

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2020



## NATION | 3

Will give you ease of doing biz, you work to provide 'ease of living': Modi to IIT students

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## SPORT | 8

Sunil Gavaskar blames Kohli's batting skills for Royal Challengers' exit

## DELHI AGE | 9

Ajay Devgn all set to direct Amitabh in human-drama, *Mayday*



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## WINDOWS

### India launches earth observation satellite



Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle, carrying the all-weather Earth Imaging Satellite EOS-01 and nine other foreign satellites of the US, Luxembourg and Lithuania, launches from Satish Dhawan Space Centre in Sriharikota, Andhra Pradesh, on Saturday. — PTI

■ Report on Page 3

## Minor molested, filmed in front of brother, 1 held

**Bhubaneswar:** A minor girl was allegedly stripped naked in front of her minor brother and filmed by three anti-social youth on the road at Kantapada area under Kakatpur police limits in Puri district. The police on Saturday took a youth into custody following a written complaint by the victim's family. According to reports, the incident occurred when the minor girl along with her 15-year-old brother was travelling to her friend's house at Nilakanthapur village.

## Milind booked for 'nude run' on beach

**Panaji:** The Goa police has registered a case against model Milind Soman for allegedly promoting obscenity, after he recently posted a picture of himself running nude on a beach in the state to mark his birthday, a police official said on Saturday. The case was registered on Friday, a day after Goa Suraksha Manch lodged a complaint in this connection, he said. — PTI

Full report on Page 3

## COUNTERPOINT



Let's celebrate Diwali now, we may not get the chance after the results!

## WEATHER



Max: 29°C  
Min: 13°C  
RH: 41%  
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Sunny

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Nija Ashwayuja Bahula Saptami till 7.27 am  
**Star:** Pushyami till 8.42 am  
**Varjyam:** 9.28 pm to 11.04 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 4.08 pm to 4.53 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.31 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.38 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 11.56 PM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 1.04 PM**

# JOSEPH BIDEN IN, DONALD TRUMP OUT

**Washington, Nov. 7:** Democrat Joe Biden defeated President Donald Trump to become the 46th President of the United States on Saturday, positioning himself to lead a nation gripped by a historic pandemic and a confluence of economic and social turmoil.

His victory came after more than three days of uncertainty as election officials sorted through a surge of mail-in votes that delayed the processing of some ballots. Mr Biden crossed 270 Electoral College votes with a win in Pennsylvania.

Mr Trump refused to concede, threatening further legal action on ballot counting.

Mr Biden, 77, staked his candidacy less on any distinctive political ideology than on galvanising a broad coalition of voters around the notion that Mr Trump posed an existential threat to American democracy. The strategy proved effective, resulting in pivotal victories in Michigan and Wisconsin as well as Pennsylvania, onetime Democratic bastions that had flipped to Trump in 2016.

Mr Biden, in a statement, said he was humbled by the victory and it was time for the battered nation to set aside its differences. "It's time for America to unite. And to heal," he said. "With the campaign over, it's time to put the anger and the harsh rhetoric behind us and come together as a nation," Mr Biden said. "There's nothing we can't do if we do it together."

Mr Biden was on track

▶ **JOE BIDEN** said he was humbled by the victory and it was time for the battered nation to set aside its differences

▶ **KAMALA HARRIS**, in workout gear, spoke with Biden on phone, exuberantly telling the President-elect, "We did it!"

▶ **DONALD TRUMP** repeated his unsupported allegations of election fraud. He tweeted: "I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!"

▶ Trump's refusal to concede has no legal implications. But it could add to the incoming admin's challenge of bringing the country together after a bitter election.

to win the national popular vote by more than 4 million, a margin that could grow as ballots continue to be counted.

Mr Trump was not giving up.

Departing from long-standing democratic tradition and signalling a potentially turbulent transfer of power, he issued a combative statement while he was on his Virginia golf course. It said his campaign would take unspecified legal actions and he would "not rest until the American People have the honest vote count they deserve and that Democracy demands."

Mr Trump has pointed

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■ Special coverage: Page 6



## Kamala creates history, is 1st Black woman to be V-P

**Washington, Nov. 7:** Kamala Harris made history Saturday as the first Black woman elected as vice-president of the United States, shattering barriers that have kept men — almost all of them white — entrenched at the highest levels of American politics for more than two centuries.

The 56-year-old California senator, also the first person of South Asian descent elected to the vice-presidency, represents the multiculturalism that defines America but is largely absent from Washington's power centres.

▶ **KAMALA HARRIS** has made history as the first woman, the first Black American and the first Asian American vice-president of America

▶ The 56-year-old represents the multiculturalism that defines America but is largely absent from Washington's power centres.

four years ago. Ms Harris has been a rising star in Democratic politics for much of the last two decades, serving as San Francisco's district attorney and California's attorney-general before becoming a US senator. After Harris ended her own 2020 Democratic presidential campaign, Joe Biden tapped her as his running mate. They will be sworn in as President and vice-president on January 20.

Mr Biden's running mate selection carried added significance because he will be the oldest President ever inaugurated, at 78, and hasn't committed to seeking a second term in 2024. — AP

year of reckoning over police brutality and systemic racism. As the highest-ranking woman ever elected in American government, her victory gives hope to women who were devastated by a Hillary Clinton's defeat

seats out of 9 in Gwalior region each to the BJP and the Congress, and 0-2 seats to the BJP and 4-6 seats to the Congress in Chambal region. Gwalior-Chambal region, where 16 Assembly constituencies have gone to byelections, is considered the stronghold of Jyotiraditya Scindia who quit the Congress and joined the BJP in March this year, leading to the fall of the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.

"Various exit polls on the November 3 Assembly byelections in MP have predicted a huge success for BJP. However, the exit polls only indicate the

■ Turn to Page 4

## With 6,953 Covid cases, Delhi highest contributor

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

Delhi overtook Maharashtra and Kerala by reporting 6,953 Covid-19 cases in a span of 24 hours, becoming the largest contributor to the new 50,356 single day infections, according to the Union health ministry on Saturday. Seventy-seven per cent of these new cases of Covid are from 10 states and UTs — Delhi, Kerala, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Karnataka, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Haryana, UP and Rajasthan.

The country's Covid-19 caseload rose to 84,62,080, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 78 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 92.41 per cent.

According to the Union health ministry, the coronavirus death toll climbed to 1,25,562 with 577 new fatalities.

As per the data, India's daily new recoveries have been exceeding the daily new cases since more than a month.

"The last five weeks has seen a continuous decline. The average daily new cases have declined to 46,000 cases from more than 73,000 average daily new cases in the first week of October," it said.

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## MP BYPOLLS

Exit polls predict Shivraj sarkar safe, to be in majority

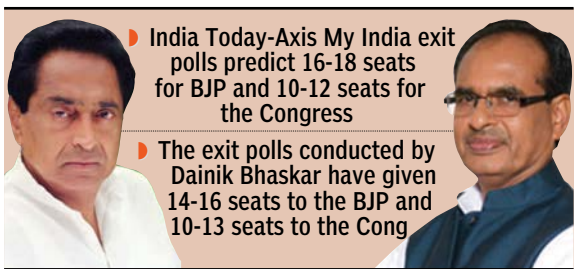
## 'BJP will fare better than Congress'

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY**  
BHOPAL, NOV. 7

Exit polls on November 3 byelections to 28 Assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh by two media organisations have predicted a robust show by the ruling BJP, enabling Shivraj government to gain majority in the House.

Both the exit polls, however, have forecast a not-so-encouraging show by the Congress in the Assembly byelections, indicating that the by-poll results may dash the hopes of the Opposition party to return to power in the state.

India Today-Axis My



▶ India Today-Axis My India exit polls predict 16-18 seats for BJP and 10-12 seats for the Congress

▶ The exit polls conducted by Dainik Bhaskar have given 14-16 seats to the BJP and 10-13 seats to the Cong

India exit polls predict 16-18 seats for BJP and 10-12 seats for the Congress.

The exit polls conducted by *Dainik Bhaskar*, a Hindi daily, have given 14-16 seats to the BJP and 10-13 seats to the Congress. It has predicted that one seat will go to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP).

The exit polls by *Dainik Bhaskar* indicate that the BJP and the Congress are sweeping in Malwa and Chambal regions respectively, while sharing equal number of seats among them in the regions of Gwalior, Nimad, Bundelkhand and Bhopal. They have given 4-5

## J&K Opp. alliance to fight local body polls 'unitedly'

**YUSUF JAMEEL**  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 7

The recently formed alliance of Jammu and Kashmir's regional Opposition parties and their allies from the national Left parties have decided to contest the upcoming elections for District Development Councils and the vacant seats of panchayats in the Union Territory (UT) "unitedly".

After day-long deliberations at the residence of its president and former CM Farooq Abdullah in

Jammu on Saturday, the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) spokesman Sajad Gani Lone said that all its seven member parties will unitedly fight these elections.

"The PAGD has unanimously decided to fight the DDC elections unitedly. Despite the abruptness of the elections in terms of timing, it is important that this sacred space in democracy is not allowed to be invaded and marauded by divisive forces," he said.

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## ■ Pak PM says Sharif trying to create 'rebellion' in Pak Army

## Imran targets Nawaz, call him a 'jackal'

**Islamabad, Nov. 7:** Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Saturday lashed out at three-time former premier Nawaz Sharif, describing him as a "jackal" who is trying to create "rebellion" in the Army by accusing it of involvement in the country's politics and calling for a change in the military as well as the ISI leadership. Mr Sharif, the 70-year-old supreme leader of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) who was ousted from power in 2017 by the apex court on graft

charges, had last month for the first time directly named Army Chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and ISI head Lt. Gen. Faiz Hameed for interfering in the general elections of 2018 to ensure victory of Mr Khan.

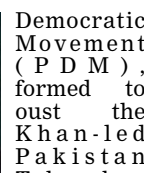
Mr Sharif had made the comments virtually on October 16 during a joint rally organised by the Opposition parties under the banner of Pakistan



Insaaf (PTI) government.

Prime Minister Khan said that Mr Sharif is sitting in London "like a jackal" and targeting the Army.

Hitting out at Mr Sharif, Mr Khan said the former Prime Minister was trying to stir up a rebellion in the Pakistan Army by



alleging it is involved in politics and calling for changing the Army and ISI chiefs," Mr Khan said while addressing a public gathering in Mingora in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province.

The powerful Army, which has ruled Pakistan for more than half of its 70-plus years of existence, has hitherto wielded considerable power in the matters of security and foreign policy.

However, the Army has denied meddling in the country's politics. — PTI

## Exit polls predict edge for RJD-led tieup; voting ends

| BIHAR FORECAST   |                 |                  |       |       |
|--|-----------------|------------------|-------|-------|
|  | TOTAL SEATS 243 | MAGIC FIGURE 122 |       |       |
| SOURCE   | NDA             | MGB              | LJP   | OTH.  |
| Today's Chanakya   | 55              | 180              | 0     | 8     |
| Dainik Bhaskar   | 120-127         | 71-81            | 12-23 | 19-27 |
| News X   | 110-117         | 108-123          | 4-10  | 8-23  |
| Republic TV  | 91-119          | 116-138          | 5-8   | 3-6   |
| Times Now  | 116             | 120              | 1     | 6     |
| Poll Of Polls  | 103             | 124              | 6     | 10    |
| ▶ Opp. coalition in Bihar led by Tejashwi will win 124 seats, just past the majority mark, say polls |                 |                  |       |       |
|  |                 |                  |       |       |

**VINEETA PANDEY**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

The Tejasawi Yadav-led Mahagathbandhan has an edge over the ruling National Democratic Alliance to form the next government in Bihar, several Exit Polls predicted on Saturday soon after the final phase of polling in the state for 243 Assembly seats ended.

The exit polls predicted that the RJD-Congress' Mahagathbandhan may get 123 seats and form the government. The magic number in Bihar Assembly is 122.

According to Polls of Polls (which takes an average of various exit polls), the JD(U)-BJP's NDA, led by incumbent chief minister Nitish Kumar, will manage to get 110 seats, the Chirag Paswan-led LJP will bag just four and others put together with Independents will get five seats.

Some pollsters indicated the results, which will

be out on Tuesday, could swing either way, even hinting at a hung Assembly.

However, Today's Chanakya, which has sometimes been accurate and had completely missed the mark sometimes, boldly stuck its neck out to declare that the Mahagathbandhan will sweep Bihar this year, bagging 180 seats (plus or minus 11 seats), while the NDA will get just 55 seats (plus or minus 11 seats), and others, including the LJP, will manage 8 (plus or minus 4 seats).

Today's Chanakaya was completely off the mark in predicting 2015 Bihar Assembly results and had to apologise for going wrong like all other pollsters.

This time, as per Today's Chanakaya, the RJD and the Congress, along with their Left allies, are expected to bag 44 per cent vote share, the JD(U) and BJP will get 34

■ Turn to Page 4

## 55% turnout in final phase; triangular fight in most seats

**NAYEAR AZAD**  
PATNA, NOV. 7

Bihar on Saturday recorded a voter turnout of around 55 per cent during the third and final phase of polls. Voting in this phase was held in 78 constituencies spread across 15 districts of north Bihar, Seemanchal and Kosi region of the state.

Like the previous two phases, the final phase too is considered crucial for the ruling NDA led by the JD(U) and for the Grand Alliance comprising the RJD, Congress

and Left parties. However, the entry of parties like LJP, Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM and Pappu Yadav's JAP made the fight triangular in most seats.

Chirag Paswan, who had pulled out of the NDA citing ideological differences with chief minister Nitish Kumar ahead of seat-sharing, emerged as the third force and fielded candidates on 42 seats, mostly against the JD(U) and Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) during the third phase of polls.

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## SHORT TAKES

## Over 30 kg crackers seized from shop in Delhi, owner held

**New Delhi:** Over 30 kg of illegal firecrackers were recovered from a shop in Delhi's Dabri area and its owner arrested, police said on Saturday. Rakesh Bansal was arrested on Friday after two policemen on patrolling duty received information that illegal firecrackers were stored in a shop in Raja Puri in Dabri, they said. On reaching the spot, the police found 34.6 kg of unauthorised crackers in possession of Bansal, said deputy commissioner of police (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena. The shopkeeper has been arrested and a case registered in this regard under sections of the Explosives Act at Dabri police station, the police said. Amid rising pollution levels and a spike in daily Covid-19 cases, the Delhi government on Thursday imposed a blanket ban on firecrackers, including green crackers, from November 7 to 30. Given the significant relationship between air pollution and respiratory infections, bursting of firecrackers is not favourable "for the large cause of community health", the government had said in its order. — PTI

## Man shoots self while taking selfie

**Noida:** A 22-year-old man died after he allegedly shot himself accidentally while taking a selfie with a pistol in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida on Saturday, police said. The man was accompanied by a friend in a car and the duo was on their way to a wedding function when the incident took place at around 3 pm, the police said. Deputy commissioner of police, Central Noida, Harish Chander said the deceased has been identified as Saurabh Maavi and his friend Nakul Sharma, who is the eye-witness in the case, has been detained by the police. "According to Nakul's statement, they were both in a car when Saurabh pulled out a pistol, put it on his head and tried to take a selfie but accidentally shot himself," Chander said. Maavi was taken to a nearby private hospital but did not survive, according to the officer. The police said Sharma has been taken into custody and a probe is being conducted after a case was lodged at the Bisrakh Police Station. There was no information yet on the pistol and its ownership. — PTI

## 'Cystic Fibrosis highly prevalent'

**New Delhi:** A recent study revealed that Cystic Fibrosis (CF), which was thought to be rare in the country, not only exists but has high prevalence. A genetic research pilot study done by Institute of Medical Genetics and Genomics, Sir Ganga Ram Hospital (SGRH) which has been published in BMC Medical Genetics, London has revealed a high carrier frequency of 4.5 per cent (9 per 200) for CF. Carrier frequency of 9 per 200 found in the study has an expected disease prevalence rate of one per 2,000. Cystic Fibrosis is an inherited life-threatening disorder that damages the lungs and digestive system. It affects the cells that produce mucous, sweat and digestive juices. It causes these fluids to become thick and sticky. As a result the respiratory passageways get blocked. CF is caused by change in a gene called CFTR (cystic fibrosis transmembrane conductance regulator). This gene controls the flow of salt and fluids in and out of cells. If this gene doesn't work the way it should then a sticky mucus builds in the body. According to senior consultant and advisor, Institute of Medical Genetics & Genomics, SGRH, Dr I.C. Verma, based on this study, cystic fibrosis should be added to beta thalassemia and spinal muscular disorders that should be screened in all pregnant women to prevent these diseases and it should also be added to the list of disorders for which newborn screening is being done. Author and senior consultant, Institute of Medical Genetics & Genomics, SGRH, Dr Sunita Bijarnia-Mahay said: "Our study also found that the disease-causing pathogenic variants in the Indian population were different from those commonly observed in the West. It is because of our unique system of marriages within the same caste / community and presence of consanguineous marriages".

■ 79 fatalities in 24 hours, tally reaches over 4.30 lakh

## With 6,953 cases, Delhi leads nation in spread of Covid-19

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

Delhi recorded as many as 6,953 fresh coronavirus cases on Saturday. With this, the tally of Covid-19 cases in the state has reached over 4.30 lakh, while the death toll mounted to 6,912. Seventy-nine fatalities have been recorded in the last 24 hours, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department.

According to a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government, 57,433 Covid-19 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours.

The case tally stands at 4,30,784 in the national capital, including 3,83,614 patients who have either been discharged or have migrated or recovered. The number of active cases is 40,258, of which 24,100 are in home isolation.

Delhi has reported more than 6,000 Covid-19 cases daily in the past few days and 13 per cent of this increase has been estimated to be due to air pollution, the Indian Medical Association said on Saturday.

Stating that N-95 masks and air purifiers may not provide full time protection, the doctors' body stressed on the implementation of long-term measures to bring down pollution levels.

Air pollution damages the inner lining of the lungs and hence increases the severity of Covid-19 infection.

"Increased air pollution leads to increased inflammatory response. In the last few days, Delhi has reported more than 6000 COVID-19 cases per day. 13 per cent of the increase has been estimated to be due to pollution," the IMA said.

In the last 10 days, the national capital and its neighbouring areas have seen a sharp spike in air pollution levels.

The Air Quality Index

## Woman jumps to death along with child from 17th-floor flat

**Noida, Nov. 7:** A 28-year-old woman, along with her four-year-old child, allegedly jumped to her death from the balcony of her 17th-floor apartment in Greater Noida on Saturday, police said.

The incident took place around 9 am in Supertech Eco-village I under Bisrakh police station limits, they said.

"The woman jumped off the 17th floor along with her child, leading to their death. Prima facie, it appears to be a suicide," additional deputy commissioner of police, Central Noida, Ankur Aggarwal said.

According to officials, the woman's husband was not at home when the incident took place. The family members have been informed, Aggarwal said.

Further proceedings are underway to ascertain what led the woman to take the extreme step, he added.

— PTI

## GB Pant college students call off hunger strike

**New Delhi, Nov. 7:** Five students of GB Pant Engineering College, who were on a hunger strike against non-inclusion of the institute in the admission counselling of Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University this year, called off the fast on Saturday morning.

The students began the hunger strike on Tuesday. They had been protesting outside Vikas Sadan in north Delhi.

"The condition of the students was not good. They also have to appear for their exam so they have called off their fast. However, we will begin a relay hunger strike with



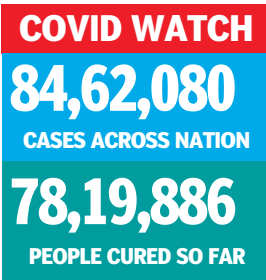
A man makes a wall graffiti to create awareness for coronavirus in New Delhi on Saturday. — G.N. JHA

## Tally rises to over 84.62L with 50,356 new cases countrywide

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

With 50,356 new cases, country's Covid-19 case-load rose to 84,62,080, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease crossed 78 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 92.41 per cent. According to the Union health ministry, the coronavirus death toll climbed to 1,25,562 with 577 new fatalities.

As per the data, India's daily new recoveries have been exceeding the daily new cases since more than a month. "The last five weeks has seen a continuous decline in average daily new cases. The average daily new cases have declined to 46,000 cases from more than 73,000 average daily new cases in the first week of October," it said.



In last 24 hours, 50,356

(AQI) in Delhi on Saturday remained above 350 while safe limit is 0-50. The WHO's ambient air pollution data shows that the levels of PM 10 and PM 2.5

in Delhi are way above the normal levels, the IMA stated. Poor air quality may result in the aggravation of asthma, COPD, high BP and even cardio-

vascular diseases. Merely walking could result in health complications due to the high concentration of particulate matter (PM) 2.5 in Delhi's air.

The total recovered cases stand at 78,19,886 which has pushed the national recovery rate to 92.41 per cent. The gap between recovered cases and active cases presently stands at 73,03,254.

79 per cent of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 States/UTs.

Maharashtra continues to have the maximum number of single day recoveries. 11,060 recoveries have pushed up the State's total recoveries to 15,62,342.



People walk along a street of a market area amid the coronavirus pandemic in New Delhi on Saturday. — AFP

## 11-year-old girl raped in Rohini

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

An 11-year-old girl was allegedly sexually assaulted by her father's acquaintance inside her house in Rohini, police said on Saturday.

The girl was with her younger brother on Friday when the accused, who worked as a mason with her father, came to her house and sexually assaulted her, they said.

The accused fled from

the spot when the girl screamed for help following which one of her neighbours rushed to help her, a senior police officer said. The girl was taken to a hospital and is stated to be stable, he said. A case was registered under sections of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and the accused was arrested, police said.

Meanwhile, the body of a man with head injuries was found hanging at his

house in east Delhi, police said on Saturday. The man, identified as Singh Raj, was found hanging at his house in GD Colony in Mayur Vihar Phase-III on Thursday. His elder brother Gajraj Singh spotted the body and informed police about it, they said.

Singh Raj was found hanging from a ceiling fan. He had multiple injuries on his head and a blood-stained iron rod was found lying on the bed, said the police. — PTI

## DU college principals deny funds misappropriation

**New Delhi, Nov. 7:** Principals of Delhi University colleges fully funded by the city government on Saturday denied allegations of misappropriation of funds and violation of UGC norms.

A special audit of seven Delhi University colleges funded by the Delhi government has revealed serious financial irregularities and violation of UGC norms, showing that despite having surplus funds the salaries of staff have not been released, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia had said on Friday.

Sisodia, who is also Delhi's education minister, had said the government was exploring legal proceedings on the basis of the audit, which was conducted

following repeated allegations by the colleges that the city government was withholding funds.

"The colleges are following all the rules and regulations as laid down by university and revised from time to time. All purchases are done through e-procurement portals. All the expenses are made with the approval of the Governing Bodies. The allegations of corruption are unfounded and baseless and denied," the Delhi University Principals' Association said in a statement.

"In the university the teachers are marking attendance of students. Each time a teacher meets his classes, his attendance is marked automatically.

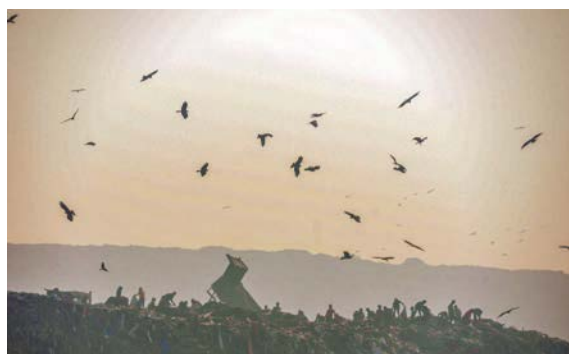
## City's air quality likely to remain 'severe' till Diwali

Toxic air also chokes Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and Gurgaon

**New Delhi, Nov. 7:** Delhi's air quality deteriorated to "severe" category on Saturday as Punjab and nearby regions recorded the highest number of stubble burning incidents this season, officials said. The air quality also remained "severe" in Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad, Faridabad, and Gurgaon in the National Capital Region (NCR), according to a government agency.

The farm fire count in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand stood at 4,528 on Friday, which was the highest this season, the Central government's air quality early warning system for Delhi said, adding that the city's air quality is likely to remain 'severe' on Diwali as well.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) mobile app SAMEER, Delhi's overall air quality index (AQI) was 427 on Saturday evening and 443 in the morning. The average 24-hour AQI



Birds fly over the Bhalswa landfill as smog envelops the area in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

at 4.00 pm on Saturday was 439 in Gurgaon, 436 in Ghaziabad, 428 in Greater Noida, 426 in Noida, and 414 in Faridabad, according to the app.

Experts said while meteorological conditions were "moderately" favourable for dispersion of pollutants, a "very high" number of farm fires in Punjab was the primary reason for the 'severe' air quality.

An AQI at zero and 50 is considered "good," 51 and 100 "satisfactory," 101

and 200 "moderate," 201 and 300 "poor," 301 and 400 "very poor," and 401 and 500 "severe."

According to SAFAR, the stubble burning share in PM2.5 in Delhi's air is estimated as 32 per cent for Saturday.

SAFAR said the share of stubble burning in Delhi's PM2.5 pollution was estimated to be 21 per cent on Friday. It was 42 per cent on Thursday, the maximum so far this season. — PTI

## 4 women among 8 held for getting credit cards with fake documents

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

The Delhi Police have arrested eight people including four women who allegedly procured credit cards from several banks using fake documents by impersonating their identities, officials said on Saturday.

The accused — Ajay Kshatriya (35) and his wife (32), Manish Kshatriya (40) and his wife (37), Kawal Raj (66) and his wife (65), Arun Sharma and his wife have been arrested from Rani Bagh area in outer Delhi, they said.

Among them, Manish alleged to be the mastermind behind the entire conspiracy was instrumental in arranging fake IDs. He used photo of his family members to create different identities with different names and address, police said.

With their arrest, police claimed to have recovered 63 credit/debit cards, 83 cheque books, jewellery and cash worth ₹14,67,285.

A probe was initiated by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of Delhi Police after they received a complaint from the Citibank stating that after its internal audit, it identified 36 customers who got their savings account opened in different names and addresses. They also obtained credit cards on the same residential address, according to police.

During subsequent verification by Citibank team, several customers were found missing from their addresses also, they said.

Police said the accused persons had also procured PAN cards, voter IDs and Aadhar Cards on the basis of impersonated fake documents. Using them, they opened accounts in different banks and also obtained credit cards from banks.



Salesmen sit outside a closed firecrackers shop in Old Delhi on Saturday. The Delhi government put a ban on bursting and sale of all kinds of firecrackers ahead of the Diwali festival owing to rising air pollution. — PTI

## Goel: Will protest if AAP govt doesn't compensate cracker traders for loss

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

Former union minister Vijay Goel on Saturday met firecrackers traders in Jama Masjid and Sadar Bazaar area to hear their grievances following the announcement of ban on the sale and purchase of firecrackers. Mr Goel said that the AAP government has miserably failed to mitigate pollution and now with the ban, it wants to prove that it has been making efforts to prevent pollution. "The AAP government should not make traders suffer because of its failure."

According to Mr Goel, traders were granted licenses to sell crackers and they made purchases but ban was imposed later, which had caused huge losses to traders, who are already reeling under the financial crisis due to COVID 19 pandemic.

"If the government doesn't announce adequate compensation to cracker traders or dealers, I would stage a protest from November 8 (Sunday) at Jama Masjid fireworks market and

decide further course of his action," announced Mr Goel.

Mr Goel claimed that chief minister Arvind Kejriwal announced the ban on firecrackers without any consultation and study on the subject. Mr Goel alleged that to divert the attention from the ban on crackers, which may hurt religious sentiments, Mr Kejriwal is again indulging theatrics by organising Lakshmi Puja.

"Delhi has seven Lok Sabha MPs. Kejriwal doesn't consult them, which he thinks is an insult to his reputation. Pollution in Delhi is increasing and smog has enveloped the entire city. The air is poisonous and Delhi has gone beyond the 'severe dangerous' category. Mr Kejriwal has ruined Diwali for two crore people. According to a report, Diwali crackers cause less pollution while vehicles are the biggest contributors to the pollution. Now, the government will start an advertisement about crackers ban then it will release advertisements on 'Odd-Even'," said former union minister.

Many colleges have adopted virtual platforms to take attendance of the students. On the basis of this attendance the marks of internal assessment are given. The signed copy of these attendance sheets are submitted to the college and the university" it said. The statement further said due to the pandemic teachers are taking online classes using their own ICT resources, adding the allegation that there is no system of attendance and existence of ghost employee is "unfounded" and "reflects poor understanding of university affairs by the education minister of Delhi government". The colleges that were audited following the order of the high court are Deen

Dayal Upadhyaya College, Keshav Mahavidyalaya, Shaheed Sukhdev College, Bhagini Nivedita College, and Maharishi Valmiki college.

Sisodia had claimed that Aditi Mahavidyalaya and Lakshmi Bai College refused to allow the audit to be carried out despite the order. As per the audit, total unauthorised payments made out by these colleges from 2017 to 2020 are — Deen Dayal Upadhyaya College (49.88 crores), Keshav Mahavidyalaya (29.84 crores), Shaheed Sukhdev College (16.52 crores), Bhagini Nivedita College (17.23 crores), and Maharishi Valmiki college (10.64 crores).

— PTI

## DU announces 5th cut off list

**New Delhi, Nov. 7:** Delhi University on Saturday announced its fifth cut off list for admissions to undergraduate courses, with over 65,000 seats filled so far.

While admissions for popular courses in many colleges are already closed, there was a dip of 1-3 per cent in the cut off list for the remaining courses.

"The eligible candidates who meet the requirements notified in the fifth admission cut off list are advised to take admissions from November 9," a varsity official said. — PTI



## SHORT TAKES

Bengal Congress MLA  
Qazi Rahim joins TMC

**Kolkata:** A Congress legislator along with his supporters joined the Trinamul Congress here on Saturday. Baduria MLA Qazi Abdul Rahim joined the ruling party in West Bengal at its headquarters in the presence of senior ministers Firhad Hakim and Partha Chatterjee. "I have realised that Didi is the only hope in the fight against the BJP. So, I am joining the TMC to strengthen her hand," Mr Rahim said. Senior Congress leader Manoj Chakraborty said the induction of opposition Congress and CPI(M) MLAs into the TMC reflects the ruling party's intention to "weaken secular forces" in the state. The Congress had won 44 seats in the 2016 Assembly elections but 18 of its MLAs have switched over to the ruling TMC since then. However, barring former Sabang legislator Manas Bhunia, who later became a Rajya Sabha MP, none of the Congress turncoats have resigned from their MLA posts. — PTI

## UP: Drug smuggling gang busted, 4 held

**Lucknow:** The Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force on Saturday claimed to have busted a gang involved in smuggling narcotics with the arrest of four people from the state's Sonbhadra district. A total of 800 kg of ganja worth ₹1 crore was recovered from the accused who have been identified as Biran Singh, Pravesh Yadav, Rajendra Jaiswal and Jitendra Pratap Singh, all natives of the state, the STF said in a statement. They were arrested following a tip-off that a narcotics consignment would reach Chopan area in Sonbhadra from Odisha, it said. The STF said it has also seized 300 sacks of salt, which were used to conceal ganja, a truck, a car, ₹3,500 in cash, two driving licences, two Aadhaar cards, and a PAN card, among other things. — PTI

## Punjab plans 100% results in schools

**Chandigarh:** Punjab chief minister Anarinder Singh on Saturday launched the "Mission Shat Pratishat" for 2020-21, aimed at empowering schools to achieve 100 per cent results despite the Covid-19 pandemic. At the virtual event, which connected him to teachers, students and their parents from more than 4,000 schools and ministers, MLAs, officials and non-teaching staff, the chief minister also announced the creation of 8,393 pre-primary school teachers posts and said they would be filled up soon by the education department, according to a government release. Pointing to the challenges in education in view of the Covid-19 situation, Mr Singh said the mission is aimed at further strengthening the digital education infrastructure in schools. — PTI

## Around ₹11L stolen from ATM in UP

**Bulandshahr:** Thieves struck at an ATM kiosk outside a State Bank of India branch in Bulandshahr's Kakod town, decamping with around ₹11 lakh in cash, police said on Saturday. The incident took place on Friday night after which the police outpost in charge of the area was suspended for negligence in maintaining the law and order, they said. Senior Superintendent of Police Santosh Kumar Singh said the thieves used a gas cutter to break open the ATM and stole around ₹11 lakh in cash. Police are trying to identify the four people involved in the crime through a CCTV camera footage.

## Goa revokes nod to Sunburn festival

**Panaji:** The Goa government has withdrawn the permission granted to the organisers of Sunburn electronic dance music festival to hold the event in the state in December this year. The move comes in the wake of criticism being faced by the BJP government in the state after it gave its nod to organise the festival amid the Covid-19 outbreak. The Congress party had protested in the city on Friday against the decision to allow Sunburn to be organised in the state. On Friday evening, state tourism minister Manohar Ajeenkumar said that the department has decided to withdraw the permission granted to the organisers of Sunburn 2020. "The decision has been taken in view of the pandemic situation in Goa. We don't want huge crowds to gather," he added.

## Security scenario of J&amp;K will improve in winter, says Army

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

Security forces in Jammu and Kashmir are extremely optimistic that overall security scenario in the Valley would improve considerably during the winter season as they have been able to successfully thwart major infiltration attempts from terror outfits in Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK). This sources claim would have a direct impact on the security situation as militant groups were facing a severe crunch of both men and material.

Intelligence inputs had revealed that 250-300 militants were waiting at the various launchpads close to the Line of Control and International Border along with Pakistan. Following this security forces had further strengthened their three-tier anti-infiltration grid.

Now top security sources have confirmed that in the past two months despite more than 20 infiltration attempts, not a single attempt was successful. "Any attempt to push militants into India from across the border have failed completely due to the pro-active surveillance undertaken by the Army along with BSF, CRPF and the local police," a senior security official said.

What is even more significant is that despite Pakistan Army deploying its Border Action teams (BAT) which helps facilitate infiltration by militants has also failed completely in its attempts this winter season. This is largely on account of the new surveillance and patrolling strategies adopted by security forces along the border. In the past, the Pak Army's BAT has been involved in targeted attacks on Indian security personnel.

## Raut to Farooq: Go to Pakistan to implement Article 370

BHAGWAN PARAB  
MUMBAI, NOV. 7

Shiv Sena on Saturday slammed former Jammu & Kashmir CM Farooq Abdullah saying Article 370 has no place in India and he can go to Pakistan and implement it there.

"If Farooq Abdullah wants, he can go to Pakistan and implement Article 370 there. In India, there is no place for Article 370 and 35A," Sanjay Raut said.

Mr Abdullah, speaking in a rally on November 6, had vowed to restore the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. "I will not die until the constitutional rights of my people are given back... I am here to do something for the people and the day I will leave this world, I will leave this world," he said.

Article 370 had granted a special status to Jammu and Kashmir. However, the Narendra Modi-led BJP government had abrogated law in August 2019 and bifurcated the state into two union territories.

## ■ 'All 7 members will fight district development councils polls'

## J&amp;K Opp. alliance to fight local body polls 'unitedly'

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR NOV. 7

In a significant development, a recently formed alliance of Jammu and Kashmir's regional opposition parties and their allies from the national Left parties have decided to contest the upcoming elections for the District Development Councils and vacant seats of Panchayats in the Union Territory (UT) "unitedly".

After holding day-long deliberations at the residence of its president and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah in winter capital Jammu on Saturday, the 'People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration' (PAGD) spokesman Sajad Gani Lone said that it's all seven member parties will unitedly fight these elections.

He said, "The PAGD has unanimously decided to fight the DDC elections unitedly. Despite the abruptness of the DDC elections in terms of timing, it is important that



Bhim Singh

this sacred space in a democracy is not allowed to be invaded and marauded by divisive forces".

The J&K administration had earlier this week announced to hold the first-ever DDC elections in eight phases from last week of November in the UT. Also, the elections for the vacant seats of panchayats and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) will be held simultaneously. 'State Election Commissioner' (SEC) K. K. Sharma, had said.

Mr. Lone said that the leadership of PAGD has over the past two days met

members of civil society, leaders or representatives of various political parties and those of various community groups including Gujjar and Bakarwals, SC/ST and Dalits. "All of them are hurt by the decisions of August 5, 2019", he claimed.

National Panthers Party (NPP) supremo Bhim Singh also attended Saturday's meeting and "opened up his heart" on the Centre's stripping J&K of its special status and splitting it up into two UTs on August 5 last year and the subsequent moves particularly the recent introduction of new land laws for J&K.

While the meeting was underway in Bathinda area of Jammu, groups of Shiv Sena, Ikk Jutt Jammu and Rashtriya Bajrang Dal (RBD) workers held protest demonstrations at a distance to express their displeasure over some of the recent statements of PAGD leaders particularly Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti.

The police swung into action and took many of the protesters into custody, witnesses said. They were, however, later released, the police sources said.

PAGD seeks restoration of J&K's special status and statehood besides repeal of all laws and decisions "imposed" on the erstwhile state after August 5 last year.

duction of new land laws for J&K. But soon after the meeting, a NPP leader claimed that Mr Singh has been relieved of his responsibilities in the party over his participating in the PAGD meeting without taking it into confidence.

The police swung into action and took many of the protesters into custody, witnesses said. They were, however, later released, the police sources said.

PAGD seeks restoration of J&K's special status and statehood besides repeal of all laws and decisions "imposed" on the erstwhile state after August 5 last year.

## RSS' Swadeshi Jagran Manch opposes ban on firecrackers

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

Coming out in support of 'green firecrackers,' Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) has asked to repeal the complete ban imposed by some state governments on firecrackers insisting that it was the illegally imported firecrackers from China, which used to create pollution while the 'green firecrackers' are certified by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research-NEERI. Noting that nearly a million people work in the firecracker making units, who will be adversely affected by such a decision by some state governments' in an effort to check pollution, the RSS affiliate has urged the central government to solve the problem of stubble burning, in various parts of the country, including Punjab, Haryana and Delhi, which is the major cause of pollution in the capital and surrounding areas.

"For some time, without any factual information, governments have been taking action like banning all types of firecrackers on the occasion of Diwali, which is completely inappropriate. It has to be understood that till now the pollution caused by firecrackers was primarily due to illegally imported firecrackers from China. There has been pollution due to the mixing of potassium nitrate and sulfur in Chinese firecrackers. However, in green (pollution-free) firecrackers made in India today potassium nitrate and sulfur are not mixed; and other pollutants such as aluminum, lithium, arsenic and mercury etc. have been reduced to the minimum," said SJM's national co-convenor, Ashwini Mahajan.

## SMOG TAJ!!



A couple poses for a photograph in the backdrop of Taj Mahal amid hazy weather conditions in Agra on Saturday. — PTI

## ISRO launches earth observation satellite EOS-01, 9 other satellites

**Sriharikota, Nov. 7:** India successfully launched its latest earth observation satellite EOS-01 and nine customer satellites on board its Polar rocket from the spaceport here on Saturday.

The Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV-C49) lifted off from the first launch pad at the Satish Dhawan Space Centre here at 3.12 PM at the end of a 26 hour countdown and injected the satellites into orbit one after another 20 minutes



People watch the PSLV-C49 carrying all weather satellite EOS-01 and nine other foreign satellites in Sriharikota on Saturday. — PTI

later: The lift off was originally scheduled for 3.02 pm, but was delayed by 10 minutes due to debris on the path of the vehicle, ISRO said. This is the first mission by the Indian Space Research Organisation this year.

EOS-01 is intended for applications in agriculture, forestry and disaster management support, the space agency said.

The customer satellites are from Lithuania (1), Luxembourg (4) and United States of America (4). — AP

## Congress slams BJP govt over price rise

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 7

The Congress hit out at the Centre over the 'skyrocketing' of prices of essential commodities during the ongoing festive season. The party alleged that faulty policies of the government have led to the skyrocketing of edible oil prices and dampened the festive spirit. In a statement, the party

pointed out that mustard oil that was selling at ₹80 per litre last year and is now selling at ₹120; sunflower oil now sells at ₹110 per litre as opposed to ₹77 per a year back, and groundnut oil now costs ₹135 per litre as against ₹99 last year.

Meanwhile, in a separate tweet, former Congress chief Mr Rahul Gandhi said the Modi government

CONGRESS ALLEGED that faulty policies of the government have led to the skyrocketing of edible oil prices and dampened the festive spirit

was "solely responsible" for the price rise.

He tweeted "On the one hand, farmers are facing a double whammy- expensive seeds and lower prices for their produce; on the

other hand, the consumer is bearing the brunt of all-round price rise. Only the Modi government is responsible."

Charging the government of being "insensitive towards farmers and the poor" Congress General Secretary for Uttar Pradesh demanded a cut in the electricity prices in the state in order to give relief to common people and elec-

tricity bills of farmers should be waived off.

She said, "The public is already hit hard by inflation. The business of small businessmen has collapsed. The crops of the farmers are not being bought, neither are they helped at the time of floods, hailstorms and natural disasters, crop insurance scheme has become a means of earning for big companies."

## Shivraj, Nath trade charges of poaching MLAs

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, NOV. 7

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan and Congress veteran Kamal Nath, on Saturday, traded charges against each other of poaching MLAs from the rival camps even as ruling BJP and Opposition Congress waited with bated breath for the outcome of the November 3 by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in the state.

Talking to reporters here, Mr Chouhan said he was informed by some BJP MLAs that the former chief minister, Mr Nath, was wooing them to join Congress.



Shivraj Singh Chouhan

However, the BJP legislators have spurned the offer to join Congress, Mr Chouhan claimed.

"It is Mr Nath who brought the culture of luring MLAs of the rival party to Congress in Madhya Pradesh. We have never approached the Congress MLAs who resigned from their



Kamal Nath

party and joined BJP. They (Congress legislators) volunteered to join BJP," Mr Chouhan said. Twenty-two Congress lawmakers resigned from the Assembly and subsequently from their party in March this year to pull down the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.

The chief minister said Mr Nath first took the step to woo two Bharatiya Janata Party MLAs into his party after Congress came to power in the state in 2018.

Meanwhile, Mr Chouhan held discussions with the senior leaders of the party involved in the management of Assembly by-polls thrice in the last three days to assess the party's position in each of the 28 seats that went to by-elections on November 3.

Congress has convened the meeting of its legislature party here on November 11 to decide on the future course of action by the party.

## CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

Due to operational reasons following Special Trains will remain temporarily cancelled on the dates shown against each :-

| CANCELLATION OF TRAINS                                     |                               |
|--|-------------------------------|
| Train No. & Train Name                                     | Date from originating station |
| 04421 Lucknow-Anand Vihar T. Special Train                 | 12, 14, 16, 19 & 21.11.2020   |
| 04422 Anand Vihar T.-Lucknow Special Train                 | 11, 13, 15, 18 & 20.11.2020   |
| 04401 New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special Train | 12, 16 & 19.11.2020           |
| 04402 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Special Train | 13, 17 & 20.11.2020           |
| 04519 Delhi Jn.-Bathinda Special Train                     | 11.11.2020 to 20.11.2020      |
| 04520 Bathinda-Delhi Jn. Special Train                     | 12.11.2020 to 21.11.2020      |

Note:- For any kind of information passengers are requested to contact Railway Enquiry No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website [www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in](http://www.enquiry.indianrail.gov.in).

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SHORT TAKES

Minor girl stripped in front of brother

Lucknow: Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday accused the Uttar Pradesh government of presenting wrong figures to mislead people on the issue of employment. "There is unemployment and the youth are facing immense problems but the chief minister is presenting wrong figures to mislead the people," he said in a statement. The former chief minister said all the schemes like MNRREGS, Matikala along with others which the government was claiming to be creating job opportunities were in "deep trouble". He claimed those associated with these schemes were facing problems in meeting their daily needs. "The government's own vocational career service portal shows there has been a fall of 60 per cent in jobs in October 2020 as compared to September," Mr Akhilesh said. He said that during BJP's rule in the state, new jobs have not been created. — PTI

Jobless teacher hangs self to death

Gorakhpur: A private school teacher who had lost his job amid the Covid-19 lockdown allegedly hanged himself to death at the Barhaj railway station in Deoria district. The body of Ashwani Kumar, 35, a resident of Amaw village under Barhaj police station area, was found hanging from an iron rod of the roof of the railway station platform, said police. Kumar was living in rented accommodation with his wife Savitri and son Ayush near Mahlia Degree College at Narmal Colony, they said. As per his family, Kumar used to teach at a private school but had lost his job during the lockdown. His wife Savitri told police that he was under depression due to financial constraints. Kumar left home on his motorcycle on Friday. — PTI

NTPC shuts down 4 units in Bihar plant

Bhagalpur: State-run power producer NTPC on Saturday shut down four of the seven units of its plant in BiHars Kahalgao as a preventive measure, after some problem in the system caused water mixed with ash to spread in nearby farmland, an official said. As a result, electricity generation at the super thermal power station plummeted to around 400 MW from the current 1400-1500 MW, NTPC spokesperson Vishwanath Chandan said in Patna. The incident, which occurred on the company's 46th "Raising Day", triggered protests from local villagers who put up a road blockade for some time, claiming that an embankment of an ash pond has breached and water mixed with ash that came out of it damaged standing Rabi crops on around 200 acre of land. — PTI

Senior scribe from Kerala passes away

Kottayam: Senior journalist and former editor of Malayala Manorama weekly, K Pathmanabhan Nair, died due to age-related ailments on Saturday, his family said here. He was 90. Nair, popularly known as Pathman, began his journalism career after completing his college education. During his decades long career, he worked in various capacities in the Manorama group till his retirement in 2001. Under his editorship, the copies of Manorama weekly rose to 14 lakh. He also authored several books. The last rites will be performed on Sunday at his son's residence. — PTI

1 dead, 2 missing as car falls into gorge

Gopeshwar (U'khand): One pilgrim from Gujarat was killed, another was seriously injured and two others went missing on Saturday when the car in which they were travelling to Badrinath fell into a deep gorge in Alaknanda valley, officials said. The accident occurred near Balaura between Joshimath and Badrinath when the car carrying pilgrims from Surendra Nagar district in Gujarat was on its way to the Himalayan temple, Chamoli SP office informed. The car fell into a 250-metre-deep gorge, killing one person on the spot, while two others went missing while a seriously injured pilgrim has been rescued and hospitalised, it said. The dead have been identified as Murgesh Rathore, the two missing pilgrims as Kripalajia and Dharmapal and the injured as Hitendra Chauhan. — PTI



Kamala Harris stands up for human rights: Uncle in TN

B. VIJAYALAKSHMI CHENNAI, NOV. 7

With Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and his running mate Senator Kamala Harris winning the US' election, her uncle Dr Balachandran said their win was on expected lines. Speaking to this newspaper from New Delhi, Dr Balachandran said, "I am glad the suspense is over. I was confident that Biden-Kamala would emerge victorious in the elections. It is not a surprise for me."

When asked about any change in India-US bilateral relationship with the change of guard there, Dr Balachandran, who has specialised on issues related to technology and economics, said that a strong foundation has already been laid for India-US ties. "There is no outstanding issue between the two countries. I think the new US regime will continue to strengthen its relationship with India." It may be recalled that Biden, in his address to a virtual fundraiser for Indian Americans, had said that the US and India share a strong interest in a rules-based Indo-Pacific region.

On Ms Kamala's strong views on Kashmir, Mr Balachandran said, "Yes, she always stands up for human rights." Mr Balachandran, who had spoken to his niece twice in the last few days, said she sounded cheerful. "Based on my analysis, I told her that I was sure of her victory," he added.

Ms Harris made history Saturday as the first Black woman elected as vice president of the United States, shattering barriers that have kept men — almost all of them white — entrenched at the highest levels of American politics for more than two centuries.

NDA, Grand Alliance, AIMIM vie for equal share of votes in Muslim-dominated Seemanchal 55% turnout, triangular fight in most seats

NAYEAR AZAD PATNA, NOV. 7

Bihar on Saturday recorded a voter turnout of around 55 per cent during the third and final phase of polls. Voting in 78 constituencies spread across 15 districts of north Bihar, Seemanchal and Kosi region of the state.

Like the previous two phases, the final phase too is considered crucial for the ruling NDA led by the JD(U) and for the Grand Alliance comprising the RJD, Congress and Left parties. However, the entry of parties like LJP, Asaduddin Owaisi's AIMIM and Pappu Yadav's JAP made the fight triangular in most seats.

Chirag Paswan, who had pulled out of the NDA citing ideological differences

with chief minister Nitish Kumar ahead of seat-sharing, emerged as the third force and fielded candidates on 42 seats, mostly against the JD(U) and Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) during the third phase of polls.

Political analysts believe that the NDA as well as the Grand Alliance are set to witness a tough fight in the Muslim-dominated Seemanchal region where AIMIM has a visible influence and has fielded 15 candidates.

"Asaduddin Owaisi's party AIMIM has a visible influence in some of the seats in the Seemanchal region. The party may cut votes and cause a major dent in the NDA as well as the Grand Alliance in this phase of polls," a political observer said.



Security personnel escort a man with physical disability as he arrives to cast his vote at a polling station for the third phase of Bihar Elections, at Raxaul in East Champaran district, Saturday

Similarly, Pappu Yadav's JAP is also likely to make the contest tough for NDA and the Grand Alliance in

the Kosi region where Yadavs and Backwards are the deciding factors. Pappu Yadav contested from

TRP scam: Notices issued to state, Mumbai top cop

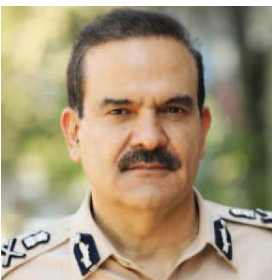
Hansa Research, plaintiff in HC, complains harassment

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 7

The Bombay high court on Saturday asked the state government and Mumbai Police Commissioner Param Bir Singh to reply to a plea filed by Hansa Research Group Pvt Ltd, the complainant in the television rating points (TRP) scam, alleging harassment by the police.

The petition filed by the company and three of its senior officials alleged that the city police was conducting the probe in an illegal and highly objectionable manner. The petition claimed that the company's officials were being harassed and coerced into making false statements against a particular news channel and sought for the probe to be transferred to the CBI.

The petition has named assistant police inspector Sachin Waze and assistant commissioner of police Shashank Sandbhor as the ones who were harassing them. On Saturday, advocate Devaduti Kamat, appearing for the government, Param Bir Singh and the two police officers, refuted



Param Bir Singh

ed the allegations and said the petitioners are being called for questioning only when required. He further told the court that investigation in the case is still on and certain material has also come to the fore against the petitioners.

The bench, however, noted that since the petitioners are complainant in the case, they should not be called to the police station without any reason. "They are the complainant and not the accused in the case. We are not saying stop the investigation, but call them only when required and on specific days and for reasonable time," Justice Shinde said.

Mr amat agreed and told the court that the peti-

tioners would be called for questioning twice a week for a reasonable time. The bench then posted the petition for further hearing on November 25 and directed the respondents (the government, Param Bir Singh, Sachin Waze and Shashank Sandbhor) to file their affidavits.

The petitioner's advocate C.S. Vaidyanathan argued that the police were pressurising the petitioners to implicate certain news channels. "The police were repeatedly coercing the petitioners to make false and incorrect statements. When the petitioners expressed inability to do so, they were threatened by the police saying they would be booked in the same offence and placed under arrest," the petition said.

The company claimed that their senior officials are being harassed by the city police, which calls them for recording of statement at odd hours and then detaining them in the Crime Branch office for long hours and threatening that they would be placed under arrest.

Party to hold tractor rally to protest new farm laws New incharge plans to revive Cong in Odisha

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 7

Ever since he was appointed as the party in-charge for Odisha a couple months on September 11, All India Congress Committee (AICC) leader Dr A Chella Kumar appears to quite focused on his mandated mission — revival of the party from the present morass in the state.

After effecting the appointment of district presidents of the party in all 33 organisational districts, Dr Chella Kumar has decided to connect with the voters by organising massive public rallies on different issues like farm distress, unemployment and irregularities in implementation of government schemes and pro-



A Chella Kumar

grammes.

As per a strategy chalked out by the AICC in-charge Dr Chella Kumar and Pradesh Congress Committee chief Niranjan Patnaik, the party will begin its people's connect programme with a mega tractor rally in the state capital on Monday against new farm bills passed by the NDA government in the last monsoon session of the Parliament.

The tractor rally will be

AFTER EFFECTING the appointment of district presidents of the party in all 33 organisational districts, Dr Chella Kumar has decided to connect with the voters by organising massive public rallies on different issues

taken out at 9.00 am on Monday next week from Congress Bhawan in Bhubaneswar to Cuttack.

It is scheduled to reach the party office at Shaktinagar via Dhakulei Temple, 42 Mouza and Press Chhak in Cuttack city.

Along with Chellakumar and the PCC President Niranjan Patnaik, senior Congress leader Narasingha Mishra and many others will join the protest.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had held tractor rallies in Punjab and Haryana from October 4 to 6 to protest against the new farm bills. To continue the agitation, Odisha Congress has decided to organise the tractor rally to give voice to farmers, whose livelihood and future has been put at stake by the Central legislations, a source in the party said.

Dr Chella Kumar had earlier announced that his party would also hold rallies to awaken people about the ruling BJD government's failure to address the problems of unemployment, deterioration of law and order, chit fund and mining scams; crime against women and atrocities on scheduled caste and scheduled tribes.

'BJP will fare better than Congress'

Continued from Page 1

trend. BJP is set to put up a far better performance in the by-polls as our feedback suggests," BJP spokesman Rajneesh Agrawal said. Congress spokesman Narendra Saluja, however, rejected the exit polls saying that his party is going to win all the 28 seats and form the government in the state. The BJP has a strength of 107 in the 230-member MP Assembly whose effective strength reduced to 201 following the resignation of 26 Congress MLAs and the demise of 3 other legislators. The Congress has 87 MLAs. The BSP has 2 MLAs and Samajwadi Party has one legislator. There are 4 Independents in the House.



People shop for decorative items at a roadside market ahead of Diwali in Kolkata on Saturday. — AFP

BJP behaving like Trump on Anab's arrest, says Shiv Sena

AGE CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 7

The Shiv Sena on Saturday likened the BJP's hue and cry over the arrest of Arnab Goswami with the reaction of Donald Trump to the outcome of the US Presidential elections. Slamming the BJP for not abiding by the law, the Sena said that the BJP is behaving as if they don't want law of the land to be followed in the letter and spirit. Taking a swipe at the state BJP over its stand that they would work by wearing black badges until Mr Goswami is released, the Sena said that it is nothing but a presentation of intellectual bankruptcy.

An editorial in Marathi daily Saamana, the Shiv Sena's mouthpiece, said the reaction of Mr Trump who is on the verge of defeat amounted to belittling the post he was holding. "Just like Mr Trump's actions that included spreading fake news and demanding that counting of votes be stopped, BJP leaders in Maharashtra are protesting against the arrest of a suspected accused," the editorial noted.

Fr Stan moves court, seeks permission to use straw and sipper

AGE CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS MUMBAI, NOV. 7

Father Stan Swamy, the 83-year-old tribal rights activist arrested in the Elgar Parishad-alleged Maoist links case, has moved a special court in Mumbai for permission to use a straw and sipper in Talaja jail in Navi Mumbai, where he is currently lodged.

Mr Swamy, through his lawyer Kritika Agarwal, moved the plea before the special NIA court on Friday seeking straw and sipper in jail citing health issues. "I cannot hold a glass as my hands are unsteady due to Parkinson's," Mr Swamy said in his application.

The special court judge D. E. Kothalikar has asked the national probe agency to file its reply on the matter on November 26.

Mr Swamy was arrested from his home in Ranchi last month in connection with the violence in Bhima Koregaon near Pune in January 2018.

Last month, the NIA had filed a chargesheet in the matter against eight people, including Mr Swamy. The investigating agency has alleged that Mr Swamy was actively involved in the activities of the CPI (Maoist).

The probe into the Elgar Parishad case was taken over by the NIA on



Stan Swamy

Swamy was arrested from his home in Ranchi last month in connection with the violence in Bhima Koregaon near Pune in January 2018.

The Pune police have claimed that speeches delivered at the Elgar Parishad conclave, held on December 31, 2017 at Shaniwarwada in Pune city, led to the violence at Koregaon Bhima the next day. The police have claimed the conclave was organised by people having Maoist links.

Father Stan Swamy is a Jesuit priest and a tribal rights activist based in Jharkhand. He has worked in the state for over three decades on various issues of the adivasi communities on land, forest and labour rights. Mr Swamy's work also involves opposition to the setting up of "land banks", which he argues would free up land belonging to the community to set up small and big industries.

Joe Biden in, Trump Out

Continued from Page 1

to delays in processing the vote in some states to allege with no evidence that there was voter fraud and to argue that his rival was trying to seize power — an extraordinary charge by a sitting president trying to sow doubt about a bedrock democratic process.

Kamala Harris also made history as the first Black woman to become vice president, an achievement that comes as the US faces a reckoning on racial justice. The California senator, who is also the first person of South Asian descent elected to the vice presidency, will become the highest-ranking woman ever to serve in government, four years after Mr Trump defeated Hillary Clinton.

Mr Trump is the first incumbent president to lose reelection since

Republican George H.W. Bush in 1992.

Early Saturday he left the White House for his Virginia golf club dressed in golf shoes, a windbreaker and a white hat as the results gradually expanded Biden's lead in Pennsylvania.

Mr Trump repeated his unsupported allegations of election fraud and illegal voting on Twitter. One of his tweets, quickly flagged as potentially misleading by Twitter, claimed: "I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!"

In Wilmington, Delaware, near a stage that has stood empty since it was erected to celebrate a potential victory on Election Night, people cheered and pumped their fists as the news that the presidential race had been called for the state's former senator arrived on their cell

phones.

On the nearby water, two men in a kayak yelled to a couple paddling by in the opposite direction, "Joe won! They called it!" as people on the shore whooped and hollered. Ms Harris, in workout gear, was shown on video speaking to Mr Biden on the phone, exuberantly telling the president-elect "We did it!" Mr Biden was expected to take the stage for a drive-in rally after dark.

Across the country, there were parties and prayer. In New York City, spontaneous block parties broke out. People ran out of their buildings, banging on pots. They danced and high-fived with strangers amid honking horns.

People streamed into Black Lives Matter Plaza near the White House, waving signs and taking cellphone pictures. — AP



# THE ASIAN AGE

8 NOVEMBER 2020



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

## Plotting a son-rise on shifting sands

Lying in bed at night at home by Someshwar beach, it's hard to believe that the economy has slowed down. The quiet is broken by the roar of diesel engines as trucks carry sand away from the beach. It's all illegal, this sand mining, but it goes on through the night and most of the day despite recent headlines in a newspaper claiming that the Mangalore police have cracked down on it.

Complaints to the local police had unexpected consequences. They brought a visitation from a gangster — a minor gangster, but big enough to deter senior citizens — who was recently released from prison after serving a sentence for murder. That was the end of the complaints.

I considered going higher up, to the Deputy Commissioner of the district, but then that's time-consuming and useless. I went to the DC a couple of years ago with a complaint about the local panchayat breaking all sorts of rules for friends and relatives. After a dozen calls, four visits to his office and six hours of waiting, I got three minutes in the presence of the man to explain these troubles. A month later, there was a letter from his office saying that my complaint had been transferred to the local authorities, who would get back to me. They never did: it was like asking a burglar to investigate her own crimes.

At my wits' end, I thought I'd wait for my friend Murthy, the one with the contacts in high places, to visit. Thanks to the lockdown, he's been in these parts for some months, and drops in once in a while to drink my most expensive whiskey. The least he could do in return, I thought, was to get some high-up to stop the sand mining, which is destroying what's left of the beach after the sea is done with it.

Murthy turned up one weekend. My wife, being aware of his habits, went off to watch TV, leaving the two of us to ourselves. I still haven't figured out how he managed to swallow, with no sign of haste, two large pegs of scotch, without giving me a chance to edge a word into the conversation. But then he bit into a samosa that was a little too spicy for him and had to shut up for a moment to let his tongue cool off and I grabbed the opportunity to present my case.

You have to hand it to the man. I gabbed my problems in the thirty seconds or so that it took him to recover, and he grasped it all. "So now you want me to see whether I can persuade some big shot to stop this illegal sand mining, someone with enough clout to avoid interference from local gangsters or officials or both."

"Yes," I responded, and sat back to receive the flood of the rest of his monologue.

As he left that night, he paused at the door of his cab, an anonymous white hatchback, very unlike the Mercedes in which he made his first visit to my house. "I'm not sure it'll work," he said. "No one else wants this to stop."

"What do you mean?" I asked. "A few people here, a hundred voters, maybe, want the mining to stop," he replied. "Thousands of others, voters for whom the sand means business, or work, or hope, will want it to continue."

"The whole beach and the township will be gone in twenty years," I said. "Name one leader who looks beyond the next elections," he told me. "Twenty years is long past any politician's horizon. Five years is the absolute maximum."

He dropped in again just three days later. My hopes rose when he walked in, but fell again when he started talking. For the first time in my experience, he seemed chastened, apologetic, and even humble. "What happened?" I asked.

"I blew it," he said, with uncharacteristic directness. "One of these VIPs invited me home a couple of days ago. He told me that his security level had just been upgraded, so he's got an armed guard now. His teenage son wanted to borrow the guard's pistol to shoot at coconuts on a palm, and the bodyguard refused to hand it over. The VIP was chewing out the bodyguard when I got to his place, and eventually the bodyguard had to submit. After the boy went out, weapon in hand, the VIP turned to me, smiled, and said, 'Boys will be boys. I was just like that at his age.' He was in a good mood, for he then asked, 'What can I do for you?'"

"I told him about the sand mining and the beach disappearing and so on, and he seemed to be thinking about it. I should have shut up then but instead I told him you were afraid your township would disappear under the waves in twenty years."

"His face lit up. 'Does that mean that fifteen years from now we'll build a sea wall there?' he asked. I told him yes, and he smiled happily. 'Elections are a part of politics,' he said, 'and you get used to winning about half the time. The important thing is your first election. If you win that, you're doing fine. Building a sea wall there after some years will fund my son's first election. So tell your friend not to worry. We'll build him a sea wall to keep his house safe.'"

I didn't know what to say, so I got up to fetch Murthy a whiskey. He read my mind, for he said, "I can't stay for a drink. I've got to move on."

"Where?" I asked, surprised.

"Back to that VIP. It's the son's birthday today, and he's having a party... I'll get my scotch there."

*Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.*

Subhani



## Biden takes high road, Trumpism is still alive



K.C. Singh

America's presidential election on November 3 took pollsters, Democrats and the world by surprise when the early results showed President Donald Trump leading in most swing states, including in the so-called Democratic "Blue Wall" states like Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin. Mr Trump had snatched these Rust Belt states from the Democrats in 2016, and their 46 Electoral College votes secured Mr Trump's victory four years ago.

Former vice-president Joe Biden told his party that as someone born in Scranton, Pennsylvania, he could reclaim the wall by bonding with the alienated working class, who had defected to Mr Trump, who in 2016 played on the twin fears of these people. One, deindustrialisation caused by the 1970s' oil price rise, and then globalisation that stretched supply chains worldwide. China's manufacturing prowess after joining the World Trade Organisation in 2001 turned global trade upside down. China built huge trade surpluses, while the US expended money on two costly wars abroad. Mr Trump exploited these fears and xenophobia under his "America First" slogan.

The power of his message is clear despite Mr Biden flipping Pennsylvania, Arizona, Nevada and, more significantly, Georgia after three decades of Republican dominance. Of the 150 million votes cast, the heaviest ever, Mr Trump has under half. It signals a deeply divided nation, with one half wedded to a divisive, racist and exclusionist vision. Recounting looms in Georgia, as the voting

wash as Republicans have done well to keep Senate control and Mr Trump's votes exceed his 2016 tally. Mr Biden simply got more votes, breaking existing records. In a similar situation in 2016, Hillary Clinton was advised by then President Barack Obama to concede to avoid uncertainty. But Mr Trump has no adviser with the gravitas of James Baker, who convinced a cornered Richard Nixon that his only good option was to resign after the Watergate scandal. Mr Trump seems to think he can reel-back Arizona, where he's cutting Mr Biden's lead, see a turnaround in Pennsylvania as more votes are counted and keep Georgia logjammed in recounts or legal challenges. A protracted standoff, he hopes, can somehow retrieve the situation, maybe by going to the Supreme Court. Unfortunately, even senior Republican leaders fear speaking the truth to Mr Trump as they can see his mesmerising grip on a huge electoral base, which many senators have just enashed.

After waiting unsuccessfully for the election to be called, Joe Biden finally addressed the nation. He chose the high road, promising to heal divides, promising to deal with the economy, climate change and the pandemic. He recommended patience, and unlike Mr Trump endorsed the integrity of the electoral process. He assumed the posture of de facto winner by promising to again address the nation the following day. Slowly, senior Republicans are moving away from solidly backing Mr Trump in his uncon-

tutional statements and unbecoming conduct. If Mr Biden widens his Pennsylvania lead to where it is seen as irreversible and the election is called, the wind may leak out of Trumpian bravado. A Biden presidency appears inevitable.

All nations are observing silently the high theatre in world's most powerful democracy. A senior BJP leader has written, as head of a party-linked think tank, to indirectly convey the government's thinking. He incorrectly claims no Republican President lost reelection in a century, forgetting George H.W. Bush's loss to Bill Clinton in 1992. Naturally, he ignores the "Abki baar" slogan Prime Minister Narendra Modi raised in Houston, crossing the line between personal friendship and political endorsement of Mr Trump. He now avows permanence of interests and not friends as the guiding principle.

A Biden presidency means both continuity and change. The basic trajectory of India-US relations will continue, but its momentum will be conditioned by how Mr Biden handles China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran. Trade ties would not be treated as Mr Trump did by seeking make-or-break solutions. Climate change provides a new area of convergence, which Mr Trump contemptuously ignored. But the Democrats would hold India to a higher standard of liberal democracy than the government in New Delhi is used to. Kamala Harris will remember the insulting treatment of her comrade Pramila Jayapal, convincingly re-elected, by external affairs minister S. Jaishankar. India has an outstanding ambassador in Washington, on a third posting there, having relationships with both sides. But then, as the BJP ideologue wrote, interests can outrank kinship or friendship.

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

**The basic trajectory of India-US relations will continue, but its momentum will be conditioned by how Mr Biden handles China, Pakistan, Afghanistan and Iran**

## LETTERS FAILED STATE

America is in big trouble. Donald Trump's defeat would mean that the Western nation has, for the moment, avoided a plunge into authoritarianism -- and yes, the stakes are that high, not just because of who Mr Trump is, but also because the modern Republican Party is extremist and anti-democratic. But the fractured verdict for the Senate means that Mr Trump's party is still in a position to hobble, perhaps cripple, the next President's ability to deal with the huge epidemiological, economic and environmental challenges faced by America. If we were looking at any other country with the American level of political dysfunction, we would probably consider it a failed state.

Shovanlal Chakraborty  
Kolkata

## DIWALI MADNESS

EVERY YEAR, we spend a lot of money on bursting crackers during Diwali. Why can't we use the money for the uplift of poor? There are billions of people all over the world who can't even get two square meals a day. Instead of spending money on crackers which goes up in smoke, we should donate the same money to an orphanage or a home for the aged. At least the people who are left there to die by their ungrateful children will feel happy. Firecrackers create a lot of pollution and cause distress to birds and animals. Avoid them if possible, or localise their use in a community to an open field. Do help to clear up the mess in your neighbourhood once the festival gets over.

Jubel D'Cruz  
Mumbai

## BRIGHT IDEA

FORMER PUNJAB minister and Congress MLA Navjot Singh Sidhu on Friday has said that if the state government resigns in protest against the Centre's farm laws, it won't solve the problem of farmers. Rather, staying united and supporting their protest will. His assertion on construction of more cold storages by the state government to store the produce of the farmers in large quantities and sell it at a good price seems justified.

Sankar Paul  
Chakdaha, West Bengal

## SRH FAVOURITES

KUDOS TO DAVID WARNER and his team for decimating Kohli's team to enter the qualifier 2 stage to meet Delhi Capitals on Sunday. Like the previous seasons, RCB progressed well till the middle stages and then choked to throw away their chances to lift the IPL trophy. Ironically, this season even the skipper was found wanting, both as a batsman and captain. A.B. de Villiers too was patchy. If only they had played Zampa or even Moeen Ali in place of Finch, things could have gone their way. The way Sunrisers Hyderabad have bounced back, it seems they will topple Delhi Capitals on Sunday and lift the Cup on Tuesday.

Capt. N. Viswanathan  
Coimbatore

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: asianage.letters@gmail.com.

Aakar Patel



## Amid new dawn in the US, India may now have to work differently

An American from Chennai won re-election this past week. Her name is Pramila Jayapal and she heads the Congressional Progressive Caucus. A few months ago, India's external affairs minister S. Jaishankar cancelled a meeting with the US House Foreign Affairs Committee, which included its Republican chairman and Democratic members. Mr Jaishankar refused to meet them because the group included Pramila Jayapal, who had pushed a resolution demanding that India end the communications blackout in Kashmir. Mr Jaishankar told the Americans that he would meet them only if they dropped Ms Jayapal from the group. Of course, the Americans refused.

Mr Jaishankar is paid by us to defend India abroad but chose instead to duck the meeting as it would involve a difficult conversation or perhaps he was just afraid of a confrontation. After his running away was widely reported in the American media, Senator Kamala Harris of California had tweeted: "It's wrong for any foreign government to tell Congress what members are allowed in meetings on Capitol Hill."

Mr Jaishankar felt he could afford to

do this as the US administration was headed by Republican Donald Trump, who doesn't care about human rights. It will not be possible for Mr Jaishankar to do what he did in December 2019 again.

The BJP has invested a lot in doing what no other Indian government has done before -- meddle in the US elections and try and get Mr Trump elected again. A group called the "Overseas Friends of the BJP" had registered itself officially as a foreign agent in the US in September. After this was discovered, the party instructed these Indian Americans to help Mr Trump in their "personal capacity" and to not use the BJP's name, but it is clear that they are all BJP supporters.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself asked Indians in the US to vote for Mr Trump at the "Howdy Modi" rally in September 2019. Or at least that is one interpretation we can give to his line "Ab ki baar Trump sarkar".

What happens now that Mr Trump is on his way out? The BJP has begun backpedalling from its recklessness. It trotted out in-house intellectual Ram Madhav to write a newspaper article on Saturday that "US-India ties stand on a

bipartisan and strong footing". Mr Madhav wrote: "Some in India believe Biden-Harris would be bad news for US-India relations."

Actually, nobody believes that. Mr Madhav is confusing the BJP with India. There is no question that US India relations run deep and at times there is a civilisational connect between the two nations. This is not such a time, India has taken a turn towards majoritarianism. The Indian State is bullying and harassing its own citizens at a scale which has alarmed the world.

Pramila Jayapal and Kamala Harris did not casually take up the issues they chose to. They will not stop taking them up now as the previously partisan BJP now pleads for bipartisan support.

Events in America have strengthened the hand of those leaders there who wish India well but think of India as being a collection of Indians. If Indians are mistreated, they will object.

The Democratic Party fought this election on a very liberal platform. On the question of human rights, the most powerful message they were aligned with was Black Lives Matter. This part of the Democratic Party (which

includes Ms Jayapal) has become stronger inside because of the success of the human rights messaging.

Most Indians may not know that in April India was earmarked as a "Country of Particular Concern" by the US Commission on International Religious Freedom. Its report said that "India took a sharp downward turn in 2019" because the Modi government "instituted national-level policies violating religious freedom across India, especially for Muslims". It said of the Citizenship Amendment Act that "this law is meant to provide protection for listed non-Muslim religious communities — but not for Muslims — against exclusion from a nationwide National Register of Citizens and the resulting detention, deportation, and potential statelessness". It said India had seen "nationwide campaigns of harassment and violence against religious minorities to continue with impunity, and engaged in and tolerated hate speech and incitement to violence against them".

It names home minister Amit Shah and UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath and reproduces their statements. Most important, it has recommended that

the US administration act and impose "targeted sanctions on Indian government agencies and officials responsible for severe violations of religious freedom by freezing those individuals' assets and/or barring their entry into the United States under human rights-related financial and visa authorities, citing specific religious freedom violations".

India was able to ignore this till now because Mr Trump was running the administration and he was the one who would decide. India put out a statement that said: "We reject the observations on India in the USCIRF annual report. Its biased and tendentious comments against India are not new. But, on this occasion, its misrepresentation has reached new levels."

This was also a form of running away. If you think you are friends with America, you have to convince them that their findings are wrong. Refusing to engage with them is not a solution. It worked when Mr Trump was in charge. It will not work now.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



## IN BRIEF

### WH CHIEF OF STAFF TESTS VIRUS +VE

**Washington, Nov. 7:** White House chief of staff Mark Meadows has tested positive for Covid-19, becoming the latest Trump administration official to contract the disease, which has killed over 2,36,000 Americans.

It was not immediately clear how 61-year-old Meadows — who has often appeared at public events without a face mask — was infected. A White House official told Fox News that Meadows was “doing well.”

Meadows' positive test comes weeks after President Trump and first lady Melania Trump contracted the Coronavirus and recovered.

## BORIS HAILS DIWALI SPIRIT OF VICTORY

**London, Nov. 7:** UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed the Diwali spirit of the victory of light over darkness and good over evil as he delivered a message of optimism about overcoming the Coronavirus pandemic for a first-of-its-kind virtual Diwali festival this weekend. Johnson appealed for a “huge collective effort” as England entered its second stay-at-home lockdown earlier this week, to last at least until December 2, in order to curb a surge in coronavirus infections across the country.

“While undoubtedly there are huge challenges ahead, I have every confidence in the resilience and resolve and good sense of people across the country and that together we will overcome this virus, just as Diwali teaches us that light triumphs over darkness, good over evil, knowledge over ignorance,” said Johnson.

## RAPPER KING VON KILLED IN ATLANTA

**Atlanta, Nov. 7:** Chicago rapper King Von was among three people shot and killed in a shooting early Friday outside a nightclub in Atlanta that also left three people wounded, state investigators said.

“The preliminary investigation indicates that Dayvon Bennett, aka King Von, and a group of men left the Opium Nightclub and went to the Monaco Hookah Lounge,” the Georgia Bureau of Investigation said in a statement. “Once there, two men approached the group in the parking lot, and the two groups of men started to argue with each other. The argument quickly escalated to gunfire between the two groups.” The GBI said on- and off-duty Atlanta police officers responded and one of each fired shots. “During the shooting incident, six men were shot during the group altercation and officer encounter.”

## INDIAN ELECTED TO UN ADVISORY COMMITTEE

**United Nations, Nov. 7:** In a significant victory for India at the United Nations, Indian diplomat Vidisha Maitra was elected to the UN Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ), a subsidiary organ of the General Assembly. In the Group of Asia-Pacific States, Maitra, First Secretary in India's Permanent Mission to the UN, obtained 126 votes. The 193-member General Assembly appoints members of the Advisory Committee. Members are selected on the basis of broad geographical representation, personal qualifications and experience.

In the group, Ali Mohammed Faq Al-Dabag of Iraq drew 64 votes. The Fifth Committee of the General Assembly, which deals with administrative and budgetary issues, recommended Maitra to the Assembly for a three-year term beginning January 1, 2021.

The victory comes as India gets ready to sit in the UN Security Council as a non-permanent member for a two-year term beginning January 2021. India's Permanent Representative to the UN Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti said that Maitra was elected on Friday to the UN ACABQ “in a strong display of support by UN member states.”

He expressed confidence that Maitra “will bring an independent, objective and much-needed gender-balanced perspective to the functioning of ACABQ”.

# Is Murdoch dumping Trump?

Media magnate Murdoch-owned Fox News helped Don come to power in '16

**New York, Nov. 7:** Fox News and the New York Post, magnate Rupert Murdoch's main media outlets, have started distancing themselves from Donald Trump as the US election vote counting drama drags on — a first since the president came to power and a potential turning point.

On Thursday night in Phoenix, Arizona, supporters of Trump bluntly shouted “Fox News Sucks” in reference to the news outfit considered fiercely loyal to the president for the past five years. Fox News infuriated Trump and his people on election night by calling Arizona for Democrat Joe Biden.

Jared Kushner, Trump's advisor and son in law, called Murdoch in vain to try to get that call retracted. Other media held off from calling the battleground state for Biden as the tallying of ballots continued.

Since that night, Fox News has stepped very carefully around allegations of massive vote fraud coming from the Trump campaign and the man himself.

“We just haven't seen it. It hasn't been presented to us,” Fox News anchor Brett Baier said on the air Friday.

So people are asking if Fox News, which helped bring Trump to power in 2016, is in the process of dumping him as Biden closes in on the magic number of 270 electoral votes that would win him the White House.

DePauw University com-

munications professor Jeffrey McCall said Fox News has always had a twin identity — on one hand, star anchors who are more editorialists than journalists and on the other a newsroom that is much more measured. Some Fox journalists, such as Chris Wallace, who was the moderator at the first Trump-Biden debate, are very well respected professionals.

On the in-your-face editorial side stands Fox star Sean Hannity, who is very close to Trump and said on Thursday evening, “Americans have every right to be suspicious ... to distrust the legitimacy of the results.” McCall said that the way Fox News has treated Trump since the election and its early calling of Arizona for Biden show the more serious side of the network is trying to “operate as independently as possible from the opinion section and even from the ownership.” “These people have their own journalistic standards that they want to uphold.”

But Reece Peck, who wrote a book about Fox News called “Fox Populism,” said this distancing could alienate some viewers and prompt them to switch to another news source, such as OAN, a small new outfit, ultra conservative and extremely pro-

Trump. Behind Fox News, which chalked up 14.1 million viewers on US election night, is, of course, Murdoch. The 89-year-old media mogul is known for his conservative views but over the past few months has come to grips with the idea of a Biden win.

— AFP

**AMERICA, I'M** honoured that you have chosen me to lead our great country. The work ahead will be hard, but I promise: I will be a President for all Americans — whether you voted for me or not. I will keep the faith that you placed in me

JOE BIDEN, *President-elect*

**I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!** Bad things took place during those hours where LEGAL TRANSPARENCY was viciously & crudely not allowed. Windows were covered with thick cardboard so observers could not see into the count rooms.

DONALD TRUMP, *outgoing Prez*

## Don rages at ‘bad things’ inside counting rooms

**Washington, Nov. 7:** Donald Trump on Saturday declared himself as the winner of the November 3 presidential election, even as major American media outlets projected his Democratic rival Joe Biden as next president of the United States. “I WON THIS ELECTION, BY A LOT!” tweeted Trump as major American media outlets declared that he has lost the election and Biden would be the 46th president of the United States. Twitter immediately flagged Trump's tweet

saying that “official sources may not have called the race when this was tweeted. Trump also repeated his allegations of electoral fraud by claiming without evidence that “bad things happened” inside the counting rooms and tens of thousands of votes were illegally received in the key battleground state of Pennsylvania.

The president has repeatedly attempted to question the validity of vote counts in key swing states and made unfounded claims that the election is being “stolen” from him. “Bad things took place during those hours where LEGAL TRANSPARENCY was viciously & crudely not allowed. Tractors blocked doors & windows were covered with thick cardboard so that observers could not see into the count rooms. BAD THINGS HAPPENED INSIDE. BIG CHANGES TOOK PLACE!” he said in a tweet.

Four days after the November 3 presidential election, votes were still being counted in several key battleground states. “This would ALSO change the Election result in numerous States, including Pennsylvania, which everyone thought was easily won on

Election Night, only to see a massive lead disappear. — PTI

## Bannon lawyer quits fraud case

**New York, Nov. 7:** A lawyer for President Donald Trump's former chief strategist, Steve Bannon, quit defending him in a federal fraud case a day after Bannon made inflammatory comments about Dr. Anthony Fauci and FBI Director Christopher Wray.

In a letter dated Friday, defence attorney William Burck told a federal court judge in New York City that he was withdrawing from the case. He did not give a reason why. Reached by email, Burck declined to discuss the decision. The lawyer quit after Bannon suggested on an online broadcast that Fauci and Wray should be beheaded for being disloyal to the president. The remarks prompted Twitter to permanently suspend Bannon's account.

“I'd put the heads on pikes” as a warning to federal bureaucrats, Bannon said on video. “You

● **IN A** letter dated Friday, defence attorney William Burck told a federal court judge in New York City that he was withdrawing from the case.

either get with the programme or you are gone.” Bannon, 66, is facing charges he ripped off Trump supporters as an organiser of a group called “We Build The Wall” that portrayed itself as eager to help the president build a barrier along the US-Mexico border. He has pleaded not guilty.

Prosecutors have accused Bannon and co-defendants of misappropriating money from the group, which raised \$25 million from thousands of donors who thought their cash would be used to build the wall. Prosecutors declined comment on Friday.

— AP

## Protesters crying foul over vote counts simmer safety concerns

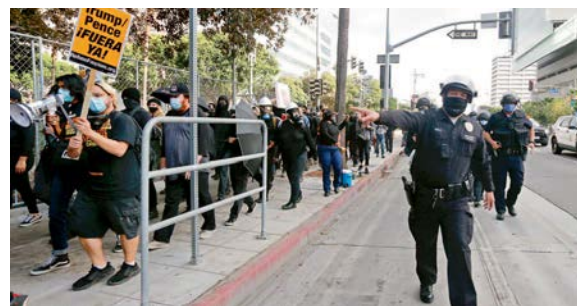
**Washington, Nov. 7:** Pro-Trump protesters — some of them openly carrying rifles and handguns — rallied outside vote-tabulation centres in a few cities around the country Friday, responding to groundless accusations from President Donald Trump that the Democrats were trying to steal the White House.

Election officials in several states where Democrat Joe Biden was ahead said the anger outside their doors made them fear for the safety of their employees. Roughly 100 Trump supporters gathered for a third straight day in front of the elections centre in Phoenix, where hundreds of workers were processing and counting ballots.

“Arrest the poll workers!” the crowd chanted, demanding four more years in office for Trump. Sheriff's deputies kept protesters in a “free speech” zone away from the entrance to the building. “When we start auditing some of these voter rolls, their fraud may actually be exposed,” conservative activist Charlie Kirk told the crowd, eliciting cheers.

In Detroit, dozens of Trump supporters returned to the streets outside the city's convention centre, where election workers counted ballots. “Stop the steal!” the protesters chanted. Some carried signs that read, “Make Elections Fair Again” and “We Love Trump”.

— AP



A police office directs as demonstrators march during a protest after the elections in Los Angeles on Friday. — AP

### MAIL BALLOTS

**1942**

Congress passed the first law that guaranteed the right to vote in federal elections to members of the Armed Forces who were away during wartime

**2009:** Congress passed a bill requiring states to set up a system to transmit absentee ballots to military and civilian voters who were overseas during federal elections

● **28 states** and the District of Columbia accept and count ballots that arrive from overseas after election day

● **3 days** after polls, mail ballots accepted in Georgia as long as they are postmarked by Election Day. North Carolina accepts them until November 12; and Nevada and Pennsylvania until November 10

● **8,900** ballots that have been transmitted to military and overseas voters could still arrive by close of business Friday in Georgia

North Carolina received nearly 11,000 ballots from uniformed service members; Georgia received more than 5,600 ballots; Pennsylvania received nearly 7,800 and Nevada about 2,700



## Why Nevada counting dragging?

**Carson City (US), Nov. 7:** The pace of vote-counting in Nevada is being criticised for taking too long and it's even become fodder for online jokes. But government officials say they are emphasising accuracy over speed in a year when processing an unprecedented flood of mail-in ballots under extended deadlines is taking more time.

“We told everyone early on that results would take

at least ten days,” Secretary of State spokeswoman Jennifer A Russell said in an email. The Legislature passed a bill in August to send all active voters mail-in ballots in hopes of curbing, or at least not fuelling, the spread of the Coronavirus. Those postmarked by Election Day can be counted if they arrive at election offices within seven days, which is Tuesday.

And they continue to

come in, though the number arriving each day is expected to dwindle.

“It's been a different year for us,” said Deanna Spikula, registrar of voters in Washoe County, the state's second-largest county that includes Reno. “The volume is definitely something that we've never seen before in the state as far as receiving and processing mail-in ballots.”

— AP

## Biden: Youngest senator to oldest Prez

**Washington, Nov. 7:** Third time lucky is an apt phrase to describe the remarkable rise of Joe Biden, a veteran in US politics for around five decades, from being one of the youngest senators in history to the oldest American president.

The 77-year-old six-term Democratic senator, who triumphed over incumbent Republican President Donald Trump in Tuesday's presidential election, ran twice unsuccessfully for president — in 1988 and 2008. The presidential dreams that the veteran leader from Delaware had harboured since child-

hood seemed all but over for a third time until he won South Carolina's Democratic Party primary on February 29, forcing most rivals out of the race and making one of the most dramatic comebacks in American political history. Biden served two terms in the White House as former president Barack Obama's vice president, capitalised on that experience to portray himself as a tested leader and a better alternative to Republican incumbent President Donald Trump.

While accepting the Democratic presidential nomination in August,

Biden pledged to restore the “soul of America”, and be an “ally of the light, not the darkness.” “The current president has cloaked America in darkness for much too long. Too much anger. Too much fear. Too much division. If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us, not the worst. I will be an ally of the light, not of the darkness,” he said.

He has a strong track record of being an ardent advocate of a strong India-US relationship. From playing a key role in the passage of India-US civil nuclear deal during a

Republican administration to setting up the goal of a \$500 billion in bilateral trade, Biden has strong ties with the Indian leadership across the aisle and has a large number of Indian-Americans within his close circuit. At a fundraiser in July, Biden had said that India and the United States were natural partners. “That partnership, a strategic partnership, is necessary and important in our security,” he said when asked whether India is critical to the US' national security.

Referring to his eight years as the vice president, Biden said that he

was proud to have played a role in securing Congressional approval for the US-India Civil Nuclear Agreement, which he said was a “big deal”. “Helping open the door to great progress in our relationship and strengthening our strategic partnership with India was a high priority in the Obama-Biden administration and will be a high priority if I'm elected president,” he had said.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1942, Joe Robinette Biden Jr studied at the University of Delaware and then earned a law degree from Syracuse University in 1968.

— PTI

Chief Justice John Roberts, for his part, is not likely to want the election to come down to himself and his colleagues. Roberts, who was not on the court for Bush v Gore in 2000 but was a lawyer for Bush, has often tried to distance the court from the political branches of government and the politics he thinks could hurt the court's reputation.

It's also not clear what legal issues might cause the justices to step in. Trump has made repeated, unsubstantiated claims of election fraud. Lawsuits filed by his campaign so far have been small-scale efforts unlikely to affect many votes, and some already have been dismissed. Still, Trump has focused on the high court.

— AP



## OUR CRITIC'S RATING

Outstanding ★★★★★ | Great ★★★★ | Good ★★★ | Okay ★★ | Poor ★ | Truly Terrible TT

# Parveen Babi: How a life of glamour ended as Token No. 62 at the morgue



Anirudha Bhattacharjee

**A**B&W centre-spread I grew up with in my childhood featured a prominent cricketer. I do not remember where I saw it. Could be Sportsweek, or one of the film magazines which would be sold on the pavement outside the main road connecting Pirmohani to Kadam Kuan in Patna. The cricketer was Salim Durrani, the hero of young women at that time. The beautiful but little-known young woman in the picture, we were told, was a new actress. Parveen Babi.

In no time the little-known young woman, advertised as the "Hottest Discovery" by director B.R. Ishara soon became a centrespread regular. Her pictures would adorn the walls of hair salons along with another centrespread where the reigning sexy symbol, Zeenat Amar, in her youth icon photograph where she would be swinging from a hammock. The filmy press even gave Parveen a moniker — poor man's Zeenat Aman, though by all standards Parveen was the better actress of the two.

Gradually, the poor man's Zeenat became part of the lives of teens brought up on a diet of Hindi films. However, except for her association with multiple men at various points in time, little was known about the roots

of the lady who, along with Sunil Gavaskar, Amitabh Bachchan, Kishore Kumar, R.D. Burman and a few others, made our lives worth living when we were young. Reports about her were mostly about various glamour, lifestyle, perversion, and schizophrenia.

Thankfully, Karishma Upadhyay's book on Parveen is a godsend. The 290+ page-long impressive compendium serves three purposes. One, it documents Parveen Babi's life in intricate detail. Two, it gives a rationale behind the myths associated with the actress. Myths which have been floating in various forms for the last 30 years. And three, it gives her persona a human face.

Upadhyay starts off with the history of the Babi dynasty. The roots are traced back almost 350 years. We get to know about Parveen's parents, her education in a Gujarati medium school, her rather modest upbringing where aspirations were limited, her college days at St. Xavier's, Ahmedabad, and her modelling spree which started with Calico.

Moving to the world of cinema, Upadhyay narrates how Parveen became part of *Dhuen ki Lakir* and *Charitra* almost simultaneously in detail. Her journey — both personal and professional — is outlined well enough to get a

feel of the changing times, the 1970s which were more about gay abandon, to the dark chambers of the 1980s. The gradual loss of innocence and how we lost the lovely and capable actress to schizophrenia and manic depression is the highpoint of the book. The book ends with Parveen Babi getting registered as "unclaimed body number 16" at Cooper Hospital and later as Token No. 62 at the morgue. Poignant? Yes, it is. Heart-breaking? Surely.

Routine? No. What is distinctly different about this book is the immense effort Upadhyay has pumped into her work. Of late, with the boom of social media, the groundwork in terms of interviews and detailing in biographies has shown a marked increase. Upadhyay, however, takes it to a different level. For someone who did not grow up during the time Parveen was a Page 3 regular for causes other than controversies and hallucinations, the effort is mind-boggling.

The book has a plethora of interviews, with her family members, school/college mates, film and media personalities, her life-long friend-cum-secretary and, of course, the three known men in her life.

While Parveen was perceived to be a Page 3 item, the interview responses are definitely not of the "oh, she was such a beautiful girl" variety. They have depth, and coverage wide enough to trace Parveen's life across a wide span of time. And in quite some detail. Stitched almost seamlessly, with anecdotes and news reports sourced from multiple periodicals/publications, the



**PARVEEN BABI**  
By KARISHMA UPADHYAY  
Published by Hachette India ₹467

chapters create a very visual story. Needless to mention, Upadhyay's standing as a reporter/scribe comes out very strongly in her work. Investigative journalism it is, but sans judgement. The book not only forces the reader to think, it also makes you feel. It takes you back in time, it makes the eyes moist. The helplessness of one of the most beautiful, articulate and modern women in cinema rubs on to the reader as well.

Quibbles? I have a few. The extreme neutral stance taken by Upadhyay implies that she does not question even basic things like a 14-year-old joining college. The subcontinent is infamous for fake birth certificates and records, but in this case Upadhyay accepts what was told to her. Two, Parveen's role as the "other woman" in Marc Zuber's life in *Yeh Nazdeekiyan* is like a slice of her own life, and this could have been discussed in more detail rather than limiting the filmic interpretation of her psychic only to Kavita Sanyal in *Arth*. Three, there

are times when the reader might lose track of timelines as not all events in the book are in strict chronology. In this case, the editors should have been extra careful. A few behind-the-scenes filmmaking stories would have added value as well, for example the inspiration behind Vijay Anand's slick *Bullet* (1976), or how Bhappie Sonie borrowed an idea from Billy Wilder in *Chalta Purza*, the Rajesh-Parveen starrer which was expected to rock but did rather badly. Lastly, the book deserved many more photographs, properly catalogued ones.

However, these are minor issues. The book's major strength is the storytelling which, like good biographies, can be given multiple reads simply to get the feel of the enigma that was Parveen.

The 10-year-old small-town boy, after seeing a few centre-spreads of Parveen, had formed an opinion. She was like a happy girl with very sad, lonely eyes. The idea was cemented after watching *Deewar* (1975). Despite her western outfits and chain-smoking avatar, she seemed to be a simple, trusting and down-to-earth girl next door with an elusive quality which was beyond definition. She was like someone who was so near, and yet so far. After reading Upadhyay's book, those "sad, lonely eyes" linger in my head.

*Anirudha Bhattacharjee, author of the National award-winning book R D Burman, the man the music, is a huge fan of 1970s cinema and a self-confessed fan of the actress.*



## Harnessing horror to showcase female rage

**A**tmospherics play a significant role in setting the tone of any film, more so, in a film that needs to draw you in and make you care. And, if sets out to raise the patriarchal practice of killing female newborns, it'd better be logical too. Not just in its premise but in its storytelling too.

The 90-minute film *Kaali Khuhi* (*The Black Well*) ambitiously tries to comment on an age-old malpractice seen more in North India — the killing of female infants at the very moment of their birth. Its first-time director Terrie Samundra does have his heart in the right pace when the grave issue as the basic premise in the film is set in Punjab (albeit the small town is fictional here) where patriarchy has always ruled primarily due to sex-selective abortions that abound leading to a disproportionately higher number of male children in the state. And, the aforementioned imbalance — well-documented in upmarket data culled from research papers published in many journals — is a direct insult since Punjab is otherwise a highly developed state in economic terms. The nameless village could well be a deliberate attempt at reminding us that it could be any place with such depraved and evil thinking people. That too in this day and age!

The Netflix India original film tends to deal with such a solemn subject using great cinematic visuals that provide more jitters than substance but with a scant regard for depth. Though well intentioned the result is both half-baked and murky.

Upon hearing her grandmother's (Leela Samson) sudden illness, the 10 year old Shivangi (Riva Arora) leaves for her father Darshan's (Satyajit Mishra) and mother Priya (Sanjeeta Sheikh) ancestral village in Punjab with them. She looks and behaves just like any girl her age would but little does she know that she would soon be embroiled in a conflict that bodes ominous repercussions. Earlier, when we see a man unsealing the unused well in the introductory sequence, we are sort of prepared to read more into the well-supposed to be the life-giving source the neighbourhood that has a lot more to reveal than hide from its depths.

For Shivangi, who is beginning to learn life's lessons on her own owing to the constant bickering between her parents, the creepy atmosphere in the village adds a pall of gloom all the more. As she explores the village along with her grandmother's neighbour Satya Maasi (Shabana Azmi) and her granddaughter Chandni (Hetvi Bhanushali), strange things begin to happen leaving her wondering what all this would lead to. A girl appears below her grandmother's bed; a dead rat and unnerving ghost-like sounds, etc. Soon, she begins to experience and uncover the mystery surrounding their house that also helps her discover the gruesome past that has been lurking in the village. That the dark and gloomy incidents of the bygone days are back to haunt and avenge is evident from sudden noises and disappearances of characters in her life. Not only her father, who faces the wrath of the spirit, other members of her family get resurrected too, as she

too - being a girl - begins to learn the bitter truth of her being an unwanted child.

To tell such a story, smoky and spooky sound and dim vision are not enough for viewers to get an authentic feel to a plausible story. To be fair, Sejal Shah's muted camerawork uses the right mix of dark lens and natural light to give us shudders in a few scenes, and the technical aspects of the film are laudable. Choosing a subject that is so commonly known in India and yet brushed under the carpet when confronted with it, is itself a very apt choice. Considering such

killings are even justified by some and many of the chauvinists would react to such a story only when prodded, making them matter-of-fact too, we ought to make people aware of such dogmatic non-sensical views. The shameful tradition can be so routine for some that they may not even react. But do we need to accentuate the gory happenings that are, may be, not every day occurrences any more, but nevertheless are

prevalent even today, with haze and uncanny eerie scenes to make it a horror genre film? Agreed the ambience denoting scare and chilling effects of an infant getting killed by self-styled do-gooder women who believed that a girl-child would bring a curse is foreboding. But creating a mysterious atmosphere when everything is familiar and evident is unnecessary.

There are flashes of great analysis when we see nearly an all-woman cast dealing with the subject for which they themselves are equally to blame for perpetuating the unjust social system of patriarchy. That women could jointly take a stand to stop such evil is what one learns about all the women characters involved in the story.

The girl-child as a protagonist represents the new generation who must bring about the desired change and the film is seen through the prism of Shivangi.

That apart, the one and half hour film fails to elicit a thought provoking response from its viewers. The narrative is fairly simplistic and in no way, makes us reason out.

While the idea to scare us by underlining the message that it's scary to know that female infanticide is an ugly reality we cannot escape from. But leaving many of the questions unanswered in a fog that the lens of the camera uses in abundance, leads to an even more miasma of smoke and uncertainty. Why, for instance, the ghost of a girl kill all those who she believes prevented her from living? Or, why does Darshan behave the way he does, and insists on staying back in the village after his mother's demise?

It is also unpardonable to use actors of the calibre of Shabana Azmi in a role that she tries hard to sink her teeth into but in the absence of any credible approach, her efforts are as fleeting as the length of her role itself.

Watch *Kaali Khuhi*, if you must, but don't look for any lessons though the film's writers Terrie Samundra, David Walter Lech and Rupinder Inderjit do have a message for you all — the abysmal dark well of superstitions must be done away with!

### Kaali Khuhi Miasma of Smoke!

**CAST:** Shabana Azmi, Sanjeeda Sheikh, Riva Arora, Satyadeep Misra  
**DIRECTOR:** Terrie Samundra  
**RATING:** ★★  
**Streaming on:** Netflix

## Diane Lane and Kevin Costner reunite for some Western warmth

### Let Him Go

**CAST:** Diane Lane, Kevin Costner  
**Direction:** Thomas Bezucha  
**DIRECTOR:** yyy  
**RATING:** ★★



**S**uperman, that boring lug, has thankfully flown the coop. Writer-director Thomas Bezucha's Western thriller *Let Him Go* reunites Diane Lane and Kevin Costner, who as the Kents were easily the warmest presences in the otherwise dully dour *Man of Steel*.

They are together again in *Let Him Go*, this time front and center but likewise retired and living close to the land. And the pairing is just as good. Both Lane and Costner, direct and earthy performers from the start, have only added depth with age. As long-married Montana ranchers in *Let Him Go*, they're basically the platonic ideal of an old-fashioned, homespun Americana. They could sell you a mountain of jeans if they wanted to.

In Bezucha's film, adapted from Larry Watson's novel, they are Margaret and George Blackledge, and the opening scenes are of ominous harmony. Their son James (Ryan Bruce) returns from the fields for breakfast, turning the radio on

and dancing with his wife, Lorna (Kayli Carter), and their newborn. If there's a trace of discord, it's in a moment where Lorna puts her son under water too hot, leading Margaret to take the child with what probably isn't her first reproachful glance at her daughter-in-law. It's an early sign: *Let Him Go* might be set on familiar, tense Western plains, but it's about mothering.

In a series of fast-moving events, James is killed in a horsing accident. Bezucha cuts immediately to three years later, when Lorna is remarrying in a small, joyless ceremony. Soon after, Margaret sees the new husband Donnie (Will Brittain) striking both mother and son on the

street. Before she's had much time to respond to it, she finds the family has unexpectedly moved out of their new apartment. Margaret starts packing up the Chevy station wagon. She's going to look for them, she says. George, a former lawman, gets in.

At this midway point, *Let Him Go* is good. As two childless, grieving figures traversing a Western landscape, the Blackledges seemed carved out of an elegiac mythology. They are trying to beat back the loss they feel creeping over their lives. "Sometimes that's all life is, Margaret," says George. "A list of what we've lost." It's an impression made more powerful by Lane and Costner, both of whom are return-

ing to a genre they've visited before but from a different standpoint in life. (Costner is more identifiable with Westerns thanks to *Dances With Wolves*, *Wyatt Earp* and others, but don't forget Lane in *Lonesome Dove*.)

Their search takes them into North Dakota where the dark reputation of Donnie's family, the Webboys (pronounced "wee-boys"), begins to surround them before they've even crossed state lines. Finding them at all seems uncertain, but they manage it, and in a menacing dinner, they meet the Webboys. Their clan, too, comes with a formidable matriarch in Blanche (Lesley Manville, bringing dramatic flare to an otherwise restrained film), a much more violent and sinister corollary to Margaret.

But the collision of the two families is managed awkwardly. The Webboys, which include a grinning father (Jeffrey Donovan) and two other brothers, never come through clearly. It's unclear what they're about, except that they're bad news, and their cruelty comes off as strange, extravagant gestures in uncertainly defined roles. What seems set up for a slow-burn showdown between rival grandmas dissipates in blunt shoot-outs that sidelines Lane's Margaret at just the wrong time. It's Margaret who leads the charge, and it's Lane's movie even when the film momentarily forgets it.

— AP

## A grand contribution to Hollywood history

### Mank

**CAST:** Gary Oldman, Amanda Seyfried, Lily Collins, Arliss Howard, Tom Pelphrey, Sam Troughton, Ferdinand Kingsley, Tuppence Middleton, Tom Burke  
**DIRECTOR:** Armando Iannucci  
**RATING:** ★★★★★  
**Streaming on:** Netflix

**I**n one history of the movies, *Citizen Kane* screenwriter Herman Mankiewicz might look like a footnote. The former playwright had a hand in many famous pictures, including *The Wizard of Oz*, but most went uncredited. He was the smartest guy in the room, a drunk and a gambler who was dead at 55. And his kid brother, Joe, who directed and wrote *All About Eve*, would go on to be the

better-known Mankiewicz.

But in another version of Hollywood history, the one David Fincher tells in the glorious new film *Mank*, Herman Mankiewicz as portrayed by Gary Oldman was early Hollywood in all its greatness and tragedy. Working off a crackling screenplay by his late father Jack Fincher, David Fincher has made *Mank* into an incisive look at a complex man who was once William Randolph Hearst's favorite dinner companion but by 43 was a Hollywood has-been — washed up and laid off while writing what would become "Citizen Kane" in a bungalow in Victorville in 1940.

Even though it's filmed in black and white with a big band score (from Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross) and made to look and sound like a film of the time, this isn't some dreamy, nostalgic writer-as-hero tale. It

doesn't take a writer to know that there's nothing more deathly boring and uncinematic as the writing process. Nor is it a referendum on the old "who really deserves credit for *Citizen Kane*" debate.

Instead, *Mank* is about the context around *Citizen Kane*, the tarnished realities of Hollywood's Golden Age, the seductive power of filmed imagery and how a man who was once a friend not just to Hearst, but to Marion Davies, too, would decide to write about them against the advice of everyone in his life.

In order to do this, Fincher flashes back to 1934, when Mank is riding high in the studio system, getting invited to all the parties, helping his little brother Joe (Tom Pelphrey) get a foot in the door and hanging around Hearst (an intimidating but warm Charles Dance) and Davies (an outstanding Amanda



Seyfried). But outside of the opulence of the movie business there is the Depression going on and worldwide unrest that will soon lead to another war. In one scene Louis B. Mayer (Arliss Howard) walks Mank and Joe through the studio lot while giving a lively speech about the "dream factory," only to end up on a big soundstage where he tells everyone from movie stars to grips that they'll have to take

a 50% pay cut so the "family" can survive the Depression. The hypocrisy of it all is getting too much for Mank to handle with his usual sarcasm. He already believes he's slumming it in his mercenary procession and is unafraid to speak his mind to the suits around him, who tolerate him until they don't.

By 1940, Mank is a Hollywood exile who agrees to write a script for the 24-year-old radio won-

derkind Orson Welles (Tom Burke). Bedridden from a car accident, he dictates dialogue and scribbles notes that his prim British assistant Rita (Lily Collins) puts through a typewriter.

There are more questions than answers when it comes to Mank, including why he seemed so intent on self-sabotage and why his wife Sarah (Tuppence Middleton) stayed around. Although pushing the limits of what a 43-year-old man looked like in 1940, Oldman is naturally terrific at playing the guy who refuses to suffer fools and is always ready with a comeback, but who takes it too far too often (the tragedy of the arrogant drunk).

The film is wry and observant about the movie business and all the things that haven't changed, as well as those that have. That it's a Netflix production is a deafening statement of its own. But

it also has a beating heart thanks in large part to Seyfried's Davies, who beautifully reclaims the life and agency of a woman who history and "Citizen Kane" reduced to Hearst's showgirl mistress. Mank and Davies are kindred spirits and she is the moral compass of the ridiculous world they inhabit. When Mank is eviscerating everyone in a drunken rant, you're looking for her reaction. It makes the question of why he ended up writing what he did ever more vexing toward the end. Was it a paycheck? A bout of moral conscience? An attempt to burn bridges? A combination of all? Or something else altogether?

"Mank" isn't interested in providing the answers, which is just as well. It's simply telling a story about a man behind so many of our movie memories and making a new one in the process. And it is, without a doubt one, of the year's very best.

— AP



## SHORT TAKES

## Saints top for 1st time in 32 years

**London:** Southampton swept to the top of the Premier League for the first time since 1988 with a 2-0 win against Newcastle, while Burnley remain without a victory this season after they were held to a 0-0 draw at Brighton on Friday. Goals from Che Adams and Stuart Armstrong ensured Southampton finished the day at the summit of the English top-flight table for the first time since Chris Nicholl's team 32 years ago. It is Ralph Hasenhuttl in charge of the Saints now and the Austrian has masterminded a remarkable revival on the south-coast. Just over a year after they were humiliated in a 9-0 thrashing by Leicester at St Mary's, Southampton have been transformed so thoroughly that they now look capable of beating anyone in the country on their day. Sustaining their place at the top is likely to prove a step too far, yet there is no reason why they shouldn't dream of European qualification and even a surprise bid to finish in the top four. Hasenhuttl recently claimed he wanted his team of "pirates" to stay out of the spotlight, but their swashbuckling form will make that impossible. — *AFP*

## Ram reaches Challenger final

**Eckental, Germany:** Indian ace Ramkumar Ramanathan fought back from a set down to beat Germany's Marvin Moller 4-6, 6-1, 6-1 and enter the final of the Eckental Challenger tennis tournament here on Saturday. Ramkumar fired 12 aces and won five of seven break points on his way to the final of the Euro 88,520 event. Ramkumar will face Sebastian Korda of United States in the final on Sunday. This is his fifth singles final on the Challenger circuit. He has never won a title. On Friday, Ramkumar achieved the best performance of the season by reaching the semifinals with a straight set 6-2, 6-1 win over Evgeny Donskoy of Russia. Before this event, making the Bangkok Challenger quarterfinals in January was the unseeded Indian's best result. He resumed competitive tennis last month after a long coronavirus-forced break. Entering the last-four clash on the back of a convincing quarterfinal win over Donskoy, Ramkumar started the match on the wrong foot, losing the first set 4-6. — *PTI*

## Azam leads Pak's rout of Zimbabwe

**Rawalpindi, Pakistan:** Skipper Babar Azam smashed a robust half-century to lead Pakistan's six-wicket rout of Zimbabwe in the first Twenty20 international in Rawalpindi on Saturday. Azam proved yet again why he is one of the top batsmen in white-ball cricket with an attractive 55-ball 82 to anchor Pakistan's chase of a modest 157-run target in 18.5 overs. The win gives Pakistan a 1-0 lead in the three-match series and a 12th straight win over Zimbabwe in all Twenty20 international cricket. Wesley Madhevere struck a maiden half-century to lead Zimbabwe to 156-6 after they won the toss and batted. **Brief scores:** Zimbabwe 156/6 (Madhevere 70, Rauf 2/25, 2/37) lost to Pakistan 157/4 (Babar 82, Hafeez 36, Muzarabani 2/26).

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**IPL:** Qualifier 2 — Sunrisers Hyderabad vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

**Women's Big Bash League:** Brisbane Heat vs Melbourne Stars from 8.15 am on Sony Six

## TENNIS

**ATP Paris Masters:** Semifinal from 7.30 pm on Sony Six

## FOOTBALL

**English Premier League:** West Brom vs Tottenham Hotspur from 5.30 pm; Leicester City vs Wolverhampton from 7.30 pm; Manchester City vs Liverpool from 10 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

**Italian League:** Lazio vs Juventus from 5 pm; Atalanta vs Inter Milan from 7.30 pm; Bologna vs Verona from 10.30 pm; AC Milan vs Verona from 1.15 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2

## UFC FIGHT NIGHT

Thiago Santos vs Glover Teixeira and other bouts from 8.30 am on Sony Ten 2

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## Can Delhi eclipse Sun?

## Inconsistent Capitals face red-hot Hyderabad in Qualifier 2

**Abu Dhabi, Nov. 7** Peaking at the right time and with all their boxes ticked, Sunrisers Hyderabad are certain to hold sway over a dishevelled Delhi Capitals in the second Indian Premier League qualifier here on Sunday. The past couple of weeks have been a picture in contrast for the two franchises.

After an underwhelming first half, Hyderabad started pushing the envelope with the mercurial David Warner marshalling his resources well.

Capitals, on the other hand, looked like serious contenders till their first nine games, winning seven in that phase before an inexplicable slump saw them lose five out of their next six matches with skipper Shreyas Iyer looking all at sea.

The current situation notwithstanding, young Iyer would want to lead the Capitals to their first summit clash in 13 editions while Warner wouldn't mind adding another silverware to his 2016 triumph.

In fact, if he can win the next two games, Warner could boast of guiding comparatively one of the more inexperienced teams in this IPL.

For Capitals, the biggest worry has been their top-order woes — especially the first three slots where Shikhar Dhawan (525 in 15 games) has shone the brightest.

Prithvi Shaw's (228 from 13 games) technique against top quality fast bowling has left a lot to be desired and Ajinkya Rahane (111 from 7 games) has had only one knock of note so far.

Something that would definitely worry coach Ricky Ponting is the number of ducks by the top-order — nine. Dhawan has four; Shaw has three and Rahane didn't bother the scorers twice.

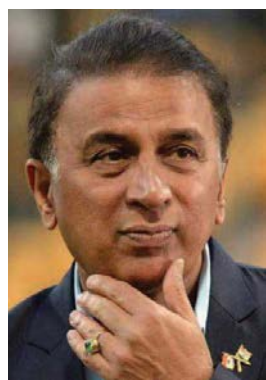
However, the bowling unit has done well save a few occasions like the first qualifier, where Mumbai Indians batting took them apart. Kagiso Rabada (25 wickets), Anrich Nortje (20) and Ravichandran Ashwin (13) have done exceedingly well in most of the games. — *PTI*

## Gavaskar blames Kohli's batting skills for RCB exit

**Dubai, Nov. 7:** Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar has partly attributed the Royal Challengers Bangalore's failure to go all the way in the 13th IPL to captain Virat Kohli's inability to live up to his high standards with the bat.

RCB were knocked out of the tournament after losing by six wickets to former champions Sunrisers Hyderabad in Abu Dhabi on Friday.

"Looking at the high standards that he sets for himself, maybe he would say he didn't quite match that and that's one of the reasons why RCB weren't able to go through," Gavaskar told broadcaster Star Sports. "...Because when he scores those big runs



Sunil Gavaskar

along with AB de Villiers, they invariably have big scores."

Kohli made a little over 450 runs in 15 matches at a strike rate of 121.35 and his team often struggled to get going in the

middle-overs.

The batting legend pointed out that the RCB's bowling lacked enough firepower to consistently challenge the opposition and prevail.

"If anything, their bowling has always been their weak point. Even now, in this particular team, they have got an Aaron Finch, who is a fine T20 player, young Devdutt Padikkal, who began well and then Virat Kohli and AB de Villiers, then you have really got it made," he added.

Gavaskar also believed that the RCB must find a player who can play the role of the finisher and suggested that Shivam Dube can fit into that role. — *PTI*



Sunrisers Hyderabad captain David Warner (left) with his Delhi Capitals counterpart Shreyas Iyer.

— BCCI

## NUMBERS GAME

## HEAD TO HEAD

## OVERALL:

- Matches: 17
- Hyderabad: 11
- Delhi: 6

## MEETING IN LEAGUE STAGE

- Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 15 runs in Abu Dhabi.
- Sunrisers Hyderabad beat Delhi Capitals by 88 runs at Dubai.

## FOR THE RECORD

- Warner with 546 runs at an average of 42 in 15 innings is the second highest run-getter in this IPL.
- Kagiso Rabada with 25 wickets at an average of 19.48 in 15 innings is the second highest wicket-taker in this IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

## Holder praises his bowlers for 'using skills and brains'

**Abu Dhabi, Nov. 7:** West Indies captain Jason Holder, whose late inclusion galvanised a much-improved Sunrisers Hyderabad, praised his side's bowlers for "using brains" as much as skills which earned them a place in the second IPL qualifier against Delhi Capitals.

Sunrisers bowlers stifled RCB to a paltry score of 131 and won the 'Eliminator' by 6 wickets with Holder playing an important all-round role with 3 for 25 and 24 not out off 20 balls.

"For me, it's all about execution. We have had

lots of discussions about certain players and in the heat of the battle, it's all about executing. Led by our bowlers, we have used our skills and our brains," Holder said.

The Caribbean skipper is happy that SRH have "peaked at the right time".

"Morale is really good as we have done well at the back half of the tournament. We peaked at the right stage and (we are) carrying good momentum. Different guys have put up hands on different occasions. One more good effort and we will be in the

finals," he said.

For Holder, who has made the difference with his steady medium pace, picking up 13 wickets in six games, it was being in a good space after two difficult years when he hardly bowled due to a shoulder injury.

"I have had a few injuries in the last couple of years, which have hampered my preparations. I had a bad shoulder and had surgeries. So, I worked a little harder, fine-tuned my skills. I am in a good space and that gives me confidence," Holder said. — *PTI*

## RCB SHOULD REMOVE VIRAT FROM HOT SEAT: GAMBHIR

**New Delhi, Nov. 7** Former India opener and two-time IPL champion skipper Gautam Gambhir feels Virat Kohli's non-performance as Royal Challengers Bangalore captain should lead to his removal from the hot seat as it is now a question of accountability.

Known for his straight-talking, the hero of India's two World title triumphs made it clear that Kohli's name as a leader shouldn't be taken alongside the likes of Mahendra Singh Dhoni and Rohit Sharma, who are IPL's most successful captains.

Asked if Kohli should be removed from RCB's captaincy, Gambhir told 'ESPNCricinfo', "100 per cent, because the problem is about accountability.

Eight years into the tournament (without a trophy), eight years is a long time.

"Tell me any other captain forget about captain, tell me any other player who would have got eight years and wouldn't have won the title and would have still continued with it.

"So it has to be accountability," Gambhir, who led KKR to two IPL titles in 2012 and 2014, said on the show 'Time Out'.

Gambhir has been a staunch critic of Kohli's IPL leadership over the years but he insisted that there is nothing personal. "...but somewhere down the line, he needs to put his hand up and say, 'yes, I am responsible. I am accountable'."

— PTI

## Novak bags 6th year-end No. 1 spot

## Djokovic equals Sampras' record

**Paris, Nov. 7:** Novak Djokovic on Friday emulated childhood hero Pete Sampras by claiming the year-end world number one ranking for the sixth time.

Djokovic, 33, was confirmed in the position after Rafael Nadal, the only man who could deny him top spot, opted not to play in the Sofia event next week.

Djokovic was also a season-ending world number one in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018.

"Pete was somebody I looked up to when I was growing up, so to match his record is a dream come true," said Djokovic.

The Serb star, a winner of 17 Grand Slam titles, had already moved past Sampras' tally of 286 weeks in the top spot in September.

Djokovic can go past all-time record-holder Roger Federer's mark of 310 weeks on March 8 next year.

"To finish the year as No.1 is one of the most impressive achievements in our sport, one which requires sustained excellence across the season," said ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi.

"To see Novak achieve this for the sixth time and

**Pete Sampras was somebody I looked up to when I was growing up, so to match his record is a dream come true.**

— **NOVAK DJOKOVIC**  
Serbian tennis star

match Pete's record is simply incredible, and he continues to cement his place in the history books."

Djokovic has compiled a 39-3 winning season, picking up four titles — a record eighth Australian Open, Dubai, the Cincinnati tournament, which was staged in New York, and in Rome.

However, he was disqualified from the US Open for hitting a line judge with a ball before his bid to win a second Roland Garros ended in a tame defeat to Nadal in the final.

Djokovic was virtually assured of ending 2020 on top of the rankings when he reached the quarterfinals in Vienna last month.

He was stunned 6-2, 6-1 by Italian lucky loser Lorenzo Sonego in the Austrian capital, suffering the heaviest loss of his career in a best-of-three sets clash.

— *AFP*

## Supernovas edge past Trailblazers, in final

**Sharjah, Nov. 7:** Two-time champions Supernovas defeated Trailblazers by two runs in a must-win game to enter the final of the Women's T20 Challenge here on Saturday.

Opener Chamari Atapattu top-scored with a 67-run knock as Supernovas posted 146 for six after opting to bat.

Trailblazers were then restricted to 144 for five in 20 overs.

Electing to bat, Supernovas rode on Atapattu's aggressive 47-ball 67, which was studded with five fours and four sixes, and skipper Harmanpreet Kaur's big shots (31 off 29) in the slog overs to post a challenging total on board.

Supernovas were going strong at 80 for no loss in 10 overs but the Trailblazers spinners Harleen Deol (1/34) and Salma Khatun (1/25) pulled things back, giving away just 23 runs in next five overs.

However, Harmanpreet exploded in the 19th over, smashing a four and a six to pile up 15 runs to take them close to 150-mark.

**Opener Chamari Atapattu top-scored with a 67-run knock as Supernovas posted 146 for six after opting to bat.**

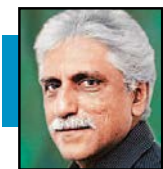
For Trailblazers, experienced Jhulan Goswami was the best bowler with figures of one for 17 from 4 overs, while Harleen and Khatun picked up a wicket each. There were also three runs in Supernovas' innings.

Earlier, left-handed opener Atapattu looked for runs from the word go and made her intentions clear with two boundaries in the second over of the innings bowled by Deepti Sharma.

Later in the fourth over, the Sri Lankan nonchalantly lost one over mid-off for a six and then swept Deepti for a boundary as Supernovas amassed 15 runs. — *PTI*

**Brief Scores:** Supernovas 146/6 (Chamari Athapaththu 67, Harmanpreet Kaur 31; Jhulan Goswami 1/17) bt Trailblazers 144/5 (Deepti Sharma 43 n.o., Shakera Selman 2/31).

## Delhi have to put up an all-round show to beat SRH



## Ayaz Memon Over The Top

Which team will play Mumbai Indians in the IPL final on Tuesday?

It is perilous to pick winners in a format which is known to throw up topsy-turvy results. I have so often ended up my foot in the mouth after making was seemed a 'safe' forecast, that I now leave predictions to the more brave or foolhardy.

Yet, how the two teams — Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals — which

clash today for a place in Tuesday's final is worth a study simply because of the hugely contrasting style in which they've reached this situation.

When the tournament started, DC couldn't put a foot wrong and SRH couldn't put a foot right. Midway through the league stage, DC seemed the strongest rivals for Mumbai Indians, SRH appeared lackluster, and still seeking their best combo.

Cut to the last fortnight,

and the scenario changes dramatically. DC, after a spate of wins, suddenly hit a slump, got stranded on 14 points for a long while, and only just made it to the play-offs.

That they finished no.2 on the points table was statistical fact, but in terms of quality of performance, DC were not quite the same, exciting, winning side that one saw at the start of the tournament.

Some stats here to explain the turmoil DC has undergone. They've lost five of their last 6 matches. In the first qualifier, they were 0-3 against MI chasing 200 and lost by a whopping 57 runs margin.

The top order, full of youthful energy and bravado, now appears as hardy as papadum, which was

amply evident in the first qualifier against Mumbai when DC were reduced to 0-3!

Shaw, Pant, and Rahane have been struggling badly, which is adding pressure not just on Iyer and Stonis, but also the bowlers. DC's bowling which was the most penetrative when the tournament started appears to have lost edge. Even Rabada has been innocuous.

Contrast this with SRH in the past fortnight. Starting with two defeats, the team picked up momentum towards the end of the league stage, and now has five successive wins to its credit.

This includes a massive 10-wicket victory over Mumbai in the last league match, which no other

team has managed in this tournament, and saw SRH leapfrog over hapless KKR into the play-offs.

Their next match, against RCB, was a cliff-hanger, victory coming only in the final over. The calmness of Williamson and the rich experience of Holder saw them through.

These two wins showed how quickly and well SRH could adapt to different pitches and situations. That's because they've struck a formidable combination nearing the end of the league phase.

Though hit by injuries (Mitch Marsh, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, Williamson, Vijay Shankar, Saha have been casualties, long or short term), SRH have been able to find adequate replace-

ment, regroup in time, and now look like the team to beat.

So remarkable has been their turnaround after losing their first two matches that SRH can afford to leave out senior pro and white ball specialist Johny Bairstow from the playing side without worry.

The batting leans heavily dependent on Warner no doubt, but in crunch situations, other batters have delivered too. Williamson's composed half century and fine partnership with Holder took the team home under pressure against RCB.

It's in the bowling though that SRH have stood out, more so after Holder's inclusion. The attack now has a fine blend of quality pacers and spinners.

Diminutive leg spinner Rashid Khan has been the stand out performer, with others only a whit behind.

The IPL is played at frenetic pace, players and teams that show stamina, physical and mental, are most likely to succeed. This also finds expression in the composition of the playing sides.

It is no surprise that Mumbai Indians have made the least changes in the tournament followed by SRH, allowing, of course, for those forced by injury. What DC are up against tonight is a well-balanced, ambitious team led aggressively by captain Warner that is refusing to yield an inch. To beat this team, Delhi have to put up a capital show in every sense of the word.