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## NEARBY



Court rejects bail plea in IB staffer's murder case

NEW DELHI  
A Delhi court has rejected the anticipatory bail application of a man in connection with the murder of Intelligence Bureau staffer Ankit Sharma during the north-east Delhi riots. The court noted that his phone location was traced at the scene of crime on the day of incident and that it cannot be a mere coincidence.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

'Resolve Punjab goods train suspension issue'

CHANDIGARH  
Concerned over the continued suspension of goods trains by the Railways even after easing of the blockade by farmers, Punjab CM Amarinder Singh on Sunday wrote an open letter to BJP national president J.P. Nadda, calling for collective will to resolve the issue.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

Gurjar body starts stir over quota in Rajasthan

JAIPUR  
A major Gurjar organisation on Sunday started an agitation over reservation, a day after community leaders held talks with the Rajasthan government and reached a consensus on 14 points. The call was given by the Gurjar Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti.

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## After U.P., Haryana govt. mulls law against 'love jihad'

Centre, State taking the issue very seriously: Chief Minister

VIKAS VASUDEVKA  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana is contemplating a law against "love jihad", a term used by fringe groups to describe interfaith relationships.

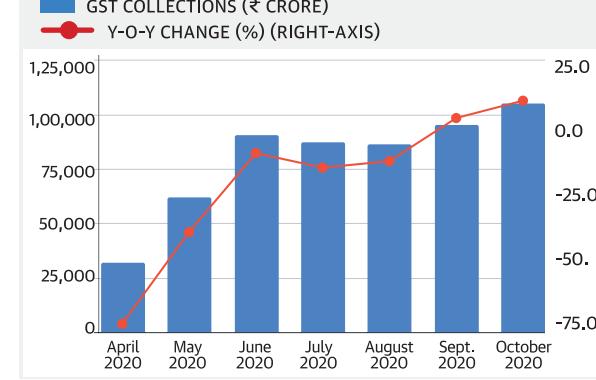
Chief Minister Manohar Lal told reporters on Sunday that the Centre and the State governments were taking the issue very seriously. He was speaking in the backdrop of the murder of Nikita Tomar, who was shot outside her college in Ballabgarh last week by a stalker.

"As the incident is being linked to 'love jihad', both the Centre and the State government are looking into the issue," Mr. Lal said. "Legal provisions are being looked at so that the guilty don't get away, and no innocent person is punished."

A three-member Special Investigation Team (SIT) has

### On the rebound

GST collections recorded a 10.2% year-on-year rise in October. The ₹1,05,155 crore collected is the highest in FY21



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Revenues from the Goods and Services Tax surpassed ₹1.05 lakh crore in October, up 10% from a year ago, and the highest recorded since February 2020.

The government cited the GST inflows that crossed the ₹1 lakh crore mark for the first time in this financial year as a 'clear' sign of a recovery in the economy after its 23.9% contraction in the first quarter of this year.

However, economists and businesses are cautious about the sustainability of

this trend.

Tax experts said the expected shortfall in GST compensation for the States could be lower than the current estimate of ₹2.35 lakh crore if this revenue momentum is maintained through the rest of 2020-21.

As per data released by the Finance Ministry on Sunday, the gross GST revenue collected in October was ₹1,05,155 crore, 10.25% higher than a year ago, and 10.1% more than the indirect tax revenue garnered in the month of September.

"The growth in GST reve-

nue as compared to that in the months of July, August and September 2020, of -14%, -8% and 5% respectively, clearly shows the trajectory of recovery of the economy and, correspondingly, of the revenues," the Ministry said.

Terming the surge in the GST kitty in October 2020 as "enthusing", principal economist at rating agency ICRA Aditi Nayar said this was in line with the expectation of a build-up of inventories in anticipation of a robust festive season.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Modi mocks Tejashwi, Rahul as 'double yuvraj'

PM invokes Chhath and Ganga at rallies across Bihar ahead of 2nd phase of voting

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday slammed leaders of the opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) and Congress – Tejashwi Yadav and Rahul Gandhi – without, as before, naming them as he addressed four rallies across Bihar ahead of the second phase of voting on November 3.

Terming them as "double-double yuvraj (crown princes)" who were contesting the Bihar poll to save their thrones, Mr. Modi said, "Today, in Bihar there is a double engine government while, on the other side,

### Tejashwi takes on PM

Rashtriya Janata Dal leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday took on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and asked him what had happened to his 2014 campaign promise of reopening the sugar mills in the Champaran region

there are double-double crown princes."

"Here there is a yuvraj (crown prince) of jungle raj (lawlessness) ... and another yuvraj (referring to Mr. Ya-

bihari and have tea made with sugar from those mills.

The RJD leader has been addressing over a dozen public meetings every day and drawing huge crowds, especially of young people. ▶ PAGE 9

dav and Mr. Gandhi) too has come to wave at the people of Bihar... Earlier, this double-double yuvraj were also in elections in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh. But what hap-

pened in Uttar Pradesh to these double-double yuvraj will happen to them in Bihar as well," Mr. Modi said at Chhapra in the first of his four public meetings.

The Prime Minister also invoked significant deities in Bihar – 'Chhath' (sun god) and Ganga – to seek votes for the NDA.

He added that some people had been spreading misinformation over construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, scrapping of Article 370 in J&K and the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019.

It said sales of mini segment cars remained almost flat at 28,462 units while those of compact cars were up 26.6% to 95,067 units.

## Car-makers rev up for Deepavali

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Anticipating strong demand during Deepavali, most car-makers registered strong growth in dispatches to dealers in October. Market leader Maruti Suzuki on Sunday said it sold over 1.63 lakh passenger vehicles in October, 17.6% up from 1.39 lakh vehicles in the same month in 2019.

It said sales of mini segment cars remained almost flat at 28,462 units while those of compact cars were up 26.6% to 95,067 units.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

cent youth into the terror fold," IGP Kumar said.

Director General of Police (DGP) Dilbag Singh described the killing as a "major success".

**'Outfit is now leaderless'**  
"The Hizb outfit is once again leaderless," he said.

The slain 'commander' was nominated after the killing of Naikoo on May 6. "He was involved in the killing of many innocent people, including three policemen and two truck drivers who were attacked after the dilution of Article 370," the DGP said.

Mir was Hizb's chief operational commander and had been active since 2014. "He was involved in many terror crimes, besides being instrumental in recruiting inno-

cent youth into the terror fold," IGP Kumar said.

Hizbul Mujahideen 'operation chief' Saif-ul-Islam Mir, who succeeded Reiaz Naikoo, was killed in an encounter in Srinagar on Sunday.

"During a search operation in Rangreth area of Srinagar, the presence of a terrorist was ascertained. He was given an opportunity to surrender. However, he fired indiscriminately. In the ensuing encounter, Saif-ul-Islam Mir alias Dr. Saif alias Ghazi Haider, a resident of Malangpora affiliated with Hizb, was killed," IGP Vijay Kumar told *The Hindu*.

Mir was Hizb's chief operational commander and had been active since 2014. "He was involved in many terror crimes, besides being instrumental in recruiting inno-

## Active cases are falling: Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India has managed to maintain its active COVID-19 caseload below the six-lakh mark for the third consecutive day, a release issued by the Health Ministry said on Sunday. According to the Ministry, the country's total active caseload stands at 5,70,458 currently.

"New confirmed COVID cases stand at 46,963," said the Ministry adding that Kerala is still reporting a very high number of new cases with more than 7,000 cases, followed by Maharashtra and Delhi with more than 5,000 cases each.

At the same time, 76% of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 States/Union Territories, including Maharashtra and Kerala.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

## 10 policemen injured in Ballabgarh violence

Over 200 protesters had gathered for a panchayat to seek justice for Nikita Tomar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
FARIDABAD

Ten policemen sustained injuries when a crowd of protesters demanding justice for Nikita Tomar, a college student shot dead by a stalker and his friend a week ago, turned violent in Ballabgarh here on Sunday.

Thirty people have been detained following the clash, the police said.

More than 200 demonstrators pelted stones at shops and tried to block National Highway-44 (New Delhi-Agra) during the panchayat.

They also hurled stones at police personnel and mild force was used to disperse the mob, said a press statement issued by the Farida-



Protesters arguing with police personnel during the panchayat in Ballabgarh on Sunday. ▶ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

bad police. A medical examination of the injured policemen was also conducted.

**Probe into incident**  
The panchayat was organised by Sarv Biradar San-

gan on Dussehra Ground. Among those detained, three each are from Delhi and Palwal, two each from Nuh, Noida and Ghaziabad.

The police said the motive behind the violence is being investigated and those behind the demonstrators are also being identified.

Akhil Bharatiya Hindu Kranti Dal national in-charge Rajiv Mittal, present at the meeting, said some "over-enthusiastic" youth became aggressive over the turn of events at the panchayat, but added that it was the responsibility of the police to maintain law and order.

Deputy Commissioner of Police, Ballabgarh, Sumer Singh Yadav said anarchy would not be tolerated and the police would deal strictly with those trying to disrupt the law and order situation in the district.

He added that action would be initiated against those holding demonstrations without permission.



Air congestion: Migratory birds being fed by boatmen over the Yamuna as smog engulfed the Capital on Sunday. ▶ R. V. MOORTHY

## Local visitors fill tourist space in Kaziranga

Domestic and foreign travellers have largely kept away due to the pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The pandemic-wary domestic and foreign tourists have largely avoided the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve (KNPTR) where elephant safari began on Sunday.

But their space has been mostly filled by local people and visitors from elsewhere in Assam and its adjoining north-eastern States.

**Tourist season**  
The KNPTR, the world's safest address for the one-horned rhinoceros, reopened on October 21 after seven months. The annual tourist season for the park is from October-April



Visitors enjoying an elephant safari at the Kaziranga reserve on Sunday. ▶ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

but the last season had ended prematurely due to the lockdown in March.

"Elephant safari is one of the major attractions of the park. We started the safari from today [Sunday] but had

to reduce the number of seats from 60 to 40 per day in order to maintain physical distance," KNPTR Director P. Sivakumar said.

He said the visitors this time were mostly from the

north-eastern States.

The KNPTR also conducts jeep safaris.

Assam Forest officials said locals had also been travelling to other popular wildlife reserves such as the Manas National Park and the Nameri National Park "possibly because the tourist pressure is less this time".

KNPTR officials said the park earns an average annual revenue of ₹5.2 crore that took care of maintenance and salaries of the casual staff. Tourism in the State suffered in December 2019 due to the violent agitation against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act before the pandemic struck.

Hindu Sena defaces signboard outside IICC

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Hindu Sena workers on Sunday allegedly defaced a North Delhi Municipal Council signboard outside the India Islamic Cultural Centre (IICC) on Lodhi Road in Lutyens' Delhi.

Posters were put up on the signage of IICC which read "Jihadi Terrorist Islamic Centre". The police, however, said the posters were soon removed and an FIR has also been registered against unknown persons after North body reported the matter.

S.M. Khan, vice-president of IICC, said that they have registered a complaint with local police regarding the incident and also raised the issue of security at the IICC.

President of right-wing group, Hindu Sena, Vishnu Gupta said he got to know that some of their workers had done it. He said, when he asked the workers, they said that radical terrorists activities are taking place all over the world, particularly in France, and scores of people from Muslim community came in support of the attack in Indian cities like Bhopal, Mumbai and Aligarh.

**Online booking of high-security plates resumes**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
NEW DELHI

Online booking of High-Security Registration Plate (HSRP) and colour-coded stickers for vehicles restarted along with their door-step delivery in some parts of east and west Delhi on Sunday, officials said.

Delhi Transport Minister Kailash Gahlot had directed officials to stop online booking last month after complaints were received from vehicle owners about delays and issues in logging into the registration portal.

"The process started smoothly and no complaints have been received so far," an official said, adding that "around 3,000 bookings are targeted every day up to Deepavali."

"If the service from suppliers of HSRP and colour-coded stickers and dealers remains satisfactory, the bookings will be raised after the festival break," the official said.

## Head constable dies in road accident

Driver of delivery van which hit victim's two-wheeler held

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old Delhi Police head constable was killed allegedly after his motorcycle was hit by a delivery van in north-east Delhi's Harsh Vihar on Sunday, the police said.

The deceased, Durgesh Kumar, was posted at Preet Vihar police station, they also said.

According to the police, the incident took place around 4.30 p.m. while Ku-

## Delhi riots: court rejects bail plea of man in IB staffer's murder case

'Accused's phone location was traced at crime scene on the day of incident'

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has rejected the anticipatory bail application of a man in connection with the murder of Intelligence Bureau (IB) staffer Ankit Sharma during the north-east Delhi riots.

The court noted that his phone location was traced at the scene of crime on the day of incident and that it cannot be a mere coincidence.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav found substance in the arguments of Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) that the custodial interrogation of Muntajim was necessary to unearth the conspiracy for planning, investigating and executing riot action plan.

"His presence/custodial interrogation is also necessary for his identification by way of judicial test identification parade from public witnesses," the judge noted.

The court also said that it has already dismissed the regular bail application of



Communal clashes broke out in north-east Delhi in February this year. •FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

principal accused in the case, Tahir Hussain, and co-accused Sameer Khan, with whom Muntajim has been in regular touch and his name has also cropped up in the intercepted phone calls/transcripts of co-accused Haseen.

Muntajim, in his anticipatory bail application, stated that he has been falsely implicated in the present case by the investigating agency and has nothing to do with the alleged incident.

His plea said that he was completely taken aback on

seeing the notice issued by the investigating officer of the case, directing him to appear before him on September 30. He said the medical condition of his wife was critical as she had delivered a baby on September 25. The plea said he is the sole breadwinner of his family and has to look after his ailing wife and the infant, both of whom are presently under treatment.

Muntajim argued that he has been falsely roped into the matter merely on the basis of disclosure statements

made by the co-accused. His plea said he has not been captured either in any CCTV footage or any viral videos.

He also said his phone location is of no help for the investigating agency as he is a resident of the same locality.

However, the SPP argued that Muntajim is a resident of Nand Nagri and his presence at the SOC at the time of incident was not natural. The SPP said his phone location has been found to be at the scene of crime on both days - on February 24 and 25 - when the intensity of the communal riots was maximum.

The SPP argued that the call details record analysis of his mobile phone reveals that his movement was not at one particular place on the day of incident. The SPP said he was constantly moving in and around the area, as sometimes his location was found at Khajuri Khas and sometimes at Karawal Nagar, which is "sufficient indication" of his involvement in the present case.

'File FIR on plaint by eyewitness of women's murder during riots'

Court rejects police's submission claiming allegations are false

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has directed the city police to register within five days an FIR on a complaint of a man who claimed to have witnessed the killing of burqa-wearing women and their bodies being thrown into Bhagirathi Vihar nala during the north-east Delhi riots.

Metropolitan Magistrate Rakesh Kumar Rampuri gave the direction after rejecting the police submission that allegation of the complainant, Nisar Ahmed, regarding some burqa-clad women or those looking like Muslim women being killed with swords and their body thrown into the drain are "false and baseless".

**Threat calls**

Mr. Ahmed, a small trader of readymade garments, in his plea, also submitted that he has been receiving threat calls and is being asked about details of his complaint and being told to settle the matter.

"The court fails to appre-

ciate as to how the police could even claim that the allegation of the applicant [Mr. Ahmed]... are false and without any evidence before conducting any thorough and proper investigation known to law, of which FIR is the commencing point," the court remarked.

In his complaint, Mr. Ahmed said that after he witnessed the crime, he locked himself and his family members inside his house. On February 25, a mob came to his house and broke the gate and looted his shop.

Mr. Ahmed also stated that his motorcycles were dragged out on the road and set ablaze. He said a large trunk containing his daughter-in-law's jewellery and other personal items related to her marriage were also looted.

He said that with the help of some neighbour, he and his family managed to flee the area.

When he tried to register an FIR, Mr. Ahmed said, he came to know that another FIR was registered at Gokal-

puri police station on the complaint of one Aas Mohammad, who was also a victim of unnamed rioters and theft.

The police stated that a handwritten complaint of Mr. Ahmed was received and was clubbed with the other FIR as the dates and places of incident were same. It also stated that allegation regarding killing of burqa-clad women are false and baseless.

As the police said that chargesheets have been made in the other FIR, the court questioned as to how it can be expected to investigate the allegations of present complainant, which are substantially different from the chargesheet prepared by the investigating officer.

Even further investigation in the other FIR "would not cover the required proper investigation in the allegations levelled by present complainant", the court said, directing the Station House Officer of Gokalpuri police station to get Mr. Ahmed's complaint investigated properly as per law.

## Complaint against dhaba fundraiser

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has received a complaint against Gaurav Wasan, who posted the video of 'Baba ka Dhaba' and collected funds on behalf of the dhaba owner, alleging misappropriation of donations.

Kanta Prasad, owner of 'Baba ka Dhaba', in his complaint said that Wasan shot his video and posted it online and convinced the public to donate money. The video went viral. Wasan mentioned his mobile number and bank account details as the owner did not have the same, but, he never revealed transaction details.

## Food for thought



Daily wagers seen cooking food on a pavement on Ring Road in New Delhi on Friday. •SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

### EXPLAINER: CIVIC BODIES VS DELHI GOVT.

**JATIN ANAND**

After simmering for months, the war of words between the Delhi government and the three BJP-ruled Municipal Corporations culminated in a day-long dharna by the Mayors outside Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence. At the core of the dispute between the elected government and the corporations are funds amounting to thousands of crores, which each is demanding from the other at the earliest. While Mayors were demanding dues, which have allegedly piled up to ₹23,000 crore in taxes or payments over several years, the Delhi government claims the corporations owe over ₹8,600 crore to it and should ask the Centre to disburse ₹12,000 crore, their Constitutional due. Both sides have dug in their heels, showing no inclination to relent, even as lakhs of employees, from doctors to sanitation workers, are struggling for livelihood.

**Fund source**

■ Apart from a grant from the Central government, which is routed to them through the Delhi government's Urban Development Department, the civic bodies generate internal revenue through property tax, toll tax, parking charges, and taxes on advertisements among similar activities. They also get a share amounting to 12.5% of the taxes generated by the Delhi government as per the recommendations of the Fifth Delhi Finance Commission constituted to prescribe viable solutions related to the finances of local bodies such



Mayors of three Municipal Corporations staging a protest outside the residence of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in New Delhi. •FILE PHOTO

as the corporations.

**Corporations' claim**

■ The corporations claim the Delhi government owes them ₹23,000 crore. The amount, they claim, has been arrived at by adding dues ranging from property tax which it has "never paid" for official buildings - including the Delhi Secretariat and offices from which different departments under the government operate among others - including interest compounded over "several years." This also contains a share of taxes generated by the Delhi government, which it is supposed to share with the civic bodies over several years. The Delhi government has termed the amount "fictional."

**Delhi govt.'s counter**

■ The Delhi government claims that it has, over the

past many years, not only paid the civic bodies their due share of taxes, but also has paid a large sum as loan. According to Delhi Urban Development Department records, as on April 1, 2020, a loan totaling to ₹6,008 crore was outstanding over the three civic bodies. This, according to the Delhi government, includes ₹1,977 outstanding from the EDMC, ₹3,243 crore from the North body and ₹788 crore from the SDMC. The Delhi government also contends that the three civic bodies collectively owe ₹2596.32 crore in arrears to the Delhi Jal Board, which is administered by the elected government, towards water bills.

**Dues as per civic bodies**

■ According to the civic bodies, the East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) has received only ₹157.40

crore of the ₹1,677 crore due, the South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC) got ₹472.39 crore out of ₹1134 crore and the North Delhi Municipal Corporation ₹612.02 crore of the ₹2090.52 crore due to it so far this year.

**Amount disbursed**

■ For the financial year 2020-21, as per the Fifth Delhi Finance Commission calculations, the Delhi government claims that a total of ₹1965.91 crore was due to the three civic bodies until October 26. Of this total amount, the Delhi government states, ₹1752.61 crore has been already paid to them while the rest is in the process of being disbursed.

**Government's solution**

■ According to the Central government, the Central government has not paid the due amount to the cor-

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• NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP  
• LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Timings DELHI		
MONDAY, NOV. 02		
RISE 06:34	SET 17:36	
TUESDAY, NOV. 03		
RISE 06:35	SET 17:35	
RISE 19:29	SET 08:45	
WEDNESDAY, NOV. 04		
RISE 06:36	SET 17:34	
RISE 20:13	SET 09:41	

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	31	11
Safdarjung	31	11
Palam	29	14

**Delhi Palm Today**  
30°C Thick smoke haze during morning. Dry weather likely. Moderate dry winds towards afternoon expected.

**Delhi Palm Tomorrow**  
30°C Smoke haze to prevail in cool morning and drop in surface winds. A mainly clear sky.

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## IN BRIEF

### AUD announces MA entrance exam dates

NEW DELHI  
Ambedkar University, Delhi, on Sunday announced entrance schedule for applicants seeking admission to its various MA courses. The entrance examinations are scheduled between November 6 and November 8. The university said the details of the assignment of examination centres will be uploaded shortly. It added that the entrance examination for those courses that have not been announced will be held in phase-II, the dates of which will be out soon.

### Haryana CM opens flyover on NH-48

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM**  
Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Sunday inaugurated the U-turn flyover near DLF Cyber City on National Highway-48 here through videoconference in Karnal, coinciding with Haryana Day.

Mr. Lal, on the occasion, said that U-turn flyover was another step towards making Gurugram traffic-free.

While inaugurating the three-lane flyover, Mr. Lal said the structure was constructed at a cost of around ₹52 crore and would provide a big relief to the people of Gurugram and commuters coming from outside.

"This will help in preventing traffic congestion and facilitate U-turn movement for vehicles coming from Delhi and DLF Cyber City and going to Udyog Vihar. Besides, it will also help in reducing accidents, pollution caused by traffic jams and save commuters' time," he said.

The Chief Minister said the Haryana government was solving the traffic problems of Gurugram one-by-one.

He added that a four-lane U-turn underpass was being constructed on NH-48 near Ambience Mall and was in the final stage of construction.

# AQI 'very poor' despite rise in wind speed

High farm fire intrusions and trapped pollutants not letting air quality in the city improve, says SAFAR

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The city's air quality index (AQI) remained in the "very poor" category on Sunday with the 24-hour average recorded at 354, based on data from 35 monitoring stations.

Data from the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) revealed that Noida, Greater Noida, Ghaziabad and Faridabad were also in the same category with AQIs recorded at 384, 388, 384 and 354, respectively.

Meanwhile, Gurugram's air was slightly better with an AQI of 306 – at the lower end of the "very poor" category.

Government-run monitoring agency – System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) – in its forecast, said Delhi's overall AQI remained in the higher end



A view of National Highway-9 in Delhi on Sunday morning.

• SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

despite the improved wind conditions and did not improve as per forecast.

It was due to a high stubble-related intrusion and trapping of pollutants during the night due to a low winter-time boundary layer height.

It added that the highly favourable conditions for

fire-related intrusion in Delhi are expected to continue.

"The SAFAR-synergised stubble fire counts over Punjab, Haryana, U.P., Uttarakhand, and neighbouring areas impacting Delhi's air, stood at 3,216 on Saturday. Stubble burning share in PM2.5 has increased and

### Air quality of Delhi-NCR

Delhi	Gurugram
364	306
Ghaziabad	384
Faridabad	354
Noida	384
Greater Noida	388

Good Satisfactory Moderate Poor Very poor Severe

0-50 51-100 101-200 201-300 301-400 >401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

namely, increased fire-related emission and accumulated intrusion mass load. Increased fire-related emission than existing conditions may lead to deterioration of AQI," SAFAR said.

An AQI between 0 and 50 is considered "good", 51 and 100 "satisfactory", 101 and 200 "moderate", 201 and 300 "poor", 301 and 400 "very poor", and 401 and 500 "severe".

In its forecast, SAFAR has said that its model predicts that the AQI is likely to improve only marginally (within "very poor" range) on November 2 but it will depend on the number of stubble fire episodes.

"It is set to marginally deteriorate on November 3. The increased local surface wind speed with faster dispersion conditions is counteracting on 2 counts,

is estimated at 40%, which is the highest of this season," SAFAR said in its daily bulletin.

Meanwhile, nights in the Capital have become cooler with the minimum temperature on Sunday falling to 11.4 degrees Celsius – the lowest this season.

The temperature was five degrees below normal for this time of the year.

The temperature on November 2 is expected to stay between 30 and 11 degrees Celsius, respectively.

Anti-dengue campaign a success, no deaths: govt.

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government on Sunday said the 10-week anti-dengue campaign launched by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was a success as no one died of the disease here this year.

Mr. Kejriwal tweeted: "Today is the 9th Sunday of the ongoing campaign against dengue. I changed the water that had accumu-

lated in my house. The cases of dengue have reduced even more and no dengue-related death has taken place in Delhi this year. He has been asking Delhites to spent 10 minutes every Sunday to change the clean stagnant water collected at home/shops/offices/surroundings as dengue mosquitoes thrive in clean stagnant water."

### TO ADVERTISE

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### THE HINDU

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## New virus cases still over 5K mark

LoP asks CM to call all-party meeting to discuss situation

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Capital reported 5,664 new COVID-19 cases, 51 deaths and 4,159 recoveries in a 24-hour period, according to a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government on Sunday.

The spike in cases, over the past week, has taken the number of active cases in the city to 34,173. The bulletin added that 44,623 tests were conducted in the same period with a positivity rate of 12.69%. The death rate which is based on the data of the last 10 days is 0.83%.

The cumulative figures now stand at 3,92,370 cases, 6,562 fatalities and 3,51,635 recoveries. The cumulative positivity rate stands at 8.30% and the case fatality rate at 1.67%. There are a total of 3,359 containment zones.



Health official conducts rapid antigen test in North Delhi on Sunday.

• SUSHILKUMARVERMA

### Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	Total deaths
3,92,370	6,562
New cases in the past 24 hours	New deaths in the past 24 hours
5,664	51

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

meeting to discuss the COVID-19 situation in the city and make arrangements on how to deal with it.

"In last 2-3 days, more than 5,000 cases have been identified. This is a worrisome situation," Mr. Bidhuri said. He expressed concern over the number of beds available. Mr. Jain said out of 2,900 ICU beds reserved for COVID-19 patients across Delhi, around 1,200 ICU beds were unoccupied.

## Haryana panel senses corruption in waste projects, demands probe

Officials fined for not providing information under RTI Act

### ASHOK KUMAR

GURUGRAM

Sensing a "huge corruption involved", the Haryana State Information Commission ordered the Director General of Urban Local Bodies Department to conduct a probe into the delay in furnishing information under the RTI Act with regard to solid waste management projects for Gurugram-Faridabad and Sonipat-Panipat clusters. The report is to be submitted within two months.

The Commission also imposed a fine of ₹1,500 each on two Municipal Corporations of Gurugram (MCG) officials for not supplying information to the appellant. The MCG Commissioner also failed to pay ₹10,000 compensation to the appellant within a month as directed by the Commission.

The Commission in its order directed that penalty amount be recovered from SPIOS Rishi Malik, chief sanitary inspector, and Bijender Sharma, senior officer, within 60 days.

Mr. Kapoor said he had filed an RTI application at Gurugram, Faridabad, Sonipat and Panipat municipal corporations on November 18, 2019, seeking information about the solid waste management project in the four cities. Mr. Kapoor said the municipal corporation was yet to provide details on the amount of fine imposed on the concessionaire Ecogreen Energy, the resolutions passed by the House of Municipal Corporation, and the ₹25 lakh fine imposed by Chief Minister Manohar Lal.

### Failed to act

Hearing the matter in pursuance to its July 2 order, the Commission, in its latest order, found that the SPIOS did not provide information to the appellant within a fortnight as directed despite show-cause notices and rejoinders. The MCG Commissioner also failed to pay ₹10,000 compensation to the appellant within a month as directed by the Commission.

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## 'Resolve Punjab goods train suspension issue'

It's vital for national security, says CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Concerned over the continued suspension of goods trains by the Railways even after easing of the blockade by the farmers, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday wrote an open letter to Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president J.P. Nadda, calling for collective will and statesmanship to resolve the situation.

Reacting to recent statements of various BJP national and Punjab leaders on the farmer's protests, particularly the continued suspension of goods trains, the Captain Amarinder stressed that this was neither the time nor the occasion to indulge in political confrontation. "What is needed at this critical moment is for all of us to put aside any temptations we may be harbouring to promote our political interests," he said.

Citing the repercussions of the continued suspension of goods trains services would have for national security, in addition to the critical shortages faced not just by Punjab but also Jammu-Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Ladakh, the Chief Minister said that the armed forces were likely to be badly affected

with the onset of winter, as they could run out of supplies and other requisites once the snowfall blocks the roads to Ladakh and the Valley. "These are dangers that neither the Central government nor any political party, including the BJP, can choose to ignore," he said, adding that "the onus lies on all of us....We need to all liaise together, with the common goal of solving the contentious issue, in the interest of the country."

**Critical losses'**  
Capt. Amarinder said every day of the continued suspension of goods trains meant critical losses to the industry, agriculture and overall economy, in view of shortages of power (coal), urea and DAP stocks.

The Chief Minister expressed surprise over the reason of "uncertainty and safety of train operations" cited by the Railways to not allow goods trains' movement through Punjab despite the easing of blockade by farmers.

He described the Railways' decision as an apparent case of trust deficit of the Central government viz-a-viz farmers of Punjab and other States.

## Baroda bypoll: a battle of prestige

It is expected to be a direct contest between two national parties — Cong. and BJP

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

Less than a year after the voters in Haryana gave a fractured mandate paving the way for the formation of a coalition government, the State is again in the grip of election fever with the Baroda Assembly seat in Sonipat falling vacant due to the demise of Congress MLA Sri Krishan Hooda earlier this year.

Though the result of the bypoll is unlikely to have any bearing on the stability of the State government, the battle in Hoodas' bastion — the Jhajjar-Rohtak-Sonipat belt — is being seen as a prestige battle for the family. While a decisive win here would, no doubt, reassess Hoodas' firm grip over their stronghold, any adverse result, close on the heels of the defeat for the father-son duo in the Lok Sabha election last year, would sure be a political setback.

### Opportunity for BJP

Sounding cautious, the Bharatiya Janata Party maintains that the bypoll is an "opportunity" for them and a "litmus test" for the Congress, which has been holding the seat for the past 15 years.

Though an addition to the BJP's tally would push it a step closer to the simple ma-

### Battle for Baroda

2019 Total votes polled:  
**RESULT 1,22,797**

(INC) (BJP) (JP)

Sri Krishan Hooda 42,566 Yogeshwar Dutt 37,726

Blupinder Malik 32,480 NOTA 219

Total electors (as on Sept. 25, 2020): **1,78,250**

Male: 97,819 Female: 80,429 Transgender: 2

SOURCE: CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER, HARYANA AND SONIPAT DISTRICT ADMINISTRATION

jority mark in the Assembly, it could be a cause for concern for its coalition partner, the Janayana Party.

The caste composition of the voters, around 50% are Jats, worries the BJP and the coalition is trying hard to prevent the division of votes along caste-lines to stand any chance in the election. However, a heavyweight Jat BJP rebel, Kapoor Narwal, withdrawing his nomination as an Independent in support of the Hoodas has tilted the scales in favour of the Congress.

The JJP could make a dent in the Congress' Jat vote, but the party may not be very keen on transferring its votes to the BJP for obvious reason. The JJP candidate had stood



pealing to the regional sentiments with a call for "pride of Baroda".

The Hoodas, seeking votes for party candidate Induraj Narwal, say the result would herald a new course of politics in the State and be a referendum on the present government.

### Sanctions projects

The BJP, with the advantage of being in the power, has sanctioned projects worth ₹165 crore over the past four months and has accused the Hoodas of neglecting the region during the Congress rule as a major poll plank. Chief Minister Manohar Lal also promised a "participation in the governance" for the region hinting at a ministerial berth for the party candidate in case of a win.

The coalition also hopes to benefit from the popularity and stature of its wrestler candidate Yogeshwar Dutt, an Olympic medallist, calling the Congress candidate "dummy" and "non-entity".

However, senior coalition leaders making personal attacks on the Hoodas, who have been spearheading the Congress campaign, in their speeches make it a contest between the government and the latter more than an electoral battle between the two parties.

Being held in the backdrop of the protests over the farm legislations in the State, the Congress has woven a narrative around the discontent among the peasantry in this predominantly rural Assembly segment and the "failure" of the government on various fronts, including employment, crime, and development, also occasionally ap-

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## Want to be a changemaker?

Social impact start-up TribesforGOOD helps youngsters learn how to make a difference in their communities and in society at large

■ ARCHANA SUBRAMANIAN

"The fulfilling feeling of giving back and contributing to society inspires, trains, guides, and gives a proper direction to youngsters on how to contribute towards the underprivileged communities, and also helps them in becoming a social entrepreneur," says Mandeep Kaur Jhajji whose brainchild, TribesforGOOD, helps potential changemakers discover, learn and contribute to their communities.

Founded in 2018, TribesforGOOD is a social impact platform where individuals learn about and take action on the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals. By bridging the talent gap faced by social enterprises and non-profits, TribesforGOOD envisions inspiring a generation of young people to support and work with social impact businesses and has successfully trained over 1,000 young people.

Its flagship programme, The



- Focus Points**
- Gender Issues
  - Financial Literacy
  - Quality Healthcare
  - Environmental issues
  - Animal Welfare

Our social impact ecosystem is generally faced with talent shortage, skills gaps and an ageing workforce



Young Changemakers, teaches students between 13 and 17 years everything they need to know about setting up a social enterprise. One of its pandemic-related projects was to educate women from the lower-income groups about basic transactions like using ATMs, making payments online, using apps to book gas cylinders and making them financially and digitally literate. "Focusing on issues such as gender, sustainability, climate change, menstrual hygiene, technology, and animal welfare, this programme offers mentorship by the best facilitators and allows

students to collaborate remotely in small multidisciplinary teams, focus on human-centred issues of their interest, leverage design thinking and present their idea to an expert panel and gain valuable insights on next steps," explains Jhajji.

### Mix of courses

Since students have little or no experience, the platform also has a Learning Academy where participants are offered a mix of online and offline courses, expert-led modules, and learn-by-doing modules on social entrepreneurship, along with a masterclass by experts who run a grassroots organisation. Other aspects include contributing to outcome-based short-term and long-term projects that look for skills such as marketing, business development and fund raising and career development programmes consisting of internships and entry-level job opportunities.

Jhajji feels that the social impact space needs to look students who are hyper-connected and vocal on social media about social and environmental

issues. Many want to make a difference but aren't sure how and that's where TribesforGOOD comes in. "Our social impact ecosystem is generally faced with talent shortage, skills gaps and an ageing workforce. It is not able to attract the same talent as banking or fashion design ... and hence the need for this. By providing a structured, outcome-based project, we are able to guide and nudge them in the right direction."

"Interested students must fill a small application form, which will be followed by a phone interview. We look for students who are eager to improve their surroundings and will engage with the NGOs even after the programme's completion," Jhajji describes the organisation as an enabler that educates and trains individuals to become lifelong changemakers. "By addressing real issues facing real organisations, our young changemakers create real continuous change in their communities. This also helps them develop crucial skills like empathy and leadership. On successful programme completion, they receive a certificate and a letter of recommendation," she says.

### SCHOLARSHIPS

#### ■ College Board India Scholars Programme

College Board, in association with Global Higher Education Alliance institutions, offers financial support to students taking admission in Indian universities post-class XII, based on the SAT.

**ELIGIBILITY:** For SAT fee discount, the applicant must be an Indian resident with an annual family income less than ₹10L and studying in class XI or XII. To be considered eligible for a full college tuition scholarship, the applicant's family income should be below ₹4L p.a. The student must also perform well in SAT and receive an offer of admission from the Global Higher Education Alliance institution.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** Up to 90% waiver for SAT exam and complete tuition fee waiver for study in member institutions.

**APPLICATION:** Online

**DEADLINE:** December 31  
[b4s.in/edge/CB12](http://b4s.in/edge/CB12)

#### ■ Mi Scholarship

Xiaomi India supports meritorious students from underprivileged sections.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Open to Indian nationals only. Applicants must be studying in class XI or XII or undergraduate (any stream) level. They must have secured at least 70% marks in their previous qualifying examination.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** Up to ₹5,800

**APPLICATION:** Online

**DEADLINE:** December 31  
[b4s.in/edge/MISCI](http://b4s.in/edge/MISCI)

#### ■ WeCare Fellowship National Essay Competition on Environment

WeCare hosts an essay competition on the theme 'Waste Management'. The key objective is to recognise and felicitate writers among Indian students.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Open to students of class XI and above.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** Cash prize up to ₹25,000

**APPLICATION:** Online

**DEADLINE:** November 20  
[b4s.in/edge/WFN1](http://b4s.in/edge/WFN1)

Courtesy Buddy4Study

### ADMISSIONS

#### ■ MSc Mechatronics and Automation

The University of Strathclyde, Glasgow invites applications for its M.Sc. Mechatronics and Automation course starting at an additional entry point in January 2021. Students will learn to develop multidisciplinary products with an integrated approach. In group projects, students will work with fellow students and an industrial client to address a practical problem.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Open to graduates from relevant courses who have chosen mechatronics and automation as their career, those currently working in mechatronics and automation who wish to enhance their theoretical grounding and practical skills. Scholarships are also available.

**FEE:** £20,900 for international students  
[eng-admissions@strath.ac.uk](mailto:eng-admissions@strath.ac.uk) or visit <https://bit.ly/31Xr8q7>

#### ■ Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science BSc

The University of Sheffield, the U.K., invites applications for the Intelligence and Computer Science BSc course starting in September 2021. This course is about biologically inspired algorithms, their relationship to living biological intelligence and the nature of consciousness itself. Students will get the chance to specialise in speech recognition, language processing or robotics.

**ELIGIBILITY:** 85% in Class XII for CBSE, CISCE or Maharashtra State Board, 90% for all other boards. International students need an overall IELTS grade of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component, or an equivalent English language qualification.

**DURATION:** 3 years

**FEES:** £24,450 for international students  
<https://bit.ly/3mzamt> or [ug-compsci@sheffield.ac.uk](http://ug-compsci@sheffield.ac.uk)

#### ■ MBA Scholarships

Strathclyde Business School, Glasgow, offers a number of MBA Scholarships. Candidates for the January 2021 Full Time MBA programme will automatically be considered for these scholarships so no separate application is necessary.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Applications are invited from candidates who are prepared to act as ambassadors for the Strathclyde FT MBA and who can demonstrate through their ideas outlined in their application and interview how they would contribute to bring the class together through teamwork to create a community. Leadership/management skills or potential, overall quality of the application and financial need will also be considered.

**SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE:** Up to 10

**DEADLINE:** November 30  
<https://bit.ly/31TXPVG> or [sbs.admissions@strath.ac.uk](http://sbs.admissions@strath.ac.uk)

### CAREERS

## A wealth of opportunity

With the growing Indian economy creating new millionaires and billionaires, there is a need for professionals who can strategically manage and grow their investment portfolios

■ SUDHIR DHAR



approach is another key quality.

#### Investment boom

As the Indian economy grows, there will be a higher penetration in equity markets. The number of entrepreneurs will surge too. According to one recent article, India has added 34 new billionaires last year. According to Knight Frank, India ranks 12th and had 5,986 such individuals in 2019, which is likely to reach 10,354 by 2024. The number of billionaires in India, on the other hand, is likely to reach 113 by 2024, up from 104 in 2019. Among asset classes, Indian Ultra HNIs are the most aggressive in equity investment with 72% willing to invest in this asset class compared to a global average of 29%.

The above facts strongly indicate the growing need for a trusted wealth manager or financial advisor who will help both budding millionaires and billionaires to manage and grow their wealth corpus and identify core wealth creation opportunities.

Though there is a spike in demand of good wealth managers, the Indian wealth management

industry is still in nascent stage. The industry finds it difficult to recruit and retain experienced professionals.

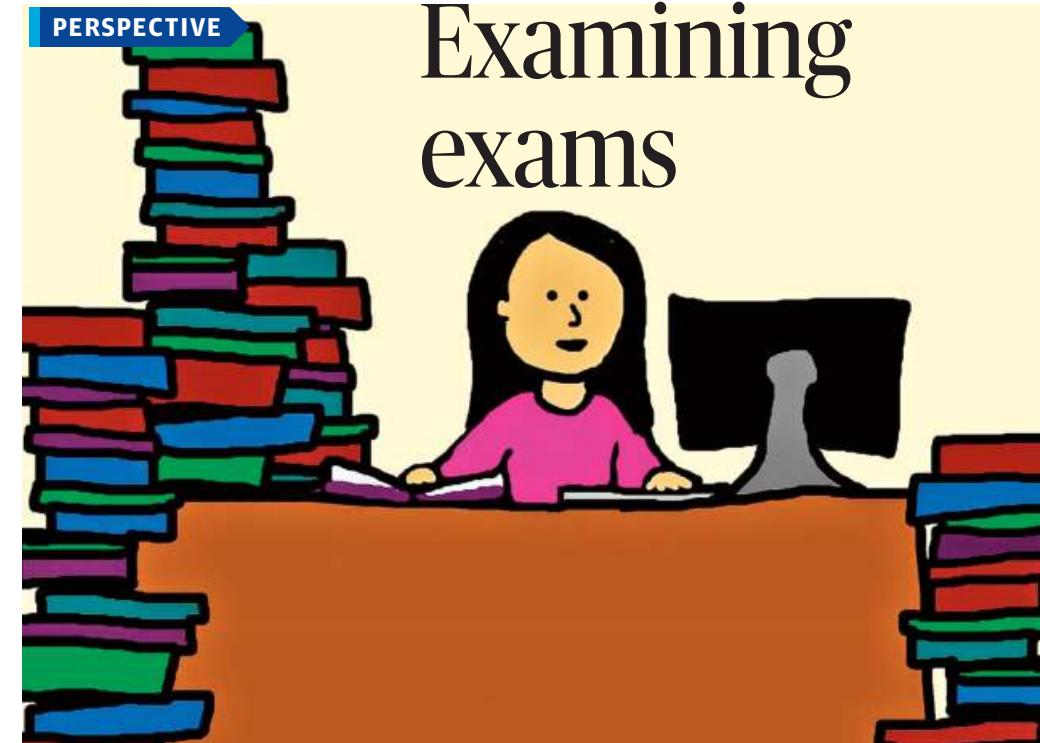
#### Eligibility

What do organisations look for in a wealth manager? A postgraduate degree in Finance/Economics/Management is a must. An additional certification like Certified Financial Planner (CFP) or Chartered Wealth Manager (CWM) always stands out. Prior experience as a private banker in banks, or other wealth management firms, ensures that the correct client base is tapped. Also, a wealth manager must be analytical, able to understand complex information and have strong mathematical skills, confidence and good presentation skills.

With the accelerated pace of our economy, knowledge about wealth creation and various micro and macro-economic factors will help make a career in wealth management a self-fulfilling and a rewarding one.

The writer is Executive Director and Head - HR, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

### PERSPECTIVE



What we need is a system that encourages children to question and learn, rather than just "mug it up"

■ SARASWATHY RAMAMOORTHY

For a long time now, exam scores have been the main indicator of a child's abilities and success. The primary motive of school education is to impart knowledge, values, and skills that will help develop necessary life skills to be successful. However, the cut-throat nature of our examination system celebrates the success of a few and creates unhealthy competition and inordinate amounts of stress in children who are physically, psychologically and emotionally not ready to handle it.

Exams and tests are important, no doubt, but should be regarded only as a measure of learning. The problem lies not just with the concept of exams but also with how they are conducted. There is a wealth of information and insight about a student's potential and ability that cannot be captured in a report card. Exams in India focus

## Examining exams

on grades (the product) rather than on what is learnt (the process). Most of what is learnt is forgotten by the next exam cycle. This is also why students choose careers in domains where they have scored well in, rather than fields that they are interested in.

#### Holistic learning

However, the New Education Policy 2020 places emphasis on holistic and cumulative learning rather than having one main exam determine a student's fate. Students are to be assessed based on their performance in different classes, the first two years of primary school are to be test-free from 2021, and report cards will no longer include the class and level rankings at both primary and secondary levels.

Board exams will cover a range of subjects and test only core concepts. Students can take exams on two occasions during an academic year. In order to track students' progress throughout their school years, exams will be conducted in classes III, V, and VIII. Further, a common national exam will be introduced for students applying to the 60-odd universities in the country. This, experts say, will not only regulate how universities are run, but will also "set higher standards and build rigour into the education system". Such changes will help create

a holistic learning environment that is safe, supportive, and provide opportunities to learn and excel in non-academic as well as academic domains.

#### Implementation

India has taken a giant aspirational leap with the NEP. Now begins the real test: implementation. The key to effective change starts with the teachers. Implementing policies of this scale will require Herculean efforts in the training and professional development of teachers as well as the implementation of technology-based solutions and processes that can augment teacher training and bring in scalable, sustainable and measurable change.

If implemented thoughtfully, the NEP has the power to propel our education system forward. What we need is a system that encourages children to question and learn rather than just "mug it up". With successful private and public collaboration, the NEP's visions for early childhood to higher education, professional education to vocational education, and teacher training to professional education can be realised.

The writer is co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer at Learning Matters Pvt. Ltd, a Bengaluru-based ed-tech company. contact@learningmatters.xyz



## Signs of easing

India's COVID-19 trajectory shows a downward trend, but there is no room for complacency

**A**fter reporting over 97,650 novel coronavirus cases on September 11, the largest number ever reported on a single day by any country till then (the U.S. registered 99,780 cases on October 30), India has been witnessing a steady fall in daily fresh cases reported since mid-September. Since October 25, there have been fewer than 50,000 new cases every day, except on one. More importantly, the reduction in daily cases has continued despite no appreciable drop in overall testing numbers, a trend quite pronounced in States that bore the brunt of the pandemic – Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, and Tamil Nadu. It is quite clear that the pandemic has peaked by spreading through the major densely populated cities, leaving lakhs infected and thousands dead, but there is a definite slowing down in these areas. Since August, cases had already started to pile up beyond urban areas in rural districts. It is unclear whether the drop in daily cases and deaths registered in the urban areas is playing itself out similarly in rural areas as well, as unlike urban areas, the protocols for testing, treatment, isolation are not as diligently followed because of gaps in the rural health infrastructure across States. This is something State Health Departments need to follow up on.

There is evidence from other disease surveillance in the past that States with better primary health and sentinel infrastructure across topographies, urban or rural, have recorded diseases better. For example, the reporting of HIV cases in Maharashtra and the southern States resulted in the recording of more cases while Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and a few other north Indian States reported fewer cases. The absence of evidence is, after all, not the evidence of absence and Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and others must not become complacent about the drop in cases, and must continue to increase their respective testing rates to keep pace with the rest of India. While peaking and a reduction in cases is a good sign that could ease the strain on the health infrastructure, the danger the virus poses is still real. The dip in cases may turn out to be just a statistical blip, with a second surge and heightened spread waiting to happen in the winter, particularly as people partake in the festive season. States have started to ease restrictions on schooling, commercial activities and have even allowed theatres and malls to open to spur the consumption economy severely affected by the lockdowns. The easing was unavoidable as the economic strain was becoming as much of a problem for people as COVID-19 was to their health. Citizens must not get complacent about the drop in cases and should continue to observe norms of social distancing, mask wearing and hand hygiene till vaccines made available prove their efficacy.

## A fierce contest

As the U.S. prepares for the election, a wrangle over the results is increasingly likely

**W**ith less than two days until voting ends in the 2020 U.S. presidential election, the results of opinion polls gauging voter preferences between the Republican incumbent, President Donald Trump, and his Democratic challenger, former Vice-President Joe Biden, almost uniformly show that the latter is holding onto a firm lead. A leading poll of polls puts Mr. Biden ahead by a solid 7.8%. A well-regarded data-driven website running statistical models on polls simulated 40,000 possible outcomes to find that Mr. Biden won 90 times out of 100. However, an analysis of politics since January 2017 reveals how voters might regard Mr. Trump's performance, disregarding what they may have said in response to opinion surveys. He came to power on what was essentially a nativist call to purportedly put "America First", to fight for the middle-class workers losing jobs to foreigners or immigrants. The divisive rhetoric that his 2016 campaign employed to this end continued to yield rich political dividends for him until early 2020. However, all this changed with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, an epidemiological challenge that the White House was unable to meet.

This was part bungling, the result of a chaotic executive decision-making, and part apathy, borne of Mr. Trump's disdain of masks, social distancing and lockdowns. Even in this approach, however unscientific, he may have won voter sympathy, perhaps because some appreciated his desire to reopen the economy, regardless of COVID-19. It is this sentiment that might prove to be Mr. Biden's undoing as vote tallying comes to a close in the days and weeks, ahead. Therein lies a major force likely to shape the denouement of this election: the pandemic has resulted in a massive shift in the balance of voting methods toward early voting, mail-in voting and absentee voting. Mr. Trump has attacked mail-in voting with factually unfounded claims regarding potential for fraud and a Democratic conspiracy. Given that well over 90 million votes have been cast already through the latter channels, and that far more Republicans and Trump supporters are likely to vote in-person on November 3, the early results will likely show a significant lead for Mr. Trump. If, as is likely, the scales start tipping toward Mr. Biden as the mail-in votes are tallied, the stage will be set for Mr. Trump to formally allege voting fraud and escalate the matter to the Supreme Court – a Court that did not hesitate to rule on the 2000 election favouring Republican George W. Bush. Given that the Republican-controlled Senate recently rushed to fill an empty seat on the Court with conservative judge Amy Coney Barrett, the 6-3 majority on the Court favouring conservatives may well have a bearing in such an eventuality. Only a strong performance by Mr. Biden on election day to add to the early-voting leads will obviate this possibility.

# The shifting trajectory of India's foreign policy

New Delhi's diplomatic skills will be tested now that the country is effectively a part of the U.S.'s security architecture



M.K. NARAYANAN

**T**he Third India-U.S. 2+2 Ministerial Dialogue between the Foreign and Defence Ministers of India and the U.S. Secretaries of State and Defence took place in Delhi on October 26-27. The build-up to the talks was extraordinary to say the least, with the U.S. Defence Secretary, Mark Esper, stating that "India will be the most consequential partner for the US in the Indo-Pacific this Century".

### The strategic focus

The outcomes were, however, on predictable lines. The thousand pound gorilla in the meeting rooms on both days was China, with the U.S. Secretary of State, Mike Pompeo, making an all-out attack on China and the threat it posed to democratic nations. The centrepiece of the dialogue was the signing of the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (BECA) for Geo-Spatial Cooperation, which marked India's entry as a full member into the select category of nations entitled to receive highly classified U.S. defence and intelligence information. The two-day meeting also discussed steps to take existing bilateral cooperation, including military to military cooperation, secure communication systems and information sharing, defence trade and industrial issues', to a new level.

With the signing of BECA, India is now a signatory to all U.S.-related foundational military agreements. India had signed the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA), in 2016, and the Communications, Compatibility and Security Agreement (COMCASA), in 2018. By appending its signature to BECA, India is in a position to specifically receive sensitive geo-spatial intelligence.

Welded together, the founda-

tional military pacts effectively tie India to the wider U.S. strategic architecture in the region. This is the reality, notwithstanding what sections in the country may believe. Previous governments had resisted attempts to get India to sign these agreements on the ground that it would compromise India's security and independence in military matters. The present dispensation argues that there are enough India-specific safeguards built into the pacts, and there is no reason for concern.

### An advantage, but at a price

Indisputably, access to this kind of highly classified information is an advantage. At the same time, it must be recognised that the information comes with a 'price tag' which would not be inconsiderable. Built into the agreements are provisions for a two-way exchange of information and, while India prides itself on maintaining strategic autonomy, it would be evident with the signing of these agreements, that India's claims of maintaining strategic autonomy will increasingly sound hollow. The U.S. makes little secret of the fact that the primary push for getting India to sign the foundational agreements was the threat posed by China, and by appending its signature India has signed on to becoming part of the wider anti-China 'coalition of the willing'.

It is a point worth considering whether by signing on to BECA at this juncture, India has effectively jettisoned its previous policy of neutrality, and of maintaining its equidistance from power blocs. It may be argued that the new policy is essentially a pragmatic one, in keeping with the current state of global disorder. It could even be argued that an ideologically agnostic attitude is better suited to the prevailing circumstances of today. The danger is that it could equally be viewed as highly opportunistic. India's Foreign Minister, S. Jaishankar, in his latest book, argues that 'because global fluidity is so pervasive, India must address this challenge by forging more contempor-

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ary ties on every major account'. This may have triggered the current flurry of agreements, but it could equally push the nation into a quagmire.

### Impact on China, regional ties

Any number of other cases can be cited. For instance, after having distanced itself from the Quad for years, on account of its security and military connotations and anti-China bias, India has more recently waived its objections, even as the Quad has become more anti-China in its orientation. The invitation to Australia to participate in the Malabar Naval Exercises this year, to which the other two Quad members had already been invited, further confirms this impression.

Too close an identification with the U.S. at this juncture may not, however, be in India's interest.

China-India relations have never been easy. Since 1988, India has pursued, despite occasional problems, a policy which put a premium on an avoidance of conflicts with China. Even after Doklam in 2017, India saw virtue in the Wuhan and Mamallapuram discourses, to maintain better relations. This will now become increasingly problematic as India gravitates towards the U.S. sphere of influence. Even as the U.S. makes no secret of its intentions to contain and check Chinese ambitions, India's willingness to sign foundational military agreements with the U.S., to obtain high grade intelligence and other sensitive information, would suggest that India has made its choice, which can only exacerbate already deteriorating China-India relations.

It may pay India better divi-

dends if policy planners were to pay greater attention at this time to offset its loss of influence and momentum in its immediate neighbourhood (in South Asia), and in its extended neighbourhood (in West Asia). Several of India's neighbours (Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bangladesh), normally perceived to be within India's sphere of influence, currently seem to be out of step with India's approach on many issues. At the same time, both China and the U.S. separately, seem to be making inroads and enlarging their influence here. The Maldives, for instance, has chosen to enter into a military pact with the U.S. to counter Chinese expansionism in the Indian Ocean region. Again, while India has been complacent about improved relations with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), it needs to ensure, through deft diplomatic handling, that the latest UAE-Israel linkage does not adversely impact India's interests in the region. India must also not rest content with the kind of relations it has with Israel, as Tel Aviv has its own distinct agenda in West Asia. Furthermore, India needs to devote greater attention to try and restore India-Iran ties which have definitely frayed in recent years.

### Afghanistan and also NAM

Meantime, India must decide on how best to try and play a role in Afghanistan without getting sucked into the Afghan quagmire. India had subscribed to an anti-Taliban policy and was supportive of the Northern Alliance (prior to 2001). The new policy that dictates India's imperatives today, finds India not unwilling to meet the Taliban more than half way – partly, no doubt, since even countries such as the U.S. are not unwilling to enter into negotiations with it. India must decide how a shift in policy at this time would serve India's objectives in Afghanistan, considering the tremendous investment it has made in recent decades to shore up democracy in that country.

India, again, will need to try

and square the circle when it comes to its membership of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO), considering its new relationship with the U.S. Reconciling its present fondness for the U.S., with its full membership of the SCO, which has China and Russia as its main protagonists – and was conceived as an anti-NATO entity – will test India's diplomatic skills. Likewise, even though India currently has a detached outlook, *vis-à-vis* the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), and has increasingly distanced itself from the African and Latin American group in terms of policy prescriptions, matters could get aggravated, following India's new alliance patterns. It would be a rude awakening for India, if it is seen as no longer a stellar member of NAM.

### The Russian link

Finally, the impact of India signing on to U.S.-related foundational military agreements, cannot but impact India-Russia relations, which has been a staple of India's foreign policy for more than half a century. Admittedly, India-Russia relations in recent years have not been as robust as in the pre-2014 period, but many of the edifices that sustained the relationship at optimum levels, including annual meetings between the Russian President and the Indian Prime Minister have remained. It is difficult to see how this can be sustained, if India is seen increasingly going into the U.S. embrace. Almost certainly in the circumstances, India can hardly hope to count on Russia as a strategic ally. This, at a time, when Russia-China relations have vastly expanded and a strategic congruence exists between the two countries. This is one relationship which India will need to handle with skill and dexterity, as it would be a tragedy if India-Russia relations were to deteriorate at a time when the world is in a state of disorder.

M.K. Narayanan is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal

## The Kamala moment in Indian American politics

Attempts to shape the diaspora's politics as an extension of the BJP's cultural nationalism in India have hit a barrier



VARGHEESE K. GEORGE

**T**he media attention on Indian Americans is disproportionate to their numerical strength due to their mobilisation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The spotlight became sharper with the rise of Kamala Harris, as the vice-presidential candidate of the Democratic Party. Mr. Modi raised the tempo of Indian American politics to unprecedented highs; the rise of Ms. Harris shows the limits of India's diaspora politics.

### A red shift, but more blue

Mr. Modi's camaraderie with U.S. President Donald Trump, in isolation, could be considered tactical. When taken together with India's refusal to engage with the Indian American lawmakers on the Democratic side, it became a public signalling of preference for the Republicans over the Democrats.

Surveys suggest a shift of Indian Americans from the Democratic camp to the Republican side, though an overwhelming majority continues to be with the first. Around 22% of Indian Americans support Mr. Trump, according to the Indian American Attitudes Survey (IAAS), while 68% (or 72% of the registered voters in the study) support Democrat Joe Biden. Compared with the 2016 post-poll National Asian American Survey (NAAS), Mr. Biden is at nine points lower than Hillary Clinton's 77%;

and Mr. Trump is at six points higher than his 16% in 2016. The 2020 Asian American Voter Survey shows Mr. Trump at 28% among Indian Americans, a 12 point jump from the 2016 post-poll survey. The ambiguity towards Ms. Harris is louder. Only less than half, 49%, are "more enthusiastic" about the Democratic ticket because of her candidacy, while 15% are "less enthusiastic" because of her candidacy; and only 45% Indian Americans are "more likely" to vote because one among them is a candidate. All this in a cohort in which support for Democrats is overwhelming otherwise.

### Diaspora activists, groups

Whether this is an outcome of any campaign by Hindutva diaspora groups is a more complicated question. Only 51% of Indian Americans are Hindus; and the support for Mr. Trump is highest among the 18% Christians. A survey among 520 randomly selected Indian Americans by Prof. Amitabh Mattoo suggests everything else being equal, up to 40% would vote for a candidate endorsed by Mr. Modi, while 20% disagreed with the idea.

Indian American politics has elements of nostalgia and grievance (the self-perception of being exiled by appeasement politics) with regard to India, and victimhood (racist experiences) and exceptionalism (claims of 'the model minority') in the U.S. Diaspora politics of Hindutva groups has reinforced these sentiments since 2014. Simplistic and ignorant American views of India as Hindu, vegetarian and a place ruined by socialism of the past are lapped up and relayed back by Hindutva



REUTERS

diaspora activists.

Indian American politicians, both Democrats and Republicans, are difficult to fit in the Hindutva straitjacket. On the Republican side, Nikki Haley and Bobby Jindal are Christians and the former also 'white.' Democrats Ro Khanna and Pramila Jayapal are practising Hindus but critical of Hindutva.

The same groups that were celebrating the fact that Ms. Jayapal took oath of office on the Bhagavad Gita in 2017 now oppose her for expressing concerns regarding Indian policies; Ms. Harris was attacked for a poster that depicted her as a Hindu goddess, though Indian leaders routinely appear as gods and goddesses.

### Hypothetical identities

The IAAS shows younger Indian Americans have more liberal views than their parents. Keeping the new generation on a tight leash is a key focus of Indian American activism, across all religious groups. At the World Hindu Congress (WHC) in Chicago in 2018, an exhibition that was pulled out after outrage, was titled 'Interfaith marriages: Silent Holocaust of Hindus'. It warned youngsters of the dangers of such marriages – a topic that triggers intense reaction among cultural warriors at home and abroad.

Ms. Harris was born to parents who married interfaith, and she herself has married interfaith. India's official policy has also leaned towards narrowing 'Indian American' to 'Hindu American', going against the grain of the Democratic Party which prefers wider categories to negotiate a landscape of increasing diversity. The Democrats underscore Ms. Harris' identities as African American and South Asian, a category that Hindutva groups abhor. 'Indian American', as a typical hyphenated American identity, assumes a certain homogeneity across diverse linguistic and religious groups from India, and adds respectability to dual national loyalties, which is an accusation against minorities in India. However, double hyphenated identities throw not only diaspora politics but even India's visa policy into a tailspin. Ms. Harris is African-Indian-American, or African-South Asian-American. American citizens of India-Pakistan mixed parentage find it impossible to travel to India, due to visa restrictions put in place during the United Progressive Alliance government, after the David Headley episode. The efforts to tap diaspora resources for advancing India-U.S. ties, also sought to streamline the community as an extension of the domestic cultural nationalism, by emphasising its Hindu identity. The Indian Embassy in Washington DC stopped celebrating Muslim festivals. The Chicago WHC had the Vice-President of India in attendance and the wholesome participation of Indian missions in the U.S.

It is damaging at two levels at least. First, it accentuated the pre-existing divisions within the Indian American community on religious, caste and generational lines, in part mirroring trends within India, besides pushing it to delink from the larger south Asian identity. Second, the attempts by groups to corner Indian American lawmakers on Hindutva questions and the India-Pakistan conflict have created a self-defeating dynamics. If their careers are harmed, it is a net loss for the community. If they come to power, there is damage control to be done. At any rate, American-born Indian Americans appear to be taking a hard look at developments in India in light of the nativist politics around them.

### A soft touch might work

Indian Americans may well be culturally rooted, but that does not automatically make them puppets of Hindutva cultural politics in the U.S. Those who might gladly support cultural nationalism in India need cultural diversity in the U.S. for self-preservation, and ally with the Democrats. Biden supporters are largely Modi supporters too. They might occasionally find common cause with the Republicans on the question of Islam, but will remain suspects in the highly Judeo-Christian world. In an inverse situation, Christians who are unlikely supporters of the majority cultural politics in India, appear to be enthusiastic about it in the U.S. Engagement with the diaspora can be beneficial for India, but aggressive efforts to navigate it can be counterproductive. Indian Americans will increasingly be like Kamala Harris – impossible to fit in any straitjacket.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

### U.P. CM's warning

It is disturbing to read the intemperate and unlawful comments made by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath (Inside pages, "U.P. CM vows tough law against 'love jihad'", November 1). As Chief Minister, he has taken a solemn oath to defend the Constitution of India. Therefore, it is the height of irresponsibility and dereliction of duty, which

he has sworn to uphold, by threatening to unleash what is akin to extrajudicial and legal violence.

Uttar Pradesh in particular is badly affected by the pandemic. In addition, its migrant worker population has suffered a great deal. As a Chief Minister he should be focussing more on how to make life better for those affected by the pandemic.

G. PARAMESWARAN,

### Sean Connery

With the passing of Sir Sean Connery, the world has lost one of the great stars of the movie world. He was charisma personified, still remembered for his witty one-liners. Though we have had many actors playing the legendary agent's role, Sir Sean Connery stood out, and still does, for his screen presence. In those days, the arrival of a James Bond movie was a festival of sorts

for movie lovers.  
G.B. SIVANANDAM,  
Coimbatore

■ There can only be one James Bond, and played by Sean Connery. On screen, he was stylish, handsome and statuesque. Hollywood has lost a lodestar.  
K. PRADEEP,  
Chennai

Sean Connery gave life to the character of the super sleuth. The name might not ring a bell as far as the present generation is concerned, but English film aficionados in the 1960s and 1970s could hardly have skipped any of

the early Bond films such as Dr. No, From Russia with Love, Thunderball, and Diamonds are Forever. C.V. ARAVIND, Bangalore

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

Error in book review: Devaki Jain was married to Lakshmi Mittal, as erroneously stated in "An

# For China, a lose-lose election

Both a second Trump term and a Biden presidency come laden with pitfalls for Beijing



ANANTH KRISHNAN

Chinese Internet users have taken to referring to the American President with a nickname, "Chuan Jianguo", that translates into "Trump building China". The message is in their view, the four turbulent years of the Donald Trump presidency, as unpredictable as they have been for China's relations with the United States, have in the broadest sense only hastened China's ascendancy, a perception that has been deepened by the Trump administration's botched handling of the COVID-19 pandemic.

#### The dilemma

This fairly predominant view hints at a dilemma China finds itself in ahead of the U.S. election, as it confronts the prospect of either four more years of a President who Beijing is still struggling to figure out, or of a more predictable candidate who, many in China believe, will be far more effective in repairing America's image abroad and rebuilding relations with its allies. As one recent article in the *Global Times*, the hawkish Communist Party-run tabloid, put it, reflecting this ambivalence, "...if Biden wins, the U.S. will remain tough on China", but "tactically, the U.S. approach would be more predictable, and Biden is much smoother to deal with than Trump."

This is a far cry from four years ago, when although prospects of a Trump presidency appeared slim, policymakers in Beijing were openly batting for a Republican win. Hillary Clinton was widely disliked in China, and the fear was she would be vocal on issues such as human rights. Mr. Trump, on the other hand, was seen as a businessman and "dealmaker" who Beijing's Mandarins, in hindsight, completely underestimated. Their envoy in Washington was dispatched to court the Trump family, with the impression that throwing a few deals their way would lead to smooth relations.

Four years on, Beijing is still grappling with the continuing impact of a bruising trade and technology war.



Donald Trump has shattered the myth that economic interdependency between the world's two biggest economies would be both an inevitability and a guarantor of stability.' A 2018 file photo of a promotional gimmick outside a U.S. apparel shop in Beijing. •AP

Mr. Trump has shattered the myth that economic interdependency between the world's two biggest economies would be both an inevitability and a guarantor of stability. Now, the prospect of outright confrontation is being debated openly on both sides of the Pacific, and the belief among some in Beijing is that four more years would push a relationship that is on the brink into the abyss. "Given the polarized political dynamics at home," wrote strategic expert Zhao Minghao, a fellow at the Charhar Institute in Beijing and a member of the China National Committee of the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia Pacific, "Trump may continue on his path of confrontation and hostility against China. If elected to a second term, Trump would continue to push for economic decoupling from China and has promised to 'end U.S. reliance on China'."

Yet for all the bluster, Mr. Trump has only achieved mixed results on the trade front. As the *Wall Street Journal* reported on October 26, he "didn't achieve the central objective of reversing a U.S. decline in manufacturing" through his trade and tariff war. The trade deficit with China has risen this year and is now back to where it was when he took office. He has, however, pushed Beijing to make concessions on trade that it had never done before. Tariffs re-

#### Two great services

Beyond the heavy costs of the trade war, in the view of some Chinese thinkers, Mr. Trump has still rendered China's rulers two great services. His unsteady rule, and particularly the administration's handling of COVID-19, has not only given China a huge propaganda win at home – and for the Communist Party helped rewrite the narrative following its own botched response to the outbreak at Wuhan – but has also more broadly, as the scholar Julian Gewirtz wrote recently in *Foreign Affairs*, deepened the perception within China "that the United States is rapidly declining and that this deterioration has caused Washington to frantically try to suppress China's rise." As he says, Mr. Trump has turned "a long-term risk into an immediate crisis that de-

mands the urgent mobilization of the Chinese system", and in many ways, has consequently emboldened Chinese leaders to double down on policies that sparked the great divergence in the first place, from accelerating State support to Chinese companies in a renewed quest for self-reliance, to taking a harder line on Hong Kong, Taiwan, Xinjiang and perhaps on China's periphery as well.

#### View on Biden

No one in China expects a potential Biden presidency to reverse any of these trends, which most people are aware go beyond Mr. Trump and now have bipartisan resonance in Washington. As Diao Daming, a scholar on China-U.S. relations at Renmin University in Beijing, put it recently, "the Democrats have accepted the fundamental stance of great power competition laid by the Republicans" and can "only make tactical-level adjustments". Where Mr. Biden may offer some relief, in the view of Li Haidong at China Foreign Affairs University, is that "he is definitely smoother to deal with", and as he told the *Global Times*, will likely lead an administration quite similar to what Beijing was familiar with during the Obama years. At the very least, he expects, there would be "more effective communication" and Mr. Biden would seek some common ground on issues such as climate change.

There is, however, little doubt that Mr. Biden will still pursue many of the same Trumpian positions on China, be even more vocal on human rights issues, and as Wei Zongyu, a scholar at the Center for American Studies of Fudan University, argued recently, "possibly form an international united front against China" working more closely, for instance, with Europe, "instead of acting alone or deserting U.S. leadership". The concern in China is he may hence be even more effective in pursuing American goals, and doing so "without resorting to self-defeating, unilateral tariff wars."

So regardless of who emerges on top on November 3, the consensus in Beijing very much seems to be this is an election that promises no good outcome.

ananth.krishnan@thehindu.co.in

#### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

## Queries, complaints and allegations

A discussion on two different complaints against the paper



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

In my columns, I generally explain how I handle a specific complaint. In this column, I am compelled to break this norm and discuss two different complaints. This is because I had to skip writing a column on October 25, Ayudha Puja, as there was no edition on October 26. While addressing complaints, I see whether it is within my remit to do so or if there would be an overreach in my doing so.

#### Advertisement policy

A complaint about an advertisement fell in the grey area between remit and overreach. Some readers, including K. Balakesari, former member, Railway Board, asked about the newspaper's policy on accepting advertisements. They were uncomfortable with the publication of a full-page ad on behalf of the People's Republic of China celebrating its national day on October 1. Mr. Balakesari asked: "Was it necessary for the paper to needlessly wade into a controversy by accepting an ad at this juncture from a country with which relations at present are far from normal, also knowing fully well that hardly anyone has the patience and time to wade through what is essentially propaganda?" He further asked: "Will the paper publish an ad from Pakistan on the eve of its national day extolling its achievements? Will you accept an ad from the RSS on the eve of its founding day?"

I must also record the fact that Mr. Balakesari's mail came on October 18, and subsequent mails complaining about the Chinese ad that was published on October 1 came after October 19. As my remit ends with the editorial content of the newspaper and does not extend to advertisements, I am not familiar with the advertisement policy of the newspaper. I will talk to the management team and find out the advertising policy in place and share it with the readers as early as possible.

In a polarised political environment, the dominant ideology always seeks to not only suppress other views but also obliterate the inherent nature of a plural society. In its de-

sire to become exclusive, it tends to create a frighteningly monochromatic imagination that erases the multiple hues that make a society inclusive. With the series of electoral successes of strong leaders across nations, the binary between 'an exclusive society' and 'an inclusive society' becomes stark and the information ecosystem is not immune to this virus. Mails from a reader from Tiruchirappalli, S. Pushpavanan, are always critical and the tone and tenor of his missives are generally harsh.

#### Misogynism in texts

Mr. Pushpavanan did not approve of the report "VCK buoyed by response to 'ban Manusmriti' campaign" (Tiruchirappalli edition, October 29). He asked what happened to the fact-check which I often mention in my column. His other arguments were: "This correspondent has not cited a single quote from the other side. It seems he is oblivious to the fact that there is another side. This is, by no standards, balanced journalism. The so-called buoyancy is from his own party men and from a Professor who is unheard of. The VCK leader's speech has created disgust and aversion among the reading public. The correspondent has acted as a PRO of VCK. This is shoddy journalism and it could be a planted news item."

I am not sure what is the other side Mr. Pushpavanan is referring to. If he means representing the votaries of Hindutva, which is vastly different from Hinduism, what he suggests is a false equivalence. Feminist scholars over the last five decades have documented the overt and covert patriarchy in the texts of various religions – be it Hinduism or Christianity or Islam. There is rich literature about the misogyny in the theocratic texts.

I was puzzled when he attached a letter in Tamil by a person whose opening line was: "I know neither Sanskrit nor Manusmriti" and who then cited Tamil translations of verses about women in the Manusmriti. Mr. Pushpavanan must realise that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar burnt the Manusmriti on December 25, 1927. The erudite scholar who gave us our Constitution read multiple translations of the text before coming to the conclusion that the "Manusmriti dehumanised the Sudras, untouchables, and women, ruled the Hindu psyche for centuries and created the greatest obstacle to any serious attempt at eradicating the caste system."

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

## A secure future for platform workers

There is a strong case to attribute a more robust responsibility to platform companies and the State

#### LAKSHMEE SHARMA

The Code on Social Security Bill, 2020, for the first time in Indian law, attempted to define 'platform work' outside of the traditional employment category. It says: "Platform work means a work arrangement outside of a traditional employer-employee relationship in which organisations or individuals use an online platform to access other organisations or individuals to solve specific problems or to provide specific services or any such other activities which may be notified by the Central Government, in exchange for payment."

While the long overdue move to recognise platform work has been made, the Code has drawn criticism from platform workers' associations for failing to delineate it from gig work and unorganised work. A categorical clarification could ensure that social security measures are provided to workers without compromising the touted qualities of platform work: flexibility and a sense of ownership.

The Code states the provision of basic welfare measures as a joint responsibility of the Central government, platform aggregators, and workers. However, it does not state which stakeholder is responsible for delivering what quantum of welfare. To mitigate operational breakdowns in providing welfare services, a tripartite effort by the State, companies, and workers to identify where workers fall on the spectrum of flexibility and dependence on platform companies is critical.

The role of platform workers amidst the pandemic has presented a strong case to attribute a more robust responsibility to platform aggregator companies and the State. As argued by Aditi Surie, platform workers were responsible for delivery of essential services during the pandemic at great personal risk to themselves. They have also been responsible for keeping platform companies afloat despite the pandemic-induced financial crisis.

This has cemented their role as public infrastructures who also sustain demand-driven aggregators. The dependence of companies on platform workers merits a jointly assumed responsibility by public and private institutions to deliver welfare measures.

A way forward for platform workers is through a socio-legally acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of work in the gig economy, and the ascription of joint accountability to the State and platform companies for the delivery of social services.

platform aggregator companies. This results in dependence on platform companies, driven by financial obligations, thus rendering flexibility and ownership moot in the short- to middle-term investment cycle.

However, contrasting evidence suggests that for specific categories of workers with basic access to capital, the flexibility of the platform is a significant attraction. Smallholder agrarian labour migrants with access to vehicular assets and capital hailing from peri-urban areas rely on the low barrier of entry and flexibility of platform work to accumulate wealth that they invest back into farm work.

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A way forward for platform workers is through a socio-legally acknowledgement of the heterogeneity of work in the gig economy, and the ascription of joint accountability to the State and platform companies for the delivery of social services.

Lakshme Sharma is Senior Research Associate, Apti Institute



#### DATA POINT

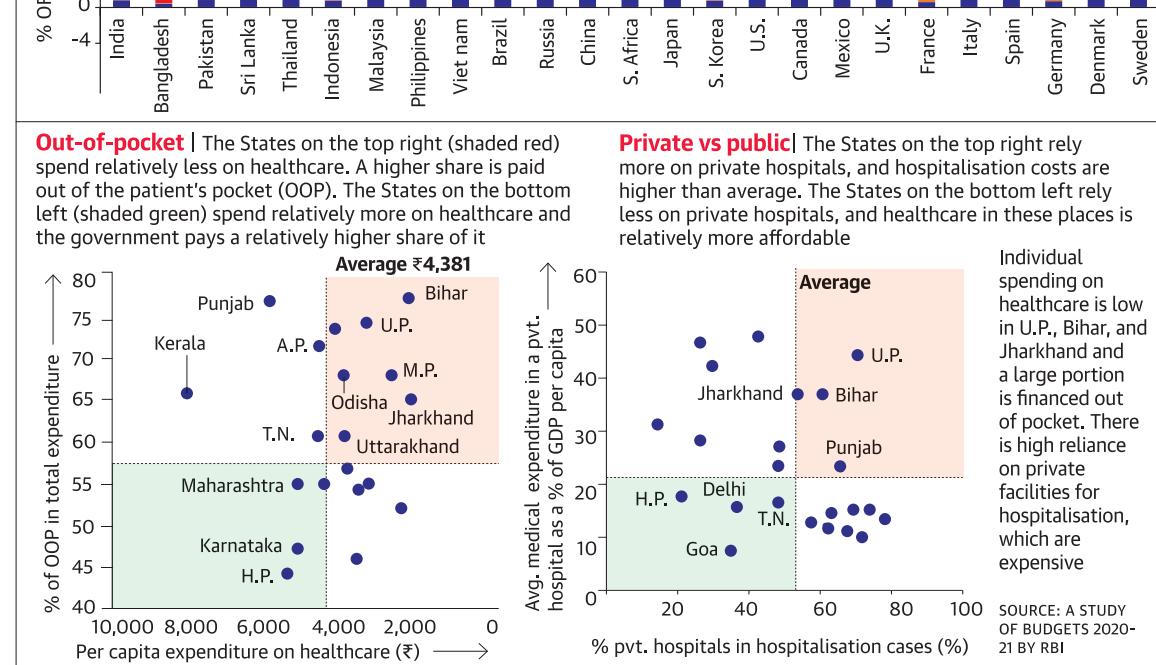
## Lagging behind

The severe lockdown in India, which had a significant impact on economic activity, was imposed not only to contain the spread of COVID-19 but also to augment the country's inadequate healthcare resources to handle the peak case load. The pandemic has put the focus on the urgent need to scale up spending on health. India's expenditure on health is woefully poor compared to many countries. Also, significant inter-State disparities exist in access to and affordability of healthcare

**Country-wise comparison** | India spends 3.5% of its GDP on healthcare, similar to what most SAARC and ASEAN countries spend, but moderately lower than what other BRICS nations spend and significantly lower than in advanced economies. A big portion (63.2%) of India's health expenditure is financed by households from their own pockets

**Out-of-pocket** | The States on the top right (shaded red) spend relatively less on healthcare. A higher share is paid out of the patient's pocket (OOP). The States on the bottom left (shaded green) spend relatively more on healthcare and the government pays a relatively higher share of it

**Private vs public** | The States on the top right rely more on private hospitals, and hospitalisation costs are higher than average. The States on the bottom left rely less on private hospitals, and healthcare in these places is relatively more affordable



#### The Hindu

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO NOVEMBER 2, 1970

Centre on development in cities

The Union Government favours "intensive development" of cities and towns within the existing municipal limits so that they can easily absorb more population. This principle of "high density development" as in the case of Hongkong, Singapore and the cities in Japan, has been advanced by the Centre in order to discourage horizontal expansion of towns and cities and to encourage their vertical development. The Ministry of Works, Housing and Urban Development in a note has suggested to State Governments to plan housing patterns in cities and towns with a view to accommodating more population into the sparsely populated areas so that maximum use could be made of the civic facilities already available there. The note points out that in a large majority of India's cities and towns approximately half of the total areas within the formal municipal limits are in an underdeveloped state and the average gross density is less than 20 persons per acre.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO NOV. 2, 1920

To every Englishman in India

The following appeal of Mr. M.K. Gandhi, published in "Young India", is a challenge to every Englishman in India:

Dear Friend,

Let me introduce myself to you. In my humble opinion, no Indian has co-operated with the British Government more than I have for an unbroken period of twenty-nine years of public life in the face of circumstances that may have turned any other man into a rebel. I ask you to believe me when I tell you that my co-operation was not based on the fear of the punishments provided by your laws or any other selfish motives. It was free and voluntary co-operation based on the belief that the sum total of the activity of the British Government was for the benefit of India. I put my life in peril four times for the sake of the Empire – at the time of the Boer war when I was in charge of the Ambulance corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's dispatches, at the time of the Zulu revolt in Natal when I was in charge of a similar corps, at the time of the commencement of the late war when I raised an Ambulance corps and a result of the strenuous training had a severe attack of pleurisy, and lastly, in fulfilment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself in such an active recruiting campaign in Kaira District involving long and trying marches, that I had an attack of dysentery which proved almost fatal.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## GST inflows in October cross ₹1 lakh crore

However, she added, "We remain as yet unconvinced on the persistence of this trend after the festive season is over, after the pent-up demand is fulfilled."

The uptick in October's GST inflows could be attributed to the festive demand and input tax credits as well as other reconciliations that were due for businesses in September," said Abhishek Jain, tax partner at EY.

GST cess collections, used to compensate the States for switching to the GST regime, rose to ₹8,011 crore (including ₹932 crore collected on import of goods). This is over 5% more than a year ago and 12.5% higher than the previous month.

The total revenue earned in October by the Central and State governments

stood at ₹44,285 crore and ₹44,839 crore, respectively.

October's GST inflows must not be considered a return to normalcy for businesses, said the Consortium of Indian Associations, an umbrella body of MSMEs, stressing that these revenues normally relate to sales that occurred in September, when a majority of the economy, including public transport, were unlocked.

"Many companies raised sale invoices in September by pushing out their finished products which they had planned in March itself. We need to await data for November and December before we can confidently say the economy has rebounded to pre-COVID-19 days," said K.E. Raghunathan, the consortium's convenor.

## Hizbul chief killed in encounter in J&amp;K

Saifullah was the last surviving militant who figured in the group pictures of Hizb 'commander' Burhan Wani, killed in an encounter in 2016. "We were tracking his movement for the last two days. I would like to congratulate the Anantnag police for tracking his movements," he said. According to the police, around 200 militants have been killed this year.

The body of the slain militant was sent to Baramulla for burial and the last rites after completion of medico-legal formalities. "The nearest family members of the

killed terrorist shall be allowed to participate in the last rites at Baramulla," the police said. There were inputs that Saifullah and his men were planning to attack some security installations and civilian areas in the Valley, the DGP said. "Militancy in north Kashmir is at its last stage. We have the upper hand as militancy is almost under control. I hope Kashmir will be a free region soon. There will be no changes in anti-militancy operations in Kashmir Valley despite the upcoming winter," Mr. Singh said.

## Modi mocks Tejashwi, Rahul as 'double yuvraj'

The Prime Minister addressed public meetings at Chhapa, Samastipur, Motihari (East Champaran) and Bagaha (West Champaran). At Bagaha in West Champaran also Mr. Modi raised issues of construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya, scrapping of Article 370 in J&K and the CAA. "Today with blessings and help of everyone in the country, construction of a glorious Ram temple is going on in Ayodhya but even at this time you all should not forget those people who had questioned even the existence of Lord Ram and putting stumbling block in its construction," Mr. Modi said.

"When Article 370 was scrapped in J&K then some negative people said Kashmir will burn, blood will flow in Kashmir and what not...but, what happened? Today Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh are making progress on development path peacefully," he added.

At Chhapa, Mr. Modi again raised the issue of the Pulwama terror attack and said those people "who were not happy with the

River Ganga was flowing even before we came to power but we made its water clean and pure in which mothers can observe Chhath puja... Don't you think business can be done by plying ships in river Ganga? We've started this project and work is going on," he said. While making indirect reference to the previous RJD government in the State, Mr. Modi said, "Earlier, mothers used to warn their children not to go out as they were worried over them being kidnapped for ransom... Do you want a return of the same government in its construction," Mr. Modi said.

"When Article 370 was scrapped in J&K then some negative people said Kashmir will burn, blood will flow in Kashmir and what not...but, what happened? Today Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh are making progress on development path peacefully," he added.

At Chhapa, Mr. Modi again raised the issue of the Pulwama terror attack and said those people "who were not happy with the

## 1 crore RT-PCR tests done for COVID-19 in T.N.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Nearly nine months after it started testing samples for COVID-19, Tamil Nadu on Sunday hit the milestone of one crore tests using RT-PCR kits.

Tamil Nadu is the only State which goes entirely by RT-PCR testing. With laboratories in all districts, the State's capacity is over one lakh tests per day," Health Secretary J. Radhakrishnan said.

With 73,012 samples having been tested in the last 24 hours, the number of RT-PCR tests done so far stands at 1,00,29,222.

P. Umanath, MD of the Tamil Nadu Medical Services Corporation, said, "The success of Tamil Nadu's strategy of using only RT-PCR [tests] is exemplified by the

fact that it is the only State where the active case count has not increased after July. It easily accounts for the highest [number of] RT-PCR tests per million population among the major States. Still, we need to continue maintaining the aggressive testing strategy to mitigate any probable surge in the winter months."

According to data available with the Health Department, as of October 31, Tamil Nadu accounted for the second-highest number of samples tested in the country next only to Uttar Pradesh, where a total of 1,48,63,388 samples had been tested. However in Uttar Pradesh, rapid antigen tests were done in significant proportions. Maharashtra came third, having tested 89,06,826 samples.

Telangana recorded 1,416 more cases on Saturday. While 41,675 people were tested, the results of 887 were awaited. Five more patients died. The 1,416 new

tests were exemplified by the

## Anti-govt. protests sweep Kerala

Protests organised on the 64th anniversary of the State's formation

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala witnessed a spate of anti-government protests on the 64th anniversary of its formation on Sunday.

Congress and BJP workers took to the streets to spotlight the ongoing money laundering investigations against M. Sivasankar, former Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, and Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of State secretary of the CPI(M), Kodiyeri Balakrishnan.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front opposition observed the occasion as a "day of betrayal".

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said Mr. Vijayan ruled behind an iron curtain in privileged isola-



**Up in arms:** BJP State president K. Surendran with party workers in Thiruvananthapuram on Sunday. ■ MAHINSHA

tion. The Chief Minister remained remote and distant from all except gold smugglers, commission agents and his enablers in the government. Mr. Sivasankar had merely done Mr. Vijayan's bidding, he said. Central law enforcement agencies were knocking at Mr. Vijayan's

door, he said, adding that the Chief Minister should resign to avoid further humiliation to himself and the State.

The CPI(M) leadership had slipped its moral moorings and allowed its kin to profit from power. The case of Bineesh was a stark example, Mr. Chennithala added.

Scores of BJP workers lined the State and National

Highways in physically distanced groups of five.

BJP State president K. Surendran alleged that Mr. Vijayan had used mega projects, including the Life Mission, as avenues for personal corruption.

## Public meetings

The CPI(M) held public meetings to counter the propaganda war unleashed by the Opposition. Mr. Balakrishnan said the media had forsaken its ethics to vilify party leaders and the go-

vernment.

The Congress in Kerala

was playing second fiddle to the BJP, the CPI(M) said.



**Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa addressing a gathering on Sunday.**

vels of the administration.

"Karnataka has a history of more than 2,000 years, and has a rich cultural, literary heritage," he said, quoting poets Pampa and Kuvempu. He called upon citizens to not just converse in Kannada, but also encourage children to do the same.

## Mullappally's comment draws flak

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A remark by Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Mullappally Ramachandran triggered widespread condemnation on Sunday, with the Kerala State Women's Commission (KSWC) filing a case against him.

Following the outrage, Mr. Ramachandran apologised, saying that his comments had been "misconstrued".

Speaking at a Congress rally, Mr. Ramachandran said women who have self-respect would die if raped. They should at least ensure that they did not get violated again, he added.

He was referring to the government pursuing cases of rape against several Congress leaders based on the recommendation of the judicial commission into the solar investment fraud case in 2016.

The case had rocked the Oommen Chandy government in 2014. The accused in the case, a woman, had told the commission that she had traded sexual favours for getting the approval of the United Democratic Front government for her solar project.

When Pinarayi Vijayan came to power in 2016, the victim filed rape complaints against several Congress leaders, including Mr. Chandy. The probe has made little headway.

Mr. Ramachandran's remarks sparked criticism across party lines. Health Minister K.K. Shylaja said blaming a rape victim showed male supremacist attitude. Congress MLA Shamim Usman and KSWC chairperson M.C. Josephine also condemned the remarks.

## Jagan pays tributes to Potti Sriramulu on State Formation Day

## STAFF REPORTER

VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Sunday said Andhra Pradesh had endured gross injustices for the last 64 years and it continued to have obstacles in its path as some vested interests were manipulating the system and playing the caste card to achieve their selfish goals.

Hoisting the national flag and paying tributes to 'Amarajeeti' Potti Sriramulu at his camp office near here on the occasion of A.P. Formation Day on Sunday, Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy said, "Andhra State would have remained a

one-and-a-half years and it is committed to achieving all-round development by having a vision for the future and through a pragmatic approach to the tasks to be accomplished," he said.

Mr. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that the State had 33% illiteracy and nearly 85% of the population was languishing below the poverty line.

"The YSR Congress Party [YSRCP] has brought about a radical transformation since it came to power. The change is visible in the form of village and ward secretariats, village clinics, Rythu Bharosa Kendras, Janata Bazaars, infrastructure being created under the Nadi-Needu programme, etc.," he said.

not sacrificed his life. Subsequently, the unified State of Andhra Pradesh was formed on November 1, 1956, and Telangana was carved out in 2014.

We have since come a long way but the State still has many problems and challenges.

Our government has done some remarkable things in

connection with a drug racket in August.

He complained of uneasiness and was hospitalised around 3.30 p.m. The doctors are treating him," said an ED official.

The ED arrested Bineesh last week for his alleged financial links to businessman Mohammed Anoop, who had been arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in Bengaluru in connection with a drug racket in August.

He is scheduled to be produced before the court on Monday. A source said they are waiting for the medical report. "It is possible he wanted to avoid going to jail. We are waiting for the medical report," said the source.

Bineesh Kodiyeri

is in custody of the Enforcement Directorate (ED).

He was taken to Bowring Hospital in Bengaluru on Saturday.

"He complained of uneasiness and was hospitalised around 3.30 p.m. The doctors are treating him," said an ED official.

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ical report," said the source.

Though the bodies are ex

pected to be handed over to

Seema's husband Syed Sa

meer, Seema's family is hop

ing the authorities will pre

vail on him to send the

bodies to India.

Mr. Hussain said the Irish

police would be question

ing Seema's father Abdul Gaffar,

mother Qurishidunnisa, and

brother Rizwan on her rela

tionship with her husband.

Earlier this year, Seema

had suffered injuries follow

ing a serious assault. The dis

covery of her body, along

with those of her children,

comes ahead of the assault

case trial, he said.

## Cases, positivity rate declined in October

A.P. reports positivity at 3.19%, lowest in months; Karnataka did more RT-PCR tests than rapid antigen

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

It was again over 7,000 COVID-19 cases in Kerala, with the State testing 50,000 samples and detecting 7,025 cases on Sunday.

The Health Department released data on 28 persons whose deaths were added to the official toll. Of the 28 deaths reported, Thiru-

vanthapuram, Kollam and Kannur reported five deaths each, Alapuzha four, Kozhikode three, Thrissur and Palakkad two each, Malappuram and Ernakulam one death each.

Andhra Pradesh reported 2,618 new infections and 16 deaths on Sunday. Daily positivity of 82,405 samples was 3.19%, the lowest in months, and the overall positivity rate for 81.1 lakh samples was 10.18%. Five districts reported no new deaths, and Krishnna four. Chittoor and Guntur reported three deaths each, West Godavari, East Godavari and Srikrishna reported one death each.

In Karnataka, positive cas

es reported on Saturday

declined over

August and September fi

gures, while testing in

creased. On Sunday, 3,652

new COVID-19 cases were re

ported. Twenty-four people

died on Sunday.

# Tejashwi confronts PM on 2014 poll promise

He asks Modi if sugar mills in Bihar have been reopened

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PATNA  
Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav on Sunday took on Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and asked him what had happened to his 2014 campaign promise to reopen sugar mills in the Champaran region of Bihar and have tea made with sugar from those mills.

"Respected Prime Minister had said at a 2014 election meeting in East Champaran that he would reopen the closed sugar mills in Motihari and have the next cup of tea from sugar made in those mills the next time he came here. The Prime Minister today came to Motihari after six years, but did not say anything about those closed sugar mills and tea," Mr. Yadav said.

The RJD leader has been addressing over a dozen public meetings every day and drawing huge crowds, especially of young people.

On Sunday Mr. Yadav addressed several public meet-



This time the people of Bihar are going to retire Nitish Kumar  
TEJASHWI YADAV, RJD LEADER

ings in East Champaran, Samastipur, Nalanda, Vaishali and Patna districts.

At his meeting in Nalanda, Mr. Yadav also attacked Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for issuing a decree for the retirement of government employees at the age of 50, while he himself was 70.

"This time people of Bihar are going to retire him (Nitish Kumar)...if our government is formed, we'll increase the retirement age," said Mr. Yadav, whose promise of providing 10 lakh government jobs has caught the imagination of the youth in the State.

The RJD leader also slammed the NDA government for its performance in improving education and

health in the State.

"Nitish Kumar should tell why people of Bihar cannot complete their graduation in three years, why does it take them four or five years in completing their graduation," he asked at another meeting in East Champaran to loud cheers from the crowd.

Despite having to rush through his meetings to cover as much ground as possible, Mr. Yadav has been met with cheers and applause at every event.

The campaign for the second phase of polling for 94 crucial seats on November 3 ended on Sunday. The third phase is scheduled for November 7. The counting of votes is on November 10.

## Congress ignored Patel's contributions, says PM

It is a family-centric party, says Modi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday hit out at the Congress, accusing it of being a family-centric party and ignoring the contributions of the country's first Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. He was speaking at an election rally in Samastipur, Bihar.

The Congress hit back saying it had organised a country-wide satyagraha on Sardar Patel's birth anniversary — Kisan Adhikar Diwas — where it recalled his contributions to farmers particularly, the Bardoli farmers' movement. The party said the Modi government had destroyed everything that Patel fought for and achieved.

**Congress hits back**  
Congress spokesperson Gaurav Vallabh, at a press conference here, said Mr. Modi believed in "distract and rule". Instead of giving an account of his six-year

rule or the NDA government's rule in Bihar, the Prime Minister was raking up such issues to distract the voters, Mr. Vallabh said.

"Congress ek parivaar main aisi simat gayi hai ki, kal unkni [Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's] birth anniversary main unkni smarjan karne se bhi inkte pait main chuhne daudne lage [The Congress is so much centred around one family that their stomachs hurt even while recalling Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel on his birth anniversary]," Mr. Modi said in his speech.

Reacting to this allegation, Mr. Vallabh said that for the BJP Sardar Patel must be new, but for the Congress he was a revered figure. "Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel lives in our hearts. The BJP has to get his statue made in China. BJP gives tickets to those people who called Mahatma Gandhi names, a figure who was revered by Sardar Patel," Mr. Vallabh said.

In 2017, the BJP had won six of these seats. This time, in a multi-polar contest, the BJP faces a string of questions, making the contest in most seats keenly watched.

Unlike the top leadership of the SP, the BSP and the Congress, Mr. Adityanath personally campaigned, first virtually and then in public

meetings. The other parties left the campaign to their second string of leaders.

### Article 370, temple

At his rallies, Mr. Adityanath flaunted the dilution of the Article 370 and the construction of the Ram Mandir as fulfilment of promises made by the BJP. In recent rallies, he even raised contentious issues like bringing a law

against 'love jihad' and promised to take stern action against cow slaughter.

On the back foot after the shooting of policemen in Kanpur and the killing of wanted criminal Vikas Dubey and his aides, the BJP government tried to placate the influential Brahmin community by taking a number of punitive measures against other controversial figures in



In my family, we are not after a nameplate. Our cause is not politics but one of public service

What kind of government was Mr. Nath running, which could not even hold together its own MLAs let aside cater to the needs of the party's workers and the public? These facts speak for themselves.

What are the focus areas of your election strategy this time?

■ We've been in power for six months in Madhya Pradesh and had to battle COVID-19. But we have had a clear blueprint in place. First, State-wide measures such as a supplement to the

Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi in the form of the CM Kisan Samman Nidhi which adds ₹4,000 to ₹6,000 a year to farmers and the delivery of ₹7,500 crores, which Mr. Nath had locked up in his treasury, into farmers' accounts. Then, resumption of schemes that were scrapped by Mr. Nath such as Ladli Lakshmi and Kanyadan Yojana, and the Sambal scheme. We have had a constituency-focused plan in place too wherein development requirements not fulfilled by the Congress government have been identified. Every constituency has got between ₹200-₹300 crore and ₹2,000 crore in development projects. We are going to the people with a blueprint for the State.

Let us not forget, of the 28 seats up for election, 27 belonged to the Congress. The BJP has everything to gain, while the Congress has everything to lose.

For the purpose of the election, how did you and your supporters reconcile with experienced BJP leaders?

■ We have officially had over 1.5 lakh people leave the Congress and join the BJP. Many of them were office-bearers, which shows the level of disenchantment with the Congress towards the current dispensation. We have worked on our relationship with the BJP over the past three-and-a-half months making sure there is complete unity. And in many constituencies you will see current and past legislators and office-bearers on one platform working unitedly to ensure the party's victory. So, the union has been complete, and without any issue.

Are you also eyeing the Chief Minister's post after the byelection?

■ In my family, we are not after a nameplate. Our cause is not politics but one of public service. And therefore, our goal is development and progress of the region and a connection with the people of the State.

For me, it's not Mr. Nath's story of *kissa kursi ka* [the Chief Minister's chair] but about finding a place in people's hearts.

## BJP bought our MLAs, says Gujarat Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

Two days before voting for byelections to eight seats in Gujarat, the Opposition Congress on Sunday released a video of former legislator Somabhai Patel "admitting" that the BJP paid ₹10 crore to each of the eight legislators who resigned before the Rajya Sabha polls in the State.

The Brahmin factor is on full display in the Deoria seat, where the Congress, the BJP, the SP and the BSP have all fielded Brahmins. However, the son of the deceased BJP MLA Janmejai Singh, Ajay Pratap Singh, has altered the equations by filling nomination as an Independent. Mr. Ajay Pratap said he was fighting to save the honour of his late father and people (Sainthwar caste). In Bangermau (Unnao), the BJP battles the baggage of the Kuldeep Singh Sengar rape controversy.

BJP chief Mayawati asked voters on Sunday to ensure the success of her candidates "to give a right message to the opponents".

SP president Akhilesh Yadav tweeted, "The youth are now saying out loud that the *jumla baaz* will be shown the door. In the coming days, the youth will emerge as the *yuvraj*."

"It is an open secret that the BJP paid money to the legislators. With this video, it is established that the MLAs were bought during the Rajya Sabha polls," Mr. Chavda told mediapersons.

Mr. Modhvadia demanded that the Income Tax Department and the Enforcement Directorate launch a probe based on the admission of Mr. Somabhai.

## Adityanath faces anti-incumbency test

Amid SP-BSP rivalry and Congress activism, a tight contest is expected in the bypolls to seven seats



Poll pitch: Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath addressing a rally in Bulandshahar. ■ PTI

## People facing double whammy of pandemic & price rise: Cong.

It accuses govt. of not doing anything to control inflation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
The Congress on Sunday accused the Narendra Modi government of letting stocks rot and artificially increasing the prices of vegetables and pulses.

Congress spokesperson Gaurav Vallabh, at a press conference here, said the inflation, coupled with the COVID-19 pandemic, was denting the festive spirit. "As if the common man was not suffering enough through job losses and income uncertainty, the government has been ignorant and blatantly incompetent in controlling inflation," Mr. Vallabh said.

He alleged that the government, instead of exploring avenues to provide support to the people and boost consumption, was on the lookout to extract as much from them. The overall CPI (Consumer Food Price Index), which had been hovering near 9% in July and August, breached the 10% mark in September, he said.

Mr. Vallabh said the inflation rate for vegetables in September was 22.71%, while it was 13.69% for pulses. "The current prices of potato are the highest in the last 130 months or close to



Costly bulb: Workers collecting onions after auction at a wholesale market in Karad, Maharashtra, on Saturday. ■ PTI

10 years," he said. Mr. Vallabh said India exported 1.23 lakh tonnes of potatoes despite a supply shortage in the country.

The government's incompetence and inaction is evident from the fact that while we exported 1.23 lakh tonnes of potatoes to nations like Saudi Arabia, Oman, Myanmar and others in 2019-20, we ourselves have a supply shortage," Mr. Vallabh said.

In the case of onions too, the government didn't do anything to arrest the price rise, he said. In January, India imported 46,000 tonnes of onions to control the rates. Out of this, 32,000 tonnes, or close to 70%, had rotted in the godowns.

Mr. Vallabh said all these steps were deliberate attempts to help the big corporates. "We demand that the government immediately act on black marketers, assess stock of essential items lying in cold storages and push sufficient stock in the markets to control the prices," he added.

be able to sell their produce anywhere, anytime on the other hand it is forcing farmers to take potatoes out of cold storage and sell their produce," Mr. Vallabh said.

There are 30 lakh tonnes of potatoes lying in cold storages across Uttar Pradesh, out of which 22 lakh tonnes were meant for the markets. The government is now forcing the farmers to take out these stocks by 31st October, instead of 30th November. On the one hand the government has been crying out loud that farmers will now

neighbouring country to immediately vacate such areas.

Mr. Srivastava's response came following a media query. "I reiterate that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the area of so-called 'Gilgit-Baltistan', are an integral part of India by virtue of the legal, complete and irrevocable accession of Jammu and Kashmir to the Union of India in 1947," he said.

He said the Government of Pakistan had no locus standi on territories "illegally and forcibly" occupied by it and that the latest move

would not be able to hide the "grave" human rights violations in these Pakistan-occupied territories.

### 'Vacate all areas'

"Instead of seeking to alter the status of these Indian territories, we call upon Pakistan to immediately vacate all areas under its illegal occupation," he said.

Following the verdict, India issued a demarche to a senior Pakistani diplomat here and lodged a strong protest over the apex court ruling.

The polls were to be held on August 18, but they were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

In a ruling earlier this year, the Pakistan Supreme Court allowed Islamabad to amend a 2018 administrative order to conduct general elections in the region. The Gilgit-Baltistan Order of 2018 provided for administrative changes, including authorising the Prime Minister of Pakistan to legislate on an array of subjects.

Following the verdict, India issued a demarche to a senior Pakistani diplomat here and lodged a strong protest over the apex court ruling.

The polls were to be held on August 18, but they were postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The aim is to camouflage the 'illegal' occupation of the region by Islamabad, it says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

India on Sunday slammed Pakistan for its attempt to accord provincial status to the "so-called Gilgit-Baltistan", saying it is intended to camouflage the "illegal" occupation of the region by Islamabad.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava said India "firmly rejects" the attempt by Pakistan to bring material changes to a part of Indian territory which is under Islamabad's "illegal and forcible occupation" and asked the

State politics. Jailed MLA Mukhtar Ansari and former MP Atiq Ahmed have faced most of the brunt, as the administration demolished and seized their properties.

"Our sympathy can never be for a criminal, goonda or mafia," Mr. Adityanath said at a rally in Jaunpur in reference to the demolition.

"When this is happening, the farmers, youth and wo-

mend a 2018 administrative order to conduct general elections in the region. The Gilgit-Baltistan Order of 2018 provided for administrative changes, including authorising the Prime Minister of Pakistan to legislate on an array of subjects.

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Gilgit-Baltistan a part of India, says MEA

The aim is to camouflage the 'illegal' occupation of the region by Islamabad, it says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Centre for Materials for Electronics Technology (C-MET) (Scientific Society, Ministry of Electronics & Information Technology (MeitY), Govt. of India) IDA Phase III, Cherpaly, HCL (PO), HYDERABAD 500 051 Phone: +91-40-27265587, 27267008 Fax: +91-40-27261658 Web: www.cmet.gov.in CoE Advt. No.: 05/2020

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# Active cases are falling: Ministry

The number remains below the six-lakh mark for the third consecutive day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

India has managed to maintain its active COVID-19 case-load below the six-lakh mark for the third consecutive day, a release issued by the Health Ministry said on Sunday. According to the Ministry, the country's total active caseload stands at 5,70,458 currently.

"New confirmed COVID cases stand at 46,963," said the Ministry adding that Kerala is still reporting a very high number of new cases with more than 7,000 cases, followed by Maharashtra and Delhi with more than 5,000 cases each.

## Recoveries up

At the same time, 76% of the new recovered cases are observed to be concentrated in 10 States/Union Territories, including Maharashtra and Kerala.

"Karnataka, Kerala and Maharashtra have contributed the maximum to the new recovered cases with each State registering more than 7,000 single-day recoveries. Delhi and West Bengal together has registered more



**Alert continues:** A health worker taking a swab for COVID-19 test at the Sabarmati riverfront on Sunday. • VIJAY SONEJI

than 8,000 new recoveries," said the Ministry.

"The active cases have dropped to 6.97% of the total positive cases of the country, demonstrating a steady falling percentage of the total cases," said the Ministry.

It added that this sustained achievement is the result of collaborative action by States/UTs under the Centre's strategy of comprehensive testing, timely tracking, quick hospitalisation and adherence to the standard treatment protocol.

## Gradual progress

The Ministry release said the trajectory of the active case-load across States/UTs has been diverse, demonstrating their focused efforts and gradual progress in their fight against COVID19.

Karnataka has reported a steady decline in the active cases in the past 24 hours. With the consistent decline in active cases, the cases per million [population] in India are among lowest in the world. India's average cases per million stand at 5,930," said the Ministry.

It added that 17 States/UTs have cases per million lower than the national average.

## 470 deaths in 24 hours

As per data released by the Ministry there has been a steady decline in the number of COVID deaths also.

"470 deaths have been reported in the last 24 hours. India's deaths per million population stands at 88. Twenty-one States/UTs have fewer deaths per million than the national average. The declining trend of the percentage active cases is commensurately supported by rising percentage of recovered cases. The total recovered cases stand at 74,91,513," said the Ministry.

It added that 58,684 patients had recovered and got discharged in the last 24 hours

# Banks told to pay back interest on interest, says RBI

They were advised to follow govt. scheme by Nov. 5: affidavit

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) informed the Supreme Court on Sunday that it had advised banks and financial companies to fully comply with a government scheme to pay back borrowers compound interest, or interest on interest, charged on their loans during the six-month moratorium.

The RBI, in a short affidavit, said its circular was issued on October 26, just three days after the Finance Ministry approved the scheme for ex-gratia payment of the difference in the compound interest and simple interest charged between March 1 and August 31 for eight categories of loans worth up to ₹2 crore by November 5.

The RBI said it had "advised" commercial banks, cooperative banks, financial institutions and non-banking financial companies to comply with the government's payback scheme.

"RBI has advised all com-

**RBI has advised**  
commercial banks,  
cooperative banks,  
and NBFCs to  
comply with the  
scheme

AFFIDAVIT IN SC

mercial banks (including Small Finance Banks, Local Area Banks and Regional Rural Banks), all Primary (Urban) Co-operative Banks/State Cooperative Banks/District Central Co-operative Banks, all India Financial Institutions and all Non-Banking Financial Companies (including Housing Finance Companies) to be guided by the provisions of the Scheme and take necessary actions within the stipulated timeline therein," the affidavit filed through advocate Ramesh Babu M.R. said.

A three-judge Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan is scheduled to hear the case on November 2. The government scheme is meant to bring "additional relief" to borrowers affected by the pandemic-induced fi-

nancial distress. The Union Cabinet had approved the scheme on October 21. The scheme will cover MSME, education, housing, consumer durables, credit card, auto, personal and consumption loans.

Clause three of the government scheme defines "all financial institutions" to include banking companies, public sector banks, cooperative banks, regional rural banks, all India financial institutions, non-banking financial companies, housing finance companies registered with the RBI, and national housing banks.

The Central Government has directed that all lending institutions shall give effect to the scheme and credit the amount calculated as per the scheme into the accounts of the borrowers by November 5.

The Ministry of Finance had earlier declared in an affidavit. All lending institutions will credit the difference between compound interest and simple interest on loans, it said.

# Assam-Mizoram border stand-off continues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam-Mizoram border row continued for the fifth consecutive day on Sunday with the authorities of both States failing to make local groups in southern Assam lift the indefinite economic blockade. The dispute flared up last week after the Mizoram government decided not to withdraw its forces allegedly occupying parts of Assam. Consequently, over 100 trucks carrying essentials, and vehicles with Mizoram-bound passengers have been blocked by agitators in Assam's Cachar and Karimganj districts.

Mizoram's Chief Secretary Lalnunmawia Chuanago has written to his Assam counterpart Jishnu Barua, who took over charge on October 31, seeking police protection for the stranded vehicles along the NH-306. He also sought action against Assam police personnel who had allegedly left Mizoram-bound vehicles, including oil tankers, at the mercy of the agitators on the Assam side.

# Gurjar body starts stir over quota in Rajasthan

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
JAIPUR

A major Gurjar organisation on Sunday started an agitation over reservation, a day after community leaders held talks with the Rajasthan government and reached a consensus on 14 points. The call was given by the Gurjar Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti. According to police, youths in large numbers blocked a rail track in Bharatpur's Bayana. Routes of seven passenger trains were changed in the wake of the agitation, a North-Western Railways spokesman said.

Organisation convenor Colonel Kirori Singh Bainala said he is waiting for State Sports and Youth Minister Ashok Chandra to come to Bayana from Jaipur. The agitation will affect traffic on the Delhi-Mumbai rail route. Traffic was disrupted on the Bayana-Hindua road, police said. Earlier on Saturday, Gurjar leader Himmat Singh said talks with the government were positive.

# Three new Rafale jets to fly non-stop from France to India

French Air Force refuelling plane to accompany them

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

Three Rafale fighter jets of the Indian Air Force are scheduled to arrive on November 4 flying non-stop from France, an official source said. With this, the IAF will have eight of the 36 Rafale jets in service.

"Three Rafale jets will fly directly from Istres in France to Jamnagar, an eight-hour-plus non-stop flight," the source said. They will be accompanied by French Air Force mid-air refuelling aircraft. "There will be three tankings in all," the source said.

The first batch of five Rafale jets were formally inducted into the No.17 'Golden Arrows' squadron of the IAF on September 10 at the Ambala Air Force station. They arrived in India in July with a stopover at the Al Dhafra airbase in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). During the first leg of the flight from the Merignac airbase at Bordeaux in France to the UAE, the jets were accompanied



**Big boost:** A Rafale aircraft after its induction into Golden Arrows Squadron of the IAF in September. • R.V. MOORTHY

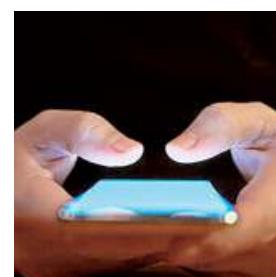
by the French Air Force mid-air refuellers. For the journey from the UAE, they were accompanied by IAF midair refuellers.

The five jets, three single seat and two twin-seater trainers, were flown from France by IAF pilots led by Commanding Officer of No. 17 squadron Group Captain Captain Harkirat Singh. The Indian Embassy in France had said in a statement that delivery of all 36 aircraft would be completed as per schedule by 2021-end. The second squadron would be based at Hasimara in West Bengal.

Last month, IAF chief Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria said the IAF would get three or four Rafales every two or three months till all 36 jets were delivered and that the first squadron would be fully ready by 2021-end and the second by 2023.

"In the next three years, we will see the Rafale and Light Combat Aircraft (LCA) MKI squadrons operating with full strength, along with additional Su-30MKI and MiG 29 aircraft, that are being ordered in addition to the current fleets," he said.

Good Samaritans are welcome to register as Cybercrime Volunteers in the role of Unlawful Content Flaggers for facilitating law enforcement agencies in identifying, reporting and removal of illegal / unlawful online content," says the website. The unlawful content is categorised as content against the sovereignty and integrity of India, against defence of India, against security of the state, against friendly relations with foreign states, content aimed



The Home Ministry plans to enlist volunteers to track unlawful content online.

at disturbing public order, disturbing communal harmony and child sex abuse material. The volunteers will have to submit photograph, name and address proof to be enlisted as a volunteer.

Since its launch last year, the portal has received over 2 lakh complaints, but FIRs have been registered only in 5,000 cases.

A senior government official said on an average, around 1,000 cybercrime complaints were received every month from across the country. The rate of conversion of complaints to FIRs is very low. In July, of the over 30,000 complaints registered, only 273 FIRs were re-

gistered, the data show.

The portal was launched on August 30, 2019 to help people report all kinds of cybercrimes on a centralised platform. An earlier version of the portal launched in September 2018 on the directions of the Supreme Court, catered only to complaints of child pornography, sexual harassment crimes against women and children. The total number of complaints received against child pornography, rape and gang rape from January-September this year stood at 13,244.

On February 4, Union Minister of State for Home G. Kishan Reddy informed the Rajya Sabha that from August 30, 2019 to January 30, 2020, as many as 33,152 cybercrime incidents were reported on the portal where 790 FIRs were registered by the law enforcement agencies.

**Rising numbers**  
According to data compiled by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the number of registered cybercrimes increased by 63.5% in

the year 2019 compared with the previous year's.

A total of 44,546 cases were registered under cybercrimes compared with 27,248 cases in 2018. In 2019, 60.4% of cybercrime cases registered were for the motive of fraud (26,891 out of 44,546 cases) followed by sexual exploitation with 5.1% (2,266 cases) and causing disrepute with 4.2% (1,874 cases).

## Helpline for victims

The portal has started a helpline only for victims of financial cyberfraud in Delhi who can dial the number 155260 or report the incident on www.cybercrime.gov.in.

On receiving the complaint, the designated police officer after verifying the matter will report to the bank and financial intermediary or payment wallet for blocking the money involved in the cyberfraud.

"Use of this facility will help a victim of financial cyberfraud in retrieving the money and help the police in identifying the cybercriminal(s) and take legal action as per law," the Ministry said.

# Prime accused in JEE proxy case held

Companies record strong growth in dispatches to dealers in October

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam police on Sunday arrested Bhargav Deka, the prime accused in the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) Main proxy candidate case, from the Borjhar airport here.

Mr. Deka is the owner of a Guwahati-based coaching institute that allegedly provided a substitute to take the test on behalf of candidate Neel Nakshatra Das to eventually score 99.8%.

The candidate and his father Jyotirmoy Das, a doctor at a reputed hospital in Guwahati, were arrested on October 28 along with three employees of Tata Consultancy Services, to which the National Testing Agency had outsourced the conduct of the exam.

One Mitradev Sharma filed a complaint at the Azara police station against the JEE topper on October 23 after a leaked phone call recording indicated he had used unfair means to score 99.8%. The candidate was heard saying that the invigilator of the examination centre had helped him get out soon after signing and writing his roll number on the answer sheet, which was later filled up by his proxy somewhere else.



**Green shoots**  
A look at the year-on-year growth in domestic sales of major vehicle manufacturers in October

Company	Y-o-Y change in domestic vehicle sales (%)
Hero Moto Corp.	35
Maruti Suzuki	17.6
Hyundai Motor India	13
Honda Cars India	8.3
Toyota Kirloskar Motor	4
Mahindra & Mahindra	1
Royal Enfield	-7

bled the company to achieve record numbers during the auspicious festive period."

Hyundai Motor India also recorded the highest-ever domestic sales since its inception of 56,605 units, a growth of 13% over October 2019. The previous highest monthly domestic sales number for the company was 52,001 units in October 2018. Tarun Garg, director (sales, marketing & service), HMIL, said,

## Positive tone

"The October month sales performance has set a positive tone for the overall business environment and we are confident that Hyundai will continue to strongly contribute towards sustainable

growth of the economy, community and all its stakeholders."

**More offers**  
Honda Cars India saw a year-on-year growth of 8.3% in sales last month at 10,836 units.

The company's senior vice-president and director, marketing and sales, Rajesh Goel, said, "We have seen positive sales momentum in line with market sentiment ... The festive buying picked up from Navratri in mid-October and we are focusing on maximising deliveries during this period. Thanks to our strong and refreshed product line-up introduced right before the festive season and ongoing multiple consumer offers, we expect

Motorcycle-maker Royal Enfield, however, reported a decline of 7% in sales at 62,858 units in October 2020.

**Robust demand**  
Home-grown Mahindra & Mahindra saw a 1% growth in domestic passenger vehicle sales in October at 18,622 units. Veejay Nakra, CEO, automotive division, M&M Ltd., said, "We are happy to achieve a growth of 4% in utility Vehicles, despite certain supply constraints ... the festive season has started on a positive note with deliveries and bookings being higher than last year. Going forward, this augurs well for a robust festive demand which in turn will help the industry in the short term."

"In a significant development, the Odisha police and the BSF solidly advanced up to Gurasethu in Swabhiman Anchal and the BSF will now maintain a camp there. This

# Security forces unfurl tricolour in former Maoist heartland

BSF, Odisha police reclaim Gurasethu from extremists

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

The Border Security Force and the Odisha police have set up a Company Operating Base (COB) at Gurasethu, dubbed the "ideological headquarters" of the outlawed CPI(Maoist), in Swabhiman Anchal along the Odisha-Andhra Pradesh border.

This is considered a milestone in the fight against the left-wing extremists.

The BSF and the Odisha police personnel unfurled the tricolour in front of the CPI(Maoist)'s "Martyr Pillar" at Gurasethu in Malkangiri district. Experts said security forces had managed to reclaim the area from the CPI (Maoist).

## Remote area

Gurasethu was once known to be the heartland of the CPI (Maoist). The ultras used to conduct training and other activities without fear, as the place was not easily accessible. Security forces had to trek to reach the place.

"In a significant development, the Odisha police and the BSF solidly advanced up to Gurasethu in Swabhiman Anchal and the BSF will now maintain a camp there. This

happened to be the ideological headquarters of the Maoists until recently," tweeted Odisha Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy congratulating the security forces.

</div

# Epiphanies ON INSTAGRAM

After hosting a week of live sessions on health with experts, here's what we learnt that might make the journey to well-being easier

TEAM METROPLUS

## The market isn't your only source of veggies; try foraging

If you want a greater variety of vegetables in your diet, you may not find everything you need at the local market. Farmers will naturally only grow and sell the varieties that see a demand, leading you to a weekly cycle of potatoes, cauliflower, beans, capsicum and so on.

Chennai-based Akash Muralidharan who went on a 100-day cooking project to rediscover forgotten native vegetables says, "Some vegetables were extremely difficult to find within the city, like the *thumattikai*, or the country cucumber." He began looking more closely at the trees growing in his friends' and relatives' gardens, and even on the roads. "There is a moringa tree in front of my apartment, and until my mother told me, I was not aware that moringa flowers are edible," he says.

Flowers of zucchini and pumpkin, and leaves that cover cabbages and cauliflower are also edible and good for garnishing. Meanwhile, keep asking your grocers for local varieties of vegetables – they might just put you in touch with a farmer they know who grows them.



1

## It's best to sip, not guzzle water

Imagine a drip irrigation system and one where you flood a plant with water. The body's cells will absorb water better, keeping the body in balance, when you sip water, says Krushmi Chheda, a Mumbai-based sports scientist and nutritionist. If you are drinking alcohol, drink one-and-a-half times of what you have had between every unit you consume. So that's 45 ml of water for every 30 ml of wine/whisky/rum. Not so hard. If you are drinking green tea through the day (not more than six cups is advisable), again sip water in between because you may stain your teeth and it does contain caffeine, a diuretic.

## There's a formula for water intake

Since we all have different body compositions, one of the best ways to calculate how much water you should drink is to divide your weight in pounds by half, which will give you the number of ounces you should consume in the day, says Krushmi. This is how much the body needs at rest – at base level. And if you are training or in humid and high temperature zones, take it up. While plain soda does not add to calories, you don't really want to put carbon dioxide that's dissolved in it, into your body.

2

## Cooking can be an adventure

The main reason people are reluctant to try new vegetables is because they aren't sure how to cook them, says Chindi Varadarajulu, chef at Pumpkin Tales, Chennai. With greens, the best guess is to stir fry them with garlic and other aromatics. "Foss them into a high fire and cook lightly. It works for most vegetables, as it brings out their flavours as opposed to overcooking them in a sauce and losing their nutrients," she says. On the other hand, vegetables like ash gourd that are mushy inside, work better as a soup. Or try nibbling on them to see if they can be eaten raw. "I make a salad out of roselle leaves, and of *vallarai keerai* (used primarily as a medicinal plant). In my pasta, I add *kovakaya* (scarlet gourd)," she offers as examples.

## Fitness-based goals are better than weight-loss based ones

What happens when the weighing machine remains stuck on one number? You will probably feel disheartened, and may even stop exercising. Now imagine focussing on a fitness-based goal, like performing a full squat. It's a process to get there, and once you do, you can get on to other fun exercises. There is always progress. "This process should be about loving yourself and not punishing yourself," says Sohrab Khushrushani, a Mumbai-based movement and mobility specialist.

5

## There's a science to rehydrating during and after a workout

Coconut water is best in the morning after a workout, because it does make some people feel a little bloated. If you are working out, a minimum of half a lime in 300 ml water with a pinch of salt and a teaspoon of honey or jaggery works. It's best to avoid sugarcane juice, unless you're doing physical work for about six hours in the day, says Krushmi.



6

## Certain foods are bad for your mental health

Most of us know that junk and processed and ultra-processed foods are not good for our bodies, but not many of us know they are not good for our mental health either. "Sugar (there are about 250 different names used for sugar on food labels) has been associated with worsening symptoms of anxiety and depression," says Dr Uma Naidoo, a nutritional psychiatrist at Harvard Medical School, and author of *The Food Mood Connection*. Fast food (like French fries) have added sugar, making it "hyperpalatable" – hard to stop eating, because our taste buds crave them. Processed vegetable oils also set up the body for inflammation, while MSG-based foods are best avoided by those who have OCD.

- With inputs from Sweta Akundi, Sunalini Mathew, Pradeep Kumar and Jeshi K

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SELF

### Don't erase the longer line

Even as we are afraid for our own health, let us help each other grow



TT SRINATH

COVID-19, its impact on each of us, the sadness many of us are experiencing as we know and hear of people passing on or afflicted by illness, reminds me of what a friend and mentor said, "In times like these, when simply being alive and hoping for a good day is a gift, can we become less comparing or devaluing of one another?"

The comment struck me as significant and I recall the same gentleman once asking me, "How do you make two parallel unequal lines into equal length?" I suggested that this could be achieved by erasing part of the longer line and making it equal to the other.

He said instead, "Why shorten one line; why don't you extend the other? To shorten you have to erase, which anyway leaves a mark and lessens the line. Instead, to extend helps expand the shorter line. If we can do this for one another we could help one another grow and not shrink."

Henri Nouwen, a Dutch preacher writes in his book, *The Wounded Healer*, 'To help others grow is to see new life even among the cracks in a rock, to be able to hear words of forgiveness even though muted by hatred and hostility and to be able to see life stirring even though shrouded by death and destruction.'

In times such as now, it is our woundedness that can help by becoming a source of life for others.

The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at tttsrinath@gmail.com

## SHEER WHEEL POWER

NISHA VARMA

The power wheel, similar in the way it looks to its more common cousin the ab wheel that has narrower handles and no pedals, helps work on the core muscles and build functional strength and stability. It has a wheel at the centre and a broader handle bar with two paddles, one on either side. Straps attached to the paddles hold the feet in place as one executes exercises using this unstable equipment. Power wheels are relatively inexpensive, easy to store, and require zero maintenance. It is an interesting and challenging variation to the regular strength and core training programme.

Warm up with a short or long walk prior to the workout, or do any other form of cardio for 15 to 30 minutes. The power wheel can be used either by itself or as a part of gym work. Remember that at no stage should the shoulders go up towards the ears; neither should the lower back overarch. For the given sample workout, repeat each exercise 10 times, unless mentioned otherwise. As you get used to the workout, do three or four sets.

### CAUTION, BEFORE YOU BEGIN

Not recommended for a total beginner, but anyone at an intermediate level. (If you have a grasp of basic posture guidelines then it is safe to assume that you are at an intermediate level.)

People with joint issues should consult a doctor before starting with the power wheel. A power wheel routine can be done without shoes. Wear shorts or tights preferably.

### HAMSTRING AND GLUTES

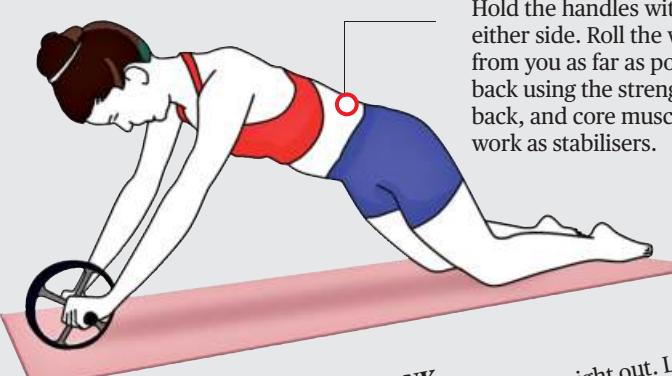
From the bridge position, roll the wheel away from you to straighten the legs. Keep the knees unlocked. Reverse the movement to bring the wheel towards you and get back into a bridge position.

### BRIDGING

Lie down on your back, your feet locked into the power wheel. Maintain the knee to ankle alignment. Lift the hips off the floor into a bridge and hold for 10 seconds. The challenge is to hold the posture without allowing the wheel to move.

This week, we take it up a notch with the power wheel designed to challenge regular core training programmes

### Sample workout



### PLANK

Hold the power wheel and go into a high plank. Maintain the position for a minute. As you get better at it, try lifting one leg off the floor.

### REVERSE PLANK

Sit on the floor with both feet straight out. Lock your feet into the power wheel straps. Raise the hip to go into a reverse high plank and hold for a minute. The wheel rolls away as you execute this.

### DYNAMIC HIP LIFTER

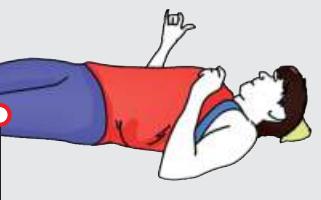
Maintain the reverse high plank and roll the wheel towards yourself to bring the hips between the arms. Roll the wheel away and go into a reverse plank.

### PLANK CRAWL

Take the plank position with your feet locked into the straps. Crawl forward for 10 movements on your hands; crawl back. Repeat for a minute.

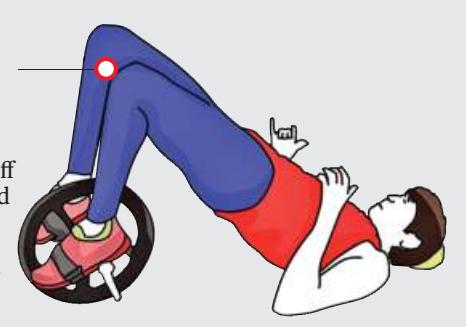
Cool down and stretch all the major muscle groups post workout.

Nisha Varma is an ACSM-certified exercise physiologist. This is a monthly column with exercises for a home workout.



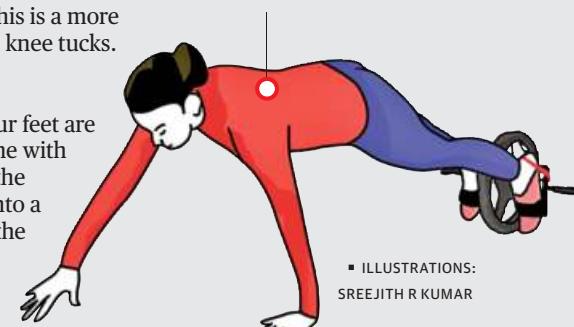
### THE PIKE

From the plank position, roll the wheel towards you but keep the legs straight and lift the hip towards the ceiling. This is a more challenging version of the knee tucks.



### KNEE TUCKS

Go on your hands and knees. Your feet are locked into the straps, arms in line with the shoulders. Lift the knees off the floor; roll the wheel away to go into a plank and bring it back towards the chest. This works the abs, along with shoulders, arms, back, chest, legs and core.



■ ILLUSTRATIONS: SREEJITH R KUMAR



4

8

## Fitness doesn't mean going into a gym and lifting weights

"Clean your house; it's a great full body exercise," says Sohrab. A squat is a basic, functional body movement exercise that everyone should be able to do. Push-ups are something you don't need weights for, and it really helps build your upper body strength. Then there is skipping. It is such a simple exercise we learnt as kids in school. "Fitness is something as simple as playing a sport you love," he says.



9

## The gut and brain are connected

Both start from the same cells in the embryo. Also, they are connected by the vagus nerve that connects the gut to the brain. "It's a two way superhighway, sending messages from one to the other," says Dr Naidoo. More than 90% of serotonin receptors are in the gut, so what you eat is going to impact the environment of the gut and could therefore impact your mental wellbeing.

10

## Just move

Michael Ajay wanted to be a professional basketball player, and as he was headed towards that goal single-mindedly, he met with a motorcycle accident and had to undergo major surgery. The setback meant he put on a lot of weight and was plunged into despair. He read a lot during this time and found that "you could combat mental health issues through physical exercise." "That became the foundation of my training," says Michael, who is today a model and fitness trainer. "Whenever you take action, you get results, and those results fuel more action."

For the full series, head over to @thehindumetroplus IGTV



**Taste of success** (Clockwise from top left) Andy Allen, Jock Zonfrillo, and Melissa Leong in *Junior MasterChef Australia*

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

season in 2012.

Melissa, who is a notable food writer and a cookbook editor, comments, "We are all very close now having not known each other well before! A lot of what you see on screen is a real-life dynamic, and we all know what good food is. There are no forced moments!"

#### Greener generations

The essence of the *MasterChef Australia* universe is its focus on sustainability; it is deeply rooted in cultural ethos and has permeated itself from Australian cuisine.

In Jock's case, this school of thought is also inherently part of Scottish and Italian cuisines, highlighted in his restaurants including the multiple-accolade-receiving 17-year-old Restaurant Orana in Adelaide.

Awards aside, for him, it is all about culture. "Breaking down the preconception of what culture is, and listening are part of *MasterChef*. All of the contestants – junior or mainstream – are deeply proud of where they are from. We look for authenticity and there's pride in that."

Andy, who has five restaurants in Australia including the decade-old Three Blue Ducks, chimes in, elaborating, "One of our restaurants is in the heart of Sydney and has a little veggie patch and a beehive in the back garden. We take all our green waste scraps to a public school's compost heap. We don't

preach, we do it by actions. That does not stop when we go to a film set, and it's amazing to see the kids care about that too. If I can get people entering cooking as a profession, that is the ultimate goal."

#### Cooking under lockdown

The global lockdowns have nurtured newer means of home-cooking, and reality cooking shows have been proponents of this movement. Melissa agrees, explaining, "We are all connected by watching these types of food shows. It helps us forget about the woes of the world. Watching *Junior MasterChef Australia* also inspires because, in some ways, these Juniors cook better than adults which is incredible!"

"There was a point where everyone was making sourdough bread," chuckles Jock, 44, "But I never had to do it at home because we did it at our restaurants. So seeing this happen everywhere, I tried to create an easy recipe. This translates to *Junior MasterChef Australia*; we never want our contestants to fail. With everyone unable to travel, people have been getting homesick, myself included. I had a yearning for Scottish things and Italian dishes, so I've been making Scottish bread rolls and Italian handmade pasta, and sharing them online with everyone."

Would the judges offer a tidbit into the season finale, as things have started to get a little competitive? Andy surmises: "It's going to be shocking, fun, intense, life-changing for the winner." Well, we guess no spoilers here – only fresh and tempting food.

*Junior MasterChef Australia* is streaming on Disney+ Hotstar Premium, with new episodes every Tuesday.

# And they stepped up to the plate

As we are well into the third season of *Junior MasterChef Australia*, new judges Melissa Leong, Andy Allen, and Jock Zonfrillo cook up a new legacy

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

A striking difference between mainstream *MasterChef Australia* and *Junior MasterChef Australia* is not the obvious age discrepancies but the vast difference in energies. In the adult series, there are considerable measures of anxiety and heated competition with doses of politics. While not featuring the stress, *Junior MasterChef Australia* has cemented its self as equally formidable.

The first two seasons featured a mix of judges: Gary Mehigan, George Calombaris, Matt Preston, Anna Gare and Matt Moran. But the third season has consolidated a new iron line-up of chefs and restaurateurs: Melissa Leong, Andy Allen and Jock Zonfrillo.

In the eight episodes we have watched so far, they have already revamped their familiar on-set aura. They were also the judges on *MasterChef Australia: Back to Win* – the 12th season of *MasterChef Australia* – which features appearances from Gordon Ramsay, Matt Stone and Katy Perry.

The trio speaks with *MetroPlus* about the new season of *Junior MasterChef Australia*, which premiered this year.

Melissa, 38, is no stranger to reality cooking shows; she has been a judge on *The Chef's Line* on Australia's Special Broadcasting Service.

"There are lots of similarities that set me up to take on the huge role at *Junior MasterChef*: cele-

brating the cultures of food, family, and stories... and also knowing that presenters come and go but the real star of these shows is food! These are an extension of my foundation," she says. For her, *MasterChef* has been a disruption in the best way, offering an experience of mentorship for the future of the culinary world. "The learning, though," she states, "goes both ways on *Junior MasterChef*."

The three experts come from very different parts of the food industry. Andy says teaming them together was "quite a gutsy move" on *MasterChef's* part.

"The funny thing is we hadn't met in person until we met in person; there was no chemistry meet – we first met at a press meet for the new judges' announcement," says Andy. Many fans of the series will remember the 32-year-old who won the fourth



#### 'BACK TO WIN'

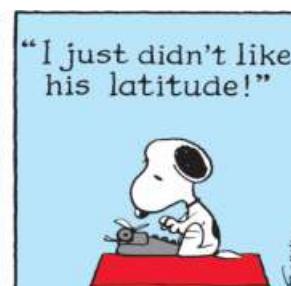
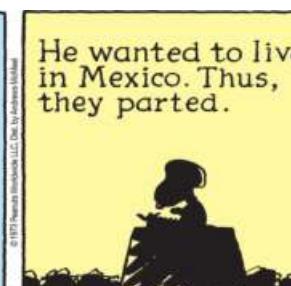
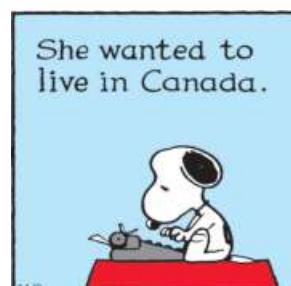
Andy says having Gordon Ramsay on the 12th season of *MasterChef Australia* put him, Melissa and Jock at ease. "He also set a standard; that was our first day of work and we were getting coached by a guy who'd done it all. It got rid of my nerves in tasting a dish and someone not agreeing."

In terms of mentorship, Andy actually points out that audiences will see the least amount of it in *Back to Win*, given the contestants had been through the competition already and had already carved their paths in the food industry. Whereas on *Junior MasterChef Australia*, Andy was able to help shape what the contestants' cooking means are like.

#### POOCH CAFE



#### PEANUTS



#### HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



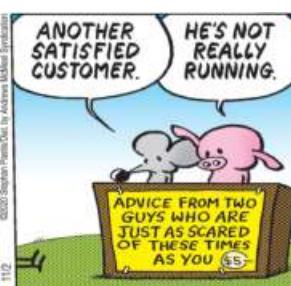
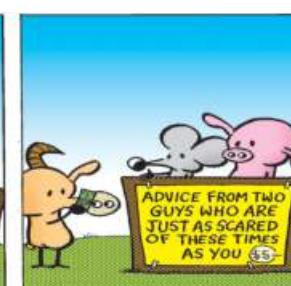
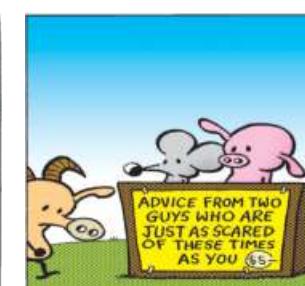
#### CALVIN AND HOBBES



#### TIGER



#### PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



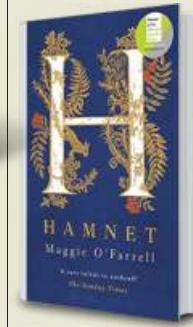
#### HOMING IN

Best-selling author **Benyamin's** books, especially about the Indian diaspora, have won him several awards. His eclectic **Reading List** of autobiographies, non-fiction and novels concludes our column

SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

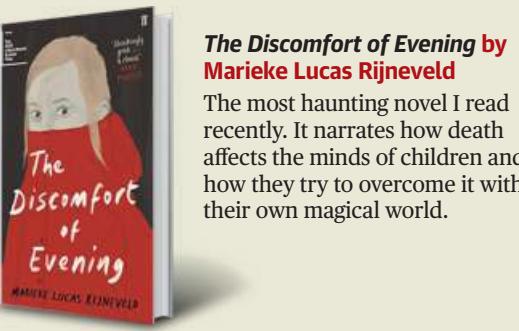
#### *The Moon's a Balloon* by David Niven

I always enjoy reading autobiographies. This is the one of the best that I read recently; a work that articulately depicts the problems and crises he faced during his acting journey to reach the Oscars.



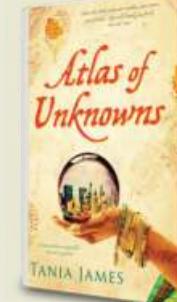
**Hamnet**  
by Maggie O'Farrell

This novel won this year's Women's Prize for Fiction. Hamnet, one of Shakespeare's sons, died at the age of 11. Eventually, Shakespeare goes on to write *Hamlet*. This novel goes behind the scenes to tell the story of a marriage and the loss of a child.



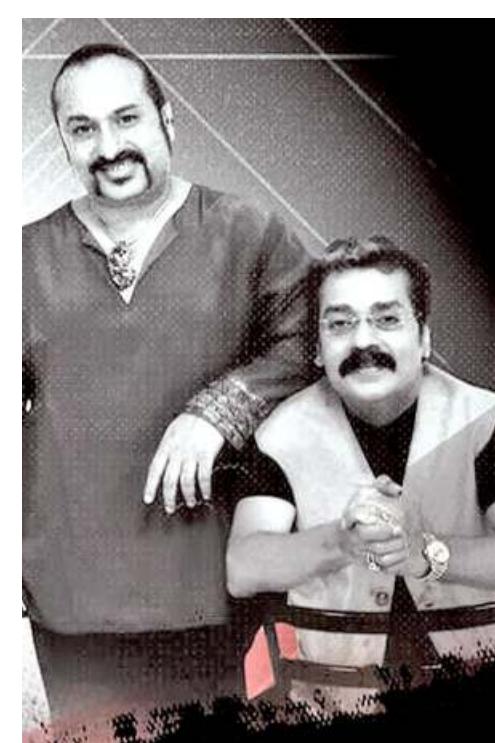
#### *Atlas of Unknowns* by Tania James

I was attracted to this work because it is a novel by an American writer with roots in Kerala. The life of Christians in Central Travancore is introduced to other communities through her book.



#### *The Shadow King* by Maaza Mengiste

I noticed this novel long before it was shortlisted for this year's Booker Prize. I was fascinated by the author's novel *Beneath the Lion's Gaze*. The novel, set against the backdrop of the Italian occupation of Ethiopia, gives us a better understanding of African colonialism.



#### Giving it a fresh spin

Paytm Insider has come up with Jim Beam Originals, a series of 10 virtual live performances by the country's leading musicians. With 70 minutes of performance, each of these singers will reinterpret famous international artists in their own style, resulting in a musical conglomeration of sorts. Curated and promoted by Turnkey Music Publishing and Music Plus, the first season of the show will go live on November 7. The series will be kickstarted by Colonial Cousins, comprising singer Hariharan and singer-composer Leslie Lewis, who will recreate The Eagles' discography. It must be noted that Colonial Cousins is popular for its fusion indipop and has produced chartbuster albums in English, Hindi and Tamil. This will be followed by Shalmali's rendition of Michael Jackson's hits on November 21. Some of the other talents in the line-up include Benny Dayal (who can sing in 11 languages), Shaan, Raghu Dixit, Usha Uthup, Thakukkada Bridge, and Shor Police to name a few.

Priced at ₹299-499 per show, or ₹1,500 for all performances; tickets are available on Paytm Insider. For details, visit <http://bit.ly/PRM-PaytmInsider-JimBeamOriginals>

# In final stage, focus is on swing States

Trump presents himself as an 'outsider'; Obama joins Joe Biden in attacking President's policies

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN  
WASHINGTON

With hours to go until Election Day, both presidential candidates and their star campaigners were engaged in hectic campaigning across battleground States, with Democratic candidate Joe Biden leading U.S. President Donald Trump in key States and nationally. The messaging and campaign style of both camps reflected a deeply polarised electorate and the candidates' contrasting approaches to the coronavirus pandemic, which continues to rage across the country.

Mr. Biden and Mr. Obama made their first joint campaign appearance in Michigan on Saturday with Biden events scheduled in Philadelphia for Sunday. Mr. Trump held four campaign rallies on Saturday in Pennsylvania alone and had a packed schedule on Sunday with rallies planned in Michigan, Iowa, North Carolina, Georgia and Florida.

An unprecedented 90 million Americans or 43% of all registered voters had voted early or by mail by the end of Saturday with over 50 million voting by mail.

## Popular vote

Going into the elections, national polls, which are indicative of how the popular vote will go, showed Mr. Biden with an average lead of 7.2 percentage points as per polling aggregator Real Clear Politics.

Both campaigns have their eyes on Pennsylvania with its potential harvest of 20 Electoral College votes. Mr. Trump won the State narrowly in 2016, but Mr. Biden is leading in polling by an average of 4 percentage points in recent polls. [State polls, on the whole, got it wrong in 2016. While pollsters say they have corrected



**Crucial phase:** (Clockwise from top left) Supporters taking a photo of Donald Trump at a rally in Rochester; Joe Biden speaking at a drive-in campaign event in Michigan as Barack Obama looks on; and voters waiting to cast their ballots in Georgia. ■ AP/AFP

for deficiencies of the past, 2020 is unique in several respects – such as the unprecedented levels of early voting – and there may be new factors impacting the predictive power of pre-election polling this year.

"Hello Pennsylvania. Let's go to Pennsylvania. We have to do the same thing we did four years ago," Mr. Trump told supporters at a rally in Butler. Mr. Trump won Butler County by a large margin in 2016.

In the final days of the campaign, Mr. Trump has talked about his economic record, portraying the elections as a choice between a "Trump super recovery" and a "Biden depression". Mr. Trump has claimed to voters that Mr. Biden will "quadruple" their taxes and "ship your [their] jobs to China."

The President also has made allegations of corruption against the Biden family, especially his son, Hunter Biden. Mr. Trump has also misrepresented the Biden-Harris position against fracking and fossil fuels and ques-

tioned Mr. Biden's mental acuity.

The President, who has an unconventional style of campaigning, has also sought to remind voters that he is not a Washington insider. "If I don't sound like a typical Washington politician, it's because I'm not," he said in Monroeville, Pennsylvania, on Saturday.

Under a Biden presidency, the country would be

plunged into chaos, Mr. Trump has said, seeking to portray Mr. Biden as a puppet of the "radical left". Mr. Trump called Mr. Biden's running mate, Kamala Harris, the most liberal Senator in the U.S.

"Kamala, Kamala Harris. You have to pronounce her name exactly right, or she gets very upset with you,"

Ms. Harris focussed on the Trump administration's mishandling of the coronavirus, racial injustice, the state of the economy and the climate crisis during her remarks.

In Flint, Michigan, Mr. Obama urged voters to turn out at the polls. "Because we need everybody, not just some people. We got to get everybody out there," he said.

Mr. Trump flipped the State in 2016 and Democrats are hoping to win it back this year. Mr. Biden leads the State by eight points as per a New York Times/Sienna Poll. The former President compared Mr. Biden's and

Mr. Trump's characters, saying Mr. Trump was not interested in the presidency and treated it like a reality show.

## Obama on Trump

Mr. Obama, who has taken to teasing Mr. Trump in his campaign speeches, said the current President was jealous of the media coverage COVID-19 was getting and had an obsession with crowd size. "Did no one come to his birthday party when he was a kid? Was he traumatised?" Mr. Obama asked.

He talked about how Mr. Biden would control the pandemic and create clean-energy related jobs, themes Mr. Biden himself spoke about at the rally.

"We're done with the chaos, the tweets, the anger, the hate, the failure, refusing to take any responsibility," Mr. Biden said in a speech which criticised Mr. Trump's handling of the pandemic and as well as his character.

Mr. Biden's messaging has included his plan for controlling the pandemic and the economy. He says he intends to roll back tax cuts for the rich – not raise taxes for anyone earning less than \$4,00,000 a year and to create jobs from clean-energy and infrastructure investments (which he says will be paid for by increasing taxes for higher income individuals).

Both Mr. Obama and Mr. Biden have talked about their economic record versus Mr. Trump's as part of their closing arguments.

"Look, Donald Trump keeps telling us what a great job he's done as President. Oh, man. Well, did you know President Obama and I ... created more jobs in the last three years of our administration that he did in the first three years before the pandemic?" Mr. Biden said on Saturday.



## Advantage Biden

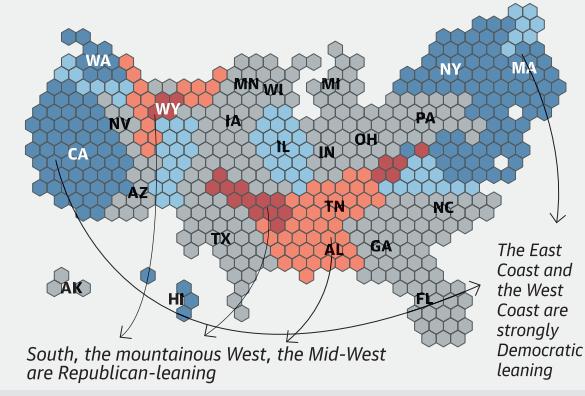
The Democratic Party candidate, Joe Biden, leads Donald Trump in the U.S. presidential elections in opinion polls. A major share of early voting has been through mail-in ballots, which result in higher rejections. Opinion polls could get trends wrong for some key States as had happened in 2016. Yet, even after adjusting for poll errors (based on 2016 number), Biden still has the edge

■ **EARLY VOTING** | Nearly 92 million Americans voted early this year, surpassing the previous record of 57.5 million set in 2016. More than 65% of 2016's total votes have already been cast as early votes

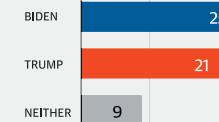


CLOSE TO 2.1% OF MAIL VOTES WERE REJECTED IN THE 2020 PRESIDENTIAL PRIMARIES. IF A SIMILAR % OF MAIL VOTES GET REJECTED IN THE 2020 POLLS, 1 MILLION VOTES MAY GO UNCOUNTED

■ **STATE-WISE SPLIT** | The map depicts the state-wise lead secured by Biden over Trump in the opinion polls. The darker the shade of blue, the higher Biden's lead over Trump. States coloured in grey have no clear leader



■ **RED AND BLUE** | Biden enjoyed over 50% share in opinion polls in 25 States/territories



In nine States, neither Biden nor Trump had a share of above 50% in opinion polls

■ **SWING STATES** | The table lists select States that could possibly be won by either of the candidates (swing States). If the 2020 opinion polls turn out to be as wrong as they were in 2016, North Carolina might switch from Biden to Trump and the former's lead could drop significantly in Pennsylvania

■ **THE BIG PICTURE** | If the opinion polls this year turns out to be as wrong as they were in 2016, Biden's lead in the overall electoral college votes could only drop from 352 to 333

Candidate	Electoral votes according to opinion polls	Electoral votes if polls are as wrong as 2016
Biden	352	333
Trump	186	205

# More ups than downs in India ties

After the initial uncertainty, relations with India picked up steam under Trump

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

President Donald Trump has ended his first term in office with a big push for ties with India, sending his Secretary of State Mike Pompeo for talks just one week before the election, and holding two rallies with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in Houston and in Ahmedabad, in the past year.

Four years ago, however, the victory of Mr. Trump in the U.S. Presidential elections had struck a sense of foreboding for officials in the Modi government. India's newly appointed Ambassador to Washington Navtej Sarna landed in the U.S. capital just three days before the election results, at a time the expectation was that Hillary Clinton, who was well-known to the Indian establishment, had worked closely with New Delhi as Secretary of State, would enter the White House. It was no secret that India's top diplomats had to knock many doors, enlist the help of prominent Indian-Americans, as well as businessmen in order to reach out to Team Trump.

Within a few months, Mr. Trump delivered a few blows to India's expectations from the U.S., including a decision on visa restrictions, a hard-hitting speech on India as the "tariff king", and clubbing India and China both on trade and on receiving an unfair advantage on climate change, which he said was one of the reasons the U.S. was walking out of the Paris climate accord that his predecessor, Barack Obama had ratified just months earlier. However, the invitation to PM Modi to the White House in June 2017 turned things around, and Mr. Trump's South Asia policy, and the U.S.'s decision to revive the Quad and rename its Pacific Command as the 'Indo-Pacific' Command set into motion a more positive foreign policy framework for India.



"Over just three or four months in 2018, we saw the Strategic Trade Authorisation (STA)-1 categorisation for India; the first 2+2 dialogue; the signing of the COMCASA in a shape acceptable to us; the approval by Congress for a general waiver provision in the CAATSA; a (temporary) waiver for India on Iran oil purchases and Chabahar... A very impressive list of strategic gains," Mr. Sarna recounted to *The Hindu*.

## China and Pakistan

More importantly, given the 2017 Doklam conflict with China and continuing cross-border attacks by groups from Pakistan, Mr. Trump's policy towards both India's biggest headaches became the U.S.'s most important foreign policy shift. One big marker was when on January 1, 2018, Mr. Trump tweeted that the U.S. would end aid to Pakistan that had given the U.S. "nothing but lies and deceit" and "safe haven to terrorists".

Subsequently, the U.S. suspended its military assistance payments, military sales and led the way on Pakistan's grey-listing at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) to designate more terrorists at the UN Security Council, including those that targeted India. On China too, after two years of reaching out to Xi Jinping, Mr. Trump made a turnaround, and the U.S. offered India moral and

military support to counter Chinese aggression, led its own attack on China's Belt and Road Initiative and its 5G telecom push and vowed (not yet realised) a counter to China's loans to countries in the Indo-Pacific region.

Regardless of the positives, several Trump decisions have come as a shock to the Modi government. His decision to forge talks with the Taliban, in concert with concessions to Pakistan in Afghanistan, has run counter to his administration's other promises. Just a day after Mr. Modi swore in his new Cabinet last year, Mr. Trump announced he would withdraw India's Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) status for exporters.

"The U.S. has treated India far more gently than Mr. Trump has treated China, or even U.S. allies, and despite several opportunities to train his guns on India, other than the removal of the GSP, he didn't do very much on penalising India," said noted analyst Ashley Tellis at a seminar organised by Carnegie India this week.

## Unpredictable attacks

The biggest challenge, say officials, is the unpredictability that has accompanied Mr. Trump, particularly in his tweets, where he had relayed private conversations with PM Modi publicly. These include his mimicry of Mr. Modi's accent when he said Mr. Sarna.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

wrecking the U.S. democracy. The Republicans accuse social media platforms of censoring conservative content and pushing a radical left agenda. Concerns related to privacy, national security and business models thriving on data harvesting are besides the questions of democracy and freedom of expression. Both sides converge on the point that Big Tech must be brought under some sort of oversight and this idea will move forward in the next administration and Congress.

There is an increasing agreement between the Democrats and the Republicans that national manufacturing has to be protected.

The devastation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic

Regardless of who wins, there would be some continuity and conflicts in policies

VARGHESE K. GEORGE  
NEW DELHI

The election season in the U.S. is drawing to a close, and through all the acrimony and confusion, it has also generated some pointers regarding the country's immediate direction, regardless of who wins the election. There are at least three points of wide agreement and three points of heightened conflicts in the U.S. that this year's campaign has brought forth.

On each occasion, the government has chosen to side-step the verbal "landmines" Mr. Trump delivered, in favour of a more stable bilateral relationship. Where that has paid off the most is in Mr. Trump's reciprocal restraint while commenting on India's internal affairs, and unlike many other countries, and leaders in the American opposition party, Mr. Trump has not raised objections to the Modi government's decision on Article 370, the arrest of leaders and telecom ban in Kashmir, or on the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA). Even when Mr. Trump landed in Delhi amidst some of the worst communal violence the city has seen in decades, he carefully avoided any mention of it.

When asked what a second Trump administration will mean for India, many diplomats say it will probably be "more of the same, only more unpredictable". "A victorious second term will have no stakes in the system. We will have to put on seatbelts, speed on the straights and hold on at the curves. India will have to roll with the punches on immigration and racialism, take the sting out of the trade issues by being a step ahead. It will also mean navigating for advantage in a divided world, with the U.S. waging multilateralism – a world where multilateralism will be without U.S. leadership," said Mr. Sarna.

Subsequently, the U.S. offered India moral and



questioned the logic of trade-driven efficiency and the unending search for competitive advantage. Trade deals had contributed to overall economic growth in the country, even as communities in particular economic sectors and locations bore the brunt of its negative impact.

The intensity might be different between Democrats and the Republicans, but a wider agreement appears to have emerged with regard to China as the main adversary of the U.S. It is not that there will be no exploration of an agreement with China by the incoming President, Mr. Biden or Mr. Trump.

## Divergent approaches

While these three points of broad agreement are themselves riddled with divergent approaches of both parties on each of the topics, at least three other issues will deepen the fissures and mobilise angst and diatribe, post election.

The first is the challenges the election system in the world's oldest democracy faces. In the absence of a central authority or uniform rules that run across the country, like in India, conflicting and chaotic election rules in various jurisdictions have become a source of a political battle. Unlike India, where there is a universal requirement of voter identity cards, and in a country that has millions of documented and undocumented non-citizens, the integrity of the

election can be easily called into question.

The familiar argument is that there is no evidence of large-scale election fraud, but there can be no evidence when it has not been the subject of an investigation. There is no meeting point between the two parties on streamlining, securing and improving the credibility of the process, while encouraging higher voter participation. Regardless of who wins, the question mark over the process will continue to loom large.

A second divisive question that will outlast the election is the role of expertise in public debates and policy-making. It turns out that the news about the resurrection of expertise in the aftermath of the pandemic was highly exaggerated. The evolving science of the pandemic has become a politically partisan topic. Its entailment with the questions of liberty – can mask wearing be mandated? – is far more immediate and knotty than the science and politics of climate change. The hope that a question of immediate life and death would force politicians towards a common ground of science appears to have been premature.

A third and the most fundamental division in the U.S. that will continue into the next presidency and beyond is that of American self. "Success is going to bring us together. We are on the road to success," the 74-year-old President said. "...what is on the ballot here is the character of this country. Decency, honour, respect, treating people with dignity," said Mr. Biden. The loser will get a minimum of 40% of votes, of people who have an idea of America different from those who have voted the winner. That is not a question that lends itself to easy answers. This election could more sharply define all these questions.

## ASK US

K. NITYA KALYANI

## Urgent eye operation

**Q.** My mother is a State government employee in Kerala. She is 53 years old. Is it possible to start a health insurance policy right now and get a claim now itself for an eye operation?

T. K. VINEETH PARAMESWARAN

**A.** Hospitalisation policies do not cover pre-existing conditions for an initial stated period and no claim will be entertained for the first 30 days of coverage except in the case of hospitalisation following an accident. Some procedures like cataract surgery are covered after two years of unbroken insurance.

Having seen that, how to fund your mother's eye operation is the question. Two options that may be available are as follows. Being a State government employee, your mother is likely to be covered already under an employer's scheme. Please check eligibility under the scheme. State government employees are also usually eligible for treatment in government hospitals free or at very nominal costs.

## Surrender, or take a loan?

**Q.** I am a retired professor (84) living with my wife (83). We have no children. We have 14 LIC policies, eight in my name with my wife being the nominee. The others are in my wife's name with me being the nominee. We are not willing to name anybody else as our nominee. We want to realise the policy money ourselves within our lifetime. There are four different policies – Whole Life, Varishta Pension Bima Yojana, Jeevan Akshay IV and Jeevan Shanti.

I am also aware of the surrender facility. Can we surrender these policies before maturity?

DR. M. R. SANTHANAM

**A.** Policy surrender rules differ from policy to policy and LIC, and other companies, change them periodically.

To give a broad idea, a whole life policy can be surrendered after three years of being in force and you will get 30% of the premiums paid, excluding the first-year premium. If it is a single premium policy, then 90% of the premium is the guaranteed surrender value.

That is a minimum. You will have to read up your policy bond or approach the LIC to work out the actual surrender value.



Jeevan Akshay IV is an immediate annuity plan and has no surrender value.

If you have taken a deferred annuity plan under Jeevan Shanti, surrender is possible whether it was single life or joint life with your spouse. The quantum will be worked out by the insurer for you on request. If it was immediate annuity, surrender would be possible only if the option you chose was annuity for life with return of purchase price, both in the case of individual or joint life.

Varishta Pension Bima Yojana is a social security scheme of the government administered by LIC. Under this, there is no option for surrender.

Except for the last policy, if surrender is not possible, you should explore loan options with the LIC to unlock your policies financially during your lifetime as per your preference. Please take care to explore these only with your insurer and not those unauthorised.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to [moneywise@thehindu.co.in](mailto:moneywise@thehindu.co.in). Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

## LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"I remember the time when you used to look at your banking app a little eagerly on salary day!"

# Treat yourself to HEALTHY OPTIONS



With standardisation, choosing a suitable health policy becomes easier

AMIT CHHABRA

Starting October 1, the Indian health insurance industry has seen a major revamp, resulting in health insurance policies becoming far more customer-centric than earlier. Over the last few months, the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has announced several modifications to health insurance norms, a process initiated keeping in mind the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. These changes have now come into force both for new and existing policies.

## Impact of standardisation

The implementation of the new guidelines has had a positive impact on customers. Standardisation of the policy wordings for inclusions, exclusions, waiting periods and most importantly, the terms and conditions, have made health insurance easier for customers to understand and choose a suitable plan.

Standardisation is a great initiative by the regulatory body as it would help customers gain better clarity on what the insurer is covering under the plan

they wish to buy. Moreover, the move would bring about uniformity and promote transparency in health insurance plans, which was earlier a major concern for consumers. The inclusion of consultations over telemedicine in policies that cover consultations under OPD is another major milestone as, during tough times such as today when everyone is trying to avoid stepping out of the house unnecessarily, tele-consultations have become prevalent.

With revamped products already available in the market, out-of-pocket expenses of customers are also going down as the insurance firms are now not allowed to recover any expenses towards proportionate deductions other than the defined associated medical expenses.

And for customers worried that standardisation would result in an increase in premiums, the regulator has decided to cap the impact of the changes on premiums.

## Key changes

In an attempt to ensure that policyholders get the best available healthcare facilities and

treatment across India, the IRDAI has mandated that customers are eligible for all modern treatment methods through a health policy. Under the revamped products, modern procedures shall be covered either as an in-patient or as part of domiciliary hospitalisation or day care treatment in a hospital.

Some prominent procedures for which you can now take treatment for include deep brain stimulation, robotic surgeries, uterine artery embolisation and HIFU, oral chemotherapy and stem cell therapy.

As per the guidelines issued by the regulator, going forward, insurers will not be allowed to recover any expenses towards proportionate deductions other than the defined associated medical expenses category include the cost of

**C** The inclusion of consultation via telemedicine in policies that cover consultations under OPD is a major milestone

pharmacy, cost of implants and medical devices and cost of diagnostics.

Also, insurance companies cannot deny coverage to people with a proven history of clinical depression, personality or neurodegenerative disorders, sociopathy and psychopathy. While inpatient hospitalisation for mental disorders will be covered under the regular plans, outpatient counselling or therapy will be covered under the OPD benefit.

(The author is Health Business Head, Policybazaar.com)

## THINK INVESTOR

## Getting it right, step by step

Investing does not allow you the luxury of learning from your mistakes

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY



**Single shot:** A person cannot get net practice for investing to achieve goals in life. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

that you buy a house.

And, you retire only once. You may rightly point out that all of us pursue several goals during our lifetime. Suppose you are investing to achieve two goals – buying a house five years hence and funding your child's education with a 10-year horizon. Also, suppose you make mistakes in managing down payment for the house. Can you learn from these mistakes and manage your child's education portfolio better? Not necessarily. Why?

Not all goals you pursue at any point in time will have the

same priority. For instance, funding your child's education portfolio may be more important than buying a house. So, the risk you are willing to take and, therefore, your choice of investment products to achieve high-priority goals, will be different compared to your choice of products for low-priority goals.

Of course, this does not mean that you cannot learn from your investment experience. But, you have to appreciate that no two investment experiences will be the same.

There is another way to con-

vince yourself to invest in equity funds. Suppose you decide to invest only in bank fixed deposits to achieve a life goal. Imagine the amount of money you have to save every month, given that your post-tax return on bank deposits is less than 4%.

## Higher savings, an option?

Would you like to cut your current consumption and save more? Or, do you want to stick with current consumption and invest in high-expected-return investments such as equity funds? From a behavioural perspective, cutting your current consumption is more painful than the likelihood of suffering losses on your equity investments in the future.

Also, there is a possibility of regret if you do not save enough to achieve your life goal.

So, think of investing in equity funds as a requirement to achieving your goal. To test the waters, you could, perhaps, invest in index funds before you are ready to invest in active funds. Finally, remember this: you (typically) only invest once for each life goal.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

## TECH TRAIL: PRECIOUS METALS

## Declines likely in price of gold and silver futures

B. KRISHNAKUMAR



drift lower in the near-term.

A fall to \$21.52–22 an ounce appears likely. MCX gold too has been consolidating in a tight range of ₹49,000–51,500. This is likely to persist until the price gets past ₹51,600 per 10 gm. A fall below ₹49,000 would impart weakness; the price could then drift to ₹47,000–47,500. Until the price rises above ₹51,500, a slide to ₹47,500 would be the short-term outlook.

MCX silver prices are likely to remain rangebound; a breakout from ₹56,000–64,200 would set the tone for the next big move. Above ₹64,200, MCX silver could rally to ₹68,000–69,000. Below ₹56,000, the price could slip to ₹51,000–51,500.

(The author is a Chennai-based analyst and trader. This is not meant to be trading or investment advice)

## Bank Fixed Deposit Rates

Bank Name	Interest Rates (%)			
	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure
<b>SMALL FINANCE BANKS</b>				
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.90	7.50	7.00
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.75	7.15	7.50
Equitas Small Finance Bank	7.35	7.10	7.15	6.75
ESAF Small Finance Bank	7.00	7.00	6.50	6.00
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.75	6.75	6.75
Fincare Small Finance Bank	7.00	6.50	6.90	6.00
AU Small Finance Bank	6.75	5.50	6.75	6.50
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.55	6.25	6.25	6.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.50	6.05	5.80
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS</b>				
IndusInd Bank	7.00	7.00	6.75	6.75
Lakshmi Vilas Bank	7.00	7.00	6.00	6.00
RBL Bank	6.95	6.75	6.95	6.50
DCB Bank	6.95	6.50	6.95	6.95
Nainital Bank	6.35	5.25	5.35	5.35
IDFC First Bank	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.75
Bandhan Bank	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.75
City Union Bank	6.00	5.50	5.75	5.50
Karur Vysya Bank	6.00	5.50	5.65	5.65
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	5.75	5.75	5.50	5.50
Karnataka Bank	5.70	5.40	5.65	5.65
Dhanalaxmi Bank	5.60	5.25	5.40	5.50
South Indian Bank	5.50	5.40	5.50	5.50
CSB Bank	5.50	5.25	5.50	5.50
<b>PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS</b>				
Federal Bank	5.50	5.25	5.50	5.50
Axis Bank	5.50	5.15	5.40	5.50
HDFC Bank	5.50	4.90	5.15	5.30
ICICI Bank	5.50	4.90	5.15	5.35
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.30	5.10	5.30	5.30
Kotak Mahindra Bank	5.00	4.60	4.90	4.50
<b>FOREIGN BANKS</b>				
Deutsche Bank	6.00	3.85	4.75	6.00
DBS Bank	5.50	4.05	5.50	5.50
HSBC Bank	4.00	3.15	4.00	4.00
CitiBank	3.75	3.00	3.75	3.75
<b>HOME LOAN INTEREST RATES</b>				

# Morgan blitz, Cummins' spell keep KKR alive; CSK eliminates KXIP

The skipper's unbeaten 35-ball 68 and the speedster's four for 34 end Royals' playoff dreams; Nine-wicket victory for Dhoni's men sends the Punjab side packing

## SPORTS BUREAU

Rajasthan Royals may have chased down some stiff targets this season, but not on Sunday night. Its chase for place in the playoffs was over too after the 60-run loss to Kolkata Knight Riders at the Dubai International Stadium.

Captain Eoin Morgan and Pat Cummins were KKR's heroes. The skipper's brilliant unbeaten 68 off just 35 balls (5x4, 6x6) helped the team recover from 99 for five and post a formidable 191 for seven while the pacer's spell with the new ball broke the back of Royals' strong top-order.

The chase had started in sensational fashion as Cummins' first five balls went for 19, but off his sixth, he had Robin Uthappa flicking to Kamlesh Nagarkoti at deep square-leg. In his next over, he had Ben Stokes stunningly caught behind by Dinesh Karthik – the airborne wicketkeeper diving to his left to pluck the ball out of thin air – and Steve Smith playing on to his stumps.

Sanju Samson and Riyam Parag also snicked to the keeper, off Shivam Mavi and Cummins respectively, in the next two overs. Morgan's decision to give Cummins a



**Shining Knights:** Cummins broke Royals' back after Morgan powered the side to 191. ■ BCCI/IPL

third over paid off as he got rid of Parag. After bowling the most expensive first over of the season, Cummins finished with four for 34.

With half the Royals side back in the dugout for 37 inside five overs, a lot depended on Jos Buttler (35, 22b, 4x4, 1x6) and Rahul Tewatia

(31, 27b, 2x4, 1x6). However, neither lasted long enough to pose a serious threat.

Earlier, Morgan could not have timed his first half-century of the season better. After the 72-run second-wicket stand between Shubman Gill (36, 24b, 6x4) and Rahul Tripathi (39, 34b, 4x4, 2x6),

KKR lost wickets in a cluster before the skipper unleashed some breathtaking shots. Andre Russell's cameo (25, 11b, 1x4, 3x6) helped too.

## Innings scan

KKR	Dots	RR
50	56	
16	11	
12	4	
55/1	41/5	
9.55	6.55	

## Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Mumbai Indians (Q)	13	9	4	18	1.296
Royal Challengers	13	7	6	14	-0.145
Delhi Capitals	13	7	6	14	-0.159
Kolkata Knight Riders	14	7	7	14	-0.214
Sunrisers Hyderabad	13	6	7	12	0.555
Kings XI Punjab	14	6	8	12	-0.162
Chennai Super Kings	14	6	8	12	-0.455
Rajasthan Royals	14	6	8	12	-0.569

After the KKR-RR match on Nov. 1



**On a high:** After Ngidi's incisive spell, Gaikwad anchored CSK's chase against KXIP. ■ BCCI/IPL



## SPORTS BUREAU

Kings XI Punjab was eliminated from the IPL 2020 playoff race after suffering a comprehensive nine-wicket defeat to Chennai Super Kings at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium, Abu Dhabi on Sunday. CSK, the first team to exit the playoff race, ended its campaign on a positive note,

recording its third successive win.

Opener Rishabh Pant

once again showed his mettle, scoring his third century in as many games. His unbeaten 62 off 49 balls (6x4, 1x6) helped CSK chase down 154 with ease.

The young opener showed great composure and awareness, even preferring to play second fiddle when Faf du Plessis (48, 34b, 4x4, 2x6) went after the Punjab bowlers. The duo added 82 for the opening wicket.

From 48 for no loss, KXIP slumped to 72 for four.

From the eighth to the 13th overs, KXIP could not find a single boundary. Imran Tahir stood out in this phase, bowling a 3-0-12-1 spell.

## Calm innings

Gaikwad kept things simple by picking boundaries without taking risks. His innings saw some exquisitely timed drives through cover and some deft cuts behind square against the two leg-spinners – M. Ashwin and Ravi Ashwin.

Earlier, put in to bat, KXIP

squared off a good start from openers KL Rahul (29) and Mayank Agarwal (26) and lost the plot in the middle phase of the game. Only Deepak Hooda's 30-ball 62

salvaged things and ensured a total of 153 for six.

Agarwal and Rahul went after CSK pacers Deepak Chahar and Sam Curran before Lungi Ngidi struck in quick succession by rearranging both openers' stumps.

While Agarwal dragged a slower one on to his wicket, Rahul tried to sweep a slow full delivery and missed it completely.

From 48 for no loss, KXIP slumped to 72 for four.

From the eighth to the 13th overs, KXIP could not find a single boundary. Imran Tahir stood out in this phase, bowling a 3-0-12-1 spell.

## SCOREBOARD

**KINGS XI PUNJAB**  
K.L. Rahul b Ngidi 29 (27b, 3x4, 1x6), Mayank Agarwal b Ngidi 26 (75b, 5x4), Chris Gayle lbw b Tahir 12 (19b), Nicholas Pooran c Dhoni b Shardul 2 (6b), Mandip Singh b Jadeja 14 (15b, 1x4), Deepak Hooda (not out) 62 (30b, 3x4, 4x6), James Neesham Ruturaj b Ngidi 2 (3b), Chris Jordan (not out) 4 (5b); Extras (b-1, w-1); Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 153.

**FALL OF WICKETS**  
1-48 (Mayank, 5.2 overs), 2-62 (Rahul, 8.3), 3-68 (Pooran, 10.4), 4-72 (Gayle, 11.5), 5-108 (Mandip, 16.2), 6-113 (Neesham, 17.1).

**SUPER KINGS BOWLING**  
Deepak Chahar 3-0-30-0, Sam Curran 2-0-15-0, Shardul 4-0-27-1, Ngidi 4-0-39-3, Tahir 4-0-24-1 Jadeja 3-0-17-1.

**CHENNAI SUPER KINGS**  
Ruturaj Gaikwad (not out) 62 (49b, 6x4, 1x6), Faf du Plessis c Rahul b Jordan 48 (34b, 4x4, 2x6), Ambati Rayudu (not out) 30 (30b, 2x4); Extras (lb-7, w-7); 14; Total (for one wkt. in 18.5 overs): 154.

**FALL OF WICKET**  
1-82 (du Plessis, 9.5 overs).

**KINGS XI BOWLING**  
Neesham 3-0-26-0, Shami 4-0-29-0, Jordan 3-0-31-1, Bishnoi 4-0-39-0, M. Ashwin 4-0-17-0, Gayle 0.5-0-5-0.

**Toss:** CSK; **MoM:** Ruturaj.

CSK won by nine wickets with seven balls to spare.

For the IPL scorecards and points table, scan the QR code

Innings scan	
KXIP	CSK
38	Dots 38
12	Fours 12
5	Sixes 3
53/1	PP 57/0
7.65	RR 8.17

and was taken to the cleaners. However, the momentum lost in the middle-overs was too much for Hooda to bridge.

The South African tried to bowl wide outside off-stump

## SCOREBOARD

## KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Shubman Gill c Buttler b Tewatia 36 (24b, 6x4), Nitish Rana c Samson b Archer 0 (1b), Rahul Tripathi c Uthappa b Shreyas 39 (34b, 4x4, 2x6), Sunil Narine c Stokes b Tewatia 0 (2b), Eoin Morgan (not out) 68 (35b, 5x4, 6x6), Dinesh Karthik c Smith b Tewatia 0 (1b); Andre Russell c (sub) Miller b Tyagi 25 (11b, 1x4, 3x6), Pat Cummins c Samson b Tyagi 15 (11b, 1x6), Kamlesh Nagarkoti (not out) 1 (1b); Extras (lb-5, w-2); 7; Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 191.

## FALL OF WICKETS

1-1 (Rana, 0.2 overs), 2-73 (Gill, 8.3), 3-74 (Narine, 8.6), 4-94 (Tripathi, 11.6), 5-99 (Karthik,

## DC and RCB in a battle for top-two finish

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

## ABU DHABI

Delhi Capitals and Royal Challengers Bangalore will need to find a way to arrest their rapid slides and secure a top-two finish. DC has lost four games on the trot while RCB has endured three successive defeats.

Monday's loser can still make the playoffs, but will have to wait till the Sunrisers Hyderabad-Mumbai Indians game on Tuesday. With KKR breathing down the necks of DC and RCB, a heavy defeat can potentially hamper chances.

For DC, the high-flying Dhawan has managed just six runs in the last three games, while Prithvi Shaw failed to make the playoffs.

There had been doubts whether he would lead the side next year after CSK

laid to rest to any speculations about his IPL future saying that he will play in the 2021 edition.

When asked by commentator Danny Morrison at the toss if it was his last IPL game, Dhoni said, "Definitely not".

There had been doubts whether he would lead the side next year after CSK

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## IN BRIEF



## Harris-Pucovski duo beats Waugh's record

ADELAIDE Test batsmen Marcus Harris and rising star Will Pucovski combined to record the biggest batting partnership in the history of Australia's Sheffield Shield domestic First Class competition. The pair put on 486 in an opening partnership for Victoria against South Australia, breaking the 30-year-old record set by brothers Steve and Mark Waugh. The partnership finally ended when Harris was out for 239 on Sunday. AP



## Dar sets record for most ODIs as on-field umpire

RAWALPINDI Aleem Dar broke the record for most ODIs as on-field umpire when he stood for his 210th match here on Sunday. The 52-year-old Pakistani surpassed South African Rudi Koertzen's record. Dar also holds the record for Tests (132) as well as most international matches (387). PTI



SOUTHAMPTON (BERMUDA) Anirban Lahiri finished day three at tied 11th in the Bermuda golf championship here on Saturday. Yet he stayed within striking distance of the Leaders. Lahiri returned two-under 69 for a total six-under, four behind leader Doc Redman (67).

Redman is one clear of Ryan Armour (70), Wyndham Clark (70) and Kramer Hickok (69). PTI

**Shubhankar stays in the hunt; Donaldson leads**

PAPHOS (CYPRUS) Shubhankar Sharma hung on for a gritty two-under 69 to be tied 12th after the third round of the inaugural Cyprus Open here on Saturday. He is only three behind leader Jamie Donaldson (69), who has a 14-under total. PTI

## Sona Polo wins title

NEW DELHI: Sona Polo beat Jindal Panther 12-10 in the final of the Indian Masters 14-goal polo tournament on Sunday. The teams were 8-8 at the end of the fourth chukker before Siddhant Sharma, Jack Richardson and Sunjay Kapur struck to tilt the balance in favour of Sona. Simran Shergill topscored for Jindal Panther with six goals.

**The results (final):** Sona Polo 12 (Siddhant Sharma 5, Jack Richardson 4, Surjy Kapur 3) bt Jindal Panther 10 (Simran Singh Shergill 6, Abhimanyu Pathak 2, Naveen Jindal, handicap 1).

## Sachin and Riya triumph

NEW DELHI: Sachin Chauhan and Riya Yadav claimed the honours in the 19-24 age category of the inaugural 54-hole World Amateur Golf Ranking (WAGR) event at the Jaypee Greens course. **The results:** Boys: 19-24 years: 198: Sachin Chauhan, 210: Arjun Gulati, 217: Anand Saprai; 15-18: 198: Aryan Kalia, 200: Gautam Potukhe, 202: Amal Jha; 13-14: 208: Sukhman Singh, 210: Parth Raman Sood, 214: Suryaansh Gulati.

**Girls:** 19-24 years: 203: Riya Yadav; 15-18: 207: Kriti Chohan, 218: Gia Lamba, 224: Priya Machiraju; 13-14: 212: Ragini Navet, 215: Amritha Mandav, 216: Srihitha Mandava.

**Combined nett scores:** Boys: 180: Ashwin Varma, 187: Amal Jha and Suryaansh Gulati.

**Girls:** 179: Riya Yadav, 187: Srihitha Mandava, 191: Simar Bal.

## Mercedes wins seventh title on the trot

Hamilton cashes in on teammate Bottas' ill-fortune to wrap up his 93rd race win



**Top of the world:** Lewis Hamilton and Valtteri Bottas hoist a Mercedes team trophy after the historic triumph on Sunday. ■ AP

## EMILIA-ROMAGNA GP

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE IMOLA

Lewis Hamilton made the most of his luck to lead teammate Valtteri Bottas home in Sunday's Emilia-Romagna Grand Prix as Mercedes sealed a record seventh consecutive constructors' championship triumph.

The six-time champion capitalised on pole-sitter Bottas' ill-fortune in picking up a debris-damaged floor to win with a near-flawless tactical drive and the fastest lap of a dramatic and incident-filled race at Imola.

Daniel Ricciardo finished third for Renault ahead of Daniil Kvyat of Alpha Tauri and Ferrari's Charles Leclerc after Max Verstappen had crashed out in his Red Bull in the closing stages.

"What an incredible achievement for all of you. I

am so proud of everybody and I am so grateful to be a part of it," Hamilton said on the team radio.

"Couldn't have done it without you," came back the reply from the jubilant Mercedes garage.

Hamilton's 93rd career success extended his lead over Bottas in the championship to 85 points with four races remaining.

## Memorable birthday

Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff, celebrating his 47th birthday, said: "I'm not so much into the numbers, but this is something to be proud of - as long as we can stay energised and motivated, I think we can push it for ever. We are looking forward to a new challenge."

Formula One takes a break next weekend before returning for the Turkish Grand Prix on November 15 where Hamilton could wrap

up a record-equalling seventh drivers' crown.

## The results:

1. Hamilton (Mercedes) 1h28m32.430s; 2. Bottas (Mercedes) +5.783s; 3. Ricciardo (Renault) 14.320; 4. Kvyat (AlphaTauri) 15.141; 5. Leclerc (Ferrari) 19.111; 6. Perez (Racing Point) 19.652.

7. Sainz Jr. (McLaren) 20.230; 8. Norris (McLaren) 21.131; 9. Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo) 22.224; 10. Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo) 26.398; 11. Latifi (Williams) 27.135; 12. Vettel (Ferrari) 28.453; 13. Stroll (Racing Point) 29.163; 14. Grosjean (Haas) 32.935; 15. Albon (Red Bull) 57.284s.

DNF: Russell (Williams); Verstappen (Red Bull); Magnussen (Haas); Ocon (Renault); Gasly (AlphaTauri)

**Standings: Drivers:** 1. Hamilton 282; Bottas 197; Verstappen 162; 4. Ricciardo 95; 5. Leclerc 85.

**Constructors:** 1. Mercedes 479; 2. Red Bull Racing 226; 3. Renault 135; 4. McLaren 134; 5. Racing Point 134.

## Rutuja triumphant on return to circuit

## TENNIS

## SPORTS BUREAU SHARM EL SHEIKH

Rutuja Bhosale returned to the professional circuit in style as she won the singles title beating Anna Siskova of the Czech Republic 6-3, 7-5 in the final of the \$15,000 ITF women's tennis tournament on Sunday.



Rutuja Bhosale.

ing well. Physically she is sharp and fresh for matches. We trained from July after the lockdown. Then she got married and came back for training.

"She is going to be playing a few weeks of tournaments now. A trainer is with her. I am confident that she will continue to have good results," said coach Hemant Bendrey.

**The result:** Final: Rutuja Bhosale bt Anna Siskova (Cze) 6-3, 7-5.

## Pakistan wins series



Iftikhar Ahmed. ■ AFP

## AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE RAWALPINDI

Spinner Iftikhar Ahmed grabbed a maiden five-wicket haul while Babar Azam notched up a half-century as Pakistan beat Zimbabwe by six wickets to win the second ODI and take a 2-0 lead in the three-match series on Sunday.

"His execution is a treat to watch. It is very important for us to have someone like him. He is an integral part of SRH's bowling attack," Sandeep said.

"We have to go and just express ourselves. We have nothing to lose and with the same attitude, we are going to go into the next game against Mumbai Indians on Tuesday," said Sandeep, who dismissed Devdutt Padikkal and Virat Kohli.

## Terrible feeling to lose three in a row: de Villiers

Says SRH played a "boring" game, but it was required on the Sharjah wicket



**Here's what we do!** Virat Kohli and A.B. de Villiers have a prep session with teammates. ■ BCCI/ IPL

win three in a row as well," de Villiers said.

de Villiers said the turning point of the match came when he and opener Josh Philippe were dismissed in quick succession. "That cost

us 20-30 runs, that was unfortunate. But, that might not have been enough in any way. The field got wet in the second innings which changed the conditions quite a bit. Maybe 140 would

have been short," he said.

The SRH bowlers put his side under a lot of pressure throughout the match, he said.

"We were initially talking about 160, which I think was a bit high. Then we thought 140 would be a good score. But credit to them. They bowled exceptionally well from the word go.

"They didn't give us many boundary balls, their seamers particularly started well in the PowerPlay. They didn't make a lot of mistakes and it didn't get easier when Rashid Khan came on, he didn't bowl any bad balls either. They put us under a lot of pressure."

de Villiers said SRH played a quite "boring" game, but that was required on the Sharjah wicket.

## Natarajan a different bowler now: Sandeep

'He is an integral part of SRH'

## V.V. SUBRAMANYAM HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad's Sandeep Sharma says left-arm pacer T. Natarajan is a totally different bowler now, after the two of them played crucial roles in the emphatic win over Royal Challengers Bangalore on Saturday.

"When I started bowling, it was a bit sticky. It's coming nicely, it's got cooler here, so it's helping.

## Knuckle ball

"I have been bowling the knuckle ball, Jonny (Baird) has been helping me. It took around three or four months to get it right," Sandeep said at the post-match media conference.

## AFI finally gears up to get off the blocks

Planning committee chairman Bhanot admits it is time to return to competitive mode

## ATHLETICS

## UTHRA GANESAN GURUGRAM

Forced to repeatedly reschedule its calendar and delay competitions due to COVID-19, the Athletics Federation of India (AFI) is now gearing up to finally get off the block, backed by the hosting of several events across the world.

With World Athletics president Sebastian Coe virtual addressing on the second day of the AFI AGM here on Sunday,

Planning Committee chairman Lalit Bhanot admitted it was time to return to competitive mode.

"The athletes are in training, we cannot sit idle forever and have to get into competition mode.

"There is not much time

left, we need to learn to live with COVID-19. We can start at state and district levels and then begin competition at the national level," Bhanot said.

**First senior event** The first senior event as per current schedule is expected to be the 1st Indian Grand Prix on February 12 in Trivandrum.

Coe, meanwhile, expressed optimism over Tokyo Olympics 2021 and encouraged AFI to begin serious preparations.

"I recently returned from Tokyo, the first international federation to do so, and I can safely say there is a cast-iron determination among all officials and stakeholders I met to stage the event next year.

"There will probably be adaptations, the conditions may be different and demand more of your teams than we have seen at Olym-

pic Games before, but please assure your athletes of the same and tell them to get into final preparations," he said.

**Pat for anti-doping work** Admitting an uncertain future made planning difficult, Coe nevertheless hoped to use lessons learnt during the pandemic – including hosting events at short notice despite restrictions – going ahead and appreciated the AFI for work on anti-doping and India's improving performances.

"None of the bravery of World Athletics would have counted if our federations did not back it up with their support and efforts.

"I cannot remember a time more challenging for all of us (but) we take comfort that we have managed our way through this difficult year (and) hope to take the lessons learnt into not such a challenging year," he added.

"None of the bravery of World Athletics would have counted if our federations did not back it up with their support and efforts.

"I cannot remember a time more challenging for all of us (but) we take comfort that we have managed our way through this difficult year (and) hope to take the lessons learnt into not such a challenging year," he added.

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