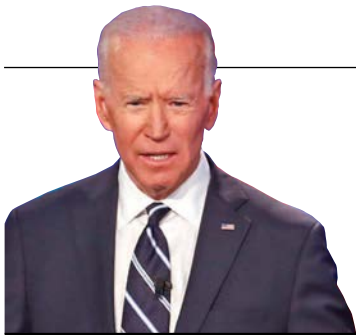


THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 1 NOVEMBER 2020



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Biden knocks Trump as rivals barnstorm heartland in 2020 prez poll finale

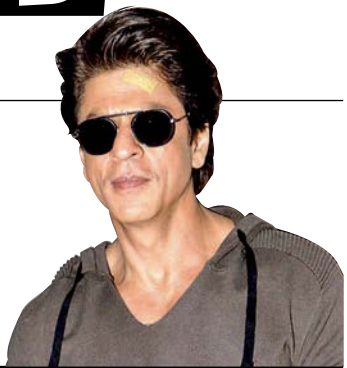


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After gov's report on law and order, Shah replaces Nadda for Bengal visit

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Upcoming films from SRK production house will have younger stars in lead roles



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WINDOWS



Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra performs Parikrama after paying tribute to her grandmother and former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on her 36th death anniversary at Shakti Sthal in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

700-km traffic jam as Paris chokes on day 1 of lockdown

Paris: Parisians fleeing for the countryside jammed the roads ahead of France's lockdown to slow the spread of resurgent coronavirus infections, and there was only a sprinkling of people hurrying along city sidewalks Friday as the nationwide restrictions went into effect. Dystopian images of logjams that stretched for 435 miles (700 kilometres) at one point Thursday evening. ■ [More on Page 6](#)

Delhi's air quality remains 'very poor'

New Delhi: Delhi's air marginally improved on Saturday as winds picked up speed and the contribution of stubble fires from the neighbouring states of Punjab and Haryana remained relatively low. The air quality index of Delhi was 365, in the "very poor" category on early Saturday. ■ [More on Page 2](#)

JEE exam fraud due to wide nexus: Probe

Guwahati: In what has become the major area of concern, the ongoing investigation into the JEE exam fraud case has found evidence, indicating that the practice of proxy appearing in the JEE examination has a wide nexus and it was prevalent at many more centres. ■ [More on Page 4](#)

COUNTERPOINT



Our campaign is very dull.. our rival candidate gets more EC notices than us!

WEATHER

Max: 31°C
Min: 13°C
RH: 28%
Rain: 0%

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwavyuja Bahula Padyami till 10.49 pm
Star: Bharani till 8.55 pm
Variyam: Sesha Variyam up to 6.32 am
Durmuhurtam: 4.10 pm to 4.55 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.35 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.33 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.49 PM
MOONSET TODAY 6.56 AM

■ 'Posters of those involved in love jihad will be put on road crossings'

With 'Ram Naam Satya' warning, Yogi vows law against 'love jihad'

Jaunpur/Deoria (UP), Oct. 31: Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said that his government will come up with a law to deal with incidents of "love jihad" and used the Hindu funeral chant of "Ram Naam Satya Hai" to threaten all "those who... don't respect our daughters and sisters".

Welcoming the recent Allahabad high court ruling declaring that conversion for the sole purpose of marriage is not valid, the chief minister also said posters would be put up of those involved in "love jihad", a derogatory coinage that refers to what the BJP and the RSS claims inter-faith marriages, especially between Muslims boys and Hindu girls, are conversion under the guise of love.

"Allahabad high court has said religious conversion isn't necessary for marriage. The government will work to curb 'love jihad'. We will bring an effective law. It is my warning to those who play with the honour and dignity of sisters and daughters by hiding their real names and identities. If they do not mend their ways, their Ram



Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath addresses a public meeting in Jaunpur on Saturday. — PTI

The government will work to curb 'love jihad'. We will bring an effective law. It is my warning to those who play with the honour and dignity of sisters and daughters by hiding their real names and identities. If they do not mend their ways, their Ram Naam Satya journey will start.

— Yogi Adityanath
Uttar Pradesh Chief minister

Naam Satya journey will start." Mr Adityanath said. He was addressing election rallies in Jaunpur and Deoria ahead of the November 3 by-elections for the Malhani and Deoria assembly seats.

"The posters of those involved in love jihad will be put on all road crossings,"

Mr Adityanath said, sending out a warning against interfaith marriages in both his speeches.

In February, the government disowned the term "love jihad". In a statement in Parliament it said that the term was not defined under existing laws and no case had been reported by any Central agency.

Mr Adityanath, whose administration has been criticised for a spate of horrific crimes against women, including two separate instances of rape of Dalit women in September, also repeated his plans for a "Mission Shakti" to "make sure all sisters and daughters are protected".

Referring to his government's Mission Shakti programme, the chief minister said that it is meant to ensure the safety, security and honour of women. But if anyone still dares to indulge in any misadventure, Operation Shakti is also ready to take on him, he said.

The Allahabad high court's assertion that

conversion just for the sake of marriage is not valid came while dismissing the plea of a newly married couple. The couple had approached the court to direct police and the woman's father not to disturb their marital life. Justice M.C. Tripathi had passed the order last month.

"The court's verdict will be followed and the honour and dignity of women will be ensured," Mr Adityanath said.

The BJP is fielding Satyaprakash Mani Tripathi from Deoria and Manoj Singh from Malhani (Jaunpur). While the former was with the BJP, Malhani seat was with the SP. — PTI

Modi takes maiden seaplane flight



Prime Minister Narendra Modi waves to his supporters after he arrived from Kevadia via India's first seaplane at Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad on Saturday. The flight connects Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmedabad to the Statue of Unity in Kevadia in Narmada district. — PTI

SPECIAL REPORT

Indo-Nepal border to have a 'laser wall' to check smuggling

VIKRAM SHARMA
HYDERABAD, OCT. 31

As India is fast-tracking the construction of its border infrastructure in view of increasing threats from hostile neighbours, the 1,751 km long Indo-Nepal border will soon have "laser walls" or infrared fencing to maintain effective vigil.

The infrared fencing will be in place around the Sonauli checkpoint on the Indo-Nepal border in Uttar Pradesh and will be extended to the border areas in Uttarakhand.

The Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB), which guards the Indo-Nepal border, has taken a cue from the Border Security Force (BSF) which has installed infrared fencing along the India-Pakistan International Border in Punjab for effective vigil on terrorists and narcotics.

Sources in the SSB told

▶ **THE INFRARED** fencing will be in place around the Sonauli checkpoint on the Indo-Nepal border in Uttar Pradesh and will be extended to the border areas in Uttarakhand.

The Asian Age that though the work to install infrared fencing was supposed to commence early this year and completed, the project could not take off due to the Covid-19 induced lockdown. Now that the lockdown has eased, work is likely to commence soon.

Since the India-Nepal border is open under international friendship treaty, it witnesses hectic activity as people do not require a visa or other documents to cross it. All they need is an ID proof. The porous border also enables hassle-free entry and exit to illegal immigrants, terrorists, human traffickers and

■ [Turn to Page 4](#)

Sir Sean Connery, original James Bond, dies aged 90

London, Oct. 31: Movie legend Sir Sean Connery, who shot to international stardom as the suave, sexy and sophisticated British agent James Bond and went on to dominate the silver screen for four decades, died aged 90 on Saturday.

Connery's wife and two sons said he "died peacefully in his sleep surrounded by family" in the Bahamas, where he lived. His son Jason Connery said his father had been "unwell for some time." "We are all working at understanding this huge event as it only happened so recently, even though my dad has been unwell for some time... A sad day for all who knew and loved my dad and a sad loss for all people around the world who enjoyed the wonderful gift he had as an actor."

Connery leaves his wife Micheline and sons Jason and Stephane.

Connery was raised in near poverty in the slums of Edinburgh and worked as a coffin polisher, milkman and lifeguard before his bodybuilding hobby helped launch an acting career that made him one of the world's biggest stars.

Tall and handsome, with a throaty voice to match a sometimes crusty personality, Connery played a series of noteworthy roles and won an Academy Award for his portrayal of a tough Chicago cop in *The Untouchables* (1987). He was 59 when *People* magazine declared him the "sexiest man alive" in 1989. However, he will forever be



Sean Connery

remembered for playing British agent 007, the character created by novelist Ian Fleming and immortalized by Connery in films starting with *Dr. No* in 1962. As Bond, his debonair manner and wry humour in foiling flamboyant villains and cavorting with beautiful women belied a darker, violent edge, and he crafted a depth of character that set the standard for those who followed him in the role.

■ [Turn to Page 6](#)

Tejashwi shares PM's clip to slam Nitish over 'scams'

15 years of Nitish regime have seen over 60 scams in the state: Yadav

NAYEAR AZAD
PATNA, OCT. 31

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav, who is contesting Bihar polls as the face of the Grand Alliance, on Saturday targeted the chief minister Nitish Kumar-led government alleging that in the past 15 years there have been over 60 scams in the state. To prove his point, he shared an old video of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on social media in which Mr Modi lists over 30 scams linked to Nitish Kumar's government.

"Over 60 scams of over ₹30,000 happened during Nitish Kumar's tenure as chief minister. Out of these, 33 scams were mentioned by Prime Minister Narendra Modi five years ago," Mr Yadav said in a tweet, tagging the Prime Minister's five-year-old speech.

It's, however, not clear where the Prime Minister was speaking and which government he was referring to in his speech.

When asked about the video, RJD leaders in Patna said that the Prime Minister's old video being circulated by Mr Yadav is of 2015 Assembly elections when Nitish Kumar was

▶ **WHEN ASKED** about the video, RJD leaders in Patna said that the Prime Minister's old video being circulated by Mr Yadav is of 2015 Assembly elections when Nitish Kumar was part of the Grand Alliance and contested against the BJP.

part of the Grand Alliance and contested against the BJP.

Besides, Mr Yadav and the other Grand Alliance partners, LJP chief Chirag Paswan had earlier created a flutter in Bihar politics by alleging a major scam in the state government's Saat Nischay (7 Resolves) scheme and promised to send all those found guilty to jail, including Mr Nitish Kumar, if his party is elected to power. He had also targeted the chief minister's pet project of liquor prohibition by calling it a breeding ground of mafia and corruption in the state.

The Opposition coalition has been trying to reach out its voters in Bihar with employment. ■ [Turn to Page 4](#)

Congress begins process to choose new party president

SREEPARNA CHAKRABARTY
NEW DELHI, OCT. 31

The Congress has finally begun the process of electing a new president, more than a year after Rahul Gandhi quit following the party's disastrous performance in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

The party's chief election authority, headed by Madhusudan Mistry, has written a letter to all Pradesh Congress Committee chiefs and general secretary in-charges of various states informing them that an AICC session

would soon be called and the process of registration for the same should begin.

In the Congress hierarchy, only AICC members have voting rights in case of any elections.

In the letter, a copy of which is available with this newspaper, Mr Mistry has asked all states to send the list of names along with photographs for registration.

Sources said that the revision of the AICC rolls has begun at state level.

The AICC session is being planned for early next year in the month of January or February.

Kamal Nath says EC move illegal, knocks at SC door

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 31

Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister and senior Congress leader Kamal Nath has moved the Supreme Court challenging the decision by the Election Commission (EC) to revoke his "star campaigner" status ahead of the November 3 by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in the state.

Mr Nath has approached the apex court against the EC order, terming it illegal and a violation of his and the Congress Party's constitutional and statutory rights.

Mr Nath has sought an urgent hearing in the case in view of the elections.

"It is the right of the party to nominate a person as a star campaigner and the Election Commission cannot interfere with the party decision. The decision is a breach of the fundamental right of expression and movement," Mr Nath said in his petition.

The EC on Friday revoked Mr Nath's star campaigner status citing his repeated violation of model code of conduct during campaigning for the Congress.

Earlier, the party had decided to hold a plenary in April in Udaipur. However, due to the Covid-19 outbreak, it was put on hold.

Sources told this newspaper that efforts are on to bring in a consensus on the name of Mr Gandhi before the meeting. However, the Wayanad MP has conveyed that he would like to wait for the Bihar Assembly results before taking any decision.

In case, Mr Gandhi decides not to come back as the party president, there is likely to be a contest with many throwing in their hats, the sources said.

UNLOCK 6 IN TN, ODISHA

Schools can re-open, larger crowd allowed at weddings, funerals

AGE CORRESPONDENTS
BHUBANESWAR/CHENNAI, OCT. 31

The Odisha and the Tamil Nadu governments on Saturday announced their Unlock-6 guidelines, allowing partial reopening of schools and certain relaxations in the solemnisation of marriage ceremonies and the conduct of last rites of deceased persons.

As per the new guidelines in Odisha, classes for students of IX to X will be allowed with a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) November 16 onwards.

The Tamil Nadu government on Saturday allowed schools, colleges, cinemas, zoos and amusement parks to reopen in November while following SOPs. Chief minister Edappadi

▶ **As per the new guidelines** in Odisha, classes for students of IX to X will be allowed with a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) November 16 onwards.

K. Palaniswami said religious, cultural, social, political and entertainment events can be held from November 16 and that up to 100 people can take part in them.

Schools, colleges, research and other educational institutions, besides hostels, will be allowed to open on November 16, he said. Schools will also begin conducting classes for students from classes 9 to 12. Cinema theatres and multiplexes can use up to 50 per cent seats. Zoos and amusement parks shall resume functioning on November 10. The relaxations are not applicable to containment zones, the chief minister said.

SHORT TAKES

Tripura: 90-year-old woman gangraped

Agartala: A 90-year-old woman has been allegedly gang-raped by two men in her house in Tripura, police said on Saturday. The incident took place at Barhaldi village in Kanchanpur subdivision of North Tripura district on October 24 but her relatives lodged a police complaint on October 29, a senior police officer said. The two men accused of raping the woman are absconding and a manhunt has been launched to nab them, superintendent of police Bhanupada Chakraborty said. "One of the accused used to call the woman 'grandmother', who was living alone in her house. On the night of the incident, he and another man broke into the house and raped the elderly woman," the officer said. — PTI

Jawan kills self with service rifle

Sukma: A 27-year-old jawan from the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) allegedly committed suicide by shooting himself with his service weapon in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, police said on Saturday. Constable Kamla Kant Rohidas, belonging to CRPF's 223rd battalion, shot himself with an Insas rifle at his unit's headquarter in Dornapal police station area on Friday night, an official said. On hearing the gunshot, Rohidas' colleagues rushed to his barrack and found him lying in a pool of blood, following which he was taken to a local hospital, where he was declared brought dead, the official said. — PTI

Crane collides with Metro pillar, 1 dead

Mumbai: A woman was killed and two labourers were injured when a part of a crane collapsed on them after it accidentally hit a metro rail pillar on Saturday in Andheri, police said. The incident occurred in the early hours near Gundavali bus stop on Western Express Highway, an official said. The Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority has formed a three-member committee to investigate and submit a report on the incident within two days. According to a press note issued by the Mumbai Police, the driver of a puller-axle, who was moving towards Andheri, lost control when a trolley being carried by the vehicle separated and rammed the woman, an auto-rickshaw and a taxi.

Yoga trainer held for raping woman

Shahjahanpur: A yoga trainer was arrested for allegedly raping a woman on the promise of marriage, police said on Saturday. Rishi Pandey was arrested in Basti district Friday evening on the complaint of a woman yoga trainer, superintendent of police (City) Sanjay Kumar said. D.K. Saroj, station house officer of Walterganj police station, said an FIR was lodged on the complaint of a woman against Pandey on September 17. The woman had alleged that he raped her many times on the promise of marriage but refused to marry her when she got pregnant, Saroj said. — PTI

Congress leader says Scindia offered him ₹50cr to join BJP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, OCT. 31

With barely 2 days to go for the crucial by-election to 28 assembly constituencies in Madhya Pradesh, senior Congress leader and former minister Umang Singh on Saturday made sensational allegations against BJP MP Jyotiraditya Scindia claiming that the latter had offered him Rs 50 crore to switch over to the saffron party. BJP, however, strongly rebutted the charges describing it "fallout of infighting in Congress in Madhya Pradesh". Talking to reporters in Dhar in Madhya Pradesh, Mr Singh, said to be close to ex-AICC president Rahul Gandhi, alleged that he was offered Rs 50 crore by Mr Scindia to join BJP in March this year when former chief minister Kamal Nath faced a revolt by 22 Congress MLAs.



The tribal leader further claimed that he was also given assurance of a cabinet berth in the new BJP government in the state. "I had spurned the offer saying that I am not for sale," Mr Singh claimed. According to him, the offer was made to him at the time when 22 former Congress MLAs, loyalists of Mr Scindia, had holed them in a hotel in Bengaluru, triggering political turbulence in the state. Later, the 22 former MLAs resigned from the assembly leading to the fall of the Kamal Nath government. Incidentally, Mr Singh had created a ripple in Congress last year when he accused former chief minister Digvijay Singh of blackmailing the ministers in the Kamal Nath government for money

Shah's 2-day Bengal visit from Nov. 5

To replace Nadda, chair meetings of party functionaries from Rarh Bengal, Midnapore zones

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, OCT. 31

Getting an adverse report on the law and order situation in West Bengal from governor Jagdeep Dhankhar, Union home minister Amit Shah has replaced BJP chief J.P. Nadda to embark on a two-day visit by himself to the state from November 5 to take stock of the ground realities and to also review the party's preparations for the Assembly election next year. He will land at Kazi Nazrul Islam Airport in Andal of

Burdwan (West) district on November 4. After his night-stay at Durgapur, Mr Shah will travel to Bankura the following day for his first party meeting, which is likely to be held either at an auditorium, Rabindra Bhavan, or in a hotel. On Saturday, state BJP president Dilip Ghosh said, "The schedule was changed on Friday. Mr Shah is coming instead of Mr Nadda. Though Mr Shah's visit was decided earlier, there were issues with his health condition." "On November 5, Mr



AMIT SHAH'S move comes a day after Bengal gov briefed him in New Delhi on October 29, before his month-long visit to Darjeeling, about the poor state of affairs under Mamata Banerjee's rule

Shah will chair a meeting in Bankura of our party functionaries of Rarh Bengal and Midnapore zones. The following day, he will preside over a meeting at the EZCC (Eastern Zonal

Cultural Centre) at Salt Lake on the Kolkata and Nabadwip zones," he added.

Mr Shah's move comes a day after Mr Dhankhar briefed him in New Delhi on October 29, before his month-long visit to Darjeeling, about the poor state of affairs under chief minister Mamata Banerjee's rule.

On the governor's role behind Mr Shah's visit, state BJP general secretary Sayantan Basu said, "Mr Shah is one of the senior most leaders in our party. He was our party president for a long time.

Guided by him, we became successful in the state."

He added, "But it is also a fact that Mr Shah is the Union home minister. He is getting complaints of daily killings of our party workers while the police is acting at the behest of the ruling Trinamul Congress here. It is likely that he wants to witness some incidents and understand the situation the state is in."

"His visit is meant to carry out a reality-check. Apart from party workers, he may interact with the people. Plans are yet to be finalised," he said.

No change of BJP guard in Bengal: Vijayvargiya

Kolkata, Oct. 31: BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya Saturday said the party will fight the coming assembly polls in West Bengal with Dilip Ghosh as its president and refuted media reports of his removal.

There were reports in a section of the media that Ghosh might be removed from the party post before the polls as the central leadership is not happy with the inner squabbling in the state BJP.

"The reports are not only baseless but also misleading and politically motivated. I want to categorically say that West Bengal BJP will



fight the assembly election with Dilip Ghosh as its state president. There is no question of replacing him," Vijayvargiya told PTI.

West Bengal BJP general secretary Sayantan Basu, known to be close to Ghosh, said, "Dilipda was re-elected for three years this January, after completing his first term. There is no question of his removal".

Mr Ghosh himself said he is "loyal soldier" of the party and is not aware of any such report. — PTI

No surprises if Tejashwi becomes CM: Sanjay Raut

Pune, Oct. 31: Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut said on Saturday that he would not be surprised if the Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav became chief minister after the Bihar Assembly polls.

Speaking at an event organised by the Pune Union of Working Journalists, Raut said all eyes are on ongoing elections in the northern state.

"There is a youngster who does not have any support, and investigation agencies like CBI and ED are hounding him. He is challenging the Union government as it is suppressing opposition parties," the Sena leader said, referring to Tejashwi.

"Therefore, I will not be surprised if he became the chief minister of Bihar," Mr Raut added.

He also hit out at National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah and PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti who have sought restoration of Article 370 which gave autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir.

Asked about opposition leaders meeting Maharashtra governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari with their demands, Raut said they should meet the concerned ministers instead. — PTI

Says triumph of Hindutva movement would mark end of 'Indian idea' Tharoor: 'Hindu India' wouldn't be Hindu at all

New Delhi, Oct 31: The Hindutva movement is the "mirror image" of the Muslim communalism of 1947 and its triumph would mark the end of the Indian idea, says senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor, asserting that Hindutva is a political doctrine, not a religious one.

A "Hindu India" would not be Hindu at all, but a "Sanghi Hindutva state", which is a different country altogether, says Tharoor in his new book "The Battle of Belonging"

that was released on Saturday.

"People like me want to preserve the India we love, and not turn our beloved nation into the kind of religious state we were brought up to detest," he said.

Tharoor also asserted that Hindutva movement rhetoric echoes the bigotry that India was constructed to reject.

In the book published by Aleph Book Company, Tharoor makes a stinging critique of the Hindutva

People like me want to preserve the India we love, and not turn our beloved nation into the kind of religious state we were brought up to detest

— Shashi Tharoor, Congress leader

doctrine and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, which he says is a

challenge to, arguably, the most fundamental aspect of Indianness.

Devoting a chapter to the "Hindu Pakistan" controversy in the book, the former Union minister writes: "I had inveighed against the ruling party's attempts to create a Hindutva version of Pakistan, since that was not what our freedom movement fought for; nor was it the idea of India enshrined in our Constitution."

"This is not just about

the minorities, as the BJP would have us believe. Many proud Hindus like myself cherish the inclusive nature of our faith and have no desire to live, as our Pakistani neighbours are forced to, in an intolerant mono-religious state," he writes.

Tharoor's reported comment last year that the BJP will pave the way for creation of a "Hindu Pakistan" had sparked a controversy with the party demanding his apology over the remarks. — PTI



Devotees during Lord Raghunath's Rath Yatra, days after the culmination of Dussehra festival, in Kullu district on Saturday. — PTI

Chhattisgarh: BJP banks on Jogi's legacy to win Marwahi

AGE CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, OCT. 31

BJP seems to be banking on the legacy of former chief minister late Ajit Jogi to win the November 3 by-elections to Marwahi (ST) assembly constituency in Chhattisgarh, held by the Jogi family for the last 20 years.

This is evident from the fact that the party's campaign strategy for Marwahi focused on how the Jogi family was given a raw deal by the Bhupesh Baghel government in the matter of settling their tribal caste status leading to rejection of nominations of

late Jogi's son Amit and the latter's wife Richa in the by-elections.

The tribal status of Jogi junior was rejected and that of his wife suspended leading to the cancellation of their nominations in the by-polls.

Addressing an election meeting in Marwahi late on Friday, the former chief minister and BJP national vice-president Raman Singh said the voters of Marwahi would not tolerate injustice to the family of late Mr Jogi who had done lot of works for the constituency and give a befitting reply to the ruling Congress in the by-polls.

Interestingly, Janata Congress Chhattisgarh (JCC) president Jogi junior on Saturday extended support to BJP in the by-election.

JCC MLA Dharamjit Singh also met Mr Singh to extend his support for BJP in the by-elections.

The JCC meanwhile has launched a campaign in the constituency highlighting injustice done to the family by the Bhupesh Baghel government by 'stripping' them of their tribal status.

The campaign was led by late Jogi's wife Renu who is one of the four Janata Congress Chhattisgarh MLAs in Chhattisgarh.

Rajasthan govt, Gujjars agree on 14 points of demand

Jaipur, Oct. 31: A delegation of Gujjar leaders on Saturday held talks with the Rajasthan government following which a consensus was reached on 14 points of the reservation demand made by the community.

Gujjar leader Colonel Kirori Singh Bainsla, however, was not present in the meeting.

The development comes amid an agitation call given by the Gurjar Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti over the quota demand from November 1. Health minister Raghu Sharma told a press conference that a seven-hour meeting of the cabinet sub-committee and the Gujjar leaders' delegation was held at the secretariat here. He also read out the 14 points of agreement on reservation.

Youth affairs and sports minister Ashok Chandna said the points of agreement will be met with immediate effect.

Gujjar leader Himmat Singh said the talks were positive and the agreement would satisfy the community, adding that there was no need for an agitation now. "The talks with the government were positive. they should take action on these points as per agreement so that the Gujjars do not have to take the path of further agitation. If the community is satisfied, there will be no further agitation," he said. — PTI

Cong to return to power after bypolls: Kamal Nath

Bhopal, Oct. 31: Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath, whose 15-month-old Congress government collapsed in March this year and led to the BJP's return to the helm, has expressed confidence that voters will remove the saffron party from power in the upcoming assembly bypolls as things have "worsened" under its rule.

Bypolls to 28 Assembly constituencies in the state will be held on November 3.

In order to return to power in the state, the Congress has to win all 28 seats, while the ruling BJP only needs nine seats to reach the majority mark of 116 in the 230-member House. "I have full faith in peo-

I have full faith in people and voters of the state, especially from these 28 seats. They are aware that the BJP government has not been able to change anything.

— Kamal Nath, Former CM, MP

ple and voters of the state, especially from these 28 seats. They are aware that the (BJP) government, which came to power by trading people's mandate, has not been able to change anything in the last seven months. The farmers' condition has worsened

and unemployment has increased...people understand everything," Nath told PTI on Friday night.

"Voters in MP are simple, naive and poor, but they are very intelligent," he said, adding that they will take a right decision.

He said the Congress will return to power in the state after the counting of bypoll votes on November 10.

Replying to a query about how many seats the Congress expects to win in the bypolls, Nath said, "I don't believe in announcing such things. (CM) Shivraj Singh Chouhan is an expert in it." The Congress leader has been facing criticism for using the term "item" against a woman MP minister during the bypoll campaign. — PTI

CANCELLATION OF TRAINS

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Railways have decided to cancel the of following Trains temporarily on the dates shown against each:-

CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS

Train No. & Name	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
04421 Lucknow - Anand Vihar Terminal Festival Special	02, 05 & 07.11.2020
04422 Anand Vihar Terminal - Lucknow Festival Special	01, 04 & 06.11.2020
04401 New Delhi - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Festival Special	02.11.2020 & 05.11.2020
04402 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - New Delhi Festival Special	03.11.2020 & 06.11.2020
04519 Delhi - Bathinda Jn. Festival Special	Upto 07.11.2020
04520 Bathinda Jn. - Delhi Festival Special	01.11.2020 to 08.11.2020

Rest of the information about above trains will remain same as announced earlier.

In addition to above due to operational reasons the following clone special trains running between New Delhi & Rajendra Nagar (T), have been cancelled from the date shown as under:-

CANCELLATION OF CLONE SPECIAL TRAIN

03293 Rajendra Nagar (T) - New Delhi Clone Special (Daily)	Cancelled w.e.f. 01.11.2020
03294 New Delhi - Rajendra Nagar (T) Clone Special (Daily)	Cancelled w.e.f. 02.11.2020

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

Security Helpline No. 182

Integrated Helpline No. 139



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SHORT TAKES

Cabinet expansion after bypolls: BSY

Bengaluru: Karnataka chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Saturday said Cabinet expansion would take place soon after the November 3 Assembly bypoll and that the BJP candidate in RR Nagar, Munirathna, would be made a minister “soon after he wins”. “It (expansion) has been put on hold for quite some time due to various reasons. I will go to Delhi to discuss it with party leaders. It will take place soon after the bypoll results are announced,” he told reporters ahead of a road show in Rajarajeshwari Nagar. Asked about his announcement at the road show that Munirathna would be made minister, he said “I am 100 per cent going to make him minister after he wins the bypoll.” Congress state chief D K Shivakumar played the announcement on Munirathna, saying it was a violation of the model code of conduct. — PTI

Actor Soumitra still in critical condition

Kolkata: Legendary Bengali actor Soumitra Chatterjee was given blood transfusion following a slight drop in his haemoglobin count and his health condition remained critical, doctors treating him at a Kolkata hospital said on Saturday. However, dialysis was not conducted on the 85-year-old thespian, who is under treatment since October 6, they said. “His blood pressure and other vital parameters, including cardiac conditions, remained stable but there was a slight drop in his haemoglobin count, because of which we gave him both blood and platelet transfusion. His consciousness is the same as before,” the doctors said in a statement. — PTI

Indo-Nepal border to have a ‘laser wall’

■ Continued from Page 1 those involved in narcotics smuggling.

The blueprint for fencing was prepared a couple of years ago and senior SSB officials were given a demonstration of infrared fencing and other state-of-the-art electronic surveillance gadgets at the SSB headquarters in New Delhi.

“The India-Nepal border is porous and there is a need to have effective surveillance mechanisms. The growing friendship between Nepal and China has a huge bearing on our internal security,” a source said.

Explaining its functioning, sources said that the invisible laser walls have sensors that are monitored through a satellite-based signal command system. It also has night and fog operability tools.

“It can detect intrusions and relay information to the border guarding force. The latest laser walls can monitor large swathes of territory,” a source said, adding that the force was looking for non-obtrusive checking mechanisms.

Besides laser walls, the SSB personnel will also be provided with state-of-the-art explosive-cum-narcotic detectors, fibroscope (a flexible fibre optic bundle with an eyepiece on one end and a lens on the other which is used to examine and inspect small, difficult to reach places like the insides of machines) besides other equipment to check smuggling.

Tejashwi shares PM’s clip to slam Nitish over ‘scams’

■ Continued from Page 1 law and order and development as the Nitish Kumar government’s failings. Blaming the state government for being involved in scams may further heat up campaigning temperature in the state ahead of the crucial second and third phase of polls.

Responding to the NDA’s “15 years of good governance versus 15 years of jungle raj” narrative being built against his party, Mr Yadav said, “We want to make our present and future better, but it seems that our chief minister wants to keep referring to the past”.

He further blamed Nitish Kumar for avoiding real issues like “Padhayi (education), Kamai (employment), Sichai (irrigation), Dawai (health)” during his public meetings and said that the election being fought in Bihar is a movement to wipe out unemployment, inflation and poverty.

Bandh against new land laws brings Valley to halt

Mirwaiz says success of strike ‘befitting reply’ to Centre

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, OCT. 31

Normal life came to a grinding halt across Kashmir Valley on Saturday in response to a call issued by separatist Hurriyat Conference against various moves initiated by the Centre in past 15 months, particularly enacting a series of new land laws and amending some of the existing ones recently to make all Indian citizens eligible to own immovable properties in Jammu and Kashmir.

Market places and other business centres in almost all major cities and towns of the Valley remained closed whereas only skeleton transport services besides private cars were plying on select routes. The impact of the strike call was maximal in Srinagar’s commercial hub Lal Chowk and its neighbourhood and entire central Srinagar.

Hurriyat Conference faction led by Kashmir’s chief Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq termed the success of the strike call a “befitting reply” to the Centre and “outright rejection” of all the “anti people” moves and decisions taken by it since August last year in J&K.

This was for the first time since August 5, 2019, when J&K was stripped of its special status and split into two Union Territories that the amalgam faction had openly issued such a call.

Sources close to the Hurriyat Conference said that its leadership is upbeat and their cadres

‘Cong leadership to decide on participating in alliance’

Srinagar, Oct. 31: The Jammu and Kashmir Congress on Saturday said it would take a call on participating in the Peoples’ Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) after consultations with the party’s central leadership, even as it asserted that there is a need to have a common platform to fight for the rights of the people of the erstwhile state.

JKPCC chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir, who was a signatory to the “Gupkar Declaration” on August 4 last year — a day before the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir’s

special status as accorded under Article 370 of the Constitution — has skipped two meetings of the alliance, which was given a formal shape recently.

Mr Mir said while he was not feeling well when the first meeting of the alliance took place on October 15, the second one on October 24 was called at a short notice and he was not in Srinagar.

Mr Mir said the JKPCC would have consultations with the party’s central leadership over the issue and take a decision after that. — PTI

are whipped up over the widespread endorsement of the strike call.

The Mirwaiz is under house arrest since August 5 last year but his close associates Prof. Abdul Ghani Bhat, Bilal Ghani Lone and Masroor Abbas Ansari had in a joint statement issue here on Wednesday strongly denounced the “incessant anti people orders being issued by the government of India at frequent intervals to intimidate and psychologically torture the people of J&K”.

They had said that this “imperial approach” is bound to fail and reiterated the amalgam’s call for engagement and dialogue among stakeholders for resolution of the Kashmir

dispute. Meanwhile, CPI-M’s J&K face Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami has alleged that a year after “arbitrary” J&K Reorganisation Act was implemented “in an undemocratic and unjust manner on October 31 last year, the “onslaught” by the BJP government at the Center on the basic and democratic rights of people of J&K continues unabated.

In a statement issued on Saturday, Mr Tarigami said that the new land laws notified on Monday, like the new domicile rules notified earlier in April, do nothing to assure the people of J&K that their concerns on demographic change are being taken into consideration.



Sikh devotees take part in a procession at the Golden Temple, ahead of the 486th birth anniversary of the fourth Sikh Guru Ramdasji, in Amritsar on Saturday. — PTI

OBCs oppose reservation for Marathas from their quota

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, OCT. 31

The Uddhav Thackeray-led MVA government in Maharashtra may find itself on a sticky wicket over the calls to provide reservation to Maratha community from the OBC quota. To oppose the demand, the OBC as well as VJNT communities have called for a statewide “OBC Aaraksan Bachav Aandolan” on November 3.

The Supreme Court on September 9 stayed the implementation of Maratha reservation in jobs and education from the Socially and Economically Backward Classes (SEBC) category. Following this, the Maratha outfits are demanding reservation from the Other Backward Classes (OBC) quota.

The issue has caught the MVA government in a catch-22 situation as the OBC and Vimukta Jati and Nomadic Tribes communities have vehemently opposed the demand. If the State Government decides to give in to the Marathas’ demand, it is likely to incur the wrath of these sizeable communities.

The Maratha organisations are up in arms against the government and want immediate steps to lift the stay of the Supreme Court on the reservation.

Inequality due to lack of access to tech must be removed: CJI

Nagpur, Oct. 31: Online functioning of courts, necessitated due to the coronavirus pandemic, created an unintended inequality as some people did not have access to digital technology. Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde said on Saturday.

However, he was proud that courts in the country kept functioning amid the pandemic, he said.

The CJI was speaking after inaugurating the Nyay Kaushal e-Resource Centre and a virtual court for the Maharashtra transportat department at the Judicial Officers Training Institute here.

The Nyay Kaushal Centre is the first e-resource centre in the

“We must remove these inequalities and that I think is going to be our next emphasis...”
— Justice S.A Bobde, CJI

country providing the facility of e-filing cases in any court in the country, officials said.

CJI Bobde said that while the courts continued to function after the outbreak of coronavirus, the access to justice became dependent on technology. It created an obvious distinction

■ Some indulged in ‘dirty politics’ for political gains: Modi

Truth of Pulwama attack accepted in Pak, says PM

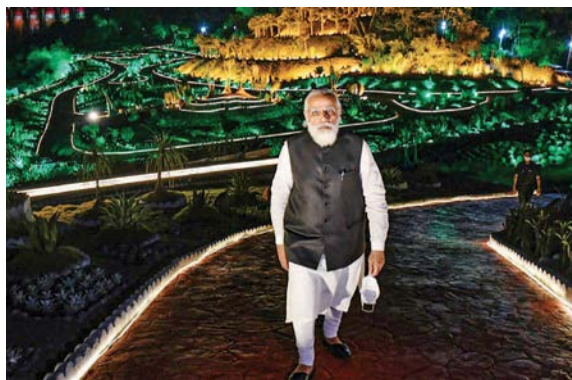
Kevadiya (Gujarat), Oct. 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the truth of last year’s Pulwama terror attack, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed, has been accepted in Pakistan Parliament.

His statement comes two days after Pakistan’s science and technology minister Fawad Chaudhry admitted his country’s role in the Pulwama attack during a debate in their National Assembly (Parliament).

Mr Modi also said that when the entire nation was mourning the brave soldiers’ death in Pulwama attack, some people indulged in “dirty politics” for their political gains.

Without mentioning China, the Prime Minister said that Indian soldiers are giving a befitting reply to those eyeing to grab the country’s land.

He was speaking at Kevadiya in Gujarat’s Narmada district after paying tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at the



PM Narendra Modi at the inauguration of Cactus Garden and Butterfly Park in Kevadia on Friday. — PTI

Statue of Unity on his 145th birth anniversary.

“The country cannot forget the unwarranted statements made after the Pulwama attack. Dirty politics laced with selfishness and arrogance was at its peak when the country was suffering from immense pain,” Mr Modi said.

“But the real face of such people has been exposed after the truth was accepted in the Parliament of our neigh-

bouring country,” he said in his address on the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas.

During a debate in Pakistan’s National Assembly on Thursday, Chaudhry had said, “*Humne Hindustan ko ghus ke maara* (We hit India in their home). Our success in Pulwama, is a success of this nation under the leadership of Imran Khan. You and we are all part of that success.” — PTI

48,648 fresh Covid cases in India, toll now 1,21,641

MEA to brief foreign envoys on virus response Nov. 6

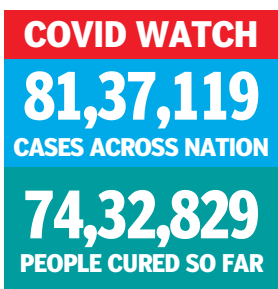
AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 31

With 48,648 new cases, country’s Covid-19 caseload rose to 81,37,119 on Saturday, while the number of recoveries crossed the 74-lakh mark, pushing the recovery rate to 91.34 per cent. According to the Union health ministry data, death toll climbed to 1,21,641 with 551 new fatalities.

A total of 74,32,829 people have recuperated from Covid-19 so far, taking the national recovery rate to 91.34 per cent. The case fatality rate has dropped to 1.49 per cent. The number of active Covid-19 cases remained below 6 lakh for the second consecutive day.

As per data, there are 5,82,649 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country, which comprise 7.16 per cent of the total caseload.

India’s Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh



ic, people familiar with the developments said on Saturday.

The briefing is expected to be carried out by foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla.

In the last few months, India has provided medical supplies to 150 countries, more than half on a non-commercial basis.

India also sent medical teams to a number of its neighbouring countries to help them in dealing with the pandemic.

India has acted as the “pharmacy of the world” and healthcare supplier to all parts of the globe in response to the coronavirus pandemic, the MEA has said recently.

“The crisis has stimulated innovation and enterprise in India and we are now able to manufacture cost-effective but high-quality critical health items for India and for the world,” Mr Shringla said while addressing a leading think-tank in Paris on Thursday.

China’s bid to change LAC status quo ‘unacceptable’

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 31

In a stern message to China, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar late on Saturday evening said attempts by Beijing to change the status quo on the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are “unacceptable” and added that previous agreements between the two nations should be “respected”.

Delivering the Sardar Patel Memorial Lecture-2020 late in the evening, he said there had earlier been peace and tranquility on the borders for about three decades, pointing out that the Sino-Indian relation-



ship has now come under “severe stress” in the duration of the pandemic.

The EAM also spoke about the development of border infrastructure in the past six years and said they marked a shift from “declaration to delivery”. He also said safeguarding borders is a “24-seven” endeavour.

EAM Jaishankar also spoke about the strong Indo-US ties and intensive engagement that is “non-partisan”. He also hailed pluralism as a civilisational strength for India and cautioned that “others” were “looking for weaknesses”.

‘Practice of proxies in JEE case has wide nexus’

1 more held ■ Accused wanted to pursue arts but forced by parents, says would have waited 1 more yr to give exam

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, OCT. 31

In what has become the major area of concern, the ongoing investigation into the JEE exam fraud case has found evidence, indicating that the practice of proxy appearing in the JEE examination has a wide nexus and it was prevalent at many more centres.

Pointing out that the police has arrested one more suspect — Kakoli Bezbaruah — from

Roopnagar area of the capital city, security sources probing the fraud told this newspaper that more in-depth investigation, that too at national level, was required to bust the racket.

Fearing that the practice of facilitating proxy for the examination has been going on for the last few years, security sources said that the idea of using proxy in JEE exams was also practiced at various other centres to which accused in Guwahati copied. It is significant that the

SECURITY SOURCES probing the fraud told this newspaper that more in-depth probe, that too at national level, was required to bust the racket

topper of the JEE (Mains) in Assam, his father and three others have been arrested by the city police here on Thursday on charges of using a proxy to write the country’s premier engineering entrance test. The accused had suc-

ceeded in securing 99.8 per cent in the exam, which is the basis for admission in India’s top engineering colleges, including the prestigious IITs.

The student, Neel Nakshatra Das, who was arrested for using a proxy to write the exam, in his confession before the police said that he was forced to appear for the exam by his parents. The police said that during interrogation he also revealed that he would have waited another year

to give the exams. In fact, arrested student Das wanted to pursue arts stream but parents forced him to take up science in higher secondary, security sources said.

The police have arrested six persons, including the candidate and his father, a practising doctor of a reputed city hospital. The deputy commissioner of police (west) has formed a special investigating team under the additional deputy commissioner of police (west) Suprative Lal

Follow maximum governance, PM tells probationers

Ahmedabad, Oct. 31: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday advised the probationary civil servants to take decisions in the national interest by following the mantra of “minimum government and maximum governance”.

Addressing the IAS probationers through video conference from Kevadiya in Gujarat, where he paid tributes to Sardar Vallabhai Patel on his 145th birth anniversary earlier in the day.

Mr Modi told the probationers that they were entering the service at a crucial juncture when India is about to enter the 75th year of its Independence.

“A government does not run on policies alone. People for whom the policies are meant need to be involved,” he said. — PTI



CM Uddhav urges Center to raise onion stocking limit

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, OCT. 31

Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday asked the Centre to increase the onion storage capacity to 1500 Metric Tonne (MT) for wholesalers. In a letter written to Union minister of consumer affairs, food and public distribution Piyush Goyal, Mr Thackeray said that the wholesalers have stopped auction of onions because of 25 MT stock limit imposed by the government. Mr Thackeray also urged the Central government to increase of stock limits of onion for purchaser/trader in APMCs.

As per advisory issued by department of consumer affairs dated October 29, three days’ time is given for grading/packaging from the date of purchase of onion in APMC. The letter sent by Mr Thackeray said this time is very short and should be increased up to seven days. “This has stalled the supply chain from farmers to consumers which resulted in the increase in the prices of onion in the retail market,” he wrote in the letter.

The letter also pointed out that the recently imposed stock limits of 25 MT for wholesalers and 2 MT for retailers have caused severe hardship to onion farmers as well as traders in Maharashtra.

Mr Thackeray also expressed his apprehensions of loss to farmers if the current stock limit is not increased.

Baruah to probe the scam. DCP Nabaneet Mahanta said that the case is very complicated and the police will soon be making some more arrests. “JEE (Main) is conducted through a stringent process. Therefore, without the involvement of a number of people, it is not easy to indulge in such malpractices,” he said.

The fraud has also raised questions over the national-level examination conducted by the National Testing Agency.

THE ASIAN AGE

1 NOVEMBER 2020



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

Winter upon us, so's the 'season of scapegoating'

Winter is coming." Long before *Game of Thrones* Ned Stark starkly uttered this now famous line, the almost-as-famous William Shakespeare had put a rather more poetic spin on it, "Now is the winter of our discontent". Or, season of smogs and frigid fruitlessness, as Keats might have added, had he lived to write his *Ode to Winter*.

Here, in Sherwood Forest, it's already arrived, with the snuffing out of the fading autumn sun, as British Summertime ends and clocks go back, reducing daylight to a flash in the midday pan. In creeps the icy damp, searching for the elderly to chill to the bone, to find them already gone in this year of devastating loss. No season of cheer for the depressed either, huddled around their UV lamps, waiting for the lifting of the black fog. Only mildly depressed currently, I have eschewed mine for cake, Coke (the drinking kind, and my lockdown addiction- please send barrels) and my capering kids who keep my spirits high.

But this hard-hit year, there will be five million fewer English children frolicking, because going hungry instead, as the greedy Tory government denies them food aid, will keep them on their toes. If you've been following British news however, you'll know there's a streak of silver lining called Marcus Rashford, Manchester United striker, who has come to their aid once more, with a raft of British organisations and individuals rallying around him to feed impoverished children in their school holidays because the UK government won't.

Yet how many Marcuses will it take to change the planet? With winter's approach, we have more to worry about than George R.R. Martin's White Walkers. We have a pandemic. Coronavirus was not just the sting in last winter's tail, but the seasonal gift that keeps on giving. On its march across the globe, it has infected 44.5 million, killed 1.17 million, and left legions jobless, grieving, physically wasted, and mentally ill. In arriving in India later, it lulled many into a false sense of security, but now shows no signs of abating, with a predicted peak early next year when the deadly winter smog has the country in its grip, quickening the spread of the virus and increasing its severity to sufferers.

If it ever went away in Europe, with our chance to catch our breath, as infections and death tolls fell, briefer even than the English summer, it is back with coldblooded vengeance. In much of England, the contagion is now more widespread than at its zenith in late spring, forcing us to return to a harsh lockdown with its attendant hardships again. But BoJo's government is too busy lining its pockets to care, handing out crucial pandemic-constraining contracts worth millions to their friends and family, as they deflect, distract, spin and scapegoat their way out of scandals, when caught red-handed again and again.

What better time of the year for that than winter? 'Tis the season for scapegoating. For fake news and whitewashing. If Herod spreading heresies so he could get his nippers on his nemesis Baby Jesus wasn't enough, Ravana and Guy Fawkes are victims of spin too. For Dussehra, we burn giant effigies of the demon Ravana to symbolically slay evil and side with good, while in Britain, huge bonfires are lit on Bonfire Night, to commemorate the capture and execution of Guy Fawkes, alleged ringleader of the Gunpowder Plot to blow up the English parliament.

Yet modern interpretations of the history of Ravana, the Dravidian King of Lanka, suggest it wasn't as black and white as the legend would have us believe. Sita may not have been abducted, and Ravana, not the villain of the piece after all. Apparently a feint by the Aryans to start a war for new territory, the ten-headed, snarling Ravana might well be the ancient world's first fake news victim. Because history is, of course, written by the victors, and when they aren't whitewashing, they are wasp-white Anglo Saxon Protestant-ing. As Catholic Guy Fawkes discovered when, despite being neither assassination plot kingpin nor even conspirator, he was executed by King James I in 1606, as a cautionary example to Catholic opponents of Protestant power.

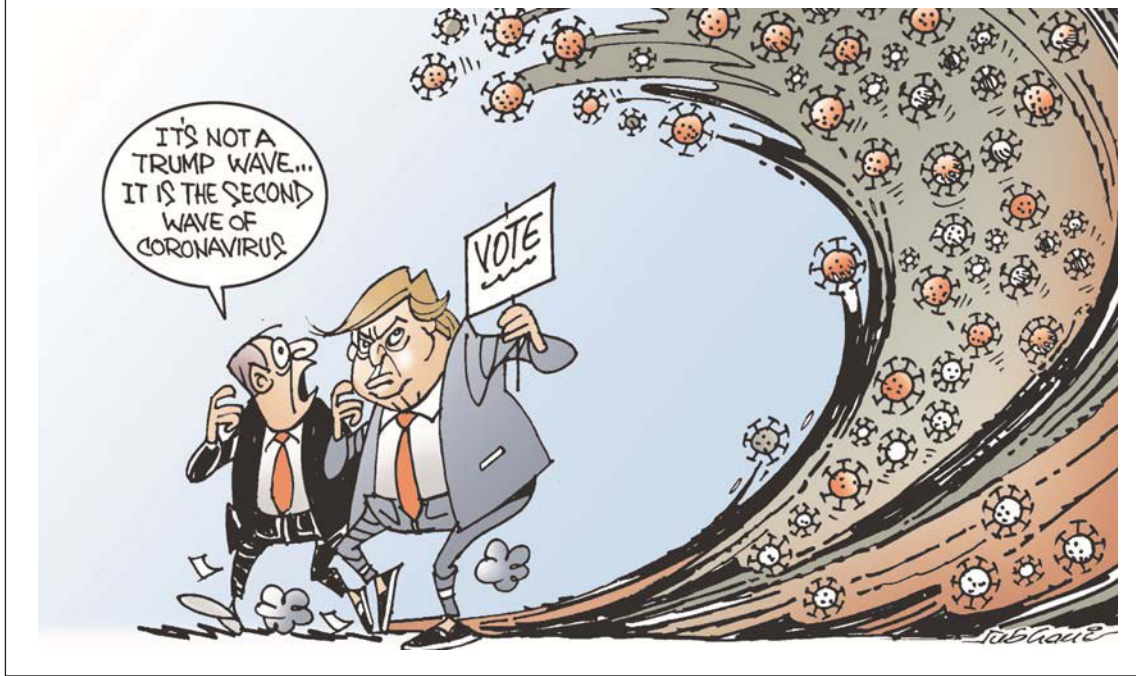
Not only do we gleefully revisit their torment every year, we are still being duped into hounding the wrong people. This summer, India concentrated all its energies on harassing an innocuous young actress called Rhea Chakrabarty, even as its government failed to contain the pandemic, salvage the economy, or keep women and children safe, while Britain after Corbyn continued its search for a suitable fall guy. You'd think it would be tax-dodging, law-breaking, extra-constitutional authority Dominic Cummings, but it will, as always, be immigrants instead.

Persecuting minorities is not a seasonal activity anywhere in the world, but a perennial favourite. In the US, Donald Trump's return to power this month will see scapegoats dragged in the mud behind him. Many of them immigrants, with "filthy" (as he called us recently) Indians amongst them. Will Democratic veep candidate, half-Indian, half-black Kamala Harris face the full force of his monstrously immature wrath when she's vanquished? That derision and degradation reserved for women when they challenge mainstream male power? Would that shock you, or that Trump might regain the White House, considering these nationalist demagogues, these selfish crooks, think nothing of twisting the law to their own ends?

Winter is nearly here, and will be a long litany of horrors, unless we act to prevent them.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures*. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenh.

Subhani



India must set example of pluralism, tolerance



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Two weeks ago, an 18-year-old Chechen headed a teacher in Paris for having shown to his students caricatures of Prophet Mohammad. He was taking a class on freedom of expression. Just days ago, a knife attack inside a church in the French city of Nice by a 21-year-old Tunisian, brutally killed three people and injured several more. The gruesome attacks rightly created worldwide outrage. French President Emmanuel Macron vowed to fight this mindless terrorism. India did the right thing in supporting his stand. Ruthlessly violent organisations like the Al Qaeda and the ISIS, which misuse religious sentiment to justify the worst form of violence, are a scourge that the world must defeat. Terrorism in any form is unacceptable, and must be unambivalently condemned.

Turkish President Recep Erdogan, Pakistan PM Imran Khan, and Malaysia's former PM, Mahathir Mohamad, however, attacked Macron for unleashing 'Islamophobia'. Erdogan is seeking to wrench the leadership of the Islamic world by adopting radical Islam. Imran Khan, facing rising unpopularity within Pakistan, is falling back on the old card of catering to the conservative domestic mullah lobby. And, Mahathir, is somehow trying to keep himself relevant. Nothing can justify their failure to categorically denounce such violent cruelty in the name of religion. Not Macron, but the funda-

mentalist Islamic elements that plan and execute such despicable crimes, should have been decried by them.

France has the largest number of Muslims in Europe. They constitute the 'ethnic debris' that floated over the years to French shores from the countries they had earlier colonised and subjugated. The French colonial empire included many Muslim countries, especially in Northern Africa. Many European countries, who had once enslaved large parts of the world, now have to face the challenge of adopting a multiculturalism that assimilates different ethnic, religious and cultural groups from their colonies.

Different countries have adopted different strategies to deal with this task, but it is not an easy one, and religious fealty is an emotive issue for people of all faiths. The West was right in opposing — in the name of freedom of expression — the ban on Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses*, and India was wrong in imposing the ban. But, many Western countries have showed great intolerance to the derogatory display of Jesus. Filmmaker Scorsese's irreverent *The Last Temptation of Christ* provoked public outrage unprecedented in the history of religious films. Militant Christians castigated Universal Pictures, abused Lee Wasserman, chairman of the company, and forced movie chains not to show the film. Similarly, they took to the streets when Christ was portrayed as a charlatan in *The*

Passover Plot. The film was hounded out of cinema halls and never seen again. It is also perhaps less known that while the Danish newspaper *Jyllands-Posten* published a dozen cartoons of Prophet Muhammad in 2005, its editor had earlier turned down cartoons of Jesus as too offensive.

The French president Nicolas Sarkozy actually took up with then PM Manmohan Singh, when the latter was on an official visit to France in October 2008, his "anguish" about the "massacre of Christians in India". Over 40 Indians of the Christian faith had been killed when suspected Hindu extremists resorted to violence in the states of Odisha and Karnataka, ostensibly to protest against perceived missionary activism in converting Hindus to Christianity. The reprehensible killings were condemned by every political party, including the BJP. Police reinforcements were sent to the disturbed areas; the chief ministers of both states, as well as national leaders, personally met with the heads of the Church to reassure them about their safety and that of their flock. And yet, Sarkozy, the head of a country that prides itself in keeping matters of religion out of matters of state, considered it fit to take up an aberrational incident about the well-

being of Christians in India during a summit political meeting. On its part, France does not allow the wearing of turbans by Sikh children and headscarves by Muslim girls. However, there is no ban on the wearing of the Christian cross.

For India, both as a Republic where the Constitution expressly espouses religious harmony, and as a civilisation that has completely rejected violence on religious grounds, radical and violent Islam is abhorrent. In fact, India's civilisational history presents the best example of a plural society. Hinduism was never a proselytising religion; it did not conduct crusades. In ancient times, Hindu kings patronised both their own temples and Buddhist viharas. The Jews lived peaceably in India before they did anywhere else. Muslim traders from the Arab countries practiced their faith undisturbed in Kerala more than a thousand years ago. Parsis came in the seventh century and the Christians in the fourth to harmoniously become a part of the national fabric.

While supporting President Macron in his stand against the savage bigotry of certain fundamentalist Islamic groups, and renewing its commitment against all kinds of terrorism, India can and should strive to present to the world its own civilisational legacy of respect for all religions, and the ability of people of different faiths to live in harmony and peace. Our condemnation of what happened in France recently will resound even more globally when we ourselves reiterate and demonstrate afresh that India is the best example of a plural and tolerant society.

While supporting President Macron in his stand against savage bigotry, India can and should strive to present to the world its own civilisational legacy of respect for all religions and the ability of people of different faiths to live in harmony

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

LETTERS

BJP INFIGHTING

The open fight in the West Bengal unit of the BJP has set off speculation as to whether the party is heading for a split in the eastern state. The nervous central leadership has now asked the joint general secretary (organisation) Shivprakash to get the party's house in order. The top brass is also not happy with general secretary and state in-charge Kailash Vijayvargiya, who has so far failed to contain the factionalism. There are complaints that Mr Vijayvargiya is siding with Mukul Roy, once a close aide of Mamata Banerjee who had joined the BJP in 2017.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

BUS BLUNDER

FOR THE LAST few days there has been sharp rise in fresh Covid-19 cases in Delhi. Last Friday saw 5,891 fresh cases, the highest in a single day. On the same day, the Delhi lieutenant governor approved the Delhi government's proposal to allow the buses to run with full seating capacity. The threat of a second wave of Covid-19 is looming large in many countries across the world. The Delhi government should desist from allowing buses to run with full passenger capacity. A second wave may prove disastrous.

M.C. Joshi
Lucknow

LEFT BEHIND

APROPOS THE editorial, "Heed ASER's red flag" (Oct 30), the ASER report flags burden of digital inequality on children, and opportunity for government schools. Only about one-third of the surveyed children had access to online learning and 11 per cent had access to live online classes. Till a vaccine is found, all stakeholders have to come together to minimize both loss of learning and the emotional turmoil that comes from being left behind.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

PUNISH POLLUTERS

ACCORDING TO the Central Pollution Control Board, Faridabad is listed among the most polluted cities in the country. Eventhough the Faridabad administration cancelled the burning of effigies of Ravana on Dussehra festival, clearly, more steps need to be taken. Increasing plantation, tightening regulations for vehicles and ensuring industrial establishments follow emission rules are the need of the hour.

Neha Jamal
Chandigarh

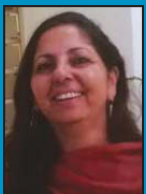
GAYLE'S KNOCK

CHRIS GAYLE'S stirring 63-ball 99 for Kings XI Punjab went in vain. This is the second year in a row that the Universe Boss has missed out on a three-figure score after Jofra Archer disturbed his furniture on Friday. In 2019, Gayle was left stranded on 99 n.o. against Royal Challengers Bangalore. The triumph not only keeps Royals in the hunt for the playoffs but ends Kings XI's five-match winning streak.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

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

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



Gehlot 'friend' Nath picks Pilot; RJD hope rests on savarna pitch

Rashtriya Janata Dal's chief ministerial candidate Tejashwi Yadav has made a concerted effort in the ongoing Bihar Assembly polls to expand the support base of his party beyond its core Muslim-Yadav vote bank. Not only has the RJD given a large number of tickets to upper caste candidates but Tejashwi makes it a point to hammer home this point during his campaign. The RJD leader ensures he is flanked on either side by the party's Bihar chief Jagdanand Singh and Rajya Sabha MP and party spokesperson Manoj Jha at his major rallies. Singh is a Rajput — in fact, he was the first upper caste leader to be given charge of the RJD's state unit. Jha is a Brahmin and is said to be Tejashwi's right-hand man. The upper castes in Bihar have never voted for the RJD as they have a special aversion to Lalu Prasad Yadav's brand of politics. It is to be seen if the course correction attempted by Tejashwi will work to

his party's advantage.

Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath enjoys a good rapport with his party colleague and Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot. But when it came to picking a campaigner for the Madhya Pradesh bypolls, Nath chose Sachin Pilot, who is not exactly Gehlot's favourite person. Nath apparently made several phone calls to Pilot requesting him to campaign in the Gwalior region which has a large Gujjar population. The veteran leader is also believed to have told Pilot that he was the only one who could do justice in this belt. Pilot has since addressed several election rallies in Madhya Pradesh but if Nath was hoping to pit the young Congress leader against his bete noire Jyotiraditya Scindia, he must have been disappointed. Pilot avoided attacking his former colleague Scindia in his speeches and instead went full throttle against Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan. As for

Pilot, this invitation is an opportunity to send out a message to his detractors that he has national appeal and cannot be ignored.

Candidates who were hoping to be nominated by the Bharatiya Janata Party for the Uttar Pradesh Rajya Sabha elections spent several sleepless nights last week because of the delay in the announcement of the final list. Urban development minister Hardeep Puri was among those who went through some tense moments before the official list came out. His staff worked the phones endlessly to find out the status of the nominations. Puri had a truncated first stint in the Upper House as he was elected two years ago in place of Manohar Parrikar who resigned his seat when he went back to Goa as chief minister. Though there was no doubt that he would be re-nominated, Puri was on tenterhooks primarily because there was a buzz that another former diplomat, known to be the Prime Minister's favourite, was likely to be

inducted into the government. In the end, all's well that ends well as Puri was very much among the eight candidates on the BJP list.

Is Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh contemplating an early Assembly poll? Though the next election is only due in 2022, there is a growing view in the Singh camp that it might be a good idea to dissolve the Assembly and call for an early poll, preferably along with the Assam and Kerala elections next year. This section believes that Singh is currently on a strong wicket, especially after the tough stand he took on the farm laws passed by the Centre. His detractors in the party are currently in no position to pose any serious challenge. Similarly, the Shiromani Akali Dal, which recently parted company with BJP, is still in the process of putting its house in order. Not only were the Akalis mauled in the last Assembly election but they have also been facing serious internal dissensions. Given more time, there's every possibility that the

Akali Dal will recover lost ground while Amarinder Singh's stock may slump by then.

A seemingly minor bye-election in the Assembly segment of Baroda in Haryana has acquired immense significance as political pundits believe the result will reflect the popularity or otherwise of the BJP-led state government. Several disgruntled legislators from the Dushyant Chautala-led JJP do not want their party to continue its alliance with the BJP because of its stand on the farm laws which are being opposed by farmers in the state. They have been mounting pressure on their party leadership to snap ties with the saffron party but to little avail. These legislators are looking for greener pastures but they have decided to await the bypoll result before upping the ante. However, their defiance could well come to a nought if the BJP wins this election.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

IN BRIEF

Saudi rams car into Mecca Masjid

Riyadh: A Saudi man rammed a car at high speed into the outer walls of Mecca's Grand Mosque, Islam's holiest site, authorities said on Saturday. Guards chased the driver as he crashed through two barriers before hitting one of the southern entrances of the mosque late Friday, according to officials in the holy city and videos on social media. Mecca authorities did not name the man but said he appeared to be in an "abnormal condition". He was referred to the public prosecutor to face possible charges, they added. Earlier in October, Saudi Arabia opened the Grand Mosque for prayers for the first time in seven months, and expanded the umrah pilgrimage to accommodate 15,000 worshippers from within the kingdom as it relaxed coronavirus curbs.

2 killed in blast at pipeline in Iraq

Baghdad: An explosion targeting a gas pipeline in southern Iraq killed two children Saturday after a blast in the north this week forced the closure of another pipeline, authorities said. An investigation had been launched into the latest explosion in Muthanna province, south of Baghdad, that killed "two children and wounded 28 people", state media said. The attack came after a blast targeted an oil pipeline in the north of the country, according to a statement by the Kurdistan Regional Government released late Friday. The statement said oil exports had been suspended after "terrorists" attacked the pipeline crossing the autonomous region to the Turkish port of Ceyhan on Wednesday evening.

New Berlin airport officially opens

Berlin: Nine years late and far above its original budget, Berlin's new airport is finally opening on Saturday with little ceremony and, thanks to the Coronavirus pandemic, few passengers. Construction of the Berlin Brandenburg Airport Willy Brandt, named after the former West German chancellor though better known as BER, started in 2006 and it was initially slated to open in October 2011. But a string of technical and planning problems forced officials to abandon six opening dates, most embarrassingly, in 2012, just four weeks before flights were supposed to start. That propelled the project to the status of a national joke as airport managers struggled to get a grip on various problems, including a complex fire safety system that long caused headaches. The airport has cost some 6 billion euros (USD 7 billion), about three times what was originally planned. It is finally opening at a time when air traffic has been hobbled by the pandemic.

MILLION TONS OF U.S. PLASTIC TRASH GO ASTRAY

Washington, Oct. 31: More than a million tons a year of America's plastic trash isn't ending up where it should. The equivalent of as many as 1,300 plastic grocery bags per person is landing in places such as oceans and roadways, according to a new study of US plastic trash. In 2016 — the last year enough data was available and before several countries cracked down on imports of American waste — the United States generated 46.3 million tons (42 million metric tons) of plastic waste, by far the most in the world. Between 2.7 per cent and 5.3 per cent of that was mismanaged — not burned, placed in landfills or otherwise disposed of properly, according to a study in Friday's journal Science Advances. Between 1.2 million and 2.5 million tons (1.1 million to 2.2 million metric tons) of plastic generated in the US were dropped on land, rivers, lakes and oceans as litter, were illegally dumped or shipped abroad then not properly disposed of, the study found. If you took nearly 2.5 million tons (2.2 million metric tons) of mismanaged plastic waste — bottles, wrappers, grocery bags and the like — and dumped it on the White House lawn, "it would pile as high as the Empire State Building," said co-author Jenna Jambeck, an environmental engineering professor at the University of Georgia.

US logs 1 lakh cases a day

Record surge in Coronavirus pushes hospitals closer to brink of capacity

Washington, Oct. 31: A record surge of Coronavirus cases in the United States pushed hospitals closer to the brink of capacity and drove the number of infections reported on Friday to an ominous new daily world record of 1,00,000, four days before the US presidential election.

The United States also documented its 9 millionth case to date on Friday, representing nearly 3% of the population, with almost 2,29,000 dead since the outbreak of the pandemic early this year, according to a Reuters tally of publicly reported data.

With the country facing the final stretch of a tumultuous presidential campaign dominated by the coronavirus pandemic, US health authorities on Friday also confirmed that 1,00,233 more people had tested positive for Covid-19 over the past 24 hours.

Friday's tally set a new single-day record in US cases for the fifth time in the past 10 days, surpassing the previous peak of 91,248 new infections posted a day earlier.

It also represented the world's highest national daily toll during the pandemic, exceeding India's 24-hour record of 97,894 set in September.

The accelerating pace of US infections continued as data trickled in on Friday, with at least a dozen states individually reporting a record number of new daily cases.

Serious cases of Covid-19 were on the rise as well, as hospitals in six states reported having the most patients suffering from the disease since the pandemic started. The number of hospitalised Covid-19 patients has risen over 50% in October to 46,000, the highest since mid-August.

Among the hard-hit states are those most hotly contested in the campaign between Republican President Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden, such as Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania and



People enjoy the Jardin du Luxembourg on Saturday in Paris on the second day after France entered a second lockdown aimed at curbing the spread of Covid-19.

700km traffic jam in France ahead of second lockdown

Paris, Oct. 31: Parisians fleeing for the countryside jammed the roads ahead of France's lockdown to slow the spread of resurgent Coronavirus infections, and there was only a sprinkling of people hurrying along city sidewalks on Friday as the nationwide restrictions went into effect.

Dystopian images of logjams that stretched for 435 miles (700 kilometers) at one point on Thursday evening — exacerbated by the upcoming long holiday weekend — were a grim sign of a return to the dark days of the spring, when virus cases first swelled in Europe and many countries kept their

citizens inside for weeks on end. With infections hitting record levels in some countries, many are now resorting to severe restrictions again.

In France, concerns were growing that rising infections would swamp the country's health system, so authorities ordered another four-week lockdown beginning on Friday.

Many areas of the French capital resembled a regular lazy weekend morning — on what would normally have been a bustling weekday. Those who were out frequently clutched permission forms proving they had an exemption that allowed

them to be on streets.

The only places that were busy were grocery stores and markets as people stockpiled food and other necessities.

All of France's 67 million people have been ordered to stay at home at all times with no visitors, or risk steep fines or prosecution. There are a handful of exceptions, such as being allowed out for one hour of exercise a day within a half-mile (1 kilometer) of home, to go to medical appointments, to a place of work, or to shop for essential goods. Restaurants and cafés are shuttered, apart from those that offer takeout.

— AP

Wisconsin.

The nationwide surge in cases seen in the past week is pushing the United States towards the grim mark of one lakh daily cases. India holds

the record of most number of daily coronavirus cases 97,894 cases, it reported on September 17.

For every 10,000 people in the United States, over 272 coronavirus cases

have been reported and about seven people have died, according to a Reuters analysis. In Europe there have been 127 cases and four deaths per 10,000 residents.

— AFP

Macron seeks to calm tensions over cartoons

Paris, Oct. 31: President Emmanuel Macron said that he could understand if Muslims were shocked by cartoons of the prophet Mohammed, as French authorities on Saturday sought to ascertain if a young Tunisian suspected of killing three people in a knife rampage inside a Nice church had outside help.

France is on edge after the republication in early September of cartoons of the prophet Mohammed

ORTHODOX PRIEST HURT IN FRENCH SHOOTING, ASSAILANT FLED: POLICE

Paris, Oct. 31: An orthodox priest has been injured in a shooting in the French city of Lyon and the assailant has fled, a police source said on Saturday.

The priest was fired on twice at around 4pm local time as he was closing the church, and was being treated on site for life-threatening injuries, the source said.

— Reuters

by the Charlie Hebdo weekly, which was followed by an attack outside its for-

mer offices, the beheading of a teacher and now the attack in Nice.

Macron sparked protests in the Muslim world after the murder earlier this month of teacher Samuel Paty — who had shown his class a cartoon of Mohammed — by saying France would never renounce its right to caricature.

But in an apparent bid to reach out to Muslims, Macron gave a long interview setting out his vision to Qatar-based TV channel Al-Jazeera, seeking to strike a softer tone.

"I can understand that people could be shocked by the caricatures but I will never accept that violence can be justified," he said. "I consider it our duty to protect our freedoms and our rights," he added in an extract of the interview to be broadcast from 1600 GMT.

France is still reeling from the latest attack in Nice which Macron has already described as "Islamist" terror.

— AFP

SCREEN ICON

World of entertainment mourns loss of global sensation who passed away in sleep

Tributes pour in for Scottish James Bond actor

Connery, original James Bond, dies

From page 1

A commanding screen presence for some 40 years, Connery was in his early 30s and little known when he starred in *Dr No*.

Condemned as immoral by the Vatican and the Kremlin, but screened at the *White House for Bond* fan John F. Kennedy, *Dr No* was a box office hit and helped Bond become a franchise that long outlasted its Cold War origins.

Though there have been many Bonds since Connery, including the most recent, Daniel Craig, for many Connery was the definitive James Bonds, his character's introduction among the most famous in movie history. He is seated at the blackjack table of an upscale casino, seen first from the side and the back. After he wins a couple of hands against a glamorous young woman, she asks for more money to gamble. "I admire your courage, Miss, uh..." we hear him tell her as the camera shows his hands removing a cigarette

from a slender case. She introduces herself as "Trench, Sylvia Trench," tells him she admires his luck and asks his name. His reply remains a catchphrase decades later. "Bond," he says, his face finally revealed as he lights a cigarette, "James Bond."

United Artists couldn't wait to make more Bond movies, with ever more elaborate stunts and gadgets, along with more exotic locales and more prominent co-stars, among them Lotte Lenya and Jill St. John.

The makers of James Bond films posted on Twitter, "Sir Sean Connery has died at the age of 90. He was the first actor to play James Bond on the big screen in *Dr. No* in 1962, From Russia With Love, Goldfinger, Thunderball, You Only Live Twice and Diamonds Are Forever followed. With the line, 'The name's Bond...' James Bond" — he revolutionised the world with his gritty and witty portrayal of the sexy and charismatic secret agent.

— Agencies

INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT SCOTTISH JAMES BOND ACTOR

THE FOLLOWING ARE SOME OF THE LITTLE KNOWN FACTS OF THE LEGENDARY STAR SEAN CONNERY, ACCORDING TO THE SCOTSMAN NEWSPAPER. CONNERY EPITOMISED AUTHOR IAN FLEMING'S SUAVE 007 AGENT IN SEVEN JAMES BOND MOVIES. THE ACTOR DIED ON SATURDAY AGED 90.



25-08-1930 TO 31-10-2020

● Despite being known as Sean, the actor's first name is Thomas, and he was referred to as Tommy in his youth.

● His first job was as a milkman with the St Cuthbert's Co-Operative Society in Edinburgh.

● Sir Sean worked as a coffin polisher before going into acting.

● He reportedly was placed third in the Mr Universe contest in 1953 although there is some dispute over whether he finished third in the Junior class, or failed to place in the 'Tall Man' classification.

● He turned out for Edinburgh junior side football Bonnyrigg Rose in his youth.

● He has a tattoo reading 'Scotland forever' which he got at the age of 16 when he enrolled in the Royal Navy.

● He donated his \$250,000 salary from his role as King Richard in 1991 film *Robin Hood: Prince of Thieves* to charity.

"When I last spoke to him it was clear even then that his health was failing but the voice, the spirit and the passion that we all loved so well were still there. I will miss him. Scotland will miss him. The world will miss him. My thoughts and condolences are with Micheline, their children and all the family. RIP Sir Sean Connery," she added.

In a statement, posted on Twitter, Bond producers Michael G. Wilson and

Barbara Broccoli said they are "devastated" by Connery's death.

"He was and shall always be remembered as the original James Bond whose indelible entrance into cinema history began when he announced those unforgettable words.

"The name's Bond... James Bond" — he revolutionised the world with his gritty and witty portrayal of the sexy and charismatic secret agent. He is undoubtedly largely

responsible for the success of the film series and we shall be forever grateful to him," they said.

The family of actor Roger Moore, who had succeeded Connery as James Bond, also condoled the actor's death.

"How infinitely sad to hear the news Sir Sean Connery has passed away. He and Roger were friends for many decades and Roger always maintained Sean was the best ever James Bond. RIP," read the

tweet from Moore's official account, which is run by his family.

Hollywood stars Hugh Jackman and Sam Neill also paid tributes to the veteran actor.

"I grew up idolizing #SeanConnery. A legend on screen, and off. Rest In Peace," tweeted Jackman.

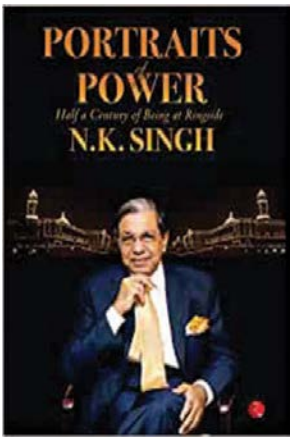
Neill, who starred with Connery in 1990 spy thriller "The Hunt for Red October", reminisced about working with the Scottish star.

— PTI

INDIAN TOP 10
BESTSELLERS

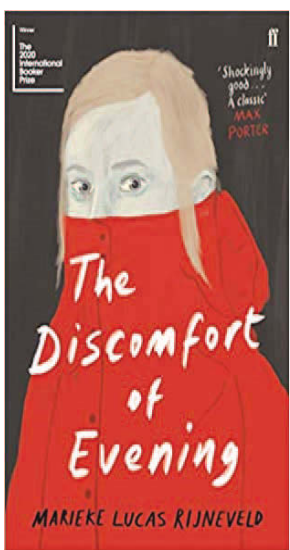
NON-FICTION

- 1 **PORTRAITS OF POWER**
N.K. Singh,
Rupa, ₹595
- 2 **THE INDIA WAY**
S. Jaishankar,
HarperCollins, ₹699
- 3 **JINNAH HIS SUCCESSES,
FAILURES AND ROLE IN
HISTORY**
Ishtiaq Ahmed,
Penguin, ₹999
- 4 **REMNANTS OF A
SEPARATION**
Aanchal Malhotra,
HarperCollins, ₹599
- 5 **HONOUR AMONG SPIES**
Asad Durrani,
HarperCollins, ₹499
- 6 **VOICES OF DISSENT**
Romila Thapar,
Seagull Books,
₹499
- 7 **THE ULTIMATE GOAL**
Vikram Sood,
HarperCollins,
₹699
- 8 **TEN LESSONS FOR A
POST-PANDEMIC
WORLD**
Fareed Zakaria,
Allen Lane, ₹599
- 9 **THE HOUSE OF JAIPUR**
John Zubrzycki,
Juggernaut, ₹599
- 10 **DEEPAWALI
POOJA-VIDHI**
Pawan Kumar Mishra,
Tara India Research
Press, ₹299



FICTION

- 1 **THE DISCOMFORT OF
EVENING**
Marieke Lucas
Rijneveld,
Faber & Faber, ₹499
- 2 **A TIME FOR MERCY**
John Grisham,
Hodder & Stoughton,
₹699
- 3 **HAMNET**
Maggie O' Farrell,
Tinder Press, ₹699
- 4 **GIRL IN WHITE COTTON**
Avni Doshi,
Harper, ₹599
- 5 **THE LYING LIFE OF
ADULTS**
Elena Ferrante,
Europa Editions, ₹699
- 6 **THE SHADOW KING**
Maaza Mengiste,
Canongate, ₹799
- 7 **PRIVATE MOSCOW**
James Patterson
& Adam Hamdy,
Century, ₹699
- 8 **THE HEART ASKS
PLEASURE FIRST**
Karuna Ezara Parikh,
Picador India, ₹699
- 9 **REAL LIFE**
Brandon Taylor,
Daunt Books, ₹650
- 10 **THE NEW
WILDERNESS**
Diane Cook,
One World, ₹399



Bahrison, New Delhi

A whitewashed portrait,
shorn of nuance, insight

Ranjona Banerji

review

I picked this book with great enthusiasm. Because I do believe that in many ways V.P. Menon is the architect of modern India and that he is largely unsung. I have read both *The Transfer of Power in India* and *The Story of the Integration of the Indian States* by Menon several times over. In Menon's books, incredibly detailed, informative and insightful, you get a remarkable portrait of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and the enormous task he was entrusted with: to bring together a disparate and motley group of princely states within the borders of India.

But hovering below the surface of Patel's astounding achievement was the writer himself, Menon. It is clear within the story that Patel could not have done this without Menon and yet Menon himself was ephemeral, elusive. This biography, by his great granddaughter, seemed like the perfect answer. To the

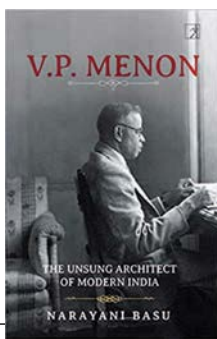
riddle that was Menon and to acknowledgement at last of his formidable accomplishment.

When all the controversy erupted over Jawaharlal versus Patel, at the launch of this book, I was still at the beginning of the story, where in a sleepy Kerala village and with an indulgent mother, Menon, was a brilliant if rebellious young student. Here, we focus on the development of a young man. The dynamics of family life. And how childhood moulds us for the future. There are dramatic moments here. That a young boy should be so angry that he burned down his school and ran away from home. The sheer grit that made him work as a labourer in the Kolar mines and claw his way up. The losses and tribulations that the young Menon faced and his dogged determination to rise above every setback. That a man without formal education could rise so far and so brilliantly.

This was the story I wanted. Alas, it was not to last long.

Between the fascinating beginning that draws you in and the final, moving, emotional end, V.P. Menon remains lost. Instead of a story of his life, with his insights, you get the story of the last days of the Raj and India's Independence. You are not even sure whether this version is that of the writer Narayani Basu, as a historian, or that of Menon. There are pages and pages of history — available anywhere for anyone to read — and one line thrown in about what Menon thought about what was going on.

It is evident early on though that Basu, and perhaps Menon,



VP MENON. THE UNSUNG
ARCHITECT OF
MODERN INDIA
By NARAYANI BASU
Simon and Schuster
₹799

is no fan of Jawaharlal Nehru's. For one, he is called "Jawaharlal" through most of the book, although everyone else is referred to by their surname. Nehru is also dismissed as a petty vindictive tyrant with no thoughts of his own. You may consider this harsh or fair but either way, this view is not sufficiently substantiated. Now whether Basu picked this up from her family or these are her views as a historian or whether Menon was clear about his feelings is not fully explained to the reader. And so also with Menon's own personal life. It is interesting enough, his rocky relationship with his sons, the collapse of his first marriage, his relationship and subsequent marriage to his mentor's wife, all you get is the bare bones. There are no insights, no conflicts, no impression of how his life affected his work. Or vice versa.

Indeed, until you reach the transfer of power, Menon himself gets lost in the tumultuous events around India's Independence. And if you want to read about the transfer of power, Menon's own books are freely available. There are missed opportunities here. The friendship between Mohammed Ali Jinnah and Menon would have made fascinating reading. There are nuggets on how Menon felt about Partition which are too

disparate and disconnected to make a lasting impression on the reader. The struggle for power, such as it was, between Patel and Nehru finds a few pages at the end and not enough before or between. Patel himself, who played such an important role in Menon's life, does not shine through.

It is possible that the linear structure of the biography is the problem. That by juxtaposing Menon's lifeline along that of India's, the man himself has got lost in the turmoil of the times. If instead, we were told Menon's story without India's story taking centre-stage, we may have learnt more about him. Basu tells us that Menon was unpredictable and remote and you feel that sometimes in his interactions with his sons. But clearly, he loved his second wife. That dichotomy is not explored.

For this reviewer, the fact that a book has been written about V.P. Menon is insufficient. His character and achievements are such that he deserved a more intimate portrait without the massive presence of Indian history as a distraction and detraction.

The writer is a senior journalist who writes on media affairs, politics and social trends. She tweets at @ranjona.

In turbulent
Assam, a lonely
granddad spars
with grandchild

Rupa Gulab

review

Udertow is a tightly packed novel that unravels strained relationships. When Loya gets a grant to study elephants in Kaziranga National Park for her PhD, she jumps at it. Elephants aren't the only attraction — this gives her the opportunity she's longed for: to visit Assam and the home her mother was banished from for marrying a man "who was not of her religion, let alone her caste, nor of her race, not from any region remotely near hers, and a man whose skin was dark, to make matters worse".

It is Loya who takes the initiative to walk into her grandfather Torun's house in Guwahati — a bold move to claim her birthright. Once she meets him, however, she's not willing to give him a chance, and thinks of little ways to punish him — understandable, because she's reacting to the treatment meted out to her mother.

Torun is a complex character. He was weak only when it came to his wife — a strong woman he loved dearly, and he intends to stay loyal to her memory. He does not give Loya an inch, even though it almost catches at his throat when he sees glimpses of his wife in his granddaughter. They are not a sweet storybook grandfather and granddaughter pair, but sparing partners, both determined to hold out against each other.

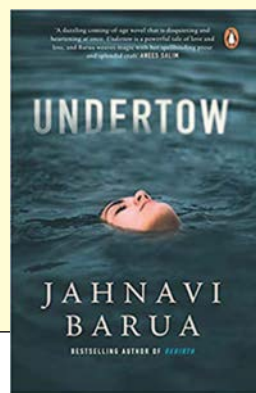
As Loya traces the path her mother walked before her, the history of Assam unfolds with every step: while it's beautiful, it's also sullen, resentful and often turbulent. Activities of the All Assam Students' Union are threaded into daily life. People around Loya's grandfather, from old friends to the house help, have family members in the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA), some who are still in hiding, and some who have surrendered. Romen, a family retainer, speaks scathingly about his brother: "First he runs away from home, joins the ULFA, drives our mother crazy and then after a couple of years he surrenders, comes back, becomes Surrendered ULFA and swaggers about the village terrorising good folks and now he is tired of that and wants to become a businessman. Ha!"

Political chatter is a constant, and most of the characters are dead against illegal migrants. Loya tries to understand this sentiment, but when she points out to Torun that the Ahoms were migrants too (from old Burma), he narrows his eyes. Loya does not feel uncomfortable: "As she lay in bed looking out at the starry sky, Loya was restless with a vague disapproval. She did not feel strongly about politics in any way, but she took for granted certain things — the idea of loving one's country and wishing it no harm."

The politics doesn't get heavy or overpower the story, fortunately. Loya and Torun are firmly at the centre of it all. She has the advantage over him, because while she's aware of the baggage he carries, he's unaware of the weight she carries on her shoulders.

While there's hope that their relationship may thaw, other forces are at work as well. Unpredictable undercurrents run through this novel, and make it all the more powerful.

Rupa Gulab is a freelance writer and the author of *Girl Alone*, *Chip of the Old Blockhead* and *The Great Depression of the 40s*



UNDERTOW

By JAHN timer BARUA
Penguin Viking
₹499

Saeeda Bano, 1st female Indian radio jockey, meets Akhtari Bai

Shahana Raza

excerpt

In December of 1942 Masud came back on vacation and we began making arrangements for his marriage with Sughra. Most of the responsibilities were once again handed over to me. Aqila and I got busy with the shopping. The main incident I can recall from this time that's well worth a mention is that Begum Akhtar was called to do a *mujra* at the bride's house from our, that is the groom's, side. She was still a courtesan at this time and went by her former name, Akhtari Bai. Akhtari had a unique character. Despite performing *mujra* her body language did not reflect the vulgarity or cheapness one associates with women from this profession.

Around 1938 a radio station was set up in Lucknow. Everyone was extremely interested. Shows for women and children were also being broadcast which used to be hosted by women. Listening to a radio discussion or radio play, we would often hear the names of these women being

announced on air. Some of us began to wish we could also hear our voices booming across the air waves. At the same time we realised this would not be possible since women from good families kept purdah from courtesans.

Slowly executives at the radio station also got to know that most women from traditional families of Lucknow, maintained purdah from courtesans and because of this, would never visit the station.

The radio station was in need of educated women to participate in various on-air programmes. The officials made a concerted effort to become friendly with men from the most conservative of families. They informed them that though courtesans visit the station (as it would be next to impossible to have any programme on air without them; after all they are accomplished singers and it is essential to have good music on air) the entrance they use and the studios they work out of are completely separate from the ones used by the other employees.

After managing to create a good impression of themselves with various families of Lucknow, the officials started sending out invites to their friends and the women in their homes to come and participate

in a talk or discussion at the station. I also received a letter from the Director in which he politely suggested, I should come to the station with my relative Huma Baji to take part in a discussion, on so and so date. I showed the invite to my husband. His response was, 'of course... you must accept it.'

Now every second week or so I would receive a request to give a talk on some topic or the other to narrate a story for the children's show or compere a ladies programme on radio. I already had Abbas Raza's permission. After a while, one of the officers by the name of Haseeb *sahab* suggested I start compere a woman's programme regularly. When I asked for details, he said, 'Just come once a week to the radio station for a couple of hours. Whatever has to be broadcast will be scripted and handed over to you.' Saeed was around two years old and by the grace of God I had a fabulous maid. I accepted Haseeb *sahab*'s offer. Once a week I drove down to Lucknow, read out details of a woman's programme for radio and returned to Barabanki by evening. I used to drive myself.

During our stay in Barabanki we became quite friendly with a District Magistrate by the

name of Mr Abbasi Wahajuddin. Eight miles to the north of Barabanki there is a small town called Dewa Sharif. It is famous for the mazar, the shrine of an early 19th century Sufi, Haji Waris Ali Shah. Every year to commemorate his death anniversary, a grand celebration is held for an entire week at Dewa.

One such night, the *tawaiifs* (courtesans) were invited to sing. Special arrangements

were made for us to sit behind a *chilman*, a thin cloth curtain, and see them perform since women from good families kept purdah from *tawaiifs*. How strange and very hypocritical! When it came to hearing the qawwals perform, we sat with the men.

Anyway, we were simply delighted to be attending the event. From behind the *chilman* what do we see? A white spotless sheet spread out across the length and breadth of the large hall stretching in front of us; several plush carpets rolled open near the walls on top of which *gautakiyas* or bolsters had been placed strategically. Reclining comfortably on these, were the privileged listeners, the audience of men. Lounging regally on a *gautakiya* with an extremely beautiful *razai* (quilt) thrown over her feet sat the famous courtesan Benazir Bai. On either side of her, at the opposite end, inside the same *razai*, sat two of her ardent admirers.

Another *tawaf* was seated in the same *andaaz* (style). She also had a gorgeous quilt covering her feet. To one side of her sat Akhtari Bai.

She was wearing a simple sari, pale grey with beautiful silver zari embroidery. Her face looked radiant, without a trace of arrogance. She did not

have a *razai*, nor was she lounging on a bolster.

After a short while, Munni Bai finished her song and Akhtari Bai picked up the *tanpura*. She hummed a few stray notes to tune the instrument to her voice, smiled, looked at the audience and started singing. What a magical voice! Within seconds, the entire gathering was mesmerised.

The *mehfil* ended around 4am, but we didn't feel as though we'd had enough. I felt a woman who can sit in a gathering surrounded by all sorts of men and present her talent with such dignity that everyone seems hypnotised must have an amazing personality; one should say a prayer at the hem of her skirt.

Every Friday I used to drive down from Barabanki to broadcast a women's programme on All India Radio. One day, after rehearsals as I was sitting alone in the studio, Akhtari Bai suddenly walked in. Greeting me warmly with a quick *salam* she said, 'Begum *sahab* I would like to speak with you.' I was shocked to see her to begin with, but her second sentence had me stumped.

'Bittan, please get me married to Ishtiaq Abbasi *sahab*.' 'Ya Allah, what sort of woman is this?' I thought, keeping my feelings to myself. I can't recall

what I said in reply but I clearly remember that she talked nonstop. Then she apologised and said, 'What do I do Bibi, I can't live without him.' Then she left as abruptly as she had walked in. I finished recording, went home and narrated the entire episode to Abbas Raza. He was most amused and said, 'Let's call Ishtiaq Bhai and tell him he has received a proposal.' I just want to see his reaction,' I replied, laughing.

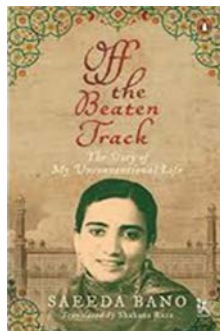
Both my father and Justice Raza were well acquainted with Ishtiaq Ahmed Abbasi's family. Ishtiaq Bhai was married to Asha Begum, whose father, Mateen-us-Zaman

sahab was Special Advisor to Nawab Sultan Jahan Begum in Bhopal. Asha Begum had passed away two years back. My husband and I had known Ishtiaq Bhai for decades. We invited Ishtiaq Bhai to our place for tea.

In 1945, Akhtari Bai married Ishtiaq Ahmed Abbasi, the Lucknow-based barrister, and was thenceforward known as Begum Akhtar.

This excerpt is published from *Off the Beaten Track*:

The Story of My Unconventional Life by Saeeda Bano, translated by Shahana Raza with permission from Penguin.



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SHORT TAKES

Amit, Sanjeet bag gold in France

New Delhi: World silver-medalist Amit Panghal (52kg) and Sanjeet (91kg) struck gold in their first competition after a coronavirus-forced break, claiming the top honours at the Alexis Vastine International Boxing Tournament in Nantes, France. Amit defeated American Rene Abraham 3-0 with a dominating performance on Friday night. Sanjeet, a former India Open gold-medallist, too put up a clinical show to get past Frenchman Soheb Bouafia in his summit clash and secure a gold. In the 75kg category, Asian silver-winner Ashish Kumar also claimed a gold after his opponent, American Joseph Gerome Hiks, gave him a walkover due to injury. — PTI

Bottas snatches pole from Hami

Imola, Italy: Valtteri Bottas snatched pole position for Sunday's Emilia Romagna Grand Prix from his Mercedes team-mate Lewis Hamilton with a dramatic late lap in qualifying at Imola on Saturday. The Finn, who is 77 points adrift of series leader and six-time champion Hamilton with five races remaining in this year's title, grabbed the prime grid position by a tenth of a second. Hamilton, who was fastest in the only practice in the morning, had been on top through most of the qualifying session and took provisional pole on his first run in Q3 before Bottas beat him in the final seconds. Max Verstappen was third for Red Bull. — AFP

Sonego upsets Djokovic in Vienna

Vienna: Novak Djokovic won just three games in a lackluster quarterfinal performance at the Erste Bank Open, losing 6-2, 6-1 to 42nd-ranked Lorenzo Sonego. It was only Djokovic's third loss of the year, after being disqualified for hitting a line judge with a ball at the U.S. Open and losing the French Open final to Rafael Nadal. "I came here with the intention to try to earn more points and secure the No. 1 in the end of the year. I have done that, so I move on," Djokovic said. Djokovic lacked power in his groundstrokes and produced a string of mistakes from the start. He soon dropped 4-0 behind, winning just five points on Sonego's serve in the opening set. — AP

ADHM to be held on November 29

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 31

After almost a month delay, the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon will be held on November 29 with all the mandatory Covid-19 protocols in line and the advisory issued by the central government. The World Athletics Gold Label Road Race will witness world-class elites and India's best-taking centre-stage in the capital city. ADHM will follow the highest level of safety standards, with bio-secure zones to ensure a Covid free race for the elite runners.

While the elite runners will be at the start line at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, on the November 29, amateurs from across the globe will join them via the exclusive Airtel Delhi Half Marathon Mobile App. Registrations for three Race categories had already started on October 30.

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Chennai Super Kings vs Kings XI Punjab from 3.30 pm; Kolkata Knight Riders vs Rajasthan Royals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

Women's Big Bash League: Melbourne Renegades vs Sydney Sixers from 8.15 am on Sony Six

FORMULA ONE

Imola Grand Prix: Main race from 5.35 pm on Star Sports Select 2 HD, 3

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Manchester United vs Arsenal from 10 pm; Tottenham Hotspur vs Brighton & Hove Albion from 12.45 am (Monday) on Star Sports Select 2

Italian League: Spezia vs Juventus from 7.30 pm; Napoli vs Sassuolo from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2

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Mumbai on Cloud 9

MI thrash Delhi by nine wickets, ensure top-two spot

Dubai, Oct. 31: Mumbai Indians ensured a top-two finish in the IPL league table with a clinical nine-wicket decimation of an already battered Delhi Capitals, who wilted under relentless pressure from Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah. While Boult (3/21 in 4 overs) dealt telling opening blows, Jasprit Bumrah (3/17 in 4 overs) broke the backbone of the Delhi Capitals middle-order, choking them to 110 for 9.

The defending champions coasted to victory in 14.2 overs, taking their points tally to 18 and will have two shots in the play-offs to get into the final. Delhi Capitals, who had won seven out of their first nine games, have now lost four on the bounce and with a match left are in danger of missing out on the play-offs with an ever deteriorating net-run-rate of minus 0.159.

While batting, Delhi Capitals consumed 62 dot balls, which effectively meant that more than half of their stipulated 20 overs had

gone without scoring. A target of 111 can't be defended nine out of 10 times and the pocket dynamo Ishan Kishan scored 72 not out off 43 balls to make the chase look like a walk in the park.

Not for once did Delhi Capitals looked like being in control as they made the Dubai strip and the MI bowling attack look doubly menacing with some of the best batsmen abdicating their responsibilities of playing fearless cricket.

Boult was brilliant upfront removing openers Shikhar Dhawan (0) and Prithvi Shaw (10 off 11 balls) in the powerplay which pegged the Delhi Capitals back.

Captain Shreyas Iyer (25 off 29 balls) and Rishabh Pant (21 off 24 balls) then compounded their team's worries as they failed to regain the lost momentum.

The duo, for the umpteenth time, looked like playing for themselves and the intent was missing which affected the morale of the batsmen coming down the order. — PTI

SCORECARD

Delhi Capitals: Prithvi Shaw c de Kock b Boult 10, Shikhar Dhawan c Yadav b Boult 0, Shreyas Iyer st de Kock b Chahar 25, Rishabh Pant lbw b Bumrah 21, Marcus Stoinis c de Kock b Bumrah 2, Shimron Hetmyer c Krunal b Coulter-Nile 11, Harshal Patel lbw b Bumrah 5, Ravichandran Ashwin c Krunal b Boult 12, Praveen Dubey (not out) 7, Kagiso Rabada (run out) 12. Extras (lb-3 w-2) 5. **Total (for 9 wkts, in 20 overs) 110.**
FoW: 1-1, 2-15, 3-50, 4-57, 5-62, 6-73, 7-78, 8-96, 9-110.
Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-21-3, Krunal Pandya 3-0-13-0, Jayant Yadav 3-0-18-0, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-17-3, Nathan Coulter-Nile 2-0-14-1, Rahul Chahar 4-0-24-1.

Mumbai Indians: Ishan Kishan (not out) 72, Quinton de Kock b Nortje 26, Suryakumar Yadav (not out) 12. Extras (w-1) 1. **Total (for 1 wkts, in 14.2 overs) 111.**
FoW: 1-68.
Bowling: Ashwin 4-0-18-0, Rabada 3-0-27-0, Nortje 2.2-0-25-1, Stoinis 1-0-4-0, Dubey 3-0-29-0, Patel 1-0-8-0.



Jasprit Bumrah of Mumbai Indians celebrates the wicket of Rishabh Pant of Delhi Capitals in an Indian Premier League match in Dubai on Saturday. — BCCI

Royals look to ride momentum

Dubai, Oct. 31: They have just given their playoffs qualification hopes a lift and Rajasthan Royals will look to sustain the momentum against Kolkata Knight Riders in another must-win IPL game here on Sunday.

Besides a victory in their last league game, the inaugural edition winners will also need other results to go their way if they are to make the playoffs of the lucrative event, in its 13th edition now.

The best-case scenario for RR would be Kings XI Punjab losing their last match and Sunrisers Hyderabad winning no more than one in their last two outings.

In that case, RR will go through with 14 points, without net run rate coming into play.

However, RR's first task is to do what is within its control — win the match against the Knight Riders and then hope for the best. Given the tight situation, the bigger the margin of win, the better it will be for the Steve Smith-led side.



The Royals can certainly look forward to their batting at the Dubai International Stadium. Their talismanic England all-rounder Ben Stokes has just won a man-of-the-match award, having made a breezy half century after picking up two wickets, in the team's win over KXIP on Friday.

The 2019 World Cup final hero getting his mojo back, at such a crucial juncture of the tournament, is great news for

the Royals. And, needless to say, a bad one for KKR as the leading all-rounder can singlehandedly influence the outcome of a game.

Sanju Samson rediscovering his touch must have also gladdened the hearts of the RR team management.

The wicketkeeper-batsman had started the tournament on an explosive note before going off the rails midway, only to come back all guns blaz-

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 21 ● Kolkata: 11
● Rajasthan: 8 ● Tied: 2
(Rajasthan Royals won both tied matches against Kolkata Knight Riders in Super Overs.)

MEETING IN 2019

● KKR beat RR by 8 wickets in Jaipur.
● RR beat KKR by 3 wickets in Kolkata.

MEETING IN 2020

● Kolkata beat Rajasthan by 37 runs in Dubai.

FOR THE RECORD

● Sanju Samson with 26 sixes in 13 innings is leading the chart this season.
● Nitish Rana, who has smashed 47 sixes in 39 innings, needs three more to become the sixth batsman to complete a half-century of sixes for Kolkata Knight Riders.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

ing against KXIP.

Skipper Smith can play according to the situation and opener Robin Uthappa can put any attack to the sword on his day. — PTI

GAYLE FINED 10 PER CENT OF HIS MATCH FEE

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 31: The swashbuckling Chris Gayle has been fined 10 per cent of his match fee for breaching the Indian Premier League's code of conduct during Kings XI Punjab's match against Rajasthan Royals here. The IPL did not specify the exact incident for which he was penalised but it is understood the Jamaican was penalised for throwing his bat away in disgust after getting out for 99 on Friday night. Gayle has admitted to the offence and accepted the sanction.

Requiring a run to complete his century, Gayle was cleaned up by a Jofra Archer yorker in KXIP's last over and reacting to his dismissal, he tried to hit his bat on the ground in frustration but the willow slipped from his hand and landed a few metres across the pitch. He smashed eight sixes and six fours on the way to becoming the first player to score 1000 maximums in T20 cricket. — PTI

SRH stay alive in play-off hunt

Sharjah, Oct. 31: Sunrisers Hyderabad defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by five wickets to stay in the race for the IPL play-offs, here on Saturday.

Chasing 121, SRH reached the target in just 14.1 overs with Wriddhiman Saha (39), Jason Holder (26 not out) and Manish Pandey (26) guiding them home.

Opener Josh Phillip top-scored for RCB, making 32 runs while Sandeep Sharma and Holder took two wickets apiece for SRH.

Earlier, Sunrisers Hyderabad produced a brilliant bowling effort to restrict a batting-heavy Royal Challengers Bangalore to a modest 120 for seven.

SRH strangled RCB by picking up wickets at regular intervals after opting to bowl.

Young Devdutt Padikkal (5) and skipper Virat Kohli (7) departed in quick succession, falling to Sandeep (2/20). Sandeep has now dismissed Kohli seven times in IPL.

AB de Villiers made a run-a-ball 24 before perishing and then Josh Philippe (32) again got a start but failed to capitalise. He was caught by Manish Pandey off Rashid Khan (1/24) in

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Josh Philippe c Pandey b Khan 32, Devdutt Padikkal b Sandeep 5, Virat Kohli c Williamson b Sandeep 7, AB de Villiers c Abhishek b Nadeem 24, Washington Sundar c and b Natarajan 21, Gurkeerat Singh Mann (not out) 15, Chris Morris c Warner b Holder 3, Isuru Udana c Williamson b Holder 0, Mohammed Siraj (not out) 2. Extras (b-1, lb-2, w-8) 11. **Total (for 7 wkts, in 20 overs) 120.**
FoW: 1-13, 2-28, 3-71, 4-76, 5-106, 6-113, 7-114.
Bowling: Sandeep Sharma 4-0-20-2, Jason Holder 4-0-27-2, T Natarajan 4-0-11-1, Shahbaz Nadeem 4-0-35-1, Rashid Khan 4-0-24-1.

Sunrisers Hyderabad: D. Warner c Udana b Washington Sundar 8, W. Saha st de Villiers b Chahal 39, M. Pandey c Morris b Chahal 26, K. Williamson c Kohli b Udana 8, Abhishek Sharma c Gurkeerat Singh b Saini 8, J. Holder (not out) 26, Abdul Samad (not out) 0. Extras (w-6) 6. **Total (for 5 wkts, in 14.1 overs) 121.**
FoW: 1-10, 2-60, 3-82, 4-87, 5-114.
Bowling: C. Morris 2-0-19-0, Washington Sundar 3-0-21-1, N. Saini 2-0-30-1, Mohammed Siraj 1-0-12-0, Y. Chahal 3.1-0-19-2, I. Udana 3-0-20-1.

the next over as RCB slumped to 76 for four in 11.4 overs. — PTI

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	13	9	4	0	18	+1.296
Royal Challengers Bangalore	13	7	6	0	14	-0.145
Delhi Capitals	13	7	6	0	14	-0.159
Sunrisers Hyderabad	13	6	7	0	12	+0.555
Kings XI Punjab	13	6	7	0	12	-0.133
Rajasthan Royals	13	6	7	0	12	-0.377
Kolkata Knight Riders	13	6	7	0	12	-0.467
Chennai Super Kings	13	5	8	0	10	-0.532

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

Kings XI face CSK in do-or-die game

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 31: Their play-off chances hanging in balance, Kings XI Punjab will leave no stone unturned as they take on Chennai Super Kings in a must-win Indian Premier League game here on Sunday.

KXIP's chances of a top four finish took a serious hit after Rajasthan Royals handed them a seven-wicket loss, snapping their impressive five match-winning streak.

The defeat means KXIP's fate is not solely in their hands as even a win against CSK will not ensure them a play-off spot. The Punjab outfit will need other results to go their way.

If Sunrisers Hyderabad (10 points from 12 games) win both their remaining matches and the loser of the Delhi Capitals (14) and Royal Challengers Bangalore (14) game finishes higher on the points table — either in terms of points or by virtue of a superior net run rate — than KXIP, then KL Rahul and his men will not qualify.

However, if Sunrisers are beaten in any match, then KXIP, who are currently placed fourth with 12

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:
● Matches: 22
● Chennai: 13
● Punjab: 8
● Tied: 1 (Kings XI Punjab beat Chennai Super Kings in Super Overs after match ended in a tie)

MEETING IN 2019

● Chennai Super Kings defeated Kings XI Punjab by 22 runs in Chennai.
● Kings XI Punjab beat Chennai Super Kings by six wickets in Mohali

MEETING IN 2020

● Chennai Super Kings defeated Kings XI Punjab by 10 wickets in Dubai.

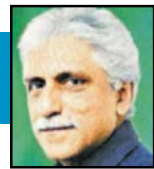
FOR THE RECORD

● Chris Gayle, who has smashed 84 sixes in 30 innings, needs four sixes to become the highest six-hitter for Kings XI Punjab.
● Rituraj Gaikwad, who has made 985 runs in 33 innings, needs 15 more to complete 1,000 runs in T20 cricket.

— S. PERVEZ KAISER

points from 13 outings with a net run rate of -0.133, will have a good chance of qualifying provided they win against CSK on Sunday. — PTI

Proliferation of English players add more glitter to IPL



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

On Friday, a tweet by @england-cricket, the "official home of all of the England Cricket teams on Twitter", caught my attention. The tweet read, "Good luck to our lads in today's huge IPL game!" and accompanied a photograph of Ben Stokes and Jofra Archer in Rajasthan Royals colours.

Former England captain Kevin Pietersen (@kp24) retweeted this tweet with a pithy observation. "Just imagine, IMAGINE, this tweet 8/9 years ago...I'm so happy these guys are bene-

fitting positively from the IPL".

Pietersen, was derided for chasing mammon when he embraced the IPL with unbridled enthusiasm about a decade back, starting with Delhi Daredevils and later representing Royal Challengers Bangalore and Pune Rising SuperGiants.

He was among the most highly paid overseas professionals in the league, and his public appreciation of the IPL did not sit too well with fellow players and critics back home.

English players were few in the IPL, one part because the second half of the league's season coincided with the start of their home season, but secondly also because of snobbery.

There are 10 top English players in IPL2020: Eoin Morgan, Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Jos Butler, Johnny Bairstow, Chris Jordan, Moeen Ali, Tom Banton, Jofra Archer, Ben Stokes.

Had Chris Woakes not pulled out at the last minute, it would have been 11 of the best white ball players from the country, a far cry from the times when Pietersen's participation in the IPL was seen so skeptically.

The mainstreaming of the IPL was, of course, not dependent on how many English cricketers played the league.

From inception, the best Australian, Kiwi, South African, West Indian, Sri Lankan, Bangladeshi — and in the first couple of years even Pakistani — players were seen in action.

The proliferation of English players, however, makes the IPL's influence in the sport comprehensive.

Importantly, English players are now negotiating with their countries to give them larger 'windows' for playing in this league.

Just how significant and influential the IPL has become for players, member countries of the ICC is evident from how things have panned out in 2020, year of the Covid pandemic.

Just the other day I read a report about how Steve Smith has decided to skip

this year's Big Bash League because he did not fancy spending more time in the bio-secure bubble.

David Warner, the other Australian batting stalwart and pace ace Pat Cummins are similarly inclined. The mental toll that being in the bio-secure bubble is taking of players is becoming an important issue.

But it is pertinent to note that none of these players decided to miss the IPL, having been in the bio-secure bubble in England for bilateral ODI and T20 series before the league commenced in the UAE.

All three Aussies are high value acquisitions for their franchises. The lure and attraction of playing in the IPL, however, is not just the money though that undoubtedly plays a huge part.

It is also about rubbing shoulders and competing with the best players in the world and reaching out to the largest audience. In all three aspects — money, talent, audience — the IPL is several times larger than any other T20 league.

Size of the audience defines the revenues for the IPL. Since inception in 2008, these have been super normal, making not just the BCCI very rich, but consequently also helping make the coffers of other boards heftier.

This allowed the BCCI to leverage the IPL even against the ICC's T20 World Championship which was scheduled for October this year, and finally scrapped in August-September with host country Australia tilting in favour of the Indian league.

The pandemic disrupted the calendar for most sports. However, IPL2020 survived on demand from various stakeholders — players, boards, broadcasters — even if played six months later than usual.

Widely touted as the fifth or sixth most valued sports property in the world, the IPL has the potential to get into the top three if the huge audiences (TV only) for this season are anything to go by.

This will not come only by hosting the tournament, and milking profits though. The BCCI has to be proactive, perhaps add a few more teams (12-16 to allow for two groups), with a relegation/promotion system in place to make it more competitive, and thereby more compelling to watch.