

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
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WEATHER

Max: 30.1°C
Min: 18°C
RH: 54%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Partly cloudy.
Mist or haze likely.
Max/Min temp. 30/19°C

COVID-19
COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+32,003)	(+496)
94,62,727	1,37,648

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+593)	(+3)
TS: 2,69,816	1,458
(+381)	(+4)
AP: 8,68,064	6,992

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

6,33,28,744

DEATHS

14,69,684

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

218

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari: Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Pournami till 2.57 pm
Star: Rohini till 8.28 am
Varjyam: 2.34 pm to 4.18 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.46 am to 9.31 am; 10.47 pm to 11.39 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Akhir 15, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.26 am
Zohar: 12.15 pm
Asar: 4.04 pm
Maghrib: 5.46 pm
Isha: 6.58 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.30 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.40 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 7.06 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 6.29 PM

COUNTER POINT

Believe me, these are local elections not Lok Sabha!

SHORT TAKE

Cibil data hints at people buying

Mumbai: Banks' requests for information on credit card borrowers or 'credit card inquiries' in October surpassed the same in the year-ago period, a credit information company said on Monday. This phenomenon suggests consumer economic activity has materially improved since the easing of Covid-19 lockdown measures, Transunion Cibil said. It can be noted that the festivities, coupled with pent-up demand, had resulted in improvement in many economic indicators in October. However, many observers are sceptical whether the same will continue ahead.

INSIDE

NATION... PAGE 7
'Bengali Pride' to be TMC's poll plank



Farmers gather at the Singhu border during their ongoing Delhi Chalo protest against Centre's new farm laws, in New Delhi, on Monday.

Modi says Cong misled farmers for several years

Denies any intention to deceive farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, facing nationwide protests by farmers across the country against the recently introduced farm laws, on Monday blamed the Opposition's sustained misinformation campaign which, he said, was making farmers suspicious of the reformist laws introduced by his NDA government.

Attacking the previous Congress-led governments for misleading farmers over the years, Mr Modi, while inaugurating the six-lane project of Varanasi-Allahabad highway in Varanasi, where he was on a day-long visit, said, "I know that decades of falsehood do put apprehensions in the minds of farmers. I want to say this from the bank of Mother Ganga — we are not working with the intention of deceiving. Our intentions are as holy as the water of river Ganga."

Mr Modi's clarification has come at a time when farmers from several states have launched massive protests against the three farm laws, demanding that they be scrapped.

Alleging that these laws are anti-farmers and pro-corporate, thousands of farmers have been camping outside the five entry

Farmers all for decisive battle

SANJAY KAW and BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

Refusing to budge, the farmers protesting against the Centre's new laws on agricultural reforms at the Delhi-Haryana border said on Monday that they were in the nation's capital for a "decisive battle" and that their agitation will continue until their demands are met.

Thousands of protesters who have been spending cold nights at the Singhu and Tikri borders for the past five days got a shot in the arm with some Haryana khap panchayats deciding to join their agitation from Tuesday.

The farmers' protests have not only affected vehicular movement ac-

ross the Delhi-NCR region, but also hit the supply of essential commodities to the national capital.

Soon after Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke in defence of the farm laws in Varanasi, a representative of the protesting farmers said they want him to listen to their "mann ki baat". "Our demands are non-negotiable," he added. The representative went on to say that the ruling party "will have to pay a heavy price" if it does not pay heed to their concerns. "We have come here to fight a decisive battle," he said.

Farmers' leader Gurnam Singh Chaduni said around 31 cases have been registered against the protesters so far to "suppress" their agitation.

points of the national capital as a mark of a peaceful protest against the laws even as home minister Amit Shah and agriculture minister Narendra Tomar have been holding parleys to end the crisis.

The farmers, who refused to accept Mr Shah's

proposal to meet in Delhi's Burari ground, have threatened to gherao Delhi if the laws are not scrapped, and said that the government should not speak to them with "preconditions".

slipped while playing with Major, his two-year-old German shepherd.

Biden, who celebrated his 78th birthday on November 20, is set to be the oldest president in US history when he is inaugurated on January 20.

To avoid disrupting regularly scheduled appoint-

ments on Monday, arrangements were made for Biden to receive an X-ray and then an additional CT scan on Sunday.

US President Donald Trump, a Republican, who has not yet conceded the November 3 presidential election, tweeted, "Get well soon!"

—PTI

Bookies give hairline edge to TRS over BJP

Maximum betting on the BJP by punters, say bookies

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

If a vibrant democracy is about difference of opinion, GHMC elections are a proof of ours being one. Even the bookies are split in their opinion about the thriller most people expect the Tuesday election might turn out to be. But the broadest truism is well established — it is a neck-and-neck race between the ruling TRS and the challenger, the BJP, and the MIM expected to hold on to its fortress.

The bookies in the most crucial bet — who will win more seats — the TRS or BJP — is giving a hairline edge to TRS; at 87 paisa to ₹1 for the pink party and 96 paisa for the BJP. There is a bet available on an exact tie, but odds are high, ₹2.76 for ₹1.

For non-punters and common people it means, if you invest ₹100 on the prospect of TRS bagging more seats than the BJP, you win ₹87, and ₹96 for the same bet on the BJP winning. Since bets will be taken all of tomorrow, though odds will change, and till the day of the results, against the odds change after the exit polls start coming out. If you bet ₹100 on a perfect tie between the TRS and the BJP, you get ₹276. Of course, in real life, bets often start at ₹10,000, but most big bookies don't take anything below ₹1 lakh.

The odds are different for the three key parties crossing the magic mark of 76 — the odds for a bet of ₹100 are ₹139 (TRS), ₹156 (BJP) and ₹276 (MIM). So the bookie market favours a close thriller at large over a clear majority for any party, with the TRS having a slight edge again over the BJP. The MIM is almost unlikely to cross 50 wards, much less than 75, according to most bookies. The odds of TRS crossing 100 wards is ₹476, and for the BJP ₹536 against a bet of ₹100.

There are a different set of odds on the Mayor, which combines the already prevalent heavy skew in favour of the TRS, which has 38 ex-officio votes against the mere three (3) of the BJP. The lowest odds are for a TRS-MIM alliance post-polls at a mere ₹101 to ₹100.

The equally interesting aspect is while bookies are offering these odds, most punters (people who place bets) are mostly betting either on the TRS or the BJP; with no takers for any of the other parties, be it MIM or the Congress.

■ **Page 2: Punters don't think any party will cross 75**



Polling staff collect GHMC election material from Wesley College premises for their respective polling stations.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

VOTER SLIPS: Election officials clarified that people can cast their votes even without a vote slip. Else, they can download it from Election Commission app

● There are a different set of odds on the Mayor, which combines the already heavy skew in favour of TRS, which has 38 ex-officio votes against BJP's 3 votes

87p

Bookies give a hairline edge to TRS at 87 paisa to ₹1 for and 96 paisa for the BJP.

₹1.39

The odds for TRS crossing 76-seat figure is ₹1.39 and ₹1.56 for BJP, which mean neither will cross halfway mark

Bandi convoy attacked by TRS men

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Hours before the election for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation began, activists of the ruling TRS and the opposition BJP clashed at various places in the city late on Monday night.

TRS activists have

allegedly gheraoed and attacked a vehicle in the convoy of state BJP president Bandi Sanjay at Necklace road, while BJP workers have allegedly ambushed and attacked TRS MLA Sudheer Reddy and his party workers at Karmanghat area of Durga Nagar.

The Ramgopalpet police,

who were deployed for bandobast at Necklace road, said that the TRS sitting corporator P. Vijaya Reddy's men stopped their car behind a vehicle in the convoy of Bandi Sanjay. They later banged windows and broke the glass.

■ **Page 3: KTR created Sanjay's fake video: Kishan**

Citizens urge peers to vote

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Citizens of Hyderabad are urging fellow-citizens to exercise their right to vote and participate in the great exercise to elect their local urban representatives. There has also been a flurry of activity on the weekend, with residents in complexes, apartments and gated communities coming together to analyse which party or candidate is right for them.

Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) have used their social media groups to propagate the message of the right to vote and the reason why no one must skip voting.

Those living in apartments and gated communities said that if they do not vote, then the elected candidate will not represent any of their problems. For this reason, they have submitted their demands to candidates contesting elections.

B.T. Srinivasan, general

secretary, United Federation of Resident Welfare Associations (UFRWA), says, "This is an opportunity for people and those contesting elections to ensure that demands put forward by welfare associations are implemented. For this reason, we have corporators approaching us to ensure they get votes and promise to resolve our problems."

There are 4,300 welfare member associations of UFRWA. Each of them have been closely working in their colonies to resolve the local problems and are in touch with municipal officials in their circles. They also represent grievances of people from time to time. UFRWA has gone one step ahead of collating data of what was promised, delivered and what is pending in each of the colonies under them. In this manner, people are aware of what is happening around them.

■ **Page 2: People refuse to sell votes for cash**

MANY DON'T GET VOTER SLIPS, NOT MANDATORY

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

A large number of voters have not received voter slips in various divisions of the GHMC, even as late as Monday evening. However, in a few places, contesting candidates have stood up to take the responsibility and distributed voter slips for the convenience of citizens.

In the Old City, a section of voters in almost all divisions confirmed that they did not receive voter slips even on Monday, while some voters said that they downloaded their voter slip from the official website of the Telangana State Election Commission.

Some MIM candidates got a gadget from a private firm, which can print slips containing details of all voters of a particular polling station. With the help of this gadget, they reached the doorsteps of voters and provided them with slips printed on the spot.

■ **Page 2: Illiterates may skip polls without voter slip**

BRIGHT | HOPE US biotech firm to seek approvals for emergency sale of its vaccine, gets ready 2 crore doses

Moderna claims its vaccine works 100% for severe Covid

New York, Nov. 30: US biotechnology company Moderna said on Monday that it will request the United States and European regulators to issue an emergency authorisation for its coronavirus vaccine, which it said is 100 per cent effective against severe Covid-19 cases.

Moderna said the primary efficacy analysis of the Phase-3 study of its vaccine candidate mRNA-1273 conducted on 196 cases indicates a vaccine efficacy of

94.1 per cent. While the vaccine efficacy against Covid-19 was 94.1 per cent, vaccine efficacy against severe Covid-19 was 100 per cent, the company said.

"This positive primary analysis confirms the ability of our vaccine to prevent Covid-19 disease with 94.1 per cent efficacy and importantly, the ability to prevent severe Covid-19 disease. We believe that our vaccine will provide a new and powerful tool that may change the course of this

pandemic and help prevent severe disease, hospitalisations and death," Moderna CEO Stéphane Bancel said.

Bancel said the company "will file today for an Emergency Use Authorisation from the US FDA and continue forging ahead with the rolling reviews that have already been initiated with several foreign regulatory agencies."

Moderna anticipates that the shipping of the vaccine to designated distribution points throughout the US

● **BASED ON prior analysis, the most common side effects for Moderna vaccine included injection site pain, fatigue, headache, and redness at the injection site.**

will occur shortly after an Emergency Use Authorisation is granted.

The company has already initiated the rolling review process with other global regulatory bodies such as

Health Canada, Swiss-Medic, the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, Israel's health ministry, and Singapore's Health Sciences Authority and intends to seek prequalification and/or Emergency Use Listing with the World Health Organisation.

The Phase 3 study, known as the COVE study, enrolled more than 30,000 participants in the US. The company said efficacy was consistent across age, race

and ethnicity, and gender demographics.

The 196 Covid-19 cases included 33 older adults (ages 65+) and 42 participants identifying as being from diverse communities (including 29 Hispanic or Latin, six Black or African Americans, four Asian Americans and three multiracial participants).

Based on prior analysis, the most common side effects included injection site pain, fatigue, headache, and redness at the

injection site. The company will submit data from the Phase 3 study to a peer-reviewed publication.

Moderna is working with US and global stakeholders to be prepared for distribution of the vaccine in the event that it receives approvals. By the end of 2020, it expects to have two crore doses of the vaccine available in the US and remains on track to manufacture 500 million to 1 billion doses globally in 2021.

—PTI



GHMC polls..



Let us put an end to indecisiveness, dynastic rule & corrupt administration that has plagued the GHMC for the last 5 years. Vote For BJP will ensure Hyderabad's holistic development with minimum government & maximum governance. BJP's Mayor Is Your Mayor. #BJP4GHMC #Vote4BJP.

G. KISHAN REDDY
Union Minister



Disgusting & shameful, but not surprising. Hindutva believes that only 1 community has the right to political power & all others are subservient. This ideology cannot co-exist with our Constitution, which talks about liberty, fraternity, equality & justice.

ASADUDDIN OWAIISI
MIM president



I request all @INCTelangana cadres to come to Hyderabad today and request your family members/relatives/friends to vote for Congress candidates in #GHMCElections2020.

UTTAM KUMAR REDDY
MP & TPCC president



"Every election is determined by the people who show up." Larry J. Sabato. #GHMCElections2020 will go to polls on a ballot paper this time. I urge my fellow Hyderabadites to watch this short video that will walk us through the voting process.

#VoteHyderabad



I humbly request the citizens of Hyderabad to exercise your right to VOTE in today's polling.

ARVIND DHARMAPURI
BJP MP



Massive distribution of money in different parts of GHMC by TRS party Money earned thru filthy means by KCR KTR. Local leader Nari caught this Nalgonda TRS guy distributing Cash in Saroornagar. Must be the money looted from flood relief fund. Waste of complaints. Police mute.

KONDA VISHWESHWAR REDDY
Congress leader



GHMC Elections: 1 Dec 2020 : Show your love for the City which gives you so many things. A city which is your identity. Please come and exercise the right of vote. We have made all the arrangements for you.

ANJANI KUMAR
Police commissioner

Poll preparation



Election staff collect ballot boxes for the GHMC elections at the City College on Monday.

— P. SURENDRA

No basic facilities for staff at polling stations

Mugs, buckets not provided in cubicle-like washrooms

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

As polling officers from across the state arrived here on Monday for the highly-anticipated Greater Hyderabad Municipal Committee (GHMC) elections, the body responsible to host the officers and state police personnel seems to be missing in action.

When *Deccan Chronicle* reached the polling station, holding polling booth numbers 18 to 22 at the Gangaputra Community Hall in Ramnagar division at 8:30 pm on Monday, the community hall hosting close to 20 personnel, responsible for the elections were yet to get a

meal and bed sheets from the GHMC. The correspondent noticed that even mugs and buckets were not provided in the cubicle-like washrooms.

To top it all, there were open urinals for men, whereas there were no toilets for female officers.

One of the police officers, stationed at the booth, who did not want to be named said, "No one from GHMC has shown up until now. We had to remove party flags from the premises. Forget tea, coffee or bed sheets, we have not even been provided sanitisers or masks. Luckily, Telangana Police has told us that they will take care of our meals."



Deplorable condition of rooms at a polling station.

What's more shocking is that all the people responsible for the smooth functioning of the polls, the three women officers at this polling station, have been put up in three dingy, unclean rooms. They said they were supposed to sleep on the dirty floor with their own bed sheets, or on the small benches.

"We have one small room for three female polling officers and we will have to share the washroom with 15 men. None of the bathrooms have mugs or buckets," one of the officers present at the booth said, on condition of anonymity.

ASIFNAGAR VOTERS' LIST FIGURES IN HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Independent candidate Lubna Sarwath, who alleged fraud in voters' list for Asifnagar, was given a chance to air her grievances during a lunch-motion at the Telangana High Court on Monday.

Lubna had alleged that the voters' list was full of names that were duplicates, triplicates and quadruplicates. Specifically, she said she had found 74 duplicates apart from two triplicates and two quadruplicates.

"The judge had granted us a lunch-time motion at 2.30 p.m. as the rolls had been full of duplicate voters. When the judge saw the list first, he said it is a valid case and if proven true, the election would be put on hold," Lubna Sarwath told *Deccan Chronicle*.

GHMC flouts green norms, erects 200 hazardous flexis

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

The over-enthusiastic Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) officials have once again erected over 200 flexis and hoardings at DRC centre, polling stations and polling locations despite plastic ban being imposed in the city.

Ironically, right from the top-notch official to those in the deputy commissioner level, everyone is passing the buck. Over 200 vinyl and flexis have been erected at 30 Distribution, Reception and Counting (DRC) centres in the city limits and corporation authorities are planning to erect in 9101 polling stations on Tuesday.

As an environmental concern, GHMC has been promoting plastic ban and eco-friendly awareness programs through flexis, vinyl hoardings and other non-eco-friendly means. The civic body has gone

about their campaigns using hazardous plastic. Though they have the option to use cloth banners, cardboard for a day or two, officials have been resorting to means that will certainly add to the pollution levels. High-ranking officials said that instructions were issued to the deputy commissioners at the circle levels and this mischief might have been done by them.

Currently, out of 7,500 metric tonnes of municipal solid waste generated in the city, 450-500 MT is plastic waste. The corporation has even made an action plan for a complete ban by 2022. However, on the steps to spread awareness pertaining to plastic ban, they have been using vinyl and flexis. This apart, single-use plastic water bottles can be found in all circles, zonal and headquarters right from Mayor's chamber, to offices of commissioner and deputy commissioner.

Flexis can be seen in all voter awareness campaigns, monsoon action team vehicles, instant repair team vehicles and the corporation has promoted through huge amounts of plastic banners. Despite MA&UD principal secretary's instructions to strictly implement Public Properties Defacement Act, the GHMC, which was supposed to enforce it, has violated it and promoted its own programmes by erecting hoardings and flexis. Arvind Kumar during January 2019 after examining hoardings, flexis, posters and banners in the city had asked the civic body to remove them immediately. He directed officials to ensure that unauthorised flexis conveying birthday greetings, political banners, pamphlets/posters of educational institutions in residential areas, on street-light poles and at junctions are not permitted.

Punters don't think any party will cross 75

From Page 1

Another set of sources close to bookies and punters revealed that bookies tapping high worth punters for stakes on the BJP. This means, some of the biggest sums of bets are on the BJP, in terms of whether they will have a Mayor, cross the half-way mark or cross 50 seats. The next lot is betting on TRS crossing 50, TRS getting more seats than BJP, TRS crossing the half-way mark or crossing 100.

Some bookies have invited bets by offering stakes from 1:2 to 1:5 ratio on BJP seat numbers and grabbing power in GHMC, and matching the odds for TRS crossing 100 seats.

Sources explained that if BJP wins less than 15 seats, punters will get ₹500 win for ₹100 bet, and the

same with BJP winning the Mayor seat. The odds, though not so steep are still high for TRS getting a majority at 76 seats at ₹200 win for ₹100 bet. It is ₹500 win for ₹100 bet for TRS crossing 100 seats.

Sources said bookies are trying to take bets on either TRS or BJP crossing 76 because these are being seen as safe for bookie bets (meaning, these are less likely to happen) and punters lose their money. But the odds are attractive for better betters willing to take risks.

Sources also said that in lower volumes and amounts, bets are being placed on MIM in terms of will they lose seats in the Old City from the existing 44. Sources said bookies are willing to offer high stakes on MIM losing seats at 1:2. The only wager available

on the Congress is for the party crossing five or more seats.

These are clearly initial odds stakes and they will change dynamically in congruence with the real-time trends as polling begins. Sources also said that besides profession betting circles, political circles will start placing bets on winning chances of the BJP and the TRS from tomorrow evening. If the odds change suddenly by noon tomorrow, it means a particular trend is clear.

What are the odds that despite all the reminders, several people won't actually go out and vote? Sadly, we would have bet on that but no bookie is open to giving money to bet on the irresponsibility or indifference of the urban middle classes.

People refuse to sell votes for cash

From Page 1

Women are more alert as they have strongly objected to use of religion in the campaign leading to GHMC elections.

Padma Rao, homemaker, Ramanthapur, says, "we do not want to vote on the basis of religion. We will vote for people who can resolve our problems of infrastructure and encroachments of Musi river. The flooding of homes in Ramanthapur is still fresh. We are not willing to be swayed by high pitched statements."

Similarly, several people said they are agast at the brazen distribution of cash and liquor by some parties and candidates. "We will not sell our votes to these people."

Complexes which are close to slums say that they have a perennial

Who is my corporator?

I do a simple experiment with my colleagues each time general elections are around the corner. I pose a few simple questions to test their "civic quotient". My favourite is a set of three questions that require them to name their current MP, MLA and corporator.

Quite a few of them know their MP, some know their MLA, but very few know the name of their corporator. In the food chain of elected representatives, corporator, even though at the bottom, is the most powerful when it comes to issues of day-to-day matters like bijli, paani and sadak.

As citizens, the first level of government we interface with is municipal corporation. Think of everything that matters to us personally on a day-to-day basis, which collectively contributes to making our city a more livable one. Without exception, almost all of these issues come under purview of the city government. Whether you want a permit to build a new house, a park in your locality, a better garbage collection system, or a new road, the solution lies with municipal corporation. By extension, corporator is our first point of contact.

In the tweet crazy world that we live in, we find it convenient to raise the issue of a broken water pipe with our Member of Parliament, if not our MLA. Often, MPs and MLAs have teams to monitor their social media accounts. Their quick response creates an impression that the issue has been addressed by them. What we do not

'MY OPINION'



D.N.V. Kumara
Guru

realise is that they do not necessarily have the powers to address these issues. In many cases, they forward it to the corporator concerned to take care of it.

In the three-tier governance system that we have in our democracy, the time and resources of an MP and MLA are better utilised if they do what they have to – frame policies that concern the country and the state. We, as ill-informed citizenry, often force them to disproportionately allot their time to issues that aren't their primary concern. And, when things don't work out, we love to blame the system.

Our corporator lives in our neighbourhood and is easily accessible. There is no "outsider" syndrome, which is commonplace during Lok Sabha general elections and at times during state assembly elections. Yet, we do not know her name, and we probably don't care. Why this apathy? Do we simply not care or we do not know? Perhaps, it is a bit of both.

In a couple of days, the twin-city populace will exercise their franchise

for electing representatives to 150 wards in the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Every election is a matter of prestige for incumbents and one of opportunity for those in opposition. This election is no different, and we have seen some high voltage campaigning. How will this impact the voting percentage? Will we see an improvement over the 45% turnout of 2016 elections?

Nearly 7.4 million voters have the power to decide the fate of their city by choosing the best from a pool of 1,122 candidates who are in the fray this year. Yet, we do not see the same level of energy or enthusiasm amongst voters. There are no major campaigns to increase the voter percentage that we see during general elections. It is time to change that.

Hyderabad aspires to be a smart city. It has all the potential to be so. It is one of the few cities, where old world charm rubs shoulders with the modern tech ecosystem effortlessly, which is so quintessentially Hyderabad. We need a city government that can take ownership of co-creating Hyderabad as a city of global standards; a city government led by a Mayor, who can take charge of the transformation process. More importantly, we need an electorate that is aware, responsible, and one that does not shy away from holding its corporators accountable. We owe it to ourselves to vote in the elections on December 1.

(Director, External Relations, ISB)

BJP TRYING TO CREATE TENSION, SAYS HARISH

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Finance Minister T. Harish Rao on Monday alleged that the BJP was planning to circulate some old videos to create communal tension in a last-minute bid to lure voters in the GHMC elections.

Addressing a press conference at Patancheru, he said that BJP state leaders have invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi and their national president J.P. Nadda to impress the voters, but they did not get the desired response.

Stating that the BJP leaders were frustrated at the lukewarm response in Greater Hyderabad, he alleged that they are now planning to circulate false information about TRS leaders. He claimed that he had credible information to this extent. Reminding that during the by-elections to Dubbak also, the BJP had circulated fake news about Congress candidate Cheruku Srinivas Reddy joining the TRS on the day of polling leading to confusion among voters, he alleged that they were now hatching a similar plan in GHMC polls.

I WiSH...

DC speaks to voters to find out the one thing they want their new corporator to do

...MORE CABS, BUSES FOR WOMEN



There must be more of exclusive cabs and buses for women in the city. There must more focus on women safety. Corporators must be available to the citizens. There must also be transparency in spending of funds on infrastructure and contractors made accountable.

— Neha Sharon Lata
Postgraduate

...BETTER AMENITIES ARE PROVIDED



This global city lacks proper amenities in most of the colonies and bastis, if we minus few elite colonies and important roads, rest of the city suffers sanitation and bad roads. Corporators should look into those areas for development, city has been expanded but most of the areas lack sporting and cultural facilities. The new

— A. Alexander
Attapur

...FOR A BETTER DRAINAGE SYSTEM



Even during small spell of rain has the drains in the city get clogged. The entire drainage system must be revamped. Corporators must take this up on a top priority after assuming power. Focus also must be in developing city slums. The living conditions of slum dwellers must be improved. Women and children should be provided proper nutrition.

— Shashank Pasupuleti
Hyderabad

...MORE PARKS FOR KIDS ARE BUILT

There are not enough parks or recreation facilities for children and elders. Corporators should also make efforts to provide basic amenities and importantly stop overflowing of drains. It is a pity that we still lack proper hygiene in the city and children are falling sick.

— Asif Khan
Hotelier, King Koti

MANY ILLITERATES LIKELY TO SKIP CIVIC ELECTIONS WITHOUT VOTER SLIP

From Page 1

Several MIM and BJP candidates also distributed voter slips in a printed manner, along with their pamphlets.

Residents of Goods Shed road, Nampally, complained that in their cluster of more than 50 houses, no one from the Election Commission or the GHMC had knocked on the doors. They said that they had received the voter slips in previous elections, but not this time. However, they said they do not refrain from voting since their polling booth is located close to their dwelling.

Syed Arshad Ayub,

Azampura division, said, "We have eight voters in our family. We did not get voter slips either from the Election Commission or from any candidate. Usually, our polling booth is at the GHMC office in Chadarghat. We will franchise our vote, using either the voter identity card or the Aadhaar."

Social worker Mohammed Abdul Akram said that educated people were able to download voter slips using different modes. However, the illiterate and poor voters do not take the extra effort to get voter slips. They may skip from voting if they do not get voter slips.

SHORT TAKES

STATE RECORDS
593 FRESH COVID
INFECTIONSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Telangana state recorded 593 new cases and three deaths on Monday taking the total number to 2,69,816 cases and 1,458 deaths. There are 10,022 active cases in the state and of these 7,946 are in home and institutional care. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area recorded 119 cases, Medchal Malkajgiri 55 and Ranga Reddy 61 cases.

Due to GHMC elections, a the health department has given out an advisory asking all voters to maintain social distance, wear masks and use sanitisers. Crowding during the polling process is a worry and for that reason people are being urged to follow safety protocols.

FLESH TRADE
RACKET BUSTED,
4 ARRESTEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

The anti-human trafficking unit of Rachakonda conducted a decoy operation and arrested four men on Monday and also rescued five victims from Manikonda.

The police have previously arrested Sana Khan alias Susheela, Qamar Unnisa alias Masha alias Farzana, and Mohd. Parwez Khan and based on an enquiry, Mozam Mondal, 30, Liton Sarkar, 25, Abir Shaik and Muntaz Ali Mondal were apprehended on Sunday night. "Mondal came to Hyderabad about two years back and rented a flat at Manikonda, where procures sex workers from his contacts and supplies them to needy customers by collecting an amount of Rs. 6,000 to Rs 8,000 through online payments. So far, he earned approximately Rs 8 lakhs by supplying sex workers in one year," said the police.

TIGER ATTACKS
HIT FOREST
PLANSDC CORRESPONDENT
KOMARAM BHEEM ASIFABAD,
NOV. 30

Killing of two persons in tiger attacks on human beings in quick succession are quite likely to hit the Forest Department's tiger conservation plans in erstwhile Adilabad district.

Advaisid Sidam Vignesh, 22, and Pasula Nirmala, 15, are those killed by tigers in separate incidents within 20 days of each other in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. These have led to fears among people living in interior areas or on fringes of forests. Forest staff's efforts towards tiger conservation may end up facing stiff opposition from people if such attacks by the big cat continue in the coming days.

It is common knowledge that even forest dwellers are scared of tiger attacks. Instances of tigers coming close to their villages and entering their agriculture fields or lifting their cattle are common, despite forest officials' claim that tiger is a shy and sensitive animal. But recent attacks have made those living in or around forests remind forest officials that tiger is categorised as a "wild animal". A senior forest officer involved in tiger conservation confessed, "We are under pressure now with two incidents of killings by tigers within 20 days. Tiger conservation will not be an easy task now".

Man-animal conflict is inevitable when people are living on fringes or inside the forests, where there is movement of tigers. In particular, a tiger corridor has been developed between the erstwhile Adilabad district of Telangana and bordering Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh.

₹100 cr to be spent for
better voter turnout

Thousands of voters giving a miss to GHMC elections

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

A large number of voters in Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections have already left for their native places within the state and outside. Voters have preferred to take advantage of the long weekend commencing Friday evening, Saturday, Sunday, Guru Nanak Jayanti holiday on Monday and Tuesday's closure on account of voting in the 150 wards of GHMC.

Citing low voter turnout during GHMC polls in 2016 and repeat of the story in subsequent Legislative Assembly and Lok Sabha polls, the State Election Commission (SEC), civic body and the state government wanted a better voter turnout on December 1, the polling day. They made hectic efforts to create awareness

about voting in these crucial elections. Overall, they will be spending over ₹100 crore.

According to officials records, during 2016 Hyderabad corporation elections, overall poll percentage was 45.29. Of the total 74,24,096 electors then, only 33,62,688 cast their vote.

Similarly, a poor percentage of polling was recorded in the 2014 general elections held in April last year. Hyderabad constituency recorded a mere 44.75 per cent while it was 46.26 per cent in Secunderabad. The overall turnout in Hyderabad

In the 2018 Assembly polls, this dropped to 50.86 percent in Hyderabad district. In Lok Sabha elections held in April last year, Hyderabad constituency recorded a mere 44.75 per cent while it was 46.26 per cent in Secunderabad. The overall turnout in Hyderabad

district comprising these two constituencies was 45.51 per cent.

Despite such low percentage, SEC, along with GHMC has allocated ₹60,000 per polling station, which includes expenses related to travel and dearness allowance for officials, food, barricading, wheelchairs, ramps, erection of flexies and hoardings for guiding voters to polling booths, apart from costs related to providing face masks, hand gloves and sanitisers to polling personnel because of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

A total 74,67,256 voters are eligible to vote in the 2020 civic body elections at 9,101 polling stations spread over 2,927 locations. 36,404 polling personnel are being deployed.

A senior official, who is on election duty, on condition of anonymity, said ever since the GHMC notification, poll personnel

have hardly slept for holding hassle-free polls. "However, we are disappointed to know that most of the youth and techies have already left the city to enjoy a long weekend. We would be spending Rs. 54.6 crore on the polling day and another ₹13.65 crore on counting of votes. Overall, the expenditure will be more than ₹100 crore, which includes raising awareness programmes and educating voters. We are appealing to at least the remaining voters that they participate in large numbers and elect corporators of their choice", the official underlined.

GHMC has clarified that no face masks will be provided to voters on the polling day. It is the electors' responsibility to wear one if they want to vote. However, sanitisers will be provided and social distancing norms will be ensured.

CAMPAIGNING
GETS A DIVINE
'TOUCH'SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL
DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Monday presented a great occasion for candidates contesting in the GHMC elections, which is to be held on Tuesday.

It marked the perfect outing for them as they invoked divine blessings in the name of Kartika Pournami and Guru Nanak, whose jayanti was also on the same day. Several candidates visited temples and Gurudwaras to interact with the devout as campaigning had ended on Sunday. The bright morning helped their cause as they could take blessings in the places of worship and also meet the voters.

G. Pratyusha, a school teacher, who is contesting from Gowlipura as an independent, visited most of the temples in her division, like Laxminarayana Temple at Sriram Nagar Colony, Pothalinganna temple at Chattrinaka and Bharat Mata temple in Gowlipura. "This is my usual practice. I worship at all the temples. However, as this time I am contesting, I was able to communicate and understand people's problems and get familiar with them."

Pratyusha said. A priest at Kanakadurga temple in Dilsukhnagar, said "there have been a lot of devotees, on the occasion of Kartika Pournami". They included some politicians and candidates." N. Seshu Kumari, who is contesting from Ameerpet Division No 98 on TRS ticket, visited the Gurudwara Sahib at Ameerpet, took part in the prayers and interacted with the devotees, said Manpreet Kaur, a devotee. She added "It was very nice that she interacted with most of us."

GHIAL: AIRPORT
OPERATIONS
NORMALISING

Hyderabad: The operations at the GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL) are gradually returning to normalcy with the passenger footfall increasing to over 30,000 daily in November, GHIAL said on Monday.

This number is over 10 times the recommencement of domestic operations on May 25, GHIAL said on Monday. From about 3,000 domestic passengers daily in the first few weeks post-recommencement of domestic operations from May 25, the passenger footfall has increased manifold.



Devotees offer prayers on the occasion of 551st Prakash Utsav of Guru Nanak Dev Ji at Gurudwara Sahib, Secunderabad, on Monday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Sikhs celebrate 551st Prakash
Utsav of Guru Nanak Dev JiDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Sikhs on Monday celebrated the 551st "Prakash Utsav" of the first Sikh Guru Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. A large number of Sikh devotees participated in the birthday celebrations at all the Sikh Gurudwaras across Telangana. Members of other communities too celebrated the event with religious fervour and gaiety.

A major attraction was "Vishaal Deewan" (mass congregation) organised under the aegis of Gurudwara Sahib Secunderabad Prabhanda Committee on Monday morning that continued up to 3 p.m. There were recitations

from Guru Granth Sahib Ji (Holy Scripture of Sikhs), along with singing of Keertans (Holy Hymns) and narration of Kathas by renowned and reputed Ragi Jathas (Sikh Preachers), according to Secunderabad Gurudwara president S. Baldev Singh Bagga and secretary S. Avtar Singh.

Bhai Amarjit Singhji from Patiala, Punjab, Bhai Bhupinder Singhji of Sri Darbar Sahib, Golden Temple, Amritsar, Bhai Harpreet Singhji Hazuri Ragi Jatha and other reputed Ragi Jathas were especially invited from various parts of the country for reciting Shabad Keertans. Giani Jagdev Singh, head priest of Gurudwara Sahib

Secunderabad stressed on imbibing higher values of life and communal harmony for which Guru Nanak Dev Ji strived.

All outstation and local preachers emphasised on teachings of Sikh Gurus, who stood for national integration, peace, brotherhood and communal harmony. They asked devotees to follow teachings of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, which are very relevant during current times. The "Vishaal Deewan" concluded with the traditional Guru-Ka-Longar (free community kitchen), wherein all devotees sat in a row and had their "Prasad", promoting the feeling of togetherness, fraternity and concern for fellow human beings.

Kalasagaram enthralled music lovers

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

On second day of Kalasagaram's 53rd annual cultural festival, music lovers were enthralled by a concert by Shreya Devnath on violin, Mylai Karthikeyan playing nadaswaram, Praveen Sparsh on mridungam and R. Geevatathnam playing the thavil.

The artists began the concert with Ammallari in Gambharalattai, Chatusra Jathi Matya thalam. Normally, the piece is played by Nagaswara vidvans in temples when the deity comes out in a procession. It was rendered with full Bhakti bhava and well appreciated. The next item was Bhajana Seya Radha in Dharmavathi raga on Roopakam thalam.

Mysore Vasudevacharya Krithi was played with nerava and swaram. The third was the rare Thyagaraja krithi Rammichuvur. Its raga too is rare Suposhini and was heart touching. The always popular Evarura in Mohanam of Thyagaraja came next with both Shreya and Karthikeyan rendering it in Kalpana swaras.

POLICE ALL SET
FOR PEACEFUL
POLL: SAJJANAR

Hyderabad, Nov. 30: Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar on Monday said 13,500 police personnel were deployed in 38 divisions belonging to 19 police stations of the Cyberabad Police for the smooth conduct of the GHMC elections.

Sajjanar said about 20.5 lakh voters were expected to exercise their franchise in 2,569 polling stations covering 674 polling sites in Cyberabad on Tuesday, speaking at a press conference here.

"We have conducted meetings with all political parties and sensitised them about the Model Code of Conduct. Zone-wise sensitisation meetings covering all ranks of police officers were also conducted," the police commissioner said.

Nizam's heirs attack Yogi,
to file defamation suitKANIZA GARARI AND
ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

Upset with comments made by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath against Nawab Sir Mir Osman Ali Khan, VIIth Nizam of Hyderabad; Nizam's legal heirs are intending to file a defamation suit against the UP CM and others.

Yogi Adityanath had gone on record saying, "Nizam tried to merge Hyderabad with Pakistan; the people revolted and Patel merged Hyderabad with India." Legal heirs of the VIIth Nizam have been strongly condemned this comment.

"Degrading, defaming and blaming erstwhile leaders and ex-administrators for everything has become fashion for a particular party," observed Dilshad Jah, grandson of Mir Osman Ali Khan and

legal representative of late Walashan Prince Mouzzam Jah Bahadur.

In a strongly worded reply to Yogi Adityanath's comments, Dilshad Jah says, "It is unfortunate that the UP CM has no historical knowledge of Hyderabad State. He is not acquainted with facts and truths. These comments are unacceptable and unnecessary. As legal heirs, we are going to approach the Indian Judiciary."

The manner in which the name of Nizam has been used for political gain has angered many of his descendants. Nawab Najaf Ali Khan, another grandson of the Nizam, says, "The level of politics has taken a deep dive, where politicians lack knowledge of the history of their own nation. They should research Nizam's prestige, heritage and what he has done before

trying to tarnish his image. It is disheartening that the country is being managed by leaders who try to distort facts and history according to their wishes." Even 53 years after Nizam's death, people not only in Hyderabad but all over the world remember him for his philanthropy, Nawab Najaf Ali Khan pointed out.

Writer and historian Inam-ur-Rahman Gayur says, "Hyderabad culture is familiar for love, affection and gratification, where people of different ethnic connections, religion and caste lived safely with their own identities. I advise Union home minister to study the style of governance and deeds of Nizams. He will ultimately be convinced that Hindus in Hyderabad were safer and prosperous than any other princely state ruled by Hindu Rajas," Gayur asserted.

KTR created Sanjay's
fake video, says Kishan

From Page 1

"Shouting that the vehicle was containing cash and liquor, the corporator's aides stopped the car. While banging on bonnets and sides, one of the men broke the windshields of the vehicle," said Ramgopalpet inspector T. Chanchala Babu. No case was booked as yet.

At Karmanghat, BJP workers alleged attacked TRS M.L.A. Sudheer Reddy as they were under the impression that he was carrying illegal cash. Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat stepped in and resolved the issue. However, no case was booked. Clashes and jostling between TRS and BJP workers were also reported at Attapur and Chaitanyapuri.

Responding to alleged attacks on the BJP workers, Union minister of state for home affairs G. Kishan Reddy accused police officers of working for the ruling party. He cautioned that if they



State BJP president Bandi Sanjay's convoy allegedly attacked on Necklace road on Monday.

make police work as the slaves of the TRS, the Central government will not remain as a mute spectator.

The minister alleged that the TRS has created fake IDs of BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar and has circulated certain posts on social media, wherein Sanjay had said that the BJP doesn't need the votes of people belonging to coastal Andhra and Rayalaseema, but have settled in Hyderabad, for the GHMC polls.

Alleging that TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao has circulated this fake news through social media from the Telangana Bhavan, Kishan Reddy demanded the police officers to immediately raid the TRS head office and take action against culprits.

Stating that after knowing that the settlers are supporting the BJP, the minister said the TRS is trying to divert their attention with fake videos and posts on social media.

MTech student kills mother, sister

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 30

An Mtech student of CMR College allegedly killed his mother and sister at their residence in Medchal to inherit family property and clear the debts he made after losing money in cricket betting.

According to the police, the accused, P. Sainath Reddy, 23, studying Mtech second year in CMR College, lost huge amounts of money after placing bets in the recent

cricket matches. "To clear the debt, he hatched a plan to kill his mother, P. Sunitha, 44, and his sister, Anuja Reddy, 22, with the hope of inheriting the family property, sell it and clear his debts. According to his plan, he laced their food with pesticide and served it to them on November 23. After battling for their lives for more than a week, Sunitha and Anusha died while undergoing treatment," said the Medchal police.

● **THE ACCUSED, P. Sainath Reddy, 23, studying Mtech second year in CMR College, lost huge amounts of money after placing bets in the recent cricket matches.**

However, relatives and villagers grew suspicious and alerted the police before the final rites of the two women. The police then took Sainath into custody for questioning, during which he confessed to the killings. "When he came to know

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DECCAN Chronicle

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On account of **GHMC Elections today** (i.e. 01-12-2020) our Classified booking counter at Head Office 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad will remain open from 10.00 A.M. to 5.30 P.M.

MANAGEMENT

Government of India
Ministry of Education
National Institutional Ranking Framework

INDIA RANKINGS 2021

The National Institutional Ranking Framework (NIRF) was launched in 2015 to rank higher educational institutions in the country based on objective criteria to promote competitive excellence in the higher educational institutions. NIRF now invites applications for India Rankings 2021, the Sixth edition of this annual exercise.

All the institutions which have participated in the previous India Rankings exercise have been pre-registered. A mail in this regard has already been sent to the Heads of the respective institutions to confirm institution details for India Rankings 2021.

In case, your institution is not pre-registered in the above manner, and wishes to participate in India Rankings 2021, you are requested to visit our website i.e. www.nirfindia.org and register your institution by clicking the registration button. In case of any query, contact National Board of Accreditation at helpdesk@nirfindia.org or call at 011-40159583/87/89.

The registration will open from 1st December 2020.

davp 21315/11/0001/2021

Member Secretary

29th Death Anniversary
In loving Memory



LATE ATHELLI ANJAIAH GOUD
*You have always been an inspiration
to all of us to be better individuals.
We miss you. You have and will always
be our guiding Light*
Inserted by : Family Members

SHORT TAKES

CASTING DIR.
BOOKED FOR
SEXUAL ASSAULTSAURABH JOSHI | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

A 26-year-old television actress registered a case of sexual assault against a casting director alleging that he targeted her on multiple occasions under the pretext of marrying her. The complainant claimed that the incident took place at multiple places. The Versova police station has filed a case and are investigating the case further.

The officials said that the victim approached them last week and revealed of her ordeal following which the officials filed a case of rape against the accused and have initiated a probe in the case. The accused is also 26-year-old, confirmed the police and had met the victim two years ago over professional assignment.

"The actress submitted an application accusing the casting director of raping her at various locations in the city after promising marriage," said an officer.

The accused established physical relations with her and kept promising marriage however after years of relationship he refused to marry her and later stopped responding to her calls and messages. The police will also scan through their mobile phones and other gadgets to get further leads in the case.

The police have filed a case against the accused under sections 376 (rape) as per the Indian Penal Code and will summon him for questioning soon. The police have begun preliminary probe in the case and may record the statements of the common contacts of the duo and witnesses in case of any.

OVER 60 JUMBOS
CREATE HAVOC
IN ODISHAAKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 30

Around 60 wild elephants have reportedly been creating havoc in Binika area of Sonepur district for two weeks now causing damage to property and destroying standing paddy crops in several acres of land.

Locals said that due to the fear of the jumbos, they were forced to sleep on the terraces of their houses even as the night temperature in the district plummeted below 15 degrees Celsius.

As per reports, the elephants sneaked into Jharapada village last night and damaged three houses. They also ate up over three quintals of rice stored inside one villager's house.

"The elephant herd has been tormenting us for two weeks now. We are forced to sleep on the terrace of our neighbour. The animals barged into the house last night by damaging the walls and ate over three quintals of rice. We request the district administration to take measures to drive away the elephant from the region," said a villager of Jharapada.

"It's been over 12 days, the jumbos are entering the village repeatedly from the forest and have been damaging property and standing paddy crops in the area," said another villager.

DELHI SEES
COLDEST NOV.
IN 71 YRSDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

November was the coldest in the national capital in 71 years, with the mean minimum temperature dropping to 10.2 degrees Celsius, according to the India Meteorological Department.

Delhi had recorded a mean minimum temperature of 10.2 degrees Celsius in November 1949. The mean minimum temperature for November was 9.6 degrees Celsius in 1938; nine degrees Celsius in 1931 and 8.9 degrees Celsius in 1930, according to IMD data.

Normally, the mean minimum temperature for November is 12.9 degrees Celsius. The mean minimum temperature was 15 degrees Celsius last year, 13.4 degrees Celsius in 2018 and 12.8 degrees Celsius in 2017 and 2016.

Delhi also braved four cold waves in November — on the 3rd, 20th, 23rd and 24th.

For the plains, the IMD declares a cold wave when the minimum temperature is 10 degrees Celsius or below and is 4.5 notches less than normal for two consecutive days.

SHEHLA'S DAD
DEMANDS
PROBE AGAINST
HER NGOS

Jammu, Nov. 30: Abdul Rashid Shora, the estranged father of student activist Shehla Rashid, on Monday levelled serious allegations against her, demanding that a probe be initiated into her NGOs and also accused her of having taken a huge amount of money for joining politics in Kashmir valley, a charge denied by her.

Shehla termed her father's statement "absolutely disgusting and baseless" and said this was his reaction after a court barred him entry into their Srinagar house on November 17 in response to a complaint filed by the family against him under domestic violence.

Releasing a three-page letter addressed to the Director General of Police at a press conference here, Shora claimed that he is facing a threat to his life from Shehla, her security guard, sister and her mother.

"She had taken Rs three crore to join politics in Kashmir from (former MLA) Engineer Rashid and (businessman) Zahoor Watali (both of whom were arrested last year by the National Investigation Agency for their alleged involvement in terror funding case)," Shora claimed.

Shehla, a former JNU student leader, joined politics and became a founding member of JK Political Movement floated by IAS topper turned politician Shah Faesal. However, she later announced her "dissociation with the electoral mainstream in Kashmir" last year.

He also demanded a probe into the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), being run by Shehla, and the bank accounts of his daughters and their mother.

However, Shehla tweeted a detailed response saying "Many of you must have come across a video of my biological father making wild allegations against me and my mum and sis. To keep it short and straight, he's a wife-beater and an abusive, depraved man. We finally decided to act against him, and this stunt is a reaction to that."

Terming the allegations "absolutely disgusting and baseless", she said the fact of the matter is that they have filed a complaint of domestic violence with a court in Kashmir against her father and it has passed an order restraining his entry into their home.

"My mother has tolerated abuse, violence and mental torture all her life. She has kept quiet for the sake of respect for the family now that we have started speaking up against his physical and mental abuse, he has started abusing us too," she said, requesting everyone not to take him seriously. - PTI

● **SHEHLA TERMED her father's statement "absolutely disgusting and baseless" and said this was his reaction after a court barred him entry into their house on Nov. 17 in response to a complaint by the family against him under domestic violence.**

HUGE | LOSS

Bhopal, Nov. 30: Madhya Pradesh has lost 290 tigers over the last 19 years but the central Indian state still has more than 675 tigers, including 125 cubs, in the designated reserves and in the wild, a top Forest department official said on Monday.

Claiming that the population of tigers has actually "gone up", he said Madhya Pradesh will continue to remain the "tiger state of India".

The official said only

Faith matters



Fireworks light the sky at the illuminated Golden Temple on the occasion of 551st birth anniversary of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikh religion, in Amritsar on Monday.

- PTI

'Bengali Pride' to be TMC's
poll plank to counter BJP

TMC plans to emerge as protector of Bengali culture and identity

Kolkata, Nov. 30: Buoyed by the "positive" response to its 'insider versus outsider' campaign, the TMC leadership has decided to embrace 'Bengali pride' as its main poll plank for the 2021 assembly polls to counter the BJP's aggressive Hindutva campaign in West Bengal.

The Mamata Banerjee-led party, which has often been mocked by opponents for not having a well-defined ideological plank, seems to have finally found one in Bengali sub-nationalism, as a section of top party leaders feels only an "inclusive message of regionalism, which the Bengalis can identify with, will counter the aggressive nationalism and Hindutva practised by the saffron camp".

"During the next assembly polls, apart from development, Bengali pride will be our main poll plank. Bengali pride is not just about Bengalis, it appeals to all sons of the soil. This philosophy will help counter BJP's attempts to import leaders from outside to control the people of the state," senior TMC leader and MP Sougata Roy said.

According to TMC sources, much like the regional parties of Tamil Nadu, which are proponents of Tamil pride, and Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, which harps on Marathi 'Ashmita' (pride), the TMC plans to emerge as the protector of Bengali culture and identity.

"The JD(U) in Bihar had talked about 'Bihari versus Bahari'. Even the BJP, which boasts of nationalism, had campaigned on the poll plank of Gujarati 'Ashmita' during the 2007 Gujarat elections. So if we do the same, we think no one should complain about it," another TMC leader said.

A senior leader of the

BJP MP alleges delay
in CAA implementationRAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, NOV. 30

Close on the heels of suffering a jolt to its 'Gorkhaland' card in poll-bound West Bengal, the BJP has landed in a fresh soup after its own MP face in the Matua community, Shantanu Thakur complained of delay and deprivation of the implementation of its key promise, Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) to the sizeable votebank of Hindu refugees who supported the saffron party's rise in the last Lok Sabha Election in the state, hoping to avail the law.

Reminding the BJP leadership to fulfill its promise ahead of the CAA's first anniversary, the Bongaon parliamentarian from North 24 Parganas also warned them of the Matuas' alienation from the party in the next year's Assembly Election to highlight his community's growing anger due to a prolong wait for the

Mamata Banerjee-led party, who was a part of a select group of the members that formulated this ideological plank, said "divisive politics and religious polarisation could never be countered with development politics.

"The JD(U) in Bihar had talked about 'Bihari versus Bahari'. Even the BJP, which boasts of nationalism, had campaigned on the poll plank of Gujarati 'Ashmita' during the 2007 Gujarat elections. So if we do the same, we think no one should complain about it," another TMC leader said.

A senior leader of the

5% of the deaths of big cats had occurred due to poaching

MP lost 290 big cats in 19 yrs

five per cent of the deaths of big cats had occurred due to poaching or in man-animal conflicts. Most of the deaths of the tigers occurred either in territorial fights or due to natural causes, he added.

"Madhya Pradesh has lost 290 tigers so far since 2002," Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Wildlife) Alok Kumar said.

However, there are 550 big cats in tiger reserves in Kanha, Bandhavgarh, Pench, Satpura, Panna

and Sanjay Gandhi reserve and in the wild, he said, adding that there are 125 cubs in the parks. Kumar said about 10 to 20 more tiger cubs might be roaming in the wild.

"They can't be captured as they might be deep inside the jungles. When they turn young and venture out, we would be able to see them," he added.

Kumar said movements of tigers were recorded through camera traps, patrolling and other means. Asked about the

deaths of 290 tigers since 2002, Kumar said, "As the number of tigers has risen, they are fighting for territorial control. We are losing 25 to 30 striped animals every year. Of them (the deceased tiger), 95 per cent were weak and old. While the remaining five per cent of (290) tigers were killed by poachers or in man-animal conflicts".

Queried on whether territories of the majestic beasts have shrunk due to encroachments, he said,

"We do have an adequate area for tigers". Kumar said there was no talk on increasing the area for the striped animals.

"The habitat of tigers needed to be protected, and for this people need to be made aware as well," he added.

Kumar said the typical lifespan of a tiger living in a reserve is 12 to 13 years. Responding to a query, he said Madhya Pradesh will continue to remain the tiger state of India. - PTI

the end. The TMC zoomed past the saffron party in the final phase with its fiery campaign over "insult to Bengali icons", following the desecration of social reformer Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar's bust during a BJP rally.

Although the BJP had denied the allegations, the damage was done. Then on, TMC supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has often invoked Bengali sub-nationalism, and called the BJP a party of "outsiders".

"Initially it was a half-hearted campaign, as we were worried about its impact on the Hindi-speaking population of the state. But later it was decided that Bengali sub-nationalism or Bengali pride would be our main ideological plank. Whether we win or lose, this will be our mainstay in days to come," the TMC leader, who played a key role in zeroing in on the idea, said.

Citing Bengal's demographic map, where 70 per cent is Hindu population and 30 per cent Muslims, the TMC leader said, "The state consists of 86 per cent Bengalis, that's the antidote of BJP's politics. Bengalis are an independent-minded community since the days of British Raj.

"Post-independence, too, be it the Congress or the communists, none of them ever accepted the supremacy of Delhi. Hindu-Muslim politics won't work here," he said.

Over the last two weeks, the TMC had been holding aggressive "insider versus outsider" campaigns to corner the BJP, and statements such as "Bengal will be turned into Gujarat" with the import of leaders from other states, has provided the ammo to even out the party's internal conflicts, which is now out in the open. - PTI

SHIV SENA TO
ORGANISE AZAAN
COMPETITIONBHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

In a bid to woo Muslims, the Uddhav Thackeray-led Shiv Sena has decided to organise an 'Azaan Recitation Competition' in Mumbai. The move is seen as an attempt to neutralise its anti-Muslim image.

The competition has been announced by Shiv Sena South Mumbai division head Pandurang Sakpal. He said, "Azaan is held just on the lines of Maha Aarti and it also provides peace of mind. Hence, a competition will be held to encourage Muslim children to recite Azaan. Shiv Sena will reward the winners of the contest."

The BJP has slammed the move saying that competition is a sign that the Shiv Sena has abandoned its ideology for the sake of power. Praveen Darekar, BJP leader and a leader of opposition in Maharashtra Vidhan Parishad, said, "Late Balasaheb Thackeray had always criticised the use of loudspeakers for offering Namaz. But Shiv Sena has now given up its Hindutva," he said.

However, NCP spokesperson Nawab Malik has hit back at Mr Darekar saying it was not always proper to look at arts and performance through the eyes of religion. "In districts like Solapur, Muslim girls have topped the 'Geeta Recitation Competition.'

In movies, actors like Dilip Kumar, Shah Rukh Khan, Salman Khan have done several scenes in temples, but it does not they have changed their religion," said Mr Malik.

EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

OPEN E-TENDER

Open Tender Notice No. : **SPJ-ST-S-15-2020**

DRM (S&T)/Samastipur invites open e-tenders on behalf of President of India for following work:

1. Name of work with its location : Signalling Work in connection with Different CTR/TRR/TRR work in different sections of SPJ Division. **2. Approx. cost of the work :** Rs. 3,24,68,371/- (Rupees Three Crore Twenty Four Lakh Sixty Eight Thousand Three Hundred Seventy one only. **3. Earnest Money to be deposited :** Rs. 3,12,400/- (Rupees Three Lakh Twelve Thousand Four Hundred Only). **4. Date & Time for Submission of tender & opening of tender :** 18.12.2020 Up to 16:00 Hrs. 18.12.2020 at 16:30 Hrs. 5. Particulars of website where full details of tender may be seen : www.irops.gov.in For further details please visit the website www.irops.gov.in.

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E. C. Railway, Samastipur

PR/998/SPJ/S&T/T/720-21/40

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E-Tender Notice

E-Tender Notice No.: S&T-Con-DNR-68R

CSTE/CON/ECR/Mahendraghat/Patna for & on behalf of President of India are invited Open online E-Tender.

E-Tender No. : S&T-Con-DNR-68R

Name of work : Design, Manufacturing, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Electronic Interlocking System (Indoor & Outdoor) including Telecom work at Patliputra & Pahlaghat in connection with doubling work of Patliputra-Pahlaghat of Danapur/ Sonepur Division of East Central Railway. **Approximate cost :** Rs. 142944318.36 **Earnest Money :** Rs. 864700/- **Cost of Tender document :** Nil as per GCC 2020 **Completion Period :** 06 Months. **Last Date & Time of submission of online E-Tender :** 18.12.2020 up to 12.00. For details information, may kindly see the tender notice and tender documents which are available at Indian Railways website <http://www.irops.gov.in>

Assistant Signal & Telecom Engineer/Con
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PR/1000/CDNR/S&T/T/20-21/40

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Fax No. +91-040-23534746, Tel. No. +91-040-23532800, email: steelcontracts@nmdc.co.in

Chief General Manager (Contracts)

हर एक काम देश के नाम इस्पाती इरादा

DECCAN Chronicle

1 DECEMBER 2020

Mend ties in region, try to counter China

We are glad of the flurry of in-person, “non-virtual” diplomacy effected by India in recent weeks in order to pay greater attention to neighbour-hood contours that have been allowed to languish of late for want of foresight, although it is time to ponder how this will be rated on the adequacy scale.

India’s immediate neighbourhood is “Saarc Plus” if we take into account Myanmar to the east, China to the north, and Iran and the Gulf Arab states to the west. Of these, the prickly or difficult ties have traditionally been with Pakistan and China, which too need engagement of another kind. Regrettably, however, for some time we have lost sight of the value of ties within Saarc, Afghanistan being the exception, and the neighbourhood too if Iran and the Gulf are excluded.

The relationship with Beijing has now grown tense, with China having militarily encroached into our territory in Ladakh this summer, with India responding to save face by amassing forces inside our own borders to face the People’s Liberation Army. Our northern neighbour’s repeated attempts to encircle us on the Bhutan and Sikkim side has added gravity to the way we think about China.

China’s military incursion into Indian territory adds many layers of complexity to an already complicated dynamic, whose key characteristic was persistent Chinese efforts over a fairly long period to cut us off from our South Asian neighbours, one by one, by lavishing vast sums of money on these countries in the form of investments and infrastructural installations, besides buildup of defence facilities. It’s no exaggeration to say that Beijing has got pretty far in that game, and it is to this reality that the Narendra Modi government has finally woken up.

Thus, we had the foreign secretary heading to Bangladesh in August. A few weeks later, in early October, he was in Myanmar along with the Army Chief. In October-November there has been a cluster of visits. The external affairs minister headed to Bahrain, the UAE and Seychelles in the Indian Ocean. The Army Chief and the RAW chief showed up in Kathmandu, followed up by the foreign secretary. Relations with Nepal have dipped with Kathmandu eating into Indian territory, redrawing boundary maps and getting this endorsed by its legislature. There is considerable lost political ground to cover even as India is going about promising development aid for infrastructure, connectivity and education. The national security adviser was in Colombo for the fourth meeting of the India, Sri Lanka, Maldives trilateral maritime security conference, which had been dormant for some time.

On the whole, however, there is a sense that these are bit moves to compensate for lost time in which the Chinese have made deft manoeuvres. Even as our foreign secretary left Kathmandu, the Chinese defence minister landed there for follow-up action. Our eastern Himalayan neighbours are extremely valuable in dealing with the Chinese. In the Narendra Modi government’s six years, foreign policy has mainly meant being worshipful of the US to the extent of showing partisanship with President Donald Trump in domestic US politics. This is not just amateurish but also harmful. The neglect of neighbours, breaching the first principles of diplomacy, has been another feature of our recent policy. It is time to rethink priorities and have a few good, grand ideas in a rapidly changing environment.

A long way still to go

India’s economy, according to a set of numbers released by the government last week, has shrunk by 7.5 per cent in the quarter that ended on September 30. The contraction in the size of the economy for the second successive quarter has technically got the Indian economy into recession for the first time in its history. A decline in economic growth for two consecutive quarters indicates a recession, or economic stagnation. The silver lining, however, was that the degree of contraction in the economy has reduced in the July-September quarter, compared to the April-June quarter.

While economic activity picked up pace in the second quarter of financial year 2020-21, there is no consensus about the durability of this economic growth. Industrial activity witnessed in the July-September quarter could be to address pent-up demand during the festive season. While people have slowly started resuming their normal activities, business transactions in the touch-heavy sectors have still not reached their pre-Covid levels — a key prerequisite for India’s economic growth re-entering the positive territory.

According to data released by the ministry of statistics, key indicators such as cargo handled at seaports and airports, production of cement, sale of commercial vehicles, and exports continued to underperform and remain in a two-digit contraction. The inter-city movement of people — as shown by data of airports and the railways — has not reached normal levels yet. Unless such a big component of the GDP does not resume its activity, the real economic growth will not be seen.

The government, which was expected to step in to restore demand normality in the economy, has in fact reduced its revenue expenditure. The government’s final consumption expenditure, according to the ministry of statistics, has come down by over ₹1 lakh crore at ₹3.62 lakh crores in the second quarter of fiscal 2020-21 compared ₹4.65 lakh crores in the second quarter of fiscal 2019-20. In a scenario, where the government tries to escape its responsibility by blaming an act of God, one could only hope that God gives Indians strength to beat the coronavirus and help them resuscitate the ailing economy.

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Subhani



Will our farmers force arrogant govt to yield?



Parsa Venkateshwar Rao Jr

The march of the Punjab farmers to New Delhi, accompanied by their counter-parts from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and other parts of northern India, despite all the attempts by the BJP-ruled Haryana government, and the refusal of the leaders of the farmers’ unions to abide by the conditions laid down by Union home minister Amit Shah to move to a specified protest site before talks with the government could begin, and more basically rejecting the home ministry’s intervention and insisting that the talks will be held with the agriculture ministry, is a clear rebuff to the self-righteous and arrogant Narendra Modi government one-and-a-half years into its second term. The farmers are not willing to buy the spin of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Cabinet and party colleagues that the three farm reform laws rushed through the two Houses of Parliament during the Monsoon Session in September through a voice vote was to strengthen the position of farmers.

The issue is no longer about the merits and demerits of the laws shaking off the shackles of the local mandis and apparently freeing the farmers to sell where they choose, of giving a backdoor entry to corporates into engaging farmers to grow what they need for their commercial purposes and lifting the “essential commodities” tag from food-grains and other commodities, enabling corporate groups to store the produce.

There is enough to discuss there, and the government may have a point or two, but it does not matter if the people affected by them remain suspi-

cious and hostile, and the government do not have any convincing arguments.

What is at issue is the Modi government’s conviction that it can do no wrong, and that the farmers in this case should grasp the good being done for them. The attitude is not that of a democratically elected government, but that of a paternalist state which believes that people should accept the government’s decisions in good faith and not raise impertinent questions.

The Modi government has been getting its way in the last six-and-a-half-years, but now it has come up against the farmers’ formidable barricades. The Haryana and Delhi police, with the latter falling under the Union home ministry, have tried to barricade the farmers’ march but there was no stopping the farmers. The Union government had to get off its high horse, and Mr Shah was forced to plead with the farmers that the government was ready to talk to them and that they should move to the Nirankari Grounds at Burari on the outskirts of the national capital. It appears that Mr Shah has no option but to yield further ground.

There is of course the fact that this is also a political tussle between the BJP and its erstwhile ally in Punjab, the Shiromani Akali Dal. The farmers form the core

By freeing the mandis, the Centre is not enabling the farmers to sell their produce where they want to because 90 per cent of them are small and marginal farmers owning not more than two acres of land, but it is enabling the corporates to enter the mandis.

There is enough to discuss there, and the government may have a point or two, but it does not matter if the people affected by them remain suspicious and hostile, and the government do not have any convincing arguments.

constituency of the Akali Dal, and it is alleged that the Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees (APMC), or the mandi committees in the state, are controlled by the first family of the party, Prakash Singh Badal and his son Sukhbir Singh Badal.

The BJP under Mr Modi has been on the warpath of weakening its allies in the National Democratic Alliance — the Shiv Sena in Maharashtra, the Akali Dal in Punjab, and Janata Dal (United) in Bihar. The Shiv Sena and Akali Dal have sensed the danger and they are hitting back, though the JD(U) is not in a position to do so now.

Prime Minister Modi seems to have miscalculated the horse sense of the farmers. The hard-nosed men and women of the soil are not going to be overwhelmed by the PM’s rhetoric and sweet talk. His “one nation, one farm market” idea does not fool them.

They know their problem is different from that of their counterparts in other parts of the country, and they know the problems they face on the ground more than any government which pretends that it knows best. The issue of minimum support price is only one part of the problem. By freeing the mandis or grain markets, the Centre is not enabling the farmers to sell their produce where they want to because 90 per cent of them are small and marginal farmers owning not more than two acres of land, but it is enabling the corporates to enter the mandis.

The Prime Minister’s

positive spin turns out be a bluff, and the farmers have seen through this. The Prime Minister and the government have been forced on to the backfoot. They will have to take greater pains to explain the hidden benefits to the farmers that would flow from the new laws, or they will have to promise to address the concerns of the farmers and incorporate them into the laws through necessary amendments.

More than anything else, Mr Modi and his colleagues need to learn, quickly, that they are not infallible, that they mean to do the right thing but yet go wrong, and that even without any evil intention they may do things that harm people more than benefiting them. Their desire to change the country overnight based on a parliamentary majority reveals political immaturity. Farm reforms may be necessary but for them to be successful it is not enough to pass new laws. There is need to connect with the people and win their trust and consent, or at least of a majority of them. The BJP has come to believe in the mantra of “Modi hai toh mumkin hai”. It is not. Even Mr Modi must persuade and convince the people. He cannot simply have his own way. Mr Modi and the BJP might chomp at the reins of democratic controls exerted by the people. But they must learn to hold back and reconsider all issues. There is an urgent need to change the style of governance from that of the presidential to the parliamentary. Had the government sent the bills for review by a joint select committee, as the Akalis and the Opposition parties had so vociferously urged, there would have been time and scope enough to respond to the concerns of the farmers and to incorporate the necessary changes before they became law.

The writer is a Delhi-based commentator and analyst

LETTERS

POLL CAMPAIGN

Spewing venom seems to be the new normal in election campaigns and the state BJP president has done exactly that by raising the issue of declining Hindu population in the Old City (Bandi: Why is Hindu population falling?, DC, Nov. 30). It is also intriguing that parties with a dismal record in governance continues to seek votes successfully in the name development.

M. Saleemuddin Hyderabad

LOVE JIHAD LAWS

All political parties in the past 10 years of election campaigns promised employment. Since no progress report in this regard is possible, love jihad is being introduced to divert attention. The result of this is hatred and division and not employment. Youth must boycott news that divides India.

Prasad Hyderabad

VIRTUAL YEAR

2020 saw only two months of activity in January and February. From March onwards, the world was in lockdown due to Covid. We saw the rise of virtual leaders, professionals and executives conducting virtual summits, conferences and meetings, while students were busy attending online classes. Even virtual marriages are taking place. Good that cricket matches are not taking place virtually.

G.V. Sudhir Secunderabad

Big blaze at Guruvayur temple

KOZHIKODE, NOV. 30 Large portions of the famous Sri Krishna temple at Guruvayur in central Kerala were gutted by a fire which broke out in the early hours of this morning.

A spokesman of the temple told PTI on trunk telephone that the sanctum sanctorum was not affected. The spokesman said the debris were being removed and poojas would commence only after “Sudhi Kalasam” (purification ceremony)

He said the fire was first noticed on the western side at about 0200 hours. Soon it spread to other parts. It took over three hours to extinguish the fire by the fire brigade, requisitioned from Ponnani.

Aakar Patel



Looking at the future in fear as economy goes into ‘de-growth’

India’s economy had contracted for another three months, we were told late last week. Meaning that, as a nation, we produced less in goods and services than we did in the same period last year. Meaning also that Indian families in the numbers of lakhs and perhaps crores got pulled into poverty. India’s economy has contracted for six months since Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for the harshest lockdown in the world. This has brought the nation into what economists call a recession, whose definition is two straight quarters of de-growth.

We know we are in a recession because of the media.

The Prime Minister has not tweeted out the numbers his government has put out. The finance minister has not done so either. The Niti Aayog’s head says he was “pleasantly surprised” that the numbers were not worse that had been expected. The chief economic adviser professes “cautious optimism” about the data. He had previously predicted growth in the two quarters from April to September. It turned out that instead of growth we had a contraction of 23.9 per cent. He describes himself as inter-

ested in “deep thinking and research”. In the economic survey, he used Wikipedia as a source. News about the third quarter is not good. Bank credit is lower in the current period than it was in the one when the economy contracted. The core sectors (steel, cement, electricity, coal, oil, refining and fertilisers) shrunk in October. If you do not know this, it might be because the Prime Minister and the finance minister have not tweeted about it. If they ignore something, then it doesn’t exist. The data is all from the corporate sector. We have no idea what is happening to the unorganised and small sectors where most Indians are employed. The weak and the poor cannot “work from home”. They must toil every day to eat. We do know that the lockdown, like the earlier demonetisation, like GST, has taken work away from the small and the poor and given it to the corporate sector. The stock market is at a historic high for this reason.

Elsewhere, the capital of our nation is facing farmers’ protests. They want the government to take back the laws that will gut procurement and affect their livelihood. The government’s agents have said

the protesters are anti-national and separatists. The standard line that is used for anyone — academics, minorities, farmers, dissident industrialists — who points out that what the government is doing is wrong. It is like children and name-calling. That is the level of maturity in our national debate.

On the Ladakh front, China has refused to go back from the spaces they have occupied on our border and the Indian Army has to spend the winter in spaces that have not been prepared for such an eventuality. Our jawans were issued sleeping bags that have been previously found to be “unfit for use in glacier and super higher altitude areas”. But they must make do because the political establishment has decided it does not want to deal with the problem. The Prime Minister tweeted that he had an “excellent discussion with my friend Boris Johnson”, the British Prime Minister, about climate change and other matters. He has not found the time to have a discussion with his friend Xi Jinping about his Army going back from our borders. Again, if you don’t talk about the problem, it doesn’t exist. His right hand man, the home

minister of India, has said that the implementation of his pet project, the Citizenship Amendment Act, has been postponed for now. He says this is because of Covid-19 and he will only implement the CAA after the pandemic ends. Why Covid-19 should affect India’s giving citizenship to those non-Muslims who came to India illegally before December 2014 is not known. No other law has been paused because of it. But after an aggressive campaign against those he called “termites”, Amit Shah is now hesitant to take India down the road of religious discrimination. It might help to understand why by looking at what our ambassador in the United States is up to.

He has spent the last two weeks sweet talking those American leaders who had previously condemned India’s actions on the CAA, the National Register of Citizens and on Kashmir.

He has been tweeting out the details of the meetings without saying why India was now engaging with those who did not like the actions of the Narendra Modi government. The reason of course is that Mr Modi’s friend Donald Trump has been defeated in the

presidential election and a Democrat will become America’s new President in two months’ time. The Democratic Party has been very vocal about its concern that India is heading in the wrong direction under Mr Modi and is damaging itself by indulging in overt majoritarianism and harassing and bullying its own minorities. We will see what the effect of India’s outreach to the Democrats is soon enough.

Meanwhile, there has been no let-up in the conduct of the ruling party. In Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh and elsewhere, laws have been passed that will jail Muslim men for 10 years if they marry Hindu women. In Hyderabad, the BJP has said in the campaign for the local elections that a vote for Muslims is a vote against India. Ten years ago, this would have produced outrage, but today it is normal and is accepted because it has become normalised. This is what is going on in our country today. It is hard to see any of it without a sense of dread and fear for what is happening and what may lie ahead.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

SHORT TAKES

SOCIAL WORKER SHEETAL AMTE ENDS LIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

Sheetal Amte, a renowned social worker and granddaughter of legendary Baba Amte, on Monday committed suicide by injecting poison. She was in the news recently after she made allegations against trustees and activists of the leprosy service committee of Anandwan. Her family had refuted allegations and said she was suffering from depression.

Dr Sheetal, daughter of social worker Dr Vikas Amte, was reportedly under stress for the last few days. According to reports, a few days ago, she had made serious allegations about the work, trustees, and activists of the leprosy service committee in Anandwan through a Facebook Live.

Within two hours, the Facebook Live was deleted. Later, a statement issued by the Amte family refuted the allegations. Dr Sheetal had been serving leprosy patients with her husband and family for the past several years.

Three generations of the Amte family are into social work in the far-flung rural and tribal areas of Chandrapur through the Anandwan Ashram and Hemalkasa Ashram in Gadchiroli, tending to people deprived of medical facilities in the Maoist-infested areas.

Dr Sheetal completed her degree from Government Medical College, Nagpur. After becoming a doctor, she joined her family at Anandwan. In addition to her MBBS degree, she also had completed her masters from Tata Institute of Social Sciences. In January 2016 Dr Sheetal was selected by World Economic Forum as 'Young Global Leader 2016' and later was selected as a Member of World Economic Forum Expert Network on Humanitarian Response.

'JUSTICE FOR PARI' FIGHT SHIFTS TO DELHI

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 30

The fight for justice for five-year-old girl Amrita Sneha Sahoo alias Pari which began in the Jadupur village in Nayagarh district reached to New Delhi on Monday with the BJP national spokesperson Dr Sambit Patra submitting a memorandum to the National Commission for Child Rights Protection (NCCPR) for an independent inquiry into her kidnapping and murder.

"I prayed to the Commission for an independent probe and asking the Nayagarh SP to appear before the child rights body to apprise the progress of the investigation so far. I also briefed the Commission how Pari's parents — Ashok Sahoo and Soudamini Sahoo — were harassed by the police and local goons while seeking justice for the brutal murder of their daughter.

Pari was kidnapped on July 14 while playing in the courtyard of her house and her skeletal remains were found in the backyard of her house seven days after on July 23.

PROF. RESCUES TURTLE FROM FISH MARKET

Guwahati, Nov. 30: A turtle belonging to a vulnerable species has been saved from being sold in a fish market in Assam on Monday, thanks to the initiative of an academician, an official said.

Head of the Life Science and Bioinformatics department of Assam University Sarbani Giri had gone to the fish market when she noticed a man putting up an Indian peacock soft-shell turtle (*Nilssonina hurum*), which was alive, for sale.

He wanted to cut the turtle into pieces and sell it but Giri immediately stopped him from doing so and offered to buy it alive for ₹4,000, a forest official said. Her gesture moved the man and he gave her the turtle.

After bringing it home, Giri called up the Cachar Forest Division in Silchar to release it in its natural habitat, the official said.

Personnel of the forest department took the turtle from the professor and thanked her for saving the life of the turtle. The forest department has decided to team up with the fisheries department to create awareness among fishermen about turtles.



A 60-year-old Covid-19 patient in critical condition being airlifted for treatment to Chennai, at the airport in Indore on Monday.

— PTI

Elementary schools in Assam to reopen from January 1

The government will soon release detailed Standard Operating Procedure

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, NOV. 30

In a significant move, Assam education and health minister Himanta Biswa Sarma here on Monday announced that the state government has decided to re-open classes for students of nursery to class VI from January 1, 2021. The detailed Standard Operating Procedure (SOPs) regarding the opening of elementary school will be released soon.

Informing that in view of the significant improvement in the Covid-19 scenario, all the temporary Covid testing centres have been closed, the minister told reporters that state government has decided to reopen schools from classes nursery to VI for both government and private schools but it will be left to parents if they want to send their children to school or not.

Earlier, this month the state government had allowed schools to be reopened for students of Class 6 and above. To minimise the risk, schools were asked to follow an odd-even system. The education de-

Delhi govt reduces RT-PCR test price to ₹800 from ₹2,400

New Delhi, Nov. 30: The Arvind Kejriwal government on Monday ordered all private laboratories to reduce the price of RT-PCR tests in the national capital to ₹800 from ₹2,400.

According to an order issued by the health department, private laboratories have been asked to charge ₹800 for testing samples collected by government teams and collected from collection sites by private sector labs as requisitioned by districts and hospitals. However, the testing of samples collected through home visit will cost ₹1,200.

All labs and hospitals have also been asked to display the revised rates at a prominent place within 24 hours. The private laboratories have also been asked to process samples, share the reports with the client (government or individual) and update all reports on the Indian Council of Medical Research portal within 24 hours of collection of samples.

Health Minister Satyendar Jain had earlier said that labs were finding it

difficult to release the results of all tests within a day. Earlier in the day, the Kejriwal said that he had issued directives to reduce the price of the RT-PCR test in the national capital, saying it will help those going to private labs for Covid-19 tests.

"I have directed that the rates of RT PCR tests be reduced in Delhi. Whereas tests are being conducted free of cost in govt establishments, however this will help those who get their tests done in pvt labs," Kejriwal tweeted. — PTI

Mareshwari, a three-time MLA from Rajasthan, was undergoing treatment at Medanta hospital for the past few days. She passed away late Sunday night.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Assembly Speaker CP Joshi, BJP state president Satish Poonia and other leaders condoled her demise.

"Saddened to know of the untimely demise of BJP leader & Rajasthan MLA Kiran Maheshwari ji. My heartfelt condolences to her family members & supporters in this most difficult time," Gehlot tweeted. — PTI

partment has decided that students of classes 6, 7, 9 and 12 will have classroom teachings on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays of every week while those of classes 8, 10 and 11 will come to school on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays.

The state government said that students of Class 6 and above can attend school, but only after consent from their parents.

The minister also announced that the state government has also allowed the college hostels to re-open from December 15 but only the final year students can come to the hostel.

Pointing out that institutions have been given to

the college principals to clean the hostels which were closed due to Covid19 the minister said that the decision to reopen elementary schools from Nursery standard to Class VI with effect from January 1, 2021 was taken after discussions with the Prathamik Sikshak Sammilani (Primary teachers association).

Most of the farmers have brought at least two trolleys with each tractor with one of them carrying ration and other essentials and the other being used to accommodate the protesters.

Stubble or crop residue, disposal of which otherwise becomes a major challenge for the farmers, is also coming in handy as many have cushioned their trolleys with layers of straw and laid mattresses over it to protect them from the cold.

Night temperatures over the last few days have been settling in the range of around 9 degrees Celsius.

The tractor-trolleys have occupied over a 10-km-long area in this Haryana district which lies along

the Ambala-Delhi national highway. Among the protesters are several men and women, some of them aged over 70 years.

Flags of various farmers' outfits from Punjab and Haryana can be seen fluttering atop the tractors, some of which are fitted with loudspeakers and used by the leaders of peasants' bodies to address the gatherings.

The protesting farmers say they will force the Centre to repeal the anti-farmer laws.

Having gathered here in thousands amid the coronavirus pandemic, they claim adverse conditions do not affect them as they are used to various challenges anyway while working in the fields.

meeting was scheduled to be held at 10 am on Monday.

Leaving his Poes Garden residence at around 9.30 am, Rajinikanth arrived at the venue ahead of time to a cheerful welcome from the fans outside the hall, who hailed him as 'future chief minister', and also showered him with flowers.

Inside the hall, where the chairs were arranged according to Covid-19 protocol with sufficient gaps between them, the actor is said to have listened to the

participants without committing himself to joining politics.

He elicited their views but did not reveal much about his plans.

The actor reviewed the working of the Mandram district branches and gave his opinion on the working of the secretaries.

Only 18 of the secretaries, according to his assessment, had done exceedingly well, while 12 had just done what was told to them and eight had performed below par.

The secretaries had been

entrusted with the tasks of enrolling more members, setting up booth committees and also doing social service in the times of the pandemic.

The secretaries' performance was reportedly assessed based on these parameters.

No one was allowed to take mobile phones inside the meeting hall and the private security of the actor threw a ring around him. He left the hall at around 12.10 pm.

Speaking to the media outside the gates of his residence, he said the district secretaries had assured him that they would abide by his decision, which he had not taken so far.

He would take the decision soon and convey it to them.

However, a pall of gloom descended among the gathering of fans and supporters outside the Kalyana Mandapam.

They had come expecting their matinee idol to make a dramatic announcement on his political entry.

PM to hold 2nd all-party meet on Coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, NOV. 30

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will hold a discussion on the Covid-19 pandemic situation in the country with the floor leaders of all political parties of both Houses of Parliament on Friday.

The parliamentary affairs ministry is coordinating the meeting, which will be held virtually on Friday from 10.30 am. This will be the second all-party meeting called by the government to discuss the Covid-19 situation since the pandemic's outbreak. The first one was held April 20 amid a nationwide lockdown to curb the spread of the virus.

The government is likely to brief parliamentarians about various steps it has taken to deal with the pandemic and may also touch on the advances in vaccine development and distribution.

India till Monday had a total of 91.32 lakh coronavirus cases, of which 38,772 were detected in the past 24 hours. The total deaths due to the virus have crossed 1.37 lakh, out of which 443 fatalities were new.

Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal continue to report a high number of cases. The cases in Delhi have started reducing a bit after the government enforced stringent measures and increased RT-PCR testing.

The Centre has, meanwhile, also asked states/UTs to identify healthcare workers, including doctors, pharmacists as well as MBBS and BDS interns, who will carry out a Covid-19 inoculation drive once a vaccine is available.

In a letter to the states and UTs, the Centre said MBBS and BDS doctors and interns, staff nurses, auxiliary nurse midwives and pharmacists will be considered as potential vaccinators, provided that they are actively involved in day-to-day provision of clinical care and have experience in administering injections.

"Further, the states may also consider retired personnel from these categories that may be utilised to meet the demand for vaccinators," the letter written earlier this month by health ministry additional secretary Vandana Gurnani said.

The health ministry has

BJP MLA DIES AFTER TESTING COVID POSITIVE

Jaipur, Nov. 30: BJP leader and MLA from Rajsamand in Rajasthan Kiran Maheshwari, who had tested positive for Coronavirus, died at a hospital in Gurgaon. She was 59.

Mareshwari, a three-time MLA from Rajasthan, was undergoing treatment at Medanta hospital for the past few days. She passed away late Sunday night.

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Assembly Speaker CP Joshi, BJP state president Satish Poonia and other leaders condoled her demise.

"Saddened to know of the untimely demise of BJP leader & Rajasthan MLA Kiran Maheshwari ji. My heartfelt condolences to her family members & supporters in this most difficult time," Gehlot tweeted. — PTI

The health ministry has

said the recovery rate in the country is good as 45,333 fresh recoveries were recorded in the last 24 hours, ensuring a net reduction of 7,004 active cases.

"The contraction of India's active caseload has ensured India's present active caseload of 4,46,952 consists of just 4.74 per cent of India's total positive cases. The difference in new recoveries outnumbering new cases has also improved the recovery rate to 93.81 per cent today. The total recovered cases stand at 88,47,600. The gap between recovered cases and active cases, that is steadily increasing, stands at 84,00,648 -- 19.8 times active cases," the health ministry said in a statement.

Will Reconsider RLP's Support to NDA: Beniwal

Jaipur, Nov. 30: Nagaur MP Hanuman Beniwal, an alliance partner of NDA, on Monday said he will have to reconsider his party's support to the Centre if the new agricultural reform laws are not withdrawn.

Beniwal appealed to Amit Shah to withdraw the three farm laws immediately.

"RLP is an alliance partner of NDA, but its strength lies in youth and farmers, and if prompt action is not taken in this matter in the interest of farmers, I will have to reconsider on being part of the NDA," he tweeted. — PTI

Long Wait

The superstar refuses to answer big question of whether he would enter politics or not

Rajinikanth's political plans remain a mystery

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR & D. SEKAR | DC
CHENNAI, NOV. 30

Nothing emerged from the closed door meeting that actor Rajinikanth had with around 45 top level functionaries of Rajini Makkal Mandram, including 38 district secretaries, as the super star refused to answer the big question of whether he would enter politics or not.

Following the news of the meeting leaking to the media on Saturday night through a copy of a letter

to the police department seeking protection for the event, the media went berserk with speculations on Rajinikanth's political plans.

Apart from articles in newspapers and discussion on television channels, even social media was agog with posts.

The media hype also gave rise to hope among his supporters, fans and followers. Many of them turned up outside the Raghavendra Kalyana Mandapam in Kodambakkam, where the

meeting was scheduled to be held at 10 am on Monday.

Leaving his Poes Garden residence at around 9.30 am, Rajinikanth arrived at the venue ahead of time to a cheerful welcome from the fans outside the hall, who hailed him as 'future chief minister', and also showered him with flowers.

Inside the hall, where the chairs were arranged according to Covid-19 protocol with sufficient gaps between them, the actor is said to have listened to the

participants without committing himself to joining politics.

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SHORT TAKES

NEPAL INTEGRITY
SAFEGUARD GETS
CHINA THUMBS UP

Beijing, Nov. 30: China's Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe has lauded Nepal's leadership for resolutely pursuing the 'one-China' policy and offered firm support to the Himalayan country in safeguarding its sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity, the defence ministry said here on Monday.

Wei, who is also a State Counsellor, met Nepal PM K P Sharma Oli and exchanged views on matters of mutual interest and held talks with Army chief Gen. Purna Chandra Thapa on ways to resume military cooperation and training impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic during his one-day visit to Nepal on Sunday.

According to a Chinese defence ministry statement, Wei told the Nepalese leaders that China highly appreciates Nepal for resolutely pursuing the 'one-China' policy, and also firmly supports Nepal to safeguard its national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. Under the 'one-China' policy, Beijing emphasises other countries to recognise Taiwan and Tibet as part of China, the statement said.

As China firmed up its ties with Nepal, which shares borders with Tibet, with heavy investments besides loans and financial assistance, Beijing wants Kathmandu to stop the free-flow of Tibetans to travel to Dharamshala in India to meet Tibet's highest spiritual leader the Dalai Lama, the statement said.

EXTRADITION
HEARING FOR
RANA ON FEB. 12

Washington, Nov. 30: A US court has set February 12 as the date of hearing for extradition of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who has been declared a fugitive by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack case. Rana, 59, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was re-arrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

Rana was earlier arrested in October 2009 by US police soon after Headley's arrest at Chicago O'Hare airport. US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chelonian said in her order on November 13 that the Extradition Hearing in this case is scheduled for February 12, 2021, at 10:00 am. Rana has time till December 21 to file his opposition to the request for extradition. The United States Government will have another month's time to file its reply.

In its motion on September 28, the US government supported Rana's extradition to India where he has been charged with the offences of conspiracy to wage war, commit a terrorist act, the waging of war, the commission of murder, and a terrorist act. Rana has argued that the US decision not to extradite his co-conspirator, David Headley, to India is inconsistent and bars his extradition.

FORCES KILL
GHAZNI ATTACK
MASTERMIND

Kabul, Nov. 30: Afghan forces have killed the Taliban mastermind of a suicide car bomb attack that left at least 30 security personnel dead, officials said Monday. Hamza Waziristani was killed in an air strike overnight in the eastern province of Ghazni where the bomber struck an Afghan military base on Sunday.

"The mastermind behind yesterday's terrorist attack on the (Ghazni) base was killed along with seven other terrorists," the defence ministry said in a statement. Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said that Waziristani was a Taliban militant from the Pakistani border region of Waziristan.

The attack was one of the deadliest in months targeting government forces in Afghanistan, where violence has surged since the start of peace talks between President Ashraf Ghani's administration and the Taliban in Qatar. No group has claimed the attack.

The insurgents have launched near daily attacks against Afghan forces, primarily in rural areas, since signing a deal with Washington in February that paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign troops by May 2021.

Health officials in Ghazni said 30 people died in Sunday's attack, but the defence ministry — which is known to downplay tolls in attacks against its forces — said 10 were killed.

China, Pak talk
regional security

Islamabad, Nov. 30: China's Defence Minister Gen. Wei Fenghe on Monday held talks with Pakistan Army chief Gen. Qamar Javed Bajwa and discussed regional security issues and signed an agreement to deepen defence cooperation between the all-weather allies.

"During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and enhanced bilateral defence collaboration were discussed," said the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the media wing of Pakistan's Army, after the meeting between the two generals.

An MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) was also signed for enhancement of defence cooperation between both the Armies," the statement said. The details of the MoU were not shared.

Gen Bajwa thanked Gen Wei for China's unwavering support to Pakistan on all key issues at regional and international forums, saying that the Pakistan Army greatly values the "time-tested and brotherly relations" with China.

● **GEN WEI** acknowledged and appreciated the Pakistan Army's sincere efforts towards maintaining regional peace and providing a secure environment to the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects.

"We have been standing together all along, and our relations will be no different in wake of future challenges," Gen Bajwa said.

Gen Wei acknowledged and appreciated the Pakistan Army's sincere efforts towards maintaining regional peace and providing a secure environment to the \$60 billion China-Pakistan Economic Corridor projects, the ISPR statement said.

Earlier on arrival at GHQ, Gen Wei laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada. The Pakistan Army presented a Guard of Honour to the visiting dignitary.

— PTI

Navalny poisoning
pressure on Russia

The Hague, Nov. 30: Russia came under renewed pressure Monday to explain the nerve agent attack on opposition figure Alexei Navalny as the annual meeting of the global chemical weapons watchdog got underway amid measures aimed at reining in the spread of Covid-19.

Navalny fell ill on August 20 during a domestic flight in Russia, and was flown to Germany for treatment two days later. His allies accused the Kremlin of poisoning its fiercest opponent.

Tests carried out by labs in Germany, France and Sweden and by the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons established that Navalny was exposed to a Soviet-era Novichok nerve agent.

The organisation's director-general, Fernando Arias, told Monday's meeting that according to the Chemical Weapons Convention, "the poisoning of an individual through the

use of a nerve agent is a use of a chemical weapon." A group of 56 nations issued a statement as the start of the annual meeting of the OPCW's member states urging Moscow to disclose "in a swift and transparent manner the circumstances of this chemical weapons attack."

Russia, which denies involvement in Navalny's poisoning, reacted bullishly in its written statement to the conference.

"Instead of trying to look into what had happened, Germany and its allies resorted to megaphone diplomacy, unleashed a mass disinformation campaign against Russia and started to demand some 'independent international investigation' under the auspices of the OPCW," Moscow's statement said.

In October, Moscow asked for OPCW experts to visit Russia to provide "technical assistance" in its investigations.

— AP

Lankan prison riot: Eight inmates killed, 37 hurt

Colombo, Nov. 30: At least eight prisoners were killed and 37 others injured when a riot broke out on Sunday at a prison on the outskirts of Sri Lanka's capital when some inmates tried to force open a door and escape, prompting the authorities to use force, police said on Monday.

Police spokesman Ajith Rohana said inmates created "unrest" at the Mahara prison located about 15 kilometres north of Colombo and prison officials took steps to control the situation. The incident comes as pandemic-related unrest has been growing in Sri Lanka's overcrowded prisons.

Inmates have staged protests in recent weeks in several prisons as the number of confirmed Covid-19 positive cases spiked in the country's overcrowded jails. "The incident was started by a set of remand prisoners when they tried to force open a door and

7 Dec.: New York City will reopen elementary schools and offer in-person classes for special-needs students of all ages despite a recent surge in coronavirus cases

FACTS, FIGURES FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

13,000 face job threat as owner of high-street chains including Topshop, Topman, Dorothy Perkins, Burton, Miss Selfridge, Evans and Wallis, faces collapse despite loan offer

8 billion euros is new stimulus package approved by Italy's government to shore up businesses affected by the latest round of anti-Coronavirus restrictions

escape following which the authorities had to use force," Rohana said. He said during the entire incident at least 37 more, including two jailors, were

injured and all of them were transferred to the nearby Ragama hospital. The residents near the prison said smoke was coming out of the premises

The United States is the world's worst-affected country, with 266,831 Covid-19 deaths

4th wave strikes in Hong Kong, authorities reimpose social distancing measures at some of their strictest levels in the city

First international students have arrived in Australia for the first time since the country shut its borders

due to fire. Prisons authorities said the rioters had set fire to the kitchen and a record room of the prison.

— PTI

Deadly term started trending in Jan. when 1st US deaths, ship outbreaks happened

VIRUS | EFFECT

Merriam-Webster's top '20 word: Pandemic

New York, Nov. 30: If you were to choose a word that rose above most in 2020, which word would it be? Ding, ding, ding: Merriam-Webster on Monday announced "pandemic" as its 2020 word of the year. "That probably isn't a big shock," Peter Sokolowski, editor at large for Merriam-Webster, said.

"Often the big news story has a technical word that's associated with it and in this case, the word pandemic is not just technical but has become general. It's probably the word by

which we'll refer to this period in the future," he said. The word took on urgent specificity in March, when the Coronavirus crisis was designated a pandemic, but it started to trend up on Merriam-Webster.com as early January and again in February when the first US deaths and outbreaks on cruise ships occurred.

On March 11, when the World Health Organisation declared the novel Coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked

hugely. Site interest for the word has remained significantly high through the year, Sokolowski said.

By huge, Sokolowski means searches for pandemic on March 11 were 115,806 per cent higher than lookups experienced on the same date last year. Pandemic, with roots in Latin and Greek, is a combination of "pan," for all, and "demos," for people or population. The latter is the same root of "democracy," Sokolowski noted.

The word pandemic dates to the mid-1600s, used

● **ON MARCH 11**, when the World Health Organisation declared the novel Coronavirus outbreak a global pandemic, lookups on the site for pandemic spiked hugely.

broadly for "universal" and more specifically to disease in a medical text in the 1660s, he said. That was after the plagues of the Middle Ages, Sokolowski said. He attributes the lookup traffic for pandemic not entirely to searchers

Yellen is Biden's Treasury
Secy, Tanden head of OMB

Prez-elect announces economic team members, to introduce them today

Washington, Nov. 30: US President-elect Joe Biden on Monday named Janet Yellen as his Treasury Secretary and Indian-American Neera Tanden as Director of Office of Management and Budget, as he announced key members of his economic team. If confirmed by the US Senate, Yellen, 74, will be the first woman to lead the Treasury Department in its 231-year history, and the first person to have served as Treasury Secretary, Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers, and Chair of the Federal Reserve. She has previously been confirmed by the Senate on four separate occasions. Tanden, 50, if confirmed by the Senate, would be the first woman of colour and first Indian-American to lead the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

Tanden's career has focused on pursuing policies designed to support working families, foster broad-based economic growth, and curb rampant inequality. "Another proud day for Indian Americans to see Neera Tanden be nominated for a Cabinet level position in the next administration. This position at OMB is a wide-ranging role with broad powers to manage trillions of dollars of the US budget. If anyone had any doubts that our community has arrived politically, this election cycle is proof enough," Indiaspora founder M R Rangaswami, and an eminent philanthropist and venture capitalist, said.

Announcing key members of his economic team, Biden also named Wally Adeyemo, as Deputy Secretary of the Treasury; Cecilia Rouse as Chair of the Council of Economic Advisers; and Jared Bernstein and Heather Boushey, as members of the Council of Economic Advisers. Biden would formally introduce his team on Tuesday. This crisis-tested team will help Biden administration lift America out of the current economic downturn and build back better — creating an economy that gives every single person across America a fair shot and an equal chance to get ahead, the transition said.



Neapolitan nativity statuettes artisan Gennaro Di Virgilio shows one of the latest addition to his gallery of figures: President-elect Joe Biden, in his shop in San Gregorio Armeno, Naples, on Monday.

Completed Wisconsin recount
confirms Biden's win over Don

Madison (US), Nov. 30: Wisconsin finished a recount of its presidential results on Sunday, confirming Democrat Joe Biden's victory over President Donald Trump in the key battleground state. Trump vowed to challenge the outcome in court even before the recount concluded.

Dane County was the second and last county to finish its recount, reporting a 45-vote gain for Trump. Milwaukee County, the state's other big and overwhelmingly liberal

county targeted in a recount that Trump paid \$3 million for, reported its results Friday, a 132-vote gain for Biden.

Taken together, the two counties barely budged Biden's winning margin of about 20,600 votes, giving the winner a net gain of 87 votes.

"As we have said, the recount only served to reaffirm Joe Biden's victory in Wisconsin," Danielle Meli, who led Biden's campaign in Wisconsin, said. Trump campaign spokeswo-

man Jenna Ellis said in a statement that the Wisconsin recounts have "revealed serious issues" about whether the ballots were legal, but she offered no specific details to validate her claim.

"As we have said from the very beginning, we want every legal vote, and only legal votes to be counted, and we will continue to uphold our promise to the American people to fight for a free and fair election," Ellis said.

— AP

INAUGURAL COMMITTEE: ALLEN CEO,
VARGHESE IS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Washington, Nov. 30: President-elect Joe Biden is taking the first formal preparations for his January 20 inauguration, unveiling the inaugural committee that will lead arrangements for the day he and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris assume their posts.

Biden is naming Delaware State University president Tony Allen to serve as chief executive officer of his presidential inaugural committee and campaign chief operating officer Maju Varghese as the group's executive director.

— AP

NOVEL CORONAVIRUS MAY ENTER
BRAIN THROUGH NOSE, STUDY SAYS

Berlin, Nov. 30: The novel Coronavirus may enter the brain of people through the nose, according to a study published on Monday that may help explain some of the neurological symptoms observed in Covid-19 patients, and inform diagnosis and measures to prevent infection.

The research, published in the journal *Nature Neuroscience*, noted that SARS-CoV-2 not only affects the respiratory tract but also impacts the central nervous system (CNS), resulting in neurological symptoms such as loss of smell, taste, headache, fatigue and nausea.

Although recent research has described the presence of viral RNA in the brain and cerebrospinal fluid, it remains unclear where the virus enters

and how it is distributed within the brain. The researchers from Charité – Universitätsmedizin, Berlin, Germany examined the nasopharynx — the upper part of the throat that connects to the nasal cavity — a likely first site of viral infection and replication, and the brains of 33 patients — 22 males and 11 females — who died with Covid-19.

The median age at the time of death was 71.6 years, and the time from onset of Covid-19 symptoms to death was a median of 31 days, they said. The researchers said that they found the presence of SARS-CoV-2 RNA, the genetic material of the virus, and protein in the brain and nasopharynx, adding intact virus particles were also detected in the nasopharynx.

— PTI

MASSACRE IN
NIGERIA LEAVES
OVER 100 DEAD

Maiduguri, Nigeria, Nov. 30: At least 110 people were killed in a weekend attack on farm workers in northeast Nigeria blamed on jihadists, the UN humanitarian coordinator in the country said on Sunday, making it the deadliest raid on civilians this year.

The attack, in a state gripped by a jihadist insurgency for more than 10 years, took place the same day as long-delayed local elections in the state.

"I am outraged and horrified by the gruesome attack against civilians carried out by non-state armed groups in villages near Borno State capital Maiduguri," Edward Kallon said in a statement.

"At least 110 civilians were ruthlessly killed and many others were wounded in this attack." Initial tolls indicated 43 and then at least 70 dead from Saturday's massacre. Some locals blamed the attack on Boko Haram fighters, but Bulama Bukarti, an analyst with the Tony Blair Institute, said the rival IS-affiliated Islamic State West Africa Province (ISWAP) were more active in the area.

"ISWAP is the likely culprit," he tweeted. Kallon, in his statement, said: "The incident is the most violent direct attack against innocent civilians this year."

"I call for the perpetrators of this heinous and senseless act to be brought to justice," he added.

One pro-government anti-jihadist militia said the assailants tied up the labourers and slit their throats.

— AFP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,149.72	-0.25
Nifty 50	12,968.95	-0.14
S&P 500*	3,612.84	-0.70
Dollar (₹)	74.03	-0.19
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.84	-0.12
Euro (₹)	88.14	-0.23
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,483.142	0.29
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	47.53	-0.65
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.911	0.039
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.847	0.005

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Penalty for QR code violation waived till March

A CBIC notification has waived the penalty for non-compliance with QR code provisions for B2C invoices generated by businesses for four months till March 31, 2021. Business with a turnover exceeding Rs 500 crore would have to issue B2C invoices with dynamic QR code from April 1, 2021 to avail of this penalty waiver. The rule requiring printing of dynamic QR code on B2C invoices is being implemented from December 1.

Ex-GM executive to head Ola's global electric biz



Ola said it has appointed former General Motors executive Jose Pinheiro, who managed 16 GM industrial complexes in nine countries, as head of global manufacturing and operations for its electric business. In this role, Pinheiro will spearhead Ola's ambitions to build world-class manufacturing facilities, starting with the world's largest scooter factory, and then expanding to multiple such facilities across India.

China's factory output surges to 3-year high

An official gauge of activity in China's manufacturing sector rose faster than expected in November, suggesting the economy's recovery is gathering pace toward the end of the year. The manufacturing purchasing managers' index rose to 52.1 in November from 51.4 in October, data released by the National Bureau of Statistics showed. That was the highest since September 2017 and beat analysts' estimates.

Yotta lays stone for ₹7,000-cr data centre park

Hiranandani Group firm Yotta Infrastructure laid the foundation of a 20-acre Delhi-NCR data centre park in Greater Noida amid the virtual presence of UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath. The firm had earlier announced plans to invest Rs 6,000-Rs 7,000 crore in this facility. The park will consist of six interconnected data centre buildings, which will offer 30,000 racks capacity and require 200 MW of power.

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All-stock deal biggest after Refinitiv's S&P to acquire IHS Markit for \$39 bn

MATTHEW MONKS, ISHIKA MOOKERJEE & VIREN VAGHELA
NOV. 30

S&P Global Inc has agreed to buy IHS Markit Ltd for about \$39 billion in stock, a deal that accelerates the wave of consolidation among Wall Street's biggest data providers.

S&P is offering 0.2838 shares for each IHS Markit share, at about 4.7 per cent premium to IHS Markit's last close. After the deal, S&P shareholders will own about 67.75 per cent of the combined company on a fully diluted basis.

The tie-up of S&P with IHS Markit, a research firm with more than 5,000 analysts, data scientists, financial experts and industry specialists, is part of a race for scale as the industry's largest players try to capitalise on surging demand for data and analytics in increasingly computerised financial markets. This follows London Stock Exchange Group Plc's \$27 billion agreement last year to acquire Refinitiv.

A statement said Douglas Peterson, chief executive officer of S&P, will serve as CEO of the combined company. Lance Uggla, CEO of IHS Markit, will stay on as a special advisor to the company for one year after the deal is closed.

The acquisition has an enterprise value of about \$44 billion, including the assumption of \$4.8 billion in net debt.

"This is a huge consoli-



S&P RETAINS FY21 GROWTH AT -9%

New Delhi, Nov. 30: S&P Global Ratings on Monday retained its forecast of 9 per cent contraction in the Indian economy for the current fiscal, saying though there are now upside risks to growth but it will wait for more signs that Covid infections have stabilised or fallen.

—PTI

dation of financial databases and services," said Gary Dugan, chief executive officer of the Global CIO Office, an investment firm in Singapore. "S&P probably gathered that expansion incrementally wouldn't work and instead has gone for a major acquisition, which will deepen their product range and relevance."

Bloomberg LP, the parent of Bloomberg News, competes with IHS Markit and S&P Global in providing financial analytics and information.

The deal would be the world's second-largest

acquisition of 2020, second only to the \$56 billion set of transactions among China's biggest oil and gas companies to sell their pipeline networks to a new national carrier, according to data compiled by Bloomberg.

Markit was famously founded in a UK barn by Uggla, a Canadian who spotted an opportunity to provide pricing for the opaque world of credit default swaps just as trading of the derivatives was taking off in the early 2000s. Uggla built up the company through a break-neck series of acquisitions, culminating in the 2016 merger with IHS. A 2014 IPO of Markit valued it at about \$4.5 billion.

Regulatory scrutiny could pose one risk for the tie-up, given the overlap between the firms' data offerings, according to Craig A. Huber, founder of Huber Research Partners. The LSE is still negotiating with EU regulators over its deal for Refinitiv, with competition authorities expressing concerns over how some companies' control of data can make them gatekeepers for an industry.

—Bloomberg

Trump to add SMIC, CNOOC to defence blacklist

ALEXANDRA ALPER, HUMEYRA PAMUK
WASHINGTON, NOV. 30

The Trump administration is poised to add China's top chipmaker SMIC and national offshore oil and gas producer CNOOC to a blacklist of alleged Chinese military companies, according to a document and sources, curbing their access to US investors and escalating tensions with Beijing weeks before President-elect Joe Biden takes office.

Reuters reported earlier this month that the Department of Defense (DOD) was planning to designate four more Chinese companies as owned or controlled by the Chinese military, bringing the number of Chinese companies affected to 35. A recent executive order issued by President Donald Trump would prevent US investors from buying securities of the listed firms starting late next year.

It was not immediately clear when the new tranche, would be published in the Federal Register. But the list comprises China Construction Technology Co Ltd and China International Engineering Consulting Corp, in addition to Semi-conductor Manufacturing International Corp (SMIC) and China National Offshore Oil Corp (CNOOC), according to the document and three sources.

—Reuters

Upward revision in growth to force rate pause this time

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, NOV. 30

Early economic recovery amidst stubbornly high inflation may make the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to keep interest rates on hold on Friday while continuing with an accommodative monetary policy stance. Economists have ruled out a rate cut for the remaining part of the fiscal and expect the central bank to revise up the GDP and inflation numbers for the rest of the year.

The six-member rate setting panel headed by RBI governor is scheduled to meet for two days starting December 2, and the resolution of which would be announced on December 4. This is the fourth bi-monthly monetary policy for the current financial year and the second meet under the newly formed MPC.

The country's economic growth outturn so far has evolved much stronger than the RBI projections (of -9.8 per cent year-on-year in Q3 and -5.6 per cent in Q4). The GDP growth rate was (-) 7.5 per cent in Q2 FY21, a notable improvement from the (-) 24 per cent fall in Q1 FY21, suggesting that the resumption of economic activity has been gathering pace. Economic growth was however sharply lower than the 4.4 per cent growth in Q2 FY20, being in the negative zone. The gains in the domestic economy in Q2 FY21 was powered by the manufacturing, electricity, and agriculture sectors, all of which witnessed positive growth rates.



On the other hand, inflation has also surprised on the upside, remaining above the upper tolerance level of 6 per cent every month (barring March 20) this year, accompanied by sticky core inflation. Food added the most to the headline, however, it was not the only source of price pressures. Inflation was high mainly due to supply-side factors, such as unseasonal rains (resulting in high prices for vegetables and pulses), labour shortages, higher services prices, higher oil, and higher taxes. Retail inflation rose to a nine-month high of 7.6 per cent in October 2020, supported by a sustained broad-based increase across the various segments of the Consumer Price Index. Core inflation (excluding food and fuel) for October stood at 5.7 per cent, which was the highest level in two years and 16 basis points higher than month ago.

"In light of this upside surprise, we expect the RBI to revise up its inflation projection by more than one percentage point to 5.5-6.9 per cent in H2 FY21 (from 4.5-5.4 per cent) and a new H1 FY22

forecast of 4.2-4.8 per cent. In view of these upward revisions, the MPC is likely to vote unanimously to remain in wait-and-see mode. Despite the growth recovery, we expect the RBI to adopt a cautious tone, flagging uncertainty about the resilience of demand after the festive season and downside risks due to rising infection cases in developed economies and parts of India," said Sonal Varma chief India economist at Nomura Holdings.

"We now expect the RBI to stay on hold through 2021 (vs our previous forecast of a 50 bp cut), as inflation has remained stubbornly high, closing the window for policy easing...we expect the RBI to revise upwards both its growth and inflation projections, but retain the dovish forward guidance," added Varma.

"Rates are likely to be on hold in rest of FY21. We expect the RBI MPC to stay focused on anchoring rates through reiteration of strong forward guidance and path ahead for open market operations, including for state developmental loans," said DBS India.

IIT Madras sees growth in pre-placement offers

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 30

Notwithstanding the pandemic impact, Indian Institute of Technology Madras continued to see a growth in pre-placement offers this year.

Ahead of phase-1 of campus placements starting on December 1, as many as 182 pre-placement offers were received by IIT Madras students this academic year compared to 170 offers last year. IIT-M students have been witnessing a rising trend in pre-placement offers for the past few years. The pandemic did not disturb that.

In 2017-18, the institute saw PPOs almost doubling to 114 against 73 in the previous year. In 2018-19, it further grew to 135.

Information Technology accounted for 46 per cent of PPOs, core sectors and R&D, 29 per cent, analytics, consulting and finance, 19 per cent and FMCG, 6 per cent.

Texas Instruments, Microsoft, Qualcomm, Goldman Sachs and

American Express are some of the key companies that offered higher numbers of PPOs.

According to IIT Madras, a major factor behind the rise in PPOs is the internship programme, which was conducted completely online this year, for the first time in its history, to overcome the logistical restrictions.

"We have been observing a direct correlation between internships and pre-placement offers ever since the internship office was created. Internships provide an excellent opportunity for students to understand the working culture and expectations of the companies that they work for and for the companies to realise the potential of our students during that short period. When interests and expectations of interns and companies match, it culminates in pre-placement offers," said N.V. Ravi Kumar, advisor (internships), IIT Madras.

As many as 93 companies had provided 415 offers for internships this year.

A new bond route opens for polluting firms

TOM FREKE
NOV. 30

The next thing in green investing is a new kind of debt designed to help fund the trillions of dollars needed to wean the world from carbon.

Transition bonds are being developed for fossil-fuel companies and other heavy corporate emitters, which have largely been shut out of a booming green market. So-called brown industries would have to use proceeds from the sales to fund their clean-energy transformation.

Next year "will be a ramp-

up phase for transition instruments," said Marisa Drew, Credit Suisse Group AG's chief sustainability officer. "We'll have some experimental issuers take the market and then we'll see many investors lining up."

The UN estimates the cost to decarbonise the world will be \$35 trillion, and capital markets will have to play a role. Corporations such as Citigroup Inc and Verizon Communications Inc and governments from Chile to Sweden raised a record \$235 billion this year in green bonds, used to fund environmentally friendly

projects.

Such financing is likely to get another boost next year from the European Union's plans to start green bonds and from US President-elect Joe Biden's prioritisation of climate policies. The coronavirus pandemic is also spurring an explosion in social bonds to fund projects that benefit society as a whole.

Behind the scenes, bankers and investors are now writing rules for transition finance.

Heavy polluters are facing the threat of tougher rules, as countries try to meet long-term emissions targets. Many banks and

investors are planning to cut financing for laggards, likely raising their cost of capital.

Transition bonds aim to provide a solution by tying funds to strict targets, aligning borrowers' interests with wider policies such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals and the Paris Agreement on climate change.

Only a handful of companies have so far sold transition bonds, given the lack of consensus on what they should be. One of the first was from a Brazilian beef producer, Marfrig Global Foods, which said proceeds from the \$500 million bond

would be used to buy cattle from ranchers in the Amazon who comply with non-deforestation and other sustainable criteria.

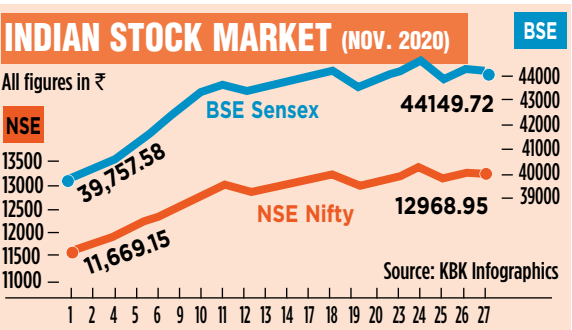
Other deals include a 500 million-euro (\$595 mn) bond from Italian gas pipeline operator Snam SpA. Total, France's largest oil company, announced plans last month to sell a "very large" transition bond. LafargeHolcim raised 850 million euros of sustainability-linked bonds earlier this month that will pay a 0.75 per cent higher interest rate if the company misses a carbon-emissions target.

—Bloomberg

Equity investors take stock of best month ever

London, Nov. 30: World shares paused on Monday to assess a record-breaking month as the prospect of a vaccine-driven economic recovery next year and yet more free money from central banks eclipsed immediate concerns about the coronavirus pandemic.

At the same time, oil, industrial commodities and other risk assets have surged, with emerging-market currencies posting their largest gains in almost two years, while safe-havens such as the



dollar and gold slipped. "It has been a very, very strong month for mar-

kets'," said Rabobank's head of macro strategy, Elwin de Groot.

GREEN | FUTURE

New rules require more responsible sourcing of raw materials

EU seeks tougher standards for batteries

EWA KRUKOWSKA
NOV. 30

Europe plans to impose stricter environmental requirements for batteries as it begins a radical economic overhaul set to boost electric vehicles and clean energy.

The European Union will aim at setting a global standard in the fast-growing market when it proposes next month regulations to ensure all batteries marketed in the region are greener throughout their life cycle.

"In our assessment, the EU will become the second-biggest global market for batteries," EU environment commissioner

Virginijus Sinkevicius said in an interview. "The number of batteries placed on the EU market and their importance will only grow in the coming years. Their sustainability should not lag behind."

The EU has already invested billions in its Battery Alliance project to compete with Asia, currently Europe's only provider of EV batteries. The region's battery market value will reach 250 billion euros (\$300 billion) by 2025, with production capacity able to meet auto industry demand, according to European Commission estimated.

Germany and France, home to major car makers,

giant companies like BASF SE and carmakers BMW AG and PSA Group.

To make batteries greener, the EU will require more responsible sourcing of raw materials, using clean energy in production, cutting the share of hazardous substances, boosting energy efficiency and improving their durability, according to Sinkevicius. The new rules will affect batteries manufactured in the 27-nation bloc and brought from abroad, he said.

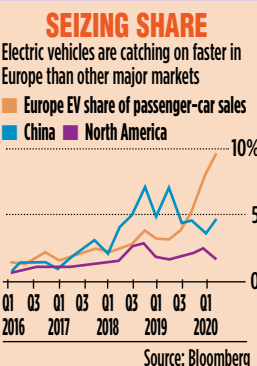
"The new framework should apply to all types of batteries and all kinds of battery chemistry, whether sold apart or contained in products," Sinkevicius

said. "It will ensure that various battery types are subject to similar but differentiated obligations."

The increasingly electric future of the region is part of the Green Deal. To meet its goal of zeroing-out greenhouse gases by 2050, the EU needs to cut emissions from transport by 90 per cent.

Europe's growing EV market is starting to lure battery makers. China's SVolt Energy Technology Co said this month it will join Contemporary Amperex Technology Ltd in opening a factory in Germany, while Tesla supplier Panasonic Corp may start up a battery business in Norway.

—Bloomberg



E-com to push warehousing, data centre demand in 2021



SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, NOV. 30

Warehousing and data centre demand driven by e-commerce will keep commercial realty market stable in 2021. Co-working segment will support the demand for office leasing space.

Despite the ongoing pandemic, the warehousing sector is expected to remain comparatively less impacted due to rising e-commerce demand, which is expected to grow from \$70 billion in FY19 to an estimated \$160 billion by 2022, finds Knight Frank.

"Logistics and warehousing have shown resilience in the primary and secondary markets. As India at a steady pace adopts the new normal for various businesses, the sentiments of stakeholders and investors are moving in a positive direction across key cities," said Shishir Bajjal, chairman and managing director at Knight Frank India.

SHORT TAKES

NorthEast United frustrate FC Goa

Goa: NorthEast United extended their unbeaten run to three games after frustrating FC Goa in a 1-1 draw in their Indian Super League Season 7 encounter at the Fatorda Stadium on Monday. Goa are yet to record three points this season. Idrissa Sylla (40') scored the opening goal before Igor Angulo (43') equalised just before the break. Brandon Fernandes was handed his first start of the season along with Albanbha Kuper Dohling as Goa boss Juan Ferrando made three changes to the side which had suffered a defeat to Mumbai City FC. Jorge Ortiz Mendoza started with James Donachie benched. NorthEast made as many as five changes to the side which came from behind to hold Kerala in a thrilling 2-2 draw. — *Agencies*

4 Olympic-bound boxers in TOPS

New Delhi: Four Olympic-bound Indian boxers — two men and as many women — have been included in the sports ministry's Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), the Sports Authority of India said on Monday. World bronze-medallist Simranjeet Kaur (60kg), Asian medallist Pooja Rani (75kg) joined M.C. Mary Kom in the elite group. Asian silver-winner Ashish Kumar (75kg) and Asian Games bronze-winner Satish Kumar (+91kg) have been included in a group which already featured Amit Panghal (52kg), Manish Kaushik (63kg), and Vikas Krishan (69kg) among the Tokyo-bound. Lovlina Borgohain and Kavinder Singh Bisht are also part of the core group. "Nikhat Zareen (51kg), Sonia Chahal (57kg) and Shiva Thapa (63kg) were moved to the TOPS developmental group from the Core Group," the SAI said. — *PTI*

Clash of heads as Wolves win

London: The sound of the thud from a clash of heads just added to concern. The game was only five minutes old when Wolverhampton forward Raul Jimenez and Arsenal defender David Luiz collided while jumping for the ball. Concerns grew as Jimenez appeared motionless and was eventually wheeled off the field with an oxygen mask on. "I knew straight away that something was wrong," Wolves manager Nuno Espirito Santo said. "Everyone called 'red, red,' which means it's a bad situation. You see the panic in their eyes."

By the time the game ended with Wolves beating Arsenal 2-1 there was a more encouraging update from the hospital with Jimenez said to be conscious and talking. — *AP*

Liverpool, Man U look to advance

Washington: Chelsea and Manchester City are already through to the Champions League knockout phase with two games to spare. Now it's the turn of Manchester United and Liverpool off the back of a challenging weekend in the Premier League. Liverpool on Tuesday host Ajax, with a two-point advantage on the Dutch club in Group D, with a packed program, fixture scheduling and James Milner adding to the injury headaches. The 2019 European champions were stunned at home last week with a home loss to Atalanta. The visit of Ajax come a day too soon for the return of up to 2,000 fans being allowed at Anfield. — *AP*

Live on TV

CRICKET

Lanka Premier League: Colombo vs Dambulla from 3 pm; Jaffna vs Kandy from 7.30 pm on Sony Six

South Africa vs England: Third T20 from 9.30 pm on Star Sports 1, HD

FOOTBALL

Indian Super League: Mumbai City vs East Bengal from 7.20 pm on Star Sports 2, 3

Champions League: Shakhtar Donetsk vs Real Madrid from 11.25 pm on Sony Ten 2; Monchengladbach vs Inter Milan; Atletico Madrid vs Bayern Munich; Liverpool vs Ajax; Porto vs Manchester City from 1.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1, 2, 3 and Six

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WARNING BELL

Setback for Oz as injured David out of ODI, T20 series

Sydney, Nov. 30: Star opening batsman David Warner faces a battle to be fit for the India Test series after Cricket Australia said Monday he will miss the last one-day international and the three-match Twenty20 series next month.

Warner limped out of Sunday's one-day international against India after straining his groin while fielding as Australia secured the series 2-0 in Sydney.

After a typically swash-buckling innings of 83 on Sunday, Warner fell awkwardly and had to be helped from the field.

Warner will miss Wednesday's final ODI and all three Twenty20 internationals beginning Friday in Canberra to undergo rehab in an effort to ready for the Test series which begins on December 17 in Adelaide.

Opening batsman D'Arcy Short has been called up to the Twenty20 international squad as a replacement.

Cricket Australia also announced that leading pace bowler Pat Cummins will be rested for the remainder of the white-ball matches against India, putting pressure on an out-of-form Mitchell Starc.

"Pat and Davie are critical to our plans for the Test Series," head coach Justin Langer said.

"Davie will work through his injury rehab and in Pat's case it is important all of our players are managed well to keep them mentally and physically fit throughout what is a challenging summer."

"The priority for both is being fully prepared for one of the biggest and most important home Test Series we have played in recent years, especially with World Test Championship points up for grabs."

Left-hander Short plays cricket for Western Australia and was the Twenty20 Big Bash League's leading run-scorer in 2017-18 and 2018-19.

No replacement has been announced for Cummins, with Australia to rely on Josh Hazlewood, Starc and allrounder Marcus Stoinis to provide the main seam bowling options. — *AFP*



Australia's David Warner (centre) is assisted from the Sydney Cricket Ground after injuring himself while fielding during the second one-day international match against India in Sydney on Sunday. — *AP*

Marnus feels Oz have advantage

Sydney, Nov. 30: Australia's rising star Marnus Labuschagne believes that the home team will enjoy a slight advantage going into the Test series against India as most of their top-order players will be coming in after having played a fair amount of first-class cricket.

Labuschagne, who contributed a solid 70 off 61 balls in the second ODI which Australia won by 51 runs on Sunday, has scored two hundreds in three Sheffield Shield matches.

"It definitely helps to have a few games under your belt just to get the pace and the timing of the game from T20s to one-dayers to four-day cricket," he replied to a query from PTI during a virtual media interaction

SMITH SCORED 2ND TON DESPITE ACUTE VERTIGO

Sydney, Nov. 30: Top Australian batsman Steve Smith has revealed that he suffered a "bad dose of vertigo" ahead of the second one-dayer against India and was not sure of playing the game in which he struck a series-clinching hundred.

"I didn't know I was playing today. I had a really bad dose of vertigo this morning and I was struggling until ... I came down early to have a hit and a bit of a run around," Smith told *cricket.com.au* after receiving his second successive Man of the match award.

Smith said it was team doctor Leigh Golding, who relieved him of the symptoms by performing Epley maneuver which involves a series of head movements used to treat benign paroxysmal positional vertigo (BPPV), a condition caused by a problem in the inner ear. — *PTI*

facilitated by series' official broadcaster Sony.

The Indian players, who

had played IPL and now ODIs, last played red-ball cricket in New Zealand

and will only have two three-day games to get into the groove.

"But a lot of these (Indian) players we're talking about, they've been doing it for a long time, they're not new to the changes of format. I'd be surprised if they didn't shift back into gear very quickly."

"I will say that it's a slight advantage, four out of our top six have been playing Shield cricket and got that rhythm as a batting group."

With David Warner ruled out of the last ODI as well as the upcoming T20 series, Labuschagne won't mind a chance to open the innings if he is asked about it. "Certainly, if I got asked to open the batting absolutely. It's an opportunity that I would enjoy taking." — *PTI*

KIWIS POCKET SERIES AS 3RD T20 CALLED OFF

Mount Maunganui (New Zealand), Nov. 30: New Zealand on Monday claimed the T20 series against the West Indies 2-0 after the third and final match of the rubber was washed out here.

Persistent rain played spoilsport to left-arm spinner Mitchell Santner's debut as New Zealand's T20I captain and the final match of the series was called off after just 2.2 overs.

The Kiwis were without Tim Southee, Ross Taylor and Kyle Jamieson, who had been given a break for the third game and were replaced by Daryl Mitchell, Scott Kugelejin and Hamish Bennett.

Sent into bat, West Indies were off to a brisk start with openers Andre Fletcher and Brandon King scoring 12 runs off the first over. — *AFP*

World Cup hero Diop dies at 42

Washington, Nov. 30: Papa Bouba Diop, the tall Senegal midfielder who scored the goal that delivered one of the greatest upsets in World Cup history, has died. He was 42.

"FIFA is saddened to learn of the passing of Senegal legend Papa Bouba Diop," the sport's governing body said on Sunday.

Diop was the hero when Senegal shocked defending champion France 1-0 in the opening game of the 2002 World Cup in Japan and South Korea. It was Senegal's World Cup debut and the win sent the West Africans on a run to the quarterfinals to match the best performance at the tournament by an African team. "Once a World Cup hero, always a World Cup hero," FIFA said in its tribute on Twitter.

Diop was first called up to play for his country at the

● **Papa Bouba Diop was first called up to play for Senegal at the age of 21 and made more than 60 appearances for his country between 2001 and 2008.**

age of 21 and made more than 60 appearances for Senegal from 2001-08.

He played club football in Switzerland, France and Greece and for four teams in England — Fulham, Portsmouth, West Ham and Birmingham.

Diop was 6-foot-5 and nicknamed "Wardrobe" because of his commanding presence. He was loved in Senegal because of that goal against the French, the former colonisers of Senegal, but also for his likeable personality off the field along with his skill on it. — *AP*



Maradona's doc under scanner

Buenos Aires, Nov. 30: Diego Maradona's surgeon responded to the launch of an investigation for involuntary manslaughter by saying he "everything he could, up to the impossible" for an "unmanageable" patient.

Earlier in the day prosecutors in San Isidro, near Buenos Aires, said they were investigating Leopoldo Luque while Argentine television showed police raiding the doctor's surgery and home.

The probe was triggered by concerns raised by Maradona's daughters Dalma, Gianinna and Jana over the treatment he received for his heart condition at his home, judicial sources said.

Maradona was buried on Thursday at the Jardin de Paz cemetery on the outskirts of the Argentine capital.

"Our investigations are ongoing, we are talking to witnesses including members of the family" of Maradona, a source close to the San Isidro inquiry said.

"The clinic had recommended that he go elsewhere to be hospitalised, but the family decided otherwise. His daughters signed for him to be discharged from the hospital," said a family member.

Later in the day, Luque gave an emotional televised news conference. "You want to know what I am responsible for?" the 39-year-old doctor asked

NAPOLI WIN BIG IN A TRIBUTE TIE TO MARADONA

Milan, Nov. 30: Napoli beat Roma 4-0 in an emotional match in the Italian league as the team paid tribute to Diego Maradona.

It was Napoli's first Serie 'A' game since Maradona died. Maradona led Napoli to their only two Serie 'A' titles in 1987 and 1990 and is considered a god-like figure in Naples. "Certainly we played with extra motivation. Today we wanted even more than normal to get a result, for Diego, for our city which is suffering this loss. We dedicate the victory to him," Napoli captain Lorenzo Insigne said.

The win saw Napoli move level with Roma and Juventus, six points below leader AC Milan on points table. — *AP*

between sobs. "For having loved him, for having taken care of him, for having extended his life, for having improved it to the end."

Luque said he did "everything he could, up to the impossible" and considered himself a "friend" of Maradona and saw him "as a father, not as a patient". — *AFP*

New Innings



Andhra Ranji Trophy cricketer D. Naren Reddy is all smiles as he poses with his childhood coach G. Kiran Reddy (left) of the Sarojini Cricket and Fitness Academy at his wedding reception in Hyderabad on Sunday. Naren married Harika Reddy in Siddipet on Friday.

Grosjean to miss next race after fiery crash



A steward reacts as officials put out a fire on Haas F1 driver Romain Grosjean's car following a crash during the Bahrain Grand Prix in Sakhir on Sunday. — *AFP*

Sakhir (Bahrain), Nov. 30: French driver Romain Grosjean will sit out next weekend's Formula One race after escaping a fiery high-speed crash in the Bahrain Grand Prix with just burns to his hands, his team Haas said on Monday.

Grosjean walked away from the wreckage after he collided with Daniil Kyvat's Alpha Tauri on the first lap of Sunday's race, causing the Haas car to split in half and burst into flames as it smashed through the safety barriers at 225kph.

Haas said treatment for the burns that 34-year-old

Grosjean suffered was "going well" and he was expected to be discharged from hospital on Tuesday.

Grosjean escaped alive thanks to the integrity of his car's survival cell, his 'halo' device, which deflected the ruptured Armco metal barriers away from his head, his own presence of mind in remaining calm as he extricated himself and the rapid skilled assistance of F1's medical staff and track marshals.

"Hello everyone, I just wanted to say I'm okay, well, sort of okay," the Frenchman said in an Instagram post. — *AFP*