

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
KARIMNAGAR | TUESDAY | 24 NOVEMBER 2020



**WORLD | 5**  
**Israeli PM flew to Saudi, Riyadh denies**



**BUSINESS | 7**  
**Rajan criticises RBI's move on new banks**

**SPORTS | 8**  
**Warner says he won't respond to India taunts**



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle, google.com/+deccanchronicle

Vol. 20 No. 178 Established 1938 | 8 PAGES | ₹6.00

## WEATHER

Max: 29.8°C  
Min: 18.6°C  
RH: 40%  
Rainfall: Nil  
Forecast: Cloudy sky.  
Haze, mist likely.  
Max/Min temp. 30/19 °C

## COVID-19 COUNT

| CASES                      | DEATHS   |
|----------------------------|----------|
| (+35,316)                  | (+462)   |
| 91,74,876                  | 1,34,212 |
| covid19india.org           |          |
| STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS |          |
| (+602)                     | (+3)     |
| TS: 2,64,128               | 1,433    |
| (+545)                     | (+10)    |
| AP: 8,62,758               | 6,948    |

## CASES AROUND THE WORLD

5,92,52,444  
DEATHS  
13,98,095  
COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES  
218  
worldometers.info/coronavirus

## ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana  
Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Dasami till 2.43 am (Wednesday)  
Star: Pourvabhadra till 3.33 pm  
Varjyam: 2.16 am to 4.03 am (Wednesday)  
Durmuhurtam: 8.42 am to 9.27 am; 10.45 pm to 11.37 pm  
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm  
HIJRI CALENDAR  
Rabbi-ul Aklir 8, 1442 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.23 am  
Zohar: 12.13 pm  
Asar: 4.03 pm  
Maghrib: 5.45 pm  
Isha: 6.56 pm  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.26 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 5.39 PM  
MOONSET TODAY 1.24 AM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 2.05 PM

## COUNTER POINT



Our MLAs are demanding 33% quota in the cabinet for those without criminal cases!

## SHORT TAKE

### President to visit Tirumala today

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, NOV. 23

With President Ram Nath Kovind scheduled to visit the hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala on Tuesday, elaborate security arrangements have been put in place by the Tirupati Urban police wing. On their part, TTD and the Chittoor district administration have made extensive arrangements. Several government and TTD officials have undergone Covid tests on Monday. During his seven-hour pilgrimage, President will visit the Sri Padmavathi temple at Tiruchanoor by 11 am, Bhu Varahaswamy temple and Lord Venkateswara temple at Tirumala by 12.50 pm and offer prayers.

■ Page 2: Traffic curbs in Tirupati for Prez visit

### Tarun Gogoi dies due to Covid

Guwahati: Congress leader and a three-term former Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi died here on Monday while undergoing treatment for post-Covid-19 complications, state health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said. He was 84 and is survived by wife Dolly, daughter Chandrima and son Gaurav, a Lok Sabha member.

## All ears for Surya



Minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy and BJP state president Bandi Sanjay listen to MP and BJYM president Tejasvi Surya during the GHMC poll campaign in Secunderabad on Monday. ■ Report on Page 4 — S. SURENDER REDDY

## 2014-29 important for India's progress: Modi

New Delhi, Nov. 23: Asserting that the 2014-29 period between the 16th to 18th Lok Sabha is "very important" for a young democracy like India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said the last six years have been "historic" for the country's development and a lot remains to be done in the remaining period.

As the age of 16, 17 and 18 years is very important for the youth, so is the time between the 16th and the 18th Lok Sabha for a young nation like India, he said while digitally inaugurating 76 multi-storied flats in the national capital for



Narendra Modi

Members of Parliament. The 16th Lok Sabha (2014-19) has been historic for the country's progress, and the 17th Lok Sabha has already become a part of history due to a number of decisions it has taken, he said, referring to the passage of landmark legis-

lations aimed at reforming farm and labour sectors besides abrogation of Article 370 and the citizenship law.

"I am confident the next Lok Sabha (2024-29) will also play a very important role in taking the country ahead in this new decade... There is so much for the country that we have to achieve. Be it 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' campaign, or economic targets or many other pledges like these, we have to achieve them during this period," he said to an audience of parliamentarians, including ministers and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla. — PTI

## No severe safety event with Covid vaccine: AstraZeneca

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 23

No hospitalisation or severe cases were noted among those who had received the AstraZeneca vaccine AZD1222 according to interim analysis of 131 trial participants, as per an official company release Monday. There were two different dose regimes used by the company. Between them, one regime has shown a better profile, the company said in its detailed analysis.

There were 23,000 participants being assessed, who among them would be following two regimes of half dose and full dose, and two

### ON PAGE 5

● COVID-19 SHOTS FOR US HEALTH STAFF BY MID-DECEMBER

● GERMANY LIKELY TO GIVE SHOTS FROM DECEMBER

full doses of AZD1222. In one dose regime (n=72), where the full dose was followed one month apart, the efficacy was 90 per cent. In another dose (n=8) regime, it was found that the efficacy was 62 per cent. The combined analysis of both the dose regimes (n=11) showed

that the efficacy of the vaccine was 70 per cent.

The company said that more data will continue to accumulate with efficacy and safety being of prime importance. "There are no serious safety events related to the vaccine," the company said. It said that AZD1222 was well tolerated across both dosing regimens. The current trials are going on in the US, UK, Brazil, Japan, Russia, South Africa and Kenya besides some Latin American countries, with more trials being planned in other EU and Asian countries.

■ Page 2: AstraZeneca to apply for early approval

### WHAT | LIES BENEATH

Army's security audit to be completed in a few days to prevent infiltration by terrorists during winter

## Security forces hunt for tunnels at LoC with hi-tech gadgets

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 23

Security forces have launched a major security audit using hi-tech gadgets, including satellite imagery, to find tunnels along the entire Line of Control and International Border with Pakistan.

The move comes in the wake of the revelations that Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists killed in Nagrota encounters Friday morning had used a tunnel to infiltrate.

Sources said that the cross-border underground tunnel unearthed in Samba sector was 160 metres into the Indian side and estimated to be 40 metres on the Pakistani side of IB. Security sources claimed that considering the perfection with which the tunnel was dug, there was a

● THE MOVE comes in the wake of the revelations that Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammed terrorists killed in Nagrota encounters Friday morning had used a tunnel to infiltrate.

● SOURCES SAID that the cross-border underground tunnel unearthed in Samba sector was 160 metres into the Indian side and estimated to be 40 metres on the Pakistani side of IB.

● SECURITY SOURCES claimed that considering the perfection with which the tunnel was dug, there was a possibility of Pakistani establishment's engineering support.

● BASED ON leads available consequent to the Nagrota encounter, it seems that Jaish terrorists were picked up by a truck from village Jatwal in Samba on the highway.

possibility of Pakistani establishment's engineering support. The exit was in thick bushes meticulously covered with soil and wild growth. The mouth of the tunnel was strengthened and reinforced by sand bags with markings of Karachi, Pakistan.

The freshly dug tunnel appears to have been used for the first time by the terrorists. Based on leads available consequent to the Nagrota encounter, it seems that Jaish terrorists were picked up by a truck from village Jatwal in Samba on the national highway.

## TRS promises to give 20,000 litres water free

Express Metro Rail to Shamshabad from city in the works

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 23

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) supremo and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao on Monday announced several sops for the people of greater Hyderabad, targeting several specific sections, including the Telugu film industry in the election manifesto released for the GHMC elections.

According to the TRS manifesto, the government would supply free water from December to households that consume not more than 20,000 litres a month and free power supply to salons, laundries and dhobi ghats not only in the city but also across the state subsequently.

The TRS party promised completion of Metro Rail phase 2 and introduction of an express Metro Rail for Shamshabad from important centres in the city. For enabling the express rail project, the state government has constituted the Hyderabad Airport Express Metro Rail Ltd., with the approval of the Cabinet.

The party also promised the introduction of an Elevated Bus Rapid Transit System in the next five years, which it claimed will change public transport in the capital city. The manifesto assured the delivering of one lakh two-bedroom houses to beneficiaries to fulfil their dream of having their own house, based on completion of construction in days ahead. It also promised regularising houses of poor on government lands and providing ₹5 lakh assistance for construction of houses.

Releasing the manifesto, Chandrashekar Rao said that the TRS government shared the concerns of sections that had been badly impacted by Coronavirus-triggered lockdown and its aftermath and the econom-



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao speaks after releasing the TRS manifesto for the GHMC elections along with minister Mohd Mahmood Ali. — DC

## CM: Vote TRS to continue growth

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, NOV. 23

TRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao on Monday urged the people of greater Hyderabad to vote for TRS for "continuous development".

Asking people, intellectuals, poets, social workers, writers and artists to take a call, he said, "Decide whether you need a city with TS-bPASS or a curfew pass. Think carefully and choose wisely, otherwise a wrong choice of vote will bite back."

Asking people to vote for TRS, Chandrashekar Rao

said, "If some other party wins, they would not be able to achieve anything as they need state government's support to sustain development."

Addressing a press conference, Rao described the State capital as a bouquet of different flowers. He requested people to stay away from destructive force, who would create trouble in an otherwise peaceful Hyderabad.

Hyderabad had emerged as a top cosmopolitan city, he said.

■ Page 2: KCR: Hyderabad has cosmopolitan fabric

ic slowdown. He said keeping in view of sufferings of private transport vehicle owners due to lockdown from March-September, it was decided to waive motor vehicle tax amount-

ing to ₹267 crore for two quarters of current year. This will provide relief to 3,37,611 vehicle owners, he said. Rao promised waiving of minimum demand charge of HD and LT cate-

## States panic as virus strikes back

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 23

From night curfews to shutting down markets and now some states even contemplating stopping incoming passengers from places like Delhi — panic has gripped several Indian states as new coronavirus cases are on a sharp rise — in Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala, West Bengal,

Rajasthan, Gujarat, Assam and Haryana. Upset with the chaos and rising cases, the Supreme Court on Monday pulled up the Delhi, Gujarat, Maharashtra and Assam governments, saying that things will get worse in December if they are not prepared, and sought status reports from them in two days.

India on Monday had a total of 91.40 lakh Covid-19

cases, out of which 44,059 were new cases. The toll overall is now 1.34 lakh, with 511 new fatalities.

The SC sought status reports from the Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Assam governments on the steps taken by them on the Covid situation and what more efforts were being made to deal with the pandemic. "Things worsened in the last two weeks, in November. Our

question is: What is your present situation? What more steps are you taking? That is what we are going to look into," the bench asked the Delhi government.

Saying the Gujarat situation was the worst after Delhi and Maharashtra, the court also pulled up the Gujarat government for allowing weddings and gatherings despite the rising Covid-19 cases.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 23

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla on Monday briefed a select group of Heads of Missions on the planned terrorist attack in Nagrota district in Jammu which was foiled on November 19, and the implications of the incident on security, diplomacy and the battle against terrorism. The FS informed the diplomatic corps that this was going to be the biggest terror attack after Pulwama.

Sources said this is the first of several briefings to be conducted by ministry of external affairs in small groups in view of Covid situation. It is learnt that

other Secretaries in MEA will also be briefing Heads of Missions in their areas of jurisdiction. "The idea is to share information as widely as possible with the international community," sources said. The Heads of Missions were provided with a detailed information docket giving the details of the incident as it transpired as well as list of items and munition that were recovered from terrorists indicating their Pakistani origins. They were also briefed on how the terrorists got into India which is now clear through the discovery of an underground tunnel in the Samba sector.

Four suspected JeM terrorists, who were hiding

in a truck, were killed by security forces near Nagrota in an encounter on Thursday morning after which the government asserted that a major terror attack was foiled by the Indian security forces.

It was the first of several briefings to be conducted by the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) in small groups in view of the Covid situation, the sources said adding other secretaries will also be holding similar sessions with heads of missions of other countries. The envoys were also briefed on how the terrorists got into India which is now clear after the discovery of an underground tunnel in the Samba sector.



SHORT TAKES

WHY FLOOD AID STOPPED, HC ASKS SEC

VUJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 23

The Telangana High Court on Monday directed the State Election Commission (SEC) and the state government to explain their stand by Tuesday on a petition challenging the circular issued for stopping of disbursement of ₹10,000 ex-gratia to flood-affected persons in the GHMC limits.

The direction was given by a division Bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy which was dealing with a urgent petition by S. Sharath Kumar, who said the orders banning provision of flood relief were in ultra vires of the power vested with the SEC.

His contention was that under the Model Code of Conduct (MCC) there were exemptions to provide the ex-gratia when unforeseen natural calamities strike. Emergency services can be deployed and and welfare schemes and rehabilitation continued even during the elections. The model code of conduct (MCC) of the Election of Commission of India (ECI) exempts such situations of calamity, counsel explained to the court.

When SEC counsel Vidyasagar objected and informed the court that the exemptions given by the ECI were not adopted by the SEC, Sharat Kumar said that the MCC does not have statutory backing. They were rules meant to lay down guidelines to political parties to maintain ethics, counsel said.

The MCC rules are applicable to the SECs and they do not have separate rules, Sharat Kumar's counsel said.

As per the Election Commission of India (ECI), when the state is reeling under any exigency, ex gratia money can be disbursed by the government to the victims under intimation to the ECI. The discretionary power used by the SEC to suddenly stopp ex gratia payment without consultation with the authorities left the victims in confusion, counsel said. The bench issued notices to the Chief Secretary, SEC and the principal secretary, home, to file affidavits explaining their stand by Tuesday.

TRAFFIC CURBS IN TIRUPATI FOR PREZ VISIT

FROM PAGE 1

Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and a host of ministers and officials will receive the President on his arrival at the Tirupati airport by 9.45 am.

TTD chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy reviewed the arrangements. He along with TTD EO K.S. Jawahar Reddy, Chittoor district collector Dr Narayana Bharat Gupta, TTD's additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy and Tirupati SP Avula Ramesh Reddy inspected the temples and the Sri Padmavathi guest house at Tirumala.

Meanwhile, Tirupati and Tirumala have come under tight security cover of the urban police wing, who also imposed several traffic curbs at various places. Urban SP appealed to the public to cooperate with the police and follow traffic directives issued by the department.

LUS: SMART WORKS GOING AT SNAIL'S PACE

PULI SHARATH KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, NOV. 23

The representatives of the Loksatta Udyama Samstha (LUS), on Monday, alleged that the developmental works under the Smart City project are going at a snail's pace in Karimnagar city.

The district unit president of LUS, N. Srinivas said, "Municipal authorities boasted that they would transform the historic Tower Circle area, on the lines of Amritsar, under the smart city project, and inaugurated works eight months back."

He adds that due to lack of commitment by the officials, works at the Tower Circle area, are going on at a snail's pace. With the road dug up, there is no space for parking. It is an inconvenience to consumers and shop owners in the area as the Tower Circle is a busy area located in the heart of the city."

Vegetable, fruit vendors, hawkers and traders have encroached the main road from Gunj High school to Sri Venkateswara temple posing problems to travellers.

Highest tax payers get least facilities

Old City gets infra work before every fest; VIPs ensure central zone in good shape; west zone languishes

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, NOV. 23

The city's highest tax payers are deprived of basic civic amenities and subject to bumpy rides 365 days a year, while city low-tax payers enjoy, relatively, the best of what the government can provide them.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) managed to collect ₹6.73 crore property tax from Chandrayangutta against ₹124.26 crore in Jubilee Hills and ₹123.51 in Serilingampally.

Taking the claims of the corporation on face value, despite its spend of over ₹67,000 crore in the city, both the Old City and western parts remained plagued by poor basic civic amenities.

But religious and cultural considerations made the difference in spend priorities and created the worst form of inequalities. For example, festivals have helped in the development of Old City, whereas the presence of powerful people – lawmakers, bureaucrats and other influential people – has contributed to the development of the central zone. In both, the west, the biggest payer of taxes, gets least.

The GHMC has been spending more than ₹100 crore towards road

repairs, special arrangements during festivities and religious observations like Id-ul-Fitr, Muharram, Bonalu and Ganesh Chaturthi. Though the time gap between some of these festivals is only a few weeks, corporation officials say they are under pressure to lay fresh roads for each of them.

Shockingly, the GHMC has re-laid roads in quick succession despite the defect liability clause being in place, whereby legally, a contractor has to look after road maintenance for a period of three years. Instead of invoking the clause, the corporation officials earmark funds for every festival and take up road "repairs works".

Meanwhile, on the side where the sun sets, it is darkness. Citizens who contribute over 70 per cent of property tax to civic body are routinely and brazenly deprived of roads, sewerage lines, drinking water and other basic facilities. The average expenditure of the corporation on remaining areas of the city, including during the current year, is only ₹2.26 crore. It is even lesser, and the least in the entire GHMC area, in the west zone, the top tax payer.

Sources said that the "conventional approach" by the corporation has

ticket prices.

Rao announced reimbursement of nine per cent state GST for small budget movies up to Rs 10 crore budget and issuing of ration and health cards to about 40,000 film industry workers, including junior artistes, to help them tide over the ongoing crisis.

Permitting the reopening of cinema theatres, he suggested that government officials and representatives of the film industry convene a joint meeting to finalise the exact date when theatres can be reopened besides working out necessary standard operating procedures.

Recalling the visit of Bollywood super star Amitabh Bachchan to his house, Rao said that during their conversation Bachchan had requested him to protect Tollywood.

ASTRAZENECA TO APPLY FOR EARLY NOD

From Page 1

The company will prepare regulatory submission of data to authorities around the world for conditional or early approval.

They are also planning for 'emergency use listing' from the WHO for an accelerated pathway to vaccine availability in low-income countries.

The 90 per cent efficacy announcement by the company has led the way for many more volunteers to join the trial. It will now be scaled-up to 60,000 volunteers, after the data

is studied and submitted to the WHO and for peer review.

The vaccine can be stored, transported and handled at normal refrigerated conditions of 2° to 8° Celsius for six months and administered within existing settings.

Meanwhile, the UK government said that the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is reviewing data from Pfizer/BioNTech to determine whether its Covid-19 vaccine meets "robust" standards of quality, safety, and effectiveness.

From Page 1

It is probably the only city which can boast of having a Gujarati galli, a Parsi gutta, a Sindhi colony and an Arab colony, which reflects its cosmopolitan and secular fabric.

"Whether Hyderabad will continue to remain safe and peaceful is in the hands of the people. Real estate is slowly flourishing. If there is any disturbance, it will ruin land values in Hyderabad. Let the realtors also take a call on this," Rao said.

Rao said the TRS government has a rare distinction of introducing unique and progressive policies like TS-iPASS, TS-bPASS and the one-of-its-kind Dharani portal for land management. He said, "people from across India have settled down here and are a happy lot. The city has a rich culture and

a great history. The TRS, which has already taken up several initiatives to make it a truly global city, will strive to keep the momentum going through various initiatives."

Referring to the promise of free water supply, KCR said that almost 97 per cent of households will get benefit and only remaining three per cent have to pay charges.

He said his government has extended financial aid of ₹10,000 to around 6.56 lakh families, at a cost of around ₹656 crore, adding, "remaining families will get aid after polls."

Regarding national politics, he said he was prepared for "any kind of sacrifice to take the country on the right path", adding that the two national parties, Congress and BJP, had proved to be "utter flops in governing" the country.

| NO YEARLY DEVELOPMENT ACTION PLAN  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
| ● Religious festivals contribute to Old City's development.                | ● Corporation has been spending most expenditure in central zone; festivals have forced them to spend in Old City. |   |   |
|  | ● West zone, second highest contributors towards GHMC's revenue, worst victims.                                    | ● Citizens residing in west zone deprived of basic civic amenities. | ● GHMC does not have a yearly action for overall development of city, only knee-jerk reactions. |
| ● VIPs residing in central zone ensure their areas are kept neat and tidy. | ● GHMC officials assured to make surgical changes in city roads by November 2018 but it has not happened.          |   |   |

been resulting in "unscientific and imbalance in urban development". Though its administration is decentralised, the corporation is yet to chalk out an early plan and execute it scientifically by taking all parameters into consideration.

Though property tax identification numbers were given for only 14 lakh residents, the GHMC records about four lakh property tax owners evade property tax net, while another six lakh residents were not even registered with the civic body to pay property tax.

For several reasons, the tax collections per region are skewed. As per official data collected from the corporation, out of 9,41,895 assessments, the civic body has managed to collect a mere ₹23.24 crore for Malakpet (in 26,187 assessments), ₹10.27 crore

tax in Santhosnagar circle from 13,638 assessments, ₹6.73 crore from Chandrayangutta (10,067 assessments), ₹15.24 crore from Charminar (16,778 assessments), ₹8.14 crore for Falaknuma (12,053 assessments), ₹26.71 crore in Rajendrenagar (28,227 assessments), ₹33.15 crore in Mehdiapatnam (30,452 assessments), ₹17.67 crore from Karwan (16,158), ₹57.66 crore in Goshamahal (35,101 assessments).

On the contrary, the GHMC collected ₹123.51 crore in Serilingampally, ₹124.26 from Jubilee Hills and ₹112.36 crore from Khairatabad. Overall, it has collected ₹1,290.57 crore across the entire stretch in the current fiscal.

While multiple gods have been saving the Old City from bad roads, civic apathy has given the highest

billing zones an incessant and unending bumpy ride, notwithstanding skyways and underpasses under the Strategic Road Development Plan (SRDP).

The corporation has spent ₹2.25 crore towards road repairs during Muharram, ₹10.92 crore during Ganesh festival, ₹4.32 crore during Ramzan and ₹46 crore under Comprehensive Road maintenance Project (CRMP); all in the Old City and central zone.

But even the gods seem to have forsaken the west zone, where, the GHMC, after collecting over ₹500 crore, has not been spending even ₹10 crore towards annual road maintenance. The condition of roads has gone from bad to worse in RC Puram circle, Kukatpally and Serilingampally.

Going by the TRS government's poll campaign

claims, it has spent ₹3.35 lakh per person in the last six years for about 20 lakh residents in the city. But like all per capita statistics, this reveals little and hides a lot. Highly placed sources from the corporation confirmed that the civic body has spent less than ₹1 crore per circle, during the current financial year, towards the highest contributors of revenue.

Even though west zone is a high revenue source, several complaints pour in from citizens pertaining to damaged roads on a daily basis. They are mostly unattended or ignored. Sources said decentralisation has failed miserably, since north, east and west even today are deprived of basic amenities like streetlights, roads, sewerage lines etc. Unless the corporation chalks out a yearly action plan for uniform development, there will be little respite for many.

Lack of funds have affected developmental activities in the last few years. Most of the development seen today was done prior to 2018. Given back to back polls until June 2019, and then a Covid-19 pandemic meant regular works were upset. Quite often, developmental works are undertaken by raising loans, which eventually bankrupted the GHMC.

Commenting on imbalanced development, a senior GHMC official said, "the corporation only has knee-jerk reactions and episodic reactions rather than a proactive action plan for the entire year. For instance, GHMC will be deployed to focus on city roads, cellars, excavations and hoardings during monsoon. After monsoon, focus shifts to sanitation to attain better Swachh ranking. Then they focus on collection of property tax," he said.

Staff from engineering, town planning, revenue and other wings has been deployed on election duty, which has paralysed every department. Similarly, ground-level staff from the other wings is deputed to collect property tax during the end of financial year, he revealed.

The official admitted that higher authorities have ignored requests to the existing vacancies in the corporation. "Every department should have specific responsibilities and a clear focus. Alas," he said.

Imbalanced development and skewed priorities will continue until the corporation chalks out a yearly action plan. Situation will not change until a strong demand from citizens over development comes, he added.

STUDIES SHOW FREE WATER CURBS WASTAGE

From Page 1

He said that several studies conducted by various reputed organisations at national and international level and a study conducted by Administrative Staff College of India found that free supply of water will curb wastage of water.

● Encouraging use of electric vehicles to make Hyderabad a pollution free city.

● Solid Waste Management: power generation from solid waste to be increased from 23 MegaWatt to 43 MW.

● PUBLIC HEALTH: Basti Dawakhana to be set wherever required.

● Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TIMS) to be set up in four corners of Hyderabad.

HIGHLIGHTS OF PINK MANIFESTO

● Introducing a New comprehensive Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Act to provide hassle free and transparent services to people; making officers responsible with stringent provisions.

● A comprehensive sewerage master plan for GHMC to be implemented in next five years with ₹13,000 crore. Areas located inside Outer Ring Road will be covered.

● Strategic Road Development Project to be extended to north and south zones of city.

● Development of 125 more link roads.

● Proposed Regional Ring Road Project to be taken up with state government funding.

● Beautification of around 185 lakes and ponds (GHMC area) and 2,700 lakes (HMDA limits) will be completed in next five years.

● Footpaths, skywalks and bicycle tracks to be built for pedestrians.

● To check traffic, extensive public transport facilities to be provided through Metro, MMTS, BRTS.

● Hyderabad will be an investment magnet; IT sector to be expanded to all corners.

● Improve employment opportunities, underground electrical cable system, giving top priority to maintenance of law and order, installing additional five lakh CC cameras and skill development centres for youth.

● Continuing welfare schemes on priority basis, party promises senior citizens of establishing free library, club, yoga and gym centres in each division of GHMC.

● Creation of urban lung space by increasing green cover and establishing theme parks.

● A master plan with an outlay of Rs 12,000 crore for maintenance of storm water.

● Expansions of MMTS trains in another 90 kms area within GHMC limits.

● Strategic Road Development Project to be extended to north and south zones of city.

● Development of 125 more link roads.

Common aim for priest, techie, doc

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, NOV. 23

Among the 1,121 contesting the GHMC elections, three independents stand out: A priest, a doctor, and a software employee.

K. Rajeswara Sharma, the priest, is contesting from Kothapet and has a complaint: Politicians just disappear after winning the election, said Sharma, who has been given the pen drive symbol.

Sharma, a postgraduate, said, "I have a public connect as a priest. I'm educating people regarding the importance of electing the right leader. Win or lose, I will continue to do so."

The pen drive symbol would have been a better fit for software employee

K. Vasantha Rayalu.

M. Jashwant Reddy, but he will have to make do with a cricket bat as his election symbol. Reddy is an Aam Aadmi Party activist but is contesting as an independent as it is not registered here.

"My intention to serve and my nature to be honest will help me in serving the people. Willingness to learn and serve with hon-

M. Jashwant Reddy.

esty are two basic criteria that are needed in governance. It is because these two qualities have become rare that we find the city in the pathetic state it is in today," he said.

A novice in politics, the techie said, "I do not wish to make big promises. If elected my first priority would be to understand the needs of the people

K. Rajeswara Sharma.

and deliver the same."

Dr K. Vasantha Rayalu has been allotted the air-conditioner symbol at Mansurabad. "I treat thousands of patients. Likewise I would like to treat society. The alliance between the Jane Sena and the BJP forced me to file my nomination as an independent candidate," he said.

Hyderabad has cosmopolitan fabric, says KCR

From Page 1

It is probably the only city which can boast of having a Gujarati galli, a Parsi gutta, a Sindhi colony and an Arab colony, which reflects its cosmopolitan and secular fabric.

"Whether Hyderabad will continue to remain safe and peaceful is in the hands of the people. Real estate is slowly flourishing. If there is any disturbance, it will ruin land values in Hyderabad. Let the realtors also take a call on this," Rao said.

Rao said the TRS government has a rare distinction of introducing unique and progressive policies like TS-iPASS, TS-bPASS and the one-of-its-kind Dharani portal for land management. He said, "people from across India have settled down here and are a happy lot. The city has a rich culture and

a great history. The TRS, which has already taken up several initiatives to make it a truly global city, will strive to keep the momentum going through various initiatives."

Referring to the promise of free water supply, KCR said that almost 97 per cent of households will get benefit and only remaining three per cent have to pay charges.

He said his government has extended financial aid of ₹10,000 to around 6.56 lakh families, at a cost of around ₹656 crore, adding, "remaining families will get aid after polls."

Regarding national politics, he said he was prepared for "any kind of sacrifice to take the country on the right path", adding that the two national parties, Congress and BJP, had proved to be "utter flops in governing" the country.

"They failed to put India on a path of development. It is time for a new political leadership to take the country on the right path. I may be the one to lead the alternative to BJP and Congress, if the need arises," Rao said. The approach and policies of both these parties has been wrong all through, he said, adding, "we need political leadership that creates wealth and distributes it to people."

Arguing that there was an urgent need to bring a definitive change in the country, he said that he would take the initiative at the appropriate time.

Rao said, "moves have started to create a new political platform that would serve as an alternative to both BJP and Congress at the national level. I am in touch with many leaders from regional parties, including chief

ministers of several states. I have already shared my plan to have a conclave of all non-BJP party leaders in Hyderabad in the second week of December."

"Everyone knows I am a stubborn person when it comes to achieving a goal as happened in the case of separate Statehood," he said. Opposing the move of the BJP government at the Centre in selling stakes in PSUs and national organisations like LIC or railways, Rao asked "for whose benefit are BSNL, or LIC or railways being made a scapegoat?"

He assured all support to employees in their fight against privatisation.

The Chief Minister also urged the people of Telangana to strictly follow the Covid-19 guidelines and cooperate with the state government in preventing a second wave

of Coronavirus pandemic in the state.

Rao said the second wave of the pandemic had begun in several states across the country and appears to be far more dangerous. Appealing to people to follow personal protection measures, failing which, Rao said, the government might be "compelled to impose another lockdown".

Stating that though the situation was better in TS, he said people should not be careless and ensure they take adequate personal protection measures.

Maintaining that the government was already on alert and ready to provide all support to people in terms of treatment, he said, personal discipline to follow Covid guidelines will have a far-reaching impact in controlling the pandemic.

He exhorted people to be

careful, saying, "as an elderly man, I urge people to wear face masks compulsorily, wash hands frequently, maintain physical distance and avoid crowds. These simple measures are our most effective weapons to prevent the spread of virus. We are hopeful of normal functioning only if people act responsibly. We need to be extra cautious because the pandemic could intensify during winter."

He said the government was increasing testing up to 75,000 tests per day and had already procured nearly two lakh home isolation kits to be supplied to Covid-19 patients. About 10,000 beds with oxygen facilities have been kept ready, besides making arrangements for oxygen cylinders supply in certain primary health centres in remote areas, he added.

TS BJP president

Bandi Sanjay alleged that the state government neglected the problems of the people of Hyderabad. Chandrasekhar Rao did not care about the floods and was comfortably settled in his farm house. Accusing IT minister K.T. Rama Rao of failing to provide basic infrastructure in the GHMC limits, Sanjay asked where the one lakh double bedroom houses were.

Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy criticised the TRS manifesto, which he said was a replication of the precious one. Reddy pointed out that free power to salons, dhoti ghats, laundries that were promised in the previous manifesto were not honoured.



## OTHER STORIES

### BHADRADRI POWER TO ANNOUNCE COD WITHIN A WEEK

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, NOV. 23

The Bhadradi Power project chief engineer Balaraju on Monday said that the conditions are favourable to declare the Commercial Operation Date (COD) of the second unit of the project.

He said, "The trial run of the 270 MW second unit is going smoothly and production touched its peak on Monday. The engineers are testing all aspects, and there has been no major problem so far."

He added, there will be an announcement about the COD, within a week.

In the Bhadradi Power Project, the first unit has already produced 270 MW power, and the second unit is ready to fit.

## BHADRACHALAM TEMPLE TO HOLD SRIRAMA DEEKSHA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
BHADRACHALAM, NOV. 23

The 28-day Srirama Punarvasu Deeksha will commence in the Bhadrachalam temple on December 4.

Temple executive officer, B. Sivaji, said that the Deeksha will conclude on December 31. The *Purnavasu Nakshatram* comes during *Karthika masam* on December 4, and the same *Nakshatram* will be on December 31, during *Margasira masam*.

Devotees can take up *deeksha* on this day. Programmes like, *Paduka* puja, *Giri Pradaksanam* and *Deeksha Viramana* will be done on December 31.

*Vendi Rathostavam*, will be held at 7 pm on the same day.

## 16 NGOS FOUND GUILTY OF LAND-GRAB

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, NOV. 23

Sixteen non-gazetted officers will face criminal cases on the encroachment of government lands in Khammam Rural and Urban mandals.

Khammam in-charge revenue divisional officer, Suryanarayana, said that the committee appointed to study the encroachment of government lands has submitted its report. As per the report, 16 members of TNGO Housing Society, who were in the executive body, have encroached 8.39 acres — 4.13 acres in Khammam Rural, and 4.26 acres in Khammam Urban mandal.

He said, "The three governing bodies, were constituted, after the formation of the society. These 16 members took decisions in the encroachment of government lands."

The report suggests, criminal cases to be filed, against the 16 members. The station house officers of II-Town and Khammam Rural police stations told to file cases against them.

Five of the TNGOs members facing allegations are retired and the remaining are in service.

## STAFF TO LOG IN VIA SPECIAL APP FOR ATTENDANCE

DC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, NOV. 23

District collector Krishna Aditya has directed government officials and staff in the district to register their attendance through the app 'Bhupalpally attendance' released on Monday at the collector's office.

A technical person explained to the district authorities on how to register their attendance online. The collector told the employees to register their attendance through the app from Tuesday.

He said, "A government employee can register his attendance not only from his office, but also from the field. A person can also take personal leave through the app."

During a meeting later, the collector directed officials to resolve the petitions received through the prajavani programme conducted earlier and details to be handed over to the petitioners within four days.

RDO Srinivas, collector office AO Mahesh Babu, DBCD Shailaja, excise superintendent Shashidhar Reddy, panchayat raj EE Rambabu, ZP CEO Naga Padmaja, DM RTC Lakshmi Dharma, district immunisation officer Dr Umadevi, district DPRO Ravi Kumar and others were present.

# Nizamabad civic result may impact GHMC polls

## TRS-BJP face-off has given the MIM an advantage

NARENDER PULLOOR | DC  
NIZAMABAD, NOV. 23

Leader of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) believe that election results of the Nizamabad Municipal Corporation (NMC) held in January 2020 will reflect in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections, where the BJP is a stronger contender. Interestingly, after the TRS-BJP face-off, the MIM has been elevated as the second political force to reckon.

After Hyderabad, Nizamabad has a sizable population of Muslims, Marathis, Kannadigas and people from north India. Because of its fertile lands, the Nizam Sugars and the Nizamsagar project, people from different parts of undivided Andhra Pradesh and other parts of the country settled here.

In the 2014 Nizamabad municipal elections, BJP had six corporators, but in the January 2020 elections, it's tally reached 28. BJP leaders gained a strong foothold in Nizamabad by targeting the TRS and its ally the MIM.

BJP MP D. Arvind said that the TRS would have offered the mayor's post to the MIM. It polarised the votes, and the BJP stood as the single largest party in the NMC. Since the BJP lacked a majority, it had to sit in the opposition.



Nizamabad TRS leaders along MLA Maganti Gopinath participate in election campaigning at Yousufguda in Hyderabad on Monday.

— DECCAN CHRONICLE

## PARTY-WISE CORPORATORS

|             | 2014 | 2020 | Present |
|-------------|------|------|---------|
| TRS         | 10   | 13   | 22      |
| BJP         | 06   | 28   | 21      |
| MIM         | 16   | 16   | 16      |
| Congress    | 16   | 02   | 01      |
| Independent | 02   | 01   | 00      |

Meanwhile, the TRS improved its tally from 10 corporators in the 2014 elections, to 13 in the 2020 elections.

With the support of the MIM, TRS corporator Dandu Neethu Kiran was elected mayor and MIM corporator Idris Khan as deputy mayor. The MIM corporators number, 16, remained intact in 2014 and the 2020 elections.

led government will definitely give comfortable results," adding that the BJP corporators number might have increased, but it will not win the mayor's post.

"The TRS-MIM combination has worked successfully in the NMC for the last two terms. The floods in Hyderabad is not the fault of the TRS-led government. It was a natural calamity," he said.

Former MLC and TRS leader, Arikela Narsa Reddy is positive, that the TRS will get a good result in the GHMC elections.

The TRS and the BJP leaders from Nizamabad are going door-to-door campaigning in Hyderabad for their respective parties.

During the MLC byelections, several BJP, Congress and Independent municipal corporators switched their loyalties to the TRS for assured development in their respective municipal divisions.

Meanwhile, Adilabad ZP chairman Rathod Janardhan, Asifabad ZP chairperson Kova Laxmi, minister Allola Indrakumar Reddy, Adilabad TRS MLA Joga Ramanna, Khanapur MLA Rekha Naik, MLC Puranam Satish and Asifabad Jilla Grandalaya Samsta chairman Kanaka Yaduvrao were seen actively campaigning in Hyderabad.

These leaders went to Hyderabad along with their associates, before campaigning began.

# ACB confirms Kamareddy DSP's role in bribery case

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAMAREDDY, NOV. 23

Officers of all the cadres in the Kamareddy police sub-division have come under the scanner of the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB).

Kamareddy police Circle-Inspector, I. Jagadish, was arrested and sent to judicial remand till December 4.

He was caught, taking ₹5 lakh bribe, from an accused in a case. His private accomplice, Sujay, was also arrested on Saturday.

Because of the ACB raids, Kamareddy police sub-inspector Govind absconded from duties.

■ **KAMAREDDY CI, I. Jagadish, was arrested and sent to judicial remand till December 4.**

His name figured in the FIR. The role of the Kamareddy DSP Laxminarayana in IPL betting and organising lucky draw schemes also came to the fore.

The ACB carried out searches in the DSP office in Kamareddy and at Laxminarayana's residence in Secunderabad.

Speaking to the Decan Chronicle, ACB Nizamabad range in-charge DSP Anand, said that they collected documents and verified the

role of the police officers in Kamareddy incident.

He said, "Kamareddy DSP Laxminarayana's role in the bribe charges will be ascertained, after scrutinising the details received."

Meanwhile, a few police officers in the Kamareddy police subdivision are facing graft charges. It is alleged, they maintain a rapport with rowdy sheeters, errant realtors, lucky draw scheme organisers and IPL betting gangs. For the first time, in the history of the police in undivided Nizamabad, a SI, CI and DSP have come under the ACB scanner and are facing graft charges.



DAATT centre, agriculture scientist, K. Shekar along with others creates awareness among the farmers about the benefits of mechanisation of paddy farming in Vilasagar village of Boinapally mandal in Rajanna Sircilla district on Monday.

## 40-YR-OLD MAN AXED TO DEATH IN TIRYANI MANDAL

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KOMARAM BHEEM, ASIFABAD, NOV. 23

The body of Atram Lachu Patel, 40, was found in a pool of blood in the agriculture fields in Thati Madhara village in Bheem Ji Guda gram panchayat in Tiryani mandal on Monday morning.

According to sources, some miscreants might have axed Atram Lachu Patel to death when he went to protect the standing crops in his field on Sunday night.

Mynubai, the wife of the deceased, alleged that their relatives would quarrel with them and accuse Lachu Patel, of being a sorcerer, and practicing witchcraft.

Tiryani SI Ramarao visited the crime scene, and the investigation is on.

## 33 CPI-MAOISTS SURRENDER IN CHARLA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, NOV. 23

In a surprise move, 33 CPI-Maoist militia members from Battinapalli and Kistarampadu villages in Charla mandal surrendered in the presence of Bhadradi-Kothagudem police and CRPF 141 battalion.

The incident took place at Charla on Monday.

The members were working for the last two years for the Maoist party. Some of them were involved in the blasting and planting of landmines in Pedamidicileru and Kaliveru recently.

Kothagudem SP Sunil Dutt said that with the constant effort of the police, the members surrendered. The police would meet the members and counselled them in different stages.

"The members want to join mainstream society to live a better life", he said and added that the people, associating with the banned Maoist party should surrender to the police.

There are 25 members from Bathinapally and eight members from Kistarampadu village in Charla mandal.

■ **SOME OF them were involved in the blasting and planting of landmines in Pedamidicileru.**



Farmers give their representations to additional collector Madhusudan Rao on the Devarapalli Greenfield National Highway project in Vemsoor on Monday.

— DC

# Give us ₹40L per acre, say Vemsoor farmers

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
VEMSOOR (KHAMMAM), NOV. 23

The farmers of four villages in Vemsoor mandal, whose lands are to be acquired, for the Devarapalli Greenfield National Highway Project, placed their set of demands before the additional collector Madhusudan Rao, who convened a meeting on the land acquisition.

The farmers said that they are ready to give their lands if the government offered to pay between ₹40 to ₹50 lakh per acre. The revenue officials have marked 186 acres for acquisition from 352 farmers of Vemsoor, Adasarlalpadu, Choudavaram and Erragunda in Vemsoor mandal.

"The government is ready to give ₹20 lakh per acre to farmers in Khammam, who will lose their lands to the Greenfield National Highway project."

The farmers said that the revenue officials collected details of trees and horticulture crops when they were not present. The government needs to redo the survey again.

Land acquisition in other mandals witnessed different issues. There is no

■ **THE REVENUE officials have marked 186 acres for acquisition from 352 farmers of Vemsoor, Adasarlalpadu, Choudavaram and Erragunda in Vemsoor mandal.**

match between the land to be acquired, and the price paid. The farmers said, "The price of land should be decided on the market rates. We will not give our lands if the government does not fulfil the demands."

T. Venkateswara Rao, a farmer, said, "There should be more bridges on the road project, so farmers can go to the fields easily. The names of some of the farmers were not updated in the records during the comprehensive survey."

The farmers said in the notification issued by the project officials on the land acquisition the details mentioned are wrong and misleading. Vemsoor Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society member, T. Gopalakrishna, said, "The government should revise the land prices as per the present situation and not that of 2013."

| VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC)   |  |                              |
|--|--|------------------------------|
| 'E' Procurement Notice No.35/VMC/AE/2020-21. Dt.23-11-2020   |  |                              |
| Sl. No.  | Name of work   | Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs |
| 1  | Repairs and maintenance of CVR FlyOver, Re-Construction of Central median VMC Guest House, Improvements to Vinayaka Temple Flyover Road, Widening of BT Road and Improvement of Drains in CI-183 areas in Vijayawada Municipal Corporation | 471.00                       |
| Contact: Superintending Engineer (Works), VMC, Vijayawada-520 001<br>Further details can be seen @ 'e' procurement market place @ <a href="http://www.tender.aeprocurement.gov.in">www.tender.aeprocurement.gov.in</a><br>Download of bid documents starts from - 25-11-2020 @ 4.00 P.M.<br>Last date / time for receipt of tenders from - 09-12-2020 upto 4.30 P.M.<br>Reverse Tendering cum Auction 1 work Starts - 10-12-2020 from 2.00 P.M.<br>Sd/- For COMMISSIONER |  |                              |



PSPCL

Punjab State Power Corporation Limited

Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001

Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813

Phone No. 0175-2213047, Fax No. 0175-2225024

Mob: 096461-82644, 096461-11035 e-mail: pccablensteel@yahoo.in

e-tendering page: [www.eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in)

TENDER NOTICE

|  |   |                |
|--|---|----------------|
| Short Description                            | Supply of sub-station structure for mounting of 11/0.4 kv transformer on 9 meter double pole and 11meter double pole against tender enquiry no. QQ-1303/PSPCL/PO/C&S. of following quantity:- |                |
|  | Sr. No.   | Quantity (No.) |
|  | 1 Sub Station Structure for 9 m double pole   | 7000           |
| 2 Sub Station Structure for 11 m double pole | 350   |                |

|   |                                   |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| Start date for down loading of Specification/tender documents from <a href="http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in">www.eproc.punjab.gov.in</a> | 23 November, 2020                 |
| Last date for down loading of Specification/tender documents from <a href="http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in">www.eproc.punjab.gov.in</a>  | 24 December, 2020 (upto 11:00 AM) |
| Last date for Bid Submission  | 24 December, 2020 (upto 11:00 AM) |
| Bid Opening date.   | 30 December, 2020 (11:00 AM)      |

For detailed NIT & Tender specification please refer to [www.eproc.punjab.gov.in](http://www.eproc.punjab.gov.in).  
Note :- It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspapers. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on official PSPCL website [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

C-357/2020  
RO - /107782

Chief Purchase Officer/MM,  
Central Purchase Organisation,  
PSPCL, Patiala.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### EDUCATIONAL CAREER/ENTRANCE COURSES

✓ **ONE-SITTING / Fasttrack-Graduations (All), Post-Graduations (All), PG Diplomas, Polytechnic Diplomas, Secondary (10th) & Senior Secondary (12th), Provided Online results & Online verifications, Eligible for Private & Abroad.** Ph:9912540011, 7337291133, [www.hyderc.com](http://www.hyderc.com) (A/2021/C000066)

### EDUCATIONAL

**MEDICAL COURSES** Diploma/Bachelors/ PG in Optometry, Radiology Imaging, Anesthesia, Medical Lab Dialysis, Dental Physician, Assistant, CSSD, Emergency Critical Care, Cardiovascular, BPT, MPT, ANM, GNM, Training & Admission. Sadhana College. P h : 9 2 4 7 4 7 6 8 7 3 . (HYCL/2021/C01736)

### NOTICE

Readers are advised to make appropriate enquiries while responding to advertisements in these columns. Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. does not vouch for any claims made by the Advertisers. The Printer, Publisher, Editor and Owner of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Ltd. shall not be held responsible / liable for any consequences, in case such claims are found to be false.

**DECCAN Chronicle**  
krmmktg@deccanmail.com  
**For Subscription Please Contact**  
**KARIMNAGAR 9000420630**  
Office: **9100715345**



SHORT TAKES

SHRINGLA TO VISIT NEPAL FROM NOV. 26

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 23

In a bid to smoothen rough edges between India and Nepal, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla will visit Kathmandu on November 26 and 27. This will be the first visit of the Foreign Secretary to Nepal since he assumed charge.

“The visit is in keeping with the tradition of regular high-level exchanges between the two countries and the priority India attaches to its relations with Nepal. During the visit, Foreign Secretary will meet his counterpart and other Nepalese dignitaries to discuss the wide ranging bilateral cooperation between the two countries. India has historical and civilisation linkages with Nepal. In recent years, bilateral cooperation has strengthened, with several major infrastructure and cross-border connectivity projects completed with India’s assistance. The visit will be an opportunity to further advance our bilateral ties,” ministry of external affairs said in a statement on Monday.

The ties between the two nations took a dive after Nepal PM changed the map of his country by adding some parts of Indian territory which Nepal claims as its own. However, though the anti-India tone in Nepal has softened a bit of late, the diplomatic ties still need some rejuvenation.

C’GARH: 3 NAXALS KILLED, 1 JAWAN INJURED IN CLASH

**Raipur, Nov. 23:** Three dreaded Naxals, including a woman, were killed and a Sashastra Seema Bal jawan was injured in a fierce gun-battle between ultras and security forces in Chhattisgarh’s Kanker district on Monday, police said.

The three Naxals were collectively carrying a reward of ₹18 lakh on their heads, they said.

The gunfight took place around 8 am in a forest between Padkaelbeda and Kosranda villages when separate joint teams of the SSB and local police were out on an area domination operation, Inspector General of Police (Bastar Range) Sundarraj P. said.

The patrolling teams, comprising personnel from SSBs 33rd and 28th battalions and local police, had launched the operation in forests of Tadoki and Rowghat areas, located around 150 km from the state capital Raipur, he said.

These two battalions of SSB have been deployed in the area since 2016 exclusively for guarding the under-construction DallirajharaRowghat railway project.

Dallirajhara falls in Balod district while Rowghat is in Kanker.

When one of the patrolling teams was cordoning off a forest area close to Kosranda village, a group of Naxals opened fire on security personnel, leading to the gun-battle, the police official said.

MAN SETS MINOR DAUGHTER ON FIRE

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 23

A 17-year-old minor girl was on Monday admitted to the Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital in Bolangir with critical burn injuries.

The maternal uncle of the girl alleged that her father set her on fire by pouring kerosene late on Sunday night. She was rescued by her neighbours from her house at around 3 am and rushed to Bhima Bhoi Medical College and Hospital, Bolangir.

Later, the girl was shifted to VSS Medical College and Hospital at Burla in Sambalpur districts.

The latest report said the doctors at VSS Medical College and Hospital referred the girl to SCB Medical College. The victim has reportedly suffered over 70 percent burn injuries.

The girl’s father, identified as Arakhita Nag of Debripali village of Bolangir district reportedly has two wives and the girl is his first wife’s daughter. The girl used to live with her uncle since childhood. However, after a village meeting a few days ago, she was sent to stay with her father.

The uncle of the girl alleged that Nag didn’t want to keep his daughter and therefore attempted to kill her.

Kashmir Valley receives season’s first snowfall

**Srinagar, Nov. 23:** Most of the plain areas in Kashmir experienced the season’s first snowfall on Monday, even as the higher reaches witnessed heavy precipitation, leading to the closure of Srinagar-Leh road which connects the valley with Ladakh, officials said here. The MeT office has issued an ‘Orange colour’ weather warning for the higher reaches of J&K and Sonmarg-Zojila axis on the Srinagar-Leh road, asking the administration and people to be prepared and to maintain vigil.

An official said light to moderate snow with heavy falls at isolated places was reported from many areas of Kashmir; a few places of Jammu and Sonmarg-Drass axis.

The famous ski-resort of Gulmarg, in north Kashmir, recorded four inches of fresh snowfall during the night, while Pahalgam tourist resort in south Kashmir, recorded 10 cm of snow, the official said.

He said most of the areas in the plains of the valley also received light snowfall. It was still snowing, especially in the higher reaches, when the last reports came in and the weather system is likely to continue, he said. — *PTI*



People walk down a road amid fog and snowfall on the outskirts of Srinagar on Monday. The Srinagar-Ladakh road was closed due to heavy snowfall on the higher reaches and rains in plains.

— PTI

Kerala puts changes to Police Act on hold

Ordinance had okayed 3 year imprisonment, ₹ 10,000 fine for offensive or defamatory remarks on social media

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
NOV. 23

Relenting to the strong protest from within and outside, the CPM-led LDF government in Kerala on Monday decided to put on hold the controversial amendment to Kerala Police Act which made posting offensive remarks on social media, liable for imprisonment and fine or both.

The amendment was made to Kerala Police Act by introducing 118 A through ordinance route triggering widespread criticism from Left sympathisers, human rights activists and legal experts.

Under the provisions of the new law, “Whoever makes, expresses, publishes or disseminates through any kind of mode of communication, any matter or subject for

threatening, abusing, humiliating or defaming a person or class of persons, knowing it to be false and that causes injury to the mind, reputation or property of such person or class of persons or any other person in whom they have interest shall on conviction, be punished with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine which may extend to ten thousand rupees or with both.”

This means that a person can face three years in jail and a fine of ₹10,000 for any social media post that is considered “offensive” or “defamatory”.

“The amendment has met with criticism from those who supported the LDF and also those who have always safeguarded democratic values. Under these circumstances the government has decided

● **CHIEF MINISTER** said the matter will be placed before the Assembly for detailed discussions and opinion of all sections will be elicited before deciding the future course

● **THOSE WHO** opposed the new law said it was similar to the 66A of IT Act and 118D of Kerala Police Act which were repealed by the SC in 2015.

to put the ordinance on hold. The matter will be placed before the Assembly for detailed discussions and opinion of all sections will be elicited before deciding the future course,” the Chief Minister said in a statement.

The central leadership of the CPM and CPI also expressed displeasure over the manner in which the ordinance was promulgated. With the criti-

cism gaining momentum, the government sought to put the controversy to rest by shelving the ordinance for the moment. Governor Arif Mohammad Khan had given his assent to the ordinance here the other day.

Those who opposed the new law said it was similar to the 66A of IT Act and 118D of Kerala Police Act which were repealed by the Supreme Court in 2015 saying these were against freedom of speech.

At that time, the CPM was in the forefront opposing the provisions of 66A of the IT Act calling those draconian. So when the Marxist party led government itself brought the amended law which also had similar provisions, even those who were close sympathizers of the Left came out in strong disapproval.

Shah’s visit to tribal family a show off: Didi

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, NOV. 23

In a blistering attack, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday called Union home minister Amit Shah’s lunch during his visit to Bankura in his last tour to the state earlier this month at a tribal family’s home a “show off” and his garland tribute to a hunter’s statue, passed off by the BJP as of Birsra Munda, an “insult” to the tribal freedom fighter, .

Charging Shah of “lying”, the Trinamul Congress supremo announced that her party would build a statue of Birsra Munda in the dis-

trict to woo the tribal vote-bank.

She also declared the tribal icon’s birthday to be celebrated by her government as a state holiday from next year.

“Few days ago our honourable Union home minister came here for a ‘show off.’ *Dikhane ke liye aaye the!* He had brought cooked food and people including Brahmin from outside to a Dalit family’s home. He did not allow the family to do anything,” she alleged at Khatra in Bankura after launching a list of government projects.

Lashing out at Shah, Banerjee claimed, “The poor man’s daughter suf-

● **MAMATA BANERJEE** announces that the Trinamul Congress will build a statue of Birsra Munda in the district to woo the tribal votebank

● **THE CHIEF MINISTER** launched *Dore Dore Sorkar* (government at doors) to reach out to the public ahead of the next year’s Assembly Election among other projects.

fers from a disease like Thalassaemia. With the assurance of help, he was told that the minister would have his lunch sitting at his home. Though it was shown that vegetables were chopped for

cooking his lunch, he (Shah) did not have the food made of it. Neither coriander leaves nor cabbage was used in cooking. From the newspapers I found he had Basmati rice and Postor Bora (Poppy Seed Fritters).”

The Chief Minister told the audience, “He (Shah) also garlanded a statue which you later said was not of Birsra Munda. The statue might be of a hunter. I respect a hunter also because he is my brother too. But why do you lie? It can not be accepted that you would vandalise Vidyasagar’s statue and garland a different statue instead of Rabindranath Tagore and

Birsra Munda.”

She added, “A statue of Birsra Munda will be built in that place by the followers of Maa-Mati-Manush in revenge of the insult you (Shah) inflicted. On my government’s part, I declare Birsra Munda’s birthday will be a state holiday because we respect him.”

Among the projects launched by the Chief Minister is *Dore Dore Sorkar* (government at doors) to reach out to the public ahead of the next year’s Assembly Election. Daily camps will be run in each district in between 11 am and 3 pm from December 1 to January 30, 2021.

BIG LOSS Three-time Assam CM was battling post-Covid health complications

Former Assam CM Gogoi passes away

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, NOV. 23

Three-time former Assam chief minister Tarun Gogoi, who has been battling post-Covid health complications for a month, passed away on Monday at about 5.34 pm at Guwahati Medical College and Hospital. He was 84.

Assam’s longest serving chief minister suffered multiple organ failure and on Sunday, doctors performed dialysis on him as he was unable to pass urine naturally due to kidney problems.

He had tested positive for Coronavirus on August 25 and had spent two months

in hospital.

Assam Chief Minister, Sarbananda Sonowal on Monday rushed back to Guwahati from Dibrugarh after cancelling his programmes.

The report of Gogoi’s demise came hours after the Chief Minister tweeted that he was flying back to Guwahati from Dibrugarh to visit the veteran Congress leader.

“Flying back to Guwahati from Dibrugarh after cancelling my programmes midway to be on the side of respected Tarun Gogoi da and his family as the former CM’s health deteriorates. He has always been a father figure to me,” he tweeted.



Tarun Gogoi

Earlier, state health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma along with his wife and two children visited the Gauhati Medical College and Hospital on Monday morning to

enquire about the health of the ailing chief minister.

Gogoi’s family, including his wife, son and daughter, have been at the GMCH since Sunday night. A host of MPs, MLAs, former ministers and senior Congress leaders have also been camping at the hospital since Saturday night.

State cabinet ministers and AGP leaders Atul Bora and Keshab Mahanta, Assam BJP president Ranjeet Dass, minister Chandra Mohan Patowary, BJP leader Ramen Deka and AIUDF chief Badruddin Ajmal were among those from other parties to visit the facility to enquire about

his health.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, defence minister Rajnath Singh, former prime minister Manmohan Singh and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had also spoken to Gaurav asking after Gogoi’s health.

Sarma who announced the demise of the former chief minister told reporters that the body of the late chief minister would be kept at Sankardev Kalakshetra where people can pay their last respect since Tuesday morning.

Earlier, prayer meetings were held across the state for the former chief minister’s speedy recovery.

INTERMEDIATE JET TRAINER COMMENCES SPIN FLIGHT TESTING

**Bengaluru, Nov. 23:** Indigenous Intermediate Jet trainer (IJT) designed and developed by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited, which will replace the ageing Kiran aircraft fleet of the Indian Air Force, has commenced spin flight testing here.

The flight was piloted by HAL’s test pilots Gp. Capt H.V. Thakur (Retd) and Wg. Cdr P. Avasti (Retd), the Bengaluru-headquartered HAL said in a statement on Monday.

“The spin testing of an aircraft is the most crucial phase of its flight testing. Accordingly, the testing will be gradually progressed to assess the behaviour of the aircraft till six turn spins to either side to meet the targeted requirement”, the PSU Defence major said.

The IJT has already been tested to its full envelope in terms of speed, altitude and load factor (G envelope) and has also been integrated with drop tanks as well as bombs, according to HAL.

For spin test, HAL redesigned the aircraft by moving the vertical tail aft and extending the rudder surface.

These changes for ensuring a satisfactory spin behaviour required extensive redesign of the rear fuselage and the rudder, the company said.

The changes have been incorporated in two aircraft with the involvement and clearance from certification agencies at every stage.

Post modification, the two aircraft underwent significant flight tests to assess the general handling with the new configuration of fin and rudder, it was stated.

These aircraft have now been incorporated with the necessary safety devices (Anti-Spin Parachute Systems).

During the first flight, initially the aircraft was taken through one turn spin to the left hand and right hand sides to test the spin characteristics, the statement added.

— *PTI*

● **INDIGENOUS INTERMEDIATE** Jet trainer is designed and developed by the Hindustan Aeronautics Limited to replace the ageing Kiran aircraft fleet of the Indian Air Force.

SC extends parole of Rajiv Gandhi’s assassin by 1 week

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 23

The Supreme Court on Monday extended by one week the parole of A.G. Perarivalan – a convict in Rajiv Gandhi assassination conspiracy case – so that he could meet doctors for his treatment.

A bench headed by Justice L. Nageswara Rao and also comprising Justice Hemant Gupta and Justice Ajay Rastogi extended Perativalan’s parole as bench was informed that he could not get himself treated because he was not provided with a police escort that is mandatory for him to go to the hospital.

The top court ordered the extension of parole by one week as senior counsel Gopal Sankaranarayanan appearing for Perarivalan told the bench that he was granted parole by Madras High Court on November 9 till November 23 for going to hospital but he could not reach the hospital on the appointed date as there was no police to escort him to the hospital.

“We are informed that the High Court extended the parole of the petitioner (Perarivalan) from 09.11.2020 to 23.11.2020, since the police escort was not provided to the petitioner, he could not visit the hospital to meet his doctor, we further

extend the parole of the petitioner by one week from today and direct Tamil Nadu to provide the necessary police escort to the petitioner to enable him to visit the hospital for treatment”, the court said in its order.

The court directed the listing of the matter on January 19, 2021, when it will hear arguments by the Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and senior counsel Gopal Sankaranarayanan on the larger issues and decide the matter on that day itself.

Tamil Nadu government’s Additional Advocate General Balaji Srinivasan told the court that let Gopal Sankaranarayanan indicate the date and time when Perarivalan will be going to the hospital and he will be provided with a police escort.

Tamil Nadu government had decided to release Perarivalan by granting him remission of sentence but the matter is still pending with the Governor Banwarilal Purohit.

The Governor has sought a report from the Central government relating to the probe being carried out by CBI headed Multi Disciplinary Monitoring Agency into the larger conspiracy behind the assassination of former Prime Minister.



## IN BRIEF YEMENI REBELS STRIKE SAUDI OIL FACILITY

**Dubai, Nov. 23:** Yemen's Houthis rebels said they struck a Saudi oil facility in the port city of Jiddah on Monday with a new cruise missile, just hours after the kingdom finished hosting its virtual Group of 20 leaders summit.

The kingdom did not immediately acknowledge any attack as videos on social media suggested a fire at an Aramco oil facility.

Brig. Gen. Yehia Sarie, a Houthi military spokesman, tweeted that the rebels fired a new Quds 2 cruise missile at the facility.

He posted a satellite image online that matched Aramco's North Jiddah Bulk Plant, where oil products are stored in tanks.

## 3 PAK BURGLARS ATTACK INDIAN MAN IN THE UAE

**Dubai, Nov. 23:** A 33-year-old Indian man was attacked by three mask-wearing Pakistani burglars who also stole his laptop, mobile phone and some cash while he was asleep at his home in Dubai, according to a media report.

During a hearing in the Dubai Court of First Instance on Sunday, the man said the Pakistani burglars broke into a villa in the Bur Dubai area in August, assaulted the residents with a metal bar, and stole several items, the *Gulf News* reported on Sunday. He said the attackers put a plastic bag over his face and tape on his mouth. "They were wearing medical masks. One of them muzzled me and the other attacked me with a metal bar. I tried to resist but they overpowered me. I pulled the mask of one of the attackers and saw his face," the victim told the court. "I managed to remove the plastic bag and the tape and went outside the room. I went to my roommate and tried to chase the attackers," he said.

The burglars stole the man's laptop, mobile phone, cash, and credit cards, the report said. While one of the burglars was arrested by a police patrol as the victim identified him, the other two remain at large.

## UK SC TO DECIDE IF I.S. BRIDE CAN RETURN

**London, Nov. 23:** Britain's Supreme Court is set to decide whether a woman who ran away from her London home as a teenager to join the Islamic State group in Syria can return to the UK.

The British government is fighting to keep Shamima Begum from coming back to the country where she was born. At a hearing beginning on Monday, it is challenging a lower court's ruling that Begum can return to Britain to mount a legal challenge aimed at restoring her UK citizenship, which was revoked on national security grounds.

The Court of Appeal said in July that "the only way in which she can have a fair and effective appeal is to be permitted to come into the UK."

But James Eadie, a lawyer for the UK government, told the Supreme Court that Begum "is considered to pose a real and current threat to national security." Begum was one of three east London schoolgirls who travelled to Syria in 2015.

## US RENEWS VOW TO DEFEND PHILIPPINES

**Manila, Nov. 23:** President Donald Trump's administration provided precision-guided missiles and other weapons to help the Philippines battle Islamic State group-aligned militants and renewed a pledge to defend its treaty ally if it comes under attack in the disputed South China Sea.

National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien represented Trump in Monday's ceremony at the Department of Foreign Affairs in Manila, where he announced the delivery of the cache of missiles and bombs to the Philippine military. Trump pledged to provide the \$18 million worth of missiles in a phone conversation with Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte in April.

O'Brien expressed condolences to the Philippines after back-to-back typhoons left a trail of death and devastation in the country and outlined US help to the country battle the coronavirus pandemic. The US assistance projects normalcy in Washington's foreign relations as Trump worked to challenge the results of the Nov. 3 presidential election.

# Blinken to be US Secretary of State, Sullivan next NSA

**Washington, Nov. 23:** Joe Biden intends to pick his trusted foreign policy advisor Antony Blinken as the US Secretary of State and Jake Sullivan as National Security Advisor, media reports said on Monday, as the President-elect is poised to make his first round of Cabinet announcements on Tuesday.

Blinken, 58, has served as the Deputy Secretary of State in the second term of the Obama administration and National Security Advisor to Biden when he was the vice president.

A strong India-hand, Blinken was the top foreign policy advisor to the Biden campaign.

"President-elect Joe Biden intends to nominate Antony Blinken to serve as secretary of State, turning to a trusted diplomat and foreign-policy advisor to oversee his work to rebuild US relationships around the globe, according to people familiar with the decision," *The Wall Street Journal* reported.

"President-elect Joe Biden is planning to announce that he has selected Antony Blinken, one of his closest and longest-se-

rving foreign policy advisers, as secretary of state," *The Washington Post* said.

"Jake Sullivan, another top Biden advisers, is expected to be named as national security adviser, according to two people familiar with the announcement," the daily said.

Last week, Biden said he had decided on his name for the Treasury Secretary. "The announcement of Blinken's selection is expected by Tuesday at the latest, people familiar with the selection said," the *Journal* reported.

Blinken also spoke during the virtual celebration of India's Independence Day organised by the Biden Campaign and addressed by Biden himself and his running mate Kamala Harris, who is now the Vice President-elect.

"The Vice President (Biden) has long been a champion of stronger ties with India. I saw this firsthand, I started working for him in 2002 on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. Then, of course, the Obama-Biden administration and his years as Vice President."

— PTI

# China to launch 1st unmanned mission for moon's samples

**Beijing, Nov. 23:** China said on Monday that it will launch its first unmanned space mission on Tuesday to collect samples from the moon's surface and return to earth, which its scientists say is one of the country's most complicated and challenging space missions.

China National Space Administration (CNSA) said that the fuelling of the Long March-5 rocket, currently China's largest launch vehicle, began on Monday ahead of the launch on early Tuesday.

The rocket, which will send the Change-5 spacecraft to Earth-moon transfer orbit, is scheduled to be launched from the Wenchang Spacecraft Launch Site in south China's Hainan Province in the early hours on Tuesday.

The mission is the country's first attempt to launch a spacecraft to collect and return samples from the moon, the CNSA said. The Change-5 mission aims to conduct unmanned lunar sample collection and return to Earth, one of the country's most complicated and challenging space mis-

sions, state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported. It will contribute to the scientific studies in fields such as the formation and evolution of the moon, it said. China's lunar exploration program is named after the legendary Change, the "Moon Lady," who took a potion and floated into the sky, eventually landing on the moon, where she became a goddess accompanied by a jade rabbit.

A major space power, China launched its first Mars mission 'Tianwen-1' on July 23 this year. The Mars spacecraft which included an orbiter, lander and rover is on its way to the red planet. China launched its first lunar probe, Change-1, in 2007 which orbited 200 km above the moon and mapped 3D images of the lunar surface followed by Change-2 in 2010 which had sent high resolution photos of the moon's surface.

Change-3 was launched in 2013 which softly touched down on the Sinus Iridum 12 days later. Change-3 included a lander and a moon rover called Yutu (Jade Rabbit). — PTI

# Shringla to visit Nepal from Nov. 26, talk bilateral issues

**Kathmandu, Nov. 23:** India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla will arrive here on Thursday on a two-day official visit to Nepal during which he would hold talks with his Nepalese counterpart Bharat Raj Paudyal and discuss wide ranging areas of bilateral cooperation.

Shringla is visiting at the invitation of Foreign Secretary Paudyal. This will be a continuation of the regular exchange of



Harsh Vardhan Shringla

high level visits between the two friendly neighbors, the Nepalese Foreign

Ministry said on Monday. "On the first day of the visit, the Foreign Secretaries of the two countries will hold bilateral meeting and discuss wide ranging areas of cooperation between Nepal and India," the ministry said in a statement here.

He is scheduled to call on the high level dignitaries of Nepal, it added. Shringla will also hand over Covid-19 related support to the Government of Nepal. — PTI

# Oxford AstraZeneca vaccine 70% effective on an average

## Becomes third drugmaker to announce promising results to contain Covid

**London, Nov. 23:** Pharma major AstraZeneca said on Monday that an interim analysis of clinical trials of its Covid-19 vaccine in the UK and Brazil showed that it was 70 per cent effective on average, becoming the third drugmaker to announce promising results to contain the deadly virus. The vaccine, developed with the University of Oxford, showed 90 per cent efficacy in one dosing regimen when the vaccine was given as a half dose, followed by a full dose at least a month later, and another dosing regimen showed 62 per cent efficacy when given as two full doses at least one month apart, AstraZeneca said in a statement.

"The combined analysis from both dosing regimens resulted in an average efficacy of 70 per cent," it added. An independent Data Safety Monitoring Board determined that the analysis met its primary endpoint showing protection from Covid-19 occurring 14 days or more after receiving two doses of the vaccine, AstraZeneca said.

No serious safety events related to the vaccine have been confirmed. The ChAdOx1 nCoV-2019 or code-named AZD1222 was well tolerated across both dosing regimens, it said. The company "will now immediately prepare the regulatory submission of the data to authorities around the world that have a framework in place for conditional or early approval," the statement said.

AstraZeneca will seek an Emergency Use Listing from the World Health Organisation for an accelerated pathway to vaccine availability in low-income countries, it added.

"These findings show that we have an effective vaccine that will save many lives. Excitingly,

— PTI

# 4 Indo-Americans Rhodes Scholars

**New York, Nov. 23:** Four Indian-Americans are among the cohort of 32 students chosen from the US as Rhodes Scholars virtually for the first time this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The diverse group, that won scholarships to the Oxford University in England, comprises immigrants and students of colour.

American Secretary of the Rhodes Trust Elliot Gerson announced the

names of the 32 Americans chosen as Rhodes Scholars representing the US on Sunday. The four Indian-American students include Swathi R Srinivasan, Vijayandaram Ramasamy, Garima P Desai and Savarni Sanka.

"Never before has a class of Rhodes Scholars been elected entirely virtually, with both candidates and selectors participating safely, independently and digitally," Gerson said. — PTI



German health minister Jens Spahn wears a protective mask as he is shown around the vaccine production company IDT Biologika by its general manager Juergen Betzing in Dessau, Germany on Monday as the race to develop a Covid vaccine continues.

— AFP

we've found that one of our dosing regimens may be around 90 per cent effective and if this dosing regimen is used, more people could be vaccinated with planned vaccine supply," explained Professor Andrew Pollard, Director of the Oxford Vaccine Group and Chief Investigator of the Oxford Vaccine Trial. The result of the Oxford vaccine compares with the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which were recently shown to be 95 per cent and 94.5 per cent effective, respectively.

The Oxford vaccine is comparatively cheaper and easier to store. "This vaccine's efficacy and safety confirm that it will be highly effective against Covid-19 and will have an immediate impact on this public health emergency," AstraZeneca Chief Executive Officer Pascal Soriot said.

— PTI

# Covid-19 shots could reach US health staff by mid-December

**Washington, Nov. 23:** US healthcare workers and others recommended for the nation's first Covid-19 inoculations could start getting shots within a day or two of regulatory consent next month, a top official of the government's vaccine development effort said on Sunday.

Some 70 per cent of the US population of 330 million would need to be inoculated to achieve "herd" immunity from the virus, a goal the country could achieve by May, according to Dr Moncef Slaoui, chief scientific adviser for "Operation Warp Speed."

Slaoui said the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) would likely grant approval in mid-December for distribution of the vaccine produced by Pfizer Inc and German partner BioNTech, launching the largest inoculation campaign in US history.

The FDA's outside advisers are slated to meet on Dec. 10 to review Pfizer's

emergency-use application for its vaccine, which the company said was found to be 95 per cent effective against infection from the highly contagious respiratory virus.

A second pharmaceutical company, Moderna Inc, is expected to seek separate approval later in December for its Covid-19 vaccine. Appearing on several network news shows on Sunday morning, Slaoui sketched out a timeline for getting the initial doses of the Pfizer vaccine from FDA authorization into the arms of those who will be first in line to receive it.

"Within 24 hours from the approval, the vaccine will be moving and located in the areas where each state will have told us where they want the vaccine doses," Slaoui told NBC's "Meet the Press."

"Maybe on 11th or 12th of December, the first people will be immunised across the US," he said. — Reuters

## GERMANY MIGHT START GIVING SHOTS IN DEC.

**Frankfurt, Nov. 23:** Germany could start administering shots of Covid-19 vaccines as soon as next month, health minister Jens Spahn was quoted as saying. "There is reason to be optimistic that there will be approval for a vaccine in Europe this year," Spahn said in an interview with publishing group RedaktionsNetzwerk Deutschland. "And then we can start right away."

Spahn said that he had asked Germany's federal states to have their vaccination centres ready by mid-December and that this was going well. "I would rather have a vaccination centre ready a few days early than an approved vaccine that isn't being used immediately," — Reuters

# China tests millions in 3 cities

**Beijing, Nov. 23:** Chinese authorities are testing millions of people, imposing lockdowns and shutting down schools after multiple locally transmitted Coronavirus cases were discovered in three cities across the country last week.

As temperatures drop, large-scale measures are being enacted in the cities of Tianjin, Shanghai and Manzhouli, despite the low number of new cases compared to the United States and other countries that are seeing new waves of infections.

Experts and government officials have warned that the chance of the virus spreading will be greater during the cold weather. Recent flareups have shown that there is still a risk of the virus returning, despite being largely controlled within China. — AP

# Saudi Arabia denies Bibi met crown prince

**Jerusalem, Nov. 23:** Israeli media reported Monday that Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu flew to Saudi Arabia for a clandestine meeting with Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, which would mark the first known encounter between senior Israeli and Saudi officials.

But, Saudi Arabia on Monday denied Israeli media reports of landmark talks Netanyahu and bin Salman during a visit by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo.

"I have seen press reports about a purported meeting between HRH the

Crown Prince and Israeli officials during the recent visit by @SecPompeo," Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan said in a tweet.

"No such meeting occurred. The only officials present were American and Saudi." Israeli public broadcaster *Kan* and other outlets had reported that the meeting took place Sunday, weeks after the Jewish state reached historic deals to normalise ties with two Saudi allies, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain.

Those deals, known as the Abraham Accords,

were brokered by the administration of US President Donald Trump, who leaves office in less than two months.

Hebrew-language media cited an unnamed Israeli official as saying that Netanyahu and Yossi Cohen, head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, flew to the Saudi city of Neom on Sunday, where they met with the crown prince. The prince was there for talks with visiting US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo. Flight radar24, which provides live worldwide flight tracking, showed a plane taking off

from Tel Aviv on Monday at around 7:30 p.m. local time and vanishing from radar near Neom around an hour later.

It shows the same flight appearing on radar near Neom and landing at Tel Aviv at around 1 a.m. (local time) Monday. It did not provide any details on the flight. The Israeli PM's office did not respond to requests for comment. Israel recently signed normalisation agreements with Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates and has long maintained clandestine security ties with Saudi Arabia. — Agencies

**NEW | STUDY** Research hints at possibility that life may have existed on the Red Planet 4 billion years ago

# Nasa rover data hints at ancient megaflood in Mars

**New York, Nov. 23:** Giant flash floods once washed through Gale Crater on Mars' equator around four billion years ago, according to a study which hints at the possibility that life may have existed on the Red Planet.

The research, published recently in the journal *Scientific Reports*, assessed data collected by Nasa's Curiosity rover — launched in November 2011 — and found that "gigantic flash floods," likely touched off by the heat of

a meteoritic impact, unleashed the ice stored on the Martian surface. Based on the analysis, scientists including those from Cornell University in the US, said these floods of "unimaginable magnitude" set up gigantic ripples that are tell-tale geologic structures familiar to scientists on the Earth.

"We identified megafloods for the first time using detailed sedimentological data observed by the rover Curiosity," said study co-author Alberto G. Fairen

from Cornell University. According to the scientists, geological features including the work of water and wind have been frozen in time on Mars for about four billion years.

They said these features convey processes that shaped the surface of both the Earth and the Mars in the past. This case includes the occurrence of giant wave-shaped features in sedimentary layers of Gale crater, often called "megaripples" or "antidunes" that are about 30-feet

● **THE RESEARCHERS** said these features convey processes that shaped the surface of both the Earth and the Mars in the past.

high and spaced about 450 feet apart, lead author Ezat Heydari, a professor of physics at Jackson State University in the US, noted. The antidunes are indicative of flowing megafloods at the bottom of Mars' Gale Crater about

four billion years ago, which are identical to the features formed by melting ice on Earth about two million years ago, Heydari added. According to the study, the most likely cause of the Mars flooding was the melting of ice from heat generated by a large impact, which released carbon dioxide and methane from the planet's frozen reservoirs.

The water vapour and release of gases combined to produce a short period of warm and wet condi-

tions on Mars, the researchers said. They believe the condensation may have formed water vapour clouds, which in turn likely created torrential rain, possibly planetwide. This water may have entered Gale Crater, and combined with water coming down from Mount Sharp in Gale Crater to produce gigantic flash floods, they added.

The Curiosity rover science team had already established that Gale Crater once had persistent lakes and streams in the an-

cient past.

The researchers believe these long-lived bodies of water are good indicators that the crater, as well as Mount Sharp within it, were capable of supporting microbial life.

"Early Mars was an extremely active planet from a geological point of view. The planet had the conditions needed to support the presence of liquid water on the surface — and on the Earth, where there's water, there's life," Fairen said. — PTI



DECCAN  
Chronicle

24 NOVEMBER 2020

## Kerala's dropping law to punish dissent welcome

The decision by Kerala's Left Democratic Front government led by the CPM to put on hold its controversial ordinance amending the Kerala Police Act 2011 is extremely welcome. The ordinance was intended to insert a section in the law giving the police wide powers to proceed against those who defame people through various media, including the social media, and another to make it a cognisable offence.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who announced the decision, said the government was forced to bring in the ordinance in the background of complaints about widespread misuse of social media platforms to attack individuals, especially women and children. The government must now complete the legal process which leads to the nullification of the ordinance.

The new Section 118A in the law had made a communication which "caused injury to the mind" of not only the target but also of "any other person in whom they have interest" a cognisable offence, giving the police undefined powers to initiate criminal proceedings against unsuspecting people.

It evoked instant condemnation from civil rights activists and Left sympathisers as well as the Opposition, who said that it could be misused to stifle voices of dissent. The Communist Party of India, the second largest LDF constituent, had also publicly voiced its dissent. The protests forced the CPM central leadership to promise a relook at the law.

That a government led by the CPM, which has consistently opposed every single move against freedom of speech, had dared to bring in such a law could perplex an outsider. But a close look at the way the police has behaved in Kerala under the current government would show that the new law was a continuation of the pattern of its behaviour, which has nothing to do with the published policy of the party that leads the government. The police shot and killed two Maoists in the forests of Nilambur in an encounter just three months after the new government had taken over.

Though Left parties oppose encounter killings, the party offered no explanation while the Chief Minister said the government will do nothing that would affect the morale of the police. Encouraged perhaps by the words of the Chief Minister, who also holds the home portfolio, the police conducted more encounters in the following years, in which six more people were killed. Two youngsters were incarcerated last year for about 10 months under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act 1967 for allegedly possessing Maoist literature though the CPM has been in the forefront of agitations against its misuse.

While it is true that the Vijayan government has finally given in to public pressure against a draconian law, the CPM leadership needs to do a serious rethink why the Kerala police, which functions directly under one of its most senior leaders, gets to do whatever it feels like, even breaking the party's own policies. It must also be a lesson for all governments in this country which find voices of dissent an unnecessary evil. They might do well to recognise that freedom of speech is a vital part of democracy, guaranteed by the Constitution, and that all attempts to smother it will face stiff resistance.

## J&amp;K: What kind of democracy?

Jammu and Kashmir has taken a long break from democracy. There has been no popular government there since 2018's summer, and in August 2019, without going through any laid-down procedure, the Centre scrapped the former state's autonomy, vivisected it, and converted it into a Union territory. Now, when polls are to be held for District Development Councils, which didn't exist in the past, non-BJP parties are vociferously complaining that they aren't allowed to campaign while BJP candidates face no hurdles.

Mostly these are the Gupkar Alliance parties, and they complain that their candidates, in the name of security, are practically facing internment. This is Kashmir's first real test at procedural democracy in 29 months and it was expected that the leaders of Kashmir's mainstream parties, who have sworn by India and paid the price, with thousands of them killed by terrorists over the years, would have every opportunity to have their say in the DDC polls.

In an eloquent letter to lieutenant-governor Manoj Sinha, stalwart National Conference leader and former chief minister Farooq Abdullah, president of the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), the conglomerate of Kashmir's non-BJP parties working for restoration of Kashmir's autonomy, has said that the story of democracy in Kashmir is soaked in the blood of representatives of the same parties whose candidates are being physically restrained from campaigning. Other PAGD parties have also complained bitterly. The elections are imminent.

If this grievance is made up, it will be appropriate for the L-G to go on record to say so, and then to substantiate his stand before the public. Else, the impression is apt to go around that the ruling party is intent on winning the election by hook or by crook, for it will be a big blow to the BJP if it loses the election after the party pursued its ideological agenda to denude J&K of its historical autonomy. And why has the Election Commission gone to sleep in the face of such complaints?

## DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER  
EditorK. SUDHAKAR  
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256

Vijayawada: No.C-3 &amp; 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Vennagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

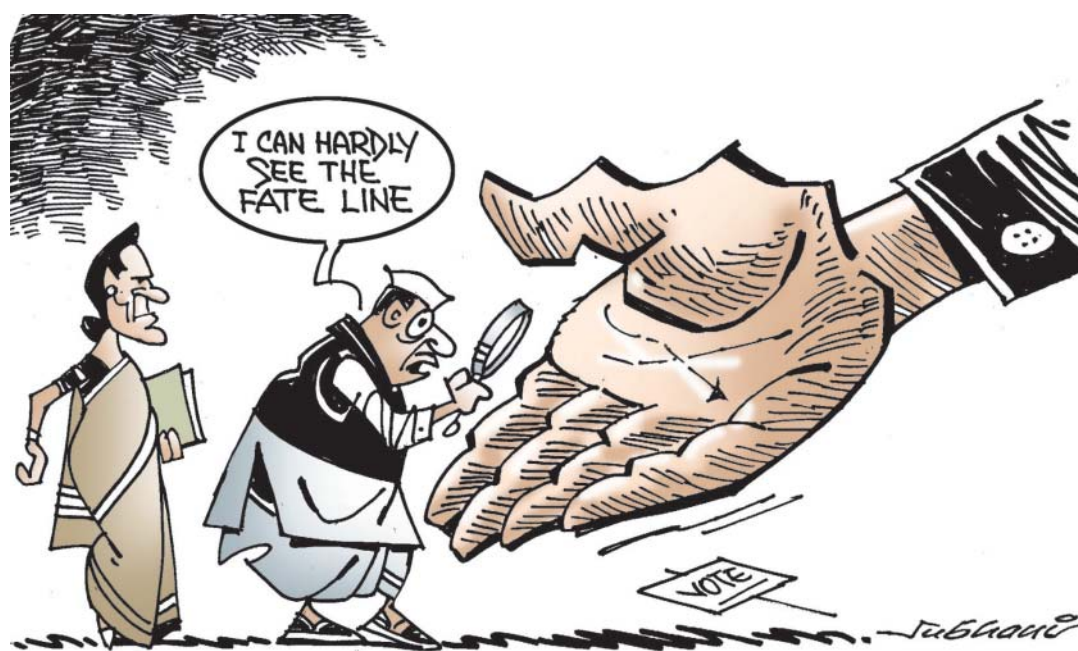
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747 48/50/51; Advrt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255

Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-34/2006-08

Subhani



## Beyond the RCEP: India matters in Indo-Pacific



Sreeram Chaulia

Since the signing of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) agreement by 15 nations on November 15, criticism of India for sitting out the mega free trade pact has arisen in some quarters. Myths have been propagated that deserve to be debunked.

The first line of attack is that India has hacked at its own feet because remaining outside the pan-regional integration process will hamper India's economic growth and transformation. This argument is not supported by empirical evidence from previous free trade agreements. Barring the South Asian Free Trade Agreement (Safra), which came into force in 2006, all the other FTAs have produced trade deficits for India.

By 2019, India had a deficit of \$22 billion with Asean, thanks to the India-Asean Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), which has been operational since 2010. Likewise, the India-Japan Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), in vogue from 2011, and the India-South Korea CEPA, in effect from 2010, have engendered progressively larger deficits for India. Signing these FTAs did increase overall trade volumes between India and its partner countries, but India's market became more open to imports without reciprocal benefits for Indian exports.

Liberal proponents of consumer welfare contend that the deficits should not matter as Indian consumers gain from the influx of cheaper foreign-made goods. But the widening trade deficits have adverse implications for India's macro-economic stability and ability to strategically plan its economic future.

External affairs minis-

ter S. Jaishankar explained the crux of the matter by reminding us that past FTAs led to "de-industrialisation" of sectors of the Indian economy by pumping in cheap foreign goods and removing economic incentives to build our own indigenous manufacturing base.

The challenge, Mr Jaishankar rightly says, is "whether India will become a first-class industrial power or not". Multiple studies have shown that if India joined the RCEP on the bargaining terms we got after six years of negotiations, the already alarming surge of Chinese goods would have swamped India and rendered it permanently uncompetitive and crippled.

Already, even without an FTA, China had a worrisome trade surplus of \$48.6 billion with India in the 2019-2020 financial year. With China sitting as the 800-pound gorilla in RCEP, which doesn't prohibit China's notorious state subsidies to its exporters and doesn't block Chinese exports rerouted via other RCEP members, India would have committed strategic suicide by entering the club.

All the hopes pinned on Prime Minister Modi's "AtmaNirbhar Bharat" and "Make in India" drives would have been eviscerated had we been in RCEP. For example, the billions of dollars of incoming FDI flows to India to manufacture consumer electronics for sale in our domestic market and for export would evaporate if our gates were wide open for tariff-free Chinese mobiles, laptops or television sets.

Protectionism and import-substitution indeed failed in earlier eras and stunted India from developing world class export-oriented products. But the record FDI inflows and improvements in "Ease of Doing Business" in the Narendra Modi era

are rays of hope for a late industrialisation renaissance, which needs at least one more decade before judging its success. In this intervening decade, we ought to be cagey about FTAs involving predatory exporting giants.

The second myth about India not joining RCEP is that the other RCEP members—the Asean nations, South Korea, Japan, Australia and New Zealand—have been deeply disappointed and India has marginalised itself by abandoning these partners when they needed it the most to counter the Chinese behemoth from within. This too is a misrepresentation. India already has FTAs with 12 out of the 15 RCEP members. Only Australia and New Zealand lack FTAs with India, but its trade with them too has been growing. We have already been quite generous with all RCEP members and remain committed to elevating our strategic partnerships with many of them. Just because we are not in RCEP does not mean India has lost its appeal in the eyes of these countries.

Admittedly, there is far greater economic cooperation potential to be unlocked by India with RCEP members other than China. But one must not downplay the defence and geopolitical dimensions of India's salience in the Indo-Pacific region. The recently strengthened "Quad" security dialogue mechanism has spurred enthusiasm in Japan and Australia, which are speeding up military interoperability for balance in the Indo-Pacific. Japan and Australia may have signed RCEP, but China is far from neutralising the "Quad" or softening opposition from Asean biggies like Vietnam and Indonesia to Chinese intimidation.

The present multilateral and multipolar international environment is complex, and countries

**RCEP is not a talisman for India's economic or geopolitical rise. We should move past what was lost by missing the RCEP bus.**

often hold overlapping memberships in a variety of groups. Owing to the interests of private corporations and big businesses, RCEP members see economic value in trading and investing with China. But there is also deep fear and anxiety among their national security establishments and ordinary citizens about China's territorial aggression and economic blackmail. This is why, after the Covid pandemic hit, Australia, Japan and India formed the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) to avoid dependence on a single hegemonic power. India is bang in the middle of these new structures and not a sideshow.

The third myth about India and RCEP is that we are rudderless if we do not coalesce into the Asia-wide economic connectivity network because the US and Europe will provide scant solace. It is true that India has not had much joy getting market access to Western countries due to their protectionist politics. But trade experts believe India might secure better terms than what was offered in RCEP if it moves forward FTAs with the EU and the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). One must be unsentimental in the pursuit of national interests, which is what the Modi-Jaishankar duo is trying to do.

Another heartening shift is that the Europeans want to permanently deploy military assets in the Indo-Pacific alongside the US to restrain China. France, Germany and the Netherlands are advocating accelerated trade and political linkages with democratic nations like India and Indonesia to contribute to rebalancing in the Indo-Pacific.

RCEP is not a talisman for India's economic or geopolitical rise. We should move past what was lost by missing the RCEP bus. There are other conducive regional and global vehicles to propel India as a "leading power", and it is on its way.

*The writer is professor and dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs*

## LETTERS

## METRO IN OLD CITY

I urge the people of the Old City in Hyderabad to demand Metro Rail at the earliest for the area from the leaders who will be coming for votes in the upcoming GHMC elections. The original project had included the Old City, but no serious initiative has been taken so far.

**Mohan Raj Jhawar**  
Hyderabad

## POLITICAL RALLIES

It is shocking to see all political parties organising and encouraging huge crowds at gatherings and road shows for votes and power in the GHMC elections forgetting all the norms for Covid-19 and risking the lives of people by creating traffic jams. Whom do we blame? Are norms only for common people and not for political parties?

**Kanagiri S.N. Prasad**  
Hyderabad

## BJP'S CHARGE SHEET

In a typical 'pot calling the kettle black' move, the BJP leadership has filed a charge sheet of a large number of allegations against the ruling TRS (*KCR family's graft has ruined TS: Javadekar, DC, Nov. 23*). The TRS may have failed to fulfil some election promises, but the BJP's failures, both at the Centre and in the states ruled by it, are not pardonable. It is unfortunate that parties continue to win votes by talking ill of other parties than talk about their own accomplishments.

**M. Saleemuddin**  
Hyderabad

## MEDICINE STREAMS

Though all systems of medicine should be improved, the demand to allow surgery does not seem justified (*Govt neglect will ruin Unani system: Docs, DC, Nov. 23*). It is too early even to allow Ayurveda doctors as training for surgery needs infrastructure and that is lacking. Even MBBS doctors doing MS are not getting full training. Let us first improve our system.

**Dr Jaspal Singh Bhatia**  
Hyderabad

## 50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN  
Chronicle

## India fascinating: Haubold

HYDERABAD, November 23 A remarkable young man who had "discovered" India sufficiently by now was in town today. Mr Erhard Haubold, Chief of the Press Bureau of German Industry, Delhi has statistics about Germany's industrial progress at his finger tips. In the course of an hour-long interview, he spoke about the Indo-German relations and the various fields in which further closer, economic ties are possible.

Aakar  
Patel

## From testing to travel, India's Covid handling process is faulty

Hong Kong banned Air India flights again last week, after Indians landing there tested positive for Covid-19 for the fifth time since August. Passengers are supposed to board the aircraft only after taking a test that confirms that they are negative, but the testing does not appear to be done at our end with any sort of rigour. The passengers who boarded the flight and landed in Hong Kong had certificates showing they were Covid negative, but this turned out to be untrue.

I was not surprised by this because there is no standard process that India is following for testing and for flying, and I can vouch for this from personal experience. For the last few months I have been going to Surat every month to attend to a case that has been filed against me. The first time I went was the first time I flew after the Covid-19 outbreak and had to find out what the process for flying was. I was told by the airline

that an app from the Surat Municipal Corporation would have to be downloaded, and a form that was self-attested which said that I was not bearing any symptoms would also be needed to be signed and submitted. I tried downloading the app, but it was a fairly crude piece of software and my phone refused to download it.

On landing in Surat, I was not asked to show either the app or the form but instead all passengers above 50 were told to take a rapid test, and their phone numbers and addresses were taken down. On leaving Surat, I was asked to show if I had downloaded the Aarogya Setu app, which I did not have and did not know I was supposed to have. On landing back in Bengaluru, nothing was asked for.

That was the first time I had travelled. The second time, the following month, on landing in Surat there was nobody at the airport to check anything and I walked about without the test or any form. The

**One airline gave face shields but did not insist that passengers use them. Another airline forced all passengers to wear the shield over their mask. Each time there was a different process**

third time, which was in October, there were people at Surat airport who were taking the temperatures of passengers who were getting off the plane but no testing or taking down of addresses or phone numbers. This time, on leaving, nobody checked for the Aarogya Setu either.

One airline gave out face shields but did not insist that all passengers use them. Another airline forced all passengers to wear the shield over their mask. Each time there was a different process and even that process wasn't followed with any kind of rigour. It is random and does not reflect the seriousness with which the rest of the

world has taken the virus. This could be one reason why China has 100 times fewer infections than India and why Hong Kong has had to repeatedly ban Air India.

The problem of testing is not limited to the airlines. A report from Bloomberg this week said that questionable testing in India could be the reason why our Covid-19 numbers were down. Half of all testing in India was done through rapid antigen tests. These tests were quick but were likely to result in false negatives (meaning reporting a negative wrongly) half the time. This could mean that one out of every four people getting tested negative could actually be infected with Covid-19.

In mid-August only 25 per cent of the total tests were done in this way but now it is almost 50 per cent. In states like Bihar, about 90 per cent of all tests are of the rapid variety. This could explain the sharp fall in the number of cases in India, the report said. Other nations which

had large numbers of positive cases like the United States and Britain were using the RT-PCR tests, which took longer time for results but were more reliable.

There is also uneven testing across the country and no specific standard. The day the Bloomberg report was published, Bihar, which had just voted in an election with large rallies, reported only 600 cases while the city of Delhi, the nation's capital, added about 7,000 cases in 24 hours.

The report quoted several experts who were sceptical about the numbers in India, and again, this doesn't surprise me. We have no standard processes in place to address the more serious public health hazard of our lifetime. It is obvious to those of us who have travelled in this period. The rest of the world, as the repeated bans on us from Hong Kong show, knows it too now.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*



## quick BITES

| INDICATORS             |           | %     |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Sensex                 | 44,077.15 | 0.44  |
| Nifty 50               | 12,926.45 | 0.52  |
| S&P 500*               | 3,581.04  | 0.66  |
| Dollar (₹)             | 74.10     | 0.07  |
| Pound Sterling (₹)     | 99.07     | -0.63 |
| Euro (₹)               | 88.04     | 0.14  |
| Gold (₹)               | 49,767    | 0.11  |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)*  | 45.63     | 1.49  |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield    | 5.900     | 0.391 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 0.855     | 3.136 |

\* As of 9:30 PM IST

## ‘Asset quality of Indiabulls Hsg, IIFL vulnerable’

Asset quality at non-bank lenders IIFL Finance and Indiabulls Housing Finance is “vulnerable” due to the economic contraction, Moody’s Investors Service said. It said Muthoot Finance, the third NBFC it rates, is better positioned because of its focus on the gold loans. Loan collections have shown an improvement for all the three NBFCs despite the six-month loan repayments moratorium ending in August.

## Gland Pharma shares rise 40% in two sessions



After decent listing gains last week, Gland Pharma shares gained another 15 per cent on positive management commentary. The shares gained 19.99 per cent intra-day to hit a high of Rs 2,184.50 on the BSE and later closed at Rs 2,091.85, up 14.91 per cent. Gland Pharma has gained 39.43 per cent in just two trading sessions from its public issue price of Rs 1,500 per share of Re 1 face value.

## UK biopharma platform buys into Celon Labs

A newly incorporated London-based biopharmaceutical platform has acquired a majority stake in Celon Laboratories Private Limited, a Hyderabad-based specialty generics company having presence in India and emerging markets. The Platform is backed by CDC Group, the UK’s publicly owned impact investor, Development Partners International via its ADP III fund and the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development.

## Fake Xiaomi products worth ₹33 lakh seized

Xiaomi said counterfeit products with the company’s branding were seized from four suppliers in Chennai and three suppliers in Bengaluru. The fake products were worth Rs 33 lakh. As a part of its proactive anti-counterfeit programme, Xiaomi filed complaints with the local police stations, and raids were conducted in the market in October and November. Over 3,000 products were seized.



# ■ On-tap banking licence already available NBFCs may prefer to skip bank status

FALAKNAAZ SYED  
MUMBAI, NOV. 23

The Reserve Bank of India’s (RBI) internal working group’s recommendation to allow large Non-Banking Finance Companies (NBFCs) to convert into front line banks may see few takers, going by the past experience. The on-tap Universal Banking Licence is anyhow available to most NBFCs and other players since 2016; however, none have opted for going down the banking route so far.

According to experts, fulfilling the statutory liquidity ratio (SLR) and cash reserve ratio (CRR) requirement for NBFCs will play an important role in decision making for most of these lenders. The impact of SLR/CRR will have a severe negative impact on NBFC’s margin profile as well as on their current cashflow patterns. After the IL&FS crisis, most NBFCs have improved their risk practices and currently are sitting on cash piles to avoid any undue defaults or liquidity freeze, pointed out experts.

The internal working group (IWG) headed by executive director P. K. Mohanty has recommended that well-run large NBFCs with an asset size of Rs 50,000 crore and above, including those owned by a corporate house, may be considered for conversion into banks subject to the completion of



10 years of operations, and tougher promoter stake dilution guidelines (49 per cent stake before applying, with a 10-year timeline to reach 26 per cent cap).

Umesh Revankar, MD & CEO at Shriram Transport Finance, said, “The regulator had opened doors for on-tap universal banking licence in 2016 and for small finance bank licence in 2018, so what we are seeing in terms of opening up the sector is not a first from RBI, but opening up candidature for large corporate/industrial houses and well-run large NBFCs for converting to a private sector bank is a progressive step indeed.”

“Shriram Transport Finance, being a large NBFC predominantly in the vehicle finance space, we have built pan-India reach with strong last-mile connectivity, all the while delivering a focused product portfolio, backed by speed & quality, to mostly the underbanked and unbanked customers. In contrast, a bank has to provide a very wide range of

services, maintain statutory liquidity ratio and cash reserve requirement and operate at a much higher cost structure compared to NBFCs. So a NBFC will have to weigh the pros and cons after final guidelines, and understand the impact for stakeholders (shareholders, employees, customers) before considering conversion to a bank.” Similarly, in its Q2 conference call, the management of Bajaj Finance had mentioned that consideration of a banking licence will be after the company becomes thrice its current size.

Jignesh Shial, research analyst at Emkay Global, says Bajaj Finance management “would not transform into a bank at the cost of growth, at least over the medium term. However, we believe the suggestions could benefit NBFCs such as L&T Finance Holdings (L&T had tried to obtain a banking licence earlier) and conglomerates such as Aditya Birla Capital due to their diversified loan book.”

## Reforms momentum to continue: Sitharaman

FC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, NOV. 23

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday assured industry that the momentum of economic reforms will continue to make India a hotspot of global investment.

Noting that the government has used the pandemic to push ahead with long pending reforms, Sitharaman said, “...The momentum for reform shall continue. Several more active reform-related steps are being taken up.”

The financial sector is being professionalised and the government will continue with disinvestment agenda, she added, addressing a CII event.

The minister also said the government will speed up the new privatisation policy for public sector units.

In order to bring in further ease for global players to set up shops here, she said an effective unified single window where access to regulators, policymakers and facilitators would be available at one point.

Referring to the Prime Minister’s meeting with representatives from 20 of the world’s largest pension and sovereign wealth funds earlier this month, she said the emphasis of the upcoming budget is going to be what the global investor community exactly looking from India in this changing environment.

# Investment proposals from HK going into deep freezer

SHRUTI SRIVASTAVA  
NOV. 23

India is subjecting foreign investment proposals from Hong Kong at par with China as part of a new policy that makes approval mandatory for plans from countries that share a land border, a person with the knowledge of the matter said.

Nearly 140 investment proposals valued at over \$1.75 billion, mostly from China and Hong Kong—China’s special administrative region—have been put on hold pending scrutiny, the person said asking not to be identified.

Amidst a border stand off with China, the Indian government tight-



ened rules for foreign direct investment from all nations sharing a land border, making scrutiny mandatory for such investments—a restriction that was earlier applicable only to Pakistan and Bangladesh. The delays may complicate deal-making and impact the flow of capital

from private equity firms and hedge funds, which often include investors domiciled in China or Hong Kong. This may starve Indian companies of investment in the midst of the pandemic-induced economic contraction.

The curbs also apply when the beneficial owner of the proposed investment is situated in any of India’s neighbours. A government panel constituted to approve these proposals is yet to decide on the rules, including on beneficial ownership.

Tensions between the two giant Asian economies have been escalating since May.

—Bloomberg

# Diwali sales bounce for organised retailers

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

Organised retail saw Diwali sales clocking about 88 per cent of last year. Some of the categories have even seen growth over last year.

The Covid-hit Diwali this year managed to garner 87 to 88 per cent sales of last year for the organised retailers. From 69 per cent sales in October, Diwali season saw a substantial recovery, finds the Retailers Association of India.

“While footfalls were still down, customers have been walking with a clear purpose of what to buy. This saw conversions going up and the bill sizes

were almost double that of last Diwali. While some categories did well, some lagged behind,” said Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, RAI.

Shopping malls too witnessed some activity during the festive days. “While the dwell time has decreased, the ticket size has increased drastically. During the Navratri and Diwali season, shopping malls across the country reported an increase in footfalls on a week-on-week basis and witnessed a continued growth during the weekends. We are hoping to reach 80 per cent of sales on an average,” said Amitabh Taneja, chairman, Shopping Centres

Association of India.

Festive-induced shopping has added some impetus to the garments category. However, growth was seen only in the occasion wear and leisure-wear segments. Athletic-wear, including shoes, saw good growth of about 20 per cent as compared to last year’s Diwali shopping period. Similarly, luxury brands and occasion-wear brands have also indicated double-digit growth.

Work-from-home category products continued to show faster recovery, especially electronics and consumer durables, with some segments registering double digit growth of about 15 to 18 per cent.

# Rajan, Acharya blast proposal for big corporate entry into banking

New Delhi, Nov. 23: The RBI working group’s proposal to allow corporate houses to set up banks is a “bombshell” and at this juncture, it is more important to stick to the tried and tested limits on involvement of business houses in the banking sector, according to an article jointly written by former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and ex-deputy governor Viral Acharya.

They also said that the proposal is “best left on the shelf.”

“The history of... connected lending is invariably disastrous how can the bank make good loans when it is owned by the borrower? Even an independent committed regulator, with all the information in the world, finds it difficult to be in every nook and corner of the financial system to stop poor lending,” the article said.

Last week, an Internal Working Group (IWG) set up by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) made various recommendations, including that a large corporate may be permitted to promote banks.

Referring to the report, the article said, “its most important recommendation, couched amidst a

## S&P sceptical

NUPUR ANAND  
MUMBAI, NOV. 23

S&P Global Ratings said on Monday a recommendation from the RBI committee to allow industrial conglomerates to set up banks is fraught with risk.

“The working group’s concerns regarding conflict of interest, concentration of economic power, and financial stability in allowing corporates to own banks are potential risks,” S&P Global Ratings said in a note. Corporate ownership of banks raises the risk of inter-group lending, diversion of funds and reputational exposure, it said. —Reuters

number of largely technical regulatory rationalisations, is a bombshell”.

“... it proposes to allow Indian corporate houses into banking. While the proposal is tempered with many caveats, it raises an important question: Why now?” asks the article, posted on Rajan’s LinkedIn profile on Monday.

The IWG has suggested significant amendments to the Banking Regulation Act of 1949, aimed at increasing the RBI’s powers, before allowing corporate houses into banking. “Yet if sound regulation and supervision were only a matter of legislation, India would not have an NPA problem. It is hard not to see these proposed amendments as a subtle way for the IWG to undercut a recommendation it may have had little power over.”

“In sum, many of the technical rationalisations proposed by the IWG are worth adopting, while its main recommendation -- to allow Indian corporate houses into banking -- is best left on the shelf,” they opined.

Rajan and Acharya noted that the rationales for not allowing industrial houses into banking are then primarily two. First, industrial houses need financing, and they can get it easily, with no questions asked, if they have an in-house bank. The second reason to prohibit corporate entry into banking is that it will further exacerbate the concentration of economic (and political) power in certain business houses. —PTI

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, NOV. 23

India is a net exporter of agricultural machinery, with tractors contributing to a lion’s share of the exports. Despite lock-down disruptions and container issues, tractor-makers could make significant exports in the first half of this year.

In 2019-20, agricultural machinery earned export revenues of \$1,024.58 million. By witnessing a positive trade balance of \$708.3 million, India is a net exporter of agricultural equipment. India exports these equipment to some of the advanced countries like the US, UK, Germany, and Italy apart from Africa, Asean and Saarc countries.

Tractors accounted for \$766 million, or 75 per cent, of the agricultural equipment exports. Even during the April-September period of this year, despite the

lock-down and container availability issues, tractor manufacturers clocked exports of \$305 million.

Mahindra and Mahindra is the market leader in the tractor segment, followed by TAFE. Together these companies account for more than 60 per cent of the tractor market share in India.

The key customers of Indian tractors are in the US, Turkey, Nepal, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Algeria, sub-Saharan Africa, Vietnam, Thailand and Ukraine. Indian manufacturers are capable of producing a wide range of advanced tractors with capacities ranging from 20 HP to 120 HP.

India also exports harvesting and threshing machinery, cleaning equipment as well as grading and sorting machinery.

“India is a world leader in exporting solar irrigation

pumps. India being largely an agrarian economy, mechanization has a significant potential,” said Engineering Export Promotion Council India chairman Mahesh Desai.

India has a large global market to explore in agricultural machinery. The global agriculture equipment market is projected to reach \$279.5 billion by 2025, growing at a CAGR of 6.5 per cent from 2018 to 2025.

Currently, the global trade is valued \$90 billion and India has a meagre share of 1.4 per cent.

According to industry experts, some of the manufacturers have realised the importance of complying with international quality standards, especially when exporting to Europe and North America. Better compliance of these standards will help Indian products grab a larger share in the global trade.

## New Suzuki V-Strom 650XT ABS launched at ₹8.84 L

MICHAEL GONSALVES  
PUNE, NOV 23

Suzuki Motorcycle on Monday launched a new BS6 variant of the V-Strom 650XT ABS, the ultimate adventure tourer bike

priced at Rs 8.84 lakh. With the new V-Strom 650XT, the Japanese automaker has introduced its first premium segment bike with a BS6 engine. The bike falls in the middleweight adventure category.



# Is India letting cronyism get deeper into banking?

ANDY MUKHERJEE  
NOV. 23

Is India opening the door for big businesses to take over its banking industry?

A working group set up by the Reserve Bank has suggestions for what to do with ownership of private-sector banks. Large industrial houses may be permitted to own controlling stakes, it says, but only after strengthening regulation and supervision to deal with the problem of “connected lending” - basically diverting depositors’ funds to their other businesses.

From the conditional nature of the recommen-

dation, it doesn’t appear that the regulator will soon reverse its policy of keeping conglomerates away from banking. But the report could pave the way for backdoor entry. Large groups could acquire non-bank finance firms, which may be allowed to convert into banks. In India’s post-Covid desperation for capital, the financial system might go from being state-dominated to tycoon-led.

The 1997-98 Asian financial crisis ought to be a cautionary tale. In Indonesia, unchecked commingling of financial and non-financial activities within a corporate

group pushed up the cost of bank rescue to 40 per cent of 1998 GDP. From telecommunications to transportation, India’s business landscape is already starting to resemble a Monopoly board. An Indian reprise of J.P. Morgan, the US banker-businessman who used finance to control railroad pricing and stitch together a steel behemoth, would bring the country even closer to the American Gilded Age of the late 19th century.

Crony capitalism has built up slowly in India, emerging as a Frankenstein’s monster a decade and a half after



politicians began to unchain the private sector in the early 1990s. That’s when in the name of public-private partnership and rapid economic growth-serious misallocation of credit got under way. In 2018, financier IL&FS Group, which wrote the playbook on

how to cynically exploit a poor country’s desire for better infrastructure, went bankrupt. The ensuing funding crunch brought down several titans who were controlling hefty assets with slivers of equity.

The great churning since then has reduced competition and raised concentration. Today, the names of domestic balance sheets available to Prime Minister Narendra Modi for any serious heavy lifting can fit on the back of a postage stamp. But his need to find fresh risk-taking private capital is high, especially after the carnage from the pandemic

ic. Per capita gross domestic product in 2025 may be 12 per cent below pre-virus estimates, “implying the largest amount of scarring among major economies globally,” says Oxford Economics’ Priyanka Kishore.

That’s the backdrop to the RBI internal group’s review of bank ownership.

The report came just as the regulator solemnised the sale to Singapore’s DBS Group Holdings Ltd of one such lender, the third failure of a major deposit-taking institution in 15 months. Before that shotgun marriage, the country had 22 universal

banks (and 10 so-called small finance banks) in the private sector, with a 30 per cent share of deposits, up from 13 per cent two decades ago. Foreign banks’ low 5 per cent share has remained unchanged. Dominant public-sector banks’ market share is down to 65 per cent, from 82 per cent in 2000.

This process will only accelerate as state-run institutions consolidate to four from 12. More private banking capital will no doubt be needed. Still, should the country really look to big business to provide it?

—Bloomberg



SHORT TAKES

Prajnesh goes down in final

**Orlando:** Indian tennis player Prajnesh Gunneswaran ended runner-up at the Orlando Open, losing the summit clash of the ATP Challenger event to American Brandon Nakashima, here.

Prajnesh did not have the required power in his strokes to hurt the American, losing 3-6 4-6 in the \$52,080 hard court tournament on Sunday.

He could convert none of the eight break chances that came his way in an hour and 28 minute contest. It is Prajnesh's second straight runner-up finish. He had reached the final at the Cary Challenger last week.

The result helped Prajnesh to move to 128 from 137. He has already locked the India number one rank with his Orlando show. Serving at 2-3, 30-all, Prajnesh buried a forehand to the net to be down a break point but saved it with an ace.

Another forehand error by Prajnesh gave Nakashima another chance but the Indian saved that too with a well set-up winner. — PTI

BCCI condoles Bhaskaran's death

**New Delhi:** The BCCI on Monday condoled the death of former Kerala first-class cricketer CK Bhaskaran Nair, who had also played an unofficial first-class game against then Ceylon. Bhaskaran breathed his last in Houston, USA, where he practised medicine. He was 79.

"The BCCI mourns the death of Dr. CK Bhaskaran Nair. He away on 21st November 2020 at Houston in the United States of America (USA)," the Board stated in a condolence message. Nair was born in 1941 in Thalassery in Kerala. He picked 106 wickets in 42 first-class matches in a 12-year career spanning from 1957 to 1969. He had five five-wicket hauls and scored 580 runs, with the highest being 76 not out. — PTI

Afridi misses SL flight ahead of LPL

**Lahore:** Pakistan all-rounder Shahid Afridi on Monday missed his flight to Sri Lanka and will be unavailable for at least the first two matches of his franchise Galle Gladiators in the inaugural Lanka Premier League. Afridi tweeted about the same, adding to the agony of the tournament organisers after a state of heavyweight pullouts. "Missed my flight to Colombo today morning. Nothing to worry, I'll be reaching soon to take part in the LPL for Galle Gladiators. Look forward to joining my teammates," Afridi wrote on his *Twitter* handle. Galle Gladiators will play their first match on November 27 against Jaffna Stallions, a day after the inaugural season opener between Kandy Tuskers and Colombo Kings. — PTI

Paddler Neha on sporting lessons

**Hyderabad:** Neha Aggarwal Sharma inaugurated a new table tennis facility at Mansarovar Heights Phase I in Manovikas Nagar, Secunderabad on Sunday. Present on the occasion were her husband and 2007 Youth Commonwealth Games silver medalist Shubham Sharma and Rachana Anandaraman, a Khelo India Games quarterfinalist.

The 2008 Beijing Olympics paddler said, "The biggest lesson sports teaches you is how to lose. It teaches you life lessons, which the four walls of a classroom cannot. To manage success, which came early in my career is another, even while taking the ups and downs. To come back from defeat and conquer the TT world gave me strength which I don't think any school or college can."

Live on TV

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Jamshedpur vs Chennaiyin from 7:20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Champions League: Rennes vs Chelsea from 11:25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Krasnodar vs Sevilla from 11:25 pm on Sony Six; Manchester United vs Istanbul Basaksehir from 1:30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Six; Dynamo Kyiv vs Barcelona from 1:30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1; Paris St Germain vs Leipzig from 1:50 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 3; Juventus vs Ferencvaros from 1:30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2

Printed and Published from Karimnagar by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Deccan Chronicle Press, H.No. 1-21/12/1, Cherlabuthkur Road, Mugdumpur Village, Karimnagar - 505 186 Telangana State Regd. No. HSB-2/22K RNI Registration No. APEN/2001/04766 Ph: 9121181123 Grams: CHRONICLE Editor: Kaushik Mitter

High-flying Reds

Jota, Firmino score as Liverpool bulldoze Leicester

**London, Nov. 23:** Liverpool shrugged off an injury crisis to move level on points with Tottenham at the top of the Premier League with a 3-0 win over Leicester, while 10-man Arsenal were left to cling on for a 0-0 draw at Leeds by Nicolas Pepe's red card on Sunday.

The champions were without the injured Virgil van Dijk, Joe Gomez, Trent Alexander-Arnold, Jordan Henderson, Thiago Alcantara, Xherdan Shaqiri and Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain, while top scorer Mohamed Salah was absent due to a positive Coronavirus test.

Yet, Jurgen Klopp's men were still imperious in easing past a Leicester side that had started the weekend on top of the table.

The Foxes did not do themselves any favours when Jonny Evans turned James Milner's corner into his own net to reward Liverpool's bright start.

Diogo Jota then became the first ever Liverpool player to score in his first four home league games with a downward header from Andy Robertson's cross. Only a combination of goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel and the woodwork kept Liverpool from a repeat of the 4-0 thrashing they dished out to Leicester when the sides last met in December.

But Robert Firmino then rounded off a fine night for the champions with a towering header from another Milner corner six minutes from time.

Liverpool have now set a new club record of 64 unbeaten league games at Anfield.

PEPE LETS ARSENAL DOWN

Leicester's defeat means Arsenal are just five points off the top four, but Mikel Arteta was furious at Pepe's lack of discipline as the Gunners were lucky to escape with a point at Elland Road where they played 0-0 stalemate with Leeds.

Leeds are 14th after their third consecutive match without a win, but Marcelo Bielsa's men were left cursing their luck as Rodrigo, Patrick Bamford and Raphinha all hit the woodwork in the closing stages.

Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang had been given a rare chance in the central striker's role, but he was starved of service even before Pepe's dismissal.

Aubameyang's penalty in a 1-0 win at Manchester United last month is the only league goal Arsenal have now scored for nearly 500 minutes.

Meanwhile, Everton recovered from three straight defeats to beat Fulham 3-2 thanks to a double from Dominic Calvert-Lewin. — AFP

RAINA PLEDGES TO LOOK AFTER 34 SCHOOLS

**New Delhi, Nov. 23:** Former India cricketer Suresh Raina has pledged to build sanitation and drinking water facilities at 34 government schools across Uttar Pradesh, Jammu and NCR.

Raina has decided to ring in his 34th birthday on November 27 with a series of philanthropic activities in association with his NGO, the Gracia Raina Foundation (GRF), named after his daughter.

The initiative will ensure health and hygiene to over 10,000 children studying in these schools.

Raina, along with his wife Priyanka, a co-founder of the foundation kicked off his birthday week by inaugurating the upgraded drinking water facility, separate toilets for boys and girls, hand washing, dish washing area and smart classrooms at Govt Composite Middle School, Noor Nagar Sihani, Ghaziabad as part of the joint project of Gracia Raina Foundation and Yuva Unstoppable. — PTI



Kasper Schmeichel (left) of Leicester City fights for the ball with Liverpool's Roberto Firmino during their English Premier League football match at Anfield in Liverpool, North West England, on Sunday. Liverpool won 3-0. — AFP

Zlatan's brace blanks Napoli

**Milan, Nov. 23:** Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored twice to bring his tally to 10 league goals this season before limping off with a muscle strain as AC Milan stayed top in Serie 'A' on Sunday with a 3-1 win at 10-man Napoli.

Milan move back two points ahead of Sassuolo — 2-0 winners earlier at Hellas Verona — with Roma third after Henrikh Mkhitaryan netted a brace in a dominant 3-0 win over Parma.

Ibrahimovic continued his fine form, heading in a Theo Hernandez cross after 20 minutes, sending in the second with his knee nine minutes after the break.

But the 39-year-old pulled up clutching his left hamstring and was substituted after 79 minutes.

The Swede has scored in all six games he has played this season, having missed two after contracting Coronavirus.

Napoli played the final half an hour a man down after Tiemoue Bakayoko was sent off for two yellow cards, just after Dries Mertens had pulled a goal back for the hosts.

Norwegian Jens Petter Hauge completed the scoring five minutes into injury time, the 21-year-old getting his first Serie A goal. — AFP



Zlatan Ibrahimovic of AC Milan in action against Napoli during their Italian League match at the San Paolo stadium in Naples on Sunday. — AFP

YUSUF STRIKES TWICE IN LILLE'S 4-0 VICTORY

**Paris, Nov. 23:** Turkey international Yusuf Yazici struck twice as Lille ended a three-game winless run in French League with a 4-0 victory over Lorient that cut Paris Saint-Germain's lead at the top to two points.

Yazici slotted home from a Jonathan Bamba pass to put Lille ahead on 28 minutes before flicking in a Jonathan David cross to double the advantage early in the second half.

The midfielder then turned provider for Luiz Araujo to add a third for Lille on the hour, with Jonathan David notching his long-awaited first goal for the club in the closing stages.

Meanwhile, Christophe Galtier's side reclaimed second place from Lyon, who beat Angers 1-0 earlier in the day courtesy of a late winner from Zimbabwe striker Tino Kadewere. — AFP



The last time we toured in India they really engaged us like that. We're learning over time that if you look not to engage in that you're almost reversing the effect by ignoring it, trying to take it in, and using your bat.

'MY DAYS ARE NUMBERED'

David Warner on Monday said his "days are numbered" in international cricket and continuing an approach of keeping his aggression in check, he

— DAVID WARNER  
Australian batsman

would rather ignore than engage if Indian players attempt to sledge him during the upcoming series.

Warner, in a virtual press conference facilitated by the series' official broadcaster Sony, touched upon his evolution as a batsman in the past couple of years.

"I've just recently turned 34, so my days are numbered, when you're in the 30s. There's obviously a risk element but there's obviously a cricket smarts element to it as well," Australia's big-hitting opener David said. — Agencies

ISAK SHINES AS SOCIEDAD EDGE PAST CADIZ 1-0

**Madrid, Nov. 23:** Real Sociedad moved three points clear at the top of La Liga on Sunday after Alexander Isak's goal proved the difference in a 1-0 win over Cadiz.

Isak headed in Adnan Januzaj's cross shortly after the hour mark at the Ramon Carranza to secure a sixth consecutive league victory for La Real.

An excellent start to the season shows no sign of abating, with Imanol Alguacil's side now three points clear of second-placed Atletico Madrid, albeit having played two games more.

They have scored an impressive 21 goals from their opening 10 matches, the highest tally in the league, and conceded only four: After travelling to AZ Alkmaar in the Europa League on Thursday, Real Sociedad play at home to Villarreal, who sit third and are the league's other surprise high-fliers.

Defeat means Cadiz sit sixth, just above Sevilla. Getafe were earlier held to a goalless draw by Eibar. — AFP

VIRAT'S WORDS HELPED ME STAY STRONG: SIRAJ

**Sydney, Nov. 23:** Away from family while grieving the recent loss of his father, Indian pacer Mohammed Siraj says skipper Virat Kohli's advice to "be strong" has helped him stay afloat as he gears up for a gruelling series against Australia.

Siraj's father Mohammed Ghouse, 53, died due to a lung ailment in Hyderabad last week and despite BCCI offering him the option to return home, the fast bowler decided to stay put on national duty.

"Virat bhai said '*Miyaan tension maat le* (don't be tense) and be strong. Your dad wanted you to play for India. So, do that and don't stress,'" the Siraj told *bcci.tv* on the sidelines of India's training session.

"The skipper told me, 'If you can be strong in this situation, it will only help you'. So those were positive words from the Indian captain and it felt nice," the Hyderabad based pacer further added. — PTI

Aridane stars as Hyderabad win

**Goa, Nov. 23:** Hyderabad FC began their Indian Super League Season 7 campaign with a solitary goal win over Odisha FC, at the GMC Stadium in Goa on Monday.

Debutant Aridane Santana (35') netted a penalty that proved to be the difference between the two sides, as Hyderabad kept their first-ever clean sheet in the league.

Hyderabad were all over Odisha's territory in the opening minutes of the game, forcing their opponents to play deep. They won a series of corners in the first 10 minutes.

The Nizams' first real chance arrived in the 6th minute when Luis Sastre whipped a perfect delivery into the box but Santana failed to direct his header towards goal. That the visitors had worked on their set-pieces was evident. A smartly-executed corner in the 10th minute saw Akash Mishra force Odisha goalkeeper Arshdeep Singh into a save.

After constant probing, Hyderabad got their reward in the form of a penalty. Aridane Santana played Halicharan Narzary clear on goal, and his effort was handled by Odisha skipper Steven Taylor.

Santana kept his composure and slotted home in the 35th minute.

Hyderabad keeper Subrata Paul had to wait until the 40th minute to make his first save, thwarting Odisha striker Manuel Onwu. The Nizams had chances to extend their lead but the outstanding Singh made a couple of good saves just before the breather.

Minutes after the restart, Odisha had their best opportunity to restore parity. But Nandhakumar Sekar's poor first touch allowed Mishra to make a crucial goal-saving tackle.

At the hour mark, Odisha had yet another chance. Diego Mauricio ghosted past his marker and squared a pass into the area to Onwu, whose low shot was kept out by Paul.

Hyderabad almost doubled the lead from a set piece but Joao Victor's goal was rightly ruled offside. Liston Colaco almost produced a moment of magic in the 67th minute, when he dribbled from the half-way mark into the box but was unable to find the finish. In the end, though, the misses did not matter, as Hyderabad held on for the win. — Agencies

CHENNAIYIN LOCK HORNS WITH JAMSHEDPUR FC

**Vasco, Nov. 23:** Chennaiyin FC will have their task cut out as they go up against two individuals who charted their stunning comeback last season but will turn out for Jamshedpur FC in their Indian Super League game here on Tuesday.

Chennaiyin fans will find not one, but three of their former heroes in the opposing dug-out when their team takes on Jamshedpur FC at the Tilak Maidan Stadium.

Coach Owen Coyle was the mastermind behind last season's stunning recovery that saw Chennaiyin go from rock bottom to within a game of the ISL title.

Jamshedpur conceded 35 goals last season with only Hyderabad FC having a more porous defence. It remains to be seen whether the presence of former Sunderland defender Peter Hartley and Nigerian centre-back Stephen Eze will improve things in this regard.

For Chennaiyin, the biggest task will be to fill the gaps left behind by departing players. Of the foreign contingent from last season, only new captain Rafael Crivellaro and defender Eli Sabia remain. — PTI



Daniil Medvedev of Russia holds up the winner's trophy after defeating Dominic Thiem of Austria 4-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4 in the final of the ATP World Finals at the O2 arena in London on Sunday. — Agencies

Medvedev stuns Thiem to win title

**London, Nov. 23:** Daniil Medvedev came from behind to beat US Open champion Dominic Thiem in a gripping encounter and win the biggest title of his career at the ATP Finals in London on Sunday.

The Russian fourth seed was second best for large periods at the empty O2 Arena but found a way back into the contest and prevailed 4-6, 7-6 (7/2), 6-4.

Medvedev, who beat five-time champion Novak Djokovic and world number two Rafael Nadal earlier in the week, is the first man to beat all three of the world's top-ranked players at the season finale.

The giant Russian, 24, has now won 10 consecutive matches following his title earlier this month at the Paris Masters and his victory will taste sweet a year after a winless debut in London.

But it is a painful defeat

for Thiem, who also lost in the final of the elite eight-man event last year, to Stefanos Tsitsipas.

"What a match. One of my best victories, two hours and 42 minutes, three sets against an amazing player," said Medvedev.

Thiem weathered early pressure from Medvedev and secured the first break of the match in the fifth game, when the Russian served a double fault.

He sealed the set in fortunate fashion when his forehand clipped the net and looped over Medvedev's racket.

Meanwhile, Wesley Koolhof and Nikola Pietrangeli beat Jurgen Melzer and Edouard Roger-Vasselin 6-2, 3-6, 10-5 to claim the ATP Finals doubles trophy. It was a case of third time lucky for the fifth seeds, who lost their first two finals, in Marseille and at the US Open, earlier in the year. — AFP