

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

KARIMNAGAR | SATURDAY | 21 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 32.2°C
Min: 19.4°C
RH: 36%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Haze, mist likely.
Max/Min temp. 31/18 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+45,564)	(+549)
90,49,609	1,32,750
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+894)	(+4)
TS: 2,61,728	1,423
(+1,221)	(+10)
AP: 8,59,932	6,920

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,76,27,674
DEATHS
13,72,099
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES
217
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Titthi: Kartika Suddha Saptami till 9.52 pm
Star: Shravanam till 9.55 am
Variyam: 2.08 pm to 3.49 pm
Durmuhurtam: 6.28 am to 7.57 am
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am
HJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Akhir 5, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.21 am
Zohar: 12.12 pm
Asar: 4.04 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.56 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.24 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.39 PM
MOONSET TODAY 11.42 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 12.09 PM

COUNTER POINT



How can you recover the money you spent on ticket, votes, campaign...?

SHORT TAKE

India's tax loss is ₹75,000 cr

New Delhi: India is losing over \$10.3 billion (about ₹75,000 crore) in taxes every year owing to global tax abuse by MNCs and evasion by private individuals, a report said on Friday. Of this, the State of Tax Justice report said over \$10 billion is lost to tax abuse by multinational corporations (MNCs) and \$200 million to tax evasion committed by private individuals. The social impact of the lost tax is equivalent to 44.70 per cent of the health budget and 10.68 per cent of education spending. It also equals paying yearly salaries of over 42.30 lakh nurses. — PTI

RIL-Future deal gets CCI nod

New Delhi: The Competition Commission of India (CCI) has approved Reliance's proposed acquisition of retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing businesses of Future Group. The ₹24,713 crore deal that would boost Reliance Industries' fast growing retail business was announced in August. Deals beyond a certain threshold require approval of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), which keeps a tab on unfair business practices across sectors. Etail major Amazon has opposed the deal between Future Group and Reliance Industries.

WORLD | 5

Trump, allies try to bypass poll mandate



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BUSINESS | 7

RBI lets bizmen own more stake in banks

SPORTS | 8

Nadal, Djoker fight back to make ATP semis



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Modi reviews security after intel warns of terror attack

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

A day after security personnel killed four Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists and seized huge quantities of arms in Jammu and Kashmir, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday asserted the security forces have thwarted their efforts to wreak "major havoc and destruction" in the country.

The Prime Minister had chaired a review meeting on Friday with top security officials as well as home minister Amit Shah and national security adviser Ajit Doval in the wake of the killing of Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists in

Neutralising of four terrorists belonging to Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed and the presence of a large cache of weapons and explosives with them indicate that their efforts to wreak major havoc and destruction have once again been thwarted.

— NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

Jammu and Kashmir's Nagrota. Specific intelligence inputs had revealed some Pakistani terrorists had infiltrated into the country with the specific purpose of carrying out a major terror attack just

before the District Development Council local elections to be held in eight phases between November 28 and December 19 in the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

Government sources said the terrorists were planning "something big" on the 12th anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack next week.

After the meeting, Mr Modi said in a tweet: "Our security forces have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism. Thanks to their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in J&K."

In another tweet, he added: "Neutralising of

four terrorists belonging to Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed and the presence of a large cache of weapons and explosives with them indicate that their efforts to wreak major havoc and destruction have once again been thwarted."

The four suspected Jaish terrorists, who were hiding in a truck, were killed after a four-hour-long encounter early Thursday with the security forces on the Jammu-Srinagar National Highway near Nagrota. In the gunfight, two J&K police officials were also injured, while the driver and cleaner of the truck managed to escape.

Sun festival



A woman, standing in the waters of the Hussainsagar, prays to the sun during Chhath Puja in Hyderabad on Friday. People from Bihar, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh and parts of Nepal who live in the city celebrated the festival amid Covid precautions. ■ Report on Page 2

— R. PAVAN

AUTOS, CABS, TRUCKS TO JOIN NOV. 26 BANDH

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

Auto rickshaws, cabs, trucks and lorries, and other private transportations in Telangana will join to support the nation-wide bandh against the BJP government at the Centre. The bandh call poster was released on Friday by members of the joint action committee, comprising several trade unions including AITUC, CITU, ITU, INTUC, TRSKV and TNTUC for a strike on November 26.

A. Satish Reddy, general secretary, Telangana Auto Union Samaikya, said they have come up with nine demands, including the abolition of the Motor Vehicle Act, 2019, formation of a transportation workers' board, waiving off of transportation tax for the lockdown and Covid period starting March till December 31.

Other demands include stopping "extortion of usurious interests" by private financiers for the duration of the Corona-virus impact and lockdown, besides a payment of ₹10,000 per month to auto and cab drivers for the same period when they had no work, besides exemption from paying EMIs till March 31, 2021. He also demanded that the TRS government provide all cab drivers with 2BHK flats.

TS offices to junk branded water for Bhagiratha units

DURGAM SRINIVAS | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

The Telangana state government has decided to replace Bisleri water with water from Mission Bhagiratha in government offices. After studying the per capita consumption of bottled water in various government offices, the Telangana Rural Water Supply and Sanitation (RWSS) department has taken a decision to supply Bhagiratha water to all government offices.

RWSS department engineer-in-chief Krupakar Reddy said that the gov-

ernment has taken up Mission Bhagiratha with an aim to supply safe drinking water to people.

He said, "Thousands of households are receiving safe drinking water under the project. Now, we have decided that the same water would be used by government officials and stop spending public money on purchase of bottled waters like Bisleri and Kinley."

He further said, "we have noticed that government offices are purchasing 200 to 250 bottles of 250 ML each day, at a cost of ₹6 apiece. We have decided to start supplying

Bhagiratha water in bottles as a pilot project from our office. We can later extend it to other wings of government."

He explained that initially the department will set up small bottling units, which would cost around ₹2 lakh, for bottling water into 250 ML bottles. The pilot project will begin in next two months.

Explaining the future plans, the engineer-in-chief said that the pilot bottling unit would be set up at Singur reservoir. He said RWSS has a plan to sell water bottles in commercial market.

WEDDING | WAR

Rajasthan CM sees ploy to create environment for adults to be at mercy of state

‘Love jihad’ BJP term to create panic: Gehlot

Jaipur, Nov. 20: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday said "love jihad" is a term "manufactured" by the BJP to disturb communal harmony, provoking a sharp reaction from Union minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat.

In a tweet, Gehlot said marriage is a matter of personal liberty and bringing a law to curb it is unconstitutional. Hitting back, Shekhawat asked if marriage is a matter of personal liberty "why are the women not free to use their

maiden name or religion". BJP leaders use the term "love jihad" while alleging that Hindu women face harassment and forced conversion in the name of love and marriage. BJP governments in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh have said they are considering enactment of laws to curb such marriages.

Gehlot, however, said such a law will not stand scrutiny in any court.

"Love jihad is a word manufactured by the BJP to divide the nation and

Jihad has no place in love... Marriage is a personal decision and they are putting curbs on it, which is like snatching away personal liberty

— ASHOK GEHLOT, Chief Minister, Rajasthan

If it is a matter of personal liberty, then why are the women not free to keep their maiden name or religion? Isn't religion a matter of personal liberty?

— GAJENDRA SINGH SHEKHAWAT, Union Jal Shakti Minister

mercy of state power. Marriage is a personal decision and they are putting curbs on it, which is like snatching away personal liberty," said the Rajasthan Chief Minister.

"It seems a ploy to disrupt communal harmony, fuel social conflict and disregard constitutional provisions like the state not discriminating against citizens on any ground," he added.

Union Jal Shakti minister and prominent BJP leader from Rajasthan Gajendra Singh Shekhawat reacted strongly. "Dear Ashok ji, Love Jihad is a trap that has thousands of young women believing marriage is a personal affair, where later it turns out it isn't. Also, if

it is a matter of personal liberty, then why are the women not free to keep their maiden name or religion?" he asked.

"Why are families of girls too forced to accept the other religion? Isn't religion a matter of personal liberty?" he tweeted.

Shekhawat asked if supporting this in the guise of personal freedom was the "new communal agenda" of the Congress.

He charged that "manufacturing terms, riots and hatred is a Congress prerogative". — PTI

IN BRIEF

BJP FINAL LIST HAS 52 CANDIDATES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

The BJP on Friday released its final list for the GHMC polls with 52 names.

- Kapra:** Vinod
AS Rao Nagar: M. Chandrika
Cherlapally: Surrender Goud
Meerpet HB Colony: Bangi Jayalaxmi
Mallapur: Mallikarjun Goud
Nacharam: Anitha Padmareddy
Chilkanagar: Shailaja Srikanth
Habsiguda: Chetana Harish
Ramanthapur: Bandari Sreevani
Uppal: Dr Shilpreddy
Vanasthalipuram: Venkateswara Reddy
Hastinapuram: Sujatha
Moosarambagh: Bhagyalaxmi Bakka
Old Malakpet: Kanakaboina Renuka
Chawni: Erukala Abhishek Goud
Talab Chanchalam: Kothapally Renuka
Santoshnagar: Yeshwanth Jaiswal
Barkas: Y. Vijayalaxmi
Falakuma: Gaguloth Mahender
Nawab Sahab Kunta: Prajwala Goud
Jahanuma: A. Srihari
Kishanbagh: Bandari Naveen kumar
Rajendranagar: Archana
Attapur: Sangeetha
Vengal Rao Nagar: Kilari Manohar
Erragadda: Prasanna
Bharatinagar: Godavari Anjireddy
Ramachandrapuram: G. Sathyanarayana
Patancheru: Ashish Goud
KPHB Colony: Preetham Reddy
Chalunagar: Aritakula Charumathi
Allapur: Puligolla Laxmi Yadav
Moosapet: K. Mahender Kamhari
Fathenagar: Krishna Goud
Old Bowenpally: Tirupathi Yadav
Balanagar: Narsi Reddy
Kukatpally: Nayini Pavan Velama
Gajularamaram: Sridhar Verma
Jagadgirigutta: Mahesh Yadav
Rangareddy Nagar: Nandanam Divakar
Chintal: Pathi Shruthi
Suraram: Bakka Shankar Reddy
Subashnagar: Malathi Reddy
Quthbullapur: Ukkanti Swathi
Jeetimetla: Tara Chandrareddy
Machabolaram: Sarve Naresh
Alwal: K. Veena Goud
Venkatapuram: G. Shiva Abhishek
Neredmet: Prasanna
Vinayaknagar: C. Rajyalaxmi Kapu
Moula Ali: Sunitha Shekar Yadav
East Anandbagh: Bakka Nagaraj
Malkajgiri: V. Shravan Brahmin
Gowthamnagar: Santoshi Srinivas Mudiraj
Bansilalpet: Spandana

CHANGE IN SPECIAL TRAINS TIMINGS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

South Central Railway on Friday announced the running of special trains between Chennai and Thiruvananthapuram and New Delhi with revised timings and stoppages, from November 30.

These trains will pass through Telangana state and Andhra Pradesh. Trains 02269/02270 MGR Chennai Central-Hazrat Nizamuddin-MGR Chennai Central, a Duronto bi-weekly, will run on Mondays and Fridays, and on Tuesday and Saturdays in the reverse direction. Trains 02615/02616 MGR Chennai Central-New Delhi-MGR Chennai Central will leave Chennai at 6.10 pm and New Delhi at 4.50 pm starting November 30.

Train 02625/02626 Trivandrum-New Delhi-Trivandrum daily superfast will leave Trivandrum at 12.20 pm from November 30 and New Delhi at 8.10 pm daily.

POWER | PLAY

VIKRAM SHARMA | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

Shadow parties have been assigned their targets while moles have planted themselves comfortably around certain leaders, specific candidates and their cash cows to give regular updates about the goings-on in Opposition camps.

Monitoring of phones is said to be at its peak even as hush-hush conversations among the smarter politicians

Risky ride



Three youths on a triple ride and talking over cellphone pose grave danger to themselves and to other commuters, on Mehdiapatnam road on Friday.

— R. PAVAN

Flood victims lose IDs, may not be able to vote

Many families rue their documents got damaged

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

Polling percentages in the upcoming GHMC elections may decline in areas that were badly affected by floods where several families seem to have lost their identity documents, including the Election Commission of India issued voter identity cards.

Due to the devastating floods that recently hit Hyderabad, several low-lying areas like Tolichowki, Shaikpet, Hafiz Baba Nagar, Al-Jubail Colony, Ganga Nagar and Madina Colony have been severely affected. Houses were inundated by more than 10 feet deep water. Educational certificates, property and other mandatory documents like the Aadhaar card, voter identity card and driving license etc., were damaged.

As per EC rules, 13 documents, including passport, driving licence, ration card and photo identity card issued by a government authority is acceptable as an alternative to

the voter identity cards for the purpose of casting a vote. But many families complained that during rains, their documents, including voter identity cards, were damaged and they could not yet get duplicate copies.

Take the case of Mohammed Asif, a resident of B Block, Hafiz Baba Nagar. He said he had kept property documents in his car along with other documents like educational certificates. His car got washed away in the rains. Other identity proofs of his entire family have been damaged as rainwater entered their home.

He complained that when he approached governmental offices for obtaining certified duplicate copies of documents, he was asked to apply along with an FIR issued by the police station concerned. The Kanchan Bagh police is reluctant to issue an FIR immediately.

“Until I finish the cumbersome and complicated formalities, I will not be able to obtain duplicate copies of my original documents,” he said.

“Without documents, how can we prove our identity enough to cast a vote? The government should make an alternative to resolve this problem to ensure every citizen gets to franchise his or her vote.”

In the Al-Jubail Colony, one of the worst hit amongst all areas, Mohammed Aslam Khan, a resident, said, “my voter ID card and passport have all gotten washed away in flood waters. We did not have enough time to make a new one. To vote in the GHMC elections, we only have our Aadhar card. If they allow us to vote with Aadhar, then only we will be able to. Else, we can’t. We want to vote because we are the worst affected.”

Another resident of C-block, Baba Nagar, Mohammed Ahsan Ali JD, said, “I am worried that our family members may not be able to exercise our right to vote in the GHMC elections as our voter identity cards and other valid documents were damaged.”

While these widespread concerns remain, there is

a major concern also about use of fake voter identity cards by some, taking advantage of the floods. Asif Hussain Sohail, an activist, claimed that he has personally seen flood victims who have lost all their documents.

“Flood victims have complained that their documents were lost or damaged. This is a serious issue. It is not correct to deprive a section of people from exercising their right to vote. But we can’t deny the possibilities of using fake voter documents to prove identity by some,” Mr Sohail said.

The State Election Commission has neither announced an alternative for such voters who lost their documents in the floods nor has it provided them with a fresh voter ID card.

“The SEC has not spoken about how it will prevent impersonation,” he said, adding that the body should monitor voting in flood impacted areas carefully to ensure there are no discrepancies or ill-practices.

Sanjay claims KCR skipped debate at Lakshmi temple

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

In keeping with his announcement, BJP state president Bandi Sanjay visited the Bhagyalakshmi temple in Charminar on Friday.

After offering prayers, he ‘waited’ for Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to speak about the fake letters controversy and halting of flood relief fund distribution.

The BJP leader reached the temple at 12 noon and waited for an hour. There was tension at the BJP office and in Charminar in view of the Friday prayers at mosques. The city police deployed Rapid Action Force and armed police at both places.

Later, speaking to the media, Sanjay demanded that the Chief Minister inquire into the episode and arrest the culprits.

He said that both the Chief Minister and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao



State BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar offers prayers at Bhagyalakshmi temple in Charminar on Friday.

— P. SURENDRA

were worried because the latest survey report was favouring a BJP win in the GHMC elections.

Sanjay accused the CM

of promising money to the voters on poll-eve and subsequently cheating them. He appealed to the people not to believe the Chief

Minister’s words as he would take them for a ride. The BJP leader said that he will wait for the CM’s apology.

GHMC battle turns into a troll war as poll nears

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL
IDC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

Since the announcement of the GHMC elections, social media networks have lit up. Followers of political parties and their leaders are busy round-the-clock taking pot-shots at one another and tearing down each other’s arguments, even reputations.

From digging up unpaid traffic challans to commenting on the religious faith, everything appears to be grist for the online troll mill.

Perturbed by some attempts that have been seen as borderline trouble-making, or with potential to create some level of unrest, Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar took to Twitter to warn everyone to behave.

In a reference to TS BJP president Bandi Sanjay’s plant to visit a temple at Charminar on Friday, Kumar said, “some people were trying to spread incorrect and false news

in social and electronic media”.

Not mincing words, the city police chief tweeted: “They are warned that action will be taken against them. Hyd Police is not stopping any person from going to any place of worship. Keep away from such propaganda and rumours.”

Others on Twitter, including local TRS leaders, chose to highlight the faith Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao places on religion. In an oblique reference to Sanjay’s temple visit, they said the CM was “not a leader who seeks a vote because he is a Hindu,” and tweeted a professionally created montage of the CM’s visits to temples and performing pujas.

The fondness towards social media and turning this into a battle front has good reason, says M. Surya Narayana Reddy, MD, Progment Software Technologies.

“Online reputation and social media management

is playing a crucial role in capturing neutral voters, which can make all the difference in the final lap. Capturing potential voters and turning them into actual voters is challenging,” he said.

G. Pratyusha, a school teacher, who is contesting the election Gowlipura as an independent, said she relies on social media to take her voice to the people as she cannot afford to spend a lot of money on physical campaigning.

“I want to bring development in my division. Since we lack funds for the campaign to match what political parties spend, we opted to reach voters through Twitter, WhatsApp, Facebook and Instagram.”

Padmavathi Kotamraju, a working woman, said, “Twitter and Facebook have become weapons to shoot at political opponents. Politicians say they want to get rid society of dirt but have no qualms in slinging mud at each other.”

MAYORAL ASPIRANTS IGNORED

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

TRS president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has dumped 28 corporators and given tickets to new faces.

The daughters-in-law of ministers Sabitha Indra Reddy and Talasani Srinivas Yadav and the daughter of C. Malla Reddy — said to be lobbying for the post of Mayor — did not find their names in the final list which was released on Friday

Mayor Bonthu Rammoohan’s wife B. Sridevi, also a mayoral hopeful, got the ticket from Cherlapally but he was dropped. In the third list, the TRS denied tickets to 17 corporators including the mayor, the others were replaced in the earlier lists. The Mayor’s seat is reserved for a woman in the general category, but there are speculations that the CM is likely to pick a candidate from the SC or BC communities.

Commission solved 8,000 atrocity cases

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KHAMMAM, NOV. 20

The Telangana State Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes commission chairman Errolla Srinivas said that the commission is working for the welfare of oppressed and has solved 8,000 atrocity cases of the 10,500 cases.

On Friday, a Jana Adalat was organised in Khammam. Mr Errolla said that the victims were paid ₹55.60 crores through the decisions of the commission. It conducted Civil Rights Day in 512 mandals. “It wants to create confidence among the SCs and STs and is organising Jana Adalats and is helping the people. The programme commenced from Khammam and Bhadradi-Kothagudem districts,” he said.

The commission heard six cases in Bhadradi and three in Khammam. “We have noticed that from the two districts,

mostly cases related to land disputes, atrocities and podu cultivation are coming to the fore,” he said.

The commission asked the vigilance officials and the monitoring committee to organise meetings at regular intervals and solve the pending cases in regards to SC and ST atrocities. The commission is taking measures to see that the welfare schemes reach the Scheduled Castes and Tribes. The children of SCs and STs receive free education in 526 residential schools in Telangana.

“There is a need for the revenue, police and forest officials to coordinate so that development reaches these sections of society. Revenue officials should solve the petitions filed on land records”, he said. Khammam collector R.V. Karnan said, “We have solved 80 out of the 105 atrocity cases in the district. The pending cases will be solved within a week.

ILLEGAL MONEY SEIZED DURING LOK SABHA POLLS LAST YEAR

● DURING THE Lok Sabha elections in April 2019, the TS police seized ₹8 crore belonging to the BJP, though the party eventually got a clean chit from the income-tax department. Besides, cash linked directly or indirectly to Congress leaders Uttam Kumar Reddy (₹2.4 crore), A. Revanth Reddy (₹23 lakh and ₹34 lakh in two cases), K. Jana Reddy (₹1 crore) while a close aide of Konda Vishweshwar Reddy was caught distributing ₹15 crore among the voters.

OTHER STORIES

Woman dies by suicide

KHAMMAM: N. Rambayamma, 65, died by suicide in her house at Gumpellagudem under Karepalli mandal on Friday. She was distressed after her son in an inebriated condition faulted her. An investigation is on.

ACB RAIDS KAMAREDDY'S CI RESIDENCE

DC CORRESPONDENT KAMAREDDY, NOV. 20

Anti Corruption Bureau officials conducted raids on the residence of Kamareddy town, police circle inspector Jagadish on Friday.

Jagadish has been working in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts for long. The ACB officials received complaints against the police officer about his disproportionate assets.

The team led by Nalgonda ACB DSP Anand, in-charge of Nizamabad range conducted the searches. The officials are verifying the property details of Jagadish in Nizamabad, Kamareddy and other areas.

507 KIDS FOUND UNDER-NOURISHED IN KHAMMAM

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM, NOV. 20

The survey, being conducted under Poshan Abhiyan, found that 2,976 kids were suffering from malnutrition and underweight. Volunteers of National Nutrition Mission, which conducted the survey, tested around 76,311 children in the district. The weight and height as per their age were taken into account.

As the condition of 507 was found sensitive, anganwadi teachers were asked to provide a special menu to these kids to improve their nutrition levels.

The workers should go to the houses of severely problematic children every day and feed them nutrition food. The weight and height of these children should be tested every fortnight, they said.

STATE REPORTS 894 FRESH COVID CASES, 4 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

There were 894 cases and four deaths due to Covid-19 recorded in the state on Thursday, data released on Friday showed.

The number of tests fell to 39,448. The reason for discovering fewer new cases is said to be lesser testing. There are 12,515 active cases of whom 10,245 are undergoing treatment at home or in institutions. The GHMC area had 154 cases, Medchal Malkajgiri district 84 and Ranga Reddy 70 cases. Due to winter, those suffering from respiratory diseases have been advised to take extra care.

Meanwhile, health minister Etala Rajendar said on Friday, Telangana state and the rest of India are unlikely to experience a second wave of Covid-19.

The minister said the intensity of Covid-19 had come down in the country. "Some countries are experiencing a fresh wave of Covid-19. Though I am not an expert on the subject, I personally feel that there may not be a second spell of the virus in India and Telangana state," he said. He was addressing a panel discussion on the topic 'Safe re-opening of schools after Covid lockdown' in Hyderabad, as part of a three-day hybrid exhibition.

STRONG FUTURE

Awareness needs to be created about Child Rights: Collector

World Child Rights Day celebrated

DC CORRESPONDENT SIRICILLA / PEDDAPALLI, NOV. 20

On World Child Rights Day district collector D. Krishna Bhaskar on Friday said, "The children of today are the pillars of a new and modern society of tomorrow. If the future of the nation is to be strong, then it must develop various skills among its children, and it begins by creating awareness about child rights and laws among the people."

Mr Krishna Bhaskar said, "Stringent action should be taken against those who violate the laws. In the villages, till date, some people show discrimination against children. There are

instances of elders performing child marriages and sending them to do labour. Officials must be cautious about such incidents and take necessary steps to prevent them."

Later, the collector distributed mementoes to children who won prizes in painting, essay writing and other events organised.

In Peddapalli, additional collector, Laxminarayana participated in the closing ceremony of the 'Childline se dosti' week-long celebrations which began on November 14, Children's Day at the collectorate in Peddapalli district on Friday.

Mr Laxminarayana said that childhood is precious. It is the minimum responsibility of every person to see



District collector D. Krishna Bhaskar gives a prize to a child who won an event on the occasion of World Child Rights Day celebrations in Rajanna Siricilla district on Friday.

— DC

that a child's rights are protected. From childhood onwards, children should be encouraged to partici-

Outrage over 'biased' selection of lecturers

Candidates allege, interview calls were not in 1:2 ratio

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, NOV. 20

Strong allegations have surfaced about huge irregularities in the selection of junior lecturers under outsourcing in minority residential government colleges in Adilabad district.

Exam for the posts was held on September 6 and interviews from September 24-26.

'Genuine' candidates who did not get jobs demanded the district administration to order an inquiry into the selection process as it smelt of fraud.

Telangana Minority Residential Educational Institutional Society (TMREIS) has filled 18 lecturer posts with ₹27,000 salary through an outsourcing agency.

Two posts each were filled for English, Urdu,



from private junior colleges.

THE APPLICANTS alleged that the outsourcing agency, Sai Panja Manpower Welfare Society, and the three-man district selection committee had committed the fraud.

Telugu, mathematics, physical science, chemistry, botany and zoology in two minority residential colleges, which were recently upgraded from school level in Adilabad district.

Habib Khan of Adilabad, who applied for a post in mathematics, alleged that some candidates got jobs with

fake experience certificates obtained from private junior colleges.

It is shocking that a woman candidate with a gold medal in Urdu (Post graduation) from Osmania University did not get the job and her exam papers were missing.

She claimed that she has been teaching in the

government degree college for the last 10 years. She regretted that officials and the outsourcing agency were saying that she was absent for the examination.

She wanted to know how she was then called for the interview.

The applicants alleged that the outsourcing agency, Sai Panja Manpower Welfare Society, and the three-man district selection committee had committed the fraud.

It is said that interview calls were not in the prescribed 1:2 ratio.

Many of those who missed out alleged that money was exchanged in the appointments. District Minority Welfare officer Krishna Veni, Taharuddin, district in-charge of TMREIS and another officer were in the selection committee.

COTTON FARMERS HAVE FACE-OFF WITH TRADERS

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, NOV. 20

A heated exchange of words took place between cotton farmers and traders at the Ennumamula Agriculture Market on Friday, leading to a tense situation.

Farmers in large numbers, from the home districts and the neighbouring districts, of Nalgonda and Suryapet, had brought their produce to the market. However, traders refused to purchase the produce brought in from Nalgonda and Suryapet. The farmers were irked and argued that they would lose transport charges if the cotton is not purchased.

The traders maintained, "We cannot purchase produce from other districts without giving priority first to the farmers of the home districts."

Market committee chairperson A. Sadanandam and the police had to intervene. Mr Sadanandam assured the farmers that they would look into the possibilities of purchasing the produce from farmers of other districts. Warangal ACP Giri Kumar said, "We will set up a security barrier in the market to avoid any violent situations."

Mr Sadanandam convened a meeting with the joint secretary of marketing, Warangal Chamber of commerce president, Cotton association presidents. He asked them to ensure the proper purchase of cotton from the farmers.

TRADERS REFUSED to purchase the produce brought in from Nalgonda and Suryapet. The farmers were irked and argued that they would lose transport charges if the cotton is not purchased.



Lorry and RTC bus involved in the accident at Mariyapuram crossroad on Friday.

— DC

Lorry rams TSRTC bus; 22 passengers escape unhurt

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, NOV. 20

Around 22 passengers travelling in a Jagatgiri Gutta-bound TSRTC bus from Husnabad had a miraculous escape when a truck, carrying cement, collided with it near the Mariyapuram crossroad under Tharigoppula police station limits in Jangaon district.

The accident occurred due to poor visibility in the early hours of Friday. Seven passengers sustained minor injuries and were rescued by the locals who rushed to the spot and alerted Tharigoppula police station. The police immediately

THE ACCIDENT occurred due to poor visibility in the early hours of Friday. Seven passengers sustained minor injuries.

shifted the injured persons to the Government Area Hospital in Jangaon. The police cleared the traffic jam on the highway.

Tharigoppula, Sub-inspector, D Haritha said that the truck driver, who was over-speeding, did not notice the bus near the junction due to the thick fog. A case is registered against the truck driver and further investigation is ongoing, said Haritha.

Meanwhile, in another inci-

dent in the district, a youngster died on the spot after he fell off his motorcycle in Jangaon town on Friday. The victim was identified as K Sai Krishna, studying in B Tech second year in a private engineering college in Warangal. He was a resident of Govardhanagiri village in Raghunathpally Mandal.

Jangaon Sub-inspector K Srinivas said that the mishap occurred when Sai Krishna lost control on the flyover on National Highway-563(B) between Siddipet and Suryapet. A case is registered against the truck driver and the body was shifted to the Government Hospital in Jangaon for post-mortem, he said.

GHMC polls: Nizamabad leaders pitch tent in Hyd

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC NIZAMABAD, NOV. 20

Political leaders from undivided Nizamabad district have camped in Hyderabad for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections. The ruling TRS, opposition BJP and Congress parties have sent their leaders from Nizamabad and Kamareddy to the twin cities for campaigning.

Nizamabad MP D. Arvind and his followers have camped in the city to attract voters. BJP has a strong base in Hyderabad, and the leaders are trying to consolidate the support for party candidates in the GHMC polls.

They are targeting Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and minister for municipal administration and urban development K. Taraka Rama Rao.

The BJP leaders after their miracle victory in the Nizamabad Parliamentary constituency last year against TRS MP K. Kavitha and the recent Dubbak Assembly segment bypoll are in full swing.



Minister for R&B, Legislative affairs and housing V. Prashanth Reddy campaigns at Gajularamaram in Qutubullapur segment in Hyderabad on Friday.

— DC

BJP state executive committee member Dhanpal Suryanarayana Gupta is making whirlwind tours in Hyderabad and has intensified campaigning.

The ruling TRS has fielded minister for roads and buildings, legislative affairs V. Prashanth Reddy, MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha for campaigning. Meanwhile, the TRS MLAs, MLCs from undivided Nizamabad district have also taken up campaigning in Hyderabad. TRS leaders are confident that Hyde-

rabad voters will support the development card and get their party nominees to win.

From the Congress, former ministers Mohammad Ali Shabbir, P. Sudarshan Reddy, former Government whip Eravathri Anil, party senior leader B. Mahesh Kumar Goud and others are coordinating with party candidates in Hyderabad. Interestingly, the TRS, BJP and Congress have intensified their social media presence in favour of their respective party candidates.

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SHORT TAKES

14 PEOPLE DEAD AS CAR COLLIDES WITH TRUCK IN UP

Lucknow/Pratapgarh, Nov. 20: As many as 14 people, including seven children, died when their car collided with a stationary truck on the Lucknow-Allahabad highway, around 70 km from Pratapgarh district headquarters, an official said on Friday.

The road accident took place late on Thursday night when the victims were returning from a wedding function in the Nawabganj area of Pratapgarh, Additional Chief Secretary, Home, Awanish Awasthi said.

Pratapgarh Superintendent of Police (SP) Anurag Arya said the speeding SUV dashed into the truck parked by the road in the Manikpur police station area after one of its rear tyres got punctured near Deshraj Inara.

While five bodies could be taken out initially, a JCB machine had to be used to pull out the SUV from under the truck to retrieve the remaining bodies, he said, adding the bodies have been shifted to CHC Kunda and will be sent for autopsy later in the day.

It took almost two hours to pull the car out from under the truck, the SP said.

Arya, who visited the spot, said the police have spoken to the family members of the victims and assured all possible help.

Awasthi said Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed senior officials to reach the spot and extend all possible help. The Chief Minister has extended ex gratia of ₹2 lakhs to each of those killed in the crash, he added.

ED FILES MONEY LAUNDERING CASE IN TRP SCAM

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 20

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday filed a money laundering complaint in connection with the alleged TRP (television rating points) rigging scam case that is being investigated by Mumbai police. The ED officials said that the case was filed by them on the basis of the Mumbai police's FIR.

The officials said that they would summon all those named accused in the case for questioning in the fresh case. The Mumbai crime branch is currently probing the case that was filed in October naming *Republic TV*, two Marathi channels accused of rigging the TRP ratings for their channels with help of some other persons, who are also named in the case.

The Mumbai police's probe revealed that apart from the named accused, two former employees of Hansa research agency were in cahoots with the accused persons. These persons will be summoned by the ED for recording their statement and the prime focus of the probe will be to ascertain if there was any laundering of ill-gotten money in the case.

"ED will probe if fake TRPs were generated and if the money earned through this was used to generate illegal funds and create illegitimate assets. TRP is the parameter to ascertain programmes with highest viewership and hence it becomes crucial for the channels to earn advertising and other revenue," said officials.

Mumbai police filed a case after ratings agency Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) filed a complaint through Hansa Research Group pertaining to the alleged rigging. Several people including *Republic TV*'s Arnab Goswami were arrested in the case that has attracted several eyeballs and has become bone of contention between the state and central governments.

LoC locals call for 'end to hostility'

Flare up along LoC last week left at least four civilians and an equal number of jawans dead

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC BALKOTE (LoC), NOV. 20

"I was away when I received a phone call from my wife saying intense artillery shelling is underway. She asked me what she and other family members should do, stay at home or leave", recalled Abdul Haleem, a resident of Balkote, a sleepy village comprising scattered traditional houses at the foothills just a stone's throw from the Line of Control (LoC) in Baramulla district.

Alarmed by the grimness of his spouse's voice, Haleem quickly headed for home but, before he could reach there, his wife called up again to inform him that two houses including their's have caught fire due to the artillery fire. "I was shocked and merely asked her if all the family members were safe. I felt relief when told everyone at home has escaped unhurt," Haleem told this newspaper.

Standing beside the debris of his house and that of his uncle's, Haleem said, "You can yourself see everything has been reduced into rubble. What was our fault? Indians and

Pakistanis may do to each other whatever they want to but why should we suffer?"

Farooqa Begum was not as lucky as her neighbour Haleem's family. An artillery shell pierced through a wall of her house killing the 35-year-old housewife on the spot. "*Hum par qayamat guzri hai* (we've gone through doomsday)", lamented her husband Bashir Ahmed Dar.

Tahir Ahmed Mir, an employee of J&K's department of consumer affairs and public distribution, was distributing ration at a depot in Kamalkote area when a mortar shell fell and exploded a couple of metres away. Mir suffered multiple splinter injuries and died on the way to the hospital. Back in his native village Sultan Daki, the world of his aged parents and siblings lies completely shattered after the tragedy.

Raveel Ahmed, his brother, said, "We were six brothers and one of them has been snatched from us. Our hearts are bleeding". The rage in Ahmed's eyes was clearly evident as he repeatedly asked 'Why was he snatched from



Last week's flare up left behind a trail of destruction in villages close to the LoC in Hajipir and Kamalkote sectors of Baramulla district.

— DC

us...what was his fault?".

The interminable hostility between India and Pakistan troops along the LoC flared up again last week, leaving at least four civilians and an equal number of Indian Army and one Border Security Force (BSF) jawans dead and more than a dozen civilians and three Army personnel injured. Pakistan reported the death of four civilians and one Army soldier and injuries to 12 civilians in cross-LoC firing and shelling on November 12 and 13.

However, Indian Army claimed to have killed, at

least, 11 Pakistani soldiers and caused "substantial damage" to its infrastructure including ammunition and FOL (Forward Operating Location) dumps and "terrorist launch-pads" across the LoC "in retaliation to unprovoked ceasefire violations".

In their counterclaim, the Pakistan Army claimed inflicting "substantial losses" both in terms of men and material to the Indian troops "in response to their provocative act of engaging innocent civilians".

In J&K, many houses in villages falling in close

proximity of the LoC including Balkote, Kamalkote, Gowhalan, Sarai Bandi, Nambra and Gwalta (Baramulla district), Dawar (Bandipore district), Keran (Kupwara district) and Sawjian (Poonch district) were damaged in artillery shelling, forcing the residents to flee to safer locations.

As reported by Pakistan media, 15 residential houses, a few multi-storey buildings and one shop were gutted and 24 residential houses and a guest-house suffered partial damage and 20 cattle and eight goats perished in the Indian shelling.

The guns fell silent on the evening of November 13. Next day when residents returned to the affected villages on the Indian side of the LoC they found their homes burnt or damaged extensively and the household goods strewn and wrecked apart.

The two countries' armies accused each other of initiating firing and it was not the first time that the exchanges caused deaths among both facing troops and civilians besides leaving a trail of

destruction in villages. As per official statistics, 32 Indian Army and Border Security Force (BSF) personnel, 26 militants and infiltrators, 16 civilians and three civilian porters working for the Army or the BSF (total number of casualties was 77) were killed in the incidents of cross-border firing and shelling, clashes and sneak attacks carried out by militants or Pakistan's Border Action Teams (BATs) along the LoC and the IB, so far, this year.

As the civilians have routinely fallen prey to such exchanges, Nazir Ahmed, a resident of Balkote asked, "When an artillery shell lands in a house, a cowshed or courtyard we can't immediately say who fired it. But the fact is that it is mainly the civilians on both sides who suffer whenever India and Pakistan troops clash. This has to be brought to a close".

The border-dwellers were also unanimous in demanding early construction of community and individual bunkers in shelling prone areas to minimise the casualties in such eventualities.

TMC MANTRI COMPARES DIDI WITH NETAJI

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 20

Trinamul Congress minister Bratya Basu on Friday compared his party supremo and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee with Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to fan an eternal "Bengali" sentiment about the legendary freedom fighter against the Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of the next year's Assembly election. He also branded her party as her own "Azad Hind Fauj" in what may trigger a controversy.

The state science and technology minister alleged, "it is a fact Bose had to go away from the politics of Bengal and India as the freedom movement was against a colonial power. Exactly the same thing happened after 50 years with Mamata Banerjee. But she did not have to go since her fight was not against any colonial rule for freedom. Mamata Banerjee's battle was on parliamentary democracy for which she formed a separate party."

Night curfew in three more Guj cities to contain Covid-19

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 20

The Union government has rushed four high level teams to Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Manipur to help the states deal with surging cases of Coronavirus.

The Union health ministry said on Friday that the teams will visit the districts reporting a high number of Covid-19 cases and support the state efforts towards strengthening containment, surveillance, testing, infection prevention and control measures, and efficient clinical management of the positive cases.

India on Friday crossed 90 lakh cases with 45,882 new detections. The total deaths so far is 1.32 lakh out of which 584 are in the last 24 hours.

India has tested a total of 12,95,91,786 samples, as on date. Close to 11 lakh tests were conducted in the past 24 hours.

"High levels of widespread testing have ensured that the cumulative positivity rate is sustained at low levels and is presently following a downward trajectory. The cumulative national positivity rate stands at 6.95% today, less than the 7% mark. Higher volumes of testing eventually lead to low positivity rate," health ministry said.

The National Recovery Rate has reached 93.60%. Meanwhile, vaccine maker Serum Institute of India's CEO Adar Poonawalla has said the Oxford Covid-19 vaccine should be available for healthcare workers and elderly people by February 2021 and by April for the general public, and will be priced at a maximum of 1,000 for two necessary doses for the public, depending on the final trial results and regulatory

Schools to remain closed in Mumbai till December 31

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Amid the rising numbers of Covid-19 positive patients in Mumbai, the Shiv Sena ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Friday announced that schools will remain closed in the city till December 31. Earlier, the Maharashtra government had planned to open schools from November 23.

According to the circular issued by BMC's education department, although pandemic is under control in Mumbai, other countries are witnessing the second wave and considering the situation of the infection of the other states, the possibility of the second wave cannot be ignored in Maharashtra. "The next four to six months are very crucial for containing the

pandemic. Hence, the schools in BMC's jurisdiction cannot be started from November 23rd. All the schools will remain closed till December 31, 2020.

Maharashtra reported a single day rise of 5,640 Covid-19 new cases on Friday taking its overall tally to 17,68,695 cases while 155 new deaths were reported which pushed the fatality count to 46,511.

Gaikwad said that the online classes will continue at the schools that remain closed. "Even if the schools do not reopen, the students can still attend the online classes and learn. I have given necessary instructions to the officials concerned," the minister added.

Gaikwad said that the education department has approved the BMC's proposal.

approvals. He added probably by 2024, every Indian will get vaccinated. "It will probably take two or three years for every Indian to get inoculated, not just because of the supply constraints but because you need the budget, the vaccine, logistics, infrastructure and then, people should be willing to take the vaccine. So these are the factors that lead up to being able to vaccinate 80-90 per cent of the population. It will be 2024 for everybody, if willing to take a two-dose vaccine, to be vaccinated," Poonawalla said.

Meanwhile, to curb the spike in coronavirus cases, the Gujarat government decided to impose night curfew in Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot cities from November 21. The announcement came as a 57-hour-long weekend curfew came into effect from 9 pm in Ahmedabad city, which will end at 6 am on November 23. The government has already announced a night curfew in Ahmedabad from November 23. Deputy CM Nitin Patel announced curfew between 9:00 pm and 6:00 am in Surat, Rajkot and Vadodara.

Thackeray govt can only launch inquiries: Fadanavis

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 20

As the Maharashtra government blamed the previous BJP-led regime for the rise in the electricity bill arrears and announcing a probe into the dues, senior BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis on Friday attacked the Uddhav Thackeray-led dispensation, saying that it can't do anything except launching inquiries. He also said that although the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government had earlier promised to waive the power bills, it has now realised that it was not possible.

Earlier, state energy minister Nitin Raut, after coming under attack for saying

that no relief can be provided against inflated electricity bills, had claimed that the state is not in a position to waive off electricity bills because three companies which are providing electricity to state are running into losses due to non payment of bills.

Fadnavis said, "during our regime, energy minister Chandrakant Bawankule had done excellent work. We provided electricity at the cheaper rate. We purchased power at a very cheap rate and we gave a concession to the poor and farmers during our rule. If this government has the courage, they should also do it," he said.

The BJP has been target-

ing the MVA government over consumers' complaint of getting inflated electricity bills during the pandemic. Earlier this month, Nitin Raut had hinted at a major relief to the consumers facing the issue of inflated power bills, saying that a Diwali gift was in the offing.

However, a few days back, the minister had said that the government will not be able to provide any relaxation in the inflated electricity bills that consumers received and that they will have to make full payment of the bills.

Raut said that Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has ordered an inquiry into the dues of the state-run power company.

TAX | FRAUD The farmer alleges that photocopies of his ID cards were misused

Odisha farmer gets ₹10cr GST evasion notice

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 20

A farmer in Sonepur district, who ekes out a living by toiling day in and out in his one-acre farmland, has received a notice for alleged Goods and Services Tax (GST) evasion to the tune of a whopping ₹10 crore.

Naveen Bag, the farmer, on Friday said he came to know how his name has been used by some unknown, dishonest businessmen to evade GST

when some departmental officials recently raided his humble accommodation on charges of tax evasion. The poor farmer learnt that a firm — Bag & Bag — had been set up using his name.

According to Naveen, he had shared the photocopies of his Aadhaar card, voter identity card and other documents with one Dilip Meher of his district around eight months ago to avail loans from a bank. He now suspects that his identification documents had been misused, leading to the

● **FOLLOWING THE** detection of the fraud, Naveen Bag has lodged a complaint with the Odisha police.

● **THIS IS** not the first time such massive irregularities and instances of GST evasion have come to the light in Odisha.

fraud. Following the detection of the fraud, Naveen has lodged a complaint at the Rampur police station. "The agricultural land is registered in the name of

my father. We are completely dependent on farming and we are completely ignorant how the company was set up in my name," Naveen said.

However, this is not the first time such massive irregularities and instances of GST evasion have come to the light in Odisha. On November 11, a delivery boy working with a private company in Rourkela had received a notice for ₹10 lakh GST evasion.

Preliminary investigations had revealed that a

fake company by the name of 'Manorama Trading' was set up using the name of the delivery boy and fraudulent transactions of over ₹70 lakh had been carried out.

Similarly, a man residing in Sector-20 area of Rourkela was also charged with gross tax liability under Section 74(5) for allegedly receiving taxable goods amounting to ₹23.96 crore and further availing ₹4.31 crore under CGST and SGST on the basis of fake invoices.

IN BRIEF

Truck hits funeral mourners, kills 9

Beijing: A truck crashed into a funeral procession in central China on Friday, killing nine people and injuring four others, the state media reported. The accident happened on a national highway in Henan province's Huabin county. Nine people were killed in the incident, Xinhua news agency reported. Four people were injured and hospitalised, it said. The Ministry of Public Security has sent a team to investigate the case, the report said. Deadly road accidents are relatively common in China. Violations of traffic laws are often blamed for these accidents.

'Cannibal' arrested after bones found

Berlin: German prosecutors said Friday there is evidence of "cannibalism" in the killing of a 44-year-old man whose remains were found on the northern edge of Berlin earlier this month. A 41-year-old man was arrested on Thursday on suspicion of murder with sexual motives at his home close to the site where the victim's bones were found. "The suspect had an interest in cannibalism," Berlin prosecutors' office spokesman Martin Steltner said. "He searched online for the topic." Steltner said it was unclear whether the victim had also had an interest in cannibalism. The two men, both Germans, had been in touch with each other online, he said.

Pak: Ancient Hindu temple discovered

Peshawar: A Hindu temple, believed to have been constructed 1,300 years ago, has been discovered by Pakistani and Italian archaeological experts at a mountain in northwest Pakistan's Swat district. The discovery was made during an excavation at Barikot Ghundai. Announcing the discovery on Thursday, Fazle Khaliq of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of Archaeology said that the temple discovered is of Lord Vishnu. It was built by the Hindus 1,300 years ago during the Hindu Shahi period, he said. The Hindu Shahis or Kabul Shahis (850-1026 CE) was a Hindu dynasty that ruled the Kabul Valley (eastern Afghanistan), Gandhara (modern-day Pakistan), and present-day northwestern India.

Mink farmers mourn as livelihood dies

Copenhagen: Denmark's mink farmers are mourning what they say is the death of their industry after a government order to cull all of their stocks over a mutated variant of the Coronavirus. On Saturday (Nov 21), angry farmers and supporters plan to demonstrate against the cull in the country's two biggest cities, Copenhagen and Aarhus, with 400 tractors expected to roll in. "We're in shock," Marianne Norgaard Sorensen said. "Words can't describe the nightmare we've been through." She and her husband, who has been a mink farmer since 1993, live in North Jutland, the region in northwestern Denmark home to the most mink farms. Like millions of others across the country, their 27,000 minks were slaughtered in early November and around two thirds of the country's stocks have been culled to date.

SINGAPORE PM'S SIS-IN-LAW BARRED FOR LAW ABUSE

Singapore, Nov. 20: Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong's sister-in-law was on Friday barred from practising law for 15 months over professional misconduct in her handling of the final will of Lee Kuan Yew, the founding father of modern Singapore and the patriarch of the Lee family. The Court of Three Judges, the highest disciplinary body for the legal profession, found senior lawyer Lee Suet Fern guilty of "misconduct unbefitting an advocate and solicitor", for preparing and executing the will which is seen as a gain for her husband, Lee Hsien Yang, the prime minister's younger brother.

Following the death of Lee Kuan, the prime minister and his brother are disputing the status of the family property at Oxley Rise on the outskirts of the central business district and hotel belt of Orchard Road. A disciplinary tribunal (DT) had found Lee Suet guilty of grossly improper professional conduct in February this year.



Migrants use a rope to cross the Tachira river, the natural border between Colombia and Venezuela, as the official border remains closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic in Cucuta, Colombia. Hundreds of Venezuelans stranded in Colombia tried to cross the international bridge Wednesday as heavy rains had increased the river level. — AFP

Pfizer, BioNTech seek emergency nod from FDA for virus vaccine

Washington, Nov. 20: Pfizer and its partner BioNTech confirmed they will apply on Friday for emergency use authorisation for their Coronavirus vaccine, becoming the first to do so in the US or Europe as the pandemic rages around the world. The vaccine has been developed with breathtaking speed — just 10 months after the genetic code of the Coronavirus was first sequenced. The announcement had been expected for several days, after the companies said that a completed study of trials of the product showed it was 95 percent effective in protecting people from infection. The announcement also confirms what BioNTech's CEO said. "Filing in the US represents a critical milestone

in our journey to deliver a Covid-19 vaccine to the world and we now have a more complete picture of both the efficacy and safety profile of our vaccine, giving us confidence in its potential," Pfizer CEO Albert Bourla said. The vaccine has been under evaluation for weeks in the European Union, Australia, Canada, Japan and the United Kingdom, the companies said. "The companies will be ready to distribute the vaccine candidate within hours after authorisation," their statement said. The Food and Drug Administration has not said how long it will take to study the vaccine data, but the government expects to give the green light for the vaccine in the first two weeks of December. — AFP

AZERBAIJAN TROOPS BACK IN CEASEFIRE DIST.

Baku, Nov. 20: Azerbaijan said on Friday its troops had entered a district bordering Nagorno-Karabakh handed back by Armenian separatists after almost 30 years as part of a Russian-brokered peace deal to end weeks of brutal fighting in the region.

Troops moved into the district of Aghdam, one of three due to be handed back, the Azerbaijan defence ministry said, a day after columns of Armenian soldiers and tanks rolled out of the territory.

Armenia will also hand over the Kalbajar district wedged between Nagorno-Karabakh and Armenia on November 25 and the Lachin district by December 1.

On Thursday Armenian residents of Aghdam hurriedly picked pomegranates and persimmons from trees surrounding their homes and packed vans with furniture, before fleeing ahead of the official deadline to cede the mountainous province.

"We wanted to build a sauna, kitchen. But now I had to dismantle everything. And I'll burn down the house with everything I own when I leave," Gagik Grigoryan, a 40-year-old electrical worker, said. — AFP

UK PM's adviser quits as 'bullying' minister stays on

London, Nov. 20: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson on Friday backed his Cabinet minister Priti Patel, despite a Cabinet Office inquiry into allegations of bullying concluding that she had breached the Ministerial Code, albeit "unintentionally".

While ministers are usually expected to resign if they breach the code, it ultimately rests with the prime minister on whether to take any action on the independent Ministerial Code adviser's findings.

Johnson, who has consistently supported Patel ever since the allegations first emerged earlier this year, declared that he still has "full confidence" in the 48-year-old Indian-origin minister, who holds one of the UK's highest political offices as Home Secretary.

It has, however, led to the resignation of Alex Allan, the independent adviser on the Ministerial Code, as the decision seems to go against the findings of his report. "My advice is that the Home Secretary has not consistently met the high standards required by the

Serbian Church leader dies due to Covid at 90

Belgrad, Nov. 20: The leader of the Serbian Orthodox Church, Patriarch Irinej, has died after testing positive for the Coronavirus, the church said on Friday. He was 90. The patriarch was hospitalised with the virus early in November, soon after attending the funeral of the head of the Serbian Orthodox Church in Montenegro, Bishop Amfilohije, who also died from complications caused by the Covid-19 infection.

"It was an honor to have known you," Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic said on Instagram with a

black and white photo of the patriarch. "People like you are never gone." At that funeral, thousands of mourners, most of them with no masks or keeping any distance between each other, gathered at the funeral in the Montenegrin capital of Podgorica on Nov. 1, in violation of coronavirus-fighting measures proclaimed by the small Adriatic state's authorities. Since Amfilohije's death, and the hospitalization of the patriarch, Serbian priests have been appealing for their parishioners to take the deadly virus seriously. — AP

MANY MOURN DEATH OF BELARUS PROTESTER

Minsk, Nov. 20: About 5,000 people gathered in the Belarus capital Minsk on Friday for the funeral of an opposition activist who died of brain trauma after being arrested by police.

Roman Bondarenko, a 31-year-old soldier, died last week in Minsk after police arrested him following a dispute in a city square that has become a regular meeting place for the opposition.

Mourners carried red and white flowers — the colours of the opposition — to a church on the outskirts of Minsk.

For more than three months, Belarus has been gripped by historic protests after a disputed presidential vote that saw strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko re-elected for a sixth term.

Protesters demand that Lukashenko, 66, resign and hand over power to political novice Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, who they believe won the election.

"It is not in our power to bring back Roman, but we can try to ensure that such crimes are never repeated," Tikhanovskaya, 38, wrote on her Telegram channel from exile in EU member Lithuania. — AFP

Trump team cries foul over Joe's win

Take frantic steps to subvert poll results

Washington, Nov. 20: President Donald Trump and his allies are taking increasingly frantic steps to subvert the results of the 2020 election, including summoning state legislators to the White House as part of a long-shot bid to overturn Joe Biden's victory.

Among other last-ditch tactics: personally calling local election officials who are trying to rescind their certification votes in Michigan, suggesting in a legal challenge that Pennsylvania set aside the popular vote there and pressuring county officials in Arizona to delay certifying vote tallies.

Election law experts see it as the last, dying gasps of the Trump campaign and say Biden is certain to walk into the Oval Office come January. But there is great concern that Trump's effort is doing real damage to public faith in the integrity of US elections.

Sen. Mitt Romney, R-Utah, one of Trump's most vocal GOP critics, accused Trump of resorting to "overt pressure on state and local officials to subvert the will of the people and overturn the election."

Romney added, "It is difficult to imagine a worse, more undemocratic action by a sitting American President." Trump's own election security agency has declared the 2020 presidential election to have been the most secure in history. Days after that statement was issued, Trump fired the agency's leader.

The increasingly desperate and erratic moves have no reasonable chance of changing the outcome of the 2020 election, in which Biden has now received more votes than any other presidential candidate in history and has clinched the 270 Electoral College votes needed to win.

But the Republican president's constant barrage of baseless claims, his work to personally sway local officials who certify votes and his allies' refusal to admit he lost is likely to have a lasting negative impact on the country. — AP

Don is damaging democracy: Biden

BIDEN: CHINA MUST PLAY BY RULES, U.S. TO BE BACK IN WHO

Washington, Nov. 20: US President-elect Joe Biden has said that he wants to make sure that China plays by the rules and announced that his administration will rejoin the World Health Organisation.

Biden was responding to a question on Thursday about his remarks during the presidential debates that he wanted to punish China over the way Beijing has been behaving.

He was asked if that could include economic sanctions or tariffs on China, the world's second largest economy.

In April, President Donald Trump announced that the US would withdraw from the WHO, accusing the UN organisation for failing to oversee the onset of the coronavirus as it began to spread in China.

"It's not so much about punishing China, it's about making sure China understands they've got to play by the rules. It's a simple proposition," Biden said during a meeting with a bipartisan group of governors in his hometown in Wilmington, Delaware. — PTI

The recount showed Biden had won by 12,284 votes, according to figures posted on Georgia secretary of state Brad Raffensperger's website — slightly fewer than the approximately 14,000 he originally led by.

Trump campaign legal advisor Jenna Ellis attacked the outcome and pledged the campaign will "pursue all legal options."

After initially making baseless claims of widespread fraud, Trump has appeared to shift his strategy to asking states to overrule the will of voters. In Michigan, Trump

Tech giants tell Pak to ease data rules

Islamabad, Nov. 20: Global technology companies have told the Pakistan government that its "draconian" data regulations would make it extremely difficult for them to continue their operations, two days after the IT ministry notified rules to define how social media will be governed in the country, according to a media report on Friday.

Under the new rules announced by the Ministry of Information and Technology on Wednesday, social media companies and internet service providers shall provide the designated investigation agency with any information or data in decrypted, readable and comprehensible format, the *Dawn* newspaper reported. Subject to justifiable technical limita-

tions, the information to be provided may include subscriber information, traffic data, content data and any other information or data. In a statement, the Asia Internet Coalition (AIC), which exclusively represents leading global internet companies on matters of public policy, expressed its alarm over the scope of new law targeting internet companies, as well as the government's "opaque process" by which their rules were developed.

Earlier this year, Prime Minister Imran Khan promised to initiate a "broad-based" consultation on content regulation after a strong backlash from stakeholders over the release of formally known as the Citizen Protection (Against Online Harm) Rules 2020. — PTI

ICE STORMS IN RUSSIA'S FAR EAST LEADS TO EMERGENCY

Vladivostok, Russia, Nov. 20: Freak ice storms following an abnormal weather phenomenon has left 1,50,000 people without water and electricity in the far eastern Russian city of Vladivostok and prompted a state of emergency.

The exceptional weather brought down cables and trees with the government of the Primorsky region declaring a state of emergency.

"The situation with the electricity supply remains very difficult — the destruction is widespread," the regional administration's deputy head Elena Parkhomenko said.

She said it could take "several days" to restore power. Freezing rain began pummeling the city of some 6,00,000 people overnight Thursday after a cyclone carrying hot air met an anticyclone carrying cold air, Boris Kubay, a local weather service official said.

He said in some places the resulting ice was 12 millimetres thick — something not observed in the region in 30 years.

Photos and videos published by local authorities and on social media showed everything from apartment buildings to road signs to public transport covered in ice.

Video footage from a security camera showed a man moving away from his car at the last second as he was cleaning ice from its windshield before a block came crashing down from the side of a building. — AFP

WRITE | MOVE Book *Shuggie Bain* was rejected by 30 editors before US, UK publishers picked it up

Douglas Stuart wins 2020 Booker Prize

London, Nov. 20: New York-based Scottish writer Douglas Stuart has won the prestigious 50,000-pound Booker Prize for his autobiographical debut novel 'Shuggie Bain', a coming of age tale of love and alcoholism set in 1980s Glasgow and "destined to be a classic", beating five other shortlisted authors including Indian-origin Avni Doshi.

Stuart, 44, dedicated the book to his mother, who died of alcoholism when he was 16-years-old. After graduating from the Royal College of Art in London, he moved to New York to start a career in fashion

design. "I cannot believe this. Shuggie is a work of fiction but writing the book was extremely healing for me; hugely cathartic," Stuart said, adding that he was "absolutely stunned" to win the coveted prize. "I always wanted to be a writer so this is fulfilling a dream. This has changed my entire life," he said in



Douglas Stuart

his acceptance speech on Thursday.

Stuart has worked for various brands, including Calvin Klein, Ralph Lauren and Gap. He started writing in his spare

time a decade ago. Dubai-based Indian-origin writer Doshi, who was shortlisted among the final six authors for her debut novel 'Burnt Sugar', lost out on the top prize.

She was in the running for this year's prize alongside Zimbabwean writer Tsitsi Dangaremba for the third novel in her trilogy 'This Mournable Body' on a shortlist otherwise dominated by US authors — Diane Cook for 'The New Wilderness', Maaza Mengiste for 'The Shadow King' and Brandon Taylor for 'Real Life'.

The 2020 Booker Prize

judging panel was chaired by Margaret Busby, editor, literary critic and former publisher, and consists of author Lee Child; author and critic Sameer Rahim; writer and broadcaster Lemn Sissay; and classicist and translator Emily Wilson.

"We bonded across Zoom meetings. It was a wonderful experience... please read all the books on the shortlist," said Busby, who led the panel through whittling down the finalists from 162 entries. "Shuggie Bain is destined to be a classic — a moving, immersive and nuanced portrait of a tight-knit

social world, its people and its values. The heart-wrenching story tells of the unconditional love between Agnes Bain — set on a descent into alcoholism by the tough circumstances life has dealt her — and her youngest son," she said in reference to the winning book.

"Shuggie Bain can make you cry and make you laugh — a daring, frightening and life-changing novel," she added.

The book was rejected by 30 editors before it was picked up by publishers Grove Atlantic in the US and Picador in the UK. — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

21 NOVEMBER 2020

SC fails if it can't protect fundamental rights of all

The Constitution is the guarantee of the individual against the state. For, it lists his fundamental rights, which are non-negotiable except through the process of law, and denies state a chance to be arbitrary. These rights are not pious declarations without remedies; the Constitution has provided for mechanisms to ensure that its writ runs. The Supreme Court of India is that supreme institution the Constitution has envisaged to perform the noblest job of protecting the fundamental rights.

Article 32 of the Constitution guarantees people the right to move the Supreme Court by appropriate proceedings for the enforcement of the fundamental rights. It also empowers the court to act appropriately to enforce them. The founding fathers who debated the Article in the Constituent Assembly were near unanimous on this unique power which made Supreme

His policy statement (made in connection with the Siddique Kappan case) is disappointing, unfortunate and unacceptable

Court of India a unique institution. And between Article 32 and the Supreme Court, they thought the fundamental rights of the people are in the safe hands. M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar, who later became the speaker of the first Lok Sabha, called the Supreme Court the supreme guardian of the citizen's rights in any democracy. "I would even go further and say that it is the soul of democracy," he said, and explained if the fundamental rights of the individual are left to the tender mercies of the government of the day, they cannot be called fundamental rights at all. Members called Article 32 "the most important article of the whole Constitution", "fundamental to all the fundamental rights guaranteed under this Constitution" which "makes all the fundamental rights become real". Dr B.R. Ambedkar who wound up the discussion in no uncertain terms made the importance of the Article clear. "If I was asked to name any particular article in this Constitution as the most important — an article without which this Constitution would be a nullity — I could not refer to any other article except this one (Article 32). It is the very soul of the Constitution and the very heart of it."

Now, cut to 2020. The Chief Justice of India, S.A. Bobde, while hearing a petition seeking the release of a journalist who was apprehended by the police while on his way to report the rape-murder of a teen, told his counsel that the court was "trying to discourage" individuals from filing petitions under Article 32. The policy statement is disappointing, unfortunate and unacceptable not only because it refused to repeat its act which ensured the personal liberty of another journalist a few days ago under Article 32 but also for its decision to totally abdicate itself from the solemn duty. The court had already started showing the signs of its fatigue with the Article when it chose to look the other way when the several people from Kashmir approached it with habeas corpus petitions, when lakhs of people were made to walk their way home which are thousands of miles away due to governmental apathy during the pandemic and when the government chose to introduce religion as a condition for citizenship. If the Supreme Court fails Article 32, it fails the fundamental rights of the people, and thereby, the Constitution itself.

Trump to leave mess for Biden

By still not recognising Joe Biden to be the President-Elect a fortnight after polling for the US presidency was completed, outgoing President Donald Trump is causing America's reliability as a partner, and also as a democracy, to be brought into question. This is apt to makes it more difficult for Mr Biden to extricate US foreign policy from the mould in which Mr Trump placed it, although the President-Elect is acknowledged to be a seasoned foreign policy hand who leans in the direction of building democratic alliances, and finding the middle ground.

Across a wide range, President Trump has taken steps in the dying weeks of his presidency to place hurdles in the path of the incoming President, who turned 78 on Friday. Assuming that he goes quietly on January 20, Mr Biden's efforts in respect of Afghanistan and Iran will be watched in New Delhi. Mr Trump signed a so-called peace deal with the Taliban under whose terms US troops are to vacate Afghanistan by May 2021. In an extraordinary move, after the counting of votes in the presidential election the US leader decided to reduce US force levels to only 2000 from 4,500 by Christmas. (At its peak, a few years ago, the US had 1,35,000 soldiers in Afghanistan.)

This appears precipitous since violence in Afghanistan has gone up alarmingly after the inking of the US-Taliban deal last February. Can Mr Biden make troops withdrawal more gradual? In fact, US force strength needs to be a lot higher to ensure that the non-Taliban factions are not disadvantaged in the talks with the Taliban as violence rages. In his fading hour, and attempting to bind his successor's hands, Mr Trump has imposed further sanctions against Iranian entities and even prepared nuclear attack scenarios against Iran. Mr. Biden has to scale back comprehensively from the dangerous Trump era path of "maximum pressure" against Tehran and seek to return to some practical version of the Obama-period Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action that curbed Iran's nuclear plans. Normalising US-Iran ties creates better conditions for a healthy Iran-India relationship.

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Subhani

TRUMP FIRES
OFFICIAL WHO
SAID NO FRAUD
IN POLLS

NO SIR,
YOU CAN'T
FIRE ALL THE
VOTERS

China's Ladakh chimera: India needs to stand firm



Syed Ata Hasnain

In June 2020 after the Galwan incident I responded to a television anchor's question on how long the Ladakh standoff might last by saying: "Till at least the end of the campaigning season". That in plain language meant the end of November 2020. My rationale was not too complex. First, China would not mobilise resources to coerce India and return without achieving any objectives a second time, the first being Doklam. These objectives and intent have been the subject of much debate without conclusion, a kind of Chinese chimera. Second, winter is a difficult period in Ladakh even on the Chinese side despite the flat open terrain. Whatever the Chinese would do, campaign style operations in such conditions may not be possible and they were not prepared. The Chinese would seek to withdraw or draw down by December and await the next summer or the one after to pursue their objectives, which weren't specific or cogent. Also, China would always wish to have some kind of agreement, knowing well that India as a rule-bound nation wouldn't not contravene it. An agreement with "advantage China" written all over is what it would seek. It would bargain to retain the most of what it had progressively transgressed upon. Most of these assessments are coming true. Obviously, India will not agree to any of this and the standoff will probably continue through winter; yet this is against my reckoning but it's too early to conclude a final stance. My understanding of China's intent, oft-repeated, continues to be that it is India's rising strategic confidence that worried China at the instance of Pakistan. The spate of strategic decisions

regarding national security that India has taken in the last four years or so include the surgical strikes, the Balakot strike, Doklam standoff, the abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A, the publishing of new maps of J&K laying full claim to Gilgit Baltistan and Aksai Chin, and the long awaited creation of a Chief of Defence Staff in pursuit of eventual territorialisation. All this has perked up the adversaries to review their own security. The intent then was simply to puncture India's confidence about dealing with dual threats, by limited coercion at selected friction points that would leave the PLA in a position of tactical advantage in the continental domain and keep India imbalanced in the development of its capability. The latter is skewed against the maritime domain, where China's well recognised fragility lies.

What upset China's intent to a great extent and in fact virtually amounted to a strategic ambush was the Indian Army operation on the night of August 29-30, 2020 by which it progressively occupied seven tactical features on the Chhota Kailash range south of Pangong Tso in the Chushul Bowl; all the features are on own side of the Line of Actual Control and were never occupied all these years for various reasons. It left the situation with the theoretical potential of the PLA advancing on Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) from Depsang, but without the support of a Pakistani offensive which could only be made through the Siachen area. The Indian Army's Kailash Range operations upset everything for the PLA, with Indian domination over Moldo and Spanggur on the other side of the LAC which could balance any

adventurism at Depsang by a foray towards Highway 219, the crucial road link to Kashgar which had triggered the entire issue of Aksai Chin between India and China over 60 years ago.

Now comes the floating, rumoured and unconfirmed information that the Chinese have proposed the PLA's withdrawal from Fingers 4 to 8 and the creation of a buffer zone for patrolling, with no patrolling rights for India. In addition, it proposed mutual withdrawal of all artillery and armoured vehicles in the vicinity of the LAC to suitable depth areas and, most important, all this to be preceded by the Indian Army's withdrawal from the Chushul Heights on Kailash range. Those in severe criticism of India's willingness to engage in the corps commander-level talks are unhappy at receiving such tripe as proposals for disengagement. While I agree that the proposals are tripe, it is the talks which bear significance since in ground-based discussions over time it is not difficult to gauge the adversary's intent. China's *Global Times* has cleverly denied these proposals and turned the report around to a perceived psychological advantage, terming them the wishful thinking of Indian commanders who fear surviving the cold of eastern Ladakh. However, the airy proposals have triggered much-needed debate in the strategic community in India, for good measure.

A few plain facts need to be kept in mind when examining the current situation. The Kailash range deployment, which

The Kailash range deployment, which should have happened many years ago but for the low strategic confidence India possessed, has given us a strategic advantage which we never had all these years

should have happened many years ago but for the low strategic confidence India possessed, has given us a strategic advantage which we never had all these years. While it must not become the reason for unnecessary bluster, it does give quiet optimism of holding important cards in an environment where everything always appeared to be packed against us. We need not be worried about Chinese adventurism to coerce us because whatever escalation China attempts to do can be responded in equal if not greater measure, albeit also with the risk of greater escalation, about which we need not be perturbed. There is a lot of talk by our strategists about lack of Indian aggressiveness in Depsang to push beyond the Y Junction to assert our right to patrolling to our claim line. This is absolutely unnecessary. Aggression must never come from a position of weakness because it will peter out even before it becomes effective. We did what we did at the Chushul Heights because we were "balanced in disposition" after having inducted reserves to Ladakh. This term, which is often taught and discussed in the Army's schools of instruction, could not have seen better application. The basics of the Indian military leadership are clear, and it is the critics who need to revisit their basics.

With the advantage achieved by the Kailash Range decision India's occupation of Chushul Heights is akin to deployment on the Saltoro Range in Siachen, such is the strategic advantage which it offers. Justifiably it should therefore be a greater strategic advantage which must accrue to us by any decision to vacate the heights. China's Ladakh chimera must never view India as a pushover; not ever again. We have not seen the end of standoffs in this strategically crucial region.

The writer, a retired lieutenant-general, is a former GOC of the Srinagar-based 15 Corps

LETTERS

IDLE POLITICIANS

Not only corporators, but majority of people are not aware about their MLAs and MPs too (*Voters are not aware of their corporators, DC, Nov. 20*). After being elected, these netas never visit their constituency except for inaugurations and never address problems faced by people. The best example of this can be seen in the sufferings of people for flood aid at Mee Seva counters. Not a single leader was helping people. Hence it is better to vote Nota.

B. Badrinath
Hyderabad

FACE MASKS

Many people are still coming out without wearing a face mask which is harmful and endangers the lives of others. If the Covid spread is not controlled, we cannot eliminate the virus. Like Delhi, I request our authorities to impose fine on those not wearing mask.

R.S. Murty
Hyderabad

GHMC ELECTIONS

GHMC voters should think and carefully review all promises of the corporators. It's time for all Hyderabad voters to choose wisely for development of the city. GHMC voters should prefer able, qualified and honest representatives irrespective of political parties.

Vaddeti Venunath
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Mass starvation feared in E. Pakistan

DACCA, EAST PAKISTAN, Nov. 20.

Mass starvation fears in disaster shattered East Pakistan grew hour by hour here and top officials issued urgent orders to step up relief operations into full flow.

A high-level conference was held here last night to get international aid that was pouring into Dacca airport to the coastal area decimated a week ago by a cyclone and gigantic tidal wave.

President Yahya Khan declared a day of mourning and special prayers were being offered for the dead, Radio Pakistan reported. Hardly any of the food, medicines, blankets and other vital life-saving supplies donated has so far reached the disaster zone due to transport problems.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



*"I drive, therefore I am
Stuck in this F...ing traffic jam!
If you want some change, be the change
I don't go for chillar, dollars — the whole range!
I've done unto others as they would do unto me
Now not the best F...ing lawyers can set me free..."*

— From **Namkeen Pumpkin** by Bachchoo

Vaccines on the way... amid talk of conspiracies, Bill Gates' role

Every boy and even some girls I knew in Pune in my boyhood had two marks like little wrinkled lips on the top of their left arms. My two scars stood out for years and then age eroded them and now they are gone. Those were the marks of vaccination that Doctor Frenchman (yes, I know, but he was a Parsi and we inherited all manner of surnames through our subservience to European colonialism) dispensed, against various possible diseases, including rabies, because we lived amongst mad dogs.

Now every year in London I go down

to my local surgery and get a free "flu jab" on the UK's National Health service. It's rendered by a needle injection and, apart from a bit of discomfort in the same location below the left shoulder, leaves no mark. As I was a mere infant when Doc Frenchman inoculated me, I don't know how the scares came about, but using my renowned forensic skills, I deduce that it was a cut with a sharp blade into which the vaccine was introduced.

I am sure the anti-Covid-19 vaccine, promised by the end of the year to the most vulnerable and then to the general population, will be delivered by a needle injection.

The announcement that these anti-Covid vaccines are in the stages of testing and perfection is welcome news. I look forward to a time when, with the aid of the vaccine, the population is shielded against this contemporary plague and we can mingle and live our lives as dharma and karma dictate. I will line up for the vaccine as soon as my generous and caring local medical practice indicates its availability. I shall even advise all the illegal immigrants I know, though they are mostly

wary of exposing their status, to register close to where they live and get a jab.

When the vaccine was announced, instead of praising Ahura Mazda and lining up for a shot, I read all manner of lunatic anti-vaccine propaganda. Some of it is reported on the news and some of it pops up on my mobile phone and my email as unsolicited, threatening information. Now I am sure, gentle reader, that some or all of you have been subjected to the same load of contentious contentions — I will suppress the stronger terms that come to mind. (Yes, keep it clean. — *Ed.*)

One persistent message on these platforms urged me to reject the vaccine because it said it was a ploy by Bill Gates and his wife to secretly inject billions of humans with a microchip which would then make those supposedly vaccinated people slaves to Mr Gates who would control their lives and instruct them what to do. They would become the robot civilisation of the Gates family!

"Destroy your Apple computer. Buy one of ours!"

The Gates family (not to be confused

with The Doors, and renowned inventors of Windows) are known to have saved millions of lives through their charitable endeavours through supplying medicines to the poor. It is ironic then that a survey in the United States among those who voted for Donald Trump found that 46 per cent believed that Covid-19 was a hoax and among them were believers in the Bill Gates conspiracy.

They were, of course, the same people who said they wouldn't have the vaccine when it became available. Other conspiracy theorists, including a taxi driver hired by the BBC to carry me to a recording, determinedly believe that the Covid-19 symptoms and deaths are not caused by a virus, but by the presence or proximity of 5G mobile phone towers.

O Tempora O Mores! This is the twenty-first century, and the human brain has evolved for billions of years. And yet, and yet...!

The fact that Pfizer, which was the first company to put forward an effective, tested and safe vaccine against Covid-19, has had its share price skyrocketing is not surprising. If I

announce the discovery of a diamond mine in my back garden, the price of my property will go up. Of course, the conspiracy-wallas would say that this was what it was all about — set a disease loose on humanity and then sell the cure for zillions. The reported facts are that Pfizer's vaccine, which has to be kept at minus 70 degrees Centigrade, will cost £30 for the two doses, fuels such crazy speculation. The second vaccine, developed by AstraZenica and Oxford, expected soon, will stay healthy at home-refrigerated temperatures and will cost a mere £2.23 a dose.

When I was in Pune last, I was shown around the vaccine manufacturing plants of the Serum Institute of India, set up and owned by my friend and schoolmate Cyrus Poonawalla. His institute has manufactured and distributed, at loss-making, nominal costs, scores of vaccines as a humanitarian gesture and I am now told that the institute is working on an anti-Covid vaccine in partnership with the US Codagenix. I am confident that when it is tried and tested, Cyrus won't be charging £30 a go.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,882.25	0.65
Nifty 50	12,859.05	0.68
S&P 500*	3,570.89	-0.31
Dollar (₹)	74.14	0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.45	-0.35
Euro (₹)	87.92	-0.09
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,551.66	0.13
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.36	0.36
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.877	0.017
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.849	-0.702

* As of 8:30 PM IST

CCI approves Reliance-Future Group deal

The Competition Commission has approved Reliance's proposed acquisition of Future Group businesses. The Rs 24,713-crore deal was announced in August. In a tweet on Friday, the regulator said it has approved "acquisition of retail, wholesale, logistics & warehousing businesses of Future Group by Reliance Retail Ventures Limited and Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Limited".

Rabi sowing begins; wheat planted in 97L ha.



Sowing of winter crops has started in the country, with farmers planting wheat in about 97.27 lakh hectare so far in this rabi season, the agriculture ministry said. Wheat is the main winter or rabi crop. Rice and pulses, such as gram, urad, moong as well as oilseeds like groundnut and sunflower, are other rabi crops. Paddy has been sown in more area at 7.26 lakh hectare compared with 6.98 lakh hectare a year ago.

Large IPOs may be allowed with 5% equity dilution

The Sebi proposed to reduce the minimum offer size in an initial share-sale, whereby companies with a post-issue capital of above Rs 10,000 crore would be required to offer at least 5 per cent stake in IPO. At present, all companies with a post-issue capital above Rs 4,000 crore have to dilute at least 10 per cent shareholding in an IPO. Sebi felt minimum public holding of 10 per cent may be achieved in 18 months.

Forex reserves surge \$4.28 bn to record \$572.77 bn

The country's foreign exchange reserves swelled by \$4.277 billion to a record high of \$572.771 billion in the week ended Nov. 13, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended Nov. 6, the reserves had risen by a massive \$7.779 billion to \$568.494 billion. Foreign currency assets climbed by \$5.526 billion to \$530.268 billion. The gold reserves declined by \$1.233 billion to \$36.354 billion.



RBI panel for 26% promoter stake Corp. houses set to get banking licence

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

In what could potentially change the landscape of the Indian banking sector, an internal working group of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has suggested that large companies and industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks with necessary legislative changes, and large, well-run NBFCs could convert into banks after 10 years of operations.

Interestingly, the panel also suggested that the cap on promoters' stake in the long run (15 years) banks may be raised from the current level of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital.

The views gain significance in the light of year-long legal battle between Uday Kotak, promoter of Kotak Mahindra Bank, and the RBI that ended in January this year. Under the current RBI norms, promoters of private banks have to reduce their stake to 40 per cent within three years of operations and then to 20 per cent within 10 years and to 15 per cent within 15 years.

The group headed by RBI executive director P.K. Mohanty was set up in June 2020 to review the extant ownership guidelines and corporate structure for Indian private sector banks with the terms of reference, including the review of the eligibility criteria for individuals/entities to apply for banking licence, examination of



preferred corporate structure for banks and harmonisation of norms in this regard, and review of norms for long-term shareholding in banks by the promoters and other shareholders.

The panel that submitted its report on Friday said, "Large corporate/industrial houses may be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to the Banking Regulations Act, 1949 to deal with connected lending and exposures between the banks and other financial and non-financial group entities; and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for large conglomerates, including consolidated supervision. RBI may examine the necessary legal provisions that may be required to deal with all concerns in this regard."

Large non-banking finance companies with an asset size of Rs 50,000 crore, including those owned by large corporate houses, may be allowed to convert to private banks subject to completion of 10 years of operations and

other criteria. The working committee recommended minimum initial capital requirement for licensing new banks should be enhanced to Rs 1,000 crore from Rs 500 crore for universal banks and Rs 300 crore from Rs 200 crore for small finance banks.

"The cap on promoters' stake in long run of 15 years may be raised from the current levels of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank. This stipulation should be uniform for all types of promoters and would mean that promoters, who have already diluted their holdings to below 26 per cent, will be permitted to raise it to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank. The promoter, if he/she so desires, can choose to bring down holding to even below 26 per cent, any time after the lock-in period of five years," said the report.

For non-promoter shareholding, a uniform cap of 15 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank may be prescribed, the report said.

Gland now among top 10 pharma companies

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 20

Hyderabad-based Gland Pharma made a grand debut on the bourses, listing at Rs 1,710 on both NSE and BSE, a premium of 14 per cent over the public issue price of Rs 1,500 per share.

Gland is now among top 10 pharma companies in terms of market value, with a market capitalisation of Rs 29,848 crore at the close of trade on the NSE.

The stock touched an intraday high of Rs 1,850 on both NSE and BSE.

Earlier this month, Gland Pharma raised Rs 6,479.55 crore through an initial public offering priced at Rs 1,490 to Rs 1,500 per share with Re 1 face value. The issue was subscribed more than two times but had received very poor response from retail and high networth investors, making its bourses debut quite a suspense till the last moment.

On the NSE, Gland Pharma shares finally closed at Rs 1,828 providing public shareholders a return of 21.8 per cent on their IPO investment. On the BSE, the stock closed at Rs 1,820.45.

Since retail and high net worth investors had largely skipped the public offer, there was a rush to buy the shares after the initial listing gains and so the percentage of deliverable quantity of shares was high at 56.25 per cent on the NSE.

ROCHE'S COVID-19 ANTIBODY COCKTAIL LAUNCH LIKELY BY MARCH

FRANCINE LACQUA & NAOMI KRESGE
NOV. 20

Roche Holding AG is working hard to rapidly boost supply of Covid-19 antibody treatments and will be able to make its first deliveries in the first quarter of next year, according to CEO Severin Schwan.

Roche has filed for emergency authorisation for an antibody cocktail it's working on with US biotech Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc and that could be granted "very soon," Schwan said on Friday in an interview. "At Roche we'll be able to provide supply in the first quarter," he added, cautioning that availability will initially be limited and should be reserved for patients at high risk.

"We're working hard to ramp up production as fast as we can," Schwan said. "No matter what, irrespective of other therapeutics, the demand for antibody cocktails will by far outstrip supply, so we have to make sure we target really the right patient groups." —Bloomberg

Profits zoom, but wages flat at listed companies

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 20

In business, there seems to be no relation between profits and wages. While listed companies made bumper profits in the September quarter, wages have grown in low single digits, much lower than in past several quarters, finds private think-tank CMIE.

The net profit of listed companies zoomed to record levels, as they grew 209 per cent in the September quarter. Even in the first half of the fiscal, which covered the entire period of the lock down of different intensities and associated uncertainties, the net profits of these companies grew 23.8 per cent. This growth was even higher than 11.8 per cent, the average growth in the past 60 quarters. The data is based on the financial statements of 1,897 companies available in CMIE's Prowess database as of November 11.

However, this profit growth seemingly has nothing to do with the wage growth. "In business and for corporate



honchos, there is no relation between growth in profits and growth in wages. The two move completely independently. Corporate managers would minimise their wage bill to maximise their profits," says Mahesh Vyas, managing director, CMIE.

Amidst lay-offs, salary cut and negligible hiring, wage growth was 2.8 per cent in the first half of the fiscal. Even in the September quarter wage growth stood at 3.7 per cent, which was lower than the average year-on-year growth in wages over the past 60 quarters at 13 per cent. "The low single-digit growth in wages in the last two quarters is therefore very low by historical standards and is in stark contrast to the

extraordinary profits earned by companies," says CMIE.

Manufacturing companies saw a 9.1 per cent fall in wages in the June 2020 quarter, which was the toughest quarter for them. Sales had shrunk by 42 per cent and net profits by 62 per cent. Then, in the September 2020 quarter, while sales fell again by 9.7 per cent, profits sprang a surprise by scaling up by a handsome 17.8 per cent. Yet, wages declined by one per cent. Evidently, companies do not apportion resources to labour in any proportion of profits.

In the services sector's case, except for banking and IT, the remaining sectors collectively saw a 9 per cent fall in wages in the June quarter and a 5 per cent fall in the second quarter.

"Shareholders are being awarded interim dividends or buy-backs. There is still very little interest in investing into new capacities... Employment in the corporate sector could recover if business picks up again," says Vyas.

Mills to get ₹12.5K-cr loan to make ethanol

New Delhi, Nov. 20: The food ministry on Friday said it has given in-principle approval to 185 sugar mills and standalone distilleries to avail Rs 12,500 crore of loans for capacity addition of 468 crore litre of ethanol per annum as part of its efforts to achieve 20 per cent blending with petrol.

In the last two years, 70 ethanol projects were sanctioned loans of Rs 3,600 crore.

Apart from promoting ethanol production from sugarcane, the ministry is making efforts to manufacture ethanol using surplus rice with state-owned FCI as well as maize.

The move is aimed at

boosting ethanol blending with petrol, which now stands near 5 per cent.

Under the ethanol interest subvention scheme for molasses-based distilleries, the government had opened a window September for 30 days, inviting sugar mills/distilleries, to apply for the scheme, the ministry said. —PTI

JLR seeks to block imports of Audi, Porsche SUVs in US

CHRISTOPHER YASIEJKO & SUSAN DECKER
NOV. 20

Jaguar Land Rover Automotive Plc filed a complaint on Thursday to block US imports of Porsche, Lamborghini, Audi and Volkswagen sport utility vehicles it says are using its patented Terrain Response technology without permission.

Jaguar Land Rover, a British carmaker owned by Tata Motors Ltd, said in its filing with the US International Trade Commission that the technology helps negotiate a "broad range of surfaces" and is a key feature in Jaguar's F-Pace and Land Rover Discovery vehicles.

"JLR seeks to protect itself and its United States operations from companies that have injected infringing products into the US market that incorporate, without any licence from JLR, technology developed by JLR and protected by its patent," Jaguar's lawyer, Matthew Moore, said in the filing.

Representatives of Volkswagen didn't immediately respond to emails seeking comment on the complaint.

Jaguar wants to block imports of Porsche's Cayenne; Lamborghini's Urus; Audi's Q8, Q7, Q5, A6 Allroad and e-tron vehicles; and VW's Tiguan vehicles. It said there are plenty of other luxury midsize SUV and compact crossover vehicles to meet buyer demand if the SUVs are banned from the US.

Still, the premium Porsche and Audi lines provide much of the profit VW is using to fund its investments in technology for electric vehicles, autonomous vehicles and further innovations.

In addition to the four brands, Volkswagen Group owns other upscale nameplates, including Bentley and Bugatti.

The International Trade Commission is an independent, quasi-judicial agency that investigates complaints of unfair trade practices, like patent infringement. It can't award damages but does have the power to block products from entering the US. —Bloomberg

Hyundai i20 sells 20,000 units in 20 days



MICHAEL GONSALVES
PUNE, NOV. 20

Despite uncertainty in the market due to Covid pandemic, the all-new Hyundai i20 premium hatchback is turning out to be a big hit for the car-maker, which sold 20,000 cars in just 20 days, that is, 1,000 cars per day.

Prices of the all-new Hyundai i20 start from Rs 6.80 lakh, making the car significantly expensive than its main rival the Maruti Baleno.

The new i20 offers plenty of choice for buyers with multiple variants, engines and transmission options.

In fact, one in every four buyers has opted for automatic/semi-automatic variants of the car while one in three buyers has opted for the sunroof equipped, top-end trims. Even the diesel variant found one in five buyers.

WINNER | TECH'S IT ALL? It's feared that the rise of fintech firms may send banks the dinosaur way

Ant's setback holds a lesson for all fintechs

ELISA MARTINUZZI
NOV. 20

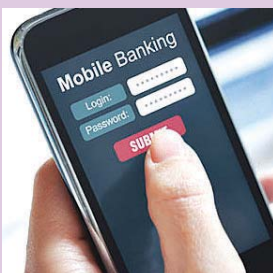
Speaking in October to his banking brethren at the world's biggest payments confab-the annual Sibos conference-Jamie Dimon didn't mince words. The rise of financial technology companies, warned JPMorgan Chase & Co's chief executive officer, will see some banks "go the way of the dinosaur."

In the world of finance, as in many other parts of the economy, Covid-19 has accelerated a shift to digital interactions that was already under way. And it hasn't gone unnoticed by regulators. In Asia, Europe, and the US, central banks and other regu-

lators are increasingly focused on how technology companies could come to dominate financial services, undermining the stability of the systems the watchdogs are entrusted to preserve.

One obvious sign of the growing importance of fintech companies is their surging market value.

The valuation of PayPal Holdings Inc, the US e-commerce payments giant, had exceeded \$225 billion as of early November-more than that of Europe's top four banks combined and higher than all US banks bar JPMorgan. In Europe, where lenders' stock prices have plummeted to record lows this year, only HSBC



Holdings Plc, with \$3 trillion in assets and a history dating to 1865, was worth more than Adyen NV, a 14-year-old Dutch payments processor.

And of course, none compare with Jack Ma's Ant Group Co, the Chinese financial giant that at the end of October was proceeding with an initial

public offering set to value it at \$315 billion—bigger than Dimon's JPMorgan. But then China's regulators stepped in to halt the IPO at the eleventh hour, demanding that Ant adhere to stricter capital requirements and provide at least 30 per cent of the funding for loans it underwrites, just like the banks it competes with.

Analysts at Morningstar Inc and other firms estimated the rules could cut the company's value in half. China's top banking watchdog also warned that it will step up probes to ensure fair competition where monopolies can be spotted. Ant and Tencent Holdings Ltd, which owns the WeChat Pay platform,

are luring customers away from commercial banks in the consumer-loan market.

While the news was shocking, thwarting the world's biggest-ever IPO, the truth is that China isn't alone in expressing new concerns about the regulatory advantage provided to the digital finance industry. The collapse of fintech poster child Wirecard AG after billions of dollars went missing from the Bavarian startup has prompted a review of how regulators in Germany and Europe oversee payment companies.

In the UK, the banking supervisor is considering tougher demands on so-called neobanks and once-hot fintechs such as Monzo

and Revolut that are struggling. In the US, the New York Department of Financial Services has sued to bar the Office of the Comptroller of the Currency from handing out licences under a fintech charter that would place companies under lighter regulation than banks.

The pace at which consumers have turned to digital transactions during the pandemic, as bank notes and coins became untouchable, is one reason regulators fret. Given the rate at which some fintechs are growing, regulators will have to decide quickly how far they want to go to keep them in check. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Women's T20 WC pushed to 2023

Dubai: The South African edition of the Women's T20 World Cup was on Thursday postponed by three months to February 2023 to avoid a cluster of big-ticket events in 2022 and manage players' workload, International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Thursday. The tournament was scheduled in November 2022 but will now be held in February 2023. In August this year, the ICC had postponed the 50 over Women's World Cup slated in New Zealand from 2021 to 2022 owing to pandemic and women's T20 cricket is also set to make its debut in the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. "The Board confirmed that the ICC Women's T20 World Cup will move from its current slot at the end of 2022 to 9-26 February 2023. If not postponed, the year would have "three major events in 2022 with the Commonwealth Games in July 2022 and the ICC Women's T20 World Cup due to be held in November 2022," ICC said. The ICC said the decision was taken keeping in mind the workload of the players and also considering long term interest of women's cricket. — PTI

Champ Rossi gears up for final race

Portimao, Portugal: Nine-time world champion Valentino Rossi says it will be a "special moment" when he brings the curtain down on his 15-year factory Yamaha MotoGP career in the final race of the season in Portugal on Sunday. Joan Mir's World Championship may already be secured but second place and the constructors' title will also be on the line in Portimao. Rossi, who has won seven of his world titles in the elite class, is among a number of riders bidding farewell, with Andrea Dovizioso heading off for a planned sabbatical and Cal Crutchlow exiting the series to become a Yamaha test rider next year. Rossi will join Yamaha's satellite Petronas team, leaving the factory to go ahead with Fabio Quartararo alongside Maverick Vinales in 2021. "Sunday will be a special moment because it was a long journey together," said Rossi. Pol Espargaro, Jack Miller, Johann Zarco and Danilo Petrucci are also among those departing for pastures new. — AFP

Task cut out for Spurs against City

London: Tottenham's title credentials face a thorough examination when they host Manchester City as the Premier League returns on Saturday after the international break. Spurs are just a point behind early pace setters Leicester, but only three points separate the top six, with Chelsea and Aston Villa also having the chance to claim top spot for a few hours at least when they face Newcastle and Brighton respectively. With the final international fixtures of the year done and dusted, a gruelling winter schedule of club football awaits for England's top-flight with nine rounds of league matches before January 2. Defending champions Liverpool are already bearing the brunt of the hectic schedule as Jurgen Klopp's squad has been ravaged by injury ahead of Leicester's trip to Anfield. Tottenham enjoyed a couple of hours at the top of the table for the first time in over three years prior to Leicester's victory over Wolves before the international break. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

Big Bash League: Hobart Hurricanes vs Perth Scorchers from 10.10 am; Sydney Sixers vs Melbourne Renegades from 1.35 pm; Perth Scorchers vs Adelaide Strikers from 4.50 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Semifinal-1 from 7.30 pm, Semifinal-2 from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Six, HD

FOOTBALL

English Premier League: Newcastle vs Chelsea from 6 pm; Aston Villa vs Brighton from 8.30 pm; Tottenham Hotspur vs Manchester City from 11 pm; Manchester United vs West Brom from 1.30 am (Sunday) on Star Sports Select 1

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

Italian league: Crotone vs Lazio from 7.30 pm; Spezia vs Atalanta from 10.30 pm; Juventus vs Cagliari from 1.15 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

NADAL NAILS IT

Djokovic also makes semifinals at season-ender

London, Nov. 20: Rafael Nadal kept alive his hopes of a first ATP Finals title on Thursday, beating defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 in London to qualify for the Last four. Novak Djokovic too advanced to the semifinals after beating Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-6 (4).

The top-ranked Djokovic set up a match against Dominic Thiem on Saturday as he goes for a record-tying sixth title at the season-ending event, and a first since 2015. Rafael Nadal will take on Daniil Medvedev in the other semifinal match.

Bouncing back from a straight-set loss to Medvedev on Wednesday, Djokovic broke Zverev to take a 2-0 lead in the first set when his opponent double-faulted on the second break point.

Djokovic saved two break points at 4-2 before clinching the set with a backhand down the line as he closed in on the net following a serve out wide.

Zverev posed more problems for Djokovic in the second set, and led 2-0 in the tiebreaker. Djokovic then won five of six points and, on his first match point, sent a deep and penetrating forehand that Zverev could only slice into the net on the stretch.

Nadal, whose haul of 86 singles titles includes just one on indoor hard courts, is chasing the biggest prize missing from his resume at the eight-man elite event. The 34-year-old has qualified for the ATP Finals for a record 16 consecutive years but has been forced to withdraw on six occasions.

The second seed won his opening round-robin match against Andrey Rublev but defeat against Dominic Thiem meant he faced a shootout against 2019 champion Tsitsipas to reach the semifinals.

Both players were rock solid on serve until Nadal

To be in the semifinals here at the last tournament of the year is an important thing. Happy for that and looking forward to the semifinals against Daniil. — RAFAEL NADAL after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas



Rafael Nadal of Spain reacts during the match against Greece's Stefanos Tsitsipas in their men's singles match of the ATP World Tour Finals tennis tournament at the O2 Arena in London on Thursday. — AFP

earned the first two break points of the set in the seventh game, which he failed to convert.

Tsitsipas was again under pressure in his next service game and this time he cracked, double-faulting on break point.

Nadal pressed home his

advantage, serving consecutive aces to take the set 6-4 against his 22-year-old opponent.

The Spaniard, twice a finalist at the tournament, had another chance to break in the first game of the second set but the Greek sixth seed dug him-

self out of danger with a searing backhand.

Tsitsipas did well to cling on against his illustrious opponent who was serving with metronomic efficiency and dominating the longer rallies.

But out of nowhere the Greek earned two set

points on Nadal's serve and levelled when the Spaniard double-faulted on the second of those.

The match took a bizarre twist at the start of the decider, with neither player able to hold serve until Nadal finally held to lead 3-1. — Agencies

INDIA SLIP TO SECOND SPOT IN TEST RANK

Dubai, Nov. 20: India on Thursday slipped to the second position in the standings of the ongoing World Test Championship (WTC) after the ICC decided to rank teams "in order of percentage of points earned" from the contested matches.

Australia (296 points from 3 series) topped India (360 points from 4 series) in the standing after the revision with a percentage of 82.22 compared to the latter's 75 per cent.

According to current regulations, incomplete matches are treated as draw but after due deliberation, the ICC Cricket Committee, headed by Anil Kumble, recommended that the final WTC standings should be determined on the basis of matches played, which was approved by the Board. — PTI

GUILTY ZOYSA SAYS THERE IS FOUL PLAY

Colombo, Nov. 20: Former Sri Lanka cricketer Nuwan Zoysa on Friday denied any wrongdoing after being found guilty of corruption on three counts by an independent tribunal of the ICC.

Already serving suspension on match-fixing charges, Zoysa was charged under the ICC anti-corruption code in November 2018 and was found guilty on all charges on Thursday after he exercised his right to a hearing before an independent anti-corruption tribunal.

The ICC said Zoysa will remain suspended and sanctions will follow in due course. — PTI

Bagan blast past Kerala in opener

Bambolim, Nov. 20: In their new avatar, ATK Mohun Bagan kicked off the seventh season of the Indian Super League on a high, defeating Kerala Blasters by a solitary goal here on Friday.

Fijian hitman Roy Krishna, who was ATK's top goal scorer with 15 goals last season, struck the all important goal after a 67 minute deadlock to give the all important three points for the green-and-maroon brigade.

The Yellow Brigade playing with a heavy defensive lineup of 4-2-3-1 managed to thwart ATKMB throughout the first half but after the hour mark they left a loose ball as the Fijian International pounced on it with a calm and composed finish.

All eyes were on the 131-year-old legacy club Mohun Bagan as they were making their ISL debut following their 'marriage' with three-time defending champions ATK.

ATKMB had a dominant first half and made some early inroads with Roy Krishna missing an early chance, even as KBFC enjoyed more ball possession in the first 45 minutes.

KBFC, who were the designated home team, looked more threatening and came out with an attacking intent in the second-half.

But KBFC were made to pay for it as Roy Krishna made amends for his three misses in the first half with his poacher goal to become the difference between the two sides.

That goal was enough for ATKMB to sink Kerala Blasters' hearts. — PTI

MUMBAI TAKE ON NORTHEAST TO OPEN BID

Vasco, Nov. 20: A revamped Mumbai City FC, with 19 new recruits and a Spanish coach of repute, will be aiming for a positive start in pursuit of a maiden ISL title when they take on NorthEast United here on Saturday.

Mumbai City have never won the coveted trophy and would be hoping that there is a turnaround in fortunes under new coach Sergio Lobera, who had guided FC Goa to a Super Cup win in 2019.

Mumbai have two good strikers in Bartholomew Ogbeche and Adam Le Fondre who can prove to be more than handful for any opposition.

The inclusion of Mandar Rao Dessai has bolstered the team's defence and he coupled with the likes of Sarthak Golui, Senegalese Mourtaada Fall and Mohamad Rakip are ready to thwart any attacking line-up.

On the other hand, NorthEast United FC under new coach Gerard Nus, would also be aiming for redemption after a poor last season.

They will expect their foreign players to pull their weight with much depending on former Anderlecht and Queens Park Rangers striker Idrissa Sylla and former Ghanaian international Kwesi Appiah. — PTI

Betting charges dog Andhra T20

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, NOV. 20

At least six players from Andhra Premier League (APL) conducted at RDT stadium here last month were reportedly involved in cricket betting.

The six cricketers from Andhra Pradesh include four from Kadapa district and another from Anantapur district. They used 'Dafabet', an online betting company. The anti-corruption unit of Andhra Cricket Association (ACA), reportedly identified the role of some players in betting.

Andhra Premier League was held as Karbonn Harmonycity T20 Andhra by Andhra Cricket Association for 18 days in October. A total of 98 players participated in the event and 33 matches were held overall with Kings-XI

emerging triumphant.

Now, the online betting allegations have raised many eyebrows. Sources close to ACA revealed the players were involved in betting, although there was no evidence of match-fixing.

Association president Sharath, secretary Durgaprasad and several others were present during the tournament. The organisers reportedly warned players for involvement in suspicious activities.

"The players were not involved in match-fixing activities but in betting by using an online betting company," an official from ACA confirmed.

A police officer from Anantapur district observed that he had become suspicious because of a group of sponsors in the league.



Winners of the Gosports T20 Cup pose with the trophy and medals in Vijayawada on Friday.

ME win Gosports Trophy with ease

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 20

Muralikrishna Enterprises defeated SS Interiors to win the Gosports T20 Cup in Vijayawada on Friday.

Choosing to make first use of the wicket after winning the toss, ME made a modest 133 for 8 in the stipulated overs. Ch Srikanth (34) and Sandeep (33) came up with decent scores while Vardhan (2/22) and Ganesh (2/31) were among the wicket takers for SS.

In reply, Interiors were bundled out for a mere 94

in 16.5 overs as ME bowlers Manikanta (3/23) and Ravi (3/20) proved too hot to handle.

BRIEF SCORES
■ Muralikrishna Enterprises 133/8 in 20 overs (Ch Srikanth 34, Sandeep 33, Vardhan 2/22, Ganesh 2/31) bt SS Interiors 94 in 16.5 overs (Manikanta 3/23, Ravi 3/20). **Man of the match:** Ch Srikanth.

■ **Man of the Tournament:** Ch Srikanth (Muralikrishna Enterprises). **Best Batsman:** Ujwel (SS Interiors). **Best Bowler:** Ravi (Muralikrishna Enterprises).

Rohit's absence will help us: Maxwell

Mumbai, Nov. 20: Rohit Sharma's absence from the upcoming white ball series is a big "positive" for Australia but K. L. Rahul is as good a player to fill in the void, feels dashing batsman Glenn Maxwell.

Rahul will be Virat Kohli's deputy in the white-ball leg since regular vice-captain Rohit is recuperating from a hamstring injury sustained during IPL.

"He (Rohit) is a class performer, so consistent as an opening batsman

with a couple of (three) double hundreds. So anytime he is not in the line-up against you, it is a positive," Maxwell said.

The three-match ODI series begins on November 27 followed by a T20 International series.

"But in saying that, India have still got back-ups, more than capable of playing that role. We saw K. L. Rahul, the performance that he put on during the last IPL was extraordinary," Maxwell further added. — PTI

UNTESTED PITCHES ARE A CONCERN: MCC CHIEF

Melbourne, Nov. 20: The drop-in pitches at the Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG) which will host the second Test between India and Australia have not been tested and it is a cause of concern, says Melbourne Cricket Club (MCC) chief executive Stuart Fox.

"It is a concern for me because I would like to give them every opportunity to trial the pitches," Fox was quoted as saying by *Sydney Morning Herald*.

The opening round matches of Sheffield Shield were held in Adelaide instead of MCG due to the Covid-19 outbreak at Melbourne and also plans to have a two-day trial match at the MCG this week also couldn't materialise due to the spread of virus in Adelaide.

"It demonstrates how vulnerable we still are day by day. Ideally, we would love to have a game and we are still working on that but, ultimately, it may not happen," Fox further added. — PTI

