

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | FRIDAY | 27 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 25.7°C
Min: 19.5°C
RH: 69%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Moderate rains likely.
Max/Min temp. 29/19°C

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+43,931)	(+489)
93,08,751	1,35,734
covid19india.org	
STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS	
(+862)	(+3)
TS: 2,66,904	1,444
(+1,031)	(+8)
AP: 8,65,705	6,970

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

6,11,16,312
DEATHS
14,33,777
COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES
218
worldometers.info/
coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Dwadasi
till 7.46 am
Star: Ashwini till 12.21 am
(Saturday)
Varjyam: 7.51 pm to 9.39 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.44 am to
9.28 am; 12.25 pm to 1.09 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
HUIJI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Akhir 11, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.24 am
Zohar: 12.14 pm
Asar: 4.04 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.57 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.28 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.39 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 3.46 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 3.47 PM

COUNTER POINT



You should have
bribed the survey agency
for a positive rank!

SHORT TAKE

Navy gets 2 Sea Guardian drones

New Delhi: The Indian Navy has taken on lease two Sea Guardian drones from an American defence major to enhance surveillance over the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) but the unmanned aerial vehicles can be deployed in the Ladakh region if the need arises, sources said. Two drones have been leased for one year with an option of extending the period by another year, they said. The lease came in the midst of India's plans to procure up to 30 weaponised versions of the drones from the US to bolster the Navy's overall surveillance capabilities in the IOR.

No global flights till Dec. 31: DGCA

Mumbai: Aviation safety regulator DGCA on Thursday extended the suspension of scheduled international commercial passenger flights to December 31. The restrictions, however, will not apply on international all-cargo operations and flights specifically approved by the DGCA, a circular said. "The competent authority has further extended the validity of circular issued on the subject cited above regarding scheduled international commercial passenger services to/from India till 2359 hours (IST) of December 31, 2020," the DGCA said in the circular.

NATION | 4 Mamata backs farmers stir



WORLD | 5 Trump pardons Flynn for lying to FBI

SPORTS | 6 India begin Oz series with ODI today



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PM bats for simultaneous elections, single voters' list

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday pitched for his oft-repeated concept of "One Nation, One Election", saying it wasn't just a matter of debate, but what the country needed. He also suggested that the Election Commission prepare a single voters' list for all elections — Lok Sabha, Assembly and panchayats, saying separate lists were a "waste of resources".

"One nation, one election isn't just a matter of debate, this is the need for India. Elections are held at different places every few months. The effect it has on development work is known to all," Mr Modi said in a virtual address at the 80th All-India Presiding Officers Conference.

He said a single voters' list was desirable. "Only one voters' list should be used for the Lok Sabha, Vidhan Sabha and other elections. Why are we wasting time and money on these lists?" he said. Speaking on the 71st anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution on November 26, 1949, the PM emphasised on the need for coordination between the legislature, executive and judiciary.

"Our Constitution has many features, but a special feature is the importance given to duties. Mahatma Gandhi was very keen on this. He saw a close link between rights and duties. He felt once we perform our duties, rights will automatically be safeguarded."



Former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnis releases the BJP's GHMC poll manifesto in the city on Thursday. Also seen are MoS for home G. Kishan Reddy and MP and state BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar. — R. PAVAN

BJP vows free Covid vaccine, 1 lakh houses

IRREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

The seemingly unstoppable BJP on Thursday promised that free Covid-19 vaccines will be given to every single person throughout the GHMC area and that no one will have to go to a private hospital for vaccination.

Former Maharashtra chief minister Devendra Fadnis released the BJP manifesto. Minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy, national general secretary Bhupe-



PAGE 2
PM TO VISIT HYDERABAD TOMORROW

nder Yadav, party state president Bandi Sanjay, national vice-president D.K. Aruna, OBC national president Dr K. Laxman,

election manifesto committee chairman Vivek Venkata Swamy and others participated in the manifesto release programme in the city.

Speaking on the occasion, Fadnis said that if the BJP comes to power, Hyderabad Liberation Day will be celebrated officially. He said the entire country got Independence on August 15, 1947, but the erstwhile Hyderabad state got it on September 17, 1948.

PAGE 2: BJP to scrap Land Regularisation Scheme

Cyclone Nivar rips apart villages in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 26:

Cyclone Nivar has thrown life out of gear in Nellore and Chittoor districts, apart from other districts in the Rayalaseema region. Under the influence of the Cyclone, heavy downpour associated with gale winds uprooted as many as 800 electric poles and 100 odd trees across Nellore district. As a result, scores of villages and some towns plunged into darkness, and traffic movement was affected due to the fallen trees.

Traffic on the National Highway No 16 that connects Chennai and Kolkata was affected, and vehicles were stranded for over eight km in view of

PG 5: TS LIKELY TO GET RAIN DUE TO CYCLONE NIVAR

water overflowed from the Pambaleru stream between Gudur and Manubolu. Although the movement of two-wheelers and autorickshaws was restricted to allow the traffic of cars and heavy vehicles, they moved at a snail pace. A diversion road constructed on the highway, where the road had breached during heavy rains witnessed in 2015, to build a new bridge led to water stagnation and overflow on the road.

PAGE 2: Links to many villages cut off

Expel hatemongers from election, Uttam tells SEC

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday demanded that the State Election Commission (SEC) disqualify BJP and MIM parties from contesting the GHMC elections for inciting communal hatred among the people.

He was addressing a press meet along with former minister Shabbir Ali, AICC Secretary Madhu Yashki Goud and other leaders here on Thursday. They released two brochures and a pamphlet on the contribution of Congress governments in the development of Hyde-



TPCC chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy releases pamphlets on Congress contribution to Hyderabad along with party colleague Shabbir Ali on Thursday.

rabad and the failures of TRS regime.

"I'm surprised as to how the SEC and state government are not taking steps to stop this provocative campaign," he said while

demanding that both the communal parties should be barred from the GHMC elections.

PAGE 2: Cong: TRS, BJP polarising votes

GIFT | CHECK ■ SEC directs TS excise department to stop illegal liquor transport

3 dry days, but parties set for high five

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

Tipplers note. All liquor shops, pubs and bars will go dry for the next three days because of the upcoming local elections. But if you were expecting some good pre-voting gift from your favourite party or candidate, don't give up hope — all political parties, with the sole exception of the AIMIM, have stocked up aplenty in advance. The State Election Commission (SEC) released a notification on Thursday to the effect keeping in the view of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation

● THE STATE Election Commission (SEC) released a notification on Thursday to the effect keeping in the view of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) election, slated to be on December 1, all bars and liquor shops will be suspending sales from November 29 to December 1.

● THE SEC on Thursday met the top officials of State Excise department at his office. He also told them, last year's sales and this year's sales should be compared, the ingredients that are used in making the illicit liquor should be seized.

● LIQUOR is a must when elections are around the corner and money and goodies are just not enough

(GHMC) election, slated to be on December 1, all bars and liquor shops will be suspending sales from November 29 to December 1. Additionally, December 4, on which the counting

will be done and results declared, shall also be a dry day.

The decision was taken by State Election Commissioner C. Parthasarathi Reddy.

The SEC directed the Telangana excise department to ensure that all illegal transportation of liquor is stopped. It asked them to install check posts and increase vigilance.

On Thursday the SEC met the top officials of State Excise department at his office, he also told them, last year's sales and this year's sales should be compared, the ingredients that are used in making the illicit liquor should be seized.

Talking to Deccan Chronicle, T. Anji Reddy, assistant excise superintendent, Telangana Excise, said, "with three days closure of all liquor sales and closure of pubs and bars,

sale of alcohol will surely go down. Even people may not stock up for consumption for those dry days because of financial constraints."

When elections are around the corner, however, it is a universal truth that political parties cannot stop at merely distributing money and goodies. Liquor is a must. Candidates are therefore bound to make necessary arrangement for both their own supporters to continue to campaign and to rush to your aid on a dry day with some booze hoping to influence your vote.

PAGE 2: Sale of liquor to go up before polls

KCR's speech to fire up TRS cadre

CM expected to give strong reply to Oppn

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

The slightly demoralised cadre of the TRS is back to an optimistic mood. They strongly believe that party chief K. Chandrashekar Rao's public meeting on November 28 will be a game changer. They are sure it will change the trend of the GHMC election campaigns.

The pink cadres hope that their top boss will give a solid reply to the strident narrative set by the BJP, suspected by many to be in perfect synchronisation with the MIM. The party is expressing confidence of bagging power again in greater Hyderabad, which chances will be cemented once Chandrashekar Rao makes a public speech.

Sources within TRS disclosed that Rao has received alarming ground level feedback about the stridently aggressive and communal campaign of the BJP party.

Sources, however, said that feedback shows the BJP's campaign is evoking negative responses from the public, who want peace and harmony. With these ground reports, the TRS is upbeat that BJP is tying itself in knots and is unable to attract neutral voters and those who want development.

Rao did not campaign in 2016 GHMC elections but had addressed a press conference during the campaign. Party leaders claimed it had evoked tremendous response from people of greater Hyderabad, which led to the TRS bagging 99 seats.



K. Chandrashekar Rao

● SOURCES SAID Rao has decided to address people in view of inputs from the ground that the people of Hyderabad are in a state of panic following the verbal duel between BJP and MIM. Feedback shows the BJP's campaign is evoking negative responses from the public, who want peace

Sources said Rao has decided to address people in view of inputs from the ground that the people of Hyderabad are in a state of panic following the verbal duel between BJP and MIM. TRS leaders find hope in reminding people of a factoid that in 2016 GHMC elections, BJP and TD had contested together but polled only 23 per cent of votes against TRS's 44 per cent vote share. The party feels that Chandrashekar Rao will "put the BJP in place" in the public meeting.

Meanwhile, TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao inspected arrangements being made for the public meeting to be held at LB Stadium on Saturday, 4 pm onwards.

KAVITHA: WHAT STOPS BJP FROM GIVING PV RATNA?

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha has questioned BJP as to what stops the Centre from awarding Bharat Ratna to late former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. She pointed out that Central governments have never cared about giving Bharat Ratna either to P.V. Narasimha Rao or former chief minister of united AP N.T. Rama Rao, even though these have been long-standing demands.

Addressing media while campaigning in Gandhinagar for TRS candidates in the upcoming GHMC elections, Kavitha criticised BJP state president and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar for staging a political stunt at former PM Narasimha Rao's ghat. She wondered why the BJP remained silent and did not celebrate the legacy of P.V. when the TRS marked the former PM's centenary celebrations.

PAGE 3: BJP silent on falling GDP: Kavitha



K. Kavitha

HARYANA COPS USE WATER CANNONS TO STOP FARMERS

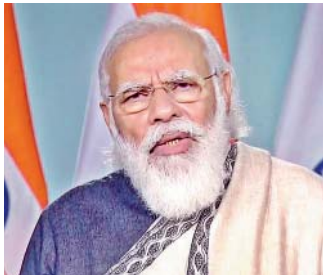
SANJAY KAW AND BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, NOV. 26

The Haryana police on Thursday used water cannons and teargas in a bid to stop thousands of farmers from Punjab from proceeding towards the national capital for their "Delhi Chalo" march against the Centre's new farm laws.

The situation got tense at the Shambu inter-state border on the national highway as farmers threw police barricades off the bridge into the Ghaggar river. It was after a two-hour clash on the bridge that farmers from Congress-run Punjab managed to cross into BJP-ruled Haryana, which used heavy force to try and block them for making their way towards Delhi in tractors and on foot on their two-day protest march against the new farm laws that they fear will reduce their earnings and give more power to large retailers. Many roads in Haryana, especially those in Gurgaon, were clogged with heavy traffic as barricades had been put up at different places to prevent the protesters from entering Delhi. The roadblocks were especially intense in places like Kundli, near Sonapat, and on the Delhi-Gurgaon border at Sirhaul and Rajokri.

However, despite the tight security measures, about 70-odd protesters, including some trade union members, managed to gather near Jantar Mantar.

SHORT TAKES



Narendra Modi

MODI TO VISIT CITY FOR REVIEW OF COVAXIN

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will arrive in Hyderabad on Saturday to review the status of India's first indigenous Covid-19 vaccine — Covaxin — being developed by the city-based Bharat Biotech.

According to sources, the Prime Minister is visiting Hyderabad as a part of his three-city tour, which includes Ahmedabad and Pune, to take stock of the ongoing Covid-19 vaccine development work in the country.

Prior to arriving in Hyderabad, Modi will visit the facilities of Zydus Cadila in Ahmedabad, where ZyCoV-D is being developed, and Serum Institute of India in Pune where the vaccine being developed by AstraZeneca-Oxford would be manufactured. All the three vaccine candidates are currently undergoing Phase-3 clinical trials.

According to the Cyberabad Police, the Prime Minister will arrive in the city at Hakimpet Air Force Station airport on Saturday afternoon and will head straight to Bharat Biotech facility at Genome Valley on the outskirts of the city. Modi is expected to spend an hour at the company's facility to understand the vaccine development.

While there is speculation about Modi campaigning on behalf of the BJP for the GHMC elections, police authorities said the Saturday visit will not include any political activity by the Prime Minister.

CONG: TRS, BJP POLARISING VOTES

FROM PAGE 1

Uttam Kumar Reddy reiterated that both parties were helping each other by polarising the voters. He slammed MIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi for his remarks on the memorials of former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and former chief minister N.T. Rama Rao. He said those two and Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy were great leaders, who served the country and the State throughout their lives. He said BJP and MIM leaders were misusing their names for political gains.

The Congress MP appealed to the people to understand the match-fixing between MIM and BJP in the GHMC elections.

Shabbir Ali said that the Congress party has sincerely developed Hyderabad as a global city and spent over ₹1 lakh crore from 2004-2014 to build world-class infrastructure.

They include the international airport at Shamshabad, Outer Ring Road, Metro Rail, PVNR Expressway, getting Krishna and Godavari River water for Hyderabad, flyovers and IT corridors.

GOOD GOVERNANCE URGES VOTERS TO OPT FOR NOTA

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

The Forum for Good Governance has urged people to go for NOTA as a means to show their disgust at public representatives, who did nothing to develop their localities. Many citizens in the GHMC region are vexed with the performance of 'Baldiya', which they expressed before the media here on Thursday.

M. Padmanabha Reddy, secretary Forum for Good Governance, said "In many localities, people are against voting as they are unhappy with coporators for their failures. Taking all such reactions into considerations, we feel the voter should opt for NOTA, which will be an eye-opener to all parties," Reddy said.

● **MANY CITIZENS** in the GHMC region are vexed with the performance of 'Baldiya', which they expressed before the media here on Thursday.

BJP, TRS play politics of alternatives

It is just an election to a large civic body, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), with an electorate of close to 75 lakh spread over 150 divisions, but it feels like a war is underway.

The BJP is trying to hard sell itself for the GHMC elections by pressing its top guns like Union home minister Amit Shah, BJP president J.P. Nadda and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, besides a slew of Union ministers, into service with an eye first on occupying the opposition space, and then to take a moonshot.

However, it is Chief Minister and Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) chief K. Chandrashekar Rao who has taken the battle to the enemy's gate. His pitch of a "national alternative"

and asserting that he would lead it from the front seems to be getting on to the nerves of the BJP.

A civic body poll drawing national attention is apparently a first-of-its-kind phenomenon in India, with the BJP amplifying its multi-frontal rhetoric, while Chandrashekar Rao is trying to wrestle the initiative.

In effect, both parties want to grab the space emptied by the "voluntary retirement" of the Congress. The TRS wants to lead the pack of opposition parties at the Centre, while the BJP's objective seems to emerge as the principal opposition in Telangana.

The TRS has launched a diatribe against the BJP by charging it with attempting to destroy the peace and tranquillity of the city and causing communal divide among peo-

ple. Unfazed by the TRS attack, the BJP continues its rhetoric, with BJP state president Bandi Sanjay and Union minister Smriti Irani coming up with a veiled threat that their party would launch "surgical strikes" to ensure Rohingya and Pakistanis are driven out.

The BJP is trying hard to establish a perception that the TRS and the MIM are partners in crime, even though the TRS has "distanced" itself from the Majlis. Minister for municipal administration K.T. Rama Rao, who is leading the TRS fight, tore into BJP leaders' observations and sought to know what they meant by "surgical strikes".

The TRS won 99 seats out of 150 in the outgoing civic body, while the AIMIM bagged 44. The BJP won a mere four divisions.

'MY OPINION'



A. Saye Sekhar

However, the BJP thinks its stock has soared in Telangana state over the last few years, especially after it won four out of 17 Lok Sabha seats in the 2019 general elections. The most shocking win was wrestling the Nizamabad Lok Sabha seat, defeating Kalvakuntla Kavitha, daughter of Chandrashekar Rao.

Buoyed, the BJP began to spread its tentacles. This "sense of arrival" has been bolstered by an unprecedented victory in

Dubbak Assembly by-elections, even though by a wafer-thin majority. This irked Chandrashekar Rao, who loves to maintain an upper hand over rivals in any election or byelection.

Basking in an afterglow of the Dubbak victory, the BJP set its eyes on GHMC elections. The TRS is now facing a new challenger in the BJP in the urban civic polls, with the Congress having debilitated itself, leaving a vacuum. The Congress is now blaming its rivals — TRS, BJP and AIMIM — for conniving with each other in all possible combinations.

As things stand, I personally think the TRS may not be dented too much in the GHMC polls. The TRS urban brand ambassador K.T. Rama Rao has been able to challenge rivals by showcasing numerous development and welfare

schemes implemented in the city. The TRS has taken up "able leadership and stable governance" as its slogan, harping largely on development.

Reliefs on taxes announced by the TRS government, especially slashing property taxes up to ₹15,000 a year by half and free drinking water to households up to 20,000 litres a month have attracted several citizens. Rama Rao's roadshows are big hits, as compared to any other leader. Chandrashekar Rao will be addressing a massive public meeting, which could be a game changer.

In contrast to the TRS development agenda, the first point in the BJP's manifesto was observing September 17 as Hyderabad Liberation Day, Corona tests and vaccine for all; scrapping of

Layout Regularisation Scheme, ₹25,000 flood relief to affected and free power to saloons.

The BJP housing programme, as opposed to 1,00,000 2BHK houses promised by the TRS, establishment of three women's police stations per year, free ride for women in Metro Rail and city buses smack of BJP's amnesia. As Rama Rao said, many of the BJP schemes are "copycat versions" of TRS development works.

While the BJP has succeeded in projecting the GHMC election as a fight between the TRS and itself, Chandrashekar Rao has already projected himself as a "national alternative" to Narendra Modi. Time will tell, whether the BJP can better the pink party, or the TRS can actually mount a challenge to Hindutva.

Civil societies make wish list for parties

UFERWAS demand proper plans for wards

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

The United Federation of Residents' Welfare Associations (UFERWAS), along with civil societies' COVA Peace Network and State Election Watch, have raised several demands in a bid to make political parties accountable for issues of public in the city during the upcoming GHMC elections. On top are matters like illegal encroachments that led to recent floods in the state, legalisation regarding encroached lands, fraudulent sale of lands belonging to water bodies and so on.

UFERWAS has further asked all political parties to constitute and ensure functioning of Area Sabhas and Ward Committees, which should have genuine RWA and civil society representatives on them. This would make sure that all ward development plans are in consultation with ward-level RWA/community groups. Further, UFERWAS must be recog-

● **UFERWAS HAS** submitted its list of demands to representatives of each political party. The federation is using WhatsApp groups to let all residents of welfare associations in different wards to know about what their local corporator had promised and how many of those promises have been delivered.

nised as the nodal agency for all RWA activity and community engagement. The constitution of advisory committees for women, youth, senior citizens and eminent citizens should also be as per the new Municipal Act, among others. Speaking at an event organised on the occasion, Dr. Mazher Hussain, executive director of COVA, said their objective is to make encroachments and flooding of cities a part of development issues for people, just like education, health,

employment and civic amenities. It is hoped that the public will make this an electoral agenda from local elections to Lok Sabha polls and prevail upon politicians and the system to reclaim all water bodies and prevent their encroachment.

For bringing in awareness and drive home this objective, a documentary, in collaboration with University of Hyderabad, titled "Why did Hyderabad Drown" has also been launched at the event. The civil bodies said that they wished to make contesting candidates commit themselves to policies and actions towards reclaiming water bodies and prevent further encroachments.

The UFERWAS has submitted its list of demands to representatives of each political party. The federation is using WhatsApp groups to let all residents of welfare associations in different wards to know about what their local corporator had promised and how many of those promises have been delivered.



Farmers cover their paddy with tarpaulin sheets in Kusumanchi in Khammam district to protect it from the unseasonal rains due to cyclone Niver on Thursday.

Cyclone Niver brings rains, paddy farmers affected

A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC KHAMMAM, NOV. 26

Farmers in Khammam district who had left their paddy at the producing centres had to rush to protect it from the unseasonal rains caused by cyclone Niver.

Kusumanchi, Nelakondapalli, Madhira, Wyra, Konigerla, Enkoor, and Errupalem mandals

received unseasonal rains. Nearly 70 per cent of farmers did not sell their crops as they had left their paddy for drying in the fields and lifting centres. The farmers had to rush to cover the paddy with tarpaulin sheets on Thursday.

The situation is worse in the mandals of Kusumanchi, Wyra, Kallur and Enkoor.

Cotton farmers had to stop harvesting operations, fearing damage to their crops.

The unseasonal rains are likely to damage, the chilli and other horticulture crops. District horticulture officer, G. Anasuya asked farmers to drain their fields of rainwater by creating pathways for the water to flow out.

HC seeks 2015 voters record for verification

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

Dealing with issues of discrepancies in the allocation of voters in Azampura and Chawni divisions of GHMC, the Telangana High Court asked the State Election Commission and GHMC to produce 2015 records of voters list to find out in which division the voters were placed.

The petitioner Asma

Khatoun, contesting from Azampura alleged that the Commissioner of GHMC had mingled with AIMIM and had shifted nearly 10,000 votes from Azampura to Chawni division.

She said the same was done during the 2015 elections also but after the High Court's intervention it was brought back to Azampura, the petitioner said.

The case posted to Monday for verification of the 2015 voters list.

Sale of liquor to go up before polls

FROM PAGE 1

M. Padmanabha Reddy, secretary, Forum for Good Governance, said, "every-one is aware of the use of alcohol to influence voters. Most political parties and their supporters distribute liquor prior to elections. This practice has to be crubbed with an iron hand. The police and excise departments should act very strictly."

He added, "it is not enough to blame politicians. Even those voters who take liquor to vote should share the blame for poor governance and

● **D. MADAN GOUD**, owner, Shruthi group of wines and bars, said, "sales of liquor will go up because people will be stocking up. The sales will escalate from Friday evening onwards. It is a trend that always works."

corruption for the next five year. If you sell your vote, what more can you expect?"

Since alcohol selling establishments have received instructions from authorities about

the dry days, they expect the sales to go up.

D. Madan Goud, owner, Shruthi group of wines and bars, said, "sales of liquor will go up because people will be stocking up. The sales will escalate from Friday evening onwards. It is a trend that always works."

Explaining the manner in which the liquor makes its way around despite the dry days and other stringent announcements of the SEC, an official in the excise department, on condition of anonymity, said, "during elections, stocking up

of liquor will happen not only at individual level but also by the merchants and stores. But it will not get reflected in the daily reports

Excise Department sends to the Election Commission. The 'extra' sales will be shown on paper on a later date, long after the elections are over. This is to camouflage real numbers sent from Excise to liquor stores before the dry days. Sale escalate by 25 to 35 per cent of usual sales during elections. Every gets a cut and is happy. Long live democracy."



Telangana state DGP M. Mahendar Reddy (right) addresses the media on the upcoming GHMC elections in the city along with other commissioners, at the DGP office in Hyderabad, on Thursday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

BJP promises to scrap LRS

FROM PAGE 1

The former chief minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis released the BJP manifesto on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao failed in construction of double bedroom houses but the BJP government constructed 15 lakhs houses for the poor people in Maharashtra.

The BJP also promised that the Land Regularisation Scheme (LRS) initiated by the TRS government would be scrapped.

● **THE FORMER** chief minister of Maharashtra Devendra Fadnavis released the BJP manifesto on Thursday.

TOP TEN PROMISES IN BJP MANIFESTO:

● **CORONA VACCINE** and testing to all as per Central government stipulations.

● **SETTING-UP OF** exclusive primary health centres (PHCs) in consonance with the population of various locations in greater Hyderabad.

● **WILL SCRAP LRS** to redeem people of greater Hyderabad from ₹15,000 crore burden.

● **A SUM** of ₹25,000 will be given to each flood affected family. Families who have already received ₹10,000 compensation will get

remaining amount of ₹15,000.

● **FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE** to build 1,00,000 one lakh houses under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

● **FREE TABS** to all children from poor families. Quality WiFi will be provided to poor families to enable student's access online education.

● **WAIVER OF** property tax in all SC colonies and slum areas. Free permission for construction of houses in less than 125 sq. yds. plots.

● **WILL PROVIDE** tap connections to all houses.

es. Free drinking water supply to all houses.

● **REJUVENATION OF** Musi river, development of Musi river front. Freeing nalas and tanks from all kinds of encroachments. Creation of ₹10,000 crore exclusive budget for modernization of open nalas and drainages. 'Sumedha Act' will be enacted to remove all encroachments.

● **FREE POWER** to all houses using less than 100 units per month. Free power and loan facilities to all professions in traditional occupations.

Links to many villages cut off

From Page 1

Similarly, traffic came to a grinding halt between Rapur and Venkatagiri following the collapse of a bridge on NH 565 at Lingasamudram village.

Links between several villages in Venkatagiri, Nellore rural, Gudur, Naidupeta, Sullurpeta, Ozili and several coastal areas were cut-off due to the overflow of water from rivulets, canals and tanks on the roads in 16 places.

Heavy inflows of 80,000 cusecs (cubic foot per second) from the Penna upstream forced authorities to release one lakh

cusecs of water from the Somasila reservoir.

A breach to the Kanupur Canal at South Mopur near Nellore led to the flooding of nearby habitations and agricultural lands. In Sydapuram Mandal, Kaivalya Vagu overflowed, causing problems to commuters on the Gudur road.

Around 20 passengers travelling in an RTC bus from Gudur to Rapur had a harrowing experience when the bus got stuck between two streams near Tikkavarapadu Cross Road on Thursday night. NDRF teams rushed to the spot with a boat and launched an operation to

shift the passengers to safety.

In the Atmakur segment, links were cut-off between Padamatanaidupalli village and the national highway as Kethemanneru vagu was in spate.

In Marripadu Mandal, Boggeru Vagu was also on spate, disconnecting transport links between many villages. Connectivity between Chejarla and Mamuduru was severed due to overflowing floodwater from the Gollapalli tank.

In Sullurpet, Vatrappalem was inundated with floodwater and the local population spent sleepless nights.

TSEC ASKS PARTIES TO FOLLOW COVID GUIDELINES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

The Telangana State Election Commission on Thursday took notice of violations of Covid-19 guidelines during the campaign period of GHMC elections, by political parties and contesting candidates, and in an appeal, requested all parties to ensure guidelines are followed strictly.

In a letter, the TSEC said that keeping in view the need to curb the spread of Coronavirus, all parties during door-to-door campaign, road shows and rallies, should ensure that all Covid-19 related requirements and precautions like face masks, sanitizers and maintaining of social distancing, are taken care of.

It further instructed that during campaigning, not more than five followers including the candidate, and excluding security personnel (if any) should participate.

During road shows and public meetings, all participants have been advised to wear face masks invariably, and moreover huge gatherings should be avoided in the first place, it said.

OTHER STORIES

2 BILL COLLECTORS SUSPENDED FOR TAKING BRIBES

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, NOV. 26

Two bill collectors, working in the Wyra Municipality, were suspended for taking bribes.

Municipal commissioner Venkatapathi Raju issued orders to bill collectors Venkanna and Gopala Rao on Thursday.

As per the details, Nagul Meera, a citizen and resident of Wyra municipality, complained against the bill collectors to the additional collector M. Snehalatha.

Nagul Meera told the additional collector that the two bill collectors are asking bribes while doing their duties.

She asked the commissioner to enquire into the matter. During the enquiry, it was found that the two bill collectors, were collecting bribes from people.

Based on the information, suspension orders were issued, to the two.

IMD WARNS OF LIGHT RAINS IN PARTS OF HYD

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

The city will experience light rains at isolated places on Friday, under the influence of Cyclone Nivar, say meteorologists.

Going by the records of Telangana State Development Planning Society, light rainfall was recorded, especially along the northern and eastern corridors. Places like Moula Ali, Alwal, Monda Market, among others, received close to 23 mm of rainfall in the wee hours of Friday. The maximum temperature too dropped by three notches below normal to 25.7 degrees Celsius.

However, the minimum temperature recorded was 19.5 degree Celsius, three above normal.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, Mahesh Palawat, a meteorologist with Skywet, said “There are chances of light rainfall on Friday. But, these rains would remain locked to the south-eastern regions of Telangana.”

For the winter, he said that the state would witness a drop in the temperatures this year, unlike last year.

“In the coming days there will be winds from the north-eastern direction, which would be cold in nature blowing over the state,” he added.

TS REGISTERS 862 NEW COVID CASES, THREE DEATHS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 26

Telangana has recorded 862 new cases of Coronavirus, apart from three deaths. With this, the number of active cases in the state has increased to 10,784.

Health authorities conducted 41,101 new tests. They are planning to test at least 75,000 samples every day in the state. The increase in number of tests is due to winter setting in. Further, Cyclone Nivar has also had an effect with its winds spreading cases of influenza and Coronavirus wider.

This has led to Health Department advising people to be careful and wear masks when going out. They should also ensure social distancing and wash their hands frequently.

Authorities say if face masks are worn properly, instances of cough and cold, apart from viruses, will be lesser.

While Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation recorded 164 cases, Medchal-Malkajgiri and Ranga Reddy reported 91 and 57 instances of virus respectively.

■ **HEALTH AUTHORITIES** conducted 41,101 new tests. They are planning to test at least 75,000 samples every day in the state.



Trade union leaders take out a rally in Khammam on Thursday as part of nation-wide general strike. — DC

Trade unions strike evokes good response

Coal production in SCCL hit as 70% workers joined stir

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM/
KOTHAGUDEM, NOV. 26

The nation-wide strike called by the Central Trade Unions on Thursday received a good response in Khammam and Bhadradi districts. Union members raised objections on the Workers Code Acts and Farm Acts.

Shops, business establishments, banks, government offices and institutions downed shutters supporting the strike.

In Khammam, porters, auto workers, RTC employees, vehicle drivers, government employees and building workers participated in the strike. Farm markets, housing projects, granite factories, workshops and the state highways were a deserted look due to the bandh.

CPI leaders B. Hemanth Rao, P. Prasad and George Clement, CPI-M leaders P. Sudarshan Rao, N. Nageswara Rao and P. Venkateswarlu and CPI (ML) New Democracy leader P. Ranga Rao participated in the strike.

In Madhira, leaders of the All-Party Committee staged a protest in front of the RTC depot in the rain. They visited every street and asked the shop-keepers to extend their cooperation by downing shutters.

In Bhadradi-Kothagudem district, 70 per cent of Singareni Collieries Company Limited workers did not attend duties. About 5,454 workers of the 7,968 workers participated in the strike. Coal production on Thursday was only 17,000 tons in the open cast and under-



Workers take part in the rally in Bhupalpally on Thursday. — DC

Seek rollback of agriculture and food security laws

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, NOV. 26

As part of the nation-wide strike called by trade unions, hundreds of workers took to the streets across the erstwhile Warangal district.

CITU Bhupalpally district president, K. Rajaiah, said, “Since the BJP came to power at the Center, they have been trying to sell the public sector companies to the corporates by amending the 44 labour laws into four codes, which are in favour of the workers.”

He said it would be wrong to merge the Coal Mines Provident Fund

Organisation (CMPF) into the Employees’ Provident Fund (EPF) to privatise the coal sector and retire workers who complete 30 years of service or 50 years of age.

He demanded that all contract workers in the Singareni municipalities be made permanent and given equal pay for equal work.

“Workers like Anganwadi, Asha, and mid-day meal workers should be assured job security and a minimum wage of ₹21,000,” he said.

“A welfare board for auto workers should be established. The Road Transport Bill should be repe-

aled. Laws that undermine agriculture, and undermine food security, should be called back. Wages in the Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme should be increased, and 200 days of work per year and should be extended to urban areas,” he demanded.

CITU district secretary Botla Chakrapani demanded the scrapping of the new pension scheme. “Public education should be strengthened by allocating more funds to the health sector.

Covid-19 vaccine should be provided free to everyone, and frontline workers must be insured,” he said.

ground mines. Citu, Aituc, Intuc, Iftu and HMS took part in the strike. Normal life in the towns like Paloncha, Yellandu, Sattupalli, Bhadrachalam, Manuguru and Wyra came to a standstill. The trade union leaders succeeded in halting 50 per cent of

the RTC bus services in all these towns.

CPI state executive member B. Hemanth Rao in Khammam said that the strike by the trade unions is total and every worker participated. The response from the people even in the rural areas was high,

and rallies were organised in every mandal headquarter.

“The agony of farmers, and employees of all sectors was highlighted during the stir. The response of the people in rural areas can be cited as a best example of involvement by them”, he said.

Constitution day celebrated

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, NOV. 26

The National Institute of Technology Warangal celebrated the 71st Constitution Day on Thursday virtually.

Prof N.V. Raman Rao, director NIT-Warangal said, “India has the largest written constitution in the world. Students and youth of the nation must be responsible citizens as freedom comes with responsibility and rights come with duties.”

Later, he read the Preamble of the Constitution to the participants in the online meet.

The Registrar of the Institute, S. Goverdhan Rao, said, “The Preamble of the Indian Constitution records the aims and aspirations of the people of India and reflects the basic spirit of the constitution. To spread the importance of the Indian Constitution, India observes November 26, as

B.R. Ambedkar remembered

DC CORRESPONDENT
PEDDAPALLI, NOV. 26

The Constitution of India is one of the best among the countries in the world, and India, said Manthani court judge, Nageswara Rao. The 71st Indian Constitution Day or Samvidhan Diwas was observed on a grand note by the Legal Cell Authority in association with the BAR association at the premises of the Manthani court in

Peddapalli district on Thursday.

Judge Nageswara Rao said, “On November 26, 1949, India formally adopted the Constitution, and came into force on 26, January 1950, and is celebrated as National Law Day. As a mark of tribute to India’s first law minister, B.R. Ambedkar, played a pivotal role in drafting the Constitution, a set of written principles and precedents of the Government of India.

the Constitution Day of India. The day has also been declared as the Constitution Day to spread awareness about its architect Dr B.R.

Ambedkar. This year, the country is celebrating the 71st Constitution Day.”

NIT-W Deans, Associate deans and faculty participated in the programme.

COPS TAKE PLEDGE IN NIZAMABAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD/KAMAREDDY, NOV. 26

National Constitution Day was celebrated on Thursday in Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts.

Police officials and constables took part in the pledge programme on the occasion. Nizamabad additional deputy commissioner of police (law and order) K.C.S. Raghuvver said that every year to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India, the Constitution Day is celebrated.

Addl DCP addressed the policemen at the Armed Reserve police headquarters on Thursday. In Kamareddy, a pledge programme was conducted at the district police office.

RDO, AO in trouble for not answering RTI properly

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC
KARIMNAGAR, NOV. 26

The second additional Munsif Magistrate Court in Karimnagar, on Thursday issued orders to register a case against the Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) and Administration Officer (AO) for giving a negligent reply to the Right To Information (RTI) petition regarding the land mafia in Bommakal village in Karimnagar district.

The city president of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Bethi Mahendar Reddy filed an RTI in the RDO office under cc no. S/3010/75, L.R.A. no 8/97 seeking to obtain complete details of the burial ground present in the survey numbers 723, 724 encroached by land grabbers. The RDO Anand Kumar and AO Srivani did not give information pointwise to the RTI petition.

Mahendar Reddy who was not satisfied with the reply given by the concerned officials, he filed a complaint in the I-Town police station against the RDO and AO.

When the police officials did



Bethi Mahendar Reddy

not take any action, he filed a complaint with the Commissioner of Police V.B. Kamalasan Reddy.

Mahendar Reddy alleged that under the 8 and 9 Public Records Act, 1993, it is the responsibility of the government officials to protect government documents and revenue records related to the public.

The officials misused their power and intentionally gave wrong information, supporting the land grabbers.

He said, “Having not received a proper response from the police department, I approached the second addi-

■ **HE SAID**, The burial ground in Bommakal village in Karimnagar district belongs to the Hindus. We will fight to protect it from the land grabbers.

tional Munsif Magistrate Court with evidence and filed a petition through my lawyer Yennampally Gangadhar.”

Viewing the details of the petition, Judge Pradeep issued orders to the House Officer of the I-Town police station to register a case against the RDO Anand Kumar and AO Srivani and start an investigation immediately.

Mahendar said, “The burial ground belongs to the Hindus. We will fight to protect it from the land grabbers.

The collector must take initiation to protect government lands by placing notice boards. Any officials indulging in irregularities must not be spared.”

He demanded that the government suspend the revenue officials who tried to mislead and support the land mafia.

COPS SEIZE GOLD WORTH ₹18L IN HYD

Hyderabad: The Air Intelligence Unit of Hyderabad Customs booked two cases of smuggling of gold against two passengers at the RGIA Shamshabad and seized the smuggled gold worth ₹18 lakh from their possession on Wednesday.

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE



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The detailed NIT and Bid documents can be viewed and /or downloaded from NMDC website <http://www.nmdc.co.in>, Central Public Procurement portal <http://www.eprocure.gov.in> and MSTC portal <http://www.mstccommerce.co.in> from 27/11/2020 to 18/12/2020.

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For Accessing the Bid document from MSTC, bidders to visit website link http://www.mstccommerce.co.in/eprochome/nmcd/buyer_login.jsp and search Tender No. NMDC/HO/2/20-21/ET/2. Bidders are requested to register as ‘New Vendor’ for downloading the tender document. For further help refer to ‘vendor guide’ given in MSTC website.

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SHORT TAKES

COVID-19 PATIENT JUMPS OFF HOSP BUILDING, DIES

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 26

A Covid-19 patient in Chhattisgarh on Thursday jumped off the building of All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Raipur.

The deceased, identified as Muralidhar Sahu (49) of Janjgir-Champa, was admitted in AIIMS, Raipur on November 22 after being tested positive for Covid-19.

He was put on a ventilator a couple of days ago when his condition worsened.

However, the ventilator was removed on Thursday morning when his condition started improving.

According to the Raipur police, Sahul had gone to washroom at around 1.30 in the afternoon and then jumped off the second storey of the AIIMS building. He was later admitted in the intensive care unit. He died during treatment. The reason for his extreme step was yet to be ascertained, police said.

As on Thursday, Chhattisgarh has reported 2,29,203 Covid-19 positive cases and 2,783 deaths.

GROOM ARRESTED FOR LINK IN IIFL LOOT CASE

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 26

A 30-year-old youth serving as manager in a private gold loan firm was on Thursday arrested in the middle of his marriage rituals by the Crime Branch in connection with dacoity at the IIFL Finance Ltd branch office in Cuttack city.

The arrested youth was identified as Pitambar Sahoo of Nischintakoili, Cuttack.

Following Pitambar's arrest, the police seized a large quantity of stolen gold and investigation is underway to ferret out more information on the IIFL Finance loot case, said Prateek Singh, deputy commissioner of police, Cuttack.

Following the manager's arrest, the bride and her family who were waiting at a hotel had to pack up and cancel the event.

According to reports, the police had obtained the custodial remand of five accused persons in the loot case. Their preliminary questioning revealed that more than 10 employees of IIFL Company had direct links with the crime that took place on November 19. According to sources, the interrogation of other suspects was on and many more are likely to be arrested.

On the other hand, people who had deposited gold in IIFL Company Ltd with the hope to get more returns have become skeptical whether they would get their deposits back in view of scam and police action.

'NO AUCTION OF NIRAV PENTHOUSE BEFORE DEC. 14'

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 26

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Thursday made it clear before the Bombay High Court that it will not auction a luxurious penthouse — Samudra Mahal belonging to Nirav Modi — before December 14.

The HC was hearing a petition filed by Modi's son Rohin challenging ED's move to confiscate Samudra Mahal property. In his petition, Rohin informed the court that his father is nowhere concerned with the said property and it belonged to a trust set up by him.

Few months back, the ED had filed an application before the special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court. The agency had brought to the notice of the court that as per provision under Fugitive Economic Offenders (FEO) Act 2018, it can confiscate immovable and movable properties belonging to Nirav Modi. According to the ED, Modi has properties worth ₹1,396 crore in India, England and UAE.

Subsequently, in June 2020 PMLA court had passed order to confiscate Modi's properties. Petitioner Rohin's counsel Amit Sibal argued that property belongs to Rohin Trust and not any individual. He also argued that as per FEO Act, a notice must be issued to Rohin if ED wants to auction the property and he must be heard before the auction, but no notice was issue to Rohin.

Farmers are up in arms



Members of various farmers organisations try to cross Shambu Border in Patiala district on Thursday during the 'Delhi Chalo' protest march by farmers against the new farm laws. Farmers faced water cannons and broke police barriers at the state's border with Haryana and by late evening, a large group of them had reached the road toll plaza at Panipat, about 100 km from Delhi.

— PTI

DIDI EXTENDS SUPPORT TO ONGOING FARMERS STIR

RAJIB CHOWDHURI & PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE, NOV. 26

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday extended her support to the ongoing farmers' protest rally to New Delhi over the Centre's three bills which has deregulated the essential commodities.

Calling the use of tear gas and water canons on the farmers' rally in Haryana "unfortunate", the Trinamul Congress supremo also offered to join their agitation, if invited, with an eye on the Assembly Election in the state.

She said, "This is unfortunate. I am sorry to say this is the first time the central government wants to capture all the fundamental rights of all sections of people. It can not curb the farmers' democratic rights. The bills are illegal as they are aimed to help the hoarders for black-marketing, not the farmers. Why did the central government snatch their rights? To allow the people of the country to die? Only one man, one party, one election, one nation? We were, are and will be with the farmers. If we are invited, we will participate in their rally to Delhi."

Banerjee, however, supported the cause behind the nationwide strike of the Congress and Left trade unions against the Centre's economic policies.

"Today a workers' movement happened. We support the cause, not the bandh as it is against our policy," she added. This prompted the BJP to foresee another "Mahagatbandhan" (grand-alliance), in line of what happened in Bihar recently, against it in Bengal.

Phase II trial of India-made 'Covaxin' begins at AIIMS

Around 15,000 volunteers will receive the shot over the next few days

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs NEW DELHI, NOV. 26

With 44,489 new confirmed cases in the last 24 hours, India's Covid-19 caseload crossed 92 lakh, while the number of recoveries surged to 86.42 lakh.

The number of total Coronavirus cases rose to 92,22,216, while the death toll due to the disease climbed to 1,34,699 with 481 new fatalities.

Phase three trial of India-made Coronavirus vaccine Covaxin, meanwhile, began at AIIMS in New Delhi on Thursday with Dr M.V. Padma Srivastava, the chief of Neurosciences Centre at the premier institute, and three other volunteers receiving the first dose.

Dr Srivastava was the first one to receive the shot, which would be given to around 15,000 volunteers at the medical institute over the next few days.

The first dose of 0.5 ml Covaxin intramuscular injection was given to four volunteers. They were under observation for two hours and will be monitored for the next few days.

Dr Srivastava said, "Covaxin is the first indigenously-developed anti-coronavirus vaccine and on top of that, my institute is participating in the trial. I am honoured to be the first volunteer to receive the shot. I am happy to be a part of such a great cause. I am perfectly fine and I'm working."

As part of the trial application, a dose of 0.5 ml would be given on day 0 and on day 28.

The phase three randomised double-blind placebo-controlled multicentre trial would cover around 28,500 subjects aged 18 years and above.

It would be conducted in around 25 sites across 10 states. The trial has already started at a few sites.

Bharat Biotech has been

given the permission for conducting phase 3 human clinical trials of the Covaxin from the Drugs Controller General of India.

According to the Union health ministry, the active caseload shot up to 4,44,746, an increase of 6,079 cases from Tuesday, even though it remained below five lakh for the 15th consecutive day, accounting for 4.82 per cent of the total cases.

The number of people who have recovered from the disease surged to 86,42,771, pushing the national recovery rate to 93.72 per cent, while the Covid-19 case fatality rate stands at 1.46 per cent.

Of the 1,34,699 deaths reported in the country so far due to the disease, Maharashtra accounts for 46,683, followed by Karnataka (11,695), Tamil Nadu (11,639), Delhi (8,621), West Bengal (8,121), Uttar Pradesh (7,615), Andhra Pradesh

(6,956), Punjab (4,653) and Gujarat (3,892).

The Union health ministry on Thursday said 60.72 per cent of the 44,489 fresh cases registered in a span of 24 hours have been contributed by six states and UTs, with Kerala leading the tally followed by Maharashtra, Delhi, West Bengal, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

It said 60.50 per cent of the 524 latest fatalities are concentrated in six states and Union territories — Delhi, Maharashtra, West Bengal, Haryana, Punjab and Uttar Pradesh.

Kerala leads the tally with 6,491 new Covid-19 cases registered in a span of 24 hours, while Maharashtra has reported 6,159 new cases followed by Delhi with 5,246 new cases.

Delhi with 99 deaths reported the maximum new fatalities. Maharashtra saw a fatality count of 65 followed by West Bengal with 51

deaths, the ministry said.

According to the ministry, 65 per cent of the active cases are in eight states and UTs which have contributed to the maximum daily new cases and deaths.

It said 61 per cent of the total deaths are concentrated in these eight states/UTs.

The case fatality rates of Punjab (3.16 per cent), Maharashtra (2.60 per cent), West Bengal (1.75 per cent) and Delhi (1.60 per cent) are higher than the national average of 1.46 per cent, the ministry said.

Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan and Kerala have a case fatality rate of 1.43 per cent, 1.02 per cent, 0.87 per cent and 0.37 per cent, respectively.

Delhi has 29,169 Covid-19 cases per million followed by Kerala with 16,201 cases, Maharashtra with 14,584 and Haryana with 7,959 cases per million population.

Trinamul leader wants Governor removed

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 26

Ahead of the Assembly election in West Bengal, the Trinamul Congress has demanded governor Jagdeep Dhankhar's removal from his post by President Ram Nath Kovind after accusing him of having "connections with criminals of the BJP."

The ruling party also sought Dhankhar's prosecution by the Kolkata police on criminal charges over his alleged support on Twitter to two accused, Govind Agarwal, a dubious chartered accountant, and Sudipta Roy

Chowdhury, a businessman, after their arrests in two separate cases of financial offences into several crores.

On Thursday, Sreerampore TMC MP Kalyan Banerjee claimed at Trinamul Bhavan, "the Governor, as a public servant, is creating obstruction in the ongoing investigation against the two accused. He is trying to indulge criminals of the BJP with whom he has connections. The way Dhankhar is giving threats to the Kolkata police and Bidhannagar police through his tweets, he is liable for prosecution under section 186 and 189

of the Indian Penal Code. The police must initiate a criminal case against him. No sanction is required for this."

He said, "the President must intervene in the matter to see if the two IPC sections were violated by the Governor or not. If so, Dhankhar should be removed by the President as the Governor with immediate effect. He is not entitled to remain as the Governor anymore. According to my reading of the statute, since the Governor has violated two IPC sections, the President should not allow him to continue in his chair further after considering all

aspects." Asked of the TMC's plan of any memorandum to Kovind for Dhankhar's removal from the Governor's post, Banerjee added, "It will be decided later."

Countering the TMC's demand Dhankhar, now in North Bengal, stated, "my attention has been drawn to press release and conference by a ruling party leader. To the extent Governor role or actions are concerned, the reflections are wide off the mark, betraying ignorance of elementary constitutional and legal aspects and factually untenable. A classic case of "memory lapse of law and constitu-

tion".

"This is unfolding of a strategy to take diversionary route so that burning issues can be put on back burner. This shall not happen. It deserves no serious note except for being ill informed on law, fact and constitution. In summation it is part of ongoing vituperative campaign to cover up monumental lapses and constitutional indiscretions. These cannot be impactful. I cannot help if some can not even read and understand the tweets. I dismiss any assertion made that indicates otherwise than my commitment for accountability and transparency."

BJP FILES COMPLAINT AGAINST LALU YADAV

DC CORRESPONDENT PATNA, NOV. 26

A complaint case has been registered against RJD Chief Lalu Yadav at the vigilance police station in Patna.

BJP MLA Lalan Paswan who had accused Lalu Yadav of making strategies to topple the newly elected NDA government in Bihar filed the complaint on Thursday under the prevention of corruption act.

On Wednesday, BJP leader and former deputy CM Sushil Kumar Modi had released an audio clip in which Lalu Yadav was heard talking to Lalan Paswan and asking him to abstain from the voting during the speaker's election.

Sources said that the Jharkhand administration has also asked the officials to ascertain the veracity of the audio clip which was released by the BJP on Wednesday.

Amid the political turmoil in Bihar and Jharkhand over the issue, Lalu Yadav who is serving his jail term after being sentenced in several fodder scam cases has been sent back to the paying ward of Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences, Ranchi.

He was shifted to the director's bungalow last month due to Coronavirus.

"This is an attempt to stop the opposition RJD from raising questions against the NDA. The allegation against Lalu Yadav is baseless and the NDA leaders cannot prove anything. The opposition parties in Bihar would continue to expose the failures of the NDA government in Bihar", RJD spokesperson Chitrnagar Gagan told this newspaper.

Sources, however, said that the RJD is concerned as Lalu Yadav's bail hearing in the fodder scam case is also scheduled on Friday.

INDIA, NEPAL TO ADVANCE MUTUAL COOPERATION

Kathmandu, Nov. 26: India and Nepal on Thursday agreed to step up efforts to advance mutual cooperation during a "productive" meeting between Foreign Secretary

Harsh Vardhan Shringla and his Nepalese counterpart Bharat Raj Paudyal.

Shringla began his two-day official visit to Nepal on Thursday. He was accorded a warm welcome on his maiden visit to Nepal which is happening at the invitation of Nepal Foreign Secretary Paudyal, amid a strain in bilateral ties following a bitter border row between the two countries.

"FS @harshvshringla had a productive meeting with @PaudyalBR during which they took stock of bilateral cooperation and discussed issues of mutual interest," the Indian embassy in Kathmandu said in a tweet.

"Both sides appreciated the progress made on the numerous bilateral initiatives and projects. It was agreed to take further steps to advance mutual cooperation," it said in another tweet.

Shringla arrived at Tribhuvan International in Kathmandu on Thursday morning.

While interacting with local journalists, he said, "I have wanted to come here earlier also, but because of Covid-19, I couldn't do so. I am very happy to be here. I was here in Kathmandu earlier too, though this is my first visit to Nepal as a Foreign Secretary. We have very strong relationship. Our endeavour will be to see how we can take that relationship forward".

Shringla's visit will be a continuation of the regular exchange of high-level visits between the two friendly neighbour.

IN BRIEF

40 miners stuck at Zimbabwe mishap

Harare: At least 40 informal miners in Zimbabwe have been trapped underground after a shaft in a disused gold mine collapsed, the country's miners' federation said on Thursday. The incident occurred late Wednesday in the town of Bindura, around 70 kilometres (43 miles) north of the capital Harare, said Wellington Takavarasha, head of the Zimbabwe Miners Federation. Takavarasha said the miners were working inside the disused Ran Gold Mine when a shaft caved in. Six miners have since been pulled from the rubble and taken to hospital.

Flydubai lands 1st scheduled flight

Tel Aviv: A flight operated by budget airline flydubai landed in Tel Aviv on Thursday, the first scheduled commercial service between the two cities following the normalisation of ties between the UAE and Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, on hand for the arrival of the inaugural flight after its nearly four-hour trip, called it "a moment of history." "As-salam alaikum (Peace be upon you)," he said to arriving passengers. "Come again and again and again." The United Arab Emirates in September signed a landmark US-brokered deal to formalise relations with Israel, the first such agreement by an Arab state in the Gulf.

Greek oil tanker hit by blast at Saudi

Riyadh: An explosion rocked a Greek-operated oil tanker docked at Saudi Arabia's port of Shuqaiq on Wednesday, Greek officials said, in an attack that a Riyadh-led military coalition blamed on Yemeni rebels. The blast on the Maltese-flagged Agrari tanker follows a string of attacks by the Iran-linked rebels on Saudi oil infrastructure, highlighting the growing perils of a five-year military campaign led by the kingdom in Yemen. The tanker was "attacked by an unknown source" while it was preparing to depart from the Red Sea port of Shuqaiq, its Greece-based operator TMS Tankers said, adding that no injuries were reported. "The Agrari was struck about one meter above the waterline and has suffered a breach," TMS Tankers said in a statement. "It has been confirmed that the crew are safe and there have been no injuries. No pollution has been reported." An investigation was underway after Saudi authorities, including the coast guard, boarded the stricken vessel, it added.

PALESTINIAN WHO WAGED 103-DAY FAST FREED

Nablus, Palestinian Territories, Nov. 26: Israel on Thursday released a Palestinian who waged a 103-day hunger strike to protest Israeli rules allowing his detention without charge, the Palestinian Prisoner's Club said. Maher al-Akhras, arrested over alleged membership of a militia group, was transferred from a Tel Aviv hospital to Nablus's Al-Najah University Hospital in the occupied West Bank, the prisoners' rights group said in a statement. A decision on releasing him to return home will follow "a medical assessment of his condition", Al-Najah hospital medical director Abdul-Karim Al-Barqawi said. Akhras, 49, was arrested near Nablus in July and put in administrative detention, a policy that Israel uses to hold suspected militants without charge. He is suspected of links to the armed Palestinian group Islamic Jihad, labelled a terrorist group by Israel, the United States and the European Union. The father of six launched his fast to protest a four-month detention order, which had been due to end on November 26. Akhras, who been arrested by Israel several times previously, ended his hunger strike after Israeli authorities committed to not extending his detention beyond that date. Israel's administrative detention policy, inherited from the British mandate of Palestine, allows the internment of prisoners without charge for renewable periods of up to six months each time. Israel says the procedure allows authorities to hold suspects and prevent attacks while continuing to gather evidence, but critics and rights groups say the system is abused.

Trump reiterates voter fraud allegations amid transition

Calls into Pennsylvania Republican event to probe charges

Washington, Nov. 26: US President Donald Trump has baselessly claimed anew that he had won the election and uttered repeated falsehoods as he called into an event held by Pennsylvania Republicans to investigate unproven allegations of voter fraud. "This was an election that we won easily. We won it by a lot," Trump declared to the group gathered at a hotel in Gettysburg on Wednesday. Trump, in fact, lost to President-elect Joe Biden by about 1,50,000 votes in the state, and Pennsylvania certified Biden as the winner on Tuesday. The Pennsylvania event was the latest attempt by Trump and his lawyer Rudy Giuliani, a former New York City mayor, to try to cast doubt on the results of the democratic election, even as the formal transition process has begun and a growing number of Republicans are recognising Biden as president-elect.

Similar events have been scheduled in Arizona and Michigan. State election officials across the country and international observers have said there is no evidence of widespread voter fraud, and Trump's legal team has lost repeatedly in court, in addition to making numerous elementary errors. Wednesday's event, organised by local Republicans, including Pennsylvania state Sen. Doug Mastriano, an outspoken Trump supporter, came with trappings of an official hearing — flags, a gavel, and "witnesses" who "testified" in person and by phone. Among them was a special guest — the president — who at one point had been expected to attend in person, but did not after another member of his legal team announced that he had tested positive for the coronavirus on Wednesday morning. — AP



Two women pray on their knees as they gather with other supporters of President Donald Trump, most without masks, outside of the Wyndham Gettysburg hotel prior to a Pennsylvania Senate Majority Policy Committee public hearing to discuss 2020 election issues and irregularities with President Trump's lawyer Rudy Giuliani in Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. — AFP

Trump pardons Flynn, his ex-NSA who lied to FBI

Washington, Nov. 26: US President Donald Trump has signed an executive order granting pardon to his former national security adviser Michael Flynn, who had been charged with making false statements to the FBI over possible collusion between the Trump campaign and Russia during the 2016 presidential polls. Trump signed the executive order on Wednesday.

"It is my Great Honor to announce that General Michael T. Flynn has been granted a Full Pardon. Congratulations to Gen Flynn and his wonderful family. I know you will now have a truly fantastic Thanksgiving!" Trump said in a tweet.

White House Press Secretary Kayleigh McEnany said, "The President has pardoned General Flynn because he should never have been prosecuted.



Michael Flynn

An independent review of General Flynn's case by the Department of Justice — conducted by respected career professionals — supports this conclusion. In fact, the Department of Justice has firmly concluded that the charges against Flynn should be dropped, she said. "This Full Pardon achieves that objective, finally bringing to an end the relentless, partisan pursuit of an innocent man," she said. "General Flynn should not require a pardon. He is

an innocent man. Even the FBI agents who interviewed General Flynn did not think he was lying. "Multiple investigations have produced evidence establishing that General Flynn was the victim of partisan government officials engaged in a coordinated attempt to subvert the election of 2016," McEnany said. These individuals sought to prevent Trump from being elected, to block him from assuming that office on his election, remove him from office after his inauguration, and undermine his administration at every turn, she said. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in a statement said Trump's pardon of Michael Flynn, who twice pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his dealings with a foreign adversary, is an act of grave corruption and abuse of power. — PTI

Russia oil giant declares Arctic project open

Moscow, Nov. 26: Russian oil giant Rosneft on Wednesday announced the start of operations for its giant Vostok oil project in the Arctic, part of the country's strategic energy plan which has been criticised by environmentalists.

"It is with great pleasure that I inform you of the start of the practical implementation of the project," Rosneft chief executive Igor Sechin told President Vladimir Putin at a meeting in Moscow. He thanked Putin, with whom he has close relations, for the adoption of a law facilitating Russian investments in the Arctic. "The prospecting and exploration work are now underway, in accordance with our timetable," Sechin said, adding that the design work for a 770-kilometre (480-mile) oil pipeline and a port had

been completed. The strategic plan for Russia's mineral resources stretches to 2035 and is banking on growing global demand, though it does predict that natural gas will partially replace oil and coal. "Mineral resources will remain a competitive advantage of Russia's economy, and will determine the place and role of the country in the world," it says. Environmentalists urged the Russian government last year to stop granting licenses to exploit several Arctic deposits. The Vostok project, the cornerstone of Russia's Arctic ambitions, brings together several Rosneft activities in the Russian Far North, near the northern sea route that the company intends to exploit to deliver to Europe and Asia. — AFP

Iran swaps Australian for 3 Iranians

Tehran, Nov. 26: Iran has freed a British-Australian academic who had been detained in the country for over two years in exchange for three Iranians held abroad, state TV announced. The television report on Wednesday was scant on detail, saying only that the three Iranians freed in the swap had been imprisoned for trying to bypass sanctions on Iran. Kylie Moore-Gilbert, 33, was a Melbourne University lecturer on Middle Eastern studies when she was picked up at the Tehran airport as she tried to leave the country after attending an academic conference in 2018.

She was sent to Tehran's Evin prison, convicted of spying and sentenced to 10 years behind bars. Moore-Gilbert had vehemently denied the charges and maintained her innocence. Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne confirmed the release on Thursday, saying Moore-Gilbert would soon be reunited with her family. "Dr. Moore-Gilbert's release has been an absolute priority for the government since her detention," Payne said in a statement. "The Australian government has consistently rejected the grounds on which the Iranian government arrested, detained and convicted Dr. Moore-Gilbert. We continue to do so." Payne said the release

was achieved through "diplomatic engagement" with the Iranian government and was done in consultation with Moore-Gilbert's family. Moore-Gilbert was one of several Westerners held in Iran on widely criticised espionage charges that activists and UN investigators believe is a systematic effort to leverage their imprisonments for money or influence in negotiations with the West, which Tehran denies. — AP

Turkish coup accused get life terms

● **THE CHAOTIC attempt was swiftly followed by a fierce government crackdown spanning years and resulting in tens of thousands of arrests.**

swiftly followed by a fierce government crackdown spanning years and resulting in tens of thousands of arrests. Turkey's largest courtroom was packed with dozens of security personnel and the presiding judge ordered one protesting defendant to "Sit down!" several times before reading the verdict. He issued multiple life sentences to 27 disgruntled air force pilots who bombed the capital

Ankara and civilians who orchestrated the coup attempt from inside the Akinci military base near the capital. Court documents subsequently obtained by AFP showed 337 defendants handed life sentences for murder, violating the constitutional order and attempting to assassinate Erdogan. Sixty suspects were given jail sentences of various lengths while 75 were acquitted. — AFP

PUBLISHING | GIANT Bertelsmann's rival News Corp., which owns HarperCollins, slammed the deal

Penguin to buy Simon & Schuster for \$2bn

Berlin, Nov. 26: German media giant Bertelsmann said on Wednesday that its Penguin Random House division is buying rival Simon & Schuster in a megadeal that would reshape the US publishing industry. Penguin Random House, already the largest American publisher, will buy the New York-based Simon & Schuster, whose authors include Stephen King, Hillary Clinton and John Irving, from TV and film company ViacomCBS for \$2.17 billion in cash. "Simon & Schuster strengthens Bertelsmann's footprint globally,

and (particularly) in the US, its second-largest market," the Guetersloh, Germany-based company said in a statement. The purchase of Simon & Schuster would reduce the so-called Big Five of American publishing — which also includes HarperCollins, Hachette Book Group and Macmillan — to four. The companies said the deal is expected to close in 2021, subject to regulatory approval. No US publisher in modern times would approach the power of the new company. ViacomCBS said Bertelsmann will pay a

● **PENGUIN RANDOM House Chief Executive Markus Dohle said on Wednesday that Simon & Schuster would retain its editorial independence and that individual imprints within Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster could continue to compete with each other for book deals.**

termination fee if the deal fails due to regulatory reasons. Agents and authors often worry that a concentration of power in publishing could mean less com-

petition for book deals, and lower advances. The Authors Guild, a writers' organisation, said Wednesday that it opposed the sale because it would hurt competition, making it more difficult for authors and agents to negotiate with publishers. It said the U.S. Department of Justice should challenge it. The department did not immediately return a request for comment. "As an organisation of writers it's important to us that the publishing industry (thrives), and that there be multiple, robust outlets to bring the

widest variety of books to audiences," said Suzanne Nossel, the CEO of PEN America. "To the extent that efficiencies are garnered through consolidation, it is our hope that they are a catalyst to enable greater investment in authors, books, and outreach to readers." Bertelsmann's rival News Corp., which owns HarperCollins, also slammed the deal. "Bertelsmann is not just buying a book publisher, but buying market dominance as a book behemoth," said News Corp Chief Executive Robert Thomson said in a state-

ment. "This literary leviathan would have 70% of the US literary and general fiction market." Penguin Random House Chief Executive Markus Dohle said on Wednesday that Simon & Schuster would retain its editorial independence and that individual imprints within Penguin Random House and Simon & Schuster could continue to compete with each other for book deals. Simon & Schuster's current president and chief executive, Jonathan Karp, will continue to lead the publishing house, Bertelsmann said. — AP

