

# THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI THURSDAY 5 NOVEMBER 2020



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**Didi govt offers sops ahead of Shah's visit to Bengal from today**



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**Diego Maradona's brain surgery successful, in recovery, says doctor**

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**Meghan becomes first person from UK royal family to vote in US polls**



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## WINDOWS



Real Madrid's Rodrigo after scoring during the UEFA Champions League group B football match with Inter Milan at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium in Valdebebas, Madrid, on Tuesday. — AFP

## Gen. Naravane in Nepal for 3-day visit, ties key focus

**Kathmandu:** Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane arrived in Nepal on Wednesday on a three-day crucial visit that is largely aimed at resetting the bilateral ties that came under severe strain following a bitter border row. Gen. Naravane is visiting Nepal at the official invitation of Nepal Army Chief Gen. Purna Chandra Thapa. He was accompanied by his wife Veena Naravane, who is the chairperson of the Army Wives Welfare Association of the Indian Army. — PTI

## Cracker pollution: NGT widens ambit

**New Delhi:** The NGT has expanded the ambit of hearing cases on pollution by use of firecrackers beyond the NCR and issued notices to 18 states and UTs where air quality is beyond norms. The tribunal was hearing various pleas seeking action against pollution by use of firecrackers. Full report on Page 2

## Growth in service sector in October

**New Delhi:** Indian service sector activity ended the seven-month sequence of decline and registered growth in October, supported by improved market conditions amid easing Covid-19 restrictions, a monthly survey said on Wednesday. Full report on Page 7

## COUNTERPOINT



**Not police, it's IT, ED officials here for hoarding costly items!**

## WEATHER

Max: 31°C  
Min: 14°C  
RH: 34%  
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Sunny

## ASTROGUIDE

**Sarvari:** Dakshinayana  
**Tithi:** Nija Ashwavyuja Bahula Panchami full day  
**Star:** Ardra full day  
**Variyam:** 1.53 pm to 3.37 pm  
**Durmuhurtam:** 10.06 am to 10.52 am; 2.38 pm to 3.23 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 1.30 pm to 3 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 5.32 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.36 AM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.02 PM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 10.35 AM**

■ **Trump claims victory, sees 'fraud', threat to move court to halt count**

■ **Mail-in ballots may be counted in battleground states till tomorrow**

## Cliffhanger in America: Tight races in key states to decide next US Prez

**Washington, Nov. 4:** The fate of the United States presidency hung in the balance Wednesday, as President Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden battled for three familiar battleground states — Wisconsin, Michigan and Pennsylvania — that could prove crucial in determining who wins the White House.

It was unclear when or how quickly a winner could be determined. A late burst of votes in Michigan and Wisconsin gave Mr Biden a small lead in those states, but it was still too early to call the race. Hundreds of thousands of votes were also outstanding in Pennsylvania.

Officials in Pennsylvania said they expect all votes to be counted by Friday. The Biden campaign believes they have a definitive edge on this, while the Trump campaign fears there could be electoral malpractice during the counting of votes.

Mr Trump, in an extraordinary move from the White House, issued premature claims of victory and said he would move the Supreme Court to stop the counting. It was unclear exactly what legal action he might try to pursue.

"Frankly, we did win this election," he said, and added, "We want all voting to stop. We don't want them to find any ballots at 4:00 in the morning," calling it "a fraud on the American public".

"All of a sudden everything just stopped. This is a fraud on the American public. This is an embarrassment to our country. We were getting ready to win this election. Frankly, we did win this election," Mr Trump said, without citing any evidence of fraud in the electoral process.

Mr Biden, briefly appearing in front of supporters in Delaware, urged patience, saying that the election "ain't over until every vote is counted, every ballot is counted".

"It's not my place or Donald Trump's place to declare who's won this election," Mr Biden said. "That's the decision of the American people."

According to the latest projections, Mr Trump is set to win 213 Electoral College votes while Mr Biden is projected to have taken a lead with 238 Electoral College votes. Either of them needs at least 270 Electoral College votes to be declared the winner.

The high stakes presidential election was held against the backdrop of a



Donald Trump



Joe Biden

historic pandemic that has killed more than 230,000 Americans and wiped away millions of jobs. Both candidates spent months pressing dramatically different visions for the nation's future and voters responded in huge numbers, with more than 100 million people casting votes ahead of election day.

But the margins were exceedingly tight, with the candidates trading wins in battleground states across the country. Mr Trump picked up Florida, the largest of the swing states, while Mr Biden flipped Arizona, a state that has reliably voted Republican in recent elections.

In the US, vote tabulations routinely continue beyond election day, and states largely set the rules for when the count has to end. In presidential polls, a key point is the date in December when presidential electors have to meet. That is set by federal law.

Several states allow mailed-in votes to be accepted after election day, as long as they were postmarked by Tuesday. That includes Pennsylvania, where ballots postmarked by November 3 can be accepted if they arrive up to three days after the election. Pennsylvania governor Tom Wolf

## Dems retain House, fail to win control of Senate

**Washington, Nov. 4:** Despite retaining the House of Representatives, the path for Democrats to flip control of the US Senate narrowed sharply early Wednesday after two key Republicans facing tough reelection battles claimed victory.

Democrats flipped two US Senate seats in western Colorado and Arizona states on Tuesday, networks projected.

But the blue wave that many Democrats predicted may have crested there, potentially falling short of the three to four seat gains they needed to take control of Congress' upper chamber.

Republicans ousted a vulnerable Democrat in Alabama, and the GOP stood their ground in other key races, often defying polls that warned how President Donald Trump could be a drag on GOP incumbents defending vulnerable Senate seats.

Senator Lindsey Graham — under intense pressure after overseeing the controversial confirmation process of a Supreme Court justice weeks before the presidential vote — fought back a fierce challenge from African-American Jaime Harrison in the conservative bastion of South Carolina. — AFP

tweeted his state had over one million ballots to be counted and he "promised Pennsylvanians that we would count every vote and that's what we're going to do".

Mr Trump appeared to suggest those ballots should not be counted, and that he would fight for that outcome in court. But

legal experts were dubious about Mr Trump's declaration. "I do not see a way that he could go directly to the Supreme Court to stop the counting of votes. There could be fights in specific states, and some of those could end up at the Supreme Court. But this is not the way things work," said

## AT THIS POINT

**BIDEN 238**  
**TRUMP 213**

**TARGET: 270**

▶ **Trump leads by slender margins in North Carolina and Georgia**

▶ **Biden ahead in Nevada, Michigan and Wisconsin**

▶ **Pennsylvania officials says they expect all votes to be counted by Friday**

▶ **At least 2,700 absentee ballots were not counted in one Pennsylvania county, election official says**

6 **A very sad group of people is trying to disenfranchise (people who voted for me) and we won't stand for this**

— **Doald Trump US President**

6 **We won't rest until everyone's vote is counted**

— **Joe Biden Prez candidate**

Rick Hasen, a professor of law and political science at the University of California-Irvine. Mr Trump has appointed three of the court's nine justices including, most recently, Amy Coney Barrett.

Democrats typically outperform Republicans in mail voting, while the GOP looks to make up ground in election day turnout. That means the early margins between the candidates could be influenced by which type of votes — early or election day — were being reported by the states.

Throughout the campaign, Mr Trump cast doubt on the integrity of the election and repeatedly suggested that mail-in ballots should not be counted. Both campaigns had teams of lawyers at the ready to move into battleground states if there were legal challenges.

Mr Trump kept several states, including Texas, Iowa and Ohio, where Mr Biden had made a strong play in the final stages of the campaign. But Mr Biden also picked off states where Mr Trump sought to compete, like New Hampshire and Minnesota. But Florida was the biggest, fiercely

■ **Turn to Page 3**  
■ **Special coverage: Page 6**

## Defence officers erupt over plan for pension cuts

*Rawat moots raising retirement age of colonels, others; in IAF, Navy too*

**PAWAN BALI**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The department of military affairs (DMA) led by the Chief of Defence Staff, Gen. Bipin Rawat, has initiated a proposal to raise the retirement age of senior officers in the Army, Navy and Air Force. However, what has created a storm is another DMA proposal to cut the "entitled pension" of the officers in case of "premature release" (PMR) from the service.

As per a letter issued by the DMA, the proposal for increase in the age of retirement is under consideration. It said that the retirement of officers upto colonels will be increased to 57 years. At present, the retirement age of a colonel is around 54 years. It said the retirement age of brigadiers will be raised to 58 years from current 56 years, and of major-generals to 59 years from present 58 years. There will be similar increases in the retirement age in the Navy and Air Force for equivalent ranks. The retirement age of JCOs in the logistics, technical and medical branches will be 57 years. The letter said a draft Government Sanction Letter will be processed for the pension of military personnel and civilian employees under the ministry of defence for the current financial year

▶ **The Union Budget had allocated ₹1.3 lakh crores for the pension of military personnel and civilian employees under the ministry of defence for the current financial year**

ter said a draft Government Sanction Letter will be processed for the pension of military personnel and civilian employees under the ministry of defence for the current financial year

It said in case of "premature release" (PMR) from service, the "pension entitlement" of those in service for 20-25 years will be cut by 50 per cent. Those who had 26 to 30 years of service will get 60 per cent of their entitled pension and those with 31-35 years in service will get 75 per cent of the entitled pension in case of PMR. Only those with above 35 years of service will get a full pension. There will be no change in the pension entitlements of "battle casualties".

The letter said there are several specialists and super-specialists who are trained for high-skilled jobs and they leave the service to work in other

■ **Turn to Page 3**

## SC seeks govt's reply on lifetime ban for convicted politicians

**PARMOD KUMAR**  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre to spell out its stand on a plea seeking lifetime ban on convicted politicians, including sitting lawmakers, from contesting elections against the six-year ban from the date of release after undergoing sentence of two years or more under the prevailing law.

Justice N.V. Ramana, heading a bench also comprising Justice Surya Kant and Justice Aniruddha Bose, sought the Centre's reply on a public interest plea filed by Ashwini Upadhyay, a Supreme Court advocate and a BJP leader, seeking deletion of the six-year ban under Section 8(3) of the Representation of People Act and it being substituted with a lifetime ban.

Section 8(3) of the RPA, 1951, reads: "A person convicted of any offence

**Marriage maintenance from date sought: SC**

**New Delhi:** The Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that the maintenance to a wife and children in the matrimonial matters should be awarded from the date on which the family court or other judicial foras were approached for seeking maintenance. **PAGE 2**

and sentenced to imprisonment for not less than two years... shall be disqualified from the date of such conviction and shall continue to be disqualified for a further period of six years since his release."

The Election Commission has already backed the plea for the lifetime ban on convicted politicians from entering the electoral fray.

The court, while dealing with the aspect of the PIL

■ **Turn to Page 3**

## Amarinder leads dharna against farm laws



Punjab CM Capt. Amarinder Singh and others participate in a protest against the Centre's farm bills at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ **Report on Page 3** — PTI



## IN BRIEF

## Constable injured after being run over by car

**New Delhi:** A Delhi Police constable was injured after he was run over by a car in Sarita Vihar area here, officials said on Wednesday. The constable, Jitender, sustained fractures in both his legs. His condition is stated to be stable, they said. The incident took place on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday when constables Jitender and Ankur were on patrolling duty in Sarita Vihar, police said. At 12.05 am, they reached H-Pocket market and saw a BMW, bearing a Haryana registration number, was parked near an ATM. A cake was kept on the car and a few people were making noise, a senior police officer said. There were around eight to 10 people. The constables asked them to go back home, but they started arguing instead. The driver of the BMW tried to hit Ankur but he jumped and managed to save himself. Thereafter, the driver hit Jitender with the intention to kill him, ran over his legs and fled from the spot, he added. The BMW was chased and found to have had an accident near Umer Masjid, Khadar Mod. An injured person was also found there, the DCP said. — PTI

## Release funds to 4 DU colleges by Nov. 9: HC

**New Delhi:** The Delhi High Court on Wednesday directed the AAP government to release by November 9, the remaining amount of two quarters to four Delhi University colleges, fully funded by it, to enable the institutes to release pending salaries of staffers. A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad observed that a major festival, Diwali, is round the corner and the government is depriving people of their salaries. The bench said it was not persuaded by any reason given by the Delhi government to deprive those who are employed in the colleges of their salaries. "You cannot deprive teachers of their rights and salaries. Do you realise the major festival is round the corner and you are depriving people of their salaries," it said. The bench also directed the four colleges — Dr Bhim Rao Ambedkar College, Bhagini Nivedita College, Aditi Mahavidyalaya Women's College and Shaheed Sukhdev College of Business Studies — to forthwith release the pending salaries of teaching and non-teaching staff, after receiving funds from the Delhi government. The high court was hearing a plea by various teachers seeking direction to the institutions, which are affiliated to the varsity and fully funded by the Delhi government, to release their salaries pending for the last four months. The four colleges told the court that Delhi government subsidised them to an extent of 100 per cent and it releases the fund on quarterly basis in four tranches. Advocate Ashok Agarwal, representing the teachers, said the four colleges have not paid salaries to their staff for the months of June, July and August. Delhi government counsel submitted that there were some irregularities in accounts of the colleges and a special audit was being done at three colleges while an audit has been concluded in two of them, it will end in the third one on Thursday. — PTI

## Choudhary new head of Powergrid projects

**Gurgaon:** Abhay Choudhary has assumed the charge of director (projects) of Powergrid Corporation of India Limited (Powergrid). Prior to this assignment, he was working as executive director (commercial & regulatory cell) along with charge of CMD coordination cell. He is an electrical engineering graduate from NIT Durgapur and holds a post graduate diploma in management from IMT Ghaziabad. During his career spanning around 35 years in power sector, he has worked in various capacities in EHV sub-stations and transmission lines, both as an operation & maintenance executive as well as a construction engineer.



Abhay Choudhary

■ National capital, Kerala register highest number of cases daily

## 6,842 Covid-19 cases, 51 deaths in Delhi in 24 hrs

VINEETA PANDEY  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Kerala and Delhi are registering highest number of daily fresh cases in the country at present even as active cases of novel coronavirus in India continue to be on a decline. While Kerala on Tuesday had 8,516 fresh cases and 28 deaths, Delhi recorded 6,842 new cases and 51 deaths on Wednesday.

The total numbers of Covid-19 cases in India have reached 83.14 lakh after 46,253 fresh cases were registered in the last 24 hours. So far, 1,23,611 people have died due to the virus out of which 514 are fresh fatalities. India's Covid-19 fatality rate stands at 1.49 per cent. According to Union health ministry, there are 5,34 active cases of Covid-19 infection in the country as on date which comprise only 6.42 per cent of the total caseload, while the total number of recoveries has surged to 76.56 lakh, taking the national recovery rate to over 92 per cent.

The ministry added that 17 states and Union Territories have recovery rates more than the national average while 16 states and Union Territories, including Assam, Punjab, West Bengal, Gujarat,



A health worker conducts Covid-19 RAT test at Anand Vihar bus terminal in New Delhi on Wednesday. — PTI

**COVID WATCH**  
**83,13,876**  
CASES ACROSS NATION  
**76,56,478**  
PEOPLE CURED SO FAR

Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, have cases per million lower than the national average. The officials said that 80 per cent of the new recovered cases are from 10 states and UTs, with Kerala recording the highest — more than 8,000 single-day recoveries — fol-

lowed by Karnataka (7,000).

Meanwhile, the Union civil aviation ministry has allowed the domestic passenger airlines to operate up to 60 per cent of their pre-Covid flights till February 24 next year. Domestic aviation sector is hopeful to operate 100 per cent of their pre-Covid domestic passenger flights by April next year.

The Delhi government has started conducting targeted Covid-19 tests in markets and other crowded areas to strengthen its surveillance mechanism, the city's health minister Satyendar Jain said on Wednesday.

According to a source in Delhi government's health department, in tar-

## Biggest spike in Noida with 331 corona cases

**Noida, Nov. 4:** Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar district recorded its biggest single-day spike of 331 Covid-19 cases on Wednesday pushing the district's infection tally to 18,679, official data showed. The number of recoveries also reached 17,168 as 177 more patients recuperated since Tuesday, according to the data released by the Uttar Pradesh health department for a 24-hour period.

The district's previous biggest single-day surge was recorded on September 10 when 251 coronavirus cases were detected. Meanwhile, the number of active cases also rose to 1,443 from 1,280 on Tuesday, the third highest in the state, the data showed. — PTI

geted testing, samples are collected at regular intervals from a restaurant or a market place in an area from where high number of cases are getting recorded or where safety protocols may not have been adhered to diligently.

## Tight security at IGI airport after threat from pro-Khalistan group

**New Delhi, Nov. 4:** Security has been beefed at Delhi's Indira Gandhi International Airport after a banned pro-Khalistan outfit, Sikhs for Justice (SFJ), threatened to disrupt two Air India flights scheduled to leave for London on November 5, police said on Wednesday.

The US-based SFJ has issued a call to boycott Air India flights and urged the victims of the 1984 anti-Sikh riots to occupy the airport to "internationalise" the issue, they said.

Deputy commissioner of police (IGI Airport) Rajeev Ranjan said: "We have tightened security arrangements after we

received inputs that Sikhs for Justice has threatened to disrupt operations of two Air India flights scheduled for London tomorrow. Even though the airport is a secure place, based on the inputs we received, we have made adequate security arrangements for the safety of passengers," he said.

A meeting was also held with officials of Central Industrial Security Force (CISF), Air India and Delhi International Airport Limited on Wednesday to discuss the massive security arrangements put in place, a senior police officer said. Similarly, a meeting was held on Tuesday in this regard by CISF officials. Delhi Police officials also attended the meeting, he said. SFJ, which has been pushing for Sikh Referendum 2020 as part of its separatist agenda, was banned by the government for its alleged anti-national activities. — PTI

## Maintenance in matrimonial cases will be from the date it has been sought: SC

PARMOD KUMAR  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled that the maintenance to a wife and children in the matrimonial matters should be awarded from the date on which the family court or other judicial foras were approached for seeking maintenance.

Heading a bench also comprising Justice R. Subhash Reddy, Justice Indu Malhotra framed the detailed affidavit of disclosure of assets and liabilities "to be filed by both parties in all maintenance proceedings, including

ISSUING A series of directions, the court said that these are not exhaustive as the concerned court may exercise its discretion to consider any other factors, necessary or relevant in the facts and circumstances of a case

pending proceedings before the concerned Family Court/District Court/Magistrate's Court, as the case maybe, throughout the country."

Speaking for the bench, Justice Malhotra has also laid down the criteria to be

adopted by the courts for determining the quantum of maintenance payable to an application.

Issuing a series of directions, the court said that these are not exhaustive as the concerned court may exercise its discretion to consider any other factors, necessary or relevant in the facts and circumstances of a case.

The court has directed its secretary general to communicate the copy of the judgment to the Registrars of all the High Courts, who would in turn circulate it to all the district courts in the states and "it shall be displayed on the websites

of all District Courts / Family Courts / Courts of Judicial Magistrates for awareness and implementation.

The court felt it necessary to bring uniformity in deciding the issue of maintenance in matrimonial cases across the country as at present they suffer from variety of discrepancies which the top court had noted in various orders and verdicts by the subordinate courts.

The judgment also lays down that the order of maintenance may be enforced as a money degree of a civil court as per the CPC provisions.

## 23-yr-old killed by 5 men after tiff over buying liquor

**New Delhi, Nov. 4:** A 23-year-old man was killed allegedly by five men following a quarrel between them over asking money to purchase liquor in southeast Delhi, police said on Wednesday.

The man, identified as Akif, was found dead inside a park at Lajpat Nagar 2 in southeast Delhi on Tuesday evening, they said.

He was declared as a "bad character" of Lajpat Nagar police station and was previously involved in at least two cases, including that of robbery and snatching, police said.

According to police, the incident took place on Tuesday evening when Akif, along with five other men, was playing rummy near a drain near a park in Lajpat Nagar -2. A quarrel broke out between them after the victim demanded money to purchase liquor for himself. It then led to a fight and Akif was later attacked with a spade, following which he died, police said.

"We received a call around 6.00 pm regarding a man found dead in a park at Lajpat Nagar 2. A spade with bloodstains was also found near the body. The man was later identified as Akif, a resident of Nehru Nagar," RP Meena, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southeast).

THE VICTIM was declared as a 'bad character' of Lajpat Nagar police station and was previously involved in at least two cases, including that of robbery and snatching, police said

A case under section 302 (murder) of the Indian Penal Code was registered and the five accused involved in the killing were arrested, he said.

The accused have been identified as Rakesh (24), Rahul (22), Shyam (24), Mukesh (24) and Mahesh (22), all residents of Aadiwaashi Camp in Nehru Nagar, the DCP said.

"During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they were playing rummy along with Akif near a drain near the park when Akif asked them to give ₹100 each for liquor and started quarrelling with them.

"He slapped Rakesh and went towards the park. They all followed him to the park where they had a quarrel with him. Initially, Akif tried to attack them with a spade. Later, Rakesh, Rahul and others overpowered him, following which Rahul and Rakesh attacked him with a spade," the DCP said.

All the accused work in a wedding band, police said.

— PTI



Heavy smog at Connaught Place in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— G.N. JHA

## Air quality turns 'severe' as toxic haze suffocates Delhi

**New Delhi, Nov. 4:** A layer of pungent haze shrouded the national capital and smudged landmarks from view on Wednesday, as people complained of itchy throat and watery eyes.

Unfavourable meteorological conditions — calm winds and low temperatures — caused the air quality to be in the "severe" category.

According to Central Pollution Control Board data, PM10 levels in Delhi-NCR stood at 448 microgram per cubic meter (µg/m3) at 7 pm, the highest in this season so far. PM10 level below 100 µg/m3 are considered safe in India.

Delhi recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 279 at 10 am. It worsened to 386 by 7:30 pm. Several monitoring stations, including the ones at

## Beyond NCR: NGT notices to 18 states, UTs in firecracker pollution cases

**New Delhi, Nov. 4:** The National Green Tribunal on Wednesday expanded the ambit of hearing cases on pollution by use of firecrackers beyond the NCR and issued notices to 18 states and Union Territories where air quality is beyond norms. A bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel noted that it has already issued notice to Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and the state governments of Odisha

and Rajasthan have already issued a notification prohibiting the sale and use of firecrackers.

The green panel sought response from Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Uttarakhand and West Bengal. — PTI

Narela (461), Wazirpur (445), Bawana (452), Jahangirpuri (454) and Rohini (444), recorded the air quality in the "severe" category.

The neighbouring cities of Ghaziabad and Greater Noida also recorded "severe" levels of air pollution. — PTI

## Bizman, wife found dead in Gr. Noida flat

**Noida, Nov. 4:** A grocery shop owner and his wife were found murdered in their apartment in Greater Noida on Wednesday, said police.

The bodies of the couple, both in their fifties, were found in a pool of blood on their ninth-floor flat in Cherry County society, under Bisrakh police station area, they said.

Additional commissioner of police (law and order) Love Kumar said the deceased couple Vinay Gupta and Neha Gupta had moved to this flat a few months ago because they had a grocery store there.

A case has been lodged and investigations are underway to find out the killers, Kumar told reporters, adding the police suspected some-

one known to the couple behind the killing.

The couple was found dead inside their ninth-floor apartment in the morning.

Officials from the local police station, special operations group, forensic and surveillance departments are inspecting the site.

Dog squads have also been pressed into service, the officer said. Prima facie, it appears that someone known to the couple has killed them using some heavy object from within their house.

It does not appear to be a case of robbery attempt, as there is no sign of forced entry into the house, neither was any item found misplaced or scattered, Kumar said. — PTI

## Minor rape victim gives birth to baby

**New Delhi, Nov. 4:** A 16-year-old rape victim gave birth to a baby on the terrace of her house in north Delhi, police said on Wednesday. Police received a PCR call on October 31. The caller informed them about a newborn baby.

Police said they recovered the infant wrapped in a cloth from north Delhi, but no further information was received regarding the baby. Later, police checked CCTV footage of the area.

Police traced the girl who said that she was raped by a 60-year-old man about eight to nine months ago and did not inform her mother about it as she was scared, he said. — PTI

## Minor boy tied to tree, beaten for alleged theft of mobile phone

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 4

A minor boy was on Wednesday morning beaten black and blue by locals at Simulia fish market under Baliapal in Balasore district for allegedly attempting to steal a mobile phone from a person. When asked, the boy confessed that he attempted to commit the offence on the direction of his mother since they are starving for food without money.

Sources said the minor boy, a resident of Bada Bazar in Jaleswar area, had come to the market with his mother. He later



A minor boy tied to a tree in a market at Balasore, Odisha.

attempted to steal a mobile phone from a person's pocket in the market. However, another person standing nearby noticed it and caught him red-handed. Soon after, a crowd gathered at the spot. They tied him to a wooden pole and went

on beating him mercilessly. Though the Baliapal police station is located nearby, the locals took law into their hands and thrashed the minor.

The Baliapal police rescued the minor from the villagers' clutch and took him to custody.

officer's house located in Sailashree Vihar area of Bhubaneswar. The bureaucrat's father-in-law raped the girl at the residence and threatened her to kill her if she dared to disclose the incident to anyone, the woman alleged.

The victim went to her house during Durga Puja and narrated the ordeal before her mother. The family members of the girl took her to a medical facility, where it was revealed that she is pregnant. The victim's mother further alleged that the OAS officer was forcing the girl to undergo abortion and threatening the family members.

## Father-in-law of Odisha babu impregnates minor servant

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO  
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 4

Father-in-law of a senior Odisha Administrative Service (OAS) officer allegedly raped a minor tribal girl at the bureaucrat's residence in Bhubaneswar for nearly five months and impregnated her. The matter came to fore after the victim's mother lodged a complaint with the Balichandrapur police station in Jajpur district on Wednesday.

As per the complaint, the girl, who belongs to a poor family and hails from Nanpur area of Jajpur district, was working as a domestic at the



## SHORT TAKES

## J&amp;K: Transit housing for Pandits okayed

**Srinagar:** The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday formally approved the construction of transit accommodation for displaced Kashmiri Pandit (migrant) employees recruited under the Prime Minister's special package in the Kashmir Valley. While acting on a decision taken by J&K Administrative Council under the chairmanship of lieutenant governor, Manoj Sinha, on October 21, the Department of Disaster Management, Relief, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction in an order issued in winter capital Jammu said that the transit accommodation will be built at six places in the Valley at a cost of ₹201.60 crore. As many as 1,680 units of transit accommodation will come up on 235.5 kanals of land in Anantnag, Shopian, Ganderbal, Baramulla, Bandipore and Kupwara.

## District local polls to be held in J&amp;K soon

**Srinagar:** Jammu and Kashmir is slated to hold its first ever District Development Council (DDC) elections later this month. Also, the elections for the vacant seats of panchayats and Urban Local Bodies (ULBs) will be held simultaneously. Announcing this at a press conference in winter capital Jammu on Wednesday, the Union Territory's newly appointed 'State Election Commissioner' (SEC) K. K. Sharma, said that polls will be held in eight phases from November 28. "I'm happy to announce that the first ever elections for the DDC's will be held from November 28 in phases which will conclude on December 22," he said.

## CRPF jawan held for murder in Bengal

**Berhampore:** A Central Reserve Police Force jawan and his four aides beat a youth to death and hanged the body in Murshidabad in West Bengal on Tuesday night. On Wednesday morning the villagers of Lalitakuri in Bhagabangola came across Pintu Das (20), the victim, hanging from the ceiling fan at his home with his hands and feet tied with rope. Pintu's mother Niyati Das alleged that her son was murdered by their neighbour: Nitai Das, a CRPF jawan, and his associates. The villagers alleged that Nitai recently caught Pintu's father: Ujjwal Das red-handed in a compromising position with his wife after returning home from his posting in Nagaland.

## Kid falls into 200-ft deep bore well in MP

**Bhopal:** Army on Wednesday launched a rescue operation to save a 5-year-old boy trapped inside a bore well in a Madhya Pradesh village. The kid identified as Pralhad Kushwaha of Saitepur village under Niwadi district fell into the 200-ft deep bore well at around 9.40 in the morning while playing along with his friends, police said. "The boy's condition has been found stable so far. Rescue operation is on," Niwadi district additional superintendent of police Pratiba Tripathy said. According to the police, the kid's condition has been monitored through a CCTV camera installed inside the bore well. Provision of oxygen has been made inside the bore well. The boy got stuck at around 60 ft inside the bore well. The bore well has water up to 100 ft. "A 40-ft long tunnel was being dug up to reach the boy inside the bore well," police said.

## MP bans Chinese crackers this Diwali

**Bhopal:** Madhya Pradesh government on Wednesday imposed a ban on storage, transportation, sale and use of Chinese crackers in the state ahead of festival of lights. Chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan told reporters here that restrictions on storage, transportation, sale and use of crackers manufactured in other countries like China have been imposed in the state. He said those who would violate the order would attract provisions of Section 9(B) and 1(B) of the Explosive Act, providing a minimum of 2 years of imprisonment. Mr Chouhan however said there would be no restrictions on sale and use of crackers manufactured in India, in the state.

## Capt. sits on dharna in Delhi for Punjab

All Congress MLAs and MPs from Punjab have joined Singh in protest at Jantar Mantar

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh on Wednesday sat on a protest demonstration at the Jantar Mantar here against what he called was "step motherly" treatment towards his state. He said he wanted to save Punjab and its farmers.

Mr Singh was accompanied by all Congress MLAs and MPs from Punjab. Lok Insaaf Party legislator Simranjit Singh Bains, Punjabi Ekta Party MLAs Sukhpal Khaira and Shiromani Akali Dal (Democratic) MLA Parminder Singh Dhindsa also joined him in the protest.

Aam Aadmi Party, which has a sizeable presence in Punjab, however, did not join the protest.

The Punjab chief minis-



Punjab chief minister Captain Amrinder Singh arrives at Rajghat for paying tribute to Mahatma Gandhi before joining a protest against farmers bill issue in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— G.N. JHA

ter claimed that the Aam Aadmi Party had been pressured not to join the Dharna as its government in Delhi had not passed amendment bills to protect the farmers.

Mr Singh had planned to hold the Dharna at the Rajghat initially in protest

over President Ramnath Kovind's refusal to meet him over the new farm laws.

He had sought an appointment with the President to seek his assent to the separate agriculture bills passed by the Punjab Assembly which if passed

would negate the Centre's new farm laws.

But the state government said that the Rashtrapati Bhavan has declined his request for an appointment. Following this, the chief minister took a decision on the relay dharna at Rajghat.

He said the protest in Delhi will highlight the situation in the state because of the suspension of goods trains by the Centre.

It might be recalled that the Railways has stopped running trains to Punjab, saying the farmers protesting against the farm laws are still blocking tracks.

However, the Punjab government claimed that the farmers have eased the blockade and are allowing goods trains to run.

Thermal power plants are shutting down in the state because of lack of coal, the Punjab government said.

The Congress along with many other opposition parties and several ground-level farmers organisations have been protesting against the recent farm legislations alleging that these will harm the interests of farmers and benefit corporates. The Centre has, however, denied these claims. The NDA government has in fact asserted that these new laws will be beneficial for farmers and will increase their income.

The three farm bills — the Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020 — were passed by Parliament recently.

## Mamata declares sops ahead of Shah's WB visit

Formation of many welfare boards on card

RAJIB CHOWDHURI  
KOLKATA, NOV. 4

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday announced distribution of 1.25 lakh pattas (land deed) to the refugees, quick formation of various welfare boards with allocation of funds for the refugees, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes to get back their votebank in the next year's Assembly Election in the state.

She also frequently asked for community-wise iconic faces of yesteryears to name her government's initiatives to woo the Matua, SC/ST and OBC representatives at an interaction with them in the state secretariat: Nabanna.

Ms Banerjee's announcement of sops for the refugees and SC/ST communities came hours before union home minister Amit Shah's arrival for a two-day state visit during which he would launch the BJP's special outreach programme for the SC/ST and OBC communities

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## Kejri sees Covid's 'third wave'

■ Continued from Page 1

in the country now, which is 6.42 per cent of the total caseload, while the total number of recoveries has surged to 76.56 lakhs, taking the recovery rate to over 92 per cent.

The ministry added that

## SC seeks govt's...

■ Continued from Page 1

seeking special courts to fast-track trials of sitting and former lawmakers facing criminal cases, was told by the high courts of West Bengal and Kerala that warrants and summons issued by the trial courts were not being executed by the state police. The apex court sought a reply from the two state governments, saying it should be filed by a senior ranking, secretary-level officer.



Mamata Banerjee

■ Banerjee's announcement of sops for the refugees and SC/ST communities came hours before union home minister Amit Shah's arrival for a two-day state visit during which he would launch the BJP's special outreach programme for the SC/ST and OBC communities

them also according to the laws. There will be no refugee colony left in Bengal which can be called illegal."

Reiterating her stand on the citizenship issues, the Trinamul supremo argued, "Many are living here after migrating from other countries including Bangladesh. They are already our citizens. Distribution of patta would only legalise their status. This was the long-standing demand of the Matua community and others."

She added, "We are also setting up a development board for the Matua community with a fund of ₹10 crores to expedite the work. Cultural boards will be set up for each community under the SC/ST and OBC. ₹5 crores have been allotted for Nama Shudra Development Board."

17 states and Union territories have recovery rates higher than the national average while 16 states and UTs, including Assam, Punjab, West Bengal, Gujarat, Jharkhand, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and Bihar, have

cases per million lower than the national average. The officials said 80 per cent of new recovered cases are from 10 states and UTs, with Kerala recording the highest — more than 8,000 single-day recoveries — followed by Karnataka (7,000).

## Cliffhanger in US...

■ Continued from Page 1

contested battleground on the map, with both campaigns battling over the 29 electoral college votes that went to Mr Trump. Democrats entered the night confident not only in Mr Biden's prospects, but also in the party's ability to take control of the Senate. But the GOP held several seats considered vulnerable, including in Iowa, Texas and Kansas. The House was likely to remain under Democratic control. —AP, PTI



People of the Muslim community burn a poster of French President Emmanuel Macron for his recent comments on Islam during a demonstration in Kolkata on Wednesday.

— PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

## Nityanand Rai slams Opp. over 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' controversy

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA, NOV. 4

After the second phase of polls, the political parties have intensified their campaign for the third and final phase elections scheduled on November 7.

On Wednesday, a day ahead of the last day of the campaigning Union Minister Nityanand Rai while addressing a rally in Araria raised the political pitch by saying that "the opposition parties accuse the BJP of forcing people to say Bharat Mata Ki Jai. I want to ask Rahul Gandhi and Tejashwi Yadav that if an Indian won't say Bharat Mata Ki Jai then what will he say Pakistan Zindabad".

Sources in the BJP said that the union minister raised the issue during his speech in Araria to counter the opposition's criticism for "Bharat Mata Ki Jai".

The issue got heated up after Congress and RJD targeted Prime Minister Narendra Modi for invoking Bharat Mata Ki Jai slogans in Bihar.

## JD-U files against Yadavs for concealing facts about assets

NAYEAR AZAD  
PATNA, NOV. 4

Ahead of the third and final phase of polls, the JD(U) has submitted a memorandum to the Election Commission seeking action against RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav and his brother Tej Pratap for allegedly concealing facts about their properties in the affidavit. "We have submitted documentary proof about properties which both the brothers Tejashwi and Tej Pratap did not mention in their affidavit. We have also urged the Election commission to investigate the false affidavits and take action under section 123 (2) of the Representation of People's Act", JD(U) leader Neeraj Kumar said.

The JD(U) leader said that the state Chief Electoral Officer H R Srinivas has assured the delegation that the details furnished in the memorandum would be sent to the election commission for further action.

The NDA has been aggressively raising the "corruption, land grabbing and jungle raj" issue against the opposition coalition led by RJD in almost all their rallies and

## Shivraj slams Kamal Nath for denigrating him during polls

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
BHOPAL, NOV. 4

Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has slammed Congress veteran Kamal Nath for denigrating him while campaigning in the just-concluded assembly elections in the state.

Talking to reporters here, Mr Chouhan said the former chief minister and other Congress leaders used abusive languages against him while campaigning for their party in the recently held by-elections to 28 assembly constituencies in the

roadshows. "Leader of the opposition Tejashwi Yadav's conduct raises doubts about his image. How will the people believe a person who has the habit of concealing facts" JD(U) leader Neeraj Kumar said.

The JD(U) also questioned his promises to provide employment to 10 Lakh youths of Bihar. Party leaders said that "the RJD was in power for 15 years in Bihar but couldn't

## Maha govt 'unlocks' theatres, swimming pools, yoga centres

Lockdown to stay in containment zones

AGE CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI, NOV. 4

The entertainment-starved people in Maharashtra can now enjoy movies and drama plays during the festive season of Diwali as the state government has allowed cinema halls, drama theatres and multiplexes to reopen from Thursday, November 5. Along with them, the swimming pools and yoga institutes are also allowed to reopen.

However, the cinema halls, drama theatres and multiplexes will be open only in areas outside the containment zones. The Uddhav Thackeray-led government has also put a cap of 50 percent seating capacity on them with no eatables allowed inside.

The development comes after the Central government said last month that the cinema halls and movie theatres across the country can reopen from October 15. However, the lockdown guidelines will strictly be followed in containment zones.

As per the latest government guidelines, swimming pools used for training of state, national and international-level sports persons and located outside containment zones can operate from November 5.

Yoga institutes, indoor sports facilities such as badminton halls, tennis, squash courts, indoor

■ While the Covid-19 cases are dropping gradually, the Maharashtra government has decided to extend the lockdown in the state till November 30. However, the activities permitted under the 'Mission Begin Again' have been allowed to continue.

shooting ranges will also be allowed to operate from Thursday. Physical distancing and sanitisation must be ensured, the guidelines said.

While the Covid-19 cases are dropping gradually, the Maharashtra government has decided to extend the lockdown in the state till November 30. However, the activities permitted under the "Mission Begin Again" have been allowed to continue.

Under unlock guidelines, the state government had allowed restaurants, bars, food courts to open with 50 percent capacity from October 5. All industrial and manufacturing units of non-essential items in Mumbai Metropolitan Region will be allowed to operate.

Public open spaces, gardens, and parks have also been opened up. However, schools, colleges and coaching institutes have been asked to remain closed.

## 2nd batch of 3 Rafale fighter jets land in India

PAWAN BALI  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 4

The second batch of 3 Rafale fighter jets for Indian Air Force landed in India on Wednesday evening after flying non-stop from France.

The fighter jets landed in Jamnagar at 8:14 pm after three mid-air refuelling en route.

These aircraft took over 8 hours to reach directly from France. This will take the total strength of Rafale fighters with IAF to eight to take on threats emerging from China.

Indian Air Force will like to operationalise the second batch of Rafale jets as soon as possible. In the first batch India had received five Rafale aircraft in July and these were inducted in IAF in September. The first batch has already been operationalised and has carried out sorties in Ladakh sector.

In 2016, India had signed a ₹59,000 crore deal for 36 Rafales which will be based in Ambala and Hasimara (West Bengal) air bases.

## Bombay high court rejects bail pleas of DHFL promoters

SHAHAB ANSARI  
MUMBAI, NOV. 4

The Bombay high court on Wednesday rejected the bail applications filed by promoters of Dewan Housing Finance Limited (DHFL) Kapil and Dheeraj Wadhawan, accused in the Yes Bank money laundering case.

Justice Sarang Kotwal pronounced the order on bail pleas on Wednesday. The judge had reserved order on the applications on October 23, after hearing arguments of lawyers from both sides.

Wadhawan brothers through senior advocate Amit Desai had filed the bail applications contending that they are entitled for bail by default. Generally bail by default is granted when a charge sheet against accused persons is not filed within a stipulated time period. In this case, the accused have

■ Additional solicitor general Anil Singh on behalf of CBI had opposed the bail applications saying that the CBI had followed all procedures and compliances.

argued that the central probe agency CBI failed to comply with the procedure under Section 173 CrPC while submitting its investigation report before the special magistrate and therefore it cannot be considered that the charge sheet has been filed on time and applicants are entitled for bail.

Advocate Desai had contended that as per section 173, a court could take cognisance of the charge sheet only if the probe was complete. In the present case, the CBI's probe report was not complete and yet the court has taken cognisance, therefore, his client

deserved to be let out in default bail, Desai had said. However, the special court has dismissed their argument and has rejected their bail applications.

Additional solicitor general Anil Singh on behalf of CBI had opposed the bail applications saying that the CBI had followed all procedures and compliances. He had said that if there had been any changes in the filing procedure of the charge sheet, they had occurred in view of the pandemic situation, during which the court had taken precautionary measures before handling documents.

The prosecution case is that Yes Bank invested ₹3,700 crore in short-term debentures of DHFL between April and June 2018 for which the Wadhawans allegedly gave ₹600 crore kickback to the former CEO and managing director Rana Kapoor.



IN BRIEF

DELAY U.S. LNG DEAL, ENGIE TOLD

**Paris, Nov. 4:** The French government asked power group Engie ENGIE.PA to hold off on signing a multi-billion dollar U.S. liquefied natural gas import contract on concerns over the environmental implications of the deal, a source familiar with the matter said.

The contract would be with NextDecade, which is due to decide on whether to go ahead with plans to build its proposed Rio Grande export plant in Texas, and comes amid scrutiny over emission levels at US gas producers.

The request came from the economy ministry, the source added.

A spokeswoman for Engie said the company's board had decided to give itself more time to study the NextDecade contract, saying "the project required a more detailed examination". The spokeswoman declined to comment on whether this followed a request from the state.

RIGHT WHALE NUMBERS FALL TO 366

**Portland (US), Nov. 4:** The population of North Atlantic right whales, an endangered species that has been the focus of conservation efforts for decades, has dipped to less than 370, officials said. The whale numbers at only 366, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said Monday in an estimate that reflects the population as of January 2019.

The previous estimate, which reflected January 2018, was 412. The whales have struggled with poor reproduction and high mortality over the last decade, especially the past few years. They're vulnerable to ship collisions and entanglement in fishing gear.

The population was more than 480 in 2011, the *Portland Press Herald* reported. A NOAA team is working on a plan designed to reduce the risk the whales face due to fishing gear. Conservation groups sounded the alarm about the drop in population Monday.

Erica Fuller, an attorney with Conservation Law Foundation, said "the outlook is grim if we do not act today."

The population of North Atlantic right whales was devastated during the commercial whaling era. It has been a federally protected species since 1972.

SYRIA GOVT SHELLING KILLS SEVEN

**Beirut, Nov 4:** Syrian government on Wednesday shelled the last rebel last enclave in the country's northwest, killing at least seven people, including three children, rescuers and activists reported.

The attack came during a day of heavy rain, and targeted the city of Idlib city and two towns, to the north and south. A child was killed when a shell landed near a weekly market in the city of Idlib, according to the Syrian Civil Defence, a volunteer rescue team also known as the White Helmets, and the Syrian Observatory for Human Rights, a Britain-based war monitor.

In Ariha, a town to the south, shells killed four people, and in Kefraya to the north, two children were killed, the Observatory said. The shelling comes as an eight-month truce negotiated between Turkey and Russia is unravelling.

Government and allied forces resumed operations in recent weeks, including carrying out an airstrike in late October on rebels in the area that killed dozens of Turkey-backed fighters at their training camp. The attack sparked retaliation, restoring a cycle of violence that had previously displaced hundreds of thousands of residents fleeing the fighting and government advances.

The northwestern rebel-held enclave is home to more than 3 million people and remains the last area in opposition hands. The international community, including the US, are calling for a nationwide cease-fire and resumption of peace talks, saying no military operations would bring about peace to war-torn Syria.

The nine-year war has displaced millions, and killed nearly half a million people, leaving Syria torn in rival areas controlled by different groups, backed by regional or international powers. Turkey, which backs the Syrian opposition, has reached a cease-fire agreement with Russia.



A man looks for the grave of a relative, victim of the Coronavirus pandemic, in the cemetery "Covid-19", on the Day of the Dead, in Tegucigalpa.

— AFP

WHO: Covid spread in Europe accelerating

Half of the globe's new cases reported last week: Health body

**Geneva, Nov. 4:** The World Health Organisation says there has been a "further acceleration" in the speed of Covid-19's spread in Europe, which was responsible for about half of the globe's new cases reported last week.

The UN health agency said in a weekly report published late Tuesday that European countries also recorded a 46% increase in deaths compared with the previous week. Although deaths also rose in the Americas, the rate of increase there was only 2%. In Europe, France, Italy and the UK reported the highest numbers of new cases while Andorra, the Czech Republic and Belgium reported the highest rate per capita.

Thirsty drinkers in England will be enjoying their final freshly poured pints in a pub for a month Wednesday while shoppers will get one last dose of retail therapy as the country prepares to join large swathes of Europe in lockdown as part of intensified efforts to contain the resurgent Coronavirus. Pubs, along with restaurants, hairdressers and other retail-

**Rome, Nov. 4:** Pope Francis urged people follow recommendations from governments and health authorities to prevent Coronavirus infections as he returned to his private library for his Wednesday general audience amid a surge of infections in Europe.

The Vatican announced last week that Francis, 83, was suspending public audiences and would celebrate all upcoming liturgies without throngs of faithful present. It made the decision after some-

ing outlets deemed to be selling non-essential items, such as books and sneakers, will have to close their doors Thursday until at least Dec. 2 following a sudden change of course last weekend by the British government.

Prime Minister Boris Johnson had for weeks

■ **IT WAS** the same setup Francis used during the Vatican's nearly three-month Covid-19 lockdown in the spring and summer.

one who attended the Pope's October 21 audience tested positive, 13 Swiss Guards who protect the pope came down with the virus and Italy re-imposed new restrictions on gatherings to try to tame resurging infections.

Francis held his audi-

ence Wednesday in his private library with around 10 priests to translate summaries of his catechism lesson, which was livestreamed. It was the same setup Francis used during the Vatican's nearly three-month Covid-19 lockdown in the spring and summer. Then, he complained it felt like he was in a "cage" and unable to mingle with his flock. In his opening remarks, Francis said "unfortunately" it was necessary to return to the library to prevent infections. — AP

lightly, or any parliament would want to impose these measures lightly on the people of this country," Johnson said.

England's lockdown follows similar restrictions elsewhere in the UK and across Europe, as nations grapple with mounting new Covid-19 infections. — AP

Arctic oil drilling matter in court

**Oslo, Nov. 4:** Norway's top court began to hear arguments on Wednesday on the legality of awarding offshore oil licenses in the Arctic, in a landmark case that could stop the industry's expansion.

The lawsuit, led by environmental groups Greenpeace Norway and Nature and Youth, is part of an emerging branch of law worldwide where plaintiffs seek to use a nation's founding principles to make the case for curbing emissions.

"The Constitution says that everyone has a right to healthy environment, and we will not secure it if we continue to drill for more oil," Frode Pleym, head of Greenpeace Norway, told *Reuters*. "We do hope and expect the supreme court to rule in (our) favour."

Two lower courts, however, have found the gov-

ernment's 2016 decision to award 10 licenses to oil firms, including Equinor, in the Barents Sea to be legal. "The decision was made after thorough professional, administrative and political processes, which were fully in line with Norwegian law and the constitution," Norway's Attorney General Fredrik Sejersted, who represents the government, said in his submission to the top court.

The oil and gas industry, which made Norway one of the richest countries in the world, is also the largest emitter of carbon dioxide (CO2) which causes dangerous climate warming. Norway has pledged to reduce emissions by at least 50% by 2030 compared to 1990.

Pleym said the country will not be able to meet its pledge under the 2015 Paris Agreement. — *Reuters*

Fu Bao: 1st panda born in S. Korea

**Seoul, Nov. 4:** The first panda to be born in South Korea was introduced to a group of lucky children and reporters on Wednesday and given a name — Fu Bao.

The name given to the panda means lucky treasure.

Fu Bao, born three months ago, appeared healthy and happy, if a little shy, as zookeepers presented her to the children, who were wearing panda T-shirts and masks, at her home at the Everland theme park.

"We love you Fu Bao," the

■ **FU BAO'S** parents, seven-year-old female Ai Bao and eight-year-old male Le Bao, arrived in 2016 from China's Sichuan province, the home of giant pandas, as part of China's "panda diplomacy".

children shouted.

Fu Bao's parents, seven-year-old female Ai Bao and eight-year-old male Le Bao, arrived in 2016 from China's Sichuan province,

the home of giant pandas, as part of China's "panda diplomacy".

Giant pandas are one of the world's most endangered species and the birth of a cub is something to celebrate.

Female pandas can only conceive once a year for a limited period, and cubs have very low chances of survival as they are often born prematurely, usually weighing less than 200 grams (0.44 lb).

Fu Bao weighed 197 grams (0.43 lb) and was 16.5 cm (6.5 inches) long at birth but has grown fast

and now weighs 5.8 kg (12.8 lb) and measures 58.5 cm (23 inches), Everland said.

"She's growing rapidly and started cutting teeth and sitting up on her own ahead of her 100th day," the zoo said in a statement.

Some 50,000 people took part in a poll to choose Fu Bao's name.

The zoo said she would make her public debut in coming weeks, when she can walk and eat bamboo. She is expected to return to China in three or four years. — *Reuters*

Temple vandalised in Pakistan, Hindus saved by Muslims

**Karachi, Nov. 4:** A Hindu temple in Pakistan's Sindh province was vandalised by an angry mob that also attempted to attack over 300 Hindu families, but were stopped by Muslims from entering the century-old neighbourhood, a media report said on Wednesday.

The incident took place on Sunday in Sheetal Das compound, housing 300 Hindu and 30 Muslim families. Residents of the neighbourhood said that scores of men had assembled outside the compound's only gate and many of them intended to attack the Hindu families.

However, the Muslim families, residing in and around the compound, were quick to reach the gate and stop the mob from entering the area.

"Police, too, reached the spot within a few minutes after they were informed," a Hindu man, requesting anonymity, told *The Express Tribune*.

Another Hindu man said: "Some of the angry men had managed to reach the temple and tried to vandalise it". They wanted to attack the compound's Hindu families, but the police foiled their attempt.

However, other eyewitnesses, said that three pre-partition idols were destroyed during the

■ **THE INCIDENT** took place on Sunday in Sheetal Das compound, housing 300 Hindu and 30 Muslim families. Residents said that scores of men had assembled outside the compound's only gate and many of them intended to attack the Hindu families.

episode, the report said. "I never felt that fearful," said a teary-eyed resident, while sharing the ordeal. An official from the police also confirmed that it was the Muslim families of the area whose resilience stopped the mob attack on the minority Hindu community. "Had it not been for the Muslim families, it would have been very difficult to thwart the attack," said the senior police official.

Following the incident, over 60 Hindu families had shifted to other areas of the city by Tuesday. "The fear still lingers and the people have left their homes and shifted women and children to locations they deem safe," said a resident. One of the elders from the Hindu community, said that he "had never seen an attack of the sort". — *PTI*

Aegean quake toll rises to 115, search continues

**Ankara, Nov. 4:** The death toll in last week's Aegean Sea earthquake has risen to 116 on Wednesday as rescuers in the Turkish city of Izmir focused on the final two collapsed buildings.

All but two of the victims were killed in Izmir, Turkey's third-largest city. Two teenagers died on the Greek island of Samos, which lies to the south of the epicentre of last Friday's earthquake.

Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency, or AFAD, said search and rescue operations had been completed at 15 of 17 buildings that fell as the violent quake

shook Izmir. Of 1,035 injured people, 137 remained in hospitals, the agency added.

More than 100 people have been pulled from the rubble of apartment buildings. Following a Cabinet meeting on Tuesday evening, President Recep Tayyip Erdogan pledged not to give up until the final person was recovered. Rescuers' spirits were raised on Tuesday when they pulled a 3-year-old girl from the wreckage of her family home 91 hours after the quake.

The US Geological Survey registered the quake's magnitude at 7.0, though other agencies

recorded it as less severe. The tremors were felt across western Turkey, including in Istanbul, as well as in the Greek capital of Athens. Some 1,700 aftershocks followed, according to AFAD, 45 of which were greater than 4.0 magnitude.

In Izmir, the quake reduced buildings to rubble or saw floors pancake in on themselves and authorities detained nine people, including contractors, for questioning over the collapse of six of the buildings. Turkey has a mix of older buildings and cheap or illegal constructions that do not withstand earthquakes. — *AP*

BRAZIL VP DEFENDS RAIN FOREST POLICY

**Brasilia, Nov. 4:** Vice-President Hamilton Mourao on Tuesday defended Brazil's environmental policies, saying the country was working to protect the Amazon rain forest and adding nothing will change if Democrat Joe Biden wins the US presidential election.

Biden, who has the backing of environmental groups, has criticized Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro's handling of deforestation in the Amazon. A Biden administration would be expected to put the environment and human rights at the top of the bilateral agenda, complicating relations and jeopardizing trade, diplomats and analysts have told *Reuters*.

Destruction of the rain forest has soared under the right-wing Bolsonaro, an ally of Republican US President Donald Trump who plans to develop the Amazon saying this will reduce poverty. Environmental advocates say his policies exacerbate climate change and embolden illegal loggers, miners and ranchers.

Mourao said Brazil is doing its best to look after the forest and will continue doing so whoever is in the White House. "We have put out more than 7,500 forest fires," he told reporters. "I would like to show better results, we have not managed yet, but we will persist." He acknowledged that there would be "some changes" in US policy if Biden wins, but no radical change on the Brazilian end. — *Reuters*



Residents stand outside a home surrounded by floodwaters brought on by Hurricane Eta in Wawa, Nicaragua, on Tuesday.

— AP

landfall, two gold miners were killed when a mountain-side unleashed tons of mud Tuesday morning.

A third miner escaped the slide and sought help. One body was recovered before rescuers had to suspend recovery efforts due

to nightfall and fears that more slides could occur as the rain continued, said Lt. Cesar Malespin of the Bonanza Fire Department. He said recovery efforts would continue Wednesday. Bonanza was getting lashed by strong

winds and torrential rain, he said.

The storm has been drenching neighbouring Honduras with rain since at least Sunday and the country reported its first death attributed to Eta early Tuesday. — *AP*

Britain's new polar ship heads for seas

**New Brighton, Nov. 4:** Britain's new polar ship, the Sir David Attenborough, headed for the open seas on Tuesday to start trials after a storm delay, before making its maiden voyage to Antarctica next year for climate change research.

The 200 million pound (\$260 million), state-of-the-art, polar research vessel, with its red hull and a bright yellow crane on its stern, sailed past Liverpool's historic docks

and out into the sea, headed for north Wales.

Officially the ship is named after the veteran BBC naturalist David Attenborough, but to many Britons it will always be known as "Boaty McBoatface", after that suggestion topped a public poll to name the vessel in 2016.

Its departure from Liverpool was delayed by around a week due to stormy weather. — *Reuters*





# THE ASIAN AGE

5 NOVEMBER 2020

## Future of Afghan: India must talk to US, others

Monday's attack on the campus of Kabul University, in which at least 35 young Afghans were cut down in their prime, is likely to be a landmark of the present phase in which peace talks are supposedly being held between the Taliban and other Afghan parties at the behest of the United States in Doha, the capital of Qatar.

There have been deadlier attacks by the Taliban or Islamic State (ISIS) this year, but this one has shaken the nation. A national day of mourning was announced by the Ashraf Ghani government, and for the first time a public demand was made to "boycott" the Doha talks. The message was inscribed on a defiant banner that fluttered on the university campus on Wednesday. The social media is apparently full of the same demand.

This is likely to put political pressure on the Afghan government, and the various parties and prominent individuals that have oriented themselves toward participating in the process of conversation with the Taliban for the sake of peace, and the United States, which brokered the Doha process in February as a necessary ingredient of its exit from the Afghan quagmire.

**The Taliban, keenly aware of America's decision and desire to get out of Afghanistan quickly, is piling up the pressure through violence and targeted assassinations so that the outcome — such as it may turn out to be — will be on its terms**

The Taliban, keenly aware of America's decision and desire to get out of Afghanistan quickly, is piling up the pressure through violence and targeted assassinations so that the outcome — such as it may turn out to be — will be on its terms. That should, in real terms, mean the end of an attempt at some kind of democracy.

It is noteworthy that the Taliban hasn't agreed to a "ceasefire" to facilitate these so-called peace talks. And it is futile discussing whether it is the Taliban or ISIS which is responsible for the Kabul University and

other high-profile attacks, for it is Pakistan which appears to be the mentor in either case. According to the UN office in Afghanistan (UNAMA), the first nine months of this year have produced nearly 6,000 civilian casualties — some 2,100 killed and 3,800 injured.

India has done well to point out yet again after the latest attack that New Delhi stands firmly behind Afghanistan in dealing with terrorism. The next step should be for this country to engage the Americans as soon as the next US President takes office, and also the key European powers and Japan on this question. Peace in Afghanistan is not just a bilateral matter for India, or a regional matter, but an international one. It is time this determination was made. Regionalism may not be the answer in this case. The dire question is: What happens if the Doha talks break down? The huge civilian toll the violence has taken across Afghanistan cannot but build even greater pressure on various constituencies within that country — since so far the talks do appear to be futile — as well as on the international community. America can't carry on pretending that it is for the Taliban and the Afghans to sort out the mess and bring peace. This is what Zalmay Khalilzad, the key US interlocutor for the Doha talks, appears to be saying without mincing his words. India simply cannot accept this approach.

## Crack whip on crackers

The Centre should take a lesson from the governments of Rajasthan, Odisha, West Bengal and Haryana, and ban the sale and use of fireworks this pandemic year in order to ward off a possible second wave of the coronavirus. Indeed, the National Green Tribunal has issued a notice asking it to consider the same. However, the government should not play apologist to its constituents by waiting for final orders.

The case for regulating, indeed reducing, use of fireworks is unquestionable, even in the best of times. Over the last 10 years, Delhi's population has seen a quantum jump and is now at 30 million plus. Tokyo, the most populous city in the world, has 38 million people. The population rise has increased the corresponding pressure on resources, leading to rising pollution levels. Stubble burning by farmers at the onset of every winter, a perennial problem that the recently dissolved EPCA failed to resolve, has compounded that — it is now clear that this is what precipitates NCR's infamous annual haze.

Smoke from crackers gets trapped in the lowest layers of air owing to the autumn fog. It has deleterious effects on the health of children, elderly, and asthma and chronic pulmonary disease patients. In 2018, the Supreme Court had ordered that only firecrackers with reduced emission and "green crackers" can be manufactured and sold. However, this year, that measure won't be enough to contain the crisis. For, aside from weakening the lungs and predisposing one to infection, exposure to pollution, also associated with the increased presence of a coronavirus receptor on lung cell surfaces, increases the risk of contracting Covid. About 15 per cent of people who died from Covid-19 worldwide had had long-term exposure to fine particulate air pollution.

The air quality index in Delhi, averaging between 410 and 450, is currently in the hazardous category. Delhi has also emerged as India's newest pandemic hotspot this festive season, thanks to some poor decisions at the government and individual levels, Diwali shopping mania and buses running to full capacity among them, recording, without precedent, over 5,000 new cases for five straight days, with the tally crossing 6,725 on Wednesday. If firecracker pollution triggers a surge that reaches the critical mass amid daily progressive lowering of temperatures due to the change of season, the epidemic might well shoot out of control. In the interest of their own safety, therefore, the people should practise restraint and the government must act swiftly.

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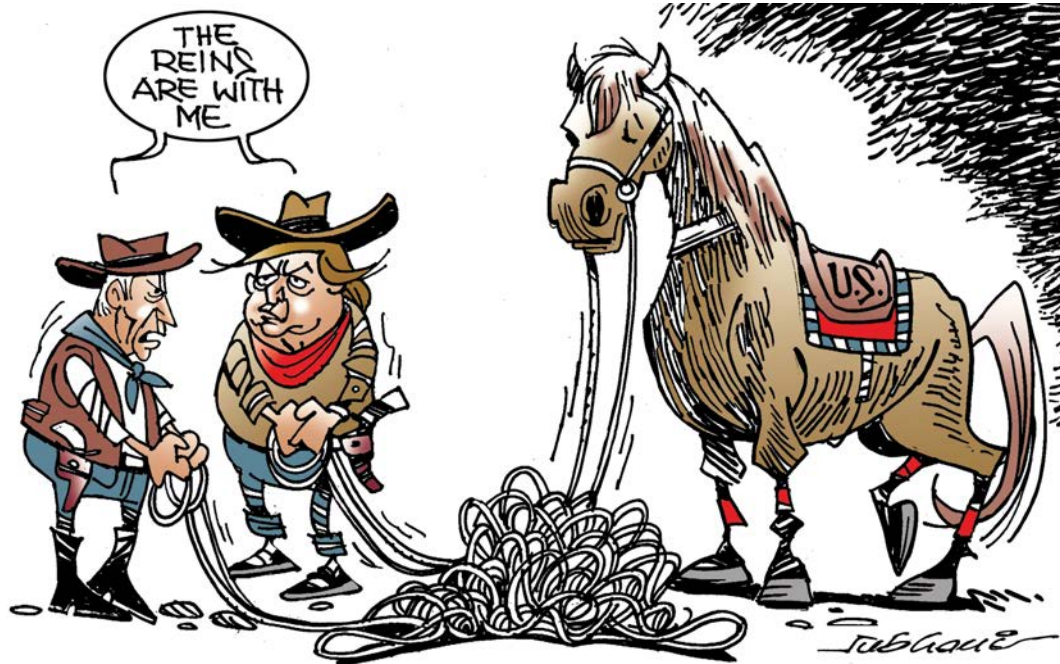
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Subhani



# Prioritise the needs of most vulnerable kids



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

As we continue to navigate the multiple uncertainties thrown up by the coronavirus pandemic, there is a heartening finding from the latest Annual Status of Education Report (ASER 2020 Wave 1) that deserves special attention. The report, released online late last month, reaffirms a positive trend: households in India, both rich and poor, are pinning their hopes on education as a passport to upward mobility, even in the times of Covid-19.

The release of an ASER report is an eagerly-awaited event for everyone not just in the education sector or civil society but also for others who are concerned about India's development trajectory and the country's future. The reason is simple: it provides deep insights into the state of learning of India's children.

This year's survey is the first-ever phone-based ASER survey. Conducted in September 2020, the sixth month of the nationwide school closures, it looks at how distance education was provided and accessed, the kind of materials and activities given to rural children and the way they dealt with these remote learning approaches, along with their families, from their homes. The learnings are collated from 26 states and four Union territories — a total of 52,227 households and 59,251 children in the age group of 5-16 years, as well as teachers or head teachers from 8,963 government schools offering primary grades.

That schoolgoing children have suffered hugely is obvious. Covid-19 severely disrupted lives across India, as elsewhere. Millions of people lost sources of livelihood during the lockdown; those in the informal sector did not get paid for several months; even during the

"unlock" phase, earnings have dipped. Household savings have evaporated. Many people are in deep debt.

But what leaps out from the flood of depressing news is that even while negotiating this catastrophic turn of events, families, rich and poor, have tried their best to support their children's education when classroom teaching went virtual.

The latest ASER data tells us that at the household level, about 11 per cent of all families bought a new phone since the lockdown kicked off. Over 80 per cent of these new phone purchases were smartphones. Of the lot who didn't have a smartphone at home, around 13 per cent said their children could access someone else's smartphone.

With time, we will know more about the choices poor households made in their crisis hour, what they gave up, what they postponed in order to buy smartphones which the children used to access learning material in recent months.

The pandemic has once again sledgehammered the fact that in digital India, everyone is not equal. Over 500 million Indians are now using smartphones, a 15 per cent jump from 2018, but there is a big gap between city dwellers and those living in villages, high-income and low-income, high-education and low-education households, as well as between men and women.

A recent study by Harvard's Kennedy School of Government estimated that, today in India, 71 per cent of men use mobile phones, as against 38 per cent of women.

Needless to say, we don't know yet how time was divided between boys and girls in households with one smartphone and whether there was any distinction made by gender and age-group.

ASER 2020 tells us that WhatsApp was the most commonly used way by which children received learning materials. Children in private schools were at an advantage compared to their government school counterparts over use of this platform. Interestingly, children in government schools were much more likely to have got learning materials through personal contact with a teacher than those in private schools. This happened when the teacher visited the family or when someone from the family went to the school.

Clearly, families with low incomes and low education who couldn't buy smartphones tried to support their children in other ways, as did many schools.

Despite the challenges and contradictions inherent in the Indian milieu, families across the board are trying their level best to make sure their children have a fighting chance in the emerging, highly competitive world of work.

A smartphone is an aspiration marker. But buying one isn't the only way parents have helped children deal with the pandemic's new normal.

The latest ASER survey offers insights about the support at home for learning — 74.9 per cent families reported being able to provide some learning support at home to their children. Apart from parents, older children also pitched in.

There are promising signs from many states.

West Bengal, for example, tops the list in reduction in school dropouts, going by the latest ASER data. The school dropout rate there is 1.5 per cent this year, from 3.3 per cent in 2018. ASER 2020 also tells us West Bengal is on top in the country for giving

textbooks for school students.

Several state governments are working on school fees to help families in financial distress and with schoolgoing children. Andhra Pradesh, for example, has decided to slash 30 per cent of tuition fees for the 2020-21 academic year for private unaided educational institutions. Even city governments are doing their bit. The Pune Municipal Corporation has formed a committee to look into the issue of school fee payments.

But while lower school fees, support at home and smartphones definitely help, they aren't going to be enough to compensate for the possibly severe learning loss suffered by many children.

We know schoolgoing children learnt something during all the months they have been at home. We also know that when schools reopen, not everyone is likely to be equally positioned to cope with classroom teaching.

Two key issues must be given top priority. Along with strengthening family support in children's learning, working on more impactful digital content, etc, there needs to be special, targeted incentives for children at risk of dropping out of school in the coming days. They must stay on.

Second, there is an urgent need for free remedial classes for all those who didn't have optimal access to learning sources when there was no physical classroom teaching or who have not been able to absorb what they received remotely.

The pandemic has affected every child in India, but not equally. When schools reopen, it is vital to continue to track who goes back to school, and to understand whether there is a learning loss compared to previous years. Children who have fallen behind and who need more help than others should be policy priorities.

*The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com*

### LETTERS

#### SUPPORT FOR TRUMP!

The fight of the century is on display in the American elections. Democratic candidate Joe Biden was back as favourite to win in online betting markets, in a reversal of fortunes for President Donald Trump. The shift came after Mr Biden overtook Mr Trump in the battleground state of Wisconsin. However, it is surprising to count the numbers who voted Trump despite the Black Lives Matter protests and US's pandemic setback. Trump supporters are here to stay and their presence will impact policy.

Krishnan Ramani  
Ghaziabad

#### JUST DESSERTS

ALL THIS WHILE, a certain television anchor posing as a journalist had been crying "off with the heads" of those who had purportedly killed Sushant Singh Rajput who had in fact committed suicide. It is fitting that another suicide, that of interior designer Anvay Naik, has come back to bite him. It is a shame when a journalist is accused of corruption and cheating someone of their hard-earned dues in the way a crony capitalist so often is. What a fall, what a disgrace for Arnab Goswami!

Bidyut Chatterjee  
Faridabad

#### RAP FOR SISTERS

GLAD TO READ that the actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister, Rangoli Chandel, have been summoned by Mumbai police in relation to a case of allegedly promoting enmity between communities through their remarks on social media. This is the second notice issued to the sisters by Bandra police who will have to appear before the cops on November 10 and 11, respectively. The Bandra metropolitan magistrate's court last month ordered the police to investigate a complaint filed by Bollywood casting director and fitness trainer Munawwar Ali Sayyed, referring to tweets and other statements of Ranaut and her sister. Now the sisters will be served a sentence by the fast track court.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

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



# US Prez poll headed into uncertain phase

Projections awaited for key states like Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Georgia, Nevada

Washington, Nov. 4: The closely-fought US presidential election appeared to be headed into an uncertain phase with Republican incumbent Donald Trump and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden fighting it out in the key battleground states. When reports last came in, Biden had earned 220 electoral college votes, with Trump following closely with 213 votes. As per *Fox News*, Biden has 238 of the 538 electoral college seats, while Trump has 213. On the other hand, *CNN* has projected 220 electoral college votes to Biden and 213 to Trump. *The New York Times* reported that Biden has earned 224 electoral college votes and Trump 213. The winner needs at least 270 electoral college votes.

Officials in Pennsylvania, which many say now holds the key to the White House for both the campaigns, announced in the wee hours of Wednesday that their next update would be only after 9 AM (local time), indicating that the suspense over the election results would continue for at least one more day. Pennsylvania has 20 crucial electoral college votes.

Major American media outlets are yet to declare their projections for some other key battleground states like Michigan, Wisconsin, North Carolina, Georgia and Nevada. "Race Tightens Between Trump and Biden, Key States Still Counting," *The Wall Street Journal* reported. "It has become clear that most Americans will go to bed without knowing who won the presidency, as vote counting in crucial states including Pennsylvania and



Ballots are counted at the Los Angeles County Regional Offices in Downey, California.

— AFP

Michigan may take days to complete. The results that are in show a nation still divided," the daily said.

"All eyes on swing states as counting continues in key battlegrounds," *The Washington Post* said. "Election turns into nail-biter that may extend for days," *The NYT* reported.

President Trump held several states he won in 2016 that Biden had hoped to flip, but other battlegrounds

were too close to call. Democrats gained a Senate seat in Colorado but lost one in Alabama, the daily reported.

"In a briefing for donors on Tuesday night, Biden campaign officials acknowledged underperforming among Cuban-Americans in the Miami area, but saw positive signs with their strength in some suburbs in Ohio that they said could be predictive across the Midwest, according to two

people familiar with the matter," the daily reported.

"Campaign officials signaled that Biden's team was preparing to wait for votes to be counted in three Northern battlegrounds that Mr Trump carried in 2016 — Pennsylvania, Michigan and Wisconsin — where it still feels bullish," *The NYT* added. The Biden campaign tried to downplay its electoral performance in Florida, which has 29 electoral

college votes.

"We said Florida was going to be close and... it is! We also said we didn't have to win it, and that remains true," the campaign said in a statement, reiterating that it has multiple paths to victory. Biden won New Jersey and New York in a tight race with President Trump also registering early wins in key states. The former vice president got 2.2 million votes in New York.

— PTI



Donald Trump

## TWITTER HIDES TRUMP'S BIDEN POLL STEAL TWEET

Washington, Nov. 4: Twitter on Wednesday placed a "disputed" label on a tweet from President Donald Trump in which he accused the rival Biden campaign of trying to "steal" the tightly-contested 2020 presidential elections.

In his first reaction to the election results, Trump tweeted, "We are up BIG, but they are trying to STEAL the Election. We will never let them do it. Votes cannot be cast after the Polls are closed!"

The tweet was placed behind a warning on the president's account that the content shared is "disputed and might be misleading about an election or other civic process." Twitter has taken similar action against Trump's account in the past.

Facebook also flagged the post of president Trump. "Final results may be different from initial vote counts, as ballots counting will continue for days and weeks," Facebook said, quoting Bipartisan Policy Center.

The social media giant also flagged the second post by Trump in which he claimed that he is winning big and will soon make a statement. "I will be making a statement tonight. A big WIN!" he said.

Flagging the post, Facebook said, "the winner of the 2000 US Presidential Election has not been projected."

— PTI

## World waits nervously for US vote count

Washington, Nov. 4: From Ford Model T cars that popped off the assembly line in just 90 minutes to 60-second service for burgers, the United States has had a major hand in making the world a frenetic and impatient place, primed and hungry for instant gratification.

So waking up to the news on Wednesday that the winner of the US election might not be known for hours, days or weeks — pundits filled global airwaves with their best guesses — came as a shock to a planet weaned on that most American of exports: Speed. "We have to have a little patience, almost certainly a lot of patience," said the European Union's foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, as the nail-biting contest for the White House increasingly focused on three states — Wisconsin, Michigan and Pen-

nsylvania — that could prove crucial in determining whether President Donald Trump or challenger Joe Biden wins.

"In the American system, the last vote counts, and maybe the last vote changes the result," Borrell told Spanish National Television. But as world leaders generally refrained from commenting on the outcome until it was clear, the particularly fractious and contested nature of the vote was already sparking concerns overseas that the superpower's sharp divisions and internal conflicts exposed by the election might endure long after the winner is declared. "The battle over the legitimacy of the result — whatever it will look like — has now begun," said German defence minister, Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer.

— AP

## Celebrating win without victory

Washington, Nov. 4: It was a victory celebration without a victory.

Empty wine glasses littered a table in the East Room of the White House. Pizza boxes and cans of White Claw hard seltzer abounded elsewhere in the complex. As Election Day came and went without a verdict in the presidential race, President Donald Trump grew agitated. At 2:21 a.m., the president took the stage before a well-lubricated crowd in the East Room and falsely claimed he had won. He vowed to take his case to the Supreme Court.

"We were getting ready for a big celebration," Trump said. "We were winning everything and all of the sudden it was just called off." He added, "We will win this and as far as I'm concerned we

already have won it." That was not true. In fact, 102 million Americans spooked by the coronavirus pandemic had shattered records to vote early, and millions of ballots had yet to be counted in key battleground states. Neither Trump nor Biden had yet reached the 270 Electoral College votes required to win the presidency.

Biden, too, felt the need to respond to the indecision. Just after midnight, the former vice president's motorcade abruptly shuttled him from his house in Wilmington, Delaware, to an outdoor speaking venue nearby, where he cautioned that a result might not come for a few days. "We're going to have to be patient," Biden said around 12:30 a.m., as supporters honked their car horns. — AP

## TRUMP TO FIGHT ELECTION IN US SUPREME COURT

Washington, Nov. 4: In an unprecedented claim in US politics, Donald Trump on Wednesday falsely asserted "fraud" in the counting of votes and said he would approach the Supreme Court to stop it, as the race between incumbent Republican president and his Democratic challenger Joe Biden was poised for a photo-finish. In one of the most divisive and bitter presidential elections in American history saw tight races in many key battleground states with Biden winning 224 electoral college votes and Trump closely behind with 213. The winner of the 2020 presidential election should have at least 270 electoral college votes out of the 538-member electoral college.

*Fox News*, considered to be the favourite news network of the president, gave him only 213 electoral college votes while crediting 238 votes to Biden. It also gave 50 per cent of the popular vote to the Democratic challenger and 48.4 per cent to Trump. Trump called the election "a fraud on the American public" and said, "Frankly, we did win this election." He also said he planned to take the battle to the Supreme Court to stop the counting of votes.

"All of a sudden everything just stopped. This is a fraud on the American public. This is an embarrassment to our country. We were getting ready to win this election. Frankly, we did win this election," Trump said, without citing any evidence of a fraud in the electoral process. "We will win this, and as far as I'm concerned, we already have won it," Trump, 74, said in remarks to supporters in the White House East Room at 2 a.m.

"Our goal now is to ensure integrity, for the good of this nation. This is a very big moment. This is a major fraud on our nation. We want law to be used in a proper manner. So we'll be going to the US Supreme Court. "We want all voting to stop. We don't want them to find any ballots at four o'clock in the morning and add them to the list," Trump said, amidst applause from his supporters.

Biden's campaign manager called Trump's statement as "outrageous, unprecedented, and incorrect." "If the president makes good on his threat to go to court to try to prevent the proper tabulation of votes, we have legal teams standing by ready to deploy to resist that effort.

— PTI

## Torres 1st gay man elected to Congress

Washington, Nov. 4: Democrat Party's Ritchie Torres has made history by becoming the first openly gay POC man elected to the US Congress.

Torres, 32, a New York City Council Member, won the election from New York's 15th Congressional District, defeating Republican Patrick Delices to become the next representa-

tive, *New York Daily News* reported. "Tonight, a new era begins for the South Bronx," Torres said in a statement.

"It is the honour of a lifetime to represent a borough filled with essential workers who have risked their lives so that New York City could live. "The Bronx is essential, and the vibrant, loving and talented people

who live here have shown time and again their power, fortune and perseverance. The Bronx is the heartbeat of New York City," he said.

Torres, who identified himself as an Afro-Latino, has served in the City Council since 2013. He defeated nearly a dozen other Democrats in the June primary after Republican Jose Serrano annou-

nced his retirement earlier this year. Torres is expected to be joined by another POC gay man, Mondaire Jones, in the US House of Representatives as results were pending in the race to replace retiring Republican Nita Lowey from Westchester county. The seat is expected to go to 33-year-old Jones, a Harvard Law School graduate.

— PTI

## VOTERS RECEIVING ROBOCALLS: NY CONDUCTING PROBE

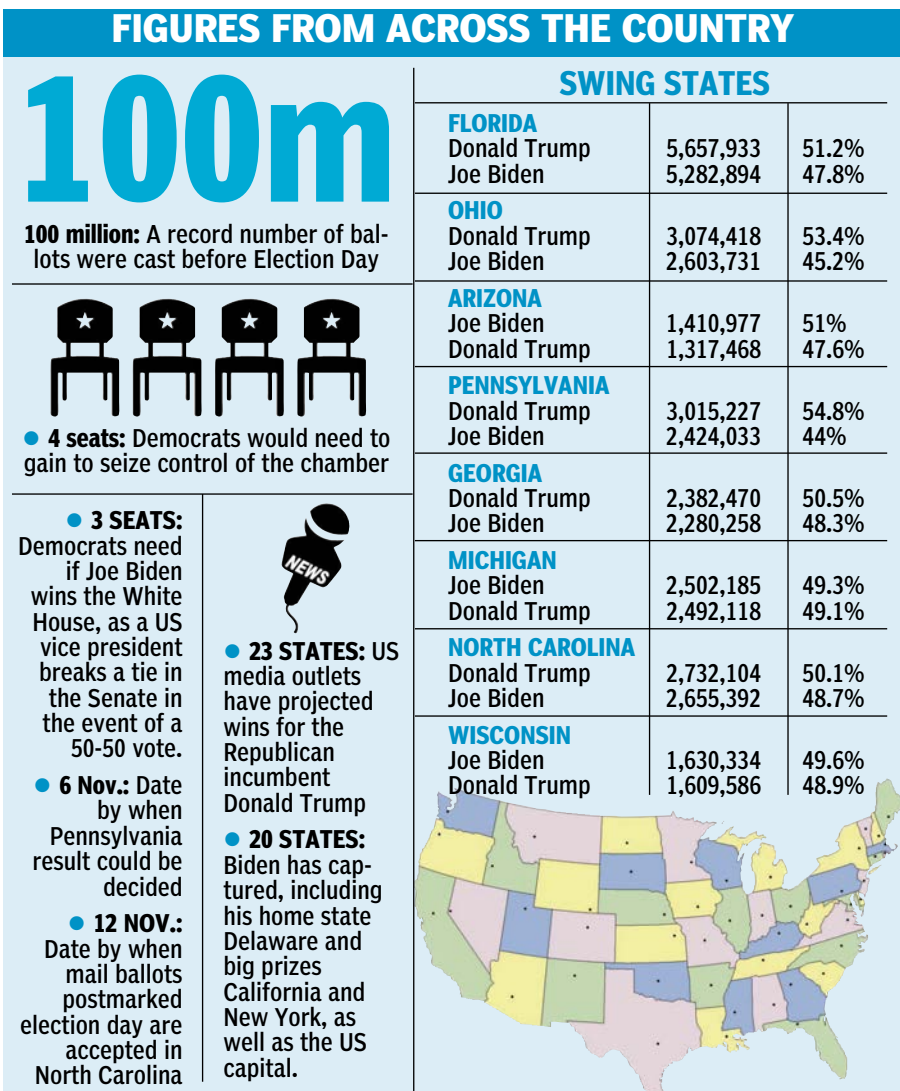
New York, Nov. 4: New York Attorney General Letitia James on Tuesday said her office is actively investigating allegations that voters are receiving robocalls, spreading disinformation and encouraging people to stay home on Election Day.

"Voting is a cornerstone of our democracy," James said. "Attempts to hinder voters from exercising their right to cast their ballots are disheartening, disturbing and wrong. What's more is that it is illegal and will not be tolerated." James said every voter must be able to exercise his fundamental right to vote without being harassed, coerced or intimidated.

"Our nation has a legacy of free and fair elections and this election will be no different. Voters should be rest assured that voting is safe and secure, and they should exercise their fundamental right to vote in confidence," she said.

James added that state leaders across the nation are working hard to protecting "your right to vote and anyone who tries to hinder that right will be held accountable to the fullest extent of the law".

— PTI



POLL | SURVEY In 2016, 13% Muslims had cast ballots for Trump

## 69% Muslims vote for Biden

New York, Nov. 4: Nearly 69 per cent Muslim voters cast their ballot for Democratic Presidential nominee Joe Biden while 17 per cent supported President Donald Trump, according to a survey conducted by Muslim civil liberties and advocacy organisation in the US.

The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR), the nation's largest Muslim civil rights and advocacy organisation, released the results of its 2020 Muslim

Voters Presidential Election Exit Poll on Tuesday. CAIR's poll of 844 registered Muslim voter households found a high Muslim turnout with 84 per cent reporting that they voted in the US election, with 69 per cent voting for Biden and 17 per cent for Trump. CAIR said more than one million American Muslim voters turned out in "record-breaking" numbers this election cycle.

CAIR National Executive Director Nihad Awad said

the "Muslim community's significant ability to impact the results of numerous races across this country, including the presidential election, was recognised nationally." CAIR Director of Government Affairs Robert S. McCaw said there was no denying the role the Muslim community plays in local, state and national politics.

"Now is the time to hold the politicians we elected to office accountable to ensure that the civil and religious

rights of all Americans are being upheld and protected," McCaw said. Compared with the 2016 election, in which then President-elect Donald Trump received a 13 per cent of the Muslim vote, Trump in 2020 received 4 per cent more support.

According to Pew Research Center, there were about 3.45 million Muslims living in the US in 2017, and that Muslims made up about 1.1 per cent of the total American population.

— PTI



Jill Biden waves as her husband Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden speaks during election night at the Chase Center in Wilmington, on Wednesday.

— AFP



## quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	40,616.14	0.88
Nifty 50	11,908.50	0.80
S&P 500*	3,466.26	2.88
Dollar (₹)	74.74	-0.44
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.60	-0.12
Euro (₹)	87.17	-0.25
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,743,111	0.21
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	40.88	1.17
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.886	-0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.770	-0.111

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Fund raising via capital markets dips 31% in Sept.

Companies garnered over Rs 75,000 crore from capital markets in September, a decline of 31 per cent from August, with private placement of debt instruments remaining the most preferred route. By Sebi data, companies raised Rs 75,230 crore in September as compared with Rs 1.1 lakh crore in August by issuing equity and debt securities. Out of this, Rs 64,389 crore was raised by private placement of debt.

## OnePlus unveils largest Experience Store in Hyderabad



Chinese smartphone maker OnePlus unveiled its largest experience store globally in Hyderabad. Spread across 16,000 sq.ft, the experience store "OnePlus Nizam Palace" also includes a large customer service centre with dedicated glass cubicles for customers to meet and consult service executives, thus, ensuring transparency in the service provided, a company release said.

## FlyDubai to start daily flights to Tel Aviv from 26th

FlyDubai will start scheduled flights between Dubai and Tel Aviv on Nov. 26 in line with strengthening ties between the United Arab Emirates and Israel following a diplomatic breakthrough in August. The carrier will operate two trips a day between Dubai International Airport and Tel Aviv Ben Gurion, a statement by the state-owned airline said. The price for a return ticket starts at 1,651 dirhams (₹450).

## Jyothy Labs Q2 profit rises 12% to ₹60 crore

Jyothy Labs reported a 12.2 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 60.13 crore for the September quarter. Its total income stood at Rs 508.51 crore, up 5.86 per cent. M. R. Jyothy, MD, said the company's focus on execution combined with its portfolio comprising daily use 'essential hygiene' has delivered strong sales and profitable growth. There is strong demand acceleration in general trade, the firm said.

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## Index marks first growth since lockdown Services PMI too expands in Oct.

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 4

India's dominant services sector registered growth for the first time since the lockdown began, as relaxation in movement restrictions supported business activity. Services growth, along with factory production, helped IHS Markit's composite Purchasing Managers' Index grow the fastest in nine years.

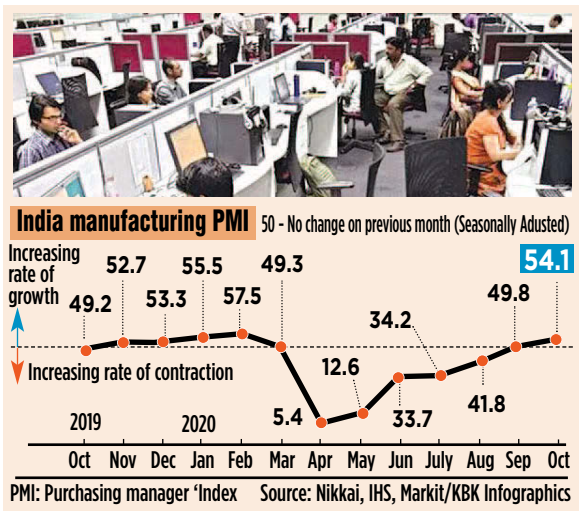
Rising to 54.1 in October, from 49.8 in September, the seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index moved above the 50-mark that separates growth from contraction for the first time since February.

Earlier IHS Markit had released the manufacturing PMI, which recorded the strongest growth in 13 years at 58.9 points.

Services companies reported an increase in new work intakes, which they attributed to successful marketing efforts and strengthening demand. The upturn in bookings ended a seven-month sequence of contraction.

Further, the domestic market was the key source of new business gains, as new orders from abroad declined further. The deterioration in international demand for Indian services in October was the slowest since March, but nevertheless sharper than pre-Covid times.

Amid reports of workers on leave failing to return and difficulties in hiring



staff due to the pandemic, services employment decreased again in October. The pace of job shedding matched the September levels. As a result of falling employment and rising orders, backlogs of work increased.

Services companies continued to report rising expenses at the start of the third quarter of the fiscal, taking the current sequence of cost inflation to four months. The latest increase was the strongest since February. Fuel, maintenance and material prices continued to increase. Some service providers lifted their fees, passing on the rising cost burden to their clients.

"While new business spending showed a reasonably big improvement, it is still not feeding into employment within the

service sector, although backlogs are rising, which may boost employment in coming months. Given that pricing pressures from fuel and material prices remain, there was an increase in the cost burdens and some reports of pass-through beginning to emerge. While output prices remain low, we will monitor this dynamic over the coming months as the economy normalizes," said Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays. The Composite PMI Output Index too rose from 54.6 in September to 58 in October, signalling the strongest increase in private sector output in close to nine years. A sharp rise in factory production accompanied by a return to growth of services activity reflected in the growth of composite index.

## SAUDI ARABIA TO RELAX RULES FOR FOREIGN WORKERS

MARWA RASHAD NOV. 4

Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Wednesday announced new plans to ease foreign workers' contractual restrictions, improving a controversial seven-decade-old sponsorship system known as kafala.

The plans, to take effect in March 2021, aim to make the Saudi labour market more attractive, the deputy minister for human resources said, by granting foreign workers the right to change jobs by transferring their sponsorship from one employer to another, leave and re-enter the country and secure final exit visas without the consent of their employers.

"Through this initiative we aim to build an attractive labour market and improve the working environment through three main services...available to all foreign workers in the private sector," Abdullah bin Nasser Abuthun-ain told reporters.

Saudi Arabia, which chairs the Group of 20 major economies (G20) this year, is seeking to boost its private sector, part of an ambitious plan to diversify its oil-dependent economy.

The currently applicable kafala system generally binds a migrant worker to one employer. Rights groups have been calling on Saudi authorities to end that system.

—Reuters

## Gland Pharma mega IPO priced at ₹1,490-1,500 per ₹1 share

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 4

Hyderabad-based Gland Pharma's mega initial public offering (IPO) that aims to raise nearly Rs 6,500 crore opens on November 9. The price band for the public offer has been fixed at Rs 1,490 to Rs 1,500 per equity share of Re 1 face value.

Gland Pharma's Rs 6,479.55 crore public offer is the largest pharma sector IPO in recent times, far bigger than Alkem Laboratories (Rs 1,349 crore in 2015) and Eris Lifesciences (Rs 1,741 crore in 2017).

The public offer that opens next Monday closes on Wednesday, November 11, the company said at a virtual media meet.

Gland Pharma is a generic injectables-focused company that sells its products primarily under a business to business model in over 60 countries, including the United States, European countries, Canada and Australia.

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of shares aggregating up to Rs 1,250 crore and an offer for sale of over 3.48 crore equity shares worth Rs 5,229.54 crore at the upper price band by the promoter selling shareholders.

Gland Pharma's foreign promoter China-based Fosun Pharma Industrial PTE will be selling over 1.93 crore shares. Gland Celsus Bio Chemicals, Empower Discretionary Trust, Nilay Discretionary Trust are the other selling promoter shareholders.



## FIRM ASKED TO TRANSFER RAMALINGA RAJU FAMILY'S SHARES TO ESCROW A/C

Hyderabad, Nov. 4: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has instructed Gland Pharma to transfer its six million shares owned by companies promoted by Satyam Computers' B. Ramalinga Raju and his kin to an escrow account following the city-based drug company announcing its initial public offering (IPO), a senior executive of the Gland Pharma said on Wednesday.

Ten firms owned by Raju and his family members held six lakh shares with Rs 10 face value each, which later became six million at face value of Re 1.

After the Satyam multi-crore scandal broke out in 2009 and the subsequent developments, the ED, which filed cases against Raju and others, had attached the shares and directed Gland Pharma not to transfer, dispose, remove, part with or otherwise deal

with them in any manner until further instruction from it.

"There is no risk in terms of Ramalinga Raju's shares, because they invested in the company (Gland Pharma) in the late 90s. And then they offloaded a few of the shares. And these are the leftover shares when the issue happened and they were attached by the Enforcement Directorate" Srinivas Sadhu, MD and CEO of Gland Pharma said in a virtual press conference.

He was responding to a query about the risk factors of the shares being held by Raju's firms.

The attached shares represent 3.87 per cent of the pre-offer paid-up equity share capital of the company.

Gland Pharma was founded by P. V. N. Raju in 1978 and Chinese Fosun Pharma acquired 74 per cent stake in the company in 2017. —PTI

## SBI net jumps 52% on lower provisions

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 4

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), on Wednesday reported a 52 per cent rise in net profit at Rs 4,574 crore for the September 2020 quarter compared to the year-ago period on account of lower provisioning and higher core income.

The bank had clocked a net profit of Rs 3,012 crore during July-September last year.

The bank's operating profit, excluding exceptional items, increased to Rs 16,460 crore in Q2FY21 from Rs 14,714 crore in Q2FY20, a rise of 11.86 per cent year-on-year.

The net interest income or the difference between interest earned and expended grew 14.56 per cent YoY. The domestic net interest margin improved to 3.34 per cent, registering an increase of 12 basis points YoY.

SBI's provisions fell 49 per cent year-on-year to Rs 5,619 crore in July-September. During the



Dinesh Khara

quarter, the bank made additional provisions worth Rs 239 crore against accounts that may be impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Slippages declined to Rs 2,756 crore compared with Rs 8,805 crore a year ago. But the bank said that loans worth Rs 14,388 crore would have slipped to NPA, if the Supreme Court instructions were not in place. Of the accounts that have received classification benefit from Supreme Court's instructions, Rs 5,965 crore worth of loans were upgraded in October itself. The bank holds pro-

visions worth Rs 3,194 crore against the pro forma accounts.

The lender said its gross non-performing asset (GNPA) would have been at 5.88 per cent and net NPA at 2.08 per cent if the bank had classified the loan accounts as NPA after August 31, in accordance with RBI's norms. It should be noted that the Supreme Court in an interim order on Sept. 3, had directed that the accounts which were not declared NPA till August 31, shall not be declared NPA till further orders.

"We are expecting further Rs 20,000 crore worth of slippages in the second half of this financial year. This has been calculated keeping in mind our usual run rate of Rs 10,000 crore worth of slippages every quarter. We do not think we will deviate from this," Dinesh Khara, SBI's new chairman told reporters.

The bank has received restructuring requests worth Rs 6,495 crore in Q2 under the one-time restructuring scheme.

## Expect 7.3% pay hike next year

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 4

After all the reports of job losses and salary cuts, there is something employees of India Inc can look forward to. Global professional services firm Aon's salary trend survey has found that 87 per cent of surveyed companies plan to give salary hikes to their employees next year compared to 71 per cent this year.

Companies intend to increase compensation by an average 7.3 per cent in 2021 compared to 6.1 per cent this year-- the lowest in the history of the survey, even lower than 6.3 per cent recorded in the aftermath of the global financial crisis in 2008.

In 2021, roughly 61 per cent of the companies are planning increments of 5-10 per cent compared to 4.5 per cent in 2020. Around 26.7 per cent companies may offer higher salary increases over last year, another 39.8 per cent plan to offer the same hike and 33.5 per cent companies intend to offer lower salary hike in 2021 over 2020, said Navneet Rattan, director, performance and rewards solutions practice, India. The

Aon Salary Trends Survey analysed data across 1,050 companies from more than 20 industries.

Commenting on the survey, Aditya Narayan Misra, director and CEO of CIEL HR Services, said during the festive season several companies have started restoring the salary cut implemented earlier. "Many of the organisations had laid off employees and effected salary cuts. Of this, around two-third are in the process of restoring salaries. As the business outlook is better now, it is likely that companies might provide at least single digit increments in 2021," he said.

## HIRING FOR FRESHERS IMPROVING

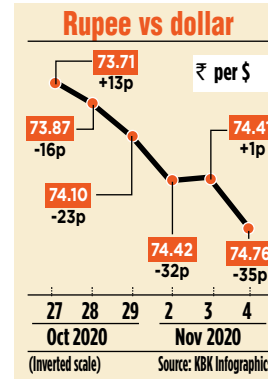
Mumbai, Nov. 4: Demand for freshers has seen an uptick since June and this trend is likely to continue till the end of this financial year, say experts.

The sectors that are seeing significant uptrend include EdTech and e-Learning followed by healthcare, HR Tech and FinTech. "Freshers hiring had dropped down to mere 1.5 lakh during March 25-April 30, from the average 5 lakh per month. How-ever, the scenario is improving and currently there are around 3.5 lakh fresher job openings listed on the portal, Team-lease.com and Freshers-world.com VP and business head Kaushik Banerjee said.

Hiring began to look up for freshers in late June and is likely to gather strength in September-November, he noted.

The other sectors where freshers are being hired include FMCG, IT and ITES, manufacturing, BFSI, telecom, and semi-conductor, he added.

CIEL HR Services director and CEO Aditya Mishra says most companies are betting on recovery and are hoping to witness pre-Covid levels of demand in January-March 2021. "About 65 per cent of the freshers who were holding offers slated to join in May-September have found placements. However, the remaining ones are struggling to find work," he said. —PTI



## Adani to acquire 3 city gas licences from defaulter

New Delhi, Nov. 4: Adani Gas Ltd on Wednesday announced the acquisition of city gas licences for Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Kutch (East) from Jay Madhok Energy for an undisclosed sum of money.

Jay Madhok Energy Pvt Ltd has been issued show cause by the oil regulator Petroleum and Natural Gas Regulatory Board (PNGRB) over defaulting on timelines and alleged irregularities in the acquisition of the city gas licence.

"Adani Gas Ltd has signed a definitive agreement for acquisition of three Geographical Areas, namely Ludhiana, Jalandhar and Kutch (East)," the firm said in a statement.

It, however, neither disclosed the name of the city gas licence holder for the three cities nor the acquisition price.

"All 3 GAs have high volumes potential in terms of demand of over 6.5 million standard cubic metres per day over a period of 10 years. These geographical areas (GA's) are under Phase 1 of Bharat Mala Pariyojana by NHAI which will further boost the development and volume growth," it said.

Jay Madhok had in 2013 won the licence to retail CNG to automobiles and piped natural gas in Jalandhar in Punjab and two years later it got a licence for Ludhiana and Kutch (East) in Gujarat.

—PTI

## WEALTH MANAGEMENT Unhappy with bank returns, billionaire takes things into his own hands

## He has no regrets about pulling money out of banks

BEN STUPPLES NOV. 4

Mohamed Mansour enjoys the challenge of managing his own fortune.

The 72-year-old billionaire set up an investment firm a decade ago to oversee his family's wealth the same way he and his brothers built their closely held business into a global firm with operations, including McDonald's Corp restaurants and a General Motors Co dealership.

Mansour Group's proceeds have allowed the Egyptian dynasty behind it to invest through their family office in firms such as Airbnb Inc, Twitter Inc and Snowflake Inc, the maker of cloud-data soft-

ware that popped 104 per cent on its first day of trading this year. With those sort of results, Mansour isn't missing someone else managing his money.

"I used to leave my money with the banks, but I wasn't pleased with the returns I was getting," he said in a recent interview. "They always have an A-team that meets you at first, and you think, 'Wow! But you don't really know who manages your money, and then you get a 2 per cent one year."

"Now I can say, 'It's my money and I'm going to invest it.' And if I lose, I lose," he added.

Mansour helped lead his family's conglomerate—founded as a cotton exporter in 1952—follow-



Mohamed Mansour

ing his father's death in 1976. It's now worth about \$7 billion, according to Bloomberg calculations. His son Loufty is chief executive officer of their London-based family office, Man Capital, which also has a venture capital business in San Francisco. Bloomberg spoke with Mansour about how he

became an early Facebook Inc. investor, his exercise regime and why he's waiting for the outcome of the US election.

Did the pandemic hit your wealth?

I reduced my exposure maybe 75 per cent at the end of February. I saw Covid was in China. When it started hitting Europe and the numbers started doubling every five or seven days, I went to my office and told my team we needed to exit any stocks not in the technology sector. We've gone into the market a bit since then, mostly in tech, but we have quite a bit of cash as we're waiting to see what happens. It'll be interesting to see how the US election

affects the markets.

Why did you set up a family office?

After serving in government from 2005 to 2009, I was starting a new career. The companies in Mansour Group were solid, and we had liquidity. When you run a business, you really don't pay attention to your wealth, and I wanted to be able to manage my own money. We used to give it to X or Y bank, but I said, "This doesn't take rocket science. We could hire bright young men and women that can manage our money. If the bank can do it, why can't we do it ourselves?"

We now have a team of 14 people, including my son, and we've established a

reputation. The deal flow comes to us, and we do one or two deals a year. It was definitely the right decision, and family offices are the future.

Why so much focus on technology?

I was at a conference about 15 years ago, when I heard a guy say the world will change: one day, you won't need to go and see a doctor in person. Instead, you'll just need a screen and the doctor will look and just give you a prescription. After hearing that, I said technology is where the future is, and we invested early in Facebook, Twitter, Uber, Spotify and more recently in Snowflake and Adyen.

—Bloomberg



SHORT TAKES

VK, Rohit dominate ICC ODI rankings

**Dubai:** India skipper Virat Kohli and his deputy Rohit Sharma continued to dominate the ICC ODI rankings for batsmen by occupying the top two positions, while pacer Jasprit Bumrah remained static at the second spot in the bowler's list. Kohli (871) and Rohit (855), who have not featured in any one-day game since the Covid-19 pandemic suspended all cricket activities across the globe, are ranked one and two respectively in the batting chart. Pakistan captain Babar Azam, however, has bridged the gap with the Indian pair after amassing 221 runs, which included a knock of 125 in the third match against Zimbabwe recently. In the bowling chart, New Zealand pacer Trent Boult (722) held on to his top spot, followed by Bumrah (719). — PTI

Samuels bids adieu to cricket

**Kingston:** West Indian batsman Marlon Samuels, who top-scored in both of the team's T20 World Cup final wins during a career that also had its share of controversies including a two-year ban for corruption, has retired from all forms of cricket. ESPNcricinfo reported that Cricket West Indies chief executive Johnny Grave confirmed to it that Samuels had told CWI of his retirement in June, having last played in December 2018. The 39-year-old played 71 Tests, 207 ODIs and 67 T20Is for the West Indies. He scored over 11,000 international runs and also picked more than 150 wickets. Samuels was known as the man for big occasions, evidences of which were his exploits in the team's T20 World Cup title triumphs in 2012 and 2016. — PTI

Doubts brew over Asian League

**Seoul:** There are growing concerns as to whether the eastern zone of the AFC Champions League can be completed in the face of travel restrictions in the region. Sixteen teams from Japan, South Korea, China, Malaysia, Thailand and Australia are scheduled to resume their campaigns in the continent's flagship club tournament in a bio-secure hub in Qatar on November 15. The eastern zone winner is then scheduled to take on western conference champion Persepolis of Iran in the final in Doha on December 18. The tournament was split in half because of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the western zone competition was completed in the same Qatar hub last month. Australian clubs especially have an issue with the revised timing of the continental competition. — AP

Oz swim coach Don dies aged 87

**Sydney:** Long-time former Australia coach Don Talbot has died aged 87, with the swimming world on Wednesday remembering him as a legend of the sport who oversaw his country's golden era in the pool. Talbot passed away peacefully on November 3, Sport Australia Hall of Fame said in a tribute. He began his coaching career in the 1950s and was Australia's head swimming coach during its peak in the 1990s and 2000s — including at the 2000 Sydney Olympics when Australia produced their best result in almost 30 years by winning 18 medals. Talbot guided the 4x100m relay team of Michael Klim, Chris Fydler, Ashley Callus and Ian Thorpe to break the world record and stun the US team who had never been beaten in the event since its Olympic introduction in 1964. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

IPL: Qualifier 1 — Mumbai Indians vs Delhi Capitals from 7.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

IPL Women's T20 Challenge: Velocity vs Trailblazers from 3.20 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

TENNIS

ATP Paris Masters: Day 4 action from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

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Heavyweights clash

Ambitious Delhi Capitals face mighty Mumbai Indians

**Dubai, Nov. 4:** They stand on the opposite ends of IPL's success spectrum but there is little to separate between Mumbai Indians and Delhi Capitals in the tournament's 13th edition as they head into a blockbuster first qualifier here on Thursday. The team to beat in the league stage, four-time winners Mumbai lost a bit of their momentum after a 10-wicket defeat to SRH on Tuesday. Chasing their maiden title, DCroared back to form by thrashing Royal Challengers Bangalore by six wickets to grab the second spot, after four successive losses. The biggest positive for Mumbai has been the return of skipper Rohit Sharma, who had missed four games to recover from a hamstring injury. The star opener, though, perished cheaply against SRH and needs to come good on the big day. The defending champions boast an explosive batting line-up coupled with an equally lethal bowling attack, but the batters had an off day against SRH. Their bowlers too were taken to the task — a wake-up call before the crucial game. Delhi's middle-order has been sluggish and heavily dependent on one or two batters. Mumbai top-order has been firing on all-cylinders and young Ishan Kishan (428 runs) has been a revelation. Quinton De Kock (443) would be keen to continue his sublime form while opening with Rohit. And so would Suryakumar Yadav (410), who has played some scintillating knocks. Known for their six-hitting prowess, Hardik Pandya (241), Kieron Pollard (259) and Krunal Pandya (95) have pummelled bowling attacks to submission. Pollard's six-hitting ability was on display again



Rohit Sharma (right) of Mumbai Indians and Shreyas Iyer of Delhi Capitals in this photo.

when he plundered four maximums against SRH. The three could prove to be the difference. Mumbai rested key bowlers — Jasprit Bumrah (23 wickets) and Trent Boult (20 wickets) — against SRH. Both have been lethal at front and at the death. Spinners Rahul Chahar (15 wickets) and Krunal (5 wickets) will need to forget the hammering they received from David Warner and Wriddhiman Saha before taking on the Capitals. On the other hand, Ajinkya Rahane (111 runs) is back among runs after scoring a match-winning 60 against RCB. Shikhar Dhawan (525) has been in blazing form,

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL: Matches: 26 ● Mumbai: 14 ● Delhi: 12

MEETING IN 2020

Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals by 5 wickets at Abu Dhabi

Mumbai Indians beat Delhi Capitals by 9 wickets at Dubai

FOR THE RECORD

Rohit Sharma who scored 3992 runs at an average of 31.43 in 149 innings of 153 matches, needs just eight runs to become first batsman to score 4000 runs for Mmbal Indians in IPL.

Kagiso Rabada with 25 wickets at an average of 17.80 in 14 innings of as many matches, is the highest wicket-taker in this Indian Premier League.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

with two hundreds and three fifties, but will need support from others in a big game. A major cause of concern is the form of two youngsters — opener

Prithvi Shaw (228) and Rishabh Pant (282) — who haven't lived up to their true potential. So has been the case of their key overseas players — West Indian Shimron Hetmyer

(138 runs) and Marcus Stoinis (249 runs). Skipper Shreyas Iyer (421) will have to play the anchor's role. On the bowling front, the South African pace duo of Kagiso Rabada (25 wickets) and Anrich Nortje (19) have been exceptional. Ravichandran Ashwin and Axar Patel have done well to suffocate the opposition teams. Earlier in the league stage, Mumbai got the better of Delhi twice but Rohit conceded that it is history. "You keep doing well, I know you want to remember those performances, but it is always nice to forget what has happened and focus on the present," Rohit said. — PTI

NEVER-SAY-DIE ATTITUDE IS KEY TO SRH SUCCESS

**Sharjah, Nov. 4:** Sunrisers Hyderabad's "never-say-die" attitude helped the team stage an incredible turnaround and secure a spot in the IPL play-offs, skipper David Warner stated. Sunrisers Hyderabad delivered under pressure in a must-win game to crush table toppers Mumbai Indians by 10 wickets and qualify for the play-offs. "It feels good now after that dreadful loss against KXIP. They (MI) rested a few players but to hold them to 150 on this ground was great. A lot of credit goes to the bowlers, (Shahbaz) Nadeem was superb. "We were trying to be as clinical with the bat then, and it feels good. "We have a never say die attitude and that is how we approach each game," the Sunrisers Hyderabad's captain added. — PTI



Sushma Verma of Velocity plays a shot against Supernovas during their Women's T20 Challenge match at Sharjah Cricket Stadium in the United Arab Emirates on Wednesday. — BCCI

Sushma shines in Velocity win

**Sharjah, Nov. 4:** Velocity toppled defending champions Supernovas by five wickets in the opening match of the Women's T20 Challenge here on Wednesday. Sushma Verma (34) and Sune Luus (37 not out) were main contributors in Velocity's successful chase. Ekta Bisht (3/22) scalped three batswomen, while Leigh Kasperrek (2/23) and Jahanara Alam (2/27) took two wickets apiece for Velocity. For Supernovas, opener Chamari Atapattu top-scored for Supernovas with a 44-run knock. Left-arm spinner Ekta Bisht scalped three batters as Velocity put up a disciplined bowling effort to restrict defending champions Supernova to a modest 126 for eight in the opening match of Women's T20 Challenge, here on Wednesday.

Apart from Bisht, New Zealand off-spinner Leigh Kasperrek (2/23) and medium pacer Jahanara Alam (2/27) also contributed in stifling the holders. Jahanara dismissed key batters — Harmanpreet Kaur (31) and Chamara Atapattu (44) — to derail Supernova. Atapattu and her Indian counterpart Harmanpreet had seized control in the back end but their 47-run partnership was broken by Jahanara with Veda Krishnamurthy taking calm-headed skier in the long on. — PTI

BRIEF SCORES

■ Supernovas 126/8 in 20 overs (Chamari Athapathu 44, Harmanpreet Kaur 31; Ekta Bisht 3-22, Leigh Kasperrek 2-23, Jahanara 2-27) lost to Velocity 129/5 in 19.5 overs (Sune Luus 37, Sushma Verma 34, V. Veda Krishnamurthy 29; A. Khaka 2-27; A. Khaka 2-27)

Liverpool run riot; Bayern, City excel

**Paris, Nov. 4:** Diogo Jota scored a stunning hat-trick in Liverpool's 5-0 demolition of Atalanta in the Champions League on Tuesday, as holders Bayern Munich scored six and Real Madrid struck late to beat Inter Milan in a thriller. In Bergamo, against an Atalanta side who reached the quarterfinals last season, Jota was brought into the starting line-up in place of Roberto Firmino and required just 16 minutes to open the scoring. Another emphatic finish allowed the 2019 Champions League winners to double their lead before the break, and Mohamed Salah then broke away to get the third just after the restart. Salah set up Sadio Mane

THE RESULTS			
Liverpool (Jota 16, 33, 54, Salah 47, Mane 49)	5	Manchester City (Ferran Torres 12, Gabriel Jesus 81, Joao Cancelo 90)	3
Atalanta	0	Olympiacos	0
Bayern Munich (Lewandowski 21-pen, 88, Kristensen-OG, Jerome Boateng 79, Leroy Sane 83, Hernandez 90+2)	6	Real Madrid (Karim Benzema 25, Sergio Ramos 33, Rodrygo 80)	3
RB Salzburg (Berisha 4, Okugawa 66)	2	Inter Milan (Martinez 35, Ivan Perisic 68)	2

for Liverpool's fourth before Jota got his hat-trick goal as the Premier League champions recorded their biggest win in Europe since beating Porto 5-0 away in February 2018. With three wins from three, Liverpool are well on course to top Group D, with Ajax and Atalanta both five points back.

Ajax won 2-1 away to Midtjylland in Denmark, as Brazilian youngster Antony opened the scoring in the first minute and Dusan Tadic netted from an indirect free-kick inside the box soon after. Anders Dreyer got one back for the hosts, who remain pointless. Meanwhile, Real Madrid ran out 3-2 winners in a

dramatic encounter with Inter behind closed doors at the Alfredo di Stefano Stadium, as Vinicius Junior set up his fellow Brazilian substitute Rodrygo to lash in the decisive goal 10 minutes from time. Karim Benzema had put the hosts ahead and Sergio Ramos headed in his 100th Madrid goal in

the 33rd minute, but Lautaro Martinez pulled one back shortly after. In another match, reigning champions Bayern have now won a record-extending 14 consecutive Champions League games after a 6-2 victory against Salzburg in Austria. German forward Mergim Berisha gave Salzburg an early lead only for Robert Lewandowski to level from the penalty spot, and a Rasmus Kristensen own goal put Bayern ahead before the break. Jerome Boateng headed them back in front, Leroy Sane got their fourth and Lewandowski strained to head in his 12th of the season, before Lucas Hernandez wrapped up their win. — AFP

Maradona's brain surgery goes well

**Buenos Aires, Nov. 4:** Diego Maradona has had successful surgery for possible bleeding on his brain less than a week after his 60th birthday. It was all successful and it happened as expected, Maradona's public relations team said in a statement Tuesday night. Maradona had a subdural hematoma, which is an accumulation of blood between a membrane and his brain, his personal doctor, Leopoldo Luque, said. Luque, a neurologist, said the problem likely was caused by an accident, but Maradona said he doesn't remember the event. The Argentine soccer great will rest in his room in a private clinic outside Buenos Aires for at least 48 hours. Maradona was accompanied to the clinic by his daughters Dalma, Giannina and Jana and other relatives, according to local media. The surgery closed a journey that the 1986 World Cup champion started in another clinic in the city of La Plata, where he was admitted with anemia and dehydration. Donato Villani, the head of the Argentine national team's medical staff, told television channel TyC Sports that such a surgery normally goes well, "but it is different with Diego," citing Maradona's past treatment for cardiac problems and his use of drugs and alcohol.



Diego Maradona

Maradona was admitted to the Ipenza Clinic with signs of depression on Monday. Luque said Maradona had felt sad for about a week and refused to eat before arriving at the clinic. Maradona has lived in La Plata since the end of 2019, when he became coach of Gimnasia y Esgrima. Maradona turned 60 last Friday and showed up that night for Gimnasia's national championship match against Patronato, which his team won 3-0. He left before the end of the first half, which raised questions about his health. Before undergoing surgery on Tuesday, the former star for Barcelona, Napoli and Boca Juniors reported feeling better. "Diego feels much better than yesterday and feels like leaving. He spent the night well and we have been joking," Luque said Tuesday morning. — AP

ENGLISH FOOTBALLER RYAN RACIALLY ABUSED

**Sinsheim (Germany), Nov. 4:** Ryan Sessegnon, on loan at German club Hoffenheim from Tottenham, has revealed that he's been subjected to online racial abuse. The 20-year-old left-back published a screenshot of the abuse late Monday showing a series of messages sent on Instagram including racist insults. "The craziest thing is I'm not even surprised anymore," wrote Sessegnon. The account shown as having sent the messages is no longer active on Instagram. Tottenham and Hoffenheim both issued messages of support for Sessegnon, who has played for England's under-21 team. Everyone at the club is with you. We are proud of the rich ethnic diversity that exists across our communities, fans, staff and players. We are driven by inclusion and equality for all and nobody should have to endure such repulsive abuse, Tottenham wrote on Twitter. Sessegnon joined Hoffenheim this month on a season-long loan. Crystal Palace player Wilfried Zaha has said that Black athletes are regularly subjected to online racial abuse. — AP



Ugo Humbert celebrates after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas in their men's singles tennis match of the Paris Masters in Paris on Tuesday. — AFP

Ugo sends Tsitsipas packing from Paris

**Paris, Nov. 4:** Second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was dumped out of the Paris Masters on Tuesday after losing to in-form Frenchman Ugo Humbert in a marathon second-round tie. Humbert, who is on a seven-match winning streak after winning the Antwerp title last month, missed four match points but battled to a 7-6 (7/4), 6-7 (6/8), 7-6 (7/3) victory. He was visibly struggling in the final-set tie-break after over three hours on court, but Tsitsipas said he was also not at full fitness. "I'm just disappointed with the way I played," Tsitsipas said. "During the second set my Roland Garros injury came back, and it wasn't as bad as at the French Open, but it kind of had me on the edge of things, and I wasn't sure if that's good for me to be out there."

**I'm just disappointed with the way I played. During the second set my Roland Garros injury came back and it kind of had me on the edge of things, and I wasn't sure if that's good for me to be out there.** — STEFANOS TSITSIPAS after going down to Ugo Humbert in Paris Masters

place in the quarter-finals. Tsitsipas will next defend his ATP Tour Finals title in London at the season-ending tournament which gets underway on November 15. Humbert appeared poised to secure the win in the second-set breaker, but saw three match points come and go before Stefanos Tsitsipas forced a decider. It was a second straight narrow defeat for Stefanos Tsitsipas after his loss to Grigor Dimitrov in Vienna last week. — AFP