

**NEW DELHI WEDNESDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2020**



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**TABLOID | 16**

## Netflix India's series *Delhi Crime* featuring Shefali Shah wins coveted Emmy Award

## ■ Jammu house of ex-CMs built on illegal land acquired under Roshni Act

# J&K land scam: Abdullahs accused of encroachment



*Tells states to set up storage facilities*

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Kartika Shuddha  
 Ekadasi till 5.10 am  
 (Thursday)  
**Star:** Uttarabhadra till 6.20 pm  
**Varjyam:** Nil  
**Durmuhurtam:** 11.40 am to  
 12.25 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 12 noon to 1.30  
 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.24 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.52 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 3.14 PM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 2.14 AM**

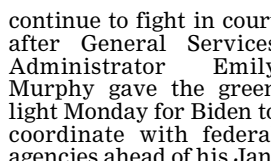
**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 24

■ **‘We do not see Priyanka and Salamat as Hindu-Muslim, but as 2 grown up individuals’**

# Don out

**Washington, Nov. 24:** The federal government has recognised President-elect Joe Biden as the "apparent winner" of the Nov. 3 election, formally starting the transition of power after President Donald Trump spent weeks testing the boundaries of American democracy. Mr Trump reluctantly accepted defeat after suffering yet more legal and procedural setbacks in his seemingly futile effort to overturn the election with baseless claims of fraud.

Mr Trump still refused to concede and vowed to



The fast-moving series of events seemed to let

► **THE LIST OF** beneficiaries made public on Tuesday names former chief ministers Farooq Abdullah, former finance minister Haseeb Drabu, his wife, Congress leader Krishna Kumar Amla who is the owner of Srinagar's Broadway Hotel among beneficiaries under Roshni Act that was enacted in 2001 and declared illegal last month

- List alleges that Abdullahs' residential house in Jammu is built over 1 acre which includes state land that's been 'physically encroached' upon but not 'shown in revenue records other than Roshni Act'
- The list also highlights the headquarters of the National Conference in both Srinagar and Jammu were legalised under the controversial Roshni Act

than Roshni Act", a charge denied by the father-son duo. It also highlighted that the headquarters of the National Conference in twin capitals of Srinagar and Jammu were legalised under the controversial act.

Mr Farooq Abdullah strongly refuted the allegation. "I'm not a beneficiary of the Roshni Act. I've not availed of the scheme for either my Srinagar resi-

The National Conference, the party of Abdullahs, in a statement alleged that the "news" that its president is a beneficiary of the Roshni scheme "is completely false and being spread with a malicious intent". It also said, "Dr Farooq Abdullah has not availed of the Roshni scheme for either his residence in

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM  
NOV. 24

Relenting to severe criticism against the controversial amendment, the Kerala government on Tuesday decided to recommend to the governor to scrap the amendment made to Kerala Police Act through an Ordinance.

A day after the chief minister said that the Ordinance was being put on hold, the Cabinet decided to recommend to the governor to promulgate a fresh Ordinance scrapping Section 118A which made a person making offensive/abusive remarks on social media liable for imprisonment up to three years.

**■ More on Page 3**

Pedestrians waded through a waterlogged road during heavy rain triggered by Cyclone Nivar in Chennai on Tuesday. Cyclonic storm 'Nivar' moved westwards, about 350 km southeast of Puducherry and 410 km east southeast of Chennai. It is very likely to intensify into a severe cyclonic storm, Indian Meteorological Department said on Tuesday evening. — PTI

From Jan. 1, all landline calls to mobile will begin with '0'

**New Delhi, Nov. 24:** Callers will soon need to add a prefix '0' for calls from landlines to mobile phones in the country. The telecommunications department requests that telecommunications make the necessary arrangements by January to implement the new system.

The department accepts the sector regulator Trai's recommendation to have the prefix '0' for such calls, a move that will create sufficient number space for telecommunications services. The Department of Telecommunications said in a circular on changing the switching pattern from fixed line numbers to mobile mobile numbers" to ensure adequate number resources for fixed and mobile services, Trai's recommendations of 29 May 2020 were accepted by the department. "The following can be implemented ... Fixed-to-mobile calls are selected with the prefix '0'. A suitable announcement could be made in the fixed line switches to let the fixed line subscribers see about the requirement to switch the prefix '0' for all fixed-to-mobile calls, 'DoT' said in a 20-letter circular. November. —PTI

**New Delhi:** India on Tuesday blocked 43 more Chinese mobile apps, including Alibaba Group Holding's e-commerce app AliExpress, in a fresh wave of web sanctions amid its border standoff with China. The banned applications, which include a few dating apps, were a threat to the "sovereignty and integrity of India", an official statement said.

Earlier on June 29 this year, the government had blocked access to 59 mobile apps and on September 2.

■ **More on Page 4**

**NAYEAR AZAD**  
PATNA, NOV. 24

The Rashtriya Janata Dal on Tuesday announced that the Mahagathbandhan party has fielded a candidate for the post of the Speaker against the ruling NDA's candidate in the newly constituted Bihar Assembly.

Leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav said that the party has fielded five

time RJD MLA from Siwan, Awadh Bihari Chaudhary, for the post against the ruling NDA nominee, three-time BJP MLA Vijay Kumar Sinha. "Our nominee for the post of Assembly Speaker is Awadh Bihari Chaudhary has submitted his nomination paper even before the ruling NDA announced its candidate, Mr Chaudhary is a five-time MLA and is aware of the Assembly proceedings. The decision to declare him as the candidate for the post was taken during a meeting with all grand alliance partners," Mr Yadav said on Tuesday.



**▶ THE GRAND ALLIANCE** of Opposition parties on Tuesday named Awadh Bahari

**Choudhury** as its candidate for the Speaker's post. Awadh Bahari is a five-time RJD MLA from Siwan. He will take on ruling NDA's nominee Vijay Kumar Sinha. Sinha is a BJP MLA.

▶ **THE SPEAKER'S** election is usually unanimous. But the Opposition's decision to field a candidate for the post has made the contest keenly watched.

grand alliance candidate, the election scheduled on Wednesday for the post would not be unanimous this time.

This is also the first time since the NDA came to power in 2005 that the BJP has staked claim for the post. During the recently concluded Assembly elections, the BJP became the single largest party in the NDA with 74 seats while its partner JD(U) won 43

▶ **Turn to Page 4**



## SHORT TAKES

**Delhi records 6,224 new Covid-19 cases**

**New Delhi:** The national capital recorded 6,224 fresh Covid cases on Tuesday with a positivity rate of 10.14 per cent, while 109 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 8,621 authorities said. These fresh cases came out of the 61,381 tests conducted on Monday, including 24,602 RT-PCR tests, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department. This is the seventh time in the last 13 days that the daily number of deaths has crossed the 100-mark. The active cases tally on Monday stood at 38,501. The bulletin said that the total number of cases has climbed to 5,40,541 of which 4,93,419 have recovered. The number of containment zones in Delhi rose to 4,708 on Monday. As many as 109 fatalities were recorded on Tuesday, as against 121 deaths on Monday. This is the seventh time in the last 13 days that the daily number of deaths has crossed the 100-mark. Authorities reported 121 deaths on Monday, 121 deaths on Sunday, 111 on Saturday, 118 on Friday, 131 on November 18, the highest till date, and 104 fatalities on November 12.

**3 die of corona in Noida, toll rises to 80**

**Noida:** Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddh Nagar recorded three more fatalities linked to Covid that pushed its death toll to 80, while the district's infection tally surged to 21,801 with 152 new cases on Tuesday, official data showed. Active cases in the district came down to 1,276 from 1,302 on the previous day, according to the data released by the UP health department for a 24-hour period. The number of active cases in Gautam Buddh Nagar is the fourth highest in the state. According to the department's data, 178 more patients were discharged during the period in Gautam Buddh Nagar with the overall recoveries reaching 20,445, the fifth highest in the state. With the death toll reaching 80, the district now has a mortality rate of 0.36 per cent. The recovery rate of patients reached 93.78 per cent, the statistics showed. Meanwhile, the number of active cases in UP rose slightly to 23,928 from 23,776 on Monday, according to the data. The overall recoveries in the state reached 4,99,507 as the death toll linked to Covid climbed to 7,615 on Tuesday, the data showed. — PTI

**Goyal, Parvesh Verma distribute face masks**

**New Delhi:** Former Union minister and senior BJP leader Vijay Goel along with party MP Parvesh Verma, on Tuesday, distributed face masks at Connaught Place saying he was saving people from the ₹2,000 fine imposed by the Arvind Kejriwal government. The former Union minister also demanded the Delhi government to provide masks to those who are being slapped with the ₹2,000 penalty for not wearing face masks. "Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has hiked the penalty for not wearing a face mask from ₹500 to ₹2,000. So, we are distributing face masks to save poor people facing coronavirus from financial loss," said Mr Goel outside the Rajiv Chowk Metro station gate. He said the government is not supposed to fine people. It should make people aware, something that they were doing and giving out masks free of cost.

**2 men arrested for blackmailing women**

**New Delhi:** A 20-year-old man and his accomplice have been arrested for allegedly extorting money from women by threatening to post their morphed obscene pictures on social media, police said on Tuesday. The accused, Shoaib Akhtar, used to work with a firm which provided loans to customers online. He, however, lost his job during the lockdown. According to police, Akhtar misused the database of his previous company and targeted the company clients. He along with his two associates, Nasimul Haqul and Jabbar, hatched a conspiracy to extort money from people by sending them their morphed obscene pictures, and threatened to post the same on social media, police said.

# Pollution played key role in 3rd Covid wave: CM to PM

## Urges Modi to reserve 1K ICU beds for Delhiites in Centre-run hospitals

**New Delhi, Nov 24:** At a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said the high severity of the third wave of Covid cases in the is due to many factors with pollution being a significant one, sources said. Mr Kejriwal told the Prime Minister that Delhi saw the peak of 8,600 Covid infections on November 10 during the third wave and since then, the number of cases as well as the positivity rate are steadily decreasing, the sources said. The CM hoped that this decreasing trend would continue in the Delhi.

Mr Kejriwal also appealed to PM Modi to reserve 1,000 ICU beds for Delhiites in Centre-run hospitals like AIIMS and Safdarjung Hospital as he underlined that the high severity of the third wave of Covid cases in the national capital is due to many factors with pollution being a significant one. During a Covid review meeting convened by PM Modi, Mr Kejriwal said if the Central government reserves these ICU beds in its hospitals in the city for the people of Delhi amid a surge in coronavirus case, "it will be a great support to us". During the meeting, Mr Kejriwal said that the Delhi government is not concerned about the non-

ICU Covid beds since it has an adequate number of such beds.

According to a statement, Mr Kejriwal told PM that out of the total ICU beds available across the city, around 3,500 are occupied and 724 are still vacant.

PM Modi interacted via video-conferencing with the chief ministers of the states that are witnessing a surge in the number of Covid cases to review the pandemic situation. "Home minister Amit Shah is helping in increasing the ICU beds, but if the Central government decides to reserve 1,000 beds for the people of Delhi in Central government hospitals like Safdarjung and AIIMS, it will be a great support to us. "We are thankful for all the help that we and the people of Delhi have received from the Central government during the entire epidemic," Mr Kejriwal said during the meeting.

Delhi recorded 6,224 fresh Covid cases on Tuesday with a positivity rate of 10.14 per cent, while 109 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 8,621 authorities said. These fresh cases came out of the 61,381 tests conducted on Monday, including 24,602 RT-PCR tests, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department. — PTI

# No chance of city schools resuming soon, says Sisodia

**New Delhi, Nov. 24:** Schools in the national capital which are closed due to the coronavirus pandemic are unlikely to reopen until a vaccine is available, deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said on Tuesday.

Universities and schools across the country were closed on March 16, when the Centre announced a countrywide classroom shutdown as part of measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

"Until we get some vaccine, schools (in Delhi) are not likely to open," Mr Sisodia, who is also Delhi's education minister, told reporters.

He had announced on October 30 that schools will remain closed until further orders, saying parents were not in favour of sending their ward to schools yet.

"We keep getting feedback from parents that they are really concerned about whether it is safe to reopen schools. It is not. Wherever schools have reopened, Covid cases among children have risen. So we have decided that as of now schools in the national capital will not reopen. They will continue to be closed till further orders," Mr Sisodia had said then.

A nationwide lockdown was imposed on March 25. While several restrictions have been eased in different "unlock" phases, educational institutions continue to remain closed.

According to "Unlock 5" guidelines, states can take a call on reopening schools in phases. Several states also began the process of reopening schools. While some of them announced closure again due to rise in coronavirus cases. Earlier, schools were allowed to call students from Class 9 to 12 to school on voluntary basis from September 21. However, the Delhi government decided against it.

Delhi recorded 6,224 fresh Covid cases on Tuesday with a positivity rate of 10.14 per cent, while 109 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 8,621 authorities said. These relatively low number of fresh cases came out of the 37,307 tests conducted on Sunday, including 18,046 RT-PCR tests, according to the latest bulletin issued by the Delhi health department. — PTI

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# Abdullahs accused of encroachment

■ **Continued from Page 1** The purpose of enactment, which granted ownership of state land to its occupants, was stated to be to raise money for power projects upon payment of a sum to be determined by the government. The cut-off year was set as 1990 by the NC government which, in 2005, was relaxed to 2004 by the then PDP-Congress government headed by Mufti Muhammad Sayeed and further relaxed to 2007 by his successor Ghulam Nabi Azad as the head of the coalition government.

However, it is alleged that the scheme was broadly misused by those who had acquired government land illegally and also by several powerful politicians, bureaucrats and influential businessmen and that the same caused a loss of ₹50,000 crore to the state treasury. "Roshni Act" initially envisaged conferment of proprietary rights of around 20.55 lakh lanals (102,750 hectares) to the occupants of which only 15.85 per cent land was approved for vesting of

ownership rights.

Following complaints of alleged misuse, the scheme was repealed by the then governor Satya Pal Malik on November 28, 2018. In October this year, the J&K high court, while acting on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by a Jammu-based pressure group IkkJutt Jammu, deemed the law and all allotments made under it as "null and void" and "unconstitutional". It also said that the rules framed in 2007 by the Congress-PDP government headed by Mr Azad did not appear to have any legislative sanction.

Acting on the court's direction, the Central Bureau of Investigation earlier this month registered three separate cases of alleged land grab.

The lists of beneficiaries were made public by the divisional administration, both in Kashmir Valley and Jammu regions, in accordance with the October 9 directive of the high court. These show former finance minister Haseeb Drabu, his wife, Congress leader Krishna



A boy wearing face mask walks past a mural on Covid and protective measures in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

# Kejri orders 1,200 breathing machines for ICU beds in city

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 24**

Amid a surge in the number of coronavirus cases in the city, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal has ordered for an immediate procurement of 1,200 BiPAP machines for the new ICU beds being added in the national capital this week, an official said on Tuesday.

He said the move will allow immediate operationalisation of the new ICU beds.

A total of 1,200 BiPAP machines will be procured immediately from the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), the official said.

A BiPAP machine is used to push air into the lungs. A patient wears a mask or nasal plugs that are con-

nected to the ventilator. The machine supplies pressurised air into him. It is called also called "positive pressure ventilation" because the device helps open patient lungs with this air pressure.

On Monday, Delhi health minister Satyendar Jain attributed the high Covid death rate in the city to the pollution caused by stubble-burning.

# 1st international transfer of Covid patient to Delhi

**SHASHI BHUSHAN NEW DELHI, NOV. 24**

In the first case of an international transfer of a Covid pneumonia patient on extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) machine, a team of doctors from a hospital in the city flew down to Kathmandu to put an ECMO on the sick patient who was then airlifted for transfer.

Elaborating on the condition of the patient, Dr Kewal Krishan, the director of heart transplant and ventricular assist

devices at the department of cardiovascular surgery at Max Hospital in Saket, said: "The patient from Uttarakhand was at Kathmandu in Nepal for a business trip. He had been complaining of fever for over a month and was initially treated at home. After 3-4 days, however, he developed difficulty in breathing and was diagnosed with Covid-19."

"He was admitted at a hospital in Kathmandu, but his oxygen saturation levels kept dropping despite mechanical venti-

lation. That's when we were contacted by the patient's family and we flew down to Kathmandu and put him on VV ECMO support

support," he added.

The principal director and chief of pulmonology (Cluster 1) at Max Hospital, Dr Vivek Nangia, said, "The patient had extensive pneumonia in both the lungs despite being on ventilator with 100 per cent support. That's when we decided to put him on ECMO. One of its major advantages is that it acts as an artificial lung outside the body and protects the patient from ventilator related complications."

According to doctors,

while an ECMO machine can help save a person's life, it does not treat the disease or injury that leads to heart or lung failure. The machine can only provide support for a person while the healthcare team works on treating the underlying disease.

ECMO is a life support machine replacing heart and or lung functions. The machine pumps blood from the patient's body to an artificial lung (oxygenator) that adds oxygen to it and removes carbon dioxide.



Members of a family wrapped in woolens sit at a road side during a cold morning in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

# 70-year-old Afghan refugee shot dead in Vikaspuri

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 24**

A 70-year-old Afghan refugee was shot dead allegedly by two unidentified bike-borne men outside his house in west Delhi's Vikaspuri area, police said on Tuesday.

The deceased has been identified as Attam Singh, a resident of Vikaspuri, they said.

On Monday around 5.20 pm, police received information about firing incident near house number H-358, Vikaspuri, following which they rushed to the spot, a senior police officer said.

"Singh was rushed to Sehgal Hospital, Outer Ring Road where he was declared brought dead. He received a bullet injury on his head," Deputy Commissioner of Police (west) Deepak Purohit said.

Two men, wearing helmets, on a motorcycle were seen near his home when he came back. When the deceased stopped his car, the pillion rider fired at him and later, the duo escaped from the spot, the officer said.

The post-mortem will be conducted at DDU hospital on Tuesday, police said.

The deceased was an Afghani refugee who settled in India 28 years back. He used to do sewa at Gurdwara at Anandpur Dham, Karala Village, they said.

Ha was a property dealer and used to deal in the sale-purchase of property near the Gurdwara, police said, adding that the recent deals are being checked.

The younger son of the deceased runs a mobile phone shop at Gaffar Market. Further investigation is underway.

# 46-yr-old man held for duping bank of ₹24.13cr

**AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 24**

A 46-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly duping a bank to the tune of ₹24.13 crore by selling the stocks of his company which he had hypothecated with the bank to avail various loans, police said on Tuesday. The accused, Pradeep Kumar Mittal, a resident of Pitampura, was arrested on Monday and later released on bail as per the order of a city court, they said.

According to police, the accused company availed loans worth ₹24.13 crore from the bank in 2013 by hypothecating stocks of raw materials, semi-finished goods and unfinished goods lying in its factory premises.

Mittal had agreed to regularly submit the statements of stocks and book debts to the bank, but

failed to do so.

A probe was initiated against the accused company on a complaint of the duped bank in 2018.

The bank alleged that when the accused failed to submit the statements of stocks and book debit to the bank in 2014, they visited the factory premises and found very negligible stock lying there and the unit was found non-functional.

Joint commissioner of police (Economic Offences Wing) O.P. Mishra said the directors of the company had availed credit facilities in 2013 from the bank.

The bank secured the credit facilities through the security by way of hypothecation of stocks of raw materials, semi-finished goods, goods in transit and book debts. Some properties were also mortgaged as collateral by the alleged company, he said.



## IN BRIEF

SC JUNKS PLEA  
SEEKING RECALL  
OF PM ELECTIONPARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 24

The Supreme Court on Tuesday dismissed a petition by a sacked BSF jawan Tej Bahadur Yadav who had sought the setting aside of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 2019 election from Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency on the grounds that the rejection of his nomination papers was illegal.

Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde heading a bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian, in a judgment dismissed the plea by Tej Bahadur saying it sees no merit in it and do not consider it necessary to issue notice to the Prime Minister Modi.

Speaking for the bench, Chief Justice Bobde said, "We see no merit in the appeal and do not consider it necessary to issue notice to the respondent (Prime Minister Modi). The appeal does not raise any arguable question of fact or law and admitting the appeal would amount to an exercise in futility for the court to do so."

Noting that the averment by Tej Bahadur does not disclose any cause of action which invest him with right to sue, the court said, "It is settled that where a person has no interest at all, or no sufficient interest to support a legal claim or action he will have no locus standi to sue."

Referring to Section 83 of the Representation of People Act, 1951, that allows only an elector or candidate of a constituency to file an election petition against a successful candidate from that constituency, the court while dismissing the petition by Tej Bahadur said, "We are, therefore, of the view that the present election petition has been rightly nipped in the bud" by Allahabad high court.

ODISHA COPS  
CRACK IIFL  
DACOITY CASEAKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO  
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 24

Odisha police on Tuesday claimed it had cracked the IIFL Finance Ltd's office dacoity case in Cuttack by arresting all the four accused and recovering nearly 2 kilograms of gold ornaments from them.

The Twin City Commissioner of Police, Dr Sudhansu Sarangi, said the dacoity was masterminded by an insider of the IIFL Finance Ltd's local unit and the police cracked it with help of experts from Hyderabad.

Dr Sarangi said the mastermind of the crime was Lala Amrit Ray, an employee at the company.

Lala had planned the loot with the help of one of his college friends, identified as Ranjan Behara alias Bapu and two others.

On November 19, four miscreants who came on a couple of motorcycles stormed into the IIFL Finance office at Naya Sarak and took away gold ornaments and cash, all estimated to be worth over ₹12 crore. The loot was possible on account of the poor security measures at the office of which the miscreants took full advantage.

There were several loopholes in the security measures at the company which did not bother to even verify the antecedents of its staff before appointing them, said the CP.

MAN SHOOT  
WOMAN COP  
IN MP DISTRICT

Dhar/Barwani, Nov. 24: A 23-year-old woman constable was allegedly shot by a man over her refusal to marry him in Madhya Pradesh's Dhar district on Tuesday, police said.

Both the victim and the accused, who later shot himself in the chest, are undergoing treatment at a hospital in Barwani, an official said.

The incident took place near Gadakpur Chokdi in Dhar, where Karan Thakur (26) shot at the constable, who was heading towards Barwani after distributing some wedding invitations, the official said.

The accused intercepted the victim's car, fired at her and then shot himself in the chest, he said.

The constable, who is posted in Rajgarh district, sustained a bullet injury in her neck and will be operated on, Khargone's (DIG) Tilak Singh said. —PTI

Kerala Cabinet scraps  
Police Act amendmentAGE CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVNANTHAPURAM,  
NOV. 24

The Kerala Cabinet on Tuesday decided to recommend to the governor to scrap the controversial amendment made to Kerala Police Act through ordinance.

The Cabinet which met earlier in the day decided to recommend to governor Arif Mohammad Khan to promulgate a fresh ordinance scrapping Section 118 A which made a person making offensive /abusive remarks on social media liable for imprisonment up to three years or a fine of ₹10,000 or both.

Relenting to severe criticism against the controversial amendment from across the country, the government on Monday had decided to put the

► **MANY LEADERS** in the LDF felt that putting the ordinance in abeyance could prove detrimental to the ruling front during the local body elections

ordinance on hold.

However, with demands coming up from various quarters, including from Left circles to scrap it completely, the Cabinet decided to bury the controversial amendment.

Many leaders in the LDF felt that putting the ordinance in abeyance could prove detrimental to the ruling front during the coming local body elections.

The Opposition Congress and BJP had already launched a campaign alleging that the controversial ordinance was brought to gag the media, social media from

reporting the gold smuggling case, narcotics and money laundering cases against the chief minister's former principal secretary and the son of a prominent CPM leader respectively. Under these circumstances the party leadership and the government felt that withdrawing the ordinance was the only option.

Moreover, the central leadership of the CPM, particularly party general secretary Sitaram Yechury, had taken a strong stand on the issue forcing the government to act promptly on the controversial ordinance. Many in the Left feel that an ordinance which is diametrically opposite to the well stated position of the party on freedom of speech, should not have been brought in the first place.

SC notice to govt  
to fix uniform rate  
for RT-PCR testPARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 24

The Supreme Court on Tuesday sought response from the Centre on plea to cap charges for RT-PCR tests uniformly at ₹400 instead of varying rates being charged across the country for testing suspected Covid patients. While issuing notice, a bench comprising Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, Justices A.S. Bopanna and V. Ramasubramanian tagged the public interest petition by a lawyer Ajay Agarwal with an earlier matter also pending before the bench headed by the Chief Justice.

Mr Agrawal has contended that different rates are being charged

across the country whereas the actual cost of the test works out at just ₹200.

At present, the charges for the RT-PCR test is being fixed between the range of ₹900 to ₹2,800 by various state governments, UTs and NCT of Delhi. Agarwal has urged the court to direct that the cost of RT-PCR test be uniformly fixed at ₹400 across the country.

"And the matter is concerned with 135 crore citizen of the country as everybody worried about the coronavirus," the petition said.

It alleged that the owners of the private laboratories and hospitals are using the calamity into opportunities for minting crores and crores of rupees.

## Nivar may be in 'very severe' category

Storm expected to cross TN, Puducherry coasts today with wind speed of 130km/hr

New Delhi, Nov. 24: Cyclone Nivar is expected to intensify into a "very severe" cyclonic storm and cross Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts between Karaikal and Mamallapuram on the late evening of November 25, IMD director general Mrutunjay Mohapatra said on Tuesday.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) had initially predicted that Cyclone Nivar was likely to intensify into a "severe" cyclonic storm but has now estimated that it will intensify further.

Nivar is the second cyclone in the Bay of Bengal this year. In May, Cyclone Amphan had developed into a "super" cyclonic storm.

"Our forecast is it will intensify into a very severe cyclonic storm by (Tuesday) tonight

"It is very likely to cross Tamil Nadu and Puducherry coasts between Karaikal and Mamallapuram around Puducherry during November 25 late evening as a very severe cyclonic storm with a wind speed of 120-130 kilometres per hour gusting to 145 kmph," Mr Mohapatra said.

Besides strong winds, the cyclone is also expected to bring heavy rains. The India Meteorological Department has issued red alert for coastal and north interior



Police personnel manage traffic on a road during heavy rains triggered by Cyclone Nivar in Chennai on Tuesday.

Tamilnadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, for November 25, the top meteorologist said. "Isolated extremely heavy rainfall activity also very likely over coastal and north interior Tamil Nadu and Puducherry (Pudukottai, Thanjavur, Tiruvannamalai, Chengalpattu to Ariyalur, Perambalur and Karaikal districts during 25th) and over Nellore and Chittoor

► **THE IMD** has also suggested total suspension of fishing operations and motorboats and small boats, shifting of people residing in coastal areas to safer places, judicious regulation of road, air and rail traffic

► **BESIDES STRONG** winds, the cyclone is also expected to bring heavy rains

districts of Andhra Pradesh on 25th and over Rayalseema and south-east Telangana on November 26," the IMD

said.

He added that cyclone leads to multi-hazard scenario. In event of the cyclone, there could be serious damage to thatched huts, disruption of power and communications networks, an official spokesperson said.

The NCMC reviewed the status of impending cyclone Nivar at a meeting held through video conferencing with the chief secretaries of Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry. The chief secretaries of the three states, directors general of IMD and NDRF briefed the NCMC about their preparedness. —PTI

India announces projects  
worth \$80m in AfghanistanAGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 24

India on Tuesday announced major commitments at the Afghanistan Conference 2020. The conference is being organised in Geneva from November 23-24 over video conferencing in which the Indian delegation is led by external affairs minister S. Jaishankar.

In his statement, the EAM emphasised India's long term commitment to the development of Afghanistan and the benefit of its people as a "contiguous neighbour and strategic partner".

The EAM announced at the conference that India had just concluded with Afghanistan an agreement for the construction of the Shatoot dam, which would provide safe drinking water to 2 million residents of Kabul city. India had earlier built the 202-km Phul-e-Khumri transmission line that provided electricity to Kabul city.

Mr Jaishankar also announced the launch of Phase-IV of the High Impact Community Development Projects in Afghanistan, which envisages more than 100 projects worth \$80 million that India would

undertake in Afghanistan.

"I'd like to thank India and Iran for the Chahbahar corridor in the related sea corridor as well as the air corridor," Afghanistan President Ashraf Ghani said in his keynote speech. The conference is co-hosted by the UN, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and the Government of Finland and aims to reaffirm the commitment of the International community to Afghanistan during the second half of the transformational decade 2015-2024.

Lalu trying to poach NDA  
MLAs in Bihar: Sushil Modi

Patna, Nov. 24: Lalu Prasad is trying to poach NDA MLAs in Bihar in a bid to topple the Nitish Kumar government and help the Grand Alliance helmed by his RJD achieve power in the state, senior BJP leader Sushil Kumar Modi claimed on Tuesday.

The former deputy chief minister made the sensa-

tional assertion on his twitter handle, sharing a mobile number which, he claimed, Mr Prasad was having access to despite serving sentences in fodder scam cases.

The RJD supreme is in Ranchi, where he has been sentenced by a special CBI court in a number of fodder scam cases. —PTI

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer/Traction Distribution, DRM's Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi for & on behalf of President of India, invites open e-tender under single packet system for the under noted work:	
1. Name of Work with its Location	Part-B: Electrification of left out sidings by RE in DLI-ROK-BTI section.
2. Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 52,85,892.19
3. Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 1,05,700/-
4. E-Tender Bid Online Submission Period	03.12.2020 (00.00 Hrs.) to 17.12.2020 (15.00 Hrs.)
5. E-Tender Bid Submission End Date & E-Tender Open Date & Time	17.12.2020 (15.00 hrs.)
6. Fund Allocation	EBR
7. Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
E-Tender No.: 19-TRD-NDLS-2020-21 Dated 24.11.2020 2630/2020	
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON	
See Section 82 Cr. PC	
Whereas complaint has been made before me that Mohd Wakil S/o Ibrahim R/o: D-27, Gali No. 4, M-2nd, Sangam Vihar, New Delhi has committed (or are suspected to have committed) case FIR No. 323/20, Dt. 29.06.2020, U/s 323/506 & 4th Muslim Act IPC, has been registered at P.S. Neb Sarai, New Delhi punishable and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest there on issued that the said accused person Mohd Wakil cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused person Mohd Wakil absconded (or are concealing themselves to avoid the service of the said warrant).	
Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Mohd Wakil of case FIR No. 323/20, Dt. 29.06.2020, U/s 323/506 & 4th Muslim Act IPC, at P.S.Neb Sarai are required to appear before the court to answer the said complaint on or before 14.01.2021.	
By Order Mr. Anuj Kumar Singh, Court No. 212, Saket Metropolitan Magistrate, Saket Court Complex, New Delhi	
DP/326/SD/2020	

CAN FIN HOMES LTD.	
Plot No.C-3, Above Canara Bank, Sec-1, Noida-201301, General: 0120-2870164/65/67, 7625079126 Email: noida@canfinhomes.com, Web: www.canfinhomes.com CIN: L85110KA1987PLC008699	
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES	
Proviso to rule 9 (1)	
SALE NOTICE for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with provision to Rule 9(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.	
NOTICE is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. Noida Branch, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 16-12-2020 for recovery of Rs. 18,32,528/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Thirty Two Thousand Five Hundred Twenty Eight Only) due to Can Fin Homes Ltd. from Mr. Santu Ram and Baleshwari (Borrowers) and Dharendra Singh Rawat (Guarantor) as on 04-05-2016 together with further interest and other charges thereon. The reserve price will be Rs. 18,70,000/- (Rupees Eighteen Lakh Seventy Thousand Only) and the earnest money deposit will be Rs. 1,87,000/- (Rupees One Lakh Eighty seven Thousand Only).	
DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPERTY	
Flat No. Y-271 A, Ground Floor, Block – Y, Sector-12, Noida, Pin-201301 North - Other Property, South - 9 Mtr Wide Road, East - Flat No 272 A, West - Flat No 270 A The detailed terms and conditions of the sale are provided in the official website of Can Fin Homes Ltd., (www.canfinhomes.com). Please refer to the following link https://www.canfinhomes.com/SearchAuction.aspx	
Date : 25.11.2020 Place : NOIDA	Sd/-, Authorised Officer Can Fin Homes Ltd.

CAN FIN HOMES LTD.	
Plot No.C-3, Above Canara Bank, Sec-1, Noida-201301, General: 0120-2870164/65/67, 7625079126 Email: noida@canfinhomes.com, Web: www.canfinhomes.com CIN: L85110KA1987PLC008699	
POSSESSION NOTICE Rule 8(1)	
The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice dated 06-02-20 calling upon the borrowers Mr. Dharmveer Singh & Mrs. Kamlesh Chauhan to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being Rs. 24,84,145/- with further interest at contractual rates, till date of realization within 60 days from the date of the said notice.	
The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this the 21st day of November 2020.	
The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.	
The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of CFHL for an amount of Rs. 24,84,145/- and interest thereon.	
DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY	
House No. 02, Nagar Nigam No. 92, Khasra No. 817, Guldhar - II, Dhargal, Ghaziabad, UP-201002 BOUNDRIES: North by – Plot of Rekha Tyagi, South by- Plot of Verma, East by – Road 20 Ft wide, West by – Plot of Vikash	
Date : 24.11.2020 Place: NOIDA	Sd/- Authorised Officer Can Fin Homes Ltd.

New Okhla Industrial Development Authority	
Administrative Building, Sector - 6, Noida - 201301 (U.P.) Website : www.noidaauthorityonline.com	
E-TENDER NOTICE	
E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on Noida Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & https://etender.up.nic.in. Please ensure to see these website for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.	
A) (1) 17/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/20-21 M/o D/o Village (Two Year R/o PVC Water Line in Village-Hazipur & 5% Abadi Sector-104) Noida. Cost Rs. 28.61 Lacs (2) 19/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/20-21 M/o Sewerage (Making Connection of Sewer Line Newly Layers Sewer Line From C-135 to C-105, Sector-108, Noida. Cost Rs. 09.53 Lacs (3) 31/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/20-21 M/o W/s (Repair of Damaged MS Line Near Khoda T_Point and Rajat Vihar Sector-62) Noida. Cost Rs. 17.73 Lacs The above tenders can be uploaded by date 01.12.2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 02.12.2020 at 11.00 AM. B) (1) 32/DGM(JAL)/AO/SM(JAL)-I/20-21 M/o W/S (Two Year Cleaning of UGR-58, OHT-58 and UGR-60 in Network Sector-57 to 60) Noida Cost Rs. 11.51 Lacs The above tenders can be uploaded by date 08.12.2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 09.12.2020 at 11.00 AM.	
Office- Sector-05	SENIOR MANAGER (JAL)-I, NOIDA
CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA	

## DESPERATE | MOVE HC asks actress, her sister to appear before police on Jan. 8

## Kangana gets interim protection from arrest

SHAHAB ANSARI  
MUMBAI, NOV. 24

The Bombay high court on Tuesday granted interim protection from arrest to actress Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandel and also questioned the charge of sedition slapped on the sisters. The sisters have approached the HC seeking quashing of FIR against them by Mumbai police for alleged hateful tweets.

A division bench of Justice S.S. Shinde and

Justice M.S. Karnik granted them relief after their lawyer Rizwan Siddiqui assured it that the sisters would appear before the Mumbai police on January 8, 2021, in compliance with the summons issued to them.

During the hearing, the bench observed that there is a trend of adding Section 124A (sedition) of IPC to complaints registered against those speaking against the government. The judges also asked the chief public prosecutor Deepak



Thakre to explain to the court the need to invoke Section 124A of the IPC in this case.

The bench suggested Mr Thakre to conduct a workshop with the police and tell them what sections to add as per offences.

In the meantime, senior advocate Rizwan Merch-

ant on behalf of original complainant Munawwar Ali Syed requested the court to seek undertaking from Ranaut and Chandel that they will refrain from making any more "instigating comments" on their social media handles. On the other hand advocate Rizwan Siddiqui argued that, "What is instigating is subjective and if any statements are made, then the due process will follow."

However, the bench asked him to take instruc-

tions from the sisters that they will not put anything related to this matter on social media handles.

The court opined that, "There is freedom of speech, no doubt, but that freedom is for the other citizens too."

Following this advocate Siddiqui assured the court that Ranaut and her sister will appear before the police on January 8, 2021 and that they will not make any statements pertaining to the subject matter of the FIR under challenge.



## IN BRIEF

### BAGHEL SAYS CONG LEADERS USING WRONG PLATFORM

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, NOV. 24

Chhattisgarh chief minister Bhupesh Baghel on Tuesday lambasted the Congress leaders who demanded change of party leadership, saying that they were using the wrong platform to raise such an issue.

"Those who talk of change of system, structure and leadership of Congress have chosen the wrong platform to raise the issue", Baghel said in his Twitter post.

Baghel's statement comes in the wake of senior Congress leaders like Gulam Nabi Azad and Kapil Sibal going to the media to express their views on the need for restructuring the party to make it more democratic.

"Congress party is an ideology and ideology has no structure. Ideology is the 'neev' (foundation)", he tweeted.

He dared these leaders to work on the ground. "Hit the street carrying the Tricolor and flag of Congress. Then, the realisation that the problem does not lie in foundation nor in structure (of the party), will come", another Twitter post by him said.

It is time (for the leaders) to put up a fight to save 'idea of India' along with Congress workers, he added.

Baghel, who is known to be a staunch loyalist of former AICC president Rahul Gandhi, has, however, observed the foundation of Congress has always been and will always be strengthened by workers of the party.



Bhupesh Baghel

### Bihar Speaker

■ Continued from Page 1

seats. Two other NDA partners Hindustani Awam Morcha and Vikasheel Insaan Party won four seats each, taking the NDA total to 125 in the 243-member House.

The grand alliance comprising RJD, Congress and three Left parties — CPI, CPI(M) and CPI(ML) — has won 110 seats.

Reports suggest that the RJD which has emerged as the largest party in the state with 75 seats is also in touch with AIMIM and few Independent MLAs seeking support for the post of the Assembly speaker.

The AIMIM has entered Bihar Assembly for the first time by winning five seats in Seemanchal and Kosi region of the state.

"We are in touch with other political parties regarding the issue and we hope that this time the grand alliance will have its Speaker in the state Assembly," Mr Yadav said.

When he was asked why his party has decided to field its nominee when there is a tradition that the ruling alliance gets unanimous support, Mr Yadav said, "There is also a tradition that the opposition has its candidate appointed for the post of Deputy Speaker but in the previous assembly despite our request, the post was kept vacant".

### UP govt okays law against conversion

■ Continued from Page 1

Sidharth Nath Singh said, "The way in which religious conversions are done using deceit, lies, force and dishonesty is heart wrenching, and it was necessary to have a law in this regard."

He said punishment under the new law is a jail term from one to five years, and a fine of ₹15,000.

But if the woman involved is a minor or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe, the jail term would range from three to 10 years, he said. The fine too would increase, to ₹25,000.

"In the case of mass conversions, the punishment is from three years to 10 years and a fine of Rs 50,000 on the organisations which indulge in it," the minister told reporters.

Mr Singh said if anyone wants to change religion after marriage, then he or she can do so. But the district magistrate has to be informed two months in advance in a prescribed form, and the person can convert once permission is granted.

He claimed that this will resolve law and order problems.

— Agencies

### MP to keep vigil on film shootings

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, NOV. 24

Amid row over a kissing scene in Mira Nair-directed web series *A Suitable Boy* reportedly shot in a famous Hindu shrine in Madhya Pradesh, the state government on Tuesday decided to keep a vigil on shootings of films in temples of MP.

State home minister Narottam Mishra said that an officer of the MP government will henceforth be deputed to monitor the shooting of films in the temples. The officer concerned would record the shootings and submit the recordings to the state government for scrutiny, he added.

The decision comes in the wake of the row erupted over a kissing scene in the web series *A Suitable Boy*, leading the Rewa district police to lodge an FIR against two officials of Netflix.

### Final journey



Congress MP Gaurav Gogoi near the mortal remains of his father and former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi in Guwahati on Tuesday. Tarun Gogoi, 86, passed away at the Gauhati Medical College Hospital, where he was receiving treatment for post-Covid complications. Scores of people and leaders cutting across party lines gathered at Tarun Gogoi's official residence in Dispur to pay their last respects. The Assam government has announced a three-day state mourning in honour of Tarun Gogoi.

— PTI

## Maha CM urges PM to stop BJP's political protests

SONU SHRIVASTAVA  
MUMBAI, NOV. 24

While participating in the video conference meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the chief ministers of other eight states, Maharashtra chief minister Uddhav Thackeray urged the PM to rein in political parties carrying out politically motivated protests in the times of the coronavirus pandemic.

Mr Thackeray's remarks were made in the wake of the agitations carried out by the BJP in Maharashtra for demands such as opening of temples and relief in electricity bills.

The CM said, "The fear of the second wave is looming large but 'some political' parties are playing with the lives of the people by violating the health protocols. They should be explained the current situation properly and asked not to play politics."

Mr Thackeray also said that either the PM or home minister Amit Shah should call a meeting with all the political parties and apprise them about the gravity of the situation. "Instead of playing politics, all the political parties should be



Uddhav Thackeray

told to assist to contain the pandemic," he said.

Meanwhile, the state government has formed a task force to manage the distribution of Covid-19 vaccine and to decide how vaccination will be carried out in the state. According to an official statement from chief minister office (CMO), Mr Thackeray informed Mr Modi about the task force.

"A task force has been set up to manage the distribution and vaccination in Maharashtra and the government is in constant touch with Adar Poonawalla of the Serum Institute of India to track development of the coronavirus vaccine," Mr Thackeray said in the statement. Poonawalla is the CEO of the Serum Institute of India, which has partnered with AstraZeneca for manufacturing the Oxford vaccine for Covid-19.

## ED raids premises linked to Sena MLA

SAURABH JOSHI  
MUMBAI, NOV. 24

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday raided premises owned by Shiv Sena MLA Pratap Sarnaik in connection with a probe into an alleged money laundering probe and detained his son Vihang for questioning at the agency's Ballard Pier office. The ED raided 10 locations in Mumbai and Thane, including premises of security agency 'Tops'. The raids have been criticised by the Sena leaders.

The officials said raids began in the morning and multiple locations and

they seized several documents and other items related with the probe. The agency detained Vihang and he was taken to the ED office at around 3.15 pm for questioning. The ED is probing alleged laundering of funds by the father son duo.

"Probe is underway to trail the proceeds of the business to ascertain if the money was illegally laundered overseas. Those involved will be questioned during the course of investigation," said an officer. The searches also included premises of promoters of a security company, some of whom are politicians.

## Vaccine for all, avoid politics over Covid: PM

■ Continued from Page 1

raising the frequency of RT-PCR tests (considered the most accurate in terms of detecting the coronavirus infection), Mr Modi also said cold storage facilities for storing the vaccine must be made available on a priority basis. He added efforts were on to make medical colleges and district hospitals self-sufficient in oxygen generation, and said the process for establishing over 160 new oxygen plants was under way.

Attacking his political rivals, Mr Modi said at the meeting that while no one

can forecast when the vaccine will come, "some people" were playing politics over it and nobody can stop them from doing so.

Besides Gujarat, Haryana and West Bengal, the CMs of other states that participated in the meeting included Delhi, Rajasthan, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra and Kerala. It was also attended by Union home minister Amit Shah and health minister Harsh Vardhan.

Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray said he was in constant touch with Serum Institute CEO Adar Poonawalla and that the

state had formed a task force to ensure timely distribution of the vaccine and executing the vaccination programme. The state leads the nation in the number of infections and deaths.

While Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal sought the Centre's urgent intervention in curbing the annual pollution that occurs due to the burning of crop stubble during winter, West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee sought the state's GST dues from the PM at the meeting, saying the infection was under control in the state.

Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot said his government had cut out the rapid antigen tests, whose results were often inaccurate. He said all Covid tests conducted in the state were RT-PCR tests, and the number had touched 30,000-plus a day. He said the state government was also taking other precautions, including a ban on crackers, a law on mask usage, night curfew and restraint on gatherings to curb the infection.

Sources said when Haryana CM Manohar Lal Khattar started reeling out

figures on the number of infections and deaths in the state, Mr Modi cut him short and asked about his plan to tackle the infection instead, rather than reeling out figures.

The PM urged all chief ministers to share their feedback in writing on their strategies to counter the pandemic, and said no one could impose any view on each other as everybody had to work together.

The Prime Minister made it clear that in the first stage the vaccine will be given to frontline health workers, in the second stage to the police and

## Metoo suit: Ramani, MJ refuse settlement

New Delhi, Nov. 24: Former minister M.J. Akbar and journalist Priya Ramani on Tuesday refused any settlement between them in a criminal defamation complaint filed by him against her.

Senior advocate Geeta Luthra, appearing for Mr Akbar, said that if Ms Ramani was apologetic for her allegations, she would ask him to consider closing the complaint.

Ms Ramani's counsel, Bhavook Chauhan, said however that she stood by her statement and if Mr Akbar wanted to withdraw the complaint, he may do so.

Did the counsel (for both the parties) have a chance to talk or are the doors shut, the court sought to know on Tuesday.

Ms Ramani's advocate replied in negative. No, our stand is clear. She stands by her statement. If the complainant wants to withdraw, then he may bring it on record.

Mr Luthra said, I've gone on with my matter. If the

accused was apologetic... If there is any indication from them (accused and her counsel) I will ask my briefing counsel.

Briefing counsels are link between the client and a "senior advocate".

After the submission on behalf of Ms Ramani, Mr Akbar's counsel said, Let's continue on merits.

Mr Akbar had filed the complaint against Ms Ramani for allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct around 20 years ago when he was a journalist.

Ms Ramani had said the allegations against Akbar, made in the wake of #MeToo movement in 2018, were her truth and were made in public good.

Additional chief metropolitan magistrate Ravindra Kumar Pandey, who started hearing afresh final arguments in the case, had on Saturday asked both the parties whether there was a chance of settlement between them in the matter.

— PTI

## 'Denied justice', couple attempts suicide outside Odisha Assembly

Alleges police inaction in 5-yr-old daughter's kidnapping, murder case

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO  
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 24

A couple hailing from Odisha's Nayagarh district on Tuesday attempted self-immolation in front of the Assembly protesting what they said was 'police inaction' to arrest the culprits involved in kidnapping and killing of their five-year-old daughter.

Before the couple set themselves afire by lighting the matchstick, the alert police personnel deployed there rescued them unhurt.

The couple said the police was not acting sincerely to apprehend the culprits as the key accused

- Babuli Nayak - is the strong supporter of state agriculture minister Arun Kumar Sahoo and active member of the Naveen Patnaik-led Biju Janata Dal.

Their daughter Pari was abducted on July 14 by some unidentified miscreants while playing the backyard of their house. Seven days later on July 23, chopped off body parts of the girl packed in a gunny bag was recovered from the same place by her parents.

Though the parents had lodged a missing report in the local Nayagarh Sadar Police Station on the very day Pari was abducted, the police allegedly did not take any prompt step to

● THE COUPLE'S daughter was abducted on July 14 by some unidentified miscreants while playing in the backyard of their house. Seven days later on July 23, the girl's chopped off body parts packed were found in a gunny bag from the same place by her parents.

● BEFORE THE couple set themselves afire, alert police personnel outside the Odisha Assembly rescued them unhurt

rescue her:

Pari's parents — Ashok Sahoo and Soudamini Sahu — met top police officials and

named the suspects in the case. They told the police that one Babuli Nayak, a confidant of minister Arun Sahoo, was the key culprit.

The police never attempted to take Babuli Nayak into custody. As a result, Babuli and others made lethal attacks on the couple at their home. The injured couple was rushed to the local district headquarters hospital.

While nursing their grievous wounds in hospitals, the couple was again attacked allegedly by Babuli and his goons.

With no hope of a peaceful living at their home, the couple fled to their relatives' place at Laxmi Prasad. The police went to

Laxmi Prasad late at night four days ago and took them along with their relatives to the police station, where they were allegedly forced to keep quiet on the matter.

"We have been begging for justice since we lost our beloved child. But what we have got so far is an assault by the culprits and police inaction," the couple said.

After their rescue, the couple was sent back to Nayagarh by the Bhubaneswar police.

"The couple talked to Superintendent of Police (SP) Pratyush Diwakar. We assured them justice," said deputy commissioner of police Uma Shankar Dash.

## After ED, Customs arrest Kerala CM's ex-secretary

GILVESTER ASSARY  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, NOV. 24

Troubles for chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar are far from over with Customs recording his arrest in connection with the gold smuggling case.

The Customs officials visited Sivasankar in Kakkanaad jail in Ernakulam district where he is currently under judicial custody in a case registered by the Enforcement Directorate earlier. He was arrested by the ED in connection with the money trail associated with the gold smuggling case in which he is the fifth accused.

The Customs recorded his arrest a day after the special court for Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) cases allowed Customs to take Sivasankar into custody.

The Customs while seeking his custody had claimed that they had received direct incriminating material against the bureaucrat regarding his involvement in gold



M. Sivasankar

smuggling through diplomatic baggage.

The Customs has cited the statement given by key accused Swapna Suresh in which she alleged that Sivasankar was involved in the gold smuggling conspiracy. His detailed questioning was essential to probe the different channels involved in gold smuggling.

It may be recalled that the Customs had earlier arrested 15 persons in connection with the case including Swapna Suresh, Sarith P.S. and Sandeep Nair in connection with the seizure of 30 kg of gold which was smuggled through diplomatic baggage meant for a senior official of UAE consulate in Thiruvananthapuram.

The seizure made by the customs at the Thiruvananthapuram international airport on July 5 exposed a huge racket involving several people.

● THE CUSTOMS claimed that they had received direct incriminating material against the Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary regarding his involvement in gold smuggling through diplomatic baggage.

tional airport on July 5 exposed a huge racket involving several people.

The Customs told the court that it has sufficient information regarding the suspended officer's involvement in the case. The gold smuggling case is being currently investigated separately by premier Central agencies, including National Investigation Agency, the ED and the Customs.

Meanwhile, the Kerala High Court has sought the response of ED officials on the bail plea moved by Mr Sivasankar in the money laundering case linked to the gold smuggling racket. In his petition, Sivasankar alleges that the agency produced just selected WhatsApp messages before the court to mislead it and implicate him in the case

## Govt bans AliExpress, 42 other China apps

New Delhi, Nov. 25: The government on Tuesday blocked access to 43 more Chinese mobile apps, including Alibaba Workbench, AliExpress, Alipay Cashier, CamCard and WeDate, for being prejudicial to the sovereignty, integrity and defence of the nation.

The ministry of electronics and IT has issued the order for blocking the access of these apps by users in India based on the comprehensive reports received from Indian cyber crime coordination centre, ministry of home affairs, an official release said.

Sources, meanwhile, said these apps have Chinese links.

Earlier on June 29, the government had blocked access to 59 mobile apps and on September 2, 2020 another 118 apps were banned under section 69A of the Information Technology Act.

"Government of India today issued an order under section 69A of the Information Technology Act blocking access to 43 mobile apps. This action was taken based on the inputs regarding these apps for engaging in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of state and public order," the release said.

The blocked apps include Alibaba Workbench, AliExpress, Alipay Cashier, CamCard and WeDate.

The government had banned 59 apps on June 29, 2020, and on September 2 it had banned 118 more apps. Previously apps like TikTok, Bigo Live, PUBG Mobile, which were all very popular in India, were banned.

— PTI



# THE ASIAN AGE

25 NOVEMBER 2020

## Corporate takeover of banks a dangerous idea

Recommendations of an Internal Working Group (IWG) of the Reserve Bank of India to allow big corporations to promote commercial banks has finally set the stage to turning the clock back on the ownership of lending institutions in the country, nearly 50 years after the Indira Gandhi government nationalised banks.

One of the reasons that forced Prime Minister of the day, Indira Gandhi, to nationalise 14 large private banks in 1969 was that these were owned by big industrialists and that they gave loans to themselves. Ever since this watershed moment in history, successive RBI governors and committees balked at the prospects of allowing industrial houses to promote banking institutions. Even when the RBI relaxed norms for setting up banks, it allowed only two entities — IDFC and Bandhan — to promote full-fledged banks.

The IWG's recommendation on allowing big companies into the banking sector, however, does a somersault on the RBI's past approach. Though the IWG did not lose sight of the possibility of such corporate-promoted banks resorting to connected lending, it noted that allowing such entities would bring in much-needed capital, experience, management expertise, and strategic direction to the banking sector. It also observed that many of such industrial houses have been successfully operating in other financial segments.

Discussing international experience in allowing industrial houses into the banking sectors, IWG argued that there are very few jurisdictions which explicitly disallow large corporate houses. There was, however, no country with a comparable economic and social background as that of India on the list. Most of the countries cited were the Western countries or some smaller countries like Singapore or Malaysia.

In India, a large majority of people still trust banks because they are not allowed to fail. In such circumstances, the trust deficit among people towards the banking sector would lead to the collapse of the banking sector. That is why former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan called the IWG recommendations a bombshell.

In a joint statement, Mr Rajan and former RBI deputy governor Viral Acharya questioned the timing of the decision to discard the cautious approach adopted by the central bank in allowing industrial houses to promote commercial banks. They argued that giving banking licences to industrial houses would allow them to concentrate economic power in their hands. Citing the corporate governance track record in the country, they argued that it would be difficult to ring-fence their banks from lending to their own group companies, which would put their competitors at a great disadvantage.

The IWG's recommendations have also become controversial because all the experts, except one, were of the opinion that large corporates/industrial houses should not be allowed to promote a bank. The IWG, however, went ahead with a recommendation that contradicts the expert advice. This undue haste on the part of the IWG to create a favourable policy framework for industrial houses could create suspicion in the minds of people, which is not conducive for the healthy growth of the banking sector in the country. The RBI governor and board, and also the Central government, should, therefore, exercise abundant caution while acting on this particular recommendation.

## A builder of modern Assam

If there is a lesson in the life of former Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi, who died on Monday at age 86, it is this: a sympathetic and active consideration of the lives of all communities in a state, a close and pragmatic attachment to ground realities, and an intellectual appreciation of the development paradigm, wins people's hearts — and elections.

Assam's longest-serving CM (2001-16) did not adopt the attitude of either entering a popularity contest or pleasing his party's high command in Delhi. This lent gravitas to his actions. In any objective evaluation, Mr Gogoi will be counted as arguably the most important Assam personality since independence, and among the most important Indians, although the breadth of his achievements remains to be fully appreciated. This Congress leader offers a model to emulate for his party and its leaders, and for other parties and their leaders.

Mr Gogoi did not contest the 1983 election following the call of All Assam Students Union to boycott parliament polls until a resolution of the "foreigners issue" was found. A Congressman through and through, he was not into AASU or AGSP politics but was frank in acknowledging that there was a problem. He also held that some "Indians" had gone to Bangladesh on account of communal problems, only to come back. He did not count them as foreigner. The Congress leader was a strong votary of the Assam Accord patiently negotiated by PM Rajiv Gandhi and wanted the tribunals to identify "illegal" elements to do their work patiently, and with the utmost care (unlike what transpired).

Assam had been wracked by multiple insurgencies. It faced a very serious illegal migrants issue. The state has multiple ethnic, religious and tribal communities. Mr Gogoi negotiated their demands for political participation and socio-economic development with empathy. As CM, he brought a financially bankrupt state back to life, leveraging his personal goodwill with former PM A.B. Vajpayee and home minister L.K. Advani. And he built infrastructure, offered employment opportunities, and encouraged women's participation in panchayat institutions. He acknowledged corruption in his own government. He was a builder of modern Assam.

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Subhani



## If 'Trumpism' outlives Trump, America loses



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Reflections

A cartoon in London's free and therefore mass circulation *Evening Standard* shows US President Donald Trump screaming: "This totally discredited, completely fraudulent election ... has been won by me." The searing contradiction of that rant may well reflect the profound conviction of the 68 million fanatical Trump devotees. It is what 78-year-old US President-elect Joseph R. (Joe) Biden must address if the next four years of American history are not lost in bitter political wrangling, interminable legal battles, vicious racial conflict and bloody fighting in the streets.

During the last four years the United States suffered what former President Barack Obama calls "truth decay". He warns, moreover, that it will take more than one election — meaning Mr Biden's historic victory this month — to undo the damage done during the Trump presidency. The mix of toxic conspiracy theories, denigration of respected international institutions, intensely narrow nationalism as highlighted by the beligerence of Mr Trump's "America First" slogan, the spate of sackings to purge the administration, especially the Pentagon, of all but Trump loyalists, and a reckless populism that has divided American society from top to bottom has created wounds that are in desperate need of healing.

Abroad, the mix found support only among leaders who share some of Mr Trump's personal and political characteristics — Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu of Israel, and our own Mr Narendra Modi among them. At home, Mr Trump's divisive demagoguery enjoyed the back-

ing — apart from influential power brokers who are always in the shadowy background — of an extreme right-wing fringe, lower income group whites in the so-called "rust belt", and a surprising number of women and Latino voters who also saw Mr Trump as a champion of the underprivileged. Like India's Sangh Parivar, this coalition, too, was able to single out the enemy within and charge it with doing the majority out of its rights. Similarly, Mr Trump accused, without a shred of evidence, countless anonymous enemies as well as the financier George Soros and voting machines manufactured in Venezuela of cheating him of his majority.

A Biden presidency's real tasks lie at home where it must counter such dangerous fantasies and persuade all Americans to accept reality. But what it needs to accomplish abroad naturally commands greater attention in the media outside the United States. India and Britain both offer examples of such expectations. Mr Modi's concern for H-1B visas and Green Cards may not be shared by a Democratic administration, not even by Mr Biden, a friend of India who wrote to President George W. Bush asking him to remove the sanctions on India that President Bill Clinton had imposed after the 1998 Pokharan-II nuclear tests, but saying

**During the last four years the United States suffered what former President Barack Obama calls 'truth decay'. He warns, moreover, that it will take more than one election to undo the damage...**

**It is a matter of regret to the world and should be a matter of shame to the United States that some 30 of Mr Trump's election complaints have already been rejected by the American courts**

the time was not ripe for easing up on Pakistan. At the same time, he warned India not to take advantage of the Afghanistan crisis because, as he put it, the whole world, not just the United States, was looking at the Kashmir problem. This comment provoked Jaswant Singh, who was visiting the US as external affairs minister under Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, to cancel his appointment with the then Senator Biden.

As for Britain, Mr Johnson, facing bankruptcy because of the costs of the coronavirus pandemic and nowhere near achieving a divorce settlement with the European Union which he must do by December 31, desperately needs a trade pact with the United States. But whereas President Trump was solidly behind the British Prime Minister, proudly calling himself "Mr Brexit", his Roman Catholic successor with roots in Ireland's County Louth, has not rushed to Britain's defence. On the contrary, he has made it clear that the Good Friday agreement which Mr Clinton had brokered must be honoured and a soft border retained between Ireland and the six British-held counties of Ulster (Northern Ireland).

Beyond such specific challenges, a Biden presidency must reintegrate the United States into pragmatic global politics. It must forge rational new alliances with leaders of the European Union like Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany and France's President Emmanuel Macron. It must return to the Paris climate accord and abandon the insensate persecution of Iran in favour of a coordinated strategy to meet Tehran's legitimate

threat perceptions, if any.

Above all, Washington must come to grips with the challenge of a rising China. A firm stand is certainly necessary when it comes to China riding roughshod over the rights of smaller East and Southeast Asian countries in the South China Sea as well as China's aggressive militarism in Ladakh. But ranting and raving about the Wuhan virus, drawing facile distinctions between the People's Republic of China and the Chinese Communist Party, and targeting even the World Health Organisation for apparent subservience to China makes a mockery of diplomatic activism. It is as childish as dubbing North Korea's Kim Jong-un "Rocket Man" until the two finally met under Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's aegis in Singapore. Yesterday's enemy was then transformed into today's sweetheart... until they fell out again!

It is a matter of regret to the world and should be a matter of shame to the United States that some 30 of Mr Trump's election complaints have already been rejected by the American courts, and that a number of civil and criminal charges may be levelled against him after January 20, 2021 when his immunity from prosecution lapses. None of this is a good advertisement for democracy in an increasingly undemocratic and authoritarian environment. The world's only superpower enjoys a responsibility to the global community that goes far beyond the demands of domestic party politics. Americans simply must not allow Trumpism to outlive Donald Trump.

*The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author*

**A number of civil and criminal charges may be levelled against him after January 20, 2021, when his immunity from prosecution lapses. None of this is a good advertisement for democracy**

### LETTERS

#### FALSE ELATION

Apropos the DMK youth wing secretary's statement, welcoming the tie-up between the AIADMK and the BJP, and terming it as a 50 per cent win for itself in next year's Assembly elections, perhaps, he has forgotten the fate of the RJD, which failed to form the government in Bihar, only due to the utter failure of the Congress Party. An important member of the Mahagathbandhan, it could not win even 25 per cent of the seats allotted to it. If only these seats had been contested by the Left! If the DMK continues to have the Congress as its main ally, it is 75 per cent advantage for the AIADMK alliance.

**N. Mahadevan**  
Chennai

#### CIVIL SOCIETY WIN

**THE BACKLASH** by the Opposition and civil society against the controversial amendment to the Kerala Police Act has paid off, with the Left Democratic Front (LDF) government retracing its steps. The ordinance mandates a jail term of up to three years for defaming or threatening individuals through "any mode of communication". Even those supporting the Left Front had expressed reservations against the amendment (Section 118A) which was introduced through an ordinance on Saturday.

**N.J. Ravi Chander**  
Bengaluru

#### DIALOGUE IS KEY

**APROPOS** the editorial, "J&K: What kind of democracy?" (Nov. 24), the BJP's strident political posturing, portraying all its political opponents in the Valley as anti-national and separatist, might be electorally useful for it in the Jammu region but is harmful for the national integration that it professes. When such statements come from the home minister, it is even more counterproductive. Meaningful dialogue is essential, and violence-free elections are the best way to open up peace possibilities.

**Sankar Paul**  
Chakdaha, West Bengal

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

Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



## Who's afraid of Nitin Gadkari?

Union road and transport minister Nitin Gadkari's recent sharp rebuke of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) officials for the delay in the construction of the NHAI headquarters was delivered with his typical smiling demeanour but carried a lethal punch that shocked the babus. It was surprising in its candour (rare for politicians) and turned what was meant to be a joyous event — the inauguration of the building — into a scathing critique of bureaucratic inefficiency in the country.

This was not meant to turn out like this, more than six years into the rule of the NDA government. When the Narendra Modi sarkar came to power six years ago, it rode in on huge expectations that it would re-energise the economy, oversee infrastructure development, improve the functioning of

the government and tackle corruption.

Many of its big-ticket economic reforms are still on the anvil or have been watered down, following political resistance. Two big "reforms", namely demonetisation and a badly implemented GST, have been disastrous. But the one area where the winds of change were felt the most was the bureaucracy. It is clearly evident that despite what some saw as a streak of authoritarianism in Prime Minister Modi's approach, bureaucracy in India was shaken out of its long slumber and was compelled to sit up and take note of his new style of proactive governance.

Now, from hearing it from Mr Gadkari, it appears that in this respect, too, the recalcitrant babus have refused to fall in line with the Modi sarkar's stated culture of direct access, simplifying proce-

**It is indeed rare for the political executive to haul up the bureaucracy in the manner that Mr Gadkari did, though the present dispensation at the Centre has moved far more decisively against bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency than its predecessors...**

dures and eliminating delays in decision-making and implementation. The situation seems to hark back to the to the days when an administrative paralysis had set in during the UPA-2 government's tenure. Despite green signals from the highest levels, the babus in Lutyens' Delhi refuse to take a deci-

sion and keep the file moving from one ministry to the other.

It is indeed rare for the political executive to haul up the bureaucracy in the manner that Mr Gadkari did, though the present dispensation at the Centre has moved far more decisively against bureaucratic corruption and inefficiency than its predecessors — compulsorily retiring hundreds of babus for corruption and inefficiency. When it came back to power last year, it started with compulsory retirement of 27 IRS officers and followed this up with instructions to various departments to identify deadwood that the government needed to get rid of. This message was underlined again by Mr Gadkari to his captive audience, just in case some babus felt the government was not serious.

But is this the entire picture? Could there be a flip side — that

perhaps it is the workman who is quarrelling with his tools for his own failures? After all, the same babus, who were lambasted by the minister, used the same rules and procedures to build the national highways at a stupendous rate of 30 km a day! It could also be pointed out that the political executive also should share the blame for allowing the "naalayak" and "nikamma" babus to fester in the system because it suits them and their populist policies?

Can Mr Gadkari and the government seize the courage to follow through with its campaign to purge corruption in governance or will the corrosive forces of corrupt netas and babus manage to paper over the cracks and survive?

*Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.*



## IN BRIEF TAIWAN TO BUILD DOMESTIC SUBMARINES

**Kaohsiung (Taiwan), Nov. 24:** Taiwan's president inaugurated the production of domestically made submarines Tuesday in the southern city of Kaohsiung, in a step forward for the island's defence strategy at a time of elevated tensions with China.

"This submarine is an important part of allowing our navy to develop asymmetric warfare and to intimidate and block enemy ships from surrounding Taiwan's main island," said President Tsai Ing-wen. "Now, with the construction of the submarine to its future commission, we will certainly let the world know our persistence in safeguarding our sovereignty."

## B'DESH MAN HELD FOR HINDU ATTACK PLOT

**Singapore, Nov. 24:** A Bangladeshi man, who was plotting attacks against Hindus in his own country and planning to fight in Kashmir, has been arrested by Singapore's security agencies which investigated the suspicious activities of 37 people as part of the heightened security measures in the city-state following recent terror strikes in Europe, the government said on Tuesday.

In a statement, the Ministry of Home Affairs said that counter-terrorism investigations into the suspicious activities of 37 people in Singapore have been carried out after most of them posted on social media, inciting violence or stoking community unrest in the aftermath of the terror attacks in France.

Of the 37 people, 14 are Singaporeans and 23 foreigners, mostly Bangladeshis, it said. "The 14 Singaporeans comprise 10 males and four females, and are aged between 19 and 62 years old. Most of them had, in response to the recent terror attacks in France, made social media postings which incited violence or stoked communal unrest," the ministry said.

## DAVID DINKINS, 1ST AFRO-U.S. NY MAYOR, DEAD

**New York, Nov. 24:** David Dinkins, who broke barriers as New York City's first African-American mayor, but was doomed to a single term by a soaring murder rate, stubborn unemployment and his mishandling of a race riot in Brooklyn, has died. He was 93. Dinkins died Monday, the New York City Police Department confirmed. The department said officers were called to the former mayor's home this evening. Initial indications were that he died of natural causes. Dinkins, a calm and courtly figure with a penchant for tennis and formal wear, was a dramatic shift from both his predecessor, Ed Koch, and his successor, Rudolph Giuliani — two combative and often abrasive politicians in a city with a world-class reputation for impatience and rudeness.

In his inaugural address, he spoke lovingly of New York as a "gorgeous mosaic of race and religious faith, of national origin and sexual orientation, of individuals whose families arrived generations ago." But the city he inherited had an ugly side, too. AIDS, guns and crack cocaine killed thousands of people each year. Unemployment soared. Homelessness was rampant.

## DARWIN NOTES STOLEN FROM VARSITY LIBRARY

**London, Nov. 24:** Cambridge University launched an appeal Tuesday to find two valuable notebooks written by Charles Darwin after they were reported as stolen from the university's library. The notebooks, estimated to be worth millions of pounds, include the 19th-century scientist's famous "Tree of Life" sketch.

They haven't been seen since 2000, and for years staff at the library believed that the manuscripts had probably been misplaced in the vast archives. But after doing a thorough search, library staff now conclude it's likely that the notebooks were stolen. Police are now investigating and Interpol has also been notified.

"My predecessors genuinely believed that what had happened was that these had been mis-shelved or misfiled," said Jessica Gardner, university librarian and director of library services. Staff recently searched through 189 boxes making up the Darwin Archive, but failed to locate the notebooks.

# Trump agrees to Biden transition

## Will pave way for a smooth handover of power; Prez doesn't concede poll defeat

**Washington, Nov. 24:** US President Donald Trump has finally given a go-ahead to begin the transition process for president-elect Joe Biden after the state of Michigan certified the Democratic leader's victory in the November 3 presidential election, paying the way for a smooth handover of power after weeks of delay.

President Trump, a Republican, however, did not formally concede the election to Biden, saying he would "continue to fight and will prevail." He has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but has not provided any evidence to back his claims of electoral fraud. Many of the lawsuits have been dismissed by courts.

On Monday, the Administrator of the General Services Administration (GSA) Emily Murphy informed Biden in a letter that the Trump administration is ready to begin the formal transition process. The letter from Murphy, a Trump appointee, is the first step the administration has taken to acknowledge President Trump's defeat, more than two weeks after Biden was declared the winner.

Taking to Twitter after Murphy wrote to Biden, Trump said that he has asked to begin the transition process in the best interest of the country. "...fight, and I believe we will prevail! Nevertheless, in the best interest of our Country, I am recommending that Emily and her team do what needs to be done with regard to initial protocols, and have told my team to do the same."

"What does GSA being allowed to preliminarily work with the Dems have to do with continuing to pursue our various cases on what will go down as the most corrupt election in American political history? We are moving full speed ahead. Will never concede to fake ballots & "Dominion," Trump said in a series of tweets.

In her letter, Murphy said she took the decision "independently" and based on the law. "Please know that I came to my decision independently, based on the law and available facts. I was never directly or indirectly pressured by any Executive Branch official — including those who work at the White House or GSA — with regard to the substance or timing of my decision. To be clear, I did not receive any direction to delay my determination," Murphy said in her letter as reported by multiple news outlets. — *PTI*

Bernstein's post was condemned Monday by some of those involved. It was an eyebrow-raising modern twist on journalism from the former *Washington Post* reporter who, with partner Bob Woodward in the 1970s, penned scoops that led to the resignation of President Richard Nixon. Bernstein said he wasn't violating any confidentiality pledges in listing the senators.

He said he learned of the politicians' supposed private feelings through conversations with some of their colleagues, staff members, lobbyists and White House aides. "With few exceptions, their craven public silence has helped enable Trump's most grievous conduct — including undermining and discrediting the US electoral system," he tweeted late Sunday. Bernstein, a *CNN* political analyst, declined a request to talk about his posts.

Many Washington reporters have talked about lawmakers who have privately expressed reservations about Trump but rarely attached names to their stories. — *AP*

## Michigan certifies Biden poll victory

**Lansing (US), Nov. 24:** Michigan election officials on Monday certified Democrat Joe Biden's 154,000-vote victory in the state, another setback for President Donald Trump in his futile effort to undermine the results of the Nov. 3 election through baseless legal challenges and unsupported claims of fraud.

The Board of State Canvassers, which has two Republicans and two Democrats, confirmed the results on a 3-0 vote with one abstention. Allies of Trump and losing GOP Senate candidate John James had urged the panel to delay voting for two weeks to audit votes in heavily Democratic Wayne County, home to Detroit. Under Michigan law, Biden claims all 16 electoral votes.

Biden won by 2.8 percentage points — a larger margin than in other states where Trump is contesting the results like Georgia, Arizona, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania. Some Trump allies had expressed hope that state lawmakers could intervene in

selecting Republican electors in states that do not certify. That long shot bid is no longer possible in Michigan. "The people of Michigan have spoken. President-elect Biden won the State of Michigan by more than 154,000 votes, and he will be our next president on January 20th," Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer, a Democrat, said in a statement, saying it's "time to put this election behind us."

The Trump legal team dismissed the certification as "simply a procedural step" and insisted it would fight on. But Trump's efforts to stave off the inevitable — formal recognition of his defeat — is facing increasingly stiff resistance from the courts and fellow Republicans with just three weeks to go until the Electoral College meets to certify Biden's victory.

Time and again, Trump's challenges and baseless allegations of widespread conspiracy and fraud have been met with rejection as states move forward with confirming their results. — *AP*



Janet Yellen

## YELLEN MAY BE SELECTED AS TREASURY SECY

**Washington, Nov. 24:** US President-elect Joe Biden is planning to nominate former Federal Reserve Chair Janet Yellen as his Treasury Secretary to lead his economic response to the raging Coronavirus pandemic, which has wreaked havoc on the world's biggest economy and led millions of Americans to lose their jobs.

A formal announcement on 74-year-old Yellen would be made soon, according to *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*. The Treasury Secretary is fifth in the presidential line of succession. — *PTI*

## INDIA KEY PARTNER IN ENGAGING CHINA: BLINKEN

**Washington, Nov. 24:** India and the US face a common challenge in the form of an "increasingly assertive" China and New Delhi has to be a key partner in engaging with Beijing from a position of strength, believes long-time national security and foreign policy expert Antony Blinken, who could be President-elect Joe Biden's probable pick for the post of the Secretary of State.

Blinken made these comments during a community outreach programme with the Indian-Americans organised by the Biden campaign on the occasion of India's Independence Day on August 15.

He alleged that US President Donald Trump has helped China advance key strategic goals by weakening American alliances, leaving a vacuum in the world for China to fill, and abandoning American values and giving Beijing a green light to trample on democracy in Hong Kong. — *PTI*



Palestinians, mask-clad due to the Covid-19, wait to cross onto the Egyptian side at the Rafah border crossing between the Gaza Strip and Egypt, on Tuesday. It was announced that Egypt would reopen the border crossing from November 24 to 26.

— *AFP*

# US virus response: Thanksgiving could prove to be make or break

## China FM in Japan for talks on reviving Covid-hit economies

**Washington, Nov. 24:** In Pennsylvania, if you're having friends over to socialise, you're supposed to wear a mask — and so are your friends. That's the rule, but Barb Chestnut has no intention of following it.

"No one is going to tell me what I can or not do in my own home" said Chestnut, 60, of Shippensburg. "They do not pay my bills and they are not going to tell me what to do." As governors and mayors grapple with an out-of-control pandemic, they are ratcheting up mask mandates and imposing restrictions on small indoor gatherings, which have been blamed for accelerating the spread of the coronavirus.

But while such measures carry the weight of law, they are, in practical terms, unenforceable, and officials are banking on voluntary compliance instead. Good luck with that. While many are undoubtedly heeding public health advice — downsizing Thanksgiving plans, avoiding get-togethers, wearing masks when they're around people who don't live with them — it's inevitable that a segment of the population will blow off new state and local restrictions and socialise anyway.

Experts say that could put greater stress on overburdened hospitals and lead to an even bigger spike in sickness and death over the holidays. — *AP*

**Tokyo, Nov. 24:** Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi arrived in Japan on Tuesday to meet with his Japanese counterpart and discuss ways to revive their pandemic-hit economies as well as regional concerns over China's growing influence.

During his two-day visit, Wang and Japanese Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi are to discuss resuming business trips between the world's No. 2 and

No. 3 economies through a "business track" programme that would allow visitors to engage in limited business activity during 14-day quarantine periods. Japan recently launched such arrangements with a few less-infected Asian countries.

Wang's visit comes as Japan is grappling with resurgence of coronavirus infections and the government struggles to balance disease prevention

and the economy. Chinese visitors topped the number of tourists in Japan before the pandemic.

Wang is expected to meet with PM Yoshihide Suga during his Tokyo visit, the first by a top Chinese official since the February visit of Chinese foreign policy chief Yang Jiechi. Japan and China are not currently considering rescheduling Chinese President Xi Jinping's state visit to Japan. — *AP*

## Oz airline boss for vaccine passport

**Sydney, Nov. 24:** The boss of Australia's largest airline said Monday that once a coronavirus vaccine becomes widely available, it may require passengers use it before they can travel abroad.

Qantas Chief Executive Alan Joyce said he's been talking to his counterparts at other airlines around the world about the possibility of a "vaccination passport" for overseas travelers.

"We are looking at changing the terms and conditions to say for international travellers that we

will ask people to have the vaccination before they get on the aircraft," Joyce told Australia's *Network Nine* television.

Australia has imposed some of the most severe border restrictions in the world since the pandemic began. It has closed its borders to most international visitors and only allowed its own citizens to travel internationally under special circumstances. Those restrictions have helped the nation of 26 million people tame its outbreak. — *AP*

## U.S. PRISONS TO PRIORITISE STAFF TO RECEIVE VIRUS

**Washington, Nov. 24:** The federal prison system will be among the first government agencies to receive the coronavirus vaccine, though initial allotments of the vaccine will be given to staff and not to inmates, even though sickened prisoners vastly outnumber sickened staff. Officials at the federal Bureau of Prisons have been instructing wardens and other staff members to prepare to receive the vaccine within weeks. — *AP*

# Netanyahu says he'll pay a visit to Bahrain soon

**Jerusalem, Nov. 24:** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Tuesday that he spoke with the crown prince of Bahrain and would visit the Gulf state soon, a month after the two countries established formal diplomatic relations.

Bahrain's foreign minister visited Israel last week in a mark of the warming ties between the two countries following the signing of US-brokered accords in September. In October, the two countries established formal ties, and signed a series of agreements to promote bilateral cooperation. Netanyahu said in a

● **BAHRAIN'S FOREIGN minister visited Israel last week in a mark of the warming ties between the two countries following the signing of US-brokered accords in September.**

statement released on social media that he spoke with Bahraini Crown Prince Salman bin Hamad about "the fact that we can bring the fruits of peace to our peoples and to our countries in a very short time."

The prime minister said the crown prince "invited

me to come in the near future for an official visit to Bahrain, and I will do this on your behalf," referring to Israeli citizens.

In the past several months, Israel has signed treaties to normalise ties with Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Sudan, the first Arab states to do so in decades. But the deals orchestrated by the Trump administration have outraged the Palestinians, who have long counted on a united Arab stance that recognition of Israel should come only after they achieve an independent state. — *AP*

## PAK INTEL BODY TO COORDINATE SPY AGENCIES

**Islamabad, Nov. 24:** Pakistan PM Imran Khan has approved the setting up of the National Intelligence Coordination Committee, a mechanism to coordinate over two dozen intelligence organisations in the country, to be headed by the ISI chief, according to a media report on Tuesday.

Although there have been discussions about the establishment of the coordination forum, its terms of reference and modus operandi would be decided once it formally takes shape, *Dawn* newspaper quoted a source as saying. — *PTI*

## GENEROUS | DONATION

## \$1 mn given by three Indian-American couples to support the graduate programme

# California university establishes chair in Jain studies

**Washington, Nov. 24:** A US university in California has established a chair in Jain studies following a generous donation of \$1 million from three Indian-American couples. The Bhagvan Vimalnath Endowed Chair in Jain Studies University of California, Santa Barbara will support the graduate programme, and develop and teach undergraduate and graduate courses on Jainism.

Prominent among them include exploration of Ahimsa (non-violence),

Aprigraha (non-attachment/non-possessiveness) and Anekantavaad (plurality of views and beliefs) — the principles of Jainism and their import and implication for modern society, the university said. Students will be engaged to explore the practical significance of such principles for enduring peace, social harmony and ecological sustainability, it said.

The donation for this has come from Dr. Meera and Dr. Jasant Modi via the

● **THE DONATION for this has come from Dr. Meera and Dr. Jasant Modi via the Vardhamana Charitable Foundation; Rita and Dr. Narendra Parson via the Narendra and Rita Parson Family Trust; and Raksha and Harshad Shah via Shah Family Foundation, according to a statement.**

Vardhamana Charitable Foundation; Rita and Dr. Narendra Parson via the Narendra and Rita Parson Family Trust; and Raksha and Harshad Shah via Shah Family Foundation, according to a statement. "The most effective way

of helping mankind, climate change and all forms of life is by spreading the principles of non-violence, giving and showing respect for all opinions. Support and creation of an endowed chair in Jain studies is the most effective way

to achieve this goal," the donors said in a joint statement. "UC Santa Barbara is a prestigious place and more important, it has an effective model to achieve our goals. This new position will make Ahimsa, Aparigraha and Anekantvad principles better known in the mainstream — and this will benefit us all," they said.

The new gift builds on prior philanthropy from the Modis and the Parsons, in partnership with the Jain Center of Southern

California and the Jain Temple of Los Angeles, to establish UC Santa Barbara's Bhagvan Vimalnath Lectureship in Jain Studies and South Asian religions. University Chancellor Henry Yang said that the establishment of the Bhagvan Vimalnath Endowed Chair in Jain Studies will help to advance Jain and South Asian studies, an exciting and increasingly important field, at UC Santa Barbara.

The new position will also enable academic inve-

stigation of the many ways in which Jainism has been integral to South Asian and transnational religious histories. The chair holder will support and train innovative scholars in the fields of Jain studies and South Asian religions, including language instruction in Sanskrit and Prakrit, while simultaneously making UCSB the programmatic center for an emerging network of scholars in the field, the statement added. — *PTI*



quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,523.02	1.01
Nifty 50	13,055.15	1.00
S&P 50*	3,619.28	1.17
Dollar (₹)	73.99	0.16
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.88	0.14
Euro (₹)	87.93	0.08
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,569▼1,049	2.15
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	47.66	1.60
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.880	0.021
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.865	0.006

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Google pays ₹33,700 cr for Jio Platform stake

Alphabet Inc's Google has paid Rs 33,737 crore for a 7.73 per cent stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's digital subsidiary, Jio Platforms Ltd. The transaction also marks the US technology giant's biggest investment in an Indian firm. With this, Jio Platforms has raised a total of Rs 1.52 lakh crore by selling nearly 33 per cent stake to 13 financial and strategic investors in just 11 weeks, RIL said.

Aibea to join trade unions in strike tomorrow



The All India Bank Employees' Association (Aibea) said it would join the one-day nationwide strike on Nov. 26 called by central trade unions to protest against the government's anti-labour policies. Ten central trade unions, except BMS, will observe a general strike on Thursday. "Lok Sabha in its recently held session has passed three new labour enactments by dismantling existing 27 enactments," the Aibea said.

Indian sellers join Amazon's US holiday sales

More than 70,000 Indian exporters on Amazon's Global Selling programme will showcase their Made in India products on the annual Black Friday and Cyber Monday sales. The exporters are launching thousands of new products on Amazon's global websites for the holiday season between Nov. 26 and Nov. 30. Indian products in categories like health & hygiene and home essentials saw heightened demand abroad.

Goa govt issues ₹156-cr demand notice to JSW

The Goa government has issued a demand notice to JSW Steel Ltd, handling coal at Mormugao Port Trust (MPT), to pay Rs 156.34 crore in the form of Goa Rural Improvement and Welfare Cess, within a fortnight, for transportation of coal. In a demand notice issued on Nov. 9, copy of which was released on Monday, the Assistant Director of Transport has asked JSW Steel to pay Rs 156.34 crore to the state.

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Heavy FPI buying pushes indices up Nifty crosses 13000-mark

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 24

Benchmark index Nifty-50 created a new milestone by crossing the 13000-mark for the first time and closed at a new peak of 13055.15, aided by a sharp rally in financials and auto stocks and heavy foreign portfolio buying.

The index has gained 73.81 per cent from the March low of 7511.10 in the post-Covid rally over optimism around economic revival and robust second quarter corporate earnings.

The Nifty gained 128.70 points or 1 per cent on Tuesday to reach the new landmark of 13055.15 after touching an intra-day high of 13079.10 points.

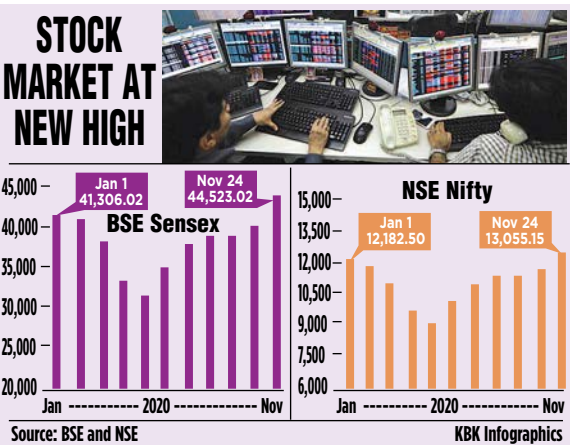
The BSE Sensex also gained 1.01 per cent, or 445.87 points, and closed above the 44,500 mark, at a new all-time high of 44523.02.

BSE's market capitalisation hit a new all-time high of Rs 174.81 lakh crore.

The Nifty Bank Index comprising banks and other financial heavyweights gained 2.46 per cent while the Nifty Auto Index gained 1.71 per cent.

The top Nifty gainers included Adani Port (4.46 per cent), Axis Bank (3.93 per cent), HDFC Bank (3.54 per cent), Eicher Motors (3.52 per cent), Hindalco (3.44 per cent) and Mahindra & Mahindra (3.05 per cent).

The broader market also gained but lagged behind the large-caps with the



BSE Mid-cap Index rising 0.58 per cent and the BSE Small-cap Index rising 0.89 per cent.

Heavy buying by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), to the tune of Rs 4,563.18 crore, led to gain across all the sectoral indices on Tuesday.

"Indian indices opened on record-high levels on Tuesday, tracking gains in Asian peers, on the back of the progress made on the Covid-19 vaccine and the prospects for a speedy global economic revival," said Hemang Jani, head-equity strategy, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

"FPIs have made the highest monthly buying in November 2020 in the last 2 decades. Till date they have pumped in approximately Rs 50,989 crore. In November itself and have invested approximately Rs 1.31 lakh crore in India year-to-date. This has helped the indices touch the 13K levels," Jani said.

"The inflow increased considerably especially after the end of the election in the United States and weakness in the dollar index. Another major reason behind such a large inflow was the expected stimulus worth trillions of dollars from central banks to revive economies that are hit hard by the Covid-led lockdown," Jani said.

Strong second quarter corporate earnings with significant growth seen in IT, pharma, metals, select private banks and NBFCs, and cement have helped the market move higher.

"Rural demand continued to outperform urban in 2QFY21, enabling sequential recovery for most companies in the consumer sector. Commentaries of NBFCs suggest improving macros across most business segments and the end of the moratorium have led to increased optimism for collection efficiency as well as growth," Jani said.

RBI nixes Muthoot plan to acquire IDBI Mutual Fund

New Delhi, Nov. 24: The RBI has turned down the proposal of Muthoot Finance to acquire IDBI Bank's mutual fund business for Rs 215 crore, saying sponsoring a mutual fund is not in consonance with the activity of an operating NBFC.

In a regulatory filing on Tuesday, IDBI Bank said a share purchase agreement for sale of IDBI Mutual Fund to Muthoot Finance was signed on November 22, 2019. The agreement was for acquisition by Muthoot Finance of 100 per cent equity shares of IDBI Asset Management held by IDBI Bank, IDBI Capital Markets & Securities, and 100 per cent shares of IDBI MF Trustee Company held by IDBI Bank.

"Their (Muthoot's) request for a no objection certificate was not acceded to by Reserve Bank of India," IDBI said. —PTI

RE corners 95% energy project financing in 2019

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 24



Financing for coal-based energy projects dropped 82 per cent last year to shrink the segment's share in the total energy project financing to 5 per cent. Renewable energy projects now account for 95 per cent of the lending.

Two coal-fired energy projects received a total finance of Rs 1,100 crore in 2019, which was 82 per cent less than Rs 6,081 crore received by five projects in 2018. The project financing in the coal sector has been coming down for the past two years. In 2017, coal projects had received a total of Rs 60,767 crore and by 2018 the lending dropped by 90 per cent, as per the report by Centre for Financial Accountability.

Coal-based projects had a higher share of 72.6 per cent in the energy project financing till 2017. That year, renewable energy accounted for just 27.4 per

cent share with a total financing of Rs 22,913 crore. By 2018, renewable energy (RE) financing grew by 6.6 per cent to Rs 24,443 crore. But as the coal project loans fell drastically, the RE share rose to 80 per cent.

Total project financing for the energy sector further came down to Rs 24,071 crore in 2019. Despite, a 6 per cent dip in funds to Rs 22,971 crore, 14 renewable energy projects grabbed a higher share of 95 per cent. Of the total funds, wind energy projects received Rs 6,917 crore and solar projects got Rs 16,054 crore.

The troubled state of discoms affected the lending towards renewable energy projects as well.

Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh continued to be the most attractive states for renewable energy, accounting for 79 per cent of the total lending. Commercial banks provided the majority of loans to renewable energy, while their exposure to coal-based projects fell drastically.

Private commercial banks continued their dominance, but state-owned financial institutions too increased their lending.

Refinancing continued to account for the majority of coal power lending in 2019, while most renewable energy lending was for new projects.

Motor premiums reclaim top share

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 24

After remaining subdued for six months, motor premiums have once again reclaimed the top slot among general insurance categories in October.

Increased festive demand for automobiles has helped the revival of motor insurance premiums.

Motor premiums historically had the highest share

among non-life insurance premiums. At the end of last fiscal, motor premiums had 36.6 per cent share of total general insurance premiums and health had 27.3 per cent share.

However, the lock-down period saw a significant drop in the automotive sales and motor cover renewals, which led to a 49 per cent drop in the motor premiums in April. At a monthly premium of Rs

2,621 crore in April, share of motor premiums fell to 18.5 per cent.

But the pandemic saw health insurance premiums growing. In April health premiums grew 6.2 per cent over the same month last year and grabbed a share of 37.9 per cent. Health premiums have been growing all through FY21 first half.

By October, the year-to-date motor premium went

up more than health at Rs 35,281 crore and its share moved up to 31.1 per cent. Health premium till October stood at Rs 32,879 crore with a share of 29.2 per cent, as per the data from General Insurance Council.

Motor premiums increased 3 per cent in October against the same month last year on the back of rising new vehicle sales.

India's latest unicorn startup is Cars24

SARAH MCBRIDE & SARITHA RAI NOV. 24

India's mass transit systems were shut off when the country locked down. As a result, Indians rushed to find alternative transportation, and that often meant used cars.

A major beneficiary was Cars24 Services Pvt Ltd, an online marketplace for used cars based in Gurgaon. The company's valuation jumped to more than \$1 billion after a new round of funding. DST Global, the investment firm led by Russia-born billionaire Yuri Milner,

invested \$200 million in the deal.

The investment doubles the total funds raised by Cars24 since the business was established five years ago. The chief executive officer and co-founder, Vikram Chopra, was an investment analyst early in his career at Sequoia Capital, one of the world's most prominent venture capital firms and now a Cars24 investor. Chopra started Cars24 after having a hard time selling his car before a temporary move to the US, he said. Daunted by the situation, he ended up giving his car to a friend instead, he said.

Cars24, which takes a cut of each transaction, is on track to generate estimated gross annual revenue of \$600 million, Chopra said. "Our awareness among consumers has shot up dramatically," he said.

India's pre-owned vehicle market is fragmented. Online retailers like Cars24, Droom and OLX, along with the automakers themselves, offer a more consistent buying experience, simplified paperwork and access to lenders. India lacks a system to establish fair values for used cars like Kelley Blue Book. For Cars24, the new

investor brings a global expertise. DST Global is based in Hong Kong and has backed a varied list of companies over the years, including Facebook Inc and WhatsApp in the US and Alibaba Group Holding Ltd in China. In India, DST invested in the online shopping firm Flipkart.

What made Cars24 stand out was its ability to handle so many steps, including remote inspections of vehicles, said Rahul Mehta, a Dubai-based managing partner at DST. "You have to be deep into operations," he said. "These guys have done well." —Bloomberg

Oil-rich Kuwait faces reckoning as debt crisis looms

Dubai, Nov. 24: When Kuwait emerged from a months-long coronavirus lockdown, hundreds of Kuwaitis flocked to reopened stores, the lines clogging malls, snaking through hallways and spilling onto sidewalks. But unlike much of the world, where long lines

formed for donated food, Kuwaitis were waiting to buy Cartier jewellery.

The jewellery-store rush by Kuwait's long-coddled citizens is a symptom of a looming disaster.

Kuwait, one of the world's wealthiest countries, is facing a debt crisis. The pandemic has sent the

price of oil crashing to all-time lows and pushed the petro-state toward a reckoning with its longtime largesse, just as a parliamentary election approaches in December.

Covid, low oil prices and the liquidity crisis have all come together in a perfect storm, said Bader al-Saif, a

professor of history at Kuwait University.

Like other Gulf sheikhdoms, Kuwait provides cushy jobs to roughly 90 per cent of citizens on the public payroll, along with generous benefits and subsidies, from cheap electricity and oil to free health care and education. —AP

Time to reform office culture of financial world

SREE VIDYA BHAKTAVATSALAM NOV. 24

Everywhere, the stewards of capitalism are in flux, grappling with the implications of a radically different future that's set to play out from home offices, living rooms, and kitchen tables around the world.

This is a big moment for an industry that has long lionised alpha-male "tough guys" who wear their stamina as a badge of honor and view the need for work-life flexibility as an admission of weakness. From New York to London to Hong Kong, the hard-charging culture of finance has been tied to the towering edifices that cram in thousands of over-achievers, the cutthroat chaos of the trading floors, and the relentless schmoozing that accompa-

nies the entry into the upper echelons.

The new workplace reality, with hundreds of thousands of bankers working from home for the foreseeable future, has spurred considerable angst among the financial elite. One by one, powerful men have lamented the damage to their companies' cultures-cultures they've sought to perpetuate. Sergio Ermotti, who stepped down as CEO of Zurich-based UBS Group AG on Nov. 1, said it's "especially difficult for banks to create and sustain cohesiveness and a culture when employees stay at home."

In September, JPMorgan Chase & Co.'s Jamie Dimon pushed for a return to normal, warning of slipping productivity and alienation among workers. BlackRock Inc.'s Laurence Fink worried about the

serendipitous "water cooler moments" being lost as Zoom calls supplant impromptu encounters. Senior leaders at Goldman Sachs Group Inc, Barclays Plc, and others have pointed to the vital role that face-to-face interactions play in preserving the fabric of their companies' cultures.

Lost in this nostalgia is a hard truth: The finance industry has created some of the most toxic workplaces for women, racial minorities, or anyone else who doesn't fit in comfortably with Wall Street's fraternity. As a journalist who has spent years covering finance and investing from Boston, New York, Hong Kong, and London, I'm often asked what I learned from my time in these financial centres. One takeaway seems especially relevant in the

Column

The world of finance can be incredibly isolating and hostile to someone who isn't White, straight, and male

strange times in which we find ourselves today: The world of finance can be incredibly isolating and hostile to someone who isn't White, straight, and male.

Sure, sexual harassment is no longer as flagrant as

it was in the 1990s, a sordid period that put women at the mercy of their drunken bosses and colleagues. For every incident that gets this kind of spotlight, dozens are never chronicled.

The global reckoning fuelled by the #MeToo movement in 2017 and the racial justice protests that followed the police killing of George Floyd in 2020 have led many banks and other financial companies to enact tough policies to combat and address sexism and racism in the workplace.

At the same time, the financial industry is adapting to the tectonic shift toward remote working. Standard Chartered Plc has unveiled a permanent move to flexible working for its 85,000 employees. Switzerland's UBS expects a third of its

employees to work from home permanently, and Japan's Mizuho Financial Group Inc is mulling a shorter workweek.

Already there are signs that some of the worst aspects of banking culture are moving to this virtual world. Excluding women and members of minority groups from important meetings and decisions is even easier when operating remotely.

Financial companies will have to navigate a tricky path between respecting employees' privacy and protecting vulnerable staff. But instead of bemoaning the loss of the corporate cultures caused by remote working, leaders should use the opportunity to examine these cultures more closely and then take concrete steps to reform them.

—Bloomberg



## SHORT TAKES

## Dada underwent 22 Covid-19 tests

**Mumbai:** BCCI president and former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Tuesday revealed that he underwent as many as 22 Covid-19 tests in the past four and a half months while trying to navigate his professional commitments amid the raging pandemic. Ganguly was kept busy by the conduct of the Indian Premier League in the UAE from mid-September to early November. "I must tell you I have got tested 22 times in the last four and half months and not been positive even once, I have had cases around me, so that probably forced me to get tested myself," Ganguly said at a virtual conference where he was brand ambassador of Livinguard AG. "...I stay with elderly parents and I have travelled to Dubai and in the initial part, I was very worried, not just for me, but the community, you don't want to spread it to somebody else because people are looking up to you," he added. Ganguly said he is immensely proud of his BCCI team for pulling off a successful IPL, which he hopes, would be back in India for its next edition. The event was shifted to UAE this year because of the pandemic. — PTI

## Fans set for EPL games next week

**London:** Supporters are set to return to English Premier League games next week for the first time since March. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson is allowing a return of spectators to sports stadiums as part of an easing of coronavirus restrictions when the national lockdown ends on December 2. A maximum of 4,000 fans will initially be allowed into venues in the areas with the lowest Covid-19 infection rates and up to 2,000 in the areas placed in the next tier of restrictions. The highest-risk areas still won't be allowed fans. Plans for the return of spectators in October were put on hold due to a spike in coronavirus cases. — AP

## Honda end year with double points

**Portugal:** Fighting rides from Stefan Bradl and Alex Marquez delivered a double-top ten to wrap up a strong final weekend in here. The unprecedented 2020 MotoGP came to a close in Portugal with a trio of tremendous races across the classes. Conditions were again near perfect as the sun loomed over the Portimao circuit. Using morning warm up to confirm the final aspects of his setting, Alex was again strong and consistent throughout the 20-minute session. The MotoGP rookie ended in seventh but with excellent pace. Focus was high for Bradl as the last race day of the year began, the German having put in a very impressive performance on Saturday. A fast fall at Turn 9 saw Bradl walk away unharmed, changing his leathers and returning to the track for the final minutes of Warm Up. The crash had no ill effect as Bradl shot forward in the race and immediately began to battle in the top five, giving no quarter. The battle would rage until the end of the race, Bradl earning seventh and achieving his best race finish of the year.

## Live on TV

## CRICKET

**Women's Big Bash League:** Semifinal-1 from 1.40 pm on Sony Six

## FOOTBALL

**Indian Super League:** Goa vs Mumbai City from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

**Champions League:** Olympiacos vs Manchester City from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Monchengladbach vs Shakhtar Donetsk from 11.25 pm on Sony Six; Liverpool vs Atalanta from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1; Inter Milan vs Real Madrid from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2; Bayern Munich vs Salzburg from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 3; Atletico Madrid vs Lokomotiv Moscow from 1.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Six

## WWE

**NXT:** Bouts from 6.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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## DOUBLE TROUBLE?

## Rohit, Ishant may miss entire Australia Test series

**New Delhi, Nov. 24:** India's star opener Rohit Sharma and pacer Ishant Sharma will miss the first two Tests against Australia and are also doubtful for the remaining two after it was conveyed to the BCCI that the duo will require close to a month to be match fit.

The two, who are undergoing rehabilitation at the National Cricket Academy in Bengaluru, are already out of contention for the limited-overs leg of the series, which begins with the ODIs on Friday.

They were kept in the Test squad for the series starting on December 17 but tough quarantine rules have made their availability uncertain.

"The NCA has given a report that both Rohit and Ishant will take at least another 3 to 4 weeks to get match fit," a Board source said on Tuesday.

Rohit, while talking to PTI last week, had stated that his hamstring injury is fine now and he is only working on strength and conditioning to be battle-ready at the NCA.

Ishant, on the other hand, is recovering from a side strain.

"Even if they travel now they will have 'hard quarantine' since they will travel by commercial flight. Hard quarantine means not being able to train during the 14 days like the whole team," the source said.

"So, now if only Cricket Australia can convince the government and allow them to train during quarantine," he added.

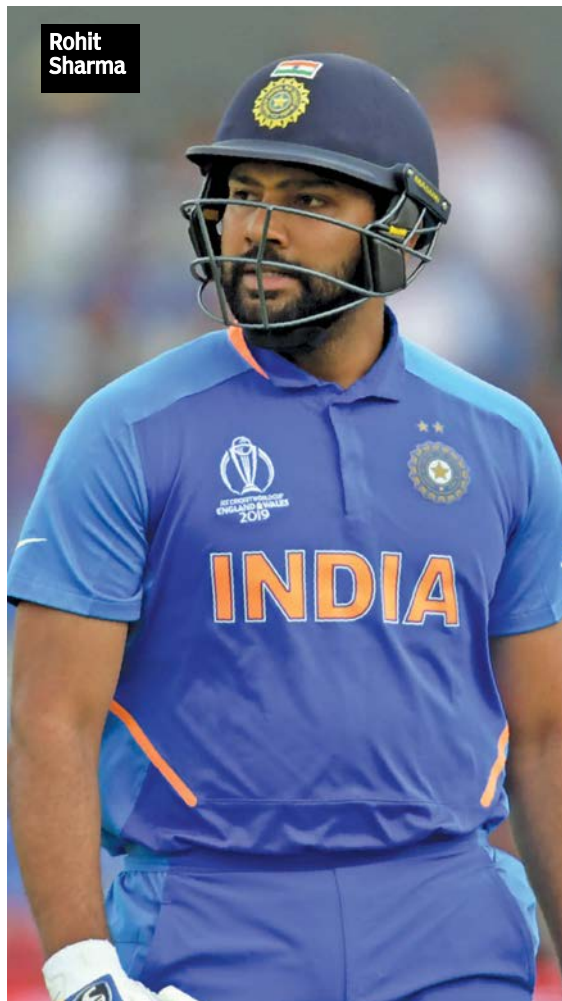
The Indian team, which landed here after the IPL earlier this month on a chartered flight, was allowed to train in quarantine as Australia battled a fresh wave of Covid cases.

National coach Ravi Shastri had on Sunday stated that the two cricketers' chances of playing the Test series hinge on whether they are able to board a flight to Australia within this week.

— PTI



Ishant Sharma



Rohit Sharma

## Shastri backs 'Fav 5' to rule Oz

**New Delhi, Nov. 24:** Coach Ravi Shastri believes India's pace attack can conquer Australia "in their own den" in the upcoming Test series between the world's top two sides.

India's quick bowlers, led by Jasprit Bumrah, will face a powerful home batting line-up including David Warner and Steve Smith when the four-Test series begins on December 17.

But Shastri said his team's pace unit was the best in the world, despite being likely to be without

the injured Ishant Sharma who is receiving treatment India for a muscle tear.

"His absence does make a difference to the fast-bowling department, but then we have the capacity among the young bowlers to deliver," Shastri told *Sportstar*.

Shastri dubbed Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav and Navdeep Saini the "fabulous five", adding, "Yadav has the experience. Saini is young and fast. Bumrah one of the best

**You put up runs on the board and watch these fast bowlers hunt the opposition. They can beat Australia in their own den.**

— RAVI SHASTRI  
India coach on his team's pace attack

in business.

Shami is raring to go. Siraj is an exciting prospect. "You put up runs on the board and watch these fast bowlers hunt the opposition. They can beat Australia

in their own den."

Australia last week overtook India at the top of the inaugural world Test championship when the scoring system was amended due to the coronavirus pandemic, but Virat Kohli's men enjoyed a historic first Test series win Down Under on their last tour in 2018-19.

Shastri is confident his team can stay focused on and off the pitch during the tour, which requires travel bubbles and isolation because of the pandemic. — AFP

## Thapa shines in Chennaiyin win

**Vasco, Nov. 24:** Anirudh Thapa's early strike coupled with a penalty from Esmael Goncalves (26') gave Chennaiyin FC a 2-1 win over Jamshedpur FC in the Hero Indian Super League here on Tuesday.

Thapa got the game off to an electrifying start, scoring in the very first minute. Rafael Crivellaro won the ball and found Goncalves on the right flank. His low cross was powered into the net by the midfielder, the exuberance of his celebration matching that of his finish. He became the first Indian goal scorer after four games this season.

Last season's golden boot winner Nerijs Valskis (37') pulled one back but a string of misses ensured that Jamshedpur boss Owen Coyle started the season with a defeat to the team he managed last season.

The next few minutes made it evident what sort of a game this was going to be. Jamshedpur's English defender Peter Hartley wasted a golden opportunity to draw his team level in the 7th minute and headed a free-kick wide off. Three minutes later, Goncalves found himself one on one with opposing custodian TP Rehenesh but failed to find the target.

Lallianzuala Chhangte missed a chance to score in the 20th minute. His first

## MFC LOOK TO BOUNCE BACK AGAINST GOA

**Margao, Nov. 24:** Stunned by NorthEast United in their opening match, Mumbai City FC would look to bounce back when they take on FC Goa in an Indian Super League match, which is expected to produce free-flowing football here on Wednesday.

For Mumbai City head coach Sergio Lobera, it will be the first time he will be up against his former club.

The match is expected to see a lot of passes. Lobera has long been known for getting his players to spray the ball all around the pitch. During his stint as FC Goa coach, he averaged 535 passes per match. — PTI

touch, as he received Crivellaro's excellent pass, took the ball away and the subsequent effort was pushed behind by Rehenesh. But he made amends five minutes later, drawing a push from Isaac Vannalsawma inside the box and winning a penalty. Goncalves did not make a mistake from the spot. — Agencies

## TOKYO GOVERNOR SURE OF HOSTING SAFE OLYMPICS

**Tokyo, Nov. 24:** Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike remains firm about being able to safely hold the Olympics next year despite growing concerns about Japan's recent resurgence of Covid-19 infections.

Japan has experienced an uptick of the infections this month with a nationwide daily total exceeding 2,000 as the government tries to balance preventive measures and business activity without

further hurting the pandemic-hit economy.

"As the host city, I'm determined to achieve the games whatever it takes," Koike said on Tuesday.

Her comment comes a week after International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach's visit to Tokyo, where he held a series of talks with Japanese Olympic officials, including Koike, to showcase their determination to pull off the games. — AP

## Kohli, Ashwin nominated for Player of Decade award

**Dubai, Nov. 24:** The talismanic Virat Kohli and Ravichandran Ashwin were on Tuesday nominated for the coveted ICC Men's Player of the Decade Award with the Indian captain featuring in all five men's categories for his incredible run in the last 10 years.

Kohli and veteran off-spinner Ashwin are the two Indians among seven players nominated for the most prestigious award.

Besides the Indian duo, Joe Root (England), Kane Williamson (New Zealand), Steve Smith (Australia), AB de Villiers (South Africa), and Kumar Sangakkara (Sri Lanka) are the other contenders in this category.

In the Men's ODI Player of the Decade cat-



Ravichandran Ashwin



Virat Kohli

egory, former India skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and run-machine Rohit Sharma also found a place alongside Kohli, Lasith Malinga (Sri Lanka), Mitchell Starc (Australia), de Villiers and Sangakkara.

Kohli and Rohit also featured in the Men's T20I Player of the Decade category, which also included Rashid Khan (Afghanistan), Imran Tahir (South Africa), Aaron Finch (Australia), Malinga and Chris Gayle (West Indies). — PTI

## CLARKE WARNS INDIA COULD BE SMOKED IN TESTS

**Sydney, Nov. 24:** Former Australia captain Michael Clarke has warned that India could be "smoked 4-0" in the Test series if skipper Virat Kohli does not set the tone in the white-ball games before his departure.

"These One-dayers and these Twenty20s is where Virat Kohli can really stand up and lead from the front," Clarke said on *Sky Sports Radio* on Tuesday.

"If India don't have success in the One-dayers and the T20s, they are in deep trouble in the Test matches and they'll get smoked 4-0, in my opinion," he added. Clarke feels that despite featuring in only one Test, the talismanic Indian skipper could still play a huge role in the outcome of the red-ball series by dominating in the limited overs game. — PTI

## TouchWood! Burnley score 1st win

**London, Nov. 24:** Burnley won for the first time in the Premier League this season as Chris Wood sealed a 1-0 victory against Crystal Palace, while Southampton missed a chance to go third in their 1-1 draw at Wolves on Monday.

Burnley had failed to win any of their first seven games in the joint worst start to a season in the club's history.

Sean Dyche's side were the only Premier League team yet to score a home goal this term until New Zealand striker Wood put them ahead in the first half against Palace.

That was enough to clinch a much-needed three points for Burnley, who climbed out of the relegation zone at the expense of Fulham.

"We created two or three golden chances, we take one and it gets a bit nervy because we hadn't found that first win. To



Burnley's Chris Wood (right) celebrates with teammates after scoring against Crystal Palace. — AP

get that one done will do us the world of good," Dyche said.

"We have got a group that can challenge. We have had a tough start but that has been coming."

Palace were missing Ivory Coast forward Wilfried Zaha after he

tested positive for coronavirus and Roy Hodgson's side lacked a cutting edge without him as they slumped to a second defeat in three games.

Burnley had managed just three league goals this season and hadn't scored since October 3

when Ashley Westwood netted in a loss at Newcastle. But Wood ended that four-game goalless run in the eighth minute when he fired home from Jay Rodriguez's flick after a poor headed clearance from Cheikhou Kouyate.

## REVITALISED WALCOTT

At Molineux, Southampton were on course for a fourth successive win when Theo Walcott put them ahead in the second half.

But Pedro Neto came off the bench to equalise as fifth-placed Southampton had to settle for extending their unbeaten run to seven matches.

"I am happy. For everyone it was a tough game, tactically so demanding. They played 4-3-3, we didn't expect that but we found the answers," Southampton boss Ralph Hasenhuttl said. — AFP

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

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

CANCELLATION OF MAIL / EXPRESS TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
04624 Amritsar-Saharsa Festival Special	25.11.2020
04623 Saharsa-Amritsar Festival Special	26.11.2020
04652 Amritsar-Jaynagar Express Special	25.11.2020
04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar Express Special	27.11.2020
04654 Amritsar-New Jalpaiguri Karambhoomi Superfast Clone Special	25.11.2020

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
08237 Korba-Amritsar Spl.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
08238 Amritsar-Korba Spl.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	26.11.2020
02407 New Jalpaiguri-Amritsar Superfast Special	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	25.11.2020
02408 Amritsar- New Jalpaiguri Superfast Special	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	27.11.2020
02357 Kolkata-Amritsar Spl.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
02358 Amritsar-Kolkata Spl.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	26.11.2020
02715 Nanded-Amritsar Exp.	at New Delhi	New Delhi-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
02716 Amritsar-Nanded Exp.	from New Delhi	Amritsar-New Delhi	26.11.2020
02925 Banda Terminus-Amritsar Special Express	at Chandigarh	Chandigarh-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
02926 Amritsar-Banda Terminus Special Express	from Chandigarh	Amritsar-Chandigarh	26.11.2020
05933 Dibrugarh-Amritsar Spl.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020
05934 Amritsar-Dibrugarh Spl.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	27.11.2020
04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar Exp.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 24.11.2020

DIVERSION OF SPECIAL TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Diverted Via	Date (from the Originating Station)
02904 Amritsar-Mumbai Central Golden Temple Mail	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Beas	of 24.11.2020
04674/04650 Amritsar-Jaynagar-Amritsar Express	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Beas	25.11.2020
08215 Durg-Jammu Tawi Festival Spl.	Ludhiana Jn.-Jalandhar Cantt.-Pathankot Cantt.	25.11.2020
08216 Jammu Tawi-Durg Festival Spl.	Pathankot Cantt.-Jalandhar Cantt.-Ludhiana Jn.-	27.11.2020
04673 Jaynagar-Amritsar Express	Beas-Tarn Taran-Amritsar	of 23.11.2020
02903 Mumbai Central-Amritsar Central Golden Temple Mail	Beas-Tarn Taran-Amritsar	of 23.11.2020
09026 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Clone Spl.	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Beas	25.11.2020
02926 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Express	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Beas	25.11.2020
02716 Amritsar-Nanded Sachkhand Exp.	Amritsar-Tarn Taran-Beas	25.11.2020

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

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