

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | SUNDAY | 29 NOVEMBER 2020

WEATHER

Max: 24.0°C
Min: 20.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: —
Forecast: rain.
Max/Min temp.
24/20 9C

COVID-19 CUNT

CASES

DEATHS

(+43,404)

(+530)

93,92,689

1,36,720

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+753)

(+3)

TS: 2,68,418

1,451

(+625)

(+5)

AP: 8,67,063

6,981

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

6,23,48,685

DEATHS

14,55,254

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

218

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Kartika Shuddha Chaturdasi
till 12.46 noon
Star: Kritika till 6.02 am (Monday)
Varjyam: 4.40 pm to 6.27 pm
Durmuhurtam: 4.07 pm to 4.52 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Rabbi-ul Akhir 13, 1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.45 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 4.30 pm
Maghrib: 5.40 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.18 AM
SUNSET TODAY 5.32 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 4.54 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 6.03 AM

COUNTER POINT

Don't take them seriously. The polls in Punjab and Haryana are far away!

SHORT TAKE

Cold conditions prevail in N. India

New Delhi: Jammu and Kashmir till December 4. Kashmir experienced sub-zero night temperatures as the mercury settled several degrees below the freezing point, with Srinagar recording the minimum temperature of minus 2.2 degrees Celsius, while Gazigund (Anantnag) and Kupwara experienced a low of minus 1.8 degrees Celsius and minus 1.0 degrees Celsius respectively. Temperatures in Himachal Pradesh, Lahaul and Spiti's administrative centre Keylong was recorded as the coldest place in the state at minus 9.5 degrees Celsius.

EPFO extends life record deadline

New Delhi: Retirement fund body EPFO has extended the deadline for submission of life certificates by pensioners till February 28, a move which would benefit over 35 lakh persons who could not submit the document by November due to coronavirus pandemic. The pensioners who could not submit their life certificates till November 30 deadline, would get pension every month till February. "In view of the ongoing pandemic and the vulnerability of elderly population, the EPFO has extended the time limit up to February 28, 2021.



NATION | 4
Congress supports farmers agitation



WORLD | 5
US court rejects Trump Pennsylvania lawsuit

SPORTS | 6
India look to hit back in second ODI



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Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with Dr Krishna Ella, CMD and Suchitra Ella, JMD, of Bharat Biotech on Saturday.

PM reviews Covid vaccine progress at Bharat Biotech

DC CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
HYDERABAD, AHMEDABAD, PUNE, NOV. 28

Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited Coronavirus vaccine facilities at Ahmedabad, Hyderabad and Pune to review the development and manufacturing process on Monday. The visit was purely functional, and shorn of any ceremony. Modi first visited the Zydus Biotech Park in Ahmedabad, then the Bharat Biotech plant in the city and wound up his tour with a visit to the Serum Institute of India facility in Pune. Scientists, researchers and facilitators at Bharat Biotech said they were humbled by the visit of the

Prime Minister. The PM personally reviewed the vaccine development and manufacturing process. He was briefed by the company about the human trials for which 26,000 volunteers in hospitals across the country have been enrolled. The vaccine is being produced in the certified level 3 biosafety production unit. Modi later posted on his Twitter handle that Bharat Biotech officials had briefed him about their vaccine. He congratulated the scientists for their progress in the trials so far. At all the three plants, the Prime Minister, who was wearing a PPE kit during the review, was extensively briefed about the vaccine work by com-

pany officials and scientists. Modi landed at the Hakimpet Air Force station at around 1 pm and proceeded to Bharat Biotech's facility away by road. He reviewed the progress of Covaxin, a vaccine candidate being developed by the company. He also interacted with Bharat Biotech chairman and managing director Krishna Ella, scientists and senior management. "At the Bharat Biotech facility in Hyderabad, was briefed about their indigenous Covid-19 vaccine. Congratulated the scientists for their progress in the trials so far. Their team is closely working with ICMR to facilitate speedy progress," Modi posted on Twitter.

PUSHKARALU VISITORS BRAVE CHILLY WEATHER

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, NOV. 28

With Tungabhadra Pushkaralu coming to an end in next three days, visitors are heading to Pushkar ghats all along the course of the river in Kurnool district braving rains and chilly winds. Mantralayam and Sangameshwaram ghats are attracting most visitors. Various authorities say compared to 2008 Pushkarams, about one lakh fewer devotees reached the ghats for various rituals due to the pandemic. The number of visitors at the pump house ghat was 447 out of whom just 47 offered Pinda Pradanams. 287 had shower baths while the remaining took a holy dip despite the Covid risk. Authorities were warning through mics that taking a dip has been banned in view of Covid spreading through water from any infected persons taking a dip. Most devotees did not heed the warning. Kaipa Venkata Murthy, a visitor from Secunderabad, said, "What is Pushkar bath without a dip? We are aware of Covid and have maintained physical distancing and have sanitised ourselves. This dip is essential to propitiate our forefathers."

M. Sridhar from Cooperative Colony in Kadapa, however, said his family had a shower bath and offered Pushkar pujas to minimise the threat of Coronavirus. H. Hanumantha Rao from Nellore said facilities like separate enclosure for men and women to change clothes at the ghats have been really convenient. Despite rains and chilly weather, most visitors, preferred early morning visits to the ghats.

AP temple land sale put on hold

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, NOV. 28

The proposed sale of 208.15 acres of temple lands belonging to Mantralayam Raghavendra Seamy Mutt in Aija, Rajoli and Gattu in Jogulamba Gadwal district of Telangana has been put on hold. The tender process for sale of these lands was to start from December 7. When contacted, Mutt assistant administrative officer L. Madhava Setty said, "The decision to put off the tender process has been taken after farmers cultivating lands belonging to the Mutt requested that they be allowed to harvest the crops. He also cited the prevailing Coronavirus pandemic as another reason. Madhava Setty maintained that the Mutt had got permission from the

state government to sell the lands in 2017 as per Endowment Act 30 / 1987 and other norms. He denied that there has been any pressure from ruling YSR Congress party leaders on this issue. Mantralayam Mutt is a public trust property. It is stated that the Matadhipathi of Sri Raghavendra Swamy Mutt found it difficult to personally manage the vast extents of properties endowed to the Mutt by individuals and institutions for upkeep of various religious and other activities carried out by the religious institution. Thus, the Mantralayam Matadhipathi gave power of attorney to certain people to manage the properties.

■ Page 3: Calling tenders big scam: Mutt staff

MEDICAL | ADMISSIONS

Higher Education dept must issue GO on counselling guidelines

NTR-UHS awaits orders on MBBS, BDS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

NTR University of Health Sciences (NTR-UHS) is yet to go ahead with admissions for first year MBBS, BDS and other courses. To do so, it is awaiting orders from the state government specifying guidelines to conduct counselling for admissions into the first year. A six-member, high-level committee, with university registrar Dr. K. Sankar as its convener, has submitted already a report with a set of guidelines to the Department of Higher Education (DHE). Basis this, DHE is supposed to

issue a GO incorporating the guidelines for counselling. The guidelines include conduct of separate counselling for admission into first year MBBS and BDS courses. It had been a combined exercise thus far. Counselling for admission for first year Ayush courses will also be done separately. The NTR-UHS registrar said, "Unless another GO specifying guidelines on conduct of counselling is issued, we cannot go ahead with admissions." DHE has already issued G. O. 159 on implementation of reservations for SC, ST and BC students in all higher educational institu-

₹5 lakh ex gratia to kin of cyclone victims: CM

Jagan asks officials to take up crop loss enumeration

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced an ex gratia of ₹5 lakh each to the next of kin of eight persons (six in Chittoor and two in Kadapa districts) who died in the heavy rains triggered by cyclone Nivar.

The Chief Minister made this announcement while addressing collectors of Nellore, Kadapa and Chittoor districts at the International Airport in Tirupati after an aerial survey of the Nivar-affected areas in the three districts on Saturday. He directed officials to make sure that power is restored as early as possible. He said the crop loss enumeration should be taken up on a war-footing and reports should be submitted by December 15 in order to offer compensation by December end.

The Chief Minister said people in relief camps should be given ₹500 each while returning home. Services of volunteers should be utilised to hand over the amount if they have already left relief camps. The CM instructed officials to give seeds at 80 per cent subsidy to the farmers in the affected areas. A decision to this effect was taken at the Cabinet meeting on Friday. He directed officials to act on humanitarian grounds in dealing with the people in the affected areas and to compensate other damages like houses and livestock as per SDRF norms. Deputy Chief Ministers K. Narayana Swami, Amjad Basha and other ministers and officials attended the meeting.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy makes an aerial survey to take stock of the widespread devastation caused by Cyclone Nivar across the state.

2 more cyclones likely to hit state

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

People, mainly farmers, who have already faced the worst of Nivar cyclone, are now a worried lot as Meteorological Office has warned that another two cyclones – Burevi and Taketi – may hit the state. While Burevi is expected to hit the AP coast on December 2, Taketi will swoop in on December 7. Farmers are extremely distressed that for the first time, a series of cyclones are hitting them. They point out that harvesting for Kharif season

starts towards November end. But majority of the farmers were forced to hurriedly harvest due to cyclone. Many say they could save only half their crops due to sudden start of rains due to cyclone. According to agricultural department, Nivar has caused huge devastation by damaging standing crops on 2,14,420 hectares in 11 districts of the state. Paddy farmers are the worst hit, followed by those who cultivated red gram, Bengal gram, cotton and other crops.

■ Page 2: Highest damage reported in Guntur district

Villages near Penna marooned

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Several low-lying villages along the Penna river in Nellore district were inundated after officials released of more than 2.8 lakh cusecs of water from the Somasila reservoir. The reservoir had received 2.63 lakh cusecs of water on Saturday. Elsewhere, breaches to the bunds of water bodies led to inundation of villages in Kovur, Buchireddypalem and Sangam mandals apart from low-lying areas in Nellore City. Hundreds of villages are still under the grip of darkness as stagnant water, deposited by rains accompanying Cyclone Nivar, affected the restora-



Farmers try to protect their paddy from getting inundated in Annampalli village, Mummdivaram mandal in East Godavari District on Saturday.

tion of power. In Nellore City, water entered Bhagat Singh Colony, Parameswari Nagar and Manumasiddi Nagar among others. Industries minister

Mekapati Goutham Reddy inspected the breach to a tank at Nagulavellaturu in Chjerla mandal. Minister Anilkumar visited affected areas like Porlukatta. Nellore Rural legislator

LOW PRESSURE CONTINUES IN BAY OF BENGAL

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 28

A low pressure area lay over South Andaman Sea, adjoining areas of south-east Bay of Bengal, and equatorial Indian Ocean on Saturday. It is very likely to concentrate into a depression during the next 48 hours and intensify further. Thereafter, it is likely to move nearly westwards and reach south Tamil Nadu coast on December 2.

Under its influence, scattered to widespread rainfall activity is very likely over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kalaikal in Kerala, apart from Male, Lakshadweep, south coastal Andhra Pradesh and south Rayalaseema between December 1 and 2. Isolated heavy to very heavy rainfall is also likely over south coastal Andhra Pradesh and south Rayalaseema, a Met office report said in its Saturday evening bulletin. ■ UNDER THE influence of the low pressure, scattered to widespread rainfall activity is very likely over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Kalaikal in Kerala, apart from Male, Lakshadweep, south coastal Andhra Pradesh and south Rayalaseema between December 1 and 2.

Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy, Kovur legislator Prasannakumar Reddy and Sarveypalli legislator Kakani Govardhan Reddy inspected affected areas in their constituencies. Prasannakumar asked the people living in and around Kangiri reservoir to be alert as the reservoir is full. Water overflow poses a threat to Buchireddypalem and neighbouring villages. Former mayor SK Abdul Aziz demanded that the authorities supply a mineral water can and food to the people living in inundated areas. Meanwhile, traffic was restored on NH 16 much to the relief of the travelling public. ■ Page 2: Traffic allowed after damage repaired

5 CRPF COBRA COMMANDOS HURT IN ATTACK

Raipur, Nov. 28: Five personnel of CRPF's jungle warfare unit CoBRA were injured in an IED blast triggered by Maoists on Saturday in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, officials said. They said the IED blast took place in the Chintafuga forest area of the district and the injured personnel are being evacuated by a helicopter. The injured persons belong to the 206th battalion of the Commando Battalions for Resolute Action (CoBRA). A joint team of CoBRA and police was out for a special operation when the blast took place, they said. — PTI

IN BRIEF

VUNDAVALLI SEEKS
WHITE PAPER
ON POLAVARAMDC CORRESPONDENT
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM, NOV. 28

Former MP Vundavalli Arunkumar demanded that the government release a whitepaper on the status of Polavaram Project and the availability of funds for it.

He told the reporters here on Saturday that the YSRC government is not taking a firm and correct stand on the project and exerting pressure on the Union government to bear the full cost in accordance with the AP Reorganisation Act in 2014.

He said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy need not be afraid of the cases pending against him and he should take a firm stand on the issue of Polavaram project and other promises made at the time of bifurcation. He said it was absurd on the part of the Union government to contend that Polavaram cost would be borne at 2014 rates. He wondered how anybody can execute the work in 2020 at 2014 rates.

He said that it is the right of the Andhra Pradesh people to have Polavaram Project constructed at the expense of the Union government, as it has been declared as a national project. He said that former Congress leader K.V.P. Ramachandra Rao has filed a PIL in the Supreme Court regarding the Polavaram project and other assurances of bifurcation. He himself had impeded in the case. The state government should also file an affidavit and impede itself.

He said even the former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu did not take a correct stand on the project, but as he was an ally in BJP for four years, he somehow managed the show. Now, Jagan Mohan Reddy is finding himself in a corner, Arunkumar said.

He said that the Centre should bear the entire cost of the irrigation component of the project, including the R&R cost. He said that Niti Aayog had submitted a report on the comprehensive development of Andhra Pradesh after bifurcation. However, it was kept a secret and it should be made public.

Cyclone Nivar claims eight lives

Rainfall had major impact on Nellore, Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa districts

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Heavy rainfall under the influence of Nivar cyclonic storm has claimed eight lives, including six in Chittoor and two in Kadapa, while four persons went missing in the state.

Based on a preliminary assessment, as the rainfall had a major impact on Nellore, Prakasam, Chittoor and Kadapa districts, 1.12 lakh people were affected, 6,133 houses marooned, 2,294 houses/huts damaged, 88 big animals, 2,618 small animals, 8,130 poultry birds perished.

As many as 1,597 villages/towns in 124 mandals were affected while six villages suffered inundation due to floods. The authorities have set up 223 relief camps and evacuated 40,306 persons and accommodated them in such camps while 265 medical camps were organised to provide healthcare.

As a temporary relief, ₹2.50 crore was released to the four districts for talking up immediate relief works. A special assistance of ₹500 each was given to the affected persons accommodated in relief camps.

Agriculture crops located in Nellore, Prakasam, Chittoor, Kadapa and Kurnool, suffered damages in about 2.14 lakh hectares based on preliminary reports while enumeration on the extent of the damage is underway.

In the fisheries department, cage culture units at Annamayya reservoir in Kadapa district and farms in Prakasam district were flooded causing an estimated loss of ₹51.15 lakh.

Infrastructure damage and loss to departments like roads and buildings, water resources, municipal administration, energy, panchayat raj, rural water supply, handlooms and textiles was estimated at ₹56,993.31 lakh for taking up restoration works



Paddy crop damaged due to rains at Kruthivenu mandal in Pedana constituency in Krishna district on Saturday. — DC

■ As a temporary relief, ₹2.50 crore was released to the four districts for talking up immediate relief works. A special assistance of ₹500 each was given to the affected persons accommodated in relief camps.

both on temporary and permanent basis.

The state government deployed eight NDRF and six SDRF teams in the four districts for taking up rescue operations.

Meanwhile, two persons stranded in Mallimadugu reservoir near Renigunta in Chittoor district were rescued as were 60 stranded in a local canal at Tippapadu village of Gudur mandal in Nellore district.

Jagan should personally visit flood-hit areas, says Lokesh

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Main opposition Telugu Desam has criticised Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for conducting only aerial surveys of flood-hit areas without personally visiting, understanding the plight, and consoling victims of floods.

Both TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu and party national general secretary Nara Lokesh separately observed that aerial surveys are just eyewash, empty and half-hearted efforts. Such surveys would not be able to wipe the tears of farmers. Lokesh

underlined that only a field-level survey and first-hand enquiry from farmers will give a correct picture about the impact of flooding.

Lokesh commented that Jagan Mohan Reddy, who walked all along in Padayatra before elections, is now flying only in air. The CM has thus gone beyond the reach of the common public after coming to power. He asked why the Jagan regime has failed in carrying out timely enumeration of crops losses and is not extending the required compensation to farmers in times of natural disasters.

Traffic allowed after damage was repaired

from page 1

Traffic movement was allowed after repairing the damage to the diversion road on the National Highway near Audisankara Engineering College at Gudur. The area witnessed huge floodwater obstructing movement of vehicles

between Nellore and Chennai.

Chittoor Police along with State Disaster Response Force teams rescued a 60-year-old person from Neeva river in Gangadharanellore mandal in Chittoor district on Saturday.

The survivor was identified as Sk Abdullah of Kotrakona village in Gangadharanellore mandal.

According to Chittoor DSP Sudhakar Reddy, Abdullah had gone to the middle of the river to collect grass for cattle. Water was released from the nearby NTR reservoir

which marooned him.

The teams rescued the man who lost hope of survival.

DSP Sudhakar Reddy said they had instructed the irrigation officials to close four gates of NTR reservoir to carry out the rescue operation and saved Abdullah.

Ready Bills on 1st day of Session: Speaker

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

AP Legislative Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram sought to prepare all Bills which would be introduced in the Assembly on the first day of Winter Session on Monday. He said the Assembly Winter Sessions would be held amidst Corona protocol taking all precautions. AP Legislative Council chairman M.A. Sharif directed all departments to prepare answers to the questions of legislators without fail. The Speaker and Chairman conducted a preparatory meeting with the officials on Saturday.

Sitaram and Sharif directed the police department to implement tight security following Corona protocol for the smooth functioning of Winter Sessions. They instructed the police to behave respectfully with the legislators without giving any chance for complaints.

Sitaram instructed the officials to take all necessary measures following the Covid-19 protocol for the Winter Sessions. He said that people would watch the Assembly session live and urged the officials to provide thorough information while providing answers to the questions of the legislators. He said that people seek their questions raised in the Assembly by their legislators about their problems and they would be satisfied when the officials would provide proper information. He sought to conduct a review on questions and answers of the earlier session before starting the Assembly session to provide required information to legislators and further to people.

The Council Chairman said that getting answers during Zero Hour is the right of legislators; hence the officials should provide complete information without fail to the questions.

Chief whip in AP Legislative Council, Ummareddy Venkateswarlu, said that MLAs and MLCS would face severe problems from the public in their areas if they failed to get proper answers. He sought to conduct of petition committee meeting frequently for the smooth performance of question and answer sessions.

NAIDU DEMANDS ASSEMBLY WINTER SESSION FOR AT LEAST 10 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Telugu Desam chief N. Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday demanded that the Assembly Winter Session be extended for a period of at least 10 days to discuss many burning problems being faced by people of the state, including floods.

Naidu said the YSRC government has not only failed in solving the old problems but ended up creating new problems for people in the past 18 months of its mis-governance. He said a longer

Assembly Session will allow time for holding discussions on a wide-range of issues being faced by the public. He alleged that only statements are being issued but no real compensation is being given to affected families at the field level.

Addressing an online meeting of the TDLP Naidu charged that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has miserably failed in delivering governance and administration. Naidu alleged that there is zero coordination within the official machinery as it has got de-motivated.



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SHORT TAKES

DOCTOR FOUND
MURDERED AT
AVANIGADDADC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Famous doctor in Avanigadda town Dr Kota Srihari Rao of Lakshmi Nursing Home was brutally murdered inside his house in Avanigadda of Krishna district on Saturday. He was found in a pool of blood inside his bedroom on the premises of the nursing home. The incident took place when his family members had gone to other place and he was alone in the house.

Krishna district SP Ravindranath Babu on Saturday stated that the police rushed to the spot and inspected the scene of offence. He said that the culprits tactfully changed the CC camera's direction to hide their identity. He said that as the incident took place while no one of the doctors family member were at home, the police are suspecting it as a murder and investigating the case in that angle.

SP Ravindranath Babu said that the clues team was pressed into action and four special teams were formed to investigate the case.

He added that police teams were questioning the doctor's family members, close relatives, hospital staff and locals to crack the mystery behind the murder.

TTD releases white
paper on its assets

Vaikunta Dwaram to be open for 10 days: TTD

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, NOV. 28

Putting the criticism over not disclosing the details of TTD assets to rest, TTD Trust board has released a white paper, on Saturday, on its assets which include 1,128 assets extending in an area of 8,088.89 acres across the country, apart from details of properties auctioned since 1974 with the survey number, place, board resolution, and auctioned date.

The Trust Board meeting took place at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala on Saturday. Speaking to media persons after the meeting, TTD Trust Board chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy said they have resolved to open the Vaikunta Dwaram for 10 days starting from Vaikunta Ekadasi day for the benefit of a multitude of visiting pilgrims to Tirumala temple.

Mr Reddy said they had consulted the Peethadhipathis and Agama advisers before

KEY DECISIONS		
● To make Tirumala as a Holy Green City and pollution-free pilgrim centre. As part of it, decided to run 100 to 150 electric buses to Tirumala with APSRTC.		
● As a pollution check measure, to utilise more non-conventional sources of energy, including wind and solar.	● Gold Malam works of Maha Dwaram, Dwajasthambam, Balipeetham in Srivari temple.	● To take up the gold malam works for Surya Prabha Vahanam at Sri Padmavati Ammavari temple with 11.7 kg of gold.
● Advance payment of ₹10,000 to the artists of Annamacharya Project as they do not have programs due to Covid.	● Decided to take up Sanatana Hindu Dharma Prachara with Prachara Rathams. Some board members have come forward to donate for these special vehicles.	
● To reintroduce Kalyanamastu, a mass, free wedding programme to the underprivileged couples with a new set of guidelines.	● Boys Hostel for S.V. Balamandiram at ₹10.75 crore	● Decided to continue its deposits in scheduled banks



deciding on the request from the pilgrims. TTD EO Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy, TTD

Trust board members, other top brass officials of TTD were also present.

CALLING TENDERS BIG
SCAM: MUTT STAFF

FROM PAGE 1

Mutt employees' association president V. Narayana has alleged that calling for tenders is a big scam. He urged people and devotees of Sri Raghavendra to protect properties of the Swamy. Narayana charged that Mutt officials are playing a game about selling Mutt lands on the pretext that they are yielding very less income from their lease.

The Mutt has more than 5,000 acres of land in different locations of the country. Several court cases are pending with regard to some of these lands in Karnataka and Tamil Nadu states.

Meanwhile, addressing media in Kurnool city on Saturday evening, Telugu Desam Mantralayam in-charge P. Tikka Reddy, along with party Kurnool unit president Somisetty Venkateswarlu, found fault with Mutt authorities in calling for the tender. They maintained that the move has been devised only to benefit YSR Congress party leaders. First it was Tirupati Venkateswara Swamy lands and now it is the turn of Manyralayam lands. YSRC is bent on weakening Hindu religious institutions, the TD leaders alleged.

BJP district secretary K. Narsimha Varma said the Mutt has no right to dispose of its lands even though the state government may pressurise temple authorities in this regard. He said it is unfortunate that only Hindu temples are being targeted and their assets are being sold away. "This is not at all acceptable to Hindus," the BJP leader asserted.

AP records 625
new Covid casesDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

The prevalence of Covid-19 seems to be under control in AP as more number of districts are registering less than 100 daily positive cases, and only a few districts are registering deaths.

Accordingly, AP registered 625 new Covid cases taking the tally to 8,67,063 and five deaths raising the toll to 6,981 in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities issued Covid bulletin on Saturday reporting that out of 49,348 samples tested, only 625 persons were found to be infected with the virus and out of a total number of 99,62,416 samples tested so far in the state, 8,48,511 patients were discharged after recovery, while 11,571 patients are still active with the virus.

Krishna district registered 103 daily cases of Covid, while the remaining districts registered less than 100 including 93 in West Godavari, 88 in Visakhapatnam, 68 in Guntur, 61 in Chittoor, 54 in East Godavari, 29 in Vizianagaram, 27 in Prakasam, 24 in Nellore, 22 in Kurnool, 21 in Anantapur, 19 in Kadapa and 16 in Srikakulam.

East Godavari topped the state for having the highest number of total Covid active cases with

3,945 while Krishna stood in the second position with 1,530 and Guntur with 1,361 occupied third position.

However, Visakhapatnam registered 974 followed by 892 in West Godavari, 701 in Nellore, 573 in Chittoor, 412 in Prakasam, 314 in Srikakulam, 269 in Anantapur, 211 in Kadapa, 196 in Kurnool and 193 in Vizianagaram.

East Godavari continued to lead in the rate of recovery of Covid patients with 1,17,625 patients recovering followed by 90,846 in West Godavari, 82,181 in Chittoor, 70,737 in Guntur, 65,797 in Anantapur, 60,438 in Prakasam, 60,170 in Nellore, 59,526 in Kurnool, 56,604 in Visakhapatnam, 53,617 in Kadapa, 44,776 in Srikakulam, 43,093 in Krishna, 40,206 in Vizianagaram, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

Among daily cases of Covid deaths, Krishna and West Godavari registered two each followed by one in Visakhapatnam.

The state health authorities discharged 1,186 Covid infected patients after recovery in the last 24 hours in the state.

AP conducted Covid tests on 1,86,562 samples per one million population with a positive rate at 8.7.

TWO TELANGANA
YOUTH ARRESTED
FOR ROBBING BANKDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

The police arrested two youngsters on Saturday who robbed ₹77 lakh from State Bank of India, Nadikudi branch a week ago. The two persons inspired by movies (like *Julayi* Telugu movie) and YouTube videos committed the crime to earn money swiftly without leaving any evidence to settle their lives but the police traced the mystery through scientific investigation.

The robbery took place on 21 November in which the culprits did not leave any evidence but the police got a slip on which a phone number was written, a small video footage and with the phone number and other scientific methods, the police cracked the mystery.

Addressing a press meet at Guntur on Saturday, Guntur rural SP Vishal Gunni said that the police arrested 21-year-old Kedari Prasad and 37-year-old Vinay Ramulu relatives and natives of Gandhinagar

of Miryalaguda in Telangana State and recovered the booty. He said that the duo accused studied Class X and intermediate and they planned to earn money in a swift way inspired by movies and YouTube videos which showed various types of bank robberies without leaving evidence.

He said that the duo used to visit Dachepalli for works, observed SBI at Nadikudi situated in inner lanes, conducted recce and robbed ₹77 lakh by cutting chest with gas cutter wearing gloves, detaching CCTV cameras and sprinkled chilli powder to mislead sniffer dogs.

SP Vishal Gunni said that the police formed eight teams which arduously worked with the help of a small video footage. He said that the police arrested the duo and recovered ₹77 lakh.

TD MLA stops
wall constructionDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, NOV. 28

The third time MLA and senior TD leader Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu stood by the shop keepers and successfully stopped the construction of a compound wall on Andhra University Engineering College Road under the Three Town police station limits on Saturday. It may be recalled that the Andhra University (AU) authorities with the GVMC personnel demolished all the shops that were located in the engineering college road last month. The MLA, however, could not prevent the demolition as there was a large presence of police personnel who did not allow him to go near the spot.

On Saturday when the AU officials were preparing for construction of the compound wall, the MLA along with his followers, reached the spot

and had arguments with the AU officials. He told them that the land on which the shops were built belonged to the AP irrigation department, but the AU officials with the help of GVMC demolished the shops.

The MLA told the AU officials that the matter of demolition was in the high court and they had no right to build any compound wall till the court disposed the issue. The petition will come up for hearing on December 11, and till then none has the right to interfere in the said land, the MLA told the officials.

The MLA called the collector V. Vinay Chand and vice-chancellor of Andhra University Prof. P.V.G.D. Prasad Reddy, but there was no response from them.

Meanwhile, the police officials entered the area and pacified both the parties. The AU engineering staff called off the work.

GOVERNMENT STARTED EFFORTS
TO RESOLVE BAJRANG MILL ISSUEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

Minister for endowments Velampalli Srinivas Rao said that the government started measures to resolve issues of Bajrang Jute Mill and assured to do justice to the workers.

He said that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy appointed a High Level Committee which is working for an

amicable solution which consulted management and workers. The high level committee meeting was conducted in the endowment minister camp office at Vijayawada on Saturday.

Minister Srinivas Rao lamented that earlier TD government never tried to resolve the Bajrang Jute Mill problem despite workers conducting numerous agitations.

World AIDS Day
in virtual modeDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, NOV. 28

The World AIDS Day to be held virtually on December 1 in the wake of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic situation in the state.

The virtual event will be held in a webinar mode with Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan as chief guest, and Union minister of state for health and family welfare Ashwini Kumar Choubey as the guest of honour from 10.30 to 11.30 am.

The health authorities used to organise the event to commemorate the efforts of the workforce engaged in the AIDS control programme by taking

out rallies and holding meetings to bring about awareness among the general public underlining the importance to curb its spread earlier. But with the prevalence of Covid-19, such practice is discontinued for this year to avoid the spread of the Covid-19.

The Andhra Pradesh State AIDS Control Society (APSACS) authorities issued directions to all the additional DMHOs and other concerned health personnel to ensure participation of all stakeholders from a minimum of 1,000 locations in each district in the state on Tuesday. The link for the virtual event <https://webcastlive.co.in/worldaidsday2020>.

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SHORT TAKES

NAGA, ASSAM ENGAGE IN UGLY BORDER SPAT

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, NOV. 28

After Mizoram row, the inter-state border conflict has erupted between Assam and Nagaland with local organisations of Assam imposing an indefinite economic blockade thereby halting all economic activities between Assam and Nagaland at Mariani in Jorhat district.

Tension had started at the inter-state border since November 10 following the construction of a temporary structure allegedly by Mokokchung district administration within the Dissoi Valley Reserve Forest under Mariani range of Jorhat Forest Division of Assam. The problem aggravated with the Mokokchung district administration posting armed Nagaland policemen at the site.

In response the Assam Police on November 11 also deployed its personnel in temporary camps near the place where Nagaland policemen were camping in order to prevent any further encroachment by Nagaland.

The local students organisation — the All Tai Ahom Students Union (ATASU), which opposed the move to what they called encroachment of Assam's land by the neighbouring state of Nagaland, has launched a movement since November 10 which was suspended for three days on assurance of the administration to resolve the issue.

K'TAKA CM'S AIDE ATTEMPTS 'SUICIDE'

Bengaluru, Nov. 28: Karnataka Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa's political secretary and relative N. R. Santosh who was hospitalised following alleged suicide attempt, is 'stable and cheerful', and may be discharged in a day or two, doctors treating him said on Saturday.

According to sources, Santosh is said to have attempted suicide by consuming sleeping pills on Friday night.

On finding him unconscious at his Dollars Colony residence here, family members have rushed him to Ramaiah Memorial Hospital.

Santhosh (31) was brought at about 8.30 pm with an alleged history of consumption of sleeping tablets at around 7 pm, the Hospital President Dr Nareish Shetty said in a statement.

Noting that on admission he was drowsy, the doctor said appropriate treatment was administered immediately and all investigations were carried out.

"He has been taking sleeping tablets occasionally for his sleep disturbance as per past history. On Saturday morning, the patient is stable. He had his breakfast and is cheerful. The plan is to shift the patient to the ward post noon on Saturday. He may be discharged in a day or two based on his health status and recovery," the statement added.

OPPN FIRM ON DEMAND FOR EXIT OF MIN SAHOO

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, NOV. 28

The Odisha government, under pressure from the Opposition and facing large-scale public outrage over the soft-peddling the investigation into the murder of five-year-old girl, on Saturday agreed to institute a probe by a court-monitored five-member Special Investigation Team (SIT), on Saturday.

The SIT will be headed by Inspector General of Police (IGP) Arun Bothra, who had cracked the 2018 Patnagarh parcel bomb case in which a newly-wed couple and their grandmother were killed.

State parliamentary affairs minister Bikram Kesari Arukha made the announcement in the Assembly. The announcement came a day after the Opposition parties attacked the Naveen Patnaik government over the ambiguity in the announcement by the latter regarding a SIT probe made on the floor of the House through video-conferencing on Friday.

The CM had said, "If required, the state government will order SIT probe into Pari murder case."

Arukha's announcement failed to pacify the Opposition which continued its attack on the government, forcing Speaker S.N. Patro to adjourn the proceedings till 3 pm.

UP 'love jihad' law gets Gov. nod

Jail term up to 10 years and fine of ₹50K for those violating its clauses

Lucknow, Nov. 28: The Uttar Pradesh ordinance aimed at curbing forcible or fraudulent religious conversions including those for the sake of marriage has got the assent of state Governor Anandiben Patel with the new law providing for a jail term of up to 10 years for any violations.

The law, which has been published in the UP gazette, comes into force at once, an official spokesperson said on Saturday. The ordinance was promulgated by the Governor on Friday with immediate effect.

Under the law which deals with different categories of offences, a marriage will be declared "null and void" if the conversion of a woman is solely for that purpose,

and those wishing to change their religion after marriage need to apply to the district magistrate.

The Yogi Adityanath government on Tuesday approved the draft of the Uttar Pradesh Prohibition of Unlawful Conversion of Religion Ordinance, 2020, which also curbs religious conversions only for the sake of marriage, dubbed by BJP leaders as 'love jihad'.

"The way in which religious conversions are done using deceit, lies, force and dishonesty is heart wrenching, and it was necessary to have a law in this regard," Cabinet minister and UP government spokesperson Sidharth Nath Singh had said.

Conversion for the alleged purpose of marriage is, however, only one aspect of the ordinance.

The new law was opposed by the opposition Samajwadi Party.

Hours after the governor's nod, SP president Akhilesh Yadav said his party will oppose the Bill when it comes up in the state Legislature for passage.

"The Samajwadi Party is not in favour of any such law. We will oppose it (when it comes up in the assembly)," the former chief minister told a press conference.

The new law also has a provision under which if someone returns to their original religion, it shall not be deemed a conversion.

The onus to prove that the conversion has not been done forcibly will lie

on the person accused of the act and the convert, it said.

In cases of violations of the law, the ordinance stipulates that the court shall grant appropriate compensation payable by the accused to the victim of conversion which may extend to a maximum of ₹5 lakh in addition to the fine.

The ordinance mainly envisages that no person shall convert, either directly or indirectly from one religion to another by use or practice of misrepresentation, force, undue influence, coercion, allurement or by any fraudulent means or by marriage nor shall any person abet, convince or conspire such conversion.

Minister Sidharth Nath Singh on Tuesday told

reporters that the punishment under the new law is a jail term from one to five years, and a fine of ₹15,000.

But if the woman involved is a minor or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe, the jail term would range from three to 10 years, he said.

But if the woman involved is a minor or belongs to a Scheduled Caste or a Scheduled Tribe, the jail term would range from three to 10 years, he said. The fine would increase to Rs 25,000.

"In the case of mass conversions, the punishment is from three years to 10 years and a fine of Rs 50,000 on the organisations which indulge in it," he added.

— PTI

India, Nepal put 'sour' ties back on friendly track

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI
NEW DELHI, NOV. 28

With India declaring it is "Nepal's foremost friend and development partner", bilateral ties are once again firmly back on track following the successful two-day visit of foreign secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla to Kathmandu this week. Sources said recently that both sides "noted the special relations between India and Nepal, and the importance of respecting each other's sensitivities", adding that the two sides "shared their perspectives on boundary matters and discussed ways to take it forward under the appropriate bilateral mechanisms".

The visit comes even as China — much to India's concern and dismay — has extended its influence in the Himalayan nation enormously in the past few years especially after the Nepalese Communists assumed office.

It may be recalled that ties between India and its Himalayan neighbour had soured in the summer months this year after Nepal went ahead and unveiled a new map that showed portions of territory in India's Uttarakhand state — Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipu Lekh — as part of Nepal.

New Delhi had objected to that move. But much water has flowed under the proverbial bridge in the past few months. The ice had initially been broken in August after Nepalese Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli had called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi then to wish him on the occasion of India's 74th Independence Day, with both leaders "expressing mutual solidarity" and agreeing to strengthen cooperation.

Foreign Secretary Mr. Shringla said in

Kathmandu during his just-concluded visit that culminated on Friday that "aside from our common civilisational inheritance, India's relationship with Nepal rests on four pillars — development cooperation; stronger connectivity; expanded infrastructure and economic projects; easier and enhanced access to educational opportunities in India for the young people of Nepal". He had also declared that "underlying all of these is a steadfast principle: we will work to Nepal's priorities".

The Foreign Secretary also "assured the people of Nepal that, once a vaccine is rolled out, meeting Nepal's requirements would be a priority for us". He had added, "Given our genetic profiles, what works for India is likely to work for Nepal as well. Together we will recover from the pandemic and together we will protect our people."

During his two-day visit, Mr. Shringla had called on Nepalese PM Oli, which included a one-on-one meeting, and had also called on the Nepalese President and the Foreign Minister, apart from holding talks with the Foreign Secretary of Nepal. Nepalese PM Oli had also conveyed Nepal's desire to build on the momentum in the bilateral relationship and enhance the level of bilateral engagement.

During the visit, discussions had taken place on "specific measures that could be taken to finalise key projects at the earliest, including the Pancheshwar Multipurpose Project, as well as launch new economic initiatives". Discussions had also taken place on "specific meetings that could be scheduled to maintain high level engagement, and address issues of mutual interest".



Bharatiya Kisan Union members attempt to cross a barricade at Ghazipur border to enter Delhi, during their Delhi Chalo protest against the Centres new farm laws, in New Delhi, on Saturday.

— PTI

Centre ready for farm talks: Shah Cong hits out at Modi govt over 'Delhi Chalo' march

New Delhi/Chandigarh, Nov. 28: Thousands of farmers dug in their heels at Delhi's border points, their numbers swelling through the day as many more joined them, and hundreds gathered at the city's Burari grounds on Saturday, disparate but united in their determination to hold protests against the new farm laws.

With many roads and entry points blocked, Union Home Minister Amit Shah appealed to the farmers to shift to the Burari ground and said the Centre is ready to hold discussions with them as soon as they move to the designated place.

He said a delegation of the farmers has been invited for discussion on December 3, adding now that some of their unions have demanded that talks be held immediately, the central government is ready to do so as soon as the protestors shift to the ground in Burari.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh termed Shah's offer to hold discussions at the earliest as the best in the interest of the farming community and the nation at large. He urged the farmers to accept the appeal and shift to the designated place for their protest.

After a restive Friday that saw police using teargas shells, water cannons and multi-layer barriers to block the protesters and some farmers pelting stones and breaking barricades in their determination to push through as

New Delhi, Nov. 28: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday alleged that a soldier was pitted against an old farmer due to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "arrogance".

The Congress also said it would have been better if the prime minister talked to the protesting farmers instead of getting "himself photographed in corporate offices". "This is a very sad photo. Our slogan was 'Jai Jawan, Jai Kisan', but today a soldier is standing against the farmer due to PM Modi's arrogance. This is very dangerous," he said in a tweet in Hindi along with the picture of a soldier showing a baton to an old farmer.

part of their 'Delhi Chalo' march, it was a quieter Saturday.

But the tension persisted with restless crowds milling around the city's edges and beyond and settling down from another night out in the cold.

Though there was no clear roadmap, the farmers, belonging to multiple groups, including 30 from Punjab, appeared clear in their resolve, some saying

farmers from Punjab and Haryana continued their protests against the new farm laws, with many of them blocking traffic on the national highway after the police stopped them from their 'Chalo Delhi' march.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala accused Modi of getting pictures clicked in corporate offices while farmers are protesting on Delhi roads. "Wish the PM talks to farmers on the road instead of flying in the aircraft," he said in a tweet, after Modi visited a company in Ahmedabad which is engaged in the Covid-19 vaccine research.

Another spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi

claimed whoever protests against the Modi government is "deemed a terrorist".

"Poor farmers from Punjab pointing out genuine grievances have been labelled khalistanis. Why doesn't Modi come out and address the Annadata however, only demands of them during elections," he tweeted.

Party leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also tweeted similar pictures of farmers being prevented by the police from marching towards Delhi, where they wish to hold a protest against the new farm laws. She said it is right if the government frames laws against farmers, but it is wrong when farmers wish to make their voice heard in Delhi.

— PTI

had been there for three days, refused to budge. As police personnel swarmed the area, many said they would not go to the Sant Nirankari ground in Burari that was offered to them for peaceful protests.

Settling down for another night on the road, some said they would wait for the outcome of a crucial meeting on Sunday to decide the next course of action.

— PTI

GOOD NEWS

Over 35L could not submit their documents due to pandemic

EPFO extends deadline for pensioners

New Delhi, Nov. 28: Retirement fund body EPFO has extended the deadline for submission of life certificates by pensioners till February 28, a move which would benefit over 35 lakh persons who could not submit the document by November due to Coronavirus pandemic.

The pensioners who could not submit their life certificates till November 30 deadline, would get pension every month till February. "In view of the

ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and the vulnerability of elderly population to Coronavirus, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) has extended the time limit up to 28th February 2021 for submission of Life Certificate (Jeevan Pramaan Patra-JPP) in respect of the Pensioners drawing pension under EPS 1995 (Employees' Pension Scheme-1995) and whose Life certificate is due in

● **THE PENSIONERS** who could not submit their life certificates till November 30 deadline, would get pension every month till February.

● **PRESENTLY, A PENSIONER** can submit JPP anytime during the year up to 30th November, which is valid for a period of one year from the date of issue. All such pensioners can submit life certificates till February 28, 2021.

any month till February 28, 2021," a labour ministry statement said.

Presently, a pensioner can submit JPP anytime during the year up to 30th November, which is valid

for a period of one year from the date of issue. All such pensioners can submit life certificates till February 28, 2021.

During this extended period, pension will not be

stopped in respect of 35 lakh pensioners who could not submit JPP during November 2020, the ministry added.

Multiple modes for submission of JPPs including 3.65 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs), branches of pension disbursing banks, 1.36 lakh post offices, postal network of 1.90 lakh postmen and Grameen Dak Sevaks under the Department of Post can be availed by pensioners.

— PTI

Naidu to chair SCO summit tomorrow

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 28

The ministry of external affairs announced on Saturday that vice-president Venkaiah Naidu would chair the 19th meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation council of heads of government to be hosted by India in virtual format on Monday. Pakistan will be represented by its parliamentary secretary for foreign affairs.

The other six SCO members — Russia, China, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan — will be represented by their Prime ministers, New Delhi added.

It may be recalled that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had just attended the SCO Council of Heads of State meeting in Virtual format earlier this month on November 10 that had been chaired by Russian President Vladimir Putin.

IN BRIEF
PAKISTAN,
U.S. RESTORE
MONASTERY

Peshawar, Nov. 28: Pakistan and the US have jointly completed restoration work at the Takht-i-Bahi Buddhist monastery in northwest Pakistan under the \$230,000 cultural preservation project.

US Consul General Gregory Macris virtually participated in the closing ceremony of the project at the monastery in Mardan in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

"The US mission in Pakistan is committed to working with local partners to support conservation and preservation of sites of great cultural significance across Pakistan," said Macris.

The Humanitarian and Facilitation Organisation (HAFO) received a US grant to execute the two-phase project at Takht-i-Bahi.

OLI SUBMITS
SEPARATE
DOCUMENT

Kathmandu, Nov. 28: Nepal's protracted political crisis deepened on Saturday after embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli rejected Pushpa Kamal Dahal "Prachanda's" accusations that he was running the government without consulting the party, and instead blamed his rival for non-cooperation in handling the party's affairs.

In the much-awaited Central Secretariat meeting of the ruling Communist Party of Nepal (CPN) on Saturday, Prime Minister Oli submitted a separate 38-page political document in response to the allegations made by party's executive chairman "Prachanda".

Oli was responding to the allegations made against him by "Prachanda" in his 19-page political paper presented at the Secretariat meeting on November 18. In his report, Prachanda had accused Oli of running the government without consulting the party, failing to abide by the party's due procedures and engaging in corruption.

Oli dismissed the allegations levelled against him by "Prachanda" while submitting the separate report, according to a senior Standing Committee member of the party.

FUTURE OF WALES
GANDHI'S STATUE
IN QUESTION

London, Nov. 28: There is a question mark over the future of a statue of Mahatma Gandhi in Wales after an official Welsh government review into Britain's colonial and slave trading history drew up a list of memorials that require a rethink.

"The Slave Trade and the British Empire: An Audit of Commemoration in Wales" report released this week also shortlists the commemoration of Britain's war-time Prime Minister Winston Churchill and Robert Clive, referred to as Clive of India for his role in establishing Britain's colonial hold in India, as "persons of interest" to move to a second stage of the review process.

Wales has a bronze sculpture of Gandhi at Cardiff Bay, unveiled in 2017 to mark the 148th birth anniversary of the leader of the Indian national movement.

In the audit, he has been classified under Category E of persons of interest who "require examination as having been highlighted by campaigners".

INDIAN MAN ON
TOURIST VISA
MISSING IN UAE

Dubai, Nov. 28: An Indian man, who reached the UAE on a tourist visa to seek a job, has been missing since November 9, a media report has said.

Amrithalingam Samayamuthu, 46, a father of four from the south Indian state of Tamil Nadu, had come over to take up a job in the UAE, the *Gulf News* reported on Friday. Samayamuthu's nephew Durai Maniraja, who is a fisherman in Ras Al Khaimah, said his uncle came with three people from Tamil Nadu on November 8.

"They stayed in an accommodation in Hor Al Anz. His roommates said the next morning he went to the workplace. After he came back, they went for work at night," Durai said. He said Samayamuthu was upset as he would be alone in the room and also wanted to go.

"But the others told him not to. There was no news about him later is what they told us," Durai said. Samayamuthu had not called home as he did not have a UAE SIM card. His brother-in-law Kannan Nagoorankani, said he approached the Al Muragqabat Police Station to file a complaint.



This picture taken with a fisheye lens on Friday shows coworking rooms of the capsule hotel Anshin Oyado Shinjuku, Tokyo, which has been renovated into a coworking space without the upper and lower partitions of the capsule. Facing unprecedented challenges due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the capsule hotel renovated an entire floor to be used as a coworking space, offering office necessities such as high speed internet required for telework and web conferencing, including computer hardware and other computing devices. — AFP

Germany hits mn cases as Russia links up with India on vaccine

Europe toll crosses 4L, shops reopen in parts of continent

Berlin, Nov. 28: Germany, once a beacon of hope in Europe's Coronavirus nightmare, logged more than one million cases on Friday, while Russia asked India to help mass produce its controversial Sputnik vaccine.

Although the virus spread is slowing thanks to weeks of tough restrictions, Europe remains at the heart of the pandemic, recording more cases than the United States in the past week.

The pandemic is spreading fastest in Asia and Latin America, and is up by a worrying 113 percent over the week in Mexico.

Until recently, Germany's relative success in containing the virus had offered some sense of hope, with authorities putting in place some precautions that still allowed life to carry on almost as normal. However, its measured approach has failed during the second wave, endangering the health of Europe's biggest economy and weighing on the mood as the northern hemisphere heads into the winter holidays.

Germany's Robert Koch Institute recorded more than 22,000 new daily cases on Friday, pushing the overall total beyond the one-million mark.

The number of Covid-19 patients in intensive care has soared from around 360 in early October to more than 3,500 last week.

Most countries hope to ease their virus rules for Christmas and New Year.

Persistent high case numbers loom over governments' hopes to ease their virus rules for Christmas and New Year.

Europe on Saturday crossed a grim barrier, registering 400,649 deaths. Stores began lifting their shutters in France on Saturday, while Poland's shopping centres will also reopen. "I'd rather avoid the internet, I'm going to buy things in the shops. They need it," said Anne Dubois, one of the first customers applauded through the doors by staff at

Paris' vast Galeries Lafayette department store.

"Whether or not there's people here, at least we've got our daily life getting back to normal," said 36-year-old Aurelie, a manager in the L'Oreal section at Galeries Lafayette.

Belgium will allow shops to reopen from December 1, but keep the current semi-lockdown in place possibly until mid-January. The move mirrors similar easing in Germany, Luxembourg and the Netherlands.

Paris' vast Galeries Lafayette department store.

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Scientists to detect single virus particles

Tokyo, Nov. 28: Scientists have developed a new method for identifying single virus particles based on changes in electrical current when they pass through ultrasmall pores, an advance which they claim may lead to new rapid Covid-19 tests.

The study, published in *ACS Sensors*, demonstrated a new system for identifying single virus particles using an algorithm trained to detect changes in the current passing across silicon nanopores. According to the scientists, the work may lead to fast and accurate screening tests for diseases like Covid-19 and influenza.

In the new method, the scientists said a layer of the compound silicon nitride just 50 nanometres (nm) thick has tiny nanopores added.

The motion of the ions can be monitored by the current they generate, and when a viral particle enters a nanopore, it blocks some of the ions from passing through, leading to a transient dip in current.

CONGRESSMAN TESTS POSITIVE FOR VIRUS

Miami, Nov. 28: South Florida Congressman-elect Carlos Gimenez has tested positive for Coronavirus, his campaign announced Friday.

The former Miami-Dade County mayor and his wife, Lourdes, tested positive Thursday for Covid-19 after having mild symptoms, according to a statement. They said they're self-isolating at home, in accordance with Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

Court rejects Don Pennsylvania suit

Observes voters, not lawyers choose Prez

Washington, Nov. 28: In a fresh setback to US President Donald Trump's efforts to reverse the November 3 presidential election result in the battleground state of Pennsylvania, a court has dismissed a lawsuit filed by his team, observing that "voters, not lawyers choose the president." The judgement came four days after Pennsylvania certified Trump's Democratic rival Joe Biden as the winner in the state which has 20 electoral college votes.

Trump, a Republican, has refused to accept defeat in the November 3 presidential election, and told reporters on Thursday that it would be "hard" to concede to Biden, a Democrat. The President has said that he would leave the White House if the Electoral College declares Biden as the winner, but made clear he is not prepared to "concede" the election. He has launched a slew of lawsuits in key states, but has not provided any evidence to back his claims of electoral fraud. Many of the lawsuits have been dismissed by courts. The three-judge panel of the 3rd US Circuit Court of Appeals on Friday upheld a previous ruling that dismissed the Trump campaign's request for an injunction in the case in Pennsylvania to challenge the election results and slammed the lawsuit. "Free, fair elections are the lifeblood of our democracy. Charges of unfairness are serious, but calling an election unfair does not make it so. Charges require specific allegations and then proof. We have neither here," Judge Stephanos Bibas said in his order.

"The campaign cannot win this lawsuit," said Bibas, who was appointed by Trump. He authored the order along with two other judges on the bench, Chief Circuit Judge Brooks Smith and Judge Michael Chagares, who were appointed by former Republican president George W Bush. Trump has refused to concede the November 3 election to Biden and has

Biden to represent best in us: Harris

Washington, Nov. 28: Joe Biden will be a president who represents the best of America, his deputy and Vice President-elect Kamala Harris has said, asserting that he is a leader the world will respect. Lavishing praise on the 78-year-old US President-elect, Harris on Friday said that Biden will be a president for all Americans.

"Know that" Biden "will be a president who represents the best in us. A leader the world will respect and our children can look up to," Harris said in a tweet.

Harris, 56, the daughter of an Indian immigrant from Chennai, has created history by becoming the first Black American woman to be elected as the

country's Vice President. While Indian-origin politicians have been elected as heads of the state in various parts of the world in the last several decades, from Mauritius to Fiji, Harris as the vice president of the United States would be the most powerful politician ever.

Biden, in a series of tweets, called for unity in the country. "This is our moment — ours together — to write a newer, bolder, more compassionate chapter in the life of our nation," Biden said in a tweet. "Each of us has a responsibility in our own lives to do what we can to slow the virus. Every decision we make matters. Every decision we make can save a life.

GUANTANAMO: SOME MAY BE RELEASED

Washington, Nov. 28: The oldest prisoner at the Guantanamo Bay detention centre went to his latest review board hearing with a degree of hope, something that has been scarce during his 16 years locked up without charges at the US base in Cuba.

Saifullah Paracha, a 73-year-old Pakistani with diabetes and a heart condition, had two things going for him that he didn't have at previous hearings: A favourable legal development and the election of Joe Biden. President Donald Trump had effectively ended the Obama administration's practice of reviewing the cases of men held at Guantanamo and releasing them if imprisonment was no longer deemed necessary.

US curbs on Russian, Chinese firms for Iran missile support

Washington, Nov. 28: The US has imposed sanctions on four companies from China and Russia for supporting Iran's missile programme that remains a "significant proliferation concern," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said.

"The US has sanctioned four entities in China and Russia for their support of Iran's missile programme. We will continue to use all our sanctions tools to prevent Iran from advancing its missile capabilities," Pompeo said.

The companies are Chengdu Best New Materials Co Ltd and Zibo Elim Trade Co, Ltd. in China and Nilco Group, which is also known as Nil Fam Khazar Company and SanTERS Holding and Joint Stock Company Elecon in Russia for transferring sensitive technology and items to Iran's missile programme. President Donald Trump withdrew the US from the landmark Iran nuclear deal in 2018.

KILLING OF SCIENTIST: KHAMENEI CALLS FOR 'DEFINITIVE PUNISHMENT'

Tehran, Nov. 28: Iran's supreme leader on Saturday called for the "definitive punishment" of those behind the killing of a scientist linked to Tehran's disbanded military nuclear programme, a slaying the Islamic Republic has blamed on Israel.

Israel, long suspected of killing scientists a decade ago amid tensions over Tehran's nuclear programme, has yet to comment on the killing Friday of Mohsen Fakhrizadeh.

However, the attack bore the hallmarks of a carefully planned, military-style ambush.

The slaying threatens to renew tensions between the US and Iran in the waning days of President Donald Trump's term, just as President-elect Joe Biden has suggested his administration could return to Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers

from which Trump earlier withdrew.

The Pentagon announced early Saturday that it sent the USS Nimitz aircraft carrier back into the Mideast.

In a statement, Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei called Fakhrizadeh "the country's prominent and distinguished nuclear and defensive scientist."

Khamenei said Iran's first priority after the killing was the "definitive punishment of the perpetrators and those who ordered it."

He did not elaborate. Speaking to a meeting of his government's Coronavirus task force earlier Saturday, President Hassan Rouhani blamed Israel for the killing. Rouhani said that Fakhrizadeh's death would not stop its nuclear programme, something Khamenei said as well.

DETERIORATING | CONDITION PM invites singer to contribute to protected areas expansion initiative

Imran lauds Cher efforts to relocate elephant

Islamabad, Nov. 28: Prime Minister Imran Khan on Friday appreciated efforts of US celebrity singer Cher to relocate Kaavan, dubbed as the world's loneliest elephant, from a Pakistani zoo to Cambodia for better conditions. Cher, who called on the Prime Minister in Islamabad, has been campaigning for retiring Kaavan, the country's only Asian elephant, to an elephant sanctuary. The story of Kaavan, who is 35 years old, attracted world attention after reports went viral about the deteriorating condition of the zoo in Islamabad where the elephant was kept.

Khan "thanked Cher for her campaign and role in this regard," according to his office. He said that "it was indeed a happy moment for all of us that after giving joy and happiness to the people of Islamabad and Pakistan for about 35 years, Kaavan will now be able to retire with other elephants in a specialised sanctuary in Cambodia."

The Prime Minister also invited the singer to participate and contribute towards the government's initiative for the expansion of protected areas, to which she agreed.

Cher also tweeted about her meeting with Khan. "Just Came From Meeting To Thank Prime Minister Imran Khan For Making It Possible For Me To Take Kaavan To Cambodia," she said. The Pakistan government on Monday issued a permit to transfer the elephant and sources said Kaavan will be flown to Cambodia on November 29.

The elephant was already handed over to experts who

● **PRESIDENT ARIF Alvi attended a function at the Marghzar Zoo in Islamabad to mark the handing over of the elephant to experts to finalise its shifting to Cambodia.**

were dealing with its transfer. President Arif Alvi along with his wife Samina attended a function on November 24 at the Marghzar Zoo in Islamabad to mark the handing over of the elephant to

experts to finalise the last part of the preparations to shift it to Cambodia, his office said in a statement.

The experts have trained Kaavan to enter a large metal crate that will be used to transport it to the airport. They have also noted that Kaavan was responding well to music and singing. Kaavan is being relocated to a wildlife sanctuary in Cambodia on the orders of the Islamabad High Court in the context of providing proper care and natural environment. The elephant, popular among children

and adults, was born in 1985 in Sri Lanka and the Sri Lankan government presented it to the then President of Pakistan.

In 1990, an elephant Sahli was brought from Bangladesh and stayed with Kaavan until his death in 2012. Animal rights activists campaigned for its release and their efforts got a boost with the Islamabad High Court's decision on May 21, ordering immediate relocation of all animals of the zoo, including Kaavan to some suitable wildlife sanctuaries.

VIDEO OF COPS BEATING POC A SHAME: MACRON

Paris, Nov. 28: French President Emmanuel Macron has said video images showing police officers beating up a Black man "shame us," and condemned violence both by and against the police. Macron asked the government to quickly come up with proposals "to reaffirm the link of confidence that should naturally exist between the French and those who protect them" and to better fight discrimination.



SHORT TAKES

Hamilton takes Bahrain GP pole

Manama: Newly-crowned seven-time champion Lewis Hamilton claimed pole position for Sunday's Bahrain Grand Prix with an impeccable record-breaking lap on Saturday as Mercedes dominated the floodlit qualifying session. He clocked an all-time track record lap in one minute and 27.264 seconds to outpace team-mate Valtteri Bottas by 0.289 seconds, the pair delivering Mercedes' 11th front row lock-out of the season. It was Hamilton's record-increasing 98th career pole position and the fluency and speed of his driving endorsed his status as the outstanding man to beat at Sakhir's Bahrain International Circuit. — *AFP*

Jehan pips Mick for F2 podium

Bahrain: Rising Indian racer Jehan Daruvala earned his maiden Formula 2 podium after pipping championship leader Mick Schumacher in a gripping battle for the third place at the Bahrain Grand Prix support race, here. Starting eighth on the grid, Jehan gained two places and stayed sixth for a few laps. However, in Lap 5, he lost two places and was forced off the circuit. The resulting loss of speed cost him more positions. He stayed in tenth place for a few laps before pitting to change tyres. Jehan emerged from the pits down in the 18th place but quickly climbed up the order. He gained more positions as others pitted and was running sixth by lap 19 of the 32 lap race. — *PTI*

TIME TO PONDER

With no Plan 'B' in place, India need their 'A' game to save ODI series

Sydney, Nov. 28: India's battered bowling unit will have little time to regroup and limited resources at its disposal in a desperate bid to perform a redemption act and save the ODI series against a Australia in the second game here on Sunday. It wasn't just about the margin of defeat — by 66 runs — but the manner in which the home team exposed India's vacant cup-



board of all-rounders that will give Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri numerous points to ponder. So with no back-up all-rounders or a plan B in place, India will have to execute their plan A perfectly.

With Australia's top order firing, Bumrah and company will have no option but to pick up the pieces and give a better account of themselves on a strip that promises to be a belter. — *PTI*



India captain Virat Kohli (right) talks with teammates before the start of their one-day international match against Australia at the Sydney Cricket Ground on Friday. — *AFP*

Smith finds his rhythm back

Sydney, Nov. 28: Australian batsman Steve Smith found his "rhythm" with a cracking hundred against India in the first ODI but admitted that there wasn't much pressure unlike other times.

Smith struck 105 off 66 balls in Australia's lop-sided 66-run win in the first ODI.

"I just found a nice rhythm again," Smith said while crediting his skipper Aaron Finch for setting up a nice platform with a 156-run opening stand with David Warner.

"It was just see-ball, hit-ball and obviously the foundation had been set so I could be quite aggressive," Smith said.

Having found his "hands" as he had said prior to the match, Smith was happy that he could decide which bowlers to attack even though the entire Indian bowling line-up was at the receiving end of his onslaught.

"I picked my bowlers and where I wanted to hit them, and just played some good shots to the areas of my strengths."

By his own admission, the pressure was less unlike some other times when quick wickets have fallen around him.

"There wasn't a whole lot of pressure. Probably, at other times, when I have batted my best, it's been when the team has been under a bit of pressure and I have had to play almost



Steve Smith

an anchor role to help us get a total," he said.

Smith said that trying to switch from his natural style of building the innings to a more T20 friendly mode of power-hitting did affect his game.

"I haven't felt quite right for a while and maybe that's T20 cricket, trying to be a bit more powerful and probably not playing as much to my strengths as I'd like," Smith said.

What Smith did before this series was to get back to normal grip.

"So I've been getting myself back to my normal grip and finding it," he added.

The former skipper is hopeful that he can continue with his rich vein of form during the entire summer. — *PTI*



Former India off-spinner Archana Das of Hyderabad poses with her childhood coach K. Saibaba of the Sports Coaching Foundation in Masab Tank at her marriage to K. Abhishek Reddy, a software professional, at a hotel in Begumpet, Hyderabad, on Friday. Archana is now based in Mumbai where she works for the Western Railway.

Hyderabad draw with Bengaluru

Margao, Nov. 28: Hyderabad FC settled for their second successive draw, a stalemate, in the Indian Super League, splitting points with Bengaluru FC at the Fatorda Stadium, here on Saturday.

Getting four points from two outings is best start in the league for Hyderabad.

However, it was a frustrating evening for Bengaluru FC, who are yet to taste a win this season.

The two sides showed attacking intent from the word go and BFC had their first attempt as early as the fifth minute. Ashique Kuruniyan tried his luck from a distance

but his effort took a deflection before being collected by Hyderabad custodian Subrata Paul.

Hyderabad's adamant defending frustrated Bengaluru, who struggled to take the ball up to their attacking trio of Sunil Chhetri, Kristian Opseth and Udanta Singh. Trying to find an alternative, Bengaluru engaged in long-range shots, which proved futile.

Despite making a half-time change, replacing Kristian Opseth with Dimas Delgado, Bengaluru had nothing different to offer as their opponents continued to dominate the play. — *PTI*

BELIHU, GEMECHU EYE DOUBLE DELIGHT

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, NOV. 28

Two-time winners Andamlak Belihu and Tsehay Gemechu are not only ready to defend their titles, but are also determined to break the course record this year at the Delhi Half Marathon here on Sunday.

Ethiopia's Belihu will be bidding for his third successive crown but the course he will cover is radically different to the one he conquered in 2018 and 2019.

Belihu's compatriot Gemechu rewrote the women's course record when winning in both 2018 and 2019 and it currently stands at 66:00. She is raring to go even faster this year.

BAPINEEDU B PRESENTS
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