





## IN BRIEF

## Man thrashed by locals for theft, dies

**New Delhi:** A 24-year-old man, who was thrashed by locals after he was caught red-handed while committing a theft, died at a hospital on Thursday. The deceased has been identified as Mesar. According to a senior police official, the police received information about a vehicle theft in Kabir Nagar on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday. "Hira Lal Kamra, the complainant, handed over Mesar to the police. Kamra told the police that the accused was caught red-handed while stealing his tempo and was beaten by the residents. The injured accused was rushed to Jag Parvesh Chander Hospital in Shastri Park area," said the senior police official. "A case was registered at Welcome police station on the basis of a complaint lodged by Kamra. A master key was recovered from the accused's possession," said the official. "After arresting Mesar, the police, on Wednesday, produced him in a local court which sent him to judicial custody. He was taken to Mandoli Jail. When Mesar came to Mandoli Jail at around 8.00 pm, his health check-up was conducted by a doctor who referred him to Hedgewar Hospital," he said.

## HC allows reservation of 80% ICU beds for +ve patients

Delhi recorded biggest jump of 8,593 corona cases on Wednesday

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

The Delhi High Court Thursday allowed the AAP government to reserve 80 per cent of ICU beds for Covid patients in 33 private hospitals, saying the situation in the national capital is fairly dynamic and the state has to be "much more alive" to the circumstances.

Expressing concern over spiralling cases of Covid in Delhi, the high court questioned the AAP government over "doing everything under the Sun to 'unlock' things".

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad allowed Delhi government's appeal challenging a single judge's September 22 interim order staying its decision to reserve 80 per cent of the ICU beds in private hospitals.

The high court vacated the stay order and listed the matter for further hearing on November 26 before the single bench and till then the reservation of 80 per cent of ICU beds will continue.

The high court was hear-

## 'Pollution, laxity caused spike in Covid cases'

**New Delhi, Nov. 12:** Over 870 Covid deaths have been recorded in the last 15 days in the national capital, with experts attributing it to a sudden surge in cases, deteriorating air quality, laxity by people in adhering to safety norms, among other factors.

Coronavirus cases in Delhi have registered a sudden spike since October 28 when the daily infection tally breached the 5,000-mark for the first time and it crossed the 8,000-mark on Thursday, also for the first time.

From October 28-November 11, the city has recorded a staggering 90,572 cases and 872 fatalities.

ing a plea by the Delhi government urging it to empower it to enforce the reservation of ICU beds for Covid patients in 33 private hospitals at least for 15 days in view of the rise in the number of cases. Delhi recorded its biggest single-day jump of 8,593 Covid cases on Wednesday that took its

ties with over 80 deaths daily in the last two days.

The city recorded 85 fatalities on Wednesday, which pushed the death toll to 7,228.

The only time it recorded a higher number of deaths was on June 16 (93).

Delhi recorded its biggest single-day spike of 8,593 Covid cases on Wednesday that took its infection tally to over 4.59 lakh.

Medical experts from government hospitals to private facilities have attributed to this large number of deaths in the last two weeks to a combination of factors, including a surge in daily cases amid greater movement of

public in festive season, co-morbid condition of patients, increased vulnerability of people due to rising pollution and laxity in adhering to safety norms by people in markets and other public places. S.P. Byotra, chairman, department of medicine at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said daily cases have spiralled, so death count has also gone up simultaneously.

"Plus, there are other factors, like increase in pollution level which is magnifying complications of people with respiratory illnesses, and patients coming to Delhi in very sick condition from the neighbouring states," he said.

— PTI

order of September 22 was passed when the figure of Covid infection in Delhi was hovering around in the range of 3-4,000 patients vis-a-vis today when the said figure is more than double," the bench said.

The high court said it was expected of the Delhi government to keep abreast of the situation and monitor it closely.

It asked the Delhi government to file an additional counter affidavit on material information by November 18 before the single judge who is seized of a plea by "Association of Healthcare Providers" to quash the government's order to reserve 80 per cent ICU beds for Covid patients.

Senior advocate Maninder Singh, representing the association of which the 33 hospitals are members, opposed the government's appeal saying if there is a compulsion of reserving 80 per cent ICU beds, the hospitals will have to keep the ICU bed vacant if there is no Covid patient there and let other non-Covid patients die by denying them the facility in emergency.

## City prisons staff, TN special police officials donate plasma

**New Delhi, Nov. 12:** Delhi Prisons staff and personnel of the Tamil Nadu Special Police, which carries out security duty at Tihar Jail, who have recovered from Covid donated plasma here on Thursday, jail officials said.

Director-general (Delhi Prisons) Sandeep Goel, who had also contracted the disease, donated plasma along with nine other jail officials, they said.

The voluntary plasma donation took place at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) at Vasant Kunj and the Pitampura Blood Bank, a jail official said.

"The jail staff is doing this voluntary donation for a good cause. In the future, more jail and Tamil Nadu Special Police (TSP) staff may come forward and donate plasma. This donation will help the needy and also the jail and the TSP staff and their families if they need plasma transfusion. This will also help in case any jail inmate needs plasma transfusion," Goel said.

► **DIRECTOR-GENERAL** (Delhi Prisons) Sandeep Goel, who had also contracted the disease, donated plasma along with nine other jail officials. According to the latest data shared by the jail administration, 109 prison inmates have tested positive for Covid Out of them, 95 have recovered, two have died and 12 are undergoing treatment.

► **THE VOLUNTARY** plasma donation took place at the Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS) at Vasant Kunj and the Pitampura Blood Bank

According to the latest data shared by the jail administration, 109 prison inmates have tested positive for Covid Out of them, 95 have recovered, two have died and 12 are undergoing treatment.

Besides them, of the 266 prison staff who tested positive for the virus, 231 have recovered, while there are 35 active cases at present.

— PTI



Commuters make their way amid low visibility due to heavy smog in Gurugram. — PTI

## Delhi's air quality may enter 'severe' category on Diwali

**New Delhi, Nov. 12:** The national capital recorded its air quality in the "very poor" category on Thursday with experts and government agencies saying it may enter the "severe" category on Diwali night.

A change in the wind direction – from north westerly to north-north easterly – was the reason behind the dip in pollution levels as it reduced the contribution of stubble burning significantly, they said.

The city recorded a 24-hour average air quality index (AQI) of 314. It was 344 on Wednesday and 476 on Tuesday. Delhi witnessed six "severe" air days on the trot from November 4 to November 9, according to Central Pollution Control Board data.

The neighbouring cities of Faridabad (304), Ghaziabad (328), Noida (305), Greater Noida (327), and Gurgaon (293), which fall in the National Capital Region (NCR), also recorded their AQI in the "poor" and "very poor" categories.

An official of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the "situation is much better compared to Tuesday". The wind

direction has changed, preventing the transport of smoke from farm fires in Punjab and Haryana, he said.

The official, however, said the air quality is likely to deteriorate marginally on Friday.

The IMD said winds were calm in the morning, and the minimum temperature was 11.6 degrees Celsius. Calm winds and low temperatures trap pollutants close to the ground, while favourable wind speed helps in their dispersion.

A fresh western disturbance is likely to increase the wind speed and improve the air quality in Delhi-NCR post Diwali, the IMD said.

Light rain is likely on Sunday under the influence of a western disturbance. It is still to be seen if it is enough to wash away pollutants, Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre said. "However, Delhi-NCR's air quality is likely to improve post Diwali due to an increase in the wind speed. On Sunday, the maximum wind speed is expected to be around 12 to 15 kilometres per hour," he said.

— PTI

## Ex-school principal held for looting job aspirants

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

A retired Delhi government school principal has been arrested for allegedly duping a woman of ₹18 lakh on the pretext of getting her a teaching job, police said on Thursday.

The accused, Aditya Shanker Vats, is currently the

manager of a private school in Khureji, they said.

A Pooth-Kalan resident, Jyoti, filed a complaint against Vats, a retired principal of Sarvodaya Bal Vidyalya in Shakarpur, regarding cheating of Rs 18 lakh on the pretext of getting her a teaching job in a Delhi-based government school.

**दीपज्योतिः परब्रह्म दीपज्योतिर्जनार्दनः । दीपो हरतु मे पापं दीपज्योतिर्नमोऽस्तुते ।।**

## Grandeur of Treta Yug to come alive in Ayodhya

### 5.51 lakh earthen lamps to be lit at Ram Ki Paidi

♦ Symbolic homecoming of Lord Ram and Sita in Ram Katha park

♦ Symbolic coronation of Lord Ram and Sita

♦ Saryu Aarti amid chanting of prayers

♦ Cultural programmes on Ram Ki Paidi

♦ Mesmerising laser light and sound show

♦ Re-enactment of Ram Lila

♦ Virtual Deepotsav in Ram Lalla's temple

in the august presence of

**Anandiben Patel**  
Governor, Uttar Pradesh

**Keshav Prasad Maurya**  
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

**Dr. Neelkanth Tiwari**  
Minister of State, Tourism, Culture and Religious Affairs (Independent Charge) Protocol (MOS), Uttar Pradesh

**Rishikesh Upadhyay**  
Mayor, Ayodhya

**Yogi Adityanath**  
Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

**Dr. Dinesh Sharma**  
Deputy Chief Minister, Uttar Pradesh

**Lallu Singh**  
Member of Parliament Ayodhya

**Ved Prakash Gupta**  
Member of the Legislative Assembly, Ayodhya

**Date : 13<sup>th</sup> November, 2020 | Venue : Ayodhya**

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Information & Public Relations Department, Uttar Pradesh





**IMPORTANT NOTICE**

On the occasion of "DEEPAWALI" festival on 14.11.2020 (Saturday), following arrangements have been made at all the Computerized Passenger Reservation offices, which are in control of CCM/PM

- **Partial**  
Skeleton service will be available up to 18:00 hrs at (i) IRCA Reservation Complex (ii) Delhi/PRS & (iii) Hazrat Nizamuddin/PRS.
- Reservation offices will remain closed in the evening shift from 14:00 hrs to 20:00 hrs  
(i) Sarojini Nagar (ii) Kirti Nagar (iii) Shakurbasti (iv) Delhi Shahdara (v) Ghaziabad (vi) Karkardooma (vii) Okhla (viii) Noida (ix) Tuglakabad (x) Subzi Mandi (xi) Adarsh Nagar (xii) All India Institute of Medical Science (xiii) Rohini and (xiv) Lajpat Nagar morning as usual.
- PRS counters will remain closed for the whole day  
(i) Parliament House (ii) Press Club of India (iii) Railway Board
- PRS counters will remain closed on 14.11.2020 (Saturday) in the **Evening shift** on the occasion of **DEEPAWALI** at following locations over Delhi Division i.e. Anand Vihar Terminal (PR), Sahibabad, Naya Ghaziabad, Gurgaon, Palam, Delhi Cantt., Delhi Sarai Rohilla, Faridabad, Ballabhgarh, Palwal, Narela, Sonipat, Panipat, Karnal, Kurukshetra, Kaithal, Jind, Mansa, Rohtak, Bahadurgarh, Nangloi, Shamlai, Muradnagar, Modinagar, Meerut Cantt., Meerut City, Muzaffarnagar, Khatauli, Deoband, Baraut, Gohana, Pataudi Road, Hujjar, Greater Noida, Noli, Saket Court, Dwarka Court, Central Administrative Tribunal (CAT), Shakurbasti, Samalkha, Ganaur, Shahabad Markanda, Jakhai, Tohana, Julana, Narwana, Chaudhary Charan Singh University (MTC) & Mahem Town.
- Current Reservation counters at New Delhi (Pahar Ganj & Ajmeri Gate Side), Delhi Main, Hazrat Nizamuddin, Anand Vihar & Delhi Sarai Rohilla Railway Stations will work at usual timing.

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## IN BRIEF

## India registers less than 50K Covid cases for 5th straight day

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

For the successive fifth day, the country reported less than 50,000 new Covid-19 cases in a day. With 47,905 persons have tested positive for Covid-19 in the last 24 hours, the country's Covid-19 caseload increased to 86,83,916, while the number of people who have recuperated from the disease have surged to 80,66,501.

According to the Union health ministry, the coronavirus death toll climbed to 1,28,121 with 550 new fatalities. The number of active cases remained below five lakh for the second consecutive day. There are 4,89,294 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country as on date which comprises 5.63 per cent of the total caseload.

The trend of daily new recoveries outnumbering daily new cases continues for the 40th Day with 52,718 new recoveries registered in the last 24 hours. The total recoveries have surged to 80, 66,501 pushing the national recovery rate to 92.89 per cent, while Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.48 per cent. 78 per cent of the new recovered cases are concentrated in 10 States/UTs. Maharashtra reported the maximum number of single day recoveries with 9,164 newly recovered cases. 7,264 people recovered in Delhi followed closely by Kerala which reported 7,252 new recoveries. 10 States and UTs reported 78 per cent of the new cases.

The 550 new fatalities include 125 from Maharashtra, 85 from Delhi, 49 from West Bengal, 31 from Punjab, 29 from Kerala, 28 from Tamil Nadu, 25 each from Haryana and Chhattisgarh, 23 from Karnataka and 20 from Uttar Pradesh.

A total of 1,28,121 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 45,560 from Maharashtra followed by 11,453 from Karnataka, 11,415 from Tamil Nadu, 7,452 from West Bengal, 7,281 from Uttar Pradesh, 7,228 from Delhi, 6,828 from Andhra Pradesh, 4,389 from Punjab and 3,776 from Gujarat.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 12,19,62,509 samples have been tested up to November 11 with 11,93,358 samples being tested on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the national capital later in the day reported 104 deaths due to coronavirus infection — the highest fatalities due to the highly contagious virus in one day. The city reported 7,053 new Covid-19 cases in the last 24 hours. The city reported the last highest fatalities on June 16 when 93 people died of the virus.

## Festive shopping in Bhopal



People buy earthen lamps and other puja material on the occasion of Dhanteras in Bhopal on Thursday.

— PTI

# NDA has hijacked people's mandate in Bihar: Tejashwi

*Public of Bihar is with us, it's a victory for Grand Alliance: Yadav*

**NAYEAR AZAD**  
PATNA, NOV. 12

RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav in his first remark after the Assembly election raised doubts over the electoral process in the state. He also alleged discrepancies in postal ballot count and demanded recounting in more than 20 seats where the grand alliance candidates lost by a thin margin.

Talking to the media after being declared as the legislative party leader of the grand alliance on Thursday, Tejashwi Yadav said, "They have hijacked the people's mandate once again. In 2015 also people's mandate was in favour of the grand alliance but it was the BJP which made backdoor entry to gain power".

The NDA led by Nitish Kumar has won 125 seats, three more than the number required to form the government in Bihar.

However, it was the RJD which emerged as the single largest party in the state with 75 seats. The BJP became the second-



RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav with his brother and party MLA Tej Pratap Yadav addresses a press conference at his residence in Patna on Thursday.

— PTI

largest party with 74 seats. Nitish Kumar's JD(U) slipped to number three position in the state. Sources said that Nitish Kumar is likely to take oath as chief minister of Bihar for another term after the Diwali festival.

During his interaction with reporters, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav also announced that he would soon take out a "Dhanyawad Yatra" to thank the people of the state for voting in favour of the grand alliance.

He said that "The ver-

dict was in our favour but the results were declared in their favour. I am confident that the grand alliance would have won at least 130 seats if the counting was done in a free and fair manner. We have also decided to demand video footages of the counting process. The grand alliance also wants to know that under whose pressure postal ballots were cancelled".

He added that "if there is a little bit of morality left in Nitish Kumar then he should accept the people's mandate and leave his greed for the throne".

Multiple exit polls had predicted Tejashwi Yadav-led alliance's victory in these polls but the Nitish Kumar bucked anti-incumbency to win a fourth straight term.

In the statistical game, National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has achieved victory in Bihar Assembly polls, however, the real winner is Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav, whose party has emerged as the single largest party in the state, Shiv Sena said on Thursday.

## ASEAN KEY TO INDIA'S ACT EAST POLICY, SAYS PM MODI

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi on Thursday participated in the 17th Asean-India virtual Summit at the invitation of the Prime Minister of Vietnam Mr Nguyen Xuan Phuc. Vietnam is the current chair of Asean.

"Asean-India engagement has evolved over the years into a deep, robust and multi-faceted partnership. Asean and India became Summit-level partners in 2002, and Strategic partners in 2012. The breadth of our partnership is covered by several Dialogue Mechanisms cutting across various sectors like defense, cyber security, counter terrorism, commerce, telecommunications, agriculture, energy, environmental issues, tourism, etc," said Riva Ganguly Das, Secretary (East) in ministry of external affairs.

The annual Asean-India summits provide the opportunity for India and Asean to engage at the highest level. The 17th Asean-India Summit is the eighth summit attended by Prime Minister Modi. He attended the 16th Asean-India Summit in Bangkok in November last year.

Speaking at the summit, PM Modi underlined the centrality of Asean in India's Act East Policy and noted that a cohesive, responsive and prosperous Asean is central to India's Indo-Pacific Vision and contributes to security and growth for all in the region.

The Prime Minister underscored the importance of strengthening convergence between India's Indo-Pacific Oceans Initiative and Asean Outlook on Indo-Pacific to ensure a free, open, inclusive and rules-based Indo-Pacific region. He invited the Asean countries to take the lead on various pillars of our Oceans Initiative.

On Covid-19, PM Modi stressed on leveraging strong Asean-India ties in the fight against the pandemic. He welcomed Asean's initiatives to fight the pandemic and announced a contribution of \$1 million to Covid-19 Asean Response Fund and underlined the importance of cooperation and regular exchanges in the field of traditional medicines as a source of healthy and holistic living.

## Pak FIA omits names of 26/11 kingpins: MEA

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

India on Thursday said that Pakistan's Federal Investigative Agency has omitted the name of the mastermind and key conspirators of the terror attack in Mumbai on 26 November 2008 in its updated book on most wanted and high profile terrorists. India added Pakistan should give up its "obfuscation and dilatory tactics" in discharging its international obligations in the Mumbai terror attacks trial.

The document compiled by the anti-terrorism wing of the FIA has listed 1,210 terror suspects out of which 28 have been named for their involvement in the Mumbai terror. Among these 28 are 19 Pakistani nationals but names of the masterminds, Hafiz Saeed and Zaki-ur Rehman Lakhvi are missing. The list is prepared annually but not much action is seen on ground against those named in the Mumbai terror attacks. "While the list includes a select few members of the Lashkar-e-Tayyiba, a UN designated terror entity based in Pakistan, including the crew members of the boats used to execute the 26/11 attack, it glaringly omits the mastermind and key conspirators of the heinous terror attack. It is a fact that the 26/11 terror attack was planned, executed and launched from Pakistan's territory. The list makes it clear that Pakistan possesses all the necessary information and evidence on the conspirators and facilitators of the Mumbai terror

attack based in Pakistan," ministry of external affairs spokesperson Mr Anurag Srivastava said.

He added that the Government of India has repeatedly called on the Pakistan government to give up its "obfuscation and dilatory tactics" in discharging its international obligations in the Mumbai terror attacks trial. "Several other countries have also called upon Pakistan to expeditiously bring the perpetrators of the dastardly terror attacks to justice. It is a matter of serious concern that, despite its own public acknowledgement as well as the availability of all necessary evidence, including that shared by India, Pakistan is yet to show sincerity in delivering justice to the families of 166 victims from 15 countries across the globe, even as we near the 12th anniversary of 26/11 attacks," the spokesperson said.

Meanwhile, on the killing of an 82-year-old Ahmadi man, believed to have been killed by some gunmen apparently because of his faith in Peshawar, the spokesperson said, "This is, unfortunately, a sad reflection of the state of minorities in Pakistan. Over a period of time, we have seen the space for people from the minority community to practice their religion shrink continuously. Besides, their condition remains deplorable. We have been consistently raising the issue of the safety, security and well-being of minority communities with the government of Pakistan."

## DEAD BOY WALKS HOME, ARRESTED MEN TO BE COMPENSATED WITH ₹2.5L

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
BARGARH, NOV. 12

The Odisha Human Rights Commission (OHRC) has ordered for payment of compensation of ₹2.5 lakh each to two persons of Bargarh district who were 'wrongfully' arrested on charges of killing a boy in 2016 while he was later found alive as he returned home after two years.

The panel has recommended that the compensation amount of Rs 5 lakh be recovered from the salary of Prakash Kumar Karna, former inspector of Paikamal

police station, who had arrested the two.

As per reports, one Jitu Dandasena of Pipilipali village under Paikamal police limits in Bargarh district went missing on December 7, 2016. During the course of investigation, police arrested Halu Gurla and Raghab Naik of Bargarh town on December 24, 2016 on the charges of murder and destruction of evidence.

The two were later sent to jail. However, Dandasena returned home in 2018. The two arrestees had moved the OHRC seeking justice after their release from jail.

## MP: Shivraj rules out expansion of his ministry

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY**  
BHOPAL, NOV. 12

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday ruled out expansion of his ministry in near future indicating that he was in no hurry to accommodate the 2 former ministers who resigned from his cabinet on October 21 when their 6-month mandatory period to continue in their position as non-MLAs ended.

Former ministers Tulsi Silawat and Govind Singh Rajput were among 22 ex-Congress MLAs who had resigned from the Assembly and subsequently from their party in March to pull down the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.

All the 22 former MLAs later joined BJP 14 of them including Silawat and Rajput were later inducted in the Shivraj ministry. As per the constitutional provision, a non-MLA can join a state ministry, but he or she needs to be elected to the House within 6 months of being inducted in the ministry.

Accordingly, Silawat and Rajput, who were inducted in the Shivraj cabinet on April 2, resigned from the Shivraj cabinet on October 21.

Both of them were however elected to the Assembly in the November 3 by-elections in the state. "Ministry expansion is not in my agenda right now", Chouhan told reporters here. He also refused to commit as

● **SHIVRAJ SINGH CHOUHAN** indicates that he is in no hurry to accommodate the 2 ex-ministers who resigned from his cabinet on October 21 when their 6-month mandatory period to continue in their position as non-MLAs ended.

to when he was planning to expand his ministry.

Meanwhile, out of the 12 non-MLA ministers in the Shivraj ministry, three have lost the elections, while the rest nine have won the polls.

The three ministers who lost the polls are Imarti Devi, Anand Singh, Kansana and Giriraj Dandotia.

Meanwhile, Kansana announced his resignation from the ministry immediately after he lost the polls.

The other two ministers who lost the polls were yet to announce their resignation from the ministry.

The BJP won 19 out of the total 28 seats where bypolls were held in Madhya Pradesh, decimating the Congress that managed to secure just 8 seats.

Polling was held on November 3 on the 28 seats. By-elections were necessitated following the resignation of 25 MLAs and the death of three legislators earlier. In March this year, 22 Congress MLAs resigned from the state Assembly, paving the way for BJP's Shivraj Singh Chouhan to take over as Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister for the fourth time.

## POLL DEBACLE: KAMAL NATH RULES OUT RETURNING TO CENTRAL POLITICS

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
BHOPAL, NOV. 12

Former chief minister Kamal Nath has sent a clear message to his detractors in Congress that he was not leaving state politics in the wake of debacle of his party in the November 3 Assembly by-elections in Madhya Pradesh.

In a stern warning to his adversaries in Congress in Madhya Pradesh who have launched a campaign to mount pressure on the party high command to find an alternative to him to lead the party in MP following dismal show of the party in the by-elections, Mr Nath said, "Let me make it clear to those who think that I will return to Central politics (following setback of the party in by-elections), I am going to work for the party and people of MP till my last breath".

He was addressing a party meeting here convened to review the performance of Congress in the November 3 by-elections to 28 Assembly constituencies in the state, here on Wednesday evening. Congress has fared badly in the by-elections by winning only 9 seats. The disastrous show has shattered the hope of the party to return to power in the state in the by-elections.

## Nirmala has a 12-pt plan

**Continued from Page 1** finance minister announced an Atma Nirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, under which EPF-registered organisations would get benefits on recruiting new people who didn't have EPFO before or those who lost their jobs between March 1 and September 30 this year. "The scheme will cover any new employee joining employment in an EPFO-registered establishment on monthly wages of less than ₹15,000. It will also cover EPF members drawing monthly wages of less than ₹15,000, who lost their jobs during the Covid-19 pandemic from March 1, 2020 and is employed on or after October 1, 2020," she said.

"The employees' contribution (12 per cent of wages) and employer's contribution (12 per cent of wages), totalling 24 per cent of wages, will be given to establishments for two years. However, to avail of the scheme, operational till June 30, 2021, establishments with up to 50 employees will have to add a minimum of two new employees, and those with more than 50 staff, will have to give a minimum of five new jobs," she added.

Besides, Ms Sitharaman also announced an extra outlay of ₹10,000 crores to be provided for the PM's Garib Kalyan Rozgar Yojana in the current financial year, a move to boost employment in the

country's rural belts. In Budget 2020-21, the government had provided ₹61,000 crores for MNREGA and an extra ₹40,000 crores in the first Atma Nirbhar Bharat package. So far, ₹73,500 crores has been already spent. For farmers, the government also extended its support to the agri sector by providing ₹65,000 crores for subsidised fertilisers.

For 26 stressed sectors identified by the Kamath panel, the Centre also extended the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) till March 31, 2021. There is also a ₹1.46 lakh crore boost for the manufacturing sector, with production-linked incentive for 10 sectors such as mobile manufacturing, electronic components and pharma. "This is expected to give a significant boost to economic growth and domestic employment. The original ECLGS had one year of moratorium and four years of repayment, while the new scheme will have a one-year moratorium and five years of repayment," Ms Sitharaman said, adding that ₹2.05 lakh crores had been sanctioned to 61 lakh borrowers and ₹1.52 lakh crores disbursed so far.

In order to boost the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana in urban areas, the government also gave an additional outlay of ₹18,000 crores for the PMAY-Urban. "This will help 12 lakh houses

to be constructed and 18 lakhs to be completed," she said. To promote the construction sector, the finance minister also announced a cut in performance security to three per cent from five per cent. Moreover, to benefit home buyers and real estate developers, Ms Sitharaman also announced relaxations in the income-tax rules to allow sale of primary residential units of up to ₹2 crores in value below the circle rate.

Explaining this, she said till now, only 10 per cent difference between the circle rate and the agreement value was allowed. "To boost residential real estate sector, the differential has now been increased to 20 per cent for the period up to June 30, 2021. This measure will reduce hardships faced by both home buyers and developers and help to clear the unsold inventory," she said.

Also, the government plans to infuse ₹6,000 crores in equity in the NIFID Debt Platform. To shore up investment, Ms Sitharaman also announced ₹10,200 crores in extra outlay towards capital expenditure in addition to the ₹25,000 crores provision already made for roads, ports and defence projects.

"This will create demand for domestic defence equipment, green energy and industrial infrastructure," she said.

## I MADE NO CLAIM TO CM POST: NITISH

**Continued from Page 1**

Nitish Kumar has been upset over the performance of his party in the polls. This is the first time in 15 years that the JD(U) has slipped to number three position in the state, after the RJD and the BJP.

The RJD, with 75 seats, has emerged as the single largest party, followed by the BJP, which has won 74 seats. The JD(U) has got only 43 seats and two smaller NDA partners — Hindustani Awam Morcha and Vikasheel Insaan Party — won four seats each.

The JD(U) has been holding Lok Janshakti Party chief Chirag Paswan responsible for the low tally and has been accusing him of "cutting votes" in most of the seats fielded by the party. On Wednesday, while talk-

ing about his party's performance in the Assembly elections, Chirag Paswan had acknowledged it was his party's goal to cause a dent to the JD(U) and make the BJP stronger.

Sources said the JD(U) leadership has urged the BJP to initiate action against Chirag Paswan and his party for aggressively campaigning against Nitish Kumar and fielding candidates in most seats where the JD(U) had fielded its candidates. As per an assessment, the LJP harmed the JD(U) in 20-30 seats during the polls. "It's the BJP which has to decide whether any action is to be taken against him (Chirag Paswan) or his party. It's for the BJP to decide whether or the LJP should remain in the NDA", Mr Nitish Kumar said.

## 'LAC PULLBACK CLAIMS INACCURATE'

**Continued from Page 1**

to gain bargaining chips in talks by fishing for interests in the disputed border area.

The Chinese Army's occupation of the area between Finger 4 and Finger 8 on the north bank of Pangong Tso in May 2020 is one of the most sticky points in resolving the six-month military standoff between India and China.

The *Global Times* report underlines the challenge of implementing any disengagement plan with the Chinese and Indian militaries are inaccurate and not helpful for the two sides to reach their established goals," the state-owned newspaper said, in a report quoting sources.





THE ASIAN AGE

13 NOVEMBER 2020

Digital oversight: Don't try to regulate, censor

The Central government's move to bring the digital space under the purview of the information and broadcasting ministry, with President Ram Nath Kovind approving the Government of India (Allocation of Business) 357th Amendment Rules, 2020, gives it the power to regulate policies and rules for online content, including news and creative material broadcast through over-the-top platforms. This comes soon after the Supreme Court expressed concern over the lack of oversight on OTT content and seeking the government's views on the subject.

At present, most content in India is regulated by statutory or autonomous bodies. The Press Council of India and the Central Board of Film Certification, both statutory bodies, monitor the print media and films respectively, while the News Broadcasters Association represents television news channels and the Advertising Standards Council of India regulates advertising. However, there is no law or body that governs online content, or OTT platforms. The attempt by a group of video streaming services to formulate a self-regulatory code that laid down a set of guiding principles for content on these platforms had failed to take off. In this background, the new rules fill in a lacuna, and thus welcome.

A knowledge society demands an open and free exchange of ideas. Regulators do have a role, but only a very limited one.

It is learnt that the programme code that governs content on TV and which found an outlet in the Cable Television Network Regulation Act, 1995 may serve as the template for guidelines, and the code lists several don'ts.

While it is necessary that there is a regulatory body which can oversee the content, there are too many apprehensions and challenges that such a body will face. This is basically because of two factors. One, it should work within the limits of Article 19 (1) of the Constitution, which guarantees the right to speech and expression. Any attempt to muscle information or opinion expressed online will fall foul of the Constitution, and hence untenable. The media is best left to regulate itself, and a statutory regulator should not take on the role of a censor or do the bidding of the government in power. There are laws in our statute book to punish those who break them; and thus it must function solely as an overseer and not as a regulator, in the strict sense of the term. Second is the role that technology plays while trying to regulate online platforms. In the case of the press, television, advertisements or films, the products are made and/or distributed physically within the territory of India but when it comes to online, none of this is applicable, thanks to technology. One can produce content sitting anywhere in the world and make it available in the country, and imposing restrictions on them would be a tough, if not impossible, task. At the same time, those from within the country are easy to be brought under control. It is incumbent on a regulator to ensure that every player gets a level-playing field.

A knowledge society demands an open and free exchange of ideas. Regulators do have a role, but only a very limited one. The government must ensure that the new regulator promotes India's transformation into a knowledge society, and not impedes it.

A fitting finale for IPL

The smiles on the faces of not only the record winners of the Indian Premier League said it all. There was an immense sense of satisfaction to the event having been held as a glorious tribute to the sporting spirit of mankind with the popular multi-billion IPL 2020 season transplanted in the UAE desert and gone through virtually without a hitch. Five-time champions Mumbai Indians may have pulled one more away from the pack but they were just one great part of a wonderfully uninhibited final in which bright cricket of the enterprising T20 variety was served as entertainment in the face of one of humanity's greatest challenges in the form of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The super hero frame may have frozen prematurely on Marcus Stoinis as Delhi Capitals' opening gambit backfired, but denied by one of the great weapons of the 2020 season — pace attack. Even on Asian pitches there was plenty for quicks like Trent Boult to show the way. A methodical thoroughness may have exemplified the extent to which Mumbai Indians have revolutionised the format but they displayed that long after attacking batsmanship saw the likes of Kagiso Rabada being toyed with. This was not a nail-biting final, but an almost clichetic DC captain had realised that setting a target is as much a way of trying to win in this format. The flow of then attacking game was owed primarily to getting on with it rather than complicating it excessively.

The slow bowlers held their own too, so too did athletic fielders who bring excitement in their new gravity-defying, boundary riding ways even as the batsmen went through the vicissitudes, sometimes run ragged by just the thought of winning when near enough to the threshold. Many of the youth of India embellished the competition in unfolding their unique talents while the experienced often left us marvelling at how they reproduce skills as if from muscle memory. The public, drawn even more into interaction with the Dream XI IPL fantasy games, was laughing too as a great IPL edition went by.

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Sanjiwan Sahni



Forum of CMs: An idea 'whose time has come'

An idea whose time has come". This was among the responses following my earlier article in these columns, which proposed the creation of a forum comprising the chief ministers and Leaders of the Opposition in states not governed by the ruling party.

The fulcrum would be to reinforce the federal structure, with national issues getting a collective voice, rather than individual efforts. Over time, it was hoped, with more credibility, a potential challenger would emerge.

The second dominant response was over implementation, which is even normally problematic and would be a challenge.

Let us look at the proposed alternative in these contexts.

First, the establishment of a forum, if it finds acceptance by even a few CMs or LOPs, will help to create an enabling structure as a first step. Not having to negotiate alliances to join a larger collective would be an advantage. Its membership will be limited to CMs and LOPs, and participation voluntary. This would extend to issues as well.

In other words, there need not be a consensus on all issues. There could be a consensus on major national issues,

where the forum will allow the CMs' viewpoints to get wider national acceptance than in their areas of influence. Success could be reinforcing.

The point is that this would be a democratic forum as all members would be representatives chosen on the basis of their success in the electoral process in their states. Collectively, the forum would be representative of 60 per cent of the electorate that had not voted for the ruling party. This is a small attempt to address the lacuna in our first-past-the-post system. The majority vote gets divided and permits even a minority to get majoritarian power. A collective forum for the voice of 60 per cent seems worth exploring.

There is enough expertise available in the system to put a structure together that would incentivise and promote collaboration. At the same time, it will leave scope for dissent. Dissent by abstention from issues isn't acceptable to some.

How could the forum's voice be more effectively disseminated?

The CMs and LOP will be supported by experts selected by them in multiple domains including but not limited to economics, law, diplomacy and even politics. Ideally, this forum will have a

fair measure of younger people, who not only have the relevant domain knowledge but are also articulate and have acceptability at an individual level, that will be enhanced by their collective credibility. Some names that come to mind include Mahua Moitra, Kanhaiya Kumar, Prashant Kishore, Sachin Pilot, Chetan Bhagat, Priyanka Chaturvedi and Raghav Chadha.

Another key question: It is all very well to find fault with the government's viewpoint but what is the alternative vision. Currently, different state-level politics brings out the relevant issues, but restrictively. Nobody has the mandate to credibly propagate an all-India national vision. Besides policy, the administrative capabilities of the states are only well known where they are in power.

Many states have demonstrated progress in multiple but limited spheres of activity. If this experience is pooled in the forum, the likelihood of national issues gaining acceptance will probably increase exponentially. The forum could generate shared experience. It could also incentivise a competitive streak. Both of these are positives.

Where the advisory team can be helpful in focusing and bringing to the

CMs' and LOPs' attention, in a structured way, key issues that should be taken up on a priority basis. Its mandate should be to:

a) Segment — economic, defence/foreign affairs, political, administrative reforms, technology, etc. Identify — key issues in these segments.

b) The effort should be to try and arrive at a consensus on three (illustrative) issues in each segment. This would become the core alternative agenda to propound collectively.

This would be a combination of political, managerial and technological prowess. Segmentation and prioritisation would put the focus on what must be done with immediacy across the country. The powerful team of spokespersons using the best technologies, carrying credibility with the bulk of voters, should make an impact.

For clarity, the team will be required to focus on the positives that need to be done. Political parties will be left to fight their battles independently, as is currently the norm.

The intention is to "cut the clutter" and bring forward issues that pass the test of experiential and intellectual rigour, including multi-disciplinary analysis.

Electorally, in a Utopian world, the

The writer is a television commentator and anchor



Subhani

New insights on Rajiv, but questions remain



Karan Thapar

As I See It

Biographies written by friends can be both revelatory and exasperating. Because the author knows the subject intimately there's a lot you can learn from them which otherwise you might never have found out. But, equally, for the same reason the book is likely to ignore or gloss over incidents that could embarrass the subject. Such books are fascinating but not always satisfying.

That is largely true of Wajahat Habibullah's recent book *My Years with Rajiv*. First, however, a word about their relationship. Habibullah and Indira Gandhi's two sons, Rajiv and Sanjay, studied together at Doon School and earlier at Welham. Their families knew each other and Habibullah's mother even served as a Congress MP. Later, the adult Wajahat served in both Rajiv Gandhi's and his mother's office. As he reveals, Habibullah accompanied Mrs Gandhi "on every tour within India, from Kashmir to the Andamans". Consequently, he got to know and, perhaps, understand the Gandhis better than any other civil servant.

Now, let's come to the book. The new bits suggest that a lot happened when he was Prime Minister of which Rajiv Gandhi knew very little. In fact, he was often kept in the dark. By politicians, by generals and even, it seems, by his close friends. If true — and I'm prepared to accept Habibullah's word — it's hardly a flattering portrait of India's youngest Prime Minister.

Habibullah reveals that Rajiv was totally clueless when, in February 1986, the gates of the Babri Masjid were unlocked. "Was Rajiv Gandhi involved in the decisions leading up to this unlock-

ing?" he asks. This is the answer that Rajiv Gandhi gave him: "I had not been informed of this action and have asked Vir Bahadur Singh (then chief minister of Uttar Pradesh) to explain. I suspect it was Arun (Nehru) and Fotedar (Makhan Lal) who were responsible, but I am having this verified. If it is true, I will have to consider action."

Unfortunately, Habibullah does not explain how a Prime Minister could be ignorant of something as important as this, or what that suggests of his leadership and of his control of events. Yet Habibullah does write of himself that he was "completely taken aback". Therefore, it's a mystery why he doesn't dig deeper to find an explanation for Gandhi's ignorance. Or ask how Rajiv's cousin, Arun Nehru, could have placed the Prime Minister in this predicament.

Even more surprising is what Habibullah has to reveal about Operation Brasstacks. In 1986-87, this operation was viewed as unwarrantedly provocative and many feared that it could spark a conflict with Pakistan. Although Habibullah says that it involved "the entire Indian Army", it emerges that Rajiv Gandhi had no idea of its planning or that it was actually happening. Habibullah reveals he only found out as a result of a casual comment to Lt. Gen. P.N. Hoon, then Western Army commander, at an Army Day reception.

Habibullah's account of Rajiv's conversation with Lt. Gen. Hoon is both funny and frightening. "When Rajiv saw him, he sauntered up to him and asked cheerfully: 'How is the Western Front?' " Lt. Gen. Hoon then started to speak about Operation Brasstacks. "Rajiv looked taken aback and asked

**Rajiv Gandhi was often kept in the dark. By politicians, by generals and even, it seems, by his close friends. If true — and I'm prepared to accept Habibullah's word — it's hardly a flattering portrait of India's youngest Prime Minister.**

Hoon what he was talking about." As Habibullah adds, it soon become crystal clear that "the Prime Minister of India had in fact no inkling of an exercise that had brought India and Pakistan to the brink of war".

Once again, Habibullah does not bother to ask the obvious questions. What does Rajiv Gandhi's ignorance of Brasstacks reveal of his relationship with the Army Chief and, more importantly, Arun Singh, the minister of state for defence and Rajiv's closest friend? Indeed, what does this sorry state of affairs reveal of Rajiv Gandhi's hold on the government? Habibullah's silence doesn't mean the questions don't exist or that they can conveniently not be answered.

The third revelation is from Rajiv Gandhi's brief term as Leader of the Opposition. During Operation Desert Storm, launched by a 35-nation coalition led by the United States in 1991, to liberate Kuwait from Saddam Hussein's control, Rajiv Gandhi "launched a tirade against the USA focused on refuelling permissions given by India to US planes". Gandhi claimed this was a surrender of Indian sovereignty. However, Habibullah points out that such criticism overlooked the fact "India itself was routinely given such permission by a host of countries".

The author goes a step further to reveal Gandhi's hypocrisy was a lot worse. Behind closed doors he was in touch with the US embassy to convey a very different message. "Rajiv

was at pains to quietly explain to the US embassy in New Delhi the domestic compulsions behind his actions and stressing that he had no desire to undermine India-US relations that he had himself so carefully wrought". Once again, Habibullah has no comment to make on this distressing two-facedness. However, where this book falls horribly short is in its discussion of the massacre of Sikhs in Delhi in 1984. It has very little to say of the killings and almost nothing of the enormity of what happened. There's no attempt to assess the response of the new Prime Minister or the failure of his government to act effectively.

In fact, Habibullah describes the gathering at Teen Murti House, where Presidents and Prime Ministers queued up to pay their last respects to Indira Gandhi, but seems to ignore what was happening outside. Over 3,000 Sikhs were killed but his account suggests Rajiv Gandhi, standing beside his mother's body, was unaware or uninformed of the pogrom taking place in his capital. Habibullah as good as admits this when he writes: "We were later to learn that Sikhs were assaulted on the streets".

Habibullah quotes Rajiv Gandhi's November 2, 1984 broadcast: "As Prime Minister of India, I cannot and will not allow this". But it happened and most people believe he did little to stop it. Yet this is not a subject Habibullah pays any attention to.

I guess when a Dosco writes about another Doon School boy, friendship comes in the way of an honest and objective account. Between chums that might be understandable, but for a biographer it's less forgivable. But then Habibullah doesn't hide his enormous admiration for his subject. That's apparent from the introduction. Quoting what Marc Antony said of Brutus in *Julius Caesar*, Habibullah says of Rajiv Gandhi: "This was a man".

LETTERS

REOPENED IN HASTE

Delhi is passing through a third wave of the Covid pandemic. The daily count crossed the 8,000 mark for the first time on November 11. Lambasting the Delhi government for laxity, the Delhi high court questioned its strategy of "unlocking" almost everything, including granting permission for 200 people to gather at weddings, allowing public transport to function at full capacity and tehbazaari. It even asked why the Delhi government was reopening the city when cases are sky-rocketing. This should be taken as a warning by the Centre and all state governments.

M.C. Joshi  
Lucknow

YOUNG TALENTS

**HEARTY CONGRATULATIONS** to the Mumbai Indians franchise for emerging victorious in the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League. MI skipper Rohit Sharma must be lauded for his brilliant captaincy throughout the tournament and for playing an exceptional knock on the night of the final. By lifting the trophy for the fifth time, Sharma has proved once again why he is acknowledged as one of the most successful captains of the IPL. MI's young talents Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav have also captured attention with their impressive batting this year.

Tushar Anand  
Patna

TRADERS SUFFER

**WITH THE CRACKER** ban now in place, should the government not have notified traders a month in advance? It could have proactively declared the ban in the first place instead of the matter going to the court. As things stand, the traders have suffered huge losses and are struggling to celebrate a happy Diwali.

Neha Jamal  
Chandigarh

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

The writer is a management and economic adviser



## IN BRIEF

**Shots fired at Saudi embassy in Dutch**

**The Hague:** Several shots were fired early Thursday at Saudi Arabia's embassy in The Hague, Dutch police said. Nobody was injured and police were investigating. Spokesman Steven van Santen said police were alerted around 6 am (local time) to shots being fired at the building on a stately avenue in the Dutch city. Officers found several bullet casings outside the building and local media showed images of bullet holes in windows. The motive for the shooting was unclear. Police appealed for witnesses. Calls to the embassy went unanswered early Thursday.

**Radio Liberty scribe killed in bombing**

**Kandahar:** An Afghan journalist working for a US-funded radio network was killed in a blast in southern Afghanistan on Thursday, officials said, just days after a former television presenter was murdered in Kabul. Radio Liberty reporter Aliyas Dayee was killed when a sticky bomb attached to his car exploded in the city of Lashkar Gah in Helmand province, said Omar Zwak, the spokesman for the province's governor. Targeted killings of prominent figures, including journalists, clerics, politicians and rights activists, have become more common in recent months as violence surges in Afghanistan, despite ongoing peace talks between the government and the Taliban. Dayee, 33, was on his way to the local press club with his brother when the car exploded, Radio Liberty's chief editor Rateb Noori said.

**Democracy bloc set to resign in HK**

**Hong Kong:** Hong Kong's legislature opened on Thursday ahead of the planned mass resignation of its pro-democracy bloc, one day after the government ousted four of its members. One of the pro-democracy lawmakers, Lam Cheuk-ting, unfurled a banner from a balcony of the legislative council building saying the city's leader Carrie Lam had brought disaster to Hong Kong and its people. The group had said they would hand in resignation letters on Thursday, but it was not immediately clear when they would do it or even what the proper procedure was. One said the removal of their four colleagues could sound the "death knell" for democracy in the semi-autonomous Chinese territory. The resignation of the 15 remaining pro-democracy lawmakers would rather put tensions over the future of Hong Kong, a former British colony, regional financial hub and bastion of Western-style civil liberties where China's government has increasingly tightened its control.

**CARDI B SORRY FOR GODDESS DURGA LOOK**

**Los Angeles, Nov. 12:** American rapper Cardi B has apologised for appropriating Goddess Durga's image for a magazine cover shoot. The 28-year-old musician recently appeared on the cover of Footwear News magazine, posing as Goddess Durga with shoes in her hands, while promoting her first line of sneakers with Reebok.

In the magazine's cover photo, Cardi B is seen holding a shoe while multiple arms stretched out around her from her shoulders.

The singer was then slammed on social media with many Indian users claiming that she has insulted the Hindu goddess, while others took offence to her outfit. On Wednesday, Cardi B took to her Instagram story and apologised to her Indian fans.

In a video message, the musician said, "When I did the shoot, the creatives told me I was going to represent a Goddess; that she represents strength, femininity and liberation, and that's something I love and I'm all about."

"And though it was dope, if people think I'm offending their culture or their religion I want to say that was not my intent. I do not like offending anyone's religion; I wouldn't like it if someone did it to my religion," she added.

Cardi B maintained that her intention was not to disrespect anyone's god. "When people dress as Virgin Mary and Jesus, as long as they do it in a beautiful, graceful way it is ok". But I wasn't trying to be disrespectful; maybe I should have done my research. I'm sorry. I can't change the past but I will do more research for the future," she added.

**Typhoon Vamco strikes Philippines**

Rescuers pull a rubber boat carrying residents through a flooded street after Typhoon Vamco hit in Marikina City, suburban Manila on Thursday. — AFP

**Biden transition picks up, Klain chief of staff**

Long road ahead for duo to fight Covid, heal divided nation

**Washington, Nov. 12:** US President-elect Joe Biden pressed ahead with his transition on Wednesday despite Donald Trump's refusal to acknowledge defeat, naming a seasoned Democratic operative as chief of staff in his first public White House personnel choice.

Biden tapped longtime aide Ron Klain, who previously served as his first chief of staff while vice president, acknowledging the two had a long road ahead in fighting the Coronavirus pandemic as well as healing a deeply divided nation.

"His deep, varied experience and capacity to work with people all across the political spectrum is precisely what I need in a White House chief of staff as we confront this moment of crisis and bring our country together again," Biden said.

He made the announcement after visiting the Korean War Memorial in Philadelphia earlier in the

**US military won't be used as political pawn, says Gen Mark**

**Washington, Nov. 12:** The words spoken by America's top military officer carried a familiar ring, but in the midst of a chaotic week at the Pentagon, they were particularly poignant.

"We are unique among militaries," said Gen. Mark Milley, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. "We do not take an oath to a king or a queen, a tyrant or a dictator. We do not take an oath to an individual."

Milley was speaking

Wednesday at the dedication of an Army museum in a week that saw President Donald Trump fire Defense Secretary Mark Esper and install three staunch loyalists to senior Pentagon policy positions.

The abrupt changes have raised fears about what Trump may try to do in his final two months of office — and whether the military's long held apolitical nature could be upended.

Milley's comments, made as he stood alongside

Esper's successor, acting defense chief Christopher Miller, reflected a view he has long been passionate about: the military's unequivocal duty to protect and defend the Constitution — what he called the "moral north star" for everyone in uniform.

But his message in a time of turmoil — Trump has refused to concede his election loss — was unmistakable: The military exists to defend democracy and is not to be used as a political pawn. — PTI

side Washington, in what should have been a moment of national unity but instead highlighted the Republican's refusal to acknowledge election defeat.

The president made no public remarks during the somber wreath-laying ceremony, his first official appearance since the November 3 vote. — AFP

**ARMENIA DETAINS CRITICS OF KARABAKH DEAL**

**Yerevan, Nov. 12:** Armenia on Thursday arrested 10 leading opposition figures for violently protesting against a Russian-brokered peace deal that ended weeks of fighting with Azerbaijan and sparked fury with Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan.

Prosecutors announced the arrests hours ahead of a fresh demonstration called by the opposition against the accord that sees Armenia give up swathes of disputed territory in Nagorno-Karabakh to their long-standing foe.

The 10 politicians face up to a decade behind bars for their role in "illegal violent mass disorder", prosecutors said. — AFP

**\$500 mn to be pledged at Paris forum for cure UK crosses 50,000 Covid-19 deaths**

**Paris, Nov. 12:** Several countries and foundations are set to pledge more than \$500 million on Thursday for a global pool aimed at ensuring equitable access to coronavirus tests, treatment and vaccines for all nations, organisers of a French forum said.

The third edition of the Paris Peace Forum, which seeks to address governance issues with concrete projects, takes place Thursday and Friday in the French capital and is dedicated to finding ways to ease and get out of the Covid-19 pandemic.

It takes place as the number of cases is rising rapidly across Europe and beyond.

It also comes just days after American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech reported highly promising results for their vaccine candidate, raising hopes globally.

During the forum, several countries are expected to announce funding for the so-called ACT-Accelerator, a mechanism led by the World Health Organisation that aims to ensure access to tests, treatments and vaccines for all. According to a statement by organisers, France will be announcing a commitment of 100 million euros, Spain 50 million and the European Commission 100 million specifically for the vaccines part of ACT-A.

The British government is also set to declare a contribution of one additional pound for each four dollars announced.

Organisers added that the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation was also due to "announce an important commitment during the discussion." WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, French President Emmanuel Macron, Spanish Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez and Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission, will take part in an online discussion due to be streamed online.

In September, the United Nations estimated that the ACT-Accelerator had only received around \$3 billion of the \$38 billion needed to meet the goal of producing and delivering two billion vaccine doses, 245 million treatments and 500 million diagnostic tests over the next year.

**CREATIVE TROLLS SLAM W.H.O. ON FB FOR TAIWAN CENSOR**

**Taipei, Nov. 12:** Alleged censorship of Taiwan on the World Health Organisation's Facebook page inspired some creative trolling on Thursday, with special characters and foreign scripts used to bypass filters that also censored Winnie the Pooh, a character used to poke fun at Chinese President Xi Jinping.

The deluge came after Taiwan politicians and social media users shared screenshots showing messages containing "Taiwan" or "Taiwan can help" failing to upload underneath a banner advertising a WHO livestreamed event on the Coronavirus. — AFP

becoming clearer as the months have gone on," he said. — PTI

**Turkey prohibits smoking in public**

**Istanbul, Nov. 12:** Turkey's interior ministry has banned smoking in public places across the country to curb the spread of Covid-19.

In a statement late Wednesday, the ministry said smoking would be banned in busy streets, bus stops and public squares when necessary. It said the nationwide mask mandate in public spaces, which has been in effect for several months, must be followed at all times and smokers were routinely violating the mask rule.

The ministry also said provinces can decide to impose curfews on senior citizens above the age of 65 if they are seeing increases in the number of critical patients. The governors of Istanbul and Ankara have already reintroduced measures this week, allowing senior citizens to leave their homes only between 10 am and 4 pm. — AP

**Johannesburg, Nov. 12:** When Coronavirus placed the world in lockdown, a gospel-influenced anthem with Zulu lyrics brought people together through social media, lifting spirits and instantly becoming a global phenomenon.

Today, "Jerusalem" has clocked more than 230 million YouTube views in less than a year — and lured an army of people into mimicking its dance moves.

"The feedback was crazy," says 24-year-old South African artist Master KG, who co-wrote and performs the disco-house track with Nomcebo Zikode. The viral "Jerusalem dance challenge" saw thousands across the world posting clips of themselves copying the video choreography. — AFP

**Asian leaders to sign huge China-backed trade pact**

**Hanoi, Vietnam, Nov. 12:** Fifteen Asia-Pacific nations are set to sign an enormous free trade deal at an online summit that started on Thursday, with the pact seen as a coup for China in extending its influence across the region.

Once signed, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) will be the world's largest trade pact in terms of GDP, according to analysts. The pact, which was first proposed in 2012 and viewed as a Chinese-led rival to a now-defunct US trade initiative, loops in 10 Southeast Asian economies along with China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia.

"After eight years of negotiating with blood, sweat and tears, we have finally come to the moment where we will seal the RCEP Agreement this Sunday," said Malaysia's trade minister Mohamed Azmin Ali, ahead of the virtual meeting.

Vietnam's Prime Minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc also confirmed the pact would be signed this week during opening remarks at the online summit.

India had been due to sign the pact but pulled out last year over concerns about cheap Chinese goods entering the country, though it can join at a later date if it reverses its position.

The RCEP — whose members account for around 30 percent of global GDP — would be a "major positive step forward for trade and investment liberalisation" in the region, said Rajiv Biswas, Asia Pacific chief economist at global business consultancy IHS Markit. "RCEP will be the world's biggest free trade area measured in terms of GDP," he said.

The pact's expected signing comes as the 10 members of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) fight to mitigate the crippling cost of the Covid-19, which has ravaged their economies and left many battling a severe public health crisis. — AFP

**China lays out tech roadmap to catch up with US: Report**

**Beijing, Nov. 12:** China must apply cutting-edge technologies such as artificial intelligence if it wants to transform its military into a modern fighting force on a par with those of other leading powers, according to new guidelines and comments from President Xi Jinping and other officials.

The statements come from a booklet published this month by the state-run People's Publishing House, in which senior officials, including President Xi, outlined the latest five-year plan for the country's development.

The military modernisa-

tion is being pushed by 67-year-old Xi, who besides heading the ruling Communist Party (CPC) and the Presidency is also the Chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC), which is the overall high command for China's 2-million strong military.

China this year approved about \$179 billion defence budget, the second-highest after United States defence spending of \$732 billion. According to Stockholm Peace Research Institute (SIPRI) military expenditure figures, China defence spending in 2019 amounted to \$232 billion. — PTI

**DYNASTY | JUBILEE | Bashar Assad, has an unquestioned grip on what remains****Syria marks 50 yrs of Assad family rule**

**Beirut, Nov. 12:** On Nov. 13, 1970, a young air force officer from the coastal hills of Syria launched a bloodless coup. It was the latest in a succession of military takeovers since independence from France in 1946, and there was no reason to think it would be the last. Yet 50 years later, Hafez Assad's family still rules Syria.

The country is in ruins from a decade of civil war that killed a half million people, displaced half the population and wiped out the economy. Entire regions are lost from government control. But Hafez's son, Bashar Assad, has an unquestioned grip on what remains.

His rule, half of it spent

in war, is different from his father's in some ways — dependent on allies like Iran and Russia rather than projecting Arab nationalism, run with a crony kleptocracy rather than socialism. The tools are the same: repression, rejection of compromise and brutal bloodshed.

Like the Castro family in Cuba and North Korea's Kim dynasty, the Assads have attached their name to their country the way few non-monarchical rulers have done.

It wasn't clear whether the government intended to mark the 50-year milestone this year. While the anniversary has been marked with fanfare in previous years, it has



Syrian mourners wave portraits of President Hafez Assad, right, and his two sons Bashar, centre, and Basil who died in a car accident in 1994 to mourn the death of their president, in Damascus, Syria on June 10, 2000.

— AP file photo

been a more subdued celebration during the war.

"There can be no doubt that 50 years of Assad family rule, which has been

ruthless, cruel and self-defeating, has left the country what can only be described as broken, failed and almost forgotten,"

said Neil Quilliam, an associate fellow at Chatham House's Middle East and North Africa program.

After his 1970 takeover, Hafez Assad consolidated power. He brought into key positions members of his Alawite sect, a minority in Sunni-majority Syria, and established a Soviet-style single-party police state.

His power was absolute. His Mukhabarat — or intelligence officers — were omnipresent.

He turned Syria into a Middle East powerhouse. In the Arab world, he gained respect for his uncompromising position on the Golan Heights, the strategic high ground lost to Israel in the 1967 war. — AP



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,357.19	-0.54
Nifty 50	12,690.80	-0.46
S&P 500*	3,558.67	-0.39
Dollar (₹)	74.63	-0.34
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.40	0.23
Euro (₹)	88.15	-0.52
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,057▼81	0.16
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.28	0.48
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.903	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.916	-0.073

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## China's online Singles Day sales exceed \$74 bn

China is gripped by "Singles' Day" online shopping frenzy this month as sales on e-commerce giant Alibaba's e-commerce platform Tmall exceeded \$74.1 bn, a new record for the 12-year-old event. Sales on Tmall exceeded 498.2 bn yuan (\$74.1 bn) between Nov. 1 and Nov. 11, state-run Xinhua news agency said. Another e-com giant JD.com, which started promotions from Nov. 1, said it generated \$41 bn since.

## TCS to acquire select assets of Pramerica Ireland



TCS said it has inked an agreement with Prudential Financial, Inc (PFI), under which the Indian firm will acquire over 1,500 employees and select assets of Pramerica Systems Ireland Ltd. The move will help strengthen TCS' delivery capability in Ireland, it said. Pramerica is PFI's subsidiary based in Letterkenny, Ireland. PFI will retain the Pramerica Ireland entity, which will continue to operate from Letterkenny.

## Emirates posts \$3.8 billion in half-year losses

Emirates Group, the owner of the Middle East's biggest carrier, reported it lost \$3.8 billion in the first half of the year, its first net loss in over three decades after the pandemic wiped out air travel. The state-owned company said revenue for its Dubai-based airline, Emirates, had dropped 75 per cent to \$3.2 bn from the same period a year ago, even with this year's 52 per cent reduction in operating costs and rise in cargo traffic.

## Festive kits for Maruti Alto, Celerio, WagonR

Maruti Suzuki India said it has launched festive edition kits for three models—Alto, Celerio and WagonR. The kits, which could only be bought with a new car, are priced at Rs 25,490 for Alto, Rs 25,990 for Celerio and Rs 29,990 for WagonR. The Alto kit comes with features like touchscreen music system, security system, dual tone seat covers, among others. Celerio kit comes with designer mats, double din audio with bluetooth.

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# Measures likely to increase fiscal deficit of central govt Incentives seen costing ₹1.2 L cr

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 12

Though the government has estimated that the benefits of Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 will amount to Rs 2.65 lakh crore, the measures are likely to cost the exchequer Rs 1.19 lakh crore to Rs 1.2 lakh crore, find analysts. The measures are likely to increase the fiscal deficit of the Centre.

According to Barclays India, the measures announced on Thursday will cost the exchequer Rs 1.19 lakh crore, or 0.6 per cent of the GDP. Ica said the cost would be around Rs 1.2 lakh crore.

Among the measures announced, the enhancement in the outlay for fertiliser subsidies is Rs 65,000 crore. This will directly raise fiscal spending, says Aditi Nayar, principal economist, Ica.

The Rs 1.46 lakh crore production-linked incentive scheme for ten sectors will be spent over a period of five years. If at all it is evenly distributed across five years, the cost will be around Rs 29,000 crore in FY21.

The government also raised allocations for urban affordable housing by Rs 18,000 crore in order to offer some relief for construction and infrastructure companies. The government has also promised an equity injection of Rs 6,000 crore for the National Infrastructure and Investment Fund (NIIF) to encourage greater debt financing.

The government has also added an extra Rs 10,000 crore for rural employment assistance, and is looking to provide Rs 10,200 crore for capital

## ECONOMY SEEING STRONG RECOVERY: FM

New Delhi, Nov. 12: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Thursday said the Indian economy is witnessing a strong recovery after a long and strict lockdown. Addressing the media, she said macro-economic indicators are pointing towards recovery.

She noted that Covid-19 active cases have declined from over 10 lakh to 4.89 lakh with case fatality rate (CFR) at 1.47 per cent. Giving out details of recovery, she said composite purchasing managers index (PMI) rose to 58.9 per cent in October versus 54.6 per cent in the previous month, registering strongest increase in output in close to nine years.

Energy consumption



Nirmala Sitharaman

growth trended higher in October at 12 per cent year-on-year, while GST collections have grown 10 per cent to over Rs 1.05 lakh crore. Daily railway freight tonnage grew by an average 20 per cent year-on-year versus 12 per cent, she said adding bank credit has improved 5.1 per cent. Also, FDI inflows in April-August at \$35.37 billion was a 13 per cent year-on-year.

— PTI

equipment spending. It may also release Rs 3,000 crore for the Export-Import Bank of India to boost exports.

However, there is no indication that the borrowing programme will remain unchanged at Rs 12 lakh crore, or estimated 6 per cent of GDP, says Barclays.

"While activity indicators are improving, government revenues continue to significantly trail estimates. The finance minister indicated that the new fiscal projections remain a work in progress. But we believe that Thursday's extra spending will raise the deficit. As such, we raise our consolidated deficit forecast to 13 per cent of the GDP for fiscal year 2020-21, from 12.4 per cent previously. Of this, we expect the centre's

fiscal deficit to rise to 7 per cent of GDP, from 6.4 per cent earlier," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays.

Financing pressures should remain manageable, in our view, with the RBI supporting market yields through sustained Open market purchases, he added.

"At present, our forecast for Indian real GDP in FY2021, is of a contraction of 11 per cent. We will revisit this projection in early December 2020, after the data for Q2 FY2021 is released by the NSO. By then, there will be greater clarity on the likelihood of the endurance of the festive season uptick, as well as the pace of new covid-19 infections domestically and in major trading partners during the colder months," said Nayar.

## Moody's raises forecast, sees 8.6% growth in 2021

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

Global rating agency Moody's Investors Services on Thursday revised India's GDP growth forecast for the calendar year 2020 upwards to -8.9 per cent contraction from -9.6 per cent contraction forecast earlier. Similarly, GDP forecast for calendar year 2021 has been revised upwards to 8.6 per cent from 8.1 per cent projected earlier. In September, the agency had forecast the economy to shrink by 9.6 per cent in 2020.

The revision comes in the backdrop of slowing spread of novel coronavirus cases in the country and gradual pick up of economic activity after seeing a 23.9 per cent contraction in April-June. The country, however, saw a worst phase of economic slowdown when consumer spending,

private investments and exports collapsed during one of the world's strictest lockdowns.

"India's economy to shrink by 8.9 per cent in the 2020 calendar year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, compared to an earlier forecast of a 9.6 per cent contraction. The steady decline in new and active (Covid-19) cases since September, if maintained, should enable further easing of restrictions. We, therefore, forecast a gradual improvement in economic activity over the coming quarters," Moody's said in a note, adding that there is limited room for further rate cuts in emerging markets like India.

The agency also noted that the global economic recovery over the coming year will be highly dependent on the development and distribution of a coronavirus vaccine, effective

pandemic management and government policy support. However, Moody's expects pandemic management will continue to improve over time, thereby reducing fear of contagion and allowing for a steady normalisation of social and economic activity. As a result, the virus is expected to become a less important macroeconomic concern throughout 2021 and 2022.

The report further said the geopolitical and trade risks will remain a key focus in the year ahead, as the relationship between the US and China, has deteriorated. "The agency does not believe that the Biden administration would differ materially from the current administration with regard to these issues. Decoupling of the Chinese economy from the US is likely in the areas of trade, technology and investment," it said.

## Tax sops to help clear unsold homes; realtors may cut prices

New Delhi, Nov. 12: Home developers facing a liquidity crunch may reduce rates to clear their unsold inventories following the government providing income tax relief, realty industry said on Thursday even as they pointed out that overall housing prices are unlikely to come down as builders are already working on thin profit margins.

The Centre on Thursday

relaxed income tax rules to allow primary or first sale of housing units of up to Rs 2 crore at a price that can be 20 per cent below the stamp duty circle rate.

Currently, the law restricts differential between circle rate and agreement value at 10 per cent.

This relaxation, which is applicable till June 2021, is aimed at helping builders clear their unsold stocks, estimated to be around 7

lakh in major eight cities.

"We do not anticipate overall reduction in housing prices. Rates are already low and margins are low. But, the income tax relief will allow those developers who are facing liquidity challenges to clear their unsold inventories by reducing prices," Credai national chairman Jaxay Shah said.

He said the housing prices have already gone

down below circle rates.

Naredco and Assocham president Niranjan Hirani welcomed the tax relief. "Differential above 10 per cent between circle rates and agreement value translates into tax penalties under Section 43CA of IT Act. This has been a major stumbling block for price rationalisation. This pinches when it comes to liquidating unsold inventory," he said.

## RBI may keep rupee weak to boost exports

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 12

Despite positive factors such as foreign portfolio investors returning back to domestic equities, stronger Asian currencies and weak dollar, the rupee continues to be the one of the worst performers against the dollar.

According to traders, the central bank continues to aggressively buy dollars to keep the rupee weak in order to boost exports. Experts said that 75 level would be a crucial resistance for the rupee.

A trader said, "While the RBI maintains that it intervenes only to remove volatility and has no targeted level for the rupee, we have been noticing aggressive dollar buying whenever the rupee touch-

es 73.90 level. The RBI aggressively intervenes and heavily buys dollars through the public sector banks. Since the last one month, the RBI has been aggressively buying dollars. Even yesterday, there was an aggressive intervention by the RBI."

During the calendar year, the rupee has been one of worst performers having depreciated by 4.5 per cent. In comparison, the Thai baht and the Korean won have appreciated, with the yuan trading at a 28-month high at 6.6. On Thursday, the rupee continued its losing streak to the fourth straight session and dived 28 paise to end at 74.64 against the US dollar.

Darshit Purohit of IFA Global said, "The domestic equities are trading at



an all-time high but the rupee has continuously remained weak. The primary reason for the rupee remaining weak vis-a-vis other Asian currencies is the aggressive RBI intervention as reflected in the robust build-up in forex reserves. The motive

## Anti-dumping duty on acrylic fibre removed

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 12

Close to the heels of announcing production-linked incentives (PLI) for man-made fibre (MMF) products, the government has revoked anti-dumping duty on acrylic fibre exported from Thailand. The industry feels this will give a major fillip to the MMF segment that employs more than 10 lakh people.

Acrylic fibre, known as poor man's wool, is used for making sweaters and shawls for domestic and international market. The anti-dumping duty had made the fibre costly and stunted the growth of the sector for more than two decades.

"Removing the anti-dumping duty on acrylic fibre, which was long overdue, will be a game changer for the Indian AF sector and it will go a long way in boosting the growth of the MMF industry. The move will act as an impetus to this labour-intensive sector by generating additional employment and increasing the competitiveness of the entire value chain," said Sanjay Garg,

president, Northern India Textile Mills Association (Nittma).

According to Nittma, only three players in India produce acrylic fibre and due to the high anti-dumping duty on imported fibre, the downstream industries were forced to buy it from them. This made the fibre-made products expensive in both domestic and export markets.

The value-add industry has more than 1,500 unorganised players, employing over 10 lakh. The move will make the fibre cheaper for them and make Indian products competitive in the export market.

The government had earlier removed the anti-dumping duty on purified terephthalic acid, a raw material of polyester staple fibre, thus providing a boost for the production of polyester products. The industry has been asking the government to remove anti-dumping duty on viscose staple fibre (VSF) as well in order to make Indian MMF competitive in the global market.

Nittma expects that the government will soon remove the anti-dumping duty on VSF as well.

Federal Bank, said, "While going by the macro economic indicators, green shoots are visible and we may see the current account becoming positive by the end of the financial year. But the RBI will remove the excess supply of the dollars as the government wants to boost exports. So, the intention of the policy makers would likely be prevention in the appreciation of the rupee."

"The rupee would trade between 74 and 74.25 in the short-term and between 73.75 and 74.50 in the long term," added Khajuria.

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$183 million to touch a record high of \$560.715 billion in the week ended October 30, RBI data showed.

## Industrial output leaves contraction zone in September

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

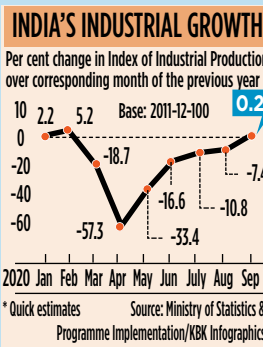
The country's industrial output moved back to positive territory after six months contraction to clock a modest 0.2 per cent year-on-year (YoY) growth in September, while retail inflation inched up to 7.61 per cent in October, over elevated food prices, government data released on Thursday showed.

The rise in industrial output, measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), is significant when contrasted against 8 per cent contraction in August and 4.6 per cent contraction a year ago in September 2019.

"With the gradual relaxation of restrictions, there has been a relative improvement in economic activity by varying degrees as well as in data reporting," the government said in a statement, adding that it may not be appropriate to compare the IIP in the post-pandemic months with the IIP for months preceding the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The September IIP growth was marked by a positive rise in both electricity and mining whilst the key category of manufacturing is still in the negative territory, registering a decline of 0.6 per cent. The speedy recovery is cushioned by a turnaround in the core sector output which shrunk at its slowest pace at 0.8 per cent this fiscal," the release said.

As the core sector output constitutes over 40 per



cent of the IIP, the output of mining and power segments grew by 1.4 per cent and 4.9 per cent, respectively.

Joseph Thomas, head of research, Emkay Wealth Management, said, "The IIP is almost flat at 0.20 per cent, from a deeply negative number for the period before that there is some economic recovery happening at present, but the price level too is rising. To sustain the early gains in recovery, control of the price level is critical."

As per data, the retail inflation stood at 7.61 per cent in October against 7.27 per cent in September. It was at 4.62 per cent in October 2019.

In October, inflation in meat and fish rose to 18.7 per cent while vegetable prices rose 22.51 per cent.

"This may have an impact on the trajectory of interest rates, and RBI may have to continue to focus on liquidity provision rather than rate action... Persistently high inflation could invite action from the RBI by way of even reducing the free liquidity," Thomas said.

## SINGAPORE PLANS NEW VISA TO DRAW TOP GLOBAL TECH TALENT



YOOLIM LEE NOV. 12

Singapore is rolling out the red carpet for top talent, launching a program to initially attract 500 individuals with a proven track record of contributing to the global technology ecosystem.

Under the so-called Tech.Pass programme, qualified individuals will be able to secure a new type of visa, allowing them to start and operate more than one company and become an investor; consultant or mentor for local startups, according to the Economic Development Board. This offers more flexibility than current government regulations, which require firms to sponsor an employment pass for talent they want to bring in.

The two-year visa isn't designed for mid-tier tech workers who might compete with locals for jobs, a political issue that has prompted the government to tighten its framework for issuing employment passes to foreigners this year. It's targeted at highly accomplished entrepreneurs and technical experts who can bring in capital, networks and knowhow, as Singapore aims to become the region's technology and innovation hub.

"Tech.Pass will add to the critical mass of established tech talent in Singapore and create a flywheel effect' to further strengthen our position as a leading tech hub for the region," minister of trade and industry Chan Chun Sing said.

— Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

## Mother of tennis star Evert dead

**Deerfield Beach (UK):** Colette Evert, the matriarch of a tennis family that produced five children who were successful in the age-group and professional ranks, including 18-time Grand Slam champion Chris Evert, has died. She was 92.

She died last Thursday in Deerfield Beach, Florida, according to a tweet by Chris Evert and an online obituary posted by Fred Hunter's Funeral Home in Fort Lauderdale.

Born Jeanne Colette Thompson on June 15, 1928, in New Rochelle, New York, she went by her middle name and was the youngest of 10 children.

In 1952, she married Jimmy Evert, a tennis teaching professional in Florida whom she met at the wedding of a mutual friend in New York.

The couple's five children played tennis collegiately or professionally. — AP

## Shah ensures safe T20 WC next year

**Dubai:** The BCCI is committed towards hosting a safe and healthy ICC T20 World Cup next year and "will leave no stone unturned" in its endeavour, board secretary Jay Shah said as the countdown for the much-anticipated event began on Thursday.

The ICC T20 World Cup was scheduled in Australia in October-November this year but had to be postponed to 2022 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

India, however, will be hosting the 2021 edition of the global event as per schedule in October-November.

"The BCCI will leave no stone unturned in ensuring that the health and safety of everyone concerned in this showpiece event is taken care of," Shah was quoted as saying in an ICC statement.

— PTI

## Younis named Pak batting coach

**Karachi:** The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Thursday extended batting coach Younis Khan's contract till 2022 T20 World Cup in Australia.

The PCB said it had received positive feedback about Younis' role during tour of England, which paved way for its contract extension.

"I am delighted that Younis will now be with for, at least, the next two years as our batting coach. The feedback we received about Younis' impact in a short period of time in England was excellent,"

Pakistan Cricket Board Chief Executive Wasim Khan said. "His work ethics, commitment and knowledge are second to none, and I am confident that his appointment will benefit a number of talented batsmen."

— PTI

## Foreign players pull out of PSL

**Karachi:** The efforts of Pakistan Cricket Board to complete the Pakistan Super League have received setbacks due to the unavailability of some more overseas players ahead of the play-offs matches due to Covid 19 related travel restrictions.

For the first time since the PSL was launched in 2016, former West Indian captain Darren Sammy, who has one of the leading faces of the league, is not available to play for his franchise. New Zealand's Mitchell McClenaghan has also pulled out due to his country's travel guidelines. — PTI

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Women's Big Bash League:** Perth Scorchers vs Melbourne Renegades from 6.45 am (Saturday) on Sony Six

## FORMULA ONE

**Turkish Grand Prix:** First practice from 1.25 pm, Second practice from 5.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

## GOLF

**Augusta Masters:** From 11.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1, HD

## WWE

**SmackDown:** Bouts from 6.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 1

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## Finland pip France

## Forss, Onni spoil Thuram's party; Portugal rock Andorra

**Paris, Nov. 12:** Finland spoiled Marcus Thuram's party on Wednesday after beating France 2-0 on the day the Borussia Moenchengladbach attacker emulated his father Lilian Thuram by making his debut for Les Bleus.

Thuram was picked by Didier Deschamps for the friendly at the Stade de France over 22 years after his dad won the World Cup at the same ground, but despite a strong performance on the left wing could not stop the Finns from coming out on top.

The 23-year-old hit the bar with less 15 minutes gone and soon after flashed a difficult volley over as he and Lucas Digne caused continual problems down the left flank for the away side.

However, Marcus Forss stunned the hosts when he collected the ball after a Moussa Sissoko mistake and rammed home at Steve Mandanda's near post.

France barely had any time to react before Onni Valakari doubled the away side's lead with a stunning effort after being left to stroll towards goal.

## RONALDO CONTINUES GOAL QUEST

Cristiano Ronaldo continued his quest to snatch the all-time record for most international goals when he struck his 102nd Portugal goal in their in a 7-0 win over Andorra.

Pulinho netted brace as Pedro, Sanches, Felix scored one goal each to get past Andorra.

France's opponents on Saturday in what could be a Nations League 'A', Group 3 decider strolled post their weak opponents in Lisbon despite not starting a single player from the team that beat Sweden 3-0 last month.

Ronaldo missed that match after testing positive for Coronavirus and was introduced at half-time on Wednesday, but had to wait until there were only five minutes remaining to boost his record bid with a close-range header.

Former Iran striker Ali Daei holds the record on 109 goals.

Italy extended their unbeaten streak to 20 games after a second-string line-up comfortably beat Estonia a 4-0. — AFP



Belgium's Michy Batshuayi (left) vies for the ball against Switzerland's Loris Benito during an international friendly football match at the King Power stadium in Leuven, Belgium, on Wednesday. Belgium won 2-1.

— AP

## Belgians boss over Swiss

## THE RESULTS

<b>Finland</b> (Forss 28, Onni 31)	<b>2</b>	<b>Netherlands</b> (Van de Beek 47)	<b>1</b>
<b>France</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Spain</b> (Canales 19)	<b>1</b>
<b>Portugal</b> (Neto 8, Paulinho 29, 61, Sanches 56, Garcia 76-go, Ronaldo 85, Felix 88)	<b>7</b>	<b>Germany</b> (Waldschmidt 13)	<b>1</b>
<b>Andorra</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Czech Republic</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Belgium</b> (Batshuayi 49, 70)	<b>2</b>	<b>Turkey</b> (Tosun 23-pen, Turuc 41, Under 58)	<b>3</b>
<b>Switzerland</b> (Mehmedi 12)	<b>1</b>	<b>Croatia</b> (Budimir 32, Pasalic 53, Brekalo 56)	<b>3</b>

FIFA's top-ranked team was also without Real Madrid star Eden Hazard, who remained quarantined in Spain following a positive Covid-19 test.

Switzerland pressed high in the early stages

and took the lead in the 12th minute following a defensive error from Sebastian Bornauw, who failed to control a long ball and headed it back into the path of Admir Mehmedi.

— AFP

## Young guns in Oz Test side vs India

**Melbourne, Nov. 12:** The prodigiously talented pair of Will Pucovski and Cameron Green were among five uncapped players picked Thursday in a 17-member Australian Test squad for the big-ticket four-match series against India, starting December 17.

The other uncapped Test players in the Tim Paine-led side are fast bowler Sean Abbott — whose bouncer had accidentally hit Phil Hughes during a Sheffield Shield game in 2014, leading to his tragic death — leg-spinner Mitchell Swepson and all-rounder Michael Neser.

All the players who are yet to wear the Baggy Green have been called on the back of extraordinary performances in the domestic circuit in recent times, Cricket Australia said.

Cricket Australia's national selector Trevor Hohns said the Shield performances augur well for the country's cricketing future.

Each of these players, though, has represented Australia in other formats.

Up against a strong Indian line-up and seeking to regain the Border-Gavaskar Trophy they lost for the first time in 2018-19, the fresh faces in the Australian Test squad will join the seasoned stars who dominated their most recent Test series — against Pakistan and New Zealand at home.

The performance took the team to the top of the world rankings before the Covid-19 pandemic hit.

## THE SQUADS

■ **Australia:** Tim Paine (c), Sean Abbott, Joe Burns, Pat Cummins, Cameron Green, Josh Hazlewood, Travis Head, Marnus Labuschagne, Nathan Lyon, Michael Neser, James Pattinson, Will Pucovski, Steve Smith, Mitchell Starc, Mitchell Swepson, Matthew Wade, David Warner

■ **Australia 'A':** Sean Abbott, Ashton Agar, Joe Burns, Jackson Bird, Alex Carey (wk), Harry Conway, Cameron Green, Marcus Harris, Travis Head, Moises Henriques, Nic Maddinson, Mitchell Marsh (subject to fitness), Michael Neser, Tim Paine, James Pattinson, Will Pucovski, Mark Steketee, Will Sutherland, Mitchell Swepson.

The limited overs leg, which will comprise three ODIs and as many T20Is, will be held prior to the Test series, starting November 27.

Also, Pat Cummins was named Paine's deputy in the Test team.

The selectors also named a 19-member Australia 'A' squad, which includes nine members from the Test team, for tour matches against India.

In recent times, past Australian greats have called for Pucovski's selection in the team following his fine run in domestic cricket — the 22-year-old struck successive double centuries in his two Shield appearances.

— PTI

## KOHLI &amp; CO. ARRIVE IN SYDNEY AHEAD OF TOUR

**Sydney, Nov. 12:** A 25-strong Indian squad, led by its star skipper Virat Kohli, reached here on Thursday for a gruelling two-month Australia tour that starts with a 14-day quarantine-cum-training period on the outskirts of the city.

The Indian contingent along with Australian stars such as David Warner, Steve Smith, Pat Cummins arrived and were whisked away to the Sydney Olympic Park.

With New South Wales

government allowing the Indian team to train during the two-week quarantine period, their sessions will be conducted at the Blacktown International Sports Park, which has also been turned into a bio-secure venue.

Kohli, who will return home after the first Test for the birth of his first child in January, is set to get a special treatment during quarantine period, according to a report in *Daily Telegraph*.

— PTI

## BELIHU, GEMECHU SET TO DEFEND ADHM TTLES

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 12

The Coronavirus pandemic may have brought the entire world to a standstill, but it was not enough to stop Ethiopian duo Andamlak Belihu and Tsehay Gemechu from defending their men's and women's titles respectively at the 16th edition of the Delhi Half Marathon on November 29.

The Ethiopian pair will be eyeing their third successive win at the IAAF Gold Label Road Race.

This year's marathon will be held in a bio-secure bubble with only an estimated 60 elite international and Indian runners in action. Non-elite runners of all abilities will have a chance to participate virtually from any location, running at any time between November 25 and 29.

Ethiopia's Guye Adola, who created the course record of 59:06 in 2014, will add more fire power to the elite line-up as he will return for the 2020 edition.

An unprecedented 13 men in the elite field have run under the world class bench mark of one hour, and five of them have run faster than Belihu in their careers.

The fastest man in the field is Bahrain's 2018 World Athletics Half Marathon Championships silver medalist Abraham Cheroben, who holds the Asian record for the distance with 58:40.

## KRUNAL BRIEFLY DETAINED AT MUMBAI AIRPORT BY DRI

SHAHAB ANSARI  
MUMBAI, NOV. 12

Cricketer Krunal Pandya, who was part of this year's IPL winning team Mumbai Indians, was on Thursday detained at the Mumbai International Airport by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) for allegedly being in possession of undisclosed gold and other valuables, DRI sources said.

According to DRI sources, Krunal had returned shortly after 5 pm by a flight from UAE when he was stopped at the airport by DRI personnel.

According to reports, Krunal had purchased valuables, including gold chains, totalling to a huge amount, which was much above the permissible limit as per Indian laws.

As per rules promulgated by the Indian Government, from April 1, 2016 all male passengers coming back to India from other countries can bring gold jewellery up to 20 grams but not costing more than ₹50,000 as a duty-free allowance. And female passengers can bring up to 40 grams of gold jewellery and the cost of which should not be more than ₹1,00,000.

After this was brought to his notice, Krunal admitted that he was unaware of the rules, apologised and even agreed to pay the penalties on the same, a DRI source said.

Krunal further assured that he would not repeat the error after which the DRI allowed him to leave, the source added.

## CANCELLATION / PARTIAL CANCELLATION /SHORT TERMINATION/ SHORT ORIGATION /DIVERSION OF TRAINS

It is notified for the information of all concerned that Railways have decided to Cancel / Partially Cancel / Short Terminate/Short Originate/Divert following Passengers Special Trains / Festival Special Trains/Parcel Express Trains in view of the Kisan Agitation in Punjab:-

CANCELLATION OF MAIL / EXPRESS TRAINS		
Train No. & Name		Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
02425/02426 New Delhi-Jammu Tawi-New Delhi Rajdhani Special		Upto 13.11.2020
22439/22440 New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Vande Bharat Exp.		Upto 13.11.2020
02462 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Express		Upto 13.11.2020
02461 New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Express		Upto 14.11.2020
02011/02012 New Delhi-Kalka-New Delhi Shatabdi Express		Upto 13.11.2020
02029/02030 New Delhi-Amritsar-New Delhi Shatabdi Express		Upto 13.11.2020
05211 Darbhanga Jn. - Amritsar Jn. Special		Upto 13.11.2020
05212 Amritsar Jn. - Darbhanga Jn. Special		Upto 15.11.2020
02053/02054 Haridwar Jn. - Amritsar Jn. - Haridwar Jn. Express		13.11.2020 & 14.11.2020
04652 Amritsar Jn. - Jaynagar Express		Upto 13.11.2020
04651 Jaynagar - Amritsar Jn. Express		Upto 15.11.2020

CANCELLATION OF FESTIVAL SPECIAL TRAINS		
Train No. & Name		Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
04656 Firozpur Cantt. - Patna Jn. Special		Upto 13.11.2020
04655 Patna Jn. - Firozpur Cantt. Special		Upto 14.11.2020
02422 Jammu Tawi-Ajmer Express		Upto 13.11.2020
02421 Ajmer-Jammu Tawi Express		Upto 14.11.2020
02231 Lucknow - Chandigarh Express		Upto 13.11.2020
02232 Chandigarh-Lucknow Express		Upto 14.11.2020
04888/04887 Barmer - Rishikesh - Barmer Express		Upto 20.11.2020
04519 Delhi Jn. - Bathinda Express		Upto 20.11.2020
04520 Bathinda-Delhi Jn. Express		Upto 21.11.2020
04401 New Delhi - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special		Upto 19.11.2020
04402 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - New Delhi Special		13.11.2020 to 20.11.2020
02471/02472 Shri Ganganagar - Delhi Jn. - Shri Ganganagar Express		Upto 20.11.2020
02331 Howrah-Jammu Tawi Festival Special		Upto 13.11.2020
02332 Jammu Tawi-Howrah Festival Special		Upto 15.11.2020
09611/09614 Ajmer-Amritsar - Ajmer Express		13, 15 & 20.11.2020
02919 Dr. Ambedkar Nagar - Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Special		Upto 13.11.2020
02920 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra - Dr. Ambedkar Nagar Special		Upto 15.11.2020

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
02903 Golden Temple Mail	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	12.11.2020
02904 Golden Temple Mail	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	14.11.2020
02925 Bandra Terminus-Amritsar Special Express	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	12.11.2020
02926 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Special Exp.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	14.11.2020
02715 Sachkhand Express	at New Delhi	New Delhi-Amritsar	12.11.2020
02716 Sachkhand Express	from New Delhi	Amritsar-New Delhi	14.11.2020
03307 Dhanbad-Firozpur Exp.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Firozpur	12.11.2020
03308 Firozpur-Dhanbad Exp.	from Ambala Cantt.	Firozpur-Ambala Cantt.	14.11.2020
04649/04673 Jaynagar-Amritsar Saryu Yamuna Exp.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	12.11.2020
04650/04674 Amritsar-Jaynagar Saryu Yamuna Exp.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	14.11.2020
02057 New Delhi - Una Himachal Janshatabdi	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt. - Una Himachal	13.11.2020
02058 Una Himachal - New Delhi Janshatabdi	from Ambala Cantt.	Una Himachal - Ambala Cantt.	14.11.2020
02237 Varanasi-Jammu Tawi Festival Special	at Saharanpur	Saharanpur-Jammu Tawi	13.11.2020
02238 Jammu Tawi-Varanasi Festival Special	from Saharanpur	Jammu Tawi-Saharanpur	14.11.2020
04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar Mail Express Special	At Delhi	Delhi-Amritsar	13.11.2020
04652 Amritsar-Jaynagar Mail Express Special	From Delhi	Amritsar-Delhi	15.11.2020
08237 Korba-Amritsar Festival Special	At Meerut City	Meerut City-Amritsar	13.11.2020
08238 Amritsar-Bilaspur Festival Special	From Meerut City	Amritsar-Meerut City	15.11.2020
09717 Jaipur-Daulatpur Chowk Festival Special	At Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Daulatpur Chowk	13.11.2020
09718 Daulatpur Chowk-Jaipur Festival Special	From Ambala Cantt.	Daulatpur Chowk-Ambala Cantt.	14.11.2020
04653 New Jalpaiguri-Amritsar	at Saharanpur	Saharanpur-Amritsar	13.11.2020

DIVERSION OF SPECIAL TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Diverted Via	Date (from the Originating Station)
05909 Dibrugarh-Lalgarh Spl.	Rohtak-Bhiwani-Hisar-Hanumangarh	11.11.2020
05910 Lalgarh-Dibrugarh Spl.	Hanumangarh-Hisar-Bhiwani-Rohtak	13.11.2020

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF PARCEL SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
00901 Bandra(T)-Jammu Tawi	At Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Jammu Tawi	13.11.2020
00902 Jammu Tawi-Bandra(T)	From Ambala Cantt.	Jammu Tawi-Ambala Cantt.	15.11.2020
00464 Amritsar-Howrah	From Delhi	Amritsar-Delhi	13.11.2020

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

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