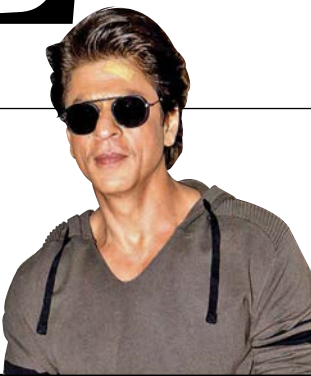


**NEW DELHI THURSDAY 19 NOVEMBER 2020**

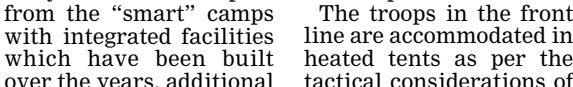
**TABLOID | 16**

## SRK-starrer *Pathan* goes on floor at Yash Raj Studios amid Covid pandemic threat

Vol. 27 No. 273 16 PAGES ₹5.00

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Kartika Shuddha  
Panchami till 10.04 pm  
**Star:** Poorvashada till 9.41  
am  
**Varjyam:** 5.35 pm to 7.10 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 10.10 am to  
10.55 am; 2.38 pm To 3.22  
pm  
**Rahukalam:** 1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.25 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.48 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 11.50 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 9.29 AM**

Alarmed by these plans by Mr Shah and Nadda in the backdrop of five central BJP leaders' assignment to the state, the TMC has seen it as an ominous sign and also



The first meeting will be held in Agar Malwa, where Asia's biggest cow sanctuary was established in 2017.

■ **More on Page 4**

The decision announced by acting defence secretary Christopher C. Miller on Tuesday is in line with President Donald Trump's promise to bring the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to a successful and responsible conclusion and to bring service members home. The move was immediately opposed by Mr

Interestingly, Mr Chidambaram was not among the 23 leaders who wrote to the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, in August this year demanding changes in the functioning of the party.

Earlier this week Mr Sibal, who was signatory to the August letter, spoke about the inability of the party to change. He said that it has been six long years now and the time for introspection is over, it's now time for action. He further added that people do not see the Congress as an alternative and yet no action is being taken to correct this.

The major announcement came just two days after leading biotechnology company Moderna said on Monday its virus vaccine had an efficacy rate of 94.5 per cent. Earlier this month, Pfizer and Biontech had said their Covid-19 vaccine candidate was found to be more than 90 per cent effective.

Analysis of the data indicates a vaccine efficacy rate of 95 per cent in participants without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection and also in participants with and without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection (second primary objective), in each case measured from seven days after the second dose.

—PTT

**More on Page 6**



## IN BRIEF

**Man steals bike to gift it to relatives**

**New Delhi, Nov:** A 25-year-old man was arrested after he allegedly stole a motorcycle from Delhi's Sewa Nagar to send it to his native place in Bihar as a Diwali gift for his relatives, police said on Wednesday. The accused has been identified as Shiv Shankar, a resident of Bihar's Sitamarhi district. He worked at a dhaba in Kotla Mubarakpur, they said. On Saturday, information was received at K M Pur police station regarding the theft of a motorcycle in Sewa Nagar, the police said. During investigation, CCTV footage was scanned and it showed a man lurking near the motorcycle. After some time, he stole the bike, a senior police officer said. On Monday, police received information that the bike will be sold near Sewa Nagar Nala. Thereafter, a trap was laid and the accused nabbed when he came there with the stolen bike, deputy commissioner of police (south) Atul Kumar Thakur said. During interrogation, the accused said he wanted to send the motorcycle to his native place as a Diwali gift for his relatives, the police said.

**Man held for obtaining loans with fake docs**

**New Delhi:** A man was arrested for allegedly taking three home loans worth ₹6.70 crore by forging the documents of a house that he had rented in one of the posh localities in East Delhi, the police said on Wednesday. The accused, Sachin Sharma, was arrested on Tuesday and produced before the court, it said. The matter came to notice after the owner of the property approached the police and registered a complaint against the accused. In her complaint, the woman alleged that in 2014 she had given her property at Surajmal Vihar to Rahul Sharma, Sachin Sharma, and Mange Ram Sharma on rent and upon its expiry in 2016 both Rahul and Sachin Sharma entered into a lease deed with her and continued to reside as tenants at her property.

**WHO to eliminate cervical cancer**

**New Delhi:** Cervical cancer is the second most common cancer in Indian women. There are an estimated 96,000 new cases and 60,000 deaths annually due to cervical cancer, which translates to one woman dying in just over eight minutes. The number now exceeds the number of deaths due to maternal mortality. It is a tragedy since almost all cases can be prevented or detected early and cured with appropriate treatment. For the first time ever, the world has committed to eliminate a cancer as a public health problem. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has recommended targets for 2030 to accelerate the progress towards elimination. In the next decade, countries should strive to reach the goals of vaccinating 90 per cent of girls with HPV vaccine by the age of 15, screening 70 per cent of women at the age of 35 and 45 years with a high performance test such as HPV test, and treat 90 per cent of women detected to have pre-cancer or cancer as well as facilitate palliative care. "On November 17, following the end of the 73rd World Health Assembly, WHO will mark this historic announcement and officially launch the elimination strategy. The moment has arrived for an ambitious and inclusive strategy to accelerate eliminating cervical cancer as a public health problem," said WHO.

**Women, son among 3 held with drugs**

**Noida:** A mother-son duo was among three people arrested in Uttar Pradesh's Greater Noida after 4.10 kg of cannabis was allegedly recovered from them, police said on Wednesday. The accused were held near Chhalera village by officials from the Sector 39 police station. "Those held have been identified as Rinku Yadav, Mithun Halder and his mother Amita Devi. They were held after 4.10 kg of cannabis was recovered from their possession," a police spokesperson said. An FIR has been lodged in the case under provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act, 1985, the spokesperson added.

# 50 people allowed at weddings in Delhi

## DDMA reverts to earlier cap to tackle coronavirus spread

**AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

Only 50 people will now be allowed at marriage functions in the national capital instead of 200 as the Delhi Disaster Management Authority on Wednesday reverted to the earlier cap on the number of guests in the wake of a spurt in coronavirus cases in the city. The order was issued after L-G Anil Bajjal, who is also the DDMA's chairman, approved the Delhi government's proposal to allow only 50 people to attend any marriage function.

The Delhi government had on October 31 allowed marriage gatherings of up to 200 persons. It had earlier imposed a cap of 50 persons during the unlock period.

On Tuesday, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the Aam Aadmi Party government had decided to withdraw the order allowing 200 guests at a wedding, as it mulled reimposing certain restrictions to check the spike in cases.

In the Wednesday order, Chief Secretary Vijay Dev said that the decision was taken in view of the sudden surge in the number of Covid cases in the city, which has further been aggravated due to rising pollution levels owing to various factors.

"In closed spaces, a maximum of 50 per cent of the hall capacity will be allowed, with a ceiling of 50 persons. Wearing of

**▶ THE ORDER** was issued after lieutenant governor Anil Bajjal, who is also the DDMA's chairman, approved the Delhi government's proposal to allow only 50 people to attend any marriage function

face masks, maintaining social distancing, provision for thermal scanning and use of hand wash or sanitizer will continue to be mandatory," Mr Dev said. He also said, "In open spaces, keeping the size of the ground/space in view, subject to a ceiling of 50 persons and with strict observance of social distancing, mandatory wearing of face masks...."

The chief secretary has directed all district magistrates, DCPs and all authorities concerned to ensure strict compliance of his order.

The national capital has been witnessing a spurt in coronavirus cases since October 28 when daily cases breached the 5,000-mark for the first time. The single-day rise in cases crossed the 8,000-mark on November 11.

On Tuesday, Delhi recorded 6,396 fresh Covid cases, taking the infection tally to over 4.95 lakh, while 99 more fatalities pushed the death toll to 7,812. The city had recorded 104 deaths in a day on November 12, the highest in five months.



A health worker takes samples from a commuter during a campaign to conduct random Covid test of people coming from Delhi in Noida on Wednesday. — PTI

## ‘No lockdown plan, may impose restrictions in marketplaces’

**New Delhi, Nov. 18:** Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia said on Wednesday the Delhi government has no plan to impose a lockdown but may press some restrictions in market areas for some days to prevent the spread of Covid if such a need arises.

Lockdown was not a solution to the pandemic. It could be tackled through proper medical arrangements which the government was doing effectively, he said while interacting with reporters at the Delhi Secretariat.



Manish Sisodia

The national capital has been witnessing a spurt in coronavirus cases since October 28 when daily cases breached the 5,000 mark for the first time. Single-day rise in cases crossed the 8,000 mark on November 11.

"We have no intention of a lockdown. Let me clarify, we have made a general proposal to the Centre with regard to certain regulations like shutdown for some days in the markets where Covid-appropriate behaviour and social distancing violations pose threat of rapid infection," Sisodia said.

He asserted what the Delhi government has proposed are measures to prevent violations like not wearing face masks and crowding in the markets and it will not be a lockdown. — PTI

# ‘Sidelined’ Purvanchalis not happy with BJP

**SHASHI BHUSHAN**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Purvanchali community feels it has been sidelined by the Delhi BJP leadership which allegedly failed to put up an aggressive show against the AAP government's ban on Chhath Puja at public places.

Not only did senior BJP leaders fail to meet the lieutenant-governor (LG) to get these restrictions lifted, they also distanced from the protest at chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence on Tuesday, alleged a Delhi BJP Purvanchali leader.

Knowing the importance of the Purvanchali vote bank, which comprises about one-third of the total electorate in the national capital, BJP was seen continuously stand-



Delhi BJP Purvanchal Morcha workers stage a protest against the ban on Chhath Puja events at ITO Yamuna Ghat in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

ing with the community and even appointed party Lok Sabha member from Northeast Delhi Manoj

Tiwari as its president of the city unit in November 2016 in place of its traditional Baniya and Punjabi

community.

In 2010, then Delhi BJP president Vijender Gupta, a leader from Baniya com-

munity, had successfully fought a political battle with the then Sheila Dikshit government to announce a public holiday on Chhath Puja.

Purvanchal, a traditional vote bank of Congress, voted AAP en masse in the 2015 Delhi Assembly polls. However, after Mr Tiwari took control of Delhi BJP, they voted in favour of the saffron party in the 2017 civic polls.

Interestingly, with the change of guard, Delhi BJP leadership left its Purvanchal Morcha to politically fight against the city government's decision banning celebration of Chhath Puja at public places. Not a single senior non-Purvanchali Delhi BJP leader joined the protest led by BJP state unit general secretary Dinesh Pratap Singh,

a Purvanchali himself.

Delhi BJP asked Mr Singh to organise the protest and he did not ask any senior party leaders, office bearers, and prominent Purvanchali faces like Mr Tiwari or Laxmi Nagar MLA Abhay Verma, the lone BJP MLA from Purvanchal.

Mr Singh told this newspaper that the state leadership made him the in-charge of the protest at Mr Kejriwal's residence and he did not contact any leader whether Purvanchali or not.

Attempts to contact Mr Tiwari, Mr Verma, and Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta turned futile. Question has been raised within the party and most importantly from non-Purvanchali leaders about differentiating festivity regionally.

## High court junks plea against ban on Chhath

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Delhi high court, on Wednesday, refused to interfere with the AAP government's decision to ban Chhath Puja celebrations at public places like ponds and riverbanks in the city due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The high court said that the third wave of the infection was already underway in the national capital and allowing a large gathering would result in people becoming "super spreaders."

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad dismissed a petition by the Durga Jan Seva Trust challenging the November 10 order of the chairman of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) not to allow any gathering in public places for Chhath Puja on November 20.

The bench said the authorities passed the order after considering the spread of infection in Delhi and the petition was merited.

"In today's day and time, such a petition is belied by the ground reality," the bench said, adding that the petitioner should have taken into consideration the current circumstances in the city. The high court said it appeared that the petitioner is not alive to the Covid situation.

Chhath Puja is celebrated by thousands of people in the capital, especially those hailing from Bihar and Eastern Uttar Pradesh.

## City's air quality 'poor', no significant change likely

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

Delhi's air quality deteriorated marginally and was recorded in the "poor" category on Wednesday as a change in the wind direction increased the share of stubble burning in the city's pollution slightly.

The city's air quality index (AQI) was recorded in the "moderate" category in the morning. However, pollution levels increased by a bit as the day progressed. The 24-hour average AQI stood at 211. It was 171 on Tuesday.

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

Weather experts and government agencies said no significant change was likely in the next three to four days.

V.K. Soni, the head of the India meteorological department's environment research centre, said northwesterly winds increased the stubble burning contribution slightly on Wednesday.

According to the ministry of earth sciences' air quality monitor, Safar, stubble burning accounted for eight per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution on Wednesday. It was three per cent on Tuesday. Around 800 fire points were observed in Punjab, Haryana and western Pakistan. However, their impact on Delhi-NCR's air quality will not be significant, V.K. Soni said.

## CM: Govt to reduce Yamuna's pollution by 90% by March '23

**New Delhi, Nov. 18:** Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said the Delhi Jal Board will reduce the pollution load in the Yamuna by 90 per cent by March 2023.

At a review meeting, DJB officials presented a detailed plan to Kejriwal and Water Minister Satyendar Jain in this regard.

Major interventions include treatment of around 150 MGD polluted water coming from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh using natural wetlands and the aeration method.

"Second, the wastewater in small and big drains will be tapped into sewage treatment plants. Third, steps will be taken to improve the quality of the existing STPs, including



Arvind Kejriwal

upgrading all the equipment and using innovative processes," a DJB statement said.

The utility will collect sludge from septic tanks across Delhi and reuse it in the bio-gas plants to generate electricity and gas, it said. The chief minister directed the officials to ensure that 90 per cent of the pollution in the Yamuna is eliminated by

March 2023.

The government will increase the treated water reuse capacity to 400 million gallons per day. More treated water will be used in lakes, forests, gardening, and groundwater recharge and irrigation purposes.

The national capital generates around 720 million gallons of wastewater per day, of which around 525 million gallons is treated by sewage treatment plants. Around 90 MGD is used in various parks and gardens, and the rest goes to waste.

There are five major outfalls carrying wastewater into the Yamuna, including Najafgarh drain, Shahdara drain, Barapullah drain, Delhi Gate drain and Mori Gate drain. — PTI

## First impression: DU students enter college life virtually

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** Even though there were no fancy orientation day celebrations for thousands of first-year students of the Delhi University, the Covid pandemic could still not dampen the excitement that comes on the first day of college.

While the colleges are still closed in view of the pandemic, the new academic session for the freshers began from Wednesday after a delay of over four months. "Every year when

I used to read in newspapers about the first day at DU, it almost felt like a red carpet welcome. I had plans about what will I wear on the first day, how my first picture on the campus will be. All of that was held online. This is the new normal and we have no choice but to adapt," Sonakshi Tyagi, a fresher at Gargi College, said. Maitreyi college students had an online orientation session which was live streamed.

"It was very different

from what my school seniors or my elder sister had as a first day of college but still the excitement was the same. I felt sad but then this is how the whole world is operating at the moment," Shrutika, a Political Science student, said.

Every year, the first day of college is usually marked by warm welcome with flowers, cafeteria interactions with seniors and orientation day celebrations.

Puran Bisht, a Shivaji college student, said, "It was

not like you are going to interact with 20 people and make friends for the rest of your lives. It was the same feel of being at home and attending classes."

Hindu College, Miranda House, St Stephen's College, Shri Ram College of Commerce, Ramjas College and others have opted for an online orientation process introducing students to college officials, various societies and fellow students.

During the orientation

ceremonies, colleges are also laying emphasis on the impact of Covid on mental health of students.

First-year students are also being introduced to college counsellors and online sessions are being lined up with these counsellors.

The Delhi University Students' Union (DUSU), which used to organise a welcome drive for freshers everywhere and used to distribute flowers and chocolates, has also planned

online interactive sessions and events this year.

"Since students cannot come to college, we will reach out to them. Till last year, the experience of the first day was very different. We used to visit all colleges, meet the students in societies, welcomed them with chocolates and parties and get-togethers. But this year, we are planning to organise online events where students can also participate," Akshit Dahiya, the DUSU president, said. — PTI



## IN BRIEF

### 'LADAKH IN CHINA' ERROR: TWITTER APOLOGISES

**New Delhi:** Social media giant Twitter has apologised in writing to a key parliamentary panel for wrongly showing Ladakh in China and has promised to correct the error by the month-end, the committee's chairperson Meenakshi Lekhi said on Wednesday. Twitter's deposition has come in form of an affidavit signed by Damien Karlen, Chief Privacy Officer of Twitter Inc, for wrong geo-tagging of India's map, Lekhi said. Last month, the joint committee of parliament on data protection bill had come down heavily on Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and had sought an explanation by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit. Appearing before the panel, chaired by Lekhi, representatives of Twitter India had "begged apology", but they were told by the members that it was a criminal offence that questioned the sovereignty of the country and an affidavit must be submitted by Twitter Inc, not by its 'marketing arm' Twitter India.

## Varavara Rao to be shifted to hospital

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 18

The Bombay high court on Wednesday directed the Maharashtra government to shift poet and activist Varavara Rao from Talaja jail in Navi Mumbai to Nanavati hospital in Mumbai. The court also allowed his family to meet Rao in the hospital.

Rao is an accused in Bhima Koregaon riot case. Court in its order cleared that Rao should be treated there for 15 days and without informing the court about his health, he should not be shifted to any other place. The court directed that the cost of Rao's treatment at the Nanavati Hospital will be borne by the state government.

A division bench of Justice S.S. Shinde and Justice Madhav Jamdar passed its orders while hearing a writ petition filed by Rao's wife Hemlata seeking that he be shifted from the Talaja prison hospital to the Nanavati Hospital immediately, since his contin-



Varavara Rao

ued detention was a breach of his fundamental rights.

On the last hearing, the court had asked for a detailed medical report of Rao after his counsel Indira Jaisinghani argued that the state is silent on the neurological condition of Rao in its medical report submitted before the court on Wednesday.

Initially state prosecutor Deepak Thakre had suggested that the cost of treatment should be borne by Rao's family. However, Ms Jaising argued that the Supreme Court had held that a state could not cite lack of money as a reason to not look after a citizen's fundamental rights.

## Why are Rahul, Sonia silent on Agusta?: BJP

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

Renewing its attack on the top brass of the Congress over alleged kickbacks in defence deals, including AgustaWestland, during the UPA regime, the BJP on Wednesday attacked Congress president Sonia Gandhi and former president Rahul Gandhi, saying they have been silent over reports that an accused in the case has allegedly made references to some of its leaders and their relatives.

Citing media reports on an alleged corruption in the AgustaWestland deal, former Union minister and BJP spokesperson Rajyavardhan Rathore said, "Congress played with the national security which is very unfortunate and the country will never forgive it. Corruption are Congress are two faces of the same coin..Rahul Gandhi tweets on all sort of issues but has not responded to these grave



Rajyavardhan Rathore

charges." He said party leader and Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had on Tuesday asked Gandhis to clarify on the names figuring in relation to the scam.

"But there is only silence. What we understand with this silence. The person who tweets on every issue is not saying anything on such a scam in which investigation is going on in Italy and in India. What is the reason and why there is a scam when Congress is involved in defence deals? Why Rahul Gandhi is silent on AgustaWestland deal?" he asked.

The fresh allegations have come in the wake of

Rajiv Saxena, an accused-turned-approver in the VVIP chopper deal, allegedly making references to two Congress leaders and son and nephew of another Congress leader.

A reported statement of Saxena to the ED claimed that he had mentioned the names of former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath's nephew Ratul Puri and son Bakul Nath, along with Congress leaders Salman Khurshid and Ahmed Patel.

He said there was an investigation in Italy on ₹3.600 crore

AgustaWestland helicopter deal that its parent company is working unethically.

On November 26, 2012, the then defence minister A.K. Antony informed Lok Sabha that the investigation which is going on in Italy also includes the investigation regarding the contract done with India, Rathore said.

He said a preliminary inquiry was ordered by CBI in February 2013.

## ORDER ON BSF JAWAN'S POLL PLEA RESERVED

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its order on an election petition by a dismissed BSF jawan Tej Bahadur challenging election of Prime Minister

Narendra Modi from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency on the grounds that the rejection of his nomination papers by the returning officer was flawed.

**EAST DELHI MUNICIPAL CORPORATION**

**PUBLIC NOTICE**

**Swachh Survekshan 2021**

**To participate in the 'Swachh Ranking' competition under the Swachh Bharat Mission.**

This is to inform that the East Delhi Municipal Corporation is fully committed to achieve the objectives of the Swachh Bharat Mission. For this, East Delhi Municipal Corporation is participating in the Swachh Survekshan 2021 conducted by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs, Government of India. According to the guidelines of Swachh Survekshan 2021, 'Swachhta Ranking' is required, to promote competition for cleanliness and sanitation among all hotels, schools, hospitals, RWA (Residential Welfare Association, Government Offices and Registered Market Associations operating in the urban area. The objective is to improve the sanitation level of these places and the city, with maximum participation from the citizens.

The Municipal Corporation is announcing the 'Swachhta Ranking Competition for the participation of various institutions, the Municipal Corporation is competing cleanliness rankings in all hotels, schools, hospitals, RWA, Government Offices and Registered Market Associations in East Delhi region. A committee has been formed, with the objective of keeping the competition transparent in the ranking process, under whose supervision the entire ranking process will be implemented. The team of the committee constituted will survey the premises of each participant at the ground level. The first three winners of each category mentioned above will be felicitated by the East Delhi Municipal Corporation.

Interested participants are requested to participate in the Swachhta Ranking Competition before 6 pm on 25-11-2020, by sending a participatory/ registration at [www.mcdonline.nic.in/edmcportal](http://www.mcdonline.nic.in/edmcportal). Through the East Delhi Municipal Corporation, be sure to be made available to the Executive Engineer.

**Executive Engineer**  
**P.I.U/ Central Store**

**RO NO - 63/DP/EAST/2020-21**  
EDMC's Citizens Helpline No. 155303

## MUMBAI POLICE ISSUES 3RD SUMMON TO KANGANA RANAUT AND HER SISTER

SAURABH JOSHI  
MUMBAI, NOV. 18

The Bandra police issued third summons to actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli, asking them to appear before them on November 23-24 in connection with a case registered against them for allegedly promoting enmity between different communities.

The police had first sent summons to the duo asking them to appear on October 26. They had sought time to appear stating they were busy with a family wedding till November 15.

The officials stated that this could be the last summons sent out to the duo and if they dodge again, further action will be taken against them. The second time they were asked to appear on November 9-10 however they did not appear even then. The series of tweets by the two

sisters led to enmity between communities, police claims.

"The duo needs to be questioned based on the complaint we had received, which is the basis of the FIR. They are yet to respond to the third summons we have sent them," said a police officer.

The case pertains to the complaint of fitness trainer Munawar Ali Sayyad in the Bandra court, seeking probe into the tweets and other statements given by the sisters. The police filed a case under sections 153 (A) (promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion, race), 295 (A) (deliberate acts hurting religious sentiments), 124 (A) (sedition) and 34 (acts of common intention) as per the provisions of the IPC.

Ranaut had come out aggressively on social media platforms following the suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, criticising the Mumbai police.

## 12 civilians injured as terrorists lob grenade at CRPF personnel in Pulwama

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 18

At least 12 pedestrians were injured in a failed attempt of suspected militants to target a pillbox of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) with a hand grenade in Jammu and Kashmir's southern Kakapora township on Wednesday evening.

All the injured were evacuated to a nearby hospital where doctors attending on them said all of them are "stable".

The J&K police in a statement said that militants tossed a hand grenade towards a bunker of the 41 Battalion of CRPF in the main town of Kakapora. "However, the grenade missed the intended target and exploded on road, injuring twelve civilians," it said.

Soon after the attack whole area was cordoned off by police and CRPF reinforcements to nab the assailants, the police sources said. But no arrests had been made till reports last came in.

## Appeal for Identification



General public is hereby informed that one person **Name:** Unknown, **S/o:** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** About 40-45 Years, **Height:** 5'5", **Sex:** Male, **Complexion:** Shallow, **Built:** Fat, **Face:** Round, **Wearing:** White Shirt with Blue and Brown Strip and Grey Colour Pant, **Bare Footed, Place of Recovery:**

Found on 09.11.2020 in unconscious condition near Axis Bank Kalewa Chowk and admitted at LHMC Hospital vide MLC No. 3444/20. During treatment he died on 12.11.2020.

In this regard **DD No. 37A, Dated 12.11.2020** has been lodged at **Police Station, Mandir Marg, New Delhi**. Any clue come to notice please inform undersign.

**SHO**  
**P.S. Mandir Marg, New Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-23364100, 23366730**

DP/162/NDD/2020

NORTHERN RAILWAY	
Tender Notice	
The Deputy Chief Engineer/Const./ Northern Railway, Shivaji Bridge, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites open e-tenders under One-Packet System for the following work:	
Name of works and location	"Design and drawing of test piles, foundation (open/piles), substructure & super structure (PSC/Steel) in connection with construction of 07 nos. Road over Bridges on Jind-Panipat, Jind-Sonepat, Rohtak-Panipat and Delhi-Ambala section of Northern Railway".
Completion period of the work	12 (Twelve) months
Approx. Cost of work	Rs. 33.21 lakh.
Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 6,6400/- only
Date & Time for submission of E-tender and opening of tender	Tenders may be uploaded upto 11.30 hrs on 10.12.2020 on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> . The bidders can participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs on 10.12.2020.
Detailed Tender Notice & Tender Document	Tender document is available on <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 18.11.2020 to 10.12.2020. Above tenders document will be available for submission of offer on IREPS web site i.e. <a href="http://www.ireps.gov.in">www.ireps.gov.in</a> from 26.11.2020 to 10.12.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.
No: 476-A-Acs-Design&Drawing-ROBs/RUBs-CSB Dated: 18.11.2020 2579/2020	
Serving Customers With A Smile	



“I do not like carving the world into segments;  
we are one world”  
**Indira Gandhi**

Let us on this **NATIONAL INTEGRATION DAY**  
salute the indomitable spirit of India's unity,  
harmony and sovereignty in memory of  
former Prime Minister

**Late Smt. Indira Gandhi**

on her

**103rd Birth Anniversary**

**Capt. Amarinder Singh**  
**Chief Minister, Punjab**





## SHORT TAKES

MP BABU ORDERS  
10-HR JAIL FOR NOT  
WEARING MASKRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, NOV. 18

A district collector in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday ordered the police to put those who would be found moving without wearing masks, in an open jail.

Ujjain district collector Ashish Singh directed the local superintendent of police to launch a special drive in the district against those who violated Covid-19 guidelines of wearing masks in public and ordered to sentence such people to 10-hour-imprisonment in an open jail.

Singh was reviewing the pandemic situation in his district at a high level official meeting in Ujjain.

He ordered the police to ensure strict enforcement of Covid-19 guidelines of wearing masks by the people in the wake of sudden surge in Covid-19 cases in other parts of the state as well as the other states.

Ujjain reported 27 fresh cases on Wednesday taking the tally of Coronavirus positive cases in the district to 3,745.

12 CIVILIANS HURT  
IN MILITANTS  
FAILED ATTEMPTAGE CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 18

At least, 12 pedestrians were injured in a failed attempt of suspected militants to target a pillbox of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) with a hand grenade in Jammu and Kashmir's southern Kakapora township on Wednesday evening.

All the injured were evacuated to a nearby hospital where doctors attending on them said all of them are 'stable'.

The J&K police in a statement said that militants tossed a hand grenade towards a bunker of the 41 Battalion of CRPF in the main town of Kakapora. "However, the grenade missed the intended target and exploded on road, injuring 12 civilians," it said.

Soon after the attack whole area was cordoned off by police and CRPF reinforcements to nab the assailants, the police sources said. But no arrests had been made till reports last came in.

GOAIR PASSENGER  
DIES OF CARDIAC  
ARREST IN PAK

**New Delhi, Nov 18:** A Delhi-bound GoAir plane from Riyadh made an emergency landing at Karachi airport in Pakistan on Tuesday after a passenger suffered cardiac arrest and later died. The chartered flight — G8-6658 — carrying 179 passengers had sought priority landing and then landed safely at Jinnah International Airport on Tuesday. An airline official said the male passenger suffered cardiac arrest. The plane landed at Delhi airport early morning on Wednesday and the body of the deceased has been brought to Delhi, the official added. In a statement on Wednesday, GoAir said the airline's staff attended to the passenger and he was administered with Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation and Automated External Defibrillator (AED) till landing at Karachi airport, the release said.

ICMR warns against wrong  
use of CPT in Covid patients

CPT has been tried in the past for treatment of viral infections like H1N1

**New Delhi, Nov. 18:** The country's apex health research body, ICMR, has issued an advisory stating that indiscriminate use of convalescent plasma therapy (CPT) in Coronavirus infected patients is not advisable.

The Covid-19 caseload in India has mounted to over 89 lakh. In an "evidence based advisory to address inappropriate use of convalescent plasma in Covid-19 patients", the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said that a potential donor for convalescent plasma should have sufficient concentration of antibody working against Covid-19.

Benefits of CPT in improving clinical outcomes, reducing severity of disease, duration of hospitalisation and mortality in Covid-19 patients are dependent on the concentration of specific antibodies in convalescent plasma that could neutralise the effects of SARS-CoV-2. CPT or passive immunotherapy has been tried in the past for treatment of viral infections like H1N1, Ebola and SARS-CoV-1 etc.

The ICMR recently conducted an open label phase II multicentre randomised controlled trial in India across 39 public and private hospitals on use of convalescent plasma in the management of

Delhi to impose curbs in  
heavily crowded marketsAGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Delhi government on Wednesday imposed restrictions on number of people attending a wedding or large gathering events, scaling it down from 200 to 50 in view of rising cases of the Coronavirus in the national capital.

Delhi government is now all set to impose restrictions in heavily crowded markets though deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia clarified saying there is no plan to impose a lockdown but to have some restrictions in market areas for some days to prevent the

spread of Coronavirus, if such a need arises.

"Lockdown was not a solution to the pandemic. It could be tackled through proper medical arrangements which the government was doing effectively. We have no intention of a lockdown. Let me clarify, we have made a general proposal to the Centre with regard to certain regulations like shutdown for some days in the markets where Covid-19 appropriate behaviour and social distancing violations pose threat of rapid infection," Sisodia said.

While majority of Indian states are on road to recovery from the

Coronavirus, Delhi, Kerala, West Bengal, Haryana and Rajasthan are now reporting surge in cases.

Total number of Coronavirus cases in India, as per Union health ministry, were over 89.12 lakh on Wednesday with 38,617 new cases while total deaths were 1.31 lakh with 474 new fatalities.

However, as per covid19India.org, the total cases were over 89.20 lakh and total fatalities over 1.31 lakh by Wednesday evening. On the other hand, India's recovery rate is improving and has reached 93.52 per cent.

Covid-19 patients, the advisory stated. "Indiscriminate use of CPT is not advisable. It is speculated that convalescent plasma having low concentration of specific antibody against SARS-CoV-2 may be less beneficial for treating Covid-19 patients as compared to plasma with high concentration of such antibodies. — PTI

cases with moderate Covid-19 disease (PLACID Trial).

It was concluded that CPT did not lead to reduction in progression to severe Covid-19 or all-cause mortality in the group that received CPT as compared to the group that did not receive the therapy "PLACID is the world's largest pragmatic trial on CPT conducted in

464 moderately ill laboratory confirmed Covid-19 affected adults in real world setting wherein no benefit of use of CPT could be established," the ICMR said.

Similar studies conducted in China and the Netherlands have also documented no significant benefit of CPT in improving the clinical outcomes of hospitalised

## ‘Cow dung’ festival



People take part in 'Gorehabba' festival at Gumatapura village on the border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states. Laughing and cheering as they scoop up handfuls of cow dung to roll into balls, men and boys from a small village mark the 'Gorehabba' festival every year by flinging cow dung at each other. — AFP

98% OF RAPE VICTIMS IN DELHI CLOSE RELATIVES,  
ACQUAINTANCE OF ACCUSED: POLICE TELLS PANEL

**New Delhi, Nov. 18:** The Delhi Police on Wednesday informed a parliamentary panel that 98 per cent of rape victims in the national capital were either close relatives or acquaintance of the accused, sources said.

The disclosure was made before the parliamentary standing committee on home affairs, headed by Congress MP

Anand Sharma.

Along with the Delhi Police, officials of the ministry of home affairs and the ministry of women and child development deposed before the panel at a meeting, the agenda of which was rising crime against women, sources said.

In 44 per cent of the total rape cases in Delhi, the accused were from victim's family or

a family friend, 13 per cent were relatives and 12 per cent neighbour, the Delhi Police said while making a presentation on the heinous crime and the relationship between rape victims and accused.

It also said 26 pc accused are somehow known person to the victim, and just 2 per cent unknown or stranger to the victim. — PTI

PATRICIA  
MUKHIM QUILTS  
EDITORS GUILD,  
SLAMS ITS PREZMANOJ ANAND  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 18

In what has raised serious question over the role of the Editors Guild of India, senior journalist and editor from northeast Patricia Mukhim has resigned from the organisation expressing her dismay over the silence of the Editors Guild of India on the ruling of the Meghalaya High Court against her over a Facebook post.

Accusing that the journalists' body defends only star editors and anchors, the editor of The Shillong Times Mukhim has submitted her resignation to the Guild chief Seema Mustafa on Monday.

In her resignation letter, Mukhim, who is a Padma Shri Awardee, said while the organisation remained silent on the High Court's order against her, it showed "alacrity" in extending support to Arnab Goswami following his arrest earlier this month.

It is significant that the Meghalaya HC recently refused to quash the criminal proceedings against Mukhim for her four-month-old Facebook post condemning the attack on five non-tribal youths by a gang of masked men, allegedly tribals.

MP's 'gau panel'  
to take steps for  
protecting cattleRABINDRA NATH  
CHOUDHURY  
BHOPAL, NOV. 18

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday announced that a Cabinet committee would be constituted to recommend measures for the conservation and promotion of cattle resources in the state. The committee will be christened 'Gau Cabinet'. This is the first of its kind initiative in the country.

Chouhan took to social media to announce his decision to set up the committee.

In his twitter post, he declared that the first meeting of the committee would be held on November 22.

A statement issued said a six-member committee headed by the Chief Minister has been set up. Other members of the committee are home minister Narottam Mishra, agriculture minister Kamal Patel, forest minister Vijay Shah, panchayat raj minister Mahendra Sisodia and animal husbandry minister Prem Singh Patel.

The first meeting of the committee will be held in Agar Malwa in Madhya Pradesh where Asia's biggest cow sanctuary has

been established in 2017, on November 22.

Infrastructure has been laid in the 1,100 acre-sanctuary to provide shelter to 10,000 cattle. However, currently the sanctuary has housed 4,000 cattle.

Incidentally, the present Congress government in the state headed by Kamal Nath had initiated steps to privatise the sanctuary. However, the move to hand over the sanctuary to a private entrepreneur could not materialise due to the fall of the Kamal Nath government in March this year. "We have set protection of cows as a priority of our government. Around 4,000 cow shelters will be established in the state in the current year", Kamal Patel said.

Kamal Nath however described Chouhan's announcement as 'one among many announcements' which never saw light of the day.

"The Chief Minister has even forgotten to fulfil his promise of establishing cow ministry. He has even reduced the incentive of ₹20 per cow provided by his government to supply fodder to the cattle in cow shelters", he said. MP has a cattle population of 1.76 crore. The state has 1,300 cow shelters where 1.80 lakh cattle have been rehabilitated.

Ex-Kerala minister  
held in flyover scamAGE CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
NOV. 18

The Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau (VACB) on Wednesday arrested former PWD minister of Kerala and Indian Union Muslim League legislator VK. Ebrahim Kunju in connection with corruption in the construction of Palarivattom flyover in Kochi.

The arrest of the former minister was recorded in a private hospital in Kochi where he is currently under treatment. He was arraigned in the case after vigilance found his alleged role in releasing an advance amount of ₹8.25 crore to RDS Projects Ltd, the contractor of the flyover construction work in violation of rules. The MLA has also been charged with criminal conspiracy and amassment of illegal wealth.

The flyover was constructed in Kochi at a cost of ₹42 crore and commissioned in 2016. By 2019 it developed major cracks in the pier pipes and concrete girders leading to the flyover's closure for traffic. Metro man E. Sreedharan and a team of experts from Madras IIT who carried out the technical inspection detected major faults and recommended reconstruction of pier caps, girders and deck. Kunju's arrest has come as a major setback for the Congress led opposition UDF of which Muslim League is the second biggest constituent. The opposition is currently engaged in a full scale agitation against LDF government's corruption.

The Congress and Muslim League leaders, however, termed the arrest politically motivated and aimed at diverting people's attention from the sensational gold smuggling case in which Chief Minister's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar is involved and Life Mission project corruption case.

Modi, Biden talk  
to strengthen tiesAGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Indian government made its first formal contact with the new American dispensation late on Tuesday night when Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to the President-elect of the United States Joseph R. Biden and congratulated him on his election, describing it as a testament to the strength and resilience of democratic traditions in the United States.

In his tweet message, PM Modi said he has reiterated India's commitment to its strategic partnership with the US. The Prime Minister also conveyed congratulations to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, saying her success was a matter of pride for the Indian-American community.

"Spoke to US President-elect Joe Biden on the phone to congratulate him. We reiterated our firm commitment to the Indo-US strategic partnership and discussed our shared priorities and concerns — the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region," said Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a tweet.

"I also conveyed warm congratulations for Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. Her success is a

matter of great pride and inspiration for members of the vibrant Indian-American community, who are a tremendous source of strength for Indo-US relations," he added.

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) in a statement said the Prime Minister warmly recalled his earlier interactions with Biden, including during his official visits to the US in 2014 and in 2016 when Biden had chaired the Joint Session of the US Congress that was addressed by Prime Minister Modi during his 2016 visit.

"The leaders agreed to work closely to further advance the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, built on shared values and common interests. The leaders also discussed their priorities, including containing the Covid-19 pandemic, promoting access to affordable vaccines, tackling climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region," the MEA statement said.

Biden's transition team issued a statement saying the President-elect thanked Prime Minister Modi for his congratulations and expressed his desire to strengthen and expand United States-India Strategic partnership alongside the first Vice President of South Asian descent.

## SILVER LINING

## Belief that copper utensils boost immunity helps improve sales

## Pandemic boosts Kashmir's copper trade

YUSUF JAMEEL  
SRINAGAR, NOV. 18

The Coronavirus pandemic may have caused widespread disruptions, affected health systems and living conditions and pushed many parts of the world into recession, it has silver lining, at least, for Kashmir's traditional copperware and thousands of people associated with the trade.

Copperware trader Aaqib Javed said, "Covid-19 has pushed the trade by 20-30 per cent". Another Kashmiri Farooq Ahmed who runs a copperware store in summer capital Srinagar said, "If Coronavirus has brought misery with it for us, it has, at the same time, proved somewhat catalyst for boosting up our trade."

The Kashmiri copperware is an ancient artwork

and the objects are used as household dailyware and also for decorative purposes. The art of casting copperware in the Valley had flourished from years but the trade has received a boost with the outbreak of Coronavirus as it is generally believed that the use of copper utensils for cooking and eating from these helps towards increasing immunity to fight viruses and also minimizes cancer risks and fight back other diseases.

Historians say that the elegant treasure Kashmir possesses was introduced to it by artisans and traders from Iran and Iraq more than 700-years ago and Islamic scholar from Persia Mir Sayyid Ali Hamdani was instrumental in making copperware popular among the natives. Geologist and oral historian Jalal Ud Din Shah said,

"Copper was in use during the Hindu period in Kashmir also but only for carving out coins. The first use of this metal for making household utensils and decorative items began during the Muslim period in early 14th century".

He said that Valley's copperware art has its origin in Iraq is borne also by the fact that many families associated with it back home continue to use 'Baghdadi' (natives of Baghdad) as their surname. Sajad Muzaffar who runs a copperware factory in Srinagar's Zakura industrial area said, "The demand has increased over a period of time and with that a large number of people got associated with it as artisans and traders. My products are sold locally."

The elegantly designed copper utensils are not only used for cooking and

serving food at homes but also at large attended weddings and other functions. As the doctors insist on maintaining social distancing to ward off Covid-19, the traditional Wazwan cuisine is now served at weddings and other celebrations individually in copper plates which have floral and calligraphic motifs engraved or embossed on them-known as 'Kandkari' work in local parlance- instead of 'Traam', a bigger plate around which four persons sit to relish the delicacies in chorus and which has been a traditional necessarily to 'practice brotherhood'.

"Until a couple of weeks ago when the marriage season was at its peak we would work round-the-clock to make these engraved dinner plates and sarposhs (engraved

lids) for these. Indeed, Covid-19 has given a boost to our vocation," said Manzoor Ahmed Misgar, an artisan who also owns a copperware store in central Srinagar.

Sajad is happy to note that perhaps the only silver lining of the pandemic is that "it has improved further the prospects of the trade and, thereby, providing livelihood to more people".

Farooq said, "It is better for your health to cook in and eat from copper utensils and dailyware...better than that of stainless steel. Doctors also say this." Local physicians this correspondent spoke to did not dispute it claim but had reservations about the claim that the cooking in and eating from copper utensils can increase immunity to fight corona like viruses.





# THE ASIAN AGE

19 NOVEMBER 2020

## ‘Love jihad’ laws are frivolous, will divide

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution provides for the right to practise religion: all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of Part III of the Constitution which deals with fundamental rights. Marriage is hardly a subject that comes in the way of a person practising the religion of his/her choice.

However, some of the state governments in India have of late been busy discovering marriage as one. It started with Uttar Pradesh where the chief minister, piggybacking on an order of a single bench of the Allahabad high court that ruled marriage for the purpose of conversion would not stand the scrutiny of the law, said the state government would be bringing in an anti-“love jihad” law. BJP governments in Haryana and Karnataka joined the bandwagon and said they, too, were contemplating introducing such laws.

**Governments and parties that seek to perpetuate themselves have the tough route of good governance to take. The alternative is to fashion bogeys.**

Now, the Madhya Pradesh government takes the cake. The state home minister has announced that a “love jihad bill” will soon be introduced in the state Assembly making it mandatory for the people concerned to notify the district collector a month in advance before formalising an inter-faith marriage. According to the minister, marriages that take place forcibly, out of fraud or by tempting someone for religious conversion will be declared null and void. It will be a cognisable offence and non-bailable, attracting five years of rigorous imprisonment. Even those assisting such marriages will be considered a party to the crime.

Governments which lack in performance or in meeting the promises they had made to voters or in ensuring basic governance invent terminologies that offer them a covering fire while going to people. “Love jihad” is one such term. Every single authority in India, including Union ministers concerned, have said there is nothing in the law or statute which defines “love jihad”; it remains a derogatory term the right wing uses to denote the marriage of a Muslim man and a Hindu woman (and not vice-versa). In fact, the National Commission for Women has recently made it clear that no such thing exists though its chairperson holds a different view.

Those who advance such regressive ideas must bear in mind that no law that puts specific conditions on people based on their religion has a chance of survival as long as our Constitution lasts. And the Special Marriage Act, 1954, makes no distinction whether a marriage is interfaith or intra-religion. All that a couple has to do is to notify the official concerned a month before the marriage.

Governments and parties that seek to perpetuate themselves have the tough route of good governance to take. The alternative is to coin terminologies and fight an imaginary enemy. If they have the welfare of the people whom they claim to serve in mind, then they must invent ways of improving governance, not meddle with people’s private lives. The Union government must advise the states not to go ahead with such divisive and communal tools to protect themselves from the wrath of people.

## Gupkar: Let Cong decide

Union home minister Amit Shah has raised the profile of the upcoming District Development Council elections in Kashmir by attacking the J&K mainstream parties as the “Gupkar gang”, and viciously and propagandistically describing them as being anti-national and pro-terrorist. He has also rhetorically asked the Congress leadership if it is a part of this “gang”.

The DDC polls for 280 seats in J&K, which kick off on November 28, will be the first proper electoral test of the popularity of the Centre’s move to do away with the former state’s autonomous status in August 2019. If the J&K parties, along with the Congress and the CPI(M) — the latter having limited influence in southern Kashmir — come together for the DDC polls, they are likely to be a formidable combine that could electorally embarrass the BJP.

Fruits of this unity could set up a united front spirit for the subsequent Assembly election also. This too will worry the BJP. The Centre’s promises of ushering a new era of development and ending terrorism with the annulment of Article 35-A and the reducing of Article 370 have proved hollow. Political reverse for the BJP in the DDC polls is apt to strengthen the public mood in favour of the Gupkar Declaration passed on August 4, 2019, by the National Conference, PDP, People’s Conference, Congress and CPI(M).

This declaration enjoins participants to unite to seek restoration of J&K’s special status and to retain the state’s identity, a perfectly legitimate demand in accordance with the spirit of federalism. The BJP is baiting the Congress and seeking to scare it with the so-called nationalist card. The Congress is being invited to take fright as it contests elections across the country, not just J&K. The idea is to detach the party from the Gupkar Alliance in the DDC polls.

Last year the Congress had participated in framing the Gupkar Declaration, but now seems defensive on account of stray utterances of PDP and NC leaders (which were later tempered). The party should think for itself and not under BJP’s pressure.

### THE ASIAN AGE

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Dilip Cherian  
Dilli Ka Babu



## MHA hard put to find officers ready to serve in Ladakh, J&K

More than a year after the change in the status of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, there is an acute shortage of IAS, IPS and other all-India service officers in the Union Territories. The situation is dire enough for the ministry of home affairs to write to all cadre-controlling authorities to prepare a list of IAS, IPS and other officers who can be immediately sent on deputation to J&K and Ladakh.

And the ministry is trying to cast its net far and wide. According to sources, a missive from the MHA has been sent to the Railway Board chairman, Comptroller General of Accounts, Comptroller Auditor General of India, secretaries of the ministries of defence, external affairs, corporate affairs and I&B, chairpersons of the Central Board of Direct Taxes and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, and the departments of

commerce, telecom and posts!

As of now, sources say, two officers have shown willingness to serve in J&K on deputation. Both are Kashmiri-born officers, one an IAS officer from Assam-Meghalaya cadre and the other an IRS officer. Not very encouraging, it seems.

After all, J&K has a stipulated cadre strength of 137 IAS officers, out of whom only 58 are serving in the cadre, including nine who are on Central deputation. Similarly, the cadre strength of IPS officers is 147, but only 66 are currently serving in the cadre.

### CIC PUTS A LID ON INFORMATION

Among the first things the Central Information Commission (CIC) has done after the appointment of Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as Chief Information Commissioner is to allow the Central Secretariat to withhold records of the resignation

**Following the appointment of Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as Chief Information Commissioner, the CIC let the Central Secretariat withhold records of the resignation of former home secretary Anil Goswami**

of former home secretary Anil Goswami. Sinha, a former IFS officer and high commissioner to the UK, was sworn in by President Ram Nath after Bimal Julka retired from the post in August.

The panel has reportedly based its judgment on a Delhi high court order according to which file notings and deliberations of the Group of Officers or the authority cannot be disclosed. The CIC’s order came in response to an RTI application filed by IPS officer Anurag Thakur

who had sought to know from the Cabinet Secretariat the details of action taken on a complaint against Goswami, including communication exchanged between various authorities and file notings. Not getting a satisfactory response, Thakur appealed before the CIC. Goswami was forced to resign in February 2015 for allegedly trying to stall the arrest of a former Union minister in a case by the CBI.

### MANIPUR INTRODUCES GOOD GOVERNANCE AWARD

Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh has introduced an award for good governance as an incentive for babus to do innovative and extraordinary work at the grass-roots level. The initiative will reward government officials whose performance is of “a very high order” and whose work has benefited a large number of citizens and stakeholders.

Sources say that the award will be

presented every year to an individual officer or a team including administrative secretaries, deputy commissioners, heads of departments and to any other official or department. A panel comprising of the chief minister, chief secretary Rajesh Kumar and other senior officials will select the winners who stand to win a cash prize of ₹1 lakh (individual category) and ₹2 lakh (group category). To become eligible, officials will have to successfully complete a challenging task or project that results in significant benefits to the public or in the reduction of time and costs, including implementation of Central or state government schemes.

The awards will be presented on Statehood Day, Republic Day or Independence Day every year.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipcherian](https://twitter.com/dilipcherian) on Twitter.com.

Subhani



## BJP’s hopes for its own CM in Patna get dashed



Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

In Bihar, the BJP is the new regent to a tired, jaded, ruler — Nitish Kumar — whose authority after his Janata Dal (United)’s below-par performance in the recent Assembly election has dimmed to the level of inane formality. The saffron party is thus well placed now to advance its mentor RSS’ disintegrative social agendas in Bihar, with the chief minister being the rubber stamp, so besotted is he with the mere idea of being CM even at the cost of his self-esteem.

Whether the BJP is actually able to gain its ends in the foreseeable future will of course depend on many imponderables. But the current situation doesn’t bode well for Bihar. The state’s governance systems have long been a wreck. Its finances are in a pitiable state due to long-standing disregard by the Centre (despite the so-called “double-engine” government), and the state is a byword for deficient revenue-earning capacity.

Besides, as a party the BJP — the regent — typically takes the wrong turn on serious matters of governance at the Centre and in the states where its writ runs. It has been content, in the main, to play up social faultlines to score at the ballot box and then to politically persecute opponents in disregard of the law, common decencies and democratic culture. It rules through sloganeering. When it puts its best foot forward, it comes up with “love jihad”, the CAA, triple talaq, and so on. What can Bihar gain from such a mindset?

India’s poorest state is truly in an unenviable position when a party like the BJP is to the fore and the CM is only too conscious that his best fate may lie in signing on the dotted line, quietly. For all the ear-shattering din of “vikas” — or devel-

opment — emanating from BJP’s most important leaders, Bihar’s economy and Bihar society appear poised to plunge, although there will be rallies declaring victory.

Bihar is the only state in north India, besides Jammu and Kashmir (now a Union territory) and Punjab, where the BJP has not had its own chief minister, either winning the state outright or having sufficient clout in a ruling alliance. In this quest it has been thwarted yet again. This must rattle the party’s leaders.

In the recent election, the BJP evidently worked to a plan which it thought would give the party its first CM in Bihar. It seemed clear to everyone that it set up the LJP’s Chirag Paswan, a NDA ally, to cut Mr Kumar’s votes so that the JD(U) leader was denued. That game has largely succeeded, although Mr Kumar was humiliated but not entirely defeated. What did not succeed, though, was the calculation that the main Opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, led by jailed top politico Lalu Prasad Yadav’s greenhorn son Tejashwi, would be sent packing in the election. The opposite, in fact, happened. Tejashwi played what is quite possibly the most spectacular innings in recent memory for an untested captain, taking the battle to the BJP, JD(U) and LJP, in the process reaching new heights of

**For now, the BJP must remain satisfied playing regent. But in the absence of a mandate, this is still an enviable position to be in. After all, the NDA has won state power, technicality or not.**

endeavour.

He refused to live in the past, he showed energy, and he marshalled his resources and his coalition partners with aplomb. In the end his party won more seats than any other party and bettered its polling percentage by as much as five per cent compared to the 2015 election, which the RJD had fought under his redoubtable but controversial father. The BJP came up next, having dropped five per cent of its vote share, although this time it fought in an alliance with Mr Kumar, rather than independently.

The difference between the ruling NDA’s campaign and the opposing Mahagathbandhan campaign was stark. Within the NDA, the BJP played the communal metaphor to the hilt and made promises of “development” that didn’t ring true in light of the NDA’s abysmal performance in the past five years. Mr Kumar pleaded plaintively with voters to give him one more chance.

Tejashwi Yadav, in sharp contrast, spoke to the most pressing need of the young voter — for jobs and a better deal. Some 20 seats were lost to his party or combine by a couple of hundred votes or less. The Election Commission could have been seen to be scrupulous, but remained satisfied with form, although the gap in votes between the winning and the losing side was only 12,000 in the state overall.

So, who won? This is apt to remain a debate and a source of deep contention in the days ahead in case the NDA’s opponents go on the warpath. They boycotted the swearing-in ceremony of the CM and his Cabinet colleagues. That means Bihar’s polity is on notice.

The BJP’s core objec-

tive of having its own chief minister in Bihar remained unfulfilled in this election. Had the people of Bihar rejected Tejashwi Yadav in the manner that the BJP might have hoped, and the JD(U) had sunk a little lower in the tally, the saffron party might have hoped to win between 90 to 100 seats when the winning mark is 122. Since the BJP’s middle name is “defection”, the party might then have thought to make up the rest by breaking other parties through money power and using the state police as its personal army.

For now, however, it must remain satisfied playing regent. But in the absence of a mandate, this is still an enviable position to be in. After all, the NDA has won state power, technicality or not. The CM will have to sign on the dotted line as told and take the rap when things go wrong, unless even he turns. He may rest assured that the BJP will play both tough and smart with the full force of the pliant media behind it.

Right away, the saffron party sent the tallest Bihar BJP leader, the urbane Sushil Kumar Modi, Mr Kumar’s deputy CM of 13 years, home. Although from the RSS cadre, he was thought to be too close to the CM. So, he may not have been the best hatchet man. Out he went and the BJP appointed two nonentities as deputy CMs. With such ruthlessness on view, the CM had better watch out. The BJP will tolerate no demurrals as the state gets to be governed through remote control from New Delhi, with the capital of the Mauryan empire taking a long holiday.

**Whether the BJP is actually able to gain its ends in the foreseeable future will of course depend on many imponderables. But the current situation doesn’t bode well for Bihar.**

### LETTERS

#### GAME OF THRONES

In the game of thrones, the crown is made of thorns. No one knows it now better than Nitish Kumar, the newly sworn-in Bihar CM. Despite his reputation as a survivor, few will bet on Nitish serving out a full term this time. BJP’s easing out of Sushil Modi is ample indication to Nitish that the equations have flipped. Henceforth, it will be BJP calling the shots. The choice of OBC-EBC leaders to replace Sushil Modi barely disguises BJP’s plans. If Nitish vacates the political field, the BJP will need recognisable backward class faces. The JDU leaders, sworn to socialist, secular ideals, must come up with some counter-plans.

**Shovanlal Chakraborty**  
Kolkata

#### NO MORE EXCUSES

MUMBAI POLICE have sent a third notice to actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli Chandel to appear before them on November 23 and 24 for their “objectionable comments” on social media aimed at spreading communal tension at Bandra police station. They were earlier asked to be present on October 26 and 27, respectively, but failed to appear. They were again asked to appear on November 9 and 10 but Kangana informed police that she was busy with a wedding in the family. But now the sisters have run out of excuses.

**Bhagwan Thadani**  
Mumbai

#### WATCH YOURSELVES

DELHI IS in the middle of a serious public health crisis. Festivities have enhanced mass interactions; there has been reckless behaviour on the part of citizens, either due to fatigue or complacency. The Centre and Delhi government worked well together in dealing with the pandemic in the past, while the governments have to do their bit and ensure greater testing and infrastructure, there is a great responsibility on citizens to reform their behaviour.

**B. Ahsanullah**  
New Delhi

Every Monday the best letter of the week wins ₹500. Email: [asianage.letters@gmail.com](mailto:asianage.letters@gmail.com).



## IN BRIEF INDIAN JAILED IN PAK HANDED OVER TO BSF

**Lahore, Nov. 18:** An Indian national, who had illegally crossed over to Pakistan in 2016 and underwent four years of imprisonment here, was on Wednesday handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel at the Wagah Border. According to officials, Panwasi Lal, son of Kundan Lal, arrived at the Lahore railway station in August 2016 by Samjhauta Express without travel documents and was arrested. Initially, he told the police that his name was Mohammad Aslam and he was a Pakistani.

A sum of Rs 500 was recovered from him. During interrogation, it was revealed that his real name was Panwasi Lal and he was not mentally stable, officials said. The matter was taken up with the Indian authorities as to how he reached the Lahore railway station without travel documents. He was later imprisoned in the Central Jail Lahore on charges of illegal border crossing.

## '74 BIRMINGHAM BOMBINGS: COPS ARREST MAN

**London, Nov. 18:** UK police arrested a man on Wednesday in Northern Ireland in connection with the 1974 bombings of two pubs that killed 21 people and injured more than 200 in Birmingham, England.

Officers from the West Midlands counter-terrorism unit, working with colleagues from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, arrested a 65-year-old man at his home in Belfast, West Midlands Police said.

The man was arrested under the UK's Terrorism Act, and his home was being searched, authorities said.

The arrest came days before the 46th anniversary of the two November 21, 1974 blasts that ripped apart the Mulberry Bush and Tavern in the Town pubs in the city of Birmingham.

The blasts were one of the worst attacks committed by the Irish Republican Army during its armed campaign to get Britain out of Northern Ireland.

## 1995 DIANA INTERVIEW TO BE PROBED

**London, Nov. 18:** The BBC's board of directors has approved the appointment of a retired senior judge to lead an independent investigation into the circumstances around a controversial 1995 TV interview with Princess Diana.

Wednesday's announcement came after Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, made renewed claims this month that BBC journalist Martin Bashir used forged statements and false claims to convince the late royal to agree to the interview.

The broadcaster's director general, Tim Davie, said the BBC "is determined to get to the truth about these events." Charles Spencer alleged that Bashir, 57, made false and defamatory claims about senior royals in order to gain his trust and access to his sister 25 years ago. The claims included that Diana's phone was bugged and that her bodyguard was plotting against her. Charles Spencer has demanded an inquiry and an apology.

## NOBEL CEREMONY WON'T BE HELD IN PERSON IN OSLO

**Copenhagen, Nov. 18:** The winner of the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize — the World Food Program — and the Norwegian Nobel Committee said Wednesday they have jointly agreed to postpone the in-person award ceremony in Oslo next month because of the Coronavirus pandemic.

"With the current restrictions in Oslo, it would not be possible to carry out the ceremony or other parts of the laureate's traditional program in a good and worthy manner," the Nobel Committee said in a statement.

WFP head David Beasley was expected to travel to the Norwegian capital "to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the organization" that won the prestigious award for efforts to combat hunger.

But he will now accept the award during a virtual ceremony on Dec. 10.

The Nobel Peace Prize ceremony usually is held at Oslo City Hall. However, organizers said the event would be a scaled-down affair held at the city's university because of the coronavirus pandemic.

# Cop hurt, Florida slaying suspect killed in Maryland encounter

**Maryland, Nov. 18:** A suspect in a Florida slaying was killed in an encounter with Maryland law enforcement that left a police officer shot and wounded, authorities said. Montgomery County Police were attempting to arrest a suspect wanted in connection with a killing in Jacksonville, Florida, when the shooting incident happened.

It occurred in Prince George's County on Tuesday afternoon, the agency stated in a message posted to Twitter.

Montgomery County and

Prince George's County are Maryland suburbs of the nation's capital. One officer was shot by the suspect, officials said. That officer's condition was not immediately known, according to police.

The suspect was killed, the department said. Authorities did not give additional information on how the suspect died.

The wounded officer and suspect were not immediately identified. The agency said it would provide updates as more information is confirmed.

— AP

**Milwaukee officer who killed 3 resigns**

**Wauwatosa, Nov. 18:** A suburban Milwaukee police officer who has fatally shot three people in the line of duty since 2015, including a Black teenager outside a mall in February, is resigning from the department.

The Wauwatosa Commission Council approved a separation agreement with Joseph Mensah on Tuesday night, effective Nov. 30, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported. The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office has

ruled all three shootings by Mensah, who also is Black, were justified self-defense. Protests followed the most recent shooting outside Mayfair Mall.

Alvin Cole, 17, was shot five times by Mensah after he fled from police following a disturbance inside the mall. Mensah said Cole pointed a gun at him, so he shot him. Protesters marched for months, calling for Mensah to be fired. They protested outside the mall and Wauwatosa City Hall. Mensah was suspended by the Wauwatosa Police.

— AP



A water cannon is used to disperse unmasked protesters during a protest against measures imposed by the German government to limit the spread of the novel Coronavirus, on Wednesday near the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

— AFP

# Pfizer, BioNTech say Phase 3 virus vaccine candidate is 95% effective

**New York, Nov. 18:** Global drugmakers Pfizer and BioNTech said on Wednesday that their Covid-19 vaccine was found 95 per cent effective in the final analysis of the Phase 3 trial, including in people aged over 65 years, paving the way for the companies to apply for emergency authorisation from US regulators within days. American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said they have concluded phase 3 study of their mRNA-based Covid-19 vaccine candidate BNT162b2, meeting all primary efficacy end points. Based on current projections, the companies expect to produce globally up to 50 million vaccine doses in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses by the end of 2021.

The major announcement comes just two days after leading biotechnology company Moderna said on Monday its virus vaccine had an efficacy rate of 94.5 per cent. Earlier this month, Pfizer and Biontech had said their Covid-19 vaccine candidate was

found to be more than 90 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 in participants. Analysis of the data indicates a vaccine efficacy rate of 95 per cent in participants without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection (first primary objective) and also in participants with and without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection (second primary objective), in each case measured from seven days after the second dose.

The companies said the first primary objective analysis is based on 170 cases of Covid-19, of which 162 cases of Coronavirus were observed in the placebo group while 8 cases in the BNT162b2 group. Vaccine efficacy was consistent across age, gender, race and ethnicity demographics. The observed efficacy in adults over 65 years of age was over 94 per cent, they said. There were 10 severe cases of Covid-19 observed in the trial, with nine of the cases occurring in the placebo group and one in the BNT162b2 vaccinated group.

"The study results mark

an important step in this historic eight-month journey to bring forward a vaccine capable of helping to end this devastating pandemic. We continue to move at the speed of science to compile all the data collected thus far and share with regulators around the world," said Dr Albert Bourla, Pfizer Chairman and CEO.

"With hundreds of thousands of people around the globe infected every day, we urgently need to get a safe and effective vaccine to the world," Bourla said. The announcements about the vaccines and their potential availability for use among the general population in the coming weeks and months has offered hope to millions around the world in a year that has seen the Covid-19 pandemic devastate lives and economies and still showing no signs of abating.

So far, the Coronavirus pandemic has infected more than 55 million people around the world and killed more than 1.3 million people.

— PTI

## TOILET PAPER LIMITS, EMPTY SHELVES BACK

**New York, Nov. 18:** Looking for toilet paper? Good luck. A surge of new Coronavirus cases in the US is sending people back to stores to stockpile again, leaving shelves bare and forcing retailers to put limits on purchases.

Walmart said Tuesday it's having trouble keeping up with demand for cleaning supplies in some stores. Supermarket chains Kroger and Publix are limiting how much toilet paper and paper towels shoppers can buy after demand spiked recently.

And Amazon is sold out of most disinfectant wipes and paper towels. Geoff Freeman, president and CEO of the Consumer Brands Association said he doesn't expect things to be as bad this go-around since lockdowns are being handled on a regional basis.

— AP

# US to withdraw troops from Afghanistan

**Washington, Nov. 18:** The US has announced to reduce the number of American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to 2,500 each by January 15 next year, which drew sharp reaction from influential lawmakers across the aisle. The decision announced by Acting US Defence Secretary Christopher C. Miller on Tuesday is in line with incumbent President

Donald Trump's campaign promise to bring the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to a successful and responsible conclusion and to bring service members home.

The move was immediately opposed by the Opposition Democratic Party of the President-elect Joe Biden, whose lawmakers described it as a threat to national security. Several

Republican lawmakers too opposed the move. "I am formally announcing that we will implement President Trump's orders to continue our repositioning of forces from those two countries. By January 15, 2021, our forces, their size in Afghanistan will be 2,500 troops. Our force size in Iraq will also be 2,500 by that same date," Miller said during a

press conference, adding that this is consistent with the Trump administration's established plans and strategic objectives. The US currently has a little over 4,500 troops in Afghanistan. Interacting with reporters, National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said the remaining troops would be defending US diplomats and facilities.

— PTI

## EMERGENCY | FUNDING

## Women, girls and people with disabilities will be major beneficiaries

# Famine fear: UN releases \$100M to 7 countries

**Nairobi, Nov. 18:** The United Nations humanitarian office is releasing \$100 million in emergency funding to seven countries at risk of famine in Africa and the Middle East amid conflict and the Covid-19 pandemic, while the humanitarian chief says returning to a world where famines are common would be "obscene."

A statement overnight said \$80 million of the money will go to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Congo, Nigeria, South

**THE MONEY breaks down as follows: \$15 million to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso \$6 million, Congo \$7 million, northeastern Nigeria \$15 million, South Sudan \$7 million and Yemen \$30 million.**

Sudan and Yemen. Another \$20 million has been set aside for "anticipatory action to fight hunger in Ethiopia," where deadly fighting erupted this month in its

rebellious northern Tigray region.

"Without immediate action, famine could be a reality in the coming months in parts of Burkina Faso, northeast Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. This would be the first time famine has been declared since 2017 in parts of South Sudan," the statement said.

A return to a world where famines are commonplace would be "obscene in a world where there is more than enough

food for everyone," UN humanitarian chief Mark Lowcock said.

The UN said the money will target the most vulnerable, especially women, girls and people with disabilities. The money breaks down as follows: \$15 million to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso \$6 million, Congo \$7 million, northeastern Nigeria \$15 million, South Sudan \$7 million and Yemen \$30 million. All have been destabilised by conflict or extremist attacks.

— AP

# Trump fires top Homeland official

## Power transfer will be orderly

**Washington, Nov. 18:** President Donald Trump has fired a top Homeland Security official who contradicted his claims of voter fraud and asserted that the November 3 election was the most secure one in America's history. Trump, who has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but has not provided any evidence to back his claims of fraud, announced on Twitter on Tuesday that he has fired Christopher Krebs, director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) at the Department of Homeland Security. Trump, Republican, has refused to concede to President-elect Joe Biden, a Democrat, and has made unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud.

"The recent statement by Chris Krebs on the security of the 2020 Election was highly inaccurate, in that there were massive improprieties and fraud — including dead people voting, poll watchers not allowed into polling locations, 'glitches' in the voting machines which changed votes from Trump to Biden, late voting and many more," Trump said in a tweet, repeating unsubstantiated claims of election fraud.

"Therefore, effective immediately, Chris Krebs has been terminated as Director of the Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency," he said. Krebs is the latest official to be dismissed by the US president following his defeat, with Defence Secretary Mark Esper also shown the door amid reports Trump doubted the Pentagon chief's loyalty. There is speculation that before Trump leaves office in January, CIA director Gina Haspel and FBI director Christopher Wray may also be sacked.

Following his dismissal, Krebs, a former Microsoft executive, appeared to have no regrets. "Honoured to serve. We did it right. Defend Today, Secure Tomorrow. #Protect2020," he tweeted. President Trump said that the only thing secure about the election was that it was virtually impenetrable by foreign powers.

— PTI

Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has said

## MURTHY AND MAJUMDAR MAY BE IN CABINET

**Washington, Nov. 18:** Two eminent India-Americans, including former US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, are among the potential Cabinet picks in the next Biden-Harris Administration, according to media reports. Murthy, who currently is the top Indian-American advisor to President-elect Joe Biden on Covid-19, is a potential pick for the post of Secretary of Health and Human Services and Stanford University Professor Arun Majumdar for the post of Secretary of Energy. *The Washington Post* and *Politico* said in their reports on Tuesday that mentions a list of potential picks for various Cabinet-level positions in the Biden administration. Murthy, 43, is currently one of the co-chairs of the Covid-19 advisory board of the transition. He has been a close associate of Biden on Covid issues.

— PTI

## PELOSI MOVES TO LEAD HOUSE FOR 2 MORE YEARS

**Washington, Nov. 18:** House Democrats seem certain to nominate Nancy Pelosi for two more years as speaker, but she'll be leading a smaller majority divided along ideological lines as it tries to shepherd President-elect Joe Biden's agenda toward enactment. Pelosi, D-Calif., faced no announced rivals for the post on Wednesday as the chamber's Democrats planned their first-ever virtual leadership elections in response to the pandemic.

House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and No. 3 party leader Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., were also on track to retain their positions. "Let us all be advocates for unity in the Democratic party, where our values are opportunity and community," Pelosi wrote to Democrats this week. The first female speaker, Pelosi has won wide acclaim among Democrats.

— AP

# FB, Twitter CEOs oppose US govt dictating content

**Washington, Nov. 18:** The CEOs of Facebook and Twitter have vehemently opposed any changes that would allow the US government to dictate content moderation, saying these platforms are a new industry and should have a different regulatory model. While Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, along with the lawmakers, have agreed on the need to make necessary changes in the controversial Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996, the two social media heads said they opposed any changes that would allow the government to dictate content moderation.

Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996 generally provides immunity for website publishers from third-party content and says no provider or

user of an interactive computer service shall be treated as the publisher or speaker of any information provided by another information content provider.

"Section 230 was developed to allow these technologies to flourish. Early on, if you could sue Twitter or Facebook for content on a Facebook post or a tweet, and they were liable for what somebody else said or what they felt or did, then the company would have probably never been in existence," Senator Lindsey Graham said during a Congressional hearing.

"My hope is that we change section 230 to incentivise social media platforms to come up with standards that are transparent and opaque that will allow us to make judgments about their judgments."

— PTI

## CHINA HAS NO BASIS TO PICK THE NEXT DALAI

**Washington, Nov. 18:** China has no theological basis to pick the next Dalai Lama, according to a top US diplomat, asserting that the Tibetan Buddhists have successfully picked their spiritual leader for hundreds of years. "I travelled to Dharamshala, India to speak to the Tibetan community that were assembled there in exile and to tell them that the US is opposed to China picking the next Dalai Lama," Ambassador at Large for International Religious Freedom Samuel D. Brownback told reporters on Tuesday during a conference call, recalling his visit to India in October.

— PTI

## NEPAL'S CPN MEET ENDS IN STALEMATE

**Kathmandu, Nov. 18:** The much-awaited crucial meeting of the Central Secretariat of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) on Wednesday ended in a stalemate with Prime Minister K P Sharma Oli demanding ten days' time to present a separate political document in response to his rival Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda's" accusations that he was running the government without consulting the party. As soon as the meeting started at Prime Minister Oli's official residence in Baluwatar, Oli told the members of the Secretariat that he will present a separate political document in the next meeting and demanded ten days' time.

— PTI





quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,180.05	0.52
Nifty 50	12,938.25	0.50
S&P 500*	3,614.85	0.15
Dollar (₹)	74.19	0.35
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.61	0.14
Euro (₹)	88.20	0.16
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,253*357	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.64	0.89
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.878	0.002
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.865	-0.007

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

Smaller towns are ‘heroes’ of pandemic: Nestle

Smaller towns have emerged as ‘heroes’ for Nestle India during the pandemic, offsetting ‘somewhat muted’ performance in large metros, its CMD Suresh Narayanan said. “One of the themes I would be having for the future is our smaller towns—our tier II, III and IV towns, which are towns with population of up to 5 lakh, up to 1 lakh and below a lakh—have really become the heroes of this pandemic,” he said.

Global container volumes rose in Q3: Top shipper



The world’s biggest shipping company, Denmark’s A.P. Moller-Maersk, said global container volumes rose increased by around 1 per cent in the third quarter, a faster rebound than expected earlier in the year. But global demand for containers is expected to contract by 4-5 per cent this year due to Covid-19. CEO Soeren Skou said disciplined execution led to solid earnings and cash flow growth for the firm in Q3.

FPIs stay bullish on equities; pump \$6.3 billion in Q2

Foreign investors have pumped in \$6.3 billion in the Indian equity market in three months ended September on attractive valuations, opening-up of the economy and resumption in business activities, says a Morningstar report. This comes after a net inflow of \$3.9 bn in the June quarter and a net withdrawal of \$6.38 billion in the March quarter. As of Sept, the value of FPI investments in equities stood at \$450 bn, up 31 per cent.

India’s laptop, tablet mfg can reach \$100 bn

India has the potential to scale up its laptop and tablet manufacturing capacity to \$100 billion by 2025 through policy interventions, ICEA said. Scaling up laptop and tablet PC manufacturing can take share of India in global market to 26 per cent from 1 per cent now. India Cellular and Electronics Association chairman Pankaj Mohindroo said the country’s electronic market has reached \$65 billion.

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■ Depositors money, employees safe LVB shareholders to lose investment

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 18

Public shareholders of Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) will lose their money as the entire amount of the paid-up share capital will be written off as per the scheme of amalgamation of LVB with DBS India proposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). However, depositors need not worry as their deposits will be transferred to DBS and would be fully secured. Around 4,000 employees of LVB also can heave a sigh of relief as they will be moved to DBS at the same remuneration as in LVB for the next three years. However, Damocles sword hangs over key management personnel of LVB as they could be retrenched by DBS, if it feels so. The market is also waiting to see whether the RBI will take over troubled private lender Dhanlaxmi Bank, too, as it is being long mired in management issues, and impose a merger or a revival plan. As per the draft scheme of amalgamation of LVB with DBS Bank India, the entire amount of the paid-up share capital will be written off. “On and from the appointed date, the entire amount of the paid-up share capital and reserves and surplus, including the balances in the share/securities premium account of the transferor bank, shall stand written off,” said the RBI in the draft scheme of amalgamation for LVB

HOPE AND DESPAIR

- ▶ Deposits will be transferred to DBS Bank India and would be fully secured
- ▶ Around 4,000 employees will be moved to DBS India at the current remuneration for 3 years
- ▶ Key management personnel of LVB could be retrenched by DBS, if so required
- ▶ Market is also waiting to see if similar action will follow in the case of Dhanlaxmi Bank

with DBS India announced by it on Tuesday. Anand Dama, analyst at Emkay Research, said, “As per the extant scheme, paid-up capital/reserves of LVB shall stand extinguished similar to write-off of AT-1 bonds in the case of Yes Bank. Deposits will be transferred to DBS and thus stand fully secured, while employees will be moved to the transferee bank at the same remuneration as in LVB for the next three years. However, key management personnel could be retrenched by DBS, if required.” Speaking at a virtual press meet on Wednesday, the RBI-appointed administrator for LVB and former non-executive chairman of Canara Bank T.N. Manoharan said shareholders of LVB will not have a say in the amalgamation decision in their general body meeting under the Companies Act as the Banking Regulation Act—a special Act—will override the provisions of a general law. LVB depositors contin-

ued to panic since the announcement of the amalgamation scheme by the RBI on Tuesday evening, with the bank witnessing about Rs 10 crore of deposit withdrawals, according to Manoharan. He assured depositors that their money is safe and expressed confidence that the lender’s merger with DBS Bank India will be completed within the December 16 deadline set by the regulator. Manoharan said all the employees of LVB will be absorbed in DBS after the merger. DBS Bank may also rope in more experienced professionals to carry out a digitisation drive at the troubled bank. The RBI administrator said that the troubled bank has enough liquidity to pay back depositors. Shares of LVB fell 19.94 per cent to Rs 12.40 on the BSE, hitting the lower circuit. Shares worth Rs 31.8 crore were traded on the NSE and Rs 3.65 crore, on the BSE. (With inputs from Ravi Ranjan Prasad)

VEDANTA BIDS FOR BPCL; FOREIGN PLAYER ALSO IN RACE

New Delhi, Nov. 18: Mining conglomerate Vedanta has put in a preliminary expression of interest (EoI) for buying the government’s stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), for which a major foreign player too is said to be in the race. A special purpose vehicle floated by the BSE-listed Vedanta Ltd and its London-based parent Vedanta Resources submitted an EoI before the close of deadline on November 16. “Vedanta’s EoI for BPCL is to evaluate potential synergies with our existing oil and gas business,” the company said in a statement. “The EoI is at a preliminary stage and exploratory in nature.” Sources in the department handling the sale said the EoI has been put in by a special purpose vehicle or SPV floated by Vedanta Ltd and Vedanta Resources. They also said a major foreign player was among the three-four entities whose EoIs were received by the close of the bidding on Monday. The other potential investors are foreign funds but their identity was not disclosed. Share price of BPCL has plunged by nearly a fourth since the time the strategic sale was approved in November last year. At Wednesday’s closing price of Rs 383.20 on the BSE, the government’s 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL is worth Rs 44,000 crore. —PTI

Apple to halve App Store fees to 15% from January

MARK GURMAN NOV. 18



Apple Inc is cutting by half the fees charged to most developers who sell software and services on the App Store, marking the biggest change to the store’s revenue structure since the iPhone maker launched the service in 2008. The company is lowering the App Store fee to 15 per cent from 30 per cent for developers who produce as much as \$1 million in annual revenue from their apps and those who are new to the store. The change will go into effect January 1 as part of an App Store Small Business Program, Apple said on Wednesday in a statement. The company said the new structure will apply to the “vast majority” of developers who charge for apps and in-app purchases on Apple’s devices. The programme won’t affect some major apps such as those from Netflix Inc and Spotify Technology SA. The Cupertino, California-based technology giant said it’s making the change to help small developers financially and to provide a way for them to invest in their businesses amid the economic struggles caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Apple has faced ongoing scrutiny from government regulators and criticism from developers about the percentage of revenue it takes for App Store purchases. The company also is engaged in a lawsuit with Epic Games Inc, the maker of the

video game Fortnite, over its App Store fees and payment rules. Alphabet Inc’s Google also charges similar fees to developers on its Android app store. Income from app developers has been key to Apple’s growing services business, which reached almost \$54 billion in revenue in fiscal 2020. The App Store is one of several products and offerings that make up the services unit, but is the biggest revenue driver, according to Toni Sacconaghi, an analyst at Sanford C Bernstein. He estimates the App Store alone will bring in \$18.7 billion in 2021, about a third of Apple’s total services revenue next year. Apple has said there are 1.8 million apps in the App Store across all of the company’s platforms and more than 28 million registered developers. The company said earlier this year the store has generated \$155 billion for developers since it started. Since the beginning of the App Store, Apple generally has charged developers a 30 per cent slice of revenue generated by their apps. In 2016, Apple lowered to 15 per cent the cut it takes from subscriptions purchased through the apps for more than a year. Earlier this year, Apple also loosened

restrictions on some cloud-gaming apps and email services, charging a fee to fewer developers. The latest change will take place across App Stores on the iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple TV and Apple Watch. The company has said that 85 per cent of apps found on the App Store are free and aren’t part of the revenue fee system. Small developers make up the majority of App Store sellers. Some major apps, such as those offered by Netflix and Spotify, don’t let subscribers sign up through the App Store, avoiding the 30 per cent charge. Apple is betting that the fee change will result in developers creating more apps and sticking with the App Store, which will create enough new revenue to offset any potential financial negatives from the fee reductions. Apple’s standard 30 per cent fee will remain for developers that generate more than \$1 million in a calendar year. Chief executive officer Tim Cook testified about the company’s App Store practices at a July hearing before US lawmakers. In advance of Cook’s appearance, Apple published a study that claimed its 30 per cent cut is normal for the industry or lower than some app stores. “We’re launching this programme to help small business owners write the next chapter of creativity and prosperity on the App Store, and to build the kind of quality apps our customers love,” Cook said. —Bloomberg

Rising metal prices, freight charges hurt many sectors

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 18

Rising metal prices and higher freight charges on imports are posing a new challenge for manufacturers and exporters. Base metal prices as well as steel prices have seen significant upside of late in the commodity market. Copper prices have moved up 64 per cent from their March levels, zinc has gone up by 67 per cent, nickel by 50 per cent, aluminium by 30 per cent and lead by 24 per cent from their March levels, said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities. “Stimulus packages announced in major economies, the restriction on production in China ahead of the winter due to environmental concerns and weakness in dollar are some of the key factors

supporting base metals. Further, zinc has low levels of inventory, nickel prices are supported by steel demand, lead by recovery in the automobile sector and aluminium by demand from the packaging industry,” he said. While the raw material price is hurting the manufacturers, the recent jump in freight charges on imported goods due to limited availability of containers has worsened the situation. “The price of hot rolled coil, an essential raw material for the engineering industry, has increased from Rs 35,000 a tonne to Rs 42,000 a tonne in the past six months,” says the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India. “Zinc prices too have shot up from Rs 170 a kg to Rs 220 per kg and freight charges have almost doubled,” said EEPIC India

chairman Mahesh Desai. “Prices of other essential metals have also been rising disproportionately to the end-product prices... Engineering exporters face severe headwind and this is impacting their exports. Exporters also face scarcity of steel,” he said. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers Association said, “The increasing steel prices, used extensively in manufacturing of vehicles, puts pressure on the cost of vehicles. This, coupled with the rising international freight charges, could impact the competitiveness of Indian manufacturers.” The exporters want the Centre to intervene and prod the large steel makers to keep prices in check. The real estate sector is also concerned about the rising steel prices.

SENSEX ENDS ABOVE 44000 FOR FIRST TIME

Mumbai, Nov. 18: Equity benchmarks scaled record highs for the third straight session on Wednesday as investors accumulated banking, auto and engineering stocks amid firm global cues and unabated foreign fund inflows. The BSE Sensex vaulted 227.34 points to close above the 44000-level for the first time at 44,180.05. Intra-day, it touched its lifetime high of 44,215.49. The NSE Nifty advanced 64.05 points to end at its all-time high of 12,938.25, after making an intra-day record of 12,948.85. M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, soaring 10.76 per cent, followed by L&T. According to traders, largely positive cues from global markets and persistent foreign fund inflows buoyed market sentiment. —PTI

Renault names new compact SUV Kiger

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, NOV. 18



French auto major Renault on Wednesday said it will launch its all-new compact SUV Kiger in the Indian market in the first quarter of next year to boost sales in Asia’s third biggest and fiercely competitive car market. The Renault Kiger will be built on the same platform as the company’s compact multi-purpose vehicle Triber and will be an international launch for Groupe Renault. It will feature an all-new global petrol turbo engine, the company said in a statement. “After Kwid and Triber, Renault Kiger is the third global car from Groupe Renault to be launched in India first, followed by other markets,”

Venkatram Mamillapalle, Country CEO and MD at Renault India, said. The concept or show car is a joint effort between the corporate design teams in France and Renault India, and the company says it took a lot of input and feedback from Indian customers. The sub-compact SUV segment in India has grown by leaps and bounds in recent times with multiple options for prospective buyers and it is this rapidly expanding increase that Renault Kiger is looking at tapping.

Why India’s financial sector keeps blowing up

JEANETTE RODRIGUES NOV. 18

Explainer

What’s up with India’s \$1.7 trillion financial system? In the space of a couple of years, four major finance companies have been seized by authorities and the central bank has had to reassure the public multiple times. It’s a stark turnaround since the country emerged largely unscathed from the 2008 global financial crisis. Policy makers are grappling with a chicken-and-egg situation: Should they spur credit to boost economic growth or focus instead on cleaning up a banking system with the world’s worst bad-loan ratio?

How did it come to this? The seeds were sown in a debt-fuelled economic boom between 2007 and 2012, when banks increased loans by 400 per cent. When the economy began slowing, many companies struggled to repay, making banks reluctant to lend more. That crimped the availability of credit

and added a further drag on the economy, heaping pressure on indebted businesses. Some of the slack was picked up by non-bank lenders, or shadow banks, but one of the most prominent, IL&FS, became the first major blowup in 2018 in what became known as India’s mini-Lehman moment. What’s happened since? The collapse of IL&FS triggered something of a credit crunch and the Reserve Bank of India stepped in to take control of another shadow lender, Dewan Housing Finance Corp, to contain the fallout. A smaller lender also failed in 2019 after allegedly duping investors about its exposure to a property developer. Then, in March 2020, the central bank seized Yes Bank in India’s biggest bank rescue, and this month it orchestrated the takeover of struggling Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd



by Singapore’s DBS Group Holdings Ltd, the first such move involving a foreign bank. What went wrong? Yes Bank’s troubles were rooted in the rapid expansion under its former CEO and co-founder Rana Kapoor. Credit Suisse had noted in a 2019 report the company had the biggest proportion of outstanding loans to large stressed borrowers. Lakshmi Vilas suffered numerous setbacks in the recent past, including the ouster of its CEO by stakeholders. In 2019, the bank had planned to merge with shadow lender Indiabulls Housing Finance Ltd, only

sation in 2016 devastated supply chains and created dangerous imbalances in the financial system. Also, regulators allege that some bank chiefs handed out to their cronies many loans that ended up in default. What are authorities doing and is it working? The central bank in 2015 began assessing the bad loans, bringing to light the full scope of the problem. Gross non-performing assets across the banking sector surged from about 3 per cent to more than 9 per cent, then breached 10 per cent—the highest in the world. The government has created a new bankruptcy law to aid loan recoveries but, as the economic growth slows, authorities are taking steps to spur fresh credit and show more lenience toward certain borrowers and small businesses. The central bank warned in July that India’s bad-loan clean-up is set to reverse, with soured debt forecast at 12.5 per cent of total credit by March 2021, the

highest level in more than two decades. Are there more difficulties ahead? Almost certainly. Fitch Ratings warned in July that capital fund-raising plans by state-owned banks from private sources won’t be sufficient to mitigate anticipated risks without additional support from the state. But the government is struggling to find cash to support the lenders and to spur credit. India entered an unprecedented technical recession in 2020 and the central bank said risks are piling up on household and corporate balance sheets that could spill into the financial sector. Any silver lining? The health of India’s NBFC sector has improved. The RBI had been concerned about 10 companies on a list of 50, but is now just focused on four. Healthier shadow lenders could revive credit for consumers, potentially giving a shot in the arm to the economy. —Bloomberg

NSE ASKED TO RAISE CORPUS OF INVESTOR PROTECTION FUND TO ₹1,500 CRORE

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 18

Regulator Sebi has asked the NSE to increase the size of its investor protection fund (IPF) corpus to Rs 1,500 crore in order to protect the interests of investors in light of the recent broker defaults. The exchange currently maintains about Rs 550 crore in IPF corpus, NSE said when enquired by Financial Chronicle. “The adequacy of the IPF corpus will be reviewed on a half-yearly basis and incremental contributions will be made to the IPF, if required,” the NSE said. “Sebi has advised NSE to increase the size of its IPF corpus to Rs 1,500 crore in order to protect the interests of investors in light of the recent broker defaults,” the NSE said in a statement on Wednesday. “NSE is focused and committed to further strengthening investor protection through a variety of measures including focused investor education, enhanced broker supervision and surveillance in view of the recent defaults of Trading Members,” it said.

APPAREL EXPORTERS SEEK DEAL WITH UK

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 18

Apparel exporters want the government to strike a pre-FTA preferential trade deal with the United Kingdom ahead of Brexit. The apparel industry is at a disadvantage against some of its competitors which have FTA with the UK, it is felt. “It has been learnt that after the implementation of Brexit in January 2021, 47 Least Developed Countries, including Bangladesh, will continue to enjoy preferential trade benefits. This will be a continuation of the disadvantage to Indian apparels in the important and potential market of the UK,” said Apparel Export Promotion Council chairman A Sakthivel.



## SHORT TAKES

## Youngster Leon earns GM norm

**Chennai:** Young Indian International master Leon Luke Mendonca won a GM tournament in Hungary with a round to spare to close in on the coveted Grandmaster title. The 14-year-old player from Goa won the First Saturday GM November 2020 event in Budapest late on Monday to earn his second Grandmaster norm in the space of 21 days. He needs one more norm to earn the GM title. Mendonca (Elo 2516) finished with 7.5 points and won the title with a round to spare. He remained unbeaten in the event and scored wins over two Grandmasters. He posted six wins and three draws in the nine-round championship. In the opening round, he drew against higher rated GM Plat Vojtech of the Czech Republic. He had in late October won the RigoChess International Chess Festival Grandmaster tournament in Hungary where he gained his maiden GM norm. — PTI

## Dalmiya grandson is football official

**Kolkata:** Keeping up the family legacy, Aditya Dalmiya, grandson of former BCCI and ICC president late Jagmohan Dalmiya, on Wednesday made a foray into sports administration. Aditya is the son of Dalmiya's daughter Baishali, who happens to be a Trinamool Congress MLA from Bally constituency. The 21-year-old, who is pursuing masters in sports management, was appointed as the chairman of Indian Football Association 'School Committee' representing Rajasthan Club. "He is a young man with the right mindset. We made the 'School Committee' with much care and made him the chairman. My nephew Anirban Dutta, who is in the same committee, will work under him," IFA chairman Subrata Dutta said. Recollecting his father Biswanath Dalmiya's role in Dalmiya's rise, he said: "My father had spotted Jagmohan Dalmiya in the early 1970s as the administrator of the football unit of Rajasthan Club." — PTI

## Aditi and Diksha start well in Saudi

**King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia:** Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar began with a round of one-under 71 respectively as the Saudi Ladies Team International got underway at the Royal Greens Golf and Country Club on Wednesday. They were both Tied-14th as Finnish golfer Sanna Nuutinen shot 66 to take the lead after the first round. Other Indians in the field were further down. Tvesa Malik (74) was T-41 and Astha Madan (80) was T-103rd. The tournament has an innovative team format, though the individual pros will also be vying for substantial purse. It is being played over 54-holes with \$500,000 up for grabs — \$300,000 for the team and \$200,000 for the individual. The players and amateurs make up 37 teams. The teams were selected in an NFL-style draft system and they compete in a team of four pro-am format with the best two scores to count. — PTI

## CWG all set for women's cricket

**Dubai:** Six highest-placed teams in the ICC rankings as on April 1 next year along with hosts England will get direct qualification to the 2022 Commonwealth Games women's T20 competition, which will make its debut at the quadrennial showpiece in Birmingham. Women's cricket will be a part of the Commonwealth Games for the first time ever when the 2022 edition gets underway in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8. The ICC and the Commonwealth Games Federation unveiled the qualification process for the event on Wednesday. — PTI

## Live on TV

## TENNIS

**ATP Finals:** Round robin matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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## GERMANY'S PAIN

## Spaniards shame heavyweights with humiliating defeat

**Paris, Nov. 18:** Ferran Torres grabbed a hat-trick as Spain condemned Germany to their worst defeat in 89 years on Tuesday, winning 6-0 in Seville to qualify for the UEFA Nations League finals and join France, who came from behind to beat Sweden 4-2.

Manchester City forward Torres was the star for Spain, who were as brilliant as Germany were bad. The result raises further questions about Germany coach Joachim Loew, who was already under pressure coming into this game. "This has been a black day for us," admitted Loew after Germany's heaviest defeat since losing 6-0 to Austria in 1931.

They came into their final game in League A, Group 4 on top, a point clear of Spain, and so only needed a draw at an empty La Cartuja to qualify for the finals in October next year. But Alvaro Morata headed Spain in front in the 17th minute before Torres crashed in the second on 33 minutes after Dani Olmo's header hit the bar.

His City teammate Rodri headed in another to make it 3-0 for Spain before the end of a first half in which they lost Sergio Canales and skipper Sergio Ramos to injury. Spain, meanwhile, became the second side to qualify for the Nations League finals after France clinched their place by beating Portugal 4-2 at the weekend.

— AFP

## THE RESULTS

<b>Spain</b> (Morata 17, Ferran Torres 33, 55, 71, Rodri 38, Oyarzabal 89)	<b>6</b>
<b>Germany</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Croatia</b> (Kovacic 29, 65)	<b>2</b>
<b>Portugal</b> (Ruben Dias 52, 90, Joao Felix 60)	<b>3</b>
<b>France</b> (Giroud 16, 59, Pavard 36, Coman 90+5)	<b>4</b>
<b>Sweden</b> (Claesson 5, Quaison 88)	<b>2</b>



Dominic Thiem of Austria celebrates defeating Rafael Nadal of Spain in their men's singles round robin match on Day Three of the ATP World Tour Finals in London on Tuesday.

— AFP

## NADAL DANCES TO THIEM MUSIC AT ATP

**London, Nov. 18:** Rafael Nadal insisted he can still win the ATP Finals for the first time despite a damaging 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/4) defeat against Austria's Dominic Thiem on Tuesday.

Thiem overpowered Nadal behind closed doors at London's O2 Arena to put a dent in the Spanish star's bid to finally lift the one major prize missing from his packed trophy cabinet.

Thiem became the first player to qualify for the semifinals a few hours later when reigning champion Stefanos Tsitsipas beat Russian seventh seed Andrey Rublev 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (8/6).

Tsitsipas saved a match point in the final set tie-break before the Greek sixth seed sealed his first win of the week. Nadal had beaten Rublev in straight sets in his first match, but the 34-year-old was unable to cope with Thiem in a high-quality clash.

"I'm happy with the way I played. I think my chances are bigger to have a very good result now than five days ago because the level of tennis, even if I lost today, for me is much higher," he added. — AFP



Spain players celebrate a goal against Germany during the UEFA Nations League football match at La Cartuja stadium in Seville, Spain, on Tuesday. Spain won 6-0, Germany's worst defeat since 1931.

— AP

## Brazil, Argentina 2 good

**Montevideo (Uruguay), Nov. 18:** Brazil continued their perfect start to the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup with a 2-0 win over Uruguay while rivals Argentina stayed in touch with an easy win in Peru.

First-half goals from Arthur and Richarlison helped Brazil to a 2-0 win over Uruguay, who had Manchester United striker Edinson Cavani sent off.

Argentina, with Lionel Messi pulling the strings, brushed aside a limited Peru 2-0 in Lima, with goals from Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez and Nicholas Gonzalez in a game in which they were never troubled.

Ecuador, playing on their home turf in high-altitude Quito, hammered Colombia 6-1.

## THE RESULTS

<b>Uruguay</b> (Arthur 33, Richarlison 45)	<b>2</b>	<b>Ecuador</b> (Arboleda 7, Mena Delgado 9, Estrada Martinez 32, Arreaga 39, Plata 78, Estupinan 90+1)	<b>6</b>
<b>Peru</b> (Gonzalez 17, Martinez 28)	<b>0</b>	<b>Colombia</b> (Rodriguez 45+1-pen)	<b>1</b>
<b>Venezuela</b> (Mago 9, Rondon 81)	<b>2</b>	<b>Paraguay</b> (Angel Romero 19-pen, Kaku 72)	<b>2</b>
<b>Chile</b> (Vidal 15)	<b>1</b>	<b>Bolivia</b> (Moreno 41, B. Cespedes 45)	<b>2</b>

Paraguay and Bolivia fought out a 2-2 draw while Venezuela picked up their first points in a 2-1 victory over Chile in Caracas.

Victory in Montevideo left Brazil on top of South America's qualifying standings on 12 points with four wins from four games. Argentina are second on 10 points after beating Peru, with surprise team Ecuador third

on nine points.

Uruguay are fifth on six points, behind Paraguay on goal difference after four matches.

The first four teams in South America's round-robin competition qualify directly for the World Cup finals in Qatar, while the 5th placed nation faces a playoff against the country qualifying from Oceania.

— AFP

## Akhtar pitches for Rohit as ODI lead

**New Delhi, Nov. 18:** Former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar feels Rohit Sharma leading the Indian Test team against Australia in Virat Kohli's absence is a no brainer and the much-awaited series will be his "best chance" to stake claim for captaincy in one of the limited-overs formats.

Calls have been growing for spilt captaincy in the Indian team since Rohit led Mumbai Indians to a fifth title in the IPL. Rohit has also led India to an Asia Cup title in Kohli's absence. Though Ajinkya Rahane is the vice-captain on paper, Akhtar sees Rohit taking over leadership duties from Kohli following the first Test at the Adelaide Oval. The India skipper will be returning home after the series-opener to attend the birth of his first child.

"My take on it is pretty simple. From what I know Virat is very keen to take the team forward. It all

depends on how fatigued he is feeling. He has been playing non-stop since 2010, has got 70 centuries and a mountain of runs under his belt," Akhtar said.

"If he is feeling fatigued, then he should think about giving the leadership role to Rohit in one of the formats (preferably T20s). I could see the boredom on his face during the IPL, may be it was because of the bio-bubble situation, he seemed a bit stressed out. It all depends on how he feels. Rohit has been ready for captaincy for a while," he added.

"Australia will be his best chance to prove himself as captain. He should grab it with both hands. He has the talent and ability to lead the team. The whole world would be looking at Rohit as captain and batsman. If he does well for himself and the team, then there should be a debate about spilt captaincy," Akhtar said. — PTI

## BUGATHA, CHAUDHARY TO LEAD INDIAN CHALLENGE

**AGE CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

Defending champion Srinu Bugatha and Parul Chaudhary will lead the Indian challenge at the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon here on November 29.

Tata Mumbai Marathon 2020 winner Bugatha along with Abhishek Pal, Olympian Avinash Sable and Pradeep Singh will spearhead the elite men's field. Sable, the national record holder in 3000m steeplechase, became the first Indian to qualify for the Olympics since 1952 in his discipline last year.

In the women's category, Parul Chaudhary, the winner of the Half Marathon race at the Tata Mumbai Marathon earlier this year, will lead the Indian elite team along with Sanjivani Jadhav, Monika Athare and Chintia Yadav. Chaudhary broke the course record of Tata Mumbai Marathon (Half Marathon race) earlier this year with a timing of 1:15:37s. She had finished second in the last two editions of ADHM.

## English August for India in '21

**London, Nov. 18:** A five-match Test series against India will headline England's bumper home summer in 2021 as the country's cricket board on Wednesday unveiled a provisional fixture with plans to get crowds back into the stadiums.

The matches against India are scheduled for August-September.

Earlier this year, England hosted Pakistan and the West Indies in twin Test series behind closed doors due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic, before welcoming Australia for a series of limited overs matches.

However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) now seems eager to stage the return of fans into the playing arena from the next season onwards depending on the Covid-19 situation.

"Next year we've got another big international programme to look forward to, with the thrill of a five-Test series against India as the centrepiece, compelling white ball series for our men and women, and an Ashes Series for our Visually Impaired team," ECB chief executive officer, Tom Harrison, said in a release issued by the board. Much to the delight of

● **England's Test series against India is due to get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14.**

English cricket fans craving for live action, the CEO added, "It's an exciting prospect for England fans, and while Covid-19 means there's still a great deal of uncertainty, we really hope to be able to welcome fans back into the grounds safely next year to bring that unique atmosphere to stadia across the country."

The Test series against India is due to conclude the men's international summer, with matches at Trent Bridge, Lord's, Headingley, the Kia Oval and Old Trafford. The series is due to get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14. — PTI

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

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

CANCELLATION OF MAIL / EXPRESS & SPECIAL TRAINS	
Train No. & Name	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
02425/02426 New Delhi-Jammu Tawi-New Delhi Rajdhani Special	19.11.2020
22439/22440 New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Vande Bharat Exp.	20.11.2020
02462 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Express	19.11.2020
02461 New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Express	20.11.2020
02011/02012 New Delhi-Kalka-New Delhi Shatabdi Express	19.11.2020
05211 Darbhanga-Amritsar Festival Special	19.11.2020
05212 Amritsar-Darbhanga Festival Special	21.11.2020
02422 Jammu Tawi-Ajmer Superfast Special	19.11.2020
02421 Ajmer-Jammu Tawi Superfast Special	20.11.2020
02231 Lucknow-Chandigarh Special	19.11.2020
02232 Chandigarh-Lucknow Special	20.11.2020
04888 Barmer-Rishikesh Special	Upto 20.11.2020
04887 Rishikesh-Barmer Special	Upto 21.11.2020
04519/04520 Delhi Jn.-Bhatinda Jn.-Delhi Jn. Special	Upto 20.11.2020
04401 New Delhi-Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra Festival Special	19.11.2020
04402 Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Katra-New Delhi Festival Special	Upto 20.11.2020
02471/02472 Shri Ganganagar-Delhi Jn.-Shri Ganganagar Superfast Spl.	Upto 20.11.2020
09611/09612 Ajmer-Amritsar-Ajmer Special	19.11.2020
09614 Amritsar-Ajmer Special	20.11.2020
04924 Chandigarh-Gorakhpur Festival Special	19.11.2020
04923 Gorakhpur-Chandigarh Festival Special	20.11.2020
05097 Bhagalpur-Jammu Tawi Special	19.11.2020
02588 Jammu Tawi-Gorakhpur	21.11.2020
04652 Amritsar-Jaynagar Express	20.11.2020
04651 Jaynagar-Amritsar Express	22.11.2020
02054/02053 Amritsar-Haridwar-Amritsar Shatabdi Express	20.11.2020

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
02903 Golden Temple Mail	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 18.11.2020
02904 Golden Temple Mail	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	19.11.2020
02925 Bandra Terminus-Amritsar Special Express	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 18.11.2020
02926 Amritsar-Bandra Terminus Special Exp.	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	20.11.2020
02715 Sachkhand Express	at New Delhi	New Delhi-Amritsar	of 18.11.2020
02716 Sachkhand Express	from New Delhi	Amritsar-New Delhi	20.11.2020
03307 Dhanbad-Firozpur Exp.	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Firozpur	of 18.11.2020
03308 Firozpur-Dhanbad Exp.	from Ambala Cantt.	Firozpur-Ambala Cantt.	20.11.2020
04649/04673 Jaynagar-Amritsar-Jaynagar Express	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	of 18.11.2020
04650/04674 Amritsar-Jaynagar-Amritsar Express	from Ambala Cantt.	Amritsar-Ambala Cantt.	20.11.2020
02057 New Delhi - Una Himachal Janshatabdi	at Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt. - Una Himachal	19.11.2020
02058 Una Himachal - New Delhi Janshatabdi	from Ambala Cantt.	Una Himachal - Ambala Cantt.	20.11.2020
02237 Varanasi-Jammu Tawi Festival Special	at Saharanpur	Saharanpur-Jammu Tawi	19.11.2020
02238 Jammu Tawi-Varanasi Festival Special	from Saharanpur	Jammu Tawi-Saharanpur	20.11.2020
02408 Amritsar-New Jalpaiguri Superfast	from Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Amritsar	20.11.2020
08216 Jammu Tawi-Durg Festival Special	From New Delhi	Jammu Tawi-New Delhi	20.11.2020

PARTIAL CANCELLATION OF PARCEL SPECIAL TRAINS			
Train No. & Name	Short Terminate at/ Short originate from	Partially Cancelled between Stations	Date of cancellation (from the Originating Station)
00901 Bandra(T)-Jammu Tawi	At Ambala Cantt.	Ambala Cantt.-Jammu Tawi	19.11.2020
00902 Jammu Tawi-Bandra(T)	From Ambala Cantt.	Jammu Tawi-Ambala Cantt.	21.11.2020
00467 Howrah-Amritsar	At Delhi Jn.	Delhi Jn.-Amritsar	19.11.2020

DIVERSION OF SPECIAL TRAINS		
Train No. & Name	Diverted Via	Date (from the Originating Station)
05909 Dibrugarh-Lalgarh Spl.	Rohtak-Bhiwani-Hisar-Hanumangarh	of 17.11.2020
05910 Lalgarh-Dibrugarh Spl.	Hanumangarh-Hisar-Bhiwani-Rohtak	19.11.2020

**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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