

DECCAN Chronicle

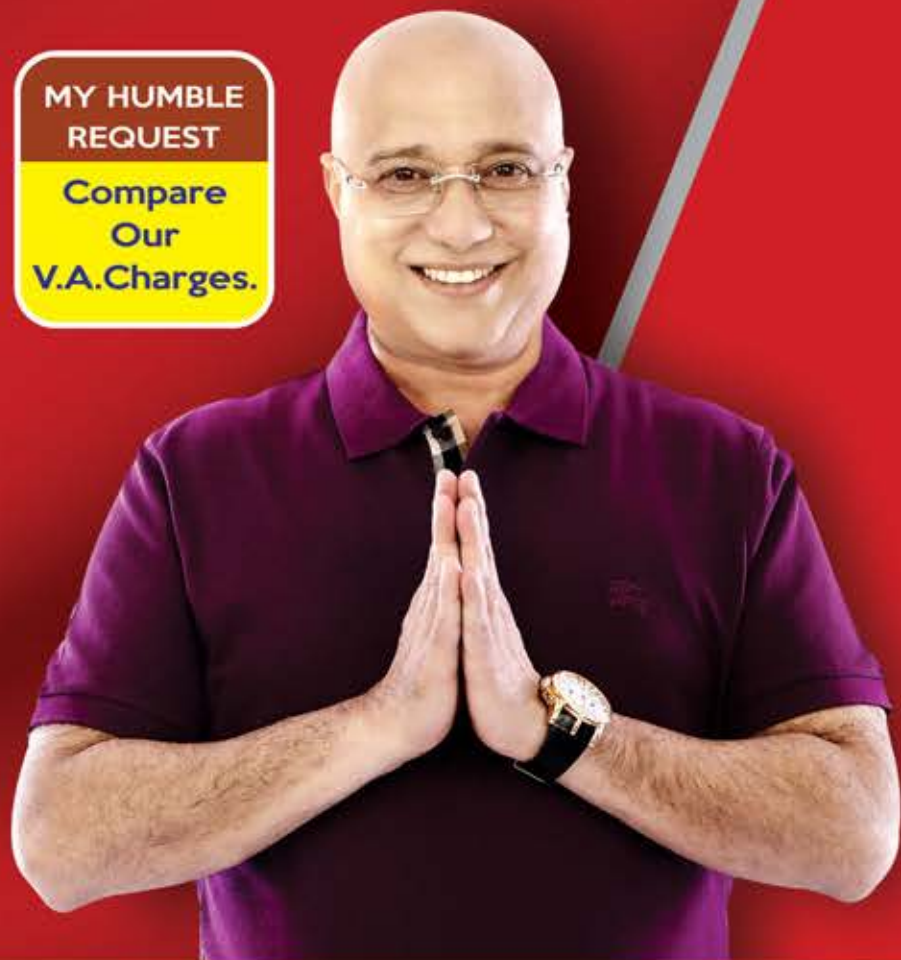
THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 29 | OCTOBER 2020

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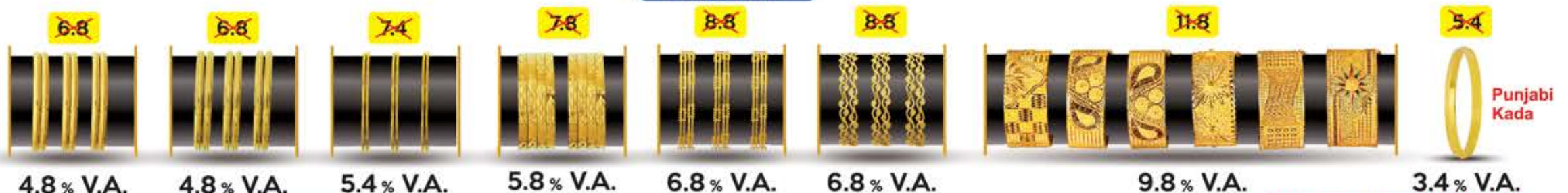
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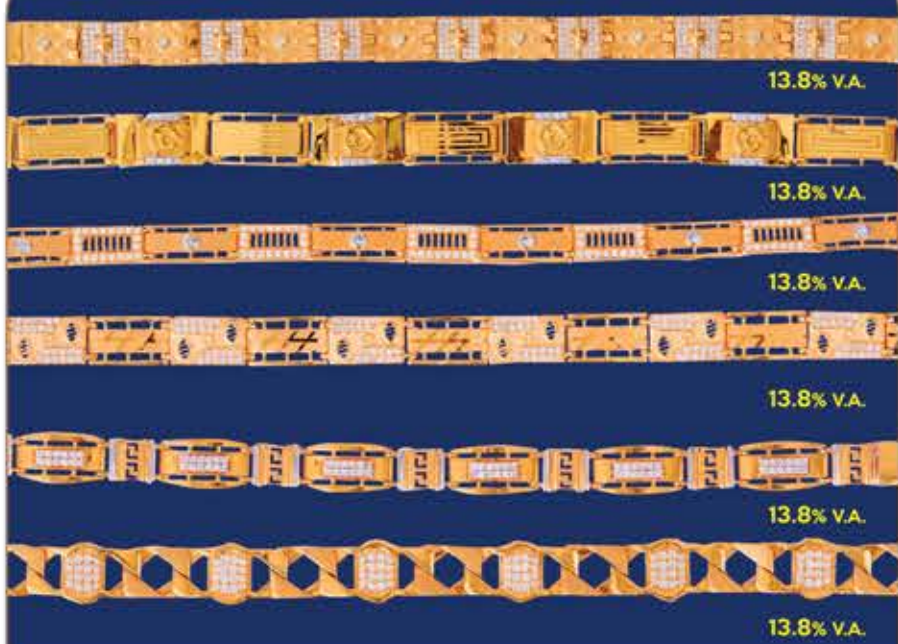
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PENDANTS



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0.0750 to 0.1349	Rs.76000 to 85000	Rs.63500
0.1350 to 0.1749	Rs.98500 to 105000	Rs.80000
0.1750 to 0.2249	Rs.108500 to 112000	Rs.91000

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DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | THURSDAY 29 | OCTOBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 30°C
Min: 25°C
Rainfall: Nil

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aippasi 13
Tithi: Thrayodashi
Star: Uthirathi/ Revathi
Rahukalam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm
Yamagandam:
6 am to 7.30 am
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.49 am
Zohar: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.14 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.58 pm

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+30,633)	(+256)
80,19,738	1,20,311

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,516)
TN: 7,16,751 11,018

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

4,45,45,799

DEATHS

11,75,945

COUNTRIES,
AREAS WITH
CASES 215

worldometers.info

Vanathi made BJP women's wing chief

Chennai: Vanathi Srinivasan has been made the national president of BJP's women wing (Mahila Morcha) with immediate effect, according to a notification from the BJP national secretary Arun Singh. The 50-year-old politician from Coimbatore had held many posts in her political career that reportedly started with the ABVP during her college days. She was made a vice-president of Tamil Nadu BJP recently.

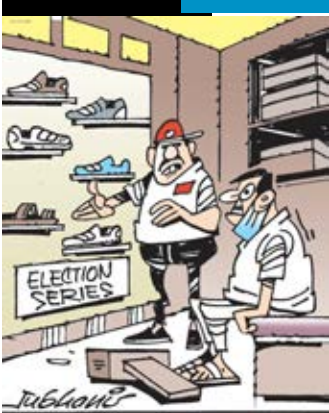


SC refuses to hear plea for disbursal of central funds to TN local bodies

New Delhi: The Supreme Court Wednesday refused to entertain a PIL seeking direction to the Centre to release grants for Tamil Nadu local bodies from 2016 till date. The plea alleged that on an average ₹4,000 crore annual funds for local bodies in the state have not been released since 2016 by Union ministries of finance and panchayati raj, stopping of development works

COUNTER

POINT



New range, tough and costs less... to throw at candidates!

Dividing districts, a new poll strategy

G BABU JAYAKUMAR & D SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 28

The AIADMK and the DMK, the two major political parties in the State, have started gearing up for the 2021 Assembly elections adopting one common strategy: to divide their party districts and forming one district for every two Assembly constituencies.

Within Chennai, the AIADMK hitherto had three districts namely North

● **Both the AIADMK and the DMK feel that by bringing two constituencies under one district secretary, electioneering could be easily monitored and that the secretaries would be able to spend more time and energy in each of the constituencies**

Chennai South, South Chennai North and South Chennai South. Now, according to a party press release on Wednesday, six districts have been carved out of them for administrative convenience.

Now, the districts go by the

names North Chennai South (East), North Chennai South (West), South Chennai North (East), South Chennai North (West), South Chennai South (East) and South Chennai South (West) and each of them have different district secretaries.

The DMK, too, has increased its districts from 65 to 72 and plans are afoot to add more districts with a view to bringing two Assembly constituencies under one district, headed by a secretary. Both the parties feel that by bringing two constituencies under one district secretary, electioneering could be easily monitored and that the secretaries would be able to spend more time and energy in each of the constituencies.

Otherwise, the DMK had already called for booth committee meetings at the various districts and the party high command had been meeting district level office-bearers in Chennai for the past 10 days in batches. Party president M.K. Stalin had already addressed the district level leaders through video conference and met the district secretaries and office-bearers in Chennai, zone-wise. The series of meetings con-

cluded on Wednesday with Northern zone leaders meeting the president.

Apart from Mr Stalin, top leaders of the party like general secretary Durai Murugan, treasurer T.R. Baalu, principal secretary K.N. Nehru and other deputy general secretaries took part in the discussions in which district level functionaries were encouraged to come up their observations, views and ideas on winning the next elections.

■ P4

Southwest monsoon withdraws, northeast monsoon sets in: IMD

New Delhi, Oct. 28: The southwest monsoon finally withdrew from the entire country on Wednesday, 13 days after its normal date of retreat, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

With this, the northeast monsoon, a phenomenon that brings rainfall over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, parts of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala during October to

December, has commenced, it said.

"In view of significant reduction in rainfall activity over most parts of the country, the southwest monsoon has withdrawn from the entire country today October 28." According to the weatherman, a cyclonic circulation lies over southwest Bay of Bengal, off north Tamil Nadu coast in lower and mid tropospheric levels.

— PTI

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Boiler blast: SC refuses to entertain plea challenging NGT order



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Don slams media for Joe graft case censor

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Mumbai Indians beat RCB by 5 wickets



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ARMY COMMANDERS' CONFERENCE

Talks with China to continue, troops standing firm: Rajnath

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 28

Defence minister Rajnath Singh said Wednesday that while Army troops were standing firm at the northern border with China, the ongoing talks for a peaceful resolution of the standoff will continue.

Addressing the ongoing Army commanders' conference in New Delhi, being held from October 26 to 29, Mr Singh said there were no budgetary constraints for capability development and meeting other requirements of the Army.

The eighth round of the corps commander-level talks between India and China to resolve the six-month military standoff in eastern Ladakh is likely to be held soon.

With initial snowfall reported in Ladakh, he said the best weapons and winter clothing will be provided to the troops. "It is our national responsibility to ensure availability of the best weapons, equipment and clothing to our troops braving extreme weather and hostile forces to defend our territorial integrity," said Mr Singh.



The commanders are deliberating on all aspects of the existing security scenarios, the situation in the hinterland and challenges for the security apparatus.

Referring to the situation along the western border, he complimented the Indian Army's response to cross-border terrorism and ceasefire violations. "I compliment the excellent synergy between the Central armed police forces, the police and the Army in tackling the menace of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir. It is due to the synergised operations in the Valley that the Union territory of Jammu and Kashmir is moving to a stable and peaceful environment conducive for overall growth and development," said Mr Singh.

Border standoff with India bilateral issue, says China

Beijing, Oct. 28: China on Wednesday said its border standoff with India in eastern Ladakh is a bilateral issue, and asked the US to "stop" its Indo-Pacific strategy, terming it as an attempt to impose American hegemony in the region.

The remarks by the Chinese Foreign Ministry came a day after Secretary of State Mike Pompeo assured India that the US stands firmly with it to confront threats to its sovereignty.

Reacting to the US push for closer defence ties with India, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin told a media briefing here on Wednesday that "the border affairs between China and India are matters between the two countries."

"The border situation is generally stable at the moment. Both sides have unimpeded channels for communication, and are properly handling matters through consultation and negotiation," he said.

CM: 35% not wearing masks, ensure compliance of norms

A. ARUL PALANI | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami on Wednesday urged officials to ensure the strict implementation of safety protocols as about 35 per cent of people in the state do not wear masks, one of the preventive measures against Covid-19.

Addressing a review meeting on the pandemic with top bureaucrats and district collectors on Wednesday, Mr Palaniswami said lack of awareness has prompted people to throw caution to the wind and directed the district administrations to take steps to ensure its compliance by all.

Many people even the state capital Chennai did not comply with the mask



rule ahead of the Deepavali season, the chief Minister observed and directed the officials, especially the police, to step in and create awareness. Spraying disinfectants at regular intervals in the virus affected areas was among the key measures to prevent the spread of the contagion, he said.

The state government has so spent ₹7,372.25 crore on prevention, treatment and relief activities. Holding fever camps in all districts, conducting door-to-door checks for symptomatic

persons, doing RT-PCR tests and isolating the infected people and treating them had resulted in a dip in fresh and active cases, he added.

He said the state's test positivity rate was a low 7.39 per cent and credited doctors for the achievement. As many as 6,75,518 people have been cured of the disease and the recovery rate was 94.57 per cent while the fatality rate was 1.53 per cent. The daily infections have been less than 5,000 for the past 17 days and dipped below 3,000 in the past four days.

The active cases in the state were less than 30,000. As on Tuesday, Tamil Nadu's total coronavirus cases stood at 7,14,235 with 10,983 deaths while the active cases were 27,734.

Controversy over AIIMS nominee

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT 28

DMK president M.K. Stalin, several political leaders and many common people came down heavily on the appointment of Shanmugha Subbiah, a Chennai-based oncologist who recently landed in a women harassment case, to the managing committee of the All-India Institute of Medical

Sciences (AIIMS) that is to come up in Madurai.

Urging Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami to write to the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to remove Dr Subbiah from the committee and appoint Members of Parliament from the State, Mr Stalin said Dr Subbiah, ABVP's national president, had indulged in indecent behavior in front of his neighbour's apartment

following a fight with the woman over the use of the parking lot allotted to her.

The incident that happened in July had created a sensation then as several allegations against him came out when the women's harassment case had hit media headlines. The woman neighbor was also forced to withdraw the complaint, which allowed the doctor to get away from the case. ■ P5

SHORT TAKES

Integrated farming scheme a success in Thanjavur

G. SRINIVASAN | DC
THANJAVUR, OCT. 28

The integrated farming scheme, implemented in Thanjavur district from 2018, has benefited a large number of farmers, said M.Govinda Rao, Thanjavur district collector, on Wednesday.

In a press release, he said that during 2020-21, so far 400 farmers in Pattukottai, Peravurani, Thanjavur and Budalur blocks benefited from the scheme with a disbursement of ₹2.40 crore as subsidy. During 2018-19, 500 farmers in Thiruvonam block gained from the scheme and a subsidy of ₹5 crore was disbursed.

During 2019-20, 300 farmers in Papanasam and Ammapettai blocks benefited and a subsidy of ₹3 crores was disbursed. The collector said the scheme aims at creating income for farmers throughout the year by utilising farm wastes, growing fodder, growing horticulture crops along with paddy etc.

Farmers are also encouraged to rear cattle, poultry etc. Farmers with 1 to 2.5 acres of land are eligible and they will get Rs 1 lakh as subsidy for taking up activities permitted under the scheme.

Onion price in Southern districts stabilise

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUNELVELI, OCT. 28

Tamil Nadu government's measures to stabilise onion prices by enhancing the supply from outside the state has impacted positively on the price of the commodity in the southern districts.

The onion price at the Central market in Tirunelveli on Wednesday witnessed a slight dip by Rs 10 from the skyrocketed price price up to Rs 120. The wholesale rate of onion at the vegetable market in Nagercoil, Kanyakumari, district on Wednesday was between ₹80 and ₹100. This is because of the stringent measures taken by the state government, according to Ravichandran, joint registrar of cooperative societies, Thoothukudi district.

As a price control measure, the Tamil Nadu government through its cooperative department initiated the sales of onion at a subsidised rate of Rs 45 per kg through its farm fresh retail outlets. In addition to this, the department too directly procured onion from Maharashtra and Karnataka to enhance the supply of the commodity in the open market apart from taking action against hoarding, said the cooperative department official, who said that 20 tonnes of onion from Nasik in Maharashtra have been brought to Thoothukudi on Tuesday.

Of this 20 tonnes, Thoothukudi district got an allocation of 10 tonnes to be sold at Rs 45 through the 15 cooperative societies run Farm fresh retail outlets, while Kanyakumari district was allotted 8 tonnes and Tirunelveli district 20 tonnes, according to the joint registrar of cooperative societies, who too added that more loads of onion is expected from Maharashtra and Karnataka as the northwest monsoon. Traders are optimistic that prices will come down before Deepavali.

As a price control measure, the Tamil Nadu government through its cooperative department initiated the sales of onion at a subsidised rate of Rs 45 per kg through its farm fresh retail outlets

CM launches scheme to provide stipend to young advocates

Chennai, Oct 28: Chief Minister K. Palaniswami on Wednesday launched a scheme to provide monthly stipend of ₹3,000 to young advocates in the state. He announced the initiative in July this year with a view to helping junior lawyers from poor background, as it would take about four years for them to start practising after completing various formalities, including enrolling in the Bar Council, an official release here said.

Eligible advocates will get the sum for a two year period. The chief minister handed over the stipend orders to nine advocates at the Secretariat here to mark the rollout of the scheme, it added. Palaniswami had in July

CM handed over the stipend orders to nine advocates at the Secretariat here to mark the rollout of the scheme

announced that the monthly stipend will be paid to newly enrolled junior lawyers for two years to help them overcome financial difficulties in pursuit of their profession.

Many young advocates could not realise their ambition due to lack of income during their initial years of practice and many of them, mostly with rural or poor background, find it difficult to sustain and as a result change profession, he had then said. —PTI



Chief Minister K. Palaniswami hands over a petition for various highway projects in the state to Union road transport and highways and MSME minister Nitin Gadkari in Chennai on Wednesday. — DC

Boiler blast: SC refuses to entertain plea challenging NGT order

New Delhi, Oct. 28: The Supreme Court Wednesday refused to entertain a plea against an NGT order imposing an interim penalty of ₹ 5 crore on NLC India Ltd in connection with a boiler blast at Neyveli Lignite Power Plant in Tamil Nadu in which 13 workers died and 10 were injured on July 1.

A three-judge bench of Justices L. Nageswara Rao, Hemant Gupta and Ajay Rastogi asked the petitioner to approach the

The petitioner then withdrew the plea with liberty to approach the high court

high court in the matter. The petitioner then withdrew the plea with liberty to approach the high court. The apex court was hearing an appeal filed by Meenava Thantai K R Selvaraj Kumar Meenvar Nala Sangam against the order of the National

Green Tribunal slapping an interim penalty of ₹ 5 crore on NLC India Ltd in connection with a boiler blast at Neyveli Lignite Power Plant. The tribunal had said independent verification of facts in the incident is necessary and the industrial unit is liable to pay interim compensation on the principle of 'Absolute Liability'. The green panel had said an interim compensation of ₹30 lakh be paid to each deceased pending final assessment. —PTI



Dr P. Shankar, IAS, Director, DIPR, takes charge as Inspector General of Registration. — DC

'Purchasing power injustice to meritorious'

From P1

Candidates who have really worked hard and secured higher marks than these candidates will surely get an impression that there was something beyond merit that can secure admission to a candidate and which was the purchasing power.

The judge said if this situation was allowed to be continued year after year and no one takes any steps to redress the same, it results in injustice to meritorious candidates.

Obviously, these seats carry a lot of monetary value to it and a student with the necessary contact and financial wherewithal can purchase this seat and undergo the course along with students who had toiled and burnt the midnight oil to secure these seats on pure merit.

The judge said if this situation was allowed to be continued year after year and no one takes any steps to redress the same, it results in injustice to meritorious candidates

Parties seek doc's immediate removal

From P1

Demanding his immediate removal from the committee, TNCC president K.S. Alagiri said a massive protest will be organised by the Youth Congress if it was not replaced.

In a statement, Alagiri recalled that it was the Tamil Nadu Congress student wing president Aswathaman who complained to the police about the continuous

harassment of the woman by Dr Subbiah. DMK MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi tweeted, "This is an endorsement of indecent behavior and also an incentive for other BJP cadre to follow suit?". Many other Twitter users posted their comments against the appointment of Dr Subbiah that the hashtag #AIIMS started trending.

Congress MP Jothamani reproduced

her letter to Union Health Minister Harsh Varadhan referring to the past behavior of the AIIMS committee member while dealing with his lone woman neighbour. Even news channels started referring to Dr Subbiah as the doctor who 'urinated at the woman's door', the image of which was caught in CCTV cameras.

Interestingly among those who tweeted

against the appointment were some doctors, who opposed the move. Dr Subbiah was the only doctor from the State to be appointed for the proposed AIIMS.

Meanwhile, a Twitter user pointed out that Dr Subbiah has been appointed as one of the directors for the proposed IIT in Palakkad, asking, "Does a premier institute in Kerala require a thug like this?"

Two men killed in road mishaps

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Two men were killed in two separate accidents in Sriperumbudur, Kanchipuram district on Tuesday night.

In the first incident, a senior technician working with a private firm died after he collided head-on with a container lorry near Mannur, Sriperumbudur.

According to the police, the deceased has been identified as Krishnan (51) a resident of Manavalan Nagar in Thiruvallur district. On Tuesday night, after work at a private company in Irungattukottai in Sriperumbudur, the victim was heading home on his two-wheeler, when the accident happened.

Police said, when he was crossing Mannur Erikkarai road, he rammed his

vehicle against a container truck. He died on the spot. Based on the alert, Sriperumbudur police rushed to the scene and sent the body for post-mortem. A case has been registered and the driver is being questioned.

In another incident, a 22-year-old man working at a private courier company was killed on Tuesday night when he was returning home on his two-wheeler near Mannur Erikkarai road.

The victim was identified as Srinivasan, from Thodukadu in Tiruvallur. On Tuesday evening, after work, he was riding on Mannur Erikkarai road, when a van rammed against his bike.

He was rushed to the Chengalpattu government hospital, however, he passed on the way. Police registered a case and begun an investigation.

PEW SEIZES 330 KG GANJA

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 28

The St.Thomas Mount PEW (Prohibition Enforcement Wing) have seized around 330 kilograms of ganja transported from Andhra Pradesh in a vehicle, near Alandur in the early hours of Wednesday, amid an ongoing crackdown on drug networks across the city. The city police commissioner appreciated the team which made the recovery.

In a drive against drugs, the St.Thomas Mount PEW team headed by Inspector Rajalakshmi and SI Jayaraman, and other officers inspected the vehicles in Asarkana, Alandur, on Tuesday night. Police said based on a specific tip-off, the team, at 3 am, stopped a Tata Eicher transporting dried fish from Andhra Pradesh to the city. The team said, as the occupants of the vehicle gave contradictory statements when questioned, the officials checked the vehicle and found a huge quantity of ganja hidden inside dried fish baskets.

M. Mahesh (29), Muthu Krishnan (36) from Red Hills, S. Murali (30), Puzhal and B.Magudeeswaran (35) were arrested and handed over to the St Thomas Mount police. Around 330 kilograms ganja, Rs 2,80,000 in cash, four mobile phones and the Tata eicher were seized from the accused.

On Wednesday, city police commissioner Mahesh Kumar Aggarwal rewarded the St.Thomas Mount PEW team for good work done by making an unprecedented seizure of 330 kg of ganja.

Bid to smuggle processed shark fins foiled at airport

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Processed shark fins worth ₹16.5 lakh were seized from two Dubai-bound passengers at the Chennai Airport on Wednesday.

Acting on specific information that some wildlife/marine products were likely to be smuggled to Dubai, a special alert and vigil were maintained by Customs officers at the departure terminal to nab the smugglers.

The officers noticed that two passengers were moving suspiciously with a carton box each in the departure area. A close watch was kept on their movement and they were intercepted after they had cleared immigration and were proceeding towards security check. From their boarding passes and passports the passengers were identified as Sathackathullah (52) of Chennai and Abbas (29), of Tiruchirappalli, who were bound for Dubai by Fly Dubai FZ 8518, a press release said.

They were questioned about the contents of their carton box. As they were evasive in their

reply they along with their checked-in luggage were brought in for detailed examination. On opening the carton boxes, three white gunny bags were found inside and on opening 9.5 kgs from one gunny bag and 14 kgs from two gunny bags of suspected wildlife products similar to shark fin were recovered.

The suspected shark fins were examined by Wildlife Crime Control Bureau officials who certified that same as "processed shark fins" and there was a probability that these belonged to a CITES-listed species.

As the export of shark fins is prohibited as per the Foreign Trade Policy, the 23.5 kgs shark fins worth Rs. 16.5 lakhs were seized under the provisions of Customs Act, 1962 read with FT (D&R) 1992.

Shark fin soup is an expensive delicacy served in high-end restaurants abroad. The Chinese consider it a symbol of prosperity and conferrer of good health. The practice of finning is causing the collapse of shark populations around the world. Further investigation is under progress.



Seized shark fins.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
AMENDMENT
Following Amendment carried out in the Tender Notice No. E-R-1:58-20-21, Date of Opening 05.11.2020.
Description: Earnest Money (INR)
Existing Value: ₹ 4,82,500/-
Modified Value: ₹ 4,77,900/-
Tender value (INR): Existing Value: ₹ 6,64,94,101/- Modified Value: ₹ 6,65,72,389.32. Details are available on our website: www.irops.gov.in
Sr. Divisional Engineer
PRI/ENG/CI/100 (Line) Raipur.
f South East Central Railway @secar

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
E-TENDER NOTICE No. YE
29/2020-21/08 Dated 21.10.2020
The undersigned on behalf of the President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works:

Sl.	Item of Work	Approx. Value
1.	Provision of basic Infrastructure facility for cleaning staff in Mysuru division-Electrical arrangements.	Rs. 18,05,644/-
2.	Provision of lift/2 Nos./ Rs. 7,20,948/- all Kadur and Birur station at PF-1 & PF-2/23 and Power Supply Arrangements. (Provision of Electrical Arrangements).	Rs. 7,20,948/-
3.	SAGARA- Provision of High level Platform for PF No.2 for a length of 540 mtrs. (RS PF shelter for length of (45x7.0m side) - Electrical Arrangements and Shivamogga Halt re-construction of Station Building - Electrical Arrangement	Rs. 20,54,101/-

Last date of submission of bids: Up to 11:00 hrs of 13.11.2020
For details log on: www.irops.gov.in
Divisional Railway Manager (Electrical)
South Western Railway, Mysuru
PUB/170AAS/PRB/SWR/2020-21

भारतीय प्रतिभूति और विनिमय बोर्ड
Securities and Exchange Board of India

PUBLIC NOTICE

Refund for NCDs of Moral Group of Companies

SEBI had passed an order dated October 31, 2017 bearing no. WTM/GM/EPD/69/2017-18 in the matter of Moral Group Of Companies (copy available at www.sebi.gov.in), against the companies and their directors, *inter alia* directing them to refund the amounts mobilized by them from investors through issuance of Non Convertible Debentures (NCDs) during June 2010 to December 2012:

Sl.	Name of the noticee	PAN	DIN/CIN
1	Moral Devcon Limited	AAHCM3170B	U45400UP2011PLC045251
2	Moral Health & Personal Care Limited	AAHCM3158P	U51900MP2011PLC026128
3	Moral Commotrade Limited	AAGCM8052P	U51909WB2010PLC152841
4	Moral Infrastructures Corporation Limited	AAGCM4867L	U45300WB2010PLC145291
5	Arun Kumar	AGZPK5896J	02800810
6	Ajay Kumar Sharma	ANQPS0753F	02356951
7	Gyaneshwar Sharma	BQHP59902F	U1881854

Since the abovementioned companies and their directors had claimed to have completed the refund to investors, SEBI, vide order dated March 20, 2020 bearing no.WTM/GM/EPD/84/2019-20 (copy available at www.sebi.gov.in) directed them to publish notices in newspapers (English and Hindi) inviting complaints / claims from investors in respect of the abovementioned NCDs that were still outstanding. The abovementioned companies carried out the newspaper publication of such notice on May 09, 2020.

Notice is hereby given to the general public, calling upon them to file their complaints / claims, if any, pertaining to the refund of money in respect of the NCDs issued by the abovementioned companies. The complaints / claims, in writing, along with copies of all supporting documents such as NCD certificates, payment receipts etc., may be sent to the following address or email IDs, so as to reach SEBI within 30 days from the date of this notice:

The Division Chief,
Enforcement Department-I (DRA-V),
SEBI Bhavan-II, Plot no. C-7, G Block,
Bandra Kurla Complex, Bandra East, Mumbai – 400051.
Email IDs: ashutosh@sebi.gov.in, avinashk@sebi.gov.in

Date: 20.10.2020
Place: Mumbai

Ashutosh Arun
Deputy General Manager

Davp:15204/11/0191/2021

Ooty carrot fetches windfall for farmers

B. RAVICHANDRAN | DC
OOTY, OCT. 28

The price of Ooty carrot has touched the three-figure mark. Packed with a rich quantity of vitamin-A, the Ooty carrot, which is known for its brilliant colour and taste, had become a must buy farm produce even for tourists who visit the Nilgiris. Generally the price of Ooty carrot hovers around Rs 40 per kg. Now, for the past couple of weeks there had been an unprecedented upward trend as a kilogram of carrot began to fetch between Rs 100 and Rs 110.

Though the carrot price has begun to pinch the common man, it has brought unexpected tidings for the farmers. R. Rangasamy, the



president of the Nilgiris Potato and Vegetable Growers Association, said

that a couple of factors including the climate and lockdown effects brought a

<<<<

Fresh Ooty grown carrots arranged in boxes.

— DC

new high for carrot price this year."

"Due to transportation issues after lockdown quite a few farmers stopped cultivating carrots. That resulted in carrots being cultivated in small acreage. The heavy rains in August and September in Ooty also played spoil-sport with the carrot sowing season. So, the farmers who braved these odds to take up carrot cultivation are yielding rich dividends now. This trend may continue for some more time" he elaborated.

DECCAN Chronicle

29 OCTOBER 2020

Why India must not put all eggs in the US basket

The third edition of the India-US dialogue in the “2+2” format — the annual event at which the foreign ministers and defence of the two countries take stock of the international security affairs — which was held in New Delhi last Tuesday had the obvious context of the Chinese aggression in Ladakh, and this enabled both sides to orchestrate extreme camaraderie.

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, in his opening remarks, spoke of China’s “reckless aggression”, perhaps implying that our northern neighbour’s military venture in eastern Ladakh was foredoomed. This is good for national morale, and apparently rests in no small measure on assurances of US support. As if to confirm this, US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, who likes to sound hawkish on China, noted in the joint press conference after the meeting that the US would do everything in support of India’s “sovereignty”.

This sounds a shade condescending, and may suggest to some that in the US reckoning India may not be altogether prepared to defend its borders entirely on its own. However, the current Indian leadership will just have to pocket the superciliousness. It has just finished signing — also on Tuesday — the Basic Cooperation and Exchange Agreement (Beca), the last of the four “foundational agreements” on which the US insists when it enters into a deep partnership with a country involving close defence relationship. The external affairs minister, S. Jaishankar, pithily summed up the discussions when he informed the media that the conversations had a strong “political military” content.

An assertion of such a nature is unlikely to be tested in the severest of conditions any time soon in the event that the China’s “People’s Liberation Army” (threatening currently to ‘liberate’ Ladakh without solicitation) changes its mind in view of the growing international hostility it may sense to its militaristic designs over a large swathe of continental and maritime territory. But India will do well not to overlook history, although contexts may change from era to era. In 1962, Prime Minister Nehru had specifically sought “air support” from the Kennedy administration to ward off Chinese aggression in our northeast, but this was denied although Washington did extend support in other ways.

When President Donald Trump paid an official visit in February this year, India and the US had escalated their relationship to that of Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, the closest India can think of getting to “strategic ally” (of the Nato variety) in the age of multi-polarity, and in the just ended “2+2” conversation, it was decided, according to the joint statement that was issued, to expand this framework in order “to realise the full potential” of the Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership. Perhaps it is a foregone conclusion that greater purchase of American military platforms and equipments will ensue and greater clarity lent to the “shared vision” of India and the US for the Indo-Pacific which was first introduced into the India-US relationship during the visit of President Barack Obama in PM Narendra Modi’s first term.

World must follow Macron

It has been a watershed moment in the over two-decade-old clash of civilisations of which the intelligentsia world over has now sat up and taken note. When a teenager beheaded a teacher about two weeks back for showing the provocative *Charlie Hebdo* cartoons to his students only as the best example of freedom of expression, all of France rallied for the country’s famous principle of *laïcité* (secularism) and celebrated culture of discourse wherein any opinion whatsoever is open to scrutiny and vigorous, non-violent debate. But what made the show of support different was the fact that during its course for the first time a head of state openly called upon immigrants rather than the existing population to integrate with French multiculturalism.

This newspaper unequivocally stands behind President Emmanuel Macron to uphold the democratic values of freedom of expression, an activity at the heart of knowledge, freedom of conscience, human dignity and equality between men and women. It also applauds Mr Macron’s plan weeks before to draft a law to fight “Islamist separatism” which will counter the favouring of personal laws over France’s republican values that adversely affect women’s rights. So far, these have been compromised by putative liberals and in the very name of multiculturalism. And that is ironical, as human rights are a universal declaration (Paris, 1948).

Mr Macron’s drawing of distinction between “French Islam” and other forms is also significant in the light of his country’s intensifying brushes with Islamism culminating in the Nice attack of 2016 killing 87. Close on the heels of that attack, families were beaten up in Toulon by Muslim youth purportedly offended at the sight of women cycling on a holiday wearing shorts. It was the inevitable fallout of the rise of Islamic fundamentalism as a reaction to insecurities caused by globalisation, a phenomenon first identified by Dutch sociologist-politician Pim Fortuyn in 1997. Fortuyn was assassinated in 2002.

As a politician himself, Mr Macron should know best how to keep his distance from far right forces. These forces have been trying to hijack this essentially humanitarian cause right since after the agnostic left first brought it to public domain. Nevertheless, it is imperative upon other nations in the world to confront this ever-growing global malaise and see through the power play of leaders like Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan whose aim it is to challenge Saudi Arabia’s leadership of the Sunni world and his supporters, Imran Khan among them. Few indeed spare a thought for the worst sufferers — women in regressive societies who risk torture and opprobrium for routine freedoms but lack a political voice.

KAUSHIK MITTER Editor

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Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Dhesi, Khattar’s favourite, gets a second innings

Politicians are sometimes loath to let a favourite babu go off into retirement. They find ways to bring them back into the administration. In 2017, Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh had appointed retired chief secretary Suresh Kumar as his chief principal secretary, even though the state had a regular principal secretary, another IAS officer, because Mr Kumar enjoyed his full trust.

Now taking a cue from the neighbouring state, Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar has sprung a similar surprise on his administration, and one which is likely to alter power equations in the Chief Minister’s Office (CMO). He has appointed retired IAS officer D.S. Dhesi as the chief principal secretary in the CMO.

According to sources, Mr Dhesi

was Haryana’s chief secretary for four years and retired last year. He was then appointed chairman of the Haryana Electricity Regulatory Commission (HERC), which he has now left to join his new assignment. Though his duties have not been spelt out, it is quite likely that Mr Dhesi will become another power centre in the CMO, with all important files meant for Mr Khattar being routed through him.

THE ‘SPECTRUM SECRETARY’ Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba will head a panel of secretaries to streamline the spectrum allocation process. The other members of the panel are home secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, defence secretary Ajay Kumar, telecom secretary Anshu Prakash, I&B secretary Amit Khare and secretary,

department of space, K. Sivan. Those in the know say that the committee’s ambit may eventually be widened to also include spectrum pricing issues, always contentious, as we have seen in the past.

According to sources, the high-powered panel will examine the possibility of drawing up an annual calendar for auction of the spectrum that will give telecom companies a clear road map of the quantum as well as the frequency of spectrum being offered for commercial use. It will also sort out the various spectrum-related issues between ministries — as seen in the composition of the panel.

This may meet a long-standing demand of telecom companies who have been asking the government to clear the air for auctioning spec-

trum, which will help them plan and allocate resources efficiently, optimise their networks and roll out new technologies.

TOO BUSY TO CLEAN AIR

It is that time of the year, Covid or not, when the air quality in north India deteriorates rapidly. Stubble burning by farmers in Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi is a major contributor to this. Every year several steps are announced, media raises a big stink, but nothing much has happened.

This year, stubble burning has begun already and urgent steps would be required to prevent Delhi from turning into a gas chamber. The Supreme Court has now taken a serious note of the failure of these states to stop stubble burning which poses a serious threat to pub-

lic health in the region. It directed the respective chief ministers of these states to remain present when the court takes up the matter of combating air pollution at the next hearing. Hopefully, some meaningful action will emerge from the apex court’s intervention.

Meanwhile, the state administration in Punjab and Haryana especially are busy dealing with angry farmers agitating against the Centre’s controversial farm bills, the chief secretaries have their hands full already. This year could see a repeat of our previous trysts with polluted air at the onset of winter with babus issuing the usual warnings and threats to fine farmers who are burning stubble.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@Twitter.com](#). Let’s multiply the effect.

Subhani



As US embrace deepens, watch for pitfalls ahead



K.C. Singh

The foreign and defence ministers of India and the United States met, in the “2+2” format, in New Delhi on October 26-27. They first engaged their counterparts and then met in the 2+2 format, progressively favoured by many countries as national security, defence and diplomacy are in today’s complex and interconnected world quite seamless.

Significantly, they were meeting just a week before Americans go to the polls to elect the President, one-third of the Senate and a new Congress on November 3, and against the backdrop of the six-month old India-China military standoff in Ladakh. In a choreographed press interaction, with only two journalists on either side allowed one question each, external affairs minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar unconvin-

gently explained the event as normally due. Perhaps both sides had unrelated compulsions for the scheduling. Unlike recent US presidential elections, many traditionally pro-Republican states are now swing states, including Texas and Georgia. The former was last won by a Democratic candidate (Jimmy Carter) in 1976. In both states, non-white immigrants are tilting the demographic balance towards Democrats. Joe Biden is, in the last week of electioneering, swinging through them sensing change. Thus, was the meeting really sought to allow the projection of Mr Trump as pro-India and resurrect the “Howdy Modi” Houston rally’s euphoria for the diaspora vote?

India, on the other hand, would have weighed the advantage of signing the Basic Exchange and Cooperation Agreement (Beca) now. If Mr Biden were to win, he would only assume office in January. A new secretary of state may not have India on his to-do list till

well into 2021. With the India-China confrontation now likely to linger, India needs to optimise the use of American equipment like Apache helicopters, or new armed drones, if acquired, or other US transport and reconnaissance platforms already deployed. India’s access to the US geo-spatial network will have a multiplier effect on the targeting accuracy and lethality of these weapons, thus influencing the Chinese tactical calculus.

The joint statement expectedly details myriad themes such as the India-US relationship being raised to a Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership during the February 2020 visit of President Donald Trump. But the scope has been limited by the context. Covid-19 and its handling gets prominence as the Democrats are using it in the presidential election. Also related is the new Indo-Pacific alliance sought to be built around resilient supply chains. Trade, on the other hand, finds cursory mention in the statement despite it being Mr Trump’s principal preoccupation before the pandemic. The impending election has focused minds on the immediately relevant ideas. US secretary of state Mike Pompeo, in his remarks, recalled the New Age Vision finalised during his earlier visit. With a flourish, he announced that India and US stood against “all manner of threats”, not just from China. It is the language normally used among treaty allies. The US, he added, would stand with India to “protect its sovereignty and integrity”. His hyperbole hardly reflects the views of his government, as Mr Trump is by instinct an isolationist. Was he auditioning for a presidential run in 2024?

Two other important themes, although mentioned in the joint statement, are left undressed. One, Mr Trump’s tightened immi-

gration controls, in the mistaken belief that it would help ameliorate job losses due to Covid-19 lockdowns. Two, the traditional flow of Indian students to US universities. Again, there is a misguided move to cancel student visas if university courses have gone online. This has left many students stranded, both unable to repay borrowed money or complete their education and seek employment. The joint statement simply skips over these problems while restating past formulations on students as a people-to-people bridge.

The focus is basically on defence cooperation and sales as that plays well back home, particularly during an election. There is an interesting decision to exchange liaison officers, with an Indian officer to be embedded at Navcent, Bahrain, which is the naval element of the US Central Command. Similarly, a US officer will be received by India’s Information Fusion Centre for the Indian Ocean Region (IFC-IOR). The Quad is lauded, as too India’s invitation to the Australian Navy to join Japan, the US and India in the Malabar naval exercises.

Some of the benefits of the growing strategic clinch with the United States have been recounted above. What can be the pitfalls? Firstly, while the overall trajectory of India-US relations would not materially alter under a Joe Biden administration, some elements may. Mr Biden’s priority will be to rebuild US alliances, particularly with Nato, shore up the US economy and try reducing Trumpian unpredictability. He may cautiously attempt to reengage China. Mr Pompeo’s belligerence

may be replaced by a more nuanced containment strategy for China. A Biden administration may also bring greater focus on human rights, civil society protection and freedom of speech and media. All that may require a fresh rebalancing among the major powers, including in Asia.

Second, the *Wall Street Journal* correspondent’s query is important as he sought to know the status of India’s defence relationship with Russia after the signing of Beca now and the other three foundational agreements that were signed earlier. The defence minister parried it in Hindi, but the message was that India was unlikely to change its policy of buying weapons from multiple sources. But is this sustainable, with the closer integration of US communications, logistics and geo-spatial systems with Indian weapons systems?

India may acquire more US weapons systems to narrow the strategic gap with China during the coming months. M.K. Rasgotra, a former foreign secretary and doyen of Indian diplomacy, now in his late 90s like Henry Kissinger, recently wrote that the US needs to devise a concessional buy-lease programme for India to boost quickly its defence capability to deter China. Mr Trump has been too erratic and transactional to think that big. The next US President would inherit a destabilised West Asia, a fractious South Asia and a China-intimidated East Asia. He would require vision and leadership to peacefully contain China, curb the worst instincts of the Narendra Modi government and the BJP while helping India to rise and heal the fractures of the Islamic world? He can regain global leadership by reimagining a post-Covid world with new and flexible global alliances and reformed institutions of global governance. Covid-19 has created a historic inflexion point for change, which the brave and the wise must shape. Otherwise, rising revisionist powers like China will fill the vacuum.

The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.

LETTERS

MANUSMRITI ROW

Apropos *Khushbu* held ahead of protest against *Thiruma*, released (Oct.28).

Tamil Nadu politics is so peculiar, the dlibs and drab political outfits which are headed by lightweights do pick up trivial or silly things indulging in fracas only to be in the limelight!

Otherwise Thirumavalavan of VCK thinking that his party is forgotten would not have quoted Manusmriti cried hoarse that it had denigrated. The women only to remind the electorate that his ‘freed che-etahs’ are still active, basking under the Sun! And the BJP emboldened with the parties-hopping yesteryear actress Khushbu since joined it, would not have entered the street show as a savior of weaker sex’s dignity, lambasted Thiruma alleging that he has insulted the womenfolk! The great Manu must be turning in his grave, aghast how both the parties which cling to the apron strings of either major ‘kazhagam’ brazenly used his ‘Smriti’ which is redundant today, playing such bizarre politics to gain political mileage! Unlimited opportunism?

A. Seshagiri Rao, Chennai

VCK LEADER Thol Thirumavalavan has quoted verbatim what is stated about women in Manusmriti and the BJP has twisted his statement to make it appear as if he has denigrated women. The party is only trying to get political mileage out of it. When DMK president Stalin tried to intercede, he, too, was branded anti-women. It is ironical that actor Khushbu whose bold stance on premarital sex was once denounced by the same elements is now on the side of these hypocrites and tricksters.

Tharcus S. Fernando, Chennai

GOOGLE UNDER SCANNER

THE GROWING influence of tech behemoths such as Google and Facebook on human lives across the globe is simply baffling. Citing the abuse of its market dominant position and its indulgence in anti competitive behaviour, the US Department of Justice had launched an anti-trust suit against tech major Google. As a gateway to the internet and a search advertising behemoth, Google maintained and continued to maintain its monopoly power. Whether the dominance of Google has stemmed from its exclusionary practices or not, what is obvious is that its dominance is mostly driven by network effects. As tech majors such as Google and Facebook shape how people live, think, consume, vote, read and work, concrete steps to holding them accountable while protecting competition is the need of the hour.

M. Jeyaram, Sholavandan

IN BRIEF

MAN WHO KILLED 9 IN AP GETS DEATH PENALTY

ANUDEEP CEREMILLA | DC WARANGAL, OCT. 28

A Warangal court on Wednesday sentenced to death Sanjay Kumar Yadav, 24, a native of Daulatpur in Bihar, for the murder of nine people in Gorrekunta of Warangal Rural district on May 20 this year.

Additional sessions judge K. Jaya Kumar delivered the judgement after the public prosecutor Satyanarayana, argued strongly before him that Yadav should be hanged as it was the appropriate punishment for a person like him.

The defendant pleaded guilty to murder before the judge.

During the night of May 20, Yadav sedated and drowned nine persons in an agriculture well on the premises of a warehouse.

He killed the family of Md. Maqsood who migrated to Warangal from West Bengal 20 years ago. He had an extra marital affair with Maqsood's wife's sister's daughter, Rafika, who lives with her two children in Warangal. Sanjay, who promised to marry Rafika, moved around with her teenage daughter. Rafika questioned his behaviour and forced him to marry her immediately.

On the pretext of going with her to meet her family in West Bengal, he took Rafika on a train and threw her out of it, after strangulating her near Nidadavolu in Andhra Pradesh on March 11.

When Maqsood's family questioned him about the whereabouts of Rafika, he decided to kill all of them. He mixed sleeping pills in the food during the birthday party of Maqsood's three-year-old grandson. He carried the unconscious persons to the well one by one and threw them in.

IRANI TESTS + FOR COVID

New Delhi, Oct. 28: Union minister Smriti Irani on Wednesday said she has tested positive for Covid-19.

The women and child development and textiles minister asked the people who came in contact with her to get themselves tested for the disease at the earliest.

Telangana, Kerala see spurt in Covid cases

Kerala reports 8.790 new cases; TS numbers double

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, OCT. 28

In a setback of sorts, new Covid-19 cases clambered back in most south Indian states on Wednesday with Telangana and Kerala reporting a surge.

The Telangana health department reported 1,481 fresh cases on Wednesday. The rise in cases, from 837 on Monday, also reflects an increase in the number of tests that rose from 21,099 on Monday to 40,081 on Tuesday.

There were four deaths in the last 24 hours. While the total Covid-19 cases in Telangana stand at 2,34,152, the cumulative

fatalities reached 1,319. As many as 2,14,917 people have so far recovered from the disease.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area recorded 279 new cases, followed by 138 in Medchal-Malkajgiri, and 111 in Ranga Reddy districts. Khammam and Nalgonda districts each had 82 fresh cases, while Karimnagar and Bhadradri-Kothagudem recorded 79 cases each.

Covid numbers in Kerala too showed a surge after a brief lull on Wednesday when it reported 8,790 new cases, including 94 health workers, taking the total count

to 3.98 lakh. The death toll climbed to 1,403 with 27 more fatalities.

The state had reported 5,457 cases on Tuesday and 4287 on Monday. The total recoveries have gone up to 3,16,692, with 7,660 getting cured today, the minister said in a press release.

Andhra Pradesh registered 2,949 new Covid-19 cases scaling up the tally to 8,14,774 and 18 deaths taking the toll to 6,643 in the last 24 hours.

Of a total of 77,73,681 samples tested so far, 7,81,509 patients were discharged after recovery while 26,622 are under-going treatment.

Among daily cases of Covid-19, West Godavari topped the state with 492 followed by 457 in Krishna.

Karnataka's Covid-19 tally and cumulative fatalities reached 8,12,784 and 11,046 respectively, on Wednesday with 3,146 fresh infections and 55 deaths on Wednesday. A total of 7,384 people were discharged, taking the aggregate recoveries to 7,33,558 and the active cases stood at 68,161, a bulletin said

(With inputs from Thiruvananthapuram, Vijayawada and Bengaluru)

Par panel raps Twitter for showing Ladakh in China

CHINA MAY USE MILITANTS TO FOMENT TROUBLE IN N-E

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, OCT. 28

Even after significant improvement in law and order scenario, the unified command of security forces has decided not to scale down counter-insurgency operations in Assam and adjoining states as there is apprehension of China trying to extend direct or indirect help to armed rebel groups of India to create unrest in the north-eastern states.

The apprehension about China instigating insurgent groups of northeast was based on a report of China's *Global Times* where it was stated that if India plays Taiwan card, China should also help militant groups of India to retaliate.

Admitting that Chinese agencies have been directly or indirectly helping the militant groups of north-east and under the present circumstances, the Chinese agencies would definitely like to provide help to revive insurgency in the region, security sources present in the unified command meeting, however, told this newspaper that GOC 4 Corps of Indian Army Lt. Gen. Shantanu Dayal who chaired the unified command, assured that there was no need to worry on China front. He asserted that Indian army in the north-east was fully prepared and capable of responding to any kind of threat emanating from across the border.

Sources said some members also raised questions about Twitter's transparency policy and its actions during elections, especially vis-a-vis their policies in other countries. Asked for their com-

ments, a Twitter spokesperson said in an emailed statement, "The recent geotagging issue was swiftly resolved by our teams. We are committed to openness, transparency around our work and will remain in regular touch with the Government to share timely updates."

Multiple sources in the panel said Twitter officials "begged apology" for Ladakh being shown as part of China on its app, but they were told by members that whatever they wanted to say on the issue should be given in writing in form of an affidavit by Twitter Inc, the parent company of the social media platform.

They said Twitter India is "just a marketing arm" of US-based parent Twitter Inc, and therefore a written reply should come from them.

Twitter Asia, based in Singapore, mainly deals with advertisement revenues and takes all major decisions related to the region, some members opined.

Officials who deposed before the panel on behalf of Twitter India included Shagufta Kamran, senior manager, public policy; Ayushi Kapoor, legal counsel; Pallavi Walia, policy communications; and Manvinder Bali, corporate security.

Officials from the Ministry of Electronics, Information and Technology, and the Ministry of Law and Justice also deposed before the panel.

The Indian government on October 22 had warned Twitter about its location setting that showed Leh in China, saying any disrespect towards the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable.

In a strongly-worded letter, Ajay Sawhney, Secretary in the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY), asked Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey to respect the country's sensitivities, sources in the ministry had said.

— PTI

ED arrests former secy to Kerala Chief Minister

From Page 3

The ED team which was camping in capital later took him to Kochi by road.

The ED, which later recorded the arrest of Mr Sivasankar, said the senior official had in a statement conceded that he had called up customs officials at the behest of Ms Swapna.

Mr Sivasankar's alleged links with the accused in the gold smuggling case are under the scanner of various agencies including the National Investigation Agency and the Customs. The officer's Whatsapp chats with his chartered accountant Venugopal which came out in the public domain recently, had given some hints that he was overseeing the financial transaction of Ms Swapna Suresh, a key accused in the gold smuggling case. However, there is no concrete evidence has

emerged yet to connect him with the gold smuggling case.

The NIA, Customs, and the ED are conducting separate probes into the seizure of 30 kg of gold worth Rs 15 crore which was smuggled in "diplomatic baggage" at the Thiruvananthapuram international airport on July 5.

While opposing the anticipatory bail plea, the ED had given strong hints about Mr Sivasankar's possible involvement in money laundering with Ms Swapna.

The court observed that even if the officer's argument were to be considered, there was no need for him to interfere in matters concerning management of Ms Swapna's finances. "Considering the gravity of the offences under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), the petitioner

is not entitled for the discretionary relief," it held.

The court observed that the investigating agency may not be having sufficient evidence at the moment to arraign him as an accused in the case and there may not be sufficient evidence for now to suggest he is guilty. But the ED has gathered sufficient material to interrogate him for which he is bound to cooperate as a senior government officer.

The questioning of Mr Sivasankar continued at the ED office in Kochi till late in the evening. Workers of opposition parties including the Congress and the BJP organised protests against the officer outside ED office.

The leaders of opposition parties demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in view of the ED action.

SC ORDERS STATES TO ENSURE DRY RATION TO ALL SEX WORKERS

New Delhi, Oct. 28: The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed all state governments to ensure dry ration is being provided to sex workers, identified by the National AIDS Control Organisation during Covid-19 pandemic, in an adequate amount and uniformly.

A bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao directed the state governments to get help from the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) and legal services authorities to identify sex workers and maintain confidentiality pertaining to the identity of sex workers.

States are directed to follow the standard operating procedure (SOP) by the NACO and commence distribution of dry ration to sex workers, the bench said. The apex court also asked the governments to file a compliance report within four weeks.

"We also direct the state government to ensure that schemes for the distribution of ration are implemented," the Supreme Court said. "In case there are no schemes the Central government scheme can be adopted. Regarding confidentiality, states to maintain the format of NACO and not reveal the identity," the bench added.

WORLD

IN BRIEF

Examination at airport: Probe on

Dubai, Oct 28 (AP) Qatar apologised Wednesday after authorities forcibly examined female passengers from a Qatar Airways flight to Australia to try to identify who might have given birth to a newborn baby found abandoned at the airport earlier this month. Under pressure after Australia condemned the searches, Qatar's government said it had begun an investigation into the treatment of the women who were taking Qatar Airways Flight 908 to Sydney on Oct. 2. Qatar offered no immediate explanation of how officials decided to perform invasive vaginal examinations on the women.

Guru gets 120 years in jail

New York: Disgraced self-improvement guru Keith Raniere, whose NXIVM followers included millionaires and Hollywood actors, was sentenced to 120 years for turning some adherents into sex slaves branded with his initials and sexually abusing a 15-year-old. US District Judge Nicholas Garaufis on Tuesday called Raniere "ruthless and unyielding" in crimes that were "particularly egregious" because he targeted girls and young women in the sex-trafficking conspiracy that resulted in Raniere's conviction last year. He handed down the unusually stiff sentence in Brooklyn federal court after hearing 15 victims call for a long prison term to reflect the nightmares and anguish they'll confront the rest of their lives. As he announced the sentence, Garaufis noted that Raniere labelled some of the victims' claims lies.

— AP

Don slams media for Joe graft case censor

Trump alleges that Biden got \$3.5 million from Russia

Milwaukee (US), Oct. 28: US President Donald Trump has slammed the mainstream American media and big tech companies for blocking the alleged corruption charges against his opponent Democratic challenger Joe Biden. They have accused each other of serious corrupt charges during the election campaigning, with the president alleging that Biden got \$3.5 million from Russia and it came through Russian President Vladimir Putin because he was very friendly with the former mayor of Moscow. Biden has denied the allegations.

Trump, before leaving for a campaign trail on Tuesday, told reporters at the White House that the mainstream media was not showing corruption against Biden. "Nobody has ever seen anything like we're witnessing right now. I think it's a very sad time and it'll go down as a very sad era for the media and certainly for big tech (companies). "I think what is going on with all of those companies — I think they've hurt themselves

Choice of super recovery or Biden depression: Prez

Milwaukee (US), Oct. 28: US President Donald Trump has said that the 2020 presidential election is a choice between a "super" economic recovery led by his administration or a "Biden depression" as he targeted his Democratic challenger Joe Biden. With just seven days left for the most crucial American presidential election in recent memory, Trump intensified his campaign by having as many as three rallies on Tuesday, with one of them being in rain

and freezing cold.

"Seven days from now, we are going to win this state and we are going for more incredible years in the White House," Trump said in identical speeches in three battleground states of Michigan, Wisconsin and Nebraska. "This election is a choice between a Trump super recovery or a Biden depression. That's what you are going to have with the raise of taxes, the biggest tax increase in our history. It's ridiculous. It's a choice between

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Tech giant CEOs grilled over bias

Washington, Oct. 28: The CEOs of Twitter, Facebook and Google are facing a grilling by Republican senators making unfounded allegations that the tech giants show anti-conservative bias.

The Senate Commerce Committee has summoned Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, Facebook's Mark Zuckerberg and Google's Sundar Pichai to testify for a hearing Wednesday.

The executives agreed to appear remotely after being threatened with subpoenas. With the presidential election looming, Republicans led by President Donald Trump have thrown a barrage of grievances at Big Tech's social media platforms, which they accuse without evidence of deliberately suppressing conservative, religious and anti-abortion views. The chorus of protest rose this month after Facebook and Twitter acted to limit dissemination of an unverified political story from the conservative-leaning *New York Post* about Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, an unprecedented action against a major media outlet.

The story, which was

FOR TOO long, social media platforms have hidden behind Section 230 protections to censor content that deviates from their beliefs.

ROGER WICKER, Senate Commerce Committee chairman

CONFRONT ISLAMOPHOBIA, SAYS IMRAN

Islamabad, Oct. 28: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Wednesday wrote a letter to the leaders of the Muslim states, asking them to make collective efforts to confront growing trend of Islamophobia.

"The recent statements at the leadership level and incidents of desecration of the Holy Quran are a reflection of this increasing Islamophobia that is spreading in European countries where sizeable Muslim populations reside," according to the letter posted on Khan's official Twitter account.

The letter came in the wake of publication of caricatures on the Prophet in France and comments made by French President Emmanuel Macron, who defended such depictions as protected under the right to free speech. "We won't renounce the caricatures," Macron said last week. Khan urged the leaders of the Muslim countries to "collectively take the lead in breaking this cycle of hate and extremism, which nurtures violence and even death". The prime minister said that blasphemy against any prophet, including those of Christianity and Judaism, was not accep ta

Expert: 1st vaccines imperfect

London, Oct. 28: The first set of Covid-19 vaccines that clear clinical trials for rollout to combat the deadly virus are likely to be imperfect and might not work equally for everyone, the chief of the UK government's

Vaccine Taskforce has warned. Kate Bingham, Chair of the UK's Vaccine Taskforce set up earlier this year to coordinate global efforts in search of a viable vaccine against the Coronavirus, said it is important to manage

expectations as the early discoveries are unlikely to prove the "silver bullet" that the world is hoping for to get to grips with the pandemic.

"The first generation of vaccines is likely to be imperfect, and we should be

prepared that they might not prevent infection but rather reduce symptoms, and, even then, might not work for everyone or for long," Bingham writes in an article for the medical journal *The Lancet* this week.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39,922.46	-1.48
Nifty 50	11,729.60	-1.34
S&P 500*	3,283.56	-3.16
Dollar (₹)	73.86	-0.18
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.08	-0.20
Euro (₹)	86.81	0.21
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,279.682	1.34
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	38.95	-2.25
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.859	0.012
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.761	-0.017

* As of 9:30 PM IST

HPE Covid Test Labs facilitate 1L patient visits

Hewlett Packard Enterprise (HPE) today announced that its Covid-19 Test Labs and Outpatient Department (OPD) Centers have collectively facilitated over 100 thousand patient visits across India. These facilities provide additional authorised Covid-19 testing facilities and isolation beds, thereby assisting the government of India and state governments in their efforts to contain the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

Printed & Published by K Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed & Published at Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai. Editor: T.Venkatram Reddy, RNI Reg. No. TNENG/2008/25473 Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

Gold loans double as Covid-hit people pledge family jewellery

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Gold loan disbursements by NBFCs have more than doubled in September quarter over the previous quarter. They are expected to clock 15 to 18 per cent growth this year on increased demand and higher gold price.

Preliminary estimates indicate that gold loan disbursements, including repledge with NBFCs, have more than doubled sequentially in the second quarter of this fiscal, finds Crisil.

Growth was flat in the first quarter of this fiscal because of low disbursements in April and May due to the country-wide lock down. Manappuram Finance saw its gold loan portfolio growing by 2 to 3 per cent in April-May as customers have been availing gold loan using online products. Muthoot Finance too had seen a flatish growth during the



lock down.

With the Covid-19 pandemic-driven lockdowns being lifted slowly and economic activity clawing back, demand for gold loans has risen, especially from individuals meeting urgent personal requirements and from micro enterprises for working to restart businesses. Gold loans would be preferred also because non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and banks have tightened their underwriting norms for other loans, leading to cautious lending to micro and small enterprises, traders and the self-employed.

Crisil expects assets under management of NBFCs to grow 15-18 per cent this fiscal. Motilal Oswal too expects gold loan NBFCs to deliver 15 per cent CAGR over FY20-23.

“In the current scenario, we believe gold financiers would benefit as customers would look to raise cash by leveraging their gold holdings and increase in gold prices would give a modest impetus to growth.

Inability of customers to get personal loans due to lack of formal documentation, higher share of rural business and flexi-lending terms will support gold loan business,” finds Motilal Oswal Financial Services. “Unlike other asset classes, gold loan has not faced major issues in collection and disbursement, or re-pledge of loans, barring in the stringent lock down phase in April and May,” said Krishnan Sitaraman, Senior Director, CRISIL Ratings.

In order to provide a smooth re-pledging process in times of pandemic, larger NBFCs are offering online renewal since the underlying collateral is already in their possession. Large gold-loan financiers have also consistently raised funds through bonds, under the targeted long-term repo operations and partial credit guarantee schemes at a competitive cost.

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Hospitality sector sees signs of revival

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 28

Hospitality has started seeing early signs of month-on-month recovery in occupancy with gradual revival in domestic leisure travel. However, occupancies are still down 60 per cent compared to last year levels.

Average occupancies in hotels across India moved up 10 to 12 per cent from the August levels to 24 to

26 per cent in September. Average daily rates too have improved 2 to 4 per cent to ₹3400- ₹3600 per night. Revenue per available rooms grew 12 to 14 per cent month-on-month to ₹815 – ₹935, as per HVS and Anarock.

Leisure destinations such as Goa and Jaipur have been witnessing a noticeable improvement in occupancy as people have started travelling for a change of pace, albeit to

destinations closer to their cities. Domestic air passenger traffic also has improved by 39 per cent in September compared to August. However, corporate travel continues to remain subdued.

On a year-on-year basis, hospitality remains one of the worst affected by Covid-19. Occupancies were down 60 per cent last month compared to September 2019. Revenue per available rooms was

down 72 per cent and average daily rates by 30 per cent.

Going ahead, festive season is likely to boost demand for travel and hotel stay. Long vacations and international trips are off the table for the rest of 2020.

Booking.com finds that almost 62 per cent Indian travelers favour a trip they could afford in the short-term rather than saving for a dream trip.

FOOD MINISTRY WORRIED OVER LESS IN-TAKE OF SWEETNER

New Delhi, Oct. 28: The government on Wednesday said there is a need to address “myths and misgivings” about sugar consumption in India, as the per capita consumption of the sweetener has remained stagnant for the last three years at 19 kilogram.

Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey, after launching industry body ISMA’s portal ‘http://meetha.org’ said India is one of the world’s largest consumers of sugar but per capita consumption has remained stagnant at 19 kg, much lower than the world’s average per capita consumption of 23.50 kg.

The country’s annual sugar consumption stood at 25-26 million tonnes, while production reached 27.5 million tonnes in the 2019-20 season ending September.

“There are a lot of myths going around about sugar and sugar consumption without scientific basis. This misinformation multiplies much faster than the truth multiplies,” the official said.

“Therefore, it is very important to come up with scientific information so that people can make very informed decisions,” Pandey said.

Food secretary Sudhanshu Pandey also said that there is also “misunderstanding” about Indian sugar abroad. — PTI

Covid rebound in US, Europe turns markets volatile

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, OCT. 28

Weak global cues led to a fresh round of selling in the Indian market as the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic in Europe and the United States, uncertainty over who would be the next US President worried investors.

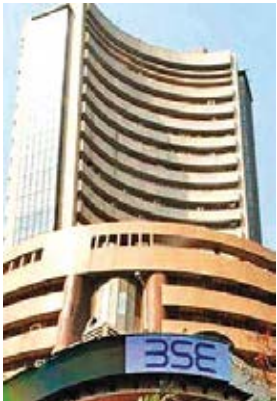
Sensex fell 600 points or 1.48 per cent to close at 39,922.46 while Nifty-50 settled at 11,729.60 down 159.80 points or 1.34 per cent.

Rising Covid-19 cases globally specifically in Europe and the United States are worrying investors as strict lockdown could be imposed and the economy’s recovery, which is still at a nascent stage could once again get hit, said analysts.

Among the global peers United Kingdom’s FTSE 100 index fell to its lowest level in six months on Wednesday on investors’ worries of more virus curbs and uncertainty over a coronavirus vaccine.

Volatility in the domestic market arose ahead of equity derivative contracts expiry on Thursday as the Sensex fell 778 points intra-day taking the index to day’s low of 39,774.60 before the final close at 39,922.46. Volatility index India VIX rose 4.88 per cent to 23.28.

Keshav Lahoti, equity analyst, Angel Broking said, “We expect volatility to continue in the market on the eve of key events of



the US election, ongoing result season and how coronavirus cases are being reported around the world.”

Broader market suffered lesser damages with BSE Mid-cap index down 0.93 per cent and BSE Small-cap index down by 0.76 per cent.

All sectoral indices on the Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) barring telecom and capital goods closed in the red led by the financials. BSE Bankex index closed 2.28 per down cent and Nifty Bank fell 2.17 per cent.

The top losers in the Sensex basket included IndusInd Bank(-3.45 per cent), HDFC(-3.44), ICICI Bank(-3.34), HDFC Bank(-2.27), Bajaj Finance(-2.41) and Tech Mahindra(-3.00 per cent).

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) turned net sellers by ₹1130.98 crore on Wednesday after aggressive buying on Tuesday of equities worth ₹3,590 crore.

GAMES

Surya power

Yadav turns on heat as Mumbai bust RCB

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 28: Mumbai Indians defeated Royal Challengers Bangalore by five wickets in an IPL game here on Wednesday to all but qualify for the play-offs.

Put in to bat, Royal Challengers Bangalore scored 164 for 6 in the allotted 20 overs.

In reply, MI chased down the target of 165 with five balls to spare. Suryakumar Yadav led the charge with an unbeaten 79 off 43 balls that included 10 fours and three sixes.

Earlier, young Devdutt Padikkal pummelled the Mumbai Indians attack into submission with a 45-ball 74 before Jasprit Bumrah stopped Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Put in to bat, Padikkal, who plundered 12 fours and a six, added 71 runs for the opening wicket with Josh Philippe (33).

However, the RCB then suffered a middle-order collapse as Mumbai roared back into the game with lead pacer Bumrah (3/14) doing the bulk of damage.

Padikkal began with a boundary over deep extra cover and then struck successive fours off Krunal Pandya, as RCB fetched 12 runs in the third over. The two openers continued playing their shots, the highlight being Philippe’s six over Trent Boult’s head in the fifth over.

Padikkal then went on the offensive against James Pattinson.



Suryakumar Yadav of Mumbai Indians plays a shot against Royal Challengers Bangalore during their IPL match at Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Wednesday. — BCCI

SCORECARD

Royal Challengers Bangalore: Josh Philippe st de Kock b Chahar 33, Devdutt Padikkal c Boult b Bumrah 74, Virat Kohli c Tiwary b Bumrah 9, AB de Villiers c Chahar b Pollard 15, Shivam Dube c Yadav b Bumrah 2, Chris Morris c Pattinson b Boult 4, Gurkeerat Singh Mann not out 14, Washington Sundar not out 10. Extras (W-3) 3. Total (for 6 wickets in 20 overs) 164.

FoW: 1-71, 2-95, 3-131, 4-134, 5-134, 6-138.

Bowling: Trent Boult 4-0-40-1, Jasprit Bumrah 4-1-14-3, Krunal Pandya 4-0-27-0, James Pattinson 3-0-35-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-43-1,

Kieron Pollard 1-0-5-1. **Mumbai Indians:** Q de Kock c Gurkeerat b Siraj 18, Ishan Kishan c Morris b Chahal 25, Suryakumar Yadav not out 79, S. Tiwary c Padikkal b Siraj 5, K. Pandya c Morris b Chahal 10, H. Pandya c Siraj b Morris 17, Pollard not out 4. Extras (LB-2, W-6) 8. Total (for 5 wickets in 19.1 overs) 166.

FoW: 1-37, 2-52, 3-72, 4-107, 5-158.

Bowling: Chris Morris 4-0-36-1, Dale Steyn 4-0-43-0, Washington Sundar 4-0-20-0, Mohammed Siraj 3.1-0-28-2, Yuzvendra Chahal 4-0-37-2.

IPL POINTS TABLE						
Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NRR
Mumbai Indians	12	8	4	0	16	+1.186
Royal Challengers Bangalore	12	7	5	0	14	+0.048
Delhi Capitals	12	7	5	0	14	+0.030
Kings XI Punjab	12	6	6	0	12	-0.049
Kolkata Knight Riders	12	6	6	0	12	-0.479
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	5	7	0	10	+0.396
Rajasthan Royals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.505
Chennai Super Kings	12	4	8	0	6	-0.602

Tabulated as Played, Won, Lost, No Result, Points, Net Run Rate

Clear mind is my strength: Rashid

Dubai, Oct. 28: Sunrisers Hyderabad leg-spinner Rashid Khan says a clear mind is his biggest strength and he reaped the rewards for focussing on bowling more dot balls against DC in their IPL match here.

Going into Tuesday’s do-or-die contest against DC, SRH registered a comfortable 88-run win to stay alive in the race for the play-offs. Rashid returned with incredible figures of 4-0-7-3 to make a significant contribution in Sunrisers’ win.

“I just go with a clear mind, that’s my biggest strength. I want to bowl a good line and length, no



Rashid Khan

matter the situation. You have to mix up and play with the batsman’s mind, and see the weak zone and strong zone..So I keep those things in mind,” Rashid said.

The Afghan bowled 17 dot balls in his four-over quota.

— PTI

Ousted CSK look to halt Knights

Dubai, Oct. 28: Already out of play-offs reckoning, a relaxed CSK are ready to play party-poopers with an aim to foil KKR’s desperate bid for a victory in an IPL game on Thursday.

KKR with 12 points from 12 games would like to win the next two encounters to ensure a smooth passage while CSK, currently at the bottom of the eight-team table, are only playing for pride.

A possibility remains that multiple teams will end up on either 16 or 14 points and a comprehensive victory at this stage of the tournament, will bring the super-or net run-rate into equation when the play-off spots are decided.

It won’t get too easy for KKR against CSK, who handed an eight-wicket thrashing to RCB in their previous outing.

KKR’s unsettled batting order is a point of concern for Eoin Morgan, who would hope that Dinesh Karthik produces his A game when it matters most. They need to be at the top of their game against the CSK batting unit that has been frustratingly inconsistent

NUMBERS GAME

HEAD TO HEAD

OVERALL:

- Matches: 21
- Chennai: 13
- Kolkata: 8

MEETING IN 2019

- Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by 7 wickets at Chennai
- Chennai Super Kings defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 5 wickets at Kolkata

MEETING IN 2020

- Kolkata Knight Riders beat Chennai Super Kings by 10 runs at Abu Dhabi

FOR THE RECORD

- Rahul Tripathi scored 81 off 51 balls with eighth fours and three sixes against Chennai Super Kings in the first meeting at Dubai.
- Faf du Plessis with 401 runs in 12 innings of as many matches, is the fifth highest run-getter in this IPL.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

but is more than capable of being destructive on its day. CSK will be aiming to build on the win over RCB and end the season on a high.

— PTI

ANOTHER WARM-UP TIE FOR INDIA IN OZ

Melbourne, Oct. 28: The Indian cricket team will get an additional Day/Night warm-up game in Sydney as a tune-up to the series-opening Pink Ball Test against Australia in Adelaide from December 17, the host board announced on Wednesday. The tour will include a 14-day quarantine-cum-training period in Sydney starting November 12 for the Indians who will fly in after the IPL final on November 10. The Border-Gavaskar Trophy will begin with a day-night encounter at the Adelaide Oval on December 17.

Regd. No. TNENG/2010/35692
Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited and Printed at Deccan Chronicle Presses situated at SP 3, Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032. RNI Registration No: TN ENG/2005/14987 Ph Nos: 22254747, 22254748, 22254750, 22254751
Editor: KAUSHIK MITTER

City trounce Marseille, Reds rock

Paris, Oct. 28: Holders Bayern Munich continued their perfect start to their Champions League title defence on Tuesday as Real Madrid had Casemiro’s late goal to thank for scrambling a 2-2 draw away to Borussia Moenchengladbach.

Liverpool and Manchester City also made it six points out of a possible six in Europe this season, after Bayern needed a late Joshua Kimmich strike to claim a 2-1 win at Lokomotiv Moscow in Group ‘A’.

Leon Goretzka put the Germans ahead early on in front of a limited crowd in the Russian capital, but Anton Miranchuk tucked in an equaliser for Lokomotiv in the second half — Miranchuk’s twin brother Aleksei scored for Atalanta in the Champions League last



Mohamed Salah (right) of Liverpool in action against FC Midtjylland during their Champions League match at Anfield stadium in Liverpool on Tuesday. — AFP

week. But Bayern were not to be denied a record 13th straight win in the competition as Kimmich controlled a Javi Martinez pass and volleyed home low from outside the box 11 minutes from time.

Meanwhile, Pep Guardiola’s City eased to a second straight win in Group C with Kevin De Bruyne setting up Ferran Torres for the early opener against Marseille after the hosts had carelessly ceded

possession. Ilkay Gundogan and Raheem Sterling added late goals to make it 3-0, leaving Marseille without a point. In another match Liverpool defeated Danish champions Midtjylland 2-0

at Anfield in Group D. Diogo Jota finished off a fine move to give Jurgen Klopp’s team the lead early in the second half, before Mohamed Salah made sure of the points with a late penalty. — AFP

THE RESULTS			
Manchester City (Torres 18, Gundogan 76, Sterling 81)	3	Atletico Madrid (Marcos Llorente 29, Joao Felix 52, 85)	3
Marseille	0	Salzburg	2
Liverpool (Jota 55, Salah 90+2-pen)	2	(Dominik Szoboszlai 40, Felipe 47-OG)	
Midtjylland	0	Bayern Munich (Leon Goretzka 13, Joshua Kimmich 79)	2
Real Madrid (Benzema 87, Casemiro 90+3)	2	Lokomotiv Moscow (Anton Miranchuk 70)	1
Borussia Moenchengladbach (Thuram 33, 58)	2	Inter Milan	0
		Shakhtar Donetsk	0