

CAPITAL ISSUE

HC seeks details of CAMPA funds

Vijayawada: The AP High Court directed the additional solicitor general to submit details on usage of funds sanctioned by Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management Authority to the forest department in the state. The court while hearing a petition on improper usage of funds sanctioned by the Centre through CAMPA to the state forest department by the social activist Thota Suresh Babu here on Friday, asked for details on spending of such funds by the state government.

HC: HOW GOVT CAN BUILD HOUSE ON GREYHOUNDS LAND

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

The AP High Court asked the state government as to how it could build a state guest house on a land allotted to the police special forces called greyhounds in Visakhapatnam.

Amaravati JAC leader Gadde Tirupati Rao filed a petition in the court challenging the state government's proposal to build a state guest house on Kapuluppada Hill.

During the hearing in the case here on Friday, the petitioner's counsel Vunnam Muralidhar argued in the court that it was not appropriate to plan to build the state guest house on a land allotted for the greyhounds and he also informed the court that the place was being used for various training programmes to tackle naxalites and terrorists.

The court directed the state government to file its counter in a week's time and asked it to make the Centre as a party in the case. The court also asked the AP government not to fell trees in 30 acres land allotted for guest house construction.

HC QUESTIONS GOVT ON RELOCATION OF CAPITAL CITY

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

The AP High Court on Friday asked the state government how it could relocate the capital city by setting up an administrative capital in Visakhapatnam even after spending thousands of crores of rupees on the Amaravati capital region.

The court, while hearing a batch of petitions on the decentralisation of administration by setting up three capitals — turning Amaravati, Visakhapatnam, and Kurnool into legislative, administrative and judicial hubs respectively — made critical comments on the state government's decision to relocate the capital city.

The court observed that there was no such precedence anywhere in the country and commented that the act of the AP government was tantamount to flouting constitutional provisions. The court observed that it would not tolerate the abuse of public money and would intervene on the issue if warranted.

In a separate development, the court expressed its displeasure with the police for implicating the farmers belonging to the SC community fighting for retaining the capital city at Amaravati under the provisions of the SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989. The court wondered how the farmers could be jailed for 18 days. The court also observed that if that was the case, it could be considered as the violation of the fundamental rights of the farmers. The court asked the police as to why they could not produce proper reasons for the arrest of the farmers and said that it could be considered as a contempt of court. Finding fault with the police for failing to handle the farmers' case properly, the court advised them to go by law and the Constitution. The court also faulted the police for failing to file their report properly.

LOKESH: YSRC GOVT HAS ALWAYS BEEN ANTI-FARMERS

Vijayawada: Telugu Desam national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Friday alleged that the YSRC government was resorting to 'highhanded behaviour and arm-twisting tactics' to suppress Amaravati farmers' agitation against the arbitrary three Capitals proposal.

The farmers of Krishnapalem, who were recently released, met Lokesh at Undavalli on Friday. He said it as highly condemnable that SC, ST atrocities cases were filed against the Dalit farmers, who staged agitations to continue Amaravati as only capital of AP.

Nivar leaves a trail of destruction

Man dies after his car stuck in floodwaters at Irala, Chittoor district received an average rainfall of 10.4 cm

NDRF and SDRF rescue 13 stranded people in Chittoor

FROM PAGE 1

In Chittoor district, heavy rainfall associated with gale winds under the influence of Nivar cyclone created havoc in the district. Several water bodies across the district breached, causing hardships to the people and halting the traffic movement.

The cyclone destroyed standing crops in thousands of acres, resulting in crop loss running into crores of rupees. The Chittoor district administration has directed the field staff to assess the damage on war-footing soon after the rain subsides. Teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) along with police rescued 13 persons stranded in floodwaters.

In East Godavari district,

more than 55,000 hectares of paddy and other crops in 1,807 hectares have been affected due to ₹Nivar Cyclone' till Friday.

In an unusual development, some fishermen families in Uppada ventured out in the rain, braving the wind to search for gold on the coast near Market Centre in Uppada and Suradapeta of U.Kothapalli Mandal. There was a rumour about scattered gold ore on the coast, which made several people brave the rain in large numbers.

In Kurnool district, the cyclone battered Nandyal division with Chagalamarri receiving 84.4 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours. Sirivella, Allagadda, Koilkuntla, Orvakallu, Atmakur worst affected. Maize and Paddy crop was damaged in 6,500 hectares due to the cyclone.

LOW-PRESSURE AREA OVER SOUTH COASTAL AP

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 27

The Cyclone Nivar has weakened and lay over a low-pressure area over south coastal Andhra Pradesh and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal on Friday.

"After crossing Puducherry, the cyclone moved northwestward and took a curve and moved northwards and lay as a low-pressure area over south coastal AP and west-central Bay of Bengal," said IMD director for Andhra Pradesh S Stella.

She said under its influence, heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely over

coastal Andhra Pradesh and Rayalaseema areas during the next 24 hours.

Similarly, a cyclonic circulation lays east equatorial Indian Ocean and adjoining south Andaman Sea and extends up to 5.8 km mean sea level. Under its influence, a low-pressure area is very likely to form over southeast Bay of Bengal during next 24 hours and intensify further. It is likely to move westwards and reach Tamil Nadu-Puducherry coasts on December 2. Under its influence, heavy rainfall is likely from December 1 onwards over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal.



A bus carrying women to an industry in Sri City is stuck in floodwaters in Sathyavedu mandal of Chittoor district on Friday. Locals helped the women to alight from the bus and reach their destination.

Heavy inflows into Somasila pose threat to habitations downstream

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE/KURNOOL, NOV. 27

Flood situation is grave in SPSR Nellore district following inflows into the Somasila reaching dangers level of above 4 lakh cusecs. Penna barrage has been receiving huge inflows from the Somasila and we are shifting the people living in vulnerable areas to safer places," said collector K.V.N.

Chakradhar Babu while appealing the people to be on alert. Elsewhere, NDRF/SDRF teams rescued 120 persons at Devarayapalli in Anantasagar mandal apart from 100 members stranded in RTC buses which were stuck in the swirling floodwaters at Saidapuram.

Standing crops are damaged in 70,000 hectares of

land in Prakasam district following heavy rains under the influence of Cyclone 'Nivar' as per preliminary reports from field level officials. Nivar cyclone battered Nandyal division with Chagalamarri receiving 84.4 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours. Sirivella, Allagadda, Koilkuntla, Orvakallu, Atmakur worst affected. Maize was damaged due to cyclone. Paddy fields fell to ground. 6500 hectares of crops have been damaged due to the cyclone, the district administration estimated. Paddy is worst affected as 4500 hectares of crop got damaged. 150 hectares of horticulture crops like banana and papaya were lost.

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Reports trigger gold search along seashore in EG

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, NOV. 27

While most people in East Godavari are staying indoors due to chilli winds and heavy rains following Cyclone Nivar, certain fishing families are venturing into the rain to search for gold along the sea coast near the Market Centre in Uppada and Suradapeta of U. Kothapalli mandal.

The search along the coast started following reports that one or two persons had found gold ornaments along the coast. These reports said certain

houses along the coast had been swallowed by the sea and tidal waves may have swept ashore gold ornaments from these houses.

Meanwhile, cyclonic weather continued throughout the day in East and West Godavari districts on Friday too.

A three-year-old boy Nookapeyyi Lucky of Tatapudi village in Kapileswaram mandal died when he fell into a water-filled pit in Ryali village of Atreyapuram mandal. He had come there along with his parents Durga Prasad and Gopi on Wednesday.

More than 55,000 hectares of paddy and other crops over 1,807 hectares have been affected due to Nivar Cyclone till Friday in 602 villages of 59 mandals, according to agriculture officials. Most of the paddy crop was affected in mandals of U. Kothapalli (2,400 hectares), Uppalagupam (2,010 hectares), Amalapuram (1,603), Allavaram (1,150), Katrenikona (1,954), I. Polavaram (1,521), Mamidikuduru (904), Razole (1,495), Prathipadu (1,320), Tuni (1,213), Rowthulapudi (1n423) and other areas.

A temporary road laid between Samalkot and Pithapuram has been badly damaged due to rains.

In the earlier cyclone, an old bridge in the area had collapsed, following which the temporary road had been laid.

East Godavari district registered an average of 87.7 rainfall with the highest rainfall being 149.2 mm at Malkipuram, 135.4 mm in Sakshinetipalli, 136 mm in Allavaram, 147.2 mm in Amalapuram, 119.6 mm in Uppalagupam, 115.4 mm in Katrenikona, 60.6 mm in Rajamahendravaram,

114.2 mm in Samalkot, 112 mm in Pithapuram, 102.6 mm in U. Kothapalli, 87 mm in Rajanagar and 131.6 mm in Kakinada.

West Godavari district reported an average rainfall of 76.7 mm, the highest being at Achanta -147.6 mm, Poduru -117.6 mm, Bhimavaram -113.4 mm and Palakollu -111.2 mm. Telugu Desam Party Kakinada parliamentary district president Jyothula Naveen Kumar has demanded that the state government pay Rs. 30,000 per acre to farmers who have lost their crop in the present Nivar Cyclone.

STATE AFFAIRS Govt to directly credit ₹1,227 crore into the farmers' bank accounts on December 15

Cabinet nod for crop insurance, distribution of pattas

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

The AP Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, gave its nod to pay crop insurance for 2019-20 Kharif season, whereby ₹1,227.774 crore will be credited into farmers' accounts on December 15 and to distribute house site pattas on Christmas day.

Briefing the media here on Friday, agriculture minister Kurasala Kannababu said the state government has borne the entire premium for crop insurance without even charging one rupee from farmers. He said that between 2016 and 2019 farmers paid a premium of ₹871.26 crore, and for 2019 Kharif, the state government had borne the entire premium of ₹1,030.74 crore. While only 60.84 lakh farmers have availed crop insurance of ₹37,453.79 crore from 2016-19, in just one year, 2019-20, nearly 58.77 lakh farmers were brought under crop insurance, which is to the tune of ₹37,721.57 crore.

Kannababu said that the Cabinet okayed distribution of 30.60 lakh house site pattas on December 25, costing ₹23,000 crore. He stated that construction of the houses will commence the same day, with a target to complete 16 lakh houses in 8,494 layouts under Phase 1 by June 2022, at a cost of ₹1.80 lakh per unit.

The minister explained, "D Forms" will be given

Govt rules out changes in Polavaram dam height

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

Minister for agriculture Kurasala Kannababu said on Friday that the Cabinet has approved incorporation of Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) under Uttarandhra Irrigation Projects Development Corporation limited (UIPDCL) and also another SPV under Andhra Pradesh Palnadu Area Drought Mitigation Projects Corporation limited (AP PADMPCL) duly including Guntur Channel extension scheme and YSR Vedadri lift irrigation scheme under 'YSR Palnadu Drought Mitigation Project'.

A special purpose vehicle, under Krishna-Kolleru salinity mitigation project corporation limited, in which four regulators will come up on Kolleru and three structures under Krishna River.

Kannababu said that the Cabinet also approved for World Bank-assisted dam rehabilitation and improvement project (DRIP), Phase-2 & 3 by administrative approval for an amount of ₹776.50 crore. They also accorded administrative

approval for house site lands under litigation and after the court clearance, a conven-



Kursala Kannababu

tive approval to increase the discharge from 12,000 cusecs to 24,000 cusecs of Somasila-Kandaleru flood flow canal with an amount of ₹918.80 crore.

The Cabinet approved sanction ₹240.53 crore for completion of R&R package in Chitratravati balancing reservoir so as to impound 10 TMC of water in the project. It approved extension works of north feeder channel canal of Rallapadu reservoir in Prakasam district at a cost of ₹632 crore.

Speaking on Polavaram project, Kannababu stated that the Cabinet condemned speculations and reports on reducing the dam height and said that there won't be any change in the height of the dam. He said that in addition to these, the Cabinet has approved to change the

deed will be given. For this project, the state government pooled 66,518

system of levying property tax from the annual rental value basis (ARV System) to capital Value (CV) system. He said that only ₹50 is levied as property tax for houses of below poverty line (BPL) families.

Kannababu said that the state Cabinet also agreed to clear pending arrears of DA for employees and pensioners.

With regard to employees and pensioners, DA with a hike of 3.144 per cent, which was applicable from July 2018, will be paid from January along with another hike of 3.144 per cent (applicable from January 2019 and will be paid from July 2021). Also the hike of 5.24 per cent, which was applied from July 2019, will be paid from January 2022. In addition to these, salaries and pensions that were deferred for March will be paid in December and the April dues in January.

Also, the Cabinet gave a nod to the proposed incentives for Kopparthi YSR Jagananna Mega Industrial Hub, which was aimed to create employment opportunities for youth.

acres of land across the state including government and private lands.

Further, the state government will also distribute TIDCO houses to the beneficiaries by collecting only one rupee."

Kannababusaid that to empower women and strengthen the dairy sector, the Cabinet approved AP Amul project, which is scheduled for launch on December 2.

He explained that in the first phase, the project will touch 400 villages in Kadapa, Chittoor, and Prakasam districts, where around 9,899 bulk milk chilling Units will be established. He stated that women beneficiaries of Cheyutha and Aasara schemes will be given cattle, goats and sheep on December 10.

Kannababu said that the Chief Minister will launch the resurvey project "YSR Jagananna Shaswatha Bhukaku mariyu Bhuraksha pathakam" on December 21.

He said that the latest technology would be used for conducting comprehensive survey and survey stones will be given to farmers free of cost.

The survey will start on December 21 and will be held in phases until 2023. The Cabinet has approved ₹927 crore for the project. The Cabinet agreed to amend the AP Gaming Act 1974 in the ensuing Assembly Session in order to ban online gambling. Besides these, it approved bills regarding the supply, pricing and manufacturing of quality fodder along with the AP Fisheries University Bill.

ATCHANNAIDU ASKS JAGAN TO RESCUE NIVAR-HIT FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

Telugu Desam AP president K. Atchannaidu made a strong plea to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to rescue the farmers from the heavy crop losses they suffered under the impact of the Nivar Cyclone in the state.

He wrote a letter to the CM saying that crops in thousands of acres were still under water and lamented that over ₹9,720 crore worth crops were damaged in the heavy rains and floods from August to October.

Stating that the cyclone caused irrecoverable blow to the farmers, Atchannaidu said that the government should make arrangements for buying the damaged crops by offering remunerative prices. He claimed that there was a greater need to rescue the farmers who were badly hit because of repeated natural disasters over the past few months.

Atchannaidu asserted that the government did not take preventive measures to save the farmers. He sought YSRC's priorities to be changed in order to avert further damages to the people in times of cyclones and calamities.

SC REVOKES STAY ON COP'S SUSPENSION

From Page 1

In a related development, the Supreme Court on Thursday stayed the order of the AP High Court revoking the suspension of former additional director of police (intelligence) A.B. Venkateswara Rao in a case related to misconduct in the procurement of security equipment from an Israeli firm.

A two-judge bench of the Supreme Court comprising Justice A.M.Khanwilkar and Justice B.R. Gavai gave a ruling in favour of the AP government.

POLICE FOIL MURDER PLAN, ARREST THREE

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

The Tadepalli police foiled murder plan by arresting three persons on Friday.

Guntur urban SP R.N. Ammi Reddy addressing a press meet on Friday said that the Tadepalli police found three persons suspiciously wandering in an auto-rickshaw at Tadepalli in the early hours on Friday hence the police tried to stop them but the trio tried to escape. The police found two big knives, two small knives and chilli powder packets.

OTHER STORIES

RGUKTCET-2020 POSTPONED DUE TO NIVAR CYCLONE

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies (RGUKT) popularly known as IIT, convener D Harinarayana on Friday informed RGUKT CET-2020 has been postponed in view of the impact of severe cyclone in Andhra Pradesh.

The RGUKT CET-2020 scheduled to be held on November 28 was postponed to December 5, 2020 (Saturday).

He said that the students appearing for the test are advised to take note of this change.

Mr Harinarayana said that the test will be held between 11 am to 1 pm on December 5 in the designated centres.

There will be no change in the examination centres or hall tickets allotted to the candidates. The candidates are requested to report at the allocated examination centre two hours before the commencement of the examination along with the hall ticket and any identity proof.

● **THE RGUKT CET-2020 scheduled to be held on November 28 is postponed to December 5, 2020 (Saturday).**

● **THERE WILL BE NO change in the examination centres or hall tickets given to the candidates.**



Prof. Ananda Kumar

RAYALASEEMA UNIVERSITY GETS NEW V-C

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL NOV. 27

Bringing a semblance of academic atmosphere in the Rayalaseema University campus and equipping students to be industry ready are his priorities, said Prof. Ananda Kumar who took charge as the Vice-Chancellor of Rayalaseema University, Kurnool on Friday.

He said the 12-year-old University has a promising future and the stress would be on e-learning, engineering education besides research and development.

Vice-Chancellor Rao was an alumni of Silver Jubilee Government College, Kurnool.

TWO VEGETABLE MARKETS TO BE BUILT IN TIRUPATI

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 27

Two new vegetable markets are being built in Tirupati City with the latest technology soon.

One of them will come up at DBG hospital road in Korlagunta under 4th division in the city at an estimated cost of ₹60 lakh and another near Bonthalamma temple in Karakambadi road in one ward in the city at an estimated cost of ₹3.5 crore.

Tirupati legislator Bhumana Kaunakar Reddy disclosed this while taking part in the groundbreaking ceremony of the two new markets along with Municipal Commissioner P.S. Girisha on Friday. The legislator said there was only one vegetable market in Tirupati in the past.

Commissioner P.S. Girisha said that the civic body had set up nine temporary vegetable markets in the city during the pandemic.

He said they had resumed trading activity in Indira Priya Darshini vegetable market in the city from the last four days. He informed them that they had proposed four vegetable markets in the city for meeting the needs of the public. As part of this, a market was opened at Vaikuntapuram in M.R. Palli on November 23. "Another market was proposed at Balaji colony in the city, and it would be taken up shortly," he said.

He said they are building 120 shops in the vegetable market complex for vegetables and provisions being constructed at the Karkambadi road with the latest technology.

Funds crunch affects survey of rivers in AP

Survey is required to develop safe navigational routes

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN
| DC
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

Lack of funds seems to have delayed the bathymetric survey that is required to develop navigational routes on the Godavari and Krishna rivers to enable tourism boats to operate to popular destinations like Papikondalu, Nagarjuna Hill and others in AP.

In the aftermath of a boat mishap on Krishna river in November, 2017, claiming several lives, the state government had initiated a series of measures ranging from total overhaul of boats to issue of licence, to ensure safety for passengers. Another boat mishap on the Godavari river in September 2019 forced the government to implement all safety norms strictly including setting up control rooms at regular intervals along the flood banks to keep tabs on the boats.

Accordingly, the water resources authorities were supposed to carry out bathymetric survey

● **ACCORDING TO an estimate, it would cost ₹1.8 crore to conduct a bathymetric survey on the Godavari river from Polavaram to Pochavaram covering nearly 70 km so that a navigation route could be developed for tourism boats. This survey has been delayed.**

involving private agencies, after calling for bids. According to an estimate, it would cost ₹1.8 crore to conduct a bathymetric survey on the Godavari river from Polavaram to Pochavaram covering nearly 70 km so that a navigation route could be developed for tourism boats. This survey has been delayed.

However, as the mines authorities excavate sand from the river bed, they assured that they would pay ₹80 lakh out of the total cost of the survey. The authorities are looking for other sources to raise the funds to cover the balance.

Godavari river conservator R. Mohan Rao said, "We are able to find some sources of funding and we will call for bids to select the agency for taking up the survey."

Authorities say that it will take three to four months to conduct such a survey once the works begin. Moreover, the survey has to be done once a year after the river experiences floods. The cost of the repeat surveys, however, will be 10 per cent of the first survey.

On the other hand, sources said that with the Polavaram project scheduled to be completed by December 2021, there is no need for such a survey as the river will be having adequate depth, as huge quantum of water will get stored in the reservoir.

On the Krishna river no bathymetric survey has been done, to fix a safe navigation route from the Nagarjunasagar dam to Nagarjuna Hill where Buddhist relics are secured in a museum, cover-

ing a distance of nearly 10 km. Even here, lack of funds is stated to be the reason. Lack of safe navigation routes on both the rivers is having its impact on plying of tourism boats. Ever since the boat mishap in the Krishna, boat operators are unable to operate their high capacity boats on a regular basis for varied reasons resulting in a huge financial loss and service providers have lost their sources of income.

On the other hand, the authorities are coming up with plans to revive boat operations mainly on both the rivers and also at other places in strict compliance with all safety norms.

AP Tourism Development Corporation joint manager (Water Fleet) Ch. Pavan Kumar said, "We are going to run a pilot boat followed by a fleet of tourism boats equipped with high end communication gadgets, carrying tourists to visit tourist places hereafter following the navigation route to ensure more safety for all."

19 women out of jail told to become good citizens

2 women prisoners freed at Adavivaram

DC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, NOV. 27

As many as 19 women prisoners were released from Central Jail on Friday as per GOMS.No. 131. The state government issued the GO to release the women prisoners who have completed five years of imprisonment as per their good behaviour on August 15. But, due to the Covid-19, it was delayed in their release.

Today, the relatives of the women prisoners thronged to the Central jail and received them with hugs and experienced happy moments. According to sources, two women prisoners did Post Graduate and another two prisoners completed their degree courses from the Jail.

Along with the panchayat raj commissioner, Ballary Zilla Parishad CEO Nandini, Panchayat Raj Commissioner office Director Revanappa, Karnataka State Panchayat Raj Resource Center Director Yalakk Gowda, State Panchayat Raj, Rural Development Corporation Joint Director Ganesh Prasad, Panchayat Development Officers, Planning Officers and Executive Officers were in the team.

The team of officials inspected Somandepalli Grama Sachivalayam-3, Chilamathur Grama Sachivalayam-1 and Rythu Bharosa Kendrams. The Karnataka officials were amazed to know the functioning of the secretariat system while interacting with district officials and staff and observed services are wonderful and useful to the people at the village level without having to go to the mandal and district centres.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIZIANAGARAM, NOV. 27

A 19-year-old youngster said to be academically brilliant allegedly raped a four-year-old minor girl living next door in a village under the Bhogapuram police station limits in Vizianagaram district. The accused, P. Durgarao, is a topper in the academics and was given a cash prize of over ₹25,000 for scoring highest marks in the Intermediate. He was arrested on the charges of rape and produced

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 27

Two women prisoners G. Kantamma and N. Roja who were undergoing life imprisonment were released from Central Jail at Adavivaram on Friday. The two were released as per the GO 149 on special remission issued by the state government on the occasion of Independence Day 2020, according to central jail superintendent N. Rahul. He

their life with these professional courses. Sri Sri Sri Tridandi Chinna Jeer Swamy Trust distributed sewing machines to the prisoners through the Central Jail Superintendent S. Rajarao, Women Jail Superintendent K. Krishna Veni and YSRC leader J. Vijayalakshmi.

Merit student rapes 4-yr-old

before the court and sent to judicial remand, said Deputy Superintendent of Police, Trinath.

The medical examination of the girl was conducted, and the accused confessed the crime, he added. Though the incident occurred on Wednesday, it came to light on Thursday night when the parents of the victim girl approached the police.

The culprit, P. Durgarao, allegedly took the girl to his home on the pretext of playing with her on Wednesday afternoon and allegedly

exploited her. The girl came back home around 1.30 pm on Wednesday for lunch, but she fell sick and complained of pain while attending nature's call.

The parents of the girl took the girl to a private hospital near Tagarapavalasa in Vizag city for treatment on Thursday. Later, the girl narrated the entire episode to her parents.

The accused has been booked under the relevant sections of the IPC and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POSCO).

Department has reduced the paperwork and ensured the timely clearance of various goods. He also said that the government had appointed Nodal Officers to ensure faster clearance of goods at the Ports.

Krishna B. Kotak, chairman, J.M. Baxi Group, in his address said Andhra Pradesh is strategically located and plays a major role in contributing to the overall growth of the country. D. Ramakrishna, chairman, CII Andhra Pradesh and managing director, Efftronics Systems Pvt. Ltd. presided over the inaugural session.



Priests perform Radha Damodara Puja as part of the month-long Karthika Masa Deeksha at Vasantha Mandapam in Tirumala on Friday. Processional deities of Sri Malayappa Swamy, Sridevi, Bhudevi were brought to Vasantha Mandapam for the event.

— DC

AP registers dip in new Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 27

AP has continued its dip in number of new Covid-19 cases and also deaths in the last 24 hours.

Accordingly, the state registered 733 new Covid-19 cases rising tally to 8,66,438 and six deaths taking toll to 6,975.

The authorities released Covid-19 bulletin here on Friday reporting that out of 57,752 samples tested, 733 persons were found infected with the virus. Out of a total of 99,13,068

samples tested so far, 8,47,325 patients were found recovered from the infection of Coronavirus while 12,137 patients are found still active with the virus.

Among daily cases of Covid-19, WG reported the highest of 118 followed by 112 in Guntur, 102 in Krishna, 74 in Chittoor, 73 in Visakhapatnam, 65 in EG, 40 in Antapur, 33 in Kadapa, 31 in Vizianagaram, 29 in Nellore, 22 in Srikakulam, 21 in Kurnool and 13 in Prakasam.

HRF ACTIVIST V.S. KRISHNA AND OTHERS BOOKED UNDER UAPA ACT

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 27

The police filed two FIRs against HRF coordination committee member for AP and Telangana Mr V.S. Krishna and others for influencing Vakapalle rape survivors to depose falsely against the police personnel.

The two FIRs were filed at the Munchingput police station in Visakhapatnam district and Piduguralla in Guntur district invoking Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA). Names of functionaries of other rights, literary and Dalit

organisations were also included in the two FIRs.

HRF representatives S. Jeevan Kumar and A. Chandrasekhar said this is an atrocious allegation. HRF, along with many Adivasi, womens', and mass organisations were active participants since 2007 seeking justice for the 11 Vakapalli women who were raped by special forces personnel.

Thirteen accused police personnel are presently on trial. While two of the Vakapalli women had died in the intervening years, the remaining nine came to Visakhapatnam and deposed in court.

Irrigational official in ACB

Anantapur: ACB sleuths nabbed Irrigation DEE Mohan Gandhi while accepting bribe of ₹2 lakh from a farmer to release compensation in connection with land acquisition process under Chittravathi balancing reservoir. The official was caught red-handedly while collecting bribe.

OBITUARY	
Dr. Paravastu Ranga Chari (S/o Late Paravastu Venkata Ramanuja Swamy) B.Sc., M.S., FRACS, FAMS, FRASC., FICS, FASL, FESA. Consultant Orthopaedic Surgeon, Prof. Emeritus of Orthopaedics - Osmania Med College, Hyd & Formerly Prof. of Orthopaedics Deccan College of Med Sciences, Hyd DOB: 06-06-1927 DOD: 27-11-2020 Funeral today, Sat, 28-11-2020, at 12:30 p.m., from resl. to Bansilalpet Shamshaan Vatika, Hyderabad	
Inserted by: PS Ramanujam (Srikanth) (Son), Sharmila (Daughter-in-law), MVRN Acharyulu (Son-in-law), Padmaja (Daughter), Bhargava & Kalyan (Grandchildren), PVG Rajan (Brother)	Cell: 93913 71293

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IN BRIEF

NAVY'S MIG-29K CRASHES, PILOT MISSING

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Indian Navy's two-seater, trainer aircraft MiG-29K flying over Arabian Sea crashed on Thursday evening. One of the pilots of the MiG-29K was rescued. However, the second pilot is still missing even more than 24 hours after the accident. The missing pilot has been identified as Cdr Nishant Singh. Aircraft and ships are involved in searching for the missing pilot. As a safety mechanism, Indian Navy's pilot flying suit is equipped with vest which inflates and allows them to remain afloat in water during such emergency scenarios. Also there is personal locator in the suit, which when pressed by a pilot in distress, emits emergency radio signal which helps in locating him in such cases. "We have increased the number of units searching for the missing pilot. Every effort is being made to locate him," said a senior official. Till the time of filing of this news report there has been no trace of Cdr Singh.

BID TO CAP SURGE PRICING BY CAB AGGREGATORS

New Delhi, Nov. 27: The government on Friday proposed to cap surge pricing charged by cab aggregators like Ola and Uber at 1.5 times of the base fare. The development assumes significance in the backdrop of a long-pending demand of citizens to cap the pricing of ride-hailing services. "The aggregator shall be permitted to charge a fare 50 per cent lower than the base fare and a maximum surge pricing of 1.5 times the base fare," said the Motor Vehicle Aggregators Guidelines, 2020 issued by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways. This will enable and promote asset utilisation which has been the fundamental concept of transport aggregation and also substantiate the dynamic pricing principle which is pertinent in ensuring asset utilisation in accordance with the market forces of demand and supply, the ministry said. The driver of a vehicle integrated with the aggregator shall receive at least 80 per cent of the fare applicable on each ride and the remaining charges for each ride shall be received by the aggregator. In states where the city taxi fare has not been determined by the state government, an amount of ₹25/30 shall be the base fare for the purpose of fare regulation, the guidelines said. Similar fare fixation shall be done by the state government of other vehicles integrated by aggregators with the relevant state, the ministry said. Research firm RedSeer said that the guidelines for cab aggregators which seek to cap surge pricing at 1.5X among other provisions are expected to have mixed impact for the sector that will benefit from improved safety regulations but could have "negative" fall-outs for drivers' earnings.

● **THE DEVELOPMENT** assumes significance in the backdrop of a long-pending demand of citizens to cap the pricing of ride-hailing services. ● **THE MOVE** will enable and promote asset utilisation which has been the fundamental concept of transport aggregation and also substantiate the dynamic pricing principle which is pertinent in ensuring asset utilisation in accordance with the market forces of demand and supply.



Protesters pelt stones during the Delhi Chalo march by members of various farmer organisations over the farm reform laws at Singhu border in New Delhi on Friday. - PTI

Farmers brave tear gas, baton charge to reach Delhi

Centre invites farmers for talks on Dec. 3; Amarinder welcomes decision

SANJAY KAW & BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 27

Thousands of farmers on Friday braved batons, tear gas and water cannons along the Delhi-Haryana border before the authorities allowed them to march towards the national capital as part of their "Delhi Chalo" protest against the Centre's new farm laws. Punjab Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh, accused by his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal Khattar of instigating farmers, was the first one to welcome the Centre's decision to allow the protesters to enter the city. Soon after Capt. Singh urged the Centre to immediately initiate talks to address the farmers' issues, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar reiterated that the government would hold talks next week. He said, "The government has always been ready to discuss issues with farmers. We have

invited farmers' organisations for another round of talks on December 3. I appeal to them to leave the agitation in view of Covid-19 and winter." After camping overnight near Delhi, the farmers clashed with the police for the second day at the Tikri border near Delhi-Bahadurgarh highway. Carrying flags and shouting slogans, the farmers had gathered at various entry points into Delhi in a determined bid to push their way through as part of their march while the police blocked them with barricades, teargas shells and baton charges. Clashes broke out at multiple places and Delhi's borders resembled a virtual warzone with restless crowds of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, milling around and a sea of police personnel keeping them at bay. Drones circled the air and plumes of smoke from teargas shells could be seen from far. Security was strengthened at the border and sand-laden trucks and

● **CLASHES BROKE** out at multiple places and Delhi's borders resembled a virtual warzone with restless crowds of farmers, mostly from Punjab and Haryana, milling around and a sea of police personnel keeping them at bay. ● **HOURS LATER**, the farmers were given permission to enter Delhi and hold a peaceful protest at the Nirankari Samagam Ground.

water cannons were stationed. Barbed wire was also used for fencing at the Singhu border to prevent the protesters from entering the city earlier in the day. The police resorted to a lathicharge for a brief time to control protesters who broke barricades. Hours later, they were given permission to enter Delhi and hold a peaceful protest at the Nirankari Samagam Ground at Burari in north Delhi. However, there are still thousands of farmers still camping at the bor-

der points, and undecided on whether to go to the identified protest site. It is expected there might be some clarity on this situation on Saturday. Traffic was also disrupted in many parts of the city due to the protests. The Dhansa and Jharoda Kalan borders were closed for traffic, and commuters had to take an alternative route. There were long queues of vehicles on the Delhi-Hardwar stretch due to the closure of the Delhi-Dehradun highway. In Baghpat, the protesters blocked traffic on the Sonipat highway using tractors and raised slogans against the new farm laws. A farmer was killed and two others injured as the tractor-trolley in which they were travelling met with an accident. The Delhi police, which expressed concern over the pandemic situation, had sought permission from the AAP government to use the city's nine stadiums as temporary jails for farmers arrested or detained, but this was denied. Delhi

health minister Satyendra Jain said every citizen had the right to protest peacefully. In a letter to the home secretary, he said the Centre should accept the demands of farmers, adding that putting farmers in jails was not a solution. Former Haryana chief minister Bhopinder Singh Hooda appealed to the people of the state to extend all possible help, like food and accommodation, to the protesting farmers. In a scathing attack on the Centre, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said no government in the world can stop the farmers from fighting the "battle of truth". "The Prime Minister should have remembered that whenever the ego hits the truth, it is defeated. No government in the world can stop the farmers fighting the battle for truth. The Modi government has to accept the demands of the farmers and the black laws have to be withdrawn. This is only the beginning!" Rahul Gandhi tweeted.

I am detained, says Mehbooba

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, NOV. 27

People's Democratic Party (PDP) leader and former chief minister Mehbooba Mufti on Friday claimed that she has been detained at her residence here and is not being allowed to visit the family of her party's youth wing leader Waheed Ur Rehman Parra who was arrested by National Investigation Agency earlier this week in a militancy-related case. Ms. Mufti tweeted, "I've been illegally detained yet again. Since two days, J&K administration has

refused to allow me to visit @parawahid's family in Pulwama. BJP Ministers & their puppets are allowed to move around in every corner of Kashmir but security is a problem only in my case". Later during the day, the PDP leader called a press conference at her residence in Srinagar. Gupkar Road area but the police stopped the invitees from relocating to the venue. Ms. Mufti in another tweet said, "Press has been barred from entering my residence in Srinagar. This despite no written orders explaining my arbitrary detention."

Border clashes spread, two more jawans killed

DC CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, NOV. 27

The renewed intermittent clashes between the facing armies along the Line of Control (LoC) that began in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district earlier this week spread to neighbouring Rajouri district on Friday, leaving, at least, two more Indian soldiers dead. The Army said that the Pakistani troops resorted to "unprovoked ceasefire violation" in Suderbani area of Rajouri early Friday. "Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked

● **ON THURSDAY**, a Junior Commissioner Officer Subedar Swathantra Singh was killed and a local resident was injured along the LoC. cease fire violation on the LoC in Sunderbani sector of district Rajouri on November 27," Lt. Col. Devender Anand, the Jammu-based defence spokesman said. He added, "Our troops responded immediately to the enemy fire. In the ensuing fire, two jawans of the Indian Army Naik Prem Bahadur

Khatri and Rifleman Sukhbir Singh got critically injured and later succumbed to their injuries." He said Naik Prem Bahadur Khatri and Rifleman Sukhbir Singh were "brave, highly motivated and sincere soldiers". On Thursday, a Junior Commissioner Officer Subedar Swathantra Singh of 16 Garhwal was killed and a local resident Muhammad Rashid was injured in Pakistani artillery and small arms fire along the LoC's Kirni and Qasba sectors in Poonch district.

Key Trinamul Cong minister Adhikari quits

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, NOV. 27

Dealing a double blow to the Trinamul Congress ahead of next year's Assembly polls in West Bengal, rebel TMC minister Shubhendu Adhikari resigned from chief minister Mamata Banerjee's cabinet on Friday, while another disgruntled party MLA Mihir Goswami reached New Delhi to join the BJP. He joined the party in the evening. Both have distanced themselves from their party fuelling speculation of their defection to the BJP, which has also kept the door ajar for them. In his resignation letter on Friday, Mr Adhikari told the CM, "I do hereby tender my resignation from my office as minister. Steps may be taken for its immediate acceptance. I am simultaneously emailing this to His Excellency the Governor of West Bengal, for doing the needful at his end. I thank you for giving me opportunity to serve the people of the state, which I did all through with commitment, dedication and sincerity." The TMC heavyweight, who was the face of Ms Banerjee's famous land movement in Nandigram during Left Front rule and later became an MP twice, was the minister of three key state government departments, transport, environment and water resources investigation/development. Within hours of Mr Adhikari's resignation, meanwhile, Bishnupur BJP MP Soumitra Khan made a startling revelation, claiming over 58 TMC MLAs, including state panchayat minister and Narada sting accused Subrata Mukherjee, were ready to defect to the saffron party.

Welcoming Mr Adhikari's step, Mr Khan said in North Bengal, "It was bound to happen. I now imagine what Rabi Babu (TMC MLA Rabindranath Ghosh) and Goutam Da (TMC minister Goutam Deb) will do. It is a matter of concern (sic). I feel that after Mr Adhikari, Subrata Mukherjee is next in the line. On January 9 in 2019, when I joined the BJP, Bhaipo (CM nephew Abhishek Banerjee) had said a lot. But today we have 18 Lok Sabha seats here." Tweeting the resignation letter, governor Jagdeep Dhankhar said, "Today at 1.05 pm a resignation letter of Mr Suwendu Adhikari from office as minister addressed to the chief minister has been forwarded to me. The issue will be addressed from the constitutional perspective." Senior TMC MP Sougata Roy, who recently met Mr Adhikari twice to placate him on Ms Banerjee's instructions, said: "He is still an MLA of our party as he has not quit the post. He has also not tendered his resignation from our party's primary membership. He will remain a member of our party as long as he continues to be an MLA." He added, "Stepping down from the ministership is purely his personal decision. I am feeling sad about. What I had from the conversation with him... I felt he would not quit the party. I am still hopeful. I will try to ensure he remains in our party." Mr Adhikari's step came a day after he quit the chairmanship of Hooghly River Bridge Commis-sioners, a state undertaking in the transport department, sending out his first official signal to the TMC of his exit from government.

MP POLICE TO STOP PRACTICE OF PARADING ACCUSED IN PUBLIC

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 27

Madhya Pradesh police has announced to do away with the practice of parading accused, suspects and arrested people in public, thanks to a recent directive in this regard by Gwalior bench of high court. Additional director general of police (crime investigation department) Kailash Makwana late on Thursday night issued an order asking the IGs of all ranges in the state and district superintendents of police to ensure that the prevailing system of parading the accused, suspects and arrested persons, is put to end in their respective jurisdictions. The order follows a directive issued by Makwana on November 7 prohibiting disclosure of identity and personal information of accused, suspects, arrested persons and victims in any criminal case and publication of their photographs (faces covered or uncovered) in the media. The move by MP police comes in the wake of a recent ruling by Gwalior bench of MP high court that sought abandonment of such a practice while holding that parading of the accused amounts to violation of Article 21. A single bench of the court in its ruling on November 2 quashed the clauses of MP Police circular of 2014 related to production of suspects and victims before the media, disclosure of their personal information and circulation of their photographs in media, holding that the measures violated Article 21 (right to life and personal liberty). The court's order was in response to a petition filed by a Gwalior-based man who was arrested due to mistaken identity recently. The incident has gone viral in social media. The court held that such actions harmed his reputation. The high court directed the director general of police of MP to ensure that such incidents did not recur. The practice of parading the accused, suspects and history-sheeters by police in public was adopted to instill fear in the minds of criminals.

MAHA ATS GETS NOD TO FREEZE PROPERTIES OF DRUG OFFENDERS

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 27

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) got a clearance from Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators Act (SAFEMA) for freezing the property of accused persons in case involving an operation seizing drugs worth around ₹60 crore. The raid by the Vikhroli unit of ATS recovered 146.143 kilograms of mephedrone worth ₹58.55 crore, ₹1.55 crore in cash and three vehicles. The ATS has arrested 13 persons under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act in the case. The case pertains to the raids by an ATS unit who recovered 146.143 kilograms of mephedrone worth ₹58.55 crore, ₹1.55 crore in cash and three vehicles. "The clearance will help us freeze the properties of the accused persons that would make the action against them more stringent," said an officer. The probe in the case had revealed that the accused had bought properties, including a plot in MIDC Shirala in Sangli district in the name of one Sardar Patil, a flat at Panvel in Raigad valued at ₹35.10 lakh, a plot in Panvel worth ₹12.72 lakh and another piece of land valued at ₹32.93 lakh in the name of Kaisuddin Siddiqui. Also, Gold and silver ornaments worth ₹41.32 lakh, seven foreign-made wrist watches and foreign currency were recovered from accused Mohammed Tanvir Abdul Aziz Paryani, who has links with fugitive gangster Dawood Ibrahim, the officer said. The freezing order was issued by SAFEMA authorities on the basis of the ATS probe and a demand made by the latter for such action.

BIG | RELIEF Valuer to assess damages caused in order to calculate the compensation amount

Kangana bungalow demolition wrong: HC

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, NOV. 27

In a relief to actor Kangana Ranaut, the Bombay High Court on Friday quashed and set aside the September 9 order issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) directing demolition of alleged alterations carried out at her Bandra office in Mumbai. HC said the demolition action was bad in law and the demolition was carried out on wrongful grounds. A bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and R.I. Chagla

was hearing a petition filed by Ranaut, seeking that the partial demolition of her Pali Hill bungalow carried out by the BMC be declared illegal. Ranaut had sought ₹2 crore as compensation from the BMC. On the issue of compensation, the bench said it was appointing private firm M/S Shetgiri as the valuer to assess the damages caused in order to calculate the compensation amount due to Ranaut. It further said that the valuer would hear the petitioner and the BMC on monetary damages caused to her due

to the demolition and pass appropriate order before March 21. Court also made it clear that the fees of the valuer would be borne by Ranaut. "The BMC order actuated by legal malice. There is material in pleadings that smacks of malafide and was done to cause substantial losses. We would be perfectly justified to order compensation against respondents," the bench said in its order. The court also allowed Ranaut to take steps to make her property habitable in accordance with the

approved plan. If an application is made to BMC for approval, it will be decided within 4 weeks, the court order said. The bench also asked Ranaut to show restraint in her social media posts and noted, "We do not accept allegations made by the petitioner in view of the alleged atmosphere in the state or film Industry. The petitioner is suggested to maintain restraint on public platforms. Irresponsible statements made by the citizens are best ignored." The BMC had denied the allegations of malafide

action against the actor and said that the actor had carried out illegal work at the bungalow and its officials had therefore acted in accordance with the law in carrying out the demolition work. The bench, however, said that the photographs of the site, BMC's attempts at denying Ranaut's allegation, the comments made by Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut and the editorial in party mouthpiece *Saamana* following the demolition made it clear that the civic body had acted out of malice. On October 5, the court

had reserved its verdict on the plea after days of extensive arguments from all sides. It had also made Sanjay Raut a party to the case and disapproved his tweets and his interview to a TV news channel threatening to teach Ranaut a lesson for her tweets comparing law and order situation in Mumbai to PoK in a tweet. Welcoming the court's decision, Ms Ranaut tweeted, "When individual stands against the government and wins, it's not the victory of the individual but it's the victory of democracy."

IN BRIEF

4.7 magnitude quake hits Turkey

Ankara: An earthquake with a 4.7 magnitude shook Malatya province in eastern Turkey on Friday, sending people pouring out into the streets in fear. There was however, no immediate report of any damage or casualties. The quake, which was centered in the town of Puturge, struck at 11:27 am (local time), Turkey's Disaster and Emergency Management Directorate said. It was felt in several neighboring provinces. Malatya's Gov. Aydin Barus told the state-run Anadolu Agency that his office had not received any "negative reports" concerning possible damage or injuries.

Ex-World Bank prez Wolfensohn dies

New York: James Wolfensohn, who served as the president of the World Bank for 10 years and was a guiding force for a couple of the most well-known cultural institutions in the US, has died. He was 86. Wolfensohn died Wednesday at his home in Manhattan according to the institute for Advanced Study, where he had been a past chair of the board. His son and one of his two daughters also confirmed his death in media reports. Wolfensohn, born in Australia, worked on Wall Street for many years before taking over as the head of the World Bank, a loan-offering global development organisation, in 1995.

Iran envoy goes on trial over bomb plot

Brussels: An Iranian diplomat goes on trial in Belgium on Friday accused of plotting to bomb an opposition rally outside Paris, in a case that has stoked tensions with Tehran. The case shines another uncomfortable light on Iran's international activities just as it hopes to ease tensions with the United States after President Donald Trump tore up the 2015 nuclear deal signed by both countries and other world powers. It also comes a day after a prisoner swap that saw the release of three Iranians jailed over a 2012 bomb plot in Thailand, in exchange for the freeing of an Australian-British lecturer imprisoned by Tehran for alleged spying. In June 2018, Belgian authorities thwarted what they said was an attempt to smuggle explosives to France to attack a meeting of one of Iran's exiled opposition movements. Later that year, the French government accused Iran's intelligence service of being behind the operation, a charge the Islamic republic has furiously denied.

SRI LANKAN MAN RUNS MOBILE LIBRARY FOR KIDS

Colombo, Nov. 27: During his leisure time, Mahinda Dasanayaka packs his motorbike with books and rides his mobile library — across mostly muddy roads running through tea-growing mountain areas — to underprivileged children in backward rural parts of Sri Lanka.

Having witnessed the hardships faced by children whose villages have no library facilities, Dasanayaka was looking for ways to help them. Then he got the idea for his library on wheels. He started his programme, called "Book and Me," three years ago, and it has become very popular among the children.

"There are some kids who hadn't seen even a children's story-book until I went to their villages," he said. Dasanayaka, 32, works as a child protection officer for the government. On his off days — mostly during weekends — he rides his motorbike, which is fixed with a steel box to hold books, to rural villages and distributes the reading material to children free of charge.

"The children are very keen and enthusiastic, they are eagerly waiting for me always looking for new books," Dasanayaka said by phone. His programme is mainly centred in Kegalle, a mountainous region of the Indian Ocean island nation about 85 kilometres (52 miles) northeast of Sri Lanka's capital, Colombo, with poor villages scattered among tea plantations.

He visits the villages once or twice a week to distribute the books. His collection includes about 3,000 books on a variety of subjects. "Boys mostly like to read detective stories such as Sherlock Holmes, while girls prefer to read youth novels and biographies," he said.

Iran's top nuclear scientist assassinated

Tehran, Nov. 27: Top ranking Iranian nuclear physicist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, was "assassinated" in an ambush near Tehran, the Iranian state television reported on Friday.

Fakhrizadeh was shot and injured in his vehicle in Absard, in Damavand county, a suburb in eastern Tehran, and later succumbed to his injuries, Iran's foreign ministry said on Friday.

Local authorities confirmed Fakhrizadeh's death several hours earlier and also said that several attackers were killed in retaliation. The top scien-

tist and six others were killed in the attack.

The semiofficial Fars news agency, believed to be close to Iran's Revolutionary Guard, said the attack happened in Absard, a small city just east of the capital, Tehran. It said witnesses heard the sound of an explosion and then machine gun fire. The attack targeted a car that Fakhrizadeh was in, the agency said.

Those wounded, including Fakhrizadeh's bodyguards, were later taken to a local hospital, the agency said. No group immediately claimed responsibility

for the attack.

"Terrorists murdered an eminent Iranian scientist today. This cowardice — with serious indications of Israeli role — shows desperate warmongering of perpetrators," Mohammad Javad Zarif wrote on Twitter on Friday.

Fakhrizadeh led Iran's Amad (Hope) programme which Israel and the West have alleged was a military operation looking at the feasibility of building a nuclear weapon in Iran.

"If Iran ever chose to weaponise (enrichment), Fakhrizadeh would be known as the father of the

Iranian bomb," one Western diplomat told *Reuters* in 2014.

News of the killing comes amid fresh concern about the increased amount of enriched uranium that Iran is producing. Enriched uranium is a vital component for both civil nuclear power generation and military nuclear weapons.

The International Atomic Energy Agency had said that the Amad programme ended in the early 2000s and that its inspectors now monitor Iranian nuclear sites. Iran's state television on its website later

published a photograph of security forces blocking off the road. Photos and video shared online showed a sedan with bullet holes through windshield and blood pooled on the road.

Israel declined from immediately commenting on the killing. It had earlier alleged that Islamic Republic's military nuclear programme was led by Fakhrizadeh.

Fakhrizadeh's name was specifically mentioned in Israeli PM Benjamin Netanyahu's presentation about Iran's nuclear programme in May 2018.

— Agencies



Photo released by the semi-official Fars News Agency shows the scene where Mohsen Fakhrizadeh was killed in Absard, a small city just east of the capital, Tehran, Iran, on Friday. (Inset) Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

— AP

UK asks regulator to approve AstraZeneca

Britain will be the first nation to get vaccine, if approved

London, Nov. 27: The UK government said on Friday that it has formally asked the country's independent medicines regulator to assess the suitability of Oxford-AstraZeneca's Covid-19 vaccine for temporary supply, as soon as the company submits the necessary safety, quality and efficacy data.

The UK will be one of the first countries in the world to receive the vaccine, if authorised, with pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca expecting to have up to 4 million doses ready for the country by the end of the year and 40 million by the end of March 2021, the government said.

The move to formally seek approval follows the vaccine team declaring its efficacy in trials earlier this week. However, there have been some concerns raised around the way the results were collated. "We have formally asked the regulator to assess the Oxford/AstraZeneca vaccine, to understand the data and determine whether it meets rigorous safety standards. This letter is an important step towards deploying a vaccine as quickly as safely possible," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock, in reference to a formal letter to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's (MHRA).

The MHRA is the UK's independent regulator and has already been tasked with reviewing data from Pfizer/BioNTech to determine whether its Covid-19 vaccine meets "robust" standards of quality, safety, and effectiveness.

— PTI



A physician wearing PPE kit takes a nasal swab for a Covid-19 test, as personnel of the Austrian Armed Forces (Bundesheer) are ready to process it, in Korneuburg, Austria, on Friday.

— AFP

German virus tally crosses 1 million

Berlin, Nov. 27: Germany, once a beacon of hope in Europe's Coronavirus nightmare, logged its one millionth case on Friday, as Russia announced a partnership with India to mass produce its controversial Sputnik vaccine.

Like much of Europe, Germany is battling a resurgence of a pandemic that is filling hospitals and forcing countries to shut down for business while they wait for help from a clutch of vaccines that could start rolling out for use next month.

Some of the excitement about the new jabs dampened when Britain's pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca admitted that

● **RUSSIA ANNOUNCES a partnership with India to mass produce its controversial Sputnik vaccine.**

further research was needed after a mixup in its third-stage trial.

But Russia unexpectedly stepped in with an announcement that an Indian generic drug maker would start producing 100 million doses of its government-backed vaccine in early 2021.

Germany had largely contained the spread when the virus descended on Europe from China at the start of the year after first emerging in December in the Chinese city of Wuhan.

— AFP

CHINA IMPOSES ANTI-DUMPING DUTY ON OZ WINE

Beijing, Nov. 27: China on Friday said it would impose anti-dumping tariffs on Australian wine, the latest salvo in an increasingly terse standoff between the two that has worsened since Canberra called for an inquiry into the origins of Covid-19.

Beijing has on several occasions used the threat of diminished access to its vast domestic market as a stick to beat Australia and has suspended imports of some products including beef and timber. In the latest blow, China's commerce ministry announced wine importers will be forced to pay deposits of 107-212 per cent of the value of their goods at customs.



Elon Musk

AMERICA OPENS PROBE INTO TESLA OVER SUSPENSION FAILURES

Detroit, Nov. 27: The US government's road safety agency is investigating complaints that suspensions can fail on nearly 1,15,000 Tesla electric vehicles.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration says it has 43 complaints that linkages near the ball joints can fail, allowing contact between the tire and wheel liner.

The probe announced Friday covers 2015 through 2017 Model S sedans and 2016 through 2017 Model X SUVs. The agency says 32 owners complained of failures at low speeds, but 11 said the links failed on roads while traveling above 10 mph including four at highway speeds.

It says the number of complaints is increasing as the vehicles age, with 32 in the last two years. Three of the highway complaints came in the last three months.

The agency says it will investigate how often the problem happens and the safety consequences. The probe could lead to a recall. A message was left early Friday seeking comment from Tesla. — AP

Will leave if EC confirms Biden's win: Trump

Washington, Nov. 27: US President Donald Trump said for the first time that he will leave the White House if the Electoral College declares Joe Biden as the winner, but made clear he is not prepared to "concede" the election.

Trump, a Republican, has refused to accept defeat in the November 3 presidential election, and told reporters on Thursday that it would be "hard" to concede to Biden, a Democrat. "Certainly I will, and you know that," Trump said

when asked by a reporter about leaving the White House if Biden is declared the winner on December 14. "I will and, you know that." "It's going to be a very hard thing to concede because we know there was massive fraud," Trump said, once again repeating the unsubstantiated claims of voter fraud.

The 538-member Electoral College is scheduled to meet on December 14 and is expected to formally declare the 78-year-old former vice president as the 46th US President.

Under the US electoral system, voters do not directly choose the president. Instead, they vote for 538 officials, who are allocated to American states based on their population size. Biden leads Trump 306 votes to 232 under the Electoral College system used to pick US presidents. Biden's tally is far more than the 270 needed to win the race for the White House, and he also leads the popular vote by more than six million.

In his Thanksgiving Day remarks, Trump, however,

said it will be a mistake if the Electoral College were to elect Biden. "It's going to be a very hard thing to concede," Trump told reporters when asked during a press call at the White House what he will do if the Electoral College elects Biden. "If they do, they made a mistake," he said.

On his plans for his last Thanksgiving in the White House, Trump said, "You can't say what's first or last." It might be the "first one of the second term," Trump, who is con-

tinuing his legal efforts to upend his victory. Earlier this week, Trump allowed the official start of Biden's transition to power without conceding defeat.

Biden due to be sworn in as president on January 20. However, election officials in key battleground states have declared Biden the winner, giving him an unofficial 306-232 edge in the Electoral College that determines the outcome of US presidential contests.

"This was a massive fraud," Trump said of the election. — PTI

PORK | ROASTED

Ractopamine additive, allowed in pork meat imported from the US, bone of contention

Pig guts fly in Taiwan Parliament protest

Taipei, Nov. 27: Opposition lawmakers hurled pig organs inside Taiwan's parliament on Friday to protest the government's decision to ease restrictions on pork imports from the United States.

Taiwan's notoriously rambunctious legislature frequently sees chaotic clashes between rival lawmakers but Friday's scuffles were particularly novel.

Lawmakers from the opposition Kuomintang (KMT) party dumped buckets of pork offal on the debating chamber floor and then proceeded to hurl intestines, hearts, liver and other organs at

their rivals. Taiwan's government recently announced it would allow imports of US pork-fed with the additive ractopamine from January 1.

The supplement improves leanness but is banned in places like the European Union and China.

Officials in Washington have made it clear restrictions on US pork and beef imports are a key stumbling block to the US and Taiwan signing a trade deal.

Taiwan's President Tsai Ing-wen and her Democratic Progressive Party, which commands a strong majority in parliament, hope the easing of

restrictions will pave the way for an agreement.

But many in Taiwan are opposed to US pork imports and the KMT have seized on the issue after a series of stinging electoral defeats.

Last weekend they joined tens of thousands in an annual labour rally, where opposition to pork imports was a major theme.

Taiwan's powerful domestic pork industry also fears competition from the US.

The DPP campaigned heavily against ractopamine when they were in opposition, and the KMT have accused them of hypocrisy.

The governing party now argues the additive is not a safety threat and that the deal will boost ties with the US, a valuable trading partner and strategic ally against China.

"We're very sorry to throw pig's internal organs in parliament, but this is to highlight the pork issue," opposition lawmaker Lin Wei-chou told reporters.

Lin Chu-yin, a DPP legislator, posted pictures of the discarded offal on her Facebook account. "The opposition party has the right to protest, but they shouldn't be wasting food," she wrote. — AFP



Pork intestines and other organs are seen after Taiwan lawmakers threw them at each other in Taipei on Friday.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

28 NOVEMBER 2020

Logistical posers loom as vaccine race nears finish

Humanity's race to come up with a vaccine for Covid-19 has had a chequered history over the last 10 months. Many researchers and pharma companies have made steady and spectacular progresses, kindling the hopes of millions of people for an early end to the miserable life they live under the shadow of threat the microorganism poses to all. The last fortnight saw them on a roller-coaster ride of hope with about five vaccine candidates announcing various degrees of efficiency. The one from Oxford University, being jointly developed by pharmaceutical major AstraZeneca, was leading the race when it announced their inexpensive, easy-to-produce vaccine reported an average efficacy of about 70 per cent.

The good run received a setback now with the manufacturers acknowledging an error in the vaccine dosage received by some participants. As per reports, the manufacturers were silent as to why some study participants did not receive as much vaccine in the first of two shots as expected. It was also

Intellectual property laws could hinder the way of the vaccines to the poor countries and a group of British lawmakers have already demanded a waiver of the rules and authorise generic manufacturers with its production

found that the group, which received a lower dose, looked better protected than those who got two full doses. It has also come out that no one in the test group with the highest efficacy rates was over 55. Reports pointed at other irregularities and omissions, too, triggering questions about the preliminary results of the trials.

It has now been decided that AstraZeneca will run an extra trial. Notwithstanding the averments by the company that the trials were conducted to the highest standards, the UK government has now asked the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency to see if the vaccine meets rigorous safety standards.

Scientists who work on the vaccine and the people who look forward to its arrival need not lose their hearts on the temporary setback. Science has designed its procedures in such a way that truth ultimately triumphs; the anomalies that have come out now are part and parcel of the process and there are inbuilt mechanisms to identify and correct them in time. The only impact it will have on the entire project is a delay, perhaps of days or weeks, in the authorisation of the vaccine for public use.

Governments and the public must look at a more serious issue on hand — on the just and equitable distribution of the vaccine. Health experts have already issued warnings against the rich countries reserving the entire stock of early production of about three billion doses of the vaccine, leaving the poor nations and their more vulnerable people at bay. Intellectual property laws could hinder the way of the vaccines to the poor countries and a group of British lawmakers have already demanded a waiver of the rules and authorise generic manufacturers with its production. Some of the vaccines demand cold chains, which are nearly impossible to install in certain climactic conditions. Every single issue will have an impact on all the people and their fight against the pandemic and hence be addressed collectively by all nations. Science has its way of correcting itself, it's harder to accomplish the same in politics.

Bull runs for Oscars

The jury to choose an Indian feature film for the Oscars (April 25, 2021) must be complimented for picking the Malayalam film *Jallikattu*. The title may resonate with the sporting bulls of Tamil Nadu but the theme is startlingly different with the 'protagonist' being a bull that escapes from a butchery in a remote village in Kerala and becomes the subject of a hunt portraying some of the worst aspects of humans who are so prone to violence. It will compete in the 'Best international feature film' category in which Indian movies have not made much headway, with not a single one ever being shortlisted for the prize.

The movie, appreciated at the Toronto international festival where its director Lijo Jose Pelliserry was awarded and India's festival, may have edged out 26 others on entertaining themes released in the year of the pandemic that has proved inhibiting for theatrical releases. But if the film has been chosen for its content and its screenplay as an ode to the art of film-making it may fare better than many of the choices made by juries based on their understanding of popular content in the Bollywood tradition to please the masses. This point is well borne out by the short shrift the aesthetic creations of a filmmaker of the calibre of Satyajit Ray received in terms of nominations to the Oscars.

Many films aim to be a metaphor melded from the complexity of human emotions, which *Jallikattu* manages with certain raw quality displaying a freshness of approach. Opinions may vary wildly when it comes to judgments in subjective situations like movie appreciation, just as it has in this case when *The Disciple* lost out. And yet, somehow, the story of a bull must draw empathy considering how man's depredation of the plant has already led to ecological disasters, including the Coronavirus pandemic caused by a pathogen crossing species. The Oscars hinge on many factors, including lobbying, but cinematic excellence is invariably rewarded, much as the South Korean film *Parasite* scored a path-breaking win at the Oscars this year.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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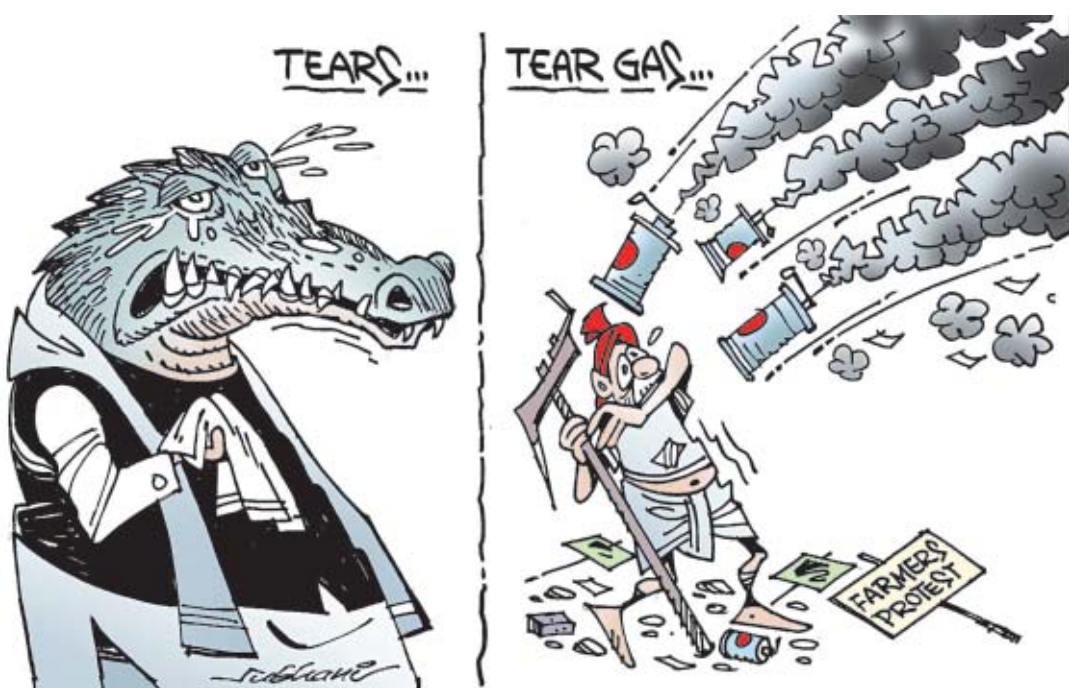
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Subhani



High hopes over vaccine: Are we being unrealistic?



Shobhaa's Take

I am writing this a day after the anniversary of the horrific 26/11 terror attacks on Mumbai in 2008, that not only shook the metropolis like nothing ever had, but shook the rest of India and the world as well, as shockwaves reverberated across continents at the audacity of the operation. It's been 12 years since that ghastly day when the bone-chilling events were played out live on television channels globally. I guess time has a way of making us forget even the greatest of tragedies. This year, the significant date went by without much notice. The local media in Mumbai gave it scant, passing coverage — if at all. A couple of pictures appeared the next day in a few dailies, featuring police officers paying tributes to their slain colleagues and all the other victims of the terror strike. Only one prominent obituary in a leading daily served as a reminder of what families had endured when their loved ones were brutally gunned down by ruthless criminals from across the border. Not so surprisingly, the pandemic deaths have overtaken and overwhelmed us to such an extent that we neglected to honour the memories of all those we tragically lost more than a decade ago.

While we wait breathlessly for the magic vaccine, here's my prediction for what it is worth: our great Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, will be the first, high-profile citizen to take the vaccine today when he visits the Serum Institute in

Pune. He is scheduled to fly into Hyderabad and Ahmedabad on the same day to take stock of vaccine development work at facilities in these three cities. Will he... won't he? Take the shot, I mean? I think he will. This is nothing more than a gut feeling, while figuring out the mind of one of the shrewdest leaders in the political sphere. For one, a bold gesture such as this one will send out a powerful signal to the rest of the world that India has beaten everyone else in the vaccine race. For another, it will be more than a mighty booster shot for his personal ego. Besides, with two key state elections to consider, his party, the BJP, will try and flatten any curve in its path — not just the Covid one. India's global image as a pharma leader will be further bolstered if NaMo goes for it. And frankly — history will be made by this one gesture of this one man! Narendra Modi has both — an uncanny sense of timing, besides an obsession to create personal history. If he indeed does take the vaccine before any other major international political personality, he will be hailed as the "Hero of the Pandemic 2020". Catch him passing up on such an opportunity!

When the scenario is this cynical, it's hard to stay optimistic and believe by this time next year everything will be 'back to normal', or 'back on track'

Nothing is ever going to be the same again — that's a given. But we cannot carry on without investing in hope for a better tomorrow.

The question that is worth asking is this: Are we pinning unrealistic hopes on the vaccine "saving" humanity? People are still dropping like flies, particularly in America... while the Covid-19 statistics in India continue to be alarming. We are expecting miracles once the vaccine gets marketed — and there are still four or five months to go without that happening. Yes, we must place our faith in experts and scientists at this point and pray for deliverance. Will that happen because we desperately want it to? Or will we be dealing with a fresh set of problems? As of now, the world is in need of instant solace and reassurance. We hang on to every tiny scrap of positive news and breakthroughs. We are too close to the pandemic to have sufficient distance to make informed choices about the vaccine. At the moment, I am sitting on the fence, and not committing to taking it as and when it's here. I have zero knowledge about its side effects, zero knowledge about its long-term efficacy, and zero knowledge about its overall behaviour. In that sense, we are all guinea pigs, ready to try whatever it is that appears, because we are scared and numbed by fear. Fear of the unknown. I am asking myself silly questions like: "What if I do take the vaccine and my body revolts against it? What if I avoid contracting Covid but my kidneys fail? Or my liver packs up?" The thing about the pandemic is how it has generated a fear psychosis on an

unprecedented level, as we scramble to grab every little straw that offers relief from the dreaded virus, without thinking about repercussions.

Till then, we have little choice but to go along with the official info, which may or may not be accurate. Rumour mills are in overdrive, about who is making how much selling masks that are substandard, and how easy it is to get licences to import masks if the person puts down ₹45 lakhs — no scrutiny, no testing, no questions asked. When the scenario is this cynical, it is hard to stay optimistic and believe by this time next year everything will be "back to normal", or "back on track". Nothing is ever going to be the same again — that's a given. But we cannot carry on without investing in hope for a better tomorrow. Whether or not schools reopen next year, whether or not hospitals and health-care systems can cope down the line, whether or not there will be a third, fourth and fifth wave... babies will continue to be born, people will get married, lovers will find a way to celebrate romance. Poets will write moving verse, painters will give expression on canvas, musicians will compose melodies — nothing will stop the creative impulse, least of all a microbe.

Christmas is but a few weeks away. Santa Claus and his reindeers will arrive in a safe bubble and he will greet children with a lusty "hohoho" from behind a sturdy face shield and mask — so be it! The world will continue to spin, and the stars will still shine. 'Tis the season to be jolly — why deprive ourselves?

Readers can send feedback to www.shobhaade.blogspot.com

LETTERS

FIRE FIGHTING

Thank you for the rare photograph of a mock drill for fire fighting (*Mock drill, DC, Nov. 27*) to contain a scenario at Mulagada vilage. Trained fire fighters replicated rescue operations. Such preventive measures would go a long way in effectively dealing with actual happenings if there are any LG polymers type of leakage.

Prof. K.V. Satya Prakash
Visakhapatnam

CONTEMPT NEEDED

Karan Thapar could be wrong in his assessment of Kunal Kamra's tweets as 'No contempt' involved! (*DC, Nov. 27*). If showing the SC building swathed in saffron colour with BJP's lotus flag fluttering atop the building, isn't denigrating the institution, then what is? It's up to the SC now to give its verdict.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

1 NATION, 1 POLL

The Congress which ruled the country for almost six decades has made a mess of the election process and thereby the democratic principles. The 'one nation one poll and one voters' list concept is a necessity for India under the present circumstances, even though the process might be cumbersome. There is a lot to be planned and executed in order to put this concept into a reality. The Prime Minister deserves all support in this regard.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Attempt on Pope's life

MANILA, Nov. 27 A Bolivian artist wearing a priest's robe tried to stab Pope Paul VI with a curved Moslem knife today shortly after his arrival at the airport in Manila, but the 73-year-old Pontiff escaped injury.

Priests and reporters standing a few steps behind the scene of the incident said the attacker in his bid got no closer than three feet to the Pope who was moving down a reception line.

The man was seized by security men and taken to Metropolitan Command Headquarters where authorities said he would be charged with attempted murder.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



*"Faith is a wraith
Promising paradise for the soul
Hope is the rope
That lets you climb out of a hole
Charity should spell clarity ---
Returning the wealth you stole..."*
— From *Dhoka Cola* by Bachchoo

My parents first took me to Khajuraho on a cultural holiday trip when I was about eleven years old. We went from Kanpur to Madhya Pradesh and spent some time looking at the display of erotic carvings in the temples. A late beginner, I suppose, I didn't quite appreciate the erotic dimension of the sculptures, though I observed my dad and mum studying them with a distanced, yet acute, curiosity.

Without protesting any form of innocence or naivete, gentle reader, I promise I have never opened the pages of the *Kama Sutra*, even though there have been at one time or other two editions, one pictorially endowed, on my bookshelves in my short and happy life. I know that they are eighth century depictions of sexual possibilities, some in extreme yogic distortions which

promise erotic pleasure, but I have never felt the need to take instruction in these instinctive urges from man, beast or book. One ploughs one's own furrow, so to speak.

Apart from Khajuraho in Madhya Pradesh, there are at least twelve and perhaps a hundred surviving Hindu temples which include in their sculptural representations acts of human sexual coupling. And some of the central symbols of Hindu cosmic creativity are the lingam of Shiva and the universal Yoni which symbolises birth and perpetuity. Hinduism has, from the Vedas onwards, never been prissy about human love, sex and procreation. The Temple of Surya in Konarak in Odisha has some of the world-famous exemplars of erotic sculpture. In Maharashtra, the Markandeshwar temple and the depiction of love in Ellora are also a glorious part of India's heritage.

Hence it came as an absolute article of bewildered wonder that some idiot, or some misguided organisation, is suing Mira Nair's depiction in the Netflix series adaptation of Vikram Seth's universally acclaimed novel *A Suitable Boy* in a Madhya Pradesh court for a scene

in which two characters kiss near a temple. In the name of Krishna and the gopis, of Shiva and Parvati, of Vishnu and Lakshmi, Ram and Sita — and of the Khajuraho temples of Madhya Pradesh, are these misguided Victorian puritan protesters saying that love and its active manifestations are anything to object to? Are they anti-Hindu-history-and-heritage bigots?

Surely Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his entire Cabinet and the philosophy of his party are dedicated to the upholding of Hindu heritage and India's inherited values and traditions! This absurd puritanism, which objects to a scene in a fictional drama of two characters kissing — not even in an act of fornication so graphically celebrated in revered Hindu temples — is surely some imperial hangover which we can do without?

Hinduism is much more philosophically explorative and wider than the Semitic monotheisms of Judaism, Christianity and some interpretations of Islam. There is no puritan tradition in Hinduism which would forbid the depiction of two lovers kissing outside a Kentucky Fried Chicken shop or a

temple. The people who are attempting to bring this case against Netflix ought to be, Your Honour, sent to re-education classes about the ethics of dharma, etc, in Hindu teachings! (*Don't get carried away, you idiot, this is a column, not an address to the court — Ed. Of course, boss! Sorry — fd*)

I would like to address the people in Netflix who face these absurd charges, but I have no conduit to them. I would say to them have some faith in Indian justice because I have faced similar legally enlisted assaults and have prevailed.

The first was against a film I had commissioned and wrote called *Bandit Queen*. A group of people tried to stop the film being released for several reasons, not all idealistic, but they didn't succeed.

Then there was the case against a film I wrote called *Mangal Pandey, The Rising*.

Some people claimed that they were the descendants of Mangal Pandey and the film had represented him in an unfavourable light. The judge ruled that it was a waste of court time and threw the case out. I am now told that judges have changed, that there has been some

ideological adjustment on the juridical benches. Gentle reader, living in London, so far away from home, I know nothing of this. I feel confident that the barristers who defend this very peripheral right to freedom of depiction, even using the arguments I have posed above, will convince a judge who knows his Hinduism.

Freedom of expression and the right to any, even those considered dissenting, opinions are an absolute requirement of democracy. Regimes in today's Turkey and Iran have suppressed free expression as the right of the state to exclusively disseminate information, both in the name of their exclusive interpretations of Islam. I don't know, but perhaps they censor scenes on Netflix of couples kissing outside mosques.

Of course, the Madhya Pradesh court should treat the case against the kissing next to a *mandir* with the contempt it deserves. And that would be a precedent in universal law pronouncing the freedom of depiction which doesn't transgress decency, tradition or in the case of the kiss outside a temple, explicitly graphic Hindu iconography.

Row over a kiss:
It's puritanism,
not a breach of
Hindu heritage

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,149.72	-0.25
Nifty 50	12,968.95	-0.14
S&P 500*	3,631.85	0.06
Dollar (₹)	74.03	-0.19
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.84	-0.12
Euro (₹)	88.14	-0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,142*43	0.008
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	48.04	0.24
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.911	0.039
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.852	-0.026

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Core industries' output contracts 2.5% in October

Contracting for the eighth month, the output of eight core infrastructure sectors dropped by 2.5 per cent in October, mainly due to decline in production of crude oil, natural gas, refinery products and steel. The production of eight core sectors had contracted 5.5 per cent in Oct. 2019. While coal, fertiliser, cement and electricity recorded positive growth, crude oil, natural gas, refinery products and steel showed negative growth.

Hero MotoCorp appoints Clarke as COO, HR head



Hero MotoCorp said it has appointed global mobility expert Michael Clarke as chief operating officer, with the additional role of chief human resources officer. Clarke will join from January 1 and report to Pawan Munjal, chairman and CEO. "Mike brings considerable global experience and expertise in managing complex operations, international restructuring, organisational and cultural change," Munjal said.

Only BIS-certified helmets to be made and sold

The Centre said only Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS)-certified helmets would be manufactured and sold in India for two-wheelers. This would help in avoiding sale of low-quality helmets, which would help in protecting the wearers from fatal injuries, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said. The ministry said it has issued the 'Helmet for riders of Two Wheelers Motor Vehicles (Quality Control) Order, 2020'.

Forex reserves rise, cross \$575-bn mark



The country's foreign exchange reserves rose by \$2.518 billion to touch a lifetime high of \$575.29 bn in the week ended Nov. 20, RBI data showed. In the previous week ended Nov.13, the reserves had surged by \$4.277 bn to \$572.771 bn. Foreign currency assets rose by \$2.835 bn to \$533.103 bn. The gold reserves declined by \$339 million to \$36.015 bn. The special drawing rights with the IMF rose by \$4 mn to \$1.492 bn.

■ GDP contraction comes down to -7.5%

Recovery beats projections in Q2

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, NOV.27

Amidst hopes of development of a corona vaccine, the Indian economy rebounded at a faster-than-expected pace in the July-September quarter, helped by a pick-up in manufacturing. The country's GDP contracted by 7.5 per cent during the quarter, lower than economists' projection of 8.5 per cent to 10.5 per cent contraction and signalling a sharp recovery from the record plunge of 23.9 per cent in the previous June quarter.

"India's real gross domestic product (GDP) fell to 7.5 per cent in the July-September quarter compared to a contraction of 23.9 per cent in the three months ended June. The GDP at constant (2011-12) prices in Q2 of 2020-21 is estimated at Rs 33.14 lakh crores, as against Rs 35.84 lakh crores in Q2 of 2019-20, showing a contraction of 7.5 per cent as compared to 4.4 per cent growth in Q2 of 2019-20," data released by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation on Friday showed.

Reacting to the latest GDP data, the government's chief economic adviser K. V. Subramanian said there is an 'upside potential' in the estimates about the economy during the current financial year as recovery is taking the faster pace than expected. "I would say that the given what we have seen in Q1 and Q2 and with the opti-



mism that is being seen in the estimates, I do see upside potential in that estimate given the good recovery that is happening," Subramanian said, adding that food inflation is expected to soften in the third quarter and it is something which has to be tracked closely.

Giving a further outlook of the economy in the future course, he added, "We should be cautiously optimistic and the caution is warranted because economic impact is primarily due to the pandemic. Given the uncertainty, it is difficult to predict if positive territory can be hit in the third or fourth quarter of this fiscal."

The data further showed that some sectors like manufacturing, agriculture, trade and service segments have shown some encouraging improvement due to removal of lockdown restrictions in a phased manner: "Manufacturing clocked a surprise 0.6 per cent growth in July-September after it had

shrunk by a massive 39 per cent in the preceding quarter... Continuing its good showing, the agriculture sector grew by 3.4 per cent, while the trade and services sector showed lower-than-expected contraction at 15.6 per cent," the government release said.

At this rate of recovery from the depths plumbed it earlier, economists said the economy will gradually exit its contraction mode in the current quarter or so.

"Consumer demand has been observed to be showing signs of revival in recent months. Supply chains, snapped off by Covid curbs, have been restored to a large extent. High-frequency indicators, such as fuel and electricity consumption, apart from rail freight and mobility, have looked up," economists said, adding that festive season sales were buoyant, though much of the shopping could be attributed to a spring back of pent-up demand.

Burger King sets IPO price band at ₹59-60

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 27

US-based Burger King's Indian subsidiary announced an initial public offering (IPO) to raise Rs 810 crore.

The public issue, opening on December 2, has been priced in the band of Rs 59-60 per equity share of face value of Rs 10 each.

The public offer from the fast food company closes on December 4.

The IPO comprises fresh issue of shares worth Rs 450 crore and an offer for sale of 60 million shares by promoter QSR Asia Pte. Ltd.

"The size of the fresh issue of up to Rs 600 crore has been reduced by Rs 150 crore pursuant to the pre-IPO placement, and accordingly, the fresh issue size is up to Rs 450 crore," the company said while announcing the IPO.

"The net proceeds from the fresh issue are proposed to be utilised for setting up of new company-owned Burger King Restaurants and for general corporate purposes," the company said.

In the IPO, 75 per cent of the offer is reserved for the qualified institutional investors, 15 per cent for the non-institutional investors or high net worth individuals and 10 per cent for the retail individual investors.

LVB bond write-off will hurt other banks: Icra

Mumbai, Nov. 27: The write-off of Rs 318-crore tier-II bonds by Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) ahead of its merger with DBS Bank is a precedent set by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and will hurt the private sector lender's peers, a report said.

During the Yes Bank rescue earlier this year also, there was an over Rs 7,000-crore bond write-off, but that involved a different instrument called additional tier-I bonds.

In the case of LVB, which has been merged with DBS in a scheme proposed by the RBI, investments of Rs 318.20 crore in bonds issued by LVB will be written off,



the lender informed the exchanges late Thursday night.

"RBI has set a precedence with the proposed write-off as it's the first time a tier-II bond is being written off," ratings agency Icra said in the report on Friday.

The agency added that investors should factor in

the risk in Basel-III instruments, as these instruments can be completely written off in case the bank gets into trouble.

"We expect the risk premiums for such instruments to increase for weaker private banks, given this event," the ratings agency said.

In an exchange filing late on Thursday evening, the bank said the RBI has advised it of the need to fully write down the Series VIII, Series IX and Series X Basel-III-complaint tier-II bonds before the amalgamation with DBS Bank comes into effect on Friday.

"If the relevant authori-

ties decide to reconstitute the bank or amalgamate the bank with any other bank under the Section 45 of the Banking Regulation Act, such a bank shall be deemed as non-viable and both the pre-specified trigger and the trigger at the point of non-viability for write-down of bonds shall be activated.

"Accordingly, the bonds shall be written off before amalgamation or reconstitution in accordance with applicable rules," according to the terms of the information memorandum of the respective Basel-III Tier-II bonds issued by the bank," LVB said.

— PTI

LPG subsidy for BPCL consumers to continue

New Delhi, Nov. 27: LPG customers of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) will continue to get cooking gas subsidy post-privatisation of the nation's second-biggest fuel retailers, oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Friday.

"Subsidy on LPG is paid

to consumers directly and not to any company. So the ownership of the company that sells LPG is not of any material consequence," Pradhan told PTI.

The government gives 12 cooking gas (LPG) cylinders of 14.2-kg each to households in a year at a subsidised rate. This sub-

sidy is directly paid into

the bank accounts of the users. The subsidy is paid in advance and consumers use this to buy LPG refills that are available only at market price from dealers of oil marketing companies—Indian Oil Corporation, BPCL and Hindustan Petroleum

Corporation Limited. The moment a refill is bought using the subsidy, another installment is transferred into the user bank accounts.

Pradhan said the LPG

subsidy payment is done

digitally to all verified customers. — PTI

Mid-caps, small-caps seen outperforming near-term

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, NOV. 27

After a bull run in large-cap stocks, analysts estimate a catch-up rally in the broader markets consisting of mid-caps and the small-cap stocks.

On Friday, while the benchmark indices closed in the red with Sensex down 110 points, or 0.25 per cent, the BSE Mid-cap Index gained 1.91 per cent and the BSE Small-cap Index gained 2.40 per cent, thus, outperforming the large-cap stocks.

The situation in the domestic market is panning out just like for the US broader market benchmark Russel 2000 and European Stoxx 600 that have given a break-out after record bull run in the benchmark indices Dow Jones Industrial Average, S&P 500 and Nasdaq indices, analysts said.



The BSE Mid-cap Index has rallied over 74 per cent from its March low of 9711.44 to 16,914.65 but is still far below its all time high of 18,321.37, touched on January 9, 2018.

The BSE Small-cap Index at 16,875.15 is also up over 90 per cent from the March low of 8,872.83 but far short of the all-time-high of 20,183.45 it touched on January 15, 2018.

"In line with our prog-

nosis, mid-cap and small-cap indices have extended their up move after a higher base formation in September and October. We expect both indices to witness acceleration in upward momentum and outperform the Nifty in coming months," said brokerage ICICI Securities.

"Globally, Russell 2000 and Stoxx 600 have also registered multi-year range breakouts. Historical, positive correlation of domestic indices with global peers makes us further confident in our positive stance," it added. "In the coming month, we maintain our overall constructive stance, with incremental shift to broader markets as the Nifty is expected to undergo consolidation amid positive bias in the range of 12800-13200 after a sharp 14 per cent rally in November," ICICI Securities said.

Credit guarantee extended to health sector

New Delhi, Nov. 27: The government on Thursday said it has extended the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) to the health sector and 26 other sectors identified by the Kamath Committee.

The National Credit Guarantee Trustee Company Limited (NCGTC) has issued the operational guidelines for implementation of ECLGS 2.0 scheme, the finance ministry said in a statement.

The scheme was announced by the government earlier this month as part of the Rs 2.65-lakh crore Atmanirbhar Bharat 3.0 package.

"Under ECLGS 2.0 entities with outstanding credit above Rs 50 crore and not exceeding Rs 500 crore as on February 29, 2020, which were less than or equal to 30 days past due as on February 29, 2020 are eligible," the statement said.

The loans provided under ECLGS 2.0 will have

a five-year tenor, with a 12-month moratorium on repayment of principal, the statement said.

"These entities or borrower accounts will be eligible for additional funding up to 20 per cent (which could be fund based or non-fund based or both) of their total outstanding credit (fund based only) as a collateral free Guaranteed Emergency Credit Line (GECL), which would be fully guaranteed by NCGTC," it added. — PTI

Credit downgrades abate on signs of economic recovery

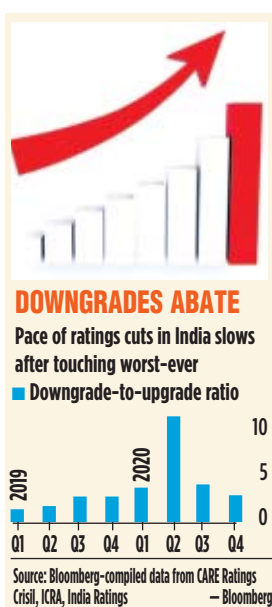
ANURAG JOSHI
NOV. 27

The pace of credit-rating cut for Indian companies has slowed amid signs the local economy is coming out of its worst-ever contraction.

There have been about three downgrades for every upgrade of rupee debt since October 1, the lowest since the last three months of 2019, according to data from India's four biggest rating firms compiled by Bloomberg. That compares with a ratio of more than four to one in favour of a cut for the previous quarter, and a record 11 to one in the April-to-June period.

Economic data suggests that Asia's third-biggest economy is recovering, albeit unevenly, after it shrank a record 24 per cent in the three months to June 30. A slower pace of downgrades may open the door to funding for weaker borrowers in India.

A record Rs 1.38 lakh crore (\$19 billion) of bond obligations from issuers rated AA and below mature in 2021, according to data compiled by



Bloomberg.

Last month, the country unveiled measures totalling \$6.6 billion to boost faltering consumer demand and investments, adding to the unprecedented \$277 billion stimulus announced in May to rescue the economy from the impact of the coronavirus.

— Bloomberg

COUCH | SHOPPING

Consumers are now able to shop anywhere in the world

‘This is the apocalypse for legacy retail’

HILARY PUNCHARD
TORONTO, NOV. 27

Legacy retailers such as Macy's Inc and Hudson's Bay will be left behind by consumers after they neglecting to build a foundation in e-commerce before the pandemic, according to Mark Cohen, a former CEO of Sears Canada.

"This trend (of e-commerce) which emerged about 15 or 20 years ago was moving along at an increasingly accelerated clip pre-pandemic and now the pandemic is causing stores to be closed, causing customers to avoid shopping malls and shopping districts from a physical point of view and that trend has accelerated



enormously," Cohen said in an interview.

"It's something that was well underway pre-pandemic, it's apocryphal the degree to which consumers have moved in that direction today and I suspect that once Covid is in our rearview mirror, the rate of growth of e-commerce will abate a bit, but it's certainly not going to

reverse the trend that we've been seeing."

Cohen, who now serves as director of retail studies at Columbia Business School, explained that the ultimate nail in the coffin for legacy retailers was that many companies neglected to engage with customers online rather than just in-person.

"(Hudson's Bay) has been

late to the party as have many legacy retailers in fully expressing themselves online. They did have a website as did Macy's but it's been merely an expression of whatever it is they're putting on sale each week rather than a portal into the customer's presence and expectations," Cohen explained.

"I think that when all is said and done the great American, great Canadian department store has seen its day and it's on the way out."

Department stores have been dealt blow-after-blow amid Covid-19 with many companies being ordered to close their doors due to pandemic-related lockdowns and solely rely on their e-commerce plat-

forms to attract customers.

But, Cohen said with customers no longer being tied to local retailers and with the expansion of e-commerce offerings amid the pandemic, the apocalypse for legacy retail has finally come. "I think that the consumer who was tethered to a local mall whether here in the US or in Canada now has no limitations on where they can consider shopping... They are literally able to shop anywhere in the world," Cohen explained. "This is the apocalypse that was upon us pre-pandemic from a legacy retail point of view, which now is in full view—it's really something to watch."

— Bloomberg

DRAFT RULES FOR REGISTERING VINTAGE VEHICLES FRAMED



New Delhi, Nov. 27: The Centre on Friday said it intends to formalise the registration process of the vintage motor vehicles, and has sought public comments for proposed rules regarding this.

In a statement, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways said it has invited public comments for proposed rules on registering vintage vehicles.

"There are no existing rules for regulating the registration process of vehicles of heritage value. These rules are proposed to be inserted as sub-rules 81A, 81B, 81C, 81D, 81E, 81F, 81G in the Central Motor Vehicle Rules, 1989," it said.

The draft rules define vintage motor vehicles as all those vehicles that are two-wheelers and four-wheelers (non-commercial and personal use) and are more than 50 years old from the date of their first registration (including imported vehicle).

There is a restriction in the definition no substantial overhaul of the vehicle which includes modification in chassis or body shell, and/or engine.

"It is proposed that all applications for registration shall be applied on 'Parivahan' portal."

"It is further proposed that all states registering authority will appoint a nodal officer who will process all applications for registration of vintage motor vehicles," it said.

Further, states will form a committee that will inspect a vehicle and declare whether the vehicle is fit for registration.

If approved, a 10-digit alphanumeric number will be assigned to the respective vintage vehicle, valid for 10 years, the statement said. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Bagan beat Bengal in derby

Vasco, Goa: Fijian striker Roy Krishna continued his prolific goal-scoring form as he helped ATK Mohun Bagan prevail over SC East Bengal 2-0 in the first ever Indian Super League derby here on Friday.

Krishna, who had scored ATKMB's lone goal against Kerala Blasters in their campaign opener, struck in the 49th minute before Manvir Singh killed the contest in the 85th minute with a solo effort. With two wins on the trot, ATK Mohun Bagan led the table with six points, followed by Northeast United FC. It was a typical Antonio Lopez Habas' style of play that panned out on the field as ATKMB were slow to get off the blocks before taking control of the game. Their defence, helmed by Tiri, put up a disciplined show to return with a clean slate for their second successive match in the league. — PTI

Belgium on top in FIFA rankings

Zurich: With Belgium still at No. 1, FIFA released its final rankings list for 2020 on Friday and set the seedings for the European portion of the World Cup qualifying draw. Defending World Cup champion France is in second place, with Brazil third and England fourth. European champion Portugal rounds out the top five, with Spain in sixth. FIFA will host the European draw on December 7. The 10 top-seeded teams include Italy, which was seeded second four years ago and failed to qualify for the 2018 tournament in Russia after ending up in a group with Spain. The Netherlands, ranked 14th, took the last top-seeded place, dropping No. 16 Switzerland into pot 2. — AP

Badminton League off due to Covid-19

New Delhi: The sixth edition of the Premier Badminton League (PBL) was on Friday postponed to next year, keeping in mind the health and safety of the players amid the raging Covid-19 pandemic. The league, which is one of the highest prize money badminton tournaments in the world, was initially scheduled to take place in the last week of December in Delhi, Mumbai and Pune. However, SportzLive, the official license holder of the league under the aegis of the Badminton Association of India (BAI), decided to postpone the event due to the prevailing conditions. PBL is a sought-after global badminton leagues having six-franchise-based teams, who compete in a home and away format. — PTI

CCOB emerge cricket champs

Hyderabad: City College Old Boys Cricket Association (CCOB CA) beat Emerging Cricketers Developmental Group (ECDG) by 33 runs to win the 4th edition of Teen Premier League Junior Cricket Championship organised by the School Sports & Games Federation (SSGF) at RKS Grounds in Bodupalle here. Batting first in the final, CCOB were all out for 174 in 26 overs. Ansh was the top scorer with 41. In reply ECDG were out for 141 in 24.3 overs. **Brief scores:** CCOB Cricket Association 174 in 26 overs (Dharmik 35, Ansh 41, Furkhan 3/24, S. Akash 4/15) bt ECDG 141 in 24.3 overs (Manikanda 36, Sathwik 37, Ansh 3/11, Pruthvi 3/4, Adnan 2/6).

Live on TV

CRICKET
Women's Big Bash League: Final — Melbourne Stars vs Sydney Thunder from 1.40 pm on Sony Six
Lanka Premier League: Kandy vs Dambulla from 3.30 pm; Galle vs Colombo from 8 pm on Sony Six

FOOTBALL
English Premier League: Brighton vs Liverpool from 6 pm; Manchester City vs Burnley from 8.30 pm on Star Sports Select 1
Indian Super League: Bengaluru vs Hyderabad FC from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Italian League: Benevento vs Juventus from 10.30 pm on Sony Ten 2, HD

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SMITH HEREENS

Finch, Smith centuries blow India away in opener

Sydney, Nov. 27: Hardik Pandya's career-best effort wasn't good enough to compensate for a forgettable bowling effort as India slumped to a 66-run defeat against Australia in the first ODI, making a rather unimpressive start to the tour, here on Friday. Virat Kohli's men started exactly on a note they wouldn't have liked, giving away 374 runs in 50 overs with rival captain Aaron Finch (114 off 124 balls) and his illustrious predecessor Steve Smith (105 off 66 balls) hitting contrasting hundreds.

A pitch that looked docile during the first half suddenly came to life in the second as Josh Hazlewood (3/55) bounced out the Indian top-order, including Kohli and a frightened Shreyas Iyer, who got himself into a tangle.

Pandya's 76-ball 90 and a 128-run stand with senior opener Shikhar Dhawan (74 off 96 balls) delayed the inevitable but it was always a catch-up game after the team was reduced to 101 for 4 inside 14 overs.

Big-hearted leg-spinner Adam Zampa (4/54 in 10 overs) dismissed Shikhar Dhawan and Hardik Pandya in quick succession as India surrendered to scoreboard pressure finishing at 308/8 after 50 overs.

India's eternal nemesis Steven Smith seems ready to torment them a lot in next two months if his 11 fours and four sixes were any indication on Friday.

Not for once was he troubled by the Indian bowlers, who were already under the pump after a 156-run opening stand between Finch and David Warner (69).

As far as Indian innings is concerned, a high percentage of dot balls (148) in the Indian innings also showed how the mighty Australian team dominated the proceedings.

INDIANS JOIN AUSSIES IN ANTI-RACISM MOVE

The Indian cricketers on Friday joined their Australian counterparts in forming a barefoot circle on the ground to support the anti-racism movement and acknowledge the culture of indigenous people of the host country.

The barefoot circle ceremony was held before the start of the opening One-Day International between the two teams here.

— PTI

SCORECARD

Australia: D. Warner c Rahul b Shami 69, A. Finch c Rahul b Bumrah 114, S. Smith b Shami 105, M. Stoinis c Rahul b Chahal 0, G. Maxwell c Jadeja b Shami 45, M. Labuschagne c Dhawan b Saini 2, A. Carey not out 17, P. Cummins not out 1. Extras (B-1, LB-6, NB-2, W-12.) 21. **Total (for six wickets in 50 overs) 374.**
FOW: 1-156, 2-264, 3-271, 4-328, 5-331, 6-372.
Bowling: Shami 10-0-59-3, Bumrah 10-0-73-1, Saini 10-0-83-1, Chahal 10-0-89-1, Jadeja 10-0-63-0.

India: S. Dhawan c Starc b Zampa 74, M. Agarwal c Maxwell b Hazlewood 22, V. Kohli c Finch b Hazlewood 21, S. Iyer c Carey b Hazlewood 2, K.L. Rahul c Smith b Zampa 12, H. Pandya c Starc b Zampa 90, R. Jadeja c Starc b Zampa 25, N. Saini not out 29, M. Shami b Starc 13, J. Bumrah not out 0. Extras (LB-2, NB-3, W-15) 20. **Total (for 8 wickets in 50 overs) 308.**
FOW: 1-53, 2-78, 3-80, 4-101, 5-229, 6-247, 7-281, 8-308.
Bowling: Starc 9-0-65-1, Hazlewood 10-0-55-3, Cummins 8-0-52-0, Zampa 10-0-54-4, Stoinis 6.2-0-25-0, Maxwell 6.4-0-55-0.

The match — the first international cricket played in New Zealand for almost nine months — produced a nail-biting finale as the Black Caps

reached 179-5 in the final over after being set a target of 176. Persistent showers meant the innings were reduced to 16 and many players, particularly the tourists, were rusty after only emerging from Covid-19 quarantine on Thursday.

But there were outstanding individual performances on both sides, particularly man of the



Australia's captain Aaron Finch hits a six as India's wicketkeeper K. L. Rahul watches during their One-Day International cricket match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday.

— AFP



Steve Smith of Australia celebrates after scoring a century against India in their ODI match at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday.

— AP

Kohli rues first defeat

Sydney, Nov. 27: India skipper Virat Kohli on Friday questioned his team's body language after the opening ODI loss to Australia and said Hardik Pandya not being fit to bowl is affecting the side's balance as he doesn't have enough all-rounders at his disposal.

India made a dismal start to their tour of Australia, losing the first ODI by 66 runs here, chasing a mammoth 375-run target after Aaron Finch and Steve Smith smashed hundreds for the hosts.

"Everyone needs to show the intent in the entire 50 overs. Probably, we played 50 overs after a long time that could have an affect...but having said that we have played so much ODI cricket that it is not something we don't know how to do," Kohli said in the post-match presentation.

"I think the body language in the field wasn't great after around 25

overs. It was a disappointing part. If you don't take your chances against a top-quality opposition they'll hurt you and that is what happened today,"

the Indian skipper added. Kohli said his bowlers couldn't pick wickets regularly and it allowed the Australians to post a big total in the end.

They were 58 without loss before Ferguson broke through and clean-bowled Fletcher on 34.

The Black Caps' Devon Conway and Jimmy

INJURED ISHANT OUT AS ROHIT WAITS TILL DEC. 11

Sydney, Nov. 27: India's senior-most fast bowler Ishant Sharma has been ruled out of the upcoming Test matches against Australia as he will not be match-fit in time while Rohit Sharma's hamstring will be assessed finally on December 11, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Thursday.

BCCI issued a short injury update of the two senior players after a fiery online media interaction by Virat Kohli, who made his displeasure clear about lack of communication and clarity on the whole issue. While Kohli had raised a question as to why Rohit didn't do his rehabilitation in Australia along with Wriddhiman Saha, Shah in his press note clarified that Rohit had come back to country to attend his ailing father after which he reported to the NCA.

"Rohit Sharma had to come back to Mumbai after the IPL to attend to his ailing father. His father is now recuperating well and that has allowed him to travel to the NCA and start his rehabilitation," Shah said.

— PTI

match Ferguson and West Indies captain Kieron Pollard's unbeaten 75 from 37 balls. Ferguson claimed a career-best haul of 5-21 to put the brakes on a flying start from the West Indies, saying the short boundaries at Eden Park helped his cause.

Pollard almost swung momentum back to the West Indies single-handedly, clubbing eight sixes

and four fours to ensure his team set a competitive target.

The tourists were even more brutal against Hamish Bennett, plundering 29 runs from a night-mare over for the fast bowler.

They were 58 without loss before Ferguson broke through and clean-bowled Fletcher on 34.

The Black Caps' Devon Conway and Jimmy

NUMBERS GAME

● Australia recorded their highest total against India by making 374 for 6 in 50 overs. Their previous best was 359, recorded four times. Overall, it is the third-highest total by any team against India in One-Day Internationals.

● Steven Smith recorded third fastest hundred for Australia by completing 100 runs off 62 balls during his 105-run knock. The quicker ones are Glenn Maxwell's 51-ball century against Sri Lanka at the 2015 World Cup, also at Sydney and James Faulkner's century in 57 balls against India in Bangalore in 2013.

● All five Indian bowlers except Mohammed Shami, conceded 60-plus runs, only the second such instance for India. The first such instance was against West Indies at Guwahati in 2018.

HIGHEST TOTALS AGAINST INDIA IN ODIs

Score	Opponent	Venue	Date	Result
438-4	South Africa	Mumbai	25-10-2015	India lost
411-8	Sri Lanka	Rajkot	15-12-2009	India won
374-6	Australia	Sydney	27-12-2020	India lost
366-8	England	Cuttack	19-01-2017	India won
365-2	South Africa	Ahmedabad	27-02-2010	India lost

FASTEST HUNDREDS FOR AUSTRALIA IN ODIs

Balls (score)	Batsman	Opponent	Venue	Date
51 (102)	Glenn Maxwell	Sri Lanka	Sydney	08-03-2015
57 (116)	James Faulkner	India	Bangalore	02-11-2013
62 (105)	Steven Smith	India	Sydney	27-12-2020
66 (101)	Matthew Hayden	S. Africa	St Kitts	24-03-2007
67 (122)	Adam Gilchrist	Sri Lanka	Brisbane	14-02-2006

FASTEST HUNDREDS AGAINST INDIA IN ODIs

Balls (score)	Batsman	Team	Venue	Date
45 (102)	Shahid Afridi	Pakistan	Kanpur	15-04-2005
57 (116)	James Faulkner	Australia	Bangalore	02-11-2013
57 (119)	AB de Villiers	S. Africa	Mumbai	25-10-2015
58 (102)	AB de Villiers	S. Africa	Ahmedabad	27-02-2010
62 (105)	Steven Smith	Australia	Sydney	27-12-2020

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

NATARAJAN IN INDIA ODI SIDE AS SAINI COVER

Sydney, Nov. 27: The BCCI on Thursday dded left-arm seamer T. Natarajan to India's ODI squad as half-fit paceman Navdeep Saini's cover.

According to BCCI press release that landed close to midnight, Saini had complained of back spasms which led to the 29-year-old yorker specialist from Tamil Nadu's inclusion in the 50-over format.

Natarajan, who has played 15 List 'A' matches so far, was initially a net bowler accompanying the Indian team and then made it to the T20 squad after Varun Chakravarthy pulled out and now is a part of ODI squad. Natarajan put up a splendid performance with the ball for SRH in the recently concluded IPL that led to his selection.

— PTI

Brazil mourns Diego's demise

Sao Paulo, Nov. 27: Brazil and Argentina are long rivals for football supremacy in South America, and Brazilians naturally think of their own Pele as the best footballer in history. But they are putting aside the argument to mourn the death of Argentine superstar Diego Maradona.

Ex-presidents, author Paulo Coelho and former competitors were among Brazilians paying tribute to Maradona for his influence on the game and charisma off the field.

Brazilian newspapers that only put sports in their top headline when the national team wins a World Cup had Maradona's death in that position Thursday.

A mural of Maradona was even painted on a wall in the Vila Cruzeiro favela in Rio de Janeiro, an honor that proud and soccer-crazy Brazilians rarely, if ever, give to foreigners.

"He was an example of persistence and perseverance because he grew in life as a human being," said graffiti artist Angelo Campos, who painted an energetic Maradona in a blue shirt under an inscription with his nickname, "El Pibe de Oro" (the Golden Kid).

The Neo Quimica Arena in Sao Paulo displayed a triumphant Maradona image on a giant screen by its main entrance. That is the same stadium where most Brazilian fans cheered against Argentina in the 2014 World Cup semi-final against Holland.

Argentina won on penalties but lost final to Germany 1-0. All top-tier Brazilian clubs paid tributes, including Santos, where Pele played nearly all of his career.

— AFP

POLICE CLASH WITH FANS IN ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires, Nov. 27: Riot police fired rubber bullets and tear gas in clashes Thursday with football fans near the wake for Argentine football legend Diego Maradona in Buenos Aires.

Officials earlier ordered Maradona's coffin to be moved to another room inside the presidential palace after fans took over an inner courtyard and disrupted his lying in state.

The government had early announced a three-hour extension to the wake to allow time for fans to pay their respects.

Tens of thousands of people had queued from early morning to file past the star's coffin, draped in the Argentine flag and the player's No.10 jersey, at the presidential palace. Many of the mourners were in tears, and some wore replicas of the World Cup winner's jersey as they gathered at the Casa Rosada palace to see his coffin.

But as the day wore on, fans queueing outside the palace grew increasingly impatient and some took over a courtyard inside the palace, where they chanted slogans.

At the same time, riot police clashed with stone throwing fans on streets around the palace, and several people were arrested.

— AFP



Players of Napoli (in blue) and Rijeka observe a minute's silence in homage to Maradona prior to their Europa League match at the San Paolo stadium in Naples on Thursday as a screen displays a photo of late Argentinian legend, who had played for Napoli in the 1980s.

— AFP

Napoli dedicate win to Maradona

Paris, Nov. 27: Napoli honoured the memory of Diego Maradona with a 2-0 win over Rijeka which allowed them to go top of Europa League Group 'F' in the first match since the death their Argentine icon.

Gennaro Gattuso's side entered the field all wearing the number 10 jersey of Maradona, who won Napoli's only Serie A titles in 1987 and 1990 as well as the 1989 UEFA Cup.

"Diego is a legend and will never die," Gattuso said after the match.

"Since yesterday you could see that the city breathed a different atmosphere. We hope to dedicate something important to him and win a trophy," he added.

Napoli are now two points ahead of AZ Alkmaar and Real

Sociedad following their goalless draw in the Netherlands.

Roma made their way into the last 32 with a 2-0 win at Romanian side Cluj, while Hoffenheim joined them after ensuring their respective passages into the next round from L.

Earlier Jame Vardy's last-gasp leveller in a thrilling 3-3 at Braga sent Leicester City through to the knock-out rounds, where they were also joined by Arsenal thanks to their 3-0 win at Molde.

Leicester looked dead and buried when Fransergio put the hosts 3-2 ahead in the first minute of added time, but Vardy stole in at the back post shortly after to tap in the goal that put the Premier League side into the Last 32.

— AFP

STADIUM NEAR BARASAT NAMED AFTER MARADONA

Kolkata, Nov. 27: A stadium near Barasat, where Diego Maradona was last seen in action in India (December 12, 2017), was on Friday named after the football legend.

During his last visit to Kolkata three years ago, Maradona had conducted a football clinic with school children at the Aditya School of Sports in Kadambgachi on the outskirts of Barasat, about 35 kilometres from Kolkata. "The stadium has now been converted into a full-fledged cricket stadium in the size of Eden Gardens and we have named it 'Diego Maradona Aditya School of Sports Cricket Stadium'," chairman of Aditya Group Anirban Aditya said.

"This is the first ever cricket stadium in the Argentine football legend's name. We also have special Maradona memorabilia in the changing room. The seat and the cloth hanger that Maradona used now be kept reserved with his autographed No.10 jersey," Aditya added.

Anirban Aditya said they had built the stadium in just four months and Maradona was the first sportsperson to step on to it.

— PTI