

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | MONDAY 16 | NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER



Max: 28°C
Min: 25°C
Rainfall: 11.8 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Karthigai 1
Tithi: Prathamai/ Thuvithiyai
Star: Anusham
Rahukalam:
7.30 am to 9 am
Yamagandam:
10.30 am to 12 noon
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.54 am
Zohar: 11.58 am
Asar: 3.12 pm
Meghrib: 5.39 pm
Isha: 6.53 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.40 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.09 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.05 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 7.51 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+27,848)	(+373)
88,41,997	1,30,048

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

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

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

5,46,03,282

DEATHS

13,22,222

COUNTRIES
AREAS WITH
CASES
217

worldometers.info

STATE | 3

BJP, Congress MP
flay firecracker ban



WORLD | 5

Violence erupts as Trump
supporters, rivals clash



SPORT | 8

Hamilton wins
seventh F1 world title



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Nitish to be sworn in 4th term CM today

■ NDA parliamentary party elects him leader

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
PATNA, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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



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

BJP picks ex-ABVP man as house leader

DC CORRESPONDENT
PATNA, NOV. 15

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

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

stituency since October 2005, is an intermediate pass out.

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

SOUMITRA CHATTERJEE DIES

Legendary actor

Soumitra

Chatterjee,

who suc-

cessfully

carried for-

ward the

golden period of

Bengali cinema with his

epic roles beyond the

era of screen icons like

Uttam Kumar and Utpal

Dutt, died on Sunday in

Kolkata.

■ REPORT ON PAGE 4

AHMED PATEL, COVID POSITIVE, IN ICU

Senior Congress leader

Ahmed Patel, who test-

ed positive for COVID-

19 a few weeks ago,

has been admitted to

the Intensive Care Unit

of Medanta Hospital,

Gurgaon.



Sabari season begins; Covid norms in force

Sabarimala, Nov. 15:

Marking the beginning of the pilgrimage season, the Lord Ayyappa hill shrine at Sabarimala opened on Sunday for the three-month annual Mandalam-Makaravilakku festival.

A large number of devotees had already reached the shrine for darshan on the day of opening of the temple. Security in and around the temple has been tightened in view of the heavy rush expected over the coming days.

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

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

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

at Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruvalla, Chengannur and Kottayam, where pilgrims arrive to proceed to the Lord Ayyappa temple. — PTI

3 die as wall collapses after cylinder blast

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS

TIRUVANNAMALAI, NOV. 15

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



OYSTER PERPETUAL DATEJUST 41

ATP MASTERS 1000

At the heart of tennis lies the ATP Masters 1000. Its tournaments can make or break a season for the top men's players. Played on the sport's storied courts and at state-of-the-art venues, it maintains tennis's greatest traditions, showcases its best talent and advances the game around the world. Now and in the future, Rolex's commitment to tennis will continue to grow.

#Perpetual



OTHER STORIES

Gold, US Dollars worth ₹41.5 lakh seized**DC CORRESPONDENT**
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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Photos: E.K. Sanjay

**Feed iguanas at Chennai snake park****B. VIJAYALAKSHMI | DC**
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

about these gigantic lizard species," added Balan.

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

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

High court directive to collector on 95-year-old woman's petition**DC CORRESPONDENT**
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

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



and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007.

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

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

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

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

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

Heavy rain causes flight delays**DC CORRESPONDENT**
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

The flight left to Dubai at around 4 am.

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

Are we set for an acrimonious campaign?**G. Babu Jayakumar****Just spamming**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Festive fumes choke city**T. SUDHEESH | DC**
CHENNAI, NOV 15

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



Fire crackers light up Chennai skies on Deepavali.

— DC

Good in Besant Nagar, T Nagar, Nungambakkam

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



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

— DC

Insurance co directed to pay ₹11 L to injured mason**DC CORRESPONDENT**
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

IN BRIEF

Shah coming to TN next week

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

—PTI

2 fire personnel killed in building collapse

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

FROM P1

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

Left seeks compensation for firework industry losses

BJP, Congress MP flay firecracker ban

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

TWITTERATI BAT FOR SIVAKASI

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

—PTI

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

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

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

1,027 cases registered in TN

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

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

—PTI

Rival gangs attack each other with sickles, 11 injured

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

Pallikaranai police registered a case and arrested a few.

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

MISSING YOU



Mrs Bhama Ramaswamy
(31-10-1929 - 14-11-2020)

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

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

Phone: 98840 41494 / 99401 35132

TV serial artiste hacked to death

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, NOV. 15

A Tamil TV serial artiste was hacked to death by a gang of four men, in front of his house in M.G. R Nagar in the early hours of Sunday.

The deceased has been identified as Selvarathinam (45), a resident of Vallal Paari Street in M.G.R Nagar in the city.

Police sources said Selvarathinam, a Sri Lankan Tamil has acted in the Star Vijay Serial 'Thenmozhi BA'. Apart from acting, he was also

Police said the assailants destroyed the CCTV cameras set in the neighbourhood and fled the spot in the vehicle. Selvarathinam died on the spot

involved in building contracts and real estate business.

According to the police, the incident happened at around 6.30 am on Sunday morning, when an armed gang of four men who came in an

auto-rickshaw, barged into the house of the victim, allegedly pulled him out and hacked him with knives and sickles.

Police said the assailants destroyed the CCTV cameras set in the neighbourhood and fled the spot in the vehicle. Selvarathinam died on the spot, the police added.

Thyagaraya Nagar police rushed to the spot and have started investigations and are probing the case in every possible angle including enmity in business or other personal issues.

A comedy caper that's fairly engaging

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

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

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



believer in god. Being the sole breadwinner of his household comprising his mom (Urvashi), grandfather (Mouli) and three sisters (including Smriti Venkat), he struggles to make ends meet. However, he aspires to become someone in the media by exposing the fake godman named Bhagavathi Baba (Ajay Ghosh), who by misusing the religious senti-

ments of people wants to usurp vast acres of lands in the name of setting up a spiritual town. Now enters Ramasamy's 'Kula Deivam' Mookuthi Amman (Nayanthara) and how she helps the former's family to unearth Baba's true colors forms the reminder of this partly devotional drama.

Though Nayanthara enters the frame almost 35 minutes

after the film begins, with her terrific screen presence and endearing expressions, she steals the show. She is cute and it is a gratifying aspect that Nayan (Amman) has been given a 'mass hero' treatment. As usual Balaji is loud and chattering non-stop, however he makes it up by evoking laughter partially with his funny one-liners. Urvashi who is the biggest plus to the film is simply remarkable. She proves her versatility and aces in comedy as well as emotional scenes playing her role to the hilt. Ajay Ghosh as the fake godman in an exaggerated role is a cliché. Mouli and Smriti Venkat are okay.

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

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

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SHORT TAKES

ASSAM DEPLOYS DRONES AT BORDER FOR SURVEILLANCE

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

GUPKAR ALLIANCE FAILS TO FINALISE SEAT-SHARING

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

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

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

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

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

COVID: DELHI TO CONDUCT HOUSE SURVEY

From pg1

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

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

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

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

DELHI STUDENTS TO GET LESSONS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

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

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

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

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

—PTI

Gangotri temple closes for winters



A large number of pilgrims attend the door closing ceremony of Gangotri Dham for winter in Uttarkashi on Sunday. After the closure of the temple gates, an idol of goddess Ganga was carried in a palanquin decorated with flowers to Mukhba village where she will be worshipped during winters.

—PTI

Cong: Delay in seat sharing affected Bihar grand alliance

Party serious about introspection, thorough analysis of election results

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

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

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

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

Nearly 160 tonnes of biomedical waste generated during election

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—PTI

LJP CLAIMS IT PROVED ITS WORTH IN BIHAR

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

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

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

—PTI

World troubled by expansionist forces, says PM

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LEGENDARY | LIFE

Feluda is no more. Apu said goodbye. Farewell, Soumitra (Da) Chatterjee, tweets Mamata Bengal breaks down as Soumitra Chatterjee passes away

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 15

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

The versatile thespian is survived by his wife Deepa, son Sougata and daughter Poulomi. Chatterjee had won the national film awards thrice and was a recipient of the Dadasaheb Phalke Award in 2012

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

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

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



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

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

Eulogising his famous

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

NARENDRA MODI Prime Minister

roles in popular Bengali films *Joybaba Felunath* and *Apur Sansar*, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on Twitter, "Feluda" is no more. 'Apu' said goodbye. Farewell, Soumitra

(Da) Chatterjee. He has been a legend in his lifetime. International, Indian and Bengali cinema has lost a giant. We will miss him dearly. The film world in Bengal has been orphaned. Best known for his films with Satyajit Ray, Soumitra Da was conferred with Legion of Honor, Dadasaheb Phalke Award, Banga Bibhushan, Padma Bhushan & several National Awards. A great loss. Sorrowed. Condolences to his family, the film fraternity & his admirers across the world."

Visiting the hospital Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee later along with her ministerial colleagues

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

His funeral was performed at Keoratala Crematorium with a gun salute by the Kolkata police.

Mourning Soumitra Chatterjee's demise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said, "Shri Soumitra Chatterjee's death is a colossal loss to the world of cinema, cultural life of West Bengal and India. Through his works, he came to embody Bengali sensibilities, emotions and ethos.

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

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

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

IN BRIEF ISRAELI HOUSES TO COME UP IN EAST JERUSALEM

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

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

AZERBAIJAN TO PROTECT CHURCHES: PREZ

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

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

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

POLICE GRAFT: BALTIMORE TO PAY \$8 MN

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

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

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

Violence erupts as Trump supporters, rivals clash

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

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

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

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



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

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

Videos posted on social media showed some demonstrators and counter-demonstrators trading shoves, punches and slaps. Anti-Trump protesters clashed with law enforcement in downtown DC as they tried to make their way to a hotel where Trump supporters were staying, the CNN reported. President Trump on Saturday briefly drove by the protesters through Pennsylvania Avenue on his way to his golf course in a Virginia suburb and he waved at his supporters.

Later in the day, Trump in a tweet alleged that

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

Thousands attend protest against Bibi

Jerusalem, Nov. 15: Several thousand protesters gathered outside Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's official residence in Jerusalem on Saturday night in what has become a weekly demonstration calling for the Israeli leader to resign.

The protesters have been demonstrating for some five months, saying Netanyahu is unfit to lead while he is on trial for corruption charges and because of his handling of the Coronavirus crisis.

The pandemic has hit Israel's economy hard, and many of the protest-

ers are students and young Israelis who have lost their jobs.

Many protesters held Israeli flags or black or pink flags, which the grassroots movements behind the demonstrations have adopted as symbols. With the weather cooling down ahead of the rainy winter season, turnout Saturday appeared to be lower than in recent weeks. Smaller demonstrations also were reported in Tel Aviv, outside Netanyahu's vacation home in the upscale coastal town of Caesarea and locations across the country.

— AP

Peru Prez faces calls to resign

Lima, Nov. 15: The head of Peru's Congress has called for the "immediate resignation" of interim president Manuel Merino after a violent crackdown on protests against his new government left at least three dead and more than 60 injured.

Thousands have taken to the streets in days of protests against Merino following the ouster of his popular predecessor Martin Vizcarra, who was impeached on corruption allegations on Monday.

"I ask Mr. Merino to evaluate his immediate resignation," Congress head Luis Valdez said in a statement Saturday night to Channel N television.

Lawmakers will meet in an emergency session on Sunday to discuss Merino's resignation, a statement released later on the Congress Twitter account said.

The ultimatum came after news of the death of three protesters during a massive and peaceful march in Lima, which was violently repressed by police firing shotgun pellets and tear gas.

Lima mayor Jorge Munoz, from the same center-right Popular Action party as Merino, also demanded the resignation of the president.

● **THOUSANDS HAVE** taken to the streets in days of protests against Merino following the ouster of his popular predecessor Martin Vizcarra, who was impeached on corruption allegations on Monday. The ultimatum came after news of the death of three protesters during a massive and peaceful march in Lima.

"I just found out about the third death" in the protests, said the Archbishop of Lima, Carlos Castillo, deploring the police crackdown in a statement to state television. Police reported two deaths, while the National Human Rights Coordinator indicated it was investigating whether there were four.

The Ombudsman's Office said the first fatality, a 25-year-old man, was killed by pellet shots to the head and face. At least 63 protesters were injured, the health ministry said.

The police tactics have been criticized by the UN and rights organizations such as Amnesty International since the protests began on Tuesday.

— AFP

Gilgit-Baltistan assembly poll over, counting begins

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

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

— PTI



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

— AFP

Special courts for speedy rape trials

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

Under the proposed law, rape cases would not be investigated by ordinary police officials and only a gazetted officer up to the level of DIG or SSP would monitor these cases, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Parliamentary Affairs Babar Awan said.

— PTI

Indian couple's drive-by wedding

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

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

home and wished them.

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

— PTI

Virus curbs tighten in Europe as global deaths top 1.3 mn

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

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

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

NEW COMPOUNDS TO TREAT NOVEL VIRUS IDENTIFIED

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

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

— PTI

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

— AFP

German ad hails couch potatoes

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

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

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

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

— AP

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

— AP

Famine of biblical proportions in '21: WFP

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

David Beasley said in an interview with *The Assoc-*

iated Press that the Norwegian Nobel Committee was looking at the work the agency does every day in conflicts, disasters and refugee camps, often putting staffers' lives at risk to feed millions of hungry people — but also to send "a message to the world that it's getting worse out there ... (and) that our hardest work is yet to come."

— AP

SATHYAMCINEMAS/cdts	ESCAPE/cdts	DEVIKALA/cdts	WOODLANDS/cdts	ALBERTA/cdts	SANGAM/cdts
VillivakkamAGS/cdts	OmrAGS/cdts	T.NagarAGS/cdts	MadhuravoyalAGS/cdts	NaavalurAGS/cdts	UDHAYAM/cdts
KOYAMBEDURDHINAI/cdts	MAYAAJAL/cdts	GOPIKRISHNA/cdts	AmbatturRAKKI/cdts	AmbatturMURUGAN/cdts	
UllagaramKUMARAN/cdts	TamaramMR/cdts	MMTheatre/cdts	KanchiKARTHIKEYAN/cdts	ChegalpetSRK/cdts	

THIRD EYE CREATION

RUNNING SUCCESSFULLY

"ATTU" RISHI RITHVIK

MARIJUANA

WRITTEN - DIRECTED MD.VIJAY

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PRODUCER MD.VIJAY

UFO TREND MUSIC

DECCAN Chronicle

16 NOVEMBER 2020

No sign of a thaw yet at the LAC in Ladakh

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Covid-19: Stick to protocol

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

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

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

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

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Karimnagar: Survey No. 1341, Vavilalpally Colony, Jagitayala Road, Karimnagar 505 001. Phone: (0878) 2228908; Telefax (0878) 2230433
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Subhani



Will apex court protect liberty for all citizens?



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

LIFE SANS NEWSPAPER

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

R. Sivakumar, Chennai

EASY TO PREACH

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

N. Mahadevan, Chennai

USUAL GIMMICKS

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

N.V. Krishnan, Chennai

Anita Katyal Political Gup-Shup



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

quick
BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	43,637.98	0.45
Nifty 50	12,780.25	0.47
S&P 500*	3,566.86	0.84
Dollar (₹)	74.61	0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.19	0.21
Euro (₹)	88.11	0.049
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,425*241	0.47
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	42.87	-0.66
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.878	-0.024
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.893	0.007

* As of Friday/Saturday

UAE 'golden' visa allows 10-year residency to pros

The UAE has approved granting "golden" visas allowing 10-year residency to certain professionals and others. All holders of doctorate degrees, medical doctors and also computer, electronics, programming, electrical and biotechnology engineers are eligible. Also eligible are those with specialised degrees in artificial intelligence, big data and epidemiology, as well as school students living in the UAE who rank top in studies.

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■ World's biggest trade agreement floats 15-country bloc
Asia-Pacific nations sign
RCEP pact without IndiaGURDIP SINGH
SINGAPORE, NOV. 15

Fifteen Asia-Pacific nations, including China, on Sunday signed the world's biggest trade agreement, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), sans India with hopes that it will help recover from the shocks of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The RCEP was signed after eight years of negotiations at the annual summit of Southeast Asian leaders and their regional partners, held virtually this year.

The agreement, which covers almost a third of the world economy, will progressively lower tariffs across many areas in the coming years, reported Channel News Asia.

After the signing, all countries would have to ratify the RCEP within two years before it becomes effective.

India, a leading consumer-driven market in the region, pulled out of talks last year, concerned that the elimination of tariffs would open its markets to a flood of imports.

But other nations have said in the past that the door remains open for India's participation in the RCEP, influenced by China.

The RCEP was first proposed in 2012 and loops in 10 Asean economies—Indonesia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei, Vietnam, Laos, Myanmar and Cambodia—along



SIGNATORIES WAIT FOR INDIA

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Countries that have signed the RCEP agreement can start negotiations with India for joining the pact once New Delhi submits a written request stating its intention for the same, according to a declaration.

On November 4 last year, India walked out of mega free trade agreement as negotiations failed to address New Delhi's outstanding issues and concerns.

The remaining 15 member countries have signed the RCEP agreement and have stated that the pact would

remain open to India.

"The RCEP signatory states will commence negotiations with India at any time after the signing of RCEP agreement once India submits a request in writing of its intention to accede to RCEP agreement to the depositary of the RCEP agreement, taking into consideration the latest status of India's participation in RCEP negotiations and any new development thereafter," according to the Ministers' Declaration on India's Participation in RCEP.

The declaration is dated November 11. —PTI

with China, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia.

Host country Vietnam's prime minister Nguyen Xuan Phuc said the pandemic has harmed global and regional trade and investment flows, including the countries partici-

pating in the RCEP talks.

The global and regional economies are facing huge obstacles and challenges caused by not only Covid-19 but also decreased global trade, he was quoted as saying by the Vietnam News Agency (VNA). The conclusion of the

negotiations of the RCEP, the largest free trade agreement in the world, will send a strong message of Asean's leading role in supporting the multilateral trade system, helping to create a new trading structure in the region. VNA quoted Phuc as saying.

Singapore prime minister Lee Hsien Loong said he joins fellow RCEP countries "in hoping that India too, will be able to come on board at some point so that the participation in the RCEP will fully reflect the emerging patterns of integration and regional cooperation in Asia."

They make up nearly a third of the world's population and account for 29 per cent of global gross domestic product, he said.

"We have reached a major milestone of signing this agreement today. It has taken us eight years, 46 negotiating meetings and 19 ministerial meetings to get here," he said.

Malaysia's trade minister Mohamed Azmin Ali, ahead of the summit, had said, "after eight years of negotiating with blood, sweat and tears, we have finally come to the moment where we will seal the RCEP Agreement this Sunday."

The four-day Asean summit included meetings between Southeast Asian leaders and their counterparts from China, Japan and South Korea in the Asean Plus Three Summit, as well as the East Asia Summit and RCEP Summit. —PTI

Infosys says
63% of US
ops no longer
tied to visas

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Infosys has been "intensely focused" on skilling and generating local employment in markets like the US, which has helped the IT services major become about 63 per cent visa-independent in the US and over 50 per cent in Europe and Australia-New Zealand, its chief operating officer Pravin Rao said.

Infosys, which counts the US as its biggest market, said it is still early to comment on the approach the new US administration could take towards work visas but it expects to continue benefiting from its localisation efforts.

"We continue to see challenges to mobility of talent. New proposed immigration regulations in USA could impact onsite wage costs, granting of visas, tenure of visas, and overall costs of compliance."

"Our localisation programme across USA, Europe and Australia, launched three years ago, mitigates many of these," said at a recent analyst meet.

He said Infosys has eight innovation hubs across the US and the EU, nine global Digital Studios (including a 5G lab in Melbourne) and seven global cyber defence centres.

"We are close to 63 per cent visa-independent in the US and over 50 per cent in Europe and ANZ," he said. —PTI

RIL acquires 96%
in Urban Ladder

New Delhi, Nov. 15: Reliance Industries' retail arm has picked up a 96 per cent stake in online furniture retailer Urban Ladder for over Rs 182 crore.

In August, RIL had acquired a majority stake in digital pharmacy marketplace Netmeds for around Rs 620 crore.

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries (RIL), has acquired equity shares of Urban Ladder Home Decor Solutions Pvt Ltd for a cash consideration of Rs 182.12 crore, RIL said on Saturday.

The investment represents 96 per cent holding in the equity share capital of Urban Ladder, it added.

RRVL has an option of acquiring the balance stake, taking its shareholding to 100 per cent.

Besides, RRVL has proposed to make a further investment of up to Rs 75 crore in Urban Ladder.

The further investment is expected to be completed by December 2023, it said.

This acquisition will help RIL in bolstering its presence in the fast-growing e-commerce segment and widening the bouquet of consumer products provided by it as it looks to compete with e-commerce majors as Amazon and Flipkart.

The investment will further enable the group's digital and new commerce initiatives and widen the bouquet of consumer products provided by the group, while enhancing user engagement and experience across its retail offerings, it said.

According to RIL, no governmental or regulatory approvals were required for the investment. RIL, which has been on a fund raising spree by selling stakes in RRVL, had earlier this month announced a Rs 9,555 crore investment from Public Investment Fund of Saudi Arabia, taking total fundraise in the last two months to Rs 47,265 crore.

The investment had valued RRVL at a pre-money equity value of Rs 4,587 lakh crore. Reliance Retail Ltd, a subsidiary of RRVL, operates India's largest retail business with 12,000 stores.

The booming e-commerce market in India will be worth \$86 billion by 2024, according to research firm Forrester. —PTI

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: Don't change anything progressing according to plans. Shifting goal posts, sudden changes may make you impatient, but you'll be able to handle things.



Taurus: Innovative strategies will be your best assets today. You'll find sudden insights about nagging issues. Cut back on commitments that don't provide promised returns.



Gemini: Despite work pressures and distractions, you'll make smart decisions under pressure. Innovative ideas will maintain your edge over the competition.



Cancer: Think through your ideas, especially new ones. Effectively pacing yourself will ensure your energy levels remain high and you'll manage to do a lot.



Leo: You'll objectively analyse and discuss issues affecting a close relationship. Test new ideas now. Your efforts to intensify love will gradually find success.



Virgo: Staying healthy and fit will keep you in shape and maintain your energy levels. Expect positive news regarding a family member. Simmering domestic issues could come to the fore. Your efforts to intensify love will gradually find success.

You share your b'day with
Arjun Kapoor is an Indian film actor who appears in Bollywood films. He is known for his roles in the films Ishaqzaade, Gunday, 2 States, Finding Fanny, Ki & Ka



Libra: Avoid scattering energy on things that can wait for another time. You may be competitive. Syncing old strategies with your current projects increases your efficiency.



Scorpio: Emotional responses could worsen matters. Work gets hectic. Obstacles can be overcome with determination and an extra initiative.



Sagittarius: Set firm boundaries so you're not taken lightly. You may be in an active frame of mind and will easily get through your tasks.



Capricorn: Focus on emerging opportunities at work and home. You'll be more competitive and assertive than usual when dealing with people constantly challenging authority.



Aquarius: Assert authority with those undermining yours. Deliver relevant information without going off tangent. Avoid committing till you check all options.



Pisces: Additional work experience helps you speed up your career growth. Some of your creative ideas have potential, but work on the details before you share them.

bridge
PHILLIP
ALDER

KEEP
YOUR
EYES ON
VERACIOUS
PLAYS

Sushma Swaraj, who was an Indian politician and a Supreme Court lawyer, said, "My best and most trustworthy friend is my husband. I trust him more than I trust myself." He can establish three diamond winners but might lose too many tricks first. The first trick went heart four, two, 10 (bottom of touching honors when playing third hand high), three. East returned the heart six

In today's deal, South is in a no-trump. What happened after West led a fourth-highest heart four? South starts with five top tricks: four spades (given the 3-2 split) and one heart. He can establish three diamond winners but might lose too many tricks first. The first trick went heart four, two, 10 (bottom of touching honors when playing third hand high), three. East returned the heart six

North	South
♠ 9 8 4	♠ 10 7 2
♥ 2	♥ 10 7 2
♦ 10 8 6	♦ 10 8 6
♣ 10 8 6	♣ 10 8 6
West	East
♠ 10 7 2	♠ 10 7 2
♥ 10 7 2	♥ 10 7 2
♦ 10 8 6	♦ 10 8 6
♣ 10 8 6	♣ 10 8 6
Declarer: South	Defender: North
Vulnerable: South	Vulnerable: North
Pass: Pass	Pass: Pass
NT	NT
Opening lead: ♠ 4	

(original fourth-highest): ace, seven, nine. South cashed his four spade winners ending on the board. (West threw the club eight and the diamond three, and East parted with the club six.) Then declarer called for the diamond six. East ducked this trick but had to take the second diamond. East switched to a club, and West took four tricks: his club and heart honors. But South had the rest for

his contract. West had blocked the heart suit. The first trick marked East with the heart jack (otherwise, declarer would have won with that card, not the ace). So West should have dropped his heart king under South's ace. Then the defenders could have taken four hearts, one diamond and two clubs without difficulty. Copyright United Features Syndicate (Asia Features)

CALVIN AND HOBBS | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



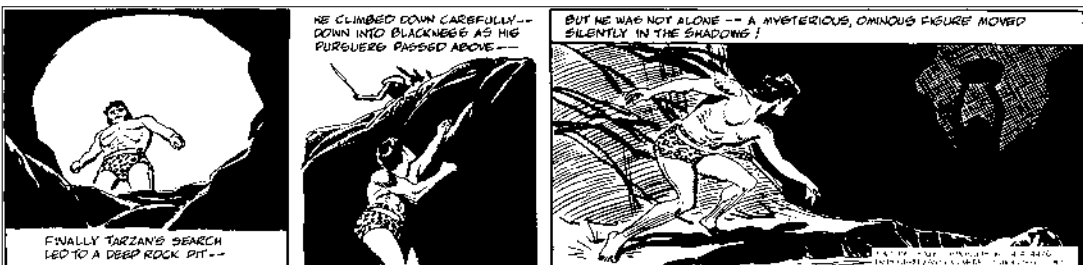
BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



TARZAN | Edgar Rice Burroughs



SHORT TAKES

Star cricketers in selection panel

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

Car racer Pace dies from Covid

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

France bag finals spot, Germany win

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

Johnson seizes Masters lead

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

Live on TV

TENNIS

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

WWE

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

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SEVENTH WONDER

Hamilton wins record-equalling seventh F1 world title

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hami: Not bad for boy from council house

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

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

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

Hamilton's journey was unprivileged and without

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

— LEWIS HAMILTON



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

— *AFP*

LEWIS LETS TEARS FLOW AFTER WIN

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

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

starting to build up.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— *AP*

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

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

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

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

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

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

Thiem survives Tsitsipas scare

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

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

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

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

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

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

icately dinked forehand at the net in the second game.

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

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

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

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

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



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

— *AP*

Aussies love to hate 'polarising' Kohli

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kohli withdrawal has put broadcaster, CA in distress



Ayaz Memon
Over The Top

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

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

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

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

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

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

the T20 World Cup.

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

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

But while terribly impor-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Perhaps. That Kohli wanted to be with his wife

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

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

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

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