Patoomyos (1:53:157) and Muklada Sarapuech (1:53:194).

— PTI





## Rewarded

Aston Villa manager Dean Smith signs a new four-year contract after he guided Villa back to Premier League last season via Championship play-offs after replacing Steve Bruce in Oct. 2018



I gave my best in every point. We are happy with 2-0 on the first day.  
— Ramkumar Ramanathan, Indian Davis Cup player

## SHORT TAKES

### Angad, Saniya are national champs

**New Delhi:** Angad Vir Singh Bajwa unofficially hit a world record score in the men's skeet final to lead Punjab's domination of the category at the 63rd National Shooting Championships for Shotgun events here on Friday. Angad held off his senior and fellow Tokyo 2020 quota winner Mairaj Ahmad Khan of Uttar Pradesh, shooting a clean 60 to equal a record he also officially jointly holds with skeet legend Vincent Hancock and two others. Mairaj also had a splendid day, shooting a world record himself, a perfect 125 in qualifying to breeze into the final. Both Angad and Mairaj will be credited with National records however. Saniya Sheikh stopped the Punjab juggernaut, bagging her third national title winning the women's skeet event in a shoot-off with state-mate Areeba Khan 10-8. Abhay Singh Sekhon and Parnaaz Dhaliwal of Punjab also won the junior men's and women's skeet golds respectively. — PTI

### Aizawl face Bagan in I-League opener

**Aizawl:** Two former champions, Aizawl Football Club and Mohun Bagan will square off in the opening match of the 13th edition of the I-League, which has been reduced to a second tier domestic competition this season. The All India Football Federation and some of the clubs were locked in a bitter face-off on which out of Indian Super League and I-League will the top-tier competition in the country. After a lot of acrimony, the issue was finally settled with the help of the Asian Football Confederation, with the ISL being made the top-tier league with a slot in the AFC Champions League play-off, while I-League champions would compete in the second tier AFC Cup. As a concession to the clubs, starting with the 2022-23 season, the winner of I-League will stand a chance to be promoted to ISL. From the 2024-25 season onwards, performance-based promotion and relegation to and from ISL will be implemented. — PTI

### SATHIYAN MAKES LAST-16 OF ITTF WORLD CUP

**Chengdu, China:** G. Sathiyam won both his group matches against higher-ranked opponents to enter the round of 16 in the International Table Tennis Federation Men's World Cup here on Friday. The world number 30 Sathiyam, making his World Cup debut, defeated Frenchman Simon Gauzy, ranked eight places above him, 4-3 in a thrilling and energy-sapping first match that lasted one hour and four minutes before a 4-2 win over world number 24 Groth Jonathann of Denmark. The 26-year-old Indian topped the Group D standings with four points to book a pre-quarterfinal berth. He will now face former world number one and current number eight Timo Boll of Germany in the round of 16 on Saturday. In his first match of the day against Gauzy, Sathiyam was down two games but made an impressive recovery to win the match 11-13, 9-11, 11-8, 14-12, 7-11, 11-5, 11-8. Gauzy looked like he was in control early on but the consistent backhand block and return shots from Sathiyam turned the match on its head. "I am just out of words, this is a fantastic win for me. This is the first time I am beating Gauzy after losing two very close matches. I was match point up in the World Team Championships and I lost. This was getting into my head, not again," Sathiyam said after the hard-fought win. "My coach kept motivating me. Losing the first game after being 10-6 up, I was a little upset. You can never take it easy against Gauzy. He is always coming back at you but I was ready for it this time and really happy that I was successful." — PTI

# Advantage India

## Ram, Sumit win to give India 2-0 lead against Pak

**Nur-Sultan (Kazakhstan), Nov. 29:** A ruthless India raced to a 2-0 lead in their Davis Cup tie for the loss of just two games as Ramkumar Ramanathan and Sumit Nagal toyed with their teen rivals from Pakistan, here on Friday. In a mismatch of epic proportion, Ramkumar double-bageled 17-year-old Muhammed Shoaib in just 42 minutes in the opening singles.

The only time Shoaib made it look like a match was in the sixth game of the second set when he stretched Ramkumar to two deuce points.

Sumit Nagal then earned his first-ever Davis Cup win, beating Hufaiza Mohammed Rehman 6-0, 6-2 in the second singles which lasted 64 minutes.

Pakistan badly missed their top players who pulled out, protesting against shifting of the matches to a neutral venue.

"I gave my best in every point. We are happy with 2-0 on the first day. Now we are looking forward to see Jee (Jeevan) and Leander fire some bombs tomorrow. Let's get the job done," said Ramkumar, who also thanked fans who had gathered to support them.

While the first match was not even a contest, promising Pakistani youngster Hufaiza resisted Nagal as much as possible by engaging the Indian in long rallies.

Twice he pushed Nagal to deuce points in the second game of the second set and finally put Pakistan on board by holding the third game after squandering four game points.

He returned and dished out another hold, staying close to Nagal.

However, it just delayed the inevitable as Nagal wrapped up the match in the eighth game.



Members of the Indian team pose after Day One's play at Davis Cup in Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan, on Friday. — TWITTER

"I started decent and finished it pretty strong. Both of us (he and Ram) had lot of fire today. We did not want to lose. They are juniors but they

played well and did whatever they could. The guy I played came up with some really good shots. He played to his potential but has a long way to go," said

Nagal.

"Tomorrow's it's going to be pretty similar (score-line)," said Nagal.

India's non-playing captain Rohit Rajpal too was

## DAVIS CUP

● In a mismatch of epic proportion, Ramkumar double-bageled 17-year-old Muhammed Shoaib in just 42 minutes in the opening singles

● Sumit Nagal then earned his first-ever Davis Cup win, beating Hufaiza Mohammed Rehman 6-0, 6-2 in the second singles which lasted 64 minutes

pleased with the performance.

"It is a fantastic day for India. Ram gave us a nice start, winning in quick time. The second match was little tighter and tough, though it looked simple. Sumit kept the level high and came through with flying colours," he said.

Veteran Leander Paes and debutant Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan will now look to seal the tie when they clash with Hufaiza and Shoaib in the doubles rubber on Saturday.

India have never lost a tie to Pakistan in six meetings so far and the trend does not look like changing.

A win on Saturday will stretch Paes' record for most number of doubles wins in Davis Cup history. He is leading the chart with 43 wins.

"It will be interesting to see how the Pakistan youngsters cope with our world class players. Let's see how it goes," said Rajpal. The winners of the tie will travel to Croatia for the World Group Qualifiers, to be held on March 6-7. — PTI

# No firepower in Gunners' arsenal

## EMERY SACKED AFTER WORST RUN IN DECADES

**London, Nov. 29:** Unai Emery was sacked as Arsenal manager on Friday after just 18 months in charge at the Emirates, with the Premier League giants mired in their worst run since 1992.

The 48-year-old Spaniard was fired following the 2-1 home defeat to Eintracht Frankfurt in Thursday's Europa League match, which extended their winless run to seven games.

Assistant Freddie Ljungberg has taken over as interim manager with ex-Juventus coach

men. The Gunners are still on course for a last 32 place if they draw with Standard Liege on December 12.

Scottish champions Celtic clinched top spot in Group E with a 3-1 win over Rennes while Wolves reached the knockout

Massimiliano Allegri and Wolves boss Nuno Espirito Santo among the early favourites to be named the next full-time boss. "We announce today that the decision has been taken to part company with our head coach Unai Emery and his coaching team," Arsenal said in a statement.

"The decision has been taken due to results and performances not being at the level required. We have asked Freddie Ljungberg to take responsibility for the first team as interim head coach." — AFP

stages with a 3-3 draw at fellow qualifiers Braga in Group K. Rangers drew 2-2 at Feyenoord to hold top spot in Group G with a one point lead ahead of their last game against Young Boys.

Earlier, Roma's Lorenzo Pellegrini was hit by

coins as the Italian club kept their last 32 hopes alive with a 3-0 victory at Istanbul Basaksehir.

## KAZAKHS TEACH UNITED KIDS A LESSON

Elsewhere, Kazakh champions Astana fought back to surprise a youthful Manchester United 2-1.

United captain Jesse Lingard opened the scoring, who had already reached the last 32, before Dmitri Shomko equalised for the home side.

Di'Shon Bernard, 19, then put through his own goal to hand Astana victory over a United side whose average age was just 22.

United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer made 11 changes from Sunday's draw with Sheffield United by handing senior debuts to teenagers Ethan Laird, Dylan Levitt and Bernard as well as naming cancer survivor Max Taylor on the bench.

Solskjaer said some of the youngsters on show put their hands up to feature against Alkmaar in the final round of group matches on December 12. — AFP



Eintracht Frankfurt players celebrate their 2-1 win over Arsenal in their Europa League Group F match at the Emirates Stadium in London on Thursday. — AFP

# Games

PAGE 16

THE ASIAN AGE

SATURDAY | 30 NOVEMBER 2019 | NEW DELHI

## PREMIER LEAGUE

# Fixture pile-up looms for Reds

**Liverpool, Nov. 29:** Jurgen Klopp is preparing to embark on a frantic run of fixtures with fears over the fitness of Fabinho after the midfielder limped out of Liverpool's Champions League draw against Napoli.

The 26-year-old Brazilian has emerged as one of the unsung heroes of Klopp's team, who have a comfortable eight-point lead at the top of the Premier League. Fabinho suffered an ankle injury during Wednesday's 1-1 Champions League draw with Napoli, a result that leaves the reigning champions needing a point from their final group game at Salzburg to guarantee progress. He will be out for more than a month after suffering ankle ligament damage.

Klopp had been looking for a victory against the Italians, to ensure that at least one of his fixtures during this chaotic run could be treated as a dead rubber. But the Liverpool manager was left with graver concerns when Fabinho limped off early.

Fellow midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum said an injury to Fabinho, signed from Monaco in July 2018, would be a "big blow", with Liverpool involved in four competitions in December. But he added: "We just have to show that it doesn't affect us. During the years we have had some difficult injuries and difficult positions (like) last season when we didn't have a right defender, we just have to deal with it so we will see."

Fabinho has emerged as a crucial player at Anfield, filling a sitting midfield role that had previously been the preserve of Jordan Henderson. He took his time to settle, with critics questioning the wisdom of Klopp's decision to bring him to Anfield.

## Live on TV

### PREMIER LEAGUE

**Man City vs Newcastle** from 6 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

**Spurs vs Bournemouth** from 8.30 pm on Star Sports 3

**Liverpool vs Brighton** from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

**Chelsea vs West Ham** from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

**Southampton vs Watford** from 11 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

### PELLEGRINI'S CHELSEA TEST

Manuel Pellegrini's side have not won in any competition since September and have plummeted down the Premier League table after a bright start.

The fourth-bottom Hammers face a challenging test this weekend against in-form Chelsea. Frank Lampard's young side have won six of their past seven league matches. "We don't talk about that," the 66-year-old former Manchester City boss said on Thursday when questioned about his future. "You have to very clear what you must do, game by game."

"Football changes all the time. We are working to try to beat Chelsea and after that, we will see the result." Goalkeeper Roberto has taken much of the flak for West Ham's poor run and was at fault again during last week's 3-2 home defeat by Tottenham.

Regular keeper Lukasz Fabianski is still injured, but Pellegrini gave no guarantee that he will keep faith with Roberto, meaning third-choice keeper David Martin might be pressed into action. — AFP

## SYED MODI | BADMINTON



# Sourabh advances, Srikanth bows out

**Lucknow, Nov. 29:** Indian shuttlers Sourabh Verma and Rituparna Das advanced to the semifinals but Kidambi Srikanth made an exit after losing in the quarterfinals of the Syed Modi International tournament here on Friday.

Sourabh, who claimed two BWF Super 100 titles in Hyderabad and Vietnam this year, notched up a 21-19, 21-16 win over Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn, a three-time world junior champion and reigning Asian junior champion, in the quarterfinal match.

The 26-year-old Sourabh will next face Korea's Heo Kwang Hee for a place in the men's singles final on Saturday. However, third seed Srikanth continued to struggle as his run was cut short by former world no. 1 Son Wan Ho.

Srikanth, who had reached the finals at India Open Super 500 early this year, went down 18-21, 19-21 to the seventh seeded Korean for his seventh loss in 11 meetings.

In the women's singles, former national champion

● Sourabh Verma notched up a 21-19, 21-16 win over Thailand's Kunlavut Vitidsarn, a three-time world junior champion and reigning Asian junior champion, in the quarterfinal

Rituparna overcame a fighting Shruti Mundada 24-26, 21-10, 21-19 in an all-Indian quarterfinals to enter the last four stage.

Rituparna, who won the Polish International in 2016 and 2018, will now face Thailand's Phittayaporn Chaiwan on Saturday.

In doubles, the women's pair of Kuhoo Garg and Anoushka Parikh lost 15-21, 9-21 to Hong Kong combination of NG Wing Yung and Yeung Nga Ting to bow out of the competition.

Earlier, the young women's doubles pair of Simran Singhi and Ritika Thaker was no match for Linda Efler and Isabel Herttrich of Germany, going down 7-21, 16-21 in another quarterfinal match. — PTI