

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 29 OCTOBER 2020



## NATION | 4

Foreign secy Shringla to visit France, Germany and UK in November



## WORLD | 6

2020 election is choice between 'super recovery' & 'Biden depression': Trump

## TABLOID | 11

Kangana kicks up row by saying that 'nepotism kids' don't get raped or stabbed



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RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 27 No. 253 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00

### WINDOWS



Janeth Magufuli, Tanzania first lady, casts her vote at Chamwino in Dodoma, Tanzania, on Wednesday. Her husband, President Magufuli, is seeking second five-year term. — AP

### Ladakh map: House panel asks Twitter to file an affidavit

**New Delhi:** A parliamentary committee on Wednesday came down heavily on Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and an explanation must be tendered by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit, sources in the panel said. The Twitter representatives told the panel that the social media company respects the sensitivities of India. ■ [More on Page 4](#)

### Gold smuggling: CM's ex-secretary arrested

**New Delhi:** The enforcement directorate on Wednesday took Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar into custody in Thiruvananthapuram minutes after Kerala high court rejected his anticipatory bail plea in the gold smuggling case. ■ [More on Page 4](#)

### NIA raids on journo, activists in Kashmir

**Srinagar:** National Investigation Agency early on Wednesday raided the offices of mass-circulated newspaper *Greater Kashmir* and a couple of NGOs and the homes of several journalists and human rights and political activists simultaneously in the Valley and Banglewala. ■ [More on Page 4](#)

### COUNTERPOINT



New range, tough and costs less... to throw at candidates!

### WEATHER

Max: 31°C  
Min: 14°C  
RH: 36%  
Rain: 0%  
Forecast: Sunny

### ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Nija Ashwayuja Suddha Trayodasi till 3.16 pm  
**Star:** Uttarabhadra till 11.59 am  
**Variyam:** 1.28 am to 3.16 am (Friday)  
**Durmuhurtam:** 10.05 am to 10.51 am; 2.39 pm to 3.25 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.38 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.31 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 5.11 PM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 4.19 AM**

'If Opp. wins, even pvt sector jobs will go' ■ Praises Nitish's leadership

## PM tears into RJD's Tejashwi, says he's 'yuvraj' of 'jungle raj'

**NAYEAR AZAD**  
with agency inputs  
PATNA/DARBHANGA/  
MUZAFFARPUR, OCT 28



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday tore into the Opposition RJD in Bihar, calling its chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav the "yuvraj" (crown prince) of "jungle raj" and targeting him over his party's promise to provide 10 lakh government jobs if it came to power.

He warned people against the double whammy Bihar could face if those responsible for having turned the state "beemar" (sick) were voted to power amid the global Covid-19 pandemic.

Addressing back to back rallies in Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur in north Bihar, besides in Patna, the PM also set the tone for the day with a dash of Hindutva as he mentioned of Ayodhya at his first election meeting.

"Forget about government jobs. If they succeed (in winning), Bihar will lose jobs even in the private sector. The party has copyright over kidnappings and companies will be forced to shut shop and flee as they will be under duress because of extortion calls," Mr Modi alleged.

Prime Minister Modi intensified his campaigning for the second and third phase of the Assembly elections while voting for the first phase got under way on Wednesday. He addressed rallies in Patna, Darbhanga and Muzaffarpur and urged people to vote for the NDA for the development of Bihar. ■ [Turn to Page 3](#)



Voters stand in queues to cast their votes for the first phase of the Bihar Assembly election amid the coronavirus pandemic at Bhabhua police station in Kaimur district on Wednesday. — PTI

## 53.54% vote in Bihar Phase 1: NDA & RJD tussle in 41 seats

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
PATNA, OCT. 28

Around 53.54 per cent voting was recorded during the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections on Wednesday. Reports said the highest turnout was recorded in Jamui district, at 57.41 per cent, followed by Kaimur, at 55.95 per cent, and Lakhisarai, at 55.44 per cent.

The NDA was locked in a tough fight with RJD-led grand alliance in at least 41 of the 71 seats that went to the polls in the first phase.

The elections were held in 71 constituencies spread across 16 districts of Bihar amid tight security. ■ [More on Page 3](#)

### Modi, Nitish silent on jobs: Rahul

**New Delhi:** In a sharp attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar, senior Congress leader Rahul Gandhi Wednesday said both of them are silent on the issue of jobs and unemployment and are instead attacking his family and that of ally, Tejashwi Yadav. ■ [More on Page 3](#)

ty and Covid-19 guidelines, with 1,066 candidates in the fray in the first phase. As many as 33 constituencies were declared as "sen-

sitive" or "hypersensitive" by the state administration.

Among the prominent political leaders in the fray during the first phase were HAM Chief Jitan Ram Manjhi and eight ministers of the Nitish Kumar Cabinet.

Another key candidate whose fate is at stake in the first phase is ace shooter Shreyasi Singh from Jamui seat. She is making her debut at the age of 27. She is standing on a BJP ticket and is pitted against sitting RJD MLA Vijay Prakash, the brother of former Union minister Jai Prakash Yadav, a close aide of Lalu Prasad Yadav.

### 2 Jaish militants killed during Srinagar gunfight

**Srinagar:** Two Jaish-e-Muhammad militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Mochu area on the outskirts of Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar overnight, the officials. The slain militants have been identified as Javaid Ahmad Ganaie, a resident of southern Pulwama district and his Pakistani associate Khalid alias Ilyas. The J&K police said that the duo was given the opportunity to surrender. "However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated," it said. ■ [More on Page 4](#)

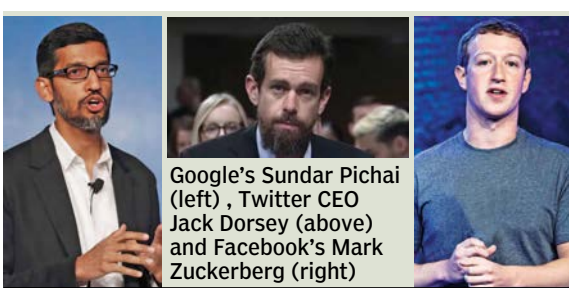


Kashmiris assemble near a house damaged after a gunbattle in Srinagar on Wednesday. Two suspected militants were killed during a gunfight that erupted shortly after the police and soldiers launched an operation based on a tipoff about the presence of rebels on the outskirts of Srinagar, the police said. — AP

## US senators grill 3 tech CEOs over bias

**Washington, Oct. 28:** The CEOs of Twitter, Facebook and Google are facing a grilling by Republican senators making unfounded allegations that the tech giants show anti-conservative bias.

The Senate Commerce Committee has summoned Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and Google's Sundar Pichai to testify for a hearing Wednesday. The executives agreed to appear remotely after being threatened with subpoenas. With the presidential election looming, Republicans led by President Donald Trump have thrown a barrage of grievances at Big Tech's social media platforms, which they accuse without



evidence of deliberately suppressing conservative, religious and anti-abortion views. The chorus of protest rose this month after Facebook and Twitter acted to limit dissemination of an unverified political story from the conservative-leaning New York Post about Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, an unprecedented

action against a major media outlet. The story, which was not confirmed by other publications, cited unverified emails from Biden's son Hunter that were reportedly disclosed by Trump allies.

Beyond questioning the CEOs, senators are expected to examine proposals to revise long-held legal protections for online speech, an immunity that critics in both parties say enables the companies to abdicate their responsibility to impartially moderate content. The Justice Department has asked Congress to strip some of the bedrock protections that have generally shielded the tech companies from legal responsibility for what people post on their platforms. Trump signed an executive order challenging the protections from lawsuits under the 1996 telecommunications law. "For too long, social media platforms have hidden behind Section 230 protections to censor content that deviates from their beliefs," Sen. Roger Wicker, the Commerce Committee chairman, said recently. — AP



Defence minister Rajnath Singh with senior Army commanders in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

## Furious China asks US to stop 'meddling, repeating old lies'

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

Furious over criticism directed at it by secretary of state Michael R. Pompeo and secretary of defense Mark T. Esper in New Delhi on Tuesday, China on Wednesday blasted the US and accused it of "repeating old lies, violating the norms of international relations and basic principles of diplomacy, and instigating" other countries in the region against Beijing. China accused the US of doing this as a ploy to "maintain its global hegemony", and asked it to "abandon the Cold War and the zero-sum mentality, stop hyping up the so-called 'China threat', and stop the wrong actions that undermine regional peace and stability". Beijing also said the "Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by the US is to stir up confrontation among different blocs." ■ [More on Page 4](#)

## 'China may use militants to foment trouble in Northeast'

**MANOJ ANAND**  
GUWAHATI, OCT. 28

Even after significant improvement in law and order scenario, the unified command of security forces has decided not to scale down counter-insurgency operations in Assam and adjoining states as there is apprehension of China trying to extend direct or indirect help to armed rebel groups of India to create unrest in the Northeastern states. The apprehension about China instigating insurgent groups of northeast was based on a report of China's *Global Times* where it was stated that if India plays Taiwan card, China should also help militant groups of India to retaliate. The Chinese agencies would definitely like to provide help to revive insurgency in the region, sources said. ■ [More on Page 4](#)

## Bengal's gov to meet Shah today over 'Gorkhland'

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI**  
KOLKATA, OCT. 28

Keeping the "Gorkhland" issue in mind, West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar will meet Union home minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Thursday before starting his month-long visit to Darjeeling, close on the heels of absconding Gorkha Janmukti Morcha (GJM) founder Bimal Gurung's exit from the BJP-led NDA over the separate statehood issue and his pledge to support the Trinamul Congress in next year's Assembly elections.

On Wednesday afternoon Mr. Dhankhar tweeted: "West Bengal Governor Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar would be on an official visit to Delhi from Oct 28-30. Governor Dhankhar leaves for Delhi on evening of Oct 28 and returns to Kolkata on Oct 30. His engagements include calling on the Union Home Minister Shri Amit Shah on Oct 29." Before his tweet, Raj Bhavan had said: "Hon'ble Governor Shri Jagdeep Dhankhar will be on Darjeeling tour with effect from 1st November 2020 to 30th November 2020. During the period Hon'ble Governor will be staying at Raj Bhavan Darjeeling."

According to sources, Mr Gurung's step, which ■ [Turn to Page 3](#)



## IN BRIEF

BJP delegation,  
mayors meet L-G

**New Delhi:** A delegation of BJP MLAs and mayors of three municipal corporations met Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and urged for his intervention in payment of ₹13,000 crore dues owed to the civic bodies by the Arvind Kejriwal government. Leader of opposition in Delhi assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, who led the delegation, said that the MLAs and mayors also requested the L-G to intervene in payment of dues including ₹10,000 crore property tax from Delhi government. North Delhi mayor Jai Prakash said that the BJP delegation requested intervention of L-G in solving the crisis including non payment of salaries to employees as funds were withheld by Delhi government. South Delhi mayor Anamika said that due curtailment of funds, it is very difficult for all three MCDs to release salary and pension to its employees and it will not be in a position to take care of its obligatory functions like sanitation, control of corona and vector borne diseases, construction and maintenance of drains, de-silting of drains and primary health centres. Mayor of East Delhi, Nirmal Jain said that the three municipal corporations of Delhi are going through a financial crisis that they are not even in a position to pay salary to their employees.

1 held for alleged  
plotting of murder

**New Delhi:** A 44-year-old man has been arrested for his alleged involvement in the killing of another man in west Delhi's Mohan Garden area, police said on Wednesday. The video of the incident went viral on social media, where a man in a yellow T-shirt is seen firing at one Vikas Mehta. Thereafter, he takes out a mobile phone from his trouser, clicks a picture of the deceased and flees the spot. The arrested man has been identified as Pawan Gahlot, a resident of Nawada village, the police said. On October 22, police received information regarding the incident at 55 Foota Road, Nawada Housing Complex, Uttam Nagar. According to the police, Pawan's brother Praveen was killed by one Vikas Dalal in May, 2019. However, Dalal was also killed in a police encounter last year. Dalal and Mehta were the members of the Pradeep Solanki gang. Therefore, Pawan suspected Mehta's involvement in the conspiracy to kill his brother and wanted to take revenge on him, a senior police officer said. On October 22, Mehta and one Puneet Yadav were present at 55 Foota Road, Nawada Housing Complex. Pawan came there and asked them to come to his office. They went to Pawan's office and stayed there for about half an hour, the officer said. When Yadav and Mehta went back to 55 Foota Road, Pawan's son Kamal Gahlot came there and fired at Mehta, the police said. — PTI

2 held for supplying  
firearms in Delhi-NCR

**New Delhi:** Two men were arrested in the national capital for allegedly supplying illegal arms in Delhi-NCR areas from Madhya Pradesh, police said on Wednesday. The accused have been identified as Mohammad Adil (24) and Mohammad Zuber (34), both residents of Palwal in Haryana, they said. A total of 19 semi-automatic pistols and one single-shot pistol have been recovered from their possession, police said. The accused were arrested on Tuesday around 4.15 am from Captain Gaur Marg, opposite Okhla Subzi Mandi. "Police got a tip-off on Tuesday that Adil would come near Okhla Subzi Mandi between 4 am to 6 am to deliver firearms to Zuber, who will supply them to one of their contacts in Delhi. "Thereafter, a trap was laid and while Adil was handing over a bag to Zuber, they were both nabbed," deputy commissioner of police (special cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said. Interrogation revealed that the accused have been involved in supply of illegal firearms for the last five to six years. Adil said he had procured the recovered firearms from an MP-based gun-runner and travelled to Okhla Subzi Mandi in his vegetable-loaded truck to further supply the firearms to local gangsters in Delhi via Zuber, the DCP said. — PTI

## ■ President orders inquiry into alleged mis-governance

DU V-C suspended for  
'dereliction of duty'

**New Delhi, Oct. 28:** Delhi University vice chancellor Yogesh Tyagi was suspended on Wednesday on the orders of President Ram Nath Kovind who has also directed an inquiry against him over allegations of dereliction of duty, according to officials of the Ministry of Education (MoE). The move comes amid a power tussle in the central university.

The President, who is the Visitor to the university, has placed Prof. Tyagi under suspension to ensure that the inquiry is fair and that he is not able to tamper with material records or coerce the witnesses, a senior ministry official said.

"All orders issued by or issued with the approval of Yogesh Tyagi during the period of his absence on medical ground are set aside and to be treated as null and void," the official said.

Prof. Tyagi has been on leave since July 2 when he was admitted to AIIMS under emergency medical



Prof. Yogesh Tyagi

► **THE V-C** is not administering in accordance with (statutory) provisions...which has caused malfunctioning of University of Delhi. This is not conducive for appropriate academic environment of the university, said an official of ministry of education.

condition. The government had on July 17 given pro-VC P.C. Joshi the charge of V-C, until Tyagi resumes office. The ministry official said: "The vice chancellor is not administering the university in accordance with (statutory) provisions...which has caused mis-governance and malfunctioning of University of Delhi. This is not conducive for appropriate academic as well as administrative environment of the university."

"The President of India in his capacity as Visitor of the University on consideration of facts and material

available on record, has ordered to conduct an inquiry into the allegations of dereliction of duties and lack of commitment and devotion to duty against him. The President has also been pleased to place Yogesh Tyagi under suspension with immediate effect until further orders as he may influence/coerce the witnesses and tamper with the material records of the university so as to ensure fair inquiry," the official said.

A controversy erupted last week when Tyagi removed Joshi as pro-VC on Thursday and appoint-

ed Geeta Bhatt, the director of the Non-Collegiate Women's Education Board of the university, in his place. Joshi had, meanwhile, notified the appointment of a new registrar, Vikas Gupta, whose interview had been completed and appointment cleared by the executive council on Wednesday.

However, the same day, Tyagi had approved and notified the appointment of P.C. Jha as acting registrar and director of the South Campus. The ministry then intervened in the power tussle between the vice chancellor and the pro-vice chancellor, saying appointments made by Tyagi were not "valid" as he is on leave.

The power tussle intensified with Jha writing to the ministry citing himself as "acting Registrar" and saying that all decisions taken by Tyagi are in accordance with university norms. The ministry took objection to the letter and directed the varsity to take strict action against him. — PTI

Doctors of North Corp  
hospitals call off strike

**New Delhi, Oct. 28:** Doctors of North Delhi Municipal Corporation-run hospitals who have been agitating for the last several days over their pending salaries called off their stir on Wednesday, officials said.

While five resident doctors of Hindu Rao Hospital had been sitting on a relay hunger strike since Friday, senior doctors of the North Corporation-run facilities had gone on an indefinite strike on Tuesday.

Their associations had joined hands in solidarity since Tuesday. "The strike by agitating doctors was called off as North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash offered juice to the medics on

► **WHILE FIVE** resident doctors of Hindu Rao Hospital had been sitting on a relay hunger strike since Friday, senior doctors of the North Corporation-run facilities had gone on an indefinite strike on Tuesday.

► **On Wednesday**, the strike continued in day time despite appeals from North Delhi Mayor.

hunger strike. Salaries of all doctors have been released, till September," the NDMC said in a statement. Senior doctors belonging to the Municipal Corporation Doctors' Association (MCDA) had

gone on casual leave en masse over their pending salaries on Monday and begun an indefinite strike on Tuesday.

On Wednesday, the strike continued in day time despite appeals from North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash to return to work as patient services were getting affected. MCDA general secretary Maruti Sinha also said the strike has been called off.

The members of the Resident Doctors' Association of the 900-bed hospital have been protesting for the past several days and had gone on an indefinite strike, seeking release of salaries due for the past three months. — PTI

LPG delivery man  
held for stealing  
61 cylinders

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

The Delhi Police has arrested an LPG gas supplier for allegedly stealing over 60 cylinders in south Delhi's Malviya Nagar area, officials said on Wednesday.

The accused has been identified as Govind Singh, a resident of Bharatpur district in Rajasthan, they said.

"The manager of a gas agency lodged a complaint on October 16 at Malviya Nagar police station where it was alleged that Singh, who supplies the cylinder, has ran away with 61 LPG cylinders," DCP (south) Atul Kumar Thakur said.

Raid was conducted at his native place in Bharatpur. His son led police to his rented accommodation at Khanpur in Delhi.

Man hangs self, suicide  
note blames landlord

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

A 35-year-old man allegedly hanged himself at his home in south Delhi's Kotla Mubarakpur area, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, they said.

The deceased has been identified as Naresh Kumar. He ran a Tattoo shop at South Extension-I on rent and his landlord was one Anil Baisla. In a suicide note recovered, Kumar alleged his landlord Anil Baisla to be the reason behind his death, they said.

During preliminary probe, it has emerged that Kumar and his landlord had some money dispute allegedly over payment of rent. Baisla had even filed a court case against Kumar over their money

dispute and the hearing for the case was scheduled on Wednesday, police said, adding these facts are being investigated.

Deputy commissioner of police (south) Atul Kumar Thakur said: "On Wednesday, we received information at Kotla Mubarakpur police station from AIIMS Trauma Centre that a patient named Naresh had hanged himself at home. He was admitted by his younger brother Gopal Krishan, Karan and Mohit but was declared dead during treatment."

During enquiry, statements of deceased's brother Gopal Krishan, Mohit and Karan were recorded, he said. Kumar is married but his family lives separately.

A case has been registered at Kotla Mubarakpur police station and investigation has commenced.

2 juveniles among 4 nabbed  
for damaging vehicles

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

After a video of a group with sticks in hand were seen damaging vehicles in outer Delhi's Mangolapuri area surfaced on social media, the police on Wednesday said they have arrested two men and apprehended two juveniles in connection with the incident. The incident took place on Monday, they said.

According to the police, on Monday, when a woman along with her brother went to buy idlis from a shop in the area, another man who was standing nearby had allegedly passed comment at her.



Police personnel detain AAP leaders and councillors during a protest against privatisation of sanitation services by SDMC at Civic Centre in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

Delhi's air quality improves,  
but relief may be short-livedAnti-firecracker  
campaign from  
Nov. 3, says Rai

**New Delhi, Oct. 28:** Ahead of Diwali festival, the Delhi government will launch an anti-firecracker campaign from November 3, environment minister Gopal Rai said on Wednesday as he requested people not to burn crackers at all considering the seriousness of the situation due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The minister said only "green" firecrackers can be manufactured, sold and used in Delhi this Diwali as per a Supreme Court order issued in 2018. — PTI

Tuesday, the maximum this season so far.

It was 16 percent on Monday, 19 percent on Sunday and 9 percent on Saturday.

The wind direction and wind speed were favourable for the transport of pollutants from farm fires in Punjab, Haryana and neighbouring regions on Tuesday.

Anti-firecracker  
campaign from  
Nov. 3, says Rai

The number of farm fires in neighbouring states was 1,943 on Monday – the highest so far this season, SAFAR said.

According to the India Meteorological Department, the predominant wind direction was westerly-northwesterly and the maximum wind speed was 4 km per hour. The minimum temperature was recorded at 13.8 degrees Celsius.

The central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the national capital's air quality was likely to remain "very poor" till October 31.

The air quality warning system said the ventilation index – a product of mixing depth and average wind speed – is likely to be around 4,000 metre square per second on Wednesday – unfavourable for dispersion of pollutants.

Mixing depth is the vertical height in which pollutants are suspended in the air. It reduces on cold days with calm wind speed. — PTI

2 Africans  
held for ATM  
card fraud  
worth crores

**Noida, Oct. 28:** The Noida Police on Wednesday said it has arrested two foreign nationals involved in ATM card cloning to dupe people of "crores" of rupees and also unearthed their links with hawala operators in the National Capital Region (NCR).

The accused have been identified as Omon Benson, who hails from Nigeria, and Johnson Usaro, a native of Kenya, and both of them were currently staying in Greater Noida, the police said.

According to officials, Benson and Usaro have been active in Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Delhi, Gurgaon and Faridabad for the last 10 years during which they cloned several cards.

Police recovered 96 ATM cards, two card-cloning modules, two laptops, seven mobile phones, two pin-hole cameras among others from them. — PTI

NORTHERN RAILWAY OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE	
The Sr. Divisional Engineer-III, Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for the following work:	
1 Name of work	Miscellaneous work at Tilak Bridge station in the section of SSE/ WINDLS/L under ADEN/NDLS.
2 Approx. cost of work	Rs. 25,32,891.35 (Rupees Twenty Five Lakh Thirty Two Thousand Eight Hundred Ninety One and Thirty Five Paise only)
3 Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 50,700/- (Rupees Fifty Thousand Seven Hundred Only)
4 Cost of tender document	Rs. 0/-
5 Date & Time of submission of tender bid and opening of tender	23.11.2020 @15:00 Hrs.
6 Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
* The tenderer/s must be registered on the Indian Railway E-Procurement system (IREPS) site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> for participating in the e-tender system. * For all terms and conditions please refer tender document. * No manual offers are acceptable. * Cost of tender document and Earnest money will be acceptable through net banking or payment gateway only. No. 128-W/280/e-Tender Notice/ NIT/22/2020-21/W-3 Dated: 28.10.2020 2368/20	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE	
The Deputy Chief Engineer /Const.-II Northern Railway, State Entry road, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender (Single packet) for the following work:	
1 Name of work & location	Supply and maintenance of Indoor well developed Ornamental potted plants for the office complex of CAO/Const / N. Rly. & Rest House at Kashmere gate Delhi. (IInd Invitation)
2 Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 53.63 lakh (Rupees fifty three lakh sixty three thousand only)
3 Earnest Money Amount to be deposited Online	Rs. 1,07,300.00/Rupees One lakh seven thousand three hundred only)
4 Completion period of work	12 (twelve) Months
5 Sale/ availability of tender document on Railway website	Tender documents will be available on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 29.10.2020 to 19.11.2020 upto 11.30 hrs.
6 Last date and time for uploading of tenders.	19.11.2020 up to 11.30 hours. Tender documents can be uploaded by the tenderer on IREPS web site w.e.f. 05.11.2020 to 19.11.2020
7 Date and time of opening of tender.	19.11.2020 at 11.30 hours (immediately after close of uploading of tender (D2).
No. 51A-G-C-K.GATE-DLI Dated 28.10.2020 2369/20	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE	
The Deputy Chief Engineer/Const./Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi, for and on behalf of the President of India invites open e-tender under One-Packet System for the following work:	
1. Name of work and location	"Design and drawing of test piles, foundation (open/piles), substructure & super structure (PSC/Steel) in connection with construction of 07 nos. Road over Bridges on Jind-Panipat, Jind-Sonepat, Rohtak-Panipat and Delhi-Ambala section of Northern Railway".
2. Completion period of works:	12 (Twelve) Months
3. Approx. Cost of work:	Rs. 33.21 lakh
4. Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 6,66,00/- only
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tenders	Tender may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs. on 19.11.2020 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 19.11.2020
6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document:	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway web site i.e. <a href="http://www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in">www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in</a> and tender document is available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 29.10.2020 to 19.11.2020. Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 05.11.2020 to 19.11.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tender are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
No. 476-Acs-Design & Drawing-ROBs/RUBs-CSB Dated: 28.10.2020 2363/2020	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	



## SHORT TAKES

## Minor dead, 12 hurt in C'garh road-rage

**Raipur:** Two persons, one of them the son of a local Congress leader, have been arrested for allegedly driving a car into a group of villagers, killing a four-year-old boy and injuring 12 others, in Gariaband village of Chhattisgarh, the police said on Wednesday. According to the police, Romit Rathore (25), the son of a local woman Congress leader, and his friend Saurabh Kutare (26) were arrested on Tuesday. The incident took place on Monday night in Malgaon village under City Kotwali police station area, when villagers were returning from a Dussehra celebration, said Sukhnandan Rathore, additional superintendent of police. Infuriated over one of the locals touching his car, the accused drove his speeding car into the crowd, killing the boy and injuring 12 others, the official said. — PTI

## Sena's Parbhani MP alleges threat to life

**Mumbai:** Shiv Sena MP from Parbhani Sanjay Jadhav has filed a police complaint alleging threat to his life and claimed a contract of ₹2 crore has been given to a gang to eliminate him, a police official said on Wednesday. The Lok Sabha member along with his supporters went to Nanalpath police station in Maharashtra's Parbhani district on Tuesday and lodged the complaint. As per the complaint, Jadhav got information on October 18 that an influential person man had given "supari (contract)" of ₹2 crore to a gang in Nanded, the police official said. The police have started an investigation into the complaint and so far no offence has been registered, he said. — PTI

## Abducted dentist rescued, 7 arrested

**Hyderabad:** A doctor from Hyderabad was rescued from Anantapur district of Andhra Pradesh a day after he was allegedly kidnapped from his clinic here by a seven-member inter-state gang, the police said on Wednesday. The kidnappers, demanded ₹10 crore as ransom to be paid in bitcoins for the release of the 56-year-old dentist, the police said. The prime accused is a close relative of doctor's wife, they said. After learning about the dentist's financial status, the accused hatched a plan along with other gang members from Maharashtra, Karnataka and from Hyderabad to abduct him to extort money by threatening him and his family, the police said. — PTI

## 1 more arrested in TRP rigging scam

**Mumbai:** The Mumbai police on Wednesday arrested one more person in the Television Rating Points (TRP) manipulation scam, an official said. This is the eleventh arrest in the case. Ashish Abidur Choudhary (50), a resident of Thane, was arrested by the Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) which is probing the scam, the police official said. Choudhary is accused of paying bribes, on behalf of some TV channels, to households where "barometers" recording viewership data were installed to put on those particular channels. The police has alleged that some channels were paying bribes to boost TRP fraudulently so as to increase advertising revenue. — PTI

## Man gets life in jail for killing mother

**Hyderabad:** A court on Wednesday sentenced a 45-year-old man to life imprisonment for killing his octogenarian mother in July 2016. The XIV ADJ (additional district judge) court convicted the man under relevant IPC sections and sentenced him to undergo life imprisonment besides imposing on him a fine of Rs 2,000, a press release from the Rachakonda police commissionerate said. The convict, a native of Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh, had come to Hyderabad along with his 80-year-old mother and other family members. As the man was facing financial problems he had asked his mother some money but she refused because of his vices, the police said. — PTI

## BIHAR POLLS Highest turnout in Jamui dist at 57.41% ■ Voting amid tight security, Covid norms

## Over 53% votes polled in 1st phase

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA, OCT. 28

Around 53.54 per cent of voting was recorded during the first phase of the Bihar Assembly elections on Wednesday. According to reports, the highest turnout was recorded in Jamui district at 57.41 per cent followed by Kaimur at 55.95 per cent and Lakhisarai at 55.44 per cent. The NDA was locked in a tough fight with the RJD-led grand alliance on at least 41 of 71 seats that went to polls in the first phase. The elections were held

in 71 constituencies spread across 16 districts of Bihar amid tight security and Covid-19 guidelines. A total of 1,066 candidates were in the fray in the first phase of the elections. As many as 33 constituencies were declared as "sensitive or hypersensitive" by the state administration. Among the prominent political leaders who were in the fray during the first phase of polls were HAM chief Jitan Ram Manjhi and eight ministers of Nitish Kumar's Cabinet. Another key candidate whose fate is at stake in the first phase is ace shoot-

er Shreyasi Singh from Jamui seat. She is making her debut at the age of 27. She is contesting on BJP ticket and pitted against RJD sitting MLA Vijay Prakash, who is the brother of former Union Minister Jai Prakash

■ **ELECTIONS HELD** in 71 constituencies spread across 16 districts

Yadav, a close aide of Lalu Yadav.

Reports suggest that Chirag Paswan's party LJP has extended support to Ms Singh on Jamui seat.

Among the political parties, the ruling JD(U) had fielded 35 and its partner BJP 29 candidates. The opposition RJD and Congress had fielded 42 and 20 candidates during the first phase of polls.

Chirag Paswan's LJP which broke away from the NDA citing ideological differences with Nitish Kumar had fielded 41 candidates in the first phase. In a statement after the first phase of polls, HAM

spokesperson Danish Rizwan said, "Seeing the turnout of people our party is confident that the Nitish Kumar-led NDA is going to form a government in Bihar".

Most of the seats were declared as sensitive by the administrative officials and special security arrangements were made for the Naxal-affected areas. Officials said that most of the state's Naxal-hit areas went to polls in the first phase.

Voting for the second and third phase is to be held on November 3 and 7. Results for 243 seats will be declared on November 10.



Voters undergo thermal screening at a polling booth as they stand in queues to cast their votes for the first phase of the Bihar Assembly polls, amid the Covid pandemic, in Kaimur district on Wednesday. — PTI

## BJP says Rahul violated code, sends plaint to EC

**Patna, Oct. 28:** The BJP in Bihar on Wednesday lodged a complaint against Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with the Election Commission, charging him with violating the model code of conduct by "asking for votes" in a tweet on a polling day. State BJP legal cell head S.D. Sanjay shot off the written complaint to the Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar requesting "legal action" against Mr Gandhi, who also addressed a couple of rallies in the state earlier in the day. As per the complaint, Mr Gandhi had "issued a

statement on Twitter asking for votes... today. The time for making appeal for the first phase of polls was over 28 hours earlier".

According to Mr Sanjay, who is a former additional solicitor-general of India, such an appeal made on the day of polling was "in utter violation of Model Code of Conduct, warranting action against him".

Polling took place for 71 constituencies of the 243-member Assembly in the first of the three-phase election on Wednesday. — PTI

## C'garh brings agri bill to counter farm laws by govt

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, OCT. 28

Amid opposition to the Centre's new farm laws, the Bhupesh Baghel government has brought an agriculture amendment bill providing to regulate market prices of farm produce to protect farmers from exploitation.

The bill christened as Krishi Upaj Mandi (amendment) Bill, 2020, was passed in the Chhattisgarh Assembly on Tuesday after a 2-day-marathon debate on it.

The bill aims to protect the farmers from fluctuating market prices and payment risks, Chhattisgarh agriculture minister Ravindra Choubey said while tabling the bill in the Assembly.

The bill did not violate any Central law, thereby avoiding confrontation with the Union government, he added.

He said 80 per cent of farmers in Chhattisgarh are small and marginal farmers who lacked capacity to store grains or bargain for fair prices.

"Hence, it was necessary to establish deemed mandis and electronic trading platforms for them," he added.

The bill allows the government to establish deemed mandis (agriculture markets) or declare private markets as deemed mandis for regulation of marketing notified agriculture produce, he added.

Chhattisgarh Swabhimanch chief Raj Kumar Gupta, however, criticised the state government for not ensuring guarantee of MSP of farm produce in the bill as was done by Punjab government in its recently legislated bill.

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO  
NABARANGPUR, OCT. 10

After the recent adjournment of the Monsoon Session of the Odisha Legislative Assembly, Nityananda Gonda, the BJP MLA from the tribal heartland of Umerkote in Nabarangpur district, is back in his occupation — farming. He is spending all the time harvesting paddy from the farmlands

## Colors TV sorry for 'anti-Marathi' remark

BHAGWAN PARAB  
MUMBAI, OCT. 28

The Colors TV channel on Wednesday issued an apology to the Maharashtra government over the controversial remarks used towards the Marathi language in its popular reality show *Big Boss*. We had no intentions of hurting the sentiments of the people of Maharashtra, said the channel.

"We have received objections regarding the refer-

ence to Marathi language during the episode broadcasted on 27th October 2020 on Colors channel. We have taken note of these objections and have taken corrective measures of removing the said part from all future broadcasts of the episode," Viacom18 Media, the parent company of Colors, said on Twitter.

It added, "We hereby apologise if we have inadvertently hurt the feelings of the people of

Maharashtra due to the broadcast of the said comment in relation to Marathi language. We value the audience and the patronage of the Marathi speaking audience and respect all languages of India in the same manner."

The recent episode of *Big Boss 14* found itself in controversy when one of its contestants Jaan Kumar Sanu, the son of well-known singer Kumar Sanu, asked actor Nikki

Tamboli to not speak in Marathi with fellow contestant Rahul Vaidya saying "mereko chid hoti hai (it irks me)."

The comments evoked angry reactions from the MNS and the Shiv Sena, who threatened to stop the shooting of the show if Jaan did not apologise. Ameja Khopkar, who heads the MNS film workers union, challenged Jaan to make a career living in Mumbai after his comments.

The Shiv Sena demanded that *Bigg Boss'* shooting permit be cancelled. Adesh Bandekar, head of the party's Chitrapat Sena tweeted, "Bigg Boss management and the person must immediately apologise to Maharashtra and Marathi people. The person should be immediately evicted from the show."

Maharashtra Home minister Anil Deshmukh also said that an inquiry will be conducted in this matter.

## Pilot skirts Cong's 'gaddar' criticism in Scindia bastion

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, OCT. 28

Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Wednesday refused to toe his party line to call Jyotiraditya Scindia whose rebellion dislodged the Kamal Nath government in March this year, a "gaddar (traitor)", saying, "One is free to decide which party one wants to be in and it is the public which judge one's actions".

Replying to queries by reporters in Gwalior as to whether he supported the "gaddar" tag given to Mr Scindia by his party colleagues in Madhya Pradesh, Mr Pilot said, "I believe one is free to decide which party one should be in and it is the public which ultimately decides if one is right or wrong."

Asked why he made no mention of Mr Scindia while campaigning for his party in Gwalior-Chambal, considered a Scindia bastion, he said, "Whatever I want to say, I say it emphatically and I know what I don't want to

I believe one is free to decide which party one should be in and it is the public which ultimately decides if one is right or wrong

— Sachin Pilot, Congress leader

say". Asked what transpired in the meeting between him and Mr Scindia in Gwalior airport on Tuesday, he quipped, "What is news for you; it may be no news for me. I am working for my party and he (Mr Scindia) is working for his party".

Incidentally, the Congress has made the issue of Mr Scindia pulling down the Kamal Nath government by leading rebellion against former chief minister Kamal Nath, its key poll plank in the November 3 byelections to counter Mr Scindia's influence in Gwalior-Chambal.

## SC allows lawyer to approach HC to seek funds from Centre

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

The Supreme Court on Wednesday permitted a PIL petitioner to approach Madras high court for seeking direction to the Centre to release funds to Tamil Nadu government for funding the local bodies in the State from 2016 till date.

Giving liberty to the PIL petitioner lawyer C.T.Jaya Sukin to approach Madras high court, a bench comprising Chief Justice

Sharad A. Bobde, Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian dismissed the PIL as withdrawn.

"Petitioner who appeared in person seeks leave of this Court to withdraw the writ petition with liberty to approach the high court. The writ petition is dismissed as withdrawn with liberty as prayed for", the court said in its order.

The PIL petitioner lawyer Jaya Sukin told the court that on an average

Tamil Nadu annually gets ₹4000 crores from the Centre for funding developmental activities by the local bodies including gram panchayats, corporations, municipalities and town panchayats.

He said that the same has not been released since 2016 as elections to local bodies had not taken place.

All the developmental work, Jaya Sukin said has come to halt in the absences of Central funding.



A woman selects a clay idol of Goddess Lakshmi ahead of the Diwali festival in Kolkata on Wednesday. — PTI

## Youth &amp; farmers angry with Modi, Nitish, says Rahul

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

As first phase of polling began in Bihar on Wednesday, the Congress launched an all out attack on the JD(U)-BJP combine with former party president Rahul Gandhi saying there was anger among small shopkeepers, youth, farmers and labourers against Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the national level and chief minister Nitish Kumar in the state.

The Congress also attacked the state government over the Munger firing incident in which one person was killed, likening chief minister Nitish Kumar to General Dyer of Jallianwala infamy.

Mr Gandhi said it was sad that the Prime Minister's effigy was burnt in Punjab on the occasion of Dussehra.

"You didn't get to see it perhaps because Nitishji and Modiji control the media," he claimed.

In one of the many rallies he addressed in the state, the Wayanad MP said the people of Bihar gave 15 years to Nitish Kumar as chief minister and six years to Mr Modi as Prime Minister yet "Bihar is the poorest state".

Earlier in the morning,

This time for justice, employment, farmers-workers, your vote should be only for 'Mahagathabandhan'

— Rahul Gandhi, Cong leader

Mr Gandhi tweeted that the current elections in Bihar were about the states future and if the Grand Alliance of which the Congress is a part come to power, it will be a government of all castes and religions.

"This time for justice, employment, farmers-workers, your vote should be only for 'Mahagathabandhan' (grand alliance)," he said in a tweet in Hindi.

In Delhi, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi alleged that in Munger, the state police beat up devotees taking out Durga idols "cruelly and mercilessly".

One person was killed and over two dozen people, including security personnel, were injured in firing and stone-pelting during the immersion of Durga idols in Munger on Tuesday.

## CBI wants FIR against Sushant's kin quashed

SAURABH JOSHI  
MUMBAI, OCT. 28

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Wednesday expressed their objection to the FIR filed by Mumbai police against the sisters of deceased actor Sushant Singh Rajput adding that the same should be quashed. The case was filed by actor cum Rajput's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, who is also prime accused in the suicide case being probed by the CBI. The tug of war continues between the CBI and the state government and Mumbai police. The Maharashtra government had recently revoked general consent for the central agency to take over a case from the state police for probing it without the state's nod.

The officials asserted that the case was bad in law and vitiated which is why the agency opposed it in the Bombay high court. The agency also told the court that the complaint was presumptive and speculative. The officials added that all angles involving the death of the actor were being probed by the CBI and hence Chakraborty should have informed them about the same. The CBI contended that a separate case was uncalled for.

"The case and its facts could already be the part of the case being probed by the CBI and other central agencies," CBI told the court.

The case was filed against Priyanka and Meetu Singh, sisters of Rajput. Rhea's complaint is based on the chat records, from a web-based application, between Rajput and one of his sisters.

## 6 BSP MLAs rebel in UP, hint they may leave Maya's party

**Lucknow, Oct. 28:** In a jolt to the BSP on Wednesday, four of the 10 MLAs who had proposed the name of the party's lone candidate in next month's Rajya Sabha polls withdrew support amid hints that they may switch sides.

The four MLAs were reportedly accompanied by two others when they met the returning officer, submitting in writing that their signatures on senior party leader Ramji Gautam's nomination papers were forged.

One of the rebels admitted that she met SP president Akhilesh Yadav, while some others in the group of six, a third of BSP's total strength in the Assembly — expressed dissatisfaction over the way their own party treated them.

They, however, did not specifically target BSP supremo Mayawati.

Without taking names, a BSP leader indirectly laid the blame for the dramatic development on the Samajwadi Party. — PTI



## Union minister Irani tests Covid positive

**New Delhi:** Union minister Smriti Irani on Wednesday said she has tested positive for Covid-19. The woman and child development and textiles minister asked the people who came in contact with her to get themselves tested for the disease at the earliest. "It is rare for me to search for words while making an announcement; hence here's me keeping it simple — I've tested positive for #COVID and would request those who came in contact with me to get themselves tested at the earliest," she said in a tweet. Ms Irani campaigned for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday for the Bihar Assembly polls. Soon after the minister made the announcement, wishes poured in for her on Twitter. Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri said she will emerge stronger from this fight against Covid. — PTI

## Tejashwi 'yuvraj' of 'jungle raj': PM

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
Bihar. Listing a few key achievements of the NDA government, he reminded the people of the "jungle raj" during the 15-year rule of the RJD. He said the "NDA is focusing on infrastructure development, better facilities in villages which will also benefit people of Bihar. For this, the government has approved a special fund of Rs 1 lakh crore. I urge you to take decisions wisely as those who pushed Bihar towards jungle raj are looking for an opportunity to return". In his public meetings, he also said 90 lakh Bihar women had benefited from the Centre's Ujjawala scheme. The PM reiterated that the Opposition coalition was being led by leaders who had no roadmap or experience to run the state. He added that the election in Bihar was being held as a coronavirus pandemic was raging and the state needed a stable government. In an attack on Tejashwi Yadav, Mr Modi said that the "people do not have any expectations from the 'yuvraj of jungle raj'. Everyone knows about his capabilities and track record". "They are the ones (Opposition) responsible for jungle raj and made money through projects which were allotted for the development of the state," Mr Modi said.

## Covid cases' spurt: 5,673 in just 1 day

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
a spurt in these states. However, laxity on part of people who are now shunning distancing and mask rules due to pandemic fatigue too is a contributing factor. In Delhi, the numbers are also high as people from nearby areas are rushing to the big city for testing and treatment, thus adding to Delhi's own numbers. "What is worrying is the cumulative positivity rate of 8.06 per cent. New cases and positivity rates have to be seen in tandem. When you look at these two together, some questions are raised. How many tests are being conducted? How many are RT-PCR and how many are antigen? Those who are symptomatic negatives in antigen... are they all being retested through RT-PCR? If not, are they spreading the infection?" Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said. At the national level, coronavirus cases in India Wednesday were close to 80 lakhs, though the detection of new cases have slowed down a bit in the country. The new cases reported in India in a span of 24 hours were 43,893, even as the total number of cases were 79,90,322 as per the early morning health ministry data. The death toll has climbed to 1,20,010, with 508 new fatalities on Wednesday.

## Bengal's gov will meet Shah today

■ **Continued from Page 1**  
has drastically changed the political mood in the Darjeeling hills, is expected to come up for discussion between Mr Dhankhar and Mr Shah since the GJM founder's rival camp within the party, led by Binay Tamang, has been up in arms against him for offering an alliance with the TMC and had also organised protests in Darjeeling recently. Besides, the killings of some BJP leaders, including Manish Shukla, are likely to be on the agenda as the governor briefs Mr Shah about the law and order situation in the state under the rule of chief minister Mamata Banerjee, sources have said.

# Shringla on 3-nation Europe tour from today

FS to visit UK, Germany and France ■ Will review bilateral relations, discuss matters of mutual interest

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

In an Indian outreach to the biggest three European powers or the E-3 — UK, France and Germany, foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla is scheduled to visit France, Germany and the United Kingdom in a week-long official visit starting Thursday during which India's "commitment to a free, open and inclusive Indo-Pacific will be discussed". The visit follows the Indo-US 2+2 Dialogue at the foreign and defence ministerial-level in New Delhi on Tuesday during



which the US had strongly criticised China on several counts, including its role in the Indo-Pacific region. Britain, though no longer a part of the European Union (EU), remains an important part of European affairs. Both Britain and France are permanent members of the UN Security Council while Germany is the strongest economic power in Europe. France is also a close defence partner of India. In a statement, the MEA said, "Harsh Vardhan

Shringla, foreign secretary, is scheduled to visit France, Germany and the United Kingdom from October 29 to November 4. France, Germany and UK are strategic partners of India and are nations with which India has close and well-established relations. Bilateral ties are multi-dimensional and have grown rapidly. During his visit, the foreign secretary will review bilateral relations and discuss matters of mutual interest and share Indian perspectives with his counterparts and with other key interlocutors. He will also interact with businesspersons, aca-

demics, intellectuals and media persons in these three countries. The foreign secretary will discuss international cooperation in dealing with the ongoing pandemic and its consequences."

The MEA added, "India's relations with France, Germany and UK are built on a foundation of shared democratic values and are informed by a commonality of interest in issues such as sustainable development and climate change. India has very substantial trade and commercial ties and large investment flows with these countries."

## India backs France, deplores personal attacks on Macron

**New Delhi:** India came out vociferously in support of strategic and defence partner France late on Wednesday, "strongly deploring the personal attacks in unacceptable language on (French) President Emmanuel Macron in violation of the most basic standards of international discourse", amid an international row over a remark made recently by

the French President following the beheading of a teacher near Paris by an extremist last week. New Delhi "also condemned the brutal terrorist attack that took the life of a French teacher in a gruesome manner that has shocked the world", adding that "there is no justification for terrorism for any reason or under any circumstance".

## Gold case: ED takes Kerala CM's ex-secy into custody

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, OCT. 28

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday took Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar into custody.

The ED officials took the officer into custody from Ayurveda hospital in Thiruvananthapuram where he was undergoing treatment. The ED team which was camping in capital, swung into action soon after the Kerala high court rejected Mr Sivasankar's anticipatory bail plea. The ED officials then took the official to Kochi by road to Kochi.

Mr Sivasankar's alleged links with the accused in the gold smuggling case are under the scanner. The officer's WhatsApp chats with his chartered accountant Venugopal which came out in the public domain recently, had given some hints that he was overseeing the financial transaction of Swapna, a key accused in the smuggling case.

However, there is no concrete evidence yet to connect Mr Sivasankar with the case.

The NIA, Customs and ED are conducting separate probes into the seizure of 30 kg of gold worth ₹15 crore which was smuggled in using "diplomatic baggage" at the Thiruvananthapuram international airport on July 5.

# Map row: Parl panel raps Twitter, seeks explanation

**New Delhi, Oct. 28:** A parliamentary committee on Wednesday came down heavily on Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and an explanation must be tendered by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit, sources in the panel said.

Appearing before the joint committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill, chaired by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi, representatives of Twitter India "begged apology", but they were told by the members that it was a criminal offence that questioned the sovereignty of the country and an affidavit must be sub-

■ **REPRESENTATIVES OF Twitter India 'begged apology', but they were told by the members that an affidavit must be submitted by Twitter Inc, not by its 'marketing arm' Twitter India**

mitted by Twitter Inc, not by its "marketing arm" Twitter India, sources added.

They were questioned for more than two hours by the panel members, mainly on Ladakh being shown as part of China on the Twitter app.

"The committee was of the unanimous opinion that Twitter's explanation on showing Ladakh as

part of China was inadequate," Ms Lekhi told PTI after the meeting.

The Twitter representatives told the panel that the social media company respects the sensitivities of India, she said.

"But, it is not only a question of the sensitivity of India or Indians. It is a question about national integrity and sovereignty of the country, and not respecting that is a criminal offence. And displaying Indian map improperly and incorrectly is an offence of treason and attracts imprisonment of seven years, she said.

BJP MP Lekhi said Twitter was also asked about its banning policy. — PTI



Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari presents Photographic Society Awards to photographers at Raj Bhavan in Mumbai on Wednesday. The photo competition was organised by the Photographic and Artists Social Foundation. Rajesh Jadhav (left), who works for this newspaper, won the second prize.

## ■ Apprehension based on a report by China's Global Times 'China may try to use N-E militants'

**MANOJ ANAND**  
GUWAHATI, OCT. 28

Even after significant improvement in law and order scenario, the unified command of security forces has decided not to scale down counter-insurgency operations in Assam and adjoining states as there is apprehension of China trying to extend direct or indirect help to armed rebel groups of India to create unrest in the north-eastern states.

The apprehension about China instigating insurgent groups of Northeast was based on a report of China's *Global Times* where it was stated that if India plays Taiwan card, China should also help militant groups of India to retaliate.

■ **THE APPREHENSION about China instigating insurgent groups of Northeast was based on a report of China's Global Times where it was stated that if India plays Taiwan card, China should also help militant groups of India to retaliate**

India to retaliate. Admitting that Chinese agencies have been directly or indirectly helping the militant groups of the Northeast and under the present circumstances, the Chinese agencies would definitely like to provide help to revive insurgency in the region, security sources

present in the unified command meeting, however, told this newspaper that GOC 4 Corps of Indian Army Lt. Gen. Shantanu Dayal, who chaired the unified command, assured that there was no need to worry on China front.

He asserted that the Indian Army in the Northeast was fully prepared and capable of responding to any kind of threat emanating from across the border.

The unified command of security forces also took note of intelligence input pointing out as to how Ulfa(I) chief Paresh Baruah was playing into the hand of China.

Referring to one of his statements where he used

the word "so called Arunachal Pradesh" to appease China, security sources said that the Ulfa(I) chief was also trying to show the involvement of his outfit in all the militant activities. However, on the ground there was hardly any such evidence, security sources said.

Pointing out that meeting of the Unified Command, which was held in the headquarters of the 4 Corps of the Army at Tezpur also reviewed the prevailing law and order situation, security sources said that all the security forces operating on the ground have decided that there should not be any let up in the counter-insurgency operations.

## Additional \$1bn credit line for Central Asian nations by India

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI**  
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

In a major move, India on Wednesday announced an "additional \$1 billion Line of Credit by India for Central Asian countries" at the second meeting of the India-Central Asia Dialogue that was held in the digital video-conference format on Wednesday under the chairmanship of external affairs minister S. Jaishankar. The meeting

was attended by Central Asian nations Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan Uzbekistan and the Kyrgyz Republic.

Afghanistan, though a member of South Asian grouping Saarc, interestingly attended the meeting as a "special invitee". India and the Central Asian nations "discussed close cooperation in political and security matters" at the meeting.

In a veiled message to Pakistan, participant nations at the meeting

echoed "sentiments on combating terrorism by destroying safe-havens, infrastructure, network and funding channels and underlined the need for every country to ensure that their territory is not used to launch terrorist attacks against other countries". All Ministers at the meeting "called for settlement of the Afghan conflict on the basis of Afghan-led, Afghan-owned and Afghan-controlled peace process".

## J&K land laws: Hurriyat calls for 1-day shutdown

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 28

As vast sections of Jammu and Kashmir's populations are seething with anger over the Centre's amending its land laws to make all Indian citizens eligible to own immovable properties in the erstwhile state, separatist Hurriyat Conference has called for a one-day shutdown against it and other alleged anti-J&K moves.

This is for the first time since August 5 last year when J&K was stripped of its special status and split

up into two Union Territories that the amalgam faction led by Kashmir's chief Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has openly issued such a call.

Meanwhile, more political parties and leaders have in their statements resented the Union home ministry affairs' making several changes to land laws paving the way for people from outside Jammu and Kashmir to buy land in the Union Territory and even allowing use of agricultural land for setting up facilities of public purpose.

# 2 Jaish militants killed in Srinagar fire

Army soldier and BSF jawan injured in mine blast at Line of Control in Balakote sector

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
SRINAGAR, OCT. 28

Two Jaish-e-Muhammad militants were killed in a gunfight with security forces in Mochu area on the outskirts of Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar overnight, the officials said on Wednesday.

The slain militants have been identified as Javid Ahmad Ganaie, a resident of southern Pulwama district and his Pakistani associate Khalid alias Ilyas. The J&K police in a statement said that the duo was given the opportu-

nity to surrender. "However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party which was retaliated leading to an encounter," it said.

IGP (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar told reporters here that, so far, this year eight militants have surrendered during "live encounters" across the Valley of which five surrenders took place in the October alone.

"This year, so far, eight surrenders took place in live encounters in the Valley of which five militants surrendered in the month of October alone. It



A damaged house after the encounter with militants in Mochu area on the outskirts of Srinagar. — H.U. NAQASH

is a welcome development," he said. Meanwhile, one soldier

each from the Army and the BSF were injured in a mine blast at a forward

area along Line of Control (LoC) in Balakote sector in J&K's Poonch district on Wednesday afternoon.

The officials said that two jawans — Inayat Hussain of BSF's 59th Battalion attached with Army's 14 Punjab and Sahil Kumar of Army's 14 Punjab — were injured in a mine blast in Manjakote area of the Balakote sector. They were immediately evacuated to a government hospital in neighbouring Rajouri town where from the Army soldier was shifted to a military hospital in garrison town of Udhampur.



THE ASIAN AGE

29 OCTOBER 2020

Why India must not put all eggs in the US basket

The third edition of the India-US dialogue in the “2+2” format — the annual event at which the foreign ministers and defence of the two countries take stock of the international security affairs — which was held in New Delhi last Tuesday had the obvious context of the Chinese aggression in Ladakh, and this enabled both sides to orchestrate extreme camaraderie.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, in his opening remarks, spoke of China’s “reckless aggression”, perhaps implying that our northern neighbour’s military venture in eastern Ladakh was foredoomed. This is good for national morale, and apparently rests in no small measure on assurances of US support. As if to confirm this, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, who likes to sound hawkish on China, noted in the joint press conference after the meeting that the US would do everything in support of India’s “sovereignty”.

**India will do well not to overlook history, although contexts may change from era to era. In 1962, Prime Minister Nehru had specifically sought ‘air support’ from the Kennedy administration to ward off Chinese aggression in our northeast, but this was denied although Washington did extend support in other ways.**

strong “political military” content.

An assertion of such a nature is unlikely to be tested in the severest of conditions any time soon in the event that the China’s “People’s Liberation Army” (threatening currently to ‘liberate’ Ladakh without solicitation) changes its mind in view of the growing international hostility it may sense to its militaristic designs over a large swathe of continental and maritime territory. But India will do well not to overlook history, although contexts may change from era to era. In 1962, Prime Minister Nehru had specifically sought “air support” from the Kennedy administration to ward off Chinese aggression in our northeast, but this was denied although Washington did extend support in other ways.

When President Donald Trump paid an official visit in February this year, India and the US had escalated their relationship to that of Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, the closest India can think of getting to “strategic ally” (of the Nato variety) in the age of multi-polarity, and in the just ended “2+2” conversation, it was decided, according to the joint statement that was issued, to expand this framework in order “to realise the full potential” of the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. Perhaps it is a foregone conclusion that greater purchase of American military platforms and equipments will ensue and greater clarity lent to the “shared vision” of India and the US for the Indo-Pacific which was first introduced into the India-US relationship during the visit of President Barack Obama in PM Narendra Modi’s first term.

World must follow Macron

It has been a watershed moment in the over two-decade-old clash of civilisations of which the intelligentsia world over has now sat up and taken note. When a teenager beheaded a teacher about two weeks back for showing the provocative *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons to his students only as the best example of freedom of expression, all of France rallied for the country’s famous principle of *laïcité* (secularism) and celebrated culture of discourse wherein any opinion whatsoever is open to scrutiny and vigorous, non-violent debate. But what made the show of support different was the fact that during its course for the first time a head of state openly called upon immigrants rather than the existing population to integrate with French multiculturalism.

This newspaper unequivocally stands behind President Emmanuel Macron to uphold the democratic values of freedom of expression, an activity at the heart of knowledge, freedom of conscience, human dignity and equality between men and women. It also applauds Mr Macron’s plan weeks before to draft a law to fight “Islamist separatism” which will counter the favouring of personal laws over France’s republican values that adversely affect women’s rights. So far, these have been compromised by putative liberals and in the very name of multiculturalism. And that is ironical, as human rights are a universal declaration (Paris, 1948).

Mr Macron’s drawing of distinction between “French Islam” and other forms is also significant in the light of his country’s intensifying brushes with Islamism culminating in the Nice attack of 2016 killing 87. Close on the heels of that attack, families were beaten up in Toulon by Muslim youth purportedly offended at the sight of women cycling on a holiday wearing shorts. It was the inevitable fallout of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction to insecurities caused by globalisation, a phenomenon first identified by Dutch sociologist-politician Pim Fortuyn in 1997. Fortuyn was assassinated in 2002.

As a politician himself, Mr Macron should know best how to keep his distance from far right forces. These forces have been trying to hijack this essentially humanitarian cause right since after the agnostic left first brought it to public domain. Nevertheless, it is imperative upon other nations in the world to confront this ever-growing global malaise and see through the power play of leaders like Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whose aim it is to challenge Saudi Arabia’s leadership of the Sunni world and his supporters, Imran Khan among them. Few indeed spare a thought for the worst sufferers — women in regressive societies who risk torture and opprobrium for routine freedoms but lack a political voice.

THE ASIAN AGE

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Printer & Publisher: K. SUDHAKAR

THE ASIAN AGE office is located at:  
New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for  
Decan Chronicle Holdings Limited, Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002 at BFL Infotech Ltd., C-9, Sector-III, Noida-201301.  
London: Quickmarsh Ltd, 8th Floor, Block 2, Elizabeth House, 39 York Road, London, SE1 7NQ.

RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



Dhesi, Khattar’s favourite, gets a second innings

Politicians are sometimes loath to let a favourite babu go off into retirement. They find ways to bring them back into the administration. In 2017, Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh had appointed retired chief secretary Suresh Kumar as his chief principal secretary, even though the state had a regular principal secretary, another IAS officer, because Mr Kumar enjoyed his full trust.

Now taking a cue from the neighbouring state, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar has sprung a similar surprise on his administration, and one which is likely to alter power equations in the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO). He has appointed retired IAS officer D.S. Dhesi as the chief principal secretary in the CMO.

According to sources, Mr Dhesi

was Haryana’s chief secretary for four years and retired last year. He was then appointed chairman of the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC), which he has now left to join his new assignment. Though his duties have not been spelt out, it is quite likely that Mr Dhesi will become another power centre in the CMO, with all important files meant for Mr Khattar being routed through him.

**THE ‘SPECTRUM SECRETARY’** Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will head a panel of secretaries to streamline the spectrum allocation process. The other members of the panel are home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, defence secretary Ajay Kumar, telecom secretary Anshu Prakash, I&B secretary Amit Khare and secretary,

department of space, K. Sivan. Those in the know say that the committee’s ambit may eventually be widened to also include spectrum pricing issues, always contentious, as we have seen in the past.

According to sources, the high-powered panel will examine the possibility of drawing up an annual calendar for auction of the spectrum that will give telecom companies a clear road map of the quantum as well as the frequency of spectrum being offered for commercial use. It will also sort out the various spectrum-related issues between ministries — as seen in the composition of the panel.

This may meet a long-standing demand of telecom companies who have been asking the government to clear the air for auctioning spec-

trum, which will help them plan and allocate resources efficiently, optimise their networks and roll out new technologies.

TOO BUSY TO CLEAN AIR

It is that time of the year, Covid or not, when the air quality in north India deteriorates rapidly. Stubble burning by farmers in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi is a major contributor to this. Every year several steps are announced, media raises a big stink, but nothing much has happened.

This year, stubble burning has begun already and urgent steps would be required to prevent Delhi from turning into a gas chamber. The Supreme Court has now taken a serious note of the failure of these states to stop stubble burning which poses a serious threat to pub-

lic health in the region. It directed the respective chief ministers of these states to remain present when the court takes up the matter of combating air pollution at the next hearing. Hopefully, some meaningful action will emerge from the apex court’s intervention.

Meanwhile, the state administration in Punjab and Haryana especially are busy dealing with angry farmers agitating against the Centre’s controversial farm bills, the chief secretaries have their hands full already. This year could see a repeat of our previous trysts with polluted air at the onset of winter with babus issuing the usual warnings and threats to fine farmers who are burning stubble.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian](#) on Twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect.

Subhani



As US embrace deepens, watch for pitfalls ahead



K.C. Singh

The foreign and defence ministers of India and the United States met, in the “2+2” format, in New Delhi on October 26-27. They first engaged their counterparts and then met in the 2+2 format, progressively favoured by many countries as national security, defence and diplomacy are in today’s complex and interconnected world quite seamless.

Significantly, they were meeting just a week before Americans go to the polls to elect the President, one-third of the Senate and a new Congress on November 3, and against the backdrop of the six-month old India-China military standoff in Ladakh. In a choreographed press interaction, with only two journalists on either side allowed one question each, external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar unconvincingly explained the event as normally due. Perhaps both sides had unrelated compulsions for the scheduling. Unlike recent US presidential elections, many traditionally pro-Republican states are now swing states, including Texas and Georgia. The former was last won by a Democratic candidate (Jimmy Carter) in 1976. In both states, non-white immigrants are tilting the demographic balance towards Democrats. Joe Biden is, in the last week of electioneering, swinging through them sensing change. Thus, was the meeting really sought to allow the projection of Mr Trump as pro-India and resurrect the “Howdy Modi” Houston rally’s euphoria for the diaspora vote?

India, on the other hand, would have weighed the advantage of signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (Beca) now. If Mr Biden were to win, he would only assume office in January. A new secretary of state may not have India on his to-do list till

well into 2021. With the India-China confrontation now likely to linger, India needs to optimise the use of American equipment like Apache helicopters, or new armed drones, if acquired, or other US transport and reconnaissance platforms already deployed. India’s access to the US geo-spatial network will have a multiplier effect on the targeting accuracy and lethality of these weapons, thus influencing the Chinese tactical calculus.

The joint statement expectedly details myriad themes such as the India-US relationship being raised to a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership during the February 2020 visit of President Donald Trump. But the scope has been limited by the context. Covid-19 and its handling gets prominence as the Democrats are using it in the presidential election. Also related is the new Indo-Pacific alliance sought to be built around resilient supply chains. Trade, on the other hand, finds cursory mention in the statement despite it being Mr Trump’s principal preoccupation before the pandemic. The impending election has focused minds on the immediately relevant ideas. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, in his remarks, recalled the New Age Vision finalised during his earlier visit. With a flourish, he announced that India and US stood against “all manner of threats”, not just from China. It is the language normally used among treaty allies. The US, he added, would stand with India to “protect its sovereignty and integrity”. His hyperbole hardly reflects the views of his government, as Mr Trump is by instinct an isolationist. Was he auditioning for a presidential run in 2024?

Two other important themes, although mentioned in the joint statement, are left undressed. One, Mr Trump’s tightened immi-

gration controls, in the mistaken belief that it would help ameliorate job losses due to Covid-19 lockdowns. Two, the traditional flow of Indian students to US universities. Again, there is a misguided move to cancel student visas if university courses have gone online. This has left many students stranded, both unable to repay borrowed money or complete their education and seek employment. The joint statement simply skips over these problems while restating past formulations on students as a people-to-people bridge.

The focus is basically on defence cooperation and sales as that plays well back home, particularly during an election. There is an interesting decision to exchange liaison officers, with an Indian officer to be embedded at Navcent, Bahrain, which is the naval element of the US Central Command. Similarly, a US officer will be received by India’s Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR). The Quad is lauded, as too India’s invitation to the Australian Navy to join Japan, the US and India in the Malabar naval exercises.

Some of the benefits of the growing strategic clinch with the United States have been recounted above. What can be the pitfalls? Firstly, while the overall trajectory of India-US relations would not materially alter under a Joe Biden administration, some elements may. Mr Biden’s priority will be to rebuild US alliances, particularly with Nato, shore up the US economy and try reducing Trumpian unpredictability. He may cautiously attempt to reengage China. Mr Pompeo’s belligerence

may be replaced by a more nuanced containment strategy for China. A Biden administration may also bring greater focus on human rights, civil society protection and freedom of speech and media. All that may require a fresh rebalancing among the major powers, including in Asia.

Second, the *Wall Street Journal* correspondent’s query is important as he sought to know the status of India’s defence relationship with Russia after the signing of Beca now and the other three foundational agreements that were signed earlier. The defence minister parried it in Hindi, but the message was that India was unlikely to change its policy of buying weapons from multiple sources. But is this sustainable, with the closer integration of US communications, logistics and geo-spatial systems with Indian weapons systems?

India may acquire more US weapons systems to narrow the strategic gap with China during the coming months. M.K. Rasgotra, a former foreign secretary and doyen of Indian diplomacy, now in his late 90s like Henry Kissinger, recently wrote that the US needs to devise a concessional buy-lease programme for India to boost quickly its defence capability to deter China. Mr Trump has been too erratic and transactional to think that big. The next US President would inherit a destabilised West Asia, a fractious South Asia and a China-intimidated East Asia. He would require vision and leadership to peacefully contain China, curb the worst instincts of the Narendra Modi government and the BJP while helping India to rise and heal the fractures of the Islamic world? He can regain global leadership by reimagining a post-Covid world with new and flexible global alliances and reformed institutions of global governance. Covid-19 has created a historic inflexion point for change, which the brave and the wise must shape. Otherwise, rising revisionist powers like China will fill the vacuum.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

STOLEN PRIVILEGES

As many as 76 foreigners being kept at Beggars’ Home, Lampur, Narela, have gone on hunger strike. These individuals belong to Myanmar, Spain, Afghanistan, Pakistan and some African nations. They complained they are being served half-cooked food and no water. They are also not provided with toothpaste, toothbrushes, shoes and soap. There is corruption in the distribution chain of these items. Their grievances need to be looked into.

N.D. Pancholi  
New Delhi

DON’T GAG PRESS

THE NATIONAL Investigation Agency (NIA) on Wednesday carried out multiple raids in Kashmir, including the main office of widely circulated daily *Greater Kashmir* and the house of human rights activist Khurram Parvez. Khurram is a recipient of the 2006 Reebok Human Rights Award. He has been vocal in condemning the abrogation of Article 370. The charge against him and the other entities is that they were purportedly receiving money from undisclosed donors. It’s a clear case threatening to gag the press freedom and silence the freedom of speech of activists.

Sankar Paul  
Chakdaha, West Bengal

STERLING EFFORT

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD gave themselves a slim chance of making it to the playoffs by turning the tables on Delhi Capital at Dubai. Barring first SRH rattled up an imposing 219 on the board and then skittled out the opposition for just 131. The SRH openers David Warner (66) and Wriddhiman Saha (87) went hell for leather, putting on a century partnership, and then Rashid Khan put in a sterling effort with the ball scalping three for seven runs in his four overs. Capitals third consecutive loss pushed them down to the third spot.

N.J. Ravi Chander  
Bengaluru

THE FILTHY TAG

PEOPLE LIVING IN north India, particularly in Delhi, would not really disagree with US President Donald Trump’s statement about India’s air being filthy. This debate might force the central and state governments to finally do something. The poor air quality in India is now officially a global joke. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has political capital to do something about this and he must because inaction on this front will taint his legacy.

Avani Jain  
Ujjain



## IN BRIEF

**Examination at airport: Probe on**

**Dubai:** Qatar apologised Wednesday after authorities forcibly examined female passengers from a Qatar Airways flight to Australia to try to identify who might have given birth to a newborn baby found abandoned at the airport earlier this month. Under pressure after Australia condemned the searches, Qatar's government said it had begun an investigation into the treatment of the women who were taking Qatar Airways Flight 908 to Sydney on Oct. 2. Qatar offered no immediate explanation of how officials decided to perform invasive vaginal examinations on the women. HR activists describe such examinations as equivalent to sexual assault.

**Guru gets 120 years in jail**

**New York:** Disgraced self-improvement guru Keith Raniere, whose NXIVM followers included millionaires and Hollywood actors, was sentenced to 120 years for turning some adherents into sex slaves branded with his initials and sexually abusing a 15-year-old, US District Judge Nicholas Garaufis on Tuesday called Raniere "ruthless and unyielding" in crimes that were "particularly egregious" because he targeted girls and young women in the sex-trafficking conspiracy that resulted in Raniere's conviction last year. He handed down the unusually stiff sentence in Brooklyn federal court after hearing 15 victims call for a long prison term to reflect the nightmares and anguish they'll confront the rest of their lives. As he announced the sentence, Garaufis noted that Raniere labelled some of the victims' claims lies. The judge told a woman who Raniere ordered to be kept in a room for two years when she was 18: "What happened to you is not your fault." He said that went for the other victims too. Raniere, who looked at victims, maintained his defiant tone.

**Local address of expats in passport**

**Dubai:** Indian expats in the UAE and elsewhere can now provide their local address abroad in their passports, an official at the Indian Consulate in Dubai has said. The Indian government has decided to allow its overseas citizens to add their local address in their country of residence mainly to aid those who do not have permanent or valid addresses in India, Siddhartha Kumar Barailly, consul, Passport and Attestation, at the Indian Consulate in Dubai told the *Gulf News*. "We understand that many people who have been staying for a long time in the UAE don't have a valid address in India. They may add their local UAE address in their passports," he said. Change in address cannot be made in existing passports, the official clarified. Indian passport holders have to apply for a new passport in which the change in address can be made. The facility can be availed by Indian expats living in both rented or self-owned accommodations, the report said. Those wishing to give their UAE address should provide certain documents as proof of residence.

**HEATHROW NOT BUSIEST IN EUROPE**

**London, Oct. 28:** London's Heathrow Airport says it has lost its place as Europe's busiest air hub to Charles de Gaulle Airport in Paris after the Covid-19 pandemic grounded flights and Britain failed to approve passenger testing that could scale back quarantine requirements. Heathrow said Wednesday that it expects passenger numbers to fall more than previously forecast this year and rebound more slowly in 2021.

The airport now expects to serve 22.6 million passengers this year and 37.1 million in 2021, down from a June forecast of 29.2 million and 62.8 million. The forecast for this year represents at 72% drop from 2019. Commercial aviation plunged this year as governments implemented travel restrictions and passengers cancelled flights amid efforts to control the spread of Covid-19. "The UK's hub airport is no longer the busiest airport in Europe, competitors such as Charles de Gaulle have exceeded us in terms of passenger numbers," Heathrow said in a statement.



President Donald Trump pumps his fist as he walks off stage after speaking during a campaign rally at MotorSports Management Company, in West Salem, Wisconsin on Tuesday. — AP

# Don slams media for Joe graft case censor

**Trump alleges that Biden got \$3.5 million from Russia**

**Milwaukee (US), Oct. 28:** US President Donald Trump has slammed the mainstream American media and big tech companies for blocking the alleged corruption charges against his opponent Democratic challenger Joe Biden. They have accused each other of serious corruption charges during the election campaigning, with the president alleging that Biden got \$3.5 million from Russia and it came through Russian President Vladimir Putin because he was very friendly with the former mayor of Moscow. Biden has denied the allegations.

Trump, before leaving for a campaign trail on Tuesday, told reporters at the White House that the mainstream media was not showing corruption against Biden. "Nobody has ever seen anything like we're witnessing right now. I think it's a very sad time and it'll go down as a very sad era for the media and certainly for big tech (companies). "I think what is going on with all of those companies — I think they've hurt themselves

## Choice of super recovery or Biden depression: Prez

**Milwaukee (US), Oct. 28:** US President Donald Trump has said that the 2020 presidential election is a choice between a "super" economic recovery led by his administration or a "Biden depression" as he targeted his Democratic challenger Joe Biden. With just seven days left for the most crucial American presidential election in recent memory, Trump intensified his campaign by having as many as three rallies on Tuesday, with one of them being in rain

and freezing cold.

"Seven days from now, we are going to win this state and we are going for more incredible years in the White House," Trump said in identical speeches in three battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Nebraska. "This election is a choice between a Trump super recovery or a Biden depression. That's what you are going to have with the raise of taxes, the biggest tax increase in our history. It's ridiculous. It's a choice between

very badly because they've been so restrictive... when they don't want to show corruption, like you have with Biden — that's totally corruption and everybody knows it — and they're trying to protect, because he can make them wealthier, whereas they

understand me," Trump said. "They understand where I'm coming from. It's very unfair. Nobody has ever seen anything like it. It's not freedom of the press... it's the opposite. And, of course, the media is in the same bag," said the president.

ween a Trump boom or a Biden lockdown. Let's lock it all down and by the way speaking of lockdowns, let's get your governor to open it up. Let's get them to open it up," Trump said.

Seeking his second four-year term, Trump is currently trailing in latest polls against Biden. However, Trump looked confident of his electoral victory on November 3, asserting that he is experiencing a wave-like situation across the country. — PTI

At a separate election rally in the battleground State of Wisconsin, his eldest son Donald Trump Jr alleged that the media and the big tech companies are now campaigning on behalf of Biden and the Democratic Party. — PTI

## Tech giant CEOs grilled over bias

**Washington, Oct. 28:** The CEOs of Twitter, Facebook and Google are facing a grilling by Republican senators making unfounded allegations that the tech giants show anti-conservative bias. The Senate Commerce Committee has summoned Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and Google's Sundar Pichai to testify for a hearing Wednesday.

The executives agreed to appear remotely after being threatened with subpoenas. With the presidential election looming, Republicans led by President Donald Trump have thrown a barrage of grievances at Big Tech's social media platforms, which they accuse without evidence of deliberately suppressing conservative, religious and anti-abortion views. The chorus of protest rose this month after Facebook and Twitter acted to limit dissemination of an unverified political story from the conservative-leaning *New York Post* about Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, an unprecedented action against a major media outlet.

The story, which was not confirmed by other publications, cited unverified emails from Biden's son Hunter that were reportedly disclosed by Trump allies. Beyond questioning the CEOs, senators are expected to examine proposals to revise long-held legal protections for online speech, an immunity that critics in both parties say enables the companies to abdicate

**FOR TOO long,** social media platforms have hidden behind Section 230 protections to censor content that deviates from their beliefs.

**ROGER WICKER,** Senate Commerce Committee chairman

their responsibility to impartially moderate content. The Justice Department has asked Congress to strip some of the bedrock protections that have generally shielded the tech companies from legal responsibility for what people post on their platforms. Trump signed an executive order challenging the protections from lawsuits under the 1996 telecommunications law.

"For too long, social media platforms have hidden behind Section 230 protections to censor content that deviates from their beliefs," Sen. Roger Wicker, R-Miss., the Commerce Committee chairman, said. In their opening statements, Dorsey, Zuckerberg and Pichai addressed the proposals for changes to so-called Section 230, a provision of a 1996 law that has served as the foundation for unfettered speech on the internet.

Zuckerberg said Congress "should update the law to make sure it's working as intended." "We don't think tech companies should be making so many decisions about these important issues alone," he said. — AP

## Expert: 1st vaccines imperfect

**London, Oct. 28:** The first set of Covid-19 vaccines that clear clinical trials for rollout to combat the deadly virus are likely to be imperfect and might not work equally for everyone, the chief of the UK government's Vaccine Taskforce has warned.

Kate Bingham, Chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce set up earlier this year to coordinate global efforts in search of a viable vaccine against the Coronavirus, said it is important to manage expectations as the early discoveries are unlikely to prove the "silver bullet" that the world is hoping for to get to grips with the pandemic.

"The first generation of vaccines is likely to be imperfect, and we should be prepared that they might not prevent infection but rather reduce symptoms, and, even then, might not work for everyone or for

## GERMANY, FRANCE GEAR UP FOR NEW LOCKDOWNS AS VIRUS SURGES

**Berlin, Oct. 28:** Germany and France were bracing for new lockdowns Wednesday, as governments sought to stop the fast-rising tide of Coronavirus cases that are beginning to fill European hospitals.

French markets opened lower on expectations that President Emmanuel Macron will announce tough measures during a televi-

## CONFRONT ISLAMOPHOBIA, SAYS IMRAN

**Islamabad, Oct. 28:** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday wrote a letter to the leaders of the Muslim states, asking them to make collective efforts to confront growing trend of Islamophobia.

"The recent statements at the leadership level and incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran are a reflection of this increasing Islamophobia that is spreading in European countries where sizeable Muslim populations reside," according to the letter posted on Khan's official Twitter account.

The letter came in the wake of publication of caricatures on the Prophet in France and comments made by French President Emmanuel Macron, who defended such depictions as protected under the right to free speech. "We won't renounce the caricatures," Macron said last week. Khan urged the leaders of the Muslim countries to "collectively take the lead in breaking this cycle of hate and extremism, which nurtures violence and even death". The prime minister said that blasphemy against any prophet, including those of Christianity and Judaism, was not acceptable to the Muslims. On Monday, Pakistan summoned French Ambassador Marc Barety to lodge a "strong protest" against the publication of caricatures and President Macron's comments. — PTI

## Border stand-off bilateral issue with India: China

**Beijing, Oct. 28:** China on Wednesday said its border standoff with India in eastern Ladakh is a bilateral issue, and asked the US to "stop" its Indo-Pacific strategy, terming it as an attempt to impose American hegemony in the region. The remarks by the Chinese Foreign Ministry came a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo assured India that the US stands firmly with it to confront threats to its sovereignty.

Pompeo's remarks came after the third edition of the Indo-US dialogue in New Delhi during which the two sides deliberated prominently upon the Sino-India border row and situation in the Indo-Pacific region. Reacting to the US push for closer defence ties with India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here on Wednesday that "the border affairs between China and India are matters between the two countries". "Now the situation across the border is generally stable and the two sides are in resolving relevant issues through consultations and negotiations," he said, in apparent reference to the military and diplomatic level talks between India and China to resolve the standoff. In a blunt criticism of China, Pompeo cited the killing of 20 Indian Army personnel in the Galwan Valley in eastern

**CHINESE FOREIGN Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin sharply criticised the US' Indo-Pacific concept, saying "the Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by the US is preaching outdated Cold War mentality and preaching confrontation and geopolitical game."**

Ladakh in a clash with the Chinese military and said the US stands firmly with India in confronting threats to its sovereignty. "Our leaders and our citizens see with increasing clarity that the CCP (Chinese Communist Party) is no friend to democracy, the rule of law transparency...I am glad to say that the US and India are taking steps to strengthen our cooperation against all manner of threats and not just those posed by the Chinese communist party," Pompeo said.

Wang sharply criticised the US' Indo-Pacific concept, saying "the Indo-Pacific strategy proposed by the US is preaching outdated Cold War mentality and preaching confrontation and geopolitical game. It is aimed to uphold the hegemony of the US. This runs counter to the common interest for the region and we urge the US to stop this". — PTI

## US' Lanka vision different: Pompeo

**Colombo, Oct. 28:** America's vision on Sri Lanka is "very different" from that of "predator" China, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said here on Tuesday as he met the leadership here and reaffirmed US' commitment to the island nation's sovereignty and security. Addressing a joint press conference with his Sri Lankan counterpart Dinesh Gunawardena after bilateral talks, the top US diplomat said that the US and Sri Lanka shared a democratic vision.

"Indeed, a strong sovereign Sri Lanka is a positive partner on the world

**THE US will open an embassy in Maldives, Secretary of State Mike Pompeo announced on Wednesday as he held extensive talks with leadership of the strategically located island nation in the Indian Ocean.**

stage. It can be a beacon for a free Indo-Pacific. "The Chinese Communist Party is a predator. The US comes in a different way, we come as a friend," Pompeo said in response to a question. — PTI

## TURKEY FLAYS CHARLIE HEBDO ERDOGAN TOON

**Ankara, Oct. 28:** Turkish officials on Wednesday railed against French satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo over its coverage cartoon mocking Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan and accused it of sowing "the seeds of hatred and animosity".

The cartoon could further heighten tensions between Turkey and France, which erupted over French President Emmanuel Macron's firm stance against Islamism following the beheading of a teacher who showed his class caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad for a free speech class. The Prophet cartoons upset many in the Muslim world. But it was Erdogan who led the charge against France and questioned Macron's mental state.

France then recalled its ambassador to Turkey for consultations, a first in French-Turkish diplomatic relations. "We strongly condemn the publication concerning our president of the French magazine, which has no respect to faith, the sacred and values," Erdogan's spokesman, Ibrahim Kalin, wrote on Twitter. Kalin said: "The aim of these publications, that are devoid of morality and decency, is to sow seeds of hatred and animosity. To turn freedom of expression into hostility towards religion and belief can only be the product of a sick mentality."

"I condemn this incorrigible French rag's immoral publication concerning our president," Turkish VP Fuat Oktay wrote on Twitter. — AP

## GIANT | SIZE 20-foot wingspan birds evolved after extinction of dinosaurs

# Fossil of 50-mn-year-old bird identified

**Los Angeles, Oct. 28:** Scientists have identified the fossil of a giant bird that lived about 50 million years ago, with wingspans of up to 21 feet that would dwarf today's largest bird, the wandering albatross.

The fossils recovered from Antarctica in the 1980s represent the oldest giant members of an extinct group of birds that patrolled the southern oceans. By comparison, today's largest bird, the wandering albatross has a wingspan of 11 and-a-half-foot.

Called pelagornithids,

the birds filled a niche much like that of today's albatrosses and travelled widely over Earth's oceans for at least 60 million years. Though a much smaller pelagornithid fossil dates from 62 million years ago, one of the newly described fossils — a 50 million-year-old portion of a bird's foot — shows that the larger pelagornithids arose just after life rebounded from the mass extinction 65 million years ago, when the relatives of birds, the dinosaurs, went extinct.

A second pelagornithid fossil, part of a jaw bone, dates from about 40 million years ago, according to the study published in the journal *Scientific Reports*. "Our fossil discovery, with its estimate of a 5-to-6-metre wingspan — nearly 20 feet — shows that birds evolved to a truly gigantic size relatively quickly after the extinction of the dinosaurs and ruled over the oceans for millions of years," said Peter Kloess, a graduate student at the University of California, Berkeley in the US.

that there are no guarantees that a successful vaccine will be found at all. "No vaccine in the history of medicine has been as eagerly anticipated as that to protect against severe acute respiratory syndrome Coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2 or Covid-19). — PTI

The last known pelagornithid is from 2.5 million years ago, a time of changing climate as Earth cooled, and the ice ages began, they said. Pelagornithids are known as 'bony-toothed' birds because of the bony projections, or struts, on their jaws that resemble sharp-pointed teeth, though they are not true teeth, like those of humans and other mammals. The bony protrusions were covered by a horny material, keratin, which is like our fingernails, the researchers said.

Called pseudoteeth, the struts helped the birds snag squid and fish from the sea as they soared for perhaps weeks at a time over much of Earth's oceans, they said. Large flying animals have periodically appeared on Earth, starting with the pterosaurs that flapped their leathery wings during the dinosaur era and reached wingspans of 33 feet, according to the researchers. The pelagornithids came along to claim the wingspan record in the Cenozoic, after the mass extinction. — PTI



quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	39,922.46 -1.48
Nifty 50	11,729.60 -1.34
S&P 500*	3,293.56 -3.16
Dollar (₹)	73.86 -0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.08 -0.29
Euro (₹)	86.81 0.21
Gold (10gm) (₹)	50,279+682 1.34
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	38.95 -2.25
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.859 0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.751 -0.017

15th Finance Commission set to finalise report

The 15th Finance Commission is on course to finalise its report by October 30, an official statement said on Wednesday. The Commission's Chairman N.K. Singh along with its members on Wednesday held a virtual meeting with the Chairmen of two previous Finance Commissions respectively. "The Chairmen of the previous Finance Commissions appreciated the tough challenge faced by the 15th Finance Commission," the statement said.

HPE Covid Test Labs facilitate 1L patient visits



Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) today announced that its Covid-19 Test Labs and Outpatient Department (OPD) Centers have collectively facilitated over 100 thousand patient visits across India. These facilities provide additional authorised Covid-19 testing facilities and isolation beds, thereby assisting the government of India and state governments in their efforts to contain the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Micromax ties up with MediaTek for smartphones

Homegrown phone vendor Micromax on Wednesday said it has partnered with Taiwanese chipset maker MediaTek to design and develop smartphones for its new "in" brand. Earlier this month, Micromax announced its new "in" sub-brand and said it was looking at investing ₹500 crore over next 12-18 months towards R&D, marketing and sourcing up manufacturing as it looks to make a comeback in the Indian market.

Bharti Airtel's shares jump by nearly 13 per cent

Shares of Bharti Airtel jumped nearly 13 per cent on Wednesday after the company reported its highest-ever quarterly consolidated revenue on the back of a rise in data usage and higher realisations. The stock gained 12.65 per cent to ₹487.80 on the BSE. On the NSE, it zoomed 12.61 per cent to ₹488. The telecom operator has reported its highest-ever quarterly consolidated revenue on the back of a rise in data usage and higher realisations.

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BPL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110052. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, IAS Registration No 30674/09. Air Surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle is prohibited.

Gold loans double as Covid-hit people pledge family jewellery

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Gold loan disbursements by NBFCs have more than doubled in September quarter over the previous quarter. They are expected to clock 15 to 18 per cent growth this year on increased demand and higher gold price.

Preliminary estimates indicate that gold loan disbursements, including repledged with NBFCs, have more than doubled sequentially in the second quarter of this fiscal, finds Crisil.

Growth was flat in the first quarter of this fiscal because of low disbursements in April and May due to the country-wide lock down. Manappuram Finance saw its gold loan portfolio growing by 2 to 3 per cent in April-May as customers have been availing gold loan using online products. Muthoot Finance too had seen a flattish growth during the



lock down.

With the Covid-19 pandemic-driven lockdowns being lifted slowly and economic activity clawing back, demand for gold loans has risen, especially from individuals meeting urgent personal requirements and from micro enterprises for working to restart businesses. Gold loans would be preferred also because non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and banks have tightened their underwriting norms for other loans, leading to cautious lending to micro and small enterprises, traders and the self-employed.

Crisil expects assets under management of NBFCs to grow 15-18 per cent this fiscal. Motilal Oswal too expects gold loan NBFCs to deliver 15 per cent CAGR over FY20-23.

"In the current scenario, we believe gold financiers would benefit as customers would look to raise cash by leveraging their gold holdings and increase in gold prices would give a modest impetus to growth. Inability of customers to get personal loans due to lack of formal documentation, higher share of rural business and flexi-lending terms will support gold loan business," finds Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"Unlike other asset classes, gold loan has not faced major issues in collection and disbursement, or re-pledge of loans, barring in the stringent lock down phase in April and May," said Krishnan Sitaraman, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings.

In order to provide a smooth re-pledging process in times of pandemic, larger NBFCs are offering online renewal since the underlying collateral is already in their possession. Large gold loan financiers have also consistently raised funds through bonds, under the targeted long-term repo operations and partial credit guarantee schemes at a competitive cost.

Hospitality sector sees signs of revival

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Hospitality has started seeing early signs of month-on-month recovery in occupancy with gradual revival in domestic leisure travel. However, occupancies are still down 60 per cent compared to last year levels.

Average occupancies in hotels across India moved up 10 to 12 per cent from the August levels to 24 to

26 per cent in September. Average daily rates too have improved 2 to 4 per cent to ₹3400-₹3600 per night. Revenue per available rooms grew 12 to 14 per cent month-on-month to ₹815-₹905, as per HVS and Anarock.

Leisure destinations such as Goa and Jaipur have been witnessing a noticeable improvement in occupancy as people have started travelling for a change of pace, albeit to

destinations closer to their cities. Domestic air passenger traffic also has improved by 39 per cent in September compared to August. However, corporate travel continues to remain subdued.

On a year-on-year basis, hospitality remains one of the worst affected by Covid-19. Occupancies were down 60 per cent last month compared to September 2019. Revenue per available rooms was

down 72 per cent and average daily rates by 30 per cent.

Going ahead, festive season is likely to boost demand for travel and hotel stay. Long vacations and international trips are off the table for the rest of 2020.

Booking.com finds that almost 62 per cent Indian travelers favour a trip they could afford in the short-term rather than saving for a dream trip.

FOOD MINISTRY WORRIED OVER LESS IN-TAKE OF SWEETNER

New Delhi, Oct. 28: The government on Wednesday said there is a need to address "myths and misgivings" about sugar consumption in India, as the per capita consumption of the sweetener has remained stagnant for the last three years at 19 kilogram.

Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, after launching industry body ISMA's portal 'http://meetha.org' said India is one of the world's largest consumers of sugar but per capita consumption has remained stagnant at 19 kg, much lower than the world's average per capita consumption of 23.50 kg.

The country's annual sugar consumption stood at 25-26 million tonnes, while production reached 27.5 million tonnes in the 2019-20 season ending September.

"There are a lot of myths going around about sugar and sugar consumption without scientific basis. This misinformation multiplies much faster than the truth multiples," the official said.

"Therefore, it is very important to come up with scientific information so that people can make very informed decisions," Pandey said.

Food secretary Sudhanshu Pandey also said that there is also "misunderstanding" about Indian sugar abroad. —PTI

Covid rebound in US, Europe turns markets volatile

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 28

Weak global cues led to a fresh round of selling in the Indian market as the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in Europe and the United States, uncertainty over who would be the next US President worried investors.

Sensex fell 600 points or 1.48 per cent to close at 39,922.46 while Nifty-50 settled at 11,729.60 down 199.80 points or 1.34 per cent.

Rising Covid-19 cases globally specifically in Europe and the United States are worrying investors as strict lockdown could be imposed and the economy's recovery, which is still at a nascent stage could once again get hit, said analysts.

Among the global peers United Kingdom's FTSE 100 index fell to its lowest level in six months on Wednesday on investors' worries of more virus curbs and uncertainty over a coronavirus vaccine.

"Volatility in the domestic market arose ahead of equity derivative contracts expiry on Thursday as the Sensex fell 779 points intra-day taking the index to day's low of 39,774.80 before the final close at 39,922.46. Volatility index India VIX rose 4.88 per cent to 23.28.

Keshav Lahoti, equity analyst, Angel Broking said, "We expect volatility to continue in the market on the eve of key events of



the US election, ongoing result season and how coronavirus cases are being reported around the world."

Broader market suffered lesser damages with BSE Mid-cap index down 0.93 per cent and BSE Small-cap index down by 0.76 per cent.

All sectoral indices on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) barring telecom and capital goods closed in the red led by the financials. BSE Bankex index closed 2.23 per down cent and Nifty Bank fell 2.17 per cent.

The top losers in the Sensex basket included IndusInd Bank (3.45 per cent), HDFC (3.44), ICICI Bank (3.34), HDFC Bank (2.27), Bajaj Finance (2.41) and Tech Mahindra (3.00 per cent).

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) turned net sellers by ₹130.98 crore on Wednesday after aggressive buying on Tuesday of equities worth ₹3,580 crore.

Dr Reddy's Q2 profit falls 30% at ₹762 crore



New Delhi, Oct. 28: Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Wednesday reported 30.22 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at ₹762.3 crore for September quarter 2020-21. The company had posted a profit of ₹1,092.5 crore for the year-ago period, Dr Reddy's said in a filing to BSE.

Revenue stood at ₹4,896.7 crore in the quarter under review. It was ₹5,400.9 crore in the same period a year ago, it added.

"We are pleased to report continued growth across all the markets and improved productivity which is reflected in the healthy EBITDA margin and return on capital employed (RoCE). Our research teams are working on several potential remedies for COVID-19 in addition to the already launched products," Dr Reddy's Laboratories Co-chairman & MD G.V. Prasad said.

Giving an update on the cyber attack, the company said: "As of date, our investigation has not ascertained if any data breaches in the incident pertain to personally identifiable information stored in the company's systems".

Recovery and restoration of all applications and data are underway. All critical operations are being enabled in a controlled manner, it added.

On October 22, the company experienced an information security incident and consequently isolated the impacted IT services.

"We promptly engaged leading outside cybersecurity experts, launched a comprehensive containment and remediation effort and investigation to address the incident," it added.

Lockdown changed consumer buying behaviour: Report

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Coronavirus-induced lockdowns across the country have transformed consumers' buying behaviour and hyper-local distribution model, and distribution alliances and an omni-channel strategy will be key to business growth, according to a joint report by Deloitte Touche

He added that this has created new opportunities for businesses to develop hyperlocal delivery models, use conversational AI (artificial intelligence) and build omni-channel retail to acquire and serve customers.

"As brands adapt to the 'new normal', the key to sustenance and growth is likely to be an agile business model that minimises disruptions in the future," Wahi said.

The report said demand for consumer goods in rural markets has increased due to the return of the migrant workers to their states due to the pandemic.

"Covid-19 has led to massive reverse migration, which in turn has driven up rural demand, favouring companies with strong rural distribution," it said.

The report also said health concerns and the need to build immunity have led consumers to buy home sanitation and immunity-boosting products. —PTI

Bankers barred from sharing bidding data sharing: Sebi

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Merchant bankers will not share bidding details of initial share sales and rights issues with investors during the bidding period as it may create information asymmetry, markets regulator Sebi said.

The clarifications have been given as part of an informal guidance sought by Citigroup Global Markets India Pvt Ltd regarding provisions of issue of Capital and Disclosure Requirements Regulations, et al.

Citigroup had sought informal guidance whether a book running lead manager can share standalone or aggregate bidding data available on the websites of stock exchanges for initial public offer, follow-on public offer and rights issue of specified securities and anals with investors during the bidding process.

Responding to this, Sebi said standalone and aggregate bidding data is displayed on the websites of stock exchanges in the standard form specified by the regulator and is publicly available information.



This data being extraneous to the information disclosed in the draft offer documents is explicitly permitted to be shared for the interest of investors by the stock exchanges.

"While publicly available information may not create information asymmetry among investors, any effort to selectively present the standalone and aggregate bidding data details may create information asymmetry and may cause prejudice to the minds of some investors which is not warranted and not the intent of Sebi regulations," the regulator said.

"Hence, the BRLM shall not share the bidding data (standalone and aggregate) with the investors or on request of investors during the bidding period," it added.

Sebi norms prohibit entities associated with the public issue of units from issuing advertisements which give any impression of status of subscription or over-subscription of the issue during the issue period.

Sebi further said BRLMs will not share information available in the public domain, including information on the websites of stock exchanges and the issuers in an IPO, rights issue, IPO, qualified institutional placement and offer-for-sale of specified securities and units when requested by investors. —PTI

West Bengal capital city beat Hyderabad city Kolkata is most affordable for house purchase in India

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Kolkata has emerged as the most affordable market this year for home purchase among India's seven major cities, according to property consultant JLL India.

As per JLL's annual Home Purchase Affordability Index (HPAI), the affordability has improved in 2020 across all seven major cities despite a fall in average household income. The consultant attributed this to decline in both housing prices as well as interest rates on home loans.

HPAI — the ratio of the average household income to the eligible household income — of Kolkata is highest at 200,



followed by Hyderabad at 185, Pune 188, Chennai 178, Bengaluru 175, Delhi-NCR 136 and Mumbai 95 during this calendar year.

"HPAI until 2019 indicates that Hyderabad had been the most affordable residential market. In 2020, Kolkata has overtaken Hyderabad to become the best market in terms

of home purchase affordability," the report said. Eligible household income is defined as the minimum income that a household should earn to qualify for a home loan on a 1,000 sq ft flat at the prevailing market price.

A value of 100 means that a household has exactly enough income to

qualify for the loan. Below 100 implies that an average household does not have enough income to qualify for a home loan, while more than 100 means that an average household has more than enough income to qualify for the home loan.

According to the report, Mumbai is moving towards the affordability threshold.

"In 2020, Mumbai continues to be the only market below the affordability threshold of 100," it said.

However, the consultant said Mumbai is the fastest moving city, showing a significant improvement in HPAI in 2020. "Our analysis suggests that despite a fall in

household income in 2020, home purchase affordability has increased in 2020 across all the markets under consideration," said Ramesh Nair, CEO, JLL India.

He projected home purchase affordability to either remain at similar levels or improve during 2021. Nair noted that the broader recovery of the housing market would depend largely upon the economic environment and the prevailing consumer sentiments.

JLL said that property values in a majority of India's prime residential markets have been stagnant over the past few years, forcing most of the developers to work on very low margins. —PTI

13% homes still have no grid power, says survey

New Delhi, Oct. 28: A majority of households (87 per cent) in India have access to grid-connect electricity, while the remaining 13 per cent are either using non-grid sources for power or "do not use any electricity at all", according to a survey.

The finding is part of the joint survey conducted by government think-tank NITI Aayog and the United States-based philanthropic organisation Rockefeller Foundation on "Electricity Access and Benchmarking of Distribution Utilities".

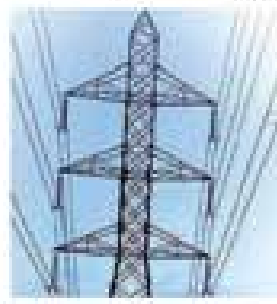
"Overall 87 per cent respondents said they have access to grid-based electricity. The remaining 13 per cent either use non-grid sources for electricity and lighting or don't use any electricity at all," the survey said.

The study further showed that of all customers using non-grid sources, the majority 62 per cent of them are agricultural customers. Only four per cent of households today do not have access to grid-based electricity.

The survey was released by Smart Power India (SPI), a subsidiary of Rockefeller Foundation, on Wednesday.

It was conducted across 10 states with a sample size of over 25,000 respondents consisting of different consumer categories such as households, agriculture, commercial enterprises and institutions both from rural and urban areas.

It mainly focused on key areas such as grid connectivity, electricity access, customer satisfaction, utilities' capacity to deliver and drivers of sustainability for utilities. —PTI





## SHORT TAKES

## Djoker closer to Sampras record

**Vienna:** Novak Djokovic defeated Filip Krajinovic in the first round in Vienna on Tuesday to edge closer to Pete Sampras's all-time record of ending the year as world number one on six occasions.

Djokovic beat compatriot Krajinovic 7-6 (8/6), 6-3 and needs to win his next match in Austria against Borna Coric to ensure he equals the achievement of his childhood idol. The 33-year-old Serb has been the top-ranked player at the end of a season five times: in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018. He shares that mark with career rivals Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Sampras achieved the feat six years in succession between 1993 and 1998. "First set, I think he was the better player. He was serving for the first set and I was lucky. He missed a smash at 6/6 in the tie-break," said Djokovic. On Monday, Djokovic began his 292nd week in total as world number one. — *AFP*

## Coleman banned for doping breach

**Paris:** World champion sprinter Christian Coleman is set to miss next year's Tokyo Olympics after being banned from athletics for two years for anti-doping violations, the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) announced on Tuesday.

The American, who won the men's 100 metres at last year's World Championships in Doha, was provisionally suspended for three 'whereabouts failures' in June. World Athletics' Disciplinary Tribunal upheld the charge and banned Coleman for two years, backdated to 14 May, 2020. The 24-year-old has 30 days to appeal against the decision at the Court of Arbitration for Sport. He is set to miss next year's Olympic Games in Japan. The AIU charged Coleman for missed tests in January and December 2019, as well as for a "filing failure" last April. — *AFP*

## NADA absolves judoka Jitesh

**New Delhi:** The National Anti-Doping Agency's Disciplinary Panel (ADDP) has exonerated junior judoka Jitesh Dagar of the charge that he evaded a dope test during a selection trial last year after NADA's Dope Control Officer failed to produce any clinching evidence against him. The event in question was the open selection trial for the Asia Oceanic and Junior Judo Championship held in Bhopal on June 13, 2019. Dagar was provisionally suspended on charges that he left the venue without providing his urine sample for dope testing after finishing third in the +100 kg category following a semifinal loss. However, NADA's ADPP comprising chairman Sunny Choudhary, Col (Dr) RK Chengappa and Kuldeep Handoo ruled that there is no evidence that the Dope Control Officers in question had informed the judoka that he needs to provide his sample. — *PTI*

## Sen pulls out as dad catches virus

**Saarbrücken, Germany:** Defending champion Lakshya Sen on Wednesday pulled out of the SaarLorLux Open Super 100 tournament after his father-cum-coach D K Sen tested positive for Covid-19 here. Lakshya was aiming to recover from an early exit in Denmark Open recently before his campaign in Germany came to an abrupt end. "We had gone for the mandatory Covid-19 test on Monday. The result came last evening. I tested positive. It is unfortunate that Lakshya had to withdraw. He had worked hard for the tournament," D. K. Sen said. — *PTI*

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**IPL:** Chennai Super Kings vs Kolkata Knight Riders from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

## FOOTBALL

**Europa League:** AEK vs Leicester from 11.25 pm on Sony Six; AC Milan vs Sparta Praha from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 1; Antwerp vs Tottenham from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Roma vs CSKA-Sofia from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 1; Arsenal vs Dundalk from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2; Rangers vs Lech from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 3; Real Sociedad vs Napoli from 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Six

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C-9, Sector - III, Noida - 201301.  
Editor - T. Venkatram Reddy.  
RNI Registration number 57290/94.  
Price in Nepal - Nep.  
Rs. 20.00 per copy.

## Surya burns bright

## Yadav turns on heat as Mumbai bust Bangalore

**Abu Dhabi, Oct. 28:** Mumbai Indians defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by five wickets in an IPL game here on Wednesday to all but qualify for the playoffs.

Put in to bat, Royal Challengers Bangalore scored 164 for 6 in the allotted 20 overs.

In reply, MI chased down the target of 165 with five balls to spare. Suryakumar Yadav led the charge with an unbeaten 79 off 43 balls that included 10 fours and three sixes.

Earlier, young Devdutt Padikkal pummelled the Mumbai Indians attack into submission with a 45-ball 74 before Jasprit Bumrah stopped Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Put in to bat, Padikkal, who plundered 12 fours and a six, added 71 runs for the opening wicket with Josh Philippe (33).

However, the RCB then suffered a middle-order collapse as Mumbai roared back into the game with lead pacer Bumrah (3/14) doing the bulk of damage.

Padikkal began with a boundary over deep extra cover and then struck successive fours off Krunal Pandya, as RCB fetched 12 runs in the third over.

The two openers continued playing their shots, the highlight being Philippe's six over Trent Boult's head in the fifth over.

Padikkal then went on the offensive against James Pattinson. — *PTI*



Suryakumar Yadav of Mumbai Indians plays a shot against Royal Challengers Bangalore during their IPL match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. — *BCCI*

## SCORECARD

**Royal Challengers Bangalore:** Josh Philippe st de Kock b Chahar 33, Devdutt Padikkal c Boult b Bumrah 74, Virat Kohli c Tiwary b Bumrah 9, AB de Villiers c Chahar b Pollard 15, Shivam Dube c Yadav b Bumrah 2, Chris Morris c Pattinson b Boult 4, Gurkeerat Singh Mann not out 14, Washington Sundar not out 10. Extras (W-3) 3. **Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 164.**

**FoW:** 1-71, 2-95, 3-131, 4-134, 5-134, 6-138.

**Bowling:** Trent Boult 4-0-40-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-1-14-3, Krunal Pandya 4-0-27-0, James Pattinson 3-0-35-0, Rahul Chahar

4-0-43-1, Kieron Pollard 1-0-5-1.

**Mumbai Indians:** G de Kock c Gurkeerat b Siraj 18, Ishan Kishan c Morris b Chahal 25, Suryakumar Yadav not out 79, S. Tiwary c Padikkal b Siraj 5, K. Pandya c Morris b Chahal 10, H. Pandya c Siraj b Morris 17, Pollard not out 4. Extras (LB-2, W-6) 8. **Total (for 5 wickets in 19.1 overs) 166.**

**FoW:** 1-37, 2-52, 3-72, 4-107, 5-158.

**Bowling:** Chris Morris 4-0-36-1, Dale Steyn 4-0-43-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-20-0, Mohammed Siraj 3-1-0-28-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-37-2.

## IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	12	8	4	0	16	+1.186
Royal Challengers Bangalore	12	7	5	0	14	+0.048
Delhi Capitals	12	7	5	0	14	+0.030
Kings XI Punjab	12	6	6	0	12	-0.049
Kolkata Knight Riders	12	6	6	0	12	-0.479
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	5	7	0	10	+0.396
Rajasthan Royals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.505
Chennai Super Kings	12	4	8	0	6	-0.602

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

## Tendulkar, Shastri heap praises on Wriddhiman

**New Delhi, Oct. 28:** The legendary Sachin Tendulkar lauded Wriddhiman Saha's "under-rated" shot-making while the national team's head coach Ravi Shastri found his 45-ball-87 simply "outstanding" as they lavished praise on the Test specialist's IPL performance for Sunrisers Hyderabad.

Saha smashed 12 fours and two sixes for SRH in their 88-run victory over DC, showing his hitting skills which have largely gone unnoticed over the years.

"Very smart batting. I also feel that @Wriddhipops quick scoring ability is invariably underrated," Tendulkar tweeted.

He loved the manner in



Wriddhiman Saha

which Saha was able to improvise his shots.

"Improvise his shots after picking the line and length of the ball. There was no slogging at all. Played a fantastic innings which I thoroughly enjoyed watching," he added.

Shastri, on his part, once again termed him as the world's best wicketkeeper and praised his Tuesday's batting effort.

"To the best Glove Man in the world. Outstanding performance tonight," Shastri said.

Meanwhile, Wriddhiman Saha's groin injury is "not serious" but his IPL franchise SRH is expected to adopt a cautious approach after consultation with the BCCI's medical team as the senior wicketkeeper-batsman is Australia-bound after the T20 event.

Saha had picked up the niggles during his match-winning innings against DC on Tuesday. — *PTI*

## Clear mind is my strength: Rashid

**Dubai, Oct. 28:** Sunrisers Hyderabad leg-spinner Rashid Khan says a clear mind is his biggest strength and he reaped the rewards for focussing on bowling more dot balls against DC in their IPL match here.

Going into Tuesday's do-or-die contest against DC, SRH registered a comfortable 88-run win to stay alive in the race for the play-offs. Rashid returned with incredible figures of 4-0-7-3 to make a significant contribution in Sunrisers' win.

"I just go with a clear mind, that's my biggest strength. I want to bowl a good line and length, no matter the situation. You have to mix up and play with the batsman's mind, and see the weak zone and strong zone...So I keep



Rashid Khan

those things in mind," Rashid said.

The Afghan bowled 17 dot balls in his four-over quota.

"Winning the game was the most important. The wicket was helping a lot. What I'm mainly focusing on is to bowl economically," Rashid added. — *PTI*

## Ousted CSK look to halt Knights

**Dubai, Oct. 28:** Already out of play-offs reckoning, a relaxed CSK are ready to play party-poopers with an aim to foil KKR's desperate bid for a victory in an IPL game on Thursday.

KKR with 12 points from 12 games would like to win the next two encounters to ensure a smooth passage while CSK, currently at the bottom of the eight-team table, are only playing for pride.

A possibility remains that multiple teams will end up on either 16 or 14 points and a comprehensive victory at this stage of the tournament, will bring the superior net run-rate into equation when the play-off spots are decided.

It won't get too easy for KKR against CSK, who handed an eight-wicket thrashing to RCB in their previous outing.

KKR's unsettled batting order is a point of concern for Eoin Morgan, who would hope that Dinesh Karthik produces his A game when it matters most. They need to be at the top of their game against the CSK batting unit that has been frustratingly inconsistent but is more than capable of being destructive on its day.

CSK will be aiming to build on the win over RCB and end the season on a high, apart from hurting the chances of play-off

## NUMBERS GAME

## HEAD TO HEAD

## OVERALL:

- Matches: 21
- Chennai: 13
- Kolkata: 8

## MEETING IN 2019

- Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 7 wickets at Chennai
- Chennai Super Kings defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 5 wickets at Kolkata

## MEETING IN 2020

- Kolkata Knight Riders beat Chennai Super Kings by 10 runs at Abu Dhabi

## FOR THE RECORD

- Rahul Tripathi scored 81 off 51 balls with eighth fours and three sixes against Chennai Super Kings in the first meeting at Dubai.
- Faf du Plessis with 401 runs in 12 innings of as many matches, is the fifth highest run-getter in this IPL.

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

hopefuls.

The batting showed some spark with the young Ruturaj Gaikwad coming up with an enterprising knock and skipper Dhoni will be hoping he keeps the good form going.

The CSK bowlers choked a strong RCB batting unit with a performance that reminded CSK of yore and that should be a worry for the KKR batsmen short on consistency. — *PTI*

## Another warm-up tie for India in Oz

**Melbourne, Oct. 28:** The Indian cricket team will get an additional Day/Night warm-up game in Sydney as a tune-up to the series-opening Pink Ball Test against Australia in Adelaide from December 17, the host board announced on Wednesday unveiling the full schedule of the 69-day engagement.

The tour will include a 14-day quarantine-cum-training period in Sydney starting November 12 for the Indians who will fly in after the IPL final on November 10.

The Border-Gavaskar Trophy will begin with a day-night encounter at the Adelaide Oval on December 17, followed by Tests at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (December 26), the Sydney Cricket Ground (January 7) and the Gabba (January 15).

As per BCCI's demands, there is a week's gap between the Boxing Day Test at the MCG and the New Year's Test at the SCG.

"India's squad will arrive in Sydney on November 12 subject to Australian Border Force travel authorisation and the appropriate departure approvals. The team will quarantine in Sydney prior to the first match of the series on November 27," Cricket Australia stated in a media release.

According to the release, the three-match ODI Series will have matches at the Sydney Cricket Ground (November 27, 29) and Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 2).

That will be followed by the three-match T20 Series at Manuka Oval, Canberra (December 4) and the Sydney Cricket Ground (December 6, 8). — *PTI*

## SAMUELS CRITICISED FOR APPALLING TRADE AT BEN

**New Delhi, Oct. 28:** West Indies cricketer Marlon Samuels has been criticised for aiming an expletive-laden tirade at old rival Ben Stokes after a seemingly innocuous comment from the England all-rounder.

Samuels made racial remarks and a derogatory comment about Stokes's wife in an *Instagram* post that former England captain Michael Vaughan called "appalling".

"This is appalling @marlonsamuels... we are trying to stamp out racism," Vaughan wrote on *Instagram*, calling Stokes's original comments "a bit of banter".

After Samuels' post, and others by him targeting Stokes, Stokes responded by adding more than a dozen pictures of Samuels to his *Instagram* story, without making any comment. Their rivalry dates back to 2015, when Samuels mocked Stokes with a send-off salute in a Test match in Grenada. — *AFP*

## Barca president Bartomeu resigns

**Madrid, Oct. 28:** Barcelona president Josep Bartomeu resigned amid the fallout of his feud with star Lionel Messi, and on his way out revealed the Spanish club wants to join a potential new super league of elite European teams.

After one of the club's worst seasons in more than a decade, Bartomeu announced that his entire board of directors also resigned, effectively avoiding a motion of censure vote.

"We have to act responsibly. For that reason we cannot hold the vote of censure in the current circumstances. It was necessary to do so in conditions that guaranteed everybody's health. For that reason we have taken the decision to not call the vote and resign



Josep Bartomeu

forthwith," Bartomeu said. Bartomeu added that the club had given its initial approval to a new competi-

"I can announce that we approved the requirements to be part of a European Super League. The decision to play the competition now must be ratified by the next (club) assembly," he added. — *AP*

## City trounce Marseille, Reds rock

**Paris, Oct. 28:** Holders Bayern Munich continued their perfect start to their Champions League title defence on Tuesday as Real Madrid had Casemiro's late goal to thank for scrambling a 2-2 draw away to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Liverpool and Manchester City also made it six points out of a possible six in Europe this season, after Bayern needed a late Joshua Kimmich strike to claim a 2-1 win at Lokomotiv Moscow in Group A.

Leon Goretzka put the Germans ahead early on in front of a limited crowd in the Russian capital, but Anton Miranchuk tucked in an equaliser for Lokomotiv in the second half — Miranchuk's twin brother Aleksei scored for Atalanta in the Champions League last



Mohamed Salah (right) of Liverpool in action against FC Midtjylland during their Champions League match at Anfield stadium in Liverpool on Tuesday. — *AFP*

week. But Bayern were not to be denied a record 13th straight win in the competition as Kimmich controlled a Javi Martinez pass and volleyed home low from outside the box 11 minutes from time.

Meanwhile, Pep Guardiola's City eased to a second straight win in Group C with Kevin De Bruyne setting up Ferran Torres for the early opener against Marseille after the hosts had carelessly

THE RESULTS			
<b>Manchester City</b> (Torres 18, Gundogan 76, Sterling 81)	<b>3</b>	<b>Atletico Madrid</b> ( Marcos Llorente 29, Joao Felix 52, 85)	<b>3</b>
<b>Marseille</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Salzburg</b> (Dominik Szoboszlai 40, Felipe 47-OG)	<b>2</b>
<b>Liverpool</b> (Jota 55, Salah 90+2-pen)	<b>2</b>	<b>Bayern Munich</b> (Leon Goretzka 13, Joshua Kimmich 79)	<b>2</b>
<b>Midtjylland</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Lokomotiv Moscow</b> (Anton Miranchuk 70)	<b>1</b>
<b>Real Madrid</b> (Benzema 87, Casemiro 90+3)	<b>2</b>	<b>Inter Milan</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Borussia Moenchengladbach</b> (Thuram 33, 58)	<b>2</b>	<b>Shakhtar Donetsk</b>	<b>0</b>

ceded possession.

Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling added late goals to make it 3-0, leaving Marseille without a point. In another match Liverpool defeated Danish champions Midtjylland 2-0

at Anfield in Group D.

Diogo Jota finished off a fine move to give Jurgen Klopp's team the lead early in the second half, before Mohamed Salah made sure of the points with a late penalty. — *AFP*