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CHENNAI | FRIDAY 30 | OCTOBER 2020

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WEATHER



Max: 32°C
Min: 25°C
Rainfall: 1 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Aippasi 14
Tithi: Chaturtashi
Star: Revathi
Rahukalam:
10.30 am to 12 noon
Yamagandam:
3 pm to 4.30 pm
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.49 am
Zohar: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.14 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.58 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.43 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.03 AM

Former Gujarat CM Keshubhai Patel dead

Ahmedabad: Former Gujarat chief minister Keshubhai Patel, who played a pivotal role in strengthening the BJP in the state, died here on Thursday after prolonged illness, family sources said. Patel (92), who recovered from coronavirus infection recently, was rushed to a hospital in Ahmedabad on Thursday morning following health complications, the sources said. The BJP veteran was the state chief minister in 1995 and again during 1998-2001.

3 BJP workers shot dead in J&K

Srinagar: Three BJP workers were shot dead by militants in Kulgam district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, police said. The Resistance Front believed to be a shadow group of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, has claimed responsibility for the killings. Fida Hussain, Umer Hajam and Umer Rashid Beigh were shot by militants in Y K Pora area of Kulgam district late on Thursday evening,

COUNTER

POINT



Not IPL, they were betting on polls!

Indian Army launches secure messaging app for its soldiers

New Delhi, Oct. 29: The Indian Army on Thursday launched a messaging app called SAI that will provide secure voice, text and video calling services to its soldiers. “The model (of SAD) is similar to commercially available messaging applications like WhatsApp, Telegram, SAM-VAD and GIMS and utilises end-to-end encryption messaging protocol,” the Indian Army said in a statement. The Army developed and named

this messaging app as SAI, which stands for Secure Application for Internet. “SAI will be utilised pan Army to facilitate secure messaging within the service...The application supports end-to-end secure voice, text and video calling services for Android platform over internet,” the statement noted. SAI scores over on security features with local in-house servers and coding which can be tweaked as per requirements, it said. — *PTI*

Heavy rains lash Chennai; many roads inundated

SINDHIYA SAMUEL | DC CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Chennai and its suburbs were pounded by heavy rains accompanied by crackling lightning from Wednesday night and continued into Thursday morning.

The first spell heralding the arrival of the north-east monsoon in the state led to waterlogging at several locations, which slowed traffic in many areas.

The rainfall was heavy in some localities including Mylapore, which received 18 cm. Other areas, including Kotturpuram, received similar showers, (14 cm Anna University) and Red Hills on the northern periphery experienced 13 cm spots of rain, a Met office bulletin said. However, several other areas like MGR Nagar (5 cm) received moderate and mild rains.

Several areas falling under nearby Chengalpet, Kancheepuram and Tiruvallur districts, including Tambaram, Uthukottai and Mamallapuram, received relatively low rainfall (2



Anna Salai in Chennai is flooded following heavy rainfall in the city on Thursday. — *DC*

cm), while other areas in these districts like Tiruporur and Sriperumbudur saw precipitation of one cm.

As per the rainfall data released by Tamil Nadu State Disaster Management Authority, Mylapore crossed the 100 mm mark by recording a rainfall of 178 mm.

Purasawalkam and Ambattur registered a rainfall of 94 mm and 90 mm respectively. Alandur recorded 78.50 mm of rain followed by Sholinganallur with 77.20 mm, Guindy 75.20 mm,

Tondiarpet 67 mm, Permabur 56.10 mm, Egmore 54.80 mm and Ayanavaram with 53 mm of rainfall. The average rainfall recorded by the city stands at 97.27 mm.

Weather blogger Pradeep John, also known as Tamil Nadu weatherman, said that K a n c h e e p u r a m , Tiruvallur and Chennai will continue to receive steady rains for the next two days.

The mornings are likely to receive peak rains as a result of upper air circulation, he said. ■ **P3**

Mandatory packaging of 100% food grains in jute bags approved

New Delhi, Oct. 29: To help the jute industry, the government on Thursday decided to extend the norms for mandatory packaging of 100 per cent food grains and 20 per cent sugar in diversified jute bags.

The decision on the extension of norms for mandatory packaging in jute materials was taken at the meeting of the cabinet committee on economic affairs.

Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the decision will benefit farmers and workers located in the eastern and north-eastern regions of the country, particularly in West Bengal, Bihar, Odisha, Assam, Andhra Pradesh, Meghalaya and Tripura. — *PTI*



decide on the successful H-1B applicants, the DHS said it is expected to help counter the downward pressure on the wages of American workers that is created by an annual influx of relatively lower-paid, new cap-subject H-1B workers. The H-1B visa, most sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.— *PTI* ■ **P5**

SELECTION OF H1B VISAS

Trump admin proposes to scrap lottery system

Washington, Oct. 29: The Trump administration has proposed to scrap the computerised lottery system to grant H-1B work visas to foreign technology professionals and replace it with a wage-level-based selection process, a move that is expected to counter the downward pressure on the wages of US workers.

A notification on the new system is being published in the Federal Register on Thursday. Stakeholders have 30 days to respond to the notification, the department of homeland security (DHS) said on Wednesday, less than a week before the US presidential election.

Replacing the computerised draw of lots to

MEDICAL SEATS

TN issues GO on 7.5 p.c. quota without Guv nod

DC CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI, OCT. 29

In a surprise move, the state government on Thursday issued a government order (GO), providing 7.5 per cent reservation in all medical and dental courses for students who studied in state government-run schools and had qualified in NEET from the academic year 2020-21.

Though the Bill on the same has been pending clearance with the Governor Banwarilal Purohit, turning it into a political issue in the state with the opposition blaming the ruling party of not being serious on getting the 7.5 per cent reservation for poor students, the government has gone ahead and implemented the reservation through the GO.

The GO referred to the announcement made by the Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami in the state Assembly under Rule 110 on March 21, 2020, the report of former High Court judge P. Kalaarasam and the opinion of the advocate-general and directed the head honchos of the various medical education boards to take appropriate action.

Thus, students from government schools would be able to avail the preferential

● **Students from government schools would be able to avail the preferential quota from this year in not only MBBS and BDS courses but also other branches of medicine**

quota from this year in not only MBBS and BDS courses but also other branches of medicine such as Siddha, Ayurveda, Unani and Homeopathy, putting aside the fears expressed earlier that the Governor's dilly dally might lead to the reservation coming into force only in the next academic year. The issue had taken a political turn when the DMK organised a massive rally in front of Raj Bhavan after party president M.K. Stalin wrote to the Governor urging him to give his assent to the Bill passed unanimously by the Assembly.

The DMK also made use of the opportunity to blame the ruling AIADMK for not putting enough pressure on the Governor to sign the Bill. The opposition parties had threatened to put pressure continuously on the Governor through protests.

IMD issues yellow alert for TN

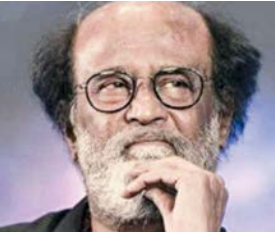
Chennai: Owing to the continuous rainfall accompanied with lightning and strong winds following the onset of the Northeast monsoon, a 'yellow' alert has been issued by the IMD for the next two days. A yellow alert has been issued after taking the stock of the prevailing weather condition in the state.

Rajini: Docs advised me against entering politics

G BABU JAYAKUMAR | DC CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Actor Rajinikanth confirmed on Thursday that he had health issues and that he had been advised by doctors not to involve himself in active politics even as his fans went berserk on Twitter demanding his entry into politics, saying that he was the only hope for Tamil Nadu.

Quoting what was described as a leaked letter of Rajinikanth, some media outlets put out a story that the actor might exit politics without even entering, prompting his fans to trend a Tamil hashtag “If at all I vote it will be for Rajini only” through the day, calling their ‘Thalivar’ to come and also questioned the veracity of the “leaked letter.” Even as the hashtag was



trending, Rajinikanth put out a tweet past noon saying: “A letter masquerading as my statement has been making its rounds on social networking sites and the media. Everyone knows that it is not my statement. Yet some of the information in the letter on my health condition and doctors' advice are all true.”

He went on to say that he would inform his political stand to the people after discussing it with the office-bearers of Rajini Makkal Mandram (Rajini People's Forum). The forum was

formed with the members of his erstwhile fans' association after he had made an announcement that he would be entering politics by launching his own party.

The actor had held meetings with the office-bearers in earlier occasions to elicit their views and also to guide them on the way he would like to fashion his party. But subsequently in a press conference, in which he just spelt out his plans and left the venue without taking questions from the media, he made it clear he was not entering politics.

Later on, when it BJP leader and Union home minister Amit Shah mentioned that his party was waiting for Rajinikanth to float his party to forge an alliance with it, media started speculating about the possible party launch, enthusing his fans. ■ **P4**

PAK ADMITS TO ROLE IN ATTACK IN PULWAMA

Islamabad, Oct. 29: In a sensational admission, a senior Pakistani minister on Thursday admitted that Pakistan was responsible for the Pulwama terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 that killed 40 CRPF personnel and brought the two countries to the brink of a war.

“Humne Hindustan ko ghus ke maara (We hit India in their home). Our success in Pulwama, is a success of this nation under the leadership of Imran Khan. You and us are all part of that success,” science & technology minister Fawad Chaudhry said in the National Assembly during a debate.

Mr Chaudhry, a close aide of Prime Minister Imran Khan, made the remarks a day after opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ayaz Sadiq said that foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi in an important meeting pleaded to release Indian Air Force Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who was captured by the Pakistani Army on February 27, 2019 after his MiG-21 Bison jet was shot down in a dogfight with Pakistani jets. In the early hours of February 26, 2019, the IAF jets bombed the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) terror camps in Balakot in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa of Pakistan and avenged the Pulwama terrorist attack that claimed the lives of 40 CRPF personnel.— *PTI* ■ **P5**

3 killed in attack in church in France

Paris, Oct. 29:An attacker armed with a knife killed three people at a church on Thursday in the Mediterranean city of Nice, authorities said. It was the third attack in two months in France. The assailant was wounded by police and hospitalised after the killings at the Notre Dame Church, less than a kilometer from the site in 2016 where another attacker plowed a truck into a Bastille Day crowd, killing dozens. Thursday's attacker was believed to be acting alone and police are not searching for other assailants, said two police officials.— *AP* ■ **P5**

Assam JEE topper held for using impersonator to write exam

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, OCT. 29

In what has come as shocker, the topper of the Joint Entrance Exam (Mains) in Assam, his father and three others were arrested by the city police on Thursday on charges of using a proxy to write the country's premier engineering entrance test. The accused had succeeded in securing 99.8 percent in the exam, which is the basis for admission in India's top engineering colleges,

including the prestigious IITs.

The police said it arrested the candidate, Neel Nakshatra Das, his father, Dr Jyotirmoy Das, and three employees of a testing centre — Hamendra Nath Sarma, Pranjal Kalita and Hirulal Pathak

Examination (JEE) Mains in Assam, allegedly for using a proxy to appear in the examination on his behalf. We investigated the case and have found that a proxy was used by the candidate through the help of another agency that acted as a middleman.”

● **The police said it arrested the candidate, Neel Nakshatra Das, his father, Dr Jyotirmoy Das, and three employees of a testing centre — Hamendra Nath Sarma, Pranjal Kalita and Hirulal Pathak**

The arrest of JEE aspirant has raised serious questions over the JEE exam conducted at all India level.

Admitting that this could be a major racket and chances of many others also having resorted to such practice cannot be ruled out, the police said,

“we are looking into all the aspects. The staff of the testing centre in Guwahati is also involved. We are searching for more people who are suspected to be the part of this crime. This might not be a one-of case but may be part of a larger racket.”

The police said the entire racket came to light on social media after a phone call recording and WhatsApp chat, in which the accused allegedly spoke about having used unfair

means to top the exam, went viral. Referring to the social media post, one MitraDEV Sharma lodged a police complaint in this regard.

The police said that the invigilator had allegedly helped the JEE aspirant in cheating. The accused went inside the online testing centre on the day of the exam just to fill his name and roll number on the answer sheet, police said. adding the test was written by a proxy outside.

SHORT TAKES

Leaders extend
Milad-un-Nabi
greetingsDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Led by Governor Banwarilal Purohit, leaders cutting across party lines greeted Muslims on the occasion of Milad-un-Nabi, which is celebrated to mark the birthday of Prophet Mohammed, on Friday. The Prophet stood for lofty values like discipline, kindness, universal brotherhood and charity, the Governor said in a statement, adding, 'may our lives be lit by the ideals of the Prophet.' Others who conveyed their wishes and greetings to the Muslims on the day of their festival were Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami, Deputy Chief Minister O Panneerselvam, DMK president M K Stalin and TNCC President K S Alagiri.

₹7 lakh fake notes
seized in
CoimbatoreDC CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE, OCT. 29

Police have seized fake currency notes worth ₹7 lakh and launched a search for the offender who is on run.

Police said, they started investigations after receiving a series of complaints about fake notes being circulated in the Peelamedu - Cherama Nagar areas. Such fake currency notes were circulated in Tasmac shops, grocery shops, supermarkets and vegetable shops, in large numbers and most of them were ₹2,000 notes.

Based on a tipoff, Peelamedu police broke open the doors of a house near Cheranma Nagar on Thursday, and were shocked to find four bundles of ₹2,000 notes amounting to a total of ₹7 lakh kept inside the house. But, police could not find any printing machine or colour printers or related accessories there.

Preliminary investigations revealed that a person was staying there for rent, and the currency notes were xerox copies. Somehow, sensing police raids, the offender had fled away. Police are investigating, and have launched a search for the miscreant.

Ex-min Veerapandi,
36 others acquitted
in landgrab caseZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, OCT. 29

Thirty-seven persons including former minister late Veerapandi Arumugam, have been acquitted in the case concerning burning of huts in the Angamnal Colony in Pallappatti area here.

It may be recalled that some huts were set on fire in Angamnal Colony in Salem Pallappatti area, on June 4 in 2012. A complaint was lodged at the Pallappatti police station, and police registered a case against 37 persons, including former DMK minister Veerapandi Arumugam.

The trial was conducted at the Additional Sessions Court No. 3 in Astampatti. The case was heard on Thursday by Judge Abraham Lincoln, who acquitted all the accused stating that police failed to prove the offence in the case.

Former minister Veerapandi Arumugam, who was later charged in the case and one another person has died during the trial period.

Following the verdict, son of former minister Veerapandi Arumugam, former MLA Veerapandi Raja and a large number of DMK workers distributed sweets to the public at the district DMK office in the Salem new bus stand area.

Main roads, streets flooded: Rain abates, water levels recede

Monsoon makes grand entry in city



Canal's sewage mixed water enters houses in TNHB colony.



EGMORE



PADI



UNDER GEMINI BRIDGE

School wall collapses on 6 cars in apartment

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Heavy rains brought down a compound wall in Chennai's Nandanam on Thursday morning, damaging cars parked on apartment premises.

The incident reportedly took place in Nandanam extension in the city and six cars were damaged because of the wall that collapsed due to incessant rains. The wall that collapsed belonged to a private school, police said. According to police, around 5, 30 am on Thursday, the sidewalk of a private school next to the

apartment collapsed, crushing the cars. It is believed that the collapse was triggered by the heavy rains in the city on Thursday.

A resident said, "I heard a loud noise and I looked outside. To my horror, I saw a portion of the school's compound wall collapsed on the parked cars. I immediately alerted the police".

The Greater Chennai Corporation officials were also alerted to remove the debris.

The car owners have filed a police complaint blaming the school authorities for the negligence. Investigations are on.



KAPALI TANK

GCC said despite the heavy rainfall in Mylapore, there was 'no water stagnation' and rainwater reached Kapaleeswarar temple tank in view of the robust stormwater drain network.

—Pictures: N. Sampath & E. K Sanjay

Subway water-logging cleared: Corp

The GCC officials said waterlogging reported in subways including Perambur, Amjikarai, Adambakkam and Gengureddy subways were cleared by noon. According to the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC), water stagnation in various parts of Chennai, including the subways, has been cleared.

Trees uprooted

At least 11 trees were uprooted in the rain from 8am to 12 noon and all of them were cleared from the streets, according to a corporation report. While Teynapet and Kodambakkam zones witnessed two tree-falling incidents each, Madhavaram, Thiru Vi.Ka. Nagar, Anna Nagar, Alanthur and Adyar zones witnessed one incident each.

HIGH-RISK AREAS

T.SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 29

It may be recalled that the Red Alas developed by National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), a MoES laboratory, last year had warned authorities about risk of flooding during the monsoon season in low-lying areas like Periamet, Pattalam, Kosapet, Manali, Thiruvottiyur, Chintadripet and Perambur.

The Atlas had said the streets in Edayanchavadi, Periamet, Egmore, Wadiya

Nagar, Kosapet, and Pattalam have a very high risk of 75 percent of the area going under three to six feet of water if the city registers 30cm rainfall in a day. The corporation wards like Ernavoor, Manali, Madhavaram, Ganesapuram near Vyasarpadi, Molakothalam, George Town, Purasawalkam, Chetpet, Teynapet, Thousand Lights, Valsarvakkam, Manapakkam, RA Puram, Velachery, Pallikarai, Thoraipakkam, Ezhil Nagar and Kannagi Nagar

are also under risk.

The north Chennai localities like Sathyamoorthy Nagar in Thiruvottiyur, Chintadripet, Mettupalayam near Perambur, Otteri, Thiru Vi Ka Nagar and many streets in west Chennai localities like Anna Nagar, Aminjikarai, She-noy Nagar and 86 those in south Chennai including Pallikarai, Thoraipakkam, parts of Madipakkam like Ram Nagar, Ramamurthy Nagar, Rajalakshmi Nagar fall under the high-risk category.

Rains delay flights at Chennai airport

P. A. JEBARAJ | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Heavy rains in Chennai and its suburbs have impacted the flight operations at the city airport. Some flights have been delayed due to the incessant rains in the wee hours of Thursday.

Although no flights have been cancelled on Thursday, departures are delayed. As per airport sources,

at least 10 flights took off with a delay of 30 minutes. The arrivals, on the other hand, functioned normally.

Flights to Bengaluru, Guwahati, Salem, Pune, Hyderabad, Patna, Madurai, Delhi and Andaman were delayed due to the downpour. Sources said that water-logging and slow traffic in the city had delayed passengers' arrival.



MARINA BEACH

Traffic
slows down

Additional Commissioner of Police (traffic) N. Kannan said movement of traffic slowed down given water stagnation due to the overnight rains. "However, traffic did not come to a complete halt. We made diversions in a few locations, considering water stagnation," he said, adding that the full strength of 3,000 traffic personnel in addition to those from the Armed Reserve have been deployed. About 120 spots, identified in the city as vulnerable to waterlogging, were being monitored by patrolling teams, he said.

Rainwater has been pumped out of 20 plus subways and vehicle movement has been normalised, Kannan said. He advised road users to exercise caution taking into account slippery pathways and chances of skidding.

City to get intermittent
rains in next 24 hoursDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 29

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) forecasts cloudy skies and intermittent rains over the next 24 hours in Chennai and its suburbs.

It stated that Kancheepuram, Thiruvallur, Chennai, Ranipet, Villupuram, Tirunelveli, Tenkasi, Thoothukudi and Ramanathapuram will witness heavy rains in isolated areas.

In the latest update, the IMD also said, "A cyclonic circulation lies over north Tamil Nadu, coastal Andhra Pradesh & neighbourhood in lower & mid-tropospheric levels. Under its influence, scattered rainfall with moderate thunderstorm & lightning very likely over Kerala, Tamil Nadu & Puducherry during next 5 days."

Chennai city received heavy rainfall in the wee hours of Thursday till around 10 am with sever-

al areas of the city recording over 170 mm of rainfall in a span of a few hours. According to a blog post by private weather blogger Pradeep John, this is the highest amount of rainfall Chennai has received in 24 hours since November 2017.

The northeast monsoon set in over Tamil Nadu on Wednesday.

Tamil Nadu receives 48 per cent of its annual rainfall between October and December.

CM should be ashamed
seeing Chennai: StalinDC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Launching a tirade against Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami and municipal administration minister S. P. Velumani for not preparing Chennai for the monsoon despite prior warning, DMK president M. K. Stalin called for the induction of the National Disaster Relief Force to save the capital city.

The people of Chennai were reminded of the 2015 floods by seeing the city going under a thick sheet of water unable to stand even a single day's downpour, Stalin said in a state-

ment, blaming it all on Palaniswami and Velumani for not taking efforts to clear the drains and widen the water outlets.

Though ₹750 crore was earmarked for undertaking the work relating to keeping the city safe from flooding, nothing had been done properly, he said.

If the elections to the Chennai Corporation had been held, the elected local representatives would have at least stood by the people at this hour of despair, Stalin said and urged the MLAs and MPs of Chennai to rush to the aid of people.

HC quashes promotion of Poornachandran as DCE

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Directing the state government to evolve a fair procedure during assessment of inter se merit and ability of the officers, without giving any room for possible abuse in the future selection, the Madras high court has quashed a government order(GO), promoting C. Poornachandran, as Director of Collegiate Education.

Justice V. Parthiban gave the directive while partly allowing a petition filed by G. Geetha, challenging the promotion of Poornachandran, who was junior to her, as DCE.

"In this regard, the government may also constitute a



high-power committee comprising experienced administrators for framing proper guidelines in order to evolve proper standards of benchmark, to be applied uniformly in respect of appointments to all selection posts", the judge added.

The judge said since DCE is an important post, the state government is directed to initiate whatever measures that are necessary and

expedient towards achieving reliable and acceptable standards, supporting the statutory requirement of merit, ability and suitability in appointment to the selection posts in order to avoid such appointments becoming easily vulnerable to frequent judicial interference. The government may initiate and complete the above exercise within three months, the judge added.

Quashing the promotion of Poornachandran, the judge said, "In the conspectus of the above discussion, this court is compelled to come to a conclusion that there has been wholesale violation of the rules and the procedure, as the 1st respondent (higher education secretary) unfortunately has handled

the important exercise of appointing HoD in a cavalier fashion, opposed to fair play and good conscience. This court, therefore, finds that the promotion of the 3rd respondent (Poornachandran) is not only contrary to the rules, but also the appointment appears to have been actuated on extraneous consideration. The procedure followed and the method adopted by the 1st respondent in appointing the 3rd respondent is riddled with infirmities all over and hence, there cannot be any hesitation for this court to come to a finding that the impugned promotion has to go back, stock and barrel".

The judge also quashed another GO (appointing the

petitioner and three others as officers on special duty on par with the post of DCE) in so far as the petitioner and C.V.Mythili were concerned. The limited quashing of GO was on the basis of the peculiar facts and circumstances that the very appointment of the petitioner and C. V. Mythili as OSD was in consequence of the promotion of C. Poornachandran as Director of Collegiate Education. The petitioner and the other candidate C.V. Mythili whose names would also come up for consideration for promotion to the post of Director of Collegiate Education when a review promotion exercise to be done pursuant to the directions of this court, the judge added.

Cops rescue kidnapped kid, hunt on for gang

R VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, OCT. 29

Police are on the lookout for a three-member gang who allegedly kidnapped a 12-year-old boy here and demanded a ransom of ₹6 crore, on Wednesday.

Police said the boy, Kannan alias Muthaiah, son of industrialist Kannappan, was riding a bicycle in front of his house on Warners road, in the city, when a car-borne gang kidnapped him.

The boy's parents searched for their son, but found only his bicycle near their house. In the meantime, over a phone call, Kannappan was told that his son had been kidnapped, and demanded a ransom of ₹6 crore for his release.

Kannappan pleaded inability to spend such a huge sum and urged the caller to release his son, but the caller disconnected the call. Some time later, the caller again dialed Kannappan with a reduced ransom demand of ₹2 crore. Around 20:00 hrs on Wednesday night, the caller again spoke to Kannappan and threatened to shoot off his son's hand, and maybe even kill him if the demand was not met.

Following this, Kannappan preferred a complaint with the Cantonment police. As per police advice, Kannappan continued talking to the caller whenever he called. Around 11 pm on Wednesday night, the caller again called Kannappan. Police traced phone

signal to Ramalinga Nagar in the city, and rushed to the spot. On seeing the police, the gang left the boy with the car and fled, and police rescued the boy along with the car.

Preliminary enquiries revealed that the gang told the boy they were his father's friends, and they would take him to his father, as per the boy's father's request.

They had neither beaten nor had they been hard on him, but had treated him gently.

Police secured the car owner, Jeevanandham of Srirangam, with the help of the registration details of the car. Jeevanandham had told the police that one of his friends took the car, and pleaded innocence.

DECCAN Chronicle

30 OCTOBER 2020

Land for all in Kashmir: Wait for SC to take call

A recent Union home ministry order, which opens the door for any Indian to buy non-agricultural immoveable property in Jammu and Kashmir, deals a grievous blow to the aspirations — and to the psyche — of the people of Jammu, the Kashmir valley, and Ladakh, the three regions which until August 5, 2019 formed the state of J&K.

The legal status of this order shall remain dubious until the Supreme Court has dealt with the challenge before it to the law through which was whittled the constitutional autonomy of the erstwhile J&K state and whose long-term consequences for India appear far from happy. The long delay in the top court pronouncing on one of the most consequential matters brought before it in Independent India has occasioned considerable surprise.

Since constitutionally downgrading J&K, the Centre has taken a series of steps that have negatively impacted the lives of ordinary people in the UT and bred resentment. Among these are the hampering of the study of ordinary students by not permitting high-speed Internet, virtually killing journalism through the harsh treatment of media personnel, placing severe restrictions on the movement of people, banning protests, filling top positions in the UT administration by non-Kashmiri officers — to say nothing of putting thousands of non-BJP politicians in jail.

In addition, in the name of quelling terrorism (and instilling patriotism by fiat) there is the egregiousness of troop deployment on an extensive scale not seen even in the intense militancy-affected years of the late 1980s-the early 1990s. To place matters in perspective — all policy actions derive from executive orders alone, as in the colonial era, and there is the denial of election to the UT legislature.

The Centre gave itself the luxury to do all of these things while the Supreme Court has delayed beyond comprehension hearing the case of the reading down of Article 370 of the Constitution and the re-fashioning of an adjunct provision, the Article 35-A. It is the latter which had made ownership of immoveable property, government employment, and state scholarships, the exclusive preserve of permanent residents of the state. In May this year, new domicile rules were devised to let some people from outside J&K to apply for permanent resident status. This has now been widened to let anyone at all own immoveable property. Such a situation does not obtain in other special category states such as Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh.

In 1960, the Sheikh Abdullah government had brought the Big Estates Abolition Act to permit the tillers of land of big zamindars beyond certain ceiling prescriptions to become owners, and it is this which had made the former state among the top performers on social and economic indices. Under the new land orders, this Act stands revoked, probably opening the door for corporate houses.

Jammu and Ladakh — like the Valley — have also reacted negatively to the new land rules though the Centre may have hoped for support from those quarters on religious grounds. The heart of the matter is the taking away of the former J&K's autonomy, a condition laid down by Maharaja Hari Singh, and endorsed by Sheikh Abdullah, for joining India in 1947, rather than go with Pakistan.

Heed ASER's red flag

There has been a shift from private to government schools between 2018 and 2020, says the Annual Status of Education Report. The reasons include financial distress in households due to loss of income and shutdown of private schools. There has been an unregulated mushrooming of private schools all over the country in the past decades.

Alarmingly, however, India is among the few countries in the world where the ratio of private to public schooling is the highest. That's because the coverage of the government school network is patchy at best and the quality of learning dispensed there abysmal. The ASER study showed, for instance, that during the survey week, only one in three rural children had engaged in a learning activity. And only 36 per cent of schools provided them with textbooks.

In urban centres, there has been a boom in the edutech industry in pandemic times. However, exposing the criminally negligent logic behind the government's great education push is a well-anticipated outcome. Although smartphone ownership almost doubled from 2018, a third of children with smartphone access still did not receive any learning materials. Significantly, less than 15 per cent of rural Indian households have Internet. The poorest homes cannot afford a smartphone or a computer. Some were found selling their only assets during the pandemic merely so the children could continue learning in a Covid year.

Though it is highly iniquitous, the much-vaunted National Education Policy is silent on this yawning academic divide. The government, in its unseemly haste to pacify the influential middle classes, was loath to drop the JEE and restarted lessons for older students. But it paid scant regard to the increase in dropouts at the elementary and secondary levels.

It is a fact that 90 per cent of brain growth occurs by age five, meaning that the quality of early childhood schooling has a crucial impact. The ASER report shows that factors determining the quality of education received at this stage include the mother's education and the type of school, government or private. There is, therefore, a need to strengthen the government school system in India urgently.

India is going through an education emergency, which has only been exacerbated by Covid.

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Subhani

Death talk: Euthanasia tales amid Covid times

Karan Thapar

As I See It

I started reading Arun Shourie's new book *Preparing for Death* whilst in quarantine after I happened to meet someone who subsequently tested positive. Had I an inkling that in a couple of days I would follow suit I doubt if this would have been my first choice. But since I had started it, I decided to continue. The fear that suddenly loomed ahead seemed to add macabre interest. At least, during daylight hours!

It's not an easy book to read. Written in a deliberate stream-of-consciousness style, it is often erudite and learned but there are occasions when it's prosaic and even pedestrian. Like his other work, this book can be repetitive or, to be more accurate, Arun argues his case so thoroughly that you feel he's nailed the point long before he's finished with his hammer blows. Consequently, you need to read it in stages. Bit by bit. To make it easier, don't read in chronological sequence. Flip forward and back as curiosity guides you.

Well, that's what I did and thus stumbled upon five pages that tell a story that I find hard to describe. Perhaps my personal Covid affliction added to my fascination but I feel certain it would grip anyone who reads it. It's the most excruciatingly honest but also deeply disturbing and distressing account of a father's death told by his son. I admire Arun for sharing it with strangers and outsiders — because that's what readers are — but I also question why he wanted to do so or what purpose it

serves. It left me feeling uncomfortable. Actually, unsettled. I felt I was intruding into someone's privacy where I had no right to be.

The question this mesmerising account raises — actually explicitly though it shies away from an answer — is did Arun's father, Hari Dev Shourie, the founder of Common Cause, commit euthanasia? Everything in your head and heart tells you the answer is yes. Even the way Arun relates the story suggests this conclusion is unavoidable. In fact, there are a couple of sentences that, particularly for the suggestive or intuitive, could clinch the issue. "He was a strong advocate of euthanasia", writes Arun. "He had even written a book on the subject: *Life's Finale: Voluntary Exit*."

Arun's account of his father's death begins on the morning it happened. H.D. Shourie, who was 91 and had recently lost his wife, asked for tea at 8 am. When Ganesh, his trusted attendant, served it he was told to come back in an hour and a half. "When he went at 9.30, our father was gone."

A note written in his hand was found on the table by his bed. "I have led a full life", H.D.

It's not an easy book to read. Written in a deliberate stream-of-consciousness style, it is often erudite and learned but there are occasions when it's prosaic and even pedestrian

By making convincing forensic use of the letter his father left, Arun presents a compelling case that drives one to the conclusion that his father committed euthanasia

Shourie began. "My time has come... I have no regrets... today, the three of you are in town." It was that last sentence that shook Arun, his brother Deepak and their sister Nalini. "We used to travel a lot", writes Arun, "and often Nalini, Deepak or I would be out of town: he had clearly chosen a day when we were all in Delhi — none of us would have to rush back."

As the three siblings read and reread their father's last letter, their grief and shock mounted, they discovered it contained further evidence to suggest that H D. Shourie had committed suicide. Arun writes that whenever he gave advice to others, the elder Shourie would say: "When you write the final note or your will, as far as possible write it in your own hand... and include in it some detail which no one but you know about... this will help establish the authenticity of the document." And that is precisely what he had done. The letter mentions "a souvenir" hidden in an "almirah". None of his children knew it was there.

If you still have doubts this was a case of death by euthanasia there is, right at the end of the five pages, a sentence spoken by Arun's mother-in-law that will simply blast them away. Malti, as Arun refers to her, lived her life with the Shouries, looking after their son Adit. Consequently, she got to know his father well.

She also shared a birthday with H.D. Shourie. It's what she suddenly said a few months after his death that seems to erase all doubts of how it happened. "*Bhai Sahib* had even written the recipe in his book, she told us one day — she was the only one in the family to have read the book."

So, doesn't that seem to suggest that H.D. Shourie put something in his morning tea which took his life? Something that would take 90 minutes to work, which is why he asked his trusted Ganesh to return an hour and a half later?

This is where Arun's account of his father's death stops. He doesn't answer the question — did H.D. Shourie take his own life? But then he doesn't really need to. By making a convincing forensic use of the letter his father left, Arun presents a compelling case that drives one to the conclusion that his father committed euthanasia. It's hard to come to any other. In fact, you sense that is also what Arun believes — though, understandably, he can't bring himself to say so — when he writes of this father's book... "though years have passed since he went, I haven't had the courage to read it to this day".

Yet Arun has had the courage to tell us this story and share its harrowing impact on himself and his siblings. Speaking out is often a way of coming to terms with terrible tragedy or inexplicable mystery. Perhaps that was his reason for revealing something most people would, almost certainly, have kept to themselves. But it's not easy for the rest of us to handle. It not only left me full of questions and conflicting emotions but also quite shaken.

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

LETTERS

INDIA TO BE SELF-RELIANT

The editorial *Why India must not put all eggs in the US basket*, (Oct.29) deserves accolades for its clinical precision of dissecting the Janus-faced China whose bellicose and incorrigible attitude has made India seek strategic and political help from Uncle Sam, leave alone the belligerent China desperately wanting to besiege the troubled borders at LAC. That said, the late president Dr A.P.J. Kalam wanted India to be self-reliant and be a world leader lock, stock and barrel despite signing multi-treaties. It is time India made its stance solid, sending befitting signals to the hostile neighbour rather than prolonging her patience, lest it could be misconstrued by China that India's DNA is anemic.

E.S.Chandrasekaran, Chennai

BIHAR POLLS

FINGER POWER came to fore when 16 districts of Bihar went to polls in the first round. A 54 per cent turnout was registered and, interestingly, the turnout was a record 61 per cent in Chakali, a Naxalite infested constituency. Traditionally, the turnout in Bihar is very poor and Munger witnessed some untoward incidents. Bihar polls appear to be rather competitive and we expect a tough fight. The pendulum swings both the sides and the voters play a pivotal role in this prestigious state election. The voters are keeping their fingers crossed and hoping for the best.

C.K. Subramaniam, via e-mail

SECOND HIT OF PANDEMIC

APROPOS YOUR report *Delhi reports second wave of pandemic* (Oct. 29). While Delhi's surge in the coronavirus cases has been taking a toll for the second time, southern states which include Tamil Nadu do not seem to be too far from yet another hit. With irregularities and norms thrown to the wind, the state would take time to see a sizeable decrease. While the state government has reported that there is a dip in the cases, on the contrary the health ministry at the Centre has said that among other states, Tamil Nadu has been reporting a spurt with regard to the pandemic. It remains clueless for the common man to understand the method or strategy of the authenticity of reports declared by state and Central health departments as it don't seem to tally.

Jacqueline Netto, Chennai

Abhijit Bhattacharyya

Stop Dragon's free ride, don't let it exploit our democracy

It has been long-term Chinese policy, almost since the inception of the People's Republic, to try and mock India's democracy as the Dragon, deep down, is convinced it is democracy which makes this country weak, and its leaders ineffective and inefficient. This has driven the Chinese Communist Party's strategic thinking for decades.

The CCP's mission to humiliate India has become more diabolical by the day. In association with its allies in the Pakistan Army and its ISI, the Chinese are going all out in a bid to internationalise India's internal issues, though with little success, at the United Nations and elsewhere. President Xi Jinping is, of course, only continuing a tradition set long back by Chairman Mao Zedong.

The Dragon's diplomatic deception now borders on the ludicrous. You don't need a trained Sinologist to uncover duplicity and the plot to attack India from within. Thus, when Beijing's man in Delhi, ambassador Sun Weidong, parrots the one-liner "the common interests of the two countries (India and China) far outweigh the frictions and differences", he's either hallucinating or trying hard to convince his bosses that he's working hard in Delhi to mislead gullible Indians, and take them for a

ride!

Therefore, one should seek some clarifications from Mr Sun, and put forward some pertinent questions to him: "Mr Ambassador, please define the common interests of the two countries". Specifically, with facts and figures, without airy semantics. In what way do the "common interests", if any, "far outweigh the friction and differences"? Does it imply that India, for the sake of the so-called "common interests", be silent and succumb to the CPC's blandishments despite all the unilateral violence, killings, invasions, forced occupation of Indian territory since the 1950s, setting the tribal areas of Northeast India on fire, destroying West Bengal through the treacherous anti-national Naxalites and other marauding Communists, the unprovoked killing of Indian border personnel at Longju (August 1959), Hot Springs (October 1959), the 32-day invasion of India (October-November 1962), Nathu La (September 1967), Cho La (October 1967), Pangong Tso Lake (May 2020), the China-Pakistan CPEC through India's J&K, and now the Galwan Valley massacre (June 2020)? Should India forget and forgive President Xi, who has made himself China's life-time dictator, and his cohorts for the sake of what Beijing hypocritically

calls "common interests"?

Does the recurring murder of Indian soldiers by the CPC-controlled private militia called the People's Liberation Army constitute the "common interests" of Beijing and New Delhi? Does the loss of limbs of Indian officers and men and the forced occupation of Indian territory by the CPC constitute "common interests"? Or do the Chinese hope to tire out the Indian soldiers standing guard on the banks of Pangong Lake and force their commanders to talk from 10 to 14 hours a day in a diplomatic engagement with PLA generals? Is this why India maintains a standing army? Soldiers aren't diplomats, and it isn't their role to resort to Gandhi-like "*ahimsa*" to counter the CPC's "*hinsa*"!

Sorry, Ambassador Sun, that's the job of the foreign office and its diplomats, who should "enter the dragon" and play hardball, telling Beijing that there is a limit to how long such gross violations of India's sovereignty can continue.

It's time for the Chinese to forget about access to India's market of 1.3 billion people. It's time their spies operating under garb of companies, investors and tourists stop interfering in India's internal affairs. Let them not issue brazen threatening

"advisories" to India's independent media, ordering it to "desist" from writing about Taiwan, Xinjiang, the Dalai Lama, Hong Kong, Uighurs and human rights violations. One wonders what the battalions of Chinese diplomats have understood about this country that they would think India's media would follow the foreign ministry's lead in its reports and comments?

It's also time for Beijing to stop instigating India's neighbourhood through its cash, threats, deceit, deception and lies.

The Indian State should seriously go back to basics of the Constitution to deal with the Chinese assault on Indian territory and revisit Article 1(3) - "The territory of India shall comprise" ... and "(c) such other territories as may be acquired". Simply put, India's Constitution doesn't have any provision to cede territory to any foreign power/country. It permits acquisition only... "as may be acquired". If at all, India can only cede its own territory subject to an amendment of the Constitution. Thus, with the passing of Constitution (119th Amendment) Bill 2013, for example, for operationalising the Land Boundary Agreement with Bangladesh, notified as "100th Amendment Act" after the assent of

the President, the border readjustment between New Delhi and Dhaka took place peacefully and with mutual respect and honour. India cannot otherwise cede an inch of its territory to any foreign country. That's the bottomline.

It is clear as daylight that the Chinese are bent on hurting and humiliating democratic India. There is no chance of any change in the congenial psyche of hostility and aggression by the CPC. That's the reason attempts are being constantly made to dishonour and discredit this country before the comity of nations. If an India of 1.3 billion people cannot safeguard its sovereignty, Constitution and territorial integrity, and allow its trade, commerce, banking, economy and strategic sectors to be penetrated by the CPC, it's time for Delhi to snub the wayward ambassador publicly. Enough is enough! Without any further ado, India must decisively abort the Chinese geo-economic strategy which is penetrating and slowly poisoning the very fabric of our republic.

The writer is an alumnus of the National Defence College. The views expressed are personal.

IN BRIEF

PAK ADMITS TO
ROLE IN
PULWAMA BLAST

From Page 1

"Legs were shaking and forehead perspiring, and the foreign minister (Qureshi) told us, For God's sake, let him (Varthaman) go back now because India is attacking Pakistan at 9 pm in the night", Mr Sadiq said, recalling the high-level meeting which was also attended by Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa, and added that "India was not planning to attack...They just wanted to kneel before India and send back Abhinandan."

Mr Chaudhry, who was the information and broadcasting minister at the time of the Pulwama attack, criticised Mr Sadiq's remarks and termed them as "inappropriate".

The international community led by the US has pressed Pakistan to deny safe haven to terror groups operating from its soil and bring the perpetrators of the Pulwama attack to justice.

PTI

FORMER GUJARAT
CM KESHUBHAI
PATEL DEAD

Ahmedabad, Oct. 29: Former Gujarat chief minister Keshubhai Patel, who played a pivotal role in strengthening the BJP in the state, died here on Thursday after prolonged illness, family sources said.

Patel (92), who recovered from coronavirus infection recently, was rushed to a hospital in Ahmedabad on Thursday morning following health complications, the sources said.

The BJP veteran was the chief minister in 1995 and again during 1998-2001. Narendra Modi had succeeded him as Gujarat chief minister.

The state government has declared a day's state mourning on Thursday, Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani told reporters. Keshubhai's last rites will be performed with full state honours, Mr Rupani added.

PTI

Protesters target cops over
Munger firing; SP removed

Angry agitators torch mofussil and women police stations in the town

Patna/Munger, Oct. 29: The Election Commission has removed the District Magistrate and the Superintendent of Police of Munger over the violence during a Durga Puja event early this week, even as a group of protesters went on the rampage in the town on Thursday setting some police stations and outposts on fire and ransacking the SP office.

The poll panel on Thursday also ordered an inquiry into the firing and stone-pelting during the immersion of an idol of goddess Durga late Monday night in which one person had died and several others were injured.

The election commission has asked Magadh Divisional Commissioner Asangba Chuba Ao to complete the probe within a week.

Rajesh Meena is District

Magistrate and Lipi Singh is SP of Munger. The EC statement said Munger will get a new DM and a Superintendent of Police Thursday itself.

Alleging that no action was taken against the SP and other police personnel over the Monday night incident, the agitators allegedly torched mofussil and women police stations in the town.

They also allegedly set police outposts at Purab Sarai and Basudeopur on fire, and ransacked the SP office and several other police stations and outposts. The office of Sub Divisional Officer was also allegedly targeted by the protestors, official sources said.

Witnesses said that finding themselves outnumbered, the police personnel at all these stations escaped from the premises.

Official sources said the agitators went berserk and also tried to set kotwali and Kasim bazar police stations on fire, but there they faced a strong resistance from the policemen who fired in the air to disperse the mob.

They burnt tyres near Rajiv Chowk in the Munger town, demanding action against the SP and the police personnel responsible for allegedly opening fire during the idol immersion procession.

Additional Director General of Police (Headquarters) Jitendra Kumar said in Patna that extra police force has been sent to Munger.

Deputy Inspector General of Police, Munger, Manu Maharaj led a flag march in Munger town to bring the situation under control.

The RJD-helmed Grand

Alliance has strongly criticised the Monday incident, likening the district police with General Dyer of infamous Jallianwala Bagh incident in Punjab during British rule on April 13, 1919.

IPS officer Lipi Singh is the daughter of RCP Singh, the JD(U) leader in the Rajya Sabha.

Coming on the eve of the first phase of polling, the incident had its impact voting too as two of the three Assembly seats — Munger, Jamalpur — in the district witnessed lower voter turnout as compared to the 2015 polls.

While Munger constituency had witnessed a poll percentage of 54.26 in 2015, it recorded 47.89 Wednesday. Similarly, the decline was from 49.70 per cent to 47.24 per cent in Jamalpur this time.

But Tarapur constituency recorded a polling per-

centage of 54.80 this time compared to 52.66 in 2015.

State minister and senior JD(U) leader Shailesh Kumar is in the fray from Jamalpur seat.

Meanwhile, the police department has ordered the removal of in-charges of mofussil police station and Basudeopur outpost in connection with the October 26 firing and baton-charge incidents.

RCP Singh was mobbed Wednesday by angry protesters demanding action against the "guilty officials" when he visited Begusarai, where polling is scheduled for November 3. Begusarai is the Lok Sabha seat of BJP leader and Union minister Giriraj Singh who had condemned the Munger incident and sought action against "erring officials no matter how highly connected they may be."

— PTI

Covid-19 caseload
crosses 8m-mark

New Delhi, Oct. 29: India's Covid-19 caseload surpassed the 80-lakh mark on Thursday, 18 days after it had gone past 70 lakh, with 49,881 new cases while the recoveries surged to 73.15 lakh pushing the national recovery rate to 90.99 per cent, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The total coronavirus cases mounted to 80,40,203 and the death toll climbed to 1,20,527 with the novel coronavirus virus claiming 517 lives in a span of 24 hours in the country, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The case fatality rate has further declined to 1.49 per cent.

Kerala records 7,020 cases: The Covid-19 recoveries in Kerala crossed the 3.25 lakh mark with 8,474 persons recuperating on Thursday, while 7,020 fresh cases were detected. The total infection count climbed to 4,05,545 and the toll mounted to 1,429 with 26 deaths. As many as 91,784 people are undergoing treatment.

4,025 cases in K'taka: With 4,025 fresh cases and 45 deaths on Thursday, Karnataka's Covid-19 tally and cumulative fatalities reached 8,16,809 and 11,091 respectively, the health department said.

AP ups testing, cases fall: A new record high of 88,778 samples were tested in a single day for the coronavirus in Andhra Pradesh but only 2,905 of them turned positive, in what is seen as a clear indication of the continuing decline in the spread of the infection.

The latest bulletin said a total of 78,62,459 tests had been done in the state so far, which revealed an overall infection positivity rate of 10.40 per cent.

TS has 1,504 cases: Telangana state recorded 1,504 Covid-19 cases and five more fatalities from the disease in the 24-hour period ending 8 pm on Wednesday, the state health department has said. The fatalities from Covid-19 so far stand at 1,324 and the total cases at 2,35,656.

Bombay HC directs Central govt
to clear its stand on media trialsDC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, OCT. 29

The Bombay High Court on Thursday asked the Union government to clarify whether excessive reportage by the press on an ongoing investigation of Sushant Singh Rajput case amounted to interference in the administration of justice under the Contempt of Courts Act.

The court also asked the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting why it should not frame guide-

● **THE COURT** also asked the Ministry of I&B why it should not frame guidelines on media coverage of sensitive criminal cases.

lines on media coverage of sensitive criminal cases.

A bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G.S. Kulkarni was hearing PILs filed by some former IPS officers of Mumbai police and activists seeking restrictions should be imposed on

media trials in SSR death case. The PILs also alleged that some media channels are maligning the image of Mumbai police deliberately and requested court to interfere in the matter.

In the previous hearings, the HC heard the petitioners, private TV news channels, and the National Broadcasters Standards Authority (NBSA) on the need for a regulatory mechanism for the electronic media.

The TV channels and the NBSA argued in favour of

a self-regulatory mechanism and said the state must not be given any control over their content.

On Thursday, senior counsel Aspi Chinoy, representing former police officers, submitted to the court that there had been blatant violation of rights of various persons by the news channels while reporting on the SSR death case. He said that the channels had resorted to pre-judging and conducted irresponsible coverage of the actor's death case.

DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
OCT. 29

A Kochi court on Thursday sent Kerala Chief Minister Mr Pinarayi Vijayan's former principal secretary M. Sivasankar to seven days custody of Enforcement Directorate (ED) which arrested him in connection with the money trail in the Kerala gold smuggling case.

Even though the ED sought 14 day custody of Sivasankar who has been

ED claims proof; Sivasankar
sent to seven-day custody

arraigned as fifth accused in the case, the court granted the investigating agency seven day's custody. He was produced before the Ernakulam Principal Sessions court which is also a Special Court of Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) cases in Kochi.

In its arrest memo the ED claimed that "during the statement given to ED on October 15, you accepted to have spoken to a senior Customs officer and made the request as per the wishes of Swapna

Suresh. This clearly shows your active involvement in the offence committed by Swapna."

Meanwhile, the ED arrested Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of Kerala CPM state secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, in Bengaluru in connection with a money laundering case and his alleged links and financial dealings with an accused in Bengaluru drug racket case. The ED later produced him before a local court which sent him to four day's ED custody.

WORLD

IN BRIEF

8 inmates dead
after prison riot

Kabul: Rioting at a prison in western Afghanistan has left at least eight inmates dead, provincial officials said Thursday. The violence erupted on Wednesday night at the prison in Herat, the capital of western Herat province, said Mohammad Rafiq Shirzai, spokesman for the provincial health department. He said 12 others — eight inmates and four prison guards — were wounded in the outbreak at the facility, which holds around 2,000 prisoners. It wasn't immediately known if there are any Taliban at the penitentiary. The rioting started after guards began clearing some partitions created by prisoners, said Jelani Farhad, spokesman for the provincial governor.

Pak seminary
blast probe ends

Peshawar: The investigation team probing the bomb blast at a religious seminary in northwest Pakistan's Peshawar city has completed its initial report and arrested one student in connection with the attack that killed eight persons, officials said on Thursday. The investigation team that included officials of counter-terrorism department, police and law enforcement agencies, recorded statements of several eye witnesses and obtained the record of the students of the seminary and the labourers engaged in a construction work there. One student of the seminary has been arrested over his alleged links to the blast, suspected to have targeted a senior cleric from Afghanistan, officials said. The blast occurred around 8:30 am on Tuesday at a local mosque, which also serves as a religious school in Dir Colony in Peshawar, while students were reading the Quran. There was no claim of responsibility for the blast in the city, bordering war-torn Afghanistan. Law enforcement agencies on Wednesday detained several people in connection with the bomb blast.

France knife attack: 3 dead

Third attack in 2 months; attacker wounded by cops, hospitalised

TURKEY CONDEMNS
SAVAGE ATTACK

Istanbul, Oct. 29: Ankara strongly condemned Thursday's "savage" knife attack in southern France that left three people dead, offering its "solidarity", despite a running diplomatic spat with Paris.

"We strongly condemn the attack committed today inside the Notre-Dame church in Nice," a foreign ministry statement said, while offering condolences to the victims' relatives after the incident that shook France.

— AFP

POPE DENOUNCES
TERROR, VIOLENCE

Vatican City, Oct. 29: Pope Francis prayed for the victims of an attack by a knife man in a Nice church Thursday, as the Vatican said "terrorism and violence can never be accepted".

"Today's attack has sown death in a place of love and consolation. The Pope is aware of the situation and is close to the mourning Catholic community," Vatican spokesman Matteo Brunelli said in a statement. "He prays for the victims and their loved ones, so that the violence may cease, so that we may return to look upon ourselves as brothers and sisters and not as enemies, so that the beloved French people may unite to combat evil with good", he said.

— AFP



French President Emmanuel Macron (2nd-L) visits the scene of a knife attack at the Basilica of Notre-Dame de Nice in Nice on Thursday.

— AFP

FRENCH PM RAISES ATTACK ALERT TO
EMERGENCY AFTER CHURCH KILLINGS

Paris, Oct. 29: France's prime minister Jean Castex says the country's threat level will be raised to its maximum after an attack near a church killed three people Thursday in Nice.

The move comes just hours before the country was going into its second Coronavirus lockdown.

SAUDI MAN STABS, WOUNDS GUARD
AT FRENCH CONSULATE, ARRESTED

Dubai, Oct. 29: Saudi Arabia's state-run news agency is reporting that a Saudi man has been detained after stabbing and slightly wounding a guard at the French Consulate in the city of Jiddah.

The Saudi Press Agency report on Thursday offered no motive for the attack. However, it comes amid heightened tensions

after an assailant decapitated a French middle school teacher who showed caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad for a class on free speech. Those caricatures were published by Charlie Hebdo and cited by the men who gunned down the newspaper's editorial meeting in 2015.

After an assailant decapitated a French middle school teacher who showed caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad for a class on free speech. Those caricatures were published by Charlie Hebdo and cited by the men who gunned down the newspaper's editorial meeting in 2015.



Three people killed and several others injured in a knife attack at a church in Nice

KBK

day. Less than two weeks ago, an assailant decapitated a French middle school teacher who showed caricatures of the Prophet for a class on free speech. Those caricatures were published by Charlie Hebdo and cited by the men who gunned down the newspaper's editorial meeting in 2015.

In September, a man who had sought asylum in France attacked bystanders outside Charlie Hebdo's former offices with a butcher knife.

— AP

COMPUTERISE
D LOTTERY
SCHEME FOR
H-1B MAY GO

From Page 1

If finalised as proposed, US Citizenship and Immigration Services would first select registrations (or petitions, if the registration process is suspended) generally based on the highest Occupational Employment Statistics prevailing wage level that the offered wage equals or exceeds for the relevant Standard Occupational Classification code and areas of intended employment.

"Prioritisation and selection based on wage levels better balances the interests of petitioners, H-1B workers, and U.S. workers," the DHS said.

"With this proposed rule, the Trump administration is continuing to deliver on its promise to protect the American worker while strengthening the economy. The H-1B programme is often exploited and abused by U.S. employers, and their U.S. clients," said acting DHS deputy secretary Ken Cuccinelli.

US President Donald Trump, keen to regulate the country's immigration policies, on June 22, signed the executive order temporarily banning issuing fresh H-1B and L-1 visas till December 31.

— AFP

NORTHERN RAILWAY PROCUREMENT OF PASSENGER ESCALATOR. Corrigendum for open Tender Published Vide Tender No. 26 of 2019-20 at S.N. 01			
S.N.	Tender No.	Opening Date	Revised Date
1	12195080B	03.11.2020	17.11.2020
The same has been uploaded on website www.reps.gov.in interested parties may kindly check the details on the website. 2382/2020			
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE			

PARADIP PORT TRUST
e-TENDER CALL NOTICE
Name of the work : "Providing Cylindrical Fenders, Super-M Fenders and Cell Fenders at NQ-I, NQ-II, Wet Basin, DSTB and other Berths of Paradip Port". EMD cost: Rs. 3,75,653/-
Last Date and time of submission of Bid : 18.11.2020 up to 17:15 Hrs. For details please refer our Website : eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app.
Executive Engineer
PPT/PR/274/2020-21, Dt.29.10.2020

SOUTH WESTERN RAILWAY
The undersigned, on behalf of The President of India, invites E-Tenders for the following works.
E-Tender Notice No. SPCR-UBL_Tele_07_2020-21
Dated: 25-10-2020

Sl.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost
1	Augmentation of the existing telecommunication system to meet the requirement of 25 KV AC Railway Electrification and Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of way station equipments with power supplies, emergency sockets etc., in SP / SSP / TSS including Trenching, Laying, Jointing of 6-Quad, OFC, PIJF cable for providing communication to SP / SSP / TSS and other miscellaneous telecom works in Sampige Road - Hubballi in. (excl.) Section of South Western Railway (Group - 259).	[Rs. 6,39,19,951/-]

E-Tender Notice No. GDG-LMT_Tele_08_2020-21
Dated: 25-10-2020

Sl.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost
2	Augmentation of the existing telecommunication system to meet the requirement of 25 KV AC Railway Electrification and Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of way station equipments with power supplies, emergency sockets etc., in SP / SSP / TSS including Trenching, Laying, Jointing of 6-Quad, OFC, PIJF cable for providing communication to SP / SSP / TSS and other miscellaneous telecom works in Gadag Jn. - Almatte Section of Hubballi Division in South Western Railway (Group - 258).	[Rs. 2,68,59,172/-]

E-Tender Notice No. MYS-CMNR_Tele_09_2020-21
Dated: 25-10-2020

Sl.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost
3	Augmentation of the existing telecommunication system to meet the requirement of 25 KV AC Railway Electrification and Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of way station equipments with power supplies, emergency sockets etc., in SP / SSP / TSS including Trenching, Laying, Jointing of 6-Quad, OFC, PIJF cable for providing communication to SP / SSP / TSS and other miscellaneous telecom works in Mysuru Jn. (excl.) - Chamaraanjagur Section of Mysuru Division in South Western Railway (Group - 297).	[Rs. 1,66,88,387/-]

Last date for submission of bids: upto 15.00 hrs. of 20-11-2020
For details log on: www.reps.gov.in
Keep visiting the website for any corrigendum till closing date.
Deputy Chief Signal and Telecom Engineer
Railway Electrification, Bengaluru
Pub/172/AAS/PRB/SWR/2020-21

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	39749.85	-0.43
Nifty 50	11670.80	-0.50
S&P 500*	3,303.20	0.98
Dollar (₹)	74.10	98.9
Pound Sterling (₹)	96.27	-0.20
Euro (₹)	86.94	-0.14
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,309	186 0.37
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	37.46	-1.66
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.881	0.023
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.803	0.022

* As of 9:30 PM IST

DPIIT's new quality control norms for leather footwear

The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has come out with quality control norms for different leather foot-wear including anti-riot shoes with a view to contain imports and production of sub-standard products in the country. The products would have to conform to the specified standards and bear the standard mark under a licence from Bureau of Indian Standards. The items cannot be produced, sold/traded, imported, stocked unless they bear BIS mark.

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Gold demand in India plunges to 25-year low

RBI in gold buying spree

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 29

India's gold demand in 2020 might be the lowest in 25 years as the pandemic has already dragged down consumption in the first three quarters by almost half. Central banks have turned net sellers in the September quarter after a gap of 10 years.

In the first three quarters of 2020, gold demand stood at 252 tonnes, which was 49 per cent down from 496 tonnes in the same period last year. With one more quarter to go, the World Gold Council expects that India's gold demand would be the lowest since 1995.

"The year 1995 had seen one of the lowest yearly demand of 462 tonnes. In Q4 of last year, the demand stood at 194 tonnes. Even if we assume that the country consumes 200 tonnes in the festive quarter of Q4 this, which though is unlikely, the total consumption for the calendar year will touch 452 tonnes and will be lesser than 1995 demand," said Somasundaram PR, Managing Director, India, World Gold Council.

According to him, some of the organised jewellers have reportedly seen 60 - 80 per cent of the demand recovering in the month of October.

The September quarter saw gold demand falling by 30 per cent to 86.6 tonnes on the back of Covid-19 related disruptions, bleak consumer sentiment and high prices accompanied by volatility.

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 29

While central banks turned net sellers after a gap of 10 years, the Reserve Bank of India bought 6.8 tonnes of gold during the pandemic-hit September quarter. In fact India has bought a total of about 30 tonnes since March this year.

India was among the six central banks that increased their reserves in Q3 by a tonne or more. India bought 6.8 tonnes of gold in the quarter when the gross purchases by all the banks totaled a modest 33 tonnes. United Arab Emirates, Qatar, Kyrgyz Republic, Kazakhstan and Cambodia were the other buyers.

Earlier in February, RBI had bought 6.8 tonnes taking the total gold reserves to 641.8 tonnes. As on October 9, gold reserves have increased to 670.1 tonnes, as per the data of RBI. In the past seven months, RBI has bought close to 30 tonnes of gold in staggered purchases.

India has been buying

gold in smaller tranches since 2017. In 2019, the bank had bought 34.5 tonnes and in 2018, 42.5 tonnes. In 2017 it had bought 0.3 tonnes. Prior to that, RBI had purchased 200 tonnes in 2009.

However, in the September quarter, Central banks turned net sellers of gold for the first time since Q4 2010. Against a net purchase of 141.9 tonnes in the same quarter last year, banks made a net sale of 12 tonnes.

Turkey and Uzbekistan accounted for the bulk of sales. Central banks of the two large buyers- Russia and China - also have not been buying gold for some time.

According to the World Gold Council, Covid-19 continued to inflict widespread economic hardship, and this pre-occupied central banks and governments around the world.

"Uncertainty has been elevated by the pandemic, motivating many investors - including central banks - to seek assets

that will diversify and protect the value of their portfolios in times of crisis. Central banks have been particularly hard hit by the low and negative interest rates on sovereign bonds, which make up the largest proportion of reserve assets for many," said WGC.

According to Rahul Bajoria, chief India economist, Barclays, increasing gold holdings is part of RBI's long-term strategy of diversifying foreign reserves. "Given the increase in foreign reserves of RBI for the past one-and-half years, gold holdings too might continue to grow. RBI has been buying bonds of developed nations, making deposits with other central banks and IMF as well as increasing gold holdings," he said.

While Reserve Bank of India has been increasing gold holdings in smaller tranches, the government has been issuing sovereign gold bonds. In the past few months, it has been issuing bonds every month.

Mistrys seek to split Tata Sons' shareholding

Mumbai, Oct. 29: The Shapoorji Pallonji Group on Thursday said it has submitted a plan to Supreme Court to end its seven decades-old association with the Tata Group.

The Mistrys have valued their holding in the Tatas at ₹1.75 lakh crore, it informed the apex court, which is hearing the long-drawn legal battle between the two groups that began after the Tatas in a boardroom coup on October 28, 2016 sacked Cyrus Mistry as the Chairman.

"Tata Sons is effectively a two-group company, with the Tata Group comprising Tata Trusts, Tata family members and Tata companies holding 81.6 per cent of the equity share capital, and the Mistry family owning the balance 18.37 per cent," the Shapoorji Pallonji Group said in a statement quoting from its submission to the apex court.



The group has submitted a plan for separation from Tatas to the Supreme Court.

Tata Sons is the core investment company and is the holding company for the Tata Group and its value arises from its stake in listed equities, non-listed equities, the brand, cash balances and immovable assets. The value of 18.37 per cent stake of the SP Group in Tata Sons is over ₹1,75,000 crore, it said.

— PTI

Centre rejigs norms for PLI scheme

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Making the production-linked incentive schemes more attractive for bulk drugs and medical devices manufacturing, the government has replaced "minimum threshold investment" criterion with "committed investment".

The government has replaced the criterion of 'minimum threshold' investment with 'committed' investment by the selected applicant. The change has been made to encourage efficient use of productive capital. Further, the amount of investment required to achieve a particular level of production depends upon choice of technology and it also varies from product to product. However, the verification of the actual investment for incentives under the scheme continues.

Global trade to shrink by 20%

SANGEETHA G. CHENNAI, OCT. 29

Revising its earlier estimate, the UNCTAD has predicted global trade to plummet by 20 per cent or by about \$6 trillion in 2020.

In 2019, global trade stood at about \$25 trillion, with estimates then predicting a 3 per cent rise in 2020. Without a swift recovery in the second

half of 2020, the consensus now is that trade will instead plummet by about 20 per cent this year, or by about \$6 trillion. Such a decline would be unprecedented, being significantly larger than the \$4 trillion fall seen during the 2009 recession, said Mukhisa Kituyi, Secretary-General, UNCTAD in a recent article.

In early October, UNCTAD had said that it

expected global trade to fall by about 7 per cent in 2020 under the assumption that the trend observed in Q3 continues into Q4. The lower bound for 2020 is at about 9 per cent and considers the possibility of a resurgence of the pandemic and the prospect of a deteriorating policy environment with sudden increases in trade restrictive policies, the article had said.

GAMES

SHORT TAKE



Novak Djokovic gestures after defeating Borna Coric in the Vienna Open pre-quarterfinal.

Djokovic seals 2020's top spot

Vienna: Novak Djokovic virtually ensured equalling Pete Sampras's record of ending the year as world number one for the sixth time on Wednesday when he reached the Vienna ATP quarterfinals. Djokovic defeated Croatia's Borna Coric 7-6 (13/11), 6-3 and will secure the year-end top spot as long as Rafael Nadal does not take an unlikely wild card into the Sofia event next month. If Novak wins the Vienna title on Sunday, he will make sure of the landmark regardless of whether or not Nadal plays in Bulgaria. Djokovic, who now has 39 wins and just two defeats in 2020, has been the top-ranked player at the end of a season five times: in 2011, 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2018. He shares that mark with career rivals Roger Federer and Nadal. Sampras achieved the feat six years in succession between 1993 and 1998.

— AFP

KAPIL SHARES HIS WELL BEING IN VIDEO MESSAGE

New Delhi, Oct. 29: A week after undergoing angioplasty, the legendary Kapil Dev on Thursday greeted his former India teammates from the 1983 World Cup, saying he is "feeling very good" and eager to meet everyone soon.

The 61-year-old underwent the procedure after suffering a heart attack. He was discharged from the hospital a couple of days later.

"My family 83. The weather is very pleasant and I am very eager to meet you all. I am feeling very good. Thanks to all for your wishes and concern."

"I am hoping that we all will meet pretty soon. I will try to meet you all as early as possible. We have approached the end of the year and I am confident that we will have a great start to next year. Love you all," an enthusiastic Kapil, dressed in a purple T-shirt, said in a video which he shared with his 1983 teammates.



A screengrab of Kapil Dev from a video released by him.

— PTI

Powerful Punjab face languishing Rajasthan

Abu Dhabi, Oct. 29: A rampaging Kings XI Punjab would look to extend their exceptional run and inch closer to a Play-offs berth while Rajasthan Royals would be desperate to stay alive in the tournament when the two sides clash in an IPL match, here on Friday.

It has been a dramatic turnaround for the KL Rahul-led side after a string of losses earlier in the tournament. They have managed to weave together five consecutive wins against the top four sides in the tournament, infusing life into their campaign. They are in fourth position with 12 points from as many games, while the Royals have slumped to the penultimate spot with 10 points having suffered seven defeats from 12 outings.

The Royals can't afford to slip up, if they lose on Friday they will be out of the reckoning while a defeat for Punjab will dent their chances for a top-four finish.

The Royals will be high

on confidence after their win over Mumbai Indians in their 1st outing.

— PTI

HARDIK, CHRIS REBUKED

Abu Dhabi: RCB all-rounder Chris Morris and his MI's counterpart Hardik Pandya have been reprimanded for a verbal altercation during their teams' IPL clash here.

The incident took place in the 19th over of MI chase when Pandya struck Morris for a massive six and gestured towards the South African.

Morris got his revenge when he dismissed Pandya in the fifth ball of the over and gave him a send off. MI won the match by five wickets.

A press release from the IPL said that both of them admitted to breaching the Code of Conduct.

"For Level 1 breaches of the Code of Conduct, the match referee's decision is final and binding," said the release.

— PTI

Gaikward off KKR

Jadeja cracks whip as CSK beat Knights in thriller

Dubai, Oct. 29: Chennai Super Kings beat Kolkata Knight Riders by six wickets in a thrilling IPL match here on Thursday.

Ravindra Jadeja scored an unbeaten 31 off just 11 balls which included two boundaries and three sixes, the last of which was struck on the last ball of the match to overhaul KKR's total of 172 for 5.

Needing 30 runs off the last two overs, CSK smashed 20 off the penultimate over bowled by fast bowler Lockie Ferguson, thanks to Jadeja, who hit two more sixes in the last over bowled by pacer Kamlesh Nagarkoti.

Earlier, opener Ruturaj Gaekwad set a solid foundation for the chase by scoring 72 in 53 balls (4x6, 6x2).

For KKR, opener Nitish Rana made 87. Following Rana's 61-ball effort, cameos from skipper Eoin Morgan (15 off 12) and Dinesh Karthik (21 not out off 10) allowed KKR to put up a competitive total.

CSK, who pulled things back in the middle overs, leaked 66 runs in the last five overs.

Lungi Ngidi (2/34) was the best bowler for CSK while Sam Curran also bowled well early on.

The KKR innings was built largely on Rana's knock which comprised 10 fours, four sixes.

Rana hit three consecutive sixes off Karn Sharma in the 16th over to up the ante as the Kolkata side looked for quick runs.

— PTI



Ruturaj Gaikwad of Chennai Super Kings plays a shot against Kolkata Knight Riders during their IPL match at Dubai International Cricket Stadium on Thursday.

SCORECARD

Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill b Karn Sharma 26, Nitish Rana c Sam Curran b Lungi Ngidi 87, Sunil Narine c Ravindra Jadeja b Mitchell Santner 7, Rinku Singh c Ambati Rayudu b Jadeja 11, E. Morgan c Gaikwad b Ngidi 15, D. Karthik not out 21, R. Tripathi not out 3. Extras (LB-1, W-1) 2. Total (for 5 wickets 20 overs) 172.

FoW: 1-53, 2-60, 3-93, 4-137, 5-167.

Bowling: Chahar 3-0-31-0, Curran 3-0-21-0, Ngidi 4-0-34-2, Santner 3-0-30-1, Jadeja 3-0-20-1, Karn Sharma 4-0-35-1.

Chennai Super Kings: Shane Watson c R. Singh b Varun Chakravathy 14, RD Gaikwad b Cummins 72, Ambati Rayudu c Narine b Cummins 38, M. S. Dhoni b Varun 1, Sam Curran not out 13, Jadeja not out 31. Extras (NB-1, W-8) 9. Total (for 4 wickets in 20 overs) 178.

FoW: 1-50, 2-118, 3-121, 4-140, 5-172.

Bowling: Pat Cummins 4-0-31-2, Kamlesh Nagarkoti 3-0-34-0, Sunil Narine 4-0-23-0, Lockie Ferguson 4-0-54-0, Varun Chakravathy 4-0-20-2, Nitish Rana 1-0-16-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE

Teams	P	W	L	N/R	Pts	NR
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	13	6	7	0	12	-0.467
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12	5	7	0	10	+0.396
Rajasthan Royals	12	5	7	0	10	-0.505
Chennai Super Kings	13	5	8	0	10	-0.532

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

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