

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SATURDAY 28 NOVEMBER 2020



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Despite Hardik's 90 Australia beat India by 66 runs in 1st ODI



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McLaren's driver Carlos Sainz Jr warms up ahead of the first practice session of the Bahrain F1 Grand Prix at the Bahrain International Circuit in the city of Sakhir on Friday. — *AFF*

Mehbooba says she's under house arrest, J&K police denies it

Srinagar: PDP chief and former CM Mehbooba Mufti on Friday claimed that she has been detained at her residence and is not being allowed to visit the family of her party's youth wing leader Waheed Ur Rehman Parra, who was arrested by the National Investigation Agency earlier this week in a militancy-related case. However, the J&K police denied she has been placed under house arrest and said that she was only requested to defer her visit to Pulwama for security reasons. **Full report on Page 4**

43K new Covid cases in India, tally 93.09L

New Delhi: PM Narendra Modi will on Saturday visit vaccine facilities in three cities to personally review the vaccine development and manufacturing process. With 43,082 new cases, meanwhile, India's Covid-19 tally climbed to 93.09 lakh cases in the last 24 hours, while 87,18,517 infected people have recovered so far. **Full report on Page 4**

Navy pilot is missing after MiG-29K crash

New Delhi: Indian Navy's two-seater, trainer aircraft MiG-29K flying over Arabian Sea crashed on Thursday. One of the pilots of the MiG-29K was rescued. However, the second pilot is still missing even more than 24 hours after the accident. **Full report on Page 3**

COUNTERPOINT



Lok Sabha, Assembly, municipal... all polls should be held at the same time so that we don't need to woo voters time and again!

WEATHER

Max: 25°C
Min: 9°C
RH: 49%
Rain: Nil%
Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Shudda Trayodasi till 10.20 am
Star: Bharani till 3.17 am
Variyam: 11.08 am to 12.55 am
Durmuhurtam: 6.32 am to 8 am
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am
SUNSET TODAY 5.23 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.54 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 4.15 PM
MOONSET TODAY 4.50 AM

■ Protests at Burari; traffic in chaos; talks offer reiterated

Farmers allowed into Delhi as clashes erupt at borders

SANJAY KAW and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Thousands of farmers on Friday braved batons, teargas and water cannons along the Delhi-Haryana border before the authorities allowed them to march towards the national capital as part of their "Delhi Chalo" protest against the Centre's new farm laws.

Punjab chief minister Capt. Amarinder Singh, accused by Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar of instigating farmers, was the first one to welcome the Centre's decision to allow the protesters to enter the city.

Soon after Capt. Singh urged the Centre to immediately initiate talks to address the farmers' issues, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar reiterated that the government would hold talks next week. He said: "The government has always been ready to discuss issues with farmers. We have invited farmers'



Traffic reduced to a crawl due to police barricading and checking to stop farmers at the Gurgaon-Delhi border in Gurgaon on Friday. — *PTI*

organisations for another round of talks on December 3. I appeal to them to leave the agitation in view of Covid-19 and winter."

After camping overnight near Delhi, the farmers clashed with the police for the second day at the Tikri border near Delhi-Bahadurgarh highway. Carrying flags and shouting slogans, the farmers had gathered at various

entry points into Delhi in a determined bid to push their way through as part of their march while the police blocked them with barricades, teargas shells and baton charges.

Clashes broke out at multiple places and Delhi's borders resembled a virtual warzone with restless crowds of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, milling around and a sea of police

personnel keeping them at bay. Drones circled the air and plumes of smoke from teargas shells could be seen from far.

Security was strengthened at the border and sand-laden trucks and water cannons were stationed. Barbed wire was also used for fencing at the Singhu border to prevent the protesters from entering the city earlier in the day.

The police resorted to a lathicharge for a brief time to control protesters who broke barricades. Hours later, they were given permission to enter Delhi and hold a peaceful protest at the Nirankari Samagam Ground at Burari in north Delhi. However, there are still thousands of farmers still camping at the border points, and undecided on whether to go to the identified protest site. It is expected there might be some clarity on this situation on Saturday.

Traffic was also disrupted in many parts of the

■ **Turn to Page 4**

Top mantri quits Mamata govt

MLA joins BJP, MP claims 58 TMC MLAs may switch sides

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, NOV. 27

Dealing a double blow to the Trinamul Congress ahead of next year's Assembly polls in West Bengal, rebel TMC minister Shubhendhu Adhikari resigned from chief minister Mamata Banerjee's cabinet on Friday, while another disgruntled party MLA Mihir Goswami reached New Delhi to join the BJP.

Both have distanced themselves from their party, fuelling speculation of their defection to



Shubhendhu Adhikari

told the CM: "I do hereby tender my resignation from my office as minister. Steps may be taken for its immediate acceptance. I am simultaneously emailing this to His Excellency the Governor of West Bengal, for doing the needful at his end. I thank you for giving me

the BJP, which has also kept the door ajar for them.

In his resignation letter on Friday, Mr Adhikari told the CM: "I do hereby tender my resignation from my office as minister. Steps may be taken for its immediate acceptance. I am simultaneously emailing this to His Excellency the Governor of West Bengal, for doing the needful at his end. I thank you for giving me

opportunity to serve the people of the state, which I did all through with commitment, dedication and sincerity."

The TMC heavyweight, who was the face of Ms Banerjee's famous land movement in Nandigram during Left Front rule and later became an MP twice, was the minister of three key state government departments: transport, environment and water resources investigation/development.

Within hours of Mr Adhikari's resignation, meanwhile, Bishnupur

Clashes on LoC spread, 2 jawans die in Rajouri

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, NOV. 27

The renewed intermittent clashes between the facing armies along the Line of Control that began in J&K's Poonch district earlier this week spread to neighbouring Rajouri district on Friday, leaving at least two more Indian soldiers dead.

The Army said the Pakistani troops resorted to "unprovoked ceasefire violation" in Suderbani area of Rajouri early Friday. "Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation on the LoC in Sunderbani sector of district Rajouri on November 27," Lt. Col. Devender Anand, the Jammu-based defence spokesman, said. He added: "Own troops responded immediately to the enemy fire. Two Army jawans, Naik Prem Bahadur Khatri and Rifleman Sukhbir Singh, got critically injured and later succumbed to their injuries." Both, he said, were "brave, highly motivated and sincere soldiers".



National security adviser Ajit Doval being welcomed by Army Commander Lt. Gen. Shavendra Silva on his arrival for trilateral India-Sri Lanka-Maldives consultations on maritime and security cooperation in Colombo on Friday. — *PTI*

Top Iran military nuke scientist killed, Tehran sees Israeli hand

Dubai, Nov. 27: An Iranian scientist that Israel alleged led the Islamic Republic's military nuclear program until its disbanding in the early 2000s was killed in a targeted attack that saw gunmen use explosives and machine gun fire Friday, state television said.

Iran's foreign minister alleged the killing of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh bore "serious indications" of an Israeli role, but did not elaborate. Israel declined to immediately comment, though

Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu once called out Fakhrizadeh in a news conference saying: "Remember that name." Israel has long been suspected of carrying out a series of targeted killings of Iranian nuclear scientists nearly a decade ago.

The killing risked further raising tensions across the Mideast, as just a year ago Iran and the US stood on the brink of war. It comes just as President-elect Joe Biden stands poised to be inaugurated in January and likely

complicates his efforts to return America to the Iran nuclear deal.

State TV said Fakhrizadeh was attacked by "armed terrorist elements." He died at a local hospital after doctors and paramedics couldn't revive him.

The semiofficial Fars news agency, believed to be close to the country's Revolutionary Guard, said the attack happened in Absard, a small city just east of the capital, Tehran. — *AP*

■ **More on Page 6**

■ CEA upbeat: 'Food inflation may soften'

Q2 growth minus 7.5%: Recovery pace faster?

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Amid hopes of the development of a Covid-19 vaccine, India's economy rebounded at a faster-than-expected pace in the July-September quarter, helped by a pickup in manufacturing. The country's GDP contracted by 7.5 per cent in the second-quarter of 2020-21, lower than economists' projection of a 8.5 per cent to 10.5 per cent contraction and signalling a sharp recovery from the record plunge of 23.9 per cent in the previous April-June quarter. The economy, however, entered into a technical recession for the first time in history.

"India's real Gross Domestic Product fell to 7.5 per cent in the July-September quarter compared to a contraction of 23.9 per cent in the three months that ended in June. The GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in Q2 of 2020-21 is estimated at ₹33.14 lakh crores, as against ₹35.84 lakh crores in Q2 of 2019-20, showing a contraction of 7.5 per cent

8 core sectors in worse shape

New Delhi: Weighed down by a fall in production of crude oil, natural gas, petroleum refinery production, and steel, India's core sector output contraction deepened in October at 2.5 per cent, as compared to a sharp recovery witnessed in the month of September, data released by the commerce and industry showed on Friday. As per the official data released by the government, the output of eight key infrastructure industries was down (-) 0.1 per cent in September as compared to 7.3per cent in August.

as compared to 4.4 per cent growth in Q2 of 2019-20," the data released by the statistics and programme implementation ministry showed Friday.

Reacting to the GDP data, chief economic adviser K.V. Subramanian said there

is an "upside potential" in the estimates on the economy during the current financial year, as recovery is taking a faster pace than expected. "I would say given what we've seen in Q1 and Q2 and with the optimism that is being seen in the estimates, I do see upside potential in that estimate given the good recovery that's happening," Mr Subramanian said, adding that food inflation is expected to soften in the third quarter and it is something which has to be tracked closely.

Giving the further outlook of India's economy in future, he added: "We should be cautiously optimistic and the caution is warranted because the economic impact is primarily due to the pandemic. Given uncertainty, it is difficult to predict if positive territory can be hit in the third or fourth quarter of this fiscal."

However, the data further showed that some sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, trade and service segments

■ **Turn to Page 4**

Doval meets Mahinda, bid to boost ties with Colombo

Colombo, Nov. 27: Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Friday sought India's continued assistance to boost the bilateral ties as he met with national security adviser Ajit Doval, who also held talks with the country's defence secretary to further advance the "valuable" cooperation which contributes to peace and security in the region.

Mr Doval arrived in Colombo on Friday for a trilateral maritime dialogue among India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Sri Lanka will host the fourth national security adviser trilateral meeting on maritime security cooperation with India and the Maldives on Friday and Saturday. The meeting will take place after six years — the last meeting was held in New Delhi in 2014.

Lanka PM Rajapaksa asked the senior Indian official for continued assistance to Sri Lanka in its bilateral help, the Prime Minister's Office said. He was particularly keen on the need for India to extend its housing assistance to the country's south, it said. — *PTI*

■ **More on Page 4**



SHORT TAKES

Noida: 199 new Covid cases, tally at 22,310

Noida: Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddh Nagar recorded 199 new Covid cases that pushed the district's infection tally to 22,310 on Friday, official data showed. The number of active Covid cases in the district came down to 1,282 from 1,285 the previous day, according to the data released by the UP health department for a 24-hour period. The active case count in Gautam Buddh Nagar is the fourth highest in the state. On the bright side, 202 more patients got discharged during the period with the overall recoveries reaching 20,947, the fifth highest in the state. With the death toll at 81, the district has a mortality rate of 0.36 per cent. The recovery rate of Covid patients reached 93.89 per cent, the statistics showed. Meanwhile, the number of active cases in Uttar Pradesh rose to 25,639 from 25,422 on Thursday, while the overall recoveries reached 5,04,411 and the death toll linked to Covid climbed to 7,697 on Friday, the data showed. — PTI

DTC board to procure 1,250 low-floor buses

New Delhi: In a move that will boost public transport in the national capital, the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) Board, in its meeting on Friday, decided to procure 1,250 low floor air-conditioned CNG buses. Transport minister Kailash Gahlot, who chaired the meeting, said that the Delhi government under the leadership of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal is committed to augment its public transport system while ensuring that environmental pollution is reduced. The new buses, part of the DTC fleet, will be Bharat Stage VI (BS VI) compliant. No new buses have been procured by the DTC in nearly the past one decade. "The new buses would be equipped with state-of-the-art features like real-time passenger information system, CCTVs, panic buttons, and GPS besides being differently-abled friendly," said the office of the Delhi transport minister in a statement.

Gr Noida: 5 held for illegal sand mining

Noida: Five men transporting illegally mined sand have been arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida, police said on Friday. The accused were held on the Eastern Peripheral Expressway in the Ecotech 1 police station area on Thursday, they said. "The accused had illegally mined sand and were transporting it on the tractor trolley. Their vehicle also didn't have any registration number," a police spokesperson said. They have been identified as Kailash Jogi, Praveen Kumar, Bhupendra Prajapati, Lokesh Prajapati and Pradeep Gujjar, the official said. The accused have been booked under provisions of the UP Minerals (Prevention of Illegal Mining, Transportation and Storage) Rules, 2018, the spokesperson said. The police have impounded the tractor-trolley laden with the illegally mined sand, the official added. — PTI

Docs correct curved spine of 24-year-old

New Delhi: Doctors at a city hospital corrected a rigid 140° curved spine of a 24-year-old girl through a two-staged surgery. The deformity in the patient was observed when she was four years old but was not treated properly; her ribs remained humped towards the right for 20 years. Doctors pointed out that scoliotic deformities of over 100° cause cardiopulmonary problems and may reduce life expectancy if not addressed on time. Doctors explained that Radhika's family noticed the deformity for the first time when she was four years old and had a full body cast for the same. Despite that, the deformity kept on increasing with time. Radhika had developed ilioacostal impingement over the last two years. The medical director and chief of Spine Service at ISIC, Dr H.S. Chhabra, said, "Scoliosis is a progressive disorder that occurs most often during the growth spurt right before puberty. Last year, ISIC held camps in nearby schools to check for such deformities in children and found that many children have varying degrees of spinal deformities that their parents are not aware of."

Says no steps taken despite exhortations Centre in SC blames govt for rise in Covid-19 cases

Delhi records 98 Covid deaths, 5,482 new cases

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Delhi recorded 5,282 fresh Covid-19 cases in a day as the positivity rate declined 8.51 per cent, while 98 more fatalities pushed the city's death toll to 8,909 on Wednesday, authorities said. As many as 64,455 tests, including 28,100 RT-PCR ones, were conducted on Thursday for the detection of Covid, according to a bulletin by the Delhi health department on Friday. According to the bulletin, the total number of cases climbed to 5,56,744 on Friday, of which 5,09,654 have recovered. The tally of active cases in

Delhi was 38,181 on Friday. The number of Covid-19 containment zones in Delhi rose to 5,229 on Friday. Meanwhile, the Delhi government-run Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital has been identified as the city's first storage facility for Covid vaccine. B.L. Sherwal, the managing director of the hospital, said a team from the Union health ministry has surveyed the building and approved it. "The Delhi government had asked us to provide space to store vaccines. We have a three-storeyed building which can be used for this purpose," Mr Sherwal said.

RT-PCR, which remained static at around 20,000 RTPCR tests for a long time.

A bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R.S. Reddy and M.R. Shah took the Centre's affidavit on record and observed that "Things are going from bad to worse but no concrete steps are being taken. States will have to rise above the politics. All states will have to rise to the occasion," the bench

said while posting the matter for further hearing on December 1.

The Centre said that despite issuing several elaborate and exhaustive guidelines for containment and prevention of the infection and for ensuring proper treatment of Covid patients, Delhi government saw its first wave of Coronavirus infection in the month of June-July and the union government immediately

had to take pro-active and pre-emptive steps to control further spread of Covid.

The Centre pointed out that to deal with the shortcomings, which lead to a massive increase in the Covid infection and the increasing strain on the capacity of medical infrastructure in the hospitals of Delhi, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah was constrained to call another meeting on November 15 to review the situation in the national capital.

It said that even now, "after it was committed that GNCTD would increase ICU (non-ventilator) beds by around 2,680, the Chief Minister, vide its letter dated November 19, 2020 addressed to the Union home minister, has expressed his inability to enhance ICU beds in the Delhi (State Government and private) hospitals by more than around 912, and has asked the Central Government to create the additional 1,700 ICU beds".

It said that several meetings were held by cabinet secretary, union home secretary and health secretary with all concerned officials of Delhi government, municipal bodies and others to review the status of Covid management and it was emphasised that all steps be taken to contain the situation in Delhi. — PTI

Farmers' march leads to traffic jam for 2nd day

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Vehicles moved bumper-to-bumper on key roads for second day after Delhi Police closed several border points with Haryana in view of the protesting farmers' "Delhi Chalo" march on Friday.

Dhansa and Jharoda Kalan borders were closed for traffic movement due to the demonstration and the commuters were asked to take an alternative route, the Delhi Traffic Police said.

"Tikri Border is completely closed for traffic movement by local police. Traffic intending to go towards Haryana is also closed. All motorists are advised to avoid this route in view of the protest by Kishan Sangharsh committee," it tweeted.

The police asked people to "totally avoid outer Ring Road, Mukarba Chowk, Grand Trunk Road, NH-44 and Singhu Border" as the traffic was "very very heavy in this area".

Heightened checking near the Dhaula Kuan police post led to obstruction in traffic in the carriageway from Gurgaon towards Dhaula Kuan.

"Traffic is heavy in the carriageway from Peeragarhi towards Punjabi Bagh due to checking by local police at Ordnance Depot. Kindly avoid the stretch," the traffic police tweeted.



A health worker collects samples for Covid test at Delhi border in Noida on Friday. — PTI

Have enough infra to vaccinate entire Delhi in few weeks: Jain

New Delhi, Nov. 27: Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Friday said Delhi has sufficient infrastructure and equipment to vaccinate its entire population in a few weeks once a Covid vaccine is available.



Satyendar Jain

"There is no need to worry about storage of vaccines. We have a large number of health care facilities, such as mohalla clinics, poly clinics, and hospitals etc, where a Covid vaccine can be administered to people," Jain told reporters.

"Once a vaccine is available, we can vaccinate the entire population of Delhi in a few weeks," the minister said.

Mr Jain also said Delhi should be given priority during the distribution of the vaccine as it is the national capital.

A three-storeyed building on the premises of Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital has also been identified for storage of Covid vaccines.

On Thursday, Delhi's Immunization Officer Suresh Seth had said the national capital is geared up for the Covid vaccination programme and the city's entire population can be covered in a month.

"We have 600 cold storage points and around 1,800 outreach sites for the universal immunization programme for children. We have sufficient equipment for vaccines that can be stored at a temperature of 2 to 8 degrees Celsius and those that need minus 15 to minus 25 degrees Celsius. The central government is further strengthening the infrastructure and provid-

ing more equipment," Mr Seth had told PTI. He had said the equipment and infrastructure for vaccines that need ultra-cold conditions (minus 70 degrees Celsius) are not there, but "we don't think there will be any problem logistically because the immunization programme will be carried out in a phased manner".

"If we involve hospital staff and nurses etc., we can easily vaccinate the entire population in a month," he had said, adding that at present, the Delhi government is collecting data of health care workers who are at top of the priority list of the Delhi government.

"If a vaccine is available, we can administer it to all healthcare workers in just three days... We have sufficient equipment and cold storage space, we are geared up. We won't let Delhi falter," Seth stressed. — PTI

Delhi breathes a little easy as high winds clear air

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Delhi's air quality improved to be in the "moderate" category on Friday morning due to favourable wind speed and is likely to get even better, according to the India meteorological department.

The city's 24-hour average air quality index (AQI), which was 302 on Thursday, improved to 137 on Friday.

On Wednesday, the 24-hour AQI was 413, which falls in the "severe" category.

An AQI between zero and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", between 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

Stronger winds and a drastic reduction in the contribution of stubble burning were two major reasons for cleaner skies over Delhi, according to experts.

V.K. Soni, the head of the IMD's environment research centre, said the

wind speed remained favourable throughout the night, leading to a better than predicted situation.

"Usually, winds remain calm at night. On Thursday night, favourable wind speed (8-12 kmph) led to better dispersion conditions," he said.

The maximum wind speed was 18 kmph on Friday, the IMD said.

The central government's Air Quality Early Warning System for Delhi said the air quality is likely to remain in the "satisfactory" to "moderate" category on Saturday and in the "moderate" to "poor" category on Sunday.

The share of stubble burning in Delhi's pollution has also reduced significantly as the harvest season has ended.

The contribution of stubble burning in neighbouring states to Delhi's PM2.5 levels was just 2 percent on Friday and 1 percent on Thursday, according to the ministry of earth sciences' air quality monitor, Safar.

City court directs Kejriwal, Sisodia to appear in defamation case

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

A Delhi court has directed chief minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy Manish Sisodia to appear before it without any failure on December 3 in a criminal defamation complaint filed in 2013 by a ticket aspirant for the Assembly elections.

Additional chief metropolitan magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandey directed Mr Kejriwal, Mr Sisodia and Swaraj India president Yogendra Yadav to appear before the court while granting them exemption on November 25 for the day.

Mr Yadav was then in the AAP. The court was hearing an application filed by Yogesh Gaur, the legal heir of the complainant Suresh Kumar Sharma, who died recently. In his application, Gaur has sought substitution of the name of the complainant.

All the three accused persons are exempted through their counsel for Nov 25 only and they are directed to join the proceedings on the next date of hearing without any failure, the court said.

Metro services resume on all lines, to be normal today

New Delhi, Nov. 27: Delhi Metro services resumed on all lines on Friday evening after they were disrupted for a few hours at multiple places because of the "Delhi Chalo" march by farmers against the Centre's new farm laws. "Services normal at all corridors from 5:35 pm onwards," DMRC tweeted, adding that the services will be regular on all lines on Saturday.

The Delhi Metro on Friday morning announced the closure of exit and entry gates at six metro stations on the Green Line due to security reasons.

"Entry & exit gates of

Brigadier Hoshiar Singh, Bahadurgarh City, Pandit Shree Ram Sharma, Tikri Border, Tikri Kalan and Ghevra stations on Green Line are now closed," the DMRC tweeted.

The Delhi Metro authorities had earlier announced that services from neighbouring cities will remain suspended on Friday.

"As advised by Delhi Police, Metro services will be available only from Delhi towards the NCR sections. However, services from the NCR stations towards Delhi will not be available due to security reasons till further notice. However,

metro services will be available from Delhi towards the NCR sections," DMRC had said.

Delhi Police used tear gas shells to disperse a group of farmers who had reached the Singhu border as part of the protest march.

The shells were fired at the border point which connects Delhi with Haryana. Security was strengthened at the border and sand-laden trucks and water cannons were stationed. Barbed wire was also being used for fencing at the Singhu border to prevent the protesters from entering the city — PTI

When father of Indian software industry was asked to 'show' software

SRIRAM KARRI
HYDERABAD, NOV. 27

In the cold January of 2005, Hyderabad was gearing up to hold a mega IEEE national conference marked by several other events on the sidelines—talks, paper submissions, panel discussions, industry interactions, and awards night.

Most industry bodies were participating such as NASSCOM, Computer Society of India (CSI), Hyderabad Software Exporters Association (HYSEA), and STPI with the largest software company of India, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), being the principal sponsor.

The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) event had its global chairman

amongst the guests besides top CEOs of Indian software industry. President Dr APJ Abdul Kalam was to link digitally to give the inaugural address.

TCS, which had just gone public a few quarters prior, had set the Indian tech industry abuzz with excitement with its campaign, "Software put India on the global map, but who put software on India's map?" The answer was obviously TCS, but if the contribution and achievement had to be personified, it was its founding CEO Fajir Chand Kohli (popularly called F.C. Kohli, or even FCK lovingly by colleagues and juniors).

"As head of marketing and communications of TCS, Hyderabad region, it was my responsibility to ensure this conference was a success in terms of its marketing, branding,

► THE INSTITUTE of Electrical and Electronics Engineers event had its global chairman amongst the guests, besides top CEOs of Indian software industry. President Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was to link digitally to give the inaugural address.

and communications. "It was a challenge but not as daunting as the talk I wished to moderate with F.C. Kohli. I was warned adequately against it by Rajesh Nambiar, the then head of TCS region, my boss (now chairman and managing director of Cognizant India).

"Be warned, he is a ferocious tiger. Unpredictable. You may get reduced to a joke in public," Rajesh told me. I could handle any

tiger, I thought, and went ahead.

Employees of the Tata Group pride the number one. Its former chairman, J.R.D. 'Tata, was India's first pilot, whose license was number #1. TCS was India's first software company. Its development centre in Hyderabad, Deccan Park, had the address #1, Software Technology Parks, Madhapur. F.C. Kohli was the visionary #1 of TCS and India's technology industry. He was an alpha male.

As news spread, not just employees of TCS, but software professionals from other companies began assembling on the lawns of the outdoor amphitheatre by 9.30 am. Security folks were going crazy. The white tiger arrived. Thousands stood up. I tried to begin my

anchoring act, announcing into the mike, "Ladies and gentlemen, the founder of TCS, father of the Indian software industry. May I welcome and introduce F.C. Kohli."

Even before reaching the stage, the 82-year-old man, ramrod straight personality, thundered, "No need to introduce me. I will do it myself. I know more about me than you."

The interaction of over 90 minutes will stay etched in memory forever. When someone asked him about stock options, he replied, "You are an idiot who wasted his parent's money and did an MBA. You should have remained an engineer and designed great products."

When a lady tried her luck through flattery, asking him to share secrets of his success, he dismissed

it, saying nonchalantly, "This is the first time in my life anyone has accused me of being successful."

On November 26, 2020, the post-graduate from MIT, the man who joined Tata Power four years of India's Independence and was part of the first team in India to install and manage our first computer system to run a power line between Mumbai-Pune, creator of TCS, one of the world first three to transform a power utility firm to computer-based operations, the man who retired as CEO of TCS at the age of 75 years, passed away. He was 96.

I did have a win in my talk. I asked him if he recalled anything unusual or funny about the starting days of the software industry in India. He recalled one. In the sixties, he got an

unusual call late one night from the customs office over a crate imported into India worth some \$2,500 odd.

When he rushed there, officials told him, "Sir, because of our respect for you, we called. We would have booked a case if it was anyone else. This document says you have imported hardware and software items. We can see the hardware, but where is the software?" Bureaucrats could not see, but he saw, clearly, not some invisible to naked eye software, but a future. If Steve Jobs created a near trillion dollar worth Apple, FCK created an even bigger Indian software industry.

Let me stop now, enough said. A word more and he might just scream from his grave... what a pathetic obituary you write... I deserve better.

SHORT TAKES

MP set to announce MSP for vegetables

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has ordered the state horticulture department to expedite the process of fixing minimum support price (MSP) of different vegetables to stop distress sale of the perishable commodities. Accordingly, the horticulture department has launched the exercise to fix the right price of vegetables to make horticulture a profitable business for the farmers, a senior officer of the department said. "We have recommended MSP for 12 vegetables by adopting the Kerala model which fixed MSPs of 9 vegetables in the southern state. Our recommendations will soon be referred to the chief minister for final approval", the officer said. Currently Kerala, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh have announced MSPs for different vegetables and fruits.

Surat BJP leader held in PMLA case

New Delhi: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested a Surat-based BJP leader in a money laundering case linked to alleged irregularities and fudging of circulation figures of his two dailies published in Gujarati and English, the central probe agency said on Friday. It said P.V.S. Sarma, director of Sanket Media Pvt Ltd, was arrested on Thursday under provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) in the case "related to cheating and forgery". A court in Ahmedabad sent him to ED custody till December 2, it said. The agency said it booked Mr Sarma, his media company and others after studying a Gujarat police FIR that was filed against him by the income-tax department. Sanket Media Pvt Ltd, it said, prints and publishes *Satyam Times* newspaper in Gujarati and English. — *PTI*

8-year-old raped, killed in Vrindavan

Mathura: An eight-year-old girl was raped and killed on the outskirts of Vrindavan in Uttar Pradesh's Mathura district, police said on Friday. The girl had gone missing a day before and her body was found near a multi-level parking in Chhatikara on Friday morning, they said. She had gone along with a woman to collect firewood from a forested area on Thursday and had been missing since then, police said. The woman had unsuccessfully tried to trace the girl and then informed her family members, who approached the police in the evening, they said. Police started a search operation with the help of the villagers but the minor could not be traced till late in the night, SSP Gaurav Grover said. — *PTI*

J&K DDC Phase-1 election today

Jammu: The first phase of the DDC election and panchayat bypolls will be held in Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday, with 1,427 candidates in the fray and seven lakh voters eligible to exercise their franchise, officials said. State election commissioner K.K. Sharma said 2,146 polling stations have been set up for the smooth conduct of elections of Phase-I. "As many as 7 lakh voters shall use their right to vote in phase I of polling tomorrow. Out of 7 lakh voters, more than 3.72 lakh are from the Kashmir division and 3.28 lakh are from the Jammu," Mr Sharma told reporters. On the DDC elections, the SEC said a total of 280 constituencies are in the UT of J&K (14 in each district), out of which voting will be conducted in 43 constituencies in Phase-I. — *PTI*

Uddhav lashes out at Central govt

Don't force me to take path of vengeance, says Maharashtra CM

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, NOV. 27

Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray on Friday slammed the Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led Central government over the "misuse" of Central investigating agencies.

On the first anniversary of Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government, Mr Thackeray also expressed his anger upon the backlash on the reopening of a suicide abatement case against Republic TV anchor Arnab Goswami. "I am calm, but that doesn't mean I am impotent," Mr Thackeray said in an interview given to Sanjay

Raut, executive editor of *Saamana*.

Hitting out at the BJP for indulging in "politics of vendetta", he said his government cannot be intimidated by ED and CBI probes. "Whether it is ED, or CBI, doesn't the state also have a right on it? We also have names which we can give names... we are not interested in the politics of vengeance, do not force us to take that path," he said.

Without taking names of Maharashtra's BJP leaders, who had targeted his son Aaditya Thackeray in the Sushant Singh Rajput death case, Mr Thackeray said, "Even you have families and children, and you



Uddhav Thackeray

are not clean. We can also rebut." He also said that not just him, but the people of the state would teach them a lesson.

On the alleged misuse of central agencies, the chief minister said that those who are misusing the power, should remember that they will not remain in the power all the time.

Three days ago, the ED conducted raids at the premises linked to Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik in Mumbai and neighbouring Thane in connection with a money-laundering case.

He also claimed that the MVA would complete the next four years in office.

Mr Thackeray said NCP chief Sharad Pawar and Congress president Sonia Gandhi showed political courage to join hands with the Shiv Sena to form the MVA government last year. He said, "Some people thought these three parties will not come together and that the Shiv Sena had no option but to go behind them (BJP)."

SC extends Rajiv case convict parole by week

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 23

The Supreme Court on Friday extended by one week the parole of A.G. Perarivalan — a convict in Rajiv Gandhi assassination conspiracy case — for medical treatment.

A bench headed by Justice L.Nageswara Rao and also comprising Justice S. Ravindra Bhat made it clear that they will not any more entertain applications seeking extension of parole.

In the last hearing of the matter on November 23, 2020, the top court had given an extension of parole ny a week so that Tamil Nadu police could escort him to a doctor for his treatment.

Appearing for Perarivalan on Friday, senior advocate Gopal Shankarnarayanan said the petitioner has 25% blockage in kidney and needs surgical intervention.



A.G. Perarivalan

Navy's MiG-29K crashes into sea; 1 pilot missing

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Indian Navy's two-seater, trainer aircraft MiG-29K flying over the Arabian Sea crashed on Thursday evening.

One of the pilots of the MiG-29K was rescued. However, the second pilot is still missing even more than 24 hours after the accident. The missing pilot has been identified as Cdr Nishant Singh.

Aircraft and ships are involved in searching for the missing pilot.

As a safety mechanism, the Indian Navy's pilot flying suit is equipped with a vest which inflates and allows them to remain afloat in water during such emergency scenarios. Also, there is personal locator in the suit, which when pressed by a pilot in distress, emits an emergency radio signal which helps in locating him in such cases. "We have increased the number of units searching for the missing pilot. Every effort is being made to locate him," said a senior official. Till the time of filing of this news report, there has been no trace of Cdr Singh.

CDS meets ex-servicemen league chief to discuss veterans' issues

New Delhi, Nov. 27: Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat and Indian Ex-servicemen League president Brig. Kartar Singh (Retd) met on Friday to discuss issues related to the welfare of armed forces' veterans, sources said.

Mr Singh expressed his happiness over a positive response from the defence ministry to some

of the issues of ex-servicemen, the sources said. Other matters pending resolution are also being taken up by priority by the defence ministry, they noted.

Mr Rawat told Mr Singh that defence minister Rajnath Singh was personally looking into all pending issues in a proactive manner, the sources added. — *PTI*

Arabic Sea. "A MiG-29K trainer aircraft operating at sea ditched at about 1700 hrs on 26 November. One pilot has been recovered and searches by air and surface units are in progress for the second pilot," said Indian Navy's spokesperson Commander Vivek Madhwal in a statement. The statement said that an inquiry has been ordered to investigate the incident. Last year in November, Indian Navy's MiG-29K twin-seater aircraft had crashed in Goa after a bird hit. Both the pilots were able to safely eject from the aircraft.

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH, CHANDIGARH

Corrigendum regarding E-Tender Notice No. PI(EP)/20-21/05

Due to certain changes in B-III of Quantities (BOQ) the below mentioned tenders (Sr. No. 1 to 12) are cancelled. All the tenders are republished with modified BOQ. The bidders who have already submitted their bid are required to resubmit their bid with revised BOQ.

E-Tender Notice No. PI(EP)/20-21/05			Phone No. 0172-2756469			
Tender applications are invited for purchase of various items against tender No. 1-12 from the Manufacturers or their sole authorized distributors/agents. The bidders can place their bids as per terms & conditions contained on https://e-procure.gov.in/e-procure/app .						
Sr. No	Equipment/Item Name	Quantity	EMD	Bid submission date	Bid Opening Date	Deptt. Name
Non Pre Bid Cases						
1	Intracranial Pressure Monitors	05Nos.	80,000/-	15-12-2020	16-12-2020	Neurosurgery
2	CUSA	01No.	80,000/-	-do-	-do-	Surgical Gastroenterology
3	Semirigid Ureteroscope with Accessories	02Sets.	20,000/-	16-12-2020	17-12-2020	Urology
4	Non Contact Tonometer	10Nos.	1,30,000/-	-do-	-do-	AEC
5	Yag Laser	01No.	44,000/-	17-12-2020	18-12-2020	AEC
6	1,3-Beta-D Glucan detection kits and other necessary consumables	120 Kits	2,14,000/-	-do-	-do-	Medical Microbiology
Pre Bid Cases						
7	Cardiac Digital Fluoroscopy composite Interventional Lab with CT for Cardiac Intervention and Complex Cardiac Structural Procedures-01 No. on buyback basis of Existing Cath lab.	01No.	30,00,000/-	18-12-2020	21-12-2020	Cardiology
8	Cytogenetic Microarray System with Software for Analysis	01No.	4,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	Paediatrics
9	Nephelometer	01No.	1,20,000/-	21-12-2020	22-12-2020	Medical Microbiology
10	High Throughput sequencer for exome sequencing	01 No.	8,00,000/-	-do-	-do-	Paediatrics
11	Automated Karyotyping System	01 No.	4,00,000/-	22-12-2020	23-12-2020	Paediatrics
12	Bioreactor	01 No.	33,940/-	-do-	-do-	Translational and Regenerative Medicine (R.G.C)

Tender List can also be downloaded from website www.pgimer.edu.in and can be applied on website www.e-procure.gov.in. Cost of Tender fee is Rs.200/- (non refundable) which can be deposited in the shape of Demand Draft in favour of Director, PGIMER, Chandigarh. Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) must be in the form of FDR /TDR valid for a period of one year from any scheduled bank in the name of the Director, PGIMER, Chandigarh. EMD in any other form will not be accepted. Tender fee and EMD should be submitted at the Procurement Branch (Import) manually by 2:30 PM on or before the date of opening of bid mentioned against respective item. The tenders shall be opened on the next date at 03:00 PM in the presence of the authorized intending tenderers. Tenders not submitted on the prescribed form, not accompanied with Tender fee and valid Earnest Money shall be summarily rejected straightaway.

The undersigned reserves the right to accept or reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason thereof. **"PRE-BID CONFERENCE" WITH INTENDING BIDDERS FOR ITEM Sr. No. 07 to 12 has already been held on 20-11-2020 at 03:00 P.M. ONWARDS IN THE PI(EP), OFFICE, PGIMER, CHANDIGARH** For more details contact: 0172 -2756469 at Procurement Branch (Import).

NOTE 1. The terms and Conditions of the original Notice Inviting Tender (NIT) available on PGIMER Website will remain same. However on switching over to e-tendering on e-Procurement, the bids will be received in electronic form on e-Procurement website and no bid will be received in Physical form.

NOTE 2. If any of the tender opening dates happens to be a holiday in PGIMER, Chandigarh, then the same shall be opened on next full working day.

Additional Terms and Conditions.

- All the bidder are required to furnish a Certificate as per newly introduced rule 144(Xi) of GFR-2017.
- As per rule 150 of GFR-2017 all bidders are required to provide their GeM registration Id. Without this Id Supply Order will not be issued even after being L-1.

PROFESSOR IN-CHARGE (EP)

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
TENDER NOTICE	
The Dy. Chief Engineer /Const.-II, Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi, for and on behalf of President of India invites open e-tender under Single Packet System for the under noted work:	
1. Name of work and location	"Hiring of one Vehicle such as (Jeep, Gypsy, Tata Sumo type of vehicles) on monthly hiring basis for three years for XENC/SRE working under Dy. Chief Engineer /Const.-II, Northern Railway Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi".
2. Completion period of the work	36 (Thirty six months)
3. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 15.13 Lakh (Rupees Fifteen lakh & thirteen thousand only)
4. Earnest money amount (to be deposited Online)	Rs. 30,300/- (Rupees Thirty thousand three hundred only)
5. Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 22.12.2020 on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in . The bidders can only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 22.12.2020.
6. Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in . Above tenders document will be available on IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in from 08.12.2020 to 22.12.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
No. 120-B-Acs-Dy-CE-C-II-CSB Dated : 27.11.2020.	
2661/20	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

Top court takes cognisance of incident 5 Covid patients die in Rajkot hospital fire

Ahmedabad, Nov. 27: Five coronavirus patients were killed after a fire broke out in the ICU of a designated Covid-19 hospital in Gujarat's Rajkot in the early hours of Friday, a fire brigade official said.

Twenty eight other coronavirus patients undergoing treatment at the hospital were rescued, he said.

The fire broke out around 1 am in the ICU of Uday Shivanand Hospital in Mavdi area, where 33 patients were admitted, seven of them in the ICU, the official said.

"We rushed to the spot and rescued 30 patients after a call informing about the fire was received. Three patients died inside the ICU, while two died shortly thereafter," he said.

The fire was brought under control, he said, adding he cause of the fire has not been ascertained yet.

The rescued patients have been shifted to other Covid-19 hospitals, he added.

In August, eight Covid-19 patients were killed after a fire broke out on the top floor of a four-storey private hospital in Ahmedabad.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi condoled the deaths and said the administration is ensuring all possible assistance to those affected.

"Extremely pained by the loss of lives due to a hospital fire in Rajkot. My thoughts are with those who lost their loved ones in this unfortunate tragedy. Praying for a quick recovery of the injured. The administration is ensuring all possible assistance to those affected," the Prime Minister's Office tweeted.

In August, eight Covid-19 patients were killed after a fire broke out on the top floor of a four-storey private hospital in Ahmedabad.

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court, taking suo motu



Charred remains inside the ICU of a designated Covid-19 hospital after the fire broke out in Rajkot on Friday. Five Covid patients died in the incident. — *PTI*

ing all possible assistance to those affected.

"These incidents are repeated and we notice that no complete steps being taken by states nor is there any mechanism to abrogate the situation," it said.

The three-judge Bench of Justices Ashok Bhushan, R Subhash Reddy and MR Shah also sought a response from the Gujarat government on the incident while also taking strong exception to implementation of fire safety mechanism in hospitals across the country. — *PTI*

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Meanwhile, the Supreme Court, taking suo motu

Forego interest on 8 categories of loans: SC

New Delhi, Nov. 27: The Supreme Court Friday directed the government to ensure that all steps be taken to implement its decision to forego interest on eight specified categories of loans paid upto ₹2 crore in view of the coronavirus pandemic.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan

said the Covid pandemic has not only caused serious threat to the health of the people but has also cast its shadow on the economic growth of the country as well as other countries in the entire world.

The eight categories of loans are MSME (Micro, Small & Medium

Enterprises), education, housing, consumer durable, Credit card, Automobile, Personal and Consumption.

"Due to lockdown, there can be no denial that most of the businesses including private sector as well as public sector has been adversely affected," the bench said. — *PTI*

In honour of our Founder & Chairman Srichand P. Hinduja's 85th birthday, we wish Peace and Love to him, the people of India and all Humankind.

With respects from your team.



S.P. HINDUJA
BANQUE PRIVÉE

IN BRIEF

BID TO CAP SURGE PRICING BY CAB AGGREGATORS

New Delhi, Nov. 27: The government on Friday proposed to cap surge pricing charged by cab aggregators like Ola and Uber at 1.5 times of the base fare. The development assumes significance in the backdrop of a long-pending demand of citizens to cap the pricing of ride-hailing services.

"The aggregator shall be permitted to charge a fare 50 per cent lower than the base fare and a maximum surge pricing of 1.5 times the base fare," said the Motor Vehicle Aggregators Guidelines, 2020 issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways.

This will enable and promote asset utilisation which has been the fundamental concept of transport aggregation and also substantiate the dynamic pricing principle which is pertinent in ensuring asset utilisation in accordance with the market forces of demand and supply, the ministry said.

The driver of a vehicle integrated with the aggregator shall receive at least 80 per cent of the fare applicable on each ride and the remaining charges for each ride shall be received by the aggregator.

In states where the city taxi fare has not been determined by the state government, an amount of ₹25/30 shall be the base fare for the purpose of fare regulation, the guidelines said.

Similar fare fixation shall be done by the state government of other vehicles integrated by aggregators with the relevant state, the ministry said.

Research firm RedSeer said that the guidelines for cab aggregators which seek to cap surge pricing at 1.5X among other provisions are expected to have mixed impact for the sector that will benefit from improved safety regulations but could have "negative" fall-outs for drivers' earnings.

MP POLICE NOT TO PARADE ACCUSED IN PUBLIC

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, NOV. 27

Madhya Pradesh police has announced to do away with the practice of parading accused, suspects and arrested people in public, thanks to a recent directive in this regard by Gwalior bench of high court.

Additional director general of police (crime investigation department) Kailash Makwana late on Thursday night issued an order asking the IGs of all ranges in the state and district superintendents of police to ensure that the prevailing system of parading the accused, suspects and arrested persons, is put to end in their respective jurisdictions.

The order follows a directive issued by Makwana on November 7 prohibiting disclosure of identity and personal information of accused, suspects, arrested persons and victims in any criminal case and publication of their photographs (faces covered or uncovered) in the media.

The move by Madhya Pradesh police comes in the wake of a recent ruling by Gwalior bench of Madhya Pradesh high court that sought abandonment of such a practice while holding that parading of the accused amounts to violation of Article 21.

MAHA ATS CAN FREEZE ASSETS OF DRUG OFFENDERS

SAURABH JOSHI
MUMBAI, NOV. 27

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) got a clearance from Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators Act (SAFEMA) for freezing the property of accused persons in case involving an operation seizing drugs worth around ₹60 crore.

The raid by the Vikhroli unit of ATS recovered 146.143 kilograms of mephedrone worth ₹58.55 crore, ₹1.55 crore in cash and three vehicles.

The ATS has arrested 13 persons under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in the case.

"The case pertains to the raids by an ATS unit who recovered 146.143 kilograms of mephedrone worth ₹58.55 crore, ₹1.55 crore in cash and three vehicles.

"The clearance will help us freeze the properties of the accused persons that would make the action against them more stringent," said an officer.

BMC must pay for damages, rules court ■ Actress calls it a 'victory of democracy'

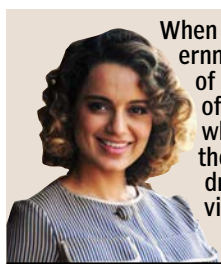
Kangana's house demolished in 'malice': HC

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, NOV. 27

In a relief to actor Kangana Ranaut, the Bombay high court on Friday quashed and set aside the September 9 order issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) directing demolition of alleged altercation carried out at her Bandra office in Mumbai. HC said the demolition action was bad in law and the demolition was carried out on wrongful grounds.

A bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and R.I. Chagla was hearing a petition filed by Ranaut, seeking that the partial demolition of her Pali Hill bungalow carried out by the BMC be declared illegal.

Ranaut had sought ₹2 crore as compensation from the BMC. On the issue of compensation, the bench said it was appointing private firm M/S Shetgiri as the valuer to assess the damages caused in order to calculate the compensation amount due to Ranaut. It further said



When individual stands against the government and wins, it's not the victory of the individual but it's the victory of democracy. Thank you everyone who gave me courage and thanks to those who laughed at my broken dreams. It's only because you play a villain so I can be a hero.

— Kangana Ranaut, actor

that the valuer would hear the petitioner and the BMC on monetary damages caused to her due to the demolition and pass appropriate order before March 21. Court also made it clear that the fees of the valuer would be borne by Ranaut.

"The BMC order actuated by legal malice. There is material in pleadings that smacks of malafide and was done to cause substantial losses. We would be perfectly justified to order compensation against respondents," the bench said in its order.

The court also allowed Ranaut to take steps to make her property habitable in accordance with the approved plan. If an application is made to BMC for approval, it will

be decided within 4 weeks, the court order said.

The bench also asked Ranaut to show restraint in her social media posts and noted, "We do not accept allegations made by the petitioner in view of the alleged atmosphere in the state or film industry. The petitioner is suggested to maintain restraint on public platforms. Irresponsible statements made by the citizens are best ignored."

The BMC had denied the allegations of malafide action against the actor and said that the actor had carried out illegal work at the bungalow and its officials had therefore acted in accordance with the law in carrying out the demolition work. The bench, however, said that the pho-

tographs of the site, BMC's attempts at denying Ranaut's allegation, the comments made by Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut and the editorial in party mouthpiece *Saamana* following the demolition made it clear that the civic body had acted out of malice.

On October 5, the court had reserved its verdict on the plea after days of extensive arguments from all sides. It had also made Sanjay Raut a party to the case and disapproved his tweets and his interview to a TV news channel threatening to teach Ranaut a lesson for her tweets comparing law and order situation in Mumbai to PoK in a tweet.

Welcoming the court's decision, Ms Ranaut tweeted, "When individual stands against the government and wins, it's not the victory of the individual but it's the victory of democracy. Thank you everyone who gave me courage and thanks to those who laughed at my broken dreams. It's only because you play a villain so I can be a hero."

'Court verdicts tight slap' to Maha govt: Fadnavis

AGE CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, NOV. 27

The BJP on Friday lashed out against the Uddhav Thackeray government after the court orders in Kangana Ranaut and Arnab Goswami cases.

Arrogance of the MVA government has been exposed in less than a year, BJP leader Ashish Shelar said. The Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had reopened a suicide abatement case Goswami. The Shiv Sena ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on September 9 had demolished a part of Kangana Ranaut's office in Bandra, Mumbai.

While the high court set aside BMC's demolition order against Ms Raut calling it "smacks of malafide intentions", the



Devendra Fadnavis

SC has said that after prima facie evaluation, it found the FIR against Mr. Goswami did not establish the ingredients of the offence of abetment of suicide against him.

Reacting to the HC order on Ms Ranaut's petition, Mr Shelar said, "For ego and vengeance of one person, BMC has suffered huge loss. Now Mumbai's will have to pay for Rs one crore spent on lawyers by the BMC, Rs two crore damage claimed

by Ms Ranaut and whatever damages are awarded by the court appointed valuer. BMC must recover this money from whoever ordered the illegal action.

Senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis said the verdicts given the SC and the Bombay high court were a "tight slap" to the MVA government. "The verdicts of two courts in the country given on the same day in a way sum up the performance of the government in the last one year. But will they now call the SC and the HC as Maharashtra-drohi (anti-Maharashtra)?" he said.

"The verdicts of the SC and the HC over some of the incidents that occurred in Maharashtra in the recent past due to the rulers blinded by power, were a tight slap to the government," he added.

Mufti says she's under house arrest, cops deny

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, NOV. 27

Former chief minister and PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti on Friday claimed that she has been detained at her residence here and is not being allowed to visit the family of her party's youth wing leader Waheed Ur Rehman Parra who was arrested by National Investigation Agency (NIA) earlier this week in a militancy-related case.

Ms Mufti tweeted, "I've been illegally detained yet again. Since two days, J&K administration has refused to allow me to visit

@parawahid's family in Pulwama. BJP Ministers & their puppets are allowed to move around in every corner of Kashmir but security is a problem only in my case."

Later during the day, the PDP leader called a press conference at her residence in Srinagar's Gupkar Road area, but the police stopped the invitees from relocating to the venue. Ms Mufti in another tweet said, "Press has been barred from entering my residence in Srinagar. This despite no written orders explaining my arbitrary detention. Kashmir



FORMER CHIEF minister Mehbooba Mufti said that she has been along with her daughter Iltija being detained at her residence which is borne by the fact that mediapersons were not allowed to enter the premises

is an open air prison where no one has the right to express their opinion."

However, the J&K denied she has been placed under house arrest and said that she was only requested to defer her visit to Pulwama for security reasons. "PDP leader Mehbooba Mufti is not under house arrest.

She was requested to postpone her visit to Pulwama purely due to security reasons," Kashmir zone police wrote on micro-blogging site Twitter.

But the former CM insisted that she has been along with her daughter Iltija being detained at her residence which is borne

by the fact that mediapersons were not allowed to enter the premises. "This comes a day before the DDC (District Development Council) polls in Jammu and Kashmir," she said.

Other leaders and candidates of the recently formed "People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration" have also alleged that they were not being allowed to carry out poll-related activities on the pretext of security concerns while all facilities are extended to the BJP candidates and leadership to ensure their public reach out.

Doval meets Mahinda, bid to boost relations

Colombo, Nov. 27: Sri Lankan Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Friday sought India's continued assistance to boost the bilateral ties as he met with national security adviser Ajit Doval, who also held talks with the country's defence secretary to further advance the "valuable" cooperation which contributes to peace and security in the region.

Mr Doval arrived in Colombo on Friday for a trilateral maritime dialogue among India, Sri Lanka and the Maldives. Sri Lanka will host the fourth national security adviser trilateral meeting on maritime security cooperation with India and the Maldives on Friday and Saturday.

The meeting will take place after six years — the last meeting was held in New Delhi in 2014.

Mr Rajapaksa asked the senior Indian official for continued assistance to Sri Lanka in its bilateral help, the prime minister's office said.

He was particularly keen on the need for India to extend its housing assistance to the country's south, it said.

India has previously built houses in the north and eastern regions ravaged by the nearly three-decade-long military con-



flict, and in the central tea plantation areas for the Tamils of Indian origin.

"NSA Ajit Doval called on PM Mahinda Rajapaksa. NSA conveyed greetings from PM@narendramodi and recalled the contribution of the successful Virtual Bilateral Summit between the two leaders to progress in bilateral cooperation," the Indian high commission in Colombo said in a tweet.

Mr Modi held wide-ranging talks with his Sri Lankan counterpart Mahinda Rajapaksa during the summit in September, covering the entire spectrum of bilateral ties and with a focus on further expanding cooperation in key areas.

"An opportunity has come to begin a new chapter in India-Sri Lanka ties after your party's electoral victory. People from both the countries are looking at us with new hope and expectations," PM Modi had said.

Mr Doval also met Sri Lankan defence secretary Maj. Gen. Kamal Gunaratne (Retd) and they agreed on several steps to further strengthen the "valuable" cooperation between the two countries. — PTI

Farmers enter Delhi from Tikri border after clashes

New Delhi, Nov. 27: After braving water cannons and clashing with security personnel, thousands of farmers started entering the national capital on Friday from the Tikri border after the Delhi Police granted them permission to hold peaceful protest at the city's Burari ground.

The farmers, who were part of the 'Delhi Chalo' march against the Centre's new farm laws, were escorted by police personnel amid tight security as they started entering the city from Tikri Border around 3 pm.

The Delhi police on Friday allowed protestors to hold their protest at Nirankari Ground — one of the biggest grounds in the national capital.

However, farmers gathered at the Singhu Border have not entered the city so far.

Earlier in the day, the Delhi police used tear gas at the Singhu border to disperse protesting farmers who were trying to head towards the national capital.

Farmers also pelted stones at police and broke barricades in an attempt to enter Delhi. Heavy police deployment had been made at the city borders to prevent their entry.



Protesters pelt stones during the Delhi Chalo march by members of various farmer organisations over the Centre's farm reform laws at the Singhu border in New Delhi on Friday.

— PTI

PLUMES OF smoke were seen as security personnel used multiple rounds of tear gas to disperse the protesting farmers at the Singhu border

Plumes of smoke were seen as security personnel used multiple rounds of tear gas to disperse the protesting farmers at the Singhu border.

At the Tikri border, farmers clashed with police and also tried to remove a truck, which was placed as a barricade, by tying it to a tractor with the help of a chain.

Traffic was disrupted in many parts of the city due

to the protest.

Taking to twitter, the Delhi traffic police on Friday posted a series of tweets, asking people to avoid outer Ring Road, Mukarba Chowk, GTK

road, NH-44 and Singhu Border in view of the 'Delhi Chalo' march by farmers from Punjab against the farm laws.

"In view of the rally/march/protest by All India Kishan Sangharsh co-ordination committee, the traffic police is diverting traffic from Mukarba Chowk & GTK road. Traffic is very very heavy in this area," it said. — PTI

Q2 growth minus 7.5%: Recovery pace faster?

Continued from Page 1 have shown some encouraging improvement due to the removal of lockdown restrictions in a phased manner. "Manufacturing clocked a surprise 0.6 per cent growth in July-September, after it had shrunk by a massive 39 per cent in the preceding quarter," the GDP data showed. "Continuing its good showing, the agricultural sector grew by 3.4 per cent, while trade and services showed lower-than-expected contraction at 15.6 per cent," it added.

Meanwhile, benchmark BSE indices Sensex and NSE Nifty 50 did not show a cheering sign and final-

ly ended on a flat note in trade on Friday ahead of the GDP data for the second quarter.

The Sensex moved in a range of 412 points and the Nifty touched an intra-day high of 13,035.30 and low of 12,914.30.

At this rate of recovery from the depths plumbed earlier, economists said the Indian economy will gradually exit its contraction mode in this quarter. Even Reserve Bank governor Shaktikanta Das said Thursday: "We must be watchful of demand. There is a reason to fear that it may slump after the festive season is over."

Farmers allowed into Delhi as clashes erupt

Continued from Page 1 city due to the protests. The Dhansa and Jharoda Kalan borders were closed for traffic, and commuters had to take an alternative route. There were long queues of vehicles on the Delhi-Hardwar stretch due to the closure of the Delhi-Dehradun highway. In Baghat, the protesters blocked traffic on the Sonpat highway using tractors and raised slogans against the new farm laws. A farmer was killed and two others injured as the tractor-trolley in which they were travelling met with an accident.

The Delhi police, which expressed concern over the

pandemic situation, had sought permission from the AAP government to use the city's nine stadiums as temporary jails for farmers arrested or detained, but this was denied. Delhi health minister Satyendra Jain said every citizen had the right to protest peacefully. In a letter to the home secretary, he said the Centre should accept the demands of farmers, adding that putting farmers in jails was not a solution. Former Haryana CM Bhupinder Singh Hooda appealed to the people of the state to extend all possible help, like food and accommodation, to the protesting farmers.

Top minister quits Mamata govt

Continued from Page 1 (sic). I feel that after Mr Adhikari, Subrata Mukherjee is next in the line. On January 9 in 2019, when I joined the BJP, Bhaipo (CM nephew Abhishek Banerjee) had said a lot. But today we have 18 Lok Sabha seats here."

"Tweeting the resignation letter, governor Jagdeep Dhankhar said: "Today at 1.05 pm a resignation letter of Mr Suwendu Adhikari from office as minister addressed to the chief minister has been forwarded to me. The issue will be addressed from the constitutional perspective."

Senior TMC MP Sougata Roy, who recently met Mr Adhikari twice to placate

him on Ms Banerjee's instructions, said: "He is still an MLA of our party as he has not quit the post. He has also not tendered his resignation from our party's primary membership. He will remain a member of our party as long as he continues to be an MLA."

He added: "Stepping down from the minister-ship is purely his personal decision. I am feeling sad about. What I had from the conversation with him... I felt he would not quit the party. I am still hopeful. I will try to ensure he remains in our party."

Mr Adhikari's step came a day after he quit the chairmanship of Hooghly River Bridge Commission-

ers, a state undertaking in the transport department, sending out his first official signal to the TMC of his exit from government posts despite Ms Banerjee's desperate attempt to bring him back to the party's mainstream.

Mr Adhikari's move coincided with another jolt to the TMC in North Bengal, where disgruntled TMC MLA Mihir Goswami, who has been attacking his party for the last couple of months, reached New Delhi with BJP Cooch Behar MP Nisith Pramanik.

The Cooch Behar South MLA defected to the BJP after a talk with Union home minister Amit Shah, sources said.

THE ASIAN AGE

28 NOVEMBER 2020

Logistical posers loom as vaccine race nears finish

Humanity's race to come up with a vaccine for Covid-19 has had a chequered history over the last 10 months. Many researchers and pharma companies have made steady and spectacular progresses, kindling the hopes of millions of people for an early end to the miserable life they live under the shadow of threat the microorganism poses to all. The last fortnight saw them on a roller-coaster ride of hope with about five vaccine candidates announcing various degrees of efficiency. The one from Oxford University, being jointly developed by pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca, was leading the race when it announced their inexpensive, easy-to-produce vaccine reported an average efficacy of about 70 per cent.

The good run received a setback now with the manufacturers acknowledging an error in the vaccine dosage received by some participants. As per reports, the manufacturers were silent as to why some study participants did not receive as much vaccine in the first of two shots as expected. It was also found that the group, which received a lower dose, looked better protected than those who got two full doses. It has also come out that no one in the test group with the highest efficacy rates was over 55. Reports pointed at other irregularities and omissions, too, triggering questions about the preliminary results of the trials.

It has now been decided that AstraZeneca will run an extra trial. Notwithstanding the averments by the company that the trials were conducted to the highest standards, the UK government has now asked the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency to see if the vaccine meets rigorous safety standards.

Scientists who work on the vaccine and the people who look forward to its arrival need not lose their hearts on the temporary setback. Science has designed its procedures in such a way that truth ultimately triumphs; the anomalies that have come out now are part and parcel of the process and there are inbuilt mechanisms to identify and correct them in time. The only impact it will have on the entire project is a delay, perhaps of days or weeks, in the authorisation of the vaccine for public use.

Governments and the public must look at a more serious issue on hand — on the just and equitable distribution of the vaccine. Health experts have already issued warnings against the rich countries reserving the entire stock of early production of about three billion doses of the vaccine, leaving the poor nations and their more vulnerable people at bay. Intellectual property laws could hinder the way of the vaccines to the poor countries and a group of British lawmakers have already demanded a waiver of the rules and authorise generic manufacturers with its production. Some of the vaccines demand cold chains, which are nearly impossible to install in certain climatic conditions. Every single issue will have an impact on all the people and their fight against the pandemic and hence be addressed collectively by all nations. Science has its way of correcting itself; it's harder to accomplish the same in politics.

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Bull runs for Oscars

The jury to choose an Indian feature film for the Oscars (April 25, 2021) must be complimented for picking the Malayalam film *Jallikattu*. The title may resonate with the sporting bulls of Tamil Nadu but the theme is startlingly different with the 'protagonist' being a bull that escapes from a butchery in a remote village in Kerala and becomes the subject of a hunt portraying some of the worst aspects of human beings who are so prone to violence. It will compete in the 'Best international feature film' category in which Indian movies have not made much headway over decades, with not a single one even being short-listed among five for the coveted prize.

The movie, appreciated at the Toronto international festival where its director Lijo Jose Pellisserry was awarded India's festival, may have edged out 26 others on various entertaining themes released in the year of the pandemic that has proved inhibiting for theatrical releases. But if the film has been chosen for its content and its screenplay as an ode to the art of film making it may fare better than many of the choices made by juries based on their understanding of popular content in the Bollywood tradition to please the masses. This point is well borne out by the short shrift the aesthetic creations of a filmmaker of the calibre of Satyajit Ray received in terms of nominations to the Oscars.

Many films aim to be a metaphor melded from the complexity of human emotions, which *Jallikattu* manages with certain raw quality displaying a freshness of approach. Opinions may vary wildly when it comes to judgements in subjective situations like movie appreciation, just as it has in this case when *The Disciple* lost out. And yet, somehow, the story of a bull must draw empathy considering how man's depredation of the plant has already led to ecological disasters, including the coronavirus pandemic caused by a pathogen crossing species. The Oscars hinge on many factors, including lobbying, but cinematic excellence is invariably rewarded, much as the South Korean film *Parasite* scored a path-breaking win at Oscars this year.

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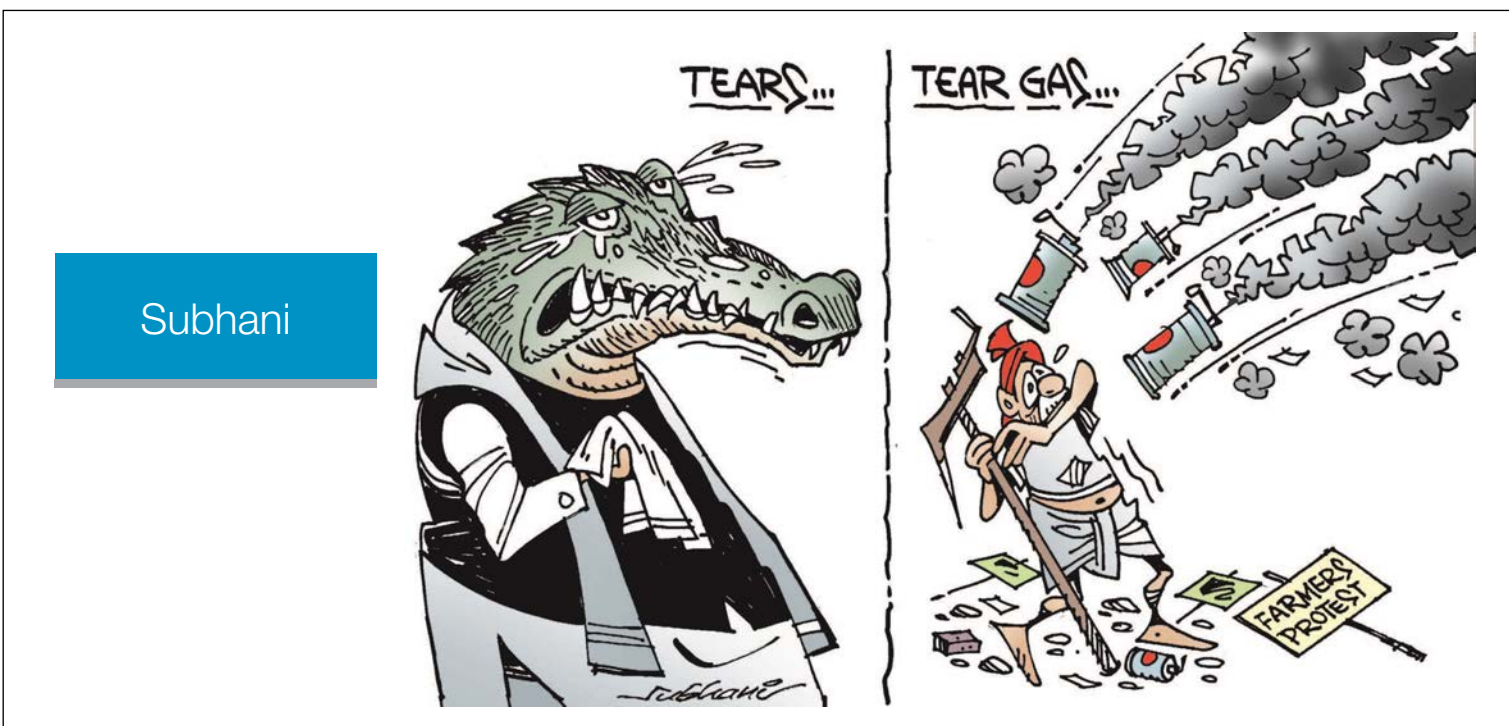
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High hopes over vaccine: Are we being unrealistic?



Shobhaa's Take

I am writing this a day after the anniversary of the horrific 26/11 terror attacks on Mumbai in 2008, that not only shook the metropolis like nothing ever had, but shook the rest of India and the world as well, as shockwaves reverberated across continents at the audacity of the operation. It's been 12 years since that ghastly day when the bone-chilling events were played out live on television channels globally. I guess time has a way of making us forget even the greatest of tragedies. This year, the significant date went by without much notice. The local media in Mumbai gave it scant, passing coverage — if at all. A couple of pictures appeared the next day in a few dailies, featuring police officers paying tributes to their slain colleagues and all the other victims of the terror strike. Only one prominent obituary in a leading daily served as a reminder of what families had endured when their loved ones were brutally gunned down by ruthless criminals from across the border. Not so surprisingly, the pandemic deaths have overtaken and overwhelmed us to such an extent that we neglected to honour the memories of all those we tragically lost more than a decade ago.

While we wait breathlessly for the magic vaccine, here's my prediction for what it is worth: our great Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will be the first, high-profile citizen to take the vaccine today when he visits the Serum Institute in

Pune. He is scheduled to fly into Hyderabad and Ahmedabad on the same day to take stock of vaccine development work at facilities in these three cities. Will he... won't he? Take the shot, I mean? I think he will. This is nothing more than a gut feeling, while figuring out the mind of one of the shrewdest leaders in the political sphere. For one, a bold gesture such as this one will send out a powerful signal to the rest of the world that India has beaten everyone else in the vaccine race. For another, it will be more than a mighty booster shot for his personal ego. Besides, with two key state elections to consider, his party, the BJP, will try and flatten any curve in its path — not just the Covid one. India's global image as a pharma leader will be further bolstered if NaMo goes for it. And frankly — history will be made by this one gesture of this one man! Narendra Modi has both — an uncanny sense of timing, besides an obsession to create personal history. If he indeed does take the vaccine before any other major international political personality, he will be hailed as the "Hero of the Pandemic 2020". Catch him passing up on such an opportunity!

When the scenario is this cynical, it's hard to stay optimistic and believe by this time next year everything will be 'back to normal', or 'back on track'

Nothing is ever going to be the same again — that's a given. But we cannot carry on without investing in hope for a better tomorrow.

The question that is worth asking is this: Are we pinning unrealistic hopes on the vaccine "saving" humanity? People are still dropping like flies, particularly in America... while the Covid-19 statistics in India continue to be alarming. We are expecting miracles once the vaccine gets marketed — and there are still four or five months to go without that happening. Yes, we must place our faith in experts and scientists at this point and pray for deliverance. Will that happen because we desperately want it to? Or will we be dealing with a fresh set of problems? As of now, the world is in need of instant solace and reassurance. We hang on to every tiny scrap of positive news and breakthroughs. We are too close to the pandemic to have sufficient distance to make informed choices about the vaccine. At the moment, I am sitting on the fence, and not committing to taking it as and when it's here. I have zero knowledge about its side effects, zero knowledge about its long-term efficacy, and zero knowledge about its overall behaviour. In that sense, we are all guinea pigs, ready to try whatever it is that appears, because we are scared and numbed by fear. Fear of the unknown. I am asking myself silly questions like: "What if I do take the vaccine and my body revolts against it? What if I avoid contracting Covid but my kidneys fail? Or my liver packs up?" The thing about the pandemic is how it has generated a fear psychosis on an

unprecedented level, as we scramble to grab every little straw that offers relief from the dreaded virus, without thinking about repercussions.

Till then, we have little choice but to go along with the official info, which may or may not be accurate. Rumour mills are in overdrive, about who is making how much selling masks that are substandard, and how easy it is to get licences to import masks if the person puts down ₹45 lakhs — no scrutiny, no testing, no questions asked. When the scenario is this cynical, it is hard to stay optimistic and believe by this time next year everything will be "back to normal", or "back on track". Nothing is ever going to be the same again — that's a given. But we cannot carry on without investing in hope for a better tomorrow. Whether or not schools reopen next year, whether or not our hospitals and health-care systems can cope down the line, whether or not there will be a third, fourth and fifth wave... babies will continue to be born, people will get married, lovers will find a way to celebrate romance. Poets will write moving verse, painters will give expression on canvas, musicians will compose melodies — nothing will stop the creative impulse, least of all a microbe.

Christmas is but a few weeks away. Santa Claus and his reindeers will arrive in a safe bubble and he will greet children with a lusty "hohoho" from behind a sturdy face shield and mask — so be it! The world will continue to spin, and the stars will still shine. 'Tis the season to be jolly — why deprive ourselves?

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

HEED THEIR VOICES

The Delhi Chalo agitation protesting against the Centre's new farm reform laws gathered steam with convoys of farmers from Punjab breaking the barricading on the Amritsar-Delhi National Highway. Even the use of water cannons and firing tear gas shells failed to break their resolve to reach Delhi and lay an indefinite siege to the capital. As former Prime Minister, HD Deve Gowda has rightly pointed out the use of force cannot solve the problem and the Centre should engage with the farmers.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

CBI'S JOB

GOVERNANCE IN GUJARAT is going from bad to worse under BJP rule with three persons dying after an Intensive Care Unit of a designated Covid-19 hospital in Rajkot caught fire. There were seven Covid patients at the ICU unit of the Uday Shivanand Hospital at the time of the incident, which took place at 1 am. At least eight people were killed after a massive fire broke out at a hospital in Gujarat's Ahmedabad in August. Prime Minister Narendra Modi only expressed condolences over the deaths but did not affix responsibility. Shouldn't the CBI probe into the matter?

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

RELIEF FOR KANGANA

IN A MAJOR RELIEF for actor Kangana Ranaut, Bombay high court on Friday set aside the demolition order passed on September 9 by the BMC and held that the demolition action "was actuated by mala fides." In a slap to the BMC, she is allowed to make her bungalow habitable again and make an application to the Corporation to carry out restoration of the demolished work.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

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

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"Faith is a wraith
Promising paradise for the soul
Hope is the rope
That lets you climb out of a hole
Charity should spell clarity —
Returning the wealth you stole..."
— From *Dhoka Cola* by Bachchoo

My parents first took me to Khajuraho on a cultural holiday trip when I was about eleven years old. We went from Kanpur to Madhya Pradesh and spent some time looking at the display of erotic carvings in the temples. A late beginner, I suppose, I didn't quite appreciate the erotic dimension of the sculptures, though I observed my dad and mum studying them with a distanced, yet acute, curiosity.

Without protesting any form of innocence or naivete, gentle reader, I promise I have never opened the pages of the *Kama Sutra*, even though there have been at one time or other two editions, one pictorially endowed, on my bookshelves in my short and happy life. I know that they are eighth century depictions of sexual possibilities, some in extreme yogic distortions which promise erotic pleasure, but I have

never felt the need to take instruction in these instinctive urges from man, beast or book. One ploughs one's own furrow, so to speak.

Apart from Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, there are at least twelve and perhaps a hundred surviving Hindu temples which include in their sculptural representations acts of human sexual coupling. And some of the central symbols of Hindu cosmic creativity are the lingam of Shiva and the universal Yoni which symbolises birth and perpetuity. Hinduism has, from the Vedas onwards, never been prissy about human love, sex and procreation. The Temple of Surya in Konarak in Odisha has some of the world-famous exemplars of erotic sculpture. In Maharashtra, the Markandeshwar temple and the depiction of love in Ellora are also a glorious part of India's heritage.

Hence it came as an absolute article of bewildered wonder that some idiot, or some misguided organisation, is suing Mira Nair's depiction in the Netflix series adaptation of Vikram Seth's universally acclaimed novel *A Suitable Boy* in a Madhya Pradesh court for a scene in which two characters kiss near a

temple. In the name of Krishna and the gopis, of Shiva and Parvati, of Vishnu and Lakshmi, Ram and Sita — and of the Khajuraho temples of Madhya Pradesh, are these misguided Victorian puritan protesters saying that love and its active manifestations are anything to object to? Are they anti-Hindu-history-and-heritage bigots?

Surely Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his entire Cabinet and the philosophy of his party are dedicated to the upholding of Hindu heritage and India's inherited values and traditions!

This absurd puritanism, which objects to a scene in a fictional drama of two characters kissing — not even in an act of fornication so graphically celebrated in revered Hindu temples — is surely some imperial hangover which we can do without?

Hinduism is much more philosophically explorative and wider than the Semitic monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity and some interpretations of Islam. There is no puritan tradition in Hinduism which would forbid the depiction of two lovers kissing outside a Kentucky Fried Chicken shop or a

temple. The people who are attempting to bring this case against Netflix ought to be, Your Honour, sent to re-education classes about the ethics of dharma, etc, in Hindu teachings! (*Don't get carried away, you idiot, this is a column, not an address to the court — Ed. Of course, boss! Sorry — fd*)

I would like to address the people in Netflix who face these absurd charges, but I have no conduit to them. I would say to them have some faith in Indian justice because I have faced similar legally enlisted assaults and have prevailed.

The first was against a film I had commissioned and wrote called *Bandit Queen*. A group of people tried to stop the film being released for several reasons, not all idealistic, but they didn't succeed.

Then there was the case against a film I wrote called *Mangal Pandey, The Rising*.

Some people claimed that they were the descendants of Mangal Pandey and the film had represented him in an unfavourable light. The judge ruled that it was a waste of court time and threw the case out. I am now told that judges have changed, that there has been some

ideological adjustment on the juridical benches. Gentle reader, living in London, so far away from home, I know nothing of this. I feel confident that the barristers who defend this very peripheral right to freedom of depiction, even using the arguments I have posed above, will convince a judge who knows his Hinduism.

Freedom of expression and the right to any, even those considered dissenting, opinions are an absolute requirement of democracy. Regimes in today's Turkey and Iran have suppressed free expression as the right of the state to exclusively disseminate information, both in the name of their exclusive interpretations of Islam. I don't know, but perhaps they censor scenes on Netflix of couples kissing outside mosques.

Of course, the Madhya Pradesh court should treat the case against the kissing next to a *mandir* with the contempt it deserves. And that would be a precedent in universal law pronouncing the freedom of depiction which doesn't transgress decency, tradition or in the case of the kiss outside a temple, explicitly graphic Hindu iconography.



IN BRIEF

4.7 magnitude quake hits Turkey

Ankara: An earthquake with a 4.7 magnitude shook Malatya province in eastern Turkey on Friday, sending people pouring out into the streets in fear. There was however, no immediate report of any damage or casualties. The quake, which was centered in the town of Puturge, struck at 11:27 am(local time), Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate said. It was felt in several neighboring provinces. Malatya's Gov. Aydin Barus told the state-run Anadolu Agency that his office had not received any "negative reports" concerning possible damage or injuries.

Ex-World Bank prez Wolfensohn dies

New York: James Wolfensohn, who served as the president of the World Bank for 10 years and was a guiding force for a couple of the most well-known cultural institutions in the US, has died. He was 86. Wolfensohn died Wednesday at his home in Manhattan according to the Institute for Advanced Study, where he had been a past chair of the board. His son and one of his two daughters also confirmed his death in media reports. Wolfensohn, born in Australia, worked on Wall Street for many years before taking over as the head of the World Bank, a loan-offering global development organisation, in 1995.

Iran envoy goes on trial over bomb plot

Brussels: An Iranian diplomat goes on trial in Belgium on Friday accused of plotting to bomb an opposition rally outside Paris, in a case that has stoked tensions with Tehran. The case shines another uncomfortable light on Iran's international activities just as it hopes to ease tensions with the United States after President Donald Trump tore up the 2015 nuclear deal signed by both countries and other world powers. It also comes a day after a prisoner swap that saw the release of three Iranians jailed over a 2012 bomb plot in Thailand, in exchange for the freeing of an Australian-British lecturer imprisoned by Tehran for alleged spying. In June 2018, Belgian authorities thwarted what they said was an attempt to smuggle explosives to France to attack a meeting of one of Iran's exiled opposition movements. Later that year, the French government accused Iran's intelligence service of being behind the operation, a charge the Islamic republic has furiously denied.

SRI LANKAN MAN RUNS MOBILE LIBRARY FOR KIDS

Colombo, Nov. 27: During his leisure time, Mahinda Dasanayaka packs his motorbike with books and rides his mobile library — across mostly muddy roads running through tea-growing mountain areas — to underprivileged children in backward rural parts of Sri Lanka.

Having witnessed the hardships faced by children whose villages have no library facilities, Dasanayaka was looking for ways to help them. Then he got the idea for his library on wheels. He started his programme, called "Book and Me," three years ago, and it has become very popular among the children.

"There are some kids who hadn't seen even a children's story-book until I went to their villages," he said. Dasanayaka, 32, works as a child protection officer for the government. On his off days — mostly during weekends — he rides his motorbike, which is fixed with a steel box to hold books, to rural villages and distributes the reading material to children free of charge.

"The children are very keen and enthusiastic, they are eagerly waiting for me — always looking for new books," Dasanayaka said by phone. His programme is mainly centred in Kegalle, a mountainous region of the Indian Ocean island nation about 85 kilometres (52 miles) northeast of Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, with poor villages scattered among tea plantations.

He visits the villages once or twice a week to distribute the books. His collection includes about 3,000 books on a variety of subjects. "Boys mostly like to read detective stories such as Sherlock Holmes, while girls prefer to read youth novels and biographies," he said.

Iran's top nuclear scientist assassinated

Tehran, Nov. 27: Top ranking Iranian nuclear physicist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was "assassinated" in an ambush near Tehran, the Iranian state television reported on Friday.

Fakhrizadeh was shot and injured in his vehicle in Absard, in Damavand county, a suburb in eastern Tehran, and later succumbed to his injuries, Iran's foreign ministry said on Friday.

Local authorities confirmed Fakhrizadeh's death several hours earlier and also said that several attackers were killed in retaliation. The top scien-

tist and six others were killed in the attack.

The semiofficial Fars news agency, believed to be close to Iran's Revolutionary Guard, said the attack happened in Absard, a small city just east of the capital, Tehran. It said witnesses heard the sound of an explosion and then machine gun fire. The attack targeted a car that Fakhrizadeh was in, the agency said.

Those wounded, including Fakhrizadeh's bodyguards, were later taken to a local hospital, the agency said. No group immediately claimed responsibility

for the attack.

"Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice — with serious indications of Israeli role — shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators," Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter on Friday.

Fakhrizadeh led Iran's Amad (Hope) programme which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon in Iran.

"If Iran ever chose to weaponise (enrichment), Fakhrizadeh would be known as the father of the

Iranian bomb," one Western diplomat told Reuters in 2014.

News of the killing comes amid fresh concern about the increased amount of enriched uranium that Iran is producing. Enriched uranium is a vital component for both civil nuclear power generation and military nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency had said that the Amad programme ended in the early 2000s and that its inspectors now monitor Iranian nuclear sites. Iran's state television on its website later

published a photograph of security forces blocking off the road. Photos and video shared online showed a sedan with bullet holes through windshield and blood pooled on the road.

Israel declined from immediately commenting on the killing. It had earlier alleged that Islamic Republic's military nuclear programme was led by Fakhrizadeh.

Fakhrizadeh's name was specifically mentioned in Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's presentation about Iran's nuclear programme in May 2018.

— Agencies



Photo released by the semi-official Fars News Agency shows the scene where Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was killed in Absard, a small city just east of the capital, Tehran, Iran, on Friday. (Inset) Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

— AP

UK asks regulator to approve AstraZeneca

Britain will be the first nation to get vaccine, if approved

London, Nov. 27: The UK government said on Friday that it has formally asked the country's independent medicines regulator to assess the suitability of Oxford AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine for temporary supply, as soon as the company submits the necessary safety, quality and efficacy data.

The UK will be one of the first countries in the world to receive the vaccine, if authorised, with pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca expecting to have up to 4 million doses ready for the country by the end of the year and 40 million by the end of March 2021, the government said.

The move to formally seek approval follows the vaccine team declaring its efficacy in trials earlier this week. However, there have been some concerns raised around the way the results were collated. "We have formally asked the regulator to assess the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, to understand the data and determine whether it meets rigorous safety standards. This letter is an important step towards deploying a vaccine as quickly as safely possible," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock, in reference to a formal letter to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA). The MHRA is the UK's independent regulator and has already been tasked with reviewing data from Pfizer/BioNTech to determine whether its Covid-19 vaccine meets "robust" standards of quality, safety, and effectiveness.

— PTI



A physician wearing PPE kit takes a nasal swab for a Covid-19 test, as personnel of the Austrian Armed Forces (Bundesheer) are ready to process it, in Korneuburg, Austria, on Friday.

— AFP

German virus tally crosses 1 million

Berlin, Nov. 27: Germany, once a beacon of hope in Europe's Coronavirus nightmare, logged its one millionth case on Friday, as Russia announced a partnership with India to mass produce its controversial Sputnik vaccine.

Like much of Europe, Germany is battling a resurgence of a pandemic that is filling hospitals and forcing countries to shut down for business while they wait for help from a clutch of vaccines that could start rolling out for use next month.

Some of the excitement about the new jabs dampened when Britain's pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca admitted that

● **RUSSIA ANNOUNCES a partnership with India to mass produce its controversial Sputnik vaccine.**

further research was needed after a mixup in its third-stage trial.

But Russia unexpectedly stepped in with an announcement that an Indian generic drug maker would start producing 100 million doses of its government-backed vaccine in early 2021.

Germany had largely contained the spread when the virus descended on Europe from China at the start of the year after first emerging in December in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

— AFP

CHINA IMPOSES ANTI-DUMPING DUTY ON OZ WINE

Beijing, Nov. 27: China on Friday said it would impose anti-dumping tariffs on Australian wine, the latest salvo in an increasingly terse standoff between the two that has worsened since Canberra called for an inquiry into the origins of Covid-19.

Beijing has on several occasions used the threat of diminished access to its vast domestic market as a stick to beat Australia and has suspended imports of some products including beef and timber. In the latest blow, China's commerce ministry announced wine importers will be forced to pay deposits of 107-212 percent of the value of their goods at customs.



Elon Musk

AMERICA OPENS PROBE INTO TESLA OVER SUSPENSION FAILURES

Detroit, Nov. 27: The US government's road safety agency is investigating complaints that suspensions can fail on nearly 1,15,000 Tesla electric vehicles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says it has 43 complaints that linkages near the ball joints can fail, allowing contact between the tire and wheel liner.

The probe announced Friday covers 2015 through 2017 Model S sedans and 2016 through 2017 Model X SUVs. The agency says 32 owners complained of failures at low speeds, but 11 said the links failed on roads while traveling above 10 mph including four at highway speeds.

It says the number of complaints is increasing as the vehicles age, with 32 in the last two years. Three of the highway complaints came in the last three months.

The agency says it will investigate how often the problem happens and the safety consequences. The probe could lead to a recall. A message was left early Friday seeking comment from Tesla.

— AP

Will leave if EC confirms Biden's win: Trump

Washington, Nov. 27: US President Donald Trump said for the first time that he will leave the White House if the Electoral College declares Joe Biden as the winner, but made clear he is not prepared to "concede" the election.

Trump, a Republican, has refused to accept defeat in the November 3 presidential election, and told reporters on Thursday that it would be "hard" to concede to Biden, a Democrat. "Certainly I will, and you know that," Trump said

when asked by a reporter about leaving the White House if Biden is declared the winner on December 14. "I will and, you know that." "It's going to be a very hard thing to concede because we know there was massive fraud," Trump said, once again repeating the unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud.

The 538-member Electoral College is scheduled to meet on December 14 and is expected to formally declare the 78-year-old former vice president as the 46th US President.

Under the US electoral system, voters do not directly choose the president. Instead, they vote for 538 officials, who are allocated to American states based on their population size. Biden leads Trump 306 votes to 232 under the Electoral College system used to pick US presidents. Biden's tally is far more than the 270 needed to win the race for the White House, and he also leads the popular vote by more than six million.

In his Thanksgiving Day remarks, Trump, however,

said it will be a mistake if the Electoral College were to elect Biden. "It's going to be a very hard thing to concede," Trump told reporters when asked during a press call at the White House what he will do if the Electoral College elects Biden. "If they do, they made a mistake," he said.

On his plans for his last Thanksgiving in the White House, Trump said, "You can't say what's first or last." It might be the "first one of the second term," Trump, who is con-

tinuing his legal efforts to upend his victory. Earlier this week, Trump allowed the official start of Biden's transition to power without conceding defeat.

Biden due to be sworn in as president on January 20. However, election officials in key battleground states have declared Biden the winner, giving him an unofficial 306-232 edge in the Electoral College that determines the outcome of US presidential contests.

"This was a massive fraud," Trump said of the election.

— PTI

PORK | ROASTED Ractopamine additive, allowed in pork meat imported from the US, bone of contention

Pig guts fly in Taiwan Parliament protest

Taipei, Nov. 27: Opposition lawmakers hurled pig organs inside Taiwan's parliament on Friday to protest the government's decision to ease restrictions on pork imports from the United States.

Taiwan's notoriously rambunctious legislature frequently sees chaotic clashes between rival lawmakers but Friday's scuffles were particularly novel.

Lawmakers from the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party dumped buckets of pork offal on the debating chamber floor and then proceeded to hurl intestines, hearts, liver and other organs at

their rivals. Taiwan's government recently announced it would allow imports of US pork-fed with the additive ractopamine from January 1. The supplement improves leanness but is banned in places like the European Union and China.

Officials in Washington have made it clear restrictions on US pork and beef imports are a key stumbling block to the US and Taiwan signing a trade deal.

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and her Democratic Progressive Party, which commands a strong majority in parliament, hope the easing of

restrictions will pave the way for an agreement.

But many in Taiwan are opposed to US pork imports and the KMT have seized on the issue after a series of stinging electoral defeats.

Last weekend they joined tens of thousands in an annual labour rally, where opposition to pork imports was a major theme.

Taiwan's powerful domestic pork industry also fears competition from the US.

The DPP campaigned heavily against ractopamine when they were in opposition, and the KMT have accused them of hypocrisy.

The governing party now argues the additive is not a safety threat and that the deal will boost ties with the US, a valuable trading partner and strategic ally against China.

"We're very sorry to throw pig's internal organs in parliament, but this is to highlight the pork issue," opposition lawmaker Lin Wei-chou told reporters.

Lin Chu-yin, a DPP legislator, posted pictures of the discarded offal on her Facebook account. "The opposition party has the right to protest, but they shouldn't be wasting food," she wrote.

— AFP



Pork intestines and other organs are seen after Taiwan lawmakers threw them at each other in Taipei on Friday.

— AFP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,149.72	-0.25
Nifty 50	12,968.95	-0.14
S&P 500*	3,631.85	0.06
Dollar (₹)	74.03	-0.19
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.84	-0.12
Euro (₹)	88.14	-0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,142.43	0.008
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	48.04	0.24
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.911	0.039
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.852	-0.026

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Core industries' output contracts 2.5% in October

Contracting for the eighth month, the output of eight core infrastructure sectors dropped by 2.5 per cent in October, mainly due to decline in production of crude oil, natural gas, refinery products and steel. The production of eight core sectors had contracted 5.5 per cent in Oct. 2019. While coal, fertiliser, cement and electricity recorded positive growth, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products and steel showed negative growth.

Hero MotoCorp appoints Clarke as COO, HR head



Hero MotoCorp said it has appointed global mobility expert Michael Clarke as chief operating officer, with the additional role of chief human resources officer. Clarke will join from January 1 and report to Pawan Munjal, chairman and CEO. "Mike brings considerable global experience and expertise in managing complex operations, international restructuring, organisational and cultural change," Munjal said.

Only BIS-certified helmets to be made and sold

The Centre said only Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)-certified helmets would be manufactured and sold in India for two-wheelers. This would help in avoiding sale of low-quality helmets, which would help in protecting the wearers from fatal injuries, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said. The ministry said it has issued the 'Helmet for riders of Two Wheelers Motor Vehicles (Quality Control) Order, 2020'.

Forex reserves rise, cross \$575-bn mark

The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$2.518 billion to touch a lifetime high of \$575.29 bn in the week ended Nov. 20, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended Nov.13, the reserves had surged by \$4.277 bn to \$572.771 bn. Foreign currency assets rose by \$2.835 bn to \$533.103 bn. The gold reserves declined by \$339 million to \$36.015 bn. The special drawing rights with the IMF rose by \$4 mn to \$1.492 bn.

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Only 40% of target achieved so far CPSEs told to exceed capex target by Mar.

New Delhi, Nov. 27: Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday exhorted large central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) to exceed their planned capital expenditure (capex) target for 2020-21 by March to accelerate economic growth. She held a virtual meeting with secretaries of power, mines and atomic energy along with chairmen and managing directors (CMDs) of 10 CPSEs, belonging to these ministries, an official statement said.

This was the fifth in the ongoing series of meetings that the finance minister is having with various stakeholders to boost the economic growth amid the pandemic.

While reviewing the performance of CPSEs, Sitharaman said capex by CPSEs is a critical driver of economic growth and need to be scaled up for the 2020-21 and 2021-22.

Appreciating the efforts of the ministries and CPSEs for making visible efforts to meet the capital expenditure targets, the finance minister said "more efforts are still required to achieve the target of 75 per cent capex by Q3 and more than 100 per cent by Q4 of the FY21".

The overall achievement as on November 23 is Rs 24,227 crore (39.4 per cent) against the capex target for 2020-21—Rs 61,483 crore, the statement said.

Sitharaman encouraged the CPSEs to perform better to achieve targets and



Nirmala Sitharaman

to ensure that the capital outlay provided to them for the year 2020-21 is spent properly and within time.

The finance minister said the better performance of CPSEs can help the economy in a big way to recover from the impact of Covid-19.

Sitharaman asked the secretaries to closely monitor the performance of CPSEs to ensure meeting the capex targets and make plans for it. She also asked them to proactively sort out the unresolved issues of the CPSEs.

Meanwhile, the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (Dipam) has suggested that market capitalisation improvement and asset monetisation be included as parameters in the MoU target the CPSEs sign with the government.

Dipam, which manages government investment and equity holding in CPSEs, has also asked public sector enterprises to engage with investors

"consistently and transparently" to improve market capitalisation. It has also asked them to pay interim dividends after quarterly or half-yearly earnings to reward shareholders.

Addressing a CII event, Dipam secretary Tuhin Kanta Pandey said there are 249 operating CPSEs with a combined turnover and net worth of Rs 24 lakh crore and Rs 12 lakh crore, respectively. There are 54 listed public sector enterprises with a total market capitalisation of Rs 9.74 lakh crore.

Pandey said a point of concern has been that between March and November, while the Sensex and the Nifty have risen by about 50 per cent, the BSE CPSE Index has risen only 19 per cent.

"In general, we have a problem of PSU stock valuation in market. We must also do atma chintan (introspection)... as to why this is happening," Pandey said. —Agencies

Burger King sets IPO price band at ₹59-60

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 27

US-based Burger King's Indian subsidiary announced an initial public offering (IPO) to raise Rs 810 crore.

The public issue, opening on December 2, has been priced in the band of Rs 59-60 per equity share of face value of Rs 10 each.

The public offer from the fast food company closes on December 4.

The IPO comprises fresh issue of shares worth Rs 450 crore and an offer for sale of 60 million shares by promoter QSR Asia Pte. Ltd.

"The size of the fresh issue of up to Rs 600 crore has been reduced by Rs 150 crore pursuant to the pre-IPO placement, and accordingly, the fresh issue size is up to Rs 450 crore," the company said while announcing the IPO.

"The net proceeds from the fresh issue are proposed to be utilised for setting up of new company-owned Burger King Restaurants and for general corporate purposes," the company said.

In the IPO, 75 per cent of the offer is reserved for the qualified institutional investors, 15 per cent for the non-institutional investors or high net worth individuals and 10 per cent for the retail individual investors.

Mid-caps, small-caps seen outperforming near-term

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 27

After a bull run in large-cap stocks, analysts estimate a catch-up rally in the broader markets consisting of mid-caps and the small-cap stocks.

On Friday, while the benchmark indices closed in the red with Sensex down 110 points, or 0.25 per cent, the BSE Mid-cap Index gained 1.91 per cent and the BSE Small-cap Index gained 2.40 per cent, thus, outperforming the large-cap stocks.

The situation in the domestic market is panning out just like for the US broader market benchmark Russel 2000 and European Stoxx 600 that have given a break-out after record bull run in the benchmark indices Dow Jones Industrial Average, S&P 500 and Nasdaq indices, analysts said.



The BSE Mid-cap Index has rallied over 74 per cent from its March low of 9711.44 to 16,914.65 but is still far below its all time high of 18,321.37, touched on January 9, 2018.

The BSE Small-cap Index at 16,875.15 is also up over 90 per cent from the March low of 8,872.83 but far short of the all-time-high of 20,183.45 it touched on January 15, 2018.

"In line with our prog-

nosis, mid-cap and small-cap indices have extended their up move after a higher base formation in September and October. We expect both indices to witness acceleration in upward momentum and outperform the Nifty in coming months," said brokerage ICICI Securities.

"Globally, Russell 2000 and Stoxx 600 have also registered multi-year range breakouts. Historical, positive correlation of domestic indices with global peers makes us further confident in our positive stance," it added.

"In the coming month, we maintain our overall constructive stance, with incremental shift to broader markets as the Nifty is expected to undergo consolidation amid positive bias in the range of 12800-13200 after a sharp 14 per cent rally in November," ICICI Securities said.

Credit guarantee extended to health sector

New Delhi, Nov. 27: The government on Thursday said it has extended the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to the health sector and 26 other sectors identified by the Kamath Committee.

The National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) has issued the operational guidelines for implementation of ECLGS 2.0 scheme, the finance ministry said in a statement.

The scheme was announced by the government earlier this month as part of the Rs 2.65-lakh crore Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 package.

"Under ECLGS 2.0 entities with outstanding credit above Rs 50 crore and not exceeding Rs 500 crore as on February 29, 2020, which were less than or equal to 30 days past due as on February 29, 2020 are eligible," the statement said.

The loans provided under ECLGS 2.0 will have

a five-year tenor, with a 12-month moratorium on repayment of principal, the statement said.

"These entities or borrower accounts will be eligible for additional funding up to 20 per cent (which could be fund based or non-fund based or both) of their total outstanding credit (fund based only) as a collateral free

Emergency Credit Line (GECL), which would be fully guaranteed by NCGTC," it added. —PTI

LVB bond write-off will hurt other banks: Icra

Mumbai, Nov. 27: The write-off of Rs 318-crore tier-II bonds by Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) ahead of its merger with DBS Bank is a precedent set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and will hurt the private sector lender's peers, a report said.

During the Yes Bank rescue earlier this year also, there was an over Rs 7,000-crore bond write-off, but that involved a different instrument called additional tier-I bonds.

In the case of LVB, which has been merged with DBS in a scheme proposed by the RBI, investments of Rs 318.20 crore in bonds issued by LVB will be written off,



the lender informed the exchanges late Thursday night.

"RBI has set a precedence with the proposed write-off as it's the first time a tier-II bond is being written off," ratings agency Icra said in the report on Friday.

The agency added that investors should factor in

the risk in Basel-III instruments, as these instruments can be completely written off in case the bank gets into trouble.

"We expect the risk premiums for such instruments to increase for weaker private banks, given this event," the ratings agency said.

In an exchange filing late on Thursday evening, the bank said the RBI has advised it of the need to fully write down the Series VIII, Series IX and Series X Basel-III-complaint tier-II bonds before the amalgamation with DBS Bank comes into effect on Friday.

"If the relevant authori-

ties decide to reconstitute the bank or amalgamate the bank with any other bank under the Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, such a bank shall be deemed as non-viable and both the pre-specified trigger and the trigger at the point of the point of non-viability for write-down of bonds shall be activated.

"Accordingly, the bonds shall be written off before amalgamation or reconstitution in accordance with applicable rules," according to the terms of the information memorandum of the respective Basel-III Tier-II bonds issued by the bank," LVB said. —PTI

Credit downgrades abate on signs of economic recovery

ANURAG JOSHI NOV. 27

The pace of credit-rating cut for Indian companies has slowed amid signs the local economy is coming out of its worst-ever contraction.

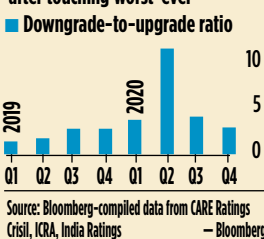
There have been about three downgrades for every upgrade of rupee debt since October 1, the lowest since the last three months of 2019, according to data from India's four biggest rating firms compiled by Bloomberg. That compares with a ratio of more than four to one in favour of a cut for the previous quarter, and a record 11 to one in the April-to-June period.

Economic data suggests that Asia's third-biggest economy is recovering, albeit unevenly, after it shrank a record 24 per cent in the three months to June 30. A slower pace of downgrades may open the door to funding for weaker borrowers in India.

A record Rs 1.38 lakh crore (\$19 billion) of bond obligations from issuers rated AA and below mature in 2021, according to data compiled by



DOWNGRADES ABATE Pace of ratings cuts in India slows after touching worst-ever



Source: Bloomberg-compiled data from CARE Ratings, Crisil, ICRA, India Ratings — Bloomberg

Bloomberg. Last month, the country unveiled measures totalling \$6.6 billion to boost faltering consumer demand and investments, adding to the unprecedented \$277 billion stimulus announced in May to rescue the economy from the impact of the coronavirus. — Bloomberg

DRAFT RULES FOR REGISTERING VINTAGE VEHICLES FRAMED



New Delhi, Nov. 27: The Centre on Friday said it intends to formalise the registration process of the vintage motor vehicles, and has sought public comments for proposed rules regarding this.

In a statement, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said it has invited public comments for proposed rules on registering vintage vehicles.

"There are no existing rules for regulating the registration process of vehicles of heritage value. These rules are proposed to be inserted as sub-rules 81A, 81B, 81C, 81D, 81E, 81F, 81G in the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989," it said.

The draft rules define vintage motor vehicles as all those vehicles that are two-wheelers and four-wheelers (non-commercial and personal use) and are more than 50 years old from the date of their first registration (including imported vehicle).

There is a restriction in the definition no substantial overhaul of the vehicle which includes modification in chassis or body shell, and/or engine.

"It is proposed that all applications for registration shall be applied on 'Parivahan' portal.

"It is further proposed that all states registering authority will appoint a nodal officer who will process all applications for registration of vintage motor vehicles," it said.

Further, states will form a committee that will inspect a vehicle and declare whether the vehicle is fit for registration. If approved, a 10-digit alphanumeric number will be assigned to the respective vintage vehicle, valid for 10 years, the statement said. —PTI

COUCH | SHOPPING

Consumers are now able to shop anywhere in the world

‘This is the apocalypse for legacy retail’

HILARY PUNCHARD TORONTO, NOV. 27

Legacy retailers such as Macy's Inc and Hudson's Bay will be left behind by consumers after they neglecting to build a foundation in e-commerce before the pandemic, according to Mark Cohen, a former CEO of Sears Canada.

"This trend (of e-commerce) which emerged about 15 or 20 years ago was moving along at an increasingly accelerated clip pre-pandemic and now the pandemic is causing stores to be closed, causing customers to avoid shopping malls and shopping districts from a physical point of view and that trend has accelerated



enormously," Cohen said in an interview.

"It's something that was well underway pre-pandemic, it's apocryphal the degree to which consumers have moved in that direction today and I suspect that once Covid is in our rearview mirror, the rate of growth of e-commerce will abate a bit, but it's certainly not going to

reverse the trend that we've been seeing."

Cohen, who now serves as director of retail studies at Columbia Business School, explained that the ultimate nail in the coffin for legacy retailers was that many companies neglected to engage with customers online rather than just in-person.

"(Hudson's Bay) has been

late to the party as have many legacy retailers in fully expressing themselves online. They did have a website as did Macy's but it's been merely an expression of whatever it is they're putting on sale each week rather than a portal into the customer's presence and expectations," Cohen explained.

"I think that when all is said and done the great American, great Canadian department store has seen its day and it's on the way out."

Department stores have been dealt blow-after-blow amid Covid-19 with many companies being ordered to close their doors due to pandemic-related lockdowns and solely rely on their e-commerce plat-

forms to attract customers.

But, Cohen said with customers no longer being tied to local retailers and with the expansion of e-commerce offerings amid the pandemic, the apocalypse for legacy retail has finally come. "I think that the consumer who was tethered to a local mall whether here in the US or in Canada now has no limitations on where they can consider shopping... They are literally able to shop anywhere in the world," Cohen explained. "This is the apocalypse that was upon us pre-pandemic from a legacy retail point of view, which now is in full view—it's really something to watch."

— Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Bagan beat Bengal in derby

Vasco, Goa: Fijian striker Roy Krishna continued his prolific goal-scoring form as he helped ATK Mohun Bagan prevail over SC East Bengal 2-0 in the first ever Indian Super League derby here on Friday.

Krishna, who had scored ATKMB's lone goal against Kerala Blasters in their campaign opener, struck in the 49th minute before Manvir Singh killed the contest in the 85th minute with a solo effort. With two wins on the trot, ATK Mohun Bagan led the table with six points, followed by Northeast United FC.

It was a typical Antonio Lopez Habas' style of play that panned out on the field as ATKMB were slow to get off the blocks before taking control of the game. — PTI

Belgium on top in FIFA rankings

Zurich: With Belgium still at No. 1, FIFA released its final rankings list for 2020 on Friday and set the seedings for the European portion of the World Cup qualifying draw. Defending World Cup champion France is in second place, with Brazil third and England fourth. European champion Portugal rounds out the top five, with Spain in sixth. FIFA will host the European draw on December 7. The 10 top-seeded teams include Italy, which was seeded second four years ago and failed to qualify for the 2018 tournament in Russia after ending up in a group with Spain. — AP

Badminton League off due to Covid-19

New Delhi: The sixth edition of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) was on Friday postponed to next year, keeping in mind the health and safety of the players amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic. The league, which is one of the highest prize money badminton tournaments in the world, was initially scheduled to take place in the last week of December in Delhi, Mumbai and Pune. However, SportzLive, the official license holder of the league under the aegis of the Badminton Association of India (BAI), decided to postpone the event due to the prevailing conditions. PBL is a sought-after global badminton leagues having six-franchise-based teams, who compete in a home and away format. — PTI

Para athletes in TOPS scheme

New Delhi: The Sports Ministry has included eight para athletes, including four who have qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics, in the Target Olympic Podium Scheme. The decision was taken by the Mission Olympic Cell at its meeting on November Thursday. The eight athletes are from athletics, shooting, badminton and table tennis. From para-athletics, Vinod Kumar and Ajit Kumar Panchal (both men's discus throw) and Praveen Kumar (men's high jump) have been included in the scheme while Virender Dhankar (men's shot put) and Jayanti Behera (women's 400m) have been dropped. Both Vinod and Praveen have already qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics. — PTI

Live on TV

CRICKET

Women's Big Bash League: Final — Melbourne Stars vs Sydney Thunder from 1.40 pm on Sony Six

FORMULA ONE

Bahrain Grand Prix: Practice 3 from 4.25 pm; Qualifying from 7.25 pm on Star Sports Select 2, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Brighton vs Liverpool from 6 pm; Manchester City vs Burnley from 8.30 pm; Everton vs Leeds United from 11 pm; West Brom vs Sheffield from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1, HD

Indian Super League: Bengaluru vs Hyderabad FC from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Italian League: Sassuolo vs Inter Milan from 7.30 pm; Benevento vs Juventus from 10.30 pm; Atalanta vs Verona from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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SMITH HEREENS

Finch, Smith centuries blow India away in opener

Sydney, Nov. 27: Hardik Pandya's career-best effort wasn't good enough to compensate for a forgettable bowling effort as India slumped to a 66-run defeat against Australia in the first ODI, making a rather unimpressive start to the tour, here on Friday. Virat Kohli's men started exactly on a note they wouldn't have liked, giving away 374 runs in 50 overs with rival captain Aaron Finch (114 off 124 balls) and his illustrious predecessor Steve Smith (105 off 66 balls) hitting contrasting hundreds.

A pitch that looked docile during the first half suddenly came to life in the second as Josh Hazlewood (3/55) bounced out the Indian top-order, including Kohli and a frightened Shreyas Iyer, who got himself into a tangle.

Pandya's 76-ball 90 and a 128-run stand with senior opener Shikhar Dhawan (74 off 86 balls) delayed the inevitable but it was always a catch-up game after the team was reduced to 101 for 4 inside 14 overs.

Big-hearted leg-spinner Adam Zampa (4/54 in 10 overs) dismissed Shikhar Dhawan and Hardik Pandya in quick succession as India surrendered to scoreboard pressure finishing at 308/8 after 50 overs.

India's eternal nemesis Steven Smith seems ready to torment them a lot in next two months if his 11 fours and four sixes were any indication on Friday. Not for once was he troubled by the Indian bowlers, who were already under the pump after a 156-run opening stand between Finch and David Warner (69).

As far as Indian innings is concerned, a high percentage of dot balls (148) in the Indian innings also showed how the mighty Australian team dominated the proceedings.

INDIANS JOIN AUSSIES IN ANTI-RACISM MOVE

The Indian cricketers on Friday joined their Australian counterparts in forming a barefoot circle on the ground to support the anti-racism movement and acknowledge the culture of indigenous people of the host country.

The barefoot ceremony was held before the start of the opening One-day International between the two teams here.

— PTI

SCORECARD

Australia: D. Warner c Rahul b Shami 69, A. Finch c Rahul b Bumrah 114, S. Smith b Shami 105, M. Stoinis c Rahul b Chahal 0, G. Maxwell c Jadeja b Shami 45, M. Labuschagne c Dhawan b Saini 2, A. Carey not out 17, P. Cummins not out 1, Extras (B-1, LB-6, NB-2, W-12) 21. **Total (for six wickets in 50 overs) 374.** **ForW:** 1-156, 2-264, 3-271, 4-328, 5-331, 6-372. **Bowling:** Shami 10-0-59-3, Bumrah 10-0-73-1, Saini 10-0-83-1, Chahal 10-0-89-1, Jadeja 10-0-63-0.

India: S. Dhawan c Starc b Zampa 74, M. Agarwal c Maxwell b Hazlewood 22, V. Kohli c Finch b Hazlewood 21, S. Iyer c Carey b Hazlewood 2, K.L. Rahul c Smith b Zampa 12, H. Pandya c Starc b Zampa 90, R. Jadeja c Starc b Zampa 25, N. Saini not out 29, M. Shami b Starc 13, J. Bumrah not out 0. Extras (LB-2, NB-3, W-15) 20. **Total (for 8 wickets in 50 overs) 308.** **ForW:** 1-53, 2-78, 3-80, 4-101, 5-229, 6-247, 7-281, 8-308. **Bowling:** Starc 9-0-65-1, Hazlewood 10-0-55-3, Cummins 8-0-52-0, Zampa 10-0-54-4, Stoinis 6.2-0-25-0, Maxwell 6.4-0-55-0.

Auckland, Nov. 27: Paceman Lockie Ferguson unleashed a devastating five-wicket barrage as New Zealand downed the West Indies in a roller coaster Twenty20 series opener in Auckland on Friday.

The match — the first international cricket played in New Zealand for almost nine months — produced a nail-biting finale as the Black Caps



Australia's captain Aaron Finch hits a six as India's wicketkeeper K. L. Rahul watches during their One-Day International cricket match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday.

— AFP



Steve Smith of Australia celebrates after scoring a century against India in their ODI match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday.

— AP

NUMBERS GAME

● Australia recorded their highest total against India by making 374 for 6 in 50 overs. Their previous best was 359, recorded four times. Overall, it is the third-highest total by any team against India in One-Day Internationals.

● Steven Smith recorded third fastest hundred for Australia by completing 100 runs off 62 balls during his 105-run knock. The quicker ones are Glenn Maxwell's 51-ball century against Sri Lanka at the 2015 World Cup, also at Sydney and James Faulkner's century in 57 balls against India in Bangalore in 2013.

● All five Indian bowlers except Mohammed Shami, conceded 60-plus runs, only the second such instance for India. The first such instance was against West Indies at Guwahati in 2018.

HIGHEST TOTALS AGAINST INDIA IN ODIs

Score	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
438-4	South Africa	Mumbai	25-10-2015	India lost
411-8	Sri Lanka	Rajkot	15-12-2009	India won
374-6	Australia	Sydney	27-12-2020	India lost
366-8	England	Cuttack	19-01-2017	India won
365-2	South Africa	Ahmedabad	27-02-2010	India lost

FASTEST HUNDREDS FOR AUSTRALIA IN ODIs

Balls (score)	Batsman	Opponent	Venue	Date
51 (102)	Glenn Maxwell	Sri Lanka	Sydney	08-03-2015
57 (116)	James Faulkner	India	Bangalore	02-11-2013
62 (105)	Steven Smith	India	Sydney	27-12-2020
66 (101)	Matthew Hayden	S. Africa	St Kitts	24-03-2007
67 (122)	Adam Gilchrist	Sri Lanka	Brisbane	14-02-2006

FASTEST HUNDREDS AGAINST INDIA IN ODIs

Balls (score)	Batsman	Team	Venue	Date
45 (102)	Shahid Afridi	Pakistan	Kanpur	15-04-2005
57 (116)	James Faulkner	Australia	Bangalore	02-11-2013
57 (119)	AB de Villiers	S. Africa	Mumbai	25-10-2015
58 (102)	AB de Villiers	S. Africa	Ahmedabad	27-02-2010
62 (105)	Steven Smith	Australia	Sydney	27-12-2020

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

Kohli rues first defeat

Sydney, Nov. 27: India skipper Virat Kohli on Friday questioned his team's body language after the opening ODI loss to Australia and said Hardik Pandya not being fit to bowl is affecting the side's balance as he doesn't have enough all-rounders at his disposal. India made a dismal start to their tour of Australia, losing the first ODI by 66 runs here, chasing a mammoth 375-run target after Aaron Finch and Steve Smith smashed hundreds for the hosts.

"Everyone needs to show the intent in the entire 50 overs. Probably, we played 50 overs after a long time that could have an affect...but having said that we have played so much ODI cricket that it is not something we don't know how to do," Kohli said in the post-match presentation.

"I think the body language in the field wasn't great after around 25

INJURED ISHANT OUT AS ROHIT WAITS TILL DEC. 11

Sydney, Nov. 27: India's senior-most fast bowler Ishant Sharma has been ruled out of the upcoming Test matches against Australia as he will not be match-fit in time while Rohit Sharma's hamstring will be assessed finally on December 11, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Thursday.

BCCI issued a short injury update of the two senior players after a fiery online media interaction by Virat Kohli, who made his displeasure clear about lack of communication and clarity on the whole issue. While Kohli had raised a question as to why Rohit didn't do his rehabilitation in Australia along with Wriddhiman Saha, Shah in his press note clarified that Rohit had come back to country to attend his ailing father after which he reported to the NCA.

"Rohit Sharma had to come back to Mumbai after the IPL to attend to his ailing father. His father is now recuperating well and that has allowed him to travel to the NCA and start his rehabilitation," Shah said.

— PTI

overs. It was a disappointing part. If you don't take your chances against a top-quality opposition they'll hurt you and that is what happened today,"

the Indian skipper added.

Kohli said his bowlers couldn't pick wickets regularly and it allowed the Australians to post a big total in the end.

— PTI

NATARAJAN IN INDIA ODI SIDE AS SAINI COVER

Sydney, Nov. 27: The BCCI on Thursday dded left-arm seamer T. Natarajan to India's ODI squad as half-fit paceman Navdeep Saini's cover.

According to BCCI press release that landed close to midnight, Saini had complained of back spasms which led to the 29-year-old yorker specialist from Tamil Nadu's inclusion in the 50-over format.

Natarajan, who has played 15 List 'A' matches so far, was initially a net bowler accompanying the Indian team and then made it to the T20 squad after Varun Chakravarthy pulled out and now is a part of ODI squad. Natarajan put up a splendid performance with the ball for SRH in the recently concluded IPL that led to his selection.

— PTI

Brazil mourns Diego's demise

Sao Paulo, Nov. 27: Brazil and Argentina are long rivals for football supremacy in South America, and Brazilians naturally think of their own Pele as the best footballer in history. But they are putting aside the argument to mourn the death of Argentine superstar Diego Maradona.

Ex-presidents, author Paulo Coelho and former competitors were among Brazilians paying tribute to Maradona for his influence on the game and charisma off the field. Brazilian newspapers that only put sports in their top headline when the national team wins a World Cup had Maradona's death in that position Thursday.

A mural of Maradona was even painted on a wall in the Vila Cruzeiro favela in Rio de Janeiro, an honor that proud and soccer-crazy Brazilians rarely, if ever, give to foreigners.

"He was an example of persistence and perseverance because he grew in life as a human being," said graffiti artist Angelo Campos, who painted an energetic Maradona in a blue shirt under an inscription with his nickname, "El Pibe de Oro" (the Golden Kid).

The Neo Quimica Arena in Sao Paulo displayed a triumphant Maradona image on a giant screen by its main entrance. That is the same stadium where most Brazilian fans cheered against Argentina in the 2014 World Cup semifinal against Holland.

Argentina won on penalties but lost final to Germany 1-0. All top-tier Brazilian clubs paid tributes, including Santos, where Pele played nearly all of his career.

— AFP

POLICE CLASH WITH FANS IN ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires, Nov. 27: Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas in clashes Thursday with football fans near the wake for Argentine football legend Diego Maradona in Buenos Aires.

Officials earlier ordered Maradona's coffin to be moved to another room inside the presidential palace after fans took over an inner courtyard and disrupted his lying in state.

The government had early announced a three-hour extension to the wake to allow time for fans to pay their respects.

Tens of thousands of people had queued from early morning to file past the star's coffin, draped in the Argentine flag and the player's No.10 jersey, at the presidential palace. Many of the mourners were in tears, and some wore replicas of the World Cup winner's jersey as they gathered at the Casa Rosada palace to see his coffin.

But as the day wore on, fans queueing outside the palace grew increasingly impatient and some took over a courtyard inside the palace, where they chanted slogans.

At the same time, riot police clashed with stone throwing fans on streets around the palace, and several people were arrested.

— AFP



Players of Napoli (in blue) and Rijeka observe a minute's silence in homage to Maradona prior to their Europa League match at the San Paolo stadium in Naples on Thursday as a screen displays a photo of late Argentinian legend, who had played for Napoli in the 1980s.

— AFP

Napoli dedicate win to Maradona

Paris, Nov. 27: Napoli honoured the memory of Diego Maradona with a 2-0 win over Rijeka which allowed them to go top of Europa League Group 'F' in the first match since the death of their Argentine icon.

Gennaro Gattuso's side entered the field all wearing the number 10 jersey of Maradona, who won Napoli's only Serie A titles in 1987 and 1990 as well as the 1989 UEFA Cup.

"Diego is a legend and will never die," Gattuso said after the match. "Since yesterday you could see that the city breathed a different atmosphere. We hope to dedicate something important to him and win a trophy," he added.

Napoli are now two points ahead of AZ Alkmaar and Real

Sociedad following their goalless draw in the Netherlands.

Roma made their way into the last 32 with a 2-0 win at Romanian side Cluj, while Hoffenheim joined them after ensuring their respective passages into the next round from L.

Earlier Jame Vardy's last-gasp leveller in a thrilling 3-3 at Braga sent Leicester City through to the knock-out rounds, where they were also joined by Arsenal thanks to their 3-0 win at Molde.

Leicester looked dead and buried when Fransergio put the hosts 3-2 ahead in the first minute of added time, but Vardy stole in at the back post shortly after to tap in the goal that put the Premier League side into the Last 32.

— AFP

STADIUM NEAR BARASAT NAMED AFTER MARADONA

Kolkata, Nov. 27: A stadium near Barasat, where Diego Maradona was last seen in action in India (December 12, 2017), was on Friday named after the football legend.

During his last visit to Kolkata three years ago, Maradona had conducted a football clinic with school children at the Aditya School of Sports in Kadambgachi on the outskirts of Barasat, about 35 kilometres from Kolkata. "The stadium has now been converted into a full-fledged cricket stadium in the size of Eden Gardens and we have named it 'Diego Maradona Aditya School of Sports Cricket Stadium'," chairman of Aditya Group Anirban Aditya said.

"This is the first ever cricket stadium in the Argentine football legend's name. We also have special Maradona memorabilia in the changing room. The seat and the cloth hanger that Maradona used would now be kept reserved with his autographed No.10 jersey," Aditya added.

Anirban Aditya said they had built the stadium in just four months and Maradona was the first sportsperson to step on to it.

— PTI