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HYUNDAI



Seema project needs nod: NGT

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, OCT. 29

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) Southern Zone, directed the AP government not to proceed with the proposed Rayalaseema lift irrigation project (RLIP) without submitting the detailed project report before the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB). The Union ministry of Jal Shakti had given this direction as it would impact sharing of Krishna waters between Telangana and AP. Pronouncing the judg-

ment on Thursday — the orders were reserved on September 3 — on the application filed by one Gavinolla Srinivas, the NGT said it had prima-facie found that there is a component of irrigation envisaged in the project, which requires prior environmental clearance (EC). Without this, the state government is not entitled to proceed with the project. The bench observed that the RLIP involves building canals from Sangamithram to Muchumarri of about 4.5 km.

■ Page 2: Tribunal: Project for drinking water, irrigation

Work on 16 med colleges to start

Aarogyasri will cover 2,000 diseases in all districts, says CM at Nadu-Nedu

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES IN AP FROM NOV. 2

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 29

The state government has decided to reopen all educational institutions on November 2 by putting in

would be provided to the remaining six districts. He said that tenders processes for the new medical colleges would start in November in a phased manner and would be completed by January.

Jagan Mohan Reddy said that the state government would be spending ₹17,300

place all protocols. Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney issued modified guidelines for reopening.

■ Page 3: Schools to run on alternate days

crore to revamp the existing government hospitals and for establishing the new medical colleges under the Nadu-Nedu initiative. He directed officials to finalise the tenders for new medical colleges by January.

The CM sought details on the establishment of new

medical colleges, development of village clinics, primary healthcare centres, community health centres, area hospitals and district-level hospitals. Reiterating that all the hospitals should have better medical facilities, he said that there will be no compromise on the quality of infrastructure or the services being provided in hospitals. He stated that hospital authorities should be accountable and responsible in all aspects and directed them to ensure that all facilities are in place and make sure that patients should experience the feel of corporate

hospitals. He said that there should not be any complaints on sanitation or other facilities.

He instructed the authorities to study best practices in the construction of hospitals and implement them in the state. In addition to these, he also stressed on following environment-friendly initiatives and setting up of green buildings. He directed the authorities to immediately release ₹5,472 crore for revamping the existing hospitals under the Nadu-Nedu.

■ Page 2: Ward secretariats to act as referral centres

THREE KILLED IN KNIFE ATTACK IN FRENCH CHURCH

Nice, France, Oct. 29: A man wielding a knife killed three people praying in a church in the French city of Nice on Thursday, slitting the throat of at least one. The assailant, who was shot and wounded by police, was identified as Brahim Aouissau, a 21-year-old Tunisian migrant who arrived in Italy in late September and later travelled to France, sources close to the inquiry said.

■ Report on Page 6

INDIA CALLS FOR PREDICTABLE U.S. VISA REGIME

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, OCT. 29

India sought “increasing predictability in the visa regime” to the US, adding that the “people-to-people relationship is an important foundation of the special ties between the two countries which should be nurtured”.

■ Another report inside

SECURE | LINE App said to be safe from spies

Indian Army to ‘talk’ over its in-house app

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, OCT. 29

The Indian Army has developed a mobile messaging app similar to “WhatsApp” for secure voice, text and video calling. This app will be used within the Army to keep communications secure and was named “Secure Application for Internet” (SAI).

“The application supports end-to-end secure voice, text and video calling services for Android platforms over the

Internet. It is quite similar to commercially available messaging apps like WhatsApp, Telegram, GIMS and SAMVAD, and uses end-to-end encryption messaging protocols,” the Army said.

It said SAI scores on security features with local in-house servers and coding which can be tweaked as per requirements.

“The process for filing Intellectual Property Rights (IPR), hosting the infrastructure on NIC and working on an iOS

platform is currently in progress,” it said. Defence minister Rajnath Singh complimented the Army for developing the app.

The Indian Army has initiated several steps to prevent any attempts at online snooping by the spy agencies of other nations.

Earlier this year the Army asked its officers and jawans to immediately delete their Facebook accounts and barred them from using some 88 other apps.

Pak brags about Pulwama attack

Islamabad, Oct. 29: In a boast that is bound to further embarrass Pakistan and bolster India’s repeated assertions of cross-border terrorism, a senior Pakistani minister on Thursday admitted that Pakistan was responsible for the Pulwama terrorist attack in Jammu and Kashmir in 2019 that killed 40 CRPF personnel and brought the two countries to the brink of a war.

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

Mr Chaudhry, a close aide of Prime Minister Imran Khan, made the remarks to counter Opposition Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leader Ayaz Sadiq’s claim made a day before in a speech in the National Assembly that Pakistan’s foreign minister Shah Mahmood

● PML-N LEADER

Ayaz Sadiq said ‘legs were shaking and forehead perspiring’ at a meeting of Pakistan’s top leaders, including Army chief General Qamar Javed Bajwa, wherein foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi pleaded to release IAF Wing commander Abhinandan Varthaman, saying if he was not released, India would attack Pakistan.

Qureshi had at an important meeting last year pleaded to release IAF Wing Commander Abhinandan Vartaman, who was captured on February 27, 2019, after his MiG-21 Bison jet was shot down. “India was not planning to attack... They just wanted to kneel before India and send back Abhinandan.” Mr Sadiq said that Prime Minister Imran Khan had skipped the high-level meeting.

Mr Chaudhry, the information and broadcasting minister termed them as “inappropriate”.



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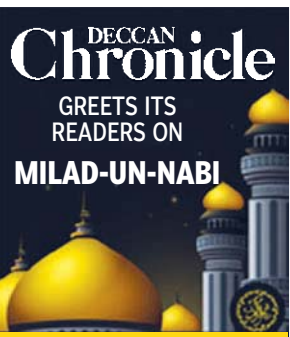
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WEATHER
Max: 33.0°C
Min: 22.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: 1.8mm
Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
33/22 °C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+50,326)	(+553)
80,81,917	1,21,049
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+1,504)	(+5)
TS: 2,36,656	1,324
(+2,905)	(+16)
AP: 8,17,679	6,659

CASES AROUND THE WORLD
4,51,20,686
DEATHS
11,83,386
COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES
215
worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Nija Ashwayuja Shuddha
Chaturdasi till 5.45 pm
Star: Revati till 2.56 pm
Varjyam: Nil
Durmuhurtam: 8.34 am to 9.20 am; 12.22 pm to 1.08 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HIJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Awwal 12, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.35 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.30 pm
Maghrib: 5.50 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.04 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.37 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 5.03 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.40 PM

COUNTER POINT



Not IPL, they were betting on polls!

INSIDE

■ STATE... PAGE 2
AP Police clinch majority awards at national level

SHORT TAKES

VRO gets 2-yr jail, ₹10k fine for graft

Vijayawada: An ACB court convicted a village revenue officer to two years rigorous imprisonment and imposed fine of ₹10,000 in Kurnool on Thursday. According to ACB authorities, Thalari Pullarao, 51, while working as VRO at Madhavaram village of Pyapili mandal in Kurnool district, demanded a bribe of ₹10,000 from complainant Mutha Lakshmi Narayana for the issue of passbooks in his name and also in the name of his wife, his younger brother and his sister-in-law for a land of 21.03 acres. Based on the complaint, the ACB sleuths booked a case and caught the VRO red-handed while accepting the bribe on March 20, 2017. Finally, the ACB court convicted the VRO by awarding the sentence of two years RI.

REGISTRATION FOR MED/DENTAL COUNSELLING TOUGH

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 29

Some students who secured All India Rank in NEET UG 2020 are facing difficulty for online registration on the official website of Medical Counselling Committee.

Though the MCC announced to commence online registration for counselling for allotment of seats to pursue medical and dental first-year courses in various colleges from October 27, it failed to begin due to some technical grounds. However, as the counselling started on October 28, some students were finding it difficult to access the website and register for counselling for varied reasons.

A student from Vijayawada complained about the difficulty in opening up of the MCC website to register while some students complained about registration for counselling.

JAGAN TO HOIST TRICOLOUR ON AP FORMATION DAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 29

The AP government issued orders to conduct AP formation day celebrations following the Covid-19 protocol on November 1.

Chief secretary (political) to government Pravin Prakash issued orders on Thursday. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy would hoist the national flag at 9 am on November 1 inaugurating AP Formation Day celebrations at CM's Camp office in Tadepalli and would pay floral tributes to the image of Amarajeivi Potti Sriramulu. Also district in-charge ministers, ministers and Collectors would celebrate AP Formation Day in their respective districts.

Governor B.B. Harichandan would participate in the AP Formation Day celebrations at Rajbhavan in Vijayawada.

WARD SECRETARIATS TO ACT AS REFERRAL CENTRES

FROM PAGE 1

Meanwhile, officials informed that the tenders for medical colleges in Paderu, Piduguralla, Machilipatnam and Pulivendula will be finalised by the end of November, and for Bapatla, Narsapuram, Eluru, Anakapalli, Markapuram, Madanapalle and Nandyal medical colleges by December.

For Vizianagaram, Rajahmundry, Penikonda, Amalapuram and Adoni medical colleges the tenders will be finalised by January. All these works will entail an expenditure of ₹7,500 crore.

On Aarogyasri referral programme, the Chief Minister stated that village/ward secretariats will be acting as referral centres till the establishment of YSR Health Clinics. He stated that the list of empanelled hospitals has to be displayed at all secretariats and the health assistant or ANM will be guiding the patients in receiving treatment from the best hospital.

As the Aarogyasri programme will be made available in the remaining six districts from November 13, the Chief Minister directed the authorities to add any treatment or procedures to the list if necessary.

Health minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney and other officials were present on the occasion.

Police Band performs



AP Police Band performs at Swaraj Maidan during Police Commemoration Day programme in Vijayawada on Thursday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

AP Police clinch majority awards at national level

State cops bag 18 of 28 awards, no other state touched double-digit

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 29

The AP Police department, which bagged 48 Shoch awards on Wednesday, once again dazzled on Thursday by winning 18 of the total 28 Governance Now India Police Awards-2020. This is another record as no other State had a double-digit tally.

The awards are given in recognition of those who have made the greatest contribution to public service with innovative use of technology.

In the first stage, the awards summit identifies officers who are ringing in innovative changes in the police department using technology and elects them as key speakers.

Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat state have won two awards each while Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Telangana State had to be content with one each.

Out of 18 awards, AP police headquarters won seven awards, followed by Anantapur and Prakasam po-

lice, one each by East Godavari, Guntur Urban, Kadapa, Kurnool, Srikakulam, Vijayawada and Vizianagaram. The AP Police won awards for Disha mobile App, AP police Seva, drone with audio announcement, digital health, house quarantine App, Disha integrated crime scene management, body-worn camera screening, implementation of house quarantine monitoring, high alert, Girijana Mitra programme, RRR programme, implementation of telemedicine, Kurnool fights corona, project TATA, Spandana and Parivartana, e-beat system, integrated crime prevention and monitoring centre with emergency response solutions and assurance with endurance service with sacrifice initiatives.

with emergency response solutions and assurance with endurance service with sacrifice initiatives. Prakasam Police was selected for Spandana & Parivartana and TATA (Training & Activities for Technology Adoption) projects.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy congratulated AP Police department for their excellence at the national level. He sought AP Police to render good services to people. Prakasam SP, Siddharth Kaushal, was one of the key speakers from across the country selected for the awards summit.

As part of the summit, the SP said on Thursday that in Spandana, com-

plaints received online were disposed of on a war-footing even during the corona outbreak.

As part of Parivartana, reception centres at all police stations have been set up to educate the staff about technology and to provide quick solutions besides conducting training on the behaviour with the public. "Similarly, as part of the TATA project, training is given to everyone from the home guard to the Additional SP to enhance technical skills as there is a shortage of technically qualified personnel in the department," Kaushal added.

The SP said that the budget for the police department is low and steps should be taken to provide faster services to the public using low-cost technology and to increase skills of all staff so that everyone can acquire knowledge about technology.

He said that he was happy to receive the awards as they stand testimony to the proficiency of Prakasam district police.

HM: WILL USE TECHNOLOGY TO TACKLE DISASTERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRIKAKULAM/
VIZIANAGARAM, OCT. 29

Home minister and deputy chief minister Mekathoti Sucharita said the government would use technology extensively to prevent accidents and mitigate the situation during disasters.

Talking to reporters after inaugurating additional buildings at the fire station in Visakhapatnam on Thursday, the home minister said that the State Disaster Relief (SDR) officials served the people for 22 days non-stop during Titli cyclone and recently rescued and rehabilitated people in East and West Godavari and Krishna districts during the floods. Apart from preventing human loss, the SDRF personnel also saved the livestock.

"Some of our personnel were also sent to Kerala and Hyderabad during floods to carry out rescue and relief operations," she said.

The home minister presented merit certificates to the fire service personnel BJDS Prasant Kumar, K. Srinu Babu, Durga Reddy, P. Rambabu, Rajasekhar and P. Chakradhar.

New tourism policy soon, says minister

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 29

The government will soon release a new tourism policy for the State, said Minister for Tourism Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, at the CII Andhra Pradesh Tourism Conclave here on Thursday.

Delivering the keynote address, the minister said tourism in India has grown by leaps and bounds over the years, with each region contributing something to its splendour and exuberance. The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) organised an Andhra Pradesh Tourism Conclave themed "Restarting Tourism and Hospitality Sector — Andhra Pradesh as most preferred Destination" in the digital mode.

The minister felt that Andhra Pradesh has the distinction of being a leading tourism destination in India and is presently the third most visited State in terms of domestic tourism.

In view of Covid-19, Andhra Pradesh will continue to promote the state domestically to attract more number of tourists. It is a microcosm within itself — offering unmatched tourism potential to investors and tourists, he added.

Highlighting the major strengths of Andhra Pradesh tourism, which includes beach and water-based, eco-tourism, Buddhist, religious, heritage, spiritual, wellness and medical, the minister stated that the government is to soon release a new tourism policy to attract greater private investments.

Vinod Zutshi, former secretary-tourism, and president, New Tourism Foundation stated that

● **THE MINISTER** felt that Andhra Pradesh has the distinction of being a leading tourism destination in India and is presently the third most visited State in terms of domestic tourism.

● **IN VIEW OF Covid-19**, Andhra Pradesh will continue to promote the state domestically to attract more number of tourists.

Andhra Pradesh could take the lead in re-start operations of tourism. He said that the state has great locations based on coastal advantage, eco-tourism and pilgrimage tourism.

Zutshi advocated a state-level tourism investors' summit, which would create a platform for investors about new avenues of opportunities.

AP Tourism Development Corporation managing director Pravin Kumar said the sector has been contributing significantly to the State's GSDP. He stated that the government has put the required Standard Operating Protocols (SOP) to resume tourism operations. Post-Covid, digital platforms have emerged as viable options to market the tourism strengths, he said.

Dilip Puri, founder-CEO of Indian School of Hospitality said that AP has the advantage of beautiful rivers, hills and forests, which would provide scope for new concepts of tourism with emerging new normal scenarios. He felt that the State has multiple tourism products to offer at the pan India level and emphasised that there was a need to build capabilities and skill development in the tourism sector.

Botsa hits out at Naidu on housing

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 29

Minister for municipal administration, Botsa Satyanarayana, lambasted opposition leaders over the large-scale corruption in TIDCO housing during the TD regime and for obstructing the state government's initiatives in court.

Addressing a press conference here on Thursday, Satyanarayana criticised TD supremo, N. Chandrababu Naidu, for failing to sanction houses meant for the poor during his term and said TD leaders have looted huge amounts in the name of houses for the poor. The previous government had laid the foundation for only three lakh houses despite the union government sanctioning seven lakh houses.

"Out of three lakh houses, 2,62,216 reached the basement level while only 81,040 houses came up to 90-95 per cent work done and in 71,488 houses only 20-40 per cent work was done in the five-year term of TD. Although not a sin-

gle house was distributed to the poor, Naidu left a debt of ₹3,200 crore to TIDCO contractors," Satyanarayana said.

The previous government had fixed ₹2,000 per sq ft, for providing a house in 300 sq ft and charged over ₹2.6 lakh from the poor. For houses in 345 sq ft and 430 sq ft, beneficiaries were asked to pay ₹3.25 lakh and ₹4.65 lakh. Though the price per square foot is only ₹1,200, the TD government charged over ₹2,000 and pocketed all the money, without even clearing bills to the contractors or completing a single house, Satyanarayana added.

Seeing the plight of the poor, Chief Minister, Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, during his pada yatra, decided to give 30 lakh houses free of cost, along with the TIDCO houses. Spending ₹600 crore, the state government completed all the pending houses and geared up for distribution.

However, TD leaders approached the high court and stalled the distribution of house pattas.

YSRC HAS NO RIGHT TO QUESTION SEC: TD

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 29

Leader of opposition in AP legislative council, Yanamala Ramakrishnudu, on Thursday expressed surprise over the changing statements of YSRC leaders on the con-

duct of local body elections in Andhra Pradesh.

He claimed that the YSRC leaders have no right to question the authority or jurisdiction of a constitutional and autonomous institution like the state election commission (SEC).

Tribunal: Seema project for drinking water, irrigation

From Page 1

The project will need evacuating the canal for about 22 km from the pump house delivery system to the Srisaillam Right Main Canal (SRMC). It concluded that though AP was projecting it as a scheme to augment drinking water requirements for the drought-hit Rayalaseema, the purpose appears to be to enhance utility of the water for irrigation as well.

The NGT further said that this will change the manner in which water will have to be lifted even as the project shed the gravity method for the lift pumping system.

The Tribunal said that such a mechanical device, which, according to AP, is not sufficient to draw the allocated water and to reach the optimal use of allocated water from the Srisaillam project. So it

● **THE NGT** said that though AP was projecting it as a scheme to augment drinking water requirements for the drought-hit Rayalaseema, the purpose appears to be to enhance utility of the water for irrigation as well.

cannot be said that there is no diversion/change in the project as claimed by AP. If that be the case, then it cannot be said to be a scheme for drinking water purposes but rather a combined project for drinking water as well as for irrigation purposes, the Tribunal concluded.

It said that there is a change in the methodology of drawing water and they want to enhance the capacity of the existing canals by providing additional canals/diversion canals and also by widening the existing canals. It is pertinent to note

that the Ministry of Jala Shakti had earlier opined that RLIP does not require environmental clearance because it is not a new one and does not involve addition in the cultivable command area (CCA). The change of stand was taken by the Union ministry of Jala Shakti after the TS government strongly objected to it.

The Tribunal bench, headed by Justice K. Rama Krishna (judicial member) and Sibal Dasgupta (Expert member), weighed the contentions raised by the Telangana state government which argued that the existing project passes through a wildlife sanctuary and some protected eco-sensitive zones. If there is any expansion by providing additional canals or widening the canal, it could affect those areas and further appraisal on those aspects would be required.

SIRIMANU | FEST

Urmila says she and her mother were offended when they were told to leave the Fort

Utsav kicks up fresh row in Gajapati Raju family

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, OCT. 29

The Tuesday's Sirimanu Utsav set the ball rolling for a fresh feud between the MANSAS chairperson Sanchaita Gajapati Raju and her sister Urmila Gajapati Raju.

Urmila is the daughter of Sudha Gajapati Raju, third wife of Ananda Gajapati Raju and Sanchaita, the eldest daughter of Ananda's divorced wife and former MP Uma

Gajapati Raju.

Urmila told the media on Thursday that she and her mother were offended while they were watching the Sirimanu Utsav from the entrance of the Fort. The police on the instruction of the chairperson asked them to leave the Fort, she said.

She went on to add that they were the legal heirs of the Ananda Gajapati Raju and Sanchaita lost all her rights after her mother divorced her father and a

settlement was made concerning the property.

"A registered will executed by my father Ananda Gajapati Raju gave my mother and me all the rights over the property," she told the media persons while narrating all the irregularities that were committed by Sanchaita Gajapati Raju.

Stating that Urmila's allegations were false, Sanchaita Gajapati Raju told this correspondent on Thursday evening that it

was customary since the venue was the Fort, the Chairperson MANSAS and her guests were allotted the first row to witness the ceremony.

There were no invitations and even Ashok Gajapati Raju stayed citing the Covid-19 pandemic, Sanchaita said.

"However some extended family members walked in without prior intimation with an entourage of male chaperones and occupied the front two rows. Out of

courtesy, I let them sit and added a chair for myself and was flanked by the Executive officer and the Correspondent of MANSAS," Sanchaita said.

She said Urmila and her mother, who were sitting next to the EO watched the event for over 45 minutes and then left the venue but later informed the media that they were not given any seats and therefore left the festival midway. They claimed that since they

belong to the royal family they had to be given the respect shown to the Maharanis and Princesses.

Sanchaita said that all ceremonies belong to the people of Vizianagaram and feudal mindsets have no place in 21st century modern progressive democratic India, which is mandated by the principle of a government.

"All respect and due courtesy to the guests were given to Urmila and

her mother and her remarks of being humiliated because she had to sit next the correspondent of the Trust is uncalled for. The correspondent happens to be heading the educational institutes, which is the primary mandate of the Trust," she said.

"The petulant behaviour of the young lady and her mother only underscores their arrogance, lack of empathy and insensitivity towards the common working class," she added.

OTHER STORIES

ISRO GEARS UP TO LAUNCH PSLV-C49 ON NOVEMBER 7

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC NELLORE, OCT. 29

The Indian Space Research Organisation is gearing up to launch India's workhorse Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV) at 3.02 pm on November 7, weather permitting, from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre (SDSC) Sriharikota Range (SHAR), in Nellore district. This will be its first launch in about a year.

In its first mission in 2020 and 51st overall, the rocket, numbered PSLV-C49, would inject into space, an earth observation satellite, EOS-01, along with nine international customer satellites. Operations to launch PSLV-C49 commenced on a small scale by following Covid-19 protocols at SHAR in August and the scientists decided to go ahead with the launch of EOS-01.

ANCIENT SHIVA TEMPLE UNEARTHED NEAR PENNA RIVER

NAGESWARA RAO BALLEDA | DC KADAPA, OCT. 29

An ancient temple was unearthed on the river Penna near Sugamanchi Palli village in Jammalamadugu mandal on Thursday. Villagers said that along with the inscription on the temple, many idols have already been found at the site.

According to reports, this ancient temple was noticed by a man who went to chop wood at the spot. According to the inscription found near the temple, it is a Shiva temple dating back to the time of the Rashtra Kootas. Archaeological officials have found a 10th Century Sanskrit language and Kannada script engraved on the Shiva temple stones.

DIP IN RIVER TUNGABHADRA IS A HEALTH RISK

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL OCT. 29

If you dip in the Tungabhadra river near Kurnool during the Pushkarams beginning from November 20, chances of sludge and the sewage of Kurnool city being thickly dissolved in the waters can not be ruled out. Kurnool Municipal Corporation (KMC) has been letting out the sewage into the Tungabhadra river without any guilt for the past several decades. The people of the Kurnool city have been prodding the civic body to regulate sewage but to no avail.

Jr colleges not prepared to reopen

Majority parents unwilling to send their wards to college fearing infection

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 28

Though the state government has announced the reopening of all educational institutions from November 2 onwards for the new academic year 2020-21 in compliance with Covid-19 protocols to avoid spread of the virus, majority of them are unprepared to do so as the official announcement has come at very short notice.

Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney announced here on Thursday the state government's decision to re-open all schools and colleges in both government and private sector from next Monday onwards.

Even as Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

hinted about the date of reopening of educational institutions on November 2 earlier, no efforts were made to ready the institutions for reopening.

The managements of both the government and private junior colleges were caught off guard by the official announcement on Thursday. With October 30 being a public holiday due to Milan-un-Nabi and November 1 being a Sunday, they have just two days to prepare the educational institutions, taking up sanitisation and other requisite measures as per Covid-19 protocol to re-open on Monday.

The state has nearly 2,700 junior colleges with an intake capacity of 11 lakh students, including five lakh first year students. The board of inter-

SCHOOLS TO RUN ON ALTERNATE DAYS

From page 1

She said that schools will run on alternate days in three phases for which officials are making arrangements. She mentioned that Classes 9, 10, 11 and Intermediate first and second year would function on alternate days only for half-a-day and on a rotation basis.

mediate education is carrying out online admission for both first- and second-year intermediate courses from October 21 onwards and as the last date for online admission ended on October 29, it has been extended to November 6.

Out of nearly five lakh first year students in all

Ms Sawhney said that Classes 6, 7 and 8 will start functioning on a half-a-day basis from November 23. She stated that Classes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 will begin on December 14 and on alternate days and on half-a-day basis. She added that the same schedule would apply to all government schools and colleges.

colleges in the state, so far about one lakh have taken admission. Unless the admission of students is completed, it may not be possible to run the classes as the newcomers may miss the lessons as they arrive late. Moreover, majority of parents are unwilling to send their wards to the colleges

fearing that they may get infected with Covid-19.

In addition to that, the authorities in government colleges are supposed to clean up the class rooms and sanitise them and also come up with a plan of action as to how many students are to be accommodated in each class room, maintaining social distance to avoid the spread of the virus. They need a budget allocation for arranging sanitisers and also for daily sanitisation of classrooms.

The Board of Intermediate Education authorities maintain that they have even prepared an academic calendar and other schedules in strict compliance with Covid-19 protocol to ensure protection to students and staff from the virus.

WILD ELEPHANT TRAMPLES FARMER TO DEATH

DC CORRESPONDENT VIZIANAGARAM, OCT. 29

A wild elephant trampled a 25-year-old farmer in Vizianagaram district. The deceased was identified as Y. Narayana. He was severely injured in the attack on Tuesday in Gumpa village under Komarada mandal in Vizianagaram district.

He succumbed to injuries in KGH in Vizag on Thursday.

The herd of wild elephants wreaked havoc in Bangarampetta and few other areas by damaging the standing paddy, maize, cotton, and few other crops during the past few days. The farmers are spending sleepless nights fearing attack and loss of life.

Elephants entered into villages in search of food.



45 Acres area reclaimed through biominning by clearing huge waste piles at Ajith Singh Nagar in the middle of Vijayawada city. — DC

End of ordeal for residents around Ajith Singh Nagar

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 29

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation authorities and the general public around Ajith Singh Nagar dumpsite are heaving a sigh of relief as they are completely relieved of the issues faced by them due to bio mining of waste that was dumped at the Ajith Singh Nagar dumpsite for the past several years.

Now the 45-acre dumpsite land worth of ₹650 crore has been completely reclaimed by Erode-based Zigma Global Environ Solutions Pvt. Ltd. VMC has given them the contract to segregate and remove the waste at the dumpsite.

This is India's largest land reclamation work done in terms of the area reclaimed through the bio mining process.

The dumpsite is situated at the centre of the city and is surrounded by around 400 apartments, most of which were unoccupied because of the dumpsite. The waste stocked for years have caused hardships and health hazards to 50,000 locals residing in the vicinity. They included increasing ground water pollution, air pollution, bad odour caused due to the organic content decomposition, mosquito and fly menace due to leachate water and stagnant water near the dump.

The overall amount spent by the Corporation towards the contract has been put at ₹25.75 crore.

Out of the reclaimed land, five acres was converted into a construction and demolition waste facility, two acres for a plastic waste management facility, two acres for a waste to compost processing facility, five acres for a farmers produce market and five acres for a children's park.

VMC executive engineer A.S.N. Prasad said that the years old dumpsite has been completely reclaimed by Zigma Global by segregating 3,00,000 tonne waste into all sorts of materials.

AP RECORDS 2,905 NEW COVID CASES, 16 DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, OCT. 29

AP registered 2,905 new Covid-19 cases rising tally to 8,17,679 and 16 deaths taking toll to 6,659 in the last 24 hours. The authorities issued Covid-19 bulletin here on

Thursday reporting that out of 88,778 samples tested, 2,905 individuals were found infected with Covid-19. Out of a total 78,62,459 samples tested so far in AP, 7,84,752 patients were discharged after recovery while 26,268 patients are still active.

MINISTRY OF DEFENCE
Department of Ex-Servicemen Welfare
EX-SERVICEMEN CONTRIBUTORY HEALTH SCHEME (ECHS)
NOTICE INVITING TENDER

ADVERTISEMENT FOR ECHS EMPANELMENT OF PRIVATE HOSPITALS DESIGNATED BY STATE GOVERNMENT FOR COVID-19 TREATMENT BY LOCAL FORMATION COMMANDERS

1. Director Regional Centre Hyderabad, on behalf of the GOC Sub Area, the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) invites applications for the purpose of ECHS Empanelment from private hospitals/ Nursing homes designated by state Government for COVID-19 treatment and co-morbidities.
2. The empanelment of such hospitals with ECHS will be for treatment of COVID-19 cases at rates as notified by MoD. The hospitals which are notified by State Government for treatment of COVID-19 patients and who are willing to get Empanelled with ECHS on temporary basis initially for a period of six months subject to review of the COVID situation by the Competent Authority would be eligible for temporary empanelment irrespective of their QCI/NABH status.
3. The empanelment will be only for testing and treatment of COVID-19 and co-morbidities and will be for a maximum period of six months and will be renewed / extended based on COVID-19 situations.
4. Interested Hospitals, Nursing Home etc, may submit the completed application forms at the Regional Centre ECHS Hyderabad by 30 Nov, 2020. The application, terms / conditions & requirements of empanelment for ECHS requirements are available at Regional Centre ECHS Hyderabad. Interested to contact on our email ID jdhs@echshyderabad.org & dirh@echshyderabad.org (Contact No 040-27797836, 27790508).

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DIRECTORATE OF DISTANCE EDUCATION
ADMISSION NOTIFICATION - JULY SESSION 2020-21

Online Applications are invited for Admissions to the following Distance Mode Programmes for **July Session 2020-21**.

Name of the Programme	Duration	Recognition
M. A. Urdu	2 Years	Recognition granted by UGC - DEB, New Delhi, Vide Lr. No. F. No 8-2/2018 (DEB III), dated 16.8.2018
M.A. English		
M.A. History		
M. A. Hindi		
M.A. Islamic Studies		
M.A. Arabic	4 Semesters	& F.No. 8-2/2018 (DEB III) dated: 25.01.2019
B. Ed. (DM)	4 Semesters	
B. A.	6 Semesters	University Grants Commission Gazette Notification No. 354, dated 4th September, 2020 [University Grants Commission (Open and Distance Learning Programmes and Online Programmes) Regulations, 2020] and UGC-DEB Public Notice No. F.No.1-15/2020 (DEB-1), dated 12th October, 2020
B. Com.		
B. Sc. (Life Sciences) - BZC		
B. Sc. (Phy. Sciences) - MPC		
Diploma in Teach English	2 Semesters	
Diploma in Journalism and Mass Communication		
Certificate Course in Proficiency in Urdu through English	6 Months	
Certificate Course in Functional English for Urdu Speakers		

The candidates are directed to compulsorily go through the prospectus of the Distance Education Programmes 2020-21 before submitting the online form. The E-prospectus and Online Application form shall be available at "ADMISSIONS" on the Directorate's website: manuu.edu.in/dde from **30th October, 2020**. The form is to be submitted online with Registration Fee of 1000/- for B.Ed (DM) and Rs.300/- for other programmes. For further details candidates may contact Student Support Services Unit (SSSU) on its Helpline Nos. 040-23008463 or 23120600 (Extn. 2207). The candidates may also contact or visit any of the MANUU Regional Centres/Sub-Regional Centres located at Hyderabad, New Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, Mumbai, Patna, Darbhanga, Bhopal, Ranchi, Amaravathi, Srinagar, Jammu, Nuh (Mewat) and Lucknow.

Last date for submission of the online application forms is 25th November, 2020.

DIRECTOR, DDE 29-10-2020 **Registrar**

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DECCAN Chronicle

30 OCTOBER 2020

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

A recent Union home ministry order, which opens the door for any Indian to buy non-agricultural immoveable property in Jammu and Kashmir, deals a grievous blow to the aspirations — and to the psyche — of the people of Jammu, the Kashmir Valley, and Ladakh. The legal status of this order shall remain dubious until the Supreme Court has dealt with the challenge before it to the law through which whittled the constitutional autonomy of the erstwhile J&K state and whose long-term consequences for India appear far from happy. The long delay in the top court pronouncing on one of the most consequential matters brought before it in Independent India has occasioned considerable surprise.

Since constitutionally downgrading J&K, the Centre has taken a series of steps that have negatively impacted the lives of ordinary people in the UT and bred resentment. Among these are the hampering of the study of ordinary students by not permitting high-speed Internet, virtually killing journalism through the harsh treatment of media personnel, placing severe restrictions on the movement of people, banning protests, filling top positions in the UT administration by non-Kashmiri officers — to say nothing of putting thousands of non-BJP politicians in jail. In addition, in the name of quelling terrorism (and instilling patriotism by fiat) there is the egregiousness of troop deployment on an extensive scale not seen even in the intense militancy-affected years of the late 1980s-the early 1990s. To place matters in perspective — all policy actions derive from executive orders alone, as in the colonial era, and there is the denial of election to the UT legislature. The Centre gave itself the luxury to do all of these while the Supreme Court has delayed beyond comprehension hearing the case of the reading down of Article 370 and the re-fashioning of an adjunct provision, the Article 35-A. It is the latter which had made ownership of immoveable property, government employment, and state scholarships, the exclusive preserve of permanent residents of the state.

In May, new domicile rules were devised to let some people from outside J&K to apply for permanent resident status. This has now been widened to let anyone own immoveable property. Such a situation does not obtain in other special category states such as Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh. In 1950, the Sheikh Abdullah government had brought the Big Estates Abolition Act to permit the tillers of land of big zamindars beyond certain ceiling prescriptions to become owners, and it is this which had made the former state among the top performers on social and economic indices. Under the new land orders, this Act stands revoked, probably opening the door for corporate houses.

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

Heed ASER's red flag

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

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

In urban centres, there has been a boom in the edutech industry in pandemic times. However, exposing the criminally negligent logic behind the government's great e-education push is a well-anticipated outcome. Although smartphone ownership almost doubled from 2018, a third of children with smartphone access still did not receive any learning materials. Significantly, less than 15 per cent of rural Indian households have Internet. The poorest homes cannot afford a smartphone or a computer. Some were found selling their only assets so the children could continue learning. Though it is highly iniquitous, the National Education Policy is silent on this yawning academic divide. The government, in its unseemly haste to pacify the influential middle classes, was loath to drop the JEE and restarted lessons for older students. But it paid scant regard to the increase in dropouts at the elementary and secondary levels.

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

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Subhani



Death talk: Euthanasia tales amid Covid times



Karan Thapar

As I See It

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

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

Like his other work, this book can be repetitive or, to be more accurate, Arun argues his case so thoroughly that you feel he's nailed the point long before he's finished with his hammer blows. Consequently, you need to read it in stages. Bit by bit. To make it easier, don't read in chronological sequence. Flip forward and back as curiosity guides you.

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

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

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

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

A note written in his hand was found on the table by his bed. "I have

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is a television commentator and anchor

LETTERS

POLICE LAURELS

It is encouraging to read the police department's achievements (*AP cops ace tech test, win 48 of 83 Skoch awards, DC, Oct. 29*). The Disha initiative, justice through the innovative programme — Renovate, Restrain and Reassure (RRR) for policing are all impressive.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

BIASED SEC

The ruling party is evidently trying a tit-for-tat with the SEC on holding elections to local bodies. And the SEC himself is trying to settle scores by conducting elections before he demits office in March 2021. The TD is playing spoilsport by taking umpteen U-Turns. When AP SEC had unilaterally postponed local body polls halfway through March 2020 citing Covid, the TD leaders supported it. Earlier, when the elections to local bodies were due in 2018, neither the TD nor the SEC thought of holding it because of the anticipated defeat as Assembly polls.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

PM'S NAME CALLING

The Prime Minister's name calling in Bihar elections was uncalled for. He could have delegated his Cabinet colleagues to campaign instead of bringing down the dignity of the office he holds.

N.S. Sharma
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

New light on Netaji

NASIK, Oct. 29. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, dressed in Japanese clothes, left Taipei airport with some Indian companions for an unknown destination on August 18, 1945, after ordering the plane that brought him there to be brunt, according to Mr. Mohammed Usman Patel, who claims he was Netaji's bodyguard at the time.

Mr Patel told PTI yesterday he had prepared a detailed statement about Netaji's movements at the time as known to him and was sending it to the Prime Minister. He has suggested that the Khosla Commission, set up to inquire into the circumstances of Netaji's reported death, hear him and some others who were present at Taipei airport at the time.

Abhijit Bhattacharyya



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

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

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

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

ride!

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

Should India forget and forgive President Xi, who has made himself China's lifetime dictator, and his cohorts for the sake of what Beijing

hypocritically calls "common interests"?

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

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

It's time for the Chinese to forget about access to India's market of 1.3 billion people. It's time their spies operating under garb of companies, investors and tourists stop interfering in India's internal affairs. Let

them not issue brazen threatening "advisories" to India's independent media, ordering it to "desist" from writing about Taiwan, Xinjiang, the Dalai Lama, Hong Kong, Uighurs and human rights violations. One wonders what the battalions of Chinese diplomats have understood about this country that they would think India's media would follow the foreign ministry's lead in its reports and comments?

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

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

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

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

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

IN BRIEF

8 inmates dead after prison riot

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

Pak seminary blast probe ends

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

3 die in France church attack

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

Paris, Oct. 29: An attacker armed with a knife killed three people at a church on Thursday in the Mediterranean city of Nice, authorities said. It was the third attack in two months in France.

The assailant was wounded by police and hospitalized after the killings at the Notre Dame Church, less than a kilometre from the site in 2016 where another attacker plowed a truck into a Bastille Day crowd, killing dozens.

Thursday's attacker was believed to be acting alone and police are not searching for other assailants, said two police officials, who were not authorised to be publicly named.

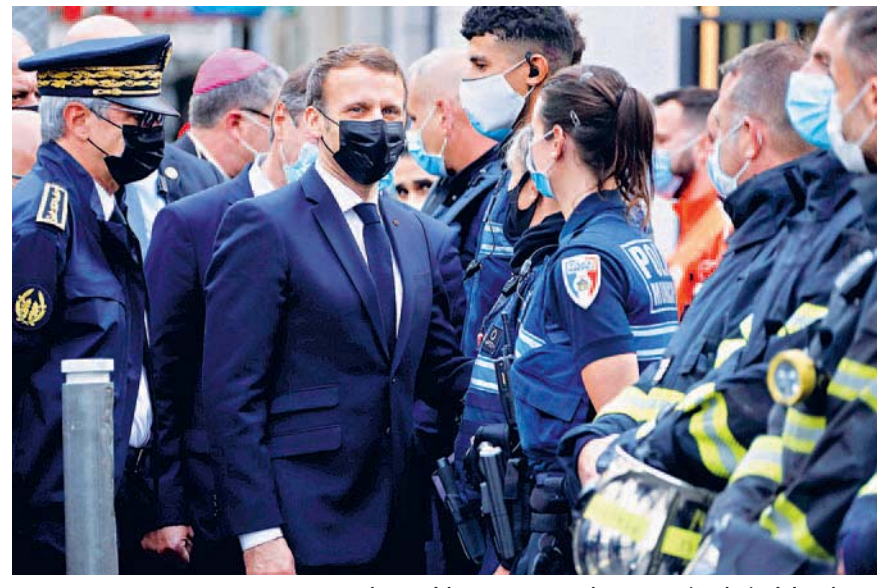
France's anti-terrorism prosecutor's office opened an investigation into the killings, which marked the third attack since the opening in September of a terrorism trial in the January 2015 killings at the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo* and a kosher supermarket.

"He cried 'Allah Akbar' over and over, even after he was injured," said Nice Mayor Christian Estrosi, who told *BFM* television that three people had died, two inside the church and a third who fled but was mortally wounded.

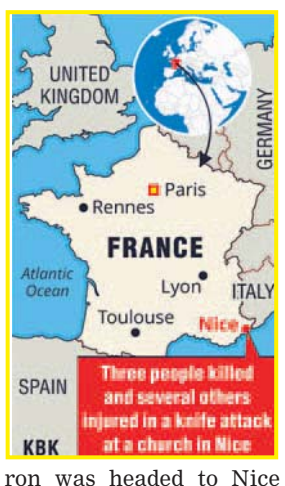
"The meaning of his gesture left no doubt." In Nice, images on French media showed the neighborhood locked down and surrounded by police and emergency vehicles.

Sounds of explosions could be heard as sappers exploded suspicious objects. The lower house of parliament suspended a debate on France's new virus restrictions in the wake of spurt in cases and held a moment of silence Thursday for the victims.

The PM rushed from the hall to a crisis centre overseeing the aftermath of the Nice attack. French President Emmanuel Mac-



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



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

FRENCH PM RAISES ATTACK ALERT TO EMERGENCY AFTER CHURCH KILLINGS

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

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

An attacker armed with a knife killed three people at a church Thursday in Nice, French authorities said. It was the third attack in two months in France amid a growing furor over caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad that were re-published by the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. — AP

SAUDI MAN STABS, WOUNDS GUARD AT FRENCH CONSULATE, ARRESTED

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

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

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

TURKEY CONDEMNS SAVAGE ATTACK

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

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

POPE DENOUNCES TERROR, VIOLENCE

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

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

The Pope expressed his solidarity with the Catholic community in France. An attacker armed with a knife killed three people. It was the third such attack in recent weeks following furor over caricatures of the Prophet Muhammad that were republished by the satirical newspaper *Charlie Hebdo*. — AFP

Computerised lottery scheme for H-1B may go

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

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

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

If finalised, US Citizenship and Immigration Services would first select registrations (or petitions, if the registration process is suspended) generally based on the highest Occupational Employment Statistics prevailing wage level that the offered wage equals or exceeds for the relevant Standard Occupational Classification code and areas of intended employment. "Prioritisation and selection based on wage levels better balances the interests of petitioners, H-1B workers, and US workers," the DHS said. "The Trump administration is continuing to deliver on its promise to protect American workers," said Acting DHS Deputy Secretary Ken Cuccinelli.

US President Donald Trump, keen to regulate the country's immigration policies, on June 22, signed the executive order temporarily banning issuing fresh H-1B and L-1 visas till December 31. Reforming America's immigration regime is a major election promise of the Republican leader under his America First policy. "The current use of random selection to allocate H-1B visas makes it harder for businesses to plan their hiring, fails to leverage the H-1B programme to truly compete for the world's best and brightest, and hurts American workers by bringing in relatively lower-paid foreign labour at the expense of the American workforce," Cuccinelli said. According to the DHS, modifying the H-1B cap selection process by replacing the random selection process with a wage-level-based selection process is a better way to allocate H-1Bs when demand exceeds supply. This new selection process would incentivise employers to offer higher wages or petition for positions requiring higher skills and higher-skilled workers instead of using the programme to fill relatively lower-paid vacancies. — PTI

GAMES

IPL PREVIEW

Powerful Punjab face languishing RR

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

It has been a dramatic turnaround for the KL Rahul-led side after a string of losses earlier in the tournament.

They have managed to weave together five consecutive wins against the top four sides in the tournament, infusing life into their campaign. They are in fourth position with 12 points from as many games, while the Royals have slumped to the penultimate spot with 10 points having suffered seven defeats from 12 outings.

It's a mad scramble for the play-offs. With Mumbai Indians all but through, six teams are in the hunt for the remaining three spots.

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

The addition of Chris Gayle has done wonders for the team's confidence.

The Royals will also be high on confidence after their morale boosting win over table toppers Mumbai and would be desperate to keep the winning momentum going.

The biggest positive for the Royals is Ben Stokes roaring back to form after rusty displays in previous five outings. Sanju Samson is also back among runs. — PTI

HOLDER'S SIGN

Dear Readers, What do you think Jason Holder of Sunrisers Hyderabad is signalling when he raises three fingers after taking each wicket? Write to us at sportsdesk@deccanmail.com

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Gaikwad off KKR

Jadeja cracks whip as CSK beat Knights in thriller

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI



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

SCORECARD	
Kolkata Knight Riders: Shubman Gill b Karn Sharma 26, Nitish Rana c Sam Curran b Lungi Ngidi 87, Sunil Narine c Ravindra Jadeja b Mitchell Santner 7, Rinku Singh c Ambati Rayudu b Jadeja 11, E. Morgan c Gaikwad b Ngidi 15, D. Karthik not out 21, R. Tripathi not out 3. Extras (LB-1, W-1) 2. Total (for 5 wickets 20 overs) 172.	Chennai Super Kings: Shane Watson c R. Singh b Varun Chakravarthi 14, RD Gaikwad b Cummins 72, Ambati Rayudu c Narine b Cummins 38, M. S. Dhoni b Varun 1, Sam Curran not out 13, Jadeja not out 31. Extras (NB-1, W-8) 9. Total (for 4 wickets in 20 overs) 178.
FoW: 1-53, 2-60, 3-93, 4-137, 5-167.	Bowling: Pat Cummins 4-0-31-2, Kamlesh Nagarkoti 3-0-34-0, Sunil Narine 4-0-23-0, Lockie Ferguson 4-0-54-0, Varun Chakravarthi 4-0-20-2, Nitish Rana 1-0-16-0.

IPL POINTS TABLE	
Teams	P W L N/R Pts NRR
Mumbai Indians	12 8 4 0 16 +1.186
Royal Challengers Bangalore	12 7 5 0 14 +0.048
Delhi Capitals	12 7 5 0 14 +0.030
Kings XI Punjab	12 6 6 0 12 -0.049
Kolkata Knight Riders	13 6 7 0 12 -0.467
Sunrisers Hyderabad	12 5 7 0 10 +0.396
Rajasthan Royals	12 5 7 0 10 -0.505
Chennai Super Kings	13 5 8 0 10 -0.532

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

India for Kiwi as ICC's chairman

New Delhi, Oct. 29: The BCCI is likely to back the candidature of New Zealand's Greg Barclay over Singapore's Imran Khwaja in the elections for the ICC chairman, a post vacated by India's Shashank Manohar after two terms in July this year.

Barclay and Khwaja are the only two candidates contesting for the chairman's post and the 16-member all-powerful ICC Board is set to vote in the first week of December.

While hectic back-channel talks are on to find a unanimous candidate and put up a picture of unity among the Board of Directors (mostly comprising of member nations), it is highly unlikely that Khwaja will have the backing of the Indian cricket board.

"The BCCI is more aligned with New Zealand Cricket (NZC) and those who matter in Indian cricket board find Barclay as a more suitable candidate for the post. Also Khwaja's policy positioning isn't exactly in favour of Indian cricket," a senior official, privy to developments in ICC board said. There are a few issues due to which current ICC deputy chairman Khwaja won't find favour with the BCCI.

Firstly, the role played by him along with Manohar to roll back the proposed revenue model in which India, England and Australia stood to gain more.

The matter was up for vote and Khwaja and Manohar had back then, gathered enough votes to crush the BCCI.

Secondly, the ICC in 2019, had drawn up a rough calendar for the 2023 FTP cycle and till 2028, each and every year, there was a senior men's flagship event kept in that, the revenues from which would have benefitted the smaller nations.

It is understood that the white paper that ICC prepared had Khwaja's tacit support. In fact, BCCI had strong objections to such a proposal. — PTI

KAPIL SHARES HIS WELL BEING IN VIDEO MESSAGE

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

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

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

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

The former captain, who also showed his proficiency in golf after retiring from cricket, is the only player to claim over 400 wickets (434) and accumulate more than 5000 runs in Tests.

— PTI



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