

SHORT TAKES

WOMAN DIES OF
CARDIAC ARREST
AT E-SEVADC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

A 50-year-old woman suffered cardiac arrest and died while she was standing in a queue at an E-Seva centre at Tolichowki to collect the flood relief money on Wednesday.

The deceased, identified as Munawar Unisa, 50, a resident of Golconda, was there to apply for the interim relief of ₹10,000 extended to flood victims by the state government when she suffered the stroke, said the police. "She collapsed while standing in the queue and was rushed to a nearby hospital by the locals present there. Duty doctors at the hospital pronounced her dead. No case has been registered as the kin of the deceased did not file a complaint with us," said K. Chandra Shekar, police inspector of Golconda.

Meanwhile, The state government on Wednesday said that since Monday, as many as 2.86 lakh families affected by the October floods submitted their applications at various Mee Seva centres and of these, 1.78 lakh were found eligible to receive the ₹10,000 flood relief. The government has deposited ₹178 crore into the bank accounts of the 1.78 lakh families, it said. Other applications, it said, were being scrutinized. The process of receiving applications and disbursement of relief will resume after the GHMC polls, government said. Earlier, between October 20 and November 1, when ₹10,000 was distributed in cash, government said it gave ₹486 crore

BJP CONSPIRING
TO SELL PUBLIC
SECTOR FIRMS

From page 1

He alleged that the BJP is conspiring to give away several public sector undertakings including NTPC, BHEL, BSNL, BPCL and LIC to corporate houses in guise of disinvestment. He said the BJP government has disinvested in 23 PSUs in its rule so far.

He questioned the Central government about the necessity in privatising Life Insurance Corporation, which is one of the premier organisations of this nation.

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the first prime minister of the country, had set up several public sector companies with a futuristic view, but the BJP government led by Atal Bihari Vajpayee had started disinvestment and handed over several premier companies to the corporates. Rao said that employees of PSUs already announced the war against the disinvestment and as the Congress became hapless in fighting against the ruling BJP now it is time for other opposition parties to agitate against anti policies of the BJP.

He urged the employees of LIC, Railways, NTPC, BHEL, BSNL and BPCL to join hands with the TRS to launch a movement against the Central government, and assured them that the TRS would stand behind them for their fight for right. Stating that a different trend is going on in the present politics, the TRS president alleged that BJP transformed the social media as an anti-social media and launched a new trend in politics by spreading misinformation to the people repeatedly so that they believe it is a fact.

The Chief Minister said the time has come to fight against the BJP's anti-people policies.

SEC okays more star
campaigners for
GHMC electionsMADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

The State Election Commission (SEC) has increased the number of star campaigners from five to 10 for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections. This comes in the wake of pleas by political parties seeking the SEC to increase the number of star campaigners for the ensuing elections. According to the SEC's revised order, the Election Commission can permit/accord star campaigner status to 10 persons for recognised political parties registered with the TSEC and five persons in case of registered parties that are without reserved symbol. The parties should submit the list of star campaigners along with their bio-data and also a copy of the individual's identity card (one of those notified by the SEC for the purpose of identification of voters) to the GHMC commissioner and election authority marking a copy to SEC within three days of issuance of election notification.

The GHMC commissioner and election authority are authorised to issue vehicle permission to the star campaigners fur-

THE PERMIT may be issued in the format annexed to the notification on a square-shaped sticker with suitable adhesive. An attested copy of the permit shall be prominently displayed on the windscreen of the vehicle and the original be kept by the person for checking by police or any other authorities.

nished by the political parties. The permission will be given in the name of the star campaigners and the registration number of the vehicle and the period for which the permit is issued and area of operation.

The permit may be issued in the format annexed to the notification on a square-shaped sticker with suitable adhesive. An attested copy of the permit shall be prominently displayed on the windscreen of the vehicle and the original be kept by the person for checking by police or any other authorities.

Surveillance teams should also be informed about such vehicle permissions issued to the star campaigners of a political party for the purpose of accounting of expenditure either on

behalf of the party or the contestant. Travel expenditure of the star campaigners will be borne by the concerned political party.

In the event of a public rally or meeting by the star campaigner, if the candidate or his election agent shares the dais with the star campaigner/other dignitary, then the entire expenditure of that particular rally other than the travel expenses of the star campaigner should be added to the candidate's expenses.

If the candidate is not present on the dais but the banners/posters with the name of the candidate or photographs of the candidate are displayed at the site of public rally or the name of the candidate is mentioned by the dignitary/star campaigner, then also the entire expenditure on the public rally, other than the travel expenses of the star campaigner, will be added to the candidate's account of election expenses.

If there is more than one candidate/election agent, sharing the dais or displaying banners or posters with their names in rally/meeting, then the expenses on such a rally/meeting should be equally divided among all such candidates.

Vox populi: Voters have tasks
cut out for new GHMC Council

MAKE ROADS SAFE



some roads in the city, or even an extended U-turn, these should be promptly publicised to ease road travel. The GHMC must be and vigilant about road safety.

— BHAGYASHREE TARKE,
Artist
Narayanguda

SETTLE JAWAHARNAGAR ISSUE



suffering as garbage vehicles continue to go every night and there is no one willing to opt for alternative. Similarly, Kapra lake restoration and sewage connection of colonies is pending. These works have started but there is a tremendous delay, creating more problems. The GHMC need to pay more attention to this.

— VENKATA SUBBA RAO,
Dammaiguda

BALKAMPET HAS TO BE ILLUMINATED



There is an urgent need to immediately raise awareness about keeping our city clean. It is not only the responsibility of the GHMC but each and every individual. Non-availability of street lights in every part of the city for the safety of general public is the second concern I have. While there are a lot of potholes which are never repaired especially the Balkampet bridge needs more serious attention. Many sewage manholes do not have lids creating problems for two-wheelers in the absence of street lights or during heavy downpours. Installing street lights in every part of the city is mandatory, so that my city always remains illuminated and bright.

— AARTI SREENATH,
Graduate student
Old Bowenpally

REGULAR WATER SUPPLY AT RED HILLS

The major problem in Red Hills division is a disturbance in the water supply and poor drainage system. We expect that the next corporator to focus on water supply and maintenance of roads. In our area water supply is frequently disrupted and many a time without any intimation. When we approach the authorities, they tell us that there is a pressure problem and the water is not reaching the filter beds. Another major problem is overflowing of drainage. The majority of drainage problems is usually caused by inadequate slope which prevents water to flow smoothly from the houses. I also expect our future corporator to develop playgrounds and parks.

— SYED SADIQ ALI,
Private company employee



People stand in queue to submit their applications to receive ₹10,000 as compensation for damages caused due to the recent floods, at Sikh road on Wednesday. However, the distribution was stopped on SEC orders. — GANDHI

No flood relief funds from Centre
despite plea, says Chief Minister

From page 1

The TRS chief said a debate needs to be initiated among people on this during the GHMC polls.

He instructed the party members to reach out to every household and explain to them about the welfare and development activities taken up by the state government in Greater Hyderabad. He also told them to expose the obstructive politics of opposition parties, especially the double standards of state BJP leaders.

Ridiculing the claims of BJP leaders on the Cent-

re's assistance to the state government for the flood relief in Hyderabad, Chandrashekar Rao said that the BJP-led Central government did not release a paisa towards flood relief despite the requests from the state government. "They would not release funds towards the flood relief. Instead, they had resorted to obstructive politics by writing letters to the Election Commission, asking it to stop the financial assistance being extended to the flood-affected families in GHMC and surrounding municipalities." He

alleged that BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar has complained to the Election Commission against the flood relief assistance of ₹10,000 being given to each of the affected families by the state government. The CM, however, reiterated his resolve to extend financial assistance to all the eligible flood-affected families after the poll results are declared.

Stating that the TRS government had spent about ₹67,000 crore for development activities in Hyderabad over the past six years, he explained that the several flyovers

underpasses over bridges were constructed in the city to overcome the traffic problem. The Chief Minister said the government had regularised houses constructed by the poor through GO 53, and has been serving meals to the poor for just ₹5.

He said several international companies looking in Hyderabad and Amazon alone had invested ₹21,000 crores in Hyderabad. He announced the names of the party in-charges for all 150 divisions and handed over the division-wise voters list as well as TRS activists list to them.

CM's flood relief move hits
SEC block; angers victimsSANJAY SAMUEL PAUL
AND BALU PULIPAKA
| DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

Anger, frustration, heartburn and disappointment marked the day for thousands of people who on Wednesday lined up in front of the Mee Seva centres in the city to submit their applications for the ₹10,000 relief promised by the state government to the October flood victims in GHMC areas.

The announcement that the State Election Commission (SEC) put a stop to the disbursement of the relief did not go down well with those standing in long lines of hundreds of people hoping to get their applications into the government system.

It was evident that the programme, initiated by Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, was designed to provide immediate and much-needed assistance to the lakhs of families affected by the unprecedented floods, began well but soon appeared to lose its way. Allegations piled up from flood victims as well as other political parties that ground level politicians of the TRS were pocketing much of the money.

Following the outcry over the manner in which the relief was distributed in cash, the government modified the programme and asked the victims to apply online at Mee Seva centres with a promise that the relief would be deposited into their bank accounts.

STATE POLL PANEL CHIEF SAYS FLOOD
AID CAN BE DISTRIBUTED AFTER POLLSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18.

The State Election Commission on Wednesday instructed the state government to immediately stop disbursement of the ₹10,000 relief to families affected by the October floods in the GHMC limits.

The SEC said this activity runs against the Model Code of Conduct for elections.

The government, the SEC said, can resume this activity after the completion of the election process to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Council, it said.

The rush was such at Mee Seva centres even in Road Transport Authority offices, which cater to vehicle owners and licence seekers to pay their fees, were also besieged by flood victims in their hundreds bringing all other operations to a halt. Meanwhile, angry flood victims staged a rasta roko on the Nacharam-Mallapur main road after the announcement that their applications will no longer be accepted with their protest resulting in long traffic jams on the busy road. Police forces were called in at several centres to control the crowds and all hell broke loose when the centres started shutting down citing the SEC announcement late in the morning. At the Mee-Seva centre in Domalguda, women standing the lines since early morning, were chased away from the spot.

At the Moghalpura Mee Seva centre, many aged women, angry at being shut out from the promised

relief, began shouting that anyone who comes to ask for a vote in the GHMC elections, will be beaten by their slippers if they enter their localities. Such was the anger against the government that 'TRS down down', 'KCR down down' slogans rent the air at several centres.

Sunanda Bai, a resident of Domalguda, who was standing in a Mee Seva queue for the past three days, was finally chased out by the police before reaching the main counter to submit her application. She said, "I lost my husband a month ago, in spite of all my other troubles, I was standing in the queue. This is the third day I was in the queue. Now they tell me that they have stopped it till the elections are over."

Santha Venket, a resident of Arvindnagar, near Ashoknagar, said, "My husband sells onions on a cart. Our stock of four bags of onions drowned in the flood. We are in debt."

POLL | PROMISES

Durgam Cheruvu to be one of the stars of the campaign

TRS to campaign on road development

From Page 1

The TRS is planning to campaign about road development through the Strategic Road Development Plan (SRDP), and also showcase development in IT corridors. The other campaign focus areas are to be the stable electricity supply, launch and successful operations of Metro Rail, development of public parks, property tax rebates, enhancement of wages for sanitation workers, among several other initiatives.

The recently inaugurated cable-stayed bridge at Durgam Cheruvu is expected to be one of the stars of the TRS campaign.

However, the flagship programme of double bedroom housing project for urban poor is not expected to figure

very prominently with charges that the state government could not keep its promise on this front, and in some cases, could not even identify the beneficiaries.

Indications of the TRS' unique strategy of leaning towards secular development as its strength, have been there for some time now.

In one surprise move to overcome any possible image as a party indulging in minorities' appeasement, the TRS has decided to contest in all 150 GHMC wards. To confuse both the Congress and the BJP, TRS party chief K. Chandrashekar Rao had recently invited Hyderabad MP and AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi to his residence and clarified that the pink party will contest in all

150 divisions would not extend any support to the AIMIM unlike during the 2016 GHMC polls.

According to party sources, the TRS has asked its workers not to visit any religious place during the GHMC poll campaign to clear that they do not follow failed strategies such as the one by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi who began visiting temples to woo voters.

The TRS will also not include the Shaadi Mubarak scheme in its campaign in the Old City, which otherwise, might turn advantageous to the BJP and the MIM.

The TRS is serious about making inroads into Old City as it was defeated in 12 seats with margins of less

than 12,000 votes and four seats with less than 6,000 voters in the 2016 GHMC polls.

Overall the TRS stood second place in about 34 divisions and it has now decided that it wants to win all of them. The party is particularly keen to win in Shastripuram division where Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi resides, where it lost by a narrow margin the last time.

The AIMIM's political moves in the recently concluded Bihar and Dubbak elections are learnt to have irked the TRS chief. As a result the party has decided to maintain distance from the AIMIM and not continue friendship in GHMC polls since it might turn into an advantage to the BJP. In

order to protect TRS' secular image it has decided stay equidistant from both the BJP and the AIMIM.

On the caste front, since both the BJP and the Congress are wooing the Reddy and Munnuru Kapu communities for the mayor post, the TRS is actively considering an SC candidate for the position.

However, the seat would be shared among both communities for a term of two-and-a-half years each. This unexpected move would be made at the last minute to counter the criticism made by the Opposition that the TRS chief did not keep the promise of making an SC candidate chief minister during both the Legislative Assembly polls after the formation of Telangana state.

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

Flood victims are furious that the state government is giving ₹10,000 at Meeeva centres, which is insufficient, and makes a mockery of several people who refuse to stand in queues for the compensation.

Many victims allege that the government charity is not defined by their actual losses but on their need for GHMC elections. This has brought Hyderabad floods back in focus and victims are besieged by different political parties.

Mohammed Nafees, a resident of Tolichowki, says "I have lost entire furniture, electronic

appliances, crockery and many other accessories in the floods. Will ₹10,000 help me to get all of it? Why are they making us relive those harrowing days when we had water all over our houses, cleaning all the muck and slush has been very troublesome mentally and physically. We have tried to move on but elections will replay them. All parties are only waiting to exploit the situation. No one wants to help."

Incidentally, people who have been flocking at Meeeva are those who had no flooding in their homes.

The real people who suffered have to still make their documents as many

do not possess them.

B. Raju in Ramanthapur says, "I have to get my documents in place. I am running around for that. The government can do is to make these processes easy for us."

With Mee Seva services affected there is a delay for those who have booked their slots. Others say that they are from reputed families and cannot stand in queues. They believe that they will over time make up for the lost accessories. Some of the victims are also government employees and find it very embarrassing to queue up. Their contention is that a rough assessment would have helped in handling the situation better.

OTHER STORIES

STIR FOR RELEASE OF ARRESTED FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, NOV. 18

The farmers, who are going to Sattupalli to attend the hearing of land acquisition to the Greenfield Highways, were taken into custody at Kalluru on Wednesday.

The farmers from other areas staged dharna at various places in protest against the arrest and demanded that they should be released.

The farmers reached Sattupalli and appealed to the RDO Srinivas to release them. At one stage, they tried to touch the feet of RDO and requested to release the farmers.

COUPLE HELD FOR DUPING BANK OF ₹5.3 CRORE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

The Cyberabad Police arrested a couple on Wednesday for cheating a bank to the tune of ₹5.3 crore after submitting forged documents to avail the same.

The couple, identified as Pabanthi Prabhakar, 47, and Pabanthi Saritha, 42, residents of Shaikpet, obtained the loan by submitting false documents like salary slips and Form 16 to the bank, said the police.

They submitted documents at Indian Bank, Shadnagar and availed a loan of ₹5.3 crore. "The fraud came to light when they failed to repay the loan EMIs and defaulted. Bank officials lodged a complaint with the Shadnagar police after which the couple was arrested and produced before court," said the police.

The accused Prabhakar was previously involved in six similar cases in various police stations in Cyberabad and Rachakonda.

BUSINESSMAN ALLEGEDLY ENDS LIFE, NOTE FOUND

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

A businessman allegedly killed himself by hanging at his residence in Misrigunj, Kamatipura, on Wednesday.

Mohammed Faraz Khan, 28, was living with his family near Nawaz Function Hall in Misrigunj, said the police. "On Wednesday morning, his family members found him hanging in his room. In a note allegedly written by him was found in the room. Khan stated that no one was responsible for his death and he apologised to his family for taking the extreme step," said the Kamatipura police.

The Kamatipura police team reached the place and shifted the body to Osmania General Hospital mortuary for post-mortem and a case was booked under section 174 (suspicious death) of the CrPc.

₹34 LAKH HAWALA MONEY SEIZED BY TASK FORCE COPS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

The West Zone Task Force police seized ₹34 lakhs of illegal hawala money from three men in two different instances on Wednesday.

According to the officials, the first seizure was at Afzalgunj where the team apprehended Kannaiah Lal, 32, and Bhagirath, 56, and seized ₹13.50 lakh from their possession. "The two men, along with the seized cash and two cell phones were handed over to the Afzalgunj police for further investigation," said the DCP of Commissioner's Task Force, P. Radhakrishna Rao.

In the second case, the officials nabbed Syed Ahmed, 40, who was in possession of ₹21,31,000 lakh from Andhra Bank cross roads in Koti, Sultan Bazar. "We also seized two mobile phones from him. We later handed him over to the Sultan Police for further investigation," added the Task Force official.

● **THE FIRST seizure was at Afzalgunj where the team apprehended Kannaiah Lal, 32, and Bhagirath, 56, and seized ₹13.50 lakh from their possession**

● **In the 2nd case, Syed Ahmed, 40, who was in possession of ₹21,31,000 lakh was nabbed**

White paper on ₹25cr aid to flood-hit sought

Cong demands ₹10k relief to flood-affected in Warangal

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, NOV. 18

There is an understanding between the TRS and the BJP to eliminate the Congress from the state, Warangal DCC president Naini Rajender Reddy alleged.

He said it is a known fact that both the TRS and BJP have made zero contribution for the people in the state.

Mr Reddy said that TRS has pact with both the 'communal' parties - BJP and MIM - for its political mileage.

"TRS has supported the BJP's anti-people policies on many occasions. Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao was the first one to support Prime Minister Narendra Modi's demonetisation and GST and extended support to them through specially convened Assembly session. It indicates that both the parties were hand-in-glove with each other," Mr Reddy said.

He further questioned why KCR did not oppose

Govt. failed to rescue farmers, says Sujatha

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, NOV. 18

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee state general secretary Gandrath Sujatha said the state government is hoodwinking the farmers with false promises and failed to come to the rescue of the distressed farmers. She said soon they would organise a massive protest against the state government's apathy towards the farmer issues.

Speaking to media persons, Ms Sujatha said hundreds of farmers suffered losses due to cotton crop damage following the heavy rains. The

the Centre's farm bills despite being well aware of the fact that the bills are detrimental to the interests of the farmers.

farmers did not get any compensation for the crop damage though they paid the premium for crop insurance.

She demanded the state government to order for CBI inquiry into irregularities in sanctioning Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak schemes in the Adilabad district and take stern action against the government employees involved in the scam.

Senior Congress leader Konda Gangadhar, senior leaders Venkat Reddy, Ramdas Nakle, Wasim, Are Pochanna, Sanjiv, Naid, Bhumaiah and Rupesh Reddy and others present.

TRS' silence over the farm bills indicates that it has an understanding with the BJP, he alleged. Mr Reddy recalled that

the BJP's oldest ally Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) had also opposed the farm bills and broken ties with the party.

Referring to the floods in Warangal in mid-August, Mr Reddy criticised the government for not giving a helping hand to the flood-affected. The Congress workers distributed food packets to the flood-affected, he added.

Mr Reddy demanded a white paper on ₹25 crore relief to the flood-affected city announced by the MA&UD minister K.T. Rama Rao.

"With an eye on elections to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), the government has announced ₹10,000 monetary help to each household which suffered in the recent floods," Mr Reddy alleged, demanding same relief to the flood-hit in Warangal.

Senior leaders Namindla Srinivas, B. Srinivas Rao and E.V. Srinivas Rao were present among others.



BJP Warangal Urban president Rao Padma being arrested by the police at the Kakatiya University Cross Road in Hanamkonda on Wednesday.

—DC

₹20k relief sought for flood-hit in Warangal

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, NOV. 18

BJP Warangal Urban District president Rao Padma alleged that Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and his son K.T. Rama Rao have become expert liars and excel in duping the public.

Demanding the state government to provide financial assistance of ₹20,000 to the people affected by the floods in Warangal, a protest was held at the Kakatiya University Cross Road in Hanamkonda on Wednesday.

Flood-affected people along with BJP leaders and activists squatted on the Karimnagar-Hanamkonda highway causing a huge traffic jam. The police arrested the activists and shifted them to the KU police

● **Flood-affected people along with BJP leaders and activists squatted on the Karimnagar-Hanamkonda highway causing a huge traffic jam.**

station. Speaking on the occasion, BJP Warangal Urban district president Rao Padma questioned why does the TRS government not provide relief to Warangal flood victims in the same way as those in Hyderabad?

"Is Mr KCR Chief Minister of Telangana or only Hyderabad? There were floods in Warangal even before Hyderabad. Then why such discrimination towards the people of Warangal city?" she posed.

"Warangal flood vic-

tims should also be given immediate financial assistance. Three months after the floods in Warangal, no compensation has been received. The people's representatives here do not have enough for their corrupt activities. Corruption has been fostered by them even though they claim to have developed the city. We cannot expect them to speak on the problems of the people," Ms Padma ridiculed.

She further warned that if the TRS does not provide relief to the public immediately, the public would teach a lesson to the TRS party ministers, MPs and MLAs.

She also challenged the ruling party ministers and representatives for the discussion on Central government assistance to the state.

Matter of faith



Devotees offer milk at snake pits and pray on the occasion of Nagula Panchami during Karthika masam in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

— R. PAVAN

IIT-H TO HOST INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP IN DEC

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, NOV. 18

Indian Institute of Technology, Hyderabad (IIT-H) and NISER Bhubaneswar will jointly host a nine-day international workshop 'Advanced Functional Analysis and its Applications 2020' from December 16 to 24 in which

experts from various parts of the world will deliver talks.

Special mention will be made on 'Analysis on Banach spaces' at the online event, with the organisers keen to reach out to participants along with their requirements and interests virtually.

The workshop prime

objective will be to cover some advanced topics on 'Functional Analysis' at its introductory level.

Those interested can register at <https://sites.google.com/iith.ac.in/december-workshop/registration-and-dates?authuser=0>.

The last date for the registration for participation is November 30.

Tummala complaint on social media news

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, NOV. 18

Former minister Tummala Nageswara Rao complained about the news appearing in various social media groups against him.

He met Khammam police commissioner Tafseer Iqbal on Wednesday and complained to the writers.

"The news is tarnishing my image and the writers want to damage me politically," he said.

He said that it seems these individuals are

working on behalf of others. Such forces should be checked, he said. A person posted that Tummala is ready to join BJP along with another former minister K. Srihari. Sources said that a TRS leader is supporting them to post such news.

Mr Tummala said such comments are defaming him and such activities should be curbed.

Mr Tummala, who lost in Palair Assembly constituency in 2018 election, is actively touring in the district and he wants to get back his place in TRS.

CPI DEMANDS MORE JOBS FOR LOCALS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOTHAGUDEM, NOV. 18

Communist Party of India Bhadradi district secretary Sabir Pasha demanded that the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) should give more jobs to the locals.

He said the youth of Kothagudem want to get jobs in SCCL as it is a big company. He said that the company is setting up solar projects at various places and the youth hope to get jobs in it.

Referring to the expansion of open cast mines, he said the people of residential colonies fear losing their houses. He said the company should minimise the expansion of mining and colonies should be exempted from it. He said the SCCL management sent proposals for the expansion of VK-7 and Gautam Khani. The people near these mines are worrying a lot.

PUBLIC NOTICE

General public are hereby informed that Peruka Sathyanarayana is obtaining housing loan from my client State Bank of India Velgator Branch by depositing his title deeds. One of the Link Original Regd. Sale Deed vide Document no. 872/2002 executed by M.A. Moayed in favour of Mamidipalli Sunitha is Missing/Lost while travelling in Busstand Peddapalli. On complaining to the police Peddapalli and on enquiry they have issued a certificate of Missing/Lost. If anyone found with the above mentioned lost original document, the same may be handed over at the below mentioned address or if any one has any claims or objections over the schedule property in Sy.no. 684 measuring 288 Sq.yrds of Peddapalli town and Dist. should come or send their claims or objections with necessary documents at the below mentioned address within a week time. Else my client will proceed with the processing of the housing loan application of Peruka Sathyanarayana.

Sd/- **MANDALA SUNIL KUMAR**
ADVOCATE
3-7-41, SRIRAMNAGAR, PEDDAPALLI
CELL: 9866112209

PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited	
Regd. Office: PSEB, Head Office, The Mall, Patiala-147001 OFFICE OF CHIEF ENGINEER / METERING C-3, SHAKTI VIHAR, PSPCL, PATIALA, PUNJAB 147001 Tel. No. 0175-2218871, Fax No. 0175-2200284, e-mail: semeteringpatiala@gmail.com Corporate Identification Number (CIN): U40109PB2010SGC033813 Registration Number: 33813, website: www.pspcl.in e-tendering page: https://eproc.punjab.gov.in	
NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Tender Specification No.	MQP-167 /2020-21/PR
Short Description	Procurement of Portable Secondary Injection Type CT & PT Test Equipment for Testing of LT/HT/EHT Current Transformers & Potential Transformers
Start date of downloading of tender documents/ Bid submission start date	18.11.2020 at 11.00 Hrs
Last date of downloading / Bid submission	16.12.2020 till 11.00 Hrs
Bid opening date (Part-I & II)	21.12.2020 at 11.30 Hrs
Intending officer and Contact No.	SE/HMC, PSPCL, Patiala 96461-18774
Detailed NIT and set of specification/ tender documents can only be downloaded from website https://eproc.punjab.gov.in . Tender ID is 2020_POWER_56212_1	
Note: Corrigendum, if any, after the publication of this tender enquiry shall only be uploaded on site and will not be published in any newspaper.	
C-352/2020 RO : I/105541	SE/HMC PSPCL, Patiala

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE PROPERTY

INDEPENDENT HOUSE

HUDA LAY-OUT 300 Sq.yards west facing 2000 Sft ground floor independent house for sale at Sa Ram Nagar Colony Hydeshakota. (Suncity) Bandlaguda Jagir municipal fully developed colony 100% vaasthu. Contact: 09346601919 (W/2021/AT000650)

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SHORT TAKES

‘LADAKH IN CHINA’ ERROR: TWITTER APOLOGISES

New Delhi, Nov. 18: Social media giant Twitter has apologised in writing to a key parliamentary panel for wrongly showing Ladakh in China and has promised to correct the error by the month-end, the committee’s chairperson Meenakshi Lekhi said on Wednesday.

Twitter’s deposition has come in form of an affidavit signed by Damien Kariem, Chief Privacy Officer of Twitter Inc, for wrong geo-tagging of India’s map, Lekhi said.

Last month, the joint committee of parliament on data protection bill had come down heavily on Twitter for showing Ladakh as part of China, saying it amounted to treason and had sought an explanation by the US-based parent of the social media platform in form of an affidavit. Appearing before the panel, chaired by Lekhi, representatives of Twitter India had “begged apology”, but they were told by the members that it was a criminal offence that questioned the sovereignty of the country and an affidavit must be submitted by Twitter Inc, not by its ‘marketing arm’ Twitter India.

“Twitter has now given us a written apology on an affidavit for Ladakh being shown in China,” Lekhi said. “They have apologised for hurting Indian sentiments and have sworn to correct the error by November 30, 2020,” she added.

POLICE ISSUE 3RD SUMMONS TO KANGANA, SISTER

SAURABH JOSHI | DC MUMBAI, NOV. 18

The Bandra police station in Mumbai issued third summons to actor Kangana Ranaut and her sister Rangoli asking them to appear before them on November 23-24, for questioning in connection with the spreading enmity case filed against them over their objectionable tweets. The police had first sent summons to the duo asking them to appear on October 26. The duo had sought time to appear stating they were busy with a family wedding till November 15.

The officials stated that this could be the last summons sent out to the duo and if they dodge again, further action would be taken against them. The second time they were asked to appear on November 9-10, however, they did not appear even then, officials said. The series of tweets by the two sisters led to enmity between communities, police claims.

“The duo needs to be questioned based on the complaint we had received, which is the basis of the FIR. They are yet to respond to the third summons we have sent them,” said a police officer.

The case pertains to the complaint of fitness trainer Munawar Ali Sayyad in the Bandra court, seeking probe into the tweets and other statements given by the sisters.

MP’S ‘GAU PANEL’ TO TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT CATTLE

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, NOV. 18

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shrivraj Singh Chouhan on Wednesday announced that a Cabinet committee would be constituted to recommend measures for the conservation and promotion of cattle resources in the state. The committee will be christened ‘Gau Cabinet’. This is the first of its kind initiative in the country.

Chouhan took to social media to announce his decision to set up the committee.

In his twitter post, he declared that the first meeting of the committee would be held on November 22.

A statement issued said a six-member committee headed by the Chief Minister has been set up. Other members of the committee are home minister Narottam Mishra, agriculture minister Kamal Patel, forest minister Vijay Shah, panchayat raj minister Mahendra Sisodia and animal husbandry minister Prem Singh Patel.

The first meeting of the committee will be held in Agar Malwa in Madhya Pradesh where Asia’s biggest cow sanctuary has been established in 2017, on November 22.

Infrastructure has been laid in the 1,100 acre-sanctuary to provide shelter to 10,000 cattle.

‘Cow dung’ festival



People take part in ‘Gorehabba’ festival at Gumatapura village on the border of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states. Laughing and cheering as they scoop up handfuls of cow dung to roll into balls, men and boys from a small village mark the ‘Gorehabba’ festival every year by flinging cow dung at each other.

— AFP

Adhir hints Sibal can leave Cong if he feels out of place

Suggests dissenting leaders may set up new party or join another party

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Congress’ recent electoral debacle in Bihar has further brought out the discord within the party with leaders now publicly hitting out at each other and some even asking others to quit, “set up a new party or join any other party”.

West Bengal unit chief of the Congress and Lok Sabha MP Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary on Wednesday, reacting to Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal’s comments after the results of bypolls and Bihar Assembly elections, said, “If some leaders think that Congress is not the right party for them then

● **WEST BENGAL** unit chief of and Lok Sabha MP Adhir Ranjan Chaudhary said if some leaders think that Congress is not the right party for them then they may set up a new party or can join any other party which they think is progressive and according to their interest

● **FORMER UNION** finance minister P. Chidambaram also raised doubts over the party’s organisational capacity in an interview to a local daily.

they may set up a new party or can join any other party which they think is progressive and according to their interest. But they should not indulge in such embarrassing activities since it can erode the credibility of the Congress.”

“If such leaders are serious about revamping the Congress party, then they should try to prove their mettle on the ground. Did

they volunteer to work for the party during the recent Bihar elections?”

On Wednesday, former union finance minister P. Chidambaram also raised doubts over the party’s organisational capacity.

In an interview to a daily he said, “I feel the Congress contested more seats than its organisational strength. The

Congress was given 25 seats where the BJP or its allies had been winning for 20 years. The Congress should have refused to contest from these seats. The party should have fielded only 45 candidates.”

“I am more worried about the bypoll results in Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Karnataka. These results show that the party either has no organisational presence on the ground or has been weakened considerably,” he said.

Interestingly, Chidambaram was not among the 23 leaders who wrote to the Congress president, Sonia Gandhi, in August this year demanding

changes in the functioning of the party.

Earlier this week Sibal, who was signatory to the August letter, spoke about the inability of the party to change.

He said that it has been six long years now and the time for introspection is over, it’s now time for action.

He further added that people do not see the Congress as an alternative and yet no action is being taken to correct this.

The disastrous election results have once again opened the Pandora’s box on the functioning of the Congress and has aggravated the demand for a democratic change within the party.

ORDER ON BSF JAWAN’S POLL PLEA RESERVED

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Supreme Court on Wednesday reserved its order on an election petition by a dismissed BSF jawan Tej Bahadur challenging election of Prime Minister Narendra Modi from the Varanasi Lok Sabha constituency on the grounds that the rejection of his nomination papers by the returning officer was flawed.

Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde heading the bench also comprising Justice A.S.Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian said, “this is too important a matter to be adjourned so many times. The respondent is the Prime Minister of India”.

Shah, Nadda to visit WB every month till polls end

Kolkata, Nov. 18: Firmly fixing its sights on West Bengal after victory in Bihar, the BJP in Bengal on Wednesday said Union home minister Amit Shah and Nadda for three days, party sources said.

After catapulting the NDA to power following stupendous performance by the BJP, the saffron party has made it clear that mission Bengal tops their next target.

Shah, who missed campaigning in Bihar, made a two-day trip to Bengal starting November 5 to oversee BJP’s preparedness for the state polls.

BJP president J.P. Nadda was scheduled to accompany Shah to Bengal, but his visit was cancelled a night before.

During the visit, Shah met the family members of a BJP worker Madan Ghorai allegedly killed in judicial custody last month in Patashpur in Purba Medinipur district and hit out at Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over alleged minority appeasement and deteriorating law and order.

The Bengal BJP chief also lashed out at the Congress-CPI (M) alliance, saying both the parties have been rejected by the people of the state long back. “The people of WB have given chances to the Congress, the CPI(M) and the TMC. All the three parties have failed to live up to the expectations of the masses, which will now be fulfilled by the BJP,” he said.

— PTI

TEMPORARY | SHELTER

Temperatures in forward bases already reached below zero degrees celsius

Army finishes work on winter habitats for troops

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Indian Army has completed establishing winter habitat facilities for all troops deployed in eastern Ladakh as the military standoff with China is in its seventh month, senior officials said on Wednesday.

This comes as temperatures in the forward bases in Ladakh have already reached below zero degrees Celsius.

India has deployed around 50,000 troops in the area to tackle any threat that may emerge from the Chinese People’s Liberation Army.

● **INDIA HAS** deployed around 50,000 troops in the area to tackle any threat that may emerge from the Chinese People’s Liberation Army.

● **THE TROOPS** in the front line are accommodated in heated tents as per the tactical considerations of their deployment.

The winter deployment in Ladakh is especially difficult due to the tough terrain, low temperatures and bone chilling winds, which make survival extremely difficult.

“In order to ensure operational efficiency of troops deployed in the winter, the Indian Army has completed establishment of habitat facilities for all troops deployed in the sector,” the officials

said. They added that apart from the “smart” camps with integrated facilities which have been built over the years, additional state of the art habitat with integrated arrangements for electricity, water, heating facilities, health and hygiene have been recently created in order to accommodate the troops.

The troops in the front line are accommodated in

heated tents as per the tactical considerations of their deployment.

Also, adequate civil infrastructure has been identified to cater for any sudden emergency requirements.

The Indian Army had already been storing essential supplies for the winter deployment on a war footing.

It has also received the first batch of winter clothing for its soldiers from the United States.

The altitudes in Ladakh range from the high to super high altitude and the area experiences up to 40 feet of snowfall, after the month of November.

Bihar Oppn slams Nitish over graft charges on mantri

NAYEAR AZAD | DC PATNA, NOV. 18

A day after allocating portfolios, the Nitish Kumar-led NDA government in Bihar has landed in a fresh controversy over the induction of controversial JD(U) MLA Mewalal Chaudhary as education minister.

Mewalal Chaudhary, a former vice-chancellor of an agriculture university and a first-time minister in Nitish Kumar’s Cabinet, faces serious corruption charges and was even suspended once by the JD(U) over the issue.

On Wednesday while questioning Chief Minister Nitish Kumar’s “zero-tolerance” policy on corruption, Opposition leader Tejashwi Yadav demanded the sacking of Mewalal Chaudhary. “Has he (Mewalal Chaudhary) been awarded the ministerial berth for his involvement in corruption and given him the freedom to loot? He faces serious corruption charges under Sections 409, 420, 467, 468, 471, and 120B of the Indian Penal Code”, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said in a tweet.

The JD(U) had suspended him in 2017 after an FIR was registered against him over alleged irregularities in appointments during his tenure as the vice-chancellor of the Bihar Agriculture University at Sabour in Bhagalpur district.

RJD leaders in Patna said the case was lodged against him on the basis

of reports that highlighted irregularities in the appointment of assistant professors and junior scientists.

As per Chaudhary’s poll affidavit, the case is still pending against him in the court of the additional district and sessions judge (I) in Bhagalpur and the matter is being investigated by the state vigilance department.

“For the sake of saving his chair, Nitish Kumar keeps preaching about his zero tolerance on issues like crime, corruption and communalism. But the reality is there for everyone to see, he has appointed a fugitive accused as an education minister in his Cabinet. There is no minister from the minorities in his Cabinet this year. This government is protecting the corrupt and criminals”, Tejashwi Yadav said.

Amid the controversy, Bihar election watch and the Association of Democratic Reforms (ADR) has come out with a report highlighting the criminal cases against several ministers who took the oath Monday along with the chief minister. The report says eight out of 14 ministers have declared criminal cases against them in their poll affidavits, including serious criminal offences. The report says that among those who have declared criminal cases against them two are from the BJP and two from the JD(U), and one each from Hindustani Awam Morcha and Vikasheel Insaan Party.

Modi, Biden talk to strengthen ties

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, NOV. 18

The Indian government made its first formal contact with the new American dispensation late on Tuesday night when Prime Minister Narendra Modi spoke to the President-elect of the United States Joseph R. Biden and congratulated him on his election, describing it as a testament to the strength and resilience of democratic traditions in the US.

In his tweet message, PM Modi said he has reiterated India’s commitment to its strategic partnership with the US. The Prime Minister also conveyed congratulations to Vice President-elect Kamala Harris, saying her success was a matter of pride for the Indian-American community.

“Spoke to US President-elect Joe Biden on the phone to congratulate him. We reiterated our firm commitment to the Indo-US strategic partnership and discussed our shared priorities and concerns — the Covid-19 pandemic, climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region,” said PM Modi in a tweet.

“I also conveyed warm congratulations for Vice President-elect Kamala Harris. Her success is a matter of great pride and

inspiration for members of the vibrant Indian-American community, who are a tremendous source of strength for Indo-US relations,” he added.

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) in a statement said the Prime Minister warmly recalled his earlier interactions with Biden, including during his official visits to the US in 2014 and in 2016 when Biden had chaired the Joint Session of the US Congress that was addressed by PM Modi during his 2016 visit.

“The leaders agreed to work closely to further advance the India-U.S. Comprehensive Global Strategic Partnership, built on shared values and common interests. The leaders also discussed their priorities, including containing the Covid-19 pandemic, promoting access to affordable vaccines, tackling climate change, and cooperation in the Indo-Pacific Region,” the MEA statement said.

Biden’s transition team issued a statement saying the President-elect thanked Prime Minister Modi for his congratulations and expressed his desire to strengthen and expand US-India Strategic partnership alongside the first Vice President of South Asian descent.



Indian Army sets up upgraded living facilities for soldiers in eastern Ladakh.

This, coupled with the windchill factor, is when temperatures dip down to minus 30-40 degrees. In addition, access by road also gets affected for a brief period, when taking any supplies to the forward areas is a logistical nightmare.

IN BRIEF INDIAN JAILED IN PAK HANDED OVER TO BSF

Lahore, Nov. 18: An Indian national, who had illegally crossed over to Pakistan in 2016 and underwent four years of imprisonment here, was on Wednesday handed over to the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel at the Wagah Border. According to officials, Panwasi Lal, son of Kundan Lal, arrived at the Lahore railway station in August 2016 by Samjhauta Express without travel documents and was arrested. Initially, he told the police that his name was Mohammad Aslam and he was a Pakistani. A sum of Rs 500 was recovered from him. During interrogation, it was revealed that his real name was Panwasi Lal and he was not mentally stable, officials said. The matter was taken up with the Indian authorities as to how he reached the Lahore railway station without travel documents. He was later imprisoned in the Central Jail Lahore on charges of illegal border crossing.

'74 BIRMINGHAM BOMBINGS: COPS ARREST MAN

London, Nov. 18: UK police arrested a man on Wednesday in Northern Ireland in connection with the 1974 bombings of two pubs that killed 21 people and injured more than 200 in Birmingham, England.

Officers from the West Midlands counter-terrorism unit, working with colleagues from the Police Service of Northern Ireland, arrested a 65-year-old man at his home in Belfast, West Midlands Police said.

The man was arrested under the UK's Terrorism Act, and his home was being searched, authorities said.

The arrest came days before the 46th anniversary of the two November 21, 1974 blasts that ripped apart the Mulberry Bush and Tavern in the Town pubs in the city of Birmingham.

The blasts were one of the worst attacks committed by the Irish Republican Army during its armed campaign to get Britain out of Northern Ireland.

1995 DIANA INTERVIEW TO BE PROBED

London, Nov. 18: The BBC's board of directors has approved the appointment of a retired senior judge to lead an independent investigation into the circumstances around a controversial 1995 TV interview with Princess Diana.

Wednesday's announcement came after Diana's brother, Charles Spencer, made renewed claims this month that BBC journalist Martin Bashir used forged statements and false claims to convince the late royal to agree to the interview.

The broadcaster's director general, Tim Davis, said the BBC "is determined to get to the truth about these events." Charles Spencer alleged that Bashir, 57, made false and defamatory claims about senior royals in order to gain his trust and access to his sister 25 years ago. The claims included that Diana's phone was bugged and that her bodyguard was plotting against her. Charles Spencer has demanded an inquiry and an apology.

NOBEL CEREMONY WON'T BE HELD IN PERSON IN OSLO

Copenhagen, Nov. 18: The winner of the 2020 Nobel Peace Prize — the World Food Program — and the Norwegian Nobel Committee said Wednesday they have jointly agreed to postpone the in-person award ceremony in Oslo next month because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"With the current restrictions in Oslo, it would not be possible to carry out the ceremony or other parts of the laureate's traditional program in a good and worthy manner," the Nobel Committee said in a statement.

WFP head David Beasley was expected to travel to the Norwegian capital "to receive the Nobel Peace Prize on behalf of the organization" that won the prestigious award for efforts to combat hunger.

But he will now accept the award during a virtual ceremony on Dec. 10.

The Nobel Peace Prize ceremony usually is held at Oslo City Hall. However, organizers said the event would be a scaled-down affair held at the city's university because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Cop hurt, Florida slaying suspect killed in Maryland encounter

Maryland, Nov. 18: A suspect in a Florida slaying was killed in an encounter with Maryland law enforcement that left a police officer shot and wounded, authorities said. Montgomery County Police were attempting to arrest a suspect wanted in connection with a killing in Jacksonville, Florida, when the shooting incident happened.

It occurred in Prince George's County on Tuesday afternoon, the agency stated in a message posted to Twitter.

Montgomery County and

Prince George's County are Maryland suburbs of the nation's capital. One officer was shot by the suspect, officials said. That officer's condition was not immediately known, according to police.

The suspect was killed, the department said. Authorities did not give additional information on how the suspect died.

The wounded officer and suspect were not immediately identified. The agency said it would provide updates as more information is confirmed.

— AP

Milwaukee officer who killed 3 resigns

Wauwatosa, Nov. 18: A suburban Milwaukee police officer who has fatally shot three people in the line of duty since 2015, including a Black teenager outside a mall in February, is resigning from the department.

The Wauwatosa Commission Council approved a separation agreement with Joseph Mensah on Tuesday night, effective Nov. 30, the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel reported. The Milwaukee County District Attorney's Office has

ruled all three shootings by Mensah, who also is Black, were justified self-defense. Protests followed the most recent shooting outside Mayfair Mall.

Alvin Cole, 17, was shot five times by Mensah after he fled from police following a disturbance inside the mall. Mensah said Cole pointed a gun at him, so he shot him. Protesters marched for months, calling for Mensah to be fired. They protested outside the mall and Wauwatosa City Hall. Mensah was suspended by the Wauwatosa Police.

— AP



A water cannon is used to disperse unmasked protesters during a protest against measures imposed by the German government to limit the spread of the novel coronavirus, on Wednesday near the Brandenburg Gate in Berlin.

— AFP

Pfizer, BioNTech say Phase 3 virus vaccine candidate is 95% effective

New York, Nov. 18: Global drugmakers Pfizer and BioNTech said on Wednesday that their Covid-19 vaccine was found 95 per cent effective in the final analysis of the Phase 3 trial, including in people aged over 65 years, paving the way for the companies to apply for emergency authorisation from US regulators within days. American pharmaceutical giant Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech said they have concluded phase 3 study of their mRNA-based Covid-19 vaccine candidate BNT162b2, meeting all primary efficacy end points. Based on current projections, the companies expect to produce globally up to 50 million vaccine doses in 2020 and up to 1.3 billion doses by the end of 2021.

The major announcement comes just two days after leading biotechnology company Moderna said on Monday its virus vaccine had an efficacy rate of 94.5 per cent. Earlier this month, Pfizer and BioNTech had said their Covid-19 vaccine candidate was

found to be more than 90 per cent effective in preventing Covid-19 in participants. Analysis of the data indicates a vaccine efficacy rate of 95 per cent in participants without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection (first primary objective) and also in participants with and without prior SARS-CoV-2 infection (second primary objective), in each case measured from seven days after the second dose.

The companies said the first primary objective analysis is based on 170 cases of Covid-19, of which 162 cases of Coronavirus were observed in the placebo group while 8 cases in the BNT162b2 group. Vaccine efficacy was consistent across age, gender, race and ethnicity demographics. The observed efficacy in adults over 65 years of age was over 94 per cent, they said. There were 10 severe cases of Covid-19 observed in the trial, with nine of the cases occurring in the placebo group and one in the BNT162b2 vaccinated group.

"The study results mark

an important step in this historic eight-month journey to bring forward a vaccine capable of helping to end this devastating pandemic. We continue to move at the speed of science to compile all the data collected thus far and share with regulators around the world," said Dr Albert Bourla, Pfizer Chairman and CEO.

"With hundreds of thousands of people around the globe infected every day, we urgently need to get a safe and effective vaccine to the world," Bourla said. The announcements about the vaccines and their potential availability for use among the general population in the coming weeks and months has offered hope to millions around the world in a year that has seen the Covid-19 pandemic devastate lives and economies and still showing no signs of abating.

So far, the Coronavirus pandemic has infected more than 55 million people around the world and killed more than 1.3 million people.

— PTI

TOILET PAPER LIMITS, EMPTY SHELVES BACK

New York, Nov. 18: Looking for toilet paper? Good luck. A surge of new Coronavirus cases in the US is sending people back to stores to stockpile again, leaving shelves bare and forcing retailers to put limits on purchases. Walmart said Tuesday it's having trouble keeping up with demand for cleaning supplies in some stores. Supermarket chains Kroger and Publix are limiting how much toilet paper and paper towels shoppers can buy after demand spiked recently.

And Amazon is sold out of most disinfectant wipes and paper towels. Geoff Freeman, president and CEO of the Consumer Brands Association said he doesn't expect things to be as bad this go-around since lockdowns are being handled on a regional basis.

— AP

Trump fires top Homeland official

Power transfer will be orderly

Washington, Nov. 18: The transfer of power from Donald Trump to Joe Biden's administration would be "orderly" and happen "right on time," according to a top Republican leader and Senator Mitch McConnell.

Last week, the mainstream media declared Biden as the winner of the Nov. 3 presidential election after the 77-year-old former vice president crossed the mandatory 270 electoral votes out of the 538-member Electoral College. Trump, 74, however, has refused to concede the election, asserting that he has won.

Senate majority leader Mitch McConnell has said that there would be a smooth transition of power to the next administration. "We are going to have an orderly transfer

from this administration to the next one," he told reporters at the US Capitol when asked about the fact that the incumbent Republican President Trump has refused to concede the election to President-elect Biden and has filed multiple lawsuits challenging the results of the election.

"What we all say about it is frankly irrelevant. All of this will happen right on time, and we will swear in the next administration on January 20," McConnell said. In all the presidential polls the country goes through this process, he said, adding that there's a way to deal with disputes, it's called the courts. "And the courts in the various states are dealing with whatever disputes there are," he said.

— PTI

MURTHY AND MAJUMDAR MAY BE IN CABINET

Washington, Nov. 18: Two eminent India-Americans, including former US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, are among the potential Cabinet picks in the next Biden-Harris Administration, according to media reports. Murthy, who currently is the top Indian-American advisor to President-elect Joe Biden on Covid-19, is a potential pick for the post of Secretary of Health and Human Services and Stanford University Professor Arun Majumdar for the post of Secretary of Energy. *The Washington Post* and *Politico* said in their reports on Tuesday that mentions a list of potential picks for various Cabinet-level positions in the Biden administration. Murthy, 43, is currently one of the co-chairs of the Covid-19 advisory board of the transition. He has been a close associate of Biden on Covid issues.

PELOSI MOVES TO LEAD HOUSE FOR 2 MORE YEARS

Washington, Nov. 18: House Democrats seem certain to nominate Nancy Pelosi for two more years as speaker, but she'll be leading a smaller majority divided along ideological lines as it tries shepherding President-elect Joe Biden's agenda toward enactment. Pelosi, D-Calif., faced no announced rivals for the post on Wednesday as the chamber's Democrats planned their first-ever virtual leadership elections in response to the pandemic. House Majority Leader Steny Hoyer, D-Md., and No. 3 party leader Jim Clyburn, D-S.C., were also on track to retain their positions. "Let us all be advocates for unity in the Democratic party, where our values are opportunity and community," Pelosi wrote to Democrats this week. The first female speaker, Pelosi has won wide acclaim among Democrats.

— AP

US DICTATING CONTENT: FB, TWITTER ANGRY

Washington, Nov. 18: The CEOs of Facebook and Twitter have vehemently opposed any changes that would allow the US government to dictate content moderation, saying these platforms are a new industry and should have a different regulatory model. While Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and Twitter CEO Jack Dorsey, along with the lawmakers, have agreed on the need to make necessary changes in the controversial Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996, the two social media heads said they opposed any changes that would allow the government to dictate content moderation.

— PTI

US to withdraw troops from Afghanistan

Washington, Nov. 18: The US has announced to reduce the number of American troops in Afghanistan and Iraq to 2,500 each by January 15 next year, which drew sharp reaction from influential lawmakers across the aisle. The decision announced by Acting US Defence Secretary Christopher C. Miller on Tuesday is in line with incumbent President Donald Trump's campaign promise to bring the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq to a successful and responsible conclusion and to bring service members home.

The move was immediately opposed by the Opposition Democratic Party of the President-elect Joe Biden, whose lawmakers described it as a threat to national security. Several

Republican lawmakers too opposed the move. "I am formally announcing that we will implement President Trump's orders to continue our repositioning of forces from those two countries. By January 15, 2021, our forces, their size in Afghanistan will be 2,500 troops. Our force size in Iraq will also be 2,500 by that same date,"

Miller said during a

press conference, adding that this is consistent with the Trump administration's established plans and strategic objectives. The US currently has a little over 4,500 troops in Afghanistan. Interacting with reporters, National Security Advisor Robert O'Brien said the remaining troops would be defending US diplomats and facilities.

— PTI

Famine fear: UN's \$100M to 7 nations

Nairobi, Nov. 18: The United Nations humanitarian office is releasing \$100 million in emergency funding to seven countries at risk of famine in Africa and the Middle East amid conflict and the Covid-19 pandemic, chief the humanitarian chief says returning to a world where famines are common would be "obscene."

A statement overnight said \$80 million of the money will go to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso, Congo, Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. Another \$20 million has been set aside for "anti-

THE MONEY breaks down as follows: \$15 million to Afghanistan, Burkina Faso \$6 million, Congo \$7 million, northeastern Nigeria \$15 million, South Sudan \$7 million and Yemen \$30 million.

patory action to fight hunger in Ethiopia," where deadly fighting erupted this month in its rebellious northern Tigray region.

"Without immediate action, famine could be a reality in the coming months in parts of Burkina Faso, northeast



Nigeria, South Sudan and Yemen. This would be the first time famine has been declared since 2017

in parts of South Sudan," the statement said.

A return to a world where famines are com-

— AP

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DECCAN Chronicle

19 NOVEMBER 2020

‘Love jihad’ laws are frivolous, will divide

Article 25 of the Indian Constitution provides for the right to practise religion: all persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess, practise and propagate religion, subject to public order, morality and health and to the other provisions of Part III of the Constitution which deals with fundamental rights. Marriage is hardly a subject that comes in the way of a person practising the religion of his/her choice.

However, some of the state governments in India have of late been busy discovering marriage as one. It started with Uttar Pradesh where the chief minister, piggybacking on an order of a single bench of the Allahabad high court that ruled marriage for the purpose of conversion would not stand the scrutiny of the law, said the state government would be bringing in an anti-“love jihad” law. BJP governments in Haryana and Karnataka joined the bandwagon and said they, too, were contemplating introducing such laws.

Now, the Madhya Pradesh government takes the cake. The state home minister has announced that a “love jihad bill” will soon be introduced in the state Assembly making it mandatory for the people concerned to notify the district collector a month in advance before formalising an inter-faith marriage. According to the minister, marriages that take place forcibly, out of fraud or by tempting someone for religious conversion will be declared null and void. It will be a cognisable offence and non-bailable, attracting five years of rigorous imprisonment. Even those assisting such marriages will be considered a party to the crime.

Governments which lack in performance or in meeting the promises they had made to voters or in ensuring basic governance invent terminologies that offer them a covering fire while going to people. “Love jihad” is one such term. Every single authority in India, including Union ministers concerned, have said there is nothing in the law or statute which defines “love jihad”; it remains a derogatory term the right wing uses to denote the marriage of a Muslim man and a Hindu woman (and not vice-versa). In fact, the National Commission for Women has recently made it clear that no such thing exists though its chairperson holds a different view.

Those who advance such regressive ideas must bear in mind that no law that puts specific conditions on people based on their religion has a chance of survival as long as our Constitution lasts. And the Special Marriage Act, 1954, makes no distinction whether a marriage is interfaith or intra-religion. All that a couple has to do is to notify the official concerned a month before the marriage.

Governments and parties that seek to perpetuate themselves have the tough route of good governance to take. The alternative is to coin terminologies and fight an imaginary enemy. If they have the welfare of the people whom they claim to serve in mind, then they must invent ways of improving governance, not meddle with people’s private lives. The Union government must advise the states not to go ahead with such divisive and communal tools to protect themselves from the wrath of people.

Gupkar: Let Cong decide

Union home minister Amit Shah has raised the profile of the upcoming District Development Council elections in Kashmir by attacking the J&K mainstream parties as the “Gupkar gang”, and viciously and propagandistically describing them as being anti-national and pro-terrorist. He has also rhetorically asked the Congress leadership if it is a part of this “gang”.

The DDC polls for 280 seats in J&K, which kick off on November 28, will be the first proper electoral test of the popularity of the Centre’s move to do away with the former state’s autonomous status in August 2019. If the J&K parties, along with the Congress and the CPI(M) — the latter having limited influence in southern Kashmir — come together for the DDC polls, they are likely to be a formidable combine that could electorally embarrass the BJP.

Fruits of this unity could set up a united front spirit for the subsequent Assembly election also. This too will worry the BJP. The Centre’s promises of ushering a new era of development and ending terrorism with the annulment of Article 35-A and the reducing of Article 370 have proved hollow. Political reverse for the BJP in the DDC polls is apt to strengthen the public mood in favour of the Gupkar Declaration passed on August 4, 2019, by the National Conference, PDP, People’s Conference, Congress and CPI(M).

This declaration enjoins participants to unite to seek restoration of J&K’s special status and to retain the state’s identity, a perfectly legitimate demand in accordance with the spirit of federalism. The BJP is baiting the Congress and seeking to scare it with the so-called nationalist card. The Congress is being invited to take fright as it contests elections across the country, not just J&K. The idea is to detach the party from the Gupkar Alliance in the DDC polls.

Last year the Congress had participated in framing the Gupkar Declaration, but now seems defensive on account of stray utterances of PDP and NC leaders (which were later tempered). The party should think for itself and not under BJP’s pressure.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

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Subhani



BJP’s hopes for its own CM in Patna get dashed

Anand K. Sahay

Far & Near

In Bihar, the BJP is the new regent to a tired, jaded, ruler — Nitish Kumar — whose authority after his Janata Dal (United)’s below-par performance in the recent Assembly election has dimmed to the level of inane formality. The saffron party is thus well placed now to advance its mentor RSS’ disintegrative social agendas in Bihar, with the chief minister being the rubber stamp, so besotted is he with the mere idea of being CM even at the cost of his self-esteem.

Whether the BJP is actually able to gain its ends in the foreseeable future will of course depend on many imponderables. But the current situation doesn’t bode well for Bihar. The state’s governance systems have long been a wreck. Its finances are in a pitiable state due to long-standing disregard by the Centre (despite the so-called “double-engine” government), and the state is a byword for deficient revenue-earning capacity.

Besides, as a party the BJP — the regent — typically takes the wrong turn on serious matters of governance at the Centre and in the states where its writ runs. It has been content, in the main, to play up social faultlines to score at the ballot box and then to politically persecute opponents in disregard of the law, common decencies and democratic culture.

It rules through sloganeering. When it puts its best foot forward, it comes up with “love jihad”, the CAA, triple talaq, and so on. What can Bihar gain from such a mindset?

India’s poorest state is truly in an unenviable position when a party like the BJP is to the fore and the CM is only too conscious that his best fate may lie in signing on the dotted line, quietly. For all the ear-shattering

din of “vikas” — or development — emanating from BJP’s most important leaders, Bihar’s economy and Bihar society appear poised to plunge, although there will be rallies declaring victory.

Bihar is the only state in north India, besides Jammu and Kashmir (now a Union territory) and Punjab, where the BJP has not had its own chief minister, either winning the state outright or having sufficient clout in a ruling alliance. In this quest it has been thwarted yet again. This must rattle the party’s leaders.

In the recent election, the BJP evidently worked to a plan which it thought would give the party its first CM in Bihar. It seemed clear to everyone that it set up the LJP’s Chirag Paswan, a NDA ally, to cut Mr Kumar’s votes so that the JD(U) leader was denuded. That game has largely succeeded, although Mr Kumar was humiliated but not entirely defeated. What did not succeed, though, was the calculation that the main Opposition party, the Rashtriya Janata Dal, led by jailed top politico Lalu Prasad Yadav’s greenhorn son Tejashwi, would be sent packing in the election. The opposite, in fact, happened.

Tejashwi played what is quite possibly the most spectacular innings in recent memory for an untested captain, taking the battle to the BJP, JD(U) and LJP, in the process

India’s poorest state is truly in an unenviable position when a party like the BJP is to the fore and the CM is only too conscious that his best fate may lie in signing on the dotted line, quietly

For now, the BJP must remain satisfied playing regent. But in the absence of a mandate, this is still an enviable position to be in. After all, the NDA has won state power, technicality or not.

reaching new heights of endeavour.

He refused to live in the past, he showed energy, and he marshalled his resources and his coalition partners with aplomb. In the end his party won more seats than any other party and bettered its polling percentage by as much as five per cent compared to the 2015 election, which the RJD had fought under his redoubtable but controversial father. The BJP came up next, having dropped five per cent of its vote share, although this time it fought in an alliance with Mr Kumar, rather than independently.

The difference between the ruling NDA’s campaign and the opposing Mahagathbandhan campaign was stark. Within the NDA, the BJP played the communal metaphor to the hilt and made promises of “development” that didn’t ring true in light of the NDA’s abysmal performance in the past five years. Mr Kumar pleaded plaintively with voters to give him one more chance.

Tejashwi Yadav, in sharp contrast, spoke to the most pressing need of the young voter - for jobs and a better deal. Some 20 seats were lost to his party or combine by a couple of hundred votes or less. The Election Commission could have been seen to be scrupulous, but remained satisfied with form, although the gap in votes between the winning and the losing side was only 12,000 in the state overall.

So, who won? This is apt to remain a debate and a source of deep contention in the days ahead in case the NDA’s opponents go on the warpath. They boycotted the swearing-in ceremony of the CM and his Cabinet colleagues. That means Bihar’s polity is on notice.

The BJP’s core objective of having its own chief minister in Bihar remained unfulfilled in this election. Had the people of Bihar rejected Tejashwi Yadav in the manner that the BJP might have hoped, and the JD(U) had sunk a little lower in the tally, the saffron party might have hoped to win between 90 to 100 seats when the winning mark is 122. Since the BJP’s middle name is “defection”, the party might then have thought to make up the rest by breaking other parties through money power and using the state police as it personal army.

For now, however, it must remain satisfied playing regent. But in the absence of a mandate, this is still an enviable position to be in. After all, the NDA has won state power, technicality or not. The CM will have to sign on the dotted line as told and take the rap when things go wrong, unless even he turns. He may rest assured that the BJP will play both tough and smart with the full force of the pliant media behind it.

Right away, the saffron party sent the tallest Bihar BJP leader, the urbane Sushil Kumar Modi, Mr Kumar’s deputy CM of 13 years, home. Although from the RSS cadre, he was thought to be too close to the CM. So, he may not have been the best hatchet man. Out he went and the BJP appointed two nonentities as deputy CMs. With such ruthlessness on view, the CM had better watch out. The BJP will tolerate no demurrals as the state gets to be governed through remote control from New Delhi, with the capital of the Mauryan empire taking a long holiday.

Whether the BJP is actually able to gain its ends in the foreseeable future will of course depend on many imponderables. But the current situation doesn’t bode well for Bihar.

LETTERS

FLOOD AID CHAOS

When we can pay electricity and other bills online from home directly, why does the government want us to apply for flood compensation through Mee Seva only and promote corruption? (People stand in never-ending queues to apply for flood aid, DC, Nov. 18). Government handled this issue in a very casual manner, eying GHMC elections. It must allow us to apply from anywhere.

B. Umakanth
Hyderabad

Poor people cannot stock ₹10,000 worth of rice, pulses, oil, etc., in their houses. How can the authorities judge how much they lost in floods? Wrong claims that can be significant cannot be avoided. Instead of cash compensation, one month free ration can be given through ration shops.

Dr O. Prasada Rao
Hyderabad

LUCKY DECEMBER?

Does Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao feel that December is lucky for him? The last Assembly polls which were to be held in 2019 were advanced to December 2018 and now GHMC elections expected to be held in January 2021 are advanced to December 2020. It is not fair for the SEC to accede to the ruling TRS without giving sufficient time for other parties to prepare the list of candidates, file nominations and withdraw.

S. Nageswara Rao
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

IRCs to be set up at Centre, States

NEW DELHI, November 18. Union Labour Minister D. Sanjivayya told the Rajya Sabha today that the Government had decided to set up Industrial Relations Commissions, both at the Centre and in the States, to settle industrial disputes between workers and managements.

Replying to questions arising out of a calling attention notice by Mr. T.V. Anandam (Cong-O) and others on the recent strike by the harbour workers of the Madras port, Mr. Sanjivayya said the Government took the decision on the recommendations of the Nation Commission on Labour. The Government proposed to take a decision on the commission’s other recommendations. These steps would substantially contribute to industrial peace in the country, he said.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



MHA hard put to find officers ready to serve in Ladakh, J&K

More than a year after the change in the status of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, there is an acute shortage of IAS, IPS and other all-India service officers in the Union Territories. The situation is dire enough for the ministry of home affairs to write to all cadre-controlling authorities to prepare a list of IAS, IPS and other officers who can be immediately sent on deputation to J&K and Ladakh.

And the ministry is trying to cast its net far and wide. According to sources, a missive from the MHA has been sent to the Railway Board chairman, Comptroller General of Accounts, Comptroller Auditor General of India, secretaries of the ministries of defence, external affairs, corporate affairs and I&B, chairpersons of the Central Board of Direct Taxes and the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs, and the departments of

commerce, telecom and posts! As of now, sources say, two officers have shown willingness to serve in J&K on deputation. Both are Kashmiri-born officers, one an IAS officer from Assam-Meghalaya cadre and the other an IRS officer. Not very encouraging, it seems.

After all, J&K has a stipulated cadre strength of 137 IAS officers, out of whom only 58 are serving in the cadre, including nine who are on Central deputation. Similarly, the cadre strength of IPS officers is 147, but only 66 are currently serving in the cadre.

CIC PUTS A LID ON INFORMATION

Among the first things the Central Information Commission (CIC) has done after the appointment of Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as Chief Information Commissioner is to allow the Central Secretariat to withhold records of the resignation

Following the appointment of Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha as Chief Information Commissioner, the CIC let the Central Secretariat withhold records of the resignation of former home secretary Anil Goswami

of former home secretary Anil Goswami. Sinha, a former IFS officer and high commissioner to the UK, was sworn in by President Ram Nath Advani as Bimal Julka retired from the post in August.

The panel has reportedly based its judgment on a Delhi high court order according to which file notings and deliberations of the Group of Officers or the authority cannot be disclosed. The CIC’s order came in response to an RTI application filed by IPS officer Anurag Thakur who had sought to know from the

Cabinet Secretariat the details of action taken on a complaint against Goswami, including communication exchanged between various authorities and file notings. Not getting a satisfactory response, Thakur appealed before the CIC. Goswami was forced to resign in February 2015 for allegedly trying to stall the arrest of a former Union minister in a case by the CBI.

MANIPUR INTRODUCES GOOD GOVERNANCE AWARD

Manipur chief minister N. Biren Singh has introduced an award for good governance as an incentive for babus to do innovative and extraordinary work at the grass-roots level. The initiative will reward government officials whose performance is of “a very high order” and whose work has benefited a large number of citizens and stakeholders.

Sources say that the award will be

presented every year to an individual officer or a team including administrative secretaries, deputy commissioners, heads of departments and to any other official or department. A panel comprising of the chief minister, chief secretary Rajesh Kumar and other senior officials will select the winners who stand to win a cash prize of ₹1 lakh (individual category) and ₹2 lakh (group category). To become eligible, officials will have to successfully complete a challenging task or project that results in significant benefits to the public or in the reduction of time and costs, including implementation of Central or state government schemes.

The awards will be presented on Statehood Day, Republic Day or Independence Day every year.

Share a babu experience! Follow [dilipthecherian@Twitter.com](#).

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	44,180.05	0.52
Nifty 50	12,938.25	0.50
S&P 500*	3,614.85	0.15
Dollar (₹)	74.19	0.35
Pound Sterling (₹)	98.61	0.14
Euro (₹)	88.20	0.16
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	50,253*357	0.00
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	44.64	0.89
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.878	0.002
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.865	-0.007

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Smaller towns are 'heroes' of pandemic: Nestle

Smaller towns have emerged as 'heroes' for Nestle India during the pandemic, offsetting 'somewhat muted' performance in large metros, its CMD Suresh Narayanan said. "One of the themes I would be having for the future is our smaller towns—our tier II, III and IV towns, which are towns with population of up to 5 lakh, up to 1 lakh and below a lakh—have really become the heroes of this pandemic," he said.

Global container volumes rose in Q3: Top shipper



The world's biggest shipping company, Denmark's A.P. Moller-Maersk, said global container volumes rose increased by around 1 per cent in the third quarter, a faster rebound than expected earlier in the year. But global demand for containers is expected to contract by 4-5 per cent this year due to Covid-19. CEO Soeren Skou said disciplined execution led to solid earnings and cash flow growth for the firm in Q3.

FPIs stay bullish on equities; pump \$6.3 billion in Q2

Foreign investors have pumped in \$6.3 billion in the Indian equity market in three months ended September on attractive valuations, opening-up of the economy and resumption in business activities, says a Morningstar report. This comes after a net inflow of \$3.9 bn in the June quarter and a net withdrawal of \$6.38 billion in the March quarter. As of Sept, the value of FPI investments in equities stood at \$450 bn, up 31 per cent.

India's laptop, tablet mfg can reach \$100 bn

India has the potential to scale up its laptop and tablet manufacturing capacity to \$100 billion by 2025 through policy interventions, ICEA said. Scaling up laptop and tablet PC manufacturing can take share of India in global market to 26 per cent from 1 per cent now. India Cellular and Electronics Association chairman Pankaj Mohindroo said the country's electronic market has reached \$65 billion.



Depositors money, employees safe LVB shareholders to lose investment

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, NOV. 18

Public shareholders of Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) will lose their money as the entire amount of the paid-up share capital will be written off as per the scheme of amalgamation of LVB with DBS India proposed by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). However, depositors need not worry as their deposits will be transferred to DBS and would be fully secured. Around 4,000 employees of LVB also can heave a sigh of relief as they will be moved to DBS at the same remuneration as in LVB for the next three years. However, Damocles sword hangs over key management personnel of LVB as they could be retrenched by DBS, if it feels so. The market is also waiting to see whether the RBI will take over troubled private lender Dhanlaxmi Bank, too, as it is being long mired in management issues, and impose a merger or a revival plan. As per the draft scheme of amalgamation of LVB with DBS Bank India, the entire amount of the paid-up share capital will be written off. "On and from the appointed date, the entire amount of the paid-up share capital and reserves and surplus, including the balances in the share/securities premium account of the transferor bank, shall stand written off," said the RBI in the draft scheme of amalgamation for LVB

HOPE AND DESPAIR

- Deposits will be transferred to DBS Bank India and would be fully secured
- Around 4,000 employees will be moved to DBS India at the current remuneration for 3 years
- Key management personnel of LVB could be retrenched by DBS, if so required
- Market is also waiting to see if similar action will follow in the case of Dhanlaxmi Bank

with DBS India announced by it on Tuesday. Anand Dama, analyst at Emkay Research, said, "As per the extant scheme, paid-up capital/reserves of LVB shall stand extinguished similar to write-off of AT-1 bonds in the case of Yes Bank. Deposits will be transferred to DBS and thus stand fully secured, while employees will be moved to the transferee bank at the same remuneration as in LVB for the next three years. However, key management personnel could be retrenched by DBS, if required." Speaking at a virtual press meet on Wednesday, the RBI-appointed administrator for LVB and former non-executive chairman of Canara Bank T.N. Manoharan said shareholders of LVB will not have a say in the amalgamation decision in their general body meeting under the Companies Act as the Banking Regulation Act—a special Act—will override the provisions of a general law. LVB depositors contin-

ued to panic since the announcement of the amalgamation scheme by the RBI on Tuesday evening, with the bank witnessing about Rs 10 crore of deposit withdrawals, according to Manoharan. He assured depositors that their money is safe and expressed confidence that the lender's merger with DBS Bank India will be completed within the December 16 deadline set by the regulator. Manoharan said all the employees of LVB will be absorbed in DBS after the merger. DBS Bank may also rope in more experienced professionals to carry out a digitisation drive at the troubled bank. The RBI administrator said that the troubled bank has enough liquidity to pay back depositors. Shares of LVB fell 19.94 per cent to Rs 12.40 on the BSE, hitting the lower circuit. Shares worth Rs 31.8 crore were traded on the NSE and Rs 3.65 crore, on the BSE. (With inputs from Ravi Ranjan Prasad)

VEDANTA BIDS FOR BPCL; FOREIGN PLAYER ALSO IN RACE

New Delhi, Nov. 18: Mining conglomerate Vedanta has put in a preliminary expression of interest (EoI) for buying the government's stake in Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL), for which a major foreign player too is said to be in the race. A special purpose vehicle floated by the BSE-listed Vedanta Ltd and its London-based parent Vedanta Resources submitted an EoI before the close of deadline on November 16. "Vedanta's EoI for BPCL is to evaluate potential synergies with our existing oil and gas business," the company said in a statement. "The EoI is at a preliminary stage and exploratory in nature." Sources in the department handling the sale said the EoI has been put in by a special purpose vehicle or SPV floated by Vedanta Ltd and Vedanta Resources. They also said a major foreign player was among the three-four entities whose EoIs were received by the close of the bidding on Monday. The other potential investors are foreign funds but their identity was not disclosed. Share price of BPCL has plunged by nearly a fourth since the time the strategic sale was approved in November last year. At Wednesday's closing price of Rs 383.20 on the BSE, the government's 52.98 per cent stake in BPCL is worth Rs 44,000 crore. —PTI

Apple to halve App Store fees to 15% from January

MARK GURMAN NOV. 18



Apple Inc is cutting by half the fees charged to most developers who sell software and services on the App Store, marking the biggest change to the store's revenue structure since the iPhone maker launched the service in 2008. The company is lowering the App Store fee to 15 per cent from 30 per cent for developers who produce as much as \$1 million in annual revenue from their apps and those who are new to the store. The change will go into effect January 1 as part of an App Store Small Business Program, Apple said on Wednesday in a statement. The company said the new structure will apply to the "vast majority" of developers who charge for apps and in-app purchases on Apple's devices. The programme won't affect some major apps such as those from Netflix Inc and Spotify Technology SA. The Cupertino, California-based technology giant said it's making the change to help small developers financially and to provide a way for them to invest in their businesses amid the economic struggles caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. Apple has faced ongoing scrutiny from government regulators and criticism from developers about the percentage of revenue it takes for App Store purchases. The company also is engaged in a lawsuit with Epic Games Inc, the maker of the

video game Fortnite, over its App Store fees and payment rules. Alphabet Inc's Google also charges similar fees to developers on its Android app store. Income from app developers has been key to Apple's growing services business, which reached almost \$54 billion in revenue in fiscal 2020. The App Store is one of several products and offerings that make up the services unit, but is the biggest revenue driver, according to Toni Sacconaghi, an analyst at Sanford C Bernstein. He estimates the App Store alone will bring in \$18.7 billion in 2021, about a third of Apple's total services revenue next year. Apple has said there are 1.8 million apps in the App Store across all of the company's platforms and more than 28 million registered developers. The company said earlier this year the store has generated \$155 billion for developers since it started. Since the beginning of the App Store, Apple generally has charged developers a 30 per cent slice of revenue generated by their apps. In 2016, Apple lowered to 15 per cent the cut it takes from subscriptions purchased through the apps for more than a year. Earlier this year, Apple also loosened

restrictions on some cloud-gaming apps and email services, charging a fee to fewer developers. The latest change will take place across App Stores on the iPhone, iPad, Mac, Apple TV and Apple Watch. The company has said that 85 per cent of apps found on the App Store are free and aren't part of the revenue fee system. Small developers make up the majority of App Store sellers. Some major apps, such as those offered by Netflix and Spotify, don't let subscribers sign up through the App Store, avoiding the 30 per cent charge. Apple is betting that the fee change will result in developers creating more apps and sticking with the App Store, which will create enough new revenue to offset any potential financial negatives from the fee reductions. Apple's standard 30 per cent fee will remain for developers that generate more than \$1 million in a calendar year. Chief executive officer Tim Cook testified about the company's App Store practices at a July hearing before US lawmakers. In advance of Cook's appearance, Apple published a study that claimed its 30 per cent cut is normal for the industry or lower than some app stores. "We're launching this programme to help small business owners write the next chapter of creativity and prosperity on the App Store, and to build the kind of quality apps our customers love," Cook said. —Bloomberg

Rising metal prices, freight charges hurt many sectors

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 18

Rising metal prices and higher freight charges on imports are posing a new challenge for manufacturers and exporters. Base metal prices as well as steel prices have seen significant upside of late in the commodity market. Copper prices have moved up 64 per cent from their March levels, zinc has gone up by 67 per cent, nickel by 50 per cent, aluminium by 30 per cent and lead by 24 per cent from their March levels, said Ajay Kedia, MD, Kedia Commodities. "Stimulus packages announced in major economies, the restriction on production in China ahead of the winter due to environmental concerns and weakness in dollar are some of the key factors

supporting base metals. Further, zinc has low levels of inventory, nickel prices are supported by steel demand, lead by recovery in the automobile sector and aluminium by demand from the packaging industry," he said. While the raw material price is hurting the manufacturers, the recent jump in freight charges on imported goods due to limited availability of containers has worsened the situation. "The price of hot rolled coil, an essential raw material for the engineering industry, has increased from Rs 35,000 a tonne to Rs 42,000 a tonne in the past six months," says the Engineering Export Promotion Council of India. "Zinc prices too have shot up from Rs 170 a kg to Rs 220 per kg and freight charges have almost doubled," said EEPC India

chairman Mahesh Desai. "Prices of other essential metals have also been rising disproportionately to the end-product prices... Engineering exporters face severe headwind and this is impacting their exports. Exporters also face scarcity of steel," he said. The Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers Association said, "The increasing steel prices, used extensively in manufacturing of vehicles, puts pressure on the cost of vehicles. This, coupled with the rising international freight charges, could impact the competitiveness of Indian manufacturers." The exporters want the Centre to intervene and prod the large steel makers to keep prices in check. The real estate sector is also concerned about the rising steel prices.

SENSEX ENDS ABOVE 44000 FOR FIRST TIME

Mumbai, Nov. 18: Equity benchmarks scaled record highs for the third straight session on Wednesday as investors accumulated banking, auto and engineering stocks amid firm global cues and unabated foreign fund inflows. The BSE Sensex vaulted 227.34 points to close above the 44000-level for the first time at 44,180.05. Intra-day, it touched its lifetime high of 44,215.49. The NSE Nifty advanced 64.05 points to end at its all-time high of 12,938.25, after making an intra-day record of 12,948.85. M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, soaring 10.76 per cent, followed by L&T. According to traders, largely positive cues from global markets and persistent foreign fund inflows buoyed market sentiment. —PTI

Renault names new compact SUV Kiger

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, NOV. 18



French auto major Renault on Wednesday said it will launch its all-new compact SUV Kiger in the Indian market in the first quarter of next year to boost sales in Asia's third biggest and fiercely competitive car market. The concept or show car is a joint effort between the corporate design teams in France and Renault India, and the company says it took a lot of input and feedback from Indian customers. The sub-compact SUV segment in India has grown by leaps and bounds in recent times with multiple options for prospective buyers and it is this rapidly expanding increase that Renault Kiger is looking at tapping. "After Kwid and Triber, Renault Kiger is the third global car from Groupe Renault to be launched in India first, followed by other markets,"

Venkatram Mamillapalle, Country CEO and MD at Renault India, said. The concept or show car is a joint effort between the corporate design teams in France and Renault India, and the company says it took a lot of input and feedback from Indian customers. The sub-compact SUV segment in India has grown by leaps and bounds in recent times with multiple options for prospective buyers and it is this rapidly expanding increase that Renault Kiger is looking at tapping. "After Kwid and Triber, Renault Kiger is the third global car from Groupe Renault to be launched in India first, followed by other markets,"

Why India's financial sector keeps blowing up

JEANETTE RODRIGUES NOV. 18

Explainer

What's up with India's \$1.7 trillion financial system? In the space of a couple of years, four major finance companies have been seized by authorities and the central bank has had to reassure the public multiple times. It's a stark turnaround since the country emerged largely unscathed from the 2008 global financial crisis. Policy makers are grappling with a chicken-and-egg situation: Should they spur credit to boost economic growth or focus instead on cleaning up a banking system with the world's worst bad-loan ratio?

How did it come to this? The seeds were sown in a debt-fuelled economic boom between 2007 and 2012, when banks increased loans by 400 per cent. When the economy began slowing, many companies struggled to repay, making banks reluctant to lend more. That crimped

the availability of credit and added a further drag on the economy, heaping pressure on indebted businesses. Some of the slack was picked up by non-bank lenders, or shadow banks, but one of the most prominent, IL&FS, became the first major blowup in 2018 in what became known as India's mini-Lehman moment.

What's happened? The collapse of IL&FS triggered something of a credit crunch and the Reserve Bank of India stepped in to take control of another shadow lender, Dewan Housing Finance Corp, to contain the fallout. A smaller lender also failed in 2019 after allegedly duping investors about its exposure to a property developer. Then, in March 2020, the central bank seized Yes Bank in India's biggest bank rescue, and this month it orchestrated the takeover of struggling



Lakshmi Vilas Bank Ltd by Singapore's DBS Group Holdings Ltd, the first such move involving a foreign bank.

What went wrong? Yes Bank's troubles were rooted in the rapid expansion under its former CEO and co-founder Rana Kapoor. Credit Suisse had noted in a 2019 report the company had the biggest proportion of outstanding loans to large stressed borrowers. Lakshmi Vilas suffered numerous setbacks in the recent past, including the ouster of its CEO by stakeholders. In 2019, the bank had planned to merge with shadow lender Indiabulls

Housing Finance Ltd, only for the regulator to veto the move. The RBI had placed Lakshmi Vilas under watch in September of that year, months after the breach of key thresholds.

So it's not just the economy? No. India's bad-loan problem has multiple roots, including government policies. Some borrowers found life harder when authorities suddenly tightened regulations; the courts cancelled coal-mining licences or ordered payment of telecom fees; natural gas supplies dwindled; real-estate prices fell and interest rates rose.

The demonetisation in 2016 devastated supply chains and created dangerous imbalances in the financial system. Also, regulators allege that some bank chiefs handed out to their cronies many loans that ended up in default.

What are authorities doing and is it working? The central bank in 2015 began assessing the bad loans, bringing to light the full scope of the problem. Gross non-performing assets across the banking sector surged from about 3 per cent to more than 9 per cent, then breached 10 per cent—the highest in the world. The government has created a new bankruptcy law to aid loan-recoveries but, as the economic growth slows, authorities are taking steps to spur fresh credit and show more lenience toward certain borrowers and small businesses. The central bank warned in July that India's bad-loan clean-up is set to reverse, with soured debt forecast at 12.5 per cent of total credit by March 2021, the

highest level in more than two decades.

Are there more difficulties ahead? Almost certainly. Fitch Ratings warned in July that capital fund-raising plans by state-owned banks from private sources won't be sufficient to mitigate anticipated risks without additional support from the state. But the government is struggling to find cash to support the lenders and to spur credit. India entered an unprecedented technical recession in 2020 and the central bank said risks are piling up on household and corporate balance sheets that could spill into the financial sector.

Any silver lining? The health of India's NBFC sector has improved. The RBI had been concerned about 10 companies on a list of 50, but is now just focused on four. Healthier shadow lenders could revive credit for consumers, potentially giving a shot in the arm to the economy. —Bloomberg

NSE ASKED TO RAISE CORPUS OF INVESTOR PROTECTION FUND TO ₹1,500 CRORE

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, NOV. 18

Regulator Sebi has asked the NSE to increase the size of its investor protection fund (IPF) corpus to Rs 1,500 crore in order to protect the interests of investors in light of the recent broker defaults. The exchange currently maintains about Rs 550 crore in IPF corpus, NSE said when enquired by Financial Chronicle. "The adequacy of the IPF corpus will be reviewed on a half-yearly basis and incremental contributions will be made to the IPF, if required," the NSE said. "Sebi has advised NSE to increase the size of its IPF corpus to Rs 1,500 crore in order to protect the interests of investors in light of the recent broker defaults," the NSE said in a statement on Wednesday. "NSE is focused and committed to further strengthening investor protection through a variety of measures including focused investor education, enhanced broker supervision and surveillance in view of the recent defaults of Trading Members," it said.

APPAREL EXPORTERS SEEK DEAL WITH UK

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, NOV. 18

Apparel exporters want the government to strike a pre-FTA preferential trade deal with the United Kingdom ahead of Brexit. The apparel industry is at a disadvantage against some of its competitors which have FTA with the UK, it is felt. "It has been learnt that after the implementation of Brexit in January 2021, 47 Least Developed Countries, including Bangladesh, will continue to enjoy preferential trade benefits. This will be a continuation of the disadvantage to Indian apparels in the important and potential market of the UK," said Apparel Export Promotion Council chairman A Sakthivel.

SHORT TAKES

Youngster Leon earns GM norm

Chennai: Young Indian International master Leon Luke Mendonca won a GM tournament in Hungary with a round to spare to close in on the coveted Grandmaster title. The 14-year-old player from Goa won the First Saturday GM November 2020 event in Budapest late on Monday to earn his second Grandmaster norm in the space of 21 days. He needs one more norm to earn the GM title. Mendonca (Elo 2516) finished with 7.5 points and won the title with a round to spare. He remained unbeaten in the event and scored wins over two Grandmasters. He posted six wins and three draws in the nine-round championship. In the opening round, he drew against higher rated GM Plat Vojtech of the Czech Republic. He had in late October won the RigoChess International Chess Festival Grandmaster tournament in Hungary where he gained his maiden GM norm. — PTI

Dalmiya grandson is football official

Kolkata: Keeping up the family legacy, Aditya Dalmiya, grandson of former BCCI and ICC president late Jagmohan Dalmiya, on Wednesday made a foray into sports administration. Aditya is the son of Dalmiya's daughter Baishali, who happens to be a Trinamool Congress MLA from Bally constituency. The 21-year-old, who is pursuing masters in sports management, was appointed as the chairman of Indian Football Association 'School Committee' representing Rajasthan Club. "He is a young man with the right mindset. We made the 'School Committee' with much care and made him the chairman. My nephew Anirban Dutta, who is in the same committee, will work under him," IFA chairman Subrata Dutta said. Recollecting his father Biswanath Dutta's role in Dalmiya's rise, he said: "My father had spotted Jagmohan Dalmiya in the early 1970s as the administrator of the football unit of Rajasthan Club." — PTI

Aditi and Diksha start well in Saudi

King Abdullah Economic City, Saudi Arabia: Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar began with a round of one-under 71 respectively as the Saudi Ladies Team International got underway at the Royal Greens Golf and Country Club on Wednesday. They were both Tied-14th as Finnish golfer Sanna Nuutinen shot 66 to take the lead after the first round. Other Indians in the field were further down. Tvesa Malik (74) was T-41 and Astha Madan (80) was T-103rd. The tournament has an innovative team format, though the individual pros will also be vying for substantial purse. It is being played over 54-holes with \$500,000 up for grabs — \$300,000 for the team and \$200,000 for the individual. The players and amateurs make up 37 teams. The teams were selected in an NFL-style draft system and they compete in a team of four pro-am format with the best two scores to count. — PTI

CWG all set for women's cricket

Dubai: Six highest-placed teams in the ICC rankings as on April 1 next year along with hosts England will get direct qualification to the 2022 Commonwealth Games women's T20 competition, which will make its debut at the quadrennial showpiece in Birmingham. Women's cricket will be a part of the Commonwealth Games for the first time ever when the 2022 edition gets underway in Birmingham from July 28 to August 8. It will only be the second time that cricket will feature in the event after a men's competition was part of the Games in Kuala Lumpur in 1998. — PTI

Live on TV

TENNIS

ATP Finals: Round robin matches from 7.30 pm and 1.30 am (Friday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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GERMANY'S PAIN

Spaniards shame heavyweights with humiliating defeat

Paris, Nov. 18: Ferran Torres grabbed a hat-trick as Spain condemned Germany to their worst defeat in 89 years on Tuesday, winning 6-0 in Seville to qualify for the UEFA Nations League finals and join France, who came from behind to beat Sweden 4-2.

Manchester City forward Torres was the star for Spain, who were as brilliant as Germany were bad. The result raises further questions about Germany coach Joachim Loew, who was already under pressure coming into this game.

"This has been a black day for us," admitted Loew after Germany's heaviest defeat since losing 6-0 to Austria in 1931.

They came into their final game in League A, Group 4 on top, a point clear of Spain, and so only needed a draw at an empty La Cartuja to qualify for the finals in October next year.

But Alvaro Morata headed Spain in front in the 17th minute before Torres crashed in the second on 33 minutes after Dani Olmo's header hit the bar.

His City teammate Rodri headed in another to make it 3-0 for Spain before the end of a first half in which they lost Sergio Canales and skipper Sergio Ramos to injury.

Germany's defence was missing as Jose Gaya burst through and squared for Torres to get the fourth on 55 minutes, and Fabian Ruiz teed up the 20-year-old Torres to complete his hat-trick.

Germany now have several months to reflect on this loss before the start of 2022 World Cup qualifying in March and then the delayed Euro 2020 in June and July.

Spain, meanwhile, became the second side to qualify for the Nations League finals after France clinched their place by beating Portugal 4-2 at the weekend.

— AFP

THE RESULTS

Spain (Morata 17, Ferran Torres 33, 55, 71, Rodri 38, Oyarzabal 89)	6
Germany	0
Croatia (Kovacic 29, 65)	2
Portugal (Ruben Dias 52, 90, Joao Felix 60)	3
France (Giroud 16, 59, Pavard 36, Coman 90+5)	4
Sweden (Claesson 5, Quaison 88)	2
Luxembourg	0
Azerbaijan	0
Montenegro (Jovetic 14, Boljevic 25, 28, Mugosa 60)	4
Cyprus	0
Malta (Guillaumier 54)	1
Faroe Islands (Jonsson 70)	1



Spain players celebrate a goal against Germany during the UEFA Nations League football match at La Cartuja stadium in Seville, Spain, on Tuesday. Spain won 6-0, Germany's worst defeat since 1931. — AP

Brazil, Argentina 2 good

Montevideo (Uruguay), Nov. 18: Brazil continued their perfect start to the qualifiers for the 2022 World Cup with a 2-0 win over Uruguay while rivals Argentina stayed in touch with an easy win in Peru. First-half goals from Arthur and Richardson helped Brazil to a 2-0 win over Uruguay, who had Manchester United striker Edinson Cavani sent off.

Argentina, with Lionel Messi pulling the strings, brushed aside a limited Peru 2-0 in Lima, with goals from Inter Milan's Lautaro Martinez and Nicholas Gonzalez in a game in which they were never troubled.

Ecuador, playing on their home turf in high-altitude Quito, hammered Colombia 6-1. Paraguay and Bolivia fought out a 2-2 draw while Venezuela picked up their first points in a 2-1 victory over Chile in Caracas.

Victory in Montevideo left Brazil on top of South America's qualifying standings on 12 points with four wins from four games. Argentina are second on 10 points after beating Peru, with surprise team Ecuador third on nine points.

— AFP



Brazil's Marquinhos (left) and Douglas Luiz vie for the ball with Darwin Nunez of Uruguay during their FIFA World Cup South American qualifier at the Centenario Stadium in Montevideo on Tuesday. Brazil won 2-0. — AFP

THE RESULTS

Uruguay (Arthur 33, Richardson 45)	2	Ecuador (Arboleda 7, Mena Delgado 9, Estrada Martinez 32, Arreaga 39, Plata 78, Estupinan 90+1)	6
Peru	0	Colombia (Rodriguez 45+1-pen)	1
Argentina (Gonzalez 17, Martinez 28)	2	Paraguay (Angel Romero 19-pen, Kaku 72)	2
Venezuela (Mago 9, Rondon 81)	2	Bolivia (Moreno 41, B. Cespedes 45)	2
Chile (Vidal 15)	1		

Nadal dances to Thiem music at ATP

London, Nov. 18: Rafael Nadal insisted he can still win the ATP Finals for the first time despite a damaging 7-6 (9/7), 7-6 (7/4) defeat against Austria's Dominic Thiem on Tuesday.

Thiem overpowered Nadal behind closed doors at London's O2 Arena to put a dent in the Spanish star's bid to finally lift the one major prize missing from his packed trophy cabinet.

Thiem became the first player to qualify for the semifinals a few hours later when reigning champion Stefanos Tsitsipas beat Russian seventh seed Andrey Rublev 6-1, 4-6, 7-6 (8/6).

Tsitsipas saved a match point in the final set tie-break before the Greek sixth seed sealed his first win of the week.

Nadal had beaten Rublev in straight sets in his first match, but the 34-year-old was unable to cope with Thiem in a high-quality clash.

Now Nadal, who lost the 2010 and 2013 finals of the event, has to beat Tsitsipas in his last group match to keep alive his hopes of reaching the semifinals of the prestigious season-ending tournament.



Dominic Thiem of Austria celebrates defeating Rafael Nadal of Spain in their men's singles round robin match on Day Three of the ATP World Tour Finals at the O2 Arena in London on Tuesday. — AFP

Despite his perilous position, Nadal took heart from the way he competed against the inspired Thiem. He believes that will stand him in good stead in a showdown with Tsitsipas that decides the second semifinalist from the group. "He played I think an amazing match, and I

played well too. So my feeling is not negative. I lost, but I had plenty of chances in the first and then I had break up in the second set," Nadal said.

"I'm happy with the way I played. I think my chances are bigger to have a very good result now than five days ago because

the level of tennis, even if I lost today, for me is much higher," he added.

Nadal, who last month equalled Roger Federer's record of 20 Grand Slams by winning the French Open, has won 86 titles but just one of those has come on an indoor hard court.

The world number two has qualified for the ATP Finals for 16 years in a row, but his record at the eight-man elite event pales in comparison with Federer and Novak Djokovic after six injury withdrawals.

Potentially facing another disappointment in the Finals, Nadal said he couldn't explain his problems at the event. "I don't know. I think even if I never won here, I don't want to pretend to be arrogant at all, because I am not. But I really don't need to show even to myself or to no one that if I am playing my best tennis I think I can win in every surface and against any player," he said.

"I never won in the World Tour Finals. That's the real thing at the same time. So no problem about that. I know I have to play my best if I want to have chances," Nadal added. — AFP

English August for India in '21

London, Nov. 18: A five-match Test series against India will headline England's bumper home summer in 2021 as the country's cricket board on Wednesday unveiled a provisional fixture with plans to get crowds back into the stadiums.

The matches against India are scheduled for August-September.

Earlier this year, England hosted Pakistan and the West Indies in twin Test series behind closed doors due to the raging Covid-19 pandemic, before welcoming Australia for a series of limited overs matches.

However, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) now seems eager to stage the return of fans into the playing arena from the next season onwards depending on the Covid-19 situation.

"Next year we've got another big international programme to look forward to, with the thrill of a five-Test series against India as the centrepiece, compelling white ball series for our men and women, and an Ashes Series for our Visually Impaired team," ECB chief executive officer, Tom Harrison, said in a release issued by the board. Much to the delight of

● **England's Test series against India is due to get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14.**

English cricket fans craving for live action, the CEO added, "It's an exciting prospect for England fans, and while Covid-19 means there's still a great deal of uncertainty, we really hope to be able to welcome fans back into the grounds safely next year to bring that unique atmosphere to stadium across the country."

The Test series against India is due to conclude the men's international summer, with matches at Trent Bridge, Lord's, Headingley, the Kia Oval and Old Trafford.

The series is due to get underway on August 4 at Trent Bridge, with following matches taking place at Lord's, Headingley and The Oval, before finishing up in Manchester on September 14. — PTI

NEW DAD RICHARDSON PULLS OUT OF OZ SIDE

Sydney, Nov. 18: Fast bowler Kane Richardson withdrew on Wednesday from Australia's limited-overs squad to face India to stay with his wife and newborn son in Adelaide, which is battling a coronavirus outbreak.

Richardson will be replaced by fellow quick Andrew Tye who was part of the squad on Australia's recent white-ball tour to England.

"It was a difficult decision for Kane to make but one which has the complete support of the selectors and the entire playing squad," national selector Trevor Hohns said.

Richardson informed selectors of his decision on Tuesday, hours before South Australia announced a six-day "cir-

cuit-breaker" lockdown to contain a sudden coronavirus cluster in the state capital Adelaide.

"Kane wanted to remain in Adelaide with Nyki and their newborn son. We will always support our players and their families, even more so given the challenging environment we are in," said Hohns.

Preparations for India's blockbuster cricket tour have been complicated by the outbreak in South Australia, with the first Test scheduled at the Adelaide Oval from December 17-21.

Before that there are three one-day internationals and three Twenty20 internationals to be played in Sydney and Canberra beginning on November 27. — AFP

Akhtar pitches for Rohit as ODI lead

New Delhi, Nov. 18: Former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar feels Rohit Sharma leading the Indian Test team against Australia in Virat Kohli's absence is a no brainer and the much awaited series will be his "best chance" to stake claim for captaincy in one of the limited-overs formats.

Calls have been growing for split captaincy in the Indian team since Rohit led Mumbai Indians to a fifth title in the IPL. Rohit has also led India to an Asia Cup title in Kohli's absence. Though Ajinkya Rahane is the vice-captain on paper, Akhtar sees Rohit taking over leadership duties from Kohli following the first Test at the Adelaide Oval. The India skipper will be returning home after the series-opener to attend the birth of his first child.

"My take on it is pretty simple. From what I know Virat is very keen to take the team forward. It all depends on how fatigued he is feeling. He has been playing non-stop since 2010, has got 70 centuries and a mountain of runs under his belt," Akhtar said.

"If he is feeling fatigued, then he should think about giving the leadership role to Rohit in one of the formats (preferably T20s). I could see the boredom on his face during the IPL, may be it was because of the bio-bubble situation, he seemed a bit stressed out. It all depends on how he feels. Rohit has been ready for captaincy for a while," he added.

"Australia will be his best chance to prove himself as captain. He should grab it with both hands. He has the talent and ability to lead the team. The whole world would be looking at Rohit as captain and batsman. If he does well for himself and the team, then there should be a debate about split captaincy," Akhtar said. — PTI

PAK CHIEF IS SURE OF HOSTING MORE GAMES

Karachi, Nov. 18: Pakistan Cricket Board chairman Ehsan Mani believes the successful and event-free conduct of Pakistan Super League-5 has enhanced the image of the country and exuded confidence of hosting more international teams next year.

Mani said he was happy to have fulfilled his commitment of hosting the entire PSL this year at home. "I reiterated this when the event was suspended prior to the play-off stage, and despite several challenges, uncertainties and doubts, I am delighted that the PCB has fulfilled another commitment and promise to the loyal and passionate Pakistan cricket fans and supporters," he said after the summit clash that was won by Karachi Kings on Tuesday night. — PTI