

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | MONDAY 16 | NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 30°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: 8.3 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 1
Tithi: Prathamai/ Thuvithiyai
Star: Anusham
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
Yamagandam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.54 am
Zohar: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.12 pm
Maghrib: 5.39 pm
Isha: 6.53 pm

SUNSET TODAY 5.40 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.09 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.05 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 7.51 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+26,848)	(+368)
88,41,784	1,30,043

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,819)	
TN: 7,58,191	11,478

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

5,46,03,282

DEATHS

13,22,222

COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES

217

worldometers.info



STATE | 3

**BJP, Congress MP
flay firecracker ban**



**Violence erupts as Trump
supporters, rivals clash**

WORLD | 5

SPORT | 8

**Hamilton wins
seventh F1 world title**



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Nitish to be sworn in 4th term CM today

■ **NDA parliamentary party elects him leader**

**DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
PATNA, NOV. 15**

Janata Dal (United) leader Nitish Kumar who was on Sunday unanimously elected leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) parliamentary party will be sworn in chief minister of Bihar for the record fourth term on Monday.

Mr Kumar, who met Governor Phagu Chauhan and staked claim for forming a new government after his election, said the oath-taking ceremony is fixed around 4.30 pm on Monday as per the governor's direction.

Mr Kumar met the governor amid rumours that deputy chief minister in the outgoing cabinet Sushil Modi is unlikely to return to his old job as the BJP elected fourth term Katihar MLA Tarkishore Prasad was the legislative party leader. Mr Prasad is tipped to be the deputy chief minister.

The meeting of the NDA legislature party was attended by senior BJP leader and defence minister Rajnath Singh.



JD(U) National President Nitish Kumar with HAM(S) Chief Jitan Ram Manjhi, BJP State President Sanjay Jaiswal, and VIP Chief Mukesh Sahni after meeting Governor Fagu Chauhan in Patna, Sunday. — PTI

BJP picks ex-ABVP man as house leader

**DC CORRESPONDENT
PATNA, NOV. 15**

The BJP on Sunday sprang a surprise with the election of Tarkishore Prasad, who rose through the ranks of Akhil Bhartiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), an affiliate of the RSS, as the party's leader in the Bihar legislature.

Mr Prasad, 52, who has been winning Katihar con-

stituency since October 2005, is an intermediate pass out.

The names of Bettiah MLA Renu Devi, who has been made party's deputy legislature party leader, and Kameshwar Choupal, a Dalit MLC who rose to fame after having laid the foundation stone for the Ram temple at Ayodhya in the 1990s, are doing the rounds for the post of a second deputy chief minister.

Covid: Delhi to go for house-to-house survey

**DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 15**

In view of rising COVID-19 cases in Delhi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday ordered doubling up of RT-PCR testing in the national capital, increase in hospital beds and ventilators, better tracking and management of home isolation patients

and review of containment measures. Besides, house-to-house survey in the entire Delhi will be conducted by the teams of All-India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), the Delhi government and the municipal corporation of Delhi.

The decision was taken following an emergency meeting in which Mr Shah

along with Delhi Lt governor Anil Baijal, Union health minister Dr Harshvardhan, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi minister Satendra Jain attended.

Delhi recorded the highest Covid-19 cases on Saturday among all states at 7,340 with 96 deaths while on Sunday the new

cases were 3, 235 due to fewer testing on holidays. The deaths on Sunday were 95. "We need to save as many lives as possible and for that the Union government is making available additional oxygen cylinders, high flow nasal cannulas, and other important medical equipment to the Delhi government," Mr Shah said. ■ P4

Gilgit-Baltistan assembly poll over, counting begins

Islamabad: Wearing face masks, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in northern Pakistan voted on Sunday in the third legislative assembly election amidst tight security. India has slammed Pakistan for its decision to hold election in Gilgit-Baltistan and said any action to alter the status of the militarily-occupied region has no legal basis.

■ **REPORT ON PAGE 4**

AHMED PATEL, COVID POSITIVE, IN ICU

Senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel, who tested positive for COVID-19 a few weeks ago, has been admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of Medanta Hospital, Gurgaon.

Sabari season begins; Covid norms in force

Sabarimala, Nov. 15: Marking the beginning of the pilgrimage season, the Lord Ayyappa hill shrine at Sabarimala opened on Sunday for the three-month annual Mandalam-Makaravilakku festival. A large number of devotees had already reached the shrine for darshan on the day of opening of the temple. Security in and around the temple has been tightened in view of the heavy rush expected over the coming days.

The state government has said elaborate arrangements have been made to ensure that no Covid-19 patient enters the hill shrine for the pilgrimage. The entire pilgrimage would be through the virtual queue system this time, so the usual

heavy rush can be regulated, Devaswom minister Kadakampally Surendran had said.

Each pilgrim should carry a Covid-19 negative certificate, issued within the last 24 hours, he said. Covid-19 testing kiosks would be opened at Pampa and Nilakkal, the base camps, to help devotees take a test before beginning the pilgrimage. Apart from this, arrangements would be made by the health department to facilitate antigen tests in various centres including, all bus stands and railway stations at Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Kottayam, where pilgrims arrive to proceed to the Lord Ayyappa temple. — PTI

3 die as wall collapses after cylinder blast

**DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
TIRUVANNAMALAI, NOV. 15**

Three people, including an eight-year-old boy and his mother, were killed and four injured when a wall collapsed after a domestic LPG cylinder exploded near here on Sunday, police said. J. Kamatchi (35), the tenant, her son J. Hemanath, and neighbour S. Chandra (60), died in the wall collapse. Kamatchi's husband M. Janakiraman and another son J. Suresh (15) were injured, the official said. "Under the impact of the explosion, 55-year old D. Mukthabai who owned the house on Pudhukamur road and her 15-year old daughter D. Meena sustained 90 and 50 per cent burns, respectively," the police said. ■ P3

Tiruchendur festival begins sans devotees

**ARULOLI M | DC
TIRUCHENDUR, NOV 15**

Kanda Sashti festival commenced on Sunday without devotees by performing the 'yagasala pooja' inside the temple prahara at the Arulmigu Subramanyaswamy temple here in Thoothukudi district.

The 'yagasala pooja' symbolising the commencement of the six-day 'sashti festival' at this second abode of Lord Muruga would have attracted thou-

sands of devotees from across the state, but was performed by temple priests, HR&CE officials and Minister for information and publicity, Kadambur C Raju, around 6:30 am. Before the temple was opened at 1 am and Vishwaroopa darshan followed by Udayamarthanda abhishegam for the deity, Lord Jeyanthinathar was performed.

The Lord along with Goddesses Valli and Theivanaai were taken in a

golden temple car after the performance of kumba pooja. No devotee was allowed.

According to the joint commissioner of the temple, 5,000 devotees registered online and an equal number daily for the first five days of the festival since November 15 would be allowed to worship at the temple, though they would not have permission to participate in any of the special poojas. The temple administration also has fixed the

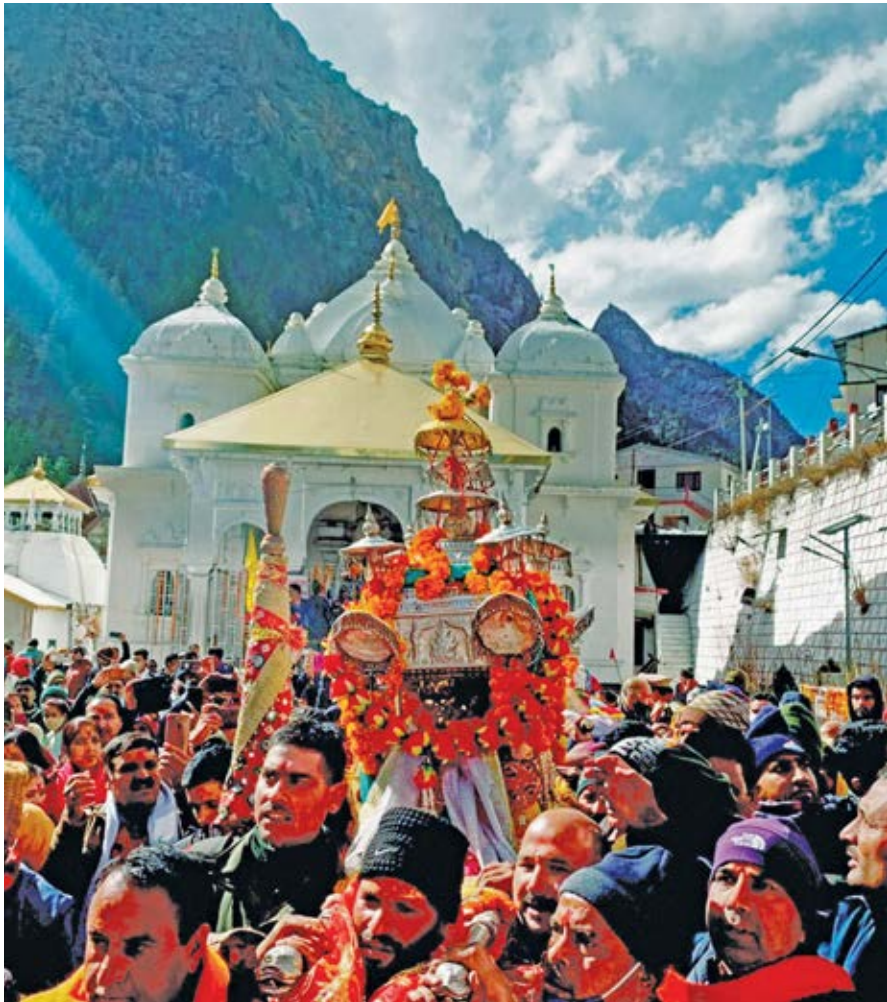
timing, according to which the devotees during the first five days of the festival can have temple entry between 5 am to 11:30 am and between 2 pm to 6 pm.

Devotees are not allowed to stay within the temple premises and there is no permission for holy dip in the sea. The temple administration has blocked the way to the sea shore with tin sheets.

On the Soorasamharam day on November 20, when more than a lakh of devo-

tees usually converge usually to witness Lord Jeyanthinathar annihilating demon king Soora Padhuman and his brothers, Gajamugasooran and Singamugasooran at the seashore, the HR&CE has decided not to allow devotees.

Moreover the climax event, Soorasamharam on the six day and the Swamy Ambal Thirukalyanam the following day on November 21, will be performed within the temple prahara.



A large number of pilgrims attend the door closing ceremony of Gangotri Dham for winters, in Uttarkashi, Sunday. — PTI

Sena's decision to reopen temples stirs political row

**BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 15**

Maharashtra government's decision of reopening of religious places has resulted in the game of political one upmanship with the BJP calling it a win for Hindutva. However, the Shiv sena has countered it saying it was neither a victory nor a defeat of anybody.

"The government was forced to reopen the places of religious worship due to the protests by Hindutva organizations and the support extended to them by the BJP," said Praveen Darekar, the leader of opposition in the Vidhan Parishad.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Saturday announced that places of religious worship in

Maharashtra, which have been shut from March due to coronavirus-induced lockdown, will reopen from Monday. The state government has also issued guidelines under which religious places located out of Covid-19 containment zones will be allowed to remain open as per the timings decided by the authorities and devotees will be allowed inside in a staggered manner.

Bihar: Cong blames delay in seat sharing

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Delay in finalising seat sharing for the Bihar election adversely impacted the Mahagathbandhan's poll performance, senior Congress leader Tariq Anwar said on Sunday, asserting that the Congress must learn from it and complete alliance formalities well in advance for upcoming assembly polls.

Anwar, party's general secretary and a veteran leader from Bihar,

acknowledged that there were shortcomings due to which the party performed worse than other 'Mahagathbandhan' constituents and asserted that the high command was serious about an introspection as well as a thorough analysis of the results. Anwar said the Bihar poll results were "definitely below" the Congress' expectations and it was a setback to bag only 19 out of the 70 seats it contested. P4

LEGENDARY | LIFE

***Feluda* is no more. Apu said goodbye. Farewell, Soumitra (Da) Chatterjee, tweets Mamata**

Bengal breaks down as Soumitra Chatterjee passes away

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, NOV. 15**

Legendary actor Soumitra Chatterjee, who successfully carried forward the golden period of Bengali cinema with his epic roles beyond the era of screen icons like Uttam Kumar and Utpal Dutt, died on Sunday afternoon at a private hospital in Kolkata while fighting prolonged illness from Covid-19. He was 85.

The versatile thespian is survived by his wife Deepa, son Sougata and daughter Poulomi.

Chatterjee had won the national film awards thrice and was a recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2012

before being conferred with the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres, France's highest award for artists, in 2017.

He worked with a league of famous film directors like Satyajit Ray, Mrinal Sen, Tapan Sinha, Goutam Ghose, Aparna Sen and Rituparno Ghosh. Chatterjee has also contributed to drama and poetry during his six-decade career.

Admitted at Belle Vue Clinic in October 6 with Covid-19, Chatterjee beat the infection in a week but he needed ventilator support twice as his conditioned weakened due to Covid encephalopathy besides age-related ailments.



The film veteran's condition turned grave since late on Saturday night.

He stopped responding to treatment early on Sunday. Chatterjee breathed his last at 12.15 pm.

Shri Soumitra Chatterjee's death is a colossal loss to the world of cinema, cultural life of West Bengal and India. Through his works, he came to embody Bengali sensibilities, emotions and ethos. Anguished by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

Eulogising his famous roles in popular Bengali films *Joybaba Felunath* and *Apur Sansar*, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Twitter, "*Feluda*" is

no more. 'Apu' said goodbye. Farewell, Soumitra (Da) Chatterjee. He has been a legend in his lifetime. International, Indian and Bengali cinema has lost a giant. We will miss him dearly. The film world in Bengal has been orphaned. Best known for his films with Satyajit Ray, Soumitra Da was conferred with Legion of Honor, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Banga Bibhushan, Padma Bhushan & several National Awards. A great loss. Saddened. Condolences to his family, the film fraternity & his admirers across the world." Visiting the hospital Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee

later along with her ministerial colleagues and a host of film personalities, walked with a sea of Soumitra Chatterjee's fans in his last journey which covered his Golf Green residence, Artists Forum and Rabindra Sadan.

His funeral was performed at Keoratala Crematorium with a gun salute by the Kolkata police. Mourning Soumitra Chatterjee's demise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Shri Soumitra Chatterjee's death is a colossal loss to the world of cinema, cultural life of West Bengal and India. Through his works, he came to embody Bengali sensibilities, emotions and

ethos. Anguished by his demise. Condolences to his family and admirers. Om Shanti."

French Ambassador to India Emmanuel Lenain tweeted, "Deeply saddened to learn legendary actor Soumitra Chatterjee has passed away. A versatile artist, he earned the world's admiration and many awards, including Order of Arts and Letters & Legion of Honour. My heartfelt condolences to his family and fans."

Union home minister Amit Shah, West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar and several actors including Sharmila Tagore condoled Chatterjee's death.

NOW, JAIL-MADE FOOTWEAR TO HIT KERALA MARKET

Thiruvananthapuram, Nov. 15: 'Jail-made' hawai chappal will soon be available in your next-door shop or market in Kerala as a central prison here has started manufacturing the rubber slippers now.

The Kerala Prisons and Correctional Services Department recently established a manual footwear manufacturing unit at the jail premises.

The jail authorities released photos of inmates, in their conventional attire, engaged in chappal making and the colourful footwear they made. "Each pair will be sold at ₹80 under the brand Freedom Walk," a jail official said. — PTI

OTHER STORIES

Gold, US Dollars worth ₹41.5 lakh seized

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

Gold and 10K US Dollars worth ₹41.5 lakhs were seized by Chennai air customs on Saturday.

Based on intelligence, Nagoor Meeran (54) of Chennai who was destined to Dubai by Emirates flight EK 545 was intercepted at the departure terminal while he was proceeding to the security hold area after Immigration, on suspicion that he might be carrying foreign currency.

On examination of his check in baggage, one white envelope concealed among personal effects was recovered. On opening containing 10,000 US Dollars in the denomination of 100 equivalent to ₹7.35 lakhs were recovered and seized Customs Act 1962 read with FEMA (Export and Import of Currency) Regulations, 2015.

Two cases of gold smuggling were also detected on the same day. Siddiq Sheik Abdullah(25) Pudukkottai who arrived from Dubai by Flight Air India IX1644 was intercepted at the exit. On search, 3 bundles of gold paste weighing 656 grams recovered from the rectum which on extraction yielded 596 grams gold. One 49 gram gold cut bit was also recovered from his pant pocket. Total 645 grams gold of 24 K purity valued at ₹33.6 lakh was recovered and seized. Siddiq has been arrested by the customs.

In another case, one Mohamed Rifath(36) of Ramanathapuram who arrived from Dubai by FlyDubai flight FZ8517 was intercepted at the exit and on search, one bundle of gold paste of 172 grams was recovered from the rectum which on extraction yielded 154 grams of gold valued at ₹7.9 lakhs and seized.

In all, 10,000 US Dollars worth ₹7.35 lakhs and 799 grams gold worth ₹41.56 lakhs seized under the Customs Act. One Arrested. Further investigation is under progress.

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Photos: E.K. Sanjay



Feed iguanas at Chennai snake park

B. VIJAYALAKSHMI | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

Want to know more about iguanas and also feed them? Just step into the special enclosure at Chennai Snake Park in Guindy.

Nearly 50 people visited the exclusive enclosure, 'Walk through iguana garden', inaugurated on Sunday morning.

Speaking to DC, Sriharan Balan, of Madura Travel Service (P) Ltd and also chairman of tourism subcommittee, Travel Agents Association of India, said, "We along with Dipankar Ghose, wilderness tourism consultant and special activity coordinator at Chennai Snake

Park, wanted to initiate wilderness tourism in Tamil Nadu and this is our first step. We had invited representatives of various associations, including guides and hoteliers, for the Sunday event. Tourism degree students of Stella Maris College had the opportunity to meet and interact with stakeholders and also know more about the reptiles from eminent scientist Dr Ganesh."

The enclosure has 4 iguanas of different sizes and colours. These huge lizards, native to Amazon forests of South America, live amid plants and buses in a closed enclosure. "We want to create an awareness among people and dispel any fear

about these gigantic lizard species," added Balan.

Besides, travel and tourism industry with the help of the government aims at wooing domestic tourists by launching such nature and wildlife trails.

The reptile garden, the first in the state, was inaugurated by K. V. Giridhar, IFS, director, DoE, in the presence of S. Paulraj, chairman, Chennai Snake Park Trust, and V.K.T Balan, chairman, Madura Travel Service (P) Ltd. Also, the snake charmers scheme was launched in the presence of A. V. Venkatachalam, IFS, chairman of Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board.

High court directive to collector on 95-year-old woman's petition

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

Coming to the rescue of a 95-year-old woman, who was allegedly cheated by her granddaughter by obtaining her left thumb impression in white papers and prepared and executed a settlement deed in her favour, the Madras high court has directed the Tiruvallur district collector to consider and pass appropriate orders on the representation of the old woman, which sought action against her granddaughter under the provisions of the Maintenance



and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

Justice Pushpa Sathyanarayana gave the directive while disposing of the petition filed by C.Salammal, which sought a direction to the Tiruvallur

district collector to dispose of her representation dated August 4, 2020.

The judge said the case of the petitioner was that her grand daughter, namely Loganayagi born to her only daughter had fraudulently obtained the petitioner's left thumb impression in white papers and prepared settlement deed in her favour. Later on, knowing the fact, the petitioner had cancelled the settlement deed and executed the same in favour of her daughter and younger granddaughter. Aggrieved by the same, the said Loganayagi filed suits one

after another for permanent injunction and declaration. Both suits were clubbed together and tried jointly and decreed in favour of the said

Loganayagi. Challenging the same, the petitioner along with her daughter, had preferred an appeal, which was also dismissed. Thereafter, the petitioner had given representation dated November 21, 2019, to the Tiruvallur district collector seeking action against her granddaughter under section 23 of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, the judge added.

Heavy rain causes flight delays

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

Flight operations were delayed at Chennai airport on Sunday morning following heavy rain.

Two international flights to Dubai and Hong-kong were delayed for nearly 30 minutes.

According to the airport sources, a special flight to Dubai from Chennai airport, was delayed for at least 30 minutes, due to heavy rain with strong wind, at the Chennai airport, visibility became poor, which led to the delay.

The flight left to Dubai at around 4 am.

Similarly, a Hong-kong bound cargo flight, Luftansa, scheduled to depart from the airport on Sunday morning, was also delayed due to the adverse weather conditions.

Are we set for an acrimonious campaign?



G. Babu Jayakumar

Just spamming

As political parties, at least the two major ones in the state, sound the bugle for the impending electoral battle in 2021, there wafts in a jarring note, portending an acrimonious campaign. Going by statements issued by the parties, the speeches of leaders and the posturing of cadre, there is a fear of too many punches landing below the belt, turning the hustings into a street brawl.

Of course, rarely are elections fought on issues in the country. But the latest exchanges between the AIADMK and DMK leaders point to the dogfight possibly plunging to

abyssally low depths even without taking into account the havoc likely to be wreaked by social media, through its troll armies and meme factories.

For, restraint seems to be the last thing that the leaders seem to practice while shooting their mouths in public. Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami was speaking at a government function when he said his beta noire M. K. Stalin would be banished from elections for some time after his conviction. Stalin quickly pointed out that a lower court had already cleared him of the charges that AIADMK leader was referring to.

Of course DMK head honcho Stalin himself does not lag behind in making such snide remarks. In the long and winding statements that he regularly puts out, more than one a day, on various issues, he always makes it a point to predict that the AIADMK leaders would be packed to prison once the DMK government returned to power after the elections. He would always accuse them of corruption and say that their end was near.

Stalin was out to find fault with the government even after it had ordered an enquiry by a retired high court judge into the spate of allegations against the Anna University Vice Chancellor M. K. Surappa, who he wanted to be expelled. Not only did he ask why Surappa had not been suspended from his job, he also asked what was the 'bargain' that went on after the charges

against Surappa were first brought to the knowledge of the government nine months back.

More than the language, it is the manner in which the DMK picks on the AIADMK on each and every thing that the government does gives rise to the impression that the next campaign could well be just brimming with negativity and rancor with alliances and parties thriving on pointing fingers at each other.

That the AIADMK does not lag behind the DMK in delivering hits below the belt was proven in the Deepavali message, issued jointly by the two top honchos O Panneerselvam and Palaniswami. In what would otherwise be a greeting to the people with glowing good wishes and recollections about mythologies and about lighting lights and dispelling the darkness, there was this clear political comment.

It said Deepavali was an occasion that vanquishes the forces with selfish and cruel characteristics who aspire to rule and uphold righteousness. If that sounds too general, the next sentence left no room for ambiguity. Stating that the people of Tamil Nadu would be, in the next few months, destroying the arrogance of evil forces and allowing the AIADMK to continue power, the message said 'let the lights lit this Deepavali be a harbinger for that.'

So, bringing in electoral politics into a regular festival greeting and that too by coming out with doomsday predictions for the rival party in such a blatant manner only goes to prove that the party leadership is obsessed with only the coming elections and means to fight it out in whatever way. Luckily, the DMK does not come out with greetings to the public for Deepavali for ideological reasons. Other-

wise, there could have been some seething acrimony in the festival wish.

Otherwise, the DMK not only loses an opportunity to hit out at the AIADMK but also appropriates any credit that the rival might get for some work done well. It has become more pronounced after the DMK ramped up its political activities in the aftermath of I-PAC taking over the reins of its campaign work. One example was the agitation that the DMK organized against Governor Banwarilal Purohit for his dilly dally on signing the Bill providing 7.5 per cent reservation for students from government schools in medical college admissions.

When the Governor put the Bill on the backburner, perhaps hoping to kill it by delaying it, the AIADMK government turned proactive and even visited Raj Bhavan to expedite the process of approval. But the DMK jumped into the

fray by first writing to the Governor and then by organizing an agitation in front of Raj Bhavan. The truth of the matter, however, is that the idea for the reservation for school students was purely that of the AIADMK's.

Prior to Palaniswami making an announcement on providing exclusive lateral reservation for government school students in the Assembly under Rule 110, the DMK had never spoken anything about it, either inside the Assembly or outside it. Only when the Bill got stuck in Raj Bhavan, the DMK tried to appropriate it by accusing the AIADMK of having a secret pact with the BJP in not getting clearance for the Bill.

Of course there had been too many such instances to prove that both parties have been stooping too low, in their bid to conquer the State, in what is likely to be a do or die battle for both.

Festive fumes choke city

T. SUDHEESH | DC
CHENNAI, NOV 15

Even as the city was struggling to cope up with the pandemic, Deepavali saw the place choking from toxic fumes. The TNPCB website which has made available the real time 'air quality index' on Deepavali says, stations including Koyambedu, Royapuram and Perungudi, recorded air quality under severe and very poor categories. Data shows the city smothered in a blanket of fumes on Saturday as a result crackers being fired throughout the day. Perungudi topped in severe pollutants category with Particulate Matter 2.5 (PM 2.5) 470 microgram / cubic meter on Deepavali day, while 420 microgram / cubic meter for PM10. The spike in PM 2.5 levels on Saturday evening is indicative of smoke due to bursting of firecrackers. Koyambedu saw PM 2.5 level skyrocket to 400µg/m3 on Saturday evening, as well as on Sunday morning, while PM 10 level touched 424 µg/m3. Royapuram recorded PM 2.5 level as 309 µg/m3. Though PM10 level recorded in moderate category (142), the ozone level in Royapuram went up to 311. As per air quality index, the permis-



Fire crackers light up Chennai skies on Deepavali.

— DC

Good in Besant Nagar, T Nagar, Nungambakkam

A press release issued by TNPCB claimed that there was substantial decrease in five places in the city including Nungambakkam, T Nagar, Triplicane, Besant Nagar and Sowcarpet in the values of PM2.5 and PM10 compared to last year. PM10 and PM2.5 values were well within the limit in all stations during Deepavali day except in Triplicane and Sowcarpet. According to TNPCB, the air quality index is found to be 'moderate' in Triplicane, 'satisfactory' in Sowcarpet and 'good' in Besant Nagar, T. Nagar and Nungambakkam.



Inmates of SRS Sarvodaya Girls Hostel at Chetpet in the city celebrate Deepavali.

— DC

Insurance co directed to pay ₹11 L to injured mason

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

The Motor Accident Claims Tribunal, Chennai, directed an insurance firm to pay a compensation of ₹11 lakh to a 38-year old mason for sustaining injuries in mishap. He was knocked down by a two-wheeler in Cuddalore district two years ago.

The petitioner M. Adhimoolam of Alwar Thirunagar, submitted that he was working as a mason and earning Rs 700 per day. On February 21, 2018, at about 7 p.m. was on the left side of the

Palakkollai-Pudupet Road, in Cuddalore District. A motor cycle bearing registration rden by its rider in a rash and negligent manner on the opposite direction, hit him and he sustained serious injuries. The rider of the motorcycle was responsible for the accident.

He underwent treatment in hospital for long and spent huge amount towards the treatment. He suffered a disability to the tune of 35 per cent.

Hence the owner of the motorcycle A. Shankar, Palakkollai, Virdachalam Taluk and insurer of the vehicle,

National Insurance Co. Ltd were liable to pay a compensation of ₹15 lakh to him, he said.

However, the insurance firm denied the allegation and stated that the accident took place due to the negligence of the petitioner.

The Small Cause Court-V, Judge V.Sutha said considering oral and documentary evidences the Tribunal holds that the accident took place due to the rider of the bike. The judge orders compensation of ₹ 11,16,500 towards nourishment, transport, loss of earnings, treatment and loss of amenities.

IN BRIEF

Shah coming to TN next week

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

Union home minister Amit Shah will be visiting the state on November 21 to address BJP cadres, according to state BJP president L. Murugan. The state BJP chief also said Amit Shah is likely to meet Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami. Sources said he might also discuss upcoming Assembly polls in 2021 with the CM.

Gelatin sticks, detonators seized in Kerala; 2 from TN arrested

Palakkad, Nov 15: Around 7,000 gelatin sticks and 7,500 detonators, which were illegally being transported to Kerala, were seized from a truck carrying tomatoes on Sunday and two people from Tamil Nadu were arrested, police said. Prabhu (38), who is also the owner of the truck, and Ravi (30) were arrested under various provisions of the Explosives Act. "We suspect that the explosives were collected from Salem in Tamil Nadu and were on the way to Angamali when a special election squad and police jointly apprehended the load from a small pickup truck," an investigating officer said. —PTI

2 fire personnel killed in building collapse

Madurai, Nov. 14: Two firemen were killed in a building collapse here on Saturday while trying to put out a fire, police said. Chief Minister K. Palaniswami condoled the death of K. Sivarajan and P. Krishnamurthy and announced a relief of Rs 25 lakh to each of their families. Police said electrical short circuit is suspected to have caused the fire in the old building which suddenly collapsed when Fire Service personnel were trying to douse the flames. Two personnel sustained injuries. The victims died while being rushed to the hospital, police added. Meanwhile, Palaniswami in Chennai hailed the dedication and sacrifice of the deceased personnel and announced Rs 25 lakh as relief to their families. Further, one respective kin will be provided government job based on qualification, he added. The Chief Minister also announced a financial aid of Rs 3 lakh each to the injured persons—R. Kalayanakumar and Chinnakaruppu, and said the government will bear their medical expenses. He prayed for their early recovery and said he has directed the district administration to ensure high medical attention to them. —PTI

FROM P1

The incident is suspected to have been triggered by a gas leak at a house in nearby Arani, police sources said. collapsed. Chief Minister condoled the deaths and announced a solatium of ₹2 lakh each to the families of the victims.

Left seeks compensation for firework industry losses

BJP, Congress MP flay firecracker ban

Chennai, Nov. 15: The raging debate over the ban on firecrackers in several states continued with BJP national general secretary C. T. Ravi on Sunday questioning the rationale and flagging concerns about other pollutants. Tamil Nadu police said over 1,000 cases have been booked across the state against those who burst crackers beyond the permitted two-hours on Deepavali day. The social media was abuzz with many, including MP Manickam Tagore, highlighting the plight of lakhs of workers employed in the fireworks industry's national hub of Sivakasi in Virudhunagar district of southern Tamil Nadu. The Left parties underscored that stocks worth crores have been left unsold in view of the ban and urged financial assistance to the industry. Several states had banned sale and use of firecrackers this year citing the Covid-19 pandemic and environment concerns with the decision coming as a blow to the industry. A day after the nation celebrated the festival amid the ban, Ravi, party in-charge for Tamil Nadu, said about ten lakh people were dependent on the cracker industry. "Sivakasi in Tamil Nadu is where crackers are manufactured & nearly 10 lakh people are employed. If activist, Govts or tribunals want to ban crackers for #Deepavali, they should ban for all purposes now. No pontificating cricketer or actor should celebrate weddings with Crackers," he tweeted. To a twitter user, who pointed to the plight of workers

TWITTERATI BAT FOR SIVAKASI

The topic 'Sivakasi' trended on Twitter and many users of social media, while discussing firecrackers and pollution highlighted that the livelihood of lakhs of people in Virudhunagar district hinged on the fireworks industry. Several social media users protested against the ban on use of firecrackers citing pollution, questioning why it was only for a day on Deepavali. They questioned what they called the 'silence' of activists about other causes of pollution throughout the year. Some twitter users even claimed that the bid to "destroy #Sivakasi" is to help China, which is noted for its fancy firecrackers and tagged some reports claiming that the neighbouring country "accounts for 94 per cent of US fireworks imports." A number of users tweeted using the hashtag "Save #Sivakasi #VocalForLocal." The social media was also flooded with claims and counter-claims on vested interests working behind getting firecrackers from Sivakasi banned for Deepavali. —PTI

and the need for alternative employment for them in view of ban and curbs vis-a-vis firecrackers, the Saffron party leader said he agreed with that view. "I agree. Those in Sivakasi dependent on crackers industry should be provided with alternate jobs. Only then should crackers be banned across Bharat. Also, other activities that involve mass killing of animals, cutting trees & causing damage to environment should also be banned," Ravi, who was here days ago to lead a 'Vetrivel yatra,' that was not allowed by the government citing the coronavirus pandemic, said. In another tweet response, Ravi said he was not for banning crackers at all. "As a Hindu, I don't want anyone interfering or lecturing us about how to celebrate Our Festivals. I am against arbitrary ban on crackers that affects the livelihood of lakhs of Tamil Makkal (people) dependent on crackers industry in Sivakasi".

Tagore, Congress MP from Virudhunagar, shared a report on cause of pollution in Delhi which did not feature firecrackers as a contributory factor. Sarcastically, he said on his twitter handle, "Kindly find Sivakasi #Firecrackers in the list of Pollutants in Delhi but blame it for all others mistakes, is it fair?" "Sivakasi only have the talent and knowledge to compete China on #Fireworks industry but Ministers of Modi Sarkar never supports Sivakasi but ran hashtag #Local4Vocal." "Japan skies lit up with fireworks to brighten mood amid coronavirus...but in our India where Our Sivakasi manufactures Fireworks We have fight to stop lies and spread truth," the Congress MP said. Also, on his twitter handle he dismissed claims of child labour in Sivakasi as completely false, baseless and unfounded.

CPI's state secretary R. Mutharasan said approximately Rs 500 crore worth

1,027 CASES REGISTERED IN TN

Police said they have registered a total of 1,027 cases in Tamil Nadu against those who burst crackers violating the two-hour time limit on Saturday. In Chennai city alone, as many as 428 cases were registered this year as against 204 last year, they said.

Firecrackers dispatched by Sivakasi-based small manufacturers have got stuck with dealers in various parts of the country in view of the ban which is 'threatening' the livelihood of lakhs of workers. Such small scale manufacturers, who took loans for production aimed at the festival season, have not received payment for supplies they have made and 'there is no scope' for getting the payment, he said in a statement. The Left leader pointed out that dealers remitted payment to manufacturers only after sale and this was the norm in firecracker industry. Mutharasan requested the Tamil Nadu government to extend cash assistance to fireworks manufacturers, to protect jobs, the industry and for resumption of production. CPI (M) state secretary K. Bala Krishnan said about 50 per cent of the entire manufactured stocks were unsold and there was no scope to sell them. He urged the government to compensate the firecracker industry for the losses suffered and wanted measures to protect the interests of ordinary workers. —PTI

CM's priority is people's welfare, says minister

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

Soon after inspecting the ongoing developmental works at Ullikkottai near Mannargudi on Sunday food minister R. Kamaraj told newsmen that Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami is very keen in implementing people's welfare measures despite the pandemic. Due to the chief minister's efforts, Tamil Nadu is leading in implementing developmental works compared to other states.

Rival gangs attack each other with sickles, 11 injured

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

Rival gangs in Perumbakkam slum clearance board apartment in Perumbakkam were said to be in critical conditions. The two gangs in the area frequently fought over peddling ganja in the area. Police said, on Saturday night, the gang

injuries in the attack. Two women, Victoria and Amala, residents of the slum clearance board apartment in Perumbakkam were said to be in critical conditions.

The two gangs in the area frequently fought over peddling ganja in the area. Police said, on Saturday night, the gang

attacked each other with sickles. Eleven persons were injured in the attack, they added.

Pallikaranai police registered a case and arrested a few.

It may be noted that two months back, Pallikaranai police arrested eight persons belonging to both gangs who had attacked two persons.

Guru peyarchi festival held

DC CORRESPONDENT
THANJAVUR, NOV. 15

People had darshan of Guru Bhagawan at the Sri Vasishtheswaraswamy temple at Thittai near here on Sunday, in view of Guru peyarchi festival. Guru Bhagawan moved from dhanusu to makara rasi at 9:48 pm on Sunday. Corona preventive measures were strictly adhered to.

Devotees were subjected to thermal screening, washing hands, using sanitizers and maintaining social distancing, during their visit to the temple.

Medical camps and mobile medical units are functioning near the tem-

Devotees were subjected to thermal screening, washing hands, using sanitizers and maintaining social distancing, during their visit to the temple

ple. The panchayat has been asked to put water taps so that people could wash hands.

Children below 10 years and elderly above 60 years, were not permitted to visit the temple. Police had made elaborate security arrangements at the temple.

Special abhishekams and alankarams were done to Guru Bhagawan, who is in a separate 'sannidhi' in the temple.

New train service launched

DC CORRESPONDENT
KUMBakonam, NOV. 15

The Mayiladuthurai – Coimbatore Jan Shatabdi Express special arrived here hauled by an electric locomotive on Saturday, piloted by Samson, loco pilot, and assistant Aashik. It may be recalled that Abay Kumar Rai, CRS, southern circle, Bengaluru, inspected the newly-electrified Mayiladuthurai – Thanjavur section, on November 11.

With his approval on

It may be recalled that Abay Kumar Rai, CRS, southern circle, Bengaluru, inspected the newly-electrified Mayiladuthurai – Thanjavur section, on November 11

Saturday, to operate electric locomotive-hauled passenger trains, the Mysore - Mayiladuthurai festival special express hauled by an electric loco-

motive, entered the section on Saturday morning. Chennai — Egmore - Trichy 'Cholan special train', Trichy — Chennai Egmore special train, Coimbatore - Mayiladuthurai Jan Shatabdi, Bhuvaneshwar - Rameswaram festival special, were some of the other trains hauled by electric locomotives. Thanjavur district rail users association thanked the CRS for his approval to commission trains on the new electric track.

Salem-Chennai daily flights resume

ZAKEER HUSSAIN | DC
SALEM, NOV. 15

The Salem-Chennai flight has been rescheduled to operate daily from Sunday, operating five days a week.

'TruJet' operates passenger flights from Salem airport to Chennai. The Salem-Chennai flight will be operated from October 25 onwards for five days except Tuesday and Wednesday.

The Salem-Chennai

flight service has been changed to a daily service again from Sunday, said Prasanna, manager, TruJet.

The flight will leave Chennai at 7:15 am and reach Salem at 8:15 am. The return flight will leave Salem at 8:35 am and land at Chennai by 9:35 am.

Prasanna said, TruJet would provide connecting flights to Kadapa, Vijayawada, Mysore and Belgaum.

Tributes paid to ex-PM Nehru

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, NOV. 15

The 131st birth anniversary of the first Prime Minister of our nation, Bharat Ratna Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, was celebrated at BHEL here, on Saturday.

A BHEL release said, R. Padmanabhan, executive director, BHEL Tiruchirappalli complex, garlanded the statue of Jawaharlal Nehru at the factory main gate, and paid floral tribute to his memory.

A comedy caper that's fairly engaging

MOOKUTHI AMMAN
REVIEWANUPAMA
SUBRAMANIANCAST: Nayanthara,
Urvashi, RJ Balaji,
Mouli, Ajay GhoshDIRECTION: RJ Balaji
and NJ SaravananRATING: **1/2
two and a half

After making his debut as the hero as well as trying his hands as a writer in his previous outing LKG, actor RJ Balaji has now collaborated with NJ Saravanan and directed Mookuthi Amman, a devotional genre with a difference. MK is not the routine Amman films of late 80s and 90s, but it takes a dig at religious politics, with Nayanthara who essays the titular character questioning the fake godmen who claim as messengers of God and exploit common people.

Set in Nagercoil, Engels Ramasamy (RJ Balaji), his name a combo of rationalist thinkers Friedrich Engels and Periyar EV Ramasamy) is a TV reporter in an almost defunct local channel. But Ramasamy is a



strong believer in god. Being the sole breadwinner of his household comprising his mom (Urvashi), grandfather (Mouli) and three sisters (including Smrithi Venkat), he struggles to make ends meet. However, he as-

pires to become someone in the media by exposing the fake godman named Bhagavathi Baba (Ajay Ghosh), who by misusing the religious sentiments of people wants to usurp vast acres of lands in the name of setting

Though Nayanthara enters the frame almost 35 minutes after the film begins, with her terrific screen presence and endearing expressions, she steals the show. She is cute and it is a gratifying aspect that Nayan (Amman) has been given a 'mass hero' treatment. As usual Balaji is loud and chattering non-stop, however he makes it up by evoking laughter partially with his funny one-liners

up a spiritual town. Now enters Ramasamy's 'Kula Deivam' Mookuthi Amman (Nayanthara) and how she helps the former's family to unearth Baba's true colors forms the reminder of this partly devotional drama.

Though Nayanthara enters the frame almost 35 minutes after the film begins, with her terrific screen presence and endearing expressions, she steals the show. She is cute and it is a gratifying aspect that Nayan (Amman) has been given a 'mass hero' treatment. As usual Balaji is loud and chattering non-stop, however he makes it up by evoking laughter partially with his funny one-liners. Urvashi, who is the biggest plus to the film is simply remarkable. She proves her versatility and aces in comedy as

well as emotional scenes playing her role to the hilt. Ajay Ghosh as the fake godman in an exaggerated role is a cliché. Mouli and Smrithi Venkat are okay.

The first half moves rapidly with an entertaining narrative from Balaji and picks up all the more after the arrival of Nayanthara. The same cannot be said post interval. The screenplay lacks coherence and logic takes a beating at some places. The attempts made by Balaji's family to expose the fake godman appear immature and the climax confrontation between God and the swindling crook is somewhat lackluster and less impactful.

The film touches upon several issues plaguing society, but thankfully without a preachy tone.

MISSING YOU



Mrs Bhamaswamy
(31-10-1929 - 14-11-2020)

Mother of
Maya Narasimhan and
R. Mohan (Resident Editor, Deccan Chronicle, Chennai)

T.M. Narasimhan, Rohini Mohan, Aarti, Namit and Lasya,
Preeti, Rakesh and Madhav, Aaditya, Karen, Leela and Devin

Phone: 98840 41494 / 99401 35132

SHORT TAKES

ASSAM DEPLOYS DRONES AT BORDER FOR SURVEILLANCE

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, NOV. 15

In the wake of growing inter-state border dispute among the north-eastern states, Assam government has augmented vigil along the inter-state border areas and deployed drones to keep surveillance on its forest areas along the border.

Informing that even the ministry of home affairs was keeping a close watch on the situation along the Assam-Mizoram border areas where conflict took place recently, authoritative security sources told this newspaper that more than 589 square kilometres of Assam's land was under encroachment by the neighbouring states.

Pointing out that it was highly challenging to retrieve the lands encroached by neighbouring states long back, security sources said that Assam was determined to stop the fresh attempt of encroaching the land by neighbouring states.

Asserting that the Assam government was committed to protect its constitutional boundaries, security sources said that efforts are on to improve vigil along the inter-state border areas. However, because of the length of the inter-state borders and difficult terrain, it is not easy to deploy police to guard every inch of the border with the people of neighbouring states taking advantage of the situation.

GUPKAR ALLIANCE FAILS TO FINALISE SEAT-SHARING

Srinagar, Nov. 15: The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration members failed to finalise their seat-sharing arrangement for the District Development Council polls yet again despite holding a marathon meeting on Saturday, the third one in two days, on the issue.

The seat-sharing issue defying a resolution appeared to be exasperating for the two key constituents of the PAGD with its vice-chairperson and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti reminding the alliance that it "has a bigger cause to fight for than to bicker over the DDC elections."

JKPC chairman Sajad Lone too rued that "the statesmanship and magnanimity is still a missing trait in our polity". In a related development earlier during the day, as per the sources, PDP founder member Muzaffar Hussain Baig resigned from the party following disagreement over seat-sharing for the upcoming DDC elections in Jammu and Kashmir.

The PAGD meeting which lasted for several hours at the National Conference (NC) headquarters 'Nawa-i-Subah' here concluded late on Saturday night, a PAGD leader said.

He said the meeting was part of the consultations between the parties of the alliance for the upcoming DDC polls.

COVID: DELHI TO CONDUCT HOUSE SURVEY

From pg1

The home ministry has decided to further increase health and medical facilities in the national capital. It was decided to go in for a much more aggressive testing, tracing and isolation in the entire NCR region. The focus would be on increasing the number of ICU beds along with ventilators both in private and government hospitals. In view of the shortage of medical staff in Delhi, it was decided to provide additional doctors and paramedical staff from the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) and they would soon be airlifted to Delhi.

Other medical facilities of CAPF too will be utilized to provide additional corona facilities to Delhi. The ITBP has already set up the country's biggest Corona hospital in Delhi's Chattarpur area.

Authorities of Delhi government and Delhi Commissioner of Police have been asked to strictly enforce the necessary measures, especially wearing of face masks, so that there is no laxity in observance of Covid-19 appropriate behavior.

During the meeting it was discussed to focus on improving the recovery rate and bringing down the death rate. Delhi's present death rate ranges between 1.5 to 1.8 per cent. The high positivity rate in the capital was also a matter of concern.

DELHI STUDENTS TO GET LESSONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

New Delhi, Nov. 15: From how much information to share online to how to deal with cyber threats, over seven lakh students in schools under the Delhi government, the city's cantonment board and NDMC will soon get lessons on the "responsible use of social media".

The month-long series of online sessions, which will be conducted for 1,040 schools, is scheduled to begin from November 23. The lessons are being conducted against the backdrop of increased usage of gadgets and exposure to social media during the Covid-19 pandemic.

"Threat through the unknown and anonymous cyber world is a harsh reality nowadays. Ease of access and unmonitored reach has exposed the children to unscrupulous elements on the net," deputy director of education Mohinder Pal said.

"The series on 'responsible use of social media' will create awareness about the various kinds of threats on the internet and also ways to secure oneself from these threats. The children will also be sensitised about responsible use of social media," he said. — PTI



Border Security Force (BSF) personnel carry the coffin of their colleague Sub Inspector Rakesh Dobhal, who was killed on November 13, during ceasefire violations by Pakistan near LoC in Nowgam Sector of North Kashmir, after his wreath-laying ceremony at STC Humhama on the outskirts of Srinagar, on Sunday. Four army personnel, a Border Security Force sub-inspector, and six civilians were killed while four security forces personnel and eight civilians were injured in the firing by Pakistan during the multiple ceasefire violations between Uri, Gurez, and Poonch sectors in Jammu and Kashmir.

— PTI

Cong: Delay in seat sharing affected Bihar grand alliance

Party serious about introspection, thorough analysis of election results

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Delay in finalising seat sharing for the Bihar election adversely impacted the Mahagathbandhan's poll performance, senior Congress leader Tariq Anwar said on Sunday, asserting that the Congress must learn from it and complete alliance formalities well in advance for upcoming assembly polls.

Anwar, party's general secretary and a veteran leader from Bihar, acknowledged that there were shortcomings due to which the party performed worse than other 'Mahagathbandhan' constituents and asserted that the high command was serious about an introspection as well as a thorough analysis of the results.

Anwar said the Bihar poll results were "definitely below" the Congress' expectations and it was a setback to bag only 19 out of the 70 seats it contested. "There was an environment of change with enthusiasm among the common people for it, but we could not exploit that. We had the expectation that with the Congress fighting on 70 seats, it would win at least 50 per cent of the seats," the former union minister said.

"Our government was not formed and we (the Congress) also have a responsibility in that. Going forward, our efforts will be aimed at strengthening the Congress and the Mahagathbandhan and we will make a strategy for it," he said.

Nearly 160 tonnes of biomedical waste generated during election

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Nearly 160 tonne of biomedical waste in the form of gloves, face masks and empty sanitiser bottles used by polling personnel and voters was generated during the Bihar Assembly polls held amid the Covid-19 pandemic, poll authorities in the state have said.

The poll authorities also relied on an inexpensive but effective technology used to track EVMs to ensure that the waste reached public health centres for its onward journey to the incinerator.

To ensure safety of voters, polling staff and security personnel in the first-ever polls held amid the pandemic, the Election Commission had procured 18 lakh face shields, 70 lakh face

masks, 5.4 lakh single use rubber gloves for polling and security personnel and 7.21 crore 'one hand' single use polythene gloves for voters to press the EVM button and sign the register at the polling stations.

It had also bought a total of 29 lakh hand sanitiser bottles of 100 and 500 ml. As per the guidelines issued by the Election Commission and poll authorities in Bihar, the polling stations were sanitised a day before election and three times on the day of the election.

The office of the Chief Electoral Officer of Bihar had sought the help of the state health department to decide on "Covid safety material" for the three phase elections.

The safety material which included face masks, face shields, gloves and personal sanitiser bottles were put in a bag meant for a polling party of six persons.

"They were trained for disposal of the safety material also. It could be littered anywhere," Bihar Chief Electoral Officer H.R. Srinivas said.

He said roughly, 160 tonne of biomedical waste was generated. All districts have its biomedical waste (BMW) disposal agency.

"The challenge was the agency would lift BMW from health centres, hospitals but not lift from polling stations. The districts then appointed BMW workers," Srinivas said.

— PTI

LJP CLAIMS IT PROVED ITS WORTH IN BIHAR

New Delhi, Nov. 15: With questions being raised about the Lok Janshakti Party's prospects after it won only one seat in the Bihar Assembly polls, party sources on Sunday cited its "influence" in "changing" results in over 40 seats to assert that it will continue to have a key presence in the state politics.

The LJP was instrumental in the defeat of Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) in at least 36 seats which is evident from its vote share, and the BJP would also have been hit hard if the regional party had gone all out against it in a similar manner, the sources claimed. The LJP might have won only one seat, but it has underscored its presence by fetching 5.7 per cent votes, the party sources said.

They noted that the party put up candidates in only six seats where the BJP was in the fray while contesting on almost each of the 115 seats where the JD(U) contested in the elections to the 243-seat Bihar Assembly polls. With the JD(U), hit hard by the LJP in the elections, likely to oppose any friendly vibes to the party by its ally BJP, the sources in party claimed that it was offered only 15 seats to contest in the polls.

— PTI

World troubled by expansionist forces, says PM

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 15

Prime Minister Narendra Modi who, continuing with his tradition, celebrated Diwali with soldiers on Saturday at the historic Longewala in Jaisalmer of Rajasthan, asserted, "If there is an attempt to test India, the response will be equally fierce."

Without naming any country, the Prime Minister said that the entire world feels troubled by "expansionist" forces and expansionism shows a "distorted mindset" which belongs to the 18th century. He said that India has come out as a forceful voice against the ideology of expansionism.

Modi's comments come at a time when India has been in a military stand-off with China for six months at the eastern Ladakh and there has been an increase in cross-border firing with the Pakistan at the LoC. India and China are set to hold ninth round of Corps Commanders level talks to resolve the stand-off.

Modi said that the world knows that India will not compromise on its national interest. "This status of India is due to its valour and capabilities. India is able to forcefully hold forth on the international fora because of the security provided by the armed forces. India's military power has enhanced its negotiating power," the Prime Minister said.

He said, "No power in the world can stop our brave soldiers from guarding the borders of our country."

The Prime Minister emphasised that only that nation is secure which has the capability to face the attackers and intruders. He said irrespective of advances in international cooperation and changes in equations, "We simply can't afford to forget that vigilance is the key to security, alertness is the basis of happiness, and strength is the confidence of victory."

"If anyone casts an evil eye on us, our soldiers will reply to them befittingly. This establishes the credibility of the Indian Army in the world. Today, the country's Army is engaged in military exercises with other big countries. We are engaged in strategic partnerships to fight against terrorism. Indian Armed Forces have shown that they can strike on terrorist havens anywhere, anytime," the Prime Minister said.

He conveyed the gratitude of the countrymen to the armed forces and said 130 crore Indians are standing strongly with the forces. He said his Diwali is complete only when he is with the soldiers whether in the snow-clad mountains or in the desert.

"On the day of Diwali, there is a tradition of preparing a rangoli in front of the main gate of the house as a sign of good luck and prosperity. Similarly, the boundaries of the nation are the gateways of the country. Here, you (the army) are responsible for the prosperity and good fortune of the nation," Mr Modi said.

BREATHING TROUBLE Stubble burning accounts for 32 p.c. of PM2.5 pollution but no let up in cracker bursting

Delhi air quality falls to 'severe' zone the day after festival

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Delhi recorded the worst air quality in four years on the day after Diwali as pollution levels in the city and its suburbs crossed the "emergency" threshold on Sunday due to the combined effect of stubble burning and firecrackers.

However, higher wind speed — up to 25 kilometres per hour — and light rainfall under the influence of a fresh Western Disturbance brought some relief. The air quality had turned "severe" on Saturday evening with stubble burning accounting for 32 per cent of Delhi's PM2.5 pollution, but firecrackers emissions and calm winds made the situation even worse.

The levels of PM2.5, which is about three per cent the diameter of a human hair and can lead to premature deaths from heart and lung diseases, were 396 microgram per cubic meter (µg/m3) in Delhi-NCR at 6 am, above the emergency threshold of 300 µg/m3. PM2.5 levels stood at 329 µg/m3 at 7 pm. The safe limit is 60 µg/m3. PM10 level stood at 543 µg/m3 at 6 am, above the emergency threshold of 500 µg/m3, before it started decreasing.

It was 441 µg/m3 at 7 pm, according to Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data. PM10 levels below 100 µg/m3 are considered safe in India. According to the Graded



Response Action Plan (GRAP), the air quality is considered in the "severe plus" or "emergency" category if PM2.5 and PM10 levels persist above 300 µg/m3 and 500 µg/m3 for more than 48 hours. As per

Delhi Pollution Control Committee data, hourly PM10 concentrations soared to 1,636 µg/m3 by 1 am at Punjabi Bagh and 1,937 µg/m3 by midnight at Jahangirpuri.

A large number of people

burst crackers across the national capital and its suburbs on Saturday night, flouting the ban imposed by the National Green Tribunal. The tribunal had on Monday imposed a total ban on sale

or use of all kinds of firecrackers in the National Capital Region (NCR) from November 9 midnight to November 30 midnight, saying "celebration by crackers is for happiness and not to celebrate deaths and diseases".

The city recorded an overall AQI of 414 on Saturday. It had soared to 454 by 10 pm. On Sunday, the 24-hour average AQI stood at 435 at 4 pm, which was the worst on the day after Diwali in the last four years.

Delhi recorded a 24-hour average AQI of 337 on Diwali last year (October 27), and 368 and 400 on the next two days. Thereafter, pollution levels remained in the "severe" category

for three days on the trot. In 2018, the 24-hour average AQI (281) on Diwali was recorded in the "poor" category. It deteriorated to 390 the next day and remained in the "severe" category on three consecutive days thereafter.

In 2017, Delhi's 24-hour average AQI on Diwali (October 19) stood at 319. It, however, slipped into the "severe" zone the next day and stood at 403. According to India Meteorological Department, Delhi-NCR witnessed light rain on Sunday and higher wind speed under the influence of a fresh Western Disturbance which aided in dispersion of pollutants.

— PTI

IN BRIEF ISRAELI HOUSES TO COME UP IN EAST JERUSALEM

Jerusalem, Nov. 15: Israel is moving forward on the construction of hundreds of new homes for Jewish residents in a sensitive east Jerusalem neighbourhood, the country's Housing Ministry and a settlement watchdog group said Sunday.

The Housing Ministry on Sunday opened up tenders for more than 1,200 new homes in the Givat Hamatos area of Jerusalem. The settlement watchdog group Peace Now and other critics say construction there would seal off the Palestinian city of Bethlehem from east Jerusalem, further cutting off access for the Palestinians to the eastern sector of the city, which they claim as capital of their hoped-for state. The move may test ties with the incoming administration of President-elect Joe Biden, who is expected to take a firmer tack against Israeli settlement expansion after four years of a more lenient policy under President Donald Trump.

AZERBAIJAN TO PROTECT CHURCHES: PREZ

Moscow, Nov. 15: The president of Azerbaijan has promised that Churches will be protected when the strongly Muslim country takes possession of areas formerly controlled by Armenians.

President Ilham Aliyev's office said he made the promise in a telephone call with Russian President Vladimir Putin, who is deploying peacekeeping forces in the areas under an agreement that ended six weeks of fighting between Armenia and Azerbaijan over the Nagorno-Karabakh region. Ethnic Armenian forces controlled Nagorno-Karabakh and sizeable adjacent territories since the 1994 end of a separatist war.

Fighting resumed in late September and ended with an agreement that calls for Azerbaijan to regain control of the outlying territories as well as allowing it to hold on to parts of Nagorno-Karabakh that it seized during the fighting. The first of the territories, Kalbajar, is being turned over on Sunday. Kalbajar is home to the well-known Dadivank monastery of the Armenian Apostolic Church. A day before the territory's handover, workers removed many of the monastery's sacred objects. Other residents in Kalbajar torched their own homes, fearing what will happen when Azerbaijani forces take over. Azerbaijan is about 95% Muslim and Armenians fear that churches would be damaged or closed when it takes control of the territories.

POLICE GRAFT: BALTIMORE TO PAY \$8 MN

Baltimore, Nov. 15: Baltimore officials are set to approve a roughly \$8 million settlement to two men who went to prison after drugs were planted on them a decade ago during an encounter with members of a rogue police unit that brutalised, robbed and falsely arrested residents.

The city's spending board is scheduled to take up the settlement Wednesday. The Board of Estimates has approved several settlements in recent weeks stemming from the misconduct of members of the Gun Trace Task Force, a once-lauded group that was supposed to take guns off the streets of Baltimore. The settlement for Umar Burley and Brent Matthews is the largest settlement in connection with the task force and surpasses the amount paid in 2015 to the family of Freddie Gray, a young Black man who died a week after he was critically injured in police custody and whose death led to civil unrest. The proposed payment includes \$6.3 million for Burley and Matthews as well as \$1.8 million to pay off a lien due to the estate of Elbert Davis, which sued Burley, Burley and Matthews encountered task force members in 2010 during an illegal traffic stop that led to a high-speed chase.

Burley crashed with another vehicle, killing Davis. Burley spent seven years in prison, while Matthews served two-and-half years behind bars. Their convictions were vacated in 2017 after officers cooperating in the federal investigation into the task force told authorities that a member of the unit had spoken of drugs being planted in the incident. "Mr. Burley and Mr. Matthews were overtly and undeniably framed by a conspiracy of at least four police officers," the men's attorneys, Steve Silverman, said in a statement. "It should not take an army of lawyers litigating for years to right wrongs like this."

Violence erupts as Trump supporters, rivals clash

Don's supporters rally in Washington over his massive voter fraud claims

Washington, Nov. 15: Violence erupted on the streets of downtown Washington after thousands of supporters of US President Donald Trump held a protest rally to back his unproven claims of massive voter fraud and electoral malpractices during the 2020 presidential elections. The "Million MAGA March", held a week after Democrat Joe Biden was declared the winner of the November 3 election, was mainly peaceful throughout the day on Saturday, but by late in the night, clashes erupted between Trump's supporters and counterprotesters. A mass brawl broke out later on Saturday night just five blocks away from the White House as counterprotesters clashed with a group of Trump supporters.

According to reports, a man in his 20s, believed to be a Black Lives Matter protester, received serious injuries and was rushed to a hospital after being stabbed in the back during the altercation and two police officers were also injured. The clash lasted for several minutes as the two groups wielded batons and pushed and shoved each other until cops intervened, the reports said. Thronging to Washington DC from various parts of the US, participants of the Make America Great Again (MAGA) Rally asserted that Trump won the elections and that they were in the city to express their support to their leader.

Trump, who has not yet conceded the election to the projected winner, Biden, has repeatedly asserted, without evidence, that fraud and other irregularities deprived him of mil-



Supporters of President Donald Trump protest in front of the Clark County Election Department, in Las Vegas, Nevada on Saturday.

lions of votes in key battleground states. According to Fox News, anti-Trump demonstrators allegedly hurled eggs at Trump supporters — or stole signs, hats and banners, and lit them on fire.

Videos posted on social media showed some demonstrators trading shoves, punches and slaps.

Anti-Trump protesters clashed with law enforcement in downtown DC as they tried to make their way to a hotel where Trump supporters were staying, the CNN reported.

President Trump on Saturday briefly drove by the protesters through Pennsylvania Avenue on his way to his golf course in a Virginia suburb and he waved at his supporters.

Later in the day, Trump in a tweet alleged that

● **TRUMP IN a tweet alleged that news channels are not showing the massive gatherings in support of him, as he posted a picture of protestors of his MAGA rally.**

news channels are not showing the massive gatherings in support of him, as he posted a picture of protestors of his MAGA rally.

"Instead they have their reporters standing in almost empty streets. We now have SUPPRESSION BY THE PRESS. MAGA!" he said. Participants of the rally, which started at Freedom Plaza, chanted "four more years" and "stop the steal."

Sporting the red MAGA cap, they displayed large posters and banners in

support of Trump. Washington DC Metropolitan Police Department, late Saturday said that at least 20 people were arrested. Trump in a tweet blasted counter protesters who turned up at the Million MAGA March as 'Antifa scum' as he joked that they ran for the hills after violent scenes erupted in Washington DC on Saturday night.

The president claimed 'Antifa' had waited until the end of the march to attack attendees as he praised his supporters who "aggressively fought back". "Antifa SCUM ran for the hills today when they tried attacking the people at the Trump Rally, because those people aggressively fought back," he tweeted. Later, in a series of tweets, Trump attacked media outlets.

— PTI

Gilgit-Baltistan assembly poll over, counting begins

Islamabad, Nov. 15: Wearing face masks, the people of Gilgit-Baltistan in northern Pakistan voted on Sunday in the third legislative assembly election amidst tight security. India has slammed Pakistan for its decision to hold election in Gilgit-Baltistan and said any action to alter the status of the militarily-occupied region has no legal basis.

The voting which commenced at 8.00 am (local time) ended peacefully without any break at 5.00 pm and no untoward incident was reported. The counting of votes has started and complete results are expected by tomorrow. Earlier, the polling officials said that the voters present inside the polling stations would be allowed to cast ballots even after the end of polling time. There are 24 seats for the contest but polling on one seat was postponed, leaving 23 seats up for grabs. As many as 330 candidates, including four women, are in the contest, they said. India has opposed Pakistan's plan to hold election in Gilgit-Baltistan.

— PTI



People queue to cast their ballot at a polling station during the legislative assembly election in Skardu city in Gilgit-Baltistan region of Pakistan on Sunday.

— AFP

Special courts for speedy rape trials

Islamabad, Nov. 15: Pakistan government is all set to promulgate next week an ordinance seeking establishment of special courts for speedy trial of rape cases, according to a media report.

Under the proposed law, rape cases would not be investigated by ordinary police officials and only a gazetted officer up to the level of DIG or SSP would monitor these cases, Adv-

iser to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan said. He said the proposed law also suggested steps for speedy disposal of cases.

He said this after PM Imran Khan through a tweet announced that the government had planned to bring a "stringent and holistic anti-rape ordinance closing all loopholes".

— PTI

FOOD FOR | THOUGHT

\$15 billion needed to help malnourished kids, schools

Famine of biblical proportions in '21: WFP

United Nations, Nov. 15: The head of the World Food Programme says the Nobel Peace Prize has given the UN agency a spotlight and megaphone to warn world leaders that next year is going to be worse than this year, and without billions of dollars "we are going to have famines of biblical proportions in 2021."

David Beasley said in an interview with The Associated Press that the Norwegian Nobel Committee was looking at the work the agency does every day in conflicts, disasters and refugee camps, often putting staffers' lives at risk to feed millions of hungry people — but also to send "a message to the world that it's getting worse out there ... (and) that our

hardest work is yet to come." "It was so timely because we've been fighting to get above the choir," Beasley said of last month's award, pointing to the news being dominated by the US elections and the Covid-19 pandemic, and the difficulty of getting global attention focused on "the travesty that we're facing around the world." "So this was really a gift from above," Beasley said, recalling the surprise and delight of WFP's 20,000 staffers worldwide, and his own shock at being interrupted during a meeting in Niger in Africa's Sahel region with the news.

Beasley recalled his warning to the UN Security Council in April that as the world was deal-

● **WORLD LEADERS responded with money, stimulus packages, deferral of debt in 2020. The money available in 2020 is not going to be available in 2021**

ing with the Coronavirus pandemic, it was also "on the brink of a hunger pandemic" that could lead to "multiple famines of biblical proportions" within a few months if immediate action wasn't taken.

"We were able to avert it in 2020 ... because the world leaders responded with money, stimulus packages, deferral of debt," he said. Now, Beasley said, Covid-19 is surging again, economies are continuing to deteriorate particularly

Virus curbs tighten in Europe as global deaths top 1.3 mn

Vienna, Nov. 15: A swathe of new restrictions to curtail a second wave of Coronavirus infections were announced or came into force from Austria to Greece, Italy to Portugal on Saturday as the global death toll climbed above 1.3 million. More than 53 million have been infected worldwide by Covid-19, which is running rampant throughout America and Europe, forcing governments to take more action despite the potential economic devastation.

Austria joined a growing trend announcing schools and non-essential shops would close from Tuesday, having imposed a partial lockdown two weeks ago. "There are still many who say that infections don't happen at school, in shops or services," said Chancellor Sebastian Kurz.

"But the truth is the authorities can no longer trace 77 percent of new infections, which means they no longer know where contamination is happening," Greece, battling a saturated national health system, announced it

NEW COMPOUNDS TO TREAT NOVEL VIRUS IDENTIFIED

Washington, Nov. 15: Researchers have discovered new drug compounds that target a protein which enables the novel Coronavirus and other viruses with pandemic potential to replicate in human cells, an advance that may lead to new therapeutics for Covid-19.

According to the researchers, including those from the University of Maryland in the US, these compounds disrupt the functioning of a protein complex inside human cells that are critical for the replication and survival of coronaviruses, including the one that causes Covid-19.

— PTI

would shut all schools after imposing a nationwide night curfew from Friday.

— AFP

German ad hails couch potatoes

Berlin, Nov. 15: The German government has released a tongue-in-cheek ad hailing an unlikely hero in the fight against the Coronavirus pandemic: The humble couch potato.

The 90-second video posted online Saturday begins with an elderly man recalling his 'service' to the nation back when he was just a young student "in the winter of 2020, when the whole country's eyes were on us."

"I had just turned 22 and was studying engineering," he continues, "when the second wave hit." With violins stirring at viewers' heart strings, the setting switches to a scene of the narrator as a young man.

"Suddenly the fate of this country lay in our hands," he says.

— AP

SECRET PARTIES TEST FRENCH LOCKDOWN

Paris, Nov. 15: France is in a second lockdown amid a second wave of the Coronavirus, but some people can't stop partying.

Police broke up one gigantic fete outside Paris early Saturday, reportedly using special grenades to do so. Police intervened to end a middle-of-the-night house party attended by at least 300 people "in total disdain for health rules," the Paris Police Prefecture tweeted.

Party-goers threw bottles at police, police said. Police had to toss special grenades as intermediate weapons to break up the gathering and escape.

— AP

Indian couple's drive-by wedding

Dubai, Nov. 15: An Indian couple in the UAE has organised a "drive-by wedding ceremony" where guests were allowed to wish them from their cars only, in a bid to maintain social distancing due to the Covid-19, a media report said.

Muhammed Jazem and Almas Ahmed from Kerala first had their 'Nikah' then they stood under a flower arch outside their home in Dubai for a socially-distanced wedding reception, *Khaleej Times* reported. The couple's family members and friends, who could not attend the marriage, stopped their cars outside the newlyweds' home and wished them.

"We asked our guests to stop only for a few moments, give us their best wishes, take a picture and then they could drive away," Jazem said. "We instructed them not to step out of the car, to keep moving to avoid traffic, and not pull over," he said. Jazem and Almas, who grew up in the UAE, had an arranged marriage. Jazem, an aeronautical engineer with Emirates Airline, said that since their parents and many of their relatives are elderly, they did not want to have a big event because they fall under the high-risk category.

— PTI

year and how leaders are going to have to prioritize programs, Beasley said. "And the response has really been good." "I'm telling them you're not going to have enough money to fund all the projects you historically fund," he said. "Those are important things," Beasley said, but he likened the upcoming crisis to the Titanic saying "right now, we really need to focus on icebergs, and icebergs are famine, starvation, destabilization and migration." Beasley said WFP needs \$15 billion next year — \$5 billion just to avert famine and \$10 billion to carry out the agency's global programmes including for malnourished children and school lunches.

— AP

DECCAN Chronicle

16 NOVEMBER 2020

No sign of a thaw yet at the LAC in Ladakh

India's official signalling to its own citizens on where the situation stands in eastern Ladakh, where China has positioned some 50,000 troops along with artillery and armour, obliging India to play the matching game, is confusing and far from reassuring.

In May this year Indians woke up to the nasty fact that the Chinese armed forces had crossed over into India's side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) across eastern Ladakh, from north to south. The government was caught wholly unawares. It simply did not matter to China that the Doklam crisis in the eastern Himalayas had been just about defused in 2017, with the informal Wuhan summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping then offering hope of a mutual understanding toward a measure of stability in bilateral relations. Now we know better.

Although possessing no *locus standi*, China used the emasculation of Article 370 in respect of Jammu and Kashmir and declaring Ladakh as a Union territory in August 2019 as a supposed justification for its military forces to move into the Indian side across a vast swathe of land. Starting from then, the government has refused to take the people into confidence about the status of our borders in the Ladakh region. Indeed, its communication with the public appears to have been less than transparent.

In mid-June, the PM told the Opposition leaders in a virtual formal meeting that China had not intruded into Indian territory. This may have been designed to save face and to avoid political damage within the country, but this was no help to India's cause. The Chinese have continued to throw the PM's words back at us. Even so, the militaries of the two countries have so far held eight rounds of talks with the intention of "disengagement" at the "friction points", which will hopefully lead to a "de-escalation" in eastern Ladakh.

After the eighth round earlier this month, the Indian media, obviously fed by unnamed government or defence sources, communicated a sense of hope of reaching disengagement shortly. Central to this was the idea that the Chinese had agreed to pull back their forces from "Finger 4" (the 'fingers' refers to mountainous spurs on the north bank of Pangong Lake) eastward to "Finger 8", where the LAC runs on the Indian side. The intervening space would be declared as a "no-patrol zone" by the troops of either side. Similarly, on the south bank of the lake and the Kailash Range area broadly, the Indians were to vacate the heights they had seized and these tactically sensitive points were also to be converted into no-patrol zones.

If the Indian government is amenable to such ideas, it will be pushed into a further disadvantageous position since the proposed "no-patrol" zones are within the LAC on the Indian side. Anyhow, for now the whole thing is academic. China's *Global Times* newspaper, an official propaganda sheet, has rejected the contents of the Indian media stories, claiming that India's understanding of the LAC itself is faulty.

Despite this, the PM said, addressing troops in Longewala on Diwali day, that those coveting Indian territory will be given a "*prachand jawab*", or fierce response. There has been little sign of that so far. First things first — let the government come out with a White Paper laying out the factual position.

Covid-19: Stick to protocol

The steady quantum of reports that comes out of the research laboratories all over the world about one vaccine candidate or the other clearing another step has been the only positive news on the Covid-19 front of late. As per the World Health Organisation, there are at present more than 100 Covid-19 vaccine candidates under development, with a number of them in the human trial phase.

Close on the heels Pfizer announcing that the vaccine it develops with BioNTech has proved 90 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 has come the news Sputnik-V being developed by the Russians is 92 per cent effective. The phase-III trials of the vaccine being developed by Oxford University along with AstraZeneca are being undertaken all over the world including in India. It has also been reported that India will get 10 crore doses of the vaccine by December this year, which should come as a big relief for us. US manufacturer Moderna has reported major advancements in the trials. Covaxin, which is being developed by Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech International Limited along with Indian Council for Medical Research, has also entered the human trial phase. Ahmedabad-based Zydus Cadila's vaccine candidate is expected to enter phase III clinical trials by December.

It could be for the first time that the search for a vaccine has covered such substantial distance in such a short time as in the case of Covid-19 vaccine. However, experts are worried over the timeline it could take for it to reach everyone who wanted it. The director of All-India Institute of Medical Sciences, who is a member of the Union government's Covid-19 task force, has said it could take at least two years for the vaccine to reach all.

The virus has not gone anywhere, and the vaccine is yet to come. Strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols is the only option people are left with for the time being.

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:
Chennai: SP 3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai 600032. Phones: (044) 22254747, 22254748
Coimbatore: 77 Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore 641009. Phone: (0422) 2231255, 2231256
Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad 500 003. Phone: (040) 27803930-4. Fax: (040) 27805256
Bengaluru: 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Ft. Road, Koramangala, Bangalore-560095. Ph: 08043460500; Fax: 080-22960551/52/55
Visakhapatnam: Survey No. 1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017. Phones: (0891) 2552333/2552334, Fax (0891) 2755285
Vijayawada: No. C 3 & 4, Patnamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.). Phones: (0866) 2555284/ 2555287, Fax: (0866) 2555234
Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry 533125. Phones: (0883) 2417208, 2417618
Anantapur: Thapovan Colony, Bangalore Bye-Pass Road, Anantapur 515004. Phones: (08554) 276903, Fax: 08554-276904
Nellore: Survey No. 527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemudugunta Panchayat, Nellore. Phone: (0861) 2348581/ 82, Telefax (0861) 2348580
Karimnagar: Survey No. 1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagitayala Road, Karimnagar 505 001. Phone: (0878) 2228908; Telefax (0878) 2230433
Kochi: No. 3-B, 3rd Floor, DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Emakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408
Kozhikode: No 6/1002 E, First Floor City Mall, Opp. YMCA Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001 Fax : 0495 4019018
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Subhani



Will apex court protect liberty for all citizens?



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

The Supreme Court of India upheld the principle of personal liberty by granting interim bail to Republic TV's chief Arnab Goswami in a 2018 case where he is accused of abetment of suicide. This is a good thing. There are some who do not like Goswami's views, or the abusive felicity with which he name-calls and verbally humiliates his ideological "opponents" or demeans those whom he does not like. However, anyone's personal likes and dislikes are not material to the protection of his or her constitutional rights. If his personal liberty has been unfairly violated, and he deserves to get bail, he should not be arbitrarily kept in prison by the law enforcement machinery of a state government with which he is at loggerheads.

It was heartening for citizens to hear the clarion call of Justice D.Y. Chandrachud: "If we as a constitutional court do not lay down the law and protect liberty, then who will?" The message was clear. The highest court in the land will intervene to protect personal liberty at any cost, list a case of this nature with lightning speed, overrule the standard judicial procedures like first pursuing a bail petition before the designated lower court, and hear the petition even if means working on the weekend. This is also a good thing.

However, such heartening news may not have bought much hope to Father Stan Swamy, who is languishing in Talaja jail in Navi Mumbai. The 83-year-old tribal rights activist has been incarcerated

since January 2018 for his alleged Maoist links in the Elgar Parishad case. On November 6 this year, Swamy moved a petition before the National Investigation Agency special court in which he asked for a straw or a sipper cup in jail. "I cannot hold a glass as my hands are unsteady due to Parkinson's (disease)", his petition said. He was asking not for big things like personal liberty and freedom. His only request was for a sipper cup or a paper straw so that he could drink water without spilling. A straw or a sipper are not dangerous items, nor are they luxury items which prisoners should not have. But that request does symbolise some things as important as personal liberty, which the Supreme Court so vigilantly defended. It symbolises a human being's legitimate craving for dignity; of his supplication for compassion; of his expectation of humane treatment; of his hope in a caring system for those in deep medical distress. The special court judge who heard this desperate petition simply asked the NIA to file its reply on the matter on November 26.

For 20 days Father Stan Swamy will continue to wait with his trem-

A straw or a sipper are not dangerous items, nor are they luxury items which prisoners should not have. And Fr Swamy's request does symbolise personal liberty, which the Court so vigilantly defended.

For 20 days Fr Stan Swamy will continue to wait with his trembling hands for a straw or a sipper to be provided to him... And there is no guarantee that... on Nov. 26, the court would accede to the request.

bling hands for a straw or a sipper to be provided to him. The NIA will get *twenty days* to consider whether such a request should be conceded to. And there is no guarantee that when it does file its reply on November 26, it would accede to the request. The legal position in the matter may require further deliberation. The rules need to be checked out for "dangerous" prisoners. If these don't provide for a straw to be given to prisoners, how can an exception be made? After all a sipper, that would enable an 83-year-old prisoner suffering from advanced Parkinson's disease to take a sip of water, could sabotage the interests of the state.

Perhaps the honourable Supreme Court could take suo motu cognisance of such matters as well. Travesty of justice has many forms. In some cases, the rule book is thrown at those deprived of personal liberty, who languish in prison for months without bail. In others, matters are fast tracked at incredible speed, and the judiciary makes public its unwavering commitment to protect personal liberty. Perhaps, the highest court of the land will also then take steps to ensure that the personal liberty of people like the octogenarian Varavara Rao, who has been repeatedly denied bail, and not given permission to be admitted to hospital. The 80-year-old poet, teacher and activist, who has been in jail without trial since 2018, again for alleged Maoist links in the Elgar Parishad case, "was

found lying on a soiled bed soaked in urine with no one to attend to him". His health is extremely precarious; he has suffered deliriums in jail, where he also contracted the Covid-19 virus. Perhaps the Supreme Court may also ask its judicial subordinates why bail in the case of a pregnant Safoora Zargar, arrested for participating in the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act, took as much as 70 days to be processed.

The nation looks upon the Supreme Court, and the judiciary in general, as an agency of the last resort to get justice. When the Supreme Court declares that it will intervene proactively to ensure personal liberty, it raises, in the thousands of prisoners who are for untenable and inhumane reasons being denied personal liberty, the possibility of hope. Surely, the Government of India is not so vulnerable that it treats people above the age of 80 who are nearly disabled, as "enemies" who can destabilise the State. The administering of justice should never be selective, or so lacking in humanity that it revolts the human conscience. When Father Stan Swamy is given the freedom to drink water with a semblance of dignity, we will believe that the Supreme Court's concern for Arnab Goswami has a larger meaning and a message for the conduct of the judiciary as a whole.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

Travesty of justice has many forms. In some cases, the rule book is thrown at those deprived of personal liberty, who languish in prison for months without bail. In others, matters are fast tracked...

LETTERS

LIFE SANS NEWSPAPER

It was a life off the routine for me yesterday without reading DC as the newspaper office was closed for Deepavali. For hardcore readers like me, a 'newsaperless day' would be gloomy and downcast, rendering them out of tune with the world, although there are TV channels, which naturally cannot provide in-depth news. It was a rare sight as the morning newspaper dumps were a deserted look, which normally would hustle and bustle with activities, with hawkers and vendors unpacking the newspaper bundles, sort them and insert supplements in a jiffy, and leave in a flash for deliveries at home.

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

EASY TO PREACH

It is great news that the Congress leaders are welcoming the decision of Kodiyeri Balakrishnan to quit as CPM state secretary and urging Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan to step down at the earliest. Though it is a justifiable demand, the Congress should also ask some of its corrupt state ministers and CMs to quit. It is very easy to preach sitting in the Opposition, but tough to practise when one is in power. Thankfully the present day voters are smart to analyse and recognise 'clean' leaders who can deliver.

N. Mahadevan, Chennai

USUAL GIMMICKS

This refers to your report that Australian head coach Justin Langer has hailed our Indian captain Virat Kohli, for taking paternity leave during the Test series Down Under. It is nothing but natural as Kohli has time and again proved to be a real thorn in their flesh. Of course, Kohli's absence could prove to be a boon to a young talented cricketer in Indian team. Incidentally, while Aussie veteran spinner Nathan Lyon feels that there may not be any advantage to Australian team, Steve Smith has dared our quick bowlers to unsettle him. These comments are nothing new to Indian cricket team, as such gimmicks are used by every Australian team on the eve of our tour Down Under or their tour to India, to unnerve our players. However, they should remember that the present day players are tough nuts to crack.

N.V. Krishnan, Chennai

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



Why Shah held back in Bihar; hunt for unhappy Trinamul men

When home minister Amit Shah tested positive for the coronavirus and was hospitalised twice, it was generally accepted that the BJP's chief election strategist would not be joining the poll campaign in Bihar because of medical reasons. But Mr Shah's recent two-day visit to West Bengal immediately set tongues wagging as people wondered that if Mr Shah had recovered sufficiently, why didn't he make it for the last phase of the campaign in neighbouring Bihar? While it is true that Mr Shah kept away from Bihar on doctor's orders, the home minister was also not happy with the fact that he would be constrained from propagating his hard Hindutva line in his speeches. The BJP had decided that it would play down the communal card in Bihar as identity politics usually takes precedence here. Since the home minister and Hindutva are inseparable, it would have been difficult for Mr Shah to contain himself and speak about issues that do not have a dash of

minority-bashing or Hindu nationalism. Though Yogi Adityanath did do his bit, he was promptly put down by Nitish Kumar.

In the Madhya Pradesh government's women and child department jinxed? How else can one explain why the incumbent minister, Imarti Devi, previously with the Congress and now with the BJP, was unable to hold her seat in the recently-concluded byelections. According to the grapevine in Bhopal, ministers who have headed this department have invariably failed to stage a comeback. The previous minister Maya Singh did not get a ticket in the last Assembly poll while an earlier minister Ranjana Baghel had also failed to make the grade. It was widely expected that Imarti Devi would come through with flying colours. Not only is she Jyotiraditya Scindia's camp follower but she was also in the news in the run-up to the election when former chief minister Kamal Nath used derogatory language and referred to her

as an "item". The BJP had launched an offensive against Kamal Nath for insulting a woman and had approached the Election Commission that withdrew the Congress leader's star campaigner status. But despite these efforts and the publicity, Imarti Devi was unable to break the jinx.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's emphatic declaration that Janata Dal (United) leader Nitish Kumar will remain Bihar chief minister has not gone down well with a section in the BJP that feels the top post rightfully belongs to their party since it has a higher tally in the Assembly. In fact, even before the election, the BJP's Bihar unit had been urging its Central leadership to stake claim to the chief minister's post since it has emerged as the dominant force in Bihar. However, Mr Modi is not pressing his party's claim as it would not like to give Nitish Kumar a reason to switch over to the other side. The BJP has decided it is better to forgo the

chief's minister's post rather than risk losing yet another ally. As it is, there is talk that regional parties, which are making tentative moves to form a joint front, would approach Nitish Kumar to join them and if he was at a loose end, the JD(U) could even be propped up as its prime ministerial candidate.

Now that Bihar is in the bag, the BJP has shifted focus to West Bengal, which goes to polls next year. Keen to expand its footprint in the East, the BJP is eyeing disgruntled leaders and workers of the Trinamul Congress, which can be persuaded to join the saffron party. West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee has reason to worry as the BJP is determined to dethrone her and will not stop at anything in its mission. It has deployed her former colleague Mukul Roy to identify the unhappy leaders in the Trinamul. In addition, the BJP plans to take a hard look at Trinamul leaders whose names figure in cases of financial impropriety. It will not be surprising if these

cases are suddenly activated in the coming months, only to disappear miraculously once the person concerned crosses over to the BJP.

Former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Kamal Nath faces an uncertain future after he failed to stop the BJP from picking up a substantial number of seats in the state byelections. Mr Nath currently holds two posts - he is leader of the Congress legislature party and the state unit president. With Congress insiders blaming Mr Nath for the party's poor performance, there is a growing demand that the party follow the principle of "one man, one post" and replace Mr Nath as state unit president. Mr Nath would ideally like to return to Delhi as he is used to playing on a larger stage but there is no role for him here. He may well be forced to stay on in Madhya Pradesh and focus on grooming his son, a first time MP from Chhindwara.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

SHORT TAKES

Star cricketers in selection panel

New Delhi: The new-look national selection committee of the BCCI is set to have a boost in its profile with some of the well-known former India players like Chetan Sharma, Maninder Singh and Shiv Sunder Das applying for the vacant posts from their respective zones. However, Ajit Agarkar, who has 231 international matches to his name, could be the front-runner for the chairman's post in case he decides to re-apply for selector's job. While Agarkar couldn't be contacted for a comment, it has been learnt that he would throw his hat in the ring and his credentials for the top job will be difficult to ignore considering his vast international experience. Although the BCCI has officially got rid of the zonal system, it is highly unlikely that two people from the same zone will be kept in the selection panel. Sunil Joshi from South Zone was the chairman while the Central Zone was represented by Harvinder Singh. — *PTI*

Car racer Pace dies from Covid

Memphis: Jim Pace, the overall winner of the 1996 24 Hours of Daytona, has died after contracting Covid-19. He was 59. Pace's family said he died on Friday in Memphis. "Racer, teacher, and loyal friend," IMSA President John Doonan said. "These are three simple words to describe Jim Pace. All of us at IMSA are devastated by losing such a great champion." Born in 1961 in Monticello, Mississippi, Pace began his racing career in the Barber Saab Pro Series in 1988. He soon moved to sports car racing and won the GTU class at the 1990 24 Hours of Daytona. Six years later at Daytona, Pace won with fellow drivers Scott Sharp and Wayne Taylor in a Riley & Scott Mk III, and he also won the 12 Hours of Sebring that year in the same car, with Taylor and Eric Van de Poele. He took his third victory of that season at Texas World Speedway, co-driving with Taylor. — *AP*

France bag finals spot, Germany win

Paris: World champions France and Germany rode on the influence of their Chelsea stars to rack up Nations League wins on Saturday while Spain's Sergio Ramos missed two penalties on the night he celebrated a record-setting 177th international appearance. Chelsea midfielder N'Golo Kante scored just his second international goal as France defeated European champions Portugal 1-0 in Lisbon to secure a place in next year's finals. Kante was quickest to react to a rebound as he netted the winner on 53 minutes that clinched France top spot in their group. France lead Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal by three points ahead of Tuesday's clash with Sweden in Paris but are guaranteed first place by virtue of their superior head-to-head record. Kante's teammate in the English Premier League Timo Werner scored twice on his return to Leipzig as Germany enjoyed a 3-1 win over Ukraine. — *APF*

Johnson seizes Masters lead

Augusta: Top-ranked Dustin Johnson went four-under par in the first four holes to seize a three-stroke lead early in Saturday's third round of the Masters, pulling away from an elite field at Augusta National. The 36-year-old American, who grew up only an hour's drive from the course, unleashed his best to any major round in his career to stand on 13-under par for the tournament. — *APF*

Live on TV

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Six

WWE

Raw: Bouts from 6.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, HD

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Editor: **KAUSHIK MITTER**

SEVENTH WONDER

Hamilton wins record-equalling seventh F1 world title

Istanbul, Nov. 15: Lewis Hamilton secured a record-equalling seventh Formula One world title on Sunday after winning the Turkish Grand Prix despite starting sixth on the grid.

The Briton matched Michael Schumacher's haul of drivers' crowns with three races of the season remaining.

The 35-year-old sealed his latest title with a typically measured master-class, handling treacherous wet early conditions to claim his 94th career win despite his unaccustomed start position.

A breathless Hamilton said: "I'm lost for words. This is way beyond my dreams."

Hamilton, who sealed his first title in 2008, was adding to his unprecedented roster of records — most wins with 94, most pole positions (97), most podium finishes (163) and most consecutive points finishes (47).

It was widely declared as one of his finest triumphs and entirely appropriate on the day he drew alongside Schumacher in the record books.

He lapped his team-mate and only remaining title rival Valtteri Bottas, who finished 14th after a desultory outing, to claim his 10th victory in 14 races this season.

Hamilton came home over half a minute clear of Sergio Perez for Racing Point. Both chose to make only one pit-stop and spend most of the race on a single set of intermediate tyres as their rivals pitted several times to cope with the slippery conditions.

Hamilton's old rival, four-time former champion Sebastian Vettel, finished third ahead of his Ferrari team-mate Charles Leclerc, Carlos Sainz of McLaren and, after a wild and impulsive afternoon, Max Verstappen in the leading Red Bull. Alex Albon came home seventh in the second Red Bull ahead of Lando Norris in the second McLaren, Lance Stroll, who had started from his maiden pole position for Racing Point, and Daniel Ricciardo of Renault. — *APF*

Hami: Not bad for boy from council house

Istanbul, Nov. 15: Lewis Hamilton cemented his position as one of Formula One's true greats when he equalled Michael Schumacher's all-time record of seven world titles on Sunday, another staggering achievement for a boy who grew up in modest circumstances.

His victory in Istanbul — the 94th of his career — allowed him to add the 2020 title to his championships of 2008, 2014, 2015, 2017, 2018 and 2019.

The son of a black father and a white mother, whose parents separated in his youth, Hamilton, 35, grew up on a municipal housing estate. His father Anthony at one time held down three jobs to fund his son's embryonic racing career in karting.

Hamilton's journey was unprivileged and without

I often say it is beyond wildest dreams but my whole life secretly I have dreamt as high as this. It felt so far-fetched. I remember watching Michael win those world championships. To get one or two or even three is so hard. Seven is unimaginable.

— LEWIS HAMILTON



Mercedes driver Lewis Hamilton celebrates after winning the Turkish Formula One Grand Prix at the Istanbul Park circuit racetrack in Istanbul on Sunday.

— *AFP*

LEWIS LETS TEARS FLOW AFTER WIN

Istanbul, Nov. 15: After winning a difficult race to equal Michael Schumacher's record of seven Formula One championships on Sunday, the hardest thing for Lewis Hamilton was containing his emotions.

His voice could be heard breaking as he thanked his team over the radio moments after crossing the line at the Turkish Grand Prix, while underneath the helmet the tears were

starting to build up.

"All these emotions were running through me and I was trying to stop it," Hamilton said in his post-race news conference.

"I was thinking about my whole career, from when I was five when I drove in a go-kart, from when we won the British championship, driving home with my dad and singing 'We Are The Champions' and dreaming of being here." Moments after victory

No. 94 and title No. 7, he sat in his car with his head in his hands.

"It really hit me and I just burst into tears. I couldn't get out of the car because I just couldn't believe it," Hamilton said.

"I didn't want the visor to come up and people to see tears flowing, because I had always said I would never let you see me cry. I remember watching drivers in the past crying and I was like 'I'm not going to do

that.' But it was too much," he said.

Speaking a short time after his win, Hamilton was wiping away those tears as he prepared to mount the podium.

"I'm definitely a bit lost for words. I dreamed of this as a kid. This is way, way beyond our dreams," he said, thanking his family.

Hamilton only had one title, with McLaren in 2008, when he replaced Schumacher at Mercedes in 2013. — *AP*



Lewis Hamilton poses with his dog as he celebrates his record win in Istanbul on Sunday.

— *AP*

reeled off nine successive podiums from his debut in Melbourne, rocking the establishment along the way with his speed and his style.

On and off the track, he was fast, somewhat mer-

curial and occasionally tempestuous and the combination led to a fierce rivalry with team-mate and two-time champion Fernando Alonso at McLaren. That was a signal of how tough it was to

be for all his future team-mates as Hamilton, who narrowly missed out on the 2007 title, returned to triumph in 2008 with a dramatic last-gasp fifth-place finish in Brazil.

He also showed frustration as McLaren failed to deliver the speed to beat Sebastian Vettel and Red Bull, who reeled off four straight title triumphs from 2010 to 2013, by which time Hamilton had departed for Mercedes.

Escaping the management regime of Dennis and his father, Hamilton found freedom at Mercedes alongside team-mate Nico Rosberg, his teenage karting friend and rival. Rosberg broke Hamilton's sequence of supremacy in 2016 and then retired, leaving the Englishman to dominate.

— *APF*

Thiem survives Tsitsipas scare

London, Nov. 15: Dominic Thiem beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in the opening singles match of the ATP Finals on Sunday.

In a repeat of last year's final at London's O2 Arena, won by Tsitsipas, US Open champion Thiem stumbled after winning a first-set tie-break but found his range again to win 7-6 (7/5), 4-6, 6-3.

Thiem was impressive on serve in the first set, winning 79 per cent of service points, but failed to convert three break points against the Greek world number six.

The Austrian third seed found himself in deep trouble when trailing 4-1 in the tie-break but battled back and made his first set point count when Tsitsipas went long with a backhand lob.

Tsitsipas produced a forehand winner in the third game of the second set to break the Austrian and haul himself back into the contest, facing no break points as he levelled the match.

The defending champion appeared to have the momentum but it was Thiem who drew first blood in the deciding set, earning a break with a del-

icately dinked forehand at the net in the second game.

The fifth game ultimately proved to be decisive. Tsitsipas had a chance to break but caught the net with a powerful backhand and could not engineer another break point in a game that contained six deuces.

Earlier, Novak Djokovic received the ATP Tour No. 1 trophy after finishing the year at the top of the rankings for a record-equalling sixth time.

The Serbian, who has drawn level with American Pete Sampras, said: "Obviously I am super proud of it, but I have mixed emotions because of what is going on in the world. I can't be ignorant to that, although I have achieved one of the biggest goals in sport."

Top seed Djokovic, who is competing in Group Tokyo 1970 alongside Daniil Medvedev, Alexander Zverev and Diego Schwartzman, plays his opening match on Monday.

London's O2 Arena is hosting the ATP Finals for the 12th and final season before the year-end championships moves to Turin next year. — *AFP*



Novak Djokovic poses with his year end ATP number one trophy during Day One of the ATP Finals tennis championship at The O2 Arena in London on Sunday.

— *AP*

Aussies love to hate 'polarising' Kohli

Sydney, Nov. 15: Test captain Tim Paine says Australians have "polarising" opinions on India skipper Virat Kohli, one whom they love to hate as rivals but at the same time enjoy watching him bat as fans. Australia and India are set to lock horns in a four-Test series with the opening Day-Night game in Adelaide starting December 17.

"I get asked a lot of questions about him, he's just another player to me it doesn't really bother me. There's not really a relationship there with him to be fair, I see him at the toss and play against him and that's about it," Paine told ABC Sport.

"With Virat it is a funny one, we love to hate him but we also love to watch him bat as cricket fans. He certainly is polarising in that type of scenario. We love watching him bat, but we don't like seeing him score too many runs."

The last time the two sides met tempers flared with both skippers having

a go at each other at every given opportunity. The duo even had to be separated by the on-field umpires on a couple of occasions.

"Australia and India, it's a heated competition and he's obviously a competitive person and so am I, so yeah there were a few occasions when we had words but that wasn't because he was the captain and I was the captain, it could have been anyone," Paine said.

Comparing his on-field battle with Kohli to the likes of Joe Root and Ben Stokes, the wicketkeeper-batsman said it always a heated affair when the best players are out in the middle. "There is always a bit more tension when a player is as good as he is, it's the same when you play against England, its Joe Root or a Ben Stokes," Paine said.

"It's often the best player is the one that your team goes up a little bit, the intensity goes up when the best players in the world come out to the crease."

— *PTI*

Kohli withdrawal has put broadcaster, CA in distress



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

Virat Kohli's decision to be with his wife for the birth of their first-born has thrown the impending Test series against Australia into a tailspin on several fronts.

Kohli is among the foremost batsmen in the game, and over the past 7-8 years easily India's best batsman in the five-day format.

His absence considerably weakens the Indian batting. Considering he is also captain, this is a double whammy for the Indian team. Kohli's most cele-

brated win also came in Australia, in 2018, when led India to a first-ever Test series Down Under.

That he is the game's biggest drawcard has added to the turmoil his decision to return to India after the pink-ball Test at Adelaide has caused more particularly for broadcasters Channel 7.

Financially in the doldrums for over a year, India's tour has come as a lifeline for Cricket Australia. This included a trade-off to ensure the IPL was played at the cost of

the T20 World Cup.

Meanwhile, Cricket Australia structured a complex telecast deal between Fox Cricket and Channel 7 where the latter got rights for all Test cricket played in Australia and the former exclusive rights for all white ball cricket, plus simulcast rights for Tests. Had things gone normally, Fox Cricket would have had 7 exclusive match days featuring Kohli (4 ODIs, 3T20s), plus 20 days (potentially) of him in the four Tests.

Kohli's withdrawal from three Tests has put Channel 7 in deep distress. Now they have only five days (maximum) of the Indian captain, which potentially diminishes viewership and hence revenues.

But while terribly impor-

tant for Channel 7 and CA, this is not the only reason why Kohli's absence from the three Tests has invited widespread scrutiny and opinion.

Former players like Allan Border and Steve Waugh, while respecting Kohli's decision have recalled the times when these things wouldn't even have been on the radar of cricketers.

This, in fact, is the crux issue (financial implications are consequential) and needs to be assessed in a contemporary frame of reference.

Societies evolve, sensibilities change, people's behavioural patterns also change over time. What may have seemed normal 30-40 years back in several aspects, would be considered gross and insensitive

today. It could be unacceptable to the mother that her partner is not with her at the time of delivery. Or indeed the male partner is even if the female partner is accepting of his absence.

While uncommon in the past, this is hardly unusual in this day and age. Rohit Sharma returned from Australia in 2018, missing a Test, to be with his wife who was expecting their first child.

This year, Joe Root missed the first Test against West Indies to be with his wife who was expecting their second child. And it need not be only about birth of a child.

Ben Stokes missed the home series against Pakistan to be with his ailing father in New Zealand. In fact, he missed a few

weeks of the IPL, too to spend more time with his dad.

What's compounded matters currently is of course the Covid pandemic. Had times been normal, Kohli perhaps may have missed one Test at most.

Once out of the bio-secure bubble, however, he would have to be quarantined again for a fortnight, which makes his return to Australia redundant.

Dismay at Kohli missing three Tests is genuine, and not just for CA and broadcasters, but also fans. The longest format deserves the best to be seen in action.

Could the itinerary have been planned differently so that he featured in all Tests?

Perhaps. That Kohli wanted to be with his wife

at the time of delivery was known even before the IPL started. Had the Tests been scheduled before the ODIs and T20s, he would have played in all four.

But that would have meant missing almost the entire ODI and T20 series, which would have left Fox Cricket fuming!

All told, the final determinant can't be based only on monetary considerations. In being present for the birth of a child or someone sick in the family, the decision rests with the player.

HR practices in sport, certainly at the elite level, are no longer about dictats from authority or rough and ready solution-finding. That such practices have to be holistic, highly sensitive and enlightened is the new reality.