



YOGI ADITYANATH  
PROMISES LAW  
ON 'LOVE JIHAD'



EX-FINANCE SECY  
FIRES SALVO AT  
SITHARAMAN



JOHNSON MULLS  
LOCKDOWN AS  
COVID CASES RISE



BETTER SONEGO  
THAN DJOKOVIC,  
THE CHAMPION

WEATHER

Mainly clear sky. Mist/shallow fog in the morning. The maximum and minimum temperatures would be around 31 and 13 degrees Celsius respectively.

RAINFALL: Nil

RELATIVE HUMIDITY

Max: 87% Min: 34%

TEMPERATURE

Max: 30.8°C (O) Min: 13.0°C (-3)

SUN RISES

06:34 hrs

MOON RISES

18:49 hrs

SUN SETS

17:36 hrs

MOON SETS

07:50 hrs

## Truth of Pulwama attack accepted in Pak Parl: Modi

'Those indulging in dirty politics after attack exposed'

SNS & PTI  
AHMEDABAD, 31 OCTOBER



PM Narendra Modi arrives on a seaplane during its first flight between Kevadiya and Ahmedabad, at the Sabarmati Riverfront in Ahmedabad on Saturday. AFP

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said the truth of last year's Pulwama terror attack, in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed, has been accepted in Pakistan's Parliament.

His statement comes two days after Pakistan's Science and Technology Minister Fawad Chaudhry admitted his country's role in the Pulwama attack during a debate in their National Assembly.

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

He was speaking at Kevadiya in Gujarat's Narmada district after paying tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel at the Statue of Unity on his 145th birth anniversary.

"The country cannot forget the unwarranted statements made after the Pulwama attack. Dirty politics laced with selfishness and arrogance was at its peak when the country was suffering from immense pain," Modi said. "But the real face of such people has been exposed after the truth was accepted in the Parliament of our neighbouring country," he said, speaking on the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas.

During a debate in Pakistan's National Assembly on Thursday, Chaudhry had said, "Humne Hindustan ko ghus ke maara

(We hit India in their home). Our success in Pulwama, is a success of this nation under the leadership of Imran Khan. You and we are all part of that success."

The PM said he remained silent despite all the "accusations and filthy words" used against him after the Pulwama attack. "Politics done after Pulwama attack shows that people can cross any limit for their political gains. I want to urge such political parties not to indulge in this kind of politics as it affects the morale of our security forces," he said.

"For your political gains, you should not play into the hands of anti-national forces, knowingly or unknowingly," he added.

Against the backdrop of terror attacks in France and criticism being faced by its President Emmanuel Macron over a cartoon row, Modi said it was a matter of concern for the entire world how some people have come out in support of terrorism.

In the present situation, all the nations, all the governments and people of all

the faiths must get united against terrorism. Peace, brotherhood and respect for each other is the identity of humanity. Terrorism and violence is not good for anyone," he said. India understands the pain of terror victims very well, as terrorism has taken lives of thousands of Indian soldiers and citizens over the years, the PM added.

On the issue of securing borders, Modi said the country's soldiers now have the capability to give a befitting reply to the enemies. "Aaj Bharat ki bhoomi par naazr gadane walo to muh tod jawab mil raha hai (Today those eyeing to grab our land are getting a befitting reply)," Modi said without naming China.

Modi also launched the country's first seaplane service by flying in a twin engine 19-seater aircraft from Narmada Dam to the Sabarmati riverfront in Ahmedabad. After paying tributes to Sardar Patel at the Statue of Unity, he inaugurated the water aerodrome on lake number 3 of the Narmada Dam's catchment area.

## Free Covid vaccine promise not violation of poll code: EC

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

**Opposition parties**  
had slammed the  
BJP for promising  
free Covid-19 vac-  
cines in its Bihar poll  
manifesto and dem-  
anded action by the  
Electoral Commission.

The BJP's promise of providing free coronavirus vaccine in its manifesto for the Bihar assembly polls is not violative of the provisions of the model code, the Election Commission has held.

Responding to a complaint by RTI activist Saket Gokhale, the commission said it has found no violation of the provisions of the model code in the issue.

"...no violation of any of the provisions of Model Code of Conduct has been observed....," the commission said.

Gokhale had claimed that the promise is discriminatory and a misuse of powers by the central govt

overnment during elections.

According to sources, the commission cited certain guidelines for election manifestos contained in Part VIII of the Model Code of Conduct to conclude that the free vaccine promise was not violative of it.

"The Directive Principles of State Policy enshrined in the Constitution enjoin upon the State to frame various welfare measures for the citizens and therefore

there can be no objection to the promise of such welfare in election manifesto," one of the provisions quoted by the EC said.

Trusts of voters should be sought only on those promises which are possible to be fulfilled, the other provision cited by the commission said.

"It is stated that the election manifestos are issued by political parties, candidates in respect of a particular election," the EC response said.

Gokhale wrote on Twitter on Friday, "ECI shockingly ignored the fact that the Union government announced it for a specific state and said action is taken when election atmosphere is violated."

Earlier this month,

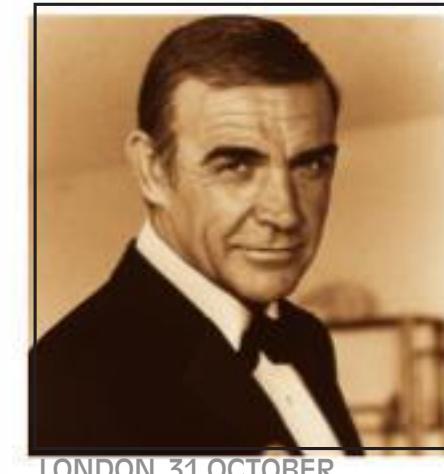
Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had released the BJP manifesto for the Bihar assembly polls which promised free Covid-19 vaccine once it is cleared by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

Opposition parties had slammed the BJP for promising free Covid-19 vaccines in its Bihar poll manifesto and demanded action by the Election Commission.

Opposition parties had slammed the BJP for promising free Covid-19 vaccines in its Bihar poll manifesto and demanded action by the Election Commission.

The BJD, however, said health is a state subject and its manifesto is for Bihar, not for the entire country, where it has promised that the state government will buy the vaccine for its people.

Actor Sean Connery, first James Bond, dies aged 90



LONDON, 31 OCTOBER

Legendary Scottish actor Sean Connery, who became a global icon as the first screen James Bond and featured in a string of cult hits in his five-decade-long career, has died. He was 90.

According to BBC, the actor passed away overnight in his sleep while in the Bahamas. He had been unwell for quite some time.

In a career spanning half a century, the actor featured in many critically-acclaimed and commercial blockbusters such as *The Hunt for Red October*, *Indiana Jones and the Last Crusade*, *Murder on the Orient Express* and *The Rock*.

But he will be remembered best as the classic James Bond, a role he first played in 1962's *Dr No*, which he followed up with *From Russia with Love* (1963), *Goldfinger* (1964), *Thunderball* (1965), *You Only Live Twice* (1967), *Diamonds Are Forever* (1971) and *Never Say Never Again* (1983). Connery later shifted gears to take up more dramatic movies such as John Huston's *The Man Who Would Be King*, Richard Attenborough's *A Bridge Too Far*, and *The Name of the Rose*. He won an Oscar for supporting actor for his turn as a tough Irish cop in Brian De Palma's *The Untouchables*.

The actor is survived by his second wife, painter Micheline Roquebrune, whom he married in 1975 and his son Jason Connery. P.T.

Another report on P10

## Rajasthan govt introduces Bills to negate impact of farm laws

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAIPUR, 31 OCTOBER

The Rajasthan government on Saturday introduced three bills in the Assembly to negate the impact of the farm laws enacted by the Centre recently. The move comes after the Punjab Assembly earlier this month adopted a resolution against the farm laws and unanimously passed four bills to counter the Centre's contentious legislations.

Rajasthan's Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal introduced the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions and Rajasthan Amendment) Bill 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill 2020 and the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion



and Facilitation and Rajasthan Amendment) Bill 2020.

A number of provisions to protect the interests of farmers, including sale or purchase of a crop under farming price and imprisonment of three to seven years for harassment of farmers, have been included in the bills.

The Congress leadership has suggested that states where it

is in power should pass laws of their own to counter the central legislations that had triggered farmers' protests in several parts of the country.

In the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services (Rajasthan Amendment) Bill, a provision states, "Provided further that no Farming Agreement for the sale or purchase of a crop shall be valid unless the price paid for such agricultural produce is equal to, or greater than, the prevailing Minimum Support Prices, announced by the Central Government for that crop. Apart from a few other amendments, three new sections have been added as special provisions for Rajasthan, providing for punishment for harassment of farmers and powers to the state government to give directions.

The Congress leadership has suggested that states where it

## Covid-19 caseload goes past 81 lakh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

With the addition of 48,268 Coronavirus infections and 551 deaths in 24 hours, India's tally on Saturday reached 81,37,119. Out of this total, 5,82,649 cases are currently active, 74,32,829 patients have been discharged, while 1,21,641 lost the battle against the pandemic.

While the recovery rate stands at 91.34 per cent, the case fatality rate is 1.49 percent, the data from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare showed. Moreover, 23 states and Union territories have a case fatality ratio lower than the national average, while 65 per cent of the total deaths so far were recorded in five states.

Maharashtra continues to be the worst-hit with a total of 16,72,858 cases, including 43,837 deaths; followed by Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and



Delhi. West Bengal today recorded 3,993 fresh Covid cases and 57 deaths due to the infection with North 24-Parganas recording 907 cases in the last 24 hours. Till now, 3,73,664 people have been detected Covid positive, 6,841 died and 3,29,937 recovered of which 4,049 patients were discharged from hospitals in a single day, taking the discharge rate to 88.30 per cent.

Kolkata registered 895 cases and 16 deaths and neighbouring district of North 24-Parganas too recorded 16 deaths in the last 24 hours. The Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) logged 10,67,976 sample tests for Covid-19 in a single day on Friday, taking the total number of samples tested so far to 10,87,96,094.

Delhi adds 5,062 fresh cases, 41 deaths

Delhi today recorded 5,062 fresh Covid cases, which pushed its caseload to over 3.86 lakh.

These new cases were detected out of relatively lesser number of tests, 44,330.

Amid the festive season and rising air pollution levels in Delhi, this was the fourth consecutive day when over 5,000 cases have been logged in a day in the city.

Today, 41 new fatalities were



recorded, which took Delhi's Covid toll to 6,511. (SEE P2)

## US elections: Who is voting? Who is winning? Early vote only offers clues

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, 31 OCTOBER

As early voting breaks records across the USA, political analysts and campaigns are reviewing reams of data on the voters, looking for clues to key questions: Who is voting? And who is winning?

On one level, the answers can be simple. Registered Democrats are outpacing registered Republicans significantly ~ by 14 percentage points ~ in states that are reporting voters' party affiliation, according to an Associated Press analysis of the early vote.

But that doesn't tell the whole story. Many Americans'

choices don't align with their party registration. Meanwhile, polls show Republicans have headed President Donald Trump's baseless warnings about mail voting, and large numbers intend to vote on Election Day.

That means the early Democratic surge could give way to a Republican surge on Tuesday.

As of Friday afternoon, 86.8 million people had voted in the presidential election. That's 63 per cent of the total who cast ballots in the 2016 race. Most election experts think the United States will see 150 million to 160 million ballots cast in 2020, which would mean that we are likely more than halfway through voting. In one state,

ballots ~ 27 per cent were cast either by new or infrequent voters, according to AP's analysis. It sounds like a big number, but it's not too much greater than past years. Still, the number may well grow, as new and infrequent voters tend to vote close to, or on, Election Day.

A rise in that number appears to be good news for Democrats. Forty-three percent of the infrequent and new voters are registered Democrats, compared to a quarter who are Republicans. They are registered as independents or with a minor party ~ a group that tends to favour Democratic candidates. The voters are clustered in the Sunbelt, par-

ticularly in states such as Florida, North Carolina and especially Texas that Democrats hope to win by mobilising large chunks of the electorate that sit out most contests.

Biden's fate may be tied to strong turnout among Black voters in the battleground states. So far, about 9 per cent of the early vote has been cast by African-Americans, about on par with the 10 per cent of the electorate Black voters made up in 2016. Black voters are tracking closely with their share of the electorate in several battlegrounds. In North Carolina, they are 21 per cent of both all early voters and all registered voters. In Georgia and Texas, they

make up 30 per cent of the early vote and 32 per cent of registered voters.

A slight drop in Black voter turnout from the elevated numbers of 2008 and 2012 played a role in Democrats' 2016 loss, and the party and its supporters are watching carefully to see what happens this time.

There's been a surge in the older African-American vote. Black voters 65 and older are already one of the most reliable voting demographics, and according to TargetSmart data they have already surpassed their numbers in six key battlegrounds ~ Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Nevada, North Carolina and Texas. At the

same time, younger, less reliable Black voters comprise a larger share of the Black vote right now than in 2016.

Organisers say Black voters are feeling from the pandemic and economic collapse, which have hit African-Americans hardest, and the country's racial reckoning. That's motivating them to overcome persistent obstacles to voting, said Mary Kay



In train for North Bengal to connect with people and work towards fulfillment of their expectations. Harnessing of its enormous travel, tourism, economic, educational potential would improve lives of the people.

JAGDEEP DHANKHAR  
WEST BENGAL GOVERNOR

## Normal water supply restored in Delhi: DJB vice chairman

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

The Delhi Jal Board (DJB)'s vice chairman Raghav Chadha today said it was working continuously to restore normal water supply in Delhi, which was affected due to high levels of ammonia in the Yamuna river.

In a tweet tonight, Chadha however asserted that "Happy to report that both Bhagirathi & Sonia Vihar Water Treatment Plants are now functioning at full capacity. Owing to tireless efforts of @DelhiJalBoard engineers ammonia discharge in Yamuna by Haryana has been brought within parameters. Normal supply of water is now restored."

Earlier in the day, Chadha had inspected the Sonia Vihar water treatment plant where water production had decreased due to the increase in ammonia levels.



annual maintenance, water coming from Uttar Pradesh, that is from the Ganga, has stopped. This happens every October. Unfortunately, this maintenance work has coincided with the spike in ammonia levels in raw water received from Haryana," he said.

The level of ammonia in the water was between 1.7 PPM and 1.9 PPM (Parts Per Million). On Friday, it shot up to around 3.5 PPM, which is considered to be an extremely high level of toxicity and is not fit for human consumption.

As a result, the two water treatment plants at Sonia Vihar and Bhagirathi, which treat the water that comes in from the Yamuna, had to be shut, Chadha added.

"I met officials concerned, who have been working continuously to ensure that water supply in affected areas of South Delhi, East Delhi and North-east Delhi is restored," Chadha said.

"Delhi is a landlocked city and gets water from the neighbouring states. Due to

Water treated at these plants is supplied to South Delhi, East Delhi and North-east Delhi and parts of New Delhi Municipal Council areas.

The DJB vice chairman said the Sonia Vihar water treatment plant, which treats 140 million gallons of waste water per day, was operational at 70-80 percent of its capac-

## JOBS & CLASSIFIEDS QUEST

### SITUATION WANTED

at Barasat Court Notary website: date: 11.11.2020 at 17:00 Public dated 14.10.2020 declared my name is Ankita Dutta. Ankita Dutta & Anketa Karan same & one identical person.

### TENDERS

**TAMRALIPTA** Mahavidyalaya – NIEQ No. WBDHE / TM / eNQ-01 / 2020-21, Date: 31.10.2020.

The Principal of Tamralipta Mahavidyalaya invites quotation for supply and installation of various equipment under Boost Programme 2017-18 at Tamralipta Mahavidyalaya.

EXPERIENCED lady, 60, looking for an office admin. job. 9972816728.

### AGM NOTICE

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The Annual General Meeting of Modern School Old Students' Association will be held on Sunday 29th November, 2020 at 11 a.m. at HLL Hall, Modern School, Barakhamba Road, New Delhi-110001. Election of President, Vice President, Secretary, Joint Secretary and Members of the Executive Committee will also be held on the said date as per Election Procedures Bye-Laws of the Association for which purpose nominations in Form A are hereby invited. The last date of receiving nominations shall be Monday 23rd November, 2020 till 4 p.m.

Form A can be collected from the school's office on any working day during school hours. Ballots for the election shall be cast, if required at the AGM between 11 a.m. and 12.30 p.m. Modernites are requested to carry photo identity card.

Dated: 1st November, 2020.

Vikas Mishra  
Secretary

## ELECTRICAL & MACHINERY BAZAR



## The Sunday Statesman

### KOLKATA

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# 5,062 fresh Covid cases push Delhi's tally to 3.86L

It's impossible to curb virus spread through lockdown, people should treat mask as vaccine: Jain

SNS & PTI

NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

Delhi today recorded 5,062 fresh cases of novel coronavirus infection (Covid-19), which pushed its caseload to over 3.86 lakh, even as the positivity rate spiked to nearly 11.5 per cent amid festivities and rising pollution in the national capital.

These fresh Covid cases were detected out of relatively lesser number of tests ~ 44,330 as against a recent daily average of 60,000 ~ conducted the previous day, according to the Delhi government's latest health bulletin.

Amid the festive season and rising air pollution levels in Delhi, this was the fourth consecutive day when over 5,000 cases have been logged in a day in the city.

The national capital had yesterday recorded 5,891 fresh cases of coronavirus infection — its highest single-day Covid spike so far — with 59,641 tests conducted for identifying these cases. Its positivity rate was then 9.88 per cent.

Today, 41 new fatalities were recorded, which took Delhi's Covid toll to 6,511, according to the health bulletin.

The tally of active cases rose to 32,719 from yesterday's 32,363. The city's total number of Covid cases climbed to 3,86,706. The recovery rate further dipped to 89.85 per cent.

Earlier in the day, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain said it was "impossible" to curb



virus has spread through the community," Jain said when asked if lockdown-like restrictions could be imposed if spike in cases continue in Delhi.

He told reporters that the lockdown was imposed in the beginning as "it was a new virus then" and its behaviour was totally unpredictable.

"There have been a lot of learnings from the lockdown, and a lot was also said that after the 21-day lockdown the virus spread will stop or with temperature going to 40 degrees Celsius, it will stop. Did it stop? So, the learning from that exercise has been that it is impossible to wipe off COVID-19 transmission through a lockdown as the

announced late March a countrywide lockdown to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus. From 8 June, the central government brought in "Unlock" in phases, under which restrictions have been eased accordingly.

The Delhi health minister pointed out that a large number of people in the city has become "carefree" and are not wearing masks in public places. He warned that "chalans" (fines) were being issued and stricter action will be taken against those not wearing masks.

Jain had last month ruled out the possibility of another lockdown in the city, saying an economy "cannot be kept shut for eternity" as livelihood of a large number of people is dependent on it.

He has also maintained that "extreme caution and not panic" should be the response of the city and people should exhibit greater alertness and responsibility in public places to deal with this pandemic.

The previous highest single-day spike of 5,739 cases was recorded in Delhi on 29 October.

It was the first time on 28 October that the national capital's daily Covid count crossed the 5,000-mark. The city had then logged 5,673 cases.

## BJP stir to continue against 'huge' power bills, pollution: Adesh Gupta

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

The Delhi BJP will continue its struggle against problems like "huge" power bills and pollution faced by people of the national capital, party president Adesh Gupta said after inaugurating a block-level workers' training programme here on Saturday.

Participating in Malviya Nagar block training programme, Gupta also attacked the Arvind Kejriwal government, saying it has a budget of Rs 60,000 crore, but no one knows where this money is being spent as the problems of Delhiites are not being solved.

The inter-state bus services was stopped after the imposition of lockdown in March, resulting in shutting down of inter-state bus terminals at Anand Vihar, Sarai Kale Khan and Kashmere Gate.

The Transport department is preparing a standard operating procedure for opening the inter state bus services. It is expected to begin next week, officials said.



Minister Narendra Modi without any discrimination and politics during the lockdown," he said.

He said Delhiites are still facing the problems, including 'huge' electricity bills and increasing pollution, and BJP workers will continue their struggle till the Kejriwal government solves these issues.

The two-day block level training programmes were held in 32 blocks across the city, in which 80 party leaders addressed the workers on a range of topics, including ideology of the party, use of social media, concept of 'Atma Nirbhar Bharat' and important local issues in Delhi.

On its second day on Sunday, 100 party leaders will address the workers during the training programme at 34 blocks.

The training programmes at all the 280 blocks in Delhi will be organized in a phased manner till November 22, said Delhi BJP media cell head Naveen Kumar.

## LG, CM pay tributes to Patel, Indira

PTI  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

Delhi Lieutenant Governor (LG) Anil Baijal and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal greeted people on the occasion of Valmiki Jayanti and paid tributes to Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary on Saturday.

Paying homage on Twitter to former prime minister Indira Gandhi on her death anniversary, Kejriwal said, "My tributes to our former Prime Minister Smt. Indira

Gandhi on her death anniversary." He also greeted people on the occasion of Valmiki Jayanti and paid tributes to Patel. The LG administered oath to officers to uphold the unity, integrity and safety of the nation at an event held at the Raj Niwas on the occasion

*The posters of those involved in 'love jihad' will be put on all road crossings*YOGI ADITYANATH  
UTTAR PRADESH CHIEF MINISTERThe Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 01 NOVEMBER 2020

03

# SAD seeks Centre's package for farmers

**Alleging the Centre's 'discrimination' vis-a-vis pandemic-hit farmers, Sukhbir urges PM to ensure a relief package for them with loans & interest waiver**

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
CHANDIGARH, 31 OCTOBER

**T**he Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD)'s president Sukhbir Singh Badal on Saturday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to intervene and direct the Union finance ministry to offer a comprehensive relief package to farmers instead of discriminating against them.

In a statement, the SAD chief said the decision not to include the farming community in the ambit of the scheme, which seeks to provide ex-gratia payment of the difference between compound interest and simple interest to borrowers for six months, proved that policy makers were totally out of sync with grassroot realities.

"It is a sad day for Indian democracy if policy makers have become so out of touch with the agriculture sector that



they do not realise that farmers bore the brunt of the Covid-19 pandemic. Thousands of tonnes of fruits and vegetables simply rotted in the fields," Badal said.

Farmers who had made investments in poly and net houses suffered huge losses as their produce could not be marketed for months. Everyone associated with agricultur-

"It is shocking that instead of doing this the Union government is not even ready to save them from compound interest being charged from them due to default in instalments. The finance ministry has played a cruel joke on the 'annadaata' who put his life at risk to supply food to the nation during the pandemic," the SAD chief said.

He urged the PM to direct the ministry to withdraw this "discriminatory clarification" and instead come out with guidelines for banks which offer concrete relief to farmers who are unable to repay crop loans and pay interest on other loans.

Badal said the Centre's announcement was being seen as a "double whammy" by the farming community which was still reeling from the "ill effects" of the central agri-marketing laws, which had resulted in losses to maize and cotton farmers in

Punjab and were working to the detriment of farmers across the country.

"Now we are being told by the finance ministry that the farmer did not suffer at all due to the pandemic and that he does not need any finance relief. This amounts to sprinkling salt on the wounds of the farming community which is already reeling due to forced distressed sale of food produce during the pandemic," he said.

"I urge the PM to come out with a concrete package for the farming and allied community which should include waiver of crop loans and interest waiver on other loans including tractor loans. The government should also partially write off loans taken to create infrastructure for allied activities. All this is needed not only to give a boost to the agriculture sector but also help the rural economy back on track," Badal said.

## Himachal Cong holds silent protest against farm laws

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 31 OCTOBER

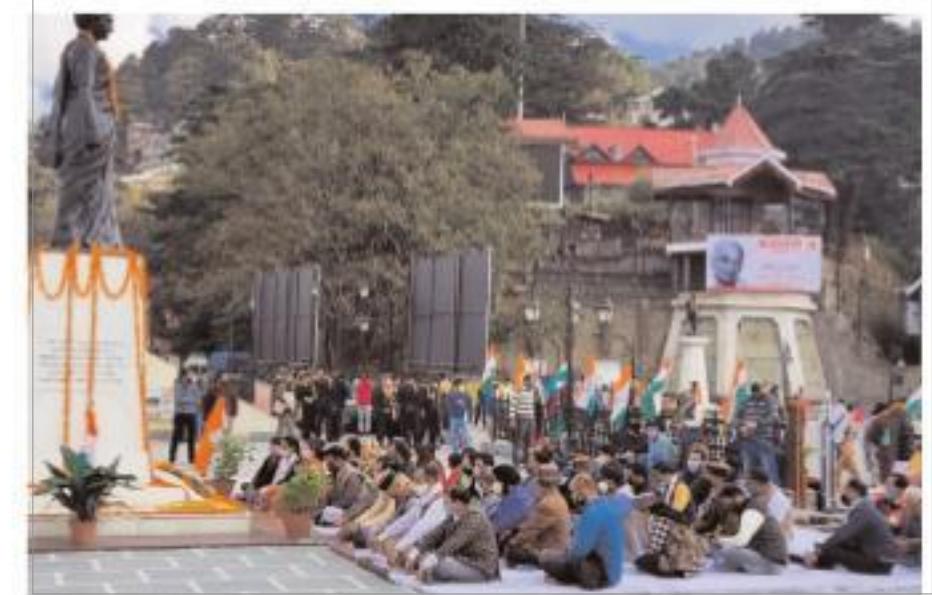
Himachal Pradesh Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore along with party workers on Saturday staged a silent protest at the historic Ridge Maidan in Shimla against farm laws - brought by the Narendra Modi government - and to show solidarity with the farming community.

After paying tribute to former PM Indira Gandhi and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Rathore criticized the Central government on farm laws and said they will adversely affect the interests of farming community in the country.

"Efforts are being made by the government to enslave the small and medium farmers of our country by introducing and passing the anti-farmers bills.

Today just like the pre-independence era, Congress again is fighting on the roads against incumbent establishment for the interests of farmers and larger interests of our country," he added.

He said the laws that were enacted by the Congress leaders after independence to improve the condition of the



HP Congress chief Kuldeep Singh Rathore along with party workers staging a silent protest at Ridge Ground in Shimla on Saturday. SNS

Lady of India.

It was Indira Gandhi who made it possible for our state Himachal in getting the status of an independent state," he said.

He further stated that the Iron Man of India Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was a legendary freedom fighter and the first home minister of independent India.

"Sardar Patel tied the country in the cult of unity which is still intact and it was him who managed more than 500 princely states and merged them into one for the formation of our nation. This nation will always be indebted to him," he added.

## Himachal Guv calls for remaining vigilant against anti-social elements

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 31 OCTOBER

Himachal Pradesh Governor Bandaru Dattatreya on Saturday called for remaining vigilant against anti-social elements who were trying to hurt the integrity of the country by resorting to terrorism, casteism, regionalism and religion.

Speaking on the occasion of the 145th birth anniversary of first Deputy Prime Minister of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, which is celebrated as 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas', he said our brave soldiers are protecting the borders to maintain the integrity of the

country. "However, the people of the nation also had an equal responsibility in maintaining peace and unity as the anti-social elements were trying to mislead the common people for their vested interests.

We need to be careful with them as they keep trying to hurt the integrity of the country by resorting to terrorism, casteism, regionalism and religion," he added.

The Governor said the fight on the basis of caste, religion and area inanimate the foundations of the country and it has neither individual benefit nor national interest.

"The economy, judiciary etc. of any country would be able to smooth all these things only when there was unity in the people.

The biggest hurdle in unity was personal interest and in the present situation, personal interests had become imperative and ideological differences were the main hindrance in the development of the country.

We should remember that wherever there is a rift, people will find their benefits in it. We are the only losers in such a situation," he said.

Dattatreya called upon the people to rise above all social, linguistic and religious differences and unite to con-



tribute for development of the country.

The Governor said 31st October, the birthday of Sar-

dar Vallabhbhai Patel was observed as National Unity Day

**'We need to be careful with anti-social elements as they keep trying to hurt the integrity of the country by resorting to terrorism, casteism, regionalism and religion'**

to perpetuate Patel's contribution to the political integration of India.

Today was also the death anniversary of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He paid his tributes to both great personalities of the country, he added. The Governor took

salute from an impressive march past presented by police contingents led by Parade Commander Siddharth Sharma on the occasion.

HP Director-General of Police Sanjay Kundu, MC Shimla Mayor Satya Kaundal, Deputy Mayor Shailender Chauhan, Secretary, Home, Manoj Kumar, Deputy Commissioner Adity Negi were also present on the occasion among others.

Later, the Governor also visited a blood donation camp organized by All India Valsiki Samaj Vikas Parishad at the Ridge ground in Shimla on the occasion of Maharishi Valmiki Jayanti.

## Jai Ram pays floral tributes to Sardar Patel, Indira Gandhi

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
SHIMLA, 31 OCTOBER

Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur paid tributes to first Deputy Prime Minister of India Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his 145th birth anniversary being celebrated as 'Rashtriya Ekta Diwas' at his portrait on the Ridge here on Saturday. He also paid floral tributes to former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi at her statue on her death anniversary.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister said that it was due to the determination, dedication, diplomacy and iron will of



Sardar Patel that India today stands united.

He said Patel integrated the farmer's cause in Kheda and Bardoli with the national freedom movement. The Kheda Satyagraha of 1918 is an epitome of the unity and discipline shown by farmers, even when their land, assets, and means of livelihood were seized.

The Chief Minister said that the nation was divided into 562 odd princely states that were released from the British

suzerainty; there was colossal chaos, confusion and conjugation. Sardar Patel rose to the occasion and did one of the most remarkable integrations in the history of the world and united all the big and small princely states of India. The most noteworthy part of Sardar Patel's endeavour was his understanding and ability to combine such a diverse country in terms of geography, languages, cultures, and traditions, he added.

Thakur said that India was forging ahead on the path of progress and prosperity under the able leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said that abrogation of Article 370 from Jammu Kashmir paved the way for 'One Nation One Flag, One Constitution'.

Thakur said that the present Union Government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was engaging with the legacy of Sardar Patel with all due considerations, respect and diligence.

He said that under his leadership, the Nation has taken a big initiative of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'. The Prime Minister has unparalleled fervour, faith and firmness to take this integration to the next level, he added.

Thakur said that India was

also remembered the contributions of Indira Gandhi on her death anniversary. He said that Indira Gandhi made immense contributions for upholding the unity and integrity of the country. He said that she laid down her life for the cause of the nation.

Thakur also felicitated the people of the State on the occasion of Maharishi Valmiki Jayanti and urged them to imbibe the teachings of this 'Adikavi' which were more relevant even today.

He said that India was strongly fighting the Corona pandemic and it would definitely win the battle against the virus. He said that the Prime Minister in his recent address to the nation has urged the people to ensure social distancing, use face masks and sanitizers to save ourselves from this virus. Thakur also administered the oath of national unity pledge to the gathering on the occasion.

An impressive march past was presented by the State police contingent. DSP Probationer Sidharth Sharma was the main attraction of the event.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

The Enforcement Directorate has arrested a person in connection with a money laundering case linked to an alleged Rs 750 crore bank loan fraud committed by misusing credit facilities, the central probe agency said on Saturday.

It said Sai Chandrasekhar was arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act on Friday following which a local court here sent him to seven days ED custody.

The money laundering case against Chandrasekhar pertains to a probe initiated by the agency against Virkaran Awasty, Vinod Sirohi and KPMG India Pvt Ltd, it said in a statement.

The PMLA case was filed against them after studying an FIR registered by the economic offences wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police on the basis of a complaint received from Hassad Netherlands BV.

Hassad Netherlands BV, a subsidiary of Hassad Food Company, was "induced" by Virkaran Awasty and Ritika

Awasty, Directors of Bush Foods Overseas Pvt Ltd, to part with funds amounting to USD 120 million (about Rs 750 crore) by misrepresenting the level of stocks/inventory, the ED alleged.

"On the basis of such misrepresentations, the accused persons induced Hassad Netherlands BV to provide corporate guarantee for the outstanding amount of Rs 714 crore of credit facilities availed from consortium of banks.

"Credit facilities were availed by Bush Foods Overseas Pvt Ltd on the basis of non-existent stocks and inventory," the agency claimed.

Probe found, it said, Virkaran Awasty along with other directors created bogus stocks by inflating the inventory and fabricating financial statements of the company.

"Bulk transactions of sales and purchases were generated so that Bush Foods could record increased turnover, profit margins and additional stock by generating approximately equal value of sales and purchases in a year.

**The accused was arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act on Friday following which a local court here sent him to seven days ED custody.**

"Artificial profit and artificial stock in the book value of inventory was recorded in the books by showing these bulk sales as domestic sales," it alleged.

Chandrasekhar, it said, was an employee of Hassad Foods Company and was part of team which evaluated the transactions. The agency charged that Chandrasekhar "colluded and conspired" with Virkaran Awasty to "cheat" Hassad Netherlands.

Chandrasekhar had a pivotal role and responsibility in the business transactions between Bush Foods Overseas Pvt Ltd and Hassad Netherlands BV. He also had a key role in negotiations, discussion and due diligence car-

ried out by Hassad on Bush Foods," it said.

Chandrasekhar was paid "illegal gratification" of Rs 20.79 crore by Virkaran Awasty for manipulating the due diligence exercise in favour of Bush Foods Pvt Ltd despite knowing that the credentials of the company were not genuine, the ED alleged.

"Chandrasekhar acquired a property located at Indiranagar area of Bengaluru worth Rs 5.8 crore for which amount was transferred by Virkaran Awasty from his company V&R Overseas.

Chandrasekhar also received Rs 1 crore proceeds of crime in the account of his father and mother from Virkaran Awasty which was spent for medical treatment of his father," it said.

Chandrasekhar also got Rs 13.79 crore from Virkaran Awasty in his Dubai-based company Harin Ventures Limited, it said.

The agency said it has attached Chandrasekhar's assets in Bengaluru and Mumbai and bank balances worth Rs 7 crore in the past.

## Mother bear, cubs force night lockdown at Joshimath

RAJU GUSAIN  
DEHRADUN, 31 OCTOBER

Amotherbear and her cubshave caused a night lockdown of sorts at Joshimath in Chamoli district in Uttarakhand these days. The bear has reportedly injured six persons so far, sparking fear among the local people.

The forest department has been on alert round the clock and their quick response team has regularly been patrolling areas where the bears' movements are recorded.

According to the Nanda Devi National Park staff, the female bear became aggressive after losing one of her two cubs.

By attacking Kailesh Dass (60), Kharan Singh (50) at Chunar and Vinesh Kankholi (44) at Parsari on 25 October, the bear was

injured in two days, an alarming situation is said to be prevailing in Joshimath. The Nanda Devi National Park management immediately launched a special operation. Vijay Lal Arya, range officer of this national park, said, "We have launched a public awareness campaign under which we are requesting people not to venture outside during night time. Our quick response team is working all day and night. Local police is providing us the required support."

The bear family has featured in two videos recently. The free movement of the mother bear with her cubs in the human habitation areas has come as a surprise to some people. The first video shows a site near Gorang Mohalla petrol pump in Joshimath confirming that

the mother bear has been able to find her missing cub. This has provided huge relief to the forest department personnel. The new video shows the bear family members moving freely near the army cantonment area.

According to a rough assessment of the forest department, about 8-9 bears live near Joshimath town.

Six persons, who sustained injuries in the attacks by the mother bear, are getting medical treatment in various health care facilities including those at Srinagar (Garhwal) and at Joshimath. Some have sustained fractures. The incidents have forced local people to stay indoors and not step out during the night. The bear family seems to have forced a night-lockdown in the area.

President. Cheema said the three farm Bills passed in the state assembly by rushing amendments to negate the "controversial" central laws were meaningless, asserting that it would not help protect the farmers' interests.

He said there was no point in meeting the President as the Punjab governor has not yet signed the Bills.

He alleged that Amarinder Singh was trying to fool the people of Punjab, especially the farmers, by projecting himself as their champion.

AAP MLA said instead of meeting the President, if the CM leads a delegation of all parties, to meet Prime Min-

ister Narendra Modi, the AAP would have gladly accepted the offer.

Had Amarinder decided to stage a 'dharna' outside the Prime Minister's residence to repeal the black laws, including the Air Pollution Ordinance, the AAP would have extended its full support to him, he said in a statement here. Amarinder Singh was a mere puppet in the hands of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, which was why he had not so far met either the prime minister or the Union agriculture minister and the railway minister alone or as a delegation against the black laws, he alleged.

## AAP rejects Pb CM's appeal to accompany him to meet Prez

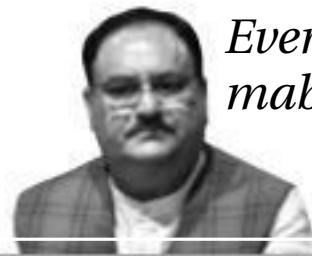
PTI  
CHANDIGARH, 31 OCTOBER

The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday rejected Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's appeal to legislators of all parties to accompany him to meet President Ram Nath Kovind on November 4 to request him to give his assent to the state's amended farm laws.

Dubbing the chief minister's move a mere political drama, Aam Aadmi Party senior leader and Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema said the AAP will not be a part of the delegation headed by the CM to meet the

President. Cheema said the three farm Bills passed in the state assembly by rushing amendments to negate the "controversial" central laws were meaningless, asserting that it would not help protect the farmers' interests.

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*Everyone in the country wanted to see a grand Ram temple at Sri Ram janmabhoomi in Ayodhya but the Cong did everything to protract the case*

BJP PRESIDENT J P NADDA

ACCUSING THE CONGRESS PARTY OF CREATING OBSTACLES IN THE CONSTRUCTION OF RAM TEMPLE AT AYODHYA.

India



United Hindu Front members demonstrating calling for an immediate ban on Muslim demonstrations in India regarding the events in France in New Delhi on Saturday.

**AITUC:** Leaders of several national trade unions today attended the centenary celebrations of the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), the first national trade union of the Indian working class, at AITUC headquarters. The leaders recalled that the AITUC emerged out of several workers' movements in the country under the leadership of its founder-president Lala Lajpat Rai. AITUC General Secretary Amarjeet Kaur paid tribute to late former AITUC General Secretary Gurudas Dasgupta who died this day last year. She said he fought for workers' rights in Parliament as an MP for 25 years.

**'Central agencies being misused to destabilise LDF govt in Kerala'**

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 31 OCTOBER

CPI-M Polit Bureau member S Ramachandran Pillai has on Saturday alleged that the central government is using investigation agencies to destabilize the LDF government in Kerala.

He said that the investigation agencies were being used for political gains and added that these agencies are acting on the orders issued directly by Union Ministers and other leaders.

Pillai further said that the CPI-M will not protect Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of party state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan. He said Bineesh should be punished if he has committed any mistake.

Meanwhile, Abraham Lawrence, son of senior CPI-M leader and former LDF convener MM Lawrence, has joined the BJP.

Addressing a press conference in Kochi, along with BJP state vice president AN Radhakrishnan, Abraham Lawrence said he is leaving the party protesting against party's stance on Bineesh Kodiyeri, who was arrested in Bengaluru in connection with a drug peddling related money laundering case.

He alleged that the CPI-M is deviating from its principles and ideologies and that he has decided to join the BJP attracting its nationalist fervor.

It is learnt that Abraham Lawrence will receive BJP membership from party national president JP Nadda through online next day.

SNS

## TENDER

### HIMACHAL PRADESH IRRIGATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

#### \*FOR E-TENDERING\*

The Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Anni District Kullu (H.P) invites tenders on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh from approved eligible contractors for the following work through e-tendering process:-					
Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	Earnest Money	Time Limit	Cost of tender
1	PWSS to PC habitation of GP Kharga and Tunnan in Nirmand Block, Distt. Kullu(H.P) (SH: C/O RCC Intake Chamber = 1 Nos. C/O Storage tank 10000 ltrs capacity & Laying, jointing & testing in trenches GI pipe 25 mm dia Point D to E from RD 0 to 8500 = 8500 Rmts.).	Rs. 13,51,712/-	27,034.00	3 Months	400/-
2	Tapping additional Source to WSS Digeri GO villages G.P. Bishadhar and Muhan in Anni Block Tehsil Anni Distt. Kullu HP. (SH: Providing, laying, jointing and testing of MSERW 80 mm dia & GI pipe 80 mm dia for Rising main and supplying and erection of pumping machinery & CI Anchor blocks).	Rs. 17,01,935/-	33,029/-	6 Months	400/-
3	PLWSS Durah Khad to Dhawansh, Panvi, Dabbar & Kuadhar in GP. Lot Nirmand Block Tehsil Anni Distt. Kullu HP. (SH: C/O RCC Intake Chamber 1 No., C/O Sed. Tank 10800 ltrs capacity, C/O RCC Storage tank = 40000 ltr, C/O Pump House, Toilet & Septic tank, Site development, barbed wire fencing & Laying, jointing & testing in trenches GI pipe 65mm from point C to B at RD 0 to 3300 = 3300 mtr.)	Rs. 28,90,129/-	50,852/-	6 Months	400/-
4	PLWSS Durah Khad to Dhawansh, Panvi, Dabbar & Kuadhar in GP. Lot Nirmand Block Tehsil Anni Distt. Kullu HP. (SH: Providing, laying, jointing and testing of MSERW 65mm dia = 55 Rmt & GI pipe 65mm dia = 500 Rmt for Rising main and supplying and erection of pumping machinery).	Rs. 12,52,502/-	25,050/-	6 Months	400/-

1. Last date of filing/ uploading the tender through e-tendering:- 05-11-2020 up to 05:00 PM.

The tender forms and other detailed conditions can be downloaded from the website www.hptenders.gov.in or from office of above Executive Engineer, up to date specified above.

4029/2020-2021 HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

# Andhra CM writes to PM, seeks mediation in Polavaram project

T'gana CM K Chandrasekhar Rao urged farmers to unite and agitate against the Centre's farm laws

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
HYDERABAD, 31 OCTOBER

While Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao today exhorted farmers to unite and raise their voices against the Centre's farm policy which will benefit only corporates, his Andhra Pradesh counterpart YS Jagan Mohan Reddy wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking his intervention for the release of funds for Polavaram irrigation project admitting the imbroglio with water resources ministry was turning out to be an "embarrassment."

Rao inaugurated Rythu Vedika, a platform meant to bring all farmers together at Kodankandla in Jangaon district and addressed a public rally where he tore into BJP and the central government over farm policies.

Holding up a document the Telangana chief minister said that the Centre has announced Rs 1,888 per quintal paddy as

minimum support price (MSP) and though the state government was ready to pay more than MSP the Centre has barred it through guidelines issued by Food Corporation of India (FCI) restricting any additional payment beyond MSP.

Urging farmers to unite and agitate against the Centre using the platform of Ryathu Vedika Rao said: "It is high time for farmers to get united and show their strength."

Rythu Vedika will help farmers to meet frequently and discuss their problems and facilitate their plans in selling their produce. It will also enable farmers to organise themselves into a group for protecting their rights.

The two room structure along with toilets would allow setting up skill imparting centres for agriculture and allied activities.

Rao also termed the Centre's power reforms as draconian. Dismissing the claims

of BJP leaders that Centre was contributing over 75 per cent of the pensions he said the Centre contributes for only seven lakh people that too a paltry amount of Rs 200 per person while the state government provides between 1500 to 2000 to more than 38 lakh beneficiaries.

The Telangana chief min-

ister accused the Centre of treating the states like "beggars" and forcing the farm bills on them.

Meanwhile Andhra Pradesh chief minister YS Jagannath Reddy wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking to end the "embarrassing" tussle over Polavaram.

miseries on the people."

The party will extend its complete solidarity and support to the kisan protest action calls of 26-27 November and will also support the call of the Central trade unions for a nationwide general strike on 26 November.

Yechury said the Central Committee had concluded that the BJP Central government was utilizing the period of the pandemic and the consequent disruption of normal life and activities due to lockdown restrictions etc. to advance its "core RSS agenda" of converting India into a "Hindutva Rashtra."

The Central government had virtually abdicated its responsibility towards containing the pandemic, he said. Yechury said the Central government cannot abdicate its responsibility on the provision of the vaccine against Covid-19 free of cost. The Centre cannot pass on the buck to the state governments, he said.

It will take place soon after the bypoll results are announced," he told reporters ahead of a road show in Rajarajeshwari Nagar.

Asked about his

announcement at the road show that Munirathna would be made minister, he said "I am 100 per cent going to make him minister after he wins the bypoll."

Congress state chief DK

Shivakumar lauded the announcement on Munirathna, saying it was a violation of the model code of conduct.

"Let him be made chief minister... but now saying that he (Munirathna) will be made minister itself is a poll code violation," Shivakumar told reporters.

Addressing the road show, Yediyurappa asked voters to elect Munirathna by at least a 50,000 vote margin, "paving the way for him to be made minister soon after he wins."

He lauded the steps taken by Munirathna to help people of his constituency during the coronavirus induced lockdown and urged them to help him win by at least a 50,000 margin, "paving the way for making him a minister."

The CM said Rs 900 crore worth work has already been sanctioned in the constituency.

## Bineesh Kodiyeri's arrest seen as trouble for many in film industry

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, 31 OCTOBER

The arrest of CPI-M Kerala secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan's son Bineesh Kodiyeri by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in Bengaluru in connection with a drug peddling related money laundering case, is expected to bring trouble for many in the Malayalam film industry.

As the ED Bengaluru unit is probing the finances of Bineesh Kodiyeri, who allegedly funded Kochi native Mohammed Anoop, the main accused in the drug case busted by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), his alleged role will come under the scanner of the national probe agencies.

There has been report in the past about the drug mafia's close links with the Malayalam film industry.

The sleuths of the agencies, particularly the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) are expected to come knocking at the doors of those in the

arrested in the Bengaluru drug case along with Kannada television star D Anikha and Rijosh Ravendaran, a Palakkad resident, on 28 August.

Bineesh has acted small roles in some Malayalam films and is a member of the Association of Malayalam Movie Artists (AMMA) and also a key member of an AMMA cricket team that used to participate in various tournaments.

The ED has stated that Anoop Mohammed had admitted during interrogation that he was indulging in the sale and purchase of narcotic drugs and was closely associated with Bineesh.

During the course of the investigation, it was revealed that Anoop Mohammed was a 'benamidar' of Bineesh and all his financial dealings were done on the instructions of the latter, who had paid huge amounts of money to him.

The ED also found that Bineesh was Anoop's boss and he (Bineesh) had handed over Rs 3.5 crore to Anoop.

## India's first 'Tyre Park' to come up in Bengal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 31 OCTOBER:

West Bengal Transport Corporation is gearing up to launch India's first-ever "Tyre Park" where scrap and defective tyres turned into art installations will be displayed.

The entertainment park is to come up in the heart of the city at Esplanade Bus Depot. AWBTC official said the idea behind the park is to enable conversion of waste into art.

"Nothing is waste and can be art and that is a message the unique Tyre Park will deliver."

The park will include a small café. A soothing ambi-

ence coupled with music will offer a little space for visitors to sit and relax. The location of the entertainment park has been strategically selected near the existing tram museum called Smarika, which provides important information to the visitors on the evolution of trams.



*Commitment and unwavering effort towards developing the state has led to Tamil Nadu being rated among the best governed states...*

AFTER THE STATE FIGURED IN TOP FOUR IN LARGE STATE CATEGORY OF GOVERNANCE OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS INDEX-2020

## THUMBNAILS



A resident walks past Army soldiers standing guard during a one-day strike called by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) in Srinagar on Saturday. AFP

**Beaches set to welcome visitors:** The panoramic beaches of Kerala, one of the most sought after destinations of holidaymakers visiting the state, are all set to reopen on Sunday after months-long closure due to pandemic. The reopening of the beaches and the launch of 26 new tourism projects are expected to give a boost to the holiday sector, Tourism Department sources said. It is also a solace to a large number of domestic families who like to spend their evenings in beaches and reduce their stress in this critical period," said E M Najeeb, senior vice president, Indian Association of Tour Operators. PTI

# Will bring law on 'love jihad': Yogi Adityanath

UPCM says, Ram Naam Satya journey will start if people don't have respect for women

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAUNPUR/DEORIA (UP), 31 OCTOBER

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday said his government would come out with a law to deal with 'love jihad' and used the Hindu funeral chant Ram Naam Satya Hai' to threaten those who don't respect their daughters and sisters.

Welcoming the Allahabad High Court ruling declaring that conversion for the sole purpose of marriage is not valid, the CM also said posters would be put up of those involved in 'love jihad', a derogatory coinage referring to the alleged campaign of Muslims forcing Hindu girls to convert.

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

In Deoria, he said, an attempt was made to illegal-

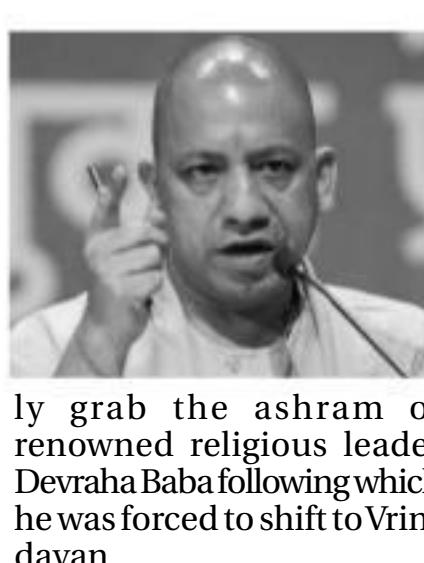
rallies in Jaunpur and Deoria ahead of the November 3 by-elections for the Malihani and Deoria assembly seats.

"The posters of those involved in love jihad will be put on all road crossings," Adityanath said, sending out a warning against interfaith marriages in both his speeches. Referring to his government's Mission Shakti programme, the chief minister said it is meant to ensure the safety, security and honour of women. But if anyone still dares to indulge in any misadventure, Operation Shakthi is also ready, he said.

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

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

In Deoria, he said, an attempt was made to illegal-



ly grab the ashram of renowned religious leader Devraha Baba following which he was forced to shift to Vrindavan.

This prompted the BJP government to start building a hospital in Deoria in his name, the chief minister said. Academic work will also start there from the next session and people of the area will also get expert medical treatment.

He claimed that the rule of the mafia and 'goonda' elements had ended in the state. The Samajwadi Party chief (Akhilesh Yadav) is today worried because he had sympathy for such elements. The government has launched Operation Mafia under which property amassed through illegitimate means are being bulldozed and seized. These properties, made through

wrong means, will be demolished and new houses will be constructed for the poor. He stressed that the mafia will not be allowed to prosper in the state at any cost.

Should those who have sympathy and support criminals and mafia get the support of people? The fate of the Samajwadi Party has already been decided in 2014, 2017 and 2019 elections, the chief minister said.

Attacking the Congress, SP and the Bahujan Samaj Party, the CM said their governments had worked on the basis of caste while the BJP government is working for all sections of the society with complete sincerity, honesty and devotion. Yogi alleged that the SP was desperate seeing the massive support for the BJP and was conspiring to instigate riots in the state.

Adityanath asserted that government jobs are no longer up for sale in Uttar Pradesh and over 3.50 lakh youths have got government jobs since his government came to power. Those who try to sell jobs are now promptly sent to jail, he added.

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 31 OCTOBER

Divide between the Leh and Kargil districts on the issue of 6th Schedule for the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh has further widened before the date is finalised for a fresh round of talks on the matter with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Last month the Centre told representatives of the Apex Body of Leh spearheading the agitation that another round of talks will be held a fortnight after the elections for Leh's Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council (LAHDC) were completed. It was made clear by the Centre that further talks will be held only after including representatives of Kargil. The Ladakh UT consists of only two districts, Leh and Kargil. While Leh is Buddhist dominated, Kargil is a Muslim majority district.

Now that the BJP has turned victorious in these elections the demand for 6th Schedule has grown louder in Leh. However, majority of people in the Shia Muslim dominated Kargil were sticking to the demand for restoration of Article 370 and nothing short of that.

The recently formed People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) has also contributed its bit for keeping the demand alive in Kargil. A 5-member team of the PAGD led by National Conference (NC) leader Omar Abdullah chose to visit Drass in Kargil on Friday to garner support for restoration of Article 370.

Omar said that the delegation of PAGD met leaders of the Kargil Democratic Alliance in Kargil and all unitedly demanded that the pre-August 5th, 2019 position must be restored.

Amit Shah had last month met leaders of the Apex Body of Leh that had called for boycott of Leh's LAHDC polls to press their demand for 6th Schedule. However, the boycott call was withdrawn after the meeting with Shah at New Delhi. Former MPs Thuptisan Chhewang and Thiksey Rinpoche,

former minister Chering Dorjay Lakrook and others were part of the delegation.

Besides Shah, minister of state for Home, Kishan Reddy and also Kiren Rijiju were present in the meeting. Amit Shah had assured the Ladakhi leaders that the government is committed to safeguard the interests of people of Ladakh. It was also assured that all issues related to language, demography, ethnicity, land and jobs will be considered positively and taken care of.

Indian government is open to discuss protection available under the 6th Schedule while looking into issues related to Ladakhi people, he assured the delegation.

The Home Minister also made it clear that the dialogue between a larger Ladakhi delegation consisting of representatives from Leh and Kargil districts under the aegis of Peoples Movement for Constitutional safeguard under the 6th Schedule and Union Home Ministry would commence after 15 days of culmination of LAHDC, Leh elections. Any decision so reached in this connection would be in consultation with the representatives from Leh and Kargil.

## Sonia, Rahul, Priyanka pay tribute to Indira Gandhi on her death anniversary

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER



a tweet and also posted a picture of the former prime minister.

Tweeting in Hindi, Priyanka Gandhi noted that it was both her grandmother's death anniversary and Mahatma Valmiki's birth anniversary.

"It was my grandmother who introduced me to Valmiki ji's teachings. Valmiki ji's teachings inspire me to raise the voice of the underprivileged in the society and join their fight for justice," she said.

## 'MP voters intelligent, they'll bring Cong back to power'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
Bhopal, 31 October

Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath, whose 15-month-old government collapsed in March this year and led to the BJP's return to the helm, has said the voters in the state are simple, naive and poor, but they are intelligent, and will bring the Congress back to power in the upcoming Assembly bypolls.

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

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

"I have full faith in people and voters of the state, especially from these 28 seats. They are aware that the (BJP) government, which came to power by trading people's mandate, has not been able

to change anything in the last seven months. The farmers' condition has worsened and unemployment has increased...people understand everything," Nath told on Friday night.

"Voters in MP are simple, naive and poor, but they are very intelligent," he said, adding that they will take the right decision. He said the Congress will return to power in the state after the counting of bypoll votes on November 10.

Replies to a query about how many seats the Congress expects to win in the bypolls, Nath said, "I don't believe in announcing such things. (CM) Shivraj Singh Chouhan is an expert in it."

The Congress leader has been facing criticism for using the term "item" against a woman MP minister during the bypoll campaign.

The Election Commission on Friday revoked Nath's star campaigner status for "repeated violations of the model code

while campaigning for the bypolls".

Speaking about it, he said, "Which post or position this star campaigner has? The EC has not given me any notice, nor had it asked me about it. Why they are doing this in the last two days of campaigning only they know." But the Congress leader defended his use of the word "item".

"I was in Lok Sabha for so many years. There it is mentioned in the agenda sheet, item number 1, item number 2... That was on my mind. I did not say it to disrespect anyone," he said.

"Yet, I had said that if someone feels insulted, then I express regret," the former chief minister added.

Nath also claimed that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi did not express disapproval about him in particular after the episode, but only said disrespectful language should not be used against women.

On the BJP's demand for apology from him over the remark, Nath said, "It is not anyone's demand. I do what I feel is right and proper, because it (disrespecting the woman minister) was never my intention."

Senior leader Jyotiraditya Scindia's rebellion against the Congress and the resignation of 22 MLAs of his party in Madhya Pradesh had led to the collapse of the Kamal Nath government in March.

Days before quitting the Congress, Scindia, while addressing a rally in Tikamgarh, had threatened that if he would hit the streets if the party's manifesto was not fulfilled by the Kamal Nath-led government.

Reacting to his threat later, Nath had then said, "Toh uttar jayein sadak par (Let him hit the streets if he wants to)."

When asked about his reply to Scindia, Nath said what else would he have said in such a situation.

## Kashmir shuts down, people protest against new land laws

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
JAMMU, 31 OCTOBER

that lifted the land purchase restrictions on outsiders.

A statement issued by Hurriyat Conference leaders, Mirwaiz, Prof. Abdul Gani Bhat, Bilal Gani Lone and Masroor Abbas Ansari said; "the amalgamation reiterates its principled stand of engagement and dialogue among stakeholders for resolution of the Kashmir dispute". It accused the Centre of attempting to "undermine all attempts of pursuing a peaceful resolution".

"A policy of permanent demographic change is aggressively being pushed to snatch our land, destroy our identity and turn us into a minority in our own land. One after the other laws are being invented and amended by New Delhi and forcibly thrust upon the people..."

## FAITH IS THE SPUR



Sikh devotees carry the Palki Sahib (palanquin) with the Guru Granth Sahib, the central religious text of Sikhism, during a religious procession ahead of the birth anniversary of the fourth Sikh Guru Ramdas, at the Golden Temple in Amritsar on Saturday. AFP

## Paddy politics heats up in Chhattisgarh

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
RAIPUR, 31 OCTOBER

With the festive season reaching its zenith, customary politics between the Congress government and the Opposition BJP over Paddy procurement has intensified in Chhattisgarh.

BJP on Saturday reacted angrily over the state government's allegation that the centre was trying to disrupt the paddy purchase in Chhattisgarh by blocking the supply of gunny bags.

State BJP President Vishnudev Sai said that agriculture minister Ravindra Chouhan is lying because the Congress government's intention are malicious.

Questioning the credibility of government claim regarding paucity of gunny bags in the state, the saffron leader said, Congress ruled Punjab has not complained of any dearth of gunny bags and a record paddy pro-

curement is going on there. Similarly, all the necessary assistance have been rendered to Chhattisgarh by the Union government, then why agriculture minister Chaubey and his government is trying to falsely implicate the Centre for its own failures, former Union minister alleged.

Charging the Bhupesh Baghel led Congress dispensation of resorting to the politics of fraud, BJP leader Sai claimed that the Congress government of Chhattisgarh is not willing to buy farmer's paddy, that is why they have engineered an artificial shortage of gunny bags in the state. Citing data, the tribal leader who took the reins of the party for the record third time, claimed that rations shops in the state have not returned 2,25 crore of gunny bags. This implies that the state government does not want to purchase farmers' entire paddy, he said. All kinds of excuses are being

framed by the Congress regime to cover up their malicious intentions, he added.

Government procurement of paddy in the ongoing Kharif season has crossed 20 million tonnes within a month, Sai claimed adding that Union food minister Piyush Goyal has estimated that a record 74.2 million tonnes of paddy is expected to be procured this year. All the measures have been taken to accomplish the Central government's intention to buy maximum farm produce, he informed.

Accusing the Congress government of resorting to delaying tactics, the BJP leader said that till date 130 million tonnes of paddy has been procured in Punjab, whereas, the Chhattisgarh government has been busy crying for the shortage of gunny bags, despite the BJP urging the ruling dispensation to gear up for the paddy purchase on time.

pushover. He is contesting from Raghopur seat for the third consecutive time.

"Though he (Tejashwi) is trying to woo Yadav voters by claiming that he is going to become the chief minister after the elections, people are not interested," he claimed.

Asked if Tejashwi has the edge because of the fact that his father is the tallest leader of Yadavs in Bihar politics, Kumar told "The achievements of Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Centre and Nitish Kumar in Bihar will comfortably see me through."

Union minister of state for Home Nitin Ram Rai, also a Yadav, has a great influence among the caste, which is an advantage for BJP candidate.

## Shah to visit West Bengal with IT team next week

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
KOLKATA, 31 OCTOBER

gal BJP will organize a business summit in Kolkata to attract investments for the state and prepare a roadmap for revival of its economy. Political party leaders explain that a business summit is an important announcement. The BJP plans to organize it either on 20 December or 21 January, Dasgupta said.

However Trinamul Congress MP Saugata Roy derided BJP's decision as a "poll gimmick".

"We have decided to organize a business meet in Kolkata to prepare a roadmap for investments in the state. After analyzing the Covid-19 situation, it will be decided whether it will be a virtual or an actual summit," Dasgupta told a late night press conference yesterday.

"We will invite business leaders, entrepreneurs and start-up companies and talk to them on what they want and to create an investor-friendly environment," he said.

He criticized the Mamata Banerjee government's industrial policy for failing to bring in investments in the state.

According to BJP sources, flailing industrial policy of the TMC government in the "last ten years has failed to attract any investments in the state".

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
HAJPUR (BIHAR), 31 OCTOBER

He is hopping from one region to another daily to drum up support for the Grand Alliance so that he could become the chief minister of Bihar, but winning his own seat won't be easy for Tejashwi Yadav who is up against an experienced BJP PMP in Raghopur constituency.

A part of the Hajipur Lok Sabha seat, Raghopur assembly segment in Vaishali district will vote in the second phase on November 3.

The 31-year-old, the younger son of Lalu Prasad, had taken the electoral plunge from Raghopur in 2015, when he had barely reached the qual-

ifying age of 25 for fighting polls. He won the election and went on to become the deputy to CM Nitish Kumar, whom he would call chacha (uncle) then, an expression of respect and alliance. But the alliance fell apart in 2017, and now Tejashwi is challenging his chacha for the top post.

The Grand Alliance, spearheaded by the RJD and with the Congress and Left parties as its members, has already announced Tejashwi as its CM candidate. But from being a CM candidate to actually becoming the one depends on whether Tejashwi wins his elections. Raghopur seat is a Yadav-dominated constituency across river Ganga which Lalu Prasad had won

in 1995, 2000, and his wife Rabri Devi in 2005.

Tejashwi's main rival now, the BJP's Satish Kumar, had emerged a giant killer, defeating Rabri Devi in 2010 state election. Kumar, however, had lost to Tejashwi in 2015, when Tejashwi was a nominee of an alliance comprising his RJD, the JD (U) and the Congress, while the BJP had gone solo. The equation here on the day of filing nomination on October 14, and told them that they would be electing a chief minister.

## Lanka autocratised

The status of Sri Lanka as a democracy suffered a serious setback on 29 October when Mahinda Yapa Abeywardene, Speaker of Parliament, signed the 20th Amendment to the Constitution passed with a two-thirds majority, 156 voting in favour, including eight from Opposition benches, 65 against and one absentee. Former President Sirisena was the lone absentee. The controversial amendment gives Gotabaya Rajapaksa, elected President last August, absolute executive powers and immunity from wrong doings. Thirty-nine petitions were filed by opposition party leaders and civil society groups in the Supreme Court challenging the legality of the amendment. The court ruled that as long as the legislation was passed by a two-thirds majority, except for four clauses that needed additional public approval through referendum, it was valid. The 20th Amendment replaces the 19th Amendment enacted in 2015 with the full support of the Rajapaksa clan, who were then in the opposition, to curtail wide-ranging powers of the president. The 19th Amendment barred people with dual citizenship from holding the highest office of President. Gotabaya and one of his brothers, Basil Rajapaksa, were citizens of both Sri Lanka and the USA. Gotabaya renounced his US citizenship to enter the presidential race. The 20th Amendment has eliminated the dual citizen provision. Now he can get his US citizenship restored. Opposition party members voted for the amendment on an assurance by the President that he would enact a new constitution by November 2021 which will retain the 19th Amendment prohibitions on dual citizenship. The office of Prime Minister has been turned into a dummy post. The President's brother and former President Mahinda Rajapaksa is now Prime Minister in the Sri Lanka Podujana Party government. The President now has the power to hold ministries, sack ministers including the Prime Minister, and have authority over hitherto independent commissions that oversee elections, police, human rights and anti-corruption organisations. The amendment also allows the President to dissolve Parliament half-way through a five-year term. Ever since Gotabaya was elected President in November last, politics in the island nation has undergone a sea change. After dissolving Parliament in March, he ran the country like a monarchy for the next five months. In the August parliamentary election, his SLPP won a two-thirds majority. In a democracy, the Executive, Legislature and the Judiciary should be able to function independently. The 20th Amendment has made the Executive the supreme head. In 2009 when his brother Mahinda Rajapaksa was the President, Gotabaya, an army officer, was the secretary of defence. He oversaw the defeat of the LTTE and the killing of its leader Velupillai Prabhakaran and authorised extrajudicial killings of about 40,000 Tamil civilians. The Press was gagged, and inconvenient journalists were abducted in white vans without number plates and roughed up. Lasantha Wickrematunge, founder-editor of the independent Sunday Leader was shot and killed on the main streets of Colombo in broad daylight. No one was arrested or brought to book. With Gotabaya Rajapaksa at the helm, most of the journalistic community in Sri Lanka has lapsed into self-censorship to safeguard their life and limbs.

## Blaming doctors

With most opinion polls suggesting that Democratic contender Joe Biden has notched up significant leads in several key American states, it must be a sign of President Donald Trump's desperation - in the midst of widespread condemnation of his administration's handling of the Covid epidemic - that he has turned his ire on medical professionals. Suggesting that doctors were somehow being incentivised to drive up the death count from coronavirus, Mr Trump alleged "Our doctors get more if someone dies from Covid". Lest there be any ambiguity about his claim, he said: "You know that, right? I mean our doctors are very smart people. So what they do is they say 'I'm sorry but everybody dies of Covid'". He then added, "In Germany and other places, if you have a heart attack, or if you have cancer, you're terminally ill, you catch Covid, they say you die of cancer, you died of heart attack. With us, when in doubt choose Covid. It's true, no, it's true. Now they'll say 'oh that's terrible what he said,' but that's true. It's like \$2,000 more so you get more money." Not surprisingly, the American Medical Association has hit back strongly. "The suggestion that doctors - in the midst of a public health crisis - are overcounting Covid-19 patients or lying to line their pockets is a malicious, outrageous, and completely misguided charge," the AMA's president, Dr Susan Bailey said in a written statement. The controversy erupts even as the United States continues to report high numbers of infections and death - with more than 90,000 positive diagnoses and more than 900 deaths on Friday. Medical professionals - an estimated 16 million of them across the country - will be incensed at Mr Trump's allegation for as the AMA statement noted "physicians, nurses, and frontline health care workers have risked their health, their safety and their lives to treat their patients and defeat a deadly virus." Certainly, the facts about medical earnings would suggest that doctors in the US have little reason to fudge the numbers of Covid deaths, or to profit from higher numbers. While the epidemic has added to workloads of primary care professionals, it has adversely impacted those who earn from procedures that can be deferred. According to the authoritative Medscape Physician Compensation Report, a primary care physician in the country earned an average of \$237,000 (Rs 1.77 crore) a year in 2018, while a specialist earned \$341,000 (Rs 2.54 crore) a year. Orthopedic specialists, plastic surgeons, otolaryngologists, cardiologists, dermatologists, radiologists, gastroenterologists and urologists each earned an average of \$400,000 (Rs 2.98 crore) or more.

# Aurangzeb the Savior?

Had Mughal rule continued in the Akbarian vein, it is likely to have engendered warm and lasting Hindu-Muslim fraternity. In the process, Hindu spiritualism might have got sidelined

**M**ost historians have overlooked that Emperor Akbar and his apparently sympathetic treatment of Hindus could have changed the course of Indian history. This would have been so had Emperor Aurangzeb not played his part during his 49-year-long reign. Committed Hindus tend to look upon the former as benign and the latter as wicked, if not malignant. This, one might say, is an allopathic outlook.

On the other hand, if a homeopathic approach were adopted, in the long run, Akbarian policies would have induced complacency amongst the Hindus. One has to bear in mind that Akbar initiated the tradition of Mughal princes marrying Rajput ladies. He had also befriended Rajputs to the extent that a number of Mughal generals were Rajputs. An example was Raja Man Singh of Jaipur, who fought for the emperor at the Battle of Haldighati against Maharana Pratap.

The Maharana and his clan were about the only Rajputs who were not Mughal allies. Mirza Raja Jai Singh was another outstanding example who fought many a battle on behalf of the Mughals. This faith in Rajput generalship continued till the reign of Aurangzeb. There was Raja Chhatrasal of Bundi during the time of Shah Jahan. By the time Aurangzeb came to the throne, he had no choice but to make use of Hindu generals, as Muslim stars were very few in his military firmament. Mirza Raja Jai Singh was outstanding; there was Raja Jaswant Singh, Kunwar Ram Singh, etc.

Another of Akbar's tactics was to also have Hindu ministers in his cabinet; Raja Todar Mal and the famous Raja Birbal are outstanding names. As if this were not sufficient, Akbar also coaxed Hindu sentiment by replacing Islam with an innovated religion called Din-e-ilahi, earlier called Sulh-Kul. The purported Din-e-ilahi was more of an ethical system. Its tenets were the prohibition of lust, sensuality, slander and pride, which were regarded as sins. Piety, prudence, abstinence and kindness were the core virtues of Din-e-ilahi. Celibacy was respected, chastity enforced and animal slaughter forbidden. Celibacy and non-slaughter of animals were more than sufficient to distract Hindus.

More significantly, Akbar decreed that Hindus who had been forced to convert to Islam could revert to Hinduism without facing the death penalty. In his days of tolerance, he was so well liked by Hindus that there are numerous references to him, and his eulogies are sung in songs and religious hymns as well.

Akbar also practiced several Hindu customs. He celebrated Diwali, allowed Brahman priests to tie jewelled strings round his wrists as blessing, and, following



his lead, many of the nobles took to wearing rakhi. He renounced beef and forbade the sale of meat on certain days.

Akbar was also the first Muslim ruler of Delhi-Agra to have married a Hindu princess, namely Jodha Bai of the house of Amber. Prince Salim, who later succeeded Akbar as Emperor Jahangir, was born to Jodha, and was therefore, a half-Hindu. Jahangir's son Khurram, who became Shah Jahan, was born of the former's Hindu queen Jagat Gosain. Aurangzeb, Shah Jahan's third son and his eventual successor, was only 62 per cent Muslim and 38 per cent Hindu.

Akbar's son and successor Jahangir showed little interest in theological speculation. Shah Jahan's interest, apart from governance, was in architecture. In other words by their relative disinterest in religion, in no way did they contradict Akbar or reverse his policies. Jahangir and Shahjahan maintained many of Akbar's concessions, such as the ban on cow slaughter, having only vegetarian dishes on certain days of the week, and drinking only Ganges water. Jahangir ruled from Lahore, Punjab, 200 miles away from the Ganges, and therefore the water was sealed in large jars and transported to him. He referred to the Ganges water as the "water of immortality."

It is difficult to reconcile all these qualities with Aurangzeb being an iconoclast, an Islamic zealot and an avid Hindu hater.

Unlike his predecessors, he did not marry a Hindu woman.

Moreover, he got obsessed with what he was doing, rather than keeping an eye on what he ought to have done. He spent 27 years

Had Mughal rule continued in this vein, it is likely to have engendered warm and lasting Hindu-Muslim fraternity. It is not impossible that some spiritual figure might have been thrown up to further innovate a blend of the two religions Hinduism and Islam; Din-e-ilahi was inadequate. For example, let us say, some faith parallel to Brahma Samaj, which is a blend of Christianity and Hinduism. In the process, Hindu spiritualism might have got sidelined by the apparently more modern Islamic theology and clerical activism.

But Shah Jahan was succeeded by Aurangzeb, who proved to be a contrast to his five predecessors. At the same time, he was gifted with a number of extraordinary qualities. He knew the Quran by heart, had mastered the Hadith as an expert; he was fluent in Persian, Arabic, Turkish and Brajbhasha. He was also a capable military commander and loved power.

It is difficult to reconcile all these qualities with Aurangzeb being an iconoclast, an Islamic zealot and an avid Hindu hater. Unlike his predecessors, he did not marry a Hindu woman. Moreover, he got obsessed with what he was doing, rather than keeping an eye on what he ought to have done. He spent 27 years

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of his reign of 49 years in the Deccan. In these years, not once could he visit north India. All in all, he happened to antagonise Hindus, high and low, so thoroughly that it is difficult to meet any one today who does not view the name Aurangzeb with revulsion. The Muslims are aware of this antagonism; it is difficult to find anyone with this name or with the name Alamgir, which was Aurangzeb's title. In all my tours and travels across the country, I have found only one shop in a lane on the main Kidderpore Road in Kolkata, where a hardware store is named after Aurangzeb.

Had Emperor Aurangzeb been similar to his predecessors, there might have been the possibility of the Hindu faith reducing to significantly lesser numbers. That would have been a loss to the world and its spiritual potential. This point needs explanation in terms of marketing phenomena, because the purpose of this exposition is not religious, but simply peace for mankind.

There is something unique about the Hindu faith that despite attempts by other religions to induce conversion, Hindus have not made any organized effort to convert others.

Yet, it manages to thrive. As long as one believes in karma, i.e., simply deeds leading to destiny,

one is a Hindu. There are avatars and deities galore, but no absolute god. In fact, the concept of swami (master) and das (servant) introduced by the bhakti saints like Chaitanya Mahaprabhu in the east to saint poets Tulsiadas, Meera and Surdas, in the north to Narasinh Mehta, Sant Tukaram and Eknath in the west and the Alwar saints in the south, most of them sang and propagated the message of the Single Paramatma (God). It was an attempt to take Brahmanism to masses who naturally preferred simple explanations and specific objects of worship. Philosophical concepts were not for them.

In sum, Hinduism is not a religion but a democratic faith and without the structure of a clergy or a hierarchy of authorities.

Subject to karma, believe what you like and pray when you can is the name of the game. It is like inductive logic, which rises from the ground and moves upwards towards a conclusion. No premise is given like a single god, a supreme book and a founder prophet as the Western religions prescribe. The corollaries of the premise then flow like sound reasoning. It is like deductive logic. There is no concept such as karma; or every action having a reaction, equal and opposite.

These religions aim at organization, possibly conversion, and expansion, which often lead to clashes. This is where the beauty of the Hindu faith stands out, for peace and not for war; for contentment rather than imperial activation. This is what Aurangzeb by his whimsical conduct, saved for the world.

A MEMBER OF THE **ANN**  
ASIA NEWS NETWORK

ASIAN VOICES

Clean sources  
better for imports  
of electricity

A renewable energy source in Malaysia will be the preferred choice for Singapore under the upcoming electricity import pilot, said the Energy Market Authority (EMA). "EMA prefers to import electricity from a renewable energy source," the agency told *The Straits Times* on Monday. "Potential importers will need to specify the sources of their supply, which will be one of the factors that EMA will consider in evaluating the proposals." They will also have to demonstrate their supply reliability, credibility and track record, and ability to secure demand from Singapore consumers, as well as manage the carbon output of generation supply, said EMA.

One importer will be appointed through the selection process. EMA's comments come after Minister for Trade and Industry Chan Chun Sing announced at the start of the Singapore International Energy Week that Singapore will be importing 100MW of electricity from Malaysia over a trial period of two years.

The amount will make up about 1.5 per cent of Singapore's peak electricity demand. Chan said in his opening speech: "This will allow the region to share the green energy sources that different countries may have."

The EMA, an agency under Chan's ministry, plans to issue a request for proposal by March next year for 100MW of electricity imports.

The imports could begin as early as end-2021, via the existing electricity interconnector between the two countries, EMA said. The Singapore-Malaysia electrical network intercon-

**THE STRAITS TIMES**

nexion is an undersea cable that is used to transmit electricity across the two countries.

It is now primarily used for mutual support between both countries' power systems, said a spokesman for EMA, adding that the interconnection is being upgraded and will be used to facilitate the trial for electricity imports.

As the quantity of electricity being imported is relatively small, it is unlikely to have a significant impact on the wholesale electricity prices in Singapore, the spokesman added.

After the two-year trial, plans for further imports will be considered. But imports will be introduced progressively in tandem with electricity demand growth. The spokesman added: "This will need to be balanced with considerations of energy security, price competitiveness, and environmental sustainability." Singapore hopes to tap regional energy grids to supplement the nation's access to renewable energy sources, and the trial with Malaysia will lay the groundwork for this.

Currently, solar energy remains the most viable option for Singapore, which lacks access to other forms of renewable energy, whether wind or tidal power.

But there are challenges to harnessing sunshine, including the lack of space to deploy solar panels and the intermittency of sunshine due to cloud cover and urban shading. Singapore hopes to meet around two per cent of its total electricity demand in 2025 with solar energy.

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR** editor@thestatesman.com

## China must be encircled

SIR, Your editorial 'China's rebound' (*The Statesman*, 28 October) has highlighted the facts about China's economic position and social order coming back to normality after containing Covid-19 on a note and scale that borders on mystery indeed. It appears that the origin of the virus at Wuhan and its reasons have gone into oblivion. While the whole world is reeling under the virus, China has comfortably come out of it. The whole world would want to know the measures undertaken by China for its

effective control and containment. It is no wonder that placed in such a position the Chinese economy is bound to grow stronger. This may propel the Chinese political leadership under the lifetime President Xi Jinping to maintain jingoistic and aggressive postures in relation to the border-issues with countries like India, Nepal and Bhutan.

Taiwan and Hong Kong will have no respite from the repressive measures. The South China sea as also the Indian Ocean will see increasing naval activities

from the Chinese side. It is high time for India to fortify its naval strength by taking advantage of her naval bases at the Andaman and Nicobar islands. The congress of the Communist Party of China will, no doubt, see some dissenting leaders criticise the present regime of Xi for its aggressive policies with neighbouring countries that have impacted trade relations.

Meanwhile, it is high time India and other countries affected by Chinese aggression to come together. Alliances like the Quad need

to be strengthened along with more such alliances of like-minded countries in the Pacific region. The active presence of the USA and Western countries for containment of China needs to be constantly maintained. The signing of the Defence Accord between the USA and India on the 27th after 2+2 diplomatic talks in New Delhi is a case in point.

Further, the diplomatic pressure of abandoning the One China policy needs to be mounted by countries concerned. China must be encircled.

Yours, etc., Paramananda Pal

Kolkata, 28 October.



## ACT TO SAVE WOMEN

SIR, In absolutely shocking twin incidents involving attacks on women on the same day on Monday in Haryana and Mumbai, two young women were attacked in broad daylight by stalkers resulting in the unfortunate death of the Haryana girl and landing the Mumbai girl in hospital where she is struggling for life. A 21-year-old student in Haryana was shot dead in broad daylight just outside her college by a man who first tried to shove her into his car. The woman's murderer on the streets, barely 30 km from Delhi, has been caught in a frightening video that shows her attempting to save herself before being shot at point-blank range. The attacker and girl knew each other and he had kidnapped her in 2018 also. The parents of the girl had complained earlier in 2018 about this attacker harassing their daughter but they had withdrawn the complaint to protect her name.

In the second incident, a man allegedly stabbed a TV actress for spurning his marriage proposal when she was returning home from a café. The accused, who was in a car, stopped her on the way and asked why she had stopped talking to him.

The National Commission for Women must take note of such incidents and force the respective state police forces to nab the culprits and get justice for victims on fast-track mode for which courts also have to work in tandem. The Union and respective state governments must take necessary steps to ensure a safe and secure environment for women and facilitating their free movement without any fear of getting stalked or attacked by mischievous elements.

Yours, etc., Vandana, Chandigarh, October 29.





Vodafone Idea would not shy away from taking the first step on tariff hike issue

RAVINDER TAKKAR  
MD AND CEO, VODAFONE IDEA

## THUMBNAILS

**Yamaha-Amazon tie-up:** Two-wheeler maker India Yamaha Motor on Saturday said it has tied up with Amazon India to sell its range of apparels and accessories online. This is for the first time in India that the company would sell its apparels and accessories online, India Yamaha Motor said in a statement. With this move Yamaha customers and motorcyclists will be able to buy a wide range of accessories and apparels for both motorcycles and scooters in an easy and convenient way through Amazon India, it added.

PTI

**Relaxo profit:** Relaxo Footwears Ltd on Saturday reported an increase of 6.46 per cent in its net profit at Rs 75.10 crore in the second quarter ended September 2020. It had posted a net profit of Rs 70.54 crore in the July-September quarter last fiscal, Relaxo Footwears said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations was down 7.38 per cent to Rs 575.87 crore during the period under review.

PTI

**Ather Energy:** Electric two-wheeler startup Ather Energy opened the full payment window for its 125-cc 450 Plus and 450X e-scooters for the customers in Bengaluru and Chennai from Saturday. Bookings for the rest of the cities will open before Diwali, the company said in a Press release. The EV maker had recently announced an assured buyback scheme for the two variants of its Ather 450 model.

PTI

**Dynamatic pact:** Bangalore-headquartered Dynamatic Technologies Ltd and Central Scientific Instruments Organisation (CSIR-CSIO) have signed an MoU for jointly designing, developing and manufacturing futuristic solutions for the defence and aerospace, healthcare and agriculture industry.

PTI

**Preeyam Budhia awarded:** Kolkata intrapreneur Preeyam Budhia won the FBN Next Gen Lombard Odier People's Choice Award 2020. She was honoured for her water conservation projects. This prestigious international award had participants hailing from over 26 countries, according to a media statement.

SNS

**UK co positive on doing biz in India:** UK minister for investment, Lord Gerry Grimstone, has released UK India Business Council's 'Doing Business in India Report 2020' at a round-table with Indian industry captains during his virtual visit to India. It shows that UK businesses believe that India's business environment is improving, and they see an opportunity for greater UK-India collaboration notwithstanding Brexit, COVID-19 and the global economic slowdown. India's Atmanirbhar Bharat mission is seen by the UK firms as an opportunity to do more business in India, leveraging UK's innovation for manufacturing in India.

SNS

# Sitharaman insisted on my transfer from ministry of finance, says Garg

SC Garg, former finance secretary, took voluntary retirement soon after being moved from the finance ministry

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

**S**ubhash Chandra Garg, the former finance secretary who was shunted out of the finance ministry within three weeks of Modi-2.0 government's first Budget last year, today alleged that new finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman got him transferred out.

Garg, who took voluntary retirement soon after being moved from the finance ministry - where he handled the department of economic affairs - to power ministry, said Sitharaman, unlike her predecessor Arun Jaitley, had "a very different personality and knowledge endowment".

Both ministry of finance and Sitharaman's office refused to comment on the blog Garg wrote on the day he said he would have in normal course retired from the government service but for the VRS.

"She did not seem to have confidence in me. She was not quite comfortable working with me as well," he said, adding differences over surplus RBI should give as dividend to the government and dealing with problems of non-banks had surfaced within months of her takeover.

"Serious difference also developed on some key issues like economic capital framework of RBI, a package for dealing with problems of non-banks, resolution of non-banks, partial credit guarantee scheme, capitalisation of non-banks like IIFCL and other financial entities and the like."

**SUBHASH CHANDRA GARG**  
FORMER FINANCE SECRETARY

"Very soon, not only had our personal relationship soured, but the official working relationship also became quite unproductive," he wrote.

Sitharaman wanted him out in June 2019, ahead of the 5 July Budget presentation, he said, but did not say why her request wasn't immediately

accepted by the government. Garg was transferred out on 24 July 2019, as secretary, ministry of power, and he applied for voluntary retirement within half an hour of receiving the order.

"Mrs. Sitharaman asked

for and insisted on my transfer from the ministry of finance in June 2019 itself, within one month of her taking over as FM," wrote Garg, who exited the government after serving the mandatory notice period on 31 October 2019.

Praising her predecessor Jaitley for his deep knowledge and understanding of the economy, he said his successor "Mrs. Nirmala Sitharaman, has a very different personality, knowledge endowment, skill-set and approach for economic policy issues and also for the officers working with her.

"It became quite apparent very early that working with her was going to be quite difficult and it might not be conducive to undertaking necessary reforms for the attainment of the objective of building a \$10-trillion economy of India."

The former finance secretary alleged that Sitharaman, for reasons not very clearly known to him, came with some pre-conceived notions about him.

"Very soon, not only had our personal relationship soured, but the official working relationship also became quite unproductive."

Garg recalled he made up his mind in June 2019, much before the Budget was presented, that he would take voluntary retirement from the service to be able to work on the wider economic reform agenda outside the government.

"I drafted my months' notice for voluntary retirement sometime in the fourth week of June after going through the rules relating to voluntary retirement and decided to seek it from 31 October 2019," he said.

"It became quite apparent very early that working with her was going to be quite difficult and it might not be conducive to undertaking necessary reforms for the attainment of the objective of building a \$10-trillion economy of India."

The former finance secretary alleged that Sitharaman, for reasons not very clearly known to him, came with some pre-conceived notions about him.

any job in the government or outside the government in regulatory bodies or elsewhere," Garg said. The former finance secretary, however, informed Mishra that he had already made up his mind to seek voluntary retirement.

"I filed for voluntary retirement on 24 July, the day I was transferred to the ministry of power instead of 31 October 2019, the date I had originally intended," he recalled.

Garg, however, on 26 July 2019, had asserted there is no connection between his transfer from the high-profile finance ministry and decision to take voluntary retirement, saying he had already discussed the retirement matter with the Prime Minister's Office on 18 July.

The 1983 batch IAS officer of Rajasthan cadre, Garg came to the Centre in 2014 and was appointed executive director in the World Bank where he stayed till 2017 when he was appointed DECA secretary in June 2017. In March 2019, he was elevated as the finance secretary.

Forex reserves at new high of \$560.5 billion

MUMBAI, 31 OCTOBER

The country's foreign exchange reserves swelled by \$5.412 billion to touch an all-time high of \$560.532 billion in the week ended 23 October, RBI data showed.

In the previous weekend ended 16 October, the reserves stood at \$555.12 billion after increasing by \$3.615 billion.

During the reporting week, the surge in the forex kitty was mainly on account of an increase in foreign currency assets (FCA), a major component of the overall reserves.

FCA rose by \$5.202 billion to \$517.524 billion, the RBI's weekly data showed. Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves.

The gold reserves were up by \$175 million in the reporting week to \$36,860 billion, as per the central bank data. The special drawing rights with the IMF rose by \$8 million to \$1,487 billion.

The country's reserve position with the IMF also climbed by \$27 million to \$4,661 billion during the reporting week, the data showed.

## ICICI Bank Q2 profit jumps to ₹4,251 cr

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER

ICICI Bank today reported an over six-fold jump in its standalone net profit at Rs 4,251 crore for the second quarter ended September 2020. The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 655 crore during the same period of the previous fiscal year.

Total income (standalone) in July-September 2020 stood at Rs 23,650.77 crore, up from Rs 22,759.52 crore in the same period a year earlier, ICICI Bank said in a regulatory filing.

Income (consolidated) increased to Rs 39,321.42 crore during the quarter from Rs 37,424.78 crore a year earlier.

Total provisions for bad loans and contingencies rose to Rs 2,995.27 crore for September 2020, quarter against Rs 2,506.87 crore a year ago.

As of 30 September 2020, the bank held Covid-19 related provision of Rs 8,772 crore, the private sector lender said.

Net NPAs fell to 1 percent

(Rs 7,187.51 crore) from 1.60 percent (Rs 10,916.40 crore).

On consolidated basis, the bank's net profit was up over four-times at Rs 4,882 crore in Q2 FY21 against Rs 1,131 crore in Q2 FY20.

"The consolidated profit after tax in Q2 2020 had a one-time additional charge due to re-measurement of accumulated deferred tax assets at the revised marginal tax rate. The consolidated return on equity was 14.2 per cent in Q2 2021," it said in the filing.

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As of 30 September 2020, the bank held Covid-19 related provision of Rs 8,772 crore, the private sector lender said.

The new loan recast will

## Loan recast to take GNPs to 11.5%: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 31 OCTOBER

### BAD ASSETS

» The ratings agency expects fresh additions to the dud assets pile to primarily come from loans under SMA 1 and SMA 2 categories which were already under moratorium and not eligible for restructuring, lower rated corporates and personal loans not eligible for the restructuring scheme and the unsecured personal loans.

» The system-wide GNPs stood at 8.2 per cent in Q1

of FY21, down from 9.5 per cent in Q1 FY20, thanks to the recoveries and higher write-offs during the period.

per cent, respectively. The comparable numbers for India stood at 9.2 per cent in 2019, 10 per cent in 2017 and 9.5 per cent in 2018.

In absolute terms, India's GNPs rose steadily from Rs 7.1 lakh crore in Q4 of FY17 to Rs 8.8 lakh crore in Q3 of FY18, and spiked to Rs 10.2 lakh crore in Q4 of FY18.

The highest incremental NPA addition of Rs 1.4 lakh crore was in Q4 FY18, after

which the numbers began to moderate and came down to Rs 8.4 lakh crore in Q1 of FY21.

Of the total dud loans, state-run banks accounted for around 80 per cent of the pile till Q1 of FY20, after which there was substantial contraction in their GNPs and it stood at Rs 6.4 lakh crore in Q1 of 2021, down from Rs 7.4 lakh crore in Q1 FY20.

Meanwhile, GNPs of pri-

## Nafed invites bids for supply of onion

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI, 31 OCTOBER



tons) which has to be supplied in multiple lots of 100 tons.

Since the buffer stock of onion, which Nafed manages on behalf of the government, is gradually getting depleted, the cooperative has been asked to augment domestic supplies with imported onions to continue with ongoing market intervention.

Last year, Nafed had not only imported on its own some quantities but also distributed onions imported by state-run MMTC.

This year, it wants to get the supplies from importers so that shipments could arrive fast and improve the domestic supply situation. Even the size of onion Nafed has specified for supply is what Indians normally consume.

Last year, big size onions were imported but there were hardly any takers for that.

So far, Nafed has offloaded around 37,000 tons of onion from the buffer stock of nearly 1 lakh tons in select mandis and retail markets in order to check retail prices which have skyrocketed to over Rs 80 per kg in some parts of the country due to damage to the kharif crop in the wake of heavy rains in the key growing states.

On 30 October, commerce and consumer affairs minister Piyush Goyal had said that private traders have already imported 7,000 tons of onion and another 25,000 tons are expected to arrive before Diwali.

The government hopes that the several measures taken recently, including ban on export of onion and stock limits on traders, will help ease pressure on prices during the festival period.

## Combined fiscal deficit may cross 13% in FY21: Report

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI, 31 OCTOBER

The pandemic-induced growth contraction and additional spending to support the needy amounted to a little over 2 per cent of the economy are likely to push the combined fiscal deficit to 13 per cent of GDP this fiscal - nearly double of the past year, according to a report.

Similarly, these numbers will see the government debt, which has been under 70 per cent of GDP for long, shooting past the 80 per cent mark this year to Rs 75.6 lakh crore or \$1.01 trillion, making the country the second most indebted in Asia after China.

The cumulative fiscal deficit of the Centre and

states stood at over 7 per cent of GDP in FY20 as against an average 6.6 per cent in the previous five years, as the Centre maintained the deficit below 4 per cent for four years from FY16 to FY19, before a cocktail of bad data - revenue and higher spending - pushed it to 4.6 per cent in FY20.

The pandemic-related pressures might see the combined fiscal deficit jump to 13 per cent of GDP this year, house economists at Singaporean lender DBS led by Radhika Rao said in a note.

It can be noted that general government debt levels have come down from the highs, averaging around 70 per cent of GDP for the past three years.

"But due to the pandem-

ic impact on growth shock and the resultant lift in borrowings, debt levels are expected to climb past 80 per cent this year," the report said.

As of July-end 2020, the total quantum of outstanding Central government securities (bonds and T-bills) stands at Rs 75.6 lakh crore or \$1.01 trillion, while that of the states called state development loans stood at Rs 34 lakh crore or \$459 billion, nearly half of the G-secs.

Among the states, the top five issuers in FY19 were Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Andhra Pradesh, accounted for more than half the total issuances, and top 10 states made up almost 75 per cent of the total.

## Plastics export council targets \$25 billion exports by 2025

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
MUMBAI, 31 OCTOBER

The Plastics Export Promotion Council of India has announced plans to increase plastic exports to \$25 billion in the next five years, while posting a 20 per cent growth during FY 2021 and FY 2022.

The Mumbai-based apex trade body will invest \$6.2 million (Rs 46.23 crore) and create 18 plastic parks, among multiple measures to boost environmentally sustainable growth of the plastics industry.

He called for boosting domestic production of polymers (used to make many products in daily life, from packaging, clothing, paints to aircraft) to ensure surplus quantity at competitive rates. Boosting domestic production

### STEPS TO BOOST SHIPMENTS

» The Plastics Export Promotion Council (Plexcon) will invest \$6.2 million (Rs 46.23 crore) and create 18 plastic parks, among multiple measures to boost environmentally sustainable growth of the plastics industry.

» Plexcon also called for renegotiating free trade agreements for plastic goods exported to major destinations such as Europe,

becomes a key to solving the major industry problem of India being import-dependent on polymers.



Bimal Gurung surrendered to Mamata Banerjee for his personal benefits

ALOK KANTA MANI THULUNG, LEADER, GORKHA JAN MUKTI MORCHA (BINOVY TAMANG FACTION)

ON THE MORCHA LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENT TO JOIN HANDS WITH THE TMC AND ON HIS POSSIBLE RETURN

The Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 01 NOVEMBER 2020

09

# Odisha govt dithers on reopening schools, places of worship

School and mass education dept to decide on reopening of schools, districts on places of worship

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 31 OCTOBER

**O**disha government seems to be in two minds on reopening of schools as it deferred an earlier decision of graded opening from 16 November and said the School and Mass Education department will take a call on the deferment.

Initially the government had stated that schools will reopen on 16 November in a graded manner. Classes for Class 9 to 12 will be held. The rationale was that several states across the country had resumed functioning and

Kendriya Vidyalayas were also open.

However, on second thoughts, the government felt it necessary to adopt a more cautious wait and watch approach allowing time for any possible increase in COVID-19 cases post Durga Puja and Diwali festivals. Apprehensions of parents and guardians were another factor leading to the deferment.

"The Department of School & Mass Education (SME) may take appropriate decision with regard to the date of reopening of schools under its control/superintendence/supervision in respect of classes, in a graded manner,

after November 15, 2020 in consultation with relevant stakeholders and issue necessary guideline and Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)", read the notification issued today.

The circular issued today also put the onus on district administration to decide on the other sensitive issue of reopening places of worship.

It is pertinent to note here that the government had shut educational institutions as well as religious places of worship on 16 March following the outbreak of coronavirus.

While the unlock process began, the central government

and several other states allowed opening of religious places but Odisha continued to keep them closed.

Survivors of several temples across the state had staged protests recently demanding reopening of temples. The BJP had also supported the demand.

With daily infections dropping to less than 2,000 cases, the 'Covid' situation has improved a lot.

Meanwhile the Unlock-6 guidelines issued by the government stated "all cinema halls, swimming pools, entertainment complexes, theatres, auditoriums and assembly halls across the state will

remain closed during November while lockdown shall be enforced within the Containment Zones during the period. Large social, political, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural, religious functions and other congregations will remain prohibited till November 30.

Large social, political, sports, entertainment, academic, cultural, religious functions and other congregations will remain prohibited till November 30.

Marriage related gatherings shall be allowed with a maximum ceiling of 200 persons and funeral/last rites related gatherings with a

maximum ceiling of 50 persons, subject to the stipulated conditions.

There shall be no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons, private vehicles and goods.

Meanwhile an order issued by the General Administration and Public Grievances department said that all state government offices will continue to remain closed on Saturdays in the month of November.

The order said all departments of the government and subordinate offices will have 50 per cent strength of employees including Group-A officers during the month.

One crore worth brown sugar seized in Bhubaneswar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 31 OCTOBER

The Special Task Force (STF) wing of the crime branch on Saturday claimed to have made a seizure of brown sugar valued at more than Rs one crore in the international drug market in the state capital Bhubaneswar.

A drug peddler identified as Seikh Hasim Bux of Balasore district possessing 3.285-kilo gram of brown sugar was intercepted near the Baramunda bus terminus in the city.

The increased crackdown on drug peddlers could be gauged from the fact that the cumulative seizure of brown sugar in the ten months 2020 is more than two-fold than the drug haul of the past seven years.

The banned substances are making their way to Odisha from Murshidabad in West Bengal.

Balasore and Mayurbhanj districts bordering Bengal have become the gateway to drug peddling networks in the State.

The organized racket of drug peddlers based in Balasore have spread their network to major urban centres - Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Puri, Rourkela, Sambalpur, and Purulia of the State, he added.

has seized 22,168 kilograms of brown sugar. The seized narcotics would have fetched the drug peddlers over Rs 22 crore in the international market, said Soumendra Priyadarshi, Crime Branch Additional Director (ADG).

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DGP reviews by-poll arrangements

BALASORE, 31 OCTOBER

Ahead of the by-poll for the Balasore assembly seat, Odisha DGP Mr Abhay reviewed the police arrangements today.

At least 700 police personnel, 9 platoon CRPF, 26 platoons of OSAP will be deployed informed SP Sudhansu Sekhar Mishra. Inter-district and interstate borders will be under strict vigil, he said. A total of 290 habitual offenders have been arrested. Elaborate police arrangement for 346 polling booths including 85 sensitive ones have been made.

SNS

## Drop in Covid curve in Odisha

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 31 OCTOBER

Maintaining its downward trend in virus infections, Odisha on Saturday reported below 1,470 fresh cases with the COVID-19 caseload mounting to 2,90,116 while 12 fresh fatalities pushed the state's coronavirus death toll to 1,320.

The state's contagion positivity rate which hovered around 9 to 10 percent earlier this month has now dropped to 3.07 percent on Saturday.

Khurda district, under which Bhubaneswar falls,

reported the highest number of new cases at 170, followed by 126 at Cuttack.

Despite the spike in deaths, the case fatality of 0.45 percent in Odisha is considerably on a lower side in comparison to national average of 1.49 percent case fatality rate. The State's recovery rate (94.38 percent) is marginally higher than the country's 91.34 percent recovery rate.

Odisha currently has 14,905 active cases, which 5.13% of total positive cases registered in the State.

A total of 45,55,815 lakh

sample tests have been conducted in the state so far, including 47,750 on Friday.

The pandemic's growth rate in October is to the tune of 23 percent, marking slowdown of the COVID graph in comparison to September when it was 49 percent.

Odisha is currently placed at the 9th spot in the total COVID count of the country. The States of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Kerala, Delhi and West Bengal have reported more virus infections than Odisha.



## Less than 100 new Covid cases in Bhubaneswar

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 31 OCTOBER

ease as against 81 new infections detected during the past 24 hours.

Of the fresh infections, 62 were local contact infections while the remaining 19 cases were sourced from quarantine centres, said Bhubaneswar Municipal Corporation (BMC) officials.

In the current month, as many as 6,918 infections have been detected at a

daily average of 223 positive cases.

Of the total tally of positive cases, 1,423 were active cases, accounting for 4.88% of confirmed positive cases detected in the capital city so far while 27,543 have recovered from the contagion till date.

A total of 166 patients from the city have succumbed to the virus in the city.

## Mahashivaratri timeline for Ekamra Kshetra dev

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHUBANESWAR, 31 OCTOBER

Smooth access to the famous Lingaraj Temple with e-vehicles to cut down on vehicular pollution, new roads, eco-friendly waste disposal to keep the premises clean were expedited to try and meet the Mahashivaratri deadline.

ST secretary VKartikayan Pandian, Works secretary Dr Krishan Kumar and Bhubaneswar municipal commissioner Prem Chandra Chaudhary took stock of the work in progress in the wee

hours today.

The grand Ekamra Kshetra development plan and the World Heritage City plan for Puri are two dream projects of CM Naveen Patnaik entrusted to his most trusted bureaucrat Kartikayan Pandian.

The CM had earlier directed that the majority of the work on Ekamra Kshetra should be done before Mahashivaratri so that devotees in large numbers can get a serene experience of viewing the Mahadeep ( lamp carried atop the Lingaraj Temple).

Pandian today directed the officials to expedite the work and asked them to complete land acquisition by end of next month. Eighty percent of acquisition has already been completed.

Widening of all access roads will be completed before Mahashivaratri and new alternate roads for devotees, pedestrianized pathway around Bindu Sagar is to be ready by the time.

Development of eastern plaza in front of the temple and northern plaza at north gate, bus parking near Brahma

jabandhu Kalyan Mandap, development of Badheibanka square were discussed at the spot today.

Drainage all surrounding temples including Lingaraj were focussed said official sources.

Devotees will have a clear view of Bindu Sagar from the Northern gate of Lingaraj temple as structures around the area will be acquired . The open space will give the devotee a divine experience of being able to see the temple and Bindu Sagar.

## Agro enterprise in Kalahandi district mooted

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
BHAWANIPATNA, 31 OCTOBER

Kalahandi district administration has taken initiative to motivate and encourage young educated entrepreneurs to establish agro enterprises to boost the agriculture sector in the district.

Kalahandi district collector Parag Harshad Gavali chaired a meeting with stakeholders and interacted with prospective entrepreneurs explaining to them the facilities under the agriculture infrastructure fund in the district.

District Development

Manager, NABARD, Lead district manager, SBI, chief district Agriculture officer, Deputy director Horticulture, chief district Veterinary officer, GM DIC, Sub collectors of Dharamgarh and Bhawanipatna and representatives from among lead progressive farmers attended the meeting. Feasibility of different Agriculture and Agriculture related projects were discussed.

It was decided in the meeting to open a single window in the office of Chief District Agriculture Office, Bhawanipatna for study of feasibility of different projects and to

render assistance. Entrepreneurs can also approach the collector for resolution of any bank credit related problem.

Some of the proposed projects highlighted at the meeting were Cold Storage, agro service centers, methane gas from waste, commercial cultivation of mushroom, ground nut processing units, green house projects etc.

Besides the projects proposed by entrepreneurs, there were proposals for construction of warehouses, grading units, ripening chambers for fruits, bio stimulant production units etc.

## Bhubaneswari coal mine hit by strike

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
TALCHER, 31 OCTOBER

Production and dispatch of coal from the Bhubaneswari coal mine of MCL here has been hit due to a strike by drivers and helpers of transport agencies.

Over the last five days, coal production and transport has been affected.

According to a coal official, as against the daily production of 80,000 tonne from the mine only 15,000 tonne of coal has been produced since

October 27. There has been no dispatch of coal from the mine.

The coal is supplied to power plants in Odisha and states like Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Tamilnadu.

The drivers and helpers deployed by private transporters are demanding ex-gratia for puja at par with MCL employees.

The SDPO, Sidharth Kataria however said today that the issues have been resolved and normality will be restored soon.

## Dull Gajalaxmi Puja in Dhenkanal

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE  
DHENKANAL, 31 OCTOBER:

The famous Gajalaxmi Puja in Dhenkanal district commenced without much fanfare and festivity in view of the pandemic related restrictions.

The Gajalaxmi Puja is a 11 day affair and draws crowds from across the state and outside every year.

The 38 puja pandals from the Korean bypass to the College road (6 km) in a row were put up but there were no dazzling lights or arch gates etc.

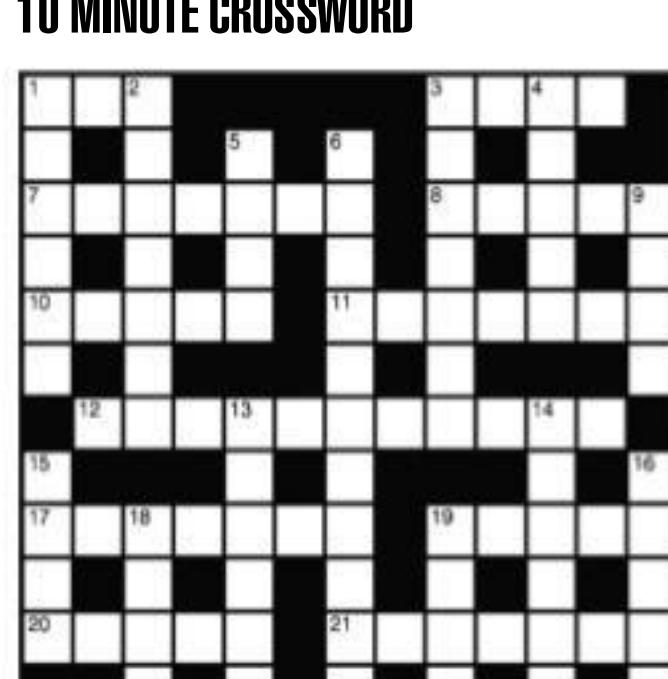
In Ganesh Bazaar, the Mina Bazaar pandal are where the

day festival to do business worth crores who were worst hit.

Rural products put up every year through SHG at the ORMAS mela (earnings of over 3 crore) have also been abandoned.

## LEISURE

### 10 MINUTE CROSSWORD



BEETLE BAILEY/Mort Walker





I am indeed disgusted with attempts to misrepresent and take out of context what I wrote on my blog.

FORMER MALAYSIAN LEADER MAHATHIR MOHAMAD

STANDING BY HIS WIDELY CONDEMNED COMMENTS ON ATTACKS BY MUSLIM EXTREMISTS IN FRANCE

## THUMBNAILS



A reveller in a costume in Shibuya district of Tokyo during Halloween on Saturday.

AFP

**Georgia polls:** Voters in Georgia cast ballots on Saturday in a parliamentary election hotly contested between the governing party, founded by a billionaire, and an alliance around the country's ex-president who is in self-imposed exile in Ukraine another former Soviet republic on the Black Sea.

AP

**Iraq clears sit-in square:** Iraqi security forces on Saturday cleared out sit-in tents from the capital's central square that has been the epicentre of the anti-government protest movement, a year after the eruption of demonstrations against corruption led to months of clashes with authorities across Iraq.

AP

**Man crashes car into Mecca shrine:** A man in a speeding car crashed into the outer gates of Mecca's Grand Mosque on Friday night, the state-run news agency reported. The crash happened around 10:30 pm. He rammed his car through a barrier and kept driving until it hit the gate on the Grand Mosque's southern side. AP

**Pak new travel advisory:** Authorities in Pakistan have issued a new travel advisory, reducing from 30 to 22 the number of countries from where passengers will be allowed to enter without a coronavirus test following a surge in Covid-19 cases globally. PTI

**Journalist killed:** A Mexican television journalist has been shot to death in the border city of Ciudad Jerez, across from El Paso, Texas, prosecutors said. Arturo Alba Medina was found shot to death on a street on Thursday. AP

**Sudan deal:** Sudan says it has signed an agreement with the U.S. that could effectively stop any future compensation claims being filed against it in U.S. courts, following Washington's decision to remove the country from its list of state sponsors of terrorism. AP

**Kidnapped US citizen rescued:** An American citizen kidnapped in the West African nation of Niger this past week has been rescued in an American military operation in neighboring Nigeria, a U.S. official said. AP

# Biden's road to 270 wider; Trump scrambles

Former V-P is competitive in all battleground states Trump carried in 2016; incumbent putting hopes for re-election on two of the swing states

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TAMPA (FLORIDA), 31 OCTOBER

**P**resident Donald Trump and Democratic challenger Joe Biden each has a path to the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win the White House. Biden's is appreciably wider.

The former vice president is competitive in all the battleground states Trump carried in 2016 and has put a handful of traditional Republican states, including Georgia and Arizona, in play. That has Trump scrambling to defend a wide swath of territory and putting the incumbent's hopes for reelection on two of the most populous swing states, Florida and Pennsylvania.

A look at the most likely roads to victory:

Biden can win an electoral majority most simply by carrying the three states where Trump stunned Democrat Hillary Clinton in 2016: Michigan, Pennsylvania and Wisconsin.

Those states were carried by Democrats for decades before 2016. They would give Biden 279 electoral votes, as long as he wins all the other states in Clinton's column. Under this scenario, Biden would not need to win any other states Trump won in 2016.

The three northern industrial states have been Biden's sharpest target for advertising dollars. He spent almost \$150 million - 30% of his total national ad spending since June - in the three, according to Kantar/C MAG's review for The Associated Press.

The fiercest struggle among the three is in Pennsylvania. Biden has had a slight advantage in most polls, while some



**"Donald Trump has divided US; turned Americans against one another"**

**"Joe Biden is corrupt career politician, betrayed America for last 17 years"**

suggest Trump remains within striking distance.

Biden, who was born in Scranton, claims some favorite son status in the state. Trump's hopes have been boosted by Biden's recent call for phasing out fossil fuels, though Biden has said he would not ban fracking.

If Biden loses Pennsylvania, it would require him to find 11 electoral votes elsewhere.

Once reliably Republican Arizona, offering exactly 11, and North Carolina, with 15, are states Trump won four years ago that are well within Biden's reach.

Democrats are particularly bullish about Arizona, last carried by a Democrat in 1996. Trump won the state in 2016 by 3.5 percentage points, the smallest margin in 20 years, and this year, the Democrats' Senate candidate, former

astronaut Mark Kelly, is running a strong race.

The Arizona alternative supposes, as most of Biden's paths do, that he also wins Nevada, last carried by a Republican in 2004. Trump has campaigned in the state, though Democrats say they are comfortable with their prospects there.

The race for North Carolina appears tighter, but there is recent precedent for a Democrat carrying the state. In 2008, Barack Obama was the first Democrat to take it in 32 years. Although he narrowly lost there in 2012, as did Clinton in 2016, waves of college-educated newcomers are swelling its booming suburbs, a boost to Biden's chances.

There's another scenario for Biden: a more comfortable Electoral College victory. Should Biden win Michigan,

Pennsylvania and Wisconsin, and either Arizona and North Carolina, he would capture at least 290 electoral votes.

He's also competing for Ohio, which Trump won by 8 percentage points in 2016; Iowa, which Trump won by nearly 10 percentage points; and Georgia, which Trump carried by 5 percentage points.

Victories in those states would boost Biden's electoral total above 300. Biden made two stops in Georgia this past week and on Friday had his first fall campaign visit to Iowa. He's spent almost \$5 million but hasn't visited Iowa since the state's caucuses in February.

Biden has campaigned lightly in Ohio but has spent almost \$7 million in advertising. Surveys and operatives in both parties said the two states were very close heading into the campaign's final

weekend. Oh, and remember Florida? The perennial battleground offers 29 electoral votes and is, per usual, exceedingly close.

There's one more big prize on the table: Texas. Democrats have been eyeing the state for years, but this is the first year in decades where it may really be within reach for the party.

The state's new battleground status highlights not just Trump's struggles in the suburbs, which are booming outside Texas' major cities, but also his weaknesses in nearly every state with a diverse electorate.

"Biden has more of an opportunity to win by a larger electoral number than Trump does," said Republican pollster Glen Bolger, who is surveying in several battleground states but not for Trump's campaign. "It doesn't mean Trump can't win."

Trump almost certainly cannot reach 270 electoral votes without carrying Florida, where polls show a tight race. Some have suggested a slight Biden advantage.

Trump's rally on Thursday in Florida was his third campaign trip to the state this month, underscoring why Florida is so important to his reelection. He plans to return before Tuesday's election.

Even if Trump nets Florida and holds battlegrounds he won in the South and Southwest, he would still be short of 270 electoral votes.

The president is wagering much on Pennsylvania as the best chance of moving within striking distance of that threshold. After a trio of rallies this past week, Trump was set to hold four more in the state on Saturday.

## Record daily virus surge in US as election day draws near

AGENCIES  
WASHINGTON, 31 OCTOBER

The US has recorded at least 94,000 new Covid-19 cases over the last 24 hours, with spikes in several states days before the presidential election. It is the second day in a row the country has broken its daily new case record after reporting more than 91,000 cases on Thursday.

More than nine million total cases have been reported in the US, according to Johns Hopkins University tally. The contest between Donald Trump and Joe Biden comes to a head on Tuesday.

At recent Trump rallies, attendees have been screened and given masks. But there has not been social distancing, and some supporters continue to avoid masks. Biden has also continued to campaign, though the Democrat's rallies have enforced social distancing practices.

Johns Hopkins University says the US has reported more than 229,000 deaths due to Covid-19. The daily death toll has risen by more than 1,000 three days this month.

Even if Trump wins Florida and Pennsylvania, he would still be short of the magic number if he can't carry most of the states he won in 2016.

He could nose ahead in Ohio, long one of his strongest states, but would still need to cobble together a series of states he won in 2016 and some he continues to trail.

"Biden's plan to abolish the entire U.S. oil industry - you saw that?" Trump noted at a rally last week in Lansing, Michigan, recalling Biden's call for phasing renewable fuels in and fossil fuels out over time. "Will cripple our nation and send us into an absolute deep depression."

## France on terror alert amidst Muslim protests

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
PARIS, 31 OCTOBER

of the right to publish cartoons depicting the Prophet.

France has warned its citizens they face a security risk "everywhere" in the world in the wake of the attack, Foreign Minister Jean-Yves Le Drian said yesterday.

Macron has refused to back down. "If we're attacked, once again, it's for our values, our taste for liberty, the possibility on our soil to believe freely," he said on Thursday, after speaking to police and emergency staff at the Notre-Dame basilica in Nice.

"We will give up nothing."

The French President has increased the number of soldiers mobilised for internal security operation Sentinelle to 7,000 from 3,000 to protect important sites such as places of worship and schools. He was set to convene a security Cabinet yesterday.

The man suspected of carrying out the Nice attack was a Tunisian born in 1999 who had arrived in Europe on 20 September in Lampedusa, the Italian island off Tunisia that is a main landing point for migrants from Africa.

A French police source named the suspect as Brahim Aouissaoui. A French judicial source said a 47-year-old man had been taken into custody on Thursday evening on suspicion of having been in contact with the perpetrator.

His comments came as tens of thousands of Muslims protested in Pakistan, Bangladesh and the Palestinian territories yesterday after the killings in a French church prompted a vow from President Macron to stand firm against attacks on French values and freedom of belief.

Thursday's attack, on the birthday of Prophet Muhammad, took place at a time of growing Muslim anger across the globe at France's defence

### DEJA VU?



Shoppers buy food at an open market in Mulhouse on Saturday, on the second day of a new national lockdown in France aimed at curbing the spread of the Covid-19 pandemic.

AFP

## Boris mulls lockdown as Covid cases rise

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON, 31 OCTOBER

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is considering a month-long nationwide lockdown amid the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the country with an announcement expected as early as Monday, according to reports quoting government sources.

Johnson met his most senior Cabinet colleagues on Friday to discuss the possible toughening of restrictions

in light of worsening coronavirus infection rate and hospital cases.

Everything except essential shops and education settings could be closed under the new measures, *The Times* newspaper reports, with the hope that measures can be lifted in the lead up to Christmas in December.

But no final decisions are believed to have been made and tougher regional measures under the current three-tiered lockdown measures

are also being considered.

UK Chancellor Rishi Sunak, Health Secretary Matt Hancock, Chancellor of the duchy of Lancaster Michael Gove were all understood to be present at the discussion.

Documents seen by the BBC suggest the UK is on course for a much higher death toll than during the first wave unless further restrictions are introduced. Deaths could reach more than 4,000 a day, one of the models suggests.

## Unrest erupts in vigil for black man shot by police near Portland

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
VANCOUVER (US), 31 OCTOBER

Tensions boiled over into unrest following a vigil for a Black man shot and killed by law enforcement in a city near Portland, Oregon, in southwestern Washington state.

Mourners gathered late Friday in Hazel Dell, an unincorporated area of Vancouver, Washington, where family and friends say Kevin E. Peterson Jr., 21, was shot on Thursday night. The city is about 12 miles north of Portland.

Hundreds of people gathered for the vigil on Friday evening, with some holding signs reading, Honk for Black lives. White silence is violence and Scream his name. Nearby, tensions flared between left- and right-wing protesters. Video recorded by journalists in a parking lot showed two groups of people shouting at each other.

Also, some armed demonstrators gathered near a building they told reporters they were protecting.

The crowds ultimately fizzled out near the vigil but a group of hundreds of protesters later marched through downtown Vancouver. Windows were shattered, flags

were burned and federal agents clothed in riot gear surrounded a building warning people that trespassing on federal property would be subject to arrest.

Family and friends had described Peterson as a former high school football player and the proud father of an infant daughter.

In a statement, Clark County Sheriff Chuck Atkins said a joint city-county narcotics task force was conducting an investigation just before 6 p.m. Thursday and chased a man into the parking lot of a bank, where he fired a gun at them. A firearm was recovered at the scene, Atkins said.

Authorities have not named the person who was shot, but Kevin E. Peterson Sr. told The Oregonian/OregonLive the person was his son, Kevin E. Peterson Jr. Atkins referenced the Peterson family in his remarks but did not confirm Peterson was the person who was killed.

Authorities have not named the person who was shot, but Kevin E. Peterson Sr. told The Oregonian/OregonLive the person was his son, Kevin E. Peterson Jr. Atkins referenced the Peterson family in his remarks but did not confirm Peterson was the person who was killed.

When he decided to become an actor, he was told that Thomas Sean Connery wouldn't fit on a theater marquee so he dropped his first name. Then came the audition that changed his life.

Connery was not the first choice for "Dr. No." The producers had looked to Cary Grant, but decided they wanted an actor who would commit to a series. So they started interviewing more obscure British performers. Among them was the 6-foot-2 Connery. Without a screen test, Broccoli and Saltzman chose the actor, citing his "dark, cruel good looks," a perfect match for the way Fleming described Bond.

had a troubled first marriage and a history of comments justifying domestic violence. In 1962, he married Diane Cilento, an actress best known for her role as Molly in "Tom Jones." They had a son, Jason, who also became an actor.

When he decided to become an actor, he was told that Thomas Sean Connery wouldn't fit on a theater marquee so he dropped his first name. Then came the audition that changed his life.

## An era of style, wit and charm comes to an end with the original Bond

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LONDON, 31 OCTOBER

Sean Connery, the charismatic Scottish actor who rose to international superstardom as the suave and fearless secret agent James Bond and then abandoned the role to carve out an Oscar-winning career in other rugged roles, has died. He was 90.

Connery's son Jason said his father died peacefully in his sleep overnight in the Bahamas where he lived, having been "unwell for some time."

"A sad day for all who knew and loved my dad and a sad loss for all people around the world who enjoyed the wonderful gift he had as an actor," he told the BBC.

Bond producers Michael G. Wilson and Barbara Broccoli said they were "devastated" by the news and that Connery's "gritty and witty portrayal of

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

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

For decades, with actors from Connery to Craig in the leading role, filmgoers have loved the outrageous stunts, vicious villains and likable, roguish hero who enjoyed a life of carousing, fast cars, gadgetry, weapons, elegant clothes and vodka martinis (always shaken, not stirred).

Connery continued as Bond in "From Russia With Love," "Goldfinger," "Thunderball," "You Only Live Twice" and "Diamonds Are Forever," often performing his own stunts. "Diamonds Are Forever" came out in 1971 and by then Connery had grown weary of playing 007 and feared he wasn't being taken seriously despite his dramatic performances in Alfred Hitchcock's "Marnie" and Sidney Lumet's "The Hill." "I'd been an actor since I was 25, but the image the press put out was that I just fell into this tuxedo and started mixing vodka martinis," he once complained. When he walked away at age 41, Hollywood insiders predicted Connery would soon be washed up. Who would hire a balding, middle-aged actor with a funny accent?



*China can no longer rely on the old model of development, it's time for a change.*

CHINESE PRESIDENT XI JINPING  
PROPOSING FOR THE FORMULATION OF THE 14TH FIVE-YEAR PLAN (2021-2025)

the Sunday Statesman  
NEW DELHI, 01 NOVEMBER 2020

11

## THUMBNAILS



People queue to test for Covid-19 during nationwide testing in Bratislava, Slovakia, on Saturday. AFP

**Typhoon Molave leaves 27 dead:** Floods and landslides triggered by typhoon Molave in Vietnam have left 27 people dead, 50 missing and 67 injured as of Saturday morning. The natural disasters damaged 63 bridges along with some national highways and local roads. IANS

**Canada plans to bring in more immigrants:** Canada's ruling Liberal government has planned to bring in more than 1.2 million immigrants in the next three years, Immigration Minister Marco Mendicino announced. He unveiled a three-year immigration plan that set targets for bringing skilled workers, family members and refugees into Canada. IANS

**Afghanistan violence:** Violence has expanded to 28 out of 34 provinces in Afghanistan in the last 24 hours amidst constant delays to the start of direct peace negotiations between the Kabul government and the Taliban, according to the Defence Ministry. IANS

**Cambodia water festival:** Cambodians marked the annual water festival, also known as Bon Om Touk, amidst the ongoing pandemic. The annual event, will take place from October 30 to November 1. IANS

**New Berlin airport opens 9 years late**



Nine years late and far above its original budget, Berlin's new airport is finally opening Saturday with little ceremony and, thanks to the coronavirus pandemic, few passengers.

Construction of the Berlin Brandenburg Airport Willy Brandt, named after the former West German chancellor though better known as BER, started in 2006 and it was initially slated to open in October 2011.

But a string of technical and planning problems forced officials to abandon six opening dates, most embarrassingly, in 2012, just four weeks before flights were supposed to start.

That propelled the project to the status of a national joke as airport managers struggled to get a grip on various problems, including a complex fire safety system that long caused headaches.

The airport has cost some 6 billion euros (USD 7 billion), about three times what was originally planned. It is finally opening at a time when air traffic has been hobbled by the pandemic. The opening of the new airport's Terminal 2 has been delayed until early next year because it isn't currently needed.

BER's opening spells the end of West Berlin's Cold War-era Tegel airport, the busier of the two aging and increasingly cramped airports that so far served the reunited German capital.

Saturday's first landings at the new airport will kick off a week-long transition, with the last flight from Tegel due to depart on November 8. The former East Berlin's Schoenefeld airport, which is located across the runways from BER, is being incorporated into the new airport as its "Terminal 5". AP

# Armenia asks Moscow for help amidst conflict

Following more than month of fighting with Azerbaijan in Nagorno-Karabakh

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
YEREVAN (ARMENIA), 31 OCTOBER

Armenia's leader urged Russia on Saturday to consider providing security assistance to end the fighting over Nagorno-Karabakh, the biggest escalation in the decades-long conflict between his country and Azerbaijan.

Following more than a month of intense fighting in which Azerbaijani troops forged into the separatist territory, Armenian Prime Minister Nikol Pashinian asked Russia's President Vladimir Putin to quickly discuss possible security aid to his country.

There was no immediate response from the Kremlin.

The request came as Azerbaijani troops forged deeper into Nagorno-Karabakh and both sides accused each of breaking a mutual pledge not to target residential areas hours after it was made.

Russia, which has a military base in Armenia and has signed a pact obliging it to protect its ally in case of foreign aggression, faces a delicate balancing act of trying to maintain good ties with Azerbaijan and avoid a showdown with Turkey.

Nagorno-Karabakh lies within Azerbaijan but has been under the control of ethnic Armenian forces backed by Armenia since a war there ended in 1994. The latest outburst of hostilities began Sep-



Reservists keep watch in the Shusha region on Saturday, amidst the ongoing military conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the breakaway region of Nagorno-Karabakh. AFP

tember 27 and left hundreds perhaps thousands dead, marking the worst escalation of fighting since the war's end.

On Friday, the foreign ministers of Armenia and Azerbaijan met in Geneva for a day of talks, which were brokered by Russia, the United States and France, co-chairs of the so-called Minsk Group of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs.

The talks concluded close to midnight with the two sides agreeing they "will not deliberately target civilian populations or non-military objects in accordance with international humanitarian law."

But shortly after the mutual pledge was announced by the Minsk Group co-chairs, Nagorno-Karabakh authori-

ties accused Azerbaijani forces of firing rockets at a street market and a residential building in the separatist region's capital, Stepanakert. They said that residential areas in the town of Shushi also came under Azerbaijani shelling.

The rapid failure of the latest attempt to contain the fighting follows the collapse of three successive cease-

A US-brokered truce frayed immediately after it took effect Monday, just like two previous cease-fires negotiated by Russia. The warring sides have repeatedly blamed each other for violations.

Armenia, Azerbaijan agree to avoid targeting civilians:

Armenia and Azerbaijan have agreed to avoid targeting civilians and residential areas amid the ongoing conflict between the two warring

countries over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region, according to a joint statement.

The statement was issued late Friday after talks in Geneva between Armenian Foreign Minister Zohrab Mnatsakanyan and his Azerbaijani counterpart Jeyhun Bayramov, along with representatives from France, Russia and the US, reports Xinhua news agency.

The two sides will start to recover and exchange remains on the battlefield, and provide a list of currently detained war prisoners for eventual exchange, according to a statement by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) Minsk Group co-chairs.

They will also provide in writing comments and questions related to possible ceasefire verification mechanisms, it added.

Earlier in the day, the Co-Chairs of the OSCE Minsk Group, namely Igor Popov of Russia, Stephane Visconti of France, and Andrew Schofer of the US, met separately and jointly with Foreign Mnatsakanyan and Bayramov.

The joint statement added that the co-chairs will continue working with the sides intensively to find a peaceful settlement of their latest conflict.

Friday's development came after the collapse of the latest US-brokered ceasefire reached between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region.

# Death toll reaches 30 in quake that hit Turkey, Greek island

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
IZMIR (TURKEY), 31 OCTOBER

Rescue teams on Saturday plowed through concrete blocks and the debris of eight collapsed buildings in search of survivors of a powerful earthquake that struck Turkey's Aegean coast and north of the Greek island of Samos, killing at least 30 people.

More than 800 others were injured.

The quake hit on Friday afternoon, toppling buildings in Izmir, Turkey's third largest city, and triggering a small tsunami in the district of Seferihisar and on Samos. The quake was followed by hundreds of aftershocks.

Early on Saturday, onlookers cheered as rescuers lifted teenager Inci Okan out of the rubble of a devastated eight-floor apartment block in Izmir's Bayraklı district.

Her dog, Fistik, was also rescued, Sozcu newspaper reported.

Friends and relatives waited outside the building for news of loved ones still trapped inside, including employees of a dentist's surgery that was located on the ground floor.

In another collapsed building, rescuers made contact with a 38-year-old woman and her four children aged 3, 7 and 10-year-old twin boys and were working to clear a corridor to bring them out, state-run Anadolu Agency reported.

Two other women, aged 53 and 35, were brought out from the rubble of another toppled two-story building earlier on Saturday. In all, around 100 people have been rescued.



A man digs a grave as relatives attend the funeral of Nazmiye Dograyan, one of the victims found dead under a collapsed building after an earthquake in the Aegean Sea. AFP

since the earthquake, Murat Kurum, the environment and urban planning minister, told reporters.

Some 5,000 rescue personnel were working on the ground, Kurum said.

At least 25 people were killed in Izmir, including an elderly woman who drowned, according to Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, or AFAD.

Two teenagers were killed on Samos after being struck by a collapsing wall. At least 19 people were injured on the island, with two, including a 14-year-old, being airlifted to Athens and seven hospitalized on the island, health authorities said.

The small tsunami that hit the Turkish coast also affected Samos, with seawater flooding streets in the main harbour town of Vathy. Authorities warned people to stay away from the coast and from potentially damaged buildings.

The earthquake, which the Istanbul-based Kandilli Institute said had a magnitude of 6.9, was centred in the Aegean northeast of Samos. AFAD said it measured 6.6 and hit at a depth of some 16 kilometers (10 miles).

It was felt across the eastern Greek islands and as far as Athens and in Bulgaria. In Turkey, it shook the regions of Aegean and Marmara, including Istanbul.

Istanbul's governor said there were no reports of damage in the city, Turkey's largest.

Turkey is crossed by fault lines and is prone to earthquakes. In 1999, two powerful quakes killed some 87,000 people in northwestern Turkey. Earthquakes are frequent in Greece too.

Authorities warned residents in Izmir not to return to damaged buildings, saying they could collapse in strong aftershocks. Many people spent the night out in the streets, too frightened to return to their homes, even if they sustained no damage, the DHA news agency reported. More than 3,000 rescue personnel were sent to Izmir, as well as relief supplies.

## Nearly 3 months after vote, Belarus protests still go strong

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
KYIV, 31 OCTOBER



Nearly three months after Belarus' authoritarian president's re-election to a sixth term in a vote widely seen as rigged, demonstrators keep swarming the streets of Belarusian cities to demand his resignation in the most massive and sustained wave of protests the ex-Soviet nation has ever seen.

While President Alexander Lukashenko has relied on massive arrests and intimidation tactics to hold on to power, the continuing rallies have cast an unprecedented challenge to his 26-year rule.

Authorities have responded to protests triggered by 9 August election that gave Lukashenko a landslide vic-

tory over Sviatlana Tsikhanouskaya by unleashing a violent post-election crackdown.

Police dispersed peaceful demonstrators with stun grenades and rubber bullets, detained thousands and beat hundreds, which caused protests to swell and prompted the U.S. and European Union to introduce sanctions

against Belarusian officials.

Tsikhanouskaya, who went to Lithuania after the vote under pressure from authorities, called for a nationwide strike this week that so far has failed to halt production at state-run industrial plants forming the backbone of the Belarusian economy. But observers predict that eco-

nomic troubles amid a surge in coronavirus cases will fuel discontent and steadily erode Lukashenko's grip on power.

By putting forward an ultimatum to Lukashenko to resign by Oct. 25 or face the

strike, Tsikhanouskaya has managed to mobilize and reinvigorate her supporters after nearly three months of protests. About 200,000 demonstrators flooded the Belarusian capital last Sunday, one of the biggest rallies since the protests began. Another massive protest is planned for this Sunday.

Authorities, meanwhile,

have focused on derailing

the opposition efforts to stage

strikes at major state factories.

They have moved methodically to arrest strike organizers, threatened workers with

dismissals for joining the action and deployed officers of the State Security Committee still known under its Soviet name KGB to monitor the situation at industrial plants.

Lukashenko this week charged that a terrorist war is being waged against the government on some fronts, accusing the largely peaceful protesters of radicalizing." Following his orders, over 300 students are facing dismissal from their universities for taking part in protests.

While thousands of stu-

dents and retirees took to the

streets in Minsk pressing for

Lukashenko's resignation,

and some small business

owners closed their doors

earlier this week, most state

enterprises have continued to

operate as usual.

## Mexican president taps loyalist as new security chief

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MEXICO CITY, 31 OCTOBER



Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador proposed a former journalist and long-time Mexico City government bureaucrat to be the country's new security chief on Friday at a time when the country is on track to set a new annual homicide record.

It was not immediately clear if Rosa Icela Rodriguez would accept the post. Obrador said he had not asked her in advance and she was currently in quarantine, recovering from Covid.

Rodriguez would replace Alfonso Durazo, who officially resigned Friday to run for governor of the northern state of Sonora. She would be the first woman to take over coordination of the security cabinet.

The tapping of Rodriguez was unexpected. Hers was not one of the names circulating in recent weeks as leading contenders for the post.

In late July, Lopez Obrador had named Rodriguez, then secretary of the Mexico City government, to be in charge of the country's ports and merchant marine.

It was unclear at the time how long that would last because the president was pushing constitutional reforms that would allow the navy to take over the ports.

I needed her to impose order on the ports ... to end the corruption in the ports, the contraband, the introduction of drugs, all of that,

and completely trustworthy.

## Crowds protesting virus curbs clash with police in Barcelona

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
BARCELONA, 31 OCTOBER

### MARKING AUTUMN



A woman releases a candle boat in a pond during the celebration of Loy Krathong festival outside Chiang Mai on Saturday.

and a much-criticized trend in parts of Africa.

The two main opposition parties' chairmen lost their parliament seats by astounding margins considering the consistently large campaign rallies they drew, Dan Paget, a lecturer in politics at the University of Aberdeen, wrote Friday. Magufuli banned opposition political gatherings in 2016, not long after taking office. Irregularities and the overwhelming margins of victory raise serious doubts about the credibility of the results announced, the United States said, later noting credible reports of the use of force against unarmed civilians.

Top opposition candidate Tundu Lissu has rejected the vote and called for peaceful protests, the contraband, the introduction of drugs, all of that, and completely trustworthy.

Vote-counting was far from over when Tanzanian opposition leader Seif Sharif Hamad was frustrated enough to call people onto the streets.

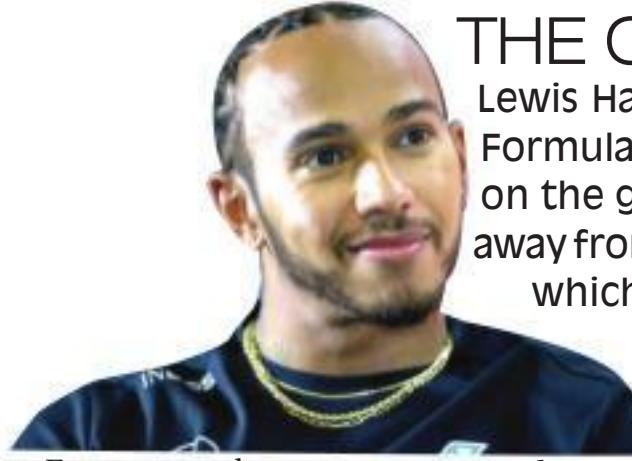
We thwarted observers alleged the most blatant election fraud in the country's history, and with no way to challenge the results in court, there was little to do but protest.

That populist President John Magufuli late Friday was declared the overwhelming winner of Wednesday's election was no surprise. But the ruling party's victory in almost

in a week. A party official, Ismail Jussa, was badly beaten by soldiers and hospitalized. On the eve of the vote, at least 10 people in Zanzibar were killed.

We were a cradle of peace, their colleague, ACTWazalendo party campaign manager Emmanuel Mvula, told The Associated Press after describing the events. But after witnessing Tanzania's sharp turn away from democratic ideals, I'm worried for our future as a nation.

&lt;p



## THE CHAMPION'S WAY

Lewis Hamilton (photo, left) is planning for life after Formula One, but has reassured his fans he plans to be on the grid in 2021. Hamilton is potentially two races away from wrapping up a seventh world championship, which would see him equal Michael Schumacher's all-time record weeks after surpassing the German's tally of the most wins in F1.

For more updates

[www.thestatesman.com](http://www.thestatesman.com)

## THUMBNAILS



PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
DUBAI, 31 OCTOBER

**M**umbai Indians ensured a top-two finish in the IPL league table with a clinical nine-wicket decimation of an already battered Delhi Capitals, who wilted under relentless pressure from Trent Boult and Jasprit Bumrah.

While Boult (3/21 in 4 overs) dealt telling opening blows, Jasprit Bumrah (3/17 in 4 overs) broke the backbone of the Delhi Capitals middle-order, choking them to 110 for 9.

The defending champions coasted to victory in 14.2 overs, taking their points tally to 18 and will have two shots in the play-offs to get into the final.

Delhi Capitals, who had won seven out of their first nine games, have now lost four on the bounce and with a match left are in danger of missing out on the play-offs with an ever deteriorating net-run-rate of minus 0.159.

While batting, Delhi Capitals consumed 62 dot balls, which effectively meant that



more than half of their stipulated 20 overs had gone without scoring.

A target of 111 can't be denied nine out of 10 times and the pocket dynamo Ishan Kishan scored 72 not out off 43 balls to make the chase look like a walk in the park.

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

Boult was brilliant upfront

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

Captain Shreyas Iyer (25 off 29 balls) and Rishabh Pant (21 off 24 balls) then compounded their team's worries as they failed to regain the lost momentum. The duo, for the umpteenth time, looked like playing for themselves and the intent was missing which affected the morale of the batsmen coming down the order.

Quinton de Kock effected a 'MS Dhoni-esque' stumping off

Rahul Chahar to see Iyer's return to the hut after which came Bumrah's devastating two-over spell.

A ball pitched on length was climbing up while moving a shade away which Marcus Stoinis edged to the wicketkeeper.

Pant's misery ended when Bumrah came round the wicket and fired one from wide of the crease that came in with the angle to trap him leg before.

He then tormented Harshal Patel, who played and missed a few before being adjudged leg-before, a decision that couldn't be reviewed as Pant had consumed it during his dis-

missal.

If Delhi Capitals miss out on a play-off berth, Iyer-Pant duo will have to accept their responsibility as premier international players in this DC line-up.

Iyer has scored 414 runs in 13 games but mostly coming in at No 3, his strike-rate of less than 125 has left a lot to be desired.

Pant has been even worse and with each passing match, his wretched form is perhaps an avocation of Sunil Joshi-led national selection committee's decision to drop him from the white-ball squads for the Australia tour.

## SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS INNINGS	
PP Shaw c de Kock b Boult	10
S Dhawan c SA Yadav b Boult	0
SS Iyer st de Kock b Chahar	25
RR Pant lbw b Bumrah	21
M Stoinis c de Kock b Bumrah	2
S Hetmyer c Pandya b Coulter-Nile	11
HV Patel lbw b Bumrah	5
R Ashwin c Pandya b Boult	12
P Dubey not out	7
K Rabada run out (Bumrah)	12
Extras: (lb 3, w 2)	5
<b>TOTAL:</b> (20 Ov, RR: 5.5)	110
<b>BOWLING:</b> TA Boult 4,0,21,3	

KOHINOOR INNINGS	
KH Pandya 3,0,13,0	J Yadav 3,0,18,0
J Yadav 4,0,17,3	SS Iyer 2,0,14,1
NM Coulter-Nile 2,0,14,1	
<b>MUMBAI INDIANS INNINGS</b>	
Ishan Kishan not out	72
Q de Kock t b Nortje	26
SA Yadav not out	12
Extras: (w 1)	1
<b>TOTAL:</b> (14.2 Ov, RR: 7.74)	111
<b>BOWLING:</b> R Ashwin 4,0,18,0	
K Rabada 3,0,27,0	A Nortje 2,2,0,25,1
M Stoinis 1,0,4,0	

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\*MRP (incl. of all taxes). Conditions apply.

## Do-or-die game for KXIP; CSK play for pride

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ABU DHABI, 31 OCTOBER



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

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

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

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

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

Zayed Stadium. It remains to be seen if Mayank Agarwal, who has missed three games, returns to the side.

KXIP's bowling has been instrumental in their recent wins. However, against the Royals they leaked runs and were unable to pick wickets and skipper Rahul will hope his bowlers will be on top of their game against a CSK side, which cruised to a 10-wicket win in their previous meeting.

For CSK, 23-year-old Ruturaj Gaikwad has shown a lot of spark, notching up back-to-back fifties to set up the wins against RCB and KKR. Ravindra Jadeja has been in fantastic form, smashing boundaries and sixes towards the end of the innings.

RCB's struggle with the

## Clinical SRH bowlers restrict RCB to 120/7

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
SHARJAH, 31 OCTOBER

Sunrisers Hyderabad produced a brilliant bowling effort to restrict a batting-heavy Royal Challengers Bangalore to a modest 120 for seven in an Indian Premier League match here on Saturday.

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

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

AB de Villiers made a run-a-ball 24 before perishing and then Josh Philippe (32) again got a start but failed to capitalise. He was caught by Manish Pandey off Rashid Khan (1/24) in the next over as RCB slumped to 76 for four in 11.4 overs.

RCB were done in by some incisive bowling from SRH bowlers upfront, resulting in a 30-run fifth-wicket stand but they never got the momentum.

Towards the end, both Sandeep and Morris departed in quick succession to add misery to RCB's woes.

## SCOREBOARD

ROYAL CHALLENGERS BANGALORE	
JR Philipe c Pandya b R Khan	32
D Padikkal b Sharma	5
V Kohli c Williamson b S Sharma	7
AB de Villiers c Sharma b Nadeem	24
W Sundar c & b Natarajan	21
Gurkeerat Singh not out	15
CH Morris c Warner b Holder	3
I Udana c Williamson b Holder	0
MD Siraj not out	2
Extras: (1, lb, 2, w 8)	11
<b>TOTAL:</b> (20 Ov, RR: 6.0)	120
<b>BOWLING:</b> S Sharma 4,0,20,2	
JO Holder 4,0,27,2	T Natarajan 4,0,11,1
S Nadeem 4,0,35,1	R Khan 4,0,24,1

## Rajasthan Royals look to win, end KKR's campaign

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DUBAI, 31 OCTOBER

losing their last match and Sunrisers Hyderabad winning no more than one in their last two outings.

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

However, RR's first task is to do what is within its control -- a crucial juncture of the tournament, great news for the Royals. And, needless to say, a bad one for KKR as the leading all-rounder can single-handedly influence the outcome of a game.

The Royals can certainly look forward to their batting at the Dubai International Stadium. Their talismanic England

all-rounder Ben Stokes has just won a Man-of-the-Match award, having made a breezy half century after picking up two wickets in the team's win over Kings XI Punjab on Friday.

The 2019 World Cup final hero getting his mojo back, at such a crucial juncture of the tournament, is great news for the Royals. And, needless to say, a bad one for KKR as the leading all-rounder can single-handedly influence the outcome of a game.

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

No opposition takes Jos Buttler lightly and then there is Rahul Tewatia and young Rishabh Pant down the order, beefing up RR's batting.

Jofra Archer has been the standout performer with the ball and he will again shoulder RR's responsibility in bowling.

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

etkeeper-batsman had started the tournament on an explosive note before going off the rails mid-way, only to come back all guns blazing against KXIP.

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